

TT No.132: Keith Aslan - Sat December 4th 2010 (KO: 15.02); **Windsor & Eton** v Hednesford; Southern League Prem Division; Result: 3-2; Admission: £9; Prog: £2; Att: 197 (h - 151; a - 22; neutral - 24).

I rarely do revisits for two particular reasons. One is the cost and second, I am usually disappointed that wonderful grounds with 'character' on my first visit have been transformed into banal functional grounds with Lego stands. However, with the weather having been none too perky of late my options were limited and a second visit in 35 years to Stag Meadow beckoned.

Windsor was packed with a heady mix of Christmas shoppers and tourists and had a very festive feel to it. Plenty of places to eat and drink, but having not won the lottery lately, I decided to wait until I arrived at the ground for sustenance. After a half hour walk to the south of the town, I arrived to be cheerily told by the gateman that there was no programme today. There was, and it arrived 10 minutes before kick-off, its tardy arrival being quite understandable given that it was only at 10 o'clock that morning that the game was confirmed as taking place.

Now here's the thing, the pitch was about as perfect as it could be for the time of year, the going was soft and even the most fussy referee could have found no grounds for calling the game off which leaves me very surprised so few matches took place in this part of the country. Fair enough, I can understand non-league clubs not having an incentive to play, but a certain league club just a few miles down the road should hang their heads in shame for calling their match off at midday on Friday with the weather forecast (which has been stunningly accurate of late) predicting there would be a thaw on Friday night. This club also had its pitch covered all week and it is beyond belief it would not have been perfectly playable at 3 o'clock on Saturday. They always advertise themselves as "Real football for real fans" a somewhat hollow boast. Yes Brentford, I'm talking about you!

Back to Windsor, and was shocked to read in the programme that this is likely to be Windsor's last ever match with a winding up order being held on Wednesday which they don't intend to contest. It is always sad when an established club falls by the wayside, even if you could criticise them for living beyond their means. They need £50,000 in the next three days which doesn't seem to be forthcoming. How much did the FA spend on England's farcical world cup bid?

Set against this, the game had a slightly surreal air and I didn't hear the impending demise mentioned by anybody throughout the afternoon. If it is the end at least the mascot who went round the ground shaking hands and doing high fives with the entire attendance dressed as a stag, will be able to use his Saturday afternoons to find a girlfriend.

The ground was exactly as I remembered it from 35 years ago. The tea bar on your right as you enter (the Minestrone Soup, was to die for), an impressive stand next to the changing rooms down the right-hand side and a long, covered terrace

opposite with a shallow terrace behind both goals. This was where the small but enthusiastic band of Windsor fans hung their flags including one that said Merseyside Royalists. Surely, they don't travel down from Liverpool for games!

If this was to be their last game it was a fitting finale, twice behind, Windsor came back to win an absolutely cracking game 3-2 to put the sprinkles on the trifle for this groundhopper. I really do hope Windsor somehow manage to keep going. Their patron was shown in the programme as Prince Phillip, although he couldn't make it today. Surely, he could help them out of their current difficulties. After all, his missus owns the ground!

07/20