

**TT No.116: *Paul Roth*** - Thursday 15th November 2007; BOODLES Independent Schools FA Cup; **Westminster** vs. Kimbolton; Res:1-0; Att: Varying! Programme: 4 Pages, free; Weather: Sunny and mild.

Jim Wilson was the proprietor of the estate office opposite the Lloyds Bank in Westgate-On-Sea, when I was transferred there during the 1970's. A nicer English gentleman you could not wish to meet. He always had anecdotes and stories to recount and one such tale was of how the Met Police would recruit drivers for their high-speed pursuit cars, back in the 40's and 50's. The test was simple....to drive from the centre of London, that being Trafalgar Square, to the city of Bath in 4 hours or less, observing all speed limits. No M4 in those days, don't forget! Yes, Trafalgar Square, the Centre of London! Yesterday was the nearest to the centre of the capital that I've ever watched a football match and I cannot think of anywhere that indeed could be more central.

Vincent Square, where Westminster School playing fields are located, is about 500 yards South East of Victoria Station and a lovely venue it is too. The main focus is the old pavilion with picture postcard picket-fence surrounding it; step inside and feel the history that now engulfs you. In fact, the Public School has a real claim to fame in the annals of football folklore, being that themselves and Charterhouse were the first two teams to play an inter-school match, back in 1863.

By the 2pm kick-off, an array of familiar faces had gathered and it was good to chat with the many 'hoppers that had come along for a rare Thursday afternoon match. The production of a 4-page programme was an added bonus. Team line-ups and a résumé of the season so far was included therein.

With the Houses of Parliament just visible in one direction and Westminster Cathedral clearly in view in another, this made for a stunning setting for a game of football. My guess is that most present who watched the game in its entirety, would concur that this was an excellent, competitive match, well refereed and free from the petulance you often get with professional soccer. I can't remember seeing so few chances created in 80 mins (40 mins each way today), but still enjoying the spectacle so much. I have to say, much more entertaining than watching Margate FC this season! Hartsdown Park is not for the connoisseur this term!

The tie was won by the only goal of the game, a stupendous free kick flighted over the Kimbolton wall, by Vittorio Boccanera. The visitors played their part, but couldn't get one telling attempt on the home goal. Westminster hit the crossbar near the end, but 1-0 was a fair reflection of the play, and so the young men in pink and black progress to the quarter finals (the draw is made public on Friday 16th, at 6pm). Westminster have yet to win the ISFA Cup, but look to have a good chance now.

For those who need it (I'm including myself, naturally), the GBG listed Jugged Hare, is but a minute's walk away from the playing fields, on the Vauxhall Bridge Road. A fantastic afternoon out.

FGIF RATING: 5\*. Train day - 6602 steps (1770=1 mile) = therefore 3.72 miles walked today.

06/20