



FGIF INBOX NEWS UPDATES 2022-23

updated as shown on posting date

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR 2022-23 - for all updates re new club photos, reports, programmes etc please check the relevant on-site pages or scroll down to the updates panel (yellow box) on the *FGIF* Home page for the latest additions...

OCTOBER

30/10/22: Bob Powell (via Brian Buck) - Info for travellers. The RMT have postponed their strike on the day that it clashes with the National Poppy Day appeal. They will now strike on Wednesday 9th November. The planned strikes for Saturday 5th and Monday 7th November will still go ahead.

Further news: on Thursday 3rd November **tubes and London overground** workers have postponed their strikes until Thursday November 10th.

Many **Orient** fans are fuming that **Crewe Alexandra** have moved their FA Cup tie on Sat November 5th to a 1.00pm kick-off to avoid playing under lights. The decision was made late in the day as it is a train strike day. Orient are not certain if they can get the extra coaches to accommodate their fans.

If any hoppers get stuck due to train strikes over the weekend of Sat 5th November, the scheduled televised FA Cup games is as follows:

Fri 04/11 - 19.55 pm (BBC 2) - **Hereford** v Portsmouth;
Sat 05/11 - 12.00pm (BBC 1) - **South Shields** v Forest Green Rovers;
Sun 06/11 - 12.30pm (ITV) - **Wrexham** v Oldham Athletic;
Sun 06/11 - 15.00pm (ITV) - **Torquay United** v Derby County and,
Mon 07/11 - 19.45pm (ITV) - **Bracknell Town** v Ipswich Town.

24/10/22: Bob Powell (Via Brian Buck) - At this moment **Arsenal** are due to play Zurich in the Europa League (ko 2000 pm), but also that day the RMT train drivers and tube workers, and London overground trains are on strike. The match might be moved, or the train drivers may settle their strike...?

Oxford United are submitting a planning application to build a new 18000 capacity stadium at Kidlington, but local residents are against the idea and said the club will face massive opposition to their plans.

Stratford Town defender Kynan Isaac has been given a 10-year ban by the FA for his part in spot fixing during an FA Cup tie v Shrewsbury Town in November 21.

The cost-of-living crisis poses the biggest threat to non-league football since World War 2. Teams in the lower tiers of the pyramid fear that the combination of dwindling gates and higher energy prices could seal their fate. The cost of matchday transport, floodlights have been identified as common problems. **The FA** said it was trying to understand how best to help grassroot clubs.

Crystal Palace have been given permission to build a new main stand this will increase the capacity by 8000 to over 34000.

Millwall have got approval to build a new training ground at West Kingsdown near Brands Hatch Kent.

23/10/22: Gary Spooner - It was a case of letting the train take the strain yesterday as I went to **Little Common**. Having completed the fencing of the unenclosed sides they are now back at their own ground. Involved three trains each way - Leicester to London, London to Haywards Heath and Haywards Heath to Cooden Beach. All were on time and not overcrowded. Certainly, it beats four hours each way in a car and only slightly more expensive than the petrol it would have cost. I travelled stress free and in comfort with some stunning views along the route and I managed to read a 217-page novel during the journey. Happy Saturday! After arriving at Cooden Beach I had time for a walk on said (deserted) beach before strolling to the ground. Not the greatest ground and facilities but the journey and beach and seaside more than made up for it.

The game saw step 5 Little Common against Step 6 Milton United but with Milton being top of Hellenic League Division 1 I expected a good game and so it proved. Two decent sides playing decent football with no quarter given. Milton United led 1-0 at half time but the second half saw Little Common score 3 cracking goals to progress to the 2nd Round for the first time in their history. Admission was £6 with printed programmes available. Attendance was 97. The magic of the Vase is alive and well!

21/02/22: Steve Penny - Non- League Football Books. Readers may be interested to learn that highly acclaimed and long-standing non-League football writer Steve Penny has had a busy, few months, putting together no fewer than four new football books (with another on the way!).

His recent projects include the following titles: *Towering Tales & A Ripping Yarn* about grassroots football in Yorkshire; *Tarts, Trams & Tuk Tuks* - the adventures (and misadventures) of a group of English football tourists on a long weekend trip to Lisbon; *Island Hopping* - the football grounds of Lanzarote and *Pilgrims' Patch - the football grounds of Lincolnshire* covering all 160-plus teams in Lincolnshire.

I can recommend these excellent publications to all *FGIF* readers and footy fans alike. They will make a terrific addition to any sporting bookshelf and might even provide much-needed inspiration for buying that cracking Christmas present!

For more details about Steve's books and how you can order them [CLICK HERE](#). Alternatively, go to the Non-League Books link on the [GROUNDHOPPING](#) section shown on the *FGIF* Home page. Thanks to Steve for providing us with the info.

16/10/22: Peter Miles (via Brian Buck) - Might be one for your fixtures list... **Lutterworth Athletic** have a run of home games including two mid-week matches being staged at North Kilworth Sports Club while their own pitch is converted to 3G.

16/10/22: Bob Powell (via Brian Buck) - Sad news to emerge (Monday 10/10) hearing that junior club **Gedling FC** suffered a break in at the weekend. They removed a door to gain entry taking away bathroom fittings, copper piping etc. Burst pipes flowed non-stop causing thousands of pounds worth of damage to the dressing rooms.

Newcastle United FC will explore naming rights for St. James' Park and whether to expand or build a new stadium but will do so by consulting with fans.

Southend United FC face a winding-up petition in the High Court on November 9th brought about by HMRC over an unpaid debt. The club countered by saying they intend to pay the debt in full.

16/10/22: Gary Spooner - Managed to miss *Strictly* again last night with a sporting double yesterday. First up was footie at **Garforth Town**. An hour before kick-off the sun was beating down and I was sat in the car deliberating whether I needed a fleece and a coat. Thankfully being a Southern softie, I decided on both. It was a wise move. Before kick-off there was rain in monsoon proportions accompanied by a howling gale. The stand offered no respite as the rain was sheeting directly into it. Drenched and bedraggled before a ball had been kicked. Ouch! Had the conditions continued throughout the game there would have been very few pics. Luckily the sun did come out soon after kick-off which allowed me to take some pics including a rainbow behind the very photogenic stand. The game itself was strange. Garforth won 4-0 and missed a penalty but Eccleshill did not play that badly. It was 1-0 to Garforth at half time and early in the second half Eccleshill missed a great chance to make it one each. They continued to have plenty of play but couldn't score. Meanwhile at the other end Garforth took their chances well for a comprehensive victory. Admission was £6 and printed programmes were available. Great choice of food at Garforth as well though I didn't go for the spam butty. It was pie and peas and a flask of tea which was much needed as despite the sun coming back out, the wind made it noticeably chilly for the first time this season.

From Garforth it was a short drive to Headingley for **Australia v Fiji** in the **Rugby League World Cup**. I had arranged parking via *Justpark* on a driveway which was a short walk from the ground. I'm definitely not a fan of apps and the like but without *Justpark* I would have been struggling to park within a couple of miles of the stadium. Well worth the £7 it cost in my view. The rain was now lashing down again so another drenching before kick-off. At least inside the ground the stand provided protection and allowed me to watch without getting any wetter though it still felt cold to this Southern softie! Australia won easily as expected though it was better than expected entertainment wise with some corking tries. Strangely

Fiji scored first and last. Final score was 42-8. Getting out of Leeds afterwards was a mare but once on the motorway it was a trouble-free journey, and I was home just before midnight. Cracking day out but very tiring and stressful at times.

11/10/22: Jon T Green - What a nice little town **Market Rasen Town FC** is and a really great place for a sunny Autumn game.

I was reading about your visit (or lack thereof) to **Hamilton Panthers** in the York League, what a total nightmare!!! There is that horrible moment when it washes over you that you are not going to see your chosen match and then the heart-pounding race to find a replacement fixture. I was having a nice quiet cuppa when I started to read your report but had to put it down halfway through as the tension racked up. Getting stuck in the traffic with the clock running just makes you want to scream, doesn't it? It was with some relief that I read of your arrival at **Rawcliffe**. You'll be pleased to know that I was able to finish my drink and a couple of chocolate biscuits safe in the knowledge that you got to see a game. The things we put ourselves through, eh?

09/10/22: Bob Powell (via Brian Buck) - According to today's papers the **FA Cup Final** scheduled for 3rd June 2023 is under threat, because it is also the day of King Charles coronation. Prince William is due to hand out the medals and it will be interesting to see how this plays out and if the FA Cup Final will be moved...

09/10/22: Gary Spooner - I gave the South East Counties Hop a miss yesterday and am very glad I did. I visited a friend in Wales and after an excellent lunch we headed off to **Llanuwchllyn** for a Welsh Cup tie against Holywell Town. It was a beautiful scenic drive along the shores of Lake Bala made even better because the sun was shining. Cae LLan is a delightful ground with wonderful scenic views. It is tucked away behind the local church hall on the wall of which there is a sign pointing the way. Big day for Llanuwchllyn yesterday and a decent crowd including many from Holywell. £4 admission and a printed programme as well. The first half was a very dour affair with no goals. Holywell were obviously the better side but wasted chances and Llanuwchllyn were pressing and harrying with great effect. The second half saw Llanuwchllyn tire and Holywell step up a gear. Holywell scored 5 unanswered goals and could have had 5 more! After the game it was back to my friends for a cuppa before the trip home. Timing was perfect as I got in just as Strictly was finishing! Excellent day out and another gem of a Welsh ground visited.

03/10/22: Jon T Green - I finally made it back to **Glasgow United** on Saturday after the disappointment of the "rain-off" last time around. It's a long trip from Norfolk but a really top ground, shame that there was a "crowd" of only 31!!! On the way North I went to **Chester-le-Street Town FC** on Friday night, another superb Northern League venue and a great standard of play.

02/10/22: Gary Spooner - With the previous two weeks seeing trips to Exeter and Chester Le Street I stayed relatively local yesterday and visited **Foley Meir FC** who were at home to Barnton. Very friendly welcome and a cracking ground with sweeping views of Stoke in the background. If you look closely, you can spot the top of the Stoke City stadium in one of the pics. Just a fiver to get in with

programmes and badges available. On the food front I can recommend the excellent pasties and one of the Scouse was highly impressed with the curry and chips. On the pitch Foley had been struggling with seven straight defeats after winning their opening two games. Barnton easily made it 8 straight defeats yesterday and should have won by a hatful though profligate finishing and a good performance by the Foley keeper kept them to just 2 goals. Foley rarely threatened and were not helped by their indiscipline which saw them down to 10 men for most of the second half and 9 men for a while when a player was sin binned. Another good afternoon out and home for just after six which unfortunately meant I either had to suffer Strictly or the wrath of Mandy. If there are early kick offs in future months, I'll be very happy to drive home in the light and get back for dinner although the downside is I'll have to suffer Strictly more often!

SEPTEMBER

25/09/22: Brian Buck - ITV4 has started to show reruns of the northern version of **The Big Match Revisit**. I haven't investigated this thoroughly. They start at around 6pm although I notice that one is starting at around 5.40pm during this week. I'm not sure if they are on every weekday night either!

The West Herts League has folded with most remaining clubs joining the Herts Senior County League, but some clubs have joined the Aylesbury and District League instead.

25/09/22: Bob Powell (via Brian Buck) - Sat 1st October **Arsenal** v **Spurs** (live on BT with kick-off at 12.30 pm). ASLEF has said that 12 rail companies will be on strike on that day. RMT the biggest rail union have yet to announce their strike days, some papers are saying the Spurs game could be postponed due to the rail strikes. Also, that weekend Friday 30 September and Sat 1st October the postmen are on strike. Life doesn't get any easier!

You might want to warn people Wed 5 October ASLEF train strike from Tues 4th October Arriva London North buses 2000 drivers and 47 routes affected are on indefinite strike will severely hamper non car drivers getting to matches.

Chesham v **Merthyr** match abandoned after a Chesham player suffered a bad injury. They waited so long for an ambulance that the referee had no option but to call off the match.

25/09/22: Gary Spooner - It was going to be Vase action yesterday with Plan A being **Heaton Stannington** v **Campion**. However, in midweek it was announced that **Chester Le Street United FC** were to play one final game at their Riverside Stadium before ground sharing at Sunderland West End for the foreseeable future due to their floodlights not being to the required standard. Therefore, a change of plan. Not just me either as there was a bumper crowd of 271 comprising of mainly hoppers and including my mates The Welsh and The Scouse. Superb welcome from CLSU. Game not the best which saw the home side win 1-0 with a first half goal. Amazingly I've been to the Riverside many times for cricket but had never noticed the football ground next door! Excellent lounge complete with bar selling

hot food and drinks and I even managed to get one of the 25 programmes available. Hopefully United will sort out the floodlight issues before the March 31st deadline and will be able to return home again. When they do a visit is definitely recommended.

18/09/22: Bob Powell (via Brian Buck) - Leicester City Stadium expansion plans have been approved by 8,000 seats taking the capacity to 40,000. Plans to build a new hotel and business centre, a flagship fan store, an events arena and residential flats has also been given the go ahead.

Horsham have been given the go ahead for further ground improvements. The plans include additional covered stands, a press box, new turnstiles and a scoreboard, as well as moving the existing small stands to the community pitch.

18/09/22: Hatfield Town FC (via twitter) - The club's First Team have moved to a new ground and will be playing their first league match there this Sat 17th Sept! New Home Ground will be at THE HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY GROUND in Letchworth!!!!

18/09/22: Gary Spooner - Long trip to Exeter yesterday in the company of a Burton Albion supporting friend who was heading for their FL1 game at Exeter City. Meanwhile I settled for Heavitree United FC just a mile and a bit down the road. Low level game but a ground well worth visiting as Heavitree used to be in the Western League. An impeccably observed minute's silence before the main event which saw Bampton take all three points with a snatch and grab 3-1 victory. Heavitree will be mightily disappointed after having most of the possession though they lacked a cutting edge up front which cost them (a similar display by Celtic today who lost 2-0 at St Mirren despite having 80% possession!). After the game I met my friend who was ecstatic as Albion had secured their first win of the season and despite still being rock bottom there is now optimism (for a few days at least) of better things to come this season. We'd both had a good afternoon and the trip home was a lot less troublesome than the journey there. Another excellent hop!

04/09/22: Bob Powell (via Brian Buck) - The Isthmian League board are offering clubs the chance to kick off early on a Saturday as winter draws in providing both clubs agree to avoid soaring energy costs of using floodlights. If the policy proves a success, I am sure other leagues will follow suit and midday kick-offs on a Saturday could become commonplace.

Cambridge United FC are to buy back the ground after 18 years as tenants. The deal ends a plan announced by the club three months before Covid-19, to move to a new 12,000 capacity greenbelt stadium on the east of the city.

04/09/22: Bedfordshire County League (via Brian Buck) - Welcome to the 2022-23 Season. We shall commence the new season with a competition comprising of five divisions comprising of 77 teams.

Joining us for the first time are Bedford Town FC Youth Development U23, Buffs FC (Baldock); Kempston Rovers Academy U23 and MK Dons U23, in Division One. Whilst

in Division Three you will find Caddington FC and Stotfold Junior Adult, plus in Division Four, Bedford Wanderers, Caldecote U23, Kempston Athletic (old name new club) and Meltis Rangers. We also welcome back, Bedford Albion (Division One), Westoning Recreation (Division Two), Ickwell & Old Warden (Division Three) and Marston Shelton Rovers Reserves (Division Four).

In addition to which there have been several name changes. In the Premier Division. AFC Kempston Town & Bedford College are now AFC Kempston Town Hammers. Biggleswade United U23 are now Biggleswade United Reserves and in Division One Sporting Lewsey Park are now just Lewsey Park FC. There are also two changes in Division Two with AFC Kempston Town & Bedford College Reserves now being AFC Kempston Town Hammers Reserves and Shefford Town & Campton U23 becoming Shefford Town & Campton Development. Whilst in Division Four Woodside Adult have become Leighton Woodside.

04/09/22: Gary Spooner - I had to resort to Plan B yesterday after **Three Bridges** moved their FA Cup tie to Friday night. Very glad I did too as I had an excellent afternoon at **Oakwood** which is also in Three Bridges though a longer walk from the station. Superb welcome at Oakwood! Admission was a fiver, and a badge was an absolute bargain at just ONE pound!!!! Alas only an online programme but to compensate Mark Gilbert (the Manager and the Chairman) gave me an excellent selection of old programmes and yearbooks including some from lodgers Forest Row and Crawley Ladies. As you can imagine I was well impressed. Proves that non-league really is different class!

The game was reasonable (especially so given the hot conditions) with Selsey being a class above and comfortably winning 2-0 with a goal in each half. Very sparse crowd (20-30 only) which really is a shame as Oakwood are a super friendly club and visitors are guaranteed a warm welcome. The trains behaved relatively well with only minor delays so another cracking day out. Back to London again next week courtesy of a £9 return fare on National Express. Given that I could probably only drive around 60 miles total for £9 worth of petrol it was too good to turn down. Also, happy that it deprives the profiteering oil companies of another tenner that they don't deserve! Will be scouring the fixtures later in the week with a Trophy game being my likely destination.

01/09/22: Jon T Green - What a wonderful club **Holwell** are and a real shame to see them struggling on the pitch albeit they did pick up three points with a win on Bank Holiday Monday. The chairman and committee are incredibly enthusiastic and working so hard to keep everything moving in the right direction but when you are drawing less than 100 people through the gate, that's a real labour of love.

AUGUST

30/08/22: Gary Spooner - Glorious drive across the Derbyshire Dales to New Mills yesterday (we took the scenic route and went for a walk en-route). A lovely ground and a decent game too though I did not get the normal "non-league" feel about

New Mills. Officials and staff seemed more officious and less friendly than elsewhere and there seemed to be a lot of notices telling you what you could and couldn't do. Obviously HSE in overdrive! Additionally, some eye watering prices by non-league standards on food and drink (no idea where I got my Yorkshire blood from!) and whilst I was delighted to get a printed programme, the £2.50 price tag was excessive for the quality of programme received. Having been overwhelmed by the friendliness at **Eccleshall** on Saturday it was definitely a case of being underwhelmed yesterday. Scenic route again on the way home and we stopped for an excellent Italian meal in Ashbourne to round off the holiday weekend. Hard at it again today to pay for future outings!!

28/08/22: Gary Spooner - The magic of the Vase was alive and well yesterday with a cracking trip to **Eccleshall**. Excellent rural ground, really friendly people and a cracking game to boot. My only gripe was the online programme but with a crowd of just 53 yesterday I can just about concede that the cost of production may well have exceeded revenue from sales. Special mention for the home-made brownies (at a bargain 60p) which were impossible to walk past and absolutely delicious. So good that some people had more than one (not me before you ask!) Cold water at 50p a bottle was also appreciated on a baking hot afternoon.

The game was definitely one of two halves with Eccleshall taking a 2-0 half time lead. The first goal was an absolute belter from distance and well worth the £6 admission on its own. Second half saw Rugby score and from then on it was brilliant end to end cup tie football. Particularly tense last 15 minutes after Eccleshall were reduced to 10 men but they held on for victory and a trip to Hereford Lads Club in the next round. Home for 6.30pm and pasta with Mandy though I'm secretly yearning for the sun to fade and the cold and rain to come so shepherd's pie is back on the menu!

Cup football planned again next week with plan A **Three Bridges** v Erith Town in the FA Cup. Making use of a train voucher I have but would have much preferred a cash refund. Fingers crossed that the trains are running properly.

22/08/22: Jon T Green - Well what an interesting hop it was on Saturday, I've certainly never seen such a lavish set up as they have at **Totton**. Club crest woven into the carpet in reception - blimey most clubs don't even have an old piece of lino. Good luck to them but in a weird way I hope that this isn't the future of non-league football.

21/08/22: Bob Powell (via Brian Buck) - Blackpool plan 3 new exits at the south east corner of their Bloomfield Road stadium, it would enable away supporters to disperse more quickly into Henry Street, hoping this will reduce clashes between opposing fans.

Knebworth of the Herts Senior County League are issuing programmes this season, which will include articles by a well-known local Groundhopper!

21/08/22: Gary Spooner - Had car trouble in the week which scuppered a trip to Suncny Speedway on Friday night. Had a flat tyre which was replaced (at

exorbitant cost) only for it to be flat again the next morning because the ***** hadn't fitted it properly!!!!!! Highly stressful and very frustrating. At least it was finally sorted (at no further cost) so that I could make it to the footie yesterday. No arch at Cardiff City but you were right predicting Cup action for me.

I had a superb day out and fitting in with my Yorkshire blood I didn't spend a single penny all day (I'd filled up with diesel the night before). Arrived at my mates around 11.30am where his wife had rustled up some bacon and sausage butties. Very good indeed. From there it was a short drive to Wrexham and Clywedog Park, the home of **Brickfield Rangers FC**. Odd that a team with Rangers in their name play in green and white hoops! No admission charged yesterday though for League games it is £3. Reason given was that there would be no crowd as Wrexham were at home. Unfortunately, this was the case. Whilst the resurgent Goats (as Brownly calls them) were being watched by nearly 10,000 just down the road, there were less than 30 at Brickfield. No programmes yesterday but we were given one from earlier in the season. No badges either and our offers to pay admission were flatly refused. My mate did buy some drinks and his neighbour who came as well bought a hamburger, but Victor Tyke Spooner's wallet was not troubled!

The game itself was definitely a game of two halves, the first of which was total dross. No surprise then that it was 0-0 at half time. The second half was much improved with Brickfield taking the lead on 55 minutes. Given that Brickfield are a tier higher than Llansannan and that Brickfield had had the majority of possession with Llansannan barely getting into the Brickfield half, we expected that a comfortable home win would follow. How wrong we were! On 62 minutes Llansannan equalised and a minute later they took the lead. We now had a cup tie! Brickfield threw the proverbial kitchen sink at them. Llansannan defended desperately and heroically and held firm before scoring a third in injury time to complete a shock result and cap a great day for them. The roads behaved on the way home and the 2pm kick off meant I was home at 20 past 6 for an excellent chicken salad that Mandy had prepared.

15/08/22: Jon T Green - Goole AFC - what a fantastic ground and absolutely one of my favourites. I last went there about 10 years ago on a soaking November afternoon and stood at the back of the covered terrace. Brilliant stuff.

On a less positive note, **Poringland Wanderers** have ceased playing this season - I am sure that they were a team who you were very familiar with from our time in this part of the world. They also had a great Sunday team and played in the National Sunday cup a few times.

Attached are a few photos from my hop to **Horncastle Town** on Saturday; what a super little town it is and a thoroughly enjoyable day out.

I went to **Potters Bay Town** yesterday for their game against Herne Bay - not only was it blisteringly hot and humid but the game took 2 hours and 7 minutes to complete from the scheduled 2pm KO. Now I don't want to moan unnecessarily but that is just madness, the crowd simply lost interest (it wasn't a great game anyway) and wandered off to have a cold beer. This really does need sorting out; start the game on time, 10 minutes for the interval and stop adding on so much additional time. This doesn't happen if the Scottish and Welsh leagues so why here????? Rant over now - sorry!!!

14/08/22: Bob Powell (via Brian Buck) - **Plymouth Argyle** are buying the Parkway Sports Club in the Ernesettle area of the city, with a view to build a new training ground there. Work will start at the end of the season; pitches are currently used by a number of amateur sides which Argyle will support in finding alternative facilities. This has come about after Argyle received a £4 million investment from a US consortium last week.

Sad times - Sat 6th August: **Tamworth** v **Ilkeston Town** in the Southern League Premier Central. Up to 30 Tamworth fans allegedly smashed windows on the Ilkeston supporters coach by throwing rocks at the coach on which children were aboard. Tamworth are investigating the trouble.

Spartan SML Division One club **Eaton Socon FC** are issuing programmes and badges this season.

14/08/22: Gary Spooner - Mandy and I ventured to your old patch yesterday. First off, we went for a walk at Paxton Pits nature reserve. Must have been mad - it was 33 degrees! At the end it felt like there was more water on my head than in the lake! Next up, was lunch (2 Co-op meal deals) - at least we found a shady spot for the deck chairs. From there it was a short trip to the St Neots Interiors Stadium and a first ever home game at Step 6 for **Eaton Socon FC** against Winslow United. A very friendly welcome, programmes and badges available and much needed bottles of cold water on sale for 50p (contrast that with league clubs who don't let you take your own in and then charge exorbitant prices). The attendance was 77 who saw an entertaining game despite the conditions. Massive credit to all the players!! Eaton won 2-0 with two second half goals. We stopped for a meal on the way back but were still home for 8.30pm. Excellent day out.

07/08/22: Gary Spooner - Due to a variety of occurrences and hideous traffic on the M1, it turned out to be Plan C yesterday! I ended up meeting mates The Welsh and The Scouse at **Stotfold FC**. Brownny passed on the piccies and let me do the honours so here they are.

Gloriously hot day at The New Roker Park (now the JSJ Stadium) and a cracking cup tie with lots of goalmouth action which finished 2-2. Last year's SSMFL Division 1 champions Stotfold twice took the lead with their second a belter from outside the box. Twice Vase holders Newport Pagnell equalised. End to end stuff with no quarter given and the crowd of 281 were well entertained. The M1 behaved on the way home and I was back at a sensible time to go out for food with Mandy.

The New Roker Park was an impressive set up. Admission was £7 and a card match ticket was given on entrance. Impressive printed glossy programme for £1.50 and badges available also. Didn't partake of any food but a decent selection available. An excellent afternoon Hop!

06/08/22: Gary Spooner - I didn't do all the games on the Hop weekend. Far too much like hard work! It was nice to dip into a few and chat with some old faces though and of course I had to have a slice of the cake at **Nirvana** - superb it was too! The **MK Irish** ground was used by **Bletchley Town** in the Southern League. They were also known as **Milton Keynes City** at one point. They eventually folded in the mid-80s. They resurfaced in 2005/6 in the North Bucks League and then the Spartan South Midland League before folding again in 2014. After that at some point **Buckingham Town** moved in. They've had loads of different names as well before becoming MK Irish.

02/08/22: Jon T Green - How good was it to get back to live league action on Saturday? I was going to head down into Kent for a game but given the total chaos on the roads heading towards the Channel Ports I decided that a nice NCEL game looked a much safer bet. What a super club **Shirebrook Town** are, fabulously welcoming even when I arrived very early in the day. Tough start for them against a decent Harrogate RA side who eventually ran out 1-0 winners. I've included some photos in this email.

JULY

31/07/22: Bob Powell (via Brian Buck) - **Wren Rovers** suffered their second break in just three months. Doors were smashed using sledge hammers and the bar rifled.

Rushcliffe Borough Council have given **Nottingham Forest** planning permission to carry out the ground improvements at the City Ground.

25/07/22: Gary Spooner - I took in **Strathspey Thistle** v Forres Mechanics on the opening day of the Highland League season. Comfortable 4-0 win for Forres who played over half the game with 10 men. Could be a long season for Strathspey supporters!

Highland League footie is not a great standard but as with all the games we both watch if you get two evenly balanced teams it can be very entertaining. Probably on a par with Step 5 or 6 here. Not surprising given the low population from which to recruit players. Some lovely grounds as well and though Strathspey is not one of the better ones, the location of Grantown on Spey and surrounds more than compensates.

END