

## **The forgotten little brothers by Stuart Fuller**

Ferdinand, Wilkins, Rooney, Terry. Legends in their own way I am sure you will agree. But what if I was to tell you I was talking about Anton, Graham, John and Paul? The siblings of Rio, Ray, Wayne and John? Not quite in the legends bracket are they? The same can be said for some clubs as well. Whilst some towns and cities can boast two (or more) clubs playing at a professional level, other places in England have a definite big brother v little brother arrangement.

### **Norwich City v Norwich United**

Last season was a good year for the two teams from Norwich. Whilst City triumphantly returned to the land of milk and honey, beating Middlesbrough in the Play-off final at Wembley, United stormed to the Eastern Counties League Premier Division Title, finishing 26 points above 2<sup>nd</sup> place Godmanchester Rovers. However, for a number of reasons the club declined promotion to the Ryman League. United were originally formed as Poringland back in 1903, playing at the superbly named "The Gothic". They were renamed in 1987 and moved to their current home, Plantation Park back in 1990. With United's best run in the FA Cup coming last season when they made it to the Second Qualifying Round it may be some time before they meet in a competitive match.

### **Cambridge City v Cambridge United**

Just a couple of seasons ago the two teams from Cambridge were separated by just one division as United were playing in the Conference Premier and City in the Conference South. Today they are separated again by three divisions as United have returned to the Football League whilst City suffered enforced relegation in 2008 when their Milton Road ground failed a FA Inspection. Worse was to come for City as they became embroiled in a legal battle over the ownership of the ground, which has now been demolished, forcing City to first groundshare with Newmarket Town, then Histon and now as of this season with St Ives Town. There will be playing in the Southern Premier League this season.

### **Oxford City v Oxford United**

In recent times Lewes have actually played both City and United in competitive games, although few Rooks fans will want to remember our visits to the City of Spires as we lost in the Conference Premier back in 2009, then crashed out of the FA Trophy in November 2014 to Oxford City now playing in the Conference South as of this season after being shunted across from the North Division. Last season City's experiment of importing La Liga cast offs almost paid off as they finished just outside the playoffs, although the locals didn't appear to warm to the experiment with crowds at Marsh Lane rarely broke the few hundred mark. City were once managed by Bobby Moore, with Harry Redknapp as his assistant.

### **Lincoln City v Lincoln United**

Whilst both Lincoln City and United play Non-League football, they are light years apart in terms of facilities. Conference National City have the 10,000 capacity Sincil Bank with four almost new stands, perhaps a permanent sign of the excessive spending that caused their downfall out of the Football League, twice. As each season passes, climbing out of the Conference becomes a harder and harder job, with last season's 15<sup>th</sup> place finish a hard pill to swallow for many fans. Travel West from Sincil Bank for a couple of miles and you will reach the leafy tranquillity of Ashby Avenue (or the more impressive Sunhat Villas & Resorts Stadium), home of The Amateurs, Lincoln United. Currently played three levels below City in the Northern Premier League Division One South, their local derbies are against the likes of Goole AFC and Rainworth Miners Welfare in front of a hundred or so fans.

### **Ipswich Town v Ipswich Wanderers**

In May 2013 Ipswich finally got their hands on a trophy in front of an excited crowd at Portman Road. Ipswich Wanderers that it, not Town. Wanderers won the Suffolk Senior Cup in that year on penalties in front of a crowd of 1,000. Whilst The Tractor boys have been stuck in the Championship ploughed field for a decade, The Wanderers are on the up. They were promoted back to the Eastern Counties League Premier Division in 2014 and finished last season in 9<sup>th</sup> place. Their chairman is a familiar name to some – Terry Fenwick – the man who decided not to tackle Diego Maradona when he scored “that” goal in the 1986 World Cup Quarter-Final. If only he did perhaps he could have now been chairman of Ipswich Town.

There are others of course. Swindon Town may consider their local rivals to be Oxford United or Bristol City but Swindon Supermarine, the original works team from the Supermarine airplane company, will have a different opinion. Southend United fans may think that their local rivals are Colchester United but what about Essex Senior League Southend Manor? There was a story a few years ago about a disillusioned Newcastle United fan deciding to turn his back on St James’ Park and support Newcastle Town. The only problem with this one is that the teams play 191 miles apart – Newcastle Town are based in Newcastle-under-Lyme.