

**TT No. 105: Keith Aslan** - Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2020; **EARSHAM** v Castle Acre Swifts; Hadley & Ottaway Anglian Combination Division 3; Kick-Off: 13.59; Result: 2-2; Admission: Free; Programme: Donation; Attendance: 26 (21 home, 0 away & 5 neutral)

It's a weekend so Broadstairs station is shut again, oh joy the opportunity for another excursion to and from Ramsgate on a Rail Replacement Bus. Oh, and just so you're up to date, it's not called 'engineering work' any more it's 'Rail improvement programme'. Improvements! They're having a laugh.

Earsham requires a 581 from Diss station, also the service you want for Harleston and Bungay, although when I did them there were a lot more buses. You either got to Earsham three hours before kick-off or 22 minutes. I chose the latter option which didn't present any problems with the ground a three-minute walk from the bus stop. The return couldn't be better with a bus at 3.58 which I made with ease thanks to a punctual start and a 10-minute half-time. Just as well as the bus was three minutes early, arriving back at Diss 5 minutes early. Methinks the driver was booking off when he got back to the bus station. Had I missed it only 41 hours to wait for the next one.

Didn't have time for any sightseeing in Earsham but the Queens Head does food and has lots of those strange sounding beers that people seem to enjoy. It had an advert in the programme and boasted of a 'real fire'. I wonder what a pretend one looks like? The ground was just what a village ground should look like with a rope along the nearside being the sum total of spectator facilities. Hot drinks were available from a hatch in the changing room block served by 'Gyles', programme editor and ground hopper who regularly appears on hops. With storm Ciara still pottering round the Atlantic the sun shone gloriously throughout the match, a day when it's almost good to be alive.

This lived up to its billing as match of the day round these parts. Top v second, Castle Acre Swifts started, and ended, six points in arrears but with two games in hand. They were 1-0 up at the 10-minute half time, Earsham turned it round to lead 2-1 then with 10 minutes to go Swifts got a penalty and something I've never seen before occurred, although as it was at the far end of the pitch, I didn't see it very well. The penalty was 'scored' and the referee pointed to the centre circle. The club linesman, pointed out that it was a 'double hit'. The ref. Changed his mind, disallowed the goal, and gave a free kick to Earsham. Surprised the referee didn't spot it himself. From my distant vantage point the penalty didn't look quite right but I couldn't tell why. Fair play to Castle Acre who didn't whinge about it and five minutes later they scored a cracking equalizer.

In spite of the rail replacement bus I was still home in time for 'Casualty' so another good day.

