

22/11/05 TT No.116: Ron Jones - Takeley (EOL) ART2; Battersea Ironsides (Middlesex County League) and Chipperfield Corinthians (HSCL) ART1.

The week leading up to Saturday 19th November I was hoping to go further afield, with a visit to Chasetown v Nantwich in the Vase in mind. Forecasts of slow clearing freezing fog in that area forced a change of plan - Chasetown can keep for another day, (it was Postponed!!), and I settled for **Takeley** v Walthamstow Avenue & Pennant in the Anagram Records Trophy 2nd Round, Bishop's Stortford was clear and sunny on arrival, from here an hourly bus runs to Takeley, a 15 minute journey. Station Road is one of the branches of the crossroads where the bus stops, and crossing the bridge over a disused railway, the ground comes into view. Enclosed from the road by a metal fence, the club name and a board advertising this match are by the gate. Inside the ground, an area behind the goal provides car parking with the dressing room block, completed in 2000, close to the corner of the pitch. Also, in this building is a clubroom with kitchen serving tea etc before the match and hot food at halftime. Takeley use the bar at the village sports club after the match. At present Takeley only issue for matches in this cup, a very well-produced 16 pager with a card cover and all the relevant information including league tables, visitors history and two page history of the competition which sold for £1, In front of the club building is hard standing which extends to the halfway line where an enclosed wooden shelter holding about 50 is sited. A nice touch here is a board bearing the club name attached to the roof. The pathway also runs from the corner to behind the goal at the entrance end. The rest of the ground is grass standing, and the pitch is fully railed off. Three sides of the ground are surrounded by houses and bungalows but as these are secluded by trees and bushes and the ground is fully fenced off it all adds to the enclosed impression and comes across as similar to the better county (senior) league grounds in the days before lights and complete hard standing became compulsory - for the Essex Olympian league it's very impressive. On the pitch, Walthamstow took the lead on the hour before the hosts came back to record a 3-1 win in front of a crowd of around 35. With a 1-30 kick off, a favourable connection meant I was back at Tottenham Hale just after 4.30 following a very enjoyable trip.

On Saturday 12th November I made the short journey to **Battersea Ironsides** v Brazilian in the Middlesex League. The Openview ground is about 15 minutes-walk from Earlsfield station, and a bus from Tooting Broadway also passes the ground. At the entrance is a car park with the clubhouse/dressing rooms nearby. The clubhouse itself also caters for the club's rugby side who play in a nearby park, as England were live on TV, their match kicked off early and the club was packed by the time the football got underway. Tea and hot food are available here as well as a bar. The pitch is roped off behind the near goal and along one side, where there are dug outs either side of the cricket square. Behind the other goal is the grounds perimeter fence, while along the other side are tennis courts enclosed by a fence and hedges, with no room for spectators. For this match, Battersea Ironsides did

not produce their usual programme but at least they issued - a photocopied 8-pager with match details on the front, and league table, a few lines of notes and the line ups inside. The attendance just about reached double figures as the visitor's weathered early pressure before scoring twice in as many minutes around the half hour mark, with three more after the interval, capitalising on defensive errors with some sharp finishing to run out 5-0 winners. This ground was home to Mascot Sports in the Surrey Senior League some 30 - 40 years ago, and I wonder if the Ironsides will emulate the likes of Staines Lammas and Hanworth Villa in reaching that league's present-day incarnation from the Middlesex League.

Chipperfield Corinthians v Spelthorne Sports Anagram Records Trophy 1st Round 5th November 2005.

The Herts County League club's ground is situated at the end of Queen Street, an unusual pebbled residential road close to the centre of this very pleasant village. The pitch is fully railed off, with hard standing in the form of a narrow pathway along the side nearest the entrance, with overhanging trees and bushes and a fence behind this, There's also hard standing behind the far end with a two strand wire fence between wooden posts marking out the ground's boundaries, a grass area with a play area and housing set back are beyond this. The wire fence extends the length of the other touchline with trees behind before the land slopes sharply away, leaving a narrow area of grass standing within the ground itself. The dressing rooms are the width of the pitch from the entrance, with a club room and tea bar, where programmes at 60p are also available, although no bar. This issue runs to 12 pages and is a regular issue, with full results and fixtures involving HCL clubs on the day and previous week and the visitors table and results to date added to the basic info, the only ad being the Cherry Red sponsors. An overhang from this building provides cover although set back from the pitch. At this end there's a training area with gardens backing on. The overall impression is of a rural setting despite the proximity to London and friendly club to visit. An attendance of 20 saw a match of few chances, with the Middlesex League visitors netting the only goal midway through the second half.

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