

# Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust

Working for Club & Community



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## WE TALK TO ROBBIE HORN

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## Newsletter No. 20 Summer 2012

c/o 10 Golden Square  
Berwick-upon-Tweed  
Northumberland  
TD15 1BS

**Telephone:**  
01890 860329

**Fax:**  
01289 306980

**E-Mail:**  
trust@berwickrangers.org

**Chairman:**  
Colin Pike

**Vice-Chairman:**  
David Cook

**Secretary:**  
-

**Treasurer:**  
Gordon Dickson

**Membership Secretary:**  
Bill Purvis

**FC Board Representative:**  
John Bell

**Committee Members:**  
John Bell, Ronald Kirk, Stephen  
Scott, David Spence, Michael  
Smyth, Keith Hall

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Michael Smyth

**Designed/Published by:**  
www.vivadigital.net

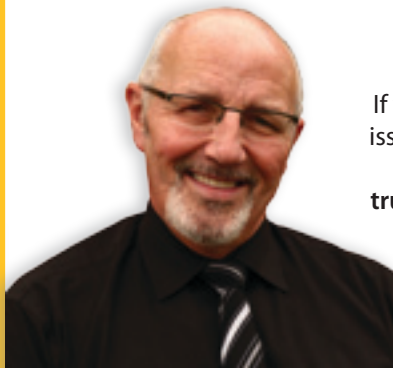
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Press & Angus Blackburn

## Greetings...

HERE WE ARE AGAIN on the eve of another season. Last season was a bit disappointing for us all I'm afraid but changes have been made to the club's management in which we played a full if not wholly popular part.

We now have a new young enthusiastic management pairing who hopefully will bring new ideas to the club and this season achieve what we all crave. Having met the manager a couple of times, he strikes me as the kind of lad who will give his all for the cause and of course, having known Robbie since his last time at the club, he appears the ideal assistant. Both, I think, will be hungry for success and we of course will give them any assistance that we are able to give.

As I write this piece, we have an all-time membership high, something from which we can all draw pleasure, but at the same time never take for granted as this has only been achieved through hard work and communication with our members.



With the year now half way through we have as usual been engaged in many things designed to help our football club. You'll notice I say OUR football club because that's exactly what it is.

Brian Porteous and his directors, including our own John Bell, are doing a grand job and have the club on a really good financial footing, a point I commended them on at the football club AGM. We on the Trust board will carry on representing you, our members, to the football club and often asking those questions that nobody else does.

As usual, you are invited to any of our board meetings with no prior notice required.

Keep the faith.

*Colin*

Colin Pike, Chairman

### FOOT NOTE:

If you have any questions or issues, or any contributions for our newsletter, email: [trust@berwickrangers.org](mailto:trust@berwickrangers.org)

## vice-chairman

DAVID COOK

Given the furore about where Rangers newco will ply their trade in the 2012/13 season, it's easy to overlook the success of the Trust in reaching its highest ever membership figure of 235, though not everything in the garden is rosy, as I'll go on to explain later in this article.

On the field of play – and let's not kid ourselves – that's what really matters to us all as Berwick Rangers supporters, it's been another challenging season but one that ended with some real optimism about the way ahead. Following a popular, Trust-led campaign for urgent change, Jimmy Crease stepped down as manager after the Deveronvale debacle in the cup at Banff in November, to be replaced by Ian Little, who was initially aided and abetted by former favourite Craig Valentine prior to the appointment of Robbie Horn as assistant manager.

Since picking up the reins, they've transformed the place, and it's no coincidence that in the 5th July edition of the Berwick Advertiser skipper Chris Townsley talks about the feelgood factor at the club. That's a sign of the quiet revolution that Little and Horn have engineered since taking over; no more stagnation and unimaginative stuff from the management – they've got a clear view about what they want to achieve and how to achieve it. Now all that needs to happen is to transfer that vision into consistent results that get us into the play-off places – easier said than done when the 3rd Division is likely to be distorted by the presence of Rangers, but a target which should not be out of the reach of a young and talented squad.

They have other hurdles to overcome, some of them unfortunately closer to home. The Berwick Advertiser ran a front page story in its 29th June edition focusing on the angry reaction created by the football club's decision to enter into a partnership with the successful Salvesen BC at Forrester in western Edinburgh. That partnership will see the 1st X1, Reserves and U19 sides training together. The steam generated by this – Rangers severing contact with their home town, denying opportunities to local talent etc – seems to me to be misplaced. Over many years, Berwick Rangers teams made up of players from Edinburgh and the West of Scotland have always trained in the city or in the Lothians. This is neither new nor unique to Berwick Rangers. Stranraer players train in Glasgow, half the Elgin team train in Glasgow, players from the Angus clubs train in Dundee and Aberdeen. It comes down to economics, practicality and where the biggest pool of players available to the club is located.

I've watched Berwick for 35 years and can only recall a handful of local guys – Eric Tait, Stuart Romaines, Brian Marshall, & Martin Neil – getting a regular game. If a local guy is good enough – and we may shortly have 2 of them – then training locally and travelling to Edinburgh one night a week should not be beyond them if they have ambition to play for Berwick Rangers (and be well rewarded for doing so). Salvesen have access to all-weather pitches that guarantee Rangers a training venue, not always the case under previous arrangements when bad weather

made outdoor grass pitches unplayable. This is a non-story. There is nothing new in it. Berwick Rangers have made a sensible business decision for the good of the club that neither severs ties with the local community nor denies talented local players the chance to play for the 19s, Reserves or 1st X1.

I said at the start of this article that despite Trust membership continuing to rise, we are faced with some familiar challenges. Our long-serving and valued secretary, Karen Thorburn, has resigned and we are down to 10 board members, 5 short of capacity. The workload of the Trust is, unfortunately, being carried by around five members of the board. That is not sustainable. We all have day jobs to pay the bills. The work we do for the Trust is done on a voluntary basis, and the bottom line is that we really do need a hand – find out how you can do that elsewhere in this newsletter.

By the time you get this, we could very well be at home to the Rangers newco in a league fixture on 25th August. I've got mixed feelings about that, but it's an undeniably exciting prospect. The new season is rapidly hoving into view, and I feel more optimistic with Little and Horn at the helm than I have for many years. Best of luck to them, and thanks again to you, our members, for your continuing support for the Trust.

**David Cook**  
Vice-Chair  
Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust

## Robbie talks to Board member, Michael Smyth...

**In a break during Berwick Rangers' successful open day training sessions at Old Shielfield on Saturday, June 23rd, assistant manager Robbie Horn was interviewed by Trust Board member Michael Smyth (pictured below with Robbie).**

**Q.** You were managing Vale of Leithen. How easy was it to decide to re-join Berwick Rangers when the opportunity came along?

**A.** It was difficult in a way because we had a good playing squad and a good committee. Vale had given me my first managerial opportunity so it was a wrench to leave but when Yano approached me about a return to Berwick, it was a chance to move up the managerial ladder. I'd also got on well with directors and supporters at Berwick so that was another factor.



**Q.** The Supporters Trust helped fund you on a SFA coaching course. What's the latest news on that?

**A.** I went on an intensive nine day course at Largs. It was hard being away from my family and work for that time. There were 43 of us on the course. By October, I have to submit a written assignment which is followed by a tutorial. Another written assignment is required by March next year, again followed by a tutorial. Then in June, 2013, I will undergo a four day assessment. At the end of it all, if everything goes well, I will have my 'B' licence, the minimum requirement to be a SFL assistant manager.

**Q.** Berwick turned in some good displays towards the end of last season e.g. the 5-0 rout of champions Alloa Athletic. Yet, there were also some very poor performances such as the 4-1 home defeat to Queen's Park and the loss at bottom club East Stirlingshire. Any explanations for such inconsistency?

**A.** It was a funny league. Each team could beat any other. Four or five wins in a row were needed to stake a claim to a play-off place. We didn't manage to do that. The 3-3 draw with Elgin cost us but we should still have been more positive away to 'Shire the following week. We were more galvanised when down to ten men. However, we were too complacent in the earlier home game with 'Shire which we also lost.

**Q.** So when you arrived back at Shielfield, what did you judge to be the major weaknesses in the team?

**A.** Fitness. Other teams seemed to be hungrier and fitter and more able to get around the park. Sometimes in part-time football, players need to do extra training on their own, not just settle for the two nights a week organised by the club.

**Q.** Now, at the end of June, there has been little news of new signings. Can you tell us about any new players who have joined in the close season?

**A.** Goalkeeper Youssef Bejaoui has signed after being on loan at the end of last season and Ian McCaldon has returned to be our number two keeper and goalkeeping coach. We've signed Dean Hoskins, a left back from Spartans who has a great left foot and is good going forward. Central midfielder Neil Janczyk has signed from East Fife having previously played first team football with Hearts. He's a good passer and can break up things in midfield.

In addition, Richard Walker and John Ferguson are training with us trying to earn contracts. John is still young. With Richard, his spell away from playing when a physio in Ireland, may have interrupted his progress as a player but he has ability and experience and, like Chris Townsley, is a good influence in the dressing room.



Dene Drouge is on trial with us despite having an offer to extend his stay with Cowdenbeath.

We had hoped to fix up Omar Kader from Spartans and Alex King who had a trial last year but they are currently in pre-season training with other clubs. They may yet make their way to Shielfield.

Some promising new signings have also been made by the Reserves. I anticipate a recognised first team squad of 19 players but any out of action will have to make their way back via the Reserves and in-form Reserve players will get their chance with the first team.

**Q.** Is there any hope of getting Danny Handling or Jordon Forster back on loan?

**A.** Slim hopes. Hibs may want to loan them out at a higher level. However, for all parties involved, their loan spells at Berwick were a success which might encourage Hibs to lend us other players in the future.

We won't have Connor McGlinchey again. (On loan from Hamilton last season). The extra costs involved in using West of Scotland-based players means we are concentrating on players from Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and the Borders.

**Q.** What is the principal aim for the new season--- to go all out to try to win the Third Division title or merely to qualify for the play-offs?

**A.** At the start of a season, the aim must be the play-offs. If we can seriously challenge for the title great, but it is difficult to compete with the money being spent by Peterhead and Stirling Albion. I also expect Queen's Park and Elgin City to be strong again.

**Q.** When the play-offs were first introduced, Berwick Rangers were very much against them. Bearing in mind the small SFL divisions, wouldn't it be better to go back to simple two up and two down?

**A.** The play-offs bring a bit of excitement. They gave us something to play for last season, even in the last few games.

**Q.** Grant McNicholl has been signed as an 'old head' to play for the Reserves. Grant joined you at the Vale last season. Am I right that he didn't play all that many games and isn't there a worry that continual injury problems will prevent him from carrying out the role expected?

**A.** Grant is presently recovering from a knee operation but expects to be back playing in September. We've signed him to be a 'figurehead' in the Reserves. It's great for the club to attract someone like him and it's not costing us a lot of money.

**Q.** Have you signed as a player in case of emergencies?

**A.** No. The age limit rule restricts the number of older players.\* I'm 35 now. I may turn out in bounce games or in an emergency for the Reserves where I can play up to three matches as a 'trialist' anyway.

*\*This rule was explained in the 'Reserves Review' in our previous edition.*

**Q.** Last season, Vale of Leithen played two Junior clubs in the Scottish Cup. Junior participation remains a controversial issue because they have their own national Cup and they're in whilst a good number of East of Scotland League clubs are not. What's your view on this?

**A.** A very difficult question to answer. The top Junior clubs (i.e. Junior Cup and 'Super League' winners) playing is right. Girvan, who kept full SFA membership when they switched from Seniors to Juniors, that's another kettle of fish.

**Q.** Should Glasgow Rangers 'newco' have to start again in the SFL Third Division?

**A.** It would be fantastic for Berwick Rangers, financially and playing at Ibrox. But what's going to happen to the SPL? It would lose money e.g. from Sky. For the integrity of the game, it should happen but what would be the overall impact on Scottish football if it did?

*Thank you for your time, Robbie.*



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**Berwick Rangers finished 7th in the 3rd Division last season, with a total of 48 points. Same old, same old you might think, but that hardly tells the story of a campaign notable more for what happened off the pitch than what happened on it.**

That finish in lower mid-table limbo is a familiar one – 6th in 2010/11 with 49 points, and 6th in 2009/10 with 50 points. What is evident is that action had to be taken to break the stranglehold of mediocrity, and that moment arrived on 22nd October 2011, when a shockingly poor Rangers outfit were ripped apart by Deveronvale in the Scottish Cup on a dismal afternoon in Banff.

The Trust took the initiative by issuing a statement calling for the immediate resignation of Jimmy Crease. This was not a knee-jerk reaction, but the culmination of growing frustration at the lack of obvious progress on the pitch. The Manager had delivered some good results, no question, but not with the kind of consistency needed to



■ *The Gaffer: Ian Little*

haul the club into the play-offs. That problem was compounded by a feeling that the FC board was content to allow things to meander along. The upshot is that Jimmy eventually stepped down, though the Trust took pelters in some quarters for having the nerve to step up to the plate and demand some positive action. Some people – and you know who you are – seem incapable of accepting change even if it means that things improve. And things certainly improved, and have continued to do so, following the appointment of a new manager.

Ian Little was appointed manager at the beginning of November 2011 and kicked off his career with a creditable 1-1 draw at home to play-off chasing Elgin City, a result made all the more palatable after Rangers played 80 minutes with 10 men. They followed this up with a storming 2-0 win over an excellent Queen's Park side in arguably the best performance of the season, to reignite interest in a previously moribund campaign.

Little and Horn stamped their own philosophy on the team over the course of the next 27 league games under their charge, winning 9 and drawing 10. A number of things became evident during that time. They weeded out the dressing room malcontents and exiled them to Lothian juniors, which meant goodbye to the multi-talented but spectacularly irritating Darren Gribben, and to full back Thommo; they built a younger, hungrier, more skilful team by bringing in the exciting promise of Danny Handling and Jordon Forster on loan from Hibs; they signed a new keeper in the statuesque Youssef Bejaoui; they appointed a skipper with genuine leadership qualities in Chris Townsley; they promoted talent from Berwick Rangers U19s (the very promising Ben Miller); they instilled in their team the guts, determination and resilience to get good results from unpromising positions; they reinvigorated Stuart Noble; and above all else, they showed supporters that here was a couple of guys who knew what they wanted



and had a vision, a bigger picture, about how to make Berwick Rangers a more successful club.

Some people will argue that Little and Horn having a vision is all very well, but that it's results on the pitch that really matter. To an extent, they'd be right, but this about building a club for future success that goes way beyond the narrow parameters of next season. Rangers have added a number of new faces to their squad and more will be signed up following the friendly matches against Cowdenbeath, Dunfermline and Livingston. New faces include keeper Bejaoui, left back Dean Hoskins from Spartans, central midfielder Neil Janczyk from East Fife, and the highly-rated Doug Brydon from Duns, who is a centre half. The closed doors game v Cowden featured some very promising trialists including full back Lancaster from Hibs and Damien Gierty who has been playing in Luxembourg, so I'm guessing but would expect the best trialists to sign on the dotted line before the season proper kicks off.

Berwick Rangers' competitive season starts with a bang on 28th July, when they host a powerful Queen's Park outfit at Shielfield in the Ramsdens Cup. If that doesn't whet the appetite, then a potential home fixture against the Rangers newco on 25th August should help reacquaint all those "lifelong" Berwick fans – the ones who couldn't

find Shielfield with satnav – with their local football club.

The Little/Horn template of a young, hungry side, balanced out with a handful of experienced players, looks like it will be entrusted to deliver the holy grail of a play-off spot this season. The quality core of last season's team, including Notman, Townsley, McLean, Currie and Noble will be expected to give their new colleagues the platform to compete with the likes of Queen's Park, Elgin, Stirling Albion and Peterhead for a place in the play-offs. The elephant in the room, and you know who I mean, will be favourites for the title, so we've got the Livi situation all over again. One club's serial criminality means it's a damned sight more difficult for blameless members of the 3rd Division to get their hands on the championship trophy. Looks like we're going to be royally dumped on for the second time in 3 years. That said, if beating Rangers isn't an incentive for players, nothing ever will be.

So once again, despite the turmoil and the frantic search for the lost soul of Scottish football, we'll roll up at Shielfield brimming with the bright-eyed optimism that fills us with hope at the start of every new campaign. Whatever happens, it's unlikely to be a dull one. I'm not a betting man, but I'm going for Berwick Rangers taking that fourth play-off spot. You can buy me a pint. Happy new season.

**No tricks, no half truths, just the bottom line – if you're a Trust member, or are planning to be a Trust member, we need your help.**

**WE NEED:**

**a)** New board members – if you're aged over 18, are a Trust member and have access to a pc (emails), and you're interested in helping out with recruitment, fundraising, working on projects or organising social events, then we'd be well chuffed if you could join us. Our rules permit the Trust board to have up to 15 members. We currently have 10, of whom half are genuinely active. We meet once every 4-6 weeks or so, on Saturdays before home games or on a weekday evening. All board members have specific responsibilities.

**b)** A new Secretary to the Trust board – the Secretary does not have to be a Trust member. The Secretary's main responsibilities include

preparing meeting agendas, taking minutes, managing the action tracker, ensuring compliance with model rules and being responsible for the administrative parts of Trust business. You'll need access to a pc and the internet.

**c)** New members – our next target is 250 members. The Trust will have a recruiting stall at one of our early season matches but you can still join up online.

To find out more, please contact the Trust by email: [trust@berwickrangers.org](mailto:trust@berwickrangers.org) Since it was established in 2003, the Trust has grown as an organisation and is now a major shareholder in Berwick Rangers Football Club. We have our own director representative on the Berwick Rangers FC board and will, by the end of this season, have contributed £60,000 to the

football club. To build on those achievements, and to keep that momentum going, we need some help from our membership. It would be good to hear from you.




## Another fine mess...

By the time you read this, the fate of the club formerly known as Rangers FC will have been decided. With delicious irony, the SFL clubs are due to meet on Friday 13th July to decide whether the Rangers newco/Sevco 5088 or whatever they're called will begin the 2012/13 season in SFL 1 or SFL 3.

I'm not going to go into the rights and wrongs of how Scottish football ended up in this shambolic mess. Entire rain forests have been ripped out to provide the print for the coverage this saga has received. I doubt that any event has polarised football interests in the history of the game north of the border like this has, and the whole circus has exposed a number of unhappy truths. Steering a way out of the mire has proved beyond the capabilities of the men who currently run Scottish football, while the shallow self interest of the SPL has been shown up for what it is, an entire abdication of collective responsibility, leaving the steaming pile for the SFL to clean up. SPL clubs should be ashamed, and the lingering sense of grievance felt by most SFL clubs at having had this dumped on their turf will take years to melt away.

From a Trust perspective, we felt it was absolutely vital that we consult our membership to find out which of the options on the table they felt was in the best interests of Berwick Rangers Football Club. No point ducking it and hoping it would go away - our role is to represent the views of our membership, which is why we contacted everyone to find out which option they wanted us to put to the football club board.

**These are the options we put to you, with the % who voted in favour shown on the right:**

- 1) Direct entry into SFL 1 = 2%
- 2) Direct entry into SFL 3 = 23%
- 3) Consideration for admittance into SFL 3 if a vacancy exists, in competition with other eligible clubs who may also wish to seek admission, with the successful applicant being selected following a vote by member clubs = 70%
- 4) Reject Rangers newco admittance into the SFL = 5%

**Option 3** got a whopping majority, and we've communicated that to the BRFC board for them to take account of the Trust membership view when they meet to consider how they'll vote on Friday 13th.

One of the few good things to have emerged from the shambles has been the co-operation between clubs and supporters, and in particular the refusal of the SFL to be bullied or bought off by the SPL and its tame administrators.

If Rangers newco do join us in SFL 3, it'll make our chances of winning the league or getting into the play-offs that much harder. On the other hand, it gives supporters a historic and probably one-off opportunity to see their team stuff the Gers in a league fixture. Over the course of two home fixtures, it will probably generate more income than the remaining home games lumped together, and the prospect of playing the fallen giant might encourage some players to put pen to paper who otherwise wouldn't have signed. If the Friday 13th vote is for SFL 3, then you'd better cancel any plans you had for 25th August that didn't involve a trip to Shielfield.

**Berwick Rangers Reserves finished tenth out of thirteen teams in the East of Scotland League First Division, drawing exactly one-third of their twenty four league games.**

They enjoyed only one success in the second half of the season, 4-3 at home to Peebles Rovers courtesy of Sam Young's 90th minute winner.

Three of the draws came at Shielfield in March. Andy McLean's appearance in the three-all game with Easthouses Lily provided evidence of the benefit of having an experienced first teamer in the side, Andy being involved in two of the Berwick goals.

The Reserves looked set to take the scalp of then league leaders Preston Athletic after building a 2-0 lead but indiscipline--a recurring problem-- got in the way and Preston fought back for a 2-2 draw against ten men. It turned out to be a vital point, as in the end, the Prestonpans side only pipped



■ *Shaun Hill celebrates against Eyemouth United*

Gala Fairydean for promotion on goal difference. Coldstream were happy to leave Shielfield with a point from a 1-1 draw against a gutsy Reserve team made up of the only eleven fit men available on the day. In a cracking, high scoring finale to the season at Duns, the Reserves' unbeaten record against Berwickshire teams was lost when Gary Waddell hit a last minute winner for the home side.

In between, there were some stinkers. The Reserves had no answer as they were swept aside by Kelso United in the second half at Woodside Park and, despite another ( early ) dismissal, should have done better at bottom of the table Hawick Royal Albert.

In mitigation, coaches Keith Kinnaird and Gordon Carter were constantly having to change the team. Regulars such as former captain Kevin Carter, Peter Johnstone and Scott Gemmell departed the club probably feeling they were going to make no more progress at Berwick. And, if a Junior club shows interest, there is at least the prospect of getting paid for playing.

Arran Ponton, Darren Lavery and Jamie Burstow were all loaned to other clubs, the first two after being in the first team squad. Add in the inevitable suspensions and injuries and it becomes clear why the Reserves' management needed to bring in new players. Thus, in the last third of the campaign, the team was frequently studded with trialists. Some made one-off appearances. Others, including Darren Carter, Josh Hall and Anthony Kerr were signed.

Of course, the ideal situation would not be to use trialists nor sign players simply to fill gaps in the second team ranks but to bring in footballers with at least some potential to go on and play for the senior side.

The club believes that a Reserve team operating in the East League's Premier Division would be much more useful. The players would be better prepared

■ *Shaun Hill in action for the Reserves at home to Coldstream*



■ *Berwick Reserves v. Gala Fairydean Michael Robinson with the ball*

for any step up to the top team through playing regularly at a higher level than at present, the gap between the East of Scotland top flight and the SFL Third Division being less marked.

Mark Lamb, once coach at Coldstream, has been appointed to lead the Reserves with the job of raising standards. The message from the club is that we can expect to see greater integration between the first team, Reserves and Under 19s with all three training at the Forrester Complex in Edinburgh. There has been a link-up with Salvesen Community F.C. who are based at Forrester.

More controversial was Berwick Rangers' request to the East League to be allowed to play home games at Forrester once the clocks revert to Greenwich Mean Time, i.e. late October through to March. This writer was not alone in thinking it was not a good idea. Berwick Rangers Reserves were re-admitted to the League with the proviso that they played home games on the main pitch at Shielfield as often as possible. The 'wear and tear' argument is not convincing as even at the end of the season, Shielfield was in excellent condition and in the whole season, only one first team and one Reserve

game was called off. Furthermore, the prospect of neighbouring clubs such as Coldstream, Eyemouth United and Duns ( all with significant contingents of Berwick-based personnel ) having to travel to Edinburgh for supposed local derbies seems absurd. The EoSL rebuffed Rangers' request saying that the pitch at Forrester is not up to standard and anyway, no club could have more than one home ground.

Going back to last season, despite limited appearances, Darren Lavery finished as top scorer with thirteen goals followed by Sam Young with twelve. Shaun Hill was the Reserves' Committee's Player of the Year and brother Callum took the Players' Player of the Year trophy. A special mention must also be made of Connor Wood who put in some excellent performances between the posts.

For the record, Stirling University won the league title for the first time, on goal difference from Spartans. Leith Athletic and Selkirk were relegated to be replaced by First Division Champions Heriot Watt University and runners-up Preston Athletic, both making a return to the top division after one season down.

**It was the 18th February, 1967. Three weeks earlier, I had witnessed Berwick knock the mighty Glasgow Rangers out of the Scottish Cup at Shielfield Park, in the biggest upset ever in the competition.**

Over 5,000 Berwick fans travelled to Easter Road on that day to see if Jock Wallace's team could cause another major upset. There were two special trains organised for the fans, with numerous buses and cars also carrying supporters. Along with a group of my friends from Spittal, I travelled on one of the trains that day.

I had been to Easter Road previously to watch the aforementioned Glasgow Rangers play Hibs in a league game so I knew the route from Waverley Station down to Leith Walk and then on to the ground.

This was a huge occasion and there were 29,000 in the ground that day. I remember looking at the terracing on the opposite side to the tunnel and thinking to myself that it nearly touched the sky. I suppose as a twelve year old most things did look really big to me back then.

The Berwick team that lined up that day was Wallace, Haig, Riddell, Craig, Coutts, Kilgannon, Lumsden, Reid, Gerard, Dowds & Ainslie. The only change from the team that beat Rangers was at number nine where Walter Gerard replaced the injured George Christie. The Hibs' team lined up as Allan, Duncan, Davis, Stanton, Madsen, Cousin, Quinn, O'Rourke, Scott, Cormack & Stevenson. This was a pretty impressive line up. Pat Stanton is one of Hibs' all time greats, Peter Cormack later went south to become a regular at Liverpool and Nottingham Forest, and John McNamee and Jim Scott left shortly after to join Newcastle United, with Scott playing in both legs of the Inter Cities Fairs Cup Final which Newcastle won in 1969.



Berwick more than held their own during this game. After 12 minutes, Kenny Dowds had a shot from the edge of the penalty area which Hibs' goalkeeper Thomson Allan appeared to claw back from over the goal line. The Berwick players claimed in vain that the ball had crossed the line but the referee would have none of it. I was right in line with the goal and having perfect eyesight in those days was also convinced that a goal should have stood.

Hibs were awarded a penalty midway through the first half and toilet rolls rained down from the Hibs' fans behind the goal. Jock Wallace deliberately took his time clearing them and the delay seemed to unnerve Jim Scott. Not surprisingly, big Jock saved the penalty to the delight of the Berwick fans.

The only goal of the game came in 42 minutes when Scott managed to slot the ball past Wallace. Despite a bit of pressure from Berwick in the second half, sadly an equaliser did not materialise. However, Berwick had done themselves, the fans and the town proud. The victory against Glasgow Rangers in the first round ensured that this team had written themselves a place in the history books and for one twelve year old Berwick supporter it had been one heck of an adventure.

**The biggest crowd to watch Berwick Rangers Reserves last season was an official 125 for September's Qualifying League game away to Gretna 2008.**

All other attendance figures were estimates. The average for Reserve home games at Shielfield hovered around the fifty mark, a typical figure at many East of Scotland clubs.

Nevertheless, three figure crowds were not that unusual. The SFA South Challenge Cup Final between Duns and Stirling University at the newly renamed 3G Arena in Galashiels drew over 300 spectators to a venue where home club Gala Fairydean had also enjoyed a bumper attendance when they kicked off use of the new surface with a King Cup victory over Preston Athletic in January. Even on a freezing night in March, there were around 140 there to watch Gala play Duns.

In fact, the Berwickshire team, back in East of Scotland football after 38 years, became accustomed to playing in front of such numbers, for example in home derbies against Eyemouth United and Coldstream with 150 watching the return fixture against the latter at Home Park.

Even on an unseasonably cold night at the beginning of May, just short of one hundred people turned up at Duns for Berwick Reserves' final match of the season. Bottom club Hawick Royal Albert attracted some three figure gates when they played on Friday evenings benefitting from the lack of counter attractions and the lure of a pie and a pint in their social club above the stand.

But just as crowds vary so do admission policies. Clubs with

enclosed grounds such as Gala, Hawick, Craigroyston and Preston charge at the gate. Coldstream take a collection and, as well as selling programmes, Duns invite donations into a bucket on entry to the playing area at Berwickshire High School.

Coupled with the laying of the new artificial surface, there was a general tidying up of Netherdale in Galashiels. With a large concrete stand which is a listed building and floodlights, Fairydean's home ground is almost the equal of some lower division SFL grounds.

Peebles Rovers are one club who might wish for their own 3G pitch. Even as early as September when Berwick Reserves played at Whitestone Park, it was on a heavy pitch. Later in the season, serious drainage problems forced the postponement of several Peebles' home matches which would have gone ahead if scheduled elsewhere.

The Reserves also played on grounds of differing sizes from the wide spaces of Raydale Park in Gretna to the narrower confines of Eyemouth's Warner Park.



■ *Elliot Grieve in action for the Reserves at Eyemouth*



## THE LONE RANGERS BOOK REVIEW

**The Lone Rangers: an English Club's century in Scottish football, by Tom Maxwell**

This is one of the best books ever written about football – although it isn't just about football. It's about the cultural schizophrenia that permeates every aspect of Berwick life, it's about The Legends of the Black & Gold, including the god-like genius of Davie Smith, it's about the emotional rollercoaster that comes with being a Berwick Rangers supporter, and it's about the fickle hand of fate that dealt you that hand in the first place.

If you haven't got it by now, beg, steal or borrow it. Or even better, buy it. The Lone Rangers is a brilliantly written, expertly-researched book that takes its place at the top table in the pantheon of great books about sport.

Author Tom Maxwell is a lifelong Berwick Rangers F.C. fan, a 'Berwickier' and also a journalist. He is regularly spotted at some of the sport's most hallowed places, including Ochilview and Links Park. He was once heard to swear loudly in a public place.

### Reviews of The Lone Rangers

'A strong contender for football book of the year.' --Phil Shaw, Backpass Magazine

'A lively account of Berwick Rangers' many trials and tribulations... Maxwell brings this unique place to life.' --Harry Pearson, When Saturday Comes

'Well-written, funny, absorbing and entertaining - all the joy and pain of British football's true borderline madness!' --Roddy Forsyth, BBC commentator and The Telegraph

'I never knew I could know so little about my local football team. The Lone Rangers has fixed that, however, in the most entertaining and humorous way.' --Pat Nevin, Ex-Chelsea and Everton footballer and 5 Live commentator

"The Lone Rangers should be cherished as an affectionate and entertaining account of the club's life through thick and thin." --The Scotsman

"Ask all the football fans in the country which club they'd most like to read about and 99% would say 'Berwick Rangers'. The other 1% are liars." --Gordon McQueen

"Quite simply, this was a book I couldn't put down." --Footballbookreviews.com



**The Glasgow Rangers saga has at least helped to raise the profile of the Scottish League Third Division.**

'The Times' ran a feature speculating on the likely difficulties of accommodating Rangers' travelling support at the smaller Third Division grounds should the 'new' Ibrox club have to re-launch in the SFL's bottom league. Although there might be no problem at Hampden, home of Queen's Park, Annan's Galabank holds barely 2,000 whilst Shielfield's capacity was given as just over 4,000 (though let's not forget it wasn't even full for last year's glamour Cup tie with Celtic).

Later in June, Craig P. Stewart in 'The Scotsman' looked back to the 1960s when the Glasgow giants proposed a restructuring of Scottish football which would have reduced the number of clubs in the Scottish League's then two divisions from 37 (a particularly odd total, looking back) to 32. Rangers nominated Albion Rovers, Brechin City, Stenhousemuir, Stranraer and Berwick Rangers for the chop.

The Ibrox club claimed to have selected these five for sacrifice for having the smallest gate receipts but in an era when virtually all League match attendance figures were estimates ending in zeros, I would ask how they could be certain of this.

Stewart related how the threatened clubs started legal action to preserve their League status. I recall some other clubs which initially appeared receptive to Rangers' plans started backtracking and crucially, Celtic, under chairman Robert Kelly, sided with the threatened five. Eventually, the plan was dropped.

Inevitably, Mr. Stewart mentioned that Berwick Rangers took 'a measure of revenge' when they famously beat their Glasgow namesakes in the Scottish Cup in 1967. However, for him, the current irony is that those very same clubs which Rangers wanted booted out would have a voice in determining in which Scottish League Division, Rangers would now play.

Stewart's article seems to have struck a chord with football followers for his paper listed it as that particular week's best-read sport story online with over 30,000 hits, more than twice as many as the second most read 'Charles Green defiant as club faces exit from SPL'.

On the same day that Stewart's article appeared, 'The Scotsman' published the draw for the First Qualifying Round of the Europa League. Living in Bucharest some years ago, I watched an international on television between Romania and Luxembourg played outside the capital. Romania finished comfortable winners and I kept thinking that Berwick Rangers could probably have given Luxembourg a good game. Similar thoughts returned when I saw the Europa League draw.

Scottish clubs have suffered a few embarrassments against unsung opposition in European competitions but I still wonder how the likes of Shkendija from the predominantly Albanian town of Tetovo in Macedonia or Gandzasar Kapan (Armenia) would fare if they ever visited Shielfield. Most bizarrely of all, the metropolis(!) of Santa Coloma in Andorra had two clubs in the draw! That seems a bit like Stenhousemuir and East Stirlingshire both qualifying for Europe!

It is sometimes said that any publicity is good publicity and Berwick Rangers certainly had a lot for the close season in the final June edition of the 'Berwick Advertiser'. Disquiet at the club's link-up with Salvesen in Edinburgh was the lead story on the front page. It was continued overleaf and there were two letters from readers questioning the wisdom of this move.

Irony again that the criticism should appear in the same edition as a highly positive report with pictures from the club's coaching session for local youngsters held at Old Shielfield the previous weekend.

## JUNIORS UPDATE

Berwick Rangers will be working closely with one of Scotland's most famous Boys' Clubs, Salvesen of Edinburgh this season in an attempt to provide increased opportunities for talented young players to progress to senior football. The Borderers' First Team, Reserves and Under-19s will train alongside Salvesen youth teams at the excellent Forrester Sports Hub, on the outskirts of Edinburgh.

John Bell, the Director for Youth Development, explains, "In the last two seasons we've fielded teams in the SFL under-17 and under-19 Leagues. It's been tough, especially last year when we lost two excellent coaches (Bill Blyth and Keith Brady) through illness and relocation, but the progress of players such as Ben Miller into the first team demonstrates that it can have its rewards."



■ Former Coldstream manager Mark Lamb has been appointed as head of youth development

For 2012/13, there is no external financial support available to us as we're quite far away from meeting the demands of the new SFA Youth Academy, and both the SFA and SFL youth initiatives require that we have SFA Level 4 Coaches in place. The connection with Salvesen has been developed over recent months and has a mutual benefit to both organisations. I'm very aware that this could be perceived by some supporters as another example of an unhealthy focus on Edinburgh and putting further distance between the Club and the Berwick community, but in the short-term at least, we don't have the facilities nor the infrastructure to replicate this locally. This year, Annan and Forfar have put down 4G pitches, and there are clear benefits to the development of community activity around a senior club.

We've explored some avenues of potential support, but it's clear at present that there is no finance available through Northumberland County Council (the owners of Shielfield Park) and major grants aren't available through the football authorities. We're very aware that Shielfield needs major investment to bring it up to modern standards, and every possibility will be addressed."

## GOLDEN OLDIES DISCO REPORT

A golden oldies disco with music from the 1960s, 1970s & 1980s was held at the Black & Gold Club on Saturday 21st April on behalf of Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust.

Around 70 people attended the function and the music was supplied by former local man Gary Dunn who now resides in Glasgow. Gary was his usual hilarious self keeping the audience entertained with jokes and stories of his misspent youth living in the town, as well as playing some excellent music.

A pie and pea supper was supplied and a raffle was held. This was drawn by football club chairman Brian Porteous.

Around one hundred pounds was raised towards Trust funds, which was slightly disappointing considering that last year's event raised over three hundred pounds. This was due to a smaller attendance than last year and increased costs for the disco and catering.

However, everyone who attended seemed to enjoy themselves and it is planned to hold a similar event sometime again next spring.

Thanks to all of those who donated raffle prizes.

**NEXT EVENT – ELVIS PRESLEY TRIBUTE NIGHT – BLACK & GOLD CLUB ON SATURDAY 20TH OCTOBER 2012, LOOK OUT FOR DETAILS.**

## PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Steven Notman was the clear winner of the members' poll to decide the Supporters Trust Player of the Year for 2011-12. Stevie was presented with his trophy by Trust Chairman Colin Pike at the Berwick Rangers awards ceremony in the Black and Gold Club after the home match against Stranraer on Saturday, May 5th.



## SUMMER SOCCER?

With impeccable timing in this, one of the wettest of summers, MSP Rod Campbell ( SNP ) has called for the Scottish government to lobby the SFA to switch to summer soccer. Mr. Campbell claims it will bring health benefits for fans and players alike by avoiding the worst of Scotland's winter weather.

Should summer football have already been in operation this year, a lot more games would have suffered the fate of Berwick's friendly with a Hearts XI on July 7th and been called off.

## QUALIFYING CUP

Berwick Rangers Reserves are in the only six-team group in the East of Scotland Qualifying League, the competition which opens the new season in early August. The Reserves will play Premier Division sides Whitehill Welfare and Lothian Thistle, Selkirk (relegated at the end of last season) and two other First Division teams, Eyemouth United and Hawick Royal Albert.

## A LITTLE CUP THAI

The Trust made a financial contribution towards Berwick Rangers' manager Ian Little's participation as a member of the Scotland team in a veterans' charity tournament in Thailand during the off season. Yano reported that because of the heat, pre-match warm-ups ( is that even the right term? ) are much shorter over there. Similarly, because of the sapping heat, a completely different style of play is needed once matches get underway.

## SWANSON ON THE MOVE

Former Shielfield favourite Danny Swanson has left Dundee United after signing a two year contract with Championship club Peterborough United at the beginning of June.

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