

**TT No.25:** *Keith Aslan* - Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2017; **SLOUGH TOWN** v Chippenham Town; Southern League Premier Division; Kick-Off: 15.02; Result: 0-1; Admission: £10; Programme: £2; Official Attendance: 753

A second visit in three months to Buckinghamshire's premier tourist hotspot, this time to see how Slough are settling into their new accommodation. Prior to the game, I had a look at their old 'new' ground. Still there, derelict of course but stands and floodlights remain in situ. Apparently, the owner of the land died, his son took over and immediately threw the club off so he could build houses on it. The council said they would never give planning permission for anything other than recreational facilities so instead of getting a regular rent he's left with a useless piece of land. Like Aylesbury and Kettering's now dilapidated former homes it's all such a waste. This is third home ground I have seen Slough on, I first saw them at Stan Bowles's spiritual home, the Dolphin Greyhound Stadium (long gone), where they played for fifty years. If memory serves me correctly (and these days it doesn't always) it was 1970, a pulsating 3-3 draw in the FA Cup against Hillingdon Borough with the night on 4,000 crowd treated to the silky skills of Micky Droy among others. These were good times.

'Arbour Park' is easy by public transport, being a 15 stroll from the station, you don't even need a map. Leave by the back entrance, up to the main road, turn right and just keep going. A multitude of 'no parking' cones would suggest you won't get much closer to the ground in a car. While not a particular fan of new builds, I quite liked this one, six tiers of covered terracing behind each goal, a stand on the far side and on the nearside are the changing rooms and a very impressive grandstand, or it will be when it's finished! (April apparently). I spent the time waiting for kick off happily grazing on cheese and onion rolls in the welcoming bar cum tea room. There are benches and tables outside, ideal for a warm day which this wasn't. There must have been well over a hundred neutrals at this one, the expected configuration of hoppers was supplemented with a plethora of refugees from postponed fixtures. Like all new grounds, (apart from A.F.C. Flyde where they were actually needed) the place was overwhelmed with stewards. Why do new grounds need all these people, but not old ones? I think 'health & safety gone mad' covers it.

Slough are currently in freefall, top in December, this defeat, their third in succession takes them down to 6th, with Chippenham moving up to second. Mind you, if I was a fan, I'd just be happy they were on their own ground playing back in Slough. The results can come later.