

FEBRUARY 1976: FIRST NOTES WRITTEN

Swaythling 2-0 Fleet Town

SWAYTHLING
1 Malcolm Harris
2 Bill Ragan
3 Ian Knight
4 Colin Hill
5 Ken Brady
6 Mel Davolls
7 Phil Birks
8 Ray Deane
9 Roy King
10 Terry Rawlins
11 John Tull
12 Ray Light (used)

Venue	Ten Acres, Eastleigh
Date	Wednesday, 25th February 1976
Competition	Russell-Cotes Cup Round 1
Referee	Mr David Letts (Basingstoke)
Attendance	Not recorded

Match Details			
37'	1-0	Hill (1)	
85'	2-0	Hill (2)	

FLEET TOWN (unconfirmed)
1 T Rockett
2 R Cox
3 P Jordan
4 M Youldon
5 T Robinson
6 I Churchman
7 I McCoubrie
8 A Windiate
9 M Clarke
10 R Stratton
11 P Simpson
12 A Devereux (used)

THIS was match number 242 in my records and a most significant one too. The match, in the Russell-Cotes Cup (a county cup competition which contributes to the Hampshire Football Association Benevolent fund) was a most decent one between Swaythling and Fleet Town, who were both from the Hampshire League Division 1.

The most significant event actually occurred when I'd got home! Ten Acres was a rather awkward walk from my parents home back then, taking about thirty minutes in all. It wasn't too bad until reaching Stoneham Lane itself as walking from the Swaythling shops towards the ground there was a path along the lane, at least until you'd walked a little way beyond the BTC Ground when there was still around ten minutes more walking to do. It was a real 'take your life in your hands' sort of trek from there, with no footpath and a very narrow lane and an 'evil' sharp bend which was particularly treacherous and dark when attending evening games. Anyway, yes I made it home and sat down and had a sudden thought: "I would like to remember that match, but how could I do it?"

Yes, swift action was taken! I got a piece of paper and put down my thoughts. Bingo! My first ever match report!

Here is what was written that evening (with spelling errors corrected to save embarrassment!):

Swaythling skipper Colin Hill put his side in the Second Round of the Russell-Cotes Cup with two well taken goals but Fleet can say they were unlucky to go out.

Two evenly matched sides fought out a midfield battle in the first half with Ian Churchman most prominent for Fleet, while Terry Rawlins and winger John Tull looked impressive for the home side. Swaythling went ahead through a Colin Hill goal about eight minutes before half-time, a well-placed shot wide of Rockett in the Fleet goal.

In the second half Fleet, urged on by sections of the crowd, really pressed for an equaliser, and to many of the crowd it was coming any time, but unfortunately they missed chances. Swaythling took off their star player Rawlins and Ray Light, another forward, came on. Swaythling improved, Deane, with an open goal, unfortunately caught an awkward bounce and the ball hit him on the knee and came off a post.

Light, in fact, had a hand in Hill's second goal, which came less than five minutes from time. Fleet were pressing for extra time and the ball was cleared. A terrible back pass was seized on by Light who unselfishly pulled it back, Deane's mishit shot ran to Hill right on the line and he eventually controlled it and still had time to tap it over the line. Fleet's best player Churchman went off with cramp, to give substitute Devereux about thirty seconds to play.

I walked along Stoneham Lane recently (written in June 2022) and it now has a footpath leading up to the ground!! Looking back over all those years, my first effort in writing a match report wasn't too bad in the end!