



MACCLESFIELD TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB RETURN TO THE NON-LEAGUE SCENE

CHAPTER ONE Season 2012-2013 ALL THE KING'S MEN



**BY
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A FRESH START

Completing the 2011-12 season in bottom position in the npower League 2, Macclesfield were relegated along with Hereford United to the National Conference, more commonly known as the Blue Square Premier League, after 15 interesting seasons as a member of the Football League. The make-up of the Conference was somewhat different to the league which the club left in 1997 when the Silkmen were a successful team, winning the Conference Championship twice and picking up silverware in Cup competitions on a regular basis. The replacement of the one-up-one down system with two clubs moving in each direction has seen several former Football League teams remaining in the Conference for many years providing a very competitive league.

BEHIND THE SCENES

During the close season there is always a lot of activity behind the scenes to ensure that the club are fully prepared for the start of the forthcoming season together with the introduction of new initiatives. Changes in staff took place: Glyn Chamberlain, assistant manager, left the club as did the ticket office manager, Robert Stirling, and with the catering franchised out (see below), senior catering staff took the opportunity to leave the club for pastures new, however, the club's excellent chef remained, and the personable Dean Holmes, who managed the club's reception desk so well, moved to a social carer's position. Both Robert and Dean often returned on match days during the 2012-13 season to assist. In addition, Nicky Reid, physiotherapist and Paul Geaney, masseur, together with Neil Boothby, Commercial Manager all departed.

A New Manager



Manager Steve King

With Gary Simpson having been dismissed towards the end of the previous season and his temporary replacement Brian Horton having also left the club, the appointment of a new manager was of the utmost priority.

In the recent history of the club no managerial appointment has caused so much concern. The Macclesfield based directors undertook the selection process as the owners of the club resided outside the UK. After due consideration, they agreed to employ a current manager of another club who had extensive knowledge and experience of the Conference scene and had been fairly successful over the years and, importantly, would have been well received

by the supporters. However, the owners had a completely different view and insisted on the appointment of Steve King who had been successful up to Conference level but had never managed at the top non-League level, on the basis that he had many contacts and would bring to the club players who would provide an entertaining style of play with an opportunity to return to league football at the first attempt, although only Lincoln City and Darlington had achieved this goal and then in the late 1980's.

Following the appointment of Steve King, Andy Scott, Vice Chairman, resigned from the Board with immediate effect citing business and family reasons, however, he stated that he would still work

behind the scenes as far as sponsorship was concerned. Andy had made his mark as a player in the 1970's when, according to research completed so far, he became only the fourth player in the history of the club to score a double hat-trick – the others being free-scoring Tommy Nolan, club record holder Albert Valentine and Johnnie Mullington, who holds the club record for scoring the most number of goals in a single match. At the same time, it was announced that Chairman Mike Rance, together with directors Barrie Darcey and Jeremy Turner would be leaving once the club was in good order behind the scenes. In the end Barrie Darcey and Jeremy Turner both remained as directors throughout the 2012-13 season, only Mike Rance resigning from the Board in October 2012, however, he retained the brief for the development of a new ground. After Mike's resignation the club functioned without a designated Chairman although the day-to-day operation was in the hands of the Chief Executive, Jon Harris and with no takers for the Ticket office/Retail Manager position, Barrie Darcey became an integral part of the club office.

To assist Steve King, Colin Reid was appointed team coach bringing to the club his extensive experience. However, Reid left the club before the season started. Mel Pejic was appointed physiotherapist, but he left the club during the season although he returned when John Askey was appointed caretaker manager (see April) for the final matches of the season after the dismissal of manager Steve King. Eric Nixon, who had played for several League clubs including Manchester City and Tranmere Rovers, was appointed part-time goalkeeping coach, but he had left the club before the season was completed and became a scout for Football League 2 team Fleetwood Town.

Other Matters

The price of Season Tickets remained at the same level as the 2011-12 season with the additional benefit of one year's free entry to the Gold Bond Draw for the first 500 adult/over 60 season tickets purchased.

Michael Connor was the winner of a draw for the away terrace to be named after him for the 2012-13 season, but he made the wonderful gesture of asking the club to name the terrace after club legend John Askey.

The Big Storage Company became the club and shirt sponsors for the season.

The usual close season ground maintenance was undertaken including stripping off the top layer of the pitch followed by sanding and seeding. Working with a qualified carpenter, the Rossendale Trust woodworking group performed maintenance work on the access gates to the Henshaw Stand.

Instead of using the facilities at the Egerton Boys Club in Knutsford, the new football complex at Sandbach United Football Club was used. However, these facilities were vacated during the season due to the adverse weather experienced causing the grass pitches to deteriorate to such an extent that they were unusable, returning to Egerton with some training taking place on the Moss Rose ground.

The match day catering facilities were franchised out to The Snowgoose of Sunderland Street, Macclesfield but this arrangement did not last the season with Snowgoose leaving the club after which the take up of pre-match meals in the McIlroy Lounge increased and pub grub was re-instated in Keith's Bar.

A partnership was formed between the football club and Macclesfield College to form the Macclesfield Football Academy which provided a one-year course with a coaching award, sports qualification and relevant football credits. There were to be opportunities for additional coaching and training similar to a professional footballer using the College facilities.

Before the season commenced it was announced that Bernard Jordan had died. Bernard was the Silkmen's programme editor for many years and produced one of the most comprehensive match day programmes to have been seen at the Moss Rose. A very demanding editor, but he always obtained good results and worked tirelessly, often still proof reading the programme at midnight on the day before the match. Also Malcolm Glazzard passed away at the age of 81. Malcolm had been a prolific scorer and influential player during Macclesfield's time in the Cheshire League scoring 112 goals in 162 appearances. In February 2013 it was announced that Rob Curran, a club director from 1992 to 1996 had died. Rob served the club during the time that Arthur Jones was chairman.

A number of season tickets were made available to the Cheshire Peaks and Plains Housing Trust, the club's Community Outreach Sponsor, basically to be offered to community groups mainly in the Council Estate areas of the town. A survey of the people in these areas indicated that cost was a factor in them not attending on matchdays. As part of their sponsorship for the club, Peaks and Plains sponsored a number of community based activities at the club, they were the sponsors of the Family stand and they made use of the club facilities including the McIlroy Lounge for meetings. Their sponsorship monies were directed to the Football Club's Community Sports Trust to help local disadvantaged people. As an integral part of Peaks and Plains sponsorship, they were given the opportunity to purchase (up to) 1000 season tickets. These were then donated by them to their local partners to use as they saw fit, either to reward volunteers or use them to raise funds. Some partners gave the season tickets away as raffle prizes, auction lots, and the opportunity to submit bids for tickets. There were a number of adverse comments about this scheme and, as such, the club have stated that it will not be repeated.

A well supported pre-season Fans' Forum was held to enable the supporters to meet the new manager. Colin Reid answered the majority of football related questions. Many positives came out of the meeting with the emphasis on providing entertaining football, playing from the back but making a more direct approach when necessary with players instructed to play with pride and passion. It also came to light that the existing cliques had been stopped by grouping the players in a better mix. There was no guarantee that more goals could be scored than in recent seasons, but it was a requirement that players must be as sharp in the last five minutes as the first five minutes. The aim for the forthcoming season was to attain a play-off league position.

SEASON REVIEW

Playing Staff

Usually at this stage details of players leaving and new players signing for the club would be listed. However, not only at the beginning of the season were there numerous changes, but also throughout the season the turnover of players continued at a high rate. An appendix has been included at the end of this chapter listing all players who left the club during the summer of 2012, those signed for and during the 2012-13 season, loan moves in and out and a note of players leaving at the end of the season. Player Profiles, Match Information, Player Statistics and more are all recorded on the web site www.silkmenarchives.org.uk

Cup Competitions

There were just three cup competitions – Cheshire Senior Cup, FA Trophy and the FA Cup. The former Conference League Cup competition, which Macclesfield had won when they were last members of the Conference, had been disbanded to reduce the overall number of matches.

In the **Cheshire Senior Cup** Stockport were the visitors in the first round. In spite of surface water on the pitch the match was played at a fast pace. Macclesfield dominated and won the tie with a Waide Fairhurst goal in the 17th minute. By the time the second round was played at the end of February 2013 at Stalybridge, the senior side were challenging for a play-off position in the National Conference resulting in a Macclesfield team consisting mainly of youth team players. Early in the match the Macclesfield goalkeeper was dismissed, and by half-time the Silkmen were losing by 4-0. The second half proved more productive with Andre Da Costa and Paul Lewis both scoring, but Stalybridge scored a further goal to run out winners 5-2.

Having won the **FA Trophy** in 1970 and 1996 the competition has happy memories for the Silkmen. Drawn away against Gateshead in the first round, the match was brought forward to Friday 23 November in the anticipation of gaining a better attendance. 312 watched this match, including 28 from Macclesfield, which proved a disappointment from the Macclesfield point of view when the home side was victorious by 2-0.

There was much better news in the **FA Cup** when the Silkmen achieved a historic sequence of matches. In the fourth qualifying round Marine were the visitors. Two goals from Matthew Barnes-Homer and one from Amari Morgan-Smith ensured the Silkmen progressed 3-1 to the first round. Drawn away at Football League One side Swindon Town who were riding high in their league, saw the Silkmen victorious 2-0 by way of a 35-yard screamer by Tony Diagne and an own goal.

Drawn away at Barrow for the second round, this tie was postponed twice, the first occasion a late postponement saw many Silkmen reach, or almost reach, Barrow. The tie was eventually played on Tuesday 18 December ending in a 1-1 draw, both goals coming from set pieces. The replay at the Moss Rose saw Macclesfield gaining an emphatic 4-1 victory. Two goals up in 16 minutes, the Silkmen allowed Barrow back into the match when they scored in the 17th minute. However, after the interval Macclesfield re-grouped and scored a further two goals.

Championship side Cardiff City were the opponents for the third round at the Moss Rose. The teams were:

Macclesfield Town: Cronin, Martin (Winn 66), Brown N, Mills P, Braham-Barrett, Henry (Mackreth 61), Murtagh, Wedgbury, Kissock, Barnes-Homer

Cardiff City: Lewis, McNaughton (Coulson 58), Nugent, Oshilaja, KJiss (Wharton 72), Harris (O'Sullivan 64), Ralls, McPhail, John, Velikonja, Jarvis

There certainly was a sense of occasion before this match with the McIlroy Lounge full to capacity with diners, a performance by the Bollington Brass Band, TV cameras present for the ITV Highlights programme and both BBC 5 Live and BBC Radio Manchester broadcasting live commentaries. SIS television beamed the match live around the world. In the first half Macclesfield held their own and deserved to go into the interval with the score goalless. In the second half Macclesfield played well but a sweeping move from the back to the



Matthew Barnes-Homer celebrates

front saw the Bluebirds take the lead in the 57th minute from close range against the run of play. With five minutes left it looked as though Macclesfield would be exiting the competition at this point, but the introduction of Jack Mackreth in the 61st minute had injected significant pace on the right and it was from his cross which Matthew Barnes-Homer converted in the 85th minute to draw the Silkmen level. Three minutes later Pablo Mills' shirt was being tugged by a Cardiff player, the referee having no hesitation in pointing to the penalty spot. Everyone in the ground held their breath, but top-scorer Barnes-Homer made no mistake driving the ball low into the left side of the goal, the 'keeper getting a hand to the ball but could not keep it out. 2500 Silkmen supporters went into raptures and 646 Cardiff supporters had exactly opposite emotions. For the first time in their long history, Macclesfield Town were through to the fourth round.

Struggling Premier League side Wigan were the opponents at the Moss Rose in the fourth round on Saturday 26 January. Prior to the match there had been another great effort by the ground staff and volunteers to clear the ground, terraces and surrounding areas outside the ground of snow, especially as there had been another light snow fall the previous evening.

SIS television had left their gantries in position after the Cardiff match and again screened the match live around the world with ITV including the match in their Highlights Show on the same evening. Again BBC Radio 5 Live and BBC Radio Manchester both broadcast commentaries from the ground. The McIlroy Lounge was full to capacity with diners who were greeted with a glass of champagne or orange juice, followed by a three-course meal. Each diner received a new Macclesfield Town scarf and a champagne glass inscribed with the details of the match in a presentation box. Again the Bollington Brass Band performed before the match.



Bollington Brass Band performing on the pitch before the Wigan FA Cup match

This match was played in front of a crowd of 5849 including 2200 Wigan supporters. The teams were:

Macclesfield Town: Anyon, Jackson, Brown N, Audel, Braham-Barrett, Mackreth, Wedgbury, Murtagh, Kissock (Winn 78), Fairhurst (McDonald 76), Barnes-Homer.

Wigan Athletic: Robles, Henriquez, Gomez, McManaman, Espinoza, Fyvie (Jones 53), Stam, Golobart, Mustoe, Dicko (Lopez 66), Figueroa

Macclesfield had signed goalkeeper Joe Anyon on an emergency loan deal from Shrewsbury Town as Lance Cronin was unavailable due to a broken thumb. For midfielder Sam Wedgbury it was a celebratory day as he made his 100th appearance in all competitions for Macclesfield.



John Paul Kissock and Sam Wedgbury in action against Wigan Athletic

The Silkmen played with pace and determination but the Premier League side were often quicker off the mark, retained possession of the ball effectively but there were many times, especially towards the end of the match when they had to defend well. Macclesfield created chances but as in recent Conference matches they failed to convert them, but they were unfortunate to have what looked to be a good penalty claim turned aside by referee Roger East. A single goal coming from the penalty spot in the 7th minute for Wigan was the only difference between the two sides. Wigan went on to become the winners of the cup when they beat Manchester City in the Final at Wembley.



Matthew Barnes-Homer celebrates after scoring against Cardiff City

BLUE SQUARE BET PREMIER LEAGUE

Pre-season Friendly Matches

Visiting Witton Albion on Saturday 21 July, the Silkmen fielded two different teams in the first and second halves. They were a goal down at the interval; however, they dominated the second half but could only score one goal when Kieran Murtagh drilled the ball home at the far post to earn a 1-1 draw.

The following Wednesday the trip to Nantwich Town saw the Silkmen defeated 5-1. The Dabbers were four goals up in the first half and added a further goal in the second half before Tony Diagne scored a consolation goal.

The next day Macclesfield redeemed themselves with a 6-0 win at Buxton to lift the Keith Alexander Trophy again. Four of the goals were scored by trialists.

The following Saturday saw the Silkmen travel to North Wales beating Colwyn Bay 2-0 with a goal from open play by Nat Brown and Waide Fairhurst from the penalty spot.

On 1 August the team put in an excellent performance against New Mills. The Silkmen were 4-1 up at the interval and added a further two goals in the second half, the many substitutions having no impact on their overall performance. The goal scorers were: two from Barnes-Homer and one each by Henry, Ahodikpe, Gnahoua and Mackreth

The only home pre-season match was against FC United of Manchester, managed by former Silkman Karl Marginson, on the Saturday before the Conference season started. FC United proved to be a well organised side especially in the first half and could have been two goals to the good in the first half which was rather a disappointing affair from the Silkmen's point of view. A score-line of 0-0 at half-time gave the Silkmen the opportunity to improve after the break. Heavy rain towards the end of the first half and throughout the interval left standing water on the pitch resulting in the ball failing to travel well at times. Macclesfield redeemed themselves, especially when the fast Charlie Henry had been introduced, with goals from Matthew Barnes-Homer and Arnaud Mendy to secure a 2-0 victory.

An open light training session was undertaken on the Tuesday evening before the season commenced following a request by supporters at the recent Fans' Forum. The session, under the direction of John Askey, included a separate section for goalkeepers and a short 11-a-side match. Play was stopped from time to time to allow John to talk to players about moves which had just taken place. A corner was taken six times, twice for the corner taker's benefit and the others to give the attack the opportunity to win the ball, although the defence won the ball on each occasion. At the end of the training session, the players came across to the Henshaw stand to meet the supporters.

Blue Square Bet Premier League Matches

August 2012

The opening match of the season was brought forward 24 hours to the evening of Friday 10 August so that it could be televised live by the pay-to-view Channel Premier Sports TV, and paired the two ex-Football league sides who were relegated at the end of the 2011-12 season. Played at Hereford the Macclesfield team was: Cronin, Jackson, Brown N, Charnock, Braham-Barrett, Henry, Murtagh (Edmans 76), Mendy, Wedgbury (Brown S 86), Winn, Barnes-Homer. 10 players made their Macclesfield Town debut. Two goals from open play by Hereford United with a penalty by Matthew Barnes-Homer saw the Silkmen lose their first match back in the Conference.

Macclesfield entertained much fancied Wrexham at the Moss Rose the following Tuesday and playing with pace and determination throughout the match, earned their first league win in the calendar year of 2012 with goals from Waide Fairhurst and Arnaud Mendy.

A second home match on Saturday 18 August saw the Silkmen entertain Dartford. Playing good passing football in a 4-4-2 formation, Macclesfield's approach was a little casual at times and they were fortunate not to have been punished by Dartford who failed to make their goal scoring opportunities count. Macclesfield were a goal up at half-time courtesy of an own



goal following a fierce cross whipped in by Charlie Henry, but they could not fashion a goal from open play in the second half. However, in the last minute of the match, Charlie Henry converted from the penalty spot (his only goal of the campaign) which he celebrated with his trade-mark somersault.

Next there was a fruitful trip to Lincoln City. Macclesfield dominated the opening exchanges taking the lead in the 12th minute, when Waide Fairhurst converted Charlie Henry's cross, but then sat back allowing Lincoln to equalise. In the second half, goals from Matthew Barnes-Homer and Chris Holroyd, who scored in the 87th minute only a minute after his introduction, took the score to 3-1. Lincoln pulled a goal back two minutes later leaving Macclesfield to see out a nervy five minutes of added time to win the match 3-2.

Charlie Henry making his trade-mark celebratory somersault

In the last match of the month, a double strike by Matthew Barnes-Homer gave Macclesfield victory over Barrow at the Moss Rose taking the Silkmen to second place in the table with 12 points behind leaders Newport County.

September 2012

Six matches were played during the month of September which brought mix fortunes.

One goal down after 36 seconds and in arrears by two goals after 17 minutes, Macclesfield still attacked but could not convert their chances at Luton Town. Early in the second half Nat Brown



pulled a goal back when he converted Charlie Henry's free-kick, however, goals in the 82nd and 90th minutes gave the home side a 4-1 win.

The short journey to Stockport was a productive and an exciting match. Chris Holroyd scored the only hat-trick of the season and the first by a Silkmen player since the 2004-05 season, the Silkmen running out winners 4-3. At half-time the score was 2-2 but Macclesfield took a 3-2 lead in the 51st minute with Holroyd's hat-trick goal only for

O'Donnell to equalised for Stockport 10 minutes later. Macclesfield obtained the rub of the green when Stockport's Tunnicliffe scored an own goal with eight minutes to play.

Macclesfield found it hard work when Braintree visited the Moss Rose. The visitors blocked the Silkmen's attempts to play with pace but nevertheless they created many scoring chances. The visitors took the lead from a penalty but only four minutes later John Paul Kissock equalised. A late penalty by Matthew Barnes-Homer gave

Stockport hat-trick scorer Chris Holroyd

Macclesfield all three points and took them to top place in the table, however, there had been a late scare when the ball was cleared to a Braintree player whose shot was cleared off the line.

Manager Steve King regularly changed the starting line-up and rarely played a settled team.

At Nuneaton there were personnel and positional changes which led to the team making a poor start and found themselves two goals down by the 13th minute. Nuneaton, in the lower reaches of the league, continued to be the better performing side and held their lead until the 70th minute when Keiran Murtagh pulled a goal back. Seven minutes later Nuneaton took the score to 3-1 but unlike the 2011-12 Macclesfield team, this season the side rarely gave up the cause and started to play the better football. In the 90th minute Matthew Barnes-Homer made it 3-2 and a minute later Arnaud Mendy crashed the ball through a sea of players to equalise. However, the assistant referee raised his flag for an off-side offence, but the referee overturned his assistant's decision as a Macclesfield player who was in an off-side position was deemed not to have interfered with play.



Arnaud Mendy scoring the equalising goal at Nuneaton

At the Moss Rose, high-flying Forest Green Rovers took all three points scoring their second goal in the sixth minute of time added on to win 2-1, top-scorer Matthew Barnes Homer on target for the Silkmen's goal. During this match Macclesfield had been reduced to ten men when John Paul Kissock had been dismissed for a second bookable offence.

Heavy rain throughout Monday 24 September and all day on Tuesday led to the pitch being declared unfit for play at 17.15 by the referee although the officials of the club had understandably been optimistic all day that the match would be played.

The last match of the month was played at Kidderminster Harriers managed by former Silkmen legend Steve Burr. With the majority of possession in the first half Macclesfield failed to capitalise and were undone just before half-time when the home side scored from a corner, only their second chance on goal. Kidderminster were by far the better side in the second half and went on to win 3-0.

Only picking up seven points in the month, the Silkmen fell to eighth position in the table.

October 2012

Alfreton Town were the visitors for the first match of the month and they got off to the best possible start scoring within seconds of the kick-off. Matthew Barnes-Homer equalised from the penalty spot in the 26th minute but a mistake by the Silkmen with three minutes to go cost them dearly allowing the visitors to score and take all three points.

At Gateshead on a Tuesday evening, Macclesfield went two goals down but their never-say-die attitude earned them a share of the points with two late goals by Matthew Barnes-Homer and Chris Holroyd. Barnes-Homer's goal was voted both the Conference and Macclesfield Town's Goal of the season when full-back Ryan Jackson took the ball to the byline and crossed to Barnes-Homer who volleyed home with an over-head kick.

Saturday 13 October was declared Blue Square Fans' non-League Day with transport provided so that fans could attend three consecutive matches. The first match was at 12.30 at Macclesfield, then Stockport at 15.30 followed by Hyde at 18.30. League leaders Newport County were the visitors to the Moss Rose. Matthew Barnes-Homer rescued a point for the Silkmen in the 90th minute when he out-jumped the Newport defence to brilliantly head home Keiran Murtagh's cross, Newport having scored just before half-time. Macclesfield's might have won this match as they defended well



but were constantly denied by the Newport 'keeper who was on top form throughout the match. Manager Steve King was dismissed by the referee at the end of the first half.

A visit to Grimsby Town, who were in the play-off positions, gave Macclesfield their first Conference victory since 8th September (against Braintree) by way of another Barnes-Homer goal, on this occasion in the 83rd minute from the penalty spot. Yet another changed side for the Silkmen, but

it was the string of saves made by goalkeeper Lance Cronin who in no small way ensured victory for Macclesfield and saw him feature in the non-League paper's Team of the Week. Down to 10 men late in the game, Grimsby made a late surge but were kept at bay by Cronin.

Match action at Grimsby

Despite only earning five points taking their total to 24, the

Silkmen moved up the table one place to seventh, only three points off the play-off positions.

Since the departure of Colin Reid the club had been operating officially without a first team coach, but having worked with the club for several weeks it was announced that Argentinian Pablo Asensio had been appointed to the position. Pablo had played in Argentina, Spain and Greece before moving to England where he had worked on coaching duties at several clubs, the last being Southport in the 2011-12 season.

November 2012

The only league victory in the month came in the first match when Tamworth were the visitors to the Moss Rose. Amari Morgan-Smith's cheeky first half goal gave the Silkmen the lead when he back heeled Ryan Jackson's cross towards goal, the ball hitting the post before crossing the line. This was certainly Ryan Jackson's match (although Carl Martin was named the Man of the Match) when he scored the second goal with a left-footed low strike from outside the box having taken a slight deflection.

At Cambridge, Macclesfield could not make an impression and went down 2-0, one of the goals scored by Tom Elliott, a former Silkmen.

Three changes were made to the team for the visit of Ebbsfleet. Macclesfield looked out of sorts playing with a lack of cohesion, passing was poor and there seemed to be a general malaise. A goal on the stroke of half time from a glancing header by Chris Holroyd

after excellent work on the right by Charlie Henry should have changed the game, however, Ebbsfleet re-grouped for the second half and were the better side equalising in the 57th minute and won the match with a fortunate penalty.



Grass Roots Day at the Moss Rose

In the McIlroy Suite before the match Dennis Taylor and John Parrott, snooker stars, gave a very entertaining question and answer session for the 95 pre-match diners. This match was also a Grass Roots Day hosted in conjunction with the club's Community Sports Trust entertaining girls and boys from junior teams in the local area who filled the John Askey terrace.

On the following Tuesday evening Mansfield, the eventual champions of the National Conference, came to the Moss Rose several places below Macclesfield in the league table at the time, winning 3-0 with two of their goals scored from corners.

With 27 points the Silkmen had slipped to ninth position.

December 2012

For a second consecutive month only one victory was achieved.

The Cheshire Derby against Hyde at the Moss Rose was played in difficult conditions when it rained throughout the match, the players having to cope with water underfoot. There were five changes to the team in a 4-3-1-2 formation. Whilst John Paul Kissock usually started on the wing and given a roving role, for this match he started just behind the front two. Hyde scored early in the first half and doubled their score from the penalty spot just before the interval. The Silkmen enjoyed a better second half and following Matthew Barnes-Homer's goal in the 56th minute they created more goal scoring opportunities hitting the woodwork on several occasions. On the introduction of Amari Morgan-Smith for Kissock the formation changed to 4-4-2. Hyde strove to extend their lead but were denied by Macclesfield 'keeper Lance Cronin, but Macclesfield had a stroke of luck in the 82nd minute when the Hyde 'keeper collected the ball from a Nat Brown header, stepped back and was adjudged to have crossed the line. Chris Holroyd snatched victory in the 90th minute when he

gathered the ball on the left, darted into the box, went past two defenders before sending a low drive which wrong-footed the 'keeper for Macclesfield to win 3-2.

A visit to Forest Green Rovers, who were in the play-off places, saw Macclesfield take a first half lead which they held onto despite coming under continual pressure until the 85th minute when Stokes equalised for the home team.

With both Nuneaton and Macclesfield having been knocked out of the FA Trophy, the home league match against Nuneaton was brought forward to Saturday 15 December 2012 from the scheduled date of Tuesday 12 February 2013 and as such was the only National Conference match played on the day. Macclesfield missed a golden opportunity to move up the table three places if they had gained a win against the bottom placed club who had failed to secure an away victory since August. A 4-1-2-1-2 formation left the Silkmen with no width which Nuneaton tried to make the most of early in the match when their right-back stormed up the flank on two occasions crossing the ball into the six-yard area. Even though the formation changed to 4-4-2 half way through the second half, Macclesfield were out of ideas with the match finishing 0-0, leaving some of the supporters expressing their dissatisfaction.

The home match against Lincoln City was postponed because of a waterlogged pitch.

On Boxing Day the Silkmen travelled to Southport to face another club in the lower reaches of the league table. It rained heavily throughout the match. Macclesfield started brightly but it was the hosts who took the lead in the 24th minute which they doubled only five minutes later. Macclesfield re-grouped for the second half and goals from Jack Mackreth and Matthew Barnes-Homer brought them onto level terms. However, Southport came back to win the match with a goal in the 77th minute to take them out of the relegation places.

Having picked up five points during the month, with a total of 32 points the Silkmen remained in ninth position.

January 2013

The month of January was notable for the team's historic progress in the FA Cup competition (see earlier) but in the four league matches played only one defeat was registered.

On New Year's Day there was the return fixture with Southport. Unusually Steve King named an unchanged side for this match which the Silkmen started slowly giving the advantage to the visitors who were two goals up in 11 minutes. Craig Braham-Barrett was unfortunate to be involved with both goals, the first when he conceded a penalty and the second when he gifted possession to Southport's Chris Lever. With full-back Ryan Jackson dismissed just before half-time, Macclesfield found themselves with a mountain to climb. Macclesfield came good in the second half and two late goals by free-scoring Matthew Barnes-Homer gave Macclesfield a share of the points.

Next came an emphatic 3-0 win at Braintree courtesy of a first half goal by Amari Morgan-Smith and a double strike by Waide Fairhurst. Only 20 Macclesfield fans were present to witness this victory.

Macclesfield dominated possession at Dartford but were undone in the first half through a freak goal when a sliced clearance by Macclesfield 'keeper Lance Cronin fell to Dartford's Jon Wallis whose 40 yard strike dipped just below the crossbar. The Dartford 'keeper denied shots from Keiran Murtagh and Charlie Henry in the second half but a mistake by Pablo Mills gifted the ball to Dartford who scored their second goal in the 82nd minute to win the match 2-0.

At the Moss Rose there was an entertaining match in which both Macclesfield and Kidderminster played good attacking football with play flowing from end-to-end. Waide Fairhurst's second half goal was the difference between the sides when he took a quick free-kick, sprinted forward 30 yards to head home an excellent pinpoint cross by Jack Mackreth. Pablo Mills was dismissed for a lunging tackle but 10-man Macclesfield held firm despite Kidderminster pressing for the equaliser hitting the cross bar twice. This was the last league match played in the month as matches at Tamworth and Barrow were postponed.



Waide Fairhurst scoring against Kidderminster

With nine points gained taking the total to 39 points, the Silkmen remained stubbornly in ninth position for the third consecutive month due to teams above them performing well.

February 2013

With Lance Cronin remaining on the injured list, goalkeeper Rhys Taylor made his debut at Ebbsfleet after which he remained the Silkmen's first choice 'keeper until the end of the season. Macclesfield dominated bottom of the table Ebbsfleet to secure an excellent win with four well taken goals (Murtagh, Fairhurst and two from Mackreth) to revenge the Fleet's win at the Moss Rose in November.

At Hyde, Macclesfield dominated the match taking a first half lead by in-form Waide Fairhurst only for former Silkman Scott Spencer to equalise in the last minute of the match from a splendidly taken free-kick.

Macclesfield left Tamworth with a point after a scrappy match finished goalless. In their fourth consecutive away match the Silkmen picked up a much needed win at Alfreton. Thierry Audel scored

his first goal for the Silkmen in the 31st minute when he met Paul Kissock's corner at the front post, powerfully heading into the roof of the net. The hosts equalised only five minutes later but Waide Fairhurst secured all three points for the Silkmen when he headed home from close range in the 58th minute.



On their visit to the Moss Rose Luton were one place below Macclesfield in the league table and had just been knocked out of the FA Cup by Millwall in the fifth round. They took an early lead, Macclesfield having stopped playing looking for an offside decision. This was one of those occasions when the complexity of the offside rule was applied involving phase one and then phase two of the play. Worse was to come for the Silkmen when 'keeper Rhys Taylor was dismissed. Peter Winn, who had started his career as a goalkeeper, took over the gloves and did himself proud. Despite playing with 10 men, Macclesfield's backs-to-the-wall determined

Peter Winn substitute goalkeeper in the Luton match

performance earned them a share of the points when striker Waide

Fairhurst scored in the 76th minute.

Gateshead came to the Moss Rose on a Friday evening having scored just one goal in their last five matches in which they had failed to register a single point. They certainly made up for their recent record, scoring three goals in the first 20 minutes and capped their winning performance with a fourth goal on the stroke of half time. Macclesfield were still feeling the effects of their hard match against Luton only three days earlier. As it was half term, this was the second 'Kids for a Quid' match of the week.

Eight points gained during the month took the Silkmen's tally to 48 and to seventh place in the table.

March 2013

With a backlog of matches to clear through postponements, nine matches were scheduled but the continuing adverse winter conditions saw the postponement of two. However, results overall were good with three wins, two draws and only a single defeat.

Due to be screened by Premier Sports TV on the first Friday in March, the home match against Grimsby Town had to be postponed when the Grimsby team coach was held up on the M62 following a serious accident and the team were unable to reach Macclesfield even though they had left in good time.

In the next match Macclesfield entertained Lincoln City. This match was originally due to be played on 22 December 2012 but was postponed due to inclement weather. It was re-arranged for Tuesday 5 March 2013 but as Manchester United were playing in a televised match in the Champions League on the same day, it was decided to play the match on the next day. This was former Silkmen manager Gary Simpson's second match in charge at Lincoln having recently been appointed

manager. It was another bitterly cold evening, Macclesfield lining up with a 4-3-1-2 formation against a tall, defensive Lincoln side playing with a single striker which Macclesfield found difficult to penetrate. The visitors took the lead in the first half through a fortunate penalty. A more positive approach by the Silkmen in the second half saw them equalise two minutes after the re-start through an own goal. The strike followed a speedy run by Ryan Jackson up the right wing crossing to Amari Morgan-Smith whose header towards goal was headed into the goal by Scott Gardner trying to divert the ball over the crossbar. Another brilliant speedy run by Jackson led to the second Macclesfield goal when he crossed to Matthew Barnes-Homer who, running in, turned the ball into the net from close range to score his 21st goal of the campaign. The Silkmen held out for a 2-1 victory and seventh place in the table.

Before the match there was one minute's applause in memory of manager Keith Alexander who had died three years earlier and also for midfielder Richard Butcher who had died almost two years earlier. A memorial had been erected under the Henshaw stand of Keith and Richard together based



The Memorial



on a photograph of both of them.

Richard Butcher & Keith Alexander

On the following Saturday a goal on either side of the interval by Amari Morgan-Smith gave Macclesfield a 2-0 victory at bottom placed Telford who, with this defeat, had gone 23 Conference matches without a win.

On another bitterly cold evening Macclesfield entertained Woking with manager Steve King continuing with the 4-3-1-2 formation and the same team. However, in an attempt to change the play he moved to 4-4-2 formation with just over 30 minutes left when Jack Mackreth replaced Waide Fairhurst. A less than inspiring match finished goalless, with Macclesfield unable to break down the Woking defence.

On the following Saturday the match due to be played at Newport was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch.

Manager Steve King set out his stall to win the home match against bottom-of-the-table Telford when they visited the Moss Rose on a Tuesday evening only 10 days since the two teams last met, starting with a 4-2-4 formation. This worked well initially when, in the third minute, Waide Fairhurst stuck out a leg to divert the ball into the goal after Sam Wedgbury had driven the ball towards goal. The visitors equalised in the 34th minute despite Macclesfield dominating play. After the break the Silkmen looked out of sorts frustrating the crowd when they failed to capitalise on goal scoring opportunities. The introduction of flying winger Jack Mackreth livened up play but just as everyone had given up any hope of victory, one minute into added time Matthew Barnes-Homer lashed the ball home to win the match after the ball had been palmed to him by the 'keeper.

The match at Mansfield on the following Saturday had to be cancelled due to a very heavy snowfall.

Originally scheduled for 29 January, the re-arranged date for the away match at Barrow was further delayed by a day to Wednesday 27 March 2013 in view of the extremely cold weather to give the pitch chance to thaw out more. Only a handful of Macclesfield supporters managed to make the trip to Holker Street and they left disappointed when Barrow's Alex-Ray Harvey gave the home side victory with a goal in the 59th minute despite the Silkmen playing with three frontmen in a 4-3-3 formation.

The Silkmen returned to the Moss Rose for the last match in the month against struggling Stockport County. John Askey had been assisting manager Steve King for many weeks and the starting formation had his mark on it when the more conventional 4-4-2 was adopted. This was another frustrating match for the supporters when the Silkmen failed to make the most of their goal scoring opportunities against a poor Stockport side. Macclesfield started the second half brighter and took the lead when Matthew Barnes-Homer rose high to head home Keiran Murtagh's angled free-kick from the right, but all to no avail when the Macclesfield defence failed to clear the ball allowing well-travelled and experienced Jon Macken to equalise for the visitors. The attendance of 4027, including 1836 from Stockport, was a record Conference League match attendance for the Moss Rose. Midfielder Keiran Murtagh received his 15th caution of the season and as a consequence was suspended for the following three matches having already served earlier suspensions.

A tally of eleven points in the month left the Silkmen in seventh position.

April 2013

With the final day of the season taking place on 20 April, seven fixtures remained to be completed.

Macclesfield did well to hold FA Trophy winners Wrexham to a goalless draw at the Racecourse Ground in the first match of the month. Top scorer Matthew Barnes-Homer broke a cheekbone following an elbow challenge towards the end of the match resulting in surgery which left him out of contention for the remaining matches.

For the visit of Grimsby there was yet another change of formation, on this occasion to 4-3-1-2, with John Paul Kissock playing just behind the front two. Even a black cat running onto the pitch on the London Road side of the ground did not help the Silkmen who suffered a 3-1 defeat. Grimsby looked as though they wanted to win this match from start to finish, their victory kept them in a play-off position. The defeat left Macclesfield in eighth position some 12 points off the pace.

With little hope of achieving the season target of reaching a play-off position in the Conference both Manager Steve King and Coach Pablo Asensio had their contracts revoked after the Grimsby match. A statement from the club explained the position *'Although we have witnessed some exciting football this season, there have been a number of off the field issues, including the day to day preparation of the team, which became a real concern. It was therefore necessary, in the best interests of the Football Club, to make this change. We wish Steve and Pablo well for the future.'*

John Askey was appointed caretaker manager for the remaining matches.



Caretaker Manager John Askey

Hereford were the visitor's for John's first match, a lack-lustre performance throughout with many of the Macclesfield players looking as though they were performing without purpose. The exceptions were Peter Winn who worked hard and Man of the Match Sam Wedgbury. The visitors scored an early goal and could have extended their lead although the Silkmen had what looked a certain goal adjudged by the officials to have been cleared off the line.

A visit to high-flying and eventual Conference Champions, Mansfield on a Tuesday evening saw the home side two goals to the good by

half time, both of which came from converted free-kicks taken by former Silkman Adam Murray, and three goals up after 51 minutes. Macclesfield rather belatedly upped their game with Pablo Mills scoring a late consolation goal when he powerfully headed home from a Ryan Jackson free-kick.

There was no luck two days later at Newport who were to gain promotion to the Football League by way of the play-offs. Jay Burgess, making his debut for Macclesfield, put the Silkmen ahead in the third minute when he drilled home a shot from the edge of the box. Newport then emphasised their superiority with three goals in the first half and by adding a fourth in the second half to comprehensively defeat the Silkmen.

The following Saturday at Woking, Macclesfield looked dead and buried at half time when the home side were leading 5-0. The BBC commentators said that in their opinion the Silkmen had not had the rub of the green but poor defending had let them down. This match turned out to be the proverbial match of two halves. In the 60th minute, Waide Fairhurst hammered home from 25 yards. Then in the 71st minute Guy Madjo took advantage of the Woking 'keeper Putnims dropping the ball to score his first goal for the Silkmen. In the 83rd minute Fairhurst drilled home his second goal and in the 90th minute young Arthur Gnahoua scored his first goal for the Silkmen to make the score 5-4 to Woking. Unfortunately Macclesfield ran out of time, and having lost four matches on the bounce slipped to 12th position in the league table.



Arthur Gnahoua

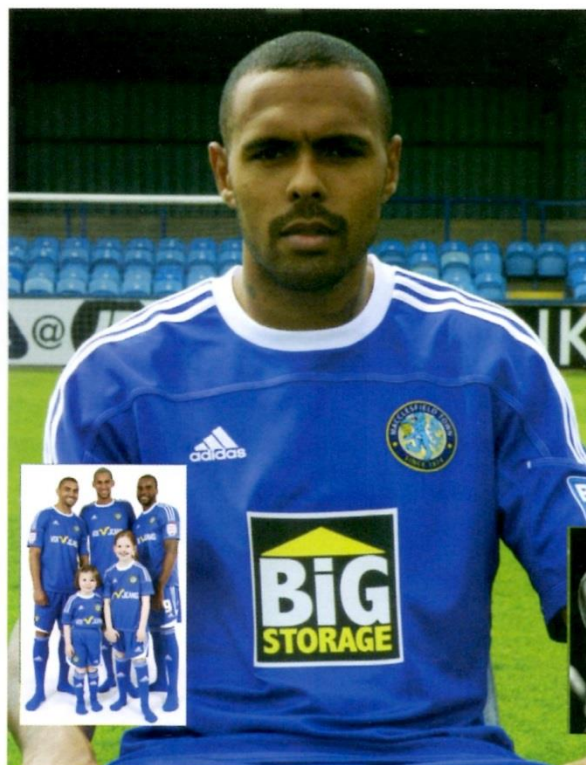
Cambridge United were the Silkmen's last opponents of the season the match kicking-off at 17.15 to accommodate Premier Sports TV broadcast transmission elsewhere, thereby requiring all the Blue Square Bet Premier League matches to kick-off at the same time. Initially the visitors enjoyed the majority of the play and deservedly took the lead in the 15th minute when former Silkmen Tom Elliott struck home through a crowded box. The match then drifted into a typical end-of-season affair with neither side having anything to play for, until unmarked Macclesfield captain Pablo Mills hit a bullet header into the back of the net from a perfectly flighted corner by Peter Winn. Even better was to come when on the stroke of half-time, Sam Wedgbury's diagonal ball to the right wing was well collected under pressure by Jack Mackreth who nodded the ball to the centre of the field where Guy Madjo collected the ball with his back to goal, turned and thumped the ball from 30 yards out to score one of the best goals of the season. Macclesfield held out in the second half to earn their first victory since the 2-1 win against Telford in the middle of March.

With 63 points Macclesfield completed the season in 11th position, a somewhat disappointing finish as they had operated for most of the season nearer the top of the table and, at times, challenging for a play-off place.

The ever hard working Sam Wedgbury was voted both the Players' and the Supporters' Player of the Year with Waide Fairhurst taking the Jean Ridgeway Trophy.



The author wishes to express his sincere thanks to the Macclesfield Town Football Club Official Web Site, and more importantly to the club's official photographer Peter Hilton for the photographs included in this chapter, with the exception one which has been provided by the author.



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MTFC PLAYERS 2012-13	
AGOMBAR Harry (Did not make a senior appearance)	Signed from Grays Summer 2012 Loan to Histon August 2012 Loan to Grays December 2012 Contract cancelled by mutual agreement January 2013
AHODIKPE Euloge (Did not make a senior appearance)	Signed from US Creteil Lucitanos (France) Summer 2012 Contract cancelled by mutual agreement September 2012
AMORES Antonio (Did not make a senior appearance)	Signed from CD Toledo (Spain) March 2013 Released summer 2013
ANYON Joe	One week emergency loan from Shrewsbury Town for 4 th Round FA Cup tie
AUDEL Thierry	Signed from Pisa (Italy) January 2013 Moved to Crewe Alexandra Summer 2013
BAKARE Michael	Released summer 2012
BARNES-HOMER Matthew	Signed from Ostersunds FK (Sweden) Summer 2012 Signed by Forest Green Rovers summer 2013
BATESON Jon	Released summer 2012
BOLTON James (Did not make a senior appearance)	Existing contract 2013-14 season Loan to Workington August 2012 Loan to Stafford Rangers December 2012 Loan to FC Halifax March 2013
BRAHAM-BARRETT Craig	Signed from Sutton United summer 2012 Under contract for 2013-14 season Loan to Cheltenham Town to January 2014
BROWN Nat	Existing contract for 2012-13 season Loan to Lincoln City March 2013 Released summer 2013 signing for Lincoln City
BROWN Scott	Signed from York City on non-contract basis Summer 2012 Agreement cancelled August 2012
BURGESS Jay	First professional contract 2012-13 Loan to new Mills September 2012
CHALMERS Lewis	Released summer 2012
CHARNOCK Kieran	Loan from Fleetwood Town Summer 2012
COLLIS Steve	Released summer 2012
CRONIN Lance	Signed from Bristol Rovers Summer 2012 Released summer 2013
CUDWORTH Jack	Released summer 2012
DA COSTA Andre	Signed from Dulwich Hamlet Summer 2012 Loan to Workington August 2012 Contract cancelled by mutual agreement March 2013
DANIEL Colin	Existing contract for 2012-13 season Transferred to Mansfield Town 2012
DANIELS Greg	Released summer 2012
DIAGNE Tony	Existing contract for 2012-13 season Loan to Lincoln City March 2013 Transferred to Morecambe June 2013
DONNELLY George	Existing contract 2012-13 But transferred to Rochdale May 2012

DRAPER Ross	On expiry of his contract signed for Inverness Caledonian Thistle July 2012
EDMANS Rob	Loan from Dagenham & Redbridge August 2012
EVANS Micah	Loan from Blackburn Rovers January 2013
FAIRHURST Waide	On expiry of his contract signed for Lincoln City Summer 2013
FERMINO Eves	Signed from FC Sion (Switzerland) March 2013 Released summer 2013
FISHER Tom	Released summer 2012
GORMAN Jonny	Loan from Wolverhampton Wanderers January 2013
GNAHOUA Arthur	Released by Stalybridge. Signed September 2012 Loan to Whitehawk FC November 2012 Loan to Colwyn Bay January 2013
HAMSHAW Matt	Released Summer 2012
HENRY Charlie	Signed from Luton Summer 2012 Loan to AFC Telford United February 2013 Contract cancelled by mutual agreement March 2013
HEWITT Elliott	Existing contract for 2012-13 season Transferred to Ipswich Town May 2012
HOLROYD Chris	Loan from Preston North End August 2012
JACKSON Ryan	Signed from AFC Wimbledon Summer 2012 Transferred to Newport County AFC Summer 2013
KASIM Yaser	Loan from Brighton & Hove Albion January 2013
KAY Scott	Released summer 2012
KISSOCK John Paul	Loan from Luton Town Summer 2012 Signed January 2013 and under contract for 2013-14 season
KONADU-YIADOM Junior	Signed from St Neots Town Summer 2012 Loan to Histon Loan to Whitehawk FC November 2012 Loan to Chelmsford City January 2013 Contract cancelled by mutual agreement March 2013
LANE Jack	Released summer 2012
McDONALD Dean	Free agent (previously with Carshalton) signed January 2013 Released April 2013
McNAMEE Anthony	Signed from MK Dons summer 2012 Contract cancelled by mutual agreement December 2012
MACKRETH Jack	Signed from Barrow summer 2012
MADJO Guy	Free agent (released by Aldershot Town) signed March 2013 Released summer 2013
MARTIN Carl	Signed from Crewe Alexandra Summer 2012
MATTIS Wayne	Released summer 2012
MENDY Arnaud	Existing contract for 2012-13 season Loan to Luton Town October 2012 Transferred to Luton Town January 2013
MILLS Andrew (Did not make a senior appearance)	From Youth Team – first professional contract summer 2012 Loan to New Mills September 2012 Loan to Buxton February 2013
MILLS Ben	Existing contract for 2012-13 season Loan to Chester August 2012 Transferred to Chester November 2012
MILLS Pablo	Signed from Crawley Town Summer 2012

MORGAN Paul	Released summer 2012
MORGAN-SMITH Amari	Signed from Luton Town Summer 2012 Loan to Kidderminster Harriers January 2013 Released summer 2013
MUKENDI Vinny	Released summer 2012
MURPHY Darren (Did not make a senior appearance)	Free agent (released by Port Vale) Signed January 2013 Contract cancelled by mutual consent February 2013
MURTAGH Kieran	Signed from Cambridge United Summer 2012 Transferred to Mansfield Town Summer 2013
PAYNE Stefan	Signed from Sutton United January 2013 for 14 days Transferred to Ebbsfleet United January 2013
ROBERTS Adam	Released summer 2012
TAYLOR Rhys	Free agent (released by Preston NE) signed January 2013
THOMAS Michael	Released summer 2012
TOMLINSON Ben	Existing contract for 2012-13 season Transferred to Alfreton Town August 2012
TREMARCO Carl	Existing contract for 2012-13 season Season-long loan to Floriana FC (Malta) Released summer 2013 – signed for Inverness Caledonian Thistle
VEIGA Jose	Released summer 2012
WEDGBURY Sam	Existing contract for 2012-13 season Transferred to Stevenage Summer 2013
WINN Peter	Signed from Stevenage Summer 2012



Pablo Asensio leading training

**MACCLESFIELD TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB
OFFICIAL TEAM PHOTOGRAPH
SEASON 2012-2013**



Back Row

Craig Braham-Barrett, Keiran Murtagh, Kieran Charnock, Ben Mills, Arnaud Mendy, Tony Diagne, Carl Martin, Matthew Barnes-Homer, Nat Brown, Junior Konadu-Yiadom

Middle Row

Paul Etchells (Kit Man), Patrick Slattery (Assistant Kit Man), Jay Burgess, Peter Winn, Sam Wedgbury, Lance Cronin, Andrew Mills, Daniel Lloyd-Weston, James Bolton, Ryan Jackson, Arthur Gnahoua, Mel Pejic (Physiotherapist)

Front Row

Scott Brown, Harry Agombar, Jack Mackreth, John Paul Kissock, Charlie Henry, Steve King (Manager), Ben Tomlinson (moved to Alfreton), Waide Fairhurst, Andre Da Costa, Euloge Ahodikpe

