

12/10/05 TT No.66: Mike Latham - Cammell Laird (NWCL)

Tues 11 Oct 2005, FA Cup 3rd Qualifying Round replay, Cammell Laird 0-1 Hucknall Town (att-395).

Cammell Laird's rapid rise through the pyramid has earned them respect from opponents for the excellent standard of football they play and though they bowed out of the FA Cup on a wet evening on the Wirral they gave another good account of themselves against opponents three levels higher.

Having moved through the North West Counties League Division Two in their first season following promotion from the West Cheshire League, Lairds have won four of their five league games so far in the first division but are already building up a big fixture backlog.

They earned a fine 2-2 at Conference North side Hucknall to earn a place in the fourth qualifying round draw for the first time in their history. An entertaining, free-flowing replay was only decided by a late goal by the Hucknall substitute to deny Lairds the prospect of a tie against Burscough.

Located in Rock Ferry near Birkenhead the Kirklands ground is on St Peter's Road. Opposite the main entrance is the Lairds clubhouse where a warm welcome was extended to travellers.

Known throughout the world for its connection to the ship-building industry, the works team club will celebrate their centenary in 2007.

The ground is small and hemmed in by housing with a small seated stand straddling the halfway line on the St Peter's Road side and a small cover on the opposite side where the dugouts are located. The rest of the ground is hard standing behind a white post and rail fence.

At the entrance the officials and secretary's rooms and tea bar are situated. The pitch was flat, well grassed and in good condition and the floodlights were excellent.

A crowd of nearly 400 was comfortably accommodated and club officials were friendly. A well-printed programme, which included the FA Cup draw from the day previously and several interesting articles was £1 though admission was raised from the normal £5 to £8 for the game.

To progress further up the pyramid the club may well have to relocate to a new ground with locals talking of a proposed new site nearby and also change their name from the works name with Birkenhead Town one possibility. They have obviously come a long way in a short space of time and the team's neat, constructive and entertaining playing style has already won lots of admirers. They certainly more than held their own against last season's beaten FA Trophy finalists.

Lairds were unlucky to concede just as extra-time beckoned but the crowd had certainly had an entertaining evening. Match rating: 4*.

03/20