

TT No.107: Paul Roth - Sat 6th Dec 2008; FA Vase 3rd Round; **Biggleswade Town** vs. Wivenhoe Town; Res: 6-0; Att: 196; Entry: £6; Programme: 28 pages, £1; Weather: Cold, sunny, dark (!) and dry!

It's the firm's Christmas outing today! The Seers-Roth firm, that is.

My old pal Geoff and myself are being driven around the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire hinterland in search of quality GBG pubs, by my friend's girlfriend, Raksha. Such luxury is relished by the two of us and we get stuck into some fine ales before arriving at the rather uninspiringly named Carlsberg Stadium, the new home of Biggleswade Town FC. The ground is clearly visible on the left-hand side of the road as you drive Northward up the A1.

"ZINDAGI" exclaimed Raksha as we entered the stadium, after driving up the gravel driveway and parking in the ample car park. Raksha is Indian and she tells me ZINDAGI means 'LIFE' in Hindi.

I took that to mean she was impressed with the ground! Mind you, the word could mean something else entirely, so I apologise herewith if I'm inadvertently swearing! £6 admission and a poor 28-page programme selling for a one, is the total expenditure required to get the necessary accoutrements for a contented 'hoppers afternoon's entertainment.

Let me say straight away, all three of us were highly impressed with the new stadium and what has been achieved here. The first nice touch is the club's badge, a Wader with the year of foundation, 1874, on the clubhouse wall as you even enter. A welcome board above the brick+ turnstile block is a nice touch also and once inside the feel is of modernity that is pleasing to the eye.

There is a 300-seater grandstand on the nearside and a smaller covered area opposite. A wide concrete walkway surrounds the whole and six floodlight pylons, three on each side, were gainfully employed as darkness fell. The clubhouse and changing room area have a high-quality finish to them; Real Ale, plus Carlsberg Lager, is also available! A burger van was kept busy for much of the match; not by us I should hasten to add. Green and white goal nets, the club's colours, are attached to the goal frames and augment the already neat and tidy finish. The entire is surrounded by wooden fencing.

This 3rd round FA Vase match itself was perhaps the only disappointing part of an otherwise memorable day; it was just too one-sided as the hapless Essex club were completely outplayed by the high-flying Waders. Two down at the break, they did well not to concede double figures as the last half hour saw the homesters camp out in their half.

After the game we were soon back in Hertford, where we enjoyed a traditional Indian Christmas banquet and strolled from pub to pub whilst admiring the amazing festive illuminations, apparently turned on and put up by Val Doonican.

FGIF Rating: A spicy 5*.

+ A footnote: *Where do these bricks originate from? I have my own theory but will wait till the doyen of the brick, my chum Steve Hurley, has visited the ground himself. The further North you travel, he was telling me, the denser the clay used in brick making becomes. Steve was saying that if he taps a brick with a tuning fork, he can pretty well ascertain its provenance. Hence the phrase, "As thick as a brick"!*

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