

TT No.080: 14/04/05 Ground/Club Focus: *Andy Sneddon* - Crewe FC (Mid Cheshire League 1); Stockport Georgians (Manchester League Prem Div.) and Ossett Common Rovers (West Yorkshire League Prem Div.)

Wed 6th April 2005; **Crewe FC** 0 **Bollington Athletic** 2; Mid Cheshire League Division One; Att: 40; Programme/Admission £1, 48pp.

Crewe FC currently play at the Cumberland Stadium very close to the town centre. However, the stadium will be undergoing refurbishment next season and the club will be playing elsewhere, so we decided to "tick it off" just in case.

The ground is a fairly basic council owned athletics track with all the facilities on the side you come in on. There is a small car park inside and a nice chap will relieve you of a quid on the gate in exchange for a quite superb 48-page programme (Crewe are regular issuers, including midweeks). There is a tea bar inside the dressing room complex with reasonable views of the pitch. However, on a poor day most people would stand in front on the glass because that's where the small amount of cover is. The view from here isn't perfect as you are a little way from the pitch (6 lane running track in the way) and the two dugouts are quite large. The best view is from the small grass bank alongside the dressing rooms.

The stadium has floodlights but these are very much for the athletics and are not of match standard. However, on a chilly evening that started with glorious sunshine, the dark clouds rolled in late in the first half and by the time the heavens opened early in the 2nd it was a good job we had the lights. There's no way the game would have continued without them and although far from perfect it was playable.

Crewe should have had the game sewn up by halftime, but their young side just couldn't finish. Two second half goals from the visitors got them a rather underserved 3 points that leaves Crewe deep in relegation trouble.

Sat 9th April 2005; **Stockport Georgians** 3 **Brightmet United** 3; Air Miles Manchester League Premier Division; Att: 35; Programme/Admission £1, 36pp.

Stockport Georgians play at one of the better-appointed grounds in the Manchester League, in the Woodsmoor district of Stockport. It's a pleasant suburb and the ground has a slight rural feel about it with many trees lining 2 sides. It is fully enclosed, with a large car park inside, fully railed, hard standing all round, dug outs and a small stand for approx. 50 people situated in one corner by the dressing rooms and clubhouse. The programme was a cracking effort with a full colour cover and much to read and was available in the club before the game, as well as a young lad walking round just after kick off making sure they all went! There is a good tea bar within the club which served superb pie/peas and gravy for £1-50 and the general feel of the place was extremely welcoming.

The game itself was very much the old game of two halves. In the first there were a reasonable number of chances but only one went in (to Georgians) whilst the second was a real ding dong affair with the formbook thrown out of the window as second from bottom Brightmet came back from 1-0 and 2-1 down to lead 3-2, only for Georgians (still with outside title chances) to equalise in disputed fashion in injury time.

Wed 13th April 2005; **Ossett Common Rovers** 1 Carlton Athletic 2; West Yorkshire League Premier Division; Att: 25; Programme: 4-page full colour, 50p.

As rumours abound that Ossett Common Rovers may be losing their ground at the end of the season and I had business in Leeds during the afternoon, it seemed a perfect opportunity to get this one ticked off, just in case. The ground, in common with many in the West Yorkshire League, is simply a railed off pitch, with no other facilities to speak of other than the dressing rooms. It's a far from unpleasant setting though, situated on the SE edge of Ossett, but the pitch is rather undulating to say the least and doesn't lend itself to good football. The programme is a regular issue, produced by genial club Chairman Malcolm Hirst, and although only 4 pages, had both line ups, reports, news, fixtures and the league table, plus 3 full colour photographs. What more do you need?

Ossett needed points to avoid getting dragged into the relegation dogfight, Carlton, strangely for once, only have 2nd spot to play for as Nostell MW are clear at the top (still unbeaten) and are rumoured to have NCE ambitions. Carlton looked the more dangerous on the break but the home side had most of the play and will feel disappointed to have come away empty handed.

Although there is nothing available at the ground here are a couple of recommendations for refreshments:

The Red Lion on Dewsbury Road (approx. 15-20 mins walk) is a real ale brew pub and had its own multi award winning White Lion available (very pale and absolutely superb), plus Kelham Island Pale Rider as a guest. It was a real pub in every sense: real ale, real fire, real people, warm welcome. Tremendous.

To compliment the ale, we went to the Park Square Fisheries, a couple of minutes-walk from the ground, and enjoyed proper Yorkshire Fish and Chips (done in beef dripping) for the miserly sum of £2-65. The fish was quite simply amongst the best I've ever tasted.

It all added up to one very good evening out!

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