SPORT ITALIA HELLENIC LEAGUE –PREMIER DIVISION
(Played on Saturday, 16th December 2006)

SWANS GIFT HIGHWORTH A POINT

SLIMBRIDGE 2 , HIGHWORTH TOWN 2

Matt Pratley was the Highworth hero with an equaliser in added-on time. Slimbridge dominated the second half and should have wrapped the game up long before the end, but a lot of good work foundered with some wayward finishing. Justin Miller gave the visitors an early lead but this was soon cancelled out by Robbie Colwell from the penalty spot. A second half goal from Tim Haddock looked to have earned the hosts the points but a tenacious Highworth rearguard action eventually brought its reward.

On three minutes, a Tom Dingle cross from the left was met with a looping header over home goalkeeper Ryan Chandler from Miller, the ball dropping just under the bar and into the net.

Slimbridge then powered forward and after a couple of near misses were back on level terms on eleven minutes. Johnny Meadows was brought down on a run into the box, Colwell converting the resultant spot-kick, sending Jamie Morse the wrong way.

Will Morford, who was to cause the Highworth defence problems with his darting runs all the game, forced a desperate clearance into his own side-netting from Andy Minturn and set up Kacey Johnstone who forced a good block from Morse mid-way through the half, before the hard-working Lee Spalding made a risky but successful challenge to dispossess Johnstone as he was about to shoot from close range.

At the other end Tony Joyce fired straight at Chandler after some delightful passing football had forged an opening. The half concluded with Matt Green, impressive throughout, floating a free-kick into the visitors box, where Ashley Thomas flicked-on to Haddock, free in front of goal, but his header drifted agonisingly past an unguarded upright.

The second half commenced with Slimbridge dominating possession and Meadows' raking pass saw Morford fractionally late at the back post with the empty goal beckoning. Johnstone then flicked-on to Colwell who lobbed the onrushing Morse from the edge of the area, only to see the ball drop the wrong side of the post.

As the half wore on, Colwell and Haddock both went close, before skipper, Leon Sterling put in a right-wing cross, met by a firm Colwell header, but straight at Morse.

John Cant then replaced a tired looking Johnstone on 76 minutes, and a minute later supplied a precise left-wing cross for Haddock to plant a measured header into the top corner of the net and put the home side ahead for the first time in the match.

Slimbridge then looked comfortably in control and should have made the game safe, but fate decreed otherwise. In the dying seconds of the match, Highworth won a corner on the left, and Pratley launched himself into a crowded box to see his header hit the inside of the far post netting and an early Christmas present for his side.

There was no denying that Slimbridge had let the game slip, but that's football for you! A game of honest, skilful endeavour, played in good spirit generally. A credit to both sides that should be acknowledged by all but the very blinkered!

Slimbridge; R.Chandler, L.Sterling, J.Embling, T.Haddock, Ashley Thomas, A.Axton, Matt Green, J.Meadows (J.Inch 78), K.Johnstone (J.Cant 76), R.Colwell, W.Morford.
Highworth Town; J.Morse, M.Hall, J.Reeves (L.Brown 83), L.Spalding, A.Joyce, A.Minturn, M.Davis, J.Mills, M.Pratley, J.Miller (J.McGahey 76), T.Dingle.
Referee Mr. J.Lyon (Oxford)