

TT No.249: Paul Roth - Saturday 13th May 2006; Macron Welsh League 1st Division; **Newport YMCA vs. Goytre Utd.** Res: 0-3; Att: 300(estimate); 32-page programme and entry: £2.

Scanning last Sunday's NLP for a meaningful match to attend this Saturday had led me to this vital end of season fixture. Simply put, Goytre had to win to take the title and therefore gain promotion to the elite echelons of football in the principality.

A noon kick-off meant an early start from Margate in the car...I was considering going by train and having a few beers, but the thought of all those awful football "Lager Louts" heading for Cardiff to see the Cup Final had put me off!! Travelling around the M25 and the West Ham United Expressway, as the M4 had clearly become, I was thoroughly entertained by the wondrous variety and decoration of vehicles that passed me by and that I overtook, bedecked in claret and blue, on their way to the Millennium Stadium. Newport was achieved in 3 hours and fifteen minutes and a swift half in the GBG listed Godfrey Morgan was had before going to the YMCA ground in Mendalgief Road, in the southern part of the town.

£2 bought the 32-page programme, a better issue than I had first imagined and full of up-to-the-moment content, and entry to the ground. Great value. With over an hour still to kill the decision was made to walk into town for a drink in the Red Lion, again in the GBG. Although in Stow Hill I hadn't bargained for such a steep climb, but at least it was all downhill on the way back!

On my return I went straight into the ground proper, which lies behind the impressive YMCA. I had parked in the small car park to the front, but there is more parking space to be had at the side of the huge brick edifice and also on the street itself. My first impression of the ground was one of scruffiness, as grass banks were overgrown with weeds and the pitch unkempt and daisy strewn. This notwithstanding, it is a nice venue though. The bank nearest the YMCA itself is elevated and gives a good view of the pitch and to the left is a smart covered stand with the club's name embossed across the top. Railings fully encircle the arena and are supported by alternately painted, in yellow and blue being the club's colours, concrete posts. A huge electricity pylon dominates proceedings and is set above the corner of the ground to the bottom left. Mention must also be given to the fantastic catering service on offer today...there was curry and chips (excellent value and very, very, tasty at £1.50), burgers and rolls available from one area and tea, coffee and sweets from another. Another table at the back of the main building dispensed alcohol. I don't know if things are always as good as this but it was a super effort from an obviously very well-run club.

So, to the game proper and that win Goytre Utd so desperately needed. Within five minutes of the start they swept into the lead with a well taken goal from their captain Darren Lyons and effectively won the championship with a second right on

half time direct from a corner scored by Richard Ryan. The YMCA stuck manfully to the task after the break but a confident Goytre added a third when Paul Lenahan headed home. Cheers greeted the final whistle and I stayed on to witness the impressive trophy being handed over to the men from near Port Talbot.

I could have had a "double" today of course, but didn't have a Cup Final ticket, so after one more half in yet another GBG pub, I made my way back to Kent and this time was regally entertained during the journey home by the Test Match Special team on Radio4. Their anecdotes almost make the cricket itself an irrelevance. Great stuff!

A cracking day out and back home by 5.30pm.

FGIF Rating 4*.

04/20