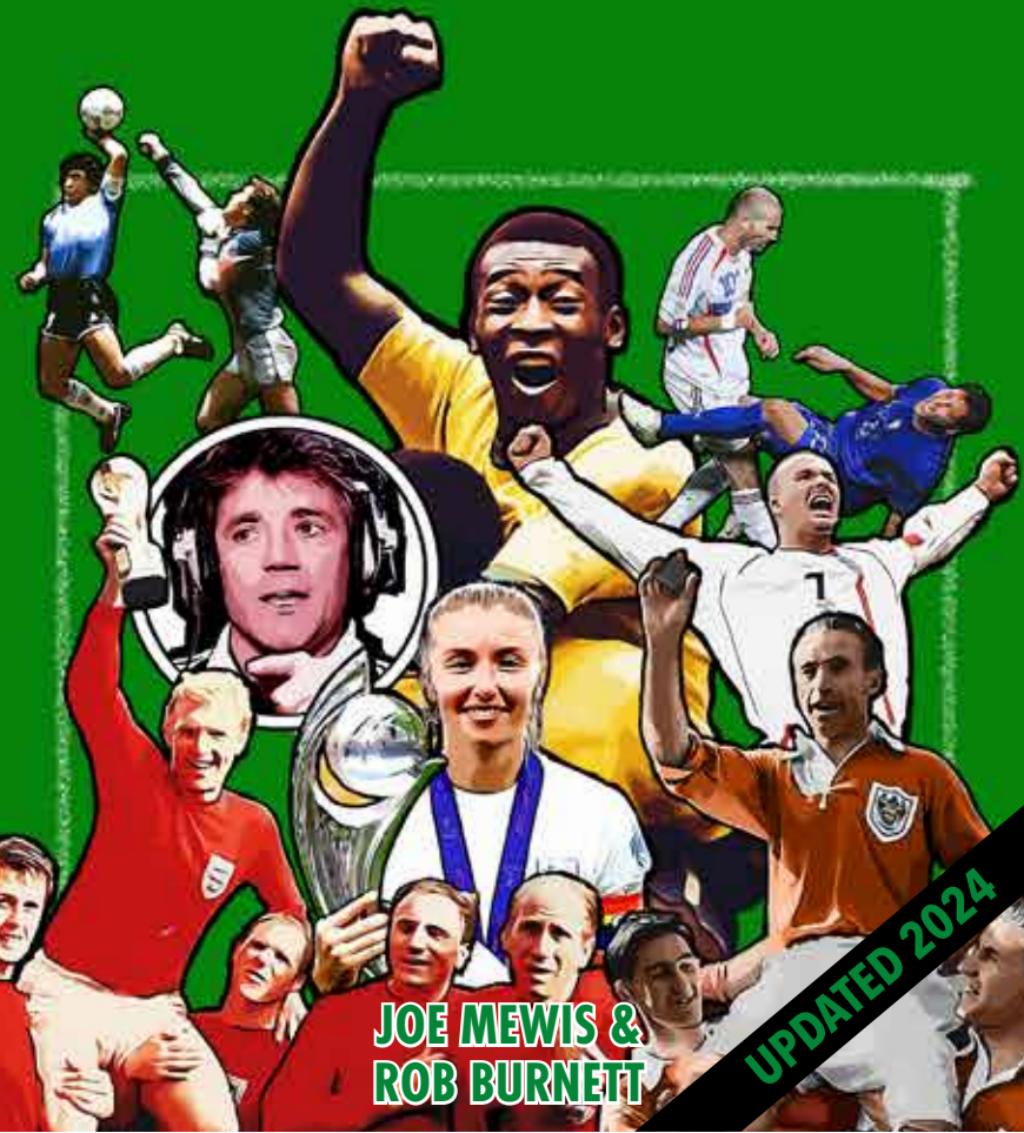


FOOTBALL

On This Day

*History, Facts & Figures
from Every Day of the Year*

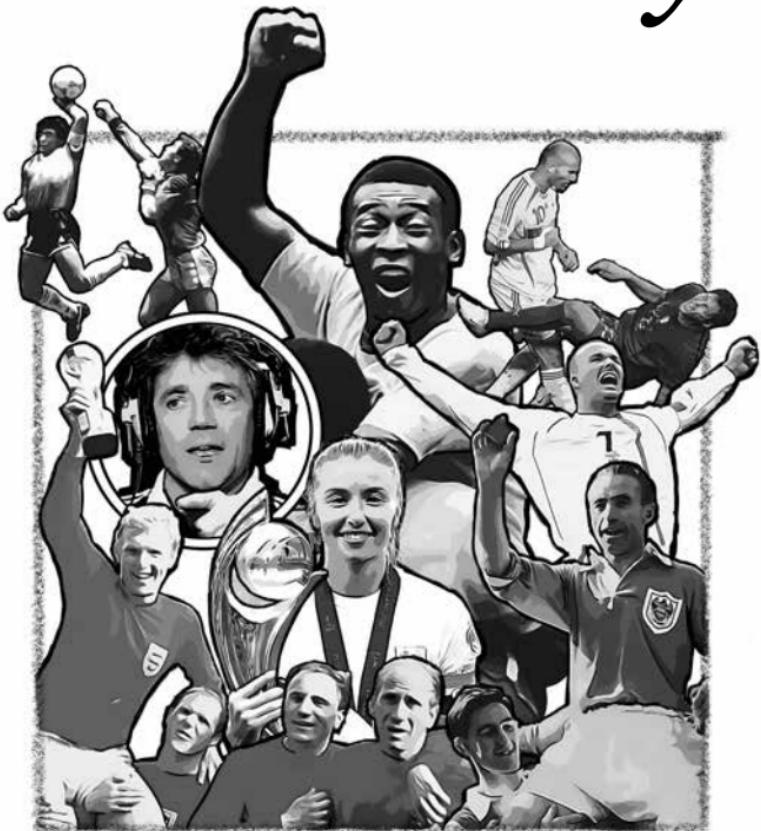


**JOE MEWIS &
ROB BURNETT**

UPDATED 2024

FOOTBALL

On This Day



JANUARY

JANUARY 1

When Sir Stanley Matthews signed for Blackpool in 1947 his new manager Joe Smith said: 'You're 32, do you think you can make it for another couple of years?' Sir Stan would go on to play at the top until he was 50, finally retiring in 1965 and it was on this day that year that he became the first footballer ever to receive a knighthood. Despite being the first winner of the Ballon d'Or, an England regular and with a playing career lasting more than 30 years, Sir Stan only ever won one trophy: the FA Cup in 1953.

Alan Shearer, who would already be a knight if any of the royals were Geordies, was celebrating today in 1996 when he became the first man to hit 100 Premiership goals since its formation in 1992. He raised his right arm and wheeled away from goal in familiar fashion after scoring for Blackburn against Tottenham Hotspur in a 2-1 win for the reigning champions.

JANUARY 2

On this day in 1930 Jim Dyet pulled on a King's Park FC jersey for the first time and ran out on to the pitch at the Forthbank Stadium to make his debut for the now-defunct club against Forfar Athletic. Not only did King's Park destroy Forfar 12-2 but debutant Dyet opened his account in spectacular fashion, scoring eight times. This remains the highest-scoring debut in British football.

Staying in Scotland, today is also the anniversary of the second Ibrox Stadium disaster, which happened in 1971. Hundreds of fans were injured and 66 lost their lives when crush barriers collapsed as thousands of Rangers fans tried to leave the ground after Celtic took the lead in the 89th minute. Colin Stein scored an equaliser for Rangers during injury time and an initial theory that fans had tried to get back in to the ground when the goal went in was later discounted. The disaster remains the worst in the history of Scottish football.

JANUARY 3

Before the explosion of multimedia formats which allow you to check football results on television, the internet, your phone, watch or whatever comes next, the radio was the only place to hear all the day's scores. On this day in 1948 the familiar theme tune to *BBC Sports Report* was heard for the first time when the programme advertised as a 'new Saturday feature for sportsmen' was first broadcast. The show survives to this day – though they no longer read out the classified results, as producers reasoned fans now have plenty of other ways to check the scores.

Sir Alex Ferguson suffered his first-ever FA Cup third round defeat as Manchester United boss today in 2010. What made it worse was that it was bitter rivals Leeds United who inflicted defeat on Fergie's men. And what made it *even* worse was the fact that Leeds were licking their wounds in League One at the time. Jermaine Beckford's 19th-minute strike was enough to seal a stunning upset that is still sung about every week at Elland Road.

JANUARY 4

One of the most famous FA Cup giant-killings occurred on this day in 1992 when George Graham's Arsenal, the reigning league champions, visited the Racecourse Ground to play Wrexham, who were rock bottom of the entire league structure at the time, 92nd of 92 clubs. The Gunners were leading 1-0 with seven minutes left when Mickey Thomas and Steve Wadkin scored to win the tie for Wrexham in dramatic fashion.

Eleven years later and just over the border, Shrewsbury Town were emulating their Welsh counterparts today in 2003 when they knocked out Premier League side Everton, also by a 2-1 scoreline. The Shrews had lost their last two games 6-0 and 5-1 while Everton were in the early stages of the David Moyes revival, and the game was Wayne Rooney's first in the FA Cup. Nigel Jemson made light of the 80 league places separating the teams by scoring twice to give Shrewsbury a 2-1 win.

JANUARY 5

The all-conquering Liverpool side of the 1970s had a scare today in 1974 when Third Division Doncaster Rovers held them to a 2-2 draw at Anfield in the FA Cup third round. Kevin Keegan bagged both the Liverpool goals against his hometown club but Donny nearly won it in the final minute when they hit the woodwork. Liverpool won the replay 2-0 and went on to win the trophy.

Always a man with a penchant for the dramatic, it was on this day in 1997 that Keegan resigned as manager of Newcastle United. He had been lured back from the golf courses of Spain in 1992 to help the Magpies who were on their knees and heading for the Third Division. After saving them from relegation, getting them promoted and then taking them to the brink of the Premier League title in that famous 1995/96 season, KK decided he had had enough and left St James' Park, but not for the last time.

JANUARY 6

If you had to attribute Arsenal's position at the sharp end of English football to one man, it would have to be Herbert Chapman. He was a highly innovative coach who took an interest in every facet of the club. Shirt numbers, white footballs and games under floodlights were just some of Chapman's initiatives. He died on this day in 1934 of pneumonia after watching Arsenal's third team play Guildford City in pouring rain.

No doubt Coventry City were hoping Terry Butcher would have the same effect on the club as Chapman had at Arsenal when they hired him as their new player-manager in 1990. At 31 he was the youngest First Division boss but it was not to be and on this day in 1992 Butcher was shown the door at Highfield Road, and then told to get the hell out of it after a wretched run of results saw the Sky Blues stuck at the wrong end of the table.

KEVIN KEFGAN WAS NOT LOVING IT AT NEWCASTLE ANY MORE AND QUIT IN JANUARY 1997.



JANUARY 7

In a clear snub to Mrs Redknapp and their wedding day, Harry Redknapp claimed this was the best day of his life in 1984 when his Bournemouth side beat holders Manchester United 2-0 in the FA Cup third round at Dean Court. Under Big Ron Atkinson United had lost only one away game all season but were missing key defenders Gordon McQueen and Kevin Moran. They still had big names like Frank Stapleton, Bryan Robson and Norman Whiteside in the team and should have been more than enough to see off Harry's Third Division strugglers. They weren't.

There was more First Division embarrassment in the cup five years later in 1989 when Coventry City were knocked out by lowly non-league side Sutton United just two years after the Sky Blues had won the trophy. Sutton won the match 2-1 but their cup run was brought to a crashing halt in the next round when they were thumped 8-0 at Norwich.

JANUARY 8

When Cardiff City lined up to play Queens Park Rangers in an FA Cup tie in 1990 thousands of fans packed into Ninian Park hoping for a thriller. Sadly for them the game was a dull 0-0 draw but things got worse for Cardiff on this day, the Monday after the game, when club officials found canny thieves had broken in and stolen the £50,000 gate receipts from the game.

A less canny thief was in action on this day in 2003 when he chose perhaps the worst possible victim. Drug addict Carl Bishop broke into Duncan Ferguson's home but Big Dunc caught him at it, punched him and held on to the little tealeaf until the police arrived. In court, prosecutor Anthony Limont claimed: 'Mr Ferguson was very frightened,' but he's not fooling us. After Bishop's two-day hospital stay recovering from Big Dunc's own brand of justice he was given four years in prison.

JANUARY 9

On this day in 1900 Societa Podistica Lazio, or Lazio Track and Field Club was founded in the Prati district of Rome with the founding fathers naming the club after the district rather than the city to try to be inclusive to the whole region. They took up football a year later and had the Eternal City to themselves until 1927 when Roma were formed. Lazio resisted Mussolini's efforts to merge the two clubs, ensuring the fiercely contested Rome derby continues to this day.

The club had to wait until 1974 to win their first Scudetto, and their second was delivered in 2000 by Sven-Göran Eriksson, who resigned from the club on this day in 2001, clearing the way for him to become England manager. The Swede had agreed to take over in the summer but Lazio's form dived after his intention to quit was made public, forcing him to leave early to oversee England's rise to the heights of mediocrity.

JANUARY 10

Although Sir Alex Ferguson will always be remembered as the manager who brought through the 'Class of 92' golden generation of players at Old Trafford that included the likes of Beckham, Scholes and so on, he was also never afraid to splash the cash. On this day in 1995 he broke the British transfer record when he paid £6m plus Keith Gillespie for Newcastle striker Andrew Cole. Cole soon justified his fee and banged in plenty of goals for the Red Devils until he was sold to Blackburn in 2001.

Andrew's namesake Joe was part of another highly talented bunch of youngsters to come through the ranks together, this time at West Ham. Young Cole was just 17 when Harry Redknapp handed him his first league start at Old Trafford on this day in 1999. Even Joe's talents could not prevent the Hammers going down 4-1 to Manchester United.

JANUARY 11

Life was a beach for Charlton Athletic today in 2003 when they turned up at Stamford Bridge to play their Premiership fixture with Chelsea. The Addicks were soon undone by what Chelsea were laughably calling their pitch, which was made up entirely of sand with not a blade of grass in sight. Alan Curbishley said: 'It reminded me of a piece of land about to have a patio laid on it,' as his team went down 4-1.

Cultures clashed today in 2019, when a Leeds United intern was spotted observing a Derby County training session prior to the two sides' Championship clash. As Rams boss Frank Lampard fumed, Marcelo Bielsa causally admitted Leeds had been doing this all season before his team saw off Derby 2-0 at Elland Road. The tabloid press quickly dug their claws in, dubbing the incident 'Spygate'. Bielsa's brilliantly idiosyncratic response was to invite the media to a 90-minute press conference during which he laid bare the forensic details of all of his scouting and analytic methods, his point being that all this fuss over watching one meagre training session wasn't worth the bother.

JANUARY 12

Former World Footballer of the Year George Weah made his debut in English football today in 2000 after signing for Chelsea on a six-month loan deal. He came off the bench in his first game to score the winner against London rivals Tottenham at Stamford Bridge, having arrived in London from Italy just hours before the match. He said: 'It's a good beginning. I feel welcome. I'm hoping to do great things in London and I'm very happy that Gianluca [Vialli] believes in me.'

David Beckham announced a big-money move to the LA Galaxy on this day in 2007. The former England captain's deal with the MLS side was reportedly worth £128m but many people felt he was effectively consigning himself to semi-retirement in a below-par league. Despite leaving Real Madrid for the USA, Becks managed to win back his place in the England squad and help raise the profile of America's fourth-most-popular sport.

JANUARY 13

The only thing that perhaps gave Arsène Wenger greater pleasure than winning trophies was identifying and nurturing young talent. He did it many times at Arsenal, and on this day in 1997 he started a project that would go on to be one of his most successful when, as Monaco boss, he gave Thierry Henry his first professional contract. After an unsuccessful stint at Juventus, Henry followed his mentor to Arsenal, where a switch from winger to striker made him one of the best players in the world.

A young player that Wenger would have loved to get his hands on was Brazilian Alexandre Pato. AC Milan bagged the striker, nicknamed ‘the Little Duck’, for €22m from Internacional and today in 2008 he made his debut, getting on the scoresheet in the *Rossoneri*’s 5-2 win over Napoli at the San Siro.

JANUARY 14

Today in 1958 a crowd of 60,000 watched Manchester United beat Red Star Belgrade 2-1 in a European Cup tie at Old Trafford. The second leg, three weeks later, was to be the last appearance of the Busby Babes before the Munich disaster.

On the same day 11 years later, Sir Matt Busby announced he would retire as United manager at the end of the season. After rebuilding the team that was ripped apart by the tragedy in Munich, he had finally led United to the European Cup in 1968, ten years after the plane crash. He said: ‘It’s time to make way for a younger man... a track-suited manager.’ Sir Bobby Charlton, who survived the crash and went on to win the European Cup, said at the time: ‘Matt Busby’s presence will always be at Manchester United. He is Manchester United.’

JANUARY 15

Today in 2006 Sven-Göran Eriksson was ruing the day he ever met Mazher Mahmood. The then-England boss thought he was a rich Arab sheikh interested in buying Aston Villa and installing Sven as manager but in reality the ‘fake sheikh’ was a *News of the World* reporter. Sven told him Rio Ferdinand was lazy, Wayne Rooney came from a poor family and most staggering of all, that he would quit England if they won the World Cup. If only Sven, if only.

“Remember the name: Wayne Rooney!” Clive Tyldesley told us when the Liverpudlian youngster scored that belter of a goal for Everton against Arsenal back in 2002. Today in 2021, Rooney announced his playing days were over and he would begin his managerial career as boss of Derby County. In between, Rooney had won every club trophy going with Manchester United – including five Premier League titles, the FA Cup and the Champions League – and become England’s leading goalscorer.

JANUARY 16

Today in 1982 the draw for the upcoming World Cup in Spain turned into a right old Titus Shambles. Things got off to a bad start when they forgot to keep the seeded teams apart, and then one of the containers holding the balls jammed, splitting open and cascading ping-pong balls everywhere. Any hopes of FIFA salvaging any self-respect from the charade were dashed when the West German representative Hermann Neuberger accused the organisers of slave labour by using Spanish orphans to fetch the balls back and forth.

The 1982 World Cup was the only one that Kevin Keegan managed to play in, as England had not qualified for the two previous tournaments. Even then he only managed 26 minutes against Spain because of injury. Today in 2008 KK made a dramatic return as Newcastle manager, 11 years after resigning.

JANUARY 17

A Football League attendance record was set when 83,620 supporters gathered to watch Manchester United take on Arsenal today in 1948. The match was played at Manchester City's Maine Road stadium because Old Trafford was still undergoing reconstruction after suffering bomb damage in March 1941. It would not reopen until 1949. The match ended 1-1 and Arsenal went on to take the title. United were runners-up that season but did win the FA Cup – Matt Busby's first trophy for the club.

On this day in 2000, Frenchman Eric Cantona beat George Best to be named Manchester United's best player of the 20th century in a poll conducted on the club's official website.

JANUARY 18

By far the smallest crowd for any England match (reports vary from 85 to 300 fans) turned out at a snow-covered Kennington Oval on this day in 1879 to see the home side beat Wales 2-1 in the first meeting of the two sides on a football pitch. Herbert Whitfield of Old Etonians and Thomas Sorby of Thursday Wanderers put England 2-0 up before William Davies from Oswestry scored Wales' first ever goal in international football.

Jimmy Hill wasn't around in those days but the man who was a player, manager, club chairman, TV pundit and emergency linesman, was also the driving force behind the abolition of the maximum wage in football. Until Hill stuck his chin in, players could only earn a maximum of £20 a week, dropping to £17 in the summer. As chairman of the Professional Footballers' Association he had threatened a strike, but the Football League president Joe Richards backed down on this day in 1961 and within weeks Fulham's Johnny Haynes became the first £100-a-week player.

JANUARY 19

At Barcelona they throw pig's heads on to the pitch but Charlton's fans apparently prefer a more domestic animal missile. On this day in 1982 at the old Valley, the home fans livened up a 0–0 bore draw with Luton by lobbing the front half of a dead cat on to the pitch. Chris Weaver saw it happen: 'A passing policeman, who the cat had narrowly missed, nudged it gingerly to one side with his foot and that was that.'

Robbie Savage may be the pantomime villain of football but even he has probably never had a dead cat thrown at him. Today in 2005 he engineered himself a move from Birmingham City to Blackburn Rovers to hook up with his old international manager Mark Hughes. Rob claimed he wanted to move to be nearer his parents in Wales despite the fact Blackburn is just five minutes closer to Wrexham than Birmingham. Birmingham managing director Karren Brady said, 'If Robbie has come to that decision because of the distance between Blackburn and Wrexham, he should take a look on his map.'

JANUARY 20

Paolo Maldini began his extraordinary career on this day in 1985 when an injury to Milan defender Sergio Battistini in their game against Udinese gave the 16-year-old his first taste of first-team action. Following on from his father Cesare – who was a Milan player for 12 years – Paolo went on to become a legend for the *Rossoneri* in a one-club career that would see him win more trophies than you can shake a stick at. A stint as the club's technical director followed between 2018 and 2023 in which he helped deliver the club's first Serie A title for 11 years in 2022.

Theo Walcott wasn't even born when Maldini began his career but the young Englishman was making waves of his own today in 2006 when he became the most expensive 16-year-old in the history of British football with his transfer from Southampton to Arsenal, which was worth up to £12m.

JANUARY 21

After the Ridsdale and O'Leary era, administration, court cases and relegation from the Premier League, Leeds fans probably thought they had seen it all. There was still more to come, however, and on this day in 2005 the most controversial chairman in football bought control of the club. Ken Bates had sold Chelsea and was looking for a new project. The man once described by Martin O'Neill as 'a footballing cretin' made all the right promises about leading the club back into the Premiership. Instead another relegation and period of administration followed as things did not go to plan.

Tragedy struck today in 2021 when Argentine striker Emiliano Sala boarded a plane to travel to his new club Cardiff City, following his club-record £15m switch from Nantes. Sadly, he would never make it as his private plane – a Piper Malibu – crashed in the English Channel. Sala's body was recovered from the wreckage two weeks later. He was just 28 years old.

JANUARY 22

On this day in 1927 football began its long relationship with radio when former Harlequins rugby player Henry Blythe Thornhill Wakelam became the first ever radio football commentator. He described the action from a garden shed at Highbury as Arsenal and Sheffield United shared the points in a 1-1 draw, with Arsenal's Charlie Buchan scoring the first goal to be heard live on radio. *The Spectator* correctly predicted: 'That type of broadcasting has come to stay.'

Goodness knows what Wakelam would have made of events at Carrow Road on this day in 1963. An extremely harsh winter that year meant an FA Cup tie between Norwich and Blackpool had been postponed 11 times because of a frozen pitch, and in a desperate effort to get the game played the ground staff used a flamethrower to try to defrost the playing surface. It proved unsuccessful because as quickly as it was melted the ice froze again.

JANUARY 23

Great manager though he was, Sir Alex Ferguson made his fair share of expensive transfer gaffes. On this day in 2002 he blew £7.5m on Uruguayan striker Diego Forlán. Despite being thrown straight into the first team he had to wait a full eight months for his first goal, and even that was a penalty. Best remembered for taking his shirt off after scoring and then running around with it in his hands after failing to get it back on, he was moved on to Villarreal after just 10 goals in 63 league games for United.

On this day in 2005 Jermaine Pennant was arrested in Aylesbury after crashing a Mercedes into a lamp post while over the drink-drive limit. He was also serving a driving ban and was uninsured. Upon being arrested he had a cunning plan to evade punishment and reportedly told the arresting officer his name was Ashley Cole. Genius.

JANUARY 24

Leônidas da Silva, the Brazilian player known as the Black Diamond and top scorer at the 1938 World Cup, died today in 2004 at the age of 90. He was one of the first black players to play for the elitist Flamengo club and also had a chocolate bar named after him – Diamante Negro means Black Diamond in Portuguese and the bar is still produced in Brazil today. He is also credited as being one of the inventors of the bicycle kick although he claimed he was only perfecting the move invented by another Brazilian, Petronilho de Brito.

Unbelievably, former Aston Villa chairman Doug Ellis claims in his autobiography that he invented the bicycle kick, despite never having been a professional footballer. On this day in 2002 Deadly Doug saw yet another manager leave Villa Park on his watch when John Gregory resigned after nearly four years in charge, blaming ‘the pressures of the job’.

JANUARY 25

French collar-turner-upper Eric Cantona stunned the world of football on this day in 1995 when he launched a kung-fu kick at Crystal Palace fan Matthew Simmons, who he claimed had been racially abusing him. He was banned for nine months, stripped of the French captaincy and initially sentenced to two weeks in prison, later reduced to 120 hours of community service. The incident preceded the bizarre press conference when Cantona's only words were: 'When the seagulls follow the trawler, it is because they think sardines will be thrown into the sea.'

In 1997 Trevor Sinclair produced a moment of brilliance even Cantona would have been proud of when he scored with a 35-yard overhead kick for Queens Park Rangers in an FA Cup tie at Loftus Road against Barnsley. His strike was good enough to win the *Match of the Day's* Goal of the Season award.

JANUARY 26

Two of the game's great managers were born on this day. The first, in 1919, was Bill Nicholson. The Yorkshireman arrived at Tottenham when he was just 16 and save for a break for World War Two, he would serve the club as a player, coach and most famously, manager, for nearly 40 years. He oversaw Spurs winning a hatful of trophies including the league and cup double in 1961 – the first double of the twentieth century – as well as the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1963, making Spurs the first British winners of a European trophy.

That same year on this day, a future European trophy winner was born in Portugal. José Mourinho was famously Sir Bobby Robson's translator at Barcelona before really making his name at Porto where he won the European Cup. He went to Chelsea with a brief to deliver the same trophy but despite winning their first league title for 50 years, he could not succeed in Europe with the club.

JANUARY 27

A heated game between Arsenal and Liverpool at Highbury today in 2002 ended in three red cards being shown. Martin Keown was sent off first before Dennis Bergkamp was carded for a bad challenge on Jamie Carragher. In the aftermath a pound coin was thrown from the crowd at Carragher, who picked it up and hurled it straight back. He was immediately sent off. The incident cost him a £40,000 fine and earned him a three-match ban and a formal warning from the police.

Robbie Fowler, a long-time teammate of Carragher, made an emotional return to Anfield on this day in 2006 when Rafa Benítez re-signed him from Manchester City. The scouse striker had left in 2001, playing for Leeds and then City. He said: ‘Since I have left, deep down I have always wanted to come back and it has been a long time but I’m glad to say I’m back now. Leaving was probably one of my biggest regrets I have had in football. I can’t really believe it’s happened again so I’m ecstatic to be honest.’

JANUARY 28

Denis Law was probably wondering why he even bothered on this day in 1961 when he scored six goals for Manchester City in an FA Cup fourth round tie at Luton. City were 6–2 up through Scotland’s only Ballon d’Or winner Law, when the match was abandoned because of a waterlogged pitch. Law still scored in the replay five days later but Luton won the tie 3–1, rendering his earlier feat irrelevant.

Steve McManaman never scored six in a game, preferring to act provider for teammates like Robbie Fowler and Michael Owen at Liverpool, but on this day in 1999 he decided to turn his back on Anfield. He agreed to join Real Madrid on a free transfer when his contract expired at the end of the season. Labelled a Judas by Kopites, McManaman made the most of his time in Spain by winning La Liga and the European Cup twice.

JANUARY 29

Egypt provided England's opposition today in 1986 when two young players made their Three Lions' debuts. Southampton striker Danny Wallace was playing well at his club and scored the third goal in the 4-0 win in what would be his only England appearance. Peter Beardsley also made his debut that day when he came on for Gary Lineker and unlike Wallace, he would go on to play at the World Cup in Mexico later that year, and was a mainstay in the national side for ten years.

Another England player made his most important transfer move on this day in 1988. Arsenal manager George Graham paid Stoke City £350,000 to take Lee Dixon to Arsenal and the right-back quickly established himself as first choice in the best defence in the country. With George '1-0' Graham in charge it was a good time to be a defender at Arsenal as clean sheets were the priority and trophies aplenty followed.

JANUARY 30

Another Southampton striker was born on this day in 1951, and it was a good job he was for Saints fans. Bobby Stokes scored the winner when the Second Division club beat highly fancied top-flight team Manchester United 1-0 in the 1976 FA Cup final. Stokes won a car for being the first scorer in the match and rumour has it he started taking driving lessons before the game, fully expecting to score first and win the prize.

Future Southampton manager Glenn Hoddle was in hot water on this day in 1999 when comments he made to a journalist about disabled people were published in *The Times*. He said: 'You and I have been physically given two hands and two legs and a half-decent brain. Some people have not been born like that for a reason. The karma is working from another lifetime.' He was sacked four days later.

JANUARY 31

Before the multi-million pound contracts that footballers get these days, many found it a struggle to make ends meet when they retired and it was not unusual for a player to sell his medals to raise some much-needed cash for their retirement. Today in 1998 Tina Moore, ex-wife of Bobby Moore, announced she was to auction off his medals and trophies to raise £2m. England's only World Cup winning captain died of cancer in 1993, aged just 51.

Another England captain must have thought his international career was over today in 2008 when Fabio Capello left David Beckham out of his first England squad. At the time Becks was stuck on 99 caps and must have feared he would never be able to join the likes of Bobby Moore by gaining his century. Capello brought him into his next squad however, allowing Becks to reach his ton in a friendly 1-0 defeat to France in March 2008.