

TT No.5: Steve Hardy - Saturday 20th July 2019; **Eastwood Hanley Development v Leek CSOB Reserves**; Pre-Season Friendly; Result: 2-3; Admission: Free; Programme: No; Attendance 11 H/C

Hands up all those of you who remember Stoke based Eastwood Hanley FC? They were a top club back in the 1980s, playing in the Northern Premier League and vying with Leek Town for the title of top club in Staffordshire. It all started to go wrong for them when continual vandalism at their Trentmill Road ground in Stoke forced them to move out in the early 1990s, and after a couple of years ground-sharing with other local clubs they eventually folded in 1997.

The new club started in 2014 when an existing club changed their name to Eastwood Hanley and joined the Staffs County league. The old Trentmill Road ground was still there, but in a very dilapidated state, so the club have spent the last five years getting it back in order, whilst playing all their games at various other local venues, including the 3G pitch at Northwood Stadium in Stoke, where they are currently based.

Today their Reserves were entertaining Leek CSOB Stiffs at Trentmill Road in a pre-season friendly, so I decided to see how much progress they have made on renovating the site. I never got to see the old club, and can't actually find any old pictures of the ground anywhere on the inter-web, so have no way of comparing the old with the new. I suspect several bits of terracing are original, as is the small roofless stand down one side, but that is probably it.

The match itself was really rather good. Two VERY young teams (including at least one 15-year-old) gave it everything, and the fun started with an Eastwood penalty on just 10 minutes. Loads more huff and puff produced no more goals in the first half, but after the break CSOB were much the better side. They equalised on 51minutes and they took the lead 6 minutes later. Back came Hanley to equalise following a very short back-pass interception before CSOB finally won it with a mile's offside 3rd on 74 minutes.

Quite when the club will be able to start playing all their games at Trentmill Road, I don't know. It looks pretty good to me already, with a railed off pitch, a tea bar and a super clubhouse. No floodlights as yet, of course, but the club are only doing what they can afford to do. Quite right too.