

TT No.65: *Mike Latham* - Saturday 1 December 2012: Gwynedd League, **Trearddur Bay United** 4-1 Llanystumdwy; Attendance: 20 (h/c); No admission or programme; FGIF Match Rating: 4*.

Frost-free Anglesey provided the perfect destination on a day when many fixtures were in doubt due to the first icy grip of winter. With the tasty prospect of Welsh Premier League action to follow, Bangor City taking on The New Saints in a televised clash at 5pm I headed to Trearddur Bay, leaders of the Gwynedd League.

I've been following the club from afar for a considerable time as their excellent website is regularly updated and provides a useful source of reference for results and fixtures in the Gwynedd and Anglesey Leagues. They immediately give the impression of being a friendly and well-run club and that was soon to be borne out. I really enjoyed my visit here.

Trearddur Bay is a small village of maybe one thousand inhabitants, located a couple of miles south of Holyhead on the west coast of Holy Island off the north-west coast of Anglesey. The main dual carriageway from Bangor is an excellent road and the miles are easily eaten up. At holiday time it must be thronging with traffic but in the depths of winter the road was very quiet. Scuba diving, sea fishing and horse riding are some of the attractions in summer; on a bitterly cold December afternoon a few brave souls undertook a bracing walk along the promenade, their collars turned up against the chill.

The football club plays at a recreation ground on Lon Isallt, opposite the lifeboat station that overlooks the sweeping sandy bay. It was here in February 2011 that Prince William and his future wife, Catherine Middleton, participated in their first official function after becoming engaged, dedicating a lifeboat. Further along is the family owned Trearddur Bay Hotel, which overlooks the beach. This is the club headquarters after the game.

The football ground had survived the first ravages of winter and looked in good shape. The ground is overlooked inland by a striking property on a small hill; a friendly local explained that this was formerly the site of a preparatory school which suffered a disastrous fire in 1972 and later closed down. The sports grounds had been laid out with good drainage and the club occupies part of the old school playing fields.

It's a modest set-up but typical of clubs at this level; a neat post and rail fence on three sides, the fourth side bordering the main road and backed by a sturdy stone wall. There's a smart changing pavilion in the corner from where hot drinks are also cheerfully dispensed. Club officials were very friendly and welcoming. In other words, grass roots football at its very best.

The home side struggled in the early stages and Llanystumdwy took a fifth-minute lead when one of their defenders was given too much time and space in the area

to fire home a shot. United huffed and puffed and barely deserved their equaliser, scored late in the first-half.

The second half though was a different story. United played the game at a far better tempo and looked a good side going forward. Despite a fine display by the visitors' goalkeeper they took the lead soon after the resumption and quickly added two more goals. It was to the credit of the visitors that they regrouped in the last quarter of the game when an even heavier defeat could have been on the cards.

This league is at level five of the Welsh pyramid and suffers at times through a lack of publicity though a league website and several club websites do offer information for interested parties that live farther afield. Within half an hour or so of the final whistle I was parking up at Bangor City's new ground and anticipating a fine game against TNS. The action was fast and furious, the pace unrelenting and the game won by Chris Jones's fine strike for the visitors in the first-half. It was not short of controversy, Bangor claiming a goal after a mad scramble that would have been a case for goal-line technology. I also picked up an excellent new book on the history of Bangor's old ground which they vacated last year. But that's a story for another day; this was about my trip to Trearddur Bay and one I'd recommend unreservedly.

04/20