

TT No.245: Mike Latham - Saturday 12 May 2012: Dumfries & District Amateur Football League, **Burns Cup Final 2012: Lochar Thistle 0-1 Lochmaben** (at Enterprise Park, Tinwald Downs Road, Dumfries); Att: 110 (h/c); Admn/Prog: No; Postcode: DG1 3PH.

There's nothing better at this time of the year than to visit a game with something riding upon the outcome, especially in good weather. This was my first dip into the Dumfries & District League and on a gloriously sunny if chilly afternoon I experienced what was a really impressive showpiece.

The league is now down to eight clubs, some former members now being part of the Southern Counties (South of Scotland League). A local told me that the league once functioned with two divisions of 12 clubs and so the current state of affairs is worrying for football enthusiasts in this part of the world. Despite that the league, he assured me, was superbly run by a small but enthusiastic committee and the standard of football was very good; he proved to be spot-on.

It's unusual that a cup final is played at one of the competing teams' ground; this was at Thistle's Enterprise Park home. Thistle are league champions for a second season running but Lochmaben are their closest rivals and had beaten them 4-0 in the Queen of the South Cup Final at Palmerston Park the previous Monday.

Thistle's Enterprise Park ground is at the end of Tinwald Downs Road on an industrial estate just off the A701 Beatock Road out of Dumfries (turning right at a roundabout by a Tesco Extra). The ground is opposite the Dumfries and Galloway Aviation Museum. A map can be found here:
<http://www.dumfriesaviationmuseum.com/>

The playing pitch was in immaculate condition and there is a smart club house. The pitch is railed-off on two sides, the far side (nearest the road) is bordered by a large hedge. There are scenic views of distant hills. It was a well contested and hard-fought game with few goalmouth incidents, the Lochmaben goalkeeper having an outstanding game when called upon.

As the game wore on, it looked increasingly likely that a single goal would decide the issue. So, it proved as with just three minutes remaining the visitors won their second cup final inside on week following a prolonged goalmouth scramble three minutes from time. Their celebrations at the final whistle were joyous and prolonged but the home team took the result in good spirits. I really enjoyed my visit here and intend to be back for more matches in this league.