

TT No.59: *Dean McClean* - Saturday 4th November 2006. West Lancs Prem Div. **Kirkham & Wesham v Burnley Utd.** Res: 2-0; Att: 50; Admission: £2 including 28pp programme; FGIF Match Rating: 2*.

There is a notion in ground-hopping circles that suggests only those 'hoppers who attend matches solely by public transport are worthy of being called "true ground-hoppers". So, with both of my chauffeurs unavailable, I was forced to attend a match by the dreaded Public Transport. Some insight in to this was given by my friend Rupert, who recently experienced bus travel en-route to a new ground. How a member of the privileged Guards Club was reduced to travelling in this manor only he will know.

So, with limited options I was glad to be able to tick off another WLL ground. The easiest one of these for me being Kirkham & Wesham FC.

If, like me, travelling by bus to K & W, is relatively straight forward. Bus no.68 Preston-Blackpool runs every 20 minutes, get off in the village of Warton and walk down Church Road (opposite BAE Warton). After half a mile the ground becomes visible on the right-hand side. Continue along until reaching the Birely Arms and the entrance to the ground is found via the pub car park.

Having dominated the WLL in recent years, winning the title no less than 6 times in the last 7 years, Kirkham have finally taken it upon themselves to climb the pyramid system. The match day programme tells of an application for the North West Counties FL, but at press the ground is very primitive and in need of a lot more work yet to be sure of promotion.

Financed by their very own sugar daddy, K & W are very much the Chelsea of the area where buying players is concerned, even being able to hand pick players from level four of the pyramid. It surely would be beneficial for these players to test themselves at a higher level rather than having an easy ride as it were in the WLL. Though I am not sure where K & W will derive their support from as the ground is a few miles out of town and quite literally in the middle of nowhere.

The entrance fee was a very reasonable £2, which included a professionally printed and designed 28-page programme. A very tidy effort with lots of information on the club and other news concerning the WLL. Plenty to keep one occupied during half-time and on the bus home!

On a windswept afternoon, K & W & Burnley played a generally scrappy game. The strong cross wind not helping either team. Having seen Blackburn Rovers miss two penalties against Bolton Wanderers last month, it was Kirkham's turn to do likewise today. Though unlike the Rovers, Kirkham managed to score the first, off the rebound. How Burnley United could do with Jussi!

Already leading the chasing pack by nine points Kirkham are sure to finish as champions (again) and therefore earn the right to apply for promotion. Hopefully

they will have a ground in place suitable for that aim, so that club and players can test themselves at a higher level.

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