

36) TWTD Issue 96 Player Profiles

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Raydon Athletic have not had a game since the last TWTD.

This was largely due to several games being postponed due to freezing conditions. It was also slightly more largely due to Manager Roland Peters deciding to try and scrape snow off the Clockton Road pitch using a snow plough he borrowed off his cousin who runs Mendlesham Snow Plough Museum. He succeeded in scraping the snow off but must have had it on slightly the wrong setting as he also scraped off the top 10 inches turf and soil, rendering the pitch “buggered’ for the foreseeable future. The desperate sowing of grass seeds in Mid February at temperatures of minus four has yet to bear fruit so it may be some time before Raydon are able to play home games.

In the meantime, due to popular demand for some kind of Raydon article (and due to Woolworths and Zavvi deciding to opt out of planned adverts in the fanzine, leaving a space), Malcolm Baggio has put together a “who’s who’s of the current Raydon squad to bring any new followers of the team up to speed with the key personnel in what some have called “The greatest fictional football team of the modern era”.

Roland Peters. Raydon manager Roland Peters has been with the club since 1945. He was spotted by his father Hank doing keepie uppies in the back garden with a full sized football when he was just two. His father immediately called the legendary Pete Clockton, who was Raydon manager at the time. Within one week Roland was starring for the club’s under-two team with some staunch central defence displays. Although Roland was sent off 15 times before he reached the age of four, his father was able to tame his aggressive tendencies by adding a tiny amount of horse tranquilliser to his milk every day and his disciplinary record soon became almost acceptable.

Peters progressed through the ranks at Clockton Park, making his senior debut in 1959 aged just 14 and becoming player manager in 1983 at the age of 38. Peters retired from playing in 1989, 40 years to the day since his Raydon debut having made 2042 appearances for the club at all levels. Incredibly, he had worn the same boots in every appearance since 1958 and it was fitting therefore that rather than hanging his boots up at the end of his career, he cremated them in a solemn ritual on the Clockton Park centre circle in the presence of a few close friends and relatives. Peters was gutted when Raydon’s number one fan Reg Shuttlebuck later told him that he would have paid him £250 for the boots. All was not lost however – Peters simply scraped some ashes out of his barbecue and sold it to Reg for the same price, telling him they were the ashes of the boots he had cremated. Reg keeps the ash in a special silver goblet on his mantelpiece.

Away from football, Peters’ main hobby is “Psycho Yoga’. This new variation of yoga has recently arrived in the UK and is similar to traditional yoga but with the sessions led by an extremely loud and aggressive instructor – in this case an ex -Army Major – who barks orders to the participants and intimidates any that struggle with any of the exercises. Typically, the soundtrack to the sessions will be deafening military music or a CD of the sounds of the battlefield.

Lionel Stubbs. Lionel Stubbs is “Mr Raydon”. He is the chairman, physio, secretary and linesman at Clockton Park. The millionaire who made his fortune in rawl plugs has pumped pounds of his own money into the club over the years and his long-term aim is to steer Raydon to the Premiership. “I know it’s a tall order, but we’re heading in the right direction,” Stubbs said recently after a 1-1 home draw with bottom of the table Zenit de Gedding, Raydon’s 6th consecutive draw which left them languishing in mid table of the HBOS League, 16 tiers below the Premiership.

Although incredibly wealthy, Stubbs is amazingly down to earth, often bringing expensive steak and caviar to the training ground which has passed its best before date and selling it to the players for as much as 10% less than the marked price. He also sellotapes a 50p piece to their Christmas cards every year, which his personal assistant Lucas signs for him. Roland Peters gets 75p.

Stubbs has a deformed little finger on his left hand which is 3cm longer than all his other fingers. He is very sensitive

about it and if you point it out he goes absolutely berserk.

Ian Buffalo. Goalkeeper Buffalo was signed from Harlow Town before the 2002-2003 season to replace Jason Gooseflesh who's colossal weight was having a seriously detrimental effect on his agility and fitness. Harlow had decided to offload Buffalo after he lost his left arm in a lawnmower accident at the end of the previous season. Roland Peters decided to take a punt on him and the custodian was an instant success. He has adapted to the false arm phenomenally well and has even used it to his advantage in the past, none more so than on his debut against Thetford Foresters. Thetford were awarded a penalty and as the Thetford striker blasted a perfect penalty towards Buffalo's top right hand corner, he quickly ripped his artificial arm off and threw it at the ball, deflecting it wide. Buffalo is a fervent football fanatic and away from the pitch he either talks about football, watches football or plays subbuteo.

Jason Gooseflesh. Gooseflesh is a Raydon goalkeeping legend who remains on the books despite being ousted from the position of first choice glovesman in August 2002 when Ian Buffalo was signed from Harlow Town. Buffalo's acquisition was prompted by Gooseflesh's ballooning weight which had started to hinder his performances. Since then Gooseflesh's weight has yo-yoed wildly from as little as 8 stone to as much as 35 stone. In fact if the total amount of fat that he has gained and lost over the years was poured into a huge vat it would need to be big enough to house six sheep or 3 cows or 1 elephant. He hasn't made an appearance since January 2005 but still trains the goalkeepers when sufficiently fit.

Keith Heath. Central defender Keith Heath signed for Raydon at the start of the 2006-2007 season after moving to the area from Wales to take a job adding gristle to Tesco Value burgers. Heath is officially the 'hardest' central defender to have played for Raydon, based on Hoffmeister Opta Stats. Heath doesn't have the typical physique of a central defender, measuring in at just 5 feet, 4 inches tall. However, his stocky frame and ability to jump his own height from a standing position have seen him become a first choice centre back and a real fan's* favourite. Heath made headlines in a match against Higham Highwaymen in May 2008 when he got his right foot caught in the turf when landing after challenging for a header and twisted his knee 180 degrees in its socket. He managed to struggle on for the remaining 83 minutes of the match in excruciating pain with his right kneecap at the back of his leg, to help Raydon to a 3-1 win. He was taken to hospital after the game and was found to have ruptured every tendon, ligament, muscle and nodule in his knee. He duly came second** in a 'bravest player of the season' poll at Clockton Park at the end of the season. Heath remains on the sidelines but has recently started doing some basic work in the swimming pool*** with physio Lionel Stubbs. Away from the pitch, Heath's main pass time is collecting flutes - he has over six - although he admits to not being able to play a "single f****g note." He is also a big fan of Coronation Street and has every episode ever made on video. His ambition is to be able to play the Coronation Street theme tune on the flute, although he has no inclination to actually learn how.

Andy Slipper. Back in June 1987 Raydon played a pre-season friendly against Canterbury Wednesday. A rookie right back by the name of Andy Slipper was a star player for the Canterbury team. However, he was so impressed with Raydon's facilities, set-up and friendly ambience that he stayed behind in the club's bar when his teammates headed back to Canterbury. After an hour of drinking and joining in the general obscene banter of the Raydon players, he was on the phone to his wife Linda telling her to pack their suitcases, put their house on the market, wind-down her successful nail varnishing business, take their children out of school and get on the first train to Suffolk. They have never looked back, although Linda defiantly refused to join Andy in Raydon and they divorced soon after. Andy is now married to his second wife, Sandy. He has never set foot outside Suffolk since the historical day of that match except on club-related matters, not even for his father's funeral in Colchester in 1998 (it clashed with a casual non-compulsory training session-cum-kickaround).

Mal Chipaway. Mal hung up his footballing career at the end of the 2003 / 2004 season – but quickly backtracked on that decision after a strange dream in which Roland Peters appeared in an angelic white gown and told him to 'sort your bloody self out sharpish.' He was eerily touched by the strange vision and reversed the decision to retire upon waking the next morning. Mal has earned something of a reputation as the clubs joker. Last year for example, he cut the brake cables on George Mnunga's car following a training session. Minutes after leaving the club's ground, Mnunga careered off the road when attempting to brake at a sharp bend. He ploughed into a tree, writing off his car and sustaining some nasty cuts and bruises. Fortunately, Mnunga has a great sense of humour and totally appreciated Chipaway's 'joke'. Away from football and practical jokes, Chipaway likes

waterfowl and has a small lake in his back garden which is home to two geese and a flamingo.

Jean-Pierre Duval. French left-back Jean-Pierre Duval is the 40-year-old half brother of manager Roland Peters. In 1999 he was persuaded by Roland to sell his successful garlic refinery in Lyon and move over to England to join Raydon. Jean-Pierre settled in to the English way of life although he speaks no English whatsoever, has steadfastly refused to learn the language and his wife Claudette will not leave the house without an armed chaperone. Indeed the couple moved back to France in September 2004. He remains on the books and makes the occasional appearance when over visiting Roland and his wife****

Derek Diffydale. Diffydale alienated himself from his parents, three brothers and four sisters when he turned his back on a life of devout Catholicism to play Sunday morning football with Raydon in 1988. The central defender hasn't spoken to any of them since and his father has even been trying to get him ex-communicated. Diffydale though is quite happy with his new religion – playing for Raydon and worshipping the Raydon god that is manager Roland Peters. The crucifixes that used to adorn the walls of his house have long since been replaced by Raydon Athletic pennants and other club artefacts. Diffydale recently celebrated 20 years at Clockton Park with various testimonial activities and the proud warhorse told TWTd, “Joining Raydon was the best decision I ever made in my life – that includes marrying my wife and having children – no offence to them of course – and it's great to still be playing after all this time.”

Satan Greaves. Left back Satan Greaves was signed before the start of the current season after calling up manager Roland Peters and asking for a trial. He has settled in to the team like a mother hen settling gently on a clutch of eggs although he is yet to make a great impression on the side. Peters told TWTd, “Satan is a great professional, very much possibly one for the future if he turns out to be any good.”

Greaves can often be seen on Belgian TV as a football pundit as a result of an hilarious misunderstanding which we haven't got time to explain here.

Shaka Shaftsville. Shaftsville, who always comes top in a supporters' poll of 'worst player to have played for Raydon,' had a brief flirtation with the first team back in 2002. He put in some gut-wrenchingly horrific performances that would have had the likes of Alan Hanson and Mark Lawrenson explode with fury had they been punditing on his contribution. Since that brief spell, Shaka has not featured in a first team squad despite the fact that Roland Peters has continuously maintained that he is still part of his plans and the player has attended every training session. Shaftsville has had numerous trials in search of a new club but to no avail. He even dressed up as a woman in order to have a trial with Trimley St Martin All Saints Female 11. Shaftsville was actually successful in this trial and afterwards was so elated and caught up in the moment, celebrating his success with his new team mates that he absent mindedly joined them for a post match communal shower at which point his penis and balls gave away his true gender and therefore ineligibility.

Les Candlestick. Midfielder Candlestick has been a familiar face in the Raydon midfield since 1992. Whilst not a particularly good player, he is such nice bloke that even the no-ruddy-nonsense Roland Peters could never bring himself to drop him.

Candlestick is famous for scoring the longest hattrick ever in football, scoring in the first 2 seconds of a cup game against Rattlesden Rattlesnakes. After Rattlesden scored twice Les scored again on 87 minutes to take the game into extra time. After a series of long delays due to arguments and injuries, he then scored in the 11th minute of added on time at the end of extra time.

An interesting fact about Les is that he is infertile.

Sid Chopper. Raydon signed Chopper before the start of the 2004 2005 season, prizing him away from fierce local rivals Wenham Wanderers where he hadn't missed a game for 23 years. Chopper – who's middle name could well be 'Steely Resolve' - has been an astute acquisition; his phenomenal range of passing mixed with violent but fair tackling technique has made him a firm favourite with the fans. Chopper does not have a number on the back of his shirt – just an exclamation mark.

Jack Funtingdale. Football is the only thing that has ever turned Jack Funtingdale on (and that includes his wife according to rumours – only joking Elaine!). The midfielder had unsuccessful trials with several professional clubs in the early 90's including Mansfield Town, Rotherham United, Berwick Rangers, Mansfield Town again, Carlisle United, Darlington, Mansfield Town for a third time and Gillingham. (Although Gillingham did recruit him as an after match litter picker). By 1995 and after a total of 22 unsuccessful trials, Jack realised that he would not make it as a professional footballer. He moved to Suffolk where he pursued a career as a roadsweeper brush pruner and joined Raydon Athletic. Although not up to professional standard, Jack regularly shines when in a Raydon shirt and has picked up 3 man-of-the-match awards in the 412 games he has played since joining the club.

Saul Quan. Whilst the rest of the squad all live within ten miles of Raydon, midfielder Saul Quan travels from Haywards Heath in Sussex for every Raydon match whether home or away. He used to play for Haywards Heath Hotspur until 1998 when he decided to seek a new footballing challenge. He heard about Raydon Athletic on the soccer grapevine, telephoned Roland Peters and was soon stepping out on the hallowed turf of Clockton Park. As well as a tricky and skilful winger, Quan is also a competent goalkeeper and is back up to first choice Ian Buffalo. Annoyingly for him, on the one occasion when Raydon played Haywards Heath Hotspur in a pre-season friendly Quan had to miss the match after accidentally eating a kilo of confetti.

Mansley Kilkorkey. Mansley was a closet homosexual until he joined Raydon Athletic in 2001 at the age of 28. The midfielder had remained a shy and retiring character, scared of how the world would react to his secret. However, within two weeks of joining the club he felt so comfortable with the Raydon lads that he 'came out' during the half time break of a crunch league match against Orford Castlers. Although the initial shock of the news led to Raydon throwing away a 4-0 half time lead and losing 5-4, they quickly accepted Mansley for the person he is and treated him exactly the same as any other player. He has really come out of his shell since he revealed his sexual preference and is a popular character with his playing colleagues. However they do insist that he showers on his own after matches.

Fitzroy Fitzphillips. The homeless Fitzphillips was snapped up by manager Roland Peters at the start of the 2004/2005 season after he spotted him in Ipswich back-alley kicking an empty Carlsberg Special Brew can around with aplomb, despite being totally inebriated. Unfortunately, midfielder Fitzphillips has been unable to command a regular place in the team due to problems with his alcohol consumption and a lack of transport.

Doggie McManahammond. Striker McManahammond has been the darling of the Raydon faithful for over a decade since breaking through to the first team in 1997 at the age of 17. Since then he has notched 423 goals, putting him ahead of the late great Pete Clockton – although Clockton was a centre back and only scored 6 goals in 1200 appearances. McManahammond has attracted a great deal of interest from professional clubs over the years although the interest has admittedly never come close to manifesting itself into an offer of a trial, let alone a contract.

Early in his Raydon career, McManahammond has a strange superstition in that every time he scored a goal he would run the whole way round the perimeter of the pitch ten times in celebration. This soon led to problems with exhaustion and he would rarely last more than 65 minutes. Indeed, in 2004 after scoring a 5 goals in a game against Brightlingsea Siders, his leg muscles collapsed. He was bed ridden for four months and had to have a calf transplant. This prompted him to stop the running ritual and instead he now simply does a handstand when he scores.

George Mnunga. Nigerian striking battering-ram George Mnunga has little footballing ability but his fitness levels and strength render him a vital member of the Raydon squad. At the end of a 90 minute match, Mnunga's heartbeat is only slightly faster than the average person's is whilst in the middle of a deep sleep, according to Hoffmeister

Opta Stats. Mnunga was signed in 1999 after Roland Peters got chatting to him in a pub whilst he was backpacking round South Suffolk for three months, his first ever trip outside Nigeria. Only the seventh Nigerian ever to play for Raydon, Mnunga is particularly fond of clotted cream.

Dave Mackinackie. Striker Dave Mackinackie is the tallest player in the league at a whopping 6 foot 10 inches. The towering bean-pole is lethal in the air as is illustrated by the fact that 182 of his 186 goals for the club have been headers. In fact, Mackinackie has actually touched the ball more times with his head than with his feet since signing for Raydon from Ingatestone Instigators in 1999, based on a recent casual observation from Raydon's number-one fan, Reg Shuttlebuck.

Dave is not that popular with the other players. Asked why, the general answer tends to be "I don't know there's just something about him."

Dwyn Wynwynch was originally signed on loan during the 2007-2008 season and made such an impact that his permanent acquisition was soon administered. Wynwynch's electrifying pace is a big asset to Raydon's strike force although local internet based TV station, "Raydon TV" have not viewed Wynwynch's pace so positively. Three of their cameramen have ricked their necks trying to keep up with Wynwynch, one so severely that he was unable to consume anything with a greater viscosity than watered down water for over a fortnight after the incident.

Wynwynch has formed a close bond with fellow Welshman Keith Heath which can annoy other squad members as they insist on communicating with each other in Welsh. It is therefore perhaps fortunate that league rules state that clubs can only field two Welshmen.

* Please note that the apostrophe is in the right place. This statement is specifically referring to the fact that Raydon's number one fan Reg Shuttlebuck is a fan of Heath - not that Heath is a favourite with all fans. He might be - it's just that no research has yet been undertaken to clarify that fact.

** The winner of the Bravest Player of the Season award was Saul Quan who, whilst on holiday in Australia bravely fought off eight crocodiles that were attacking a small kitten that fell into a river he was walking past with his fiancée. Despite Quan sustaining massive gashes to all external parts of his body and losing a testicle in the attack, he still managed to save the kitten and take it to a nearby vet's for treatment. After recuperating for a week in Yabbee Creek Hospital, Quan returned to the UK and made the bench for the next Raydon game. Despite receiving the sad news that the kitten had died of gangrenous whiskers just before the game, he still managed to summon enough courage to come on for the last ten minutes and, with tears in his eyes, headed a vital winner in the last seconds of the game.

*** He basically sits in the shallow area in the leisure pool at Crown Pools and waits for the wave machine to come on and the water to ripple in between his toes.

**** He hasn't once returned to the UK since moving back to France.

***** It isn't, it's Jonathan.