

# BADSEY RANGERS FOOTBALL CLUB



A CENTENARY SOUVENIR

*by*

T. C. SPARROW



Above, Badsey Recreation Ground, the Rangers' home from 1920 to the present day and, below, Aldington Pastures, the scene of many of the club's early triumphs (Photographs by John Hall).



This book has been produced to commemorate the centenary of Badsey Rangers Football Club. It briefly traces the history of the Worcestershire village club from its formation by the market gardeners of Badsey and the neighbouring hamlet of Aldington through the years when it became one of the best football teams in the country. It also records the club's early triumphs and the part played by its supporters throughout the past 100 years. I believe, by an club's history has been recorded, only the second such occasion, I believe, by an amateur club in the country.

Starting Again 37

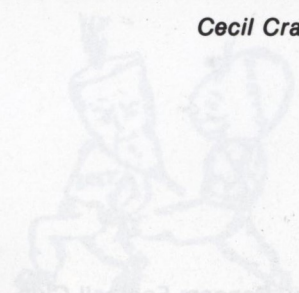
by

T. C. SPARROW, F.C.C.A., A.T.I.I.

Many years ago I planned to write a book about the history of the Rangers. I have now done so. I hope it will be of interest to the club's members and to those who are interested in the history of the game. I have tried to include as much of the material on which this book has been based as I could. I have also included extracts from the club's early newspapers. My thanks are due to Mr. Jack Taylor for his help in finding the material and to the subscribers listed on page 55 for their financial support. Whilst it is hoped that the money raised from the sale of this book will cover the costs of publication, I appreciate the offer of the club's main sponsor, Valerian Knight, to cover any deficit which may arise. Finally, I should perhaps point out that any views and opinions expressed are my own, and not necessarily those of the club committee.

"They all pulled together through dangers  
And every man stuck to his tack,  
They go by the name of the Rangers,  
The invincible scarlet and black".

Cecil Crane, 1910



## INTRODUCTION

This book has been produced to commemorate the centenary of Badsey Rangers Football Club. It briefly traces the history of this Worcestershire village club from its formation by the market gardeners of Badsey and the neighbouring hamlet of Aldington, through the years when it became one of the best known amateur football clubs in the Midlands, to its present day status as a member of the Premier Division of the Worcester and District League. We must, of course, remember that there have been lean seasons as well as successful ones and on more than one occasion the club came very near to closing down. Nevertheless, a glance at the Honours List on pages 52 and 53 will suggest that few football clubs have achieved as much as Badsey Rangers. It is a tribute to the efforts of officials, players and supporters throughout the past 100 years that this milestone in the club's history has been reached, only the second such occasion, I believe, by an amateur club in the county.

Many years ago I learned from my grandfather something of the Rangers' formative years. Also, listening to my father and others, notably the late Bert Brewer, I heard about the great Badsey teams of the years between the Wars. But much of the material on which this book has been based has been taken from the *Evesham Journal* and I am grateful to the Editor for permission to include certain extracts from that newspaper. My thanks are due to Mr Jack Taylor for contributing the Foreword and to the Subscribers listed on page 55 for their financial support. Whilst it is hoped that the money raised from the sales of this book will cover the costs of publication, I appreciate the offer of the club's main sponsor, Valefresh Limited, to cover any deficit which may arise. Finally, I should, perhaps, point out that any views and opinions expressed are my own, and not necessarily those of the club committee.

September 1989

T. C. SPARROW

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## BADSEY RANGERS FOOTBALL CLUB

By J. K. TAYLOR O.B.E., J.P.

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There were some long faces at Bretforton after 5-1 and 6-1 defeats by Badsey on consecutive Saturdays in January 1948.



An early Badsey team pictured outside Aldington Manor, probably during the 1893-94 season. Back row (left to right): W. Keen, W. Collett, W. Harwood, J. Barnard, W. Bell, G. Bell, J. Dore, W. Wilkins, W. W. Blake, A. Dore and H. Keen. Front row: A. Ballard, A. Evans, W. Knight, W. Stanford, J. Keyte and H. Knight.

## FOREWORD

By J. K. TAYLOR, ESQ., O.B.E., J.P.  
Commercial and Marketing Department, The Football League Limited.  
Referee, The World Cup Final, 1974.

Having been involved in Association Football as a junior player, senior referee, and now administrator with the Football League, I have experienced many ups and downs during the last 40 years. In the course of visiting over 60 nations there have been times when I, like many others, have wondered what has happened to the greatest game in the world and it is because of the problems at top level that it is refreshing to look back and remember what football is all about. One of the principles of sport is that it should create fellowship within a community and it is with this in mind that I feel proud and honoured to write this brief Foreword to the Badsey Rangers centenary book.

Chairman Jack Wheatley and his committee follow a dedicated group of men who over the years have made Badsey a name respected in junior football and in doing so have given young men a true purpose, always with the will to win, but not at all costs. I know from meeting the officials at Badsey that the future of this great club is in the safe hands of people who put service before self and it is my sincere wish that the present team will emulate the previous achievements of the club. I congratulate Terry Sparrow on compiling this detailed and interesting look at a club which has never lost sight of the true meaning of football, and I commend the book to all who love the game.

Hatton Common,  
Shifnal, Shropshire.

J. K. TAYLOR



Badsey Rangers 1959-60, with the Evesham Hospital Cup. Standing (left to right): R. Butler, T. Wall, M. Annis, R. Allen, D. Wyld, R. Salter, T. Richmond, A. Hewitt, T. C. Sparrow. Seated: G. Evans, E. Norton, K. Elliott, D. Bartlett, A. Padfield.

## CHAPTER 1

### EARLY DAYS

It is difficult to say when football, in some form, first began. Certainly a game known as football has been played in England for hundreds of years and it seems that for a long time it was discouraged by the authorities. Prior to the formation of the present club I have been unable to trace any reference to football in the history of the parish of Badsey, but we can read in *The Victoria History of the County of Worcester* that under a bye-law made about the end of the 14th Century the inhabitants of the Borough of Pershore were forbidden to frequent the unlawful games of tennis, football and "the dyse". Later, at nearby Cropthorne, a 17th Century vicar committed several of his parishioners to trial for "usage of the unlawful game of footeball, contrary to the statutes of the land".

#### *Football comes to Badsey*

To appreciate the formation in Badsey of organised football as we know it today, we can do no better than recall the words of the late John H. Bird, quoted from the first of his series of articles on Badsey Rangers, which were published in the *Evesham Journal* in 1955 under the title *Pioneers of Village Football*. Mr. Bird wrote: "It is the winter of 1889 and in the south Worcestershire village of Badsey . . . a group of young men, far more lissom than their plodding gait suggests, are talking about the new growth of an old game. Market gardeners every one, they have been temporarily driven from their work on the land by heavy rain and here is a chance to talk leisurely about a football club, for wet days and winter are the times when most plans are made by workers for whom fine days mean long and busy hours on the land. The scene as I picture it . . . is a wooden shed, with rain running down from the corrugated iron roof and dripping straight into the clay soil". And so, from a small gathering in a gardener's shed on that dreary day a century ago, came the ideas and enthusiasm to form a football club which was to become one of the foremost in the county and which went on to achieve success at a higher level than its founders could have hoped for, or indeed imagined to be possible.

At first the matches were merely friendlies, at irregular intervals; it was a matter of arranging a fixture whenever someone could be found to provide the opposition. One imagines that the pitches, no doubt mostly in farm fields, were on the rough side and often affected by weather conditions. In particular, much of the winter of 1890-91 was not suited to football, with 7 or 8 weeks of continuous severe frost from early December onwards and a report of ice 17 inches thick on the millpond at Aldington. On 9th September 1892 football in Badsey was put on a more formal basis at a meeting held in the Badsey Reading Room, a building long since pulled down which stood near to the old Cider Mill, also no longer to be seen, on land later occupied by Poplars Garage. Upwards of 20 people attended the meeting and officers were elected, including William Stanford captain, Edwin Warner secretary and Jim Addis Barnard treasurer. The following month the *Journal* carried a report of a home fixture against Evesham Sunday Morning Adult School, played on 8th October 1892, which Badsey won by 5 goals to 2. The newspaper said: "Badsey was superior to the Adults both in weight and combination, the forwards playing a really pretty game throughout". The home team was Bell; Harwood, Warner; Blake, Stanford, Bell; Barnard, Murray, Evans

(3 goals), Keyte (1) and Dore (1). To the best of my knowledge this is the earliest written report of a Badsey football match. A fortnight later Badsey travelled to meet the reserve team of Evesham Wanderers, where they won 4-3 after "a rather rough game". This time the *Journal* mentioned "a pretty bit of passing among the visitors' forwards".

An indication of the Badsey club's progress may be found in the late Arthur H. Savory's book *Grain and Chaff from an English Manor*. Savory, who lived at Aldington Manor from 1873 to 1901 and was the first president of Badsey Rangers, had this to say: "Cricket, though popular in my first years at Aldington, gradually became difficult to arrange. As the market gardening industry superseded farming, the young men found full employment for the long summer evenings on their allotments or those of their parents. In the winter, when horticultural work is not so pressing, they had plenty of time on their hands, and a football club was formed. It flourished exceedingly, and Badsey became almost invincible among the neighbouring villages and even against the towns". The village at the time was less than a quarter of its present size—Badsey's population at the 1891 Census was 574—but the community was much more closely knit in those days and the exploits of the new club quickly created a keen public interest.

#### *A New Venture*

And so to league football. In the autumn of 1893, the year in which the Worcestershire Football Association was founded, Badsey, already known as Rangers, entered the North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League. Although this league had operated during the previous two seasons, Evesham Wanderers being champions on each occasion, there was some doubt whether sufficient entries could be obtained to get it under way for 1893-94. It was not because of insufficient teams in the district—the *Journal* said: "the football fever is indeed spreading"—but rather that most of them appeared to prefer friendly matches, without the commitment to league fixtures. However, after it had been decided that the league could function with a minimum of four teams—a maximum of eight was allowed by the rules—five eventually declared their intention to compete and the league was saved. Apart from Badsey, the teams were Evesham Wanderers Reserves, Evesham Town, Moreton Town and Winchcombe Town. The league entrance fee was one guinea (more than a week's wages), players had to be registered for 28 days before competing and each club was required to provide an "umpire". Badsey then published a preliminary fixture list for the season as follows:

1893	Sept.	30	Pershore	Home	Friendly
	Oct.	7	Evesham W.	Away	League
		14	Hampton	Home	Friendly
		21	Moreton	Home	League
		28	Dunnington	Home	Friendly
	Nov.	4	Avondale Rovers	Away	Friendly
		11	Winchcombe	Away	League
		18	Pershore Pomona	Home	Friendly
		25	Evesham T.	Home	League
	Dec.	23	Hampton	Away	Friendly

1894	Jan.	6	Evesham W.	Home	League
		13	Dunnington	Away	Friendly
	Feb.	3	Evesham T.	Away	League
		10	Winchcombe	Home	League
		17	Pershore Pomona	Away	Friendly
		24	Pershore	Away	Friendly
	Mar.	10	Moreton	Away	League

As can be seen from the foregoing list, the first match was a friendly against Pershore and this was also the first game to be played at Aldington Pastures, acclaimed as the Rangers' new ground, lent by the president, A. H. Savory. Badsey won 9-3. The following week the Rangers travelled to Evesham, where they met the Wanderers Reserves for league points and delighted their supporters by winning 7-1 in their first-ever league match. The Badsey eleven was G. Bell; J. Barnard, W. Harwood; W. Bell, W. Stanford, J. Dore; W. Collett, A. Evans, W. Wilkins, J. Keyte and A. Dore. The *Journal* said: "the visitors brought over a heavy team and Evesham had no chance". On the same day the Rangers Reserves also went to Evesham, where they met Avondale Rovers Reserves and won 3-2. For this match Badsey lined up: A. C. Sparrow; C. Brooks, H. Bell; A. Crane, H. Knight, G. Mustoe; J. Sears, W. Hatch (1 goal), W. Addis (1), C. Collett (1) and W. Blake. Later that month Rangers fielded three teams on the same day, versus Dunnington, Littleton and John's Rovers, all friendlies and all won, the scores being 2-0, 2-1 and 2-1 respectively. The enthusiasm of the Badsey and Aldington people for football knew no bounds and sometimes groups of men would raise scratch teams, give them names and play a match. One such encounter took place on 21st February 1894 between Badsey Royal Star and Aldington Rovers, when the former won 5-2 after "rather a rough game". The unusual feature of this game, played midweek, was that it took place entirely under the light of the full moon. Was this, perhaps, the forerunner of present day floodlit matches? To return to the Rangers, their good form in friendly matches continued, but on the whole they found the league, with its town clubs, a little too strong and this first venture into league football saw them finish the season at the foot of the table. The results for the 1893-94 season are summarised below:-

	P	W	D	L	F	A
1st XI League	8	2	1	5	15	16
1st XI Friendlies	7	6	1	0	27	4
2nd XI Friendlies	16	12	1	3	57	27

On the financial side, the treasurer was not kept very busy counting his money and the accounts showed only two sources of income, subscriptions £7 1s. 5d. and gate receipts £4 2s. 9d. Alas, these amounts did not cover the expenditure and a loss of £1 1s. 3d. on the year's working was reported. To wind up the season a supper and entertainment took place in E. Bell's barn, where the catering arrangements were in the hands of John Poole, landlord of the Royal Oak (now the Round of Gras). This was quite a formal affair and it is doubtful if footballers of today, or officials for that matter, would have appreciated the long speeches. First to speak was Julius Sladden, a vice president, who acknowledged the occupation of the majority of those present by proposing a toast to the market gardening industry. A. H. Savory followed with a speech more in the nature of a

sermon, saying that "football is a training for the battle of life". He went on to express the opinion that no better day's work was done than when a football club was established in Badsey.

The next season Badsey's forwards were soon on target, scoring ten goals in a friendly against Hampton and in the league, too, results steadily improved. A controversial incident arose on 9th February 1895 when Bourton on the Water failed to turn up, apparently because they thought that the ground could not possibly be fit for play, owing to severe frost. The referee ruled that the ground was playable and Badsey promptly claimed the two points, plus expenses. The league, however, acting on Worcestershire F.A. advice, decided that it was not possible to award points for a match which had not taken place, but they did order Bourton to pay Badsey 10 shillings; also 2s. 6d. to the league to cover the referee's expenses. William Stanford, for Badsey, told the meeting that he could not offer a vacant Saturday for the fixture to be rearranged and the league accepted this, ordering it to be played on Wednesday 3rd April. The Rangers, at full strength, won 1-0 in front of a large crowd. Clearly the local players and their supporters were able to take time off work in order to be at the match and this did not apply solely to the adults, for at the end of that week J. H. McDonald, headmaster of Badsey School, wrote in his diary: "The attendance was not so good on Wednesday, owing to a football match being played at Aldington". By the end of the season Badsey had won 3 and drawn 3 of their 8 league games and that year they also did better financially; income £13 14s. 2d., expenditure £10 1s. 8d., surplus £3 12s. 6d.

#### League Champions

1895-96. On 27th September secretary Stanford went to Droitwich for the Annual General Meeting of the Worcestershire Football Association and soon afterwards Rangers paid their half-crown to become affiliated to the Association for the first time. Continuing in the "Cotswold" League, Badsey showed that they were by then a real force to be reckoned with and newspaper reports began to suggest the possibility of league honours. A set-back occurred at Evesham on 21st December when the Old Boys, who were leading the table at that point, won 1-0 and the *Journal*, in a philosophical mood, said: "Badsey contributed a good number of lookers-on, who perhaps expected to see their favourites go back winners. Blessed is he who expecteth nothing, says the prophet, for he shall not be disappointed". Fortunately this reverse did not upset the Rangers' team and after they had won the next four matches without conceding a goal, excitement mounted as the date approached for the return fixture against Evesham Old Boys. Rumours began to circulate which suggested that the Old Boys would strengthen their team for this match, rumours which appeared to be well founded when the visitors turned up at Aldington with five men from Evesham Wanderers, who competed in a higher league. But the home team was more than equal to the occasion; they too had "imported" some players, one from each of Kidderminster, Redditch and Worcester, and one of the guests, Sealey, scored the only goal of the game, although the result might have been different had not Evesham finished with only nine players because of injuries. A crowd of 800 watched the game. The Rangers' one remaining fixture, at Pershore, was not quite as easy as expected but Badsey did eventually win 3-2 and so became league champions for the first time. A summary of Badsey's league results for the season follows:

	HOME	AWAY
Bourton on the Water	3-0	1-0
Evesham Old Boys	1-0	0-1
Evesham Town	7-1	3-0
Hampton	3-0	3-2
Moreton Town	2-0	1-3
Pershore Town	2-0	3-2

To wind up the season a match was arranged on Evesham Wanderers' ground between Badsey and a League Representative XI, which the latter won 3-2, and after the match the league trophy was presented to Augustine Dore, the Rangers' captain. It was then paraded from Evesham to Badsey behind the Offenham Band. One can imagine the celebrations which took place a few days later as the new champions held their annual supper in Sladden's barn; tunes thumped out from the piano, enthusiastic singing and much port wine consumed from the cup. The individual trophies—engraved silver and gold medals—were presented to Messrs. A. Dore, J. Dore, Bennett, Warner, Collett, Barnard, Sealey, G. Bell, W. Bell, Harwood, Keyte, Evans, Biddle and Wilkins. Of course there were the speeches as well and in a reference, no doubt, to the match on 29th February when both Badsey and Evesham Old Boys fielded teams not fully consisting of regular players, Sladden said that he hoped that the league would change its rules to prevent a recurrence of this sort of thing, perhaps by imposing a "radius" qualification for players.

After the success detailed in the previous paragraphs there followed a rather lean spell. The team soon showed several changes; it seems that two players moved into a higher grade of football and others apparently gave up playing. I have been unable to trace a copy of the final league table for 1896-97 but it is certain that Badsey, with only 3 wins in 12 matches, finished near the bottom and, at the end of that season, withdrew from the league. An interesting comment on refereeing was made in January 1897 when the *Evesham Journal* said: "The referee was a somewhat peculiar specimen of that genus and he was reminded of it in rather forcible language by the crowd. Probably never has a referee on an Evesham ground been nearer having a cold bath than this one". Badsey did not feature in that particular match but the comment does suggest that poor refereeing, which is so prevalent today, is not a problem associated solely with the late 20th Century.

The Rangers, after a season of friendly matches, returned to the N.C. & V.E. League in September 1898 but achieved little of note for the next two or three years. At times it was difficult to keep going and on 10th March 1900 the team mustered only nine men for a game at Moreton. Badsey was not the only club to experience difficulties; rather surprisingly the enthusiasm for football which had been generated in the Vale of Evesham up to 1896 did not continue for the last few years of the century. Newspaper reports are extremely sparse during the latter period and but for seeing an occasional league table one would hardly know that any football was being played in the locality. The *Journal*, in an article written on 28th April 1900, attempted to analyse the situation and said: "Unless a radius qualification for players is imposed, the village clubs who play local men will be

disheartened by competing with those who can afford to bring players from a distance. When local men were played a few years ago there were larger gates; also there was more interest than has been shown during the last 2 or 3 seasons". Perhaps if more attention had been paid to Sladden's words at the Rangers' supper in 1896 this falling off in enthusiasm would not have happened. Sometimes the Badsey supporters did not behave themselves as well as they might have done and we are told that on a certain day at Pershore "... for quite 10 minutes the Badseyites occasioned much disorder by caviling at his (the referee's) decision to allow the equalising goal".

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:  
"NORRIS,  
MANUFACTURER  
COVENTRY."

*Hertford Works, Coventry, 14 Apr 1896*

*Bought of H. J. Norris,*

*Watch Manufacturer & Jeweller.*

*Watches or other goods forwarded as samples or patterns, must be returned within seven days.*

<i>14 best silver &amp; gold medals with inscriptions tender - £ 10 13 2</i>			
<i>Recd £ 10 13 2 1896 Recd £ 10 13 2 1896 H. J. Norris W. M. M. M. M.</i>			

Bill for medals presented to the Badsey players following their first league title in 1895-96.

## CHAPTER 2 INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

As a new century dawned so did Badsey Rangers begin an era of success which was to put the club firmly on the football map. Starting with a second North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League title in 1901-02 and being brought to a halt only by the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914, this was for Badsey a remarkable period of achievement, one which was not matched by any other club in the district. Although the winning of the North Cotswold League in 1902 was a somewhat hollow success, as there were only two other teams in the league, Badsey also achieved distinction that season in other fields. They became champions of the Bidford League at the first attempt—their opponents were Arrow & Ragley, Bidford, Evesham Wanderers, Offenham and Stratford Rovers—and again for the first time, tried their luck in the Worcestershire Junior Cup. A comfortable 3-0 win against Evesham Wanderers in the first round of the competition gave them plenty of encouragement—this was, incidentally, Badsey's first ever cup match—and they went on to reach the semi final, there losing by the odd goal of three to Redditch Albion.

The following season the Rangers, then competing solely in the "Cotswold" League, which had increased in strength to eight teams, started off as though they were determined to retain the trophy and after four games had scored 40 goals without reply. A newcomer to the league was a team from Campden called Essex House, who were said to know little about the game, and their first match happened to be against Badsey. In this match, played on 4th October 1902, the Rangers' forwards were irresistible and had scored nine goals by half time. The *Journal* report goes on to say: "After crossing over the Campdonians fell still more utterly to pieces, and the bombardment of their citadel continued unabated till the call of time". The final score was 24-0 which is, I believe, the highest ever recorded by Badsey throughout the club's history.

Badsey's fifth game of the season was at Pershore, where the Excelsior surprised everyone by holding a 3-2 lead with only nine minutes left to play, when the game was abandoned because the ball had burst. It gives some indication of the parlous state of clubs' finances in those days when one realises that the abandonment of the game shows that only the one ball was available. Badsey refused to travel to Pershore again simply to play the remaining nine minutes, as ordered by the league, and the result was therefore allowed to stand in Pershore's favour. Fortunately the latter withdrew from the league shortly afterwards and all of their results were deleted, thus leaving the Rangers with a "clean sheet" once more. Badsey eventually had to be content with the runners-up position, losing twice to Evesham Wanderers, who took the honours with 23 points out of a possible 24. Badsey defeated all the other teams both home and away to give them 20 points, with a goal average of 78-13. The Wanderers also proved too good for Badsey that season in the Worcestershire Junior Cup, although it took three attempts before the tie was settled. On the occasion of the second of these games both Ted Bell and George Knight of Badsey were selected to play for Aston Villa Reserves, but preferred to stay with Badsey; a couple of seasons later Knight became a regular player for Worcester City. In April 1903 the *Journal* was able to report "a revival of interest in football".

In September 1903 Badsey Rangers, seeking a higher standard of football, joined the Worcester League for the first time. It was, perhaps, a little unfortunate that their opening fixture involved a journey to The Faithful City to meet the reigning champions, Cinderella, and the market gardeners returned home disappointed after a 4-1 defeat. Disappointed, yes, but not downhearted, for in the next match Badsey came back to their best form with a 10-0 victory against Upton on Severn at Aldington Pastures. During the 1903-04 season Badsey and their near neighbours Bretforton Old Boys fielded what was virtually a joint team, with several players turning out for both Badsey in the Worcester League and Bretforton in the North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League, which, because of the small leagues in those days, was a relatively easy task. If a clash of fixtures did arise, one or the other simply postponed the match. A typical Badsey team of the period, containing their Bretforton "guests", was: J. Perkins; A. Sadler, E. Bell; C. Keen, E. Tomkins, H. Sadler; W. Bennett, G. Knight, E. Carter, P. Hall, A. Carter. At the end of the season Badsey occupied third place in the Worcester League table and in view of this satisfactory performance it seems strange that the club left Worcester at that point and returned to the "Cotswold" League, although the decision may well have been taken on financial grounds.

For the 1904-05 season the North Cotswold League attracted enough teams to warrant two divisions and the Rangers entered both. It appears that the intention was to field the same team in both divisions—perhaps an easily won trophy was envisaged—and the second division team quickly got under way with a series of wins. By Christmas the "reserves" had won six games out of six, but shortly afterwards they hit a snag when they arrived for a match versus Offenham with a team which included an ineligible player. Unfortunately for Badsey the appointed referee was the league secretary (E. Bourne) and he, knowing that the man was not properly registered, would not allow him to play, whereupon Badsey refused to play without him. As a result, the match did not take place and Bourne's report of the affair led to Badsey being expelled from the league. At this point the "first" team had not played a league match at all, but they eventually made a start on 21st January 1905 with a 3-2 win at Bretforton. The return fixture at Aldington was abandoned with the visitors leading by a single goal, after Dowdeswell of Bretforton refused to leave the field when ordered off by the referee. Although I have been unable to trace the final league table I have seen Arthur Sadler's winner's medal, from which it is evident that Badsey finished the season as champions.

The next season Badsey returned to the Worcester League and after winning the first six games eventually had to be content with third place. On the cup scene, a good run in the Worcestershire Junior Cup took them to the semi final and the club also competed by invitation for the N.C. & V.E. League trophy, which was run on a knockout basis that year because the first division of the league did not function. In the semi finals Badsey and Evesham Town accounted for Offenham and Winchcombe respectively, but a disgraceful scene in the final caused the match to be abandoned; after the referee had awarded a penalty to Evesham the Badsey players lined up in the goalmouth and would not allow the kick to be taken. Meanwhile, not far away, Bretforton Old Boys were being hailed as champions of the newly formed Campden League.



Although making a shocking start to the 1906-07 Worcester League programme with an 8-1 trouncing at Norton Barracks, the Rangers, having joined the Campden League as well, soon made their presence felt in the latter competition. A 15-0 victory over Shipston Excelsior was followed by a dozen goals against Campden and Badsey became champions of the league in fine style, with 15 points out of a possible 16, scoring more than twice as many goals as their nearest rivals. Again a match versus Bretforton was abandoned, this time when supporters of that club invaded the pitch and pelted the referee with mud; fortunately the score of 3-1 in Badsey's favour was allowed to stand. The following week the *Journal* published a letter from a gentleman described as "A Badsey Correspondent", who wrote: "Being a spectator and having paid 3d. to see the game, I must say that it was the most disgraceful thing that I ever saw". Note the admission charge of 3d., equivalent to perhaps £2 at today's prices. A Badsey and Bretforton match in 1989 would attract a mere handful of spectators; if they were asked to pay £2 it would almost certainly attract none at all. In the Worcester League Badsey soon recovered from their bad start and secured second place with a record of Played 14, Won 9, Drew 1, Lost 4, Goals 39-32, Points 19. Support for the club was excellent, with a report of 50 or 60 people travelling with the team to Worcester and 400 turning up at Aldington Pastures to see the home match versus Droitwich United. The Badsey team in those days usually comprised: W. Ancil goal; E. Bell and A. Sadler backs; J. Knight, C. Keen and W. Underhill half backs; W. Bennett, G. Knight, J. Dore, T. Hall and H. Sadler forwards.

A year later Badsey lost the Worcester League runners-up spot on goal average but won the North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League for the fourth time. In the Worcestershire Junior Cup a 20-0 victory at Harvington in the first round promised well but, alas, once again the club fell at the semi final stage, this year against Hoobrook Olympic, in front of 800 spectators on Evesham United's ground. At the Annual Dinner held on 4th June 1908, J. Sladden in the chair, the Evesham League cup was presented to captain Ted Bell, while William Stanford reported that the club had a record 78 members and a balance in hand of £1 10s. 11d. Ready for another change of scenery the Rangers then returned to the Bidford League which, it will be remembered, they had won at their only previous attempt. Again Badsey took the title, remaining unbeaten throughout and conceding a mere four goals in the process. During that season the *Journal*, in an editorial comment, mentioned "bad blood" between Badsey and their close rivals Evesham United, who were members of the same league. Notwithstanding this bad blood, or perhaps because of it, the Evesham v. Badsey fixture attracted 1200 spectators and after the final whistle had sounded, with Badsey victorious by 2-1, their supporters continued to cheer as they walked from the ground to the town centre, where they staged an "impromptu demonstration" outside the Town Hall.

#### *A Surplus of Players*

The village of Badsey was growing rapidly. The social and economic reasons for this population explosion are outside the scope of this book, but are considered in *A Brief History of Badsey and Aldington*, by R. D. H. Seaman and T. C. Sparrow, which was published in 1983. Suffice to say that the population of Badsey almost doubled in the two decades from 1891 and this factor led to a surplus of footballers; more young men wished to play than Rangers could accommodate. It is not surprising, therefore, to find another club starting; in 1908

Badsey Star entered the second division of the Bidford League. Among the players were William Hardiman, Bob Pethard, Walter Dore, Arthur Hall and Cecil (Bosco) Crane, and it was the latter who painted on the side of his market gardener's shed the slogan "The Star that will shine in 1908", brave words which remained there until the decaying structure was pulled down some 40 years later. The Star kicked off with a 4-1 win against Harvington and they continued to enjoy a very successful season, finishing in second place behind Evesham United Reserves, after having won 15 and drawn 4 of their 20 league matches. Strangely, the club then disbanded and no further mention of it occurs throughout Badsey's football history.

A team known as Badsey Olympic, playing a few friendly games, appeared briefly on the football scene in 1910—goals by J. Hartwell and J. Keen featured in a 2-2 draw against Laverton—but the next major step in the development of football in the village was the formation in 1911 of Badsey United, again with the object of encouraging the younger and less experienced players. These lads soon showed what a wealth of football talent was available in Badsey and they became champions of the North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League's second division in their inaugural season, with the splendid record of Played 12, Won 11, Lost 1, Goals 49-7. At the end of that season the United were billed to meet the Rangers in a charity match in aid of the Titanic Disaster Fund; unfortunately history does not tell us the result. A year later United, having been promoted to the first division, achieved second place behind Moreton Town. They also reached the final of the Worcestershire Minor Cup, only to lose 3-0 to Kidderminster St Marys, but won the qualifying section of the Evesham Hospital Cup, beating Hinton-on-the-Green 1-0 in the final. Included in United's team at the time were players such as Jack Hartwell, Harry Sadler, Bob Pethard, Albert Huxley and the brothers Jack, Tom and Cecil Keen. We also find a Badsey Juniors Club, firstly in the 1909-10 season as a member of the N.C. & V.E. League Division III and then, later on, playing friendly matches. One of these, on 7th March 1914, was particularly interesting because the Juniors' goalkeeper, Harry Marshall, scored three times in the 7-3 defeat of Offenham. One assumes that his goals came from the penalty spot or, perhaps, from free kicks; nevertheless there cannot have been many occasions in football history when a goalkeeper has scored a hat-trick. A few years later Marshall, then a centre forward, earned a reputation as being the hardest kicker of a football ever seen in Worcestershire.

#### *Five County Cup Finals*

By 1909 the competition for the Worcestershire Junior Cup had been running for 15 years and up to that point had been dominated by teams from the north of the county, in particular the Kidderminster side Hoobrook Olympic, who were winners six times in all, including five in a row up to 1908. Apart from Evesham Wanderers, runners-up in 1896-97, no team south of Worcester had reached the final during the history of the competition. But all this was soon to change. The Badsey footballers showed that they were equal to any in the county and although it was to be another 26 years before they equalled Hoobrook's six wins, they did appear in five consecutive finals in the years immediately before the Great War.

The first of these finals was reached after an epic struggle at the semi final stage, where the Rangers met Evesham United on no less than five occasions before earning the right to play Droitwich United. Badsey had not done particularly well that season and in February had withdrawn from the Redditch, Studley and District League, whence they had moved from Worcester the previous September. It was therefore decided that the team would be strengthened for the visit to Evesham and the new players duly helped Badsey to a 4-2 win. The *Evesham Journal* reported that "... the home team turned out as advertised, but among the wearers of the red and black several strange faces were observed, a Brierley Hill man taking the position of centre half, and Price and Garrett of Moreton being in the front line". Evesham quickly suspected that the "Brierley Hill man" was not eligible to play and a protest was lodged. Badsey put forward a rather weak defence, William Stanford saying that the player, Shepherd, was well known in Badsey and often came there. He was a pigeon fancier and had a cousin on the Rangers' committee. Not surprisingly, the committee of the Worcestershire Football Association was not impressed by this irrelevant argument and ordered that the game be replayed. The replay ended with the score at 1-1, as did the third match at Aldington, even after extra time. The situation was by then becoming desperate, as the date for the final drew near, and the Association directed that the third replay be played to a finish. This time Badsey, with two goals from "Butcher" Price, managed a 2-1 victory and Cecil Crane summed up their success when he wrote:

"To the Bewdley enclosure United went,  
To beat Badsey Rangers was their intent;  
But though Badsey couldn't a full team run,  
They ran out victorious by two goals to one.  
Now to all United who want to sup  
Out of the Worcestershire Junior Cup,  
To Badsey or Droitwich will have to go,  
For the Rangers have dealt them a crushing blow".

Some of the Evesham supporters felt that their team had been badly served by the referee and after the match the unfortunate gentleman came in for some rough treatment, being kicked and punched before being chased along Bewdley Street, where he eventually took refuge in a cottage. With the mob shouting outside he escaped through the back door, disguised in a borrowed overcoat and cap, and climbed over several walls to reach Merstow Green. The crowd, anticipating the move, was there to meet him, but fortunately the arrival of four policemen enabled him to reach the relative safety of the club's headquarters at the Royal Oak in Vine Street. As a result of the affray the Evesham club was fined £2 and forbidden to play on its own ground, or within six miles of it, until the following 1st October.

But Badsey's triumph was short lived; Evesham was ready with another protest. This time George Knight was the target and it was established that following his professional career with Worcester City a few years earlier he had not been reinstated as an amateur, although he had since played many games for Badsey without the fact coming to light. And so yet another replay was ordered, this time on the ground of Worcester City F.C. Once again Badsey won but, perhaps weary of cup ties, they gave an indifferent performance in the final and

went down 3-1, their only goal coming from a penalty kick taken by Theodore Hall. A year later the Badsey players perhaps thought that history was about to repeat itself, when they let a 4-2 lead slip away and finished 4-4 in the semi final against St Clements at Aldington. But this time one replay was sufficient; a 2-0 victory at Worcester saw them safely into the final. Sadly, once again, there was no cup to bring home; Bromsgrove Rovers Reserves proved to be too good on the day and the Rangers were defeated by two clear goals.

It was at Evesham in April 1912 that Badsey Rangers at last won the Worcestershire Junior Cup. It had been rumoured that their opponents, Stourport Swifts, were not much of a team, but evidently they believed in travelling in style; not for them a journey by train as was usual in those days; instead, according to the *Journal*, they "came by motor". Badsey were, perhaps, a little too complacent at the start and were shocked when Stourport took an early lead, which they held until half time, but as the second half progressed the Rangers gradually gained control of the game and goals from Sargent (2) and Price made sure that the coveted trophy would come to Badsey for the first time. The players who achieved that famous victory, an important milestone in the club's history, were: Hardiman; Sadler, Herbert; A. Hall, Dore, W. Hall; Knight, T. Hall, Sargent, Price and Jelfs.

Badsey retained the cup in each of the next two years to make it five consecutive finals and a hat-trick of wins; we can only speculate what further records may have come Badsey's way at that time had not the War intervened. The losing team in the last two years was Droitwich United, thus giving Badsey sweet revenge for their defeat at the hands of that club in the 1910 final. In both years replays were again necessary at the semi final stage; in 1912-13, versus Astwood Bank, the first match was postponed because of ground conditions, both teams having already arrived; the rearranged match, played in a gale force wind, ended with no score; eventually Badsey won 4-2 before going on to win by two clear goals in the final. The next season Badsey met the soldiers from Norton Barracks in the semi final and after a goal-less draw went on to gain a comfortable 4-1 victory in the replay, with goals from Dolphin, Price and "Jerry" Sadler (2). The final was held at Aldington Pastures on Wednesday 22nd April 1914 and Badsey quickly capitalised on their home advantage when Price scored in the first minute, from which point they never looked back and finished 4-1 winners. The trophy was presented by Mr. James Ashwin, High Sheriff of Worcestershire, who said that he hoped that Badsey would always bring honour to their county and country as they had brought honour and credit to their club that day. Badsey Rangers: Hardiman; Sadler, Herbert; Hall, Knight, Hall; Price, Sadler, Price, Dolphin, Jelfs. Referee: R. Weaver (Evesham).

#### *The Evesham Hospital Cup*

The Evesham Hospital Cup, as its name suggests, is a competition formed with the object of raising funds to provide extra comforts for patients at the Evesham Cottage Hospital in Briar Close (closed in February 1988). When invited to support the project H.R.H. le Duc d'Orleans, who lived at Wood Norton, responded by presenting a silver cup valued at 20 guineas. The handsome trophy and the good cause behind it attracted numerous entrants, Badsey among them, for the inaugural season of 1911-12, and after kicking off with a comfortable 5-0 win against Bretforton Old Boys, Badsey went on to reach the final. That first final, held on 27th April 1912, certainly aroused the interest of the local football public and over 2000 people gathered on Evesham United's ground to watch the

Rangers take on Astwood Bank in what turned out to be a very close match, the only goal coming when Badsey's Theodore Hall scored from the penalty spot. At the end of the game the Astwood Bank team felt somewhat aggrieved and not without justification; about five minutes from time the ball was kicked into the nearby river—we are not told the offender's name—and referee C. Knight-Coutts refused to allow extra time for it to be recovered. The final whistle went with the ball still in the river—no spare was available—and shouts of "play out the time" from the Astwood Bank supporters almost drowned the speeches as George Knight collected the cup. Badsey's team in that game was: William Hardiman; Arthur "Shaddy" Sadler and Billy Herbert; Arthur Hall, Billy Hall and Walt Dore; W. "Dublin" Knight, Theodore Hall, Cecil "Bosco" Crane, George Knight and W. H. "Bandy" Jelfs. Twelve months later Badsey reached the final again but this time not quite as many spectators turned up; a mere 1600 watched them retain the cup with a fine 5-1 victory against Droitwich United, with goals from W. Hall (2), Price, Jelfs and "Dublin" Knight. After surviving heavy pressure during the first half the Rangers took complete control after the interval, at one stage scoring three goals in about as many minutes, and the newspaper report tells us that "Badsey swarmed round the Droitwich goal like flies round a jam pot".

The Hospital Cup committee, with fund raising as its primary object, was no doubt delighted when the best two supported clubs in the district reached the final in the 1913-14 season. With Badsey Rangers bidding to take the honours for the third consecutive year and their opponents, Evesham United, determined to avenge three defeats by Badsey earlier that season—two in the Worcester League and the other in the second round of the Worcestershire Junior Cup—all the signs indicated a tremendous final. In anticipation of a record gate the committee provided extra accommodation, at a small additional charge, by arranging for a line of drays with a double row of chairs on each to be placed along one touchline. They were not disappointed and a crowd of 3000 was on the ground in time to see the ceremonial kick-off by Master Edward Rudge, Squire of Evesham. The Evesham Territorial Band was also in attendance, playing selections before the game and again at half time. George Knight scored in the first half for Badsey but just as their supporters were preparing to cheer yet another victory a defender handled the ball in the penalty area and Evesham equalised from the spot kick, only a minute from full time. Badsey Rangers: Hardiman; A. Sadler, Herbert; A. Hall, Knight, W. Hall; L. Price, W. Sadler, P. Price, Dolphin, Jelfs. In the replay, when P. Sargent replaced W. Sadler in the Badsey team, Knight again gave his side the lead; sadly for Badsey, however, after "another desperate struggle" and in front of "another huge attendance", Evesham scored twice in the second half to win the cup. The hospital benefited by £31 12s. 9d. and in recognition of their work for the competition the Badsey and Evesham clubs were allowed 4 gns. and 3 gns. respectively.

#### *More and More Honours*

The Bromsgrove Charity Cup was yet another competition in which the club excelled in those halcyon days up to 1914. The first success came on Easter

Monday 1911 at the Evesham ground, where Badsey defeated Droitwich United 3-1, and a year later, again on Easter Monday and again at Evesham, the Rangers beat the same opponents by the same score to retain the trophy. In the latter match Droitwich, one of Badsey's keenest rivals in those days, took an early lead, but the equaliser soon came from Arthur Hall, whose shot "curled into the net amid thunders of applause". Another goal followed when "Price beat the goalkeeper with a clever low shot and then it appeared as if the heavens were let loose for the crowd let itself go in one prolonged shout of triumph". Later, Price added the third. The following season Badsey had to be content with a semi final spot, but this was merely a temporary setback and in April 1914 the Bromsgrove Cup returned to Badsey. On this occasion the opposition in the final was provided by Rubery St Chads, who had the misfortune to lose their goalkeeper with a broken collarbone midway through the first half, after which Badsey took complete control of the game and finished 6-1 winners. The Badsey players were also trying hard to win the Worcester Charity Cup and went close in the 1912-13 season when they at last reached the final, only to taste defeat at the hands of Stourport Swifts by 2 goals to nil at Worcester. Once again Stourport used an unusual mode of transport; for this match they travelled down the River Severn by steamer.

It is, perhaps, not surprising to learn that during the five year period of intense cup tie activity described in the preceding paragraphs, Badsey's league performances were somewhat less spectacular. We have already heard that a good many replays were necessary; inevitably a backlog of league fixtures resulted and sometimes it was not possible for them to be rearranged. On at least two occasions the Rangers did not complete their league programme, but by 1913-14 they appear to have been better organised, as not only did they play the full quota of Worcester League matches in a season when the league had more members than ever before, but finished in second place. The final table (leading positions) is given below:

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hereford City	24	20	3	1	84	16	43
Badsey Rangers	24	16	4	4	62	20	36
Stourport Swifts	24	13	4	7	43	31	30

And so, by 1914, Badsey Rangers had earned a position as one of the leading clubs in Worcestershire. As Badsey's market gardens flourished so, too, did its football; the game had aroused the interest and enthusiasm of the local people and they turned up in their hundreds to watch it. Badsey Rangers F.C. had played a major part in improving and extending the social life of the village. But now it was time for an enforced break; more important things were on hand and it was to be another five years before the "Red and Blacks" resumed their efforts at Aldington Pastures.



*Badsey Rangers 1911-12. Back row (left to right): E. Collett, F. Newman, H. Hall, P. Hall, A. Sadler, A. Geden, W. Hardiman, J. Sladden, W. Herbert, J. Sadler, C. Crane, A. H. Mustoe, J. Barnard, W. Stanford, W. Collett. Front row: "Dublin" Knight, "Butcher" Price, T. Hall, A. R. Hall, W. Hall, W. Dore, G. Knight, W. Keen, W. H. Jelfs. Inset: P. Sargent.*



*Badsey Rangers 1920-21. Back row (left to right): S. Glazzard, G. Knight, A. R. Hall, H. Marshall, W. Brighton, J. Sladden, W. Jelfs, W. Sadler, C. Keen, W. Hardiman. Front row: H. Wilkes, E. Payne, N. Holliday, A. E. Hall, W. Hall, W. H. Jelfs, H. Benbow, "Tich" Price.*

## CHAPTER 3 THE YEARS BETWEEN THE WARS

Early in 1919 we find Badsey Rangers returning to competitive football. "Shaddy" had retired but most of the other old stalwarts were still there, including the evergreen George Knight, who was first seen wearing a Badsey jersey back in 1900. After the Armistice on 11th November 1918 it was too late for the local leagues to get under way that season, but there was time to play for the Evesham Hospital Cup and once again Badsey reached the final; as in 1914 the opposition was provided by Evesham, this time the Town. It was the first cup final to be staged in the Vale of Evesham for five years and the football-starved public certainly gave it their full support, there being almost 4000 present to see the goals scored by W. Dore and W. H. Jelfs which made sure that the trophy returned to Badsey. Although the game itself was played in a sporting manner a section of the crowd became antagonistic towards the Badsey team and at the end the Mayoress presented the cup "amid a perfect pandemonium". Efforts by the Town officials to restore order proved to be futile and the winners were harassed on their way back to the changing room by a mob 300-400 strong; missiles were thrown and several of the Rangers players were hit with sticks. Following the affray Badsey sent a strong letter to the competition which began: "Dear Sir, At a committee meeting of the Badsey Rangers club held last night it was unanimously decided that owing to the disgraceful proceedings after the match in the Hospital Cup played on Monday the Rangers absolutely decline to again enter the competition". The letter went on to say: "as we consider ourselves to be the oldest and premier club in the district we are thoroughly ashamed of the disrespect shown to the Mayor and Mayoress, let alone ourselves. (Signed) W. Stanford, chairman; A. H. Mustoe, hon. secretary".

When the North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League was revived in September 1919 the competing clubs were Badsey Rangers (subsequent champions with 24 out of 28 points), Bretforton Old Boys, Littleton United, Winchcombe United, Evesham Town, Pershore Atlas Works, Broadway and Pinvin, and they finished the season in that order. In the Worcester League the Rangers got off to a good start by winning 12-1 at Stourport (H. Marshall 9) and led the table for much of the season, but after conceding thirteen goals in the last three games had to be content with second place, five points behind Worcester Rovers. On the cup scene Badsey reached the final of the Worcester Charity Cup, but again had to play second fiddle to Worcester Rovers, losing 3-1 at Worcester in a match watched by about 2500 people.

### *A New Ground and a New Team*

The provision of a Recreation Ground for the village was first debated in 1900, when consideration was given to the purchase of land at The Stockey (part of which is now Badsey School playing field), but the idea was soon abandoned for financial reasons. About a dozen years later a committee was formed and land in Sands Lane was acquired, but further progress was delayed because of the war. However, in 1919 the project was resumed and fund raising continued in earnest. A "Mammoth Asparagus Show" held at Seward House on 28th May 1919 brought in £200 and a few weeks later, on the occasion of a Garden Fete at the same venue, Julius Sladden was able to report that the land had been levelled and the grass

was coming up well. The following year, on 15th May, the new Recreation Ground was opened by Captain Cecil Hunt, son of the Reverend T. H. Hunt (Vicar of Badsey, Aldington and Wickhamford 1852-87). Prior to the official opening ceremony the first football match had already taken place; on Easter Monday Badsey Rangers met Littleton United in a friendly match and won 3-1, although the distinction of scoring the first goal on Badsey "Rec" went to a Littleton player, Fred Curnock. The proceeds from the game—£47 13s. 0d.—were given to Evesham Hospital as some consolation for Badsey's non appearance in the Evesham Hospital Cup during the 1919-20 season. At the end of that season the Rangers left Aldington Pastures and made their home at the new ground, where it has remained to the present day.

Ready for the first season at the new ground, Badsey introduced five splendid new players to the team, all of whom were former members of the successful Worcester Rovers club. They were half backs "Spoff" Wilkes and H. Benbow, the right wing pair of Ernest Payne and Norman Holliday and, to complete the quintet, centre forward Hall, who became known to supporters as Worcester Arthur Hall, in order to distinguish him from the local player of the same name. These players combined with "Jerry" Sadler, George Knight, "Bandy" Jelfs and others to form a very fine team, possibly the best in the history of the club and certainly the only one to have won six trophies in a season. The Worcester League had only six teams that year, one of which withdrew before completing its programme, and so double fixtures were played. For a time Droitwich Comrades led the race for the title; later, the lead fluctuated between Badsey and Stourport Swifts. With one match to go the destiny of the new Kilbourne Kay trophy was still not settled; Badsey led the table by a single point as they prepared to welcome Stourport for the deciding game. The visitors had the misfortune to lose a player through injury just before half time, at which point they were losing 2-1, and the handicap of playing a man short throughout the second half was too much, as Badsey added six more goals, thus becoming Worcester League champions for the first time, with a record of Played 16, Won 11, Drew 2, Lost 3, Goals 67-22, Points 24.

In cup ties, too, Badsey excelled. They won the Worcestershire Junior Cup, Evesham Hospital Cup and Bromsgrove Charity Cup, each for the fourth time, and, in addition, the Worcester Charity Cup and the Studley Cup, these latter being for the first time. In two of the finals the losing team was Evesham Town and the Badsey team which defeated that club 1-0 to regain the Evesham Hospital Cup was: W. Brighton; W. Sadler, A. Hall; G. Knight, H. Wilkes, H. Benbow; E. Payne, N. Holliday, T. Hall, W. Hall and W. H. Jelfs. Attendance: 3000. Worcester Arthur Hall was missing that day, playing for Worcestershire against Gloucestershire; others who achieved county recognition that season were Sadler and Holliday, whilst Knight had played for Worcestershire many years earlier, several times as captain. Badsey's full cup record for the season was: Played 28, Won 25, Drew 2, Lost 1, Goals 108-25, the lone defeat being in the F.A. Amateur Cup.

#### *A Trip to Oxford*

The 1920-21 season saw Badsey's first venture into the F.A. Amateur Cup, the premier competition for amateur clubs in the country. A successful visit to Hereford C.S.D. in the first qualifying round was followed by a home victory against a Nottinghamshire side, Netherfield Rangers. Next came Erdington and in spite of the admission charge being raised to one shilling there were over 1200 spectators present at Badsey to see the visitors sent packing to the tune of 8-0. It

was then Badsey's turn to travel again; a long journey to Nottingham ended successfully as Basford were beaten 4-2 to earn the Rangers a place in the competition proper. And so Badsey's name went into the hat with the elite of English amateur football; an away tie versus Oxford City resulted, to be played on 1st January 1921. The whole village was agog with excitement; almost everybody wanted to be in Oxford that day. In anticipation of a record following the Rangers' committee chartered a special train, timed to leave Evesham at 10.30 a.m., Littleton & Badsey 10.38, Honeybourne 10.45, Campden 10.58, Moreton in Marsh 11.10; returning from Oxford at 7 p.m. The weather could hardly have been worse; incessant rain fell throughout the match, turning the pitch into a quagmire. The Badsey players never produced their true form that day; perhaps slightly overawed by their opponents' reputation and no doubt missing the inspiration of their captain, George Knight, barred from this competition because of his earlier professional status, they suffered a 5-0 defeat. Some light relief for the Badsey supporters was provided by an optimistic gentleman who went round the touchline with a marker throughout the match in a futile attempt to replace white lines which were constantly obliterated by the rain. In spite of the inclement weather the match was watched by over 5000 people.

The following season Rangers resumed their quest for the Amateur Cup with a convincing 10-0 home win versus Silhill, six of the goals coming from Worcester Arthur Hall, and this was followed by victories over Old Wulfrunians and Birmingham University. In the fourth and final qualifying round Badsey met Evesham Town. A drawn game resulted; the replay also ended all square, even after extra time. At the third meeting the Badsey supporters were jubilant as Sadler scored the only goal of the match from the penalty spot, but their jubilation was short-lived when it was discovered that their team included an ineligible player, A. Wilkins. A protest followed; an F.A. commission sitting at Leicester ordered yet another replay. This time Evesham won and Badsey's hope of glory disappeared. That season, too, a new competition appeared on the local football scene—The Mayor of Worcester's Royal Infirmary and Orphanage Football Challenge Cup—which soon became known more simply as the Worcester Infirmary Cup and which over the years was to be a happy hunting ground for Badsey. After a remarkable semi final in which they scored fourteen goals without reply against Norton Barracks—"Jerry" Sadler, in the unaccustomed position of centre forward, scored a double hat trick—Badsey reached the first final, only to go down by a single goal to a Kidderminster side, Franche, although the latter also missed two penalties. Some high class football entertainment for the Badsey supporters was provided in 1923 with the visit, on two occasions, of Aston Villa Reserves for friendly matches. On 21st April 1923, 2000 people saw Badsey hold the strong Villa team to a 1-1 draw; later in the year, with the game played midweek, the visitors were able to include several players with first team experience and the Rangers lost 6-3.

#### *A Quiet Time in the Twenties*

Generally speaking, however, once the great Badsey Rangers team of 1920-21 began to break up, which happened fairly quickly, the club tended to be overshadowed for a few years by Evesham Town and, to a lesser extent, by those other local rivals Bretforton Old Boys. Evesham's most notable performance was to reach the final of the F.A. Amateur Cup in the 1922-23 season, when the Town lost 2-1 against London Caledonians at Crystal Palace in a match attended by 14132 spectators. During their passage to the final Evesham had to visit Badsey at

the fourth qualifying round stage, winning by the odd goal of three against the following Rangers team: Ruby; Sadler, Jones; Cropper, Wilkes, Benbow; Dowdeswell, Griffiths, Marshall, Beddard, Blundell. 2500 people turned up to watch the game, one of the biggest crowds ever seen at Badsey, and the *Evesham Journal* described the scene thus: "One not in the know, making his way to Badsey between the hours of one and two o'clock in the afternoon, would have wondered what was the meaning of all the animation, for the traffic was coming in all directions—motors, motor bicycles, push bicycles, pedestrians—all wending their way to the celebrated village of football".

It was not that Badsey did particularly badly during the years following 1920-21, merely that something of an anticlimax was inevitable after such a wonderful season. The club again reached the first round proper of the F.A. Amateur Cup—a long journey to R.A.F. Cranwell in January 1924, involving Friday travel and an overnight stay in Lincoln, ended with a 2-1 defeat—and in April of that year won the Worcester Charity Cup by beating Stourport Swifts 1-0 at St George's Lane, Worcester. Two years later the Rangers beat the same club 4-3, after extra time, to take the Bromsgrove Charity Cup for the fifth time, and in 1926-27 won the North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League's Division 1 Knockout Cup with a comfortable 4-0 victory against Pershore Athletic, the goals coming from Frederick "Peas" Perkins (2), Les Hunt and George Knight junior. Badsey's team for the 1924 Worcester Charity Cup final was: J. Abbott; W. Sadler (captain), C. Spragg; A. R. Hall, L. Moore, T. Brotherton; E. Payne, V. Hollington, W. Beddard, D. Cropper, F. Burford. Centre half Wilkes had broken his leg in the semi final; later, a benefit match versus Evesham Town raised £45 for him.

As well as winning the three trophies mentioned in the preceding paragraph Badsey achieved runners up honours in various league and cup competitions on seven occasions during the seasons 1921-22 to 1926-27 inclusive, whilst the reserve team won the Worcestershire Minor Cup in 1925, the only time this trophy has ever come to Badsey, with the following team: A. Harris; W. Harris, T. Reade; G. Hartwell, Alf Moyle, Cecil Harwood; A. Jelfs, C. Keen (captain), "Peas" Perkins, P. Crisp and George Knight junior. One unsuccessful final was against Bretforton Old Boys in the Evesham Hospital Cup and which brought about the biggest defeat ever suffered by Badsey in a cup final. The first match, in April 1927, ended in a 2-2 draw and because the season was almost over it was not possible to arrange the replay until the following August, when again the score was 2-2. At the third attempt, on 14th September 1927, Bretforton excelled and perhaps surprised even themselves with a massive 10-3 victory. This was a period of many changes in the Rangers' team, as the committee tried to find a combination capable of repeating the club's earlier triumphs, and nowhere was this more apparent than in the goalkeeper's position, where Merry, Ruby, Abbott, Trenfield, Cotton, Harris and Hemming followed one another in rapid succession.

#### *Badsey Arravale and Elsewhere Park*

1926 saw the birth of yet another football club in the village, this time known as Badsey Arravale. Beginning with the arrival of Holliday, Hall and others in 1920 the Rangers' team had included a majority of outsiders, leaving limited opportunities for the local players. Badsey United had disbanded at the end of the 1922-23 season and it was to fill the gap left by United's demise that the new club was formed, with the intention of fielding a team composed entirely of Badsey men. Immediately a problem arose; Arravale had nowhere to play, so although the

Rangers already occupied the Recreation Ground the new club applied for permission to use it as well. The Recreation Ground Management Committee said "No"; their chairman, Sir Julius Sladden, who was knighted in the 1926 New Year Honours for "political and public services" and who was also president of Badsey Rangers, told Arravale that they must look elsewhere. And so, when they eventually found a home in Arthur Jones' field in Badsey Lane, they named it Elsewhere Park.

Arravale kicked off with a Redditch League match versus Terrys and about 150 spectators were at Elsewhere to see them line up as follows: E. Knight; W. Sears, H. Marshall; F. Jinks, P. Crisp, G. Evans; H. Hatcher, F. Sandford, E. Mason, C. Stewart, A. Reed. The result was a draw of two goals each, but unfortunately this promising start was not maintained and the newcomers ended the season near the foot of the league. They also competed in Division 1 of the North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League, finishing at the bottom, but found some consolation in reaching the semi finals of both the Studley and Shipston Cups. The following season their league record was just as bad, but that year there was something to celebrate; a 3-2 victory over Offenham Swifts in the final of the "Cotswold" League Knock-out Cup gave the Arravale club its first trophy. In 1928-29, competing solely in the N.C. & V.E. League and having been relegated to the second division, the club found its true level and won the championship in fine style with 35 points from 22 games. Six months later, back in the first division, things began to go wrong and at a meeting held at the Royal Oak on 11th November 1929 both the chairman (G. H. Stewart) and the secretary (Chas Stewart) resigned, complaining of lack of sportsmanship and bad behaviour on the part of certain players. The remaining committee members were unwilling to carry on, a resolution to wind up the club was duly carried, and Badsey Arravale disappeared from the village football scene.

#### *Harold Cave*

Badsey Rangers Football Club has been well served during the past 100 years by many able and hard-working officials, but it is doubtful whether any one of them has made a greater impact on the club than Harold John Cave. As a young man he followed Badsey United and can be seen, standing among their officials, on a 1912 team photograph. Then, in the 1920-21 season, with the formation of the Evesham and District Schools League, Harold often refereed the home games of Badsey School. Later, he became secretary of the Vale of Evesham Junior League and in August 1927 came his appointment as secretary of Badsey Rangers. When we consider the difficulty at the present time in obtaining sufficient people who are willing to serve on a football committee, it is interesting to note that in 1927 Cave was backed by Messrs. V. C. E. Cockerton (chairman), A. J. Brewer (treasurer), J. Barnard, W. W. Blake, H. Field, P. Hall, W. Hall, J. Hartwell, W. Hartwell, Tom Keen, George Knight, C. March, G. Marshall, A. Perkins, A. Sadler, H. Sadler, W. Sadler, Edgar Salter, A. W. Sparrow, W. Stewart and A. Wheatley. Support generally, however, had fallen; the large "gates" of the early 1920s had disappeared and Walter Blake complained that almost as many people watched the home matches from the road as paid to go inside the ground. On one occasion when Rangers and Arravale were both at home on the same day the *Journal* said that "less than 200 of the populace was at football on Saturday afternoon", although we must remember that as the total population of the village was still only about 1100, the football supporters formed quite a large percentage when compared with attendances of perhaps 50 or so from a village of over 2500 people in 1989.

Cave did not have long to wait for something to celebrate; at the end of his first season as secretary Badsey topped the Redditch League table with 28 points out of a possible 32, four points ahead of the previous year's champions, Alcester Old Boys. Also in 1927-28 the Rangers reached two cup finals, both with Bretforton Old Boys, and lost at the semi final stage in a further three competitions. The first of the finals, for the Alfred Terry Memorial Cup, saw Bretforton gain an unexpected 3-1 victory; the second one, for the Evesham Hospital Cup, almost did not take place. 800 spectators were already on the ground at Evesham when Bretforton, finding themselves a man short, refused to play and went back home, leaving the gatekeepers to refund the admission money. To their credit, Knight-Coutts and his Hospital Cup committee, at an emergency meeting held later the same day, resolved: (1) That the cup be awarded to Badsey; (2) That Bretforton be ordered to pay £25 to the competition as compensation for loss of revenue; (3) That Bretforton be reported to the Worcestershire Football Association for serious misconduct. But Bretforton appealed to the Association and the latter, in a decision which was as ludicrous as it was so obviously unfair, ruled that the match must be rearranged. Badsey, at the wrong end of such an appalling verdict, had little heart for the match and lost 2-1.

The following season Badsey performed only moderately in the Redditch League but finished second in the North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League, one point behind Harvington. On the cup scene the club lost in three semi finals but, breaking fresh ground, won the Stratford Nursing Home Cup by defeating Leamington St Johns 4-1 in the final at Pearcecroft, Stratford-on-Avon. Team: Davis; W. Sadler, Meadows; Warner, Moore, Hunt; Levitt, Beddard. B. Malin, Gould, D. A. Jelfs. Then, in 1929-30, the Rangers secured third place in the Redditch League, comfortably won the North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League, which that season finished with a mere four clubs, a further four having fallen by the wayside since the opening day, and were losing finalists of the Evesham Hospital Cup. Seeking to retain the Stratford Nursing Home Cup Badsey reached the semi final, where the opposition was provided by Evesham Rovers. The first match produced a 2-2 draw, as did the replay, and although Badsey won at the third attempt it was found that their team included a cup-tied player, Latham of Metal Castings, who had been "imported" from Worcester because Badsey had no regular goalkeeper available that day. Evesham duly protested and yet another replay was ordered. This time Badsey, still without a goalkeeper who was eligible to play, included the veteran Billy Hall, aged 42, about 25 years after his first appearance for the club and who was not a goalkeeper in the first place. The handicap of a substitute goalkeeper was too much and Badsey lost 3-2.

Cave was gradually strengthening his team and in September 1930 Badsey returned to the Worcester League. For the first match, at home to Metal Castings, Badsey lined up as follows: Frank Davis; S. Rowlands, C. Harwood; W. Taylor, W. Sears, Archie Reed; D. A. Jelfs, H. King, C. Malin, A. J. Pitt, Harry Hatcher. The visitors proved to be the better team, by a 3-1 margin, and they led the table throughout the season, while Badsey gained second place, making sure of that position with a convincing 9-1 win against Ledbury Town in the last match of the season. The Rangers also beat Alcester Old Boys in the final of the Evesham Hospital Cup, thus reversing the previous year's result, with the following team: F. Davis; S. Rowlands, W. Harwood; T. Sears, W. Sears, D. A. Jelfs (captain); M. Dowdeswell, A. J. Pitt, E. Tomkins, E. Dowdeswell, H. Hatcher. It will be seen that

the team showed several changes when compared with the one at the start of the season and, in particular, the forward line had been considerably strengthened by the arrival of "Yarney" Tomkins and the Dowdeswell brothers. These three men had previously appeared for Bretforton Old Boys until that club disbanded in 1930 owing to lack of players.

#### *A Shelf Full of Trophies*

The 1931-32 season was one in which Badsey Rangers again reaped a rich harvest, bringing back to their supporters happy memories of the all-conquering team of 1920-21. For the second consecutive year the chief opposition in the Worcester League was provided by the works team Metal Castings, who won every match until the end of March and looked certain to retain the championship. Surprisingly, however, Castings then suffered two defeats to give Badsey renewed hope and all depended on the final match of the season, Badsey versus Metal Castings at Badsey. Rangers won 3-1 to take the title, with the leading positions as follows:

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Badsey Rangers	16	14	1	1	85	19	29
Metal Castings	16	13	0	3	81	24	26
Comer Villa	16	11	1	4	52	43	23

That year also saw the Worcester Infirmary Cup come to Badsey for the first time. Following a 15-1 victory over Cookley in the semi final, when centre forward Ernest Tomkins scored eight times, the Rangers beat Malvern Trinity 3-1 in the final at St. George's Lane, Worcester. Returning to the same ground for the final of the Worcester Charity Cup, Badsey found unexpected difficulty in disposing of Ledbury St Michaels and the match went to extra time before Badsey showed their superiority and finished 5-3 in front to win the trophy for the third time. In the Worcestershire Junior Cup, over 500 people were on Badsey Recreation Ground to see the Rangers beat Metal Castings in the fourth round and about 1000 went to Evesham for the semi final, where Badsey achieved a comfortable 5-1 victory over Droitwich Comrades. The final, played at Redditch, is reported as being a fairly one-sided affair and we are told that the score of 3-0 against Bromsgrove St Johns did not fully represent the play. This was Badsey's fifth time of winning the Junior Cup and their seventh appearance in the final. Lastly, nearer to home, Badsey won the Evesham Hospital Cup for the sixth time by defeating Tewkesbury Town 6-3 with goals from E. Tomkins (4), C. Malin and E. Dowdeswell. After the match the cup was presented to Douglas Jelfs, the Rangers' captain by Sir Bolton Eyres Monsell, First Lord of the Admiralty and Member of Parliament for the Evesham Division.

In each of the four cup finals the Badsey team was the same: Frank Davis; Sid Rowlands, Jack Swain; George Geden, Bill Sears, Doug Jelfs; Manny Dowdeswell, C. Malin, Ernest Tomkins, E. "Napper" Dowdeswell and Harry Hatcher. Reserve: Cecil Harwood. One remarkable feature of that outstanding season was the small number of players taking part—only 16 appeared in the Rangers' colours all season and three of those played a mere five games between them—and no doubt the ability to field a settled team contributed greatly towards the club's success. In addition to their 85 league goals Badsey netted a further 101 in cup games, the chief goalscorers being Tomkins 59, Malin 37, E. Dowdeswell 33, Hatcher 16 and M. Dowdeswell 15.



*Badsey Rangers 1931-32. Back row (left to right): T. Keen, W. H. Jelfs, G. Knight, H. J. Cave, A. W. Sparrow, V. C. E. Cockerton, P. Case. Centre row: E. Hartwell, C. Knight, G. Geden, W. Sears, S. Rowlands, F. Davis, J. Swain, C. Harwood, F. Hill, E. Salter. Front row: M. Dowdeswell, C. Malin, D. A. Jelfs, E. Tomkins, E. Dowdeswell, H. Hatcher.*

#### *Great Days in the Amateur Cup*

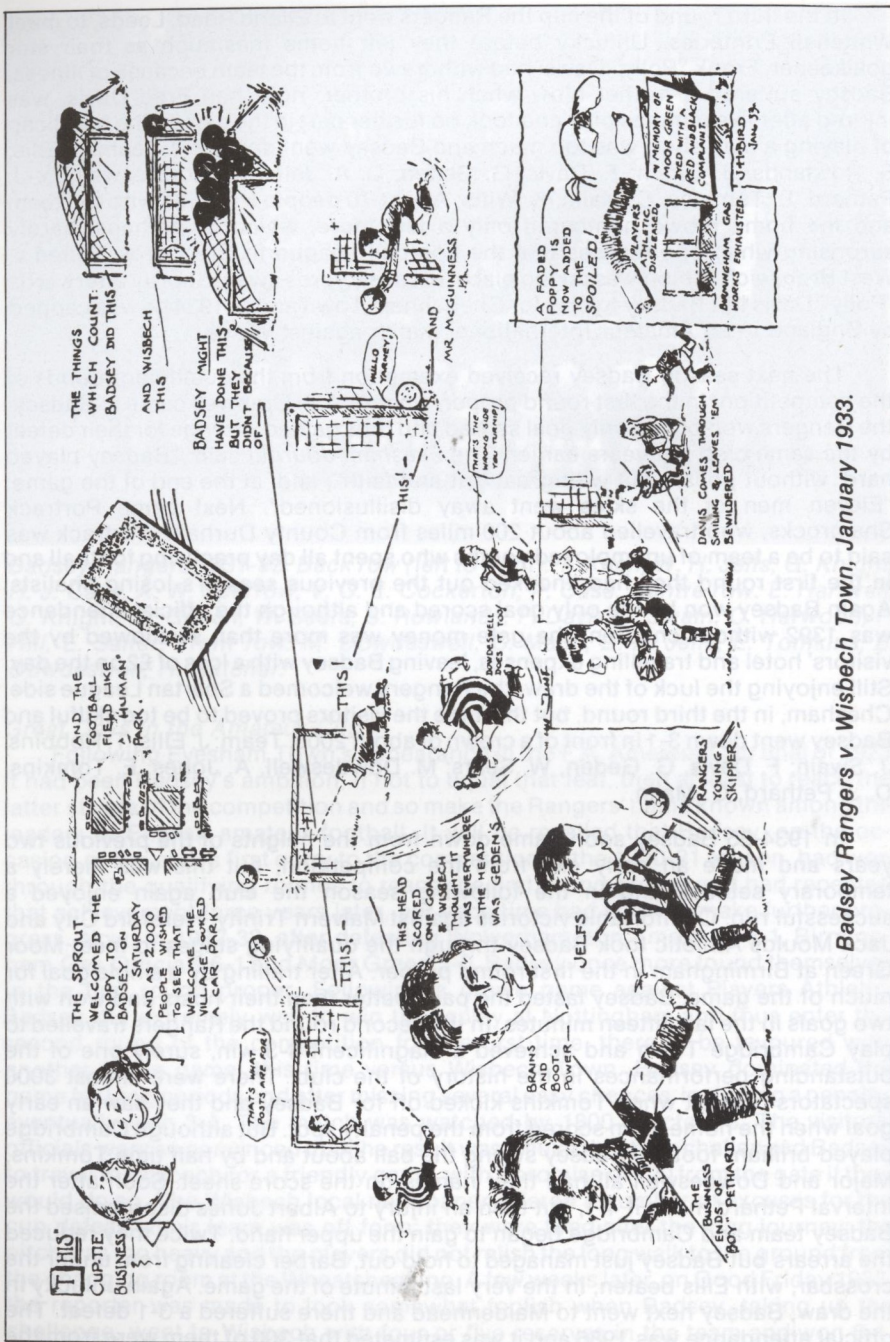
Following Evesham Town's appearance in the F.A. Amateur Cup final of 1923 it had been Badsey's ambition, if not to equal that feat, then at least to reach the latter stages of the competition and so make the Rangers' name known among the leaders of English amateur football. It will be recalled that Badsey, on the occasion of the club's first entry to the competition in the 1920-21 season, had won through the qualifying rounds to reach the first round proper and had repeated that achievement three years later, but each time had failed to make further progress. Now, in 1932-33, after defeating Wolverhampton Amateurs 6-1, Birmingham Gas Officials 6-1 and Moor Green 3-0, Badsey once more found themselves in the first round proper. Following a drawn game against Players Athletic, Badsey did extremely well to win the replay at Nottingham and thus enter the second round of the competition for the first time, there to be favoured with another home game, this time versus Wisbech Town. Badsey dominated the game for long periods and after missing several easy chances, including a penalty, eventually won 3-1. The match was watched by 1800 spectators. The visitors' officials were so convinced that the result was a fluke that they challenged Badsey to travel to Wisbech for a friendly game, with a promise of £20 from the gate if they would do so. The Wisbech local newspaper offered a number of excuses for the cup defeat—their team was off form; they were tired after the long journey; the pitch was too heavy and the players did not relish the long walk to the ground from the changing room at the Wheatsheaf Inn. A few weeks later, on Good Friday 1933, the reporter was made to look somewhat foolish when Badsey, taking up the challenge, went to Wisbech with four or five reserves in the team and won 6-1.

In the third round of the cup the Rangers went to Elland Road, Leeds, to meet Whitehall Printeries. Unlucky before they left home inasmuch as their star goalkeeper, Frank "Polly" Davis, had withdrawn from the team because of illness, Badsey suffered a further blow when his brother, right half Fred Davis, was injured after five minutes play and took no further part in the game. The handicap of playing a man short was too much and Badsey went down 2-0. Team: J. Ellis; S. Rowlands, J. Swain; F. Davis, G. Geden, D. A. Jelfs; M. Dowdeswell, D. J. Pethard, E. Tomkins, C. Malin, K. Witts. About 70 people travelled with the team and the home crowd numbered only a few more, which is, perhaps, hardly surprising when one realises that the Football League fixture Leeds United v. West Bromwich Albion was taking place just a few yards away. Shortly afterwards "Polly" Davis left Badsey to play for Cheltenham Town and in 1934 he was capped by England in an Amateur International match against Wales.

The next season Badsey received exemption from the qualifying rounds of the competition. In the first round proper, when R.A.F. Cranwell came to Badsey, the Rangers won by the only goal scored and thus gained revenge for their defeat by the same club ten years earlier. The *Evesham Journal* said: "Badsey played hard, without polish, but with great grit and faith", and, at the end of the game: "Eleven men of the skies went away disillusioned". Next came Portrack Shamrocks, who travelled about 200 miles from County Durham. Portrack was said to be a team of unemployed youths who spent all day practising football and in the first round they had knocked out the previous season's losing finalists. Again Badsey won by the only goal scored and although the official attendance was 1392 without children, the gate money was more than swallowed by the visitors' hotel and travelling expenses, leaving Badsey with a loss of £2 on the day. Still enjoying the luck of the draw, the Rangers welcomed a Spartan League side, Chesham, in the third round, but this time the visitors proved to be too skilful and Badsey went down 3-1 in front of a crowd of about 2000. Team: J. Ellis; T. Robbins, J. Swain; F. Davis, G. Geden, W. Sears; M. Dowdeswell, A. Jones, E. Tomkins, D. J. Pethard, C. Malin.

In 1934-35 Badsey soon came down from the heights of the previous two years and made an early exit from the competition, but this was merely a temporary setback and in the following season the club again enjoyed a successful run. Comfortable victories against Malvern Trinity, Hereford City and Jack Moulds Athletic took Badsey through the qualifying stages to meet Moor Green at Birmingham in the first round proper. After trailing by a single goal for much of the game, Badsey lasted the pace better than their hosts and won with two goals in the last fifteen minutes. In the second round the Rangers travelled to play Cambridge Town and achieved a magnificent 4-3 win, surely one of the outstanding performances in the history of the club. There were almost 3000 spectators present when Tomkins kicked off for Badsey and they saw an early goal when the home team scored from the penalty spot. But although Cambridge played brilliant football Badsey swung the ball about and by half time Tomkins, Major and Dowdeswell all had their names on the score sheet. Soon after the interval Pethard made it 4-1, but then an injury to Albert Jones disorganised the Badsey team and Cambridge began to gain the upper hand. Twice they reduced the arrears but Badsey just managed to hold out, Barber clearing from under the crossbar, with Ellis beaten, in the very last minute of the game. Again unlucky in the draw, Badsey next went to Maidenhead and there suffered a 3-1 defeat. The official attendance was 1986 and it was estimated that 300 of them were from the





Badsey Rangers v. Wisbech Town, January 1933.

**Friday, February, 22nd, 1936. Kick-off.**

**MAIDENHEAD UNITED (Colours—White Jerseys, Black Knickers)**

Right Wing		Left
	1—W. F. C. Bunce	
	2—G. H. Robinson	3—A. G. Lambden
	4—C. G. Welford	5—F. W. Hampshire
	6—J. Snow, <i>Capt</i>	
7—S. J. Ayres	8—B. Day	9—P. J. Hunt
	10—F. C. Gigg	11—J. Deverall
12—A. E. Jones	13—D. J. Pethard	14—E. Tomkins
	15—G. E. Knight	16—M. Dowdeswell
	17—J. Barber	18—J. Robbins
	19—R. Knight	
	20—J. Swain <i>Capt.</i>	21—T. Robbins
	22—J. Ellis	
Left Wing		Right Wing
	<b>BADSEY RANGERS (Colours—Red and Black Stripes, Black Knickers).</b>	
	Referee—F. W. FERRIS (Oxfordshire)	

This afternoon we have as visitors the strong Worcestershire team, Badsey Rangers. They are the oldest football team in Worcestershire, having been formed in 1890. They are members of the Worcester & District League and stand 2nd on the league table at present. They are fortunate in being able to call on the services of two Evesham players, Pethard and G. Knight. We understand that both of these players have been approached by professional clubs, but prefer to maintain their amateur status.

We give results of both teams in the cup competition this season :—

v. R.A.M.C. (Aldershot) H. 4—4	v. Malvern H. 4—1
v. " " " A. 4—1	v. Hereford City A. 4—1
v. H.M.S. Victory " A. 3—1	v. Jack Moulds H. 3—1
	v. Moor Green A. 2—1
	v. Cambridge Town A. 4—3
	<hr style="width: 100px; margin: auto;"/> 11—6
	<hr style="width: 100px; margin: auto;"/> 17—7

Spectators can be assured of a good rousing game, and we predict a close finish.

Maidenhead United versus Badsey Rangers, 1936  
Two extracts from the official match programme.

Evesham district. The Rangers' players and officials travelled by bus, but for those wishing to go by train the Great Western Railway advertised a special excursion—return fare 5s.0d.—leaving Evesham at 11.30 a.m. and Littleton & Badsey at 11.40 a.m. For an extra shilling passengers could continue to London after the game, returning from Paddington station at 11.35 p.m. Copies of two extracts from the official match programme may be seen on page 33.

And so Badsey, three times in the space of four seasons, reached the last sixteen teams in the premier amateur competition of England, a tremendous achievement for a village of just over 1000 people. But we must not forget that there were other successes as well. Although it was from the Amateur Cup matches that Badsey gained the most publicity during those four seasons, the club took the honours in several other competitions during the same period. Twice finishing at the top of the Worcester League and also winning the Worcestershire Junior, Worcester Charity, Worcester Infirmary and Winchcombe Cups, this was a just reward for the hard work of Harold Cave and his committee. The team which won the Worcestershire Junior Cup in April 1935 by defeating Lye Town Reserves 2-0, following a goal-less draw, was: J. Ellis; T. Robbins, J. Swain; W. Sears, G. Geden, J. Barber; M. Dowdeswell, H. Attwood, E. Tomkins (2 goals), J. Russell, W. Major. The 1934-35 season also saw the changing rooms built on the Recreation Ground and a year later £20 was spent to add washing facilities. Badsey's chief marksman at the time was "Yarney" Tomkins; in his five full seasons as the club's centre forward, beginning in 1931-32, he scored a total of 235 league and cup goals. It is interesting to read in an *Evesham Journal* review of Badsey's 1934-35 season that several reserve players showed great promise and with coaching and care should prove acquisitions to the senior team. On 2nd December 1948 one of the players mentioned, Jack Haines, then with West Bromwich Albion, scored twice in England's 6-0 defeat of Switzerland at the Arsenal ground.

#### *The Central Amateur League*

Ready for a new challenge Badsey left the Worcester League in 1936 and accepted an invitation to join the Central Amateur League, although Cave warned that travelling expenses would be about £100 a season, at lot of money at a time when the average employed man in the village earned less than £2 a week. The first match was at home against Ibstock Penistone Rovers, when a "disappointing" attendance of about 200 spectators saw the visitors win 4-2. Apart from Ibstock the Rangers' opponents were Bedworth Town, Coalville Town, Coventry Morris Motors, Leicester Nomads, Loughborough College, Moor Green, Northampton Mount Pleasant, Northampton Nomads and R.A.F. Cranwell. Badsey gained no points until their fourth match and at the end of the season found themselves in the lower half of the league table with 20 points from 20 games. However, the club did achieve distinction that season by winning the Worcestershire Junior Cup for the seventh time, thus creating a record which stands to this present day. The team which defeated Catshill Village Hall F.C. 3-2 in the final, played at Evesham, was Jack Ellis goal; Tom Robbins and Jack Swain backs; Bill Rooney, Bill Sears and Jack Barber half backs; Harry Attwood, Albert Jones, Albert Hughes, Laurence Smith and Wally Major forwards. A year later, with Dick Collett scoring 45 goals, the Rangers finished fifth in the league and also landed the Worcester Royal Infirmary Cup for the third time with a fine 3-0

win against Worcester League champions Cherry Orchard. Team: Ellis; Robbins, Swain (captain); Rooney, Sears, Barber; Attwood, Hughes, Collett, Willmore, Major.

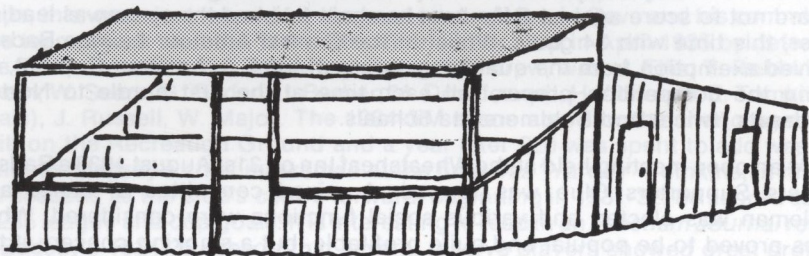
The 1938-39 season saw Badsey improve their Central Amateur League position still further when they secured fourth place out of eleven teams, only Moor Green, Ibstock and Morris Motors finishing above them. Yet again there was a trophy to bring home; Badsey beat Offenham 4-2 in the final of the Evesham Hospital Cup. That last season before the outbreak of the war saw frequent changes in the Rangers' side—a total of 48 players appeared—and possibly, with a more settled team, an even better league position would have been achieved. In the team which won the Hospital Cup were J. Ellis; T. Robbins (captain), L. Ankers; Ron Knight, C. Castle, J. Chatwin; F. Price, H. Beasley, R. Collett, George Knight and L. Scrivens, showing quite clearly the changes which had taken place, only Ellis, Robbins and Collett remaining of the team which had won the Worcester Infirmary Cup just twelve months earlier. Although Collett was the only forward not to score against Offenham he again finished the season as leading scorer, this time with 34 goals. Whilst in the Central Amateur League Badsey received exemption from the qualifying stages of the F.A. Amateur Cup but, on joining the competition proper, fell each time at the first hurdle to Norton Woodseats (twice) and Boldmere St Michaels.

At an open meeting held at the Wheatsheaf Inn on 31st August 1938 a Badsey Rangers Supporters Club was formed. A mixed committee of ladies and gentlemen was elected and various social functions were considered. Whist drives proved to be popular and quite profitable, but a smoking concert at the Wheatsheaf was a failure, only two shillings being taken at the door, while a darts tournament brought in a mere half crown. The following June, at the Annual General Meeting, treasurer Bert Brewer reported a balance in hand of £11 and said that £25 had been given to the parent club, which was thought to be very satisfactory. But support generally was not particularly good at the time and the Rangers' gate money at a home league match in 1938-39 averaged only £3 18s. 9d., representing perhaps 150 people each match. Nevertheless, it seems likely that Badsey was the best supported club in the district—Evesham's Birmingham Combination team had folded up on 25th October 1938—and, by way of comparison, the Annual General Meeting of Bretforton Old Boys held in August 1939 heard that their total gate receipts for the whole season amounted to less than £9.

For a few seasons Badsey tried their luck in the F.A. Cup and the first attempt, in 1933-34, resulted in the biggest defeat ever suffered by the club. Travelling without regular goalkeeper Ellis to Oswestry Town, a semi professional Birmingham League team, the Rangers went down 19-3 and none told the story better than Tom Sale, who was called on to deputise in goal for the day. Badsey never won a match in this competition, the nearest occasion being in the 1936-37 season when they held Hereford United to a 3-3 draw at Edgar Street. The F.A. Cup games did, however, attract more spectators and the *Evesham Journal* reported that over 1000 were at Badsey in September 1937 to see Hednesford Town lower the Rangers' colours to the tune of 5-1. Several Badsey players gained representative honours during the 1930s and both Ellis and Robbins were in the Worcestershire team which met the Birmingham F.A. on 19th February 1938. George Knight, then an Evesham Town player, captained the county side

that day and so followed his father, who had been Worcestershire captain some 25 years earlier.

Starting a fourth season in the Central Amateur League and with George Knight appointed as captain, Badsey lost to Coalville Town in their first match. But, following the declaration of War on 3rd September 1939, the club announced that it would suspend its activities for the duration of hostilities, although some clubs in the Vale of Evesham carried on for a while and the North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League operated for two more seasons. On 18th January 1943 Harold Cave, whose tireless work as honorary secretary had contributed so much towards the Rangers' successes during the thirties, died at the age of 54.



## CHAPTER 4 STARTING AGAIN

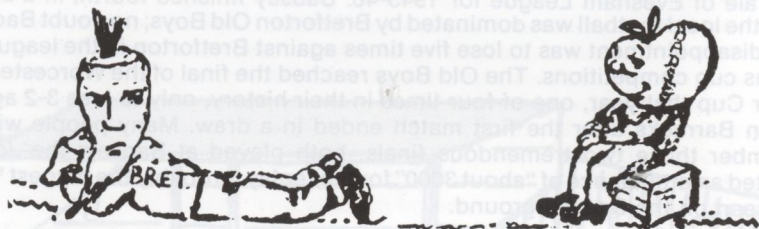
After remaining dormant for six years Badsey Rangers F.C. was revived in the autumn of 1945, but unlike 1919 when most of the pre-war players were still available, this time it was necessary to find virtually a new team. With only Ron Knight and Bill Willmore left of players who had given service in the Central Amateur League, although two or three others did turn out occasionally, the committee was not over ambitious and was content to enter the North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League for 1945-46. Badsey finished fourth, in a season when the local football was dominated by Bretforton Old Boys; no doubt Badsey's main disappointment was to lose five times against Bretforton in the league and various cup competitions. The Old Boys reached the final of the Worcestershire Junior Cup that year, one of four times in their history, only to lose 3-2 against Norton Barracks after the first match ended in a draw. Many people will still remember those two tremendous finals, both played at Badsey; the *Journal* reported an attendance of "about 3000" for the replay, probably the biggest "gate" ever seen on the Badsey ground.

The following season Badsey returned to the Worcester League and chairman Fred Savage and his committee began to build a fine team. Fourth that season; runners-up to Stourport Swifts the next; the Rangers started 1948-49 with their sights set firmly on the league title. The club had already won its first post-war trophy; in April 1948 Badsey beat Bretforton 4-2 on the Crown Meadow in Evesham, with Les Malins scoring three goals, to win the Worcester Infirmary Cup for the fourth time. Badsey: C. Knight; J. Plant, J. Sadler; L. Wallis, W. Willmore, G. Malins; Wal Izod, G. Knight, R. Bass, L. Malins, Wm Izod. Bretforton: Aston; Grubb, Wits; Biddle, Cox, Tomkins; Williams, Smith, Adams, Hay, Jelfs. It is interesting to note that George Knight was in the Rangers' team that day; he had made a comeback a few months earlier and it was 23 years since he first appeared in a cup final for Badsey.

Before the 1948-49 season got under way the club suffered a sad blow with the loss of Gordon Malins, a fine left half and captain, who was forced to give up playing following an injury sustained in a practice game. But new players were on the way, including three from Bretforton, and before the season was many weeks old a team had been built which compared favourably with the best of the great Badsey Rangers teams of earlier years. I still recall the characteristics of those players, who provided us boys with plenty to enthuse about as we looked forward to the weekly fixture. They were Cyril Knight, goalkeeper supreme; Dennis Croft, a tall, strong right back; his partner Bill Willmore, whose superb judgement made up for his lack of inches and enabled him to win many high balls against taller opponents; Les Wallis and Maury Hay, skilful wing halves; centre half Bill Cox, a tough, hard-tackling player; the brothers Wally and Bill Izod, famed for their accurate centres from near the corner flags, but also ready to cut in and try a shot at goal; inside right Tommy Cook from Worcester, a player of immense skill;

inside left Les Malins, a real grafter and scorer of some great headed goals; Alfie Adams at centre forward, a brilliant opportunist with the knack of being in the right place to get an apparently simple goal; and the reliable Percy Stock as reserve.

It was a delight to watch the combination of these fine players and the *Journal* reports were full of praise for the team, saying that "... the forwards possessed a perfect understanding" and "... the forward line moved with clockwork precision". One good result followed another, but perhaps the one most enjoyed by the Badsey crowd was the 11-0 trouncing of Bretforton Old Boys, with Alfie Adams scoring five times against his former club. Badsey did not lose a league



game until Good Friday, when they suffered a 3-2 reverse against the eventual runners-up, Ledbury Town; the only other league defeat was on the last Saturday of the season, following a 2 hour cup final played earlier the same day. But by then the league trophy had already been collected and the Worcester Infirmary Cup won for the second consecutive year. Badsey met Evesham United in the final and about 2500 spectators were on the Recreation Ground to see the goals from Cook and Malins which gave the Rangers a 2-0 victory. The teams had tossed for choice of ground so that the competition would benefit from a better attendance than if a neutral venue was used. Badsey also reached the final of the Worcester Nursing Home Cup and played a 1-1 draw, after extra time, versus Heenan and Froude. As there was no time to arrange a replay the teams were declared joint holders of the cup; Badsey had the luck to win the toss for the winners' replicas. Badsey: Knight; Croft, Willmore; Wallis, Cox, Hay; Izod, Cook, Adams, Malins, Izod. During this wonderful season the team enjoyed splendid support. Over 2000 people saw the home league match with Evesham and "gates" of between 500 and 750 were commonplace. Leading goalscorers were A. Adams 55, P.T. Cook 39 and L. Malins 24; both Cyril Knight and Tommy Cook were selected to play for Worcestershire. A summary of the season's results follows:

	P	W	D	L	F	A
League	22	16	4	2	79	23
Cup	17	13	1	3	76	31

Not for the first time in Badsey's history a successful team began to break up quite quickly and only three years after carrying off the Worcester League title we find the club in dire straits. Support had dwindled rapidly; on Easter Monday 1949 Badsey took £92 at the gate when Evesham United were the visitors; two years later the similar fixture brought in only £24. Total gate receipts for 1948-49 amounted to £413; this figure had fallen to £56 by 1951-52 and the big crowds

were never seen at Badsey again. In April 1952 Badsey won the Evesham Hospital Cup with a 4-2 victory over Wickhamford, after going two goals down in the first ten minutes, but by September of the same year some doubt arose as to whether the club would carry on. Three league games had been played, and lost, at the commencement of the 1952-53 season when the *Evesham Journal* said that "... Badsey Rangers, formed 62 years ago, cannot raise a team and have had to call off the match". Fred Savage is quoted as saying: "We have got to start again almost from scratch if we are not to go down. It is up to us to see that we do not go down. There is no truth in the rumour that we are going to withdraw from the Worcester League. None whatever". As the *Journal* pointed out, the problem was that too many clubs were chasing too few players of the quality necessary for the Worcester League, which at the time included six teams from the Evesham district—Badsey, Bretforton, Broadway, Evesham United Reserves, Hampton Rovers and Offenham. Badsey's survival rested on the possibility of bringing in men from farther afield and this was done following a contact with a certain Jack Clarke, who introduced several players from the Birmingham area to make up the Rangers' depleted numbers. On 18th October the club was able to resume its league programme and the new players helped to see the season through, although Badsey finished only tenth in the table. The real success, however, was to win the Worcester Infirmary Cup by defeating Heenan and Froude 1-0 at the Worcester City ground, after the first match had ended in a 2-2 draw. The winning goal came in the 38th minute from centre forward Burns, deputising for the injured Dunn; Badsey were well served by a strong defence in which 'keeper John Grindle and half backs Pete Osborne and Den Fortey were outstanding.

#### *Badsey Juniors*

At various times over the years Badsey ran a reserve team, mostly with little success, but in 1951 the committee decided to form a youth side instead and the team, known as Badsey Juniors, was entered in the Vale of Evesham Junior League, which catered for players under the age of 18. A strong team was soon gathered together and the Juniors won the league in fine style, dropping only three points in 20 games with a goal average of 175-30. They also won the league's Evesham Standard Knockout Cup by defeating Alcester St Nicholas 4-2 in front of about 1000 spectators at the Crown Meadow, Evesham. Team: J. Macnamara; P. Sparrow, T. C. Sparrow; R. Sandford, M. Salter, B. Jennings; M. Milner, D. Gould, F. Hiron, R. Grove, D. Emms. A year later the Juniors retained the Standard Cup and took runners up honours in the league, but the team then disbanded, mainly because of opposition from a local headmaster who did not wish his pupils to play football for teams outside the school.

#### *A Constant Struggle*

In the hope that a change of league would bring a change of luck Badsey Rangers left the Worcester League in 1953 and joined the Birmingham Alliance (West Midland Section). But difficulties continued, including the resignation of secretary Ron Rouse in mid season, and Badsey's three seasons in the Alliance did not bring the club much success. It was only after deciding to return to Worcester that Badsey achieved any consistently good results, winning their last five Alliance games of the 1955-56 season, plus the semi final and final of the Evesham Hospital Cup. The final was held at Littleton on 5th May 1956 and the Rangers team which beat Broadway 3-2 was: C. Smith; W. Shammon, R. D. Clarke; E. Cave, Don Grove, R. Biggart; J. Haines, J. New, M. Stokes, Les Malins and H. Gisbourne.

For the next seven years Badsey competed in Division 1 of the Worcester and District League and what a struggle it was. Mere statistics, depressing as they are, convey only part of the story. 163 league matches played but only 40 won; over 100 league goals in a season conceded on three occasions; just one solitary trophy to show for seven years' effort; and so one could go on. But behind the figures lies the story of how the club again came close to folding up and of how a new committee was formed at the last minute to avoid this ignominious end. It all began when Gerald Norledge, who had taken over the secretary's job from Ron Rouse in December 1953, resigned on 12th March 1957. I was appointed in his place and the season drew to a close without further incident. Then, at a stormy Annual General Meeting on 5th June 1957, trouble really flared up. A number of well-intentioned but misguided people had a lot to say about the advisability of re-electing Mr Norledge as secretary and a resolution to that effect was carried by a large majority. Because of this decision several of the retiring committee would not accept re-election. It was obvious that the situation was hopeless; most of the workers had gone; the talkers were left. Before the new season was two months old the secretary had resigned again and his resignation was quickly followed by that of the whole committee. The future looked very bleak indeed. In the hope that a solution could be found, chairman Bill Hatch called an Extraordinary General Meeting.



Bill Hatch.

I believe that the club would have gone under at that point had it not been for Raymond Butler, who came to see me on the day after the committee's resignation and expressed his determination to see the Rangers carry on. He persuaded me to go to the extraordinary meeting on 9th October, where the president of the club, G. H. Stewart, was in the chair, and there we heard the sad details. No minutes of the last Annual General Meeting were recorded, nor of the weekly committee meetings since 27th August, neither was there any written record of matches which had so far been played that season. It was hard to believe that the administration of the club had fallen into such a shocking state in so short a time; some of those who had spoken so boldly at the Annual General Meeting only four months earlier were now strangely silent. However, enough people came forward who were ready to face the difficult task of keeping the Rangers going and a new committee was formed:- Ray Butler (chairman), T. C. Sparrow (secretary), A. G. Crisp (treasurer), George Keen, John Keen, Ron Knight, Bill Hatch and a few others. At the end of the season there was little success to report—only four games won—but at least Badsey Rangers was still in business, even if bottom of the league. The next season was as bad, if not worse—we even lost a cup-tie on our own ground against Wickhamford—and April 1959 saw Badsey propping up the table once more. League officials remained sympathetic and again we escaped relegation.



*Badsey Rangers 1947-48, with the Worcester Infirmary Cup. Back row (left to right): F. Sandford, A. W. Sparrow, R. A. Murray, A. J. Brewer, V. Wasley, W. Hatch. Second row: A. G. Crisp, G. W. Neale, D. Malin, L. Wallis, C. Knight, R. Knight, J. Plant, W. Dunkley, E. Salter, A. Sears. Third row: R. Rouse, J. Sadler, G. Knight, R. Bass, G. Malins, L. Malins, F. C. Savage. Front row: Wal Izod and Bill Izod. (Absent from the picture: W. Willmore).*



*Badsey Juniors 1951-52. Back row (left to right): C. Baker, V. Wasley, P. Sparrow, R. Sandford, F. C. Savage, M. Salter, J. Macnamara, B. Jennings, R. A. Murray, T. C. Sparrow, R. Rouse, W. Hatch. Front row: A. Emms, A. W. Sparrow, M. Milner, D. Gould, F. Hirons, R. Grove, D. Emms, J. Hatcher, F. Sandford.*

At the beginning of the 1959-60 season we were fortunate to secure the services of Ken Elliott, a Cheltenham based player with experience of a higher grade of football. He came to us as a "permit" player, having formerly played as a professional, and his skilful play in the centre half position, together with his all round knowledge of the game, soon made their mark on the team. That season we held our own in the league and won eight matches, including "doubles" over Avonbank (Evesham), Gorse Hill and Metal Box, but undoubtedly the most satisfying achievement was to bring the Evesham Hospital Cup back to Badsey. It was not that the Hospital Cup was a particularly important competition at the time, but simply that after several years in the football wilderness we were glad to win any sort of trophy. Our team for the final on the Crown Meadow at Evesham was: R. Allen; T. Wall, R. Salter; M. Annis, K. Elliott, D. Wyld; G. Evans, E. Norton, T. Richmond, D. Bartlett, A. Padfield. A summary of our results in the competition, with the goalscorers, is as follows:

First round	Ryall Grove	(A)	2-1	Norton 2.
Second round	Bretforton O.B.	(H)	4-3	Norton 3, Bartlett.
Semi final	Bishampton	(H)	2-0	Norton, Evans.
Final	Moreton Town		3-1	Richmond 2, Padfield.

The next season, with Brian Underhill scoring 23 goals, we won as many league points as we lost and this was the only occasion during those seven seasons 1956-63 that we scored more goals than we conceded. We also reached the semi final of the Winchcombe Charities Cup. In 1961-62 we slipped back slightly and also, that season, some bright individual suggested that it was time that Badsey entered the F.A. Amateur Cup again. We did. An unfavourable draw gave us a round trip of over 100 miles to play against Wrockwardine Wood, we got lost on the way and finished up by conceding seven goals. Needless to say, this was Badsey's farewell appearance in the competition. Later that season Graham Bartlett was selected to play for the Worcester League Representative XI. In the autumn of 1962 it was decided to extend the club's activities by forming a junior section and they enjoyed reasonable success, being losing finalists of the Evesham Junior League Knockout Cup. For the first team, however, it was a different story. After a bold start in a friendly match with a 12-0 victory over Collins Bros., things soon began to go wrong. We lost match after match and the only thing to break the weekly sequence was the weather; because of snow and severe frost no matches were played between 15th December 1962 and 9th March 1963. The resulting fixture congestion was cleared by playing ten games during the month of April, but still nothing went right. Our record for the season was dismal; bottom of the league with a mere 8 points; total goals scored in 29 league and cup matches only 50 (D. Williams 15); goals against 120.

## CHAPTER 5

### RECENT TIMES

The management committee of the Worcester League had been most co-operative in allowing Badsey to retain its first division status, in spite of poor form, but clearly there had to be a limit. One could not expect to live on one's reputation indefinitely. Rather than accept the inevitable relegation Badsey withdrew from the Worcester League at the end of the 1962-63 season and joined the Stratford-on-Avon League. At the Annual General Meeting held on 15th July 1963 George Crisp reported a balance in hand of £184 and this meeting also marked the end of his 16 years as honorary treasurer. He was made a life member. The first match in the Stratford League, at home to Bidford, resulted in a 3-2 victory and at the end of the season Badsey occupied fifth place in the league table. The juniors, too, had their moments, especially when they defeated Aston Cantlow by 20 goals to nil, with Eddie Tye scoring seven. However, in June 1964 it was decided to disband the junior section because of insufficient financial resources and a shortage of committee members.

The Rangers continued in the Stratford League but after a good start a run of injuries led to an unsettled team, with a consequent lack of success. The following season, in an effort to encourage more local players, a decision was taken to compete in the North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League, a decision which proved to be one of the most disastrous in the history of the club. Although team spirit remained good the playing strength was sadly lacking and in May 1966 all that could be shown for a season's effort was a solitary league point from the home game with Bishampton. At least the treasurer was able to report a profit of £39, largely thanks to Bingo. We quickly said goodbye to the Cotswold League and went back to Stratford.

#### *Happy Years at Stratford*

The opening of the 1966-67 season saw a new method of selecting the team. Hitherto the committee had deliberated each Monday evening, at the Wheatsheaf Inn until 1962 and then at the Cricket Club, which later became the Recreation Club, and hoped that their combined ideas would produce the best team available. But now all this was to change; we were to have a manager, with sole responsibility for signings and team selection. Vic Cull was the man appointed and he was at once able to attract several new players, who soon made their presence felt, and from that point the Rangers commenced an eight year period of unbroken success in Stratford football. Always in the first three league positions and reaching a host of charity cup finals, this was one of the golden periods in the Rangers' history, bringing some consolation to those members of the committee who had struggled on for many years, wondering whether any trophies would ever return to Badsey. During those eight seasons our league position was third, third, second, third, second, first, first and second. In addition, during the same period, we won the Stratford Hospital Cup three times, Stratford Nursing Home Cup twice, R. M. Smith Cup twice, League Knockout Cup twice, R.A.F.A. Cup and Evesham Hospital Cup. On a further six occasions cup runners-up honours were obtained. A summary of the results for 1966-67 to 1973-74 follows.

	P	W	D	L	Goals
League	188	135	29	24	705-284
Cup	178	113	14	51	617-332

The 1972-73 season, the second time that Badsey took the league championship, was especially notable, as not only did they win the league and the Knockout Cup, but also the Hospital, Nursing Home and R. M. Smith Cups, this being the only time in the history of Stratford football that one team has won all five major trophies in the same season. During that triumphant season for Vic Cull and his men (pictured below) 52 matches were played, of which 44 were won, 4 drawn and 4 lost. 218 goals were scored, with 70 against, the chief goalscorers being Colin Kelly (62), Les Proctor (44), Alex Ogg (29) and David James (26). It was indeed a memorable year and whilst it is difficult, and perhaps slightly unfair, to single out individuals from a well-balanced squad one recalls, for example, the many brilliant goals by centre forward Kelly and the midfield artistry of "Fred" Emms. That season also saw a change in playing tactics; it was on 24th March 1973 that Badsey first adopted a 4-2-4 formation. In July 1973 chairman Ray Butler, who had played a prominent part in keeping the club going during the several difficult years from 1957, resigned after 16 years in office. His place as chairman was taken by George Keen, who had already completed 19 years on the committee. In appreciation of his work for the club Mr Butler was elected to life membership and, at the same time, a similar honour was given to Bill Hatch, well known for his duties as club linesman for a long period. A year later it was thought that Badsey had achieved all that was reasonably possible in Stratford football and the club returned to Division 1 of the Worcester League.



*Badsey Rangers 1972-73, with five Stratford trophies. Standing (left to right): P. Swain, R. Butler, H. Merriman, G. R. Keen, M. Emms, B. Willmore, D. James, J. Stanley, G. Cotton, D. Wright, J. Matthews, M. Green, J. Wheatley, C. Whalley, V. Cull, T. C. Sparrow, M. Barraclough. Seated: C. Kelly, D. Brotherton, A. Ogg, N. Emms (mascot), A. Sale, L. Proctor, S. Hinsley.*

Besides the players who appear in the photograph on page 44, opposite, others who were prominent during that successful period 1966-74 include Mick Andrews, Roger Brewer, Edgar Emms, Brian Heath, Austin Jelfs, the brothers David and "Chas" Lane, Frank Maddox, Graham Norledge, Ted Norton, Tony Padfield and Tony Waters. Among the many highlights of those years may be mentioned 8 goals by Maddox as we beat Offenham 15-0 on 11th October 1969 and 16 goals in a match at Long Compton on 12th January 1974 (Proctor 6), the latter coming during a period when Badsey scored a total of 50 goals in five consecutive matches. Sometimes there were anxious moments, such as when Fred Heritage, with a car full of players, got lost on the way to a cup game at Ilmington. When they did arrive, only just in time for the kick-off, it transpired that they had travelled via Shipston-on-Stour. But the panic was over; the team was complete; manager Vic Cull breathed more easily, smoked another Woodbine or two and was satisfied to see Badsey win 8-1. Fred, a loyal and hardworking member of the committee for about 15 years and before that a player, was always willing to provide transport to away games, but he was not noted for his powers of navigation and I recall one occasion when he set out for home after a match near Coventry. He had been on the road for about 20 minutes when he passed a football ground, remarking what a good pitch it was, to which one of his passengers replied: "Yes, that's where we've been playing today."

Of course there were disappointments as well and none more so than when Badsey failed to retain the league championship in the last season at Stratford and thus make it three in a row. Up to the end of March the season had gone very well, we had lost only one league match and the trophy was there for the taking; it looked to be a mere formality. But our neighbours at Littleton had other ideas. Not content with coming to Badsey on 6th April and beating us by the odd goal of three, they defeated us again in the return match a month later, this time 2-0. Perhaps weary of football—we played 17 games in 37 days—we slipped from the top and let in Stratford Town Reserves for the title, although a magnificent win against Alcester Town in the final of the Evesham Hospital Cup on the last day of the season restored some of our pride. The players who featured in that exciting 3-1 victory were: G. Cotton; C. Grant, C. Whalley, J. Stanley, J. Matthews; D. Wright (2), A. Whelan; C. Kelly, D. James, M. (Fred) Emms, L. Proctor (1).

#### *Under the Lights at Moreton*

For a time Badsey took part in the Moreton Floodlit Cup, entry to which was restricted to eight clubs and those by invitation only. As the name suggests, all the matches were played under floodlights on the Moreton Town ground. Rarely displaying our best form in this competition, we reached the final only twice in six attempts, the first of these being in our record-breaking 1972-73 season, but even then we put on a poor performance against Kingham All Blacks and lost 2-0. Two years later, victories over Cirencester Town and Kingham took us into the final against Moreton Town, playing on their own ground and odds-on favourites to win the trophy. On that evening of 8th May 1975 the Rangers excelled themselves by taking the game into extra time after a thrilling 90 minutes, but all seemed lost when Moreton took the lead. Few of those present will forget the outstanding performance of goalkeeper Gary Cotton, whose brilliant saves as the home team piled on the pressure kept us in the game, just as few will forget the excitement as Rangers fought back with goals from David James and "Fred" Emms to take the cup. The Moreton people could hardly believe it. We were never invited to play there again.

## We Go Back to Worcester

And so, after an interval of 11 years and ready to commence the 1974-75 season, we find Badsey Rangers back in Division 1 of the Worcester League. The players soon showed that they were able to meet the challenge of a higher grade of football and, the following May, occupied third position in the league table. David James scored 40 goals that season. A year later Badsey went one better, finishing as runners-up behind Worcester Y.M.C.A., and so secured a place in the Premier Division, which had been established in 1973. At this point Vic Cull gave up the manager's job which he had held with distinction for 10 years. His successor was Ron Humpston and under his leadership the team got off to a good start with 10 points from the first seven matches, but could not quite maintain this form and finished in sixth position. Badsey reached three cup finals that year, the one success being a 2-0 win over Westfields (Hereford) in the Worcester Infirmary Cup. Team: Cotton; Bailey, Whalley, Stanley, Harris; Wayland, Norman, Wright; Basford, Bartlett, Ogg. As will be seen from the foregoing line-up it was now a 4-3-3 formation, this having been first used by Badsey during the 1974-75 season. The next two seasons saw the club in mid-table positions, but after that we experienced a lean spell. Following three consecutive seasons at the bottom of the league, relegation was inevitable and we returned to Division 1 for 1982-83.

The 1982-83 season is particularly mentioned, not because of any special achievements on the field—in fact, quite the reverse, as Badsey finished eleventh in the league—but merely to draw attention to some extremely shabby treatment which the club received at the hands of the Evesham Hospital Cup committee. A problem arose when Badsey was drawn to play two cup matches on the same day; clearly this was impossible and it was decided to play in the Worcester Nursing Home Cup, leaving the Hospital Cup game to be rearranged for a later date. This did not suit the committee of the latter competition—perhaps they thought that they were being made to look second best—and their decision was that Badsey should be struck out of the competition. The club was not even given a chance to attend a hearing to explain its action; nothing as democratic as that. Over the years we had given much support to that committee, including making our ground available for their finals on numerous occasions, once at only three hours notice when Evesham's pitch became waterlogged after sudden heavy rain. All this was soon forgotten. These people were ready to accept our generosity when it suited them; they were equally ready to hit us hard once they had a chance. Their action at that time was possibly the most disgraceful in the history of football in the Vale of Evesham.

In August 1983 Vic Cull, having resumed as team manager a year earlier, obtained the services of several players who had previously assisted the highly successful, but by then defunct, Pershore Junior Old Boys F.C. It soon became apparent that Badsey had a team capable of challenging for the league title and as the season approached its conclusion it seemed that either Badsey or Fladbury would finish as champions. The latter had taken three points from the two meetings between the clubs and after completing their fixtures held a one-point lead. Everything depended on the Rangers' last match, at home against the bottom club, Upton Town. Although Badsey struggled during the first half it was a different story after the interval and a 6-0 win ensured the club's place at the top of the table and a return to the Premier Division after only two years. On the cup scene Badsey reached the final of the Worcester Infirmary Cup but there found

the Premier Division champions, Hinton (Hereford), a little too strong and lost 2-0 with the following team: M. Bennett; A. Cook, B. Andrews, M. Green, N. Hurman; D. Trotman, R. Kilpatrick, S. Ciesla; P. Trotman, P. Tustin, G. Mabbott.

## Worcester League Division 1 (leading positions) 1983-84

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Badsey Rangers	24	15	8	1	62	22	38
Fladbury	24	17	3	4	68	34	37
All Blacks	24	15	4	5	54	19	34
Northwick	24	13	6	5	50	38	32

## Sponsorship

In 1983 a new concept was introduced to Badsey football—sponsorship. As the cost of running a football team escalated, whilst attendances at matches remained negligible, it became apparent that some sort of outside finance was needed if the club was to survive. The small committee was unable to raise all the money required. Our first major sponsor at Badsey was H. Goodall & Son Limited, the Evesham motor dealers, who donated a complete set of kit emblazoned *Goodall for Vauxhall*. Next came Littleton and Badsey Growers Limited and they, in turn, were followed by Valefresh Limited. In addition, several other companies and individuals have made substantial cash donations. To all these the club extends its thanks. Their generosity, coupled with the efforts of chairman Jack Wheatley and a small band of helpers, has enabled the club to build a sound financial base.

The last two decades have seen a resurgence of other Badsey football clubs. Badsey United reappeared in 1970 after a lapse of almost 50 years and in 1980 Badsey Recreation, a completely new club, was formed to run a Sunday team. Mention of the latter club reminds us of the development of Sunday football in the Vale of Evesham, as in many other districts, during the last few years. In 1989 we find four divisions in the Evesham Sunday League, whereas the North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League (Saturday) has long since disappeared.

## The Last Five Years

And so, during the approach to the club's centenary season, Badsey competed in the Premier Division of the Worcester League, a league extremely well managed by chairman Bert Powell and his colleagues. It may, perhaps, be appropriate at this point to remember the great debt owed by clubs and their players to those gentlemen who give their time and effort to organising the local league and cup competitions. These last few seasons have not produced very much out of the ordinary and although we have seen some good players at Badsey during the period, much of the football has been mediocre. Badsey achieved fourth place in the Premier Division in 1987-88 and in the same year reached the final of the Worcester Infirmary Cup for the eleventh time, there to gain a comfortable 4-0 victory over All Blacks (Worcester). Team: M. Bennett; S. Trotman, A. Robbins, R. Fitzmaurice, M. Perrett; G. Cowley, J. Cox, R. Lewis (1 goal); E. Dooley (2), J. Smith (1), T. Davies. Substitutes: D. Trotman and D. James.

Badsey's team manager since 1985 has been Alex Ogg, full of enthusiasm for the job and demanding the same high level of commitment from his team as he



personally gave in a playing career which spanned almost 20 years. His efforts were rewarded on 6th May 1989 when Badsey became champions of the Worcester League Premier Division for the first time. Alex has also been closely involved in the social and fund raising activities of the club and here he has received full support from other members of his family.

The winning of the Premier Division championship came at the end of a season when Badsey led the table for much of the time, but it was not until the last match that the winners were known. Tewkesbury came to Badsey needing a win to give them the league by a single point but, encouraged by a crowd of over 200 people, five or six times the usual attendance, the Rangers won an exciting game 2-1. Two days later Badsey went to the Worcester City ground to meet Archdales in the final of the Worcester Infirmary Cup, where a single goal from leading scorer Eamonn Dooley was sufficient to bring the trophy back to Badsey. The Rangers' team for the final was: M. Bennett; A. Robbins, A. Clarke, M. Ridlington, G. Burrow; P. Tustin, G. Cowley, J. Cox; E. Dooley, J. Smith and T. Davies. Substitutes: R. Lewis and D. James. Other players who contributed to the success of that season included P. Trotman and M. Green.

#### Conclusion

As we look back on a hundred years of football in Badsey, are there any conclusions to be drawn? Is local football today faster, more skilful, more entertaining than the game of 20, 40 or 60 years ago? Some, perhaps, would say that it is. As far as Badsey supporters are concerned, some of those to whom I have spoken and who are, or were, old enough to remember, said that the 1920-21 team was the best ever. Others gave most praise to the teams of the 1930s, whilst at least one claimed that the 1948-49 team was better still. For my own part, looking back over the 35 years since I first joined the Badsey committee, it seems to me that although there are still some good players to be seen, the general standard of the local leagues has deteriorated badly during that time.

And what of the future? Can clubs such as Badsey Rangers survive in these days when so many activities compete for our leisure time and when it is difficult to find people who are willing to serve on the committee of a football club? Clearly the image of our club has changed considerably during the past 100 years; Badsey Rangers F.C. is no longer a centre of attraction for almost the whole village. Of course the village itself has changed, too, with the present day collection of uninteresting housing estates so different from the Badsey scene described by the 19th Century historian John Noake, only a generation or so before the Rangers' formation, when he wrote, in *The Rambler in Worcestershire*, "From the Bretforton road to Evesham the very pretty tower of Badsey peeping out from the trees entices the lover of the picturesque across some exceedingly pleasant fields".

As a general rule I do not believe that local footballers of the present generation have the dedication of William Stanford and his friends, as they tramped across the fields to Aldington in 1893 or, for example, of Bill Izod, some 55 years later, cycling 8 miles each way to play a match. Nor, do I think, shall we again see the enthusiasm among supporters as was shown when a train full of Badsey folk travelled to Oxford on that wet New Year's Day in 1921, or when 2500 people turned up at the "Rec" in 1949 to watch the Rangers beat Evesham United in the final of the Worcester Infirmary Cup. We can only hope that a few stalwarts will still come forward to keep the old club going and at least provide a game for those young men who wish to play.



Badsey Rangers 1988-89. Winners of the Worcester League, Premier Division, and the Worcester Infirmary Cup. Standing (left to right): R. W. Bennett, A. Stallard, P. Trotman, G. Burrow, T. Davies, M. Bennett, M. Green, D. James, M. Ridlington, D. Speake (secretary), K. Mitchell (trainer). Seated: T. C. Sparrow (treasurer), J. Wheatley (chairman), J. Smith, E. Dooley, G. Cowley, A. Robbins (captain), A. Clarke, J. Cox, A. Ogg (team manager), G. Brooks.

# WORCESTER LEAGUE

## Division I.

### BADSEY RANG. v. METAL CASTINGS

Two goals by Jones and Tomkins were sufficient to earn Badsey Rangers victory over Metal Castings at Badsey on Saturday, when nearly 200 spectators witnessed a fast and interesting game. By defeating their visitors, Badsey become champions of the league. As is the case in matches between these two teams, good football was produced, neither side giving any quarter, and going all out throughout the whole ninety minutes. Every player on the Rangers' side did his share in the victory, Geden being outstanding at centre-half, while Jones at inside-right did two men's work. At the last minute, Robbins and W. Sears had to drop out of the Rangers team, but their deputies, Sid Rowlands and R. Knight, both played a great game. Both teams having settled down, the game was fought out at a fast pace. Badsey gradually asserted their superiority and they continued the better team. During a scrimmage in the Castings goalmouth, Allard handled the ball in the penalty area, and from the spot kick Jones gave his team the lead. Another combined movement by the Rangers should have resulted in a second goal, for after Major had taken the ball up the wing and centred perfectly, Tomkins put the ball over the bar from close in, and a great chance was thrown away. Badsey held on to their single goal lead until half-time.

Play opened more evenly in the second half, each set of forwards setting up well-planned attacks without success. The game was marred at this point when Gould, of Castings, received marching orders, for after Jones had beaten him for possession, he is alleged to have struck the Badsey player. Continuing with ten players, Metal Castings had great difficulty in piercing the Rangers' solid defence, although it appeared that they enjoyed rather more of the game than previously. While Moore, of Castings, was receiving attention for an injury, Badsey scored their second goal. Russell sent in a great drive, and Clarke was only able to push the ball out to Tomkins, who crashed it into the net. Metal Castings were playing well although handicapped, but Badsey were on top of their form and played proper championship football. When Moore returned, the visitors went near reducing the lead, Swain heading the ball from under the bar with Ellis out of position. The defences held out until the end, which came with the Rangers winners by two clear goals.

After the match, the League Cup was presented to the Rangers' captain, by Mr. H. L. Rolfe, the Chairman of the League, who congratulated Badsey on their success, and also Metal Castings in their valiant fight in finishing runners-up. Badsey Rangers: J. Ellis; S. Rowlands, J. Swain; R. Knight, G. Geden, J. Barber, M. Dowdeswell, A. Jones, E. Tomkins, J. Russell and W. Major.

Copy of the Evesham Journal report of the last game of the 1934-35 season, when Badsey became Worcester League champions.

## Worcester League

Premier Division							
Badsey Ran.....	20	17	0	3	57	22	34
Tewks. YMCA.	20	14	3	3	58	23	31
Bredon.....	20	13	1	6	53	32	27
Pershore Utd...	20	10	4	6	41	22	24
County Sp.....	20	10	3	7	37	32	23
Hallow WMC...	20	9	11	0	36	41	19
Chq. Fladbury.	20	7	4	9	25	33	18
Broadway.....	20	5	3	12	31	52	13
Feckenham.....	20	4	4	12	26	52	12
Hereford Lads.	20	5	2	13	28	49	11
Malvern Ran...	20	2	3	15	21	53	7

The final league table for 1988-89

## CLUB OFFICIALS 1945 - 1989

	President	Secretary
1945-52	V. C. E. Cockerton	1945-47 G. Hall
1952-76	G. H. Stewart	1947-53 R. Rouse
1976-79	F. C. Savage	1953-57 G. F. Norledge
1979-89	A. W. Sparrow	1957-80 T. C. Sparrow
		1980-81 V. Cull
		1981-82 G. R. Keen
		1982-84 S. K. Bradley
		1984-88 R. W. Bennett
		1988-89 D. Speake
	Chairman	Team Manager
1945-54	F. C. Savage	1966-76 V. Cull
1954-55	A. W. Sparrow	1976-77 R. Humpston
1955-57	W. Hatch	1977-79 G. Bartlett
1957-73	P. A. R. Butler	1979-80 V. Cull
1973-82	G. R. Keen	1980-81 J. Haines
1982-83	J. P. Swain	1981-82 M. Guise
1983-89	H. J. F. Wheatley	1982-85 V. Cull
		1985-89 A. C. Ogg
	Treasurer	
1945-47	R. Rouse	
1947-63	A. G. Crisp, M.M.	
1963-80	T. C. Sparrow	
1980-82	G. R. Keen	
1982-85	D. J. Wright	
1985-89	T. C. Sparrow	

## LIFE MEMBERS

1954	F. C. Savage
1963	A. G. Crisp, M.M.
1973	P. A. R. Butler
1973	W. Hatch
1980	T. C. Sparrow
1982	G. R. Keen
1986	F. A. Heritage

## HONOURS LIST

### *Worcestershire Junior Cup*

Winners 1911-12, 1912-13, 1913-14, 1920-21, 1931-32, 1934-35, 1936-37.  
Runners-up 1909-10, 1910-11.

### *Worcester Infirmary Cup*

Winners 1931-32, 1932-33, 1937-38, 1947-48, 1948-49, 1952-53, 1976-77, 1987-88, 1988-89.  
Runners-up 1921-22, 1983-84, 1985-86.

### *Worcester Nursing Home Cup (formerly Worcester Charity Cup)*

Winners 1920-21, 1923-24, 1931-32, 1932-33, 1948-49\*.  
Runners-up 1912-13, 1919-20, 1984-85.

### *Evesham Hospital Cup*

Winners 1911-12, 1912-13, 1918-19, 1920-21, 1930-31, 1931-32, 1938-39, 1951-52, 1955-56, 1959-60, 1973-74, 1981-82.  
Runners-up 1913-14, 1924-25, 1925-26, 1926-27, 1927-28, 1929-30, 1975-76, 1976-77, 1978-79, 1979-80, 1980-81.

### *Bromsgrove Charity Cup*

Winners 1910-11, 1911-12, 1913-14, 1920-21, 1925-26.

### *Stratford Hospital Cup*

Winners 1968-69, 1971-72, 1972-73.  
Runners-up 1970-71.

### *Stratford Nursing Home Cup*

Winners 1928-29, 1971-72, 1972-73, 1974-75.  
Runners-up 1973-74.

### *Stratford R. M. Smith Cup*

Winners 1969-70, 1972-73.  
Runners-up 1973-74.

### *Stratford R.A.F.A. (Invitation) Cup*

Winners 1968-69.  
Runners-up 1949-50, 1950-51.

*Stratford Foster Shield* Runners-up 1966-67.

### *Moreton Floodlit Cup*

Winners 1974-75.  
Runners-up 1972-73.

*Winchcombe Cup* Winners 1932-33.

*Alcester Charity Cup* Runners-up 1986-87.

*Pershore Floodlit Cup* Runners-up 1985-86.

*Studley Cup* Winners 1920-21.

### *Terry Memorial Cup*

Runners-up 1927-28.

### *Worcestershire Minor Cup*

Winners 1924-25 (R).

### *Evesham Hospital Minor Cup*

Winners 1937-38 (R).

### *Worcester League Premier Division*

Winners 1988-89.

### *Worcester League Division 1*

Winners 1920-21, 1931-32, 1932-33, 1934-35, 1948-49, 1983-84.  
Runners-up 1906-07, 1913-14, 1919-20, 1922-23, 1930-31, 1933-34, 1947-48, 1975-76.

### *Stratford Alliance (formerly Stratford League) Division 1*

Winners 1971-72, 1972-73.  
Runners-up 1968-69, 1970-71, 1973-74.

### *North Cotswold and Vale of Evesham League Division 1*

Winners 1895-96, 1901-02, 1904-05, 1907-08, 1919-20, 1929-30.  
Runners-up 1902-03, 1926-27, 1928-29, 1937-38 (R).

*Bidford League Division 1* Winners 1901-02, 1908-09.

### *Campden and District League*

Winners 1906-07.

### *Redditch, Studley and District League*

Runners-up 1921-22.

### *Redditch League Division 1*

Winners 1927-28.

### *N.C. & V.E. League Division 1 Knockout Cup*

Winners 1926-27.  
Runners-up 1931-32 (R), 1937-38 (R).

### *Stratford Alliance Division 1 Knockout Cup*

Winners 1972-73, 1973-74.  
Runners-up 1971-72.

*Baylis Cup (Worcester League)* Runners-up 1976-77, 1977-78.

### *Vale of Evesham Junior League*

Winners 1951-52 (J).  
Runners-up 1952-53 (J).

### *Vale of Evesham Junior League Knockout Cup*

Winners 1951-52 (J), 1952-53 (J).

\* Joint Holders. (R) Reserve team. (J) Junior team.

## SOME BADSEY TEAMS OF THE LAST 70 YEARS

1918-19. v. Evesham Town, Evesham Hospital Cup final.  
W. Hardiman; W. Sadler, W. Herbert; C. Keen, G. Knight, W. Dore; T. Keen, T. Hall, W. Hall, L. Price, W. H. Jelfs.

1925-26. v. Evesham Town, Evesham Hospital Cup final.  
A. Harris; W. Sadler, S. Rowlands; T. Gould, F. Mace, C. Harwood; A. Jelfs, L. Brotherton, T. Brotherton, P. Crisp, G. Knight.

1929-30. A typical team.  
F. Davis; C. Willis, C. Harwood; W. Taylor, H. Twigg, A. Reed; D. A. Jelfs, L. Hunt, C. Malin, V. Coombes, H. Hatcher.

1932-33. v. Bishops Cleeve, Winchcombe Cup final.  
J. Ellis; S. Rowlands, J. Swain; W. Sears, G. Geden, F. Davis; M. Dowdeswell, G. Knight, E. Tomkins, A. C. Sears, C. Malin.

1937-38. v. Elmley Castle, Evesham Hospital Minor Cup final (Reserves).  
R. Hardiman; R. Knight, H. Hartland; W. Cole, F. Taylor, J. Keyte; F. Price, A. Price, H. Brain, W. Salter, A. Sears.

1946-47. v. Bretforton Old Boys, Worcester League.  
C. Knight; P. Osborne, J. Sadler; R. Knight, W. Willmore, G. Malins; R. Keen, V. Brighton, C. Hall, L. Malins, W. Izod.

1950-51. v. Stratford Town, R.A.F.A. Cup final.  
C. Knight; P. Osborne, P. Stock; J. Reade, G. Cox, B. Jennings; V. Irving, S. Watkins, E. Edginton, M. Hay, W. Izod.

1951-52. v. Wickhamford, Evesham Hospital Cup final.  
N. Corbett; D. Croft, R. Knight; A. Willis, P. Osborne, J. Green; R. Thomson, D. Fortey, P. T. Cook, R. Grove, W. Izod.

1952-53. v. Heenan & Froude, Worcester League.  
Clarke; Simpson, Hacklett; Green, Fortey, Minett; Baker, Grove, Lawless, Dunn, Freeman.

1966-67. v. Bishampton, Stratford Foster Shield final.  
A. Grove; P. Loxston, F. Heritage; M. Enstone, E. Lane, L. Sutton; G. Norledge, P. Clarke, R. Brewer, A. Padfield, G. Taylor.

1977-78. v. Pershore J.O.B., Baylis Cup final.  
S. Hawtin; J. Jones, C. Whalley, D. Wright, N. Edwards; A. Ogg, A. Ballinger, E. Tye; A. Basford, G. Bartlett, J. Haines.

## SUBSCRIBERS

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J. Williams  
Mr. & Mrs. D. J. Wright  
Mr. & Mrs. F. A. Hemming  
Mr. & Mrs. P. Sparrow  
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Mr. & Mrs. J. P. Swain  
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John and Julie Hall  
Mr. & Mrs. G. T. Brooks  
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Shuard and Beattie  
Miss V. Sadler  
Mr. & Mrs. Vic Cull  
A. McLennan



Colin Kelly receives attention from trainer Henry Merriman, while team manager Vic Cull stands by with the sponge.