

Newtown White Stars



This photograph of 1879 shows the victorious Newtown White Stars football team. It is special in several ways.

Firstly, it is a very early photograph of a team at the very beginning of organised football in mid Wales. North-east Wales is credited as being the cradle of Welsh football, with Wrexham FC forming in 1864, followed soon after by Cefn Druids. But the game was quick to catch on in Newtown, with Newtown FC being established in 1875. Newtown White Stars was formed at about the same time and very soon there were a plethora of teams in the town. Many of these teams were formed of workers in the flannel mills. This was made possible by the growth of free time thanks to legislation which gave factory workers a half day off on a Saturday afternoon.

Secondly, the photo emphasises this was a team in the early stages of formation whose members had little money to spend on a 'team strip'. Instead, they wore whatever they could find and sewed a white star on their shirts in order to identify themselves from their opposition.

Thirdly, the photo can be said to be the earliest showing a team posing with the actual Welsh Cup trophy. The competition had been established two years earlier. The first winners were Wrexham, but no trophy existed at the time. So the White Stars were the second team to win the trophy but the first team to be awarded it.

Finally, as well as having a copy of the photograph, the Museum also possesses the framed certificate which is featured with the cup. The pair therefore represent a unique record of the early days of Welsh football.

If you want to read more about the White Stars follow this link
<https://www.countytimes.co.uk/sport/18318022.tale-newtown-white-stars-fc---newtowns-first-working-class-heroes/>