

05/12/05 TT No.126: Ron Jones - AFC Dunstable (SSML2) in Beds Sen Trophy QF and Bromley Green (Kent County League Prem Division)

On Saturday 3rd December, I went to **AFC DUNSTABLE** for the Beds Senior Trophy quarter final v AFC Kempston Rovers. A direct bus from Luton passes the ground in Dunstable Road, Tottenhamhoe, at the edge of the village. Lancot Park is shared with cricket, in fact the sign at the entrance is titled Dunstable Cricket Club, and the spacious and plush clubhouse has several framed cricket photos on the walls. The bar and tea bar were open before the match with hot food at half time. A very well presented 32-page programme was on sale here for £1. This had a blue glossy cover and included a club history and honours and visitors page as well as the usual fixtures (which included all the reserve and junior teams), tables and matchday info.

From the clubhouse/dressing room building, players and spectators must walk around the perimeter of the cricket pitch, which is fully roped off, to reach the playing area. This is fully roped off and is bordered behind the near goal by trees and the fence separating the park from the main road. There are dug outs along the far touchline; along this side is a grass bank with the fence enclosing the park behind. Behind the far goal is another cricket pitch while along the side nearest the clubhouse are eight park benches at regular intervals, sited in the strip of land between the football and cricket pitches. Beyond the ground are fields into the distance. There is no cover or hardstanding, fortunately the rain had stopped an hour or so before kick-off and it remained dry throughout the match. The whole ground itself is very well maintained and unusual in that there are distinct areas for the two sports with no overlap of the cricket outfield.

In an evenly matched cup tie, the home side, unbeaten in all competitions this season, marginally had the edge in a goalless first half, with the visitors having most of the play early in the second. AFC Dunstable finished stronger and an 88th minute winner extended their winning run to 16 matches, with the attendance being around 40. After the match I called in at Tottenhamhoe FC some 100 yards away along the same road who were at home to Arlesey Athletic in the same cup, to be told "we don't have programmes here". The bus stop for the journey back overlooks the Tottenhamhoe ground, and I easily made the 15.37 bus following the 1.30 kick off.

Deciding to 'play safe' on Saturday 26th November I headed for Kent after receiving a 'yes' reply, from **BROMLEY GREEN** that their Kent County League match with Fleet was frost free and on. The swan ground in Willenborough is around 15 minutes-walk from Ashford International station. The club's facilities are set back in the near corner of the ground, comprising dressing rooms and adjacent 'no airs and graces' clubroom where tea, rolls and canned and bottled drinks are sold, and programmes are usually sold here. The pitch is fairly close by, and is roped off on three sides, the exception being the near side where a pathway

runs from level with the edge of the area to the halfway line. A car park is set back from here while further along this side, trees and bushes are very close to the touchline, these providing limited protection from the elements. There's open grass beyond the far goal and another pitch is set back at right angles some distance beyond the far touchline, with portable Perspex dug outs sited either side of the halfway line on this side. Behind the near goal is an expanse of grass before the ground is bordered by a small stream with housing beyond.

All in all, a pretty exposed venue on a cold day, more so as the bright sunshine at the start gave way to heavy rain midway through the half which stopped during half time, while the second half was punctuated by another heavy 10-minute burst. The attendance just edged double figures as bottom of the table Fleet had the better of the early stages before Bromley Green began to dominate and took the lead on the half hour. Two more followed in the second half for a comfortable 3-0 score-line. I picked up some back issues of the programme before the game although the day's issue never arrived. The following day, I tracked down the elusive programme and got through to the editor who apologised that they weren't available due to a printer breakdown and helpfully offered to email the file for a 4 page 20p issue in green and black with match details on the front, home line ups, a detailed club history, and details of club personnel on the back. A much-appreciated gesture. The back copies I picked up varied from 4-8 pages as they also include line-ups for reserve and Sunday matches.

04/20