

TT No.62: Steve Hardy - Saturday 2nd November 2019; **Keele University** v Milton United; Staffordshire County League Division One; Kick-Off: 2pm; Result: 2-5; Admission: Free; Programme: No; Attendance: 10 h/c

With most of my part of the world under 2ft of rain, yet another 3G pitch was the order of the day. One that I have been trying to get to for ages is the floodlit one at Keele University, so off I went for my fifth attempt to finally tick it off. The club's *twitter* account said 'game on' before I set off, and I have been there so many times I didn't need the services of Sarah *Satnav* at all, much to her chagrin.

When I arrived, I could see players warming up on the plastic pitch, but something didn't look right. Turns out they were the University lacrosse teams who had booked the pitch earlier in the week for training. Not another wasted journey, surely? Well no, actually. The football was indeed still on, but it was on one of the many grass pitches the University has, and one that I had visited before (or was it?).

Speaking to the team's Manager it turns out that the pitch I saw a game on before had been deemed surplus to requirements a few years ago now, and had been torn up. As is always the way, the University then realised they had made a mistake, and rebuilt the pitch and surrounds in an almost identical position, so, new pitch or not?

On the pitch, it turned out to be another excellent game. The first-half was very even with the homesters taking the lead on 18 minutes. For me, the turning point of the whole game came next, when the geriatric linesman failed to spot an obvious offside and allowed the move to continue and result in a penalty for Milton on 34 minutes. They scored with aplomb and we turned around at 1-1 with the Keele lads really disappointed.

After the break it was a totally different game. Milton bossed it from start to finish, scoring two in a minute on 49 and 50 minutes, before running out 5-2 winners over a visibly deflated Keele team. Great shame that the linesman, who got several more decisions badly wrong, should have ruined what could have been a really close game.

So, another soggy day out in west Stoke, and, a sixth attempt to tick off the plastic pitch will have to be made.