

TT No. 104: Mike Latham - Sat 16 February 2013- Emirates Scottish Junior Cup Fourth Round Replay; **Kilsyth Rangers** 4-1 Kinnoull; Att: 300 (est.); Admission: £5; Raffle ticket: £1; No Programme; FGIF Match Rating: 4*.

Another classic Scottish Junior ground, one of the best I've visited, is Duncansfield, home of Kilsyth Rangers. After several dodgy Saturdays weather-wise it was great to head North again safe in the knowledge that there would be some play in the Juniors. My first-choice game, as it turned out, was never in doubt and the game was fast, open and full of incident.

Kilsyth is a town of around ten thousand inhabitants, located roughly halfway between Glasgow and Stirling. The town is around 200ft above sea level built on a narrow strip of land between the River Kelvin to the south and the Kilsyth hills to the north. The town has a rich historical past, long being one of the main routes between Glasgow, Falkirk and Edinburgh and close to Roman Antonine Wall and the Forth and Clyde Canal. Kilsyth was one of the earliest locations for the sport of curling and a bloody Civil War battle took place close-by in 1645. These days the major battles concern commuters fighting their way through rush-hour traffic towards Glasgow, Stirling and Edinburgh.

The main A80/M80 route from the M74 is located to the South of the town and on journeying to the ground I passed the outskirts of Cumbernauld where Clyde were preparing to play Rangers in a third division game at Broadwood. Kilsyth's economy was built on mining, farming and weaving, then on light engineering, transport and service industries. Many of the old miners' houses were demolished in the immediate post-war period and there are several housing estates in the town, including a rather pleasant-looking one to the west of the ground.

Junior football was played in Kilsyth before the war, Kilsyth Emmet reaching the Junior Cup semi-final in 1919. The present club was formed immediately after the war and the present Duncansfield ground developed. The ground has a superb long covered terrace on the far side and is laid out in classic oval shape with one of the widest pitches in the Juniors. On the near side are rows of well-maintained terraces, a dressing room building, pie hut and bar. The players emerge from the dressing rooms and enter the pitch through a tunnel constructed underneath the terracing. Both ends are grassed banks.

The first tie in Perth had been a tight affair though Kinnoull, I was assured had the better of the opportunities. The replay was equally close-fought until Rangers took the initiative with two goals in five minutes before half-time. Kinnoull's last chance of fighting their way back into the tie disappeared immediately upon the resumption when the home goalkeeper pulled off a fine save from a penalty.

Kilsyth went on to score twice more, playing some fine, inventive football in a game that was increasingly stretched and open. The visitors pulled back a late

consolation and though the score-line was cruel from their point of view, there was no doubt that Kilsyth deserved to progress.

Around 300 spectators, maybe slightly more watched the game unfold from the terracing a mild and calm afternoon- some of the club's more vociferous supporters occupied the section of the covered terrace opposite armed with some musical accompaniment and a mascot.

Kilsyth have a fine history in the Junior Cup, winning the competition twice, in 1955 and 1967 and losing in 1957. In their first appearance in the final they played before a crowd of 64,976 at Hampden, against Dunfermline Hibs. Famous former players include George Mulhall, David Stewart and Frank McGarvie, three of six Scottish internationalists produced by the club.

Realistically Kilsyth will struggle to replicate the feats of the teams of 1955 and 1967 this season- Auchinleck and Linlithgow are the clear favourites for the coveted title- but they will undoubtedly give it their best shot. They move on to a fifth-round tie at Kelty after another fine afternoon's entertainment in this splendid competition.

04/20