

MOLTEN SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE

NEWSLETTER No. 2

By Bill Scholes

THE MANAGERIAL MERRY GO ROUND

DIVISIONS ONE and TWO

The managerial waters of Division's One and Two are much calmer than those in the Premier - probably no real surprise. Whilst there are 15 new managers in the Premier, there are only 6 in Division One and Division Two is a veritable millpond, with only 3 changes.

At Amersham Town in Division One, Wayne Butfoy is in charge, although he did replace Ted Gromnicki halfway through last season and at Bedford FC, Andrew Arnold replaces Dave Parker. Andy O'Dell is the new manager at Buckingham Athletic, whilst Roger Burr is now in charge at Cranfield United. Sun Postal Sports have a new man in the hot seat, Terry Hows replacing Gordon Wallis, whilst there are new joint managers at Winslow United, in the form of Michael Harris and Andrew Wright.

The three clubs in Division Two who have bucked the trend of the status quo are, Kent Athletic, where John Cook has taken over from Alan Loasby, Pitstone & Ivinghoe, who have recruited Richard "Alfie" Elliott and Tring Corinthians, where Ross Parret has moved from Chesham Reserves to take over from Simon Lacey.

BEACONSFIELD SYCOB APPOINT NEW CHAIRMAN

Beaconsfield SYCOB's 10-month search for a new Chairman has ended with Bob Breen, the former Slough Town FC chief executive, taking over the role with immediate effect. After leaving Slough Town, Bob has held similar roles, in Ireland with Waterford United FC and Bohemians FC - both in the Premier Division of the League of Ireland.

Bob said his priorities at Beaconsfield would be to bring stability to the club and help re-establish its position at a higher level within the game. The new Chairman should feel at home straight away, as his old club Slough Town will be ground-sharing at Holloways Park this season.

AMERSHAM TOWN MOVE BACK TO SPATLEYS MEADOW

After a year of ground sharing at Beaconsfield SYCOB, Amersham Town are moving back home this season. In the past year the ground has undergone what in TV circles would be called a major makeover. Anyone familiar with the old ground would be hard put to recognise it now; gone is the notorious slope, gone is the bumpy and uneven playing surface and gone are the changing rooms that doubled as a morgue during the last war. Over the last 18 months the pitch has been totally levelled and reseeded, and now resembles a lush bowling green. The dressing rooms are state-of-the-art, with artificial grass flooring - easier to hoover up the mud! There are separate changing rooms for female officials and the clubhouse has been totally refurbished. The new facilities were opened on Sunday 12th, August by Luther Blissett, who brought his Celebrity United team along to christen the pitch and play a select Amersham Town Veterans XI.

CHALFONT ST PETER HOST LUTHER BLISSETT'S CELEBRITY UNITED

Luther's team of roving celebrities will be in action again in South Bucks shortly, when they visit Chalfont St. Peter on Sun 2 September for a charity match. Kick off is at 3.00pm, with an Under 13 staged before the main event. Entry is only £5. Chalfont spokesman Stuart Latham stated that they are deliberately keeping the price low to encourage as many families as possible to attend.

FA CUP WEEKEND ROUND UP

Last weekend saw the start of the long trail to Wembley, with a record number of 731 clubs entering the most famous Cup competition in the world. 171 clubs entered at the Extra

Preliminary Round stage, of which 20 were Spartan South Midland clubs. 8 emerged victorious, with a further 3 involved in replays. There were 3 all-Spartan ties, Tring Athletic beating Ruislip Manor 2-1, Langford getting a welcome 1-0 win over London Colney, whilst Biggleswade United and Broxbourne Borough V&E fought out a 1-1 draw and will replay Tuesday. Also replaying on Tuesday is Haringey Borough, who drew 2-2 with Wembley. Chalfont St. Peter maintained their 100% start to the season with a good 3-1 away win at Buckingham Town, Oxhey Jets returned from Bedfont with a 2-0 victory and Cockfosters had a 3-2 home win against Southend Manor. The two other sides recording home wins were Welwyn Garden City, who beat Bowers & Pitsea 3-1 and Hertford Town who triumphed 1-0 against Cogenhoe (pronounced cook-no) United. The latter were late in arriving for the game due to an unfortunate incident with modern technology. In an attempt to locate the ground, one Cogenhoe official entered the wrong postcode into an internet map service which resulted in the team bus pulling up in Welwyn Garden City, outside the house of Hertford Town Secretary Stephen Hedley, whose lawn simply wasn't big enough for the match!

The two longest journeys were undertaken Beaconsfield SYCOB and Aylesbury Vale, who both drew Wessex League clubs from the Bournemouth area but came away with mixed results. Beaconsfield had the happiest return journey, having beaten Bournemouth Poppies 3-2 but, just a couple of miles away, the Vale had the heaviest defeat of the day, losing 6-1 to Christchurch. 1-0 down after only a couple of minutes, their cause was not helped when Paul Talbot saw red for a rash tackle, leaving his team mates with a Herculean task. A good opportunist goal from Luke Melisi saw Vale draw level, but a bad defensive error saw them go 2-1 down on the stroke of half time. It was an uphill struggle in the second half, as Christchurch took advantage of the extra man and ran in 4 more goals. A number of players from both Beaconsfield and Aylesbury decided to stay down in Bournemouth for a night of clubbing – I wonder if they met up? - If so, I wonder who won?

In Tuesday night's replays, Broxbourne Boro beat Biggleswade Utd 2-1, but Haringey Boro went down 3-0 away at Wembley.

IT'S ALL HAPPENING AT TRING ATHLETIC

Tring referee Graham Poll, having just released his new book, was among the spectators to witness Tring Athletic's 2-1 win over Ruislip Manor in the FA Cup and was accompanied by his ghostwriter, and a photographer from the Daily Express. An article on the game, together with photos, majoring on the magic of the FA Cup, appeared in Monday's edition of the Express.

In a recent Herts Charity Shield game against London Colney, Tring's Vinnie Iannone scored what could well be the fastest hat trick on record - his three goals spanning just three minutes between the 19th and 22nd minutes.

PREMIER DIVISION ROUND UP

It's early days yet, with most clubs having played just two games. Early pace setters are Chalfont St. Peter and Tring Athletic, both teams having won their opening two games. Free scoring Chalfont beat Cockfosters 4-0 in their opening game at home and followed up with a 3-1 win away at Hanwell Town. Manager Danny Edwards has retained most of last years squad, as well as making some important additions and with Chairman (or should I say Head Groundsman) Denis Mair working tirelessly throughout the summer to improve the pitch, the scene is set for Chalfont's young side to replicate last season's away form at home. Tring, starting a season for the first time for 17 years without Mick Eldrige and Ray Brimson in the dugout, have given new manager Phil Casserly just the start he would have wanted, winning 3-0 away at Broxbourne Boro and 2-0 at home to London Colney. The only other team with a 100% record are Biggleswade Town, but they have only played the once - winning 3-1 away at Colney Heath. At the foot of the table, 3 clubs remain pointless - newly promoted Cockfosters, Ruislip Manor and Welwyn Garden City.