



SOUTHEND UNITED EX-PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

Supported by Southend United F.C. and The Shrimpers Trust

NEWSLETTER – Issue 08 – February 2020

WELCOME

Welcome to our eighth Newsletter, issued exclusively to you, our SUEPA members. The last one was distributed in November, since which we've been busy making plenty of preparations for matters coming up, so it's time for an update.

Not everything it's fair to say has quite gone to plan, and we've also had some sad news which we reflect on later in this newsletter, but SUEPA does continue to go from strength to strength and interesting times are ahead.

In this Newsletter we cover:

- Membership update, where we highlight who has recently joined;
- Our SUEPA events on 14 December and 1 February;
- Our 'Quickfire Five' Q&A, this time with Mark Hone (our guest on 1 February) and Gary Jones (ahead of his visit to Roots Hall later this month) being under the SUEPA spotlight;
- The Southend United Hall of Fame Evening – an update;
- Current schedule of SUEPA Match Day Events for the remainder of the 2019/20 season;
- Remembering Frank Mathews and Chris Barker;
- The team of the decade – SUEPA members dominate!
- A reminder of how to keep up to date with SUEPA news and how to contact us;
- The full current SUEPA membership list.

Please read on, we hope you enjoy this edition and, as always, your ideas and comments will be gratefully received.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership up again – and SUEPA quick off the mark!

We are now up to 214 members, just seven having joined since our last newsletter but it has been a time when focus has been more on SUEPA event organising, and efforts are now returning to continuing to growing our membership. Indeed, we've set a target of 250 by the end of 2020 so let's see how that goes!

Sadly we have lost one member recently - Frank Mathews - and we pay tribute to Frank later.

NEWSLETTER –Issue 08 – February 2020

We start with our most recent recruit. On 1 February for the visit of Lincoln we had in mind that the Imps had more than one ex-Shrimper in their ranks. Two were in the starting eleven so a little more difficult to approach but one, Jack Payne, was on the subs bench so a quick word was had and Jack duly agreed to join us. Jack was a former Young Player of the Year and also our leading scorer for the 2015/16 season.

We were certainly quick off the mark with one of our latest joiners. Four hours after the club announcing that Simon Cox was leaving for pastures new in Australia we had him signed up for SUEPA!



It was a signature we just had to get – Simon has been our leading scorer for the last three seasons and with Southend United scoring chart-toppers Jim Fryatt, Ken Jones, Mike Beesley, Billy Best, Bill Garner, Chris Guthrie, Stuart Brace, Peter Silvester, Stuart Parker, Derrick Parker, Derick Spence, Keith Mercer, Glenn Pennyfather,

David Crown, Brett Angell, Stan Collmore, Ricky Otto, Gary Jones, Andy Rammell, Martin Carruthers, David Lee, Freddy Eastwood, Nicky Bailey, Lee Barnard Ryan Hall, Barry Corr and now Jack Payne already part of SUEPA (phew – what a list!) we were thrilled to have Simon get in touch so quickly. We wish him well in his down-under adventure.

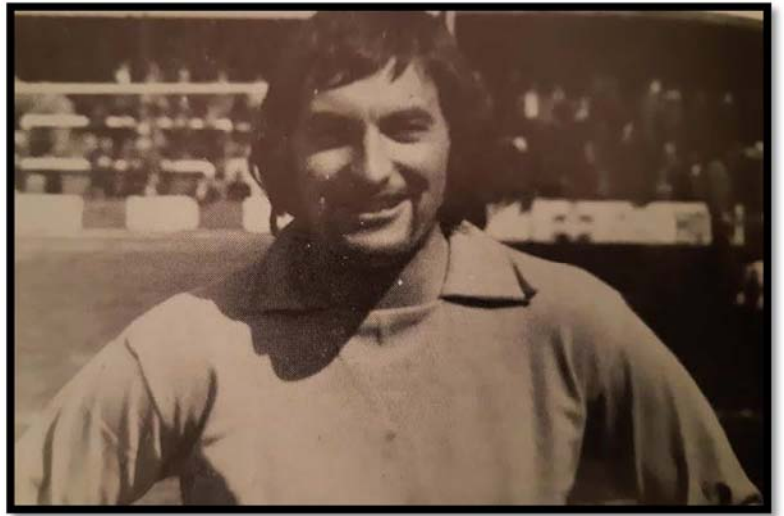
Now, we've a few still missing from this leading scorer list – Stevie Phillips, Leon Constantine and Richard Cadette among them - where are they, anyone know?!

Two of our joiners take us back to the '60's. Regularly linking up with other former player associations, we found out that Tony Beanland was a member of the Southport ex-players group and got in touch. Tony's time at Roots Hall stands out on his footballing CV as a bit of a southern blip in a career otherwise focused in the North West. Speaking to Tony recently it seems his mind was made up for him by then Southport manager Billy Bingham who first told him of our then manager Alvan Williams's interest and then when he said to Billy a day later that he was still thinking it over was promptly told that Southport had already agreed a fee of £5,000 which they had just spent on bringing in former Shrimper (and SUEPA member) Jim Fryatt so he had to go!

We also had a nice chat with our other recent '60's joiner Owen Simpson who since hanging up his boots has settled in the Humberside area. We had been trying to track Owen down for some time having seen his picture in an old Grimsby Town line-up posted on Facebook, but it was SUEPA member Dave Worthington that finally hooked us up with him having spoken to Owen on Dave's latest trip back to the UK.

NEWSLETTER –Issue 08 – February 2020

Humberstone is the home of a few Shrimpers it seems as a catch up with our friends at the Lincoln City Former Players Association led us to getting in touch with Dennis Booth who of course was a near ever-present in his two years at Roots Hall in the early '70's before transferring to Lincoln City. Dennis lives not too far from Sincil Bank so if we can't get him back to Roots Hall one day we might well catch up with him next time Southend play up there and hook up with our Lincoln FPA friends at the same time.



A very recent recruit lives a little further afield - Germany! Lars Unger came to us on loan from Fortuna Dusseldorf - not perhaps the most common of hunting grounds for Southend United scouts - in the second half of the 98/99 season. Still connected with his first club Werder Bremen, and us knowing that a Southend supporter also now has the somewhat rare pastime of regularly travelling from Essex to watch Werder Bremen (it takes all sorts!) we've put them in touch and are hoping to get a picture of them catching up for a beer soon at a Werder home fixture - we'll include it in our next newsletter if we get it!



Last but not least, adding to our SUEPA managerial team we were delighted to get Paul Sturrock's agreement to join us. Widely held as the club's saviour in 2010, Luggy was a true gent in his departure three years later as he sat in the crowd watching 'his Shrimpers' under new management in our first ever final at Wembley. Well known to be battling health problems now, we wish him well and if Paul you are ever able to return to Roots Hall we'll guarantee there won't be a seat un-tipped to welcome you back on the hallowed turf.

NEWSLETTER –Issue 08 – February 2020

SUEPA EVENTS

A Family Day Out!

Back on December 14th for the visit of Rotherham our former shot-stopper Mel Capleton returned to his first club and where, after a five-year gap after first leaving, he then came back to keep watch between the sticks for us at the turn of the millennium.

Mel loved his afternoon back with us, making it a real family day out in bringing his wife and two daughters, the youngest of which at just three weeks old will perhaps forever hold the record of being the youngest ever SUEPA guest!



NEWSLETTER –Issue 08 – February 2020

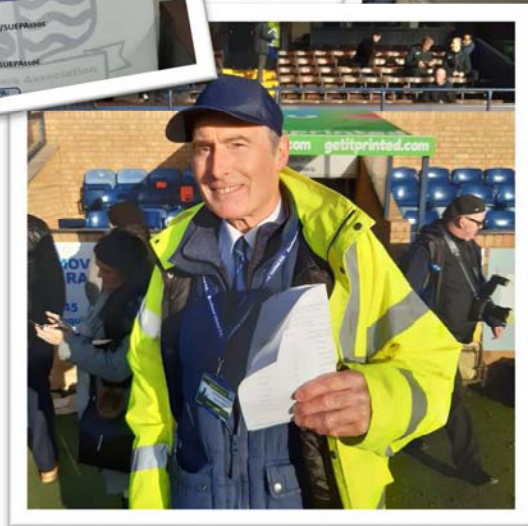
Back to the 90's

It was lovely to have Mark Hone and his wife Toni as our guests for the match v Lincoln City on February 1st. Mark is also a former Imp and a current match day summariser for BBC Lincs covering the local non-league scene so it was perhaps strange for someone with a foot in both camps to witness the first Southend United home win of the 2019/20 season.

The match day summariser for Lincoln games is our former manager Steve Thompson so we were delighted to also prise him out of the commentary box and have a quick catch up over a beer or two after the match. We think Steve was quite pleased to be informed that he remains to this day the most successful ever manager in Southend United's history in win-ratio terms!

We also caught up again with our former centre-half Neil Townsend too who was visiting with friends to celebrate his 70th birthday at the place where he had so many magnificent games in a Shrimpers shirt.

Finally, in a busy SUEPA day we also had a quick chat with Tony Hafford who we reported on in our last edition. Undertaking his usual Roots Hall stewarding duties, Tony is pictured below with a copy of an old team sheet from 1969 when he featured in a reserves match with fellow SUEPA members Dave Barnett, Eddie Clayton and John Baber.



NEWSLETTER –Issue 08 – February 2020

QUICKFIRE 5!

We plan to issue out requests from time to time asking you if you could respond to a set five questions which we will then include in a future Newsletter. Don't feel too relieved if you have not had an email from us yet, we will get to you at some stage

This time we are delighted to have mid-90's and former team-mates Mark Hone (1994-96) and Gary Jones (1993-96) respond to our usual five questions.

First, over to you **Mark**

1. *Who had the biggest influence on your playing career at Roots Hall and why?*

Peter Taylor was the manager that signed me from Welling United and was the biggest influence. I loved his training sessions, he was so positive in everything he said to me and he picked me in the team which obviously helped!

2. *Who was the biggest character you played with and why did they stand out?*

In terms of characters there were so many Graham Bressington, Phil Gridlet, Ricky Otto, Mick Bodley, Mike Marsh, and Andy Ansah to name but a few.

3. *Who would you say was the best player you saw in a Southend shirt during your time at the club and what made them so special?*

Best player was Chris Powell. We were team-mates at Crystal Palace and we also travelled in together when I signed at Southend. His development at Southend was obvious and phenomenal from the young lad I knew at Palace. He was class defensively and going forward was a class lad as well.

4. *Can you tell us any funny stories from your playing days either whilst at Southend or elsewhere?*

Whilst at Southend then only one I can say was Peter Taylor who can do a fantastic impression of Norman Wisdom and he used to bring this out every so often mainly when we were staying overnight and in a hotel foyer!

Whilst at Lincoln City the team I played in were nicknamed the 'Crazy Gang No. 2'. On my 30th birthday I was getting over an operation and about to go training, the physio at the time asked me to come in and lay on the treatment table just to check me over before going out training. Once I had done this and laid down the lads ran in and pinned me down on the table. I was then strapped to the treatment table with duck-tape, smeared with boot polish everywhere, vaseline put in my hair and then picked up whilst on the table and put outside into the car park where I was left there whilst they all went off to training. It was 15 minutes later, after seeing the club office workers going into the ground and several delivery drivers laughing at me, before the then chairman John Reames arrived at the ground, saw me and ordered assistant manager Shane Westley to get me off the table and to training!

5. *What did you do after hanging up your playing boots and do you ever get back to Roots Hall to see a game?*

I left football and became a probation officer. Which I am still doing to this day.



NEWSLETTER – Issue 08 – February 2020

I coached at Lincoln City's centre of excellence for eight years and spent six months helping with their youth team up until a few years ago when I then started to report and summarise on local games for BBC Radio Lincs.

Next up, **Gary**

1. *Who had the biggest influence on your playing career at Roots Hall and why?*

Barry Fry because he bought me from non-league football and I went straight to playing championship football (or old division one). He gave me my big chance in league football.

2. *Who was the biggest character you played with and why did they stand out?*

Biggest character at the time I was there was probably Ricky Otto, a proper lad from London!

3. *Who would you say was the best player you saw in a Southend shirt during your time at the club and what made them so special?*

Only one for me is the legend Ronnie Whelan, a class act and it was an honour to be on same field.

4. *Can you tell us any funny stories from your playing days either whilst at Southend or elsewhere?*

One story from when I won a championship medal at Notts County under Sam Allardyce. We went on end of season trip to Marbella, Big Sam was forever on his phone so one day when we had a few beers at Puerto Banus Shaun Farrell grabbed his phone and threw it in the harbour. The lads couldn't believe it. And we then all cautiously looked at Big Sam's face only to see him start laughing so it all ended well!

5. *What did you do after hanging up your playing boots and do you ever get back to Roots Hall to see a game?*

My last league club was Halifax Town. Unfortunately, the club was relegated and put into administration. I've not been back to watch Southend since I left - last time I was there to play was with Hartlepool when I remember going back to defend a corner and someone threw a toilet roll at me, all good fun!



THE SOUTHEND UNITED FC HALL OF FAME EVENING – AN UPDATE

You may recall from our last Newsletter that we were working with the club to help put on the first ever Southend United Hall of Fame evening during November.

We were very much looking forward to this and preparations were well-advanced. Unfortunately, however, the club decided to cancel the event a week before it was to be held due to poor ticket sales, the clubs poor form at the time being understood to be a key reason behind the unexpected reduced interest.

NEWSLETTER –Issue 08 – February 2020

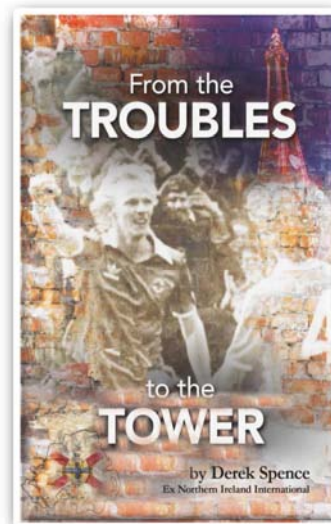
This was certainly disappointing, a lot of effort had been put in by a number of people to organise and publicise the event which was going to be a true celebration of the club's past. However, all is not lost as a new date for the event of Friday 10 July 2020 has now been earmarked to hold it on. A similar format involving the Hall of Fame and live music is intended, and this time it is hoped that a revised catering arrangement and reduced ticket price will generate much increased interest. Maybe some glorious summer weather on the eve of the Euro 2020 final will help too!

We remain convinced that the event will be a great one and look forward to working with the club on this to make it a success. Further details will be publicised via the usual media channels nearer the time.

SUEPA MATCH DAY EVENTS FOR THE REST OF THE SEASON

Our event schedule for the remainder of the season has now been finalised, as follows:

- Saturday February 15th v Coventry City: postponed from January 4th due to Gillingham's FA Cup commitments, our guest for this one will be Scott Forbes. Scott is looking to make a bit of a party of the day having purchased additional tickets so a number of his friends can join him on his return to Roots Hall!
- Saturday February 22nd v Burton: Gary Jones is coming to this one and will be bringing his young daughter to watch her first ever football match!
- Saturday March 7th v Bristol Rovers: we are looking to make this a 1960's themed event with Mike Beesley, Peter Hunt and Derek Tharme coming along so far and with others we hope being able to join them.
- Saturday March 21st v Bolton: Derek Spence, who has recently published his autobiography 'From the Troubles to the Tower' will be coming along. His book really is a great read, and it's not often that a former Shrimper puts pen to paper to tell their life story. If you want to join Derek on the day just let us know, he might appreciate some help in the club shop before kick-off as he'll be bringing a few copies with him! Alternatively, the book is available on Amazon, just type in Derek's name on the Amazon search box and you'll see a link to it.



It is now intended that the 1970's themed event match day mentioned in our last Newsletter will be held at the start of next season.

If you are interested in attending any game at Roots Hall as our guest please do get in touch. We are not able to run a SUEPA event at every match but will be pleased to see if we can accommodate you and do what we can to make your trip back to Roots Hall a memorable one.

NEWSLETTER –Issue 08 – February 2020

REMEMBERING FRANK MATTHEWS AND CHRIS BARKER

It is with great sadness that we have recently learned of the deaths of two former Shrimpers.

Frank Mathews holds a special place in SUEPA hearts as he attended our first ever SUEPA match day event (with former team-mate David Allaway) back in March 2018. Frank leaves behind his wife Kay and a loving family who will miss him deeply. We know that some Southend fans attended Frank's funeral and one presented Kay with a copy of a picture of Frank when he had to turn out as an emergency goalkeeper for us, a picture she had never seen before and was pleased to receive.

There have been many worthy tributes already to Chris Barker whose sad passing at the oh so young age of just 39 is just tragic. He was a man who played with heart and was a genuine good guy. SUEPA, of course, aims to re-connect former players with each other, the club and the fans, and we had only recently contacted Chris to see if he would like to join our ever-growing group. Sadly now we will not get the opportunity to be in touch with him once more, but his passing makes us more determined than ever to re-connect with as many of our former players as possible and continue to show them our appreciation in whatever way we can of their time at Southend United.

It just remains for now to say, Frank, and Chris, you were both great Shrimpers, may you RIP.



THE SOUTHEND UNITED TEAM OF THE DECADE

Some of you may well have been following this.

The local Southend newspaper The Echo ran a poll to identify the Southend United team of the last decade. After receiving over 16,000 votes the team was recently revealed:



Shrimpers fans were asked to pick their favourite player in each position to have lined up for Southend United from the start of 2010 to the end of last year – two still play for the Shrimpers but of the remainder we are pleased to say that seven, Daniel Bentley, our President Adam Barrett, Ryan Hall, Ryan Leonard, Michael Timlin, Simon Cox and Barry Corr are SUEPA members. Congratulations to you all, and well done also to The Echo’s Chris Phillips for running the poll, who continues to show his love for the history of the club as well as reporting on all things Shrimper week in week out.

That just leaves Bilel Moshni, Ben Coker and manager Phil Brown to track down – we are on the case!

NEWSLETTER –Issue 08 – February 2020

FOLLOWING AND CONTACTING SUEPA

We will continue to issue regular Newsletters – our next one is scheduled to be issued at the end of the current 2019/20 season.

We do have a SUEPA Twitter page (*currently 1,379 followers*) and a SUEPA Facebook page (*currently 879 followers*) on which we post up details of new joiners and any other news, so if you wish to see what is happening on a more frequent basis please do 'follow' us:

On Twitter: [@SUEPAssoc](https://twitter.com/SUEPAssoc)

On Facebook: www.facebook.com/SUEPAssoc

You can then use either of these social media outlets to send us a private message, or you can contact us via email as follows:

Email address: suepassoc@gmail.com

Alternatively, we can be reached by post at SUEPA c/o The Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 9FD

THE FULL SUEPA SQUAD TO-DATE

GOALKEEPERS

Terry Alderton, Cameron Belford, Daniel Bentley, Derek Bellotti, John Burridge, Mel Capleton, Mervyn Cawston, Steve Collis, Darryl Flahavan, Neil Freeman, Peter Goy, Bart Griemink, Tony Hafford, Ian Joyce, John Keeley, Alan Meyer, Steve Mildenhall, Jon O'Brien, Sean Rafter, Paul Sansome, Neville Southall and Jim Stannard.

DEFENDERS

Frankie Banks, Dave Barnett, Adam Barrett, Mark Beard, Tony Bentley, Paul Brush, Guy Butters, Peter Clarke, Graham Coughlan, Ryan Creswell, Dave Cusack, Andy Dixon, Phil Dudley, Andy Edwards, Derek Ewing, Tony Hadley, Steven Hammell, Andy Harris, Steve Hatter, Johnny Herd, Mark Hone, Lewis Hunt, Christian Hyslop, Duncan Jupp, Warren May, David McSweeney, Tamika Mkandawire, Alan Moody, David Morley, Danny O'Shea, Mark Phillips, Chris Powell, Spencer Prior, Chris Ramsey, Leo Roget, Osei Sankofa, Pat Scully, Damon Searle, Owen Simpson, Alex Smith, Efe Sodje, Michael Spillane, Mark Stimson, Derek Tharme, Adam Thompson, Neil Townsend, John Walker, Shane Westley, Che Wilson, Bob Worthington, Dave Worthington, Micky Wright and Dave Young.

NEWSLETTER –Issue 08 – February 2020

MIDFIELDERS

Andy Ansah, Will Atkinson, John Baber, Nicky Bailey, Tony Beanland, Mark Bentley, Dennis Booth, Jack Bridge, Peter Butler, Paul Byrne, Paul Clark, Adrian Clarke, Eddie Clayton, Jason Cook, Jimmy Corbett, Willie Coulson, Dave Cunningham, Peter Daley, Alan Dicks, Craig Easton, Dave Elliott, Gerry Fell, Scott Forbes, Mark Gower, Phil Gridelet, Luke Guttridge, John Gymer, Julian Hails, Derek Hall, Mark Hall, Ryan Hall, Scott Houghton, Jeff Hull, Peter Hunt, Carl Hutchings, Neil Jenkins, Leon Johnson, Terry Johnson, Bobby Kellard, Danny Kerrigan, Micky Laverick, David Lee, Ryan Leonard, Alan Little, Martin Ling, Adam Locke, Kevin Maher, Mike Marsh, Dave Martin, Alan McCormack, Colin Morris, Franck Moussa, Garry Nelson, Terry Nicholl, John Nielsen, Iain O'Connell, Ricky Otto, Anton Outulakowski, Adrian Owers, Carl Pettefer, Glenn Pennyfather, Declan Perkins, Ron Pountney, Ken Reynolds, Damien Scannell, Malcolm Slater, Nicky Smith, Paul Smith, Jamie Southon, Peter Taylor, Stuart Thurgood, Steve Tilson, Michael Timlin, Lars Unger, Sanchez Watt, Alex Woodyard and Anthony Wordsworth.

STRIKERS

Ben Abbey, Peter Abbott, Charles Ademenio, Brett Angell, David Allaway, Lee Barnard, Mike Beesley, Ian Benjamin, Gary Bennett, Billy Best, Stuart Brace, Lee Bradbury, Drewe Broughton, Stan Collymore, Barry Corr, Simon Cox, Harry Crawford, David Crown, Martin Curruthers, Liam Dickinson, Dickie Dowsett, Lawrie Dudfield, Freddie Eastwood, Colin Flatt, Jim Fryatt, Paul Furlong, Bill Garner, Terry Gray, Wayne Gray, Danny Greaves, Chris Guthrie, Gary Jones, Ken Jones, Francis Laurent, Jason Lee, John Linford, Roy McDonough, Keith Mercer, David Mooney, Gary Moore, Lee Nogan, Derrick Parker, Stuart Parker, Matt Paterson, Jack Payne, Billy Paynter, Joe Piggot, Andy Rammell, Morriss Scott, Peter Silvester, Derek Spence, Blair Sturrock, Andy Thomson, Neil Tolson and James Walker.

COACHING / BACKROOM

Micky Buxton, Buster Footman, Barry Fry, Steve Parmenter, Dave Smith. Paul Sturrock and Steve Thompson.

