

**TT No.82: Chris Powell** - Friday 5th October 2007; **Llanidloes Town v Caersws Res**; Mid Wales League; Score: 1-1; Att: 167 (h/c); Admission: £2.50; Programme: No; FGIF Match Rating: 2\*.

Due to circumstance I was afforded the opportunity to take in a rare (for me) night game. After scanning the fixture lists, Llanidloes Town v Caersws Reserves was the only realistic game for me to do (living as I do 'Oop North'). I know some people frown upon games that involve reserve teams, but as long as they are not the home team and it's a new ground to visit, I'm not bothered. So, it was to Victoria Avenue I headed. After finishing bottom last season, Llanidloes Town only escaped relegation due to the other teams being denied promotion, Hay St Mary's because of ground criteria and Bishops Castle because of being just over the border.

There was little information on the t'internet regarding the location of the ground, I couldn't even find a postcode to help me along, so it was with some trepidation I headed down the A470 to Llanidloes, fearing a wild goose chase around the town trying to find the ground. I need not have worried as it turned out to be one of the easiest grounds to find. As you continue down the A470, through Welshpool and Newtown, you will see the sign welcoming you to Llanidloes. Continue a little further (past the rugby ground) and you will come to a roundabout, turn right (signposted Llanidloes A4518) and the ground is approximately 200 yards on the left-hand side, you literally can't miss it! There is limited parking at the ground but ample street parking.

The ground itself looks very smart from the outside and with the lights beaming down onto the pitch it looks fantastic (There is something about the feel of a ground when it's under floodlights). You can immediately tell that this ground once graced a higher level (Llanidloes were founder members of the League of Wales). After paying my £2.50 entrance, and getting over the disappointment of no programme (which is bizarre considering the crowd that is in attendance tonight), I entered the ground.

It is situated within a park and is surrounded by trees and a playground behind one goal and, although fenced off, if you were feeling particularly mean you could watch the game quite easily without paying (and some were - c'mon its only £2.50!). There is hard standing all around the pitch and two stands on the halfway line, opposite each other. The main stand has the feel of past times where the seating is benches and everybody is bunched up together. I would guess that this would probably hold around 150 people in here. Underneath the main stand are the changing rooms and the club bar, where the pictures of the past teams stare down at you from the walls. Sadly, as I was driving, I could not sample the lovely Brains bitter they were serving. The stand opposite was your "modern" type and this has room for 60 people, but during the match there were only about 8 people in it whereas the main stand was packed (hopefully this was due to sentiment rather than the proximity to the bar!)

The game itself was a typical derby (only nine miles separate these clubs) and the first half was a real scrappy affair. There was little goalmouth action to speak of and neither goalkeeper had a shot to save as both teams were effectively cancelling each other out. The only decent chance came towards the end of the first half when Llanidloes striker Nick Jones should have done better with a header from six yards.

The second half was an improvement in terms of the actual football as the passing was much better and the game was end-to-end, but again the quality in the last third let both teams down. In all honesty the game had 0-0 written all over it unless there was a moment of genius or a great big cock-up. Can you guess which one occurred? Llanidloes took the lead in the 63rd minute when, under no pressure whatsoever, the Caersws goalkeeper sliced a routine kick straight into the path of Greg Brown, who had no trouble running in and despatching the ball into the net. A moment of madness, but there was more to come. 12 minutes later a Caersws cross from the left-hand side was headed into own net, again under no real pressure, by Llanidloes defender Ashley Williams. I suppose you could argue that this made it a fair result as neither team did enough to win the game.

It was an enjoyable night out in Powys and the partisan crowd made for a good atmosphere. An attendance of 150+ was pretty amazing when I was expecting the "10 men and dog". Overall, worth the visit and a nice start to my weekend.

06/20