

**TT No.23: Steve Hardy** - Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018; **Craster & Embleton United** v Wooler; North Northumberland League; Kick-Off: 2.00pm; Result: 1-2; Admission/Programme: No; Attendance: 25 h/c

Craster and Embleton were two separate clubs last season, but have merged during the summer with home games being played in the tiny village of Embleton. Except today! I arrived at Embleton's Creighton Memorial Hall ground to find a cricket match in full swing and was told that until the cricket season ends, they are playing back at the old Craster ground some 3 miles away.

No problem there as I knew exactly where the Craster ground was, although I did miss the first few minutes of the game as KO had been brought forward to 2.00pm instead of the advertised 2.30pm.

The North Northumberland League is struggling again this year. Now down to just one division of eleven clubs there is still a great deal of travelling involved for teams like Wooler in the north and FC Bedlington in the south. The standard of play is pretty low still, and I wasn't surprised that the first half was terrible, with Wooler deserving their 1-0 lead, scored on ten minutes. After a stiff talking to from their Manager, Craster & Embleton started much more positively in the second half and very quickly found an equaliser. The game then seemed to be meandering towards a 1-1 draw, until with just 4 minutes left, Wooler broke away to score a rather fortuitous winner.

Absolutely no spectator facilities at the ground, as you would expect from a league at step ten in the non-league pyramid. The last time I saw Wooler they were playing in the Northern Alliance, but the huge amount of travelling involved, soon saw them drop back to the familiarity of the North Northumberland League again.

Craster is a lovely little village to visit, and, in the end, this turned out to be a top afternoon out.