

THE EARLY YEARS OF JOHNSTOWN Y.F.C.

Johnstown Youth Football Club was the brain child of Mr John Platt originally from Johnstown now living in Gyfelia. John approached me and asked if I would like to get involved.

As I had twin boys Scott and Nigel who were both football mad it was an easy decision to make.

John arranged for a representative from both the North East Wales F.A. and the Wrexham and District Youth Football League to attend our first ever meeting to highlight the requirements for entry into the league, the meeting was held in the Morton Inn and interested parties were invited to attend, this led to a close friend of mine the late Mr Peter Hughes of Ruabon attending. Peter as well as being a scout for Everton had a vast knowledge of running clubs and working with children in football, scouts, judo and youth clubs.

As a club we owe a lot to Peter because when we emerged from that meeting I was the chairman and Peter had volunteered to pen the clubs' first ever constitution which would have to be accepted by the Youth Football League and the North East Wales F.A. to gain entry into the league.

Support for the venture started to gain momentum as John worked tirelessly to achieve sponsorships for kit, balls, nets, etc. to enable him to fulfil his dream of providing organised football for the youth of Johnstown.

Our first season in the Wrexham and District Youth Football League was in 1986/1987. If memory serves me right we entered 3 teams that season at under10, under12, and under14 level, in those days it was 11 a side and full size pitches at all age levels.

The club continued growing in the following years thanks to the generosity of the community and a committed team of committee members, managers, fund raisers and parents. We ended up at one time with two teams in every age group except under 10's (133 children approx), and when we couldn't find a manager for an under 16 side John who was running an under 14's side in the mornings also took on the role of under 16's manager on a Saturday afternoon.

Nothing was going to stop his dream remaining a reality.

During my involvement as chairman I don't recall winning any cups, but what I do remember with great pride is the fact that nearly every year one or more of our teams picked up the leagues' fair play awards.

Another highlight of my term was taking a team of under 14's to face an Everton under 15's at their Belfield training ground, this was organised by Peter Hughes. When we arrived Howard Kendall and the first team squad were just finishing a training session, which was an added bonus on a special day for the boys. In the game we held our own in the first half, but ended up being beaten 5-1 by a group of older, stronger boys, who three days earlier had beaten Bradford City 8-0 so all in all a good result. Refreshments followed the game, and the hospitality shown by Everton was brilliant.

I mentioned my sons Scott and Nigel earlier who inspired me to get involved in this venture, they enjoyed playing for the club for approx 6years so much that they eventually returned as joint managers of an under 10's team. They managed them for 6years, and enjoyed every minute of it. They have asked me to express their thanks to the club for the support and backing they received in their fight to raise the age for girls to play in the league from under 12 to under 14.

Below I am listing some of the earlier sponsors, managers, and committee members, and I apologise in advance if I have missed any out but please be aware that it was nearly 24 years ago.

Kit Sponsors

Reece Jones Developments, Johnstown Tyre Services (Dave Gittins), D&J Thomas(Butchers), Tan y Clawdd Garage, Sherwin Heating, S.M. Sports(the late Stuart Mason), Charisma Trophies(Mr John Purdie), D.H.D. Engineering, The Post Office, Hoya Lenses, Shanks & Mc Ewan

Managers and Assistants

Mike Garrigan, The late Frank Pierce, John Platt, Gwyn Gilpin, Mike Stewart, Geoff Pearce, Alan Hughes, Trevor Roberts, Roger Mostyn, George Chinioque (sorry about the spelling George) Errol Jones, Cyril Wright

Committee Members (Open to all parents)

Kelvin James, Harold Griffiths, Peter Dunn, Arnold Edwards, Cyril Wright, Janet Griffiths, Alan & Maria Hughes, Les & Collette Jones, Sandra & Mike Stewart, Eileen & John Platt, Peter Jones, Karen Pierce, Ivy Conway,

Most Meetings were attended by all of the above plus the managers, and some parents.

In addition I would like to thank Joey Jones for the support he gave to the club during the early years. He was a regular attendee at our presentation evenings which went down very well with the children, and on occasions he would turn up with other players with him.

I hope that this helps to fill in the gaps in the history of our club for you, and I wish you every success for the future

Kelvin James
First Chairman