**Armchair Adventures**

**Ronny’s Football Adventure – Transcript**

**00:00** Connie: Hi guys, welcome to Armchair Adventures- hosted by me, Connie. On this episode, we’re going on an Armchair Adventure with...drum roll please! Ronny! Say hello Ronny.

Ronny: Hi, I’m Ronny. I’m 87 and I’m from Ashton-under-Lyne and I was supposed to be going to Benidorm. Mind you that was months ago now, god only knows if I’ll make it abroad this year or not. These Armchair Adventures we’ve been going on though Connie have been brilliant.

Connie: Thanks Ronny, glad you’ve been enjoying them. So, what have you been missing during the last few months?

Ronny: Well, the football on and off. We got in a few games in this season but it’s basically been a write off.

Connie: We?

Ronny: Ashton United Connie. 2nd non-league club in the world formed 135 years ago.

Connie: Ashton United, I’m pretty sure that’s my dad’s team. Do you play?

Ronny: (Laughs) No, no, not anymore, I’m el Presidente.

**01:00** Connie: You what?

Ronny: I’m the president of the club.

Connie: Wow, I never knew that about you Ronny.

Ronny: There you go. Football has been part of the fabric of my life for as long as I can remember.

Connie: I can’t stand team sports myself, especially football. The competition, the pressure. It’s not for me.

Ronny: It’s not just about the match you know Connie. It’s about the community that surrounds the club.

Connie: Well, all I know is football makes my dad moody.

Ronny: (Laughs) well, it can be a roller coaster of emotions sometimes.

Connie: Thanks for sharing that with us Ronny. I really appreciate it. I’ll get the rest of the customers on the phone now so they can join in.

**02:00** [ARMCHAIR ADVENTURES THEME MUSIC]

Connie: I have all my lovely customers on a conference call now ready to take part. Say hi everyone..?

Everybody: (different hellos).

Ronny: Hi everyone.

Connie: Ronny’s been telling me about his passion for football.

Everybody: Oh yes, absolutely, the beautiful game, marvellous, can’t beat that match day feeling.

Connie: I’m not sure myself.

Pat: I’m with you Connie, I don’t see anything fun about watching a group of sweaty men kicking a ball around and shouting at a someone with a whistle.

Connie: That’s so funny Pat. I know everyone, including you listener, let’s all pretend to be a referee blowing our whistles trying to control an unruly football match. Ready, steady, go!

**03:00** [WHISTLE SOUND EFFECTS, MURMUR OF DISAPPROVAL]

Connie: Well done you lot. I want you to really engage with your imaginations during todays adventure listener, as you act, move and, later on, sing, just like my customers do. It’s going to be awesome.

Lynda: Football is so much more than chasing a ball around you know Pat.

Linda: It’s an opportunity to be part of something bigger.

Lilly: Something important.

Cyril: Something that matters.

Baz: Football can change people’s lives you know Connie.

Jean: And footballers can be fantastic role models for young people when they want to be.

Carla: Look at that Marcus Rashford and his amazing campaign for free school meals.

Everybody: Oh yes, what a fantastic young man he is, great job, absolutely.

**04:00** Ronny: That kind of thing is also happening at grassroots level you know. Ashton United have been helping vulnerable people during this pandemic, with food parcels and prescription runs and all sorts Connie. A sports club like ours looks after the community.

Connie: That sounds lovely Ronny, and I do like Marcus Rashford, but I’m still not convinced football is for me. I am however very happy to go on a footballing adventure if that’s what you fancy?

Ronny: Well, I wouldn’t mind. What about you lot?

Everybody: [CHORUS OF YES]

Connie: In that case, what’s the dream for Ashton United Football Club?

Ronny: Well, I guess it’s going to be about rebuilding next season.

Connie: Rebuilding? This is an Armchair Adventure Ronny, wouldn’t you want Ashton United to play in the final of say the FA cup?

Ronny: (laughs) Well, yes of course, but I think that might be a little while off yet.

Connie: They play the FA cup in London don’t they.

Ronny: Yes, Wembley- the home of football.

**05:00** Connie: In case you’ve forgotten Ronny, we are in the business of Armchair Adventures. We can go anyway, be anything. If Pat and me are going to have to watch boring football I want to see them win a cup.

Ronny: Footballs not all about winning you know.

Connie: Come on, you know it makes sense.

Ronny: Ok Connie, I’m going to take everyone on an adventure to discover what being part of a football club is all about.

[ARMCHAIR ADVENTURE THEME]

[CROWD NOISES]

Connie: Where are we?

Ronny: Wembley way.

Connie: Look at that giant arch. What’s that building up ahead- it looks like a spaceship?

Baz: That’s the stadium Connie.

**06:00** Cyril: This is where England won the World Cup in 1966.

Lilly: It looked a bit different then though.

Cyril: It did, but Wembley is still the home of English football.

Lynda: There’s such a buzz in the air.

Linda: Hear the noise of the crowd.

Carla: Feel the anticipation.

Rita: Rosettes.

Jean: Scarfs.

Lilly: Chanting.

Cyril: Singing.

[CHANTING AND SINGING]

John: Food stalls of all varieties- mmmm smell those burgers cooking.

[SIZZLING]

Connie: What can you see, feel and smell on Wembley Way listener on big match day?

Connie: I’ve never seen so many people congregating in one place before.

Pat: I’ve got to say, even I have got an excited feeling, I feel like I feel before a big music concert.

Ronny: Exactly Pat.

**07:00** Lynda: All the fans of both teams mix together here Connie.

Linda: They only get separated inside the stadium. Who are Ashton United playing in the FA cup final then Ron?

Ronny: Well, club rivalry is a big thing in football. I had a bit of trouble choosing who we’d play against, so for today’s adventure I’ve decided to imagine a super team for us- I’ll call them The Rivals FC and they’re the richest club in the world.

Baz: That’s a great idea.

Carla: How marvellous.

Rita: Very imaginative Ronny.

Keith: It’s going to be a real David v Goliath match then.

**08:00** Ronny: Ashton United [ASHTON UNITED MUSIC] vs The Rivals FC [RIVALS FC MUSIC]

Ann: That’ll make it even more exciting. Well done Ronny.

Ronny: Thanks.

Pat: There’s so many people here. I can’t get over it

Ronny: All these faces eh? I know so many of them.

Connie: Do you?

Ronny: Absolutely. There’s our groundskeeper. Alright David?

Lynda: There’s Sheila, your treasurer- the lady that looks after the money.

Linda: There’s Graham that paints the white lines on the pitch. Hiya?

Rita: And Julie who makes the tea.

Jean: And Pam from behind the bar.

**09:00** John: And that lovely couple that makes them cracking steak and kidney pies.

Ronny: It takes a community of people to make up a club Connie. And to achieve something as monumental as making it all the way to the final of the FA cup, it takes that whole community pulling together.

Keith: Good job I put my lucky underpants on then.

Connie: Your what Keith?

Keith: My lucky underpants. I always wear them on a big match day.

Connie: Does he Ann?

Ann: Ooo Connie, those pants have more holes in them than a slice of swiss cheese, but he’d divorce me if I threw them away.

Keith: It’s my little match day ritual.

Lynda: I’ve got my Wembley hat on. I’ve never washed it. You never wash a hat with Wembley magic dust on.

Baz: Whenever I ran on to play football before a match I would always touch my clubs logo for luck.

**10:00** John: When I played, I’d bend down and touch the pitch- rub my fingers through the hallowed turf- say a little prayer before the first whistle went.

Ronny: Match day rituals are important Connie.

Connie: Is there anything you do to bring you luck, listener? Before you take part in something really important to you?

Connie: I guess I am a little excited, but at the end of the day, it can’t be that much different than watching the game on the television, and that, to me, is a mega snooze fest.

Ronny: You lot soak up the atmosphere. We’ll meet you at the seats. Connie, come with me. I have a surprise for you.

[MUFFLED RUMBLE OF CROWD]

Connie: Where are we now?

Ronny: We are in the tunnel. This is where in a few moments the players will run out.

Connie: Yes, I’ve seen that bit with dad. They run out through the tunnel and the crowd goes wild, there’s fireworks and loud music, and then everyone sings the national anthem.

**11:00** Ronny: I tell you, the sound of thousands of your fellow country men and women singing together makes the hairs stand up on the back of your neck.

Connie: I know, listener. Let’s all pretend we are running out into a stadium to play in a big match.

Ronny: Come this way.

Connie: Where are we going?

Ronny: Let’s take a peek in the changing rooms. It’s not usually the done thing before a big match, but this is my Armchair Adventure.

[RIVALS FC MUSIC AND LOTS OF SHOUTING]

Connie: What’s that noise?

Ronny: That’s The Rivals FC manager, he is renowned for being a bit of a bully boy- it’s a very stressful job. He’ll be giving his team the hairdryer treatment.

Connie: The what?

Ronny: He shouts in the faces of his players with such force they say it feels like a hair dryer blowing.

Connie: And The Rivals FC are the richest team in the world you say?

**12:00** Ronny: Absolutely. All their players cost millions and millions of pounds and they get paid thousands and thousands of pounds each week.

Connie: Do they eat caviar sarnies to give them strength before the game, and fill their water bottles with posh pop?

Ronny: (Laughs) Why not? They definitely have a state of the art sports ground. They are the kind of club that think they can just buy their way to the top.

Connie: Do they play in silk shorts, have gold plated boots with diamond encrusted studs?

Ronny: Absolutely.

Connie: What else do you think the most expensive football team in the world has, listener? it can be anything you want, really let your imaginations go wild.

Connie: That was fun. What’s through this door?

[DOOR CREAK]

[ASHTON UNITED MUSIC PLAYS]

Ronny: That’ll be our boys. Warming up. Going through last minute tactics. Psyching themselves up for the battle ahead.

**13:00** Ronny: Careful Connie, we don’t want then to lose concentration.

Connie: That man is waving at you Ronny.

Ronny: Oh, hold on sec.

[WHISPERS]

Connie (still whispering): What was that about Ronny, serious team tactics?

Ronny: No, he’s coming round to fix my fence in the week, he was just checking I’d be in Wednesday lunchtime.

Connie: But isn’t he a professional football player on like a mega amount of money?

Ronny: No Connie, Aston United are semi-professional. They don’t get paid. The goalkeeper is a primary teacher, our striker also drives the coach, the right back’s a dustman.

Connie: Oh I see.

Ronny: Like I said, football’s not about money. All the money in the world doesn’t make a winner. Football is about community. Without community, there is no team. Let’s hurry up and get our seats. I don’t want to miss anything.

**14:00** [ARMCHAIR ADVENTURES THEME]

Rita: Hi listener, how are you doing? It’s me again - Rita! Did you know Armchair Adventures is brought to you by Made By Mortals? And they are fan-blooming-tastic! Aren’t they gang?!

EVERYONE: [in agreement]

Rita: Made By Mortals is a music theatre company that lives in the North of England, in Greater Manchester. Well, Tameside to be precise. They’re based at Guide Bridge Theatre. It’s not far from the big IKEA, if you know it. They’re dead clever in what they do. They create immersive shows, podcasts, films and workshops with a wonderful mix of community participants, of all ages. So, whether it’s getting involved in a

podcast like this one, or if you want to form a community partnership of some kind, Made By Mortals would love to hear from you. If you work for a charity, a council, a university, a hospital, a trust or any other social organisation, for goodness sake!! Commission Made By Mortals now!! Just search Made By Mortals everywhere and don’t forget to say hello! Thanks for listening, nice to see you.

[THEME MUSIC ENDS]

[CHEERING AND CHANTING STARTS]

Connie: Hi everyone

Everyone: [Hello from everyone]

Pat: Who are they in those costumes in the middle of the pitch Barry?

Baz: That’s the mascots Pat. They’re here to warm the crowd up.

Pat: Aren’t they funny?!

Rita: Let’s give them a wave everybody.

Everyone: [ALL SHOUTING HELLO]

Connie: Listener, can you dance around and wave at the crowd like a mascot? Ready, go!

**16:00** Connie: Well, that was fun.

Lynda: It’s time for a Mexican Wave. I love a Mexican wave.

Linda: Look all these thousands of people joining in- it’s magical.

Jean: It makes you feel all together, not matter what team you’re on.

Carla: I can’t wait until it’s our turn.

Connie: When I say ‘now’ listener it’s our turn, throw your hands in the air, like you’re doing a Mexican wave and we’ll all join in together. Here we go, it’s coming, it’s coming and… now!

Everyone: [Yay]

Connie: This atmosphere’s amazing. Here they come look, listen. First it’s The Rivals FC.

**17:00** [BOOING, THE RIVALS FC MUSIC]

Ronny: And now it’s our boys- Ashton United.

[CHEERING, ASHTON UNITED MUSIC]

Connie: Why’s that one got the ball in his hand?

Pat: And why’s he got a different kit on?

John: That’s the referee, he’s putting the ball on the spot for kick off.

**18:00** Ronny: Just enjoy it you two. Soak in the atmosphere, quieten your mind, and let the players do their thing. Football is an art form, it’s beautiful to experience, if you let it breathe.

Connie: Ok. I’ll try.

[BOTH ASHTON UNITED AND THE RIVALS FC MUSIC PLAYS]

[BOOS AND CHEERS ALTERNATE]

[CUSTOMERS CHEERING]

**19:00** Connie: They’ve scored! They’ve scored! Ashton United have scored!!! People are hugging.

Linda: Big cheers.

Rita: Huge smiles.

Lilly: Jumping up and down.

Lynda: Fist pumping.

Cyril: High fives all round.

Carla: Elation

Jean: Pure joy.

Connie: How would you celebrate your team scoring listener?

[BOOS]

Ronny: What? That’s ridiculous.

Connie: What’s happened?

Baz: The VAR has disallowed it.

Everyone: You’re joking. They can’t do that.

Pat: The what?

Rita: The Video Assistant Referee, there’s another referee watching the footage on big TV screens and they’ve ruled that it wasn’t a goal after all.

Connie: They can’t do that.

Rita: I’m afraid they can.

**20:00** Ronny: There’s no wonder left in the game. We used to debate for hours after the game, what was and wasn’t a goal or a foul or what have you. That’s all gone now. Fairs fair though I supposed, it wasn’t a goal by the letter of the law.

Connie: Don’t let this set back stop us- we were playing beautifully up till then.

Ronny: I’m glad to hear you say that Connie.

Connie: Come on Ashton United, you can do it! Come on your sparrows.

Ronny: Robins!

Connie: Sorry?

Ronny: Our nickname is robins.

Connie: Oh yeah, sorry! Come on you Robins!

**21:00** [ASHTON UNITED AND THE RIVALS FC MUSIC]

[CROWDS CHANTING]

[BOOS]

Everyone: Oh no! I don’t believe it. Just before half time as well!

Connie: What’s happened now?

Ronny: Well, it’s half time.

Connie: But Rivals FC have just scored. And we’re losing one nil. They can’t pause the match there.

Ronny: They have to have half time, Connie.

Baz: Time to regroup.

Linda: Rethink the tactics.

Lynda: Refresh the body for the second half.

Ronny: I expect it’ll be our lads getting the hairdryer treatment now.

Connie: Our manager wouldn’t do that, would they Ronny?

Ronny: Well… probably not. Where are you going Connie?

Connie: I’m off to the changing rooms.

Ronny: You can’t do that.

Connie: This is your Armchair Adventure Ronny, I’m going.

Ronny: Connie no, it’s… Connie? Connie? Come back.

**22:00** [DOOR CREAKS OPEN]

Ronny: Connie. Wait! Sorry lads, Connie’s not been around football for long, she doesn’t realise that busting into the changing rooms at half time of the final of the FA cup is really not the done thing.

Connie: Right you lot, put your water bottles down and listen up. You are playing beautifully out there. Magically even. You’ve got everyone behind you. Me and Pat, don’t even like football and we are cheering you on. People really care out there. Yes, they might have had a bad day, week, month, well year even, but none of that matters at the moment. The only thing that matters is you lot and this beautiful game. Now, get out there and win it. Not for yourself, but for all the people that got you here. Win it for them. Win it for Ronny!!!

[CHANTS OF RONNY, RONNY, RONNY]

**23:00** [BOOS AND CHEERS AGAIN]

Connie: I wish there was more we could do to help them.

Rita: Well, we could sing.

Ronny: Copy me.  *Ashton United are the best*

Everyone: Ashton United are the best.

Ronny: *We’re the mighty robins from North West.*

Everyone: We’re the mighty robins from North West.

Ronny: *We’re off to Wembley and we’re gonna win the cup.*

Everyone: We’re off to Wembley and we’re gonna win the cup.

Ronny: *Ashton United are the best.*

Everyone: Ashton United are the best.

[ASHTON UNITED MUSIC PLAYS, THEY SING ABOVE LINES WITH THE MUSIC]

**24:00** [RIVALS FC MUSIC STARTS, BOOS FOLLOWED BY CHEERS FOLLOWED BY BOOS]

Everyone: [Cheering/Frustration]

[FINAL WHISTLE]

Connie: I can’t believe it, we lost. I’m devastated.

**25:00** Ronny: That’s football.

Connie: It was their strikers’ fault, he cheated, he was pushing and shoving at the end there. Where’s the V A R when you need it. And besides that, it isn’t right that The Rivals FC get all that money and we don’t. We should have won. We were the best team.

Ronny: Football’s is about community Connie. It’s not all about the win. That’s only part of it. It’s about people coming together when things are tough. We’ll rebuild from this, and we’ll come back stronger, you mark my words.

Carla: How incredible. That was an experience I’ll never forget.

Lynda: Me neither.

Linda: It’s a shame Aston United lost. But it felt wonderful to part of a community like that.

**26:00** Connie: It really did. Thank you guys. It’s been an incredible armchair adventure. And it’s taught me so much. I’ve learnt that team sports are so much more

than just about the matches you see on the television. It’s about ordinary people, all over the world, coming together, helping each other, united by sport. That’s so important at a time like this.

Rita: Do you like football now then Connie?

Jean: Will you be watching with your dad?

Connie: You know, I think I might. Well, the highlights at least.

Rita: Ronny would love to hear you say that.

Connie: Where is Ronny?

Rita: Oh I don’t know.

Carla: I’ve not seen him.

Lilly: Me neither.

Cyril: What about Pat, she’s missing and all?

Linda: How strange.

John: They probably had to get off early for some reason.

Baz: Never mind. Thanks Connie. Today has been really special.

Connie: Well, you’re the best customers a travel agent could ask for- thank you. Next time listener, another one of my lovely customers gets to take us on another Armchair Adventure; inspired by their passions and interests, but for now, it’s time to say goodbye. Goodbye.

**27:00** Everyone: [CHORUS OF GOODBYES]

Connie: End. Call. Now.

[PHONE HANGS UP]

Connie: Lovely. I wonder where Ronny and Pat got to.

[STADIUM SOUNDS START UP]

Pat: What are you doing Ronny, it’s time to go home?

Ronny: We’re in the business of Armchair Adventures Pat, we can go anywhere and do anything we like, can’t we?

Pat: Well, absolutely.

Ronny: And this episode is my episode, right?

Pat: Right.

Ronny: In that case, I’m going to sit here, in this wonderful historic stadium and I’m going to replay that game, but this time with a difference.

Pat: O yeah?

Ronny: Yeah. This time I’m gonna let us win.

**28:00** Pat: (Laughs) I don’t blame you Ronny. It’s not every day you get to see your local football team win the FA cup. You know what, I think I’ll join you.

[CHEERS]

*Armchair Adventures is a Made By Mortals production made in collaboration with Hearts and Minds, a theatre company for over 55s. And with support from Arts Council England, the National Lottery, United We Stream and Action Together.*