

TT No.91: *Keith Aslan* - Saturday 19th January 2019; **PARK VIEW** v Bedford (they dropped the United bit 10 years ago without telling me); South Midland League Division 1; Kick-Off: 15.03; Result: 0-1; Admission and programme: £5 for young and old alike; Attendance: 16 (3home, 10 away & 3 neutral)

Park View don't actually have any supporters, the three 'home' spectators were the secretary, the programme seller and a WAG who turned up 28 minutes into the match.

I awoke this morning to see the winter sun beating down on my Thanet dacha but in the far-off land they call 'The North of England', snow was sweeping across the Staffordshire tundra, putting paid to my first choice of Foley Meir. But unlike our wonderful politicians I had a plan B and this was it.

Park View, a 15-minute walk from Wood Green tube station, play at a ground graders wet dream. A 2,000 seat stand down one touchline with a massive bank of terracing along the other, just what you need for 16 people. The 'New River Sports Stadium' is also home to Rugby League Club London Skolars, which with that spelling they obviously aren't. The view from the top of the stand must be one of the best vantage points in non-league football, it's just a pity there weren't more to people to enjoy it. If you came to a match against a team without such a large away following (by South Midlands standards) you could get very lonely. There is a spacious on-site café with hot drinks and nibbles served by a very obliging young lady.

I last saw Park View 5 years ago during their brief spell in the Middlesex Premier League. Same ebullient secretary, they played on the adjacent pitch, about the only 3g 'cage' I've come across containing a substantial amount of terracing. They only played a couple more games after I watched them before being thrown out after some injudicious tactile activity between one of their players and a referee. When the club refused to identify the offending player, the league took the view of collective culpability and expelled them. For some reason the detailed club history in the programme didn't mention any of this.

The real victims were the groundhoppers who were saving the ground for a rainy day and missed out. The programme then, as now, contained much about anti-racism, all very laudable but I'm not so sure about Park View's diversity credentials. I don't think you'd get very far in their team if you weren't Ghanaian. They pottered around the footballing backwaters for a few seasons before resurfacing in the South Midland League and gaining promotion at the first attempt. They are obviously thriving, but I can't imagine where the money comes from to keep the club going. A great set up, they even have a 'programme's officer' although a fellow hopper told me it doesn't mean what I think it does.

Harringay Borough's ground is only 400 yards down the road and you could hear the cheers as they beat my local bunch of no-hopers, Margate. When I did Harringay

you couldn't even hear the crowd when you were in the ground. Good to see them progressing. Today's mid table match mirrored the one I watched a week ago with the away side snatching the only goal a quarter of an hour from time. Park View are a great little club creating a top notch matchday experience but I can't help thinking that a 2,000-seat stadium, programme and a café for an attendance of 16 isn't sustainable in the long run.

04/20