

TT No. 15: Bob Davies - Sat 23rd August 2008; **Saffron Walden Town v Debenham LC**; Ridgeons League Division 1; Res: 1-3; Att: 151; Admission: £3.50 for me, £1.50 for grandson; Programmes 50p; Tea: 70p.

With the M25 fast becoming a car park I decided a more sedate ride into Essex was the better bet on a Bank holiday Saturday. A trip to revisit Saffron Walden Town, the oldest existing football club in Essex. The ground is located in Catons Lane. In (Saffron Walden) High Street, turn into Castle Street. At the T-Junction at the bottom of Castle Street turn left and then first left by the Victory Public House into Catons Lane. The ground is at the end of Catons Lane next to the Car Park.

The ground has hard standing all around the ground. Three stands provide a more than adequate covered accommodation. One of these, the oldest on the ground, located on the club house side also contains the dressing rooms. Since my previous visit another piece of covered accommodation has been erected behind the goal at the Church End. Seated accommodation for 40 in two rows of twenty plus a three-step terrace behind which looks to be easily extendable should the need apply. The main seated area is on the opposite side of the dressing room complex and seats more than 120 and has enough room for some standing accommodation behind it as well.

A well-stocked and staffed tea bar will meet the need of any hungry traveller. The bar is a clean and tidy and welcoming area where you can catch up with the latest football news on Sky TV over a refreshing pint.

Onto the programme, that at only 50p must represent the best value for money I've seen this season. An attractive picture of the ground on the cover leads to an 8-page advertising shell, inside of which is a 40-page programme with another 10 pages of adverts. The 30 pages available are a comprehensive read on the home club and their visitors with match action pictures and directions for forthcoming games. There is also a crossword and a cartoon to finish it off. Well done to the editor of this particular publication.

The game was very keenly contested and played at a tremendous pace throughout. The match was goal less at half time with home side coming closest with a looping effort that struck the crossbar. In the second half it was the home side that drew first blood with Brad Green pulling clear of the visitor's defence and lobbing over the advancing keeper. It was the visitors that then rang the changes bringing on all three subs in the space of four minutes. Within three minutes of the last substitution they were rewarded with goal from substitute Shaun Green as he headed home from a corner. Two minutes later and it got even better for the visitors as Stuart Jopling blasted home number two. The home side pushed hard for an equaliser but in stoppage time Shaun Green scored his second capitalising on a moment of indecision between a defender and the goal keeper to ensure the visitors claimed their first ever victory over the Bloods.

A very enjoyable afternoon in Essex and thank you to the Saffron Walden committee for their help and hospitality.

FGIF Rating: 5* - excellent.

06/20