

**TT No.083: 15/04/05 Ground/Club Focus: *Mike Latham* - Hallam (NCELP)**

Thurs 14 April, NCEL Premier, Hallam 2-2 Thackley (att. - 100)

There's no escaping the fact that you are entering a football ground of great historical significance at Sandygate. A huge sign proclaims the ground as the oldest club ground in the world, dating back to 1860, and that Hallam FC are the second oldest club in the world (after Sheffield). There is also a prominent plaque on the wall.

Once inside the ground does not disappoint. Situated in leafy Crosspool, a suburb of Sheffield just off the A57 road that takes you over the Snake Pass to Glossop, the location is idyllic. Sharing with a cricket club, Hallam FC's ground is effectively three-sided with a club house and smart new cantilevered main stand on the left-hand side as you enter and a small covered stand behind the goals at the entrance. The pitch slopes sharply down to the far end with huge netting constructed in a vain attempt to stop wayward shots disappearing into neighbouring gardens. The far side is largely out of bounds, almost encroaching as it does on the cricket square with a neat temporary fence constructed.

Club officials do a grand job as ball boys, manning the cricket side and behind the far goal to ensure that play keeps flowing with the crowd gathering mostly in the stand or on the banks at the club house side.

Admission was £4 with an up-to-date programme selling for £1 and a tea bar and the club house provide plenty of facilities for the spectator and a warm, cheery welcome.

The pitch was damp after recent rain and that helped the game which Hallam needed to win to ensure safety from relegation. Playing in distinctive blue and white hoped jerseys, they came from behind to lead 2-1 just after half-time but then had to rely on some outstanding saves from their goalkeeper. Thackley equalised from a penalty and a draw was a fair result. A visit to Sandygate is highly recommended.

03/20