

TT No.61: *Paul Roth* - Sat October 1st 2011; **Deal Town Rangers** vs. Sevenoaks FC; Kent County League Div. 2 East; Res: 3-1; Att: 63; Programme: 20-pager for £1, including entry; Altitude & global positioning: The Castle Community College Ground, Mill Hill is 7m (22.965 ft) above sea level; Lat 51 degrees, 12.9 mins N, longitude 1 degree, 23.7 mins E (position derived from centre circle); SAT NAV: CT14 9HH; Weather: Hot & sunny; Club Shop: No; Local MP: Charlie Elphick (Con); My Day's carbon footprint legacy: 13.7.

As you progress along Mill Road, in the pretty seaside town of Deal, the visitor hereabouts would have no sense of what lays hidden behind the rows of terraced houses situated along the northern part of that thoroughfare.

The entrance to the Castle Community College is virtually opposite Deal Town FC's Charles Sports Ground's sea-end turnstile block, and is understated to say the least. Once inside though, acres of sporting space appear as if by magic.

This is the home of KCL new boys Deal Town Rangers FC, whose superb facilities are a revelation even to myself, having lived in and around the area for much of my life.

A long, ancient-looking changing room block that has the club's name emblazoned across its ingress is the first pleasing aspect, quickly followed by the presence of a floodlit 3G pitch (this won't be used by the club when the weather worsens, as it's apparently too small). The actual playing area itself is found at the furthest point within the facility, and on the day was taped-off on two of its four flanks. Dugouts that have "Deal Town Rangers FC" and "Visitors" annotated upon them respectively, back on to the houses located on neighbouring Sycamore Drive.

But the greatest surprise of all comes in the form of the club's 20-page matchday programme. That they issue at all is amazing - it was explained to me that DTR want to do everything, both on and off the field, as professionally as possible - and 'The Hoopster' is about as professional as it comes. All you, paper-chasers will doubtless be scrambling to add an edition to your collections.

Another unique touch is the idiosyncratic tea bar. The beverage is proffered free of charge from the boot of the chairman's car, parked pitch-side!

On a blisteringly hot day that was more reminiscent of pre-season kick-about, I was impressed with how well both teams applied themselves, and kept slugging it out right up to the final whistle.

The action was continuous, and it was the orange-clad homesters that held a 1-0 advantage at the much-needed orange juice and cold-water break. This was thanks to a speculative overhead-kick from 25 yards out, that flew past the stranded Sevenoaks 'stopper after a dangerous-looking corner-kick had been cleared. Everyone in attendance was dumbstruck when the ball sailed in; nobody more so than the scorer, Darren Little, himself!

'Rangers sewed up all three points with two long-range efforts courtesy of captain Danny Hogg and Luke Larkins during the free-flowing and competitive second-half, before the table-topping and previously unbeaten west Kent side (Sevenoaks FC are a completely independent, new football club, that happen to groundshare at Greatness Park with Sevenoaks Town FC. The programme stated there is no connection between the two squads) gleaned a late consolation with a well-worked move late on.

This welcome addition to The Kent County League is best summated in three words...What a corker!

FGIF Star Rating: 5*.

07/20