

TT No.94: *Keith Aslan* - Saturday 26th January 2019; **CAISTER** v Scole; Anglian Combination Premier Division; Kick-Off: 13.58 (yippee); Result: 4-2; Admission: Free; Programme £1 with a free slice of cake for every one purchased; Attendance: 39 (37 home, 0 away & 2 neutral)

If like me football programmes and wanton greed are your two primary lifestyle choices then this is the club for you with a free slice of cake issued with every programme (what am I going to do with six programmes?). It proves you can have your cake and eat it but I wouldn't hang about paying Caister a visit as it can't be long before they sus that a 16-page proggy. and a slice of cake for a quid is never going to be a money spinner.

Great Yarmouth is the railhead for this one with frequent buses travelling three miles up the coast to Caister. The ground is partly roped, partly railed with a new changing room block containing a comfortable refreshment room that doubles as a village hall. There is a large banner outside advertising that here is the headquarters of the 'Darling Cat Lounge' providing 'Cat therapy in your local community'. They meet on Thursdays if you're ever up this way but it seems you have to bring a cat along, a safe environment for them to interact with other felines apparently. Their facebook page is a wonder to behold with lots of photographs of the cats Christmas party and this wonderful institution is summed up by one poster 'It's a great way to meet cats'.

Back to the football, twice league leaders Caister took the lead only for Scole to equalise before the third went unanswered, the fourth was a penalty in the 93rd of the 90 minutes. Prior to the match I visited a nearby pub the 'Never Turn Back' which is adjacent to the site of Caister's original ground. Situated on the edge of a whopping great Caravan Park the place must get packed in the summer but today there were just two of us (plus two very sociable dogs) enjoying the thrills of Accrington Stanley v Derby County on the big screen. The somewhat unusual pub name is the motto of the local Lifeboat crew - Caister men never turn back.

With the Non-League Paper having an in-depth article on ground grading by the Head of the National League System now is an appropriate time for a rant. Top of the league, Caister will never be allowed promotion with this ground (getting promotion by winning football matches isn't an option). They have a site earmarked for a new ground on the outskirts of the village (you pass it on the bus) but of course finding the money to build it is a different matter. I told them they were better off staying where they are, promotion just wouldn't be worth the expense and hassle. I could write a thesis on what's wrong with the article on ground grading in the N.L.P. but to quote the sentence relevant to Caister "People who pay to watch football want to watch football in good facilities". Rubbish. Caister is a village club and proud of it. They provide a local football team for 40 or so local people to watch on a Saturday afternoon and the spectators are getting the facilities they expect from a club living hand to mouth that's kept going by a

host of hard-working volunteers. Yes, the fans wouldn't say no to a covered stand, but unlike the F.A. they live in the real world where they understand the money isn't there to build them for clubs like Caister. In the unlikely event the new ground, enclosed with stands and floodlights, is ever built I would expect it would still only be the same 40 or so that turn up every week. Caister are a wonderful club, just keep on doing what you're doing at this level, serving the local community. Rant over (until next week).

04/20