

TT No.98: *Mike Latham* - Saturday 9 February 2013: Lock Stock Welsh Alliance Football League Division Two: **Kinmel Bay Sports** 2-1 Meliden; Attendance: 40 (h/c); No admission or programme; FGIF Match Rating: 3*.

Heavy overnight rain in North Wales reduced my options; just one game was played in the Gwynedd League and Anglesey League webmaster Dave McCann issued a 'Be sure before you travel' warning on their league website- so I headed off to North Wales and another dip into Division Two of the Welsh Alliance, the fourth tier of the pyramid.

Only four games were played in this league as well, but the game at Kinmel Bay was never in doubt, the playing area firm and in good condition on a murky and chilly afternoon. The distant hills kept disappearing from view under low cloud and rain threatened but happily never arrived.

Both these sides are relative newcomers to the Welsh Alliance, Meliden being a club I had visited a few weeks ago for what proved to be a really enjoyable occasion. Kinmel Bay Sports are the new name of Abergele Rovers who moved ground and changed name to progress up the pyramid after some dominant seasons in the Clwyd League. This is their second season at this level.

As football grounds go, Y Morfa, the home of Kinmel Bay Sports is hardly an inspiring setting. The ground adjoins a rather forlorn looking small leisure centre at the end of a residential road. Not only is spectator viewing limited to one side of the field but even that is interrupted by the large metal cage of the adjoining synthetic five-a-side courts. There are no seats or covered accommodation, in fact an area of concreted hard standing behind a sturdy wooden fence is the only concession to spectator comforts. No attempt appears to be made to charge admission or sell programmes and the only drinks or snacks to be had are from vending machines in the leisure centre.

There are compensations, with some scenic views inland towards the mist enshrouded hills while the floodlights in the near distance were part of the Tir Prince harness racing track and leisure park. The ground had quite a rural feel despite its close proximity to Rhyl and is certainly unusual- being one of the few I'd ever visited where it is not possible to watch the game, from a spectator's point of view from the halfway line.

Kinmel Bay is located in Conwy county borough, and two miles along the coast from Rhyl, which lies across the River Clwyd in the neighbouring county of Denbighshire. Rhyl and neighbouring Prestatyn were both playing away from home and some of their supporters seemed to make up part of the crowd which numbered around 40 by kick-off time.

The game was a feisty affair, nearly boiling over after an early incident and later degenerating into a couple of ugly massed pushing and shoving melees with one of

the visiting players red carded. The attitude of both sets of players and the people on the side-lines left the casual observer in doubt that this was a game both sides appeared desperately keen to win. In the circumstances the referee, aided by two young-looking assistants did well to keep a lid on things. All the goals came in the second half, the home side scoring first and last to maintain their promotion challenge. The visitors, on the balance of play could be justified in claiming they were at least a draw. The final whistle brought hostilities to a close and players from both sides warmly congratulated their opponents as they trudged off to the dressing rooms.

04/20