

TT No. 139: Keith Aslan - Sat January 16th 2010; **Canterbury City** v Coney Hall; Kent County League Premier Division; Result: 4- 0; Kick-off: 14.10; Admission: Free; Programme: £2; Attendance: 21 (17 home 0 away 4 neutral).

With Mr. Global Warming having apparently taken a holiday recently, this was my first football for a fortnight. Not a particularly great length of time in the general scheme of things but serious withdrawal symptoms were beginning to appear. These manifested themselves with screaming rage and uncontrollable sobbing every time I heard the words "The pitch is fine but the game is off due to Health and Safety Concerns".

No Health and Safety concerns at Canterbury and with most games in the area off due to waterlogging, the melting snow at their Hersden base had conversely produced an almost perfect playing surface. One to bear in mind for future wet weather trips. Three travellers set off from St Pancras on the super-duper new train service which followed the Channel Tunnel Rail Link for much of its journey. Less than an hour London to Canterbury. Gosh, that is moving. I temporarily suspended my dislike of rail privatization and had to admit this was really rather good. Well done, South Eastern Trains.

A walk from one end of Canterbury to the other for the bus station where four buses an hour made the fifteen-minute journey to City's current base at Hersden (numbers 8, 8a & 9 from bays C1 and C2). Along the route, in the village of Sturry, we picked up 50% of Stockport's most famous double act (and no, it wasn't the canine half). A three-minute walk from the bus stop is Canterbury City's present domicile, and former home of Kent County stalwarts, Tyler Hill.

Although still an hour before kick off the catering facilities were in full swing and tea and bacon butties were being shifted at an impressive speed. As in my last visit two years ago at Bridge the club is superbly run by a number of very friendly officials who were happy to take time out to answer any questions and generally make travellers feel welcome. Particular mention of the lady behind the tea bar whose effervescence, belied her years. What can you say about the programme? A 36-page bundle of joy with a smashing glossy photograph on the cover which looks as though it changes with each issue. The hard work and enthusiasm of everyone concerned in bringing football back to Canterbury is alas not appreciated by the local populace and a crowd of 21 was a sad illustration of the apathy this venture is attracting. Surely, with every other game off for miles around, a few more people could come out to support their local side.

It is over a month since the City's last match which resulted in a 4-0 victory, and showing the lay-off had had no effect whatsoever, they replicated the score-line today. They have ambitions to go higher, but with their proposed new ground in Canterbury still appearing no closer to fruition than when I last visited, they are talking about ground sharing at the superior facilities Whitstable or Herne Bay.

Don't do it. Having put so much work into bringing football back to Canterbury, it must be better to stay there at a lower level and wait your time rather than to gain promotion by playing somewhere else.

The ten-minute late start meant we missed our bus, thanks ref. But if you have time to kill, there can be few more enjoyable ways to do it than sitting in a Canterbury pub quaffing lager and watching the score at Chelsea going up into the stratosphere. With four contented travellers on the train going home, one of our number produced a box of "After Eight" mints he'd won on the raffle. I don't think Paul Daniels could have made them disappear quicker than we did. All in all, rather a good day out.

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