

**16/02/06 TT No.179: Stephen Harris - Biggleswade United (South Midlands League Premier Division)**

Tuesday 14 February 2006; Biggleswade United 0-0 Hillingdon Borough; Spartan SM Prem; att. c.44, programme issued, admission £4.

A couple of years ago I was at a Biggleswade Town game and peered through the hedge for a glimpse of Biggleswade United's Second Meadow ground next door. Today matters were reversed as I finally made it to a United game - although only just, as our walk from the railway station to the ground kept getting interrupted by unavoidable pitstops at the Golden Pheasant, the Wheatsheaf and a tempting chip shop.

Entry is at the east end of the ground into a grassed car park with the spacious and pleasant clubhouse to your left. It was nice, and unusual, to be presented with a choice of real ales at a football club bar and it was a shame we had to dash off at the end for our train. There is also a tea bar here which opened before the game and again at half-time for drinks, hot food and chocs. Three sides of the ground have hard standing and are bordered by a high and sturdy fence which provides a good arm rest for spectators and catches most wayward balls. Far more effective than the usual low rail and I was only called upon for ball-boy duties once, albeit making a fool of myself trying to retrieve the ball from where it was wedged under a parked car. The fourth side is bordered by the hedge boundary with their near, and it seems rather unloved, neighbours - whose pitch was busy tonight with a gang of kids churning up the goalmouth on their bicycles. The north side has a small, modern, brick stand between the dugouts which is separated into two parts, one with four steps of terracing and one with two rows of bench seating. Half an hour into the game an official appeared with mats for seated spectators to sit upon, which is another nice touch.

On a cold night, the small crowd was boosted by several from Hillingdon but apparently reduced by the fact that some of the regular home fans were absent, having been obliged to celebrate St. Valentine's day elsewhere. Much of the talk was about Hillingdon's unexpected progress in the FA Vase and whether their home crowd of 233 in the last round was a return to prominence for the club or actually a pretty poor turnout given the stage of the competition. Despite this Vase progress, it was United who looked the stronger side in a flowing game. Both sides created plenty of chances but few shots on target. The metalwork was rattled four times in all, but everything else was high and wide or straight at the 'keepers and United should consider this as points dropped from a game they should have won.

A neat little match programme was included with admission. The fact that only two copies were left by half time suggests the attendance of 44 (my headcount, not an official figure) was within expectation. I have a couple of spare copies from

my philistine friends who usually deposit such items in the nearest bin, should anyone bump into me in the next week or so and want one. FGIF Match Rating: 3\*.

04/20