

# Fanatical

Everpresent since 1968. An incredible journey.

Gary Edwards and Andy Starnore

Foreword by Brian McDermott



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# Introduction

**T**HIS is the story of Gary Edwards, who hasn't missed a competitive Leeds United match anywhere in the world since January 1968. That's 46 years of incredible loyalty. In fact he's only missed one friendly and that was through no fault of his own. An air traffic control strike prevented him from boarding a flight to Toronto – he had a match ticket and a flight ticket.

Brian Clough lasted 44 days. Jock Stein lasted 44 days. Another 19 managers have come and gone (20 if you include Eddie Gray twice – although he's far from gone, given his role as commentator on Yorkshire Radio with the brilliant Thom Kirwin, hospitality stuff and complete and utter devotion to Leeds United) and Brian McDermott is the latest man to depart Elland Road. Hundreds of players have been and gone and, since Gary began his mammoth run there have been 11 chairmen taking over the reins at Elland Road.

Players, managers, chairmen, members of the board, coaches and staff will always be bypassing as their football careers go in different directions but what about the football fan? From the moment you are hooked as a small boy, kicking a tennis ball around in the playground, as I can remember, to the maturity of retirement days, the football fan is a loyal-to-the-bitter-end beast. Through thick and thin, ups and downs, highs and lows, the football fan will never change. Once it's in your blood that's it.

How often do you see grown men with beer bellies big enough to take up two seats sobbing into their hops at the end of a season when their side has been relegated? How often have you seen supposedly mature men, who have very responsible jobs, returning to the office on the Monday in their smart suits and gleaming shoes, turning into some kind of demented kid at a friend's party, jumping around like Zebedee on the Saturday just gone when your team has won a trophy – or beaten manchester united? It's all part and parcel of a game that is electrifying because of the fans. The fans make the game.

If you take out the war years, when no competitive football was played, Gary Edwards has seen over half of the entire history of Leeds United's matches. I would be absolutely amazed if anyone in the world could beat that. Gary is not only the biggest supporter in the world (probably), he also possesses a true Yorkshire wit, which will certainly make you chuckle.

'We all love Leeds, we all love Leeds...' 'You're only here to watch the Leeds...' 'Marching on Together.' Yes, Leeds fans are both noisy and loyal.

Gary's first ever Leeds game came on 26 March 1966, two days prior to his 11th birthday. It was a First Division fixture against Blackpool at Elland Road. With all the excitement and the incredible atmosphere, Gary left Elland Road that day thinking that Leeds had won the match 1-0. Unfortunately Blackpool emerged as 2-1 winners. You could forgive Gary for thinking the way he did though, as when Blackpool had scored the only noises coming from the terraces were still Leeds supporters. The atmosphere alone had Gary hooked for life.

Prior to getting on to the non-stop run of matches Gary has attended, he had already been to many games for two years.

West Ham United and Sunderland spring to Gary's mind as he explains, 'I remember seeing West Ham for the very first time in 1967. It was at Elland Road on the last day of November. England had won the World Cup the year before and there had been a trio of West Ham players in the team. And, although Bobby Moore, Geoff Hurst and Martin Peters were warmly applauded that day, a lot of Leeds fans wanted Leeds to "knock the stuffing out of 'em," as the bloke stood next to me and my dad shouted, along with a mouthful of chewed up crisps that ended up on the shoulder of the lad who was about my age and was stood at the side of me at the wall in front of the open kop.

'The reason for this outburst from that bloke and many other Leeds fans was down to the fact that just three weeks before, West Ham had beaten Leeds 7-0 in the League Cup at Upton Park. Ouch!

'Leeds won that day 2-1, after going a goal down, Johnny Giles and good old Albert Johanneson doing the honours. I thought afterwards, "That should make that bloke happy." I have no idea where it came from, but I had visions of him going home if Leeds had lost, and his poor wife (if indeed he had one) sat there at the table with all of the bloke's tea all over her face as he ranted about another defeat.

'Funnily enough, my first ever Leeds game against Sunderland was an FA Cup tie in the 1966/67 fifth round. In front of a hostile crowd Jack Charlton scored to earn Leeds a 1-1 draw and a replay at Elland Road just four days later.

'There wasn't enough time to make the replay all-ticket and this caused more problems than anyone could have imagined. About half an hour before kick-off, the gates were closed, leaving thousands of fans outside. Several of them scaled the exterior walls and clambered on to the roof of the Scratching Shed to watch the game. I remember looking at them and thinking that one day I'm going to go up there. Alas, I never did.

'Meanwhile there were around 5,000 too many spectators inside the ground and during the match one of the steel and concrete crush barriers in the Lowfields Road stand gave way under the pressure. Dad and me were stood in our usual spot on the halfway line and could see people spilling out on to the pitch, some were laid out receiving medical treatment from some of the Leeds and Sunderland medical staff and the St John's Ambulance brigade until a fleet of ambulances arrived to take 32 people to hospital. Fortunately, no one was seriously hurt, but it was so close to becoming a major disaster.

'The game was held up for about 20 minutes but once resumed it still ended in another 1-1 draw, courtesy of Johnny Giles, forcing a second replay five days later. The attendance that evening at Elland Road of 57,892 is still a record home gate.

'After much dispute between the two teams, Boothferry Park, Hull, was chosen for the replay and, within ten minutes Leeds had taken the lead through Rod Belfitt. Belfitt was one of Don Revie's so-called 'Shadow Squad'. These were a group of around half a dozen players who weren't quite first-team regulars, but despite being sought after by almost every other First Division team, they chose to stay with Revie and Leeds United. A large squad was invaluable to Revie.

'This second replay was played on 20 March and just two days later, Leeds were to play Bologna in the fourth round of the Fairs Cup in Italy. Leeds had asked Bologna to postpone the game until 5 April but the Italians had refused. Even worse, if the game against Sunderland was drawn again, the third replay would be on 22 March, the same night as the game in Italy!

'The prospect of two cup ties on the same evening left Don Revie with a dilemma, but he remained undeterred and said, "I am taking with me to Hull 22 or 24 players just in case, and as yet I have still not made up my mind on the exact composition of the party. If the

worst should happen, I will send the reserves to Italy, you never know with our reserves, we might still have a chance in the second leg at Elland Road.”

‘Whatever the outcome of the game at Hull, Leeds would still have a busy few days ahead. Unable to get a hotel in Hull, they were based at Bridlington and would have to be up at 5am the next day to fly from Humberside Airport to Luton, then from there they would fly to Forti in Italy, before embarking on an hour’s drive to Bologna. After the game they would have to ensure that they returned in time for Saturday’s league match at Blackpool and two more Easter fixtures over the next four days. All in all, Leeds would play five games in nine days. Leeds lost the first leg to Bologna 1-0, but won the return leg at Elland Road by the same score and went through on the toss of a disc.

‘There had been bad blood between Leeds and Sunderland on the pitch going back six or seven years and that evening at Hull, it would spill out like never before in front of a capacity crowd of 40,000. I’d gone to the game with my dad and uncle John and right up to kick-off and beyond, fights had broken out between both sets of supporters all over the ground. This fighting intensified after we had taken that early lead. Meanwhile tempers frayed once again on the pitch and the referee had trouble maintaining order.

‘With about ten minutes remaining Sunderland equalised to make the score 1-1 yet again. The game looked to be heading for a second replay when within minutes of the final whistle Leeds were awarded a dramatic penalty when Jimmy Greenhoff was brought down inside the box. Johnny Giles ignored all of the furor going on around him and coolly slotted the spot-kick past Jim Montgomery. This prompted irate Sunderland fans to invade the pitch, but order was soon restored when a policeman dived and rugby-tackled one of the Sunderland fans and the rest retreated back over the wall on to the terraces.

‘Billy Bremner said afterwards, “That copper could have waltzed into the Leeds rugby league side.” Tempers then reached fever pitch in the closing moments as Sunderland had two players, George Herd and George Mulhall, sent off.’



‘Villa Park is probably one of the most famous football grounds in the world. Aston Villa are one of the founder members of the Football League and Tom Hanks is reputed to be a Villa fan, for the simple

reason that, as he says, “Aston Villa has got to be the best name ever for a soccer club. I’m big on Aston Villa because the name is so sweet, it sounds like a lovely spa.”

‘I first experienced this famous ground when Leeds lost the FA Cup semi-final against Chelsea there in April 1967. Leeds were consigned to a bitter 1-0 defeat by a ruthless, determined and brutal display, not from Chelsea, but from referee Ken Burns of Stourbridge. I was 11 years old back then and people still talk today about Peter Lorimer’s goal being disallowed because Chelsea’s defensive wall was not ready. TV footage clearly shows Burns indicating to Giles to take the kick and the Leeds man then rolls the ball inside to Lorimer, who unleashes an unstoppable screamer past Chelsea keeper Peter Bonetti followed by wild celebrations from Leeds players and fans. I was right behind that goal and I can still picture the ball nestling in the back of the net as if it belonged there.

‘Within seconds, Bonetti pulled the ball from the net and threw it back to Lorimer. The goal had been disallowed by Mr Burns because Chelsea weren’t ready and the kick had to be retaken, resulting in a goal kick. Tony Hateley’s goal for Chelsea earlier was enough to take them to Wembley, where they were beaten by Tottenham Hotspur 2-1.’



‘I remember my first trip to Doncaster Rovers, it was for a friendly. I think it was the summer of either 1966 or 1967 and Doncaster were in either the Third or Fourth Division but, the thing I can remember clearly is how we got there. We travelled down the old A1 in my dad’s trusty white Sunbeam Rapier, a convertible! Don’t get me wrong, it wasn’t brand new or anything like that, maybe ten years old but, there we were, father, son and my new Leeds woollen scarf heading for Belle Vue in style with the top down.

‘It wasn’t much of a ground really, but the local blokes that stood around us were giving me a bit of a history lesson. “Largest pitch in t’country that old cock,” one said proudly, nodding to the early-season lush green turf. Then another joined in by saying, “See them floodleets? Tallest in t’country them.” “You know why? Eh?” I felt my dad dig me as if to shut me up, but I’d already asked, “Why?” “Well,” he said, puffing on his pipe. “Thuz an airfield ovver theyah an t’sop planes fleein in t’leets, thuv put more leets on top o’floodleets so that planes can see ’em affore the flee into ’em. It’s all clever stuff tha knos.” All these years on I can still remember that bloke at Donny.

‘One of Leeds’s and indeed football’s most famous players is Jack Charlton, who made his Leeds debut against Donny in April 1953. A famous player for Donny at that time was comedian Charlie Williams. The great John Charles once said, “He [Charlie] is without doubt the hardest player I ever played against.”

‘Doncaster have yo-yoed up and down the lower divisions throughout their long history and in 1995 under the ownership of chairman Ken Richardson, they tumbled out of the Football League and into the Conference. Also in 1995 Belle Vue’s main stand suffered extensive fire damage but, that’s not the end of the unhappy events. Nine months after the fire, Richardson was found guilty of conspiracy to arson and sentenced to four years in prison. It transpired that he had employed three men to set fire to the stadium in order to pay off the club’s debts with the insurance money.’



‘It was Leeds Road, Huddersfield, where my dad took me to try and curb my enthusiasm for Leeds United. It was around 1967/68 that my dad saw my enthusiasm turning into an obsession. I never saw that however – and I still don’t. I feel that it is quite normal to want to follow your football team to the ends of the earth and back again.

‘Anyway, dad’s plan was to take me to Elland Road one week and then, when Leeds were away the following week, he’d take me to watch Huddersfield Town. This little arrangement lasted for ten days. After watching Huddersfield draw 1-1 with Everton one Saturday and then beat someone else during the week, I said to my dad that if I couldn’t watch Leeds play away then could we go to watch the reserve team – and this is just what we did. Inevitably though the Leeds away games began to kick in and the rest, as they say, is history.

‘I remember a neighbour we used to have living across the street from us at number 15 called Mrs Cheeseborough and she had a nephew who played for Huddersfield Town called Geoff Hutt. On Tuesdays and Thursdays my mam would be late home from work and Mrs Cheeseborough would give me and my sister Julie our tea in her kitchen, or scullery as she called it. She would give us banana sandwiches. With sugar sprinkled on – yuk!

‘She obviously knew that I was a Leeds fan and she would tell me about this Geoff Hutt as if he was the best footballer on the planet. She would say things like, “I like to see Leeds win, but not when our Geoff is playing against them.”



‘We only played at Huddersfield twice in the league in the 1970s – in April and September 1971 when Town were promoted to the First Division before being relegated two seasons later. We didn’t win either of these encounters and in fact in the second one we lost 2-1 – while playing in red!

‘Huddersfield really only had one player who was worthy of note and that was their captain Trevor Cherry, so Don Revie bought him for £100,000 in 1972, but only on the undertaking that we also took Town’s dodgy centre-half Roy Ellam for £35,000. Revie gave him back to Huddersfield not long after on a free transfer.

‘It was at Leeds Road where I met and shook hands with a very limp-wristed Brian Clough, who was our manager there for a friendly in August 1974. It was the first and only time I ever met Clough.’



Let’s get on to Gary’s non-stop story. On this journey we’re not only going to visit every ground in Britain Leeds have visited in the last 46 years, we’re also popping across to our European neighbours for some quite astonishing tales. Yorkshire ay – not only just the wit, the stories, a massive dose of loyalty, the friendliness but, more gold medals in the 2012 London Olympics than Australia – now that’s summit to be proud of int it! I think you’re going to enjoy this.

**Andy Starmore**

# Welcome To Leeds United

THE Beatles were number one and number three in the charts with 'Hello, Goodbye' and the EP 'Magical Mystery Tour' respectively. Sandwiched in between them at number two was Georgie Fame with 'The Ballad of Bonnie and Clyde'. *Planet of the Apes* had just been released in the cinema, as had the sci-fi film *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

The 'I'm Backing Britain' campaign had just been endorsed by the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson with the idea of working an extra half an hour each day for no pay. The average price of a house was £2,530 and a loaf of bread was just five pence.

In the football world Manchester City were heading towards the old First Division title. Little did their fans know at the time that they would be waiting another 44 years before they were next crowned champions of England. Back in the 1967/68 campaign Leeds were also having a great season. On 17 January 1968 the mighty Leeds, as they most certainly were in those days, travelled a relatively short distance down to Derby County. There was never any love lost between these two rival clubs who had two managers that would be destined to loathe the sight of each other – Leeds's Don Revie and Derby's Brian Clough.

The rivalry inspired writer David Peace to produce *The Damned United*, an excellent book which ended up in the cinema, although I have to add that the film didn't really portray Revie in a good light, which was disappointing.

Leeds had already established themselves in the top flight by this time, having finished second, second and fourth in their first three seasons after promotion in 1964. They had just thumped

Southampton 5-0 in a league match at Elland Road and were now on their way to the Baseball Ground for a League Cup semi-final first-leg showdown.

Of the 31,904 fans packed inside Derby's home there was one fan who couldn't make it on this particular day, and for me I haven't been able to say that about any other Leeds match in the last 46 years. This was to be the start of a journey that has had more ups and downs than a roller coaster stretching from Scarborough to Blackpool – and back!

I was just 11 years old. I travelled to Derby for the first time for this League Cup tie. It was my first experience of the infamous 'corrugated alley' that used to run adjacent to the away end at the Baseball Ground. I had gone on the 'Football Special' train from Leeds with my dad and as we walked down that alley, the noise was deafening as fans chanted and banged and kicked the corrugated panels. We had been confronted by Derby fans all the way from the station but even though my heart was pounding I never felt scared one bit – after all, I was surrounded by thousands of Leeds fans and more importantly, I had my dad with me.

I laugh now, and sometimes shudder, when I think of going to the games with dad. Even when confronted by opposition fans, with your dad by your side you have nothing to fear have you? What I didn't realise then of course was that I was only 11 years old – but my dad would only have been about 30 himself! I still have memories of me defiantly waving my Leeds scarf in the face of mean-looking, tattooed skinheads at away grounds and then sulking when my dad would snatch it from me and put it in his pocket telling me in no uncertain terms to 'shut up'!

Leeds were sitting on the top of the First Division that day and beat Second Division Derby 2-0, but it is remembered more these days as probably the game that saw Clough develop his obsessive hatred towards Revie and Leeds.

A few weeks later came my second trip to Filbert Street, Leicester, following a prior visit in 1967, and this was a memorable encounter.

Gordon Banks was widely acknowledged as the best goalkeeper in Great Britain – he had played in the 1966 World Cup Final and I had seen him play for Leicester against us a couple of times. By the time we played them in this match Banks had been transferred from Leicester City to Stoke City and had been replaced by someone who was regarded as the greatest young goalkeeping prospect in years – Peter Shilton.

Leeds fans crammed into the away end witnessed a hard-fought 2-2 draw with our goals coming from Johnny Giles and Paul Madeley. Shilton saved a penalty in the closing stages.



Saturday 2 March 1968 will go down in Leeds United's folklore as a prominent date that changed the course of the club's history. Following the brilliant promotion to the top flight in 1964 Leeds had already begun a reputation of being the bridesmaids and never the bride – until now.

In 1965 Leeds lost out to Manchester United in the league on goal average. They were beaten in extra time by Liverpool in the club's first FA Cup Final. In 1966, again Leeds were runners-up in the First Division – this time to Liverpool. They were beaten by Real Zaragoza in a semi-final replay in the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup in the same year.

A year later Dynamo Zagreb broke all our hearts with a 2-0 aggregate victory in the final of the Fairs Cup and Chelsea knocked us out of the FA Cup 1-0 at the semi-final stage. At last Leeds were about to come out on top by claiming silverware and becoming 'Super Leeds'.

In only my third match away from Elland Road in this mammoth footballathon I was heading to the capital and a date with Arsenal at Wembley Stadium. An average price for a ticket that day was just £1.03.

John Hamilton was a Geordie, he was a mate and later a business partner with my dad back in the mid-1960s. He was also an avid Leeds supporter. I've never really been able to pinpoint why I became a Leeds fan. Obviously there was my dad taking me to games, but looking back, John, or Mr Hamilton as he was known to me, may just be one of the reasons I became a bit of a fanatic.

In 1965 I used to go with my dad to work at 'his' factory in the centre of Leeds at weekends and evenings. Of course it wasn't really *his* factory, he just worked there. He and Mr Hamilton used to do the cleaning and general maintenance of the three-storey clothes factory when all the workers had gone home. I would sweep a floor or something while dad would disappear and ply his trade elsewhere in the dark, old, creaking factory. We would finish our work and then go home.

Mr Hamilton would do the night shift on his return from Elland Road or an away game. On Leeds United matchdays I would look out

of the canteen window, which was on the second floor. It overlooked Sovereign Street on the banks of the River Aire and it was here where Leeds fans would get on the double-decker special buses that went to Elland Road.

In the beginning, it didn't mean a right lot to me, but then Mr Hamilton started leaving me a match programme under the canteen telephone which was perched on a purpose-built small wooden shelf that jutted out from the wall near the window where I would watch the buses. A lovely old lady called Elsie Binns used to run the canteen and she would leave my programme there until I next returned to 'work'. It was pure magic moving the phone and grabbing my brand new programme, which I would read from cover to cover.

On 2 March 1968 I went to Wembley Stadium for the very first time. I had already immersed myself in the world of Leeds United and had been going to most of the games for a couple of seasons.

Mr Hamilton was taking his grey mini-van to Wembley. I climbed in the back and dad sat in the front. We travelled down the old A1 and my little old belly was making all sorts of noises. Not because of hunger or travel sickness, but just pure excitement. I lay in the back watching the sky slowly come to life and listening to my dad and Mr Hamilton talking work and football.

I will never forget that first time I arrived at Wembley Stadium. I had seen crowds at Elland Road and other grounds, but here it all seemed so spread out, so big, so special. And this was outside the stadium.

The noise inside was indescribable as the two teams came out of the famous tunnel. I couldn't believe that Leeds United were out there on the hallowed turf. I thought it would have been impossible, but the crowd got even louder as the game got under way.

The game itself has been dubbed ever since as dour and boring, but I thought it was unbelievable if a tad ill-tempered. It certainly reached fever pitch as scuffles broke out at regular intervals. Then after 20 minutes, Terry Cooper hit one from the edge of the penalty area and it flew into the back of the Arsenal net. Cue more fighting between the teams.

Arsenal claimed that their goalkeeper, Jim Furnell, had been fouled by Jack Charlton and Paul Madeley – but TV footage clearly shows that Furnell was nowhere near the ball. It is well documented that Cooper had dreamt of scoring the winning goal at Wembley for three consecutive nights prior to the game. I dreamt about it for more than three nights after the game!

The afternoon just got better and better and even though we were holding on to a slender lead, I never wanted the game to end. I just couldn't get enough of the incredible atmosphere.

When the final whistle did blow, the Leeds players and fans celebrated like never before. I saw Billy Bremner do a forward roll as Jimmy Greenhoff lifted Johnny Giles up into the air. Charlton hugged Cooper. I hugged dad and Mr Hamilton and anyone near me. And everyone was doing the same. The presentation of the trophy to Bremner and Leeds's ensuing lap of honour all melted into one glorious memory.

As we came out of the ground, Leeds fans were all jumping up and down and dancing. It never dawned on me at the time, but this was the first major trophy that Leeds United had ever won, and I had been there! As we walked back towards the van I can remember sulking because my dad wouldn't buy me a small silver (plastic) cup that was on sale at one of the vendors. It had small white silk ribbons on it. 'Don't you think you've had enough today lad?' dad said. He was right of course, but even so I looked at Mr Hamilton with my best spaniel puppy-like eyes but he just laughed. 'Come on bonnie lad,' he said. 'Leeds United have won the real thing.'

I curled up in the back of the van and read my programme and as we entered the bottom end of the A1 I fell fast asleep. I woke up just as we drove into our estate. I then heard the handbrake and Mr Hamilton opened the back doors of the van. As I climbed out I thanked him for a great day and went into the house still clutching my rolled-up programme.

A few minutes later dad followed me in and put the kettle on. He made himself a sandwich and brought me one with a cup of tea. 'Enjoyed it?' He asked. 'You what?' I said, 'Not half! Thanks dad.' With that he put a small silver cup with white ribbons in my hand. 'Here, you miserable little git!' he smiled.

I love my dad...and Leeds United.



Leeds followed up their first major trophy with a 2-0 win over Bristol City in the fifth round of the FA Cup at Elland Road followed by a 1-1 draw in the First Division at home to Nottingham Forest. Nine matches in and I had still not witnessed a defeat. In fact seven out of nine were victories.

There was always something to be said for going with your dad to some of the most feared football grounds in the country – and by

that I mean events off the pitch. St James' Park used to be a really dodgy ground for away fans to go to. The coach park for the away fans was a cattle market and the only entrance into it was three feet wide so if you were going through it you were a visitor, simple as that – hence the hundreds of Newcastle supporters hanging around just picking off supporters trying to get through.

When a mob of Leeds fans arrived at this entrance it was a sight to behold – the police were always virtually non-existent in those days on Tyneside so there were some colourful scuffles that took place. This was my first venture into what was known as the 'Magpies Nest' and once again I travelled by car. This time it was in uncle John's lime green Ford Anglia. Dad was sat in the front and I was in the back with my cousin Graham. Graham was sat behind my dad and I soon found out why. As we trundled up the A1, John, a very heavy pipe-smoker, would wind down his window at regular intervals and jettison huge dollops of phlegm out which would invariably splatter against my window as I ducked.

Finally we arrived at St James' Park and I refer back to my comment at the beginning about going to feared grounds with your dad. During the mid-to-late-1960s and 70s St James' Park was without doubt in the top four of the most dangerous grounds to go to. My Leeds scarf was quickly confiscated and stuffed into my dad's pocket as we left the car. Then, as we entered the ground I noticed, and so did the others, that we had inadvertently paid to go into the Leazes End – the home section. I looked at the Leeds fans in the other end and then I looked at dad.

'Howay the Lads!' rang out as we stood in silence. We still stood in silence as Newcastle went 1-0 up. The home fans sang and banged on the back of the stand and my dad looked really uncomfortable. John didn't look much better and our Graham constantly stared down at the floor – we must have stuck out like a sore thumb. I got the distinct feeling that neither dad nor John wanted Leeds to score. Then with just seconds remaining Norman Hunter unleashed an unstoppable left-footed drive straight into the top corner of the Newcastle net.

I couldn't contain myself and I leapt up and punched the air. Dad and John both immediately leapt on me and held me down with a firm arm on each of my shoulders. Three thousand pairs of eyes glared at us as I was bundled out of the ground by dad and John. For the first time I saw dad visibly shaken and John began fumbling with his pipe as we started to blend in with the crowd that was now streaming out of the ground. Usually I would fly my scarf out of the

car window on the way home but it remained in dad's pocket until we reached Wetherby roundabout on the A1, eight miles from Leeds.

In March 1968 came an away game at Chelsea and there is a song that starts, 'When I was just a little boy I asked my mother what should I be. Should I be Chelsea, should I be Leeds, here's what she said to me,' and continues in a rather less than complimentary manner towards Chelsea supporters.

Leeds United and Chelsea. It's a recipe that doesn't sit well on the stomach. It's a recipe that leaves a sour, bitter taste in the mouth. It's a recipe that, in the eyes of the supporter, will always be destined never to rid itself of the animosity which exists between the two sets of fans.

Well, where do we start with this one? Dear oh dear. The rivalry between Leeds and Chelsea is fierce. So fierce that it will be talked about for hundreds of years to come on space stations and galaxy outposts all across the entire universe.

I really can't remember much about my first visit to Stamford Bridge in March 1968. I do recall thinking it was a big ground though, but not a particularly good one. It had odd stands dotted about with no real conformity. We were housed in the very large open end opposite the infamous Chelsea Shed. In our end, to our left, there was a stupid little stand perched on what looked to be unsafe stilts. Home fans were in there, and they were welcome to it too. It remained a much-talked-about fixture at Stamford Bridge for many years.

Needless to say there will be plenty more to come with this fiercest of rivalries throughout the book, as the seasons and the years roll on. Leeds followed the goalless draw at Chelsea in 1968 with a 2-0 home win over Manchester City in the league before I was to be part of a noisy and tense 80,000 crowd at Ibrox as Leeds travelled to Glasgow Rangers in the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup.

When Leeds became the first British team to win the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup (now known as the Europa League) back in 1968, they beat Scottish opposition in the three consecutive rounds up to the final; Hibernian, Rangers and Dundee.

When I travelled to Ibrox for the Rangers game two days before my 12th birthday it was the first time I had ventured outside England. I travelled north with my dad on a 'Wally Trolley' (Wallace Arnold coach) and the atmosphere at Ibrox was intimidating to say the least.

Leeds fans weren't grouped all together, but instead were dotted about in little pockets around the ground. We were in what was probably the largest group of Leeds followers in one of the corners



behind the goal but Rangers supporters were all around us – very large Rangers supporters they were too!

I didn't know it at the time of course but playing for Rangers that evening was a man who I would grow to dislike intensely over the years – a young Alex Ferguson. The noise from the partisan 80,000 crowd was immense but the Leeds defence in front of keeper Gary Sprake held firm to earn a 0-0 draw. There seemed to be almost as many Rangers fans at Elland Road two weeks later as there had been at Ibrox, but Leeds won the second leg 2-0 to set up a semi-final with Dundee.

Two home games against Yorkshire rivals Sheffield United, one in an FA Cup quarter-final and a league encounter, followed the trip north of the border. Two wins were just what the Don ordered. Paul Madeley secured a narrow 1-0 victory in the cup and goals from Madeley again and two from Johnny Giles made it a more comfortable 3-0 league win. After knocking Rangers (and Alex Ferguson) out of the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup, with over 50,000 spectators crammed into Elland Road, it was time for my first trip to Tottenham on this non-stop adventure. Leeds were to go down 2-1 in front of another bumper crowd.

It wouldn't happen now but back in 1968 there wouldn't be any moans about the fact that teams sometimes played two matches in two days, and so it was off to Coventry City the day after travelling to London. Coventry had recently appointed their new manager Noel Cantwell, replacing the unmistakable character who was in charge at Highfield Road for the previous seven years – Jimmy Hill.

Terry Hibbitt was one of the unsung heroes of Don Revie's legendary squad during the late 1960s and early 70s. Hibbitt was among a group of players who were known as the 'Shadow Squad' who were never regular first-teamers but remained at the club as vital squad cover despite interest in them from elsewhere.

My first vivid memory of Hibbitt was at Highfield Road, Coventry, in April 1968. He was small in stature, no taller than Billy Bremner or Johnny Giles, and he had bow legs. My dad always called him 'Cowboy' because of those unbelievable legs. 'You could drive a bus through them,' Dad would laugh.

He also had quite a large head and big beady eyes, with black wavy hair always combed back. I realise this doesn't give the most flattering description, but it's true. Above all, however, Hibbitt was a very skilful player, and took most of the corners whenever he played. I was stood at the front with dad as he took one of these corners at

Coventry that day. He was only a couple of feet from us and I saw him look at my Leeds scarf that was wrapped around my wrist and hung over the wall as he launched the ball into the six-yard box.

The Coventry defence headed it out but only as far as Hibbitt who had moved inwards. It was like slow motion as the ball left Hibbitt's boot and soared into the top corner of Coventry's net. Then, best of all, Hibbitt ran over to where we were stood to celebrate his goal. He put his hands to the side of my face and we were all jumping about like mad. That is why I have such a vivid and detailed description of him to this day.

My first trip to Goodison Park, the home of Everton, would come in 1969 but there was soon a little matter of an FA Cup semi-final against the Toffees in 1968 to come first. It was played at Old Trafford in front of 63,000 supporters.

When I started watching Leeds in the 1960s it seemed that watching them play in an FA Cup semi-final was something that occurred every season. I had seen them cruelly robbed at Villa Park against Chelsea in April 1967 and here we were, almost a year later to the day, on our way to play Everton in another semi-final, this time at Old Trafford.

A group of us, including my sister Julie and my cousin Jean, set off on our journey with dad in his 18cwt Thames Dormobile. A neighbour, Trevor Morris, had drawn and painted some Leeds posters to stick in the windows and we left Kippax with about a dozen Leeds scarves flying proudly out of the windows.

In those days it wasn't just a quick glide across the M62. Work on the trans-Pennine part of the motorway had only just begun as we embarked on a three-hour trip across the rugged Pennines and up and over Saddleworth Moor then down into the deepest, darkest depths of Lancashire. All around us there were large excavators and diggers gouging out the tough rocky landscape to make way for the new motorway – it would be a further three years before it was completed.

As we gazed at the huge rock face being carved away, dad said, 'Those JCB's aren't strong enough for this job. I've heard that they're going to hire a load of Yorkshiremen to clear the way with their teeth.'

Eventually we found ourselves very close to the ground and in a large queue of coaches, vans and cars with Leeds scarves hanging out of the windows and blue, white and yellow flags everywhere. Then the occasion took a serious grip of us in dad's van and we immediately burst into song, 'We shall not, we shall not be moved.'

Although I was only 12 years old, I had noticed that a certain pattern had emerged for these sort of games – the opposition fans were always given the ‘home’ end while Leeds fans were always dumped into the away end, which in those days was always open and it was impossible to generate the same atmosphere as the opposite section that always had a roof over it. This occurred at all eight semi-finals, including replays and one FA Cup Final replay, that Leeds played between 1967 and 1977 at Villa Park (twice), Old Trafford (twice), Hillsborough (three times), Burnden Park, and Maine Road. Today was to be no exception.

Unfortunately for Leeds, another pattern also emerged from these types of games. Our goalkeeper Gary Sprake was prone to costly errors. One occurred just before half-time in this game although, admittedly, Sprake was playing with a badly damaged shoulder, which restricted his movement. Everton centre-forward Joe Royle knew this and barged into Sprake at every opportunity. There were no substitute keepers back then.

Just before the interval Sprake mis-hit a clearance and it rolled just a few yards to Everton’s Jimmy Husband who instinctively pounced on the ball and took a snap-shot towards goal. Leeds full-back Paul Reaney was famous for his goal-line clearances and he seemed to have things covered behind Sprake, who was on the floor, but Jack Charlton was between Reaney and the ball and stopped it with both hands. Johnny Morrissey converted the penalty.

Reaney has said many times since, ‘I had everything under control and shouted such to Jack, but he handled the ball when he simply didn’t have to. To this day I’ve never let big Jack forget it!’

Although Leeds then took the game to Everton, Mick Jones and Terry Cooper both hitting the woodwork, they were unable to break down a resilient defence and 1-0 was enough to see the Toffees through to Wembley, where they lost the final 1-0 to underdogs West Bromwich Albion.

The journey back to Yorkshire was an absolute nightmare as we stared in silence at the huge cranes and machinery silhouetted against the darkening skies overhead. Worst of all I had an awful argument with Jean over something to do with the game – I can’t quite remember what. This set everyone else off arguing with each other until dad shouted at the top of his voice for us all to be quiet and we continued the rest of the journey in absolute silence, except for the odd mutter here and there.

Every Leeds fan had seen enough Scousers for the time being but the red side of Liverpool would arrive at Elland Road a week

after that heartbreaking defeat to the Toffees. More misery ensued as Liverpool ran out 2-1 winners. Sandwiched in between though was to be a second jaunt up to Scotland, this time to face Dundee.

One of the best things about supporting Leeds during the Don Revie era was that you didn't have time to dwell on a disappointing result, because there was always another game literally just days away.

This was the case after the FA Cup semi-final defeat against Everton at Old Trafford. Five days later, that particular game had been consigned to the archives and I was heading north with dad, his mate John Hamilton and the Leeds United Travel Club on a Fallas coach. We were going to Dundee in Scotland to watch Leeds in yet another semi-final, this time in the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup.

Fallas Coaches were very regal-looking vehicles, dark blue with majestic gold livery. The owner of the company was a different kettle of fish however. Fallas operated from premises on Elland Road, directly opposite the ground. A large car park accommodated the coaches at the rear and at the front was the bungalow where the owner lived, and every matchday became an ordeal for him.

To the front of his property was a wall, which unfortunately became an ideal 'seat' for fans to eat their fish and chips or hot dogs. The owner was having none of it however, and would come out wielding a baseball bat and literally whacking any fans that had dared to park their rear on his wall. Police had to constantly intervene, but this activity continued almost every week. I'm not entirely certain when they vacated the premises and ceased trading, but alas Fallas Coaches are no more, and neither is the bungalow.

When we arrived in Dundee, we were confronted with *two* grounds, one on one side of the road and one on the other. Dens Park, the home of Dundee, is very close to Tannadice Park, the home of Dundee United. In fact, the two grounds are just 200 yards apart. They even share the same car park and are the closest senior grounds in Britain. Only two stadiums in Europe are closer – MTK and BKV Előre in Budapest, whose respective homes actually back on to each other.

Dundee had only previously played in Europe back in 1963 when AC Milan beat them in the semi-final of the European Cup. This season they had beaten DWS Amsterdam, RFC de Liege and FC Zurich to reach yet another European semi-final.

Once we had established which ground to enter we took our places and feasted on a Scotch pie and broth. Leeds were at full strength with the exception of Gary Sprake, who had played against

Everton with a badly injured shoulder. Our ever-reliable reserve keeper, David Harvey, deputised.

Bremner kicked off and exerted pressure from the start, which was rewarded with a goal after 26 minutes, scored by Paul Madeley. Dundee, however, were not going to give up without a fight and within ten minutes they had drawn level through Bobby Wilson. In the second half Dundee forced Leeds back and we looked in real danger of falling behind but Harvey pulled off a couple of magnificent saves and Leeds ended up the stronger of the two sides. Mr Hamilton grabbed me just before the end as a delicate lob from Jimmy Greenhoff bounced off the top of the crossbar and to safety for the Scotsmen. 'I thought that fucker was in,' he said as he let me go.

The next morning at school I was showing Graham Hunter my match programme and then it suddenly dawned on me that I may be going to my second final of the season. All we had to do was beat Dundee at home in the second leg. There was a somewhat eerie atmosphere for that second leg at Elland Road. The large open end, known as the Spion Kop, had been demolished to make way for a brand new stand to be built during the close-season. All that remained that evening was a large mound of earth and rubble.

Once again, Dundee proved worthy opponents and it took a solitary goal by Eddie Gray to finally separate the sides and put Leeds into the final of the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup for the second consecutive season.

My love affair with Leeds also includes my love affair with the brilliant white shirts that Don Revie introduced to Elland Road shortly after his appointment as manager in March 1961, so you may gasp in horror at something I am about to reveal.

I have a hatred for the colour red because of a certain club from Old Trafford. Who can blame me for that? When I was married to my first wife in 1978 she went out and bought some pots and pans. They were red. They were also immediately thrown out of the front door. The marriage lasted barely two months.

I also attempted to paint a fire engine white once and with my painting and decorating firm I will give a discount for the removal of red paint. In fact I will do it for free. So prepare to be astonished.

I have an absolutely dreadful confession to make: I used to like Arsenal's kit. I was only nine or ten years old but I would see pictures of their distinctive red shirts with white sleeves in my copies of *Goal* and *Football Monthly* and I liked it. I never had any interest in Arsenal as a team, obviously, and the shirt thing passed very quickly.

My bedroom walls were always full of pictures of Leeds, Leeds and more Leeds. There was no comparison anywhere in the world with the glorious all-white Leeds kit. It was simply magical. Hung down the wall by the side of my bedroom door was a homemade tape measure and at the side of it I had little pieces of card at different levels. These cards depicted the height of each individual Leeds player. My bedroom was a shrine to Leeds.

The final league game of the season was to be a relatively short trip across the Pennines to Burnley. It had been an unbelievably strenuous but amazing season nonetheless. Not surprisingly the players must have been shattered, having won the League Cup, lost out narrowly to Everton in the semi-finals of the FA Cup, eventually finishing fourth in the league and while still awaiting an Inter-Cities Fairs Cup Final, which would now be taking place during the beginning of the 1968/69 season. And the players think they've got it tough nowadays! I remember that trip in 1968 to Burnley's ground. Well, half a ground.

The first time I went to Turf Moor it was poor. The second time was even worse. For the first visit, in May 1968, I arrived at a ground with only two parts open. The large side that we were in (well over half of it anyway, Burnley fans were just over the adjoining fence) and the end to our right behind the goal where most of the Burnley fans were. Opposite us was a kind of building site and a large white boarding hid the other end. We lost 3-0, and there is more on that second visit in the next chapter.

The 1967/68 season had drawn to a close, albeit with an Inter-Cities Fairs Cup Final still to play in at the beginning of the following campaign, 1968/69, which would be the first campaign that I would not miss a single game – the first of what now is 45 consecutive seasons. So then, where would my next 'new ground' be?