

TT No.209: *Dean McClean* - Wednesday 5th April 2007. West Cheshire League Prem Division: **Christleton** v Ashville; Res: 1-3; Att: 20 (est.); Admission/programme: None; FGIF Rating: 3*.

During recent weeks the highest level of football has marred by a series of disgraceful acts: match fixing scandals in Italy, barbaric riot police and hooliganism in both Spain and Italy -all in the name of football! Never has there been more of a gap between the elite and the game at grassroots level, both financially, and behaviourally. It's almost inconceivable to think that I was watching the same sport at an idyllic Christleton. The chasm in contrast could not be more, as it seems as though non-league football is almost a parallel sanctuary for those few of us who have chosen to shun the game at the highest level. If following your team over Europe is about ducking and diving an anti-English, baton wielding, maniac riot policeman, then forget it-and give me Christleton any day. The saying "The lower you go, the better it gets" has never been more appropriate!

Located to the east of Chester, off the A51, the picture-postcard village of Christleton and the rolling Cheshire hills provide a stunning back-drop on a glorious sunny spring afternoon. On entering the village from the A51, turn left at the large pond and the ground is found at the end of the road straight ahead of you.

Cricket and Football are played at the same venue. The large clubhouse and changing rooms are shared by both sports. Although the clubhouse was open, on enquiring for a cup of tea we were treated with a mild suspicion and remained thirsty.

Two teams in the lower reaches of the table produced an entertaining game on an immaculate playing surface. The visitors quickly opened up a three-goal lead, and despite the hosts reducing the deficit just before half-time, it was the visitors who held on for a well-deserved three points. A game high on quality, I was very impressed with the standard in this only my second visit to a West Cheshire League ground.

You may find snooty club officials here but you won't encounter any batons....