

# REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION

## 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2003

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### MEMBERSHIP

The number of clubs affiliated is as follows: -

Open Age	2,487
Junior	393
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	2,880
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### COUNCIL

We were much saddened during the year to lose the services of one of our Life Vice-Presidents, Mr Geoff Stephenson, who joined the Association in 1972 as the representative for Halifax & District FA. He became a Vice-President in 1990 and was elected as a Life Vice-President in 1993.

We were also saddened by the passing away of many other stalwarts of the game including Mr Eddie Joyce who had been well known for his work in football in the Leeds area and Mr Bevan Sykes, the President of the Heavy Woollen Gate Sunday Alliance League. In addition, we received the news of the death of Mr Alan Burbridge, the President of Cheshire County FA, who had been a friend of this Association for many years.

Our condolences go to their families and to all those who have lost a loved one who had been involved with football in our area.

During the year, we welcomed Mr T Butt as a new member of Council. Mr Butt was co-opted as a member of the Equity Working Party which also nominated Mr Milton Brown as a new member of the Local Football Partnership. It is felt that both gentlemen will be able to bring much experience and specialist knowledge to the workings of the County FA.

We were sad to lose the services of our Chairman and Finance Director, Mr G Pawson, who had reached the compulsory retirement age but pleased that he would remain a member of Council. Mr P Marsden replaced him as Chairman and Mr G Howden became the new Finance Director. Mr R G Secker was elected as a new member of the Board of Directors.

We were delighted to be chosen by the Football Association to provide the ball boys/girls for the FA Cup Final in 2004.

### ASSOCIATION CUP WINNERS

<u>Competition</u>	<u>Winners</u>	<u>Runners Up</u>
Senior Cup	NO COMPETITION	
County Cup	Harrogate Town	Farsley Celtic
Challenge Cup	Silsden	Barnoldswick Utd 72
Challenge Trophy	Park Hotel, Pudsey	St. Nicholas
Sunday Cup	Albion Sports	GNG Sikh Temple
Sunday Trophy	Woodlands Raiders	Thornhill Scarborough
Womens Cup	Leeds United Ladies	Leeds United Development
Minor Cup	Harrogate FA	Huddersfield FA
Junior Cup	Pannal Ash JFC	Beeston Juniors
Junior Trophy	Clifton Rangers Youth	Silsden Juniors
Junior Shield	Westend Juniors	Knaresborough Celtic
Charity Shield	Albion Sports	Silsden

It was disappointing that plans to stage the Senior Cup for the first time for four years had to be aborted due to the projected police costs of staffing the proposed game between Huddersfield Town and Bradford City. The County Cup Final was a repeat of the previous years with Harrogate Town coming out on top for the second time – a feat which was equalled by Silsden in the Challenge Cup. Doncaster Belles were unable to defend the Womens Cup as a move to a new ground outside our area meant that they were not affiliated to this Association.

We congratulate all those who reached the various finals of our competitions and trust that they enjoyed the experience of playing at the County FA headquarters.

Our special thanks go to W.T. Knowles & Co. of Elland who again sponsored the Junior Shield (U12) competition and to the Royal Air Force who are involved with the Womens Cup.

All the winners came from original entries which had shown an increase in numbers from those of the previous season whilst those interested in taking part in the 2003/2004 season was again an increase on the 2002/2003 entries.

The County Cup and Youth Committees continued their policy of inviting clubs and leagues to attend the draws for the latter stages of the competitions and were encouraged by the response. Our thanks go to BBC Radio Leeds for broadcasting the draws live and to all those who made the events a special occasion.

## **CONGRATULATIONS**

Our congratulations go to those clubs who were successful in the various cup competitions, whether it be at County, District or League level, and to those who won championships or who were promoted to a higher division.

Our special congratulations are extended to Harrogate Railway Athletic who held the nation's attention as they progressed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Round Proper of the FA Cup before succumbing to Bristol City in a televised game.

Our commiserations go to Huddersfield Town who were relegated to Division 3 of the Football League at the end of the 2002/2003 season and to all those who found themselves in similar positions.

## **REPRESENTATIVE FOOTBALL**

Having won the Association of Northern Counties Youth Competition in season 2001/2002, it was disappointing for our under 18 squad to lose its last game in 2002/2003 against Northumberland and to not qualify for the semi-final. The new season also started in a similar way with early defeats away to Liverpool and at home to Manchester which would leave us with an almost impossible task to finish in the top two. Our performances in the national competition were much more encouraging with victories over Sheffield & Hallamshire and Nottinghamshire before being beaten by our old adversaries from East Riding.

Our chosen representatives in the Northern Counties Senior Competition, Silsden, were unable to play on the day of a match arranged against Westmorland due to commitments in the FA Vase. Boroughbridge were asked to step in and duly won the game before falling at the next hurdle away to Cumberland. Our thanks go to the club for the manner in which they played and in the way they conducted themselves on behalf of the County FA.

The Northern Counties Ladies Competition was aborted following problems with arranging fixtures. It was decided, however, that the three Ridings should stage their own competition and matches home and away in midweek were arranged between North, East and West Riding County FAs. A draw at home to a strong East Riding side had given us much hope for the rest of the competition.

The newly-formed under 16 squad was accepted into the Midland Youth Competition and came away with early victories in the league and cup against Derbyshire which bode well for the remainder of the campaign.

## **REFEREES**

The number of referees registered with the Association at the end of the year stood at 1,120 which was approximately 6% less than at the same time last year. This reduction has a dramatic effect on the ability of all leagues and competitions to staff matches with qualified officials. Our work with the training and development of new and experienced referees continued and thanks must be given to all those instructors, assessors, examiners etc who give their time to assist with this valuable work. We were disappointed to lose the services of our Head of Referee Development, Mr R D Faley, in October but wish to express our appreciation for the enthusiasm and expertise he had brought to this area.

We were disappointed to learn that the Football Association was to re-introduce a fee for new referee candidates as we feel that this may have a detrimental effect on recruitment. The offer to reimburse the fee on completion of 10 matches as a referee may, however, assist with retention.

We take this opportunity to offer congratulations to all those officials who were appointed to various finals etc and to those who were promoted to the higher spheres of the game. We wish them all the best for the future.

## **DISCIPLINE**

The work of the Disciplinary Commissions shows no signs of abating with figures at the end of the year showing that misconduct charges rose by 15% on the previous year. The number of recorded cautions also rose by 6%. Commissions adhered to the policy of imposing stricter penalties and a number of clubs had their affiliations suspended for periods due to the misconduct of players, officials and/or spectators. The County FA produced a booklet on disciplinary procedures which was issued with the handbook and which gave much valuable information to the club secretaries who normally deal with the administration. A copy of the booklet was forwarded to the Football Association where it was greeted with approval and further copies were requested by other County FAs.

In spite of this, the amount of misconduct still causes concern and has a detrimental effect on the recruitment and retention of many officials (see REFEREES). Commissions will continue to deal with proven cases in the most stringent way and will continue to make decisions which may seem unpopular to many of the participants.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

The work of the County FA in developing the game at every level and in progressing the various FA initiatives continued with much effort, time and resources being aimed at this important aspect of the game.

The staff in the Development Office was increased from two to five with the appointment of a Development Manager and additional administrators as well as the introduction of Development Officers responsible for clubs and schools. The additional input meant that we were able to continue with the development of charter standard for clubs (including the first charter standard adult club) and schools, TOPS courses for teachers, coach education (including the setting-up of the West Riding Coaches Association), disability football etc.

We were chosen to pilot an Adult Coaching Course and our work in dealing with equity issues (including the setting-up of specific workshops) was highlighted in the FA National Game Annual Report/Review.

We were delighted that 5 County FA Football Workforce volunteers were able to receive their awards from the England Under 21 manager, Mr D Platt, and players when the squad visited Fleet Lane in June and that Mr Richard Hewitt of Oakworth Juniors attended the FA Community Shield in August to be presented with a national award.

The valuable work of the Local Football Partnership continued with representatives of local authorities, sports organisations etc joining with the County FA to monitor bids to the Football Foundation. The creation of a County Facilities Strategy was an important step in prioritising the applications and we were able to support large schemes from Howden Clough, Sherburn White Rose, Coulthurst Craven, Marley Stadium and many others.

We again supported the FA Fair Play Award scheme with presentations being made to Mixenden Rangers Juniors and Northowram Junior Girls.

Work in other areas, eg, Child Protection, continued and our thanks go to all those who contribute to our success in this important aspect.

## **GROUND AND HEADQUARTERS**

Our facilities still continue to attract interest from the Football Association and others who see our headquarters as an ideal location for courses etc.

We are also visited by teams who use our pitch for training purposes including the England U21 squad in May/June prior to a game against Serbia and Montenegro. We are always delighted to welcome them to Fleet Lane and trust they enjoy their stay with us.

We continue to make improvements to our headquarters and thank the members of the Grounds Committee for their input.

## **THANKS**

Our thanks go to the members of Council, and to the other organisations involved with us, in ensuring that the work of the County FA continues.

The role of the County FA has changed considerably over the last few years and we are continually calling on the expertise and knowledge of various personnel to ensure that we maintain the highest of standards.

We offer our thanks to the members of District Associations who give their time and energies freely to ensure that they contribute to the well-being of football in our area and to the various leagues whose management committees maintain the administration of the game.

We also express our thanks to the press and media for their continued coverage and the interest shown in our activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The West Riding County FA continues to work closely with all parties and is one of the largest innovators in the development of the game. We will continue to be at the forefront and will endeavour to ensure that the future of the no 1 sport in this country is in capable hands for those who wish to play the game.

G R Carter JP  
Secretary