

### **Whitehaven Amateurs Football Club**

Whitehaven AFC was formed in 1994 following the decision by Marchon Chemical Works to withdraw its financial sponsorship from Marchon AFC, and to use the playing area for industrial purposes. Marchon AFC itself had previously replaced the all conquering Haig Colliery side, which had been so successful in the 1970's and 80's, when the colliery was closed.

So it was then, the County Ground Whitehaven was leased on a peppercorn rent from the County Council, and Whitehaven AFC was born, with two adult teams and two junior sides playing in the first season. It seemed that things couldn't get any worse when the club's changing rooms were destroyed by vandals, but with a lot of self help and grant money, new facilities were built along with a new clubhouse. The club very quickly expanded to encompass junior sides at every age level, and although the club struggled financially at times, the players at every level have improved, culminating in our senior side becoming Wearside league champions for the first time in their history. The only sadness being the club was denied promotion to the Northern League because of its ground limitations. This was eventually achieved in 2007/8 after the club had appeared in successive Shipowners Cup finals, and won the Monkwearmouth Charity Cup, while showing prominently in the Wearside League. Much hard work had brought the ground up to the required standard and the dream was realised. Steady progress has been made in the two years since admission, and the club emphasised this by winning the Ernest Armstrong Trophy last season. Last year saw the club enter the FA Vase for the first time, and this year the club competes in the FA Cup for the first time in its history. The club has achieved Community Charter Standard status and is committed to providing quality coaching to all who join the playing side of the club. A ladies team was started last year and won promotion, and a girls side is currently being developed.

One of the strengths of the club is its junior base, which provides opportunities for all age groups and abilities to play football. Several players have been selected to join Carlisle United School of Excellence over the years, and some have gone on to play for Morecambe, Workington Reds and Penrith. Probably the best known player produced by the club is Stuart Green, who signed for Newcastle United and later joined Hull City, Stuart is currently playing for Wycombe after spells at Crystal Palace and Crewe, and we have a number of talented players who are keen to emulate him.

Recent developments at the County Ground have resulted in a third generation all weather pitch being positioned on the site, and with increased usage and sponsorship, the future looks very bright for football in the area. To compliment the pitch, further improvements are being planned to ensure the club will have facilities second to none, including a seated grandstand, state of the art changing rooms and a conference room. Directors of the club are determined to oversee these improvements and ensure the team plays at the highest level of football possible.

### **Whitehaven AFC Pen Pics and squad players**

**Jack Fryer:** Goalkeeper. Formerly with Workington Reds and is now in his third season with the club. Superb shot stopper who grows in confidence with every game.

**Craig Routledge:** Unlucky to lose his place in the side last year and a dominating presence at the back.

**Brian Miller:** Returned to the club last season after a season away. Good pair of hands and good organiser.

**Wayne Collins:** No nonsense centre half who rarely misses anything in the air. Previously judged the most improved young player of last season

**Craig Lewis:** Defender previously with Carlisle Utd. and Workington, but a product of the youth policy at the club.

**Darren Johnston:** Moved to Whitehaven from Cleator Moor Celtic and has impressed in pre season games. Quick and strong in the tackle.

**Adam Johnson:** Recent signing, and impressed with his speed and tackling. Previously with Netherhall in the County League.

**Kevin Law:** Signed from Windscale and endured a difficult first season with injury. Can play at centre back or midfield and is equally effective in both positions.

**Graeme Lilly:** Previously skipper of the side with a no-nonsense approach to defending. Converted to centre half from centre forward and can play full back.

**Gary Hodgson:** Defender/Midfield player who signed from Netherhall. Strong tackler and good in the air.

**Malcolm Holliday:** Dynamic midfielder with an eye for goal. Ever present last year and vital cog in the midfield. Skippers the side and sets the tone for the team. .

**Carl McGrady:** Strong midfielder who regularly appears on the score sheet. Usually occupies the central midfield role.

**Stuart Shaw:** Previously with Gretna, Stuart is an influential player with a good eye for goal. Expected to show strongly this year.

**Craig Robson:** One of the most experienced members of the team, having played since 16 years of age. Usually operating on the left of midfield or up front. Very quick with a good eye for goal.

**Stephen Hewitt:** Classy player who loves to be on the ball. Returned to the club after his YTS contract with Carlisle United and had a brief spell with Workington Reds.

**David Dustin:** Industrious striker and tireless runner who is in his third season with the club.

**Lee Dunn:** New signing from Cleator Moor Celtic where he scored many goals. Strong forward with a good work ethic and expected to do well.

**Darren Donald:** Tricky winger with an eye for goal. Second season with the club following his signing from Windscale.

**Gary Hewitt:** Hard working addition to the squad after a stint with Morecambe. Likes to play upfront although capable of playing on both flanks.

**Kevin Connolly:** Has played in several positions for the team, and always gives 100%. Leading scorer last year which earned him the player of the year award.

#### **Manager: Martin Harris**

Highly regarded ex professional with Workington Reds who has an excellent reputation within West Cumbria, having managed and played locally. In his second stint at the club, and demands high standards of his charges.

