



THE VIADUCT CUP



"Football makes sense when nothing else does"

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The Nether Bridge Chronicle

Excitement is building in anticipation of the 1913 Viaduct Cup final on Saturday next. Holders Carmody Mill travel to The Sidings football ground in Nether Bridge to take on underdogs Bamford Hatworks. The Hatters are striving to win for the first time in their long history while the visitors will play for their twelfth consecutive title. Fans of the beautiful game shouldn't miss out on what has been billed the match of the decade. Old rivalries live long and Bamford Hatworks Football Club will throw everything they have at the accomplished Carmody team in an attempt to steal a famous victory. There is no doubt the match will be a hard fought affair. Kick off is at 3.15pm.

Chapter 1

The football landed on a crate of tomatoes with a satisfying splat.

“What on earth...!” the market stall holder picked up the ball, “Who kicked this?” she said wiping the red pulp from her eyes.

I would have made a run for it, but she had my best ball. “Sorry Mrs Finch!” I said. “It was an accident.” I took the scuffed leather football from her and with a strong right boot launched it down the steps into the cobbled market square. As I set off after it, skipping down the steps two at a time, Mrs Finch called out after me,

“Get back here Kit Bracken!” she shouted. “You owe me for these tomatoes!”

I weaved through the crush of market day shoppers with the ball at my feet. As I side-stepped a pile of horse manure, I bashed into a woman who dropped her shopping basket.

“Mind out!” She said as she gathered herself. “Young ladies should not be running about the streets with footballs.”

“Sorry!” I said not sorry at all as the ball bounced ahead of me. I leapt forward, trapped it beneath my foot, then turned to block a man in a smart suit as he reached out for my coat.

“Apologise at once!” he said, but I was away. “Disgraceful behaviour.” He muttered as he helped the woman with her shopping.

I could hear the rattled crowd behind me, the shouts of disapproval and the crash of boxes falling from the market stalls. As I dribbled the ball through the crowd, I imagined myself on a real football pitch. The disgruntled shoppers were the desperate opposition defence. I passed one, then left the next in my wake. The third, an old street sweeper, stood his ground, but I feigned a

kick to the right and slotted the ball through his legs. I looked up, jumped over a beer barrel, and neared my target. Sergeant Beswick had his back to me, he was busy herding the match day crowds. I booted the ball straight at him. His helmet almost fell off as he stumbled forward. I didn't hang around.

“Oi! I ought to burst that ball.” he shouted. “You're causing a public nuisance.”

“Afternoon Sergeant.” I said picking up the ball “I'd stay and chat but I've got somewhere to be.” I laughed as I ran backwards, but pulled up short as the tram rang its bell and trundled through the square. Passengers jumped off as it slowed. A poster on the side advertised the 1913 Viaduct Cup final, Bamford Hatworks versus Carmody Mill, Saturday at 3pm. The town hall clock struck two. It was almost time.

To find out more about Kit and The Viaduct Cup visit www.nicclare.com to buy the book.