

# BERWICK RANGERS SUPPORTERS TRUST



## ROBBIE HORN ADDRESSES OUR AGM

NEW CHARITY  
PARTNER



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# Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust

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## B.A.R.K

In this issue, we are championing Berwick Rangers' Charity Partner for season 17/18, Berwick Animal Rescue Kennels (B.A.R.K.).

B.A.R.K., who are based in Ramparts Business Park, provide temporary refuge for unwanted or stray domestic animals with the objective of re-homing them whenever possible. Their logo also features on our Under 20s' team shirts having been nominated in the sponsor raffle by Ian Beresford, Associate Director.

Visit their website at [b-a-r-k.co.uk](http://b-a-r-k.co.uk) for more information or find them on Twitter @BARKKennels and Facebook [facebook.com/BerwickAnimalRescue/](https://www.facebook.com/BerwickAnimalRescue/)

*Berwick Rangers chairman Len Eyre (left) and Ian Beresford with Ronnie show off the B.A.R.K. logo on an Under 20s' shirt*



# FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

Hello,

The first part of the season fizzled out with the December 30th postponement of our home game versus Stenhousemuir, the second Shielfield game in a fortnight called off because of a frozen pitch. In between, we picked up a merited point in a goalless draw in Cumbernauld against Clyde who were immediately below us in the table. Unfortunately, we kicked off the New Year with two away defeats (and again no goals) at Ainslie Park and Forthbank Stadium v. Edinburgh City and Stirling Albion respectively. Then at home, it was the same story, a 2-0 loss to Annan.

As we entered 2018, we all waited for new signings as the so-called 'transfer window' opened. Robbie Horn had been quite open about the need to strengthen the side after making a popular return to the club as manager on John Coughlin's departure in August. Last time Robbie was on the books at Berwick it was as assistant manager to first Ian Little and then Colin Cameron. During that spell, the Trust contributed towards the cost of his UEFA 'B' licence course, success in this a prerequisite to hold such a position at an SPFL club.

Off the field, the club reported a loss of nearly £90,000 for the trading year up to May 31st, 2017. This was an even higher figure than in the previous season. A combined deficit of around £170,000 over two years should be a worry to all who have Berwick Rangers at heart.



Since our last issue, the club has appointed two more associate directors, Graham Exley and Ian Beresford, bringing the total to five. Ian is also a member of the Trust Board but sits in the club boardroom in his own right.

To stimulate interest, the club distributed free tickets for admission to the Elgin home game on September 19th. Just over 100 were used which helped record an attendance close to the average for the season up to that point. On the one hand, the Elgin game was a good choice as distance dictated City were unlikely to bring a big travelling support. On the other, if appetites were whetted by our storming comeback to win 3-2, there was a five week gap until the next home game on the

printed fixture list.

At the start of the campaign, the club organised a sponsorship raffle for naming rights on kit. There were 125 entries at £200 a go, resulting in gross takings of £25,000. Commercial Director Graham Bell said the response far exceeded expectations. A similar raffle was run at £20 a shot for the Under 20s' kit. It was also deemed a success but no figures seem to have been announced. The Trust's name went into both draws but we were not amongst the winners.

The club board hoped that the Trust would be able to provide financial support of £4,000 for this season. I have to say that this was their figure and no discussions took place. However, in the first half of the season alone, we contributed over £3,500. As well as the stakes in the raffles, we donated £700 to keep

our advertising boards on display inside the ground and Norham-based member Alan German handed over a cheque for £2,500 to chairman Len Eyre to meet the season's running costs of the Development League team. We also gave £100 towards Daniel Watt's kit. In reality, a nominal payment and when Daniel left the club our backing was 'transferred' to assistant manager David Burrell.

With our help, 'The Berwickshire News' has been donating plenty of space to Berwick Rangers, sometimes as much as three full pages.

We decided not to renew our membership of Supporters Direct Scotland. One hundred pounds per annum may represent good value for those supporters' organisations able to fully participate in its activities. For a number of reasons we are not. Under these circumstances, the Trust Board considered that sum of money could be better spent elsewhere. Curiously though, we still receive regular communications from SDS!

Again, this issue contains contributions from a variety of writers, in fact almost certainly a record number. They include Stuart Bell whose centre spread, 'Berwick's Rocky Horror Shows', in the previous number attracted particularly favourable comment. Thanks to all who have provided articles this time.

Those of you living locally may have seen the new style fixture posters, bright and glossy and emphasising we are the 'Black and Gold' as in the name of the official match programme in which Robbie Horn signs off his piece with;

'Black and Gold Army!'

**Michael**

## TRUST AGM

Our 2017 Annual General Meeting held on January 20th, 2018 was well attended despite that afternoon's home match versus Elgin City being postponed. The occasion was marked by the presentation of a cheque for £3,000 accepted on behalf of Berwick Rangers F.C. by guest speakers club chairman Len Eyre and manager Robbie Horn. This sum, along with a further donation totalling £400 from individual Trust Board members is earmarked towards the cost of signing new players during the January transfer period.

### **Main points arising from the formal stage of the meeting included:**

1. No change in membership of the Trust Board
2. Membership stands at 226 (since increased by one)
3. It was agreed that voting for Trust Player of the Year will be extended to non members who regularly attend matches.

A third guest speaker, Steven Notman, was unable to be present as, with no game, the first team squad was training elsewhere. He sent a message apologising that he hadn't been able to make it and again thanked the Trust for supporting his testimonial (see page 11).

The above donations bring the total amount from Trust to club so far this season to £6,920.



January signing Ousman See (Photo by Ian Runciman)

# BERWICK RANGERS NIL

## *Ron Kirk took stock at the season's halfway point*

Here we are again at the halfway point of another season. 18 League games played, 21 points accrued and only 14 goals scored. Indeed of these 18 games, Berwick have failed to score in 9 of them, 8 of which were away from home where Berwick have managed to find the net on only 4 occasions in 11 games. Of those 4 goals, three were scored at Peterhead and Elgin which means that travelling Berwick fans who gave these two games a miss, like I did, have only seen one goal scored on their travels. I am not sure that I will remember what to do when I next experience the joy of a Berwick goal away from home. It brings to mind the old Billy Connolly joke about people in England thinking that Partick Thistle's full name was Partick Thistle Nil. On the other hand it would suggest that Berwick's misfiring strikers would do well on BBC's Pointless programme. That said, it is debatable that we actually have any strikers this season. To put it even more into context, Darren Smith's two goals for Stirling in Berwick's most recent away game took his tally for the season to 15 which is one more than Berwick as a team have mustered as a whole in the first 18 games. Similarly, Peterhead over the Christmas and New Year period scored 17 goals in 3 games. On current form it would take Berwick 22 games to match that feat.

The season, as it does these days, kicked off with the 5 team League Cup sections. Berwick competed admirably before losing narrowly to higher league opposition in the

shape of Motherwell, Morton and Queen's Park. They also lost out in a penalty shoot-out after drawing 2-2 with fellow League Two rivals Edinburgh City.

The Irn Bru Cup saw Berwick overcome Kilmarnock Under 20s before they were duly despatched from competition by Queen of the South who exposed the gaping gulf in quality between the two sides by cantering to a 5-0 win with 5 second half goals.

The real bread and butter though is the League. Berwick played Clyde at home on the opening day and despite playing second fiddle to the Cumbernauld based side for most of the game, two late goals secured a



*Darren Lavery congratulates Pat Scullion for his goal which put Annan out of the Cup ( photo by Ian Runciman)*

3-1 win. This however proved to be a false dawn as Berwick crashed to a resounding 4-0 defeat against a rampant Stirling Albion side one week later. Worse was to follow though. Annan Athletic then cruised to a 5-1 win at Sheffield without really having to get out of

second gear. This proved to be the catalyst for manager John Coughlin as he and Berwick parted a few days later. Obviously, Coff, as he is affectionately known, is well thought of by Berwick fans. None of us will forget that he was at the helm for the 2006/2007 title winning season and that he guided the club away from the bottom of the league to mid table security after returning to the club for a second spell as manager in November 2015. He did however fail to build on that recovery last season, most of which was spent battling to avoid the dreaded relegation play-off spot.

The deficiencies in the squad he had recruited for this season's campaign were already evident, and for me, the final nail in his coffin, were the baffling substitutions he made in that Annan game. For instance, taking a striker off when we were 3-1 down

with over 20 minutes to go at a time when we should just have been going for it did not make any sense to me. We ended up losing 5-1 anyway despite his reluctance to throw caution to the wind.

The board moved quickly to appoint Robbie Horn to replace Coughlin. Robbie is well known to Berwick fans having played a pivotal part in Coughlin's title winning team of 2006/2007 and then being assistant manager, first to Ian Little and then to Colin Cameron before heading off to find his feet in a managerial capacity. Robbie returned to the club after a successful stint at Bonnyrigg Rose, where he made the headlines by guiding them to a shock Scottish Cup win over Championship side Dumbarton which earned them a tie against the then Cup holders Hibs.



*Michael McKenna challenges for the ball v. Montrose in October  
(Photo by Ian Runciman)*

Robbie has enjoyed something of a mixed start to his time as Berwick manager. He has not yet been able to impose his own mark on the team as he has had to work with the squad of players he has inherited. There have been times when the deficiencies in the squad have been ruthlessly evident such as in the 3-0 defeats at Stenhousemuir and Montrose and the 5-1 loss at Elgin when the opposition on these occasions looked like they were from a higher level. On the other hand there have been times when the team have ground out results without being great such as the 1-0

home win over Cowdenbeath, the 0-0 draws away to Annan and Clyde and the 1-1 home draw against Edinburgh City. In addition, the team have produced 3 marquee results since Robbie took over. The 3-2 home win over Elgin when we came back

from 2-0 down with just over 15 minutes left to play, the 2-0 away win at Peterhead (did that really happen?) and the 1-0 home win over Stirling Albion which was actually more convincing than the score suggests. Thanks to these 3 wins and the other results which the team have managed to grind out, 21 points have been accumulated, only 3 more than at the same stage last season.

Berwick currently sit in seventh place, 9 points behind fourth placed Stirling Albion and 12 points clear of Cowdenbeath who currently occupy the dreaded relegation play off place. For the optimists amongst us, a second half season push could see Berwick challenge for a promotion play off place. On the other hand, the realists amongst us realise that if the 3 clubs currently below Berwick were to win a couple of games then we could yet again be

sucked into the battle to avoid bottom spot. Edinburgh City have won their last 2 games which has halved the 12 point advantage Berwick previously enjoyed over them. That shows how quickly things can change.

It is clearly evident that the current squad lacks sufficient quality to put in a sustained challenge at the top end of the table. The heavy defeats suffered at the hands of Stirling, Annan, Stenhousemuir, Montrose and Elgin have clearly demonstrated that. In addition, after grinding out a 1-0 home win against Annan in the second round of the Scottish Cup, Berwick's shortcomings were brutally exposed by Arbroath in the next round. In truth, the 3-0 final score flattered Berwick with the home side cantering through without having to exert any serious effort. The Arbroath team is full of the quality of players that Berwick need to strive to attract.

As I write this, the January transfer window has just opened. It is rumoured that the manager has identified a number of players who he would like to bring to the club. However, early indications suggest that the manager is struggling to persuade these players to join Berwick. He had the air of a frustrated man when I witnessed him in

discussion with some fans before the recent New Year game at Edinburgh City. This is not a new development. I have suggested in previous articles that the club as a whole seems to have lost the ability to attract players of sufficient quality to compete to move on to the next level. I suspect that the manager has been finding that out. That needs to be addressed and a solution found quickly. Otherwise we are simply going to tread water in the bottom 4 until we eventually drop through the relegation trap door into Lowland League obscurity. Hopefully by the time you read this, Robbie will have bucked the recent trend and brought in some of his intended targets. Indeed in the course of drafting this, Robbie has signed Declan O'Kane a midfielder from Musselburgh, a player who by all accounts Robbie has had his eye on for some time. What we really need though are a couple of forward players who will be able to get the goals for column ticking over more regularly particularly away from home. Maybe then, we can all look more positively at things rather than spending our Saturday afternoons constantly checking how the teams below us in the League table are getting on and deriving some comfort from the fact that they have also lost.

*Aaron Murrell has the ball in the home win over Stirling Albion  
(Photo by Ian Runciman)*



# WILLIE BE AN ASSET?

**'Berwick Rangers are delighted to sign Willie Useless from Alloa Athletic. Willie, 39, scored one own goal in three first team appearances over 13 seasons at the Indodrill Stadium and can stand about in defence or midfield. He should be a big ass....'**

Fictitious of course but if we did sign a player of Willie's calibre(!), based on past form, the official club website might well inform us that his arrival at Shielfield is a cause for delight. The latter word is not used as a metaphor but as a statement of fact. So who exactly is delighted? Is the chairman, on the capture of a player whose name is unfamiliar or about whom he knows little? Is the manager, perhaps merely relieved to have got the signature of, at best, a journeyman player in whom no other club was seriously interested but who at least will be an additional body for a squad limited in numbers?

Being positive is one thing but 'delight' meaning 'great pleasure' or 'overjoyed' to describe reaction to signings often seems over the top. Through its constant repetition,

the website almost becomes a parody of itself. There would be a good argument for its use in relation to any marquee signing but even then it might be premature to do so. Colin Cameron is a case in point. Welcomed by almost everyone associated with Berwick Rangers in 2014, his tenure as player-manager ended not on completion of contract and certainly not on a high but because of the need for change to try to get the team back on the rails.

This season, we were told that then manager John Coughlin was 'delighted to get his man' when Daniel

Watt signed a full contract. The official Twitter 'teaser' preceding this announcement was pretty naff and hardly treated its audience as adults. It had supporters speculating and probably hoping that a bigger name player



*Willie doesn't look the part, does he?*



was on the way, perhaps a proven goalscorer at SPFL level. That's no slur on Daniel, a hard worker for the Under 20s, who, had he been given more of an opportunity, might have established himself as a genuine first teamer before last season was out. Maybe. Yet, within days of the Trust backing him by donating the money for his home and away kit, new manager Robbie Horn sent him out on loan to Hill of Beath Hawthorn ( a move which became permanent in December ). Somehow, the whoops of delight of a few weeks earlier now seemed hollow.

At the end of the same month, September, Greg Rutherford left the club 'by mutual consent'. When he re-signed for 2017-18, it was supposedly a cause for 'delight'. It was reported he left because he couldn't commit to training due to a new job and his studying for a teacher's qualification. No doubt true but he was struggling to do what he was in the first team to do, i.e. score goals, and those who watched him turn out in the first home Development League match of the season v. Forfar, where Robbie Horn was also present, would have had good reason to conclude he would soon be on his way.

In most cases, a simple announcement of a signing or re-signing would be sufficient. Then if things don't work out, the club is not left with egg on its face leaving 'delight' to hit the right note, for example, in describing the record of a striker who scores tens of goals in a season or a keeper voted the best in his division. A good Cup run, or a long unbeaten one and obviously winning promotion constitute other instances when this particular emotion would be appropriate.

It is probably fair to point out that this form of

hyperbole is quite prevalent on other sports clubs' websites too, though that is no reason for ours to follow suit.

By definition, the web is worldwide. People learning English as a foreign language who use it as an aid to extend their knowledge of the tongue, having been taught the correct use of the word and happening upon the Berwick Rangers site, might wonder why a small lower league football club which has had its fair share of struggles in recent years, is so often suggesting that is experiencing such great joy.

However, the posts regarding the January signings, whilst welcoming, were more muted so perhaps change is afoot.

“ *Being positive is one thing but 'delight' meaning 'great pleasure' or 'overjoyed' to describe reaction to signings often seems over the top.* ”

At the same time, any club should also treat with caution claims that its official website is receiving tens of thousands of hits. These do not necessarily equal the number of individuals visiting a particular website. The normal layout of any web page consists of numerous pieces of text and images each of which constitutes a file. The average hits per visit is estimated to be about fifteen as a click on any one of these files counts as a hit. Therefore, dividing the total number of hits by fifteen will give a more realistic idea of the actual numbers tuning in.

As for Willie, if we did sign someone like him, the official website would probably crash such would be the rush of supporters from our rival clubs eager to have a look and a laugh at our expense. Dare it be said, they are the ones who would be 'delighted' that we'd got a man who truly lives up to his name!

**Michael Smyth**

# HOW ON EARTH DID I GET HERE?

asks **GORDON BAXTER**

I suppose it was fate that drove me to the bright lights of Shielfield, being an Anglo-Scot. Well, that and the promise of a weekend away with beer and food as well. I don't have any ties to the area, although I do have some background knowledge of life in football's lower leagues.

After a playing career that was interrupted by WWII, my grandad found himself managing Cowdenbeath. The money situation in the lower leagues seems to have changed very little in the intervening 50-plus years. At the end of the season, the chairman gave him a list of names of the players they would be letting go, to try and balance the books. My grandad wrote his own name on the bottom of the list, handed it back and walked away, never to return!

I also recently found out that my dad played for Edinburgh City. When we asked about his brother who went on to play lower English League football (for Brighton, Darlington and Torquay), and ended up in non-league football, my dad replied, "No, he didn't play for Edinburgh City, he played for one of the



*Gordon Baxter (left) and Tom Kelsey and their St Andrews Berwick Rangers Supporters sign at Shielfield*

good teams."

When Davie Letham first suggested a weekend trip to Berwick, including taking in a Berwick Rangers' match, we were all up for it. We didn't really know what to expect, but I had an inkling, because on the way to a Scotland game a few years ago we got chatting to a guy who followed Albion Rovers. He said he'd rather go and watch Rovers than the Scottish Premier League. Much of it is down to the honesty and integrity of the players, who play for the love, rather than the money, and the close bond between the players and the fans. Having now seen Berwick play several times, I'd have to agree with him. What started

out as a weekend away with football thrown in, has expanded into several games a season (home and away). It's nice to show up to games and see and chat to some of the friendly faces we've met along the way (in hospitality, at dinners, in the pubs). It all helps to create a more sociable atmosphere, which makes it easier to bear when the team doesn't win, and gives us something to talk (or moan) about. It's also what keeps us (all of us?) coming back for more.

# STEVEN NOTMAN TESTIMONIAL

**Wednesday, November 15th, 2017 saw the first visit to Shielfield by a team from Glasgow Rangers since the two clubs met in February, 2013 in a Scottish Football League Division Three game following the reconstituted Ibrox club's relegation from the top flight for financial indiscretions. Billed as a Rangers XI, the occasion was Steven Notman's Testimonial match.**

Staging the game on a midweek night in November was something of a gamble but the weather was relatively benign and the crowd a little higher than Berwick's average.

The 'Gers honoured 'Notty's' ten years service to Berwick Rangers by sending a very strong team but, in return, insisted that Berwick field their first team as they wanted a competitive game. Despite the 4-0 margin, they certainly got that even though Berwick could nowhere near match the visitors for pace. It was a great gesture that the home Rangers included all the first team squad on the team sheet including out on loan Daniel Watt and Jordan Orru plus Under 20s' captain Jamie Chapman. Only keeper Sean Brennan of the men listed didn't get a run out though he had been injured in a recent Development League match. Former Berwick Rangers chairman Brian Porteous, who heads the testimonial committee, commented, "I'm sure they will treasure the occasion of playing against some SPFL Premier League players." Stevie

himself played 55 minutes having missed the previous Saturday's home encounter with Edinburgh City because of a rib injury.

The visitors scored twice in each half. Some reports credited David Bates with helping Dalcio Gomes' shot into the net but, on Rangers TV, he made it clear he hadn't touched the ball. Aaron Nemane made it 2-0 with Serge Atakayi and Jordan Thompson scoring during the second forty five minutes.

Brian hailed the game as a great success for both fans and Steven Notman. "After paying for the outlays, we made

about £6,000 which exceeded the sum I was anticipating." The Trust covered one expense by donating £200 to pay for first aid cover.

A forthcoming event is a testimonial dinner on Sunday, March 25th, 2018 at Tynecastle (Hearts F.C.) in Gorgie, Edinburgh commencing at noon. Tickets are £35 each at tables for ten with a three course sit down meal. Speakers are John Gahagen and Eric Davidson. Anyone wishing to purchase a table at £350 or single tickets for £35 each, please contact [brian.porteous@gmail.com](mailto:brian.porteous@gmail.com) (Mobile 07776 237190).

Another way to support Steven Notman's testimonial is to make a donation into Bank of Scotland account 10445866, sort code 80-46-05, Reference: donor's name.



*Captains Lee Hodson (left) and Steven Notman exchange pennants with referee Gavin Ross in the middle. (Photo by Ian Runciman)*

# BERWICK RANGERS SUPPORTERS WINDSOR BRANCH

**Hello everyone. My name is Ian Dawson and I'm a Berwick Rangers fan. I attend a few Berwick Rangers games each season with my 7 year old son Christopher who also loves Berwick Rangers. Nothing remarkable or interesting about that perhaps, until you find out that we actually live in Windsor. Yes that Windsor with the Castle and Legoland, I guess your age group probably dictates which one strikes the bigger chord with you!!**

I was asked to write an article for the Supporters Trust magazine about being a long distance supporter and I have to say that was a bit of a challenge. Creative writing really isn't my thing. I am a Chartered Accountant by trade, so facts and figures are really my bag. I therefore settled on producing an alternative statistical analysis of mine and Christopher's 17-18 season following Berwick Rangers so far. I hope you find it at least vaguely entertaining and perhaps even a little enlightening!!!

## **Games Attended - 4 (1 Home and 3 Away)**

The Berwick Rangers games we've attended thus far in 17-18 are 3 ways being Edinburgh City, Stenhousemuir, Annan and also Montrose at home.

## **Miles Travelled - 3,000 (approximately)**

Just those 4 games comes in at around a whopping 3,000 miles for the total distance travelled. That is actually the same as the distance from London to the North East corner of the USA !!! Unfortunately, living in Windsor means a hefty 740 mile round trip just for a HOME game.

That's bad enough, but then we have the added complication of needing to largely stick to day trips. Anything else would just be a little bit too tricky at home with my wife and



*Christopher Dawson in front of dad Ian with other Berwick Rangers people on Carlisle Station*

my little girl. Hence we really have to pick and choose our games carefully. The one bright spot is that we live very near to Heathrow, so anything within an hour of Edinburgh or Glasgow Airport is a real possibility. Hence our trip to Stenhousemuir earlier in the season by taxi/plane/tram/train when we were in the front door about 9pm. The other 3 trips were all day returns on the train with Edinburgh City being the longest with a 6am departure and 11.30pm arrival back home. A long day when you're 40+ years old, never mind just 7!!

## **Goals Scored For - 0**

As I'm sure those with a good memory will now have worked out, we are yet to see Berwick Rangers score a goal this season !!! That's an awful lot of travelling without seeing your team hit the back of the net. The high point of the season so far for us being the point we scrapped hard for at Annan back in November. Not a great return, but rest assured we will be

back in the Spring undeterred by our current (lack of) success rate. I guess that is unless the other Berwick supporters want to try and buy us off given our record...

### Berwick Rangers Legends Met - 2

Russell Craig and Eric Tait certainly qualify under that headline. What a pairing !! We've actually been lucky enough to meet Eric several times now, he is a genuine top bloke. This includes THREE times on Carlisle Station on the way to Annan, whilst engaging in a game of football between the benches on Platform 5. It's rapidly becoming a tradition !! Amusingly the first time we met Eric back in 2015 we had absolutely no idea who he was. The great man looked a bit crestfallen, but Eric soon regained his composure and filled us in on his club records for appearances and goal scoring. Needless to say we googled him up that evening and after finding numerous articles, including one on the opening of the Eric Tait Lounge, we realised the magnitude of our faux pas.

We met Russell in hospitality at the Montrose home game. Really nice guy as well and we got another great photo to boot. Again the magical Scottish FA Cup victory over Rangers in 1967 has been covered extensively under our subsequent research.

### Virgin East Coast Activity Books Completed - 2

Virgin East Coast are kind enough to supply free activity books for kids. When you're trying to fill 10 hours of return train journey to

Edinburgh, this is an extremely useful piece of equipment !! Our particular favourite is train bingo, which basically involves filling in a bingo card based on typical items you might see out of a train window. You can imagine the sort of thing car, lorry, church, sheep etc. where I think it's the pig that always proves to be the most challenging.

I'd actually really like to go at writing my own train bingo card for Virgin East Coast instead. Mine would be more like Emirates Stadium, London Road Stadium, Keepmoat Stadium (look carefully), York Minster, White Horse at Kilburn, Durham Cathedral, Angel of the North, Lindisfarne Castle and Shielfield Park. If you're really familiar with that journey then you'll know an East facing window is a major advantage, with everything except the best football stadium in the list out that side. Hence Virgin East Coast's new select your own seat service has been a key upgrade for the competitive train bingo player. I've resisted my win at all costs mentality thus far which wants me to stick Christopher on the other side of the train on his own!



*Christopher in the cockpit of the plane back south following a match in Glasgow v Queen's Park in March, 2016*

### Wrong Stadiums Nearly Visited - 1

Yes it's true. Every travelling football fan's nightmare nearly came true for us. We were firmly headed for the Meadowbank Stadium back in September and it was only after a chance conversation with some fellow Berwick fans, who got on our train at Berwick, that the error came to light.

I still wish I could have seen my face when I was told, "You do realise they're not playing at

Meadowbank Stadium this season don't you ?". I don't think panic stricken would cover it...It might not seem like such a big deal, but again the logistics are such that if we don't make the 5.30pm train from Waverley Station then we don't get home. A quick search for some location details and a taxi number resulted in a full situation retrieval!!!

### Capacity of Stenhousemuir Supporters' Club Bar - 25 (approximately)

For those of you who have been in the "Wee Bar" at Stenhousemuir's Ochilview Stadium then you'll know what I'm talking about. For those of you who haven't, there isn't enough room in there to swing a cat when it's empty, never mind on match days !! Christopher and I marched in there with all our Berwick Rangers gear on at about 2.15 pm and wondered what on earth we'd let ourselves in for.

It actually turned out to be the high point of the whole trip. They were some of the nicest people going. They made room for us to sit down. We had a good chat with a few of the Stenny lads about all sorts of different stuff and even found someone who lives about 5 miles away from us during the week. Amazing!

In truth one of the over-riding experiences of following Berwick Rangers around is that everyone is so friendly, especially when they find out where you've come up from. This is whether they are other Berwick fans or even fans of other teams. In particular I'd like to give a special mention to the Elgin fans last season. They were brilliant and even persuaded their chairman to give us an impromptu tour of the ground. That was top class.

### Weeks without a Berwick Rangers Game - 9 (and counting)

Unfortunately, the cost of travelling the distances we do is such, we HAVE to book in

advance to try and reduce the cost as much as possible. In turn this means that we can't gamble with postponements since the travel costs will already be sunk, so mid-November to mid-February is basically a lock-out.

Annan away in early November was our last game, our next game is likely to be the home game on 24th Feb. Unfortunately/fortunately and inexplicably, our local team Windsor FC (just 1 mile from our house) that we follow are STILL in the last 16 of the FA Vase. Should they make the quarter finals then we'd be duty bound to go to that game and take that hit on our Berwick travel as it's already booked.



*Christopher with the legendary Russell Craig*

The perils of spreading your allegiances !! Still should Windsor FC somehow get to Wembley it will all be worth it....Either way we will definitely be up for a few more Berwick Rangers games before the season is over. Can't wait to rack up another few thousand miles!!

**N.B. Windsor have been drawn at home to Hamble in the last 16 of the Vase.**

# WE WERE NOT ALONE

**Trust Board member John Bell has been researching information about another club called Berwick Rangers which existed in the late 19th century and probably into the early 20th.**



*The cathedral in Worcester, a city once home to Berwick Rangers*

In his 2011 book 'The Lone Rangers' ('An English club's century in Scottish football'), Tom Maxwell makes passing reference to another team called Berwick Rangers changing their name to Worcester City early in the last century. Apparently, Worcester's Berwick Rangers were formed when some youths met under a lamp post in the city's Cherry Orchard district by Berwick's Brook, hence the name. Worcester Rovers became their greatest rivals and when they clashed, for example in the Worcestershire Cup, crowds of 6-8,000 were reported.

However, there is some confusion about how and when the name Berwick Rangers disappeared from the football scene in the English Midlands. Maxwell suggests around

1904-05 but other evidence contradicts this. What is certain is that the other Berwick Rangers played a number of seasons in the Birmingham and District League.\* Joining in 1893-94, League records indicate they completed nine seasons but during 1902-03, merged with Worcester Rovers to form Worcester City who then took over Berwick's playing record and fixtures in the Birmingham League.

Then again, other research points to the likelihood that Berwick Rangers folded some time between 1898-1900 due to low income from falling attendances. Worcester Rovers too, were wound up but were re-formed as Worcester City with a new set of players and committee and took over Berwick Rangers' Birmingham and District fixtures. Again, 1902-03 is the season in which this is supposed to have happened.

With League records showing that Berwick Rangers finished 1901-02 with 26 points from 11 wins (worth only 2 points in those days) and 4 draws (= 26 pts), this version of the club's history provides no explanation for the hiatus between the time Berwick Rangers became defunct and Worcester City taking their place in the Birmingham competition.

The two clubs' identical names seems to have been a complete coincidence, one taking its name from its town, the other after a small water course in its locality. More intriguingly, was each aware of the other's existence?

*\*With acknowledgement to Football Club History Database*

# REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

by *STUART BELL*

It's so easy to be critical, negative, miserable even, about Berwick Rangers right now. Let's be honest - we've been 'disappointing' for years. That made it easy to write a column I called 'A tale of 2 cities' based on our 2 excursions to the grotesque Ainslie Park this season. The 2 defeats to Edinburgh City were not happy occasions and my ramblings dripped with cynicism, anguish and gloom.

Before pressing 'Send', I did a quick proof read and ended up deleting the lot. The truth is I ALWAYS look forward to my trips to watch Berwick, and that is because there is plenty to be cheerful about. Cast out the dark side and for a moment at least consider these few examples....

## 1. Berwick-upon-Tweed

It would be a tight contest to find the ugliest town/ground in the lower leagues. So remember, when other fans are spending time and money in the land that time forgot - Cowdenbeath - or sitting down in the ghastly Broadwood Stadium to watch Clyde, or stood in the rain at Ainslie Park which makes Broadwood look like the Taj Mahal, or looking for a half decent pub in Annan or Elgin, or walking to the ground down the grotty streets of Methil or Coatbridge, we all get to enjoy gorgeous Berwick. Beautiful place, where people choose to come for their holidays. You won't find many tourists in Larbert.

## 2. Pre match food and drink

All very samey when I first came to the town, the place is now blessed with some great, friendly boozers selling top quality beer. The Pilot, the newly renovated Brown Bear, Barrels and the award winning Curfew

Micropub. Then there are some great chippies - order a jumbo in the Castlegate or even wait till you get inside the ground! There are also some fabulous independent shops, especially on Bridge Street and Castlegate and stacks of nice cafes and new bistros dotted around the town.

## 3. The January transfer window

Written in mid January, we have just signed Declan O'Kane to add some fire to the team, and also Ousman See who, when interviewed, said he knew where the opposition goal is and was therefore a shoo-in. I suspect there will be a few more before you read this and whoever they are, any other forward must surely be better than none at all and any loanees must surely be better than those we send back. There is a theory that the January window sees poor teams improve AND often causes the better teams to deteriorate as their best players move on. Things can only get better on the pitch and hopefully in the league table, which brings me on to...

## 4. Robbie Horn

The Board gets some stick, plenty of it deserved, but they have done 2 things in recent years which challenge the notion that they are intransigent and bereft of ideas. Firstly, they appointed Colin Cameron, the highest profile manager at Berwick for many a long year. He was meant to have contacts and influence and we could expect players a class above the norm banging on the secretary's door asking where they should sign. An initial surge and a floaky cup run later, and Cameron slumped down the fence near the dugout, pondering whether to buy a new pair of boots from the Age Concern charity shop.



Meanwhile, John Coughlin was waiting in the wings, or perhaps up on the roof. Once again, the Board went radical and appointed him full time on a 2-year contract - unusual for our division, and especially unusual for Berwick. Sadly, he bombed big style, sinking steadily after signing a herd of donkeys to play in the back 4.

But now, we have Robbie Horn. Cameron and Coughlin have spent all the rainy day funds, so Robbie is struggling with an inadequate and massively imbalanced squad. I think Robbie Horn will prove to be one of our best managers, but he will need time to sign his own players. Risky to write this - I hope we've picked up a few points by the time this gets printed - but he just seems like he knows the game at this level and doesn't take any nonsense from dipsticks like Pat Scullion. Nor will he sign people like Dunlop and Donkor.

## 5. McCrorie/Notman/McKenna

I know it's only 3, but these players would get in any team in our division, and many above that level too. Another front man or two, something more solid from O'Kane, bit of extra confidence all round, and I hope by the end of April we'll all be looking forward to next season with genuine hope and optimism.

If not, I'll just revert to being a miserable old sod hurling abuse at the Duckett side linesman.



*Robby McCrorie*

*Beautiful Berwick-The New Bridge at night (Photo by Stuart Bell)*



# UNDER 20s

by MICHAEL SMYTH

Perhaps the most disappointing feature of the first half of the 2017-18 season for Berwick Rangers Under 20s was their quick exit from the Scottish Youth Cup. After a First Round bye, they were drawn at home at the next stage against opposition from outside the SPFL Development Leagues. Played on a Sunday, October 1st, a great effort went in to making it something of an occasion. The Trust produced posters advertising the match versus the University of Stirling, the tie was sponsored by livestock agents R.Curle and Son and a special edition of the club programme, 'The Black and Gold', was on sale.

Unfortunately, on a mild but windy afternoon, the visitors turned out to be party-poopers. Ultimately, the home team paid the penalty for failing to make the most of first half wind advantage. Stirling struck twice after the break before Eyemouth lad Gary Windram pulled one back for Berwick late in the game. A check with one of the Stirling coaches confirmed that his team was comprised of bona fide students, all on courses associated with the University which is very much a football-oriented institution. It regularly fields six men's teams including sides in both the Lowland and East of Scotland Leagues so from Berwick's perspective the result was disappointing but no disgrace. In the next round, the students travelled in the opposite direction to Inverness where they went down 2-0 to Caley Thistle.

Berwick's first half dozen DL results followed a discernible pattern, two wins, followed by two defeats and then another two victories. The sequence was broken when they lost three on the trot before they gained a second success over Stirling Albion on the Forthbank

Astro. Grant Rose, from Jedburgh, finished as he had started. He scored the first goal of the competitive season in a 4-1 win over Cowdenbeath at Kelty in September and bagged the second as his team comfortably won 2-0 at Stirling in late November.



Grant Rose (Photo by Caledonia Photo)

The team enjoyed a 50% success rate over their first ten League games, five wins and five losses. The latter included home and away defeats at the hands of both reigning champions and this season's pacesetters Raith Rovers, and Livingston. There should have been one further match in early December but it was called off, in unsatisfactory circumstances, at the request of visitors Cowdenbeath. The postponement had nothing to do with the weather.

Once again, virtually all of the signed squad got regular weekend football playing for an assortment of Junior, Lowland League or East of Scotland league clubs including Windram with Coldstream from whom he was signed and then loaned back and Dunbar-based goalkeeper Stuart Allan and Stuart 'Buster' Briggs from near Ancroft, a few miles out of Berwick, with Berwick EoSL team, Tweedmouth Rangers. Trialists appeared now and then. One was an overage player

originating from Paraparaumu in New Zealand who had been playing in the U.S.A. He set up the winning goal for Bradley Barrett in a 2-1 win at Alloa in which the team played some of their best football so far this campaign.

Last season, the first team was often dependent on Under 20s players to fill the bench but currently, with a bigger senior squad, less so. Under 20s skipper Jamie Chapman, also from Dunbar, made an appearance with the big boys during Steven Notman's testimonial match with a Rangers XI in mid-November. This would also be the last time Daniel Watt, a mainstay of the DL team over the previous two seasons, would be seen in a Berwick shirt, playing all but the opening twenty minutes. Also involved against the 'Gers was Robert Wilson, whose loan spell at Haddington Athletic had recently ended. His first game back at the club was for the Under 20s in the home defeat v. Raith a week earlier but he was pleased to be back and very positive about turning out for the age group team.

There are dissenters amongst Berwick supporters who question the value of running

a second team. This season, it has cost the club practically nothing as a financial contribution from the Trust equalled the entire budgeted running costs. Having a second side gives players like Wilson, returning to the club or coming back from injury, the opportunity to re-acclimatise. Established first team men Darren Lavery and Jonny Fairbairn came through the old Reserves team. Dylan Easton's stay at Shielfield was relatively short but a player, for whom Berwick received a fee when he moved on to St.Johnstone, wouldn't have been with the club at all if then Reserves' boss Mark Lamb hadn't taken a gamble on him. Most recently, Paul Simpson formerly with the Perth club, has been blooded in the first team after shining for the DL team.

A leading English club, not so many years ago in the Premiership, conducted an in-house survey re the number of players from its academy set up who eventually won professional contracts at the club. Only six out of a thousand did so. Maybe Berwick Rangers haven't done so badly over recent seasons in bringing players through from their second team.

*Jamie Chapman (Photo by Caledonia Photo)*



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# ST ANDREWS BERWICK RANGERS SUPPORTERS – OLDER LINKS THAN SOME MAY THINK

Although St Andrews Berwick Rangers Supporters has only been formed for a couple of years, the links to St Andrews go back further than some may think. A player from the late 1940s, early 1950s was a lecturer at St Andrews University. He even picked up a couple of medals during his time at Berwick.

Ronald Mitchell was known as Ron to his friends and colleagues. He played football at school, and his ability was recognised when he was invited to sign for North End Junior Football Club in Dundee. Ron left Morgan Academy in 1938, and won scholarships through the school to do a mathematics degree in the old University College, Dundee (a college of St Andrews University).



*Ronald Mitchell*

He won medals for Special Mathematics (1939-40), Special Physics (1940-41), and Senior Honours Mathematics (1941-42). He graduated with First Class Honours in 1942, and was called up and sent to the wartime Ministry of Aircraft Production in London, where he remained until after the end of the war. His duties included the interrogation of captured Luftwaffe pilots, in an attempt to get information about their aircraft; some years later he met one of them at a conference. While he was in London, he continued to play football, turning out a few times for Chelsea.

In October 1946, Ron decided he would like to do a PhD, He made contact with D

E Rutherford, who was then a Lecturer in Mathematics and Applied Mathematics in St Andrews University. Lecturing staff were in short supply at that time, and Rutherford agreed to act as supervisor in return for Ron taking an Assistant Lectureship for the duration of his PhD. After being awarded his PhD in 1950, Ron stayed on at St Andrews as a Lecturer.

During much of this time, Ron continued to play football, and signed as a part-time professional with a number of Scottish clubs. During the period 1946-1955, he played with St Johnstone, East Fife, Brechin City and Berwick Rangers in that order. While with Berwick Rangers, he won a Scottish Qualifying Cup South Runners up Medal in 1949-50, and

Scottish Qualifying Cup South Winners Medal in 1950-51.

Around 1965-66, Ron went to evening classes in Dundee to learn Russian. This led to a visit to Moscow where surprisingly Ron was able to indulge his love of football, He played for The Rest of the World against the USSR in a football match which was organised in the stadium of Moscow Dynamo. The home team, who had been in training for several weeks, won 5 - 2.

***David Letham***

# HERE AND THERE

## FUND RAISING EVENT

On Friday, 1st September, 2017 a Robbie Williams/Michael Buble Tribute Night was held in The Black & Gold Club. This was an event jointly organised by Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust and Berwick Rangers Supporters Club.

A very enjoyable night was enjoyed by around seventy people thanks to the talents of versatile singer David Donnelly-Kay.

In the first half of the show, the audience was entertained by the songs of Canadian singer Michael Buble. The night started with one of his best known numbers 'Come Fly With Me' which was followed by many of his other hits and best known recordings including 'Beyond The Sea', 'That's Life', 'Mac The Knife', 'For Once In My Life', 'I Just Haven't Met You Yet', 'Fever' and 'Cry Me A River'. After a break of around half an hour when a raffle was held, the second half of the show began and it was all

## WHO ARE COLVILLE PARK?

For the second year running, Colville Park took part in the William Hill Scottish Cup. But who are they and where are they from? They qualified to participate in this season's competition having once more won the Scottish Amateur Cup. This time, they played four matches in all knocking out two East of Scotland League sides in the Preliminary Rounds. A 7-0 success at Burntisland Shipyard was followed by a 5-0 win over Preston Athletic. In the First Round proper they defeated Lowland League Cumbernauld Colts 2-1.

Drawn at home for the latter two ties, their own ground in Motherwell was considered unsuitable for the Scottish Cup so both were relocated to New Tinto Park in Govan, Glasgow, home of Junior club Benburb.

Reward for beating the Colts was a trip to Balmoor Stadium and a 9-0 defeat by SPFL 2 Peterhead.

going to be Robbie Williams' songs. The first was the appropriately named 'Let Me Entertain You'. By this time it was noticeable that the dance floor had started to become busier. This could have been because of the type of song being performed or possibly because, by this stage, more alcohol had been consumed! More of Robbie's hits followed including 'Rock DJ', 'Millennium', 'No Regrets', 'Strong', 'She's The One' and 'Candy'. As the night came to a close the performer finished with the classic song 'Angels' much to the audience's delight. All those who attended seemed to have had a very enjoyable night.

Including the raffle the night raised a modest profit of £230 which was split evenly between the Supporters Trust and the Supporters Club. The money will be used by both organisations for the benefit of Berwick Rangers Football Club.

## NOW THERE ARE FIVE

With Highfields United's defection from the North Northumberland League to the Border Amateur League, there are now five clubs from Berwick playing in Scottish football. Highfields join Berwick Colts and Tweedmouth Amateurs (now officially rebranded as Tweedmouth Community F.C.) in the BAL. Tweedmouth Rangers are in the East of Scotland League and of course, Berwick Rangers in the SPFL.

With Springhill folding early in the season, it leaves just two adult teams from the town still playing in English football, Tweedmouth Harrow in the NNL and Spittal Rovers in the Northern Alliance. Rovers have been playing home fixtures out of town at Lowick but are planning to return to England's most northerly football pitch at Newfields on the edge of Berwick.

## SHOULD SCOTLAND GO EAST?

Following Scotland's 2-2 draw in Slovenia last October, a result which ended their hopes of making it to this year's World Cup Finals in Russia, manager Gordon Strachan's comment, "Genetically we are behind", attracted a lot of attention.

If Scottish players' lack of physique makes it difficult to compete in Europe, perhaps Scotland should consider following Australia's example and switch confederations. Not that the Aussies'

move from Oceania to Asia in 2006 had anything to do with size even though amongst their Pacific rivals were island nations renowned for providing big men to the rugby codes. More, it was results such as the 2001 demolition of Tonga (22-0) and American Samoa (31-0) which convinced officials that the Socceroos would be better off playing in Asia.

Players from some Asian countries are typically smaller than those in Europe so going east might be the answer to the problem articulated by Strachan. An implausible idea? What about Israel and Kazakhstan, both affiliated to UEFA?

## DERES DELIVER AS PAPERBOYS LOSE WAY

**Richard Mann had some fun writing this report of a recent Southern Counties East First Division match between Erith and Belvedere and K Sports. The visitors were formerly known as Aylesford Paper Mills, hence their nickname, 'The Paperboys'. How many names of national newspapers can you find within the text? We think there are six.**

### Erith & Belvedere 2 K Sports 1

Erith & Belvedere delivered only the second league defeat of the season for top of the table K Sports as they overturned a half-time deficit to clinch the points with a ninetieth minute winner.

The in-form Deres began brightly and on the quarter hour man of the match star striker Arlie Desanges saw Paperboys' guardian Jack Rankin make an outstanding save with his feet as he attempted to turn in a cross from only a yard out.

Ten minutes later Deres' custodian Tommy Taylor mirrored his opposite number's save when he prevented Paperboys' winger Dan Stubbs scoring.

The Deres had the majority of the possession in the first half and it came as a surprise when just as the sun was setting on the period a Paperboys' breakaway resulted in striker James Alderman opening the scoring.

The second forty five minutes began with the Deres dominating the exchanges and just seven minutes into the half Desanges was again denied by a back peddling Rankin who turned the striker's header over the bar.

Try as they might the Deres were unable to unlock the Paperboys' defence and threw caution to the wind as they made a double substitution with twenty minutes to go and switched to a 4-2-4 formation.

With eight minutes to go the express pace of substitute Jonathan Murray undid the Paperboys' defence and after he rounded Rankin, Murray shot through the legs of a defender on the goal line to equalise.

The Deres did not revert to a more conventional formation to secure a point but continued to press for all three and were rewarded just as additional time was being indicated when Desanges finally beat Rankin.

Happy times for the Deres as they move up to 8th in the table while the Paperboys saw their lead at the top of the table reduced to a single point.

Attendance: 34

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