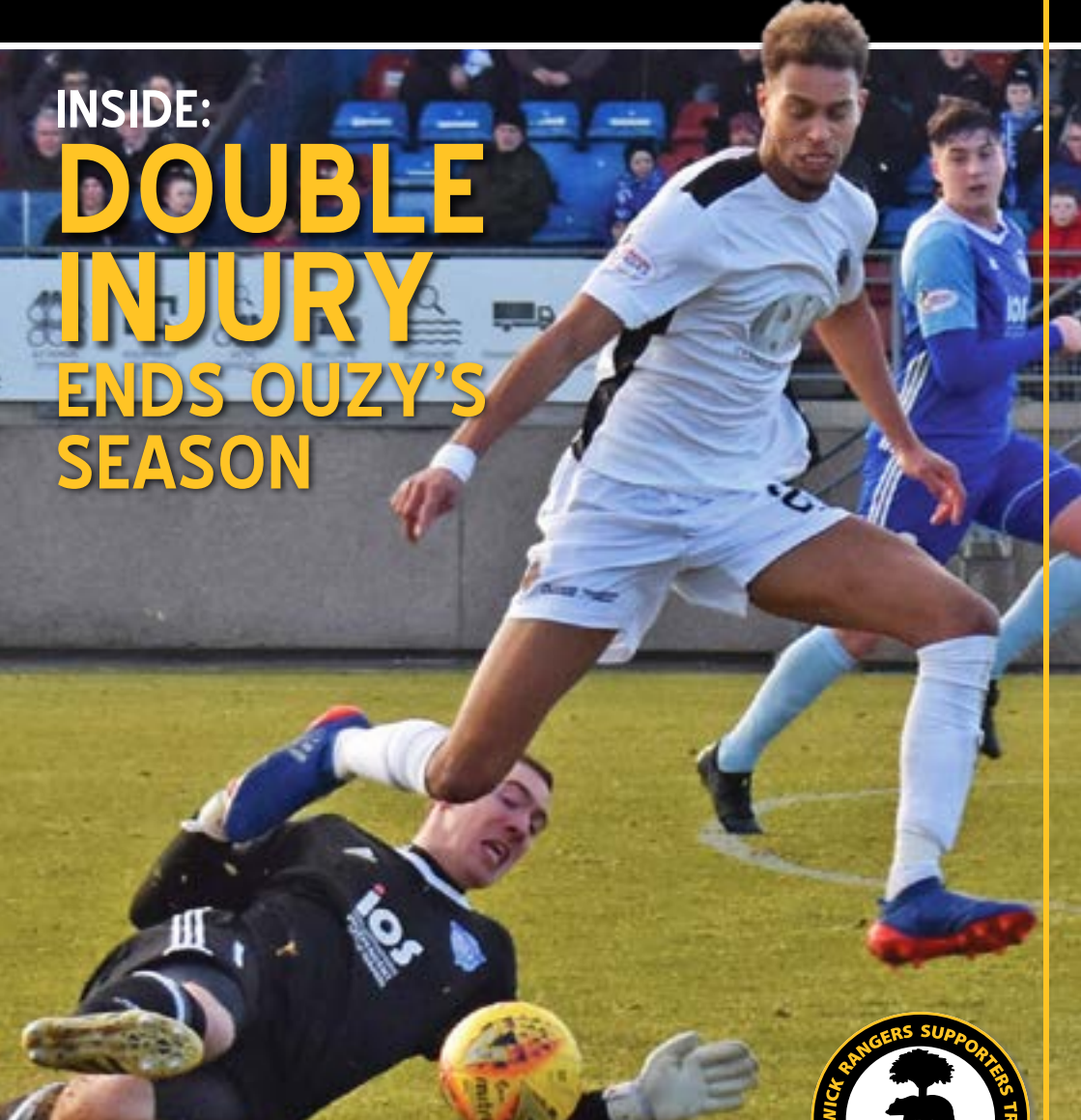


# BERWICK RANGERS SUPPORTERS TRUST

INSIDE:

## DOUBLE INJURY ENDS OUZY'S SEASON



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# Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust

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## FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

Hello,

There is a pall of gloom hanging over Berwick Rangers at the moment relating to both on

and off the field. Let's start with on. It is often said that not too much should be read into pre-season results. Hibs and St. Johnstone were always likely to be tough opponents though the ease with which they ripped Rangers apart was particularly worrying. I confess I can only go by hearsay. I decided to give the friendlies a miss considering kicking off at the start of July to be too early. O.K. the Hibs' game was arranged primarily with money in mind and Berwick should have made something

from a 1,410 crowd. There was barely a tenth of that number to see the Perth team win 4-0.

A third home fixture v Raith Rovers was cancelled for 'security reasons' so instead, Berwick made the trip to the Indodrill Stadium and a 3-1 loss to Alloa. Not content with a mere three pre-season outings, a fourth was arranged against Civil Service Strollers and this one at least produced a win (2-0).

The Betfred Cup can be blamed for the July 4th kick off, itself commencing in the middle of the month. On the subject of low crowds, there were again fewer than 200 spectators present at Rangers' opening match in that competition on a Tuesday night at Annan, around twenty five of them supporting Berwick. Ultimately,

Berwick finished pointless and goalless at the bottom of their Betfred group (see table page 4).



The manager's comprehensive update during the close season was surprisingly posted on the club website. After all, it deviated from the party line with its veiled criticism of the limited playing budget which had been allocated to him and devoid as it was of the usual linguistic excrement of exaggerated pleasure over almost anything that happens at Shielfield. A few weeks later, in the local press, Robbie Horn acknowledged how the enlarged pyramid

(see article) was already having an effect on his ability to sign players.

In typical website speak, we were informed that the club was 'excited' to be running a shirt sponsorship raffle again. This excitement does not appear to have permeated to the wider public. The sale of 80 tickets was hailed as a success but was more than one third down on the previous year. This may have been in part due to the increase in price from £200 to £250 (largely due to VAT considerations) but the novelty had probably worn off for some.

As Hot Chocolate used to sing, 'Everyone's a Winner, Baby' and, in this raffle everyone was, raising the question as to how much the club actually made from it. For example,

Our cover picture, taken by Gordon Dickson, shows forward Ousman See in action at Peterhead in February, a match which ended in a 1-1 draw.

One of the players signed by Berwick last January with financial help from the Trust, Ouzy came to Shielfield from Forfar Athletic. The surname incidentally comes from The Gambia, his father's homeland. Pronunciation is as in what we do with our eyes. Ouzy, whose mother is Scottish, has visited the small African state several times.

Unfortunately, his season was cut short by serious injury. At Montrose on April 14th, he went down injured in the 26th minute. His long wait lying on the pitch for paramedics to arrive is well documented. The Scottish Ambulance Service later apologised for the delay. A broken tibia and dislocated ankle meant Ouzy missed the final four games of the season and the start of this one.

Via fundraising and a collection at Shielfield, more than £2,800 was raised to assist the player whilst absent from his daytime job as a tiler. Berwick Rangers F.C. generously paid the fees to set up a JustGiving page on the internet so that all monies pledged went directly to Ouzy.

all entrants could opt to accept two season tickets as a reward for taking part, yet the combined value of these was higher than the price of the raffle ticket!

There has been an inflation busting hike in the cost of concessionary season tickets for the new campaign. The single entry concession price, which during the course of last season was increased from £6 to £7, has now gone up again to £8. It is appreciated that many clubs, even in our division, do not work on the strict basis that concession prices will be precisely half of those for standard admission but given the age profile of much of Berwick Rangers' support, these moves could backfire as fans are lost because they believe they are being asked to pay too much. Even more so, if the team is not performing very well.

BETFRED CUP GROUP F (FINAL TABLE)						
	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
Livingston	4	3	1	0	4	11
Airdrieonians	4	2	1	1	5	7
Hamilton	4	1	2	1	3	6
Annan Athletic	4	2	0	2	1	6
<b>Berwick Rangers</b>	4	0	0	4	-13	0

In good faith, the Trust donated £3,000 to the club towards the cost of aeration work on the pitch with the promise of another £2,000 should further work be done. We were entirely confident that we had recourse to the funds needed to provide these sums. The work was to form part of a bigger scheme under which the club was to benefit from grants from the Scottish Football Partnership. To say there was disharmony on the board would be an understatement. Our cheque was rejected by the club and we paid directly the company which did the work. John Bell, the prime advocate for the pitch works, was replaced as Vice Chairman by Doug Watkin. At the same time Eric Tait was announced as 'Director of Football'. It is difficult to imagine that sat too well with the manager. Aren't such posts usually the preserve of bigger clubs who

haven't the heart to sack a struggling manager so they bestow on him that title as they move him upstairs?

Then there was the saga of where Berwick Rangers Reserves would call home. A team had been entered into the resurrected Reserve League (replacing the Development League) but the club board voted it should play home fixtures in Edinburgh. East of Scotland League Tweedmouth Rangers were lined up to move on to the main pitch from Old Shielfield until a volte face by the directors left them scurrying to the East League's Management Committee to de-register Shielfield (proper) as their home. In his article, Ron Kirk says a little more about this.

We had already been asked whether we could help finance the second team again. In the end, we committed to contributing up to £1,500 over the course of the season as and when bills arise. We also donated £700 to the club to keep our three advertising boards around the ground.

Then there was the bombshell of July 27th, the ousting of Len Eyre as chairman. Almost immediately afterwards, came the statement that Mr Watkin would be 'acting up' as chairman in the interim, his, a truly meteoric rise to the top over a matter of weeks.

I make no apologies for some overlap in content across several articles. It is indicative of the current state of affairs. Once again, thanks to everyone who has contributed material for this issue whether it be articles or pictures. Thanks too, to Ian Beresford for putting together the fixture list you will find inside.

Despite everything, I hope you will still find the magazine to be a good read.

*Michael*

**STOP PRESS: Gloom lifts a little. 4/8/18 SPFL 2 opener, Berwick Rangers 1 Stirling Albion 0**

# IT'S A SHAMBLES

*Says Ronald Kirk*

The World Cup is over for another 4 years and for a couple of weeks or so it looked like football might be coming home. Wimbledon and the Open golf championship are also over for another year as are most of the local Border Common Riding festivals. My own home town has its own summer civic week and I was reminded this year that in years

and Edinburgh City to avoid bottom spot and the dreaded relegation play off. Ultimately, Cowdenbeath performed even worse than they had the previous season and, despite a slight revival towards the end, they were always sufficiently detached to look destined to be bottom for the second successive year. That said, the stirrings of a revival from the



*Berwick celebrate the goal which brought victory over Cowdenbeath in April (Photo by Ian Runciman)*

Blue Brazil had Berwick fans looking anxiously over their shoulders for brief periods but eventually Berwick secured their league status with 4 games to go following Cowdenbeath's defeat at Peterhead. This was on the same day that Berwick's game at Montrose was significantly held up for so long following the serious leg injury sustained by Ouzy. See that Cowden's defeat and rubber stamping of their second successive wooden spoon had been confirmed

gone by it used to have an event called 'It's a Shambles' which was a variation of a theme based on the old BBC One programme called 'It's a Knockout' whereby representatives from different parts of the town took part in various games and challenges. What reminded me of this? Well, to be frank, the goings on in the boardroom of BRFC where baffling decisions have been made without any explanation leaving supporters of the club somewhat puzzled and perplexed.

before half time had been reached. Hopefully Ouzy is now well on the way to a full recovery and it will not be long before we see him again in a Black and Gold jersey. With the pressure off, Berwick then finished the season with two wins and two draws which saw them climb back above Edinburgh City, who themselves had performed something of a second half of the season revival, and into eighth place in the league, a repeat of where they had finished 12 months earlier.

First, let us look back at last season which more or less followed the pattern of the previous one with Berwick battling both Cowdenbeath

Berwick's major downfall last season was their inability to score goals. They failed to find the opposition net in 17 league games which





Aaron Murrell gets a touch in the win over Cowdenbeath (Photo by Ian Runciman)

effectively equates to half a league season. Away from home they failed to score in 12 out of 18 league games. Indeed, when they scored at Clyde on the last day of the season, Berwick fans present didn't know what to do as most had forgotten what it was like to see their team score at another club's ground. The dearth of goals scored was highlighted even further by the fact that local youngster Jack Hamilton's double in that game elevated him into the top scorer's position with just 8 goals. This is no reflection on Jack as he had achieved that feat in just half a season after being brought in on loan from Livingston in January. The second top scorer was Mikey McKenna who left to join Arbroath in January and this further illustrates the lack of goals from the rest of the squad.

Looking ahead, the prospects for the new season at the moment look grim. In my previous articles, I have tried to be positive and optimistic. I am afraid that at the moment I am simply unable to be so. This close season has yet again gone by with the manager's rumoured prime signing targets having joined other clubs or deciding not to join Berwick for

some other reason. The bulk of last season's squad have been retained, supplemented with some new faces from Musselburgh and Selkirk. If the pre-season friendlies and Betfred Cup results are anything to go by, where heavy defeats have been suffered, then a difficult season lies ahead. As a consequence, it is easy to understand why the bulk of the pre-season predictions have Berwick down to finish rock bottom.

I have raised the question in this forum on more than one occasion regarding the club seemingly having lost the ability to attract players of sufficient quality.

This brings us back to the current goings on in the boardroom where it is rumoured that a split has developed between two groups of directors. In addition to failing to provide the manager with sufficient money to enable him to put together a decent squad, there have been a number of decisions which have been made over the summer which have left supporters somewhat bemused.

The first of those was the decision not to carry

out any major repair works to the pitch. Now, I am the first to admit that I do not know all the facts, but it seemed apparent to me that the pitch last season was unable to cope with the demands of an 18 home game league season along with Development team fixtures. I accept that the winter was more severe than in previous years but the bottom line is that seven first team fixtures were postponed. This leads to a lower gate when the fixture is eventually played together with a potential loss of sponsorship revenue. The crowd for the last home Saturday fixture was more or less double the crowds for the rearranged midweek matches. In addition, two of the home fixtures towards the end of last season were played on a pitch that was so hard the entertainment value was virtually nil. To me as a fan, it seemed that substantial work needed to be carried out and doubtless there were reasons for not going ahead with this but no explanation has been provided as far as I am aware leaving fans rather puzzled.

Still on the subject of the pitch, there was the decision to allow Tweedmouth Rangers to play their home games at Shielfield, a decision which was subsequently reversed which meant that, after all, the Reserve team would play their home games there. This was not before Tweedmouth Rangers had registered Shielfield as their home ground with the East of Scotland League. With the change of mind, Tweedmouth had to go back to the East of Scotland League and register Old Shielfield instead. It is rumoured that East of Scotland officials were far from impressed and did consider reporting Berwick to the SFA.

There then followed a boardroom reshuffle which resulted in the appointment of a new Vice Chairman as well as the creation of a Director of Football. No explanation has been provided for the reshuffle and again the rumour mill has been working overtime with suggestions that it was forced through whilst other directors were away on holiday. That has now been trumped by the more recent announcement that the decision had

been taken to remove Len Eyre as chairman. Apparently, a majority of the Board found that they had no confidence in Len to provide the leadership required to take the club forward. The Vice Chairman will now step up in the interim 'to allow the club to function normally', a statement that was greeted with considerable mirth amongst supporters on social media.

I don't think any of us have any confidence in the board as a whole being able to provide the leadership required and as Private Frazer in Dad's Army would say "WE'RE DOOMED!" Frankly, ladies and gentlemen, it's a shambles.

## RESERVES

Berwick Rangers Reserves will be in the SPFL Reserve League 2 this season along with the second teams of Airdrieonians, Albion Rovers, Ayr United, East Kilbride, Livingston, Queen's Park, Raith Rovers and Stirling Albion. Each team will play each other twice (home and away) to give a total of 16 league fixtures.

East Kilbride are the odd ones out as they are members of the Lowland League. However, clubs from that competition can be accepted into the Reserve League subject to meeting certain requirements.

The decision to scrap the age restricted Development Leagues was taken because of a belief that young players will benefit from playing alongside and against more experienced men on a regular basis. It was this theory which lay behind the suggestion, made during the course of last season, that Celtic and Rangers Colts teams should be allowed to enter SPFL 2. Berwick Rangers, like other clubs, sought their own fans' views on this proposal but across SPFL 2 there was little support for the idea. Thus, the Old Firm will compete with teams representing sixteen other clubs in Reserve League 1.

# REFS GET IT WRONG

Berwick lost 1-0 at home to Clyde in February because of a last minute penalty which was controversial in more ways than one. Viewing the highlights on YouTube at first I thought it was not a penalty (Jordan Orru having allegedly fouled David Goodwillie inside the box) but was shocked even more when the referee allowed the former Scotland international to take the penalty the way he did and then blow for time straight afterwards allowing the goal to stand. (Those who were at the match will recall that Goodwillie appeared to break his run before connecting with the ball.)

No wonder Berwick players were so angry after the final whistle. Whatever league you play in now, the standard of refereeing is very poor. Decisions like the above can affect issues such as relegation with the prospect of people losing their jobs if their club goes down. Spectators pay hard earned money to watch their teams. I have spoken to numerous fans here in Lincolnshire who have said they know of lots

of people who have stopped going to games due to the standard of officiating. Unless things change, more players, managers and fans will walk away from the game.

On numerous occasions, Berwick fans have been on the short end of the stick



Action from Berwick v Clyde before the controversial ending  
(Photo by Ian Runciman)

with respect to decisions going against their team. Players and management get frustrated, too. It can lead some players to react by taking it out on opponents with the consequential sanction of yellow cards or dismissal. For those in charge in the technical area there is the threat of fines or touchline bans if they are deemed to have gone too far in venting such frustration.

I believe it is time that all officials in all divisions from the Premiership through to SPFL 2 should be made to be full time, be between certain ages and paid a full time wage. If they fail to meet the required standard, they should be relegated to operating in lower leagues.

Far too often, I have turned up on a Saturday afternoon really looking forward to a game of football only to leave at 4:45p.m. feeling very angry, deflated and upset that a good game has been spoilt.

**Paul Muddiman,**  
*Boston, Lincs.*

# UNDER 20s

The Development League is no more. For four seasons, Berwick Rangers competed in its East Division. Now the club's second string has been rebranded as 'Reserves' to fit in with the SPFL's decision to reinstate Reserve team football.

As it is always possible that it could all change again some time in the future, it may be premature to refer to 2017-18, a season we now review, as Berwick's 'final' campaign in the Development competition.

There was a gap of two and a half months between the team's last competitive match in 2017 and the first of the new year. It proved to be a tough return to League action on a bitterly cold night at the Michael Woods Sports and Leisure Centre in Glenrothes where Raith Rovers hit Rangers for six, Bradley Barret's goal their only consolation.

Berwick finished up winning three of their nine second half of the season games. The outstanding performance came in a 4-0 success over Forfar Athletic in a 'home' fixture at Portobello High School in Edinburgh in which Grant Rose bagged a hat trick. With the first team accumulating a backlog of home matches because of the winter weather, two other Under 20s' matches were also switched, the team conceding home advantage to visit first Alloa and then Stirling Albion. Both games were lost by a one goal margin.

The last game of the season--one which

should have been played before the midwinter break--was played at Shielfield. Berwick's five goals without reply against Cowdenbeath were enough to cancel out a five goal



Jack Cook - (left) (Photo by David Glencross)

deficit in their 'Goal Difference' column as they secured fifth spot in the seven team table. Cowdenbeath were already doomed to finish at the foot of that table though, in fairness, the trip to Berwick was for their second game

within 24 hours having also lost the Fife Cup Final against Burntisland Shipyard the night before. Yet at least they showed that they were one step ahead of Japan's World Cup team by leaving Shielfield's away dressing room spotless on departure!

Raith were again champions despite having three points docked for fielding an ineligible player in a game versus Stirling.

Rose, who had been on weekend loan to Lowland Leaguers Gala Fairydean Rovers, scored ten goals in all in Development League games and was rewarded with a first team contract during the close season thus following Jack Cook into the senior squad. Cook had already cemented his place there by the end of the SPFL 2 campaign. Paul Simpson, voted by his DL teammates as their 'Player of the Year', also appeared for the first team late on but was not re-signed for 2018-19.

**Michael Smyth**



# A MATCH TO FORGET

It's not unusual for a sporting publication to include a feature about 'A Match to Remember'. We did it ourselves in our February, 2017 issue when Stuart Lee looked back at a seven goal thriller between Berwick and Morton in April, 1995. Here we buck the trend. It may seem a contradiction in terms to dwell on 'A Match to Forget' but here goes anyway.

"Rubbish! That was rubbish!"



All together now. A crowded scene from the match. Robert Wilson (no. 16) is the nearest Ranger to the ball. (Photo by Ian Runciman)

(The opinion of one long time home fan). "Industrial" (Away supporter). "More like agricultural" (Another home man).

"The worst game of live sport I have ever seen...apart from chess" was the resounding thumbs down from yet another follower of the Black and Gold.

At least in chess play is confined to the deck. In the Berwick Rangers versus Edinburgh City SPFL 2 fixture at Shielfield last March, the ball was airborne so often that the Trust write up on the game likened it to Aussie Rules.

As it finished level the Berwick paper concluded, 'It was honours even' when these two struggling teams met for the final time in 2017-

18 (Berwick failing to register a single victory in any of the five meetings). In fact, there was nothing honourable about the fare served up in this one. The 'Advertiser' continued, 'this was a game neither side wanted to lose.' We should hope not but the inference to be drawn from that comment is that there are times when Berwick Rangers

and Edinburgh City are quite happy to lose. Really?

After a goalless first half, Jack Hamilton gave Rangers the lead before Ashley Grimes (inevitably) levelled. Despite the Citizens' keeper Calum Antell sometimes looking shaky there was no further scoring. Berwick did feel they were due a penalty when Paul Willis went down inside the Welshman's area but referee Duncan Williams believed otherwise.

The result changed nothing for the bottom three in the division as basement club Cowdenbeath also picked up a point on the same day at Stirling Albion.

The real pity is that there was a buzz around Shielfield that day. The sun was shining, the new bar on the ground floor of the club building was open—and busy—and over 500 came along to watch. Whilst the teams may have been incapable of turning on the style, spectators were at least entitled to expect to see a full blooded encounter indicative of each side's desperation to win a vital three points. Instead, what they got was, well..something pretty desperate.

# ROBBY WINS POTY AWARD

Goalkeeper Robby McCrorie was the runaway winner of Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust Player of the Year award for 2017-18. The young stopper, on a season long loan from



Trust secretary Isla Barber and Robby McCrorie with his Trust Player of the Year trophy (Photo by Ian Runciman)

the true 'Gers in Glasgow, received more than half the votes cast in a poll which, for the first time, was extended to include regular Berwick supporters who may not have been Trust members. Well received, this move saw a big increase in the numbers participating.

A former winner, Steven Notman, in his final season at Shielfield, was runner up with the remaining votes dispersed amongst a dozen players including the already departed Michael McKenna and Marcus Godinho.

McCrorie also picked up several other

trophies including for Players' Player of the Year and that presented by the Tweeddale Press. Jack Cook won the Raymond Hogg Memorial Shield as Young Player of the Year.

The Supporters Trust also provided the trophy for the Development team's Players' Player of the Year which was won by Methven, Perthshire-based winger Paul Simpson. Paul was unable to attend the club's end of season presentation event in the Black and Gold Club following the final Saturday home game versus Cowdenbeath on April 21st. Instead, Trust chairman Michael Smyth handed him his prize straight after the rearranged Shielfield fixture against Stenhousemuir three nights later, a game in which Paul made a first start for the senior team.

The Trust thanks Timpson Ltd (formerly Shoecare) of Hide Hill in Berwick for its continued support by engraving the Trust's trophies free of charge.



Paul Simpson (Photo by David Glencross)

# ROCK ON?

by 'BLACK AND GOLD ALL OVER'

There's a line in the old song, "Rock On", by David Essex, that goes "And where do we go from here?" and it's a line that rings true of Berwick Rangers at the moment. There's a catalogue of things that have happened in recent years that don't make for happy reading. Here's a couple of them:

We've got a pitch that badly needs properly repairing, based on expert reports. Anyone who plays golf knows about the problem of compaction: it's the reason why golf clubs spend money tining and back-filling the greens every year, to aerate them and prevent compaction (which screws up the drainage). There was a lot of money available through grants to offset the costs of the major repairs that were needed. The board decided not to proceed however, so the drainage problem is likely to persist.

We know that things are tight in the second division, and it's always a struggle to get players to come to Berwick. That's part of the reason why the club trains close to Edinburgh. Getting payers in costs money though, and the likes of Edinburgh City and Cowdenbeath have budgets of about £150K. The board at Berwick tried to cut the manager's budget to a little over half of that, but then relented... a bit...but it's still a long way short of £150K. The manager's still been left trying to build a squad with one arm tied behind his back. There's not much point in having a director of football if the club can't (or won't) pay for the talent to come to Berwick.

Then there are the problems that are more deep-seated. Again, here's just a couple:

There doesn't seem to be a vision for the

club: what do the board want it to be? If they want it to be a mid-table second division club that makes the promotion play-offs now and again, and provides a springboard for players to move on to bigger and better things, that would be fine by me. But at present, the only (implicit) ambition seems to be to avoid relegation, while spending as little as possible in the process.

Which leads us on to the other BIG problem. Money. The club now raffles off the main sponsor deals (front of shirt: home and away, and so on). That's a good thing, and lots of other clubs do it. It's not raising a lot of money though, and when you look at the advertising boards around the ground, there are very few new additions. Apparently the club sold something like 80 shirt raffle tickets. 80? Shouldn't it be selling twice that number? If every board member got just two or three new people (companies) to sign up, that would be another 25 or so tickets. There seems to be an inability to look beyond the people who currently put their hand in their pockets when it comes to supporting the club. That's not a sustainable model, and it shows a lack of ambition as well as a lack of effort.

It's not all doom and gloom, though...two more examples:

This year the club's sponsor is Northern Soul Kitchen (NSK), a non-profit organisation that takes food that the shops see as waste (when it is perfectly edible) and makes meals out of it, sold under a Pay As You Feel arrangement. That's a good thing... in fact that's TWO good things. NSK is on West Street in Berwick and I'm sure they would be happy to see some of the Trust Members in there either as diners, or

helping out as volunteers.

The manager is keen to do the best he can. He knows he can't pay the wages to attract seasoned campaigners to Berwick, and heaven knows we could do with one or two. He's doing his best working with the resources he's got available, bringing in younger lads from the lower leagues who are hungry to show what they can do. You can't fault him for that.

## So where DO we go from here?

It's not rocket science...

The most important thing is obviously for the board to create, and SELL a vision for the club, not just to existing supporters, but to potential supporters--young and old--in the town, for example.

Most of the club's problems are rooted in funding. They're not alone in this respect, but there is a lot more they could do--anyone who's interested should have a look at Darlington FC to see what they've been up to, it's an interesting case because the level that

they play at is similar to Berwick.

People that I speak to at games and in and around the town all have ideas about how the club could raise more money and get more people interested and involved. There are a lot of opportunities going a-begging. The recent Open Training Session, for example, could have been turned into an Open Day with activities for all the family, given away kids' season tickets to attendees, held a kids' 5 a-side tournament, a raffle to win the new kit, face painting and so on. That would have got people interested, and raised some money for the club.

There are a lot of small businesses in Berwick (I include Spittal and Tweedmouth here). The club should be knocking on doors and establishing links with them, and the wider community. Immediately, I can think of two or three companies who have said that the club has never even talked to them. There's all sorts of opportunities here, from player shirt sponsorship, an advert in the programme, stadium advertising, all of which would bring in money. The club should hold an open day

Manager Robbie Horn with youngsters on Old Shielfield during the Open Training Day (Photo by Ian Runciman)







Berwick players pass on hints on the main Shielfield pitch during the club's Open Training Day in June  
(Photo by Ian Runciman)

(or evening) for these people too: invite them in, show them round, provide light refreshments, and talk to them about how they can get involved.

**So what does it all mean?**

It's a mixed bag: some things are looking good, but some not so good. The danger is that the things that are not so good (like the pitch) are only likely to get worse in the long run, unless they are addressed sooner, rather than later. It would be good for the club to be more open and honest about the real state of affairs, on and off the pitch.

The club should be tapping into its sizeable audience for support and funding, online as well as offline. On the Facebook page, for example, where the club has over 3000 followers, there was at least one person who said he'd be happy to contribute £5 to help out, so the willing are out there. It's going to need a bit of time, effort and direction from the board though, to make things happen.

Finally, I know that we'll never make the Scottish Premier League, but I also know there's a lot more that can and should be done to make things better for the club, the fans, and the town.

**BERWICK RANGERS BOARD**

Doug Watkin's tenure as acting chairman of Berwick Rangers (see page 4) was short-lived. Less than a week later, he and two other directors resigned. On Friday, August 3rd, the club issued a statement that, based on legal advice received, it considered improper the voting procedure by which Len Eyre had been 'removed' as chairman and therefore Len was still in situ.

Two nights earlier, the Trust Board held a special meeting, the purpose of which was to consider, in conjunction with other shareholders, including Berwick Rangers Supporters Club, calling for an Extraordinary General Meeting of Berwick Rangers plc because of the situation existing at the time.

# SO WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON WITH ST ANDREWS BERWICK RANGERS SUPPORTERS IN THE OFF SEASON?

Well, we renewed our banner at Shielfield and our advert in the programme and continued with our sponsorship of Sean Brennan. But the one major thing is that we won the raffle to become the sponsor on the front of the home shirt for this season. Well, I say we but I do of course mean me. The rest of the group are

kitchen just opened up in Berwick. It's a good initiative and I'm happy to support them. The raffle win couldn't have happened at a better time for them either as they just opened at the end of June and there's an article about them in this magazine. The club and Northern Soul Kitchen have already met to think up ideas

to help promote each other and I'm hopeful something good will come out of it. The club have already kicked off by offering to donate £1 from every home shirt sold to Northern Soul Kitchen. The BBC have also been in touch looking to film a piece about the club and the kitchen. I've already been interviewed by the BBC and there has been quite a buzz on social media



**St Andrews Berwick Rangers Supporters**

[www.berwickranger.co.uk](http://www.berwickranger.co.uk)

just along for the ride. Although my brother did sign up to pound per point and my dad asked me to get him a season ticket!

Actually, it's quite a thing to have won the shirt sponsorship and rather than putting St Andrews Berwick Rangers Supporters on the front I've asked Northern Soul Kitchen of Berwick if they would like it and they were very happy to accept. They are a community

about the sponsorship. It's important to forge good community links and I'm hopeful this is a link that will stay strong and last for a long time. I've also had a flag made out of a combination of our logo and that of Northern Soul Kitchen. Hopefully, it will be displayed home and away.

**David Letham**



# FIRST IMPRESSIONS

by *STUART BELL*

I travelled up for the Airdrie game on July 21st with a couple of things on my mind. First, I wanted to see for myself how Robbie's new young team was faring up. After a string of heavy defeats would I see anything to prevent 8 months of worried looks at the Lowland league table?

The second objective was to see if I could delve into the murky plot of the Boardroom farce which unusually saw curtain up in July rather than Panto season.

I should add immediately that I believe that the elastic has been wound so tightly, there will be a loud twang long before this article appears. Possibly even before the first League game, we could have major changes in the Boardroom as the jockeying for position takes on the guile and subtlety of a Declan O'Kane tackle.

I spoke to several parties who you might think are "in the know" about the move to essentially demote our Vice-Chair, and to appoint a Director of Football without public explanation of the reasons or the role. Each of those parties gave me very different views. Impossible as it is, they were both convinced and convincing.

Fake news? Lies? Good people who have been misled by others with an agenda? I'm afraid I'm no further forward, but I can confidently say 2 things.

Firstly, however this pans out (and this is not a swipe at any particular individual), we need a strong, open and communicative leader upstairs. If we end up with someone possessing the integrity and honesty of

Donald Trump's barber, it will go on until we are playing the Shire again. The current culture of individuals or secretive little groups doing what the hell they like, then looking all amazed when someone objects, is cringeworthy and has to stop.

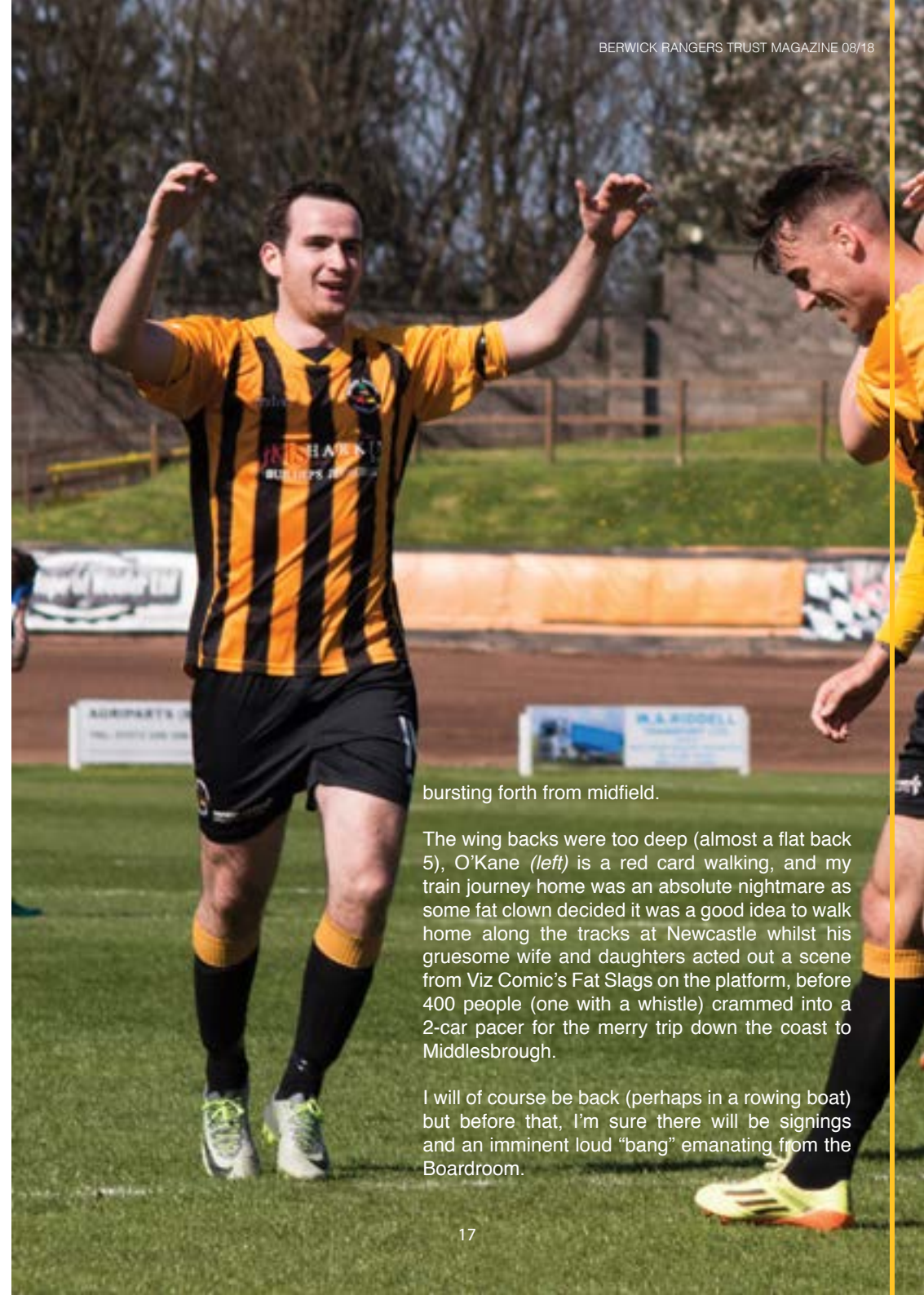
Secondly, I feel the need to defend my mate Eric Tait. He has received some nonsense abuse in social media, and he gets that because he puts his head over the parapet and people choose to chuck stones at it. You don't get the same abuse aimed at some other Directors, many of whom our average supporter in the Duckie would struggle to name.

Eric is one of many players in the extensive cast and whatever goes on over the prawn sandwiches, I do believe that nobody is more enthusiastic about Berwick Rangers. Genuinely, nobody. It would be a mistake for any future Board not to harness that in a significant ambassadorial role.

And so to the match. Well, there was some promise despite another comprehensive and comfortable win for the visitors.

We have 2 decent keepers, and the defence (whilst always prone to a Scullion-esque cock-up) coped reasonably well in a last minute tackle kind of a way, with a fairly constant barrage of attacks. Murphy - when he got on - and Willis showed flashes of skill in midfield though they desperately need someone else to have the confidence to put their foot on the ball and retain possession.

Up front, well we didn't really have an up front to be honest. The best chances all fell to Willis



bursting forth from midfield.

The wing backs were too deep (almost a flat back 5), O'Kane (*left*) is a red card walking, and my train journey home was an absolute nightmare as some fat clown decided it was a good idea to walk home along the tracks at Newcastle whilst his gruesome wife and daughters acted out a scene from Viz Comic's Fat Slags on the platform, before 400 people (one with a whistle) crammed into a 2-car pacer for the merry trip down the coast to Middlesbrough.

I will of course be back (perhaps in a rowing boat) but before that, I'm sure there will be signings and an imminent loud "bang" emanating from the Boardroom.



# LET THE REVOLUTION BEGIN

It seems that in every second issue of this magazine we are compelled to turn to the subject of Scottish football's pyramid system. In No. 28, a two page spread led with the question, 'A Pyramid Built on Sand?' as for one thing, at that time (August, 2016), no Junior club had yet come into the system. In No. 30, out in July of the following year, we reported how Kelty Hearts had become the first to jump ship and move into the East of Scotland League and therefore into the Senior non-league ranks.

However, what has happened since the beginning of 2018 is little short of extraordinary resulting in the EoSFL TRIPLING its membership from 13 to 39 teams.

In March, the Scottish Junior F.A. convened a special meeting to discuss and decide whether the Junior game should seek

incorporation within the pyramid. Ninety nine of its 150 odd clubs were in favour but some clubs were already on their way. Dalkeith Thistle were first to announce they would be following in Kelty's footsteps. Bonnyrigg Rose soon indicated they, too.

The trickle became a flood and, at a special meeting the following month, the EoSFL doubled in size helped by the admission of a dozen Junior clubs. In echoes of BSC Glasgow, admitted into the Lowland League before they even fielded an adult male team, the thirteenth newcomers were Inverkeithing Hillfield Swifts, a Fife club boasting a flourishing youth set up.

Aware that there were other SJFA members contemplating the same switch, the EoSFL extended its deadline for applications to May 31st. Another 13 clubs were then admitted.

*Regan Graham on the ball as Tweedmouth Rangers kick off the new season at home to Lothian Thistle HV (Photo by Ian Beresford)*



There was no triumphalism from a League which a few years earlier, largely due to defections to the Lowland League, had its long term future thrown into doubt. Its President, John Greenhorn, did allow himself the short comment that it was 'a momentous time for the region'.

This season the East league will include teams from Perth (Jeanfield Swifts) to Berwick (Tweedmouth Rangers) and from Hawick Royal Albert (relegated from the Lowland) to St Andrews United. Easthouses Lily and Craigroyston return after three and two years respectively as Juniors. Perhaps the grass wasn't greener on the other side after all? Edinburgh United, founded in 1985 as the 'Capital's Juniors' have also come across. The SJFA has now lost all its teams in both Midlothian and East Lothian as well.

So why so many and all at the same time? 1) Some outfits are ambitious and aiming higher towards the Lowland League and in some cases the SPFL. 2) Despite its glorious history, Junior football is now perceived as a dead end. For instance, if any of these clubs obtain their SFA licence they are automatically into the Scottish Cup rather than through qualification as winners of a major Junior competition. 3) In the modern jargon, player development is all about 'pathways' but the well populated combined Lowland/EoSFL/South of Scotland Under 20s League (whose matches are usually staged on Friday nights) is closed to Junior clubs. This option should now be open to them. 4) Fear of losing derbies against traditional rivals which necessitate little travel but produce better pay days.

The EoSFL is regarding 2018-19 as a season of

transition. It will comprise three Conferences, each of thirteen teams, drawn up by taking into consideration clubs' final standings in their respective competitions in 2017-18. The set up has a semi regionalised look too, certainly in Conference A which includes Borders clubs Hawick, Peebles Rovers and Coldstream plus Tweedmouth Rangers. The winners of each Conference will meet in a round robin tourney to determine League champions. In 2019-20, formalised divisions based on this season's placings will replace the Conferences.

Geographically, the pyramid remains lopsided. Whereas there are two feeder leagues into



the Lowland (the SoSL is the other), there is none into the Highland League. Nor have any Juniors from the west of Scotland yet broken ranks though

presumably, some of them were amongst the 99 referred to earlier. All the same, we are witnessing the start of a revolution which could lead to the total demise of a separate Junior game.

It also has serious implications for lower SPFL clubs. The pressure is building. It will not only be the East Kilbrides and Spartans (and top Highland sides) on their heels. Kelty went up to the LL at the first attempt and there are some more big hitters amongst the new intake e.g Bonnyrigg, Bo'ness Utd and Musselburgh Athletic. Berwick Rangers' player catchment area is getting ever more crowded. It is no secret that Robbie Horn's budget is limited. In every sense, clubs like these may well be able to come close to matching or even bettering what Berwick Rangers have to offer. Furthermore, it may not be too long before the SPFL 2 promotion/relegation play off is scrapped and the bottom club in that league's lowest division automatically drops out.



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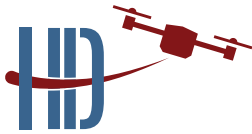
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## NORTHERN SOUL KITCHEN BERWICK RANGERS' NEW HOME SHIRT SPONSOR

### Northern Soul Kitchen

***But who are they? And what's it about?***

Harriet Grecian and Millie Stanford have been working on the Berwick project for over two years, saving edible food from going in the bin and turning it into tasty nutritious meals for local events. Finally after a lot of hard work and plenty of help from eager volunteers they have opened their cafe at 19 West Street having identified a need for such a project in the town. They are being supported by a number of local businesses such as Tesco, the Green Shop and the Co-op. Everything cooked in the kitchen will be made from unsold edible food and will be offered on a pay-as-you-feel basis, meaning that everyone can afford a hot and healthy meal. Northern

Soul Kitchen ran a successful crowd-funding campaign last year and have secured a number of grants from organisations such as UnLtd and Berwick Voluntary Forum. Simpsons Malt has also generously offered a grant towards the project.

### ***So what do the founders have to say?***

"At the end of the day we wanted the town to have the ownership of it. We wanted to build up some sort of momentum for change in the town. We think everyone should have access to healthy food and a friendly environment in which to enjoy it.

which we take unsold, yet edible food from supermarkets, local shops and households to create affordable and balanced meals for all. The food is offered on a Pay-As-You-Feel (PAYF) basis meaning people can pay what they think the food is worth, donate whatever

amount they can afford or even volunteer their time and skills to pay for a meal - all have their value.

In this way, the café will be a place for everyone. The one thing we have to get across to people is that it's not waste food, scrapings from plates and out of date produce. It's the type of food the supermarkets markdown in price because it has a short shelf life or pre packaged fruit and vegetables that are close to their sell by date - most of them haven't even ripened yet!



19 West Street  
Berwick-upon-Tweed  
[www.northernsoulkitchen.co.uk](http://www.northernsoulkitchen.co.uk)

The idea of waste food consumption can be a somewhat taboo subject. We will battle this by raising awareness and destigmatising waste food use by providing high quality food and service.

Every year, millions of tonnes of food in the UK are wasted, while hard-working families, young people and the elderly struggle to feed themselves. Our café will work to alleviate both these situations in the local area."

**Find out more at**  
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We are a collaborative community space in

# HERE AND THERE

## TOUGH SEASON FOR TWEEDMOUTH RANGERS

**Tweedmouth Rangers finished bottom of last season's East of Scotland League collecting only four points from their 24 match schedule. After 22 attempts, which included many heavy defeats and the use of innumerable trialists, they finally enjoyed a 3-1 home win over Ormiston on a Tuesday night in May. During the previous month, they had taken their other point from the same opponents in a 1-all draw on Hibernian's training ground in Tranent.**

Despite Tweedmouth's lowly position, freelance groundhoppers from places such as Kendal, Leicester and Essex still made their way to Old Shielfield for games and when Tweedmouth visited Kelty Hearts in mid March, a touring group

## TESTIMONIAL RAISES OVER £12,000

Steven Notman's Testimonial was a great success. The final sum raised and announced by Brian Porteous after the home game with Cowdenbeath on April 21st amounted to a whopping £12,342.

The player himself was fulsome in his praise for the efforts of the former Berwick Rangers F.C. chairman in organising the three events which did so much to lead to this reward for the former Hibernian and Vale of Leithen player; a golf day in Dunbar in the summer of 2017, a

## EAST OF SCOTLAND HOTSHOTS 2017-18

There is a Berwick Rangers link to three of last season's top six East of Scotland League goalscorers ( in all games ). Joint top with Kelty Hearts club mate Stuart Cargill, was former Berwick player Scott Dalziel, each on 40 goals.

of shoppers swelled the gate to around 300.

Kelty were crowned champions but were chased all the way by Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale who faced a congested run of fixtures as the season drew to a close. The two clubs were fated to meet in what was the final League game for both, Kelty winning 3-1 at their own New Central Park. This time, a crowd variously reported as being 1,300 and 1,400 turned out for the title decider. The Fifers then went on to comfortably beat South of Scotland League champions Threave Rovers over two legs in the play off for promotion to the Lowland League. Hawick Royal Albert travelled in the opposite direction back to the EoSL.

\*\*Meanwhile, Tweedmouth Harrow are the latest Berwick club to switch from the North Northumberland League into Scottish football with a return to the Border Amateur League.

match against Glasgow Rangers in November (covered in our previous issue) and a dinner with guest speakers in Edinburgh in March, 2018. In addition, there were several further cash donations from individuals.

Stevie is sometimes portrayed as a reluctant public speaker but at the club's end of season presentation went on to articulate his gratitude to all who had supported his testimonial. Afterwards, he again privately thanked the Supporters Trust for its £200 donation which covered the cost of first aid provision at the match against the Ibrox team.

Next, with 32, was Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale's Louis Swanson, brother of former Shielfield star Danny Swanson. Sharing fifth spot with Heriot Watt University's Anton Dowds was Eyemouth United's John Crawford who was a trialist with Berwick during Colin Cameron's time at the helm as manager. Both found the net on 28 occasions.

## Ladbrokes League 2 - 2018/2019

## Berwick Rangers

Comp	Day	Date	Time	Opponent	H/A
1	Saturday	4th	3.00 pm	Stirling Albion	H
2	Saturday	11th	3.00 pm	Queen's Park	A
Im Bru Cup 1	Tue	14th	7.45pm	Airdrieoninas	H
3	Saturday	18th	3.00 pm	Cowdenbeath	A
BetFred Cup 2	Sat/Sun	18th & 19th	3.00 pm		
4	Saturday	25th	3.00 pm	Annan Athletic	H
5	Saturday	1st	3.00 pm	Albion Rovers	A
Im Bru Cup 2	Sat/Sun	8th & 9th	3.00 pm		
6	Saturday	15th	3.00 pm	Elgin City	H
7	Saturday	22nd	3.00 pm	Peterhead	A
BetFred Cup QF	Tue/Wed/Thu	25th, 26th & 27th	7.45 pm		
8	Saturday	29th	3.00 pm	Clyde	H
9	Saturday	6th	3.00 pm	Edinburgh City	A
Im Bru Cup 3	Sat/Sun	13th & 14th	3.00 pm		
Wm Hill Cup 2	Saturday	20th	3.00 pm	TBC	TBC
10	Saturday	27th	3.00 pm	Cowdenbeath	H
BetFred Cup SF	Sat/Sun	27th & 28th	3.00 pm		
11	Saturday	3rd	3.00 pm	Stirling Albion	A
12	Saturday	10th	3.00 pm	Elgin City	A
13	Saturday	17th	3.00 pm	Albion Rovers	H
Im Bru Cup QF	Sat/Sun	17th & 18th	3.00 pm		
Wm Hill Cup 3	Saturday	24th	3.00 pm		
14	Saturday	1st	3.00 pm	Clyde	A
BetFred Cup F	Sunday	2nd	3.00 pm		
15	Saturday	8th	3.00 pm	Peterhead	H
16	Saturday	15th	3.00 pm	Queen's Park	H
17	Saturday	22nd	3.00 pm	Annan Athletic	A
18	Saturday	29th	3.00 pm	Edinburgh City	H
19	Saturday	5th	3.00 pm	Cowdenbeath	A
20	Saturday	12th	3.00 pm	Clyde	H
21	Saturday	19th	3.00 pm	Peterhead	A
Wm Hill Cup 4	Saturday	19th	3.00 pm		
22	Saturday	26th	3.00 pm	Queen's Park	A
23	Saturday	2nd	3.00 pm	Annan Athletic	H
24	Saturday	9th	3.00 pm	Stirling Albion	H
Wm Hill Cup 5	Saturday	9th	3.00 pm		
25	Saturday	16th	3.00 pm	Edinburgh City	A
Im Bru Cup SF	Sat/Sun	16th & 17th	3.00 pm		
26	Saturday	23rd	3.00 pm	Elgin City	H
27	Saturday	2nd	3.00 pm	Albion Rovers	A
Wm Hill Cup QF	Saturday	2nd	3.00 pm		
28	Saturday	9th	3.00 pm	Cowdenbeath	H
29	Saturday	16th	3.00 pm	Peterhead	H
30	Saturday	23rd	3.00 pm	Stirling Albion	A
Im Bru Cup F	Sunday	24th	3.00 pm		
31	Saturday	30th	3.00 pm	Edinburgh City	H
32	Saturday	6th	3.00 pm	Annan Athletic	A
33	Saturday	13th	3.00 pm	Queen's Park	H
Wm Hill Cup SF	Sat/Sun	13th & 14th	3.00 pm		
34	Saturday	20th	3.00 pm	Clyde	A
35	Saturday	27th	3.00 pm	Albion Rovers	H
36	Saturday	4th	3.00 pm	Elgin City	A
Wm Hill Cup F	Saturday	25th	3.00 pm		



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