

**TT No.17: *Andy Gallon*** - Wed 29th August 2012; **Pocklington Town** v Scarborough T; Humber Premier League Prem D; Res: 1-2; Att: 40; Admission: Free; Programme: 50p (4pp); FGIF Match Rating: \*\*\*\*.

You can't beat spontaneity, huh? With my partner on a 48-hour working absence in That London, I settled down to watch the six o'clock news - the first mundane act of what promised to be an evening as unremarkable as the rain that had lashed the streets of York since the break of another awful 'summer' day. Five minutes of headlines (for which read blanket coverage of the preposterous PC-Olympics), and I'd had enough. Off went the telly, on went the computer. Idly surfing a hopping website (yes, others are available!), I opened the section dedicated to programmes. Third header from the top of the index referred to Pocklington Town. Now, they're about 15 miles from our door and a club I know to be occasional (as in 'blue moon') issuers, but in the four years I've lived in York I've only ever driven past their ground. A post, dated mid-afternoon the previous day, revealed the club were issuing for that evening's Humber Premier League Premier Division visit of Scarborough Town. Zoyks, Scoob! Luckily, and most unusually at this level, Pocklington have floodlights and therefore the game wasn't scheduled to kick off until 7.45. Knowing York's northern outer ring road to be a tea-time car park approaching M25 proportions, I hastily grabbed what I needed and dashed out to the car. It was still tipping down relentlessly. With deep puddles at every turn, I feared a postponement, but decided to press on regardless.

Fortune, I'm happy to report, favoured the brave. On arrival at the snappily-titled Henry Thirsk Amenity Centre on the eastern edge of 'Pock', my worst fears were allayed. The pitch was in superb condition! A regular confirmed it to be an excellent drainer. Modest, if neatly produced, paper secured, I bought tea and returned to the car for a spot of Radio Four: in the main, a gloriously PC-Olympics free zone. Emerging five minutes before kick-off, I was surprised by how few spectators were present. Scarborough Town, poor relations of local rivals Athletic in terms of post-Scarborough FC debacle fan base and status, were represented by a handful of officials and fans, whilst a mere clutch of Pocklingtonians had made the effort.

What a shame. By now, the cloud had rolled back to reveal a wonderfully clear sky and an almost full moon. The lingering remains of the day were blessed with sunshine, the air was still, the temperature mild and as the match got under way the sweet fragrance of dewy grass made its presence felt. What could be finer?

It seemed almost unreasonable to expect a decent contest, but that's what we got. I amused myself by standing alone on the touchline opposite the 39 other spectators. Partly because I enjoy swimming against the tide, but largely because I couldn't bear 90 minutes of manager speak from the technical area. As a bonus, I got to play ball boy for much of the game. Even at 47, I find it fun to chase a ball and boot it about. Said partner isn't always thrilled by my sitting room antics.

Pocklington started as joint leaders after chalking up three straight wins, their best start to an HPL season, but fell behind in the sixth minute when a weak header back to Rob Kunkel was intercepted by Ben Luntley, who rounded the keeper and stroked the ball into an empty net. Nine minutes later, the hosts levelled. Speedy striker Dan Boneham raced into the box and was brought down by Josh Hakings. Tom Rogers fired his penalty into the roof of Rob Clark's goal. There was little to choose between the teams for the rest of a very enjoyable match, and a draw looked inevitable. But with nine minutes left Scarborough substitute Jamie Bradshaw seized on a wayward Pocklington pass across the box and netted from close range. The hosts deserved something, and were unfortunate in the 88th minute when a six-yard header from their lanky centre-half came back off the crossbar.

Decent facilities at the Henry Thirsk Amenity Centre (dear me, this name does need sexing up!). Pocklington have four pitches at their disposal. The first team pitch is nearest the car park. It is large and flat, and railed off on each side. There are dug-outs along the west touchline, with an impressive two-storey clubhouse behind. The dressing rooms are on the ground floor, a bar on the first. A refreshment hatch can be found at the structure's lower north end. No complaints about the floodlights, which were very good indeed. Despite the proximity of the other pitches, there is enough room for the club to erect stands should they wish to climb the pyramid.

With the rush hour traffic on York's outer ring road a fading memory, I was home in time to switch on the ten o'clock news. More PC-Olympics and (God help us) another mind-numbing opening ceremony. Do people really pay to watch this tripe? Headlines (such as they were) over, telly off, then back to the computer. It was almost as if the intervening four hours had never happened.

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