

TT No.9: *Richard Panter* - Sat 11th August 2007; **Alvechurch** v Loughborough Dynamo; Midland Alliance; Result: 2-1; Attendance: 76; Programme: 48 pp £1; Match rating: 3*.

On a rare Saturday which initially saw both my son Tom and me off work on the same day we decided to visit Vauxhall Motors. However, the CWU called off suspended postal strike action so we had to plod the mean streets of Loughborough and time constraints meant a visit to a more local venue. Then the boy's car developed an electrical fault so he was left out of the squad in order to sort it out. This is how I arrived at Alvechurch. Lye Meadow is located (for me) an hour or so around the M42 at junction 2, following the A441 Redditch bound take the first island, then follow signs for Alvechurch, the ground is then a mile and a half on the right, very simple indeed.

I had been told that what Lye Meadow lacked in quality it made up for in scenery. On entering the ground through a solitary turnstile, I noticed a row of poplars behind the far goal and a venerable Oak tree was to the right of the stand. Very verdant, very English, but hardly spectacular though. Anyhow, I took a couple of pictures of the stand and clubhouse complex and wandered around the ground to the left and when I reached the touchline I was staggered by the vista on offer. Rolling hills recently harvested for hay, or grazed by sheep, capped by deciduous woodland stretched along the entire eastern boundary of the ground, breathtakingly magnificent in the brilliant summer sunshine. The main A441 was just behind the ground and cut its way unobtrusively through such scenic beauty.

The earlier mentioned main stand is functional and large for a level five club, there is concrete hard standing all around the pitch. A cosy clubhouse complex felt strange, almost alien when I walked in. Not because it was one of those isolated country drinkers where all the locals stop their conversations and drinking and stare at the intruder, it was most friendly, no, I could see across the room, furthermore I could breathe in the air quite well...there were no smokers whatsoever. The national smoking ban has been imposed during the close season and the good folks of Alvechurch respected this (to me) sensible legislation. We found a burger and drinks wagon was situated outside this multi-purpose building. Meandering to the far goal there is evidence of the club's former glory times. The concrete base for an earlier covered area remains, the above ground infrastructure having long gone. I would readily challenge the comment that the ground 'lacked quality' if I could remember who had made it to me!

I watch Loughborough Dynamo on a semi regular basis but couldn't actually say I support them. They have the good sense to play some three miles from my home and on working weekdays when I have to be up at three or four the next day three miles is just right. A further attraction is that they generally play attractive attacking football and a goalless game is as rare as a smoker in a football clubhouse nowadays. Furthermore, their pre-season matches have found the club

in excellent form, the hosts I knew little about bar their proud history. By kick-off my spine was tingling in anticipation.

Alvechurch were to giving the Dynamo defence a torrid time with their pace, movement and the way they used all of the pitch. Their forward line came in a variety of shapes and sizes and number Loughborough were unable to begin, let alone maintain any form of mention. Midway through the opening half Lee Chilton twisted and turned the visiting defence and deftly placed the ball to the right Matt Nurse to open the scoring. No more than Church deserved. Dynamo were level in the thirty-seventh minute after a calamitous mix up in the home defence. The 'keeper gave his defender a 'leave it' shout which he did, said custodian then performed a subtle air-shot which allowed the ball to drop to a Dynamo forward who ran on for a tap in to equalise. The second half saw Loughborough unable to cope with the notorious Lye Meadow slope, equally Alvechurch kept up their attacking pressure which the visitors were generally able to repel thanks mostly to some fine and commanding goal-keeping. The deserved winner arrived in the seventy-sixth minute and came inevitably from Chilton once more. A neat flicked ball fell at his feet, he took it wide and once more gave Nurse no chance with. On this performance the diminutive Lee Chilton deserves a prolonged chance at a higher level, he is quick, agile, well balanced and very alert. It is a treat to see a player with but one intent, to have a pop at goal.

Finally, a mention for 'The Official Alvechurch News & Record' sold for £1. It was 48 pages and packed with statistics, results, cartoons, news and history. Editor Alan Deakin does an excellent job.

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