

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 7 Iss. 06. – July 2012

THE INTRODUCTION – Paul FitzGerald

Ssshh!

Not too much noise please I'm trying to concentrate on something other than football for a few weeks!

It seems an age now since our club did not do themselves proud in the play offs and with the same old story following our national team, I am now desperately trying to find any sport with some success that I can support....Fortunately there are a few coming up over the next few weeks and as I work in Ireland most weeks, I claim dual nationality just in case the British Open throws up an winner from the Emerald Isle.....

Which brings me on to pre-season....



News from the club had been sparse with the only real definite being departures and the fixture list. I'd like to pick out Anthony Grant from the list of players leaving us – not everyone's favourite but he put in some fine performances for us during his stay and was of course the last remaining player from the debacle of unpaid wages from a few years back. I wish him well for the remainder of his career.

However a little movement on the news front recently with Kit, Player and Pre-season Tour announcements suddenly arriving like red busses it will be interesting to hear the reasoning behind some of this.

Talking of which our next Liaison meeting is due next week, and not before time, as news of finances, pre-season and Fossetts Farm has been hard to come by.

Some of you may know that the Government has been putting pressure on the football authorities, to improve the way they run the game in our country. This has come about through pressure from groups such as Supporters Direct. The Trust is a member of the Supporters direct group and did take part in the submissions to the government, which lead to the white paper produced, The FA and Football league have now responded to this proposal and once again we have been asked to respond to that.

If anyone is interested in the proposals follow this link (<http://www.thefa.com/TheFA/NewsAndFeatures/2012/~ /media/Files/PDF/TheFA/Final-Response-DCMS.ashx>) and more importantly, if any supporter out there would like to take part in our response, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Following on from our concerns over current levels of fund raising, the committee have spent some time discussing this year's planned expenditure. We have decided that with the budget laid out that we can just about afford another year of Youth Sponsorship and are therefore delighted to once again tie up with Ricky and his youth setup. There were other calls for your money, but after much discussion amongst the committee and the club we have decided to continue with the Youth Sponsorship.

At committee we also approved expenditure on a replacement drum for The Blue Voice. An odd request at first sight - however any regular attendees at the Hall and indeed many away games can't fail to notice/appreciate the improved atmosphere when the drum is played. Sadly said drum takes a bit of a beating....and is in need of replacement!

So to combat this downward trend of income we are re-doubling our efforts to raise funds and you will see included in your "pack" a couple of pre-season draw tickets and a 5p collection card (details below) we would really appreciate it if



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you could help us make the pre-season draw an early success so that we can continue and improve our financial support of the club.

And finally, welcome back Brian Wheeler as Commercial Sales Director.

If you have any comments about anything to do with the Trust why not come to see us at MTBD on Sunday July 15th or failing that as ever you can contact me on pfitz666@aol.com

WIN A PAIR OF 2012/13 SUFC SEASON TICKETS

Not renewed your Season Ticket yet? Or want to bring a family member or friend to matches with you?

Well now's your chance to do so for just **£1.00**

The Trust is raffling a **pair** of 2012/13 Season Tickets to raise funds and the cost of each ticket is just £1.00.

2nd prize is a Day Trip for Two to Brugge (or a Day Trip in the UK to the equivalent value) donated by East London Travel part of the SBC Leisure Group, and the **3rd** Prize is a Bottle of Bubbly.



Tickets are in the process of being mailed out to all Members and will also be on sale at this year's MTBD on Sunday 15th July. They will also be available from the Trust information stand in the Shrimpers Bar prior to the Pre-Season Friendlies vs. West Ham, Ipswich, Millwall and Tottenham, the Capital One Cup Match vs. Peterborough on Tuesday 15th August and the League Game vs. Accrington on Saturday 18th August. The draw will take place at half-time during the Accrington Match on the 18th August.

Tickets can be returned to the Trust at MTBD or any of the above Matches, alternatively they can be posted to **Pre- Season Draw, The Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS1 9FD** or to the Promoters Address printed on the ticket. **Cheques made payable to The Shrimpers Trust.**

If you require any further information or more tickets please contact **Alan Perry on Tel: 01702 476458 or by email: alanperry4@hotmail.com.**

Please note that there is no cash alternative for this draw.

5P COLLECTION CARD FUNDRAISER



With this newsletter you will find enclosed a 5p Collection Card.

This is a new Fundraising Initiative that the Trust has started to help raise funds to continue our on-going support of the SUFC Youth Team.

All you need to do is stick your spare 5p coins on the card (sellotape will do) and return it to the us either to the Trust Info Stand in the Shrimpers Bar or by post to **The Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS1 9FD**

WELCOME ABOARD

With the new season approaching, Paul Sturrock has already been busy delving into the transfer market by capturing the signings of Gavin Tomlin, Kevan Hurst, Anthony Straker and Ryan Cresswell, subject to a medical.

For those of you who have not had a chance to have a look yet or have never heard of these players ...

Anthony Straker is a former Aldershot Town defender, he has signed on a two year deal. He has represented England at U-18 level but is now a full international for Grenada.



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Gavin Tomlin was one of the worst kept secrets in this year's transfer market and is a much needed forward. Last term he was a Gill and scored 6 goals from 9 starts including one against our beloved team.

Paul Sturrock has indicated these players will add some pace, so I look forward to seeing some more electricity in the side at the start of next season.

Kevan Hurst is a winger. We seem to have love hate relationships with our wide men, so it will be interesting to see the verdict from the Roots Hall faithful on Mr. Hurst. At 26 he has already made 279 career appearances netting 25 goals.

At the final signing so far ... Ryan Cresswell, a strong defender, who will provide competition for Mark Phillips and Chris Barker. It was clear last season when Phillips went out of the side or was unfit, the team struggled, so hopefully this will increase our chances next term.

With new signings come departures, and we would like to take this opportunity to wish Anthony Grant the best of luck at his new club Stevenage.

We can all continue to keep our fingers crossed that Freddy Eastwood will take a pay cut and decide to continue with the Blues, however, as time moves on this looks more and more unlikely.

MEET THE BLUES DAY – SUNDAY JULY 15th

The Shrimpers Trust will once again be in attendance at this year's MTBD which is being held at the Blue's Training Ground, Boots & Laces on Sunday 15th July where TOWIE star Mark Wright and his Essex United side will be playing a team made up of SUFC Legends including Mark Bentley, Duncan Jupp, Adrian Clarke and David Lee.



The whole Blue's 1st Team Squad will be in attendance and they will be signing autographs in the Trust marquee after their training session.

We will be selling our full range of merchandise from the marquee and will also be taking New and Renewal Memberships along with Away Travel Bookings for Peterborough and Oxford Games.

We will also be selling our Pre-Season Draw Tickets (see above) and will have all our other fundraising forms available.

MTBD will also see the Blue's new home and away kits go on sale, and there will also be coaching sessions, a 5-a-side completion and a penalty shoot-out completion for the supporters to take part in.

BC WORLDWIDE CHALLENGE – UNDER 18's TOURNAMENT

Roots Hall will host the BC Worldwide Challenge tournament in July this year.



Southend United's successful under 18's tournament will once again take place this year over the weekend of 21st and 22nd July.

Confirmed attendees of the BC Worldwide Challenge tournament are Norwich City, Millwall and Colchester United.

The four team competition will see Norwich face Millwall in the first match, whilst SUFC's youth team, who are the current holders of the trophy after beating Norwich in the final last year, will take on Colchester in the 2nd match on the Saturday.

A third and fourth place play-off along with the final will be held on the Sunday.

Matches on both the Saturday and Sunday kick off at 11.00am and 3pm respectively.

Tickets are priced at £7.50 for an adult for both days or £5.00 for either day, with childrens tickets priced at just £1.00 per day.

FORTHCOMING FUNDRAISERS

CHINESE NIGHT

Monday 20th August 2012
East, 33 Alexandra Street, Southend on Sea

7.30pm for an 8.00pm meal
£15.00 – All You Can Eat Buffet

For further details contact Alan Perry (01702 476458 or alanperry4@hotmail.com)



QUIZ NIGHT

Saturday 1st September 2012
The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall

The Shrimpers Trust will be holding their first Quiz Night of the Season in the Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall on Saturday 1st September 2012.

The doors open at 7.00pm with commencement of the quiz at **7.30pm sharp**.
The cost will be £10.00 for adults and £6.00 for under 16's.

Included in the price will be a choice from 5 meals (*Chicken & Chips, Chicken Nuggets & Chips, Sausage & Chips, Fish & Chips or Vegetarian Spring Roll & Chips*). The meals are provided by the Fish House and will be served at around 8.45pm.

Ideally we need tables of 8, but if you would be happy to join others who will come in parties of less than 8 please let us know.

For further details or to book a table contact Alan Perry (01702 476458 or alanperry4@hotmail.com)



BOWLING WITH THE BLUES

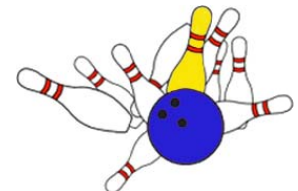
Monday 24th September 2012
1st Bowl, The Kursaal, Eastern Esplanade, Southend on Sea
7.00pm for a 7.15pm start

The Shrimpers Trust will be holding a Bowling Evening with the 'BLUES' at the Kursaal Bowl on Monday 24th September 2012.

Members of the Southend United 1st Team Squad will be joining in the fun and during the evening you will get the chance to win a bottle of bubbly if you score a strike when the randomly positioned 'GOLDEN' pin is the head pin on your lane.

The cost will be £11 per person which includes three games of Bowling plus your shoe hire.

For further details contact Alan Perry (01702 476458 or alanperry4@hotmail.com)



FUNDRAISING

100 Club

The latest winners in the scheme, pulled out of the hat during weekly draws since the last newsletter were Paul Manning, John Freemantle, Andrew Haddow, Matt Eva, Clare Brooks, Paul FitzGerald, John Smith, Neil Whitehead, Teresa Perry, Roy Rice, Richard Coxell, Rick Napper, Danny Collins, Mike Smith and Trevor Reynolds, each winning around £28.00.

The nature of the 100 Club means the more people that sign up, then the bigger the weekly prize. To register your interest, you can still contact Alan Perry at alanperry4@hotmail.com or by calling 01702 476458 and put yourself in with a chance of winning the weekly prize. Remember, the more people that sign up to the scheme, then the higher that prize will be. By setting up a standing order for just £5 a month (or just £60 a year), you put yourself in with a chance of winning around £28.00 per week at the present time.

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Quid-a-Goal

Our Quid A Goal scheme is now up and running for the 2012/13 Season.

The aim of the scheme - like most of the Shrimpers Trust's activities is to raise money for Southend United Football Club and make sure that there is a club for us to be supporting in the foreseeable future. In particular, some of the money raised from this Season's "Quid a Goal" scheme will be donated to the Southend United Centre of Excellence, in particular to the Under 18's as part of our on-going support for SUFC's Youth Team.

If you would like to help raise funds for this worthy cause you can do so by completing the QAG Entry Form that has been enclosed with this newsletter and returning it to us at MTBD or at the Trust Info Stand in the Shrimpers Bar prior to any Home Match. Alternatively you can post the form back to us at the address listed on the Form.



MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to New Life Members (Total 204)

Roy Davis and Jimmy Sears.



Life Membership of the Trust currently costs £75.00 if you have an email account or £100.00 if you prefer to receive Trust Mailings by post.

If you are interested in joining this group please contact our Membership Secretary, Paul Yeomanson via email at membership@shrimperstrust.co.uk.

You can also join up as a Life Member in the Membership Section of the Trust Website www.shrimperstrust.co.uk, and postal applications will also be accepted at **Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 9FD.**

Welcome to New Members since the last Newsletter

Alan Bailey, Nicola Baldwin, Courtney Brunning, Susan Bullock, Maureen & Liam Callaghan, John Carter, Stephen Choat, Gary Collinson, Jason Coman, Alison Cook, Joseph Darby, Charley & Doug Dickson, David Eve, Chris Fenton, Paul Fyffe, Ryan Goode, Gregory, Fiona & Conor Gordon, Teresa Gowan, Isabella Hamilton, Chris Hoskyn, Christopher Jeffrey, Alan, Dale & Perrie King, Hudson Kirkham, Stephen Mailes, Kelvin Mayhew, Dale Merrin, Amy Morris, Paul Norman, Nick O'Shea, Dave Powell, Simon Ravinet, Joe Shawyer, Maria Short, Nathaniel Thompson, Ryan Welton, John Wiseman and Dee Woods.

***Please note that the Shrimpers Trust would like to know if any of its members' addresses change, or if they have a new email address so that newsletters and other correspondence can be sent to the correct address. Please send any change of address details to **The Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend on Sea, SS1 9FD**, by email to membership@shrimperstrust.co.uk or alternatively fill in our on-line contact details form which can be found in the Membership Section of the Trust Website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk ***

SHRIMPERS TRUST POTY AWARDS 2011/12

The Shrimpers Trust held their 2011/12 Player of the Year Awards on 3rd May in the Shrimpers Bar at Roots Hall. Joining the 100 plus Trust members on the night were Paul Sturrock, Graham Coughlan and the Southend United Senior squad. Ricky Duncan and his under 18's Youth team squad also attended, along with Southend United's new CEO Gary Lockett.

The evening included various presentations to members of the first and youth teams, culminating in the Trust's 2011/12 Goal of the Season and Player of the Year awards.

The Trust's Vice Chairman, Paul Yeomanson who was host for the evening opened by extending a warm welcome to everyone and in particular thanked Paul, Graham, Ricky and the players for attending the event.

Youth Team Awards

The Trust's on-going involvement with the Youth structure was highlighted, which included donations made to the Centre of Excellence, as well as shirt sponsorship of the Youth team which had been in place for the last 4 ½ years.

The under 18's had indeed this season finished 6th in the Football League Youth Alliance and had reached the 2nd round of the FA Youth Cup narrowly losing to a strong Brentford side.

Congratulations were extended to goalkeeper Luke Chambers who had secured a 2 year professional contract with the Club, and to Ryan Auger (full-back), Louis Baucutt (centre-half) and Jack Paxman (midfield) who had all been offered 1 year development contracts.

Player of the Month:

As part of the Trust's involvement with the Youth team, Player of the Month awards were made throughout the season, with the winners being chosen by Ricky Duncan and the Trust's Rob Craven.

In recognition of the above, a commemorative framed photo was presented by Ricky to each winner, which were as follows;



August – Marlon Agyakma
September – Aaron Tatham
October- Jack Payne
November – Luke Chambers
December/January – Luke Chambers
February – Mitchell Pinnock
March/April – Robert Hyams

Player of the Year:

The winner of this award was presented with the Tom Grace Memorial Shield. The Youth Team Player of the Year award had been renamed in memory of avid Southend United supporter and junior member of the Trust Tom Grace, who sadly had passed away at the age of 15 in 2007. Tom's family had joined the evening, with his father Len making the presentations. Overall winner was Jack Payne with 1st runner up Ryan Auger and 2nd runner up Luke Chambers.

Following all presentations Ricky Duncan spoke briefly of his work as Head of Youth, with his key objective being to produce as many players as possible who then would make the transition into the first team. Ricky finished by saying how appreciative he was of the Trust's on-going support to the Youth team and how he very much valued their involvement as a key sponsor.



Junior Shrimpers Player of the Year:

The SJS Player of the Year as voted for by the Trust's under 16 members, was presented to Southend defender Mark Phillips by Junior Shrimper Luke Edmonds.

Top Traveller Awards:

For the 2011/12 season the Trust had again run coaches to all away league and cup fixtures, having so far clocked up some 8,768 miles. There were three supporters, Shane Chapman, Lesley Hicks and Gaye Overall

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who had travelled with the Trust to all these games. With the possibility remaining that Southend would be involved in the play offs, there would of course potentially be more miles to be added to the tally. It was therefore confirmed that the Top Traveller Awards would be made at a later date. Current Top Junior Traveller Luke Chittocks (7,554 miles) would also receive his award at the same time.

Finally on behalf of the Trust Committee and those who had travelled with the Trust this term, Paul Yeomanson thanked Clare Brooks for all the work she had once again undertaken this season organising and running Away travel.



Goal of the Season:

The Martin Cramner Goal of the Season award, named in memory of lifelong Southend United supporter Martin who had passed away at the start of the 2010/11 season aged 40, was presented by his wife Zoe Cranmer. The contenders for this award as voted by Trust members, were Bilel Mohsni v Northampton at home, Ryan Hall v Cheltenham at home and Anthony Grant v Wimbledon at home. Defender/utility man Bilel Mohsni's first goal in the Northampton match, a screamer from 35 yards, was adjudged to be a very popular winner.

Player of the Season:

Paul Sturrock presented the main award of the evening. 2nd runner up was Ryan Hall, 1st runner up Mark Phillips, with Trust members voting defender Sean Clohessy as their overall winner. In accepting his award, Sean who had made near on 50 league and cup appearances for the Blues so far this season, thanked both Paul Sturrock and Graham Coughlan for the ongoing support and guidance they had given to him during his time to date with the Club. He also paid tribute to his team mates who he said had performed very well this season.

Paul Sturrock on behalf of his management team and the players thanked the Trust for their support and financial backing over the last season, which he said was greatly appreciated. He added that he was keen for this relationship to continue.



Turning his thoughts to the weekend match against Macclesfield Town and the possibility if other results went our way that Southend could secure automatic promotion, he said that he was insisting that his players focus on the job in hand and that they didn't worry about other results. He urged that supporters should give full and vocal support to the team on Saturday and not be too dispirited should we not make it at the weekend. He stressed that the important thing was to secure three points on Saturday and then we would have kept the winning momentum going into any play off situation.

Paul finished off by taking a few questions from the floor, including enlightening the audience regarding his lucky cream jacket which he vowed to keep wearing to matches until we lost. Paul however made it clear that combining his kilt with the jacket for the last game of the season would not be an option for him!

He described the 2011/12 season as a roller-coaster of ups and downs which had included some excellent performances from the team, particularly away from home, but that there had also been some poor performances at home. Whilst we had suffered in terms of selection options due to injuries and suspensions, he paid credit to his squad of players who he said had all worked very hard throughout the season. All he said had been fantastic.

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In response to a question asking for more detail regarding any proposed pre-season tour for next season, Paul confirmed that no firm decision had been made on location as yet. Whilst giving somewhat cryptic clues regarding potential locations, he would not be further drawn. Also he said that no decisions had been made as yet regarding players who might be retained or released by the Club. This he said would be very much driven by budget, but would not be considered until the 2011/12 season was brought to a conclusion.

Having read out a short message from the Trust Chairman Paul FitzGerald who unfortunately due to business commitments had not been able to attend the evening, Paul Yeomanson wrapped the evening up by thanking Paul, Graham, Ricky, the support teams and all the players for taking the time to attend the evening.

Final thanks were also given to Trust members who had attended and for all the support they had given to the Trust over the season.

It was noted that the auction of the 2011/12 home shirt signed by the first team raised £130. The raffle which had been held on the night raised a further £140.

BARBER'S BLURB – TERRACE TALK MATCH REPORTS

Monday 9th April 2012



**Southend United 2 (Eastwood 70, Grant 90)
AFC Wimbledon 0**

Freddy Eastwood scored one and set up another as Southend relit their hopes of automatic promotion with a 2-0 victory over AFC Wimbledon at a wet Roots Hall stadium. Eastwood put the Blues in front and it was a pass from the Southend legend that led to Anthony Grant's stunning 90th minute strike.

The recalled David Martin looked dangerous early on as his runs down the left gave cause for excitement but very little end product was evident. Ryan Hall then caused Seb Brown to get down low to save well from his long-range effort after good quick play from Bilel Mohsni.

Moncur made Belford move quickly to save his effort and a once rumoured Blues target, Harrison, saw his good strike go wide of the target as the match was pretty uneventful. Freddy Eastwood then came to life for the first time in the game as he linked up well with Martin but the former Millwall man couldn't hit the target when well placed.

Michael Timlin, back in the centre of the park, was pulling the strings in the midfield and the former Swindon man had an attempt on goal but it didn't test Brown. The first half petered out with very little action to report.

The first action in the second half came from the visitors. West Ham loanee Moncur played the ball into Prior and the striker turned and struck an effort on goal but his strike curled wide of the goal.

Southend then kick started their promotion push when club hero Freddy Eastwood put them in front. A corner was headed back across goal by Phillips and the on loan Coventry City forward flicked a header past Brown to send the home fans wild.

Anthony Grant then secured all three points when he struck home a stunning strike in the 90th minute. He collected a pass from Eastwood before taking a touch then striking home into the far corner from 25 yards.

Blues Team: Cameron Belford, Kane Ferdinand, Luke Prosser, Mark Phillips ©, Peter Gilbert, Bilel Mohsni, Michael Timlin, Ryan Hall, Anthony Grant, David Martin and Freddy Eastwood.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Freddy Eastwood.

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Saturday 14th April 2012



Torquay United 0 Southend United 0

Southend United's automatic promotion hopes are all-but over despite dominating large periods of the game against The Gulls. With six points the difference between the top three, and us the last chance looks like Barnet at home this Friday, if Southend are going to claim an automatic place.

Freddy Eastwood dropped to the bench as he continued to carry a knee problem and it was his replacement, Harris, that had the first chance of the game but his 25 yard effort was straight at the goalkeeper in the Torquay net.

Cameron Belford was equal to anything that came his way in the Blues goal as Southend looked to get the opening goal of the game. They were playing well to be fair and were only denied by the crossbar as Ryan Hall thundered a free-kick towards their goal.

Former Norwich man Jarvis was causing most of the danger to Southend, his shot went over, before Chris Barker was on hand to clear the ball after his cross was creating cause for concern in the Blues box. At the start of the second half it was Jarvis causing problems again and former Blues trialist Howe, having an attempt on goal, joined him but both efforts didn't cause any problems.

Michael Timlin then sent a fizzing effort inches wide of the goal before the midfielder played a stunning through ball to Mohsni, but the goalkeeper was equal to his clever effort and keep the scores level.

There were a couple of shouts for a penalty for Southend. The first looking like a blatant handball and then Phillips was clearly shoved in the back, but the referee failed to give a penalty.

Substitute Freddy Eastwood was inches away from securing a win for Southend but he failed to connect with a superb Ryan Hall cross.

Blues Team: Cameron Belford, Sean Clohessy, Chris Barker ©, Peter Gilbert, Bilel Mohsni, Michael Timlin, Ryan Hall, Anthony Grant, Kane Ferdinand and Neil Harris.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Anthony Grant.

Friday 20th April 2012



Southend United 3 (Mohsni 11, 25, 32) Barnet 0

Bilel Mohsni netted a hat-trick as Southend United confirmed their participation in the play-offs at least this season. The versatile player netted all his three goals in the opening half as Blues cruised to victory and after the weekend's results, still in with a chance of an automatic promotion place.

Southend knew that three points tonight would cement a play-off place at least and they took the lead with the first chance of the game. Neil Harris curled a free-kick from 20 yards that beat the goalkeeper but smashed onto the post, and the ball fell to Bilel Mohsni, who got the ball over the line to give Southend the lead.

Neil Harris was enjoying, which many believe, was his best performance in a Southend shirt and after the former Millwall man nearly set up Bilel for his second, the striker then saw a dipping shot from 30 yards well saved by former Luton keeper Brill in the Bess net.

Mohsni and Harris were working together extremely well and were causing The Bees a lot of trouble, before Mohsni did finally net his second, a header from a corner. The Frenchman powerfully headed home a Ryan Hall corner to take his goal tally up to 11 goals for the season and put Southend United in the driving seat.

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Just seven minutes after scoring the second Mohsni scored his third goal of the evening. Another Hall corner was headed by Mohsni, the power on the header was enough to find the back of the net, beating the efforts of the Barnet player on the line trying to save the goal.

Neil Harris came mightily close to scoring the goal he fully deserved but his header looped over the crossbar, before Mohsni tried his luck from 50 yards, seeing Brill off his line, but the goalkeeper got back in time to prevent a stunning goal.

Freddy Eastwood did brilliantly to create an effort for himself but his shot was off target, substitute David Martin made Brill push his effort away, but it didn't really trouble the keeper.

Blues Team: Cameron Belford, Sean Clohessy, Mark Phillips, Chris Barker ©, Peter Gilbert, Bilel Mohsni, Michael Timlin, Ryan Hall, Anthony Grant, Freddy Eastwood and Neil Harris.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Bilel Mohsni.

Saturday 28th April 2012



**Oxford United 0
Southend United 0 (Hall 19, Mohsni 31)**

Goals from Ryan Hall and Bilel Mohsni fired Southend to within one point of automatic promotion as The Blues were victorious by 2 goals to nil at Oxford United. A stunning free-kick and a guided header proved to be enough for The Shrimpers who were by far the better team throughout the 90 minutes of the match.

Southend had already secured a play-off spot but Oxford were still in the hunt for one. It was the hosts that registered the first chance on goal through former Blues loanee Dean Morgan. He latched onto a cut-back before seeing his shot well saved by goalkeeper Cameron Belford.

It was in the 19th minute of the game that Southend took the lead. Duberry conceded a foul on the edge of the box and the referee awarded a free-kick. Ryan Hall stepped up to unleash a dipping and swerving effort that flew into the top corner of the goal to send The Blues fans in full voice.

Only 12 minutes later before Southend were celebrating again. Full back Peter Gilbert whipped in a good first time cross and the cross was met superbly by Mohsni who guided his header into the far corner of the goal to net his 13th goal of the season.

Just before the break The Blues nearly scored a third goal. Bilel Mohsni headed another good ball into the box on and the ball found its way to Harris, who delicately clipped the ball past the goalkeeper, but the defender rushing back was Duberry, and he clipped the ball to safety.

The second half Oxford saw more of the ball which was expected as they were chasing a deficit, but Southend were controlled on the ball and went close again through Mohsni, as his header went into the side netting of the goal.

Southend United held on to claim the three points and with Crawley and Torquay dropping points the quest for automatic promotion goes to the final day of the season. With three sides separated by just a single point.

Blues Team: Cameron Belford, Sean Clohessy, Mark Phillips, Chris Barker ©, Peter Gilbert, Bilel Mohsni, Michael Timlin, Ryan Hall, Anthony Grant, Kane Ferdinand and Neil Harris.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Anthony Grant.

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Saturday 5th May 2012



Southend United 2 (Gilbert 24, Harris 90) Macclesfield Town 0

Goals from Peter Gilbert and Neil Harris fired Southend to an easy victory against Macclesfield Town, and up to fourth place, however they missed out on automatic promotion by one point after Crawley were victorious against Accrington Stanley. At one stage of the afternoon Blues did occupy the final automatic spot, but Crawley's goal was enough to put them ahead of Southend by a point.

Before the game the player of the season awards were handed out and the winner of the award was Mark Phillips, with Clohessy and Hall in 2nd and 3rd respectively. Bilel Mohsni won goal of the season for his wonder strike against Northampton at Roots Hall.

After a cagey first 20 minutes, Blues soon settled down, and took the lead through Peter Gilbert's 3d strike of the season. The full-back ran unmarked onto a Hall corner to side foot home a volley into the bottom corner of the goal to put Southend into 3rd place in the table.

Michael Timlin tested Veiga in the goal and the rebound fell to Harris, which was deflected over the South Stand goal, as Macclesfield stayed in the game against the Southend pressure. Freddy Eastwood then saw a drive well saved and then another goal wide of the goal as Blues upped the pressure.

Just before the break a moment of pure class from Bilel Mohsni, nearly doubled Blues' advantage, but Veiga produced a stunning save to tip the defenders flick and volley over the bar.

Freddy Eastwood and Neil Harris linked up well all afternoon with both strikers having efforts on goal. Harris saw a clever header go agonisingly over the bar, before Eastwood fired a wayward shot and then saw a 20 yard stinging drive fly inches over the bar.

Substitute Elliot Benyon played his part in the second goal of the game as he powered a header from a Ryan Hall cross, which Veiga did well to save, only for the ball to fall to Harris, who tapped in his 9th goal of the season from 4 yards.

Blues Team: Cameron Belford, Sean Clohessy, Mark Phillips, Chris Barker ©, Peter Gilbert, Bilel Mohsni, Michael Timlin, Ryan Hall, Anthony Grant, Freddy Eastwood and Neil Harris.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Peter Gilbert.

Saturday 12th May 2012



Play Off Semi-Final – 1st Leg

Crewe Alexandra 1 (Dugdale 49) Southend United 0

A header from Dugdale, minutes after the restart, has put Crewe in the driving seat for a place at Wembley Stadium. The big defender timed his run superbly to guide a flying header past Belford at the far post, Southend had the better chances throughout the ninety minutes, but they failed to take their chances, leaving the game at Roots Hall on Wednesday night an even bigger match.

The opening stages of the game were a tense affair, as you would have expected, as both sides didn't want to gift the other team a chance on goal. However, it was Southend, and Bilel Mohsni, that did that first of all. A poor cross field ball from Mohsni was collected and slipped through to Leitch-Smith but Belford was quick off his line to clear the danger.

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Belford then did well to clear a few corners and keep the danger away from the Southend goal, The Blues had a chance to score when it fell to Timlin, but the midfielder saw his shot saved well by Phillips. Kane Ferdinand saw his header loop over the bar just before the break as Southend looked to get back into the game.

It was just minutes after the restart that the home side did take the lead, and it was the first goal Southend had conceded, in just over 8 hours of football. Westwood clipped a floated free-kick into the box, which was over the head of Mohsni and met by Dugdale, and the big centre-half powered home a header past Belford and into the top corner of the goal. Crewe had taken the lead in this close encounter.

Southend continued to battle to try and get something from the game. Belford saved well from Leitch-Smith and down the other end Hall and Grant saw wayward shots cause no harm to the Alex goal.

The Shrimpers huffed and they puffed as Moshni set Timlin up but the former Swindon man could only fire at Phillips. Leonard then whipped in a cross that Mohsni headed over the bar when he usually scores, and substitute Freddy Eastwood came mighty close to scoring but his strike was blocked on its way to goal by Timlin.

Blues Team: Cameron Belford, Sean Clohessy, Mark Phillips, Chris Barker ©, Peter Gilbert, Bilel Mohsni, Michael Timlin, Ryan Hall, Anthony Grant, Kane Ferdinand and Neil Harris.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Anthony Grant.

Wednesday 16th May 2012



Play Off Semi-Final – 2nd Leg

**Southend United 2 (Harris 64, Barker 88)
Crewe Alexandra 2 (Leitch-Smith 24, Clayton 86)**

Southend United crashed out of the play-offs after a 2-2 draw at Roots Hall. With the goal advantage from the first leg, a draw was enough for Crewe to progress to the Wembley showpiece, where they will play either Cheltenham Town or Torquay United.

With a vocal support behind Southend, home advantage, and an attack minded side, this was a good chance to turn the tie around and go through to the final. It was the home side that had the first chance of the match when Bilel Mohsni launched a 30-yard strike on target after Elliot Benyon played in the midfielder.

It was all Southend with the attempts on goal and they went close again through Elliot Benyon, before Clohessy slice a horrible volley, wide of the North Bank goal. However, the predictable happened, and against the run of play Crewe scored the pivotal goal through AJ Leitch-Smith. The striker collected the ball on the left before cutting past Sean Clohessy and unleashing a rising drive into the top corner of the goal to put Crewe 2-0 up on aggregate.

Freddy Eastwood thought he had levelled on the night for Southend when he placed home from close range after Hall's shot was saved, but the linesman raised his flag, ruling the goal out. Belford then nearly gifted the visitors a chance to score twice, but their wasteful finishing was to Blues' advantage.

In the second half it was all Southend United with Eastwood and Benyon having chances before substitute Neil Harris prodded home his 10th goal of the season to set up a good final thirty minutes. Freddy Eastwood and Michael Timlin then both hit the post as Blues came agonisingly close to getting back in the game. Mohsni then headed over before heading straight at Phillips when he should have done better.

Against the run of play again young striker Max Clayton scuffed a shot past Belford to put Crewe 3-1 up on aggregate, before Barker netted his first goal in 10 years just 90 seconds later, to set up a thrilling finale but it wasn't to be.

Blues Team: Cameron Belford, Sean Clohessy, Luke Prosser, Chris Barker ©, Peter Gilbert, Bilel Mohsni, Michael Timlin, Ryan Hall, Anthony Grant, Freddy Eastwood and Elliot Benyon.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Anthony Grant.

5th July 2012