

TT No.107: *Brian Buck* - Saturday 17th March 2018; **Ottershaw** v South Wimbledon Dazzlers; Surrey Junior Cup Semi Final; Kick-Off: 1.30pm; Result: 2-1; Attendance 25 approx.

When I woke up next morning I was greeted by a light layer of snow on my lawn. The first thing I then did was to try and find out what parts of the country had been affected. I soon found out that no one seemed to be particularly immune from the weather and games were getting called off all over the place. However, I had been in contact with the Ottershaw secretary via *twitter* on the previous night and soon I had received two messages from him telling me that the match was on. I was very grateful for his help in what otherwise could have been a very tricky day for me. I had left it too late to go to the game by public transport, so it was a car job and it took me about 90 minutes or so to get there.

On my arrival the nets were being put up, players were arriving and there was no snow around, so it was game on. This is probably a very pleasant place to watch football on a nice day and the recreation ground seems to be cut out of a wooded area. This was also seemingly a good dog walking area. But before I could appreciate all this it was time to head into the bar, which belongs to the cricket club. Today they did a good trade and there was some hot food available as well. But you could tell that it was very cold outside because the windows soon got steamed up.

Then it was time for the match which was played out in occasional snow flurries. There was a certain beauty about this place as the pitch is slightly raised and the dullness of the surrounds gave a slightly Christmassy feel to the afternoon. But it was extremely cold and I really don't know how one lady survived. The top half of her body was well wrapped up, but I wouldn't personally recommend thin tights (I assume!) for the lower part! As for the match, it was a keenly contested game which I thoroughly enjoyed, not least because for the most part the players of both sides behaved themselves and played the match in the right spirit. The ref though was well in control and at one point I thought that he was going to actually book the lump of dog shit someone spotted on the pitch before it was removed. Ottershaw, from the Guildford & Woking Alliance and playing uphill, took the lead on 17 minutes with a close-range effort and slightly against the run of play. The goal gave them confidence and they then became the better side for the rest of the half. But I still felt that there was something more to come from the South Wimbledon Dazzlers, who play in the Wimbledon & District League and after the break they deservedly equalized by way of a 30-yard direct free kick on 70 minutes. Soon I recall saying to a watching lady, "It's got a bit more exciting now," and she agreed, "A proper game!" The match looked like going into extra time (I assume) but on 90(+1) minutes a rogue tackle just inside the area, saw Ottershaw win the game from the spot. A tad harsh on the visitors who did enough not to lose

at this point. But I think that the collective team effort from the hosts helped them to keep their composure and I wish them well in the final.

Afterwards I nipped off to watch the end of the first half and all of the second half at nearby Chertsey Town, who were playing AFC Hayes in a Combined Counties Division 1 match, which finished 1-1 (attendance 52). Not great and I think that the fans of both sides thought that their respective sides could do better. The ground, a decent one, was much as I remember it from my last visit here, on Easter Monday 4 April 1994: I saw them beat Leatherhead 6-2 in a Diadora League Division 1 match (attendance 400 approx). Earlier in the day I had watched De Havilland lose 4-0 at home to Walden Rangers in a South Midland League Division 1 match (attendance 25 approx.) before going on to Spurs to see them lose 4-1 to West Ham United (attendance 31,502). Don't remember too much about that one though!

04/20