

**TT No.63: *Brian Buck*** - Saturday 2nd November 2019; **Shefford Town & Campton** v Cranfield United; Beds Senior Trophy 2nd Round; Result:3-3 (Cranfield United won 4-2 on penalties); Attendance: 32.

Domestics seem to follow me around when I visit this ground. In September I was violently ill on the way to a game here and only recently have I started to feel much better. Didn't stop me watching football, including a week in Devon & Cornwall though! Today I also had problems, as two days earlier our overweight cat developed a swollen paw and my wife booked him in for a 12.30pm visit to the vets, leaving me with no time to find a new ground today. I didn't have a leg to stand on, but at least the cat had three!

So, it was off to Shefford Town & Campton to witness their first ever home 3pm kick off in November, due of course to them now having floodlights. Admission was with a slim programme and once inside the ground I was able to renew acquaintances with my friends from the Beds County League and later on all three match officials.

The ground is pleasing on the eye. On the car park side there is a stand, giving spectators a decent view of proceedings and with it was well used today. Next to it there is space for a seated stand to be put in, soonish I believe. Behind one goal there is a gentle banking. The clubhouse, offering minimal shelter from the elements and on the far is some steep banking and behind that are the remnants of the disused Hitchin to Bedford railway line, which by coincidence also banked Shefford's old ground in Ivel Road.

Last season both of today's sides were vying for the Beds County League Premier Division title, which was eventually won by Shefford, by virtue of them having a seven goal better goal difference after the sides finished level on points. So, as Shefford now play one step higher than Cranfield in SSML Division 1, they were the favourites to win today and in the first half it looked as though they might just do that. As the rain started to intensify goals on 8 and 17 minutes put them into a convincing lead. But they seemed to sit on this a bit and gradually Cranfield worked their way into the match, especially after they pulled a goal back on 21 minutes, causing a lady Cranfield fan to get rather excited. She had believed the game to be a 2pm kick off, but once she was told it was a 3pm start she announced, "We're going to have this!" Ultimately, she proved to be right and 'her' side equalised just 83 seconds into the restart. Then on 59 minutes the visitors took the lead from the spot, although had the ref been standing in the stand with us, he may not have given it. But he would have given what he saw. At this point it seemed that Cranfield would hold out, but on 87 minutes Shefford managed to equalise. So, onto penalties and Cranfield scored all four they needed to take. Shefford missed their second kick, which had to be retaken with both of the players efforts being saved and their fourth effort went wide. Overall an enjoyable afternoon out and if I ever stop travelling around the country in the

quest for new grounds to visit, this is the kind of place I'd like to come to more frequently on Saturdays. Answer? Get more cats!

04/20