

## Barmouth & Dyffryn United Football Club ~ History

The club was founded in 1863 shortly before the FAW was formed, however, archived records have shown that Barmouth FC was a club during this time although it cannot say whether they actually played in a competitive match until 1896 when the Club were inaugural members of the newly formed Cambrian League that later became known as the Cambrian Coast Football League from the 1920-21 season until it sadly ended in 1963.

Although coverage of football in the press during this time and into the early 1900s was very sporadic, little information has been gleaned thus far on the Cambrian League but according to sources the League was founded in October 1896 at a meeting in Porthmadog with six clubs competing the inaugural season - Towyn, Porthmadog, Dolgellau, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Barmouth and surprisingly Penygroes with Towyn taking the title. Little has been traced since that initial season and it may well have been disbanded following the formation of other surrounding Local leagues and research is ongoing to clarify the situation. Nevertheless, the Cambrian Coast Football League was founded following a meeting at the old Unionist Club in Barmouth on Saturday 17th January 1920 with member clubs being Criccieth, Porthmadog, Harlech, Barmouth and Pwllheli Comrades. Barmouth were the first Champions of the League in 1920 and the League was born.

Having finished runners up in 1921, Barmouth recaptured the title in 1922 as the League was being run as part of the Welsh National League Central Section following the reorganisation of football within the FAW. Very little has surfaced during the next 7-8 years, however, it has been reported that both Barmouth and Towyn moved up into the top flight structure at that time and with the total collapse of the National League structure in 1930, the Cambrian Coast League was revived with Barmouth becoming members of an eight team structure and sadly finished last in the 1930-31 season.

According to records, Barmouth resigned from Season 1932 until the 1936-37 season there was no team in Barmouth and again the club finished in the bottom position and struggled until the outbreak of the Second World War when all Competitions ceased.

After the war the club merged with Dyffryn Ardudwy to become known as Barmouth & Dyffryn United FC, hence the name as it still stands today. Due to housing restructuring in Barmouth, they adopted Dyffryn as their home base to play fixtures competed respectively for the next few years and for the next four years from 1948 until 1952, even had a Reserve Team for the 1st time that won the Second Division Challenge Cup in 1951. In 1953, the Club finished third then second in 1954 and after a gap of over thirty years, captured the title for the third time against strong opposition. From then on, Barmouth were always in with a shout but with Aberystwyth Town and 55th RA Tonfannau amongst the member clubs and fielding very strong sides, we failed to capture another League title until the Cambrian Coast ended in 1963, although the club did finish as Runners-up on three occasions.

It was also during this time (1955-56 season) that Barmouth flew the flag of the Cambrian Coast League as we captured the old North Wales Coast Amateur Cup by defeating Buckley Wanderers 1-0 in the final at Llandudno, the captain being none other than John 'Jack' Morris.

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Other cup triumphs during this period saw the Magpies claim their only ever Challenge Cup success when they beat Trawsfynydd 3-0 in the final at Dolgellau, however, the Club finished bridesmaids five times between 1948 and 1961.

The club did in fact win the League Cup three times in 1957, 1958 and 1960 and were finalists in 1962 and 1963; therefore it is fair to say that the club enjoyed its golden age years between 1954 and 1963.

From other archived information, it has been reported that over 7000 spectators witnessed the club's semi-final win over Aberystwyth in the 1948 Challenge Cup albeit the club lost out to Machynlleth in the final played at Aberdyfi of all places.

With the Central Wales being set up following another revamping by the FAW in the mid-sixties, the club had little option but to take up the offer of becoming members in the 1963-64 season and after a slow start for a few seasons, the club finished 3rd in the Central Wales League during the 1968-69 season, however, actually won the NWCFA Senior Challenge Cup against Holyhead Town but better things were on the horizon with players as far afield from the Wrexham area turning out for the Magpies under captain Idris Price and Manager John Morris.

In the 1969-70 season, Barmouth became Champions of the Central Wales League that included four teams who competed in the Welsh Premier League during the 2009-10 season (Welshpool, Newtown, Caersws and Aberystwyth Town) and reached the fifth round of the Welsh Cup when the team were faced with the daunting task of overcoming the mighty Cardiff City on Wednesday, 21st January 1970, a team that also featured Mel Sutton, Don Murray, Brian Clark and none other than John Toshack.

The Club was a force in Welsh Football and again won the NWCFA Challenge Cup in 1971 and for the next two years was always in the running of the League and finished runners-up in 1973 but managed to win the Central Wales Challenge Cup in 1973. This latest purple patch in the club history finally ended at the end of 1972-73 season when the club then resigned from the League and went into the wilderness until it rose again to compete in the Aberystwyth & District League during the 1978-79 season.

Captained by John Holland, the Club won the League for the only time in 1982 and finished Runners-up four times most notably in 1990 losing only 1 game along the way to the eventual champions Penparcau in the final match of the Season. The Club were League Cup winners in 1984 and 1990 and also picked up the North Cards Cup in 1990 under Manager Brian Harvey.

Other triumphs saw the club win the 1st Division Trophy in 1989, the Bert Pritchard Memorial Trophy in 1982 and 1984 for being the League top scorers and reached the final of the Youth Cup in 1982, 1986 and 1991. The clubs' association with the League ended on a sour note at the end of the 1992-93 season and the club applied to become members of the Gwynedd Football League and were duly accepted.

Secretary of the League at the time was none other than our Vice President today Alun Foulkes and he can recollect the trauma faced by the club on the eve of the 1993-94 season when John Morris had to travel to Caersws to pay an

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outstanding fine to the CWFA, otherwise their opening match in the Gwynedd League against Llandegfan would be postponed. Luckily the fine was paid and what transpired as their first campaign in the Gwynedd League became a disaster and a nightmare conceding 220 goals in the process of 34 games that yielded 4 League wins throughout - records were created all for the wrong reasons.

The club fared much better during the 1995 and 1996 season finishing fifth during the latter, but at the end of the 2000-2001 season decided to withdraw from the League for various reasons after finishing last but one.

The current crop of our players today emerged during this era under Manager Dan Papimyk Snr and Secretary Tony Jeffs and their hard work and efforts were rewarded as the young team finished 2nd in 2001-02 and won the inaugural AEEU Cup beating CPD Bethel in the final at Caernarfon.

They quickly became Champions of the Caernarfon & District League in 2002-03 to return to the Gwynedd Football League and the success continued with the side finishing 3rd in 2005-06 only to win the League in 2006-07 under Player Manager Craig Papimyk, but were denied promotion to the Welsh Alliance Football League due to ground criteria. Craig Papimyk won the Gwynedd League Player of the year and Carl Ryan topped the strikers' table to become the Gwynedd League Top Goal scorer for the season 2006-07.

Season 2007/08 saw the Club win the NWCFA Junior Cup, the Gwynedd Leagues' Eryri Shield and became finalists of the Welsh Alliance Leagues' Barritt Cup but were narrowly pipped to retain the Gwynedd League title by Llanillyfni that sparked a huge row when this club were given promotion to the Welsh Alliance League having an inferior ground to Barmouth.

Spearheaded by Chairman William Huntley and Alun Foulkes who had returned to the club as Secretary, the club successfully appealed to the FAW and the club took up its position in the third tier of Welsh Football for the 1st time in 35 years and the club has never looked back. With Brian Harvey back at the helm, the club finished tenth in its first full season that was made up entirely of home grown players.

In Season 2009-10 the club finished a creditable fourth, after being in the top two until the final three matches of the season under the guidance of former Manager Iolo Owen and assistant Steve Smith.

The reserves, who were reformed in 2007-2008 and after two years of struggle, won the Caernarfon & District League under manager Dan Papimyk jnr. and assistant Dickie Sharp and reached the final of the Moorings cup.

Season 2010/11 Barmouth finished in 14<sup>th</sup> place and just escaped relegation on the last day of the season, with a 2-2 home draw against Llandudno Junction.

Last season Barmouth again struggled in the league and looked certain relegation candidates in January, but a remarkable run of seven consecutive wins saw the club ease away from the drop and finished mid-table. The season also saw Barmouth have a good Welsh Cup run, beating Aberdyfi, Hawarden Rangers and Ruthin Town before unluckily losing to Caersws.

This season 2012/13, the club has a new management team of manager Dan Papimyk jnr. and Stuart Pilling as assistant, to replace Iolo Owen due to his increased work commitments.