

TT No.073: 10/04/05 Ground/Club Focus: *Mike Latham* - Holker Old Boys (NWCL1)

Tues 5 April, NWCL Division One, Holker Old Boys 1-2 Flixton (att. - 28)

Holker Old Boys is a thriving small club on the outskirts of Barrow-in-Furness on Rakesmoor Lane in the village of Hawcoat. The ground's elevated position affords marvellous views over distant Lakeland fells though its exposed position tests the fortitude of the spectator in deepest winter.

The club was founded in 1936, originating from the local Holker Central Secondary School, and played at Thorncliffe Road, close to Barrow AFC's Holker Street ground. In 1971 they moved to Rakesmoor and developed the ground sufficiently to be included in the NWCL in 1991.

The welcome from the gateman was warm and the writer, immediately recognised as a traveller, was ushered into the well-kept club house for a programme.

Admission was only £2 with the programme, with a distinctive green cover and the club badge with a stag's head in the middle, selling for £1. This mostly comprised the latest league newsletter though there were a few pages of editorial. The home team had eleven changes to the published team, the visitors, who had only one substitute, a mere eight.

Holker run three open age teams and several junior teams down to the age of eight years and their splendid facilities are clearly a focal point for the local community.

The club house sold fresh rolls and crisps and though there is no tea bar, travellers are welcome to pop into the groundsman's room near the dressing rooms at half-time for a cup of tea, which was very welcome on a chilly evening.

The club house and dressing rooms are located by the entrance to the ground and there is a large car park. A small seated stand is positioned behind the goal towards the corner. Painted in green and white on the front of the stand roof is the message "Holker Old Boys welcome you to Rakesmoor."

The home dug-out is situated on the opposite, open side with the visitors on the near-side where there is also a low covered shelter. The pitch was slightly sloping from left to right looking from the club house but was in good condition for this time of the season. Neatly enclosed by a white post and rail fence the ground is splendidly maintained.

With the counter-attraction of Liverpool-Juventus on television (shown on the big screen in the club house) only eleven spectators lined the ground at the 8pm kick-off. This swelled to the final attendance of 28. After falling behind to a well taken goal early in the second half Flixton scored twice in five minutes to make their long journey home a happy one, though they had a player sent-off in the last minute for a bad tackle that was out of character in a well contested game.

A visit to Rakesmoor Lane comes highly recommended for a warm and friendly welcome, good facilities and an excellent and unusual ground.

03/20