

# Ainsworth Football Club



## 1966

Lads from Ainsworth village went to the Isle of Man and played football on the beach – England v Scots and Welsh (with about 20-a-side !!). They returned home and formed a football team and played friendlies on Sundays with the help of former Bolton Wanderers Football Club players Tommy Banks and Denis Stevens

## 1968



The Ainsworth Football Team joined the Bolton S.S. League 4<sup>th</sup> division and got a few walloppings and a rude awakening. The first ground was at Moss Bank Park and they played there for one season. Then Mr Booth, who was in charge at Bankfield in Ainsworth, suggested they help form a pitch and could play on it for free as long as they maintained it for the children of the home - which they did. Kenny Barber cut the pitch with a 12" mower and worked out that he walked about 4 miles while doing so! At this time some hard decisions had to be made - dropping mates to bring in better players. The team was based at the old Conservative Club, which was the end house, next to the Duke William Pub. At this time, they played under the name of Ainsworth Young Conservatives Football team. They then moved from the Conservative Club to the Duke William pub and took the name Ainsworth F.C.

## 1970

The Ainsworth Football team was struggling and a local Bury team – Highfield United – offered to take them over and play under their name in Bury Amateur League. So the team resigned from the Bolton S.S. League and went playing for Highfield. However the move did not feel right and so they asked Bolton S.S. League if they would let the team rejoin mid-season – which they did. Slowly but surely over the next ten years Ainsworth Football team got stronger.

## 1980



The team won the Marshall Cup – the first trophy after 12 years of trying and didn't concede a single goal in all the cup rounds, with John Pearson scoring in every round, including the final. In the same year Ainsworth Football Team joined Bolton Combination which at the time felt like joining the football league as it was such a big step. They started off in the 5<sup>th</sup> division, slowly working their way up the divisions (either by finishing runners-up or being invited to move up by the League Committee)

## 1989

The Changing rooms were burned down by vandals and so the team put an appeal in the paper for help. They received donations from local businesses and from Ainsworth Village Association. Bankfield offered the team a room to change in. The team held fund-raising events and were given 3 porta-cabins by Watsons at Horwich. With a lot of help from local businesses and the player Martin Readyhough, they built new changing rooms (with seats from the Great Lever End at Burnden Park)

## **1994-95 season**



Ainsworth Football Club won the 1<sup>st</sup> division title and Division 1 Knock out cup. The team was managed by John McGill, scoring 123 goals!! It was around this time that they were asked to form a veterans team – known as Ainsworth Fossils (although they dropped the name fossils a few years ago). They helped to form the Bolton Vets League, which is still going strong today.

## **1996**

John McGill resigned and Garry Pierce (a former Huddersfield Town, Wolves and Blackpool player), who was new to the area, was appointed. Garry took over a good team but, with his football league experience and the inclusion of a couple of players, Ainsworth F.C. became a very good team.

## **1997-98 season**



Ainsworth F.C. won the Open Cup, Premier League Cup and were runners-up in the league (missing out by just 1 point).



Sadly, after that, Garry moved on and the players moved to bigger clubs

## **2000 season**



Brian Lawder was awarded the Goldline Trophy for services to local football, presented to him by Nat Lofthouse at the Reebok Stadium.

## **2003**

After 35 years, where he had at some time been Goalkeeper, Secretary, Manager, Groundsman, Brian resigned and John Pearson and Clive Matthews took over the reins, with Dave Alford doing a great job as secretary. However Brian rejoined the club as Chairman in 2009

## **Fundraising**

Ainsworth Football Club has had a number of fundraising events, including Sportmans Dinners. Their most famous dinner was when Jack Charlton was the speaker (just before he got his Ireland job – when he would have cost a lot more!!)



There was a charity match in 1982, where Ainsworth Football Club played against ex-Bolton Players to raise funds for Bankfield



## **Dave Ridings**

One Local player has made it to the big time – Dave Ridings played for the club when he was 16 years old, eventually joining Halifax Town. He moved on to Lincoln City and has now done full circle and is playing in the first team on Saturdays.

## **The Pitch**



The pitch was infamous for its slope – having a 17ft fall from goal to goal. Dave applied for various grants and now Ainsworth F.C. has a “level playing field” with excellent drainage.



The club currently runs 2 teams on a Saturday in L.A.L. and 2 vets teams on a Sunday, based at the White Horse Pub in Ainsworth Village.

