

09/02/05 TT No.174: Stephen Harris - Colliers Wood United (Combined Counties League Premier Division)

Wednesday 8 February 2006; Colliers Wood United 0-2 Merstham; Combined Cos. Premier; att. 75, programme issued, admission £5.

Around a year ago I saw a game at Greenwich Borough and a few weeks after that I realised that this meant I had watched football at the home ground of every senior football club in Greater London. A minor groundhopping milestone, all the less impressive when you consider it had taken a pedestrian 29 years to achieve since I first wandered onto the terraces at Brisbane Road in 1976. The whole thing became much more important however when I discovered that my good friend Robert had somehow inexplicably failed to see a game at Uxbridge and I had therefore achieved the milestone a few weeks before him - something to be mentioned at every opportunity.

The trouble is, such records have to be maintained and that means that for several months now I have been putting off a trip to Colliers Wood United who have returned this season from their exile in Croydon. Last night was the big night and I headed off into deepest south-west London. The Wibbandune Sports Ground lies at the edge of Wimbledon Common in an area of open parkland and unnecessarily large houses - it is not in Colliers Wood. The set-up is similar to that at Mole Valley Predators (TT 42), although all round a little neater and smarter. You enter the ground through a small car park to a fully-railed pitch at one side of a larger sports ground. There is hard standing all around and additional spectator facilities on just one side. These are centred on a pleasant club house/tea bar/dressing room block, which has a small area of cover attached to the front between the two dugouts. Around 30 plastic seats are set out in this area. All-important are the new and powerful floodlights which have made games possible once more at this venue. Hot drinks and filled rolls were available from the clubhouse.

Merstham are going all-out for promotion and looked a good side. Colliers are no mugs either though and this was a very good game with a real end-to-end first half. Goalless at half-time with Merstham looking most likely, the goal finally came shortly after the break. Just after that though an away player was sent off, leading to a much tighter second half. Merstham eventually went further ahead with a last-minute penalty. Very enjoyable; Match Rating 4*.

A thin programme was included with admission and further copies were on sale for £1. Now of course I have to find an opportunity to see a game at London APSA's new location, and soon it will be Arsenal's turn I guess, if I am to maintain the full set.