

## *IT WAS ONLY YESTERDAY!*

Driving down Mill Lane, I was surprised to notice, for the first time, the new location of Chinnor Boys Football Club; not surprised so much for it's progression from the Playing Fields, but the fact that the club still runs in earnest at all. One has a developed ignorance that when your playing days as a boys ends, then so much the running of the club; *'It can't go on without me'*, you proclaim.

But here before me is a brand new ground, a new constructed set of changing rooms and newly added perks such as kit bags adorned with the club's name, which began to appear around the village. Yes, the club HAS managed without me and very nicely too. When giving the issue thought, the progression is hardly surprising when one considers the enthusiasm that always characterised the club.

Seeing the present set-up, I instantly recalled many far-off and apparently forgotten memories of my own career with the 'orange and blacks'. Seeing this pitch in such fine fettle reminded me of the pitch we used to play on; the infamous slope at the romantic sounding name of the 'Rec'. The pitch was served by a set of changing rooms that were in apparent disguise for they could have passed for any other occupation; a milking shed perhaps, a motor mechanic shed or any type of shed. It's unique structure lasted as best as it could until, that is, it got the worst of a riffling winter storm. The event coincided with one particular Sunday morning match and it came to be that we got a taste of world war bomb shelter before our time while we changed under creaking corrugated iron. The toughest tactical decision of the day was how to re-enter the not so towering inferno.

'Of course it was all different then', I am tempted to say, but that may well drum up visions of Corinthian style soccer back in the long shorts era, but I talk of a period only 7 to 8 years ago which clearly emphasises the club's progress. I am able to say that my own team were involved in some of the club's earlier pioneer developments. We saw the quick rise of a new set of changing rooms at the Rec., the introduction of sponsorship and an exciting and memorable tour to Holland as an under 16 team. The team, on the whole, managed to stick together over a period of 5 years and I remember the vintage years when the trophies would steadily flow in under the careful guidance of first, Stan Cleaver and then, John Walford. As a kid, I would harmlessly rank them alongside the likes of Bill Shankly and Don Revie.

Of course team members have now gone their separate ways; some hopefully into employment, some into higher education; some have given up

football, some remain with the club within the senior teams but in each case memories will be enhanced of when we were bubbling little kids and football was 'in the blood'.

Tony Lixton, present chairman of the club, tells me that the new site at Mill Lane accommodates two pitches plus the additional use of the old Rec. and the junior pitch at the playing fields. From all accounts, things are in a healthy frame of mind at the club; sponsorship takes a unique form, with each of the eight teams being sponsored by a shop or business in the area. With it comes a set of kit and the sponsors name on the boy's training tops. The sponsorship is vital to the club and good for the sponsor; apart from the advertising advantage, it helps to promote boys football and also emphasises the village interest for the club. One also sees the profits of a successful dance at the Sports and Arts Centre in Thame and also the continuation of tours abroad for the under 16 team. All the club now wants is continued parental support and the continued influx of boys to further strengthen the squads.

With my memories enhanced of what seems an age ago, the thing that has NOT changed is the sparkle in the eyes of the young boys that take the field for Chinnor.

*EDMUND YOUNG*

---