

TT No.241: *Dean McClean* - Fri 5th May 2006. Welsh National League (Wrexham Area): **Chirk AAA 3-2 Mold Alexandra**. Att: 50est; Admission: by donation; 44pp programme; £1; FGIF Match Rating: 3*.

As much as Ashington is famous for being the birthplace of England legends Bobby and Jackie Charlton, Chirk is famous for being not only the birthplace of a Welsh legend but also for launching the football career of one; Billy Meredith won the Welsh Cup with his home village club in 1894. After shorth spells as a semi-pro at Wrexham and a professional at Northwich, Meredith joined Manchester City. From 1896 until his retirement in 1924, he remained a professional footballer. During a wonderful career he played 650 FL games, appeared in 53 FA Cup ties, was capped 50 times by Wales and scored 185 FL goals.

Chirk AAA are one of the oldest clubs in Welsh football history having being established in 1876. For the club's 125th anniversary, a souvenir-badge was made to commemorate the occasion. In the early years of Welsh football Chirk were a force to be reckoned with; between 1886 and 1894 they were winners of the Welsh Cup on no fewer than five occasions. Chirk regularly competed in the (English) F.A. Cup too. In 1894, with the legendary Billy Meredith team, Chirk reached the Semi-Finals of both the Welsh Cup and English F.A. Amateur Cup. Unfortunately, as both ties were due to be played on the same day the Welsh F.A. ordered Chirk to play the Welsh Cup tie.

Enough of the past glories and more about the present. Chirk play their football in the Welsh National League and have done since those early glory days. Only once, when they played one season in the Cymru Alliance, did they threaten to play at a higher level.

Chirk's Holyhead Road Ground is easily found off the main road running through the village. The venue is shared with the Cricket Club resulting in a 3-sided ground for tonight's match. On entering the ground there is a large club house with wooden benches outside, which were heavily populated on a glorious spring evening. The ground is situated in a generally pleasant location, I say generally because the hideous looking chocolate factory unfortunately blots most of the landscape! The smell is none too pleasant either. Although no admission was charged, a superb colour programme was on sale for a very well-priced, £1.

With an outside chance of winning the title, Chirk completely dominated the first half, cruising into a 2-0 lead. However, the expected rout failed to materialise as Mold battled back to level the scores. Chirk finally managed to win the match late in the 2nd half. Unfortunately, the home team continually abused opposition players and the referee through-out the match. At one point telling his players to leave it 'till after" commenting on a difference of opinions between opposing players. This sort of behaviour is just unacceptable at any level of football, especially non-league level!

