

TT No.35: *Mike Latham* - Sat 15 November 2014; Kon-X Wales Ltd. Anglesey Football League; **Bro Goronwy** 4-1 Cemaes Bay; Admission: donation; Attendance: 80 (h/c); No programme.

It was a glorious morning along the North Wales Coast and I stopped off at Llanfairfechan and Red Wharf Bay on my way to the main event of the day. I had been entrusted with the care of my dog Finty for the day and she loves her football so I abandoned my plans of a trip to Glasgow- for all I love Glasgow it can't compare to Anglesey's beaches when you're a dog.

On to Moelfre, the base of Bro Goronwy- the only team as far as I know that is named after a Welsh poet. Goronwy Owen was an 18th century poet who, it is said, played an important role in the literary and antiquarian movement in Wales often described as the Welsh Eighteenth Century Renaissance. He had a cult status in Welsh literary circles, but also a tragic and short life.

Moelfre is a village on the north east coast of Anglesey, a few miles on from Red Wharf Bay on the Amlwch road from Pentraeth. There is a large sandy beach known Traeth Lligwy which we investigated afterwards. I love 2pm kick-offs in autumn and winter, especially as they allow for a little bit of daylight after games.

Bro Goronwy play on School Lane and their ground is known as Cae Nerys. It's accessed via a small road and the number of cars parked alongside the roadway showed that this game had created a lot of interest locally, featuring as it did two of the top three teams in the Anglesey League.

I really like this league and can't praise league official Dave McCann enough for the interest he generates on the excellent league website. It's excellent apart from giving locations of the grounds of the competing teams and I have no idea where two of the members- Holy Isle and Valley play- I suspect in Holyhead.

Grassroots football in this part of the world has taken a battering recently and the long-established Caernarfon and District League recently folded with some of its remaining members entering the Gwynedd League. The Anglesey League has also lost clubs to the Gwynedd and currently operates with nine members, of whom four are reserve teams. The Welsh Alliance also encompasses teams from Anglesey and so competition for players and teams is fierce.

Bro Goronwy have been a big player in the recent past and won the Anglesey League to win promotion to the Gwynedd where they were champions in 2011 at the first attempt. They had worked hard to bring the ground up to Welsh Alliance standards but then had to go into abeyance in July 2013, citing player issues. Happily, the club has regrouped back in the Anglesey League and on the evidence of my visit look a team on the up.

Visitors Cemaes Bay were once in the Welsh Premier League but have known times of austerity in the years since and have struggled manfully to keep the football

flag flying. They certainly looked a far better team than the last time I saw them- at the splendidly named but now sadly apparently defunct Llandegfan Antelope a couple of years ago and brought along a good following of supporters to this local derby.

I thought the ground was fantastic- great views inland of the Snowdonian range, the sea glistening in the distance and a farm yard along one side, very similar to nearby Llannerch-y-medd which I visited not too long ago. There was also an excellent tea bar with hot drinks and hot dogs at very reasonable prices. The playing pitch is tight, sloping and railed on all four sides with dug-outs.

The visitors took the lead with an early penalty but Bro Goronwy equalised soon afterwards. An initially tight game went the way of the home side in the second half- two quick goal early after the resumption, a fantastic penalty-save by the visiting 'keeper after a red card and an injury-time clincher. Throw in lots of agricultural challenges, some good moments of skill and lots of passion all around, it was a great game, especially as it ended in warm handshakes. One of my best ever days watching football in Wales- and Finty enjoyed it, too, especially as we went to the game armed with magnificent pies from Gent's in Pepper Lane, Standish, just off the M6. Fantastic.

04/20