

A background image showing two people, a woman on the left and a man on the right, looking down at a smartphone held by the man. The image is partially obscured by a semi-transparent dark band containing the title text.

# ABBAY STADIUM AND CAMBRIDGE UNITED

# Cambridge and The History of Football

When the Romans settled in Cambridge, one of their sites was based in Barnwell, which means that they were perhaps the first people to play a kind of football in the area where the stadium is today!

Another important moment in football history was in 1579 when a Cambridge town against gown match ended in a brawl!

## FACTOID!

Football originated from the Roman game of harpastum - an early form of football.



Picture of people playing harpastum in Roman times

# Today's Rules of Football Inspired by Cambridge Rules!



Photo of football team playing match on Parker's Piece  
- the site where the original rules were created!

In 1848 the teams in the Cambridge area met to establish one uniform set of rules as a way of preventing fights and disagreements.

## **FACOID!**

The football rules were written on papers fixed to the trees on Parker's Piece. Later, when the Football Association was founded in 1863, they used the Cambridge rules, which are still the rules used today!

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This history shows that  
football has been at the centre of  
Cambridge's culture for generations!

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# The Origins of Cambridge United

The 'Cambridge United' football team was established in 1912 and initially named 'Abbey United', after the Abbey area where it was set up. In fact the name 'Cambridge United' originally belonged to a completely different Cambridge club, based in Romsey!



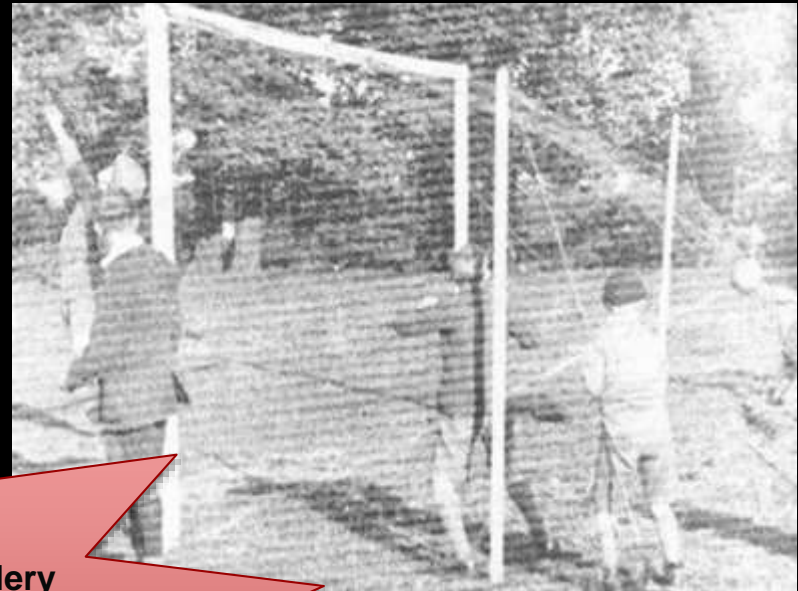
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Photo of ball going wide at Creake Charity  
Shield football match on Milton Road  
on 2<sup>nd</sup> July in 1925.

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# The original grounds- back in the day!

This photo shows a match from 1928 at Abbey United's first ground, which was called the Celery Trenches because the surface was so rough! The grounds were on the old Whitehill Farm, which was eventually covered by the Whitehill estate.



## **FACTOID!**

Before the club moved to the Celery Trenches, the players & supporters had to carry the goalposts from the Dog & Pheasant pub, Newmarket Road to a pitch on Stourbridge Common and back again after the game.

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# The Opening of Abbey Stadium



Photo of Abbey Stadium's Opening Ceremony in 1932

**The team settled in the Abbey Stadium in 1932 and are still there today.**

**The land was gifted to them by Harry Cement Francis, the president at the time, who was managing director of the Star Brewery and lived in Burleigh House on Newmarket Road**



# The First Match at Abbey Road Stadium



The ever first match at Abbey Road Stadium was kicked off by Mrs Saxon, Henry Clement Francis' daughter.

The player on the right is Harvey Cornwell, who was the star player of the 1920s.

# First Competitive Football Match



**The team played their 1<sup>st</sup> competitive football match as 'Abbey United' at the Abbey Stadium on Newmarket Road on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1932.**

Photo of Harvey Cornwell playing in the team's first competitive match as 'Abbey United'



# Cambridge United Join the Football League



**Cambridge United Football Club entered the promised land of the Football League in 1970 for the first time.**

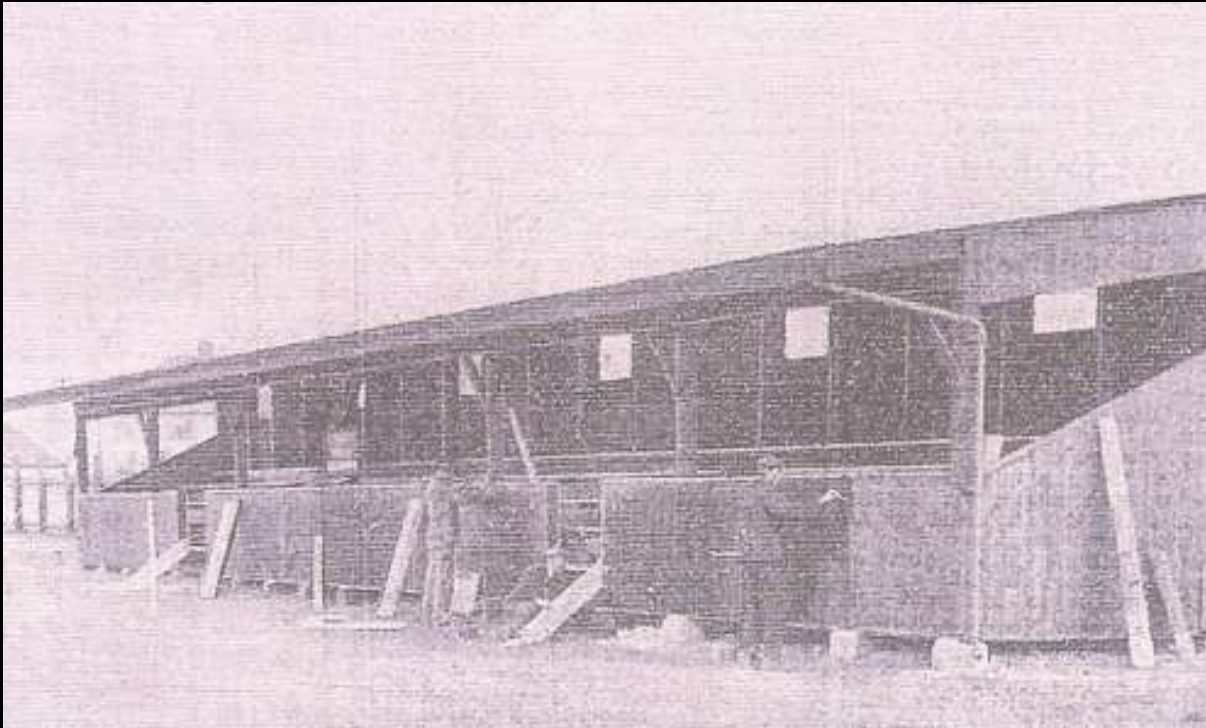
**It was the latest twist in the tale of Cambridge football because people had already been playing the beautiful game in the city for centuries!**

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Cambridge United V Chelsea Match  
in 1970s- Photo by Ian Hutchinson

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# Abbey United's First Grandstand



**This is a photo of Abbey United's first grandstand, which opened in 1934 and could seat around 400 people.**

**It was on the side where the main stand is now.**



# Abbey United Becomes Cambridge United



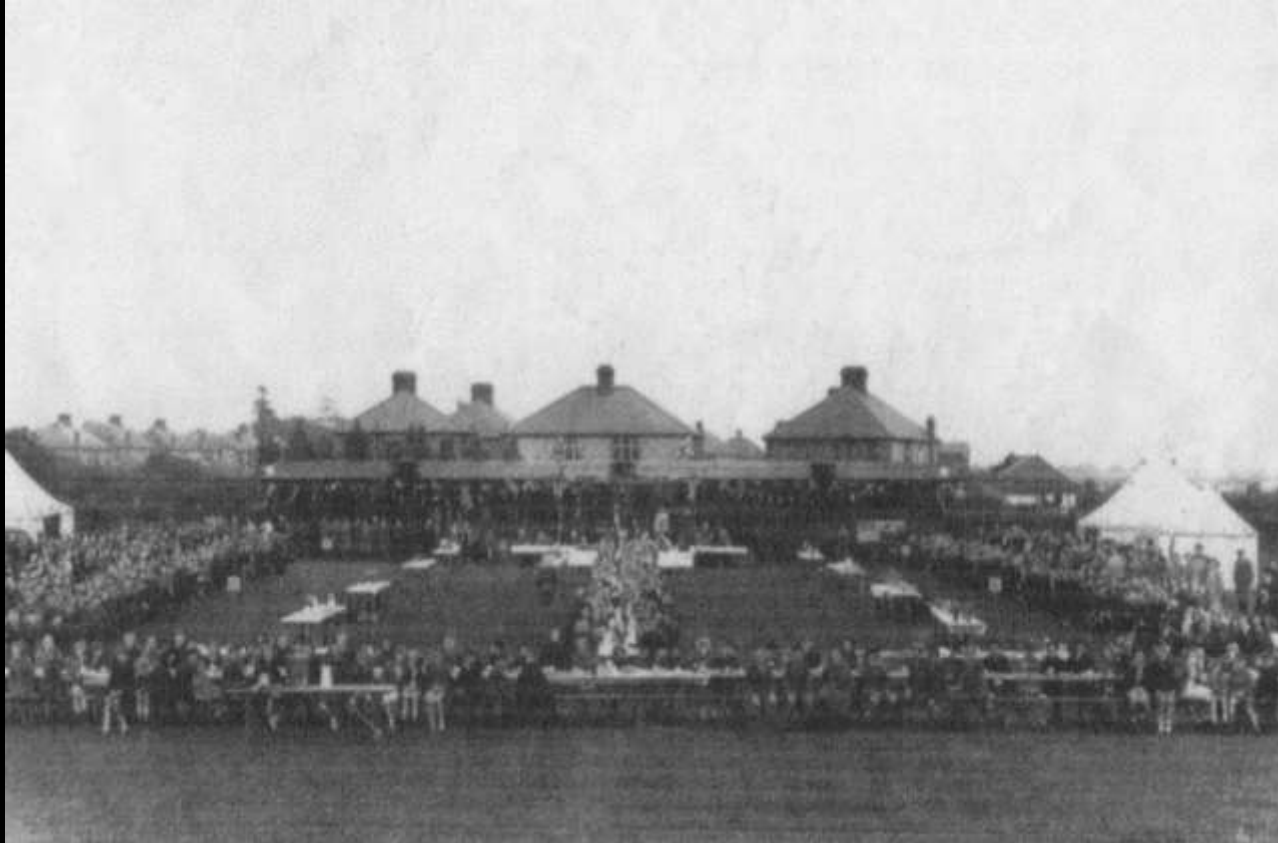
**In 1949 the club turned professional, and changed its name to Cambridge United in 1951.**

**This photo shows a match in the 1950s of Abbey United playing against Cambridge City.**

**Derby matches in those days were huge affairs, sometimes drawing 10,000 or 12,000 people to watch!**

Photo of Goalkeeper Sam Cornwell reaching to save a goal.

# Celebrations at Abbey Stadium



**This photo is from around 1950 and shows a celebration at the stadium- possibly celebrating the Queen's Coronation in 1951 or Cambridge gaining it's City status in 1953.**



# Central Youth Centre Boys Football Match



**Local boys teams also played at the stadium in 1950s.**

**The changing rooms weren't as fancy as they are today- they were basically just a hut, as the picture shows.**

Boys Team Group photo outside the Changing Rooms at Abbey Stadium in 1950s.

# Old Faithful Canteen at Abbey Stadium



**The Old Faithful canteen as it was named was built in 1953 and demolished in 1962 to make space for floodlight pylons and terrace improvements.**

**The floodlights are still there today but might have to be demolished when the new development takes place.**

**In the background of this photo you can see the old tea bar, where supporters Mrs Morgan and Mrs Harrison, both local ladies, used to serve teas.**

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# The Pitch and Grounds in 1950s



**This shows just how open and empty the ground used to be, before the club and supporters started to build the ground as we know it today.**

**You can see the old changing rooms on the right. The supporters built the terraces now known as the Habbin (named after a supporters' club chairman) and the Newmarket Road End.**

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The view from Habbins and allotments end of the pitch in 1950s.  
Photo from J Swailand Collection

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# The Football Ground in 1960s



A photo from 1960 showing how different the ground was in those days, with the old Stand still there in front of the houses in Elfleda Road.

## **FACTOID!**

The old main stand and the old floodlights were put up by supporters on telegraph poles!

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# Cambridge United Vs Chelsea



On 1 May 1970 a record crowd of 14,000 packed into the Abbey Stadium to see United take on Chelsea, who had won the FA Cup a few days before.

The United goalkeeper making the save is Rodney Slack, who still lives opposite the ground on Newmarket Road and is a Coconuts committee member.

# Cambridge United's Double Victory at Wembley Stadium



## FACTOID!

In 2014, Cambridge United went to Wembley twice and won twice – and were promoted back to the Football League.

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Cambridge United's Celebration on Wembley Pitch in 2014.

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# Abbey Meadows School Singing Three Lions Song on BBC Newsround



Abbey Meadows pupils sang their own version of the famous Three Lions song, to support Cambridge United in their match against Manchester United in Feb 2015.

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