

= Leek Town F.C. =

Leek Town Football Club is an English football club based in Leek, Staffordshire, currently playing in the Northern Premier League Division One South. The team, nicknamed "The Blues", play their home games at Harrison Park.

The club was founded in 1946 and played in a variety of local leagues, including the Staffordshire County League, Manchester League, Mid @-@ Cheshire League and Cheshire County League, before becoming founder members of the North West Counties League in 1982 and from there progressing to the Northern Premier League in 1987. In 1997 they were Northern Premier League champions and gained promotion to the Football Conference, the highest level of English non @-@ league football, spending two seasons at that level before being relegated.

Leek Town reached the final of the FA Trophy in 1990, having progressed all the way from the first qualifying round, but lost in the final at Wembley Stadium.

= = History = =

Football was played in Leek from at least 1876, with an earlier side called simply Leek F.C. having been part of The Combination in the 1890s, but the current Leek Town club traces its lineage to the formation of a team called Leek Lowe Hamil in 1946 (although the club's official history does not mention it, some sources state that the club was initially known as Abbey Green Rovers before adopting the Lowe Hamil name).

The club began life playing in the local Leek and Moorlands League, playing on a field adjoining a pub, before joining the Staffordshire County League in 1947. In 1949 ? 50 Lowe Hamil were champions of this league, becoming the first (and to date only) team to win the title without losing a single match (some sources state this title win occurred in 1950 ? 51). In 1951 the team switched to the Manchester League, adopting the name Leek Town at the same time, and won the championship at the first attempt, after which the team relocated once more to the Mid @-@ Cheshire League, where again they played for just one season. In 1954 the team joined the Birmingham & District League but resigned in the middle of the 1956 ? 57 season due to financial difficulties, after which they had another brief spell in the Manchester League, which was also curtailed due to monetary problems, before eventually returning to the Staffordshire County League.

In 1968 a new committee was formed, under which the club emerged from the doldrums. Manager Paul Ogden took over in 1969 and led the club to two Staffordshire County League championships, followed in quick succession by two Manchester League titles. After the second Manchester League win, Leek joined the Cheshire County League, where they were league champions at the second attempt in the 1974 ? 75 season, but after Ogden left in 1975 to take over as manager of Northwich Victoria a series of managers came and went in quick succession without being able to maintain this level of success.

In 1982 the Cheshire County League merged with the Lancashire Combination to form the new North West Counties League, where Leek spent five relatively unsuccessful seasons. During their spell in this league former England player Mike Pejic took over as manager, Leek's most high @-@ profile appointment to date, but he had only a short reign before moving to Northwich Victoria. Following Kevin Lewis' brief reign Neil Baker took over in 1986 and was to lead the club to some of its greatest successes to date.

Leek were chosen to be among the founder members of the new Northern Premier League Division One in 1987 and in 1989 ? 90 won the Division One title to gain promotion to the Premier Division, the highest level at which they had ever played. In the same season they progressed through eight rounds of the FA Trophy, including a quarter @-@ final win over Darlington, that season's Conference champions, to reach the final at Wembley Stadium but were defeated 3 ? 0 by Barrow.

In 1993 ? 94 Leek finished second in the Northern Premier League Premier Division, which should have been sufficient for promotion to the Football Conference. However, they were refused

promotion due to financial irregularities . To compound their problems , they were shifted from the Northern Premier League to the Southern League ; the resulting travel costs nearly crippled the club . After one season the club was allowed to return to the Northern Premier League .

In 1996 ? 97 Leek claimed the Northern Premier League title by ten points and were this time granted promotion to the Conference . In their first season at this level they narrowly managed to avoid relegation but could not repeat the feat the following year and were relegated back to the Northern Premier League Premier Division . In 2000 ? 01 the Blues were relegated to Division One , but regained their place in the Premier Division when the league was restructured due to the formation of Conference North in 2004 . The club achieved several mid @-@ table finishes in the league but struggled off the pitch . On 21 June 2006 it was announced that the club was in such severe financial peril that it was facing a winding @-@ up order , but on 11 June the following year it was confirmed that a new consortium had taken over the club and secured its future . In the 2007 ? 08 season Leek finished in the bottom four , resulting in relegation to Division One South . Four seasons later the club qualified for the play @-@ offs for promotion back to the Premier Division , but lost in the final to Ilkeston .

= = Colours and crest = =

Leek 's home colours have traditionally been all blue , and their away colours all yellow , both colours which reflect the town 's coat of arms , which is predominantly blue and gold . The club has also used a blue and white kit similar to that of Blackburn Rovers , and a red and black away kit . Since 1997 , the team 's shirts have been sponsored by butter manufacturer Kerrygold , whose headquarters are in the town .

The club 's crest features a garb and a Staffordshire knot , both of which are elements of the town 's arms , as well as a caduceus , a symbol which appears on token coins issued in Leek in the 18th century .

= = Stadium = =

Harrison Park lies on the outskirts of Leek and has been the team 's home since 1948 , when the club purchased what was then called Hamil Park for the sum of £ 1 @,@ 250 . Changing rooms were constructed in the 1950s (previously the players had been obliged to change in a nearby pub) , along with the first covered accommodation for spectators , and floodlights (which had previously belonged to the defunct Rugby Town) were erected in 1972 , soon after which the stadium was renamed Harrison Park after former club chairman Geoff Harrison .

The ground currently has a seated stand along one side of the pitch , which was constructed in 1992 , three covered terraces and a small amount of uncovered terracing . In 1998 the ground was flooded when a nearby reservoir overflowed and the river which runs alongside the ground burst its banks .

Leek County School Old Boys , when they were in the North West Counties Football League , shared the ground between the early 1990s and 2014 .

= = Supporters = =

In the 2008 ? 09 season Leek 's average attendance was 241 , placing them fourth out of twenty teams in the Northern Premier League Division One South , down 20 % compared to the previous season , when the team played in the Premier Division . In Leek 's final season in the Conference National , 1998 ? 99 , the club 's average home attendance was 607 .

= = Statistics and records = =

Leek 's best ever league finish was a 19th @-@ place finish in Conference National (level 5 of the overall English football league system) in 1997 ? 98 , the first of two seasons the team played at

that level . The Blues have only twice progressed as far as the rounds proper of the FA Cup , reaching the first round in 1993 ? 94 and the second round in 1990 ? 91 , when they held Chester City to a draw at home but lost 4 ? 0 in the replay .

Leek reached the final of the FA Trophy in 1989 ? 90 but lost 3 ? 0 to Barrow at Wembley Stadium .

The highest attendance figure recorded at Harrison Park came when the club played near @-@ neighbours Macclesfield Town in an FA Cup 2nd qualifying round match in the 1973 ? 74 season in front of a crowd of 3 @, @ 512 .

= = Players = =

= = = Current squad = = =

As of 4 February 2015

Note : Flags indicate national team as defined under FIFA eligibility rules . Players may hold more than one non @-@ FIFA nationality .

N.B. The Northern Premier League does not use a squad numbering system

For a list of all Leek Town players , past and present , see Category : Leek Town F.C. players

= = Managers = =

Despite their relatively short history , over 30 men have managed The Blues . Paul Ogden has had six separate spells in charge .

= = Current staff = =

As of May 2016 .

= = Honours = =

= = Rivalries = =

Leek 's main local rivals are Buxton , the two sides having been historic Northern Premier League rivals throughout the 1990s . Matlock Town and Kidsgrove Athletic are also considered local rivals to the Blues .