

LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB

RUINED MY LIFE

SIXTY YEARS OF
SUPPORTING EVERTON



BOB WATERHOUSE

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Chapter 1

The 1960s – Everton the Top Dogs

THIS CHAPTER will focus on how Liverpool and Everton generated contrasting club cultures in the 1960s, which had a profound effect on their relative future development. Everton's management was authoritarian and traditional, while Liverpool's was more democratic and collegiate, as reflected in the famous Boot Room. This was also shown in their contrasting attitudes to modernity. For example, Liverpool embraced the burgeoning media coverage of football, building facilities especially for TV and changing their strip; Everton, by contrast, were suspicious of the media and tried to keep TV cameras away from Goodison Park.

My allegiance to Everton Football Club is somewhat of a mystery to me as I was certainly not brought up in an Everton-supporting household. My dad was a very 'mild' supporter of Liverpool FC and he did once take my mum to watch from the Kop in the 1950s. According to Mum, it was my next-door neighbour Stephen Tinsley, three years older than me, who managed to convert me, an

impressionable six-year-old. I also have a faint recollection that one of my sister's boyfriends, Roy Finney, also played a role. I remember how jealous I was when he got a ticket to the 1967 FA Cup fifth round tie against Liverpool at Goodison. This was the famous match when the pictures were beamed live to Anfield, a combined audience of over 100,000 watching the fixture. When Everton won 1-0, I was even more jealous. Anyway, regardless of who influenced me, I was hooked for life.

In fact, this allegiance quickly developed into a none-too-healthy obsession, which seemed to dominate most of my everyday experiences. At an early age I refused to touch red things without recourse to a protective glove; this regularly happened at the dinner table when asked to pass the tomato sauce. I also developed a lifelong aversion to eating tomatoes. One of my standard Christmas and birthday presents were football annuals, and I'm not too proud to admit that any sections on Liverpool players were gratuitously defaced and covered by non-PC graffiti; this even extended to the poor unfortunates that were children of Liverpool players! In 1969, having just turned 12, I should have known better, but after listening to our 1-0 defeat in the semi-final of the FA Cup by Manchester City, I dismantled my favourite mechanical robot piece by piece. By the end of this process the robot was thoroughly inoperable. I had a few regrets about this wanton destruction, but quickly put them to one side, as playing with robots could hardly be compatible with my future status as a moody self-conscious teenager.

When I was five I began my school career at the now-defunct Barnston Lane Primary School in Moreton on the

Wirral. My first few months at school coincided with the great cold snap of 1963, when the Mersey started to freeze over and several icebergs were spotted on the river. Perhaps early morning trudges through the snow sowed the seeds of my initial distrust of all things associated with school. My initial school years were far from happy. I was very conscious of my scruffy handwriting, and I was painfully shy. I can't remember any feedback of a positive nature from my teachers and, consequently, I was reluctant to discuss school with my parents. I must have done something right, however, because by junior school I was in the top stream and I gradually began to thrive. I was a mildly precocious child, in my own quiet way, and began to follow world events from an early age, which has continued to be the case throughout my life. I remember where I was when Kennedy was shot; I was playing with my toys on the floor of the back room.

I viewed the then Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson through the largely conservative views of my *Daily Express*-reading parents. I was never sure whether my early short-lived support for the Conservative Party was more to do with my newspaper reading or football allegiance. I was certainly attracted by the colour of their rosettes up to the 1970 General Election. As well as giving me most of my information on politics, the *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express* fed my football obsession. The 1960s were the glory days of sports reporting in the papers and I feasted on the words of reporters such as James Lawton and Alan Hoby.

Everton and Liverpool were evenly matched in the 1960s. In head-to-head contests Everton had one more victory, two if you include the second match in the

championship-winning season of 1969/70. So, at the time, I never saw supporting Everton as giving me a relatively raw deal. As previously mentioned, the financial clout of the club gave it an advantage over Liverpool. Our superior ground enabled the club to stage more 1966 World Cup matches than any other club. However, my memories of this competition are somewhat clouded by two events. First, the hike in ticket prices meant there was no way my notoriously 'penny-pinching' father was ever going to take me to see the world champions Brazil play any of their opening matches at Goodison Park. Second, after watching the earlier rounds on television, we set off on semi-final day for a holiday in Bournemouth.

Happily staying at a B&B location in Wiltshire on the way to the south coast, I viewed England's triumph against Portugal. However, we were only booked into Bournemouth until the day before the final. My mum assured me that we would find somewhere else for the night, and I was mollified. However, in Bournemouth it seemed that everywhere with a TV was booked up. My mum did take us round various possibilities, but without success. My dad, being a creature of habit, wasn't keen on changing our plans to travel to London that day and resisted our failed attempt to secure accommodation. This made me deeply upset and culminated in a fraught car journey to London, during the final, when I attempted to listen to the match on a clapped-out car radio that gave only intermittent coverage.

Although Liverpool and Everton were fairly evenly matched in the 1960s, I was aware of Liverpool's building momentum. Partly it was to do with media attention. They

encouraged TV coverage, as exemplified by hosting the first *Match of the Day*, in 1964. They even invited a camera crew from BBC's *Panorama* to cover the crowd in front of the Kop, who were in full cry to 60s Merseybeat songs such as Gerry and the Pacemakers' anthem 'You'll Never Walk Alone'. Their reporter even compared the Kop favourably to Welsh rugby crowds:

It used to be thought that Welsh international rugby crowds were the most musical and passionate in the world, but I've never seen anything like this Liverpool crowd. On the field here, the gay and innovative ferocity they show is quite stunning. The Duke of Wellington before the battle of Waterloo said of his own troops, 'I don't know what they do to the enemy, but by god they frighten me.' I'm sure that some of the players in today's match must be feeling the same way.⁵

By contrast, Everton were suspicious of TV and tried to keep the cameras away from Goodison Park. In fact, the club stood alone in the Football League in trying to ban *Match of the Day*. This appeared to create the image of one club as young and in the spirit of the 'swinging 60s' and the other, as exemplified by their suspicious authoritarian manager Harry Catterick, as being stuck in the age of post-war austerity. However, Everton historian Gavin Buckland also states that Shankly did share some of Catterick's suspicions of TV as well: 'Shankly wanted to stop the Saturday lunchtime preview shows and

television providing score updates while games were still in progress.⁶

The media had also become hostile to Everton in the early 1960s as unsubstantiated allegations by *The People* of performance-enhancing drug use and bribery conveyed the image of a club desperate for success at any cost: 'Whatever the rights and wrongs of the *People* investigations, there was an inevitability that the almost maniacal craving for success from the chairman downwards would attract media scrutiny. Any story about the club was therefore bound to be newsworthy, especially if there was potential chicanery involved.'⁷

Consequently, it was Liverpool who seemed to attract the support of 60s celebrities such as Cilla Black, Ken Dodd and, famously, Gerry Marsden. The media fed off these celebrities and the atmosphere of the Kop singing 'You'll Never Walk Alone', which in 1971 formed part of the backing for the Pink Floyd track 'Fearless' on their album *Meddle*. All Everton could offer was the 'Z-Cars theme' based on the traditional folk song 'Johnny Todd'.

Harry Catterick was a strange and complex man who achieved great things in the 1960s with Everton, only once finishing outside the top six, yet his suspicion of the media has led him being unfairly neglected in posterity by them. The following excerpts from an article by *Guardian* journalist Daniel Taylor gives us a flavour of why:

Catterick was difficult, impenetrable, deceitful, frequently unpleasant and pulled some fairly despicable stunts. He was also brilliant, a football visionary, with enough presence that one of his former players recalls 'his word was God'.

We are, however, talking about someone who was ahead of his time, calling for a trimming down of a 42-game league, the introduction of professional referees and a more cultured style of football, in the era when teams rejoiced in having men nicknamed ‘Chopper’ or ‘Bites Yer Legs’. Catterick intensely disliked Leeds and Revie and frequently warned that English footballers were in danger of falling behind other European nations. He wore expensively tailored suits, took dancing lessons, and developed a taste for expensive cigars and red wine. Yet there was always this Do Not Disturb barrier. Len Capeling, a former sports editor of the *Liverpool Daily Post*, summed him up, superbly, as someone who ‘had difficulty in smiling with his eyes’. Shankly knew him as ‘Happy Harry’.⁸

Catterick’s management style was also a relic of the past. At Everton’s training ground, Bellefield, all the players had to sign in on time, and latecomers were routinely fined. He deliberately had a remote relationship with the players, which he felt beneficial when discipline needed to be enforced:

Stories became legion of ‘The Bollocking Room’ located in the Goodison Road stand where Harry would tear a strip off players who, he felt, were not giving their all or meeting the high standards demanded of them. To up the ante it was customary for Harry to keep the players

waiting an hour before entering the room – just to let them stew.⁹

By contrast, Shankly's regime at Liverpool, although just as strict, was much more democratic and based on self-policing, as 60s striker Roger Hunt recounted:

There wasn't a lot of discipline problems. I don't remember a single player being fined for misconduct. I'm not saying there wasn't any misconduct, but it only needed a word here and there. If another player wasn't pulling his weight the players themselves would have a word. If a player came in and he wasn't doing things the Liverpool way, the other players, never mind the staff, would have a word. There was this kind of spirit in the club.¹⁰

It's revealing that Alex Young, writing at the pinnacle of his career, singled out Bill Shankly as an extraordinary coach, with no mention of Harry Catterick. Revealingly, this was also supported by his team-mate, England left-back Ray Wilson:

Natural coaching that doesn't require any swotting up from books and blackboards. Shankly must be the best 'natural coach' in the game. Ray Wilson, who played for him at Huddersfield, once told me: 'Shankly could make a donkey play football.'¹¹

Famously, Shankly said that footballers should be treated like men because he wanted them to play like men. This was at a time when Catterick was treating his players like naughty schoolboys.

Also, Liverpool's greater success in Europe helped the club develop an international profile, which Everton have never subsequently matched. A friend of mine who had been brought up as an Evertonian and was a regular attender during the championship-winning season of 1962/63, decided to switch his allegiance to Liverpool not long after as nobody in South Africa, where he worked at the time, had heard of Everton! Liverpool's greater success in Europe was strongly influenced by Bill Shankly's 'modernist' approach in embracing Europe. The Victorian Catterick had similar suspicions of foreign football to the older generation of FA officials who kept England out of the pre-war World Cups, as Gavin Buckland recalled:

... Catterick therefore treated continental soccer with a certain amount of disdain. 'European competitions are not competitions at all,' he later confessed, 'playing games over two legs isn't football. It does nothing but create negative play that is something we cannot abide.'¹²

Buckland also speculated that Catterick's attitude towards Europe and the club's consequent failures in it are reasons why he's never mentioned as one of the great managers of his time. Perhaps his being out of the spirit of the 1960s zeitgeist is another. For example, to me the adoption of

an all-red kit by Liverpool in November 1964 seemed to embody the spirit of the times as matched by Leeds United and Chelsea, who also changed to same-colour strips to modernise their clubs. Leeds had already changed their strip in 1961 when manager Don Revie declared that he wanted to transform the club into the Real Madrid of Yorkshire: 'The club's yellow and blue kits were jettisoned in favour of an all-white ensemble, which Revie borrowed from Real Madrid as a symbol of his lofty ambitions for the club.'¹³

Liverpool manager Bill Shankly thought that the all-red strip would also intimidate opposition teams:

We switched to all-red, and it was fantastic. The introduction of the all-red strip had a huge psychological effect.

Our game against Anderlecht that night was a night of milestones. We wore the all-red strip for the first time. Christ, the players looked like giants. And we played like giants.¹⁴

Everton, naturally, stuck with their blue shirts and white shorts. Despite the lack of fashionable kit, the largely home-grown team fashioned by Catterick in the 1960s seemed to be going places. The midfield trio of Alan Ball, Colin Harvey and Howard Kendall became known as the 'Holy Trinity'. They weren't in awe of Liverpool, as their 1960s record shows. It was also well known that Shankly cast envious glances across Stanley Park at our midfield trio. His main *bête noire* was Alan Ball.

However, what was lost on younger Everton fans like me was the fact that Shankly was getting far more out of

his, ‘on paper’, significantly inferior team. Alan Ball later went so far as to question Catterick’s ability to manage: ‘He never came to a training session. He never imparted any football philosophy to think about. He had problems with one-to-one relationships.’¹⁵ By contrast, Shankly was a ‘hands-on’ and methodical manager, as this extract from his autobiography illustrates:

I have many notebooks, accumulated over the years, which are filled with information. I picked up something from everybody in football, no matter who they were. If they said something, or did something I thought was good, it would go in the book.

From the day I arrived at Anfield, the training was planned. We knew exactly what we had to do each morning. Everything was tabulated on sheets of paper. This was the basis, and everything stemmed from it.¹⁶

The difference in management styles was to have dire consequences in the early 1970s when Catterick effectively lost control of his team and Shankly’s Reds went from strength to strength.