

**TT No.102: Steve Hardy** - Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2019; **Melksham Town v Blackfield & Langley**; Southern League Division One South; Kick-Off: 3.00pm; Result: 2-3; Admission: £6 OAP; Programme: £1; Attendance: 406

Melksham Town moved to their new ground on the eastern side of the town in 2017. Before that they had played at the old Conigre ground since 1920, and I was pleased to see they had brought their old wrought iron gates from the Conigre and placed them at the Players and Officials entrance.

They share this new facility with the local rugby club. As they were also at home today, the car park was rammed, but the club must be pleased that in their first season at step 4 they are still getting crowds in excess of 400 for each game.

I wish I could enthuse about the game itself, but I can't. When the two teams actually stopped diving, waving imaginary cards in the ref's face, moaning and berating the ref, and a spell of football broke out, then it was excellent, but these spells were few and far between. Blackfield are league leaders at this stage, and you could see why when they finally played some football, but why all this aggressive nonsense that surrounded it?

In a nutshell, Melksham scored after just 13 minutes, with B & L equalising on 38. They then took control with two goals in a minute to lead 1-3 before Melksham scored from a penalty on the stroke of half time. This penalty was awarded after a blatant dive that Tom Daley would have been proud of. It was so obvious that you could understand why the B & L players harangued the ref to find out why he hadn't spotted it.

The side behind the goal nearest the car park is out of bounds at the moment, as the club are having to install a small covered area to meet league requirements. What nonsense. 406 people were there today and there was plenty of room for all, especially as a good few decided to watch from the excellent clubhouse on top of the main stand, or from the viewing platform next to it.

Rant over.