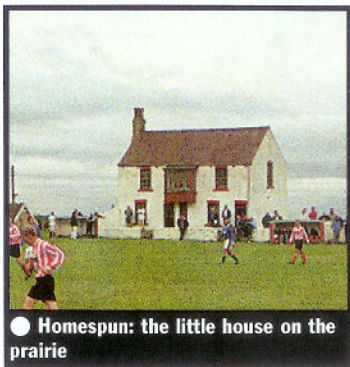


# The comfort zone?

**T**HE dugouts man just didn't dig us. Despite a day touring the North-East – “football's spiritual home” he wrote in NVNG101 – Sussex-based author David Bauckham hasn't included a single ANL example in his splendidly quirky new book.

We're just sitting too comfortably, he says, though he'd certainly have alighted at Ryton had he known that the second division club was making use of former Tyne and Wear PTE bus shelters. Like many others, he fell in love with Whickham's tea ladies, too.



● Homespun: the little house on the prairie

David does, however, find himself at home at three former Northern League venues – Cockfield, which has seen better days, Willington, where the seats may have been pinched from the parish hall and, most gloriously, Stanley United's

windswept former hilltop ground. The dugouts are neither here nor there but, like everyone else, David's awestruck by the little house on the prairie which serves as changing room, canteen, pavilion and much else. “There is surely nothing else like it in English football,” he says. United, sadly, have now folded, the historic ground presently unused.

The book, hard back and in colour, covers the non-league dugout in all its oft-ramshackle but always innovative glory. The ANL may be too close the bench mark, but it's still worth pulling up a seat for a couple of hours. A treasure.

■ Dugouts by David Bauckham is handsomely published by New Holland Books, £7 99.