

## **Borrowash Victoria AFC History 2013/14**

Borrowash Victoria AFC was founded in the summer of 1911. Like many clubs of the time Borrowash did not start with a blaze of glory. Popular belief is that the only illumination for the inaugural meeting was the gas-lights of Elm Street. However this wasn't to put the fledgling members off. They secured a pitch, Coffee Joe's Field, and changing facilities. Though opposing teams must have wondered at the mile and a half walk between the two.

From this modest start the club enjoyed a challenging future. Two World Wars halted play, but on each occasion the club reformed once peace returned. Off-field challenges saw the club disband and reform on three occasions. Despite all of this the will of the locals to have a football team represent their village remained unchecked. Maybe that is what makes the club motto so relevant 'Palma non sine pulvere' – 'No Victory without effort'.

The present club commenced in 1963 when a group led by Tony Beardsley tired of the restrictions of the youth league. With the support of Albert Anderton and Neville Hardy the new team started playing in the depths of Section E of the Derby Welfare League. The new team was christened, Borrowash Victoria Amateur Football Club, or simply "The Vics" to the locals.

Only three years later, and following early successes in both league and cup, the popularity of the club led to the creation of a reserve team. One major difference back then was that the teams didn't have a manager and it was not until January 1968 that the first manager was appointed, one Mr Arnold Grace. He led the team to promotion in his opening season and developed the team's standing tremendously until he left the club in 1968 due to ill health. Arnold did not however retire from The Vics entirely and returned as chairman in 1975.

It is that type of devotion to the club that frequently marks the history of The Vics. Several names reappear as you look through the archives; players' who hung up their boots only to stay on with the club in another capacity.

No doubt it was that spirit that encouraged ex-international Alan Hinton to sign for the club in 1977, an event that saw the TV cameras at a Vics game for the first and only time. Incidentally, Alan was spotted by the cameras at the end of the game taking the nets down. I doubt any of us will see such a turn of events again.

The modern era of sponsorship finally reached Borrowash in time for the 1977/78 season, Mr P Siddall a local building contractor. In exchange for bearing Siddall's name on the shirts, Mr Siddall provided funds and a concrete floor in the equipment hut. Ever practical at The Vics.

The 1977/78 season also provided the club's first major championship, the East Midlands Regional League Premier Division. However things looked dicey at the end of the 1980/81 season with a mass of resignations from the committee. As always The Vics pulled through and a face from today made his entrance to the stage. Ian Anderson turned from playing staff to president (and sponsor).

The most challenging episode in the recent history of the club also happened under Ian's reign. In 1983 the club were threatened with expulsion from the league due to settlement of a drain below the pitch making it unplayable. In those circumstances many a club has folded but The Vics rolled up their sleeves, repaired the pitch for the remainder of the season before moving to their new and current home, The Bowl.

Trials and tribulations about the pitch however continued; none worse than when the landlord (the local leisure centre) allowed it to be used for horse riding during the County Show! This however did not prevent the highlight of the club's history from occurring in the 1985/86 season.

To mark the official opening of the changing rooms and floodlights, Brian Clough brought a full strength Nottingham Forest squad to The Bowl. The evening set new records including the highest ever attendance, an estimated two thousand supporters packing the banks.

Unfortunately Borrowash Victoria can not be graced by such crowds every week but a hardy one hundred supporters come along, what ever the weather. Clearly the club still holds a special place in the village community.

On the field, The Vics joined the East Midlands Counties League as founder members for the 2008/09 season. This proved to be the first of many near-misses with promotion, with the side finishing second just three points adrift. 2010/11 was even closer, two points this time. 2011/12 second again but seven points adrift of a very good Heanor Town side.

Last season saw several significant changes on and off the field. Ian Anderson stood down as Chair after over 30 years' service; he does however remain on the committee. His successor is Frazer Watson and he has brought some new faces onto the committee and these changes have continued this season.

Borrowash Victoria now has a successful junior setup with teams from Under 18's down to Under 9's. Last season those junior teams collected three major trophies and numerous other awards. It is from this young crop that the next generation of Vics will appear, following the example of former junior players who are now regular members of the senior squad.