

FROM THE GARTON ARCHIVE

PICTURE OF THE MONTH 88 JULY 2019 FRIENDS REUNITED

In memory of a keen football fan Tony Leverington 1940-2019
(Lincoln School 1952-59)



On the left are two former Lincoln School mischief-makers, Robin 'Nobby' Upton and Peter Harrod. The photograph was taken outside the sixth-form block at Lincoln Christ's Hospital School (LCHS) by Robin's sister, Margaret, on one of Robin's infrequent visits to Lincoln. The picture on the right, taken from the 1957-58 First Eleven football team, reveals that the two friends have aged somewhat over the years! We had not seen each other since September 1958, when Nobby left Lincoln School to join Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club as an apprentice, but we greeted each other like long-lost friends, and found plenty to reminisce about. Most of our conversations centred upon exploits on the football field, no doubt embellished with the passage of time, and the skill of selective memory! Oh, those goals he scored, and the saves I made!

Robin Upton, aka 'Nobby', was born in 1942, and was admitted to Lincoln School in September, 1953. It was not long before his talent as a footballer began to show, and he was soon impressing his critics in the Under 14 team. In the February 1955 edition of *The Lincolnian* magazine he was described as '...a very good ball-player, with an eye for an opening. He has started many an attack by dispossessing an opponent.' The following year, his 'very good ball skills' were also celebrated, alongside his shooting ability and his tireless work in both attack and defence. Nobby was still young enough to play in the Under 14 eleven in the next season as inside-right and captain, where his role as a 'schemer' was performed 'with considerable success'.

Nobby left Lincoln School after taking his 'O' levels the following year, so he had only one season in the first eleven. He still occupied the position of inside-right, and was

described in the December 1957 magazine as ‘...a good natural footballer, who works hard, but must remember to shoot first time.’ Harrod, the goalie, was apparently ‘a safe goal-keeper, although rarely tested.’ That showed the quality of those in front of him. He was also occasionally slow to clear the ball, presumably looking for a photo opportunity!

One of the many treasures that we hold in the Garton Archive at LCHS is a school exercise book kept by the legendary geography master, Jack ‘Jim’ Shirley. ‘Jim’ was in charge of the first eleven football team at the time, and kept a meticulous diary on the progress of the teams. The 1957-58 season was a successful one in which 16 matches were played, 12 were won, 3 were drawn and only one was lost. ‘Jim’ Shirley recorded, proudly, that the Lincoln School first eleven had not been beaten by a school team since the 1954-5 season. The team was captained by John Dalton, and the Vice-Captain was Jim Edwards. Colours were awarded that season to Paul Basckomb, Mike Hall and the two young lads pictured above!

Wikipedia reports that Nobby joined the Brighton and Hove Albion club as a 15 year-old, apparently against the advice of his teachers at Lincoln School, and turned professional on his 17th birthday. He began his career as a wing-half, made his début in November 1962, and cemented his place during the following season. He made forty appearances for Brighton from 1959-66, but his playing career was plagued by injuries, which including two broken legs and a recurring knee cartilage problem, which eventually caused his retirement. The local newspaper bemoaned his bad luck as follows;

“Just when a bright Albion career lay in prospect, Nobby broke his right leg twice inside four months and was never the same player again. Nor did the tale of woe end there. Wretched luck dogged the young half-back from Lincoln throughout his five years at the Goldstone (The original Brighton stadium).”

After leaving Brighton, Nobby played for Crawley Town for two seasons, before trying his luck with a couple of teams in the South African league.

The highlight of Nobby’s career was probably the Division Four Championship triumph in the 1964-5 season. Fifty years later, seven ‘legends’ of that team, including Nobby, returned to the new Amex Stadium in Brighton, where they were presented to the crowd, and paraded the trophy that they won fifty years earlier.

Little is known about the post-school footballing career of Peter Harrod, although rumour has it that he once had an unsuccessful trial for Brant Road Nomads reserves!

Peter Harrod

Archivist for the pre-1974 archives at LCHS

