

TT No.054: 20/03/05 Recent Ground/Club Hopping News: *Andy Sneddon* - Padarn United (Aberystwyth & District League); Brynteg Village (Welsh Nat League - Wrexham Area 1) and Houghton Main (Sheffield & Hallam County Senior League);

19/3/05: Aberystwyth & District League, Len & Julia Newman Memorial Trophy Round 3

Padarn United 3 Penparcau 4 (after extra time); Att: 20; Prog: No - Padarn haven't issued since their days in the Mid Wales league in the late 1990's.

It wasn't so much a case of Spring arriving as Summer making a dramatic entrance on the Cambrian Coast. Barely two weeks previous the hills in the area were capped with snow, whilst today it was shorts and suntan lotion all round in temperatures around 70F and the most wonderful cloud free skies you're likely to see this side of the Med.

If ever there was a day to be standing in a field with minimal facilities this was it!

I never got around to "ticking" Padarn when they were members of the Mid Wales League in the late 1990's so missed out on the programme and the stand, the latter falling foul to the elements. The facilities now consist of a permanently roped pitch on three sides, with dugouts. The dressing rooms are in the corner with some other (unused) buildings. The rest of the ground is flat standing. It's an interesting venue in some ways though as the easy way in is through the Hotel Car Park with which the ground shares its name (Llety Gwyn, on the A44 just West of Llanbadarn Fawr village), passing under the main Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury railway line. This forms the backdrop on one side with the historic village of Llanbadarn Fawr behind, whilst on the other side you have the Vale of Rheidol Narrow Gauge Railway with UWA's playing fields behind. This is the ground that UWA (Mid Wales League) sometimes use early and late season when their main ground (Vicarage Fields) is still being used for cricket.

On paper the game itself should have been a comfortable win for the visitors (3rd top) against Padarn (3rd bottom) but this was a local derby and a cup tie and as such we got everything you would expect in a game like this, including the formbook being thrown out of the window for the most part. Penparcau just about deserved their extra time win but Padarn's never say die attitude almost pulled them through against the odds.

This was my fourth "tick" in this league (Aberdyfi, Bow Street - superb ground, & Twywn/Bryncrug being the others) and it won't be the last. The welcome is always friendly, the entertainment excellent and in most cases the scenery stunning. It's a long way to go but it's been well worth it every time.

from 12/3/05: **Brynteg Village** - Welsh National League (Wrexham Area) Div. 1; Brynteg Village 3 Ruabon Villa 2; Att: 25; Prog: 24 pages, £1.

Brynteg is one of many ex mining and steel villages in the hills West of Wrexham. On a cold and windy day this wasn't the best place to be as it is very exposed, a big open space with three pitches, the nearest of which to the dressing rooms is simply roped off for league games. There are no facilities to speak of as such so wrap up warm!

Mother (Ros) and Daughter (Sam) White appear to do pretty much everything to keep the club running smoothly and that includes the sporadic printing of programmes, done by Sam. This is usually not produced until the morning of the game, partly due to time pressures but also down to the fact that being a council pitch the games can be called off rather too easily by over-zealous "Parkies"! So, if you want a prog give them a ring after 10am on the day of the game.

It isn't the most inspiring venue for a hopper on a bad day but I suspect on a good one the views looking West would be superb, as the ground is raised up on something of a plateau.

League leaders Brynteg were good value for the win and it was rather more comfortable than 3-2 would suggest. If they are to be promoted to the top flight at the end of this season though I would suspect a new venue would be required.

from 5/3/05: **Houghton Main** - Sheffield & Hallamshire County Senior League Div. 1

Houghton Main 3 Silkstone United 0; Att 65; Prog: 8 pages, 50p

Houghton Main play in Little Houghton, about 5 miles East of Barnsley and this is another little "gem" in this area. Although essentially a cricket ground, (the pitch being on the far side of the square from the Dressing Rooms and Social Club), the ground is terrific for this level being railed on 3 sides and roped on the cricket square side. There is a wonderful covered terrace on the halfway line that I would expect could accommodate 150-200 without a problem. The steps are steep and views excellent.

The social facilities were first class with pie/peas/gravy and onions setting you back the princely sum of a quid, with proper crockery and cutlery to enjoy it from.

The programme is a pretty regular issue and includes most of the basics required.

The club are wonderfully warm and friendly and the standard of football and facilities are probably rather better than you may suspect. Well worth a visit.

03/20