

TT No. 17: *Keith Aslan* - Sat 10th December 2016; **AFC Fylde** v Brackley Town; FA Trophy; Kick-Off: 15.00; Result: 1-1; Admission: £8; Programme: £2; Official attendance: 641

Fylde's superb new ground is a 17-minute walk from Kirkham & Wesham station, an appropriate location given that prior to its somewhat naff name change this is what the club used to be called (without the station bit obviously). The stadium has what is commonly known as a 'wow' factor, you won't ever have seen floodlights like these before. A football league ground in all but name it has one end and one side filled with copious amounts of heavy duty terracing, the other side containing a large seated stand, while behind the far goal is where I assume the expansion work will take place once the club attain their inevitable football league status. I had a delicious pre. match meal in the club bar which has at least a dozen screens all showing different sports which I found a bit off putting.

It is ten years ago that I did Fylde's previous 'new' ground and I vividly recall the chairman telling me of their 15-year plan to get into the football league. I'd heard it all before, but in this case, it looks to be coming a reality with the team currently out of sight at the top of their league. It wasn't so long ago this club were playing on a public park in the West Lancs. League. Brackley have also come up in the world, and Hellenic League football is still fresh in the memory in this part of Buckinghamshire. The two clubs are rivals in the Conference North, although the more geographically astute might question Brackley's northerly status. Mind you this is the league that thought Bishops Cleeve was in the north of England as well.

I'd chosen today's match, not for the magic of the Trophy, but because with Fylde's well publicised ticket distribution problems there would be a much lower crowd for this fixture, and the reduced admission prices were a clincher. I bought my £8 terrace ticket from the nice young girl in the ticket office, but when I came to try and get in the entrances were shut and the only access was into the main stand which was the only part of the ground that was open. Unusual for a newly built ground, there were very few stewards to let supporters know what was happening and there was chaos as people who'd bought tickets for other parts of the ground were told to sit anywhere in the main stand with people who'd already bought specific seats (at £2 extra) turning up and finding them already occupied. When the decision was made only to open the main stand surely somebody would have had the common sense to inform the ticket office so they didn't sell tickets for the rest of the ground. Apparently not. The tickets rather grandiosely had printed on them 'A.F.C. Fylde - the football team of the Fylde coast' which must come as a bit of a surprise to Blackpool and Fleetwood.

It was nice for me to visit a ground like this when most Saturdays are spent where a rope is the last word in spectator luxury. I look forward to seeing Fylde in the football league soon and trust they will get their ticketing arrangements sorted

out. Today's game ended in a draw which means a midweek replay that Fylde could have happily done without. Still at least they won't have too far to travel what with Brackley being in the north of England!

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