

TT No.42: Keith Aslan - Saturday 5th October 2019; **CINQUE PORTS** v Folkestone Town; Kent Junior Cup; Kick Off: 14.00 on the button; Result: 5-3; Admission: Free; Programme: £1; Attendance: 26 (19 home, 2 away & 5 neutral)

Now pay attention as this gets very complicated. Nine years ago, Deal Town Rangers were formed. They changed their name to Deal Community Sports and are no relation to the Deal Town Rangers currently playing in the Kent County League. Next name change was to Deal Sports, the club was a hopper's dream having played at three different grounds in Deal and Walmer. At the beginning of last season, they became Margate Sports in a surprise move to groundshare at Margate. The chairman wanted the club to progress into the South East Counties League, the secretary and founder Bob Chivington, more of whom anon, didn't. So, while Margate Sports first team became Thanet United Bob took the reserves back to their spiritual home in Walmer under the name of Cinque Ports. And if you understood all that you should be on the Krypton Factor.

The club play at Markewood recreation ground which is a 20-minute walk from Walmer station. They are currently renovating the dilapidated changing rooms and creating a tea room inside the building but astonishingly are getting complaints from their neighbours. Apparently, they think the land should be for the exclusive use of dog walkers and the like. Playing football on a recreation ground, whatever next! I'd have thought the word 'recreation' was a bit of a giveaway. Bob Chivington has been with the club since its inception and does more or less everything except play, when I arrived an hour and a half before kick-off he was walking up and down the pitch cleaning up the doggy doos having already put the corner flags out and the goal nets up. He also edits the 36-page glossy programme, today's issue was Volume 9 number 4. Without people like Bob football at this level would simply cease to exist. Their opponents Folkestone Town play in the Ashford and District League, one of the few local leagues still going around these parts.

Pre match I took a stroll along the seafront with a fellow hopper to Walmer Castle. The town is steeped in history, most famously it was the landing point in 54AD for the Roman Invasion of Britain. You can see why they chose this spot to land with its castle and High-Speed rail link to London. There is a monument in the town to commemorate the invasion, the surprising aspect of it is that it was erected in 1946. I would have thought the local council would have had more pressing matters to attend to one year after the end of the war. It was the first of only two successful invasions of England, if only I could remember where the other one took place, or even the year.

A good turn-out of hoppers from all over England, and Stockport. I felt a bit of a fraud only travelling half an hour down the coast. The referee made the secretary put up a rope along the nearside of the pitch 'to give the linesman a bit of protection' (from 26 people?) Spectator comfort is well catered for with seats dotted around the ground for the infirm and the lazy, so that's me on both counts.

But be aware if it rains you will get wet. Plenty of on pitch action, 25 minutes and the 'Ports' went 1-0 up, by 28 minutes they were 2-1 down before going in for an eight-minute half time 3-2 to the good. Match finished up 5-3, a bit disappointing for me as with no trains for a while after the match I was hoping for extra time, not a desire shared by my compatriots who were travelling in the opposite direction with much less waiting time involved.

Back in my country dacha before six, if only all ground-hopping was this easy.

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