



FROM THE RED LION TO THE NATIONAL LEAGUE

# Guissey AFC The History

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*with*

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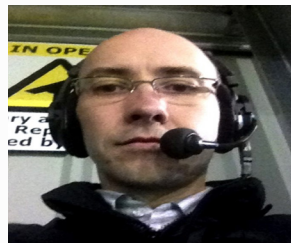
**Joe Priestley David Robertson**

**Tom Feaheny**

***Foreword by John Helm***

# Dedication

This book is dedicated to the host of staff, volunteers and contractors both past and present who have made Guiseley AFC the family friendly club that it is now an integral part of the local community and of the wider football family.



# The Early Days

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# Season 1956-57

**R**eigning West Riding County Amateur League champions Guiseley hoped they would be able to retain the championship trophy as they embarked on the new League campaign. In the end they would do so, but not in the circumstances anyone might have predicted.

The Nethermoor vintage of 1956-57 both shone and disappointed during a controversial campaign. It had started relatively positively when an early encounter with local rivals Yeadon Celtic saw the Lions come back from a goal down to win 9-1 with goals from Van Gelovan (4), Claughton (2), Witham (2), and Hawkins.

However, Guiseley soon began to slump and exits from the cup competitions, including the Wharfedale Challenge Cup which was won by Otley based DP&E, saw the Lions' season take a turn for the worse.

By early 1957 Guiseley were languishing towards the bottom of the table in 13th place when Mother Nature intervened.

Heavy snow and freezing weather meant that games could not be played for over five weeks – and this in the days where playing on a snow bound pitch was not uncommon. Without the benefit of floodlights and mid-week fixtures clubs could not fulfil all the required fixtures.

The season was also played out against a backdrop of great international political instability. In late 1956 the United Kingdom and France began bombing Egypt to force the reopening of the Suez Canal, the ensuing crisis leading to petrol rationing in the UK.

In Hungary, Soviet troops invaded to crush a revolt leading to the death of thousands while nearly a quarter of a million people left the country. Meanwhile Fidel Castro and his followers landed in Cuba to begin the revolution that would lead to the island's becoming a Communist state.

At home Prime Minister Anthony Eden resigned and was succeeded by Harold Macmillan, while in Europe the Treaty of Rome established the European Economic Community. IBM boffins created the hard disk drive and Elvis Presley purchased his famous home Graceland.

Manchester United won the First Division to become English football champions for the fifth time while Tottenham Hotspur were runners-up. Aston Villa won

## HAWKINS SCORED SEVEN FOR GUISELEY

Guiseley ..... 9  
Yeadon Celtic ..... 1

Guiseley completed a very happy Christmas with a slashing defeat of their neighbours, Yeadon Celtic, to make two doubles within two days. Both Celtic and Thackley, whom they beat on Boxing Day, were beaten in the opening matches of the season.

Celtic were outplayed in all departments. After a brisk start in which Celtic promised well and twice struck the woodwork with good shots, Guiseley went ahead through Hawkins. Celtic equalised shortly after when Forrest failed to hold a shot from close range.

After that, however, Guiseley settled down to play much the better football and goals were scored by Cousins, France and Hawkins to give them a 4-1 lead at half-time.

### Powerful Attack

In the second half it was all Guiseley, Celtic having little of the game and their defence being under pressure almost continuously.

Guiseley's half-backs and forwards linked up in fine style and, playing attractively, produced goals in quick succession. Hawkins was in his best form after a bad spell and scored all five second-half goals to make his total seven for the match.

On Boxing Day Guiseley visited Thackley and won 2-1 in one of the best games of the season. Both teams played well with Guiseley superior in the second half. France and Dean scored first-half goals for Guiseley after Thackley had opened the scoring.

a record seventh FA Cup, beating Manchester United in the final and denying their opponents the chance of being the first double winners of the 20th century.

Local sides had indifferent seasons, Leeds finished 8th in the First Division, Bradford City 9th in Third Division North and Bradford Park Avenue ended in 20th spot in the same division.

Yet a resolution to Guiseley's season was not to be so easily found. League officials began to panic as the fixture pile up became unmanageable, and a hastily-arranged play-off was devised to determine the League positions.

However, this solution was so controversial that the programme was halted. There could be no solution and so a no-competition was declared. So for the first time in Guiseley's long history, The Lions would finish the season without a final league position.

» WITH JUST TWO MINUTES LEFT ON THE CLOCK ALLEN ROBERTS HOOKED THE BALL INTO THE NET TO LEVEL THE GAME 4-4»





# FA Amateur Cup 1921-1974

Guiseley's first foray in the FA Amateur Cup was nearly a century ago in 1921-22 when they marked their debut with a 2-1 win at Monk Bridge Sports before losing 5-1 at Acomb WM in the Second Round Qualifying. The following season saw them exit in the Preliminary round as Liversedge recorded a 2-0 victory.

Rawdon clinched the local derby by 4-3 in the 1924-25 competition but in the following season Guiseley hit their stride with a resounding 6-0 victory over Low Moor in Qualifying Round One but they were swiftly brought back down to earth as Rawdon once again put paid to their hopes with a 4-1 home win after the first game at Nethermoor had ended all square at 2-2. The following season they progressed to Round Two where a home tie against Chilton Colliery saw the visitors go through to the next round with by a margin of 6-2.

Qualifying Rounds Two and Three proved to be the stumbling block in the campaigns that followed but in 1932-33 after disposing of local opposition in Luddendenfoot, Farsley, Meltham, Manningham Mills and Nether Edge in the regional qualifying rounds Guiseley found themselves in the unfamiliar territory of Round Three.

The exotically named Bournemouth Gas Works were to be the visitors to Nethermoor making the trip from the south coast long before motorways or Inter-City trains were even thought of. The visitors were also considered to be one of the giants of non-league football at the time and as their home tie in the previous round had attracted a crowd of 5,000 they made a bid to reverse the venue. A request that was roundly rejected by Guiseley.

The decision not to switch the tie was vindicated when over 2,000 crammed into Nethermoor on Saturday 4th February, 1933, with adults paying 7d and boys 2d but the home supporters were to suffer disappointment as the visitors triumphed 2-1 and eventually progressed to the semi-finals, where they lost by the same score to Stockton. It says much for the prestige that the game brought to Guiseley in that it was considered for many years afterwards to be the greatest event ever witnessed in the town.

Little did they know it at the time but this would also be the pinnacle of The Lions' participation in the national competition as Round 2 would be the furthest they would progress in subsequent years.

The Lions recorded one of their biggest victories in the competition on the way to meeting Bournemouth when they defeated Luddendenfoot 7-2 in Qualifying Round Two, a scoreline which nearly eclipsed the 8-1 win away at Horsforth in Qualifying Round Three six years earlier. By contrast it was neighbours Farsley Celtic who inflicted Guiseley's heaviest defeat in the competition when they scored seven without reply at Nethermoor in a Round One tie in the 1937-38 season.

The longevity of football can be evidenced by the fact that many of the clubs that Guiseley played over the years are still competing at various levels in the Pyramid including Harrogate Town, Farsley Celtic, Yorkshire Amateur, Swallownest, Ossett Albion, Altofts, Hall Road Rangers, Liversedge, Salts and Thackley whereas others such as Doncaster United Amateurs, Leeds Ashley Road, Kingston Wolves, Keighley Central, Brook Sports and Bradford Rovers have all fallen by the wayside for one reason or another.

As the growth of semi-professional football became more widespread a new competition, the FA Trophy, was inaugurated for the 1969-70 season with the senior semi-professional clubs taking part. The Trophy ran alongside the FA Amateur Cup until 1974-75 when the designation of professional and amateur was swept away and team members became simply 'players' and with this change came a new competition, the FA Vase. Guiseley's final tie in the Amateur Cup followed a familiar pattern as they lost 2-1 at home to Thackley at the first time of asking in Qualifying Round One but two decades later the replacement FA Vase would bring unprecedented success to Nethermoor.

weather. They would yield just three points out of a potential 18. Frustratingly this included a home defeat to Boston United where, despite a Liburd hat-trick and an Odejayi goal, Guiseley lost 5-4.

February brought the closure of airline Flybmi and a UK winter temperature record with temperatures of 21.2 °C in Kew Gardens. Huge wildfires were reported in England, including one on Saddleworth Moor in West Yorkshire.

Guiseley earned three points through draws during the month. Loan signing George Cantrill scored to earn a creditable point against eventual champions Stockport County while a Scott Smith header earned another at Telford.

The Lions then let slip a two goal lead at FC United to record a frustrating 3-3 draw. The high point of the month was a 4-3 West Riding County Cup victory over Barnoldswick in which two Clayton goals and strikes from Thornton and Smith earned Guiseley a place in the final.

Prime Minister Theresa May wrote to the EU to request a three-month Brexit extension in March. After 1-0 defeats to Alfreton, Southport, Curzon Ashton and Hereford fans were hoping that Guiseley could find the extra time needed to avoid the drop. The Lions hovered just above the relegation zone in 19th place. To add to Guiseley supporters' concerns was the sale of leading scorer Rowan Liburd to Hereford.

Every game began to take on heightened importance. A hugely significant fixture at home to Curzon Ashton finally brought a much-needed league victory thanks to a single goal from Purver. Days later, James notched to secure a 1-1 draw with York City.

Tiger Roll won the Grand National for the second consecutive year in April but The Lions were not able to get on a roll of their own. Costly defeats followed. A 3-2 loss at Spennymoor, despite a stunning Hatfield free-kick, was followed by a 2-0 reverse at Play-Off chasing Brackley.

Guiseley fans were also deprived of morale boosting silverware in the West Riding County Cup following defeat to Ossett United in a final hosted at their opponent's ground.

Easter brought The Lions just one point. A draw at home to Ashton secured by a James penalty

was followed up by a defeat at Blyth Spartans that did little to ease the nerves. Safety would go down to the wire.

The dominance of Manchester City continued as they won both the Premier League and FA Cup. There was the first ever all-English set of European finals. Liverpool beat Spurs to win the Champions' League while Chelsea thrashed Arsenal to secure the Europa League. Leeds missed out on promotion to the Premier League in the Play-Offs while Bradford City were abjectly relegated from League One.

Guiseley needed victory to guarantee survival as they went into their last home game of the season. Darlington were the opponents and, in a tense encounter, Felix scored the all-important goal to earn the three points that mathematically secured safety. Supporters could enjoy a final day trip with nothing at stake for the first time in a long while. A relaxed affair at Kidderminster saw The Lions end the campaign with a 2-1 win thanks to goals from Halls and Dyche.

The real achievements were not entirely reflected in the footballing records. Shrewd financial management, a revenue-boosting cup run and an eye for young talent had enabled the new managers to halt the slide. As the season ended the club was debt free and had a secure platform from which to develop.



# The 1970s

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# Season 1970-71

The football season returned in August 1970 with the images of the magnificent Brazilians lifting the World Cup and the summer that England surrendered their grasp on the trophy.

Guiseley were in less celebrated football circles and were competing in the Yorkshire League Division Three. Opponents that season included familiar names such as the two Harrogate teams, Town and Railway, and Bradford Park Avenue's reserve outfit.

Less well-known foes included Firth Vickers, the works team of one of the companies that would become BAE Systems, and a side representing Sheffield Waterworks.

Away from football the Vietnam War was in full flow and September marked the onset of Operation Jefferson Glenn, a campaign which would perpetuate fighting in Thua Thien Province until October 1971

Hopes were high at Nethermoor for the new campaign, under the management of Eric Roberts, and The Lions were expected to thrive in the League. In the League Cup, Guiseley beat Yorkshire League top dogs Bridlington Trinity 3-2 in front of a crowd of 350 at Nethermoor.

The side were beaten 3-0 by Mexborough in the next round, who themselves went on to the final only to lose to eventual league champions Lincoln United.

Fans and players travelling to away matches had the option of buying a flagship new car to drive. This was the year that Ford introduced the MK3 Cortina. British Leyland responded by launching the Morris Marina. The sounds of the charts of the time would have been emanating from many of the car radios of the era and would no doubt include hits by Janis Joplin, who died of an overdose; the Beatles, who split up; and Elvis Presley, who began his first tour since 1958.

In 1971 the United Kingdom introduced decimalisation meaning that shoppers and shopkeepers had to get used to a new way of counting the pennies. Guiseley fans were also faced with a mathematical challenge when The Lions faced Sheffield Waterworks - namely how to keep up with the score.

Division 3	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Stocksbridge Works	28	19	5	4	74	38	43
2 Brook Sports	28	16	8	4	60	46	40
3 Leeds Carnegie College	28	15	5	8	69	32	35
4 Guiseley	28	14	5	9	68	52	33
5 Harrogate Railway Ath	28	13	5	10	42	40	31
6 Sheffield	28	12	6	10	61	52	30
7 St Johns College	28	9	10	9	45	37	28
8 Ossett Town	28	10	8	10	48	44	28
9 Leeds Ashley Road	28	10	7	11	48	41	27
10 Hall Road Rangers	28	11	4	13	49	68	26
11 International Harvesters	28	9	7	12	50	52	25
12 Harrogate Town	28	8	6	14	34	45	22
13 Bradford PA	28	8	5	15	39	53	21
14 Firth Vickers	28	8	3	17	43	72	19
15 Sheffield Waterworks	28	3	6	19	23	81	12

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YORKSHIRE LEAGUE No. 2

SATURDAY 29th. AUGUST, 1970.

v

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»As for GUISELEY THEY FINISHED FOURTH IN YORKSHIRE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE»

Guiseley won 11-0 and striker John McCormick scored five goals.

Guiseley's goalscoring was better than their record keeping in the County Cup. The Lions beat Leeds Carnegie College 3-2 at Nethermoor in the First Round but were then ejected from the competition for fielding an ineligible player. Farsley Celtic went on to win the West Riding County Cup after having been champions the previous year.

Elsewhere in football Arsenal won the League championship and FA Cup double. They narrowly overcame Leeds United to win the League but the Yorkshire men won the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup by beating Italian side Juventus in the two-legged final. As this was the last year of the Fairs Cup Leeds took part in the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup Trophy Play-Off. This match was contested between the last winners and the winners of most finals and injury hit team lost 2-1 to their hosts Barcelona.

Halifax Town finished in third place in Division Three - one place ahead of Aston Villa. However, as only two teams went up at that time it was another season in

the third tier for the Shaymen. Bradford finished in 18th spot in the same division. The Villains, who were languishing in football's third tier, still managed to reach the League Cup Final but lost to Bill Nicholson's Tottenham Hotspur at Wembley.

The Seventies were also known for the number of odd competitions that arose. This was the year of the Ford Sporting League which ranked clubs on a complex point scoring scheme according to goals scored and bookings and red cards received. Oldham Athletic won the competition, winning a pot of £70,000 which had to be used on stadium improvements. In the same season Blackpool, who were relegated from the top flight, beat Bologna to win the Anglo-Italian Cup.

As for Guiseley they finished fourth in Yorkshire League Division Three. It was a disappointment to manager Eric Roberts, who had predicted a better season for the club.

However, it was enough to secure promotion for The Lions to the Second Division and better things lay ahead in a decade in which the UK would experience both tremendous political and societal change.

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Pages: Programme cover and teams versus International Harvester 29th August, 1970

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Study: Kaine Felix (7) threads the ball through the Cambridge defence for Guiseley's third

## **RUSS O'NEILL & MARCUS BIGNOT 2018 TO DATE**

JOINT MANAGERS



The Board appointed their first joint management team in 2018 when they recruited Russ O'Neill and Marcus Bignot to pick up the pieces from the Cox era. They also brought in an assistant manager in former England C Striker Paul Clayton. They set out to restructure the team and rid the club of a host of players who had been given costly long term contracts and they spent much of their first season doing this. They brought in fresh young talent and motivated individuals such as Aaron Martin who dreamed of playing in the Football League. He got that dream after a March 2020 transfer to Harrogate Town and played at Wembley in the promotion play-offs before moving into League Two with them. Bignot was appointed as a coach with the England Under-18 team and the management's interest in finding and improving young players saw them give opportunities to young Guiseley Academy players.



The UK had a new Prime Minister as Gordon Brown finally got the top job when Tony Blair stepped down. The new Wembley had hosted its first FA Cup Final, the first on the site in seven years.

The worst floods in living memory had struck most of the country and large chunks of Yorkshire were underwater. On top of all that the world's financial systems were teetering on the brink and ultimately the credit crunch would plunge the world into a 'Great Recession'

Having escaped the worst of the double deluge of water and creditors, the 2007-08 season began well for The Lions – undefeated for the first nine games of the season and going well. Change was however afoot. Terry Dolan had been appointed the club's first full-time manager a year previously but had not endeared himself to the Guiseley fans.

It had all started so well. August brought five straight wins and four clean sheets. The pick of the bunch was a 5-0 trouncing of North Ferriby United in which Marc Smith and Mark Bett scored two apiece with James Hanson adding the other goal.

By mid-September The Lions were top of the division and safely through to the next round of the FA Cup after a 3-1 First Qualifying Round victory at Durham City. All seemed to be going swimmingly.

Guiseley couldn't maintain the pace and defeat at Gateshead in the league saw The Lions slip to third, whilst Vauxhall Motors ended their FA Cup hopes. Expectations were now so high at Nethermoor that being in the top three but losing contact with the leaders brought increased pressure.

Guiseley made progress in the FA Trophy as Dominic Kreif and James Hanson's goals played an important role in seeing off the challenges of Prescot Cables and Hednesford as November loomed.

It would be a month that brought managerial changes. England manager Steve McClaren watched, safe and dry under his infamous brolly, as his side crashed to a 3-2 defeat at the hands of Croatia at Wembley.

The result meant that the national side would fail to qualify for a major tournament for the first time in 14 years and would be the first time England missed the European

## Diary of a groundhopper

TUESDAY, MARCH 27

Guiseley 2 Cammell Laird 1

ON THE day the FA confirm that the FA Cup final will definitely be at Wembley, I find myself heading towards a still-meaningful Cup Final in a competition that hasn't had kick-off times altered for the benefit of TV: the Unibond League Chairman's Cup.

I have spent the day basking in the sun on the Yorkshire coast, intending to take in Marske's game at night. After finding their secretary's phone engaged for a solid two hours, I speak to a guy from their opponents. He informs me that their game is scheduled for tomorrow!

By this time, I am somewhere

near Guisborough so panic sets in as I try to find another match in the area. I plump for a quick dash down the A19 and A1 to Guiseley in Yorkshire and arrive at Nethermoor at 7.15pm

I pay £7 at the gate and hand over another £1.50 for a programme. I am furnished with a teamsheet within seconds of asking for one. The pasty and mushy peas look irresistible so I do not hold out for long. All that is left to do is sample the real ale on offer in the clubhouse and I can go home. Oh yes, I have a football match to watch too!

Due to the clocks being put forward two days ago, it is still light as the teams kick-off. Summer is on its

way and I cannot wait for those football-less, hay fever-filled, horrible sweaty days to arrive: NOT.

Cammell Laird are a division lower than Guiseley but are in a rich vein of form. However, the home side could have been two up in the first couple of minutes. The pace of the match is ferocious with Guiseley looking slightly the stronger side. They edge in front by half-time.

During the break I rummage through the cosy club shop. Much to my dismay, this sort of wonderful place is becoming rarer at football grounds. I also notice ex referee Jeff Winter schmoozing in the hospitality area. He must be impressed with tonight's young officials as they are

having a superb match.

As the second half gets under way, I spring into action. I have been covetously eyeing up a smart, glossy poster advertising tonight's match. It is beckoning me as it hangs from the door of the hospitality room window and I know I must have it. Within seconds of gaining permission, the poster is in my pocket. My preciousssssss.

I can now calm down and watch the second half. Guiseley continue to dominate but cannot kill off Laird.

The home side do eventually score another goal, but, unbelievably, Laird score straight from the restart! In the end, though, the rightful team lift the trophy.

Review: From the Non-League Football Paper



Guiseley AFC - The History charts the progress of a football club with a proud 111 year history that has scaled the heights of Non-League up to the very pinnacle of the Pyramid - The National League.

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