

The Corinthian-Casuals Football Club was formed in 1939 following the merger of the two great amateur sides bearing those names.

The Corinthians were founded in 1882. N.L. "Pa" Jackson, who was then Assistant Honorary Secretary of the Football Association, aimed to develop a club side capable of challenging Scotland at international level. A meeting was held at Jackson's offices in London's Paternoster Row, thus was the club born. The name came from a suggestion by England international, H.A. Swepstowe, which was accepted unanimously. In the recently published history of the club, "Play Up Corinth," author Rob Cavallini explains "the most likely explanation for this choice ... is the word's long forgotten meaning – 'man of fashion and pleasure,' which captures the whole essence of the playing membership and their sporting ideology." Merely four years later, there were nine Corinthians in the England team that drew 1-1 with Scotland. Between 1883 and 1890, 52 of the 88 caps awarded against Scotland went to Corinthian players. Corinthians fielded the full England side twice in 1894 and 1895, both matches against Wales, a 5-1 victory and 1-1 draw respectively.

The Corinthians original constitution stated that the club play in no competitions whatsoever, and this was not broken until 1900 when the Sheriff of London Shield was competed for. This was, however, for the most noble of reasons, it being a charitable event and the forerunner of the modern day Community Shield. Aston Villa, who were Football League champions at the time, were beaten 2-1 as Corinthians lifted their first trophy. Four years later, Corinthians inflicted Manchester United's record defeat, to the tune of 11-3. The centenary of that game was celebrated in 2004, the reds claiming a 3-1 victory, which leaves us 12-6 winners on aggregate! In 1902, Real Madrid adopted Corinthians white strip, although the two clubs have had a reversal of fortunes ever since!

After the Great War, Corinthians entered the FA Cup for the first time. If they had done so in the 1880s & 1890's, it is widely acknowledged that the club would surely have won it on several occasions. 1922/23 saw Corinthians take Brighton to a second replay, and a year later, Blackburn Rovers were beaten 1-0. 50,000 people then witnessed the 0-5 defeat at West Bromwich Albion. In 1925, the FA Cup was reorganised into its present structure, and Corinthians were granted a bye to the 3rd Round, along with the clubs from the top two flights. 70,000 people saw the two games against Manchester City, who ultimately won 4-0, following a 3-3 draw at Crystal Palace. The bye to the 3rd Round continued until the end of the 1932/33 season. Noteworthy results were the 4-0 thrashing of Walsall in 1927, beating Norwich City 3-0 in 1929, and taking Millwall to a second replay in 1930. The club were also runners-up in the Charity Shield, losing 2-1 to Cardiff City in 1927.

Perhaps the Corinthians greatest contribution to the game, however, was their 'missionary' work; touring overseas in South Africa, South America, Canada, the U.S.A. and every corner of Europe. A tour of Brazil in 1910 inspired a certain club called SC Corinthians Paulista, who became the first official FIFA World Club Champions in 2000, to be formed. The two clubs still maintain ties to this very day.

The Casuals - Recently discovered newspaper clippings seemed to show them to have been founded in 1877, six years earlier than previously thought, though further investigation proved no direct connection and we are content to lay that myth to rest. The Casuals' FA Cup performances sadly lacked the legendary drama of the Corinthians, and in 1890/91, having never got past the 1st round, they conceded 13 goals to Aston Villa. The next year Stoke won 3-0, and a year later, Nottingham Forest triumphed 4-0. The Casuals, probably rather wisely, rarely entered the competition again. The club did, however, make a lasting impression on the FA Amateur Cup's history by reaching the inaugural final in 1894, Old Carthusians winning 2-1 at Richmond. They won jointly the London Senior Cup, in 1886/87, after drawing with Old Westminsters, and were runners-up another five times. The London Charity Cup was also won a total of six times in this early period.

The Casuals became founder members of the Isthmian League in 1905 and the Southern Amateur League in 1907, winning the first AFA Senior Cup in 1908, then again in 1913. They then rejoined the Isthmian League in 1919. Whilst they were members, they won the Surrey Senior Cup in 1930, beating Nunhead 2-1. The FA Amateur Cup was finally won in 1936, the club's greatest achievement, when they beat Ilford 2-0 in a replay at Upton Park, following a 1-1 draw at Crystal Palace. The team were also Isthmian League runners-up that year. Three years later came the historic merger with the Corinthians.

The Corinthian-Casuals Football Club had played only one game when World War II broke out, though it really wasn't our fault. Come the recommencement of football in 1945, the club proudly retook its place in the Isthmian League, where it would remain for another 39 years. In 1954, the club beat Epsom 2-0 to win the Surrey Senior Cup. Two years later in 1956, they reached the FA Amateur Cup Final, drawing 1-1 with Bishop Auckland at a packed Wembley Stadium. The neo-legendary north-eastern club won the replay at Middlesbrough 4-1. A year later, another good run in the FA Amateur Cup saw the club reach the semi-final. After this high point, the club slipped into a long decline, a rare moment of success seeing them reach the FA Cup 1st Round in 1965/66, where Watford won 5-1.

The 1973/74 season was an historic milestone; heralding the end of *the amateur*. As if in empathy, Corinthian-Casuals were relegated, for the first time in their history, into Isthmian League Division 2. There they would stay there until 1978, when further relegation to the basement followed a third bottom finish in four years. A number of steady seasons were played out before new ground-sharing rules created by the Isthmian League saw the club unceremoniously thrown out in 1983/84. This coming after 65 years of continuous membership, and in spite of a 5th place finish, simply because the club's long nomadic history meant it shared a ground, thus did not have one of its own. Ironically, the year this occurred was the best in quite a

while. The club reached the 1st Round of the FA Cup, holding Bristol City to a goalless draw at Champion Hill, before losing 4-0 in the replay. The club also made it to the 5th Round of the FA Vase, the replacement competition for the FA Amateur Cup.

The first season in the Spartan Premier League was a disaster and a second consecutive relegation occurred. Next year, the Corinthian-Casuals fortunes took an upturn when they bounced back as Champions, remaining in the Premier Division for a further 12 seasons. 1988 was a truly historic year, with the club securing its first ever home ground, merging with the crippled Tolworth FC, thus taking over the running of their facilities. This season also saw the Corinthian-Casuals Tour Of Brazil, when legendary Brazilian international, Socrates, donned the famous chocolate and pink colours for a special game. A runners-up berth in 1993 and winning the League Cup in 1995 were the highlights of the Spartan League era, before the club switched to the Combined Counties League in 1996. This was a greatly improved experience. In the first season, a runners-up spot was achieved to at last win back our place in the Isthmian League.

The team's best finish for many years, 5th in 2000/01, saw them miss promotion by a meager 3 points, whilst the Reserves won the Suburban League South and London Intermediate Cup. In May, the club toured Brazil again, winning the Sao Paulo Athletic Invitation Cup. Victories were achieved over Paulistano and Sao Paulo AC, though SC Corinthians Paulista's U21's inflicted a 2-0 defeat. The next season saw the reorganization of the Isthmian League, with a top 6 finish guaranteeing a place in the new Division 1 South. Although being in the running for much of the season, a late slump saw the Corinthian-Casuals slip to finish in 10th place. However, thanks to some astute thinking, the ground had been improved anyway, gaining a "Grade B" award. Thus, due to circumstances elsewhere, the promotion places sank to as low as 11th and the club got to play its highest level of football since 1978.

The new Division 1 South lasted only two seasons, and on each occasion, the club finished in the bottom four. The 2004/05 season saw a reversion to a single Division 1 and, presented with its most exciting squad for many years, New Year passed with the club in 3rd place. However, a heavy loss at Horsham started a stunning descent, and with just two wins in the last 18 fixtures, the club sank to finish in 13th. Much of that promising side were picked off by wealthier neighbours during the close season, the remainder of the squad having an horrendous time the following year, rarely emerging from the foot of the table. The Reserves, however, were doing extremely well by winning the Suburban Football League Southern Division and being runners-up in the London FA Intermediate Cup. After the FA's continued tinkering with the national non-league set up, Lady Luck came to the Club's aid once more, with a little extra help from some clubs either resigning from Level 4 or disappearing altogether. The result was that the Corinthian-Casuals were reprieved for another season in the Isthmian League, though that wasn't enough to save the management.

Season 2006/07 saw regime change, Brian Adamson appointed as new manager, and hopes were lifted towards an improvement in fortunes. The season was certainly a tale of two halves, with the club eventually finishing second from bottom with more points than they had achieved since 2004/05, a somewhat pleasing 34. The team were very young, the majority without Isthmian level experience, and needed to gain that experience quickly. Up until December, it looked like the team would never get above 10 points. Luck did not seem to be on their side, frequently losing by a single goal. But they played exciting football, all with a speed and passion that had not been seen for several years at the Tolworth ground. With the arrival of the New Year, fortunes changed and the team produced a run of seven games without defeat. They continued with mixed fortunes, right up to the final game of the season. Here they needed to beat Leatherhead to get off the bottom of the table to be in with any hope of avoiding relegation. The 3-1 victory achieved just that, thanks also to the late merger of Hayes & Yeading.

While the 1st XI were finding Lady Luck a little fickle with her favours, the Reserves were steadily working their way up the Suburban Premier table. They showed strong nerves when beating Sutton United in the Champions Cup semi-final 2nd Leg, coming from behind to win 2-1 on aggregate. And then in the final, when they beat Waltham Forest 4-2 on penalties, following two hours of football and as many goals apiece. Their second trophy came from a rematch of the previous season's London FA Intermediate Cup final. This time the Reserves held their nerve to beat Metrogas 5-4 on penalties, following the same again.

Whilst good fortune has certainly played a part in retaining an Isthmian place, in this last season, the right to play Ryman League football was justly earned on the field of play. The club also enjoyed the momentous honour of celebrating 125 years of football with a commemorative match at Wembley Stadium. We prepared for the new season with, for the first time in recent years, the core of last year's team still in place. In addition, we have a highly beneficial link-up with Woking FC to bolster the reserves. The hard work, vision and dedication of management team, Brian Adamson and Keith Holloway, is clearly beginning to pay dividends. We look forward with quiet optimism to another year as the eternal underdogs, punching above their weight. The Corinthian-Casuals Football Club continues to take great pride in its rich and glorious history, and still so very much more in its present day standing as the highest ranked amateur club in England.