

TT No.60: Keith Aslan - Saturday 9th December 2017; **BENHALL ST. MARY** v Bramford United; Suffolk & Ipswich Premier Division; Result: 3-1; Kick-Off: 14.00; Admission and Programme: Free; Attendance: 22 (20 home, 0 away & 2 neutral)

With parts of the country closer to the Arctic Circle being beset by snow, the sun was shining in East Anglia, although admittedly it was a tad on the nippy side. The newly promoted home team had put on their social media site that they are surprised at certain club's lack of facilities and after match hospitality in the higher division, adding that 'some clubs don't even do a programme' (so they'll be in for a shock if they ever make it to the Southern League!). Previous non-issuers Benhall have been printing the paper all season, a decision they think compliments their higher league status. If only there were more clubs like this around.

Relatively easy to get to, the ground is a 25-minute walk from Saxmundham Station, with the meagre bus service not fitting in with the match. Benhall is a hamlet of which the football club is the focus of the local social scene, with the clubhouse being a very welcome respite from the biting cold. No food here but hot drinks at half time. Pre. match was spent supping the amber nectar and watching Chelsea lose to West Ham on the big screen, my disappointment at the result was tempered with the fact that in a way I should be pleased the Hammers won, as it's my taxes that subsidise our friends from East London. Never mind the National Health System, far better to put money into a football club that rakes in hundreds of millions every season and can afford to pay its employees a hundred grand a week, slightly more than nurses get I fancy.

Having been promoted last season Benhall have lost a few players but clearly replacements of the requisite standard have been sourced if today's game was anything to go by. Two departed to Henley of the same division because they are paying their players, which seems quite bizarre at this level. The game kicked off with a crowd of 7 but by half time had risen to 22 all of whom hung around for the second half. I'm not of course including the cowards who watched the match from the warmth of the bar. They must know they can't count it, real men stand on the touchline, we take hypothermia in our stride.

Nice part of the world, nice club with top of the range facilities make this an enjoyable outing but it won't be for the football that today will stick in the memory. Imagine my excitement when changing trains at Ipswich I found a brand-new, 'Greggs' opened up on the station. Two new ticks in one day, that's what I call a result.