

**TT No.98: Brian Buck** - Saturday 25th January 2020; **City of Liverpool** v Droylsden; BetVictor Northern Premier League North West; Venue: played at Bootle; Result: 0-1; Attendance: 322.

Today I was fortunate to be given a lift for which, as always, I was very grateful to my driver. It took us about three-and-three quarter hours to get to the ground, which under its unsponsored title is called New Bucks Park. I'd visited Bootle's previous ground, Bucks Park, on 31 August 1985 when I watched Bootle draw 1-1 with Eastwood Hanley in a North West Counties League Division 1 match, (attendance: 70 approx.).

35 years later and they still play in that league today. Having located the ground, we had time enough to visit a *Wetherspoons* pub in nearby Maghull, or so we thought. But we got stuck in a traffic jam on the way, so our visit was a short one. The beer was good though. Back at the ground, it turned out that the gateman and I had mutual friends as he was the brother of a long time Spurs and Wealdstone fan I know and along with their father they ran Ruislip Manor before that. Two meat and potato pies later, which weren't as good as the Bolton ones and we were ready for the start of the game.

This ground is in an unattractive industrial estate. Parking was limited, if you obeyed the law, but most people parked on double yellow lines and so did we. The ground itself was not the most attractive you'll ever see, but it was better than some of the bland new grounds you see now days. It had two sections of seating behind one goal and there was shallow cover behind the other goal. No seats on the clubhouse side, but it did have a raised veranda and that's where we stood to watch the match. On the dug-out side, there was narrow flat standing although my driver did tell me that they might be able to put a stand in there one day.

The game was a decent one, once it got going, but neither side looked like scoring. On 60 minutes we had a problem. A Droylsden player became injured and spent some time on the floor whilst a stretcher was found. There was one, but it belonged to Bootle and they had locked it away and so eventually the player got up and with help, walked off the pitch. On 80 minutes, with an assist by my driver, as he walked round the ground for a second time, we got a goal, by way of a 30-yard direct free kick. Finally, the match kicked into life as City searched, in vain, for the equaliser.

We left the ground with a good feeling about our visit here. City of Liverpool have only been going for four years and unlike another recently formed side, AFC Liverpool, they have no leanings towards either Everton or Liverpool. To make the point they play in purple although in today's match they looked a little marooned at times. They are a community club and the locals have taken to them. They must be doing something right as their average attendances are three times higher than their landlords. Good luck to them.

