

Sunday 1st May 2011

Brentham Veterans v Teddington Veterans.

Team:-

Adrian Lovett

Mick Eames

Mark Langley-Sowter

Paul James

Dave Grose

Jon Rhodes

Chris Firmin

Tom Rice

Tony Georgiou

Mick Duffy

Colin Matthews

Subs:-

John Rodgers

Nigel Green

Neil Graveney

On a glorious, sunny, Spring May morning, Brentham Veterans were due to play away to two Tonne Ted from Teddington and his mates, or were they due to play at home to Kew? Anyway, after hours of negotiations during the week involving Chris 'it's not my fault' Firmin, Brentham players made their way to BP Sunbury Sports ground where Teddington had booked a pitch – or so they thought! It became apparent that BP Sunbury Sports had 'double booked' the pitch, which had absolutely nothing to do with Chris, but it was his fault anyway. It didn't stop Messrs Duffy, Green and Eames arriving at the Sunbury venue, together with all of the Teddington team. It was here that Mick Eames confessed to bashing the Archbishop of Canterbury in his earlier days back in South Wales, and he offered to show Mr Duffy of how he bashed the bishop – who didn't know where to look. Duffy made his excuses and left to make the trip back to Brentham, closely followed by Mr Eames who was intent in showing Duffy his 'party trick'. The game against Teddington had been transferred back to Brentham where the rest of the Brentham squad waited on the arrival of Teddington and the Brentham waifs and strays.

The cricket season had begun, and Brentham had to share the changing room facilities with the cricket youths. Marky Mark made a dive into his bag on arrival to get his bag of sweets out. The morning was glorious as Brentham welcomed back Mick Eames and Chris Firmin into the starting line up for the first time in 'yonks', however, they were missing Mr Stag Do himself who would have been making his 1000th appearance for Brentham if he hadn't been to so many Stag do's and Weddings since he joined the club. There was however, another familiar face who was lining up for the opposition, who WAS making his 1000th appearance, every one of them for a different team that Brentham had played over the years – Vinnie! The Big Tosser lost the toss and which resulted in Brentham kicking off defending the bowling green end of the pitch with the wind behind them – exactly what the Big Tosser would have chosen if he had won the toss! As there was no referee (same as usual for a home game then), Nigel Green donned a yellow international referee's shirt (Brentham's second kit), and put the whistle to his mouth to start the game.

Brentham took the game to Teddington and were first to threaten when Matthews crossed to Duffy, but his tame header was easily saved by Two Tonne Ted in the visitors goal. Matthews then struck a shot over the

Teddington bar and Jon Rhodes crossed to the far post where Tony G couldn't get enough purchase on his header to threaten Ted. Tony G was next again to try his luck when his shot from the edge of the visitors box just went wide of Two Tonne Ted's left hand post. Teddington began to get more and more into the game, and Chris Firmin and Tom Rice were having a battle in midfield as Teddington began to enjoy more of the ball. They created two excellent chances which in turn brought two excellent saves from Adrian, both resulting in corners for the visitors. Mick Eames was having a confident return to right back, and his distribution was excellent as he looked to find feet with every one of his passes. Firmin was also enjoying himself in midfield, mainly winning the ball back after Marky Mark tried his best to beat Dave Grose's world record of giving the ball away to the opposition the most times in 90 minutes of football.

Paul James was trying his best to inspire a Brentham team that appeared to be losing interest in the game, and their cause wasn't helped when Tom Rice had to limp off injured on 25 minutes with a recurrence of an 'old' injury. On 30 minutes, Brentham forced another corner, however, Teddington cleared the danger and broke quickly out of defence. One long ball forward later saw Marky Mark caught the wrong side of the Teddington forward who got the run of the ball when Adrian came out to challenge him on the edge of the Brentham penalty area. The Teddington striker found himself in front of an empty goal with the ball at his feet. 1-0 to the visitors. Neil Graveney had been introduced for Tom Rice and was getting involved with Chris Firmin to harness the Teddington midfield as Nigel Green brought the half to an end on a lacklustre display by the Brentham Veterans.

Half time: Brentham Veterans 0-1 Teddington Veterans.

Matty Quinn was on the sidelines as Brentham trooped off the pitch, and he had been shocked with what he had seen from the Brentham players, but not as shocked as the Brentham players had been on seeing Matty Quinn – The wife had let him out!!! Whatever was said by the Captain at half time had the desired effect as a completely different Brentham team turned up for the second half, and from the Teddington kick off, Brentham pushed forward and forced Teddington into conceding a corner. The pattern had been set for the second half with Brentham players pressing the opposition and Colin

Matthews firing in a shot from the edge of the Teddington penalty area which was well saved by Two Tonne Ted. Nigel Green had passed on the referee's whistle to Mick Eames for the second half (allegedly), and now Nigel was finding space out on the right wing of Brentham as Colin Matthews regularly found him from his new role in the middle of the park. On 55 minutes Brentham were level when Matthews found Nigel Green. Nigel had wrestled the ball off Jon Rhodes before delivering an excellent cross onto the head of Duffy who headed the ball back across Two Tonne Ted and into the far corner of the Teddington net. 1-1.

John Rodgers was supporting Nigel Green well with his forward forays which were creating space for Nigel and the Rhodester. On 60 minutes Jon Rhodes used his space well as he engineered a goal out of nothing. The Rhodester was about 40 yards from goal when he knocked the ball behind the Teddington defence and used his speed to overtake the Teddington defenders before finding himself one-on-one with Ted. Jon rounded the round goalkeeper (which took quite some time) before coolly slotting the ball home to give Brentham the lead for the first time in the game. 2-1.

The Rhodester was now enjoying himself and forced a corner on 70 minutes. The corner was half cleared by Teddington, but Duffy retrieved the ball and fed Rhodes who was still out by the corner flag. His excellent cross was met by a thumping header from Neil Graveney on the 6 yard line who had just beat two other Brentham players to the ball such was the desire to get on the end of another fine cross from a Brentham player. 3-1. Teddington were still providing a threat, and they reduced the deficit on 76 minutes when a fine shot from the edge of the Brentham box hit Adrian's crossbar and down over the line to give Adrian no chance. The goal was verified by a Russian who had been passing the pitch carrying a linesman flag at the time, and he gave the goal. 3-2. Colin Matthews was playing some delightful balls in behind the Teddington defence as Brentham looked to regain their two goal advantage, but it was Tony Georgiou who provided the killer ball as he fed in Duffy who beat the Teddington off-side trap and coolly finished from the corner of the Teddington box. 4-2.

Mick Eames was letting the game flow, regardless of whether the ball went out of play or not, in fact he insisted players play on, despite the ball hitting the

neighbours fences and rebounding back onto the pitch and he waived play on on several occasions as players waited for the referee's whistle – which never came. On 82 minutes, Dave Grose was feeling really threatened by Marky Mark's attempt to beat his world record and decided to pass the ball back behind the Brentham defence and in the path of a Teddington striker – in front of goal. The striker played a one-two with his team mate before firing an unstoppable shot into the far corner of Adrian's net to make the score 4-3 to the hosts, but still it gave hope to the visitors for the closing stages of the game. With time running out, Teddington created another chance, however, Adrian made another excellent save at the feet of a Teddington striker to smother his effort and preserve Brentham's lead.

After 45 minutes of looking for his whistle, Mick Eames eventually found it and blew it for full time. There were two Brentham teams who played against Teddington, thankfully not enough damage had been done in the first half by the visitors and the Brentham team who came out in the second half were able to retrieve the game. Welcome returns by Mick Eames and Chris Firmin, and fine performances from Paul James, Nigel Green, Jon Rhodes and Colin Matthews. Adrian made some outstanding saves, and Duffy played a Captain's part in the second half.

Both teams retired to the bar/veranda where Teddington unpacked the packed lunch they had brought with them from BP Sunbury. Geoffy was spotted in the Brentham bar looking for Dave Sellers and Adrian so that he could arrange a shared room with them on the forthcoming tour to Ireland – now just two weeks away!!

Thank you to everyone who turned up to witness a new World record on the playing fields of Brentham.

Full time: Brentham Veterans 4-3 Teddington Veterans.

(Duffy 2, Rhodes 1, Graveney 1).

Next game Home v Hook Veterans. Sunday May 8th 2011.

