

08/02/06 TT No.173: Mike Latham - Biddulph Victoria (Midland Football Alliance)

Tuesday 7 Feb 2006. Harvey World Travel Midland Football Alliance: Biddulph Victoria 5-0 Causeway United. Attendance: 60est; Admission: £4; 44pp programme: £1; FGIF Match Rating: 3*.

Heavy rain on the M6 motorway and on the approach road to Biddulph through Congleton from J17 was hardly the best preparation for a rare foray into the Midland Alliance but any negative thoughts about the wisdom of spending a Tuesday evening in the straggling Staffordshire town were soon dispelled.

A warm welcome at the gate, a friendly official only too please to give out the team line-ups (after encountering a wall of secrecy at recent visits to other clubs this was a welcome change) and an excellent pint of Ruddles County on handpump in the clubhouse raised the spirits.

The Vic's produce an excellent 44-page programme full of interesting reports, historical articles and statistics that is a credit to editor John Shenton and this helped pass the time before kick-off on a rain soaked though relatively mild evening.

Sharing their facilities with the cricket club, the football ground is effectively three-sided with a white post and rail fence around the perimeter of the pitch. The only cover is a bench seated stand behind the nearside goal with a capacity, according to the programme, of 224. The overall ground capacity is 1,075 though this mark was never going to be tested for this game.

The cricket ground boasts an imposing black and white pavilion and a distinctive scoreboard and was the venue for a couple of Derbyshire county games in the 1980s in the Sunday League. There is a club house shared by the cricket and football clubs and behind the far goal is an all-weather floodlit pitch.

Formerly known as Knypersley Vics before changing their name in 2002 the Vic's are a friendly club and boast an excellent tea bar where the pie and peas come heartily recommended. The dressing rooms and committee room are also located behind the nearside goal.

With the weather so poor all but a handful of the spectators gathered in the covered stand and saw the homesters earn a convincing victory. After going in 1-0 ahead at the break they added four more in the second half. The game was played in a good spirit and was splendidly refereed by Bolton official Mr Siddall.

On a sunny afternoon the Tunstall Road ground would be a splendid place to watch a decent standard of football and even on a miserably wet evening in deep winter it was good to be out and about. A visit here is a rewarding one.

