

01/11/05 TT No.94: Paul Roth - Retford United (NCEL1)

Retford United vs. Brodsworth Welfare; F A Vase 1st round proper; Res: 4-0; Attendance: 180; Programme: £1; Entry: £4.

G N E R has always proved the quickest way to get up country for me and I made use of some cheap rail tickets (singles each way) to travel to Nottinghamshire to take in this F A Vase tie.

On arriving at Retford and walking into town things don't auger well as my first impressions are of a somewhat dowdy place but a pint in the GBG listed Rum Runner and a stroll into the market square, quickly followed by another beer in the Turks Head, have me warming to the place. Walking out of town along Laverton Road you pass over two bridges - as per Mick Burt's article in the Traveller of a couple of weeks ago - and arrive at Cannon Park, Retford's home, now totally surrounded by lovely rolling green countryside. A real contrast. Inside the stadium is a most impressive clubhouse bedecked with TVs showing Sky's coverage of Wigan's game with Fulham. Next door is a world class culinary establishment selling the much-revered pie and peas and all other forms of fast food. Oddly the arena has no stand but hard standing is provided all round and the feel is of a comfortable place to watch football.

A read of the 20-page programme, an above average effort with colour action photo enhancing the cover, before kick-off, sets me up for the action. With the floodlights on from the start Retford are soon one up and only luck and poor finishing prevents an avalanche engulfing the Doncaster based side. The second half turns on Brodsworth missing an early penalty and then Retford stepping up the ante and fully deserving to run out 4-0 winners and gaining a place in the 2nd round draw (home to Trafford). Incidentally the 3rd goal is my candidate for my goal of the season so far (only because I can hardly remember last week's action).

The walk back to the station takes half an hour - again as Mick Burt states - but with an hour and a half to kill, longer did I but know it as my train was late, I can afford to linger in a couple of the town's more pleasant watering holes. I am back in Margate by 11o'clock after one of the more-gentle days on my feet - 14165 steps.