

TT No. 114: Keith Aslan - Saturday 9th March 2019; **KIVETON PARK** v Penistone Church Reserves; Sheffield & Hallamshire Cup Semi-Final; Kick-Off: 14.00; Result: 1-2; Admission: Free; Programme: £1; Attendance: 49 (36 home, 12 away & 1 neutral).

Due to a heady combination of line closures, over running engineering work and signal failures it took over 3 hours to make the hour and twenty minutes journey from Broadstairs to London by which time my train north (and the next one) was long gone. In spite of the late hour I decided to take a chance and still made a beeline for Kiveton. The trains now all needed to be spot on, they were, and the programmes needed to last out until 20 minutes before kick-off, they did. The previous week, with an almost identical attendance, they had sold out by this time, all bought up by those pesky groundhoppers. You got a free hot drink with every programme, but as the drinks were the same price it seems a strange offer.

The team play a 12-minute walk from Kiveton Bridge station, (don't get off at Kiveton Park or you'll have a long walk). The train passes by their old ground which has acquired a new stand since my visit and is now home to Central Midlands side Renishaw Rangers. Kiveton's current ground at Wales High School has a raft of large containers housing the essentials including a tea bar with plenty of hot food and sweeties to keep you going. In it there is a framed photograph of a resplendent looking Herbert Chapman, Kiveton's most famous son. Spoke to the chairman before the game who admitted there is much needing to be done to progress upwards but the stumbling block is, no surprises here, financing it all.

This was Kiveton Park's biggest game for 13 years and they were hoping for a crowd approaching 200. This was wildly optimistic although the heinous weather probably kept the attendance down. They did have the advantage of a few away supporters when Penistone's first team game was called off in the morning. I was able to maintain my record of sending's off, that's the fourth consecutive Saturday I've bagged at least one, and today it was double helpings. 15 minutes into the second half, with the all the scoring done and dusted, a Kiveton player got first dibs at the '*Wash and Go*' thanks to a tackle Hannibal Lecter would have been proud to call his own. 12 minutes later his teammate followed him for a delicious head butt. From then on it was all Penistone but some doughty defensive work meant they were unable to build on their lead. In the first half a Kiveton player unchallenged, was about to cross the ball when play was halted as a Penistone player was prostrate in the penalty area. Rather than restart the game with a drop ball the referee gave what amounted to an unchallenged free kick to Penistone, their keeper kicked the ball upfield to his own player who then hoofed it virtually the length of the field back to the Kiveton goalkeeper. I can never understand why referees do this, and even more surprisingly why Kiveton didn't complain (they complained about everything else). Football really is a funny old game sometimes.

My return home was 3 hours shorter than the outward journey in spite of a glorious rail replacement bus journey from Canterbury when I miraculously transformed from a customer into a passenger!

04/20