

TT No.23: Brian Buck - Saturday 29th July 2017; Punjab United v Sporting Khalsa; Friendly Match; Result: 3-4; Attendance: 50 approx.

Today I decided to let the train take the strain and with engineering works going on around Dartford I lashed out a few extra pennies and got to Gravesend just 22 minutes after leaving London St Pancras International, as it is called these days. From there I caught a bus to the ground, which I had to wait some time for it to arrive. However, I was chatted up by some pink haired granny while I waited! The bus stopped almost outside the ground and I headed straight for the entrance where I picked up a free programme, on account of my senior citizen status. By now I had been joined by another groundhopping friend, a Leyton Orient fan. Next stop was the bar, but not the main one, as there were two private functions going on here today, namely a wedding reception and a 40th birthday party celebration. We were ushered into a small bar in between the two functions where we were joined by some home officials, who were very pleasant people to talk to and they were full optimism for the coming season, having been promoted into Step 6 football after winning the Kent County League last season.

So, this season they will play in the Southern Counties East League. Just before the start I attempted to buy some food from the outdoor burger bar. But despite there being no one in the queue I was told that I would have to order it from the bar we had just come out of! When asking why I couldn't buy it direct from the burger bar I was told "Security reasons!" I decided not to partake. As for the game, it was keenly contested with the visitors, from the West Midlands, proving to be the stronger side by the end. I watched the game from the seated stand and so kept dry from the rain. Khalsa scored after 5 minutes but by the 32nd minute Punjab were winning 3-1. It could have been 4-1 by the break, but as the potential scorer bore down on goal the half time whistle was blown. After the break Punjab wilted quickly, so allowing Khalsa to score the three goals they needed to win the match.