



Pre-season Bulletin – Season 2012/13 ... No.2

13th August 2012

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I wish to extend best wishes to all Member Clubs of the Ryman Football League in season 2012/13.

As always, last season the three Divisions were particularly competitive, and I see no reason that 2012/13 will be any different.

Once again our good friends at Ryman Ltd. are sponsoring the League, Lucas Fettes & Partners will continue their sponsorship of the Youth Cup and the Macron Dealers will once again sponsor the monthly awards (Manager of the Month, Team of the Month and safe hands awards,

Season 2012/13 sees us warmly welcome the six new member clubs to our League – Hampton & Richmond Borough, Herne Bay, Thurrock, Three Bridges, Witham Town and Wroxham – competing in a very strong Premier Division and two regional First Divisions.

At the same time we have had to say goodbye to a number of clubs – AFC Hornchurch, Billericay Town, Godalming Town, Great Wakering Rovers and Whyteleafe – and we wish them every success and enjoyment in their respective new Leagues this season.

Hopefully, we will also see success for our Clubs in the FA Cup competitions, as well as in the respective County Cup games.

I also look forward with much anticipation to the sixth season for our Youth League, now with thirty-nine clubs competing in four Divisions, together with our ever-growing Youth Cup, Veterans' Cup and Women's Cup competitions.

The Ryman Football League is fully committed in its support of The FA's "Respect Programme", and look to the full co-operation of all Member Clubs of the League with this initiative to enhance our game.

Good luck to every Club in our League, and thank you for your support.

Alan Turvey – Chairman

By Peter Butcher – Ryman League Communications Administrator

The league's 108th season (98th playing season) gets under way on Saturday and there looks likely to be fierce competition for honours in all three divisions. Below we preview the season via a look at the opening fixtures.



One fixture stands out in Saturday's Premier programme. It's at East Brighton Park, where last season's Ryman South champions **Whitehawk** entertain **Lowestoft Town**. The well-funded and ambitious Sussex club will be keen to make an immediate impact at this level, while the Trawlerboys, who boast the division's highest gates, will be desperate to win the title outright after two successive defeats in the play-off final.

Margate are being tipped by many as potential champions, not least because they have signed striker and lucky mascot Carl Rook who has assisted three Ryman Premier sides to promotion in the last three seasons. They start with a home game against **Hendon**, who were in the play-off mix for most of last season but fell three points short.

Another fancied side are **Canvey Island**, not least because they have Steve Tilson at the helm. Not many sides at this level have ever boasted the services of a boss with a track record of success in the Football League. The former Canvey player has assembled a strong squad for their opening-day visit to **Wingate & Finchley**, who will probably be happy to repeat the mid-table finish of their Premier debut season.

Talking of former Football League managers, relegated **Thurrock** have former Gillingham and Barnet boss Mark Stimson in the dug-out as they bid to reclaim their Conference South place. Stimson is best known for his success down the road at Grays, where he led the team to two FA Trophy victories and the Conference Premier play-offs. It looks like a rebuilding season at Ship Lane. Stimson's first test is a visit to **Harrow Borough**, who have survived a number of brushes with relegation in recent years and will be hoping for mid-table security at the very least.

We mustn't forget **Wealdstone**. Despite the distraction of a run to the FA Trophy semi-finals, they reached last season's play-offs. More and more happily settled in their Grosvenor Vale home after many years of wandering, they look formidable, especially as Golden Boot holder Richard Jolly will doubtless be keen to repeat in what he says will be his final season. **Metropolitan Police**, with a number of handy new signings, visit them on Saturday.

Bury Town were the other disappointed play-off club last season and will no doubt be among the leaders again. **Carshalton Athletic** are their first visitors. The Robins had one of the division's strongest squads on paper last time around but could finish only 16th and owner-manager Paul Dipre will expect a great deal better.

Leiston, having won Ryman North at the first attempt, get their first taste of Premier football with a home game against **Cray Wanderers**. A 4-2 win at last season's champions, Billericay Town, was an encouraging friendly result for Leiston on Saturday and they are likely to make it a three-pronged Suffolk assault in the upper reaches of the table. Cray, 152 years old, had a creditable campaign last time around but their main focus will be on gaining planning permission for their new ground.

Like Leiston and Whitehawk, **Enfield Town** will be making their Premier debut on Saturday. They may have a realistic view of their prospects after their fixture at **Lewes**, who were only two points short of the play-offs in April.

Concord Rangers will not want to be upstaged by their Canvey neighbours. They start with a home game against promoted **Bognor Regis Town**, who will perhaps be uncomfortably aware that the last two Ryman South play-off winners went straight back down again. But, whatever their fate, they will play good football.

East Thurrock United and their visitors, **Kingstonian**, finished together in mid-table last season, an outcome that was much more satisfactory for Rocks (who also reached the first round of the FA Cup and the League Cup final) than it was for K's, who had reached the play-off final 12 months earlier.

Finally, the other relegated side, **Hampton & Richmond Borough**, return to Ryman football for the first time since 2007 with a home game against **Hastings United**, another club who found it hard going last season.



North

History will be made at **Potters Bar Town** on Saturday when visitors **Wroxham** become the first Norfolk club to play Ryman League football. Like the Suffolk clubs recently promoted from the Eastern Counties League, the Yachtsmen are expected to make an immediate impression in their new surroundings. Their hosts have a habit of starting the season well but fading as Christmas approaches.

Another side hotly tipped for honours are **AFC Sudbury**, as they were last season when, as it turned out, they fell well short of a play-off spot. They look set to do better this time and will hope to get off to a flying start against visitors **Cheshunt**, for whom a mid-table finish would seem to be the limit of their ambitions.

Grays Athletic have a new home at the old Ford Sports ground in Romford. Play-off semi-finalists last season, they will enjoy the perfect playing surface and will surely be challenging again. They start with a visit to perennial strugglers **Waltham Forest**, once again ground-sharing at Ilford and unlikely to improve greatly.

Needham Market have reached the play-offs in both their Ryman seasons and, like Lowestoft in the Premier, will be desperate to finish on top of the pile and avoid that lottery this time around. They face tough competition but will hope to start off with three points at **Ware**, who received a relegation reprieve last season after finishing 21st.

Witham Town return to Ryman football after three seasons in the Essex Senior League. Teams promoted from that league usually do well and Witham should be no exceptions. They start with a home game against **Thamesmead Town**, whose main ambition this season will surely be to finish their much-delayed ground redevelopment.

Two sides with high hopes meet at **Brentwood Town**. The hosts finished 15 points away from the play-offs last season, a disappointing outcome, but some shrewd summer signings suggest better times ahead. Their visitors, **Tilbury**, surprised most people last season by finishing third before losing a play-off semi-final thriller to Needham, and manager Paul Vaughan will be planning to upset a few applecarts again.

Maldon & Tiptree finished last season strongly, after many changes on the playing side, and start this campaign with another completely reshaped squad after snapping up Redbridge manager Terry Spillane. He led the Motormen to sixth place and the second round of the FA Cup, and will be hunting a play-off place at least. They start with a trip to **Aveley**, relegated from the Premier and another side rebuilding under new management, although Justin Gardner actually took over at the Mill Field late last season, when their doom was sealed.

The two sides who finished immediately above the relegation spots meet in Cambridgeshire, where **Soham Town Rangers** entertain perpetual strugglers **Ilford**. Soham will hope to improve but Ilford may be grateful that league expansion for 2013-14 means that only one club will go down from this division.

Harlow Town will be looking to go at least two better than last season's seventh place. They start with a trip to **Heybridge Swifts**, for whom 16th place was a major disappointment.

It's ironic that, while Grays take up residence in Romford, **Romford** themselves are now groundsharing with Thurrock at their ground just outside Grays. Boro boss Paul Martin did well to engineer a mid-table finish on limited resources and he will be looking to start with three points at home to **Redbridge**, who are starting from scratch again with an inexperienced squad.

Unlucky **Chatham Town** host **Waltham Abbey** in the division's other game. Chats once again find themselves isolated from their many local rivals in Ryman South and may be more interested in other clubs' results than their own, hoping that promotion and relegation issues work out in such a way that they can return to their natural home. Their opponents, a Premier side in 2010-11, look likely to be mid-table finishers again.

For this writer, at least, the team of last season in the Ryman League were **Dulwich Hamlet**. They were edged out into third place in a three-way battle for the Ryman South title and lost the play-off final for the second year running. Yet they made a mockery of the old assumption that sportsmanship awards only go to losers by topping the league's Respect table with a single late-season yellow card denying them a remarkable clean sheet. They reached the play-offs with 65 points in 2011, 23 points adrift of the fourth-placed team, and so their 21-point improvement last season would still have been enough only for fifth place a year earlier, when, admittedly, there were two fewer games. **Ramsgate**, who have settled into a mid-table existence of late, are their visitors on Saturday.

Dulwich, though, will not start the season as favourites. That status belongs to **Maidstone United**, who finished sixth last season. The difference? A luxurious new ground in their home town, the first time they have played there since 1988. Four-figure crowds look a certainty and the artificial pitch – perhaps the shape of things to come – will surely give them a substantial advantage over visiting clubs who are not used to it. First to test it, on Saturday, will be **Walton & Hersham**. They were the sixth-placed finishers in 2011 but never threatened to do better last time around.

Folkestone Invicta, who lost to Dulwich in the play-offs, start a new promotion challenge with a home game against **Worthing**. Both clubs will hope to be among the front runners as they were last season, though Worthing faded badly in the closing stages.

Two clubs new to this level of football start their season with home games. **Herne Bay**, who are expected to adapt well after winning the Kent League, have an attractive start against one of the league's most famous clubs, **Tooting & Mitcham United**, who have a considerable rebuilding job on hand after conceding 116 Premier goals last season.

Less may be expected of **Three Bridges**, who finally captured the Sussex County League title after many years of frustration. Their first visitors are **Sittingbourne**, who never seemed in much danger of relegation last season but had only two points to spare at the end.

Behind them on goal difference were **Burgess Hill Town**, who escaped the drop by beating Dulwich on the final day of the season. Hoping for a less nerve-wracking time next April, they host potential surprise packets **Chipstead** on Saturday.

Whitstable Town are another side hoping to haul themselves away from the lower reaches of the table and they face an immediate test on Saturday when they travel to **Leatherhead**, easily the best of the four sides relegated from the Premier in April. The Tanners should be in or around the play-off places.

Best of the rest, at least on last season's form, are **Hythe Town** who finished eighth and could well do better. They start with a long trip to **Walton Casuals**, league members since 2005 but yet to finish in the top half of the table.

Merstham showed some promise last season, though they finished well short of the play-offs. They open with a home game against the renamed **Crawley Down Gatwick**, a title that defies geography. The airport is north of Crawley while the village of Crawley Down is several miles to the south of the town. Be that as it may, the Anvils climbed well clear of the relegation zone after a shocking start to their Ryman career and will be looking to continue that progress.

Faversham Town are at home to **Eastbourne Town**. Both clubs were well into the bottom half of last season's table and may find it hard to make significant improvements.

Horsham defied pre-season relegation predictions last season by winning two away games in the first week. Alas for the Hornets, they were to win only once more in the league and ended up 13 points adrift at the foot of the Premier table. So an instant return to the top division looks improbable, especially as there is no immediate sign of the new ground which could bring an end to their tenancy at Horsham YMCA. They open the season at Gorings Mead against **Corinthian-Casuals**, another side unlikely to be contenders at the top.

Saturday, August 18th, 2012

RYMAN PREMIER DIVISION

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----|---------------------|
| Bury Town | v. | Carshalton Athletic |
| Concord Rangers | v. | Bognor Regis Town |
| East Thurrock United | v. | Kingstonian |
| Hampton & Richmond Borough | v. | Hastings United |
| Harrow Borough | v. | Thurrock |
| Leiston | v. | Cray Wanderers |
| Lewes | v. | Enfield Town |
| Margate | v. | Hendon |
| Wealdstone | v. | Metropolitan Police |
| Whitehawk | v. | Lowestoft Town |
| Wingate & Finchley | v. | Canvey Island |

RYMAN NORTH DIVISION

- | | | |
|--------------------|----|------------------|
| AFC Sudbury | v. | Cheshunt |
| Aveley | v. | Maldon & Tiptree |
| Brentwood Town | v. | Tilbury |
| Chatham Town | v. | Waltham Abbey |
| Heybridge Swifts | v. | Harlow Town |
| Potters Bar Town | v. | Wroxham |
| Romford | v. | Redbridge |
| Soham Town Rangers | v. | Ilford |
| Waltham Forest | v. | Grays Athletic |
| Ware | v. | Needham Market |
| Witham Town | v. | Thamesmead Town |

RYMAN SOUTH DIVISION

- | | | |
|--------------------|----|--------------------------|
| Burgess Hill Town | v. | Chipstead |
| Dulwich Hamlet | v. | Ramsgate |
| Faversham Town | v. | Eastbourne Town |
| Folkestone Invicta | v. | Worthing |
| Herne Bay | v. | Tooting & Mitcham United |
| Horsham | v. | Corinthian-Casuals |
| Leatherhead | v. | Whitstable Town |
| Maidstone United | v. | Walton & Hersham |
| Merstham | v. | Crawley Down Gatwick |
| Three Bridges | v. | Sittingbourne |
| Walton Casuals | v. | Hythe Town |

Monday, August 20th, 2012

RYMAN PREMIER DIVISION

- | | | |
|-------------|----|----------------|
| Kingstonian | v. | Harrow Borough |
|-------------|----|----------------|

Tuesday, August 21st, 2012

RYMAN PREMIER DIVISION

- | | | |
|---------------------|----|----------------------------|
| Bognor Regis Town | v. | Metropolitan Police |
| Canvey Island | v. | Leiston |
| Carshalton Athletic | v. | Lewes |
| Cray Wanderers | v. | Whitehawk |
| Enfield Town | v. | Wingate & Finchley |
| Hastings United | v. | Margate |
| Hendon | v. | Hampton & Richmond Borough |
| Lowestoft Town | v. | Concord Rangers |

Thurrock v. Bury Town
Wealdstone v. East Thurrock United

RYMAN NORTH DIVISION

Cheshunt v. Waltham Forest
Grays Athletic v. Brentwood Town
Harlow Town v. Aveley
Maldon & Tiptree v. AFC Sudbury
Needham Market v. Heybridge Swifts
Thamesmead Town v. Romford
Tilbury v. Potters Bar Town
Waltham Abbey v. Ware
Wroxham v. Witham Town

RYMAN SOUTH DIVISION

Chipstead v. Walton Casuals
Corinthian-Casuals v. Merstham
Crawley Down Gatwick v. Burgess Hill Town
Eastbourne Town v. Horsham
Hythe Town v. Herne Bay
Ramsgate v. Faversham Town
Tooting & Mitcham United v. Leatherhead
Walton & Hersham v. Dulwich Hamlet
Whitstable Town v. Maidstone United
Worthing v. Three Bridges

Wednesday, August 22nd, 2012

RYMAN NORTH DIVISION

Ilford v. Chatham Town

RYMAN SOUTH DIVISION

Sittingbourne v. Folkestone Invicta

Saturday, August 25th, 2012

RYMAN PREMIER DIVISION

Bognor Regis Town v. East Thurrock United
Canvey Island v. Hampton & Richmond Borough
Carshalton Athletic v. Concord Rangers
Cray Wanderers v. Harrow Borough
Enfield Town v. Whitehawk
Hastings United v. Wingate & Finchley
Hendon v. Bury Town
Kingstonian v. Margate
Lowestoft Town v. Metropolitan Police
Thurrock v. Lewes
Wealdstone v. Leiston



FA Cup Preliminary Round

Friday, August 24th, 2012

Romford v. Waltham Forest

Saturday, August 25th, 2012

AFC Dunstable	v.	Redbridge
AFC Sudbury	v.	Ilford
Barkingside or Great Yarmouth Town	v.	Witham Town
Biggleswade United	v.	Ware
Burgess Hill Town	v.	Littlehampton Town
Chatham Town	v.	Peacehaven & Telscombe
Cheshunt	v.	Potters Bar Town
Chipstead	v.	Crowboroug Athletic
Crawley Down Gatwick	v.	Tooting & Mitcham United
Dulwich Hamlet	v.	Hythe Town
Eastbourne Town	v.	Chessington & Hook United or Warlington
Epsom & Ewell	v.	Three Bridges
Faversham	v.	Ringmer
Felixstowe & Walton United	v.	Heybridge Swifts
Godalming Town	v.	Ramsgate
Grays Athletic	v.	Takeley
Halstead Town	v.	Brentwood Town
Haringey & Waltham Development	v.	Waltham Abbey
Harlow Town	v.	Hadleigh United
Herne Bay	v.	Folkestone Invicta
Horley Town	v.	Leatherhead
Horsham	v.	Raynes Park Vale
Maidstone United	v.	Shoreham or Colliers Wood United
Maldon & Tiptree	v.	London APSA
Merstham	v.	Walton & Hersham
Needham Market	v.	Gorleston
Redhill	v.	Corinthian Casuals
Sittingbourne	v.	Burnham
Soham Town Rangers	v.	Burnham Ramblers
Tilbury	v.	Brantham Athletic
VCD Athletic	v.	Whitstable Town
Walton Casuals	v.	Thamesmead Town
Whitton United	v.	Aveley
Worthing	v.	Rye United
Wroxham	v.	Great Wakering Rovers

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League Cup

First Round – Week beginning 3rd September 2012

- | | | |
|-----------|----|--------------------|
| Cheshunt | v. | Soham Town Rangers |
| Chipstead | v. | Three Bridges |

Second Round – Week beginning 15th October 2012

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| AFC Sudbury | v. | Leiston |
| Aveley | v. | East Thurrock United |
| Burgess Hill Town | v. | Bognor Regis Town |
| Canvey Island | v. | Ilford |
| Chatham Town | v. | Harrow Borough |
| Cheshunt / Soham Town Rangers | v. | Lowestoft Town |
| Chipstead or Three Bridges | v. | Hampton & Richmond Borough |
| Corinthian Casuals | v. | Walton Casuals |
| Eastbourne Town | v. | Dulwich Hamlet |
| Enfield Town | v. | Brentwood Town |
| Faversham Town | v. | Cray Wanderers |
| Folkestone Invicta | v. | Kingstonian |
| Grays Athletic | v. | Waltham Forest |
| Harlow Town | v. | Witham Town |
| Hastings United | v. | Lewes |
| Hendon | v. | Tilbury |
| Herne Bay | v. | Tooting & Mitcham |
| Horsham | v. | Walton & Hersham |
| Leatherhead | v. | Carshalton Athletic |
| Maidstone United | v. | Sittingbourne |
| Maldon & Tiptree | v. | Bury Town |
| Margate | v. | Metropolitan Police |
| Needham Market | v. | Ware |
| Redbridge | v. | Potters Bar Town |
| Romford | v. | Concord Rangers |
| Thamesmead Town | v. | Waltham Abbey |
| Thurrock | v. | Wingate & Finchley |
| Wealdstone | v. | Ramsgate |
| Whitehawk | v. | Merstham |
| Whitstable Town | v. | Hythe United |
| Worthing | v. | Crawley Down Gatwick |
| Wroxham | v. | Heybridge Swifts |



Veterans Cup

Round One - To be played by 30th October 2012

Northwood	v.	Leiston
Metropolitan Police	v.	Kingstonian
Three Bridges	v.	Middlesex Wanderers
Walton Casual	v.	Burgess Hill Town

Womens' Cup

Round One - To be played by 30th October 2012

Eastbourne Town	v.	Hampton & Richmond Borough
Gillingham	v.	Lewes
Haverhill Rovers	v.	Enfield Town

Byes for: Carshalton Athletic, Herne Bay, Lowestoft Town, Maidstone United and Westfield



Constitution Season 2012-12

Central	East	South	West
Carshalton Athletic	Ashford United	Bognor Regis Town	Ashford Town (Middx)
Chipstead	Corinthian	Burgess Hill Town	Bedfont Sports
Croydon	Faversham Town	Crawley Down Gatwick	Camberley Town
Kingstonian	Fisher	Eastbourne Town	Hampton & Richmond Borough
Leatherhead	Maidstone United	Hastings United	Hayes & Yeading United
Metropolitan Police	Ramsgate	Horsham	Northwood
Sutton United	Sevenoaks	Lewes	Potters Bar Town
Tooting & Mitcham United	Thamesmead Town	Peacehaven & Telscombe	Staines Town
Walton & Hersham	Tonbridge Angels	Three Bridges	Wingate & Finchley
Whyteleafe		Worthing	
Woking			

Fixtures and Cup draw will follow next week



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Visit the **New Ryman League Website** for more up to date news as it arrives at:
www.isthmian.co.uk

Our next bulletin will be published on Monday 20th August 2012

The weekly roundup bulletin will be published on Thursday 23rd August 2012

Please send any news items for the Website to the League's Communications Administrator

Peter Butcher (peter@isthmian.co.uk)



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