

**TT No. 166: Paul Roth** - Saturday 3rd March 2007; Essex Olympian League Prem Division; **Kelvedon Hatch** vs. Mountnessing; Res: 2-1; Programme: 16 pages; Entry: free; Att: 65.

All week I knew where I was heading for my Saturday afternoon football. That was until 9pm on Friday evening when rain and wind lashed at our front door. A call to Mr. Johnson, the Cricklade secretary, soon had me pondering other destinations. On Saturday morning, after further conversations with him and the Tenterden Town supremo, I was left in no doubt that these two football grounds were underneath flood water of Biblical proportions. The KCL, I correctly guessed, would be virtually washed out, so where should I head for?

Kelvedon Hatch has long been a desired destination mainly because they always issue programmes. And so, after a positive response from their secretary, off I set to Essex. This much maligned county has much to offer once you head east, away from the M25 corridor. There are small picturesque villages, larger towns steeped in history and a magnificent and diverse coastline dotted with scenic inlets and estuaries. It also, you've guessed, has some cracking pubs. Visits were made to four GBG entries today (a half in each I hasten to add) and the pint of Canary and Beaver from the Brentwood Brewery (unknown to me before today) in the Queen's Head in Fyfield was the best glass of bitter I have sampled for a long time.

Kelvedon Hatch FC is located in School Road off the A128 as you head towards Chipping Ongar from Brentwood - second on the right after the Eagle pub to be exact!! If you follow the small sign pointing to the village hall you will find a good-sized car park and recreation ground which, with the aid of goals, netting and an elaborate post and rope creation, can be transformed into a decent enough football ground.

Steve Andow produces the excellent 16-page programme, all done on his home PC and this is free of charge. On thicker than usual paper lots of relevant content adorns each page and there are team line-ups on the back page.....more than can be said for the team-sheet produced by Arsenal FC when I visited the Emirates Stadium a couple of weeks ago for an FA Youth Cup tie!

In the right corner of the pitch are changing-rooms and a tea-bar which only sold hot drinks at half-time. There is a small bar adjoining the village hall but that doesn't open until the end of the game.

Three things struck me at KHFC today: firstly, everyone including the players was very friendly; secondly, a tremendous amount of hard work had been put in by volunteers to get the game played (it was still awfully wet) and finally, the surprisingly high standard of football, given the slippery and cloying surface.

It was a really entertaining game of football. With the hosts scoring two first-half penalty kicks, the game seemed to be dead-locked until 10 minutes from time

when the visitors got one back. 'Hatch' managed to hang on their lead leaving Mountnessing in a sombre mood as black as their kit.

Next weekend I have an idea as to where I might be heading but that depends, of course, on what the weather has in store!

06/20

FGIF Rating: 4\*.