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THE EASY BUY STADIUM

BARTON TOWN SWANS REVIEW



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Gregory's Greeting

This afternoon sees us return to Northern Counties East Football League action as we welcome Bottesford Town to our Easy Buy Stadium home for this Premier Division fixture.

Looking at the weather forecast as I write this early Friday morning it seems that we have rain and strong winds forecast for the last 30 hours so if the match is on then we must thank our groundsman - Paul Coult - for all his hard work.

I do hope you have brought your hats and scarves with you but if not we have a selection of Barton Town wear available at the bar!

On behalf of all at Barton Town FC, I extend a very warm welcome to the players, officials and especially the supporters of Bottesford Town who made the journey to be with us today.

Don't forget we have the Chums Snack Bar at the side of the clubhouse where you can get hot drinks - and cold ones if you are brave! - and there's a great choice of hot food too. As always there's also a "special" this afternoon - but



you'll need to get yours early as these are always popular!

Since my last notes the management team have again been busy strengthening the team where issues have been identified but the core squad has remained the same for several matches as the team has gelled since the start of the season.

Talking of teams... if you are interested in getting involved with Barton Town FC by joining our team of match-day volunteers we'd love to hear from you. Speak to one of us at the game - we're a friendly lot and are always happy to talk to fellow supporters.

In other news we now have the planning for the pitch drainage APPROVED!
It's taken a quite a while to get to this stage and everything sorted with the local authorities but we are now able to get quotes organised so we can submit the grant application to the FA.

Finally, Thank You to the match sponsors Three Behind the Goal... thanks for your ongoing support.

I'm looking forward to a good match this afternoon and I hope you all enjoy it too.

UP THE SWANS!



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A Shot Across The...

Firstly... if today's match is on then all credit goes to the groundsman - Paul Coult - on getting the pitch ready after heavy rain from Storm Darragh postponed last week's game.

Our last home game was more than two weeks ago in the Lincolnshire Senior Trophy. On a windy, freezing cold night the first half was very scrappy with no real chances with both teams defences being on top. The second half started the same and then Lincoln United had a very good 15-20 minutes and then we came to life and we got one back; perhaps against the run of play we looked like we might take it to penalties.

A disappointing result as we wanted to progress in that competition - as we do with all matches - but "it is what it is"; it wasn't meant to be but I can't knock the work rate nor attitude of our players.

That was followed by a real NCEL Premier Division "Derby" match when we hopped just across the Humber Bridge to Beverley Town. Way back in August we were victors in only the second league game of the season and with both teams and players moving between the teams in recent seasons there was always going to be a little bit of added "frisson" to the





A Shot Across The...

game... and that proved to be the case! The home side scored early on so we were chasing the game. A second goal for them secured the win and three points.

We then undertook the journey to Hallam on Tuesday for the NCEL League Cup match. It always seems to be a difficult journey and this was compounded by the England v Switzerland UEFA Women's EURO 2025 match at Bramall Lane which we assume was the cause of the long delays getting into and around Sheffield.

The Lionesses' win wasn't something the Swans weren't able to emulate at Sandygate conceding two before Tom Waudy pulled one back just before the final whistle.

On the player front... Charlie Clements has been recalled to Grimsby Town and will be rejoining their U18 team and we understand there may be an opportunity in the first team for him. Obviously we wish him well as in the time he was with us he was involved in quite a few matches and got his name on the score-sheet. He's got a great attitude and we hope a good future in front of him.

During November we recruited some new players, although one is a name I'm sure you'll recognise as he was a Swan a few seasons back; James Williamson has signed having been at Bridlington



A Shot Across The...

Town for a few seasons where he was also club captain. His signing has taken a while to get sorted but he started a couple of weeks ago and has been at our training sessions.

We have also signed Harry Lovick who was at Pickering Town - and played against us only last month! He's a player we have been aware of for a year or so. When he became available we were pleased to be able to bring him on-board. He brings a bit of quality and came on for about 20 minutes at Albion Sports.

Finally, we have added Lucas Robinson to the squad; he's joined us from Goole... and like Harry, played against us earlier in the season when he was a big threat out wide. At around 2m tall he's a presence on the pitch; got good feet and quick so it's good to get him on-board.

I've took the opportunity to give the players a break from training last week as some were still getting over knocks they have picked up in recent games. All being well with the weather we'll have a good game with a well rested squad available for today.

Enjoy the match... UP THE SWANS



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ARTIFICIAL Intelligence (AI) is getting everywhere these days – even now in football it seems. This week, The NLP ran an article on former Non-League and Football League player turned sports agent, Guy Branston, who has launched a new AI venture that he says will revolutionise the way clubs engage with their supporters.

The ex-centre-half has launched an AI bot named Mai that he says can help clubs speak to thousands more fans - and even reach a global audience.

One of Branston's former clubs, Rotherham United, as well as Premiership Rugby side Leicester Tigers have already signed up to the service - named Sports AI Consultants - and Branston says talks are underway with several other sports clubs.

Branston, 45, made over 400 career appearances for a variety of clubs through the EFL including Hull City, Sheffield Wednesday and Peterborough United.

He also turned out for a number of now Non-League clubs, such as Oldham Athletic, Aldershot Town, Rochdale and Torquay United and had a season-long spell at Kettering Town in the Conference National back in 2008-09.





After retiring in 2014, he subsequently worked as chief scout at Notts County, operations manager at Nuneaton Town and director of football at Chesterfield before becoming a licensed agent in 2023.

Explaining how AI can revolutionise sports consultancy, Branston explains: “the advent of artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed numerous sectors, and the realm of sports consulting is no exception” Branston explains on his LinkedIn page.

“AI-powered sports consultants are at the forefront of this transformation, utilizing advanced algorithms and data analytics to enhance fan engagement and optimize team performance.”

Speaking to our sister paper, The Football League Paper, for whom he also doubles up as a columnist, Branston continued: “In the simplest terms, it’s an AI bot that will have a conversation directly with the fan or customer over the phone. So, imagine you’re a football club or a rugby club and you’re offering a half-season ticket for sale. Traditionally, that would be advertised via email or a social media post, but those things are very cold and impersonal. A social media post can be missed. Emails can drop into junk folders or





not get opened. And there's a good reason why things are done this way. At most clubs - particularly lower league clubs - there simply aren't enough arms and legs in the building to call fans individually.

"The secretary is doing multiple jobs. The marketing people are flat out. Even if you could afford to hire a telemarketer, how many people would they reach in a day? Maybe 100. It's not worth it.

"What Mai can do is call 2,000 people a day, and have a conversation in any language. It can take the 'temperature' of the conversation to work out whether someone is annoyed or unhappy or eager to hear more, and respond accordingly. Then, at the end of that day, the club gets a report saying how many people engaged with the call, how many people have requested a text message with a link to the landing page that sells the season ticket, and how many people bought one.

"And this is just one application. Right now, we're looking at how clubs could use AI to address mental health issues - engaging with lonely ex-players, getting kids back into football who've had a hard time after being released. This really does have the potential to revolutionise the way clubs communicate."



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In Town Today



Bottesford Town Football Club was formed in 1974 and played their football in the Lincolnshire League.

The original base was at the Dolphin pub, with the football being played at

Fred Gough School. The Club moved to its current Birch Park home in 1983.

The senior side experienced a successful period during the early 90's winning a number of Cup competitions and the Lincolnshire League in three successive seasons. In 2000 the 1st team entered the Central Midlands League gaining promotion in 2005 to Division 1 in the Northern Counties East Football League. In 2016 they won the 'play-off' final to gain promotion to the Premier League where they have played for the last 5 seasons.

The Club has for many years supported the local Scunthorpe and District adult Football Leagues,

The year 2000 saw the amalgamation of the Junior and Senior Clubs clearly demonstrating that players starting with the Club at the age of 6 could be encouraged to stay with the Club for their progress in football.

The Club today has 25 teams both boys and girls playing mini-soccer in the local Saturday Kalson League, 11 a-side teams in the Sunday Kalson League, Youth football being played in the Junior Premier League, & the Lincolnshire Intermediate



In Town Today



League, and a Development Squad playing in the Central Midlands Football League. A newly formed Veterans team who will play in the Humber Veterans League

In 2018 a new addition to the Club was the introduction of the DSActive team for individuals who are Downs Syndrome, the team has grown from strength to strength and they now perform in the Ability Counts League.

The Club's proudest achievement was in 2003 when they became a FA Charter Standard Community Club, being one of the first Clubs in the Country at that time to get the achievement. The Club had to work very hard to meet all of the FA criteria and is now reaping the benefits and rewards.

In 2009, the Club achieved the distinction of being awarded by the Lincolnshire Football Association as the FA Charter Standard Club of the year, a reward for the efforts of the members of the Club.

This massive involvement in 'grass roots football' and its development has seen the provision of enhanced facilities to support the same, with the introduction of a magnificent Changing Room & Meeting Room facility in 2009 for the use of all those who play their sport at Birch Park. Developments continued in 2019 with the aid of



In Town Today



grant support from both the North Lincolnshire and Bottesford Town Councils together with the Football Foundation, with the addition of a new tractor and grass cutting maintenance equipment plus the replacement of the floodlights for the main pitch with a modern LED installation which was designed for the future provision of a new Stadia Facility incorporating a 3G playing surface.

2020 also saw through the efforts of number of volunteers & sponsors, a new Catering Facility to serve the needs of everybody who visits Birch Park. Proudly, the Club today is able to announce that after many years of preparation and with the financial support from predominantly the Football Foundation, the North Lincolnshire Council and the S.S.E. Sustainable Community Fund, together with other supporting groups, the new £1.5m Barrett Steel Stadium facility was officially opened in July 2023.

Exciting times lay ahead with a number of developments being 'worked up' including a number of improvements for the Bottesford Sports Hall, extension of our Car Parking facilities, installation of energy saving Solar panels, and the establishment of an outside 'play area' for families who use our Social club..



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Our last league home game was ages ago, way back on the 26th October when we met Champion at home. What a game it was, especially for the neutral (although I doubt there were many of those at the game). It was a game played by two very good teams.

By Darren Stockdale

Both teams defended well, and both teams attacked well. It looked like one of those games where it would end goalless when a true inspired substitution by the Barton bench brought the first goal of the game. The subs board was ready to announce the arrival of Ryan Thompson, but there was a delay whilst the ball went out of play. It eventually did for a throw-in to Barton just down from the bench.






The Barton Blog

On came Thompson, the play resumed with the throw going to Thompson, who took the ball straight into the Champion box and scored. With a game this close that could have easily been the only goal but almost immediately Champion had a run of three corners, scoring from the third.

There was plenty more end-to-end play, but the game finally ended a draw. That was followed by an excellent away win at Rossington Main. Grant Tait put Barton in front just before half time. Tom Waudby scored just after half time, which was enough to see off a very late goal for Rossington to leave the score 2-1 to Barton. That game was followed by another excellent away win at Tadcaster.





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The Barton Blog

Again, Grant Tait put Barton in front on ten minutes, and once again Tom Waudby put Barton two goals up, on 32 minutes. Tadcaster pulled one back just after the break, but a third for Barton from Ali Spencer Aydemir sealed the win.

Our following league game, away at Albion Sports, saw a defeat for Barton. Will Waudby put Barton in front, but three goals for Albion sealed the win for the hosts. Our next scheduled league home game was postponed so our next game saw us away again in the league, at Beverley, where we lost 2-0.

Our away game in the League Cup on 3rd December saw another defeat for Barton at Hallam. Hallam took the lead in the first half, and added to it in the second. A late goal from Tom Waudby wasn't enough to save the game. Finally, another badly-named storm hit the region for our game against Handsworth last week resulting in that being postponed.

You will be well aware of my thoughts on the names the relevant Met Office gives these storms. If they cannot come up with better names they should leave it to the public to name them. Mind you, with our record of naming things they would all probably end up being called Stormy McStorm Face.





Trivia

Lost Positives

Two words that have always annoyed me are underwhelmed and overwhelmed, because no one ever seems to be just the right amount of whelmed. That led me onto looking into lost positives, of which (ironically) whelmed is not one of. What is a lost positive? Well, we are all aware that people can be unruly, but do you ever hear of people being ruly? Not anymore I doubt, but it is (or was) once a word. This is an example of a lost positive. Here are some of the more interesting ones I have found:

Couth – Uncouth is someone who is uncultured or 'rough around the edges', whereas someone who is couth is well mannered and polite.

Evitable – something that is inevitable cannot be avoided whereas if something is evitable then it can be entirely avoided if acted upon properly.

Feckful – To be feckless is to be ineffective, incompetent or inept, but to be feckful, or full of feck, is to be powerful, efficient and vigorous.

Ept – speaking of inept, to be inept is to be generally incompetent whereas to be ept is to be suitable and befitting.





The Barton Blog

Gormfull – Someone who is lacking sense is classed as gormless. However, to be full or gorm, or to be gormfull, is to be intelligent, discerning and vigilant.

Nocent – We are all aware of the word innocent, but we have lost the use of the word nocent. Nocent is term for what we call guilty (guilty being an old English word).

Ruly – If an unruly crowd is one that causes chaos, then a ruly crowd is one that just follows the rules.

Ruthful – If someone is ruthless, they have no pity and are merciless and cruel. However, someone who is ruthless is said to be empathetic and merciful. The word 'ruth' means the quality of compassion and pity.

But what about **whelmed**, the word that started this idea in my head. Checking the dictionary whelmed simply means 'capsized'. So, whelmed has always been a negative, with no lost positive attached to it, we just add 'under' or 'over' for added oomph.





The Barton Blog

History

Our home game against Bottesford last season saw a good win for Barton. Tom Waudby got the first after only four minutes, and it remained that way to half time. After the break Fraser Papprell, Tom Waudby again, and Elliot Vassalo all added to the tally to leave the final score 4-0 to Barton. Our away game was a much closer game, or at least it was a typical "game of two halves". Barton took a quick lead again, through Iwan Heeley on ten minutes. Will Waudby added the second around the half-hour mark, and it remained that way to half time. Bottesford took the fight to Barton in the second half, scoring almost immediately, with Reece Moody grabbing the equaliser right at the end. Our away game right at the start of the season saw a defeat for Barton by three goals to one, Tom Waudby grabbing ours right at the end of the game.

Let's hope for a good game today and up the Swans.





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Local Legend

Everyone loves a home-grown hero. Someone who comes from the area of the club, who understands its unique place within its community, who identifies with the fans. It adds a little spice for a derby day, and makes their commitment to the cause seem all the more authentic. And there are few clubs in world football who can boast more home-grown heroes than Athletic Bilbao. The Basque club only signs Basque players, probably costing them significant periods of success, but keeping the identity of the team fiercely local. And there is no Basque legend who stands out more than the incomparable Telmo Zarra.

Zarro was born in 1921, in the northern Basque town of Erandio just south of the Bay of Biscay. His father, Telmo Zarronandia, was an engineer and the manager of the station at Asua, where Telmo Junior was born, and football was part of the family. His brothers Tomas and Domingo, both a decade his senior, were regulars in La Liga



The Untold Game

for Basque side Arenas de Getxo. Tomas provided young Telmo with a football from the club, and despite his father's disapproval and his own shyness of his incredible ability, his talent shone through.

After impressing with junior sides around the town, at 16 Zarra was signed by Second Division side S.D. Erandio, where he was slowly shepherded into the first team. In his first season, he played a handful of times, but in his second he made twenty appearances, scoring twelve goals, and catching the eye of bigger suitors. At the end of that season, aged just 18, he moved to Bilbao.



The Untold Game

His time at Athletic would define Spanish football for decades.

The Spanish Civil War had finished just a year earlier, with victory for the Fascist Franco and the death of Telmo's brother Domingo, but the fallout of that conflict curtailed a promising opening season for the younger Zarra at Bilbao. After six goals in his first eight games, he was called up for national service and sent to the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on the African coast. He would be gone for a year, but when he returned his legend began.

The 1941-42 season saw Zarra rediscover his goalscoring form, smashing in 26 goals in 28 games and finishing as the club's top scorer. The following season he got a goal per game over 25 appearances, as Bilbao won a league and cup double. He was top scorer once again, something he achieved in 10 of his 15 seasons with Athletic.

The club failed to capitalise on that success, and over the following decade won just one more league title, and four Copa del Generalisimo (now the Copa del Rey). But the lack of consistent success didn't blunt Zarra's consistent goalscoring. He topped the league goalscoring charts between 1944 and 1947, and in the final season of that run equalled the highest ever number of goals in a single La Liga season. In 1950-51, he smashed that record with 38



The Untold Game



goals in just 30 games. His new record stood for seventy years, eventually being beaten by Cristiano Ronaldo in 2011.

Sadly for Zarra, he suffered a broken leg in the off-season after breaking that record, meaning he missed the whole of the 1951-52 season, but he returned to form in 1952-53, scoring 24 more goals and winning the inaugural Pichichi award, given to the league's top goalscorer by the sports newspaper Marca. It was particularly fitting, as the award was named after the nickname of another Bilbao legend, Rafael Moreno.

Zarra continued to score goals for the club as his legend grew, playing two more seasons in Bilbao before finally moving on in 1955. He made a handful of appearances for other Basque clubs until 1957, but his status was secured in Bilbao.



The Untold Game

His record of 251 goals in 257 appearances stood for nearly six decades, until Lionel Messi overtook him in 2014. He matches the Argentinian's goals per game ratio, although Cristiano Ronaldo bettered it, and also overtook him in total goals scored in 2015. But in the Copa del Rey, his record looks unassailable. 81 goals across 18 years stormed past the record set by Josep Samitier, and where Zarra played for a middling side, Samitier played for both Real Madrid and Barcelona. Since Zarra set his record, Messi is the player who has come closest to it, but he fell a full 25 goals short. No current La Liga player has even 50.

Telmo Zarra might not be as recognisable a name as his contemporaries Alfredo di Stefano and Ferenc Puskas, but his goalscoring was far higher than both of those genuine global superstars. So when the history of Spanish football is written, in one corner of northeastern Spain at least, there is one name that stands out above them all.

Telmo Zarra.

Enjoy the game.

Martyn Green, The Untold Game

Find more at TheUntoldGame.co.uk or on social media @TheUntoldGame



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