

TT No.114: Keith Aslan - Saturday 29th February 2020; **KENSINGTON & EALING BOROUGH** v Godalming Town; Combined Counties Division One; Kick Off: 15.02; Result: 4-2; Admission: Free; Programme: On line nonsense but 'a friend' printed one off for me; Attendance: 58 (27 home, 19 away & 12 neutral)

Considering they've only been going since 2012 Kensington have certainly got around. They began life as AFC Hillgate playing at the West London Stadium. Then a move to Viking Sports old ground, no idea how they got that up to standard, it was falling to pieces the last time I saw it. Next up was Amersham, then Bedfont followed by Leatherhead and finally they were playing home games at Raynes Park Vale, except that they weren't due to the pitch being in a permanent state of unplayability. This has prompted them to see out their remaining fixtures this season at the Club Des Sports in Acton causing much excitement among the groundhopping fraternity. Although not quite up to Combined Counties standard (Mr. *Atcost* seemed to be the only thing missing), the league has given Kensington special dispensation to use the ground for the rest of the season to enable them to fulfil their fixtures. This is what is called common sense - it will never catch on!

Being in London there are plenty of transport options but Acton Central was most people's station of choice, a 10-minute stroll from the ground. Coming from Euston requires a change at Willesden Junction whose signage boasts that not only is it the London Borough of Culture 2020 but also the alighting point for Harlesden Town Centre, neither of which is much of an incentive to get off a train. On the way to the ground I stopped off in the park for a cuppa and such is the vagaries of the weather, I drank it alfresco with the sun beating down on my bronzed body while most of the rest of the day was pretty gruesome. My Dad used to take me round this park but it is very much changed, as I suppose you would expect in 60 years. Although spending much of my life in the locale the ground had passed me by and as all the hoppers agreed, here is a little gem. Although 3G it is a 'proper' ground' with the green chain link fence gloriously absent. Spacious surrounds and a raised viewing platform with an overhang which as we all discovered isn't much good for keeping out the hailstones when the gale is blowing in the wrong direction. This ground should be on every hoppers bucket list. Behind the goal is a very comfortable café but even the Premier League wouldn't charge the prices in here. The coffee was delicious, but not £2.90p delicious.

As well as the great and bad of groundhopping, Godalming bought a large following with them including a group of youngsters who sang and shouted throughout the match and apparently follow them everywhere. And this for a team that's bottom of the league. The programme was an online only abomination. From the JMA stable the club could have made a few 'Bob' today by printing a few copies off. As soon as it went up on the net on Friday night, I was phoning all my friends (not really friends but people who haven't blocked my number yet) to see who was going to the game and also knew how to print off the programme. Alan Wiggins

progeny meant I had a black and white paper version in my clammy hands with the promise from another source of a full-blown colour one to follow in due course. Oh happiness.

The match was captivating with Kensington going two up which against bottom of the table, should have been it, but Godalming fought back to draw level amid wild celebrations from their younger fans. The home side eventually won through in a game containing some good goals but Kensington's 4th came direct from a corner. 'I've been practising that in training'. Who are you kidding?

Another joyful day out apart from, you've guessed it, the train journey. For the first time in 5 weeks we actually have trains running through Broadstairs (I'm getting rail replacement bus withdrawal symptoms) but so as to make sure their 'customers' are still stuffed, the fast line to London was closed meaning it took even longer to get to the capital. And the trains were packed with anybody getting on beyond Sittingbourne having to stand up. It does make me cross.

04/20