

Sunday 1st November 2009					
Waltham Sunday League Senior Cup Second Round Match at Hazelwood Sports Ground					
EDMONTON ROVERS	1	CHESHUNT CORINTHIANS	7	HT 1-3	
King (45 mins.)		Wingrove (26, 29, 76, 84 mins.), Mitchell (31 mins.), D.Gildersleve (83 mins.), Porter (88 mins.)			
EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Simon JACKSON (GK) (8); Terry MOORE (5); Alan BARNARD (5); Martin LOVEDAY (5); Tony KING (5); Danny HAGAN (5) (Off injured after 72 mins.); Danny SMITH (5); Peter MURPHY (5); Steve COKELL (5); Conor McGOVERN (6); Daniel DALEY (5) Subs.: None					
CHESHUNT CORINTHIANS LINE-UP: Matt GUINCHARD ? (First Half GK); Lee GILDERSLEVE (Second Half GK); Terry BLISS, Steve McHUGH, Adam STOCK; Dan OUGHTON, Andy PORTER, Scott DEAMER, Billy WINGROVE; Dean HARDING, Lee MITCHELL Subs.: Huseyin TASAN (On for Oughton 31 mins.), Shane O'BRIEN (On for Guinchard at H-T), Dan GILDERSLEVE (On for Stock 64 mins.)					
Referee: Geoff BLACKMORE		Weather Conditions: Torrential Rain & Very Strong Wind		Attendance: 7	
Report (by Laurence Hughes): Having gone out of the League Challenge Cup the previous week after a dreadful performance against Spenny Rangers, we were hoping to give a much better account of ourselves in the League Senior Cup against another top side in Cheshunt Corinthians, but that all went out of the window when Rob and Terry Brown both dropped out on the morning of the match, leaving us with just a bare eleven after several others got wind of the fact that they would only be a substitute and therefore thought it was best to do other things. That was probably not surprising when the horrendous-sounding weather forecast turned out to be deadly accurate, but that didn't bother Cheshunt Corinthians, who turned up an hour before kick-off in their sponsored tracksuits with a full-strength squad all itching to get themselves on YouTube. Of course, as always happens when we have a bare eleven, there is no sign of any spectators/ex-players/Assistant Managers coming along to act as Club Linesmen, so Manager Trevor Hughes had to do it wearing his steamed-up glasses, shiny new football boots (that I bought him for Christmas especially for the job!), and a bizarre-looking ankle-length brown hooded raincoat that had Cheshunt Corinthians' players all calling him the 'Jedi Master'. (See picture above right). With Cheshunt Corinthians having the near-gale force wind behind them in the First Half, we were half-expecting them to take an early lead, but after a couple of lucky escapes in the first five minutes we defended really well and were starting to frustrate our opponents until Martin Loveday dived in and committed himself in the 26th minute, leading to a quick break and a clinical finish by Corinthians' world famous? freestyler Billy Wingrove, who was one of numerous current or former 'Semi-Pro'-standard players in their 14. We then let in another silly goal just three minutes later though when Tony King went into the wrong zonal marking position from a corner and allowed Wingrove a clear shot at goal from the back of the penalty area which he buried into the roof of the net to put his side 2-0 up. Our heads then went down badly because we realised pretty much straight away that to make a comeback from 2-0 down against a team of this calibre would require three good substitutes...but we didn't have any. We were then run ragged just two minutes after that as Corinthians scored their third goal in the space of five minutes as Lee Mitchell tapped a square ball into an empty net, and it was only some good saves from keeper Simon Jackson that stopped them going off at Half-Time leading by five or six. In fact the last 15 minutes of the First Half were just a total nightmare as we continually gave the ball away, kept slipping over when in possession, argued with each other, unnecessarily balked the Referee for every decision that went against us, and just basically lost our discipline and composure completely. However, we somehow managed to win a corner against the wind in Injury Time at the end of the First Half, and from Steve Cokell's quality delivery, Tony King pulled a goal back with a powerful near-post header to give us some sort of hope for the Second Half. The Half-Time team-talk sounded like a right slanging match though...I wasn't listening properly because I was too busy trying to change tapes and get all the rain out of my viewfinder...but whatever was said, it didn't seem to have much effect as Corinthians created a number of chances almost straight away despite kicking against the wind, and it was only more good saves by Jacko and some dreadful finishing that kept us still in with a chance. With Corinthians putting outfield player Lee Gildersleve in goal for the Second Half because of an injury to their First Half keeper, we really should have tested him with the wind behind us, but too many shots were scuffed straight at him or players failed to get on the end of good crosses, and when Danny Hagan limped off injured in the 72nd minute leaving us down to 10 men for the rest of the match (including 45-year-old Peter Murphy who was probably not expecting to play a full 90 minutes) our chance had gone and it was then just a case of how many Corinthians would win by. Freestyler Wingrove then took over as he completed his hat-trick in the 76th minute. He didn't need to do any tricks to get past our defenders by then as he just walked past them, while further goals in the space of five minutes from Danny Gildersleve, Andy Porter and Wingrove (again) made the final score 7-1, all of these four Second Half goals either being as a result of Manager/Lino Hughes not being fit enough to keep up with play and refusing to flag for 'obvious' offside when he is not in line, or from situations where only two of our defenders were back facing as many as five 'forwards' at a time. It was a real shambles in the end and another one to add to the long list of heavy defeats we have had over the years in these sort of weather conditions. The absence of skipper Stuart Dorward (with more family commitments) and not having any substitutes was a major factor this time, but on this evidence we would probably struggle to beat Cheshunt Corinthians even with a full-strength side out. At least we had one bit of good news. All five match balls were found afterwards when we thought we had lost two of them. Barney managed to get one back by knocking on a Connaught Gardens resident's door, while somebody had put the other one in the clean kit bag for some reason!					
			Murf's Alternative Report: Aquaplaning around the M25 it seemed fortunate that it was not the first day of Lent though I could have sworn that strange looking charabanc piloted by an elderly bearded fella had ARK 1 as its number plate. As ever, the week leading up to this sodden Sunday had been played out in full on Rovers' website. In line with the previous fixture, yours truly had started it outside the 16 and so a Sunday morning of thumb twiddling beckoned, the only likely bright spot a trip to the gym and a lining up behind the right running machine. But a week is a long time in Rovers line-ups. By Tuesday, promotion to the 16 had been secured and, by 7.54am on Sunday, Lol's frustrated forum post indicated a possible start. It put a certain determination to make it to Hazelwood in one piece where it was confirmed. I was in the starting ten. Yes, ten. A combination of dropouts, no shows, disputed debt rescheduling and Smithy going AWOL had led to the promotion though, fortunately, a bedraggled Smithy reported for duty with 15 minutes to go. And no, despite the temptation, The Brothers did not drop or fine the temporarily missing midfielder for his tardiness. In the dressing room The Manager pumped up his charges by informing them that the opposition had been at the ground for an hour, conducted a structured set of drills in their pristine looking drill tops and all round looked very organised and professional. The confidence boost was not so draining, delivered as it was by a man shrouded in the strangest looking overcoat. Where Malcolm Allison had his Arthur Daley camel coat and Motty his sheepskin, Manager Hughes had turned up in something resembling a one man tented portalo. It was a veritable mish-mash of zips and flaps, and drew unfortunate comparison with those who hang around playgrounds. Somewhat unconvincingly, The Manager blamed his wife's predilection for TV shopping channels as if his own taste were superior.		
Still, he declared, if it keeps me dry.... With the clock ticking, it was questioned whether The Management had put out any last minute calls to boost squad numbers. "Well, I posted on the forum...", The Manager replied. The slip was Freudian or, more to the point, Bobby Robsonian and The Manager quickly corrected himself by confirming a few late begging texts had been dispatched. Unfortunately, he confirmed, he was not on Twitter which was a shame considering the coat. As kick-off approached, the team huddled together in the driving wind and rain in the insufficient lee of The Cameraman's pitch and, aside from wondering what they were doing venturing out on such a morn, a rallying call was issued. And considering the conditions, it was fortunate the first 16 had been available the week before for the team photo, especially Jacko who looked like he'd just stepped out of the Capri Sun advert. The ref commenced the proceedings with Rovers kicking uphill against the wind and rain. It was clear from the off that Cheshunt Corinthians were going to live up to The Manager's pre-match hype and Rovers were immediately under pressure from a side that passed and moved with aplomb. However, Rovers defended stoutly and managed to weather the initial storm. Then, in a 5 minute period, Rovers outdid Spurs at Arsenal by conceding three quick goals before regaining defensive composure. Indeed, just before half-time, Rovers hauled themselves back into the game. Having eschewed the initial opportunity arising from the disadvantage that is a close quarter free kick awarded for a back pass, Tony King applied his strawberry bloneness to the resulting Cokell corner. Half-time brought a degree of inquest which was eventually swept away by optimism for what could be achieved with the slope, wind and rain in Rovers' favour. And, indeed, there were a couple of decent chances to close the gap. Firstly, Messrs McGovern and Cokell indulged in a bout of role reversal as the former delivered a cross which pinpointed the latter's normally exemplary left foot at the far post. But the opportunity went begging as the ball was sliced harmlessly wide. The second fell to Smithy, again at the far post, this time from a corner. The ball somehow eluded everybody while Smithy somehow eluded the ball. And, though the away side were superior, the game remained notionally in the balance until midfielder Danny Hagan was forced to retire with a hamstring pull. Indeed, matters were made temporarily worse as Tony King initially preferred to tend his fallen comrade on the touchline rather than patrol the now gaping midfield. With numerical superiority added to an already impressive game, Corinthians made hay while the sun didn't shine and, in the final 14 minutes, a further 4 goals were added. Indeed, it was so nearly five when a through ball found Corinthians' centre forward the wrong side of the home defence and he confidently slotted it past Jacko. Wheeling away delightedly, he was in mid-Shearer mode when an obliging goal-line puddle came to Rovers' rescue. (See picture above left). At the final whistle the debit column read 7 and the pitch resembled a muddy battlefield. As Remembrance Day beckons, the obvious analogy would have been The Somme but that I feel that somewhat hackneyed, preferring instead to invoke the boggy environs of Agincourt where Henry V's longbowmen eventually stuck two fingers up to the French. Though Rovers were unable to do the same, they had struggled manfully against superior forces in kit which, when sodden, was like hauling around chain mail.					
					

TREVOR HUGHES'S MANAGER'S REPORT

We faced another difficult cup tie on Sunday against an experienced side in Cheshunt Corinthians. Our captain Stuart Dorward was unavailable and when Rob Brown and Terry Brown both dropped out on Sunday morning we were left with a bare eleven. In heavy rain and a strong wind against us in the first half we were under severe pressure right from the start but we defended very well until the 26th minute when Martin Loveday made a rare mistake by misjudging a sliding interception which led to a break and a good finish. We then conceded a rare goal from a corner when the player on the edge of the area was not closed down by Tony King who was in the wrong 'zone' due to me locking the changing rooms and getting my linesman's instructions from the referee before the game and forgetting to tell him his position. A third goal in five minutes followed from

another fast break as we lost our concentration. Fortunately, we regained our composure and Tony King headed in from a corner in first half injury time to make the half time inquest slightly more positive. With the wind behind us we started to create chances in the second half. Corinthians had plenty of chances to increase their lead but a combination of some good saves by Simon Jackson and some poor finishing kept us in with a chance. Unfortunately, our finishing was also poor with the wet and windy conditions no doubt the excuse. Danny Hagan pulled his hamstring and had to come off after 72 minutes which was typical on a day when we had no substitutes. Our 10 men kept trying to attack but a fourth goal sealed our defeat after 76 minutes and late goals in the 83rd, 84th and 88th minutes made the final score a rather embarrassing 7-1. I have no complaints about the effort put in by the eleven who played but the quality of the opposition proved that we need our strongest starting eleven and three good substitutes if we are to win games at this level.