

Up There Cazaly!

A historical look at Tonbridge Angels through the eyes of their supporters with original text by the late Brian Cheal. Part 13: Season 1963-64, promotion and a pair of county trophies



The 1963-64 season turned out to be the most successful season so far. Fourth position was attained thus ensuring promotion back to the Premier Division. In the FA Cup, the Fourth Qualifying Round was reached, the first time for many years, despite being drawn away from home in each round. There were also a couple of trophies with the Kent Floodlight Cup being won for the first time and the Kent Senior Shield returning to the Angel Ground after an absence of five years.

On Thursday, 30th April, 1964 Tonbridge ended their long and happy association with the Metropolitan League when the Reserves beat Romford Reserves 2-0. It was only their fifth win and for the first time, Tonbridge Reserves were firmly entrenched at the bottom of the table with just 13 points from 38 matches, 38 goals scored and a staggering total of 162 conceded. It was a question of economics and with an increasingly smaller professional squad more and more local youngsters were being drafted into a very strong league. Some horrendous defeats resulted and double figures were conceded against Oxford United Reserves and Charlton Athletic A.

The first team squad showed few changes from the one which had gone so close the previous term. Ronnie Skyme and John Dennis departed to Hastings and Dartford respectively and Willie Hinshelwood, who had often looked a fine player with a good nose for goal, left after just one, injury plagued, season. He was soon back in the game, linking up with Fourth Division Hartlepool. John Rainford was retained but was unable to break into the first team at all spending the

season with Bob Hailstones, Austin Dunne and Gus Simmons helping out the beleaguered reserves before retiring.

There were only two signings, Andy Bowman and Danny O'Donnell, both Scots. Bowman, a thick set, red haired, wing half, started his career at Chelsea before returning home to win a Scottish League Championship medal with Hearts. Coming south to try his luck once more he had spent two seasons with Newport County before arriving at the Angel where he was to form a powerful partnership with Geoff Truett. The diminutive O'Donnell, a tricky ball playing inside forward, had previously been with Brentford and Kilmarnock.

One of the keys to success was that, at last, Tonbridge managed to steer clear of the injury bug. Goalkeeper Fred Crump played in all 42 league matches as did full backs Joe Carolan and Peter Lovell; so too did Bowman, John

Kilford and O'Donnell. Gerry Francis only missed one and Truett two. With Ray Kemp and Alan Shackleton making 33 appearances each, Billy Wright 30 and Ron White 27, promotion was really won by 12 players. The only other players to make league appearances were Simmons and a young left half called Dave Waters, who made a promising debut at Canterbury on 23rd April 1964, the beginning of another fine Tonbridge career. For the total 68 first team games, Bowman, Carolan, Kilford and O'Donnell had 100 percent attendance records with Crump missing one, Lovell, Francis and Truett two each.

The Angels got off to a fine start with the first four league matches all won. Two goals from Truett, one a penalty, and one from Wright without reply brought a comfortable win against Trowbridge in a rather turgid affair, 1,739 had turned up on a warm afternoon and the team was Crump; Carolan, Lovell; Bowman, Kilford,



Back Row: Andy Bowman, Peter Lovell, Fred Crump, John Kilford, Joe Carolan, Geoff Truett. Front Row: Ronnie White, Gerry Francis, Ray Kemp, Harry Haslam (Manager), Danny O'Donnell, Billy Wright, John Smith (Trainer)

Gerry Francis

Reproduced from an article in Backpass, Summer edition of 2012, Phil Shaw relates how after a flight from apartheid in South Africa, Gerry Francis joined Leeds and became a standard-bearer for “coloured” players in white-dominated English football of the 1950’s.

In the beginning, decades before Lucas Radebe and Tony Yeboah sprang out of Africa to become cult heroes among the Leeds United faithful, and even pre-dating the days when Albert Johanneson cut an exotic dash along the flanks at Elland Road, there was Gerry Francis.

Not the Gerry Francis who captained England during the 1970s but the first black South African to play top-flight football in England. A fast, attacking player who could operate on the right wing or inside forward, he left behind the life he knew in apartheid-torn South Africa for a journey into the unknown of professional football in mid-1950s Yorkshire.

There he became only the second black South African, after Steve Mokone, to play abroad professionally. He was also a friend and colleague to John Charles, roomed with Billy Bremner, attended Jack Charlton’s wedding and was in the first side Don Revie selected for Leeds after he began his momentous reign as manager.

Francis is now 78 (ed. In 2012) and living in Canada with his Trinidadian wife Gloria, with whom he will celebrate his 50th wedding anniversary in August. The son of a mother of Dutch, German and African descent and father of South African descent, he was only 23 and turning out for the Blackpool Coloured Football Club in Johannesburg when, in 1957, he was recommended to Leeds by a scout. He paid his own fare to England, receiving VIP treatment on what was the jet’s maiden flight.

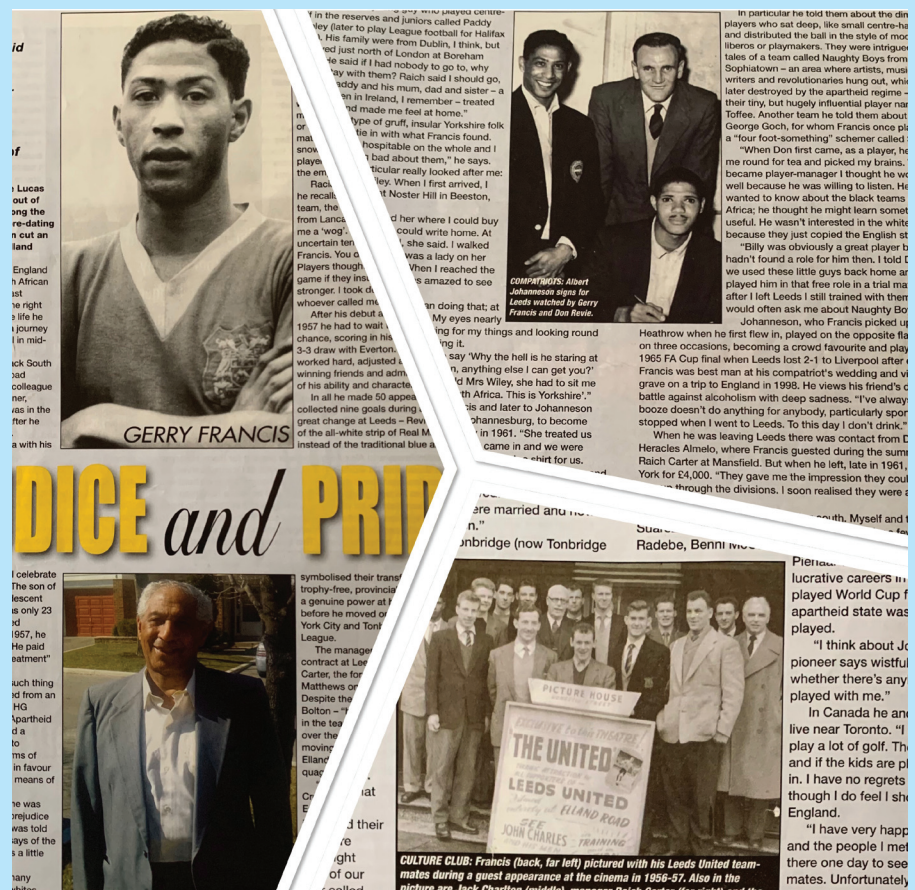
In South Africa, where there was “no such thing as a full-time footballer”, he had graduated from an apprenticeship to become a machinist in HG Williams’ shoe manufacturing company. Apartheid was then “at its ugliest” and he left behind a society where everything – from schools to hospitals, beaches to benches and all forms of sport – was segregated along racial lines in favour of the minority white population, often by means of the brutal suppression of non-whites.

In the West Riding, though the welcome was generally warm, he soon realised colour prejudice was not exclusive to Afrikaner people. “I was told there was no such thing in England”, he says of the system he escaped, “but I think there was a little apartheid there, too.”

There was certainly a “colour bar” in many British cities and towns, preventing non-whites from entering pubs, clubs, cafes and dance-halls, let alone renting or even buying houses. Not until 1965 and the Race Relations Act was such discrimination made illegal. Oswald Mosley, who had held a fascist rally in Leeds at Holbeck 20 years earlier, was still strutting around the country, stirring crude racism.

For Francis, as well as the taunts from some opponents and spectators, there was initial uncertainty surrounding such matters as whether he could share a bath or even socialise with his white teammates. Not to mention the cold, rain, snow and mud – a culture shock for a player raised on sun-baked pitches – and the emphasis on strength rather than skill.

Racial abuse was “an ongoing thing”, he recalls. “When I first got in the Leeds team, the captain Eric Kerfoot, who was from Lancashire, heard an opponent call me a “wog”. He told the guy in no uncertain terms “His



name is Gerry Francis. You don't call him anything else". Players thought it would put me off my game if they insulted me. It made me stronger. I took delight in making fools of whoever called me names."

After his debut against Birmingham in 1957 he had to wait two years for his next chance, scoring on his third appearance, a 3-3 draw with Everton. But Francis worked hard, adjusted and persisted, winning friends and admiration because of his ability and character.

In all he made 50 appearances and collected nine goals during a period of great change at Leeds – Revie's adoption of the all-white strip of Real Madrid instead of the traditional blue and gold symbolised their transformation from trophy-free, provincial under-achievers to a genuine power at home and abroad – before he moved on to Fourth Division York City and Tonbridge of the Southern League.

The manager who gave him his first contract at Leeds in 1957 was Raich Carter, the former England player Stanley Matthews once called "my ideal partner". Despite the scepticism of chairman Sam Bolton – "he wasn't too keen to have me in the team" – Carter stuck to his guns over the qualities of his 5ft 8in recruit, moving him to a wide role because of an Elland Road pitch Francis recalls as a quagmire.

"Mr Bolton's great favourite was Chris Crowe, who he thought could play for England (which he eventually did, once, as a Wolves player in 1962). But the crowd seemed to like me. At one point, when it was between me and him to play on the right wing, they were booing him because he was in the first team and I was in the reserves."

Carter's patronage was vital to Francis being able to integrate. "Raich asked me round to his house for tea. He wanted to talk to me about England because I didn't know anything. Coming from South Africa it didn't feel right for me to visit white people because I wasn't allowed to do that back home. Yet here was that great international footballer inviting me to his house. I felt awkward, but he brought me to his house to tell me what kind of player he thought I was. He said I reminded him of himself in his younger days.

"At the end of the season all the players went 'home'; some to Scotland or Ireland. Raich asked what I was going to do. He thought I would be bored and suggested I help the groundstaff boys at Elland Road and do a bit of training too.

"There was a young guy who played centre-half in the reserves and juniors called Paddy Stanley (later to play league football for Halifax Town). His family were from Dublin, I think, but they lived just north of London at Boreham Wood. He said if I had nobody to go to, why didn't I stay with them? Raich said I should go, so I did. Paddy and his Mum, Dad and sister – a beauty queen in Ireland, I remember – treated me so well and made me feel at home."

The stereotype of the gruff, insular Yorkshire folk did not always tie in with what Francis found. "They were very hospitable on the whole and I can't say anything bad about them," he says. "One person in particular really looked after me, my landlady, Mrs Wiley. When I first arrived, I was in digs with her at Noster Hill in Beeston, not far from the ground.

"One morning I asked her where I could buy pens and paper so that I could write home. At the stores across the road, she said. I walked over and as I went in there was a lady on her knees scrubbing the floor. When I reached the counter and looked back I was amazed to see she was white.

"I had never seen a white woman doing that; at home only black people did that. My eyes nearly popped out of my head. I was paying for my things and looking around to make damn sure I was really seeing it.

"The woman looked at me as if to say: 'Why the hell is he staring at me?' The shopkeeper said: 'Young man, anything else I can get you?' She could see I was looking. When I told Mrs Wiley, she had to sit me down and tell me calmly. 'This is not South Africa. This is Yorkshire'."

Mrs Wiley was "like a Mother" to Francis and later to Johanneson after he came over from Germiston, near Johannesburg, to become Revie's first signing as player-manager early in 1961. "She treated us better than the white guys," he laughs. "If we came in and we were going to a party she would go out of her way to wash a shirt for us.

"That's why Billy moved from there. He felt she was favouring us and didn't do anything for the Scottish boys. He moved to a boarding house run by the mother of Tony Leighton (who died aged 38 after playing for a succession of Yorkshire clubs), another young player at Leeds."

For a time, Francis had roomed with Bremner and is compatriot Tommy Henderson. They often fell asleep discussing their hopes, fears and experiences. "I first met them just after they had played for Scotland in a schoolboy international at Wembley. I didn't understand a bloody word! I asked Mrs Wiley what language they spoke in Scotland. When I learned English in South Africa we were taught to pronounce words properly!"

Bremner, of course, would become Revie's talisman as Leeds began their relentless pursuit of honours. His burgeoning talent was instrumental in marginalising Francis, although both captain and manager were interested in learning about the football culture in South Africa's townships and how it might be applied to the English game.

In particular he told them about the diminutive players who sat deep, like small centre-halves, and distributed the ball in the style of modern day liberos or playmakers. They were intrigued by the tales of a team called Naughty Boys from Sophiatown – an area where artists, musicians, writers and revolutionaries hung out, which was later destroyed by the apartheid regime – and their tiny but hugely influential player named Toffee. Another team he told them about was George Goch, for whom Francis once played and a “four-foot-something” schemer called Shakes.

“When Don first came, as a player, he invited me round to tea and picked my brains. When he became player-manager I thought he would do well because he was willing to listen. He really wanted to know about the black teams in South Africa; he thought he might learn something useful. He wasn't interested in the white teams because they just copied the English style.

“Billy was obviously a great player but Leeds hadn't found a role for him then. I told Don how we used these little guys back home and he played him in that free role in a trial match. Even after I left Leeds I still trained with them, and Billy would often ask me about the Naughty Boys.”

Johanneson, who Francis picked up from Heathrow when he first flew in, played on the opposite flank to him on three occasions, becoming a crowd favourite and playing in the 1965 FA Cup Final when Leeds lost 2-1 to Liverpool after extra time. Francis was the best man at his compatriot's wedding and visited his grave on a trip to England in 1998. He views his friend's death after a battle against alcoholism with deep sadness. “I've always said booze doesn't do anything for anybody, particularly sportsmen. I stopped when I went to Leeds. To this day, I don't drink.”

When he was leaving Leeds there was contact with Dutch club Heracles Almelo, where Francis guested during the summer and Raich Carter at Mansfield. But when he left, late in 1961, it was to York for £4,000. “They gave me the impression they could go all the way through the divisions. I soon realised they were a selling club.

“Eventually I decided I was going south. Myself and the lady who became my wife had been writing to each other for a few years as pen pals. We sent one another photos. Out of the blue she said: ‘Oh, I'm coming over’. It was just before they (the UK) said they were not taking any more immigrants. The cut-off was a Wednesday and she arrived on the Tuesday. Three weeks later we were married and now we've got two daughters and two grandchildren.”

Francis “thoroughly enjoyed” his time at Tonbridge (now Tonbridge Angels), the Kent part-timers where his teammates included Joe Carolan, the former Manchester United left back who directly opposed him in his second appearance for Leeds, a 6-0 drubbing at Old Trafford in 1959. “Joe's one of my greatest friends. He lives in Maidstone now and hasn't been well, but we're still in contact.”

However, the worst racial abuse he endured came while playing for Tonbridge at Dover. “You could hear everything that was shouted at those small grounds. I'd run rings round their defence and when we were coming off at the end a fight broke out between one of our players, a big defender called Gus Simmons and the guy who had been marking me. It was a terrible punch-up.”

South Africa had rid itself of inhuman partitions since he left (Tommy Henderson now lives there and the pair met up on his last trip “home”). While race remains an issue in English football – witness the Suarez/Evra and Terry/Ferdinand disputes – countrymen such as Radebe, Benni McCarthy, Quinton Fortune, Aaron Mokoena, Steven Pienaar and Phil Masinga have enjoyed lucrative careers in England. They have also played World Cup football whereas the apartheid state was a pariah when Francis played.

“I think about Jo'burg every day the pioneer says wistfully, “but I don't know whether there's anybody still alive that played with me.”

In Canada he and Gloria have retired and live near Toronto. “I try to stay active and play a lot of golf. There's a park next door and if the kids are playing soccer there, I join in. I have no regrets about my football career, though I do feel I should still be living in England.

“I have very happy memories of Leeds and the people I met. I hope to make it back there one day to see some of my old teammates. Unfortunately the travelling is very expensive for us seniors.

“But I wish the club and the supporters well and hope they soon get back to where they belong. They took a chance on a non-white player and I'll always be grateful for that.”

Truett; Francis, White, Shackleton, O'Donnell, Wright.

Two days later the crowd topped the 2,000 mark, by 50, for the visit of Dover and they witnessed a tremendous game of football with Ray Kemp, who had replaced the injured Shackleton, scoring a hat-trick after Allan Jones had given the visitors a 10th minute lead. It took Tonbridge just eight minutes to draw level with a beautifully worked goal instigated by Bowman who brought the ball through before sending a superb cross field pass to White. The chunky inside forward flicked it to O'Donnell who adroitly laid it into the path of Kemp to score from three yards with the Dover defence bemused. A fine goal indeed but it was well and truly surpassed when the Blues took the lead a minute before half-time when a seven pass move which started when Crump threw the ball out to his skipper, Carolan, who played the ball inside to Bowman. Bowman exchanged passes with White before finding O'Donnell who sent Francis clear down the wing. The South African's perfect cross was headed in by Kemp and the crowd roared. They knew that whatever the second half brought their admission money had been well spent. Five minutes after the interval the Pembury man completed his hat-trick when Kirkwood was unable to hold a Francis shot. Jones provided the pass which allowed Heath to reduce the arrears but Wright made it 4-2 to round off a wonderful evening's entertainment. Kemp scored again at Yiewsley where a home defender put through his own goal to make it 2-0 but, after a 2-1 victory at Barry, Tonbridge tasted defeat for the first time on 18th September when Dover gained revenge with a 3-2 win at the Crabble. Dartford ended the Angels' interest in the Southern League Cup after two draws and the FA Cup provided an early opportunity to avenge last season's shock at Eastbourne. In a rather dull match, devoid of the usual cup tie fervour, Tonbridge were never seriously troubled and one goal from Ray Kemp proved sufficient. A young Dane called Pip Sellebjerg made his debut at outside left but was only to play one more first team game.

The next round brought a trip to Hastings where a large contingent of Tonbridge supporters saw their favourites turn on their best attacking style to demolish the Premier League hosts. Gerry Francis hit top form with three goals, the second a vicious swerving left foot shot from 20 yards. Kemp and Wright also got their names on the score sheet and the same 5-2 score accounted for Sittingbourne twice in 12 days, first in the Kent Senior Shield at the Angel where O'Donnell and Wright scored twice each supported by a Truett penalty, the second an away league fixture which brought four goals for Danny O'Donnell who had made an impressive start to the season. Indeed the attacking play of the whole side had been most impressive but a trip to Folkestone brought a second league defeat, both goals coming from the Seasiders centre forward Tony Biggs whose aerial power showed up some worrying shortcomings in the Angels defence. Fortunately there was only one Tony Biggs.

There was a tremendous atmosphere in the next FA Cup tie at Maidstone with a large number of Tonbridge supporters in the 3,000 crowd. The "Stones" had a serious goalkeeping problem as all their regular keepers were injured and reserve centre half Peter Roberts had to be drafted in between the posts. It soon became obvious that the match was to be

a battle between Maidstone's fast, all-action style and the Angels more considered football and it was the home side who had the better of the first half, Mike Candey giving them a deserved interval lead. It needed a twice taken Truett penalty to bring the Blues level early in the second half but then Tonbridge began to take control. With Joe Carolan pushing forward, adding his skill to the attack on the right, and O'Donnell taking a leading role, the home side were struggling to stay in the game and they were destroyed by three goals in four minutes midway through the second half.

After 66 minutes Kemp headed in O'Donnell's cross and two minutes later Kemp's opportunism made it 3-1. In the 70th minute Francis blazed in an angled drive and suddenly Maidstone were beaten after an astonishing burst of attacking power and skill. The Angels toyed with them after that, Ray Kemp adding a fifth, his third, in the final minute, after Bowman and Francis had combined to send him through.

It had been a most impressive performance which was rewarded by yet another away match in the Fourth Qualifying Round, this time at Margate, another Premier Division side. Unfortunately, the Angels form deserted them at the vital moment, the home side running out 2-1 winners



Gerry Francis with Joe Carolan during his visit to the club in 2001

of a mediocre match. Tonbridge started quite brightly but missed some early chances and after that only Francis seriously troubled the home defence. Margate took the lead in the 49th minute when Crump pushed out Naysmith's dangerous cross only to see it rocketed back past him by Marshall's fierce shot from the edge of the box. The home side piled on the pressure and increased the lead after 70 minutes when Crump was slow to cut out a long cross from Hills allowing Blackburn to head in. Francis reduced the arrears with one of his spectacular solo efforts but that was the only bright spot of the afternoon for Tonbridge.

In between the two cup ties Poole and Ramsgate, both among the early pacemakers, visited the Angel for important league matches.

Poole's strong defence earned them a point, Kemp getting the vital equaliser to cement his position as Kent's leading goalscorer, but the fixture against Ramsgate brought headlines in the national newspapers. Our old favourite Tommy Bickerstaff had joined Ramsgate during the close season and led out the men from East Kent having been appointed captain for the day. In front of a crowd of 2,409, on a sunny afternoon, Tonbridge attacked from the start. They should have taken the lead in the sixth minute but Francis, uncharacteristically, shot wide from close range. The "Rams" took the lead with their first attack of substance when Clifton blasted in a shot from 25 yards. After 23 minutes Ray Kemp brought a fine fine save from Bickerstaff and two minutes later scored the equaliser but perhaps it would have been better if he had missed.

Kemp had picked the ball up in midfield and started to advance on the Ramsgate goal. As he did so, an anonymous moron in the crowd blew a whistle. Thinking it was the referee all of the players stopped in their tracks but the official Mr Frank Perkins waved play on. It was the Tonbridge centre forward who was quickest to react and he moved forward to fire the ball past the bewildered Bickerstaff. The referee then blew his whistle and

pointed to the centre spot. The visitors were incensed and surrounded Mr Perkins protesting vehemently, none more forcefully than player-manager Joe McDonald who was cautioned by the referee. When he persisted Mr Perkins ordered him from the field but McDonald refused to leave whereupon the referee took the only course left to him by abandoning the game.

Whilst all this was going on, about 400 Ramsgate supporters were outside of the ground trying to get in. Their special train had been delayed by a cow which had been electrocuted while trying to cross the railway line. Extra police were called to control a large, and understandably disgruntled, crowd who had gathered outside the pavilion, some of them calling for the referee, others demanding their money back. Eventually they were dispersed without any real trouble by a sympathetic and good humoured local constabulary.

Harry Haslam telephoned the Southern League to register a strong protest but later a calmer reflection agreed that the referee had little alternative. When the Southern League rang back Frank Perkins was already in the bath so the tea ladies were asked to leave the pavilion while he answered the telephone with a bright red towel around his midriff. Haslam sympathised with the crowd adding "but they can't say they didn't get enough excitement."

Regular supporter Frank James from Hildenborough, summed up most people's feelings when he said "You can't blame the ref but I would like to get my hands on the bloke who blew the whistle."

Oddly, when the game was eventually replayed, much later in the season, it resulted in a 1-1 draw.

Another strange occurrence around this time was the rumour that famous Italian club Inter Milan had been watching Tonbridge and were interested in signing four of the players. It was reported in the local paper that the club had received a telephone call from someone purporting to be a representative of

Inter. Haslam was a little perplexed: "This sort of thing can be unsettling but I don't know if the caller was genuine or not. It could be someone's idea of a joke." Nothing came of it and nothing further was heard.

While the first team were being knocked out of the cup at Margate, Tony Burns made a return to the Angel Ground with Arsenal's Metropolitan League side but he had little chance to show his progress. Far more busy was his opposite number Mick Gevaux making his debut. Gevaux, on loan coincidentally from Arsenal, gave a promising display, but was unable to prevent the young Gunners from running up a 4-0 win. The JAC's continued to perform well, McNaughton gaining selection for Kent Juniors against Middlesex, whilst Joe Carolan was selected for the Southern League representative side to play Cambridge City with John Smith called upon to act as trainer for this match. Gevaux continued to impress with his displays for the Reserves but suffered a very serious injury in his fourth game against West Ham "A", having to be rushed to hospital after receiving a heavy blow to the kidneys. He was to be out of action for a long time and needed an operation to remove parts of a damaged kidney.

October ended with a 3-2 defeat at home to Kings Lynn, a rather rugged encounter which saw Truett opening the scoring for the visitors with a rather spectacular own goal and Francis injured, but November, although it was to have a rather painful sting in its tail, was a profitable month for Tonbridge as they sought to make up leeway in the league after the distraction of so many cup ties. The Angels had fallen to halfway position but had several games in hand over most of the teams above them. The next four league games were all won with 16 goals scored and seven conceded. By 23rd November Tonbridge had climbed back into third place with 19 points from 13 games and a good goal ratio of 37-21. Only Corby with 45 had scored more.

The attack had certainly been producing some scintillating football with Francis and O'Donnell showing

Geoff Truett



Geoff Truett was born on 23 May 1935, in Forest Gate, Essex. He was evacuated to Amersham, Buckinghamshire during World War II and as a youth he was involved in athletics, competing in the shot put and javelin.

Truett began playing for Wycombe Wanderers alongside brother Jim, scoring 63 goals in 114 appearances in all competitions between 1952 and 1957. While playing with Wycombe, Truett won the Isthmian League in 1956 and 1957 and was a runner-up when he played in the 1957 FA Amateur Cup Final against Bishop Auckland at Wembley Stadium in front of 90,000 spectators. As



in the Amateur Cup semi-final of 1955, Wycombe couldn't topple the Bishops who won 3-1. Following interest from a number of professional clubs, Truett was a member of the London XI team which played in Switzerland in 1957.

Truett then played in the Football League for Crystal Palace, scoring five goals in 38 league appearances between 1957 and 1962. He later played for Tonbridge between 1962 and 1970, remaining the player with the record number of starts, with 517 in all competitions, the only player to have more appearances was Mark Gillham. While playing with Tonbridge, Truett won the 1965 Kent Senior Cup and he was twice voted as the club's Player of the Year. Remarkably, his benefit match in March 1968 attracted a complaint from the Lords Day Observance Society as it was played on a Sunday! Truett finished his career with Hastings United, retiring in 1973 at the age of 38. Truett combined his semi-professional playing career with working as a builder. After retiring as a player Truett worked as a buyer for a number of building firms in the Croydon area. He died on 5 January 2015, aged 79, following a short illness. At the time of his death he was living in Cophorne, West Sussex with his daughter Jane, after his wife Josie had moved into a nursing home. He also left a son, Daniel, and four grandchildren.

One of Tonbridge Football Club's greatest players and leading appearance maker has died at the age of 79.

Dynamic centre-half Geoff Truett joined the club in 1962 from Crystal Palace and went on to make 517 appearances, finding the net an astonishing 115 times.

Truett represented the club until 1970 – twice voted player of the year – and helped the Angels gain promotion to the Southern Premier Division in the 1963/64 season and triumph in the Kent Senior Cup the following year.

As a young Angels fan in the early 60s, Geoff Calderhead, 68, remembers Truett's heroics at the old Angel Ground.

"He was a crowd favourite and my hero as a teenager," he said. "Angels had some excellent players in those days, but Truett was the best of the lot and in my opinion is probably Angels' greatest ever player.

"What I remember best about him was his leadership skills on the pitch and the amount of goals he scored as a defender. He was a real specialist from the penalty spot and in all the years I watched him play I certainly can't remember him missing one."

Truett's distinguished career at the Angels coincided with a host of celebrated players turning out the club. Illustrious teammates included Tony Burns – who went on to play for Arsenal, Brighton and Charlton – and Malcolm MacDonald, who would become the first man to score five goals in a single game for England.

Long-time fan Tim Balsdon, 71, still watches the Angels home and away most weeks and was lucky enough to train with Truett as a teenager, whilst on the fringes of the first-team squad.

"He was a real powerhouse of a player, but a very gentle man off the pitch," he said. "We had some exceptional players in those days, including a lot of ex-professionals, but Geoff outshone them all and stood out as a leader.

"It seems strange now that a defender could score so many goals but in those days they used to bring the ball out from the back a lot more. Geoff was great at that, a bit like Franz Beckenbauer. He was very difficult to stop once he started breaking forward.

"He was a complete player, a colossus for the club. Even now when I watch the games with the older fans, very rarely does a match go by where his name is not mentioned."

Tonbridge Angels director and former chairman, Colin Fry, said: "He was a brilliant player who left me with great memories and for a powerful man he had a great touch. Believe me this bloke had it all, he was tremendous."

spectacular skills and Kemp finding the net regularly but they had to rely on Kilford and Truett to get the goals in a mud bath at Gloucester, for a 2-1 win. Francis returned to the side after missing a couple of games for the visit of Southern League newcomers Stevenage Town, whilst Alan Shackleton had taken over the number eight shirt from Ron White. Tonbridge started the match as though they were still in slumber and suffered a rude awakening when the visitors raced into a two goal lead in the first 15 minutes. Shackleton headed in a corner after 36 minutes and O'Donnell equalised seconds after the interval. Then Francis took over with two amazing goals in just over a minute. In the 56th minute he sped down the right wing and crashed in a fierce shot past the startled Stevenage goalkeeper from the narrowest of angles.

There seemed little danger when a minute later he received the ball on the edge of the penalty area, closely marked and facing his own goal. He flicked the ball up with his right foot over his left shoulder, ran round the marking defender and, as the ball dropped, he calmly lobbed it over the advancing goalkeeper into the net. It took some believing. Understandably Stevenage were demoralised and Shackleton added a fifth nine minutes from time.

Francis was again on the mark at Clacton, scoring twice in a 4-1 win, the other goals coming from Kemp and Wright. Joe Carolan had a superb game and spent most of the second half prompting his forwards as he pushed up from right back. It was a class display. A week later Burton Albion visited the Angel and contributed splendidly to a real thriller although it was Tonbridge who eventually triumphed by 5-3, two goals from Kemp and one each from Francis, Shackleton and Truett.

On Monday, 25th November, Arsenal visited the Angel Ground for a special challenge match which had been arranged as part of the deal which had taken Tony Burns to Highbury. Unfortunately a very wet evening kept the attendance down to just over 3,000 but those that braved the

elements were treated to a really memorable evening. Arsenal included eight of their regular First Division side with their expensive signing from Italian club Torino, Joe Baker, at centre forward. Neither Ian Ure or George Eastham, the other two big names, were included and Tony Burns was in goal, but it was still a powerful side with Irish International Billy McCullough at left back. Tonbridge fielded a pair of Irish International full backs. Peter Lovell was sadly unable to play and Arsenal loaned Terry Neill who, in his one and only appearance in a Tonbridge shirt, gave an immaculate display from the right back position.

The full ine-ups were: Tonbridge: Fred Crump; Terry Neill, Joe Carolan; Andy Bowman, John Kilford, Geoff Truett; Gerry Francis, Alan Shackleton, Ray Kemp, Danny O'Donnell, Billy Wright. Arsenal: Tony Burns; Fred Clarke, Billy McCullough; John Sneddon, Laurie Brown, Vic Groves; Terry Anderson, Geoff Strong, Joe Baker, John Samuels; George Armstrong.

The Gunners started confidently, strolling around, stroking the ball to each other whilst Tonbridge played the part of awe struck onlookers. Then Carolan made an interception midway in his own half. He waited for an Arsenal forward to advance on

him drawing him on before selling a dummy and calmly dribbling round him. Slowly advancing towards the halfway line the Angel's inspirational captain cleverly beat another two opponents before passing to Truett. The message to his colleagues was clear. Although Arsenal were First Division opponents their team consisted of fellow human beings. It took some fine goalkeeping by Crump to keep the score blank for the first half but the men from Highbury were no longer able to dominate. With Kilford beginning to match the calm authority of Neill and Carolan and keeping a tight rein on Baker the whole side gradually grew in confidence. Bowman and Shackleton were prominent and as the first half drew to a close Francis and Wright began to trouble Clarke and McCullough.

After the interval it was Tonbridge who stepped up the pace and the crowd began to exercise their lungs. On the hour the roof of the long stand nearly came off when the Angels took the lead. Francis, who was beginning to make McCullough wish he had stayed at home, burst down the right wing and drove in a hard cross which Shackleton adroitly nodded down for Kemp to crash in from close range. Three minutes later Tonbridge, incredibly, increased their

Ronnie White

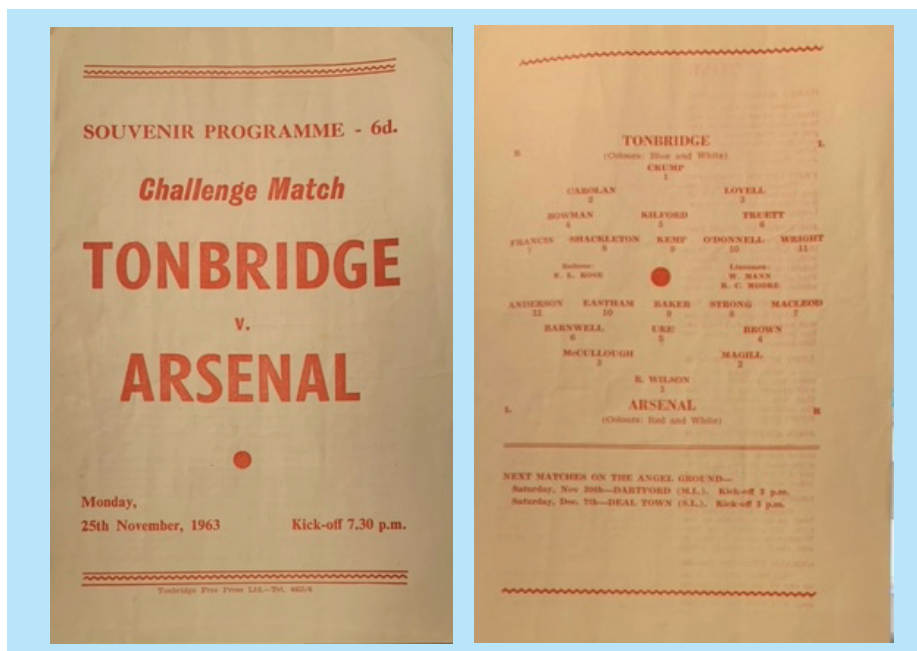


Ronnie White was born in Bethnal Green on 9th November 1931.

He played Sunday league football for the famous Brady Boys Club in London's East End, but he had to leave when he turned 18. He went on to Maccabi Sports and it was there that a scout went to see him play and asked him to join Charlton. Initially White thought it was a wind up but he made his debut against Wolves in the team including Eddie Firmani and Derek Ufton. Ron Burgess, a truly great player, was his marker but Charlton won 5-2 and White scored. In the famous Christmas

game of 1957, Ron played against Huddersfield, who after 62 minutes were 5-1 up but Charlton came back to win 7-6!

Ronnie signed for Tonbridge in July 1962 and made his debut against Burton Albion at the beginning of the 1962/63 season. He made 97 appearances for the Angels, scoring eight goals before retiring at the end of the 1963/64 season. Sadly Ronnie died in his early 50's.



lead. Shackleton sent a superb pass out to the left into the path of Wright who flashed in a low drive from a narrow angle. For a while Arsenal appeared a little stunned. Soon they realised that their pride was hurt and stormed back into attack but the "boys in blue" were now feeling 10 foot tall. They had a real battle on their hands and the crowd roared themselves hoarse. Brown pulled one back for the illustrious visitors but in the 75th minute Shackleton capped a storming second half display by making it 3-1. Arsenal fought hard to retrieve the match but Tonbridge were equally determined. The closing stages of the match were like a cup tie but although Strong scored the Gunners second, with two minutes remaining, Tonbridge hung on to clinch a famous victory.

It was back down to earth with a bang the following Saturday when a Bobby Laverick inspired Corby went nap. It was only 2-1 after 70 minutes but three goals in seven minutes made it an unhappy 100th appearance for Fred Crump. The nadir of the season was reached a week later when bottom placed Deal Town came to the Angel and shared four goals, a Truett penalty giving Tonbridge a slightly fortunate point. After a 1-1 draw at Trowbridge, a much improved Tunbridge Wells side proved stubborn Christmas opponents and the Angels had to work hard to achieve the double. Both games were won by 2-0. A crowd of 2,000 saw the first encounter, at the Angel, when

Kemp and Francis were the scorers. Ron White had returned to the team in place of Billy Wright and Shackleton bagged both goals in the return at the Culverden Stadium two days later. Peter Peters was still on the wing for the Wells and he had been joined in their forward line by two other "old Angels" Johnny Dougan and Bob McKenzie.

Gerry Francis had more cause than most to celebrate Christmas this year as he received the news that he had been selected for the South African World Cup squad. He never actually played though because that country's apartheid policy caused them to be banned by FIFA.

1963 ended with Tonbridge in seventh place (P18 W11 D3 L4 F45 A29 Pts 25) and with games in hand over all the teams above. The New Year began with a visit from Crawley, so often Metropolitan League opponents but this time making their first Southern League appearance at the Angel. Goals from Shackleton and Truett were enough to send them away pointless. Bowman and Truett had by now blended into a great pair of wing halves, both fine individual players who became even better when paired. The ball playing skills of Francis, White and O'Donnell earned Tonbridge a lot of free kicks outside the penalty area and the two wing halves perfected the art of turning a good proportion of them into goals.

Truett liked a long run at the ball but Bowman always seemed to roll the ball into his path at just the right pace and place. The second goal against Crawley was typical of so many with Geoff taking Andy's pass in his long stride and blasting it in from 25 yards.

Fred Crump capped a fine display by saving a penalty in the closely fought promotion battle at Cheltenham but was unluckily beaten when the only goal of the game was deflected past him. Goals from Carolan and Kemp saw Tonbridge safely over the first hurdle of this season's Kent Senior Shield against Bexley United, formerly Bexleyheath and Welling, on a bitterly cold night at the Angel. The next three league matches were all won, 11 goals being scored in the process, but rather heavy weather was made in beating bottom club Barry by four goals to two. Ron White had a superb match but must have grown a little frustrated as he saw his colleagues waste so many of the chances that his skill had created. Truett gave another display of power shooting, breaking the net in scoring the third goal. Francis bagged a brace as Crawley were beaten 4-1 at a very muddy Town Mead, after some early scares, and Yiewsley, managed by former Tonbridge winger Tommy Dougal, were beaten 3-1 at home. Lowly Gravesend, who included newly signed Gordon Quinn at inside left, proved spirited opponents playing some surprisingly good football to share four goals and it was thanks to Crump's excellent goalkeeping that Tonbridge escaped with a point.

Carolan and Truett each made their 100th first team appearance on 8th February 1964 against Sittingbourne when Francis scored the only goal of the game. The Kent Senior Cup brought a first ever visit to Herne Bay, who were unbeaten in the Aetolian League and a comfortable 5-0 victory. Shackleton ended a fairly barren spell with a couple of goals, the others coming from Francis, a Truett penalty and an own goal from former Tonbridge defender John Miles. It was a pity that some of the goals could not have been saved for the next two league games when a 2-0 defeat at Poole was followed by a dour goalless draw at Ramsgate, leaving Tonbridge

fifth (P27 W16 D5 L6 F61 A38 Pts 37) level on points with Cheltenham who had played a game more. Kings Lynn had drawn away at the top with 45 points from 28 games, Corby had taken 40 points from 28 games, whilst Folkestone were third with 39 points from 25 games.

There was no joy for Kevin McCurley on his return to the Angel Ground with Canterbury, except perhaps the satisfaction of taking part in a fine game. Billy Wright returned to the Tonbridge left wing with O'Donnell reverting to inside forward and Shackleton taking over the number nine shirt from Kemp who was left out. There were goals for both Shackleton and Wright, another Truett penalty and an improved performance as a very useful looking Canterbury side were beaten 3-0, whilst Cheltenham were losing at home to Burton. The tough, experienced Folkestone side ended the Angels interest in the Kent Senior Cup for another year with a 2-0 victory at the Angel, Tony Biggs getting on the score sheet again, but while this was going on the promotion chase took another twist when the free scoring Corby were beaten on their own ground by Cheltenham.

Fred Crump, Joe Carolan, Andy Bowman and Danny O'Donnell were all selected for a Southern League representative side which drew 3-3 at Yeovil against a side selected from Bath, Weymouth and Yeovil. Tonbridge returned to Southern League action with a 6-2 home victory over Gloucester City, Shackleton leading the way with a hat-trick. On the day that Team Spirit won the Grand National, much of that quality was needed at Stevenage, where an O'Donnell goal gave the Blues a most creditable point in appalling conditions. At the start the pitch was ankle deep in mud and water but hidden in the slimy mud were a number of stones and flints which were churned up to the surface as the game progressed. Both Crump and Wright were taken to hospital afterwards to have cuts stitched but fortunately both were soon able to resume first team action.

Easter came with the top positions looking like this:

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kings Lynn	31	23	2	6	77	34	48
Folkestone	29	20	6	3	62	25	46
Corby	32	20	4	8	100	47	44
Cheltenham	32	17	9	6	70	40	43
Tonbridge	30	18	6	6	71	41	42

Tonbridge began with a trip to Ashford on Good Friday which resulted in a dull goalless draw. For the visit of Folkestone on Easter Saturday, Harry Haslam decided to give the side a more physical outlook by bringing in Gus Simmons for Ron White. It did not really work as Folkestone completed their third victory of the season in as many games against Tonbridge by the odd goal in three. It was a fairly physical encounter though and the closest of the three with Truett becoming the only Tonbridge player to score against Folkestone this season. At least Tony Biggs was prevented from scoring for once. There were two more goals from Truett on Easter Monday when Ashford were beaten 3-0 in the return but it had been a slightly disappointing holiday and Tonbridge had fallen back a little in the promotion race which now looked like this:

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Folkestone	32	22	6	4	67	29	50
Kings Lynn	34	24	2	8	80	38	50

Corby	35	22	5	8	108	48	49
Cheltenham	35	20	9	6	80	43	49
Tonbridge	33	19	7	7	75	43	45

What we did not know at the time was that Tonbridge would not taste defeat again, in any match, this season whilst Corby's goal machine was about to dry up. The "Steelmen" were only able to score another six goals in their last seven matches, only two of which were won. They were still five points ahead of Tonbridge, who had two games in hand when they visited Kent on 11th April for what was a most vital match. Ray Kemp celebrated his return to first team duty, a month after being dropped, with a couple of goals, Danny O'Donnell added a third and with a lone reply from centre forward Hukin, Corby finished a well beaten side. It was a good time for Tonbridge to record their first win over the Northamptonshire outfit at the fourth attempt.

It was Kemp, who gave Tonbridge the lead at Kings Lynn, latching on to a good pass from Bowman. The home side soon equalised and a first class game ensued with the Angels having slightly the better of things but unable to beat the "Linnetts" goalkeeper Walls for the second

Billy Wright



Billy joined Tonbridge FC during the summer of 1962 from Millwall and was to enjoy three seasons at the Angel Ground making 145 appearances and scoring 37 goals - not a bad return for a left winger. In season 1963/64 he was part of the squad that earned promotion from the Southern League Southern Division to the Premier, at the time a top tier of non-league competition.

His early football career saw him start out at Blackpool in 1950 as an understudy to the great Stanley Matthews, with appearances therefore somewhat limited, followed by a spell at Leicester City where he helped them win promotion. Then came stints at Newcastle United and, at the other end of the country, Plymouth Argyle.

His time at Millwall proved to be somewhat limited due to injury and he left after just 16 appearances to join Tonbridge.

After leaving the Angels Billy linked up with Bexley United.

Billy died on 14th April, 2021 at the age of 89.

Twelve days, one promotion, two cups

Monday, 27th April 1964 – Southern League - Attendance: 2,000

Tonbridge (5) 7 (Shackleton 2, O'Donnell 2, Francis, Kemp 2) Gravesend & Northfleet (1) 2 (Easton 2)

With a seven goal grand-slam Tonbridge leapt into the Premier Division on Monday night. Cheering supporters mobbed the team as they left for the dressing room and cries of "Up the Blues" could be heard from the railway station.

Although it was pretty obvious from the start that the Angels were going to get both points from this match (they only needed one to secure promotion), few people could have hoped that the result would have been so overwhelming.

The first goal came after only one minute when Alan Shackleton slipped in the ball from a Bowman pass. It bounced out from the bar, but the linesman ruled that it was over the line.

Play seemed to lack the urgency that might have been expected from such a vital game but no fault could be found with Tonbridge's efficiency in front of goal.

O'Donnell slammed in their second in the 18th minute following a free kick and Gerry Francis put them three up just two minutes later.

But the Angels did not have it all their own way and it wasn't long before Gravesend's inside right Easton caught their defence off guard and reduced the arrears.

Then right winger Jeans nearly followed this up, but the ball went wide.

In the 30th minute speedy Ray Kemp raced the Gravesend keeper for the ball. The keeper got there first but he fumbled it and Kemp rocketed home from some way out.

Gravesend were taken completely unawares just seconds before half time when they thought the ball had gone over the line and their defenders stopped play. With a neat move, O'Donnell took full advantage of the situation and crashed the ball in from short range.

Another desperate attempt by Gravesend in the 65th minute narrowed the gap when Easton again slipped the ball in from close range.

But with only five minutes to go, Tonbridge pressed home their superiority with two good goals from Kemp and Shackleton.

Tonbridge: Crump, Carolan, Lovell, Truett, Kilford, Bowman, Francis, Shackleton, Kemp, O'Donnell, Wright.

Gravesend: Reed, Wales, Amato, Cross, Newcombe, Bridge, Jeans, Easton, McGuinness, Cortine, Myers.

Mr Harry Haslam, the Tonbridge manager, spoke on Tuesday about the Angels' new role in the Premier Division.

"I will not forecast what the gates will be like next season, but it is quite possible that people who haven't come to see us in the last year will turn up to games," he said.

"With the newly-formed Floodlight League and Premier Division football it will be a completely different programme at the Angel Ground."

Finally, Mr Haslam said:

"THANK YOU to the Board of Directors for sticking to a policy which has sometimes proved expensive but has finally paid off.

THANK YOU to the Supporters Club and the newly formed Angels Club who have been a tremendous help.

THANK YOU to the crowd who have behaved in an excellent manner and have given us tremendous support.

THANK YOU (last but not least) to the lads themselves. They may have had their bad patches but they have brought us through.

Friday, 1st May 1964 – Southern League – Attendance: 1,150

Burton Albion (2) 2 (Barker, Raynor) Tonbridge (0) 3 (Kemp, O'Donnell, Bowman (pen))

Promotion-winning Tonbridge ended their dramatic season on a dramatic note on Friday night. After trailing by 2-0 in the first half of their last game, they beat Southern League Cup winners Burton Albion by a penalty goal in the last minute of the game.

For both teams this suspenseful game provided a fitting climax to an epic season, and Burton, who have admitted few betters in recent months, yielded to a side which in the second half, produced persistent attacks which the Albion defence, one of the best in the League, found impossible to hold.

Burton had a good first half and took a 17th minute lead when Barker scored from an unselfish pass by centre forward Raynor.

Raynor got his own goal after 33 minutes, scrambling the ball into the net after falling on it in the goalmouth.

After that Tonbridge began to assert their superiority and although there was some excellent defensive work by Burton's Finney and Reeves at full back, and centre half Aston, the second half went very much the way Tonbridge wanted it.

A header by Kemp opened their scoring after 57 minutes and O'Donnell gave them the equaliser when his header bounced into the net off the underside of the crossbar in the 75th minute.

At any time in the next 15 minutes, the Albion goal might have fallen, but it was not until the final minute that Reeves fouled Francis and Bowman scored the winner from the spot. It was Burton's first home defeat since 23rd December.

Monday, 4th May 1964 – Kent Senior Shield Final – Attendance: 1,933

Tonbridge (3) 3 (Truett, Francis, Shackleton) Dartford (0) 1 (Taylor)

Tonbridge proved their elevation to the Premier Division of the Southern League was justified when they beat Dartford in the final of the Kent Senior Shield on Monday before a crowd of 1,933.

They played as a premier team and although heavy rain just before the kick off left puddles which stopped the movement of the ball at times they had a plan of campaign which carried them through, no matter what Dartford – already in the Premier Division - did.

Tonbridge's first goal came in the 22nd minute when an indirect free kick against Redmond for obstructing Wright was awarded on the corner of the goal area. Bowman tapped the ball to Truett, who put it through the wall of Dartford players standing on the goal line and into the net. Three minutes later a Francis cross was side footed into the net by Wright.

The Angels' third goal followed the award of a free kick for a foul on Wright, taken by himself. He lobbed the ball into the goal area where Shackleton nodded it home.

Dartford's solitary goal – Crump did not have a lot of difficulty in dealing with the visiting shots - came midway through the second half when left half Craggs worked his way out to the wing and inside right Taylor turned his centre into the net.

From then on Dartford trebled their efforts, but sterling work by Lovell and Carolan kept them at bay.

And how the crowd cheered when Joe Carolan went up to receive the shield from Mr C. Turner of the KCFA.

Wednesday, 6th May 1964 – Kent Floodlight Cup Final First Leg – Attendance: 893

Dover Athletic (0) 1 (Jones) Tonbridge (1) 1 (Shackleton)

Outclassed and outmanoeuvred for much of the game, Dover were lucky to hold a polished Tonbridge team to a 1-1 draw at Crabble in the first leg of the Final of the Kent Floodlight Cup on Wednesday evening before 893 spectators.

Right from the start Tonbridge looked the more dangerous combination. Tonbridge took the lead in the 32nd minute. Outside left Wright picked up a pass on the half-way line and after a long solo run crossed for Shackleton to head home. Even after the change round Tonbridge maintained their advantage with several lightning attacks on the Dover goal. Centre forward Kemp had hard luck on two occasions when his shots hit the woodwork.

Dover's equaliser came in the 72nd minute when hard working centre forward Allan Jones bundled the ball into the net. Half back Dave Hudson crossed from a free kick from the touchline and Kirkup headed into Crump's arms, but Crump fumbled the save, Jones knocked it from his arm and it bounced into the net.

Saturday, 9th May 1964 – Kent Floodlight Cup Final Second Leg – Attendance: 1,788

Tonbridge (0) 1 (Francis) Dover Athletic (0) 0



Kent Senior Shield winners: Back Row: John Smith (Trainer), John Kilford, Fred Crump, Peter Lovell, Geoff Truett, Andy Bowman, Alan Shackleton, Official, Official. Front Row: Billy Wright, Ray Kemp, Joe Carolan, Gerry Francis, Danny O'Donnell

time. Two goals from Wright and a Truett penalty were enough for a comfortable win at Deal and Monday, 20th April brought Cheltenham to the Angel Ground, a visit which attracted a crowd of over 2,000 on a very wet night. They must have been pleased with the entertainment provided. After early pressure from the visitors, Truett put the Blues ahead, rocketing home one of his specials from 15 yards in the 23rd minute. Six minutes later the men from Gloucestershire equalised through Crichton and, despite several dangerous attacks at both ends, the score stayed the same. Both goalkeepers, Crump and Barton certainly earned their money. With Corby losing at home to Ashford on the same night that point was enough to guarantee Cheltenham promotion together with Folkestone and Kings Lynn. Corby now had 53 points with only one game left to play whilst Tonbridge were just a point behind with four matches remaining, although Corby had a considerably superior goal average.

Four points were now needed to be sure of promotion and the first of these was gained at Canterbury with a goal from Shackleton. With Truett unavailable, David Waters made a promising League debut at left half.

Much more would be heard of him although not for a while. Coleman managed a goal for Clacton on their last visit to the Angel Ground, the Essex club having already withdrawn from the Southern League for the following season, but scores from Shackleton, O'Donnell and Wright ensured a comfortable win, despite the heroics of another Wright, the visitor's goalkeeper. Two days later, Monday, 27th April, Gravesend came to Vale Road but were rather in the role of film extras, for this was the night that Tonbridge clinched promotion and they certainly did it in style with a grand display of the exciting football that had been the hallmark of the side at its best. Gordon Quinn did manage to get his name on the score sheet for the Fleet but two goals each from Kemp, Shackleton and O'Donnell and one from Francis gave the Blues a 7-2 victory and meant that Gravesend, so often a bogey team in the past, had conceded 15 goals in two visits to the Angel Ground.

The league campaign ended with a trip to Burton, a real celebration trip, in more ways than one. A sunny spring afternoon made the long coach trip all the more pleasant though, of course, spirits were already high and a lovely evening was perfect for football. The

match itself was most entertaining with both sides playing open attacking football and we were also treated to some entertaining refereeing from that great character Roger Kirkpatrick. As a Midlander he was already well known by the Burton people but had not yet progressed to the Football League and was completely unknown to the Tonbridge party. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the referee being a showman we had to admit that he did not miss a trick.

In the build up to Tonbridge's second goal a Burton player committed a foul. Joe Carolan protested but the referee waved play on, the ball was played quickly resulting in a goal. After pointing to the centre circle, Kirkpatrick turned to Carolan "what did you say? Joe just smiled and said: "Good decision".

A hard pitch and a lively ball was not conducive to controlled football but Burton, unbeaten at home since the end of December and having just won the Southern League Cup, started confidently and were two goals up by the interval. After a half-time chat between Harry Haslam and the referee the ball did not appear to have quite so much air in it for the second half which greatly added to the spectacle. Headers from Kemp and O'Donnell brought the scores level and in the last minute Tonbridge were awarded a penalty. Andy Bowman, the only regular first team player not to have scored a goal, was given the task and slotted it in with great aplomb to give the Angels a fine win. Truett, unable to get away for the long midweek journey, was replaced by Gus Simmons who, in only his second Southern League match of the season, proved a capable deputy.

There was much to celebrate and the products of the famous brewery town have seldom tasted so good. It was a tired but happy band that arrived back in the not so small hours of the following morning. The season was not yet over, however, there were more trophies to be won and in between the last two league games, Brighton and Hove Albion brought a strong side to the Angel for Austin Dunne's benefit match. Despite their

hectic end of season programme Tonbridge also fielded the regular first team although Austin himself, replaced Geoff Truett for the second half, making his last appearance in a Tonbridge shirt. Roy Jennings opened the scoring with a first minute penalty after Bowman had handled. Tonbridge forced their Fourth Division opponents on the defensive as they strove for an equaliser but it was Brighton who scored again when speedy winger Peter Knight broke away in the 29th minute. A minute later Shackleton was fouled in the penalty area but when, local referee, Billy Mann pointed to the spot, goalkeeper Fred Crump was summoned up to take the kick which he duly converted with a “there’s nothing to it really” look. A goal from Francis on the hour brought things level and that is how it stayed. Most importantly the game had been well supported, a just reward for Austin Dunne who had been a great servant to the club. In his eight seasons with Tonbridge he had appeared in every position except goal, never giving less than his all, but he will be best remembered for his games at half back and for his tough tackling and determination.

On Monday, 4th May, Dartford were the visitors for the Final of the Kent Senior Shield. The “Darts” occupied a midway position in the Premier Division. Led by manager Alf Ackerman they included former Tonbridge winger Johnny Dennis. Tonbridge fielded the side which had finished the season: Crump, Carolan, Lovell, Truett, Kilford, Bowman, Francis, Shackleton, Kemp, O’Donnell, Wright.

It was a fine match with both sides producing football worthy of the Final. The Angels really hit top form and Johnny Bourne was kept busy in the visitor’s goal before Dartford were rocked by two goals in a three minute spell midway through the first half. The old firm of Bowman and Truett combined for the first after Tonbridge had been awarded a free kick on the six yard line. Andy Bowman tapped it to his trusty partner who somehow forced it is through the crowded goal area. In the 25th minute Francis took a corner on the right which eluded the leaping Bourne and Wright came

in from the far side to score with a well placed shot. When Shackleton headed in Wright’s free kick three minutes after the interval the game was as good as over but Dartford never stopped trying and gained a consolation when Bobby Taylor scored after 62 minutes.

It only remained to play the final of the Kent Floodlight Cup, a two legged affair, with Dover who had won the Eastern Section on goal average from Ramsgate. Tonbridge had dominated the Western Section, winning it by five clear points. Of the 10 matches played seven had been won and two drawn with the impressive goal tally of 35-9. The only defeat had been the first match of the tournament, at Sittingbourne, by the odd goal in three. Revenge was gained the following week when the “Brickies” were crushed 6-2 at the Angel with two rare goals from Ronnie White, the second a delicious curving lob from near the corner flag. It was Geoff Truett’s turn once again to show his scoring prowess with a brace in the 4-0 win over Sheppey, one of his specials breaking the net. Erith were beaten 5-1, Dartford 5-0 and Gravesend 8-0. The Fleet were demoralised by the fleet of foot Gerry Francis and Danny O’Donnell, Francis scoring four times and O’Donnell three.

The final was something of an anti-climax with both sides understandably looking a little jaded after a long season. A 1-1 draw at Dover, a goal each from Shackleton and Allan Jones, made Tonbridge firm favourites but they made heavy weather of the return and it was not until four minutes from time that Francis scored the only goal of the game with a cool piece of finishing, that brought the cup to Tonbridge and mercifully saved everyone having to endure extra time.

With the Juniors also picking up a couple of trophies, it had been a most satisfactory season, but the Shields and Cups were very much the icing, its was promotion which really made the cake. Once again Tonbridge had come with a strong late run. Of the nine league games, five were won, four drawn with 23 goals scored, 11 conceded. With Corby’s challenge fading it was enough to gain fourth place and promotion by four points.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Folkestone	42	28	7	7	82	38	63
Kings Lynn	42	28	5	9	94	44	61
Cheltenham	42	25	10	7	92	49	60
Tonbridge	42	24	11	7	98	54	59
Corby	42	24	7	11	114	56	55

Southern League First Division 1963/64

		P	W	D	L	F	A	GA	Pts
1	Folkestone Town	42	28	7	7	82	38	2.16	63
2	King's Lynn	42	28	5	9	94	44	2.14	61
3	Cheltenham Town	42	25	10	7	92	49	1.88	60
4	Tonbridge	42	24	11	7	98	54	1.81	59
5	Corby Town	42	24	7	11	114	56	2.04	55
6	Stevenage Town	42	21	6	15	70	59	1.19	48
7	Ashford Town	42	19	9	14	73	57	1.28	47
8	Burton Albion	42	19	8	15	76	70	1.09	46
9	Poole Town	42	17	11	14	75	61	1.23	45
10	Dover	42	18	9	15	86	75	1.15	45
11	Canterbury City	42	16	12	14	66	66	1.00	44
12	Crawley Town	42	20	2	20	81	71	1.14	42
13	Trowbridge Town	42	16	9	17	71	78	0.91	41
14	Clacton Town	42	19	1	22	76	88	0.86	39
15	Gloucester City	42	17	4	21	88	89	0.99	38
16	Yiewsley	42	15	8	19	63	77	0.82	38
17	Sittingbourne	42	15	8	19	52	70	0.74	38
18	Ramsgate Athletic	42	13	9	20	57	55	1.04	35
19	Tunbridge Wells Rangers	42	10	8	24	47	89	0.53	28
20	Gravesend & Northfleet	42	7	9	26	43	96	0.45	23
21	Deal Town	42	5	7	30	48	106	0.45	17
22	Barry Town	42	3	6	33	33	137	0.24	12

Ironically the four sides promoted were the same four who had been relegated two years previously. Only Corby bettered Tonbridge's 98 goals scored, a tribute to the skilful attacking football so often produced by the "boys in blue". The defensive record was the fourth best in the division.

The complete record for all first team matches was:
P68 W40 D17 L11 F169 A83

Ray Kemp was overall leading scorer with 32 goals, followed by Gerry Francis with 31. Alan Shackleton scored 27, Geoff Truett 26, Danny O'Donnell 18 and Billy Wright 17.

The Angel's Club inaugurated the Tonbridge Player of the Year Award which was voted for by supporters being given voting slips at one of the late season matches. The popular winner was Geoff Truett with John Kilford's cultured centre half play earning him second place and Gerry Francis third. Of course all of the 12

regular first team players played a full part in the club's success. Full backs Joe Carolan and Peter Lovell were absolute models of consistency whilst Truett would be the first to acknowledge the importance of Andy Bowman to the side. Fred Crump had enjoyed his best season helped, no doubt, by playing behind a settled defence. Forwards Gerry Francis and Danny O'Donnell had thrilled the crowd with their skills whilst Francis's goal tally was a tremendous achievement for a winger, not that Francis was an orthodox winger or an orthodox anything. Ray Kemp, who started the season with such a flurry of goals, Alan Shackleton, after his early season injury and Billy Wright were all dangerous players near goal and Ron White had often been the creator for them.

More than anything else, however, Geoff Truett's combination of wholehearted endeavour and spectacular shooting had captured the

hearts of the supporters. An honest player, he could always be depended upon for 90 minutes effort. Big and powerfully built he was quite a sight as he surged, tank like, into attack with those blonde wisps of hair flapping over his high domed forehead. He will be remembered most of all for his dynamic shooting but even more remarkable than his power was his consistent accuracy. For someone who shot as hard and as often as Truett it was amazing how few flew hopelessly high and wide. Even allowing for penalties, 26 goals in a season is a phenomenal achievement for a wing half.

Austin Dunne, John Rainford and Ron White were released, the latter two retiring. White had made 98 first team appearances in two years with Tonbridge. He had graced the inside forward positions creating a host of goalscoring chances and delighting the more discerning fan with his subtle skills, control and superb passing.

Southern League First Division Player Statistics 1963/64

Name	SL	FAC	SLC	KSC	KSS	KFC	Total	Goals	Career Apps	Career Goals
Bowman, Andy	42	4	3	2	3	12	66	1	66	1
Carolan, Joe	42	4	3	2	3	12	66	2	124	2
Crump, Fred	42	4	3	2	3	11	65	(18)	147	
Francis, Gerry	41	4	3	2	3	11	64	32	117	46
Harlot,						1	1		1	
Kelly,						1	1		1	
Kemp, Ray	34	4	3	1	3	7	52	34	117	64
Kilford, John	42	4	3	2	3	12	66	1	115	13
Lovell, Peter	42	4	3	2	3	11	65	1	294	3
O'Donnell, Danny	42	4	3	2	3	12	66	20	66	20
Sellebjerg, Pip		1	1				2		2	
Shackleton, Alan	34			2	2	9	47	26	95	54
Simmons, Gus	2		1			1	3		114	3
Truett, Geoff	40	4	3	2	3	12	65	25	123	39
Waters, Dave	1						1		1	
White, Ron	27	4	2	2	2	10	47	2	97	7
Wright, Billy	31	3	2	1	2	10	49	17	81	28
() = clean sheets								+ 4 own goals		

Southern League First Division 1963/64

Date	Opponents	@	Comp		Res		Att	Pos	Goalscorers
Sat 24/08/1963	Trowbridge Town	H	SL		W	3 0	1739	3	Truett 2 (1 pen), Wright
Mon 26/08/1963	Dover	H	SL		W	4 2	2050		Kemp 3, Wright
Sat 31/08/1963	Yiewsley	a	SL		W	2 0	850	3	Kemp, Eagles og
Mon 02/09/1963	Dartford	H	SLC	1i	D	2 2	2238		Kemp, O'Donnell
Sat 07/09/1963	Eastbourne United	a	FAC	1Q	W	1 0	1362		Kemp
Mon 09/09/1963	Dartford	a	SLC	1ii	D	2 2	1290		Truett pen, Francis
Sat 14/09/1963	Barry Town	a	SL		W	2 1	375	2	Kemp, Francis
Mon 16/09/1963	Sittingbourne	H	KSS	QF	W	5 2			Wright 2, Truett pen, O'Donnell 2
Wed 18/09/1963	Dover	a	SL		L	2 3	1413		Kemp, Carolan
Sat 21/09/1963	Hastings United	a	FAC	2Q	W	5 2	3208	4	Francis 3, Wright, Kemp
Wed 25/09/1963	Folkestone Town	a	SL		L	0 2			
Sat 28/09/1963	Sittingbourne	a	SL		W	5 2	1470	5	O'Donnell 3, Francis, Wright
Wed 02/10/1963	Dartford	a	SLC	1r	L	0 2	756		
Sat 05/10/1963	Maidstone United	a	FAC	3Q	W	5 1	2946		Kemp 3, Truett, Francis
Mon 07/10/1963	Poole Town	H	SL		D	1 1	2398		Kemp
Wed 09/10/1963	Sittingbourne	a	KFC		L	1 2	800		Frayne og
Mon 14/10/1963	Sittingbourne	H	KFC		W	6 2	1592		Kemp 2, White 2, O'Donnell, Wright
Sat 19/10/1963	Margate	a	FAC	4Q	L	1 2	3173	10	Francis
Mon 21/10/1963	Sheppey United	H	KFC		W	4 0			Francis, Truett 2, Kemp
Sat 26/10/1963	King's Lynn	H	SL		L	2 3	1987	12	Francis, Kemp
Tue 29/10/1963	Sheppey United	a	KFC		W	2 1			Truett 2
Sat 02/11/1963	Gloucester City	a	SL		W	2 1	1270	10	Kilford, Truett pen
Mon 04/11/1963	Gravesend & Northfleet	a	KFC		D	1 1			Kemp
Sat 09/11/1963	Stevenage Town	H	SL		W	5 2	1746	9	Shackleton 2, O'Donnell, Francis 2
Sat 16/11/1963	Clacton Town	a	SL		W	4 1	605	5	Wright, Francis 2, Kemp
Sat 23/11/1963	Burton Albion	H	SL		W	5 3	1864	3	O'Donnell, Francis, Kemp, Shackleton, Truett
Sat 30/11/1963	Corby Town	a	SL		L	1 5	1171	7	Truett
Sat 07/12/1963	Deal Town	H	SL		D	2 2	1473	6	Truett pen, Kemp
Sat 14/12/1963	Trowbridge Town	a	SL		D	1 1	650	8	Shackleton
Thu 26/12/1963	Tunbridge Wells Rangers	H	SL		W	2 0	1983		Kemp, Francis
Sat 28/12/1963	Tunbridge Wells Rangers	a	SL		W	2 0	2000	7	Shackleton 2
Sat 04/01/1964	Crawley Town	H	SL		W	2 0	1589	5	Shackleton, Truett
Sat 11/01/1964	Cheltenham Town	a	SL		L	0 1	1581	7	
Mon 13/01/1964	Bexley United	H	KSS	SF	W	2 0	250		Carolan, Kemp
Sat 18/01/1964	Barry Town	H	SL		W	4 2	1385	4	Francis, Kemp, Truett, Shackleton
Sat 25/01/1964	Crawley Town	a	SL		W	4 1	762	4	Truett, Francis 2, Kemp
Mon 27/01/1964	Yiewsley	H	SL		W	3 1			Francis, Kemp, O'Donnell
Sat 01/02/1964	Gravesend & Northfleet	a	SL		D	2 2	1128	4	Shackleton, Francis
Sat 08/02/1964	Sittingbourne	H	SL		W	1 0	1578		Francis
Sat 15/02/1964	Herne Bay	a	KSC	2	W	5 0		4	Shackleton 2, Miles og, Truett pen, Francis
Wed 19/02/1964	Poole Town	a	SL		L	0 2			
Sat 22/02/1964	Ramsgate Athletic	a	SL		D	0 0	1067	5	
Mon 24/02/1964	Gravesend & Northfleet	H	KFC		W	8 0			O'Donnell 3, Wright, Francis 4
Sat 29/02/1964	Canterbury City	H	SL		W	3 0	1689	4	Shackleton, Wright, Truett pen
Wed 04/03/1964	Dartford	a	KFC		W	1 0			Francis
Sat 07/03/1964	Folkestone Town	H	KSC	QF	L	0 2	1400	4	
Mon 09/03/1964	Dartford	H	KFC		W	5 0			Shackleton 3, Francis, Truett
Sat 14/03/1964	Gloucester City	H	SL		W	6 2	1117	4	Shackleton 3, Wright, Lovell, Cox og
Mon 16/03/1964	Erith & Belvedere	H	KFC		W	5 1			Truett, O'Donnell 2, Francis, Shackleton
Sat 21/03/1964	Stevenage Town	a	SL		D	1 1	904	5	O'Donnell
Tue 24/03/1964	Erith & Belvedere	a	KFC		D	2 2			White, Shackleton
Fri 27/03/1964	Ashford Town	a	SL		D	0 0			
Sat 28/03/1964	Folkestone Town	H	SL		L	1 2			Truett
Mon 30/03/1964	Ashford Town	H	SL		W	3 0			Truett 2, Shackleton
Mon 06/04/1964	Ramsgate Athletic	H	SL		D	1 1			Wright
Sat 11/04/1964	Corby Town	H	SL		W	3 1	1766	5	Kemp 2, O'Donnell
Wed 15/04/1964	King's Lynn	a	SL		D	1 1	1967	5	Kemp
Sat 18/04/1964	Deal Town	a	SL		W	3 1	454	5	Wright 2, Truett pen
Mon 20/04/1964	Cheltenham Town	H	SL		D	1 1	2053	5	Wright
Thu 23/04/1964	Canterbury City	a	SL		D	1 1		5	Kemp
Sat 25/04/1964	Clacton Town	H	SL		W	3 1	1751	5	Kemp, Wright, Shackleton
Mon 27/04/1964	Gravesend & Northfleet	H	SL		W	7 2	2000	4	Shackleton 2, O'Donnell 2, Francis, Kemp 2
Fri 01/05/1964	Burton Albion	a	SL		W	3 2	1150	4	Kemp, O'Donnell, Bowman pen
Mon 04/05/1964	Dartford	H	KSS	FINAL	W	3 1	1933	4	Truett, Wright, Shackleton
Wed 06/05/1964	Dover	a	KFC	FINAL i	D	1 1	892	4	Shackleton
Sat 09/05/1964	Dover	H	KFC	FINAL ii	W	1 0	1788	4	Francis