

TT No.114: *Dean McClean* - Tues 13th November 2007. Midland F/ball Alliance: **Studley** v Loughborough Dynamo Res: 1-0; Att: 69; Admission: £5; 20pp programme: £1. FGIF Match Rating: 2*.

With very few (floodlit) grounds within a 100-mile radius from home to tick off, it is becoming increasingly difficult for my fellow traveller and I to tick off a new ground in the midweek winter months. Studley being 130 miles from home, this was further than we would normally go in midweek.

I'd like to say it was worth the effort. However, overall, the trip wasn't quite as rewarding as one would have hoped. The bitterly cold weather added to by a strong northerly wind on an open ground with minimum shelter, did little to inspire. And neither did the game-an insipid contest, where passing the ball on the ground appeared to be an alien concept. Amazingly, Loughborough are perched atop of the Midland Alliance, four points clear and with a game in hand, although it would be easy to imagine that the table had unwittingly been printed upside down. After watching Northern League side Consett produce an exceptional display of passing football only three days previous, this match was a shock to the system. The first half was instantly forgettable, indeed an elderly gentleman standing in front of me, enquired "what time does the match start", 5 minutes before half-time! Thankfully, the second period improved and the dreaded goalless draw was avoided, as the home side grabbed an unlikely victory with, not surprisingly, a scrappy goal late in the game.

The Beehive, Studley's home, is very easy to get to by car; the A435 passes the ground and you simply cannot miss it, believe me. It was an irony that the home team's ground is named this, when it was the visitors, all decked out in Orange and Black, who would have suited the name better!

As mentioned above, the ground really is open to the elements. The entrance is between the clubhouse and the small stand, where £6 is handed over for my admission and excellent programme, which with only 20 pages, is rather thin but overall, it is a decent effort. Full colour and very presentable. On your right is the large, almost refurbished, clubhouse. This incorporates the changing rooms and rather basic tea bar, that serves tea, coffee, hot chocolate and delicious pasties. In fact, there is currently two bars here, so going thirsty isn't an option. A small, rather ram shackled covered stand provides the only shelter; with ample posts obstructing one's view and no elevated seating, the view from here is very poor. So, it's shelter and have a poor view, or brave the elements and improve your view. The rest of the venue is just hard standing, whilst two further pitches sprawl out in the distance and ground isn't enclosed at all on 3 sides.