

TT No.241: Mike Latham - Saturday 5 May 2012: Huddersfield & District Football League Division 2: **Scholes** 2-2 Kirkheaton Rovers; Attendance: 70 (h/c); No admission or programme.

The Huddersfield & District Football League season was fast approaching a climax and having seen several end-of-season games in this competition I was anxious to watch what appeared to be one of the games of the campaign.

Both sides had championship hopes in their penultimate game; in the end Scholes survived with a draw and now need to defeat Meltham Athletic next Tuesday to pip Royal Dolphins for the title. Despite a gallant effort Kirkheaton's title hopes are over.

Scholes is a beautiful Pennine village just off the Sheffield road from Huddersfield, close to Holmfirth. The village cricket team have a splendidly appointed ground and the football team's ground is rather more basic their pride and will to win are hardly diminished.

The teams change close to the village centre and approach the field via a long track by the side of Totties garden centre in whose café I savoured a magnificent pre-match sausage and egg tea cake and coffee. The village pub, the Boot & Shoe acts as headquarters. I decided instead to park on Greenhill Bank Road and hop over a stile to the field. A friendly local had advised me this was the best policy, adding that he knew the game was a big one as he saw someone mowing the field earlier in the week. Mowed it may have been but the dandelions were flourishing unchecked, fitting in nicely with the visitors' smart black and yellow striped jerseys.

Though the skies were glowering the rain mercifully held off though the wind chill, despite the sun, was severe. The game was played at fast pace and the importance of the occasion was readily apparent. The home fans and officials gathered on the near-side of the sloping ground backed by stone walls and sloping fields, the visitors positioned themselves on the far side. The referee relied on club linesmen to signal that the ball had gone out of play but ruled on offsides. He had a pleasant manner and controlled a tense game with considerable skill.

For large portions of the game the visitors looked to me the better side. They took the lead early in the proceedings when their talented no7 lobbed the ball home from a tight angle and went in at half-time 2-1 ahead after the referee awarded a penalty to each side. Scholes equalised midway through the half, the response coming in first-half-injury time. It was something of a surprise when the home side pulled level again midway through the second half.

Despite their efforts Kirkheaton could not force a winner and a fine game ended with honours even. Driving back through the village the teams and referee could

be seen making their way back to their changing facilities, a tradition that has doubtless gone on for many decades.

The Huddersfield & District League is well organised with a good website, regularly updated and considerable local press coverage in the Huddersfield Examiner. Games I've witnessed here in the past few weeks have invariably been well disciplined and entertaining and this was no exception. Highly recommended.

07/20