

# *new frontiers*

## A York City Fanzine

# 25 – January 2016 - Free To Download



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Happened To Diego de G Forbidden  
London

## **new frontiers – Established 1992**

### **Much Ado About Nothing**

Welcome to Issue 25. We didn't realise just how long it was since the last issue. New manager, 2 visits to YCS from City and many disappointments ago. Just about the only thing that hasn't changed is our league position.

We're deep into a cycle of short term managers, the lack of stability is not good for anyone. It can't last, we can't survive each season by the skin of our teeth.

Each new manager has inherited a squad of players, on long contracts, that the previous manager couldn't get a tune from. Football regulations make it impossible to sack them. Last summer, Russ Wilcox struggled to get rid of the contracted players he didn't want.

Ironically, Jason Mooney, the only one he moved on without too much hassle, has shown at Accrington what Nigel Worthington saw in him when he offered him a 2 year contract.

Jackie McNamara is now in place, still having to get a performance out of players signed by Nigel Worthington and Wilcox.

The upside is that many players are out of contract this summer, so the manager will finally be able to move on the players he wants to move out. The downside to the upside is that some of the better players are also out of contract and able to walk if they so wish.

Whilst 2 year contracts may be needed to attract some players to City, it was surprising that Worthington dished out so many to players who'd been released by their previous clubs (and you'd have thought would be eager to sign a contract to stay in The League). Maybe one year deals with a one year option would have been a better way forward.

A word of praise for the board who continue to support the manager. Pumping in money to support annual losses and in November backed McNamara by bringing in a new quota of loanees whilst tearing up the deals of some of the existing loanees. At the same time, stating money will be available in the January transfer window.

### **Youth Policy**

At the time of McNamara's appointing, Jason McGill indicated that he wanted McNamara to re-energise the youth system.

About time.

I struggle to name (m)any recent youth players who've made the transition to the first team, albeit not helped by the lack of regular reserve team football.

A successful youth policy should provide a steady stream of young players capable of holding down a regular first team place. If they're good enough, we'll sell them on and make some money.

I know I'd rather cheer a few young players who've come up through the system and are trying

to make a name for themselves rather than a journey man player on his own journey down through the divisions into oblivion.

### **Greening / Cresswell**

I can't finish without a word about Richard Cresswell and Jon Greening. Its always a shame when club legends leave, especially in such circumstances, but can be viewed as the club giving the management team every opportunity to make their own mark. Richard & Jon, thanks and best wishes for the future.

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*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 organisation or person slagged off herein).*

*Correspondence (and articles (hint, hint) for the next issue) can be emailed to 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.*

## Sophie & Russ

In the spring of 2015, York City South enjoyed 2 visits from City. In March, Russ Wilcox and Steve Torpey invited us into the team's London hotel on the eve of the game at AFC Wimbledon. 6 weeks later, Sophie McGill visited us at our April meeting in central London.

Making a return visit, Sophie, held a full house spell bound for over 2 hours, talking and discussing a whole range of issues affecting City.

Sophie opened by describing her family as "true custodians of the football club" and giving her view of a "very interesting season, and an unusual season which started with a lot of expectation and we very much thought with a definitely strengthened squad".



She spoke very highly of Nigel Worthington and truly believed without him we'd have been relegated in 2013. She couldn't stress enough the good work he did developing the whole football club, including the training ground, EPPP status and improvements in office administration. She noted how he brought upper division league experience to City's overall well being, but she ultimately felt he thought he was frustrated at being unable to get his messages across to lower league players. She cited one particular incident in his last game at Newport.

The board had a clear vision of the type of manager they sought to succeed Nigel and Russ Wilcox ticked all the right boxes.

Again, Sophie spoke about her family being hands on in running the football club but hands off in player recruitment and team selection.

Sophie showed us an A3 scale drawings of the new the stadium, so detailed, it was difficult to read all the detail, but the colour coding suggested a large, flexible build. She was particularly gushing over the corporate facilities and outlined how City would be in charge of them and the options to greatly increase non match day revenue compared to Bootham Crescent.

However, City's agreement with the Football Stadia Improvement Fund (FSIF) is an all seater stadium, meaning the club's hands are tied with regards to standing. However, she noted the progress of safe standing since the original

agreement was made, developments elsewhere and that the club is aware of supporter's representations and feelings on the subject.

Sophie noted fans might not always attend games with the same people and that the club was looking at ways to ensure flexibility in seating arrangements.

She noted the FSIF are decent people and have been brilliant towards York City.

Sophie went on to nominate her player of the 2014/5 season, but first nominated Keith Lowe as her favourite player, "a fantastic guy, brilliant, really nice and normal guy, with a lovely wife, a cultured man who has just become the father of twins".

Her vote for YCS player of the year went to Russell Penn, our "best captain for a very long time, a leader on and off the pitch". Sophie told how (2 days earlier) after the win over Morecambe, she expressed her thanks to a still unshowered Russ for his help in ensuring our safety, her kind words almost reduced Russ to tears, "then he hugged me, sweat from his face making my hair stick to my face".

Sophie noted this season that all the players cared, something as a fan, "you believe they care, they give 100%", but now realised in some previous seasons that had not always been the case.

A frank appraisal of discussion on City's managers during the McGill years followed. Sophie felt virtually every manager had been beneficial to the club.

Billy McEwan is held in high regard, noting the quality of players he brought to City, Clayton Donaldson and Martyn Woolford included.

Gary Mills' Wembley success was noted as was Nigel Worthington's efforts in ensuring league survival in his first season and for the off the field improvements, his experience of working at a higher level rubbing off at City, including the training ground, EPPP improvement and office administration practices.



She described the Gary Mills scenario that there was a feeling that things were spiralling out of control, some players were not fully committed and that Gary himself was unwilling to change. Sophie spoke of a very, very close relationship with Gary Mills and would cite it as a key factor in our Wembley double success and that it was a very, very difficult decision to sack him.

Russ Wilcox was described as being well respected in the game, the hardest working manager we have had and how he regularly travels to watch up to 4 games a week, which bodes well for this summer's recruitment. As a person, he's well liked, down to earth and really good to work with.

Sophie narrowly failed to beat her own record for the latest finish by a guest speaker and I'm sure all 20 plus members present will have left knowing the club is in safe hands.

6 weeks earlier, YCS were invited to meet Russ Wilcox and Steve Torpey. They were in a good, buoyant mood just 3 days after our win at Cambridge. They both spoke passionately about the club, Russ being very confident that we'd be in Division 2 next season, the squad is good enough to survive and the need for short term thinking for long term success.

Russ was reluctant to set a target for next season, but noted that the first season is always the hardest. He's already looking forward to our move to our new stadium and wants to be part of it.

He spoke about how the McGill family have brought stability to the club since 2002, that they're looking to move forward and he is excited about the new stadium, noting the boost a new ground gave to Chesterfield and Rotherham.



A couple of times Russ spoke about short term planning for long term success and the need for building blocks. At the same time, he recalled how Scunthorpe's chairman had spoken about the play offs this season and that set unrealistic expectations within the club and town.

Russ believes D2 is weaker this season, noting how no team had gone on a long winning run like both City and Scunthorpe did last season and the inconsistencies of many teams in the division.

He put the games at Carlisle (most complete, defended box well, quality of goals, fairly comfortable) and Morecambe amongst our top performances since arrival. Discussing the Cambridge win, Russ and Steve spoke about game management, nullifying Cambridge and pressing for a second goal rather than sitting back. Steve noted how we could have scored 5 or 6 against Tranmere and praised Micky Adams' post match interviews. From a fan's viewpoint, given our recent history, we were a little surprised neither mentioned the Luton away 2-2 draw as a highpoint, but when prompted, Russ noted how even the Luton's players on the pitch expressed surprise in Hyde's red card. On several occasions, Russ came back to how key the first goal is, but equally the need to manage segments of the game and to react to changing circumstances.

Russ also mentioned that without a reserve side, he can only very rarely see the youth players in action as their Saturday morning games clash with first team match preparation. However, he had managed to watch Dave Winfield play a couple of games for AFC Wimbledon. He'd have no hesitation in now recalling him to our first team having seen him prove his readiness in a month on loan, something he couldn't do at York without a reserve side.

The psychological effects of being thrust into first team action after several weeks of inactivity were discussed.

Somewhere along the way:

- Steve spoke about a disease affecting the turf at Bootham Crescent which causes the turf's root system to break down meaning the turf is very loose. Further treatment has been applied this week and he confirmed the state of the pitch was in no way due to any lack of maintenance due to the new stadium move
- In recent games, when we'd had no keeper on the bench, Russ has a player ready to go in goal if needed, someone whose shown his worth in training and is ready if required. But he felt that the risk of no keeper was minimal. At the same time, Russ outlined how he expects his defenders and keeper to interact and walked us through the first goal we conceded Northampton
- Russ praised our training facilities and their value in attracting players to York

For the full interviews, take a look at our web site ([www.yorkcitysouth.co.uk](http://www.yorkcitysouth.co.uk)). You'll find these and interviews with 3 former managers, plus Jon Champion and many more.

## All I Want For Christmas Is A Dukla Prague Away Kit

There was one in the gang who had Scalextric  
And because of that he thought he was better than you  
Every day after school you'd go round there to play it  
Hoping to compete for some kind of championship  
But it always took about fifteen billion hours to set the track up  
And even when you did the thing never seemed to work

It was a dodgy transformer again and again  
A dodgy transformer again and again  
It was a dodgy transformer again and again  
A dodgy transformer that cost three pound ten

So he'd send his doting mother up the stairs with the stepladders  
To get the Subbuteo out of the loft  
He had all the accessories required for that big match atmosphere  
The crowd and the dugout and the floodlights too  
You'd always get palmed off with a headless centre forward  
And a goalkeeper with no arms and a face like his

And he'd managed to get hold of a Dukla Prague away kit  
'Cos his uncle owned a sports shop and he'd kept it to one side  
And after only five minutes you'd be down to ten men  
'Cos he'd sent off your right back for taking the base from under his  
left winger

And come to half time you were losing four-nil  
Each and every goal a hotly disputed penalty  
So you'd smash up the floodlights and the match was abandoned  
And the dog would bark and you'd be banned from his house  
And your travelling army of synthetic supporters  
Would be taken away from you and thrown in the bin

Now he's working in a job with a future  
He hands me my Giro every two weeks  
And me I'm on the lookout for a proper transformer ...errr

[See Half Man Half Biscuit in action](#)



## Shippo The Lion

*The following arrived anonymously on our doorstep, if you know who either of the 2 are, please let us know.*

I'm not a YCS member, but my big boots have been filled by 2 YCS members. I'm Shippo The Lion, City's first life size mascot who roamed Bootham Crescent throughout the 1990s having started life as a twinkle in the eyes of 2 students at York's Sixth Form college.

Usually, the lovely Sarah filled my boots, occasionally others.

I recall the Stockport game in October 1994 with pride (no pun intended, but plenty of pens). I kept goal during the kids' half time penalty shoot out. Under firm instructions from Sarah not to dive about and get dirty, I stayed upright. Even so, I felt any sudden movement might dislodge my head and reveal my true identity. Problem sorted, I kept one paw on my head.

Wearing flimsy boots, the whole outfit was made by York College sixth form students, I was afraid to kick the ball too hard for fear of breaking my boots. With a papier mache head, the eye holes were about 6 inches in front of my eyes, meaning tunnel vision, I couldn't see the ball if it was on the ground at my feet, zero eye to foot co-ordination, so any attempt to kick it resulted in missing it.

As the penalties progressed I became aware of the crowd behind me becoming more and more raucous, "Shippo For England" and "Get Your Kit Off ..." to the fore.

Unbeknown to me, my football shorts were slipping down, exposing a lion's nether regions, but with my tunnel vision I had no idea what was happening.

Eventually, my keeper, Graham, came across and whispered in my ear what was happening and marched me off in disgrace. One paw holding my head, another, holding up my shorts.

After the game, I heard our chairman had forsaken his half time duties to see what all the commotion was about.

I escaped over The Pennines after our 4-0 loss at Manchester City in May 1999 which saw us relegated into Division 2 vowing not to return to Bootham Crescent until we regained Division 1 status.

True to my word, beware the next time you hike on The Pennines, especially if dressed in light blue.

## Marching On

**Mike Peters seems to be on a near perpetual solo world tour performing a reworked version of Strength, The Alarm's 1985 album and the name of their subsequent tour to promote it.**

I recall seeing The Alarm in York way back when, probably 1982, in a York uni college. Good band at the time, great evening, but somehow, The Alarm and Mike Peters fell completely off my radar.

May saw their lead singer, Mike Peters play London's 100 Club as part of an acoustic tour celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Alarm's "Strength" album.

I thought I'd go along and see how he's made it through the years.

On arriving the 100 Club, I felt a little trepidation and nearly turned around and went straight home. Peters had a 30 minutes warm up set and then a 105 minute main set. Could I take it? Did he have enough material for over 2 hours? Having spent the day trying to recall The Alarm's big hits, I came up with one, "69 Guns", as you'll see later, I even got the name of that one wrong!

Peters had just started his warm up set when I arrived. One man, 3 guitars, keyboard, drum pedal and giant tambourine.

2 and a half hours later I left feeling exhilarated. Mike Peters captivated a full house, The Alarm classics came flooding back. They included Marching On, Where Were You Hiding When The Storm Broke?, The Stand, Bound For Glory, Absolute Reality, Spirit of '76, 68 Guns, Strength and Where Were You Hiding When The Storm Broke.

Album tracks, unknown to the non Peters fans, such as "Steel Mill Town" went down just as well.

The set was liberally punctuated (and enhanced) by his reminisces, the first punk in North Wales, Eric's debut, run ins with The Clash's management and more personal memories, his father, the demise of the steel industry, his 2 separate battles with cancer and charity work.

Cutting a slightly cherubic, ragamuffin figure, despite 30 years and the ravages of time, he was easily recognisable and barely looked any older than all those years ago.

The Alarm had fallen completely off my radar, but when they or Mike Peters are back in town, I'll be first in the queue. You should be right behind me.

PS Look on youtube and you'll quickly find lots of clips from the tour, including many of the stories he told on the night. Well worth it.

Back at The 100 Club 4 weeks later to see Brix Smith And The Extricated [see my pic below]. I last crossed paths with Brix a year or 2 ago when I saw her on the Channel 4's Royal Ascot horse racing coverage as their fashion correspondent (alongside Gok Wan, if memory serves me right).



Before that, it was around the mid 80s when I saw her wearing a basque sprawled across a giant hamburger (if you weren't there, don't ask).

Its probably fair to say she wouldn't fit into her basque any more (just as I wouldn't fit into my 30+ year old bondage trousers), but musically, she's more than beaten the years.

Backed by a cast of ex Fall members (with Brix included, a 5 piece band, not an orchestra as it could easily have been with all ex Fall members) they ran through a 90 minute set, largely based on Fall songs (and given the number of Fall albums), its possible all the songs were ex Fall or taken from band member's earlier days.

Whilst its always good to see The Fall playing their current album live, new challenges, new songs and new band members (and I've never left a Fall gig feeling let down by the music, given their rich back catalogue) its a little sad some of the old songs never get aired.

The band (Steve & Paul Hanley, Steve Trafford and Jason Brown) enjoyed themselves, they had a good time. Without living in fear of the lead singer twiddling their knobs, they were on top form. Enthusiastic drumming from Paul Hanley saw his drumsticks fly out of his hands about 4 times, something I'd not seen happen for many a year, but I saw it again the following week.

Brix seems to have adopted Mark E Smith's slurring of the last word of each line and his nasal delivery. A large proportion of their set consisted of songs written by the band members or ones written during their Fall years. Starting with U.S. 80s-90s., they went through, in no particular order, Lay Of The Land, Totally Wired, Leave The Capital, Mr Pharmacist, Creep, Dead Beat, Cruisers Creek. They finished with Big New Prinz. And its "he is not appreciated" chant, just who did they mean?

## Autumn Statement

Fast forward to autumn.

Straight after the Barnet game, it was a dash down to The Kentish Town Forum to see Graham Parker And The Rumour. The last of the 70s pub rockers, reformed a few years ago and now regularly tour. Their set consists mostly of 70s material, the line up unchanged since the 70s. That's an achievement in itself. An enjoyable evening, I came away feeling glad I'd finally seen them, but not thinking I must rush home and find out when they're back again.

Autumn seems to be the time for reunions. Fuzzbox, formerly known as We've Gotta A Fuzzbox And We're Gonna Use It, now a 5 piece, including just 2 of their original lineup, stormed through their greatest hits collection, being a non fan, I was surprised how many tunes I recognised (and enjoyed), but suspect the show was very light on new material.

With a glammed up feisty singer Vix, dressed in 20s style, hairdo to match, very much in charge, their image has moved on from the 80s, exemplified by new guitarist Megan Burke dressed in a tight fitting black leather cat suit. On more than one occasion, Vix said, "not bad for girls", I'd raise the compliments considerably higher. Well recommended next time they're in your town. One disappointment? No Rockin With Rita.

A couple of weeks later and it was the return of Brix Smith And The Extricated. Their set has moved on since their spring tour. A couple of new songs (not that they sound much different to their core Fall songs) and probably Brix's best know post Fall song, "Waking Up In The Sun".

The musical year ended with another Deaf School show. All you who saw them in York in November for the first time will have concurred with their web site banner headline, "The best band in the world you've probably never heard of, and if you have, you know why".

## 2013/4 Accounts

The Facts (for the season of Nigel Worthington's play off success):

- Operating losses: £280k - held steady, figures very similar to a year ago
  - Additional legal costs re new stadium and BC repairs
  - Total wage bill down by £44k to £2.06m
  - Season tickets and gate receipts account for 36% of income
- £70k McGill family donation to ensure salary cap limit not breached
- Total McGill family input to YCFC now about £2m
- Again, no salaries or expenses taken by City's board
- Losses forecast every year until stadium move
  - With increased opportunities at the new stadium to maximise income and reduce costs, the board expects to set a break even budget once it opens

Our Thoughts:

- Although disappointing to see such a loss, its in line with a year earlier and as expected, so budgeting is good
- As a private company, YCFC need only publish brief accounts
- Playing wages still less than 2000/1
- Playing wages stated as £1.86m (2013/4)
  - For 2014/5, press reports stated Cambridge's were £1.2m and Newport £1.4m (decreasing to £900k in 2015/6)
  - Wages support Jason McGill's Radio York statement that City have the 5th highest average wage in Division 2
  - Put together, that might suggest we're badly under performing for our budget
- Whilst operating at the Financial Fair Play limit, the only way City can boost budget (and attract better players) is to increase income (either through the turnstiles or from off pitch commercial activities)
- With the £280k loss and another £70k McGill family input, that makes it over £2m invested into City by the McGill family. Thank you.

ROLL ON ~~2016~~ 2017 & THE NEW COMMUNITY STADIUM !!!

(More detail on the York City South website, including 20 year account overview analysis on the history page).

## Drinking “York” Dry

YCS members Ray Goodearl and Dot Brown continue their one couple crusade to visit every pub in the country with “York” in its name. Our web site <http://www.yorkcitysouth.co.uk> contains more info and a full list of all the pubs.

### **Latest Score; Pubs Drunk Dry 121 v Pubs To Go 8**

December 13, 2015. After the Rovers game, Dot and I stayed overnight in Bristol and then drove down to what turned out to be a near two hour journey to the Duke of York Public House, Leysters, Nr Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0HW. Not a lot of information on the web, it looked closed, seemingly a wasted trip. Do not trust the web, do not trust first appearances, ask the village locals. We drew up outside, nice gleaming pub sign and what looked like two cottage conversions. Different curtains, different colours, only one vehicle in car park. In we trotted, what a little gem, one customer, one landlady, glowing open fire, lovely, clean, beautiful antique furniture, and made most welcome. Original deeds go back to 1711, been in the landlady's family since 1911. Very little has changed in the interior over the century. Apart from the warm snug bar, two other rooms tastefully decorated and spotlessly clean. A pint of Toby ale, an hour's chat and then on our way home past one of my favourite grounds, Kidderminster, they seem to be following Stockport, entrenched at the bottom of the Conference. The local club to Leysters is of course Hereford, even more in the depths of the football pyramid. Let's hope we don't follow.

October 3, 2015. With high brow home games against Oxford & Cambridge, Ray and Dot spent the intervening days exploring Yorkshire. First pub stop was The Duke of York in Hull which they found in a large housing area. Despite being a lively place, much on offer and an excellent choice of ales, they headed to The Yorkshire Hussar Inn in Markington, near Harrogate. A lot of money is being spent on a complete refurb, excellent choice of ales, fairly busy, and a blues/rock/country band rehearsing in a back room, made very welcome, and the music very good, really rocking. Along the way, 4 breweries were visited. The Yorkshire Heart Brewery in Nun Monkton heard they were moving, they even moved to a new address, but the intrepid Ray and his good lady still found it, were made very welcome, had a tour and quickly downed all 12 sample bottles they bought on the day. The Yorkshire Dales Brewing Company in Askrigg has no public access (or tours) permitted under local planning laws; that couldn't stop Ray taking photos or buying a supply of bottled beer in their shop. Next stop was The Great Yorkshire Brewing Company, Pickering. Joining an organised tour, Ray and Dot found it very informative and interesting. Recent expansion includes exporting across the world and supplying supermarkets. Formerly called the Cropton Brewery, but

changed in 2010 to broaden marketing appeal. Finally, The Yorkshire Brewing Company in Hull, just off the refurbished water front. They knocked on the door, were invited in and made very welcome. A quick tour around the brewery, they were very busy, having just run out of all ales, as the beer festival season is in full swing. A pub with no beer!

September 20. Oh dear, Ray and his good lady, Dot, were walking the streets of York before Saturday's game with Carlisle and spotted this one. In Ray's words, "How on earth did we all miss that one. Described on the website as York's quirkiest pub, Dot and I have been in there before, but not taken any photos etc, always thought of it as Thomas's".

September 9. York Palace, Llanelli. A Weatherspoon pub that had been converted from an old cinema built in 1911, silent movies with organ accompaniment. In early 1914 Annie Oakley and Wild Bill Hickox put on a show there as part of their European tour. Excellent decor and interior, beer not very good, but food excellent, the usual for a Weatherspoons, but well worth the 400 mile trip, booked before the Swansea game was confirmed.

September 9. East Anglia Tour. We started at the York Tavern (1, Leicester Street, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 2AS). Its on a street corner, in the middle of large housing complex, which has similar pubs on street corners throughout the whole estate. 3 beers on tap, good food, and pleasant staff. Moving on we scored double hit at the Grand Old Duke of York (212, Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, IP4 2QP), an Adnams pub, with 3 excellent ales on offer and pleasant staff. Indeed, the landlady informed us of another 'York' pub, not on our list, up the road. Apparently there is local folklore that the children's nursery rhyme about the Duke marching his men up and down the hill referred to the road between Ipswich barracks and Woodbridge. Vintage Inns took over a pub called 'Sears' about 18 months ago, on the Ipswich road in Woodbridge village, and re-named it the Duke of York to jump on the band wagon, so off we went 'up the hill' to the Duke of York (Ipswich Road, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4BY). Again, an eatery, but with real ales on offer, usual fare from pub chains, served well and good food. We finished our trip with an evening visit to the centre of Ipswich and the dubiously named, New York Exchange Bar (24-26 Falcon Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 1SL). Converted from two shops, it appears to be a bar with a disco dance floor covering the rest of the area. Three rubbish bins blocked our access, lights were on, but it was closed although 8pm. Locals said it usually opens Thursdays to Saturday evenings only, and would appear to be aimed at the younger element. So a half visit, will perhaps return, (when re-incarnated as a youth!!!).

April 17. The Shrewsbury match, and a few days in Devon enabled us to make a few more visits, plus news of an extra pub we heard about whilst visiting a game farm in North Dartmoor. We managed to fit in 4 pubs, 2 in Shropshire

and 2 in the deep south. All were all delightful, busy and doing well, excellent beers and probably the best four sequence we've done (just like 4 wins on the trot). We visited the Duke of York in Tavistock, despite a new landlord who is full of enthusiasm, the pub on edge of town is struggling, the site up for sale, we do hope it survives. However, the trip ended on a high. A new pub for the list, The Duke of York in Horfield on the outskirts of Bristol. Its a huge pub in the throes of a face lift and image change, beer good, should survive. For ale heads, it had a name (and image) change in November 2014, from the Gloucester Arms, apparently, a local boozier with a drug dealing reputation.

March 20. In Ray's own words; After pub hibernation during the winter, Dot and I made an assault on South Yorkshire between the draw at home to Carlisle (March 14) and the loss to Bury (March 17). A special word of thanks to Phil Skilbeck who on Monday ably guided us around the night life of Sheffield and Rotherham. Better football, but can't score, and the worst ever combination of two full backs in the 52 years of watching City (since 1963). Thanks Ray. Whatever, the northern air, beer or football, something certainly got to Ray as in tonight's TOOAB, he's quoted as saying, "Don't panic, we will win next two away matches", that is not like the Ray we all know and love! With 9 pubs ticked off, the highlights were probably The Duke of York, Stainland (Halifax) and The York in Broomhill (Sheffield) where they had a choice of 8 real ales before being thrashed by a bunch of students in the pub quiz. For Ray, the lowlight was The Duke of York in Agbrigg (Wakefield) where Ray found the loudest ever disco (or maybe its just his age). Along the way, they found 4 pubs closed (one now a Londis) and one renamed. On the flip side, 2 new pubs were added in one street in Huddersfield.

January 21. Visited the site for the former "Duke Of York" near Lords cricket ground. The pub closed in 2005 and the site is now home to a Pakistani restaurant but with the Duke Of York motif evident. Had lunch there, a very pleasant, well presented meal. That completes our visits to all known 'York' pubs in within Greater London.

January 16. Ray is still discovering more pubs than he can sup at. A recent discovery was the *York Beer & Wine Shop 28, Sandringham Street, Fishergate, York YO10 4BA*. As it says a shop, selling good selection of ales and masses of wines, purchased a couple of bottles, not really in the brief of 'York named pubs' but there anyway so we'll add it onto the list. With yet another 3 "discoveries" in West and South Yorkshire, Ray and Dot have a 13 unvisited pubs to sample on their next weekend trip up to York to see City.

January 1st, 2015 - 3 more West Yorkshire pubs added. Happy new year.

*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.*



## Secret London

Almost certainly you've travelled on various London Underground lines when in London supporting City. I can almost guarantee one line you've not travelled on, Mail Rail.



As its name, suggests, its not part of the normal underground, but a narrow gauge (2 feet / 610 mm) line that was opened by The Post Office in 1926 to transfer mail between 8 sorting offices in central London.

The track is about 70 feet below the surface, the stations are at a more shallow level to enable the driverless trains to slow down on station approach and then to accelerate away.

Running from Paddington to Whitechapel, it broadly followed the course of the Central Line, but heads north east at Oxford Circus towards the main sorting office in Mount Pleasant, near Kings Cross.

Plans to extend northwards towards Camden and a triangular southern loop covering Westminster, Waterloo Bridge and London Bridge never came to fruition. Gradually, some of the 8 stations were closed, some argue it was deliberately run down by The Post Office, who argued it was 5 times more expensive than road transport and it was eventually closed in 2003.

Believed to be in good condition, parts have proved invaluable to scientists studying the impact of new tunnelling on existing tunnels as Crossrail work continues at a relentless pace.

In 2013, plans were announced to build a museum and to re-open part of the tracks to the public.

Catch it in *Hudson Hawk*, featuring Bruce Willis or in Charlie Higson's novel *Double or Die*.

Next Time: Secret London takes a look at the capital's lost football grounds (and lost football clubs).

# **Billy Plutch**

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

Dec 19. **Victory** Note the TV links YCS web page has been updated from "The McNamara Days" to "The McNamara Era" after today's win. Looking forward to the next update to "The McNamara Years".

Nov 21. **Loyal Supporters?** Anyone else disappointed by some of our young supporters at Orient? Can't argue with their vocal support. Not sure what happened in the first half, I was too busy watching the game, but they seemed to be fighting amongst themselves and generally giving the stewards a hard time, repeatedly standing on seats when told not to, smoking and standing in the aisles. If some had been evicted, they could have had no complaints. One had a go at a supporter of 60 years standing telling him "we don't need your kind supporting City", a supporter who still travels the length and breadth of the country, home and away supporting City, who in his spare time has been instrumental growing City support and fundraising. It calmed down at 3-1, the youngsters went home after an hour, not sure if their mums had told them to come home when it got dark or whether they were cold and wanted to go somewhere warmer.

Nov 5. **Scottish Prem?** A lot of people are asking about difference in playing standards between Division 2 and The SPL. Consider Sander Puri, Wes Fletcher, Tony Straker and Danny Racchi have all played for us and up north and you'll soon realise that's not much difference. Before them, Graeme Law at Dundee and Steve Cooper, whose Airdrie side reached the Scottish FA Cup Final, had a top flight stints in Scotland. This season, last season's young loanee from Norwich, Carlton Morris is a SPL regular starter with mid table Hamilton.

Nov 4. **Welcome Jackie & Simon** Anyone who heard Sophie speak to YCS members in April might have had an inkling as to the direction the board might take when appointing a manager. Still, pity Richard

Cresswell didn't get a chance, maybe he was never in the running.

Oct 27. **Cressie For Manager?** If dress sense is anything to go by, I'm sure Jason McGill will have Richard Cresswell towards the top of his short list. Although if you listened to Sophie when she addressed York City South in April and outlined the board's criteria when appointing Russ Wilcox, then maybe not.

Oct 26. **Sad Day** Farewell Russ, pity it didn't work out. Oliver, Berrett and Thompson; 3 Wilcox quality signings who suggest better days are just around the corner. PS look at the press message boards when Russ joined, almost universal praise, ditto Straker.

Oct 17. **F\*c" in S%\$t** Someone communicating their view of City's abject display at Barnet. Its not known whether that summed up the whole match or the incident when one City player, just beyond the half way line, to the left of the centre circle, picked up a Barnet clearance, sliced the ball across the pitch towards Marvin McCoy who then sliced it into touch, both slices losing us yardage and resulting in a Barnet throw in! You couldn't make it up. PS Impressed with the whole Hive set up, plenty of training pitches and stadium facilities.

Oct 6. **John Stones Paint Trophy** Good to see an England international putting some money back into lower league football.

Oct 5. **When Saturday Comes** They emailed me a couple of weeks ago asking if I'd write a piece on the Stand Up petition at City. I did do so, but got a response from them essentially saying it wasn't the viewpoint they expected. Guess what, they didn't use it.

Oct 1. **£14.08 - Average Ticket Price** ... so says the annual Football League survey. £24 at Notts County last weekend. When was the last time you paid under the average?

September 26. **Day Got Worse** I was on the 17:32 train departure from Nottingham to St Pancras on Saturday September 26 in a carriage with just myself and 2 single female travellers. At Leicester (approx.

18:00), the carriage was filled with Arsenal supporters. Within minutes they started singing various anti Jewish songs, mentioning Y\*\*\*, Hitler, Israel and kill, accompanied by sounds of escaping gas. As one part of the carriage started the song, it spread widely across the rest of the carriage, so it wasn't just a moronic one or 2, but dozens. On alighting at St Pancras, I hurried away from the people in my carriage but heard similar songs from Arsenal supporters further along the concourse, so presumably from other carriages. Also, I heard songs during the journey about Munich 58. You'd think travelling to away games, they'd be true / hard core supporters, I'd call them something else. Glad I support a club where such behaviour isn't tolerated and where fair minded supporters would challenge any bigots.

September 25. **Rugby World Cup** Not sure about the timings of Rugby World Cup games. After the first weekend, we immediately had 2 rest days. But, having missed Japan's sensational win over South Africa, I made a note to watch Wednesday's Scotland / Japan game. Bad mistake, it was a 2:30 kick off. Anyway, why Gloucester and their small ground? Surely a northern football ground would have offered more space. Note, the next weekend Scotland had 33,000 at Elland Road and Ireland had 89,000 at Wembley for Romania. A day later, we had one game which saw Namibia in the 8 pm prime time slot. Next day, one game, 4:45 kick off. Appreciate, we've only 20 teams and rugby players might need more time to recover, but the competition seems stop start. I don't even think the weekend quarter finals are well scheduled. One at 1pm, 2 at 4pm and just one at 8pm. How much busier would rugby clubs be hosting a big screen quarter final at 8pm (rather than 1pm) or Scotland / Japan at 8pm rather than (2:30pm) or Argentina / Georgia at 8pm (rather than 4:45)?

July 12. **Triallists** In my day, their identities were withheld go stop other clubs poaching them. Against Middlesbrough, the one attracting all the attention had his name emblazoned across all the reports, the other, who hardly got a mention, remains nameless.

June 11. **Overjoyed?** Can't get as excited as others about Michael Ingham signing a new contract. No doubt he's a solid pro, good

attitude etc etc, but many people have knocked his all round keeping skills in the past and with Jason Mooney we might not have the strongest keeping duo in the division. It might stop us signing a new keeper unless we can 1) sell or 2) terminate a contract; Option 1 - let's hope we have buyers queuing up, Option 2 - a cost to City. Meanwhile other decent keepers get signed up elsewhere.

May 3. **Jose Mourinho - Sour Grapes?** Make him City manager or make him England manager and I'm sure they'd be no complaints of boring football and 1-0 wins if we won the title or the World Cup

Apr 29. **Player Contracts** Lot of talk about paying up contracts of our of favour players. But for every one we pay off, it effectively hits our profits (realistically increases our losses) and could mean a one for one reduction in squad size for next season

Apr 11. **Vincent Kompany** Interesting to read Vincent Kompany saying Financial Fair Play is handicapping little clubs (like York City), as well as Manchester City's efforts to become a big club. *new frontiers* has said the same about FFP and York City several times. Whatever we do, we're handicapped by a low starting base and we will always find it difficult to move forward financially given FFP constraints.

Apr 1. **Michael Carrick** Hurray, we've found our defensive midfield maestro. Michael Carrick, 34 in the summer, who has amassed the grand total of 33 caps since his 2001 England debut. Despite all his good attributes, he's injury prone and has previously turned his back on England. One for the future? I think not.

Feb 10. **Talksport** Lying, dying on my deathbed listening to Talksport, they announce City are 2 up at Luton, minutes later, they announce we've had a player sent off. No name. Imagine what went through my fevered brain? It must be an unpronounceable name, Olejnik, maybe Zubar or Femi Ilesanmi. Then, 2-2 and they announce Luton's McNulty has been sent off, my suspicion deepens, and it must be our keeper. Jake Hyde didn't even get a mention for his non sending off

# Quiz Time

An ever popular YCS feature is our annual quiz. Try these questions from our most recent quiz. Quiz addict? Read more at [www.yorkcitysouth.co.uk/quiz.htm](http://www.yorkcitysouth.co.uk/quiz.htm). Answers on back page.

**Round 1: Bootham Crescent: It Happened This Day** *Name the opponents when on:*

1. *March 5, 1938 a record 28,123 crowd pack Bootham Crescent*
2. *October 28, 1959 City lose 8-2 in a friendly to mark the official switch on of the ground's first floodlights*
3. *October 10, 1960, Bootham Crescent hosts its first ever Football League Cup game*
4. *January 4, 1969, the first of England's victorious 1966 World Cup winners steps foot onto the hallowed Bootham Crescent turf in an FA Cup tie*
5. *April 27, 1974, 15,583 see City held to a 1-1 draw to confirm promotion from Division 4*
6. *August 17, 1974, City host Division 2 (now The Championship) football for the first time*
7. *May 7, 1984, City win 3-0 to become the first team ever to score 100 points in a season*
8. *October 14, 1991, City draw 2-2 in a friendly to mark the official opening of The David Longhurst Stand*
9. *October 13, 1996, Michael Owen scores all 4 goals as England Under 16s win 4-0 at Bootham Crescent.*
10. *May 7, 2012, City's last game at Bootham Crescent as a Conference club*

**Round 2: City Book Club** *Name the authors, all ex City players, who write these books.*

11. Only A Game?
12. The Story Of A Goalkeeping Legend?
13. A Tenner & A Box Of Kippers
14. Made In Sheffield
15. There's Only One <first name> <surname>
16. On the Edge?
17. Just One Of Seven
18. You Don't Know Me, But ... A Footballer's Life
19. A Tale Of Two Great Cities
20. Leeds and Scotland Hero

## YCS News Updates

You've already missed a host of events this season, including a real ale pub crawl in Southwark and Christmas social. Our next event is lined up for February 11 and with darts night, annual quiz, hospitality box and player of the season awards still to come, we're in for an action packed second half of the season. Most London events are held at [The Sheephaven Arms](#), 2-3 Mornington Street, Camden, NW1 7QD, just a 2 minute walk from Mornington Crescent tube station in down town Camden.

Pages 4 – 7 might give you a clue to another regular annual event (reserved for paid up members) that is still to be confirmed.

You'll see our flag at many away games, come and say hello.

Added benefits include car shares to home and away games plus meeting up before games.

Watch out for other ad hoc events throughout the season and next summer, including gigs and watching Yorkshire CCC in London.

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

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.

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**Bronze For Bronze?** I enjoyed watching the Women's World Cup, it was good to see England doing well, dare I say exceeding expectations. Mark Sampson proved to be a master tinker with his persistent personnel and tactical changes. Despite the generally late kick off times, I managed to watch several women's matches in full for the first time, including one not featuring England. 2 things stood out. Several times, I heard discussion on the merits of women's football and how a top side would do against men. The men's 100 metre world record is 9.58 seconds, almost a full second faster than for women. For 200 metres, its over 2 seconds quicker. An average woman concedes 15 lbs and 14 centimetres (almost 5 inches). Given that, there'll always be just one winner at set pieces and every 50:50 ball becomes a 60:40 ball. Game over. Its inconceivable any adult female side would live with a male team. Women never, young girls, possibly. Moving on, it was good to see games played in the true spirit of the game. No harassing the referee, no stealing yards at every free kick. In the semi final, when Lucy Bronze succumbed to cramp, the TV actually showed her prostrate on the ground, just behind the goal line, any man would have rolled onto the pitch to get the game stopped. For that alone, she deserved a goal medal. Well played Lucy.

## China – Part 3

Its over 20 years since my first visit to China (see issue 14) and 5 years since my previous visit (see issue 19). The pace of change is relentless, but off the beaten track, the real China still exists. Starting in Beijing, we had a 4 day whistle stop tour of the sights.

### Beijing

Staying in a renovated district (apparently rebuilt as in former times, but it was far too touristy (and clean) for my liking), just south of Tiananmen Square, we were centrally placed. Day 1 saw us walking around the square, Forbidden City and the other local central delights. Multiple queues for each snaked around the square, if you could find the end, well done, but try asking if its the queue you want and you're almost certainly be speaking to a non English speaker. Even in the middle of Beijing, western faces are few and far between. The queue for Mao's mausoleum was probably the longest.

Going back as dusk fell, the square, the size of at least 6 football pitches, emptied in about 5 minutes as a line of police locked arms and forced the masses out of the square.

Outside the square, there still exists some old traditional dwellings, we noted the use of English size bricks (rather than the older double size ones) indicating the buildings are no more than 50 years old. Here, and further afield, most hutongs have been spruced up, dusted down and are possibly survive thanks to tourists. Hutongs masquerading as "Roots Reggae Bar" and Starbucks spring to mind. Local time residents forced out of the city centre.



Incidentally, I came across 3 English language listing magazines, including a Beijing Times Out, there is a burgeoning rock music scene lead by Swedish and American musicians. I managed to see some live music, the house band at the Water Cube, now a busy water park, so busy that on turning my back and walking 5 yards into jacuzzi, someone nicked our water ring

and 2 pairs of goggles. *[Pic: The long and winding Great Wall]*



Another day was spent at The Great Wall at Mutianyu. Again, lots of signage to indicate the particular section we visited had been restored in the last 30 years, gained World Heritage accreditation and is now thriving as a tourist attraction. No doubt helping the economy by providing work in restoring the sites and then later in the tourist industry. By chance, we sat in the very same chair lift that Bill Clinton had sat in in 1999. Incidentally, on leaving the city at 7 in the morning, there were already massive in Tiananmen Square.

We didn't see many western faces in Beijing, even in the main tourist spots. We probably saw more than anywhere else on the Great Wall. Once we left Beijing and headed for Fuzhou, I could count on one hand the number of westerners I saw in over a week.



much in evidence. *[Pic: Orderly mid day queues, note its siesta time for the locals]*

## Fuzhou

Back in Fuzhou, in the southern province of Fujian, one of the high spots was a visit to Old Fuzhou, an area known locally as “3 Lanes And 7 Alleyways”. Just 5 years ago, it was real people living in real back streets. Now restored, smartly paved, it caters for tourists and a few niche businesses (as I found out when I entered an open door thinking I was entering a restored house only to be faced with security guards and staff members ushering me out).

However, there were many restored homes of former local dignitaries, my favourite being a tour of Lin Zexu's former home, a strong fighter against the Opium Wars. He was a successful government official whose work improved agricultural methods and water conservation over vast tracts of China over 15 years. The tour being enhanced by a lovely tour guide, whose near perfect English brought home just how important Lin Zexu had been in the

development of China over 150 years ago. Along with Confucius, Lin Zexu is the only other Chinaman to be honoured with a statue in downtown New York.

## Talia

We managed an overnight trip to southern Fujian, via a 2 hour bullet train journey to Zhangzhou and onto the cultural site of the Tulou buildings. Arriving in Talia, we spent the first night in a rustic hotel alongside the stream.

Having decided our hotel restaurant did not have enough to offer us, its meagre fares (not much more than a scrawny chicken and one cabbage) were displayed in a cabinet, we walked back along the stream and enjoyed a hearty meal by the stream as an enormous thunder storm raged overhead. I'm quite sure all the meat, veg and rice had been grown within a couple of miles of the restaurant. Once again our hosts were unsuccessful in their attempts during the "Get an Englishman drunk" drinking game.

Back at our hotel, in the open courtyard, at 10 at night, the manager set up his projector, pulled down the screen, poured a beer for us as we enjoyed a classic film based on the China / Korea / Taiwan conflicts of the 1950s that had been filmed locally. Distant lightning provided an eerie back drop.



*from above and inside]*

The following morning, we visited many of the Tulou, there are 42 in the region, mostly round, but a few are square in shape. Being 4 or 5 storeys tall, the outsides are built from local rock. The insides provide living quarters, the upper floors are wood constructed, the ground floors are where all the cooking is done. Many are around 300 years old, one over 700 years old, each its own community. The fortified construction provided protection from hostile parties. The land and tourism mean that they survive as thriving communities. *[Pic: Round (and square) houses*



Incidentally, our departure for Talia was an event in itself. At Fuzhou train station, a scrum of about 800 people queued at 20 (yes, 20) ticket windows. Occasionally, people pushed forward, their train being imminent, occasionally a window shut at its appointed tea break time. Invariably as you progressed towards the front of the queue, the scrum became more intense. Having pre booked tickets from Fuzhou, we collected our tickets and walked to the platform entrance. Once through security / baggage checks, the inspector refused us admission to the platform as the tickets said Fuzhou South, the new station. Back to the scrum, tickets were re-issued for the train an hour later. Cost about £9 for a 2 hour high speed train journey.

In Fuzhou, we saw more cranes, as the relentless development continues, the city has increased five fold in population since my first visit. One disappointment? The much heralded new underground system is once again delayed, now 3 years overdue and still much work to be completed.

## **Back Home**

Our return trip home was hit by the tail end of a typhoon. Summer is the typhoon season and invariably we experience at least one every summer visit. This time it coincided with our departure. It swept off the sea, causing a day of 100 mph winds and torrential rain. The city closed down, the streets were deserted for a day. In the southern part of the city, the river had broken its banks and caused substantial flooding. Come the next morning, the wind had eased and the rain had turned to drizzle, the city was getting back to normal. Roads were covered in fallen branches and twigs, workmen were already clearing up the debris. The airport road was open but a 4 hour domestic plane delay meant we missed our connection from Beijing necessitating an overnight stay in a Beijing airport hotel situated in the back of beyond, actually, it was an industrial estate.

## Book Club

**Chris Jones' "The Tale Of Two Great Cities"**, is a standard autobiography. For us, his City years are the key. He started out with Manchester City playing a couple of games in their 1967/8 Division 1 (top flight) title winning season. A combination of injury and the signing of Francis Lee halted his progress. Tales of mis-management at Swindon (where he was omitted from their Wembley League Cup shock win over Arsenal) and Walsall followed.

He didn't take kindly to being offered to York. On his arrival, Tom Johnston, told him he'd have to score all the goals as fellow striker Jimmy Seal had lost all confidence. Pre season was spent working on positional play in and around the penalty area, midfielders knew instinctively where the strikers would be running. The rest is history. Jones credits City's success to the input of coach Clive Baker. Prior his arrival, player unrest almost led to a strike and resulted in the previous coach Billy Horner leaving. His views on Wilf McGuinness are worth a read.

Earlier, **Eamon Dunphy** spent 9 months with City in 1965. His autobiography, "**The Rocky Road**", briefly covers his City career. He arrived at the end of the 1964/5 season for £4,000, weeks after Matt Busby had rejected twice that amount from Birmingham. Dunphy believes Busby didn't want to sell him to a big club, preferring to sell him as far down the league as possible to avoid the possibility of another Johnny Giles, a disgruntled squad player sold cheaply, who'd flourished at his next club. Dunphy alleges Busby may have taken the difference between the Birmingham offer and City fee for himself. Forthright as ever, Dunphy believes City never showed the same will to win as some of his later clubs.

Having finished his book, I re—read **Dunphy's** Matt Busby biography, "**A Strange Kind Of Glory**". The first quarter meanders through his early life and playing career, ending with Busby's WW2 efforts where his managerial credentials became apparent. Along the way the book covers Scottish social history at the start of the 20th century; bribery, corruption and scandal in the pre WW1 years, the 1926 General Strike / labour relationships and the serf like position of players in football.

Busby comes across as a very upright pre WW2 man. At the end of the war he was immediately appointed Manchester United manager. This is not the place to recap Busby's many managerial successes, other than to say, he founded the youth policy as the club couldn't afford to buy ready made, top class players. Over the years, from a position of strength, his earnings dwindled in comparison to his players. On his retirement, he was given a 21 year lease on the club shop. It's very evident that in his retirement, his voice was still strong, to the detriment of his immediate successors, Wilf McGuinness and Frank O'Farrell. Equally, Busby felt let down by some of United's actions and that he was aware of, or participated in, underhand dealings prevalent in football at the time, such as selling black market cup final tickets and payments to parents of prospective youth signings.

## Just About Managing

*The words and wit of some of the managers in our game. Plus, for your added delectation and delight, the words of some others as well.*

*"We've signed Tom Pope, a class keeper". David Flitcroft, Talksport 26/1/15 – Nick, you should have come back to York where you're appreciated.*

*"But a lot of right-backs are. I have seen where I am going for York players: that's not the case. I want the message to go out that my standards are high". Darren Kelly (5th June 2015). What's he implying about our quality?*

*"I'm a warm climate person" / "I'm a morning person". Take your pick from the players who never quite made it at City.*

*"I was told to guard the goal with my life". The keeper who never left his line.*

*"He's got something, good mobility and can handle a football". Carlisle boss Keith Curle told on Nathan Buddle, his new defender signed on transfer deadline day (2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015)*

*Lizzie Armistead was treated at the scene for 40 minutes before being airlifted to hospital in Norwich, having seemingly been sedated and with her head in a brace. It was feared that Armistead might have broken a leg. Daily Telegraph (18<sup>th</sup> June 2015) reporting her finishing line crash in the Aviva Woman's Tour cycle race in Aldeburgh. Head brace / broken leg - modern medicine?*

*"Whilst the club is in dialogue with the Home Office, it is not in a position to comment further at this time. However, the club can clarify that Sandro is currently on holiday in Brazil - but wasn't deported". QPR almost writing a book on saying nothing. London Evening Standard (16<sup>th</sup> June 2015)*

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**Ben Godfrey:** The interest in Ben Godfrey says it all about modern football. As soon as a youngster starts to make an impression, the big boys want him. Not 18 until next month and not guaranteed a starting place in a struggling Division 2 side, I doubt that Ben would even make a premiership club's U21 team at the moment. I can't disagree with other posts that he'll be financially better off elsewhere and maybe better coached, but as Dele Alli last season and in years gone by, the likes of Graeme Murty, Jon Greening and Richard Cresswell, were all established lower league players when moving to the upper divisions and enjoying long careers. Anyone remember our youngsters Nick Culkin, Lee Grant, Chris Hogg and Cameron Stuart, other young youth team players who left us and never made the grade.

## Ricky Sbragia

Do you remember when Ricky Sbragia joined City in the summer of 1982. We had great fun trying to work out how to pronounce his surname (some still do). Though we didn't expect too much of a free transfer signing from Blackpool.

He went straight into the first team and made the number 4 shirt his own. Playing alongside him was Denis Smith. When Smith's legs gave up, he signed John MacPhail. While Smith and MacPhail might have been more flamboyant, Ricky went steadily about his work. In his first 2 seasons, he missed just one game as City strolled to the Division 4 Championship. He never captured the same headlines as MacPhail, Smith, Walwyn and Byrne, but in his own quiet way he was equally as important.



I'm not sure what Ricky would say was his finest moment in a City shirt. Possibly winning the Championship? Maybe the following season when he starred in City's memorable win over Arsenal and then scored our late equalising goal against Liverpool in the next round. As City laid siege on the Liverpool goal, City were denied by the Liverpool defence and the woodwork on 2 occasions, before

Ricky managed to poke the ball home. Bottled by Liverpool fans for his effort. The replay was to be Ricky's last game of the season. With his mobility impaired by a back injury, Liverpool dominated the game.

Over the next 2 seasons, injuries restricted Ricky's career and he was never again to reach the same heights. He retired through injury in 1987.

Another career was about to begin. Ricky was given charge of City's Intermediate side. He went about his duties in his usual methodical way. His regime saw City's youth policy extended downwards and outwards. Juniors as young as 11 years old became attached to the club and the scouting area expanded.

The roots were being laid for the 1990s when the likes of Richard Cresswell, Jon Greening and Graeme Murty came through the juniors, those 3 netting around £3m in transfer fees for City.

Ricky gave the impression of being a father figure to the intermediates who respected his coaching ability and advice.

In 1993, our Intermediate side, under Ricky, reached the quarter finals of The FA Youth Cup, their best ever season in the competition. Graduates from that era moved onto the first team, including Graeme Murty, Steve Bushell, Scott Jordan, Lee Bullock and Andy Warrington.

In 1994, having rebuffed one approach from Sunderland, he left City to become Sunderland's youth team coach. Moves to Manchester United (managing the reserves to the league title) and Bolton followed before a return to Sunderland's coaching staff in 2007. A little over a year later he was promoted to caretaker manager when Roy Keane departed. Despite being reticent about making the move permanent, he eventually signed an 18 month contract. At the end his first season, having secured Premiership survival for Sunderland, he resigned and returned to a scouting role with Sunderland. In 2011, he was appointed manager of Scotland's Under 17 side. Since then, he has managed several of Scotland's younger sides.

At York, he was a popular member of staff, very well liked by his young charges.

My abiding memory (and it happened on many occasions), was when I was selling *new frontiers* outside the ground, he'd drive up in the mini bus having brought the inters back from their morning fixture. Whilst the players jumped off the bus and went about their business, Ricky was left to unload the skips full of dirty kit and drive the empty bus out of the ground and park it on a side street. On his return, always a cheery word, he'd thrust a pound coin into my hand for a copy of *new frontiers* with "keep the change for the next time". Next time came, another pound coin, never once, did he seek to use his change to buy a new copy.

A true gent.

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**Martin Garratt:** Consider yourself at 16 to you at 21. You probably did a lot of growing up, did some things you might now regret, but got through it with the right guidance. Richard Cresswell paid tribute to Martin, saying: "One thing that sticks out was that he had so much energy. He could run from box to box. In all the running drills he was the fittest. He was right up there. He was a box to box midfielder". Andy McMillan, a former team-mate, "He came through the system and he was a real talent. He was always one of the first ones on the training ground and one of the last to leave. He always looked very, very comfortable. I have these pictures in my head about him playing two touch football and him winning every time". Maybe what was missing was someone with Ricky's paternalistic nature to ensure Martin did the right things off the pitch as well as on it. RIP.

## Hold The Back Page

<b>Quiz (see page 22)</b> 1) Huddersfield, 2) Newcastle, 3) Blackburn, 4) Stoke, 5) Oldham, 6) Aston Villa, 7) Bury, 8) Leeds, 9) Northern Ireland, 10) Mansfield, 11) Eamon Dunphy, 12) Sam Bartram, 13) Keith Houchen, 14) Neil Warnock, 15) Neil Redfearn, 16) Tom Cowan, 17) Denis Smith, 18) Clarke Carlisle, 19) Chris Jones, 20) Peter Lorimer
<b>Kenny McEvoy:</b> Glad you're signed a proper contract, here's hoping you have a long and successful football career
<b>Reserve Team:</b> I was pleased to see we launched a reserve team this season, but not sure how it is doing, it all seems very quiet
<b>Mural.</b> Anyone fancy one?
<b>Whatever happened to Diego de Girolamo?</b> Lost in action in Sheffield United Under 21 side? Struggling to meet the demands of being a professional footballer? Injured? Probably a bit of all
<b>Former Players:</b> I regularly see Ryan Brunt, Shaun Miller and Michael Gash getting their names onto the scoresheet at Plymouth, Morecambe and Barnet respectively. Why couldn't they do it at York?
<a href="http://www.yorkcitysouth.co.uk">www.yorkcitysouth.co.uk</a> Check out our web site for much more City related content
I saw the chairman watching an old lady struggle to reach a Horlicks jars in the supermarket. He said "Can you manage, luv?" She said "I am not falling for that one"
<b>Thanks</b> to everyone who has helped to put this issue together, including contributors Fez, Ray, Billy and Nick
<b>Next Issue:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DNA of a successful City side</li><li>• City's best ever keeper</li><li>• Jackie McNamara interview</li><li>• Bury FC: Not A Hobby</li><li>• David Stockdale / Ashley Chambers interview</li><li>• Musical City</li><li>• City's best ever season – You decide</li><li>• Financial Fair Play update</li><li>• A history of City playing in London</li><li>• Agents' Fees</li><li>• Drinking York Dry</li><li>• City's worst ever kit / season /team / manager</li><li>• City Chants</li><li>• 2012 – Wembley remembered</li><li>• Quiz</li></ul>
And if its got all that lot in it, a top, top issue is in store.
<b>Please:</b> Send all comments, thoughts and ideas for the next issue to <a href="mailto:c_m_forth@hotmail.com">c_m_forth@hotmail.com</a>

Happy reading. Enjoy the game.