

**TT No.64: Chris Powell** - Sat 22nd September 2007; **Bridgnorth Town** v New Mills; FA Vase 2nd Qualifying Rd; Admission: £4; Programme: £1, 24pp; FGIF Match Rating: 4\*\*\*\*.

Whenever the draw is made for the various cup competitions the first thing that I always look out for are games that are between teams from differing leagues. For me, this game stood out straight away as Bridgnorth Town currently sit on top of the West Midlands Regional Premier and New Mills are unbeaten in the North West Counties League Division Two.

You enter Bridgnorth off the A458 and the ground itself is a little awkward to find as it sits just outside the town in the middle of housing. I haven't entered the sat-nav age so thank goodness for directions off the internet! Sadly, due to time constraints (and caravans and tractors) I never got the chance to walk around the town centre.

There is a small car park at the front of the ground, but there is plenty of street parking if it is full, as it was on Saturday. You approach the ground through the car park and enter through a turnstile at the corner of the pitch. Adjacent to this side of the ground is a public playing field, with lots of kids with their "jumpers for goalposts".

The turnstile operator was a friendly chap who was most welcoming and pleased that I had chosen to attend this game. After entering the ground, the clubhouse is directly in front of you and also some steps, which you go up to the pitch. The first thing that hits you is the slope on the pitch, which is very steep! I suspected that this may play a part in the outcome of the game.

There is a main stand running along one side of the pitch and a covered terrace with a tea hut behind the goal (the steak bakes at £1.30 are very tasty!). The other two sides of the ground are hard standing and are surrounded by houses. The rear gardens back right onto the ground, so behind the dugouts and one of the goals you get a nice view of the various sheds and conservatories. In fact, I was chatting with one of the residents as they cut their grass. As you walk around the ground and head up the slope there are fantastic views over the main stand of the town and surrounding countryside.

The game itself was very entertaining and my suspicions were confirmed when Bridgnorth eased into a 3-1 half time lead playing down the slope. The first goal was a long ball out of defence, which the New Mills defender allowed to bounce, and Horler raced on to it and lobbed the keeper from the edge of the six-yard box. New Mills equalised from a corner, which pinged around the penalty area before falling to Nevins who banged it in from 10 yards.

Bridgnorth then scored two goals in the space of five minutes. A free kick into the box caused confusion and Ryan turned it into his own net. The third was a straightforward corner, which Horler headed in unmarked.

The second half was a similar story with New Mills piling on the pressure as they took their turn down the slope. Nevins scored his second when a corner was played low in the box and he was allowed to turn easily to slot home. Bridgnorth too had a few opportunities on the break, but, despite the pressure, New Mills could not force an equaliser and Bridgnorth held on.

Overall, an enjoyable day, great game and well worth the visit.

06/20