

TT No.53: *Mike Latham* - Saturday 17 January 2015: Vale of Clwyd & Conwy League Division One; **Llanfairfechan Town 5-3 Trefnant**; Attendance: 40 (h/c); Admission: by donation to football card; No programme.

It's always good to visit a club that is regrouping and building up again, there is always a positive atmosphere and sense of ambition. Such a feeling I experienced when I made the now familiar journey along the A55, this time dropping in at Llanfairfechan, a small seaside town between Penmaenmawr and Bangor.

The Recreation Ground on Shore Road (West) is located on the sea side of the railway station and borders a park and lake. It's a haven for dog walkers and has glorious views across the bay towards Anglesey and inland to Conwy and Llandudno. The town grew as a resort after the coming of the railways in 1845 and it's rumoured that the original recipe for Guinness came from a dark wine that was brewed in Llanfairfechan. Folklore says Arthur Guinness adopted it as he travelled through the town on his way to and from Ireland.

With glorious views inland to snow-capped mountains that cast an imposing shadow over the football ground it's a great place to watch football and the club has a vibrancy and heartbeat.

Llanfairfechan Town voluntary dropped out of the Gwynedd League at the end of last season and have re-grouped in the Vale of Clwyd & Conwy League. This is a division one game so is effectively level seven of the game in Wales- the lowest part of the food chain. Both sides recorded 5-4 wins last week and I am reminded by the words of my old groundhopping pal Andy Sneddon, a guru of Welsh football groundhopping who advised me that the further down the pyramid you go the more fun you have. The portents look good for a good game and we are not to be disappointed.

At the time Andy uttered those wise words I was still obsessed with completing the 92 Football League Clubs and the 38 in Scotland and I didn't appreciate what he meant. Ten years on with more experience and wisdom and I now know how right he was.

I loved the ground- neat, enclosed and with a small tea bar and covered standing area that housed some of the home side's most passionate supporters. The tightly contested game was level 1-1 at the break but the home side then scored three times in eight minutes after half-time, the roar that greeted the fourth goal nearly raising the roof. So Llanfairfechan are re-grouping, the players look as if they are enjoying themselves and they played some really good attractive football. It was a game of numerous chances and despite conceding five goals the Trefnant 'keeper had a fine game and made several excellent saves.

There aren't many grounds where you can take your dog on the beach at half-time and again immediately on the final whistle so this was another great reason to

visit. And the best view? It had to be from the bridge over the railway station with glorious views across the bay. With connecting trains to Chester, Shrewsbury and Birmingham during the short time I was there, Llanfairfechan has great transport links.

So, for the second week running I spent an afternoon enjoying the Vale of Clwyd & Conwy League. Again, the website had up-to-date information on postponements on a day when ice and snow gripped many parts of the country. And when I got home the result including goal-scorers and times of goals had already been posted.

I've got a feeling I'm going to enjoy ticking off this league and each new ground I visit I'll raise a glass to Andy Sneddon. What's not to like?

04/20