

**TT No.95: Andy Sneddon - Welsh Travels for September 2007.**

Match 1 - 08-09-2007 - **Blaenau Amateurs** 3 Real Llandudno 1; Gwynedd League; Att: 45; Admission: £1; Prog: No.

The great old cover has finally gone now (ex-Blaenau LMR Station canopy) but this is still a "proper" football ground and deserves a visit. Fully enclosed and railed with dugouts, a single entrance (which enables them to take a gate) and some good vantage points around the ground to take in the backdrops which are to say the least, spectacular (for those that don't know Blaenau Ffestiniog was the centre of the slate mining industry in North Wales).

Best visited on a good day (now the cover has gone) to appreciate the stunning surroundings.

The welcome was warm and friendly from the committee at the gate, but remember and respect the fact that this is very much "Welsh" Wales, where "Cymraeg" is the native language. Don't, for one second though, let that put you off: the area has a lot to offer the visitor, especially if you have any interest in industrial heritage, and of course there's the Ffestiniog Railway (well worth a look if railways float 'yer' boat, but allow 3 hours for the round trip) amongst many other gems.

Oh, and the game wasn't half bad either...four goals and many near misses, Blaenau comfortable for most of the time but Real's whippet-like lone striker caused them plenty of headaches throughout.

Match 2 - 15-09-07; **Llansannan** 0 Trefnant Village 2; North Wales Coast FA Junior Cup; Att: 15 (good job our car brought 3!!); Prog/Gate: No.

Two Struggling Clwyd League Premier Division sides fought out what was, to be honest, a poor advert for level four of the Welsh Pyramid. Compared to last week's game at Blaenau (Gwynedd League), the standard here was noticeably lower.

There's nothing there in the truest sense of it being a ground, it's basically the village Rec, however, the setting, on a good day, was simply beautiful and the various elevated viewing points around the ground gave cracking views of the surrounding Denbighshire hills. It is, in the whole tightly hemmed in by trees, raised ground and a river and the view from the elevated park benches or the front of the car park (both 8-10 ft above the pitch were very good. The village is a very picturesque and sleepy little place South of Abergele and West of Denbigh, in the heart of rural Denbighshire.

I don't think it'd be too unkind to say that Llansannan are struggling at the moment. Bottom of the league, manager-less, and with a distinct lack of club officials (the keeper seemed to be doing pretty much everything beforehand) I hope they turn the corner soon.

Roll on the next round, I think I may have a crack at following this competition through the season.

Match 3 - 22-09-07; **Deiniolen** 4 Llanrwst Res 2; Caernarfon League Moorings Cup 1st Round; Att: 50-ish; Gate: None; Prog: None.

Cracking afternoon out in deepest slate mining country in Snowdonia. Deiniolen (say Dayn-yollen) upset the formbook with a well-deserved win over their Division One opponents in one of the most dramatic settings I've been to in some time.

The ground (as Bantam Cymraeg had described) is bordering on the unbelievable, hued out of a steep bank and almost unfeasibly narrow (I can't see how it's more than about 45 yards wide), with virtually no room in most places to take corners (unless you can run down vertical slopes). Spectator facilities are interesting, with a narrow walkway around the higher parts of the ground giving views from 15-20 feet above pitch level whilst only being a round 3-5 yards back in most places. It's tightly enclosed all around with the only tiny bit of space being on the far side around the dugouts. Part of the upper slope is railed and fenced and the backdrop is as you'd expect, with mountains and evidence of mine workings all around and the Menai Strait and Anglesey in the distance.

As expected, it is a virtually wholly Welsh speaking community, but the club officials we spoke to were nothing less than friendly and welcoming.

The standard on the field, was, I have to say, better than expected and if Deiniolen are one of the weaker teams in Division Two (going off their start in the league, one win in 5), I'm rather looking forward to visiting a number of the other clubs in both divisions. A number are ex Gwynedd League so some semblance of facilities should be in evidence.

Match 4 -29-09-2007; **Bontnewydd** 1 Bodedern Res 3; Gwynedd League; Admission: Free; Prog: No; Att: 30 (est).

Slightly odd one this - the pitch itself is excellent and is very neatly railed on 3 sides with masses of advertising boards, the dugouts are also very smart, trimmed in the club colours of claret and blue. The dressing rooms though are rudimentary in the extreme (shipping containers) and other than the team management there is no-one from the club there; so, no gate/prog/refreshments/raffle/collection...nowt!

The setting is very pleasant, out beyond the Eastern fringe of the village on the road to Caeathro, Llanrug and Bangor, tree lined on one side and surrounded by farmland with very good views.

The game itself was decent enough though the score-line slightly flattered Bodedern.

06/20