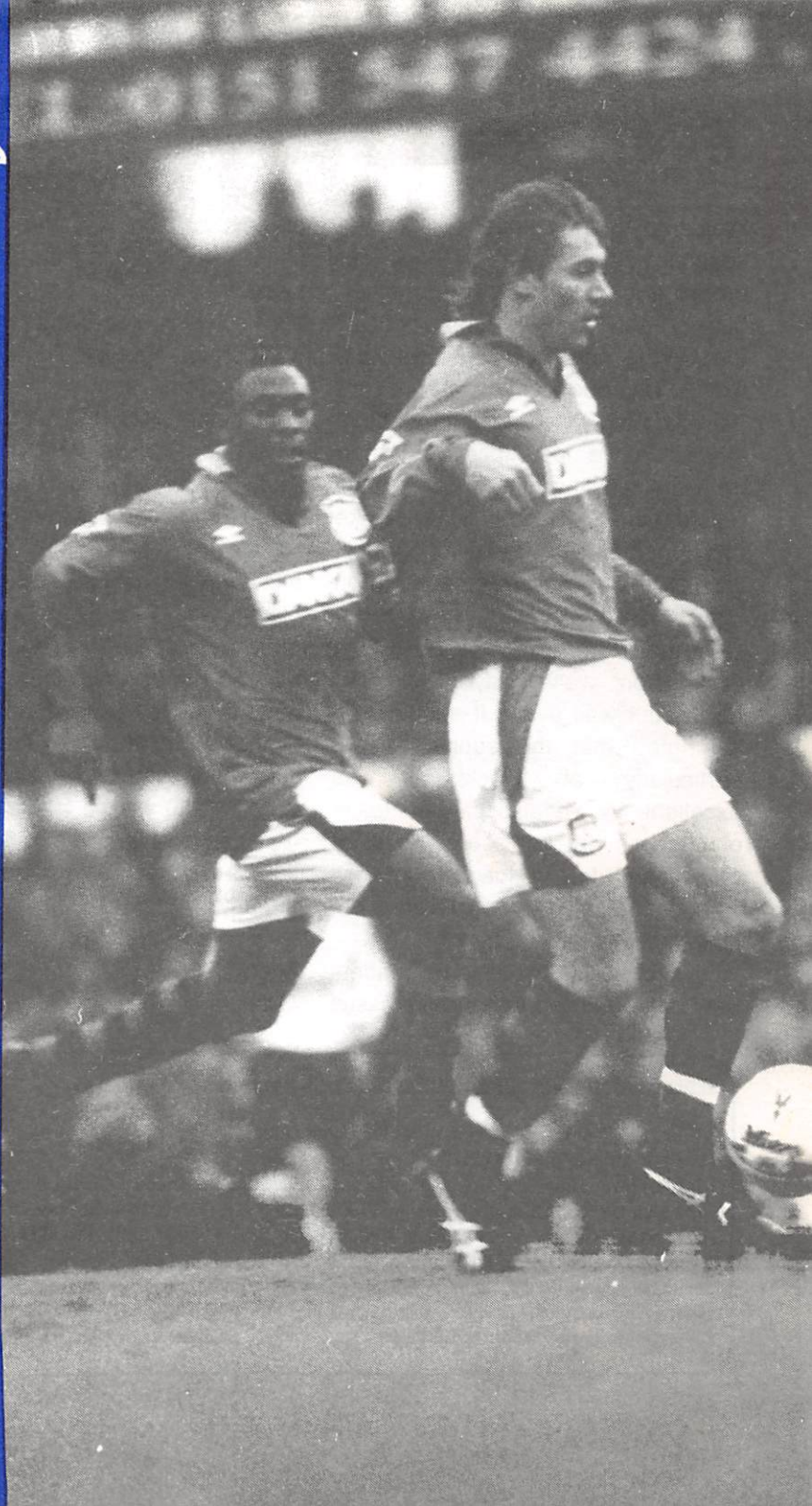




when skies are grey



ue 49

1.00

evertonia

Welcome to the last WSAG of the season. Again, we've had our problems getting this issue together, but you don't want to hear about all that. We're here now, and, well, we like it... we hope you do too!

Footballing wise, things have been OK since we last appeared, apart from the fact that 'the shower' have reached the FA Cup Final. May I take this opportunity to send all of our best wishes to... Manchester United on May 11th.

On the "Domingoan" (© The Rabid Child) front we've played badly at home, but well away. It should also be noted that the support away, particularly at Blackburn was excellent. We've also created loads of chances but not scored a lot of goals, and let in loads from few chances at the other end. Everton eh, don't make it easy do they?

On the WSAG front, some readers may have realised that the first issue

of next season is going to be our fiftith. We are planning a bumper issue (at no extra cost, I hasten to add) so we'll need loads of stuff to fill it. Therefore, we would like to hear again from any of our past contributors. Pick up your pens again boys and girls, we want your pieces. And, to anyone who has always wanted to become part of the WSAG Family, now is the time. We don't bite, well Phil might, but only in a playful way. We would also like to print six of the best articles from the past 50 issues, so is there any piece you want to see again, (without typing errors this time) then write in with your choice.

WSAG50 will be available for the first game of season 1996/97, until then, then. We're missing you already.

laters
Graham.

When Skies are Grey : Issue 49, April 1996 has been brought to you by:

editor : Graham Ennis; **merchandise manager :** Phil Redmond; **operations manager :** David Swaffield; **junior WSAG editor:** Claire Roberts.

contributors : Blue-eyed Boy, Bluenose and the Dutchman, Ian Carter, Gary Chase, Mike Cope, Ian Deakin, Mike Doyle, Danny Fitzgerald, Flossy, Paul Gallagher, Lee Gore, Tony Heslop, Ray Kirwan, James L, Lyon 3, Main Stand Blue, Greg Murphy, David O'Reilly, Overseas Correspondent, Preno, Rabid Child, Ant Rogers, Gary Ryan, Southern Joe, Mrs Steam Engine, Adrian Thomas, Alf Tupper, Dave Wiggins.

sellers : Stuart Ennis, Gareth Hughes, Gary King, Frank Malcolm, Darren Moore.

cover photo / other photos : J Malone

upwards and onwards

If I had to sum up this season in one word, that word would be 'steady': Nothing earth-shattering, nothing horrific, but steady.

It is fair to say that, wherever we finish up this season, we can safely say that progress has been made - it would be easy to let the two appalling cup results cloud that fact - and we have a solid platform for further improvement.

It should also be noted that we have won more away games this season than in any other since our last Championship win. This is particularly pleasing as, on our travels, we've recently struggled. The pace of Kanchelskis is the obvious factor here.

It would be unfair, though, to single him out as there are other players who have performed consistently throughout the season. So take a bow Graham Stuart, John Ebbrell and Joe Parkinson. All three of these deserve particular credit. Graham Stuart because he's never really been allowed to settle into one position. John Ebbrell because it has taken a hell of a lot of bottle to rise above the taunts and Joe Parkinson because he's been... well, Joe Parkinson. Indeed, it's been said that he's become something of a talisman, but don't you think that such a remark is a little disparaging. In the games he's not played, we've really missed Joe and this has nothing to do with the fact that he's a lucky charm, but has everything to do with the fact that he has been playing out of his skin all year. Credit where credit is due.

However, it is not a time to rest on our laurels. This season has also proved that certain players have reached the pinnacle of their achievement (others are now on the downslope). This has been shown by the fact that in games against the top clubs, your Newcastle and Manchester Uniteds we have looked clearly second

best. If we are to maintain our progress these players must be replaced. Top six is acceptable this season after the traumas of the last two years but a challenge for the title and a good cup run must be realistic targets for next year.

The question then must be asked: who are we going to get? There are worrying signs that there isn't a great deal of money available for transfers. Now, maybe this is only Joe Royle talking down the situation, but still, it's not the sort of thing you want to hear. My own sneaky feeling is that Johnson has said that there will definitely be some players leaving in the close season - and some of these sales may be unpalatable to large sections of the crowd. And, if I'm forced to name names then I'd put my money on Limper and Unsworth, and possibly one other.

Joe Royle was linked with a number of players before the transfer deadline (rather unsurprisingly two of these were wide players - what is it with Everton and 'wingers', we're obsessed with them!) unfortunately one of them wasn't a free-scoring forward. I would argue that such a player must be our priority. Games this season have proved we are able to create chances, now we need someone to add the finishing touch. Who? Who? I hear you ask. I don't know, but rest assured he will cost a lot of money. Money which hopefully won't have been raised from the sale of one of the men we would have thought would be supplying him with crosses.

Still, when all is said and done, and season 1995/96 is assessed from sometime in future, it will be shown that the pros outweigh the cons and for this we should offer words of praise to Joe Royle.

Graham Ennis

these are the things

A monthly look at all things Everton: between Leeds and Bolton

It was a good month for:

Andrei Kanchelskis
Duncan Ferguson
Dave Watson
Tony Grant
David Unsworth

It was a bad month for:

Craig Short
Tony Grant
Anders Limpar
Paul Rideout

Player of the Month:

Andrei Kanchelskis: Without a doubt, this month Andrei has been truly exceptional. His pace and shooting have been excellent and his goals truly magnificent. Now, Andrei, how about a repeat performance against 'The Shower'.

Performance of the Month:

vs Blackburn (away)
There are those who would say we didn't really capitalise on the extra man until after about eighty minutes, but I would suggest that to come away with any result was a bonus after those first manic twenty minutes.

Disaster of the Month:

vs Wimbledon (home)
Hardly a surprise this one. Joe Royle said he didn't see it coming, I'd guess there was loads inside the ground who would disagree with him. Defensively, this month, we haven't looked to clever, Wimbledon was the day it really showed!

Questions of the Month:

"Has Peter Johnson said we must sell before we can buy?"
We asked this last month, but we feel it is important to ask it again. Despite the fact that, now

on two occasions, Joe has intimated as much, no one in the local media appears willing to broach the subject with the man himself.

Another question of the month:

"Why were the Liverpoolians so elated after their narrow win against Newcastle, didn't it only confirm that Man Utd would be champions?"

Thought of the month:

Just imagine, if one day we actually started to take some of the many chances we've had lately, someone's in for a right tonking.

Quotes of the Month:

Sorry, we can't recall anything worth repeating this month.

Player who has done least to ingratiate himself to the supporters: Daniel Amokachi.
Sorry Dan, despite goals against Blackburn and Bolton you still flatter to deceive. With a goalscoring forward a must-buy for the summer, Dan must be looking over his shoulder with some intrepidation.

manifesto: *In the next month we would like to see:-*
A comprehensive derby victory obviously; a Man United cup win; Michael Branch to be given at least a half before the end of the season; so too for Graham Allen; after European qualification, some cheap travel arrangements this year; season tickets to rise only by the rate of inflation or less; the powers that be take some notice of 'The Return To Amber' campaign; some big new signings early in the close season - not in the last week; these transfers to take place without any fuck-ups; less emphasis on corporate hospitality, more on the needs of the regular supporters; a st. end scoreboard.

Moments in love

Tony Grant's inch perfect forty yard through ball.
Kanchelskis running amok.

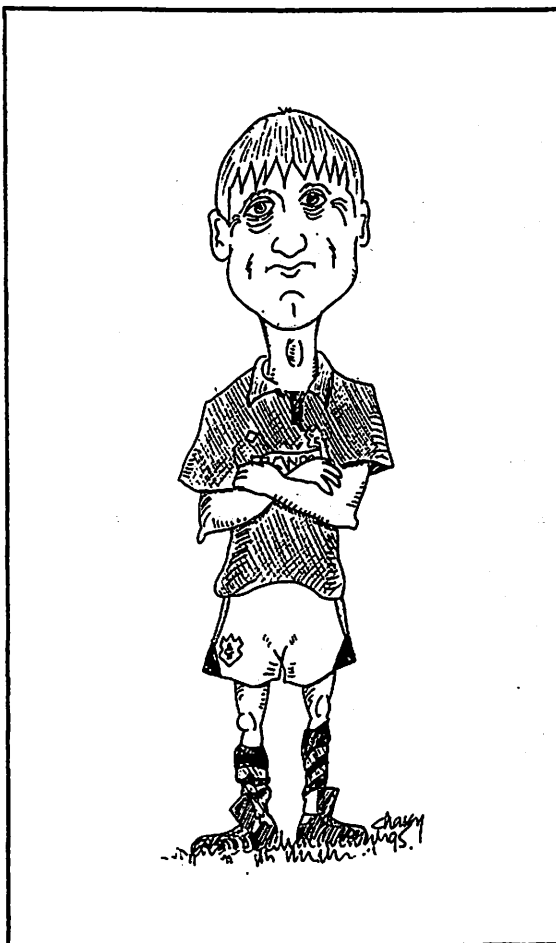
Moments in despair

26 Goal-scoring opportunities at Elland Road - only two goals.
Andy Clarke running amok.

this season's things

A reader-friendly list of what season 1995/96 meant to us Evertonians: some things good, some things bad, some just things.

26 000 Season Tickets
Danka
Anders Limpar's Skinhead
Dixie The Mascot
Andrei Kanchelskis
Radio Goodison
Pizza In The Park End
What's Hot What's Not
Cream Sponsoring A Match
Port Vale
European Football
The New Megastore
Brian Labone On The Pitch
Reserve Match Fun Nights
Duncan Ferguson In Jail
Take That Beatles Medley
Yellow Peril
Official Everton Chocolate And Lemonade
This Is Everton' Videos
The European Travel Club (mmm...)
Stockport County
True Blue Denimwear Sale
John Ebbrell
Tommy Smith 'A True Blue'



Liverpool 0 Everton 2
World-Wide Fan Club
Freedom Of The City
Everton Ladies
Millwall
2-2 Draws
Joe Parkinson Modelling
Leisurewear
Duncan Ferguson Out Of Jail
Away wins
Home draws

Controversy of the month

Respect to Robbie Fowler. In his interview with Chris Evans the day after the Newcastle game he came over both humorously and courteously. Some achievement when he is surrounded by some of the biggest tossers ever.

ins and outs

In my paper this morning, (29/3/96) the following words appear. "The club most anxious to invest heavily were Everton but, after spending more than 48 hours pursuing lost causes up blind alleys, their manager Joe Royle shut his chequebook in disappointment". Isn't this becoming an all too familiar tale? Joe had just failed to pull off two transfer-deadline swoops for Gary Speed and John Collins and although it appears both players are keen to play for Everton, we seemingly lacked the wherewithal to pull off the deals.

To my admittedly cynical mind, something is definitely going on here. We clearly have a problem. One would assume it's not the money, so it must be with Joe Royle and his lack of clout within the market, or is it the fact that Everton FC no longer has the pulling power it once had. Me, I think it is the latter.

This season we've been pretty unsuccessful in the transfer market. There has been plenty of speculation, maybe even bids but we've only signed three players - and each of them has been fraught with difficulties. Joe Royle clearly understands that the present pool of players is not good enough, but any attempts to improve his squad have been thwarted.

Why is this? Dispute the fact that we have the money, and can therefore match any club in terms of wages it appears that if a player is given a choice he will choose anywhere but Goodison. The reasons for this are threefold:

First, we are no longer a 'Big Club' as perceived in the minds of those who play or administer the game. Of course, we fans know that we are still perhaps the biggest club, but sadly, our views actually count for very little.

Secondly, add to the above the fact that the Club is unfashionable. Why this is I don't know, but count the number of times we've been on Sky or Match of the Day and you'll see this is true. Our players are

seen largely as ordinary (you won't see John Ebbrell modelling Armani, or Andy Hinchcliffe on the Pyjama Party) and our football unimaginative.

And finally, and most gallingly, we exist in Liverpool's shadow. Anything we do is measured against them and considering that Liverpool at the moment are perceived as both a 'big' and a 'fashionable' club is it any wonder that players think at least twice before coming here.

Yet the real shame is that once a player arrives, invariably they fall in love with the place. The instances are numerous, but perhaps the best example is Andy King. Andy readily speaks of his love for the Club and it's fans and once talked of crawling on broken glass to come back here. More recently, Duncan Ferguson, despite arriving with the firm intention of returning to Ibrox as soon as practically possible, quickly changed his mind. Such is the allure of Goodison Park.

Peter Johnson has done much in his short tenure as Chairman. He has quickly and skilfully turned the club around. His job now must be to actually start to convince people within the game that Everton FC is starting to go places and that it's ambition is unlimited. Understandably this task is a lot more difficult than selling a few souvenirs, but it's vital that it's completed in as short a time as possible.

This summer we are going to have to be in the market for the best players. When faced with competition, we need to compete with the best. Moreover, we need to win. At present it appears we are the only ones in the hunt for John Collins, in the summer it may be different. We must not lose out.

To paraphrase Ray Kinsella in *Field of Dreams*; if you build it up, they will come.

Ian Deakin

lotteries in the potteries

Stoke City. January 1984. FA Cup 3rd Round. Everton in dumps. Wait. Listen. Open window, Howard. 7000 Evertonians dressed in tinsel screaming heads off. No need for team talk. Go and win. Gray, Heath. Victory. Win Cup that year. Turning point. Beginning of successful run. You know. Isn't it? Marvellous.

Port Vale. February 1996. FA Cup 4th Round. Everton on confident run. 7000 Evertonians expect victory. Oh no. Bogie. McCarthy. Take us apart. Vale will to win. Blues rubbish. Confidence and match lost. No longer in Cup. You know. Isn't it? Shite. Turning point? Who knows.

If Ron Manager can make sense of that, I'm not sure I can. And neither, presumably, can Our Manager when he says that the defeat at Vale could be a very important turning point in Everton's history.

There were very few heroes in blue that night. So much so that the game ought to have spelt the possible end of many players' Everton careers and the end of the honeymoon for Daniel Amokachi with fans no longer prepared to tolerate the luxury of his missed opportunities or atrocious finishing. Unless he produces the goods he's going to become another Keown or Barlow - the object of crowd irritation and amusement.

The match also reminded us how far we have to go to be a Championship winning team. Given a good league run and some of last year's determination coupled with this year's skill, we could still make Europe. The players have a duty to prove they are earning their wages (running around and sweating help as do looking gutted when they throw away valuable home points to teams like Coventry). Nothing can match the excitement this season of April and May last year and that's our fault. But unlike those who think we won the Cup too early, I believe it's a measure of the success a club of our resources must aim for and if we finish the season in style, without having to rely on late life saving goals, we can at least look forward to 1996/97 with optimism and belief. Suits me sir. Ain't success brilliant!

Tony Heslop

subscriptions

As we have said in the last two issues, we're changing the way in which we provide subscriptions. Rather than have an issue-to-issue subscription, we are moving to offer a *season-by-season* rate. By doing this we will be able to offer you a much improved service.

By offering a season-long subscription - i.e. 7 issues - instead of the present arrangement we can offer:-

- ◆ a guaranteed copy of your favourite 'zine
- ◆ a discounted cover price
- ◆ issues sent out promptly, usually before it hits the streets

Therefore, if you want to take out a subscription for next season (issues 50 to 56 inclusive) the subscription rate will be £8.75.

In order for this to work, and for you to get your copy of the first fanzine next season (issue 50), WSAG ask you to please subscribe by FRIDAY 02 AUGUST 1996.

Cheques should be made payable to "When Skies Are Grey" and sent to :-

**WSAG (SUBS), PO BOX 226,
LIVERPOOL, L69 7LE.**

NB: Existing subscribers whose subscription is due to elapse during next season will each receive a letter explaining these changes and how they can extend their subscription to the end of next season.

rollercoaster ride

Continuing the debate about our much maligned (within the towers of WSAG) chairman. I have so far read the for and against arguments, and to be honest still do not know if his motives are truly for the good of the club or himself.

My own personal view is this, I think back to Kendall's second spell in charge when we were an absolute shambles. Remember not even being in the running for top drawer players, embarrassing and worrying eh! Remember when we were in the market for players like Mark Bright, not so long ago was it. Remember Kendall's spying missions for the likes of Brett Angell, yes we really did stoop that low.

The club were getting left behind and like or loathe him Johnson gave it a kick up the arse. Speaking as a relative outsider, living down 'sarf I don't get a constant feed of information about the club, but going to the majority of games I usually notice something different about the club. Where as previously you were lucky to see the corner flags.

I would like to know if Graham Ennis's criticism of Johnson is because of his genuine fears for the club. Or because of this reputation that Everton have of being a laid back club who just take everything in their stride, and would never contemplate anything as tacky as Everton Cola.

Well I am afraid the cold hard truth is that if you're not in it, you can't win it. We have to compete commercially because sadly today the two go hand in hand. Anyway I do not feel that it is that bad, OK as has already been said, some of it is cheap, but I feel we are still learning, we are not like Man United who have been selling themselves for years, we're still babies on that score.

Ask yourself this Graham, how did you feel when you heard we had actually signed Kanchelskis. Be honest, because I'll tell you this, we would not have got him three or four years ago. I am under no illusion that part of the reason Andrei came to us was the money, but I also feel that he felt the club were ambitious which is a big plus when competing for top players.

I believe Everton is a drug. Is Johnson a pusher or a Doctor? Is he feeding people for his own greedy needs, or is he providing a much needed service?

Johnson can't survive without us, but then again we can't survive without Everton.

It may well be a rollercoaster ride with Johnson, but its a damn sight better than sitting on that mini choo choo train that goes around the perimeter. Just hold on and see what happens, you might enjoy it.

Southern Joe

BACK ISSUES

We have "a number" of the following back issues available - 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 34, 38, 43, 44, 46, 47. Single issues cost £1 (inc. post). However, a crisp £10 note will secure you copies of all the above issues.

For the keen collectors amongst you the rare back issues mentioned in WSAG48 have now all been sold. However, we still have a handfull of copies remaining of issues 31 and 45 (each costing £1).

Send cheques / POs made payable to "WSAG" to :-

WSAG, PO Box 226, LIVERPOOL L69 7LE

diamond geezer - a graham stuart appraisal

Ask any Evertonian about Graham Stuart and the first thing that invariably comes to mind are those two goals that saved us from relegation against Wimbledon in May 1994. However, I'm sure that Graham is going to give us many more moments to remember him by in the near future.

When, in August 1993, the then blues boss Howard Kendall signed the so called Chelsea pay rebel Graham Stuart it seemed like a good bit of business on Everton's part. Stuart, a graduate of the FA School of Excellence (saying that, so was Ebberell so perhaps it wasn't too much of a recommendation) was a very versatile player who could play down the left, the right or through the middle, seemed a snip at £850,000, well by today's standards anyway.

Stuart, in all honesty had the ability to become a very good player, but you couldn't help but feel that he might never live up to his potential at Chelsea. I personally feel that Kendall bought him to play down the right wing, we hadn't had a decent winger since Trevor Steven had left for Rangers and hence the right side of midfield was becoming a bit of a problem spot. With hindsight, however, what position wasn't a fucking problem spot under Kendall at that time!

However, hopes were soon dashed after a fairly shitty debut in which he missed an open goal and was eventually dumped in the reserves after a meagre four matches. It is testament to Stuart's character how he bounced back from setbacks under Kendall and then Walker to become what he is now.

I consider him to have been a very unsung hero in our cup-run last season, playing where and when he was asked and never letting anybody down. He deservedly

won man of the match in the semi-final and scored an important goal.

Although this season is where he has really come on, his confidence is growing match by match and he has also easily been Everton's most consistent performer so far. Big Joe claims that Graham is one of the first names on the team sheet these days, despite claiming he still doesn't know what his best position is.

Stuart was the only one, with the exception of Neville Southall, to come out of the debacle that was the Port Vale replay with any credit whatsoever. He was the only player who genuinely seemed gutted at the final whistle. Joe Royle claims that when Stuart signed his new contract it was the easiest talks he has ever had with a player, he just sat down and told Joe that he wanted to play for Everton, not anybody else.

I don't subscribe to the notion that he is just a squad player, that's bollocks, where would we be this season without him? I think his best position is up front and he could turn out to be the perfect foil for the god-like genius of Duncan Ferguson. I know he misses chances but so does Shearer and you do have to be there to miss them.

He has achieved what he has this season by getting on quietly with his game and without any media hype, unlike some of those wankers across the park. At long last people are sitting up and taking notice. The stage is now set and it is up to Graham to do what we all know he is capable of, performing consistently at the highest level. Without getting too carried away I am sure that he could go on and play for the national team in the not too distant future.



radio days

It has come to my notice recently that 'Merseyside's first sports channel' is in fact total shite. To be honest, in my heart I came to this conclusion months ago but I have just been kidding myself that really it's all right. Don't get me wrong I applaud the idea of us having our own radio station and yet although I have no desire to see Everton turn into Media United I think a radio station is potentially a step in the right direction. All things considered though, I have to say that Radio Everton really pisses me off simply because it is so fucking boring.

The first real problem is Alan Jackson, basically the man is a turd not only is he a cure for insomnia but he will insist on getting things wrong which, after a while, does, I find, become slightly annoying. What particularly amused me was after the Wimbledon game Jackson was wittering on about how the famous Goodison roar was once again in evidence, I mean come on you could hear the mice farting in the church it was that quiet during the match.

Another thing that bother me is why they spend half the time talking about the First Division and how exciting it is at the moment, now personally speaking I couldn't give a shit about what is going on in there and I certainly don't expect to hear about it on so called Radio Everton. Now in fairness I do like to see how Sunderland and Sheffield United have got on but I don't really expect an in-depth analysis on their performances or a big feature on Birmingham City because Samways is on

loan there. For crying out loud as soon as they find out Ronnie Goodlass is in charge at Runcorn there is certain to be a feature on them every other week.

I would also like to point out that the music they play is complete crap, fair enough they have to cater for all tastes but Fleetwood Mac is really taking the piss. I have a theory that they only play them to keep Joe sweet - see What's Hot, What's Not from the Forest game's programme - after all surely there can be no other rational reasoning behind this bizarre occurrence. Moving on though, the competitions are an insult to anyone's intelligence, for example the last one required you to name Graham Stuart's former club, I bet that got the kids scratching their heads and running for their football facts books.

All things considered Radio Everton is inferior to both Radio City and Radio Merseyside at the moment in terms of coverage, and lets face it they're nothing to write home about. I do honestly feel that Radio Everton gives very little insight into the match itself and at the present time seems fairly oblivious to what most fans require from it.

Finally why is it that just as that interview with Anders Limpar that you really want to hear is about to come on you run out of the reception area. I hope that these are just teething troubles because like Michael Branch, Radio Everton has a lot of potential.

Ian Carter

it's oh so quiet

So things are looking a little better now at Goodison. Attendances are up, Duncan's back and we're hopefully heading for Europe. So let's try and get something else right off the pitch. Let's not be out-sung every time an away side brings a decent following to Goodison. Away from home, everything is fine. The fans were superb at Stockport and Arsenal, but let's create a little more noise at home matches. I know we like to think we're a bit more educated and cultured than mindless Geordies who prefer to spend their 90 minutes dancing and pulling faces at the opposition fans apparently oblivious to what is happening on the pitch, but we could learn a lot from their singing and their chants. So come along now, 'Altogether Now'.

Alf Tupper

side 'netting

Being a bit of a sad get with far too much time on his hands, as well as access to the University of Liverpool's computer network, I was recently 'surfing' in 'cyberspace' - as we hip young sorts might say - when I decided to look for Everton related gubbins on the Internet. To my surprise I found that the Blues do feature on the 'Net, despite their frequent inability to put the ball in the back of it. Arf! I realise that it is all too easy, and indeed fashionable, to adopt the stance of a technophobic Luddite when it comes to the Internet, and indeed the following may be of little relevance to: a. those with no interest in computers, or b. anyone else. However, you really shouldn't knock the Superhighway until you've sped down it pissed in a hot-wired car, or alternatively stolen one of the traffic cones to put in your bedroom. Or something. Anyway, this is what I found:

First up is the *Official Everton FC Website* [<http://www.connect.org.uk/everton>]. Since the emphasis here is on 'official', it is, unsurprisingly, largely corporate toss. There are results and fixtures! There's all the latest merchandise news! There's very little else of any interest! In fact, apart from a few decent historical pieces - like the history of Goodison Park - the whole experience is rather like reading the matchday programme, which makes the technological revolution all seem slightly pointless.

Much better are the unofficial sites. One such is the *Everton FC Supporters Network* [<http://www.ma.ic.ac.uk-km/everton/supernet.htm>]. The main purpose of which is to keep exiled Blues in touch with all things Domingoan. So you can, if you wish, converse with a certain Gulbrand Tholme, a man who styles himself as 'Norway's biggest Everton supporter living in the USA'. I can almost imagine the convention they must have to hold to decide who gets that title. This site also has all the latest transfer gossip etc. and is therefore much more fanzine-like in it's approach.

Staying on the Scandinavian theme, there is the *Unofficial Everton Site In Finland* [<http://raita.oulo.fi/~mep/everton/index.htm>]. Highlight of which are the player profiles which reveal that despite living several hundred miles across the North Sea, our Nordic brethren have still managed to discover that John Ebbrell is "capable of missing virtually any chance".

Those are the most substantial Everton sites I found, but there are loads of individual homepages set up by Evertonians. Some are almost surreal. *Bradford Dean Woods* is one. [<http://www.hooked.net/users/bdeanw/>] From his preposterous name you might guess that Bradford is, indeed, an American, who discovered Everton after seeing Duncan's post-goal celebrations vs United last year in a bar in his native San Francisco.

Similarly bizarre is *About Puddy* [<http://www.cs.herts.ac.uk/~jason/>] 'Puddy' is some bloke from Hertfordshire who supports Everton and also lists under his interests an appreciation of the music of the lardy balladeer Meatloaf. He is probably not a Park End 'Head'. (Or then again...)

I realise this will have been of little use/relevance/interest to just about everybody who reads this, as basic access is a problem for many. But if you ever do get the chance to use the Internet I would advise you to cast aside your negative pre-conceptions. You might initially think it's all a bit sad and basically shit, but then you'll discover it's actually pretty good. The Internet is, then, essentially an electronic version of Barry Horne.

The Rabid Child

(E Mail - watson@liv.ac.uk)

selling our birthright

The more avid WSAG readers out there will know that in recent issues we've taken a few well-aimed pot-shots at the commercial operation of the Club. It seems as if these have hit a raw nerve - not with the fans but with the Club itself. So much so, in fact, that the Club's Director with responsibility for commercial affairs has attempted to address some of the many issues currently concerning the fans. In the Wimbledon match programme Clifford Finch discussed "Branding the Blues". After the reading the article I can't help thinking that he's missed the point.

Let's get one thing straight from the start. Every fan would agree that eighteen months ago Everton's commercial operation was a total disaster - a poorly located shop with

many other Evertonians) do not and will not accept. It may come as a shock to Clifford Finch but the Everton crest is not something the fans take lightly. It is unacceptable to treat the Club crest as, for example, Park foods would treat a packet of frozen peas. Any Evertonian will tell him the crest it is more than just a logo or a brand - it is an inheritance, a tradition, a birthright. To demean the crest is to demean the Club and everybody associated with the Club. If we accept his argument for a moment, then any person with cash in their pocket would willingly buy a CD of Johnson & Finch crooning Robson & Jerome's "Greatest Hits" solely because it is has the crest on the CD sleeve? I think not.

Fans realise and understand that simply

... confirmed the mediocrity of Clifford Finch's thinking is scarcely concealed by his prosaic language.

limited range of merchandise that no-one wanted to buy. Fans were crying out for things to change and change they have. With the development of a megastore (and its satellite outlets) the Club has transformed the situation. Now fans are more willing, and more likely, to go and spend their hard earned cash on the Club. This is not disputed and is something to be applauded. However, as we have continually argued the problem lays not with the commercialisation of the Club but with it's over-commercialisation.

"Branding the Blues" just confirmed the mediocrity of Clifford Finch's thinking is scarcely concealed by his prosaic language. It is clear from his comments that he has a very narrow agenda - a dash for cash, a desire to rapidly increase the turnover of the Club's commercial operation without pausing to think of the consequences or implications of his actions. To him, all is fair game in the quest to improve the financial figures he contributes to the Club's annual report.

Central to the success or failure of his commercial strategy is the Club's crest. To him it is nothing more than a brand, a label if you like. He implores us to view the Club crest in the same way as we would a M&S or Gucci label. However, that is something that I (and

putting a crest on the Club's merchandise is not an automatic guarantee of quality. Organisations like M&S and Gucci - with whom Clifford Finch is eager to compare Everton - invest heavily in market research, product development and quality control. When people buy their goods they know they are getting a guarantee of reputation, value and quality. If comparison is to be made, then the Club's merchandise should be subject to the same tests of quality of M&S or Gucci. Only then will the devaluation of the Club crest will cease. Indeed, until the dash for cash is replaced by a more measured commercial approach then complaints will persist. I'd even go so far as to say that, if fans continue to see the continued devaluation of the Club crest through crass over-commercialisation, complaints will increase.

For me, the most worrying aspect of all this is that it highlights a fundamental weakness of the Board's current strategy - that the only way in which they can expand is in the non-football business. Until they accept that success off the pitch is directly related to success on the pitch over-commercialisation will continue to inhibit the wider aspirations of the Club.

David Swaffield

money talks

Question: *What is the difference between Lionel Pickering at Derby, Jack Walker at Blackburn, Matthew Harding at Chelsea, David Moores at Liverpool and our own Peter Johnson?*

Answer: *They are all true supporters of the clubs they are bank-rolling, Johnson on the other hand is not.*

There has been a great deal written about the pros and cons of Peter Johnson's Chairmanship of Everton FC in WSAG of late. Sadly, much of it has concentrated on whether or not we should be producing Everton chocolate bars, and not addressing what I believe is the fundamental issue. Loyalty.

Peter Johnson's business acumen is beyond question, and certainly he has been instrumental in turning around the commercial activities of the club. We used to have a souvenir shop that resembled a corner shop, now we have a superstore. Only the most churlish amongst us would say that this has not been of benefit to the Club.

However, I am more concerned about matters on the field, not off it. I am becoming increasingly concerned by whispers emanating from the club that there is no more money available for new players. It must be stressed that these are not rumours, Joe Royle himself has been quoted saying as much on the radio.

To be fair to Mr Johnson a good deal of money has been spent and some quality players have been brought to Goodison; quality players we may well have not got without Mr Johnson's backing, but I doubt there is anyone associated with the club who would dare to suggest the job is anywhere near done. We are still at least two or three quality players short of a good team. It is therefore somewhat worrying that our Chairman is reluctant to spend any more cash.

The big question that I feel must be asked is: is there a limit to Peter Johnson's ambition?

He came here talking about building a team that was capable of winning the European Cup, this season's team will be lucky to qualify for Europe at all.

The ambition of the other Chairman mentioned above is clear for all to see. Each of them has spent literally millions of pounds to help bring success to their respective clubs. As much as it grieves, let's look at David Moores at Liverpool. He has spent an absolute fortune at Anfield (there is an argument that money he's spent was rightly ours, but that is another story) and never once has he balked when the manager, be it Souness or Evans, moved for a player. It's also fair to say that the majority of the money he gave to Graeme Souness was wasted, yet he has never insisted that Roy Evans first get rid of these players before he buys replacements. Peter Johnson on the other hand, it appears, is forcing Royle to get rid of some of Walker's mistakes before any new money is made available.

What is the difference then. It is that David Moores is a Liverpoolian, his car is KOP 1, and therefore it seems he will spend any amount of money to bring success to the club he loves. Peter Johnson, on the other hand, is not an Evertonian, and therefore maybe the success of the team is not of the utmost importance.

I believe we, as supporters, would be better serviced if in future WSAG would concentrate on this point rather than what Peter Johnson is doing in commercial terms.

Main Stand Blue

blueski

Let's talk turkey.

It's fair to say we have been staggeringly dull for alarmingly large parts of this season and have even managed to make Kanchelskis look ordinary at times. And that takes some doing! Still, no complaints about Our Joe: he makes you feel good because... well he just does, doesn't he? However, as one nameless shameless cynic suggested to me, Joe still strikes you as the sort who wouldn't sign Ruud Gullit because he doesn't do enough tackling. Whether money is available in significant amounts or not, Joe's 'watershed' comments after Port Vale signalled a commitment to decisive change. Anything less and Joe has created a rod for his own back.

Why all the anti Peter Johnson propaganda? There is much to criticise (especially the omnipresent sidekick Clifford Finch) but to see the club turned around by the scruff of the neck is heart-warming. Besides which, as Bill Kenwright sat on his hands while the good Doctor Marsh presided over a barely twitching corpse I don't believe those who would like to see him as Chairman have taken the blinkers off. And those who would like to see a fanatical supporter as Chairman must have never heard of the hideously terrifying Peter Swales or Ken Bates.

Before the crusade for the canonisation of the Head brothers gathers pace, I suggest your correspondents James L and Dave Wiggins take a peek at the French produced 'Liverpool Now' video. In a toe-curlingly grim section the Head boys trot out the sort of guff about the Redshirt

that would make even Mr Bunnyman blush. I'm sorry but '...Kitchen Table' and the rest have been allowed to gather dust ever since. Fuck art, this is serious.

Phil Redmond is spot on about the Liverpool Echo and it's balanced approach to reporting. Why do they bother printing 'The Kop' as well, whose by-line ought to be: "You read all this wank first in the Echo". But hey why gripe? Surely we're all looking forward to another summer of back page shite from the Echo's well informed hacks who will have us signing at least one player a week between May and August. No doubt the vast majority of these will be dodgy looking left backs enjoying fifteen minutes of fame during Euro 96. And I don't mean Rob Jones boom boom!

Fully expecting to see the catwalks of Milan awash with the new WSAG clobber. More importantly let's hope that whichever style guru approved the hideous away kit last time round has been shot before the new design is approved. Personally, I would love to see a return to classic uncomplicated all amber. Besides which any shirt with panels, shadows etc. should be ceremoniously burnt (which would be expensive and silly) or more effectively boycotted. Vote with your feet and let those in charge be in no doubt that while the club is marketable, Everton FC remains dignified and sacred.

And I mean amber, not sunshine fucking yellow.

Fraternally yours
The Blue Eyed Boy

sing our own song

Throughout this eventful season, we Evertonians have spent a lot of time being taunted by that inimitable breed of funster commonly known as the away fan.

The main butt of these small time buffoons' 'humour' is our apparent lack of variety on the vocal front. "You've only got one song" being their favourite jibe. So what's the story (boring knobheads)?

Well, it would be fair to say that at certain Goodison games after the obvious 'Everton' and 'Duncan Ferguson' chants, the sound barrier is rarely threatened, but is that really a problem?

Well, obviously there are two schools of thought on this issue: There are those Everton singers who are may be insulted by all of this whilst there are those of us who think it's all a bit of a hoot.

Long time readers and people who know me will be aware of the fact that I'm not exactly the Leader of the Street End Choir. Yes, I'm one of those people who's stuck in a 1981 timewarp, where no one wears colours and a moody silence is golden. However despite this I'm certainly not against singing per se. It's just that I seriously believe that as Evertonians we are special and we should be above the majority of the shite chants sung by most other fans.

Although, its annoying to hear a couple a hundred QPR, Forest or Coventry beauts slagging us off, it's good that they know we're different. Put simply: if it's a choice between silence and embarrassing crap like congas, 'Lets all have a disco', 'Up the Premier League we go' and all that Blue Army nonsense, then I (and I'm sure a sizeable number of Evertonians) are on the good ship quiet.

However, there's no doubt that good crowd backing can help a teams performance. With this in mind maybe we should dust down the old quality chants and songs, of which we have plenty. Maybe it's time for those loyal alehouse blues to bury their modesty and start the chanting. Not everyone knows the words to 'Onwards Evertonians', 'When You're Smiling' and 'We Hate Bill Shankly' and certainly some of the younger element of the St End Choir will be unaware of these classic alehouse ballads. Certainly there's little point to those 2.13am singsongs when only yourself and your immediate chums can hear you.

Lets take these songs away from the shady drinking dens and into Goodison Park. Most other fans can't work us out, let's show them what we already know. We are Everton and nothing but the best is good enough.

Phil Redmond

WSAG IS AVAILABLE FROM:

LIVERPOOL: Our Price, Central Station; The Virgin Megastore, Clayton Square; Irene's, Goodison Road; Arslanian's, Goodison Road. **BIRKENHEAD:** Our Price, Pyramids Centre. **LONDON:** Sportspages, Charing Cross Road. **MANCHESTER:** Sportspages, Barton Square. **NOTTINGHAM:** Selectadisc, 21 Market Street. **MAIL ORDER :** Scottish Zine Scene, 71 Deanburn Park, Linlithgow, West Lothian. And from ourselves at the usual address.

the commercial future of everton fc

I am prompted to write having just read three thought provoking articles in WSAG48, namely 'minding my own business' (by Sad Ken), 'think about it' (by Geoff Dixon) and 'sweet as sugar' (by D Collins), all of which relate to critical commercial issues currently facing EFC - and those other clubs expecting (hoping?) to be a major force over the coming years. To these I add my own thoughts.

For any naive Evertonians out there, Geoff Dixon clarified that Peter Johnson has not funded the supposed £20 Million transfer kitty from his own pocket. My understand, like his, is that Johnson has merely underwritten the bank overdraft.

I do not criticise Johnson for this. In addition to thanking him for doing it, I believe it a prudent move on his part, in that it maintains a pressure on those within the club responsible for 'commercial activities' to generate additional income - and while I share the mixed views of many WSAG contributors over the questionable items of merchandise (e.g. EFC chocolate) I sleep easy in the belief that they do no harm, children and adults seem to want them and the income they produce benefits the club.

However, such arrangements are not without concerns - the first being that the short term stability of EFC becomes dependent on Peter Johnson remaining interested and/or the bank manager being happy with such arrangements. If Johnson were to either walk away tomorrow (without a replacement) or simply to withdraw his financial guarantees the consequences are easy to predict - the sale of the club's assets... with Kanchelskis, Ferguson, Limpit et al, first out of the door.

The second concern is that there appears to be little funding currently available for either team strengthening or ground improvement. Whilst recent contributions to WSAG differ on the priority areas for team strengthening, there

appears to be a consensus that Everton are at least three or four quality players short of a side capable of qualifying for Europe, let alone mounting a serious challenge for the title. However current market prices of £4-5M per quality European based player suggest that Royle needs to be handed another £14M or so - and to realise a couple of million from the sale of those who have tried hard but failed the 'nil satis nisi optimum' test.

OK, perhaps we could unearth a few £1.5M bargains since there are probably a few more Kinkladzes roaming around Eastern Europe, but since Everton's scouting network managed to overlook Rush, McManaman and Fowler standing on Goodison's own terraces there are limited grounds for optimism on this front.

My spies were disappointed to hear of plans for a cosmetic improvement to the Bullens Road side (est. cost £1M) being shelved immediately after the Port Vale debacle. I do not share this disappointment as it raises another issue which the club should consider i.e. stadium quality.

One advantage of having lived outside Liverpool in recent years has been the opportunity of watching Everton regularly at other grounds - and watching how these stadiums have improved while Goodison has not. It hurts to admit that I currently rank Old Trafford, St James Park, Elland Road, Highbury, White Hart Lane - and yes - Anfield above Goodison in terms of spectator facilities, with other stadia fast improving. Unlike several WSAG readers, I was not at all surprised to see Goodison excluded from the Euro 96 list.

Given the increase in admission prices in recent years, obscured views are no longer acceptable - thus three sides of the ground require major overhaul, no doubt at a cost of several millions.

So if I am correct, where do Everton get the £20M or so required for team and ground improvements (since it does no

seem likely that Johnson will be interested in increasing his overdraft guarantee to around £35M).

Many Evertonians would like a John Hall or Jack Walker to come along and throw money at us. However, such a move would simply maintain our current vulnerable position of being effectively dependant on the whim of one man. Be honest, how long do you give Blackburn when - as sure as night follows day - Jack Walker eventually loses interest? To any smug Blackburn fan who may read this I ask, do you remember Elton John's money giving Watford rapid promotion, the 84 Cup Final, first division runners-up and a place in Europe and what happened next? QED.

Other methods tried at other clubs include debenture-type schemes (e.g. the Arsenal Bond) but the high fixed cost of those have, not surprisingly, proved unpopular with supporters. Sad Ken is correct in pointing out that in order for the Everton team to be successful and able to compete with the best in Europe long term, it is a prerequisite that EFCC be successful in generating funds - and for my solution I look to the often maligned Alan Sugar. D Collins comments on Sugar's success in turning Spurs from near bankruptcy into a profitable on-going concern via Tottenham Hotspur plc.

Stock Market floatation, and the creation of Everton plc appears the (only) realistic way for the club to raise a significant chunk of the funding required for the team and stadium improvements which are required now. Spurs are now benefiting from stock market listing and as I write, Chelsea (a smaller club than Everton) are discussing a similar move - and who they will buy with the £15-20 million raised. Unlike bond or debenture schemes, sensibly priced shares would ensure supporters to acquire a stake in the club, and who knows, if the share ownership were spread widely enough we the supporters could acquire a controlling interest - and with it the ability to kick the board! As Geoff Dixon says, think about it.

Mike Doyle

RETURN TO AMBER

Do you want to see a return
of the classic away kit of :

- ♦amber shirts
- ♦blue shorts
- ♦amber socks

with no fancy trimmings or
fucking zig-zags?

If yes, then why not write to:

Clifford Finch
c/o Everton Football Club
Goodison Park
Goodison Road
Liverpool
L4 4EL

Mark your envelope :

RETURN TO AMBER

reclaiming the game

Something is rotten in the state of football. The game is on it's arse. Or rather, football as we've always known it, is finished. I've had a simmering discontentment with the way the game has been going for a while now and I feel that it's time to try and put this into some sort of coherent argument. I suppose the level of my discontentment has been reflected in the recent pieces I've written about the commercialisation of Everton FC, and while I accept that Johnson and Finch are only trying to shake the club from it's antiquated ways and bring it into the 1990s, I still don't like it. What's more from some of the letters we've been sent recently, from conversations I've had, it's clear that I'm not the only one.

Call me old fashioned or sentimental but I always presumed that the game belonged to the likes of me. Us urban proles started it, (forget those public school nonces, they ended up picking the ball up anyway!). We defined, refined and perfected it and now it is being stolen from right under our noses.

By who, you may ask. By anyone who ten years ago wouldn't have touched the game with a barge pole, that's who.

Ten years ago, admitting to supporting a team was tantamount to saying that you had an incurable and highly contagious disease. Supporters of the game were beneath contempt. As The Sunday Times said at the time "a slum sport watched by slum people in slum stadiums". The simple message was if you had anything about you, if you wanted to get on in life, steer well clear of football.

You must remember the period well. Being herded through city centres to the ground by thousands of police; sometimes in riot gear, always with dogs. Being caged in at the ground and only being let out after a military style operation had cleared the streets. A time of violence, of brutality and inhumanity. We were all the same, we couldn't be trusted. Accordingly, we were due to be identified and tagged (branded) and our movements carefully monitored.

These draconian measures never actually reached the statute books. Not for the want of trying mind, but after the horrific disaster at Hillsborough, it simply wasn't possible to get away with saying that all football fans were, by their very nature, criminal. (Although if you

read the book "No Last Rights : The denial of justice and the promotion of myth in the aftermath of the Hillsborough disaster" recently published by Liverpool City Council, then you will find that such a line of thinking was used as the mainstay of the Police's defence throughout the Inquiry).

Since then we've seen a gradual gentrification of the game. New money has been pumped in and under the guise of safety and "for our own good" all seater stadia appeared. An anomaly can be made here with the Tory government's policies in the dockland areas. In the early 1980s these areas were largely derelict, the decline in shipping had meant that the size of ports had shrunk and in all the major cities that once proudly boasted a thriving seaford, there were large areas of derelict land and property. The government sold off the land and made a killing. If you look today at areas such as The Isle of Dogs in London, Albert Dock in Liverpool and Cardiff Bay it is almost impossible to remember just how desperate these areas were. Unfortunately though, the people who have benefited most from the re-development have not been the people who traditionally lived in the areas. These people saw their own houses and area have millions of pounds pumped in and when the job was done they found that they couldn't afford to live there! Something similar has happened in football. Sometime in the mid 80s the realisation came about that the game was financially being bled dry. A few of the well-heeled clubs (the so-called Big Five) got together and thrashed out a survival plan. The game would have to be re-packaged. Enviously they looked across the Atlantic and saw the way American Football was packaged. They saw all seater stadia, middle class supporters - noisy but respectful and each with a mouthful of popcorn. Comparing that to how they perceived their own game were they saw decrepit stadia with crumbling terraces, working class supporters - noisy and violent and each with a bellyful of ale. They looked and they said, we'll have some of that! In this respect, it could be argued that for these Chairmen, the disaster came at an opportune time, for they were conveniently used to speed up the process of change. Compare the terraces to the

tenements and maybe we can just begin to see a political agenda at work here.

It is therefore not surprising to find out that the men at the forefront of this proposed revolution were not the old style football chairmen but the new post Thatcherite men like Irving Scholar at Spurs and David Dein at Arsenal. However to get the plan to work, a massive job of work had to be done in marketing football (or soccer as they liked to call it) to the very people who had previously shunned the game. To achieve this, somewhere along the way, football had to get trendy. The defining moment here was, probably, Gascogines tears. You remember when in Italia 90 that big Geordie softy realised that through his own stupidity he couldn't play in the World Cup Final and burst into tears. The hearts of armchair supporters up and down the land melted and the hooligans game revealed it's sweet and tender centre.

I suppose from then on in, it was plain sailing. As the nation wiped away Gazza's tears, the media floodgates opened. In the years that followed Italia 90 we had football books such as Nick Hornby's 'Fever Pitch', Pete Davies 'All Played Out', even 'In Soccer Wonderland', football's first-ever coffee table book. We saw television programmes about football, plays about football and somewhat incredibly an opera about football. Out from under every stone came a luvvie with a new-found love for football (or as they never

ever tired of saying "what Pele called 'the beautiful game'"). In May 1994 we even saw BBC2 devote a whole evenings schedule to football when we were treated to such inanities as (the now ubiquitous) Nick Hornby wrestling with the question 'is football an art or a science' (like who gives a fuck!) and Billie Whitelaw comparing a goalkeepers save to moves in a ballet.

The 'embourgeoisification of football' was complete, and at the vanguard was 'the soccerati'. The extent of the changes was such that Jon Savage in the Guardian wrote "Nineteen ninety four has been the year in which the media fascination with football has reached it's height: for the past two years, football writing has been escaping from the sports pages and taking refuge in all kinds of unlikely places, like the London Review of Books.... The same thing has happened to football as happened to pop from the early 80s (the birth of pop video, the emergence of glossy magazines like Smash Hits, The Face and I-D and increased tabloid coverage of pop). Football has become part of the cultural zeitgeist (although for some it always was); it has leapt out of working class pubs and landed on the dinner party table. Footballers now do what pop stars do: Ryan Giggs dates Word presenter Dani Behr, footballers take E, stalk the catwalk, and pose in fashion magazines". (Dec 16, 1994)

Surreptitiously, while all this was occurring, the new rulers of football had stealthily been



hiking up the prices. Up to £390M had been spent on improving grounds and while some of the money was provided by the Football Trust, the majority came from the fans. Better facilities meant higher prices. Higher prices also means that those people on low incomes won't be able to afford to come along anymore which is just as well as no one wanted them there to muck up the new stadiums. All of a sudden, the supporters who for many years had been the lifeblood of the club saw themselves as replaceable.

Finally, the clubs sold their souls to the devil in the guise of Sky TV. Maybe at the back of their minds was the question could the die-hards 'fight forever more because of Saturday' when from now on games would be on a Sunday and Monday?

It's now two years on and the effects of these changes are becoming clear for all to see. Granted football has never had a higher profile, and attendances are up, but is it the better for it? I don't think so.

The grounds are full, but sterile. The atmosphere has been lost. Still, it's hard to clap when you're holding a carrier bag. The new breed of supporter is there in body but not in heart and soul. It is my theory that one of the reasons that there has been such an upsurge in supporters wearing scarves and hats: wearing colours on the outside compensates for not showing the colours within. I remember clearly, a good few years back now, a friend of mine being taken to task by a Ipswich Town supporter on why he wasn't proudly displaying colours. He replied "I know I am Evertonian".

Personally I believe the heart has been ripped out of the game. The rivalry has gone. Football has always been about us and them, and in that way it was always more than a sport. The teams represented a specific area and the fans shared a pride in what they supported. It would appear that this sort of commitment is no longer what our football clubs want. They want us to support the club, by all means, but to not take it too seriously.

Football, it seems, should be treated as a bit of a laugh. As a lifestyle accessory. Take note of the following quote. This is how Roger Morton of the NME described a Take That concert: "One thing has to be understood about teen girl fans. When they're standing there screaming their heads off for a solid hour, or dance like rabid muppets, they are taking the piss. Or at least willingly suspending

their better judgement in a death or glory quest for big bonding fun. Kind of like football."

It's clear from what he is saying that he has absolutely no idea of what football is all about, or why people go to the match at all.

So, why do you go the match? Firstly, let me state I am an Evertonian first, a football fan second. I don't give a shit about any other club but Everton. I don't have second clubs, a pet Scottish club, nothing. To be honest, I don't see anything special in that. Everyone I know feels the same. That's what supporting is. That's what was passed down to me from my father and what I will hopefully pass on.



The new breed doesn't appear to be same. Support for them comes from success, not tradition. They pick up on a team almost as one would a pop group. (This may be the reason why more and more players are Behaving like popstars.) They support passionately for a while and if success doesn't continue, they will move on. The concept of a football club is for life is completely alien to them. More and more I feel like an old man trying to hang on to what I hold dear, while around me everyone's getting into Duran Duran.

Of course it can be argued that there has always been this kind of 'fly-by-night' supporter. We've all seen many a bandwagon get rolling over the years. The problem now is that I see these kind of supporter has a hegemony over the more traditional type of fan. That the whole game is now geared to short-term success and not long term development. Therefore all the clubs (those that can afford it) are now prepared to spend ridiculous sums of money to buy up 'promising' players in an attempt to buy success and thus take the lions share of the nation's floating support. It is for reasons such as these that Karen Brady at Birmingham can justify the dismantling of the club's youth teams. Such an approach, I feel, is a recipe for disaster...

...and I could go on, but I'm aware that, already this has become a very long piece and there will be those out there wondering why if I accept that these things are happening to clubs in general and not Everton specifically, why have I got such a downer on Peter Johnson and Clifford Finch?

The answer (to me at least) is simple. I believe that Everton FC is special and, in many ways, unique. I believe that 'specialness' ought to be reflected in the way the club is marketed. Under Clifford Finch, I maintain, it is not.

To me, what Mr Finch is doing is merely copying ideas from other clubs and dressing them up in blue and white ribbons. This is unacceptable.

If such moves are allowed to continue I believe the 'uniqueness' many of us feel Everton have will disappear, and the club will become almost generic, with the only differences being in the colours of the kit.

I almost suspect this is what the 'new rulers' of football want. For, they believe, if we are all the same, there can be none of those nasty differences which provoke intense rivalry. But what they don't understand is, without rivalry football, certainly as a spectator sport, is nothing.

What evidence have I to support that statement. Well, look at Manchester United.

This season, in particular, there have been complaints from long-standing fans that Old Trafford is filled with 'day-trippers' while the more genuine (read impassioned) fans are locked out. Accordingly, the atmosphere has suffered.

Is the same process beginning to happen at Goodison. OK, we've got 26,000 season ticket holders and average attendances of over thirty thousand, but can these possibly be the same thirty thousand who were turning up last year? The noise levels would indicate that they are not. Last season the ground was buzzing, this season, it's more like a morgue. It starts you thinking doesn't it.

Certainly, when travelling away with Everton, I almost feel like a stranger in my own land, particularly at London games. And I'm not the only one. I know of lads who've stopped going away because they don't get the same buzz out of it anymore. It's hard to say exactly what has changed, but clearly something has. Maybe this is something we should begin to discuss.

Getting right back to the start of this... Yes, I accept that I'm somewhat of a traditionalist but that doesn't mean I'm not forward thinking. I accept that the game, as well as Everton FC, has to adapt to the times but I still maintain that we can do that without selling our soul. And at the same time, I would like to see us maintain that unique quality that perhaps first brought us, as supporters, to the club.

However, important though this debate is, I feel we have gone as far as we can without beginning to repeat ourselves. Therefore I would suggest that, for one season only, comment on the commercial activities of the club is off-limits. (unless of course they do something completely crass.) Maybe, after a year's grace we'll all be in better position to comment.

One final thought though. Before Clifford Finch considers any new project or piece of merchandise he ought to ask himself one simple question: is it Everton? If he is not qualified to answer, then he should get someone in there who can.

Graham Ennis

still eatin' away!

Name your five worst days ever.

Suffered a close bereavement or two? They'll be in the list I'll bet. But in the Evertonian's list, that day at Wembley in May 1986 will figure prominently also. It's my third worst day in the 29 and a bit years I've known. Truly awful. Truly whisky-guzzingly horrific.

Yet there was one particular chap who bounced out of Wembley that day, with a red scarf on and with a smile as far wide as Gary Stevens' pass was lame. What a day he had. He'd done well for himself in life, so he could afford the best seats. Maybe he didn't even have to pay, that's how well he'd done for himself. Probably flew down on the Friday with his red mates.

The banter on the charter plane was to the effect that 'we may be champions now but Everton are as good as us and we know we're in for a tough game'. Yes, they were smug after clinching the league at Chelsea but the completion of the double was a taller order and they knew it. They were nervous.

Super meal the night before - at Langans or somewhere such. 'If Kenny gets his tactics right we should clinch it. We need to swamp Lineker. If he's starved of service, then the Cup's as good as ours. Molby can slice through them with a knife'. Tumble into the Ritz four poster and it's a fitful nervous night alright. Still it's the same for the Everton well-to-do down the corridor. Except that he's terrified of complete disaster.

Earlier he'd said to his companion 'The nice cushion they've got is that even if we win they

can still ram the title down our throats. We can still achieve complete failure - they can't'.

Ah! The atmosphere on the Saturday morning. Tension unbearable. Red well-to-do laughs along at the Red 'Campione' chant. Blue-boy is so wound up he can barely talk.

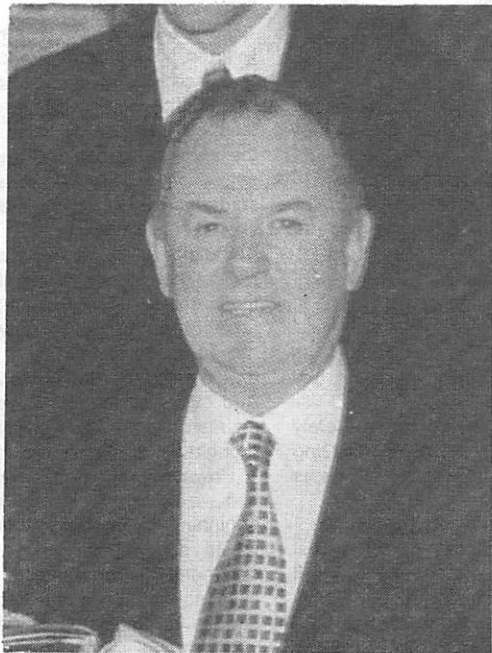
An hour later though and it's a different story. Everton have started more than convincingly, playing like a team angry that they'd just had the league stolen from them - by their fiercest rivals. Reid is on fire.

The Red can't see a way through. If any side is going to score it'll be Everton, he thinks. The Red is a clairvoyant it seems. Half time and the Evertonians are cautious but delirious. The Red is muted. He doesn't like this. All the fine wine and food in the world can't take away the bare facts. Liverpool have been outclassed in every department and it only looks like getting worse. 'I hope we can keep it down to one-nil' he chips in at the VIP party.

The second half early stages confirm his fears. Infighting between the players and Everton are so on top. Steven is running amok. The general feeling among the muted Reds is that Everton will score a second any time now.

'At least we won the league', the Red well-to-do predictably says. But wait. What's this?

An equaliser. Now two-one. 'Oh Rushie, the icing on the cake. They're dead and buried now'.



The Blue end is like a morgue. Predictions of suicide all round. 'No matter what happens in the rest of my entire life, this will end up in the top-ten of my all-time worst days'.

Red well-to-do punches the air like a Red well-to-do does. What satisfaction to see Hansen with the gleaming cup. 'We've reclaimed our authority' says the Red well-to-do. 'They thought they'd turned things around last year. But no, the Red machine is still as smooth as ever.'

This will go down as one of the best days in my life, the Red well-to-do thinks to himself as he quaffs the champagne all night. 'Terrific'.

Well, that Red well-to-do is now our Chairman. Think on that. I ask you, what was the bloody point of 1892 and all that, if 100 years later we allow a bloody Red under the bed!

Before you can mention mega-store and the new dawn, I'll remind you to think of tradition. It seems to me that even daring to mention these days that Johnson was (is) a red is heresy. 'Its a closed issue', I'm told. Well, I never closed it. Oh! of course, I forgot, I've got my head in the sand haven't I?

Well there are plenty of us reactionaries still around and our only crime - and we've been charged by our fellow Evertonians - is to protest that after a hundred years of defined identity, we meekly surrendered it to a Red for cash! Kenwright wasn't exactly skint you know. And he cried in 1986.

Don't forget - David Moores has 15 per cent of our shares. Add these to Johnson's and the simple answer is that the over-riding control of Everton Football Club - the team that correctly left Anfield because of a cash row - is now in the hands of two Reds.

You happy with that? If so what a difference a century makes. Put your hand on your heart and say that it still doesn't gnaw away at you in the small hours that OUR CHAIRMAN IS A RED!

Wonder if he still gets his '86 video out?

Suppose I'm an ungrateful wretch?

Anyway, I'm a naughty boy and I've said it. It's back out in the open. So how many agree with me then?

Greg Murphy

action man

Craig Short is my hero and these are the reasons why :

He keeps on playing
Even with blood pouring down over his eye.

He doesn't stir the crowd up, like a Cantona or Bamby,
But he's a man we can depend on
Our signing from Derby.

Although he's not as tall as big Dunc, or p'raps as thorough,
He headed a great ball
And scored at home to 'Boro.

He has the chiselled bone structure of a super-model,
But if only his passing
Was as good as Glenn Hoddie's.

He's not a fiery Limpar or a Fergie lout,
But Carig's our own action man
Of that there is no doubt.

And when the time comes and a new captain is sought,
My vote will go of course
To our action man Craig Short.

Mrs Steam Engine

beyond belief

(an interview with jason mcateer)

Interviewer: Morning Jason, I'd just like to start by asking you how you feel you've settled in at Liverpool since your transfer?

Jason Mac: Alright la, yeah well I think it's been quite good an'all cause we're all a young team la, and there's some younger players an' we have a laugh and that but there's some more older ones who aren't so young an' they're a bit older so, er, yeah.

I: Just looking ahead to next season, do you think you've got a realistic shot at the title or the FA Cup at all?

JM: Well we've got some younger players and I think I've settled in quite well an' we have a laugh, yeah.

I: Right. So you think Liverpool have a chance to win the league next year then?

JM: Who?

I: Liverpool, your team.

JM: I'm with you now. Win the what?

I: The league, do you think you can do it or do you see it going to Manchester United or Newcastle, as it looks likely to this year?

JM: No la, I think we'll win it 'cause we're young and but also as well we've got some players who aren't young and who are a bit older so its a good, er, er, com... cam... cl... cor...

I: Camaraderie? Competition? Cohesion?

JM: No, er, er club. That's it.

I: You think then, that the blend of youth and experience will be instrumental during the upcoming season Jason?... Jason!

JM: Oh, yeah, sorry, I forgot who Jason was for a minute. Yeah that's it, what you saids dead spot on right exactly sorted.

I: And you're obviously hoping for a little more success with the Republic of Ireland this year?

JM: Am I?

I: Yes, because winning is better than losing isn't it? Big Jack Chariton has had quite a lot of influence on your career hasn't he, what do you think the future holds for him?

JM: Who? Oh, that fella off the Shreaded Wheat adverts on the telly, yeah he's been to a couple of our games now you come to mention it, but I never really noticed it before la. Yeah, I'll ask him what his job is next time I see him.

I: God help me. Jason, thanks for your time.

JM: No problem, la. Do you know the way back to ours from here?

viva hate

I hate Liverpool. Always have and always will. To me, this is the attitude of a proper Evertonian - none of this "I support Merseyside" crap. The hate surfaced in my very early years. It was one of my first matches at Goodison, the 1969 derby with us going for the title and we lost 3-0. I was five and Sandy Brown's spectacular own goal was one of the only two memories I have of the game. The other was of Alan Ball racing across the pitch to twat that bastard St John. It was this act more than any other which made Bally my childhood hero. From that moment on I hated Liverpool and the 1971 semi final defeat just added to my detestation of all things red.

I went to a school on the outskirts of Merseyside in the 1970s and Evertonians were thin on the ground but, not surprisingly, at this time there were loads of reds. None of them went to the match, of course, they all had the arms on their easy chairs re-upholstered on an annual basis and rare trips into Liverpool for them were confined to buying the latest Deaf School album from Probe. Most of the blues went to the match regularly and Monday mornings were always termed as 'character building days' as we faced the usual vitriolic attack from people who struggled to name their team's players.

In the 1970s, it's difficult to decide what I hated about them most - rent-a-quote Shanky, illiterate Paisley, the cheap crass shirts were the red ran into the white collar to produce a pink product, the cheap grey jumpers they used as tracksuits for substitutes (i.e. David Fairclough) or the players. In hindsight I just despised them all. Of course, the late 70s spawned the never to be laid to rest saying "As Shanks said" which is still used to the point of tedium today.

Into the 1980s and the ugliness of the scum came to the fore, led by the beauty queen himself Ian Rush. Rumour has it that his decision to leave in 1987 was down to the pride he took in his looks. One morning he was having his daily discussion with his bathroom mirror, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the ugliest of them all?", when he got the response "Alas, devil's child, there is one more ugly than you and his name is Hardley." True to the fairy tale, Rush's nose

hit the roof and he sent his huntsman, Laughing Kenny, out to ruin this creature but to no avail. So Rush left to frighten the Italians and bring new meaning to the saying "Lock up your daughters"!

In the 1990s we have been treated to the phenomenon of that literal wit, Tommy Smith, in the Echo. Wouldn't it be interesting to be a fly on the wall when the powers that be at the Echo sit down to discuss his contribution and why, they see fit to keep this useless twat in a job. His 'fair tackle' and 'over the top' comments are dross and it's an insult to the young to call his behaviour childish when he criticised all things Souness following his ban from the detested Boot Room. His phone-in on Radio Merseyside is a real treat though as he makes a complete arsehole of himself week in, week out. And the moaning amongst them about not getting any penalties recently was priceless. If, as they say, things even out in time, they can look forward to about ten years of not being given a penalty at home.

Two final things. First this image they have created about their sporting behaviour. Anyone who has had the misfortune to sit near one during a derby knows that handling defeat is beyond them and their infamous humour disappears rapidly. O.K. so they've clapped off Chesterfield, Bristol Rovers etc. during humiliations in the Souness years but isn't his symptomatic of their patronising attitude i.e. "you done well coming to our place and not be steamrollered by the mighty reds".

Second - celebrity reds. Don't you just despise them? From our point of view it is good we don't have the embarrassment of being followed by the likes of Boardman, Tarbuck and Cilla Chuck, but its always annoyed me that when you hear a Liverpool celebrity, nine out of ten of them claim allegiance to the shite. Is this a coincidence or do the famous like to be seen to be following what they view to be success?

Even now in my supposedly mature years, I have a thing about the colour red. That said, if I was a catholic I'd have been in the confession box years ago to admit my favourite fruit pastille is the red one.

Lee Gorre

Laugh along with those lovable lads.

YES, IT'S ANOTHER WEMBLEY F.A. CUP-FINAL AND THERE'S NO SHOW WITHOUT PUNCH TIME TO WHEEL OUT THE USUAL CREW.

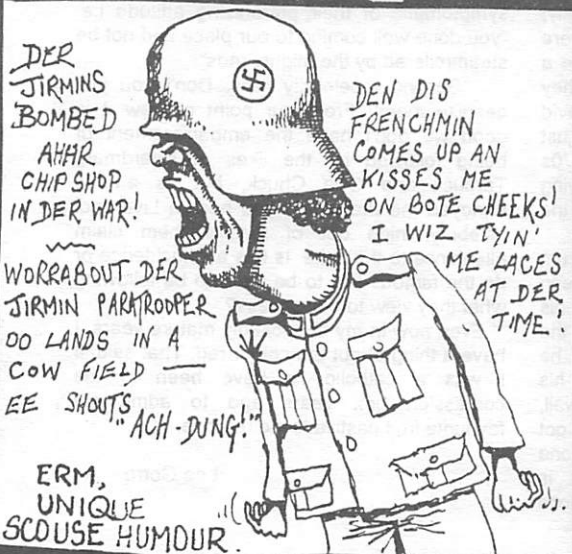


OOH'EY, CHUCKS,
WEMBLEY AGAIN!
I WONDER IF
STEVE HEIGHWAY
IS STILL
PLAYING?!



OF COURSE ME AND THE REDS GO BACK
A LONG WAY. HO HO YES! I WAS ON
THE KOP WHEN I WAS A FOETUS!
BOOM BOOM! I REMEMBER THE
GREAT MAN, SHANKS, SAYING TO ME:
"EEEEEEEEH, JIMMY, E = M.C. 2!"
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA I DON'T KNOW
WHAT HE WAS GETTING AT. IT WAS
JUST THE WAY HE SAID IT.
WHAT A CHARACTER!

ISN'T IT GREAT
FOR
MERSEYSIDE!!!



DER
JIRMIN'S
BOMBED
AHR
CHIP SHOP
IN DER WAR!

WORRABOUT DER
JIRMIN PARKROOPER
OO LANDS IN A
COW FIELD —
EE SHOUTS

"ACH-DUNG!"

ERM,
UNIQUE
SCOUSE HUMOUR.

DEN DIS
FRENCHMIN
COMES UP AN
KISSES ME
ON BOTE CHEEKS!
I WIZ TYIN'
ME LACES
AT DER
TIME!



CELEBRATIONS
MAY BE PREMIA
MONSIEUR!

WOULDN'T IT BE AWFUL IF ...

Laugh along with those lovable lads.

AT AN ORDINARY PUBLIC HOUSE, NEAR ANFIELD.

LIVERPOOL F.C.

LIVERPOOL F.C.

BACK TO OUR HOME! SECOND!



THE BARNES

ARMS

WEM-BER-LEY
WEM-BER-LEY!



WEMBLEY FEVER BEGINS TO "GRIP."

GOAL-SCORING. CELEBRATORY ANTICS PRACTICE.



IT'S A GROOVY SCENE, MAN.

IF WE DONT WIN THAT CUP ILL SQUEAM AND ILL SQUEAM TILL I MAKE MYTHELF THICK!



letters

Dear WSAG,

A few points from WSAG47, that compel me to write from afar.

The debate over subscriptions to the Dockers strike fund: Well done WSAG. The moans from 'Professional' and Ex Bircham Blue regarding bringing politics into sport, don't they realise that politics is intertwined into every part of our lives and that football is no exception?

The shift of emphasis of football away from a working class sport illustrates this - the idea of seating the terraces is just as much to do with reducing the number of working class people getting together as with safety and increasing profits. I see that Professional Blue does not have the courage of his convictions in not supplying his name and address and I am glad that the Editor clearly pointed out that he's on his own with this one. I wonder what profession he is engaged in - Professional Scab?

The Blue Lines piece headed 'tickets please. Who does PS think he is calling people doleites. What a cheeky twat he is. The notion that only doleites could get a ticket for the Stockport replay because of the time they went on sale is absurd. Does PS realise that the unemployment benefit rates are so low that it is doubtful a doleite could afford a ticket? This prick should realise the term 'doleite' is offensive in the extreme. I've just been made redundant and would gladly swap places with him. It was fitting that I read his piece while sitting on the toilet. The term unemployed or out of work will do, thank you.

In the aftermath of the death of Bob Paisley not once in the obituaries did I see recalled the time when he made disparaging remarks about the crowd questioning his team selections one time and adding that "half of them are on the dole anyway" (not a direct quote). Presumably Professional Blue and PS agree with him?

So as not to incur the wrath of Joe Moss and his ilk, I am an exiled Merseysider who came south to seek work fourteen years ago, recently made redundant, now a 'doleite' who can't afford to go and watch the game now and can't

afford to visit my aged parents and family. I hope the curse of unemployment touches PS and Professional Blue very soon and see how they like it. Or alternatively they could fuck off across the park as they seem to echo the sentiments of the late, great Bob Paisley.

I have the courage of my convictions so please print my name and address. No problem.

John Best

Out of work & Supporter of the Dockers
Bristol.

Dear WSAG,

Am I the only one who thinks the atmosphere at home games recently has been virtually non-existent?

For a time I have been pissed off with the silence that has become Goodison Park.

Short chants of 'Everton, Everton, Everton' or chants of 'You're shit and you're going down' simply aren't good enough.

So please will the Gwladys St and the Park Enders open their mouths once more with decent songs and keep them going for longer than ten seconds. And how about a song from the Bullens or the Main Stand?

Tnop Kram

Dear WSAG,

I'm writing this letter after the Wimbledon game, it's not about the shite performance but about the lack of atmosphere at Goodison. Don't get me wrong the attendances this season have been great and long may it continue, but the atmosphere from last season has gone. Many people think that we should only sing during the big matches: Man U, Newcastle etc.

There's nothing worse than sitting in a quiet Goodison and I think this reflects on the performances the team put out. It was so bad against Wimbledon that we could even hear their ten supporters singing. I remember when Goodison was a ground other teams and

supporters feared. Our home performances since October have been much improved on seasons past but we can't let them slip away again.

So come on sing out loud because you are sitting in the most treasured piece of land ever to be put on this Earth and that land is Goodison Park.

A Fanatical Blue

Dear WSAG,

Do you think playing with Mo Johnston and Billy Kenny has influenced ex Everton winger Preki to sign for his latest American soccer side in the new MLS? The team: Kansas City Wiz

Bob The Poles Left Side

Dear WSAG,

I'm a bit fucking fed up with the pathetic cheap shots various tabloids and broadsheets keep firing at Duncan Ferguson and Everton Football Club. As an Evertonian I'm proud to wear my blue shirt on matchdays and no matter what anyone ever says or does to me, I will never change and I will always defend the name of our great club to the last. That is something these so called journalists will and can never understand. It runs much deeper than going to a match, home or away, wearing a replica top etc... It is something quite unbelievably massive in our lives. No outsider can ever understand it. It is passed down from above and placed in us. It is an honour and privilege. We are the chosen people.

It is not about who goes to the most matches or who has the latest kit, it is about cutting your self and bleeding blue blood, it's about fighting against all odds with our backs to the wall, defiance in the face of adversity and coming together under the grey skies above.

We have a history that we should all be proud of and should never forget. We have idols past and present who, to us, are Gods, but to the outsiders are merely footballers. It's a long time since Duncan was just a footballer.

Many will say we are just a football club, but take them to the Sistine Chapel and they will

say 'It's only a church'. At home games we should be able to sing and not be looked at like we are complete pricks. For fucks sake we are all Evertonians and Everton need our support; the Goodison Sound.

Chris Forshaw

Dear WSAG,

I feel I must write to you and complain about Evertonians gladly singing 'Kenny Dalglish is a homosexual' at Blackburn. Can I point out that just because he may be a homosexual does not make him a bad person, however the fact that he played for Liverpool FC clearly does. Thank you.

Oscar Wilde
Bullens Road Bard

Dear WSAG,

Hallelujah. It's Wednesday 27 march and I'm oh so happy. Having been surfing the teletext I noticed that Matt Jackson has buggered off to Charlton on a month's loan. Fingers crossed that he plays out of his skin so that the move becomes permanent!

Maybe then, and if Charlton are promoted, Anders will be able to rip the back out of him. Who said revenge was sweet?

Martin Allen
Bellefield Blue

Dear WSAG,

Mark Wright's recent revelations that Gerry 'The Ferry' MarsBar helped him back to work, rest and play has lifted the lid on Liverpool's music-football link ups.

Of course we all know that the Take That boys have stood firmly behind young Redknapp for some time now, whilst the Doobie Brothers have long been suspected of influencing John Barnes' laid back style. Indeed, sixties icon Twiggy actually taught Steve McManaman how to run.

However, my journalistic sources tell me to expect the following poptastic Echo exclusives:

Sort it aahht, geezer! Chas and Dave cheeky, chirpy cockney knees up for Razor!

"Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now" melancholy Manc Morrissey my inspiration says sulky Stan!

And finally, Shane McGowan showed me hideous ugliness is no bar to success by the 'Boy David' Robbie Fowler.

Predictably Big Joe has not been slow to recognise this trend and as I write Benny from Abba is telling Anders how to 'Take A Chance'.

Yours exclusively
Scoop Connor

Dear WSAG,

Much as though it pains me to say this, I fear the relocation of Greg Yates season ticket (WSAG48) is just the start of more commercialisation. Most real fans know that without them the club is nothing. However, the club pushes on with more 'executive lounges' packages for tossers with no loyalty to the club. It's only a matter of time before all we real fans have left is an obstructed view seat in the top balcony. Maybe as James L commented, I'm getting a little nostalgic for the return of the good old, bad old days.

Mike Shipway
Wavertree

Dear WSAG,

You might be interested to hear about the strange experience witnessed by myself and my girlfriend, Dawn, concerning Walker's top striker. I refer, of course, to the willing but ultimately donkey-esque Brett Angell.

Readers will be pleased to know that the goal-master himself has not lost any of his poise, agility or balance.

The incident I refer to happened following the Coventry debacle at the Spar Shop by the Grapes pub in Formby. Following our inept performance once again against the mighty (?) Sky Blues we stopped at the Spar to buy some comfort food to cheer ourselves up. Looking around the shop and making our choices I spied a large box of milk chocolate dwarves from the

film that contained seven of the Ruel Fox sized diddymen that where reducing the aisle by the checkout from six foot to about five. Anyway, we decided not to buy them and proceeded to shop around. By this time a tall, dark figure had approached the checkout with some items and upon seeing who it was we stopped to stare as you always do whenever you see anyone remotely connected with our religious adulation of all things Blue.

He paid for his stuff and as he approached the box of Ruel Foxes he looked over at us and, it seemed, was looking at our shirts, scarves and hats with a tear in his eye. I am sure he will blame what happened next on his watery vision but he failed to see the huge box of chocolate dwarves and promptly lost his balance in a big way, just falling short of coming a right cropper at the deli counter and ejecting himself through the double doors at a Kanchelskis like speed.

Yes you guessed it, the man himself was our Brett showing the kind of run that could have fooled defences all over the world, if Limpar's dribbling is seen as unpredictable, then Angell's fancy footwork belongs only in fantasy footy or Roy of the Rovers.

You had to be there to appreciate the way he moved but it is comparable to the way that the amazing crap at crosses man himself, David (poncey model) James tried to retrieve the ball he dropped to allow Steve Stone to score the winner.

One question remains unanswered though, our Brett had a nasty cut above his left eye. I wonder does he make a habit of looking like a twat in crowded shops? Is it part of his new training routine, and if so has anyone else seen his ballerina routine recently?

Steven Gracie
Southport, Merseyside

Dear WSAG,

Congratulations on yet another brilliant issue. The fanzine gets better and better. You've taken the lead and your contributors/readers appear to be responding with thoughtful, intelligent and witty letters and stories.

The one thing that strikes home to me is the 'like-mindedness' of many of 'the followers'. There is a common vein of passion and expectation within the publication.

Evidence of this could clearly be seen in the recent letter from Darryll King of Preston, Lancashire. Although he dubbed Alf Tupper a miserable and pessimistic Evertonian, I found their thoughts on the individual players very similar (in fact at one point I thought it was a wind up - NEVER!)

For example they are both fans of Neville, Barrett, Watson, Short, Limpar, Kanchelskis and to a lesser extent Stuart, Parkinson and Home. The only real difference being that Alf Tupper sees a few of them as squad players rather than Championship winners.

So Darryll and Alf if you really are mates - admit it, you are both 'singing from the same hymn sheet'.

Gerry Granger
St Bruno in the Crimpelene

Dear WSAG,

Question: What do Walton Prison FC and Everton FC have in common?

Answer: Neither have an away strip.

Travers T O'Justice
The Winslow

Ed. Regular readers will know of Travers acerbic and abstract humour, but on this occasion I too haven't got a clue what he's on about. Answers on a postcard please.

Dear WSAG

You've got to hand it to Joe Royle haven't you? After all, he's worked some miracles - saved us from relegation last season, managed the team to an FA Cup win and, this season, he's got us on course for a top-six finish and a place in Europe. But to me that all pails into insignificance when you compare his greatest achievement to date - after all, he's turned the team into Oldham! Let's face the facts - this season we've played great attacking football at

times. However, we've conceded a number of last minute goals that have caused wins to be turned into draws or defeats. Now, if anything, the team is more likely to win by 3-2 or lose by the same score. To me that's the Oldham syndrome if ever such a thing exists. This needs to be tackled before the start of next season or more people out there will start making the same comparison.

Billy Mather
St Helens

Dear WSAG,

If there is one thing that amazes me about Evertonians, it is the ridiculous hero-worship of Daniel Amokachi.

Let's face it, Dan The man has got to be the biggest waste of money since Mo Johnston. His control is generally shocking and with a finishing touch that Stuart Barlow or Brett Angell would be ashamed of, it's clear to see that Amo is prime whipping-boy material. Incredibly he's still a big hero with all that bowing nonsense. Why?

My theory is that blues are demonstrating some form of inverted racism, a sort of attitude that says we can't give him stick: he's black, that'll be racist.

Bollocks! Amokachi should be viewed in exactly the same way as any other player, regardless of his colour. Amokachi is undoubtedly one of the worst players I've seen in a blue shirt and should be sold immediately.

Tony White
Warrington

Ed. So the honeymoon's over for you Tony?

Dear WSAG,

I am concerned that there is only four pages of letters in the latest issue of my favourite fanzine, can you please explain this.

Yours concerned
Concerned of Edge Hill

Ed. Well, Concerned, it's late, we couldn't be arsed making any others up.

tales of the unexpected

No.2 White Hart Lane

Everton supporters getting locked out - Championship decider 1985..... Closing the gates at 3 a week after Hillsborough 1989..... Lineker's last match 1992..... Too few tickets 1995.

Tottenham's version of 'Prince Charming' (Adam & the Ants) 1991 - basically a gang of mohicans repeating the blood-curdling screams whilst gesturing that all visiting fans were going to get their throats cut at full time.

Everton's version of 'The Birdie Song' 1981. Full time standing at the exit doing the silly dance whilst the Tottenham skins are across the street laughing at us. The infamous 'Get the bastards' battlecry goes out, the EFC Caberet act charge and the skins give it toes. Unfortunately the Old Bill didn't see the funny side and batoned us back into the ground.

The time when an Everton fan was hit on the head by a seat, another Everton fan took him round the pitch to First Aid. Getting a load of abuse, the fan gave a mouthful back: the likes of "You're dead if I see you outside". Alone after the match, guess who he ran into on the High Road. Luckily he survived.

The Sunday FA Cup postponement, getting as far as Knutsford if you went by coach or Stafford if you went by train.

Arranging to meet in a pub called the Duchess near Seven Sisters but unbelievably none of the market traders outside the tube station had heard of it. After five minutes, one bright spark finally realised that I'd misheard it and sent us off to the Dutch House.

Estimates of anything up to 10,000 travelling down for the midweek championship decider.

Last away game of 1992 an end of season piss up was planned in Camden Town. As we came out of the Elbow Room on Tottenham High Road an hour after the final whistle the coach in the distance couldn't really say Maghull Tours could it. It did, they'd escaped from the police escort and stopped for us on their way to Camden.

Adrian Thomas

FOREVER EVERTON 22 GOODISON CLASSICS



C GAFFER 5



CD GAFFER 5

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rise

Looking back on season 1995/96, it's important to look at the context of the entire Joe Royle's reign. Although this season has not delivered the heart-stopping excitement and ultimate glory of the previous campaign, it's certainly been one of progress.

However, there are still many with short memories who continue to cast doubts about our beloved leader. Still, there's whispers about Joe's tactical inflexibility, his small-time ambition, his love of the midfield dog. Personally I think, that in time, Joe Royle will be revered in the same as Howard Kendall circa 1985.

Looking at the season as a whole, it's been a strange sort of campaign with the big cup disappointments overshadowing the generally consistent league form. After the nightmare start highlighted by the Kanchelskis transfer wrangle and subsequent injury plus the Duncan Ferguson jailing we produced long unbeaten runs and memorable results at places where we've previously had problems i.e. Anfield and Highbury.

We now possess potentially the most exciting front-line not only in Britain but possibly in Europe with the pace and skill of Limpar and Kanchelskis servicing the strength and potential of the mighty Duncan Ferguson.

At the time of writing (the Sunday after Blackburn) with a strong finish, we're still in with a European shout, however the important thing is that the confidence gained from a long unbeaten run will be carried into the new season.

Hopefully, the new campaign will also see new faces in the blue shirts. We all know that improvements are needed in all areas of the team. It's unimportant for me to list the names of players we should sign or get rid of as everyone has got their own ideas. However, we all know that big money is needed. Let's hope that Peter Johnson shows the same commitment as the fans. We've all heard him banging on about how much Joe Royle has been allowed to spend but how much has he actually put in? Let's face it, the Sky TV deal has pushed loads of money our way and gates have risen by 15,000 in three years with outrageous ticket price rises to boot! Make no mistake, Johnson's business acumen may have increased our financial strength on the commercial side of things but whichever way you look at it, it's our money which has paid for Ferguson, Kanchelskis and all.

If it takes another fifteen million to make us title challengers then that is what should be underwritten. Talk of selling before we buy is not helpful and will not entice fans to fork out extortionate prices for season tickets.

We now have a chance to regain our place alongside the Liverpools and Manchester Uniteds of this world or we can continue to trundle along with the Chelseas and Sheffield Wednesdays. Let's get back to our rightful domain.

It's over to you Peter.

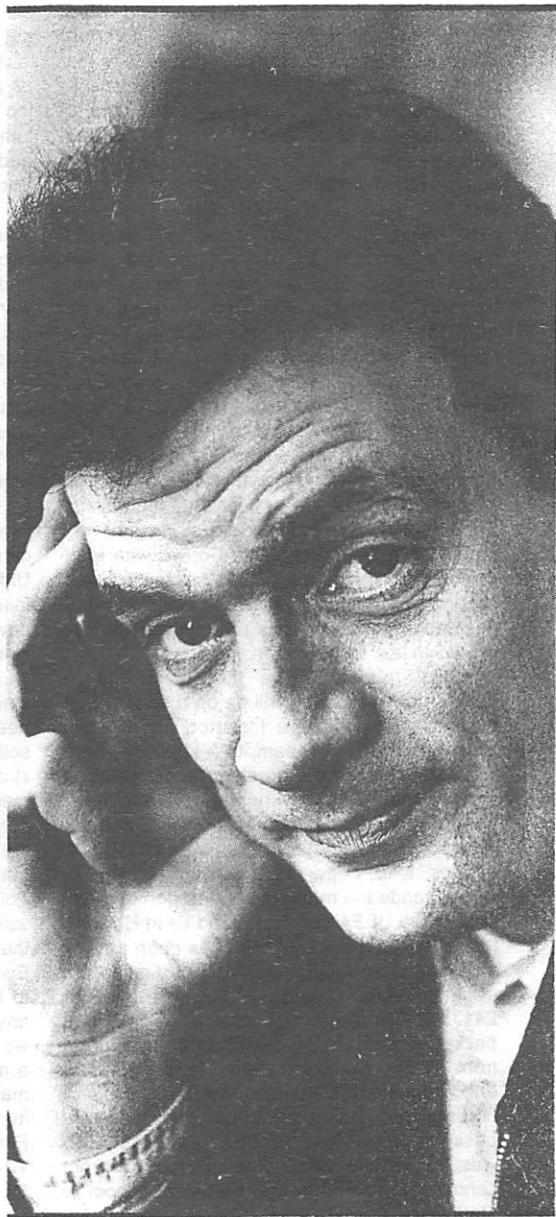
Phil Redmond

quote of the season

"Don't be comin' back at me when I'm shoutin' at you above the crowd, because I run this fucking football club until I'm told otherwise by that circus upstairs. If you come back at me you'll be off the field and will be following Terry down the road... But I'm wasting my breath on some of you. What did I say to you about good players, they want to be good players all the time! Don't you know how profound that is, have you not examined the fucking words? Because you've had two good performances and you think 'I'm Bertie Big Bollocks tonight, I'll fucking play how I like.' But you won't play how you like, because if you play how you like I'll fucking stick the youth team in.

"Because, if I'm going to take abuse from a bunch of cockroaches behind me, I'll take abuse by doing it my way. And that is fucking conformity, not fucking non-conformity. So you, you little cunt, when I tell you to do something, and you, you fucking big cunt, when I tell you to do something, you do it. And if you come back at me, we'll have a fucking right sortout here. All right? And you can pair up if you like. And you can fucking pick someone else to help you and you can bring your fucking dinner, because, by the time I'm finished with you, you'll fucking need it. You fucking hear what I'm saying or not?"

What John Sitton, manager of Leyton Orient, told his players at half time against Blackpool - they were losing 1-0. Unsurprisingly, before the season ended Sitton had lost his job. (As heard on Leyton Orient, Yours For a Fiver, Ch4)



everton abroad - the final chapter

Welcome to the final chapter - and here endeth my tales from watching Everton overseas. Yes, what started in issue 22 at the time of our '92 derby win (Johnson & Beardley) with a story about a mini-bus trip to Bordeaux comes to a conclusion 27 issues later strangely enough at Goodison derby time again. So why the end? Well, apart from the fact that again at the end of our European exile came this season meaning that fans could experience the laughs abroad once again instead of just reading about them, basically I've run out of stories! Writing this on April 1st there is the temptation to just make up some tales - would anyone have believed me about the time we kipped in an igloo whilst watching Everton play Dynamo Artic Circle or about the time we got camels across the desert for a game against Inter Sahara Sandstorm? probably not, so I'll leave that kind of bullshit for the professional journalists. I could even have said that in some far-flung outpost that the players went down with food poisoning and all the lads had to play with me scoring the winner in a penalty shoot-out (instead of actually missing the crucial shot for WSAG in last season's fanzine final).

No, this is to be the finale and in back-to-front fashion it will be on a sentimental note in finishing where I started my first trip abroad to watch our team, to a stadium where we later achieved our greatest triumph abroad and the same stadium where myself and many others made their last visit to Europe - Feyenoord and Rotterdam, where else?

Yes, it all began in the summer of 1979 when I made the momentous decision to travel over to the UEFA cup first round tie in Holland. Myself and a mate kept our eyes open for any trips and were finally rewarded by finding out about the special going from Lime Street for £41. There were also one and two night packages when flying (which is a bit different from this season when fans got no encouragement to travel). We booked after first match of the season after our shiny new passports had come through. All I had to do was to get time off - not from work but from school!! Definitely frowned upon at school to start with, this was eventually agreed. My teacher did give me quite a bit of support as he was an Everton follower - home and away -

although I think he has just please that I could get him some programmes.

Another mate still at school was now going as well and he knew two lads from a part-time job which meant 5 of us in total. We met up at Lime Street around 11 on the Tuesday night and there was already a fair number of Evertonian's already in the queue for platform 9. However, I was surprised to see 2 Everton fans standing away from the queue looking decidedly miserable. They wore blue scarves and had bags with them so I presumed they were travelling over with us but then I found out that they were Evertonians from Finland who had just arrived to, as they thought, watch the first leg at Goodison totally unaware that this had been switched not long after the draw was made - oh dear! There was no way that they could change their plans but I hope they enjoyed their stay on Merseyside anyway.

We hardly got any sleep on the six-hour journey to Dover due to having a group in our carriage who were intent on singing all night. Unfortunately, plan b to have a kip on the boat failed as there was nowhere comfy to doss down. But after drinking the night away our singing buddies were now fast asleep in a nice lounge courtesy of on knowing the Everton stewards. The same stewards had already been up and down the train every five minutes selling Everton scratch cards, bingo cards, spot the balls, raffle tickets etc. to try and make it all skint before we reached the continent, but on the ferry they surpassed themselves by trying to flog pennants for the match which you could have bought at the Toffee Shop back home and which were not selling well. In desperation they approached the passengers on the boat that were not Evertonians - the stuck-up southerner family - to be promptly told 'no, we don't want to buy any, we don't like football'. Anyway, at least we had our Blue Streak newsletter to read with a message from Gordon Lee followed by our manager's profile. I still have this collector's item - his favourite TV show was Songs of Praise and his one pastime was gardening. What a sad man! What intrigues me though is the question favourite food - roast beef. Maybe that answers a few questions even now!

We sailed in Ostende mid-morning greeting the locals with many choruses of "run, run, whoever you may be, we are the famous E.F.C." from the decks as we docked. We were then herded straight up to the train to travel though Belgium to Holland, a journey that U was to repeat some 16 years later. Plan C was to get some sleep on the train but some joker kept playing a bugle. When I did manage to get some sleep the train pulled into Roosendaal where half the boys leant out of the windows chatting "Argentina" at the Dutch on the platform. This referred to their World Cup final defeat the previous year but I don't think the cloggies gave a monkeys.

At Rotterdam the police were happy to allow us three hours in town before a special train would take us out to the stadium. A bit different again from last November when over 200 of us were intercepted on the Amsterdam train and told we would be taken straight to the ground 3 hours before kick-off. It was a case of everyone off at Den Haag much to the annoyance of the plod left on board. But back to '79 and the Double Diamond bar was chocka with Evertonian's queuing to get in so we went to a bar 50 yards down the street. (Note how far we are in to this article before a reference to me and alcohol - definitely a record, but then I was under-age at the time!) We got off with everyone else when the time came to return to the station, about 30-50 of us stopping for a giant team photo. In the middle of the pose we were faced with the Dutch riot police storming around the corner chasing after a group of Everton fans after bottle had been thrown during a single d&d arrest. Not hanging around to meet this baton charge, everyone was up and away running for the cover of the station - it must have made a good photo if the poor photographer got away. Naturally this was the main topic of conversation when I got to school.

After helping ourselves to some programmes (sorry sir but I was lying when I said they were free) we found ourselves in the wrong part of the ground but were escorted to the proper section of ticket-holding Everton fans. Many blues gone over unofficially without tickets but were standing up in "our" end. It was here that some minor scuffles broke out when they scored the only goal of the game although I believe it wasn't too clever back at central station after the match either. Looking back,

there's no way I would have gone on an official trip there now was we played Ipswich away on the Saturday it was only to be expected that many independent travellers out stay in Holland until the Friday overnight boat to Harwich (only 20 miles away from Ipswich). This incidentally led to fans arriving at Portman Road on the Saturday to find the whole of the outside of the ground covered in Everton graffiti freshly painted by those returning from Rotterdam at about six in the morning.

For us the journey home was the train from the stadium station straight after the match. Plan D was to finally set some well overdue sleep on the train which I eventually managed having some three hours in the luggage rack of all places. Apart from having our first proper meal of the trip - fish and chips at 4am - it was time for more sleep on the boat and then also the train from Dover. Arriving back at Lime Street around midday the five of us split up agreeing that we would travel together again for the next round, confident of us winning the return leg comfortably. Alas that was not to be and I don't know if any of them saw abroad again.

So that was how my travels started but I didn't have any idea or wish then that I'd make many more trips abroad to watch Everton including every year from 1982 to 1995. Unfortunately this seems destined to end this year with no pre-season tour again this year (bring back Howard) another reason why the stories have dried up. Unless we win all our remaining games there'll be no European qualification so if you want more of my tales then tell Joe in Aberdeen that he'd better start taking the team abroad again.

Au revoir.

The Overseas Correspondent

(P.S. Readers will be pleased to note that I've negotiated a new deal with the editor for next season and will be writing stories on the home front : "10 years not out" - a season by season review of not missing a league or cup game for ten seasons. If all goes well I'll complete this feat at the Aston Villa match!)

magic moments

no.1 Pat Nevin v Man United (September 1989)

To me the Cocteau Twins loving eclectic hero, to others he was the "ineffectual, intellectual homosexual" (© Pete Fingers 1989). No hedging your bets with the soft spoken Scot: you either loved him or hated him.

There's no doubting the 'wee man' is associated with the descent of the Harvey years, but his tricky feet and jinking runs made him very much a hero to many. Ever since seeing him as a Chelsea player on Saint & Greavesie introducing the gruesome twosome



to the starry-spangled world of the Cocteau Twins (he was playing 'Lorelei' off the Treasure album for anorak purposes) Pat was someone I wanted in a Royal Blue Shirt.

Taking the semi final goal - meaningless as he quite rightly said in the immediate wake of Hillsborough, there is one quite sublime moment which I will retain for all time as proof of his utter genius.

On a day when Everton performed tremendously to beat Man United, he played a one-two with Reid, beat the offside trap and the rest was pure slow-motion beauty. Gliding over the hallowed turf, with a 'This Mortal Coil' soundtrack driving him on no doubt, he approached Jim Leighton armed with less

goal-scoring instinct than many top strikers but with one crucial advantage - a brain. Sizing up the options, (Leighton stayed on his feet) Pat scooped the ball up and over the keeper, and as the whole of my world started to shimmer in a drug-like haze, the ball floated gracefully into the empty net.

Arms outstretched for the rightful adulation, the wee man had scored one of the all time great Goodison goals - the cries of 'poof', 'student' and 'Joy Division were never the same after the first single' were suddenly

absent. Pat the scapegoat and long-coat became Pat the hero and Goodison took him to heart once and for all.

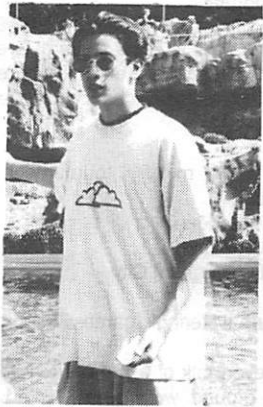
I admit a liking for players with some semblance of intelligence which may well cloud my judgement - Barry Horne BSc comes to mind as well. But for a top all time magic moment, they don't come more sublime than that goal, whatever you may have thought of him.

He even embraced fanzine culture for goodness sake - what more do you want?

Preno

when skies are grey

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blue lines

random observations from our blue tinged world

watch this space

With the season ambling to it's end, thoughts will start to wander towards 1996-97, and in the next few weeks we should hear the new season ticket prices.

Last season the club used the goodwill created by the cup win to push through extortionate price rises, (in the Park End over £40) with the introduction of monthly payments, Kanchelskis signing and Euro qualification, record sales were announced.

This summer, there's no silverware, Euro qualification looks doubtful and the word is transfer activity may be at a premium. With further steep price rises on the cards, it'll be interesting to see how many season tickets are sold. (PR)

flogging a dead-horse

Yet again the Anfield Iron is attempting self parody. I refer to Smith's forthcoming 'Soccer Hardmen Night' at the Devonshire House Hotel. Here, old 'beans on toast' and fellow hatchet men Norman Hunter and Nobby Stiles will no doubt 'entertain' the masses with stories of how hard they were and how Leighton James and Emlyn Hughes were shithouses. (Yawn)

Other features of the evening will be the hardmen insisting that although they kicked crap out of each other, they were all mates in the players lounge afterwards, on the pitch, no quarter would be given. Smith will slag off the likes of Batty and Vinny Jones claiming 'they wouldn't last five minutes in our day', bullshit ad nauseam.

I very much doubt there will be any mention of the infamous bottle incident in Hungary. That is, unless, one of you readers out there would like to pop along and raise it. (PR)

pre season games

For those who want to know some of Everton's pre-season fixtures for the summer, here's the games that the Football Echo claim have been arranged:

July 27/28 mini tournament at Anfield/Goodison
Aug. 3 at Aberdeen
Aug. 6 at Wrexham
Aug. 10 at Birmingham City

Some 'mouth-watering' games in prospect there then.

There is even talk of a pre-season game at Cardiff - a ground we haven't visited since 1979, although some older fans may have greater reason to remember the game a couple of years either! (GE)

finchwatch

Has anyone else noticed? I can help but see a remarkable likeness between the Club's director with responsibility for commercial affairs and with the keen drinker Father Jack (from Ch4's 'Father Ted').



Father Jack

Mr Finch

Could they in any way be related? (DS)

record news

Has anyone seen or heard that ludicrous record by the Sunderland fans? Some Makem knobs have done a record based around the Monkee's hit 'Daydream Believer'. It is truly awful. The lyrics have to be heard to be believed. Up there, predictably it is selling like the proverbial hot cake.

In a similar vein, is that shocking version of 'Wonderwall' that City fans sing. Yes, the eyebrow brothers are supposedly City fans but so fucking what! Sonia is meant to be an Evertonian, but we don't sing anything of hers! Again, the City version is embarrassing shite and if they're meant to be the proper Mancs, it must be a sadder place than even we thought.

All of this brings us nicely onto a CD by some pricks who call themselves the Nylon Bombers (or something or other). This steaming pile of police horse-shit has probably been sent around 'When Saturday Comes' fanzine list as we received two copies the other week.

The lyrics contain references to George Best, Stan Bowles and other 70s icons. It is clearly done by some ex-students who've just got into football via Fantasy Fuckwits.

You can just imagine the bass player shouting out at a rehearsal (in his father's conservatory) "Heeey Miles, heey guys, I've got a great idea. Why not send the disc to those fanzine people, they'll love it and give us loads of free plugs".

Well, sorry guys, we don't. We haven't even listened to it as we have a policy at WSAG; that anything sent to us via the 'football network' and featuring 'trendy' football references, is binned. Next time, save on the postage.

tony grant - the truth

Ever wondered why Tony Grant looks so knackered during the last fifteen minutes of each game?

Could it be because he's up half the night wearing a false moustache and belting out cover versions of 1970s pomp rock classics?

I think we should be told.

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bits: Graham Ennis, The Killer Queen, Phil Redmond, David Swaffield.

NEW WSAG T-SHIRTS

You may have seen on the t-shirt page that as from the end of May, our current crop of t-shirts are being phased out. But fear not. This summer we are introducing some brand new designs. Due to the quick turnaround of the last two issues we haven't, as yet, been able to produce them although the designs are done. They will be featured in our first issue of next season. However, if you want to be in with the in-crowd, a top smoothie, or a cool dude, then you can send us a SAE after 31 May, and we will exclusively send you the details. Please note, these t-shirts have been specially produced to attract the opposite sex on foreign beaches. You have been warned.

team positions

In a desperate attempt to forget yesterday's disgraceful performance against Wimbledon; when we couldn't defend (a 2-1 lead) again, I decided to compile a, purely personal, league table. Based on friendliness, knowledge of general football, knowledge of Everton and an ability to get a round in, here is my opposition fans 1995/96 Premiership table, with the fans to avoid first:

1. Liverpool

Pricks. Even with Sky and armchairs aplenty, are well short on a sound grasping of all things football, except trivia like Babbsy's or Razor's latest clobber. From Kings Lynn to Kabul, it's yet another honour for the 'shower'. Buying a round? Wasn't that Molby's transfer from Ajax?

2. Manchester United

Similar arrogance and accents, but their title challenge faltered at the last as a minority do regard Everton and Evertonians as a major British force.

3. Middlesbrough

Narrow-minded, racist, dodgy bastards! Never won a thing (even lost to Cleveland SS). Tried to impose themselves in the Winslow as one of the north east's Big Three. Within ten minutes they were shitting themselves by the telly in the corner! Having lived in the north east for a while, I can confirm that there is only a Big Two, and Boro are not in the same league.

4. West Ham United

Closet Oxford United fans, always referring to their environs as 'The Manor'. Regard Julian Dicks and Trevor Brooking as gods, need I go on?

5. Tottenham Hotspur

Modern day spivs. Venables was the perfect manager for them. Always kick off if they can't have 'their' Cup - the 1995 semi being an obvious example.

6. Bolton Wanderers

Akin to Middlesborough, but not as dodgy. Bolton pubs are like their grounds - sheds.

7. Arsenal

Like their team, Gooners are generally boring. Mention of *that* Friday night in May 1989 and they come alive. Obsessed with being 'The Pride of London' though.



8. Newcastle United

Mostly glory-hunters from Durham or Hexham, but the genuine Geordie followers are usually gems. Can be inconsistent on their travels but generally perform well. Can be total knobheads at home especially in the Strawberry.

9. Chelsea

Meadow mowing marauders who think Elbow Hughes is 'bosch', not too bad for a yarn and a joke these days.

10. Wimbledon

Exactly halfway, as I've only met a handful of these non Cardiff/Dublin/Las Vegas going tribesmen.

11. Manchester City

Yes, they're true Manc (ahem! - Ed.), but we have a certain empathy with them. In City's case a sort of big-club-in-trouble we were two years ago. Can be a laugh, especially with Dissa anecdotes.

12. Leeds United

Devout hatred of United and a profound disliking of Liverpool are promising credentials. Pretty fair at ordering times, but can be petty and back-biting - just ask the group of West Yorkshire Toffees in the Winslow bar any home game.

13. Blackburn Rovers

Despite appearing to blindly follow Uncle Jack, Dalglish and Shearer, Blackburn fans are both friendly and knowledgeable. The Championship hangers-on are disappearing, but why do they insist that they are a big club, and Newell's England material on the strength of a hat-trick against Rosenburg?

14. Nottingham Forest

Arrogance of the Clough era seems to have dissipated. Most fans make you welcome at the City Ground and hate Liverpool intensely (Nice one Stan!).

15. Aston Villa

Always good for a round, they have some cracking chants (who can forget the Tony Cascarino classic?). For good natured banter, I can't wait to use season ticket voucher 19 on 4 May!

16. Sheffield Wednesday

Excellent at taking stick (judging on his Feyenoord ECWC performances, Regi Blinker will get some hammer on 27 April - even my Feyenoord mate Maarten was made up when he was sold!). Would have been bottom, but they have that irritating shirtless Barry Bethell-esque lard mountain.

17. Coventry City

Nice people, nice ground (but small). Why oh why does the Sky Blue Tavern segregate fans and charge London prices for a sherbet? The nearest couple of chippies are owned by Dick Turpin too.

18. Southampton

A visit to the Winston up the slope from the Dell is a must. The locals are very helpful and adept at sorting out face-value tickets. Can take Le Tissier jokes with a broad smile, they even try to compete with the ringing exploits of the Mad Blue Army. Add to this the presence of the luscious barmaid Lynsey (from Seaforth - honest!) and Statto's twin brother collecting the empties, and you (almost) forget the Toffees are playing. Bliss.

19. Queens Park Rangers

The Springbok is the only away pub I have ever known, where the locals ask you straight away if you want a drink. Amazing but true! Even the bar staff are very friendly, and don't appear to mind when you occasionally order wrong pints. These West Londoners have an obvious passion for the game and know it inside out. They were certain of relegation in the Winslow in November! Bar Easter Monday, I hope the Super Hoops win every game until the season's end. Incidentally, those hooped shirts don't half help you sort out the Baywatch babes from the also-rans! Best away in the Premiership.

Hope they get promoted:

Sunderland, Derby County, Huddersfield Town.

Hope they get prison:

Stoke City, Crystal Palace, Millwall

Lyon

neighbourhood watch

Keeping a beady eye on the antics of our lovable friends across the way

a cheap shot

Yes OK it's a cheap shot but we couldn't resist it. Read the two letters below and weep - with laughter!

Loyal supporters

Dear Editor

I think I am probably the biggest Liverpool fan in Ireland. I have the home top of Liverpool for the seasons 91/92, 92/93, 93/94. I have the present away top. I also have two Liverpool caps, one Liverpool acrylic hat, Liverpool arm-bands, 92/93 Liverpool shorts...I have supported Liverpool since I was five. The very first day I saw a football game on TV, was when Liverpool played Man. Utd. in the Charity Shield - ever since that game I supported Liverpool.

Your biggest Irish fan,

No further comment required!

Dear Editor

The reason I started supporting Liverpool was because my paper round boss has been supporting Liverpool since he was born. His shop is covered with posters and stickers. He went to the match against Blackburn (the last match of the season) and when he got back he had a sore throat and a hangover. I will support Liverpool for ever.

From Nick French, Leicester

P.S. My dad supports Leicester - arghhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!

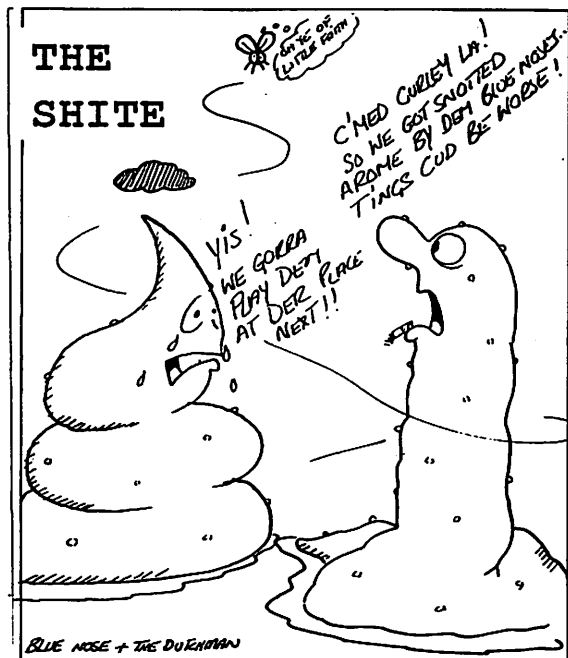
who the cap fits?

Did anyone hear 'the best fans in the world' singing "part-time supporters" to Leeds for the poor turnout at the Elland Road quarter final? On that occasion the Leeds fans, already facing a Wembley trip and its attendant fiscal demands were asked to fork out £25 by their myopic board, hence the mass boycott. Of course, when the semi-final prices were announced this was all conveniently forgotten in the subsequent outcry. No-one's suggesting that the semi-price weren't anything but outrageous but when do hard pressed boycotting fans become part-timers? You tell us Liverpool!

those who can do.....

As a further example of the maxim 'those players who can, manage; those who can't write for newspapers', the Daily Post recently featured a piece by Alan Kennedy - a red from the old school (i.e. before the pretty boys took over). Trailed heavily under the portentous title 'Champions? Why the Reds will win the Premiership', Alan was asked to use his expert knowledge of the game to predict who would finally emerge victorious in May.

Establishing his credentials, the Post beamed "Certainly few are better qualified to cast their expert eye over the final furlong of a three-horse thriller than Kennedy, who won five championship medals with the Reds". So what did this 'expert' predict: Rather unsurprisingly "I have always said Liverpool are capable of winning it this season. The way they are playing, I can't see them losing any games towards the end of the season". More

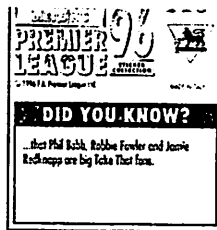


than that the exquisitely moustachioed ex Red predicted that Liverpool would avoid defeat in their last eight matches; "Liverpool could win just about every match. I have seen it happen before".

Now, this amazing piece of soothsaying appeared on March 23rd, the day of Liverpool's visit to Forest. Oh dear.

Alan Kennedy is currently unemployed.

now there's a surprise



censored views

Many thanks to Mike Cope from Tuebrook who sent in an interesting item. We would have liked to use it. Legally, however, we're advised it is not in our best interests to print a picture of a dog licking the arse of a well-known grey-haired gentleman from "elsewhere in the city". Anyway, it made us laugh.

Well at least this explains Babbsy's loss of form and Redknapp's inability to get in the team. Gary, Mark & the lads have split up, and it's all too much to take for the poor red lads. Expect Fowler to (God willing) slash his wrists in the near future.

bits: Mike Cope, Graham Ennis, Flossy, David O'Reilly, Phil Redmond,



sorted for lee's anguish

After the, ahem, 'mixed' reviews for my previous WSAG piece, I thought that I'd better return to what the punters want. So, with apologies to those of you who are under 25 years of age, I must take you back in time once again to those golden days of Mr Birmingham Bags himself, Gordon Lee.

The cherubic Philip Redmond brought back many memories for us thirtysomethings with his 'Razor Blade Alley' article in the last WSAG. Phil (known to his friends as 'Phil'), rekindled perfectly those halcyon days of the visits to Stretford, when one had more to worry about than whether Everton would come away with a point.

I would like, if I may, to go back to 1981, and another trip to Manchester - this time to Moss Side. Now, since that time, my brother has actually married a City supporting girl from Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, so I now have something of an affinity, as well as a family link, to the blue 'half of Manchester (or do the majority of Mancunians follow City, in the same way as 90% of Merseysiders support Everton?). Anyway I digress.

At that time, following Everton to Maine Road was just as dangerous as a trip to the theatre of bad haircuts, but, as it was a sixth round FA Cup replay, some 15,000 blues made the journey. Clearly, we knew as soon as Power had equalised on the preceding Saturday, that we were out, but, of course, you had to be there to witness it yourself. So it was that myself and a young friend of mine (Alan Armstrong where are you now?) headed for Lime Street station on the evening of Wednesday 11 March 1981.

Like all away trips from Lime Street at that time, our first port of call had to be that arcade opposite the station, for a game of 'spacies'. I hate arcades, but space invaders was a better game man (see, I've lapsed into early eighties phoney druggie-speak in order to add realism to this already rather turgid piece).

It's important, I think, to set the scene a little more. My companion Armstrong (he was cleverly nicknamed 'Armo') and I were in our late teens, and had just started to travel with the blues. I saw a lot of Armo in those days. We would play Subbuteo on Sundays, footy at Everton Park on Mondays, go to Goodison on Saturday afternoons, and fail miserably to cop

off every Saturday night - even in Rotters. March 1981 was a weird month really. It was a month of Tiswas, Gripper Stebson, Adam Ant, "Hello Noel", Ray Langton, Freez and Tenpole Tudor.



Significantly, it was also the month when the first Aztec Camera single was released, and some neighbours of mine from 'kenny', Michael Head and Chistopher McCaffrey, formed James L faves The Pale Fountains. But that's another story.

It was also a month of spoof 'peaceful hour' requests (Christine Sanders where are you

now?). Can I digress again Graham? (Just once more, then I'm scrapping your article - Ed)

Remember the legendary 'peaceful hour' with Johnny Jason on Radio City? The all-time classic came when The Jam were due to play Deeside. Three girls wrote into 'JJ' before the gig saying "Tell Paul, Bruce and Rick that we can't wait to see them at Deeside in April". To which JJ, who had clearly lost the plot, replied "seems like you fellers have got yourselves a date there, be sure to turn up". I kid you not, this was a genuine incident! Surely the broadcasting gaffe of all time! Anyway, back to the plot...

Once at Piccadilly station, we received the usual hearty welcome from the Greater Manchester Police - "Get on the buses, and keep quiet your shower of scum". Hardly sensitive policing or Citizens Charter type politeness is it? What's worse, we accepted this as appropriate behaviour from those charged with keeping the peace, and meekly stepped on board. Once away from the station, the singing recommenced in earnest, with the three favourite songs being "We're on the march with Gordon's Army", "We're on the march with Gordon's Army" and, er, "We're on the march with Gordon's Army". Not known for our varied track listings us Evertonians!

I don't need to dwell on the game. In fact, I remember very little about it, apart from the Kippax street being a sea of sky blue at 3-0, and them singing "There'll be blue flags flying and scousers crying/dying". Anyway, we decided to leave early, but, try as we might, we couldn't find the buses back to the station. We got talking to some other scousers, and, opting for safety in numbers, decided to head in the direction of the city centre.

As you can probably guess, we didn't have a clue where we were going and ended up traipsing around in circles. Finding ourselves back in the environs of Maine Road, we heard a muted roar and realised that Everton had scored. Minutes later, an even louder roar signalled the final whistle. So, we figured, lets hang around and wait for the rest of the

'special mob'. This was all very well until a crew of some twenty strong 'perry boys' started strolling menacingly our way.

Without giving them a chance to say "got t'ime lads", we made like hard scousers and gave it toes. Armo and I ended up running across a garden, sadly wrecking it in the process, whilst in the background we could hear a lone Liverpool accent weakly shouting 'Stand. Stand! Listen, when you're the last cock of every school you've ever attended, you do not 'stand' when it goes off badly at association football matches.

I wish I could tell that Armo and I got cornered and took all twenty 'perries' before returning to Liverpool in triumph. Sadly, the incident blew over quite quickly, and, more by accident than design, we found ourselves back on the main road opposite a fleet of GM buses reserved for the Evertonians.

That was the last time I travelled with Gordon Lee's Everton. I really wish I'd gone to his last game, at Molineux, but, at that time, Gordon was still talking about what we'd do next season. (In later years, I wasn't going to get caught out again, and went to The Manor just to witness the sword of Damocles come down on Howard's head).

Maybe it's just me, but despite a number of away trips between 1981 and 1996, none could compare with those wonderful Gordon Lee days of following Everton from defeat to defeat. It's a worrying thought, but there was a definite feeling that the Ghost of Gordon had returned, when Wimbledon turned us over recently. Andy Clarke made Craig Short look like a cross between the worst of Micky Lyons and Billy Wright. Barry Horne could have been Trevor Ross, whilst the hapless Hottiger was 'Dick' Barton reincarnated. Stuart's first half miss was reminiscent of Eammon O'Keefe, and Rideout's performance made us almost remember Garry Stanley fondly (almost Phill).

Yes, those last twenty minutes against the Dons was the closest we've come in years to reproducing the type of football played under Gordon Lee. And do you know what? I was the happiest man inside Goodison Park...

Dave Wiggins

these things fall through my mind

More abstract and obtuse thoughts covering everything from this to that.

Hello, good evening and welcome to my little contribution.

First things first: Following on from my revelations last time that Jason McAteer cannot even pick his own clothes, I hear that all the **Liverpool Catwalk Crew** are now getting their clothes direct from the major fashion houses. It's good to know that the more money get, the less you have to spend. But more importantly, it's obvious that even given access to all the top swag, those clueless cunts have to have someone else pick a bit of decent clobber for them.

And while we're dealing with all things sartorial, it appears as **Henri Lloyd** jackets have been on everyone's shopping list of late - so much so that another piece of the fabled scouse wardrobe has now been usurped. Berghaus is dead, long live King Henri.

Moving on to **football**. Can anyone recall our last major watershed: a cup defeat at Oldham? Can anyone recall who bore the brunt of that particular disaster? Neil McDonald. Why is it then that when we lose big style and changes are demanded, we always blame a full back? Answers on a post card to Earl Barrett.

Another thing. When does a forty yard, beautifully weighted defence splitting pass become merely a "long ball". When it's hit by **Tony Grant** and not one of the media's favourite washed-up ponces. For God sake, not only did he look up, he even pointed to where Kanchelskis should run on to.

So, we all looking forward to **Euro 96** coming to our fair city? It's certainly going to be a continental summer. And I must say those street-light decorations look the business - they look pretty tidy up in my hall as well.

But seriously, I'm eager with anticipation to welcome those **cappuccino sipping Italians** into town. Maybe we could swap to tips on street fashion, like trying to get the Italian's to wear socks with their boat-shoes, and to stop draping their jumpers round their shoulders.

Unlike many of you, I suspect, I will not be getting behind Scotland in the hope that our own **Duncan Ferguson** is leading the line. Me, I want our Duncan (and his is ours) to have a nice quiet summer, resting his groin and doing nothing more strenuous than reaching for a beer from the fridge.

Can I take you back to that horrible **wannabe boy-racer bastard Jason McAteer**. Did anyone clock him sporting a Robbie Fowler type nose plaster. I mean what the fuck is all that about? For God's sake can't you do anything on your own?

I mean, he's only been there a short while and he is clearly our most hatred red. If the cunt slots in the derby (and be honest it's odds on) I'm on the pitch.

So that's it from me, for now, see you later.

Up the 'tonski

James L

celebrity tossers

Halleluah! The return of celebrity tossers and those cheeky chappies at WSAG take a pop at some famous people. Tsk, tsk, tsk.

5. Fantasy Football League



Let's get this straight from the start: football fans have nothing in common with these people. The belief that they are representative of the typical football supporter is somewhat misplaced. If anything they are atypical examples of today's modern armchair supporter.

Admittedly, at times, Frank Skinner can be amusing in a smutty schoolboy type of way. However, David Baddiel is about as funny as any has-been Liverpool comedian. And as for Statto, what can you say about him? How about he's an absolute twat. Everyone had someone like Statto in their class at school: he was bullied so often he retired so far into his shell that his head almost fell out of his arse. Now he sits behind his little counter wearing his very stylish silk dressing gown whilst clutching his security rug between his white knuckled hands and getting excited about how many goals Rotherham scored away from home in the 1961/62 season.

What do these people have to do with football? What does football mean to them? To them, football is nothing more than the

means by which they can attempt to make a few humorous quips to excite the audience of kit-wearing sixth-formers in the studio each week. Whether the guffaws of laughter are prompted by Frank and David dressed up as women for no apparent reason, Jeff Astle doing a very bad impression of a tone-deaf pub-singer or a clip of Jimmy Hill wearing a less-than-fashionable floral patterned tie on a 1970's edition of 'Match of the Day' you can't help but think that their so-called humour is something that most pre-pubescent twelve year-olds don't even find funny. Is this what football is all about? Only in their fantasies! At times, you can't help but feel that colonic irrigation, prozac, or a combination of both of these things, were created for these anally retentive "new lads".

Fantasy Football League is now nothing more than the televisual equivalent of a second-rate student rag-mag. As Morrissey so rightly pointed out, that joke isn't funny any more.

GE.DS

been there, seen it, done it

1. Queued all night for a Wembley ticket.
2. Paid over the odds for a ticket from a tout.
3. Got Mick Lyons' autograph.
4. Bunked into a pre-season friendly.
5. Punched a red on the Kop.
6. Been to Wembley.
7. Been chased down Matt Busby Way.
8. Wrote EFC on your school-desk.

9. Lost a bet to a Liverpoolian.

10. Cried at Wembley in 1986.

11. Can remember where you were when you heard Howard Kendall was coming back.

12. Stood in the Street End.

13. Chased the Everton coach down the motorway.

14. Ran on the pitch.

15. Own a copy of 'Forever Everton'.

16. Can sing all the words to 'Onwards Evertonians'.

17. Bunked into Bellefield.

18. Said 'Alright' to a player in a nightclub.

19. Cried at Wembley in 1995.

20. Stayed out after the match until closing time.

21. Been binned by a girl over Everton.

22. Met a girl through Everton.

23. Bunked school to go to a match.

24. Considered getting an Everton tattoo.

25. Bought a replica kit.

26. Worn a pair of Everton shorts on the beach.

27. Started a chant.

28. Met a really good mate at the game.

29. Hugged a stranger.

30. Saved up to buy a season ticket.



31. Wrote a letter to the programme that wasn't published.

32. Been to Tranmere.

33. Watched the 1995 FA Cup Semi at least ten times.

34. Converted a mate.

35. Put a bet on Everton to win the league.

36. Got lost going to Selhurst Park.

37. Been to see strippers before a London game.

38. Took a girlfriend the match.

39. Shook Eddie Cavagh's hand.

40. Sang Everton songs drunkenly far from home.

41. Caught a toffee from the Toffee lady.

42. Spent a sleepless night before the 1994 Wimbledon game.

43. Dreamt of playing for Everton.

44. Memorised the 1970 Championship winning team.

45. Been asked by a red "How many times have you won the league?"

46. Been warned by a copper at Newcastle.

47. Hitched a lift to an away game.

48. Had a drink in the Winslow.

49. Travelled on the Ordinary.

50. Fell off a table celebrating.

51. Spilt coffee on the bloke in front going up for a goal.

52. Burnt your mouth on a pie, spilling water down the front of your coat.

53. Thrown away a burger at Arsenal.

54. Bought every paper after a big win.

55. Had a hangover before a match.

56. Woke up in a cold sweat worrying about Ian Rush.

57. Blagged a ticket.
58. Been sick with ale before a match.
59. Been escorted from the train station to the ground by the police.
60. Broke the escort to go to a boozer.
61. Watched the Bayern video on a coach.
62. Tuned into Radio Everton.
63. Picked your own Everton Worst Ever XI
64. Owned an Everton subbuteo team.
65. Wanted to be 'Bob Latchford'.
66. Left Goodison Park early in disgust.
67. Been to every game in a season.
68. Been to the reserves on a freezing cold night.
69. Thought that John Ebbrell would captain England.
70. Supported Scotland because of Georgie Wood.
71. Entered a competition for a signed Everton football.
72. Took your son to his first match.
73. Bought a scarf from one of the sellers outside the ground.
74. Shouted at a referee.
75. Missed a match due to a wedding.
76. Went to a match instead of a wedding.
77. Chased a player down the road to get an autograph.
78. Seen someone famous at the match.
79. Seen Everton lose to a lower league club.
80. Celebrated Arsenal's 1989 Championship win.
81. Thought Mike Walker would do well.



82. Bitten your finger-nails to the quick during a second half.
83. Blamed defeat on someone being there - a jinx.
84. Had a two hour argument about who we should buy.
85. Changed your mind about Barry Horne.
86. Watched Everton parade the cup through the streets of Liverpool.
87. Had your photograph taken with Billy Butler in his blue and white school-master's outfit.
88. Had a request played for you over the tannoy at Goodison Park.
89. Told a bloke behind to shut up.
90. Had your car 'minded'.
91. Met another Evertonian abroad.
92. Thought the Liverpool Echo was biased against Everton.
93. Missed a goal because you've been getting the coffee.
94. Bought When Skies are Grey.
95. Wrote an article for WSAG and not had it printed!
96. Own your granddad's scarf.
97. Thought victory was due to your lucky boxer-shorts.
98. Been in the Top Balcony.
99. Considered taking up smoking to relieve the frustration.
100. Thought of at least another twenty things that could be added to this list.

Ant Rogers, Danny Fitzgerald, & Gary Ryan

EMPORIO ARMAN

UNDERWEAR

