

TT No.115: *Richard Panter* - Sat 27th Dec 2008; **Bury Town** v Soham Town Rangers; Southern League Midlands Division; Score: 5 - 0; Att: 379; Entry: £7; Programme: 52pp £1.50; Match rating: 3 stars.

Decisions, decisions. It was one of those Saturdays when Loughborough Dynamo were inactive, as they had played on Boxing Day, so the world was my lobster to quote Arthur Daley. With my son in tow I only had to drive one way so the decision was taken to make a debut visit to Bury Town. Inexplicably, it was also the first time I had watched a match in Suffolk. The Southern League as a whole is no stranger in these parts, indeed, the last SLM fixture I saw was on the previous Tuesday when Sutton Coldfield and Leamington shared six goals in a rip-roaring pre-Christmas feast. Out of the three level four leagues I personally enjoy Southern League matches the most...

The 119 mile journey took a little over two hours due to heavy traffic on the A14 approaching Cambridge, then it took us a while to find the ground but we eventually pulled up outside and fed the parking meter on Ram Meadow with £1.30 then paid our £7.00 entry fee and took a brisk walk around the ground. Ram Meadow created a good first impression which was enhanced with the stroll around.

Covered terracing lies behind each goal. The scenery behind each of these solid little structures could not be more contrasting. The market towns church stands in an elevated position behind the car park end terrace. The other goal line is framed by a sugar beet factory which belched out what looked like the grime and industrial pollution associated with Dickensian times, although I suspect this was in reality the relatively benign by-product of steam.

The main stand is a unique building with a sloping roof which slopes upwards not downwards and would afford little if any protection for those in the posh seats in stormier times. A lean too cover stretches out from the clubhouse, and the club have thoughtfully provided a space for any disabled fans in this area. There is also a long low covered stand opposite the main stand side. This contains two rows of comfortable looking bench seats, although the rear row requires a little effort to mount!

The large clubhouse did good business as did the club shop, a badge retailing for the now standard price of £3. The snack bar was located outside on the edge of this building and a Bovril, coffee and tray of chips cost a reasonable £2. Further expenditure came in the form of the rather good programme, well filled with statistics, reports, comment and most pleasing of all to me, club history, £1.50 well spent for this neat, tidy and well-presented issue.

On this bright but decidedly cold December afternoon, Bury Town were in control of things on the pitch almost from the word go. Going two up after twenty minutes meant that Rangers were out of it early on. Three more strikes after the break

were simply icing on the cake for the home side. As we saw things none of the goals were down to 'keeper errors, and Lea Jordan in the visiting goal was awarded the Panter Man of the Match award for a string of outstanding saves. Talking of goal keepers, I picked up a team sheet in the bar and noticed a veritable skein of Greygoose's or should this be Greygeese? Dean Greygoose, the former Crewe Alexander custodian, who I remember from a magnificent display at Quorn in the FA Vase a few years back, was on the bench for Bury. His son, Sean was in a similar position on the Soham Town Rangers bench.

A fine afternoon in rural Suffolk.

06/20