

TT No.202: Paul Roth - Saturday 25th March 2006; Maine Road vs. Alsager; NWCL Prem Div. Res: 1-0; Attendance: 57; Entry: £5; Programme: 72 pages £1.

A weekend away in the Peak District and Saturday sightseeing with my wife in Manchester gave me the opportunity to visit somewhere I wouldn't usually be able to get to from my home in Margate on a normal Saturday. So with the missus entrenched in the Trafford Centre I caught the No.23 bus over to Chorlton-Cum-Hardy where Maine Road FC are based. Their home fixture versus Alsager looked a good bet on paper, as the visitors are challenging for the title and Maine Road themselves are quite highly placed in the table.

Chorlton is an unremarkable satellite town about six miles west of the city centre, save from my viewpoint as a Real Ale fan, having two superb pubs, The Bar and the Marble Brew House both being owned by the Marble Brewery itself. This is a totally organic set up and a couple of the beers I tasted were quite unique. They have four pubs in all in the Greater Manchester area and later that evening we had a tasty meal in the Knott, nearer the city centre.

Enough of pubs, but I will mention that The Marble Brew House on the Manchester Road lies opposite Brantingham Road where the ground is situated. This is a long road and it took me nearly fifteen minutes' walk to eventually arrive at the entrance which is located at the back of a spacious car park.

The club was founded in 1955 by a group of Manchester City fans, hence the name, and a lot of the fixtures and fittings therein are painted in the famous sky blue of their more illustrious neighbours. I paid the fiver entry and £1 for the massive 72-page programme, the largest volume I have had this season and a very decent effort to boot, full of everything and more to enhance my afternoon's enjoyment. I had a quick drink in the gloomy clubhouse where not even a bag of crisps was available, and a pie from the catering caravan situated outside. The ground has, I would guess not had anything much done to it in years, except for the addition of floodlights. There is a long main stand that runs the length of the right-hand side as you enter from behind the goal at the Brantingham road end and this incorporates fifty or so tip up seats as well as standing room. Across from this structure on the other side of the ground there are two smaller stands, one of which houses some very dilapidated tip up seats, the other for standing spectators only. Both ends behind the goals are uncovered. Hard standing is all round but the place really could do with a lick of that sky-blue paint. Saying that, I really liked the old-fashioned feel of the place.

The match was a close affair with Maine Road scoring the only goal of the game after 9 mins from a tap in at the far post by their no.8, Yates. They did also contrive to miss a penalty late on in the game which would have allayed the jitters they suffered as Alsager did their best to equalise in the closing seconds.

At the final whistle I retraced my long walk back to town and bussed it back to the Trafford Centre where the wife was patiently awaiting my return.

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