

TT No.142: Ian Hill - Sat 8th December 2007: Blue Square North. Gainsborough Trinity 1-1 Workington. Attendance: 232; Admission: £8; Programme 40 p/p £2.00; FGIF Match Rating: 2.

"It's grim up North" is quite a sweeping generalisation but to be precise it's very grim in Gainsborough. I visited the Lincolnshire town a couple of years ago and it was depressing then. Two years later a new shopping complex may have opened but around the town there are plenty of boarded up shops and houses.

The one redeeming feature is the "Northolme" home of Gainsborough Trinity. A large traditional old-style ground that is well maintained by the club. Located on the outskirts of the town centre, two sides of the ground are hemmed in by traditional terraced houses.

The standout feature of this ground is the old barrel roofed grandstand. Refurbished a couple of years ago it is a magnificent feature and it is great that the club decided on a refurbishment instead of a bland modern replacement. To the left of the stand is a modern uncovered terrace. Opposite is covered terracing and finally behind the other goal further covered terracing.

Food is supplied by the supporter's club which a nice selection of food - the best so far this season. The club also has a small club shop which mainly sells club merchandise. The match programme was very disappointing. The cover is nice but the other 39 pages were made up of adverts and very little reading material. With a £2.00 charge it was very overpriced and poor for a club at this level.

This game was in doubt due to the torrential rain leading up to and throughout the game. Luckily the Northolme pitch drains well and was in good condition at kick off time. Due to the conditions the game was always going to be stop start and as usual with Blue Square North the referee would make a terrible decision that would influence the outcome of the game.

With the wind behind their backs Trinity dominated the first half and had a few chances to score. The majority of teams in this league play two giant centre defenders and the equivalent monster at centre forward. If the opposing team has a decent skilful centre forward with a bit of speed then he can be expected to be kicked up in the air for the majority of the game. This was a feature of the game as a light weight Workington side struggled to contain the Trinity juggernaut.

After the Workington centre forward had been kicked up in the air, again, the referee decided that he would give the resulting free kick to Gainsborough. Quite an amazing decision and one that didn't go down well with the travelling support as Trinity scored in first half injury time.

The second half was more even but with 20 minutes to go Gainsborough's Liam Needham was sent off for his second bookable offence. This gave Workington the initiative and they scored the equaliser with a fine header from Tony Hopper.

The referee booked four Workington players and two from Gainsborough which was quite amazing. Another poor showing by an official at this level. No doubt he will be refereeing in the football league within two seasons.

06/20