

**TT No.242: Mike Latham** - Wed 25 April 2007: Welsh National League (Wrexham Area): **Brynteg Village** 1-6 Brymbo. Attendance: 100 (h/c); Admission: no charge; No Programme; FGIF Match Rating: 2\*.

The Wrexham Area of the Welsh National League, effectively level 3 of the Welsh pyramid can be a real mixed bag of tricks. In recent days I had seen a splendid game in an idyllic location at Chirk AAA where an excellent colour programme was produced and then a thoroughly depressing encounter at Borrass Park Albion on a pitch not dissimilar to the playing field at the bottom of my road where there were no obvious facilities and the standard of football was dire. To add insult to injury the result, a 4-1 home win over Hawarden Rangers, was recorded as 3-0 on the league's official website.

So, it was with some trepidation I approached this bottom v top encounter on a sunny Wednesday evening. Though just a few miles from Wrexham, Brynteg Village is a relatively isolated location and found by turning off the A483 at the main route into town, then taking the Brymbo road and turning right, uphill, by Southsea Post Office. This area was once dominated by the Brymbo steelworks, whose closure in 1990 had a devastating effect socially and economically on the local community. The ground has an elevated location with superb views across to distant hills and parking is easy. There is a changing block behind the nearside goal and, as I arrived 45 minutes early for the 6-30pm kick-off, home officials seemed to be desperately mustering a full complement of players via frantic mobile telephone conversations.

Near neighbours Brymbo have enjoyed a marvellous season and went into this game with just one defeat in the league, having won all their other league games. A friendly local informed me that they had a number of former Brynteg players in their ranks.

The playing area was well grassed and, for this time of year, well maintained, rolled, spiked and pretty level. There were no facilities as such, no stand or dug-outs and no programme though the spectacular views made up for that on a beautiful sunny evening. Disconcerting, though, was the number of un-helmeted local youths riding motor-cycles at high speeds around the vicinity, especially the grassed banks surrounding the pitch and the locals exercising their dogs or playing with their children understandably looked apprehensively nervous.

A crowd of around one hundred lined the ropes by kick-off time and the first half-hour saw some spirited and well contested football with the home side competing well. But two goals in as many minutes, one an own goal, opened the floodgates and thereafter it became a matter of just how many the visitors would score. In the end they managed six though failed to add to their tally in the last twenty minutes or so when they might easily have doubled their score. The performance of the home goalkeeper was heroic. His side did manage a consolation, a neatly

taken far post effort, but when I got home the score had been posted as 0-6 on the league website. When you are bottom nothing goes your way.

Brymbo are clearly an exceptional side for this level of football but in truth this was a typical end of season affair and the final quarter, in particular, was disappointing for its lack of intensity. Great views and friendly locals made this an enjoyable evening trip overall, though.

06/20