

TT No.91: *Brian Buck* - Saturday 3rd February 2018; **Cookham Dean** v Taplow United; Thames Valley Premier League Premier Division; Result: 2-0; Attendance: 15 approx.

Despite my meticulous planning, some days out don't go quite according to plan. I travelled to this game by public transport and I was due to arrive at Cookham station at 12.45pm, some 75 minutes before kick-off. But my train got delayed en route, because they couldn't close the sliding doors, which meant that I missed the hourly connecting service from Maidenhead. Eventually we managed to limp into Maidenhead and my train to Cookham arrived on time. However, because it was obliged to wait for passengers from other delayed trains, it finally left at the time it was due to arrive at Cookham. So, I finally arrived at my destination some eight minutes before kick-off and I arrived at the ground two minutes before kick.

But I'd missed nothing more than a pre-match pint or two because the game kicked off about three minutes late. The secretary had earlier in the morning told me that this pitch rarely waterlogs and today he was just about right. It rained throughout this match, albeit only lightly and if your idea of fun is standing in a large open recreation ground with water starting to seep up around your shoes, then this was the game for you. In fact, one of the official lino's didn't turn up because someone had told him that the game was off. Or did they? Anyway, the players and officials all entered into the spirit of things and the players got truly muddy as the centre of the pitch gradually became a gluepot.

In the first half Taplow, despite being bottom of this division, looked to be marginally the better side, but no one could score. It appears that the hosts had a rollocking at half time (they don't use the term 'bollocking' in these parts, as this is a posh area!). Anyway, it worked and Cookham took the lead from a 'power-driver', which I missed because I was talking to a dog! But I saw the other goal, on 90(+1) minutes, scored by a player who had just joined Cookham Dean from Taplow! Then it was into the club bar, to make up for lost time, before catching a train back to London and onwards and having the good fortune to find the rear coach unoccupied, thus allowing me to sleep off some of the excesses of the day!