

Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust

Be the 12th Man!



WE NEED MORE LIKE HIM

This issue is kindly
sponsored by

UK
fuels



A LETTER FROM AMERICA



JUST CHAMPION!



Issue # 27 • Winter 2015 • £2 (free for members)

www.berwickrangers.org

Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust

Newsletter No. 27
Winter 2015




Address:
c/o 10 Golden Square
Berwick-upon-Tweed
Northumberland
TD15 1BG

Telephone: 01890 860329

Fax: 01289 306980

E-Mail:
trust@berwickrangers.org

 [fb.com/berwickrangerstrust](https://www.facebook.com/berwickrangerstrust)

 twitter.com/berwickrst

Chairman:
Michael Smyth

Vice-Chairman:
Gordon Dickson

Secretary:
Isla Barber

Treasurer:
Vacant

Membership Secretary:
Bill Purvis

FC Board Representative:
John Bell

Committee Members:
John Bell, Ronald Kirk, David Spence, Ian Beresford, Gary Smith, Stuart Lee and Brendan Thorburn

Designed & Published by:
Paul Smith / www.vivadigital.net

Pictures: Tweeddale Press, Alan Bell, David Glencross, Ian Runciman, John Bell, Doug Stenhouse, Jim Matthewson, Gemma Law, Gary Flint

Editor: Michael Smyth

On the other hand, it does give us a major (though not dominant) stake in the club.

Apparently, so far, two directors have expressed an intention to stand for the post of chairman. In view of the parlous state of the football team and Brian's strong financial record whilst at the helm, it is vital that the best person for the job is chosen. With this in mind, I recently wrote to Brian suggesting a meeting at which candidates would address an audience of Supporters Trust and Supporters Club members (the SC is also a major shareholder) plus any interested individual shareholders outlining their respective visions and strategies for a successful Berwick Rangers.

After hearing these, if they were of a mind to do so, privately, audience members could indicate to individual directors which candidate they preferred. The directors could choose to ignore them but the views expressed might influence which way they eventually vote. I await Brian's reply.

Our previous newsletter carried an article critical of the local press coverage of Berwick Rangers. Unhappy with some of the comments, the sports editor approached our representative on the club board, John Bell. He was invited to give his side of the story in this issue but we have heard nothing more.

Putting back the time of our AGM in November helped attract more people than last time. The existing Trust Board was re-elected. Original guest speaker Gordon Smith brought along another ex-player David Moyes which meant for the second AGM in a row, we enjoyed hearing from a double act. Neither 'Pogo' nor 'Moysie' minced their words when talking about football. Fortuitously, they were already scheduled to come down to Shielfield that day anyway as members of a party which had booked a meal and would then watch the match. Whether they'll ever want to eat at Shielfield again is

debatable. Nothing to do with the food. It was the fare on the pitch as we crashed 5-0 to Clyde.

I hope you find this magazine more enjoyable than that particular game. Thanks to all contributors and to UK Fuels for their sponsorship. It is very much appreciated.

Keeping fingers crossed for a big improvement on the field, I wish you all a happy new year.

Michael

Michael Smyth,
Chairman

FOOT NOTE: If you have any questions or issues, or any contributions for our newsletter, please e-mail trust@berwickrangers.org

FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

These are critical times at Berwick Rangers F.C. We have recently changed the manager and, as I write, lie at the foot of the table. Our summer/autumn 2014 edition included an article entitled 'The Cameron Effect' reflecting a generally promising start as manager by the ex-Scotland international. Sadly, the high hopes invested in him by the club and supporters were unfulfilled. John Coughlin is back. If he can get us into the promotion play offs, as things stand, it would be a minor miracle but the absolute priority has to be avoiding finishing in 10th spot with an obligatory two leg play off against Highland or Lowland League opposition to determine SPFL status next season.

Another issue taxing supporters' minds is that of the position of club chairman. Brian Porteous has indicated he will step down at the end of the season. A number of Trust members have approached me asking for clarification of the situation. What I can say is that, ultimately, it is the directors of the club who will choose Brian's successor.

Revised figures suggest that the Trust holds almost 20% of the shares issued by the club. This has to be looked at in two ways. It is simply not a big enough holding for us to force through any major changes we might desire at the club without the support of others.



■ **Front cover:** Steven Notman continues to be a top performer in a struggling Berwick team

Oh dear. I am writing this article following Rangers' 5-0 home thumping by Clyde, a result which saw Rangers slump to the bottom of the league. This was the second time already that Berwick have lost 5-0 this season and along with 4-1 defeats at both Elgin and Montrose it is easy to understand why Rangers now find themselves in peril at the bottom of the league.

As most of you will know, the Trust AGM took place prior to the game against Clyde. Gordon "Pogo" Smith and Davie Moyes, who were both members of Davie Smith's championship winning team from 1978/79, were in attendance and when Davie Moyes was asked by one of those present what he thought of modern day football, he emphatically replied "s***e". I don't think that you need to be a rocket scientist to work out what his thoughts must have been as he watched Clyde romp to a 5-0 win with some ease. That evening, Alan Shearer when analysing the Newcastle-v-Leicester game on Match of the Day, commented that a five letter word which he could not use on television had been trending in social media on Tyneside to describe Newcastle's performance. I suspect that it was probably the same five letter word that Moyses had used earlier that day to describe modern day football. Shearer went on to say that there were a number of words he could use such as heartless, clueless, talentless, woeful and inept. These words could apply in equal measure to Rangers' performance against Clyde and indeed to the vast majority of the season so far as a whole.

Despite the current doom and gloom, Rangers started the season reasonably well. As in recent years, the competitive season kicked off with the Challenge Cup or Petrofac Training Cup as it is now known. Rangers were drawn away to St.Mirren and performed admirably in a 3-1 defeat. The following week, another Championship side in the shape of Alloa visited Shielfield on League Cup duty. At 2-0 down after twenty minutes or so things did not look good but Rangers battled back in the second

half courtesy of goals from Darren Lavery and new signing David Morris to force the tie into extra time. Another new signing, David Banjo, headed what proved to be the winner in extra time to send the Duckie faithful into raptures. The prize for that stunning comeback was an away tie at SPL side Kilmarnock. Rangers again battled manfully and after losing an early goal to a penalty, Darren Lavery brought Rangers level just after half time. Rangers were still level heading into the last quarter of the game but unfortunately Killie's full time training began to pay dividends and they managed to breach the away defence on three occasions during the last 20 minutes or so to wrap up a 4-1 win.

The manner of Rangers' comeback against Alloa had boosted fans hopes that a successful league season may lie ahead. Although Berwick battled to a 2-1 home win over Montrose on the opening



day of the league season, the alarm bells really started to ring the following week when they crashed to a 5-0 defeat at Methil against East Fife. In truth, 5-0 flattered Rangers as the Fifers could quite easily have racked up double figures. I know that some Berwick fans thought that East Fife were unplayable that day, but I frankly didn't go along with that theory. I have been supporting Rangers for 38 years and without a doubt that is one of the worst performances that I have had the misfortune to witness and believe me I have seen some horror shows over the years. Ryan Goodfellow, the East Fife goalkeeper, spent much of the afternoon as a spectator, so much so that East Fife should have charged him the same £13 admission fee that I had to pay.

To Rangers' credit they bounced back from the defeat in Methil to beat Stirling Albion 3-1 at Forthbank before drawing 2-2 at home to Arbroath and then stealing 3 points in a less than convincing 1-0 home win over a Queen's Park side who played more than 70 minutes with 10 men after having a man sent off for conceding the match winning

penalty duly converted by Darren Lavery. At that point, Rangers were lying handily placed in second spot in the League with 10 points from their opening 5 games. Since then however, they have been going downhill almost as quickly as the former Austrian ski champion Franz Klammer. Rangers have picked up a meagre five points in the subsequent nine games and also crashed out of the Scottish Cup at the first hurdle after losing 4-1 at Annan. The week after the cup defeat at Annan, Rangers crashed to another 4-1 defeat at Montrose which culminated in the finger being pointed at manager Colin Cameron followed by the immortal words from Sir Alan Sugar's Apprentice programme, "You're fired".

Cameron's appointment as manager in 2014 was unequivocally accepted by almost all Rangers' fans as being the correct one to take the club forward. Unfortunately, that optimism has proved to have been misplaced and the board's premature decision to extend Cameron's contract in January 2015 has backfired to such an extent that the club's league status is now in serious jeopardy.



I personally cannot believe that someone of Cameron's status, who played at the top level and who won 28 caps playing for his country, seemed to have no contacts from whom he could attract decent quality players. I understand that during the summer some other clubs had expressed their surprise at the standard of some of the players Cameron (above) was looking at and whom he ultimately ended up signing. It will doubtless be no surprise to them that we currently sit at the bottom of the league.

Cameron's dismissal led to the usual few days of speculation amongst Rangers' fans as to who the new manager would be. Eventually the board plumped for John Coughlin back for his second spell in charge having previously led the club to the third division title in 2007/2008. Coff has apparently stated that he has unfinished business at Berwick after becoming disillusioned by the previous board's failure to provide him with sufficient funds to build a side capable of competing in the second division following the third division title success resulting in him leaving to take over the manager's post at Stenhousemuir.

It would seem that Coff has already formed the view that the squad of players he has inherited is not good enough as he has already stated in the press that changes will have to be made and made quickly. There have been occasions when the current squad have performed well such as in the 3-2 comeback win against Alloa, the 3-1 win at Stirling, the committed second half against East Fife with 10 men after Ross Drummond's sending off and the recent performance against Annan in Coff's first game in charge when, although losing 1-0, the Annan goalkeeper was man of the match and even the Annan manager conceded that they were fortunate to win the game. Unfortunately, these performances have been few and far between and the number of heavy defeats, the manner of them and the fact that we are now bottom of the league clearly illustrate that an infusion of new blood is required. Personally, I think that Coff needs to add at least six new players to the squad but whether he can attract players of the necessary quality to join a side currently struggling at the bottom of the league remains to be seen.

On the positive side, we are not marooned at the bottom of the league and at the time of writing there are still 22 games to play. For the optimists amongst us we are only 7 points adrift of the promotion playoff spots. A couple of wins will probably see us back up to mid table. The realists amongst us however cannot see where the next win is going to come from and even with 22 games still to play, the threat of a relegation play off against the Highland or Lowland League champions is too close for comfort. I am sure that I am not the only one who would be far from confident that Rangers could win such a play off. However, a Clyde fan did endeavour to offer a glimmer of hope as my friends and I trudged out of Shielfield following our recent 5-0 humbling at their hands. He suggested that Coff knows what it takes to be successful at this level. Hopefully, Coff will go on to prove that particular Clyde fan right.

Euan Bauld remains a signed Berwick Rangers player but has not been able to play or train since leaving the field with a back injury in a first team match away to East Stirlingshire back in April.

Euan, who will be 19 in January, has followed the example of former Berwick goalkeeper Billy Bald and has kindly decided to forego his weekly pay during his absence. We hope to see him back in action soon.

■ *Right: Last season, Euan Bauld played mainly for the Development League team but here, he is pictured in first team action against Albion Rovers at Shielfield.*



ISLA B - STITCHING TIME



ALL TYPES OF SEWING AND ALTERATIONS UNDERTAKEN
WORKING IN PEEBLES AND BERWICK

Telephone: 077 3232 3676 Email: finlay.barber@btinternet.com



For Berwick fans, this is the team of "immortals" for the giant-killing feat they achieved in beating Glasgow Rangers 1-0 in still soccer's greatest. Back row, from the left, Gordon Hogg, Jim Kilgusson, Jack Wallace (Player-Manager), Stewart Craig, Jim Kiddell, Alan Rodgers (Substitutes). Front row, Tommy Lumsden, Kenny Dewah, Doug Coates, Frank Christie, Sammy Reid - who scored the goal - Alan Airdie.

In our last issue, Stuart Lee looked back to life as a Berwick Rangers supporter in the 1950s and into the early 1960s. Here, he continues through the decade which saw the greatest result in the club's history.

When my army apprenticeship near Chesham finished, I went into the Royal Engineers and off to Aldershot for basic training. That was something else! Lots of marching and 'tattie' peeling as well as the spit and polish. No spare time but at the end of it a few of the lads and myself managed to get to a game at Craven Cottage to see Fulham (with Johnny Haynes) play Manchester United (with Bobby Charlton). Three days later, just after my 18th birthday, we were off to Germany. Dad still sent the 'Advertiser' to keep me up to date.

I still played a mean game at inside left (no.10) including a few times for a team from a German

village that a mate and I visited at weekends to further Anglo-German relations. The nets were made of chicken wire. Bizarre!

I didn't get home that much in the 60s but I did notice the crowds had diminished. Most smaller clubs were the same. The standard of football was still good though.

The League Cup run to the semis in 1964 was something else. Again, we were giant killers before 1967. The second, home leg of a play off against St. Johnstone was an amazing game finished off in the gathering gloom. Play ebbed and flowed in an electric atmosphere. We deserved our win, playing good football against full time professionals and scoring a couple of cracking goals. I missed the Stirling Albion quarter final game as my leave had ended. Shame. The best players I can remember from the

early 60s were Ken Bowron, Ian Spence, Gordon Seaton, Bobby Kinloch, Denis Cunningham and Ian MacKay.

Of course, the big game of the decade was on January 28th, 1967. I travelled up all through the night from Cambridge to be there, changing trains three times and getting no sleep. Absolutely knackered. Who cared?! I won't go into details as everyone more or less knows about the game. When I got back to Cambridge on the Sunday evening, I was greeted like a hero especially by the Scots lads. Even Glasgow Rangers' fans offered their congratulations.

A bit of good fortune had come my way for, after a course in the UK, I was posted to Waterbeach (Cambridge) just before the 1966 World Cup. I did not miss a minute on TV. My favourite match was Hungary v. Brazil at Goodison. I can remember Florian Albert's half volleyed goal and Garrincha's 'banana' free kick. Breathtaking football. After the World Cup, I was fortunate to get a ticket (50p in today's money) for the England v. Scotland game at Wembley. Scotland won 3-2.

At the end of the sixties, Harry Melrose became Berwick manager. His 'shoot on sight' policy went down well. Great to watch but I only saw some of it as I was posted to Singapore. It was my favourite team of all time. It got even better when he signed two mates of his from Dunfermline, Bert Paton and Willie Callaghan. Like all good times, it didn't last that long.

Before going to Singapore, I managed two summer trips to Canada, living in a tented camp in a Canadian Army training area, building roads and bridges made from local trees. In our canteen tent, the results were posted up due to our Signals section receiving them directly from 'Blighty'.

The Singapore posting meant I became a very long distance supporter. However, the 'Tizer' continued to keep me up to speed. My son, Mark, was born there three years to the date of the BIG Cup win. Mark is still a 'Dream Team' fan even though he now lives halfway up the Colorado Rockies. I used to tune in to the BBC World Service around midnight to hear 'Sports Report'. My wife always knew when we won. If we lost, I was not a happy bunny. Rangers were still up and down but usually just above halfway up the league. Not bad.

One thing I was proud of was the fact that I spread the word about Berwick Rangers. Football fans and even people with little or no interest in the game started to take notice of them and say to me, "Good result on Saturday," or otherwise.



■ Harry Melrose

As will be no doubt be covered elsewhere in this year's Trust winter newsletter, 2015 has been largely miserable for fans of Berwick Rangers. Sadly, that has been a familiar theme throughout the eight seasons under the 'new regime'.

It is perhaps harsh to link the team's consistent league failures with the current board's reign. However, what cannot be denied is that Berwick Rangers have underperformed on the park over the past eight seasons.

I don't think anyone will disagree that the performance of the team in the SPFL should always be the bread and butter. But equally, I don't think you'll find many locals who don't believe Berwick Rangers' recent efforts to support the local community are refreshing.

So in a time where the club are stagnant in terms of on-pitch performance, it is at least encouraging to hear of positive developments off the park.

After years of completely neglecting their corporate social responsibility, the club have finally caught up with the expectations of a 21st century football club.

The club tested the water in the Summer of 2014, when an unnamed former Premier League footballer was hired to run a Summer Camp for local children.

Although the fortnight of football was a success, having spoken to parents of children in attendance, it appeared the player turned coach had taken as relaxed an attitude to the coaching as our first-team do to getting 3 points on Saturdays. By all accounts he enjoyed sunbathing whilst letting those assisting him run the show.



■ Dale McCrea (top right)

Nevertheless, the children enjoyed it and the club clearly saw potential. More importantly and further to that, they listened.

So when the club returned with another Camp across an early school half-term in 2015, they employed a local coach (Matty Moor), someone who cared about the club's brand and placed emphasis on fun.

As a result, the new and improved camp immediately earned rave reviews. It wasn't long before a three-week Summer Camp was booked in and sold out. Matty employed the help of Jonny Fairbairn who attended a host of sessions, a touch of class from the club's captain.

With that success came the launch of the Foundation. Thanks to the help of organisations such as the Scottish Football Partnership & the SPFL Trust, Berwick Rangers now have a regular presence in the community and local schools for the first time in their existence.

Dateline: December 16th, 2015

Another two defeats. In the first, on December 12th, we scored our first two goals in open play since the Scottish Cup defeat at Annan six matches ago though Michael McKenna got a bit of help from a deflection and Darren Lavery when the Elgin keeper failed to hold Stevie Notman's cross late on. That goal made it 3-2 but a little more respectability to the scoreline was scant consolation on a day when former Berwick player Dylan Easton showed how things could be done.

Afterwards, boss Coughlin had some harsh words for his team in a thinly veiled attack on the 'team building' efforts of his predecessor Colin Cameron. He was reported in the press as saying that the team lacked steel. Not a new observation, the same comment was made last season. 'Coff' also concluded that some of his players did not have the physical attributes needed to play at this level.

Lack of physical presence or not, four days later (Dec. 15th), the boys got stuck into Arbroath in the first half at Gayfield. A wind accompanied by swirling rain was blowing down the pitch, Arbroath facing these elements in the opening period. Despite a couple of good chances, Berwick relied on Blair Henderson's well struck penalty for their interval lead.

Though the rain had abated, Rangers still had to contend with the wind after the turnaround and it, rather than any brilliance from Arbroath, kept them on the back foot. Berwick struggled to build any meaningful attacks. In a rare instance when they got through, McKenna's finish was feeble. They were eventually undone by two wind assisted goals, one quickly following the other. The hosts added a third with a belter almost on full time.



After these results, the club board will undoubtedly come under further fire. There may be weaknesses there...the age imbalance for a start. Extending Cameron's contract before he had achieved anything was clearly a blunder. But board members are also supporters. They must be as unhappy as the paying fans with what they see on the pitch.

The board attempted to start remedial action by belatedly getting rid of Cameron. There is still time for Coughlin to save the day even though it is increasingly looking like a Herculean task.

Brian Porteous (pictured above) does not deserve to go out as the chairman of a club relegated from the League. Amongst those vehement critics of the board, if there are some who believe they've got the answers, why don't they put themselves forward for a place in the hot seat? Or, is it simply safer to fire off broadsides on social media?

My name is Jim Matthewson and I am a relocated "Berwicker" who has lived in Seattle, USA for the past 33 years. I have been a lifetime supporter of the "Black & Gold" ever since my Dad carried me on his shoulders to every home game back in the mid 50s! Berwick's result is the first one I look for each and every week. Some Saturdays find me a lot happier than others! I return to my birthplace every year but do not book my holiday until our fixture list for the new season is available in order that I can attend at least one home game during my visit!

My home team these days are the Seattle Sounders who play at Century Link Field which they share with the NFL's Seattle Seahawks. It's among the best places in the world to watch a soccer match, according to soccer magazine FourFourTwo soccer (November, 2015 issue). However, as a "purist" playing on all-weather turf as we do, will never be the same for me as playing on natural grass! The team is sponsored by Microsoft with our rave green shirts bearing the iconic Xbox logo. The original 5 year sponsorship deal was worth millions of dollars.

The Sounders led Major League Soccer (MLS) in average attendance with a staggering 44,247 per game during the 2015 season, a new high for a team that has led the league in attendances every year since joining in 2009.



With 126 consecutive sellouts, the Sounders are the second best supported team in the Americas – after River Plate of Argentina – the 27th best supported in the world, and would be sixth in any English Premier League attendance table. There can be no doubt that we have support that other MLS teams can only dream about. Here in Seattle we have taken the lead in coffee (Starbucks), computers (Microsoft) and aircraft (Boeing) so why not soccer! In the NFL and NBA and other sports they don't worry so much about attendances. The structures are stable and so they do not attach attendance figures so steadfastly to ongoing league health and essential viability. Also, those leagues live by a basic truth: for revenue generation and for overall public/media perception, TV numbers are far more important than backsides on seats!! We may not quite be there at present in soccer, but we move closer every year.

Our home games are extremely noisy with supporters singing and chanting. You can't be part of the large crowd and experience the national anthem "Star Spangled Banner" being played live before each game and remain unmoved. A 53-member marching band called 'Sound Wave', made up of traditional marching

percussion and brass instruments, keeps things very lively at each home match creating a great party atmosphere.

The Seattle metropolitan area has a population of 3,600,000 and amateur soccer is exploding. By and large, gone are the days when I first moved here of someone who had absolutely no idea about the game coaching the kids from a book. Our youth are now being coached by many who actually played in their own youth and are still playing as adults. As a result, they are able to pass on valuable insight and to demonstrate techniques first hand. As for the adults, we currently have 20 divisions in the Greater Seattle Soccer League (GSSL) with 172 teams playing each week during the season. The leagues start with open divisions (any age) and then go to over 30, 40, 50 and 55 years. You are never too old to kick a ball competitively across here!

Since its inception in 1996 there has been no promotion or relegation in MLS (or any other American sport for that matter). The teams play 34 regular league games (March- October) with the goal of qualifying for the "play-offs" which is a knockout cup competition at the end of each season. MLS currently has 20 teams (ten in the Western Conference and ten in the Eastern Conference). Of those twenty teams, the top six in each conference (12 teams in total) qualify for a play off position – meaning only 8 teams go out. This has to change as it rewards failure and makes the league too repetitive. The winners of the championship final in the west play the winners in the east and MLS awards the regular-season champions with a direct berth in the CONCACAF Champions League.

The league is coming to realize that the key to growth is rivalry, which is why New York now has two teams and Los Angeles will also follow suit. Here in the Pacific Northwest we have re-established a fierce rivalry between Seattle,

Vancouver Whitecaps in British Columbia, Canada (120 miles to the north) and Portland Timbers (150 miles to the south). Each year the team with the best overall results after playing each other in league games wins the Cascadia Cup. This rivalry was first established during the years of the old North American League (NASL) before its eventual demise due to bankruptcy in 1985 after 17 seasons.

As good and as important as it is to have these regional rivalries, the reality of playing in MLS means that some of your away games involve thousands of miles of travel. For example, when the Sounders play away against the New York Red Bulls they are looking at a 5,700 mile round trip! Compare that to Berwick's longest round trip of 465 miles to play Elgin! Of course, given the size of North America (allowing for the three Canadian teams that are in the leagues) and the fact that all twenty teams have full time professionals, this is not a fair comparison! Teams also have different climates and time zones to contend with. Seattle have played home games with a comfortable temperature of 14 degrees centigrade and had their next away game in Houston or Dallas where it's a sweltering 38 degrees!

As far as the level of play is concerned, I would place it on a par with the lower tier of the English Championship and Scottish Premier League. Overall, the football may not be of the highest quality at present but it continues to



improve with each new season and, as it does, so will commercial interest.

When it comes to players' income, the gap between the league's Haves and Have-Nots is very wide. As of 2015, the minimum salary in Major League Soccer is £38,000. Last year, it was a paltry £25,000. As an example of this, in Seattle you have regular first team players in 2015 making between £38,000 and £65,000 pounds playing alongside *designated players Clint Dempsey (£2.6 million) and Obafemi Martins (£2.5 million). *Each club is allowed to sign three designated players that are outside of the team's salary cap as regulated by the MLS. DPs are often wildly overpaid relative to their value.

The Sounders have five to six American players who regularly start games and have produced some very good local players through their academy. Amongst these is Deandre Yedlin, an active member of the USA national team, who was signed by Tottenham last summer (now out on loan at Sunderland). In contrast to some of the DPs, there are homegrown players often earning less than they're worth.

Players are free to move to the highest bidder in the rest of the soccer world. Salaries are highest in England, Spain, Italy and Germany



and therefore, those are the leagues where the level of play is highest. In MLS, which has an outlandish appetite for big foreign names, there is no correlation between expenditure and quality - not until 2011 did a team that employed a designated player, first allowed in 2007, even win the league. This means you can't rank MLS among other leagues around the world based on the salaries paid to its players.

Beneath MLS we also have two professional leagues. The United States Soccer League (NASL) with 11 teams and the United Soccer League (USL) with 24 teams. These were put in place primarily to improve player development in North America, strengthen league competition and build ties between the divisions.

So 22 years on since its start, MLS finds itself flourishing and I remain optimistic that soccer will continue to grow in popularity throughout the USA.

I'll conclude by saying that I am indeed a proud member of the Supporters Trust. I may be supporting from afar but "You can take the man out of Berwick but you'll never take Berwick (Rangers) out of this man!"

The SPFL seemed to surprise a lot of people with its announcement of a revamping of the Scottish League Cup from next season, 2016-17. Three key elements are the timing of the tournament, its format and the points system.

Summer football has often been talked about and it looks like it is going to be given another go. (Who can remember the shortlived Scottish Summer Cup?) The plan is to stage group matches over four Saturdays in July starting on the 16th. There would be eight groups each consisting of five clubs who would play each other once. The forty clubs involved would be the 38 SPFL members not involved in UEFA qualifying matches plus this season's Highland and Lowland League champions. This immediately raises a question or two. If the club finishing bottom of the SPFL loses its League status in the relegation play off, would it still get to play in the League Cup? If not, would the runners up of the league from which the new SPFL member has graduated be invited to the party to ensure there would still be a full forty competing?

Non-league participation in the League Cup is a new idea but the group concept most certainly is not. For many years, the Scottish season opened with the League Cup organised this way. In this issue, Stuart Lee refers to a 1964 League Cup play off between St. Johnstone and Berwick Rangers. There were 37 League clubs then so that meant eight groups of four. The ninth group consisted of the bottom five teams in the old Second Division. There could only be eight quarter finalists so the winners of Section 9 (in the above example, Berwick) played the winner of one of the four team pools over two legs for a spot in the last eight.

This time, there would be a full intermediary round before the quarters made up of the eight group winners, the four best runners-up plus



the four Scottish clubs involved in UEFA qualifiers. From this stage onwards, the competition would be on a knock out basis.

What would be novel...maybe a world first...is the possibility of picking up a bonus point. If a group match finished as a draw, it would go straight to penalties and the winner of the shoot out would gain an extra point.

The SPFL says it has already lined up a TV deal, reportedly worth £8 million, with BT, who will show six group games live and seven from the knock out stages for the next four seasons up to and including 2019-20 meaning, in effect, the new style League Cup will have an extended four year trial period.

There have been mixed reactions to the news about the plans. Berwick Rangers vice chairman John Bell suggested that though changes to the competition had been discussed, the SPFL announcement of 'a done deal' came out of the blue.

A final thought. Though a two week January break (at the moment only for Premiership sides) is proposed, are we now on the way to all year round football? Possibly, the gaggle of pre-season games in which many clubs indulge will now commence in June. If so, the term 'close season' will be practically redundant.

Initially, it looked as if the SPFL Development League East would be down to seven teams from last season's nine with the resignation of both Livingston and Cowdenbeath. However, the Fifiers reconsidered and rejoined. The fixture format remains unchanged with teams playing each other three times.

Berwick's competitive season did not begin in the league but with a first round tie on a Sunday in the Little Big Shot Scottish Youth Cup. In the manner of Joseph Stalin in determining some of the Soviet Union's borders, someone at the SFA appeared to have drawn a line across the map and decreed that any team located below it would be included in the South section for the competition's early stages. Thus, Berwick found themselves as one of only three sides in that particular section and were drawn away to Stranraer.

The long journey ended in disappointment. The home side were 3-0 up before Berwick hit back with goals from Adam Forrest and Regan Graham. Try as they might, they couldn't force an equaliser. Had they won, it would have been another trek to Galloway to play Dalbeattie Star.

The larger Central section would have been a better option for Berwick even though, depending on the draw, it could have involved a trip to the west of Scotland but nowhere as far as Stranraer.

The big difference between last season and this one is that Berwick now have a signed squad of under 20 players. Some of them, from the Edinburgh area and Fife, played games as trialists last term but there are some new faces including local lads Graham, Daniel Pattenden and Lewis MacKay. Two other older local players, keeper Mark Walters and central defender Kieran Ainslie, were signed from East of Scotland side Coldstream with the idea that



Local player Lewis MacKay from Eyemouth

they would be regulars providing experience in the DL team. Though they have made a number of appearances, they have also come to be seen as members of the first team squad with Walters the number two goalie behind Kevin Walker. With a bigger pool of signed men, trialists have been used sparingly.

Whereas last season, Rangers had to wait until their sixth game to register a first league win, this time, they were off the mark in only their second match. After an opening 2-0 loss at Alloa, another defeat seemed likely at Central Park when Cowdenbeath led 3-1 but three goals inside the final fifteen minutes saw Berwick claim a 4-3 success. That night, the team was made up mostly of under 20s but, as the rules permit, on other occasions up to five overage men have been used. This was not

the case in Kirkcaldy when Raith did include a handful of players with SPFL experience and dumped Rangers 5-0. Otherwise, scorelines have generally been respectable, including home victories over East Stirlingshire, Stirling Albion and Alloa and a draw against 'Shire at Bannockburn. Reigning champions Forfar remain the only team Berwick have never beaten in a season and a half in the DL (East). The sides have already met twice this campaign. Forfar won 3-2 at Shielfield and 6-3 at Station Park where Berwick made a partial recovery after going in at half time four goals down.

In a radio interview soon after his reappointment as manager, John Coughlin commented that the club was now successfully operating a Development team but the key was how to bring some of these lads into the first team. To date, only Barry Hogg has featured. Other young players have been farmed out to Junior or East of Scotland League clubs for Saturday football though these arrangements restrict opportunities for the boys to train together as a Berwick Rangers team.

The coaching situation is a little unusual but usually, Fife-based Myles Allan takes the team at away games with former Berwick Rangers, Blackburn Rovers and Falkirk player Neil Oliver in charge for Shielfield matches.

Yet again, comments have been heard that Development League games are more enjoyable to watch than first team matches; perhaps not surprising in view of the senior sides's struggles. Of course, correct timing of any young player's step up is important and a misjudged throwing in at the deep end could be counter productive. Nevertheless, club director with responsibility for youth football, John Bell, is optimistic that before the end of the season, we will see one or two of the under 20s making their mark in the first team.

Once more, the Trust is giving financial support to the Development team. For the second year running, we are covering the season's laundry bill. We have also paid for a physiotherapist to be present at home games. The Trust also provides match reports for its own website and the official club website. And spare a thought for member Peter Unwin who continues as kit man and driver. He was at the wheel for seven hours to and from the game at Forfar at the beginning of December and in between was on duty in the dressing room and in the dug out.



Top Left: Daniel Pattenden
Top Right: Dean McConnell
Bottom Left: Ewan Herriot
Bottom Right: Craig Cockburn



The Trust-sponsored Berwick Rangers v. Arbroath match on Saturday, August 29th drew an official attendance of 721. There were a number of reasons why we opted for that particular game. For a start, it fell on an English Bank Holiday weekend when there were still many holidaymakers staying in and around the town. We also hoped to cash in on any early season enthusiasm. It was only the second home league fixture but the opener against Montrose fell in early August and, after agreeing the sponsorship arrangement with the football club, we needed a bit more time to build up publicity for the match.

Arbroath tend to be one of the better supported clubs in the division and made the promotion play offs last time round. However, they had made a poor start this time and even the offer of free admission failed to entice away support in significant numbers.

Visiting Shielfield for another game a few weeks later, former Berwick player and Trust member

Tommy Graham thought it was a great move to sponsor a match this way. Another member said they enjoyed the atmosphere generated by a larger than usual crowd.

The attendance was down a little from the previous Trust-sponsored game against Peterhead in December, 2013 though the takings from the bucket collection, £1,670, were proportionately as good. On the subject of figures, keen readers of our website will have noticed we made a right cock up of the percentages calculated to make comparisons between the Arbroath attendance and those at certain other matches. Our figures changed as often as the Footsie 100 share index! It seems no one had the heart to contact us to tell us but we eventually got them right.

One suggestion was that our publicity poster would have had more impact if it had featured a footballer rather than a cartoon character supporter even though he was bedecked in black and gold. Thanks anyway, to all those

establishments in Berwick and surrounding places who displayed the poster. Most were only too willing to do so. The 'sporting' attitude of one particular opticians in Marygate (the one situated between Bonmarche and the former Calendar Shop) was untypical. A member of staff did put it up but when the proprietor returned from holiday, he took it down and binned it on the premise that he was sponsoring Berwick Rugby Club. (P.S. Shouldn't that be Berwick Rugby Union Club, leaving Berwick Rangers as the original and true holders of the local sporting abbreviation BRFC?)

Radio coverage was good. David Knox, who covers sport for both BBC Radio Scotland and Radio Borders, was an enthusiastic ally and made sure details of the game were included in numerous broadcasts in addition to recording a three minute interview with the Trust chairman.

Simon Pryde also mentioned it on his BBC Radio Newcastle sports programme and on TV, BBC Look North gave it a plug.

So, in view of the mixed comments above, was the venture a success? Perhaps not a rip roaring one but a success nevertheless and we would not rule out doing it again. If anyone has suggestions on how it could be done better in the future, please let us know.

As for what occurred on the field, Berwick made a blistering start. Courtesy of Darren Lavery and Michael McKenna, Rangers were 2-0 up after only fifteen minutes. The visitors eventually pulled it back to 2-all to claim their first point of the season leaving home fans frustrated that our team allowed them back into the game.



NON-LEAGUE NOTES

The East of Scotland League, with which Berwick Rangers have a long association, suffered a blow at the beginning of September. Having already lost Easthouses Lily to the Junior ranks, Kelso United announced their resignation from the League which had already reverted to a single division for 2015-16. Kelso cited difficulties in attracting players as the main reason for the decision though perhaps their hopes of fielding a largely Kelso-based team were somewhat unrealistic.

The SFA further opened up the William Hill Scottish Cup by giving automatic entry to the winners of the Scottish Amateur Cup. Kirkintilloch-based Harestanes were the first beneficiaries of this move and made their debut against Ayrshire Juniors Girvan in a Preliminary Round tie in mid August. Harestanes were drawn at home but, with their own ground deemed not to meet official requirements, the game was played at the home of nearby Juniors Kilsyth Rangers. Girvan won 3-0. The match was reportedly watched by a crowd of around 300.

Berwick Rangers is not the only club who should have concerns about the older age profile of much of its core support. Linlithgow Rose brought a good following to the Borders for the Scottish Cup 1st Round tie against Gala Fairydean Rovers in September but the majority looked as though they qualified for a free bus pass. Linlithgow won 2-0.

It didn't take long into the new season for our friends Dumfries YMCA to claim their first ever South of Scotland League victory after going through last season, their first in the League, without a win. On August 22nd, they beat local rivals Heston Rovers 2-1 at Palmerston Park, Rovers also using Queen of the South's artificial pitch for home games.

TRUST JUNIOR MEMBER IS A CHAMPION

Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust junior member Leon Flint is a double motorbike champion in the under 16 age group. Leon, who is only twelve, won the 2015 British minibike championship which was held over ten rounds at venues all over the country. He was also triumphant in the 150cc British speedway championship which was staged in Swindon.



In the next racing season, Leon will move up into the 250cc class using a machine with a full size frame and not only will he be competing for another individual British speedway title but will also take part in the world championship in Poland. That country is also where the under 16 World Cup will be staged for which Leon has been selected for the Great Britain team. There is also the European Championship which it is rumoured will involve six rounds in various countries and will be televised by Sky TV.

In his spare time, Leon, who lives in Berwick, plays football for Berwick Juniors under 13s in the Glendale League at Wooler and watches Berwick Rangers when he gets a free weekend.

The Trust offers its congratulations to Leon on last season's results and wishes him every success in 2016.

LADIES DAY

On Saturday, November 7th, the 6th Ladies Day was held at Shielfield, main organiser being Supporters Trust member Gemma Law. The ladies watched the Ladbrokes League 2 match between Berwick Rangers and Stirling Albion, the first following Colin Cameron's departure as manager and which unfortunately, the visitors won 2-1 to slightly spoil what was otherwise a very successful day. As main sponsors of the game, the forty seven ladies in the group chose the home man of the match. They opted for Ewan McNeil who scored Rangers' goal with a blistering 30 yard free kick.



Drinks and food were served in the Jeff Burnlees Lounge (pictured) and all profits from the event went to the football club. Gemma would like to thank the club board for its backing in enabling it to take place. She also thanks all those ladies who supported it. Gemma tries to stage two Ladies Days each season, in October/November and March/April.

JUNIOR SEASON TICKETS

This season, Berwick Rangers operated a scheme whereby any youngster under the age of sixteen could purchase a season ticket for only £5 if they chose to join either the Supporters Trust or Supporters Club. The ticket is valid for all Ladbrokes League 2 home

matches. The Trust has attracted three new members this way, two living in Kelso and one in Berwick. An alternative option was to pay £10 for the ticket and join neither organisation. At this stage of the season, Berwick Rangers F.C. is willing to give out any remaining tickets free of charge. Please contact the club if interested.

BERWICK RANGERS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The newly formed Berwick Rangers Community Foundation has been making quite an impact in recent months. Established as a charitable organisation by John Bell, Peter Unwin and Bill Blyth, the Foundation managed to secure almost £16,000 of funds from the SPFL Trust and the Scottish Football Partnership Trust. These funds helped to subsidise a hugely popular summer school, delivered at Shielfield by local youth coach Matty Moor. Eighty-three youngsters took part, each of them receiving a free Junior Season Ticket from the Club. Feedback from parents showed just how much the initiative was appreciated.

Other projects include the delivery of coaching sessions in local schools, with Matty representing the Football Club all over the Berwick area. Equipment was purchased for Old Shielfield, and plans are well under way for the 2016 summer school, which will run for four weeks. Each participant will get a Berwick Rangers replica shirt and Season Ticket for a very reasonable cost of £30 for the week. Neil Withington, one of the match programme team, has accepted the challenge of delivering a Football Memories project. This involves a publication about the Club which can be used as a reminiscence tool for carers of those with dementia and Alzheimer's.



NEWS SNIPPETS

SCHOOLS INITIATIVES AT THE CLUB

Fifty-four schools on either side of the Border received a letter from the Football Club earlier this season, inviting them to 'take-over' a home match and receive free admission for a specific game. The idea was to get youngsters inside Shielfield Park to experience live football, and hopefully produce a new generation of young fans. Scremerston First School were quick to respond, and brought along 28 of their pupils for the game against East Stirlingshire on 3rd October. Prior Park First School came next, with 32 children, and the Glendale League brought a splendid 67 to see Berwick take on Stirling Albion. Club Captain Jonny Fairbairn had earlier been to present trophies to the Glendale League on a pretty foul day. On 12th December, we expected a great turn-out from Berwick Middle School, and in 2016, the Club will entertain Lowick United Girls, Eyemouth Primary School, Spittal First School and Holy Trinity School. There are still a few games unallocated, so if you know of a local youth group who'd like to take advantage of this offer, get in touch with John Bell at the Club.

SHIELFIELD STEWARDS

In September, the Trust helped publicise the need for more matchday stewards at Shielfield. There was some response leading to the recruitment of one new man. However, the club is still on the lookout for more, both male and female. They need not be available for every game but a larger pool of people from which to call on helps spread the load. It's unpaid work but half time refreshments are provided and, of course, stewards don't have to pay to see the game. All must be at least 18 years of age. For more information, please contact chief steward John Thompson on 07856 199102 or e-mail john58@btinternet.com

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

More often than not when a Trust member changes address they notify us soon afterwards. Occasionally, we aren't informed so, just a polite reminder that if you do move, please let us know as soon as possible. It helps us keep our records up to date and avoids items such as this newsletter going astray.

CITY CUP

On Saturday, October 10th, Berwick Rangers played reigning East of Scotland League champions Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale (in stripes below) in the Final of the 2014-15 City Cup which was held over from last season. The match was still goalless after 90 minutes and, as is the rule, there was no extra time and it was straight to penalties. Berwick won 4-3 on spot kicks.



After winning the right to play for this Cup by going through the East of Scotland Qualifying Cup unbeaten it seems tough on a non-league side to lose out on another trophy in this way. Is it now time for the East of Scotland FA to reconsider? Either introduce extra time after a drawn 90 minutes or, if a game ends as a draw after either 90 minutes or 120 (if it is indeed decided that 30 extra minutes should be played) how about the clubs being declared joint winners, each keeping the trophy for half the year? It should also be considered that if Berwick Rangers were to lose their SPFL status, then presumably they would forego their current annual automatic entry into the Final.



Mr Lee Chadbourne

Email: lee.chadbourne@ukfuels.co.uk

Tel: 01289 3311223

UK Fuels Ltd, Eurocard House

23-33 Woolmarket

Berwick upon Tweed

Northumberland

TD15 1DH



The Pilot Inn

Always three Real Ales on tap
En-Suite Accommodation
Bar Meals



Football fan special:
10% off accommodation rates



www.thepilotinn.net

31 Low Greens, Berwick-upon-Tweed TD15 1LZ
Tel: 01289 304214 E-mail: spadge@thepilotinn.net



CALL NOW or VISIT WEB

OSHC Registered Consultant

ADVICE - TRAINING
INSPECTION - AUDIT

Tel: 01289 303333

Mob: 07921889052

info@24-7safety.co.uk

www.24-7safety.co.uk

HEALTH, SAFETY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
Professional Training

FIRST AID

Food Safety & Hygiene

FIRE SAFETY

SIA Door Supervisors, Security
Guarding, Stewarding & CCTV

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY

KEENWELD (Welding Supplies)

Machines - Gas Equipment - Safety Equipment - Consumables
Machine Repairs - Gas Safety Testing - Welder Training
Technical Advice - Regular Deliveries To Lothian & Borders,
Northumberland, Tyne & Wear

Telephone: 01289 302 649

Shop/office open: Monday to Friday, 9:00am - 1:00pm
Unit 7b, East Oad Industrial Estate, Berwick-upon-Tweed TD15 2XP

ADVERTISE HERE

Competitive rates - support *your* Trust!

Email: trust@berwickrangers.org

Design Printing Signage Vehicle Livery Embroidery Workwear

fantasy
PRINTS



hello@fantasyprints.co.uk
Tel: 01289 303242

VIVA DIGITAL TM

We help businesses and organisations with branding,
web design, social media and design for print.
We'd love to help grow your business.

Call: 0131 6188 339

www.vivadigital.co.uk // hi@vivadigital.co.uk

PROUD TO SUPPORT THE
SUPPORTERS TRUST