

TT No.83: Paul Roth - Saturday 2nd December 2006; **Brandon Town vs Acle Utd**; Anglian Combination League Prem Div. Res: 2-1; Att: 27; Programme: 20-pages £1 including admission.

My intention was to stay close to home today but the deluge that swamped Kent during Friday night and Saturday morning meant that a game further afield was required. So where? My new found friend, the Anglian Combination, provided the answer. I had, as a precaution, rung the Brandon secretary the night before and the friendly fellow assured me however hard it rained the game would not be off and yes there would be a programme too. Oh Joy!

So, via Victoria, Kings Cross and Cambridge I finally arrived in the sleepy market town of Brandon at 12.45pm. Being the only person to get off the train at the old-fashioned station, a throw-back to pre-Beeching era, I was soon in the centre of town. Not, that is, before popping into the Brandon Brewery shop which is situated on the left-hand side of the High Street as one walks up from the railway station. Here I availed myself of one of the company's bottled offerings ('Slippery Jack' to be precise). A beer in the GBG listed Bell, the Duke of Wellington and the Five Bells followed (all of which I have to say were a bit uninspiring). Then to the action.

Cross-border matches I always think are a bit special...Kent vs. Sussex, Essex vs. Kent, Hampshire vs. Sussex etc, etc, etc., and so today's prospect of Suffolk vs. Norfolk I felt might be a bit tasty. The Sports centre where Brandon Town play their home games is situated on Church Road. I chose the charming pedestrian 'Victoria Walk', a leafy thoroughfare and short cut, to amble along to reach the ground which is about 1/2 a mile out of the town centre. If you don't care for 'roped-off' venues for your football fix, forget this as destination. The ground is just that and very basic. Only dugouts are a permanent feature. In saying that though there is a first-class clubhouse where the ubiquitous Sky Sports is offered on giant screen; it is also a comfortable place to relax in both before and after the game. In here I bought the 20-page programme. Well produced and everything you need from such a journal and at £1 including entry, a bargain.

My cross-border theory paid off as a really close match ensued and at 1-1 up until the 75th minute a draw looked the most likely result. The homesters then struck to take all 3 points and carry on their upward march towards the top of the Anglian Combination League table. I guess the men in red and black just about deserved their narrow victory.

At the final whistle I headed back to the railhead and was surprised to discover that the station itself is just in Norfolk with the County line being 50 yards up Bridge Street toward the town. A closer cross-border encounter than I had originally thought! Back in Cambridge I had a couple of beers in the Free Press and St. Radegund before getting the 'Bullet Express' train back to London.

As ever, a super day out, in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk!!

FGIF Rating 4*. A train day = 13882 steps.

06/20