

Washington New Town Juniors Football Club 1978 to 1983

This narrative is the attempt of an elderly man to recount events leading to the establishment of an under-18s youth football club in 1978. Whilst sorting old paperwork and documents, some records of the players, results, etc. of that club came to light and were offered to the Washington History Society. What follows may contain inaccuracies because it relies upon memories of things which happened over forty years ago and can't be confirmed because some of those involved with the beginnings of the club are deceased and others unable to be contacted. Anyone able to clarify facts, correct mistakes, or add information is invited to contact the History Society.

I seemed always to be aware of the support for competitive inter-schools' football in the Washington area at both junior and secondary level. Boys wanting to continue playing beyond the age of fifteen and up to the age of eighteen could try to find a place in the well-respected and often successful **Usworth Colliery Welfare Juniors** team. Two Usworth Colliery miners, 'Jonty' Simpson and Bob Stubbings, 'ran' the team during the three happy years which I spent playing for the club in the late 1950s and early '60s. The team played its home fixtures on the excellent Usworth Welfare Park pitch but, when that pitch was lost to the construction of the A195 road as part of the new town development, the football club was discontinued – exactly when I do not know!

Discussions about the lack of opportunity for young footballers in the town took place among a group of local men at Washington Round Table meetings and five 'tablers' decided to try to establish a club for under 18 year olds – **Albert Smith, Arthur Winship, Keith Robson, Peter Birtwisle** and myself, **John Suggett** became involved and an interested friend, **Geoff Lloyd**, volunteered to help and his offer was gratefully received.

We had nothing! No pitch, footballs, changing facilities, goal nets, strips and no name! We couldn't even be sure that there would be enough demand from young players to sustain such a team. Where to start? I think that we planned to call the team Washington Juniors

but I have a feeling that we were persuaded (by whom?) to incorporate New Town into the title. We approached organisations in the town, including the Development Corporation, asking for assistance. I suppose that, basically, we were begging! Phil Dawson visited me on behalf of the Development Corporation to ask what sort of help was required and it was Phil who, eventually, managed to arrange for us to use the **Washington Welfare** pitch – though without changing facilities.

The first meeting of players for a 'kickabout' and an explanation of what we were hoping to achieve took place, I believe, at the all-weather playing surface which had been established near to the Northumbria Sports Centre on the Stephenson Industrial Estate. Albert had agreed to take on the role of secretary, Arthur became treasurer, I took on coaching and team management duties, Geoff took on many tasks including assisting with training sessions, pitch marking, goal net duties and more. Keith used his influence to obtain temporary changing facilities in the Masonic Hall and was available for assistance when required. Peter lent support where and wherever he could. For the first few games, players had to walk, in full kit, past the New Inn pub and the Co-op buildings, to the Welfare pitch to the amusement of Saturday shoppers but not visiting players or officials. I seem to recall that our first match, a friendly against Burnmoor, was played in 1978 and the

team wore faded green and white shirts which had been the property of Usworth C.W. Juniors. How we got them I don't recall!

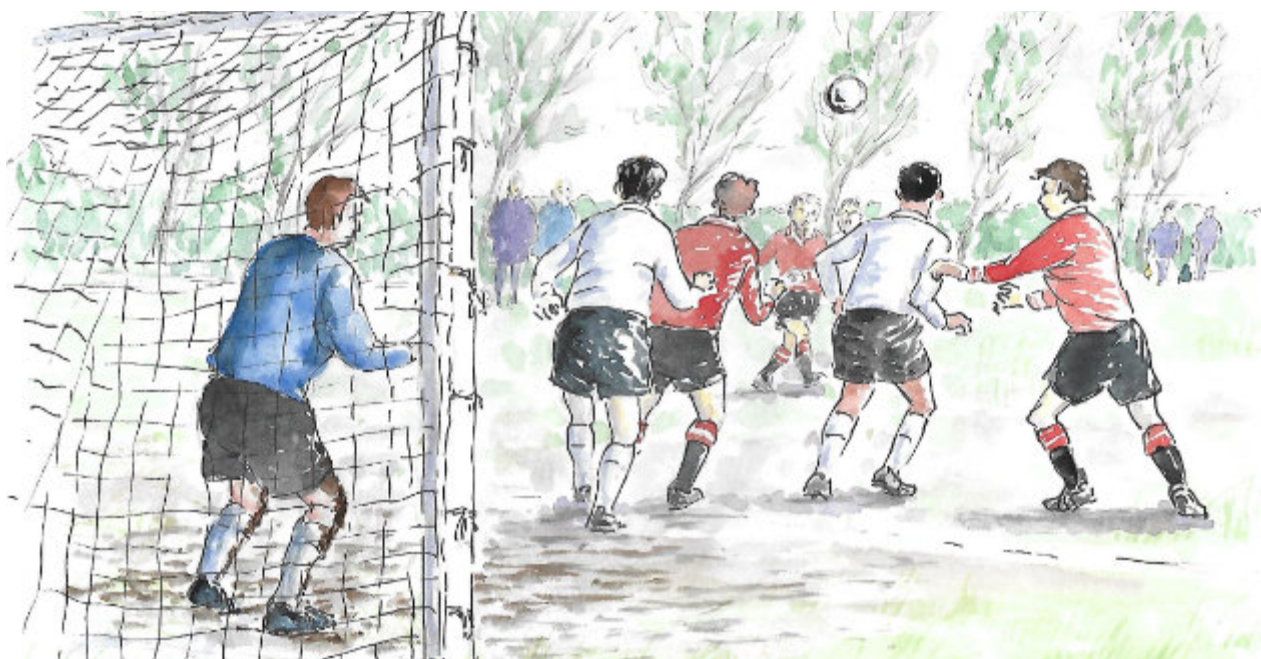
We had managed to persuade the committee of the **North Durham Youth League** to join their competition though there was much discussion and hesitation over the matter of the unsuitable changing arrangements. We assured them that those arrangements would be only temporary. Eventually, we managed to obtain a large former billiards room in the Welfare Hall for changing purposes. Occasionally, however, only a smaller room was available in the Hall so we offered that to visiting teams whilst our players had to climb a steep concrete staircase to a small projectionist's room which, until then, I hadn't known existed. It wasn't an ideal location to prepare for a football match.

We bought a set of strips and some footballs. I can't remember if we purchased goal nets and corner flags or borrowed them. We used an old line-marking machine to mark out the pitch. Where did it come from and where did it live? John's brother, Alan, who was playing at a high level of semi-professional football at

the time, assisted with the early training and coaching sessions. Apparently, goal nets, corner flags and line marker were loaned to the Juniors by the 'Bird Inn' football club which played on the Washington Welfare pitch on Sunday mornings. It seems that a deal was made that the equipment would be loaned if Alan would agree to play for the 'Bird Inn' team. Alan knew many of their players who had been trying to persuade him to join them for a considerable time. So, the deal was done!

We had decided, at the outset, that players would not be asked for subscriptions and we retained that philosophy throughout. We had good parental support so cars were always available to transport us to away matches.

Our first strip – red and white Manchester United style shirts, black shorts and black, red and white socks – turned out to be a mistake. We were running a youth team so we bought youth size kit. By the end of the first season, growing lads made the kit look decidedly 'skimpy' so men's sizes were obtained thereafter. We managed, however, to get our next kit free of charge by asking one of our players to write, on behalf of the club, to the



Prince's Trust. We got free new kit in following seasons – I didn't ask Albert or Arthur how this came about but was happy to participate in deciding on colour choices.

Finances were needed to pay league affiliation fees, cup competition fees, referees' fees and expenses, hire of changing facilities, insurance, etc. so fund raising activities were organised and Arthur, Albert and Keith were integral to the arrangements. Several Saturday evening 'Socials' were held at the Masonic Hall (including music and a meal – usually roast chicken, baked potato and mushy peas or pie and peas). Cleaning cutlery and utensils and tidying the premises on a Sunday morning was an unwelcome chore especially if you got to

clean the mushy peas container. Ceilidhs, which were popular at the time, took place in the dance hall of the Washington Welfare building. Such events were well supported by family and friends of players and officials and they enabled the club to continue to function financially.

On the playing side, training and coaching sessions took place on one evening each week pre-season and into the early weeks of the season as light permitted. Indoor facilities at Usworth Comprehensive School were, somehow, negotiated. All such sessions led to a steady improvement in the number of boys wanting to be involved and in the standard of football being played each year.



Players at Washington Welfare Hall

Below are summaries of each season from 1978/79 to 1982/83, with a table listing players, appearances and goals scored. They are based on the meticulous, handwritten records kept by John. Examples can be seen in the attached **appendix** and the end of this article.

After each match, each attending official selected their three 'men of the match' in a 1-2-3 order and wrote the names on a slip of paper. A 'tallying' procedure was held at season's end to determine the '**Player of the Year**'.

In the first season, **1978-79**, 19 league games were played, 2 were won, 2 drawn, 15 lost. 26 goals were scored, 80 conceded. 6 cup games were played with only one win and 5 defeats. 2 goals were scored, 20 conceded.

League matches were played against Whickham, Cleveland Hall, Wealcroft, Clarke Chapman, Swalwell, Pelton YC, Birtley St John's, Winlaton, Birtley RBL and Redheugh BC.

Cup matches were played against Highfield, Birtley St John's, Cleveland Hall and Clara Vale.

| Season 1978-79 | Appearances | Goals scored |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Sean Liddle | 4 | |
| Keith Mason | 16(+2assub) | |
| Graeme Southern | 19(+1s) | |
| Darryl Jordan | 13(+1s) | |
| Damien Astley | 10 | |
| Barry Rowland | 21 | 2 |
| Phil Little | 1 | |
| Peter Robertson | 17 | 5 |
| Garry Heads | 16 | 2 |
| Colin Lambert | 23(+1s) | 8 |
| Grahame Greener | 19(+2s) | 1 |
| Alan Morrow | 20(+2s) | |
| Paul Whitfield | 3(+2s) | 1 |
| Colin Engleby | 2 | |
| Ian Healer | 3 | |
| David Jonas | 9(+1s) | |
| Laurence Reay | 16(+1s) | |
| Trevor Middlemiss | 11(+1s) | 1 |
| David Fletcher | 19 | |
| Keith Jonas | 4(+3s) | 4 |
| Chris Langley | 1(+2s) | |
| Stephen Atkinson | (1s) | 1 |
| Ian Simpson | 3 | |
| Keith Allon | 7 | |
| Stephen Common | 5 | |
| Stuart Potter | 1(+2s) | |
| Colin Curtis | 6 | |
| Chris Goodfellow | 5 | |
| Own goal | | 1 |

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| Captain and Player of the Year: Barry Rowland |
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In season **1979-80**, 20 league games were played, 3 were won, 2 were drawn, 15 were lost. 31 goals were scored, 69 conceded. 16 cup matches resulted in 8 wins, 2 draws and 6 losses. 36 goals were scored, 34 conceded. The team reached two cup finals losing both to Redheugh Boys' Club. 3 friendly matches resulted in 1 win and 2 defeats.

League matches were played against Clarke Chapman, Cleveland Hall, Redheugh BC, Wealcroft, Pelton Fell, Swalwell, Whickham, Winlaton, Birtley St John's and West Hill.

Cup matches were played against Highfield, Clarke Chapman, Wealcroft, Winlaton. Lanchester, Dipton, Pelton Fell, McVities Sports, Clara Vale, Consett BSC and Redheugh BC.

Friendlies were played against Burnmoor, Wrekenton and a Sunderland AFC youth team.

| Season 1979-80 | Appearances | Goals scored |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Ian Simpson | 6 | |
| Ian Hollis | 35 | 2 |
| Alan Ball | 37 | 2 |
| Darryl Jordan | 1(+3s) | |
| Alan Morrow | 25(+4s) | 2 |
| Ian Charlton | 14(+1s) | 2 |
| Graeme Southern | 18(+1s) | 2 |
| Colin Lambert | 23(+3s) | 7 |
| Garry Heads | 32(+2s) | 7 |
| Grahame Greener | 8(+3s) | 4 |
| Alister Brown | 3(+2s) | |
| Laurence Reay | 20(+6s) | 1 |
| Keith Mason | 30(+2s) | 8 |
| Stephen Common | 13(+7s) | 4 |
| Jonathan Carnall | (2s) | |
| David Britton | 5(+1s) | |
| Keith Jonas | 18(+2s) | 17 |
| David Fletcher | 34 | |
| Colin Curtis | 11(+6) | 1 |
| Ralph Sterrick | 2 | |
| Peter Robertson | 29 | 4 |
| David Godbold | 10 | |
| Chris Langley | 1(+1s) | |
| Brian Carr | 14(+1s) | 9 |
| Andrew Armstrong | 16 | |
| Rodney Walker | 1(+4s) | 1 |
| Steven Walker | (1s) | |
| Colin Simpson | 3(+3s) | |

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| Captain: Garry Heads Player of the Year: David Fletcher |
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In season **1980-81**, 18 league games yielded 8 wins, 2 draws and 8 losses. 45 goals were scored, 31 conceded. 10 cup games resulted in 4 wins, 1 draw and 5 defeats with 31 goals being scored and 18 conceded. 2 cup semi-finals were lost.

League matches were played against Winlaton, Whickham, Swalwell, West Hill, Pelton Fell, Redheugh BC, Clarke Chapman, Cleveland Hall and Birtley St John's.

Cup matches were played against South Moor, West Hill, Beamish and West Stanley, Lanchester, Clarke Chapman, Clara Vale and Winlaton.

Friendlies were played against Wrekenton BB, Spen, a Newcastle United youth team and a Sunderland AFC youth team.

| Season 1980-81 | Appearances | Goals scored |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Barry Horton | 2(+1s) | |
| Keith Swan | 17(+4s) | 2 |
| Dave Williams | 6(+3s) | 1 |
| Colin Simpson | 26 | |
| David Fletcher | 31 | 2 |
| Ian Charlton | 28(+1s) | 7 |
| David Godbold | 27(+1s) | 11 |
| Colin Curtis | 8(+2s) | |
| Tony Smith | 4(+2s) | 5 |
| Royston Nixon | 2(+3s) | 3 |
| John Dodsworth | 29 | 1 |
| Steven Walker | 9(+8s) | |
| Andrew Armstrong | 26(+1s) | |
| Rodney Walker | 6(+5s) | 3 |
| Mark Fulcher | (2s) | |
| Steven Surtees | 2(+1s) | 1 |
| Martin Harrison(1) | (2s) | |
| Alan Steadman | 1(+1s) | |
| Gary Kendal | 25 | 1 |
| Ian Robson | 23(+1s) | 3 |
| Brian Carr | 26 | 7 |
| Colin Wynn | 24(+1s) | 31 |
| Derick Leonard | 24 | 1 |
| Barry Walton | 3(+1s) | 1 |
| Ralph Sterrick | (2s) | |
| Joe Allon | 3(+3s) | 3 |

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| Captain and Player of the Year: David Fletcher |
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In season **1981-82**, 18 league games were played, 8 were won, 2 drawn, 8 lost. 45 goals were scored, 32 conceded. A record almost identical to that of the previous season! 9 cup matches were played, 4 being won, 5 lost. 20 goals were scored, 23 conceded. Again, 2 cup semi-finals ended in defeat.

League matches were played against Cleveland Hall, Swalwell, Chester-le-Street, Redheugh BC, West Hill, Clarke Chapman, Birtley St John's, Winlaton and Whickham.

Cup matches were played against Redheugh BC, Clara Vale, Clarke Chapman, Whickham, Consett and South Moor.

Friendlies were played against Herrington CW, Shotley Bridge and a Newcastle United youth team.

| Season 1981-82 | Appearances | Goals scored |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Andrew Armstrong | 25 | |
| Ian Stephenson | 14(+1s) | |
| Colin Simpson | 28(+1s) | 1 |
| John Dodsworth | 25(+1s) | 2 |
| Stephen Smith | 6(+1s) | 1 |
| Steven Walker | 25 | 1 |
| Norman Dent | 2(+2s) | |
| Gary Kendal | 2 | |
| Ralph Sterrick | 16(+5s) | 4 |
| Jimmy Allison | 27(+1s) | 8 |
| Martin Harrison(2) | 26(+2s) | 14 |
| Martin Shotton | 27(+1s) | 1 |
| Rodney Walker | 1(+3s) | |
| Barry McGuire | (1s) | |
| Keith Swan | 28 | 2 |
| Steven Surtees | 8(+10s) | 1 |
| Mark Henderson | 4 | |
| Joe Allon | 10(+6s) | 15 |
| Gary Allison | 19(+1s) | 11 |
| Paul Trevor | (s) | |
| Ian Dawes | 18 | 4 |
| Gary Watson | 14(+3s) | 5 |
| Glen Hutchinson | 3(+1s) | |
| Keith Dawson | 1 | |
| Paul Noble | 1(+2s) | |
| David Sowerby | (3s) | 1 |
| Ronnie Monaghan | (1s) | |

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| Captain: Andrew Armstrong Player of the Year: Ian Dawes |
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In season **1982-83**, 19 league matches were played, 9 were won, 4 drawn, 6 lost. 53 goals were scored, 37 conceded. 23 cup games were played, 15 being won, 1 drawn, 7 lost. 86 goals were scored, 46 conceded. 2 cup semi-finals were lost whilst 3 cup finals resulted in narrow defeats including another to Redheugh Boys' Club. The team failed to score in only 3 matches including a friendly fixture against a Newcastle United youth team.

League matches were played against Redheugh BC, Chester-le-Street, Winlaton West End, Birtley YC, West Hill, Clarke Chapman, Swalwell, Herrington YMCA, Cleveland Hall and Whickham.

Cup matches were played against Whickham, Wearmouth CW, Crookhill, Consett RBL, Redheugh BC, Chester-le-Street, Consett AFC Juniors, West Hill, Highfield, Wrekenton BBOB, Shotley Bridge, South Moor and Herrington YMCA.

| Season 1982-83 | Appearances | Goals scored |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Ronnie Monaghan | 30 | |
| Barry McGuire | 25(+3s) | |
| Martin Shotton | 33(+2s) | 9 |
| Ian Dawes | 16(+2s) | 4 |
| David Storey | 10(+3s) | |
| Paul Noble | 39 | 4 |
| Kevin McCormack | 32(+1s) | 25 |
| Gary Allison | 38 | 34 |
| David Sowerby | 3 | 2 |
| Martin Harrison | 3 | |
| Kevin Smith | 29(+4s) | 10 |
| Tom Charlton | 32 | 1 |
| Alan Purdy | 15(+18s) | 4 |
| Willie Marshall | 4 | |
| Gary Hall | 12 | |
| Stephen Smith | 2(+2s) | 1 |
| Jim McCourt | 28(+1s) | 3 |
| Stewart Armstrong | 32(+2s) | 2 |
| Kevin Patterson | (1s) | |
| Ian Spanton | 2(+9s) | |
| Brian Kilford | 18(+1s) | 4 |
| Martin Waggott | 23(+2s) | 5 |
| Ian Campbell | 11(+4s) | 1 |
| Darren Melville | 14(+1s) | 8 |
| Joe Allon | 10(+1s) | 17 |
| Own goals | | 2 |

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| Captains: Ian Dawes and, in his absence, Gary Allison Player of the Year: Martin Shotton |
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Those three cup finals were played in 6 days! In all 9 games were played in 15 days in a frantic end of season rush. We had the feeling that there was some grudge over our success in reaching three finals so we were given no say in when the finals were to be played!

May 15th 1983. Wanless Cup Final on Birtley Welfare ground.

South Moor 5 Washington 1

Team : Monaghan; Charlton, Noble, Shotton, Armstrong; Melville; McCourt, Dawes (sub. Waggott), Allison; Kilford, Allon.

Washington goalscorer: **Allison**

May 19th 1983. League Cup Final on Herrington CW ground.

Herrington YMCA 2 Washington 1

Team : Monaghan; Charlton, Noble (sub Melville), Shotton, Armstrong; McCourt, McGuire (sub Dawes), Kilford, Allison; Allon, McCormack.

Washington goalscorer: **Allison**

May 20th 1983. Association Cup Final at Gateshead Stadium.

Redheugh 3 Washington 1

Team : Monaghan; Charlton (sub Allon), Noble (sub McCormack), Dawes, Shotton, Armstrong; Melville, McCourt, Kilford; Allison, Waggott.

Washington goalscorer: **Allison**



Note : the poster shows the date 2nd May but the game was played on 20th May

The North Durham Youth League was affiliated to the **Gateshead and District Youth FA** and, each year, clubs could nominate players to participate in trial matches with a view to representing Gateshead Youth FA in a county competition. The following Washington N.T. Juniors players were selected: in 1980-81 – **David Fletcher** and **David Godbold**, in 1981-82 – **Andrew Armstrong** and **Colin Simpson**, and in 1982-83 – **Ian Dawes** and **Kevin McCormack**.

In 1981-82 and 1982-83, **Ian Dawes** was selected to represent Durham County Schools' FA and England Schools' FA.

Andrew Armstrong was selected to represent Durham County Youth FA in 1981-82 and **Darren Melville** was selected in 1982-83.

Many good young footballers played for Washington New Town Juniors but, I suppose, prolific goal scorers merit a mention. **Gary Allison** scored 45 goals in 58 appearances over two seasons – 1981 to '83; **Colin Wynn** scored 31 goals in 25 appearances in 1980-81; **Kevin McCormack** scored 25 goals in 33 appearances in 1982-83.

Joe Allon scored 35 goals in 23 appearances (plus 10 as a substitute) in three seasons – 1980 to 1983. He had started in my Donwell Primary School team. Joe signed and played for Newcastle United and, later, for Swansea, Hartlepool, Chelsea, Brentford, Lincoln and Port Vale. Joe and Paul Gascoigne played in the same Newcastle team, coached by John's brother Colin Suggett, which won the FA Youth Cup in 1985.

Ian Dawes joined Newcastle United then left for a career with the police. **Darren Melville** and **Brian**



Joe Allon

Kilford were part of the Newcastle United youth system.

Lots of young players represented the club for more than one season. **David Fletcher** made 84 appearances over three seasons. **Gary Allison** (58), **Colin Simpson** (55), **John Dodsworth** (55), **Andrew Armstrong** (51) and **Keith Swan** (49) played for two seasons.

A referee, who regularly officiated in 'our league', was invited to the final league meeting of the 1981-82 season. Every club had to be represented at these meetings! He conveyed how he'd particularly enjoyed refereeing a cup semi-final in which South Moor had beaten Washington New Town by 4 goals to 3 after extra-time. He praised the players of both teams for their high standards of skill and sportsmanship. It was music to my ears because those are the qualities we encouraged at all times.

John Suggett. July 2021

John accepted a job in Nottinghamshire starting in September 1983 so his connection with the club ended and he is not aware of further records being kept during its brief existence after that year.

*We have not been able to trace any **photographs** of the teams or games or any **press reports**. The History Society would be very interested in hearing from anyone who has any memories or memorabilia from that time. Please contact us on: washingtonhistorysoc@gmail.com*

Appendix

John Suggett's handwritten records showing games, results, players and positions

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