

TT No. 10: *Brian Buck* - Saturday 3rd August 2019; Bakewell Town v Pinxton; **Abacus Lighting Central Midlands League Chairman's Cup**; Venue: **played at Burton Rugby Club - Peel Croft**; Result: 1-5; Attendance: 269.

Today I was grateful to get a lift to this game and we arrived here without any major hiccups, which meant we were able to nip into a few local hostelrys before proceedings got under way. Parking was a bit of a problem though. When we arrived, an earlier game was nearing completion and a CML official told us that the parking inside the ground was for players and officials only. So, we parked in the retail park opposite the ground instead, which is free parking for two hours. When we returned after our enjoying refreshments, we now noticed that the gate into the ground was now open and unattended, presumably to allow the folk to depart from an earlier game here. So, we took advantage of this.

Our reason for coming here today is that there are strong rumours that Peel Croft is set for demolition within the next year. Normally, if you haven't been here before then you might be tempted to just let it go. But the reason why a load of 'senior' Groundhoppers turned up for this one is that the ground is of major historical significance, in that it once staged League football.

At present it is the home to Burton RFC and has been since 1910. In fact, Peel Croft opened in 1872 as a Rugby venue, by 1891 codes changed at Peel Croft when Burton Swifts moved in and the Association game was played there instead. Swifts gained entry in the Second Division of the Football League a year later with their first game at home resulting in a 7-1 win against Crewe Alexandra. Also, in town there was another club, Burton Wanderers who were making their own way forward and they themselves became members of the league in 1894 playing home games at Derby Turn. It wasn't long before the realisation set in that it would be better to pool resources and the two clubs merged to become Burton United and this joint venture lasted from 1901-1907 as a Football League club before folding in 1910 having played six matches in the Southern League thus ending Association football at the ground with the venue returning to its former use with only a few football matches played here since then.

So, today's game had a bit of a nostalgic feel to it. Unfortunately, it was a bit one-sided and after 33 minutes Pinxton were winning 3-0 and deservedly so. With Bakewell seemingly unable to alter the situation I spent much time gazing around the ground, trying to picture men with black moustaches and baggy shorts running around here over 100 years ago! But this was a bit difficult because there was the noise of the passing traffic around three sides of the ground to contend with. Bakewell played better after the break, pulling a goal back on 56 minutes. But although Pinxton eased off a bit they still managed to score twice more before the end. A great day out.

