

TT No.121: *Richard Panter* - Thurs 1st Jan 2009; **Corby Town v Rugby Town**; Southern League Premier Division; Score: 2-0; Entry: £9; Attendance: 369; Programme: 28pp, £2.00; Match rating: 3 stars.

The weather in north Leicestershire was freezing cold and matches were being called off right left and Carlton! Therefore, the BBC Weather centre web site came into its own. A quick glance showed that the eastern side of the country had fared best temperature wise. So east it was. Moving on to the Southern League site there were still plenty of scheduled games showing a 3.00pm kick off, and not that most irritating of words 'postponed'. A telephone call to Corby Town's secretary was well batted, he told me that the pitch was playable and as far as he was concerned it was game on...

On the way over there the nagging gene inside my head kept saying to me, it's too frosty, the game will be off when you get there. It was cold, misty and freezing all the way to Uppingham. However, on the other side of the town it was clear of mist and more importantly frost. The rest of the journey through the delightful medieval hillside village of Rockingham with its sandstone castle was made in similar meteorological conditions. Clearly it was definitely game on at Rockingham Triangle.

After the rural tranquillity of the past, the arrival at the top of Rockingham Hill sees the sudden appearance of plenty of twenty first century hi-tech industrial buildings. It also sees the entrance to the Steelmen's council owned home at Rockingham Triangle.

Since my last visit, almost two years ago the club have opened a club shop behind the main stand. This offered the usual merchandise and looked to be taking a few quid. It relieved me of £3 (for a sixty-year-old), anniversary badge. The dug outs have been moved to the other side of the pitch opposite the main stand. Plenty of people have a poor opinion of the ground as it is surrounded by a running track, but I feel this is more than compensated by the main stand. This is a cantilever construction which runs for virtually the entire length of the pitch and it is very well elevated and there are plenty of seats, although we like most of the crowd inside here stood at the very back which affords the best view of all. I always enjoy a chat with the local fans who told me the team were low on confidence having taken but one point from the last fifteen which the team have been offered.

I am sure this morning the players, supporters and management of the visitors are still scratching their heads wondering how they lost this match. Rugby's approach play was superb, the entire team looked comfortable on the ball until they approached the Corby goal. Matt Gearing even managed a clearance from the Corby goal line and he plays for Rugby! His team also hit the bar and saw Mark Osborne in the home goal in commanding form throughout and even with the home

defence trying their best to give the visitors the ball on plenty of occasions, they failed to trouble the team sheet complier. Steve Diggin, the home number 10, had two chances and showed commendable efficiency of effort to the men in sky blue in just how to put the ball away.

My new mates, the Corby fans were grateful for the points, one of them even told me they didn't really deserve to win, in reality on possession and tactics they didn't. But as the old cliché goes it is goals that win games. Then again, I am sure on other occasions they have lost matches when they deserved to win, such is the perversity of non-league football.

Was it worth nine quid to get in? No! Was the 28-page programme worth £2? Most emphatically, yes! The manager and Chairman have a page for their 'notes', statistics are well covered as are match reports and the visitor's history and pen pics. Three pages of club history were well researched and presented, 'non-league chatter', league news, forthcoming matches, a full colour picture and details about scoring hero Steve Diggin and an advert from Corby Borough Council pictures the club's grounds past, present and future. I have checked, and this is all contained within the twenty-eight pages, a commendable publication!

06/20