

**TT No.19: Paul Roth** - Saturday 02 Sept.2006; Wessex Lge.1; **Alresford Town vs. Hayling Utd**; Res: 0-0; Att: 50ish; Entry: £3 including glossy 20-page programme.

The lovely town of Alresford (pronounced Allsford) was my destination for my footballing fix this weekend. It is one of those rare towns these days that is full of individual shops. It is also the end of the line for the "watercress" steam railway, or the start of it depending on your point of departure. The area is famous for the production of this culinary delight and you can find it growing in many special tanks all over this part of Hampshire. One of those "individual" shops, I mentioned earlier, is the Naked Grape Off Licence which has a complete section devoted to bottled beers brewed in Hampshire. Magnificent.

I had driven down today and despite the rain, enjoyed the run through rolling countryside, eking out a couple of GBG pubs along the way. I arrived early at the ground, situated in Arlebury Park which is about a mile off the A31. The high wall perimeter would make the ground easy to miss if it were not for the floodlight pylons sticking their heads aloft. The well-appointed clubhouse is upstairs where rolls and drinks are found and off this room is a balcony where an elevated view of the playing area can be seen. In fact, most of the crowd present for the game itself watched from here. The playing area is railed off on three sides and the vista from this elevated vantage point is quite stunning. A glossy newsy 20-page programme with League insert sold in the club for £3 which of course covered entrance.

Fresh on the back of a 9-0 win against East Cowes I thought that Hayling Utd and top-of-the-table Alresford might produce a real cracker but, as is so often the case, I was treated to a rather drab nil-niller. It was one of those games, had it ended 2-2 I would have thought was entertaining but I left frustrated. I suppose, in both team's defence, the swirling gale and rain was not conducive to good football. I should add there is no cover on the ground but the plethora of trees behind both goals offer good protection.

All in all, a super day out in rural Hampshire only slightly ruined by the football. Oh dear, I am in real danger of becoming one of those grumpy old men!

FGIF rating 3\*.

06/20