

TREVOR FRANCIS TRACKSUITS

TREVOR FRANCIS TRACKSUITS

A Forest fanzine for the least discerning Forest fan



All profits go towards Framework: a charity delivering housing, health, employment, support and care services to people with a diverse range of needs.

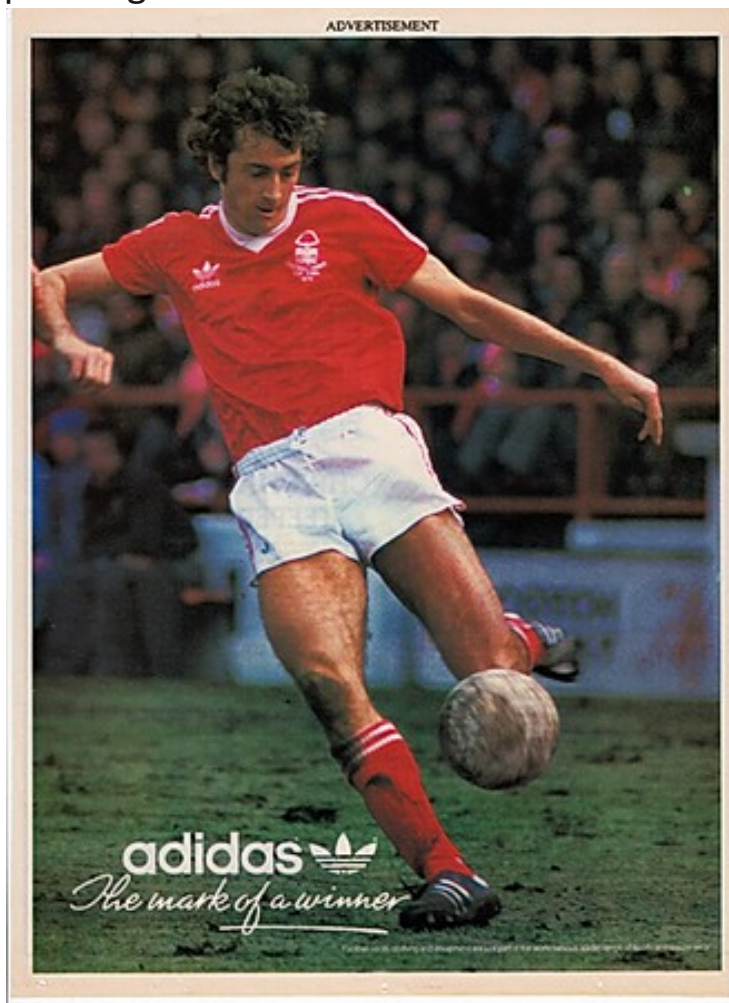
ORIGINAL EDITORIAL (JANUARY)

Hello. How are you? Good. This is the home of a brand spanking new Forest fanzine.

Bandy and Shinty was great, wasn't it? This though - - this will be the antithesis of that. No glossy pictures, no lovely spine and cheaply produced. But that's alright because any profits will go directly to a local charity, starting with Framework for this issue.

It will come out when it comes out and will resemble one of those brilliant 90s fanzines like The Almighty Brian. It takes inspiration from excellent contemporary fanzines like Viva Rovers (Doncaster Rovers) and Dial M for Merthyr (Merthyr Tydfil).

It comprises 30 pages of serious writing, not so serious writing and nice pictures. More importantly, profits go to Framework.



AMENDED EDITORIAL (MAY)



It wasn't meant to be this way.

Right about now, the idea was that you were buying this inaugural issue (an actual hard copy of this comprising 30 pages in colour and stapled) from a pub around the City Ground or from here via Paypal and maybe -- just maybe -- planning a trip to Wembley.

But getting this printed and distributed was proving just too tricky under the current circumstances. As time wore on, it seemed best to plonk the contents on here for free for all to read. The idea was that any profits would go to **Framework - a charity helping people to achieve financial stability, social inclusion and independence.**

That is still the aim. All I ask is that if you read any of this, you make a voluntary donation to Framework. No badgering. No harassment. No tracking of who has or hasn't or any of those shenanigans.

<https://www.frameworkha.org/support-us/donate>

My heartfelt thanks go out to the contributors to this issue and those who wrestled with printers in an effort to make it tangible. Next time.

I would very much like there to be an Issue 2 and for it to be something you can hold in your hands. If you are interested in contributing something -- anything really -- then send an email to TrevorFrancisTracksuits@outlook.com

I look forward to hearing from you: cartoonists, writers, artists, photographers, satirists, etc. Come one and all. I can't offer any payment since the intention is that each issue will raise funds for a selected charity.

Enjoy.

Dave Marples



A FIRE BURNS BELOW

Bury fell off the cliff while Macclesfield and Oldham dangle perilously close to the precipice. Will another minnow of a football club be next? Probably not. David Marples wonders whether clubs in The Championship are gambolling carelessly close to the edge.

Centralia in Pennsylvania is a deserted town.

It is not a huge town but thirty years ago, around 1000 residents called it home. By 2017, that figure was five.

It wasn't always thus. In 1962 a fire was deliberately started in order to clean up the town landfill site which happened to be in an abandoned strip-mine pit. An impetuous idea got worse when an unsealed opening in the pit allowed the fire to enter the labyrinthine coalmines under Centralia. It's been burning since and may well continue to do so for another 250 years.

Sulfurous steam burps out of the land while dead trees stand twisted and mangled. Signs warn that 'Driving in this Area Could Result in Serious Death' and that the 'Ground is Prone to Sudden Collapse'.

Beneath all of this, a fire burns. If one were to walk down Route 61 (now something of a tourist attraction otherwise known as Graffiti Avenue) desperately in search of escape, a plume of noxious smoke could blurt up at any time. Occasionally, it shows itself by breaking free and smiting a tree before weaseling back down below.

*

Watching Bury slowly slip away was like reliving Sarah's fate at the start of the film *Cliffhanger* (1993). Although she hangs from a rope and dangles above a cinematically huge drop, it's all going to be fine since the vastly experienced ranger, Gabriel Walker (Sylvester Stallone) has her hand. He won't let her go; he's got her. He's got this.



But as Gabe reaches out, her harness breaks. He still has her hand but agonisingly, her glove starts to unpeel. He's losing her. She falls and her anguished face haunts us.

We didn't expect this. The film has only just started and besides, Stallone always wins. How could this happen? He had her. And even if he didn't, another hand usually reaches out from nowhere and saves the day as the camera tilts up to another previously unseen handsome ranger. Jessie marries him and we all go home in a good mood.

Except, she didn't. Neither did Bury. Beyond the sadness, after the anger, once the disbelief has subsided, it's rubbish – a proper rubbish state of affairs. Sifting through the flotsam and jetsam of Bury FC, we search for clues (of which there were many) as to how this came about but most of all, for what we can do to prevent it happening again. We fear for other clubs like Bury.

The obvious place on which to fix our gaze is the lower leagues yet perhaps we should be raising our heads and upwards and around, like a deep lying midfielder looking to release a probing ball.

When David Conn speaks, we should listen. The sports journalist and writer who focuses predominantly on football covered the plight of Bury in depth and it was he who sounded the klaxon for Championship clubs on the Guardian Football Weekly podcast (Thursday 29 August):

“People who are looking at this (Bury) as a wake-up call for Leagues One and Two might be missing that the most financially toxic division is the Championship. That is actually the division where very big financial losses are being made every year, which absolutely dwarf the sort of money we are talking about at Bury. You've got - increasingly - overseas owners who are buying Championships clubs for the jackpot of being promoted to the Premier League

and obviously the big structural problem is the gap financially between the Premier League and the EFL because the Premier League is a breakaway league by the top clubs so that they wouldn't have to share their money. So clubs that are relegated or clubs that are overspending to try and get promoted, there are huge losses being made in the Championship and if an alarm should be rung, I would be ringing it there."

This needn't mean that fans of every single Championship club should immediately start running around in a state of heightened panic or start rifling through the airing cupboard for an old bed sheet on which to daub something nasty about their football club's owners.

Yet the mantra of speculating to accumulate seems to be carved into the upper forearm of Championships clubs. The practice of sale and leaseback regarding football stadia is a growing phenomenon, all to raise a few more bucks to buy that elusive twentygoalsaseason striker or to pay off that twentygoalsaseason striker that is sitting on a hefty contract even though he hasn't played a game for nine months. The number of clubs whose wages to turnover ratio makes little sense even to the least numeracy literate is astonishingly high. Like Renton in Trainspotting begging for 'one more hit' before coming off the skag, owners plead for just one more season to hit the jackpot as they push the contents of their bank account, the deeds to the stadium and the dreams of the fans forward across the baize. All in.

Sooner or later – probably sooner – a Championship club owner is going to stumble out of a back door in the pouring rain and fall to the hard concrete floor in despair having lost everything.

Actually, that's quite a romantic image unnecessarily dripping with pathos. More likely, the figure will exit with a shrug of the shoulders before ambling casually back to his mansion since it wasn't his money anyway – it was all borrowed.

That's not to say that all are culpable. While recent history tells us that while there is no sure fire strategy to achieve promotion, there are examples of clubs run on something approximating a sound financial footing or at least, an eye on the medium to long term future – fiscal or otherwise.

But generally speaking, the Championship highway is jammed with broken dreams, over expenditure on wages, FFP soft sanctions and owners on a last chance power drive while a fire burns below the surface, just waiting to snag one and chuck it on the growing pile of broken football clubs. Bury weren't the first to go and they may well be joined by another – a bigger – one.

As long as the burning desire to clear debts by claiming the big Premier League payday exists, the fire below will keep burning.

*

Make a donation to Framework here: <https://www.frameworkha.org>

SCREW VAR

When something is good for television broadcasters yet bad for football fans, you know something is wrong with it says Steve Wright.

The argument about how, if at all, technology should be used in football refereeing decisions has raged for a long time, but this season Forest were catapulted into that debate with their first experience of the system, and in my view provided the perfect answer to it.

In the FA Cup tie against Chelsea, Forest were awarded a penalty only for a VAR review to overturn the decision due to a marginal offside. This was a classic example of VAR being technically correct but to a level of accuracy that feels out of kilter with the spirit of the rules, but it also raised a bigger issue.

The tie was being played at Stamford Bridge, a Premier League ground, hence the VAR review coming into play. If the tie had instead been drawn at the City Ground there would have been no VAR, the penalty would have stood and the score may well have been levelled.

It is frankly ridiculous that within the same competition different rules apply depending on where the game is being played. This also speaks to a broader sense of the game as a whole being diminished for the sake of a small cohort of clubs at the very top.

The whole case for technology seems to be based on money. Excitement, passion and the live experience are all being sacrificed for the illusion of accuracy, even when that accuracy remains elusive and spurious.

It works for the television channels that get to stretch out yet more debate around their live games and for whoever is getting paid to provide this technology and its frustrating delays, but it doesn't work for fans, especially those who actually go to the games and populate the stadia, or for the players.

Football is a simple game and one of its great joys is that right the way from the top flight to the lowest pub league the rules are the same and implemented in the same way, or at least they were. After years of abuse and criticism it's time to give referees and linesmen (yes linesmen, they run the line) the support they really need, by kicking VAR into touch and letting them do their jobs.

*

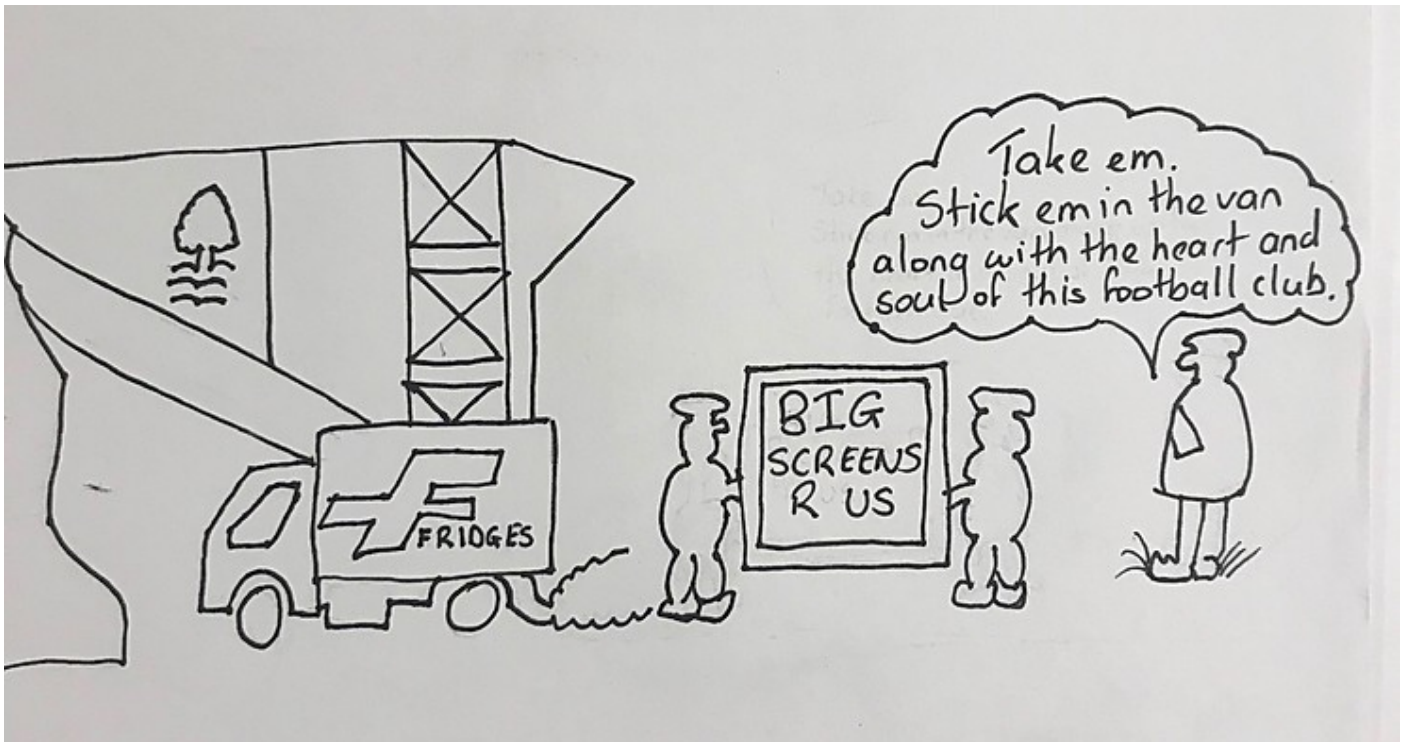
Make a donation to Framework here: <https://www.frameworkha.org>



PSYCHO TONGUE



CARTOON CORNER



WHICH TRICKY IS ROCKING THE MIC TONIGHT?

Matt Davies-Adams gets all excited about sharing a small, compact gantry somewhere high up in a stand with Forest players. He also imagines sharing a quaint B&B, a nice pub meal and maybe a spot of breakfast with one specific Tricky.

Working as a football commentator is a brilliant, if sometimes prosaic job: telling people who is in possession of the ball and what are they trying to do with it, would be a good job description.

If we're on the radio, that might extend to: where on the pitch is the ball? Other stuff is important too, like what's the score? How long are the opposition striker's toenails? What did the home side's centre back have for lunch?

The role of the co-commentator is perhaps a bit more illuminating; they need to tell the viewer/listener what's happening and why in the way that us who've never played the game, Clive, cannot. I've worked with some good ones and some bad ones over the years so when the editor asked me to write something

on which Forest player, past or present, I'd most like to call a game with, my initial thoughts were to pick who I think would offer the best insight and analysis to the audience. Then I thought 'stuff that': who do I most want to spend a couple of hours hanging out with, talking about football and other stuff?

A couple of experienced co-commentators who also happen to be Forest legends were quickly ruled out. I've met both Stuart Pearce and Trevor Francis in press rooms before games before and, embarrassingly, I've been reduced to a jabbering wreck both times. A mutual friend introduced Francis to me; he asked me if I knew what the cricket score was (England were playing, I forget the details.) "Cricket" was the only reply I could muster. He went and asked someone who didn't have drool sliding down their chin.

Something similar happened with Stuart Pearce when I chatted to him before the Manchester City v Chelsea game at the end of 2019. Being a polite man, he asked what I thought would happen in the game. After I just about managed to squeeze out the word "game", he smiled and gave up, pulling a pleasingly large handkerchief from his pocket and blowing his nose with all the gusto one would expect/demand.

So those two are out. In fact, I think we're going to have to rule out anyone who is either a miracle man or played for us during my youth (let's generously call that 1990-2003,) for fear of me being unable to conduct a normal conversation. Michael Dawson makes that list and thus can't be considered for selection on the basis of his first spell at the city ground. Anyone who enjoyed the bench cam video the club put out after the win against Leeds in February of this year would surely agree that Daws has all the makings of a suitably animated co-comm. Too much risk of me freaking out though, so it's a no for him.

Andy Reid has always made a lot of sense when I've heard him on the wireless but as well as meeting the childhood hero criteria, I'm also reluctant to pick him given the high probability of me dropping the mic mid match to just wrap him in a big hug and tell him I think he's lovely.

Who else then? They've got to be confident in their ability to hold an audience's attention...Lee Camp? Nah, I want to be able to get the odd word in now and again.

Rob Earnshaw, maybe? Another thoughtful bloke but that could be a problem. I don't want to get bogged down in a discussion about alien life forms on earth manifesting themselves in the form of technology when we're supposed to be analysing why team A have gone for a mixture of zonal and man to man marking at set pieces.

After much deliberation, I've gone for one of the current crop. There's something thrilling about hearing current footballers talk about their fellow pros (thrilling if you're as big of a nerd as me).

Joe Worrall would be good. Matty Cash - in my head - would be all scampish and borderline risqué and I'm sure Brice Samba would straddle the line between information and entertainment, if his twitter output is anything to go by. The answer we were looking for though is of course, Joe Lolley.

For one thing, there's the brummie brogue. - as pleasing on the ear as it is warming to the soul.

As a university educated baller, I wouldn't have to worry about his ability to string a sentence together and judging by the thoughtful, intelligent answers he gives in interviews, we'd all learn something.

Obviously I'm hoping it's an away game and through a freak set of weather conditions, which set in after we've completed a very enjoyable commentary which has received widespread acclaim on Twitter (ha!) we're forced to lodge together in a quaint B&B just off one of the many anonymous stretches of motorway anyone who follows football home and away in this country will be familiar with.

Just picture the scene: the owner of said hostelry is clearing away the dinner plates, mine which contained shepherd's pie, Joe's fish finger sandwich (using sustainable cod, naturally) with triple cooked chips, both clean as a whistle. I'm struck by a minor case of food envy – they made the tartare sauce for Joe's sandwich on the premise and we'd seen the iceberg lettuce used as garnish growing in the vegetable garden when we checked in. As we retire to the drawing room (it's quite a posh B&B) and reach for the decanter of port, Joe leans over and asks me, 'have I ever told you about the time I helped out at a dog sanctuary in Thailand?'

It's the kind of anecdote your Townsends, Nevilles and Jenases would never be able to regale one with but it's just me and you, Joe and I'm all ears.

*

Make a donation to Framework here: <https://www.frameworkha.org>



FOREST CATS REACT



Name: Minnie

Owner: Julie

Showing Tiago Silva how to do bicycle kicks



Name: Whiskey

Owner: Andy

Reacting to Mir starting ahead of Grabban



Name: Truman

Owner: Maxim

Thinking about how if only Gil Dias had put his foot through the ball...



Name: Tom

Owner: Kitty

Thinking about Des Walker's own goal at Bramall Lane



Name: Catalina

Owner: Damien

Reacting to seeing Forest lose to a Warnock team...again.



Name: Margo

Owner: Anya

Recreating Aro Muric against WBA



Name: Eadie

Owner: Simon

Reacting to logging on to NFFC website. *sees corner flag image and words 'Official Statement'*. Wonders what Fawaz has done now.

*

Make a donation to Framework here: <https://www.frameworkha.org>

MIAOW

The big questions will to reverberate for eternity:

***What is the meaning of life?**

***To be or not to be?**

***If you could choose any Forest player – past or present – to look after your cat for the weekend, who would you choose?**

Nick Miller ponders this age-old question.



(Clough the cat)

There are some vile propagandists out there who will tell you that cats are cold creatures, unloving, uncaring. Those people are called dog-owners, and while you shouldn't necessarily avoid them, they're to be treated with due suspicion. The cat is a creature who can broadly be left on their own. They're low-maintenance, which forms part of their appeal. But they still need some care, still need to be fed, still need to know that they haven't been forgotten about. So the obvious question that presents itself is: which three players from Forest's history would I trust to look after my cat?

Chris Cohen

The problem with naming Chris Cohen as one of three candidates to take care of Clough (because obviously he's called Clough), is that it carries the implication that another two might be required. Obviously that's not the case. Chris will be there every day to make sure Clough has his favourite Felix pouches (from the Ocean Feasts variety pack); there's also some crunchies because too much wet food is bad for his teeth; he gets a few Dreamies but not too many as we don't want him to be a fatty catty; that the litter is changed; that the litter tray is cleaned with the special spray from Pets At Home that is probably unnecessary but you bought it anyway; that he has five minutes of stroking and cuddling because your cat needs a little attention too.

He'll do all of that. There's no question that he'll miss anything. No chance that he'll forget any of that. Even if he finds himself entirely incapacitated, if he's done his cruciate ligaments for a fourth time, he'll either limp round on crutches or make sure someone is there to do the honours. Why? Because he's Chris Cohen.

Brett Williams

But if for some reason you do need a back-up, then get the man used to doing it for the majority of his career. These days people say Tottenham have trouble getting a centre-forward who's happy to sit on the bench behind Harry Kane, but imagine being a left-back at Forest when Stuart Pearce was around. Eight years, Williams was at Forest, in all that time his moustache never going past the 'fluffy' stage and he very rarely was actually required to be on the pitch. But on those few occasions, he was always there. If Pearce was ever indisposed, Brett filled in. Was he any good? No, obviously not. But the important thing is he was there. Reliable ol' Brett. Just there.

Brice Samba

We probably need a goalkeeper in here - cat-like reactions and all that. Can't have Peter Shilton - he'd just talk to the cat about Brexit and how much he hates Diego Maradona and how he had absolutely no chance of stopping that goal when jumping against a 5 ft 6 playmaker. Mark Crossley would be too unreliable, Chick Thompson is unfortunately no longer with us, Dave Beasant a

little slow and lumbering and unable to catch the little lad if he tried to make a break for it out the front door and into the middle of the road. So let's go with the current chap: great reactions, seems like a terrific egg and he'd probably create some excellent social media content for you to keep an eye on while you're away.

*

Make a donation to Framework here: <https://www.frameworkha.org>

FOREST IN THE WORKPLACE





(State of that mug, Paul)





BUILD

Walls - generally speaking – are not a good thing. Little white ones though – they are not just a good thing but also an important thing thinks David Marples.

This In an ever-changing and confusing world, we need - more than ever - portals to the past in order to keep us earthed while inertia constantly threatens to hurl us into the vast emptiness of a vacuum.

New shiny things are good; we deserve nice things. Yet if we can marry such nice things with boulders that signify the glorious history of the club, then even better.

Football stadiums mean something...no, hear me out; they REALLY mean something.

We are in the midst of an age of identikit stadiums built on the edge of provincial towns, of football clubs suddenly uprooted from the tightly packed terraced streets that housed the working man who sought escape from his hard working life to watch his team. Football clubs used to – literally – be part of the community. The challenge in a thoroughly post-modern world is to maintain such a relationship between club and supporter.

The fact that Nottingham Forest will be remaining at the City Ground is an enormous relief. What the club must now seek to do is ensure that it follows through on its desire to grow deep and solid roots into the community, to take the club into the new and thoroughly modern football landscape while celebrating its past.

This is indeed a challenge.



Football grounds themselves are portals into history – actual time machines. One can go to a ground and witness the actual spot where Johan Cruyff executed that turn, where Marco van Basten blasted in that volley, where John Robertson belted in that goal from the edge of the area in Madrid.

Of course, some of these spots are no longer football pitches but there still exists a physical place – a thing – that links directly to such seismic moments. They are actual wormholes or direct portals to the past. Nostalgia is a powerful entity – a word derived from ancient Greek meaning ‘pain’ or ache’. Such feelings are difficult to ignore. This is, I think, important.

The City Ground has – rightly so – evolved significantly over the years. Yet all that physically remains from, for example, the evening of the 3-3 draw with Koln is the Peter Taylor Stand. Sure, the goals are still in (roughly) the same place but once this structure is bulldozed, we leave behind all physical remnants of such evenings.

One thing remains: the little white wall.

Watch any footage of our glorious past and invariably, you will see it. It's there as Brian Clough and Peter Taylor emerge from the tunnel. It's there as the European Cup champions stride out to share off their unfathomable collection of silverware. It's there as Billy Walker takes his seat in the dug-out. That wall has seen some things...

Arguably, it is our portal, our time machine, our TARDIS to history.

It is for such reasons that the inclusion of a museum is essential in the development of the ground. If it were possible, the inclusion of such features like the white wall or the turnstiles would be ideal too.

A lovingly curated museum which features not only the various trinkets the club has won but also physical features from the ground, especially the old stand, would be not only a commercially successful enterprise but also offer a kind of sensory room for the Nottingham Forest supporter.

Before the National Football Museum was uprooted from the away end at Preston North End's stadium, it was a joy to experience. Perhaps such a concept could be replicated in the new stand: maybe old turnstiles to gain entry,

perhaps chunks of the white wall to funnel the queues, maybe old dugouts and press boxes to step back into the past. Or maybe such features could be incorporated into the actual new stand.

Naturally, such a sentiment can easily be dismissed as sentimental guff, trodden underfoot by the desire for modernity and progress. After all, the past is the past and in some ways, it's an anchor around our necks, it's our chains to the padlocks that hold and weigh down Jacob Marley.

Perhaps....but as Brian Clough famously said, football belongs to us and by extension, a football club belongs to its supporters. Such a transformative project of the home of a football club should strive to celebrate its past, its supporters and all (at least, the good bits) that have gone before.

The Housemartins once sang of:

Clambering men in big bad boots
Dug up my den, dug up my roots.
Treated us like plasticine town
They build us up and knocked us down.

This is not argument against progress, or against a new stand, or against building or development. Yet this is a plea to at least keep the roots in place. Somehow. Some way.

*

Make a donation to Framework here: <https://www.frameworkha.org>



FIND THE FOREST PLAYERS

Q	Y	D	P	K	Q	M	W	W	T	N	I	Y	O	M
N	O	O	K	B	C	T	V	X	O	H	A	B	I	H
P	O	G	A	I	H	L	R	T	U	E	I	C	L	X
M	A	S	G	N	R	T	L	Q	G	M	N	J	I	Y
C	M	O	P	X	N	E	V	A	N	D	T	T	C	O
O	R	Q	V	U	M	F	N	U	E	O	U	J	E	Z
X	Y	V	R	E	W	R	O	F	L	X	R	T	B	U
P	G	W	V	L	S	E	V	L	T	D	N	V	E	A
S	Z	E	L	Z	O	P	H	L	L	Q	E	S	E	T
J	T	A	Q	E	W	M	L	T	N	Y	R	S	L	O
S	U	X	M	X	C	G	A	M	T	S	J	B	Y	W
K	E	V	I	N	G	O	M	I	S	A	T	N	K	S
I	D	G	C	R	Z	Q	L	M	H	L	M	Z	I	T
N	U	H	Z	S	Q	I	D	K	G	R	U	S	T	H
Z	L	H	Y	K	Z	C	H	I	T	Q	G	Z	O	C

IAINTURNER
MATTHEWUPSON

KEVINGOMIS
STEVE MELTON

KYLEEBECILIO
YOANNFOLLY

CAPTION COMPETITION



SOME FOREST WALLPAPER FOR YOUR PHONE



