

**TT No.174: Ian Hill** - Sunday 1st March 2009: **VC Eendracht Aalst** v Racing Waregem: Belgian Division 3A: Res: 3-2: Attendance: 1200 approx.; Admission: 8 euros; Programme: (32pp A5), 2 euros; Match Rating: 4\*.

VC Eendracht Aalst are based in the Belgian East Flanders town of Aalst. They were formed in 2002 from the remnants of the old Jupiler League club KSC Eendracht Aalst. As the old club went bankrupt the new club had to start life in the 3rd division. They have had two seasons in the 2nd division but are currently back in the 3rd. I travelled from Brussels to the game, which, takes about half an hour by train.

The town of Aalst is very dull and there is nothing much to say about it. I had downloaded a map from the town's website but for some reason I lost my bearings completely after leaving the station. After a big walk round in a circle I managed to find a large map displayed on the side of a street and eventually found out where I was. I did have to wait my turn though as two race cyclists for some reason had also lost their way.

After getting my directions sorted out the ground is about 15-20 minutes from the railway station with most of the journey along the side of a canal. The floodlights are visible as you get near to the ground and three bars (one called Wembley) back onto the main stand at the Pierre Cornelisstadion. The Pierre Cornelisstadion is located in Bredestraat and has 3500 seats and 4000 standing places. It also has Business Seats.

A very nice programme is produced for games but it is hard to find them on sale. I was lucky as it appears that the club's youth team players are sent around the bars outside the ground to sell them. I was offered one for sale by a group of five 10-year olds coming out of "the Wembley". I'm sure they ripped me off charging me 2 euros for one but I can't complain as I didn't see them for sale anywhere else.

The ground is a three sided one with one end behind a goal sacrificed for advertising hoardings. The opposite goal has a small seated stand with a clubhouse on top with some rows of seating in front of it. The all seater main stand dominates one side of the ground with a covered terrace opposite. Outside the ground a flight of stairs at the back of the main stand takes you to a bar, the club offices and club shop.

I purchased an 8 Euros standing ticket. The terraced stand is very quirky and would not be out of place in the "Fenland" area of England. The back of it is sectioned off by all different types of portable fencing, improvised bits of tarpaulin are used to stop you peeping through, gravel paths form pathways, overgrown grassed areas abound and various sheds and portable buildings are used. Two of the buildings, act as bars with urinals fastened onto the back wall of one of them - different. Underneath the stand are various refreshment and drink outlets but access to them has been bricked off for some reason.

This was a strange game against neighbours Racing Waregem. A game that had Eendracht, (I should call them by their proper nickname - "The Onions",) behind all game but finishing in dramatic fashion with the home side winning 3-2. The supporters on the terrace really get behind their side and it is a loud vociferous support. The louder they got the more the referee's performance deteriorated. This spectacle made for a great entertainment and after the winner in the 94th minute you would have thought they had won a cup final. The players were hugging supporters, shirts were thrown into the crowd and the crowd was silenced as the players sang them a song - unbelievable.

This built up to a great day out. Although most of the ground seems quite modern, it is quirky in parts and the pitch does slope dramatically down to one corner. There is Mr Onion the club mascot and the atmosphere, is great. A visit does come recommended.

06/20