

TT No.235: Mike Latham - Saturday 28 April 2012: Jack Hatfield Sports Teesside League Division One; **Richmond Town** 3-1 **Whinney Banks YCC**; Att: 140 (h/c); No admission or programme; FGIF Match Rating: 4*; Postcode: DL10 4RH.

Nearing the end of the season it's important, I have long learnt, to find a game with something riding on the outcome; so, it was interesting to discover that the destiny of the championship in the Jack Hatfield Sports Teesside League Division One could have been riding on this fixture.

This was 1v2 in the Teesside League with two games left, Richmond with a 3pts lead but inferior goals difference. Richmond had never won the league but were in good form but their opponents had a redoubtable goal-scorer in their ranks. It all sounded too good to miss and it turned out to be simply fantastic.

Richmond is a market town on the River Swale in North Yorkshire on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales National Park; it has been described as the most romantic town in the North of England and was named the UK town of the year for 2009. Its roots date back to the eleventh century when the town was founded by Alan Rufus, a Breton, on lands granted to him by William the Conqueror. The construction of the imposing Richmond Castle was completed in 1086; nowadays its imposing ruins overlook the football ground at Earls Orchard Playing Fields, next to the fast-flowing waters of the Swale.

Before a good-sized crowd of locals, growing to around 140 by half-time, the home side made sure of their first championship thanks to a dominant first-half performance. All the goals came in that period, Richmond scoring first before prolific striker Danny Lockwood equalised for the visitors with his 60th goal of the season. But Richmond then scored twice more and went into the break seemingly in control.

Though Whinney Banks had the better of the second half the home 'keeper was excellent, cool under pressure and agile when needed. The final stages were really tense as the visitors threw everything at the home goal, a real bombardment in the shadow of the castle, but Richmond held on and could celebrate their big day as the referee sounded the final whistle.

A really scenic setting the Earls Orchard Playing Fields have a changing block behind the nearside goal; the playing pitch was in great condition. This was a really good debut for me in the Teesside League, whose website is really informative.