

# *new frontiers*

A York City Fanzine

Issue 24 - December 2014 - Free To Download



All we want for Xmas are  
**SOME MORE HOME WINS**

Nigel Worthington  
Green Grass  
John Peel Night  
B Teams  
Pet Sematary  
Drinking York Dry  
3 English Football Grounds

*new frontiers* – Established 1992.

Welcome to Issue 24. When I last wrote, all was rosy in the garden, we were on a glide path to the play offs. Nigel was God, Nick Pope ran him close.

We failed in the play offs, the rest is history, In fact repeated history.

Bright prospects for the new season gave way to a play off hang over. Like Martin Foyle before him, Nigel didn't get the same responses from his players and resigned in October.

Reality bites.

Last season, we struck lucky with our mid season signings. This year, we don't appear to have had the same luck. I've got to say signing defenders from teams that finished in the bottom half of Division 2 and 2 players from relegated Shrewsbury never got the juices flowing as I watched the World Cup.

Maybe this is the level we're always doomed to operate at. Certainly, our history tells us that we struggle to hang onto our better players.

Think of your favourite City player. Who replaced him? Keith Walwyn – Dave Buchanan; Dean Kiely – Andy Warrington; Clayton Donaldson – Chris Beardsley. Get the picture? Need I go on? The reality is that we just can't afford a replacement of equal standing.

We can strike lucky once, not twice. Of the 4 favourites above, only one cost us any money, and that was a pittance, but once they outgrow us we were in trouble.

Others, such as Clayton Donaldson, James Meredith and Lanre Oyebanjo all outgrew City and moved on, all leaving on a Bosman free.

Without a sheik or oligarch we have to live within our means, even then we are indebted to the McGill family who continually put money into the club to keep us a float. Thank you.

Enough looking back. Let's look ahead for a moment. Bury (away) very soon, again towards the end of December. Anyone who was there last December could easily sum up the game in one word. But it also demonstrates how quickly fortunes can change.

Let's hope we can start another surge at Gigg Lane next week.

It will always be Gigg Lane to me, no matter what the sponsors might say. As an aside, how depressing it was to watch the FA Cup Round 1 and Round 2 coverage and see some of the stadia names. Proact Stadium, Community Stadium, Merseyrail Community Stadium and Lamex Stadium included.

PS Due to a heavy 6 week dose of man flu, this issue is late in hitting the bookshelves much later than intended. Sorry and apologies if in places it reads a little dated. I left the original comments about Jake Hyde unchanged, but I'm really hoping with his recent goal rush, he'll prove me wrong.

*All views expressed are those solely of the editor or article's author and in no way should be taken to represent the views of York City South or York City Football Club (or anybody or person slagged off herein). Correspondence (and articles (hint, hint) for the next issue) can be emailed to [c\\_m\\_forth@hotmail.com](mailto:c_m_forth@hotmail.com)*

*This download is free: Please consider making a donation to YCFC in lieu of payment. At the next home game, an extra pint in the social club or lottery ticket in the car park should suffice. Remember, this is free, do you want City to recruit free transfer players or splash the cash on decent players? Russell Penn or Craig Clay, your choice.*

*During our original **new frontiers** run in the 1990s, we raised over £2,000 and every penny was donated to City's Youth Development Fund.*

*Back Issues: All digital and most paper based issues are on <http://www.yorkcitysouth.co.uk/> for further reading see the [York City South website](#)*

*Thanks: To all those who contributed or paid for this issue.*

*Next Issue: Depends on interest, commitment, articles and on the pitch performance. Articles / ideas / input / criticism always welcome.*

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Did anyone else note a great similarity between a YEP article on November 6 with something YCS and **new frontiers** ran in the past which mixed words of City's great cup exploits with youtube clips of the action. YCS and **new frontiers**, pioneers as ever.

## **Nigel Worthington – A Big Leap Forward**

I'm writing this Nigel Worthington appraisal before I even write his welcome piece. Yes, there were some clamours for his departure, but even so, the end came very swiftly. Was it just 4 defeats in 29 games (make that one win in 17 and you're closer to the truth), a post play off failure malaise or just a feeling of was it all worth it?

On his arrival, NW rallied his troops once to ensure we survived our first season back in the Football League. A year later, NW took us to the play offs.

You could say his side had a dour playing style or some of his signings were dubious (or worse). No one could disagree with either viewpoint. Once again, this season, we struggled to impose ourselves on our opposition and struggled to score goals. We were dour, but equally we were generally well organised and difficult to beat. Think of our run last season, we went to all the top teams and came away unbeaten.

You could question the wisdom of some of his signings, but you could do the same with any managers' signings. Look at Wes Fletcher, Josh Carson, Keith Lowe, John McCombe and Russell Penn and you see the core of a good team.

At the start of 2014, I questioned the wisdom of giving 3 of them contracts for the next 30 months. So far, they've generally proved me wrong. But, I would question again why he gave so many players 2 year contracts in the summer of 2014.

Quite rightly, he would say they were his first choices and he did what he needed to do to secure their signatures. So far, in the main, they haven't lived up to their billing. Tony Straker indicated that one of the reasons he joined City was the offer a 2 year deal rather than the one year extension on offer at Southend. With 3 Bosman frees, maybe 2 year deals swung the deals.

Where I might have a bigger problem is the number of free transfer players signed on 2 year deals. If press reports are to be believed, in the summer we signed 8 players on deals that run to 2016 (or 2017). A word of caution though, Sander Puri was widely reported as having joined on a 2 year deal only to leave after one year. Maybe he was paid up to leave, press reports were wrong or the deal was actually one year with a one year option. Personally, I'd be inclined to say to prospective free transfer signings, take a one year deal with an option on a second year (which depending on the deal might be

triggered at City's request or the player playing a set number of games). After all, it's a buyer's market with so many players on the free transfer list. See also page 9

Thought for another time. Are City (and our supporters) too easy on their managers? Towards the end of Gary Mills reign, he still maintained a large backing, likewise with NW, there were very few supporters calling for his head.

Towards the end of his reign, NW appeared frustrated that his players were unable to show in matches the good work they'd been doing in training. Perhaps, he wasn't the first manager to be able to get his players going again after

play off failure. Perhaps, the hard knocks of the first week of the season when we conceded late result changing goals in each of our first 3 games were more decisive than we first thought, draining the confidence out of himself and the players.

2 players NW paid money for were Ryan Bowman and Jake Hyde. I used to applaud buying the cream of the Conference (when we were in the Conference) but I wonder nowadays as its professional league, whether the rough diamonds are still there to be unearthed at £20k a pop? Maybe the non league value is lower down the pyramid with players who are not playing professionally.

I suspect his legacy maybe more that during his time we've raised our league status and standing. When he addressed YCS in March 2014, he spoke about how he found a club that wasn't properly set up for The Football League. He put some of our 2013/4 success down to instigating a weight training programme which made City a more physical side. Off the pitch, his spell coincided with the arrival of Andy McMillan and Richard Cresswell onto the staff, plus the appointment of John McGhee as General Manager. Their work has yet to bear fruit but its a sign that we're moving forward. Its strongly believed that NW only agreed to sign a permanent contract in the summer of 2013 when City committed to multiple upgrades to our Wiggington Road training complex.

In the summer of 2013, three months after arriving at the club and staving off the nightmare of relegation back to the Conference, prior to signing a permanent contract, NW outlined his vision for the club. It resulted in £120,000 of improvements at our Wiggington Road training facility.

Communications Director Sophie Hicks said: "Nigel's legacy comes in a lot of different ways really. I think he added a better level of professionalism. Because he had managed at a higher level, he had very high standards and firm ideas of how he wanted to do things, which we as a board we bought into.

I think his main legacy is the development and improvement of the training ground. I'm sure that anyone who heard him speak about his vision for the club would agree. He took a great interest in how the pitches were prepared, including Bootham Crescent, and helped everyone raise their game at York City, including all the staff behind the scenes. Nigel's legacy is very much looking at the whole of the football club from the youth teams right through to the first team. He encouraged people to be better and to raise the standards and that was something that was needed, coming out of the Conference. Obviously, Gary Mills did an amazing job getting us back into the Football League, but I think it was the right time for a higher level of professionalism".

In my younger days, I remember players training in the car park at the ground, it was loose gravel and riddled with puddles in the winter. Selling that to a pro, or the parents of a prospective youth player isn't easier. We have a smart complex. Compare and contrast.

Also, the youth system received a significant overhaul, Andy McMillan and Richard Cresswell being recruited and through them, links to bigger clubs are being established.

#### Nigel's City record:

Played 76

Won 23

Drawn 29

Lost 24

Goals For 79 / Against 76

#### Training Ground Works

- Multiple purpose large glass-fronted viewing room (the first team use to eat and have meetings and debriefings. It doubles as a communal viewing area for parents when our age banded sides play on a weekend and serves as an area for the players and others to congregate)
- Additional changing rooms
- Small gym
- Rehabilitation unit
- Numerous pitches in excellent condition (thanks to new irrigation) for all teams to play on, not just the first team

At times I thought NW was due a move upstairs into a Technical Director type role, overseeing the wider progress of our club. At the time of his departure, Russell Penn was quoted as saying only a few weeks earlier, he feared a bigger club might be in for NW. Huddersfield was suggested, a feeling that passed through my mind at the end of last season.

The end came very quickly. One bad defeat (only his 4<sup>th</sup> in 29 games) and he was off. Having not had a managerial role in the 2 years before he arrived, I can only assume he is financially secure and maybe the prospect of those long return drives, 2 or 3 times a week from his Norfolk family home made him reassess his priorities.

Whatever, he resigned, he didn't wait for the bullet and the compensation that is due to a sacked manager. Top Man. How many managers would have waited for the sack and taken a pay off?

On his departure, Nigel issued the following statement. "After Saturday's result and, in the best interests of York City, I have made the difficult decision to leave the club with immediate effect. I feel the timing of my departure will give the players ample number of games to gain the points needed to ensure York City finish in a good position in League Two by the end of the season. In recent weeks, performances have not been up to my high standards and I take full responsibility as manager. I would like to thank the board and the McGill family for their tremendous support. We have had a great working relationship. The supporters and the players should be very grateful to them for their loyalty, commitment and hard work in trying to take this club forward. I have enjoyed a wonderful time at York City over the past 18 months. The fans have been fantastic throughout and I have appreciated all their support. The experience would not have been the same without the friendship of all the staff at the club. In particular, I would like to thank my assistant Steve Torpey for his loyalty and dedication to me and York City. It has been an absolute pleasure and honour to have been manager of York City and I very much wish the club every success for the future."

A board statement, released by the club simultaneously, said: "It is with great sadness that Nigel Worthington has decided to leave. We could not have asked for a more professional and hard working manager. We will always be grateful to him for the huge contribution he made in maintaining our Football League status. "We thank Nigel for all he has achieved in making York City a better club and the legacy he leaves. He has been a gentleman throughout."

All the very best for the future Nigel.

## Secret London

Welcome to the first of a new series, you'll be thinking, I didn't know that.



We all know Hyde Park, its northern perimeter is marked by the Bayswater Road that runs from Marble Arch to Queensway and onwards towards Notting Hill. Halfway along it is the Lancaster Gate tube station. Opposite it, Victoria Gate Lodge marks one of the park's entrances. Peer through the lodge's iron railings, through the shrubbery, you'll see **Hyde Park's Pet Cemetery**.

Its easy to walk past it without realising what it is, as I did for 20 years. Closed to the public, you'll have to get your thrills through the rails. It opened in 1881 and closed in 1903, some say it contains over 300 animal graves, including many dogs whose end came under the hooves of horses galloping in the park.

It began as a favour by lodge keeper, Mr. Winbridge. First, 'Cherry', a Maltese Terrier belonging to the Lewis Barned family who lived locally at 10 Cambridge Square. They often visited Hyde Park and felt it appropriate that he was buried in the park, a place the whole family had enjoyed on many occasions. A tombstone was erected. The idea caught on and more and more pets were buried in the lodge keepers back garden. Plots were laid out in uniform rows, many marked with near identical tombstones. Headstones bear names such as 'Prince', 'Kaiser', 'Pupsey', 'Scam', 'Chin Chin', 'Smut', 'Drag', 'Tally-Ho', 'Freeky', 'Topper', 'Scum', 'Pomme de Terre', 'Fattie', 'Sir Isaac', 'Ruff' and 'Ni\*\*er'.

*"To my dear Moussoo – there are men both good and wise who say that  
dumb creatures we have cherished here below shall give us kindly greeting  
when we pass the golden gate"*

*"Darling Dolly – my sunbeam, my consolation, my joy."*

Maybe the inspiration for Pet Sematary, The Ramones 1989 single?



## The Free List

Not quite fantasy football, take a look at The PFA website and the pages (<http://www.thepfa.com/transferlist>) devoted to players seeking new clubs.

Currently, it lists around 500 players, mostly unattached but also those out of contract. Its easy to use filters allow you to pinpoint new players for your club. However, if you'd looked in August, the list was 3 times as long. Hundreds of players released at the end of the previous season still looking for a new club.

Some players have signed for new clubs, I suspect the vast majority are resigned to the fact that their professional careers are over.

Need a keeper with Premier League experience. At the start of November, Hilario (Chelsea), Carlo Nash and Tomasz Kuszczak were just some of the names without a club and available. Also in this filter is Jonathan Sutherland, judging by his photo, he's standing on a box so he gets into photo, his "Premier League" experience being just a few games for Manchester United's Under 18 & 21 sides.

Matt Etherington was on the list until his name recently dropped off, presumably he's decided to retire and go to the dogs.

Whilst there are a lot of young players, ones who didn't make a grade at the top clubs, for any club, at any level, seeking reinforcements, there is plenty of choice out there.

In late October, ex Fulham keeper, Neil Etheridge joined Oldham whilst ex Villa midfielder Isaiah Osbourne signed for Scunthorpe, both swapping the free list for contracts. Early November saw Jamie O'Hara sign for Blackpool.

Presumably, many of the players signing so far into the season have been put through their paces at various clubs, training and maybe a reserve or behind close friendly game. It does no harm to get players into clubs, put them through their paces in training, if possible, play them in the reserves and see whether they can still cut the mustard and can improve what's already at the club.

The big names are by far outnumbered by unknowns or little known names, presumably open to any offer, many sign on short term contracts. Whilst anyone on the list maybe short of match fitness, clubs are getting someone keen to retain his professional status and more than likely on the cheap. Other bigish names still on the list include Sean St Ledger and Martin Taylor.

Happy shopping.

## Drinking “York” Dry

We re-join YCS members Ray Goodearl and Dot Brown on a one couple crusade to visit every pub in the country with “York” in its name. Check our web site for further information, see <http://www.yorkcitysouth.co.uk> including a full list of all the pubs.

Ray and Dot have generally had a quiet few months on the pub trail.

Their summer got off to a disappointing start. They sent a YCS advance party to Brazil to search for York pubs. Despite visiting many beach bars mountains, tourist attractions and favelas, they failed to find a single York pub.

Dot and Ray stayed in Ealing, traded their Final tickets for an 18 days trip to Moscow where they will continue

their York pub search at the 2018 World Cup, but having vowed not to defer to Qatar further 4 years later.

With no football, Ray and Dot spent their summer twiddling their thumbs and rolling their balls waiting for the new season.

Come August and they were up and off, surprisingly not tying their York pub adventures to football. They ticked off “The York Arms”, 310, Oakleigh Road North, Whetstone, London N20 0DH on a balmy late August evening. They went with little hope, expecting a poor prospect, but found a thriving pub, full of local Friday night drinkers. It was maybe a little rough, but was a good old fashioned local, badly in need of a spruce up, but otherwise OK.

Their quest appears never ending, for on returning home, they took a text from a mate to advise of “The Duke of York”, 40 Church Street, Sutton, Kingston upon Hull, HU7 4TD, so an addition to the list of those to be paid a visit.

If you know Ray, you can imagine him saying the next bit, measured tones, but his voice shaking, “*How can Dull Hull be culture City of*



*Europe in 2017? John Betjeman, 'Oh come ye bombs and drop on Slough', should have been Hull!!!!!!"*



Rant over, the beer had gone to his head and Ray had to have a lie down. A long one, a whole week. He missed the dire draw against Wycombe a day later, the JP match at Barnsley and the win at Stevenage, 3 games in a week, all due to bowls commitments

(if you believe Ray). They were the first games he's missed this calendar year. (Ed – Ray didn't specify which of the 3 versions of bowls he was playing).

Later, it was second time unlucky at "The Yorkshire Rose" in Newall Green Warfield, Berks. This time, it was closed for re-furbishment, when previously it was not open on a Sunday evening. Hopefully third time lucky sometime soon.

STOP PRESS: October 2014 - With home games against Shrewsbury and Mansfield and an away game at Morecambe in mid week, what better way did Ray have to woo Dot than to suggest a week in The Dales. To cap it all, Ray was on the trail of a pub he didn't know existed. Skipton's "Rose And Crown" had had a re-furb and re-launched as "The Yorkshire Rose" in February 2014. Another pub to add to his York list and just as quickly, another to tick off. They usually stock 2 regular beers, including Sharps Doom Bar and 3 guest beers, as Ray noted, "one of the better ones, good food, and good selection of ales".

Latest Score; Pubs Drunk Dry 91 v Pubs To Go 37

*Check out the full list of York pubs on the YCS web site, if you know of any more that are not on the list, email us at the usual address.  
Happy drinking.*

## Musical City

Every October sees an annual celebration of the life of John Peel. Gigs around the country, more numerous by the year, countless TV and radio programmes and even more newspaper critiques. If he was alive, he'd probably go and have a kip in the back of his car in a car park by Scarborough Bridge as he did on more than one occasion when he was in York.

October 22, The Dublin Castle, Camden, London. A stellar line up of bands celebrating the life of the Great Man, everyone a veteran of multiple John Peel sessions in some guise or another.

It was a 4 act line up that even John Peel would have wanted to climb out of his grave to attend.

The night got off to a disappointing start. Headliners, The Nightingales, pulled out, guitarist Alan having badly cut a finger earlier in the day, been forbidden by his doctor to play for at least 2 weeks and necessitating an overnight hospital stay.

However, the rest of The 'Gales still came along to support the night, plus at least 2 former members, such is the spirit of The Nightingales and the pull of John Peel.

At the bottom of the bill were The Clang Group, debuting, consisting of more than half of Deaf Session (3 John Peel sessions) and Andy Mackay (ex Roxy Music, 5 Peel sessions (1972-3)). A short set featured 4 new songs, 2 songs from Langer's earlier group The Boxes and his rendition of Shipbuilding, but as he said, he didn't write the words.

Next up was Ted Chippington, [watch for yourself](#). Now a purveyor of true stories, many featuring his neighbours, he was on fire, particularly memorable being a long spiel about the mundaneness of Talksport. There were many highlights in an extended set, and as Ted himself said afterwards on being congratulated on a storming set, "out of adversity (Alan's finger), he had to rise to the occasion. True greatness.

Promoted to headliners, I Ludicrous, warmed up for the show in the bar by reprising Ted Chippington's 1980s act well, 2 lines (I hesitate to use the word "jokes", but I'm sure you'll know which 2 I mean) and regaling all with their memories of one of their memorable 1980s gig which Ted compered. On stage, singer Will waited patiently for

Martin and John to finish their drinks and join him onstage, filling his time by once again doing his Ted Chippington impressions.

No real surprises with this band, a good time was had by all. With just a handful of gigs every year (and probably not much rehearsal), they're prone to the occasional mistake, but on a night celebrating John Peel, that all adds to the occasion. I spotted one new song, Oscar Pistorius / Amanda Knox was the refrain. They seemed to enjoy themselves, the crowd certainly did, and it was like bunch of your best mates on a good night out. Not sure about the venue, as the band ran 15 minutes over the curfew, but nobody complained.

### Three English Football Grounds

Welcome to the Den, South-East 14  
Do not believe all you see or read  
We are not animals, we are human beings  
Whose fans only resort to violence  
in the face of immense provocation  
Nearest station is New Cross Gate  
£3.50 to get in and the beer is good

Burndon Park - home of 'Trotters'  
The ground stands surrounded by industrial dereliction.  
For Bolton is feeling the pinch.  
Still the fans have kept their sense of humour.  
Despite a recent run of poor results.  
Nearest station is Trinity Street.  
£3 to get in (because it's 'up north')  
and the beer is cold

Craven Cottage, in one corner stands the cottage.  
Unique, a reminder of an earlier age,  
an age before the violence, before the air was filled with vile oaths  
Opposite sits the brash new stand.  
Overlooking the Thames, smug, expensive and empty.  
There's an electronic scoreboard to gaze at when the play gets dull  
which isn't often as Fulham play an attractive brand of football  
£4 to get in and the beer is mediocre

© I Ludicrous (Written circa 1986)

## Alternative Odds

It was over so quick, did you miss the odds on who would succeed Nigel.

7/4	Martin O'Neill	Applied for the City boss' job in 1980s and didn't even get an interview. A new application might be looked upon more favourably
5/2	Russ Wilcox	How come most of the names in the betting odds have recently been sacked? Usually at a level just above City
3/1	Neil Aspin	Success at Harrogate and Halifax. Had something to do with the development and success of Jamie Vardy (Leicester) and Lee Gregory (Millwall), so seems to know a prolific striker when he sees one
4/1	Michael Ingham	A club's longest serving player (or captain) is invariably on the short list. He has played under enough City managers and is ready to put all his learnings from their failings into action. Will put everything into the job, in fact, he'll probably never leave the manager's office
9/2	Jason Mooney	Tall, imposing, able to see the bigger picture without getting down to the detail
5/1	Yorkie The Lion	A popular choice
8/1	Nigel Farage	Recently galvanised nationwide forces to challenge the Big 2. Previous financial life will be useful in ensuring the books are balanced
10/1	Dave Brailsford	Took British cycling from world non entities to multi gold medal winning Olympians and 2 Tour de France winners. Believes in incremental gains, he might need to find a lot in some of our players. At least he should have a lot of bikes when he tells the players they're on their way out
11/1	Tony Pulis	Dour style may count against him after the Worthington years
12/1	Chris Brass	Fans favourite with bags of lower league experience, including, including Torquay and Bury where he's the brains behind their meteoric rise up the table this year that started with their New Year's Eve win over City
14/1	Louis Tomlinson	Pulled out of a proposed takeover of Doncaster, no one blames him for that. He would (who wouldn't?) find things much more to his liking a bit further north. A 2 mill investment was quoted at Doncaster, for that he can be player manager. Choose your position, we've plenty available
16/1	Paul Stephenson	After a recent successful spell as Accrington

		caretaker manager, he is ready to offer a lifeline to Paul Gascoigne, his best mate from his teen years at Newcastle, as he plays the attractive football card
16/1	David Cameron	Would be a live contender if the role became free at the end of the season when he'll probably be looking for a new post, but October is maybe a little too early
16/1	Steve Agnew	Spotted at BC in July with Hull, so he's definitely interested
18/1	York Lord Mayor	Wouldn't be the first time boundaries have merged as the council and club seek to do all they can to progress the move to Monks Cross
20/1	Sir Geoffrey Boycott	Offers plenty of straight talking and ability to pinpoint what needs doing. Also see Tony Pulis
22/1	James Ford	Popular York City Knights RL Head Coach. As the clubs look to ground share, would be an ideal candidate to help the 2 clubs come together. Splitting his time between the roles would also reduce costs
25/1	Greg Dyke	Can gain on the job experience of implementing his blueprint for the future direction of English football (if he can get a Chelsea or Manchester City reserve (or eleven) down to BC, we won't complain too much about B teams (as long as its not Torres, we've enough non scoring strikers)
28/1	Steven Gerrard	Role might have come a year too soon as he still just about gets a game for Liverpool, maybe he'd be swayed by a friendly / supportive board
33/1	Jose Mourinho's Love Child	Will have an open door to a better class of loan signings
33/1	Darren Edmondson	7 years as Workington manager shows staying power. Bring his former assistant with him, we'd have an Edmondson / Viv Busby dream team
40/1	Smith / Busby / Crosby	Dream Team #2. What do they say? Never go back
50/1	Barry Swallow	With previous successful spells as caretaker manager, he would have been a popular choice a few years ago. If he could turn our summer free transfer signings into players we could sell at £100,000 each, his odds would plummet
66/1	Sophie's Children	Given some of the names in the betting, they must be worth a go
1000/1	Wilf McGuinness	He boasted of taking City from Division 4 to Division 2. Wilf, remember, never ever go back
2000/1	Luke Summerfield	He must be good at something

# **Billy Plutch**

*Having transferred from terrace to York City South web site, Billy Plutch brings his half formed opinion and incoherence to new frontiers. Read more Billy Plutch at <http://www.yorkcitysouth.co.uk/plutch.htm>*

Nov 29. **Will Aimson.** Sad news about Will, grandson of Paul. He suffered a double leg break playing for Tranmere whilst on loan for Hull. The opposition? Portsmouth, but we can't blame them this time as Will suffered his injury in a collision with one of his own teammate.

Nov 2. **Josh Carson.** Great news Josh is back, but let's not expect too much too soon, he's had a serious injury. Coulson had a similar injury and it took him several months playing before returning to his top form, psychological recovery can take longer than physical.

Oct 26. **Attack.** Best Form Of Defence. At 1-0 and in control, why did Chelsea sit back and close the game out at Old Trafford. It doesn't take a genius to know where United have their strengths and weaknesses. Put play into one box and its obvious at which end goals are most likely to come

Oct 15. **Russ Wilcox.** Glad we've gone for Wilcox rather than exotic wild cards like ex Newcastle winger Nobby Solano or Hungarian Csaba Laszlo (ex manager of Hearts and Charleroi (Belgium))

Oct 15. **Russ Wilcox.** 2 days to make an appointment, the same it took to anoint NW. Fair play to the McGills, no time to waste. I was going to write 20 reasons why Russ Wilcox will be good for us. 1) 2 of the last 3 of our managers whose surname began with W took us to the play offs, the other went on a club record winning spree. 2) You can't fault Russ' record in D2. Three, I'm still thinking ...

Oct 12. **Hodgson / Sterling.** Can't think what Roy did wrong except to tell the truth

Sept 27. **Frank Lampard.** In his proper attacking midfield role, 4 goals in 6 days. Pity Chelsea / England didn't. Ditto Gerrard. Neither are defensive midfielders where tackling is key

Sept 18. **Scottish Referendum.** Result Scotland never get out of the group, what else did you expect?

August 9. **Big KO?** Wasn't sure about the merits of giving our January signings 2+ year contracts, but to date, they've all proved me wrong. With more 2 year deals in the summer, we've got our backbone for the next 2 years. If signing free transfers, I'd suggest a one year deal with an option of a second year, make them earn it



July 30 **Vanishing Spray**. Following successful trials at Southampton FC, the spray is to be introduced for the new Premier League season. Meanwhile Ray Hodgson has asked it be made available to England for use on the opposing keeper next time they have a penalty shoot out

July 11 **Cream Of The Cr\*p** Welcome Lindon Miekle, Our 3rd Bosman signing of the summer. These players signed for City over deals offered by their previous clubs. Also welcome Anthony Straker and Jason Mooney, our earlier Bosman signings. Would you call them the cream of the crop (or something else)? PS Who, if any, was the last Bosman we signed? Are we splashing the cash?

July 8. **Brazil 1 Germany 7**. Just like watching Brazil. Let's hope we're not this season

June 25. **Luis Suarez**. With his imminent departure, Liverpool have rushed out a Suarez best bits (not bites) DVD, its 3 megabytes in size

June 19. **Back Home**. Uruguay 2 England 1. With our best 2 defenders back home, what do you expect? With a temperate climate, we can't even blame the weather, unless we overcooked ourselves in the heat of Portugal and Miami before we even arrived in Brazil

June 18. **Oh Dear**. Told my 8 year old not to get too excited about England's World Cup prospects and suggested he pick a second team just in case we got knocked out early. Having been to Spain last year the choice was obvious. Oh dear

April 27. **Liverpool 0 Chelsea 2**. If Mourinho was the England manager, could we win the World Cup?

*The Magic Of The Cup*: Proving there is life after City, I counted a number of ex City players who nowadays are plying their trade with non league clubs who got a game in Round 1. Pride of place went to Grimsby who fielded Paddy McLaughlin, Craig Clay and Chris Doig, plus one current City player, Danny Parslow, but couldn't find room in their match day squad for Scott Brown. They were closely challenged by Gateshead who included Alex Rodman, Michael Rankine, Phil Turnbull and Adam Bartlett (an ex City triallist) and of course are managed by Gary Mills. Ex City midfielder, Shaun Reid made the early headlines when his Warrington beat Exeter on Friday night. Also playing were Michael Potts (AFC Fylde, who also briefly featured on BBC1's Football Focus), Richard Brodie (Southport), Andy Bishop (Wrexham), Adam Smith (Bradford), Danny Blanchett and Ben Swallow (Havant & Waterlooville), Jon Parkin (Forest Green) and Peter Winn (Chester, another ex City triallist). I'm equally sure there are one or two more City connections I haven't connected.

## **Good Grass Or Bad Grass**

Good to see artificial pitches given the go ahead. That's how the first draft of this article started. Fast forward a couple of days, what was expected to be a no contest turned out to be a tied result. Artificial pitches didn't win the day.

They've come a long way since they were first allowed way back in the 1980s when QPR, Preston, Oldham and Luton pioneered them.

QPR were the first in 1981 and also the first to revert to natural grass in 1988. Their pitch was astro turf laid on concrete. Ironically, Terry Venables, their manager at the time published a 1973 novel, "They Used To Play On Grass".

Oldham's pitch saw the club rise into the top flight.

There was a strong feeling they gave the home club an advantage or 2. They played over 20 games a season games on them. Opponents just once. They became used to the surface and how it played. Many an opposition complained about the surface and the increased advantage to the home side, effectively beating themselves before the game even started. Something that Russ Wilcox alluded to when asked his views.

They were characterised by a high bouncing ball. Leggings and gloves were de rigeur to protect against burns when making contact with the surface. Some people put down increased tendon injuries to the firmness of the pitches.

Preston's plastic lasted until 1994. They were outlawed by The FA for senior football a year later.

Technology moves on, today's 3G pitches are much improved. Many of the downsides of the 1980s pitches are gone. They're cheap to maintain and can be hired out, making them an attractive proposition to cash-strapped clubs lower down the footballing pyramid.

There are many variants of artificial pitch, essentially many are made of synthetic fibres and look like natural grass (invariably green (other colours are available)) and never disfigured by muddy patches). Wembley's grass is part artificial, the artificial elements bind the real grass together, a system used by many Premier League clubs.

They're now UEFA sanctioned for competition and international usage. England and Wales have played internationals on them.

Just yesterday, I passed a parked car advertising artificial grass, It was finished off all over with the product, to touch, it felt like crinkly paper, no real sharpness to it.

Artificial pitches are used in the top flights of British rugby. In Harrow, Saracens RU moved to their new ground in January 2013 whilst Widnes RL return to Super League in 2012 on artificial pitch. I did notice a lot of grazed knees the last time I went to see Saracens play.

There is a one off cost, some say up to £500,000 of installing an artificial surface. But over its 10 year life expectancy, there are minimal ongoing maintenance costs. Compare that to the regular maintenance (and re-laying cost (£150,000 a time)) of a natural surface. Add in the additional income from hiring out the pitch when not required, some reports say £165,000 a year). Do the maths and the artificial pitch gives a significant return on investment whereas natural grass is a 100% loss maker.

It seems that a groundswell of professional opinion has held sway and convinced our chairmen to vote against the re-introduction of artificial pitches.

The PFA was "surprised and disappointed" that some lower league chairman were in favour of bringing back plastic pitches. Their representative, ex QPR & Blackburn midfielder Simon Barker, went on to say "It would seem that they are being driven by promises of increased commercial revenue streams and not for reasons of quality, integrity and safety."

The Football League say several studies published by UEFA, FIFA and various universities offer no "conclusive or scientifically agreed position on whether or not using artificial turf leads to changes in the risk of injuries".

Former Northampton manager Chris Wilder said, "Artificial pitches have their place, particularly helping youngsters develop their game, but I don't think they should be used in the English professional game, all Football League games should be played on grass." I might suggest his comment about helping youngsters develop their game was the biggest selling point anyone could say in supporting artificial surfaces as English football strives to catch up technique wise with the power houses of world football.

Even so, some players don't sound too supportive. The most notable high profile dissenter is probably Gareth Bale who after playing for

Wales on Andorra's 3G pitch in September 2014 described it as "the worst pitch he had played on". Elsewhere, the old pro would agree that although improved they're still not perfect and compare them to playing on a hard, dry pitch in summer where you might suffer from blisters, sore joints and burn marks. There is a petition against their use at the 2015 Woman's World Cup being held in Canada.

With their vote against artificial pitches, the traditionalists have won the day for once. It seems for once the chairmen have taken on board the advice and opinions of people in the game, although it seems very odd that they have voted against the option of an additional £200,000 per year revenue.

How a club like City who are losing £300,000 a year could do with that.

*Roll on 2015? York City Knights are due to start ground sharing at Bootham Crescent next season (their season starts in January). Let's hope the pitch can cope with 2 teams playing on it and it doesn't become a bog (or a beach). With barely 18 months to go before we are due to vacate BC, it would be very easy to skimp on the pitch maintenance needed to keep it in tip top condition.*

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*Cut Price Cup:* Can't let this moment pass without a word (or article) about the pricing policy for the AFC Wimbledon cup game. Being a cup game, gate receipts are split equally between the 2 clubs (after the standard deductions). If both clubs are agreeable, admission prices can be set at a lower than normal level. It boils down to supply and demand, reduce the price, increase the demand and hope a higher attendance offsets the lower admission price. However, other match day revenue (programmes and refreshments etc.) stays with the home club. Hopefully, some goodwill is built up and maybe a few newcomers become more regular supporters. Also, its not hard to tell which generates a nosier atmosphere, a few paying a lot, or a lot more paying less. Work it out for yourself. So not sure why we don't give it a try one day. For the replay, AFC Wimbledon (with City's blessing) were quick to lower prices thereby generating a more hostile partisan home crowd.

## YCS News Updates

You've already missed a host of events this season, but there's much more to come, including our Christmas social on **Tuesday December 16 2014 (7:30pm)** with the opportunity to meet up with fellow YCS member at [The Sheephaven Arms](#), 2-3 Mornington Street, Camden, NW1 7QD. We've a big screen TV, Christmas party food (plus the return of the mince pie eating competition) and party games (including Wembley, the classic 50s board game) and darts. A good time is guaranteed.

Our first New Year social is on **Thursday February 5 2015 (7:30pm)**, venue and guest speaker to be confirmed, but David Stockdale, Ashley Chambers and Simon Hood are high on the list.

We've 2 events in March, **Friday March 6** we're expecting to meet the manager. Nigel had already agreed to repeat last year's event when he invited YCS members into the team's hotel prior to the AFC Wimbledon away game. We're just awaiting confirmation that Russ Wilcox will do the honours. On Saturday, we'll be hosting a meet me near the ground. *Full details tbc on our web site.*

**Thursday March 26 2015** sees a social evening and darts competition back at [The Sheephaven Arms](#).

On **Saturday April 25 2015** YCS sponsor the final home league game of the season. Everyone is invited to come and join us in our sponsors' box. If its anything like previous years we'll be royally entertained by the club. After the match we will present our Player Of The Season award.

Our regular season events finish on **Thursday 28th May 2015** with our AGM and quiz (venue tbc).

Watch out for other ad hoc events throughout the season and no doubt we'll continue the fun throughout the summer, including regular 5 a side, car sharing / travel to games, gigs and when Yorkshire CCC come down to London.

**Please check our website <http://www.yorkcitysouth.co.uk/> for further details nearer the time.**

Also, we're taking membership for this season and next. Branch membership is open to all living south of York, just £10 a year (concessions and life membership available). Email [goodearlay@yahoo.com](mailto:goodearlay@yahoo.com) for further details.

## Quiz Time

This time our quiz is based on the 2011/2 season and inspired by watching Match Of The Day one night.

Listed below are the 20 teams in the 2011/2 Premier League, all you have to, using each team just once, is to work out the fixture list.

Arsenal	Aston Villa	Blackburn	Bolton
Chelsea	Everton	Fulham	Liverpool
Man United	Man City	Newcastle	Norwich
QPR	Spurs	Stoke	Sunderland
Swansea	West Brom	Wigan	Wolves

1. Game featuring teams we played in The FA Cup in our Conference years
2. The inspiration for this round, a MOTD game in early spring with both teams fielding keepers who started their careers with City
3. West London derby featuring teams we played in 2 legged League Cup games in the 1980s
4. We played both these teams during our 1974-6 stay in Division 2. One included a Football League debutant who later captain England 65 times, the other fielded multiple England captains.
5. Greater Manchester derby featuring 2 teams we played in the 1998/9 season, our most recent in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> tier (then known as Division 2)
6. These teams both finished in the bottom 2 in Division 3 (3 <sup>rd</sup> tier) in the 1985/6 season when we finished 7 <sup>th</sup>
7. Teams we've only ever played in memorable FA Cup games. In their 4 ties and 7 games against us, we've never lost in the original tie or on our opponent's home ground
8. In 1974, the first ever team we played in Division 2 and a bigger team we played later that season, the only time we've played them in the league. We've also played each in one League Cup tie, winning both ties
9. In the 1970s, one of these teams had a strike force featuring 2 ex City players, one an England international and one a Scottish international. In the 1980s, their opposition featured 2 ex City players as their management duo and 2 more starring in defence and attack
10. Two teams we've never played in the league and we are unbeaten against them both in cup games

Answers on the back page.

## **Ashley C/David Stockdale: Excuses/Excuses**

This issue was planned around an interview with Ashley Chambers, unfortunately he had to go back to Leicester to seal a house purchase so no interview. The last issue was centred around a David Stockdale interview, he also cancelled at the last minute due to the tube strike and fearing he'd miss being home before the Fulham curfew. In best Len Shackleton autobiography tradition, I was going to leave a blank page entitled "The Thoughts Of ....", but wouldn't be so cruel and couldn't bear to see all the white space go to waste.

### **... And from new frontiers #7 ...**

December 1891. Snow was falling as Burnley kicked off against a reluctant Blackburn who soon went 3 down. 2 Blackburn players fought with each other and were cautioned. Half time came and went. Burnley came back, Blackburn didn't. After a 25 minute break they reappeared, thawed out. Tempers rose and 2 Blackburn players were sent off, prompting the rest, bar the keeper, to walk off. After more time wasting, the referee had no option but to abandon the game.

Manchester City players suffered sunstroke in the first game of the 1906-7 season was played in a temperature of over 90 degrees fahrenheit, in the shade. 2 players retired at half time with sunstroke to join Jimmy Conlin, who had started with a handkerchief tied over his head. The team, 8 of who were making their debuts, and were 2-0 down, received a half time pep talk, "we'll have the sun on our backs this half, it will be the same for them; it will be easier getting to know 7 colleagues than 10". After 55 minutes Conlin returned to make a goal. 1-2. 3 more players retired and Arsenal eventually won 4-1.

Southern softies. October 1931, Blackpool v Chelsea on a cold, wet and very windy day, the pitch was waterlogged, groundstaff used pitchforks to make it fit. Chelsea complained the pitch was unfit. Less than half Blackpool's usual crowd turned up. Against the wind, Chelsea were 3 down at half time. In the dressing room, a Chelsea player collapsed unconscious, his body temperature dangerously low. 2 more Chelsea players, suffering from the cold, were late out for the second half. With 15 minutes left, 2 Chelsea players left the field. 2 more limped off injured. Chelsea finished with only 6 men and a 4-0 defeat. On the same day, 5 players suffered exposure and the referee collapsed from cold in the Blackburn v Sheffield United game. York City won 3-2 at Hull that day.

Bad light stopped play at Stockport in a 1946 war time cup game against Doncaster. After 90 minutes, the scores were tied. 10 minutes extra time each way didn't settle the matter. They played on, first goal wins. After 203 minutes, no more goals, exhausted, the players were going down like nine pins, it was pitch black, it was the days before floodlights. The referee had no option but to abandon the game. Rovers won the replay a week later. *PS Phil Burrows' grandad and Barry Swallow's dad featured in the games.*

A few years later, Southampton played Bournemouth in an experimental floodlit game. It was a foggy night, Bournemouth played in all white. No one saw anything, the game was abandoned on the hour. The Daily Telegraph reported floodlit soccer had no future.

In former times, it was a common practice to send a telegram to the star player from the opposing side informing him that the game was postponed. It worked more often than not as players failed to turn up and the game went ahead without them.

In 1908, a Scottish team travelled to Glasgow for an away game in an atrocious snow storm. Expecting the game to be called off, they turned around and went to the Christmas panto. Meanwhile, game on, supporters were roped into make up numbers.

PS Anyone else remember former days, a snow covered open Bootham Crescent terrace and opposing keepers facing a barrage of snowballs? Don't know about you, but my aim was about as good as Jim Hinch or Billy Yeats. Happy days.

## **Reserves v Under 21s**

In March, NW spoke of his desire to introduce an Under 21 side to provide a pathway from youth to first team football. On his arrival in October, Russ Wilcox spoke of the need to introduce a reserve side to give fringe players match fitness.

For many years, City ran a reserve side, its success usually coincided with a successful first team. Maybe it was the consistency of first team selection that enabled a more settled reserve side. It was around the time of the successful Smith years that our reserve side reached the top flight of the Central League and hosted the likes of Manchester United in reserve team football at Bootham Crescent.

In some years, our reserve side was largely composed of intermediate players and triallists (the cream of The York & District League (Andy Leaning being the most prominent graduate of this route in my day). It provided an opportunity for players who weren't progressing at higher clubs to come down to City and hopefully impress. Players from amateur clubs came in the hope of impressing. Tony Canham played for most of the 1984/5 season as a triallist before he signed his first pro contract in the summer of 1985 having proved his ability and consistency over a full season.

Don't quote me, but I recall when scrapping it, it was quoted that we saved fifty grand a year, although on reflection, that seems a very small figure to me. We now receive significantly more than that in payments due to our Football League status.

NW dismissed the notion of a reserve team on the basis that it would require a larger squad of senior players, some of whom would have little chance of becoming regular first teamers, whose main purpose would be to make up numbers in a reserve team, potentially spreading gloom and despondency around the club. NW favoured an Under 21 side. Stuffed full of young players with first team potential, but not yet ready for first team football. They could continue their development in controlled circumstances and be ready for the first team call up when they were ready.

Most Under 21 leagues permit 3 or 4 over age players in a team. This would provide match practice opportunities for senior players out of the first team, including those recovering from injury or out of form.

I'm sure Jason Mooney would welcome a couple of games to show the club what he's capable of, rather than warming the bench week in



week out with little hope of a game (although it shouldn't happen often with Cisak and Ingham in front of him). Josh Carson, on his return from a long term injury would have welcomed a competitive game or 2 to prove to his new manager he was fit and ready for the first team. In fact, we seem to have a whole squad of forwards who don't seem to be quite match fit.

I'm in the Under 21 side camp, a team filled with young potential, not quite ready for the first team, but still developing their footballing skills in a controlled environment, rather than a reserve side full of grumpy squad players not good enough for the first team supported by a returning pro or 2 and a stalwart like Danny Parslow. I'd also suggest the former, Under 21 side, is the cheaper option.

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Deon Burton. Pity his loan spell didn't work out. His debut at Cheltenham saw us win 1-0, by all accounts, he showed leadership on the pitch despite joining us only 2 days earlier. Apparently he was overheard shouting to Lewis Montrose at one throw in, "Midfield, move for the ball". He obviously didn't know his team-mate's name but he certainly knew what was needed. Montrose stopped gawping, ran into space and collected the throw-in. The power of a 38 year old. Best wishes for a speedy return to full fitness. You'd be welcome back at York any day.

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#### More Excuses

"I'm not good on days with the letter 'y' in them and have a phobia with days with an 'a' in them. My least favourite colour is green"

"I'm dropping through the divisions until I find my true level (and I'm still dropping)"

"No excuses needed, I was never any good in the first place"

"I'm a warm climate person"

"I'm a morning person"

## **B Teams / B Leagues**

B Leagues don't seem to want to go away, the big boys seem to propose one whenever they get a chance. Recently, they proposed a new Division 3, a mix of Conference teams and Premier League clubs B teams. The division would provide automatic promotion enabling Premier League B teams and Conference sides to rise all the way up to The Championship.

Tottenham winger Andros Townsend broke into the England team after a successful loan period at QPR last season. Likewise, Connor Wickham's goals were instrumental in saving Sunderland's bacon last season after loan spells at Sheffield Wednesday and Leeds.

In that sense, some have questioned what needs to change. But for every Wickham or Townsend, there are the likes of Chelsea midfielders Josh McEachran or Nathaniel Chalobah, who have failed to establish themselves at Stamford Bridge despite playing for seven different clubs on loan between them. Their time may yet come.

So how would the B League proposals help such players?

In McEachran and Chalobah's cases, a B League might be a step below them now. Both have played for Championship clubs but if, at 16, they had played against League One and Conference sides that had joined the new League Three, would they have developed more quickly?

They certainly would have earned more playing time, which Preston striker and former Bolton captain Kevin Davies has previously stated was the biggest advantage of starting his career at Chesterfield.

Davies, who went on to play for England, was in the first team of the third-tier side by the age of 16 and earned more than 130 appearances before he signed for Premier League side Southampton as a 20-year-old.

If a 16-year-old, who had received top-class coaching from the age of five, was playing regularly in League Three against a mix of Premier League B sides and more established lower-league clubs, arguably, he would receive a more rounded education.

Top class coaching, first team football.

The report cites the benefits of playing in front of crowds and against players who would be playing for their livelihoods.

The chance of regular first team football and an end of season promotion objective would appeal to most young players. Although they might balk at away trips to the likes of Hartlepool and Newport.

Alternatively, another of the FA Commission's ideas could come into play.

The "strategic loan partnership" would allow Premier League and Championship players to go on loan to clubs below the second tier and the FA hopes it will avoid the pitfalls of the current system where clubs are reluctant to loan out young players on a longer-term basis.

Some clubs say a player's development can be harmed because of a different style or poor training methods, but this new arrangement will allow the club to have more say on tactics, fitness and the player's welfare. Up to eight players can join a team at once and it could lead to a wider sharing of skills.

It remains to be seen how receptive lower league clubs would be to this.

The idea of a B league has been borrowed from countries such as Spain and Germany, where 18 to 21-year-old players from those countries have experienced almost treble the playing time in first team or B team games during the first half of this season.

Several big clubs such as Barcelona and Real Madrid have B teams in the second tier of Spanish football. In the Bundesliga, B teams compete in third tier, although some teams are planning on dropping them because it is too expensive.

Although these sides tend to draw crowds of a few thousand, Everton boss Roberto Martinez is in favour of following the Spanish example.

Martinez, who played for Real Zaragoza's B team in Spain before moving to Wigan in 1995, said: "The FA has come up with something I think is very exciting. B sides work, if you work at it properly. I would be in favour of it and we would all get the benefits."

Overall, the plans appear to hand another advantage to Premier League and Championship clubs, with League One, Two and Conference sides suffering.

Portsmouth chief executive Mark Catlin said a B league would "destroy the whole fabric of the league structure."

Not much thought have been given to the detail, how (and when) would players move between parent club and B team or what about the FFP implications of B teams. Chelsea seem to have a workable model, a group of players at Middlesbrough, more at Vitesse Arnhem, in total almost 30 out on loan. All required to report back to their Stamford Bridge mentor within 30 minutes of the final whistle.

You might argue that no club should have 30 loanees. Well, cap the number of players any club can have. The rest would soon find a home lower down the pyramid, maybe get more game time, maybe make better progress.

I fear B teams could damage the fabric of lower league football. Far wetter to build on the existing model. If Chelsea want to send 4 youngsters to a lower league club, let them, let them send a coach as well, but let them play for a lower league side, not a B side.

## Hold The Back Page

<p><b>Financial Fair Play.</b> Who thinks it favours the big clubs and closes the doors on smaller clubs wishing to join them? Manchester City, you over spent, no problem, just pay a big fine (we'll spread it over a few years) and you can carry on, its only money, we can share it with the other big boys.</p>
<p><b>Financial Fair Play (2).</b> We've had our first season (2012/3) of Financial Fair Play. City were indebted to the McGill family who pumped £95k into the club to meet the criteria to ensure City didn't fall foul of the regulations and incur a penalty, it might have been a transfer ban, fine or points deduction.</p>
<p><b>New Ground.</b> If its 6,000 or 8,000 capacity, its still one of the smaller ones around. Unless we generate mega bucks from off the field activities our smaller gate receipts will mean we're always a small time club. See above.</p>
<p><b>Martin Garratt.</b> Very sad to hear about his demise. As soon as he made his debut, it was very obvious that he was a very talented footballer. However, within 2 seasons, he left City under a cloud and his career (and life) hit a downwards spiral. Just goes to show, its not only footballing ability that makes a professional footballer.</p>
<p><b>Quiz Time</b> (see page 18) 1) Bolton v Stoke; 2) Blackburn v Fulham; 3) Chelsea v QPR; 4) Liverpool v West Brom; 5) Manchester City v Wigan; 6) Swansea v Wolves; 7) Arsenal v Newcastle; 8) Aston Villa v Manchester U; 9) Norwich v Sunderland; 10) Everton v Spurs</p>
<p><b>The Big One?</b> How come so many clubs are putting winning The Premier League over Champions League success? Which is the greater achievement, beating Real Madrid, Barcelona, Bayern Munich and a host of other European power houses, both in footballing and financial terms, or being the best of Manchester, Merseyside and London as well as beating the likes of Sunderland, Palace and the latest one season transient make up the numbers teams?</p>
<p><b>Ineptitude Of The Highest Order:</b> What do you make of the going ons at Watford (4 managers this season), Leeds (enough said), Blackpool and Birmingham (I'd better say nothing, court case usually pending)? Musical chairs, soap opera, laughing stock or fool's paradise, take your pick. Whatever a small pat on our backs for the way City are run. Generally we do things properly and have ex managers singing the praises of the board. Well done everyone.</p>
<p><b>Next Issue:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DNA of a successful City side</li><li>• City's best ever keeper</li><li>• David Stockdale / Ashley Chambers interview</li><li>• City's best ever season – You decide</li><li>• Financial Fair Play update</li><li>• Agents</li><li>• City's worst ever kit</li></ul>
<p><b>Please:</b> Send your comments, thoughts and ideas for the next issue to <a href="mailto:c_m_forth@hotmail.com">c_m_forth@hotmail.com</a></p>

Happy reading. Enjoy the game.