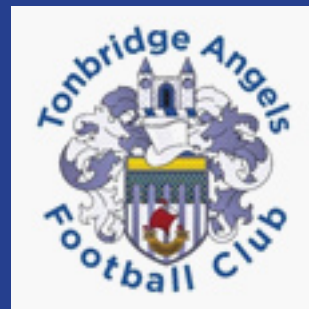


Up There Cazaly!

A historical look at Tonbridge Angels through
the eyes of their supporters
Part 1: The Beginning, season 1948-49
as written by Brian Cheal



In the very beginning ...

Tonbridge soccer fans crowded into the Medway Hall on Friday to roar an enthusiastic "Yes" when Mr Gerald Williams, MP, asked if the town really wanted a senior football team, as written by the Tonbridge Free Press.

Hundreds of fans decided on the spot to form a supporters' club for the new semi-professional Tonbridge Football Club, which will play on the Angel Ground next year. They will base their activities on those of Colchester United supporters.

Mr Williams, chairman of the meeting, called to receive the report of the formation of Tonbridge Football Club and to confirm the establishment of a supporters' club, praised the great project which would bring enjoyment to thousands of fans in Tonbridge and beyond.

Mr Williams stressed the value of the town's sporting endeavours, where men and women could meet in the love of the game.

There was no doubt, he said, that senior football would bring a great fellowship to Tonbridge, as well as increasing trade.

After he received his great "Yes" from the meeting, Mr Williams emphasised that Tonbridge not only wanted senior football, but the town wanted to do the job properly. A good club needed proper showers and hot water, turnstiles to let in the spectators and full support from the people of the town.

"I believe we want senior football in Tonbridge", said Mr Williams. "Let us have it and make a success of it."

Mr H. Portch, one of the prime movers of the new club, said that since he first came to the town 30 years ago he had realised the need for a senior football club. At first there was no ground, but now, thanks to the foresight of the Urban Council, the Angel Ground was available.

The limitation of the minor leagues meant players could not look forward to promotion.

Mr Porch thanked the U.D.C. for their work. It was no easy matter, he said, to transfer the affections of the Angel Ground, so long associated with cricket, to football.

He explained how he called a meeting to test the town's feeling on the question of senior football. The response had been so encouraging that negotiations for the Angel were opened with the U.D.C. resulting in the "very fair arrangement" they had today.

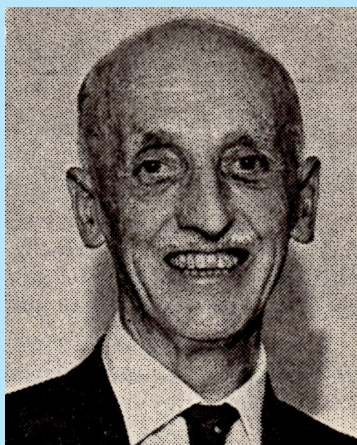
The company to run the Club, he said, was in the process of formation, but as it would be a private company the shareholders would be limited. However, those who wanted to acquire a few shares in the club would find an opportunity through the supporters' club.

"I know there is a great deal of speculation in the town regarding a famous football club's interest in us," said Mr Portch. "You want to know something about it. Well, communications and negotiations have been going on with one of the most famous League clubs in the country."

Mr Portch explained that with direction of labour and conscription calls it was no easy matter to concentrate a number of footballers in one area, but he was confident that the famous club would render every assistance, adding "and I think that is as far as I had better go tonight."

The supporters' club, he said, might be asked to assist with the work on the Angel in order to get it ready for next August.

The supporters' club was formed on the proposition of Cr. W. A. J. Mann.



Cr. L. A. Le May, who was elected temporary president of the supporters' club, until their next meeting, said the Council had been fighting for the Angel Ground for three years, but it had been difficult to get away from the idea of cricket.

However, he was sure the Angel would become as famous for soccer as it had been for cricket.

"We have practically eliminated the idea of county cricket there, for years to come", said Cr. Le May. "We have provided sport for 2,000 people for eight months of the year, instead of cricket for a few thousands for one week a year."

Mr W. May (pictured) was elected temporary secretary of the supporters' club.

Minimum membership fees for the supporters' club was fixed at 2/6d a year. Members of the club will be co-opted on to the management committee of the club proper.

On behalf of the Tonbridge and District Football League, Mr J. J. May wished the Tonbridge Football Club every success.

The Big Kick-off

TONBRIDGE FREE PRESS

ports
Page

Spotlight On
Tonbridge League

ODD MEN

INJURIES PUT THE BRAKE ON TOWN First Blood, But They Lost

TONBRIDGE 1 HASTINGS UNITED 2

WITH their flag flying bravely in Saturday's breeze, Tonbridge trotted out to their first Southern League game on the Angel, and received a big ovation from 5,000 fans who had been crowding the turnstiles for an hour before the kick-off.

Duffield, the Tonbridge captain, won the toss and gave his team the advantage of a wind blowing from the Vale Road end.

Hastings were soon on the defensive, Robson thrilling the crowd with a good dribble. He sent in a long, high shot from a Fleming

At the other end, Dickie had Workman in trouble. The goalie dived and missed, and the general melee which followed ended in a foul and free kick which cleared a nasty situation for Hastings.

WINNING GOAL



It was Saturday, August 21st 1948. Hastings United also newcomers to the Southern League were the visitors. Queues began forming at the turnstiles an hour before the kick off. Five thousand were in the Angel Ground, and what a roar arose from them as the teams took the field.

There were no surprises in Jock Denoon's selection the team being: Bob Lucas, Jack Duffield, Ron Stephens, Eddie Fleming, Bob Shanks, Len Richley, Murdoch Dickie, Ron Anderson, Albert Robson, George Chapman and John Griffiths. Hastings lined up as follows: Workman, Ridsen, Walker, Brine, Matheson, Rogers, Milton, Skinner, Riddell, Hammond, Liddell.

Duffield the Tonbridge captain won the toss and gave his team the advantage of a wind blowing from the Vale Road end. The home side were quickly on the attack with Robson prominent. He won the first corner of the game with a long shot that Workman did well to tip over. As the visitors came more into the

game Fleming made a vital interception and Lucas pulled off a couple of good saves. Then Robson's pass set up Dickie who fired over from 15 yards.

An injury to Anderson disrupted the Tonbridge attack. He was only able to hobble on the wing for the rest of the match with Dickie moving inside. It remained goalless as a fairly quiet half drew to a close but the home supporters were able to exercise their vocal chords two minutes after the resumption. The pace of Griffiths took him down the left wing and his hard centre was met by Robson whose fierce shot opened the scoring.

Stephens was only just over the bar with a powerful shot from the halfway line but Hastings began to fight back and goals from Hammond after 57 and 70 minutes gave them the lead. Tonbridge efforts to regain the initiative were hampered when Richley had to leave the field for treatment. While he was off the field, for about 10 minutes, Lucas also

had to receive treatment after a brave save.

The weight of numbers began to tell and the Blues were hard pressed to avoid going further behind as Hastings strove to press home their advantage but there were no more goals. The half back line of Fleming, Shanks and Richley had been most impressive but Hammond's opportunism had given the visitors victory. The injuries to Anderson and Richley had been too much of a handicap so Tonbridge had begun their Southern League life with a 2-1 defeat. But professional football in Tonbridge was now well and truly born.

It had, however, to endure a tough and at times turbulent childhood. The first season really was a struggle. The next visitors were Bedford Town for a Southern League Cup tie which went to extra time with four goals shared. It was an exciting match but the men in blue really should have won. They missed a host of chances with Robson failing twice from the penalty spot in the first half. Bob Holman was brought in at left back with Stephens moving across and Duffield taking over at centre half. Paddy Tracey, a red haired tearaway of a centre forward was brought into the attack with Robson moving to inside right in place of the injured Anderson.

Tonbridge trailed at half time by 1-0 but on the hour Robson equalised, Chapman and Dickie combining to set him up. Bedford restored their advantage in the first minute of extra time but Robson equalised for the second time after good work from Griffiths and Tracey. The replay was a scrapping bad tempered affair which saw Bedford win 3-0.

The reserves gained the club's first victory on the 1st September by the odd goal in three at

Sittingbourne. The first team had to wait until the 12th to get off the mark. It was the FA Cup Preliminary Round and the amateurs of Bexley did not prove a great test. Robson bagged a hat trick whilst Griffiths and Richley also got on the score sheet. There was no reply from the visitors but a trip to Dover proved to be Tonbridge's exit from this competition as the Kent League side ran out 4-2 winners. Marshal Raybould, on trial from Merthyr, made his debut at left half in this match.

The Kent Senior Cup took Tonbridge to Down



"Come, TONBRIDGE 1st XI"
TONBRIDGE FOOTBALL CLUB Ltd.
 Members of KENT COUNTY F.A.
 SOUTHERN LEAGUE
 Ground: ANGEL GROUND, TONBRIDGE

Registered Office:
 CENTRAL CHAMBERS
 47, HIGH STREET
 TONBRIDGE

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME - - TWO PENCE

OFFICIALS:
 President & Co. Secretary: H. PORTER
 W. D. MILLER
 Club Secretary: F. W. HARRIS
 E. C. PAGE
 Chairman: A. BEVERIDGE
 F. W. HARRIS
 A. C. GALE
 W. H. CHAPMAN
 J. DENNOON

CLUB NOTES
 At last the great day has come and, following many months of arduous endeavour, Tonbridge has its own senior football team, playing in the Southern League and, above all, on the Angel Ground!
 It is precisely ten months ago that the idea of forming a senior football club for Tonbridge was first mooted, and without doubt the majority of the credit must go to our chairman, Mr. Herbert Porter, for it was he who first called the meeting to consider the question of a senior football club for the town.
 In the months that have passed much work has been put in and many difficulties had to be overcome in order that today's match might take place.
 The question of a ground was probably the hardest nut to crack, but, following the acquisition of the Angel Ground by the Council, and matters of negotiation, a lease was signed and arrangements were made for the formation of the Tonbridge Football Club.
 Thus came the question as to what league should be entered, and

hopes immediately turned to the Southern League. At this time, there was very little indication that an application would be successful. However, the Management Committee decided to enter the league and, of the clubs who sought admission, Tonbridge came at the top of the post with 10 votes. The only other club to be considered was Chislehurst, but, unfortunately, the latter club was not in a position to enter the league at the time. Of course, apart from committee and management, only Chislehurst and Maidstone were successful in their application.

The step was expressed in many quarters to be a very bold one, but the fact remains, however, that the Southern League has now reached, in all probability, the limit of its expansion with the present 22 clubs, and the chance was taken that we had made the right move.

The club was formed on the 10th of the month and, at the time, we did not have a great deal of time to spare.

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SATURDAY, 24th AUGUST, 1948. KICK-OFF 5.30 p.m.
TONBRIDGE

Lucas
 Stephens
 Duffield
 E. Fleming
 Shanks
 Richley
 Dickie
 Anderson
 Robson
 Chapman
 Griffiths

Sargent
 Liddell
 Riddell
 Skinner
 Crowther
 Rogers
 Riden
 Hammond
 Walker
 Brine
 F. Workman

HASTINGS UNITED

NEXT HOME MATCH—SOUTHERN LEAGUE CUP
 BEDFORD TOWN Wednesday, 24th August, 5.30 p.m.

ALL THE FOOTBALL NEWS OF THE WEEK
 See Friday's KENT & SUSSEX COURIER
 78, High Street, Tonbridge
 TELEPHONE 2100

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 TONBRIDGE
 Tobacconists and Confectioners
 RESTAURANT AND PARTY ROOMS
 After the game pay us a visit

SOUTHERN LEAGUE XI. FIXTURES, 1948-49
 Aug. 15 (S) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 16 (S) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 17 (S) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 18 (S) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 19 (S) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 20 (S) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
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 22 (S) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
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 27 (S) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 28 (S) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 29 (S) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 30 (S) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 31 (S) Tonbridge v. Maidstone

KENT LEAGUE FIXTURES 1948-49
 Aug. 15 (W) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 16 (W) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 17 (W) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 18 (W) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 19 (W) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 20 (W) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 21 (W) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
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 27 (W) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 28 (W) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 29 (W) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 30 (W) Tonbridge v. Maidstone
 31 (W) Tonbridge v. Maidstone

Before the Match Visit the...
Pavilion Restaurant
TONBRIDGE SPORTS GROUND
 (Where All Good Sports Foregather)
 GOOD FOOD — LOW PRICES

Tonbridge Football Club, wearing shirts made by the trainer's wife, Mrs Jock Denoon, will try their wings for the first time in public when they play a trial on the Angel Ground tomorrow evening.

Charity will benefit from this match, which will give the club's supporters the first opportunity of seeing their team in action.

The Tonbridge 1st XI will play in the club colours against a 2nd XI wearing white.

The manager, Mr Jock Denoon, believes the club will do well in the coming season and has picked players to form a team blending youth with craft and experience.

Nearly all of the players have served League clubs, four coming from Crystal Palace and three from Eastbourne.

Two local players have been signed as amateurs. E. Baker last year played for Urban and Randle is an amateur from Bells Yew Green, near Frant.

Although his playing days are nearly over, Jim Taylor, ex-captain of Tonbridge Urban, has been appointed assistant trainer. He is an inside forward.

Players signed for the club are:

Goalkeepers: Lucas, who played for Crystal Palace as a professional. R. Tate, an amateur from Bexhill and Hastings. Roland Miles (an amateur) has represented the RAF.

Full backs: Robert Stevens is from Crystal Palace and can play either left or right. John Duffield is an ex-Portsmouth player with plenty of experience. Bob Hollands, formerly of Battle and Hastings, and David Cousens (Eastbourne), both amateurs.

Half-backs: Len Richley, captained Deal last year, and this will be his first season as a professional. Bob Shanks, centre half, who has played for Crystal Palace and Swindon, last year played for Gloucester City in the Southern League. Eric Fleming has captained Hastings and has represented the Army and Finchley. Randle is an amateur. E. Baker, who lives in Hectorage Road, Tonbridge is an amateur, like Dinwood, who played for Wimbledon last year.

Forwards: F. Murdoch, formerly of Chelsea, last season played for Bournemouth. He is an outside right with a good turn of speed which should prove useful in penetrating tough Southern League defences. Anderson was a Crystal Palace inside forward. Ex-Crystal Palace player Robson is another inside forward. George Chapman, an inside left, has represented many clubs including Brighton. J. H. Griffiths has represented the RAF and during the war played for many northern clubs including Newcastle United. T. Grant, from Eastbourne, can play on either wing. William Tracey has played in the Corinthian League and last season, as a centre forward, scored 52 goals for Eastbourne. D. C. Cope, a schoolboy international inside right, is an amateur. F. Messenger is an outside left from Hailsham. Kemp, an inside forward, has played for Crowhurst. R. Holman played last season in the Tonbridge League.

The kick-off tomorrow is at 5 pm and the teams will be (subject to alteration):

1st Team: Lucas; Duffield, Stevens; Fleming, Shanks Richley; Dickie, Anderson, Robson, Chapman, Griffiths.

2nd Team: Tate; Holman, Cousens; McCulloch, Stevenson, Dinwood; Grant, Cope, Tracey, Kemp, Messenger or Levett.

Farm for a first local derby against Tunbridge Wells. The teams lined up as follows: Tunbridge Wells: Cummings, Whiteford, Fletcher, Englefield, Jeffrey, Johnson, Haywood, G. Baker, Randall, Winspur, L. Baker. Tonbridge: Tate, Richler, Stephens, Fleming, Duffield, Raybould, Griffiths, Anderson, Robson, Tracey, Dickie.

The first half was quite even. The lively Randall proved a handful for the Tonbridge defence but missed a great chance to open the scoring after 20 minutes. Two minutes later the Angels took the lead when Stephens sent a 35 yard free kick sailing into the top right hand corner of the net. Tonbridge took command in the second half although their second goal was something of a fluke. Cummings appeared to have Fleming's shot covered but could only push it over his own head into the goal. Robson made it three from a Griffiths pass as Tonbridge ran out comfortable winners.

"Come on the Angels" was heard for the first time on the 8th September when Dartford were the visitors. It did not appear to catch on but the sharp-eared reporter from the Tonbridge Free Press heard it and wrote an article suggesting that the club needed a battle cry and the Angels would be a unique nickname. Sure enough it soon became a familiar sound.

League form was becoming a real worry during September. Dartford did the double over us scoring five times without reply. In the away match, 38-year-old trainer Jim Taylor was pressed into service at right half. When the powerful Merthyr Tydfil team visited us they romped to a 5-1 victory and only the excellent goalkeeping of Lucas prevented an even bigger humiliation. Tonbridge had a professional team but they did not seem very professional in their approach. Lack of regular training was one of the reasons put forward for their failings.



As usual it was the manager who paid the penalty and on the 7th October the board asked for and accepted the resignation of Jock Denoon. Marshal Raybould, the former Cardiff and Merthyr player was appointed

player manager. At the same time Len Richley took over as secretary. A fierce tackling wing half, the stocky Richley's (pictured above) tough approach did not always endear him to the fans but no one could ever question his commitment. So it now proved off the field

Saturday, 21st August 1948 - Tonbridge (0) 1 (Robson 47) Hastings (0) 2 (Hammond 55, 70) Attendance: 5,000

With their flag flying bravely in Saturday's breeze, Tonbridge trotted out to their first Southern League game on the Angel, and received a big ovation from 5,000 fans who had been crowding the turnstiles for an hour before the kick-off.

Duffield, the Tonbridge captain, won the toss and gave his team the advantage of the wind blowing from the Vale Road end.

Hastings were soon on the defensive, Robson thrilling the crowd with a good dribble. He sent in a long, high shot from a Fleming pass, which Workman, the Hastings goalie, did well to tip over the bar for a fruitless corner.

The first Hastings break-away was held up when Fleming cleverly outwitted Skinner, who was soon in the picture again when he just failed to get hold of a forward pass from Liddell which brought Lucas into action.

Lucas brought off two good saves in quick succession, one from Liddell, and one from Milton.

After giving away a corner, Stephens, who throughout the game had been kicking strongly, cleared splendidly past the half-way line.

In a spell of Tonbridge pressure, Robson gave a beautiful pass to Dickie who had the ball under control but cleared the bar from 15 yards out.

There was no score at the end of a surprisingly quiet first half in which Hastings had been slightly quicker on the ball. The Tonbridge forward line was effective, but hampered by injury to Anderson, who changed places with Dickie.

Two minutes after the resumption, Tonbridge took the lead. Following a sweep down the left, the fast-moving Griffiths found a hole in the Hastings defence with a hard centre. Robson fastened onto the ball and gave the Hastings goalie no chance with a cannon shot.

Stephens, from the half-way line, tried a shot which only just went over the bar, but Hastings were stunned by the reverse and Hammond tested Lucas. Rogers had a go, then 55 minutes after the start, Tonbridge lost their lead when Hammond turned Rogers' pass into the net.

At the other end, Dickie had Workman in trouble, the goalie dived and missed, and the general melee which followed ended in a foul and a free kick which cleared a nasty situation for Hastings.

Shortly afterwards came the movement that gave Hastings the lead. Rogers gave a through pass to Hammond who, well positioned on the left, sent in a high shot. Lucas, apparently unsighted, saw the ball drop gently into the net.

Two accidents hampered Tonbridge as they struggled to regain their initiative.

Richley headed the ball, then collapsed, but was able to resume after going off for about ten minutes. At the same time Lucas was receiving attention for injuries received when robbing a Hastings forward.

The visitors seized every new advantage and the Town were hard pressed until the final whistle.

Until Lucas and Richley were injured, Tonbridge's ten men (Anderson was only able to hobble) had been a match for Hastings. Finally, however, weight of numbers told and the home team had a hard time keeping the Hastings forwards out.

Tonbridge's half-backs were effective, Fleming proving a sound worker. Richley had a good game and Shanks was a lively centre half.

Lucas only made one mistake, but it led to the winning goal.

Hammond was outstanding in the Hastings side.

Teams:

Tonbridge: Lucas; Duffield (capt.), Stephens; Fleming, Shanks, Richley; Dickie, Anderson, Robson, Chapman, Griffiths.

Hastings: Workman; Ridsen, Walker; Brine, Matheson, Rogers; Milton, Skinner (capt.), Riddell, Hammond, Liddell.

as he became a tireless worker for the club whilst continuing to play.

A goal from Robson was enough to give the Angels a Kent Senior Shield victory at Margate where the defence was excellent with Bob Lucas particularly outstanding. On the 23rd October Tonbridge at last gained a Southern League win after six successive defeats. In the 17th minute Griffiths found Robson who shot was punched out by the Bedford goalkeeper but Dickie scored from the rebound. Tonbridge really took control going further ahead on the half hour. Raybould beat three men before passing to Robson who sent Dickie in for his second. Outstanding saves from Atkins prevented Anderson and Robson from increasing the lead. Ball reduced the arrears after 70 minutes but Tonbridge continued to dominate playing their best football so far. The team of Lucas, Franks, Stephens, Fleming, Duffield, Richley, Dickie, Anderson,

Robson, Raybould and Griffiths was cheered to an echo at the end of the game.

Raybould's eighth minute goal at Snowdon and another solid defensive performance saw the Blues clear the next hurdle in the Kent Senior Cup but the visit of Chelmsford brought a 5-0 defeat. Tonbridge finished this match with only nine men as the injury bug struck again. Popular goalkeeper Bob Lucas received a bad injury which was to keep him out for most of the season. This also proved to be Marshal Raybould's last match in charge. His brief reign had certainly seen an improvement in the results but he returned to Wales citing housing problems, which were apparently also affecting some of the players.

AN INTERNATIONAL FOR TONBRIDGE

Now Tonbridge were seeking their third manager with the season less than halfway through. They found their man, a well known



figure in the world of football, when they appointed Harold Hobbis. Hobbis who had been capped twice by England, had made 248 appearances for Charlton Athletic. He signed a three year contract. Meanwhile former Reading goalkeeper Harry Rickett was signed to replace Lucas and made his debut in the 4-2 Kent Senior Cup win over Betteshanger Colliery. Albert Robson scored three times and Dennis Bower, a centre forward signed from Crockenhill, made an impressive first team debut laying on two of Robson's goals and only being denied by the woodwork from opening his own account.

Other mid-season signings included Frank Rist, Reg Swinfen, Fergie Lunn and Robert Burlison. Rist, an experienced centre half who had been with Leyton Orient and Walsall was signed from Charlton as was Burlison. Swinfen, formerly with Queens Park Rangers, was signed from Yeovil. He had begun as a forward and made his Tonbridge debut at centre forward but most of his time at the Angel was spent in the full back position. Lunn, a hard working wing half was an Irish Youth International who had been with Distillery and Glentoran before coming to England and joining Redditch. There he was spotted by Arsenal but the Gunners had released him before he could make the first team.

Hobbis's first game was a 5-1 defeat at Gravesend on 11th December. Christmas Day football was a regular feature in those times but there was no festive joy for Tonbridge who travelled to Hastings where the United completed a double with a 4-2 victory.

In the new year Tonbridge remained bottom of the Southern League so when Alec Stock brought his Yeovil team to the Angel Ground few people gave the Blues a chance. The men from Somerset were already national news with their FA Cup exploits and were shortly to meet and indeed beat mighty Sunderland. After an even opening Yeovil began to get on top and it took some excellent defending from Frank Rist and Harry Rickett to keep them out. Against the run of play Tonbridge took the lead in the 35th minute when Robson converted an opening engineered by Swinfen. Tonbridge now began to exert considerable pressure and continued to do so after the interval but by the hour mark Yeovil, who had begun to come back into the game, were level.

Ten minutes later Swinfen made a tremendous run from the half way line only to be denied by the brilliance of goalkeeper Hall but Robson was on hand to slam the loose ball into the net. Yeovil now went all out to force the equaliser but Tonbridge defended soundly to keep them out.

The team was: Rickett, Richley, Stephens, Fleming, Rist, Anderson, Burlison, Robson, Swinfen, Dickie, Hobbis. The same eleven fought back from a 10th minute deficit with

goals from Dickie and Burlison to beat Exeter City Reserves.

Further Kent Senior Cup progress had been made with a 2-0 victory over Erith. Swinfen scored both goals on his debut. The next round brought Folkestone to the Angel and a crowd of 6,000. Tonbridge opened strongly with Swinfen denied first by a post and then by the goalkeeper. Swinfen and Fleming then combined to present Chapman with a chance to give Tonbridge the lead. Thomas equalised as Folkestone got on top in the second half and the same player gave the visitors the lead in extra time. Hobbis and Rist were both outstanding for the Angels and it was the Tonbridge player manager who equalised from the penalty spot after his shot had been handled. Such a closely fought encounter ill-prepared Tonbridge for the humiliation of the replay at Sheraton Road, 11-1 remains the club's biggest ever defeat.

In February John Griffiths departed to join Canterbury. The speedy outside left had lost his first team place since the arrival of Hobbis, but he paid a heavy price for his keenness to get to one particular home game. Arriving at Guildford with just sixpence (2 1/2p) in his pocket he bought a ticket to Shalford but stayed on the train to Tonbridge. At some stage on the journey he met the inspector who was not impressed. He was fined £2 plus 15 shillings costs with the advocate's fee a guinea, a total of £3.16s.0d (£3.80).

Spring signings included outside left Freddie Mills from Millwall and experienced forward Paddy Fitzgerald from Aldershot.

Herbert Portch made an appeal for local employers to offer jobs to some of the players. Many of them were still dotted round the county making it difficult to get them together for mid-week training sessions.

Mr A. Alvey, chairman of Tonbridge Urban District Council, who was also involved with the bowls club said: "We intend to make the Angel Ground one of the finest sports stadiums in the South of England".

Encouraging words but in reality the relationship between the council and the club was not always an easy one. The council's food committee rejected a licence application for the sale of tea to the public. One councillor was reported as saying that "there was no need for it".

In March a dispute over the rent became serious. The council refused further talks after a club statement that they cannot afford £750 a season saying that more meetings could serve no useful purpose.

Mr Portch said that the deadlock endangered the future of Southern League football in Tonbridge but that the club would be willing

to negotiate the purchase of all or part of the Angel Ground. He also stated that the original agreement had been for £300 per season for the first two seasons with a rent revision to be considered jointly in the spring of 1950. The Angel Ground had been derelict and much of the capital expenditure which had been incurred to make it fit for football would have been necessary, irrespective of the football club.

On the 8th December the council wrote to the club stating that it would not be possible to convert the old practice shed into covered accommodation during the current financial year. It would be prepared to do the work during the following financial year provided that the football club agreed to pay £500 rent for the following season. The club suggested that while the rent was under consideration the time was opportune for a longer period agreement. At a meeting with the Angel Ground sub-committee on 11th January 1949 it was concluded that the sub-committee consider the rent question.

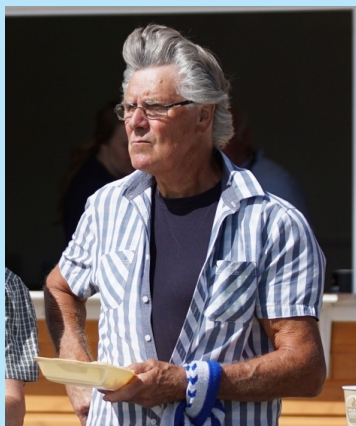
On the 2nd February the council wrote again saying they were prepared to grant a licence for five years at £750 per season on the same terms as the existing agreement. There would be provision for an increase to be calculated on an agreed proportion of any subsequent capital expenditure incurred by the council at the request of the club. The stated rent figure makes allowance for the proposed covered accommodation on the west side of the ground. The club replied by asking for another meeting.

Another letter from the council came on the 2nd March stating that in view of the capital expenditure on the ground now and in the future the rent figure could be lowered. Failing acceptance by the club the council reserved the right to further action on the expiration of the present licence. In such an event there would be no further ground improvements. It was not considered that further meetings could serve any useful purpose.

Mr Portch complained that the club had not been given an opportunity to state its case on rent or to suggest alternatives, such as a possible ground purchase. The Tonbridge Free Press provided him with the opportunity to state his case publicly and he took full advantage.

At Easter the supporters club presented the football club with a cheque for £1,250. Back on the field the Easter programme began with a visit to Priestfield Stadium to take on Gillingham, who were battling for the championship with Colchester and Merthyr. The following day it was Colchester's turn to visit the Angel. Despite taking one point from these two tough encounters the Angels requited themselves very well in both games.

At Gillingham Rickett was injured but bravely



I am prompted to write by the late Brian Cheal's article in our August 18th programme detailing our club's first ever match in the Southern League vs the 'Auld Enemy' Hastings FC. There is no need for me to embellish his, or any other account of that historic day, but how many true Blues can say they were present among that heaving 5,000 crowd?

Well I can, though I freely admit my seven-year-old memories mostly recall being hemmed in on all sides, and looking up at all those other adults, my tender sensibilities intimidated by the noise and movement. It seemed to me as if the whole town had turned out for the occasion. I was being chaperoned by my Uncle Rod, and while he appeared to be 'grown up', he was only in his

late teens, living in the same house as me in Danvers Road, just a stone's throw from the ground.

As kick off time approached, first time fans on a new adventure, surged towards the old cricket ground from all directions. We turned into Barden Road, joining more folk than my young mind could process, many of them disgorging from the South Eastern, the Station Tavern and doubtless the Angel Hotel and Prince Albert public houses. When finally inside, and as to match itself, I saw it only in snatches, sadly missing Albert Robson's first goal for the Club, though the deafening roar left me in no doubt that something important had just happened.

Returning home at full time was memorable if only for the amount of time it took to exit the ground and walk that stone's throw home. These traffic stopping crowds of course became the norm for many years after that historic 'first'. There was always a police presence who had a hopeless task of separating those on foot, or behind a wheel, mainly just on the look out for trouble. Speaking of trouble, my brother Mick at the age of five was deemed to be too young to attend the game, though I swear I saw him slipping into the Albert 'snug' - well, he was on milk stout as a baby!

Now while this needs to be taken with a pinch of salt, my personal claim to have witnessed the match could also be said to be economical with the truth. After all, I have no physical proof, vis-a-vis any souvenirs, match programme/sheet, ticket stub etc. But they could have been inherited anyway. No, all you have is my word as an adult, of a seven year old's memory.

There surely were kids of my own age among that crowd, who could tell a similar tale, so if you are out there let us know, current Angels fan or not. They too would recall we had just had one of the bitterest winters on record in 47/48. No hot water, frozen taps and outside loos, freezing bedrooms, shortages of coal and food rationing . . . but I wouldn't swap a minute of my childhood happy days!

In summary, just thinking about the phenomenal input by so many people over the last 70 years, to this very day, ensuring this proud club's longevity, is awe-inspiring. The fans I salute you all.

Paul Bayliss (Reproduced from the Tonbridge Angels programme of 6 October 2018)

Tonbridge then had to soak up a lot of pressure but went ahead once more through a great Robson solo effort. After that the Angels began to take control and appeared set for a famous victory until George equalised almost on time.

Gillingham visited the Angel for the return ten days after the first meeting and it was another exciting game. Dickie's long pass put Fitzgerald through to open the scoring after 26 minutes but two minutes later Poole equalised. Anderson headed in Fitzgerald's cross to regain the lead but a minute after the break Warsap equalised again and there was no further scoring. The Tonbridge team that performed with great credit was: Blowers, Swinfen, Richley, Lunn, Chandler, Fleming, Dickie, Fitzgerald, Robson, Anderson and Smith.

Jack Duffield took over at centre half for the for the last Saturday of the season when Lovells Athletic were the visitors, and his heroism earned him an everlasting place in the affections of Tonbridge supporters. The visitors' outside right Hodder was taken off after a collision of heads but Duffield soon reappeared with a plaster bandage on his head. The wound reopened as he continued to head the ball but the tough defender refused to leave the field. Tonbridge won 5-1 with an impressive display of attacking football. Robson scored twice, the other goals coming from Dickie, Fitzgerald and a Swinfen penalty. Later, in the dressing room, the players were discussing who might take Duffield's place for the final match of the season on Monday against Guildford. "No one is taking my place" declared Duffield defiantly. 'Cast Iron Jack' as he was christened by chairman Herbert Portch, took the field wearing a rubber helmet which appeared to be made from a football bladder. It fell off on a few occasions as he bravely headed the ball clear but, undaunted, Duffield carried on to the end. Unfortunately he headed the ball past his own goalkeeper to open the scoring but a tremendous 25 yard shot from Fergie Lunn ensured that the game ended even.

stayed on duty. In front of him the defence was superb and, incredibly, Tonbridge took the lead after 39 minutes when Dickie robbed a defender and crossed for Robson to score with a well placed shot. Despite terrific pressure it was not until the 80th minute that the Gills equalised when Carr converted Boswell's cross to beat the limping Rickett. Carr scored the winner with just three minutes remaining after Rickett pushed out Poole's shot. Chandler, not normally a first team player, did superbly at centre half as did the whole defence.

Hobbis gave Tonbridge an 18th minute lead against Colchester and this was soon doubled by Anderson. Freddie Blowers had replaced Rickett in goal and made several good saves before Cutting reduced the arrears. Just before the interval Curry equalised.



Without the material that Brian Cheal wrote back in the early 1960's, none of the historical work that I undertake would have been possible, or at the very least, it would be an awful lot more time consuming. It would appear that Brian was hoping at some stage to publish a book recording the history of, the then named, Tonbridge Football Club. I doubt whether I will be able to honour his wish in a book format, but I hope that bringing his typewritten manuscript to the internet in some way fulfils his aspiration.

Saturday, 15th January 1949: Tonbridge (1) 2 (Robson 35,70) Yeovil Town (0) 1 (Bryant 60)

Tonbridge, bottom of the Southern League, surprised the football world on Saturday by beating giant-killing Yeovil Town by the odd goal. A record crowd saw the match, the most exciting, the best and the fastest the Angels have yet played.

It was both a deserved and well-earned victory. Yeovil were, perhaps, the quicker and more constructive side, though at times it seemed as if they were deliberately playing a wary game in order to minimise a risk of injury to players who will meet Sunderland in the FA Cup.

There was no doubt, however, that in the second session when the result hung precariously in the balance the giant-killers were straining every sinew to retain their reputation.

The Angels kicked-off on a rain-soaked pitch and play was fairly even for the first five minutes. In midfield Yeovil showed more initiative and their tearaway left winger Hargreaves proved a menace, but was well held by Richley, left back.

Building up several determined attacks, centre forward Bryant, combining well with Hargreaves and inside left Wright, led Yeovil to within scoring distance on several occasions.

A stubborn Tonbridge defence, brilliantly marshalled by centre half Rist, nullified scoring chances.

Yeovil were the more cohesive side, employing short passing tactics which appeared to suit the slippery pitch, though when within scoring distance the forwards' shots were faulty.

Tonbridge came into the limelight in the 16th minute when, after some neat passing, Robson found an opening but his shot went wide.

The pace of the game livened up towards the end of the first half and the Tonbridge forwards were given no chance of breaking away. Due mainly to Rist, the Yeovil attacks were again repulsed although Rickett, in the home goal, was called upon to save several tricky shots.

Bad luck prevented Yeovil from going ahead in the 25th minute when Rickett pushed out a long shot from Hargreaves. Hamilton, outside right, did not waste the opportunity and he flashed forward, but his shot hit the post and the ball rebounded into play.

Against the trend of the game, Tonbridge took the lead ten minutes later through Robson, who took advantage of an opening engineered by centre forward Swinfen.

Although Tonbridge put on further pressure there was no more scoring before half-time.

Severely shaken by their surprising set-back in the first half, Yeovil fell back on the defensive on the resumption.

Player-manager Harold Hobbis worked hard to break through on the left-wing but, stung by their earlier lapse, the Yeovil defence held firm.

Right back Hickman deftly marked the winger who was unable to use his clever footwork to best advantage.

Gradually taking control of the game again, Yeovil equalised in the 15th minute when centre forward Bryant found an opening in a goalmouth scrimmage.

The Angels went ahead again, with a spectacular goal in the 25th minute. Swinfen broke away from midfield play and sped towards the Yeovil goal with hardly a player in the half.

With an incredible turn of speed Swinfen came within shooting distance but Hall came out to meet him and desperately managed to scoop the ball from the attackers' feet.

Page 6

TONBRIDGE FREE PRESS

SPORTS PARADE

ANGELS KEPT YEOVIL UNDER THEIR THUMB

Cup Giants Were Always On The Losing End

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Robson, who had anticipated the move, found himself unmarked with a golden opportunity. He made no mistake and whammed the ball into the back of the net, leaving the goalkeeper spreadeagled.

The pace became faster, and Yeovil fought hard to save the match, but Tonbridge hung on grimly to their narrow lead.

Had Tonbridge made a mistake at this juncture, the result might easily have been different, but a sound defence kept the Yeovil raiders out.

The teams: Tonbridge: Rickett; Richley, Stephens; Fleming Rist, Anderson; Burlison, Robson, Swinfen, Dickie, Hobbis. Yeovil: Hall; Hickman, Davis; Keeton, Blizzard, Collins; Hamilton, Stock, Bryant, Wright, Hargreaves.



Tonbridge had finished their first season of Southern League football in 20th position with the following record: Played 42, Won 9, Drawn 7, Lost 26; Scored 54, Conceded 105; Points 25. Just Chingford and Bedford

finished beneath us and yet after such a poor start this was not a bad effort. In the second half of the season, under Harold Hobbis, there had been considerable improvement. The average home attendance for Southern League matches had been 2,899.

The Reserves had finished mid-table in the Kent League Division Two but it was felt a higher standard of football was needed to

narrow the gap in standard between the two teams. Election was sought and duly obtained to the London League. Ten of the professionals were offered retention forms: Harry Rickett, Reg Swinfen, Len Richley, who continued as Secretary, Fergie Lunn, Jack Duffield, Eddie Fleming (left), Ron Anderson, Murdoch Dickie, Paddy Fitzgerald and Albert Robson. Robson declined and joined Guildford.

With evidence of increasing support at our matches, and the elimination of costs necessarily incurred in our establishment as a Senior Club, we are hopeful that the results for the season 1949-50 will show considerable improvement.

APPROVED (Sgd.) H. PORTCH
H. F. WEST

Date	Opponents	@	Comp	Res	Att	Pos	Goalscorers
Sat 21/08/1948	Hastings United	H	SL	L	1 2	5000	19 Robson
Wed 25/08/1948	Bedford Town	H	SLC	Pre D	2 2		19 Robson 2
Sat 28/08/1948	Dartford	H	SL	L	0 1		22
Sat 04/09/1948	Bexley United	H	FAC	Ext Pre W	5 0		22 Richley, Anderson, Robson 2, Griffiths
Thu 09/09/1948	Bedford Town	a	SLC	Pre r L	0 3	3681	22
Sat 11/09/1948	Merthyr Tydfil	H	SL	L	1 5	3000	22 Fleming
Wed 15/09/1948	Dartford	a	SL	L	0 4		22
Sat 18/09/1948	Dover	a	FAC	Pre L	2 4	4000	22 Robson, Coulsdon og
Sat 25/09/1948	Hereford United	H	SL	L	1 3		22 Robson
Sat 02/10/1948	Tunbridge Wells United	a	KSC	1Q W	3 0		22 Stephens, Fleming, Robson
Sat 09/10/1948	Margate	a	KSS	1 W	1 0	3427	22 Robson
Sat 16/10/1948	Cheltenham Town	a	SL	L	0 2		22
Sat 23/10/1948	Bedford Town	H	SL	W	2 1	4000	22 Dickie 2
Sat 30/10/1948	Snowdown Colliery Welfare	a	KSS	SF W	1 0		22 Raybould
Sat 06/11/1948	Kidderminster Harriers	H	SL	L	0 1		22
Sat 13/11/1948	Exeter City Res	a	SL	L	1 2		22 Anderson
Sat 20/11/1948	Chelmsford City	H	SL	L	0 5	4000	22
Sat 04/12/1948	Betteshanger Colliery Welfare	H	KSC	2Q W	4 2		22 Robson 3, Griffiths
Sat 11/12/1948	Gravesend & Northfleet	H	SL	L	1 5		22 Robson
Sat 18/12/1948	Foots Cray Social	H	KSC	3Q D	2 2		22 Fleming, Hobbis pen
Sat 25/12/1948	Hastings United	a	SL	L	2 4		22 Curbishley 2
Mon 27/12/1948	Lovells Athletic	a	SL	L	0 5		22
Sat 01/01/1949	Foots Cray Social	a	KSC	3Qr W	6 2		22 Stephens 3, Griffiths, Hobbis, Robson
Sat 08/01/1949	Erith & Belvedere	H	KSC	1 W	2 0		22 Swinfen, Hobbis
Sat 15/01/1949	Yeovil Town	H	SL	W	2 1		22 Robson 2
Sat 22/01/1949	Exeter City Res	H	SL	W	2 1		22 Burlison, Dickie
Sat 29/01/1949	Merthyr Tydfil	a	SL	L	0 5	6000	22
Sat 05/02/1949	Folkestone Town	H	KSC	2 D	2 2	6000	22 Chapman, Hobbis pen
Sat 12/02/1949	Folkestone Town	a	KSC	2r L	2 11		22 Robson, Hobbis
Thu 17/02/1949	Gloucester City	a	SL	W	3 2		20 Dickie 2, Burlison
Sat 19/02/1949	Gloucester City	H	SL	L	1 2		21 Stephens
Sat 26/02/1949	Torquay United Res	H	SL	W	1 0		Dickie
Thu 03/03/1949	Hereford United	a	SL	L	1 3	2642	Robson
Sat 05/03/1949	Worcester City	a	SL	L	0 1		
Mon 07/03/1949	Gravesend & Northfleet	a	SL	L	1 3		Duffield
Thu 10/03/1949	Colchester United	a	SL	L	0 4	4525	
Sat 12/03/1949	Torquay United Res	a	SL	D	1 1		Swinfen
Wed 16/03/1949	Worcester City	H	SL	D	1 1		20 Hobbis
Sat 19/03/1949	Cheltenham Town	H	SL	D	2 2		Mills, Swinfen pen
Mon 21/03/1949	Barry Town	a	SL	L	0 2		
Thu 24/03/1949	Chingford Town	a	SL	W	2 1		Dickie, Smith
Sat 26/03/1949	Bedford Town	a	SL	L	1 2		21 Swinfen
Thu 31/03/1949	Bath City	a	SL	L	1 3		21 Swinfen
Sat 02/04/1949	Barry Town	H	SL	L	1 2		21 Anderson
Mon 04/04/1949	Yeovil Town	a	SL	L	0 6		21
Wed 06/04/1949	Kidderminster Harriers	a	SL	L	2 5	1435	21 Fitzgerald, Smith
Sat 09/04/1949	Chingford Town	H	SL	W	4 2		20 Lunn, Robson 2, Smith
Fri 15/04/1949	Gillingham	a	SL	L	1 2	9400	Robson
Sat 16/04/1949	Colchester United	H	SL	D	3 3		20 Hobbis, Anderson, Robson
Wed 20/04/1949	Chelmsford City	a	SL	L	1 3	5100	Fitzgerald
Sat 23/04/1949	Folkestone Town	a	KSS	FINAL L	1 5		Robson
Mon 25/04/1949	Gillingham	H	SL	D	2 2		Fitzgerald, Anderson
Wed 27/04/1949	Guildford City	a	SL	D	3 3		20 Fitzgerald, Robson 2
Sat 30/04/1949	Lovells Athletic	H	SL	W	5 1		20 Dickie, Robson 2 (1 pen), Fitzgerald, Swinfen pen
Mon 02/05/1949	Guildford City	H	SL	D	1 1		20 Lunn
Wed 04/05/1949	Bath City	H	SL	W	3 1		20 Swinfen 3

Table 1

Southern League		P	W	D	L	F	A	GA	Pts
1	Gillingham	42	26	10	6	104	48	2.17	62
2	Chelmsford City	42	27	7	8	115	64	1.8	61
3	Merthyr Tydfil	42	26	8	8	133	54	2.46	60
4	Colchester United	42	21	10	11	94	61	1.54	52
5	Worcester City	42	22	7	13	87	56	1.55	51
6	Dartford	42	21	9	12	73	53	1.38	51
7	Gravesend & Northfleet	42	20	9	13	60	46	1.3	49
8	Yeovil Town	42	19	9	14	90	53	1.7	47
9	Cheltenham Town	42	19	9	14	71	64	1.11	47
10	Kidderminster Harriers	42	19	6	17	77	94	0.82	44
11	Exeter City Reserves	42	18	7	17	83	73	1.14	43
12	Hereford United	42	17	6	19	83	84	0.99	40
13	Bath City	42	15	8	19	72	87	0.83	38
14	Hastings United	42	14	10	18	69	93	0.74	38
15	Torquay United Reserves	42	15	7	20	73	93	0.78	37
16	Lovells Athletic	42	14	8	20	73	74	0.99	36
17	Guildford City	42	12	12	18	58	85	0.68	36
18	Gloucester City	42	12	10	20	78	100	0.78	34
19	Barry Town	42	12	10	20	55	95	0.58	34
20	Tonbridge	42	9	7	26	54	105	0.5	25
21	Chingford	42	6	9	27	43	94	0.46	21
22	Bedford Town	42	5	8	29	32	101	0.32	18

Table 1

Name	SL	FAC	SLC	KSC	KSS	Total	Goals	Career Apps	Career Goals
Anderson, Ron	30	2	1	6	3	42	5	42	5
Battell, Matt	1					1		1	
Blackman, Norman	1					1		1	
Blowers, Fred	5					5		5	
Bower, Dennis				1		1		1	
Burlison, Bob	11			4		15	2	15	2
Calligari, Steve	1					1		1	
Chandler, Roy	6					6		6	
Chapman, George	7	1	2	2	1	13	1	13	1
Curbishley, George	2			1		3	2	3	2
Dickie, Murdoch	41	1	2	5	3	52	8	52	8
Duffield, John	31	2	2	3	3	41	1	41	1
Fitzgerald, Paddy	12				1	13	5	13	5
Fleming, Eddie	41	2	2	7	3	55	3	55	3
Franks, Charlie	9			1	2	12		12	
Griffiths, John	8	2	2	3	2	17	3	17	3
Hobbis, Harold	11			5		16	7	16	7
Holdman, Bob	1		1			2		2	
Jones, AS				1		1		1	
Lockie, Micky	4			1		5		5	
Lucas, Bob	15	2	2	2	2	23	(3)	23	
Lunn, Fergie	24			2	1	27	2	27	2
McCulloch, W	2					2		2	
Mills, Freddie	10					10	1	10	1
Phillips, Ron		1				1		1	
Raybould, Marshall	6	1		1	2	10	1	10	1
Richley, Len	36	1	2	6	2	47	1	47	1
Rickett, Henry	22			4	1	27	(2)	27	
Rist, Frank	6			3		9		9	
Robson, Albert	38	2	2	6	3	51	27	51	27
Shanks, Bob	4	2	1	1		8		8	
Shields, ???	1					1		1	
Smith, Clem	12				1	13	3	13	3

Stephens, Bob	24	2	2	7	2	37	5	37	5
Strowger, Leslie	8					8		8	
Swinfen, Reg	24			3	1	28	9	28	9
Tate, R				1		1	(1)	1	
Taylor, Jim	1	1				2		2	
Tracey, Paddy	7		1	1		9		9	
() = clean sheets							+ 1 own goal		