

**TT No.52: Barry Neighbour - Early Season Hopping Travels (Part Two)**

The second part of my Groundhopping holiday - Monday 27th August to Sunday 2nd September 2007...

Monday 27th August 2007

My wife and I travelled north and took the M40 to Birmingham. We went to watch the Conference North game - **Redditch United 0 Nuneaton Borough 0**. A colourful 40-page programme sold for £2. Both sides cancelled each other out as they settled for a point. After the game it was a short drive for an evening kick off for **Droitwich Spa 3 Burntwood Town 0**. A 16-page programme was issued for 50p with badges at £2.50 (a real bonus at this level). The ground is down a lane at the side of Droitwich Sports Centre.

They have erected a small covered area on the far side. A friendly little club who were always in control of this Midland Combination Division 1 game. We spent the night in Sutton Coldfield before setting off to our Manchester base.

Tuesday 28th August

Along the M60/M66 for the League Cup game - **Burnley 3 Oldham Athletic 0**. We parked in the adjacent Burnley Cricket Club where drinks and hot food were being served in the clubhouse. Oldham were 'all over' Burnley in the first half and can count themselves unlucky to go in at the break a goal down. The second half went the same way with Oldham continuing to waste their chances until Burnley doubled their advantage midway through the period. A third Burnley goal on the stroke of full time did not do Oldham any justice whatsoever although maybe a harsh lesson was learnt that it is goals that count!

Wednesday 29th August

A break from football as we spent the day in Manchester City centre before going to see Belle Vue Speedway against my local side, Reading Racers. 4 5-1`s in the first six heats put the match beyond Reading with the home side running out 56-37 winners.

Friday 31st August

Saw a change of sport as we went to watch St Helens Rigby League against Harlequins. Quins kept the score down to 12-10 at half time before St Helens stretched the lead to 32-10 by the final whistle.

Saturday 1st September 2007

This was to be the highlight of the week with a visit to Gigg Lane. **Bury 1 Brentford 2**. As a big Bees fan, it is always great to see your team win especially away from home. This was my first ever visit to Bury and I thought they had a nice little set

up with the stadium looking a lot smarter than I had imagined; what a pity they cannot fill it. With only about 2000 Bury supporters the atmosphere was not great. The 68-page programme at £2.50 was a good read. As for the game, The Bees took a deserved lead with a brilliant free kick from Glen Poole and held onto it until the break. Within 10 seconds of the restart Bury were level without a Brentford player touching the ball. Bees teenage striker Charlie Ide left the pitch due to injury eventually being replaced by Ricky Shakes who was making his debut. He celebrated by firing home the winner seven minutes from time, much to the delight of the travelling Bees fans. After the game we travelled back down to Tamworth for an overnight stop.

Sunday 2nd September

A bit of a bonus game as **Causeway United** were home to Westfields in the FA Cup. Checking in my new *Cherry Red Non-League Yearbook* I saw that Causeway were ground-sharing at Tividale. On arrival at the ground we were informed that they were now playing at **Stourbridge** which was about 8 miles away. Not a real problem for me as I had not visited either before. A 20-page programme sold for £1. After a dour first-half the ref livened things up by awarding the visitors a penalty which they failed to convert. Five minutes later he awarded another penalty this time to the home side which they duly converted to make it 1-0. Causeway then had a player sent off and Westfields threw everything at them eventually gaining their reward three minutes from time when the ball was headed in at the far post. The game went to a replay which Causeway won 3-1 to progress. A great week's holiday saw 12 new grounds plus Speedway at Belle Vue and Rugby League at St Helens. My wife enjoyed the footie and the speedway but was not so keen on the rugby league! I am already looking forward to next season's fixtures coming out so I can plan another trip!!

06/20