



### The 1907 Great Ayton Celtic Team

Top : T. Williamson G. Johnson G. Rolfe W. Russel J. Rolfe  
 Middle : J. Thirling G. Hopper G. Ingledew  
 Bottom : Not Known G. Grainge A. Robinson D. Dowey R. Johnson

It is more than likely there existed a Great Ayton team in some form or other as early as 1889, under the promotion, stewardship & encouragement of the Kitching's, staunch supporters of local sports even to this very day. This is surprising, considering association football only really came of age in a professional sense with the formation of the Football League in the summer of that year - hence ensuring its ever increasing popularity as a game to be enjoyed by the masses.

We do know that 'The Grange' was used for the purpose of conducting 'footie' matches in the late nineteenth century.

Earliest official records however for any Great Ayton Soccer Team playing competitively, originate from the meeting minutes for the South Bank & District (SB & D) Football League.

These sources were kindly provided by the North Riding FA.

(NB South Bank lifted the FA Amateur Cup in 1913 – they were notably thwarted in lifting their Regional Cup. This honour befell a Great Ayton 'Rovers' eleven – a fact confirmed by the NRFA. It still appears to be their 'finest hour' (and a half) ☐.

(1913 regional cup winning team picture to be inserted)

It's not known if any name changes ever took place, but Great Ayton Celtic definitely existed both before and after the 'Rovers' success and it's certainly true that there was a Celtic both pre and post 1913. It's probable these are one and the same team, as any unregistered team ought not to be able to compete in a cup competition. Certainly this is a curious little anomaly, one which we would dearly love to solve. They themselves can certainly be forgiven any 'mix-up' with the events unfolding in France. It's highly likely of course, many of those young men, went to the front – never to return.

Pre 1923, however, Great Ayton Celtic played in what was known as the 'Cleveland League'.

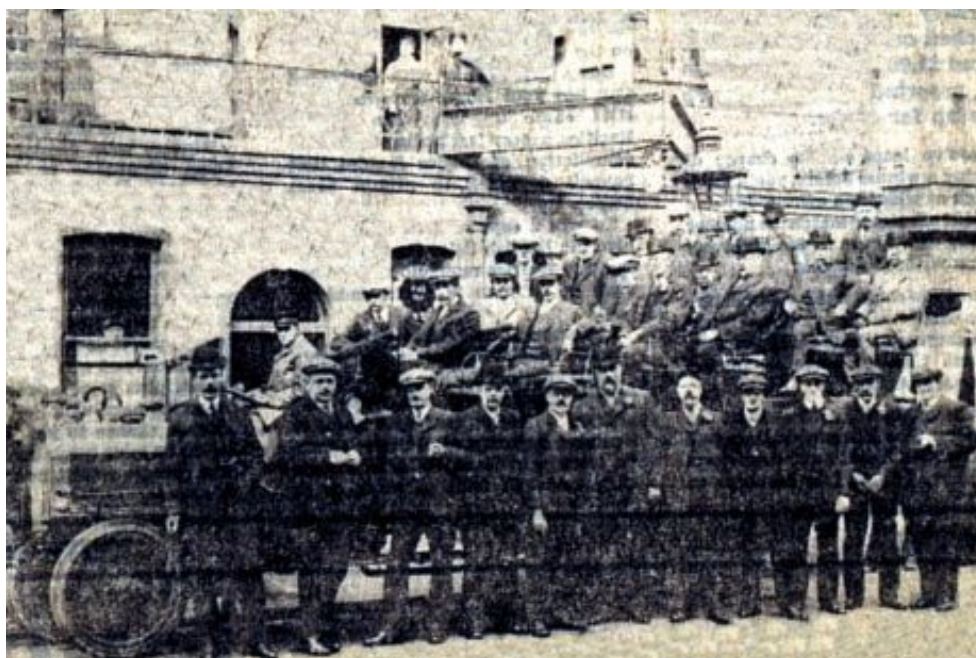




Great Ayton were originally admitted to the South Bank and District League, in 1923, after previously being members of an original 'Cleveland League' and were known as Great Ayton Celtic.

They then proceeded to be regularly and consistently fined the sum of 1/- for abysmal attendances at League Meetings. However there was one consolation. It would appear after an arranged match between local rivals, STOKESLEY, (at Stokesley), the latter were fined 2/6d to help recover the cost of a charabanc, ... or was it the ale!

Gt Ayton (now United), then re-formed in 1929, after being one of 8 teams to pull out of the SB & D (out 18) certainly as a direct result of the hardships following the 1926 General Strike. Clearly 5/- for charabancs to away games was a luxury even the most wealthy of villagers would find difficult to afford, during the hard couple of years which followed.



Charabanc about to set out for a South Bank away fixture - Evening Gazette cutting from Terry Larkin

### **Reminiscences of Bill Waugh Senior.**

The formation of the Great Ayton 'United' side, in 1928

( Re-registered as Great Ayton in 1929 in the SB & District League.)

folklore, and will appear in subsequent chronicles.

"A group of men met in the old Workingmens Club in Cleveland Street, Great Ayton.

Present were "the 5 Peacock Brothers", Arthur (known as Art), Ted (known as Rufus), Reg, Bill and Dick, Albert Laybourne, George Readman (Carol Readman's Father, who married Dougie McLean), and Bill Waugh Senior, (aged 18yrs).

They decided to form a football club, and called it Great Ayton United FC.

The Secretary was Albert Laybourne.

Three or four of the eight members present at the meeting, agreed to go the Annual General Meeting of the SB & D League that year (for the coming season 1928/9).

(NB the irony being, I can see them all sat round a pint, accusing each other of being responsible for NOT attending previous meetings some years before, and finishing up being fined and TOPPING THE LEAGUE, for non-attendance!)

Much more is known from the 1930's onwards, surrounding the 'exploits' and characters of Great Ayton United football

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