

**TT No.227: Mike Latham** - Mon 31 March 2008: North Lancashire & District League: Carnforth Rangers 1-2 Highgrove: Attendance: 50 (h/c); No admission or programme; FGIF Match Rating: 4\*.

Carnforth is an interesting town with something for everybody- situated within easy reach of the M6 (J35) north of Lancaster (the A6 road goes through the centre) it's a noted railway centre and lies at the hub of the canal network, has a decent cricket team who play in the Northern Premier League, some interesting pubs (the Canal Turn the best in my experience) and a good bookshop. Within easy distance are the coastal villages around Silverdale and Arnside with spectacular views across Morecambe Bay.

But it's primarily an industrial town, known for its ironworks and quarrying, evidenced by the pot-holed road down by the side of the canal bridge close to the centre of town that leads to Quarry Park, the home of Carnforth Rangers.

For many years Rangers competed in the West Lancashire League but they hit problems a few years ago and are now finding their feet at a lower level. At least they have risen to the Premier League of the North Lancashire League and their ground, with its one small covered area behind the dug-outs and the clubhouse incorporating the dressing rooms has plenty of character, resembling in many ways a Scottish junior ground.

To their huge credit both teams and the referee are in good time for the 6-15 kick-off and the game starts promptly. The film 'Brief Encounter' was filmed in part at Carnforth Station in 1945 and within minutes the Highgrove goalkeeper is re-enacting a scene. His crude foul on an on-rushing Carnforth striker is a textbook red card and not even his team-mates can summon up a word of protest to the referee. A brief encounter it certainly was for the 'keeper- within three minutes of the start he is showering and about to take his leave.

But despite conceding an early goal Highgrove are the better passing side and go in 2-1 ahead at half-time, the second goal coming from a spectacular bicycle kick. The scorers are nos 5 and 10 respectively but the excellent league website (which gives results and scorers but not the teams) curiously credits Broadley with two goals. Despite a scrappy second half Highgrove run out deserved winners.

A visit to Carnforth Rangers and the town and area itself come highly recommended.