



## Double Happiness for Interport Teams

Here at the KCC we always try to ensure that visiting teams do not leave Hong Kong empty-handed. The Pro Shop stocks a selection of items that make good souvenirs of a visit to the Club, and many homes, offices and clubhouses around the world have memorabilia from Interport and other challenge matches with our sports teams.

The Royal Bangkok Sports Club is a case in point. Over the years we have exchanged pennants, bags, shirts, ties, souvenir wallets and most recently a few of those very presentable KCC glass tankards. Furthermore, we have always allowed the RBSC to walk off with at least one of the Football Interport trophies. Until now, that is, because on 13 August 2011 we achieved a first for the Club, a double victory – Laura Trayford Cup and Bruno Ruegg Trophy!

The Laura Trayford Cup match between the RBSC and KCC Royals social sides kicked off in blazing afternoon heat, and for the first 30 minutes the younger Thai side had the better of the play, for which they were rewarded by a 1-0 lead. Sam Trayford then came off the bench to equalise, but the RBSC then scored twice in quick succession and with an early injury putting paid to the talismanic Tony Smith, we were starting to look a little thin on the ground.

However, judicious use of a couple of senior squad players by Manager Dave Christmas saw us begin to turn things around, and by the hour mark we had forged into a 4-3 lead courtesy of a fine header from Sam, a Chris Pickles penalty and another header, this time from Joe Fahey. With 30 minutes to go and both sides tiring, the key was to play it safe – however RBSC hadn't read the script, and pushed forward to bring the scores to 4-4 with 20 minutes still left.

The response by the veterans was to dig deep into the many hundreds of years of accumulated experience (and that's just Jingle and Fred) and find the perfect response. Two more headers from Matt Wake and Jon McKinley created some daylight between the teams, and Wakey added the coup de grace by slipping the ball over the advancing 'keeper to cap a flowing move and make the final score an emphatic 7-4 to KCC. Our first ever victory in the Laura Trayford Cup – at the third attempt – was greeted by scenes of unbridled joy on the side-lines, where the Royals promptly collapsed before being revived with little green cans and the prospect of a top quality Interport clash between the best players in the two clubs.

The KCC team was probably the best that



we have ever fielded in this fixture. A mixture of some of the KCC Dragons and Knights strongest players, held together by the dynamic Paolo Gianelli and the elegant and influential Luca Merlone in midfield simply never gave the RBSC a chance. Chris Pickles got the ball rolling by following in to net a rebound from a couple of yards (thereby becoming the first player to score in both Interport matches),





John O'Reilly slotted home a penalty, and then Neil Kee finished off a smart move with a calm finish (left) to make it 3-0 after just 25 minutes.

The Bangkok side rallied and did recover some ground before halftime, and as we went out 3-1 up for the second half, we knew that our opponents were capable of getting back into the match. However, we were not about to let that happen – Johno notched his second just before the hour mark, before the youngsters took over, with two goals from Mike Wu and one from Toby Down making it another seven up for the KCC. A late consolation goal from RBSC pulled it back to 7-2, which it is probably fair to say was an accurate reflection of the run of play.

This was a scintillating all-round display by the KCC, and shows the strength of the squads that we now have at the Club – young, not so young and Very Special Old Pale. The post-match pool party played out in good spirits, with our visitors gracious in defeat and keen to offer us a crack at a double title defence at the RBSC next spring. We look forward to

the trip, and whilst we will be more than happy to present our hosts with some more mementos from the KCC, we plan to bring the Laura Trayford Cup and the Bruno Ruegg Trophy back with us.

*'Jonny Mac'*

## New KCC Junior Football Season

I hope that all Junior Football players have had a great summer and are looking forward to the start of the new Junior Football season on **Saturday, 3 September**. This season, Brazilian Soccer Schools will be returning as the main coaches, ably assisted by a number of volunteer coaches. The training sessions will take place on the KCC pitch on most Saturday mornings from September 2011 through to May 2012. The sessions are usually from 08:30 to 10:00 but this season will occasionally run from 07:30-09:00. We will also be taking part in the Hong Kong Junior Football League again and hope to improve on our strong showing last season.

If your child is aged between 5 and 14 and would like to join the junior football programme on Saturday mornings, then please complete and return the application form which can be found at: [http://www.bss.com.hk/applications/201109/KCC\\_Sat\\_201109.pdf](http://www.bss.com.hk/applications/201109/KCC_Sat_201109.pdf). The programme also includes a very strong girls' section which we hope to grow to become one of the largest programmes for girls in Hong Kong.

We are always on the lookout for volunteer coaches to assist with the coaching and also to become team managers at the regular tournaments. Please contact Tony Smith at [samtonykids@hotmail.com](mailto:samtonykids@hotmail.com) if you fancy yourself as the next Alex Ferguson and would like to volunteer your services.

This season, we will also be providing separate coaching and playing a number of friendly matches on Saturday evenings from 19:30 to 21:00 for players born in 1996 and 1997. Please contact Tony Smith at [samtonykids@hotmail.com](mailto:samtonykids@hotmail.com) if you would like to join this coaching programme.

I look forward to seeing everyone back ready to play football again on 3 September.

Cheers!  
**Tony Smith**



## FOOTBALL

# Aston-ishing Villa Week at KCC

The list of top-flight players who have graced the grass of the KCC is a long one – John Barnes, Lawrie Sanchez, Garry Nelson, Tim Bredbury and Dave McCulloch are all names that spring easily to mind (except for Dave McCulloch). But until July this year we had never witnessed the concentration of talent that Aston Villa FC brought to Cox's Road as they used the Club for their training base in preparation for their two matches in the 2011 Barclays Asia trophy.

World-class international stars such as Shay Given, Gabriel Agbonlahor, Darren Bent, Shay Given, Emile Heskey and Richard Dunne were out there on our lawn for a whole week, going through their drills, stretching out on the turf and soaking up the admiration of the watching members.

It's fair to say that although there are masses of fans of Premier League clubs such as Newcastle United, QPR and Liverpool at the KCC, we are not a hotbed of Aston Villa support. But by the end of the week, a lot more members – particularly younger ones – will have the Villa down as their second favourite team in the league.

### Here are three reasons why:

First, the players and the coaching and support team were simply perfect guests



– no drama, no fuss; they simply got on with their training and left the Club as they found it. Second, the players were very generous with their time – despite the long flight out and the pressure of facing two other Premier League teams in front of 40,000 fans twice in four days. They not only gave our junior players a superb coaching clinic (pictures here), but also stayed around to meet KCC members at a barbecue dinner. Third, they were more than ready to take pictures and sign balls, shirts, photos and just about anything else thrust in front of them by young and old members alike – nothing was too much bother.

Having a squad of some of the best football players in England training at the KCC was a great boost for the Football Section and for the whole Club. Importantly, the feedback from Villa was that they thoroughly enjoyed their time here (and said some very good things about the pitch). We hugely enjoyed having Aston Villa at the KCC, and welcome them back any time.

To top off the week in style, the Football Section hosted a Premier League Night in the Coffee Shop, hosted by the EPL's very own John Dykes – who of course was himself a KCC player in the early days of the Football Section, alongside such luminaries as Mike Kennedy and a young Ronnie Ng (allegedly). Dykesy was joined for guest Q&A by former partner in crime at ESPN, the legendary Shebby Singh, and by Dion Dublin and Ian Taylor, former Aston Villa players and great ambassadors for the Club. He also conducted a full-on sports quiz (assisted by compiler James Gough) and kept the capacity crowd entertained with anecdotes and one-liners throughout the evening. Dykesy is a true professional, and it was great to see him back at the Club – he seemed to be having a good time as did everyone lucky enough to be there for one of the most outstanding nights that the Football Section has organised.

Many people played a part in making this week the highlight of the close season. As



well as Aston Villa FC, John Dykes and his guests, I would like to thank in particular Richard Lee and Jim Down, who put the whole Aston Villa visit together; Chris Pickles for taking on the job of organising the Premier League Night and making it a storming success; and James Gough, who provided massive behind-the-scenes support, and put together a fantastic sports quiz. Thanks are due also to other key team members Mally Leigh, Mike Trayford, Andy Laxton and Tony Smith for their superb work and to our President Donald Yap for his personal support for the events.

Finally, as always, our staff were outstanding. Robert, Ah Kwong, Kings, Teresa and everyone involved showed the Club in its best light. The KCC can be proud that we have members and staff that can carry off a week like this to such a high standard. I don't think that we – or Aston Villa – could have asked for more.

*'Jonny Mac'*

