

TT No.022: 06/02/05 Club/Ground Focus: *Mike Latham* - Halkyn United (Cymru Alliance) and Chester City (FL2).

Halkyn United's hopes of further Welsh Cup glory ended when they were defeated 0-4 at home to Caersws at their picturesque Pant Newydd ground before a crowd of around 200. Caersws, second in the Welsh Premier League, were leading 1-0 after Graham Jones's 27th minute strike before sealing the tie with a three-goal burst in the space of six minutes late in the fourth-round tie. For most of the game Halkyn, who had defeated WPL club Port Talbot in the previous round, gave a fine account of themselves.

Halkyn is a small village situated just off the A55 that is the major route from Chester to North Wales, about ten miles northwest of Queensferry. The ground is sited on a hillside with spectacular views over the Dee Estuary. A small stand with seats for around 50 and a tiny covered standing area together with the away team dug-out are sited on the south side of the ground- a wooded sloped hillside- and the views from here looking across the water to the Wirral and beyond, make the journey alone worthwhile. On the opposite (north) side the home team dugout is situated. The rest of the ground is hard standing behind a post and rail fence. The dressing rooms are situated to the west side of the ground in portakabins with a tea hut and the main entrance also on this side. The club shares its facilities with a cricket club; the cricket field is located one level down nearer the coast and there is a shared pavilion. Halkyn entered the Cymru Alliance (the northern feeder league to the WPL) in 2000 and are clearly an ambitious and friendly club. Admission was only £3 and a 24-page programme, packed with information, was on sale for £1.

The 2pm kick-off afforded a stop-off at the Saunders Honda Stadium (formerly Deva) Stadium where Chester City earned their first win in seven games with a 3-1 success against Rushden & Diamonds in League Two. A crowd of 2,340 settled comfortably into the tidy stadium that is situated at the end of a road that leads through a retail and business park. First opened in 1992 the ground comprises four almost identical stands and there is little character or individuality to commend it to ground hoppers though those that like to watch their football in a safe, neat and sanitised environment will be happy. A 40-page programme, containing some good photographs and a particularly good section on the visitors sold for £2.50. Admission to the east and west stands is £15 for adults, with £13 charged for north and south and £10 and £8 respectively for concessions (£6 and £5 for under 16s).