

TT No.176: Keith Aslan - Sat 3rd March (KO 14.28); **Oakley Sports** v Wilshamstead; Beds County League Prem Division; Result: 0-0; Admission and Programme: Free; Attendance: 19 humans (14 home; 0 away; 5 neutral) 1 dog (neutral).

Decided to take in the A6 derby with both teams going for the coveted 4th spot in the league (well more sides in the Premier League aspire to fourth than actually winning it). Oakley Sports FC has a nice simple ground to get to for the carless, a half hourly fast service from St. Pancras to Bedford and a half hourly service from the bus station that stops right outside the ground. The bus goes on a one-way circular tour of the village and you get off and on at the same stop. Bizarrely there is also a bus stop on the other side of the road which must have been erected for aesthetic reasons as no buses go in the other direction. Ask for a Day Rover at £3.60 which allows you to ride around Bedford and district all day should you desire (I didn't). Although the bus was well filled, I appeared to be the only person on it that actually paid for the journey! The more athletic groundhopper may observe that the ground is only 3 miles from Bedford station and decide to walk it for which I have one word of advice. Don't.

Oakley Sports FC has a pleasant rural setting with a clubhouse and changing rooms situated behind the goal, as is the car park which is shared with the village hall and provides ample matchday parking. The clubhouse with Sky Sports, will serve hot drinks on request before the game (but not half time) and has an exciting selection of rolls which sold out very early due to the number of travellers in attendance. There are generally two types of groundhopper, the quick and the hungry. A club official came round distributing the excellent twelve-page programme and refused to take any money.

Oakley Sports hadn't had a 0-0 draw all season so it's not hard to guess what the result of this game was going to be. The longer the game went on the less likely it looked like the stalemate was going to be broken. The groundhopping fraternity was well represented at this one, including the famous one dog and his man who came down from the non-league heartland of Stockport.

As always when travellers get together rumours abound. Someone had spoken to the referee who said he got a programme when he officiated at Flitwick, which if true can be added to the list of known Beds. League issuers, Oakley, Wooton, Reinhold and Elstow Abbey. Another rumour, to which I give considerably less credence, is that from next season programmes will be compulsory in the top division of the Beds League. Flying pigs spring to mind, but they also put in an appearance when the Middlesex League said the same a few years back so who knows?

Oakley sports have two home games left this season, March 10 and April 21. You will have a good day out.

