

**11/11/05 TT No.106: Mike Latham - Armthorpe Miners Welfare (Sheffield County Senior League 2)**

Thursday 10 Nov 2005, Sheffield & Hallamshire Senior Cup 1st Round- Armthorpe Miners Welfare (Sheffield County Senior League Div. 2) 1-3 Hallam (att.- 60)

A groundhopping friend of mine, who knows far more about Yorkshire grounds than me, told me that Armthorpe's pitch is one of the best in the league and generally can be relied upon when games are being called off elsewhere.

His wise words sustained me on a rain-soaked trip across the Pennines with fears of a 'match' sign awaiting me on my arrival growing with every mile as the heavens opened on the M62.

Armthorpe is an old colliery village on the outskirts of Doncaster and the football club's Welfare Ground is located off Church Street behind *Netto* supermarket. Armthorpe Miners Welfare (who play in the Sheffield County Senior League Division 2) groundshare with Armthorpe Welfare (NCEL Premier Division). Strangely the two clubs are affiliated to different county organisations.

With no telephone at the ground a chance was taken on the game going ahead. The gamble paid off. As Doncaster was approached the clouds lifted giving way to a mercifully dry and mild evening and after negotiating the seemingly never-ending roundabouts and retail parks of Doncaster the floodlights of the Church Street ground could be seen shining in the distance.

It is probably true to say that this first round tie in the Sheffield & Hallamshire Senior Cup excited little interest in Armthorpe. My arrival, offering the match day admission of £2, pushed the gate receipts up to the £20 mark just before kick-off. A head count just after half-time estimated the crowd at around the 60-mark.

Sadly, no programme was issued for this game and the tea bar (which is run by the NCEL club) was also shut, making a half-time trip across the road to a neighbouring petrol station necessary for essential sustenance. A traveller up from London recommended the adjoining fish and chip shop and there are several pubs in the immediate vicinity.

The ground is well maintained with a black and white painted post and rail fence surrounding the playing area and white painted perimeter concrete slabs behind both goals. There is a small seated stand, with seats for 200, and a small standing cover behind one goal. The dug-outs are situated opposite one another on the halfway line. The playing pitch was indeed excellent despite recent deluges.

Hallam scored twice in the first half, struck the woodwork on another two occasions and missed several other opportunities. Armthorpe pulled one back with fifteen minutes to go but Hallam sealed their victory with a third goal. The match featured some very rough tackling and two Hallam players were forced to leave

the field with injuries. The referee was extremely laissez-faire in his approach and tolerated some extremely bad language from the players throughout the game.

A visit to the atmospheric ground, typical of a welfare set-up, was rewarded with an enjoyable evening out, despite the disappointment of a lack of programmes and tea bar. Match rating: 3\*.

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