

TT No. 10: *Keith Aslan* - Sat 5th November 2016; **Headington Amateurs** v Lynch Pin; Hellenic League Cup; Kick-Off: 13.34; Result: 5-2aet (2-2 after 94 minutes); Admission: Free; Programme: £2; Attendance: 17 (13 home, 0 away & 4 neutral).

It's the first round of the FA Cup this weekend, (the only time of year where you'll hear Swindon Town described as giants) and this whetted my appetite for some knock out football so it was off to see the giants of Headington Amateurs take on the plucky underdogs of Lynch Pin in a game that encapsulates the magic of the Bluefin Sport Hellenic Challenge Cup.

To get to Headington's current residence you need to walk 18 minutes from Oxford Station into the City Centre (there are plenty of buses) where the number 10 gives you a 10 minute service to the Horspath Turn from where a further 10 minute walk takes you to the Horspath Stadium, which in spite of what you will read everywhere is not actually where Headington play. They play on a pitch outside, part roped, part chained, on the edge of a very large playing field, but separated by a small road that gives it a kind of enclosed feel. Not playing inside the stadium means you miss out on the large *Atcost* stand, but you also miss out on eyestrain from having to watch the game across an eight-lane running track and all in all the satellite pitch is probably a better venue from a spectator's point of view.

Teas were served up from the otherwise unopen clubhouse, apparently burgers are usually also available but the chef wasn't turning up today. The superb programme is available from the tea bar, a labour of love by the secretary/chairman/programme editor/teaboy. It's a pity such an effort hasn't got a larger readership with the crowd being a paltry 17, a quarter of whom were groundhoppers. Headington were thrown off their ground at the end of last season and the council have been very unhelpful in finding them alternative accommodation. As one committee member observed (and I've heard this many times before) the FA get billions of pounds from TV deals but contribute virtually nothing to help grass roots football.

The game was a corker, goalmouth action aplenty and even at two down Lynch Pin never looked out of it. They pulled one back with 20 minutes to go and deservedly equalised with 8 minutes left. And so, to extra time. Headington rather put the kybosh on a giant killing by scoring 20 seconds into the added period but Lynch Pin still had opportunities to equalise again until two further goals in the second period put the game to bed. On the down-side the language of both teams was appalling and I wonder how long it will be before the very young referee decides he can find better ways of spending his Saturday afternoons than being sworn at by a bunch of potty mouthed yobs. Note to the football association, those pre. match handshakes still aren't doing the job.

