

**TT No.241: Ian Hill** - Saturday 26th March 2011; **RAEC Mons** v FCV Dender EH; Belgium Exqui League (Division 2); Result: 3-0; Att: 2,000 (approx.); Admission: 10 Euros; Programme: Free: Rating: 2.

#### RAEC Mons

Mons (French) as the club is generally known as or Bergen (Flemish) currently play in the Belgian 2nd Division Exqui League. Formed in 1910 the clubs full name is Royal Albert Elizabeth Club de Mons.

#### Getting There

I travelled from Brussels by train to Mons with a journey time of around 45 minutes. Unfortunately, the map I printed off a website was completely wrong. After walking around Mons for an hour I couldn't find any street maps or plans to direct me to Stade Charles Tondreau. The last resort was a taxi which cost 10 Euros from the railway station. After getting my bearings on the journey there it was a walk of around 20 minutes back to the station through the city centre.

#### The Ground - Stade Charles Tondreau

A strange set up with the ground being half developed so you get a bit of old and a bit of new. The stadium currently has a capacity of 8,600 which looks more than adequate for the club in the second division. Along one side of the pitch and behind a goal is a modern wrap around seated stand. Behind the other goal is open terrace and the fourth side is a small seated stand with some terracing which is closed to be the public. The old part of the stadium is very Belgian in design but is slowly deteriorating. An abandoned VIP area is located at the top of the terracing behind the goal. Refreshments and food are available in a rough unused car park behind the terracing. There is also a club shop outside the stadium which is small but has a nice selection of goods. The ground also has unusual leaning floodlights which are East European in style.

#### The Game

A very comfortable win for Mons who should have won far more emphatically than the three goals they scored.

#### The Programme

As programmes go in Belgium this is one of the best I have seen. A full colour glossy A5 issue, La Revue des Dragons, is made up of 32 pages and is free of charge. It is available in the club shop, just inside the turnstiles and a large pile are dumped on the terracing for people to help themselves. This situation wasn't helped when someone tripped over them and kicked them in all directions. Team sheets were available from the stewards at the front of the terraced area. In addition, the club also have pdf copies of their programmes on their website.

This is a club that, for the paper chaser, does so much right.

Overall

A poor turnout for a well-run club but there was a chocolate festival on in Mons that weekend which must have kept the locals away. The old parts of the ground have lots of character but the new stands are quite bland. This shouldn't put you off as the entry price is a very reasonable 10 Euros to watch 2nd Division football, there is a programme and you get the chance to visit half of a very old stadium.

07/20