

TT No.044: 07/03/05 Ground/Club Focus: *Dave Reed* - Holt Utd (Dorset Premier League) and Larkhall (Western League)

Saturday saw me driving down to Dorset with fellow traveller Ken Kenealy to take in the Dorset Premier League match between **Holt United** and Gillingham Town (4th against 5th). Holt is a small village north of Wimborne and the ground is located to the west of the village at Gaunts Common, an even smaller community so you can imagine that it was pretty rural. For this level the facilities were quite good. There is a clubhouse in the car park and entry to the ground is via a paybox behind the near goal. A nice touch here is an arch with two bull's heads (the home side are called The Bulls), rather like an entrance to a ranch. To the right at this end is an area of cover which looked quite new. On the right-hand side of the railed off pitch on the half way line is a small purpose-built erection containing both dug outs and an area for 'VIPs and officials'. On the other side appears to be the beginnings of another covered area although I did not go and investigate this. Despite the game starting in a sleet shower, the entertainment was terrific with the visitors running up a three-goal lead shortly after half time. The home side then pulled back two goals after the introduction of substitute Dan Pidgley who scored one, the other being netted by Simon Freak although his goal was anything but! With ten minutes to go Gillingham scored again but were immediately pegged back. Despite the best efforts of the home side they were unable to get the equaliser. A minimal programme, produced on a colour printer, came with the £2 admission consisting of twelve pages of adverts and team pictures. An insert with the manager's notes arrived later but there were no line ups included although these were readily obtained. (Ken did discover an old programme that had line ups printed so this appears to be a bit hit and miss). One nice advert in the programme for the Holt Stores and Post Office offered among their services - Helicopter and small aircraft flights! As neutrals we were more than satisfied with what we had seen.

Sunday saw me in a carload heading for **Larkhall** and their game against Saltash, played today because the home side's reserves had played in a Somerset Senior Cup Semi-Final on Saturday (which they unfortunately lost). The visitors got held up on their long trip up from Cornwall and so the kick off was delayed by fifteen minutes. It was a return trip for me to Larkhall and since last year the pitch has been levelled and floodlights installed.

The visitors, especially their defence, seemed to have left their legs behind in Cornwall as the home side rattled up a three-goal lead by the 24th minute. Saltash also had a few chances and managed to pull a goal back but fell three behind again after 35 minutes. They were much tighter at the back in the second half but still managed to concede a further two goals to go down 6-1. The win took the home side up to third in the table and they must now be in with a chance of promotion.

The 50p programme consisted of 20 pages of adverts interspersed with up to date news, tables and results including a report on yesterday's game.

If you have not been there, Larkhall is well worth a visit especially on a fine day with great views over the surrounding countryside and the city of Bath. However, be warned, the ground is at the top of a very steep hill!!

03/20