

TT No.243: Paul Roth - Sat 3rd May 2008; Mid Sussex League, Premier Division; **Old Vardeanians** vs. Lindfield; Res: 1-1; Att: 75(?); Programme and Entry: N/A; Weather: Sunny and warm.

At the tender age of eight I was sent away to Prep School at St. Andrews College, in Meads, near Eastbourne.

I can well remember my parents coming to see me off at Victoria Station that afternoon and my Father crying his eyes out, puffing on his huge cigar, as I gazed longingly at them through the railway carriage window. If he was crying because his little soldier was flying the nest and setting off into the big bad World, or because it was 2.30 pm and the pubs had just shut, I'll of course never know. The next time I would see them both was when they journeyed down to Darley Road at exeat or for a weekend visit. Invariably, those visits would be combined with a visit to the Opera, something I came to detest as I grew older. Now you all might be wondering where this nostalgic vignette of mine is leading? To the Trevor Arms, in Glynde, that's where!

Pops and Mumsy were great friends of the landlord and landlady there, at that time...some tenuous RAF connection I think, and used to use the pub as a base, and B&B, to not only visit their only son, but to take in an Operatic performance at Glyndebourne. Amongst the glitterati present at those concerts, I can vividly recall the larger-than-life figure of Quinten Crisp. He really was a most charming and engaging man, you know.

I detested those performances; couldn't understand a word of any of it...a huge snooze! Anyway, I can't sing a note, and am about as musical as our cat, unlike Mumsy, who had trained as an opera singer. For certain, I'm no Renata Tebaldi, and you definitely DO NOT want to ever, I assure you, hear or see my Yum Yum!

Today, after a magnificent drive through the magical Kent and Sussex countryside, radiating on this fabulous Springtime day, I'm making a return visit to the Trevor Arms at Glynde, en route to football at Sussex University to Watch Old Varndeanians FC. The pub is pretty well unchanged, except of course that I can now indulge myself in a man's drink and not a glass of Dandelion and Burdock, or some other such muck. Also, I'm chuffed to bits I'm not off to the nightmarish Opera! The Kings Head at East Hoahrtle and home of the 1648 brewery, the Giants Rest at Wilmington just along from the 'Long Man' himself and the ancient Smugglers Inn at Alfriston are also 'ticked off' on my way to Falmer. Naturally, these hostelries are all GBG listed!

Found on the Southern Campus of the Sussex University, the A27 actually bisects the facility, the new, year old 3rd Generation pitch, fully enclosed and floodlit, is a stunning arena. There is a huge car park for visitors and as the ground seems to have been cut out of a hillside, there are now wonderful vantage points on offer to spectators to gaze down onto the pitch below. The club, which derivates from

Varndean Grammar School and college in nearby Brighton, used to play their home fixtures down by Falmer railway station but have used the University's new Astroturf pitch this season. There are other football pitches set in the grounds roundabout and these are so immaculately kept that your writer thought they were actually cricket pitches! Set atop the Southern Downs, this is one of the most picturesque venues I've ever had the privilege to watch football at.

The two teams are 1st and 2nd in the league respectively, with OV's having a two-point advantage over Lindfield and both have played 22 matches each. A win for the home club sees them crowned champions but it's the visitors who strike first, with an early goal. The game has added spice, as Lindfield recently beat OV's 2-1 in the Montgomery Cup final, played at Burgess Hill Town FC. The equaliser comes right at the very start of the second half and the Lindfield defence is caught fast asleep from this restart, as the men in black and red steal a leveller. For much of the rest of this intriguing match Lindfield press for a winner, without ever really creating anything too clear cut. The pitch appears energy sapping and both sets of players do well to last the gruelling ninety minutes.

At the end of play, I get chatting to Norman Wright, the OV's secretary, and he furnishes me with the club's information I have been able to pass onto you here. A more friendly and affable human being it would be harder to meet. In fact, everybody I spoke, and met today at this lovely club, offered me welcome, friendliness and interest in our hobby (thank you also to that gentleman who gave me chocolate pudding before kick-off, whoever you were!).

The club don't issue a matchday programme, but for goodness sake, you don't need one when things are this fantastic, do you?

Reading this article back, I wonder if he 'got' irony? Quinten Crisp that is; surely, he would never have dreamt his name would be associated and used in a write-up regarding a game of football!

A win at Jarvis Brook FC on Monday morning will secure OV's the league title (Lindfield play their last game at Hassocks III).

FGIF Rating: A 5* experience, back in the County that I'd spent most of my childhood in and that provoked so many fond memories today, the opera notwithstanding. A day back in the beautiful County of..."SUSSEX BY THE SEA".

06/20