

TT No.136: *Mike Latham* - Sat 7th January 2012; Midland Football Alliance: **Heather St John's** 1-0 Alvechurch; Attendance: 64; Admission: £5. FGIF Match Rating: 1*.

The MFA is hardly one of my favourite leagues and this was a dire game, between two petulantly behaved teams controlled by a young referee who had no empathy with the players. The bloke on the gate responded brusquely 'no' when I enquired if any programmes remained on sale as I arrived right on kick-off time.

It costs nothing to be polite, especially to a visitor from afar. First impressions count a lot to me so though the raffle ticket seller and the bloke at the canteen were friendly I was on a downer straight away.

The game was awful, the only goal coming midway through the first half, a header over the goalkeeper from the home striker. Two players were sent-off after a flare-up just before the end of the first-half and I had long lost interest in a truly appalling game when the visitors' No6 received a red late on.

Alvechurch wouldn't have scored if they carried on playing until I was back amongst friends in the Crown. Heather St John's is in a remote location in the middle of nowhere, the ground is superbly maintained and has a hedge around it, with a neat main stand, a well-appointed club house and with an unusual dugout area with announcer's box attached. But I should have gone home after my visit to Ashby, I didn't enjoy this one bit. It was horrible football- the sort of game that made me wonder why I bother. With the language from many of the players and hangers-on plumbing new depths, I vowed it time to get back to watching Welsh and Scottish football.

07/20