

**TT No.218: Paul Roth** - Mon April 9th 2012; **Faversham Harlequins** v Chilham; Canterbury Senior Charity Cup S-F; Res: 2-0; Att: 64; Entry and programme: N/A; Altitude and global position: Faversham Recreation Ground, Park Road is 11m (36.089 ft) above sea level: latitude 51 degrees, 18.8 mins N; longitude 0 degrees, 53.8 mins E (position derived from centre circle); SAT NAV: ME13 8AT; Weather: Raining and unseasonably chilly; Club shop: No; Local MP: Hugh Robertson (Cons); My day's carbon footprint legacy: 13.7.

A rhetorical question this, but is Faversham Recreation Ground - Faversham Harlequins FC's home - the closest football pitch to a public house? The distance from the arena's south-easterly corner quadrant to the saloon bar door of the neighbouring Market Inn, on Park Road, is just 37.3472 metres.

What a pity the hostelry is of such repugnance that only a numbskull would venture through its portal. Call me numbskull! Explain to me this: how on earth can a pint of Shepherd Neame Early Bird (a short measure I should add) retail for £3.70 within spitting distance of its production?

The 5pm kick-off for this Canterbury Senior Cup semi-final perfectly fitted in with our Easter Monday itinerary.

With the weather unkindly dreary, I momentarily had second thoughts about attending. Glad I did though, as this was to prove a most uplifting experience, especially given the horrors of the Elbads Stadium 48-hours previously.

The 'Rec' itself proffers a most pleasant aspect, being virtually within yards of the historic brewery town's centre.

Tree-lined, and adjacent to Edwardian dwellings on its westerly flank, even the severity of an unfriendly April evening couldn't dampen the most ardent stadia-loving aficionado from admiring its alluring contours.

Its verdant playing surface is also reassuringly virtually dog shit-free.

All thought of dreariness was at once cast aside once this thrill-a-minute cup-tie got underway.

The blue-clad homesters dictated proceedings from the offset, and deservedly took the lead via a wonderful piece of opportunism, courtesy of their talented centre-forward. A lamely struck back-pass was latched onto by the blue's No. 9, who had the presence of mind to lob the advancing 'keeper from 30 yards. It was a strike worthy of the Premiership.

The gathered tumult was now captivated. After that 3-minute half-time recess (no half-hour break for these hardened denizens Canterbury and District Football League), and with the stiff breeze behind them, more was expected from the erstwhile unusually-quiet Chilham outfit. They did valiantly huff and puff, but never seriously threatened.

A second wonder-strike midway through the second phase sealed Harlequins' final berth. A neat move on the left resulted in another long-range finish, this time exquisitely placed in Chilham's goal net's bottom right-hand corner by the same player who will surely soon move onto more lucrative pastures.

A thoroughly enjoyable late-afternoon outing, that went a long way to cement my burgeoning conviction that you don't have to travel zillions of miles to watch Association Football at its very best.

FGIF Star rating: 5\*.

07/20