

Bedfordshire County **Football League**



Season 2011-12

News Bulletin Number 1



Its here at last The Bedfordshire County Football League 2011-12Season.

Welcome to the first of this seasons Bedfordshire County Football League News Bulletins, like in previous seasons, they will be published on a weekly basis and found on the leagues www.bedfordshirefootballleague.co.uk website each and every Sunday evening at the latest.

In this issue you will find the news on the much delayed Football Association Level Seven Report, all the pre-season friendly round-up including the famous Brian Buck's Travellers Tales on several of these games plus a look ahead to next weekends big kick.

Football Association Level Seven Report

The Football Association's much delayed Step 7 Review Final Structure Report was published just 24 hours after the leagues Annual General Meeting and contained the news that The Bedfordshire County Football League have had their Step 7 status suspended as not only did 75% of its clubs fail to meet the revised Step 7 requirement but also their current membership falls below the agreed 14 club minimum.

However, this decision would have been based on the just finished 2010-11 season when our membership fell to just 13 clubs in The Premier Division supported by Sportsform Division due to the withdrawals during the season of Biggleswade United Reserves, Ickwell & Old Warden plus Southill Alexander.

Whilst the league have to accept this decision we believe the league for the new 2011-12 season now meets the new criteria for Step 7 in full, with our teams in the top division all meeting or being close to meeting the latest criteria.

To this effect The Bedfordshire County Football League as informed The Football Association of these facts based upon work and agreements between the League, the Clubs and the responsible authorities, and also building projects planned or underway this Summer, but until our clubs start playing friendly matches in July and August, we as a league obviously cannot be sure the work has been completed but are confident that at least 75% of our Premier Division supported by Sportsform clubs will meet the new criteria for the start of season 2011-12.

To this extent The Football Association are now expected to meet with the league to consider our classification within the National League System.

The full reports shows just two leagues, The Northern Football Alliance and The Staffordshire County Senior League have been granted Step 7 status for season 2011-12, another 16 leagues have been granted provisional Step 7 status based upon 75% of its clubs meeting the new criteria leaving the other 25% to comply fully by 31st March 2012 or those leagues will have its Step 7 status removed.

A further 15 leagues have had their Step 7 status suspended and given until 31st March 2012 for 75% or more of their clubs to achieve the grading requirement. If this is achieved within the timescale, the league would be granted provisional Step 7 status and league in question provided with a further 12 months, until 31 March 2013 to comply fully. Failure to meet either of these deadlines will result in Step 7 status being removed.

Alongside these leagues, The Oxfordshire Senior League and The Reading Football League find themselves in the same position as ourselves, whilst eight leagues having not fully returned their grading questionnaires have also had their Step 7 status suspended.

Pre-Season Friendly Round-up

Week Ending Saturday 16th July 2011.

The 2011-12 Pre-Season friendly action got underway on Friday evening when Ickwell & Old Warden netted a 3-1 home win over Potton Town, two goals from Lee Threadgold and a strike from Matthew McCartney only being replied to by James Pyman for The Town.

On Saturday, AFC Turvey opened their season with a 2-0 home win over Luton Old Boys, John Guiney and Mike Stephenson netting the vital goals.

Week Ending Saturday 23rd July 2011

Premier Division supported by Sportsform Caldecote kicked off their pre-season programme with a 1-1 home draw against United Counties League side Potton United, Matt Basta giving them the lead just five minutes before the break which was cancelled out by a strike from United's Nick Cooper two minutes into the second period.

Earlier in the afternoon the clubs two reserves sides had played out a 2-2 draw, Amit Aghera shooting United ahead 24 minutes into the game until Jordan Goodman squared matters 10 minutes later, United were ahead via Lee Garner on 64 minutes, a lead that lasted three minutes before Nicky Albone levelled matters for the home side.

The result of the day belonged to AFC Turvey, 5-1 home winners over Dunton. John Guiney with a brace plus strikes from Adam Broughton, Mike Stephenson and Martin Page only being replied to by Dunton's Joe Lewis.

The top scorers of the day were Ickwell & Old Warden, 8-1 home winners over Great Barford. Lee Threadgold and Matthew McCartney both claiming hat-tricks alongside strikes from Andrew Vallom and Dan Threadgold against a lone reply from Adam Dunville.

For Royal Oak Kempston, it was a 1-0 home win over Marsh Leys, Dean Boland the goalscorer, whilst a missed penalty from Goldington's Chris Huckle saw them held to a 3-3 draw at Stopsley Park. Robert Wilson twice and James Smart on the Park goalsheet against replies via a James Morris penalty, Kevin Malone plus an own goal.

Co-op Sports kicked off their season with a 7-4 home win over the visiting Badgers (Redditch) James McMulkin with a brace, Tom Millar, Richard Smith, Chris Vardy, Steve Remond and an own goal doing the damage.

Week Ending 30th July 2011.

Having secured a 3-0 home win over Marabese Ceramics in mid-week thanks to a brace of goals from Mike Stephenson and a strike from Tim Clarke, AFC Turvey's quest for a fourth pre-season win on the bounce was thwarted when Premier Division supported by Sportsform Bedford Hatters netted a 1-0 win at Stonefields thanks to a goal from Aran Izzard.

Goldington with three goals from Miekian Alexander and a strike from Karl Anderson were 4-0 mid-week winners at Ickwell & Old Reserves before the weekend saw them held to a 2-2 draw at Co-op Sports Reserves, Jamie McGreggor and Karl Anderson netting the goals.

Over at Harvey Close, Dunton A begun their seasons preparations when a brace of goals from Liam Brophy plus a strike from Jon Fediw was enough to secure a 3-2 win over hosts Caldecote A. whose replies came via Alex Salt and Jordan Goodman.

Also kicking off their season was Elstow Abbey, in a 2-2 home draw against Stotfold Reserves. Dave McCarthy and Ed L'Erario finding the back of the net. But Sandy in their opening game were sent to a 4-1 defeat at Long Buckby Reserves, Phil Beall their lone goal scorer.

Also going down to a 4-1 defeat were Ickwell & Old Warden at Raunds, Lee Threadgold their lone marksman.

The top scorers of the day were Luton Old Boys, 7-1 winners at Co-op Sports. Naashon Bennett netting four times and supported by strikes from Glodi Kwene, Kyle Ross and Tim Akarele against a lone home reply via James McMulkin.

For Lea Sports PSG the action came on Friday evening with a 3-2 home win over Kent's Athletic. Graeme Clark with a brace, one from the penalty spot plus a strike from James Awofisan doing the damage.

Also winning 3-2 were Eastcotts at Royal Oak Kempston, Liam Parker, Tony Milioti plus an own goal outscoring home strikes from Michael Cox and Lorenzo Jordan.

Week Ending 6th August 2011

Premier Division supported by Sportsform Shefford Town & Campton opened their pre-season friendly programme with a 2-0 home win over AFC Kempston Rovers, goals from Adam Larsen on 69 minutes and Michael Jones two minutes later doing the damage.

Another Premier Division supported by Sportsform club getting off to a winning start were Oakley Sports, 4-2 victors at Stevington, all thanks to a hat-trick from Stuart Kelly and a strike from Mark Smith.

Over at Harvey Close, Caldecote continued their unbeaten pre-season ways with a 2-2 draw against St Neots Town Reserves, former player Jack Boyd with a brace of goals in the opening period shooting the Saints 2-0 ahead until two second-half penalties from Kai Griffiths-Shilton squared the contest.

Two other Premier Division Supported by Sportsform clubs were to suffer late cancellation to their fixtures due to their opponents failing to raise a side, being Blunham for the scheduled visit of Wootton Blue Cross and Arlesey Town Reserves who were due to visit Buntingford Town Reserves.

Just 48 hours previous a 75th minute goal from Paul Chamberlain had taken Dunton to a 1-0 win at St Ives Town Reserves.

It's been a good week for Sandy FC, a goal from Matt Evans taking them to a 1-0 victory at Amptill Town Reserves in midweek before they kept another shutout with a 0-0 home draw with Elstow Abbey 72 hours later.

However, Ickwell & Old Warden's winning ways were ended with a 1-4 home defeat at the hands of Langford Reserves, Matthew McCartney netting their lone goal against replies from Jason Ridley, Dean Albone, James Smith and Garath Head.

Elsewhere, AFC Turvey continued their impressive run of pre-season results, two goals each for Mike Stephenson and Daniel Bailey earning them a 4-1 home win in midweek over Harrold & Carlton before beating Marston Shelton Rovers 3-2 at the weekend, Chris Cook and Mike Stephenson strikes plus an own goal doing the damage.

For Luton Boys, (formerly Luton Old Boys) it was a 5-3 victory at Stopsley Park. Ibrahim Sal with a hat-trick plus Stephen Gabriel with a brace only being replied to by strikes from Park's James Smith, Jake Lepick and Rob Wilson.

Meantime, Lidlington United Sports suffered two defeats, beaten 2-0 at Eastcotts on Thursday evening thanks to home goals from Michael Sexton and Dumi Ncube, they had only a Neil Tattersall strike to show for their 2-1 defeat at 61FC Luton Reserves at the weekend. Whilst on the same day Eastcotts earned a 1-1 draw at Stewarty Village. James Churchman on target for the Village against a Claren Alexander reply.

Top scorers of the week were Kings AFC, 7-1 home winners over Bedford Park Rangers, Chris Greene and Oliver Plestead netting twice alongside Allan Barber, Aaron Hazelwood and Marcus Tomlin against a lone Rangers reply via Shaun Finley.

For Co-op Sports it was a 2-2 home draw with Dinamo Flitwick, James McMulkin netting both goals against replies from Barrie Hannam and Dale Goldie.

Dunton A meantime were in action twice, goals from Lawrence Boshier and Harry Stent taking them to a 2-0 win at Sandy Reserves in midweek before they lost 3-2 at Ickwell & Old Warden Reserves at the weekend, strikes from Graham Weddle, Dan Jones and Paul Beith taking the home side to victory. Whilst at the same time Dunton Reserves were winning 4-2 at Co-op Sports Reserves.

Elsewhere, Wilshamstead Reserves commenced their pre-season with a 5-3 win in midweek at MK Athletic, Liam Philip twice plus Shaun Grieg, Kieron Colclough and Rani Thiarri netting the goals.

Week Ending 13th August 2011.

With the big kick off now just three weeks away, the weekend saw a programme of 16 friendly games taking place. The top scorers turned out to be Premier Division supported by Sharnbrook who netted a 10-2 win at Kempston Hammers Sports. Dan Glos and Martyn Cain both netting hat-tricks alongside strikes from James Whitmore, Tom King, Chris Lander and Darren Wallinger, all this coming after they were beaten 3-1 at Marston Shelton Rovers in midweek, Kevin Harris on the scoresheet against Rovers replies from Gary Russon, Bradley Cotton and Aaron Franks.

Rovers themselves continuing their impressive pre-season build up with a 7-1 win at Bromham United at the weekend, Ian Buckingham with a hat-trick, Kevin Peacock with a brace plus Daniel Bullen and Aaron Franks netting the goals against a lone home reply via Alex Russell.

Premier Division supported by Sportsform newcomers Potton Wanderers started their seasons build up with a 6-1 home win over Ickwell & Old Warden. Garath Bonnes twice, Dean Hamilton, Simon Desborough and Craig Schurek plus an own goal only being replied to by Matthew McCartney.

After winning 2-1 at Ampthill Town in midweek thanks to goals from Michael & Paul Jones, Shefford Town & Campton at the weekend were defeated 1-4 at home by Langford Reserves. Adam Larsen netting their lone goal. Langford Reserves had in midweek been beaten 4-0 at Caldecote, Jack Gabbitas, Matt Basta, Tom Cookman and Paul Gower the home marksman.

For Arlesey Town Reserves it was a 3-1 defeat at Biggleswade United in midweek where Tom James netted the goal before Henlow were beaten 2-1 at the weekend, Mark Ellis and Sam Dunn goals only being replied to by a Andy Newton penalty.

The shock of the weekend was perhaps Premier Division supported by Sportsform Bedford Hatters 0-5 home defeat by Goldington, Jordan Kumar with a hat-trick plus Kane Alexander with a brace doing the damage.

There was also a heavy defeat for Dunton, 4-0 at Co-op Sports, Chris Vardy, James McMulkin, Scott Davis and Tom Miller netting the goals, The Co-op had also collected their divi in midweek with a 9-4 home win over Four Model FC, Luke Blackburn and Gareth Fear netting twice alongside, Kerry Smith, Jason Young, Steve Remond and Eamon Cusack.

Clifton were also in action twice, in midweek goals from Steve Albone, Matt Hickford, Barry Hallybone and Robert Harradine took them to a 4-0 win over Great Barford until they were beaten 1-2 at home at the weekend by Marabese Ceramics. Chris Mattingley on the scoresheet against replies via Rhys Tudball and Dave Eastwood.

Division One Sandy continued the theme of double outings, in midweek, a lone Daniel Stafford goal took them to a 1-0 home win over AFC Turvey before another Stafford goal was all they had to show for a 1-2 home defeat at the hands of Baldock Town Reserves 72 hours later.

Division One, Lidlington United Sports had just a Nicky Barton goal to show for a 2-1 defeat at Woburn, whilst fellow Division One newcomers Kings AFC were 3-0 home winners over M & DH Oakley, Danny Cain, Alex Liburd and Oliie Plested all finding the back of the net.

For Division Two Stopsley Park, it was a 9-2 home win over Stopsley Baptist Church, Tyrone Patterson and James Smart both netting hat-tricks alongside an own goal plus strikes from Rob Wilson and Steven Laird.

In an all Division Three club encounter, Royal Oak Kempston were 3-2 home winners over Potton Town, Michael Cooney, Michael Cox and Garath Arzu seeing their goals replied to by Tom Pyman and Sam Barham.

Meantime, goals from Kyle Smith and James Churchman earned Stewartby Village a 2-2 home draw with Kempston Athletic.

The weekend ending on Sunday with a 0-4 home defeat for Sandy Reserves at the hands of Beds Sunday League William Peel, Conor Green (Potton Wanderers) twice plus Jesse Moyo (Potton Wanderers) and Jay Pateman (Potton Town) netting the visitors goals.

Week Ending 20th August 2011.

This weeks top award pre-season friendly wise perhaps falls to Premier Division supported by Sportsform Dunton, having in midweek secured a 3-2 home win over Baldock Cannon thanks to strikes from Dave Pugh, Jon Ranson and Barry Emery, the weekend saw a lone Tom Mcghee goal give them a 1-0 home win over Bromham United. In midweek, United had netted a 5-2 home win over M&HD Oakley thanks to a double strike from Dean Waghorn alongside goals for Adam Cranny, Russell Horner and Phil Kempshall.

For defending Premier Division supported by Sportsform champions Blunham, their pre-season got underway in midweek when thanks to goals from Matty McMahon and Chris Dunne against a reply from Daniel Stafford they emerged 2-1 winners at Sandy. Sandy were back in action at the weekend when despite a Daniel Stafford hat-trick they were beaten 3-7 at home by Oakley Sports. Shaun Barnett and Jamie Lally netting twice alongside Dan Kelly, Ben Paye and Henry Atherton. In midweek, Oakley Sports with goals from Dan Kelly, Jason Angol and James Grandidge were 3-2 winners at Marston Shelton Rovers whose replies came via Ian Buckingham and Daniel Bullen.

Arlesey Town Reserves were another top-flight side in double action, losing 2-0 at Co-op Sports in midweek due to home goals from Gavin Smith and Kris Fox, they then recovered at the weekend to win 4-2 at Clifton. Mark Ellis twice plus Sam Dunn and Pascirano Caloge on target against a home brace in reply from Tony Norman.

Co-op Sports were then beaten 2-3 at home by Flitwick Town at the weekend, however two of the Town's goals came via Luke Blackburn whom the home side loaned out to them for the afternoon having arrived at Solway North short of players, Scott Davis and Thomas Miller the home marksmen.

Meantime, Bedford Hatters with goals from Charlie Betts, Aaron Izzard and Ashley Deverall were 3-1 home winners over Baldock Town Reserves.

The only other top-flight club in action were Wilshamstead, who in midweek action despite a goal from Matt Rosborough were beaten 2-1 at Lea Sports PSG where Dylan Gittens netted twice for the home side.

Division One Luton Boys enjoyed a good week winning twice, first in midweek goals from Ibrahim Sal, Tyrone Balnavis and a Joe Zunguzah penalty took them to a 3-1 home victory over St Joseph's before Sundon Park Rangers were beaten 5-4 at the weekend, Giodi Kweme netting twice alongside Famik Stephen-Gabriel, Tyrone Belnavis and Tony Mensah against braces in reply from Martin Conway and Sam Chapman.

Midweek action also saw a fine win for Division One Lidlington United Sports with a 3-2 victory at Kent's Athletic thanks to a brace from Steve Flaherty and a goal from Scott Kent. Whilst Caldecote Reserves, were held to a 0-0 home draw by Great Barford.

For Division Two Stopsley Park, it was a 5-0 defeat at AFC Turvey, Tim Clarke twice plus Adam Broughton, Chris Winton and Martin Page doing the damage. Another Division Two side in action were Shefford Town & Campton Reserves, 1-1 home drawers with Potton Town, Jordan Robbens the home marksman against a Town reply from Chris Cooper.

Elsewhere, Division Three Goldington continued their fine pre-season build-up with a 4-2 win at Stewartby Village, Kane Alexander netting twice alongside Jordan Kumar and Karl Anderson against Village strikes from Tom Wheelhouse and Ben Sparks.

In an all Division Three encounter, Dunton Reserves won 5-1 at Kempston Hammers Sports, John Fediw striking four times and Ugar Demir once. Whilst Royal Oak Kempston were beaten 1-2 at home by Thurleigh, Josh St Clair Pierre doing the damage with a brace against a home strike from Michael Conney.

In earlier midweek action, Eastcotts were 4-3 home winners over Kempston Hammers (Sunday) Liam Parker twice plus Michael Sexton and Shane Wilson netting the goals, whilst a first goal for the club by Jonny Gadene took Shefford Town & Campton A to a 1-0 home win over Dunton A.

Division Three Wilshamstead Reserves were also in action drawing 3-3 at Wootton Village, Liam Parker, Kerion Colclough and Matt Johnson on target against home replies from Rees Fleck, Luke Belgrave and Ryan Stocker.

Week Ending August 27th 2011

The weekends action saw the Ickwell & Old Warden v Dunton first round tie in The Biggleswade Knock Out Cup take top billing, the visitors emerging 5-3 penalty shoot-out winners following a 4-4 draw. Earning themselves a trip in Round Two to either Stotfold Reserves or Caldecote who meet in first round action at Roker Park on Wednesday evening. Lee Threadgold with a brace plus strikes from Dave Trundle and Matthew McCartney on

target for the home side against Dunton replies from Paul Chamberlain, Tom McGhee and James Cooper in normal time.

However, earlier in the week Ickwell & Old Warden had safely made it into Round Two of The East Beds Charity Cup with a 3-0 home win over Dunton Reserves, Matthew McCartney with a brace plus a strike from Lee Threadgold doing the damage. They now face a trip to Potton Town in Round Two.

Dunton Reserves were back in action at the weekend, losing 3-2 in a pre-season friendly at Stopsley Park. Steve Laird, Dean Laird and Jack O'Shea on target for The Park against replies from David Gibbs and Ugar Demir.

Other midweek action in The East Beds Charity Cup took Elstow Abbey to a 3-0 home win over Marabese Ceramics. Ed E'erario, Dave McCarthy and Aiden Powell on the scoresheet to earn a home tie with Clifton Reserves in Round Two.

It was not a good week for Sandy Reserves, they went down to two heavy defeats, in midweek they were beaten 2-8 on home soil by Flitwick Town Eagles, Danny Hoole and Scott Dougal netting the goals against the Eagles bag full from Ian Hammett 3, Charlie Seward 2 plus Daniel Stafford, Chris Jennings and Jack Farthing (please note the Sandy first team connection) then at the weekend they were beaten 0-7 by their own first team in The Jesse Piggott Trophy Final. Ian Hammett, Rob Tapley and Daniel Stafford all netting twice alongside Charlie Seward.

For Premier Division supported by Sportsform Shefford Town & Campton, the weekend saw them draw 1-1 at home against Real RN Luton, Andy Hayday netting a 89th minute leveller after Daniel Edwards had given the visitors a 58th minute lead.

Another top-flight club playing out a 1-1 draw at the weekend were Arlesey Town Reserves at Luton Boys. Ben Worbey on target against a home reply from Nurhan Coskunganul.

For three other Premier Division supported by Sportsform clubs, it was midweek action. Blunham with five goals from Matty McMahon plus a brace from Andrew Vallom and a strike from Luke Stone netting an 8-2 win over Blunham Veterans, whilst Oakley Sports were 2-1 winners at Bromham United. Stuart Kelly and Jamie Lally on target against a United reply via Tom Prothero. The trio being made up Flitwick Town, who with a goal from Rob Almond were 1-0 winners at Marston Shelton Rovers.

Continuing their fine pre-season form are AFC Turvey, 2-2 home drawers with FC Meppershall in midweek thanks to goals from Junior Ivy and Andrew Wren, they then followed up at the weekend with a 8-1 home win over Shefford Saints Under 21's, Mark Allen on the scoresheet four times alongside Adam Broughton, Martin Page and Andrew Wren plus an own goal.

The weekend was not so good for FC Meppershall, they had their "pre season friendly" at home against Co-op Sports abandoned just 35 minutes into the contest whilst leading 2-0 thanks to a double strike from Craig Damon. Earlier in the week, Co-op Sports had won 4-2 at Kempston Hammers Sports, Jason Young twice plus Kris Fox and Thomas Miller outscoring a home brace from Jazz Sohal.

However, there was joy for Kings AFC, 6-1 home winners over Stewartby Village. Rowan Hazelwood and Andy Mayes on target twice alongside Ollie Plested and Josh Clements against a lone Village reply from Kyle Smith.

For Clifton Reserves, it was double action, a 1-1 home draw with Eastcotts thanks to a goal from Tony Norman to cancel out a strike from Michael Sexton coming at the weekend after being defeated 3-0 at Shefford Town & Campton A in midweek. Johnny Gadene with a brace plus Simon Baxter both netting in the opening half.

On the same evening, Lea Sports PSG were 3-2 home winners over Henlow. James Awofisan twice and Glen Collins finding the back of the net against Henlow replies via Andy Newton and Jo Fallano. Whilst Goldington won 3-2 at Bedford Park Rangers, Kane Alexander, Kevin Malone and James Muircroft the goalscorers against Rangers replies via Shaun Finlay and an own goal.

There was also midweek joy for Shefford Town & Campton Reserves, 3-0 home victors over Dunton A thanks to second half strikes from Wayne Goldsmith, Tom Scurfield and Ryan Reece.

Alas no such luck for Potton United Reserves in a 4-0 defeat at Eaton Socon.

Brian Buck's Travellers Tale of a few of the above games.

19. (10,127) Saturday 23rd July 2011. Ickwell & Old Warden 8 Great Barford 1 (Friendly Match) (11am kick off) att 20 approx. Usually on a Saturday I'm nowhere to be seen locally, but the lure of three matches kept me on home territory for once. Ickwell Green is one of our more scenic venues. It even has a maypole where it has been alleged that some of the local lasses have been known to use it for practicing for when they become lap dancers after they leave school. Today we also had the unusual sight of seeing some lost cyclists, searching desperately for their mates riding in the Tour de France. They stopped in hope when they saw eleven yellow jerseys in front of them but quickly moved on when someone told them they belonged to Great Barford. As for the match, it was over as a contest by half time, although by the end Barford were never as bad as the scoreline suggested. Ickwell took the lead on 69 seconds and doubled it from the spot on 7 minutes. Barford then missed a spot kick on 27 minutes. A third Ickwell goal on 42 minutes put some distance between the two sides. After the break Ickwell turned on the style and playing with confidence they seemingly scored whenever they wanted to, apart from when Barford pulled a goal back on 67 minutes.

20. (10,128) Saturday 23rd July 2011. Caldecote Reserves 2 Potton United 2 (Friendly Match) (1pm kick off) att 30 approx. We arrived at our second match of the day with plenty of time to spare and it kicked off 5 minutes late anyway. This match got better as it progressed and the scoring was opened by Amit Aghera (ex Patel) for Potton on 24 minutes, but a header from a corner ten minutes later saw the sides go in level at half time. Both teams had enjoyed much room on the pitch and if they had trodden more carefully then the spectators could have enjoyed picking the mushrooms on the pitch which were in plentiful supply. Potton regained the lead on 64 minutes, but three minutes later Caldecote equalised again when a deep cross from the right eluded everyone except Nicky Albone. He was standing on the goal line and had his back to the ball, but somehow as the ball descended it hit him on the bum and went over the line. After this game we shot off to watch Biggleswade United play Wootton Blue Cross at Clifton, but returned to Caldecote afterwards for post match drinks. Ickwell had already been here and gone as 'their' bar was closed after their match. I then spent a very pleasant hour and a half in the company of the Beds County League Press & Media Secretary Peter Francis and Caldecote chairman Sid Fage. I have to say that Caldecote is a very well run club and the way they look after spectators, players and officials couldn't be bettered at many other clubs much higher up the pyramid.

26. (10,134) Friday 29th July 2011. Lea Sports PSG 3 Kent Athletic 2 (Friendly Match) (Played at Pirton) att 10 approx. So what's in a name? Until I looked it up I always thought that the 'Lea' part of their name came from the River Lea as its source is in Luton where the club was formed, but apparently the L.E.A. stands for Luton Education Authority. The PSG part comes from a merger with Pirton and Shillington & Gravenhurst FC. Meanwhile despite the game kicking off at 6pm the Bernard Cribbins lookalike ref was anxious that the game got underway on time. Perhaps he had to record a Jackanory story later on. Anyway he did call everyone (on the pitch) "Sir!" Kent took the lead on 18 minutes, against the run of play, but Lea were level two minutes later and ahead six minutes after that. But a minute after that Kents levelled. The match turned out to be rather eventful for the first half Lea Sports lino, not a task he is destined to make a career of. As lino he was involved in a bit of handbags early

on and then started the second half on the pitch, but was sin binned by the authoritarian ref on 57 minutes. These qualities were deemed sufficient by his manager to allow him to return to the playing arena wearing the captains armband on 77 minutes. Must have worked though as his side grabbed the winner a minute later. Then just as the ref blew the final whistle I lobbed a lose tennis ball back to one of the girls in the adjacent tennis court who trapped it impressively. Pity she didn't see the loose football earlier on which also went into the tennis court and hit her on the bum!

32. (10,140) Thursday 4th August 2011. Ickwell & Old Warden 1 Langford Reserves 4 (Friendly Match) att 25 approx. Having seen Ickwell thrash Great Barford 8-1 earlier in the pre-season build up I was expecting this to be a close encounter tonight, but like the threat of rain in the air it never materialised. In the first half Langford were well on top and Ickwell hardly troubled their keeper. After taking the lead on 19 minutes they were then awarded a spot kick on 33 minutes which the ref gave for a trip. The Ickwell keeper argued ferociously against the decision and at one point was seen to be leaving the pitch. Most of us thought that he had been sent off, but the ref had just told him to remove his earrings. The spot kick was converted but the keeper still left the pitch, on 60 minutes, this time carried off with an injury! Ickwell had pulled a goal back on 53 minutes and were still going for the equaliser when Langford scored twice more right at the end to give them by then a slightly inflated margin of victory.

37. (10,145) Tuesday 9th August 2011. Potton United Reserves 2 Lode 0 (Friendly Match) att 25 approx. I arrived at the Hollow to be informed that one of their players had to go to hospital with a broken nose after the away game at Norwich United on the previous Saturday. Apparently he was embarrassingly headed butted by a barmaid! Eventually this turned out to be a closer game than it seemed it might be in the first 15 minutes. Potton took a 3rd minute lead through Simon Pearce. Unmarked he headed home powerfully from a corner. Then on 13 minutes Dave Baker-Dugmore added a second goal. This first half belonged mainly to Potton although Lode made more inroads into the Potton half as the period progressed. The second half saw Lode force Potton onto the offensive more frequently and by the end you felt that they deserved at least a goal. In fact Lode had loads of opportunities to do so and they were facing a home keeper who shouldn't have really been playing as he was still carrying the injury which he obtained shortly after letting in two goals against Stotfold on the previous Tuesday. Having said that Potton did defend quite well and had a bit more know how when going for the 50/50 balls. The Lode right back found one Potton player difficult to handle and when his team mates moaned at him for not closing him down quicker he replied, "I've got to catch the ***t first of all!"

38. (10,146) (3,045) Wednesday 10th August 2011. Co-op Sports 9 Four Model 4 (Friendly Match) att 10 approx. Co-op Sports are a decent Bedfordshire County League Division 2 side who will be playing against the likes of the aforementioned Potton United Reserves this season. The visitors are a Polish side who play in the Luton District & South Beds League. The hosts ground is in a multicultural part of Luton and as we entered the car park we were met by lots of ladies with their faces hidden, apart from their eyes trying to drive out of the car park. Some pre-season games haven't been played here as the locals have been playing cricket in the middle of the football pitch. But when you see the bumpy barren cricket 'strip' you wonder just how. Tonight the visitors were a mixture of shapes and sizes and that went for their kit as well. Co-op were 4-1 up at half time. It should have been 4-0 but the ref either didn't see or chose to ignore the offside flag raised immediately before he awarded the visitors a spot kick on 26 minutes. On 43 minutes the ball hit a man and his two young children who were casually walking across the pitch at the time, blissfully unaware that they were doing so. After the break the hosts made a load of subs whereas the visitors had few and furthermore none of the four models were present at the match. Co-op piled on the goals but as both sides tired the visitors got some at the end themselves. In particular one of the Co-op subs threw an apple at one of his team mates standing on the halfway line, just to see if he was still awake. An unusual but entertaining game

Preview Saturday 3rd September 2011.

This weekend sees the big kick off to the 2011-12 Bedfordshire County Football League season, with the Premier Division supported by Sportsform section having in effect lost its

Level Seven status within The Football Association Pyramid due to the withdrawal in season of Ickwell & Old Warden, Biggleswade United Reserves and Southill Alexander last term. The proposed 15 club line-up this season is already down to 14 following the withdrawal of Leighton United, their linkup with Dunstable Town having failed to materialise to leave them a club without any players, thus the leagues attempt to regain its Level Seven status is already in turmoil without a ball being kicked.

However, the top-flight division will kick off with a programme of six games this weekend. For reigning champions Blunham, who have not been without their own problems this summer, the season commences at Steppingley Road where they journey to face Flitwick Town in their quest to become the first side since Caldecote at the turn of the decade to win three top flight titles on the bounce.

If Blunham are not going to achieve their aim then who will win the title? For many people the answer would be Shefford Town & Campton, last seasons runners up, they start the season by making their way to The Carlsberg Stadium to face Dunton. However, one should never rule out the chances of Caldecote and Renhold United who start their campaigns by going head to head at Harvey Close.

Having had their best season for many a year last term, Wilshamstead could well be the season's dark horses, they commence their campaign with a visit to Miller Road to take on newly promoted and last seasons Division One champions Bedford Hatters.

For the second promoted side, Potton Wanderers, its home action at Mill Lane against Sharnbrook. The visitors being another club in crisis this summer resulting in them withdrawing their Division Three championship winning Reserves side from the league due to lack of players.

The other top flight action is due at The Armadillo Stadium where Arlesey Town Reserves who are expected to have a much better season this term entertain AFC Kempston Town & Bedford College and at Oakley Playing Fields where Oakley Sports play hosts to Woburn.

Division One action sees a programme of just three games. The game of the day in this section perhaps being at Hurst Grove, the venue where newly promoted Lidlington United Sports host a Luton Boys side (formerly Luton Old Boys) who could well be the dark horses this season to challenge for a promotion spot.

For another of the promoted sides, Westoning, its home action at Greenfield Road against Caldecote Reserves. Whilst last seasons third placers, Marston Shelton Rovers will be entertaining Henlow at their Playing Field headquarters.

Division Two action is a programme of six games. For many people, the title favourites are Elstow Abbey, they commence their campaign with a visit to Mowsbury Park to face Queens Park Crescents. Whilst last season's Division Four champions AFC Turvey having been promoted two divisions, start their new season with a trip on the road to face Bromham United.

For Clifton, at their new home of Second Meadow Biggleswade United, its a visit from Stopsley Park. Whilst Mowsbury Park also stages the action between hosts Pavenham and their fellow newly promoted visitors M & DH Oakley.

The days other two games in this section coming at Rectory Road, where Shefford Town & Campton Reserves host Great Barford and in Stockwood Park, the venue for Sundon Park Rangers home clash with Marabese Ceramics.

In the six game Division Three programme, many eyes will be focussed on the clash at Renhold Playing Fields between perhaps two of the leading contenders for the 2011-12 league title, hosts Renhold Village taking on league newcomers Sundon Park Colts.

For last seasons Division Four runners-up Goldington, life in Division Three begins with a trip to Cutler Hammer to take on relegated hosts Kempston Hammers Sports and life in this section for both Dinamo Flitwick and Potton Town commences when they clash with each other at Hinksley Recreation Ground.

Elsewhere, for another of this seasons new Division Three sides Eastcotts, its home action at their new home of Weston Park, Wootton(Blue Cross)against Royal Oak Kempston.

The other action in this section seeing Cranfield United Reserves host Flitwick Town Reserves at Crawley Road and Westoning Reserves make the short journey for some local derby action at Jubilee Playing Fields against Wilshamstead Reserves.

In Division Four, most of the eyes in the earlier weeks of the season usually fall upon the league newcomers, this season there are five. Bedford Panthers who travel to face Goldington Hammers in Mowsbury Park;Dunton A who entertain relegated Shefford Town & Campton A at Horseshoes Close; Marsh Leys who journey to face Wootton Village and Dinamo Flitwick Reserves who make their way to Hillgrounds for a meeting with hosts Kempston Athletic.

However, the fifth side, Ickwell & Old Warden Reserves can hardly be called newcomers, having played under that guise in Division One last term. Following the demise of their first team,its a trip to Stewartby Way to take on Stewartby Village.

The other action in this section coming in the form of a local derby at Bedford Road Recreation Ground between Sandy Reserves and their visitors Clifton Reserves;plus Hillgrounds also stages the clash between hosts Bedford Park Rangers and the visiting Caldecote A.

Action will then move onto Wednesday evening when on The Green, Ickwell & Old Warden Reserves host Dunton A in a 6.15pm kick off.