

THE BEGINNINGS OF FOOTBALL IN GRIFFYDAM



THE "GRIFFYDAM SWIFTS"

OUTSIDE THE "TRAVELLER'S REST BEER HOUSE", TOP ROAD - 1904
SEE NEXT PAGE FOR FURTHER DETAILS

DRAFT ONLY - ONGOING PROJECT

BY SAMUEL T STEWART - JANUARY 2023

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

BACK ROW - L TO R

Mr. William Hodges, Mr. Sam Shakespeare (Zion Hill), Mr. Thomas Hodges (Father of Sam Hodges), Mr. Jack Stevenson (became Landlord of the Red Lion, Pegg's Green, in the 20's and 30's), Mr. Hill (Anchor Lane)

MIDDLE ROW

Mr. Albert Haywood (Broomleys Road)

FRONT ROW - FAR RIGHT

Mr. Isiah Hodges (Uncle of Sam Hodges)

The most intriguing thing about the photograph is that the team includes five forwards, 3 half-backs, and two full backs, but no goalkeeper !!

It shows that the players were wearing their everyday heavy pit boots with steel caps on the front. A couple of the players seem to be wearing some form of shin pads, not surprisingly. Shorts were made from cut down trousers, or alternatively of the rolled up variety and some just wore conventional long trousers. A motley crew indeed. The leather football was laced with a leather lace and the more mature amongst us who played football, will know from experience that it became extremely heavy when it got wet, even though preventative measures were attempted by treating it with waterproofing material like goose grease, which was a cheaper alternative to "Dubbin". Heading the ball was not a great experience either, particularly if the head came into contact with the protruding leather lace which would often cause lacerations. Punctures were a frequent occurrence, and the bladder, being rubber, was repaired in a similar way to bicycle inner tubes.

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INTRODUCTION

Most local football teams had relationships with a public house, as was also the case with the "Griffydam Swifts" and the "Travellers' Rest Beer House". Griffydam. The Swifts played their games on the football field adjacent to the Travellers' Rest, on a sloping pitch, and no doubt utilised the pub as their changing room and for a few swift pints with the visiting team after the home games.

Local information on the early days of football in Griffydam has proved impossible to come by, and we are extremely fortunate to have located the two old photographs included in the publication together with a number of the player's names. Once again, researching old newspapers has provided some success, and a number of transcribed reports follow in chronological order.

in the last year leading up to WW 1, local teams rarely played any games and after the War, football didn't really commence again till 1920. Their neighbouring team, Pegg's Green Victoria (established at the New Inn in 1885) lost three players from their first team in WW 1. Coleorton were established at the Beaumont Arms (Rotten Row) by 1879.

**THE FOLLOWING NEWSPAPER REPORTS AND
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION ARE GIVEN IN
CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER**

The following 1892 transcribed newspaper report, is the earliest reference found by the author to football being played in Griffydam.

Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 06 February 1892

SHEPSHED UNITED v. GRIFFYDAM

This match was played on the ground of the latter on Saturday, and resulted in a victory for the visitors by three goals to Griffydam's one goal.

The following 1893 reports were selected as being the most informative and provided some details on the players and officials :-

Leicester Chronicle – March 4th 1893

Griffydam Swifts (Won 2-1) v Shepshed Church of England.

Played at Griffydam on Saturday. The visitors won the toss and kicked downhill, Griffydam started but the visitor's forwards at once got hold and ran down, and Fowkes missing his kick, enabled them to score the first goal two minutes from the start. Immediately after, the home left wing broke away, and Shakespeare sent in a magnificent shot, which just skimmed the cross bar. From the goal kick, the visitors left got possession and ran down, but J. Johnson returned with a fine kick. After midfield play, Pickering at last broke away, passed the half backs and backs in a tricky manner, and centred beautifully, enabling Oliver to equalise with a lightening shot. After this, both teams played desperately, the home side having slightly the best of the game. From a scrimmage in front of the visitor's goal, Pickering scored the second goal for the Swifts, nothing further resulting up to half time. Re-starting, the homesters' went down with a rush, and Bradford sent in a brilliant shot, which the goalkeeper saved at the expense of a corner, which was placed behind. From the goal kick, the visitors ran up, but H. Johnson returned with a huge kick, enabling the homesters' to keep up the pressure. From a scrimmage in front of the visitor's goal, Hodges sent in a good shot, which would certainly have scored had not one of the backs deliberately fisted away. A free kick resulted but the ball was cleared. The home team continued to have the best of the game, which ended in favour of the Swifts by two goals to one. **Griffydam Players** :- C. Platts, goal; W. Fowkes and J. Johnson, backs; H. Johnson, J. Hodges and S. Johnson, half backs; H. Pickering, J. Turner, T. Oliver, J. Bradford, and S. Shakespeare, forwards.

Referee, Mr. Robey of Ashby; Linesman, S. Edwards.

		C. Platts		
	W. Fowkes		J. Johnson	
	H. Johnson	J. Hodges		S. Johnson
H. Pickering	J. Turner	T. Oliver	J. Bradford	S. Shakespeare

Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 21 January 1893

ELLISTOWN ROVERS v. GRIFFYDAM

Played on the ground of the latter on Saturday. The Swifts won the toss, and played downhill, but the Rovers had the best of the game, although no very good football was seen on either side, the ground being slippery. Changing ends, the Rovers again had slightly the best of the game, which ended:- Rovers, one ; Swifts, nil.

The following 1893/4 fixture list confirms Griffydam were playing in one of the divisions of "The Coalville & District Amateur League"

LIST OF MATCHES FOR 1893-4	
Sept.	16.—Ibstock Baptist, away.
"	30.—Moirs Rovers, home.
Oct.	7.—Burton St. Margaret's, away.
"	14.—Thringstone Ivanhoe, home.
"	21.—Swannington Rovers, home.
"	28.—Griffydam Swifts, away.
Nov.	4.—Moirs Rovers, away.
"	11.—Swannington Rovers, away.
"	18.—Heather Rovers, home.
"	25.—Overseal Town, away.
Dec.	2.—Ellistown Rovers, away.
"	9.—Overseal Swifts, home.
"	16.—Ibstock Baptist, home.
"	23.—Overseal Town, home.
"	30.—Thringstone Ivanhoe, away.
1894.	
Jan.	1.—Derby Wanderers, away.
"	13.—Whitwick Robin Hoods, away.
"	20.—Burton St. Margaret's, home.
Feb.	3.—Overseal Swifts, away.
"	10.—Whitwick Robin Hoods, home.
March	2.—Griffydam Swifts, home.
"	17.—Heather Rovers, away.
"	24.—Ellistown Rovers, home.

For the next 17 years for whatever reason, no further reports could be found on Griffydam Football Club. However, in 1910 the following transcribed reports show that Griffydam were playing in the 2nd division of the "Loughborough League", and by October were top of the league. They clearly had a very useful team at this time but were not now being referred to as Griffydam Swifts.

Melton Mowbray Mercury & Oakham & Uppingham News – October 27th 1910

THE LOUGHBOROUGH LEAGUE - DIVISION II

Griffydam strengthened their position at the top of the chart by defeating Loughborough Ivanhoe by six clear goals. This is Griffydam's sixth consecutive victory, their goal average to date being 21 against 7.

Melton Mowbray Mercury & Oakham & Uppingham News – November 10th 1910

CASTLE DONINGTON TOWN v GRIFFYDAM

At Castle Donington. – The game opened fast, Griffydam forcing matters. Barker was twice tested. The Dons had several reserves, but corners repeatedly fell to them. Griffydam occasionally got away and scored after thirty minutes. The Dons renewed

the attack, missing several grand openings. Staples and Hodkins kept banging at goal, but nothing resulted. The Dons, made a big effort just before the interval, but Haywood saved.

HALF TIME

In the second half the Dons set about their task in real earnest, and scored nine goals, the visitors responding with one goal.

RESULT - CASTLE DONINGTON TOWN 9 – GRIFFYDAM 2

**Melton Mowbray Mercury & Oakham & Uppingham News –
September 22nd 1910**

LOUGHBOROUGH AND DISTRICT LEAGUE – DIVISION II

LOUGHBOROUGH OLYMPIC v GRIFFYDAM

Played at Griffydam in fine weather. The home team won the toss, and set the “Brownies” to kick up the slope and face the sun. The visitors soon got going, and were very dangerous during the first few minutes, the ball hovering around the home team’s goal. One of the Griffydam players punched the ball out from a good shot, but the referee did not see the incident. The home team broke away on the left, and from a scrimmage, Brewin scored the first goal. Griffydam kept up the pressure, and they soon secured another goal. The “Brownies” were now playing a good game. Folkes sent in a hot shot, which the keeper saved. From this point the visitors forced several corners, which were of no avail. The home team’s defence were playing a good game. The centre-forward got away, and after beating nearly all the “Brownies” defence, passed the ball to the inside right, who appeared to be standing off-side. The player, however, shot the ball in the net and at the interval the score was:-

HALF TIME

GRIFFYDAM 3 – OLYMPIC 0

On resuming, the visitors could not get going, and a fourth goal was soon registered for the home team. A fifth goal was disallowed. This livened the Brownies up, and Folkes, changing position with Jarram, began to worry the Griffydam defence, and from this point the home side did not get over the half way line again more than twice. The Olympic kept up the pressure with good staying power, which they found their opponents lacked, but bad luck dogged the visitors, and they could not score. Numerous corners were awarded to Loughborough, but it was wonderful how the ball was kept out of the net. Olympic kept up the pressure, and the ball was handled in the penalty area. Mitchell took the kick and scored. From this there was only one team (Olympic) in the game, and they gave the home defence a stiff task. Folkes centred the ball, and Jarram meeting it, banged it in the net. From the centre they pressed, and Mitchell just grazed the bar with a fast shot, and later Jarram hit the bar when the goalkeeper had given up the shot. The home goal had some miraculous escapes, but time came with the result :-

GRIFFYDAM 4 – OLYMPIC 2

Leicester Daily Post – March 22nd 1911

LOUGHBOROUGH AND DISTRICT LEAGUE

MONTHLY MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE

Griffydam reported Sileby Victoria Reserves for not fulfilling a fixture at Sileby on March 11th. The correspondence between the two clubs was read by the secretary, and Sileby were fined 2s 6d. for breaking the fixture, and ordered to pay 7s. 6d. expenses.

Loughborough Olympic reported Griffydam for being an hour late on February 25th. – **The secretary of Griffydam club said they were delayed at Griffydam owing to their centre forward being married that day. As full time was played Griffydam were only cautioned.**

**Melton Mowbray Mercury and Oakham and Uppingham News -
Thursday 30th March 1911**

DIVISION II

LOGHBOROUGH IVANHOE v. GRIFFYDAM

Played at Loughborough, Griffydam won the toss. The visitors were soon aggressive and after ten minutes' play King opened the score from a corner. The early reverse led to a severe attack on the visitors citadel, and Peaty was tripped inside the penalty area. Perry took the resultant kick but hit the upright. Through some infringement the kick had to be taken again. This time the goalkeeper save but put the ball straight back to the kicker, who eventually shot outside. Play continued in the visitor's quarter for a time, but Griffydam again got going, and King increased their score. Hal time arrived shortly afterwards, the score being:-

GRIFFYDAM TWO GOALS; IVANHOE NONE

The second half opened in the Ivanhoe's favour, and Peaty soon reduced the lead. This aroused the visitors and Richards added their third goal. After a period of end-to-end play, Biddle's scored the home team's second goal. Griffydam again took up the running, and Richards and Buttley added to their score. From this point to the end, Ivanhoe had all the play, but failed to make use of several chances. Hall, Biddles, and Peaty, all missing good openings. The game ended with the score:-

GRIFFYDAM FIVE GOALS ; IVANHOE TWO

**Melton Mowbray Mercury and Oakham and Uppingham News –
April 13th 1911**

**LOUGHBOROUGH AND DISTRICT LEAGUE I - DIVISION II
SILEBY VICTORIA RESERVES v GRIFFYDAM**

The visitors arrived late, and play was delayed nearly half an hour late. Sileby spoiled a good chance through offside play, but forced three corners, which were all cleared. The Vics. Continued to press, and many corners were given. Once the ball struck the ground in front of the net, and bounced clean over. Clarke, in the Sileby goal smartly fisted out, and the Griffydam custodian also saved very neatly on several occasions. A free kick for hands was given against the visitors, but the shot was well parried. Another corner fell to Sileby, but it was headed just wide. Another shot from a Sileby

forward travelled wide, and then, from a corner, Taylor beat the visiting goal keeper. Immediately afterwards, the whistle blew for half time with score:-

HALF TIME

SILEBY VICTORIA RESERVES 1 – GRIFFYDAM 0

Resuming, the wind was quieter for a little while, and play ruled even. The defence on each side was stronger than the attack. Offside spoiled a good opportunity for Griffydam, and a chance to Sileby was not taken advantage of. Griffydam pressed, and Clark fisted out, giving a corner, which was cleared. The wind was now giving the visitors a great advantage, but long shots always went wide or over the goal. Griffydam nearly scored, Clark saving splendidly at full length on the ground. The remainder of the play consisted in a bombardment of the Sileby goal, but the defence was grand, and the goalkeeper very safe. The end came with no addition to the score:-

SILEBY VICTORIAL RESERVES 1 – GRIFFYDAM 0

The league chart shows Griffydam placed second behind Kegworth Victoria in April 1911

DIVISION II.
Loughborough Ivanhoe 2, Woodhouse 3.
Sileby Reserves 1, Griffydam 0.

	P.	W	D.	L.	Goals		Pt.
					F.	A.	
Kegworth Victoria	15	11	2	2	61	18	24
Griffydam	14	10	2	2	56	16	22
Nathora Excelsior ...	16	8	3	5	53	37	19
*Loughborough Olympic	14	8	2	4	51	25	16
Castle Donington Res. ...	15	6	3	6	22	37	15
Woodhouse Imperial	13	7	0	6	54	31	14
Sileby Victoria Reserves..	14	6	1	7	39	43	13
Loughborough Ivanhoe ...	13	1	1	11	17	45	3
Bredon Villa	14	0	0	14	8	65	0

*Two points deducted for playing non-eligible man.

[Leicester Daily Post – July 5th 1911](#)

**FOOTBALL
LOUGHBOROUGH AND DISTRICT LEAGUE
ANNUAL MEETING**

.....In Division II, Kegworth Victoria and Griffydam tied for the top place, and a match to decided the championship was won by Kegworth Victoria. He understood that Griffydam wanted very badly to win the cup, and had subscribed weekly during the whole season to a fund which was to present £10 10s. to the Loughborough Hospital in the event of their winning the cup. The sum was raised, but the cup was not won, so the hospital lost £10 10s.

Coalville Times - Friday 25 August 1911

COALVILLE AND DISTRICT LEAGUE

THRINGSTONE AND GRIFFYDAM MATTERS

A meeting of the management committee of the above league was held on Monday night at the Red House, Coalville, Mr. R.T. Bradshaw presiding, and there being also present Messrs. D Marston, A. Clay, and the secretary, C.E. Marston.

An application was received from Thringstone House F.C. to allow the guinea they forfeited last year to stand as their deposit this year, the club having joined again after being out of the league for a year. A previous application for the return of the money was not granted, but under the special circumstances, the club were led to understand that the matter would be considered if they applied to re-enter. After some discussion, it was decided that the deposit must be forfeited according to the rules and another deposit made for the club this season.

A letter was received from Mr. T. Townsend of Griffydam, asking the league to admit a team from Griffydam in Division two.

The latter addressed to the secretary, stated:- "We were all very sorry in Griffydam that Mr. Wilson could not see his way clear to run a football team this year, and I think it is a great pity that the sport should be allowed to die out in the village, when we had such a thriving club. A number of us are now endeavouring to form a club and can raise a team though it will not be as strong as we could have had. Can we, if we succeed, be adopted to your league. We had all hoped you would have permitted us to play in your 1st Division as we could have found a stronger one than last year's one, but we had to put up with the disappointment of being ordered into the 2nd after Loughborough League had offered us 1st Division. This unhappily broke us up and our best players are leaving us. Still we may even now raise a small club, and we will try to run through".

The matter was discussed at some length and Mr. Townsend and another representative having attended the meeting, the committee heard what they had to say. It was pointed out that the second division was now made up, the place for Griffydam having been filled by Bagworth Town Reserves when the committee were informed that there would be no club at Griffydam. The committee decided however, to call a special meeting of the first division clubs next Monday night to decide whether Griffydam be accepted in the first division, provided they wrote before next Thursday saying they would enter Division 1.

Mr. Townsend said that he did not think they would get a team for Division 1, but he would do his best.

GRIFFYDAM FOOTBALL TEAM, POST WW I

The following photograph confirms that Griffydam eventually made it into the Coalville & District Amateur Football League, albeit in Division III, which they were winners of in the 1921 -22 season

Griffydam Football Club, 1921-22.
Winners of the Third Division Coalville League.



T. WITHAM, G. WHEATLEY, J. CROSON, J. KING, W. SPRINGTHORPE, W. TURNER, T. CADWALLADER,
(Trainer,) (Captain,)

A. SYKES, F. WITHAM, R. CADWALLADER, R. WARD, C. PLATTS, J. HODGES,
W. ROWELL, G. CROSON, W. BARTRAM, H. SPRINGTHORPE, J. WARD.

Derby Daily Telegraph – December 28th 1923

DERBY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION - MEDALS

SEMI-FINAL

Findern and Griffydam met on Boxing Day at Findern, and played on a heavy ground at a pace associated with ideal conditions. Griffydam from the kick-off went down in overwhelming fashion, but they found a rock-like defence. The defence eventually turned the game in the home team's favour for some time ; then even play followed, and the visitors opened the scoring before the interval. On resuming, Findern made a great effort to pull the game out of the fire, and goals from Withers and Pagett put them ahead. By this time both teams looked tired. However, with about ten minutes to go, Griffydam rallied to such extent that they equalized four minutes from time. Both sides are to be congratulated on putting up such a clean hard game, and the return encounter should be worth seeing. Jack Pawley stood out as the man of the match.