

**TT No.234: *Stuart J Pykett*** - Sat 9th April 2011; **Goytre** (2) v Monmouth Town (3); Welsh League Division 3; Admission: £3.00; Programme: 50p.

Having been to the 'other' Goytre, that is United, a few seasons back, I thought it was about time to visit the Gwent version.

The two clubs are unconnected, United playing near Port Talbot in the first division and here, Goytre F.C playing near Pontypool.

Sometimes when you pick a club out to visit on a matchday you don't always know what to expect and that was the case today.

At this stage of the season I try to pick a game with something to play for, especially on a Saturday and at this time of year the Welsh League always provides this! Also, whenever I watch Monmouth, they always give good value so this 5th v 6th clash was the one for me. Both teams had games in hand to catch the leaders and get promotion though whether either club could go up I'm not sure about as I'm not familiar as to the ground gradings situation in this division.

The ground is situated in the lovely small village of Penperlleni just off the A4042 Abergavenny/Pontypool-Newport road (public transport could be a problem). The village is not marked as such in my trusty Collins road atlas (no Sat Nav's for me!), the name 'Goetre' (note the spelling) is shown instead! Apologies to anyone who knows the area, (I may have this wrong) but Goytre appears to consist of a very pleasant pub and an equally pleasant fish and chip shop! Anyway, heading into the village by car you go over a few road humps on a very narrow road and turn right into Plough Road (not marked of course!) and follow it out into the countryside for about a mile and the ground and small car park is on your left.

If you like rural grounds this is an absolute gem of a place to visit, especially with the weather being so good, one of my favourites of the season. The ground is enclosed by trees, bushes and bleating sheep with helpful stiles in situ to retrieve balls from wayward clearances in the neighbouring fields.

There is a spacious clubhouse and dressing room complex adjacent which is bigger than it looks from the outside! The walls are adorned with club history and old team photographs. Even when you visit the loo there are old newspaper match reports to read while you are doing the necessary!!!

A 24-page colour computer generated programme was sold for a scandalous 50p, back copies of which were available for free at the bar.

The football on show was certainly not top quality even on a remarkably well grassed and true surface. However, '6 pointer' games like this are rarely for the purist and what it lacked in quality was certainly made up for in sheer effort from both teams with 100% commitment from every player and some hard but fair

tackling. Some of the players were laying their physical health on the line to block shots and deny opponents space on the ball!!

Monmouth just edged it 2-3, deservedly in my opinion, with both sides netting a penalty each.

The referee got some 'stick' from the home bench (no swearing from them though) as he gave a rash of yellow cards out to both sides mainly for frustration/dissent. A word for the referee now. I have watched a lot of games in this division and they don't have any assistance from linesmen/women using club officials who only 'call' throw-ins. The referee has a thankless task and is on his/her own. The responsibility in important games like this is massive and he/she has to give offsides as they see them, obviously often not in line with the last defender. I thought that today's official was excellent. There's no wonder we are short of match officials when they have to take abuse (not today) from some team benches - we've all seen it. It takes a strong character.

Sometimes during a season, you have a visit to a club where everything falls into place. For me it's friendly club, good game, pleasant surroundings, decent programme, nice pub, chip shop and good weather. Don't want much do I?!

07/20