

TT No. 109: Keith Aslan - Saturday 2nd March 2019; **COLDEN COMMON** v Liphook; Hampshire Premier League; Kick-Off: 15.00; Result: 2-2; Admission: Free; Programme: £1. Attendance: 44 (40 home, 2 away & 2 neutral).

Third ground I've seen Colden Common play at, and having been turfed-off their pitch in the centre of the village they've spent a few unhappy years at 'Boyes Lane' which was unsuitable for a number of reasons, not least it's remote location, before their debut today at Otterbourne's old ground just a mile from their home village. A place to call home at last and they seem to have settled in already with team photographs adorning the clubhouse walls including one of their Wessex League Div. 3 championship winning side of 2005 which was just before the ground graders lost the plot and it was Hampshire League football from then on. If you look at Colden's *twitter* feed there is a diagram of the new ground, drawn by somebody who must have been on drugs at the time, with three covered stands and details of the home and away supporters' entrances. If you believed that you would be disappointed, I didn't and I wasn't. A rural setting, railed on one side, roped on two others, with the far goal being off limits. The cosy clubhouse serves hot and cold drinks with some very welcome hot dogs appearing at half-time.

The grounds may change, the programme doesn't with Ian Steele, the magnificent secretary/ programme editor, issuing his usual 32-page colour matchday accompaniment. A fantastic effort which I only fully appreciated just how good it is when reading it on the train going home. Ian has been doing the programmes here since 1984, long may he continue. The nearest station is Shawford, with an hourly fast train from London, with the ground a half-hour-walk. Alternatively, there is a frequent bus service from Winchester that drops you 4 minutes away.

The referee phoned up at 2.25 to say his *Sat Nav*. had taken him to Kings Somborne which is miles away. You don't get this problem with maps! I was anticipating the dreaded late start but he turned up at 20 to 3. Now here's the thing, he started the game bang on time. How did he do this in 20 minutes when most of his colleagues can't manage it in an hour? There were two stoppages in the first half for the removal of doggy doo. There is a notice outside the clubhouse warning dog-littering carries a £1000 fine, but I suppose it's difficult to prove. Some people shouldn't have pets.

The game was a cracker, and having lost the previous league meeting 9-1, I suppose Colden were happy with the result in the end. A home side sending off early in the second half, my third on consecutive Saturdays, changed the course of the game, and from two goals up, they were left clinging on to a draw, although still having a number of chances to win the game on the break. Colden Common has just about the smallest goalkeeper I've ever seen, he can't have been more than five foot four, but he did the job proving that size isn't important, at least that's what all my girlfriends tell me but I've never understood why.

Timed my return home to just avoid those nice West Ham fans after their evening kick-off. Guess what, the train was cancelled and I ended up right in the middle of them. Oh, how I laughed.

04/20