

TT No.063: 01/04/05 Ground/Club Focus: *Mike Latham - Squires Gate (NWCL1) and Trafford FC - Shawe View (NWCL2 Trophy Final)*

(1) Wed 30 March 2005, NWCL Div. 1 Squires Gate 1-1 Skelmersdale United (att. - 47).

On a mild but rainy evening on the Fylde Coast a handful of devotees gathered at School Road to see this middle of the table clash in the NWCL, ignoring the live international football on the television. Squires Gate is one of three grounds in the same vicinity of Blackpool Airport- their ground actually backs on to Blackpool Wren Rovers' ground, who play in the West Lancashire League, and Blackpool Mechanics is a goalkeeper's punt away.

Gate came out of the West Lancashire League in 1991 and are now the best placed of the trio and in their third season in the NWCL's top tier. The ground, just a few minutes' drive from J4 of the M55, is reached by the side of a school and is small but extremely well appointed. There is a club-house by the main entrance and two small seated stands on the club-house side.

Opposite is a small covered stand and a minute seated stand occupies some of the space behind one goal. There is an excellent tea bar manned by extremely pleasant staff and a club shop with programmes and other memorabilia on sale. A bulky programme consisting of 40 pages sold for £1- 24 of these pages comprised the weekly NWCL newsletter but it is splendid value nonetheless. Joint lowest scorers in the league, Gate created few opportunities in a game that was increasingly dominated by the slick passing of the visitors, who had from behind to salvage a point from an interesting encounter.

After drainage problems at their new ground Skem are facing a huge fixture backlog in the final few weeks of the season and one of their officials explained they would have to play their final few home games after mid-April at Burscough while their new ground is dug up and the pitch re-laid. No such problems for Gate whose playing pitch is consistently one of the best drained in the country. A warm welcome awaits the traveller to School Road and the evening was hugely enjoyable.

(2) Thursday 31 Mar 2005, NWCL Division 2 Trophy Final; Cammell Laird 4-0 Flixton (att - 150) at Shawe View, **Trafford FC**.

Shawe View is a relatively recent addition to the NWCL, the ground formerly the host to a myriad of sporting organisations being used as Manchester City's training ground and a reserve venue for the long defunct Trafford Borough RL side. Not easy to find, but well worth the effort, it is a picturesque tree lined ground in a quiet residential area about 10 minutes from the M60 orbital motorway and not far from Manchester United's training ground in Carrington.

With locals still purring over Trafford's 5-0 demolition of second placed Newcastle Town over Easter, the runaway leaders of NWCLD2 took centre stage. Cammell Laird, runaway leaders of the division in their first season since moving up from the West Cheshire League, were far superior and played some superb attacking football at times though the pace slackened in the second half.

Leading 2-0 at the break through two goals from their prolific striker, Ronnie Morgan, Cammell Laird scored twice in the last four minutes to seal their resounding victory.

Shawe View is a most pleasant place to watch football with cover on three sides and a small main stand, an excellent tea bar and small club house; a huge adjoining car park takes the strain away from the driver. The NWCL produced an outstanding 24-page programme, priced only £1, as a souvenir of an entertaining evening.

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