



You're cracking up

THIS really did happen. It's smirk inducingly funny too, but true. I'm at the QPR game; Andy Dibble is considering a change in career to something that doesn't involve using his hands or any agility – possibly a *Big Issue* vendor – having just let in QPR's third goal. Not for the first time at a match, my mobile rings.

I've got to say that I find it incredibly embarrassing when this happens. Everybody looks at you as though you've just done a loud fart. I could understand this if I was at the cinema or theatre, but it wouldn't happen there because I'd make sure the thing was switched off.

The only reason that anybody heard it ringing was because having just seconds before gone 0-3 down, the Boro end was in numbed silence. I bet people were thinking: 'We're losing 0-3 and I'm sat next to a bloody yuppie with a southern accent – how much worse does it get?' Anyway, I digress.

The caller was a chap called Alan Foggon, you may remember him. He was calling to change the venue of our interview scheduled for the following Monday, from Newcastle to London. I wasn't in the least bit interested, so I interrupted him and said 'Never mind all that, I'm at the Boro match and we're 0-3 down after 20 minutes; can you get here with your boots for the second half?'

He raised a chuckle at that and said something like 'I'm not as fast as I was, you know', so I said 'We don't need you in midfield, dumbo, we want you in goal – I don't care how much weight you may have put on in the last 20 years, but you've got to be fitter than Andy Dibble.'



ALAN FOGGON – burstin'

Anyway, I met him a few days later, and one of the things I asked him about was the match in 1974 when Boro went to Nottingham Forest protecting an unbeaten run of 24 league games.

At one stage in this game, Boro were 1-2 down, and Foggon went on one of his runs. He was through on goal and unloaded one of his

thunderbolts, which in any other game would have been in the net before the keeper knew he'd hit it.

Unfortunately, as Foggon hit the ball, it burst. Boro's bubble burst at about the same time, and instead of bringing it back to 2-2 and maintaining the undefeated run, a new ball was found and Boro crashed 1-5. I was staggered when Foggon said he couldn't remember that at all. You'd think that would hang in your mind forever in the 'if only...' section.

Anyway, the interview was a great night out, and the printable bits will be in the next *mss*.

Stomach churning

AGAINST my own better judgment I made the trip to Reading on an empty stomach. The paper said the kick-off time was 7.45pm, so I ambled out of bed at 12.30 – it was a bit of a session the night before – and casually phoned Vince at 1.15pm about picking him up.

Once I'd been put straight on the 3pm kick-off, I was out of the house in less than five minutes and due to my incredible knack of getting wherever I have to be on time and against all odds, we were in the ground at 2.40pm.

But I was ravenous. I only resort to eating crap food when I'm seriously hungry, and after the last salmonella burger I had at Reading two years ago, (see *mss* 117) I was less than keen to make the same mistake. But on the (serenely quiet) Boro terrace the smell of jumbo sausage rolls and non-specific meat burgers was too much to bear, so I gratefully scoffed a quite acceptable jumbo sausage roll and one of the best cups of coffee I've had at any ground.

The match was a bloody nightmare. Reading looked dangerous every time they got the ball. I don't think that the terracing broke into song once, except when Boro scored. If we do go up wholesale changes will have to be made because we do not look anything like Premier League quality at the moment. And it looks like it's going to be a re-run of 1967 with everything depending on a home win in the last match against Oxford.

Anyway, what do I know? Bring back Alan Moody I say.

Keogh's Korkers:

1. Which is the only club to have played in the Premier League, the old first, second, third and fourth Divisions, and the Third Division North and South?
2. Who is the only player to have captained England on his international debut?

Answers on page 31

It's Sunday Times Rich List time again

AFTER much study, this is how the top of the football world shapes up, updated from this column in *mss* 117. Last year's placing and increase/decrease in wealth shown in brackets:

1. (1) Joseph Lewis (Rangers) £1,750m (-£1,250m)
2. (-) Mohamed-al-Fayed (Fulham) £1,200m (+£200m)
3. (2) The Moores Family (Liverpool) £1,000m (No change)
4. (3) Jack Walker (Blackburn) £600m (-£50m)
5. (9) David Sullivan (Birmingham) £350m (+£150m)
6. (-) Dave Whelan (Wigan) £340m (+£150m)
7. (6) Max Griggs (Rushden & Diamonds) £325m (+£105m)
8. (5) The Gold Brothers (Birmingham) £280m (+£50m)
9. (8) John Madjeski (Reading) £270m (+£70m)
10. (4) Steve Morgan (Liverpool) £262m (+£2m)
11. (11) Alan Sugar (Spurs) £221m (+£35m)
12. (12) David Murray (Rangers) £200m (+£50m)
13. (10) Sir Jack Hayward (Wolves) £175m (-£15m)
14. (-) Dermot Desmond (Celtic) £100m (-)
15. (7) Sir John Hall (Newcastle) £100m (-£120m)
16. (15) Nigel Wray (Notts Forest) £90m (-£10m)
17. (17) Chris Wright (QPR) £90m (No change)
18. (-) Martin Edwards (Man Utd) £85m (+£20m)
19. (-) James Moffat (Kilmarnock) £83m (+£18m)
20. (18) Steve Gibson (Boro) £80m (-£5m)

The year on year increase/decrease figures make interesting reading.

For instance, when you add up the increases and decrease in wealth of those for whom last year's figures are available, it shows an overall loss of £771 million for the top 27 football rich.

The only person missing from last year is Martin George at Leicester, and he is nowhere to be seen anywhere on the rich list, after clocking in at £82m last year. Leicester City have a fanzine called 'Where's The Money Gone?' – a fair question in this instance. He certainly hasn't blown it on players, but at least they've stayed up.

Steve Gibson's pathetic performance of the last three years is simply not good enough. Just look at this disgraceful and shameful record:
1996: Joint 212th Estimated wealth: £70m
1997: Joint 226th Estimated wealth: £85m
1998: 264th Estimated wealth: £80m

So as well as dropping a horrendous 52 places down the list, he's only worth a paltry £10m more than he was two years ago. It's an embarrassment, Steve.

Like your mum probably used to say, you should spend Saturdays at work in future instead of wasting your time with that bloody football club.

If you find my comments on Mr G. annoying, please refer to the word 'irony' in your dictionary.