

Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust Working for Club & Community

TRUST MEMBERS NEWSLETTER • SUMMER 2008 • FREE TO MEMBERS • ISSUE NO. 12





Newsletter No. 12 Summer 2008

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from the chairman...

Dear Members,

Well, the curtain eventually fell on one of Berwick Rangers' most dismal seasons in its long history - cast adrift at the bottom of the Second Division, over 100 goals conceded, and Micheal Renwick sacked after less than a year in post. Mr Renwick kindly attended the last Trust AGM, and gave a pretty good account of himself, but as we all know, results are what matters in football and he failed to deliver on that score. Inexperience? Poor man-management? Lack of resources? Who knows - but lets hope that interest in the Club can be quickly rekindled.

What was really apparent last season was the impact on the core support, the people who watch 30+ games a season home and away. The lack of competitiveness on the pitch, coupled with a general apathy off the field, has led to many loyal fans finding other things to do on match days, and worringly low crowds as a result.

The malaise surrounding the Club hasn't been restricted to matches - communication with fans has been appalling, evident in an out-dated web-site and Club issues being released by a third party through internet forums - a shocking way to conduct business. The Club AGM on the 30th April was a great opportunity to give some vision for a more positive future for the Club. Sadly, those who attended came away less than impressed - time will tell.

The new management team of Alan McGonigal and Martin Mooney are in place now and have pretty much a 'clean slate' - the squad who start the new season will be their choice, obviously determined by the resources available to them, but it should prove an interesting time, especially with the introduction of 'Club X' to the Third Division!

The Trust's affairs this year are really positive. The publication of Mission Impossible was a huge task, professionally undertaken, and the book has travelled to many parts of the globe already as orders continue to come in from Australia, Dubai and USA, to name a few. Membership passed the 200 mark and is still climbing, and our end-of-season raffle brought in some welcome funds. Thanks to all those who sold tickets, bought tickets, and donated prizes. A full list of winners is printed elsewhere in this newsletter

I can also report that at our last Committee meeting we decided to lend our support to the excellent Supporters Club initiative to install new seats at Shielfield Park, donating over £2000 from Trust funds to provide another 100 new

Finally, can I take this opportunity to thank all Trust Members for continuing to support the organisation through your subscriptions and other gestures, and especially I'd like to thank those individuals who give so much of their time and energy to drive the Trust forward. Its a pleasure to be the Chairman of an organisation where there is so much creativity, passion and commitment.

Enjoy the new season! Best wishes,



our season preview

very Berwick Rangers supporter will be glad to see the back of the Season of Shame, and the appointment of Alan McGonigle and a substantially new squad of players gives everyone a chance to do just that. While there is a justifiably optimistic air about the new season, at least with regard to the playing side, the catastrophic 2007/08 campaign should not be consigned to the past without some kind of analysis about where it all went wrong, in the hope that lessons have been learned.

This Season of Shame saw the accumulation of a litany of unwanted records, with the club registering the lowest points total since joining the league in 1955 (the 1987 vintage also obtained 16 points), the lowest number of league wins (3 !!!;the previous lowest was 4 in 1996), and the third highest number of goals conceded (after 114 in 1956 and 109 in 1957, but you could excuse that because people needed something to brighten them up after years of rationing).

So where did it all go wrong? Well, without flashing my bogus internet degree in hindsight, it was clear that John Coughlin's miraculous title win papered in 2006/07 over the

cracks. The annual emigration to Ochilview (episode three began a few weeks ago) weakened a side that managed to wrest the title from a more skilful Queens Park side by virtue of superb organisation, the occasional outbreak of outrageous skill from Haynes et al, and an ironclad defence. The second division was always going to be a harder nut to crack, and most fans were realistic about what the Black & Gold could achieve, the concensus being that survival would be a pretty good result. Critically, the club failed to consolidate the title winning side, with the result

that the team never got to build momentum at any stage of the season. They did'nt recover from a poor start and relegation looked a dead cert from the autumn onwards.

Coughlin's resignation after the loss to Alloa Athletic in early October was a harsh blow, and the downward spiral after he left highlighted the magnitude of his achievement last year. The untried Michael Renwick picked up the reins but proved unable to stem the tide.

In his meetings with supporters, Renwick came across as sincere and committed, but looking back he was asked to carry out another mission impossible, and his cause was fatally damaged by the myserious long term absence of key players like Manson and McGroarty, the inexplicable decisions to send experienced players like O'Connor and Bolo out on loan to the Shire, and the sale of Swanson (the right decision by the way, because few clubs at our level can

afford to turn down that kind of wad) and Diack. A club like Berwick cannot cope with the loss of such important players, and the only conclusion to be drawn from the whole sorry affair is that the relegation towel was thrown in long before we reached the Christmas break. You can draw your own conclusions about what that says for the way

the club treats its supporters.It's no wonder Rangers fans started voting with their feet, resulting in a home support around the 180 mark for the embarrassing midweek defeat to Queens Park. Don't be fooled by the official crowd figures which read like a Zimbabwean absent voters list.



Anyway, the upshot is that Renwick

was sacrificed following a series of horror-show scorelines, the calamitous defeats to Queens Park and a low quality Raith outfit ramming the final nails into his coffin. Inevitably, another queue of wannabes quickly lined up for Scottish football's equivalent of death row, though Alan McGonigle's appointment may very well turn out to be an astute one given his record as a successful number two and the Lazarus job he performed at Camelon. While McGonigle deserves to have the fans behind him, and let's hope he gets a fairer crack of the whip than Renwick, supporters will not tolerate another season of the garbage that was served

up last year. The least the club chairman could have done was offer up some kind of apology to supporters for an appalling season but perhaps that was too much to expect from a club which continues to conduct a significant part of its public relations business through football forums rather than via its official website. Which needs to be kept properly updated if its going to be of any value to Berwick Rangers fans,many of whom live further afield and can't get to every game and don't have access to the Berwick Advertiser.

An interesting dimension has been added to the close season by the apparent appointment of Mr John Roberston as an associate director, whatever that means. Judging by newspaper and other reports, he appears to be a man with a few ideas of his own who is prepared to put his money where his mouth is, which to my mind entitles him to have a significant say in the way the football club is run and how it plans for the future. Given that new ideas in the boardroom are often as welcome as a wasp in a spacesuit, it will be very interesting to see how his ambitions gel with the approach of those who sit in the big seats round the boardroom table. At least the boardroom boasts personalities like Bill Parkin and Brian Porteous, who seem disposed to the concept of a harmonious football club where people work for the common good, and who are much more likely to share the new man's agenda.

It's understandable that many supporters turn a blind eye to the political dimension at their football club, but it can be a high risk strategy. Look at what was allowed to happen last season, and ask yourself what you'd do if it happened again. Are you prepared to support a yoyo club which bounces back and forth between the second and third divisions? Or would you rather build a football club on a more solid foundation with a proper strategy for sustained success in the future? If you're still picking the splinters out of your backside, maybe it's time you climbed off the fence. This is your club - if you don't start and take an interest in how its run, remind yourself about what happened at Gretna. Anyway, welcome to Alan McGonigle and Martin Mooney, and good luck. You may need it.



Our 200th Member!

Testimonials



Supporters Trust membership hits double century



■ Gemma is pictured with Trust committee meml Derek Purvis, Cameron Waterhouse & Bill Purv

Our Supporters Trust continues to go from strength to strength and we recently signed up our 200th member.

This is a significant milestone and means that the Trust membership now makes up more than half Rangers current average home support.

Rangers supporter Gemma Law became the Trust's "double centurion" and was presented with a signed shirt with "Member 200" emblazoned on the back by Trust board members Cameron Waterhouse and Derek Purvis before the recent home game against Ross County. The Supporters Trust also be treated Gemma to a VIP day out at the home match against Queens Park last season as part of her prize for winning the Trust's *'Target 200'* campaign.

Long-time fan Gemma said: "I'm absolutely delighted to have become the Trust's 200th member. I think the fact that so many supporters are joining up shows that they believe that the Trust is doing a very good job in representing their views."

Trust membership has slightly increased to 201 since Gemma signed up, and the Trust board will be setting a new target of 250 members

Our next target is **250**! Our Winter newsletter will contain all the details of our next membership drive!

Unusually enough two testimonial matches will be taking place this year. They appear to be like rural buses, none for years then two at once! The two players concerned are Gary O'Connor and Grant McNicoll.

Grant as you will know has had his match, and in common with Gary approached the Trust asking if we could give them help in producing their respective testimonial programmes.

They in turn have proved to be very different tasks. Our own Paul Smith, who together with the vice-chairman have be instrumental in producing a reserve programme this season, took on the task of putting together a more conventional match programme for Grant's match against a Hearts XI. This involved a meeting with several board members prior to a home match at Shielfield with Grant and his parents, who themselves had driven proceedings up till then. Having clarified what we as an organisation could do to help various members got their offerings to Paul who pulled the whole thing together in his own inimitable style and produced Grant a programme to sell at the game.





Gary's was a bit different and I'm sure Paul would say himself just a wee bit more complicated! Most of the editorial had been done by the extremely ubiquitous George Matheson, after another meeting with various board members, and Gary and George in another Berwick boozer (anyone see a pattern emerging here? - Ed). Again, all the editorial from various sources went to Paul who worked his magic and this time produced a superb 64 page testimonial brochure, which will be on sale during Gary's testimonial year.

We have also funded the creation of **www.garyoconnor.net**, a website with news of Gary's testimonial year.

As we went to press with this newsletter we have just learned that Celtic will be sending a team for Gary's testimonial on Sunday 27th July 2008.

As usual, the Trust was very happy to be able to help out with arrangements to honour the careers of two of Berwick Rangers' most loyal servants (and all-round good guys).

 Grant is pictured with Gary McKay after his testimonial which ended with a 4-4 draw.



Supporters Trust AGM 08

Vice-Chairman's Report



Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust chairman John Bell reported on another succesful year at the Trust's 4th Annual Meeting, held in The Bonarsteads on Saturday.

Highlights of the Trust's achievements during the previous 12 months included the publication of the "Mission Impossible" book celebrating last year's successful promotion campaign, and a further increase in Trust membership to 201, which represents more than 50% of Berwick Rangers' core home support.

Rangers' manager Michael Renwick attended the meeting and spoke about his teambuilding plans for the new season, which he admitted would be largely dependent on the financial resources made available by the board, although the manager was committed to returning his side to the Second Division at the first time of asking. Michael Renwick impressed the meeting with his attitude and commitment, although a long run of poor results led to his eventual sacking.

Supporters Trust members endorsed proposals for their organisations' 2008/09 budget, with sums ring-fenced for helping with physical improvements that will benefit supporters, continued support for youth and community development, and a general purpose fund to support schemes put forward by Trust members.

The Trust are also looking at a series of new fundraising schemes and these will be reported to the Trust membership in the near future. In the meantime, the Trust is supporting forthcoming testimonials for long-serving Rangers legends Grant McNicoll and Gary O'Connor.

Finally, the Supporters Trust board welcomes a further two new members in David Spence and Ian Gregory, and looks foward to them helping build on last year's achievements. This is in addition to Cameron Waterhouse, who joined in February.

A full set of A.G.M. minutes can be downloaded from **www.berwickrangers.co.uk**

Well here we are again, at the conclusion of another season, my 38th in fact, and I'm sorry to say one of the worst I recall, and I assure

you I've seen some bad ones. This however has set new standards.

After our previous manager John Coughlin came to the conclusion he had done all he was able at our club, and no doubt for the continuation of whatever reputation he had built up in the Scottish game, he left for pastures new. Our Board of Directors thereupon appointed a man, who, in the opinion of many at the time

fell some way short of what was required to take our club forward. This early prognosis unfortunately proved correct and in its wake we all witnessed a season of desperate woe.

Opinions aside, the team, management and directors have in the season just gone set a new club record and equalled another. They have also set a new record in Scottish Football as a whole. All these records as you will guess come under the "worst" heading, and in years to come will be viewed as coldly as that.

We head into season 2008/09 with a new manager, who has been chosen by the same board. What I think our members, and indeed club supporters as a whole are now entitled to, is something from the club telling them why they should contemplate

returning to Shielfield next season. We have been presented with a list of pre season friendlies that hardly sets the blood boiling, hardly the curtain raiser required.

It has just been revealed last month that the board are winding up the reserve team. The Reserves were not a costly exercise, indeed, the reverse. A sad inditement of the board.

In conclusion, after what some may term a rant, I can say on a more positive note that the work of your Trust has gone on in the last year unabated, when those elected have put in a lot of hard work and achieved more success, underpinned by an ever increasing membership.

We at least shall strive to move onward and upward, keep the faith

Colin Pike (Vice-Chairman)

New Committee Members



Cameron Waterhouse

Cam was co-opted on to the committee at the beginning of the year, after helping out at Trust events as a normal Trust member. He is a chef, aged 24.



David Spence

Elected at our AGM in April, David comes on board after helping run our Trust shop in the past. David has been a Berwick fan for many a year!



lan Gregory

Also elected at this year's AGM, Ian has helped out at events and membership drives in the past three years. He is a regular follower, home and away.

JOIN THE TRUST FROM ONLY £2 PER MONTH!

Trust Membership

From only £2 per month, you can become a regular Trust member and receive:

A Pin Badge Membership Card Members Certificate Annual Calendar Regular Newsletters

Join today and help us support football in the local community!

Corporate Membership

Support the Trust and help promote your business! You will receive all the regular benefits, plus:

A free advert in our Newsletter A free advert on our website

Corporate membership is from only £10 per month (£120 per year)!

Junior Membership

Sign up your children or order a members pack as a present for a friend's child or relative.

A Pin Badge Membership Card Junior Members Certificate Calendar

Newsletters Plus a Birthday Card

Junior membership is only £5 per year!



Mission Impossible

New Trust Lottery



In our last newsletter we reported the release of 'Mission Impossible', the story of two contrasting seasons at Shielfield Park.

Six months on and the book has proved to be a big hit with Berwick supporters and football fans in general. The book received positive reviews in 4-4-2 magazine as well as Programme Monthly.

Shortly after the league title was sealed back in April, the Trust put the wheels in motion to produce only the third ever Berwick Rangers book, celebrating our second ever Championship.

Author and Trust member Chris Sanderson and committee members Paul Smith and David Cook worked with local publishers Martins the Printers to put together the 128 page publication.

Following an interview with committee members on Radio Borders, there was a decent turn-out at the book signing back in December. Ten players from the 2006/07 squad were delighted to sign copies for supporters at The Black & Gold.

Programme Monthly



Last seasons squad with author Chris Sanderson at December's book signing in The Black & Gold

This month sees the launch of our new lottery. The lottery is based around the existing 'The Weather Lottery', which has been established for more than 10 years and has helped organisations and charities raise over £7m to date.

The lottery is open to members and nonmembers of the Trust, with the weekly entry only £1. For this you are entered in to four daily draws per week with a chance of winning the daily jackpot of £10,000! There are smaller prizes to be won too.

It is simple to take part, simply log on to our homepage at www.berwickrangers.co.uk and follow the link to The Weather Lottery. We have also enclosed an entry form with this edition of our newsletter.



You can play as many lines of the lottery as you wish, the more you play the greater your chance of winning. And of course the Trust will receive more money.

As well as the chance to win some serious cash, you are helping to raise funds for the Supporters Trust, with every 36p in the pound going in to Trust coffers. If every member took part on a weekly basis, we would generate over £4,000 in extra funds per year!

How it works...

The Weather Lottery is a transparent lottery based on weather temperatures. You can check your daily numbers in The Daily Telegraph or online at http://www.theweatherlottery.com.

We match your chosen numbers against the second digit of temperatures in Fahrenheit in destinations around Europe as follows:

E.g. Corfu is 83° - Istanbul is 96° - Tenerife is 81° - Innsbruck 77° - Edinburgh 62° - Stockholm-64°

You choose 6 Numbers from 0-9.

Sample Line

Istanbul Tenerife Innsbruck

Stockholm



The £10,000 winning combination is 361724 So if you pick numbers 3 - 6 - 1 - 7 - 2 - 4 THEN YOU MATCH 6 AND WIN £10,000.

MATCH 3 NUMBERS AND YOU MATCH 4 NUMBERS AND YOU MATCH 5 NUMBERS AND YOU MATCH 6 NUMBERS AND YOU

WIN £2.00 WIN 20.00 WIN £200.00

WIN £10.000.00

To date The Weather Lottery has paid out over £ 7,000,000 in prizes.

JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP NOW AVAILABLE JOIN TODAY FROM ONLY £2 PER MONTH!

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

Copies still available priced £9.99

Available at www.berwickrangers.co.uk

Or at the Supporters Trust Shop at Shielfield

Park, Tyne & Tweed; The Pilot Inn; Berwick



News Snippets

Membership Cards



END OF SEASON RAFFLE - THE WINNERS

The draw for the end of season raffle was made on Saturday 19th April, these are the winners: Fuji Digital Camera - Elaine Turnbull, Musl'burgh I Pod Nano – Ronald Kirk, Duns Phillips DVD player – D Lambert, c/o Jusrol £50 cash – Betty Dickson, Edinburah £10 Foxtons voucher – S Cummings, Musl'brah Copy of Mission Impossible – James L Copy of Mission Impossible – A Smith, Swinton McAllan whisky - Jane Pannell c/o Council Trust Polo shirt – Justine Craig c/o Labour Ward Sunday lunch at Pilot – Ian Scobie, 109 Newfields Beer Glass - Matthew McLean, Middlesex Hip Flask - C Wells c/o Jusrol Picture Frame – W Purvis, Swinton Jack Daniels – R Robertson Swinton Bottle of Champagne – Keith S Tia Maria – Scott Laird, Edinburah Cabernet Sauvignon – Gordon Robertson Rose wine – M Thompson White wine - Marie Wallace, Edinburgh Red wine – Chris Hall, Cramlington

ONLINE FUNDRAISING

We are in to our second year of using fundraising website EasyFundraising after a successful first year. We raised over £100 from commissions paid to us by various companies, after many of you clicked-through to by goods and services, from our own homepage. Thank you to everyone who has supported this fundraising idea so far, hopefully many more of you will use it in the future.

The stats on the EasyFundraising website report that if every user of the Trust website used our homepage click-through to do their shopping online, they would raise £30 per year on average. We currently have around 300 unique visitors to the website each week, so if everyone went through us to do their online shopping we would raise in the region of £9000 per year!

Obviously this is a very ambitious target, but we would like to think that the next time you are

buying something online you will remember how much can be raised if you use our click-through.

BRFC WEB SEARCH ENGINE

Those of you who log on to our website will have noticed that we have added a new search tool to our homepage. It works much like Google or Yahoo!, the only difference being that with every search made, 1p is donated to Trust funds! To put this in to real terms, if every visitor to the website made it their home page and used it ten times a day, we would raise nearly £8,000 a year! Please use it as much as you can and help us raise some extra funds.

TRUST CHAIRMAN SCOOPS LOCAL AWARD

Our very own John Bell was presented with the prestigious Community Award at the recent Berwick Advertiser Community Awards.

John fills many other roles in the local community, but he is probably best known for his work in setting up and running the Berwick Youth Project. He is also credited with raising over £4m in funding which has directly benefited the Berwick community.

Vice-chairman Colin Pike commented 'I think we tend to forget the quality of the man sometimes" He continued "Its important that the role of chairman of any organisation is filled by someone held in high regard in the community, something that this award ably demonstrates'.

Well done John...



John receiving his award from Mayor Hazel Bettison

By now you should have received your membership reward card, which was enclosed with this newsletter.

Keep a hold of it - it will come in handy. It entitles you to discounted entry at all Trust events, cheaper bus travel to away games and money off at the Trust Shop.

We are also speaking to the Berwick Chamber of Trade who will be putting forward a list of shops in the town which will also be accepting the card and offering discounts. Details of which will be on our website in the next few weeks.

In the meantime, slip it in your wallet and enjoy the benefits, as we hope to give something back to our members.



Discounted Trust Event Entry 10% off BRFC Merchandise Discounted Supporters Travel 10% Discount in Selected Shops 10% Discount with Two Way Taxis Other Trust-Only Offers

Membership Update



Membership Reaches 201

When our last newsletter was produced membership stood at 186 and had been fairly static for a while. However since the turn of the year we have had 18 new members and our target was reached in February when Gemma Law became our 200th active member. While our current membership has fallen back slightly from a high of 204 I think we can safely claim to represent more than 50% of our core home support - not too bad for a "splinter" group.

In mid-May I sent out reminders to 52 members who pay their subscription annually and to date 30 have replied which means that 22 have still to respond! Of these at least 6 will pay when the football season restarts but I shall be pleased to hear from the rest of you at your earliest opportunity even if it is to let me know that you do not wish to renew your membership. I hope however that most of you will renew your subscriptions and continue to support our aims.

Members who have joined since our last newsletter are:-

Full Members: Neil Withington (Preston), Annette Barwick (Edinburgh), George Mathison (Edinburgh), Andrew Hay (Spittal), Carol Keen (Hong Kong), Steven Donnelly (Ayrshire), Paul Glassborow (London), Gemma Law (Tweedmouth), Gerard Pearson (Surrey), Neil Oglesbee (Bourne, Lincs.), Isla Barber (Peebles), Nigel Robson (South Perth, W.Australia), Ian Harris (Maidstone).

Junior Members: Jack Laing (Spittal), Gemma Donnelly (Kilwinning, Ayrshire), Reece Swanston (Berwick), Tai Meakin (Berwick), Craig Blackhall (Spittal), Edward Dunsire (Shipley, W. Yorks).



WHAT WE'RE ABOUT...

Established in 2003, we have quickly become one of the most successful Supporters Trust organisations in the UK. We have also managed to become the second biggest shareholders in Berwick Rangers F.C., through the purchase of shares. The Trust is owned and run by its members who each have one vote. The Supporters Trust cannot guarantee greater success on the pitch, but works to ensure the club continues for the benefit of the community and all supporters of Berwick Rangers F.C.

WHAT WE DO...

We are involved in many projects and initiatives. Our core aims are to:

- Strengthen the bonds between the Football Club and the community which it serves.
- Promote the principle of supporter representation on the Football Club Board.
- Promote football and its development locally.

We have put over £30,000 into the football club to help with first team affairs, stadium improvements, youth and reserves, as well as merchandising and marketing.

GET INVOLVED! FROM ONLY £2 PER MONTH

If you like the sound of what we do and would like to become a Supporters Trust member, please fill in your details overleaf. You can choose to be a Senior, Junior or Corporate Member. We will be in touch shortly to complete your application and you will receive your membership card, certificate, pin badge and car sticker. If you have any queries, please get in touch - 0776 418 9983 or trust@berwickrangers.co.uk









www.berwickrangers.co.uk