

TT No.258: *Dean McClean* - Saturday 12th May 20007. Western League Premier Division: **Bristol Manor Farm** v Street; Result: 2-1; Attendance: 40; Admission; £4; Programme: 44pp, £1; FGIF Match Rating: 4*.

As the season's football fixtures continue to dwindle with every passing day, this was a great chance to visit one of the few Step 5 teams left on the fixture list. My initial plans of taking in some Cricket had been scuppered by the wet weather, this trip to Bristol proved an inspired one.

The Creek, is easily reached via the M5. From J18 by taking the A4 toward Bristol City Centre. After around a mile you pass the ground on your right-hand side, but as it is on a dual carriage way, you have to do a U-turn at Bristol & West Sports Club, and come back on yourself.

Manor Farm moved here in the late 1960s, when they took over the venue, which was the site of the Port of Bristol Authority S&SC. This move allowed the club to successfully apply for the Somerset Senior League, where they rose rapidly through the divisions and eventually joined the Western League in 1977. Since the club moved here in the late 60s, many improvements have been made to the ground including: three new stands and new floodlights, along with a large club house.

On entering the ground, you are in an elevated position and the slope towards the river is quite pronounced. To your left is a white building that is used as the changing blocks for the players and officials. Further along on your left are two small identikit stands (very original), the first of which is just a terrace (apart from the array of bar chairs), whilst the stand further along has around 50 seats painted in the club colours of black & white. On the far side is a covered terrace that has clearly seen better days; in fact, the near side of the ground is in smart condition, whilst the far seems rather tatty and in need of some work. It's as if nobody would venture over to the far side, so nobody will notice. A high net is needed on three sides of the ground as it is hemmed in by the River Avon and the busy A4. I'm sorry to report that there wasn't a willing helper in a dingy ready and waiting to fish the ball out of the river when needed! A striking feature to the ground is that it has an amazing five mobile phone masts-surely that is a handy income to the club.

A 40pp programme was issued for the average price of £1. It was fairly average for this level with the standard fixtures, results and tables etc. The "Chairman's Chatter" was an informed and well written article which thanked everybody except the man next door.

This game was excellent, for an end of season encounter anyway. A well grassed pitch obviously helped the players. Visitors Street took the lead midway through the half with a stunning strike from 30 yards. This only seemed to galvanise the hosts as they dominated the rest of the half and deservedly equalised just before half-time. In an even second half it was Manor Farm who grabbed all three points in a well contested match, played in a good spirit.

An excellent day out - a trip to Bristol Manor Farm comes recommended.

06/20