

TT No.185: Paul Roth - Saturday 2nd February 2008; Kershaw Cambridgeshire League Premier Division: **Cambridge University Press** vs. Newmarket T Res; Res: 5-1; Att: 25; Prog: 28 pp free w/a; Weather: Cold/sunny.

Wasn't too sure whether to head up to Cambridgeshire for my first-choice match today, as the threat of snow and a very sharp frost meant a trip up the M11 might not yield any football. How wrong could I have been, as after a quick phone call to the CUPFC secretary confirmed the game was in no doubt at all. The Arctic conditions hadn't reached as far South as Cambridge.

I'm a Real Ale and football lover, as you all know by now, and I'm going to make a statement that will be an anathema to those amongst you of a similar persuasion. The best pub I visited on my sojourn to the light blue city today was a Greene King hostelry (their Dark XX mild is World class), and I'm watching my 'weekly fix' where one of the teams playing is a reserve side. There, I've said it! Many won't approve, I know.

CUPFC is located at the end of Shaftesbury Road, about 10 minutes-walk from Cambridge railway station and what an impressive venue it is too. The world-famous Cambridge University Press (find their bookshop in the city centre, at 1 Trinity Street) proper is a vast array of buildings and is almost a mini town within the city itself. The football club play at the Cass Centre within these grounds (follow the signs). The well-appointed centre has an all-weather, floodlit arena and hosts football at this time of year and cricket in Summer. The impressive and not-as-new-as-it-looks conference centre doubles as the club's hospitality suite, après-match, and boasts an excellent bar along with Sky TV and pull-down giant screen facility. The building makes a super backdrop to the tidy ground, which is half railed off and then roped around the remainder. The dugouts offer the only cover, but benches strategically placed offer respite for the weary. With pine trees all along behind these dugouts the place puts me in mind of Norwich Union FC, whom I'd visited earlier in the season. Although it is a 'Sports Centre', it doesn't feel like one, if you know what I mean!

The club provide an excellent and informative, and free I should add, 28-page programme for every home game, which is available from a table in the bar, on the upper deck of the Cass Centre. Gary Crick, who I chatted with after the match, also gave me a programme from the postponed fixture versus Cottenham on the 19th of January. This had a most unusual cover, a pair of muddy football boots, adorning its cover. Today's offering was totally different in cover design. Check out the CUPFC website which is quite superb and by clicking the relevant link one can download your own programme and previous ones too!

The Press had a +25-goal difference, compared to the Jockey's -39 GD before the start of play, so I was pretty sure the game would yield goals. I wasn't mistaken, as the home side easily won this Premier Division clash by 5 goals to one. The only

shock was that the visitors took the lead! CUP missed a penalty, which was in fact very well saved, and had two clearly legal goals ruled out for offside by a young and inexperienced linesman. It could have easily been a lot more embarrassing for the lads from Suffolk. Even my untrained eye could easily pick out some very gifted players amongst the home squad's line-up.

At the end, in the pavilion, Gary kindly bought me a swift half before my return journey home and was telling me that the club hope to progress to the Ridgeons league after the installation of floodlights, in the not-too-distant future. If they do succeed in attaining those heights, that league will be much the better for having this splendid football club as one of its' members.

The city of Cambridge is a world-famous tourist destination, and justly so, and I'm happy to report here that the CUPFC is another great reason for visiting this glorious city.

FGIF Rating:5*.

06/20