

A LOOK AT THE LLANELLI TOWN SQUAD - 2014-15

GOALKEEPERS

Craig Richards. 25/01/91. Born Swansea. Excelled in the Llanelli team who beat Swansea City to win the FAW Youth Cup. Welsh Premier Play off winner before joining Port Talbot & Lido. Scored 25 goals for Penyfan since January.

Wyn Walters. 21/02/84. Born Swansea. Signed from Penybont, Wyn has been playing his football east of Pontarddulais for a few years and won a Welsh League Division One title with Bryntirion in 2012. Ex Neath & Goytre keeper.

Peter Scammell. 16/05/93. Born Haverfordwest. Has gone from playing against Valencia to Penrhyncoch, then Kidwelly and now Cardiff City in the space of two weeks. Likes a colourful season and drives 300 miles for training !

DEFENDERS

Mark Napierella. 18/07/91. Born Olsett. The Reds sole Englishman, joined in pre-season from Pontardawe Town. Scored a wonder goal at Kidwelly and Liam Samuel had better be worried in he gets forward this season.

Steven Berry. 25/01/91. Born Swansea. Dominant central defender who started his career at Swansea City. Made his Reds first team debut against Ollwyn at Stebo in 2007 and went on to play for Carmarthen Town and Kilvey.

Lee Bevan. 10/07/87. Born Swansea. Known as *'The Tank'*. He has played Welsh Premier football for Neath and Carmarthen and joins the Reds after turning out for Goytre United last season.

Rhys Powell. 27/07/91. Born Swansea. Tough tackling defender. Unsung hero of the side. Previously played for Swansea Schoolboys, Pontardawe Youth and Morriston Olympic. Loves a holiday in Mexico and Ibiza.

Christian Bonnell. 20/12/84. Born Swansea. Signed from Cwmamman United, has also played in the Carmarthenshire League for Pwll Athletic and Evans & Williams Sports. Can play as a full back or central defender.

Leon Martin. 28/10/97. Born Pontypridd. An Academy product who made his first team debut against Tredegar Town. Can play in several positions and has been turning out for Ragged School as well this season.

Richard Lewis. 05/08/84. Born Swansea. The prodigal son has returned after making 12 Reds appearances before hitting the Welsh League gravy train with Ammanford and Haverfordwest. Made his name at Llanelli Steel, has one of the best left foots in Welsh League Football.

Tom Lavender. 22/09/94. Born Swansea. Has come on leaps and bounds under the mentoring of Gary Lloyd, has had his season delayed by injury but is now raring to go and looking to challenge for a first team spot.

MIDFIELDERS

Jamie Evans. 12/03/87. Born Swansea. Has starred for Haverfordwest County, Ammanford, Garden Village, Seaside and Cwmamman. Started his career at Camford. Multi-talented and is currently turning his skills to barwork.

Jak Shannon. 06/04/90. Born Swansea. Strong central midfielder who last turned out for Briton Ferry Athletic and has also played for Neath. The Swansea postman has won the ECFA with the college and played at Anfield.

Declan John. 14/05/91. Born Neath. Midfield general who started at Swansea City before playing for the Reds, Afan Lido and Haverfordwest County. Made his Stebo debut against Garden Village in 2008 going on to play 9 first team games.

Bruno Forkuoh. 28/05/92. Born Noventa Vicentina. Signed for the Reds this summer after making his name with Seaside, then Garden Village. Played one game for the Reds in 2011 against Cambrian but is now back to impress again.

Steve Stone. 24/11/84. Born Llanelli. Can play in midfield or defence and has previously played Welsh League football for Pontardawe and Ammanford. Great tackler and is the player the youngsters look up too.

Liam Samuel. 14/04/93. Born Swansea. Ex Academy player, who signed from Trallwm. Will bring pace and direction to the Reds forward line. Has raw aggression and was the find of the season on the circuit apart from Ross Jones.

Ross Jones. 03/03/95. Born Swansea. Midfield dynamo, who covers almost every blade of grass during games like Steve Stone. Unsung hero for the Reds after signing for Ammanford and is a Welsh Colleges international.

Matthew Lloyd. 20/05/88. Born Swansea. The most skilful player to come out of Bwlch since Jordan Follows. Needs a load of fitness work, yes loads, but could be an important offensive player for the Reds, especially at Stebo.

FORWARDS

Will Davies. 12/02/98. Born Swansea. A product of Mumbles Rangers Juniors where his dad is the manager, Will brings exciting raw talent to the squad and was the youngest debutant for the Reds since Jordan Follows.

Luke Jones. 29/05/93. Born Swansea. Handful of a striker who now looks like Joe Jordan. Is providing the outlet for the Reds upfront and scored a hatrick against Barry Town to win the Gary Lloyd Cup.

Matthew Hughes. 18/06/84. Born Swansea. Predominately right footed and signed in pre-season from Cwmamman United. Is a useful addition to the Reds squad with his undoubted ability to play in several positions.

Robert Thomas. 14/08/88. Born Swansea. Signed from Seaside in September and is looking to follow in his brothers footsteps, Chris Thomas now with Carmarthen. Known as Rob the Gob and has an explosive turn of pace.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LLANELLI FOOTBALL

The game of Association Football was introduced to the town's people of Llanelli when workers from the Staffordshire area of England migrated to the town to work in the 'newest' of the town industries - the Pottery works from 1892 to 1920. The club initially played in the Swansea & District League playing their first matches at Cae Blake, Furnace, then the Peoples Park before moving to Tunnel Road and then at Penyfan Fields.

In 1912-13 the club decided to become fully professional and applied for membership of both the Southern and Welsh League. They also moved to a new ground, Halfway Park, a former Cycle Stadium, which was situated two miles from the town centre. Their first season 1912-13 was an immediate success finishing in sixth position in the Southern League and third in the Welsh League. The following season they entered into the Welsh Cup and reached the final at their first attempt before losing to Wrexham in a replay at Oswestry after the team had initially drawn 0-0 at Swansea Town Vetch Field.

After the First World War the club continued to participate in the Southern League and in the Welsh League with moderate success. They had ambitions of reaching the Football League and as a first step they moved to a new ground in Stebonheath in 1922. Tottenham Hotspur were the FA Cup winners of the previous season were invited to make the occasion of opening the new ground by playing the local team and the Londoners were given a rude awakening when they lost 2-1 on the day. For the next three years Llanelli built up a reputation of being one of the leading non-league clubs in the country, and in 1925 became the only club to contest every round in the FA Cup from Preliminary to Qualifying rounds and on to the equivalent Third Round of today when they met Fulham at Craven Cottage before losing by the odd goal in a highly emotional game.

At the end of World War II with league football returning back to normality, Llanelli AFC in common with other Welsh clubs returned to the Welsh League fold and again gained a place in the Southern League succeeding Colchester United who had gained a place in the Football League. This was another venture into a league blessed with ex-Football League players coming to the end of their careers. The manager of the time long servant Jack Goldsborough who had been a fixture in Stebo circles since 1923 as a player, trainer, coach, groundsman and secretary/manager assembled a team blessed in the main by ex Scottish League players including one John (*Jock*) Stein who was to find fame with Glasgow Celtic and Scotland in a managerial capacity after his playing days were over, but had made history in the FA Cup with the Reds in 50-51, before the club lost to Bristol Rovers after a 2nd replay at Ninian Park.

But even he and a succession of worthy managers could not prevent the indifferent seasons the club suffered which meant a lack of people through the turnstiles and by 1958 they had to seek re-election to both Southern and Welsh Leagues. They were granted a stay in the Southern League whilst had to be relegated in the Welsh League Division II (*West*). But worse was to follow when the Welsh FA refused to sanction their stay in the Southern League.

Llanelli were left in limbo with an all time low for their future for the 1958-59 season. But under the astute managership of Wilf Grant an England B International, promotion was gained to Division One of the Welsh League.

But when Wilf Grant went on to other climes Doug Wallace and Des Palmer became managers in succession without gaining honours. For the 1967-68 season brought Gwyn Grant (*who had been a backroom boy for years after a playing career*) to the hot seat and his achievements were noteworthy. Three Welsh League Championship titles in 1970-71, 1976-77 and 1977-78 inspired by Gilbert Lloyd followed, but the club's ambitions of a higher grade of football were always denied.

With the advent of the League of Wales in 1992-93 season when they became founder members. After an initial successful season the club fell away once more, and again due to financial constraints they were relegated in season 1995-96. However, the advent of Robert Jones to the club as owner and Chairman saw the club take on a new lease of life. First Dudley Lewis as player/manager set the seeds in motion and Robbie James took over in consecutive years but in February 1988 Robbie James tragically died at Stebonheath playing against Porthcawl.

His place was taken over by Leighton James who gained promotion for the club once more to the League of Wales by virtue of their ending as runners-up to Champions Ton Pentre who had declined promotion. After one season when the club ended in a creditable fifth position he suddenly resigned and it all turned sour by 2002-03 when the club was relegated to the Welsh Division 1 once more.

In season 2003-04 saw the club regain their rightful place in the Welsh Premier League under the management of ex/players of yester year Neil O'Brien and Lee Randall. Season 2004-05 saw firstly Eddie May followed by Nick Tucker took over the helm and he managed to stave off relegation at the end of the season.

During the close season the club which had been '*up for sale*' was taken over by the Jesco Group, who decided that the club needed to turn fully professional once again after half a century of lack lustre competition except for the Welsh League Championships of 1970-71, 76-77, 77-78 seasons. Spaniard Luca Cazorla became Director of Football and six Spanish players arrived at Stebonheath Park. But by Christmas something was adrift and Luca Cazorla left by mutual agreement with Peter Nicholas assuming control, achieving for the club for the first time in their history a position in the UEFA Cup after gaining 2nd spot. The following season 2007-08 was one of success becoming League Champions and winning the League Cup.

In season 2008-09 their Championship hopes were high but they ended in the runners-up spot the biggest shock was to come before the season's end when the tenure of Peter Nicholas was ended after five years at the helm, his contract was not renewed and Andy Legg was appointed to the '*hot seat*'. Season 2010-11 Legg saw his Reds side lift the coveted Welsh Cup with an emphatic 4-1 win against League Champions Bangor City at Parc y Scarlets and won the play-offs in 2011-12 beating Bala 2-1 in the final. This proved the last game for prolific striker Rhys Griffiths, who had scored 280 goals in 281 games. The club has also enjoyed extraordinary success on the European front beating Gefle, FK Vetra, Ventpils, Motherwell and Dinamo Tbilisi, although only the win against Gefle saw the club progress over two legs.

Season 2012-13, started with the club coming agonisingly close to reaching the second round of the Europa Cup, losing 3-2 to Kups. Financial trouble then hit, with Andy Legg leaving in October 2012 and Bob Jeffrey taking over in a vast cost cutting exercise. However the club was unable to stave off HMRC and were sadly liquidated in the High Court in London on 22nd April 2013, before reforming as Llanelli Town AFC this summer and joining Welsh League Division Three for season 2013-14.

Graham Williams.