

TT No.194: Paul Roth - Saturday 31st March 2007; Anglian Combination League Division 1; **Hempnall** vs. Watton United; Result: 5-1; Attendance: 40 or so; Programme: 20 pages, donation - I gave £2.

A game resulting in a 5-1 score-line, two missed penalties by the visitors and a very good programme. You would have thought this was a cracking day out at the football, wouldn't you?

A leisurely drive up through rural Suffolk had, as ever, been augmented with the usual prerequisite stops at some superb GBG pubs, the best of which, only in my opinion that is, was the multi-roomed 'Buck' at Rumburgh. I did also like the 'Green Dragon' in Bungay.

Hempnall is a tiny, sleepy village just inside the Norfolk boundary and their football club are on the brink of promotion to the top tier of the Anglian Combination. They are 6 points ahead of nearest rivals Gayton, with games running out for the chasing pack to catch them. The ground is located off the main road as you enter the village when approaching from the Bungay side of the B1527, sign-posted 'village hall'.

The field is taped off and there is no cover at all, making this a brave choice for the 'hopper if the weather is inclement. The sunshine today belied the cold, strong wind that rather spoilt the match as a spectacle. A programme, a newsy 20- pager and a good effort for this level of football, is given away for a donation and is a regular issue too. Modern changing rooms and a soulless tea room are found in the aforementioned village hall which is sited some 60 yards or so from the actual playing area. The dugouts are pleasant enough structures, in fact the only structures on the field of play.

Hempnall were out of the blocks in a flash and were two up within 5 minutes but thereafter the only reportable piece of action during a windswept first half was Watton missing a penalty. The second half was little better and the visitors missed a second spot kick before pulling a goal back with a neat lob from their no.9. Soon after Hempnall restored their three-goal advantage and scored two more, undeserved goals, in the final few minutes which totally flattered the hosts.

I drove today but if using public transport, I would guess Norwich would be your best bet as a railhead: I do believe there is a bus and that leaves on a Wednesday afternoon from the city's train station!

All in all, not as entertaining a game as you might have expected given the score-line (even with the missed penalties) but that was due in most part to the very strong winds that swept across the open playing area throughout the game.

FGIF Rating: 3*.

