

TT No.59: Keith Aslan - Sat 31st January 2014; **AEK Boco** v Kingswood; Gloucester County League; Kick-Off: 14.00; Result: 3-2; Admission & Programme: £1.50p; Attendance: 58 (52home 5 away 1 neutral).

With much of the country beset by dodgy weather, the BBC forecast was spot on as usual with its prediction that Mr. Winter would be travelling on the Bristol by-pass leaving the city itself with perfect conditions for football. There would be no postponements round here this weekend so the ideal opportunity to have a second try at refinishing the Gloucester County League at AEK Boco. The first attempt was thwarted by the wonderful Great Western Railway when multiple signal failures meant I was just pulling into Bath at kick off time. You've got to laugh.

The trains behaved themselves today and I arrived punctually at the only place in England where much of the City Centre is a no smoking zone in what is described as a 'voluntary pilot scheme'. It's the voluntary bit I don't get. Boco play in Hanham, a suburb which has a variety of buses from the centre with the journey taking 25 minutes. Get off at The Hanham Blue Bowl and the ground is a 5-minute walk. I'd heard lots of good things about this club and they were all true. It is fully railed off with a steep slope behind one goal leading to another pitch on a lower level. The changing rooms and clubhouse run alongside the near touchline with a spacious car park behind. There is an overhang which would afford protection if the weather turns naughty. Inside you can enjoy the lunchtime footy on Sky Sports while tucking into full meals as well as hot and cold drinks and snacks. The club was formed in 2003 as a result of a merger between A.E.K. Rangers and, I kid you not, Boco Juniors. The juniors produced a string of players who went on to make the grade in the football league with their most famous old boy being that lovable rogue Julian Dicks. Programmes were available on the bar when I arrived one and a half hours before kick-off but as with a number of clubs, for some reason no attempt was made to sell them unless you actually asked for one so admission was effectively free.

The game was a corker, goalmouth action abounded and a shed load of near, and not so near, misses from both sides. Kingswood took the lead, then two quick goals gave the home side a half time advantage. The away team equalised in the second half before Boco hit the winner 8 minutes from time. This match will live long in the memory, not for the football but for the magnificent female referee who was a dead ringer for the actress Honeysuckle Weeks of "Foyles War" fame. Joanna Stimpson got the goal-nets checked while she and her assistants were doing their pre. match warm up and when a problem was discovered she got it fixed without delaying the game. Why do most other officials wait until kick off time to do this? She kicked the game off dead on time and by common consent from the terraces, controlled the game superbly. And was it my imagination or was there less bad language in this match than most! Andy Gray must be turning in his grave. Just wishful thinking.

