

**TT No.239: *Richard Panter*** - Saturday 9th April 2011; **Hereford United v Chesterfield**; Football League Two; Score 3 -0; Crowd 2492 (away fans 629); Admission £14; Programme £2.50 (44pp); Match rating \*\*\*.

### Bulls Down Town

A late change of plan saw me trekking across country to Edgar Street with my Spirite friend Steve. En route Steve said he would settle for a point away and three at home. as the above result shows my companion was disappointed, but Bull's fans would agree with his point accumulation workings.

On a fabulous early spring day, the borders area of England was as pretty as a really pretty picture. Bright sun, blue sky, wispy clouds, leafy trees and blossom everywhere, a green and pleasant land indeed. We parked in a side street up from the ground and made our way to take in a leisurely stroll around. Outside the venue looks dowdy and scruffy in places. However, it looks like a good old-fashioned football ground in other places. The two tiered (Cargill) stand which backs on the A49 is tall and skinny. The two ends behind the goals are unpretentious. The main stand side needs a little TLC as parts of it are boarded up and a lick of paint would not go amiss here and there. The main stand houses the club bar, a bar which is named after...I bet you can guess? It also encloses the offices, changing rooms and club shop. The modest programme was available from sellers all around the ground.

We paid our money and took our place on the terrace under the Cargill Stand. This was a bit of a blow as I thought we were to be located in the temporarily open cover behind the goal. I wanted to take some photos of the Cargill stand from a distance. I explained this to a steward and he kindly let me trough to take some snaps (or should this be 'pings' in this digital age?). He smiled as he made me curtail my enthusiasm as I agreed not to run onto the pitch! I took plenty of pictures but was accosted by the uber-steward who asked me what I was doing. I will point out here that I use a Canon digital compact, not a spy camera, so I was a tad puzzled that he could not work out himself what I was doing. After a brief, few barked words, he explained that the area behind the temporary stand had been condemned. I told said interrogator that I knew it had been, furthermore this change was also the attraction to a ground hopper with an interest in the history of football grounds. He was most anxious that I would be publishing my pictures and telling people that the terrace on one side of Edgar Street is condemned. So, I won't let it be known that the terrace at one side of Edgar Street is condemned, I will not mention that the forward-looking club has installed some neat, practical, safe and spacious seating there either. Whoops, sorry about that Herr Obergruppenfuhrer! After this illuminating encounter I retook my place along Steve on the narrow, restricted terracing and looked round the rest of the stadium.

The home terrace mirrored the opposite end, before the temporary seating was installed. It has a slight curve to it, but not of a severe enough degree to suggest that there has been a running, cycling or greyhound track around it, as far as I could tell. Plenty of crush barriers were strung out all along its length and the steps looked fairly well raked. It has to be said that the support under this roof made plenty of noise and created a good atmosphere given their relatively small number. The main stand directly opposite us was a single storey structure, neat in appearance and well filled. Curiously there were a number of pitch-facing windows below the seated area. The dugouts were over this side. Above us in the Cargill stand sat those more affluent travelling fans who paid £2 more to sit down under cover in a well elevated position. If the outside suggested a run-down air the inside proved this to be otherwise. Edgar Street is a good old-fashioned football ground thank goodness.

As for the match, clearly it did not go to form. In fairness to those from north Derbyshire they did not turn up all swagger and complacency. In reality I suppose most there expected an away win but from the off the Bulls took the game to their league leading guests. Stuart Fleetwood scored with a header before the break and was tormentor in chief to the 'Town' defence throughout the first half which ended 1 -0.

Straight after the break Craig Davies hit the Hereford woodwork but this was as close as the Spirites would come to a goal. Doubtless frustrated by his sides lack of competitiveness John Sheridan reshuffled his team and his charges did seem to get back into the match for a few minutes. Then defender Gregor Robson looked to have suffered a broken leg when he just dropped to the ground. After carefully immobilising the damaged leg the unfortunate Scot was taken to hospital. Fortunately (if this can be called fortunate) his leg was not broken. He did suffer serious Achilles tendon damage though which will end his season prematurely. I use the word fortunate here because Robertson suffered a broken leg last season and this was not a reoccurrence of this.

Two goals as good as I have seen this season finally gave the home side the margin they thoroughly deserved. Thunderbolts from Leslie and the impressive Colbeck finished Chesterfield off. This surely has extinguished any relegation fears that United had, and as for 'Town' their promotion party looks to be merely delayed.

33 to go.

(The bar is named in honour of Ronnie Radford. Chesterfield are known as 'Town' by those in the know, it stems back to the dark ages when Chesterfield had Town after their name.)

07/20