

Newcastle & West FC (Ireland) • Rushden & Diamonds FC (England) • Wrexham Grosvenor FC (Wales) • Queens Island FC (Northern Ireland) • Ro-

Philip O'Rourke

FORGOTTEN FOOTBALL CLUBS

of Great Britain and Ireland
Gone but Never Forgotten



Terry Celtic FC (Northern Ireland) • Wanderers FC (England) • Brinsford FC (Ireland) • Alton United FC (Northern Ireland) • White Star FC (Wales) • Llanrhos Thistle FC (Scotland) • Belfast Celtic FC (Northern Ireland)

Ireland) • Dingwall Thistle FC (England) • Cork Hibernians FC (Ireland) • Maynooth FC (Ireland) • Kilmac FC (Ireland) • Third Lanark FC (Scotland) • Marryat Town FC (Northern

Irish) • Celtic Glasgow FC (Scotland) • Brechin City FC (Scotland) • Raith Rovers FC (Scotland) • Raith Rovers FC (Scotland) • Raith Rovers FC (Scotland) • Raith Rovers FC (Scotland)

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Contents

Thank You	9
Introduction	11
Corinthian-Casuals FC (England)	15
Cork Hibernians FC (Republic of Ireland).	21
Druids FC (Wales)	28
Gretna FC (Scotland).	39
Omagh Town FC (Northern Ireland)	70
Dingley Dell FC (England)	74
Cork Celtic FC (Republic of Ireland)	79
Maxwell FC (Scotland)	84
EMFA/Kilkenny AFC (Republic of Ireland)	86
Third Lanark AC (Scotland)	93
Derry Celtic FC (Northern Ireland)	106
Wanderers FC (England).	109
Drumcondra AFC (Republic of Ireland)	116
Alton United FC (Northern Ireland).	122
The White Stars FC (Wales).	125
Inverness Thistle FC (Scotland)	129
Belfast Celtic FC (Northern Ireland).	132
Newcastle West AFC (Republic of Ireland)	145
Rushden & Diamonds FC (England)	151
Wrexham Grosvenor FC (Wales)	155
Queen's Island FC (1881) (1920) (Northern Ireland).	158
Rochdale AFC (1896) (England).	163
Caledonian FC (Scotland)	172
Brooklyn FC (Republic of Ireland).	175
Rhyl FC (Wales)	181
Blackburn Olympic FC (England)	185

St James's Gate FC (Republic of Ireland).	193
Ulster FC (Northern Ireland)	199
Dundee Harps (Scotland)	203
Crystal Palace FC (1861) (England)	208
Carnarvon United FC (Wales)	212
Aberdeen Harps FC (Scotland)	215
Belfast United FC (Northern Ireland)	219
Bootle FC (England)	222
Cork United FC (Republic of Ireland)	225
Pontllanfraith AFC (Wales)	230
Renton FC (Scotland)	233
Telford United FC (England)	247
Merthyr Town FC (Wales).	253
King's Park FC (Scotland)	258
Dublin City FC (Republic of Ireland)	264
South Liverpool FC (England).	273
Abergavenny Thursdays FC (Wales).	275
Ballymena FC (Northern Ireland)	279
Dundee Wanderers FC (Scotland)	282
Manchester Association FC (England).	288
St Columb's Court FC (Northern Ireland).	291
Clydesdale FC (Scotland).	294
Kildare County FC (Republic of Ireland)	301
Bibliography	315

Corinthian-Casuals FC (England)

THIS IS the story of two of England's oldest clubs merging to form one club, one that still plays in the amateur league to this day, contesting in a renowned international tournament as well. But before I tell the story of how that came about, let us look at the clubs' origins and the two clubs that gave birth to Corinthian-Casuals FC. They are, perhaps unsurprisingly, Corinthian FC and Casuals FC

Corinthian FC were founded on 28 September 1882 and were based in London. They are most famous for being the club who spread the game of football worldwide but they are also famed for their outstanding commitment to sportsmanship, an ethos that still lives on within the club in its modern-day form as Corinthian-Casuals.

This was summed up by the club's unique outlook on penalties. With their belief that no sportsperson would intentionally foul an opposition player in their own box, the club decided they would let the opponent score the resulting penalty, without contest. What does this mean?

Well, the goalkeeper would simply stand beside one of his goalposts and let the opposition player kick the ball into the unguarded goal . Alternatively, if Corinthian were awarded a penalty, the captain of the side would kick the ball over the bar, missing intentionally.

But this is not their only claim to fame. It is said that Spanish giants Real Madrid were influenced by the amateur side to don the white jerseys they have made so famous in today's football world. Corinthian also influenced the names of Brazilian club Corinthians Paulista and Maltese club, Zejtun Corinthians. A small amateur club from London having such an influence is something that many would think was made up but it is not. And the amazing feats of this amateur club didn't stop there.

The club would become central to the international scene, with most of its players featuring for England. In fact, when the FA opted to field only amateur players in England's British Home Championship matches against Wales in 1894 and 1895 – at a time when amateur players could be registered with more than one club – the whole England team consisted of players registered with Corinthian. Never before had one club supplied an entire England XI and it has never happened since.

The first instance came on 12 March 1894, when England beat Wales 5-1 at the Racecourse Ground in Wrexham. That day, John Gould Veitch Jr. – who was registered with Old Westminsters FC as well as Corinthian – scored a hat-trick. It would be his only

England appearance and one he would never forget. With Wales contributing an own goal to England's tally, the visitors' fifth and final goal was scored by Robert Cunliffe Gosling, a Corinthian who was also registered with Old Etonians FC and scored his second international goal in what was his third appearance.

In that 1894 game, the Welsh had taken the lead before the English proved too strong for them in the end. That wasn't the case in their next encounter, which took place on 18 March 1895, again in the British Home Championship. This time, England were at home, playing at the Queen's Club, a multi-sports complex which, of course, has become famous for staging tennis matches. Wales again took the lead, this time after 69 minutes, with a goal from Billy Lewis. He was a Chester player at the time, and is still (although this is debatable) the club's most capped international to date, with 13 caps for Wales. I say debatable because Chester did have another player, Angus Eve, who won 35 caps for Trinidad & Tobago while playing for the club; however, he was only on loan (you can decide on that one!). The game ended 1-1 after Rupert Renorden Sandilands – who was registered with Corinthian and Old Westminsters FC – scored an equaliser in the 74th minute, his third international goal in four appearances. To this day, no other England XI has been solely made up of players from one club, and I doubt it will ever happen again.

It was written into the club's early constitution that Corinthian should not compete in any competition

for which there was a trophy or prize, meaning they mainly played friendly matches. However, an exception was made for the Sheriff of London Charity Shield, in which they competed on nine occasions between 1898 and 1907. The club won the competition – which went on to become the FA Charity Shield and then the FA Community Shield – three times.

It is often said that Corinthian FC, had they played in more competitions in this era, would have won a lot more silverware. People often point to their demolition of Blackburn Rovers in 1889, when they beat the Lancashire side 8-1. Rovers had won the FA Cup in 1884 and were seen as one of the country's top clubs. Corinthian were seen as the only English amateur team who could take on the best. Another standout result came in 1904 when they beat FA Cup holders Bury 10-3 in the Sheriff of London Charity Shield. This sounds even more impressive when you consider that Bury had thrashed Derby County 6-0 in the 1903 FA Cup Final.

Finally relaxing their rule over playing competitive matches, Corinthian first entered the FA Cup in the 1922/23 season but, with the gulf between amateur and professional clubs having steadily grown, they never won the competition. However, when they were invited to face FA Cup holders Cardiff City in the 1927 FA Charity Shield at Stamford Bridge, a narrow 2-1 defeat showed they could still hold their own at the highest level.

As English football continued to evolve, the club felt it was for the better to merge with Casuals FC in

1939. However, Corinthian FC left a great legacy, not least for the famous players who represented them. Amongst these were Andrew Watson, who became the first black international when he was capped by Scotland, and England captain Gilbert Smith, who won 20 caps between 1893 and 1901 – an England record at the time. The famous faces to play for Corinthian even included a Hollywood actor. Charles Aubrey Smith, who was also a cricketer and made one solitary appearance for England in that sport, has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Now, it's time to tell the story of Casuals FC. The club were founded in 1883 and were made up of players from Eton School, Westminster School and Charterhouse School, although this was expanded to all universities and other public schools. The club were a popular one and had plenty of players and matches, playing up to five games a week, fielding different teams in each.

In 1890, for the FA Cup, the club merged with Old Carthusians, a club who had won the trophy in 1881. However, they were knocked out in the first round by eventual finalists Wolverhampton Wanderers, losing 4-3.

Casuals FC were founding members of the Isthmian League in 1905 but left to join the Southern Amateur League. They stayed in that league for six seasons, from 1907 to 1913, before returning to the Isthmian League. In 1936, the club won the FA Amateur Cup, adding the trophy to their six London Charity Cup wins (1891, 1894, 1897, 1901, 1904, 1905).

Casuals, like Corinthian, contributed players to the England national team, with seven winning caps between 1895 and 1936. With FA rules allowing amateurs to play for multiple clubs, all seven were actually also registered as Corinthian players when they played for their country. The most notable of these was Bernard Joy, the last amateur to appear at full international level for England. Joy won his only cap in a 3-2 friendly defeat by Belgium in Brussels on 9 May 1936 at a time when he was playing for First Division club Arsenal as well as being on the books of Casuals and Corinthian.

It was on 4 January 1939 when the club held a meeting with Corinthian FC about a possible merger of the two clubs. The merger was agreed and a new club known as Corinthian-Casuals were formed. The club remain active to this day, playing in the Isthmian League. One has to wonder whether, if they decided to split, would either club survive or be able to climb the leagues? Or will they do it together in the next few years? Corinthian-Casuals in the Football League would be a brilliant addition.