

**TT No.4: Keith Aslan** - Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2019; **HORSHAM** v Crawley; Pre-Season Friendly; Kick-Off: 15.02; Result: 3-1; Admission: £6 for old people; Programme: £2; Attendance: 1080 (500 home, 500 away & 80 neutral)

Previously the pre. season games here were all ticket, but changing it to pay on the gate reaped a rich reward for Horsham, a visit from me! Clearly whoever decided to make the match's all ticket in the first place has spent too much time listening to 'Optimism F.M.' with their first two games attracting 328 and 223 spectators. A few more at this one for the 'Official Ground Opener', somewhat of a misnomer with it being the third match played here in the past week.

I liked the ground, a very large clubhouse behind the near goal, two small examples of Atcost architecture along the left-hand side and another one behind the far goal but the piece-de-resistance is the capacious stand straddling the right-hand touchline built without recourse to the *Atcost* Shop. Surrounded by a wooden fence it is pleasantly situated adjacent to a golf course in the middle of the Sussex countryside, although I'd have preferred it to be situated in the middle of Horsham. Here lies the rub, great on a summer's day like today but how many people will traipse out here on a cold November night. It's two miles to the south of the town, but in fairness there is a regular bus service from outside the station. The Camping World Community Stadium has a plastic pitch with Crawley using it as their training ground, and after eleven years ground-sharing you can sense the pride and relief of all Horsham's officials and supporters at their return with the programme detailing the trials and tribulations of their homecoming. I wish them well.

I travelled cross country to get to this one, it took most of the weekend but was much cheaper than going via London. Must offer my congratulations to the hard working managers on the privatized railway who have actually managed to come up with another name for the Guard with passengers on Southern Trains being greeted over the tannoy by an 'On Board Supervisor' They may be the world's worst railway company but boy do they have inventive titles for their staff. Horsham is a very pleasant well to do town, and home to one of Groundhopping's most eccentric practitioners. Fortified by a scrumptious Steak and Chips in a town centre hostelry I walked out to the ground. Although it took me 45-minutes, it should take anyone with two fully functioning knees a bit less. Inside the stadium there were massive queues for food and drink but fortunately the club house had a drink's and a sweetie machine. If you hear any stories about me stuffing my face with chocolate before the game ignore them, its Flake news.

Crawley had had a match with Brighton the previous evening meaning they didn't exactly field their strongest eleven here, with the ubiquitous A. Trialist appearing at regular intervals on both team-sheets. An average pre. season friendly with Horsham going a goal down before getting better the longer the game went on while Crawley ran out of steam. The programme was a really good read and

excellent value, but you can't say the same about the admission prices advertised therein. £11 for adults but £60 for the over sixties. A bit steep, if I go again, I shall have to adopt a subterfuge and pretend I'm under 60 and just led a hard life. The programme also referred to Crawley as a former new town, but surely you could say that about everywhere? It did raise a serious point however, how old does a place have to be before it ceases to be a new town? I spent much of the journey home mulling this over in my mind. Note to self, must get a life.

04/20