

TT No. 195: *Mike Latham* - Sat 12th March 2011: Spar Mid Wales League Cup Rd 1: Tywyn Brynchrug 4-1 Tregaran; Attendance: 30 (h/c); Admission: £2; No programme; FGIF Match Rating: 3*.

The Spar Mid Wales League has been given a big boost this season by the creation of a second division; added to the introduction of an excellent league website with fixtures and results regularly updated the competition's profile has increased considerably.

Due to the scenic location of many of the grounds of the member clubs the Spar Mid Wales League, operating at levels three and four of the Welsh pyramid-system, offers many fine groundhopping opportunities. But the relative isolation of many of the grounds within the league makes it difficult for those relying on public transport.

The weather forecast for mid Wales was good with temperatures well above the seasonal average and little chance of rain and so I decided to visit one of the outposts of the league, Tywyn Brynchrug FC whose ground address is Cae Chwarae, Brynchrug.

More than a little preparatory research was required as there is precious little information on the club to be found on the internet. I discovered that their ground is in Brynchrug, a small village two miles inland from the town and seaside resort of Tywyn, on the Cardigan Bay coast of southern Gwynedd.

The area has several fine beaches, rich agricultural land and being on the edge of the Snowdonia National Park has simply awe-inspiring views inland to distant mountains. The area is a Mecca for steam railway enthusiasts; the Talylyn Railway line runs for seven-and-a-quarter miles, through the beautiful Fathew Valley from Tywyn. The line was originally built in the mid-19th century to carry slate from the Bryn Eglwys quarries near Abergynolwyn; nowadays the line is lovingly maintained by volunteers.

The skies were grey and threatening and the waves pounded in at the bay at Tywyn; but happily, on passing the football ground at Brynchrug the players were warming up getting ready for the game.

The cup-tie pitted Tywyn Brynchrug, sixth in the top division against lower division Tregaran, vying for the championship and in a good run of form. Unfortunately, the visitors turned up with only eleven players, and this was to back-fire upon them later.

The ground is typical of many at this level, being a railed-off playing pitch part of the village sports facilities. A children's play park separated the near-side goal from the main road. There is a small seated stand, situated at an angle to the pitch and adjoining the dressing room block from where a good tea bar was up and

running long before kick-off. Behind the Perspex dug-outs was a flag-pole with the Welsh flag flying proudly in the breeze.

Effectively a two-sided ground with the far side having a hedge separating it from a field of grazing sheep and the area behind the far goal backing on to a breathtaking view of distant mountains, this is a scenic and relatively remote spot.

By kick-off time around 30 locals had turned up and they were a friendly lot, obviously intent on enjoying their afternoon supporting their local club. They had a good banter with the visiting official who was running the line for the away team.

Tywyn Brynchrug went into the interval 2-0 ahead, both well-taken goals and sealed their progress into the next round with a third goal soon after the break. The Tregaron goalkeeper then had to limp out of the action after aggravating a knee injury, an outfield player donning the jersey. The home side added a fourth and looked set to romp to a comfortable win when the visitors' ranks were further reduced for a second yellow card against one of their defenders. But the nine men salvaged their pride with a late goal which gave the final score-line a respectable look.

It was another enjoyable afternoon of grass-roots football in a remote rural location with stunning scenery to compliment a decent game. A visit to Brynchrug comes with my warmest recommendation.

07/20