

**TT No.045: 07/03/05 Ground/Club Focus: *Barry Neighbour* - Shepton Mallet (Western League 1)**

With Brentford having ended their FA Cup adventures it was back to Non-League for me on Saturday and a visit to Western League basement side Shepton Mallet AFC. Picking up my fellow travellers Alan Gulliford and Gerry McGill at Basingstoke station it was a pleasant drive down the A303 and A36 to Shepton Mallet. Having found the ground we were amused by the board near the gate stating 'No Bicycles or Footballs allowed on the pitch', which might explain Shepton Mallet's position at the foot of the table! A trip into town found us in The Bell pub which served Real Ales and a good value meal which travellers really should try out. The King William pub at the foot of the Hill also served Real Ales. Back at the ground saw more confusion as they displayed the admission price list for the Somerset League side; I thought they were charging £2 for the programme instead this was included in the £4 admission price and was more than adequate with 32 pages and a bright cover. The ground has a decent size stand down one side and covered accommodation on the other side (which looks like converted Cattle Trucks). Still this was a lot better than nothing at all including a few local clubs I can think of. With Shepton rooted firmly to the bottom we expected a few goals from 8th placed Clevedon United but chances were wasted by both sides and the points were decided by a first half penalty after the home 'keeper hauled down a Clevedon player in the area. The keeper escaped any further punishment but ironically it was the Clevedon keeper who was booked 5 minutes later for a foul outside the area. The quality was missing but with both teams as bad as each other, an even contest ensued to entertain a healthy crowd of around 70.

03/20