

**06/09/05 TT No.39: Barry Neighbour - Shrewsbury Town (FC2); Heath Hayes (WMLP) and Burntwood (MCFL2)**

With all the fixtures being rearranged due to the Internationals I took the opportunity to visit a ground which is due to close soon.

Friday 2nd September 2005; **Shrewsbury Town 2 Oxford United 0**; Attendance: 4073; Coca Cola League 2; Rating: 4\*; Admission: £13 (Terrace); Programme: 64 pages, £2.50.

I attended the game with my wife (staying overnight at The Shrewsbury Hotel which is a Wetherspoons Lodge). This was a short walk through the town centre to Gay Meadow. The ground has a stand along the full length of the pitch but the other three sides are terracing of which two are covered. The game was very entertaining with Shrewsbury taking a 10th minute lead from the penalty spot. Oxford hit back creating a number of chances but were caught out again after 20 minutes as Shrewsbury doubled their advantage with a crisp volley which gave the Oxford keeper no chance. United, prompted by former Brentford player Chris Hargreaves in midfield and the lively Chris Hackett up front, kept Shrewsbury on their toes as both sides created chances. With no further goals it was the home side that took the spoils.

GROUND NEWS: Shrewsbury have planning permission for a new stadium. However, the firm who were to build the ground have been taken over and the new firm are debating whether to go ahead (despite running the risk of severe penalty clauses if they fail to do so). Hopefully this will soon be sorted and Shrewsbury are still looking at being in their new ground by next season.

Saturday 3rd September 2005; **Heath Hayes 1 Dudley Town 3**; Attendance: about 30; West Midlands Regional League Premier Division; Programme: Issued (no further details); Match Rating: 3\*

Although I arrived at Heath Hayes thirty minutes before kick-off, the road leading up to the ground was closed. The suggested diversion route (which involved a lengthy wait at some traffic lights) added to my frustration. As a last resort, I decided to ignore the 'Road Closed' signs. Luckily, I managed to reach the main entrance to the club just before the roadworks. Unfortunately, all the programmes had sold out by now. The ground had three small stands and a dressing room pavilion down one side but the other three were open around a railed off pitch. The game was quite entertaining with Dudley running out comfortable and deserved winners. After this it was a short trip to Burntwood.

**Burntwood 2 Archdales` 73 4**; Attendance: 16 (Counted); Midland Combination League Division 2; Match Rating: 3\*; No Programme Issued or Admission taken.

All the directions (on the map) seem to indicate that the ground in Rugeley Road is in the centre of Burntwood. However, the Burntwood Shopping Centre is about a

mile away from the club. Continue and make a turning next to the White Swan Pub where the ground is on the left-hand side. It is pretty basic; the pitch is roped off and there is some covered seating half way down one side. This was another good game to watch with Archdales coming from behind to win 4-2 and take the points. The people running the club were very friendly and it is worth a visit especially if they start issuing programmes again.

03/20