

3.2 ALFIE CROWLE'S STORY

Once upon a time there was thirteen year-old boy kicking a tatty leather football under the hot, Mexican sun. He heard a shout, "Pass yer old man the ball, Alfie!" There was Alfie's Dad in the gear of a miner, just come back to the surface after a long day's work underground. They had a bit of a kick around.

"You're getting some good with that ball my boy, you'll be up and playing for the club before long."

His Dad picked up the ball - the leather was cracked, the stitches were coming apart.

"Look at my old lucky ball!" he said, "Did I ever tell you about the first game of football we played here in Mexico?"

Alfie had heard the story many times before, but he was happy to hear it again.

"I brought this ball from St Blazey, back in Cornwall. Just about everyone in St Blazey worked in Par and St Blazey Consols. My father was a copper miner. I was a tin miner. But the price of tin dropped and the mines were closing.

All across Cornwall, everyone was talking about gold in South Africa or copper in Australia but in St Blazey all the chat was about silver in Mexico, "Come to Mexico, where the sun always shines..."

So yer Mum and me, we packed up everything, said goodbye to our families and sailed out from Penzance. All we had with us was a bag of clothes, and this here ball.

When we arrived in Pachuca we were foreigners, didn't speak the language, though there was plenty of Cousin Jacks underground. At the end of the core, me and two Redruth boys was having a bit of a kickabout when up comes the Mexicans. They had never seen a football before. I saw one of the young lads nodding and smiling so I tapped the ball over to him. He kicks it back. Before long the whole of the Mexican core joined in.

From then on, at the end of every shift we would have a game. That was how the club was formed. All eleven players in the original Pachuca team were Cornish miners."

Alfie and his Dad started walking home.

"When I was thirteen," said his Dad "I was already working as a miner. It'll be your turn before long."

"I dunno" said Alfie "I'd rather be playing football."

"Playing football!" his Dad laughed "You can't make a living doing that!"

But Alfie knew that over in England they now had professional players, people who got paid to play football all day long. Alfie kept quiet but he knew that a miner's life was not going to be for him.

Some years later Pachuca Athletic did indeed become Mexico's very first professional side and who was their coach and star player? None other than Alfred C Crowle, the miner's boy from St Blazey. Sorry to say his father never got to see it, having died young of lung disease like so many miner's did.

Football began to take off all over Mexico and Alfie was headhunted by Mexico's richest team, Necaxa. Alfie coached and played for the side. The last game he played, at the age of 43, was the cup final that Necaxa won 9-0! That score is still a record goal difference in Mexico today.

Even then Alfie carried on coaching and in 1935, he became the coach of the first ever Mexican national team, taking them to victory in the Central American and Caribbean Games.

Picture the first day of training, as Alfie walked out onto the field with a frayed old ball under one arm, the leather dark, the stitches split.

"Hey coach," laughs the striker,
"we're not going to play with that are we?"

"No" says Alfie *"... this here is my lucky ball."*

See resource [3.2 B Film: Alfie Crowle](#).

HWEDHEL ALFI KROWLER	ALFIE CROWLE'S STORY
Tas Alfi o den bal sten dyworth Porth Lanndreth.	Alfie's father was a tin miner from St Blazey Gate.
Gans milyow tus val Gernow erel, yth omdhivroas an teylu rag whel y'n balyow arghans yn Pachuca – ow tri an kynsa peldros dhe Veghiko	Along with thousands of other Cornish miners the family emigrated to work the silver mines in Pachuca – taking the very first footballs to Mexico.
An kynsa para Pachuca o selys yn mil, naw kans, hag onan – oll an unnek gwarier o tus val a Gernow!	The first Pachuca team was founded in 1901 – all eleven players were Cornish miners!
Alfi a warias rag Pachuca hag yn mil, naw kans, pymthek war'n ugens a beshya ev dhe ledya an para kenedhlek Meghiko.,dh'aga hynsa gwayn yn kestrif pewas keswlasek; Gwariow Amerika Kres ha Karabian	Alfie played for Pachuca and in 1935 went on to lead the Mexico national team to their first international competition trophy win; the Central American and Caribbean Games
Alfi Crowle yw hwath remembrys avel onan a'n dus veur oll-dermyn yn peldros Meghikanek.	Alfie Crowle is still remembered as one of the all-time greats of Mexican football.