

08) TWTD Issue 61, Apr 2002: "Raydon players involved in pub brawl"

Contributed by Daniel Harvey And James Powell
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Malcolm Baggio has connected his soccer hose up to the Raydon tap and is here to shower you with the latest Clockton Park Ramblings.

Saturday February 16th was a dark day in the history of Raydon Athletic. All the players and officials of the club plus 50% of the clubs fan base (Reg Shuttlebuck was unable to bring his dog Errol due to pub restrictions) went out to celebrate manager Roland Peter's 50th birthday. The 20-strong group crammed into a limousine and travelled from Raydon to nearby East Bergholt for a pub-crawl. By 9pm the majority of the party were paralytic with Peters himself unable to walk, let alone hold a coherent conversation. Jack Crankleshank estimated the following morning that Peters had consumed 9 double whiskies along with 6 more double whiskies.

The lads made themselves increasingly unpopular with the locals as they became more inebriated and rowdy. By 10pm the patience of the landlord of the pub they were in finally snapped when Roland Peters head butted his pet Alsation for growling at him. He ordered the Raydon party out of his pub. However, the lads were not going to leave without a fight and the landlord had to call on the locals to assist him in his efforts to eject them. A huge brawl ensued causing over £5000 worth of damage to the pub. There were also nine hospitalisations, including four Raydon players, and every member of the Raydon party was arrested.

"It was bloody mayhem!" said one eyewitness. "That fat bloke (referring to Raydon goalkeeper Raydon Gooseflesh) kept jumping on everyone. He broke my bloody wife's ribs!"

"They're a bunch of bloody maniacs!" said another eyewitness. "The landlord asked them to leave and this guy just spat a mouthful of whisky in his face."

Raydon manager Roland Peters admitted the party did get a bit out of hand but was quick to defend the actions of his players. "Yes, perhaps we did have a little too much to drink and in hindsight we could have possibly tried to avoid the violence. But on the other hand, these are a passionate bunch of lads as they demonstrate when they're out on the football pitch. Part of me is proud that they stuck up for what they believe in and showed to true Raydon fighting spirit." When it was suggested to Peters that he started the trouble by firstly head butting the landlord's Alsation and then spitting whiskey at him when he was asked to leave, Peters said, "Lead by example, that's me, lead by example."

The effects of the evening were far reaching. Four of the Raydon were charged with various offences were released on bail. Jason Gooseflesh is facing the prospect of a lengthy custodial sentence as he narrowly escaped prison 18 months ago after setting fire to his neighbour's biceps.

The club has vowed to pay the £5000 necessary to repair the pub but it still remains to be seen where the funds will come from. A whip round amongst the players raised a mere £15.32, an old leather boot and a fuzzy turquoise oblong.

On the footballing side, Raydon had a storming end to the 2001-2002 season following a terrible slump in form. Roland Peters consistently fielded his strongest team and this saw the lads win their last fifteen games of the season to clinch the title.

The crunch match of the season took place the day after the pub brawl incident against second-in-the-table Spartack Somersham. It took some persistent and desperate negotiating from manager Roland Peters to ensure that a sufficient number of players were released from Ipswich Police Station to compete in the match. Fortunately, Roland's Great Uncle Godfrey is the Chief Constable of Suffolk and he was able to pull a few strings.

Peters had to include himself at right-back as there were only ten other players available. Winger Saul Quan had to play in goal as there was no chance of Gooseflesh being released. As well as the severity of his offence and his previous record, he had done himself no favours by excreting over the floor or his prison cell and trying to push a police officers face into the deposit.

The Raydon players who were available put on an admirable performance. This was despite the hangovers, and in the case of some players, the severe beating they had received from both the East Bergholt locals and Suffolk Police.

Raydon took the lead just before half time when midfielder Mansley Kilkorkey caught a goalkick from the opponent's keeper on the volley from just inside his own half, and lashed it into the top corner. It was, without a doubt the most incredible goal I have ever witnessed. Unfortunately, Kilkorkey caught the ball so powerfully that he actually broke a toe and had to be withdrawn at half time.

Raydon played the second half with just ten men and defended resolutely throughout. Jack Crankleshank made a phenomenal nine goal-line clearances, a statistic which club Chairman Lionel Stubbs is checking out with Guinness to see if it is a world record. Saul Quan also played an integral part, making a string of fine saves. The save of the match was in the final minute when a Somersham player blasted a volley from just 8 yards towards the top right hand corner of Quan's goal. The effort ricocheted towards Quan's top left-hand corner off defender Mal Chipaway who was just 3 yards from the goal line. Quan, who had already started to launch himself towards the top right hand corner, somehow managed to adjust himself to push the effort round the post. The Somersham striker was so impressed with Quan's athleticism that he embraced him affectionately and invited him to spend a weekend with his wife and horse at his country retreat in Hull. Quan declined.

Raydon held on for an unlikely yet vital victory. Come the end of the season, the victory proved vital as Raydon secured the title, just one point ahead of Somersham. Raydon manager Roland Peters told me after the final match of the season. "Get the hell in there you steaming great pile of beauty!!!"
By Daniel Harvey.

Late news: Jason Gooseflesh received a nine-year prison sentence for GBH which was reduced to a £300 suspended fine on appeal.