

TT No.259: Mike Latham - Easter Monday 25 April 2011: Spar Mid Wales League, **Dyffryn Banw** 1-0 Waterloo Rovers; Admission: £2; No programme; Attendance: 81 (h/c); FGIF Match Rating: 3*.

There can be few more remote or unusual locations for a football team than that of Dyffryn Banw FC, who play in the Spar Mid Wales League.

Dyffryn Banw FC is the football team of the Banwy valley district situated in mid Wales on the A458 between Welshpool and Machynlleth.

Their ground is rented off the local farmer and is located to the left-hand side of the A road in the small village of Llangadfan when travelling from Welshpool.

Prior to their elevation up the Welsh football pyramid the team played on the other side of the road on a pitch behind the Banw Primary School. The team still uses the school for parking and changing facilities and the players from both sides and the officials have to walk about 50 metres along the road before crossing to the new ground, which they have used for the past five seasons.

The playing area was well grassed for the time of year and surrounded by a sturdy wire fence. Behind the far side runs an undulating river and there is a new water pumping plant being built alongside the ground. The only facilities as such are provided by the clever conversion of a trailer wagon which doubles up as a small stand straddling the halfway line. A number of chairs were available for those who wished to stay in the shade on a gloriously sunny afternoon.

Soon after kick-off a small wooden hut became a hive of activity and was transformed into a tea bar. Club officials were incredibly friendly and welcoming and obviously proud of the way such a small community manages to maintain a team playing at level 3 of the game in Wales. The players are all amateurs from the local area and have to pay a weekly subscription of £2 in order to play.

Today's opponents, Waterloo Rovers from Welshpool were safe in mid table but the home side, second from bottom, needed the three points in a desperate fight against the threat of relegation.

The game was tightly fought with little in the way of goalmouth action and it looked as though one goal, should it arrive, would settle the contest. So, it proved as 12 minutes into the second half the home striker chased a through ball down the left, outpaced the covering defender and superbly lobbed the out-coming goalkeeper for a quality goal.

The visitors had a goal ruled out for offside, the homesters hit the woodwork and survived six anxious minutes of added time before the result was confirmed.

The 'crowd' numbered around 30 just before the 2-30pm kick-off but grew in number immediately before and after the start and by midway through the first-half numbered 81 on a headcount. Set in glorious rural surroundings this was a

delightful trip to a real outpost of the game in Wales and one of my best ever days out watching football in the Principality.

It goes without saying that a visit to Dyffryn Banw comes with my highest recommendation.

07/20