

**TT No.31: Keith Aslan - Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017; Melksham Town v Clevedon Town; Western League Premier Division; Kick-Off: 15.03; Result 6-0; Admission: £5; Programme: £1; Attendance: 151 (129 home, 12 away & 10 neutral - quite a few more watched from the bar but I've not counted them as that's cheating!).**

Woke up this morning to find Kent covered in a millimetre of snow which was the excuse for a vast tranche of p-p's round these parts. Considering it's a winter game a lot of people don't seem to want to play football in the winter! So, it was 'go west old man' for me and a trip to Melksham's new ground. A bit of a slog by public transport. The station has a two-hourly service which doesn't fit in after the football, neither do the hourly bus services back to Chippenham. Plus, the train journey is the easy bit, it's a 50-minute walk from the station mostly through an endless housing estate and I felt the will to live ebbing away long before I reached the ground.

Good setup, *Atcost* stand on the far side, nearside is a large grandstand with bar and changing rooms, a la Slough but this one's finished. Full meals available in the bar, lunchtime footy on the big screen, nice vibe all round. You get a good view of the pitch from inside which a large number of wimps chose to take advantage of. I lost count of the number of people I heard complaining of how cold it was. In February. Who'd have thought it? Plenty of officials in evidence to keep the club going, all very friendly, but given it's a new ground, where were all the stewards? The programme was a good read and contained something I've never seen before, the players' wages. Everyone is on the same money (allegedly), £40 per. match including the subs. A nice little earner and I wonder how this compares with the rest of the league. While Melksham can afford to dole out £560 a game, I doubt a lot of other clubs at this level can. Their playing record is pretty impressive, the last 13 games have produced 11 wins and two draws and Melksham's overall tally of 62 points from 26 games would see them heading most leagues. Strangely, with clubs having played the same amount of games, they are only fourth, 10 points behind the leaders Bristol Manor Farm.

Clevedon are mid table but today just wasn't their day. After 20 minutes, they were down to ten men with a very contentious sending off (this is the third home game in the last four that the opposition has had a man sent off) The small bunch of vociferous Clevedon fans were not happy and I don't blame them. Then just after the half hour their goalkeeper collapsed in a heap with no one near him and had to be taken off. One of the subs. was the reluctant recipient of the No. 1 jersey, somewhat strangely he was about the smallest man on the field, and let's just say this wasn't his best position.

I got a lift back to Chippenham after the game from a fellow hopper (although there was a price to pay) and I arrived back at my now snowless Broadstairs dacha 2 hours earlier than anticipated. It wasn't only Melksham who got a result today.