

Bith: We can win it

Lostock Gralam 9 Broadheath Central

LOSTOCK'S latest conquest has convinced Neil Bithell lift his ban on the 'p' word.
The Grey Lambs' manager has banned talk of promotion to the Cheshire League's top tier all season, only now to change his tune.
"We're in the race," he said. "I hold my hands up and say the players' hard work and dedication has got them there."
They were too good for basement outfit Broadheath. Mike Butters opened the scoring, curving an unstoppable shot into the top corner.
Further goals from Star Man Anto Palmer, Liam Sharples and Nadgy Khirat ended the contest before the break.
Palmer bagged a second half brace to complete his hat-trick, Sharples adding a second to his tally while sub Gaz Barry and Dom Johnson took the total to nine.
Brookthorn Star Man Anto Palmer, Lostock Millington (GK), Horne, Bayley, Ashley, Birdsey, Johnson, Palmer, Latham, Butters, Khirat, Sharples. **Subs** Rafferty, Astbury, Barry, Pond, Tomlinson.

Glory day as Chapel
Mid Cheshire Sunday League
THE race for the Premier Division title took an unexpected twist at the weekend, writes Mike Alcock.
Leaders St Joseph were held at Cranford Rangers but closest rivals Rudheath Social Club lost a nine-goal thriller at Pockets, where Carl Eaton netted the winner with a superb lob.
The Ark are making a late bid to finish runners up to Holmes Chapel in Division One after they beat Winsford neighbors Gate by the odd goal in five, Dean Williams scoring the winner.
In Division Two Chapels are just one win away from the title after thrashing Garage.

Penalty win

Crewe and District League
LOSTOCK Gralam Reserves were victors following a penalty shoot out on Saturday.
Jack Bryning, Mitch Izzard and Tom Shutt kept their cool from the spot to edge the Grey Lambs' second string through to the last four of the Arthur Cooke Trophy at the expense of Sandbach United.
Earlier Jim Kimber and Mike Clarke were both on target in a 2-2 draw.

Cup crash

Cheshire Women's League
NORTHWICH Vixens bowed out of the Challenge Cup against Boothstown on Sunday, when Claire Lishman was their scorer in a 3-1 reverse.
Fred Burgess' outfit must now turn their attention back to the Division Two title race.
A trip to Manchester Rovers is next on Sunday, kick off 2pm.

Finley delight as Ashley deal is Dunn right in the nick of time

ASHLEY Dunn has made his move to Witton permanent.
Albion faxed the paperwork to league officials seconds before Thursday's transfer deadline, making perhaps their signing of the season so far.
"It's a massive coup for us," said manager Gary Finley.
"Ashley is well capable of playing at a higher level, but he's loved being part of things here at Witton and wanted to come back once Fleetwood gave him the go-ahead."
Finley paid the Fishermen a nominal fee for the midfielder, while the Blue Square North outfit has also insisted on what it describes as a 'considerable' sell-on clause in case Albion receive a fee for the youngster in any future transfer.
"I hope he makes both sides a lot of money," said Andy Pilley, chairman at last year's UniBond Premier Division champions.
"We have a good relationship with Witton and that made the decision to sell Ashley a touch easier."
Dunn has spent two loan spells at Wincham Park already this season, scoring four goals in 17 starts from the centre of midfield.
He had signed a one-year contract at Highbury last summer, but found first team opportunities there restricted after Micky Mellon replaced Tony Greenwood as manager.
Finley said: "They couldn't guarantee him a game, we can."

"Perhaps they saw him as a figure for the future, but Ashley did not want to wait around hoping to get a chance."
And Dunn was not the only last-minute addition made by Finley after striker Saul Ootob also stepped down from the Blue Square North.
A former front runner at Hastings United, he switches to Wincham Park

from fellow Cheshire outfit Vauxhall Motors.
"He's lighting the way for Ashley," said Finley.
"And the manager getting a busy week off the pitch by raiding a rival for Michael Roddy.
The former Republic of Ireland youth international signed from Guiseley to give Albion more options in the centre of the pitch.

how they stand

PI	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
16 Witton	.36	12	4	20	49	61	40
17 Buxton	.36	10	9	17	38	51	39
18 Whitty	.35	9	10	16	49	59	37
19 Matlock	.36	8	13	15	54	68	37

up next
Congleton Town (h)
Mid-Cheshire FA Senior Cup final
Monday, April 6 (7.45pm)
Fans' Information Meeting
Thursday, April 9 (7.30pm)

Preece hails hat-trick hero as he toasts first victory as boss

Byrom sparkle too much for Diamonds



Joel Byrom beats keeper Dale Roberts on Saturday. Picture: NICK JONES n091426



Then milks the acclaim of his teammates. n091425

ANDY Preece wore a huge grin after guiding Northwich Victoria to a first home win in more than five months.
Joel Byrom was the star of an impressive show that, despite a wobble when Diamonds dragged themselves back to 2-2, the hosts deserved to win.
They also saved the spectacle of relegation, for now.
"It's a great feeling," said Preece. "We've done everything but win a game then we allow their 10 men back to 2-2 - you can't be up can you?"
"But we found a bit of quality in the final third to finish them off."
No fewer than 168 days had passed since Darryn Stamp's back post header sealed a home success against Grays. Byrom assisted that goal.
And the former Clitheroe man ghosted onto Luke Joyce's perfect centre to open the scoring on 13 minutes after Vics had survived a scare when Rob Wollaston's dipping shot clipped the visitors.
The crossbar were reduced to 10 men following full back Michael Corcoran's dismissal for a horror tackle on Luke Horrocks and, when Byrom clinically converted the ex-Woodley man's clever free kick on 55 minutes, the game seemed up for the visitors.
But Vics did not clear the danger

Northwich Victoria 4 Rushden & Diamonds 2

when Lee Tomlin forced Ryan Clarke to save smartly at the near post soon after the restart, Joyce heading off the line as the ball looped up only for Horrocks to fell Tomlin in the resulting melee.
Sub Michael Rankin scored from the spot, then within minutes Wollaston smashed a superb volley in off the bar to level.
"It was an absolute wonder strike," raved Preece.
"You stand there and wonder what we have to do because I feel we deserve a bit of luck for the way we've played recently.
"Psychologically to win after being pegged back is a huge achievement, the players will be 10 foot tall after that display and rightly so."
Byrom restored Vics' lead with a shot that arrowed into the bottom corner, before Joyce sealed victory when

Bottom of the table

PI	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Ebbsfleet	.34	10	8	16	39	46	38
Woking	.39	8	13	18	30	46	37
Vics	.38	5	9	24	42	71	24
Lewes	.40	4	5	31	22	81	17

Preece calls on more help

VICS players have turned to a mind master to help forget their worries off the field.
Caretaker manager Andy Preece has called on an old friend, psychologist Steve Pope, to help to his team about how they approach each match.
"It's a call to arms if you like," said Pope.
"I've never been in to a dressing room with a group of lads that haven't been paid in nearly three months - I'm treating it as a challenge."
He volunteered to help when Preece called him last week, meeting the players for the first time before Saturday's 4-2 win over Rushden and Diamonds.
"I think they turned a corner on Saturday after reaching that nightmare scenario of taking the lead only to be pegged back, but instead of folding they went on to win."
"There are some very good footballers here, the problem is they don't believe they are."
For the full interview, log on to our website.
northwichguardian.co.uk

he swept Jonny Allan's assist past keeper Dale Roberts on 71 minutes.
Vics Clarke (GK), Joyce, Bailey, Grand, Brown, Elam (Aspin 69), Crowell, Byrom, Horrocks, Allan (Burns 90), Perry. **Subs** not used Meadowcroft, Mullan. **Att** 687.

up next
Ebbsfleet United (a)
Saturday, April 4 (3pm)

Kids for a quid at Vics

This voucher allows you to enter for **£1** entry for **U14s** when accompanied by an adult for Vics' forthcoming Blue Square Premier encounter with **Woking** at the Marston's Arena this **Tuesday, April 7**, kick off 7.45pm.

Entry is through any home turnstile, and the voucher permits admission to either seating or standing areas of the ground.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Postcode: _____
School attended: _____