

**TT No.232: Dean McClean** - Sat 21st April 2007. West Lancashire League Division 1: **Crosshills** v Crooklands Casuals; Res: 3-4; no admission/programme; Att: 18; FGIF Match Rating: 4\*.

During this season I have mostly been ticking-off my remaining West Lancs League grounds needed. An opportunity to visit Crosshills today was too good to miss as I dusted off my passport and slipped over the border to Yorkshire to the village of Glusburn.

Very strange you may wonder-a team in Yorkshire competing in the West Lancs league? After rising up through the lower East Lancs League, Crosshills decided not to join what would seem the more natural step of the West Riding Co. League, although they do compete in that FA's County Amateur Cup, as well as the Keighley Cup.

Located in the village of Glusburn, Crosshills' Sutton Fields home is not the easiest to find-though it can be seen from the main road don't be fooled. Upon reaching the village centre turn right (from Colne) in to Holme Lane and after around ¼ mile turn right in to Manse Way. Eventually this comes to a T-Junction and you can see The Coppice on your right, take this turn and when you reach the end turn left down a narrow lane opposite a row of terrace houses and the ground entrance is almost immediately on your right.

Having suffered more than most from what is the distant memory of the wet weather a few months back, Crosshills is best visited in the warmer/drier months of the year. The ground is basic granted but on a warm sunny afternoon it is best appreciated, with the surroundings of Glusburn CC, along with a fast-flowing brook lined with trees and the Yorkshire hills in the distance. The backdrop is superb. A rope linked by intermittent wooden poles surrounds the touchline on three sides. There is no covered accommodation whatsoever, so if it's a wet day-bring your rain coat! A small building, funded by lottery money, incorporates the changing rooms and a small tea-bar that sells teas, coffees and Bovril-yes, Bovril in 80f heat-along with a small selection of confectionery. No hot food at all and even a desperate trip to the neighbouring cricket club yielded nothing!

Observing the players of both sides prior to kick-off, we were struck by the general attitude of disinterest, they seemed more concerned with the ever-approaching end of season razz-up, than the match they were about to play. To say hopes weren't high for a spectacle would have been an understatement. How wrong I was proved as both teams battled out an enthralling end-to-end contest on a bone dry and dusty pitch-yes really. Despite being on their way down to the second Division, the visitors from Cumbria (yes, a West Lancs League fixture between two teams from outside Lancashire) raced into a 4-1 lead midway through the second half. And after surviving a spirited fight back from the home team, held on for a rare victory to make the long journey back to Barrow a sweet one.

A great game, lovely ground and friendly people made this a very enjoyable day indeed.

06/20