

# BERWICK RANGERS SUPPORTERS TRUST

## A SUCCESSFUL SEASON

INSIDE:

# BERWICK'S ROCKY HORROR SHOWS

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# Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust

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

**Telephone:** 01890 860329

**Fax:** 01289 306980

**E-Mail:**  
[trust@berwickrangers.org](mailto:trust@berwickrangers.org)

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

 [twitter.com/berwickrst](https://twitter.com/berwickrst)

**Chairman:**  
Michael Smyth

**Vice-Chairman:**  
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**Committee Members:**

Ronald Kirk  
David Spence  
Stuart Lee  
Brendan Thorburn

**Designed &  
Published by:**  
InHouse Design

**Editor:** Michael Smyth

## FRONT COVER

This issue's cover picture is from a season when Berwick Rangers did have something to shout about. By the end of 1903-04, they were champions of the seven club Border League. Taken outside the gymnasium of Berwick Barracks (now the Gymnasium Gallery), the line up includes players (one out of view) and officials along with what is presumably the trophy for winning the league. There is no obvious goalkeeper as at that time keepers still wore the same shirt as outfield players, though it may be the one in the cap. It is poignant to think that several of these men lost their lives in the First World War.

The other teams in the league were Alnwick Percy Rovers, Chirnside, Duns, Eyemouth, Tweedside Albion and Tweedside Villa.

Names and fuller details of how they won the trophy can be found in Alan Bell's 'An International Every Week' which chronicles Berwick Rangers' history over the thirty year period from 1884-1914 and which was reviewed in our previous issue (February, 2017). Produced by Hawkyard Publications, the ISBN no. is ISBN 978-0-9935882-0-4.

# FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

Hello,

**I won't say much about events on the field last season. These are covered by other contributors to this issue. What I would say is that amongst supporters there is naturally dissatisfaction, even anger, about performances and results. 'We can't have another season like that' is a common refrain.**

In club chairman Len Eyre's commendable Christmas message he said, 'Our season so far has not turned out as expected.' It didn't get much better after that, Berwick not being certain of preserving SPFL status until the dying seconds of the final scheduled league game. I am not sure upon what these expectations were

based. Certainly, in the loan stakes, we did nothing like as well as in the previous campaign when Callum Crane and Jordan McGregor made such an impact. Only Euan Spark came close to matching their standard. We had also lost valuable contracted men Ewan McNeil and Blair Henderson whilst Brian Martin was a shadow of his former self until he quit after the January defeat at Montrose.

Clearly, with a loss in excess of £80,000 in 2015-16 and no Cup runs to generate revenue last season, the club needs to be careful how money is spent. There has to be question marks over three of the January signings. There is more about the Dutch pair

in the section on the Under 20s. Did anyone check the medical history of Michael Dunlop before he came back to Shielfield? He hardly played at all.

The Trust Board tries to make sure that members' money is spent wisely. The Under 20s did the club proud and, as a token of our appreciation, we sponsored the April 3rd match at home to Raith giving £250 to the club... unfortunately subject to VAT...in exchange for permitting admission by voluntary donation into the bucket collection.

As I hinted last time, the club's February Annual General Meeting did indeed turn out to be a lively affair though not necessarily for the reasons suggested. By the end of it, three new

directors were confirmed or elected for the first time. We hope that the enthusiasm of Doug Watkin, the football experience of Eric Tait and the business background of John Lawrence will all help the club proceed in the right direction. More recently, three new non-voting associate directors have been appointed.



**FOOT NOTE: For queries or comments about this magazine or to offer contributions for future editions, please e-mail [trust@berwickrangers.org](mailto:trust@berwickrangers.org)**

We had been supplying match reports for the club to post on the official website if it wished. Midway through the season, the board decided it wanted them 'reviewed' before uploading. This was its prerogative but we declined to accept the new condition. Anyway, the official website became something of an embarrassment. For weeks after the event, the main headline remained the 2-all scoreline from Elgin on April 1st. We did continue to offer Development team reports. Most of these lads were playing as amateurs and there could be little of contention in what was written about their games. Last season was such that negative references regarding many first team games could only have been avoided if reports were heavily sanitised. Both first team and DL reports continued to be available on our own website under 'Club News' and on our Facebook pages.

Len Eyre also issued an end of season statement, some of which was open to ridicule. He called for 'all factions of Berwick Rangers to forget their differences and pull together and get fully behind the team, manager and his staff...' a sentiment with which only those of a semi permanent antagonistic persuasion would disagree. However, often it is skilful, capable, even visionary leadership that will achieve such an aim. As for the coming campaign, perhaps it would be prudent to base its outcome on hope rather than expectation.

I hope you find much of interest in this edition. Once again, we have cast our net beyond Berwick Rangers. We describe a major development at our SPFL 2 rivals Annan Athletic, summarise the end to local club Tweedmouth Rangers' first season in the East of Scotland League as well as looking deeper at the quickening pace of developments within Scottish non-league football which ultimately could affect Berwick Rangers directly.

**Michael**

## DID YOU KNOW?

Our SPFL 2 rivals Edinburgh City will be playing at Spartans' Ainslie Park for the next three seasons whilst their Meadowbank Stadium home undergoes a £41 million redevelopment. It's another example of SPFL and Lowland League clubs groundsharing... BSC Glasgow at Alloa's Indodrill Stadium, Cumbernauld Colts and Clyde at Broadwood, University of Stirling with Falkirk F.C., East Stirlingshire at Stenhousemuir's Ochilview and also, new Lowland League side Edusport Academy use Annan's Galabank.

Meadowbank Stadium was originally built to host the 1970 Commonwealth Games but now looks dated, to some resembling stadia commonly found in the former Soviet Bloc. Spartans moved to Ainslie Park, which has an official capacity of 3,000, in 2008. Unlike at Meadowbank, City will now be playing home games on an artificial pitch.

\* Former Berwick Rangers striker Josh Morris has joined another of our SPFL 2 rivals, Cowdenbeath. Last season, he scored 34 goals for Lowland Leaguers Hawick Royal Albert including the famous ( infamous? ) hat trick which helped knock Berwick Rangers out of the Scottish Cup.

\*\* Euan Spark, who was on loan at Shielfield in the second half of the last campaign, has signed for SPFL Championship members Brechin City, a club much closer to his Angus home.

\*\*\* 'Pea' Oliver, whom we featured in our previous issue, is staying on a bit longer in an official capacity at Shielfield to assist his successor as first team kit man, Jim Sheppard.

# BERWICKRANGERS FIXTURES 2017-18

## BETFRED CUP

### JULY

Sat 15th	H	Greenock Morton
Tues 18th	A	Edinburgh City
Sat 22nd		BYE
Tues 25th	H	Queen's Park
Sat 29th	A	Motherwell

## LADBROKES SPFL 2

### AUGUST\*

Sat 5th	H	Clyde
Sat 12th	A	Stirling Albion
Sat 19th	H	Annan Athletic
Sat 26th	A	Cowdenbeath

### SEPTEMBER

Sat 9th	A	Edinburgh City
Sat 16th	H	Elgin City
Sat 23rd	A	Stenhousemuir
Sat 30th	A	Peterhead

### OCTOBER

Sat 21st	H	Montrose
Sat 28th	H	Cowdenbeath

### NOVEMBER

Sat 4th	A	Annan Athletic
Sat 11th	H	Edinburgh City
Sat 25th	A	Elgin City

### DECEMBER

Sat 2nd	H	Stirling Albion
Sat 9th	A	Montrose
Sat 16th	H	Peterhead
Sat 23rd	A	Clyde
Sat 30th	H	Stenhousemuir

## JANUARY

Tues 2nd	A	Edinburgh City
Sat 6th	A	Stirling Albion
Sat 13th	H	Annan Athletic
Sat 20th	H	Elgin City
Sat 27th	A	Cowdenbeath

## FEBRUARY

Sat 3rd	A	Stenhousemuir
Sat 10th	H	Clyde
Sat 17th	A	Peterhead
Sat 24th	H	Montrose

## MARCH

Sat 3rd	H	Stirling Albion
Sat 10th	A	Elgin City
Sat 17th	H	Stenhousemuir
Sat 24th	H	Edinburgh City
Sat 31st	A	Annan Athletic

## APRIL

Sat 7th	H	Peterhead
Sat 14th	A	Montrose
Sat 21st	H	Cowdenbeath
Sat 28th	A	Clyde

\*Tues. Aug. 15th or Wed. Aug. 16th  
Irn Bru Cup First Round  
A v. Kilmarnock Under 20s

List excludes Scottish Cup dates

# YOUNG RANGERS FINISH SECOND

by MICHAEL SMYTH

**Berwick Rangers Under 20s finished as runners up in the SPFL Development League East. Though slightly disappointing after heading the table for much of the season, it was still a fine achievement. Not only was it Berwick's best finish yet in the competition but to put it into some kind of perspective, the budget for champions Raith Rovers' Under 20s operation ran into six figures. At Berwick, it was £2,600, almost one third of which was met by donations from the Trust.**

The difference between Rovers and Rangers in the final table was six points equating to the tally gained by the Fifers from two successive victories at Shielfield at the end of March/beginning of April. That Berwick were then assured of second place was down to Jordan Orru's late equaliser at home to Forfar in Rangers' final match and the help afforded by Stirling Albion in beating Forfar 1-0 in the last DL game of the season the following week. Forfar taking just a single point from those two matches left Berwick two points above them in the final reckoning.

The biggest win during the second part of the season, 7-2 over Cowdenbeath, came at Keltie Hearts' ground. Another game staged on a Junior ground was officially a 'home' fixture. At Newtongrange Star's New Victoria Park, Berwick won 3-1 against Stirling, a big improvement on the 5-0 drubbing on the

Forthbank Astro in December. During the same period, the Under 20s played one other competitive fixture outwith the Development League. With the first team having played Clyde the night before, they represented the club in the East of Scotland City Cup semi final away to Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale at Saughton Enclosure in Edinburgh. LTHV won 2-0 and went on to beat Edinburgh City 2-1 in the Final.



*Jordan Orru scored a vital goal for the Under 20s in their final match v. Forfar  
(Photo courtesy of Berwick Rangers F.C.)*

Conventional wisdom states that if a club such as Berwick can bring through at least one player per season from the Under 20s (or a reserve team) then that is proof of its value. It wasn't as clear cut this time. Leading scorer Daniel Watt (9 goals) became a regular on the senior bench but didn't get much playing time. On occasions, he was joined by Grant Goodfellow

when Rangers were hit by injuries to goalkeepers but he was never called upon to take the field. Orru had originally been signed with the first team in mind but soon became something in between. The Development team also provided opportunities for such as David Verlaque, when under SPFL 2 suspension, and Jonny Fairbairn, returning from injury, to get game time. Calum Helm, who received a non-contact injury in a first team pre-season game in the summer of 2015, finally returned to action as a substitute for the DL team starting with the first of the two home games versus Raith. The performances



*Sam Jones (left, wearing captain's armband) in action v. Lothian Thistle HV.  
David Verlaque is the Berwick player on the right. (Photo by Rae Irvine-Holliday)*

at this level of the two Dutch players signed at the end of January, Ricardo Kessels and Renne Donkor, did little to suggest that they were really first team material. Donkor was brittle at centre back struggling to cope even with the physicality in this league and much more so than either Lewis Swaney (pictured on the front cover of our previous issue) or Adam Forrest, central defenders who left the club well before the end of the season.

Captain Sam Jones finished as second highest scorer on six. Voted as Players' Player of the Year by teammates, he also won the Raymond Hogg Memorial Trophy as Club Young Player of the Year. As he was on duty for Junior club Penicuik Athletic on the same afternoon, he was unable to be present to collect his awards after the first team's May 6th game at home to Edinburgh City.

The thorny issue of Shielfield's susceptibility to the effects of heavy rain meant that there was often uncertainty about whether scheduled

home games would go ahead or be moved to another venue. The team did finish with four in a row on home turf. As it was a must win one if they were to keep alive hopes of winning the league and as a thank you to all involved with the team, the Trust sponsored the April 3rd match with Raith which allowed spectators to attend free of charge. However, donations were welcome. In this way, a further sum of £108 for the club was collected from an official attendance of 85, around double the normal watching (more about the finances of that match in 'From the Chairman').

The format in the seven team DL East was that teams met each other three times meaning that in some cases as with Raith, Rangers got two of the three at home. In others, e.g. Alloa, they twice had to visit the Indodrill Stadium. Queen of the South finished top of the equivalent eight team Development League West six points ahead of Morton.

# VERLAQUE VA VA VOOM

by **RONALD KIRK**

Phew! Well, have we all recovered and are our heart rates and blood pressure back to normal? Despite appearing to be safe from the relegation play off on more than one occasion during the final weeks of the season, Rangers' league status remained in doubt until the very last seconds of the regular season. Having gone into the final game of the season against Edinburgh City needing to avoid defeat to make absolutely certain of avoiding bottom spot, Rangers were comfortably cruising to safety at 2-0 up when synonymous with their season they contrived to throw away that lead and with 5 minutes to go another goal for City together with a late counter for Cowdenbeath up at Elgin would have confined Rangers to bottom spot and the dreaded relegation play off. Thankfully, that scenario didn't materialise and all fears were extinguished with one swipe of David Verlaque's right foot when he fired Darren Lavery's defence splitting pass across the City keeper and into the far corner.

Yet, it all could have been so different. After beginning 2017 at the foot of the table, Rangers won the bottom of the table clash at Cowdenbeath on the first Saturday of the new year with a late Steven Thomson header. A decent February which saw Rangers register wins at home to Annan and league leaders Forfar saw them climb away from the foot of the table. A midweek 4-3 home win over Clyde at the beginning of March saw Berwick open up a 12 point gap over the Blue Brazil who were to be the visitors to Shielfield the following Saturday. A win there and surely a 15 point gap would be too much for the Blue Brazil to claw back?

Cowdenbeath parted company with their manager in the lead up to the game and, as is always the way, this seemed to fire up the Cowden players and they cantered to a 3-1 win. It didn't help that Rangers were set up not to lose the game with their one man up front tactics backfiring spectacularly. Cowden then won their game in hand and all of a sudden the 12 point cushion had been halved.

Rangers steadied themselves and another win over Forfar together with away draws at Edinburgh City and Elgin broadened the gap and Rangers again looked safe. However a run of 3 defeats in a row dragged them



*Darren Lavery in possession in 0-2 defeat to Arbroath in March (Photo by Alan Bell)*

back down into the danger zone. Indeed at one point during the penultimate game of the season at Clyde, Rangers did occupy bottom spot. Early in the second half with the Shielfield side trailing 1-0 news came through that Cowden had taken the lead in their game



against Forfar. Thankfully however, both Rangers and Forfar duly equalised and the 3 point cushion was maintained.

Rangers' problems largely stemmed from their inability to defend. After keeping a clean sheet in a 1-0 away win at Cowdenbeath on 7th January, they failed to register another in their remaining 17 league games. During these 17 games, their defence was breached on 33 occasions. You don't need to be Einstein to work out that that equates to effectively two goals a game. In effect, Rangers were having to score twice to just draw and having to score three to win. In addition, they developed the knack of throwing away two goal leads. 2-0 leads at both Stirling and Elgin ended up in 2-2 draws and even the 4-3 home win against Clyde saw Berwick pegged back from 2-0 up to 2-2 at one point.

“ *Does it come down to money or geographical location?* ”

Once the dust had settled on what in all honesty had been a despairingly bad season, the chairman, manager and club captain declared that we couldn't let that happen again. However, that is easy to say. What is being done to ensure that Rangers, for the first time in a decade, will be featuring at the right end of the table? A number of last season's squad, which let's be honest, fell a long way short of the standard required, remain either having signed two year contracts 12 months ago or having been offered new terms. As the end of June approached, only three new signings had been announced, two of them on loan, with the rumour mill rife that some of Rangers' intended signing targets have already chosen to sign up elsewhere. For me, it will be the quality of the new faces that are brought in which will determine Rangers' prospects. In my view, the manager has to add at least six and possibly as many as eight new players to the squad.

I appreciate that finding players of the necessary quality will not be easy but I did raise concern in my mid-season review in our previous issue that the club are no longer able to attract players of the quality we have had in the past such as Gareth Hutchison, Grant McNichol, Robbie Horn and Tommy Graham. Why is that? This problem has not just arisen overnight. Managers prior to John Coughlin have also struggled to attract quality players to Berwick. Has anyone from the club looked into the reasons why? Has anyone asked former players such as Gareth Hutchison why they signed for Berwick Rangers? Is there anything that could be done to aid the recruitment process? Why are clubs like Stranraer and Brechin able to sign better quality players? Does it come down to money or geographical location? Both Stranraer and Brechin have consistently performed far better than

Berwick during the last few years. Why? Their average home gates are no bigger than Berwick's and they are not exactly better placed geographically. I watched with interest the end of season championship promotion play off final between Brechin and Alloa. Both legs were broadcast live on BBC Alba. Immediately after the first leg which Brechin won 1-0, Darren Dods, the Brechin manager, was interviewed and was asked if he intended bringing in the players for a training session before the second leg. His answer was no as most of his squad would have to travel back to Edinburgh that night and a couple of them had to travel across to Kilmarnock and they all had full time jobs to go to the next day. The important thing was that they got as much rest as possible before the second leg which was less than 72 hours later.

I believe that our manager currently favours a policy whereby all players are either local



*Greg Rutherford attacks v. Arbroath (Photo by Alan Bell)*

or Edinburgh based and whilst I do understand some of the logic behind that, I do wonder if, given our recent struggles, we should be looking at players from further afield. If Brechin can persuade players who are based in Kilmarnock to sign for them then why can't we? There are players out there who are not put off by having to travel. Those of us of a certain vintage will remember the Gareth Hutchison/ Gary McCutcheon partnership from about 15 years ago. Between them they scored almost 40 goals in one season. McCutcheon lived in Stranraer and was obviously not put off by having to travel every week. We have also signed players in the past from the North East of England, such as Warren

Hawke, Scott Sloan, Mark Cass, Kevin Todd, Kevin Walton and Gary Morgan. I believe that of the current squad, Greg Rutherford is based in the North East. Is it time that we explored the possibility of recruiting from the North East again?

As I have indicated earlier, I believe that the quality of the new faces John Coughlin adds to the squad this summer is crucial to our prospects. If he succeeds, then hopefully we can, for the first time in a decade, look forward to supporting a team capable of making a sustained challenge for a promotion play off place if not the league title itself. If the manager fails in the recruitment process as he did 12 months ago then I fear that

another season of battling to avoid the wooden spoon and the dreaded relegation play off trapdoor into Lowland League obscurity ultimately lies ahead.

*David Verlaque receives congratulations for Rangers' final goal of the season (Photo by Ian Runciman)*



# ST ANDREWS BERWICK RANGERS SUPPORTERS

**St Andrews Berwick Rangers Supporters was founded mid season of 2016/17 by myself (David Letham). We're a motley crew of students, staff and a few family members thrown into the mix, all with some sort of connection to St Andrews University. Most of us are still in Fife but a few are further afield in such exotic locations as Belfast, Newcastle and Lanarkshire.**

Why St Andrews Berwick Rangers Supporters? It's a question I'm often asked, and one I often ask myself too. It all started one rainy day when I created the website [www.berwickranger.co.uk](http://www.berwickranger.co.uk) and it moved on from there. I'm frequently asked by a colleague whether it's serious or just a laugh. I tell him it's both: it started as a bit of fun, but I think that's the way it should be. Anyway, he's a Clyde fan...

But why Berwick? Well, my wife is from Berwick and I'd catch the odd game here and there when visiting family. We have a flat in Spittal and while down with a couple of friends I dragged them along to a game. It was such a success, that weekends away with friends are now based around Berwick Rangers fixtures (and beer, of course). Initially my friends were sceptical but the thought of beer and a cheap weekend away won them

over. Everybody who has been to a Berwick game has enjoyed it. Gordon and Tom are now regulars, attending several games (home and, occasionally, away). And I can always rely on my father and my brother for a few games per season.

Forming St Andrews Berwick Rangers Supporters has allowed

us to gather our support under one banner. As a random collection of individuals we'd been to several matches (including hospitality), sponsoring players, sponsored the match ball and contributed to the 1967 50th anniversary dinner. As a group we have presented an

end of season award to Sean Brennan for his outstanding performance against Forfar. We also distributed sweets, branded with our logo, at the end of season game--I was the one in the bear head--and donated money to the Berwick Charities Cup.

For 2017/18 our contributions will include taking out adverts on the perimeter wall and in the programme, sponsoring a player, getting a black and gold bond number, and basically doing whatever we can to promote the club.



# BERWICK'S ROCKY HORROR SHOWS

**STUART BELL LOOKS BACK AT SOME OF THE WORST MOMENTS IN A SEASON WHICH MAY BE REMEMBERED FOR ALL THE WRONG REASONS**

**The wonder that is YouTube forms the basis of this little review of the past season. You see, my abiding memory of what was a brutally inept campaign is of a catalogue of cock-ups the like of which I've rarely seen in the previous 3 decades. The team had a certain spirit and usually displayed the requisite amount of energy, and sometimes even a modicum of skill, but on countless occasions – just when you thought they'd grind out a result – someone would inexplicably turn into Coco the Clown and throw the entire game down the pan. YouTube allows all of us to revisit this calamitous season, and should probably therefore, be banned.**

We must have lost a dozen points or more through some bizarre blunder, and so outrageously awful were some of them I think we need a special honour for the effort that went into these meltdowns. The Golden Turkey awards are presented in the film industry for outstanding contribution to cinematic dross, so you are all invited to a red carpet night at the Black and Gold to see the first annual awards for utterable tosh on a football field. Sponsored by Colin Cameron, the evening will be hosted by Gordon Strachan and Mark McGhee, with guest speaker Nick Walsh.

So without further ado, let's look at the nominations.

## **1. 5th November 2016 – Steve Notman v Cowdenbeath**

Hanging on grimly to a 1-0 lead against the worst team in the world, Stevie Notman embraced his inner red mist with a late launch

of a Cowden player on to the main stand roof, in order to give the gaffer some repair work to do come springtime. We've seen this before from Stevie. Normally a combative but fair and hard tackling soul, he does occasionally transform into Vinnie Jones, especially when he feels he is surrounded by people who don't give enough of a toss. This effort was special though, because it was on the half-way line, was the latest in a series of reds for the 'Gers, was in the 91st minute, and Cowden got the equaliser from the resulting free kick.

## **2. 11th March 2017 – Pat Scullion v Cowdenbeath**

So, having given the bottom club a point in November, we dropped down a gear and handed them all 3 in March. It seemed to many of us in the Ducket that the only explanation for Pat Scullion's extraordinarily inept display was that he'd found a bottle of Glenfiddich behind an advertising board in the pre-match kick about. Although the goals against column kept turning like a taxi meter on a Saturday night, Pat had brought something extra to the team and was, for some, the player of the year. This was not a good day for the shiny headed one, exemplified just after half time when he chased a long ball down to our right corner flag, and stretched to get in a tackle. He won it and the attacker gave up the ghost, but Pat decided to shuffle along on his backside and just managed to keep the ball in play by scooping it to their surprised left back who promptly crossed into the box to set up Cowden's 2nd goal. Admirable commitment there by big Pat.

### 3. 25th March 2017 –

#### Kevin McKinlay v Forfar

You could argue that since we won a fabulous and vital 3 points up at Forfar, this shouldn't get a nomination. But, it was such a determined late double effort by McKinlay to screw up a fantastic effort from the Dream Team, it deserves its nomination for sheer persistence. 3-1 up away to the league leaders is pretty good, and with just 6 minutes of normal time left too. Step forward our Kev. Shepherding a forward away from goal, Kev got a tad too close and clipped the heels of the surprised attacker who collapsed in customary fashion. Penalty despatched, but hey – we are still in the lead and the sun is setting. What could possibly go wrong? Wait a minute ... deep into injury time... right wing cross ... Big Kev is going to challenge for this.....Oh! He does a Usain Bolt pointy finger impression and flicks the ball off a bemused attacker's head on the edge of the box. 2 pens in the last 10 minutes, but this time a ray of hope as Brennan saves the kick to give us 3 points that arguably kept us in the league. One mightily relieved Kevin McKinlay owes the keeper a pint or 200.

### 4. 25th February 2017 -

#### Michael McKenna v Elgin

Another 3 points dropped at home when we played well enough to get something. This game was especially notable for Mikey's late red card – if he could keep them, he'd have enough to paper his living room wall. Already booked for some amateur wrestling in front of the dugout, Berwick won a free kick on the edge of the box with just a few minutes to go and losing 1-0. Mikey said, "I'm having that", and with an expectant hush descending over Shielfield, he ran determinedly in and mishit the most feeble of grass cutters which ballooned up from the wall. Mikey said, "I'm having that as well" and launched himself kung-fu style at the

ball, which was about to be calmly chested away by a defender. Said defender's ribs were subsequently crunched by an airborne McKenna who seemed miffed that common assault is not allowed in such circumstances. The only surprise was that it was a second yellow rather than another straight red. Unsurprisingly, the 10 men lost 1-0.

### 5. 22nd October 2016 –

#### Kevin Walker v Hawick

A gruesome defeat to a non-league side that weren't even any good in their non-league. I think this has to be the winner to be honest, because it was a buy-one-get-one-free cock-up with that man McKenna earning an assist. Mikey was in the opposition half with just a few minutes played, when he decided that it would be a good idea to turn back and launch a 50 yard hoof into the middle of nowhere. Kev Walker had to come 10 yards out of his box on the left side to pick up the cunning pass, but proceeded to dither like an old woman at a supermarket check-out. With several options available, his choice was to lump the ball forward as hard as he could, possibly with his eyes closed. The ball cannoned into a blue shirted backside, before dropping into the path of Josh Morris. He'd never got that sort of service at Shielfield before and calmly slotted home the first of a hat-trick.

All good fun eh? And I didn't even mention Brian Martin...



*Pre-match at the Berwick v. Hawick Cup tie. Number 9 Josh Morris, who bagged a hat trick against his old club, about to clasp hands with Berwick's Brian Martin. (Photo by Ian Runciman)*

# TWEEDMOUTH'S FINAL FIVE

Postponements earlier in the season led to Tweedmouth Rangers finishing their first season in the East of Scotland League with a run of five successive home games. They didn't win any of them yet still had an influence on the destination of the league title. In the first of the five, they lost narrowly to Stirling University. Next visitors were Leith Athletic. It was 2-all at the interval but after a double sending off, the Berwick team had to play all but the early minutes of the second half with nine men.

The odds looked stacked against them especially facing a side hoping to finish as champions and who now had the advantage of the Old Shielfield slope. Tweedmouth had little option but to adopt the San Marino tactic of pulling back all outfield players bar one behind the ball. Of course, it doesn't usually work for the Sammarinese who usually still get beaten but despite everything Leith threw at them, the 'Magnificent Nine' held on to the draw.



Three nights later, Coldstream won 4-0 in a border derby watched by over 100 spectators and there were more than eighty present the following week for the visit of the other championship contenders, Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale. The Edinburgh team missed a host of first half chances but were still 3-0 up at the break. In the second period, they were ruthless. Their final tally of eleven without reply left Leith, still smarting from two points dropped on the same ground, with the near impossible challenge of beating LTHV by a big score to claim the crown when they met on the last Saturday (May 13th) of the league programme. LTHV won 3-2 anyway meaning they finished out on their own at the top, six points clear of their city rivals.

Injuries and suspensions had taken their toll by the time Tweedmouth lined up against Ormiston on the same day, forcing them to list manager Mark Reid as their only substitute. Ormiston's late winner in a 4-3 victory saw them sitting above Tweedmouth on goal difference on the final ladder, both clubs on 12 points, two ahead of bottom club Burntisland Shipyard.

Off the field, the club continued to do the right things, publicising games on the electronic notice boards in Berwick town centre and opening up a turnstile for £2 entry for adults (children free). They also issued a four page £1 programme for the match against the eventual champions (see image above).

# ALL CHANGE AT ANNAN

In what could be a template for Berwick Rangers, SPFL 2 rivals Annan Athletic are on their way to changing their legal status. Up to now, they have been an unincorporated members' club but 74% of those voting in a poll in March were in favour of adopting a more secure existence by becoming a Community Benefit Society (CBS). Supporters Direct played a role giving advice and guidance on how to take this step.

Becoming a CBS means the club will be 100% owned by supporters and democratically managed by operating on the basis of one member : one vote. Crucially, it will provide limited liability for these 'fan shareholders' as the club will be treated as a legal entity in its own right. The new arrangement also provides greater security for the club's assets.

Any profits will be re-invested in the club as they must be used for the benefit of the community of which it has long been part. The change should enable it to develop even stronger links in the local area. For example, it is expected that more volunteers from amongst the owners will come forward to assist the club as they will have a direct incentive and interest in seeing that it operates efficiently and successfully.

Membership of the 'new' Annan Athletic will be open to all who are sympathetic to the aims of the club one of which is a commitment to running a sustainable business. There will be an annual subscription with some restrictions on the rights of those who are under 16. They cannot be members of the club's board nor vote at Annual General Meetings.

In future, Annan will be overseen by a regulator



*On the wall at Galabank (Photo by Iain Badger)*

from the Financial Conduct Authority. Failure to hold elections or AGMs could lead to it being fined. This is very similar to the situation regarding Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust which is an Industrial and Provident Society. However, under legislation enacted in 2014 and applicable throughout Great Britain ( but not Northern Ireland ), any new organisation of this type must register as either a CBS or a co-operative society.

Berwick Rangers F.C. remains a public limited company with shareholders who, theoretically, could receive a dividend if the club were to enjoy a particularly profitable financial year. Currently, large blocks of shares are owned by individuals, including some directors, the Supporters Club and Supporters Trust. If a poll vote is taken, as was the case for election of directors at this year's AGM, then every share held equals one vote e.g. 10,000 shares means 10,000 votes. ( This helps explain why counting at February's meeting took so long. ) In this way, it is possible for one person or a small group of people or a particular organisation to effectively control the club. As a CBS, this should not now be possible at Galabank.

# SEASON 2016-17 IN SMALL BITES

**Gordon Dickson picks out some of the main events of last season with some of the more important off field occurrences highlighted.**

## **1st June**

JORDYN SHEERIN joins the club, followed by KEVIN McKINLAY a day later.

## **3rd June**

Dates announced for Berwick Rangers Community Foundation coaching for 5-13 year olds under guidance of F.A. coach Matty Moor.

## **11th/17th June**

LEE HAMILTON and SEAN BRENNAN sign.

## **1st July**

STEVEN THOMSON signs from Musselburgh Athletic.

## **5th July**

First home pre-season friendly sees a 1-1 draw with Hibernian.

## **8th July**

SEAN MACKIE and BEN STIRLING arrive on loan from Hibernian.

## **23rd July**

First competitive home match sees a 1-1 draw with Clyde who win penalty shoot out to take Betfred Cup bonus point.

## **26th July**

After taking a 2-0 lead, Berwick go down to 2-3 Betfred Cup defeat at home to Premiership club Kilmarnock.

## **27th July**

**The club joins forces with Northumberland College to form the Berwick Rangers Football Academy with view to providing qualifications in sport related disciplines.**

## **29th July**

**JB Site Investigations are announced as kit sponsor for the season.**

## **2nd Aug**

Lowland League club Spartans win 3-0 at Shielfield in the First Round of the Irn Bru Cup.

## **6th Aug**

League campaign begins with a 1-1 draw at eventual champions Arbroath.

## **23rd Aug**

GREG HURST signs on loan from St. Johnstone.

## **5th Sept**

U20s kick off their Development League campaign with a victory at Livingston.

## **17th Sept**

Rangers' 2-0 win at Cowdenbeath sees them 3rd in the table.

## **19th Sept**

**Launch of club's partnership with Newcastle International Airport.**

## **1st Oct**

MICHAEL McKENNA is given his third red card of the season in a home match v. Clyde which finishes 1-1.

## **20th Oct**

GREG RUTHERFORD signs.

## **22nd Oct**

Hawick Royal Albert win Scottish Cup tie at Shielfield, the first time since they joined the Scottish League that Berwick have been knocked out of the competition at home by a non-league club.

## **24th Oct**

**Club chairman Len Eyre describes the 3-2 Cup defeat as incredibly disappointing but emphasises the league position (5th), the fact we are unbeaten away from home and have the best defensive record in the division as he backs manager John Coughlin.**



**1st Nov**

The Community Foundation's 'Football Fans in Training' programme is launched locally.

**16th Nov**

U20s go top of their league with a 6-0 victory over Cowdenbeath.

**6th Dec**

SAMUEL PEREZ joins the club.

**10th Dec**

Berwick suffer the biggest defeat of the season, a 6-0 hiding at Elgin.

**16th Dec**

PAT SCULLION joins on loan from Alloa Athletic.

**18th Dec**

**Doug Watkin becomes a full director (previously he was an associate) stating that his role as a county councillor would provide important links for the club.**

**6th Jan**

MICHAEL DUNLOP re-joins the club at the same time as GARY PHILLIPS comes to Shielfield.

**27th Jan**

EUAN SPARK and AARON MURRELL are signed on loan from Dunfermline and Dundee United respectively whilst SCULLION'S move becomes permanent.

**13th Feb**

**Club A.G.M. is held in the board room. Most prominently a loss of £82,000 for the financial year ending May 31st, 2016 and a projected loss of £60,000 for the current**

**season are discussed along with other issues that concern shareholders. The meeting ends late amid raised voices and discord.**

**8th/17th Feb**

SHEERIN leaves the club while SEAN MCKIRDY is brought in on loan from Hamilton Accies.

**7th/11th March**

A 4-3 home win over Clyde is followed by a 1-3 home defeat against bottom club Cowdenbeath.

**25th March**

A last minute penalty save by keeper BRENNAN secures a 3-2 win over the then league leaders Forfar at Station Park.

**3rd April**

U20s lose at home to Raith Rovers for the second time but go on to end the season as runners up to the Fifers, a team with a budget fifty times larger than that of the young Black and Gold.

**6th May**

After taking just 2 points from 5 games, Berwick go into the final match of the regular season, at home to Edinburgh City, needing a point to avoid the relegation play off. After leading by two clear goals, two are conceded late on leading to a tense finale eased by DAVID VERLAQUE'S stoppage time winner.

David Verlaque scores the last goal of the season (Photo by Alan Bell)



# FOOTBALL MEMORIES

'Berwick Rangers **FOOTBALL MEMORIES**' is a book recently published by Berwick Rangers Community Foundation. In a foreword, Foundation Chair and Berwick Rangers Vice Chairman John Bell explains that it was inspired by the Football Memories Project, a partnership between Alzheimer Scotland and the Scottish Football Museum at Hampden Park in Glasgow.

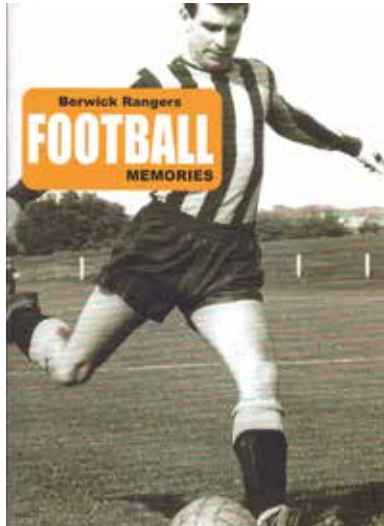
The Foundation received a grant of £1,200 from the Scottish Football Partnership to enable it to produce the book which was put together by Neil Withington. It is designed to remind supporters of days gone by following Berwick Rangers and in particular to stimulate those now suffering memory loss.

One hundred and thirty copies have been distributed to residential and care homes in Berwick. The book is also on sale at £3 per copy in Geo. C. Grieve, Church Street, Berwick. Copies will also be available from the club shop inside Shielfield once the football action starts again. All proceeds from sales will be donated to Berwick and District Friends of Dementia.

A4 in size, its front cover features Ken Bowron who still holds the club record for most individual goals in a season. There is more about Ken in the centre pages which take us back to seasons 1963-64 and 1964-65. One

of the accompanying images is from a home programme v. Raith Rovers and includes an advert conveying the information that **'THE RANGERS' STRIP AND BALL FOR THIS GAME WERE SUPPLIED BY FRASER'S OF WEST STREET'**.

Changed days now of course, with the end of season announcement that the club has signed a new kit deal with Football Nation of Edinburgh.



The book focuses on events in seventeen particular seasons stretching from 1946 to 1987. Inevitably, the famous 1967 Scottish Cup win over Glasgow Rangers is one of them. The Second Division Championship winning campaign of 1978-79 gets a double spread. As well as his direct footballing roles

we learn that for player-manager Dave Smith 'there is also involvement in the sports complex project the club is launching'. Mmm, wonder what happened to that?

The main texts are in exceptionally clear, easy to read print. Liberally illustrated, its images, some of which are in colour, include photos of a number of the most famous individuals to have played against Berwick Rangers, a couple of whom are synonymous with Manchester United.

# PYRAMID DEVELOPMENTS

Bob Dylan sang "Times They Are A-Changin'" and maybe in Scottish football they are. In Issue 28, I questioned the viability of the pyramid system, one point being the apparent lack of interest from Junior clubs. Less than a year on, the first crack has appeared. Kelty Hearts have been warmly welcomed into the East of Scotland League. No one is under any illusion that that is where they see their long term future. They have their eyes set on climbing up into the Lowland League and ultimately, the SPFL. As reigning East Super League champions, they will play in the new season's Scottish Cup but once they get their SFA licence, expected soon, as a senior club will automatically be eligible to play in the competition every season.

Kelty's facilities at New Central Park are well known to Berwick Rangers' Under 20s players and staff as the team played on its artificial surface on three occasions last season in Development League fixtures.

Some suggest they will walk away with the EoS L title at the first attempt. The Edinburgh pair Leith Athletic and Lothian Thistle Hutchison

Vale will have other ideas, the latter recalling a 3-0 win over the Hearts in the Scottish Cup two years ago. In addition, Preston Athletic are back in the East League after finishing bottom of the Lowland League.

Other leading Junior clubs are expected to watch Kelty's progress with interest. There were stories that several others had at least been thinking about making the same switch.

Situated only three miles from Cowdenbeath, Kelty will have noted the struggle faced by the Blue Brazil in last season's relegation play off with Lowland champions East Kilbride. The first leg ended goalless and the return at Central Park also finished level (1-1) after 90 minutes. So it went to penalties, won 5-3 by the home side. A number of Trust members attended the second leg. One reported that Cowdenbeath were very lucky to keep their League place. Pointedly, their players refrained from indulging in any post match celebrations. Another believed that Berwick would have struggled against 'Kilby'. He felt it might have paid off had the South Lanarkshire men been more adventurous

with their shooting for under the 'monsoon' conditions, anything could have happened.

East Kilbride will now be joined in the Lowland League by South of Scotland champions Edusport Academy (based at Annan's Galabank). Stranraer and Annan Athletic have both re-entered reserve sides into the SoSL and in another sign of changing times, will be joined by Kilmarnock club Bonnyton Thistle coming out of the amateur ranks. They will be the first Ayrshire team in that league since Girvan went Junior in 2004 and the first to play in it since it became part of the 6th tier of Scottish football under the pyramid system. Bonnyton run teams through the age groups and in another statement of intent have also had a team accepted into the combined Lowland/East of Scotland Under 20 League.

The warning signs are clearly there for clubs like Berwick Rangers. Times do seem to be changing with ambitious non-league clubs, even those without a senior pedigree, taking advantage of the new order

*Michael Smyth*

## NEW EVENTS COMMITTEE

Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust and Berwick Rangers Supporters Club have formed a joint events sub committee.

The committee consists of Ian Beresford and Brendan Thorburn representing the Trust, Brian Parkin and Allistair Grieve representing the Supporters Club and David Spence, a member of the management team of both organisations. The new committee has also been joined by Ailsa Forster who is employed by the football club on match days.

The purpose of this is to put together a provisional plan of events, initially until the end of 2017.

It is felt that combined events will be better advertised and and better supported by the public, which in turn will raise more funds for the benefit of the football club.

Provisional fund raising events until the end of the year are as follows:

July	-	Fans Football Match (Shielfield Park)/Family Fun Day
August	-	Psychic Night & Stand Up Comedian (Jeff Burnlees Suite)
September	-	Robbie Williams/Michael Buble Tribute (Black & Gold Club)
October	-	£100 Drop
November	-	Race Night (Jeff Burnlees Suite)
December	-	Christmas Raffle

Keep an eye out for further information on the Trust website <http://www.berwickrangers.org/> and/or the respective bodies' Facebook pages.

The logo for InHouse Design features the words 'InHouse' and 'Design' in a bold, stylized font. 'InHouse' is in white with a black outline, and 'Design' is in white with a yellow outline. The letters are slightly slanted and have a 3D effect.

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# THOMSON IS PLAYER OF THE YEAR

A photograph of Steven Thomson, a footballer, celebrating on the pitch. He is wearing a black and yellow striped jersey with the number 7 on the back, black shorts, and black socks. He has his right arm raised and a joyful expression. In the background, spectators are visible in the stands, some clapping. The scene is outdoors on a grassy field.

Steven Thomson was voted by Berwick Rangers Supporters Trust members as their Player of the Year for 2016-17. The midfielder, who has re-signed for the club, topped the scoring charts with thirteen goals including a memorable injury time stunner to complete a hat trick in a 4-1 win over Annan Athletic at Shielfield in February. Second place in the poll went to striker Greg Rutherford who found the net on ten occasions after making his Berwick debut in the ill-fated Scottish Cup tie versus Hawick Royal Albert last October. He is also staying on at Shielfield.

A couple of votes for Thomson were received from people who were not members of the Trust so they could not be counted. However, this prompted the suggestion that in future, voting should be thrown open to all supporters of the club irrespective of whether or not they are in the Trust. This should not be stepping on anyone else's toes. For example, the Supporters Club choice as their Player of the Year is decided by the Club's committee and not by the general membership.

Last season's Trust award was kindly donated by Shoecare of Hide Hill in Berwick. Steven Thomson was not present to receive it when end of season trophies were handed out at the presentation event in the Black and Gold Club following what thankfully, did turn out to be the final game of the season at home to Edinburgh City on May 6th. Instead, goalkeeper Sean Brennan stepped forward to accept it on 'Thommo's' behalf from Trust secretary Isla Barber.

# HERE AND THERE

## HOW TO RUN A MEETING?

Well attended and lengthy, the ending to Berwick Rangers F.C.'s Annual General Meeting in February was somewhat shambolic. Coincidentally, the following month, the item below appeared in Edinburgh City's programme for the midweek visit of Berwick under the heading, 'SOCIAL CLUB NEWS'. It certainly provided food for thought.

'The changed nature of the membership of the Club was highlighted at the recent A.G.M. Gone were the traditional complaints, execrations, accusations and insinuations; the one-singer-one-song rule was obeyed; when a question was answered by the Board the same question wasn't answered over and over again at five minute intervals; proceedings were complete in about one-third of the normal time, and everyone was on speaking

terms at the end of it. Many of us thought we had come to the wrong meeting.'



*Edinburgh City at Shielfield in May  
(Photo by Ian Runciman)*

## GROUNDHOPPING TO BERWICKSHIRE

Groundhoppers were in our region last season. Football's equivalent of train spotters, the hoppers 'collect' grounds. The five match itinerary for the organised tour from March 24th-26th, included games in both the Lowland and East of Scotland Leagues. It started on the Friday night at Pennypit Park in Prestonpans where Cumbernauld Colts beat Preston Athletic 2-0 in the Lowland. The next day saw an 11:00 a.m. kick off at Warner Park where, on a fine spring day, visitors Lothian Thistle Hutchison Vale beat hosts Eyemouth United 3-0 in the EoSL. The presence of the groundhoppers swelled the attendance to an estimated 250. Unusually but understandably, Eyemouth charged admission ( £5 ) and also produced a full colour programme, sold at £2 per copy. It was probably the Berwickshire

coast club's biggest pay day in years.

Next on the schedule, it was inland to the other current Berwickshire EoSL club, Coldstream, whose visitors were also from Edinburgh, Tynecastle. Coldstream reported an official attendance of 269 and also produced a £2 programme. 'Tynie' won 2-0. Some of the hoppers gave that one a miss and instead diverted to Berwick to see Tweedmouth Rangers beat Peebles Rovers 3-1 in another EoSL match. Then it was back to the Lowland League for an evening game at Hawick where East Stirlingshire won 4-2 against Berwick Rangers' Scottish Cup conquerors.

Fifth and last, on the Sunday, a return to the East of Scotland League in East Lothian where Ormiston were beaten 4-1 by Leith Athletic.

## UP ON THE ROOF

At East Fife, it's the out of this world 'Telstar' by the Tornadoes, a no. 1 hit on both sides of the Atlantic in 1962. Annan Athletic play Plastic Bertrand's *Ca Plane Pour Moi*, a big hit for the Belgian in 1978 though even in French, most of the lyrics are nonsensical. ( By the way, if any of us should be lucky enough to meet the great man, would it be in order to politely ask, 'May we call you Plastic?' ) Following chairman Len Eyre's end of season statement, Berwick Rangers' choice of anthem has surely got to be 'Up on the Roof', a song which brought chart success for Kenny Lynch also in 1962.



*Kenny Lynch*

## FAKE NEWS OR SLOPPY JOURNALISM?

We hear a lot these days about 'fake news' but sometimes we have to assume it is unintentional. On BBC Radio Scotland's 'News and Sport for the Borders' morning bulletins on Monday, May 8th, it was correctly stated that Berwick Rangers had preserved their SPFL status following their 3-2 win over Edinburgh City. This was followed by the erroneous comment that Berwick would now be involved in the play off with East Kilbride. Broadcast from the BBC's Selkirk studio, confusion was further increased when it was implied that the local club, which finished next to bottom of the Lowland League, would not now be relegated because of the Berwick result. The Soutars did avoid a return to the East of Scotland League but events at Shielfield had no bearing on this.

The Trust called the station to point out the errors. The reporter who took the call had herself wondered about the accuracy of her colleague's report but added, 'Well done Berwick' to express her pleasure that Rangers had kept their League place.

## CHARITIES CUP CONTINUES

After initially being cancelled due to a shortage of entrants, this summer's Berwick Charities Cup competition held on The Stanks went ahead after all albeit in a revised format. Pick of this year's names? A team obviously full of self-belief and brimming with confidence, Real Sosobad, a spoof on the San Sebastian-based Spanish club Real Sociedad.

## THAT'S IT FOLKS

The Daily Mail's Chris Foy had little time for those supporters of Newcastle Falcons who were unhappy with the Kingston Park club's May announcement that it is to stage one of its home Rugby Union Premiership fixtures, against Saracens, in the U.S.A. in September. The normally sensible Foy finished his piece with the words, 'Supporters do not own a club, they hire a seat in the ground.' Presumably, this would also be his view re the round ball game. (Has he ever heard of Annan Athletic?)

So that's it folks. Never mind their passion, loyalty and identification with their club, fans should simply be seen in the same light as someone who hails a taxi or rents a car from Avis.

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