

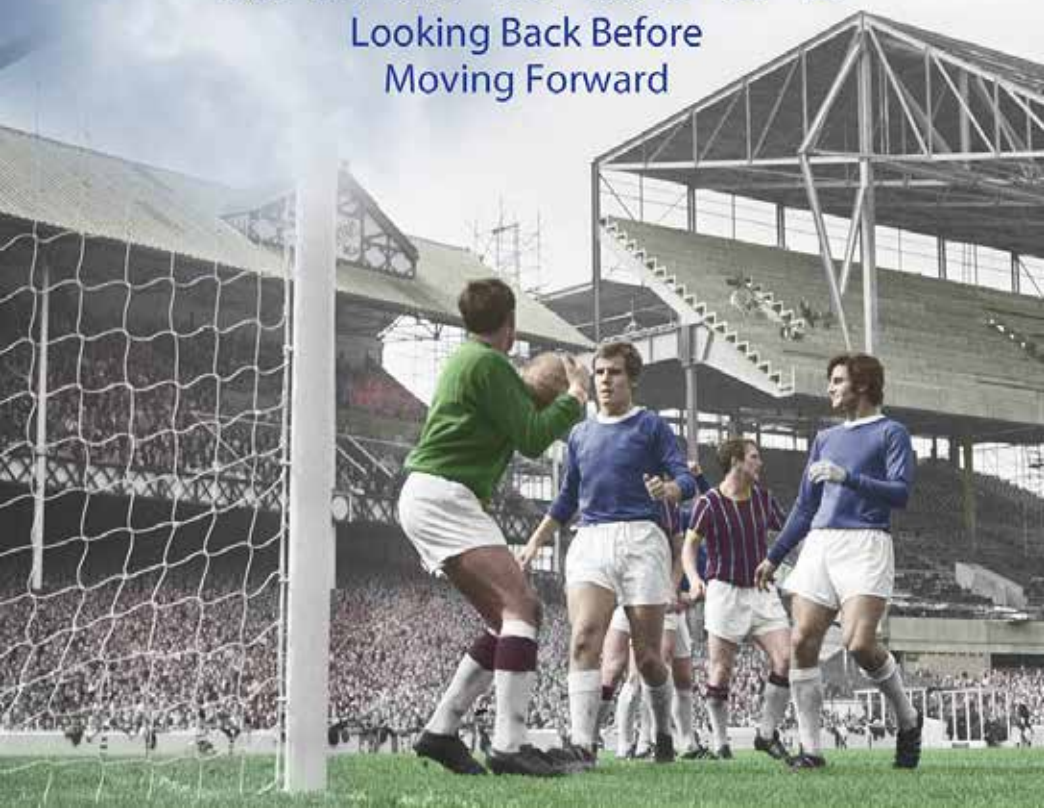
STEVE ZOCEK



GOODISON

MEMORIES

Looking Back Before
Moving Forward



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Foreword by John Motson

MY FIRST commentary for the BBC was for radio at Goodison Park in December 1969 when Everton beat Derby County 1-0. Alan Ball was the scorer and Harry Catterick the manager. I travelled with Maurice Eddleston, a very experienced, famous commentator at the time. Two commentators were used by the BBC then. During his playing career, Maurice had played with Harry Catterick. In those days, getting into Goodison was difficult if you were a press official, but Maurice just banged on the door and Harry Catterick came out to see him. Maurice introduced me to Harry as a young commentator.

Two years later, I moved to *Match of the Day* and was a regular commentator at Goodison for the next 20 or 30 years. There are two commentary positions at Goodison: the big high one that they built in recent years, where you have to climb over lots of ladders and the roof of the Bullens Road stand, and there was a smaller one on a lower platform, which I think they still use for a camera position. In my day, I used the smaller platform closer to the pitch

and I always remember thinking that it was as good an atmosphere commentating at Goodison as anywhere else. You were so close to the pitch that you almost felt part of the game and could identify the players very easily. So, it was a favourite ground of mine in that respect.

Joe Royle was a young player when I did my first games and I saw the Ball, Harvey, Kendall trio of course. My first big game with Everton was the FA Cup semi-final against Liverpool in 1977. Afterwards I interviewed Duncan McKenzie and for some reason, halfway through the interview, Duncan said to me, 'Oh, that's a surprising thing for you to say John, with you being an Evertonian.' I wasn't, but he was just cracking a joke, so I was called an Evertonian that day, but I did love going to Goodison.

I got to know Howard Kendall and commentated on three consecutive FA Cup finals involving Everton in 1984, 1985 and 1986. I always liked commentating on Everton, if for no other reason than they wore nice white numbers on their royal blue shirts. Clubs were wearing stripes and goodness knows what by then, but I knew with Everton it would be a nice straightforward commentary because the numbers were very clear.

I used to go up to do interviews for *Football Focus*, the lunchtime slot on *Grandstand*, at the training ground, Bellefield. I was there the day Bruce Rioch and Duncan McKenzie both signed. There was a little office upstairs where the manager used to sit, and my BBC television career then morphed into the David Moyes era. I remember

in those days you could get closer to managers than you can now. I had David Moyes's private number and would always call him on a Friday in strict confidence. He would always give me an idea what the team might be, which was very rare then, but those days have gone.

The last Everton commentary I did was at Leicester when Richarlison scored and I was at West Ham later that season, but as a spectator not commentating. That was the best Everton performance that I had seen for some time, certainly the best under Marco Silva.

The best Everton goal I ever commentated on was when Graeme Sharp scored that goal at Anfield in October 1984, with Mark Lawrenson and Alan Hansen looking on as the ball went into the back of the net. I also did the commentary at Villa Park when Luton Town looked as though they were going to beat Everton in the 1985 FA Cup semi-final. The game went to extra time, with Derek Mountfield heading home the winner after Kevin Sheedy had equalised from a free kick.

Everton was a club I really loved going to. In fact, during my last season for *Match of the Day* in 2017/18 I did my last game at Goodison against Crystal Palace and Everton presented me with framed programme covers from the first game I did back in 1969, and the last game I did against Palace. They treated me very well, and Sam Allardyce made the presentation in the press room after the game.

I have fond memories of Andy Gray and Gary Lineker because they were goalscorers. I remember seeing Andy

Gray score a diving header in the FA Cup sixth round at Meadow Lane against Notts County. Gary Lineker had only one season with the club, but he scored 40 goals and I commentated on a lot of them. Of course, Gary then became a broadcasting colleague on *Match of the Day*.

Players

Aldershot:

Nigel Edwards

On 5 January 1980, Everton and the Shots met for the very first time in an FA Cup third round tie at Goodison Park, where no shock was produced as Everton sailed through to the fourth round with a 4-1 victory. In the Shots' line-up that day was defender Nigel Edwards:

I was at Everton as a schoolboy and represented the Wales youth side, but I couldn't settle there if I'm honest. I played a few A team games at Bellefield, which had one hell of a setup.

For a team like Aldershot, it was a good day out. We travelled the day before, staying in a hotel in Southport overnight and the first impression of Goodison upon our arrival was that everybody was so friendly. I had already been to Goodison years before as I witnessed a Merseyside derby, but this was the first time I'd played there in my career. No disrespect, but when you play at grounds like Hartlepool, then go to Goodison, it's like going to a palace.

The thing I remember the most is that we were a Fourth Division side and it was a hard league. All the teams at that level had a team of hackers, but one of the reasons I joined Aldershot was because they had a manager, Tom McAnearney, who liked to play football and keep the ball on the ground. We didn't go there that day to kick Everton off the park or park the bus, we went there to play football. We played our normal game, attacking football, and I think that was the reason the Evertonians took to us.

Everton on the day were what you'd expect, a different class. They scored four goals to our one, but it was in all honesty a really good game and we were applauded off at the end, which was a lovely gesture. I have to say I would describe Goodison as a 'homely' stadium.

At that time, two random players from each team were selected for a urine test. Myself and Nicky French were picked for Aldershot, and Andy King and John Gidman for Everton. As we walked off the pitch, we were taken away to a room. Andy King and I couldn't pass water as we were dehydrated. We were told to go in the bar and have a couple of pints. I'd never ever met Andy before, and he invited me back to Luton, where he was staying that weekend, but I wasn't allowed as I had to go back with my team-mates on the coach. We went back into the room, and still failed to urinate, so the two managers went in on our behalf and did it for us!

We then got on the team bus, and a quarter of a mile from Goodison, the coach had to stop to let me run down an alleyway to have a pee.

Regarding leaving Goodison, I think they must, to progress. It's a shame, but you could say that about every team that moves to another stadium, as it's the history that you are leaving behind, and Everton have more history than most.

Arsenal:

Bob Wilson

Bob Wilson won countless trophies during his career with Arsenal, including the Double of First Division and FA Cup in 1971. He went on to become a legendary face on Saturday afternoons as the anchorman for the BBC sports programme *Grandstand*. He also hosted many other sports-related shows:

This particular season, we were going to Goodison to face the Football League champions from the previous season. They won it by nine points and don't forget, it was only two points for a win back then, so to win it by that margin was amazing really.

It was the opening day of the season, 15 August 1970, and Everton came out with all guns blazing, dominating the early stages. They came out as champions and played like champions. We were without Peter Simpson, our regular centre-half alongside captain Frank McLintock. Peter was still recovering from a cartilage operation from pre-season and John Roberts deputised at centre-half that day. I loved playing against Joe Royle, who I always thought was an honest player. Anyway, Joe scored in the first half hour,

heading home from a cross by full-back Tommy Wright. I seem to remember Alan Whittle having a blinder that day. He had been very important in the run-in when Everton won the league the season before. We were lucky to be only one goal behind by half-time. Apart from me having a lot of work to do, I know Bob McNab cleared off the line. It was a case then of survival, with the home side looking for the second and decisive goal which would have killed us off completely.

Fortunately Charlie George, who then was only 20 years of age, grabbed us an equaliser. It was quite strange for me as I was a teacher before I was a professional footballer and Charlie was one of my pupils. I was on Manchester United's books with Nobby Stiles at the time of the Munich disaster, but my father didn't want me to be a footballer.

As the game drew to its latter stages, I turned a ball on to the bar and as it came down, Alan Ball was at the far post and knocked the ball to Johnny Morrissey to put the ball in with his hand to put Everton back in front. John Roberts then set George Graham up to slide the ball past Gordon West to give us a 2-2 draw. We got a very unexpected point, which we didn't deserve.

One thing about Goodison was the little narrow players' tunnel. It was a lot different to many of the grounds in the old First Division. In our day, we never came out together; we may have been in the tunnel together, but we ran out separately and I will always remember the Everton fans because they had extraordinary support, which is what you need as a club.

Arsenal:

Frank McLintock

Another part of that successful Double-winning team of 1970/71 was the captain, Frank McLintock, described as a great leader and skipper by his team-mate Bob Wilson:

It was always sad for Everton, especially in the 1970s, as their neighbours Liverpool were finding success under Bill Shankly and Bob Paisley, and Everton seemed to be in their shadow for such a long period.

Everton had success in the 1960s with Kendall, Harvey, Ball and big Joe Royle, and these are the guys I remember well. I always thought the Goodison crowd were terrific too. You always knew you were in for a hard game when you went to Everton Football Club. They were a terrific club, and I wouldn't say it if I didn't mean it.

Everton have a terrific fan base who are so loyal, and so desperate for their team to win trophies again. Everything always seems to go just past their fingertips, and they take a slide down the league again.

No matter when you played Everton, and no matter where either team were in the league, it was always a tough game. Everton were always up for it, and the fans were right behind their side, and it was always backs to the wall.

Being a Scot, I remember Alex Young going there from Hearts, and what a lovely player he was. I also remember the winger, Alex Scott. So, being down here, you'd try and keep in touch with each other as much as possible.

Goodison, I felt, was similar to Highbury in some ways. The stands at both stadiums were upright, which I felt gave out a great atmosphere, whereas today's stadiums seem a bit laid back. The move from Goodison, I feel, won't affect the club. The supporters at Everton are probably better than Liverpool, who I often wonder whether they would have seen so much success, had they had to suffer what the Evertonians have over the years. Everton still managed to get a full house and, if the roles had been reversed, would Liverpool still have the support now?

Arsenal:

Pat Rice

Pat Rice was another of that Double-winning team during a career that spanned more than 500 league appearances for Arsenal and Watford, and a total of 49 caps for Northern Ireland:

The first league game of our 1970/71 Double-winning campaign was against Everton. They had a great side with the formidable midfield of Ball, Harvey and Kendall and whenever we used to play against Everton, our coach Don Howe used to put Peter Storey, normally our right-back, into midfield. Peter was put there to pick up Alan Ball, and I would come in at right-back. The following game Peter would go back into midfield and I would either be sub or not involved at all. So, due to us playing against Everton in that first game, it was the start for me getting into the team regularly.

I would describe Goodison Park as very nostalgic; they'd had great players in their history who had the privilege of playing there. It can be an intimidating place, no doubt about that, but that's all part of the heritage. I've already mentioned the Holy Trinity, but I remember Joe Royle who could head a ball from the edge of the 18-yard box. It was like someone kicking it, but Everton were a really good side at that time.

I experienced the transition from Highbury to The Emirates, so when Everton move, you're hoping that the new stadium will create the same atmosphere as Goodison Park. We were fortunate that we had a manager in Arsène Wenger, who put a team together that went through the season unbeaten.

When Arsenal switched to their new stadium, it was something that had to be done; the same applies to Everton now. The game has changed so much and is more of a business, so you have to go with it otherwise you will fall behind.

Arsenal:

Terry Mancini

Terry Mancini spent two years at Highbury having joined from Queens Park Rangers for a fee of £20,000 in 1974. Today, Terry has a business called Mancini Events, which stages a lot of golf tournaments:

My first recollections of Goodison are of course the atmosphere. A move to a new ground will take them into the 21st century as every club seems to be updating their

image by building a new stadium. Everton are a very big club with a big name and don't want to be left behind.

When I played at Goodison, I had many games where I marked Bob Latchford, who was a handful. They had a very good team in the mid-1970s, which came close to winning the First Division title I seem to recall. Everton were a team that was always difficult to beat and Goodison was always one of those grounds that you looked forward to playing at. You never got an easy game there; it was always extremely difficult. In all the times I may have played there, I think the best I came away with was a draw.

When Everton finally move to their new home, I'm sure they will embrace it brilliantly. It all of course depends on the team, doesn't it? Who wouldn't enjoy playing at a brand-new stadium? It's like me or you selling up your home and buying a new one. It will be a wonderful new experience with all top-of-the-range facilities, which must be a bonus.

Arsenal:

Paul Merson

Gunning for the Gunners for a period of 12 years with 378 league appearances, 78 goals and the PFA Young Player of the Year award in 1988/89 was Paul Merson, who is now a regular pundit on Sky Sports:

I always thought Goodison was one of the hardest places to play at. If you came away from Everton with a win, that was a bonus. It didn't matter where Everton were in the

league, it was always a tough place. Even if they had lost five games on the trot, you would still be made up to come away undefeated.

They would close you down very quickly. As a player I liked time on the ball, but someone would always be hustling you, making things hard. They weren't one of the better sides during my time going there as an opponent, but it was a difficult place to go. When I first got into the team, I scored there in 1989 when we went on to win the league. I always remember when the away end was very narrow and when the fences were still up. There looked like 10,000 fans in there when there was probably only 1,000. I can still see that away end now as I talk to you. I remember the goal I scored, I went through and hit a low ball past Neville Southall. On another occasion, I scored one of my favourite goals there, chipping Neville.

I also won there in the quarter-final of the FA Cup while I was at Aston Villa. I wasn't playing too well and had a bit of a nightmare in the first half, but just before half-time I went down the left-hand side and cut in. As I shot, Southall parried it and Benito Carbone came in and tapped home from about a yard out to put us into the lead. Our manager, John Gregory, would sit in the stands for the first half, and always leave a minute before half-time to get into the dressing room at the same time as the team. When we got in, he started flaring up, going mad and started to pick on me. 'You'd better liven up, or you're off.' I replied, 'What for? We're 2-1 up.'