

Nov 5th, 1996.

C.O.X.A. Old Boy makes the front page of The Times -yet again!

Cricket was Nick Scott's main game but he also enjoyed playing football. We both played an occasional game for the Old Boys in the early 1950's. In those days C.O.X.F.C ran two teams- just- both organised by Tony Brinn, who also refereed the home friendlies. C.O.X.F.C weren't in the Old Boy's league at that time, as far as I remember. Nick Scott was busy working towards the National Chairmanship of the Young Conservatives, so we were glad when he could spare the time to play. He scored some fine goals, and unlike me, had the advantage of kicking effectively with both feet. Since we were both playing as inside forwards (under forties please consult your parents!), this meant we never had any arguments about my preference for playing on the right.

Earlier, when we were in the fourth year (Year Ten) in 1947, Nick's father ran his own football team for his two sons Nick and Chris and some of us from the school. One member I remember was Insole, a difficult and determined defender to get round, who left school in 1948 and later became an airline pilot. It was not long after the end of the war and pitches must have been difficult to come by; the team used a large disused bomb site in Clarence Avenue to play on (probably where a school is now sited).

The pitch had decided drawbacks. It did have a certain amount of grass in places, but in general you had to be careful to keep your feet. This was because of the bricks and hardcore lying just below the dirt surface. Sliding tackles could be attempted with safety but only if you were in the know (probably only the home team would be) and remembered where you were on the pitch. We actually played Chelsea F.C. junior team on this pitch but for once it did not help us much. It was a great honour to play Chelsea of course, but losing ten- nil was all we achieved after 90 minutes of hard defensive play.

Nick's father was a policeman of rank- a superintendent, or

an inspector. I remember him being quite interested to discover I had had my bag searched one night in Streatham High Street by two of his plain-clothes men. Drugs were not on the scene in those days of course. I had no idea what they were looking for but it certainly wasn't for a wet towel, a pair of muddy boots and a load of dirty football gear.

Over the years I have followed Nick's progress with interest. He had a very difficult and nerve racking job for many years as a minister commuting to Northern Ireland. I must admit when he turned up for the final 'do' when the old college closed, I wondered if we might all be the I.R.A.'s target for tonight. Glancing around at all the Old Boys I had never met before wasn't at all reassuring. None of them looked like M.I.5 bodyguards, with bulging pockets. The only bulges were waistlines.

Finally for anyone reading this who is interested in astrology, Nick and I were both born on the very same day in 1933. Besides both being at the same primary and secondary schools, he was M.P. for Chelsea while I worked at Chelsea, London University. However, for some reason or other, the stars must have been misleading. Why didn't I make the front page of The Times today as well (or, indeed, any of the other pages?) To console myself for neglect by the press, I am now in the very act of studying Nick's close-up photo. Quite naturally he does look a little worried. But remember he is a fighter. And maybe he does look his age a bit more than I do? Yes, there is no doubt about it, he does....

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By the time you read this we will surely all know if Sir Nicholas did or did not get re-re-adopted for Chelsea and Kensington. I hope so, and I further hope that maybe eventually he will, later rather than sooner, become Lord Scott of...Chelsea...or Clapham...or perhaps even of C.O.X.A. Why not?

Henry Pinsent