

TT No.173: *Richard Panter* - Thursday 12th March 2009; **Leverstock Green v Chalfont St Peter**; Molten Spartan South Midlands League; Score: 3-3; Entry: £5; Att: 32; Programme: 44pp, £1; Match rating: 5*.

Due to both teams lagging behind somewhat in the games played column of the South Midland League this match was somewhat unusually played on a Thursday evening. As it was my day off the following day, I opted for this 92-mile southward journey down the M1. I made a similar journey sixteen days previously by visiting Hemel Hempstead Town's Vauxhall Road home and noticed Leverstock Road in the town at this time and it stuck in my vacuous memory.

Green's play on Pancake Lane, a mere one mile from M1 junction 8, although it feels that you are actually well into the sticks. The ground has little to enthuse about in all honesty. The only cover is a lean to which abuts the clubhouse complex, there are a handful of benches and a few green plastic seats under here. Hard standing runs the entire side of the pitch here. There do seem to be plans afoot as on a notice board inside the social club there is a draft of a proposed new stand at the venue, no prizes for guessing which type it is though! The floodlights are a real curio. To secure planning permission these had to be of the lower able type. When not in use, three of the four pylons are reduced by half in height and laid on top of an aluminium cradle. A neat and tidy, not to mention rapid solution to this problem.

The pitch itself lies amid a vast railed off area, the southern goal liner being about 25 yards from the goal line. The dugouts are opposite the stand. These are constructed out of UPVC and are rather conservatory like in appearance. The home one proudly has the club's name in bright green on it, along with a garden bench seat for extra comfort! The away kennel bears the welcoming legend 'our guests', again picked out in bright green. Neat, tidy, spacious and functional are all suitable adjectives to use when describing Pancake Lane.

Vase semi-finalists Chalfont St Peter lined up for the 7.30 kick off in yellow tops, black shorts and three types of socks! Leverstock Green wore their regular white and green combination. My last two level five matches have been abysmal scoreless draws at Barwell and Arnold, level five football had taken a real nose dive recently so when Green's Dave (Bullet) Parkinson missed two good early opportunities I feared the worst. However, 'Bullet' soon made amends when he lobbed the ball home from fully thirty yards. This was the finest goal I have seen for many a season, absolutely brilliant. Just before the half hour mark, he netted again after running virtually the entire length of the Chalfont half and coolly netting to the side of the despairing 'keeper. Bullets co-striker James Armstrong made it three after a rugged shoulder charge won him the chance to net, which he did with some style. Ironically it was the visitors who played the better football, but this had no cutting edge, the home side had plenty of this quality in the first period.

St Peter clearly had the key to unlock the home defence in the second half. A bold move saw the introduction of two substitutes immediately after the break. Chalfont began to pile on the pressure. They scrambled back into the game after ten minutes and just after the hour Barry Brosnan put in his application for goal of the season. Brosnan rotated some 180 degrees to volley home from outside the box in spectacular fashion. Leverstock had by now lost much of their composure and simply resorted to punting the ball up field. It was no surprise when another volley saw the points rightly shared although Bullet did have a one on one very late on but the visiting custodian smothered his effort.

So ended a fine football match, plenty of end to end attacking, a high level of skill and ball control, six excellent goals and some fine goal keeping from both sides, what a pity there were only 36 there to see it.

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