

TT No. 18: *Mike Latham* - Sat 24 October 2015: Toolstation Northern Counties East League Division One: **Worsbrough Bridge Athletic** 0-2 Selby Town (at Grimethorpe Community Recreation Ground); Attendance: 30 (h/c); Admission: £4; Programme: £1.

These are changing times for a long-established football club in the heartlands of the old South Yorkshire coalfield. Worsbrough Bridge have moved grounds and will now be based at the Grimethorpe Community Recreation Ground, about eight miles away.

Grimethorpe is also a former mining community and its Miners Welfare football club, founder members of the Northern Counties East League back in 1982 finally folded in 2003. More recently the ground has been used by AFC Grimethorpe and then Grimethorpe Sports, who play in Division Two of the Sheffield County Senior League.

The ground is like many in this part of the world and has a big area that can be put to good use with the right investment. A neat railed-off pitch with floodlights and one small covered stand is overlooked by the dressing rooms and pavilion on a level above where a disused cricket field stands forlorn and unloved. But from this level are one or two stanchions from where a great view of the action can be had. The pavilion doubles up as a tea room at half-time.

Worsbrough Bridge recently explained the decision to move and outlined their plans for the future. Recently they have suffered disruption due to their Park Road ground falling into disrepair with the failure of the floodlights a particular concern. Mindful of the need to protect a history stretching back nearly a century, club owner's entered negotiations with the charity that runs the Grimethorpe Community Recreation Ground which will now be home to the first team and under 19s team.

The two parties have ambitious plans for the future including community, sporting and educational initiatives. These include the opening of a community café on the site which will be a good base for local groups and community organisations to use. Ground improvements include new buildings, changing rooms, floodlights, stands, community and education rooms as well as medical facilities. The club will also be offering a free all year-round soccer school to all local youngsters as well as holiday clubs and plan to extend its junior base.

I hope it works out well for both parties and having never previously visited the ground was present to see a little bit of history as Worsbrough Bridge began their new era. Around 30 hardy souls were present on a chilly afternoon, the sun breaking out as the game wore on. Chances were few and far between but Selby went on to win an unremarkable game with two second half goals.

I wish the dedicated officials of Worsbrough Bridge FC well in their endeavours and hope that the Sports Ground can be restored to former glories and become a true community hub for the people of Grimethorpe.

04/20