

TT No.114: *Richard Panter* - 13th January 2007; **Hathern** v **Ibstock United**; Leicestershire Senior Cup (QF); Res: 0 - 2; Attendance: 84 est.; Programme: 16 pages, £1; Admission: no entry charge; FGIF Match Rating: 3 stars.

Due to the home team not having floodlights the match kicked off at 1.15pm, to allow for extra time and penalties should they be required. I was not expecting many spectators but a far smattering of fans took their places at Pasture Lane.

The 'Senior' cup is not actually the county's most prestigious knock out competition, that honour goes to the Westerby Cup, which is contested by the best Senior Leaguers, five MFA clubs, one Unibond, one Conference North outfit and Leicester City. The Senior League leaders Stapenhill hail from Derbyshire and are thereby excluded, so the most favoured team still in the competition is Ibstock United, mid tabled division one side Hathern had a big job on their hands.

The first half saw the visitors in wasteful mood in front of goal and the home side had their chances but we arrived at the break scoreless. Hathern enjoyed more possession and had more chances in the second period but were unable to convert any of them. Ibstock took the lead at the halfway point of the half after a woeful piece of refereeing; a clear United foul directly in front of the unobservant official went unnoticed and they went directly on to open the scoring. A minute later a misunderstanding between the home custodian and a central defender was all a very alert Ibstock man needed, he took his chance very confidently. From then on, the game was all but over, both sides spurned more opportunities but ultimately Ibstock were worthy if narrow victors.

Hathern issued a 16-page programme which had the club's results to date, league tables, team line ups and a page of 17 thumbnail action photos, a commendable effort from this progressive club. The snack bar did excellent business throughout the match and the club sell all manner of merchandise including a badge. Pasture Lane is next to the school and can be found easily from the A6 just north of Loughborough, a rural setting, a welcoming club and tasty food and drinks feed the hungry guest (I travelled all of half a mile!)...travellers, what are you waiting for?