

**TT No.22:** *Brian Buck* - Wednesday 5th September 2018; **Wilstead** v Marston Shelton Rovers; Bedfordshire County League Premier Division; Venue: played at Bedford International Athletics Stadium - Outside pitch; Result: 3-0; Attendance: 25 approx.

Because the pitch at Wilstead hadn't recovered sufficiently from the summer's drought, this match was switched here the day before. We found the pitch alright. It was behind the athletics track and the rugby pitch next to it, so it was a bit of a walk to get there. Once we reached the pitch we realised, as everyone else present did, that there was one important component of the evening missing, namely the ref. When he finally arrived, he told us that he had got stuck in a traffic jam on the way to the game. Fair enough but some of my Groundhopping friends had come from further afield and wanted to see some football before it got dark. So eventually we started at 6.36pm and the game became a 40-minutes each way affair. This could have been the first time that football had ever been played on this pitch, as the rugby posts behind both goals suggested. The first half yielded no goals but Wilstead looked slightly the better side in what was a close encounter. The only noteworthy incident was when two Rovers players incurred the wrath of the ref at the same time and were booked. Perhaps they should have realised that in being annoyed at himself for being late for the match, he was going to be in no mood to tolerate their indiscretions when he had continued to make the effort to come for their benefit. In the second half it got dark quickly, although the setting sun had made a brief appearance during the break. But now we had goals. On 48 minutes the ball was helped into the net with the outside of the scorer's foot, from a cross from the left, for Wilstead's opener. Meanwhile behind us it seemed that the phantom vegetable nicker had arrived as he climbed over a locked gate to the allotments by standing on his getaway bike. But just as we were about to dial 999, or even 101, because we really weren't that interested, he returned with some keys and unlocked the said gate. We then averted our eyes because Wilstead were just about to score their second goal on 57 minutes. Then as the light seriously faded Wilstead deservedly claimed their third goal five minutes from the end. By now the light was so bad it took some time to see the scorer's number. Overall an enjoyable but unusual evening.