

TT No.56: Keith Aslan - Saturday 10th November 2018; BOLDMERE SPORTS & SOCIAL FALCONS v Earlswood Town; Midland League Division 2; Kick-Off: 14.05; Result 4-1; Admission & Programme: £1 for old people; Attendance: 17 (12 home, 2 away & 3 neutral)

I am indebted to the Treharris secretary for informing me their game was called off 36 hours in advance giving me plenty of time to formulate a plan B. And what better than to spend a day than Birmingham? Practically anywhere but that's the downside of Groundhopping. Chester Road Station is a 15-minute ride from the City Centre with the ground a further 10-minute walk. Railed with a concrete walkway on three sides the area behind the far goal a no-go area. The complex contains two full-size pitches and a mini one and when I arrived it seemed like the entire child population of Boldmere had just finished their morning exercise. A large clubhouse with the lunchtime football on show supplied hot and cold drinks but no food. There was a chuck wagon set up adjacent to the pitch which drove off half an hour before kick-off! Obviously just there for the kids. Admission is by programme, a basic 4-pager a-la-Middlesex League, but most welcome given the sparse nature of the attendance. Amazingly there was a TV gantry and even more amazing one of the players was actually filming the match which he said was going to be put on *You Tube*. Now I don't know much about computer speak but I know what going viral means, and this won't.

Before kick-off there was a silence in honour of the war dead, so much more dignified than people clapping like seals for a minute which is so prevalent at games these days. If football fans are so ignorant, they can't stand in silence for a minute then don't bother with it. The weather was warm sunshine punctuated by showers, the BBC was spot on with its forecast, but why did most of the rain have to come down while the match was on. No cover of course. The game was adorned by a female referee and lineswoman who added greatly to the spectacle from my point of view. Very un-PC but women officials really do look great in all-black. Boldmere are top of the tree with Earlswood much closer to the roots but it wasn't all one way with the outcome always in doubt until the home side hit their fourth deep into the time added on for no reason. The fourth goal went in at one minute to five and was my signal to leave as I wanted to get home the same weekend. The game could still be going on now as far as I know. Can anybody tell me why these days it takes over two hours to play an hour and a half of football? Apart from the females on show, the other stand out feature of the match was the home side's number 10. Think Peter Crouch only taller and thinner. His all-important nickname was 'Matchstick' which was highly appropriate.

My day was topped and tailed with a Rail Replacement bus as *South East Trains* couldn't be bothered running any trains to Broadstairs this weekend. Whilst *Virgin* ran on time both ways, half the train was missing going up meaning it was jam packed especially with the *Classic Car Show* on at Birmingham International, and

the seat reservation system didn't work coming back leaving some 'customers' mighty displeased. The joys of privatization.

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