

TT No.059: 27/03/05 Easter 'Hopping News: *Mike Latham* - Ilkeston Town (Unibond League 1); Worsborough Bridge (NCEL1); Glasshoughton Welfare (NCELP) and Selby Town (NCELP).

Fri 25 Mar 2005, Unibond League First Division, **Ilkeston Town 1-0 Spalding United** (attendance- 405)

Ilkeston Town's New Manor Ground is situated on the site of an old council rubbish tip on the Awsworth Road out of town and is vastly different in style and character to their lamented former town centre ground, now the site of a supermarket.

The ground is easy to find off the M1 and there is a spacious club car park with plentiful parking on the main road outside. The stadium can be clearly seen from the approach road and the pulse quickens as you enter the car park. A new ground it may be but there is plenty of character and individuality to the ground.

Admission was only £4 and a good programme sold for £1.50. There is an excellent club house inside the ground where a warm and friendly welcome awaits the traveller. It was interesting to note that many Ilkeston fans had arrived early to sample a pint and meet their friends and there was a good atmosphere in the club house and inside the ground.

Ilkeston are one of the best supported clubs apart from AFC Telford United in the division and a crowd of 405 saw them continue their push for promotion with a 1-0 victory, courtesy of Nigel Jemson's first half goal after his side had earlier missed a penalty. The veteran striker was alert to poach the winning strike in a packed penalty area.

The playing pitch and floodlights were superb and the unusual elevated stand situated in one corner of the ground certainly caught the eye, decorated with a superb clock tower. There is a smaller seated area on the main stand side and both ends are covered. The clubhouse is situated on the other side to the seated areas and also housed a tea bar that did excellent business and served a variety of drinks and hot food.

The writer found Ilkeston to be a welcoming and friendly club and thoroughly enjoyed his visit. The fans are clearly passionate about their side and appeared to be enjoying their season in the Unibond after ten seasons in the Southern League. Ilkeston certainly looked a team on the up.

Sat 26 Mar 2005, NCEL Div. 1, **Worsbrough Bridge 2-5 Staveley Miners Welfare** (Attendance- 30)

The noon kick-off allowed the writer what was for him a rare dip into the NCEL with the prospect of seeing two halves at different grounds before the main match of the day.

Worsbrough Bridge is situated two miles south of Barnsley on the A61 Sheffield Road next to a country park in an idyllic location. The River Dove runs alongside the pitch that slopes sharply towards the club house end that backs on to the A61. A small seated stand with wooden bench seats is on the opposite side and the dugouts are in front.

There is a terrific view of the game from the grass banks in front of the club house and either side of the stand. On the opposite (river) side there is an area of hard standing. There is no standing behind the other goal as this is part of the cricket ground with the cricket square just behind the goal.

Although the crowd was only about 30 the programmes had sold out before kick-off. Admission to the Park Road ground was only £3. The home side led 2-1 at the break, the visitors' goal coming from a shock 40-yard shot out of nothing that sailed over the home 'keeper's head, and the writer was surprised to find they eventually lost 2-5.

Sat 26 Mar 2005, NCEL Premier Division, **Glasshoughton Welfare** 3-2 Buxton (attendance- 100)

Glasshoughton is situated just on the outskirts of Castleford, a town known primarily for the exploits of its rugby league side. But there is clearly a devotion of some of the townsfolk for the round ball game and the Leeds Road ground was a thoroughly pleasant place to watch a well contested game.

The Welfare centre has been extensively modernised and runs alongside one side of the ground with a small seated stand on the opposite side. Additional cover is provided behind the goal at the Leeds Road end though most spectators chose to stand alongside the dug-outs in front of the club house.

Glasshoughton led 3-1 at halftime when the writer arrived but Buxton pulled a goal back and came close to rewarding their travelling supporters with an equaliser.

With the skyline dominated by the Xscape leisure complex and a massive Freeport shopping centre the area must be unrecognisable from 20 years ago. The Glasshoughton WMC, formed in 1902, is located opposite the ground and provides additional parking and next to it are two Chinese takeaways.

Admission was only £3 and the ground is easily found off the M62 motorway. The fleeting visit for the game that kicked off at 12.30pm was well worthwhile.

Sat 26 Mar 2005, NCEL Premier Division, **Selby Town** 2-1 Harrogate Railway (attendance, est. 150)

Second v third in the Premier Division made the visit to Flaxley Road a "must see" game and around 150 spectators chose to miss the televised international and witness an engrossing contest.

Selby came from behind, after conceding a third-minute goal, to earn a narrow win in an eventful and occasionally spiteful game that was refereed with calm assurance.

The ground is located just outside the town centre and, unusually has its main stand behind the goal. A covered terrace is located behind the opposite goal but the two sides are uncovered. The far side houses the dugouts and changing rooms while the near side houses a small club house with tea bar and the club office.

The playing pitch was in good condition and the ground afforded an excellent view of the distant abbey. Admission was only £4 with an excellent 36-page programme selling for £1. This contained a chairman's welcome that indicated a move to a new ground may well be in the offing so groundhoppers are recommended to visit while they can. A warm welcome awaits and, on this visit, a good standard of football.

03/20