

**Tuesday 3 November 2015 – Morning**

**GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (NI)**

**A633/02/RBI** Information and Ideas (Higher Tier)

**READING BOOKLET INSERT**

**Duration: 2 hours**



**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- The materials in this READING BOOKLET INSERT are for use with the questions in **Section A** of the Question Paper.

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From: *Look Who It Is! Alan Carr, My Story.*

*Comedian and TV presenter Alan Carr is the son of football player and manager Graham Carr.*

I remember running and touching a tree, any tree, and then running back to my father and then running to a tree that was a little bit further away and then back to my father and so on. I seemed to have spent my whole childhood breathless, touching trees. If there weren't any trees available, Dad would bring bollards. There would be no escape from the tree touching.

Whilst I was running, I would see all the other kids in the park having a kick-around, taking it in turns to be in goal, playing keepy-uppy, their playful laughter and squeals of joy slowly being drowned out by Dad's 'One, two, three, four! Quicker, move quicker, you useless lump!' from the other side of the park. He would shout using the same booming voice with just a hint of Geordie that he used every Saturday on the touchline to his own players. I would see them try to shout back, only to be blasted again with that voice, the fools. It would be like arguing with a hand-dryer.

I first started running to try and dislodge some of the puppy fat. It would be just a leisurely run around the fields, nothing too strenuous. Strangely, although I hated sports, I did enjoy running; bounding along the country lanes seemed to clear my head and sharpen my mind. I remember running after school around a field at the back of my house, and as I approached the winning line, which was in fact an old tree with a dangly branch, who did I spot emerging from behind a bush? Yes, my father, with a stopwatch.

'That's 29 minutes, 38 seconds. If you'd pushed yourself a bit harder on that hill, you would have made 28 minutes easy.'

Not only had he been spying on me running, I later found out he had tried to enrol me in the local boys' running team, the Overstone Phoenixes, without me knowing.

'What's the point of running if you're not up against someone?' he would say. 'There's no point, Alan, if there's no challenge!'

I was a twelve-year-old spectacle wearer with a weight problem. The only challenge I had was finding sports shorts with an elasticated waist. As my father would tell me, football wasn't about scoring goals; it was about discipline and fitness.

'Alan, see those kids over there?'

'What, the ones laughing and having fun?'

'They'll never be any good because they're just kicking the ball about. We're getting your thighs built up, so they will protect your knees and you won't get arthritis in later life.'

Dad sure knew how to inject a bit of fun into the proceedings. Arthritis prevention, anyone? Apparently, if I followed Dad's exercise routine and did the relevant number of sit-ups every day, I would become a top professional footballer, an athlete. Well, that was the plan anyway.

To be frank, Dad put me off playing football. Obviously, I realise you have to do the groundwork, and put the effort in to succeed in your chosen field, but what he didn't understand was that a child has to be tempted into it in the first place. It is the exhilaration of scoring a goal that enchants a seven-year old, an exhilaration that would then hopefully blossom into a career. No-one becomes

a pilot because they'd enjoyed a nutritious in-flight meal; no, they had to want to fly the plane. My father had inadvertently managed to extract all the fun out of games for me; on that playing field it was all work, work, work with him.

School didn't make it any better. Physical Education is the only lesson on the school syllabus where you don't get any help if you're no good at it. Physical it is, Education it ain't. No arm around your shoulder, no comforting word from a teacher, just a great big dollop of contempt and sarcasm. Can you imagine the headlines if little Susie in English couldn't spell scissors, and so was forced to do an extra lap of the library in her vest and pants and then have a thwack from a wet towel?

You can see why kids today don't want to exercise and would rather sit at home playing martial arts games on their Nintendo. I wish I'd done that.

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