

HISTORY OF DAWLISH TOWN AFC

Dawlish Town Association Football Club was formed in 1889. The original name was Dawlish Argyle but the Argyle was dropped many years ago. The name 'Town' was added in recent years in order to distinguish the club from other local teams.

In the early years the club played at two different locations before moving to its present day site now known as Sandy Lane midway through the 20th century.

Originally, there was only one team, but the club added another side around the same time as they moved to Sandy Lane. By 1950, Dawlish introduced a third team into Junior Football. The success of the junior side was not far away, with the team winning their Junior 3B League in season 1953/54 with a 100% record and also winning the League Cup as well.

One of the earliest recorded honours occurred in season 1931/32 when the club lifted the East Devon Senior Cup. In 1960, Dawlish played a Torquay based side for what transpired to be for the title of 'East Devon Champions'. Dawlish won the game 3 – 0 and were duly recognised as East Devon Champions.

Dawlish Town's best ever season was in 1972/73. There were only two sides at this time but both sides won every competition they entered – a total of 7 trophies in all! The 1st team won the following: Exeter & District Premier League; Devon Premier Cup; East Devon Senior Cup; Sellick Memorial Cup; Rothmans Invitation Trophy. The 2nd team won the following: Exeter & District Senior League; Geary Cup.

After such success, the club decided that the 1st team should join the Western League in season 1973/74 with the 2nd team moving up to the Devon & Exeter Premier Division. At this time, the town of Dawlish had two other senior Saturday sides playing under the banner of AL Dawlish. An agreement was made that AL Dawlish would join Dawlish Town and with two Sunday senior teams running from 1983 to 1990, the senior playing strength of the club was considerable.

In the 1970's Dawlish ran a Youth team with their first honours being the Bevin Trophy at Under 15 level in season 1973/74 and the Devon Youth Cup at Under 18 level in season 1975/76. A full Youth Section was formed in 1983 and under its separate committee, 5 teams represented the club in various age groups. 1989 was one of their best years with the Under 14's not only winning their league, but also their League Cup final at Torquay Utd's Plainmoor ground.

Youth football continues to flourish within the town and is under the banner of Dawlish United Youth & Mini Soccer.

In season 1988/89, Dawlish 3rd team won the Devon & Exeter Senior League 3 remaining unbeaten for the entire season and only dropping 3 points!

As a requirement of Western League football, Dawlish Town installed floodlights on their ground in 1987, and the official opening was the 9th February 1987, celebrated when Queens Park Rangers brought their full squad to play the 1st team. At the beginning of the 1987/88 season, Dawlish played host to Aberdeen and in season 1988/89 both Chelsea and Watford visited Dawlish. Chelsea in fact played twice at Dawlish, playing Torquay Utd in a pre-season friendly as Torquay's ground was not ready to host pre-season friendlies. Dawlish have also played Crewe Alexandra on several occasions having established a close relationship with their manager Dario Gradi. It was Dario Gradi who spotted the talents of a Dawlish Youth player 'Seth Johnson', and for those who do not know – Seth Johnson not only played for Crewe, but went on to play for Derby County and Leeds Utd as well as becoming a full England international.

As part of the Western League development standards, Dawlish built new changing rooms in readiness for the 1989/90 season. Since this time, Dawlish have hosted many football league teams to include Burnley, Lincoln City, Leyton Orient, Bury, Bristol City, Huddersfield, Sheffield Wednesday and Wimbledon as well as our local senior teams Plymouth Argyle, Torquay Utd and Exeter City.

Not every club in the country can say that one of their teams have played at Wembley Stadium even once let alone twice! But in May 1996 Dawlish Town won the inaugural Carlsberg Pub Cup Final with Wembley Stadium hosting the final. Dawlish Town won the cup 4 – 2 on penalties with the undoubted hero being Dawlish Town's goalkeeper Jamie Day who saved two penalties! Dawlish had also won their semi-final at Anfield by two goals to nil.

The second visit to Wembley was on the 22nd September, 1996 when Dawlish played the Dutch Carlsberg Champions Brigade Bodega in a first ever Carlsberg European Pub Cup Championship. On this occasion Dawlish lost 1 – 0 after conceding a late goal.

In season 1999/2000, Dawlish regained their Screwfix Western League Premier Division place after finishing as runners-up in the First Division. Due to some fantastic support from 2nd team players under the guidance of Dave Cleave and Ray Green, and wonderful support from Dawlish United Under 16's, Dawlish were able to endure a difficult period in it's history at this time. When the 'chips were down', true heroes of the club stepped forward to be counted!

Season 2002/2003 also saw the introduction of a Ladies team who in their first season secured 3rd position in the Westward Developments Devon League First Division.

Season 2003/04 saw the club re-enter a 3rd team in the Devon & Exeter Intermediate League IV and they immediately gained promotion to Intermediate III which sadly saw the 1st team relegated back to the Screwfix Western League First Division and the 2nd team to Devon & Exeter Senior II.

At around 04:00 hrs on the 5th August 2004, the club was hit by another devastating blow when it's wooden stand (built in 1942), and which had witnessed so much of the history of the club was completely destroyed by fire.

Season 2004/05 saw the 1st and 2nd teams establish their league positions. The 3rd team however continued to flourish under manager Tim Bradshaw and secured promotion to Devon & Exeter League Intermediate II.

Season 2005/06 was a resounding success for the 1st team. Promotion to the Toolstation Premier League was secured as champions, with Dawlish Town becoming the first team in over 30 years to go through the 100 point barrier and score over 100 goals! Striker Carl Cliff-Brown was also the top goalscorer for the Toolstation Western League! The 2nd team were placed in Devon & Exeter Senior III League after a re-shuffle of the leagues within the Devon & Exeter Football Leagues and they just missed out on promotion. Yet again the 3rd team enjoyed another promotion year, this time finishing as runners-up to secure their position in Intermediate I for 2006/07.

At the beginning of season 2006/07 Dawlish Town played a pre-season friendly with Torquay Utd and marked the occasion by having their new grandstand officially opened jointly by Torquay Utd Chairman Mike Bateson, Dawlish Town's Managing Director Terence Stone and Chairman and Director Dave Fenner. In recognition of outstanding support given to the club by Terence Stone, the grandstand was duly named the 'Terence Stone Stand'.