

TT1617-57

TT No.57: *Keith Aslan* - Saturday 15th April 2017; **PRESTWICH HEYS** v Charnock Richard; North West Counties Division 1; Kick-Off: 15.01; Result: 0-3; Admission: £4; Programme: £1; Attendance: 204 (108 home, 86 away & 10 neutral).

Another Saturday, another failed attempt to visit Denaby United. Some things are just not meant to be. Their match today was postponed due to Doncaster Council 'forgetting' to mark the pitch. Call me Mr. Cynical but I suspect the council's 'amnesia' and the fact it was a bank holiday weekend were related. I was not alone among the hoppers at Prestwich whose first choice was obliterated by this most useless of councils.

Plan B at Prestwich then. The ground is a fifteen-minute walk from the delightfully named tram stop Besses o' th' Barn, so called because a pub used to stand there that looked like a barn, and I think you can guess the landladies name. Why aren't girls called Bess anymore? I find it ironic that a mode of transport considered obsolete sixty years ago is now considered cutting edge and every city worth its salt, and Birmingham, has a tram system. Manchester have embraced them like no other with the most extensive network in the country which gets bigger every time I visit.

Prestwich billed this game as their Play-off push, but more realistically the match was of far greater import to their opponents. Charnock Richard are teetering at the head of a league that is tighter than P.J Proby's trousers with three points separating the top five clubs. Charnock are the Barcelona of the North West Counties league and the only team to have any sizeable away support with almost half of today's crowd travelling down the M56. I got to this one very early predicting a quick paper sell out. As usual I was right with the programmes becoming a collector's item 45 minutes before kick-off, most being snapped up by the visitors. Why does one person need six programmes? I whiled away the time chatting to fellow fans in the club house, which has food, drink and football on TV. The homemade minestrone soup was highly yummie. In the second-half we were treated to the proper Manchester experience when it rained, but plenty of cover to keep all of the large crowd dry. One small criticism of the ground, it really does need more than one toilet.

The first half was even-Steven's but Charnock Richard asserted their title credentials after the break. They even missed one of the worst penalties I've seen outside an England match with their centre forwards spot kick causing more problems for low flying aircraft than the goalkeeper. After today's games 5 points now separate the top five so still all to play for, but this win keeps the visitors in pole position.

Credit where it's due, the trains ran perfectly today. An Easter gift from Mr. Branson? Makes up for the two and a half hours I spent on Whitstable Station last Tuesday night!

