

TT No.81: *Mike Latham* - Saturday 6 October 2007: Welsh Cup 2nd Round. **CPD Llanberis** 1-5 Newtown. Attendance: 300 (est.); Admission: £4 including 32pp programme; FGIF Match Rating: 3*.

The early stages of the Welsh Cup competition always throw up a number of intriguing ties and this year was no different. After much procrastination the decision was taken to visit the old slate-mining town of Llanberis, in the foothills of Snowdon, for a David and Goliath clash.

Llanberis, from the lower reaches of the Welsh Alliance, step three of the pyramid, were up against Welsh Premier League side Newtown on a beautifully mild and sunny afternoon.

The ground is situated opposite the picturesque Lake Padarn just off the main street of the attractive town that is dwarfed by huge mountains. Llanberis is a predominantly Welsh-speaking area with a population of around 2,000. It was a huge effort by the club, therefore, to attract a crowd of around 300 to this tie.

Entrance by way of two gates was £4 including an impressive 32-page programme with a colour wrap around cover. The club obviously enjoys the support of many local businesses with no less than 46 different advertisers in the programme, which was written predominantly in English.

There can be few better settings for a game of football and, in such splendid weather, the scenes were simply stunning. Newtown's main concern must have been the nature of the pitch which, though well grassed, was very narrow. The visitors, the programme reminded us, had taken part in the very first Welsh Cup competition back in 1877.

A post and rail fence surrounds the playing area with the dug-outs facing one another on the halfway line. There is no cover or seated area but one or two experienced spectators had brought along their own chairs. An old wooden shack behind one goal acted as the dressing rooms and tea bar, where hot drinks and hot dogs were cheerfully dispensed.

A real carnival air had built up by kick-off time and the first 20 minutes were tightly contested with the home side giving a good account of themselves. Though the visitors struck first, Llanberis were level almost immediately before Newtown established a 3-1 interval lead. Their third goal was a crisp volley from Marc Lloyd-Williams, a prolific goal-scorer in Welsh football, who hails from Llanberis.

The second half was a tamer affair and after Newtown added two more goals the last 25 minutes or so were played out at a slow pace. But the game had been well contested and played in an excellent spirit.

A visit to Llanberis comes highly recommended, particularly in weather such as this. You can dine at the club's shirt sponsors, the Spice of Llanberis, or stay at the

Padarn Lake Hotel which borders the ground, pay a visit to the Electric Mountain Snowdonia Centre, travel along Lake Padarn on board the lake railway, take a lake cruise or even attempt an ascent of Snowdon. Days out watching football don't come much better than this.

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