

18/10/05 TT No.73: Mike Latham - Worcester City (Conference North)

Mon 17 Oct 2005, Conference North - Worcester City 0-1 Nuneaton Borough (att.- 922)

Worcester City's St George's Lane home is an increasingly rare example of a traditional football ground situated close to the city centre and surrounded by housing and narrow lanes and roads. Set to be developed into housing by Miller Homes the message to travellers is 'tick it off while you can' as the football club investigate two planned locations for a new ground, including rumours of a ground-share with the rugby club at Sixways close to the M5 junction six.

On a mild autumnal evening the St George's Lane ground, City's home since 1905, looked at its best- the glare of its floodlights apparent from a distance away and helping guide a way through the maze of tightly packed streets that lead to the ground from the A38 north of the city centre. With no carpark there is only street parking and latecomers can have a frustrating time searching for a space.

With an impressively ornate gate emblazoned with the initials 'WCFC' the entrance gives the immediate impression the traveller is entering a ground of some substance and there are plenty of welcoming signs. A well-stocked club shop is situated by the entrance.

Once inside the ground is dominated by the main stand that runs lengthways down the nearside touchline and which has a small paddock in front. The other three sides are terraced with a spectacular cover, known as the Cowshed, in the far corner. The old seated stand that straddled the halfway line on this side was demolished due to ground safety regulations. Unusually, the dressing rooms are housed in a two-storey building in the nearside corner.

Surrounded by mature trees the ground, particularly for an evening game, has a tremendous feel to it and a decent crowd contributed to the atmosphere. It was one of those games that favoured the side on the up- second placed Nuneaton securing the points with a well-taken goal just after the half-hour mark and Worcester, struggling near the bottom, looking at least their equals with a neat passing style but failing to convert several half chances. Despite their struggles on the pitch the home fans were very supportive and there was no apparent barracking.

A 32-page full colour programme, containing all the basic material but short on editorial compared to many others the writer has seen recently, was £2 and the £8 admission was good value for the interesting game on view. With the ability to move around the ground and go in the stand from the terrace below there was the chance to view the game from a number of vantage points and the two sets of fans were able to change ends at half-time. A visit to St George's Lane comes highly recommended. Match rating: 4*.

