

TT No.24: *Brian Buck* - Saturday 12th August 2017; **Abbey Hey** v Runcorn Linnets; Hallmark Security North West Counties League Premier Division; Result: 0-4; Attendance: 165.

This was rather a long day out on the trains, but nonetheless I enjoyed it. I was able to get a direct train from Peterborough to Manchester Piccadilly, which included some stunning views between Sheffield and Stockport. Then I caught a local train to the nearest stop to the ground, Ryder Brow, some 8 minutes-walk away. By coincidence I had followed a chap I had briefly spoken to at Manchester Piccadilly station almost all the way to the ground. So, I was pleased to be able to redirect him just as he was about to take a wrong turn right at the end. Turned out that he was a huge Wigan Athletic fan and we spent some quality time together during various parts of the day. Surprisingly there was someone on the gate some 90 minutes before kickoff. £4 & £1 for a programme with OAP admission for me. Then it was off to the bar, where I manage to bag a couple of meat and potato pies. But what was I going to wash it down with? There didn't seem to be many bottles of Magners available and I needed at least four to cover my day's needs. The barman did a quick stock take and told me that he had ten! Anyway, it appears that the locals don't drink cider much, so I was safe! Then it was time to leave the busy atmosphere of the bar, filled up mainly by good natured visiting fans, and get out and watch the game.

In fact, most of the crowd seemed to be supplied by the visitors, always a good sign if their team is fancied to do well. They did so here today as the hosts didn't really turn up on the day and were 3-0 down by the 38th minute. After the break with the match effectively decided it was much more low-key and Runcorn added one further goal, on 86 minutes. After the match, I returned to the bar, primarily to await my train, but whilst supping my last pint I noticed a well-dressed man sporting Runcorn-colours, chuck an envelope and their players sitting near me. Rumour had it, that it was thrown towards the manager and that it had about £100 in it! Overall a good and probably a memorable day out! Getting home took longer than expected as my train was delayed. I met a nice lady at Manchester Piccadilly and she decided to reroute via Leeds and Doncaster, while I stuck with my train. So, it turned out to be a romantic reunion (from my point of view) when we were reunited at Peterborough! This lasted until we reached Huntingdon where she got off. Alas not with me!