

**TT No.82: *Chris Freer*** - Sat October 29th 2011; **Chipstead** v Corinthian-Casuals; Isthmian League Division One South; Score: 1-1; Crowd: 92; Entertainment value: 3/5.

I admire a man with profound, clearly-defined and unswerving conviction. Someone who says what he thinks, believes what he says and never, ever sways away from his chosen path. I've never met such a man but I'd admire him - or her - if I did. Truth is, there's a little bit of hypocrisy in all of us. Take me, for instance. I tell everybody I'm a vegetarian because that simplifies things. In actual fact I count fish as part of my diet, which is just as well as virtually every pint of real ale that I drink has a little bit of a sturgeon swimming around in it. And as for cheese, don't even go there!

When I was much younger, I had the youthful notion that money was the root of all evil and nobody deserved to have any more than his - or her - neighbour. These were the days of miner's strikes and three-day-weeks and a desire to be something of a rebel as I cobbled together the editorial for my punk - and then mod - fanzine. I sympathised with Jimmy in Quadrophenia. We didn't know what we were fighting for but as sure as hell knew what we were fighting against. Or so we thought. Not long after that, I sneaked through the Capitalist back door and got my first mortgage. It's been hypocrisy ever since!

As today I am back in London, I decide to route myself via St Paul's to have a look at what the 21st Century's young rebels look like. Just as I once did, they will have their 'convictions' and doubtless will fail to see that certain hypocrisies are inherent within them. To be honest the camp is not that big. Most of the tents look new or nearly new and I am amused to see that a branch of Blacks, the outdoor kit specialists who do a nifty line in tents, is situated on the edge of the churchyard. Either they are doing a roaring trade, or this whole event is simply serving as an exhibition for their products. I can hear the shop assistants now - 'Down with Capitalism' they declare as the till rings for another sale.

I can't help thinking that this 'camp' is probably about half a mile away from where it should be, unless of course it's a protest against religion. Now that WOULD be something. I walk in the direction of the City where the Met Police seem to have every bit of available space fenced off, lest the activists decide to take their actions - and tents - to the real heart of the banking system. I put a bit more of my cash into the economy by nipping into the Green Man, a Wetherspoons hostelry near Bank Station. This is one of the smallest 'Spoons I've encountered but the breakfast is up to scratch, as is the pint of WharfeBank Treacle Toffee Stout which washes it down - luvverley!

I go south of the river to London Bridge station to get a train to Chipstead, covered by my £8 travelcard. I dare say this is a route enjoyed by many a Merchant Banker as the 35-minute journey leaves the hustle and bustle of the city behind to deposit

travellers into the heart of leafy, broker-belt Surrey. The reports I have read concerning the area around Chipstead's ground states that it's not really wise to walk from Chipstead station, as parts of the journey are along roads that have no footpath. They're not wrong. To do it in the dark would be folly. Fortunately, it's a reasonably bright and breezy day so I take my chances.

Half a mile of ducking and diving later, I eventually reach the sanctity of the White Hart, a foody-ish pub but also one with a defined drinking area. The beers are a mix of mainstream and micro, and I am pleased to see a dark beer on tap, this being Pilgrim Porter, brewed in nearby Reigate and a very tasty ale to boot. From the White Hart the road has the bonus a public footpath and I can relax for the couple of hundred yards to the Chipstead FC stadium.

Set in open countryside, the High Road ground boasts a kit stand containing the required number of seats for this level, and a covered, one-step terrace behind one goal. Elsewhere is flat standing. The club house, accessed from outside the ground, has a handpump with a Charles Wells Bombardier pump-clip on it, but as I want to save the last pint of my day's beer quota for later (some driving to do tonight) I can't vouch for its functionality, or whether it's just for show - remiss of me! I can though confirm that the snack bar is once more a carnivore's paradise.

Both Chipstead and visitors Corinthian-Casuals are flying high in Isthmian League Division One South and this clash between two of the more colourfully-attired teams, draws a pitifully small crowd of under 100. Those that are in attendance witness a reasonably absorbing game that favours the visitors in the first half as they edge in front via an own-goal. They are pegged back early in the second half and it's Chipstead who look the more likely to prevail until a frantic last fifteen minutes when the home team strike the woodwork twice, while at the other end their keeper makes three outstanding stops to maintain the status quo. In the end a draw is a fair result.

Having survived the journey here, I decide to pursue an alternative route back to the station by taking in the Rambler's Rest, a large pub on the B2032. This involves walking for 800 yards or so down a steep, narrow hill, occasionally flattening myself against the hedges as yet another car whizzes up from behind me. What fun! The Rambler's Rest is the kind of hostelry where a waitress greets you at the door as you walk in, hoping to show you to a dining table. I mumble that I am only here for a beer but they still let me in.

Of the beers on tap, I am attracted to the Itchen Valley Godfathers which at 3.8% is my kind of traditional bitter - if a little thin - although it certainly wets the whistle. The stunner is that they want £3.85 a pint for it - Running Dog Capitalist Lackeys! I'm off to buy a tent....

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

Power to the People...!

07/20

