

TT No.199: Mike Latham - Tues 27 March 2012: East Lancashire League Div. 2; Waddington 2-0 Burnley Belvedere; Attendance: 20(h/c); No admission or programme; FGIF match rating: 3*.

It's a wonderful feeling, after enduring the depths of winter and the constant worry over postponements to reach late March, after the clocks have been adjusted and the start of British Simmer Time.

The early evening kick-offs are occasions to be celebrated, especially when games are played in lovely, rural occasions such as this one at Waddington. And with temperatures around 20 degrees by the kick-off time after another glorious day in Lancashire the feeling of joy de vivre was undiminished, especially with sweeping views across to Pendle Hill to be enjoyed.

Waddington is a picture postcard village in the Ribble Valley, a couple of miles north-west of Clitheroe. Before the county boundary changes in 1974, Waddington just fell within the boundary of Bowland Rural District of the West Riding of Yorkshire.

There are some good facilities here; three pubs, two churches, one Anglican, one Methodist, a social club with a bowling green, a café, a post office and a playing field down Twitter Lane that houses both the cricket and football teams.

It was to the latter I headed with the sun burning brightly from a blue sky. It's always heartening to arrive at occasions such as this to see both teams warming up and also a referee in attendance; no worries that the match will take place. Inevitably games like this involve a lot of organisation and commitment from those involved. Players rush straight from work and, mindful of the gathering gloom, kick-off times are set at 6-15pm.

In the event this game started at about 6-25pm and the referee sensibly decided to play two halves of 40 minutes with a short half-time interval. Around 20 spectators lined the touchlines by kick-off, including four travellers. Waddington have joined the East Lancashire League this season after leaving behind the Craven League.

Both teams tried to play constructive football on a well-kept and well-grassed pitch. The game was scoreless until the Waddington substitute converted a right-wing cross on the hour. Another goal followed ten minutes later. Played in a good spirit and well refereed this was a great way to commence what groundhoppers term the 'Silly Season.'