



MACCLESFIELD TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB RETURN TO THE NON-LEAGUE SCENE

CHAPTER FIVE Season 2016-2017 SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR



**BY
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OVERVIEW

A relatively successful season reaching the second round of the Emirates FA Cup, runners-up in the Buildbase FA Trophy and ninth in the Vanarama National League, one place higher than the 2015-16 season. Third position had been attained in the league in October but this status could not be maintained with ninth position consolidated throughout the last three months of the season. Additional funds helped the club throughout the season from cup receipts including one live televised match, sale of three players together with monies raised from the 2016-17 Campaign Fund.

Attendances for home league matches fell to an average of 1456 per match compared to 1598 for the 2015-16 season, within this figure there was a reduction in both the number of home and away supporters. However, the town well and truly backed the club when over 7500 supporters attended the Buildbase Trophy Final at Wembley Stadium.

The overall financial position of the club continued to improve with additional funding provided by the Silkmen Supporters' Trust and through the Super Silk Lotto, with the owner stating that he anticipated a more or less breakeven position to be achieved for the financial year.

OFF-FIELD

Club Officials

There were four major appointments during the past year

- **Rob Heys** - appointed General Manager bringing with him 15 years of experience at Accrington Stanley in a similar role.
- **Carole Griffiths** – appointed as Office Administrator.
- **Gary Lewis** – took on the important role of groundsman becoming the second club employee to have worked at Accrington Stanley. Gary started work as a groundsman at Manchester United before moving to Salford Rugby Club.
- **Martyn Irvine** – appointed to a newly created role of Youth Engagement officer responsible for developing ways in which the club engages with young people, from birth to early adulthood. From the job description it would appear that he has taken over some of the work previously undertaken by the Community Sports Trust including overseeing the Project 21 Friday night coaching sessions and holiday clubs, school time and after school sessions and liaising with local schools and youth groups.

The following personnel left the club at the end of the 2016-17 season

- **Paul and Helen Bona** – much appreciated for their work on the catering side for the club left to become landlords of a Public House in Congleton.
- **Barrie Darcey** – has played a key role in the office of the club for several years decided to take a break from the operational side of the club.
- **Colin Brooks** – the club kit man resigned from his role.

Former Players

Three former players died during the past twelve months

- **Matthew Carragher** - lost his battle with cancer at the age of 40 in December 2016. Matt made over 50 appearances for the Silkmen from November 2003 to the end of the 2004-15 season as a versatile player covering both defence and midfield roles although he was most effective as sweeper always reading the game well. On leaving Macclesfield Matt retired from playing football.
- **Derek Moss** – died on 18 December 2016 at the age of 81. He made just two appearances in goal for the Silkmen in December 1953 and September 1962 when the regular goalkeepers were unavailable. He played for Parkside and then Wilmslow Albion. His daughter was first brought to the Moss Rose as a baby and is still a regular supporter.

- **Roger Wood** – died in April 2017 at the age of 84. Roger lived locally and played for the club from 1953 to 1961. He was a versatile player who could feature equally well either as a forward or a defender and was a member of the team which won the Cheshire Senior Cup in 1954. He made 228 appearances, placing him in the top 50 all-time player appearances, and scored 33 goals. In the 1959-60 season he enjoyed a Benefit in appreciation of his service to the Silkmen. On leaving Macclesfield Town he continued to play football well into his fifties.

- **Efe Sodje**

In June 2016 the club officially announced that Efe Sodje was no longer in the employment of the club. Sodje took his case for unfair dismissal to an Employment Tribunal which in the Reserved Judgement stated that he had been suspended by the club on 29 October 2015 and dismissed on 14 March 2016. The Tribunal completed their work on 8 February 2017 when their Judgement concluded that Sodje had been unfairly dismissed and was wrongfully dismissed in breach of contract ordering that compensation be paid. Certain figures were documented but as there may have been other elements, eg pension payments, which they could not calculate, it was left to the two parties to resolve the total payment with the proviso that a further hearing could be requested if the parties could not agree.

Sodje had written himself into the history of the club when he scored the team's first goal in the Football League in August 1997. In addition, Graham Phythian may well have never written his book *Saga of the Silkmen*. Author of historical books, Graham was looking for his next subject when he paid a visit to the Moss Rose and was impressed with the way Sodje was interacting with youngsters which prompted Graham to believe that they was more than met the eye to Macclesfield Town Football Club. After a substantial amount of work, he filled a huge gap in the written history of the club with his book published in 2001.

Season Tickets

The Early Bird purchase of season tickets was again split over four phases as follows

	9am March to 23.59 21 March	Midnight 22 March to 23.59 10 April	Midnight 11 April to 23.59 1 May	Midnight 2 May to 23.59 22 May	Midnight 23 May onwards
Seating	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	
Vice President	£560	£660	£660	£660	£660
Adult	£320	£340	£360	£380	£400
Concessions (65+)	£240	£255	£270	£285	£300
Student	£80	£85	£90	£95	£100
Under 18	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50
Under 12	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30
Standing					
Adult	£240	£255	£270	£285	£300
Concessions (65+)	£160	£170	£180	£190	£200
Student	£80	£85	£90	£95	£100
Under 18	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50
Under 12	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30

Vice Presidents were only given one phase at a discounted price on the basis that most Vice Presidents pay the full price. Whilst the full price remained at the same level as the previous season for all categories, the first Early Bird price was increased by 13.3% for Vice Presidents and for Adults, Concessions and Students was increased by 6.6%, with proportional increases for the remaining three phases.

The Patron Scheme continued to be offered (See Chapter Three for full details)

The price of tickets for single league matches remained at the same level as set out on page 4 in Chapter Four of this EBook.

The number of season tickets sold totalled 543 in comparison to 634 for the 2015-16 season

Sponsorship

Carbrini continued to be the suppliers of the players' kit with Main club sponsors Arighi Bianchi again sponsoring both the home and away shirts and Palletower back shirt sponsors also for both the home and away shirts. Jako continued to supply match wear for the backroom staff and playing substitutes.

Two stands received sponsorship with Arighi Bianchi sponsoring the London Road Stand and Premier Estates sponsoring the Star Lane End stand.

Match day and general sponsorship continued to be available with details on the official web site. Events were arranged for sponsors including a networking evening in May 2016, a lunchtime meeting in October 2016 where a sponsors' photograph was taken with them in playing kit, and an evening at the Rosanero restaurant in Mill Street which was attended by approximately 70 guests together with manager John Askey and the coaching staff. Also towards the end of the season there was an opportunity for some of the sponsors to play on the Moss Rose pitch.

Silkmen Campaign Fund 2016-17

Introduced by the chairman in June 2016 at the first of his three 'Meet the Chairman' Meetings over the year, to raise additional funds for the playing budget with a target set at £100,000. A personalised token was issued in multiples of £50 and if promotion to the Football League was achieved at the end of the season, the club would double the amount returned with pay out in October 2017. Initially the Fund was open from June to the first league match of the season but was extended to 17.00 on 31 August 2016. It was announced early in September that a sum of £42,550 had been raised and that these funds had already been used to sign players Kingsley James, Ollie Norburn and Mitch Hancox. The fund was re-opened on 15 December 2016 until 31 January 2017 but no announcement was made whether any additional funds had been raised.

It is common practice these days for Non-League clubs to raise funds in this way to bolster the playing budget. Examples for the 2016-17 season were at Matlock Town who launched their 'Gladiators Transfer War Chest', Aldershot Town had their 'Boost the Budget' initiative and Sutton United embarked on a 'Boost a Budget' scheme with a target of £40,000.

Super Silk Lotto

Having been launched in November 2014, in February 2017 it was reported that there were 245 members, income had almost reached £26,000, there was a £100 prize draw each Friday, had distributed £10,500 in prizes, was handing £500 per month to the club, and had made donations to the David Lewis organisation and Ollie's Army charity. It was announced that SPACE4AUTISM was the new charity partner for the current year. The Silkmen Supporters' Trust continued to provide assistance for all financial aspects of the Lotto.

New Family Standing Area

The day before the first home league match it was announced that the terrace area on the London Road side of the ground behind the home dugout had been designated as a new Family Area so that youngsters could be close to the players when they take to and leave the field of play and would be able to obtain players' autographs. At this stage no mention was made whether the family seated area in the Moss Lane stand would be retained or that there would be an allocation of space for the

supporters who had stood in this area of the ground for many years. Understandably there was an outcry from the adult supporters.

The comments prompted a statement from the chairman that from Tuesday 16 August 2016 the area behind the home dugout would be a dedicated family area for children up to the age of 16 accompanied by an adult. The decision had been taken as the club had received comments that the Family stand in the Moss Lane stand meant that there was distance put between the youngsters and the players. Also that from 16 August the north end of the London Road terrace would be re-opened which had been closed for cost reasons.

A further announcement was made that the family area in the Moss Lane stand would remain and that both areas had been sponsored by Chrome Motors with a package including teaming up with 106.9 Silk FM to provide tickets to junior teams for matches.

In the end the new area was first formally used for the Eastleigh match on 17 September 2016 when several youngsters took advantage to obtain the autographs of players before the match (see photograph).

Whilst well used at the beginning of the season, because it was uncovered use fell away during the winter months. The club have decided that for the 2017-18 season the Club's only Family area will be the one in existence for many years in the Moss Lane stand with, hopefully, a 'Roary area' in the concourse beneath the stand.

Media

There was an excellent innovation whereby post-match videos of whole matches were made available on Silkmen Player.

The *Macclesfield Express* reported that youngsters Joe Davies and Ashley Thorpe filmed Macclesfield's games throughout the season with their content included in the BT Sport weekly Vanarama National League Highlights programme.

During the season it became known that EFL Digital would not be providing web site or Silkmen Player facilities for Non-League clubs for the 2017-18 season onwards. As the organisation had never provided commentary facilities for FA Trophy matches the club, along with other clubs, experimented with commentaries over Mixlr which proved very successful. The commentaries were loud and clear and were accompanied by the facility to post comments on a message board, in addition to which the number of current listeners were shown on screen.

Unfortunately over the last twelve months there have been many comments on the Fans' Message Board about the number of errors contained in the official web site articles, club information being available on other web sites (including fellow Vanarama National League clubs) before being posted on the club's official web site, articles not available at the time they were said to have been posted with match reports sometimes unavailable until the next day when the posting time was recorded as shortly after the match and details of players leaving the club have on occasions been omitted. It may well be that the current web site is difficult to manage and it is hoped that the new web site to be introduced for the 2017-18 season will be more manageable. However, no new web site will help in the proof checking of articles before they are published, but the author is well aware that self-proof checking can lead to overlooking errors!

Patrons and Vice Presidents

Since the McIlroy Lounge was opened to all supporters holding a match day ticket it had become more crowded with Patrons and Vice Presidents often unable to find a seat before a match and taking half time refreshments in a crowded area. To provide a better service Keith's Bar was allocated to these supporters at the beginning of the 2016-17 season. There had been what was described as an 'experiment' for the final two matches of the 2015-16 season using Keith's Bar, but why it was described as an experiment is a mystery as that area had been used exclusively and successfully by other groups in the past as detailed in chapter 14 of *The League Story* with entry strictly controlled. Reports for the 2016-17 season indicate that whilst all authorised users are required to wear a lanyard many do not do so and entry was not always fully controlled.

Silkmen Supporters' Trust

The Trust continued to support the club in diverse ways.

- Replaced the speakers and wiring for the London Road Public Address system at a cost of £540.
- Replaced broken or worn out hand driers in the Star Lane toilets.
- By Fundraising – Christmas Raffle £990, Easyfunding £320, Sale of Season Tickets donated to the SST £300, The Silk Pledge £1900.
- Researching the possibility of replacing the current broken scoreboard on a financially viable proposition.
- Support for the Home Ground Project (see below).
- Banking and accounts for the Super Silk Lotto.
- Voluntary activities including work in the club office, ticket office, assisting with the 'Moose Tours' coaches for away travel and selling 50/50 tickets.

Social Events

In November Phil Gibbons and his committee organised a reunion evening 'The Sammy McIlroy Years' for all the players who had been with Macclesfield Town some 20 years previously to celebrate winning the FA Trophy in 1996 and gaining promotion to the Football league in 1997. Cost was £20 per head including a meal prior to the main event with evening raising £3007 excluding bar takings.

Other events were organised but unfortunately some had to be cancelled due to lack of interest including a 'League of Rock Night', 'Christmas Party Night' and a black tie event 'The Silkmen Christmas Ball'.

Annual General Meeting

Held in the McIlroy Lounge at 13.30 on 5 May 2017 with the owner present.

- The Audited Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2016 showed accumulated losses of £4,202,414 (£4,044,293) indicating a loss, including depreciation of £35,801, of £158,121. Total Creditors amounted to £2,745,797, an increase of £58,669
- It was agreed that a minimum of one Director can constitute a quorum
- An AGM need not be held every year (to bring the Articles of Association in line with Company Law of 2006).
- Plans were announced to convert £1,870,000 loans into shares - £1.4M from Ramy Ltd and £470K from Andy Scott, Jeremy Turner and Mike Rance. It was also announced that following the conversion, an undefined number of the shares would be awarded to the following – Barrie Darcey 10%, Mark Blower 10% and John Askey 5%.

Silkmen Café

A proposal to open a café based between the John Askey Terrace and the London Road Terrace adjacent to the away supporters' ticket office was first made in January 2017. Under the direction of Keith and Nicky Wilson the café opened for the last home match of the season but will normally operate Monday to Friday from 7.30 in the morning closing mid-afternoon (no time given). The menu will include everything from a full English breakfast, hand crafted sandwiches and fresh salad boxes together with hot and cold drinks. Tables are provided outside the café and there is good signage.

Richard Butcher Memorial Fund

- Monies from the fund (see page 31 of Chapter four of this E-book) have helped in the refurbishment of the former Corner Flag Bar now named Butch's Bar. This facility is open early on match days with access for all supporters in possession of a match day ticket with food available at the kiosk close by where special offers are available.
- Project 21 commenced on 23 September 2016 at All Hallows using their 3G pitch from 17.30 to 18.30 at a cost of £5 per person between the ages of six and 16. Regular sessions were held on Friday evenings with the exception of school holiday periods.
- Whilst not announced by Macclesfield Town, Kettering Town announced that with the assistance and blessing of Richard's parents, it was proposed that Kettering Town and Macclesfield Town play a pre-season friendly at Latimer Park from 2017 competing for the Richard Butcher Trophy. All funds raised from this game, after expenses, to be shared between the two clubs.

Vanarama Leagues

Set out contents of 'Growing Our Game' over a four year period from 2016 to 2020

- Increase annual attendances from 1.5M to 1.7M.
- Increase commercial revenue by 50 per cent.
- Increase live Broadcast matches from 25 to 40 per season.
- Increase social media following from 750,000 to 1.1M
- Increase community activity participation from 42,000 to 63,000

Bosley United Charity Match

For the second year a Charity match was arranged on the Moss Rose on 27 July 2016 with Bosley United playing a *Once upon a Smile* team with admission of £5 for adults and £2 for concessions. Funds raised were donated to the Cheshire Fire and Rescue and to the Air Ambulance Services who attended the explosion. The attendance of 700 was well down in comparison to the match in 2015.

Prior to the match Claire Thornley and Rob Lowe, who were both injured in the explosion, released four doves to represent the four workers who lost their lives.

The celebrities won an exciting match 5-4. The celebrity team players were – Lloyd Griffiths goalkeeper (comedian), Frank Sinclair (ex-Chelsea player), Will Haining (ex-Oldham and MTFC player), Dean Smith (Last Tango in Halifax), Ben Davies (Hollyoaks), Myles Keough (4 o'clock club), Neil Wainwright (ex-Sunderland player), Jack McMullen (Waterloo Road), Danny Miller (Emmerdale), Thomas Turgoose (This is England), Vincenzo Neglia (Actor) and Anthony Connor (Actor).

Home Ground Exhibition

Home Ground was a project initiated by the Devon Guild of Craftsmen, which celebrated through a contemporary touring exhibition and participation programme, the cultural heritage of six Football Clubs which originated from a local crafts trade tradition.

The six clubs involved were – Macclesfield Town (The Silkmen), Walsall Town (The Saddlers), Luton Town (The Hatters), Crystal Palace (The Glaziers), Sheffield United (The Blades) and Stoke City (The Potters).

Supporters of each football club were involved in designing items to reflect their own club's heritage with the project culminating in an exhibition, 'Souvenirs from Home', of their work in their own town. The 'souvenirs' for Macclesfield Town were exhibited in the Museum section of the Old Sunday School in January 2017 and included football shirts and buttons. At the end of this section are photographs which give a flavour of the exhibition.



Club Sponsors in Team Kit



Project 21 (MTFC)



Team Kit for 2017-18 Season with Arighi Bianchi Sponsorship



Palletower Shirt Sponsorship



Young fans obtaining autographs from the new standing Family Area



Former players with Sammy McIlroy celebrating the Sammy McIlroy Years



Home Base Exhibition - General Display (author)



Home Base Exhibition – Buttons (author)



Home Base Exhibition - shirt detail (author)

ON FIELD

John Askey was again appointed manager with Steve Watson as his assistant.

A total of 35 players were used in the season with a further nine drafted in for the Cheshire Senior Cup match. A full list of players is included at the end of this chapter.

Defender Andy Halls was appointed team captain following the departure of Paul Turnbull.

New Rules for intolerable behaviour were introduced across the board

- **Offences which could earn players a yellow card**
 - Visibly disrespectful behaviour to any match official
 - An aggressive response to decisions
 - Offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures towards match officials
 - Physical contact with any match official in a non-aggressive manner
 - A yellow card for at least one player when two or more from a team surround a match official
- **New red card offenses**
 - If a player confronts match officials and uses offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures towards them
 - Physical contact with match officials in an aggressive or confrontational manner

Trial Match

In an attempt to find players for the team a Trial Match was organised at the club's training ground on Friday 8 July 2016 at 18.30. From applications, 22 players were selected to play each paying a £50 fee. It was the intention that one stand out player would be given the chance to train with the first team squad during pre-season preparations. It was reported that the game had been a success with four players selected to train with the team with a view to playing in the pre-season friendly at Buxton. Only one player, John Roberts, was given a contract which he signed in August 2016. In competitive matches Roberts was given just two outings – as a 77th minute substitute in the fourth qualifying round of the FA Cup and in the preliminary round of the Cheshire Senior Cup. However, he signed dual forms with Ashton United in December 2016 where he enjoyed some game time.

Friendly Matches

Admission to individual matches was – Adults £10, 65+ £5, U18s free and a price for all three matches of Adults £20 and Concessions £10.

There were six matches in total. The first took place on Tuesday 12 July 2016 at **Buxton** competing for the Keith Alexander Trophy. Macclesfield fielded two different sides in each half ensuring that all 22 players enjoyed 45 minutes of football, however two first half goals gave Buxton victory with the Silkmen failing to score.

The following Saturday the Silkmen travelled to **Leek Town** where, as the stronger team, they were victorious 3-1. Danny Whitaker scored the first goal after speedy Jack Mackreth flew down the wing crossing to Whitaker. The second came in a similar fashion after good work on the right wing, Ollie Norburn received the ball in the box to slot home from 10 yards. Jack Sampson put the icing on the cake when two Leek players unsuccessfully went for the ball at the same time just inside the Leek half, Sampson stealing the ball and ran some 30 yards beating a Leek defender and shooting home from outside the box.

On Wednesday 20 July **Wigan Athletic** visited the Moss Rose for a 19.00 kick-off. They fielded a strong squad but were denied by goalkeepers Richie Branagan in the first half and Craig Ross in the

second. For the visitors Yanic Wildshut, Michael Jacobs, Alex Gilbey and Nick Powell could not break the deadlock in the first half and, likewise for the Silkmen Kingsley James, Jack Sampson, Jack Mackreth and on trial Mitch Hancox. The visitors were fortunate in the first minute of the second half when their on loan 'keeper Adam Bogdan saved a penalty kick from Jack Sampson. Wigan proved to be a force in the second half and despite making three substitutions they could not find the back of the net due to a good performance by the Silkmen, the match finishing with honours even with a score of 0-0.

For the trip to **Nantwich Town** on Saturday 23 July, Macclesfield fielded four trialists – McKenzie Faulkner, Ollie Norburn, Emmett O'Connor and PA Souley. The Silkmen easily won this match with three second half goals without reply. The goals were scored by Kingsley James and two by O'Connor.

Rochdale were the visitors to the Moss Rose the following Tuesday. They fielded two different sides in each half whilst Macclesfield playing a 4-5-1 formation made six changes during the match. Macclesfield won this match 2-0 with first half goals from Danny Whitaker and Chris Holroyd, the second was a well-worked goal – from a corner the ball was cleared to John McCombe who played a brilliant cross field ball to Ollie Norburn who, in turn, made a telling cross which was turned in by Holroyd at close range. Both sides had a goal disallowed during the first half.

The final pre-season match saw **Stockport County** visit the Moss Rose. In front of a crowd of 990 Chris Holroyd gave Macclesfield the lead in the second minute. George Pilkington and Jack Sampson both had opportunities to add to the score but it was the visitors who were piling on the pressure, the Silkmen having to defend a number of long throws towards the end of the first half. Macclesfield extended their lead in the 65th minute with a fine solo goal by Danny Rowe although Stockport almost pulled a goal back ten minutes from time when former Silkman Scott Spencer saw his shot hit the right post, roll across the line and strike the left post before being cleared for a corner.

A successful pre-season but there was an interesting comment by assistant manager Steve Watson in the *Macclesfield Express*. 'Physically, we've done the [pre-season] work, we've played six tough games with a relatively small squad. We've had help from the lads that have come in on trial and that's good, we needed that. The players would've been far too fatigued to have played six games at 90 minutes.'



Jack Sampson scorer of the third goal at Leek



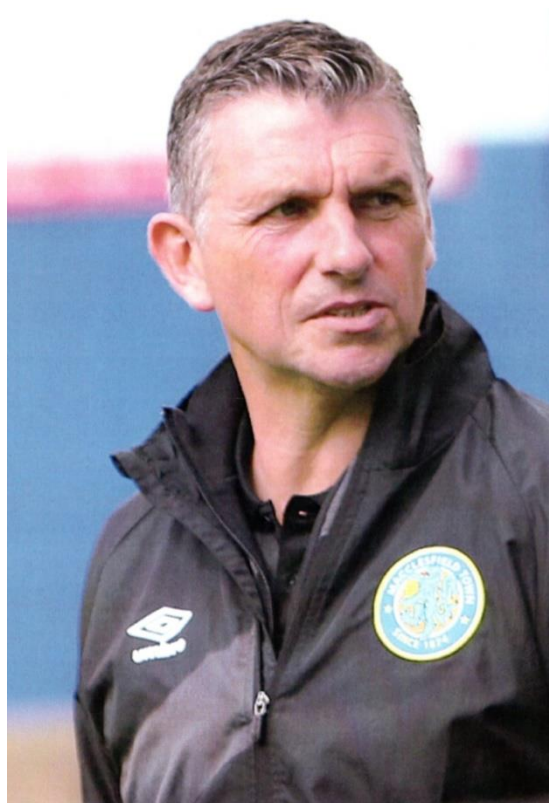
Jack Mackreth congratulates Danny Whitaker on scoring the first goal against Rochdale



Kingsley James (centre) in action during the friendly match against Wigan Athletic



Jack Sampson takes a penalty for the Silkmen which is saved by Goalkeeper Adam Bogdan



Manager John Askey

SEASON REVIEW

Cup Competitions

Entering the **Emirates FA Cup** at the fourth qualifying round, Macclesfield did well to reach the second round and with a bit of luck might have found themselves in the third round.

The Silkmen travelled to fellow Vanarama National League side **North Ferriby United** for the fourth qualifying round. North Ferriby United were attempting to reach the first round for the first time in their history and they made the better start when former Silkman Vinny Mukendi put them ahead after just 45 seconds. Macclesfield, playing a 4-4-2 formation, soon found their feet and after 10 minutes of play dominated the rest of the match although it was the 43rd minute before they equalised through the evergreen Danny Whitaker who hammered home a low shot from a Jack Mackreth free-kick. Three second half goals from Chris Holroyd, Jack Mackreth and a penalty from Danny Whitaker saw the Silkmen earn a well-deserved 4-1 victory and passage to the first round.

Another away match, this time at English Football League One side **Walsall**. John McCombe's 23rd minute headed goal was enough to dump Walsall out of the cup. Walsall had an opportunity to take the lead after nine minutes when Joe Edwards ran 50 yards down the pitch but was denied a solo goal by an excellent low save by goalkeeper Craig Ross. An attempt by Danny Rowe was clawed away by Neil Etheridge after which the home side finished the first half strongly. Macclesfield replaced Neil Byrne with Mitch Hancox at half time, Hancox taking over Halls' first half position just in front of the back four with Halls reverting to his accustomed right back position. Macclesfield could have extended their lead but forward Jack Sampson having rounded a defender and the goalkeeper could only hit the post in what must have been the miss of the season. However, the Silkmen held firm to win 1-0.

One minute's silence held prior to kick-off pre Remembrance Day.

For the second round Football League side **Oxford United** visited the Moss Rose. Macclesfield were among 12 Non-League sides to reach the second round with their match the first to be played on the evening of Friday 2 December. Transmitted live by the BBC the match was watched around the world and Macclesfield did not let themselves down. They were dominant for much of the first half but their finishing let them down. John McCombe's overhead kick almost found the net but it was midfielder Paul Lewis who was the star creating the most opportunities unfortunately shooting wide on each occasion, although to his credit he had an excellent shot saved in the second half. With the score at 0-0 at the interval it was expected that Oxford would start the second half with all guns blazing but it did not happen. However, Marvin Johnson hit the crossbar and Chris Dunckley hit the post. For Macclesfield Danny Rowe continued to use his pace well and Jack Mackreth, on the right wing, was working hard and almost snatched a winning goal towards the end of the match but his cross-goal shot hit the far post. Oxford could have won the match with the very last kick of the match but McGuire's free-kick over the wall went wide. This exciting match set up a potentially intriguing replay.

One minute's silence was held before the match in respect of the footballers from Chapecoense who had died in a recent plane crash in Colombia.

On 20 minutes there was applause for Kavan Maddocks, a 20-year old Macclesfield supporter who was in Macclesfield hospital in a critical condition having recently fallen from a multi-story car park.

The club received a fee of £72,000 for the broadcast of the match and Paul Ince, former Macclesfield manager, and Trevor Sinclair were the BBC Pundits.

Electronic advertising boards were installed for this match – believed to be a first for the club.

The replay took place at the Kassam stadium on Tuesday 13 December. Oxford lost the services of Aaron Martin in the fourth minute when he was stretchered off, but only six minutes later Oxford took the lead through Ryan Taylor after what looked to have been a handball in the run up to the

goal although it has to be said that Macclesfield had failed to clear their lines. Macclesfield pressurised Oxford without any success but were dealt a blow in the 44th minute when Mitch Hancox was dismissed for a second bookable offence. 10-man Macclesfield conceded two goals in the second half, the first two minutes after the re-start and the second in the 78th minute giving Oxford a 3-0 victory. Overall Oxford performed far better than they had at the Moss Rose with Macclesfield unable to match their home performance and were left to rue the scoring chances they had failed to convert in the original match.

Players were playing for a £100 win bonus.

Local furniture retailer Arighi Bianchi also offered a win bonus of a King size bed for each team member. Despite losing the players were still given beds in appreciation of their efforts

The club gained prize money of £30,500 plus a share of the gates receipts after the deduction of expenses.

In the **Buildbase FA Trophy** Macclesfield played a total of nine matches, including two replays, to reach the Final at Wembley Stadium where opponents York City were victorious.

For the first round there was a trip to arch rivals **Altrincham** who were in middle of a dire spell of form in their league. The match was played on Tuesday 20 December 2016. However, they showed spirit to withstand the Silkmen's overall dominance but it was the Robins who took the lead in the 39th minute through Sean Miller. 16 minutes into the second half Kingsley James equalised for the Silkmen with a left-footed drive but despite piling on the pressure Macclesfield could not find a winning goal, Altrincham goalkeeper Tim Deasy making some fine saves to earn his side a replay. *Goalkeeper Ryan Boot on loan from Port Vale made his debut for Macclesfield.*

The replay was held on Wednesday 4 January following a postponement on Thursday 29 December 2016, when Macclesfield enjoyed a better game although again Altrincham took the lead in the 25th minute. Macclesfield had had their chances but in the 49th minute Danny Whitaker, who replaced the injured Paul Lewis just before the break, brought the Silkmen level looping the ball home. Having a splendid season, winger Danny Rowe rolled the ball through a crowded penalty area in the 83rd minute to give the Silkmen a 2-1 win.

A second away tie saw the Silkmen travelling to **Amalgamated Football Club Sudbury** which was formed in 1999 when Sudbury Wanderers and Sudbury Town (the same Sudbury Town Macclesfield beat along the way to winning the Trophy in 1996). The second round was the furthest the hosts had progressed in their short history. John Askey made seven changes to the team which featured in the last Vanarama National League match giving newcomers to the club an outing together with Dan Cowan and Ollie Norburn who had recovered from injury. Grimsby Town loanee Rhys Browne opened the scoring on his debut in the 24th minute. Bury loanee Anthony Dudley doubled the score in the 33rd minute when he crashed the ball home off the post. In the second half Laurie Bell hit the woodwork before Jack Sampson drilled the ball home in the 82nd minute to score Macclesfield's 150th goal in the competition (Merrick Corfield having scored the first goal on 14 January 1970 in the 1-0 win against Buscough). Liam Wales pulled a goal back for the hosts in the 88th minute but by then Macclesfield had won their way through to the third round.

In addition to Rhys Browne making his debut, Omry Perel was also a debutant for Macclesfield.

High Flying **Forest Green Rovers** were the opponents in the third round played at the Moss Rose on the first Saturday in February. Prior to this match it had been agreed that there would be no replay with the match played to a conclusion including extra time and penalties if required. Both sides adopted a 4-1-4-1 formation. Macclesfield survived a scare when Christian Doidge hit the post for Rovers in the second minute. However, it was the home side who took the lead in the 11th minute when David Whitehead's shot took a deflection to wrong-foot Rovers Sam Russell. Also during the first half Anthony Dudley had a goal disallowed for off-side for the Silkmen. In the second half,

Macclesfield were forced to defend deep, often with every player behind the ball, and they were well supported by Scott Flinders who made a series of fine saves. Whitehead's first half goal was sufficient to see Macclesfield through to the last eight.

Tickets were issued solely for the Moss Lane stand with entry through the Moss Lane stand turnstiles although once inside there was access to all areas of the ground.

Next a trip to the Capital to face **Dulwich Hamlet** in the fourth round where 2834 supporters witnessed an interesting game. On paper this looked to be a typical banana skin at the Champion Hill Stadium but with the wind at their backs, Macclesfield took the match by the scruff of the neck, loanee Luke Summerfield scoring two goals in the first 18 minutes. The first a spectacular free-kick from 35 yards and the second from a poor clearance which fell at his feet, Summerfield lobbed the 'keeper from 35 yards. Seven minutes later from a corner which Scott Flinders was unable to clear fully, Quade Taylor thumped the ball home for Dulwich. Macclesfield had been in control until this point but Dulwich then came into the ascendancy, but the score remained 2-1 in favour of the Silkmen at half time. In the second half there were some positional moves for Macclesfield but Dulwich continued to play strongly and again were in the ascendancy as the half wore on and earned themselves a replay when Ash Carew equalised in 87th minute. In fact he almost won the match with a 40-yard shot which Flinders managed to claw over the bar.

At Dulwich alcoholic drinks can normally be consumed on the terraces for league matches but as this was a Football Association match no such drinks were allowed.

The replay was staged at the Moss Rose on Tuesday 7 March (following postponement on 28th February due to morning snowfall). Macclesfield came out of the blocks quickly determined to win this tie and were rewarded for their efforts with two goals in two minutes, both scored by on loan Grimsby Town player Rhys Brown, to give the Silkmen a 2-0 lead after just 20 minutes. Macclesfield continued to dominate the first half but, like the first encounter, during the second half they let Dulwich Hamlet back into the match leaving manager John Askey frustrated. Fortunately the Silkmen held on to win 2-0.

George Pilkington made his 150th appearance (all competitions) for MTFC

Danny Whitaker made his 677th career appearance (all clubs, all competitions) to equal manager John Askey's total career appearances.

The first leg of the semi-final was played at the Moss Rose on 11 March against **Tranmere Rovers**, another high flying team in the National League. 2358 supporters including 901 from Tranmere witnessed this match where Tranmere took the lead in the second minute from what looked to be a soft penalty decision which Jeff Hughes tucked away. Macclesfield responded well but Kingsley James bundled wide a cross from Rhys Browne. Then Tranmere's experienced centre-back Steve McNulty almost scored an own goal when he nodded the ball against the cross bar, the ball bouncing down but the assistant referee indicated that it had not crossed the line. Against a physical Tranmere side, Macclesfield deservedly equalised in the 54th minute when Ollie Norburn took advantage of a wayward header by McNulty in the area.

For the second leg a crowd of 6100, including 588 from Macclesfield, saw the Silkmen progress to the Final. On a heavy pitch the first half was a tight affair with the tie very much in the balance at half time. In the second half it was Macclesfield's Ollie Norburn who proved to be the difference between the two sides. He first struck the bar and then minutes later in the 68th minute he hit a screamer to give the Silkmen an aggregate lead of 2-1. Tranmere had no answer, and even a short disruption to play when a flare was thrown onto the pitch by the Tranmere fans had no impact on the Silkmen who held out to earn a trip to Wembley against **York City** who had overcome Lincoln City who went on to be champions of the Vanarama National League

The match day commentary made use of the Mixlr facility which had been used for all the other Trophy matches as EFL Digital did not provide commentary facilities for these matches. There was a maximum of 100 listeners during the first half jumping to 240 for the second half.

Sunday 21 May was designated as Finals Day with the Buildbase Vase Trophy competed for at lunchtime and the Buildbase FA Trophy kicking off at 16.15 and televised live by BT Sport. On a lovely sunny day the official attendance for the day as a whole was 38224 including the attendance for both matches. The people of Macclesfield well and truly supported the team with a total of 7698 Macclesfield supporters attending - quite a comparison to the just under 1500 average for Vanarama National League matches.

***Tickets** had to be purchased from the FA web site at a cost of Adults £25, Concessions (OAP/Student) £10, Child (under 16) £1 with a 50% discount on adult and concessions when purchasing nine or more tickets at one and the same time. 15099 seats were allocated to Macclesfield Town. CMAC Group organised the official club **coaches** – prices Adults £35, Under 16s £25.*

*In the build up to the final there was much **memorabilia** on sale including, flags, hooter, car sticker, rosette, scarf, baseball cap, pin badge, T-shirts and walk on jackets.*

*Mill Street and Chestergate were decorated with **bunting** with several businesses supporting the event with posters and banners promoting the 'We're Going' campaign including Virgin Trains, JJ Cookson, Tesco, RRG Toyota, Sainsburys and Leek United Building Society.*

*Men's' Outfitters John Douglas provided Herbie Frogg **suites** for the players.*

*A '**Wish them well Wembley Night**' was held at the Moss Rose on Tuesday 16 May with about 300 children enjoying a kick around on the Moss Rose – adults enjoyed themselves in the McIlroy Suite.*

*There was an opportunity to **wave the team off** at Arighi Bianchi on Friday 19 May at 11.00 when John Askey and the team departed for London following breakfast.*

*At the request of the FA the four teams in the Vase and Trophy finals were asked to nominate two supporters each in recognition of their work for their club. A presentation was made on the pitch before the match to **Barrie Darcey and Phil Gibbons** for Macclesfield.*

The teams for the two sides were as follows

Macclesfield Town: Flinders, Halls, Byrne (McCombe 67) Pilkington, Fitzpatrick, James, Browne, Whitaker, Norburn (Dudley 89), Hancox (Summerfield 87), Holroyd. Subs not used: Ross, Whitehead.

York City: Letheran, Heslop, Morgan-Smith, Klukowski (Moke 46), Hall (Connolly 69), Oliver, Parkin, Newton, Holmes (Rooney 75), Parslow. Subs not used: Simpson, Fenwick.

Macclesfield's 60th match of the season saw an entertaining and lively first half with both sides started well but it was Macclesfield who played the better and more creative football. However, against the run of play, former Silkmen Jon Parkin opened the scoring for York in the eighth minute with a deft header, although he may well have been very marginally off side, but at the pace the game was being played it would have been difficult for the assistant to spot. Only five minutes later tricky winger Rhys Browne levelled the scores having collected a cross, shot through the 'keeper's legs from 12 yards. York took the lead again in the 22nd minute through Valaine Oliver. Just as it looked as though York were going to take a 2-1 lead into the interval the ever-reliant Ollie Norburn struck a brilliant shot one minute into added time to bring the scores to 2-2 at the interval.

At half time Adriano Moke replaced Van Klujowski bringing the number of former Silkmen in the York side to four – Moke, Parkin, Hamza Bencherif and Amari-Morgan Smith. Moke played as a defensive midfielder and the York formation seemed to make it more difficult for Macclesfield. The second half was rather a disappointment as it failed to live up to the lively first half. Macclesfield were forced to make a change when John McCombe was introduced from the bench replacing Neill Byrne who had picked up a knock. Kingsley James may well have thought that he had given the Silkmen the lead but his shot was expertly headed off the line by Bencherif. York City completed their substitutions in the 75th minute but there were no further changes for Macclesfield. Four minutes from time the inevitable happened when Jon Parkin's shot was deflected by George Pilkington towards goal with advancing substitute Aidan Connolly knocking the ball over the line to give York a 3-2 lead. Immediately Askey replaced Hancox with midfielder Luke Summerfield and two minutes later striker Anthony Dudley replaced Ollie Norburn. But all was lost, York City seeing out four minutes of added time to win the Trophy, the second consecutive season that a team who had been relegated from the Vanarama National League had been successful. Jon Parkin certainly made a difference between the two teams having elected to sign for York City half way through the season by his own admission because he owns a house in Barnsley.

The club earned a total of £67,000 in prize money plus a share of the gate income for this competition.

The **Cheshire Senior Cup** competition no longer seems to have the magic it once commanded but greater priorities prevail. Macclesfield were drawn away at **Winsford United** in the preliminary round on 1 November. With an important first round FA Cup tie at Walsall on the Saturday after this match, Macclesfield signed 11 players on non-contract terms days before the Cheshire Senior Cup match with nine of them making an appearance. The home side took the lead in the 12th minute, a lead which they held at half time. Immediately after the re-start Sam Madeley scored an equaliser for the Silkmen but the hosts took the lead again in the 53rd minute only for Madeley to equalise for a second time a minute later. Riley gave Winsford a 3-2 lead in the 59th minute but Madeley netted his hat-trick taking Macclesfield level for the third time. In the 89th minute Dale Jennings for Winsford was dismissed for a foul when he was adjudged to have been the last man. With the scores tied at 3-3 extra time was played. There were no further goals in the first half but three minutes from time team captain for the match Dan Cowan stabbed the ball home to give the Silkmen victory. Subsequently it came to light, initially through the Winsford United web site, that Macclesfield had been eliminated from the competition having fielded an ineligible player. All the non-contract players who had been signed were released at the end of November with the exception of Curtis Obeng who signed for Altrincham.



FA Cup first round at Walsall - John McCombe scoring the winning goal



FA Cup second round against Oxford United 2 December - Jack Mackreth who almost scored



Match Action from the third round of the FA Trophy at the Moss Rose against Forest Green Rovers



Luke Summerfield celebrating his second goal at Dulwich Hamlet in the fourth round of the FA Trophy



Ollie Norburn scoring the winning goal at Tranmere Rovers in the second leg of the semi-final of the FA Trophy (Will Gibson)



Ollie Norburn celebrates reaching the final of the FA trophy at the end of the second leg of the semi-final at Tranmere Rovers having scored in both legs.



Barrie Darcey and Phil Gibbons on the pitch at Wembley prior to the final of the FA Trophy receiving their awards from the Football Association



Rhys Browne, scorer of Macclesfield's first goal in the FA Trophy Final



Macclesfield collect their runners-up medals



A somewhat disconsolate John Askey having collected his runners-up medal at Wembley

VANRAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE

August 2016

Macclesfield made the most of the first league match of the season on 6 August when they were dominant against a rather poor **Torquay United** side which came to the Moss Rose on the back of a long winded proposed takeover which had fallen through although they had landed a windfall transfer fee of £100K when Angus McDonald had signed for Barnsley. This was the second consecutive season that the opening match had been against Torquay, but two superb goals by debutant Ollie Norburn and Chris Holroyd ensured that Macclesfield had the best possible start to the season with a 2-0 victory. (Norburn's 24th minute goal was voted Goal of the Season by the fans). Even before Norburn had opened the scoring, Jack Sampson, Jack Mackreth and Danny Whitaker had all created goal scoring opportunities. A 4-4-2 formation allowed speedy wingmen Mackreth and Danny Rowe to run riot.

Mitch Hancox, Ollie Norburn and Craig Ross all made their MTFC debut.

The former Corner Flag Bar had been upgraded using funds from the Richard Butcher Trust and was officially opened at this match as Butch's Bar.

On the following Tuesday the Silkmen travelled to face **York City** for their first home match since their relegation from the Football League, the home side gaining a fortunate 1-0 victory. In the early stages York had a header cleared off the line and a powerful shot from Macclesfield's Danny Rowe was well saved. In the 57th minute the deadlock was broken when a York free-kick caused confusion in the penalty box with Mitch Hancox eventually making a strong clearance but the ball hit Matt Fry and rebounded into the net. Macclesfield had chances to equalise but could not find the back of the net. In this match forward Chris Holroyd was the sole striker and often isolated with Jack Sampson on the wing and winger Danny Rowe in the centre of midfield, these changes may well have contributed a less than satisfactory performance by the Silkmen.

Kingsley James made his MTFC debut from the substitutes' bench.

At **Braintree Town** in the Avanti Stadium the Silkmen were too strong for the previous season's Play-off semi-finalists basically winning the match in the first half. Goals from Danny Rowe in the 10th minute and Chris Holroyd in the 31st minute gave Macclesfield a 2-0 lead at the interval. A third goal by much maligned striker Jack Sampson came in the 73rd minute when he lofted the ball over the 'keeper from 25 yards. The Iron pulled a goal back from the penalty spot in the 81st minute. Towards the end of the match Mitch Hancox was dismissed for a second bookable offence and Braintree's 'keeper was given a straight red card when he brought down Kingsley James.

Macclesfield won their next match at home to **Southport** in the first 25 minutes with goals from Danny Whitaker (5), Paul Lewis (9) and Kingsley James (25). They took their foot off the pedal in the second half allowing Southport to see more of the ball and score a consolation goal with seven minutes to go.

Manager John Askey notched up his 200th match as caretaker manager/manager.

Danny Rowe made his 100th appearance for MTFC.

Macclesfield travelled to Gander Green Lane to renew acquaintances with **Sutton United** who had attained promotion at the end of the 2015-16 season, the last meeting between the teams had been at the Moss Rose on 2 February 1991. Sutton United play on an artificial pitch but it was reported that Macclesfield's below par performance throughout this match had nothing to do with the playing surface especially as they train on an artificial pitch. Sutton took a two-goal lead into the interval, the first goal gifted to them when 'keeper Craig Ross could only parry away a shot to Ross Stearn who made no mistake in slotting the ball home. The second came when Macclesfield's Paul Lewis failed to clear a ball in the box. Macclesfield created few meaningful attempts on goal and the home side could have extended their lead when they hit the bar twice. To make matters worse

Macclesfield's captain Andy Halls was dismissed in the 65th minute for a poor tackle. Sutton coasted home winning 2-0, their third victory on the run.

Lincoln City were the next visitors to the Moss Rose and played in their Lincoln green shirt and black shirts. Until the 43rd minute this was an even match but Kingsley James hammered the ball home for the Silkmen after Chris Holroyd's shot had rebounded off the post. Macclesfield started the second half brightly but the stuffing was knocked out of them when Harry Anderson fizzed the ball home for Lincoln, the goal coming from a Lincoln counter attack following a Macclesfield corner. Lincoln retained the initiative, substitute Adam Marriott capitalising in the 75th minute when former Silkman Luke Waterfall gained a great knock-down, beat his marker, passed to Marriott who clinically fired home to win the match 2-1.

A first ever meeting with newly promoted **Solihull Moors** at the Automated Technology Stadium produced the proverbial game of two halves with the home side in the ascendancy in the first half. The Moors took the lead in the 22nd minute when Shepherd Murombedzi's long range effort took a deflection. Macclesfield drew level in the 41st minute through a Kingsley James penalty but Solihull took the lead for the second time when they were awarded a penalty two minutes into added time, Akwasi Asante converting the spot kick. The second half belonged to Macclesfield and after James had scored his second penalty it never looked as though the Silkmen would lose the match. However, they had to wait until the third minute of added time for Ollie Norburn to convert Danny Rowe's cross to score the third and winning goal

Having played seven matches Macclesfield were in 8th position with 12 points.

SEPTEMBER 2016

Macclesfield enjoyed excellent form during the month of September chalking up four victories and only losing one match – their best month of the season.

Entertaining **Woking** on a rainy and windy day, Macclesfield showed their strength and determination against a rather poor side. The Silkmen were two goals to the good by the interval courtesy of Danny Whitaker and Danny Rowe. The visitors improved marginally in the second half and pulled a goal back in the 59th minute Dennon Lewis scoring from distance, but Macclesfield responded with Chris Holroyd scoring a third in the dying moments of the match.

In wet and slippery conditions neither side put in a particularly good performance at **Bromley**, but Danny Rowe's first half goal sealed all three points for the Silkmen. Bromley had their chances - Tobi Sho-Silva hitting the bar, John McCombe cleared Blair Turgott's shot off the line and Rob Swaine hit the post and they were further frustrated by good goalkeeping by Craig Ross.

Before the match a minute's silence was observed in memory of Bromley under 11 player Makayah McDermott who had recently died together with his aunt when they were hit by a car which was involved in a police car chase.

The home match against **Wrexham** scheduled for Tuesday 13 September was postponed one hour before kick-off following extremely heavy and prolonged rain which resulted in a waterlogged pitch.

The following Saturday **Eastleigh** were the visitors on a sunny, balmy autumn afternoon. A physical but even first half saw four players receiving treatment for head injuries. Both sides had their chances but five minutes into the second half Luke Coulson for Eastleigh was given time and space to strike the ball along the ground from just outside the area to give the visitors a 1-0 lead which they retained to win the match. Macclesfield were unlucky not to gain a point but Paul Lewis' shot was cleared off the line and John McCombe headed wide.

There was a slow start to the match at **Guiseley** but it was Macclesfield who had made five changes to the starting line-up who took control scoring two goals in the first half. On 14 minutes Chris Holroyd collected a long ball over his shoulder and lifted it over the on-rushing 'keeper. Two minutes after his introduction Mitch Hancox played an excellent cross to Ollie Norburn who struck the ball home from near the back post in the 26th minute. Ten minutes later Guiseley pulled a goal back. After the re-start Norburn almost scored a third goal but his shot was clawed away by the 'keeper. There were no further goals leaving Macclesfield victorious 2-1.

Recently signed on loan goalkeeper Scott Flinders made his MTFC debut.

Paul Lewis made his 100th appearance for Macclesfield.

The last match of the month was the re-arranged tie against **Wrexham** which had been postponed on 13 September. Playing with pace and determination throughout the 90 minutes Macclesfield easily overcame The Dragons. Man of the Match Danny Whitaker gave the Silkmen the lead in the 35th minute with a 20-yard left foot shot, with Paul Lewis doubling the lead with a headed goal two minutes into the second half. Whitaker made it 3-0 with his second goal in the 53rd minute. The result could have been much worse for the visitors but for some splendid goalkeeping by former Silkman Shwan Jalal.

With this victory Macclesfield moved up to third position with 24 points, an excellent base on which to build.

OCTOBER 2016

The momentum which had been built up over the first two months of the season was lost during October with just one win recorded.

The month started well with Macclesfield entertaining newly promoted **North Ferriby United** for the very first time. The visitors made the Silkmen work hard for their victory although much credit went to goalkeeper and Man of the Match Scott Flinders for fine work between the sticks. The difference between the two sides was a 22nd minute penalty despatched by Danny Whitaker but Macclesfield had to play 65 minutes with 10 men following the dismissal of John McCombe. North Ferriby went close to netting an equaliser but Kyle Wootton's drive hit the bar.

In line with events in the town on this day, MTFC played their part in the 'Paint Macc Pink' campaign raising funds for 'Prevent Breast Cancer' by inviting supporters to wear something pink. There was also a bucket collection.

The Macclesfield Express newspaper reported that the club hosted its first Disability Awareness Day with over 70 supporters with additional needs attending this match.

Next a Tuesday evening visit to **Barrow**. Two equally matched teams played out this match with Barrow taking the lead in the 79th minute from a free-kick. Macclesfield equalised three minutes later, Neill Byrne bundling the ball home to earn a share of the points.

At the Moss Rose Macclesfield faced a strong and well organised **Boreham Wood** side enjoying fine form away from home. 22 minutes into the match midfielder Ollie Norburn who had made a big impression as a central midfielder to date was injured and was replaced by captain Andy Halls. The Wood took the lead from a penalty in the 70th minute when substitute David Fitzpatrick had pulled back Morgan Ferrier. At this point Macclesfield sparked into life but Boreham Wood made the game safe in the 80th minute when Danny Woodward headed home from a corner to win the match 2-0.

At the Chigwell Construction Stadium Macclesfield faced **Dagenham and Redbridge**. The Silkmen playing in all white started well in a 4-4-2 formation but it was the hosts who took the lead in the 18th minute against the run of play. Macclesfield had their chances but it was the Daggers who were

in charge, however, Macclesfield never gave up the cause and rallied at the end to earn a point when Chris Holroyd headed home from close range in the 90th minute to make the final score 1-1.

An entertaining match was next played out against **Chester** at the Moss Rose which ended 0-0. The visitors were said to be the best Chester side seen in recent years and deserved to remain unbeaten in their last four outings. Nevertheless, Macclesfield were the dominant side forcing the pace especially towards the end and were unlucky when substitute Danny Rowe hit the woodwork twice in quick succession.

Once a season the first year sports journalist students at Staffordshire University are invited to the Moss Rose to cover the match and have a 'Press Conference' as part of their studies. Some of the students are involved in the media side of the club.

This was the first time that Macclesfield had played the reformed **Maidstone United** having met the original Maidstone in the Silkmen's first ever Conference match back in 1987 when Steve Burr scored the one and only goal. On the artificial pitch at the Gallagher Stadium Macclesfield took the lead in the eighth minute when Chris Holroyd chested the ball home but the lead only lasted eight minutes, Liam Enver-Marum equalising for the hosts after some poor defending. The Silkmen should have taken the lead in the 30th minute but Danny Whitaker's penalty was well saved by Lee Wogan. For the rest of the half and during the second half Macclesfield created several chances including one from distance by David Fitzpatrick which hit the post. However, the Stones always look dangerous going forward and substitute Yemi Odubade, who had only been on the pitch four minutes, scored in the 89th minute to give Maidstone a 2-1 victory.

Sam Madeley made his MTFC debut from the substitutes' bench.

Andy Halls made his 150th appearance for MTFC and Danny Whitaker notched up his 350th appearance for MTFC.

Having only gained six points during the month Macclesfield slipped to 10th position.

NOVEMBER 2016

Just three league matches were completed during November, the Silkmen holding their league position.

Top-of-the-table **Forest Green Rovers** came to the Moss Rose and caught the Silkmen cold, Keanu Marsh-Brown scoring in the second minute, his goal turned out to be the winning strike. There was disappointment for Macclesfield when midfielder Paul Lewis was stretchered off and more frustration when both Danny Whitaker and Jack Samson's shots did not find the back of the net. In the second half Forest Green Rovers showed their credentials holding out for the three points and at this stage of the season they went nine points clear.

Without a win in their last six league matches Macclesfield registered a 2-1 victory in fine style at **Aldershot Town**, Chris Holroyd scoring both the Silkmen's goals. A poacher's goal in the 27th Minute saw the Silkmen take the lead. In the second half they doubled their lead on the break, Chris Holroyd side-footing home following a run by Danny Rose down the left and his well-placed cross. From a free-kick, Will Evans headed a consolation goal for the home side in the 69th minute. Throughout the match Goalkeeper Craig Ross made some fine saves including one from a free-kick.

A second match away from home, on this occasion against **Gateshead** who included in their line-up former Silkmen James Bolton, Liam Hogan and Reece Styche. The Silkmen started well but it was the home side who opened the scoring in the 12th minute when Macclesfield came under pressure for the first time, the unmarked Danny Johnson converted Mitch Brundle's free-kick from a tight angle. Twelve minutes later Danny Rowe headed home to draw Macclesfield level. The score remained

level at the interval but not before John McCombe and Danny Whitaker had both cleared balls off the line to keep the Silkmen in the game. At the start of the second half Gateshead replaced defender James Bolton with striker Wes York, Gateshead moving to an attacking 4-3-3 formation with Macclesfield continuing with their five-man midfield and sole striker in Chris Holroyd. Both keepers were tested in the second half but the score remained 1-1 at full time.

On the last Saturday in the month **Dover Athletic** were the visitors to the Moss Rose on a cold and foggy afternoon. Foggy conditions prevailed from the kick-off for this 13th Conference match between the Silkmen and the Whites. Through the gloom Danny Rowe opened the scoring for Macclesfield in the 30th minute. Macclesfield maintained their 1-0 lead at half time. On the restart conditions had deteriorated but it was the 55th minute before the referee stopped the match and after consulting both managers and then the captains, the players left the pitch which led to a rather frustrating time for the supporters.

*As soon as the players had left the pitch the PA announcer was handed a piece of paper and asked to read out the following – ‘Ladies and gentlemen. Due to poor visibility a decision has been made to abandon the game. Please leave the ground by the nearest exit. An announcement about the rearranged fixture will be made as soon as possible via the MTFC web site.’

*Only minutes later (three according to the Silkmen Wall) it came to light that the referee had only suspended the match and not abandoned it. A further announcement to this effect was made over the PA system and a message posted on the Silkmen Wall.

*At 16.30 there was another announcement that the referee had decided to abandon the match even though visibility by then had improved significantly, as he was concerned that the fog could descend again and result in further disruption.

*It later came to light in an interview with manager John Askey that the referee had indicated to both managers that he would review the position 15 minutes after he had stopped the match in the 55th minute.

*The match was eventually re-arranged for Tuesday 10 January 2017.

On Tuesday 29 November Macclesfield were due to play Barrow at the Moss Rose but the match was postponed, the first notification being announced on the Silkmen Wall at 17.56. The fans were disappointed by the late postponement resulting in the club putting the following statement out on 1 December – ‘Despite an overnight frost on Monday night, the temperature during the day on Tuesday was sufficient to ensure that the pitch thawed and was playable. No issues were expected ahead of kick-off. However, quickly falling temperatures later in the afternoon had an adverse effect on some sections of the pitch, and with the temperature continuing to fall, the decision was taken to postpone the game.’

Having only completed three out of the five scheduled league matches Macclesfield remained in 10th position with 34 points.

DECEMBER 2016

At **Wrexham** Macclesfield dominated the match from start to finish and should probably have put the game to bed in the first half but none of their shots hit the back of the net. The Silkmen won the match with three second half goals from Danny Rowe, Mitch Hancox (his first for the Silkmen) and Danny Whitaker, without reply from the home side. Wrexham were awarded a penalty in the 92nd minute but Jordan White sent the ball over the bar. With this win Macclesfield completed a season double over Wrexham having also won 3-0 at the Moss Rose.

The Silkmen failed to give their fans an early Christmas present against **Bromley** at the Moss Rose in front of BT Sport cameras although they enjoyed much of the possession. In the 34th minute against the run of play Toby Sho-Silva was well positioned in the six yard box to strike the ball home to give

the visitors a 1-0 lead. In the second half Macclesfield continued to maintain good possession without any end product partly due to excellent defending by Bromley. A change of formation by Macclesfield from 4-1-4-1 to 4-4-2 was made on the introduction of on loan striker Richard Brodie who replaced wingman Jack Mackreth; this change almost brought success minutes later but Danny Rowe's rasping long-range shot crashed against the crossbar and out again. Just as it was looking as though the visitors would be returning south victorious, in the 84th minute attacking midfielder Paul Lewis struck home from 20 yards, his deflected shot wrong-footing the 'keeper to make the score 1-1. It is said that teams are at their most vulnerable immediately after scoring and to prove the point 70 seconds later Blair Turgot worked his way inside the box to slot home and earn all three points for Bromley.

Richie Wellens made his MTFC debut.

On Boxing Day Macclesfield travelled to Prenton Park to face **Tranmere Rovers**. Unusually for Macclesfield they started the match with two in the front line, Richard Brodie partnering Chris Holroyd. Tranmere had the upper hand for much of the first half although after 30 minutes manager John Askey changed the formation back to the regular 4-1-4-1 leaving Brodie as the sole striker, Holroyd on the right wing, Danny Rowe switching from the right to left wing and Danny Whitaker moving from the left wing into the centre of midfield. These changes made a difference but Tranmere still shaded the first half. Macclesfield came into the match more in the second half but Danny Whitaker fired well over the crossbar from a free-kick and Danny Rowe disappointingly shot wide from close range. The deciding moment came in the 83rd minute; coming for a high ball the Macclesfield goalkeeper was unable to collect the ball and collided with Jeff Hughes (some say that Craig Ross had been impeded) who headed home despite David Fitzpatrick's effort to clear the ball off the line. With Lincoln City losing to Guiseley, with this win Tranmere went to the top of the table.

For the third consecutive month, Macclesfield held 10th position (although they had reached seventh during the month) with a total of 37 points.



The redesigned Corner Flag



Ollie Norburn being congratulated on scoring the 'Goal of the Season' against Torquay United at the Moss Rose on 6 August



Match action at Braintree Town on 13 August



Kingsley James scoring Macclesfield's third goal against Southport on 16 August



Goalscorers at Solihull Moors, Ollie Norburn and Kingsley James on 29 August



Danny Rowe's goal against Woking on 3 September



Pre-match tribute to Bromley under-11 player Makayah McDermott who had recently died in a road traffic accident



Centre forward Chris Holroyd celebrating his goal at Guiseley on 24 September



Danny Whitaker in action in the match against Wrexham in which he scored two goals



Club Match Mascot wearing 'something pink' as part of the 'Paint Macc Pink' campaign for the Prevent Breast Cancer campaign



Match action in the 0-0 draw against Chester at the Moss Rose on 25 October



Foggy conditions at the match against Dover on 26 November which was eventually abandoned by the referee



Jack Sampson and Richard Brodie in action in the away match at Wrexham on 6 December

JANUARY 2017

The month of January was notable for the number of player transfers, both in and out of the club. Six players left the club either permanently or on loan, most notably Jack Mackreth signing for Bury, Paul Lewis to Cambridge United and Danny Rowe to Ipswich Town all bringing in useful income to the club. Goalkeeper Richie Branagan signed for Chorley having been unable to find regular place in the starting line-up for two seasons. Five players joined the club, again on loan or permanently. The most significant signing was the return of goalkeeper Scott Flinders who had been released by York City and replaced the capable Craig Ross in the starting line-up. (Player movements for the whole of the season are listed at the end of this chapter in a separate section).

On the playing front this was a good month with the Silkmen recording three wins and just one defeat.

The return fixture against **Tranmere Rovers** was played at the Moss Rose on New Year's Day in front of an attendance of 3317 including 1679 Tranmere supporters. Unusually Macclesfield played towards the Star Lane End (sponsored by Premier Estates) in the first half. Tranmere started the brighter and took the lead in the 10th minute through big Steve McNulty. The lead only lasted two minutes, attacking midfielder Paul Lewis equalised. Richie Sutton gave the visitors the lead again in the 36th minute. Having been booked and looking uncomfortable, centre back John McCombe was replaced by Neill Byrne in the 40th minute after which Macclesfield started to take control of proceedings. Five minutes into the second half Paul Lewis scored his second goal to make the score 2-2. Danny Rowe blasted home from 20 yards to give the Silkmen the lead for the first time in the match in the 71st minute and after Paul Lewis had been brought down in the box, he got up and dusted himself down to convert the resultant penalty in the 82nd minute to complete his hat-trick and give Macclesfield a 4-2 lead and victory over a team which was top of the table at the start of the match.

Recent signing Laurie Bell made his MTFC debut late in the match.

Dover Athletic were the next visitors to the Moss Rose to play the fixture which had been abandoned on 26 November 2016. Goalkeeper Scott Flinders, having returned on a permanent basis replaced Craig Ross in goal. He had a difficult start misjudging a lofted free-kick which was headed over him by Janie Grimes to open the scoring for The Whites in the eighth minute. Macclesfield could not find an equaliser in the first half and were frustrated by the time wasting tactics employed by the visitors but continued to press forward. The visitors had the ball in the net for a second time but Ross Lafaette's back-heel was ruled off-side. The introduction of Bury loanee Anthony Dudley in place of Jack Sampson gave the Silkmen more impetus. The breakthrough for Macclesfield came in the 69th minute when Chris Holroyd equalised and only six minutes later Holroyd was again on the score sheet netting what turned out to be the winning goal.

Anthony Dudley made his MTFC debut.

A third home league match on the trot saw **Guiseley** visiting the Moss Rose on a bitterly cold night. There were five changes to the starting line-up which may have contributed to a disappointing performance by Macclesfield who allowed Guiseley to record only their first league win on the road since February 2016. The Silkmen had three opportunities to open the scoring in the first half before Macclesfield defender John McCombe upended James Weslowski in the box, Michael Rankine converting the resultant penalty in the 29th minute. Macclesfield were on parity with the visitors only 70 seconds later, Chris Holroyd slotting home from a tight angle. Just after the restart Scott Flinders dropped a cross and in attempting to retrieve the ball barged into a defender felling Will Hatfield. Flinders saved Rankine's penalty kick but could only palm the ball back to the striker who made no mistake striking the ball home to give Guiseley a 2-1 lead and victory.

The home match against Barrow was postponed for a second time on 24 January due to a frozen pitch.

At struggling **North Ferriby United**, Macclesfield comfortably won the match 2-0 with goals from George Pilkington and Danny Whitehead. The score could have been much higher with both Mitch Hancox and Danny Whitaker hitting the bar, at least two shots cleared off the line together with a disallowed goal by Hancox.

And so the month ended on a positive note with Silkmen in eighth position with a total of 46 points.

FEBRUARY 2017

With three postponed league matches (two due to a FA Trophy commitments), the Silkmen only played four league matches during the month of February recording two victories.

At **Torquay United**, with Danny Whitehead and Anthony Dudley both injured, it gave John Askey the opportunity to introduce recent signings Connor Jennings and debutant Luke Summerfield. Jennings played as the sole striker replacing Chris Holroyd who moved to the right wing. Both sides played with a midfield five formation, little being given by either side in this fairly mundane match. However, it was the Silkmen who broke the deadlock on 35 minutes when Kingsley James reacted quickly in a goalmouth scramble following a Danny Whitaker corner to give Macclesfield the lead. Sean McGinty levelled the score, again from a corner, in the second half. Macclesfield made no substitutions in this match which ended with honours even 1-1.

Luke Summerfield made his MTFC debut.

At long last the home match against **Barrow** was played on Wednesday 15 February but not before it had been re-arranged again from Valentine's Day, although all the other midweek Vanarama National League fixtures were played on 14 February. Throughout the match Macclesfield had several goal scoring opportunities but could not make them count. Likewise Barrow also had their chances. Full back Andy Halls was injured towards the end of the first half and was replaced by John McCombe. In the 60th minute Barrow were reduced to 10 men when Akil Wight was dismissed for a second bookable offence. The result of the match eventually hinged on a controversial hand ball in the area by Chris Holroyd, the resultant penalty being despatched by Richard Bennett. Late in the match Macclesfield were unlucky when Chris Holroyd had the ball in the net only for it to be adjudged off-side. A disappointing result for one of Macclesfield's two matches in hand.

Whilst Macclesfield enjoyed good possession in the first half they could not find the back of the net against **Braintree Town** at the Moss Rose. However, two goals in as many minutes in the second half by on-loan Connor Jennings and leading scorer Chris Holroyd gave the Silkmen a 2-0 victory and a season double over the Iron.

Macclesfield's second match in hand was away against **Eastleigh**. The original fixture scheduled for 7 January had been postponed due to Eastleigh's involvement in the FA Cup. The Silkmen came out of the blocks quickly and established a lead after just seven minutes when Rhys Browne slotted home from 10 yards. Throughout the match Macclesfield fashioned several goal scoring opportunities and were always the stronger side but Browne's goal was sufficient to take all three points.

Free admission to this match

After the match, Eastleigh dismissed their manager Martin Allen following a poor run of results.

At the end of the month with 53 points the Silkmen were in ninth position, only three points behind Dover in fifth position.

MARCH 2017

With the Silkmen's involvement in the FA Trophy three league matches had to be postponed, nevertheless five matches were completed but form dipped with only one victory recorded.

When Macclesfield visited high-flying **Forest Green Rovers** it was a bad day at the office conceding three goals without any response. Rovers were the better side overall passing the ball well and maintaining good possession. In addition, the formation used by the Silkmen may not have helped the cause: both fans and the Silkmen Player commentators had difficulty working out what was happening. The commentators concluded that there was midfield four man diamond leading to a lack of width. Macclesfield were unlucky to hit the post when the score stood at 1-0. The three goals - for the first the 'keeper may well have been unsighted, the second came about following a light weight pass which was intercepted and the third saw the scorer unmarked in the box. With this win, Forest Green Rovers completed the season double over Macclesfield.

Next Macclesfield ended **Gateshead's** six-game winning run as they held the Heed to a draw at the Moss Rose. This was a match with few chances and it took until the 75th minute before there were any goals. For the visitors Manny Smith stabbed the ball home after Scott Flinders had initially saved a Paddy McLaughlin effort. Seven minutes later an excellent header by John McCombe levelled the scores and ensured that the points were shared as they were at Gateshead in November.

The match at **Chester** was preceded by floral tributes to Gary Allen, a Chester supporter, who unfortunately died during Chester's last home match, being placed behind the goal in front of the Harry McNally stand followed by a minute's applause. Chester opened the scoring in the sixth minute through James Alabi but Macclesfield equalised in the 23rd minute when defender Andy Halls scored his first goal for the Silkmen in his 171st appearance for the club. Although the Macclesfield defence were not having the best of nights, the Silkmen continued to press forward and loanee Anthony Dudley put them ahead two minutes before the break. Chester equalised in the 75th minute but it was Ollie Norburn who was yet again the hero when he scored the winning goal smashing the ball home from outside the area to win the match 3-2.

Macclesfield played this match in their third strip of red shirts, navy shorts and navy socks.

A dull first half saw both sides cancelling each other out in the first half but the match came alight in the second half for the visitors **Aldershot Town**, against a rather lack-lustre Macclesfield side. Goals by Kundai Benyu (59) and Matt McClure (83) without reply from the Silkmen gave Aldershot their third win in eight days and took them into the play-off places.

A minute's silence was impeccably observed before the match in respect for those who lost their lives in the Westminster Bridge incident earlier in the week.

At half time The Gideons presented two bibles, the first to Chairman Mark Blower and second to Life President Alan Cash in recognition of his work for the club over many years. A further 100 New Testaments emblazoned with the club's crest were provided for the potential benefit of players, management and staff of the club.

York City having been relegated from the Football League at the end of the 2015-16 season came to the Moss Rose in the middle of a fight to avoid relegation from the Vanarama National League but they still approached this match with determination. They took control in the first fifteen minutes with goals from Captain Simon Heslop and Vadaine Oliver. Macclesfield underperformed throughout and whilst they pulled a goal back when Danny Whitaker scored from the penalty spot in the 58th minute it was the 'beast' Jon Parkin who secured all three points for the visitors in the 82nd minute for York to complete the season double over Macclesfield.

At the end of the month Macclesfield remained in ninth position with 57 points, 11 points behind Aldershot Town in fifth position but with three games in hand. For several weeks the management had been claiming that they were still going for a play-off place, but with only nine matches to play the team had left themselves a tall order and it looked as though the target of achieving a play-off position was receding.

April 2017

The home form was yet again to let the team down with only one victory in the four matches played at the Moss Rose.

At Meadow Park Macclesfield easily overcame **Boreham Wood** basically winning the match in the first half. Anthony Dudley put the Silkmen ahead in the sixth minute but the lead only lasted eight minutes, David Stephens equalising for the home side. Then came the Mitch Hancox show with a hat-trick before the interval. His first came in the 27th minute after Kingsley James had hit a powerful shot which the Boreham Wood goalkeeper Grant Smith could not hold, Hancox prodding home the rebound. The second in the 45th minute, slotted home from Rhys Browne's squared pass from the byline and his third, one minute into added time, side-footed home a threaded pass from Dudley. Macclesfield took their foot off the pedal in the second half with a 4-1 lead but Bruno Andrarde pulled a goal back for the home side in the 74th minute, nevertheless Macclesfield won the match 4-2, revenge for their defeat at the Moss Rose earlier in the season.

Macclesfield's 900th Conference goal was scored by Mitch Hancox in the 45th minute.

Off to Haigh Avenue next where two goals in the first 15 minutes by Neill Byrne and Anthony Dudley virtually wrapped up the match against a poor **Southport** team. Ryan Higgins pulled a goal back for the Sandgrounders just before half time with an absolute screamer from 30 yards. There were no further goals in the second half with the 2-1 defeat leaving Southport firmly routed to the foot of the table.

Another frustrating home defeat came against **Dagenham & Redbridge** who ran out 4-1 winners. Mitch Hancox had given the Silkmen the lead in the 14th minute but Luke Guttridge levelled the scores just before half time from a free-kick. The turning point came when Macclesfield's Neill Byrne was dismissed for a foul on Paul Benson in the area, Corey Whitely putting the Daggers ahead from the penalty spot. Two second half goals by substitute Jordan Maguire-Drew wrapped up the match for the visitors enabling them to maintain their play-off position in their first season back in the National League.

Five players who were members of the 1970 FA trophy winning side together with members of the treble in the 1986-87 season were present at the club for this match.

When the score stood at 2-1 in favour of the Daggers one frustrated spectator sensing another home defeat threw his season ticket at manager John Askey in frustration and left the ground!

A much better performance in the following match at the Moss Rose against **Maidstone United** gave the Silkmen a much welcome 3-0 home win. Throughout the season supporters had been expressing their concern that playing with a loan striker, especially in home matches, had not worked. Askey started with a 4-4-2 formation, Rhys Browne linking up with Chris Holroyd in the forward line and it proved an immediate success when Rhys Browne scored after just 58 seconds. The first half was a lively affair with the Silkmen creating their fair share of chances but the score remained 1-0 at the interval. Although Maidstone played their part in the second half it was the Silkmen who triumphed. With ten minutes to go Craig Ross made a fine double save and this was followed by two late goals, a Danny Whitaker penalty (he had one saved in the fixture at Maidstone in October) and a strike by on-loan Jack Mackreth ensured that Macclesfield earned all three points and brought an end to Maidstone's nine match unbeaten record.

This was John Askey's 250th match as manager/caretaker manager with a win rate of 43.20%.

At the Laithwaite Community Stadium against lowly placed **Woking** John Askey reverted to his preferred 4-5-1 formation. Macclesfield were second best and did not perform as sharply as the home side. However, in the first half Ollie Norburn had an excellent shot saved and Chris Holroyd's spectacular overhead kick hit the crossbar. In the end the home side won the match with a second half penalty scored by substitute Chigozie Ugwu after a foul by Danny Whitaker.

Admission prices for this match were set at £10 for adults with under 16's having free entry.

John Askey made five changes to the team which faced **Solihull Moors** at the Moss Rose and started with a 4-4-2 formation. Moments before half time Macclesfield believed they had scored when John McCombe bundled the ball over the line from a cross but to the amazement of everyone in the stadium the assistant referee ruled that the whole of the ball had not crossed the line. Manager John Askey was dismissed by the referee at half time probably protesting about the disallowed goal. In line with the run of play, two minutes into the second half Chris Holroyd headed home a free-kick from Danny Whitaker to give the Silkmen a 1-0 lead. But it was the visitors who won the match with three late goals – George Carline (78), Jack Byrne (85) and substitute Regan Carline (90+3) which brought to an end Solihull's six-game losing run.

Televised by BT Sports with a 12-15 kick-off at **Lincoln City** in front of a crowd of 10031 (a Macclesfield club record for the highest crowd they had played in front of for a Conference league match) it was never going to be about Macclesfield Town as at the start Lincoln needed just three points to clinch the National League title and a return to the English Football League. With John Askey serving a one match ban it was left to assistant manager Steve Watson to oversee this match. In the first half Lincoln's Matt Rhead struck the post from close-range, but almost immediately Macclesfield counter attacked with Mitch Hancox hitting a low shot from 20 yards which bounced in front of the Lincoln 'keeper going over his out stretched hand to open the scoring to make the Silkmen potential party poopers. However, only six minutes later the Imps had equalised when Scott Flinders failed to hold a Lee Angol shot, Terry Hawridge pounced on the loose ball slotting home. The score remained at 1-1 at the interval. In the second half Chris Holroyd almost scored with a wonderful overhead kick but his shot was pushed over the bar by 'Keeper Paul Farnum. Hancox also had a shot saved but it was the hosts who created further chances with Hawridge scoring the winning goal with a strong shot along the ground across the goal which just went in at the far post. And so with a 2-1 win and a season double over the Silkmen, Lincoln City became the National League champions and gained promotion back to the Football League, capping a wonderful season which saw them also reach the quarter finals of the FA Cup and the semi-finals of the FA Trophy.

The penultimate league match of the season was the rearranged fixture at Crabble against **Dover Athletic**. Normally all league fixtures other than those arranged for the final Saturday of the season are completed on the penultimate Saturday but with Macclesfield's involvement in the FA Trophy and having had to play two matches each week in April there was no alternative than to play this match on the final Tuesday. This proved to be an entertaining match which Dover needed to win to have any hope of completing the season in a play-off position. Ollie Norburn put Macclesfield in the lead in the 32nd minute, but only eight minutes later National League Player of the Year Ricky Miller scored his 42nd goal in all competitions from the penalty spot, Andy Halls having been rather harshly adjudged to have handled the ball. In the second half Anthony Dudley gave the Silkmen the lead again but in an exciting finish Dover's Ross Lafayette levelled the scores 2-2 in the 87th minute to earn just a single point for the home side.

Ejoro Oskosieme made his MTFC debut from the substitutes' bench.

With neither Macclesfield nor **Sutton United** having anything to play for, the final match at the Moss Rose proved to be a typical end-of-season affair with little meaningful action which ended in a 0-0 draw. The closest Macclesfield came to scoring occurred in the second half when a James Thorne shot crashed against the crossbar.

There was free entry for this match with roughly 300 more home supporters than the average for the season

The Silkmen completed the season in 9th position, one place better than the 2015-16 season, having been in ninth position continually since the beginning of February. A total of 68 points was achieved, two more than the 2015-16 season, but 14 points off the last play-off position. It really was the home form which let them down losing 11 matches, only winning nine and drawing three.

Player of the Year Awards

Player of the Year	George Pilkington (for the third consecutive year)
Players' Player of the Year	Chris Holroyd
Wraggs to Riches Player	Chris Holroyd
Andy Mellor Special Award	George Pilkington
Goal of the Season	Ollie Norburn versus Torquay in the opening match of the season.



Paul Lewis (centre) celebrates scoring his hat-trick in the home match against Tranmere Rovers on 1 January in one of his last matches for the club



Forward Chris Holroyd rightfully celebrating scoring two goals in home match against Dover Athletic on 10 January



On loan Danny Whitehead scoring the second goal against North Ferriby United on 28 January



On loan Connor Jennings (right) being congratulated by Mitch Hancox, Chris Holroyd and Kingsley James after scoring the first goal against Braintree Town at the Moss Rose on 18 February



A delighted Anthony Dudley (second from right) with Danny Whitaker and Rhys Browne after scoring in the 3-2 win at Chester on 21 March



Members of the 1970 FA Trophy winning team who were guests of the club at the Dagenham & Redbridge match on 8 April



The 1970 FA Trophy winning team members with members of the NPL Treble winning team on the pitch at half time at the match against Dagenham & Redbridge



A packed Moss Lane stand at the final match of the season against Sutton United, supporters taking advantage of the free admission.



George Pilkington (right) Player of the Year with former player Mick Hardman who presented the awards

To compliment this written account, much more detailed information can be found in 'Match Information' for scores, scorers, attendances and teams, 'Season Statistics' for individual player appearances and goals competition by competition, 'General Information' and 'Player Profiles' which provide statistics and information for individual players.

Grateful thanks are extended to the club's official photographer Peter Hilton for providing the vast majority of the photographs throughout this chapter.



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MACCLESFIELD TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB
PLAYERS 2016-17 SEASON

PLAYER	SIGNED/EXISTING PLAYER	LOANED/LEFT
Richard Ainscough	*October 2016 non-contract.	*Released November 2016.
Laurie Bell	*January 2017 from Karlslund IF HFK on non-contract forms.	*Also dual registration with Hyde United. *Returned to Karlslund IF HFK at end of February 2017.
Ryan Boot	*11 November 2016 on loan from Port Vale.	*Returned to Port Vale at end of loan in January 2017.
Richie Branagan	*MTFC 2015-16.	*Loan to Ashton United for three months November 2016. *Left MTFC by mutual consent on 3 January 2017, immediately signing for Chorley.
Richard Brodie	*17 November 2016 loan from York City to 1 January 2017.	*Returned to York City at end of loan.
Rhys Browne	*12 January 2017 on loan from Grimsby Town until the end of the season.	*Returned to Grimsby Town at end of season.
Robert Burrows	*October 2016 non-contract.	*Released November 2016.
Neill Byrne	*MTFC 2015-16.	*Summer 2017 signed for Gateshead.
Dan Cowan	*MTFC 2015-16.	*Loan to Ashton United for 28 days from 23 September 2016. *Loan to Chorley for 28 days from 4 November 2016. *Signed for Stockport County summer 2017.
Anthony Dudley	*Loan from Bury from 6 January 2017 to end of season.	*Returned to Bury at end of season.
Callum Evans	*Loan from Barnsley on 17 February to the end of the season.	*18 April 2017 – returned to Barnsley.
David Fitzpatrick	*MTFC 2015-16.	
Scott Flinders	*Loan from York City for 28 days from 20 September 2016. *Signed 6 January 2017 to end of season.	*Returned to York City at end of loan. *Released Summer 2017.
Rico Gomes	*October 2016 non-contract.	*Released November 2016.
Andy Haworth	*February 2017 from Barrow.	*Released Summer 2017.
Chris Holroyd	*MTFC 2015-16.	*Summer 2017 to Wrexham.
Andy Halls	*MTFC 2015-16.	*Summer 2017 to Chester
Mitch Hancox	*Summer 2016 from Birmingham City.	
Callum Harris	*October 2016 non-contract.	*Released November 2016.
Kingsley James	*Summer 2016 from FC Halifax T.	*Summer 2017 to Chester.
Connor Jennings	*February 6 2017 – one month loan from Tranmere Rovers.	*Returned to Tranmere Rovers at end of loan.
Aaron Knight	*October 2016 non-contract.	*Released November 2016.
Paul Lewis	*MTFC 2015-16.	13 January 2017 to Cambridge United (undisclosed fee).

John McCombe	*MTFC 2015-16.	*Summer 2017 to Chester.
Jack Mackreth	*Summer 2016 from Tranmere R. *14 Mar 2017 loan from Bury to end of season.	*1 January 2017 to Bury (undisclosed fee). *18 April 2017 – recalled by Bury.
Sam Madeley.	*September 2016 from FC United of Manchester.	*September 2016 – loan to Stalybridge Celtic. *January 2017 – loan to Nantwich Town. *March 2017 – moved to Warrington Town.
Navid Nasseri	*October 2016 non-contract.	*Released November 2016.
Ollie Norburn	*Summer 2016 from Guiseley.	*Summer 2017 to Tranmere Rovers.
Ejiro Okosieme	*February 2017 non-contract...	
Omry Perel	*December 2016 non-contract.	*Dual registration with Hyde United.
George Pilkington	MTFC 2015-16.	
Olalekan Rabi	*October 2016 non-contract.	*Released November 2016.
Cody Ruberto	*October 2016 non-contract.	*Released November 2016.
John Roberts	*9 August 2016 on non-contract forms.	*Dual registration with Ashton United – December 2016. *Signed for Ashton United summer 2017
Craig Ross	*Summer 2016 from Whitehawk.	*Signed for Barnet summer 2017.
Danny Rowe	*MTFC 2015-16.	*27 January 2017 – signed for Ipswich Town (undisclosed fee).
Jack Sampson	*MTFC 2015-16.	*Loan to Chorley from January 2017 to end of season. *Released Summer 2017.
Luke Summerfield	*Loan from Grimsby Town on 3 February 2017 to end of season.	*Returned to Grimsby Town at end of season.
Chris Sutherland	MTFC 2015-16.	*One month loan to Hyde United – 6 January 2017 – returned early due to injury. *Loan to Hyde United – 24 February 2017 to end of season. *Signed for Hyde United summer 2017.
James Thorne	*Loan from Nottingham Forest on 24 February 2017 initially for one month.	*Returned to Nottingham Forest at end of season.
Richie Wellens	*December 2016 free agent, last club Salford City.	*Retired from playing professional football in March 2017.
Danny Whitaker	*MTFC 2015-16.	
Danny Whitehead	*Loan from Wigan Athletic from January 2017 to end of season.	*Returned to Wigan Athletic at end of season.
Jah-Vanne Wilson	*October 2016 non-contract.	*Released November 2016.
The following players were registered with MTFC at some time during the 2016-17 season but did not make an appearance: Robert Cooke and Curtis Obeng		

**MACCLESFIELD TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB
TEAM PHOTOGRAPH
SEASON 2016-17**



Back Row

Kingsley James, Paul Lewis, Neill Byrne, Ollie Norburn, Jack Sampson, David Fitzpatrick,
John Roberts, Danny Rowe

Middle Row

Colin Brooks (Kit Man), Byron Jenkins (Coach), Danny Whitaker, Dan Cowan, Richie Branagan,
Craig Ross, John McCombe, George Pilkington, Martin Ollier (Physio),
Tony Brown (Team Logistics Co-ordinator)

Front Row

Bill Gorton (Goalkeeping Coach), Chris Sutherland, Jack Mackreth, Andy Halls (captain), John Askey
(Manager), Mark Blower (Chairman), Steve Watson (Assistant Manager), Chris Holroyd,
Mitch Hancox, Ian Liversedge (Physio)