

TT No.86: *Richard Panter* - Tues 11th November 2008; **Abingdon United v Slough Town**; Southern League Division 1 S & W; Result 1-1; Attendance 110; Entry £6; Programme 64pp £1.50; Match rating 2*.

The desire to tick off a new ground overtook any logic or common sense on this evening. Therefore, I found myself heading south on the M1 to that county of erudition and quite a goodly number of non-league grounds, Oxfordshire. After a couple of days of heavy rain, I feared the worse when I contacted a club official, however, said official was most positive that the match was 'definitely on' furthermore he told me to seek him out for a team sheet. Blimey, for a change I had stumbled on someone who wanted people to visit his club! Thank you, Mike Blackmore.

The journey was made in twilight for much of the way down the motorway, but it was light enough to glimpse views of two kestrels and a buzzard looking for their supper, plentiful in the fecundity of what was to quote Van Morrison ended up as a golden autumn day. Trees were in the final stages of their leaf loss and there seemed to be a fruitfulness in the air.

United's tree-lined Northcourt Road home looked spick and span and the pitch looked perfect with no muddy patches evident. The ground has two areas of spectator cover. The now almost ubiquitous Arena seated stand, this one being a decent size with five rows a of seats. On the other side stood the dug outs which book end an older three step covered terrace. There are toilets both outside and inside the large single-story building which houses the memorabilia-rich bar, changing rooms, offices and function rooms. Add a snack bar, which dispensed me a welcome cup of hot Bovril on this chill evening, and you have a first-rate place to watch non-league football.

The visitors, some 40 miles distant had a good number of supporters with them and a smattering of locals resulted in a healthy crowd of 110. Most of us were anticipating a competitive high scoring game, well I was hoping for this at least! Indeed, the bountifulness of the season seemed to be evident on the pitch when after only two minutes Yashwa Romeo lashed home a spectacular volley to put the Rebels from Berkshire in the lead. United then drew level when Micheas Herbert pounced on a loose ball in the Slough box. Two goals in three minutes, I felt certain that I was at one of those games I only ever seem to read about, I was drooling at the prospect of my goal average improvement, double figures being a distinct possibility. But as the above heading tells, that was it as far as scoring went, in fact it was pretty much as far as the match went bar a free kick which rattled the visitors cross bar late in the second half. In all honesty as a spectacle it wasn't really one, that said I enjoyed my brief stay in Abingdon.

A final mention must be made about the programme for the evening. When I arrived back home, I had a coffee and scanned through the publication. Frankly, I

thought it to be a bit of a Curates dog's egg breakfast so I put it down and went to bed. The following morning, I picked it up and actually read it. As a staunch advocate of diverse articles in club programmes, I have to say this is a good read in this respect alone. Colourful and up to date it contains league news, match reports, statistics, extensive results and they have even plundered Mr Rundle's excellent F.C.H.D., a fine effort.

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