

**TT No.4: Steve Hardy** - Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2018; **Penistone Church** v Bootle; FA Cup Extra Preliminary Round; Kick-Off: 3pm; Result: 2-1; Admission: £3 (OAP); Programme: £1.50; Team sheet: 20p; Attendance: 165 (official)

The magic of the FA Cup has returned! After my morning match in Barnsley it was an easy 8-mile drive to Penistone Church for this Extra Preliminary round tie. I always try to watch matches between teams from different leagues in cup competitions, so this one, with Northern Counties East v North West Counties leagues was an easy choice.

The Penistone ground is fairly typical of NCEL set ups that I have visited over the years. Superb clubhouse and dressing room block behind the goal nearest to the entrance, a small stand covering half of one side of the pitch, floodlights and, err... that's it. It's all very neat and tidy, and more than adequate for a club at step 5 in the non-league pyramid.

It was good to see an official crowd of 165 turning up for this one, including a good few from Liverpool. Their pithy comments throughout were extremely funny, although a lot of the locals couldn't understand their Scouse accent, so missed out on the humour.

I thought Bootle were the better side for most of the game actually, but they just couldn't score. Church took the lead completely against the run of play on 24 minutes, before Bootle got a deserved equaliser just before half time. The second half followed much the same pattern, with Church re-taking the lead on 75 minutes and managing to hold out for a fairly lucky victory.

The journey home was basically a running battle between Sarah the *SatNav* girl and me. She wanted to send me totally the wrong way several times, and got more and more annoyed as I ignored her. Women eh?