

= Margate F.C. =

Margate Football Club , originally called Margate Town , is an English football team based in the seaside resort of Margate , Kent , currently playing in the National League South . The club was known for a number of years during the 1980s as Thanet United .

The club was founded in 1896 and joined the Southern Football League in 1933 . After a spell in the Kent League after World War II the team returned to the Southern League in 1959 and remained there until 2001 when they gained promotion to the Football Conference , the highest level of English non @-@ league football . Their stay at this level saw the team forced to groundshare with other clubs due to drawn @-@ out and problematic redevelopment work at their Hartsdown Park stadium , and during the three years spent away from their own ground they were expelled from the Conference National and subsequently relegated to the Isthmian League .

The team , nicknamed " The Gate " , have to date reached the third round proper of England 's premier cup competition , the FA Cup , on two occasions . On the second of these occasions they played Tottenham Hotspur , a First Division team and the reigning UEFA Cup holders .

= = History = =

For a statistical breakdown by season , see List of Margate F.C. seasons

= = = Early years = = =

Margate Football Club was founded in 1896 as an amateur club and was originally called Margate Town , playing friendly matches on local school grounds . In the years before the First World War the club played in several different amateur leagues , with little success , and played at various grounds in the Margate area , before settling on a pitch at what would later become the Dreamland amusement park in 1912 . This ground became known as the Hall @-@ by @-@ the @-@ Sea Ground , taking its name from a local dance hall .

= = = Inter @-@ war years = = =

After the First World War , Margate joined the Kent League , but in 1923 the league suspended the team due to financial irregularities and the club promptly folded . A year later the club reformed , initially under the name Margate Town , and returned to the Kent League , still playing at Dreamland , but folded again due to heavy debts . In 1929 the club reformed again and moved to its present home at Hartsdown Park , leasing part of the park from the local council for conversion into a football stadium . Around this time Margate signed a Dutch player , a highly unusual move in an era when it was almost unknown for Continental players to move to English clubs . Goalkeeper Gerrit " Gerard " Keizer , who joined the Kent club from Ajax Amsterdam , later went on to play for Arsenal .

From 1934 until 1938 Margate , by now playing in the Southern League , served as the official nursery side for Arsenal . Under this arrangement the London club regularly loaned promising young players to Margate in order for them to gain match experience . Star players such as Eddie Hapgood also turned out for Margate whilst regaining match fitness after injuries . In the second season of this arrangement , 1935 ? 36 , Margate reached the third round proper of the FA Cup for the first time , losing 3 ? 1 to Blackpool after defeating Queens Park Rangers and Crystal Palace in the earlier rounds , but shortly after this the club had to step back down to the Kent League for financial reasons .

= = = Post @-@ war years = = =

After the Second World War the Gate continued to play in the Kent League under new manager Charlie Walker , who led the team to two Kent League championships but was then controversially sacked . The team slumped during a succession of rapid managerial changes which only ended in

1950 when Almer Hall was appointed manager , a post he was to hold for the next twenty years . Under Hall the team won a host of local cup honours and reached the rounds proper of the FA Cup on a number of occasions , but never managed to match this success in league competition .

In 1959 ? 60 Margate returned to the Southern League after the Kent League folded , and in 1962 ? 63 won the Division One championship and with it promotion to the Premier Division . Two years later the club turned full @-@ time professional but this policy proved financially untenable when the team were relegated back to Division One in 1965 ? 66 . Nonetheless , they won promotion at the first attempt and returned to the Premier Division in 1967 .

During the 1970s Margate endured severe financial problems and a series of mediocre league seasons , but took part in two famous FA Cup ties . In 1971 the Gate lost 11 ? 0 to Bournemouth , with Ted MacDougall scoring a cup record nine goals . Then , a year later , Margate beat Swansea City and Walton & Hersham to set up a third round tie against First Division Tottenham Hotspur , then UEFA Cup holders . A record crowd of around 14 @,@ 500 packed into Hartsdown Park for a match which Margate lost 6 ? 0 .

= = = Thanet United era = = =

On several occasions in the 1970s Margate had discussed a merger with neighbours Ramsgate to form a new team representing the whole Isle of Thanet , which was seen as the solution to the financial problems being experienced by both clubs . The negotiations floundered , however , and Ramsgate ultimately had no involvement in the formation of Thanet United F.C. in 1981 , which turned out to be purely a name change for Margate . When Thanet District Council announced that it would not be prepared to put any funding into Thanet United , the two clubs finally abandoned the idea of a merger .

The Thanet United era saw a run of generally mediocre seasons in the Southern League Southern Division , with financial problems continuing unabated and a series of managers coming and going . In January 1989 the club came close to relegation to the Kent League and possible total collapse , but in March a new board took over , who reverted the club 's name to Margate Football Club for the 1989 ? 90 season and appointed Trevor Ford as manager . Success still eluded the club on the pitch , however , even after the signing of former Football League players such as Mike Flanagan and Mark Weatherly , who later took over as co @-@ manager and led the club to a Kent Senior Cup win , a rare triumph in this era .

= = = Chris Kinnear era = = =

In 1996 , the club 's centenary year , the club appointed Chris Kinnear as manager . In 1997 ? 98 he took the team to the first round proper of the FA Cup where they played Fulham in a home tie that drew a crowd of 5 @,@ 100 . Although the Gate took the lead , the Cottagers eventually won 2 ? 1 . The following season saw the club finally win promotion to the Southern League Premier Division , albeit only after an appeal was lodged against the league 's initial refusal to allow the team promotion due to the club failing to carry out necessary ground improvements in time . The Premier Division championship followed in the 2000 ? 01 season , and with it promotion to the Football Conference .

The 2001 ? 02 season was Gate 's first ever season of Conference football and they finished the season in eighth place . In the 2002 ? 03 season the team began groundsharing at Dover Athletic 's Crabble Athletic Ground while redevelopment work took place at Hartsdown Park , but various problems stalled the planned redevelopment . On the pitch , Margate enjoyed more success in the FA Cup when , after defeating Leyton Orient in the first round , they were drawn at home to Cardiff City in the second round , but lost 3 ? 0 at Crabble . The following season , despite finishing sixteenth , the Gate were forcibly relegated one division due to the ongoing delays and problems with the redevelopment plans for Hartsdown Park .

Margate spent the 2004 ? 05 season in the Conference South , now groundsharing at Ashford Town . Amid ongoing issues with the redevelopment work , which at one point made it seem very

likely that the club would fold completely , Margate were again relegated to the Isthmian League Premier Division .

= = = Return to Hartsdown Park = = =

In August 2005 , Margate returned to Hartsdown Park after three years in the wilderness . During an indifferent season manager Kinnear was controversially suspended . Robin Trott was placed in temporary charge as player @-@ manager in April 2006 and , after an unbeaten five game run , was given a one @-@ year contract at the end of the season . After Margate narrowly missed out on the play @-@ offs in 2006 ? 07 the club announced that Trott was to be given a new contract for the 2007 ? 08 season . Shortly before the end of the season , however , Trott was sacked . His replacement , Barry Ashby , was himself sacked two months into the 2008 ? 09 season . Shortly afterwards , the club narrowly avoided being subject to High Court action over unpaid debts to HM Revenue and Customs . The club finished the season in 19th position in the table and was expected to be relegated to Division One South , but was reprieved due to other clubs folding . The following season , Margate again finished in the bottom four but the club again received a reprieve from relegation .

Chris Kinnear returned for a second spell to manage the team at the start of the 2011 ? 12 season . The following season Margate were sitting at top of the table in January , however , after much speculation Kinnear accepted the vacant manager 's position at Dover Athletic . Goalkeeper Craig Holloway was placed in temporary charge of the side , and brought in Simon Osborn as joint manager . The club dropped from the top of the table and finished outside the play @-@ offs . After a poor start to the 2013 ? 14 season , Holloway resigned his role as joint manager , leaving Osborn in sole charge . Results failed to improve and Osborn was sacked at the beginning of December 2013 .

In the 2014 ? 15 season , the first full season under manager Terry Brown , Margate finished in 3rd place in the Isthmian League Premier Division , ensuring the team 's qualification for the play @-@ offs for promotion to the National League South (formerly Conference South) . The play @-@ offs were delayed by a lengthy appeal against a points deduction applied to fifth @-@ placed Enfield Town , but when they eventually began , Margate defeated Dulwich Hamlet in the semi @-@ finals . In the final Margate played Hendon , who had finished one place above them in the league , but a single goal from Ryan Moss gave them victory and promotion to the National League South . Following a poor start to the 2015 ? 16 season , Terry Brown was sacked. and replaced by Margate goalkeeper Nikki Bull and defender Jamie Stuart until the end of that season . In April 2016 Bull was appointed first team manager until the end of the 2017 ? 18 season .

= = Colours and crest = =

Margate 's traditional colours are blue and white , but the team have worn a number of other colour combinations . The club 's earliest known colours were black and white stripes . By the 1920s the club had adopted plain white shirts (with the team having the appropriate nickname of " The Lilywhites ") but in 1929 changed its colours to amber and black . In 1949 the colours changed again to blue and white . During the Thanet United era , the team wore plain white shirts , but when the club 's name changed back to Margate in 1989 , the blue kit was re @-@ adopted . The 2015 @-@ 16 kit was criticised for having a " slight purple tint " and the club reverted to blue the following season .

The club 's current crest is a simplified version of the coat of arms of the town of Margate , incorporating a lion conjoined to a ship 's hull (a reference to the arms of the Cinque Ports) and the white horse emblem of Kent . Previous crests have included the full town arms , the letters " M.F.C. " above a lighthouse , and the letters " M.F.C. " superimposed on a football .

Margate 's shirts have borne various sponsors ' logos but the most notable was that of the pop group Bad Manners , whose name appeared on the team 's kit as part of a sponsorship deal with their record label in the late 1990s . Lead singer Buster Bloodvessel was running a hotel in Margate

at the time and actually joined the football club 's board of directors .

= = Stadium = =

The stadium in Hartsdown Park has been Margate 's home since 1929 , the same year the park itself opened to the public . Little development of the stadium took place until 2002 , when the club launched an ambitious scheme to completely redevelop the site . The club moved out and the old stadium , which was constructed mainly from timber and corrugated iron , was demolished in early 2003 , but the local council disputed the plans submitted . Although planned to be completed by August 2003 , the redevelopment dragged on for three years , mired in issues regarding planning permission for the commercial facilities the club wanted to build in addition to the stadium itself . The team spent three years ground @-@ sharing with other Kent clubs , but club officials ' failure to confirm a return date to Hartsdown led to Margate 's expulsion from the Conference National in 2004 . In 2005 the club was finally able to return to the ground , albeit with pre @-@ fabricated stands and temporary buildings in place . In 2014 , the club applied to the local council for permission to erect six new temporary stands .

The club 's ultimate plan involves a stadium with a capacity of 5 @,@ 000 forming part of a complex incorporating a hotel , fitness centre , conference centre , all @-@ weather pitch and ten 5 @-@ a @-@ side pitches . Although it was announced that work on the 5 @-@ a @-@ side pitch complex was to begin in May 2007 , ground was not in fact broken for a further four months .

= = Supporters = =

In the 2008 ? 09 season Margate 's average attendance was 523 , the fifth highest in the Isthmian League Premier Division . During their three seasons in the Conference National , from 2001 ? 02 to 2003 ? 04 , the club 's average home attendances were 1 @,@ 233 , 684 , and 562 . For the last two of these three seasons the team were playing in Dover .

The club has an active independent supporters ' association and the fans took an active part in getting the stadium ready for the club 's return in 2005 . The supporters ' association began production of a fanzine called Blues News in 2008 .

= = Statistics and records = =

Margate 's best ever league finish since the establishment of the Alliance Premier League in 1979 was an 8th place finish in Conference National (level 5 of the overall English football league system) in 2001 ? 02 . The team have twice progressed as far as the third round proper of the FA Cup , in 1935 ? 36 and 1972 ? 73 , and reached the quarter @-@ finals of the FA Trophy in 2001 ? 02 .

The club 's biggest ever winning margin in a single match was 12 ? 1 , a score they have achieved twice , firstly against Deal Cinque Ports in an FA Cup First Qualifying Round match in 1919 ? 20 and again against Erith & Belvedere in the Kent League in 1927 ? 28 .

The highest recorded attendance at Hartsdown Park was 14 @,@ 169 for the visit of Tottenham Hotspur in the FA Cup in 1972 ? 73 . This figure is unlikely to be broken in the foreseeable future , as even after its planned redevelopment is completed , the ground will hold less than half this number of fans .

= = Players = =

= = = Current squad = = =

As of 30 June 2016 :

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

The club also fields a Ladies team , Under 21s and U18s teams . There is also a youth section running teams in every age range from under 8 to under 21 .

= = Notable former players = =

Margate 's all @-@ time appearance record holder is Bob Harrop , who played 564 times . The club 's all @-@ time top goalscorer is Martin Buglione , who scored 158 goals during the 1990s . Three other players have reached the 100 @-@ goal mark for the club , namely Alan Blackburn (121) , Peter Vandepeer (119) and Phil Amato (107) . The only player ever to gain full international caps whilst on Margate 's books is John Keister , who played for Sierra Leone during his original five @-@ year stint with the club .

= = Managers = =

Margate 's first known manager was Arthur Graves , who was installed as manager when Margate Town was reformed in 1929 . By far the club 's longest @-@ serving manager was Almer Hall , who was manager for twenty years from 1950 until 1970 .

= = Current staff = =

= = = Management = = =

Source :

= = = Officials = = =

Source :

= = Honours = =

= = Rivalries = =

Margate 's main rivalry is with Thanet neighbours Ramsgate , with whom Margate contest the Thanet derby . After many years playing in different leagues the two clubs were able to renew their rivalry when Ramsgate joined Margate in the Isthmian League Premier Division in the 2006 ? 07 season . The attendance of 1 @,@ 676 when the two sides met at Hartsdown Park was more than double Margate 's average home crowd for the season .

Another of Margate 's rivals is Dover Athletic . Despite meeting rarely in competitive games over recent years , both teams were in the Conference in the 2001 ? 02 season . In that season , the last season the two teams were in the same division , the two games between Margate and Dover were watched by a combined total of over 6 @,@ 000 spectators . The game played at Margate 's Hartsdown Park stadium drew a crowd of 3 @,@ 676 , and 2 @,@ 325 were in attendance for the game at Dover 's Crabble stadium .