

TT No. 129: Paul Roth - Sat 17th January 2009; Sussex County League Division 3; **CLYMPING FC vs. NEWHAVEN FC**; Res: 1-5; Att: 42; Programme: 20 pages, £1 including entry; Weather: Dry and mild.

Welcome to this week's edition of "Hermajestysprisonsinfocus"!

After being adjacent to Belmarsh prison at Thamesmead last Saturday, today I find myself cheek by jowl to HM's open penitentiary at Ford, in West Sussex. I know which I'd prefer, given the choice. Hopefully, I never will!

This top of the table clash between Clymping FC, situated a mile or so West of Littlehampton, across the River Arun, and Newhaven FC, from the Eastern part of the county, is my chosen match today. I've been trying to get here for most of the season, since the club were promoted to the county league this term from the West Sussex League; bad weather and various other impediments have procrastinated my arrival.

Even today, it wasn't 100% certain I would find this match on, heavy overnight rain having caused me a soupcon of angst. I shouldn't have worried though, as a telephone call to the Campbell family (young Ian is the club secretary) confirmed there wasn't a problem pitch-wise. How nice it was to hear that after the last few weeks.

I've been in touch with various members of the Campbell's so often lately, enquiring about the possibility of play, that I feel I really ought to add them to my 2009 Christmas card list! Charming, friendly and helpful folk they are too.

It's so nice to be back in Sussex, and as is my won't, a couple of GBG pubs have been visited en-route, at Ferring and Littlehampton respectively; I turn into the small club car park a full hour before kick-off and am instantly impressed with the fully railed-off, neat arena.

There's an impressive club pavilion selling alcohol, where I purchased my copy of the colourful 20-page programme; around the corner an impressive tea bar serves hot food, sweeties and all manner of soft drinks. Mercifully, no Ainsley Harriott endorsed French onion soup is proffered! This kitchen is staffed by two friendly, efficient and ever-smiling ladies.

A brace of new breeze-block dugouts offers a modicum of cover on the Church Lane side of the ground, which is shared with and taken precedence over by cricket in the early part of the season. Surrounded by all manner of trees, even palms, the overall impression is one of bucolic cosiness.

At kick-off, Clymping head the table; Newhaven lie third but are the only unbeaten side in the league, having won seven and drawn five of their twelve matches played to date; a tight match is anticipated. The first half proves to be just that,

with the homesters in blue grabbing the lead from a well taken header, only for the Dockers to equalise a few minutes later. Teatime sees this equality prevail.

The second half is an odd affair; without trying too hard Newhaven score four further goals without reply to run out ridiculously easy winners, but in truth, the play hardly reflects this score-line. Yes, the visitors deserved their win, but not by this big a margin. For the record, Moss was Clymping's scorer, whilst Probert, Bailey (2) and T. Goatcher (2) were Newhavens' marksmen.

A glorious day out in my beloved Sussex, was made even more memorable upon my journey home: Jonesing for a wee-wees, I stopped off at the Royal Oak GBG listed pub at Friday Street, near Crawley; What a truly stupendous hostelry that is, and a massive urinal relief to boot...I could have stayed there all night; drinking beer that is!

Sadly, my visit to Clymping FC today re-completes my jolly around the SCL.

FGIF Rating: 5*.

06/20