

South Manchester Reporter WithQuiz reports (1999/2000)

During the 1999/2000 season the local newspaper (The South Manchester Reporter) asked Mike Bath to write a series of light-hearted accounts of the goings-on in the local quiz league. Each article contains a few sample questions from the question paper used in the week in which the article was written (the answers appear in the subsequent article).

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Conferring (28/11/99)

If you're in the habit of drinking out on Wednesday evenings in Withington or Didsbury, you may have noticed two sad quartets in the corner of your local huddled in feverish whispers or, occasionally, rapt in silence looking at the ceiling seeking inspiration. They are almost certainly taking part in the local Quiz League. This league has been a regular part of our "local" scene for the past 20 years. So, better late than never, we intend to give you a taste of our quizzing each week in these columns.

This year there are 10 teams taking part. Two teams sit out each week and one of these sets the questions. Over the weeks question papers are a serendipitous mixture varying from the one horse obsessive ("How many questions can they get out of November 5th anyway?"), to the snatched from a quiz book at the last minute, to the inspired. The beauty is you never know which sort of question paper you're going to get.

The Wednesday before last St Cath's set the paper and the results were as follows:

- Opsimaths (one of the two Albert Park Club teams) won away to the Albert (it'll take a while for the Fletcher Moss to fully sink into our nomenclature),
- Albert Park won at home to Christie's,
- Griffing Braggarts (from The Griffin on Didsbury Road) won away to the Electric Pigs (one of the two Red Lion teams),
- and Moss Dross (well I did say fully sink in) won away at the Gateway.

You can probably gather that the word 'Albert' can be a source of much confusion for us. Who on earth was he anyway?

A trio to ponder from the question paper....

1. Which great Victorian engineer died by choking on a half sovereign?
2. What was peculiar about Danish Astronomer Tycho Brahe's nose
3. What do the initials IOU stand for?

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Still Conferring (20/12/99)

The local pub quiz league is now shut for business until Wednesday January 5th whilst its habitués go in for some more focused seasonal boozing.

At the halfway mark Griffing Braggarts are league leaders with 15 points from 8 games - closely behind Moss Dross and Old Erin (from the Red Lion) both with 13 points from 8 games. In the 'phone a friend' slot are Christie's with 2 points from 8 just behind the Albert Park with 3 from 8.

The answers to the posers published in last week's article....

1. The Victorian engineer who choked to death on a half sovereign was Brunel;
2. The peculiarity of the Danish Astronomer Tycho Brahe's nose was that it was made of gold (he lost the original in a duel);
3. IOU stands for 'Is Owed Unto'.

Another trio to ponder from last Wednesday's quiz paper....

1. Edgar Allan Poe's novels reflect his taphophobia - but what is taphophobia?
2. Which former West Didsbury café encouraged customers to read Spiderman comics and/or play chess?
3. Who scored the only goal in the 1973 FA Cup Final?

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How the mighty are fallen! (10/01/00)

The key game last week was played at the Griffin where the visitors, the Red Lion's Old Erin, defeated the Sporting Braggarts and leapfrogged over them into the league's top spot. Erin's eponymous skipper, Gerry Hennessy, reports that the Holt's cooking lager played a crucial part in their victory.

Elsewhere the Albert beat Moss Dross in the Fletcher Moss derby; the Gateway beat Albert Park by a single point on the final question after being behind all game; St Caths beat the Opsimaths; and Christie's lost to the Electric Pigs.

The answers to last week's posers were....

1. Taphophobia is the fear of being buried alive
2. The former West Didsbury café that encouraged its customers to read Spiderman comics and play chess was The Marvel
3. Ian Porterfield scored the only goal of the 1973 Cup Final (for Sunderland against Leeds)

....and 3 more to ponder from last week's paper....

1. What term originally described a punishment for a talkative midshipman and is now the name for a foodstuff?
2. What were the most popular boy's and girl's names for babies in 1999?
3. What everyday term originally referred to the inboard end of a ship's anchor cable?

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Old Dogs (17/01/00)

Whilst Old Erin were on question-setting duties Griffing Braggarts beat Christie's to regain top spot in the league. Elsewhere St Caths beat Albert Park and The Albert went down to The Electric Pigs. The Opsimaths once again lost at home to Moss Dross with some unashamed flattery of the question-person by the visitors playing a significant role in their defeat.

The Opsimaths, based at The Albert Club on Old Lansdowne Road, have been in the league since its start over 20 years ago. 'Opsimaths' is a Greek word meaning 'those who, though aged, are capable of learning' or put another way 'Old dogs who learn new tricks'. Current results, however, do not bear out this title. In the past the Opsimaths have enjoyed various names - Alice's Hat, My Sister Used to Live There, and The Crown. Although never winning the league they have consistently ended in mid-table with a couple of losing Cup Final medals. Past team members have included notable Didsbury characters Russ Belshaw and, for a while, John Turrell ('Mr Mild and Bitter'). Opsimaths have a colourful question-person, Jitka McClintock ('The bouncing Czech') who once insisted that the answer to a question about warring Scottish clans was 'The Moussaka of Glencoe'.

The answers to last week's posers....

1. A Gobstopper is the foodstuff that derives its name from the punishment doled out to talkative midshipmen.
2. The most popular 1999 baby's names were Jack and Chloe.
3. The term derived from the name of the inboard end of a ship's anchor is 'The Bitter End'

....and 3 to ponder from the latest league question paper....

1. In which country did Britain intervene militarily between 1838 & 1842, between 1878 & 1881 and again between 1919 & 1921 - and never successfully?
2. In the Beatles song *I am the Walrus* what are semolina pilchards climbing?
3. Which surname links a Salford-born novelist and a past manager of England's football team?

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The Pigs are flying (06/02/00)

Electric Pigs are the League's new boys having joined just 4 years ago. Based at the Red Lion they claim their name is pure surrealism with no known hidden meaning. This year they are moving up the league to gain mid-table respectability after a few seasons in the lower regions.

he answers to the last trio of posers....

1. The country in which Britain made unsuccessful military interventions between 1838 & 1842, 1878 & 1881, and 1919 & 1921 was Afghanistan.
2. In the Beatles' *I am the Walrus* the semolina pilchards are climbing the Eiffel Tower.
3. The surname shared by a Salford-born novelist and an England Football Manager is Greenwood (Walter and Ron).

...and 3 more to crack from recent question papers....

1. Apart from Henry Cooper name the 3 British boxers who fought Mohammed Ali/Cassius Clay in a World Heavyweight Title bout?
2. Which famous person's body was preserved in brandy after his death?
3. Which Oscar-winning film of the 1970's starts with Santa Claus chasing a drug-pusher?

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Erin's Green Valleys (19/02/00)

This week: Sporting Braggarts beat The Albert, Moss Dross beat The Electric Pigs, Albert Park lost to The Opsimaths in the Albert Club derby, and St Caths beat Old Erin.

Despite this Old Erin stay top on 23 points one ahead of the Braggarts and St Caths, and 2 ahead of Moss Dross.

Old Erin ('Red Lion' gone all quizzical) are the descendants of the team that originally formed the league back in the 70's. Captained by Gerry Hennessy they usually float in mid table. This season's surge of form dates back to their away game against The Opsimaths in November when Erin turned up with just one player (Gerry). In an act of characteristic stupidity, the home team lent Erin the old Opsimath himself (Colin Mackenzie). Gerry and the treacherous Mackenzie proceeded to beat the rump of the Opsimaths. Erin have not looked back since.

The answers to the last set of questions....

1. Apart from Henry Cooper the 3 British boxers who fought Mohammed Ali in a World Heavyweight bout were Joe Bugner, Brian London and Richard Dunn.
2. Nelson's body was preserved in brandy after his death.
3. The 1970's Oscar-winning film which starts with Santa Claus chasing a drug-pusher was *The French Connection*.

The following 3 questions appeared in The Gateway's paper last week....

1. What did Luwik L. Zamenhof invent in 1887?
2. In Australian slang what is a 'Shark Biscuit'?

....and a really sad one.....

3. Which is the most westerly Football League club whose ground is included in the London A to Z?

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Sterling Moss (04/03/00)

This week's surprise result saw Christie's beat high flying St Cath's to notch up only their third win of the season. Elsewhere Old Erin beat The Albert, Albert Park slipped to dunce's corner with a defeat at the hands of Moss Dross, and Opsimaths beat The Gateway to extend their unbeaten run to three.

This means Old Erin stay top on 25 points one ahead of the Braggarts and 2 ahead of Moss Dross. St Cath's slip to fourth place on 22 points.

Moss Dross have been one of the consistently successful teams over the years. Captained by Gerry Collins and with Roisin and the 2 Damians they have been unbeatable on questions about Irish counties. Unfortunately for the other teams they seem to know a fair bit about everything else as well. Last season they moved from their no nonsense base at the White Swan in Ladybarn to the pretensions of Didsbury's Fletcher Moss. Right now they are nicely placed below the league leaders for a late surge.

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Braggarts swagger home (25/03/00)

After a lively winter season the final round of the league games were played out last Wednesday. The top of the table clash at the Red Lion saw Griffing Braggarts pip Old Erin to clinch the title leaving the final table looking like this....

Position	Team	Played	Points
1	Griffing Braggarts	18	30
2	Old Erin	18	27
3	St Catherine's	18	26
4	Moss Dross	18	25
5	Opsimaths	18	16
6	Albert	18	14
7	Christie's	18	12
8	Gateway	18	11
9	Electric Pigs	18	10
10	Albert Park	18	9
	Totals	180	180

The last few weeks have seen a number of turnrounds: Christie's have risen from the dead to end the season with 3 straight wins, and league trailers, Albert Park, have finished with 2 straight wins including a notable home triumph against top team Old Erin the week before last.

Next week the knockout cup competitions kick off, leading up to the cup finals on May 10th and the end of season knees up at the Albert Club on May 17th. Anybody wishing to get a team together and join the league when it restarts in the Autumn is welcome to come along on May 17th and join in. In any case if you're interested get in touch with Mike Bath (445-3534) or Gary Donely (434-7931).

The answers to the last set of questions....

1. Luwik L. Zamenhof invented the language Esperanto.
2. 'Shark Biscuit' is Ozzie slang for an inexperienced surfer.

....and for the anoraks...

3. Brentford is the most westerly Football League Club in the London A to Z.

Three more posers from a recent Griffing Braggarts' paper...

1. Which pop song began with the lines: "It's a god-awful small affair / to the girl with the mousy hair"?
2. What name connects a military leader, a Welsh market town, and a leading golfer?
3. Which sauce has the following ingredients: egg yolks, vinegar, oil, chopped capers, gherkins and onions?

Newcomers up for the Cup (09/04/00)

The old familiars have been joined by some fresh faces for the end of season cup competitions. The new team (temporarily known as The Newcomers until they come up with something witty) began their quizzing with a defeat of The Opsimaths at The Albert Club but then fell to St Caths last week. Their regular home base will be The Woodstock. Other cup upsets were the home defeat of league champions Griffing Braggarts by The Albert and Moss Dross losing at home to the Electric Pigs.

To fit in with the 'too clever for their own good' status of the quiz league, this year's cup competition has been devised by some backroom boffins in an attempt to keep everybody playing up to the last minute. For those knocked out of the main tournament there is a Plate competition which gives the losers a second bite of the cherry. Finals of both Cup and Plate will be on May 10th.

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The Final Question (19/05/00)

The quiz league season ended last Wednesday night with a lighthearted tournament at the Albert Club. Andrew Simcock from the Electric Pigs provided an excellent paper and, yet again, the Griffing Braggarts came out in top place.

Indeed the season's successes have clearly been the Griffing Braggarts who, apart from the end of season event, won the league and the Plate (the knock out competition for those that failed at the first hurdle in the main cup – a bit like the UEFA Cup). The main cup competition (the Val Draper cup) was won fittingly by The Albert. The late Val Draper was for many years the captain of the Icarus team that played out of the Albert pub (now the Fletcher Moss). The season should not end, however, without mention of Old Erin who gave the Braggarts a good run for their money in the league and then ended as runners up in Val Draper cup. In an attempt to improve their position next year they have changed their name to 'Dr. O'Neil' (how many more anagrams of the Red Lion are there?).

Two final valedictory notes. Welcome to the league's first new team for some years, Snoopy's Mates. They will play at home in the Woodstock from the autumn. They joined in the cup competitions over the last few weeks and acquitted themselves very well. And many thanks from all teams to the Electric Pigs who have borne the brunt of the organisation this season and saved our bacon.

In case you are still puzzling the answers to the last set of questions which appeared at the end of March:

1. The pop song that began "It's a god-awful small affair to the girl with the mousy hair" was *Life on Mars* by David Bowie.
2. Montgomery is the name that connects a military leader, a Welsh market town and a leading golfer.
3. Tartare is the sauce made from egg yolks, vinegar, oil chopped capers and gherkins.

Three more posers for the summer (this time with their answers at the foot of the article)...

1. In which 1998 film does John Miller say "He'd better be worth it. He'd better go home and cure a disease or invent a long-lasting lightbulb."?
2. Which European country has airports coded MRS, CFE, and TLS?
3. With which country would you associate the vegetable *Allium Porum* and the flower *Narcissus Obvallaris*?

(and to save you waiting until next season the answers are: 1. *Saving Private Ryan*; 2. France; 3. Wales – they're the Leek and the Daffodil)