

# BEES ARE JUST BUZZING WITH NEW FACILITIES



**SMOOTH:** Harborough Town unveiled their new playing surface last week

HARBOROUGH TOWN are looking forward to a bright future after seeing years of work come to fruition with the official unveiling of their artificial grass pitch and ground improvements. The Bees' first game on the new surface was their FA Cup match with Cambridge City last weekend, which marked the latest chapter in the United Counties League side's history with the first phase of their £800,000 redevelopment. Despite defeat to their Southern League opponents, it was a proud day for the Leicestershire outfit, who have more than 800 players from aged six to 70 representing 48 teams. Chairman of Harborough Town's trustees Laurence Jones said: "Saturday represented a significant landmark for the club and

**By Matt Badcock**

the culmination of years of hard work and dedication. "It was extremely pleasing to see so many fans come and cheer on our boys on the new state-of-the-artificial pitch. "We have been progressing well on the pitch and now we have a community stadium to be proud of thanks to a £800,000 redevelopment. "Following the opening of the pitch, this autumn we look forward to the new car park positioned at the front and side of the clubhouse." The project funding is made up of £436,123 from the Premier League & FA Facilities Fund delivered by the Football Foundation, £70,427 from the Premier League through the Football

Stadia Improvement Fund and £270,000 secured by Harborough District Council from section 106 agreements where the authority obtained funds from developers for community use. The club are also investing £50,000 of their own funds into the project. Saturday also saw the public launch of the renaming of the ground to the Harborough Town Community Football Ground. Jones added: "This is a very exciting time in the history of Harborough Town as we look to continue to build and develop a vibrant community grassroots football hub which is a focal point for the local community. "It is therefore important that our ground name reflects what the club provides."

# STROKE FORCES RETIREMENT

WORMLEY Rovers goalkeeper Allan Buck has immediately hung up his boots after collapsing with a stroke minutes before Friday night's Buildbase FA Vase first qualifying round game at Biggleswade United. Buck, 34, was doing pre-match warm-up exercises with the team when he collapsed on the Second Meadow pitch. The Biggleswade physio gave him first aid before he was taken by ambulance to Lister Hospital in Stevenage. The game was abandoned before kick-off.

Father-of-one Buck, who previously played for Ware, Hoddesdon Town and St Margaretsbury, was discharged from hospital at 4am yesterday after undergoing a brain scan. Shortly afterwards he posted a message of thanks to both Wormley and Biggleswade on social media, adding: "Sorry for ruining everyone's Friday Night Footy!" He later tweeted: "I want to thank the Biggleswade physio, their staff and the Wormley Boys for making sure I was safe throughout tonight's experience until

the paramedics got there. It definitely wasn't pleasant and [I'm] grateful to you all! "Apparently I've had some sort of stroke before, which I have no recollection of, being referred to specialists for further examinations. There's no damage to my brain or anything else from this stroke/seizure. "Looks like it's finally time to hang the gloves up. It's been a pleasure playing with so many teams and players over the last 18 years and no doubt I'll be along to watch games and see some familiar faces."

## FA CUP PREVIEW: FIRST ROUND QUALIFYING

# A LONG LOVE AFFAIR



**By Matt Badcock**

**T**HERE can't be any other managers in this season's FA Cup who have interviewed the competition's winning manager on the pitch straight after the final.

But then Long Melford boss Jamie Bradbury did work at the Football Association for 18 years. The 40-year-old used to work in the communications team and edited nine Cup Final programmes as well as being responsible for producing the content on their digital platforms. He'll even help with this season's final programme, but first there's the small matter of trying to create history with the Thurlow Nunn Premier Division club.

On Saturday they travel to Suffolk rivals Haverhill Rovers with a place in the FA Cup second round qualifying at stake. And Bradbury, who also travelled away with the England senior team, knows just how special English football's top knock-out competition is. "At our level, those FA Cup weekends are what people really look forward to," Bradbury told *The NLP*. "There's always an extra buzz. You can't take anything away from the league because that's always the most important part, but the FA Cup no doubt always forms part of every manager's objective at this level.

"Wherever you are in the pecking order, you want to get a little Cup run going

## Cup means so much to Villagers boss Bradbury

because of the prestige of the competition and the financial rewards – especially this year with the FA investing even more into the grass-roots game through the FA Cup."

### Memories

Bradbury joined the FA in 1997 and was originally in the competitions and registration department, which saw him work on the FA Cup as well as on final days where he would look after the mascots.

Then he moved onto the media side as he continued his run of never missing a final during his employment at HQ. "It was a privilege," Bradbury said. "You never take it for granted that you get the opportunity to go to these big games. It's part work,

part fun, if you like! I'm a Liverpool fan so 2006 was a major one for me with Steven Gerrard scoring that great goal against West Ham.

"And the first one at the Millennium Stadium was Liverpool v Arsenal (in 2001) and I went as a fan with some mates. All the fans mixed together and it was a great day around the stadium. As we say, '1-0 down, 2-1 up, Michael Owen won the Cup!' It was a great day and they are two massive memories.

### Passion

"But just being involved in the FA Cup for so many years was extra special. I remember going on the pitch to interview Carlo Ancelotti after one of the finals. The noise coming down from the fans on the pitch, you're standing a foot away from him and can't even hear what he's saying! There's lots of good memories."

Bradbury left the FA in 2015, which has allowed the former Basildon and Bowers United player to move

into coaching. After a spell as assistant to Jules Mumford, he took the top job last season and is enjoying the challenge.

"When I left the FA it freed up a lot of time to get involved in my true passion, which is football," he said. "I run a coaching school on Saturdays for kids and I've set up an Under-11s and Under-8s team.

"I played under the former manager Jules for another side and said I'd love to go in and help. At the time I'd just got my UEFA B Licence, and it was great to get back involved at the level I used to play.

"It's hard to not play every week, but I enjoy it. We're a small village club and players do it for the sheer love of being part of a team together. It took a little while to get them to understand actually they are also good players and rather than just be a village side they can push on and prove themselves as a solid Non-League outfit.

"We had really good form from the end of October onwards last season and it became a lot easier as a manager. When you're losing you always question yourself but we came up with an answer to win points. We've continued that this season and it's looking positive at the moment."

But Bradbury knows the challenge of overcoming Rovers, who knocked out Maldon & Tiptree in the preliminary round having come out on top in the Haverhill derby against Borough in the extra preliminary round, a game streamed live on BBC.

"We've done ever so well to win two games, the club has only been in this position once before in the FA Cup, as far as I'm aware," Bradbury said. "If we can beat Haverhill it will be a massive day for the club. But Haverhill are always a strong side to play.

"They got a magnificent win in the last round – Maldon & Tiptree are no pushovers. So we know we've got to be at our very best to get anything out of the game."



**NEW BEGINNINGS:** Long Melford boss Jamie Bradbury worked at the FA for 18 years

**WE ARE A SMALL CLUB AND THE PLAYERS DO IT FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME JJ**  
Jamie Bradbury



**CAPTAIN MARVEL:** Steve Adams, Long Melford's skipper, was on hand to score against St Margaretsbury in the FA Cup extra preliminary round

PICTURES: Pengelly Photo

# DRAW CERTAINLY HAS SIX APPEAL!

**By Mark Carruthers**

YOU could forgive Sunderland RCA and Clitheroe if Tuesday night's FA Cup Preliminary Round replay doesn't live up to their first meeting.

Last Saturday's meeting in Lancashire produced 12 goals, three of which came in injury-time as RCA secured a remarkable 6-6 draw, despite being two goals behind in the third minute of added-on time.

With the score at 6-4 and their hosts down to nine men, Dominic Moan snatched a goal to put an unlikely draw within his side's grasp.

With 96 minutes on the clock, Nathan O'Neill lashed home an equaliser to set off wild celebrations amongst the travelling support.

The replay takes place at the Ebac Northern League club's Meadow Park home on Tuesday night and RCA manager Martin Swales believes his side must win the game if their efforts in the first meeting are to mean anything.

"I've never witnessed anything like it during my time in the game," explained Swales.

"At 6-4 down, in the third minute of injury-time, you think it's done,

let's just get on the bus and get home.

"Then Dominic Moan gets one back and Nathan gets an equaliser and it's just sheer delight for all of us.

"I don't remember much about the aftermath of the equaliser, but I ended up hugging Nathan O'Neill in their penalty area, so that probably tells you all you need to know. We need to make it count in the replay.

"What happened last Saturday will mean nothing unless we get through the tie and we have seen what they are about now.

"We will have some key players back for the replay and we have things to put right. At the end of the day, despite what happened, we conceded six goals and that's not good enough.

"No matter what the score is, you can't come away from a game having conceded six goals and have a smile on your face. So we have to improve and that has to happen when they come to our place."

The winners of the replay will face a home tie against either Ossett United or Mossley in the First Qualifying Round.



## SPORTS GROUND DEVELOPMENT

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**THE remaining Step 3 clubs join the FA Cup party this weekend with a place in the second round qualifying up for grabs as well as a cheque for £6,000.**

**The draw for the first round qualifying has thrown up some intriguing ties with Hednesford Town hosting Tamworth one of the most eye-catching. Isthmian League North Romford host Southern League Premier Central high-flyers Kettering Town, a Non-League club synonymous with FA Cup history throughout the years.**

# EMIRATES FA CUP FIRST ROUND QUALIFYING DRAW

- Radcliffe v Stalybridge Celtic, Droylsden or Squires Gate v City of Liverpool or Glossop North End, Lancaster City v Trafford, South Shields v Garforth Town, Warrington Town v Burscough, Runcorn Marine v Irlam, Whitley Bay v Whitty Town, Marine v Scarborough Athletic, Colne v Hyde United, Newcastle Benfield v Workington, Dunston UTS v North Ferraby United, Knaresborough Town v Kendal Town or Selby Town, Atherton Collieries v Kildgrove Athletic or Ramsbottom United, Kisburgh Town v Farsley Celtic, Congleton Town v Consett, Wilton Albion v Bottesford Town, Clitheroe or
- Sunderland RCA v Ossett United or Mossley, Ashton Athletic v Morpeth Town, Maltby Main v Frickley Athletic, Parkgate v Litherland Remycs or Leek Town, Bamber Bridge v Tadcaster Albion, Basford United v Staveley MW, Highgate United v Stourbridge, Loughborough University v Walsall Wood or Cleethorpes Town, AFC Mansfield v Stourport Swifts, Romulus v Belper Town, Nantwich Town v Workop Town, Sutton Coldfield Town v Rushall Olympic, Quorn v Athertonstone Town, Coalville Town v Racing Club Warwick, Hednesford Town v Tamworth, Grimsby Borough v Stafford Rangers,
- Matlock Town v Halesowen Town, Barwell v Buxton, Davenport Town v Grantham Town, Micklegate Sports v Haughmond or Market Drayton Town, Anstey Nomads v Oadby Town, Wednesfield or Chasetown v Gainsborough Trinity, Redditch United v Rugby Town, Stratford Town v Alvechurch, Leverscot Green v Brackley Town Saints or Hadley, St Neots Town v Bishop's Cleeve, Burnham v Bury Town, Cambridge City v Brightlingsea Regent, Aylesbury United v Marlow, Heybridge Swifts v Newmarket Town, Harwell Town v Potters Bar Town, Brantingham Athletic v Spalding United, Corby Town or
- Dunstable Town v Hertford Town, AFC Sudbury v Royston Town, Ware v Lowestoft Town, Hendon v Harlow Town, Brentwood Town v Haringey Borough, Haverhill Rovers v Long Melford, AFC Hornchurch v Harrow Borough, AFC Dunstable v Woodbridge Town or Swindon Supermarine, FC Romania v Aylesbury, Cheshunt v Leiston, Hitchin Town v Godmanchester Rovers, Bowers & Pitsea v Takeley, Basildon United v Stamford or Peterborough Sports, Barton Rovers v Needham Market, Enfield Town v Bedford Town, Ramsgate v Sevenoaks Town, Hastings United v Kingstonian, Metropolitan Police v Cray Wanderers or Rusthall, Faversham Town v Worthing,
- Farnborough v Molesey or Lewes, AFC Uckfield Town v AFC Croydon Athletic or Hanworth Villa, Fleet Town v East Grinstead Town, Phoenix Sports v Lancing, Merstham v Cray Valley (PM), Raynes Park Vale v Loxwood or Erith Town or Spelthorne Sports, Hythe Town v Tonbridge Angels, Egham Town v Staines Town, Corinthian Casuals v Whyteleafe or Saltdane United, Margate v Horndean, Moneyfields v Thamesmead Town, Whitstable Town v Bognor Regis Town, Horsham YMCA v Tooting & Mitcham United, Corinthian v Horsham, Pagham v Whitehawk, Leatherhead v Herne Bay,

Beckenham Town v Walton Casuals, Burgess Hill Town v Folkestone Invicta, Dorking Wanderers v Hartley Wintney, Sittingbourne v Gosport Borough, Weymouth v Banbury United, Melksham Town v Merthyr Town, Bilton v Westbury United, AFC Stoneham v Cirencester Town, Salisbury v Yate Town, Cadbury Heath v Cinderford Town, Binfield v Buckland Athletic, Frome Town v Winchester City, Wimborne Town v Dorchester Town, Shaftesbury v Poole Town, Sholing v Hamworthy United, Plymouth Parkway v Street, Taunton Town v Thattham Town or Bemerton Heath Harlequins, Paulton Rovers v Basingstoke Town, Bridport v Tiverton Town, Bishop's Cleeve v Slimbridge or Wantage Town, Chipping Sodbury Town v Bideford or Bristol Manor Farm, Lyntonton Town v Royal Wootton Bassett Town or Lydney Town