

**TT No.133: *Dean McClean*** - Saturday 1st December 2007. Spartan South Midlands Premier: **Colney Heath** v London Colney. Res: 2-0; Admission: £4; 16pp programme: £1; Att: 95; FGIF Match Rating: 2\*.

Tucking into a truly wonderful beef stew and dumplings in the Crooked Billet, I was further salivating over the varied Arsenal memorabilia that bedecked the pub's walls; the weather outside blowing a gale and freezing cold, it was certainly a wrench to leave as kick-off approached.

This game wasn't exactly a classic, believe me! Though this wasn't really an unexpected occurrence, with both teams struggling in the bottom three of table, a local derby and truly abysmal weather culminated in a poor game. To be fair to both teams, they did their best to try and play something resembling decent football, in a game settled by a goal either side of half-time; the first a scrappy affair, where the home side did its best to miss and a second half penalty, expertly dispatched by the home centre-forward. This really was the right result as bottom side London Colney barely threatened their near neighbours.

The Recreation Ground (also the home of St. Albans RLC - on a separate pitch) is a pleasant little venue in a semi-rural setting, surrounded by rolling Hertfordshire countryside and bare oak trees, that had dispatched their golden-brown leaves, made for a lovely backdrop in winter sunshine. However not long after 3 o'clock the skies had darkened and the rest of the afternoon was a wet and miserable affair. The social club is truly the hub of the club and also accounts for the only shelter provided, virtue of a canopy-cum-stand roof with two rows of tip up green seats, and it was certainly in need as around 100 people crammed in to the stand to avoid the inclement weather. The remainder of the venue is hard standing on three sides, with the opposite side of the ground home to St Albans RLC.

Four pounds entrance fee, and one pound for a programme, was collected by a friendly club official inside the social club. Quite frankly, this programme was a dismal effort for a step five club and lacked even a league table, though I have some sympathy for a club clearly lacking in that vital non-league club necessity: Volunteers! This was also reflected in the catering department, as no hot food was available and the tea was simply revolting as the adverts for bar/kitchen staff had obviously been unanswered.

A good day out.

06/20