

TT No.98: Keith Aslan - Saturday 9th February 2019; **WAVENEY** v Beccles; Anglian Combination Premier Division; Kick-Off: 14.01; Result: 0-1; Admission: Free; Programme: £1; Attendance: 48 (43 home, 3 away & 2 neutral)

More red-hot rail replacement bus action for me today as with most weekends for the past three years the line was shut from London to Ingatestone. The return journey was pretty awful, more of which anon, but this is what 21st century travel on the privatized railways is all about. The train stopped at Beccles on the way up and I was expecting to be inundated with away fans travelling to the match. My expectations were unfulfilled.

Waveney's ground is a half hour walk from Lowestoft station, there are plenty of buses. Neat, tidy and fully railed, next to the characterful pavilion is a small portacabin selling hot drinks, snacks and a 20-page glossy full colour programme. The ground is adjacent to the old Lowestoft to Great Yarmouth railway line. Long gone of course, this part of the track has been turned into a road. Somebody has a sense of humour, it's called Beeching Drive. Mention for the referee, Matthew Hudson from Thetford who today was officiating his 500th match and I believe there was some sort of presentation after the game. Beccles won the toss and elected to change ends to have the wind at their backs. This proved to be a shrewd move as the only goal on 20 minutes was a lob from nigh on the half way line that was very much wind assisted. A cracking first half the game lost its way a bit in the second but still overall a good 96 minutes entertainment. Mr. Hudson even celebrated his milestone by having a proper drop ball (you know, the type it says you should have in the rule book).

Shared a taxi back to the station with a fellow hopper, so in good time for my train home. Cancelled. How I laughed. We spent an hour in the *Weatherspoons*, next train delayed, arrived at Ipswich one minute after onward connection was due to leave, no problems here, that was late as well. Turfed out at Ingatestone for a bus to Newbury Park. Tootling down the A12 at night on a Rail Replacement Bus isn't as romantic as it sounds. Eventually arrived home somewhat later than expected. Did meet a group of about a dozen young Amish on the train from Stratford, you don't see many of them about. Apparently, teenagers are sent out to travel Europe unchaperoned to get a taste of the outside world to see if they want to spend the rest of their life in the Amish community. What stunned me was that most of them seemed to want to go back to their 17th century lifestyle. I suppose after travelling round on England's trains a horse drawn buggy would seem to be a pretty effective method of transport. Never got to the bottom of why God doesn't want them to have electricity though.

Changing trains at Stratford I have to walk through *Westfield Shopping Centre* which was teeming with people. Not for the first time I wondered what sort of saddo does their shopping at 9 o'clock on a Saturday evening. Probably the same

sort of sardo that spends 12 hours travelling to watch an Anglian Combination game!

04/20