

TT No.17: *Mike Latham* - Sat 17 October 2015: Llangloed & District 0-1

Llanfairfechan Reserves; Kon-X Wales Ltd Anglesey Football League; Admission: by donation; No programme; attendance: 42 (h/c).

Another glorious autumnal Saturday and plenty of options in north-west Wales with the roads strangely quiet. I opted for Llangloed, a small community on Anglesey reached by passing through Beaumaris and its wonderful castle on the coast road from the Menai Bridge.

Llangloed have had their moments in the Anglesey League, having a successful spell in the 1970s and last winning the league in 1989. These days, like many teams on the island, they are kept alive by a devoted band of volunteers who know the importance of having a football team as the focal point of the local community.

The Anglesey League, once made up of two divisions these days operates with eight clubs, three of which are reserve sides. Its constitution changes season by season and this year there are two newcomers, Bodorgan and Maes y Bryn. Last season's champions Valley opted not to join the Gwynedd League and so the runners-up Cemaes Bay took their place alongside the 2014 champions Menai Bridge Tigers. Many of the current Gwynedd League and Welsh Alliance teams emerged through the Anglesey League which is at least functioning, its counterpart, the Caernarfon & District League sadly folding a couple of years ago.

Llangloed first entered the Anglesey League, so the friendly club secretary told me in 1947 and have been members ever since. They originally played on a field on the other side of the road leading into the village which is now covered by housing. Their current ground, a neat railed-off pitch with a changing room block, small refreshment kiosk and car park has been home for the past 30 years or so. It's a neat, tidy ground, enclosed by trees on the far side and has a well-equipped children's playground behind the near-side goal. Like many grounds on the island it has awesome distant views of the mountains of Snowdonia.

The game kicked-off by a good, few minutes earlier than the advertised 2-30pm kick-off which is not uncommon at this level of football. Everyone was ready to go and a lot of players and spectators wanted to watch the rugby later on the tv, so it made good sense. The visitors began strongly and scored quickly after carving a huge hole through the home defence. The same player almost repeated the move moments later only to be denied by a heroic goal-line clearance. Plenty of goals looked guaranteed as Llangloed also played confidently and put together some good moves.

In the event, the two teams more or less cancelled one another out and the early goal proved sufficient for the visitors to return to the mainland with the spoils. It was a decent, well contested game played in a good spirit and well refereed. It was also over just after four o'clock and so everyone seemed happy as they headed off to watch the rugby.

Dave McCann does a brilliant job promoting the Anglesey League on the official website and matches I've seen on the island rarely disappoint. There's a real sense of community here and the football is invariably competitive and entertaining. The composition of teams can easily change, players often following the manager en-bloc to join a rival club and leaving the team they leave behind imperilled. Llangoed have suffered from this in the past but it is to the credit of their small band of devoted helpers that the football flag continues to fly in the village. I'd recommend a visit here - it was a great way to spend a lovely afternoon in a beautiful part of the world.

04/20