

**TT No.247: Paul Roth** - Saturday 5th May 2007; Gloucestershire County League; **Taverners FC** vs. Henbury Old Boys; Result: 0-1; Attendance: not quite 30; Programme: 28 pages, £1 with entrance.

"That about suits you...why's it taken 50 years for you get to watch them?" commented my beloved, rather harshly, when I told her of my preferred destination for this week's football fix. Freely, I admit, Taverners FC is an evocative name for a football club, the name deriving from the club's early roots at the George Hotel in Nailsworth.

By the time I arrived at the first of the five GBG pubs on my itinerary, the sun was shining and a lovely couple of hours were spent in the glorious Gloucestershire countryside. The falcon at Wotton-Under-edge is a lovely pub but it is the getting there that is so special, as the area thereabouts is magnificent. Near Nailsworth itself there are two pubs that are a must if the thirsty traveller is ever in the area; the fantastic Ram at Woodchester (signposted off the A46) and the recently refurbished Halfway House at Box (a test of one's driving skills if ascending up Gydynap Lane toward the inn). Both serve good food, and crisps!

A word here about Nailsworth. This is a town, for one reason or another, I always seem to levitate back to. Buxton is another. Anybody can see it's a nice place but if you can spare some time scratch the surface here and explore a little. There are some very up-market individual shops, the new Nailsworth Brewery Company situated underneath the Village Inn on the Bath Road, the Curry Club award winning 'Passage to India' restaurant and as one climbs toward the football club is a B&B, Gemini House, which is the most sumptuous guesthouse I've ever stayed in and very inexpensive to boot. There is no B&B sign to advertise the place - they don't need one! A mile or so yonder is the beautiful home of Shortwood Utd FC on the opposite side of the valley. Hopefully many of you will enjoy this on the forthcoming August Hop.

Taverners FC is located at the top of the hill on the Nymphsfield road, next door and just before the new Forest Green Rovers FC facility. Fully railed off, this is a pleasant venue on a warm day like today but I guess less so on a wet or windy afternoon in Winter, as there is no cover. Parking is available in the local primary school and here I bought the tremendous 24-page programme. A colour cover, adorned with a pictograph of a full pint of bitter and a handpump (my sort of cover this), leads into a memorable read full of topical news, squad info, statistics and that most necessary up-to-date league table.

Both teams are still vying for the championship and because of this a rather tense match unfolded, being won with a scrappy goal by the visitors from Bristol, midway through the second half. Taverners had two glorious chances to score themselves but it was just to be one of those days when nothing quite goes right.

I had wandered into the FGR clubhouse before kick-off for a look around and was disappointed to find the place has that typical characterless new-build feel, but what else would you really expect? A lot of good reports have been written about the stadium though, so I look forward to going back at a later date. The Old 'lawn' is now smothered in concrete.

To cap off a stupendous day I had a phone call from my great friend Bob who was having a rare trip out to football himself, at Swindon Supermarine. We met up, along with his wife Hills, for our usual guffaws and a pint at the Check pub in North Wroughton. Bob does make me laugh...he's a technophobe and hasn't a clue when it comes to using a mobile phone; he finishes off his brief conversations with me on his wife's machine with the words..."over and out". Great stuff.

The game was not the best I've seen this season but the day certainly was probably one of the most endearing of this term. I will give, uniquely, two FGIF Ratings today.

For the day as a whole - FGIF Rating: 5\*; for the ground and football - FGIF Rating: 3\*.

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