

TT No.112: 06/05/05 Club/Ground Focus: *Mike Latham* - Ruthin Town (Cymru Alliance)

Thurs 5 May 2005 Cymru Alliance; Ruthin Town 1-2 Buckley Town (att. - 60)

Buckley Town, champions of the Cymru Alliance, had to work hard for their win at Ruthin, sealing their victory four minutes from time with a well-taken strike by substitute Dean Hardstaff. Buckley had looked a class apart in the opening stages and took the lead with a scrambled goal but the home side gradually got back into a well-fought contest and equalised midway through the second half.

Ruthin play at the Memorial Fields, a large open space off Park Road just outside the town. There is another soccer pitch and a cricket pitch as part of the complex, each sharing a common changing-rooms complex that incorporates a small bar and tea bar. The latter served some mouth-watering freshly made baps and sausage sandwiches as well as hot drinks and there was a steady queue all evening for their excellent wares which ranked among the best experienced this season.

The main pitch has a post and rail fence on three sides with a rope used to separate the side that borders onto the cricket square with the dug-outs facing one another on the halfway line. The only cover is provided by a small structure in one corner with some bench seating and a standing area. As the wind grew in strength around the ground most of the three score spectators settled for a vantage point from here as it was the most sheltered part of the ground.

Bordered on two sides by farmers' fields with sheep grazing, Ruthin's ground affords great views over distant hills with the distinctive church spire providing another landmark. There is plenty of parking and admission was £3 with an excellent 32-page programme selling for the amazingly cheap price of 50p. This included details of Ruthin's game against Guilsfield just three days earlier.

Ruthin had seven players with the surname Jones in their side, namely Edwart, Lee, Bryn, Ossion, Liam, Rhys and Gavant and the referee also shared the same surname. Buckley's captain was their goalkeeper Faria Jackson, a former England Youth international according to the programme, and he looked a very accomplished performer. He was also extremely polite, continually thanking the writer who acted a ball boy behind the far goal in the first half.

With no floodlights at the ground, kick-off was 6-45 and the game finished still in decent light around 8-30. Two hoppers from Yorkshire also made the trip and also enjoyed their first visit to Ruthin.