

# STAR'S READING FC HALL OF FAME



## 2019 INDUCTIONS

# Welcome

We are pleased, honoured and privileged to hold the fourth STAR's Reading FC Hall of Fame, this evening. The Hall of Fame continues to grow as we induct 25 more people into this select membership. Once again, there are a number of people to thank for their contribution to this event.

Firstly, we thank our compère for this evening, Paul Allen. I also want to thank Nic Ide for work in setting up the presentation that you will see tonight. Thanks are also due to Reading Football Club and Reading Football Club's Former Players' Association for their great and invaluable help. I would like to thank STAR Board Members, especially Kevin Lenton and Roger Titford for their input to bring this evening to fruition as well as the judging panel who have come up with this selection for tonight's Hall of Fame.

Lastly, I am very pleased that the Mayor of Reading, Councillor Debbie Edwards has agreed to join us tonight.

I hope you enjoy the evening.

## Ian Maynard

Chair, STAR



# Good Evening

I am delighted to be able to lend my support to the fourth episode of STAR's Reading FC Hall of Fame. This annual event is very important to Reading Football Club. It enables our fans, young and old, and our football community to come together to recognise and celebrate the achievements of our many significant players, managers, supporters and staff in the first 150 years of our history.

## Nigel Howe

CEO

Reading Football Club

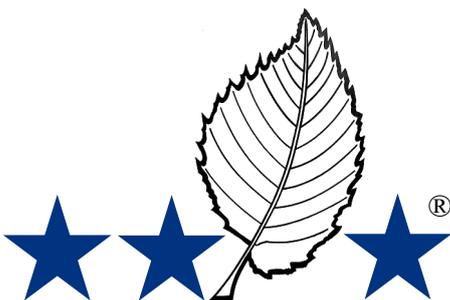


The Hall of Fame is a celebration and a record of individuals who have played an exceptional or distinctive part in the life of the club. It will include players, managers, officials, journalists and supporters with the number of inductees evenly spread to represent each decade of the Club's history. Our aim is to have 150 inductees by the point the club celebrates the 150th anniversary of its first match on 21st February 2022. So each year until then there will be a fresh set of names acknowledged and introduced into the Hall of Fame. The selection will reflect on the values that STAR endorses and applauds.

The system of inducting 12 to 25 people a year means that their induction would be special or noticeable rather than being lost in a mass of names and thus creating interest in who will be inducted each year.

For the 2019 selection more than twenty long-standing or highly committed supporters put forward their nominations (this element of the selection process has been open for all fans to participate in) and a final selection panel of eight - three STAR Board members and five others - made the decisions on whom to include this year.

In the first instance STAR's Reading Hall of Fame will be viewed on-line via STAR's website [www.star-reading.org](http://www.star-reading.org) after the launch celebration. At a later date, and as the numbers build, the Hall of Fame may have a more physical presence in and around the stadium.

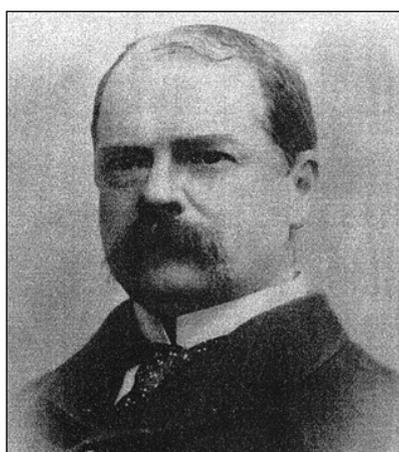


# 1870s

## James Simonds

President of the club and influential supporter right throughout its amateur days (1871-1895). Often described in the early days as the 'father of Reading FC' or its greatest friend. He presided over the AGM and helped with the finances of the club in difficult times. James also served for long periods on the town council and was a true Reading patriot from a long-established Reading family.

**Reading career 1871-95**  
**First President of The Reading Football Club**

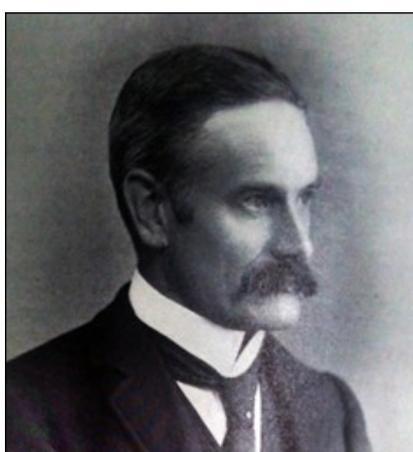


# 1880s

## Stanley Hayward

A Reading man, initially a half back in 1875 but converted to a goalkeeper after two seasons and was a regular player until 1889. He was in Reading's first Berks & Bucks Cup win in 1879, played for the Berks & Bucks FA and was regarded in his prime as a fine keeper worthy of England consideration. Hayward could be quite an attacking goalie, scoring 7 times in over 200 appearances!

**Reading career 1875-89**  
**c200+ appearances**  
**c7 goals**



# 1890s

## Stan Justins

Stan played full-back between 1887 and 1897 having learned his football with South Reading. His was an unusually long career for those days. Stan was acting captain of the club on many occasions. He was one of very few players of the amateur Reading to successfully turn professional. Stan was always a level-headed man in a crisis both on and off the pitch and a member of the 1892 B&B Cup-winning team.

**Reading career 1887-97**  
**194 appearances**  
**2 goals**



# 1890s

## Johnny Holt

Johnny was an established and well-known international when he signed for Reading from Everton in 1898 – a 5ft 4ins centre-half, reputed to have invented the sliding tackle.

His form for Southern League Reading was good enough to earn him one more England cap – thus becoming our first pro England international – and he became the first man to play 10 times for England without losing.

**Reading career 1898-1902**  
**112 appearances**  
**2 goals**



# 1900s

## Ernie Watts

Ernie was one of our first professional players. He signed from Tilehurst for the princely sum of 2/6d (12.5p) in 1896. 'Big Wattie' was a physical presence at either right half or occasionally as an emergency goalkeeper. In between his three spells for Reading, a strong Southern League side then, he played at First Division level with Notts County and Clapton Orient.

**Reading career 1896-1908**  
**177 appearances**  
**8 goals**

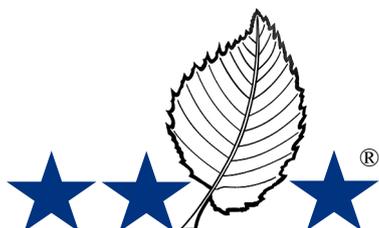


# 1900s

## Billy Henderson

Billy made more appearances for Reading in the 1900s than any other player. He was a tough-tackling defender whose physical play saw him form an impressive full back pairing with Herbert Smith. Billy missed only one match in 1904-05 when Reading finished runners-up in Southern League Division One. He signed for Reading three times with spells at Southampton and Everton in between.

**Reading career 1897-1906**  
**177 appearances**  
**0 goals**

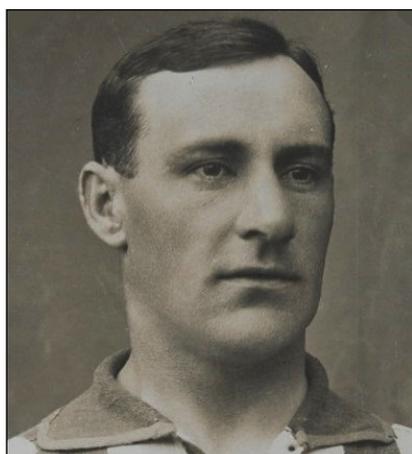


# 1910s

## Jack Smith

Jack Smith was captain and right back throughout the 1910s and into our first League season in 1920-21. He joined the club from Portsmouth for a mere £5 in 1910. In December 1920 Jack became our first player-manager and guided the club away from the threat of having to apply for re-election in our first League season.

**Reading career 1910-22**  
**252 appearances**  
**0 goals**



# 1920s

## Bert Eggo

A skilful right back from Scotland Bert played 312 games for Reading, the most pre-WWII appearances. Previously with Hearts and Sheffield Wednesday he signed in June 1921 for our second League season. He captained the side that won promotion in 1926 from Division III (S) and reached the FA Cup semi-final in 1927 and was seen as the calm influence in the dressing room.

**Reading career 1921-29**  
**312 appearances**  
**2 goals**



# 1920s

## Alf Messer

Alf signed in 1923 and played almost every game until joining Tottenham in 1930 for the large fee of £2,000. He was in the first Reading side to win a Football League promotion in 1926 – the Division III (S) title – and the first side to reach the FA Cup semi-finals the year after. A dominant centre-half, Alf was reckoned to be the best uncapped player of the day.

**Reading career 1923-30**  
**295 appearances**  
**19 goals**

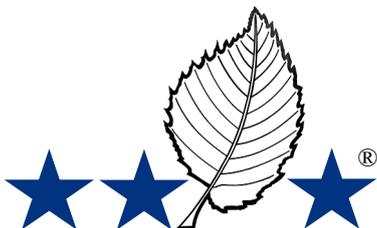


# 1930s

## Billy Butler

Billy was a veteran winger with three FA Cup winners' medals (all with Bolton) when he joined Reading in 1933. On retiring he became an innovative manager in 1935, installing a gymnasium at Elm Park and taking players out into the community. Billy came close to winning promotion several times, winning over 50% of his League matches in charge.

**Reading career 1933-39**  
**67 appearances**  
**16 goals**



# 1940s

## Joe Edelston

Joe was appointed manager of Reading in April 1939. When war broke out in September 1939 the club were top of Division III (S). He steered the club through the war years, winning the London War Cup in 1941 and keeping club spirits high. He managed our first post-war season (1946-47) which included our record 10-2 League victory over Crystal Palace.

**Reading career 1939-47**  
**Manager**

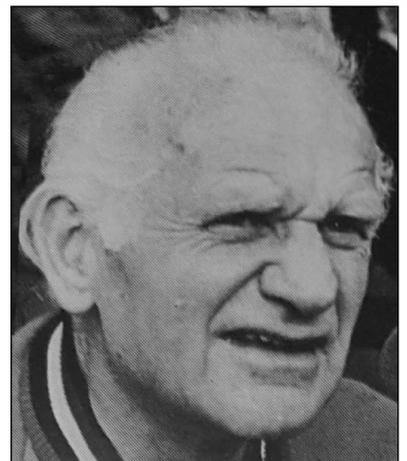


# 1950s

## Jimmy Wallbanks

Jimmy had a short League career with Reading as a centre-half, joining the club in 1938 and continuing to play during the war. But he is best remembered as the long-serving trainer and physio, a position he first took up in 1953 and held until his testimonial match in 1975, 22 years later. He delighted fans with his wise -cracking and his unusual high-stepping run onto the pitch to treat injured players.

**Reading career 1953-75**  
**58 appearances**  
**1 goal**



# 1950s

## Jimmy Wheeler

Jimmy was born in Reading and signed professional in August 1952. He started as a left winger but played across the forward line and became a prolific scorer, topping the chart four seasons in a row. After injury in 1964 his new role was player-manager of the reserve side which won the Football Combination Second Division title in 1966 – and so he was voted Player of the Season.

**Reading career 1952-68**  
**452+1 appearances**  
**168 goals**



# 1960s

## Maurice Evans

Maurice was born in Reading and made his debut in October 1955 at left half. His strong but fair play, good character and all-round effort made him a firm favourite with the fans. He was never booked or sent off in an 11-year career. Maurice became manager in 1977, won the Division Four title in 1979 and was briefly Director of Football (2000).

**Reading career 1953-66**  
**and 1974-84**  
**459 appearances**  
**16 goals**

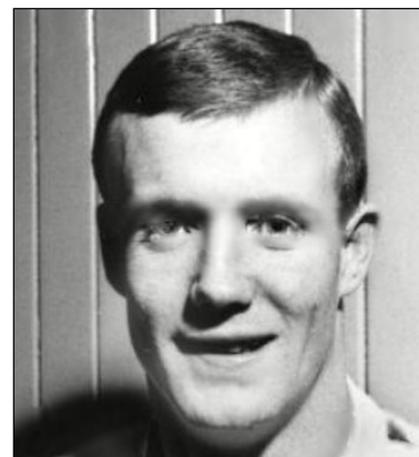


# 1960s

## Colin Meldrum

Colin signed from Watford in April 1963 for £1,300 and became one of manager Roy Bentley's best signings. He was a virtual ever present from April 1963 to October 1969 mainly at left-back. Colin was Reading's first Player of the Season in 1963-64 and retained the trophy the next season. He was a tough-tackling Scot who inspired team-mates by example.

**Reading career 1963-69**  
**302+2 appearances**  
**9 goals**



# 1970s

## Bobby Williams

Bobby joined in 1969 and served the club as a player, a coach and as a scout. He played a key left-wing role in the hugely entertaining team of 1969-70, scoring 16 goals, often ghosting in at the far post – hence his nickname 'The Shadow'. In 1974 he returned as reserve manager, then youth team coach and finally scout – as well as being a committed vice-president of the Supporters' Club.

**Reading career 1969-71**  
**67+5 appearances**  
**22 goals**



# 1980s

## Stuart Beavon

Stuart joined in 1980 from Spurs and was a permanent fixture in the Reading team for the entire 1980s. He was a cultured midfielder and dead-ball expert and the creator of many goals for the free-scoring promotion sides of 1984 and 1986. Stuart famously scored the opening goal from the spot in our Simod Cup final triumph of 1988.

**Reading career 1980-90**  
**460+21 appearances**  
**55 goals**



# 1980s

## Steve Richardson

Steve was a tough-tackling, fast, left-back who made the number three shirt his own over an 11-year career, thanks to his consistency and enthusiasm. He joined from Southampton in 1983 and was a virtual ever present in the promotion seasons of 1984 and 1986 and the Simod Cup triumph in 1988. Steve rarely scored but his goal gave the club its highest then (1987) League finish.

**Reading career 1982-93**  
**449+8 appearances**  
**3 goals**



# 1990s

## Keith McPherson

Keith joined Reading from Northampton in 1990 and was a regular choice at centre-back for the next nine years. He was not especially tall for a centre-back but was quick and hard as nails and adapted to many different playing styles and defensive partnerships. Keith was the Reading captain under three different managers and skippered the club to the Division Two championship in 1994.

**Reading career 1990-99**  
**307+10 appearances**  
**8 goals**

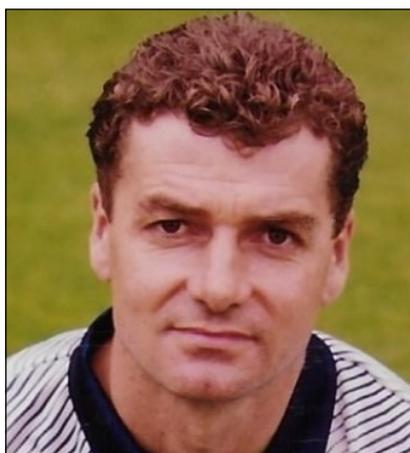


# 1990s

## Mick Gooding

Mick signed in 1989 from Wolves at the age of 30 but was able to play over 350 games for Reading. He was both tough and skilful in midfield and a key component of Mark McGhee's Division Two title-winners in 1994 and just missed the Premier League in 1995. Then he shared the player-manager duties with Jimmy Quinn for two and a half seasons.

**Reading career 1989-97**  
**356+12 appearances**  
**30 goals**



# 2000s

## Nick Shorey

Nicky joined from Leyton Orient in 2000 and developed into such a strong player he became the first Reading man in over a century to play for England, winning two caps in 2007. Slightly built and with excellent ball control Nicky was an attacking full-back in the record-breaking '106' side and won a place in the PFA divisional team of 2005-06. He scored many fine goals with pinpoint free-kicks.

**Reading career 2000-09**  
**and 2012-13**  
**316+1 appearances**  
**14 goals**

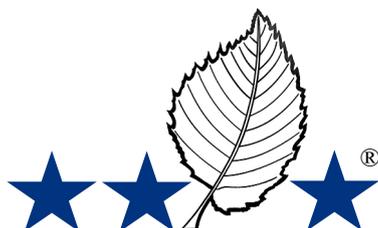
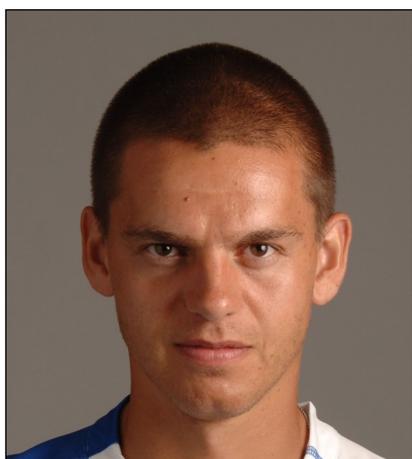


## 2000s

### Ivar Ingimarsson

Ivar was an experienced international defender with Iceland when he joined from Brentford in 2003 for a fee of £175,000. He gave the club eight years great service, and together with Ibrahima Sonko, Ivar formed a formidable defensive barrier in the famous 2005-06 season. Ivar was ever-present and never booked. He adapted so well to the Premier League he was voted Player of the Season in 2006-07.

**Reading career 2003-11**  
**276+7 appearances**  
**11 goals**



## 2000s

### Dave Kitson

Dave joined Reading from Cambridge in 2003 for the bargain fee of £150,000. As a tall, skilful centre-forward, good in the air and on the ground, he scored goals a-plenty. He was a key figure in the '106' team of 2005-06 and then scored Reading's very first Premier League goal against Middlesbrough. After a spell with Stoke he briefly returned to Reading and later settled here.

**Reading career 2003-09**  
**130+29 appearances**  
**62 goals**

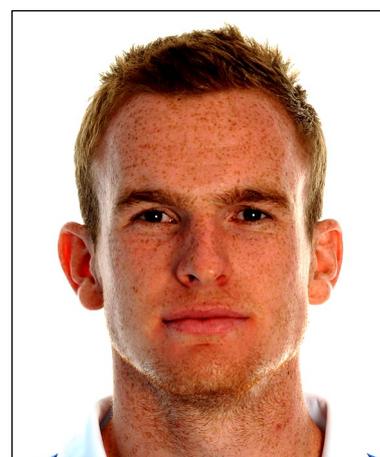


## 2010s

### Alex Pearce

Alex is an Academy product from a young age who captained our youth side to the PL Cup win 2007. He staked a first team berth at the heart of the defence in 2009-10. Alex, a fine ambassador for the club, was ever-present in the Football League Championship-winning side of 2012, scoring 5 goals and winning Player of the Season.

**Reading career 2005-15**  
**228+12 appearances**  
**15 goals**

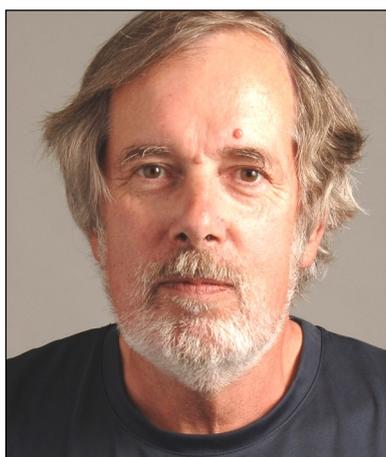


# 2010s

## David Downs

David is one of the best-known Reading supporters but more than that he has been involved with the club as its official historian. His book 'Biscuits & Royals' was published in 1984. After retiring from teaching David went to work for the club in a variety of roles including Education Officer and Youth Protection Officer, finally retiring at the age of 76 in 2018.

**Club historian and  
Academy official**



## Last Year's Inductees

In 2018 we inducted another twenty-five names into the Hall of Fame. In chronological order they were:

John Morgan  
Edgar Field  
Frank Deane  
Herbert Smith  
Harry Matthews  
Ted Hanney  
Billy McConnell  
Harry Sirrett  
Arthur Bacon  
Tony McPhee  
Johnny Brooks  
Dick Spiers  
Denis Allen

Gordon Cumming  
Steve Hetzke  
Ian Branford  
Martin Hicks  
Michael Gilkes  
Sir John Madejski  
Shaka Hislop  
Phil Parkinson  
Kevin Doyle  
Nick Hammond  
Eamonn Dolan  
Brian McDermott

All their profiles can be found under the Heritage tab on our website at [www.star-reading.org](http://www.star-reading.org). If you would like to take part in the nomination process for 2020 please get in touch with STAR.



Martin Allen receiving an award on behalf of his father Denis Allen, presented by the then Mayor of Reading, Cllr. Rose Williams and STAR Chairman, Ian Maynard at the 2018 Hall of Fame evening.