

**TT No.36: Steve Hardy** - Sat 19th December 2015; Mercian League Division 2; Craven Arms Town 5 Coven United 3; Admission: 3; Programme: No; Attendance: 4.

When plans A, B and C all vanished mid-morning, I had reluctantly settled on a safe 3G pitch in Tewkesbury for my fix today. I was halfway there on the M5 motorway when I received a text from Craven Arms Town assuring me their game was on. Given the dreadful weather in the area I was a little suspicious I must say, but decided to take the risk and turned off the M5 at Kidderminster to detour to Craven Arms.

Arriving 15 minutes before kick-off, it was difficult to see why I had been so worried. Both teams were out warming up, and the pitch looked immaculate so it was obviously a good decision.

Craven Arms Town play on a pitch at the rear of the Craven Arms Community Centre, which they share with the local cricket team. This is to be found opposite the railway station in the middle of the town. They have a large dressing room block and club house a short hike from the pitch, but sadly the clubhouse didn't open during the game, much to the disappointment of the 4 spectators present. The team, and visitors Coven United, are newcomers to the league this season, and both have been going very well so far. Today's game saw CAT race to a 3-0 lead before Coven pulled on back just before the break. With the strong wind at their backs, Coven really needed to score the first goal after the break, but they didn't as CAT scored a fourth. Coven didn't give up though and managed two more goals before the game ended with the fairly convincing score of 5-3 to CAT.

The Mercian league has taken a fair amount of stick in the Shropshire area for failing to gain a step 7A grading, but at the grassroots level of day to day football matches I love it.