

TT No.34: *Ian Hill* - Sat 20th August 2011; **Gretna FC 2008** v Berwick Rangers Reserves; East of Scotland Cup Qualifying League; Score: 4-0; Admn: £5.00; Prog: £2.00; Attendance: 125; Match Rating: 4.

This was my first visit to Raydale Park since the new Gretna club was formed in 2008. I had previously visited on quite a few occasions to watch Workington play there in the Northern Premier League and to watch Gretna play in the Scottish Football League.

Gretna FC 2008

The club was founded in 2008 after the bankruptcy and demise of Gretna F.C., which had existed since 1946. Gretna 2008 is not a direct continuation of the old club, being under a completely different management and setup; the club trades under the name Gretna FC 2008 Ltd to avoid confusion with the old Gretna.

The club currently plays in the East of Scotland Football League Premier Division. The team played for most of the 2008-09 season at the Everholm Stadium in Annan. Late in the season, however, the new owners of Raydale Park allowed Gretna 2008 to move to the ground in their home town. In May 2011 the Raydale Community Partnership, of which Gretna FC 2008 is a member negotiated the purchase of the site.

Raydale Park

There was concern when the old Gretna club folded that Raydale Park would be lost to property developers. Thankfully the new club have secured use of the stadium but there have been a few changes since my last visit.

The stadium is dominated by a large seated stand behind one of the goals. It does seem a bit out of place. The opposite end of the ground is now out of bounds. On my previous visit a small covered terrace was in place. This has now gone and has been replaced by a grassed area. The shallow terrace running opposite the main stand has now lost its roof, although, the roof structure frame is still in place. The whole stadium has seen better days but it was always a place that would ever win a beauty award.

The old cow shed main stand is still in place with, what looked like, an unused bar next to it. The refreshments kitchen had a good and varied selection of food.

Programme

Programmes are available inside the ground for £2.00. It is a 16-page A5 issue printed on glossy paper with a combination of colour and black and white print. Despite being overpriced I quite liked it. Well done to the club for issuing.

The Game

Credit to the referee; who allowed the game to be physical but played within the laws of the game. It was a comfortable win for Gretna against a young Berwick side.

07/20