

Story of the 50/60 Club by Terry Ainsworth



In February 2022, Terry Ainsworth, football historian of the Lancaster Guardian, received the Loyal Supporter Award from the Royal Lancaster Infirmary for his fund raising efforts over the past 22 years.

Terry says, "This award wasn't an individual award to me, it was a team effort just like playing football and over the years the 50-60 Club has raised between £35,000 and £40,000 and it wasn't hard work, just great fun spending time with friends & supporters."

"My journey began in 2000 when I founded the 50-60 Club and asked five footballing friends from the 1950s & 60s John Townson, Joe Sherrington, Derek Irving, Alan Moorhouse and Tony Holman to join me and arrange a reunion of former North Lancashire League players. The first reunion took place at the Boot & Shoe at Scotforth and 75 players attended, enjoying a hot pot supper and reminiscing about the "good old days". After expenses were paid there was a surplus of £141 and as nearly all the local footballers had spent time in the Orthopaedic Ward at the RLI it was decided to donate the money to them. The demand for reunion tickets was so great that the club had to look for a larger venue and the Skerton Liberal Club was chosen following a recommendation by Joe Sherrington & from then on it became the club's headquarters, entertaining around 160 players on the reunion night held on the second Saturday of March every year.

These fantastic nights would begin at 7.30pm with a blast on the whistle from former Football League referee, Gerry Jones, and occasionally another blast on the whistle around

8.30pm would see a minute's silence held for colleagues who had passed away. The two snooker tables were covered with 50 or 60 photographs from my collection of over 2,000 photographs covering the North Lancs League from 1920 to 1970. Joe Sherrington always accepted responsibility for selling raffle tickets and he raised unbelievable amounts of cash every year, top salesman as well as a terrific teammate. Half-time would arrive at 9.30pm and our hosts would supply everyone with a drink and hot pot supper to invigorate tired limbs, especially jaw muscles. The final whistle blew around 11.30pm and we were left to reflect on the memories and friendships that have never faded in seven decades."

"Donations to the ward increased as the club began to expand its activities to a sponsored walk on the last Sunday in June from Kingsway to Caton on the cycle track, Cheese & Wine evenings at the former Fired Up Café on New Street in August and Italian nights at the Pizza Margharita in November. I remember contacting Sir Richard Branson for a prize that we could auction and he sent a rail ticket for two people to travel anywhere in Britain. I believe it raised £250 at a Pizza Margharita event but many Lancaster businesses supported us every year.

A great supporter of our efforts was Jim Bentley, former captain of Morecambe FC and later manager, who would drive from the Wirral, a round trip of 140 miles, to take part in our events and would present the cheques to ward sister, Leslie Allsop."



2007 sees Terry presenting a cheque to Leslie for £2,500 with Alan Moorhouse & John Townson



Jim can be seen here in 2009 presenting a cheque for £5,000 to Leslie"