

TT No.183: Dean McClean - Wednesday 21st March 2007. Staffordshire County Senior Premier Division; **Ball Haye Green** v Redgate Clayton; Res: 2-0; Admission: £1; no programme; Attendance: 30; FGIF Rating: 3*.

On a chilly early spring evening, I took the plunge into a new league, as I made a stunning debut in the dubious surroundings of the Staffordshire County Senior League!

Ball Haye Green is a small district located in the North East of Leek, and the football club, of the same name, play at the Working Men's Club, again of the same name. Travelling South on the A523, pass Leek Town FC on your left, after about 1 mile turn left at the cross-roads with Ball Haye Street onto Park Road, then bear right onto Ball Haye Rd, which becomes Ball Haye Green. The ground is around half a mile on the left tucked away behind the WMC.

Many beautiful Victorian period buildings grace the town of Leek, although the road leading to the ground is less so as it squeezes through grim looking terrace houses and is poorly lit.

The ground is of a reasonable standard. Hard standing surrounds the entire pitch and the ground has floodlights (of course) and many local cup finals are held here. A green painted covered roof running half the length of the opposite touchline, offers covered accommodation, whilst seating is provided by an interesting array of school chairs and gym benches (which brought back many happy memories of plimsolls and authoritarian PE teachers bellowing instructions to the fat kids to run faster!). A small hut incorporating the dressing rooms and catering facilities is positioned behind the goal, where teas and coffees were gratefully purchased on a rather chilly evening. A certain hopper was fascinated to hear the tea was 40p, thus proving his theory: The lower the level, the lower the price!

On entering the ground, we were informed that programmes were not issued for midweek games, although the gateman said he would find us an old copy. Unfortunately, this promise didn't come to fruition. On a recent trip to Peterlee Town, the secretary gave a rather blunt response of "We don't do programmes for this s*** league". Hmmm...

Looking at the ground, I wonder how much more work would need be done for it to pass the ground grading rules for the North West Counties League.

On a well sanded and bumpy pitch, both teams did their best to play football in a constructive manner. A goal in each half from the home side gave them a deserved win in a well contested encounter, played in good spirit.