

TT No. 197: Paul Roth - Sat 4th April 2009; West Sussex League Premier Division; **Lancing United** vs. Newtown Villa; Res: 0-5; Att: 30; Entry: N/A; Prog: 16 pp, free; Weather: Sunny with a chilly wind; French Onion Soup: None!

Starting out on this hateful and insidious morning weather-wise, it seemed that the usually incompetent TV forecasters had gotten their predictions correct for once, as the resultant murk and precipitation appeared all-engulfing.

Today, I'm beautiful, 'SUSSEX BY THE SEA' bound.

By the time I hit the Bull public house at Mockbridge things were looking a soupcon more promising though; after the Plough at Henfield, the Chequer Inn at Steyning and the Buckingham Arms and Duke of Wellington in Shoreham-By-Sea had all been accrued, the sun was shining brilliantly and it was now a lovely Spring afternoon, albeit with a slightly chilly breeze.

I've been waiting to visit Lancing United since I read in Steve King's NLD that the club issues programmes on a regular basis, and this fixture against champions-elect, Newtown Villa, seemed the ideal moment to fulfil this long-held dream.

My initial glance, mind you, at the Crowshaw 'Rec', in Boundstone Lane, was anything but dreamy! In fact, if it hadn't been for the set of rusting goal frames in situ en-site, then I could easily have been forgiven for thinking that I was at the wrong venue.

A walk round to the Crabtree Inn, also featuring in this years' good blue book, 6 minutes and 18 seconds hence, fortified me to go back and take another look; upon my return, the pitch had now been fully roped, netted and flagged and now resembled a football ground. There is a stone wall at its furthest extremity and a rather basic looking changing room building at the town end. A neat row of trees on the far flank would offer a modicum of elemental protection on an inclement day, although personally I wouldn't like to put that supposition to the test.

From the aforementioned changing room building a rather smart, all colour, 16-page programme was given away for nothing. There are no other facilities, or indeed cover at the ground, but if you need something to eat or drink, there is a Spar shop close by. In fact, I managed to buy 18 bottles of the lovely Arundel ASB bitter and this month's edition of 'Nuts' from here.

Newtown Villa, named after the Newtown Social Club in Bognor Regis, where the club hail from (the Villa epithet has been omnipresent in all the clubs' differing guises and stems from the simple fact that their chairman is an Aston Villa supporter) top the ten team WSL table and are quite obviously going to win the title this term. Lancing United, on the other hand, find themselves in a relegation dogfight, even more so after this heavy defeat.

The match started in the vain that set the pattern for the afternoon, with the red and white hooped visitors taking an early lead with a rasping shot that found the corner of the net. A second, following a lot of pressure, came on the half hour mark. Lancing did create a couple of half chances themselves, but another goal before teatime all but sealed the three points for Villa.

The latter forty-five minutes was virtually a carbon copy of the first, but this time NV could only manage to net two scores, running out comfortable 5 nil victors.

Unfortunately, the club are not in a position to step up to the county league just at the moment, which is a pity, as they have a talented squad that produced some superb football on what was a very uneven, rutted and undulating pitch today: that's to put it politely!

Yet another sublime day. FGIF Star rating: 5*.

06/20