

Sunday February 13th 2011

Imperial College Veterans v Brentham Veterans.

Team:-

Adrian Lovett

Mark Langley-Sowter

Paul James

Mike Miley

Dave Grose

Nigel Green

Tom Rice

Neil Graveney

Tony Georgiou

Mick Duffy

Eamonn Malone

Sub:-

Alan Hedley

Oh it's a long way to Tipperary, It's a long way to go....

On a grey, wet and very windy Sunday morning, Brentham Veterans had travelled over to Harlington to look at the planes take off and land, as well as take on Imperial College Veterans (The Imps) on the all weather pitch. Paul James had taken it upon himself to check everybody's underpants in the dressing room, and had taken a shine to Nigel Green's, who passed the inspection with flying colours. Alan Hedley suggested certain member(s) of the squad should wear balaclavas, as his mind wandered on the morning.

Oh it's a long way to Tipperary, it's a long way to go.....

Talk moved on to the forthcoming tour to Ireland and Alan Hedley was enquiring as to where the nearest horse racing course was where the tourists could watch horsies side step electricity cables when he asked, how far is it to Tipperary? To which the whole dressing room replied "OH IT'S A LONG WAY TO TIPPERARY " – You had to be there.

Brentham were once again kept waiting by the opposition so the majority of the squad kept nice and cosy in the changing room before venturing out to kick the young kids off the astro turf. Marky Mark arranged for the referee to take a picture of the Brentham squad in front of the goal, which he did, before he gave the camera back, this was not the first thing he was to give in the penalty area.

Tom Rice was making his 50th appearance for Brentham Veterans and was handed the Captaincy on the day to become the biggest Tossler Brentham Veterans have ever had. The Biggest Tossler won the toss and changed the sides around so that Brentham were playing with the considerable wind in the first half. The Imps kicked off but Brentham weren't long in winning the ball back and they almost took

the lead within the first 60 seconds. Eamonn Malone had possession on the right hand side of The Imps penalty area before he crossed to Duffy who had made a run to the near post, Duffy's flick rebound of the post and was cleared by The Imps defence who were lucky not to have been a goal down with Brentham's first attack. Brentham continued to press, with Eamonn Malone finding space in The Imps penalty area before bringing in Tom Rice, Nigel Green and Tony Georgiou who were all pressing forward. On 20 minutes, Brentham's pressure paid off when they took the lead in spectacular fashion. The ball broke in midfield where Neil Graveney took possession before firing home from fully 30 yards with The Imps goalkeeper well beaten. 0-1 to the visitors. Although Brentham were having the majority of possession, The Imps had a chance to equalise on 25 minutes when their skilful midfielder broke free from challenges from Dave Grose and Paul James before he found himself through one on one with Adrian Lovett. The Imps player fluffed his lines as he fired over as his team mates were prematurely celebrating the equaliser.

Before long, The Imps were made to pay as Eamonn Malone crossed into their penalty area where Tom Rice pulled down the ball superbly before firing home from 6 yards to record his 10th goal of the season on his 50th appearance for the Veterans. 0-2. Mike Miley had to leave the field soon after, after jarring his knee making a fine challenge. Mike was replaced by Alan 'Oh it's a long way' Hedley.

Brentham had created several chances to extend their lead, and the referee was blowing up for offside when the Brentham forwards appeared to be onside, however, Brentham were not to be denied a third goal before half time when excellent wing work from Nigel Green saw him deliver the perfect cross to Tony Georgiou who headed in from within the six yard box at the far post to record his

third goal in two games, and Brentham's third on the day. The referee brought the half to an end on an excellent first half performance by Brentham.

Half time: Imperial College Veterans 0-3 Brentham Veterans.

Somehow, Pete Hoban had heard that there was young kids in the vicinity, and had turned up, camera in hand, under the pretence that he was taking photos of the Veterans. He also had stated that he had cycled to the ground, however, his car had been spotted around the corner with a cycle rack on the roof.

Brentham kicked off heading into the considerable wind in the second half, but were keeping the ball well with Marky Mark, Alan 'It's a long way' Hedley and Tom Rice playing the ball well to feet. Eamonn Malone was first to test The Imps keeper in the second half, but his effort went straight to The Imps custodian. Duffy fired wide, and Tony Georgiou fired over from the edge of The Imps penalty area as Brentham continued to dominate.

The Imps did not look like scoring with Marky Mark, Mike Miley (who had returned to the game), Dave Grose and Alan Hedley in commanding form at the back, however, they were given a lifeline into the game on 70 minutes. The Imps won a corner which was flighted into the Brentham box. Tom Rice scythed down an Imp player with a karate kick, Tom then punched the player in the head before stamping on him – in the referee's eyes. Everyone else saw Tom win a header perfectly fairly. The referee awarded the penalty with both Brentham and Imp players in disbelief. Tom and Eamonn both had words with the referee, but to no avail. The penalty was converted and the hosts were now on the ascendency as they looked to reduce the deficit even further. The Imps started to find more space in the Brentham half, and they forced several corners, but the

Brentham defence stood firm with Tom Rice ensuring he jumped with his hands behind his back. On 80 minutes, the ball went out of play by the corner flag on the Brentham goal line. Players were unsure as to whether it was a corner or a throw in, however, The Imps took a quick corner which went directly out and into Adrian's side netting. The referee decided that the corner wasn't delivered well enough to give the Imps forwards a chance to score, so he ordered the kick to be retaken. From the resulting corner, Brentham failed to clear and the ball fell to their Black Pearl who smashed the ball into the Brentham net, although Adrian did his best to get his hands to the ball, but the pace of the ball beat him.

It was now 2-3 and The Imps believed they could now salvage something from the game as they pushed players forward in search of the equaliser. This left them open to the counter attack, which Brentham exploited on a couple of occasions with Eamonn firing directly at the Imps keeper, and Neil Graveney missing a cross from Duffy in front of goal. Brentham were able to see the game out, and unlike the previous week, they managed to keep hold of the ball. The biased referee blew the final whistle, and Brentham recorded a deserved win, and in doing so they extended their unbeaten run in 2011 to five games.

Fine performances from Alan Hedley, Marky Mark and Tom Rice, and special thanks to Alan Hedley for pre-match entertainment.

Final score: Imperial College Veterans 2-3 Brentham Veterans.

(Graveney 1, Rice 1,
Georgiou 1).

Next game home v Acton Saints Sunday 20th February 2011.

Now, how far is Tipperary?