

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2011 – 19:30pm K.O.

Asdee Veterans (Republic of Ireland) v Brentham Veterans (England)

Team:-

Adrian Lovett

Dave Grose

Paul James

Mark Langley-Sowter

Alan Hedley

Nigel Green

Eamonn Malone

Mike Miley

Tony Georgiou

Mick Duffy

Jon Rhodes

Substitutes:-

Colin Matthews

Vince McFadden

Pete Hoban

Matty Quinn

Mick Eames

Injured

Tom Rice

Mascot

Bing Hu

Tour Spectator

Gerry McFadden (Tony Blackburn)

The sun was shining as Brentham Veterans rolled up in their minibus at Asdee Rovers quaint ground to play their first football game on Irish soil. The first opposition player the Brentham Veterans saw couldn't have been older than 18 – uh oh! Brentham Veterans made their way into the changing rooms and Mike Miley asked if the showers were working – several times.

The Captain expressed his disappointment in rumours that a certain group of four had drunk 85 pints of Guinness between them the day before, and that some players had even been spotted drinking on the same day as this International game! As Dave Grose is usually one of the culprits, he was blamed and then awarded with a large sponge to signify the 'Human Sponge' making his 200<sup>th</sup> appearance for the Brentham Veterans football team – a marvellous achievement. Dave was made Leprechaun Captain for the day as Brentham took to the pitch which had quite long grass. The grass was so long, for a while, Colin Matthews was feared missing, possibly kidnapped by the

little green people, but he was eventually spotted as he jumped up and down so that people could see him.

The crowd was swelling with photographers, reporters, the Rice family and about eight Matty Quinns within the Quinn entourage. Tom Rice stood forlornly on the sidelines as he was ruled out of the game injured as Dave 'hangover' Grose lost the toss which saw Brentham kick off defending the Asdee clubhouse. The majority of the Asdee team consisted of Veteran farm labourers who were as strong as oxes, but the team also contained a few Asdee youth/whippersnapper players which gave the hosts a good balance. Brentham forced the early pressure and Jon Rhodes fired wide before being denied by a fine save from the Asdee keeper. Tony Georgiou and Nigel Green kept delivering the ball into the Asdee penalty area and forcing the home goalkeeper and defenders to protect their clean sheet with some fine defending early on.

Asdee had two opportunities in the space of 5 minutes, however, their efforts were aimed directly at Adrian who handled the shots comfortably. At some point in the game, Marky Mark made a brilliant tackle, one which he described as a Baresi tackle. This he described to all other 18 members of the tour party (at least twice) in the hours following the game. As nobody actually saw this tackle, and not wanting to hurt Marky Mark's feelings, the tackle was made in the 22<sup>nd</sup> minute.....(allegedly). Alan Hedley, despite sinking 22 and a quarter pints of Guinness and smoking 40 tabs the day before, was performing effortlessly at left back, or perhaps that should read there was less effort from the left back. Paul James was immense at the back as he had a tough job on his hands containing the Asdee Centre Forward, who was putting himself about, as well as listening to Marky Mark describe how good each of his tackles were. Eamonn Malone, another member of the fun boy four was oozing class (and Guinness) in the middle of the park as he made run after run into the Asdee last quarter of the pitch with Mike Miley patrolling midfield, using his vision (when his hair wasn't in his eyes) to pick out passes for the forwards. Duffy took umbridge with one refereeing decision and told him so by saying "your wrong", to which the Asdee defenders in unison said "he's always wrong!". The Brentham striker wasn't to be left frustrated for much longer when Jon Rhodes made his way to the Asdee by-

line on 30 minutes. The Rhodester laid up the perfect cross to the far post where Duffy rose like a Mick Eames and planted a header into the top corner of the Asdee net to give the visitors the lead. At this point, Duffy spotted Colin Matthews jumping up and down with his hand in the air shouting “please mister, can I play?”, so the two forwards swapped places. Colin began causing the Asdee defence all sorts of problems, as they couldn’t see him, just the grass moving in his vicinity, and Colin used this to his full advantage on 37 minutes when from approximately 12 yards out, and at a tight angle, he fired the ball home at the Asdee keeper’s near post for a fine finish. 0-2 to the tourists. The referee soon blew his whistle for half time and the tourists left the field to a standing ovation from the crowd, apart from Bing who had two fags on the go, and Tony Blackburn who was on his music decks.

Half Time: Asdee Veterans 0-2 Brentham Veterans.

Brentham began the second half as they had started the first – on the front foot. Eamonn Malone curled one shot wide, and Nigel Green was tormenting the Asdee left back, enjoying the space he was being allowed on the park. Matty Quinn (the Brentham goalkeeper Matty Quinn), had to come out of his penalty area to thwart an Asdee attack, and shortly afterwards he made a fine save which was acknowledged by a round of applause from the crowd and his mummy shouting “that’s my boy”. On 70 minutes, Brentham increased their lead when Jon Rhodes turned the Asdee defence inside out in their area before finishing coolly past the home custodian for an excellent goal. 0-3.

Mick Eames was now playing alongside Paul James and he seemed to be enjoying himself with some assured touches, and some Baresi like tackles, something lacking in the game up until Mick’s appearance. The crowd were appreciating Mick’s talent – even though he is a Welsh Ba\*tard. Tony Georgiou was linking well with Pete Hoban, and on 75 minutes, a fine Brentham move saw Jon Rhodes with the ball at his feet 25 yards from goal. Jon swivelled and fired the ball into the Asdee keeper’s top left hand corner for a brilliant goal, his second of the game. 0-4. With Jon Rhodes quickly climbing the golden boot ladder, he was quickly substituted with Vinnie McFadden

making his first appearance for Brentham Veterans following hot on the heels of his 1,000<sup>th</sup> appearance against them a few weeks earlier.

Pete Hoban had now been pushed forward, and from one peach of a cross from Nigel Green, Pete had the chance to score his second ever tour goal, despite claiming goals against 6 year olds in a park in Madrid should count. Pete fired his opportunity over the corner flag when in a good position in front of goal, despite having time to take the ball down, take up smoking, light and smoke a cigar, comb his hair and finish coolly. The corner flag began to shake the next time Pete got possession. Eamonn Malone was next to try his luck and his effort just dropped over the Asdee bar (for a point in Gaelic football), with the Asdee keeper well beaten. Eamonn's honesty saw him admit later the effort was meant to be a cross for Nigel. With this being the case, from being a fine effort, Eamonn's 'cross' was provided with the touch of a donkey, who in turn should have called himself a Cu\*t (which I think he did anyway).

Colin almost scored another goal near the end of the match, but somehow his effort hit a defender on the Asdee goal line and went wide of the post when it looked odds on that the striker would score and clinch the golden boot and therefore make history by winning the golden boot for the first time since 1937 when he first started playing Veterans football.....but he didn't.

The 'wrong' referee blew his whistle for full time as dusk quickly fell, and Brentham had won the first ever fixture on Irish soil, and deservedly so. Fine performances from Paul James, Mick Eames, Alan Hedley, Pete Hoban, Nigel Green and Colin Matthews who played through the pain barrier of severe bruising on his leg, and broken tibia and fibia.

Final Score: Adeee Veterans 0-4 Brentham Veterans

(Rhodes 2, Duffy 1, Matthews 1)

Next game v Listowel Celtic, Sunday 21/5/2011).

(This fixture was postponed due to the opposition not knowing anything about a group of soft English people coming to their Island to play them, which was a shame, 'cos their pitch was very nice).