

**TT No.79: Keith Aslan** - Sat April 23<sup>rd</sup>; **AFC Glebe United** v Crown FMN; West Midlands Travel Stadium; Jeffs Cup Final; Kick-Off: 15.03: Result 1-4: Admission & Programme: Free; Attendance 72 (48 glebe, 14 Crown & 10 neutral).

With a report on this website of AFC Glebe's last home match the attendance is given as 'a generous 2' and presuming the author counted himself in the crowd figure there is clearly scope for Glebe to widen their fanbase. But the heady waft of silverware bought out all the glory hunters and their 'supporters' far outnumbered those of the opposition for today's Cup final.

The West Midlands Travel Stadium is home to, believe it or not, West Midlands Travel, also Sparkhill plus quite a few other Birmingham & District League clubs. They play at Kings Heath with a bus every 20 minutes to the ground from either Solihull or Bournville stations. I chose the latter, and while waiting at the bus stop, I was passed by a van with flashing blue lights and the words 'Cadbury Incident Support Unit' emblazoned across the side. One wonders what sort of major incidents occur at a chocolate factory- masses of children overdosing on Cream Eggs? Armed gangs trying to steal the chocolate money? The mind boggles. The Stadium (and surprisingly, according to the dictionary definition of the word it really is a stadium) has three pitches and a rather disappointing clubhouse which was totally devoid of the three 'F's, Fosters, food and football on the TV. But the pictures on the wall would send a bus enthusiast into paroxysms of ecstasy.

The Birmingham & District League have nine cup finals in April and May (see their website for details), all at different grounds where you wouldn't normally expect to find paper. Indeed, this is the first season that the league has issued programmes for these games, apparently at the suggestion of one of the committee members wives, as good a reason as any. And they are proper 12-page glossy efforts. Of all the finals I doubt there will be a more one-sided affair than this with Crown totally dominant throughout and you have to give them credit for managing to go in at half time a goal down. This was due to a combination of rubbishy finishing and even more rubbishy finishing with Glebe snatching a goal right on 45 minutes. Crown FMN (which stands for 'Forget Me Not'- no idea why) did manage to put a few of their myriad chances away in the second half with their third being a terrific solo effort that would not look out of place at a much higher level. Incidentally when they are casting for the next "Addams Family" movie Crown's goalkeeper will be a shoe in for the part of Uncle Fester.

I assume the referee, Jeff Shaw, was given this game by the league for symmetrical reasons with Jeff, 'reff-ing', Jeffs final. According to the programme he's been a referee for 44 years. Either he picked up the whistle at about 5 years old or he's on the same stuff as Cliff Richard. Whichever, he's ace in my book as with a load of stoppages in the second half he correctly blew up dead on 45 minutes using what the rule book calls 'discretion' knowing that if he'd carried on playing all afternoon it wouldn't have made diddley squat difference to the

outcome. If he really has been at it for 44 years he comes from an age when all referees knew how to time a game of football. Now he is one of the very few remaining that can correctly interpret a stopwatch.

An enjoyable day in Birmingham. Surely a contradiction in terms!

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