

**TT No.98: Paul Roth** - Sat 21st November 2009; Kent County League Division 1 East; **Staplehurst & Monarchs Utd** v Otford; Res: 1-3; Att: 25; Programme: 4 pages, 50p with entry; Weather: Mercifully dry; Altitude: The Jubilee Sports Ground is 21 metres (68.897 ft) above sea level.

After almost eight years away from their spiritual home, with spells playing at Loose, then latterly at West Malling, Staplehurst & Monarchs United FC are at last back in town. The construction of a new pavilion next door to the long established 'Guide' hut at the Jubilee Sports Ground, on the Headcorn Road, means that the good folk of Staplehurst now have a football team in situ to support.

The mid-Kent town is 42.35 miles from my home in Margate and if it weren't for this football match it is extremely doubtful if I'd ever venture over there. Perhaps to visit a decrepit aunt to extricate a will change might tempt me along, but even that's doubtful. Not to be too disparaging, but I'm going to be, it seems such a boring place. Yes, the 2010 good book lists two hostelrys but the Bell certainly doesn't float my boat and the Lord Raglan is so far out of town that to list it under 'Staplehurst' is somewhat misleading.

Back to the football and the facilities. Pass through the gates and you're in the spacious car park, understandably muddy and dank today, where the new, aforementioned edifice is now located on your left. Comfortable seating awaits you in what is the canteen area; that's also where I purchased my 4-page programme (only 6 produced on the day!). The well-appointed changing rooms lay to the back of this, which in turn leads out onto the field of play, partially roped along its nearside today.

The pitch was in excellent condition and despite the recent wet weather the game was once again never in doubt. The match was a bit of a non-event, Otford being allowed to saunter into a 3 nil teatime lead, an advantage the home side were never realistically going to be able to turnaround, their minds obviously focused on their impending night out in Brighton later....it was one of the substitutes' birthday apparently! They did manage to pull a goal back late on but it was too little too late.

Not the most inspirational of days I have to say but if you do want to see something memorable, then drive a further mile along the Headcorn Road to the Hawkenbury Inn. Bet you'll never have seen anything like it before!

FGIF Star Rating...a boring 2\*.