

TT No.6: Steve Hardy - Wednesday 15th August 2018; **Ball Haye Green** v Staffordshire Moorlands; Staffordshire County League Division One; Kick-Off: 6.30pm; Result: 3-2; Admission; Free; Programme: No; Attendance: 31 h/c

At the end of last season, Ball Haye Green looked like they were folding. They had just lost the use of the ground they had called home for the past 80 years, all their players had left, and things generally looked bleak. Some of their committee were determined to keep going though, so they scratched around for a new venue to play at and eventually found one on the other side of Leek at Westwood College. Sadly, they had to take a demotion as the new facilities are not up to the desired standard for the Premier Division of the Staffs County League, but at least they were still playing.

Today was their first home game at Westwood College and it was fitting that the visitors would be local rivals Staffordshire Moorlands, who, I discovered have left their lovely old ground in Waterhouses and are also playing at Westwood College this season.

I thought the match was excellent, once it got going after a nervous start from both teams. BHG took the lead after just 6 minutes, but SM were much the better team after that, and deservedly equalised through a penalty just before half time. The second half was much better, with BHG again taking the lead after an error by the SM keeper on 61 minutes, before SM equalised again on 83 minutes. A 2-2 draw would have been a fair result in my opinion, but credit to BHG who kept going forward and were awarded a last-minute penalty themselves which was dispatched with some aplomb, for a 3-2 win.

A top evening out in North Staffordshire, and I really hope Ball Haye Green can make a success of their new home and get a bit of stability back, after their traumatic summer.