

**TT No.162: Andy Sneddon** - Sat 24th February 2007; **Mexborough Main Street** v Athersley Recreation; Sheffield & Hallam County Senior League Prem Division; Res: 0-2; Att: 108 (headcount); Admission: Free; Programme: None.

I don't know about you but when reading through TT's, if I see "Admission: Free" and "Programme: None" it can be a bit of a turn off (no doubt there are those who would see this as a bonus!). In the case of this game and venue, I'm so glad I didn't let it deter me. Sometimes when looking for somewhere to go you stumble across something and think, "yeah, stuff it, I'm having some of that" and this was the case here. My regular travelling companion was otherwise engaged by his in-laws and as he normally does the planning it was down to me on my own this time. Having recently come to the conclusion that old grounds are more important than bits of paper, I thought it only right that I should take a look at the Welfare Ground, Mexborough.

Although there was no gate and no programme, this didn't mean no interest, as the game was second v top and the large numbers travelling from Athersley (for this level) bore testament to this.

The game itself was tight, competitive (but fair) and settled by two very good second half goals from the visitors. However, for those of you that haven't been (and I suspect a good number of the more experienced will have as it's the ground of former Yorkshire League and NCE club Mexborough Town), the main thing here is the ground...what a gem! Without going into masses of detail, it's shared with cricket so is essentially three sided, with the large pavilion gracefully dominating the Western end of the ground. There is a fine stand on the halfway line that seats 150 and is in very tidy condition but for me, the main striking feature was the large expanse of terracing that surrounds three sides of this elevated ground and the way it's hemmed in on two sides by a typically Northern terraced street and a wonderful old school building that is now an enterprise centre. "Atmospheric" barely does this justice. These wonderful relics of our sporting and social past are sadly becoming fewer and fewer and those surviving should be savoured and treasured.

If you've been, I doubt it's changed much in the last 15-20 years, but if you haven't, go whilst you have the chance. I did overhear a rumour (as I was leaving the ground) that Main Street may be folding at the end of the season. I sincerely hope this isn't the case as it would be a tragedy to lose football at this fine historic venue. On a day like this, who needs a programme?

As a footnote, other grounds in this league that I've visited and are all noteworthy for "batting above their average" are Penistone Church, Dodworth MW (the terracing there is amazing), Houghton Main & South Kirkby Colliery. That's not to say there aren't more, I just haven't unearthed them yet."

