BOCKING UNITED SERVICES CLUB

BUSC's beginnings are lost somewhat in the mists of history. They started at a time when the league's records are a bit thin and they carried on as something of an also-ran for a number of years before bursting forth as the league's major club for a period – then slipped back even more quickly to one team before disappearing altogether. For most of that time, they played in the old schoolroom, one of the league's cosier venues, lacking a bit of space but with a good floor, a perfectly adequate table and some refreshment from the bar at half-time.

The first reference I was able to find was for the beginning of season 1974-75. The Braintree and Witham Times preview of the season notes that they were back after a year's absence, which suggests they played in either or both of the 1972 or 1973 seasons as they are not in the table for 1971.

And their first season was not auspicious. They played 18 matches in the lowest division, drew three and lost the rest. But they bucked up after a year and finished in mid table in 1976 when their team included John Wright, who was the club's secretary for many years, Brian Hurtley and Ken Hooper. They climbed to sixth the following year, which was enough to get them promoted to division three (other teams dropped out above them), then repeated the trick in that division: they finished second from bottom in their first year, then, with the additional signing of Alan Santrey, rose to third the next.

They continued to hang around the middle reaches of division four until their first real taste of success, the division four title in 1982. Wright and Santrey won most of their games but it was the improvement of John's son Stephen that made the difference from the previous year – and the signing in mid season of the dependable Derek Finch.

Paul and Linda Chinnery joined the following season, enabling the club for the first time to put in two teams. Paul joined Finch and Santrey in division three where they finished third while John and Stephen both seemed to lose form together and the B team finished well down division four.

The A team moved up to division two in 1984 while a new B team of Stephen Wright, Paul Francesconi and Hudson Hoste stormed through division four, winning every match. They were back to one team the year after, Chinnery, Hoste, Stephen Wright and Finch winning division three.

The first major change in the club's fortunes came in 1988-89 when they merged with Community Centre. This meant they inherited a number of extra players, notably Richard Jennings, who had founded the Community Centre club and within a year took over the secretary's job at BUSC. Under his stewardship the club began to grow. They won division two in 1991 with a team of Jennings, Hoste and Ian Morrison, as well as having two other teams in division two, one in second place in division three and another in division four.

The following season came the major coup, with the signing of Peter Hayden, and more importantly persuading him to play regularly. Hayden had been on Witham FC's books in the past but had played very infrequently. This time he was serious, played in all but four of the season's matches and helped BUSC into fourth place. He also won the men's singles.

The next season came coup No.2 as Peter's brother Ian joined the team and they came within one point of taking the title. The final piece in the jigsaw arrived the following year when Terry Dowsett, married at the time to the Haydens' sister Kim, joined his brothers-in-law and to nobody's surprise BUSC A were crowned champions – and for the next two years too.

It was not only at the top that the club was successful. In 1995 they created a record that can only be beaten if the league expands again by winning each of the top four divisions. BUSC B, with the formidable line-up of Jennings, Jon Hill and Neil Gooday, won all their matches in division two and the C team of Morrison, Hoste, Chris Parr and Kevin Saunders did likewise in division three. The D team - Tony Edmonds, Garry Fryatt and Dave Pullen - were marginally less successful: They won 17 and lost one, when Pullen was not available.

BUSC ran six teams that year as they did the next season, then in 1997 they increased that to eight. And in 1998 to eleven. Sadly that proved unsustainable, and they began shedding teams as quickly as they had gained them and by 2002 they were down to just one.

They finished third or fourth in division one for the next few seasons and changed their name to Bocking along the way before in 2009 they regained the league title they had last won in 1996, but with a different set of players, Kevin Gowlett, Nigel Hodder, Paul Davison, Richard Jennings and David Edwards.

After one more year they disbanded although they continue to run a team in the Chelmsford League.