



JOKER: Biggs

Ronnie 'Bigged up' role in heist

GREAT train robber Ronnie Biggs had a cheeky answer when asked who masterminded the crime.

Ronnie, who died in 2013 aged 84, liked to joke: "I was the Mr Biggs of the operation."

The line emerged in an interview with ex-radio reporter Mike Flynn, 68, who talked to Ronnie in 1988 in Brazil.

Mike said: "I asked him about the speculation in the newspapers there was a Mr Big who planned and financed the robbery and was never captured."

"Ronnie just smiled and quipped, 'No, there was a Mr Biggs who was captured but was lucky enough to get away.' He dined out on that gag for years."

In 1963 the robbers took £2.6million - £46million in today's money - after holding up the Glasgow to London Royal Mail train.

Biggs was jailed for 30 years but served only 15 months before escaping to Rio de Janeiro. Mike, of Holt, Norfolk, added: "He said it was going on the run that made him go straight."

STAR
DNA from Neanderthals and another extinct species of human, the Denisovans, has been found in modern day Icelanders by Danish researchers.

BURST

Mums 'pass on insanity'

HIGH blood pressure in pregnant women could leave their children with mental health problems.

If expectant mothers were also overweight and had diabetes, their kids were at an even higher risk, a Finnish study found.

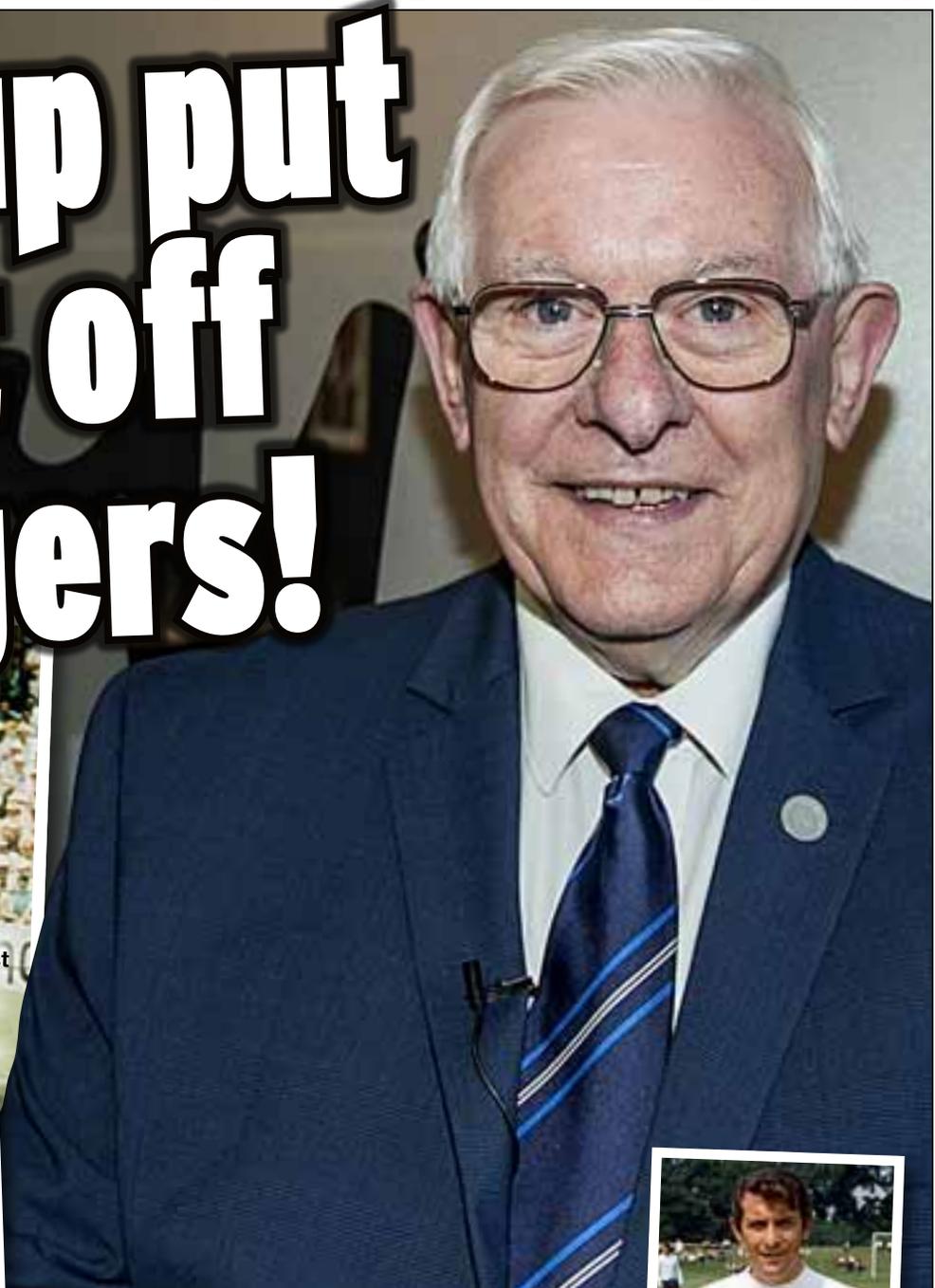
Researcher Dr Marius Lahti-Pulkkinen said: "Preventive interventions have the potential to benefit both the well-being of the expectant mother and her offspring."

ENGLAND LEGEND RECALLS MEXICO '70

World Cup put me right off fish-fingers!



OPENER: Alan scoring against West Germany. Below, bottom row second from left, before the Ecuador game in 1970



THE MIKE WARD INTERVIEW
ALAN MULLERY
FOOTBALLING GREAT



MENTION the Mexico World Cup - the first, that is, 50 years ago this summer - and for England legend Alan Mullery the memories flood back.

The pressure of arriving as world champions. The clash with Pele's Brazil. The pain of going out to those pesky Germans. The scandalous arrest of skipper Bobby

Moore. Have I missed anything out?

"I've never eaten a fish finger since," says Alan.

Sorry, you what?

"Fish fingers. We ate so many, it's put me off for life.

"We'd had all this lovely food sent out specially - Aberdeen Angus steaks, that kind of thing - and it all got confiscated at the airport. The Mexican

authorities nicked the lot! Fish fingers and chips was about all our chef could cook us."

Looking back on that tournament with the 78-year-old ex-Spurs star is both fascinating and a privilege, given how much he was in the thick of it.

It was Alan who marked the great Pele in that Brazil match.

It was Alan who rushed to congratulate keeper Gordon Banks for pulling off the save of the century, keeping out a certain Pele goal.

"I patted Banksy on the head and said, 'Why didn't you catch it?' I thought that was quite funny..."

It was Alan who opened the scoring in the ill-fated quarter-final against West Germany (his only England goal, as it turned out).

And pre-tournament, it was Alan whose roommate, England's World Cup-winning captain Bobby Moore, stood accused of theft - hauled away on a trumped-up charge of pinching a bracelet from a

jeweller's shop in Bogota, capital of Colombia.

"It was like being in an old Western," Alan vividly recalls. "You're sitting in your hotel when suddenly these people burst in, pointing guns at you and handcuffing Mooro.

"If he were still around now, bless him, I'm sure he'd say it was the most frightening experience of his life."

Rattled

Moore was stuck for a week at the British Embassy before being allowed to rejoin his team-mates in Mexico.

Did it leave him rattled? Not a bit, Alan insists: "He was our best player of the tournament."

Someone who did take some stick, and cruelly faced it for the rest of his life, was stand-in keeper Peter Bonetti, who was drafted in for the quarter-final after Banks fell ill.

Bonetti, who passed away earlier this month, was blamed for the first German goal - the start of a comeback that saw

England squander a two-goal lead and lose their world title.

Alan acknowledges it was an error - the ball went under Bonetti's body - and says the Chelsea keeper was in tears in the dressing room.

"But to say he lost us that game is an absolute disgrace," he adds. "I've played with some of the world's best goalkeepers. They've all made mistakes."

Half a century on, Alan Mullery is a deeply contented man. Not only are he and wife June approaching 60 years of marriage but Alan also has a role he adores as club ambassador for Brighton & Hove Albion, where he spent two spells as manager.

"I absolutely love it," he says. "It's a joy to be there."

Brighton's Amex Stadium even has a restaurant named in his honour, Mullery's.

Any fish fingers on the menu, Alan?

"No, there are not!" he chuckles. "We only serve good stuff!"



GROUNDING: Mullery at Brighton's Amex Stadium