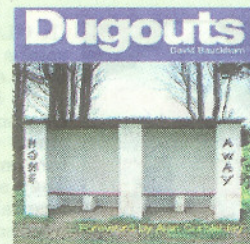


Ken McEwan takes a look at the most unusual sports book of the year

From Borough to Durham – David paints a fascinating picture of non-league dugouts



WHO in their right mind would take a trip to Shropshire and visit the home of Hopesgate United FC, in torrential rain, purely for the purpose of taking a picture of the club's two ramshackle dugouts?

The obvious answer is nobody, but then David Bauckham is not a man who usually provides the obvious answer.

The former Eastbourne Borough website manager and local radio commentator is one of those glorious exceptions to life's rather mundane set of rules.

While David Beckham was trying to find some semblance of finishing power in the World Cup, David Bauckham was applying the perfect finishing touches to his latest book which is simply called *Dugouts*.

Already the publication has received rave reviews in the *Daily Telegraph* and *Mail on Sunday* and an interview with *Skysports* is scheduled for next week.

Dugouts will take its own place in literary history as the only publication devoted to that specialist area of strangely contrasting environments where managers' heartbeats have been known to reach 197 beats per minute during the course of a highly emotional hour and a half.

It is the place where match-winning (or losing) decisions are made, where



WHEN attendances struggle to reach triple figures, every word (and expletive) is clearly audible at Holmer Green FC in High Wycombe.

a week's planning and preparation comes or fails to come to fruition.

To reach, as Bauckham has done, more than 100 of them (over 70 are included in the book), is no mean feat. And I have first hand experience of visiting a handful of the outlandish non-league venues when accompanying David to Borough away games.

Of the many weird and wonderful dugouts to be seen over nearly 100 pages, my favourite has to be at Stanley United FC, deep in the heart of county Durham. There is an ancient house on the touchline that houses the changing-room and the dugouts stand on either side. As the caption rightly points out, there is surely nothing

else quite like it in English football.

The regular football supporter goes to watch his team with his mind firmly focussed on his favourite players and the menace of the opposition. The last thing on his (or her) mind would normally be the dugout.

But Bauckham has brilliantly portrayed both the fascination and amazing variety that exists in both buildings and background. As the author points out, many of the photographs demonstrate the huge gap that exists between the heady heights of professional football and the proverbial paperclip-saving small fry.

David's assault on the non-league grounds of the nation began when he

started collecting photographs for his website Nomad Online at the turn of the century.

Hooked by the time he reached the borders, he carried on into Surrey, Hampshire and beyond, amassing a huge amount of pictures and ruining many a 'family holiday' in the process.

But while his wife and son Jonathan have suffered in the process, Jonathan has exacted occasional revenge by insisting on visiting the local windmill – a chip off the old block or what?

On reaching the 93rd page of this truly fascinating publication I was struck by one astonishing fact. What I would have imagined to be a somewhat boring subject had turned out to be hugely absorbing.

From the first page to last I had to keep going. David Bauckham may be a self-confessed sad anorak, but one thing is beyond doubt – he has now become a legendary one.

Dugouts, priced £7.99 hardback, can be purchased from all good bookshops, online booksellers and by mail order from LBS on 01903 828503.

For an even more quirky look at non-league grounds across the country, including signs, huts, rollers and programmes, make sure you visit www.pyramidpassion.co.uk



AUTHOR David Bauckham told *Herald Sport*, "When I first decided to produce the book, I made a conscious decision to make it humorous, but at the same time to retain a serious side to it as well.

"When I first went to the publishers, they saw the eccentric angle, but they did not understand just how big non-league football is.

"The fact remains that these clubs (and dugouts) have survived because of the continual work of perhaps a couple of blokes or a small committee. They are certainly not to be laughed at; they are to be congratulated."