

TT No.26: *Mike Latham* - Sat 25 October 2014: Welsh Trophy Round 3: **Castell Alun Colts 0-2 Penrhyndeudraeth**; Attendance: 30 (h/c); No admission or programme.

I love going to ties in the Welsh FA Trophy as it pits together teams that would not usually play one another. There were many good ties from which to choose on a sunny autumnal afternoon and I plumped for a visit to Hope, north-east of Wrexham for a tie that really caught my eye.

Castell Alun Colts have been a prominent force in the Wrexham Area League in the recent past, finishing as champions as recently as 2003. However, they were relegated to the second tier five years ago as they were unable to conform to the ground regulations of the league.

Their ground adjoins Castell Alun School (regarded, incidentally, as one of the top schools in Wales) and there were apparently problems over the issue of erecting a post and rail fence on three sides of the football pitch. Happily, those issues have since been resolved and a neat, plastic fence now surrounds three sides of the ground which has glorious views across to Hope Mountain.

Hope is a small village of approximately 2,500 inhabitants located just three miles or so inside the Welsh border. There is a small group of closely related villages in its local area, including Caergwrle, Abermorddu and Cefn-y-bedd and Hope follows the course of the River Alyn.

Hope is now a dormitory village with its excellent transport links with local towns and cities, notably Wrexham, Chester and Mold and has a railway station on the Borderlands Line which allows access to Liverpool via the Wirral Peninsula.

I had seen the visitors earlier in the season on the Welsh hop and formed the impression that they were a 'team on the up.' They have gained promotion from the second tier of the Welsh Alliance last season and are establishing themselves well in the competitive top division.

The early kick-off (1-30pm) allowed for the possibility of extra-time and penalties but this didn't come to pass. The game was played in a good spirit with good football from both sides but the visitors just held the edge. They scored a goal in each half to shade a competitive match well controlled by the young referee.

Sadly, tempers flared in the closing stages and a player from each side was red carded in separate incidents. This was a shame as the match had been a fine advert for an excellent competition until then.

Though there were no facilities as such- no tea bar, no hard standing, no cover, no programmes, no admission charge I enjoyed the scenic ground location and the home officials were friendly. I always find it strange that sometimes no attempt is

made to take a raffle or get donations from the crowd in games such as this where the referee's fee and expenses must drain club resources.

So Penrhyndeudraeth progress and I would expect them to do well in this competition. Another good day watching football in Wales.

04/20