

**TT No.48: Chris Freer** - Boxing Day - Friday December 26th 2014; Huntingdon Town v Eynesbury Rovers; United Counties Premier; Score: 0-3; Attendance: 80; Entertainment value: 2/5.

Christmas comes but once a year and I usually make a point of wearing my flashing 'Bah Humbug' hat whenever I can during the festivities. Not that I'm particularly against this annual jamboree of excessive gluttony and inclination to imbibe excessively, it's just that with all the trimmings, tinsel and other seasonal stuff that bedecks our house, I feel it's my solemn duty to redress the balance somewhat.

As a not particularly church-going sort of chap (weddings and funerals excepted) this time of year to me means the potential for a few Boxing Day fixture 'Double-headers', given a satisfactory weather prognosis, and I had set my plans on a North-East double involving the Northern League and Berwick Rangers, even going so far as to provisionally book overnight digs. But as the events approached, and with a forecast for much frost and the potential for snow, the proverbial cold feet set in. Digs cancelled and plans re-evaluated. Suddenly a day in the United Counties League seemed far more attractive, followed by a trip to London on the Saturday.

Boxing Day dawns with a number of windows open on the iMac, each one linked to an appropriate Twitter feed. The key is Huntingdon Town, scheduled to kick off at 11.30am, after which I have 3 Lincolnshire options. The only fly in the ointment? Approaching snow due around 5.00pm, and I know from past experience that when it snows in that part of the world, not much moves!

But the initial Twitter good news is that the game at Huntingdon is on, so it's warm-up-the-motor time and then head off down the M1 to the A14 and the 90-minute drive to Cambridgeshire. The club's new ground is Jubilee Park, which is some way from the town centre, and indeed the railway station. Whilst it is certainly walkable from the latter, I'd want to do it on a Summer's day. So, this time of year is ideal for a car trip.

There's a spacious car park out front, and the ground is approached down a path through the turnstile and straight into the clubhouse. This is a smart, modern complex with bar (slow to open) and snack hatch, and it's no surprise the latter is doing a roaring trade in hot drinks and bacon rolls on such a chilly morning. Sadly, the availability of dead pig on bread is of little value to a veggie like me and so I rely on the good old cup-a-soup option to provide some much-needed hot nourishment, whatever the nutritional value. A quick scan of the bar reveals no evidence of either cask beer or any British bottled brews, not that I'd be in a drinking mood as it happens (too concerned with staying warm!).

There's a lot of chatter therein concerning the second game of the day, and I'd guess that at least a quarter of the attendance is composed of 'hoppers', with a Merseyside element much in evidence.

The stadium itself consists of flat standing all round, with the area in front of the clubhouse, behind the goal, proving quite popular. There are two covered, seated kit stands virtually side-by-side down one side towards the corner, with a covered standing area straddling the halfway line. The pitch is flat, although the playing surface looks uneven which becomes apparent as the match progresses. It's a local 'derby' in the United Counties Premier against Eynesbury Rovers, the visitors sitting much lower down the table but arriving on the back of a couple of useful wins following a poor run. Town, with just two wins in the last 9, look to be on a slide.

And that's the way it pans out, with Rovers far more purposeful in attack and scoring twice just before half time to set the home side a few posers. They never really solve these during a second half which doesn't scale the heights, and a penalty near the end seals the points for the visitors.

And so, the dilemma. Do I go up to Lincolnshire for the second game - conscious of the forecast snow risk - or head off home early to beat the elements? Common sense prevails!

04/20