

TT No.17: *Brian Buck* - Saturday 17th August 2019; **Bottesford** v St Andrews Reserves; Everards Brewery Leicestershire Senior League Division 2; Result: 3-1; Attendance: 35 approx.

I was going to travel to this game by train, changing at Grantham and then walking the mile or so to the ground from there, but when I checked out the train times for my return journey I not only figured that I might struggle to catch the 5.14pm train, but I also noted that the next two trains, hourly, were already cancelled due to a strike. So, I decided to drive to the game instead, although later I realised that I could have got there and back by a long bus journey bus from Melton Mowbray. Anyway, since my only other visit to Bottesford, on 15 May 2004, when I saw them lose 4-0 to DH FC in a Notts Alliance Division 1 match, at their old Belvoir Road ground (att. 35 approx.), they have moved to their newish Nottingham Road ground, which is outside the western boundary of the village and completely in the countryside.

It's a rather large complex and there were at least four or five full sized pitches in it. However, the one today's game took place on was fully railed off, just ten days prior to this game, as a surprised home official told me. They also have a decent sized refreshment area here with tables and chairs. They had a 'well stocked' tea bar here as well, serving hot food. No bar though, so I had to nip back to the village centre to get my fix. The Bull was recommended, and rightly so, as it was the only pub with live TV football. I was back at the ground in good time for the start. Today was a largely sunny day with a warm wind blowing when the sun was out, but a bit chilly otherwise. I wouldn't recommend anyone to come here on a wet day, as there is no cover whatsoever, save perhaps for the overhang of the clubhouse if the wind is blowing in the right direction. But overall, this venue is a vast improvement from the recreation ground they played on in the village and they should be able to develop it without objection if and when they move up the pyramid ladder. The pitch was immaculate.

As for the game and early on it looked like the visitors might win it. But by the time Bottesford, which is actually in Leicestershire, just, took the lead on 36 minutes they were just coming into the game. An in-swinging direct free kick on 59 minutes, saw them double their lead. Then on 65 minutes St Andrews pulled a goal back. Then on 90(+1) minutes the hosts got the winner from the spot. Their keeper was taken out and needed about five minutes of treatment before he could resume. So was it really worth a St Andrews player arguing about it, and getting 'sin-binned'. The match finished almost at 5pm, so my decision to drive here was the right one. Overall an enjoyable day out, because everything was better than I expected it was going to be.