

TT No.226: Keith Aslan - Sat 17th April 2010; **VALLANCE** v SINGH SABHA; Middlesex County League Premier Division; K.O. 14.04; Result: 3-3; Admission: Free; Programme: Free; Attendance: 2 (two) - 0 home, 0 away, 2 neutral!!

My chauffeur took me on a surprisingly stress free trip around the North Circular Road from the morning Middlesex hop game (another hugely enjoyable event, well done Tony) to the 4G pitch at the West Ham Community Centre which is home for the rest of the season to Vallance, a fact that appears to have passed Mitoo by.

Their home ground at Meath Gardens is being re-laid and allegedly a stand is being built. Coming by train, Beckton on the Docklands Light Railway is a ten-minute walk away. The ground is situated on the site of the Golf Driving Range, adjacent to the old Spartan League club, Beckton's ground, now a housing estate.

Programmes are available from the changing rooms. On my visit to a previous 'home' game they issued a mass-produced photocopied effort to cater for their biggest ever crowd at a quasi-hop match. The one for this game was a superb, full colour edition which they distribute among the local community. Good to see my favourite item, the Order of Events page, is still there.

The game kicked off late, no mean feat given both sides and the three officials were out ten minutes before the scheduled start. At one minute to two, the home side, who were out before I arrived, decided that would be a good time to amble back into the changing rooms for a pre match tete-a-tete. Unfazed by being kept waiting it took less than a minute for Singh Sabha to open the scoring but by the interval Vallance had turned it around to lead 3-1. We were treated to the bizarre sight of the Vallance players arguing among themselves as they went off for the break. I can only assume they were emotionally confused, never having reached half-time with a two-goal lead before.

The buzz amongst the crowd (can two people be described as a crowd?) seemingly wondered whether Vallance were going to get their first win of the season. The answer was no. Sabha pulled it back to three all and five minutes before the end were awarded a penalty which they had the decency to miss, meaning Vallance acquired their third point of the season, but still no victory. Be patient lads, it will come.

This was another stop on my odyssey of Middlesex League Grounds, although strangely this was a team from Essex hosting a team from Berkshire. Next week should be Southall making a one-off appearance at Brunel University, but there is some doubt about the programme with the editor being trapped in America. When lava clouds interfere with programme production things are really serious!!