

TT No.72: Keith Aslan - Sat 22nd February 2014; **Deal Town Rangers** v North Kent Aces; Kent County Division 1 East; K-O: 14.40; Result: 2-2; Admission: Free; Programme: £1; Attendance: 18 (17 home, 0 away & 1 neutral).

With the rains having finally abated and the hosepipe ban season not due to start for a couple of months, the weather has finally disappeared from the news. Even the Daily Express would be hard pressed to make a headline out of today's weather, warm and dry. Ideal weather for a day by the seaside and soaking up the February sunshine on the prom at Deal is a pleasant prelude to a game of football.

Deal Town Rangers have this season relocated to the hamlet of Ripple, a couple of miles south of the town. For the carless, Walmer is the nearest station, from where it is a glorious half hour walk across the Kentish countryside along a clearly defined footpath (if you do it by road, the distance is at least twice as long). Their picturesque ground is situated in Ripplevale School, although it's not as a school as you would recognise, more a large mansion house.

Everything about this club is right, from the helpful and friendly officials; the supply of hot drinks and burgers throughout the match (which I wasn't expecting) and the programme. The Rangers have done a programme from day one in this league and their issuing credentials are proudly displayed on the cover - this was Volume 3 Number 9. Shame on the person who refused to buy one; does he really think a quid is too much to watch a football match (he should come to Chelsea!)?

The pitch itself was perfect, indeed they are about the only club for miles around that fulfilled all their home games on grass during the floods. One to bear in mind for future deluges. Today's match was between the bottom two but produced plenty of entertainment with the home side going two up before getting pegged back for the draw. Deal could have won it if their finishing had been up to par. Among their wayward shots, the number 11 must be in line for a miss of the season award. If Ronnie Rosenthal had been watching this, he'd be feeling a lot better about himself. There was the obligatory brawl with the referee showing extreme clemency in not booking anybody. He did give a long lecture to the two prime protagonists and made them shake hands afterwards which the Aces player was very reluctant to do and began to walk away before he was called back with the threat of further action. (If refusing to shake hands was a bookable offence games involving John Terry would be littered with yellow cards). The coveted handshake eventually took place with neither player making eye contact. They had both already shaken hands once in the forced pre match line up. That was a waste of time as well.

I can't end this report without a name check for the referee, so hats off to Martyn Staveley. He kicked off very punctually, had 6 minutes for half time and played two halves of football of 45 minutes each (like referees always used to and like it

says in the rule book). Well done ref and well done to all concerned with Deal Town Rangers. May you all prosper.

04/20