

TT No.245: Rob Champion - Thurs 20th May 2010; **Witherley United** v Woodlands WMC; Coventry Alliance Prem Division; Venue: Church Road; Res: 1-3; Admission/Prog: None; Attendance: 32 (h/c); Match rating: 3*.

This is to be my final game of the 2009/10 season and a decision made only about two days ago at that. I seldom have the chance to take in mid-week games due to work but, having booked the night off from work due to my wedding anniversary tomorrow (Friday 21st) I took this opportunity. For the first time since November my dad agreed to come with me and picked me up at 5pm to make the thirty odd minute drive down the A47 and A5 to Witherley.

The following information on the village is taken from Wikipedia:

“Witherley is a village and civil parish in the Hinckley and Bosworth district of Leicestershire, England. It is in the far north-west of Leicestershire. The Warwickshire/Leicestershire border runs along the parish boundary, along the River Anker to the west and the A5 to the south, with Witherley village close by the town of Atherstone and the village of Mancetter. One of its notable features is the church of St Peter, noted for its very tall steeple, "52 yards (48 m)". The village school is located next to the church - Witherley C of E primary school. In most circumstances, children attending the school later transfer to Market Bosworth High School when of age.

Proximity to the county border meant that parliamentary troops from the Warwickshire garrisons made several visits to Witherley and Atterton during the Civil War. A list of claims for losses and "free quarter" to the Warwickshire county committee in June, 1646 includes a claim for free quarter for a hundred men and horse under the command of Captain Levell and Captain Astewe from Colonel Purefoy's regiment of the Coventry garrison, estimated to be worth £9. Mr Lloyd, the rector, charged Captain Ottway's lieutenant for four horses and mares worth £13.6.8, and for three heifers worth £7.10. In 1650 this same Robert Lloyd was "sequestered" and forced to pay a fine in 1650 as a 'malignant' or for neglecting his duties (it is not certain exactly which as few details of his offences are provided).

William King claimed that Captain Flower's men had taken a horse worth 5s and John King claimed for a saddle worth 8s taken by Captain Flower's lieutenant and asked for £2 for quartering about forty soldiers from Coventry. The Astley garrison also plundered the villages, leading to a claim for forced requisitioning including the "carriage of a load of hay from Hartshill Leaz to Astley House" worth £1, and the carriage of 14 loads of hay worth £2.6.8. Francis Orton claimed he was taken prisoner by Lieutenant Hunt of Astley about Michaelmas, 1643 and forced to pay £1.13.4 for his release. The constable of the parish claimed 12s 9d for provender. John Mason senior wanted compensation for his gelding, worth £2.10 taken by

Lieutenant Hunt to Astley and William King for a mare worth £2.13.4. (Exchequer accounts, SP 28/161). The civil parish includes Atterton.”

The club play their games on Church Road in the middle of the village and is a typical village recreation ground affair. The pitch is roped off along the two touchlines and they have their own clubhouse on the site. Next to the pitch is the Blue Lion public house where we were before and after the game having a drink and something to it. I have never been to a game in the Coventry Alliance before and was unsure of the standard that would be on show. My verdict was that is off a decent level and is no worse than anything in the Notts Senior or lower division of the Leicestershire Senior League.

The game is one that visitors Woodlands should have won more comfortably than they actually did as they dominated the first half but only had two goals to show for their dominance. The opening goal came on five minutes when following a mistake in the home defence, the ball was played across the box and was slotted home from twelve yards out. Woodlands continued to press and deservedly make it 2-0 on 32 minutes, when following a cross from the right, the ball was volleyed home from a few yards out. Despite being outplayed the home side should have gone in only a goal down after the referee and linesman failed to spot the ball going under bar from a header. The second half was not as entertaining as the first but Witherley got a goal back midway through when the centre forward rounded the visiting keeper and rolled the ball into an empty net. Woodlands sowed the game up right at the death when they hit Witherley on the counter attack to give the score-line a deserved look.

06/20