

TT No.20: Keith Aslan - Sat 28th September 2013; **Barrowby** v Clifton All Whites; Central Midlands League South; Kick-Off: 14.59; Result: 0-1; Admission and programme: £3; Attendance: 34 (11 home, 8 away & 15 neutral).

Barrowby play on the outskirts of Grantham, not to be confused with Harrowby of the same parish. Grantham has two claims to fame: it is the birthplace of one of England's most beloved prime ministers and in 1985 in a poll conducted by a radio station where it was voted the most boring town in the United Kingdom, a very impressive accolade given the quality of the opposition.

There is an hourly service from the bus station to a stop right outside the ground but nothing back after the game, not even from an early kick off. However, walk back towards Grantham for 15 minutes and you will come to a stop at Barrowby Gate where you can pick up a regular town service to carry you the rest of the way. For the athletically inclined, one hopper walked the whole way in an hour.

Much has been occurring at the football club lately and pictures in the programme show the work that has been done to get the club into the Central Midlands League this season. It is railed off on three sides with a small covered stand on the half way line and a few yards away is a brand-new changing room block and function room that doubles with cricket. Teas, coffees and pasties were available from when we arrived (an hour and a half before kick-off) served by the secretary's missus who I had spoken to earlier on in the week and who will give you all the info. you need as the secretary is rarely at home, spending most of his time doing jobs around the ground and without him the club would not be where it is today.

I am pleased to report that Clifton have recently reattached the "All Whites" moniker to their name. It was dropped in the mid-nineties due to complaints in some quarters of its racist nature! You what? Presumably the All Blacks rugby team is o.k. Just to set the politically correct at ease, they are not an Aryian Supreme team and they call themselves All whites because, believe it or not, the colours they play in are all white.

In what was not a "true" result" an entertaining game produced a richly undeserved win for the league leaders Clifton. Barrowby were distraught at the end, and quite frankly, I don't blame them. An honest draw after 90 minutes, the referee just kept playing on. And on. And on. There had been no time wasting whatsoever and if he added on every nano-second of time for injuries it couldn't possibly have come to more than a couple of minutes. After three minutes the Barrowby supporter next to me said the ref. was just going to keep playing until Clifton scored. "They always do this sort of thing for the big teams and that's why they're top of the league." It isn't, but you can see where he's coming from. Sure enough, in the 50th minute of the 45 Clifton scored, and with his work done the referee blew for full time soon afterwards. Now I have no idea the reasons for the added

time, but what I will say is that if Clifton win the league by a couple of points, I hope they remember to invite this referee to their celebration party.

When we arrived back at Grantham station the easy part of the day was over and now, we faced the problem of getting back to London without any trains. It amazes me our politicians are going to spend x billions (insert your own number, it will be just as accurate as all the other figures being quoted) on a brand new line to Birmingham, while they can only run trains for five days out of seven on the lines they have already got. The agonising rail replacement bus tootled down the A1 to Peterborough, no connection for 40 minutes of course and then onto a train already full of disgruntled people from the North. Tales of half an hour sitting at Doncaster, a long deviation through the Fens at 40 miles an hour, it was a horror story and compared with those who had been on the train from Leeds I got off pretty lightly. I can remember when passengers (for that is what customers used to be called) used to slag off British Rail and would say that things were going to change once it was privatized. Well they've been proved right, but probably not in the way they intended.

By the time I eventually got back to my penthouse apartment in downtown Hammersmith it was so late I'd missed the *X Factor* on TV. So not all bad then!

04/20