

TT No.90: *Brian Buck* - Friday 2nd February 2018; **Burton Park Wanderers v Thrapston Town;** ChromaSport & Trophies United Counties League Division 1; Result: 1-2; Attendance: 73.

I was quite keen to go to this game tonight, especially as my only other visit here was on 14 May 1986, when I watched the hosts lose 4-0 to the then named Mirrlees Blackstone (Blackstones these days) in a Nene Group United Counties League Division 1 match (att. 15 approx. I was a bit late in picking up my friend at Huntingdon station, who was looking resplendent in his 'pork pie' hat, bought during a trip to Thailand, as I had fallen asleep at home and was thus very grateful to my wife for waking me up and asking me if I was still going out! Actually, I was dreaming about being late for a football match!

We made the half hour trip to the ground, but not without a few problems. The sat nav didn't recognize the new roads they've built round here recently and so we had to look out for some floodlights. That wasn't easy either as the brightest ones were lighting a nearby car park, rather than the ground! But we finally found it. The car parking wasn't particularly well lit and I nearly tripped over a step. I've had some bad luck in that department recently as I tripped over a terrace step at Redbridge and walked into a bollard on the way back to my car after a game at Stevenage earlier in the week. Luckily it missed both of my legs. Unluckily it nearly caught something else!

Anyway, after we found somewhere to sit we surveyed our surroundings and were surprised that the lights were so poor, although eventually our eyes got used to them. Although the infrastructure of the ground was a vast improvement, it was hard to believe, that Kettering Town, currently at the top end of the Southern League, might be playing National League football here next season. They have in effect taken over this ground, leaving Burton Park Wanderers with a portakabin style clubhouse in one corner of the ground, which was well used tonight. The match itself took a bit of time to get going. Thrapston started well, but gradually BPW got into the game and eventually dominated much of this half. They were rewarded when they got the opening goal on 35 minutes, which came from a 20-yard direct free kick, after the keeper fouled an attacker, earning him the only yellow card of the game. Straightaway you see that losing here was not part of their pre-match plan and on 44 minutes a 30 yarder saw them equalize at the Tin Hat End! Their winning goal came on 54 minutes after the scorer was put in and rounded the keeper. Thereafter the game was keenly contested but with the visitors always having the upper hand.