

**TT No. 170: Mike Latham** - Sat 25 February 2012: Spar Mid Wales League Division 2: **Aberdyfi** 2-2 Four Crosses; Att: 14 (h/c); Admission: £2 by bucket collection; No programme; FGIF Match Rating: 4\*; Postcode: LL35 0RT.

They are a bit of a mystery club Aberdyfi as they have no contact details on the excellent Spar Mid Wales League website, no club website and don't feature on the FA Wales' Find A Club section. I hadn't intended to venture this far but with the traffic light I made good progress despite a pit stop at the excellent Rhug Estate Farm Shop on the A5 west of Corwen and I decided to see how far I got. Alright, it's hardly in the class of the Café Ariete at Moffat or Pelosi at Langholm but the bacon, sausage and egg barm-cake went down well and the coffee, machine vended, was okay. It's certainly worth bearing in mind if in the area, as it's a step-up from the norm.

I discovered that Aberdyfi FC play at the Recreation Ground, located on the Tywyn side of the village next to the golf club and adjoining the railway station, though I had to 'phone a friend to find out this information. He was watching North Lancashire League football at the time he received my panic 'phone call which he dealt with expertly, with typical aplomb.

Aberdyfi Football Club, I later found out won the Welsh Amateur Cup in 1936, but by the early 1960s had disbanded. They were re-formed in the mid-1990s and joined the Aberystwyth and District Cambrian Tyres League. Their ground, also known as Penrhos Field was originally built on an old landfill site but has since been resurfaced with the aid of a Sports Lottery grant and a fund-raising initiative. This is their first season in the Mid Wales League.

There is a small catchment area for players, many coming from the nearby Tywyn and Brynchrug. With them having a joint club in the first division of the Mid Wales League the 'player pool' is inevitably reduced.

There is no clubhouse and so all the meetings and social events, I was told, are held at the Dyfi Inn or the Britannia Inn.

I also discovered that the Aberdovey Golf Club, founded in 1892, is a famous 18-hole links course of world renown, having been described frequently and lyrically in the press by Bernard Darwin, the famed golf writer, who was a notable member of the club.

The good thing about the Spar Mid Wales League is the friendliness of the people. Once I had received advice from my friend, I turned off the main road and parked on the station car park adjoining the ground. The referee was making his way to the game from his car, ready dressed, with time to spare. He identified me as a 'hopper and we had a good chat for several minutes. He is in charge of the forthcoming hop game at Aberaeron, Mr Davies is his name- an excellent official

with a light and friendly touch- I wish we had more of his like in English non-league football.

Once found the ground was a picture, especially on such a sunny and warm afternoon. There are sweeping views inland to sheep-clad hills with some imposing properties that dot the sky-line. But there are few facilities for the spectator, other than a tea bar in a wooden hut manned by an extremely helpful club official. Two bus shelters provide the only cover and the dug-outs are positioned on the far side. The home team had the bare XI and a gentleman that appeared to be their manager ran the line. They are a lovely, friendly club but appear to have little in the way of off-field help and precious little support- the 'attendance' peaked at 14.

Aberdyfi is a village on the north side of the estuary of the River Dyfi in Gwynedd, on the west coast of Wales, founded around the harbour and shipbuilding industry; now best known as a seaside resort with a high-quality beach. Located within the Snowdonia National Park, road access to Aberdyfi is by the A493, with Tywyn four miles to the north and Machynlleth 11 miles to the east. Aberdyfi is on the Cambrian Coast railway line.

The visitors, placed third before the game scored on 12 and 29 minutes and looked set for a comfortable win. But Aberdyfi dominated the second half, pulled one back on 55 and equalised in the fourth minute of added-on time when their midfielder curled in a screamer. There was still time for the home side to have a goal disallowed for offside and the visitors to have an attempt cleared off the line. It was great entertainment, extended to 11 minutes stoppage-time on a sunny afternoon, controlled by the top-notch referee on a lovely pitch- great stuff!

These days I'm just happy to watch this level of football on a Saturday afternoon- it was fantastic. I'd recommend a trip to Aberdyfi unreservedly. And if the lack of a programme puts you off, then the club are actively looking for volunteers to produce one for them. So, do it yourself.

07/20