

TT No.61: *Rob Campion* - Sunday 8th February 2014; **Appleby Magna** 1-2 Oadby Owls, Men's; Leicestershire & Rutland FA Sunday Premier Cup Semi Final; Venue: Bowley's Lane, Appleby Magna, Leicestershire, DE12 7BE.

Appleby Magna is a small village in the far west of Leicestershire and has a DE12 postcode. It is close to the M42 motorway and Ashby-de-la-Zouch is the nearest town being 6 1/2 miles to the North East. The parish church is dedicated to St. Michael & All Angels and before the game I took a photo of it as I had to pass it to reach Bowley's Lane.

Despite being in Leicestershire Appleby Magna, they, like the other sides that compete in Sunday Leagues that are based outside the county attract very little attention and seldom get noticed here in Leicester. Appleby though are without doubt the most successful and strongest of these teams having been competing in the top division of the Tamworth & District Sunday League (TDFL) for some time. Since the TDFL have had a web presence on the FA's Full-Time site Appleby have been crowned league champions four times (2008-2012) and won numerous cup competitions as well. This season they are also going strong in the league having won six of their seven games so far.

Oadby Owls, Men's FC are new to this level of competition having risen through the ranks of the Alliance Football League (AFL) recently. In the Summer they had a double promotion to the premier division having finished runners-up behind Frolesworth United. The Owls did claim some silverware winning the Leicestershire FA Sunday Intermediate Cup, beating their divisional rivals Frolesworth in the final. This season they sit in a respectable fourth place in the table with twelve points from their seven league games.

Below is the two team's route to the semi-final:

Round 1: Appleby Magna - bye; Ponte (Hinckley Sunday League) 1-5 Oadby Owls.

Round 2: Appleby Magna 5-0 FC Charnwood (Charnwood Sunday League); Oadby Owls - walk over after Wymeswold (Charnwood Sunday League) folded.

Round 3: Wykin (Hinckley Sunday League) 1-5 Appleby Magna; Oadby Owls 4-0 East Goscote Roofing (Leicester Sunday League).

Quarter Finals: Appleby Magna 3-1 Quorn Royals (Charnwood Sunday League); Athletic Oadby (Leicester Sunday League) 2-4 aet Oadby Owls.

The venue that Appleby call home is on Bowley's Lane on the western side of the village and as expected is a basic affair. They share the venue with the local cricket club and there is no facilities for spectators. Even parking is restricted to the side of Bowley's Lane itself.

I have seen both of these teams before this season and to be honest I expected a home win, and the first half played out like this. Appleby looked quicker and

sharper and had the lion's share of possession and territorial advantage. That said they did not create any clear-cut chances until the latter stages of the half. Following some pressure on the Owls' goal, the hosts were threatening and won a number of corners and one of these was headed in to give them a deserved lead around five minutes before the interval. Five minutes after the re-start and the visitors caught Appleby asleep at the back and Dan Copp produced an excellent finish to square things up. This would be the Owls best spell of the game and on sixty-three minutes Callum Jarman got between two defenders and lobbed the ball over the advancing keeper to give them a 2-1 lead. It was no surprise that this gave the home side a kick up the backside and the final half an hour saw them create plenty of chances but found a resolute defence hard to break down.

To sum up - collective team work and effort can and will win games against sides that on paper have the better players.

04/20