

TT No.2: *Rob Champion* - Sat 23rd July 2011; **Radford** v Bilborough Pelican; Pre-Season Friendly; Venue: Trent Vale Road, Beeston (12noon kick-off); Result: 0-4; Admission/Prog: None; Att: c.10; Match Rating: 2*.

After my original plan of Barnsley v Feyenoord fell by the wayside about ten days ago it was a case of looking for alternative arrangements for today. A few choices stood out and I had decided on the way home from Pinxton last night to head south to Biggleswade for their friendly against Wealdstone. Having checked the weather report rain was forecast in the Biggleswade area during the afternoon, so decided to stay local and take in a "double". The first part is at the old Siemens ground in Beeston which is to the west of Nottingham city centre. I don't know whether any club uses Trent Vale Road at present but it has been home to the now defunct Notts Senior League (NSL) side Siemens FC and current NSL side Boots Athletic. Boots now share the facilities at the Rolls Royce Sports & Social Club in Hucknall with fellow NSL side Hucknall Rolls Leisure.

The venue is a large sports ground that consists of three football pitches, cricket pitch and tennis courts. The one that Siemens and Boots used is furthest away from the clubhouse. The area around the ground consists of residential housing, allotments, a caravan park and the Beeston Marina. Today the sports ground was a hive of activity with games on all three pitches with slightly different kick-off times, with this game being played on the right hand (westerly) pitch. There is nothing to distinguish the three pitches from each other with all of them having no dugouts and none of them were roped or railed. To be honest it is not somewhere I would have chosen to go if it was my only match today, with the only benefit it being another new venue I have seen football at.

I have no idea why Radford are playing this friendly here (away from their normal home in Nottingham itself), and also kicking off early. Whatever the reason it gives me the chance to visit two new venues either side of Nottingham. The second of which is the Bill Stokeld Stadium, home of Northern Premier League side Carlton Town.

The two teams play one division apart with Radford playing in the East Midlands Counties League and Bilborough Pelican re-joining the Central Midlands League in the summer after a spell in the NSL. As you can gather there was no admission charge nor was a programme issued. The game was pretty poor compared to last night's excellent game @ Pinxton and I did wonder what I was doing here watching this. Pelican looked the better side though it wasn't until the latter stages of the half when Danny Blanchard scored their opening goal on 39 minutes. A minute later and Pelican were 2 up when a ball across the face of the Radford goal from Blanchard allowed a team mate to score from a narrow angle. The second half was a case of how many Pelican wanted to score and, in the end, they got just two - the first was a thunderous thirty-yard belter and the second was an overhead scissor kick. Obviously, friendlies don't mean a lot, but on this performance, it

would appear to be a season of struggle for Radford while I expect Pelican to finish in the top six of the CML Southern Division.

A lovely drive now followed across to the other side of Nottingham for game two of the afternoon.

07/20