

“In Search of the Kerry Elf” – by your foreign affairs correspondent

Thursday 19th May 2011

It was heralded as an historic visit and one that would have a profound effect on future relations between the two countries, but who was to know that the travelling clan of Brentham Vets FC from Ealing would outshine the other sojourning team from Windsor? And so it did and began thus:

Oceans 4 arrived first, although the Ferry 4 set off earlier and were only just boarding the boat as Marky Mark, Stag Do, the Unit and Rocky touched down in Killarney for their third pint of the day. It was a close call as they nearly missed the plane out of Luton to Kerry christening the tour at the airport bar. “What time do we have to be at the gate?” asked Rocky about to get the next round in (we were chilling already); “1030am” the Unit responded casually. “What time is it now?” “1025am” “Oh s**t! We better get a move on as we still have to through security”. And so the intrepid 4 set off on a run across the airport of about a mile and a bit as the Security attendant smiled and said “You’ve got no chance”. He didn’t reckon on Stag Do leading the charge, Magoo coming in a close second, the Unit hobbling along in third and Rocky falling behind last still with his pint in hand. We just made it and you had to be there to watch the Buster Keaton-esque pelt to the departure gate. It would be the first of many close shaves over the weekend!

And so the merry Kerry 4 began their search of the Kerry Elf by downing a further 4 pints whilst being served a superb Irish Stew at their now booked hotel. Supped and ready, they made their way through a couple of bars tarrying at the Laurels, upon which they rested for a further 5 pints whilst losing a couple of hundred Euros to Paddy Power in the process. The Craic was on. Darts and farting followed at another bar (the farting by Rocky was as if he’d eaten cow pats for lunch) and another 4 pints were folded. The farter won the darts of course! Then a break was requested by the juniors though Rocky wanted to go a few more rounds. Marky Mark said he needed a meditation and shower so half time was declared and an hour or so later, Rocky and Marky Mark started with 3 pints at 9pm in the hotel bar that was serving the worse Kerryoke they had both heard in a long while. A visit to the juniors’ curtain-shut room saw the Unit under the covers and snoring with Stag Do on top of the bed mumbling ‘What day is it? We’ll be down in a minute’. We didn’t believe him, especially as later, Stag Do couldn’t remember having had two visits to his room. So Oceans 2 moved across the road to live music and mayhem, more Guinness and a maddening desire to dance – well one of them did! Marky Mark was struggling with the black stuff now so proceeded to partake in double Jamieson’s and the evening slipped on till 1130pm when the Unit and Stag Do bowled in refreshed after 3½ hours sleep! For Rocky and Marky Mark there was no going back now so they put themselves forward for the pool table after Marky Mark had been told to stop dancing since it was upsetting the locals and putting off the band as they played ‘99 Red Balloons go gay, or is it go bi-?’!

Rocky and MM were awesome, unbelievably not losing in their 3 games despite not being able to see the balls straight in the last two. Rocky demolished more pints and MM topped 5 large ones before all 4 succumbed to chicken and chips at 3am. And still the Elf could not be found, but who was looking anyway?

The Ferry 4 had now arrived in Listowel and camped at Christy’s for the first of many sit-ins but went to bed earlyish, as good Catholic boys do, in preparation for the next day’s game. Well that’s what Hobanoman and Macca said, even though it was suspected that this would be the first opportunity for them to play Postman Pat when both would have the choice to be Postman or Letterbox at different times over the weekend. A close shave indeed for McDuff and Grosey!

Friday 20 May 2011

Ocean’s 9 began early to prepare to board at Luton airport and in tidy fashion. Headmaster James, despite his early protestations, was now beginning to enjoy the power and glory this prestigious position commands shepharding his students to the land of green, sheep and the black stuff (we’ll come back to the ring o’ Kerry later). What happened between landing and meeting up with the Ferry 4 and the Nomad Vince can only be surmised as the Headmaster did not file a report (have a word Unit!). Meanwhile, Ocean’s 4 all stumbled down to breakfast amazingly by 10am to be confronted by two of the locals imbibing their first pints of Guinness of the day! Urggh! was the response as codeine and bacon were combined to start their day. Then a spark of inspiration: ‘Let’s hire a car for the weekend instead of taxis guys!’ And so they did and set off in search of the Kerry Elf via the ring of Kerry taking in beautiful vistas such as the lakes, mountains, Lady’s View, a stunning coastline, Charlie Chaplin’s statue and many other sights. But would they get to the match in time? Rocky’s ring was settling down now as none of us had had a drink all day!

Despite cryptic and pestering texts and frantic phone calls from Macca and Hobanoman, Ocean's 4 arrived refreshed an hour before kick-off to play Asdee with no-one believing they had supped 85 red balloons, sorry, Guinness, between them the day before. Amazing but true! And so to the highlight of the match:

A lush meadow was presented to Brentham Vets as blue sky and sunshine enveloped the evening crowd of roughly 40 supporters, friends and family (Matty Quinn, one of 5000 Matty Quinns in Listowel, was raring to play as dad and family hovered along the touch line, but Aidy got the first half shout). Asdee were a generous mix of Vets and whipper-snappers and the opening skirmishes went Brentham's way, with plenty of controlled passing, creating a few opportunities to score. Then we did with McDuff rising salmon like to head in a fine goal from a great cross from Rhodesy, following a good move down the right wing. Although Asdee pressed on with their teenage forwards, Rocky, Magoo, Jamesey and Grosey held firm, protected ably by Macca in front of the back four. Escaping a few close shaves, Brentham scored again created from a short goal kick from the back going all the way to the front for Colin to finish with aplomb (he'd been hiding in the long grass and surprised the Asdeefence who thought he was the Kerry Elf, but he wasn't).

Interlude or Dream Sequence a la Brian de Palma:

The young Asdee player was in plenty of space

Pushing forward he started to race

Toward old Marky Mark at a dangerous pace.

Back-peddling was Marky, for the second year running

He stuck out a boot and duly dun 'im

With a tackle so fair, he had time to caress the ball round him and idle

Before elegantly passing out wide to Nigel.

Then to applause aloud, Marky Mark sheepishly bowed to the Crowd.

Alternate Version:

The inexperienced Asdee teenager ran at Marky, fell over the ball before he got to him and allowed Marky a free shot at goal from 70 yards! Well I prefer the first version – Ed.

The halftime whistle blew and a satisfied Brentham team skipped off to make way for the other tourists. Matty Quinn came on for Aidy, Vince, Mick Eames, and Hobanoman later for Colin came on for Magoo, Macc and McDuff.

The second half saw Brentham Tourists take control of the game even though Matty had to make a fine save early on. Two fine goals, one an absolute peach of a strike on the turn (WOW! The crowd oooed) from Rhodesy, completed the score of 4-0 to the visitors although Hobey and the erstwhile Ealing Elf should have added more before the end. At the full time whistle there were big shake hands all round and Macca still asking if there were any showers. The hospitality and food at the local club balanced the intake of Guinness as the whole squad was in situ for the first time.

Interlude:

As a few were smoking outside

A cyclist appeared after taking a ride

"2 hours riding" she said to Marky's spontaneous line of how long?

To which he replied "I could only last 45 minutes" and then burst into song

*'There was a young lass from Kerry, who had a desire to be merry and mean it
A boy said hello, but alas he didn't know, that the lass was related to the Unit.
This put an end to the affair right away, but who can say
Whether an injunction will be needed to make sure the story is buried?'*

Fully refreshed, the tourists boarded the minibus booked for Christys around midnight. At this point, the author cannot remember anything that was said, done or referred to on the bus, except he has had nightmares ever since about the Mighty Quinn delivering a soliloquy of surreal proportions!

Saturday 21 May 2011

In the breakfast room the next morning, it looked as if Grosey had stayed there all night. Sadly, when Marky Mark arrived, he actually believed Vinny when told everyone had downed a thimble of Paddies to start the day: "It looks as if the level of the bottle hasn't changed since earlier" Magoo suggested, but it didn't stop him taking his medicine. Hood-winked, hook line and sinker. Cheers Vinny!

Lunchtime approached quickly and many of the team assembled in Christys for the afternoon game before the real game (Leinster vs Northampton) later. But the opposition were not aware and so a hastily arranged 7 aside was played at Listowel's ground in the lashing rain. And a fine idea it was to wash away some of the alcohol from the previous day.

Dinner was next on the agenda after a few pints or five at the real game and Brentham Veterans sat down to a testosterone-filled evening meal of steak & chips for most, 6 bottles of wine for one, and awards, surprising and dangerously accurate for a lucky few. The Rabbi sparked off a great evening of mirth, revelation and hugs amongst these misty-eyed men. A Twilight Zone moment or two if there ever were. Would the Kerry Elf be coming out tonight as well? Who knows? And who can be bothered to look for him? Is he really missing anyway? Or is this simply a fig leaf of the author's imagination? (Don't worry, I'm running out of steam very quickly as Der Capitan has put a deadline on this drivvle).

Interlude:

*The Mermaid Club cost 10 Euros
Full of teens, legs and jeans you can be sure of
But for the first time ever, Magoo could not be bolder
And didn't know what to do
As it was the first club he'd ever been to where he felt older
Than poor old Stag Do.
So he went in search of the Kerry Elf instead
Another pint at Christys and he thought he'd found him
But alas it was gentleman Jim
Little Colin Matthews stumbling along the streets to bed.*

Sunday 22 May 2011

And so we come to the end of this tour
Remembering much fun and wishing for more
Such a fine time was had by all
Whether in Killarney or Listowel
We'll be back again from our not-too-distant shore
Thank you Fair Isle 'to be sure, to be sure'

And then we went home

Yours faithfully, as my memory could recall it,

Marky Larney-Stowell

(Geddit!?! Brilliant I thought! Ed).