

TT No.214: Mike Latham - Mon 10 April 2006. South of Scotland League: **Abbey Vale** 1-3 Threave Rovers. Attendance: 100 (headcount); Admission: by donation; Programme: none; FGIF Match Rating: 3*.

Abbey Vale FC, formed in 1974, entered the South of Scotland League five years ago and are currently enjoying their best ever season in that competition, hovering in fourth or fifth position. They attracted a decent crowd of around one hundred for their Monday evening league game against Threave Rovers, who hail from nearby Castle Douglas, for the 6-30pm kick-off.

Abbey Vale play at Maryfield Park in the village of New Abbey, situated about six miles south of Dumfries. The village is very picturesque and has a couple of nice pubs and the scenery is spectacular with the mountain of Criffel dominating the skyline. The village is dominated by the ruins of Sweetheart Abbey, founded in the 13th century.

The football ground is to be found behind the primary school in the centre of the village. There is ample parking in the school grounds. The venue is a basic one with a small dressing room block and tea bar behind the nearside goal at the entrance and the rest open standing behind a post and rope fence that runs lengthways down either side. Behind the far goal a green mesh fence has been erected. Three sides of the ground back onto farmers' fields with sheep grazing nearby and it is a tranquil and peaceful place to watch football. There are two green dug-outs, opposite one another on the halfway line.

Club secretary David Morton was most helpful and dug out some back issues of programmes, a rather basic production, while explaining that no issue was made for midweek games. He later went around the ground collecting 'gate' money in a bucket by donation. The tea bar sold hot and cold drinks, confectionary and pies.

The day had been sunny and reasonably warm but though remaining dry the evening became increasingly cold. The light began to fade but the match was able to be played out to a conclusion in the gathering twilight. Played on a well grassed pitch that was bumpy and undulating in parts the game was well contested though the visitors, smarting from a 0-2 defeat in the Potts Cup Final two days later, looked the better side and went back to the top of the league with their deserved win. The match was well refereed and it was a most interesting evening in pleasant surroundings and good company. Recommended (on a dry day).