

TT No.138: Keith Aslan - Thursday 18th April 2019; Kentisbeare v The Windmill; Devon Senior Cup Final @ THE F.A. GROUND NEWTON ABBOT; Kick-Off: 19.14; Result: 2-2 a.e.t. (2-2 after 95 minutes) Windmill win the shoot-out 4-2; Admission & Programme: £3 for old people; Attendance: 230 (80 Kent, 80 Windmill & 70 neutral)

Up until the arrival of my 'Traveller' one day earlier I was intending to have a night of alcohol fuelled debauchery in the Plymouth Badlands but when flicking through the aforementioned periodical this fixture leapt out of the page and grabbed me round the neck. I was billeted a three-minute walk from Plymouth station (the 'Caprea' if you're ever down that way) so it was an easy train ride to Newton Abbot for this game.

A 17-minute walk from the station I'd like to tell you of all the improvements that have been made to the ground since my last visit but as I can't remember a thing about it that won't be possible. The new Devon FA headquarters building was opened in 1995 by Bert Millichip, who must have been a very busy boy given the number of inaugurations he attended. So that was new to me. The large stand along the touchline was about the same vintage so the only the clubhouse would have been there on my last trip whenever that might have been. I did try to dig out the programme from the game but when you've got over 5,000 of them and a non-existent filing system, that was never going to happen.

The Devon F.A. organized the whole evening seamlessly and the numerous Cup Finals played here are all joyful 7.15 kick offs. The usual football fayre was available from when I arrived an hour before the start. The match was what I would call a proper football experience especially with the number of 'crowd safety stewards' in attendance. The programme was a glorious 36- page glossy production and was given away free with entry.

Kentisbeare have been going for 111 years and do their thing in the Devon and Exeter League while the Windmill are a mere 109 years younger with just two seasons behind them in the Plymouth & District League. Between them they produced a classic. I can't remember ever having seen a match with so much goalmouth action, I can't understand how there were only four goals in the game. 1-0 up at half time, Windmill had the wind taken out of their sails with two second half goals by Kentisbeare before a 88th minute equalizer sent the match into overtime. No more goals but the frantic pace continued right to the end of and both teams should take great credit for their efforts in this match.

With extra time and penalties this match finished about the same time as a normal 90 minutes in the Isthmian League and with the trains on their best behaviour I was back in Plymouth well before 11. Still time for some drunken debauchery, but these days a cup of Horlicks listening to a 'Book at Bedtime' is more my scene.

