

TT No.134: *Chris Freer* - Sat 11th December 2010; **Brentwood Town v Ilford**; Ryman League Division 1 North; Score: 2-1; Attendance: 75; Entertainment value: 3/5.

Now and again I speculate as to what it would be like to be famous. To be publicly recognised. Or maybe even have a claim to fame. I've never really been first in anything. Even at school it was only a third in the Potato race. The girls flocked adoringly round the winner, as I trudged away, clutching my spuds.

These are the thoughts going through my head as we pull into the new Milton Keynes Coach Interchange, open for the first time that very morning and, according to the driver, we are the first bus in. "There might be a reception committee" he broadcasts to my fellow travellers. There is - half a dozen suits lamely applauding and taking pictures of the driver and his bus. "It's the highlight of his career..." muses a voice behind me. I suspect said driver will be featured heavily in next month's National Express News or whatever organ they publish. Ah yes, but I bet he's never finished in the potato race top-three, I reassure myself.

I'm in London as the weather relents and there's a good chance that I might see some footy today. Brentwood is my first choice and as I tuck into my king-size (new!!!) Veggie breakfast at the Willow Walk in Victoria, I get the news that the pitch has passed a fitness test and its game on. I'm a bit disappointed in the Willow Walk this morning. They've moved the chairs about a bit, and the beer choice is limited - I suspect a new manager is in place!

Trains in the Brentwood direction run from Liverpool Street so I decide that, as it's not raining and I need the exercise, a cross-London walk is in order. As I head through Parliament Square, the debris from last week's demo is still in evidence. Rent-a-mob has gone back to its student union bars to spend money it says it doesn't have, but a newspaper headline grabs my attention. 'Anarchy in the UK' it says, with pictures of two Charlies celebrating varying degrees of fame. Prince Charles, who probably wouldn't have been so exposed if he had driven Camilla to the show in his Fiat 500, and Charlie Gilmour, whose dad knows a thing or two about music. Maybe we're on the verge of the second Punk 'coming'. Maybe this supposed Winter of Discontent will follow with a Spring of Enlightenment where X Factor music is rightly derided and we all reach for that one trusty chord all over again. One can only hope.

There's engineering work on the line from Liverpool Street to Stratford so my rail ticket gets me on the tube before I change for the 30-minute journey to Brentwood. There's still evidence of a bit of snow out Essex way, but it's quite mild so I'm confident the game will be on. A little over halfway through the 30-minute walk from Brentwood rail station to the ground is the Rising Sun pub, a bit out of the town centre but a cosy corner house with four ale's on offer, including Maple Mild, a tasty little number from the local Brentwood Brewing Company

(henceforth known as the BBC). I move on to the ground, just the other side of the frenetic A12, and sandwiched between that road and the local Leisure Centre, where Mr Brittas surely holds sway.

The pitch looks heavy but playable, and mounds of snow behind one goal bear evidence to the clearance job successfully achieved by staff and supporters. The clubhouse is inside the main stand, a wooden affair with visibility issues but attractive nonetheless. As I scan the bar for evidence of any decent beer, my eyes initially fail to spot the display of bottled beers on the counter top, until alerted to them by the serving lady. There's all six of the BBC bottled range, including the powerful Chockwork Orange. which I feel duty bound to sample - excellent! Sadly, the snack wagon is a carnivore's delight so it appears I must survive on the memory of my Wetherspoons brekky.

The home team have play-off aspirations this season, although it will take a string of successes to get them there. Today should be a perfect opportunity to pick up a three as visitors Ilford languish perilously close to the relegation slots. The first 30 minutes or so is fairly comical with the visitor's shambolic attempts to work an offside trap only successful due to the Town strike-force's inability to hit a cow's backside with the proverbial. That changes on 33 when right winger Nicky Muir realises there actually is a bye-line and cuts back for big centre-forward Ellis Remy to slot in. Ilford's tactics change and prompted by playmaker Ian Cooper they come more into the game either side of the break, a spell of pressure on 57 leading to a deserved equaliser. I feel that will be the final score but sadly the visitor's defence dozes off and allows Butterworth to collect a long ball and slot past the keeper. 2-1 it stays.

And so back to London, a place where I did spend quite a bit of time during the Punk days of the late 1970s, having decided that the 'scene' in the East Midlands wasn't big enough for the likes of me, and I would go in search of my five minutes of fame. Just my luck that I found it the same weekend they put the clocks back...

There's more on my blog at <http://flynn123.wordpress.com>

Anoracky in the UK...

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