

TT No.196: Paul Roth - Saturday 11th March 2006; **Shaftesbury** vs. Locks Heath; Wessex League Division 2; Res: 0-4; Attendance: 80; Entry: £3 which included 24-page programme.

After a wet week I was sceptical if my intended match at Shaftesbury would be on, as their midweek game at home to Liss had been postponed due to the wet weather, but a window of dryness prior to the match was enough to dispel any chance of a cancellation. After catching the 7.25am from Margate to Waterloo I was soon heading down to Gillingham where my old footballing partner Bob and his wife Hilary were waiting for me. Soon I was being whisked off into the countryside to imbibe in a couple of beers before heading back into the lovely ancient town of Shaftesbury. A quick pint in the GBG listed Crown and a look at the famous Gold Hill (of Hovis advert fame) and it was round to the ground which is situated slap bang in the middle of town. A new Tesco store has been built here and I believe the pitch has been moved to accommodate this. Loads of free car parking is available.

"Cockrams" is one of those homely feeling venues and for the standard the club finds itself at, is a superbly appointed stadium. The clubhouse outside the ground is very comfortable with Real Ale on tap and this is a few steps from the entrance where we paid £3 to get in and this included a 24-page programme - a colour picture of the team on the front cover and all the necessary info inside. There is hard standing all-round the pitch and two covered areas, three if you count the bit by the tea bar. To the right as you enter, a long-seated-stands runs most of the way along that side of the ground. The club has floodlights and these were switched on during the second half gloom but didn't seem to make any difference at all to me. The whole place is enclosed by a ten-foot-high mesh fence but this doesn't detract from the cosy feel in any way.

With the "Locks" top of the league by some way it was no surprise when they sped into 3 goal lead before half time with some crisply taken goals and with better finishing could have easily won by a lot more than the eventual margin of 4 to nil. All the same a very enjoyable game.

There was time for a quick beer in the club before my friends ran me back to Gillingham in time to get the 17.42 back to Waterloo and back indoors by 11pm.

FGIF Rating 4*; Steps 5512 (I was being driven everywhere)!