

TT No.93: *Brian Buck* - Saturday 19th January 2019; **Morecambe v Stevenage; Sky Bet League 2; Result: 1-2; Attendance: 1,422.**

Today I travelled with the Stevenage Supporters Association, as I ticked off one of my few remaining football league grounds. Unlike many of my Groundhopping friends I have never been in a rush to complete 'the 92'. Although this was a very long day it was easy, because for the most part all I had to do was sit there and I doubt if I walked more than 100 yards all day!

So, it was that the coach departed the Lamex Stadium at 8.30am, which roughly coincided with the moment I realised that I had left my sandwiches at home! There were just 25 fans on board, with two more intended passengers never showing. The journey both ways was free of traffic problems and the only issue was one passenger who never shut up during the whole journey. He must have been on a sponsored yap! Within the hour we pulled into Peterborough Services where we swapped drivers. Soon afterwards for some unexplained reason I sustained a nose bleed. I had no idea that sitting around doing nothing was so stressful! Anyway, I managed to sort that out without troubling anyone and our next pit stop was somewhere on the M62 where we encountered fans from Ipswich Town, Gateshead and of course Manchester United, this lot coming from Lincoln. Do they have any fans who actually live in Manchester? Around this time, we passed by the snow covered Saddleworth Moor.

Eventually we arrived at the ground shortly after 1.30pm and there weren't many people around. With time to kill before kick-off we went into the pub by the entrance to the ground. We wondered if we would be let in here as we expected it to be heaving with home fans. But basically, such was the local enthusiasm here it was almost empty. We still had to drink out of plastic glasses though.

Then it was time for the match. All Stevenage fans were put in the seats and our coach load were joined by another 20 fans, who had made their own way to the game. We were housed in one end of the stand, but we got a good, high, view roughly level with just outside the penalty area. I'd been to Morecambe's old Christie Park ground once before, on Tuesday 11th October 1983, when they beat Worksop Town 5-1 in front of a 250 crowd (approx.). The early 80's were my halcyon days of Groundhopping and on the previous Saturday I'd seen Wigton (on the Carlisle to Workington railway line) play in an FA Vase match. Then on the Monday I was at Easington Colliery for an early evening FA Cup 2nd Replay and the night after the Morecambe game I was at Eastwood Town. I'd done all four of these games by public transport, returning home to Cheshunt after each game.

Meanwhile back to this game and after they played 'Bring me Sunshine' by Morecambe & Wise, the game started and Stevenage had a good first half, playing as well as I've seen them play this season. However, when they went into the lead from the spot on 25 minutes one wondered if the ref had made the right decision.

Morecambe briefly came into it just before the break. In the second half it was largely the reverse of the first half. Now Morecambe piled on the pressure and when they equalised on 70 minutes with a hugely deflected shot it was well deserved. Furthermore, they had a better penalty claim turned down than the one that Stevenage were given. But Stevenage got the ball forward as much as they were allowed to and just when it seemed that a draw would be the likely outcome and rightly so, Stevenage got the winner on 90(+4) minutes when the ball was headed home from a corner. Even then Morecambe had a chance to equalise.

Afterwards we were soon all back on the coach and after stopping once we were back in Stevenage shortly after 10pm. This was a decent if tiring day out and it made a pleasant change from watching Step 7 and below football, although I'm not sure if I'd want to do this every week!

04/20