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two of the more cynically minded accused him of "putting it on." If that were so then Sir Laurence Olivier ought to be told about Johnstone. He would be glad to meet a mime of such first-rate quality.

For Birmingham Brown, the sprinter, strove zealously and perhaps a little monotonously, to break through along the left wing. Occasionally he did so, but he rarely found Murphy uncovered for the return pass: and if he tore on himself he met either Ewing charging in to kick the ball or, as once happened Trautmann diving down to roll the ball from his questing instep.

All in all Manchester City richly deserved their victory. In a game which was pleasantly free from all save minor infringements and excepting the injury to Trautmann, which no one could help, they had the greater number of exceptionally gifted and experienced artists. What is more, they had been at Wembley twelve months before.

MANCHESTER CITY: Trautmann; Lievers, Little; Barnes, Ewing, Paul; Johnstone, Hayes, Revie, Dyson, Clarke.

BIRMINGHAM CITY: Merrick; Hall, Green; Newman, Smith, Boyd; Astall, Kinsey, Brown, Murphy, Govan.

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Corinthian-Casuals v. Bishop Auckland, 1956

H. E. BATES

I am very devoted to April Saturdays when rosetted legionaires invade London in their thousands and Trafalgar Square is full of men with a fine "never-been-beaten-yet" look on their sharp, lean Northern faces.

They add a new touch to the capital, robbing it of that

rather stern week-day commercial air of bowler hats and malacca cane umbrellas, and tired typists running for trains.

Suddenly you feel that there is stern true business to be done, and I never drive up through the high North London suburbia of yellow forsythia and pink almond without hoping that the football at Wembley will match the capital's fresh taut air.

Today, when Corinthian-Casuals held a ferocious Bishop Auckland to a 1-1 draw after extra time, I need not, as it turned out, have doubted it would be otherwise. It was one of those matches which began shakily as if Wembley, rather than either team, would be the victor, and ended with fine flash and flare of trumpet for both sides.

From the kick-off it seemed as if a removal van I had seen in the morning, bearing in loud blue letters the deadly slogan "Bishops Move", might contain in it the worst of omens for London's amateurs who, for ten minutes, dithered against Auckland's opening attacks like a bevy of prep school-boys over-inflated by ginger beer on a wet Wednesday afternoon.

For this first opening spell you could faintly hear the creak of early doom. It was exactly as if the boys were playing the masters, and twice in four minutes the ball was skimming fiercely, as it was to do so often afterwards, over the Casuals' bar. But nervous athletes are often the best athletes and presently Casuals weathered the whip lash, pulled themselves together, grew up, became completely adult, and began to ask themselves who, after all, these North-eastern invaders were.

They began to show their weakness and their strength. Their weakness lay in the fact that their forwards were always a fraction slower off the mark and in the tackle than Bishop Auckland, and their strength in that their defence, which was to end the match in pure triumph, was a pack of lionhearts prepared to fight it out just beyond the crack of doom.

All this time it was really mostly Bishop Auckland's game. Superbly generalised, as always, by Hardisty they hardly ever fooled a pass, and their forwards, with O'Connell and Lewin

always prominent, were like a pack of hounds snapping and jabbing into any hole they could find. Then, just before half-time, the whole Casuals forward line woke out of a soporific daze and gave us a taste of that clean, open, sweet football that men remember when they speak of the Corinthians of old.

Kerruish, always fast and dangerous, put in a long run; all the forwards moved like lions in a swoop on the Auckland goal: and suddenly I sensed that the battle was a long, long way from over.

So it turned out to be. The second half was only just over ten minutes old when Casuals, swooping down again, forced a corner on the right-wing from which Sharratt made a fantastically good save, almost identical with one he had made just before half-time.

The ball went straight back to Insole for a second corner and the Essex cricket captain put over a close swinging ball that fell in the middle of a whole circus of players and a second later was in the net, put there by heaven knows whom, but probably by Citron.

The Bishop Aucklanders, hitherto as cold and tough as lumps of North Sea coast rock, did not care very greatly for this reverse and they showed signs, I thought, that pressure might even darken their hearts a little further.

Then, as so often happens, Hardisty began to pull them together. It is no bad business for a man to be playing at thirty-five as well as he played at twenty-five, but Hardisty disdains these trivialities and not only plays as a half-back but for a great part of the time as a sixth forward too – and there he was, prompting, weaving, scheming, pushing the ball through with immaculate beauty until, after seventy-seven minutes play, the reward came.

The Casuals defence got itself for a second or two in one of its few painful tangles and the ball went screaming for goal. Ahm, of whom we still had not seen the last, made a magnificent save, but in a flash McKenna had the ball back in the net.

Extra time started with the same guise of impending doom for Casuals as the game itself had begun.

Oliver shot marvellously only to see Ahm bring off another splendid save, the first of so many that in the end my April-chilling fingers could no longer applaud them. From then it was no longer every "Bishops Move".

The whole chess board was alive. The Aucklanders looked surprisingly good, and they got, if anything, better and better. But football is not, of course, all brains and feet; and the better they got the more the Casuals' spirits rose and heightened until they, too, were equally magnificent in quite another way. Ahm, in goal, the two backs, Alexander and Newton, Cowan, and the red-haired Vowels, all played, as they say, "blindly".

During this period Citron went off with a leg injury and McKenna joined him shortly afterwards. And then the strangest thing happened. In a spirited burst of inspiration every Casual forward, with Citron back, joined in a lovely movement that took the ball down to a spot that seemed as if selected by divine providence for Laybourne, just in front of goal.

Sometime in 1984 he will probably still be sitting in some Orwellian chimney corner sadly trying to remember what happened, and "look upon himself and curse his fate".

It was the golden chance every schoolboy dreams about and few men are ever given. In a moment it was lost.

"It would have been sheer robbery," said a gentleman with a large and ferocious ginger moustache who sat next to me, but I could not help feeling that both sides had had, in a sense, a victory as flaming as his own wide and splendid bristles.

CORINTHIAN-CASUALS: P. Ahm; F. C. Alexander, D. W. Newton; G. M. Suttleworth, R. Cowan, R. C. Vowels; D. J. Insole, J. Sanders, J. S. Laybourne, G. C. Citron, N. Kerruish.

BISHOP AUCKLAND: H. Sharratt; R. Fryer, T. Stewart; J. R. E. Hardisty, C. Cresswell, J. Nimmins; F. McKenna, D. J. Lewin, R. Oliver, S. O'Connell, B. Edwards.

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