

**TT No.87: Keith Aslan** - Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2020; **CLYST VALLEY** v Witheridge; Devon League; Kick-Off: 14.19; Result: 2-4; Admission & programme: £2 for old people; Attendance: 22 (13 home, 3 away & 6 neutral)

No fast trains to London for the previous two weekends but joy of joys today the High-Speed Line has reopened. Too easy so they shut the line through Broadstairs instead. After a long day what could be better than being 'turfed-off' the train at Ramsgate on a Saturday night for some heavy-duty rail replacement bus action through Thanet's dark underbelly. That's enough complaining about the trains. No, it isn't. When I got off at Exeter so did everybody else. No trains between Exeter and Plymouth either. I hobbled to Clyst St. Mary by walking from Newcourt on the Exmouth branch (although locals said the previous station, Digby and Sowton, is slightly nearer). There are buses to the village from Exeter but in a perfect example of unintegrated transport the walk from the train station to the bus station in the city is almost as long and much hillier. I managed to walk both ways from Newcourt station without collapsing in a heap which was good, but it took me somewhat longer than the 28 minutes Mr. *Multimap* said it should for normal people.

A nice ground, fully railed, wooden dugouts and changing rooms with an overhang that would shield spectators from any precipitation. A homely portacabin served hot drinks with pictures of bygone teams on the walls. Pride of place went to a certificate proclaiming Clyst as the '*Sunday Independent's team of the day*' for February 18 2006. An accolade I doubt they've come close to emulating since. Room for improvement on the playing front, they've lost all their games so far this season with a couple of 0-6's, a 0-7, 0-8 and 0-12 among their results. Witheridge aren't that much better but considering these are the two most rubbishy teams in the league they produced an entertaining game of football. Clyst didn't look at all bad and they had high hopes of getting their first win this afternoon. Alas it was not to be.

A glossy programme here including 28 adverts, I counted them going home, it was a long journey. I bow to no one in my admiration of the person who went around getting them. Clyst seem to think they have to issue in the Devon League. News to me but if true it's opened up a rich new seam of paper for the collector. On the subject of programmes, a year ago I went to Lampton Park in the Middlesex County League and they didn't issue. Last week they folded, that's what you call karma.

The Clyst number six was a headcase. At one stage in the second half he was adamant the ball went out of play screaming abuse at the poor linesman for not giving a throw on (yes, a throw on). All he received for this outburst was a trip to the sin bin, a pointless exercise on a par with pre-match handshakes. Still fuming when he got off the field, he was kicking the advertising boards and throwing water bottles around while the rest of the bench tried to calm him down. Now here's the thing, the neutrals were much closer to the incident than he was and we

all agreed the ball not only didn't go out of play, it was nowhere near. After he's visited an anger management counsellor, I would suggest that this lunatic pops into *Specsavers* on the way home. Whatever he does he shouldn't be playing football.

On the bus home from Ramsgate Station a young mother got on and said to her five-year-old 'Isn't this exciting?' Surely the first time in world history that anybody has described a rail replacement bus as 'exciting'.

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