

30/12/05 TT No.149: Barry Neighbour - Wokingham & Emmbrook (Hellenic League Division 1 East)

Tuesday 27th December 2005 - having shelved my original planned 'double' in Kent for Sevenoaks and Hythe due to the poor weather reports (Hythe was snowed off), I decided to stay local and head for Farnborough North End for a morning kick-off. Things did not look good due to the lack of cars in the car park and this was confirmed as the match was postponed because of a frozen pitch. A quick trip back home and then I went to watch Hellenic League side **Wokingham & Emmbrook** for their local derby with Binfield. No problems with the pitch here and an excellent 28-page programme was available for £2 including admission which also covered the game v Chalfont Wasps on 2nd January 2006 (anyone else got a 2006 programme yet?).

After years of ground-sharing at a huge financial loss Wokingham returned to the area last year after a merger with local side Emmbrook Sports. The problem being that with new ground gradings the venue will not be up to standard as they have little chance of erecting floodlights. In addition, there is only a rail down one side of the pitch with the rest being roped off, partly due to the proximity of the cricket pitch. Noises have been made of moving to a new venue but seeing the problems of the past 7 years I won't hold my breath and they may drop out of senior football altogether. The game itself was a lively affair watched by a crowd of around 200 (196 according to my mate's head count!). With several ex-Binfield players in the home line up rivalry was tense. An early goal gave Wokingham the advantage but Binfield hit back midway through the half with an equaliser. Just as in the first-half Wokingham scored early to regain the advantage. Tackles and tempers were high and referee (and groundhopper) Jim Dunn did well to keep control. A 3rd goal for the home side killed off a lot of Binfield's aggression and the game calmed down as Wokingham played out time (even missing a penalty after the Binfield keeper made a fine save).