**SHILDON AFC CLUB HISTORY**

FORMED in 1890 as Shildon Town, the Railwaymen joined the Auckland and District League two years later and in 1894 merged with the Rangers and Heroes to become Shildon United.

In 1900, the club played in the new Northern League Division Two but folded that season due to financial problems – as did the Second Division.

A re-formed club joined the Northern League in 1903 to replace Stockton St John’s.

In 1907, Shildon joined the semi-professional ranks of the North Eastern League, finishing second in season 1932/33.

Before WWII the club won four successive Northern League Division One titles; a record that stood until overhauled by Blyth in 1984. In 1937 the team was unbeaten on their march to the title with Jack Downing firing in a record 61 league and cup goals.

A replay win at York City in 1927/28 saw the club reach the first round proper of the FA Cup for the first time. In the first round they have also played Brentford, Doncaster Rovers, Lincoln City, Scunthorpe United and Oldham Athletic three times. The last time the club reached the first round was in 2003/04, losing out 7-2 against Notts County. The club also reached the second round, in 1936/37 against Dartford.

The Dean Street turnstiles and distinctive grandstand were erected in 1923. A £45,000 grant saw new dressing rooms and a social club built beneath the stand 60 years later.

Shildon won the Second Division championship in 2001/02, scoring 135 goals and finished runners-up in two cup competitions. The following season they won the Northern League Challenge Cup with a 3-2 golden goal victory over Billingham Synthonia at Feethams.

Tragedy struck the club in February 2004 when 26-year-old player, Lee Hainsworth was killed in a road accident on his way to training. He had been with the club for six years. The Brown Street stand was renamed in his memory.

Bill Aisbitt, a lifelong stalwart at the club, died in June 2003 and the boardroom was named in his honour after over 50 years loyal service.

At the end of the 2004 season, the Railwaymen came under serious threat through financial difficulties when the former chairman severed all ties with the club. At the end of the season all the players and the manager left the club, leaving it crippled.

But during the close season, the club appointed a new chairman, Brian Burn, and new manager, Gary Forrest. Their efforts, and those of everyone connected with the club, ensured its survival. The club survived a relegation scare but since then has gone from strength to strength under the management team.

In 2012-13, the club reached two cup semi-finals. A depleted side lost in the Durham Challenge Cup to Spennymoor Town. The match brought an end to the playing career of midfielder Chris Hughes after he suffered a knee injury. And there was more heartbreak as the side narrowly missed a dream day out at Wembley after losing their two-legged FA Vase semi-final to a late extra-time goal in the second leg at home.

In season 2013-14, the management team further strengthened the playing squad, bring in several experienced players in a determination to bring silverware back to Dean Street for the first time. The investment paid off with the club narrowly missing out on the league title, remaining competitive until the final weeks of the season.

But the club were able to avenge the semi-final defeat of the previous season when they faced Spennymoor Town in the final of the Durham Challenge Cup. On an historic Good Friday, Shildon striker, Billy Greulich-Smith added a new chapter to the club’s history books with two late goals – the winner in added time at the end of the 90 minutes – to overcome their local rivals by two goals to one.

At last, Gary Forrest and his management team have overcome the silverware barrier and go into the 2014-15 season with renewed confidence that they can compete on all fronts.

**CLUB COMMITTEE**

*Directors*

Brian Burn Chairman

Jeff Ridley Vice Chairman

Jon Atkinson President

Gareth Howe Secretary & Treasurer

David Dent

Norman Smith

Barry Murphy
Peter Rowley
Chris Hughes