

TT No. 120: Keith Aslan - Saturday 23rd March 2019; **WHITKIRK WANDERERS** v Knaresborough Town Reserves; West Yorkshire League Premier; Kick-Off: 14.29; Result: 1-2; Admission: Free; Programme: £1; Attendance: 36 (32 home, 2 away & 2 neutral, me and the assessor!)

Cross Gates, the first station out of Leeds on the York line, is the alighting point for this one and it's around a 15-minute walk from there. Leeds Station is undergoing a major renovation project which when completed will transform it from a bit of a tip into a bit of a tip with lots more franchised coffee outlets. Leeds is nature's way of telling me how lucky I am to live in the south of England, but I did get a new *Greggs'* tick out of today's visit.

By contrast to the City centre, the suburb of Whitkirk is very pleasant, almost rural, and Whitkirk Sports Club contains cricket, tennis and bowls as well as the football. Pre-match was spent in the clubhouse watching the lunchtime footie on TV - a pint of the amber nectar in one hand, my programme in the other. Life doesn't get much better than this. The football ground is set slightly apart from the rest of the complex, railed and fully enclosed, one of the better set ups in the league. The changing rooms have recently been enlarged to conform to ground gradings and if you don't want to traipse back to the clubhouse at half time, hot drinks and sweeties are available from a hatch.

Knaresborough have come a long way since my visit there. Back then their first team were playing at this level, while Whitkirk have been happily plying their trade in the West Yorkshire League for many years, just a well-run friendly club. With the home team 6 places and 16 points above their visitors, today's result was a bit of a surprise with the locals all agreeing this has to be put down as a bad day at the office. They were outplayed in the first half, only some quality goalkeeping and two metalwork strikes kept the score down to 0-2 at the break and there was some top entertainment listening to the Whitkirk manager's half time team shout. The gist of his rant was that they weren't playing very well although that's not quite how he phrased it. They improved slightly in the second half, but never enough to get something from the game. And they had a player sent off, I'm getting a lot of those lately.

A pleasing punctual start which might have had something to do with the presence of an assessor, an enjoyable match played in pleasant surroundings on a warm spring afternoon, what's not to like? And to round the day off nicely there was no wind which unlike last week meant the trains could run at more than 50 miles an hour without falling off the tracks.