

**TT No.65: Chris Freer** - Saturday October 24th 2009; **Worthing** v Whitstable Town; Isthmian Division One South; Score: 5-0; Attendance: 250; Entertainment value: 4/5.

After last weekend's flurry of activity, it's back to the usual one game in a day routine as I head off to the South coast, via the 440 and a Willow Walk brekkie, followed by a surprisingly good advance deal on Southern Trains, costing me just £3 each way to Worthing.

There's a distinct aroma in the air in Worthing. Just like when you go to Burton on Trent you can always smell a brewery, here there is a definite whiff of fish and chips - a cross that I suppose a seaside town has to bear.

For the first time this season I get a bit wet as I trek out to the ground first to see that nothing is amiss, paranoia having set in for some unknown reason. I manage to dry off at a Good Beer Guide 2010 (yes, I bit the bullet and bought it) listed local called the Selden Arms which is the epitome of a cosy community pub - long may it survive! My next port-of-call is equally comfortable, this being the Richard Cobden which, despite its name, is not a Wetherspoons. A pint of Harvey's Best - one of my favourite ales - goes down a treat before my short walk to Worthing's A2B stadium, or Woodside Road if you like to stick to tradition.

The impressive business-like frontage reveals a traditional if somewhat aging Isthmian league stadium with a sizeable main stand dominating. Elsewhere there is some raised terracing with a modicum of cover behind each goal and on the halfway line. Although there's a small bar under the stand, the main clubhouse is near the entrance and is roomy. There's an erratic TV showing Sky Sports News, sort of, between the pixels, but a quick check of the bar confirms the absence of anything worth drinking. Similarly, the two snack bars either side of the goal have nothing for the veggie, except chips and I've given them up for Lent.

The rain has eased but there's a swirling wind favouring one direction. Worthing are riding high in the table, having scored ten goals in their previous three games. The fact that they have also let in eight gives me the inkling that this could be a goal-fest, especially as the visitors Whitstable Town are next to bottom having conceded 21 goals in nine games already this season. It more or less goes to form, with the hosts having infinitely more clues than their guests, who appear to be clue-less. Worthing have players who can trap a ball, turn with it and run at the defence, something of a novelty compared to many of the games I've seen recently. The fact that Whitstable's defending is, at best, inept, also helps the situation.

For some reason it's only one at half time, but the floodgates open in the second, and you have the feeling that the home team will score with every attack. They also sportingly offer Whitstable opportunities to put their own names on the score sheet, but the visitors don't seem to want to spoil the party and their finishing is

laughable. Two goals direct from free-kicks and another from a late penalty contribute to a final 5-0 score-line that could easily be 9-2 or something similar. Whitstable's keeper is sent off in the penalty incident, and you can't help thinking it akin to putting the man out of his misery, him having been dropping the ball all afternoon to a consistent chorus of 'dodgy keeper' from the sympathetic home fans behind the goal.

I take the opportunity on the return journey of travelling via Brighton so I can get in a pint of Harvey's Mild at the Lord Nelson on Trafalgar Street near the station. If I could take five pubs with me to a desert island, this would be one of them. A traditional old town hostelry with a mix of regulars, tourists and the odd celebrity drinker - the Fast Show's Mark Williams was in last time I called - it just has to be a one of England's classic pubs.

There's more on my blog at <http://flynn123.wordpress.com/> ...Football for the real ale veggie ....

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