

TT No.39: *Mike Latham* - Wed 4 October 2006: Wilkinson Sword Trophy QF: **Dinnington Town 0-1 Parkgate (AET)**; Attendance: 150; Admission: £3; FGIF Match Rating: 1*.

Having missed out on Dinnington on the CML hop last season, when an alternative trip was taken to Gedling Town, the opportunity was taken to tick off this progressive club on a chilly autumnal evening.

Dinnington have been promoted to the Northern Counties East League this season and this game was part of the cup competition for second division clubs.

Like several clubs in this area, fellow newcomers Nostell Miners Welfare being another example, the football ground at Dinnington is situated adjacent to a resource centre for the local community. The car park was packed with cars from people attending a function and so neighbouring streets filled up with spectators' cars.

Around ten minutes' drive from J31 of the M1 motorway, Phoenix Park is a developing venue with two small covered areas either side of the halfway line and a small seated stand behind one goal. The playing pitch is in good condition and the ground is maintained to a high standard. The tea bar was well above average and cheap.

Unfortunately, the programmes sold out before kick-off and a decent sized crowd, perhaps more than had been anticipated, saw a highly competitive local derby with the tackles flying in. When you watch football regularly you get an idea of the shape of the game and this one had '0-0' written all over it from the early stages. Having seen Parkgate play some terrific fluent football in two recent games at Retford and Borrowash earlier in the year their display was well below par and Dinnington were more than their match in an uneven, scrappy contest lacking any momentum or fluidity.

With extra time looking and the chill of the evening growing the decision, not taken lightly, was made to abandon ship after ninety minutes' stalemate and head for home. For this I received a stern reprimand the following day from several experienced travellers of my acquaintance after admitting my desertion. But enough was enough and the excellent NCEL website revealed that Parkgate had progressed thanks to a solitary goal in the 119th minute, by which time I was heading towards the M62 and home.