

TT No.23: *Mike Latham* - Saturday 7 November 2015 - **Grange** 4-3 Bolton-le-Sands; Baines Bagguley Penhale North Lancashire & District Football League Division 2; Attendance: 45 (h/c).

With heavy rain decimating much of the programme the search was on for a game at a new ground, not the easiest of tasks. Fortunately, the North Lancashire League website came up trumps and the game at Division 2 leaders Grange was confirmed as one of a handful to survive the deluge.

I'd tried to visit Grange on several occasions in the past only to be denied by postponements so it was a relief to see the Yew Tree Road playing field full of activity on arrival despite the heavy rain showers sweeping in from Morecambe Bay.

Grange-over-Sands is a genteel town with an ageing population, superbly situated on the Bay. It's the sort of place an elderly Bishop may visit for his summer holidays to stay at one of the several splendidly appointed hotels in the resort. Historically part of Lancashire, Grange-over-Sands is now part of South Lakeland District Council and lies just off the A590 road that links Kendal and J36 of the M6 to Barrow-in-Furness, and it close to Cartmel with its famous racecourse and sticky toffee pudding.

The town developed in the Victorian era and was transformed from a small fishing village into a popular seaside resort. The coming of the railway in the late 1850s was instrumental to its transformation and the railway line runs adjacent to the football ground along the sea shore. If you've never been on the railway trip from Lancaster to Barrow then I'd recommend it, it must be one of the loveliest in England.

There's a long promenade looking out to sands and mudflats with dangerous quick-sands and a notorious sweeping tide. But though dangers lurk amidst the tranquillity of the stunning views, Grange is a genteel place and a relaxing location away from the hustle and bustle and stress of everyday life. Tourists come and still come to sample the bracing air and take the waters and a stroll down the main street with its varied number of private shops or around the gardens by the coast and it's a great base to explore the South Lakes.

Usually that is, but not on a day when the menacing and scudding dark clouds brought constant showers across the Bay and briefly the glorious views virtually disappeared until sunshine and blue skies briefly interrupted the rain.

Grange FC are having a good season and went into the 'Sands derby' against the visitors from across the Bay top of Division Two, the third tier of a well organised and highly competitive league.

The estimable Lawrie Postlethwaite has been Secretary of the League for as long as anyone can remember, a bedrock of the local amateur football scene and the

sort of person who should be recognised with a national award for all he has contributed to grassroots football. Lawrie, happily, has some good help, not least from Peter Boardman who oversees an excellent league website that keeps the league running smoothly.

Around 40-50 spectators braved the conditions to witness a game typical of the league- competitive, hard fought but generally played in good spirit. The ground is a recreational ground on Yew Tree Road, to the left off Kents Bank Road just after the fire station on the Allinthwaite road leading out of Grange. There's a changing pavilion, a tennis courts and a decent banking to get a good view not only of the game but the views across the Bay. But on a wet day there is precious little shelter from the elements. Inland the Cartmel Grange Care Home, built a century ago as a convalescence home for miners dominates the sky-line amidst some beautifully designed private houses.

Grange kept their good run going, shading an entertaining game that was watched by a decent crowd. It was a relief to get in a new ground with so many postponements around and a thoroughly good afternoon despite the weather.

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