

TT No.197: Dean McClean - Saturday 31st March 2007. East Lancashire League Division One; **Langho v Silsden (2004)**; Res: 2-1; Admission: free; Programme: no; Att: 20; FGIF Rating: 3*.

As all of my regular lifts were “otherwise engaged” today, I was left with a rather sparse choice of matches to take in on a fine spring day. After much careful deliberation, I plumped for nearby Langho for their last league match of the season against Silsden.

The visitors are the reserve side of North West Counties League team Silsden in all but name, as they refer to themselves as Silsden 2004. Although the first team now play at Keighley Cougars’ home ground, the roots of the club still remain in its spiritual home of Silsden village where the East Lancs League team still plays.

Coincidentally, two ground-hopper friends of mine attended Silsden’s last match at their former home in the West Riding County Amateur League, against Otley Town. The match is the stuff of legend to anyone who wasn’t there to witness it, as the home side needed a point to win the Championship, whilst Otley also needed a point-to avoid relegation. Not surprisingly the game finished in 0-0 draw, as a penalty was missed, along with a disallowed goal! This whole episode was much to the chagrin of one of the hoppers as he has a golden rule: A return visit is required if the match finished 0-0!

Langho FC Sports & Country Club is located off the busy A59 on the outskirts of the village-which straddles the A666-around four miles north of Blackburn.

Many grounds in the East Lancs League are split in to two categories: A rural ground in or near a village or basically on a park pitch.

Lango falls comfortably into the first category. It’s tucked away near a band of very large, expensive looking new houses and next to the busy and often dangerous A59 road. The pitch is situated about 50 yards from the clubhouse and changing rooms at a lower level and the far touchline is enclosed by large trees that acted as a super wind break on a blustery day. The ground is very basic and retains a very rural feel and so this backdrop provided an idyllic scene on a glorious spring day. There is enough room for development, and if Langho do ever attempt to enhance the ground, let’s hope it is done thoughtfully so as to retain its rustic charm.

The visitors got off to a great start and took a deserved early lead, as they adapted to the swirling wind quicker than the homesters. A galvanised Langho virtually dominated the first half from therein but could only find the net once-a superb 25-yard half-volley into the top corner. In an even, end-to-end second half, it was the home side who eventually won a cracking match with a late goal.