

TT No.33: *Mike Latham* - Sat 6 September 2008: Cheshire League Division 2; **Tarporley Vics v Eagle Sports**; Result: 3-2; Admission/Programme: N/A; Attendance: 30 (h/c).

It may be only the first Saturday in September but the local cricket programme has been decimated by the rain and football games are also falling left, right and centre with few survivors at a local level in Lancashire or Cumbria.

So, it was with something of a surprise that a check phone call to Tarporley Vics had a positive reply- and with no further messing I set off to deepest Cheshire.

The Cheshire League has two divisions, a well administered website and can generally be relied upon to provide decent football, usually in pleasant surroundings. That was certainly the case this afternoon.

Tarporley Vics moved into the league in 2006 after playing in the Chester & District League. As a consequence, they had to leave their own ground and move several miles away to the beautiful village of Tattenhall, nestling deep in some spectacular Cheshire countryside.

Tattenhall is eight miles south-east of Chester and was established before the Norman Conquest. The Tattenhall Recreation Club is part of the Bolesworth Estate owned by the Barbour family.

There is a beautifully maintained cricket ground with sweeping views of open countryside and a well-appointed pavilion. The footballers change in the pavilion and then make their way to the roped-off football pitch, a superbly maintained, slightly sloping surface that looked in immaculate condition despite the recent downpours.

The facilities are minimal, save for a couple of dug-outs but this is a beautiful tranquil setting to watch a decent standard of football. The pitch is lined by mature trees that act as a windshield and provide a vantage from scattered showers.

Surprisingly, given that the Vics club has a good website, there is no programme issued and no one bothers to come around the assembled throng to collect any donations towards match expenses. At half-time a cheerful cricket club official dispenses cups of tea in exchange for a donation. The cricket match has been cancelled due to the weather but in retrospect that may have been a premature decision and a strong breeze and sun have dried the ground splendidly.

Vics won a well contested game 3-2, taking a 2-0 half-time lead with a header from their centre forward and a second just before the break. But Eagle Sports fought back through an own goal and a header before the home number nine scored what proved to be the winner on the hour-mark.

Only a handful of Cheshire League games had escaped the rain but I was glad this one had- Tarporley Vics' home is a very pleasant and civilised place to watch football and the locals are friendly. It's no use for those that require a programme to supplement their afternoon but the lack of programmes has never bothered me as I regard them as a bonus not a necessity.

06/20