

Sunday May 8th 2011.

Brentham Veterans v Hook Veterans.

Team:-

Adrian Lovett

John Rodgers

Paul James

Mick Eames

Dave Grose

Jon Rhodes

Chris Firmin

Neil Graveney

Nigel Green

Mick Duffy

Colin Matthews

Subs:-

Eamonn Malone

Tony Georgiou

Mark Langley-Sowter

On a glorious sunny Sunday morning, Brentham Veterans were entertaining Captain Hook and his Veterans in a little corner of Ealing. The Brentham Veterans had all changed into their yellow kit for the game, however, through the changing room window, they saw Marky Mark ambling towards the changing rooms in his yellow kit, so the Brentham players rapidly changed into their blue kit, which they were all wearing as Marky Mark entered the Brentham changing rooms. Marky Mark now knows that whatever kit he is wearing, will not be worn on the day! On entering (the changing room) Marky Mark made his way straight to the bench where a half bottle of champagne had been left underneath from some celebration, his radar had 'kicked in' and led him to the cache.

Mr Stag Do was having a week off from his professional Stag Do/Weddings and Bar mitzvah business, and Paul James very kindly didn't mention Newcastle beating Birmingham City the day before, well, he didn't mention it anymore after the thirteenth time. With all of the Brentham team now in the same kit, they moved outside into the sunshine to wait for Captain Hook and his Veterans who eventually turned up in dribs and drabs. Ian Cumberland was spotted on the sidelines of which he had sped up and down during his successful Brentham career. He was now consigned to watching the action, very similar to Colin Matthews when he is on the pitch. At approximately 11am, John Capps was in a position to call the Captain's together and the Big Tossler won the toss again and elected to defend the bowling Green end of the pitch.

Brentham started brightly and within the first minute, Jon Rhodes crossed to Duffy who headed wide of the Hook post. Mick Eames slotted in to his 'old' Centre half position well alongside Paul James and Eamesey was rolling back the years as he repelled the Hook offence with John Rodgers and Dave Grose ably assisting in their full back positions. Colin Matthews took a knock early on in a challenge, and Eamonn Malone ran (ish) all the way over to Colin with a medical water bottle, but just as he got to Colin, the wee man got up and jumped around like a Spring lamb, wasting Florence Stag Do's efforts.

Duffy and the Hook Centre half swapped pleasantries when the defender took exception to the strikers hard but fair challenge, and it took John Capps to intervene to stop the two girls from scratching each others eyes out. On 25 minutes Hook forced a corner which they played short. The Brentham defence failed to push out and the Hook cross was met at the far post by Bob Marley who headed past Adrian to give the visitors the lead. 0-1. Within five minutes, Brentham had equalised. The Hook goalkeeper had possession in his 6 yard box, and under no pressure, he inexplicably played the ball to Jon Rhodes who couldn't believe his luck as he fired past the Hook custodian to level the scores. 1-1. Nigel Green and Neil Graveney were having influential games with the Scouser trying to find the forward runs of Jon Rhodes at every opportunity, and from one Graveney through ball, Jon fired over the Hook bar when well placed. On 35 minutes, Hook forced another corner. Please see above for what happened next, but to summarise –

Hook forced a corner which they played short. The Brentham defence failed to push out and the Hook cross was met at the far post by Bob Marley who headed past Adrian to give the visitors the lead.

This time it made the score 1-2.

With two minutes remaining in the half, Chris Firmin had to limp out of the action and his title of 'fittest man at the club' took another dent with a hamstring injury diagnosed. Poor Chris hasn't had a great season with injuries, but he is hopeful he will be fit for the Irish tour. John Capps blew his whistle for half time with Brentham deservedly trailing at the break.

Half time: Brentham Veterans 1-2 Hook Veterans.

Brentham began the second half brightly and took the game to Hook forcing several early second half corners which Hook defended well. On 55 minutes, against the run of play, Hook extended their lead – from a corner. Bob Marley got his head to the ball again, however, this time the ball bounced down and up again, only to be met by the smallest man on the pitch (Colin Matthews was off the pitch at the time), who headed the loose ball into the Brentham net via Adrian's crossbar. 1-3. Brentham again pushed forward, however, a move broke down when Duffy failed to find Malone with a pass and the ball was

intercepted just outside the Hook penalty area. The visitors broke to the other end of the pitch and increased their lead further to Brentham's despair! 1-4.

Despite a now undeserved three goal deficit, Brentham's heads did not go down and on 65 minutes they gave themselves hope when a long ball over the Hook defence was latched onto by Duffy. As Hook claimed for offside, which it clearly wasn't, John Capps brilliantly allowed play to continue and the striker took the chance to reduce the arrears. 2-4. The game was again beginning to get a bit nasty as Brentham chased down the deficit and Hook repelled the advances. Bob Marley made a bad tackle on Marky Mark, and as Marky Mark kicked out in retaliation, Bob Marley picked the ball up and fired it at Marky Mark as he wailed. Fortunately, the ball didn't hit Marky Mark in the face to spoil his boyish good looks. (Thanks for the drink in the bar Marky). After a brief handbag skirmish, play resumed. Brentham soon forced yet another corner which Jon Rhodes delivered to the Hook far post where Paul James headed the ball into the Hook top corner to record only his second goal of the season. 3-4 and game on!

Colin Matthews had returned to the fray and was soon in the wars again when he was caught by a very late challenge from the second smallest player on the pitch. Brentham almost levelled the scores when Tony Georgiou crossed the ball into the Hook penalty area where Duffy met the ball with a diving header which was brilliantly saved by the Hook goalkeeper, or as Colin Matthews described "the keeper threw his cap on it". The capless keeper had certainly redeemed himself with an excellent display following his earlier faux pas. Eamonn Malone was next to coax another fine save from the Hook keeper when his cross/shot was pushed onto the crossbar by the visiting custodian who was having the proverbial 'blinder' now that his team was under the cosh. With 8 minutes remaining, Hook had a rare venture into the Brentham half since their fourth goal and a Hook player took a speculative shot from 35 yards which somehow beat Adrian at his near post. It was unfortunate for Mr Lovett who had been superb in recent matches, however, the fifth Hook goal gave Hook a two goal cushion leading into the dying embers of the game. There was still time for the Excellent Eamonn Malone to cleverly beat the Hook offside trap and unselfishly (because that's just the kinda guy he is) square the ball to Duffy who had the simple task of firing home from 6 yards for a certain

contender for goal of the season – all thanks to that nice Mister Malone who's name is first on the team sheet next time out.

John Capps brought the game to an end on what must have been exciting second half for the neutral and Ian Cumberland, but unfortunately for Brentham they were on the wrong end of a nine goal thriller, a different outcome to the 0-0 bore draw with the same opposition two seasons ago.

Fine performances from John Rodgers, Neil Graveney and Jon Rhodes.

Thank you to everyone who took part.

Full time: Brentham Veterans 4-5 Hook Veterans.

(Duffy 2, Rhodes 1, James 1)

Next game, Sunday May 15th 2011. Brentham Veterans v a combined Brentham 1st & 2nd XI to contest the Frank Turner Memorial trophy, currently held by Brentham Veterans.