



Question and Answer Session - Transcript

To Alan Spence: What was your greatest goal?

Alan Spence: Before I answer, this is quite a funny question. When I was teaching at Meols Cop, we had a parents evening. This kid came up to me and asked this question. I said "I dont think I can tell you. I didnt score many great goals." The one I remember was the equaliser at Ipswich. We were 2-1 down, looked as though we were struggling. A throw in was taken by Alex Russell, it bounced once, I hit it from the edge of the area and was lodged into the top corner.

It wasnt usual, most of them were tap ins!

To this day, I will always remember one kid who stood at the Scarisbrick New Road end who always shouted "Spence, you're crap!" - Every time I looked behind the goal, there was angelic face and that's what he shouted at me.

Anyway, most memorable was the one at Ipswich. I could have done that 20 times and not connected but it ended up in the corner and then of course Colin finished it in the last minute.

To Ronnie Smith: How did Mr Bingham change things in terms of training and fitness?

Ronnie Smith: First of all, there's a lot of things we all owe to Billy. There was one thing he decided, and that was to get us fit, which he did.

We didn't carry water in them days along the beach. We ran to a certain area, where he'd put a pole, and a lower pole somewhere down in the sand dunes. I was there when Billy broke his leg, and he carried a limp. It didn't stop him from running all the way to Formby Point. Then he put us in the sandhills and had someone marking the pitch out on the beach.

He'd work us out 2 on 2, and told us we had 30 seconds to run the same distance as up the Eiffel Tower. We usually fell down, as he pushed us all the time to get fit.

After 6 weeks, a game of football was easy. This club owes a great deal to that man.

I'd like to thank him for making me a better winger. We had our ups and downs like everyone else. But he knew what he wanted and got it.

Favourite memory of the cup run?

Fred Molyneux: Hand on heart, I can't say, I got so involved in the game, it was just a joy to win. Going to Ipswich was a big plus. Every game was a plus, especially when we won. I wish I could explain that better, maybe the other boys have deeper thinking on that. It was obviously great to get through. It's thanks to the boss we did it. I can't explain that any better.

Colin Alty: Ipswich would be #1, but we were also 2-0 down against Stockport, we came back from that to draw. Ipswich was the best one for me, it was a great night. I saw my mother coming on to the pitch straight after the game. I couldn't believe it, I didn't know she'd gone!

Alan Spence: I think, looking back, for some reason throughout my career, I can remember all the cup games, but can't remember the league very well. The cup games were something special. When we went to Ipswich, I had a cloud over me. With the last kick of the game, 0-0 to Ipswich, Alex Russell put me 1-on-1 with keeper and I hit the post.

When we went to Ipswich, Alex Russell provided the ball for the first goal I scored, a tap in, as usual. The second was the one I described before. I hit it and it went like a rocket. Probably the most memorable goal I've ever scored.

Terry McDonald: Ronnie's given me instructions on what to say! One of the great moments of the cup run was hearing the final whistle. I was knackered!

Binghy, I'll call him Binghy, had the whole town behind the club. All the lads who took the field wore the shirt with pride, and we felt like we were playing for the residents. No-one can ever take that away from me.

Tony Beanland: Same as the other lads really. Ipswich, probably as no-one gave us a chance. We beat them 3-2 thanks to these two. When the final whistle went, I had the ball, I wellied it into row D, which was where my shots usually went.

Terry Smith: The morning of the game we left, got a train to Lpool, and then express to London. From Ldn we went to Ipswich. 1-2 of us noticed extra baggage, we got to Portman Road and the boss said "First, get your training kit on" so we got ourselves changed, onto the field and, "this is what you're going to do" Hardwork, spriting, jogging, sprinting, jogging.

When the game was over, we'd had a great victory, some of the spectators came up to us and went "That's why you beat us! You were training all the time!"

To Fred Molyneux: You took a drop to come to Southport from Liverpool - Why did you make such a drop to continue your career?

Fred Molyneux: Good Question. I think to sum it up, I got to a stage at Liverpool where I wasn't going anywhere. The Boss [Billy Bingham] came in and we had a chat and said he'd make me a better player. HE took a chance on me, I took a chance on the club, and it couldn't have gone any better. He hadn't seen me play, I don't know if he went on word of mouth.

I hadn't played that season, so I don't know if he looked at the retained list and took a chance. He came to Anfield and it all worked out. Coming to Southport was like joining a man's game. The boss took a chance on me and it all worked out.

I wasn't gonna mention that, Billy went down to Plymouth. The annoying part about this, the annoying part, he came to see somebody else, not me!

Alan Spence on playing for Sunderland against Juventus

Alan Spence: I was talking in the Richmond before the game. I was at school in Durham, at the Johnson Grammar School. I did reasonably well, but the only thing that mattered to me was football, and I liked girls as well.

The football was the most important thing. I find that one day Sunderland approached the amateur club I was playing for. I was delighted, I went down there, it was my boyhood club.

Billy of course was a prominent member in the first team. I was only a kid playing in the youth/reserves but nowhere near approaching the first team.

One Wednesday afternoon I was in Chemistry. I hated chemistry, I knew nothing about it and wasn't very good at it.

There was a knock. The Headmaster, JJ Eglenshaw, he was wearing the old black robe and mortar hat, said "Can I see Spence?" I thought.... "What have I done?"

He says "I've had a phone call from Sunderland. They want you to play for them tonight"

He said "Who are they playing?" - so I said "Juventus" - so he said "Who are they?"

I knew for a fact I wasn't going to get a great deal of sympathy, but I asked if I can leave early. The

headmaster told me that he was here to teach me academics, and I could leave at 4pm like everybody else. I asked if I could phone my parents as my boots were at home.

I phoned my mother, she made sure my boots were at the Stadium.

At 4 o'clock, I sprint down to the bus stop. (Fred Molyneux: You sprinted?!) I get the bus from Durham to, but I'm really short of time. I've got no money. The taxi driver won't accept my bus pass.

I went to the taxi driver, in a place called Park Lane which was full of busses, taxis, cabs etc. I asked the guy first in the queue "Can I go first, I'm playing against Juventus" - I was just a school kid in a blazer. He thought I was mad! His words were something to the effect of "you must be joking!"

It's half 6, the kick off is half 7. One taxi driver said he'd seen in the paper my story was true and took me down to the ground.

He took me to Roker Park. I ran up to the secretaries office to get some money, he gave me a pound.....

So yeah I played against Juventus. John Charles was centre forward for them, a guy called Enrique Sivori, who was the equivalent of Messi back then. I never got a kick!

At the end of the game, Alan Brown the manager asked "How do you think you did?" - I replied I'd thought I'd done ok?

"How many shots at goal did you have?"

"Well..... none"

"Exactly"

I thought I was finished. The following Saturday, things got worse. I was picked to play as a 17yo school boy for Sunderland against Blackpool, First division, 1957, forward line was Matthews, Mortensen, Taylor. We were really unlucky, we lost 7-0!

To be honest I can remember having 3 kicks. Whilst I was teaching in Leyland, beginning of the term, kids are piling in, all well dressed. I've just started this lesson and little girl says "Mr Spence, do you know Roy Gratrix?". I said I don't know him, but played against him for Sunderland when he was at Blackpool.

She said "He is my grandfather. I spoke to him yesterday, and he told me to tell you, you were crap!"

Alex Russell: - "Nobody has mentioned the game at Hull. How do you feel about that, because it was the worst game I ever played in!"

Colin Alty: - Same with me. We never got a kick in the first half, and 3 in the 2nd. We were lucky to get

away with 2-0.

Tony Beanland: My recollection of the Hull Game, not long into the game heading for goal, I'm not renowned for pace. I tripped him up and it was a penalty. I can't even remember his name. He missed the penalty and I was so grateful.

Terry Smith: The story I have will open your eyes. At the hotel we stayed in, it was surrounded by nightclubs. The Hull fans on a night out knew we were staying in this hotel. They started to climb the drainpipes. Arthur Peat was there with me. He said just lob a bucket of water at them. Of course they all went away then!

Who is the best player you all played with and against?

Alan Spence: I was fortunate to play 3 England U18 against Belgium, France and Italy, the captain of the team was Bobby Moore. He was younger than me, I've never seen anything like it. Certainly the best I've ever played with.

Tony Beanland: Against.... was at Leeds, 65? 64? Billy Bremner. I thought he was a tremendous player. The best player I ever played with is over there (Alex Russell)

Terry McDonald: The one player, and I think this concerns Southport, he was a narky little devil, he sadly passed away, but I think we'd all agree.... Arthur Peat. What a great ambassador he was to the club. When things went wrong, he'd be bollocking you left, right & centre, when it was going right he'd still be bollocking you left, right and centre because he wanted perfection.

He would fight his corner, but there was something about him. I had many arguments over various things, but it was an honour to play with him.

Colin Alty: Arthur and Alex were probably the best. Apart from those two probably Peter Thomas and Howard Kendall. Against.... I'm not sure really. I played against Stanley Matthews but I thought he was crap. He didn't try one bit!

Fred Molyneux: Older supporters will remember this. in 1966 WC, Hungary were based in Southport. We played them in two friendlies. They didn't hold back. It was leading up to the World Cup. The centre forward was a guy called Florian Albert, I've never seen anything like it in a centre forward, before or since

Best English player, was a guy called Daley Burnside when I went to Plymouth. This guy was just a magician. He had courage, he had two great feet. When the games were first televised, he had a kid on at Wolves at half time. He was on the TV juggling balls at 14 years old.

Going back to when I was here, these lads made me so welcome. These lads could play, by the way. So I'd say the 1-11 here, Florian Albert and Daley Burnside.

Ronnie Smith: There's a guy sitting here I'd put in the top two. 99% of that was because he was the best utility player I ever played with. And that's Colin Alty.

What was Billy Bingham's best quality?

Fred Molyneux: In a nutshell - take no prisoners. And, he instilled to us, we were better than them.

Terry McDonald: Being from NI where Billy is from, he's very very famous over there. When I first came to Southport, what came out of our conversation was that it's wonderful to set a goal and try to achieve it.

He went on to achieve great success with NI teams, and as a player, but his greatest ambition was that he always wanted to manage Everton Football Club. And he did it.

We learnt so much from Billy Bingham, and his training methods, and how to look after ourselves. That's how it was.

Alan Spence: When Billy came here, I was having a rough spell. He took me into his office and said "I tell you what you're not doing. Divide the field into 3. As a centre forward you need to be concentrating in 1/3. You don't have the strength or willpower to do anything else"

That was the best piece of advice I ever heard. How many times do you see 25 yarders zipping into the penalty spot. Not often.