

TT No.241: Paul Roth - Wed 30th April 2008; Kent County League Div1 West; **Bridon Ropes** vs. Sutton Athletic; Res: 1-1; Att: 8; Programme and Entry: N/A; Weather: Showery but mild.

My automobile went through the car wash, four times to be precise, as torrential downpours engulfed the Ford Focus and followed my passage along the M2 corridor this evening, en route to Charlton Park Lane, which is the shared home of Bridon Ropes FC. So hard had it rained at times that I was concerned the match might be called off, despite having been told that the game was 'definitely on' when I had rung the ground earlier (I was astounded that anyone was there at 2pm!).

I had been led to believe that the Meridian Sports Club ground was a tad jejune in nature and on first impression that could be an accurate description, but first impressions aren't always correct and by the time this KCL match had concluded, myself and friend Alan Beecham, who had joined me this evening after his day's work, were rather impressed with what's on offer here...well I was at least!

The sports club, home also to Meridian FC who play in Division 2 West of the KCL, boasts a large car park, which you can only use, by the way, if you're a member of the club, an Astroturf floodlit arena, many other football pitches besides and the piece de resistancea fabulous club pavilion. Meals, soft and hard drinks, including Real Ale, freshly boxed sandwiches and chocolate bars are proffered in a degree of comfort unfamiliar to this particular 'hopper, at such a lowly venue. The roadside extremity of the pitch is bordered by a symmetrical row of oak trees, which provide shelter when it rains, as of course it did this evening! The whole has as it's backdrop the enormous Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

'Ropes are near the bottom of the league and are in a modicum of danger of relegation but this entertaining one-all draw went a long way to alleviate that threat. In fact, some of the football on offer today was breath-taking, as the home side strung some fine moves together that just lacked that killer incision, which would have gleaned a healthier 'goals for' tally. That's not to take away anything from the visitors from near Dartford, who played their part too.

The football club has a decent enough website, which has a picture of the ground on it that would actually go a long way to persuade the visitor NOT to come along to Charlton Park Lane, but that would be a pity, as in truth, this is another excellent KCL venue.

The company itself, www.Bridon.com are manufacturers of high quality, high performance steel wire and cable, plus conventional endurance roping. Their products are used throughout the world of engineering.

I spent a most enjoyable four hours yesterday morning trawling through the wonders that are the 'Roping' and 'High Tensile Steel Wiring' world, on their

engaging website! As my beloved said to me at luncheon time "I'm begging you Paul, you've got to get out more". So, I did, and went to the football.

As a footnote, at half time I met Shaun Kedde, of FOBG FC fame, who was running the rule over the two clubs his charges will meet next term following their recent promotion...how professional is that? Or Shaun, are you just a Groundhopper in the closet?

FGIF Rating...I would like to have said 'ROPEY', but it wasn't! - 4*.

06/20