

TOFT UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

Toft had a football club in the 1930s; the playing area was in a field owned by Claude Tebbit, known as 'Seventeen acres,' on the east side of Hardwick Road, opposite the footpath leading to the allotments on the Drift; a shepherd's hut functioned as changing room. Only friendly matches were played here. The club colours were amber and green shirts, white shorts, and amber and green socks. Morling, Ward and Rogers are some of the names of team members remembered today.

The club was dormant during the hostilities of WW2 and, it is believed, was re-formed for the 1949/50 season, entering a team in the old Histon and District League. The club colours remained the same, but the livery was restyled. Major Gavin Malcolm Macfarland-Grieve of Toft Manor was president; other officers included Ernie Beeby secretary, Clifford Tebbit treasurer, Harry Sparks team captain. Following a search to find level land large enough for a pitch in the village, the playing field was established in Home Meadow behind Old Farm. The undulations of Home Meadow were to become indelibly imprinted on the memories of visiting teams! Among the team members recalled from those days include Neville Kitson goalkeeper, Les Read, Derek Morling, Horace Cutter, John Wilson, Harry Sparks and Clifford Tebbit. The team had a good following and hired a coach for away matches. The players were drawn from Toft, Hardwick, Caldecote and the Eversdens.

At some stage in the mid 50s the club was known as *The Toft and Hardwick FC*. The club subsequently graduated to the Cambridgeshire League. In the football season of 1957/58 the club were champions of Cambridgeshire League Division IV and presented with the League Cup after defeating Stow-cum-Quy FC at Histon football ground. The match was supported by three coach loads of villagers. Photographs of the champions were exhibited in the Toft Shop window, owned by club chairman Norman Balcombe. A fully subscribed celebration dinner was held in the Church Institute in School Lane. From a Cambridge Daily News report (13.5.1958) - Toft United FC season 1957/58 - played 22 matches; won 20; drew 0; lost 2; goals for 203; against 34. Also in that season the team reached the semi finals of the Lower Junior Cup competition, only to be beaten 2-1 at Histon FC ground by Willingham Reserves, the eventual winners of the Cup. - *relocated text*

Following promotion to the third Division they were again top only to be beaten by Ely City A team in the play-off match to decide top of the Division between the A and B groups. The final score was 7-1 reflecting, it was darkly hinted, at some bending of the rules regarding the higher league status of some of their opposing players!

After promotion to Division IIA in the 1959/60 season the club, since known as *Toft United Football Club*, spent a number of years in that league with players mostly made up of Toft residents. From about 1961/62 the team played in white shirts and socks, and black shorts. The players at this time included, amongst others, Koren, Paul, Malcolm and Peter Collett, Pat, Ronnie and Warwick Ward, Geoff Balcombe, David Bone, Terry Osborne, David Longstaff, John Pigden, Charlie Richmond and Mick Marsh. Officials included John Sparks treasurer, David Longstaff, and Mr Brewer who gave a great deal of support in its final years. The Club went into decline in the late 60s and early 70s through falling support and was disbanded around 1973/1974.

During the 1980's a football team was founded with its base, the Red Lion pub (now the Tui Yen restaurant) from which it derived its name - the *Toft Lions*. The team played in the *Cambridgeshire Sunday League*. No records are known of its existence as a club. It is believed it played home matches at Bourn. Archie Badcock and Johnnie Brooks (Comberton) are remembered as officers of the team and its players were drawn from neighbouring villages as well as from Toft. This team disbanded in the late 1980's.

Twenty years later the youths of Toft revived the sport. Sponsorship for shirts was raised and the game lives on in the form of the *Toft Lions Football Club*, playing home matches on the Barton recreation ground in the absence of a suitable pitch in their home village.






Eddie Wethman receiving the League trophy at Histon FC from Mr Wadsworth 1958




1957/58 Toft United team

TOFT UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB
CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEAGUE DIVISION IV

CHAMPIONS 1957-58 SEASON



TEAM, back row, left to right
John Harrup, Norman Balcombe (*chairman*), Colin Ward, Pat Ward,
Eddie Werthman (*Captain*), Malcolm Collett, Cliff Blackwell, Archie Badcock,
Jack Fletcher.

front row, left to right
Dexter Robinson, Wesley Blackwell, Terry Osborne,
Albert Constable (*Club Captain*, *injured*) Roy Wilson, John Wilson.

Cambridge Daily News Merit Shield October 1956



Toft FC c1956
back row l.to r. Peter Cawte, Bill Glover, Cliff Blackwell, John Mole, David Cawte, John Sparks
front row Albert Constable, John Wilson, Roy Wison, Jackie Fletcher and Warwick Ward



Toft Lions Football Team 2011

back row l.to r.Adam Sandercock, Jamie Onion, Alban Fernandez, Tom Preece,
Harvey Baily, Danny Thomas and Paul (?)
front row Sam Bradshaw, Marcus Wing, Will Cox, Bradley Linsdell, Jeremy Harris,
Ollie Eaton, other players: Will Harris, Sam Reynolds and Bart Fernandez

Compiled by Colin Ward and Geoff Balcombe