



MACCLESFIELD TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB RETURN TO THE NON-LEAGUE SCENE

CHAPTER TWO Season 2013-2014 JOHN'S IN CHARGE



BY
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OVERVIEW

The appointment of John Askey as manager with Efe Sodje as his assistant was warmly welcomed by the fans. John, who has made more appearances for the Silkmen than any other player, is held in very high esteem by the supporters and officials. Efe Sodje, another legend having scored the Silkmen's first Football League goal, is well respected and has the ability to gain sponsorship deals. As a management team they worked wonders on a restricted budget reaching the third round of the FA Cup, with the team completing the season in a mid-table position in the Skrill Premier League.

It was a contrasting scene off the field of play with a difficult financial position to be managed, possible takeover moves said to be in the pipeline throughout the season, outstanding debts and the Registrar turning aside the club's application to convert to a Community Interest Club, all leading to a feeling of uncertainty for everyone connected to the club. On the positive side, owner Amar Alkadhi invested a further £50,000 during the season and the Cheshire East Council came to the rescue when they purchased the freehold of the Moss Rose providing a cash injection which helped to reduce the outstanding debt.

As always, the main purpose of this chapter is to record the achievements of the football team, but a summary of the major off-field events is also included to provide as fuller a picture as possible.

OFF-FIELD

There are always changes in personnel during the close season, on this occasion Chief Executive Jon Harris left the club at short notice to take up a similar role at Kidderminster Harriers.

Fans' Forum

A significant amount of work was undertaken behind the scenes in an attempt to control the financial position of the club, the supporters being briefed at a Fans' Forum on 13 June 2013. It was explained that the financial position required remedial action and would be partly satisfied by way of an agreement with Cheshire East Council to purchase the Freehold of the Moss Rose (with the option for the club to buy back) for £250,000 with a further amount of £35,000 to clear outstanding Council Tax. The quid pro quo required the club to be converted to a Community Interest Club with many benefits including one vote per person. All shares owned by the current and past directors would be transferred to the Community Sports Trust who would then become the largest shareholders. All other shareholdings in Macclesfield Town Football Club Limited would be transferred to the new CIC by way of a General shareholders meeting. Macclesfield Town Football Club Limited would continue to operate the football side of the business and would be re-named Macclesfield Town Football Club CIC.

The meeting was then advised that the club were in debt to the extent of £485,000 (accounts for the year ending 30 June 2013 show a loss of £486,993). This loss came hard on the heels of a substantial trading loss during the year ended 30 June 2012 which was fortunately covered by the funds received from the sale of players. To help to resolve the position former director Andy Scott had formed a committee of 10 businessmen (including himself) who were each going to raise £10,000. In addition, the playing budget would be just over a third of the previous season. With only 475 season tickets having been sold in comparison to 580 at the same time the previous year, there was a plea to those supporters who had not purchased their season ticket yet to give serious thought to purchasing with prices held at the same level. (In the end over 700 tickets were sold). Volunteers were requested to work throughout the club and match day staff would be asked to volunteer their services rather than be paid.

It was announced that Dave Towns, former Stadium Manager, had been appointed General Manager and he stated that there would be more transparency between the club and fans with regular meetings (unfortunately this action did not take place possibly because Dave had to take personal leave from November). Player training to take place at Egerton Boys' Club with some carried out at the Moss Rose with doors of the ground open for everyone to attend (the latter did not occur or was not publicised). Byron Jenkins would be in charge of the Youth team. Mel Pejic, physiotherapist, had been invited to return to the club which he did but left in December 2013 to take up a physio position at Stoke City.

Post Meeting

Subsequent to the Meeting the financial arrangement with Cheshire East Council was confirmed but only just in time to ward off a Winding-up Order, a proposal for 'Pay to Play' for £20,000 by the 'Cic-on' committee went viral and for practical reasons was withdrawn within 48 hours of its proposal. An Extraordinary General Meeting was held where agreement was reached that an application be made to convert the club to a Community Interest Club. Alan Cash (former chairman and currently director of the Community Sports Trust) and David Woolliscroft (Silkmen Supporters' Trust representative) were elected directors. Subsequently the Registrar refused the application due to the high level of borrowed money in the business and all shares were transferred back to the owner and the former directors. A £3.00 charge was levied for car parking on match days on the club car park as a measure to increase revenue. (A similar suggestion had been made several seasons ago by a supporter but was turned aside by the directors at the time as impractical.)

In the meantime, and throughout the season, as Amar Alkadhi was resident abroad, the club was run by an Operations Committee. The following formed the committee for all or part of the time: Alan Cash (director), Alex Mauro (catering), Andy Scott (former director), Barrie Darcey (former director), Danny Towns (local businessman), David Woolliscroft (director), Kevin Murphy (local businessman), Mark Blower (Investment director Gresham Private Equity and volunteer), and Mike Rance (former director).

Fund Raising

A Silkmen Legends versus Premier All Stars match was played on Sunday 13 October 2013 in front of a crowd of 1044 on a damp and dismal day. This was an entertaining and delightful match which brought back many happy memories of the times the Silkmen Legends entertained the supporters over many years. It was unfortunate that many of the Premier All Stars could not attend which required some adjustments to the teams prior to kick-off. The Silkmen Legends were soon two goals to the good with strikes from Richie Barker and Phil Power but, Man of the Match, Matt Jensen soon pulled a goal back for the All Stars. A few minutes later he scored again from a bullet free-kick which left the defensive wall and 'keeper Ryan Price no chance. In the last quarter of the match Ben Sedgemore scored two more goals for the Silkmen Legends, but the biggest cheer of the afternoon came when Steve Burr scored the fifth goal to put the icing on the cake.

Another move to alleviate the club's financial position was announced in February 2014 with the introduction of the Silkmen Platinum Patron at a cost of £1,000 for individuals and £2,000 for corporate membership with numbers restricted to 100 members.

Phil Gibbons organised a brilliant and extremely well attended Return of the 80's Hero's evening in March which raised a total of £1,900. Many former players and former manager Peter Wragg attended. The projection of action videos and photographs, speeches from the players and Peter Wragg, a raffle and a silent auction of framed photographs of the era all added to atmosphere of the evening.

Before the third round FA Cup match against Sheffield Wednesday on 3 January 2014, 14-year old Silkmen fans, Harry Irlam and his cousin George Blackshaw, who lost an arm and a leg in a lawnmower accident when he was 15 months old, completed the wonderful achievement of an 11 mile sponsored walk from the Bird in Hand pub near Mobberley to the Moss Rose, raising over £1700 for club funds

Archive Web Site

Further research work was undertaken for the club's archive web site www.silkmenarchives.org.uk back to the date Macclesfield FC came into being 1876. Yes, 1876 and not 1874. Graham Phythian first recorded in his book 'Saga of the Silkmen' that Macclesfield FC was formed following the merger of the 8th Cheshire Riflemen and the Olympic Cricket Club football teams in October 1876 and this fact was confirmed during the archive research. It is a mystery where the date of 1874 emanates from as the Riflemen first played in 1873, but with more and more historic archives being made available on micro film such discoveries are not unknown. Whilst there have been additions to the site there is still information missing, often around the Easter and Christmas holiday periods. The local weekly newspapers at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries included national and international news as well as local news resulting in few column inches being devoted to football reporting, and often there were no football reports in some editions. A wider geographical search will be required in an attempt to ensure that as much information as possible is ascertained from 1876 to 1905. The site has been used within MTFC, has been well received and used by other clubs with representatives providing additional data, and the national football historian Leigh Edwards has described the site as 'excellent'.

Former Directors

During the season two of the club's former directors died. Harry Armstrong passed away in September 2013: he was a charming man who served the club well, notably using his professional expertise as a safety expert in the months before the club staged its first Football League match in 1997. Ron Sutton, who died in November 2013, served the club for 15 years as secretary, director and then chairman.

End of Season

In April 2014 Alan Cash announced his resignation as a director explaining that he had promised his family that he would only stand for a year.

Throughout the season there had been discussions on proposed takeover bids, none of which came to fruition, and when the season finished, players' wages remained unpaid and there were outstanding debts, supporters were very much left wondering whether the club could survive and questioned whether the investment in a season ticket for the 2014-15 season was worthwhile. This was a most frustrating time for all. Normally this section of the record for 2013-14 would finish at this point with the resolution covered in the chapter for the 2014-15 season. However, to tie loose ends together.....a final takeover bid was led by former director Andy Scott, but he could not conclude the deal in time to satisfy the Conference Board. Following a telephone call from the Chairman of the Conference to the club's owner, Amar Alkadhi, when he was advised that if the club could not pay off its football debts then Conference status would be lost, Mr. Alkadhi invested sufficient funds to satisfy the Conference Board with the club retaining Conference status for the 2014-15 season.



Chairman of Cheshire East Council Michael Jones handing over a cheque to club representatives Alan Cash, Barrie Darcey and Mike Rance



Phil Gibbons with former manager Peter Wragg and players at the 80s Hero's Evening



All Stars Match - Silkmen Legends Team



All Stars Match - Phil Power and Steve Wood



All Stars Match - Richie Barker scoring the first goal



All Stars Match - Ben Sedgemore and Jon Parkin

ON FIELD

Pre-season

The playing squad at the start of the season was – Danny Andrew (From Gloucester City), Scott Boden (Chesterfield), James Bolton, Richie Branagan (Salford City), Joe Connor (Stockport County), Arthur Gnahoua, Andy Halls (Stockport County), Chris Holroyd (Morecambe), Scott Kay (Huddersfield), John Paul Kissock, Paul Lewis (first professional contract), Jack Mackreth, Carl Martin, Danny Rowe (Barrow), Efe Sodje, Rhys Taylor, Paul Turnbull (Northampton Town), Danny Whitaker (Chesterfield), Steve Williams (Bradford City), Peter Winn and Connor Jennings (loan from Scunthorpe United)

Friendly Matches

Nine pre-season matches were played with the Silkmen victorious in three. A mixture of youth team players and trialists lost 2-1 at **Congleton** with Jack Mackreth giving the Silkmen a first half lead but two goals in quick succession gave the home side victory. A relatively easy win at **Leek** three days later with a team featuring more senior players. Chris Holroyd contributed two goals, an own goal and Jay Burgess completing the scoring without any reply from the home side. A mix of youngsters and trialists took a first half lead at **Kidsgrove** when Arthur Gnahoua scored from 18 yards, but former Silkmen Matt Haddrell equalised for the home side, the match ending in a 1-1 draw. Another away match, this time at **Oldham Athletic** provided a sterner test for the Silkmen, although they took the lead when Scott Boden's shot took a deflection and held the lead until the interval. In the second half Oldham scored three goals, including a penalty, in a five minute spell to give the Football League One side the upper hand, who eventually ran out 4-1 winners after they had added a further goal in the final minute.

The first home match was played on a Tuesday evening against **Rochdale**. Macclesfield failed to convert any of their goal scoring opportunities, and with former Silkmen George Donnelly scoring twice and a third goal from Joe Bunney Rochdale were easy winners 3-0. Another match where manager John Askey fielded a mix of youngsters and trialists came at **Witton Albion**. New loan signing striker Connor Jennings gave the Silkmen the lead but the home side equalised before the interval. In the second half trialist Max Lonsdale scored the winning goal to give Macclesfield a 2-1 victory.

The Keith Alexander Trophy contested each year against Buxton was played on Saturday 27th July where **Buxton** had the better of the first half. After eight changes at half-time the Silkmen scored twice early in the second half through Chris Holroyd and Connor Jennings to retain the Trophy.

Macclesfield entertained a strong, tall, young **Bolton Wanderers XI** and matched them well in the first half, but it was Bolton who won the day when a fast flowing move down the pitch, resulted in them scoring the only goal of the match. A week before the start of the season, a **Stoke City XI** came to the Moss Rose. Macclesfield had many goal scoring opportunities in the first half but failed to convert them, however, Stoke's Jordan Keane scored an own goal to open the Silkmen's account. Stoke came into their own in the second half scoring two goals. During this half James Gorfin replaced Danny Rowe. With the Conference/Cup match 'Pay to Play' for £20,000 idea withdrawn after pressure from the Football Association and FA Conference, James Gorfin paid £10,000 to play in this match. He had trained with the club the previous week and whilst he should have featured for the final 20 minutes of the match, having almost scored, he had to be substituted due to a groin strain picked up in training the day before after having been on the pitch for only 10 minutes.



Arthur Gnahou in action at Oldham Athletic



Match action - Bolton Wanderers



Match Action - Stoke City



James Gorfin - Pay to Play

SEASON REVIEW

Cup Competitions

When the team reached the semi-final of the **Cheshire Senior Cup** everyone was hoping for a place in the final remembering the many enjoyable final ties in the past. The first round against **Vauxhall Motors** was played at the Moss Rose just 10 days after the FA Cup match (see below) against the same team. Macclesfield had the match won in the first half, Arthur Gnahoua scoring in the sixth minute and then two goals by Chris Holroyd in the 38th and 39th minutes gave the Silkmen a 3-0 lead. Tom Rutter pulled a goal back for the visitors five minutes before the interval. There were no goals in the second half. A home tie against **Nantwich Town** in the second round saw the Dabbers take an early lead which they held until Danny Rowe equalised for the Silkmen with a 25-yard shot. Rowe secured victory in the 83rd minute having cut through the defence to stab the ball home. Away at **Chester**, a strong Silkmen side cruised to victory with a goal in each half courtesy of Chris Holroyd and Scott Boden.

The semi-final was played on Tuesday 4 March at the Moss Rose against **Northwich Victoria**. The Silkmen fielded a weakened team who shaded the first half, Arthur Gnahoua giving them the lead in the 33rd minute. Early in the second half the match had to be stopped for 28 minutes when Macclesfield goalkeeper Richie Branagan was knocked unconscious, received medical treatment and was stretchered off. Fortunately, after a visit to hospital Richie soon recovered. Northwich equalised in the 106th minute from a free-kick which went through a crowd of players. In the replay Northwich were victorious by a single goal scored just before half time. The second half of this match featured Elliot Rokka, the first-ever player from the Macclesfield Community Sports Trust Academy to play for a Macclesfield Town team.

120 Macclesfield fans made the journey to **Tamworth** for the first round of the **FA Trophy** on the last Saturday in November. Manager John Askey made seven changes to the side due to suspensions, injury and players on four yellow cards with following weeks' second round FA Cup tie in mind. The referee booked four players on each side, but the match turned on his decision to award Tamworth a penalty in the 83rd minute when James Bolton slipped and inadvertently made contact with the ball with his hand. Nick Chadwick's penalty shot hit the crossbar but Adam Todd was on hand to put the rebound into the net. Ben Richard-Everton added a second goal for Tamworth one minute from time ensuring they went through to the second round.

But the **FA Cup** gave the Silkmen another exciting and interesting run of fortune. **Vauxhall Motors** were the visitors for the fourth qualifying round and could easily have been two goals to the good in the opening exchanges when they started much more sharply than the Silkmen. However, Macclesfield then bossed the match scoring seven goals without reply, including a 15-minute second half hat-trick by Danny Rowe. The other goals were scored by Danny Whitaker, Scott Boden, Scott Kay and a penalty by Connor Jennings.

Amazingly the Silkmen were drawn against Football League One side **Swindon Town** for the second consecutive season having put them out of the Cup the previous season on their own turf. At this time league results were favouring Macclesfield and the team, as a whole, were playing attractive football with striker Connor Jennings in fine form. Swindon controlled the opening exchanges keeping possession but Macclesfield gradually gained confidence taking the game to Swindon. On 26 minutes Scott Boden, having gone past Darren Ward, unselfishly squared the ball to Connor Jennings who placed the ball in the bottom corner much to the delight of the Silkmen fans. The score remained at 1-0 until the 70th minute when it was Scott Boden's turn to double the Silkmen's lead. Four minutes later Jennings converted Andy Hall's fine lay-off and then in the 89th minute Peter

Winn ran onto a tame header back to the Swindon 'keeper by Grant Hall to lob the 'keeper, scoring his one and only goal for the Silkmen. What a celebration, Peter was so delighted (see front cover photograph) and so were the fans. This was the first occasion that Macclesfield had played with the newly introduced special mango coloured Nike Incyte FA Cup football.

Next up was the proverbial banana skin with a second round home tie against **Brackley Town**. Macclesfield were on top in the first half but not in any spectacular way and should have notched up more than the single goal by Danny Andrew. In the second half Scott Boden's prod home in the 50th minute doubled the Silkmen's tally but Brackley were not to be out done. First they pulled a goal, back on 58 minutes and then equalised on 71 minutes to set up a tense end to the match. It was Jack Mackreth who came to the rescue of the Silkmen in the 81st minute with a brilliant solo goal. Connor Jennings played a one-two with Mackreth before he surged up the right wing, then almost on the bye line his sheer pace and determination allowed him to squeeze between two challengers and into the box, blasting a low ball into the far corner giving Macclesfield entry into the third round.

The third round provided another home tie, this time against Championship side **Sheffield Wednesday** in front of a crowd of 5873, including 2365 from Sheffield.

The Macclesfield Town side was – Taylor, Hall, Williams, Connor, Andrew, Mackreth, Turnbull, Whitaker, Winn, Boden (Martin 63), Holroyd (Lewis 64).

For Sheffield Wednesday – Martinez, Palmer, Johnson, Semedo, Loovens, Liera, Maguire (Maghoma 87), McPhail (McCabe 73), Nuhui, Lee, Helan (Johnson 74).

Macclesfield matched their opponents for much of the match and were unlucky when they had the ball cleared off the line early in the match but the visitors took the lead in the 25th minute from a corner. Macclesfield then had their chances through Chris Holroyd and Danny Whitaker and with the team as a whole fighting tooth and nail for the ball, it was no surprise when they equalised in the 73rd minute. Paul Turnbull played a diagonal cross into the box which found defender Steve Williams who prodded home to set up a replay at Hillsborough. This match was screened live around the world by SIS Television (concentrating on Asia) with Radio 5 Live broadcasting an audio commentary.

10 days later the replay took place at Hillsborough in front of a crowd of 12302, including 1693 Macclesfield supporters housed in the upper tier of the Leppings Lane End.

Sheffield Wednesday – Martinez, Palmer, Johnson (Mattock 45), Semedo, Liera, Loovens, Maguire, Lee (McCabe 83), Nuhui, Maghoma, Helan (Johnson 65).

Macclesfield Town – Taylor, Halls, Williams (Martin 88), Connor, Andrew, Kay, Mackreth, Turnbull (Rowe 61), Whitaker, Winn (Holroyd 60), Boden.

Macclesfield were undone in the third minute when Chris Maguire scored for the Owls following a one-on-one with goalkeeper Rhys Taylor. Much to the credit of the Silkmen the score remained the same at half-time. After the break Macclesfield were equal to their stronger and more physical opponents with hope coming in the 65th minute when Scott Boden held his nerve to score a penalty in front of the Silkmen supporters. Shortly after a double substitution for Macclesfield the turning point of the match came when a Scott Kay shot hit the crossbar. By then Macclesfield had Wednesday rattled, but in the last twelve minutes, with Macclesfield tiring, they retaliated with three goals to win a trip to Rochdale in the fourth round.



Hat-trick hero Danny Rowe against Vauxhall Motor



Sheffield Wednesday - Star Lane End



Jack Mackreth in jubilant mood after scoring the winning goal against Brackley Town

Skill Premier League

Assistant manager Efe Sodje worked hard behind the scenes throughout the season helping the club on the commercial side and as part of his work Efe arranged a tie-up with town centre store Tesco Metro for them to be the official fruit supplier to the team. Efe also added another local business to the list of Silkmen sponsors when Fab Lounge of Beech Lane agreed to become the official water supplier to the club providing bottles water for match days and away trips.

August

Nuneaton Town were the opening day visitors to the Moss Rose to face a re-built Silkmen side with Danny Andrews, James Bolton, Joe Connor, on-loan Connor Jennings, Danny Rowe and Steve Williams all making their Silkmen debut. A single first half goal scored by Louis Moulton for the visitors at a time when three of their players were unmarked, gave the visitors all three points. It was the same story at **Lincoln City** three days later where the host's first half goal gave them victory. However, Macclesfield were in the ascendancy in the second half and were unlucky when Chris Holroyd's strike was adjudged to be off-side and a 35-yard screamer from Paul Lewis went straight into the hands of the Lincoln 'keeper.

In front of a crowd of 6216 including 80 Macclesfield fans, the Silkmen almost achieved their first win of the season when they visited **Luton Town**. The Silkmen enjoyed much of the play but it was the second half before the deadlock was broken when John Paul Kissock squared the ball from the right to Chris Holroyd who produced a composed finish in the 63rd minute. Macclesfield should have wrapped up this match but could not add to their score. With four minutes of added time indicated there were then injuries to both Holroyd and James Bolton, the referee extending the amount of additional time, Luton drew level in the 97th minute. In the end an additional nine minutes were played.

Another draw was earned in the next match when **FC Halifax Town** were the visitors to the Moss Rose, but not before a scare. Halifax were two goals up in the first 21 minutes but a poor back pass on 38 minutes allowed Peter Winn to chip the ball towards goal with the goalkeeper Matt Glennon only able to palm the ball away, Scott Boden, under pressure from a defender, headed home. On 40 minutes Connor Jennings replaced the injured Chris Holroyd but only four minutes later was dismissed for violent conduct. 10-man Macclesfield were undeterred and in the 82nd minute after impressive work by both Danny Andrew and Arthur Gnahoua, Jack Mackreth arrowed a tremendous volley into the top corner of the net converting Gnahoua's cross to give the Silkmen a 2-2 draw. Jennings complained to the referee at half time about his dismissal which led to him receiving a five match ban.

And so the pattern continued with a 2-2 draw at **Gateshead**, but on this occasion two first half Scott Boden goals put the Silkmen in an excellent position. However, a problem which was to occur throughout the season undid Macclesfield when they failed to defend two corner kicks from which Gateshead scored in the 51st and 70th minutes. The last match of the month saw **Braintree Town** managed by flat cap wearing manager Alan Devonshire visit the Moss Rose. Braintree's smash and grab single goal two minutes into the second half saw them leave with all three points.

After six games three points had been earned and a 21st position in the Conference league table.

Craig Braham-Barrett initially went on loan to Cheltenham Town but shortly after he signed a permanent contract with them.

September

Aldershot Town was the first stop in the month. Macclesfield dominated much of the match but a fortunate goal from midfielder Mark Molesley whose shot looked to be going over the bar but dipped late, hit the underside of the crossbar crossing the line to give the Shots a 1-0 victory. Late in the match Peter Winn hit the post and another shot was cleared off the line. With these three points Aldershot cleared their 10 point deficit incurred when they entered administration. At the Moss Rose against **Alfreton Town**, the Silkmen suffered another defeat by a single goal, on this occasion from a free-kick after Silkmen goalkeeper Rhys Taylor was adjudged to have handled the ball outside his area. Alfreton could have increased their score when they hit the woodwork twice. In the next match **Chester** took a two goal lead in the first 30 minutes, but Danny Whitaker pulled a goal back a minute before the break when he thumped home a volley to score his first goal of the season. There was a much improved performance by the Silkmen in the second half, including a splendid penalty save by Rhys Taylor taken by former Silkmen Ben Mills, nevertheless Chester ran out winners 2-1.

By now the Silkmen faithful were beginning to wonder when the first win of the season would come but the home match against **Woking** provided the answer with a 3-2 victory, but not without a few heart stopping moments towards the end. Connor Jennings returned following his five match ban determined to make amends scoring his first goal for the club on 12 minutes and he doubled the score on the stroke of half time. Matters got even better when Jennings pulled the ball back for Jack Mackreth to make the score 3-0 in the 78th minute. Woking then subjected the Silkmen to a salvo in the closing minutes, Giuseppe Sole pulling a goal back and then in additional time, Kevin Betsy scored a second goal and Woking almost snatched a third goal at the death.

With one win under their belts, a second came in the next match at **Barnet**. Two goals in eight first half minutes by Connor Jennings gave Macclesfield a good start, but Barnet pulled a goal back on 74 minutes and it required a penalty save by Macclesfield 'keeper Rhys Taylor to ensure that Macclesfield were victorious. All the goals came in the second half when **Welling United** visited the Moss Rose. Two goals in three second minutes by Connor Jennings and Chris Holroyd, with one for the visitors gave Macclesfield another victory.

A better overall performance saw the team in 18th position with 12 points at the end of the month.

Former Silkman Lewis Chalmers was released having only featured twice from the substitutes' bench on non-contract terms.

October

The run of three consecutive victories came to an end at **Tamworth** when the home side's first half goal gave them all three points. On a Tuesday evening at the Moss Rose the match against **Hereford United** was exciting, entertaining, with end-to-end play from start to finish, both sides striving for victory but Macclesfield came out on top with a 1-0 victory. Yet again, it was Connor Jennings who provided the goal for Macclesfield: Peter Winn's corner was headed towards goal by Jennings but his effort was blocked by the 'keeper the ball rebounded to Jennings who took a touch and prodded home from six yards. Hereford found themselves with an uphill task after Sam Smith was dismissed 10 minutes from time for violent conduct.

At **Forest Green Rovers** the teams went into the match with contrasting forms, Macclesfield having won four of their last five matches and Forest Green Rovers having lost five of their last six outings, but it was the home side who started the brighter going ahead through former Silkmen Matthew

Barnes-Homer's strike on 10 minutes. The Silkmen then came more into the match. Andy Halls had to leave the field injured and was replaced by James Bolton. Just before half time defender Steve Williams who had moved forward, collected a cross from Peter Winn to clinically finish in a crowded penalty area. Moments later Forest Green Rovers almost equalised. In an entertaining second half Peter Winn had a hand in Macclesfield's second goal, Jack Mackreth switched the ball from the right to Peter Winn on the left, Danny Whitaker scoring from Winn's excellent cross. Macclesfield then conceded a penalty and with score a 2-2. Chris Holroyd was replaced by Scott Boden and Paul Lewis, former youth team player, came on for Connor Jennings, the stage was set for a thrilling finale. There was a fairy tale finish for Paul Lewis who secured victory in the 90th minute when he steered Danny Andrew's hanging left-wing cross into the goal to score his first league goal for the Silkmen and gain a further valuable three points for the team.

The final league match of the month was televised live by BT Sports on a Thursday evening at the Moss Rose against **Southport**. The match was played at a fast pace, probably too fast for some of the Macclesfield players who may well have been conscious of the presence of television cameras. Connor Jennings gave the Silkmen the lead in the 10th minute, a lead they held until the 61st minute, when two minutes after his introduction from the substitutes' bench, Danny Hattersley equalised for the visitors. Danny Whitaker had a hand in the first goal and was on hand again to pass the ball to Jennings who, with sheer persistence bore down on goal placing the ball past the Southport keeper to give Macclesfield a 2-1 lead. Just as another victory seemed on the cards, hearts were broken when Southport were awarded a 90th minute penalty, Jamie Milligan equalising from the spot.

With 19 points on the board a much healthier 15th position in the league had been achieved.

November

With 610 **Wrexham** fans and a total attendance of 1978 there was an excellent atmosphere all-round the Moss Rose for the visit of the Welshmen. There was a dramatic start, 20 seconds after kick-off defender Danny Andrew hit a long ball into the box which Connor Jennings reached but went down under the challenge of the Wrexham 'keeper Andy Coughlin, the referee awarding a penalty, Jennings hitting an unstoppable shot into the roof of the net. Joe Anyinsah equalised for the visitors on 13 minutes, but Jennings gave Macclesfield the lead on 40 minutes when he despatched Scott Boden's cross from six yards. The veteran Bret Ormerod looked to have secured a share of the points for Wrexham when he equalised in the 80th minute, but there was to be a grandstand finish. In the 94th minute Macclesfield 'keeper Rhys Taylor hit a long free-kick which, assisted by the wind, dropped into the box and, despite facing away from goal, Jennings looped a header over the stranded Wrexham 'keeper to complete his hat-trick and a dramatic 3-2 win for the Silkmen.

At the Moss Rose high flying **Kidderminster Harriers** were the next opponents on a cold Tuesday evening. This game was full of pace and incident. The referee's decisions featured so much so that manager John Askey was dismissed from the touch line at half time for remarks made to the official. Both sides attacked from the start, Kidderminster defended well and both 'keepers had excellent games. Each side had a goal disallowed but the visitors took the lead in the first half when defender Andy Halls was dispossessed in a dangerous area. The Silkmen did not make the most of their chances blasting the ball high and wide, although Peter Winn hit the post during the first half. It was Captain Paul Turnbull who equalised for the Silkmen with a late-late goal. Following a corner, he lashed home through a crowd of players in the fourth minute of added time to give Macclesfield a well-deserved share of the points against the best performing side seen at the Moss Rose at this time of the campaign.

The following Saturday saw another home match, on this occasion against **Dartford**. The visitors took the lead in the 13th minute from the penalty spot with worse to come 14 minutes later when play maker Danny Whitaker was injured and was replaced by Scott Kay. The score remained at 1-0 until the 66th minute when three goals in three minutes gave Macclesfield victory. Scott Boden scored from close range and then two goals from at the time Conference top-scorer Connor Jennings, first blasting home from eight yards and then straight from the kick-off substitute Jack Mackreth used his pace, squaring the ball to Jennings who turned on the spot to thump a volley into the bottom corner of the net.

The Silkmen's visit to **Salisbury** brought an end to the Silkmen's nine-match unbeaten run in all competitions. The first half was a lively affair with the home side taking the lead on 45 minutes through Dan Fitchett. Two minutes into added time, following a disputed penalty decision, Connor Jennings equalised from the spot. The Salisbury manager was dismissed from the touch line for his half time remarks to the referee. Salisbury were rattled at the start of the second half, Paul Turnbull put the Silkmen into the lead. Salisbury were awarded a penalty, when it was Macclesfield's turn to protest as during the play in the run up to the penalty decision, Stuart Sinclair seemed to have kept the ball in play with his arm. Fitchett scored from the spot to level the score and in the 82nd minute Jamie White secured the win for the home side. Macclesfield's Danny Andrew was unlucky not to score in the dying seconds of the match when his 30-yard shot hit the crossbar and to make matters worse, Scott Kay was dismissed in the 90th minute for two cautions.

Adding seven points during the month the Silkmen remained in 15th position with 26 points.

Towards the end of the month Matty Mainwaring was signed on loan from Hyde United but only went on to make one substitute appearance in the FA Trophy competition.

December

The first match of the month was a Tuesday evening visit to top-of-the-table **Cambridge United** who extended their lead when they scored three goals without reply, Macclesfield losing their second consecutive match on the road. During this match Connor Jennings incurred what looked to be an innocuous injury but it turned out to be quite serious requiring urgent surgery. Connor Jennings returned to his home club Scunthorpe United having played his last match for the Silkmen. In his time at the club Jennings scored 17 goals in all competitions, his goals helping improve the league table position from 23rd to 15th.

Macclesfield avenged their defeat at **Salisbury** when City visited the Moss Rose. A late own goal by Salisbury's Callum Hart gave Macclesfield victory. A brilliant ball into the box by Danny Rowe from the left was met by Hart who diverted the ball into his own net under pressure from Macclesfield's Steve Williams.

The away match at **Braintree Town** on 21 December was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch but the year ended on a high note with two victories. The first against struggling **Hyde United** at the Moss Rose on Boxing Day, when brilliant free-kicks from Paul Turnbull and Danny Andrew and a header by Chris Holroyd, without any reply gave the Silkmen a 3-0 victory. **Grimsbury Town** came to the Moss Rose in the play-off places but Macclesfield were equal to them starting the brighter and capitalising by taking a two goal lead with goals from Scott Boden and Chris Holroyd. Grimsby took the game to Macclesfield levelling the score early in the second half but Macclesfield were then awarded a penalty which was taken by Chris Holroyd and whilst the ball was saved it appeared that it had crossed the line but the officials deemed otherwise. Undaunted Macclesfield pressed on and following Grimsby's Aswad Thomas fouling Jack Mackreth, Danny Andrews netted a splendid free-

kick which he struck over the defensive wall, the ball going in off the underside of the crossbar to give the Silkmen a 3-2 victory. Danny's goal was the club's 700th Conference goal.

With 35 points on the board, the team had climbed to 12th position.

January

The first match of the New Year was at **Hyde United** where the Silkmen inflicted yet another defeat on them, however Hyde held their own in the first half, but three goals in 16 minutes in the second half saw Macclesfield victorious. Initial reports indicated that Scott Boden had scored all three goals but the first was, in the end, credited as an own goal by Hyde defender O'Connor.

The next league match took place in the middle of the month at **Nuneaton Town**. Macclesfield were probably under par having played a demanding FA Cup third round replay at Hillsborough only days earlier, Nuneaton running out winners by 1-0 to complete the season double over the Silkmen.

On a wet, cold and windy Tuesday evening **Lincoln City** were the visitors to the Moss Rose. Before kick-off there was a minute's applause in memory of the late Keith Alexander and Richard Butcher with the memorial flag on display on the John Askey Terrace. Both teams had to cope with a slippery pitch. Macclesfield played into the wind towards the Star Lane End in the first half keeping most of the possession and kept Lincoln in their own half until a minute before half time when former Silkmen Ben Tomlinson blasted home a swerving wind-assisted shot. However, brilliantly taken goals by Scott Boden, Jack Mackreth and a splendid solo effort by substitute Chris Holroyd gave the home side a 3-1 victory. There was a special half-price ticket offer for this match for those fans who retained their ticket stub from the home Sheffield Wednesday FA Cup match.

Ending the month the re-arranged away match at **Braintree** was again postponed due to a waterlogged pitch. A successful month saw the Silkmen in 11th position with 41 points.

At the end of the month former Silkman Waide Fairhurst was signed on loan from Lincoln City but injury meant that he only made two substitute appearances. James Bolton commenced an initial month's loan at FC Halifax Town which was extended to the end of the season and John Paul Kissock spent the remainder of the season on loan at Oldham Athletic.

February

The home match against **Barnet** due to be played on 1 February was called off at 16.00 the previous day following a pitch inspection despite the efforts of the ground staff, volunteers and Fine Turf Services with SISIS also offering their services. The corner of the pitch between the Moss Lane Stand and the John Askey terrace again causing problems.

The pitch had recovered for the match against **Chester** on the following Tuesday on a bitterly cold and windy evening. Macclesfield played into the wind for the first half on a ground showing signs of wear especially down the centre. Chester, well supported with 457 fans, opened the scoring in the 19th minute with a well taken solo goal by Gareth Seddon, but they only managed to hold on to the lead for three minutes, Scott Boden equalising for the Silkmen. Chester then had the ball in the back of the net twice but both efforts were from off-side positions. Steve Williams put the home side in front eleven minutes later when he headed home a well-placed free-kick by Peter Winn. The lead was extended nine minutes into the second half, Chris Holroyd headed home but as the half wore on

Chester came more into the match with Macclesfield pinned in their half. Former Silkman John Rooney pulled a goal back in the 88th minute but Macclesfield held on to earn a 3-2 victory and a season double over Chester.

Defender George Pilkington was initially signed on loan for a month from Mansfield Town but remained with the club for the remainder of the season.

The match at **Hereford** the following Saturday was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch. **Luton Town** arrived at the Moss the following Tuesday in fine form. They were a physically strong and speedy team who took an early lead through their top-scorer Andre Gray, but Macclesfield continued to compete well as they did throughout the match. Danny Andrew equalised before half-time but when Macclesfield failed to clear their lines eight minutes from time, Gray scored Luton's winner. Two absolutely brilliant saves by Mark Tyler the Luton 'keeper denied Macclesfield a deserved equaliser. Luton left the Moss Rose unbeaten in 21 league matches and having chalked up their 11th consecutive away game unbeaten, a club record, and six points clear at the top of the table.

The weather was playing havoc with football fixtures at this time, the home match against **Forest Green Rovers** on 15 February was called off at 7.45am due to a waterlogged pitch following heavy overnight rain and with more rain forecast during the day.

Akpo Sodje, one of Efe's Sodje's brothers, was signed on loan from Tranmere Rovers.

Macclesfield enjoyed First Class rail travel courtesy of Virgin Trains to London with the team coach picking them up at Euston Station for their onward journey to **Woking**. Chrome Motors (Danny Towns) provided a van with a full tank of petrol and expenses paid lunch on the motorway for kit-men Paul Etchells and Patrick Slattery to transport the team kit. In the Woking side were former Silkmen Kieron Murtagh and on the bench Anthony McNamee. Macclesfield started brightly, Scott Boden scored from 18 yards out having collected a pass from on-loan defender George Pilkington. However, Woking dominated the match overall although it took them until the 61st minute to equalise through Jack Marriott, John Goddard giving them the lead eight minutes later with a screamer of a shot. Macclesfield equalised in the 73rd minute, Pilkington capitalising on a goalkeeping error when Sam Beasant dropped the ball, Pilkington heading the ball down before striking home in a crowded penalty area, but all was lost when Scott Rendell scored the winner for the home side five minutes later.

On the following Tuesday the re-arranged match at **Hereford** saw the Silkmen secure another victory in a comfortable match for them. George Pilkington scored the first goal converting a corner kick on 29 minutes. The lead was doubled when the ever-improving Scott Boden headed home a cross from Danny Andrew. A goal for the home side 12 minutes from time put the Silkmen under some pressure but they held out to end the month on a high note, leaving them in 11th position for the second consecutive month with 47 points.

March

On a sunny day few chances were created by either side in the first half at **Welling United**. After the interval the home side began to press with on loan Cambridge United defender Blaine Hudson breaking the deadlock on 62 minutes, a goal which was to be the winner. This was the second occasion the team travelled by train to London courtesy of Virgin Trains.

Macclesfield struggled to cope with the physically stronger **Grimsby Town** side when they visited the Moss Rose. It was inevitable that on his return to the Moss Rose, on loan striker Connor Jennings scored Grimsby's goal in the first half. Throughout this match the Grimsby players had been pulling back the Macclesfield players without any action from the officials, until the final moments when the assistant spotted a tug on Scott Boden in the penalty box and signalled a penalty. After the protests from the Grimsby players had died down, on 95 minutes Scott Boden held his nerve to convert the penalty sending the 'keeper the wrong way. Macclesfield gaining what had looked an unlikely point until then.

Two away matches followed. The first was at **Kidderminster Harriers** where a goal by Callum Gittins after just 45 seconds rocked the Silkmen. Kidderminster doubled their lead when former Silkman Amari Morgan-Smith scored six minutes before half time, but a below par performing Macclesfield managed to pull back a goal two minutes later when Danny Whitaker struck a right-footed shot into the bottom left of the net. After the interval Macclesfield upped their game but could not find the equaliser. At **Southport**, a lack-lustre performance saw the Silkmen defeated 4-1, Macclesfield's only goal coming from Danny Andrew who scored with a brilliant low shot from 25 yards. Macclesfield could not cope with the taller and more physical opposition, and failed to make the most of the conditions in the second half with wind at their backs.

Success came in the next two matches both at the Moss Rose. The re-arranged match against **Barnet** was held on Tuesday 18 March with manager John Askey making five changes to the starting line-up after the below par performance at Southport. A poor first half saw Macclesfield on the back foot often launching long balls to no effect and the second half did not provide any spectacle with Barnet missing chances. Just as it looked as though the match would end in stalemate, on 81 minutes Paul Turnbull fired in a free-kick which the Barnet 'keeper managed to save but the ball slipped out of his hands to Chris Holroyd who scored from close quarters. With three minutes remaining, Danny Whitaker hit a fantastic looping shot from all of 40 yards which dropped into the top corner of the net leaving the 'keeper racing back in a vain attempt to make a save, to give the Silkmen a 2-0 victory. This match saw Macclesfield reach the milestone of completing their 500th Conference League match.

The following Saturday relegation strugglers **Tamworth** were the visitors. Macclesfield were certainly not at their best but on nine minutes Danny Andrew curled a brilliant 25-yard left-foot free-kick over the wall to beat the 'keeper, but his strike was cancelled out by Kevin Thornton five minutes before the interval. What turned out to be the winning goal was scored by Scott Boden in the 57th minute with the faintest of headers following a Danny Whitaker cross.

Travelling by Virgin trains for a third time, at **Dartford** Macclesfield lost their fourth consecutive away match even though they took the lead when, against the run of play, Paul Turnbull struck home from long range. The home side equalised two minutes into the second half and won the match with a goal in the 81st minute. This was Macclesfield's 700th match in all competitions as a Conference club.

With mixed fortunes during the month the Silkmen slipped to 14th position with 54 points.

April

To complete the season eight fixtures, four home and four away, had to be fulfilled and with little to play for and wages unpaid these circumstances were reflected in the results.

Second placed **Cambridge United** were the first visitors to the Moss Rose. Macclesfield worked hard throughout this fast-moving match but their shots were often blocked by good defending. Unfortunately they threw the match away through a rash tackle in the box by George Pilkington in the 87th minute, Luke Berry making no mistake to give the visitors another victory.

At **Wrexham** the match was played at a much slower pace than seen against Cambridge. A 12th minute goal for the home side condemned Macclesfield to another defeat.

On Tuesday 8 April, the twice postponed away match at **Braintree Town** was played. The 0-0 score-line at the interval summed up a rather subdued first half. The second half saw more action with the hosts testing Macclesfield and just as Braintree seemed to be getting on top, Scott Boden scored giving the Silkmen their first away win since 25 February.

Aldershot Town came to the Moss Rose needing points to avoid dropping into the relegation area. Not a particularly entertaining match but it was that man Boden again who gave Macclesfield the lead in the 77th minute. Just when it looked as Macclesfield were going to take all three points, five minutes into added time, Paul Lewis was adjudged to have fouled the Shots substitute Brett Williams in the area, Williams putting away the resultant penalty for the points to be shared. No admission was charged at this match but donation buckets were available. In Keith's Bar from 13.00 to 14.00 there was an offer of a Brassington pie and a pint for a fiver, with the same offer in the Corner Flag from 14.00 to kick-off. Kick-off was delayed nationally to 15.07, with a minute's silence before kick-off as a mark of respect for the 96 Liverpool fans who died in the disaster at Hillsborough 25 years earlier.

The re-arranged home match from 15 February against **Forest Green Rovers** was held on Tuesday 15 April. The visitors were the quickest out of the blocks taking the lead in the second minute when 27-year-old midfielder Yan Klukowski scored to become Forest Green Rover's all-time top-scorer in the Conference with 46 goals. The opposition were the pacier side doubling their score, Klukowski again, in the 19th minute. After the interval Macclesfield rallied and matched the visitors deservedly pulling a goal back through Scott Boden but the score remained 1-2 to the visitors at full time.

At **FC Halifax Town** the Silkmen's miserable run-in to the end of the season continued, the home side taking a 2-0 lead in the first 22 minutes. On the stroke of half time, after good work by Scott Kay down the right, he passed the ball to Scott Boden who tapped in from six yards to beat a stranded Matt Glennon in goal.

Another defeat came when **Gateshead** visited the Moss Rose for the final home match of the campaign. On a blustery day, a goal in each half for the visitors with no reply from the Silkmen left Gateshead in fifth position in the league.

At long last some joy in the final match of the season at **Alfreton Town** but it went down to the wire. There was a slow start to the game but gradually Macclesfield began to impress, however, it was the second half which belonged to Macclesfield as Danny Whitaker replaced Scott Kay. The Silkmen pressed from the start and became more dominant as the half wore on and were rewarded with a late goal when Jack Mackreth pulled the ball back to Dan Cowan, whose excellent cross was met by Scott Boden who curled a header over the Alfreton 'keeper in the 89th minute. Scott Boden was the only player to feature on the score sheet during the whole of April and completed the season as top-scorer with 23 goals. The team finished in 15th position in the Skrill Premier League with 61 points with manager John Askey full of praise for them, quite rightly, as they had worked under very difficult conditions.

Danny Andrews' consistent performance and goals earned him both the Player of the Year and the Players' Player of the Year Awards. The Young Player of the Year was Will Bailey. Special Awards by Jean Ridgeway and Andy Mellor both went to John Askey who, ably aided by assistant manager Efe Sodje, had undertaken an extremely difficult and stressful job, but had brought much pleasure to the fans and a degree of success, especially in the FA Cup competition.



Danny Andrew Player of the Year

To complement this written account, detail relating to match teams, scorers, attendances, individual player statistics, general information and player profiles can all be found in the club's official archive web site www.silkmenarchives.org.uk

Grateful thanks are extended to the club's official photographer Peter Hilton for providing the photographs included in this chapter.



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Manager John Askey and assistant manager Efe Sodje



Opening match against Nuneaton Town



Scott Boden scoring against FC Halifax Town



Jack Mackreth scoring against Woking



Chris Holroyd climbing high to score against Welling United



Connor Jennings in action against Hereford United



Own goal by Salisbury's Callum Hart



Helen Skelton in a pitch side interview with Mikey Harris, then manager of Salisbury City, at the televised match against Southport



Man of the Match Paul Turnbull celebrating with Danny Whitaker after scoring against Hyde United



Chris Holroyd scoring against Barnet



The Barnet goalkeeper beaten by Danny Whitaker's shot

**MACCLESFIELD TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB
OFFICIAL TEAM PHOTOGRAPH
SEASON 2013-2014**



Back Row

Danny Andrew, Joe Connor, Paul Lewis, Carl Martin, Steve Williams, James Bolton, Scott Boden

Middle Row

Bill Gorton (Goalkeeping Coach), Byron Jenkins (Youth Coach), Roary (Club Mascot), Chris Holroyd, Connor Jennings, Jay Burgess, Andrew Mills, Rhys Taylor, Richie Branagan, Scott Kay, Arthur Gnahoua, Patrick Slattery (Assistant Kit Man), Paul Etchells (Kit Man), Mel Pejic (Physiotherapist)

Front Row

Peter Winn, John Paul Kissock, Jack Mackreth, Danny Whitaker, John Askey (Manager), Efe Sodje (Player/Assistant Manager), Paul Turnbull, Danny Rowe, Josh Green