

TT No.192: *Mike Latham* - Sat 27th March 2010; Bukta East Region Super League: **Kelty Hearts** 2-0 Newtongrange Star; Attendance: 200 (h/c); Admission: £2; Programme: £1; Raffle ticket: £1; FGIF Match Rating: 3*.

It was a glorious spring-like afternoon in the east of Scotland and the chance arose to visit one of the top league clashes of the season in the East Region Super League.

Kelty Hearts went into this game in third place with visitors Newtongrange Star in second with an advantage of nine points on their rivals but having played four games more. With leaders Bo'ness United having a four-point lead at the top it was a game neither side could afford seemingly to lose if they wanted to keep alive their title aspirations.

Kelty is a small mining community a few miles north of Dunfermline and Cowdenbeath on the county boundary between Fife and Kinross-shire. There are plenty of junior teams in this area, with local rivals Hill of Beath their main rivals. With its location close to the M90 linking Edinburgh with Perth, Kelty, a community of around 6,000 inhabitants, is popular with commuters these days.

Though football in Kelty dates back to the late 1880s the roots of the present club go back only to 1975 when a team was formed at the Central Park ground close to the centre of the village. In 1980 they joined the juniors and their progress since has been remarkable with two Scottish Junior Cup final appearances and elevation to the top sphere of the east region in 2008.

Kelty's ground reminded very much of Hill of Beath's which I had visited several weeks ago. It is superbly maintained and looked in great order in the sunshine. Surrounded by a high fence all around the exterior, the main feature of the ground are two covered standing areas on the far side adjoining the local junior school.

Along the near side is a building that houses the dressing rooms and a recently constructed club house. There is also a fine tea bar that was kept busy all afternoon. The grass surrounds of the pitch are kept neat and trim and after the ravages of the winter the pitch looked in remarkably good order.

Occupying an elevated location several hundred feet above sea level there are fine views, especially on such a bright and clear day as this one across to Lochgelly and Cowdenbeath and to a wide expanse of countryside behind the far goal.

Kelty also produce an excellent programme and clearly have a lot of support from local businesses with many taking out advertisements.

The home side seized control of a tensely fought game with a third-minute goal and clinched their hard-fought victory with a clinching goal 15 minutes from time just as the visitors were enjoying their best spell of the afternoon.

The road back to the Forth Bridge was clear and in no time the miles were being eaten up on an almost deserted M74 south back to England, leaving time to reflect upon another good trip to Scotland. A visit to Kelty comes highly recommended.

06/20