

TT No.74: Mike Latham - Sat 16 April 2016 - **Boothstown** 2-0 Uppermill; Manchester Football League Premier Division; Attendance: 20 (h/c); No admission or programme.

A rare dip into the Manchester League for me, the 1-15pm kick-off proving more tempting than the clash between the two bottom teams in the Premier Division.

In the event the game wasn't great but it was played in a decent spirit and refereed by a kindly veteran who had great positional sense, a good empathy with the players and who seemed to be determined not to be spending his Saturday evening filling in disciplinary forms.

Several fouls that would have been routine yellow cards at most games I go to merited just a quick word and though the players cottoned on they never pushed the limits too far. I much prefer this style of refereeing to be honest but it won't find favour with the jobs-worth's.

Boothstown is now a small residential village just into the City of Salford on the road from Leigh through Astley. Officially it's part of Worsley, a district linked to the Industrial Revolution and the Bridgewater Canal which passes behind the football ground, partly shrouded by trees.

The growth of Boothstown was based on the traditional industries of coal and cotton. The first pit dates back to 1760, the first deep mining came with the sinking of the Mosley Common mine in the 1860s. The canal was used to convey the coal and there was also an underground canal, the Chaddock Level which was also used to transport coal. Meanwhile Boothstown Mill finally closed in 1968 after a century of operation.

Boothstown FC play at Bridgewater Park, Amber Hill, a large residential area located at the end of a modern and well-appointed residential estate close to the East Lancashire Road. There's an impressive club house and car park and several pitches with many junior players taking part in mini-games while the first team game was underway. The early kick-off was to accommodate a reserve team game on the same pitch afterwards.

A small canteen was in operation in the club house selling hot drinks, hot dogs, sweets and chocolate and the main pitch was partly roped-off. Though the game kicked off five minutes late it was over soon after 3pm with the home side running out fairly comfortable winners thanks to two first-half goals.

The Manchester League operate an FA Full-Time website which gives all the basic information you need and it is regularly updated. It's a credit to all involved. The game wasn't the greatest but I enjoyed my stress-free visit here.

Boothstown FC are an FA Charter Standard Community Club and operate a huge number of junior sides as well as the senior sides. They obviously play a huge role

in the local community thanks to the time and effort put in by club officials and helpers. Their Academy is highly respected and seeing the number of young children enjoying playing football in such a structured and well organised environment was really excellent. I must make the effort to dip my toes more often into the Manchester League.

04/20