

04/09/05 TT No.36: Mike Latham - Redditch Utd (NCN)

Sat 3 Sep 2005, Conference North; Redditch United 1-2 Hednesford Town (att. - 381)

Anyone going to Redditch for the first time by car is advised to allow at least an extra half-hour for their journey as the town has an unbelievable one-way system. One wrong turn and you can drive miles trying to get back to where you were. Exit 7 off the ring road takes you eventually to the Valley Ground of Redditch United FC, but one wrong and you are back on that infernal ring road.

The ground is approached up a small track off the Bromsgrove Road out of the town, about 400 yards or so down the road from the station. There is plentiful parking and the locals were friendly.

On a beautiful summer's day, the noon kick-off attracted a crowd of less than 400, about half of whom had come from Hednesford.

The main stand is highly unusual with a large glazed viewing area on a level above the seats. Set back from the pitch, with the dug-outs either side, admission here was an extra 50p. The stand also incorporates the dressing rooms and social facilities. Alongside was a tea bar manned by friendly staff and a club shop.

On the opposite side of the ground is a covered terrace and there is also a small cover behind the terrace at the car-park end. Behind the far goal was a temporary stand the like of which is used for open golf tournaments. With its vast oval shape, the ground is impressive and there is a large amount of space for the club to develop their facilities further. Despite being just out of the town centre there are some pleasing rural views.

After falling behind Hednesford fought back and won the game with a well-taken goal by substitute McMahon just before the hour-mark. The game died a death in the last half-hour with the heat taking its toll on the players but the visit was an enjoyable one. An unremarkable 28-page programme sold for £1.60. Surprisingly this did not include the usual page of club officials and contact numbers etc. Like many these days it listed a squad of players from both teams with no numbers meaning that if the spectator lacks shorthand skills and A1 hearing it is impossible to find out who is playing from the tannoy. Some clubs get around this by posting a notice of both line-ups near the club house entrance for the convenience of spectators but Redditch did not appear to do this.

Match Rating: 2*.

03/20