

TT No. 100: Keith Aslan - Saturday 1st February 2020; **CORWEN** v Bangor City; Cymru North; Kick-Off: 14.00 on the dot; Result: 1-1; Admission a fiver for old and young alike; Programme: £1; Attendance: 102 official or 83 my headcount, take your pick. (45 home, 34 away & 4 neutral)

Missed out on this one during their solitary season in the Cymru Alliance in 1999/00 and with only two early kick off opportunities left to do them this season, here I was. A problematical one if like me you are 'auto-motively' challenged and for a 2.30pm start you might as well book a hotel for the weekend, and while the bus back fits in nicely with a 2 o'clock it's a fraught filled five minute connection at Ruabon Station (which I made). I got a joyfully unexpected new *Greggs* tick in Ruabon, it's on the outskirts of town opposite *Aldi* with a bit of a sweetie on serving duties this morning. The bus goes from outside the station, a T3 and when I asked for a return to Corwen I was expecting to say goodbye to most of next week's dinner money. 'The route is free at weekends' said Mr. Bus driver. Wow. Apparently, it's paid for by the Welsh Assembly. I think I'll start a campaign for devolution for Thanet if it means free buses, although hardly anybody apart from me pays on them anyway. A terrific ride through the Welsh mountains the bus was well filled for a country route as you would expect for a freebie.

Plenty of food emporiums on arrival which I didn't avail myself of having already refilled in *Greggs*, Corwen is dominated by a statue of Welsh folklore hero, Owain Glyndwr who hails from the area. He spent his life fighting the English, a sort of thinking man's Nicola Sturgeon, and he led the Welsh uprising in 1400. Although eventually losing due to the English's superior firepower he gave Henry IV's army a good, few pastings against the odds, and also, he wiped out a good portion of Shropshire (no great loss). Still revered today nearly every town in Wales has a road bearing his name and 'The Sons of Glyndwr' is a nationalist group whose MO is burning down English holiday homes in Wales. I'm sure the great man would approve.

Corwen's ground, a 5-minute walk from the bus station, is a cracker with a brand-new stand behind the goal, built for their elevated status without the help of *Atcost*. Sparsely filled, most people chose to watch the match from the long-covered veranda outside the clubhouse where inside hot drinks were available, but no food. The ground is surrounded by the magnificent Welsh mountains. Bangor City are managed by Pedro Pasculli who won the World Cup with Argentina in 1986. Not many World Cup Winners managing in the Cymru North league I would imagine and I wonder when he was running around with the Jules Rimet trophy if he ever imagined 35 years on that he would be sitting in a dug out at Corwen. His team contains a couple of Argentinians the rest being Italians with one token Welshman. Numbering teams 1-11 is passe these days and Bangor had a wide numerical variety, including 72, 81 and 95. I'm assuming the players choose their own numbers and I wonder what their significance is? Bangor's fall from grace has been

swift, it was only 2 years ago they were still playing in European competition, and while their ambition is to return to former glories, they are still a long way short at the moment.

The first half was a tale of two spot kicks, Corwen scored theirs, Bangor's missed by a mile. Their penalty was mis-hit without the mi! Bangor had the better of the second half and once they'd equalised Corwen very much settled for a point. It all got a bit frisky with a few naughties and a mass brawl, but what can you expect in a pagan country that doesn't do *'Respect'* handshakes. It was all very entertaining but not necessarily in a good way.

With *'Virgin'* now just an unhappy memory, newbies *Avanti* West Coast have wasted no time in repainting all the trains. Twenty years ago, it cost £60,000 to repaint one train and there are an awful lot of them. I wonder who pays for all this. The return fare from Broadstairs to Ruabon is £146 which might offer a clue.

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