

TT No.5: *Mike Latham* - Wednesday 12 August 2009: Tesco Cumberland County League Division One: **Carlisle Amateurs** 5-0 Silloth; Attendance: 14 (h/c); No admission or programme.

As last season neared its end, I spent a very pleasant afternoon in the surrounds of Hammonds Park in Carlisle, watching St Margaret Mary FC against Cockermouth in one of the many cup competitions in the Cumberland County League (see *TT89230*)

It was therefore with some dismay that I noticed, upon looking through the new season's fixtures on the league's excellent website that St Margaret Mary FC seemed to have disappeared, though a new team, Carlisle Amateurs, had appeared. I suspected that there must be a connection with the two.

My suspicions were confirmed after I had made my way up an unusually quiet M6 on a sunny August afternoon to the tiny hamlet of Scotby, east of Carlisle, the home of the newcomers Carlisle Amateurs FC. This was their first home match in the league- a red letter day to be sure.

The home manager, a familiar looking face, was compiling the team lists as I arrived and was happy to chat. He remembered me from my visit to Hammonds Park and confirmed that they are more or less the St Margaret Mary FC side from last season. They have changed names, and moved across the city to the beautifully appointed Scotby Cricket ground.

Scotby is a small village close to J43 of the M6- you turn towards Newcastle and turn right into the village-there is a village green, old church, a good pub (the Royal Oak is the club's HQ) and some stunning sandstone buildings.

The pitch is at the far end of the cricket ground and the cricket pavilion, a small wooden structure, is used for changing rooms. Bordered by trees on two sides, which act as a shield from the noise of traffic on the motorway about half a mile away, the pitch is humped and sloping though well maintained.

At the 6-30pm kick-off the only spectators were me and two WAGS from Silloth. The attendance peaked at 14 just after half-time when four lads from the village turned up to watch after playing on the park nearby.

The home side played some stunning football at times and swept aside a Silloth side who were relegated from the Premier Division last season. Scoring three times in the first 20 minutes and clearly having some players capable of playing at a much higher level, Carlisle Amateurs built on their 5-1 opening day win at Windscale Reserves. It was 4-0 at half-time and they had to be content with a harshly awarded penalty in the second half.

I can't understand why this league appears to have fallen off Bill Berry's radar in the Traveller- I've yet to see a bad game in it, the welcome is warm and there are some lovely locations, though often basic. I'll be back for more for sure.

