

TT No.213: Mike Latham - Tuesday 21 April 2009 - West Lancashire League Division 2: **Askam United** 0-5 **Furness Cavaliers**; Attendance: 52 (h/c); No admission or programme; FGIF Match Rating: 3*.

After such a wet and depressing winter with endless Saturdays marred by uncertainty over whether chosen games would survive the rain or frost, how refreshing the last few weeks have been for groundhoppers.

With several weeks of largely dry weather it has been relatively easy to pick games knowing, that barring something untoward (such as a postponement at poor old Bacup, one of my favourite clubs that I suffered recently) they would take place.

This local derby in the West Lancashire League had been pencilled in for some weeks, especially as third-placed Furness Cavaliers still had promotion to aim for and hence there would be something riding on the game.

The weather in the South Lakes was glorious and the new by-pass road around Low Newton makes reaching the Furness peninsula from J35 or J36 of the M6 motorway even easier these days.

Askam in Furness is a small village nestling in the Duddon estuary to the north of Barrow-in-Furness. The village owes its existence to the discovery of large iron ore deposits in the mid-19th century and the resulting industry that developed. These days it is a quiet residential village that has excellent sports facilities. As well as football and cricket clubs there is also an amateur rugby league club, who's well-appointed Fallowfield Park ground includes floodlights.

There is an excellent beach at Roanhead just to the south with good sand dunes and as the tide was out there were miles of exposed sands at Askam looking across towards Millom and Haverigg.

With views of near and distant Lakeland fells and mountains the views are simply stunning and on an evening like this crystal clear.

Askam United FC is located almost next to the beach, separated from the sea by a small grassed embankment. Going down Duddon Road to the ground the cricket field is on the right-hand side, Duddon Sports CC playing in the North Lancashire & South Cumbria League and employing a professional.

Askam United is on the left-hand side and is a fairly typical West Lancashire League venue, with a smart club house, a superbly maintained pitch surrounded by a post and rail fence and dug-outs and a small cover.

Furness Cavaliers, based on the Rampside road leaving Barrow, looked well up for the game, their players warming up long before the scheduled 6-30pm kick-off.

Around 50 spectators gathered around the rails in time for the start, their loyalties roughly split 50-50 between the competing teams. It was a fast-flowing game

played largely in a good spirit but the Cavaliers, with some clinical finishing, recorded an ultimately convincing win, though the score-line did not give justice to Askam's contribution to an enjoyable game.

The club house was open for refreshments with hot drinks, sausage rolls and pies (18 of them- 'When they're gone, they're gone and we don't want any left') on sale.

Askam United FC are a friendly club with good facilities located in a beautiful part of the country and a visit here comes highly recommended, especially if you can choose whether such as we enjoyed on this occasion. The locals told me that the place looks and feels totally different in the depths of winter but thankfully that seems a long way off as we bask in the Spring sunshine and enjoy some serious groundhopping.

06/20