

TT No.148: Mike Latham - Sat 14 February 2009: FAW Trophy Rd 5: **Nefyn United** 2-1 AFC Bargoed Redz (AET); Attendance: 120 (h/c); Admission: £3 including eight-page programme; FGIF Match Rating: 4*.

Some very old friends of mine quit the rat race some time ago and set up home in Nefyn, settling for quality of life ahead of pursuing the dollar in high stress jobs in Manchester. I had been meaning to visit them for some time and this intriguing quarter-final tie gave me the opportunity of catching up while also enjoying a fine game of football.

Nefyn is a small town on the north-west coast of the Llyn Peninsula in Gwynedd, north-west Wales with a population of about 2,500 that swells during the summer months as tourists are drawn to the beautiful sandy beaches and the rugged coastline scenery.

Despite its comparative isolation Nefyn is within easy driving distance of Bangor and only around three hour's drive from Lancashire. This was a big match for the club that plays in the Welsh Alliance League, effectively level three of the game in Wales- their opponents from the South Wales Amateur League hailing south east of Merthyr Tydfil being the first time they had ever opposed a team from south Wales.

My friends had told me of the coverage given to Nefyn's cup exploits in the local press and the number of signs around the town advertising the game. The excitement had certainly built up by the time I arrived at Nefyn's Caer Delyn ground in good time for the 2pm kick-off.

The ground is about one mile out of town on the Pwllheli road in a rural location dominated by the Garn Boduan hill, its 900-foot summit once the home of an Iron Age hill-fort. With a sea fret blocking out the winter sun and obscuring the top of the hill the ground had a brooding, atmospheric feel, quite appropriate given the importance of the occasion.

Nefyn usually manage to stage games when others in the area are called off- the proximity to the sea and the elevated location of the pitch making it rarely a target for frost or waterlogging. The ground was typical of this level- a neat post-and-rail fence around the pitch, a small cover on the halfway line, dug-outs on either side and a changing block behind the goal that doubles as a tea room- excellent home-made cakes and a cheery welcome an added bonus.

Expertly controlled by an experienced referee and two good linesmen this was a well contested cup-tie played in a good spirit. The visitors gave a good account of themselves after a shaky start, equalising just before half-time and deservedly taking the tie into extra-time. A goal midway just before half-time in extra time by the home side's no15 eventually decided the issue. Great game, great occasion and within fifteen minutes of the final whistle I was walking along Nefyn beach

with my friends- and my dogs that came along, too. Like me they are fast becoming devotees of football in this beautiful part of the country.

06/20