

TT No.81: *Brian Buck* - Saturday 13th January 2018; LNER v London Titans; Cherry Red Books Middlesex County League Combination; Kick-Off: 2pm; Result: 6-3; Attendance: 1.

After my previous match had finished, I caught the next train from Carpenders Park, alighting at Wembley Central 16 minutes later. From here it was about a 40-minute walk to the ground, although I could have caught a bus most of the way. I'd been 'umming and ahing' where to go for my middle match of the day all week and eventually settled on this one, as I noted from the league website that the hosts have their own social club on site, meaning I could have a few pints before kick-off while watching some TV football at the same time.

While I was in here a woman suddenly appeared and told us that she couldn't find her way out of the bar! In some respects, I was lucky that this match was on as I when I looked out of the window while I was supping my pint, that water was being brushed out of one goalmouth. But even though it was rather squelchy underfoot, most of the pitch was playable if rather undulating. LNER Sports & Social club was established in 1923 by the London North Eastern Railway Company and since then has been a place for friends and family alike to enjoy! Although it says this on their website, I couldn't really understand the connection at the time, as I thought LNER trains ran on the eastern side of the country. But it seems that the LNER inherited four of London's termini and Marylebone (ex-Great Central Railway) was one of them. In addition, it ran suburban services to Broad Street (London, Midland and Scottish Railway) and Moorgate (Metropolitan Railway, later London Transport). Today the Piccadilly Line passes on one side of the ground and a Chiltern Railways line on the other side. Also, if you stand in the right place you can see Wembley Stadium in the distance.

The game was 'reffed' very well considering that the holder of the whistle could barely walk, yet alone run. At one point when a player deliberately kicked the ball out of play, he told him, "Either go and get the ball or give me your name!". The score was 1-1 at the break, with LNER taking the lead on 13 minutes. I asked their clubs lino for the scorer's name and was told it was John Smith. Well, you may know a lot of John Smith's but how many do you know that play football and score goals? Not many Gary, as they kept calling him! I made sure that he was in earshot when I called him a prat when the manager gave me his real name at the end, by which time he'd scored four goals! The second half was full of goals and in a seven-minute period starting on 54 minutes, the score went, 2-1, 2-2, 3-2 and then 3-3, but starting in the 79th minute LNER won the match with three goals in five minutes to bring to a close a game where for the first time, I think, I was the only spectator for a Saturday afternoon match! Then it was onto Wembley Stadium to watch Spurs play.

