

TT No.45: Keith Aslan - Sat 9th January 2016; **Aberbargoed Buds** v Ammanford; Welsh League Cup; Kick-Off: 13.32; Score: 1-0 - abandoned on 68 mins; Admission: £5; Programme: £1; Attendance: 71 (35 home, 13 away & 23 neutral).

Having treated my paramour to a romantic meal in Greggs the day before, I was given a day pass to go to football on Saturday, and with plenty of rain about I made for the wettest part of the country with the plastic meaning there would be no problems, which of course there were, more of which anon.

The Caerphilly Sports centre is a superb complex, only opened a year ago, which is actually some distance from the cheese producing town, but is easier to pronounce than Ystrad Mynach where it is actually located. From the station of the same name walk to the end of the Cardiff bound platform where a paved footpath will take you straight to the ground, about an 8-minute walk and less than half the distance using roads. Trains are every 15 minutes from Cardiff with a journey time of half an hour. You enter through the leisure centre and walk out to a very large stand on the opposite side which could comfortably hold ten times Aberbargoed's crowds, an attendance swelled today by a number of fans whose games had been called off. Up the stairs, is a comfortable 'kitchen' with hot food and drinks where you can look down on the game. Behind the left-hand goal, running lengthways is a 4G rugby ground with an even bigger stand than the football. As this is an artificial pitch the whole ensemble is contained within the obligatory 15ft high wire mesh fence. Switched on throughout the game on a very dark afternoon, the ground has floodlights but the match still had an early kick off at 1.30 (or as close to it as the referee could manage). Risca, also of the Welsh League, share the ground.

The rain was incessant and the problems started before kick off with the referee asking for a puddle to be swept away. Throughout the first half the puddle increased in size with about a quarter of the ground under water by half time. The problem here is that a river runs underneath which normally drains the pitch but there had been so much rain that the river was overflowing and rather than draining the pitch, the water was seeping up in the opposite direction causing waterlogging. Officials did some sterling broom work at half which made no difference whatsoever. The second half got going and 10 minutes in, the home side scored. They needn't have bothered as on 68 minutes the referee 'suspended' play. Out came the brooms, it didn't work at half time so it wasn't going to work now and after a couple of minutes of just spreading the water around over a wider area the referee didn't really have any option but to abandon proceedings which must have chuffed Ammanford no end having to come back again next week for what is not their shortest trip of the season. The rugby game going on next door was unaffected.

I really enjoyed my visit in spite of the premature end. The facilities here, also used by Cardiff City, are second to none. Obviously no serious ground hopper can

count an abandonment and would have to do a revisit. Luckily, I am not a serious ground hopper.

04/20