

TT No. 164: Mike Latham - Saturday 11 May 2013: West Yorkshire Association Football League Premier Division: **Boroughbridge** 1-1 Kippax; Attendance: 50 (h/c); Admission: by donation; FGIF Match Rating: 3*.

It's always best to choose a match with something riding on the result when you go to a new ground in May, to save suffering through a game being largely played out of duty- this one at Boroughbridge caught my eye and I was glad I made the effort to brave the M62 and M1 on a day when early rain gave way to brighter, sunnier weather.

Boroughbridge is a small town north of Wetherby just off the A1; Harrogate and York are the nearest major centres of population. Until the bypass was built the town lay on the main A1 road from London to Edinburgh and historically was once the major stopping-off point for stagecoaches. The origin of the name 'Boroughbridge' is derived from nearby Aldborough, which was once a principal settlement during the Roman period and known as Isurium Brigantum.

After the Norman Conquest, the Roman Road known as Dere Street which headed north from York, was diverted from just north of Aldborough. A new town was developed where the road crossed the River Ure; the Old Town became known as the "Ald-Borough" (Aldborough), the new town became "New Borough on t'Brigg" (Bridge), which became "Borough on t'Brigg" and finally Boroughbridge.

In later times there was an important battle here, in 1322 when King Edward II overpowered Thomas, Earl of Lancaster and Boroughbridge was a parliamentary borough from medieval times, electing two Members of Parliament to the House of Commons.

These days Boroughbridge seems a fairly peaceful place set amidst some lovely rolling countryside and with a wide main street and various shops and eating places. The locals were preparing for a May festival and several wandered around in various stages of fancy dress but out on the Aldborough Road, where the town's sporting facilities are located all was relatively quiet.

The football club have played here since the early 1970s, having relocated from Valuation Lane, the old ground now covered by houses. There is a cricket club here, playing in the Nidderdale Cricket League, albeit at the low level of division six. The sports club also encompasses bowls and tennis and is well maintained and patronised.

'Bridge, who can trace their history back to at least 1900 had made sure of remaining in the Premier Division of this highly competitive league in their last league match and had followed up by winning a local cup final against rivals Ripon City. Visitors Kippax needed points to ward off the threat of finishing in the bottom two.

A decent-sized crowd built up for the game, played on a bright, sunny but blustery afternoon. The cricket team were batting first against Bishop Thornton Second XI on the adjoining pitch and when their batsmen were dismissed, they wandered over to watch the football. The pavilion doubled up for both sports and a tea bar was in operation.

The football pitch, bordered by hedges behind each goal and with a wooded copse behind the far side is neatly railed with a small seated stand on the side nearest the cricket field and dug-outs. The pitch is at a slightly lower level than the cricket field.

Against the run of play the visitors took the lead after 16 minutes and looked likely to hang on to the three points until 'Bridge equalised with just three minutes remaining. We had the unusual occurrence of referee Aaron Bannister having his dad running one of the lines. I thought the officials did well to control a hard-fought game that always held the interest.

04/20