

TT No.27: Keith Aslan - Saturday 28th January 2017; Barnetby United v Brumby; EC Surfacing Shield Semi-Final; Kick-Off: 13.28; Result: 1-4; Admission & Programme: Free; Attendance: 18 (16 home, 1 away & 1 neutral)

An early start for this one, and while it takes me a bit of time to get going these days, once I'd had the breakfast deal in Doncaster 'Greggs' (a revisit), I was good to take on whatever the world could throw at me which today was just a whole heap of pleasure. Barnetby is a village twixt Scunthorpe and Grimsby in the middle of the Lincolnshire Fens. Given the size of the place and its remote location it has a superb rail service leaving from the station's four platforms. As well as the hourly Trans-Pennine expresses to Doncaster, Sheffield and Manchester there are trains to Lincoln, Newark and Retford. These are needed to supplement the two buses a day that serve the place. Everything here is where you would want it to be, the pub is a 15 SECOND walk from the station, with the convenience store and chippie both at the end of the road that leads to the football ground. The chippie is inventively called '*ASalt and Battery*'. If there is anything else in Barnetby it passed me by.

Lee Fielden is Mr. Barnetby. Played for the team since 1993 (under 16's), he became manager at 22 in 2001. He is also Secretary, groundsman and programme editor. He makes travellers very welcome and took time out to talk to me in spite of his managerial duties. While the Scunthorpe and District League is some way outside of my area of expertise, I'm willing to stick my neck out and say this is the only club that issue programmes and badges. On Friday night Lee took my number and promised to phone if the predicted precipitation produced pitch problems which it didn't although the game took place on a gooey surface and some referees don't think you should play football in mud! The ground is pretty much what you would expect at this level with the addition of a new changing room block, built two years ago, from landfill, whatever that means. The name Barnetby United is proudly emblazoned across the entrance.

The E.C. Surfacing Shield (Lee's employers) is one of the many knock-out competitions round these parts used to supplement a somewhat meagre fixture list. Brumby are top of the league and unbeaten, they whipped Barnetby 6-0 a fortnight ago in the 'Hospital Cup' so hopes of a victory today weren't high. The home side were still in it, deep into the second half, but in the end, Brumby were just too good. One surprise was that the game had two kosher linesmen, not something you get for a league match. With the 1.30 kick off finishing at 9 minutes past 3 this must be one of the few referees that actually has a home to go to! I don't know what level the Scunthorpe and District League is, but the standard of football didn't seem very different from a lot of games I watch.

On the way home, the train passed Scunthorpe's new ground with the game still going on and looking refulgent with beaming floodlights. I well recall excitedly doing the ground opener here thinking this was going to be a once in a lifetime opportunity to do a new league ground. Even I occasionally get it wrong.

