

**TT No.58: *Mike Latham*** - Saturday 20 February 2016: Linotype **Cheadle Heath Nomads** 3-2 Garswood United; Cheshire Football League Premier Division; Attendance: 25 (h/c); No admission or programme.

Deep in Stockport suburbia, a mile or so from Edgeley Park is The Heath, the well-appointed facility for Linotype Cheadle Heath Nomads, who won the Cheshire League in 2015.

The club's name came around following a merger between Linotype FC and Cheadle Heath Nomads in 2007 and the ground has two full size pitches, an all-weather training pitch, a smart club house at the entrance and a neatly built changing pavilion on the halfway line of the main pitch with some sheltered standing for spectators. The ground is bordered by housing on three sides and by a steep railway banking behind one goal.

After another Saturday of almost incessant rain it was a relief to find a game that was definitely on. The Heath has a reputation of being an excellent, well drained pitch and the young referee did well to get the game on in such conditions. The pitch remained playable throughout but with rain continuing to fall must have been considerably damaged by the exertions of the players throughout a full-blooded contest. I pity the poor club volunteers whose job it is to replace the divots.

There is plenty of parking and a club official was cheerfully dispensing hot drinks as I arrived in good time for the 2pm kick off. I chose to test my new umbrella and waterproofs and watched most of the game in glorious isolation on the far side with just the occupants of the dug outs on the half way line and a linesman who was in danger of catching trench foot such was the mud he had to plough his way through along the touchline.

The home side were the more purposeful and established a 3-1 lead in the first half, being denied a fourth by the width of a post. As the conditions deteriorated further Garswood came back more into the game and pulled back a goal late on. What had been a decent game deteriorated in the closing stages and the visitors picked up two red cards, including one to their goalkeeper. Most of us were glad to hear the final whistle.

The 2pm kick-off allowed me to go venture back to Cheadle Town FC of the NWCL First Division whose Park Road ground I last visited more than a decade ago. I arrived at half-time to find them 8-1 up against Atherton LR. I was sorry to see the visitors in such dire straits especially as my late father's good friend was a long standing official of the club that began life in local soccer in the 1950s as Laburnum Rovers and worked their way up through the pyramid, reaching the FA Vase semi-final and the Northern Premier League in the mid-1990s.

Cheadle Town's ground is dominated by a distinctive main stand that is positioned some way back from the pitch and has both seats and a standing area. The rest of the ground is flat standing. As the rain continued to fall the home side eased off in the second half, adding just two more goals despite the visitors having their goalkeeper red carded for handling outside his area.

On such a dank and miserably wet afternoon I was lucky to see a game and a half and huge credit to both teams for being able to stage home games in the circumstances.

04/20