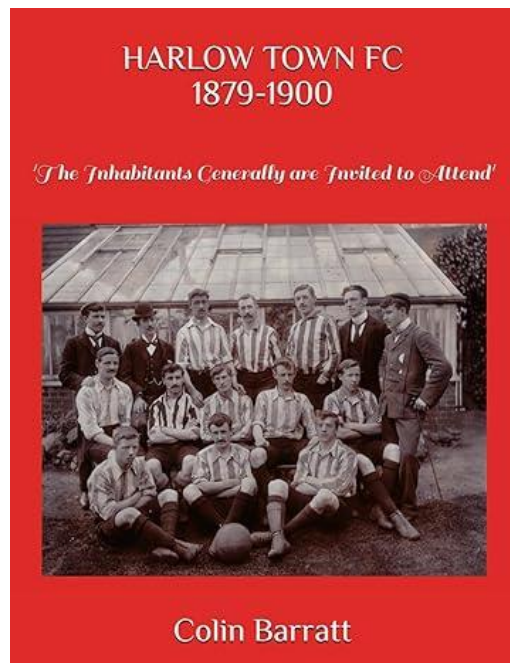


NEW BOOK ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF HARLOW TOWN FC WITH MANY CONNECTIONS TO BISHOP'S STORTFORD RESIDENTS

The book **“Harlow Town FC 1879–1900: “The Inhabitants Generally are Invited to Attend”**, written by Bishop’s Stortford History Society member Colin Barratt, explores how football in the late nineteenth century differed dramatically from today’s multi-billion-pound industry. Its title is drawn from the club’s first press release, which invited residents to watch Harlow’s inaugural match against Saffron Walden FC. Beyond recounting the club’s early fixtures, the book highlights the contributions of many Bishop’s Stortford and Sawbridgeworth residents who played pivotal roles in shaping Harlow Town’s formative years.

Harlow Town FC, founded in 1879, is one of the oldest clubs in Essex. There are just four clubs that are still playing that were formed before Harlow and only two in Hertfordshire. The club was therefore at the vanguard of football in the Essex/Hertfordshire area. Most people are unaware that the club is this old and has such a long and proud history.



Using original sources such as the census and contemporary newspapers, the book describes the club’s early seasons and delves into the personal stories of the players, examining their lives in what was then the small village of Harlow and its neighbouring towns and villages. There are many original photographs of the players as well as of the places where they lived.

Of particular interest to History Society members will be the stories of Francis Young, who went on to become the innovative headmaster of Bishop’s Stortford College; William Gee, a respected solicitor whose influence extended across the town; the Hodson brothers, remembered for their role in the club’s formative years; and William Scruby, a prominent sportsman and successful businessman

in the town.

Other players include one that was selected to represent a football World XI, another that played for one of the top teams in the country whilst also playing for Harlow, and another that went on to captain the England cricket team and become President of the MCC. Yet another was an excellent tennis player and played twice in the Wimbledon championships.

This book is for anyone who is interested in football history, sports history, social history or just wants to find out a bit more about local history and tells the story of how a small village club attracted players from the aristocracy, the landed gentry and a baker!

The book is available at Waterstones Harlow, Harlow Museum, and at the club shop on matchdays as well as on Amazon (just search ‘Harlow Town FC’).