

**TT No.57: Dean McClean** - Wed 12th September 2007. NWCL Division 2: Padiham v Castleton Gabriels; Res: 9 (Nine)-0; Admission: £3; 32pp programme: £1; Att: 61; FGIF Match Rating: 3\*.

There are some grounds in my local area I never tire of visiting. One of them is Colne, while I always look forward to a trip to Padiham. In fact, I almost came to physical blows at Kirkham last season trying to defend Padiham's ground. An elderly gentleman there was trying to say that Kirkham's (then primitive) ground was "better than Padiham or Colne" I mean, come on!

Located on the River Calder amid the hills of North East Lancashire, Padiham is a small market town around 3 miles west of Burnley and south of Pendle Hill. Although administered by Burnley, the town is fiercely independent from its neighbours. Dating back to the 11th Century, the town was had a thriving market for hundreds of years and attracted many visitors. One in particular, Joe Wesley, the 18th Century Anglican minister, believed Padiham held ..."the wildest women I ever beheld" Some may say little has changed!

Tucked away up typical Lancastrian cobbled streets off the main road through the town, the ground can be a little tricky to find. If you are coming by car be sure to arrive early as the car park often fills up very early and street parking can be limited. Entering the car park via a steep hill, the entrance is on your right, where the gateman gratefully accepts my £3 (ridiculously cheap) entrance fee. Another steep climb, up a set of steps, brings you to the summit and the ground. Immediately to the right, is the new modern clubhouse. Inside is the tea bar, where you can buy tea, coffee and the tasty Holland's pies. Further along past the clubhouse there used to be a seated stand, though this has now been demolished whilst a new one is in mid-construction. Down in the far corner is a small covered terrace. The opposite side is completely open, but a large grass banking allows for stunning views of the surrounding countryside and Pendle Hill, as well as the action on the pitch. Behind the nearside goal is another covered terrace. Also, behind this goal is Padiham CC, which also affords stunning views of the surroundings.

Padiham are a strange team to say the least; a good footballing side who have yet to fulfil their obvious potential, would be my summary. Maybe this result will give them that confidence. I had never seen a team score nine until tonight and quite honestly, I wouldn't want to see such a one-sided score-line very often. Now 5-4, that would be more like it. Although the home side went in to the break 3-0 to the good, it was a fairly even half, as Castleton created just as many scoring chances as Padiham. However, the second half was almost exclusively Padiham, as the home side ran riot with another 6 unanswered goals, to register a remarkable victory. The 6th and 7th goals were particularly special, the 6th a swerving, dipping effort from 35 yards and the 7th a sublime chip from the edge of the area.

All in all, not bad entertainment for £3!!

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