

**TT No.170: Rob Champion** - Sat 5th February 2011; **Thurlaston Magpies 2-3** Kingsway Celtic; Leicester & District League Division 2; Venue: Thurlaston Sports Ground; Admn/Programme: none; Coffee: 50p; Att: 12 (with some watching the game from their cars); Match rating: 1½/5.

In the week leading up to today I could not decide whether I would bother going to a game today, with one of the reasons being the weather forecast. It stated that there would be heavy rain to go along with the strong winds already in place, but in the end the rain did not materialise and at around 11am this morning I made the decision to go somewhere. Like a lot recently I wanted (and had) to stay local due to meeting up with my brother in the evening so made the short drive to the village of Thurlaston for a 2pm kick-off.

Thurlaston is a small village between Leicester and Hinckley located 1½ miles off the A47, which according to the 2001 census had a population of 745. It is home to two sports clubs which are at either end of the village. The Huncote Sports & Social Club is on the Enderby side while the Thurlaston Sports Club is on the Earl Shilton side. To get to the sports club enter the village from the A47 and turn right at the T-junction. Just after the Elephant & Castle pub turn right (sign posted Earl Shilton) onto Church Lane and this leads onto Earl Shilton Lane. The ground is outside the village boundary on the left-hand side and is also home to the football teams' junior sides and Thurlaston Cricket Club. The main football pitch is railed off on two sides, roped off on the cricket side with no access behind the far goal.

I am not sure when Thurlaston Magpies were formed but in 2005 they transferred from the Hinckley & District Sunday League to division two of the Leicester & District League. The five years spent in the District League have all been in this division and they have never finished above 5th place.

At the start of play the Magpies occupy sixth spot with six wins from their ten games played so far while opponents Kingsway sit at the top of the table with nine wins from eleven league encounters. What we got in terms of a game was one that was very competitive in which both teams struggled with the wind, and neither side could take advantage of when having it at their backs. It was also a niggly encounter especially in the second half though to be honest there did not seem to be any reason for this. The game was also marred by having to listen to the Thurlaston players and management argue amongst themselves which got tiresome after a while.

Kingsway remain top of the table after this victory, though on another day the hosts would have got at least a share of the spoils as they had at least as much possession and created as many chances. The opening goal came around the 12th minute mark for the visitors when Stuart Iddisha scored with a tap in from a yard out following excellent work on the left from Ben Bayliss. Their lead lasted only two minutes as Charlie Singh took advantage of the wind and scored with a 40-yard

free kick. No further scoring ensued during the remainder of the half and when the referee blew his whistle, I took advantage of the break to escape from the wind and grab a coffee from the clubhouse.

A few minutes after the restart things took a turn for the worse for the Magpies as their keeper suffered an injury which meant he was replaced in goal by an outfield player. Coupled with the wind at their backs Kingsway quickly showed why they are top of the table and scored two goals in the space of five minutes of each other. Iddisha got his second on 55 minutes when he kept his composure and finished from about six yards out, and then Teejay Smith headed home a corner at the far post on the hour mark to give Kingsway some breathing space. Thurlaston were not done though and got a goal back just five minutes later through Brad Dexter to set up (what was hoped) an interesting final quarter. Alas we did not have a grandstand finish and the visitors held on for victory.

07/20