

In these times of mercenary footballers flitting across Manchester and clubs with more money than sense it's nice to be able to report a more touching footy story that reflects what it should all be about, camaraderie and kinship, kneecaps and cruciates.

The 2009 School Reunion inspired Simon Brown to pick up the phone to the once dubbed "The Bionic Babes" of 1976 to bring together the squad for a match in memory of their late coach, Ian "Iggy" Leverton. Before the match the players presented Ian's family with The Ian Leverton Memorial Trophy to be presented annually to the top scoring player in the School football squad.

From the U13 football squad photograph, ten of the thirteen boys pictured turned out on the day, though it has to be said, not all for the football. Si Griffiths sent a note from his mum saying he was in Singapore for the foreseeable future so we let him off. The teams for the day were augmented by a couple of guest OMs and a scattering of junior Newsholmes to get to seven a side across the First Team pitch at Old Hall Lane.

To the match itself and, as it turned out, the boys of '76 could more realistically been the Los Giganticos. It would be unfair to criticise team selection but I'll do it all the same as Si Brown picked his team with experience in mind, selecting six of the old squad for his own seven. Opposing captain Ivan Gazidis must be getting used to having to bring through young talent & with the Newsholme brothers bring the average age of his team down to under 35, could he yet spring a surprise or two? Early exchanges said not as Martin Carr took two athletic goals with great aplomb and a pulled hamstring. Goal poacher Brown snatched a third as Pete Jarman, a couple of Cornish Pasties short of real match fitness, opted to referee having made a secret pact not to play the offside rule. In fact, so advanced was Brown's position that by half time opposing goal keeper Luke Newsholme came off the pitch with a scouse accent. Before that point though, Gazidis managed to put some greater equity to the scoreline with two fine strikes, one a Beckham-esque effort from the half way line. Three goals to two to the Scrap Metal Merchant Select Team at the break.

As always the Development Team, in the guise of Ian Thorpe and Jane Graham, were on hand to assist and had many grateful for their supply of half time oranges slices, drinking water and of course, Jane's magic sponge.

The second half seemed very much longer. Some early pressure from the Young Guns failed to pay off, Pete Hayes managing to blaze shots to both corner flags followed by a lofty conversion with the three reasonable chances to come his way. Tariq Drabu, showing less wayward tendencies, punished the wastefulness by extending the lead to 4-2 from just outside the box. Four became five as the heartless Steve Crummett firstly denied a couple of great efforts from Michael Newsholme and then proceeded to net at the other end from a corner following a miracle save by Luke Newsholme from a great Dave James strike. Not to be outshone by his two sons Martin N once crossed the half way line into opposition territory. Paul Robinson and Dave Newton held solid at the back not needing to venture too far forward and despite some intelligent passing into the space down the wings by Gazidis, Whitfield never quite had the pace, or never had any pace, to threaten the pairs defensive dominance. (Note to Ivan: Please practice back spin before next reunion game). Gordon Peters managed to breath some life back into the game by pulling one goal back before Brown tried to claim a hat-trick as his team went four goals clear once more. Video evidence clearly shows a hairy Scottish defender

stepping through a Belgian time warp to deflect a scuffed effort in for an own goal and, as Jarman saw sense and blew the full-time whistle, it left the final score standing at 7-3.

That was not the only reunion enjoyed by Old Mancs, several parents who had so many years ago watched their lads turn out in MGS colours came along once more to watch and wince as their offspring attempted to reproduce former glories. No scouts, but other team coaches came too; Andy Mayne wandered the touch line with Dougie Hearne who popped in late and shot off early. George Myers came along to meet with up with the Alpha contingent, Simon Williams, our illustrious 1975 School Captain, also came along but more sensibly than most chose to stay on the side lines.

The tour moved onto Didsbury for post match refreshment where, man-in-a-suitcase, Paul Cowan jetted in and talked a very good match. Great credit must go to so many people for putting themselves out & for making efforts such as this to attend from great distances as for one day at least the OM balance tipped back to the North, as for one day at least it was actually about the football.

For the record and as missed by The Pink Final:

**Result**

**SMS**.....7      3 .....**YGs**

Carr (2), Brown (2), Gazidis (2), Peters  
Drabu, Crummett,  
o.g.

**Teams:**

Scrap Metal Select: S Brown (c), M Carr, S Crummett, T Drabu, D James, D Newton, P Robinson

Young Guns: I Gazidis (c), P Hayes, L Newsholme, M, Newsholme (Jnr), M Newsholme (Snr), G Peters, J Whitfield

**MOTM:** D James

**Referee:** P Jarman

**Attendance:** Negligible