

TT No.81: *Paul Roth* - Sat 7th November 2009; Middlesex County league Premier Division; **Southall FC** vs. Hayes Gate; Res: P-P; Att: N/A; Prog: 24 pp, £1; Weather: Sunny/Mild; Altitude: The Thames Valley S C is 20m above sea level.

Golly gosh, what an exciting week it's been. Finally, and at last, on Tuesday, we got around to finishing the remnants of last year's Christmas shopping! Wednesday morning saw the arrival of my spanking new set of "Poi Ramekins"...at present I'm undertaking a more technically challenging than I'd expected eight-week Malaysian cookery course.

Thursday was even more thrilling, my saliva glands working overtime following the purchase of a state-of-the-art "Dyson DC27 15806-01 Animal Bagless Upright" Hoover. We are now the proud owners of four such machines, two of which are employed downstairs, one up, plus an older model I've adapted for use in the garden and shrubbery. Friday was monthly pedicure day, a four-weekly, scrumptious treat, enhanced no end with a snifter or two of 'Asbach Uralt'.

My euphoria was virtually at ejaculation point on 'Football Day' (the wife's lingo for Saturday) when I was joined on my excursion by one of Groundhopping's legendary figures. The spectre of my great pal Geoff Seers, resplendent in his lime green, fluorescent shell suit, clutching his beloved and bejewelled I-pod, walking towards the bar of the Queen's Head in Uxbridge, was possibly the highlight of my breath-taking week.

The only blip non-football wise on what was to be a memorable day for all the wrong reasons, was my mate's insistence that I listen to some of that ghastly Reggae music of his. Why he raves about it only God himself knows. Actually, Geoffers was the ideal chap to have beside me in the navigation seat today, knowing this part of west London like the back of his hand, having been Ealing born and bred. Geoff is a much respected, professional driver but his madcap suggestion to take a short cut he knew through a cemetery, to our second 'pit stop', seemed far too reckless a manoeuvre for your erstwhile careful correspondent. I'm no oaf, it being patently obvious that having the world's largest Praying Mantis perched on the front passenger seat, made my Ford Focus overtly conspicuous. Anyway, it would have only saved us a couple of minutes at the very most.

Thirteen minutes before the scheduled 2 pm kick-off we'd parked on Argyle Road, outside the Thames Valley Sports Centre at 20 metres (65.616 ft) above sea level, and had collected our programmes, reserved for us by helpful club secretary Geoff Harrison.

The venue is the current home of that fallen footballing giant, Southall FC, and is a setting so far removed from their magnificent long-standing, former abode in Western Road that you might mistakenly believe that this cannot be the same club. But it is and we must all be thankful that Southall FC, who've led a peripatetic existence since vacating that locale in 1992, are still going strong, the real bonus

for us Groundhoppers being that the club is presently playing in the fabulous Middlesex County League(!).

Eight minute after picking up said programmes and five minutes prior to kick-off and to our chagrin, we were retracing our footsteps - Hayes Gate FC back onto their luxury 56 seater coach - crestfallen, dumbstruck and crushed by the unbelievable news that the pitch had somehow been double-booked and that the Middlesex Junior Cup tie between Ealing Old Boys FC and Heathrow Canteen Personnel FC was to take precedence over our match. My euphoric bubble had well and truly burst. What a fiasco!! Once more, Geoff was incandescent with rage.

So, what to do? With this game being an early 2 O'clock kick-off we unfortunately had time to drive the 832 yards back along Argyle Road to catch the Molten Spartans South Midlands League Premier Division match between Hanwell Town and Hatfield Town, which commenced at 3 o'clock, the Reynolds Field of course being a re-visit for us both.

Deja Vu; I was back at Bredhurst Juniors.

Yes, another truly horrendous spectacle of footballing ineptitude which boasted one goal, an eightieth minute penalty, converted by the home side, to show for an afternoon's excruciating toil by two feckless teams. It was, however, pointed out to me by my erudite companion that visitors Hatfield Town did come close to scoring in the first half, and would actually have taken the lead if the MSSML employed in their competition goal frames that are 53 ft. wide and 29 ft. high. I still maintain that solitary goalward attempt would have missed the mark by a long way though, even if such apparatus had been deployed!

When you're in a rut, as I said last week, it's hard to get out of it but at least today I came home with two different programmes! And the wife's comment..."Gosh, you must have had fun the two of you".

FSIF (Football Shambles in Focus) Star Rating: 0*.

06/20