

TT No.2: Brian Buck - Saturday 4th August 2018; Welbeck Lions v Mickleover RBL; Abacus Lighting Central Midlands League Black Dragon South; Result: 1-1; Attendance: 20 approx.

Travel-wise this was a very poor day. I should have arrived at the ground 90 minutes before kick-off, but a series of trains cancelled by East Midland Trains meant that I got there just as they were tossing up. The fact that I had to leave immediately after the final whistle blew, to catch the Number 11 bus back to Mansfield, meant that this was the shortest amount of time I'd spent at a ground on a Saturday since 27th August 1983 when something similar happened when I watched Merthyr Town v Shepshed Charterhouse (Southern League Midland Division); result: 0-2; attendance: 400 approx.!

I picked out this match because I figured that it would be cooler the further north I went and I also suspected that they'd had a tad more rain up there than they had in the south of the country. This proved to be a good choice and after struggling to find the entrance to the ground the afternoon was quite pleasant weather-wise. I'd actually been in this vicinity before, on 1 September 1998 when the club were known as Welbeck Colliery Miners Welfare. That evening they beat Radford 3-1 in a Redferns International Removers Central Midlands League Premier Division match, attendance 50 approx. But subsequently they lost their facilities when the colliery closed down. So, they moved to the top pitch and nearer the village, effectively next door to the old pitch, which was used by the club's reserve team today for a friendly match, but you can't see one pitch from the other.

The club's new name has something to do with the fact that they go to the Three Lions pub after games. As for the match, the first half was poor, memorable only for the fact that the home keeper started time wasting from the outset and a ref who was too frightened to stand up to him. The visitors were on top but couldn't score. After the break Mickleover missed a good chance to score on 56 minutes when a lob came back off the post and into the keeper's hands, lob to 'gob'! But after this Welbeck gradually got better and on 87 minutes a header from a corner gave them the lead. After having only won four games in the past two years was this to be another one? Well, no as with the last action of the game a cross came in and the ball was headed over the keeper for the equaliser and probably overall the right result. My journey home was equally fraught when my train from Nottingham ran 40 minutes late. A decent but tiring day out.