

## The Matches

\* An asterisk indicates that there is a brief match report in the Match Details section

### The 1930s



*Jimmy Cringan, cup finalist with Birmingham in 1931, and United's player-manager in their first Cup campaign.*

In their first season Boston United did not take part in the F.A. Cup because the club was formed after the entry date for that season's competition.

The Cup trail began the following season at the Preliminary Round stage. The club's very first F.A. Cup tie was a visit to the Nottinghamshire miners side **Ollerton Colliery\***, on September 15th 1934. Several hundred Bostonians, including many on a special train, made the trip to see their team gain a comfortable 3-0 victory.

Unusually, both teams wore unfamiliar shirts as their usual colours were almost identical. Ollerton wore red and Boston blue and white stripes. United normally wore black and white, hence their nickname The Magpies which they adopted during the 1930s. After the Second World War they were to change to the black and amber/yellow strip which they have worn, in various styles, ever since.

The travelling support that Boston took to Ollerton was no isolated occurrence for Cup-ties. Matches at Shodfriars Lane in 1934 and 1936 against Newark brought several hundred opposing fans on both occasions. This was also often the case with Boston away trips.



In the Third Qualifying Round United fought a close two-match tussle with **Grantham**, beginning a long history of Cup rivalry with The Gingerbreads.

With one or two minor hiccups along the way, The Magpies did very well to reach the competition Proper in their first Cup campaign. In the First Round they easily won a potentially awkward match at **Darwen\***. In the Second Round, at tough Southern Leaguers **Bath City\***, Boston went out to a scrambled last minute goal. This was United's ninth F.A. Cup tie of the season.

The campaign had lasted nine matches. Scoring in all of them, centre-forward Frank ('Rocking Horse Boots') Bungay amassed a tally of 17 goals.



*Frank Bungay, who scored 17 goals in the 1934-5 Cup run.*

The following year United had their first crack at Football League opposition, reaching the First Round Proper after an exciting 3-2 victory at **Hitchin Town\***. A fighting display could not prevent a 4-2 defeat at Third Division (North) **Crewe Alexandra\***.

In the 1936 season Boston progressed through the qualifying rounds before coming up against top Durham amateur side **Spennymoor United**. A special train brought 300 supporters from the north-east). After a hard-fought draw at Shodfriars Lane\*, on their return home the Spennymoor team were greeted as heroes by a large crowd that had gathered at the town's railway station. The replay was on the following Wednesday afternoon. Two factories in Spennymoor closed so that workers could go to the match. Spennymoor won the replay 2-0\*.

## The 1940s

There were still disappointments to suffer before Cup success returned for Boston. In 1947 a below-par side went out to lowly **Ilkeston Town**. An estimated 1,000 people journeyed from Boston and district. Spectators stood on steep gradients that reached down to the touchlines, the corners were banked and fans encroached on to the field from unroped sections. These circumstances favoured the home side's playing style. The robust Derbyshire men knocked United out of their stride and gained an unexpected victory before a crowd of 7,000. On a lighter note, an earlier home tie that season against **Gedling Colliery** (which Boston won 5-3) ended with praise from a visiting official for the home crowd's sportsmanship.

The next season witnessed one of the most humiliating results in Boston's Cup history. At the Preliminary Round stage **Spalding United** shocked visiting supporters with a well-deserved victory at Halley Fields - a precursor to even greater damage. The Tulips were to inflict 16 years later. After the match three Boston players - McCormick, Gallacher and Winters - were suspended for an alleged breach of discipline. It was rumoured that they had arrived late for the match due to a dinner-time drinking session.

## The 1950s



*Jack Stone, scored 5 goals in the 10-3 rout of Skegness, September 1950.*

The 10-3 Extra Preliminary Round victory at Skegness in September 1950 included five goals from Jack Stone, who was referred to by the Lincolnshire Standard reporter as "the Piratical Terror of all Jolly Fishermen who

ever donned football boots." About 2,000 people from Boston witnessed the goal avalanche at Burgh Road. This Cup run ended in a miserable 4-0 thrashing at home to **Linby Colliery**. Linby's Cup run eventually lasted seven rounds. Starting out in the Extra Preliminary Round (against the wonderfully-named Parliament Street Methodists) and beating Boston in the Second Qualifying Round, they lost to Gillingham in the First Round Proper.

In 1951 the club fared little better. The campaign ended at the Third Qualifying Round with an inexcusably pathetic exhibition at Lincolnshire League **Skegness**, where they went down 2-1 in front of a record gate. 300 cars and a special train transported United fans to witness this abject surrender.

In September 1952 the opening tie of the season was a scrambled victory against a plucky **Alford** side. Boston then went on to reach the First Round Proper for the first time since 1936. Contrary to popular myth crowd trouble is not a recent phenomenon. A bruising last qualifying round match at home to **Frickley Colliery\*** illustrates this.

The match ended with a sizeable section of the usually fairly docile Boston crowd becoming so incensed with Frickley's crude approach that they attempted to jostle those considered to be the main culprits. Victory over The Colliers was rewarded with the first ever home match against League opponents.

The visitors to Shodfriars Lane were Third Division (North) **Oldham Athletic\***, Player-Managed by ex-England Back George Hardwick. Lion-hearted Boston fought relentlessly but missed opportunities and cynical tactics by the Lancastrians led to a 2-1 defeat for The Stumpites (Boston's nickname in the 1950s).

In the 1953-54 season United again reached the First Round Proper. A visit to **Scunthorpe and Lindsey United\*** (non-League opponents in 1938 but members of the Football League since 1950) ended in Boston being completely outclassed in every department. The 'Knuts' dished out a 9-0 thrashing with their fast, skilful and direct play.

The late 1940s and much of the 1950s were times of record Attendances throughout all levels of British football. In September 1954 **Brigg Town** attracted a record gate for

