

TT No.72: *Keith Aslan* - Saturday 8th December 2018; **STAPLEFORD TOWN v Keyworth**; Notts Senior League Premier Division; Kick-Off: 13.58; Result: 3-1; Admission: Free; Programme: £1; Attendance: 20 (14 home, 4 away & 2 neutral).

Brian Bucks report on Stapleford set my juices flowing, and a copy of the programme on the home club's website sent my hormones into overdrive, this was the only place to be today. Brian got a bus from Nottingham, but if travelling from London, Long Eaton is the station with a 15-minute door to door service operated by *'Trent Barton'*, my favourite bus company. I have always had good experiences travelling with them although I do realise that having a favourite bus company is probably a sign that I should get out less. I read with interest that Brian temporarily lost his bus pass on the return journey. Not a problem I ever have as I think I might have mentioned before, they won't give me one.

Stapleford have recently returned to their home town and are intending to upgrade the facilities here with the plans, and more importantly, the finance, in place for permanent barriers and dugouts. Currently roped off, there are two Perspex dugouts that are unusable because a) they aren't anywhere near the pitch and b) Ronnie Corbett would have found them too small. There is a tea bar offering hot drinks and sweeties with a signed photograph of Kenny Burns on the wall from his heyday when he still had hair and was going around maiming people. It was spoilt by the awful music being played at full blast from the adjacent dressing room. 'It inspires them' explained the secretary. The only thing it would inspire me to do would be to cut off my ears. I was joined by amazing hopper John Stancombe, now totally blind but managing to make the journey here solo by train and taxi from his Norwich base. Kinda' puts my problems into perspective.

1-1 at the end of a bitchy first half it all kicked off in the second with Keyworth being the major culprits, whingeing at the referee at every decision that went against them. I guess the pre. match 'Respect' handshakes didn't work then? Keyworth's hopes of victory went the same way as Ant McPartland's no claims bonus when they had a player sent off midway through the second half. We then had a four-minute timeout while they argued about it, Stapleford scored direct from the free kick, then another three-minute break while they argued about it some more. 'You've ruined the game ref.' screamed the opposition. Apparently, nothing to do with the players, the problem is all down to the referee sending a player off for committing a sending off offence. A man disadvantage and much more interested in admonishing the referee than playing football, Keyworth went down to a well-deserved defeat.

This was my third match on the trot that kicked off on time, and two of them were correctly timed at just 90 minutes, although I suspect today's 3.43 finish was down to the referee deciding 45 minutes aggravation was quite enough. It meant I reacquainted myself with the joys of *'Trent Barton'* buses 15 minutes earlier than anticipated. On the train back to London the buffet staff went through the train

handing out free raffle tickets. They announced the winning numbers with prizes ranging from free teas and coffees to bottles of wine and first-class upgrades for your next journey. What a nice idea and it was well received by all of the customers (nee passengers). Obviously, I didn't win anything.

04/20