

TT No.76: Steve Hardy - Sat 16th April 2016; **AFC Glebe United** 0 Silhill D 4; Birmingham & District League Division 5; Admission: Free; Programme: No; Attendance: A generous 2!!

Clutching my bottle of Dom Perignon 2002, alongside my vegetarian corned beef sarnies, it was a return to Stechford in Birmingham for me this week, as I finally managed to complete the Birmingham & District league after eight years of trying.

The recipients of this momentous occasion were AFC Glebe United, who play at Stud Lane in Stechford. I had expected a pitch in a park, but was pleasantly surprised to find that AFC Glebe appear to be the adult side of Glebe Farm FC, who own/lease the ground in Stud Lane. No spectator facilities as such, but a dressing room block, large car park and at least 3 grass pitches, are more than adequate for their two adult teams and numerous junior sides.

Glebe Farm is a particularly deprived area of Stechford, with gangs, drugs and violence just a few of the problems tackled by Jean Bree and her partner Dwight Blake when they took on the running of the club last summer. My thanks go to Dwight, in particular, for answering all my texts in the last few months as I tried to find out if matches were still on, or even if they were as described in the fixture bulletin, which was not the case yesterday!

On the pitch, Glebe made a blistering start to the season but recent form has dipped and this was their third defeat in a row. Whether an upcoming cup final is preying on their collective minds I don't know, but they seemed strangely out of sorts yesterday, allowing visitors Silhill 'D' to complete the double of them without that much trouble really. An early penalty and a goalkeeping howler gave Silhill a 2-0 half time lead, and with Glebe pressing for a goal, two late breakaway goals completed the 4-0 victory.

I have really enjoyed my trips around the playing fields of Birmingham over the last eight years, and can only hope a load more clubs join the league next season so that I have more new venues to visit.

04/20