

TT No.240: Ian Hill - Friday 1st April 2011; **Bangor City** v Prestatyn Town; Welsh Premier Football League; Result: 1-2; Att: 775; Admission: £7.00; Programme: £2.00; Rating: 5.

Bangor City FC

Organised football in Bangor has been played since 1876, City spending most of its early years competing in various cup competitions. Founder members of the North Wales Coast Football League in 1893 (Champions in 1896), in 1898 they joined the Football Combination League and in 1910 the North Wales Alliance.

During the 1930s, 40s and 50s, City competed in the Lancashire Combination, Cheshire League and Northern Premier League. They won the League Cup in the NPL's inaugural season and consistently good performances saw City invited to become founder members of the Alliance Premier League (now the Conference) in 1979.

City spent two spells in the Alliance, and in 1984, played Northwich Victoria in the FA Trophy Final, at Wembley; the first time a Welsh club had played there in almost 60 years. A Welsh Cup win in 1962 saw City qualify for a place in the European Cup Winners Cup and face Napoli. A 2-0 home win was cancelled out by a 1-3 defeat in Italy, the Italians emerged as 2-1 victor's in a replay played at Highbury. In 1984-85, City once again qualified for the Cup-Winners' Cup. Norwegians Fredrickstad were beaten in the First Round, but City lost 0-3 to Spanish giants Atletico Madrid in the Second Round. In 1992, City became founder members of the League of Wales, finishing 5th in the first season and claiming the title in 1993-4, and 1994-5 under the management of Nigel Adkins. European campaigns in Iceland and Poland were the reward for these triumphs.

Adkins left the club in 1996, and after a succession of Managerial changes, former Everton and Scotland legend Graeme Sharp took over the reins for 1997/98. Sharp led City to yet another Welsh Cup victory, beating Connahs Quay Nomads. Sharp's stay was brief however, and City fans then again saw a number of short-term incumbents of the "hotseat", with the highlight of this period being another Welsh Cup win, this time over Cwmbran, during Meirion Appleton's reign as manager. The appointment of England International, Peter Davenport during the summer of 2001 brought immediate improvement when they chased for the championship and were Welsh Cup runners-up. The Davenport era saw consistently good League positions and a number of impressive Cup runs, the bonus being European campaigns taking the club to Yugoslavia, Romania and Latvia.

An inconsistent start to 2005/6 saw Davenport resigning, leading to yet another managerial merry-go-round. The few bright spots were a Welsh Cup final against Rhyl.

Fortunes improved in April 2007 with the managerial appointment of former City player Neville Powell. In three seasons, Neville has brought home three Welsh Cups, with wins against Llanelli, Aberystwyth and Port Talbot. Off the field, lengthy negotiations have been continuing between landlords and developers to find a new home for the Club, away from the historic Farrar Road stadium, the Nantporth site outside the city being earmarked. Getting There

I travelled to Bangor by train. The ground is a very convenient 5-minute walk away. Come out of the station, turn second right and the ground is on your left.
The Game

Bangor went into the fixture level on points with The New Saints but due to their inferior goal difference in second place. It was a nervous looking City who opened the game in attacking fashion but after 10 minutes the game changed completely. City's Hoy was sent off for a late tackle on Prestatyn's O'Neill, who I must say made the most of the tackle. Referee Mike Jones on the advice of his Assistant brandished the red card and Hoy walked.

The referee controlled the game in a really eccentric way. For most of the time he waved his arms about like he was being attacked by a swarm of bees. The impressive Lee Hunt of Prestatyn should have walked for a lunging tackle on 15 minutes but was only shown yellow. Further tackles from Prestatyn went unpunished as City continued to attack; driven on by a sense of injustice they were caught out on 21 minutes as Steve Rogers scored the opening goal. On 31 minutes Prestatyn extended the lead through O'Neill as Bangor failed to deal with a long throw. Bangor did hit back just before half time to set up the second half nicely.

We also had the sight of about 14 players in a "handbags" incident where the Prestatyn keeper, Dunt, appeared to punch Bangor's Jebb. The slapping festival in the Prestatyn goal mouth should have led to some form of action by the referee but unbelievably he had a chat with the Captain's and that was it.

Boo's rang round the ground at half time as referee Jones left the field. I've got to say he was bad but his inept display increased the entertainment/comedy value. Bangor really went for it in the second half but couldn't claw a goal back. They definitely deserved something from the game but it wasn't to be.

Farrar Road

How do you describe Farrar Road? Ramshackle, falling to pieces but oozing in character. Unfortunately, plans are now moving ahead to move the club to a new ground in Nantporth. This ground will be a real loss and should have a preservation order put on it. The main stand appears to be two stands that were constructed at different times. The larger section has tip up seats and the other bench seating. The latter area is closed to be public and has a padlocked wooden gate in place to stop entry. The other three sides of the ground are uneven terracing of which it is hard to tell if it is supposed slope down towards the pitch or the angle is due to subsidence.

One goal has a large cover with sporadic crash barriers in place. As you enter the ground a club shop is to your immediate right. The step up into the shop is probably one of the highest in any football ground. There is a good selection of programmes and a few souvenirs. It would be even better if it was tidied up a bit.

Two portacabins have been put together next to the stand to provide a very sparse bar area, which, appears to sell cans from a table. It was well populated at half time.

Programme

Programmes are on sale just inside the turnstile area. It's an A5 20-page colour glossy shell with 28 photocopied pages inside. It's a really good read with some interesting articles especially the proposed move to Summer football for the Welsh Premier League.

Overall

I would highly recommend a visit to Farrar Road before it is gone for good. It's a quality old ground, the football on offer is entertaining and all for the great price of £7.00.

07/20