

**TT No.144: Mike Latham** - Saturday 15 December 2007: Huws-Gray Fitlock Cymru Alliance. **CPD Glantraeth** 4-2 Ruthin Town. Att: 50 (h/c); Admission: £3; 44pp programme: £1; FGIF Match Rating: 5\*.

With frosts around threatening to disrupt the fixtures it was time to call the Fylde based oracle. 'Anglesey has been dry and frost-free all week so it should be okay for football,' he replied. Sure enough, a 10-30am check call to the friendly Glantraeth secretary confirmed the pitch was playable and, on a gloriously sunny morning, off I set.

In my ignorance I had assumed that Glantraeth, champions of the Cymru Alliance just two seasons ago was a small village in the middle of the island. How wrong I was. A perusal of the club's excellent website which is expertly overseen by former Burscough stalwart Stan Strickland (whose jointly-written history with John Yates of Burscough FC, 'Green Village Heroes' is a model club history) tells the traveller more.

'Glantraeth Football Club was founded in 1984 after landowner Iolo Owen agreed to a football pitch being laid on a piece of his land adjacent to the Glantraeth Restaurant, hence the club's name. Anglesey's own 'Field of Dreams' is idyllically located in the middle of beautiful open countryside within the historic rural community of Trefdraeth, Bodorgan, midway between the villages of Malltraeth and Bethel with stunning views of Snowdonia and situated close to Newborough Forest and the Blue Flag beach at Llanddwyn Island' the website informs. It sounds good and, after a trouble-free drive a left turning in the village of Bethel with a sign directing the traveller towards the Glantraeth restaurant signals that the journey is nearly over.

This is a ground with a difference. A friendly gate-man takes your £3, welcomes you to the club and you then drive a few hundred yards towards the car park of the Glantraeth, where a proud peacock struts about the place. It's the first time I have ever seen a peacock at a football game.

The playing pitch is located on the other side of the Glantraeth, an impressive building with holiday cottages attached. The pitch has been enclosed by a smart white-painted boarding and a small stand, seating (I was told) 72 people is on the far side straddling the half-way line bearing the legend 'CPD Glantraeth FC'. There is also a small cover in the corner nearest the restaurant, intriguingly with a gated entrance. I rather fancy it doubles up as a pen during the week for sheep rounded up from the surrounding fields.

There can be few more rural or more idyllic locations to watch football than this and the snow-capped mountains of Snowdonia in the distance provide a perfect backdrop.

The Glantraeth is open for business and doubles up as a club meeting point and social club. It also serves a quite superb cup of coffee for only 50 pence. When the programme editor arrives with his latest edition, a superbly produced document with 44 packed pages the afternoon is complete. Recognising a stranger in their midst the home officials welcome me with open arms and are keen to chat about the club. Moreover, team lists are readily available so the times passes quickly before the 2pm kick-off.

The players change in a building behind the Glantraeth and enter the field via a stone walkway and a small bridge that goes over a stream. The pitch is well grassed and has a slope from the nearside touchline. Most of the spectators gather along this side, where a concreted walkway has been constructed and there is a fine view of the play. Just one person takes advantage of the seated stand on the far side.

Glantraeth start like a house on fire and are 3-0 up after 16 minutes, adding a fourth just after the half-hour. Ruthin, though, recover their composure and are easily the better side in the second half, grabbing two late goals to give them some consolation. A visit to Glantraeth comes highly recommended. In fact, it was one of the best days out watching football I've ever had. This surely beats being searched at the turnstiles at Bury (as I was recently) before being allowed to watch a turgid game of league football having paid £16 for the privilege and a further £1.50 for the most disgusting cup of coffee I've ever tasted.

06/20