

Supporters step into handsome ground

**Report by
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ONE way traffic might have been evident on the pitch on Thursday, as Wanderers bravely defended their goal against Cloughie's men, but Adams Park also experienced traffic of a rather more irritating kind on its opening night.

The club is moving into the twentieth century but for many Adams Park debutantes time stood still as they waited patiently in their cars, inching forward at a snail's pace towards the distant floodlights with kick-off time fast approaching.

Most were inside within ten minutes of the start, although it might have been appreciated if Mark West could have held on a few moments more to allow the late-comers a view of the first Blues goal in the new stadium.

Fortunately it did not detract from the occasion.

"You can't expect everything to be alright on the night, can you," said long-time support Brian Sims, 56, who also pointed out the total inaudibility of the tannoy system.

Like many keen Blues fans he has kept in touch with the development of the site in Sands and echoed the feelings of most when he said: "It's my fourth visit here and I'm very pleased. The ground is a credit to the town."

In certain respects Adams Park could not be further removed from that which was left behind. Out goes the famous Loakes Park clock and in comes a new digital scoreboard. The days when fans could swap ends at half-time also seem to be at an end — the face of modern football, alas. And who can forget that infamous slope?

Of course it won't be easy to recreate the homely Loakes Park atmosphere. The nostalgia for the Wanderers' old home of over one hundred years is only natural.

"I miss the cowshed and the old turnstiles," laughed Pay Brooks, 57, who has been following the Blues for over forty years and now brings along not only her son, Philip, but also her seven-year-old grandson, Duane.

On Thursday's evidence, however, it will only be a short time before Adams Park is buzzing not only with history but with anticipation.

"Loakes Park was nice and homely but it wasn't sufficient for League football," claimed Tony Serne, 48, at the match with his thirteen-year-old son Richard. "This is marching on into the future."
