

TT No.32: *Rob Campion* - Sat 28 August 2010; **St Helens Town** v Glossop North End; FA Cup Preliminary Round; Result: 1-1; Admission: £5; Programme: £1.20 - excellent effort; Attendance: 113 (official); Match rating: 2*.

After much deliberation and changing of plans we (myself and Gary Spooner) finally came to an agreement and opt for plan 'C' today. Plan 'A' was all three games on the Mid-Wales League hop, plan 'B' was Airbus UK followed by Llanidloes Town and so we arrive at Knowsley Road, St Helens for the first part of plan 'C' for their FA Cup preliminary round tie against fellow North West Counties League side Glossop North End. I would say the only reason for choosing this game is that the ground in which they share with their more illustrious neighbours St Helens RFC is to be shortly demolished and a new ground is being built for the use of both clubs.

St Helens is a large town with a population of around 100,000 and is located between Liverpool (11 miles to the west) and Manchester (23 miles to the east). The area became significant in the 18th and 19th centuries for coal mining and glass making. The town is still home to Pilkington glass which was founded in 1826 and they produce all the UK's output of flat glass.

The two clubs currently share the Knowsley Road ground which currently has a capacity of 17,500. St Helens RFC moved into the ground in 1890 while 'Town have used the ground since 2002. The record attendance for the ground was recorded on 26th December 1949 for a Saints game against their biggest rivals Wigan. The new (as yet unnamed) stadium is being built on derelict land of the former United Glass site and will have a capacity of 18,000 when completed and is due to open in Autumn 2011.

St Helens Town Football Club were formed in 1946 and joined division two of the Lancashire Combination in 1949. Two years later and they won the division two title and with it secured promotion to division one. Just one season was spent in the Combination's top division before relegation back to division two. Thirteen years were spent back in the second division when in 1965 they achieved promotion back to division one and they had to wait until 1972 for their one and only Lancashire Combination title. In 1975 they switched to the Cheshire County League and remained in the league until 1982 when it merged with the Lancashire Combination to become the North West Counties Football League (NWC). St. Helens Town have remained ever present in the NWC and have recorded a best ever finish of 3rd place on three occasions. The club have entered the FA Cup since 1946 and the furthest they have gone in the competition was in the 1985/86 season when they knocked out Colwyn Bay, Eastwood Hanley and Leek Town before succumbing to Morecambe in the 4th qualifying round after a replay. Both teams today needed a replay to secure victories in the extra-preliminary round - St Helens beating Yorkshire side Nostell Miners Welfare 5-4 on penalty kicks following a 2-2 draw and Glossop 1-0 over Wigan Robin Park.

A fair result in the end at Knowsley Road which started well for the home side. Dave Garnell scrambled the ball home from a corner after sixteen minutes, and for the first quarter of the game were in control against a Glossop side devoid of ideas and skill. The game then appeared to turn in the visitor's favour when the home side were down to ten men as their number three took out Glossop's number ten with a two footed lunge. The visitors did not have time to make their numerical advantage count as they themselves were down to ten men on thirty-seven minutes when their number seven was very harshly given a second booking for a foul on St Helens captain Luke Faulkner. My own opinion was that it was not deserved and Faulkner made a meal of the challenge and thus contrived to get the player sent off. The remainder of the half petered out and ended 1-0. The second half was a turgid affair and of very poor quality. Daley Woods missed a couple of good chances for the home side before Glossop deservedly got an equaliser with around fifteen minutes from the penalty spot through David Morris. The best effort of the half came ten minutes from time when a Glossop shot from fully thirty yards was tipped over the by St Helens goalkeeper.

Game over and when then made the twenty-minute drive to Ashton Town Football Club for their North West Counties League encounter with Runcorn Town.

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