

THE Blizzard

THE FOOTBALL QUARTERLY / ISSUE THIRTY-SEVEN



Below are extracts from each of the pieces featured.

🔍 Dermot Corrigan

All Things to All Men

The goalkeeper Ricardo Zamora was both honoured and imprisoned by both sides in the Civil War

Delegates from 36 countries present at the 1936 Fifa Congress in Berlin automatically rose from their seats to show their respect for Zamora, who had been Spain's keeper from the 1920 Olympics through to the World Cup in Italy just two years earlier. Most would also have recalled seeing just a few months before the globally circulated photo of El Divino's miraculous last-minute save that ensured Real Madrid beat his former club Barcelona in the final of the 1936 Copa del Presidente de la República. And now he had died aged just 35, according to reports in the German press the previous day. It was shocking news, but also not a huge surprise given the many casualties of the early turbulent weeks of the conflict in Spain.

🔍 Tom Harvey

A Cup of Tea Then Blank

How a badly installed boiler almost killed the Fulham midfielder Robert Wilson

"I was unconscious for 24 hours. I woke up in intensive care and had no idea where I was or how I'd got there."

7 December 1983 began as an ordinary Wednesday in the life of the Fulham footballer Robert Wilson. He would end it unconscious and close to death. Then 22, the midfielder had attended training with the club that morning before heading to his three-bedroomed semi-detached home in Woosehill, near Wokingham, Berkshire, after lunch. "I went to training as normal," he said. "It was a cold, crisp day. I arrived home about 2pm. My wife Lesley got in a couple of hours later from her job as a dental nurse in a practice near Wokingham.

 Osasu Obayiuwana

Sepp Blatter

The former Fifa president on ageing, his enemies and his fight to clear his name

What have you been doing since then and in the meantime?

I had difficulties digesting the entire matter. I had, on 1 November 2015, a complete breakdown, at the cemetery, when we went for a Catholic ceremony. I recovered and I had to change my life. I wake up every morning at 6am and I get to my office at 8am. I listen to the news in the morning, from around the world. Geopolitics has always been something. I am interested in and the role that sport has in it.

 Peter Speetjens

King of the Flipflap

The Brazilian great Roberto Rivellino on his memories of three World Cups

Roberto, how did it all start for you?

I have a photo of me kicking a ball when I was about three years old. My mum took it. The funny thing is the way I kick the ball in that photo is the same as I kicked it as a grown-up. Same style. Same kind of movement. I don't know how to explain. It's a God-given talent, I guess. As a kid I was always playing on the street. But I also played for two clubs: Banespa, where I played futsal and Indiano, a small club in the south of São Paulo, where I played campo [football]. Life was very different in those days. I just loved playing and never thought about being a professional player. Things just happened naturally. Today, you have parents convinced their three-year-old is the next Ronaldo.

 Jo Harman

When Puskás came to Selhurst Park

The night in 1962 when third-division Crystal Palace pushed Real Madrid to the limit

Nearly 60 years on, it's difficult to comprehend how the match even took place. Real Madrid, crowned the best side in Europe in five of the previous six seasons, arrived at ramshackle Selhurst Park on 18 April 1962 to take on Crystal Palace, sitting in the lower reaches of the Third Division, just a fortnight before playing Benfica in the European Cup final.

🔴 Michael Yokhin

The Age of the Shadow

The Danish midfielder Søren Lerby once played two games in different countries in the same day

On 13 November 1985, Søren Lerby famously took part in two matches in two different countries – neither of them of great importance. Denmark had already qualified for the World Cup for the first time and needed just a draw against Ireland in Dublin to ensure they topped their group above the USSR. Bayern Munich, meanwhile, faced mid-table VfL Bochum in the last 16 of the DFB-Pokal. They had, it's true, been beaten 3-0 by their less glamorous opponents in the Bundesliga a month earlier, but they were still clear favourites to prevail this time, with or without their Danish star.

🔴 Paolo Vezzoli

The Legend of Atalanta

This had looked like being the greatest season in Atalanta's history. When lockdown came they were fourth in the table, three points clear of Roma, with a game in hand and on course to match last season's achievement of qualifying for the Champions League. In this season's Champions League, they'd beaten Valencia 8-4 on aggregate to reach the quarter-final, and had done so playing vibrant almost pathologically attacking football under Gian Piero Gasperini. In a last 16 populated only by clubs from Europe's top five leagues, they were the fairy story.

🔴 Ewan Flynn

The Atomic Boys

After the Second World War, Blackpool had the first organised fan club in the country. Bevers soon decided that rather than the match-day uniform of tangerine jackets, the Atomic Boys should instead wear fancy dress. There is some thought that costumes were 'loaned' from Blackpool's vaunted waxworks' museum, Louis Tussaud's. Bevers, who kept a shop in the town, was extremely well connected and could call in favours whenever the Atomic Boys needed a new look. Syd's son Darrell recalls as a boy going into the basement of the family shop and being greeted by an array of costumes, from Native American headdresses to Chinese emperors' robes – "all sorts". Soon enough the Atomic Boys could be found parading around town before kick-off, decked out in their eclectic getups, to drum up support for the Tangerines.

 John Harding

The Rise and Fall of the Showbiz XI

The club that featured Sean Connery, Tommy Steele and Des O'Connor in the same line-up

I went to the rowdiest, craziest football match I have ever seen yesterday afternoon. 12,000 spectators crammed the sports stadium at Hayes Middlesex – and there was a riot. People ran onto the pitch for autographs, even while play was going on. And as the final whistle went the losing side was mobbed. No wonder. For the losing team was the ShowBiz XI radio and TV stars...

 Paul Brown

Out of the Hotbed

The journalist David Taylor remembers Jackie Milburn, Hughie Gallagher and Millwall's hooligans

David Taylor was born in Gorseinon, near Swansea, in 1938. His parents were from Ashington, Northumberland, and the family returned to the North-East in 1944. He began his career in journalism at the Newcastle Journal, and also worked for the Guardian before moving into broadcasting, initially with Tyne-Tees Television. He worked on the regional football programme Shoot and came to know several North-East football legends from the golden age of the "hotbed of football". Nationally, he worked for BBC Panorama, where he made the now- infamous 1977 documentary about Millwall hooligans, F-Troop, Treatment and the Halfway Line. His credits as a reporter and producer also include World in Action, On the Line and Great Railway Journeys. He lives in the fishing village of Polperro, Cornwall, where he is writing a book about William Shakespeare. He spoke to The Blizzard from self-isolation during the coronavirus pandemic.

🔪 Jon Spurling

Prisoners 1 Screws 0

How the sitcom Porridge reflected changes in football in the 1970s

With many of 70s comedy's lead protagonists, their club loyalties were abundantly clear, as were their views on football as it entered the Technicolor era. In *Rising Damp*, Rigsby bemoaned Leeds United's luck in the 1975 European Cup Final, insisting they were "robbed" and added, "Players prance around like male models... in my day when you scored a goal you got a brisk handshake. Now you get covered in love bites." Alf Garnett was a West Ham fanatic, and described 70s players as "a bunch of long haired poofters".

🔪 Callum Rice-Coates

War Minus the Shooting

George Orwell's famed essay of football shows how little he understood it

George Orwell did not like football. He was, throughout his life, largely dismissive of Britain's great pastime. It was rarely mentioned in his work, but when the topic of football – and indeed any of the country's other various popular sports – did crop up, he approached it with a general disdain. "Football," he wrote, "is war minus the shooting. It has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence."

🔪 Sean Cole

The Club of Second Chances

The Swedish side Ytterhogdal are developing players released by English academics

With a population of just over 500 people, at least an hour's drive away from the nearest town, Ytterhogdal is far off the beaten track. The remote Swedish village boasts a unique football team, composed largely of young players from England. Released by academies back home, they gambled on rediscovering their passion and sense of purpose in one of the game's more obscure outposts. So far it seems to be working as Ytterhogdals IK continue to surpass all expectations. At the end of last season they finished second in Division Two, the country's regionalised fourth tier, entering into a play-off for promotion. If they'd gone up it would have been an unprecedented achievement for the club. Founded in 1921, this is the highest they've ever been in their history.

 Mak Sanderson

The Brief Glory of Ronnie Ekelund

The Danish forward who became Matt Le Tissier's favourite teammate

Ronnie Ekelund's seven months with Southampton ended in 1995. Matt Le Tissier remembers that time well – it was the season he scored 30 goals. During his 16 years at Southampton he formed many attacking partnerships. He had a great understanding with Rod Wallace, as Alan Shearer's decoy runs through the middle created the space for each of them to cut inside and shoot at goal. But when asked whom he enjoyed playing alongside most, he will say Ronnie Ekelund.

 Roger Domeneghetti

The Pioneer

Jozef Vengloš's reign at Aston Villa was short but he was the first foreign top-flight manager

"Hands up those of you who know this man," demanded Aston Villa chairman Doug Ellis as he introduced his new manager to the media. The assembled press pack responded with bemused silence. No hands were raised. It was August 1990. Graham Taylor had left the Birmingham club to take on the England job. His replacement was Dr Jozef Vengloš, a manager with a successful track record at domestic and international level. The reason no one had heard of him? He was a foreigner at a time when the English game was still resolutely English. Vengloš was the first overseas manager in the top flight but he was sacked less than a year later, derided as a failure, a bizarre experiment gone wrong. If anything he was ahead of his time, a trailblazer who paved the way for other foreign managers to follow.

 Tim Walters

The Green Future

If carbon emissions targets are to be met, football's relentless expansion must stop

Around Christmas, the Liverpool manager Jürgen Klopp criticised the "crazy" demands made on top players who, given the proliferation of fixtures, can find themselves with only two weeks off a year from a job that is physically and mentally gruelling. He called for football administrators to "think about the players, and not about their wallet." He's right about this, of course, but there is a more pressing reason why the football authorities need to think more broadly about load management and curtail their expansionist tendencies: our planet can't sustain it either.

🔪 Michael McCann

Time for a Change?

Would a stopped clock system help eliminate the scourge of time-wasting?

When you first fell in love with football, what was it that first drew you in? A goal kick taking forever? A substitution taking an age as the player trudges off, dragging his feet to eke out every last second? Or maybe a blatant act of feigning injury so everyone could stand around drinking water? No? Me neither. Nobody loves time wasting.

🔪 Elliot Turner

Helping the Giants Escape

How Mexico and Argentina have tried to ensure big sides are never relegated

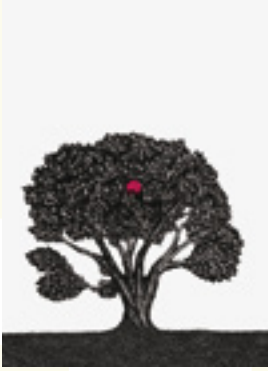
In 1993, the Argentinian club Quilmes supposedly made a pact with a bruja [witch] named Dora. They would win promotion from the second division in exchange for cold hard cash: US\$4000, as the peso was pegged at the time. However, after the club lost their next two games to rivals Gimnasia y Esgrima and Deportivo Morón, they backed out of the deal and decided not to pay. The next decade they were cursed with near misses, losing the promotion final three times. Management tried to track down the bruja to pay up, but she was already dead. Only in 2003, when a fan named his daughter after Dora, was the club able to win promotion with a hard fought victory over Argentinos Juniors.

🔪 Emile Avanesian

Barcelona 5 Atletico 4

Copa del Rey quarter-final second leg, Camp Nou, Barcelona, 12 March 1997

The situation Bobby Robson inherited when he took the Barcelona job was chaotic. The golden era of Johan Cruyff, the former player who as coach had reinforced the Total Footballing principles of the club while winning four successive league titles and Barça's first European Cup, had come to an end amid acrimony, his attempts to rejuvenate his squad collapsed amid a civil war with the president Josep Lluís Núñez.



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