

**TT No.128: Steve Hardy** - Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2019; **Whalley Range** v Old Stretfordians; Lancashire & Cheshire Amateur League Premier Division; Kick-Off: 2.00pm; Result: 5-0; Admission: Free; Programme: No; Attendance: 7 h/c

Just half a double today. I arrived at my planned morning match to find the place locked up and deserted. This left me with nearly 4 hours to kill in southern Manchester until match two, and I can tell you that it was the longest 4 hours I have ever had!

Anyway, the gates to the Whalley Range ground were finally open when I looked in again at 12.30, and I was warmly welcomed in to the clubhouse where a committee meeting was in full swing. It was getting quite heated too, so I took the free cup of coffee they had made me, and went and ate my lunch outside in the sunshine.

Whalley Range used to play in the Manchester league, and are currently looking to return to either that league or the Cheshire league, as a means to progress up the pyramid. They have a new pitch being laid over the summer, but the stumbling block will be no floodlights or any cover or terracing. By only spending what they can afford to spend, though, they are certainly doing things in the right way.

The match itself saw 3<sup>rd</sup> top Range entertain second bottom Stretfordians. Range are guaranteed to finish at least 3<sup>rd</sup> in the table, and today they made very short work of the visitors who offered very little indeed. Their 5 goals came after 2 and 30 minutes before half time, with a wicked deflection for an OG making it three on the hour. Number 4 came just three minutes later from a direct free kick and the rout was concluded with a penalty on 75 minutes.

I really enjoyed my trip up to Manchester, (apart from the wasted 4 hours) and the folk at Whalley Range were lovely. I hope their promotion application goes well, as they deserve it.

04/20