

TT No.124: Andy Molden - Welsh Hop Weekend featuring matches played in the Ceredigion League (08-10/03/13).

Day 1 of 3 - 08/03/13 - Welsh Premier League - **Bangor City** v Airbus UK; WPL; Result: 2-0; Attendance: 591; Admission: £8, OAP's £5; Prog £2.

Took the game in on the way to the Welsh Hop. Liked the ground, everything you want for a League of Wales ground. Reasonable sized car park. Very good catering. Strange game, a draw would have been a fair result but some unusual refereeing handed Bangor the points. At the start of play the teams were 3rd and 2nd in the league so this result leaves everything to play for in terms of Europe in the coming months. Rained all game. Was staying in a Lodge at Porthmadog got it in the sale at £19. The 25-mile drive back to the lodge was done in good weather and arriving at the lodge I found Porthmadog had not had any rain.

Day 2 of 3 - 09/03/13 - Welsh Hop: Match 1 - **Crannog** 6 Llanbydder 0; Ceredigion League; Attendance: 134.

Onto Welsh Hop, having stayed in Porthmadog overnight an early start was in order. Got up at 5.45am for a 6.45am departure. Nice weather in Porthmadog and quite warm as I left. Encountered all sorts of weather on the way to Crannog. But arriving at Crannog the weather was the same as at Porthmadog, in fact I wish I had packed my Surf Board and wet suit as I would I have gone into the sea for an hour.

Like this set up loads of grass banking, very good catering at reasonable prices. Everyone friendly. Game a bit one sided but enjoyable. Fantastic view over Cardigan Bay. Never thought I would visit a team called Crannog, a word I usually only hear in Time Team.

Match 2 - **Maesglas** 2 Llanboidy 1; Ceredigion League; Attendance: 155.

Onto Maesglas again great views, good game and plenty to eat a Hog Roast. Some of the travellers thought their luck was in when they were asked if they wanted stuffing.

Match 3 - **St Dogmaels** 0 New Quay; Ceredigion League; Attendance: 284.

Third in the day St Dogs v New Quay, 3v2 both teams undefeated. Win put New Quay top. A cracking ground making Cotswold grounds look flat. Catering top class, Crab Rolls and Leak & Potato Soup. Crab Rolls were a 1st for me as was the home keeper taking the corners. Bit of handbags at the end involving the away lino and the home crowd which we later found out ended up with the home keeper seeing red. End to a smashing day, a 40-minute drive to my hotel in Lampeter.

Day 3 of 3 - 09/03/13 - Welsh Hop.

Match 4 - Trinity St David's University College Lampeter 1 Dewi Stars 0;
Ceredigion League; Attendance: 161.

Up at 6.30am shower and a quick walk around Lampeter. Taking photos of the pitch by 7am. Lovely day but colder than the day before. The irony of the hop was it took place in the one of the only areas that had good weather. Back in the hotel the entertainment started early, there 10 "hoppers" staying in the hotel - the Royal Black Lion which by chance was also the HQ for the homesters in the first game. Breakfast was being served at 8.30 which gave plenty of time to get to the 10.30am kick-off as the ground was 300 yards away.

Lower division game in the Ceredigion saw the bottom of the table students face promotion chasing Dewi who come from Llanddewi Brefi of Little Britain fame. The student's ground is unusual for this part of Wales as it is quite flat and normal sized. The students both on and off of the pitch had things running well. Catering was on the go early doors by chance it was being supplied by the Black Lion Royal Hotel who are the team's sponsors, bacon and sausages were being walked. The club ran a raffle with first prize being two tickets to see Cardiff City's last home game of the season, they also had 6 other prizes. I purchased the first two tickets and much to my surprise won 1st prize which by chance was a pick of the prizes. I plumped for the case of beer which I donated back to the club as a man of the match award. This went to the home number two who scored a stunning goal in the first half. The game was not great but the homesters fought well for their win.

Match 5 - Llandysul 4 Saron 3; Ceredigion League; Attendance: 206.

The venue again was delightful, the village was very nice and even the public car park we had to use a 70p for four hours was a bargain. Again, a lower division game, 8th v 3rd, but it was a cracker end to end stuff and quite skilful. The pitch we were told was the best in the league and it proved that, in fact the whole set-up was great. The catering was like at all the other grounds great and well-priced. The Welsh Cakes and Bara Brith were out of this world and the burgers seemed to contain real meat and not a horse in sight

All in all, a cracking weekend, it's all going to take place on the same weekend next year and it seems the year after so those with the league on their radar can complete it. Everyone was friendly and really helpful; everything was well priced. The catering was first class.

An easy journey home just two hold ups on at Carmarthen and one at Swindon saw me arrive back by 7pm.

04/20