



Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust

Working for Club & Community

TRUST MEMBERS NEWSLETTER • SUMMER 2009 • FREE TO MEMBERS • ISSUE NO. 14

NEW KIT ON SALE

PAGE 6



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**In this
issue...**



We look forward to
the new season



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the heights!

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Newsletter No. 14 Summer 2009

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from the chairman...

Dear Members,

Welcome to our latest newsletter - I hope you're having a grand summer and looking forward to the start of the new season.

Whilst it might appear that things have been quiet in recent months, the Club has undergone a mini-revival off the pitch, with a host of activity designed to provide a better service to supporters. What's evident is the spirit of co-operation, and everyone has really pulled together since the take-over in the Spring. Developments such as the new official website, on-line shop and ticketing have progressed due to the influence and hard work of fans.

What's very apparent is that the Club cannot possibly be run well with only the efforts of a Board of Directors, and with everyone once again feeling part of their football club, the feel-good factor has certainly made its way to the dressing room. The management team are reporting that players are in good spirits and gelling together as a side, which has to be a good sign for the season ahead.

I'd just like to highlight a couple of things - one being the dedication that Jimmy

Crease gives to his role as Manager. I've gained an insight into the time, energy and passion that he brings to his role, and he is absolutely tireless in his efforts for Berwick Rangers. We all sincerely hope that his hard work will pay dividends in the months ahead.

The other is a mention of Paul Smith, our webmaster and compiler of newsletters, amongst other things. Paul moved across to Australia a few months ago, and all on the Trust Committee were really worried that we'd lost someone who did a huge amount of work on our behalf. I'm delighted to report that in this age of technology, Paul is continuing to do most of the things he did before, only with more sunshine in his life! That includes the layout of this newsletter - so all the best in Oz, Paul - look forward to seeing you again soon.

Best wishes,

John Bell
Chairman
(Director of BRFC)

Just as the close-season circus hits new heights of insanity - Man City offering a half-fit John Terry £250,000 a week (a sum that would cover our wage bill for around three years), Barcelona offering £39m plus Alexander Hleb and Samuel Eto to Inter for hopeless Swedish carthorse Zoltan Ibrahimovic, and Sven Goran Ericsson surreally washing up at the door of a Noits County side managed by ex Ger Ian "Pumper" McParland, it's been a relief to get back to some kind of normality with the Black and Gold. Unlike Real Madrid, we've haven't sold our soul for a collection of overpriced mercenaries. Well, ok, maybe just a couple. I love my football, but I have to admit that I've got just as much pleasure this summer from watching the British & Irish Lions manage to lose heriocrally whilst retaining the moral high ground against a cynical and unloved Springboks outfit, and a Flintoff-inspired England force their way into a one nil lead over a combativebutpersonality-free Australia. Sometimes you just need a break from the beautiful game.

Watching these other sports reminded me that drama, skill and commitment isn't the sole preserve of the football field, and football at any level will do well to match the quality and tension of the aforementioned rugby and cricket contests. At the start of this diatribe, I mentioned that top-flight football has become a freak show and an opportunity for every money-grabbing lowlife to screw both the poorly-regulated game and us, the hapless suckers who fork out every week to watch our favourite team, subscribe to Sky and buy the latest strip. Venting anger at the sheer greed-driven lunacy of it all has been done by better scribes than I'll ever be, but I'm thankful my allegiance doesn't lie with a "big" team. The further down the football pecking order you are, the less likely it is you'll be steamrollered by the moneymaking machinery of grasping players and their agents and all the other hangers on. That's not to say the problem doesn't exist at Berwick's level - we all know it does, but it's a damn sight less pernicious.

It was with some anticipation then that I ventured along to Shielfield on 18th July for our first home friendly of the season - a comfortable 4-2 win over the trophy-laden Hibs U-19 side. Playing a very watchable game of high-paced passing football, Rangers outclassed their full-time opponents in the first half and ended up with a 4-0 lead before the Hibeas restored some semblance of acceptability with two late goals. The real action began on 25th July with a disappointing 4-2 loss to Stranraer in the first round of the Alba Challenge Cup. We're making an unfortunate habit of early cup exits and it's unlikely that pattern will be broken against Premier League hopefuls Partick in the League Cup on 1st August. At least there were some mitigating circumstances in the Stranraer defeat - not least of which was the team bus being clobbered by an out-of-control car on the way to Stranraer. Steven Notman's 18th minute red card and Jamie Ewart's dismissal in the tunnel at half time meant that their teammates had to play 45 minutes with 9 men. That they pulled the score back to 3-2 with four minutes left reflects well on their competitive instincts but Jimmy Crease is going to have to get a grip on discipline to prevent it

pre-season preview

BY DAVID COOK

derailing the season before it's really got under way. Jamie Ewart, who pretty much cleaned up in last year's player of the season awards, is already banned from the opening league fixtures and his latest aberration will extend his absence at precisely the time his qualities are most needed.

Rangers' squad still looks a touch thin to me, though keeper Mark Peat, defender Andrew McLean, midfielder Oliver Russell and striker Steven Radzynski have all been signed up since the weekend. The rigours of a third division campaign will need a squad of 20-22 to keep the Gers competitive, so it'll be interesting to see how close Jimmy Crease gets to that if real progress is to be made in league and cup competitions. The trials and tribulations of the last couple of seasons have been well documented, so it makes a pleasant change to be able to report that off the field, relations between



the new board, which now features directors from both the supporters trust and the supporters club, and those supporters' organisations are more harmonious than they've been for some time. There's still a lot of work to be done before all the pieces of the jigsaw fall into place, but early signs are certainly encouraging. Rangers finished second bottom in a poor league last year, despite a temporary uplift in form after Jimmy Crease took over from the unlamented Alan McGonigle. Alan who? Quite. It's difficult to forecast who the front runners will be in this season's third division. Of the relegated sides, I'd discount Stranraer, who are probably thankful to still have a side in the league after their financial traumas, though Queens Park might be contenders. Forfar have been throwing some of their Sky money around and with the experienced Dick Campbell at the helm they're my favourites for the title. Albion Rovers have surprisingly held on to the services of Bobby Barr for another season, and if they can achieve consistency they could be dark horses. Annan will do well to maintain their form of last year, though Cowdenbeath will probably challenge again, despite losing star striker Gemmill to Montrose. So where does this leave Rangers? A mid-table finish would be acceptable progress, and anywhere in the play-offs an unexpected bonus. The beauty of it all is that, unlike say the English or Scottish Premier leagues or the Spanish Liga, we haven't a clue how the final table will look. And that uncertainty is what makes the Third Division a genuine competition, unlike some of its more heralded counterparts which have been corrupted by cash.

Despite the air of optimism at Shielfield, Scottish football in general is mired so deep in the brown stuff that only a radical overhaul looks like saving it. Livingstone have just entered fiscal administration for the second time in their 14 year history, Clyde are on the brink, Stranraer hanging by a thread and sundry rumours persist about the survival prospects of a host of other clubs. The Scottish Leagues have just been rated something like 34th in the world, trailing the likes of Ecuador, Egypt and Uzbekistan. There is no easy way out of this mess and at Shielfield, all we can do is make sure that Berwick Rangers becomes a well-run club with a robust structure and sound financial base, and is respected where it counts. To do that, it's vital that the new spirit of co-operation is sustained and that the town starts to get behind it's senior football team.



Vice-Chairman

Greetings once again!

Here we are again, only this time at the eve of a new season in every sense of the word. Everything that has gone before is now well and truly history and we can look forward to the season upon us with hope and expectation.

As you will be aware the Trust played a full part in the take over which resulted in the ownership of the club changing hands. We now sit at the boardroom table by right rather than invitation, and are playing a full and active part in the running of our club.

For that reason I personally enter this season feeling back to the way I used to and really looking forward to what lies ahead.

Let us, however, not underestimate the task in hand. The new administration, of which we are a full partner, is now responsible for what is served up, and by that I don't just refer to the playing side. Everything has, and is, getting a revamp, and I would ask all associated with the club, in particular, you as a Trust member, to show some patience if all that is attempted does not come off right away.

Everyone in the Trust now has a direct route straight to the top in our club, and as such actually owns a part of our club, how many other fans can say as much.

Keep the faith,
Colin



Your Trust Needs YOU!

The Trust Board currently has 4 vacancies. The Board is allowed a maximum membership of 15 and currently has 11 members, although that number may change shortly.

We're looking for people with all sorts of skills. Typical board member activities include helping organise events, producing material for websites and newsletters, fundraising, working with people at the football club and supporters club on joint initiatives, attending Supporters Direct meetings etc, IT work etc. If you are a current trust member and would like to step up your commitment by joining the board, let us know - you'll be made very welcome!

The board meets roughly every 6-8 weeks to carry out its formal business but there is

normally other work to be done in between meetings, usually involving arranging events or activities that will either raise funds or boost membership.

Most serving board members will up for re-election in April 2010, but if you join now your appointment would be for 2 years (all board members are appointed for a period of 2 years). This is an exciting opportunity to get involved in helping Berwick Rangers Football Club make progress on and off the field.

The trust is now represented on the football club board by director (and trust chairman) John Bell, so we have an influential voice when it comes to major decisions affecting Berwick Rangers. You can help get fans view across by joining us on the trust board. **Sign up now!**



Trust Events



Since the Trust held its first public meeting back in 2003, fundraising has always been one of its main objectives.

The very first idea to come to fruition was a balloon race, so in the summer of 2003 the very first fundraising event was held when we launched balloons from the centre circle prior to kick off.

Following on from the success of this we have organised live musical acts with both the Happy Cats and Gangsters of Ska appearing at the Black & Gold. The Gangsters in particular were a huge success with standing room only in the club.

A well attended New Years Eve party was then organised and proved to be a huge success especially since a lot of non Trust members attended. We have organised discos for Valentines Day and Halloween, both were fancy dress optional and although numbers weren't great, everyone enjoyed themselves.

We have also catered to the brainiacs as well by running several quizzes both on a football and general knowledge basis, even organising one before a match with East Fife which was well attended by fans of both teams.

The most successful fundraisers without doubt though are the Race Nights. These have normally been held in the Pilot but on one occasion we pitched up at Haggerston Castle for the night and held one for the Caravan owners.

Whilst these have been all arranged with aim of raising funds for the Trust it has also been about getting the name of the Trust seen around the area and to make people aware of what we

stand for and to try and persuade more people to join up.

The future of the Fundraising events is ongoing with several ideas being followed up. It is hoped that after the initial success of the balloon race in 2003, now is the right time to organise another and this will hopefully take place later in the year.

Since the takeover of Berwick Speedway links between the two organisations have grown in strength and it is hoped that some sort of event linking the two groups could take place, ideally after a football match and before the start of a speedway meeting. Another race night will be held in the Pilot hopefully sometime in September.

A 70's disco, fancy dress encouraged will also be held in December preferably in the Black & Gold.

It will be easier to organise events linked with the football club and Trust now that the Black and Gold Social Club will be open for business later this year.

All of the future events will be advertised locally and to members nearer the time.

We have organised many events in the past and are currently putting together some events for later this year, but as a Trust member what event(s) would you like to see us organise e.g. do we need to go outside Berwick?, members only event, weekend of different events.

All ideas will be gratefully received by the Committee and we will publish all the ideas received in the next newsletter.

If you have any suggestions call 07764189983 or georgethompson007@hotmail.com or mail to the usual Trust address - trust@berwickrangers.co.uk





News Snippets



NEW STRIPS ON SALE

The new strips, provided by Hummel, are now on sale. They are available at the club shop on matchdays, Tyne & Tweed on West Street in Berwick and via the web at berwickrangers.net (follow the links for the shop). So far sales have been steady with the new away strip slightly outselling the home version.

The online shop also offers various other items for the Dream Team orientated – so get buying now! www.berwickrangers.net

DUCKET WANDERERS

Berwick Rangers Supporter's Team, or at least three of them, took part in a game 2500m above sea level on the mountain plateau in the Atlas Mountains in Morocco. The story is that Trust members, John Bell, Gordon Dickson and Peter Unwin took part in a nine day trek in July.

During the middle part of the journey the local guides produced a battered football and challenged the trekkers to a game on a pitch that even Cowdenbeath would have sniffed at. The England Morocco clash started well for the visitors, taking an early lead but eventually going down 5 – 2 (we think).

Much of the opposition played in sandals and two were in bare feet, including young Rashid who, even when the temperature got up to 42 degrees still kept his jumper on.



NEW CORPORATE SPONSORS

Keenweld (Welding Supplies) Ltd. in Berwick are the latest local company to become a Corporate Member of the Trust. The honorary status was given at the last meeting of the Trust Board in recognition of their longstanding support and sponsorship.

Company Director, Colin Keenan was extremely happy to receive membership on behalf of his business. "I am delighted that Keenweld has been made a Corporate Member of the Trust. I recognise the valuable input that the Supporters Trust has made to Berwick Rangers Football Club. Keenweld is committed to continuing to support your organisation so that it can continue to further its goals and we look forward to sponsoring and enjoying Supporters Trust events in the coming months."

Any company interested in taking out corporate membership or sponsoring a Trust event can call 01890 860329 or e-mail trust@berwickrangers.co.uk.

Box 22 Ltd. is a Berwick-based firm of planning and regeneration consultants which specialises in providing planning and development services to a wide range of clients across the North of England and South of Scotland.

The company has been involved in some of the highest profile development proposals in the Berwick area in recent years and works with many other established local businesses. In lending support to the activities of the Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust, Director Chris White said "We are delighted to be associated with the Trust and hope to play a full role in strengthening the role of the club within the community."

The club is hugely important to the area, and the energy and commitment of the Trust provides a positive example of how local people and businesses can come together to broaden its appeal and strengthen its foundations."

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Since our last Newsletter membership has, despite the performance of the Dream Team on the pitch, continued to increase and has been as high as **233**.

Over the period 18 new members have been recruited but unfortunately we have, for various reasons lost five. In May I wrote to all members who pay an annual subscription and while the majority have renewed their membership there is still a number of you who have still to reply.

As I included stamped addressed envelopes to the U.K. residents there is no excuse not to reply even if it is only to say you do not wish to renew your subscription although in view of our future plans we would rather have your money. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Members who have joined since our last Newsletter are listed below.

Tim Moore (Mansfield, Nottinghamshire), Paul Hodgson (Canty's Brig, Berwick), Gordon Reid (Aberdeen), Preston Horton (Keynsham, Bristol), Steve Wray (Windermere, Cumbria), Phillip Bell (Bramley, Leeds), Malcom Clarke (Guernsey, Channel Islands), Leslie N Harrison (Witney, Oxon), Tris Robinson (Radcliffe on Trent, Nottingham), Tony Sweeney (Corby, Northants), Neil Belcher (Mansfield, Nottinghamshire), Paul Kenny (Lowick) James McLaughlin (Walton on Naze, Essex), William Warner (Berwick), Darren Smart (Doncaster) and Keith Foulds (Sheffield).

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