

TT No.92: Steve Hardy - Sunday 20th January 2019; **Bloxwich Rangers U21 v Dudley Rangers United Beacon League Division 2**; Result: 2-1; Admission; Free; Programme: No; Attendance 18 h/c

The Beacon League is quite a rarity amongst Sunday leagues, as they play on a Sunday afternoon, and not the traditional Sunday morning. Absolute boon for groundhoppers, of course, as you can do 2 matches in a day without much travelling involved either.

Today's game meant a mere 7-mile trip down the A34 to the 'delightful' town of Bloxwich, and the venue of the Stafford Road Sports Club where I had previously seen Bloxwich Cricket Club in action. The pitch is one of several at the rear of the club, and is reached by walking across the cricket square and through a hole in the fence.

Bloxwich Rangers U21s are top of the table, with Dudley Rangers in mid table, and a great many goals were anticipated by the crowd of 18. Sadly, it wasn't to be, as neither team seemed remotely interested in being there. In summary, Dudley took the lead on 10 minutes when the Bloxwich defence parted like the Red Sea and allowed the Dudley forward to run through and pick his spot. Bloxwich then equalised on 39 minutes, when the Referee overruled the Dudley linesman who was flagging furiously for offside, and awarded a debatable equaliser. 1-1 at half-time then.

As the two teams came to the touchline to have their half-time orange segment and pep talk, we noticed that the home keeper had joined three of his friends on the far side of the pitch. After a few minutes chatting the four of them just left the ground and disappeared in to the nearby housing estate and were never seen again. This left Bloxwich without a keeper for the second half, but in truth the substitute was rarely troubled as the second half was even more dire than the first. Bloxwich eventually scored the winner on 83 minutes and with the fog getting worse we were really relieved to hear the final whistle, and get back into our warm cars and go home.