

TT No.80: *Chris Freer* - Saturday November 7th 2009; **Hamilton Academicals v Motherwell**; Scottish Premier League; Score: 2-2; Attendance: 3,583; Entertainment value: 3/5.

It's back north of the border today but no flight this time. Instead I'm stood at Crewe station, trying to think of the name of the MP in the white suit who's shifting from foot to foot attempting to look inconspicuous not ten yards away. Doubtless he's wracking his brains trying to put a name to the internet blogger staring at him from not ten yards away...

The train into Glasgow offers tantalising glimpses of Celtic Park - which looks like a three-sided ground from a distance - and Shawfields, the former home of Clyde FC, which now serves as a greyhound stadium. I've only one match today, so I have leisure time prior to getting the train to Hamilton. It has to be the Wetherspoons on Sauchiehall Street where I have a disagreement with the bar-lady as to what constitutes a good head on a beer. Her idea of perfect is an inch of froth. I counter that I don't think so but after three attempts I give it best. I retire next to the Bon Accord, a more agreeable pub with a good selection of ale.

My train from the Low-Level station into Hamilton passes by the Accies ground which looks quite impressive from a distance. Before heading there, I need to sample the delights of the George Bar in town, a GBG regular. It's a friendly enough old local, with three ales on tap, but a pig of a walk back to the ground. It's like the away end at Watford, you can see it but the official route takes you way beyond. It's much easier to access the ground from the Hamilton West station.

At close quarters New Douglas Park turns out to be a bit like Falkirk, basically a two-sided ground. The main stand holds the Accies faithful whilst a second stand behind the goal is home to the visitors from just down the road, local rivals Motherwell. There's a load of scaffolding behind the other goal, so maybe something is being developed here, but on the far side there's an empty temporary stand, looking like it last saw any service, at Hickstead. It's a cold day but a macaroni pie from one of the several snack hatches on the concourse in front of the stand warms me up.

I saw Hamilton a few weeks ago at Tannadice. Their tactic then was to lump stuff up to Antoine-Curier and hope something would stick. For most of this match that looks to be the policy at home, too. They are a team of honest endeavour but with Motherwell only slightly more cultured it's looking stalemate territory until the ref intervenes towards the end of the first half. A second rash tackle from an Accies man and he can't get the yellow and the red out of his pocket quick enough. Are these guys on commission?

Needless to say, the traditional Scottish pastime, the Boo (if you recall an earlier post, delivered like a cow with a cold) comes into play and for much of the match I find myself compelled to offer my own contribution, often when there's nothing to

boo at. To make matters worse, there's a penalty shortly thereafter - a stone-waller, despite the home booing - and it looks glum for the Accies. A good save from the home custodian, combined with a few more over the next 40 minutes or so, creates a platform for a steal, and the Accies go a goal up, are pegged back, go in front again, and finally lose two points at the death. The excitement is late in coming but welcome nonetheless.

Drizzly rain greets my return to Glasgow and I plan to settle down in a quiet hostelry with a book for an hour or so. I reckon without the instinct in this city to be on the ale at 5.30pm of a Saturday evening. Everywhere is packed - including the Pot Still, my favoured watering hole - so I give it best and head for the station cafe. I've a four-hour rail journey and an hour's drive ahead of me. No sign of the MP in the white suit. Presumably he isn't a footy day-tripper like myself.

There's more on my blog at <http://flynn123.wordpress.com/>

Footy from a real ale veggie angle....

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