

TT No.82: Keith Aslan - Sat 9th May 2015; **Crewe FC** v Congleton Vale Rovers; Crewe & District Challenge Cup Final; Venue: Crewe FC; Kick-Off: 13.59; Result: 3-0; Admission/programme £2.50p; Att: (52 home, 21 away & 5 neutral).

It's cup final day, and, unlike it's more famous FA counterpart, the Crewe and District Cup has lost none of it's magic, although that could be because it didn't have any to start with. The town of Crewe owes its existence to the railway with the station once being the biggest in the world. Even today it is still easy to reach from virtually anywhere in England with hourly non-stop trains from London doing the journey in 1hr 35 minutes. The walk from the station is difficult to gauge, it took me 27 minutes, but anyone with two fully functioning knees could probably do it in around twenty.

Crewe's home is the Cumberland Arena, although it isn't really an arena (and come to that, it's not in Cumberland either). It is a multi-purpose sports facility opened by Kate Hoey in 2002. The pitch is surrounded by an athletics track, not as bad as it sounds as you can watch the game from inside the lanes with the pitch being roped off. There is a large public car park just outside the ground but no parking within it and the dressing room complex also contains a room where hot drinks were served at half time. The building has an overhang that would keep Crewe's average attendance (but not today's) dry in the event of rain. Its location next to the main railway line would go down very well with train spotters. I've never understood why Crewe don't add rovers, united or something to their name to differentiate them from their more illustrious neighbours instead of just calling themselves Crewe FC. However, this does seem to work, type Crewe FC into Google and this is the club that comes up first.

Even a *You-gov* pollster could probably have correctly predicted the outcome of this match. This was a David and Goliath encounter, only this time Goliath came up trumps with the home side fairly comfortably cruising to the silverware. Man, or rather woman, of the match was the Crewe Secretary. I've never seen a more enthusiastic ball girl and she probably did more running than some of the players. Apart from a few minutes either side of half time when she rushed in to serve the teas. This was the managers last game, maybe she could do that job as well next season.

A quirk of the programme was the colours the teams were playing in weren't on the line ups page but on the front cover. I've never come across that before. Another unusual aspect of the day was my Virgin train arriving on time and was only 16 minutes late on the return journey. Happy days.