

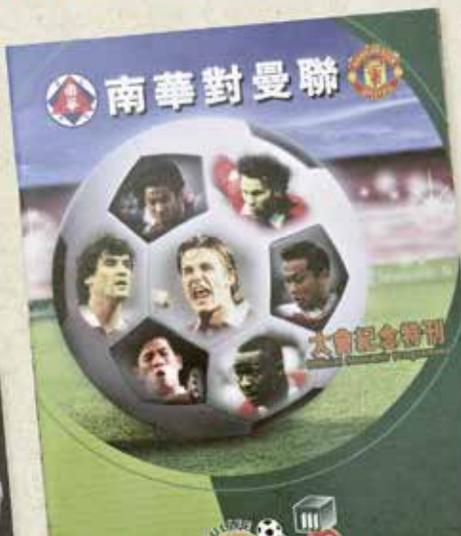
H I B E R N I A N



PROGRAMMES! PROGRAMMES!

FOOTBALL AND LIFE FROM WARTIME TO LOCKDOWN

CLIFF HAGUE



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Chapter 1

Junk, Historical Objects and Magical Memories

SOME BOOKS inspired by football memorabilia tell the story of men undergoing a mid-life crisis, steeped in nostalgia for the 1980s. They chart the journey from naive nerd, standing on the terraces with laddish mates, and then with a succession of girlfriends who, with varying degrees of disinterest, observed the on-field displays of their temporarily beloved's heroes. Punk rock provides the mood music to the occasional brush with the National Front or opposition casuals. Marriage, divorce and contentment with a second wife follow, as our protagonist takes his seat in the stands with a nostalgic sigh for a youth now lost forever.

This book is different. Yes, it intertwines my own life as one of the now grey-haired 'baby boomer' generation with the changes within the game, but – spoiler alert – that life, while not uneventful, has not been punctuated by multiple liaisons. More than 50 years of marriage to the same woman, while cherished, is a thin basis for dramatic shifts of plot. The sum total of my wife's engagement with all things football amounts to little more than a polite but perfunctory 'Did they win?' before returning to her knitting. My response, giving a concise

explication of the decisive moments behind the score – the flying header, the hapless own goal – remains a monologue: insightful certainly, yet still strangely failing to ignite interest. Lest it be thought that, as long-married pensioners, our days are spent over cups of tea in silence, we do talk to each other; just not about football. But then again, while this book is inspired by a lifelong love of football, it is not only about football. It is about the changing times through which I, my generation, and subsequent generations have lived, and the forces that have shaped our destiny, from the days when a brass band provided the pre-match entertainment to the 21st century where taking a selfie and posting it on social media is an indispensable part of the matchday experience.

Football programmes carry personal memories but are also historical objects, laden with stories about their place and time. So this book aims to tease out some of those memories and stories, and share them with readers who have experienced the excitement of hearing the programme sellers' cries of 'Programmes! Programmes!', the clank of the turnstile, and then getting that awe-inspiring first view of the pitch. Any match is an occasion, rooted in a particular place and time; some are unforgettable, others quickly fade from the mind, having served their purpose as fleeting entertainment, just an afternoon out and a chance to meet up with a few friends, leaving only the match programme as an ephemeral yet tangible record that you were there that day.

The book is built around the many programmes in my collection. Some are presented as 'Programme Spotlights', and accompanied by images in the photographs section, to give a bit more detail, and so enrich the narrative and close the gap with the past. That past represents the collective leisure experience of generations of ordinary people, and the programmes sketch in some other aspects of their lives. Football programmes tell history from the bottom up, a history not of kings and queens

(though occasionally they show up to present a trophy) but rather about everyday life – the new TV, the local brewery, a holiday, unemployment, the fate of places where we live.

How did I become the custodian and curator of a collection of almost 2,000 football programmes? Why would anybody collect football programmes, especially retrospectively from matches they had not actually attended, in places they had never visited? No doubt there are papers in peer-reviewed psychology journals that provide possible answers, at least to collecting in general, and perhaps to the sub-species of football programmes in particular. In my case it all began when I was still a child, and by the place and times in which I grew up.

I lived with my parents and my mother's widowed mother and her cocker spaniel in a 'two-up, two-down' terraced house with no bathroom and an outside toilet in the Harpurhey area of Manchester. As a seven-year old, I had learned to read, and unlike many of my classmates at Alfred Street Elementary School, I was lucky enough to avoid the beatings with a leather strap that were regularly meted out to other boys by our teachers. I had quit my career in the muscular environment of the local Cub Scouts, never progressing beyond Tenderfoot status. We had no TV at home, and there were no video games to stream online, but there were trips to local cinemas, not least for the children's matinees which provided first-hand experience of anarchy, though the word was not part of my vocabulary at that age. At Christmas there was occasionally a trip to the pantomime, a short walk from home at the Queen's Park Hippodrome. The name had been appropriated to impart classical grandeur during the already faded era of music hall. Likewise the cinemas in the Harpurhey area proclaimed affinity with a world that bore ludicrously little relation to their actual locale – The Palladium, The Coliseum, The Princess, The Adelphi, The Empire, and The Moston Imperial Palace (less impressively, but more commonly, referred to as

‘The Mip’). Within these parameters of culture and everyday childhood, as part of a gang of other scruffy kids, I played cowboys and indians, hide and seek, but especially football. We played in the streets, where the handcart of the rag and bone man or a horse-drawn milk cart was as common a sight as a car; in the back alleys; in the school playground and in the local rec’. So the football came first, then the programmes followed.

While this childhood world was intensely local, I can remember listening to the commentary of the 1952 FA Cup Final on the BBC Light Programme, though the match programme is a gap in the collection. As the name of the station implied, the Light Programme was for those who found the agenda of the BBC’s Home Service too serious or taxing, while the Third Programme, with its classical music, emphatically was not for the likes of us – we had no gramophone or instruments in the house. Arsenal played most of that final with ten men after full-back Wally Barnes suffered a serious knee injury, and there were no substitutes in those days. I remember that the only goal was scored by George Robledo, meaning that Newcastle United became the first club in the 20th century to retain the cup. There is an evocative five-minute Movietone Newsreel of the match on YouTube, complete with Winston Churchill, and the crowd singing ‘Blaydon Races’. It includes an intriguing flashback to the 1932 final meeting of the same sides, which shows how Newcastle’s equaliser came from a cross after the ball had been run out of play; controversial refereeing decisions and the case for the Video Assistant Referee go back at least that far.

When my eighth birthday came along, at the start of the 1952/53 season, my present was to go to watch the league champions Manchester United play Arsenal. I already supported United. Growing up in Manchester meant you were either United or City. I don’t think my father had ever been

to a match: his own father had died in 1916 when my dad was only a few weeks old, and he was brought up by his elder sisters, while his mother worked in a textile mill to support her four surviving children. So I sought advice on which team to follow from Uncle Arthur, my mother's younger brother. Having been captured in North Africa and spent time as a prisoner of war, he now worked as a ticket seller/'conductor' on the Manchester Corporation buses, a description that does not do justice to his talents or the way he went about his job. He was a performer and the bus was his auditorium. He did not just take the coppers and threepenny bits and dispense the tickets, he provided his passengers with a stream of information and quips, a cross between a bingo caller and a stand-up comedian. He also loved his football and cricket. As he lived in another terraced street nearby, and was a frequent visitor to our house, he was the obvious oracle to approach for guidance on what would be a life-defining decision for me as a seven-year-old. I asked a sensible, cautionary question: which was the better team, City or United? The answer was truthful, 'United', so that was that.

So, on a balmy Wednesday evening in early September 1952, my mother took me to see United host the famous north London club who had run them close for the title the previous season. Walking down Warwick Road to the stadium, I was amid the greatest and most excited throng of people I had ever experienced. Enterprising residents in the streets near the ground were renting their back yards out for those cycling from work to park their bikes. Along the length of the bridge over the railway line was painted 'BAN THE A-BOMB UNITED WE WIN'. Even at that early age I knew about atomic bombs, but decoding the intent of this message puzzled me for a long time. Was it a triumphant response to a United victory – but why should United ban the bomb? Or, with an emphasis on the 'we', was it the taunt of a set of visiting

supporters, so carried away by their success that they felt able to prevent a nuclear holocaust? It took me years to realise that 'united' was not United.

Mum and I watched the match from the Stretford Paddock, the area of standing in front of the main stand. To reach the turnstiles we had passed outside the dressing rooms, where the smell of liniment hung in the air, mingling with the smoke from the adjacent railway and the Woodbines of the crowd. It must have been the first 'proper' game my mother had been to. I recollect that admission to the paddock cost an adult three shillings, and half that, 1/6d, for me. Once inside the ground, my mum was disappointed to find that this expensive investment had not purchased us seats. So I stood at the front, eye-level to the pitch, not far from the tunnel from which the players emerged for the 6.30pm kick-off, and watched a goalless draw play out. My one clear mental image from those 90 minutes so long ago is that United's Stan Pearson took a through pass in an inside-left position and put the ball in the Arsenal net. Mum got excited and cheered, but I, with the know-all nonchalance of an eight-year-old boy, explained that he was offside and it wouldn't count. Yet let nothing take away from my gratitude to my mother: I don't think that she ever got a proper grasp of the offside law, and was regularly confused when TV began to show replays of goals ('Is that another one?'), but there were not many women going to football in those days, especially without the company of a man. She may have been naïve about what to expect, but I admire her courage and devotion to introducing her little boy to the wonders of a professional football match staged before a crowd in a stadium.

Inexperience or thrift might explain why I do not have a programme from that first big game, or I may simply have lost it. It is one of those that got away, and later chapters will touch on others that would have enhanced the collection, but for one

reason or another are not part of it. Their absence is a kind of reminder that while the clock ticks down to 90 minutes there is always a chance of a winning goal coming in injury time. Who knows what might still turn up? Meanwhile, for the sake of clarity, programmes that are in the collection and referred to in the text will be listed in chronological order at the end of each chapter. They are not all of classic matches by any means; some merit mention because they are definitively of their time, but others simply show the quirky side, if not of football, then at least of the programme editors and their readers. How else to explain the jokes, poems and misprints?

So the programme collection really began with my second visit to Old Trafford, for Manchester United v. Blackpool, a 2.15pm kick-off on Boxing Day 1952, a day after the sides had drawn 0-0 at Bloomfield Road; yes, they played back to back on Christmas Day then Boxing Day at the time! Indeed, Christmas Day football continued in England until 1959 and in Scotland until 1976, when 7,500 turned out to watch Alex Ferguson's St Mirren draw 2-2 with Clydebank, and Alloa v. Cowdenbeath drew a crowd of 750. Blackpool's 1952 team was their best-ever side, with their superstar right-winger Stanley Matthews, the powerful Stan Mortensen leading the line, little Ernie Taylor providing the tricks and the passes and Harry Johnson the rock around which their defensive game was built. These men would provide the dramatic climax to that season in the 'Matthews' Final a few months later, in which the seaside club came from behind to beat Bolton Wanderers 4-3. That final, in which Bolton led 2-0 and 3-1 helped by catastrophic goalkeeping from Scottish international George Farm (whose career had begun with Armadale Thistle, then Hibernian), was the first game I watched on our new TV with its 12in screen, but again, alas, the match programme has eluded me.

I did not actually see Blackpool play that Boxing Day game, though I do have the programme. We did not have a car, so

Mum, Dad and I travelled across Manchester from our home in the north of the city by public transport, changing from a trolley bus to a petrol bus in the city centre. However, as we alighted and began to walk down Warwick Road, there were streams of people coming in the opposite direction: the gates were already closed on a capacity holiday crowd of 48,000. Maybe the programme was purchased to compensate for my disappointment at missing my Christmas treat, I don't know. But, crucially, I kept the programme. It must have meant a lot to me. We had no books in the house, and the only personal possessions I can recall are a bicycle, some tin cowboys and indians, a cap pistol, a cheap cricket bat, and a tennis ball that was used for cricket and football on the croft – a small triangle of vacant land – behind our house. So saving a programme of a game which I had not seen was a conscious and significant act for a young boy.

The evidence that I was a collector before my ninth birthday is confirmed by the fact that I also have in my collection the programmes from the two other games I went to during that 1952/53 season. Another 'uncle', the short-term husband of my mother's niece, took me to see United beat Aston Villa 3-1 on Saturday, 7 February; then I was taken by my mum when United beat Liverpool by the same score on 20 April 1953 in a 6.30pm Wednesday match (no floodlights in those days). These first steps in programme collecting were uncultured, unstructured, and maybe even accidental. I used to cut out football and cricket pictures from newspapers and stick them in a scrapbook, and that is where these first programmes also went, secured by sellotape. My curating skills were undeveloped.

The next stage of collecting – acquiring programmes not as a by-product of going to a game, but as an end in itself – began a year or two later. The intoning of the football results on *Sports Report* on the Light Programme at 5pm on

a Saturday was an introduction to the geography of Great Britain. In my Harpurhey-centric world view, there seemed to be something exotic about places like West Bromwich (yes, I know) or Brighton and Hove that prompted me to write off to those clubs requesting a copy of their programme and enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. The boyfriend of the elder sister of a girl I knew from a later seaside holiday gave me some programmes of London clubs from the 1940s and early 1950s, including Chelsea, Arsenal, Queens Park Rangers and Tottenham Hotspur. Other programmes found their way to me in similar fashion, given to me by people who probably wanted rid of them.

My burgeoning collection was kept in an old shoe box under my bed. Then, as a teenager I was going to matches each week and always getting a programme. Also I was able to swap programmes at school or with pen pals. *Charles Buchan's Football Monthly* magazine was a bit like what would now be called a platform; it included listings of people wanting to swap programmes. So it was that I acquired a significant number of Wolverhampton Wanderers home programmes for example, some of which are discussed in Chapter 4. Out there, somewhere, hopefully still alive and well, there is a pensioner who supported Wolves as a boy, and has a collection of 1950s Manchester United programmes that I provided. Also I remember a kind of 'bring and buy' sale at school from which I was able to add some programmes.

Going to university in Cambridge in 1963 interrupted my match-going apart from occasional trips down to London and vacations back in Manchester. Though I would still buy and keep the programme when I did get to a game, I was no longer an active collector of other programmes. This state of affairs continued after I moved back to Manchester to do a post-graduate Diploma in Town and Country Planning. Married in 1966, we lived in a small, damp terraced house

built 140 years earlier, with a cellar that had an earth floor where water accumulated. Thus for two years the programmes were kept protected in a trunk that had been used to shuttle my clothes and books between home and university while I was an undergraduate. When we moved to Scotland in 1968, the programmes came with us, and programmes from the Glasgow clubs, and then after a move in 1971, the Edinburgh clubs began to be added, along with Manchester area programmes from matches during holiday periods.

That would have been the end of the story, had our son, Euan, not succumbed to the same fascination with programmes. As a teenager in the 1980s he followed Hearts, and so every week or two another programme was added to the collection. More significantly, he invested money earned from newspaper delivery rounds into building the whole collection. He was informed by a couple of books, Phil Shaw's *Collecting Football Programmes* (1980) and Julian Earwaker's *The Definitive Guide to Football Programmes* (1987). Euan's collecting was much more strategic than mine had been. He bought FA Cup Finals, adding to the few I had, and also programmes of games that were in ways (sometimes weird ways) significant or unusual, such as the 1964 match between a Scandinavian select and the Rest of Europe (see Programme Spotlights 1). Suffice to say that our collection includes an otherwise inexplicably high number of Torquay United programmes as they struggled in the lower reaches of the Fourth Division around the end of the 1980s. No spoilers – the full story comes in a later chapter.

Reading a draft manuscript of this book, he explained, 'I think that some of the really obscure programmes may have been freebies – many dealers sent a free programme with your first order, etc. Or I think you could buy "mixed bags" of, say, five programmes chosen by the seller for a pound. I did try to buy programmes for record scores, though I'm not sure

how robust the market is these days for Stoke City's record win programme. Also cup finals, United Europeans (home and away) and as many of the United 1957/58 season (home and away) that we were missing as I could. And the fastest own goal which for a while had been scored by Pat Krause of Torquay. Obviously.'

In 1990, Euan spent part of a gap year in London, where, before the days of GPS-enabled phones, he was wont to tear the relevant pages out of the *A to Z* so as to navigate his way to all the major London grounds – and add the programmes to the collection.

As parents of young adults might appreciate, when in 1994 Euan headed off to Syracuse University in New York State to do a PhD, his programmes did not travel with him; rather they remained behind in our house. In 1998 he returned to the UK for a couple of post-doctoral years at Staffordshire University, living in Stoke, during which time he added programmes from venues comfortably reachable from the Potteries. When he returned to the USA and settled in Chicago, by some oversight, the boxes and boxes of programmes that he had accumulated and originally catalogued as a boy on a BBC 'B' computer, never accompanied him across the Atlantic. 'My' collection had become 'our' collection, but I had become, and remain, the sole curator.

As well as purchases, including from a short-lived programme shop that was close both to my place of work and to Euan's school, donations swelled the collection. While still at secondary school, Euan had displayed some of his collection in the church that my wife took him and his three sisters to, and an elderly congregant who was a Heart of Midlothian fan gave him some Hearts programmes from the 1950s and 1960s, which get a mention in Chapter 9. A colleague with whom I played cricket for Heriot-Watt University Staff was pleased to offload some of his Charlton Athletic programmes to us. Such

serendipity continued even as I was writing this book, when an exchange of Christmas e-mails with a work colleague from 50 years before resulted in his contributing three Portsmouth programmes from his own boyhood years.

Programme Spotlights 1: A star-studded line-up showcased by Danish design

Scandinavia 2 Rest of Europe 4, 20 May 1964, friendly

A crowd of 45,600 watched this game, which was staged to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Danish Football Union. The Rest of Europe was a star-studded selection with British players prominent. They lined up with Lev Yashin (USSR) in goal; Ray Wilson (England) and Jozef Bomba (Czechoslovakia) as full-backs; Ján Popluhár (Czechoslovakia) as centre-half with Valerie Voronin (USSR) and Jim Baxter (Scotland) as the wing-halves; then a forward line of José Augusto (Portugal), Jimmy Greaves (England), Paul van Himst (Belgium), Denis Law (Scotland) and Bobby Charlton (England). The best known Scandinavian was probably right-winger Roald Jensen (Norway) who would go on to play for Heart of Midlothian between 1965 and 1971.

Greaves opened the scoring after four minutes and added another before half-time. Eusébio replaced van Himst for the second half, when Hans Tilkowski (Germany) took over in goal. Law stretched the lead after 48 minutes, then Juhanni Peltonen (who joined Hamburg that summer, becoming the first Finnish player to play in the German Bundesliga) pulled one back, only for Eusébio to restore the three-goal advantage minutes later. Swede Harry Bild got a late consolation goal.

The programme cost one kroner, and is all in Danish. It is rare for an image of a sculpture to dominate the front page of a programme (reproduced by permission of the DBU), and even rarer to have the name of the sculptor printed there. Knud Nellemose (1908–'97) sculpted boxers and athletes as well as footballers. The

work featured on this front cover captures the muscular dynamic of a tackle, though nowadays the defender would probably get a yellow card, and the attacker should be depicted falling over and grasping his shin. The dramatic colliding shapes show football as an art form. The white background, and sparse, clean font draw the eye to the excitement and drama captured by the sculpture. This cover exemplifies how good design has been central to all aspects of Danish life for more than 50 years. I have not found an equivalent image fronting a British programme.

So why wait until now to mine this seam? Well, it was a long time since I had looked at the collection. It was packed in bags and cardboard boxes, on dusty shelves in cupboards rarely opened, the sort of places where you keep life insurance policies and old birthday cards, life's unsorted and unconscious accumulation of 'stuff' that you never get the time to sort out, until it's too late and grieving family members have to do it for you. Could you really trust them to appreciate the riches that lie there, among what my wife is prone to refer to as 'junk'? Aye, there's the rub. Could it all end in a charity shop, or worse still simply be consigned to the paper recycling bin, an ecologically correct solution, but an act of cultural and historical vandalism? You bet it could!

So, action not words, deeds not dither! Or at least action with words and just enough dither over each programme to distil its uniqueness; that is what I resolved. What I had not anticipated was just how massive the collection was, and in particular how many programmes Euan had acquired. I still retained a clear mental image of the front covers of many of the programmes that I had collected as a boy – the *United Review*, of course, with its drawing of a player and a fan shaking hands above a black and white photo from the previous match at Old Trafford, or the squarish *Hatters* programme of Luton Town, or the image of the crenelated stand at Molineux across the

Wolverhampton Wanderers programmes. As I began to re-catalogue the collection on 21st-century software, I became aware of the way programmes are valued by dealers and auction rooms. A cup final fetches more than a run-of-the-mill Fourth Division match, and pre-1960 programmes have more of a premium than later equivalents. The Scandinavia v. Rest of Europe programme could be worth a few pounds, but I have not been able to put even a minimal value on the likes of Airdrieonians v. Hibernian on 13 November 1971, or the eight-page York City v. Tranmere Rovers programme from 23 January 1982, despite it being in mint condition.

Yet even seemingly mundane programmes can contain something to catch the eye, be it a player, a match report from a previous game, or some quirk. For example, by the 1980/81 season some programmes had become syndicated, so the Cambridge United v. Coventry City on 4 November (see Programme Spotlights 2) and Middlesbrough v. Wolves on 22 November programmes shared several features and advertisers. These included a feature on rock music of the day, and a full-page advertisement for a pre-internet computer dating service. A page headed 'Humour' included a couple of jokes stereotyping Irish people. Sportopia Promotions' 'Poem on Soccer' competition was also there in both programmes as a double-page feature. It offered £250 for the winner and two £50 prizes for the runners-up, and £5 for each poem published. The invitation to submit entries well conveys the expectations:

*If you're into fame,
A few lines on the game,
May win you the prize of the year,
So now is the time
For stories and rhyme
So come on let's hear, let's hear!*

The published entries in the Cambridge United v. Coventry City and Middlesbrough v. Wolves programmes fall some way short of the works of Shakespeare and Keats. My Team by Mr P. Cooper reads:

*Southampton are great,
They could beat all the rest,
But they must be playing
At there [sic] very best.
As on runs Wells,
Who looks very small,
But there's nobody better,
To look after the goal.*

*And here comes the team,
In there [sic] red and white vest,
Now is the time,
To be put to the test.*

*The ball leaves the spot
And up comes a cheer,
As we make a run,
And Keegan is clear.*

*A nice early goal,
Just what we need,
To put us on top,
And one in the lead.*

*Now were [sic] one up,
Were [sic] have to defend,
But who better to do it,
Than McMenemy's men.*

*Well what a match,
I knew were [sic] do well,
But there's no better team,
Than the saints at the Dell.*

Programme Spotlights 2: Time for a rhyme: Sportopia 1980

Cambridge United 0 Coventry City 1, League Cup fourth round replay, 4 November 1980

Cambridge had managed a creditable 1-1 draw in the first meeting. The 1-0 replay win, secured by a Steve Hunt goal in front of a crowd of over 10,000, was a stepping stone on Coventry's path to the semi-final where they lost 4-3 on aggregate to West Ham United, who in turn lost the League Cup Final replay 2-1 to Liverpool. Coventry had put out Manchester United in the first round, winning both legs 1-0. Coventry were then a First Division team (i.e. in England's top division), while Cambridge United were in the Second Division, but had eliminated two other top level cubs, Wolverhampton Wanderers and Aston Villa, to reach the last 16. They had achieved successive promotions in 1977 (managed by Ron Atkinson) and 1978, and in 1980 had finished eighth in the Second Division, which was the highest placing in their history at the time and has only been beaten once since.

The front cover emphasises the club's colours both through the action photo and the black and yellow stripes either side of it. It also gives prominence to a black player, Cambridge winger Derrick Christie. At that time relatively few black players were appearing in the Football League. The picture shows that shirt sponsorship was still quite discrete at this time (see Chapter 10 for more on sponsorship).

This programme includes the same double-page spread on the Sportopia poetry competition, with the same poems that appeared in the Sportopia-produced Middlesbrough v. Wolves programme on 22 November 1980. Both programmes have 40 pages, and also share articles by leading football journalists of the day, while also including some features relevant to the home team and the particular match: for example, pen portraits of the opposition. The 'Reel to Reel' feature in both programmes was

about rock stars of the day, Sting, Phil Lynott of Thin Lizzie, and the American Southern rock band Blackfoot.

The Sportopia programmes also shared the same corporate advertisers: presumably, the ability of the company to sell space in the programmes of several clubs, rather than just one, achieved some economies of scale and enhanced appeal to larger companies. One such advertisement catches the eye. 'We'll make you believe in computer dating,' proclaimed Dateline, offering a 'Free Matching Test'. This was still in the pre-internet age. By completing the form on the bottom half of the page and mailing it (enclosing two first-class stamps) to their London address, your details would be put through 'our amazing computer' and possible matches identified. Who knows what marriages might have been made not in Heaven, but by somebody clipping out a page from their programme at the Abbey Stadium that chilly November night?

What can I say? Presumably the confusions between 'there' and 'their', and 'were' and 'we're' and even 'we'd' were in the original and tolerated by Sportopia editors as poetic licence, and Mr Cooper received his £5. Any further deconstruction of his verse can be limited to noting that Kevin Keegan had joined in the summer of 1980 from Hamburg where he had twice been named European Footballer of the Year and reached a European Cup Final, and manager Lawrie McMenemy was at the peak of his career, while The Dell was the club's home ground in those days. Were readers from Middlesbrough to Cambridge entranced by such odes? Are they too flimsy a basis on which to infer snobbish comparisons between the cultural norms of English fans and those of Danish football followers who imbibed the artistic merits of the cover of the 1964 programme from the game with the Rest of Europe (Programme Spotlights 1)?

Checking online to get an idea of the market value of our programmes, not surprisingly I found that there can be a large

differential in price for the same programme depending on the condition it is in. Write in the team changes, substitutes, score, scorers and half-time scores and the value of your asset plummets. Cut out the token to get priority for buying tickets for a big game, and you reduce the eventual resale value. Fold up the programme to stuff it in your inside pocket as you stand on a rain-drenched 1950s open terrace, and half a century or more later that same fold makes you worse off. In other words, all that makes a programme an authentic document, everything that adds particularity and a human stamp, is a devaluation in the eyes of traders, and presumably their clients. Before the age of bland consumerism, programmes were functional. They told you who was playing, so if there were changes you needed to write them in. You were told the half-time scores, and like you did with information given to you by your school teachers, you wrote them down, 'ours not to reason why'.

In general, older programmes command a higher price. However, the earliest dated programmes in our collection are actually reprints, not originals, so they are not worth much. That said, like so many others, they provide fascinating insights into the game and the times. One is a full-colour reproduction, issued in 1974, of the first programme that Aston Villa produced, which was for their First Division meeting with Blackburn Rovers on 1 September 1906, a game the Villa won 4-2. The original price for Volume 1 Number 1 of *The Villa News and Record* was one penny. The front cover is dominated by an advert for Rover Cycles which 'never wear out', 'When you see a cyclist on a "ROVER" you can be sure that he or she have [sic] paid for their bicycle. We do not "touch" the penny or twopence a day business.' The advertisement rates shown inside suggest that Rover would have paid £2 for this splendidly disdainful front cover advert. On the inside of the back cover was an advert for the ferocious-

looking McGregor Football Boot, as worn, the text assures potential purchasers, by players at a long list of professional clubs. The illustration accompanying the ‘lace to toe’ boot shows it as having 12 pairs of eyes for the laces, and extending not just over the ankle, but midway up the shin. The toe cap was no mere decoration, but rather a statement of intent that would strike fear into any opponent who did not fancy facing a future with a permanent limp.

A message from the Villa directors indicated that they hoped the new publication would contribute to the ‘delectation of our readers’, and that they were following the lead of ‘other important clubs’, while also noting that club journals and programmes could be an important source of revenue. Page three devoted two paragraphs to ‘The Players’ Comforts’, explaining how a gymnasium had been created beneath the grandstand, and a reading room and ‘well equipped’ library, ‘containing all that could reasonably be required for the well being and edification of the players’. ‘Edification’ is not a word likely to appear in 21st-century programmes, though lockdown has forced recognition that wellbeing really does matter.

That inaugural Villa programme reported that Newcastle were the most financially successful club the previous season, recording a profit of £4,399, quite a lot of money in those times. In contrast, ‘Chelsea’s loss [was] little less than stupendous. Had the club, however, attained the height of its ambitions and gained a place in the First Division of the League, the £5,000 deficit would have given no cause for anxiety.’ Apart from the figure of £5,000, this sounds a familiar story, though, despite the 1905 Russian revolution, there were no Tsarist oligarchs looking to buy an overspending club to launder their fortunes to countries where they would be safer.

Our other reprint from a pre-war programme is the famous 1923 FA Cup Final, the first to be held at The Empire Stadium, Wembley, in which Bolton Wanderers beat West

Ham United 2-0. As archive clips on YouTube show, the game was played with spectators standing around all the touchlines, and only after mounted police, one very visible because of his 'white' horse (it was actually grey, but showed up as white in the newsreels), had cleared the playing area. Like most FA Cup Final programmes, the one for 1923 was actually rather bland. The most interesting pages were about the new stadium and the forthcoming Empire Exhibition. There was no hint of the slavery and oppression on which the empire had been built, rather the pomp of empire was flaunted, 'This vast stadium, the largest in the world, the most comfortable, the best equipped, holds more than 125,000.' Indeed, the crowd for that final was estimated to be double that figure, as people scaled perimeter walls to get access to the stadium. While the area of the stadium would equal that of 'the Biblical city, Jericho', it was a small part of the 216-acre site being developed for the 1924 exhibition, where 'will be displayed all the wealth, the manufactures, raw materials and resources of the greatest Empire the world has ever known'. Readers were encouraged to visit the exhibition, which was to be 'the most wonderful, the most romantic enterprise in history. After a hideous and crippling war, we are going to build a new and greater trade, find new prosperity, make stronger still the bonds that link us and our fellow-citizens overseas together in one ideal of friendship.' Just three years later, in May 1926, there were tanks on the streets of London as the General Strike began, when a million coal miners had been locked out of their workplaces after a dispute with the coal owners who wanted them to work longer hours for less money.

The oldest original programmes in the collection are both single sheets on pink paper, with a fold creating four pages. They were produced by Hertford Town. Their reserves hosted Wood Green Reserves in a Spartan League Second Division game on the evening of Thursday, 16 September 1926, while

the second programme is for their first team's encounter in the Spartan League First Division with ex-champions G.E. Romford on Saturday, 27 August 1927. The price of each programme was one penny. Even that far back, and at non-league level, the three basic features of the programmes were much the same as today. There were advertisements, the team line-ups and club notes.

At the top of the front cover, Ibbot and Co. advertised their 'Rich clean milk – We often please where others fail', a claim that makes one wonder just how stringent were environmental health controls all those years ago? 'The Club Outfitters', Drury Bros., promoted their 'Tip-Top Topcoat', and Dye and Sons offered two 14-seater motor coaches for hire, while on the back page, the Hertford Candy Company tempted readers to their 'large selection' of 'high class' confectionary and chocolates, with delights such as Swiss rolls, cream sandwiches and Dundee cakes. On the inside pages, around the team line-ups, along with various local businesses, and at diagonally opposite corners to each other were the Castle Cinema and the Premier Theatre. The former claimed to screen a continuous programme of 'the finest pictures' every day from 6pm to 10.30pm and all 'at popular prices'. In contrast, the theatre assumed a cultural superiority: in small print that would have challenged the eyesight of those unable to afford reading glasses, it described itself as, 'The popular little Theatre for High Class and refined Entertainments where the leading Musical Comedy Concert Parties appear in all the latest productions.' Lest there be any doubt about the sort of people it aimed to attract, it listed prices from the most expensive (1/6d) to the cheapest (sixpence). Collectively, though the adverts were few in number, they show an acute appropriation and endorsement of middle class norms and expectations.

The display of the players dominates the centre pages. They are lined up in the traditional 2-3-5 formation, with the home

players wearing numbers from one (goalkeeper) to 11 (outside-left), while the visitors were numbered from 12 (outside-left) to 22 (goalkeeper). This is the same system as used in that 1905 Aston Villa programme, and now looks distinctly odd, though it had a logic in its day. For the Wood Green Reserves match, there seems to have been a problem with a clash of strips. Hertford Town were down to play in red and green, and their visitors in red and black. Had nobody noticed?

Among the Club Notes section, two comments catch the eye. Those at the reserves game were given the distressing information that Hertford Town's president, the Rev. Roland Smith, B.A. was 'slightly better, but it will be a long time before he will be out of danger'. How his reverend came to give his time to the club, and what became of his fate, sadly we may never know. For a man of the cloth to be president of a football club was not that surprising: a number of clubs who are today household names had their 19th-century origins in efforts by churches to steer young men away from more sinful attractions. Everton and Wolverhampton Wanderers are examples.

The Club Notes for the fixture with G.E. Romford capture the timeless optimism of fans everywhere at the start of a new season. No matter how dire the previous season, the summer break is a purgative, and as the days begin to get shorter, the club is reincarnated, with everything possible once more. 'Today we enter upon another season in the history of our Club, and in spite of the bad times experienced last season, come up smiling once more, feeling sure that this season we are really going to turn up "trumps",' read the programme, adding that the club were confident of 'making a considerable advance' if only because the previous season had been so abysmal. Always look on the bright side of life, as being a fan teaches you to do.

As these two reprints and 1920s programmes show, there is more to a publication than just the team sheet or a

report of the last match. I am reminded of a cringe-inducing record called *Deck of Cards*, recorded in 1948 by Tex Ritter, a Stetson-wearing country and western singer. It recalled the North African campaign in World War II, just a few years earlier, and a 'soldier boy' put on a charge for spreading out his playing cards during a church service. His defence, sombre and devout, is that the cards are a proxy Bible, almanac and prayer book, 'You see, Sir, when I look at the Ace it reminds me that there is but one God,' and so on, with the 52 cards, four suits and 12 picture cards a reminder of how many weeks there are in a year, then in a month, and how 12 months make a year, the kind of things you could easily forget without a pack of playing cards.

I suppose that our collection of football programmes could be my secular deck of cards, though I don't need a front and back page as a sonorous reminder that everything has a beginning and an end. They are ephemera but carry multiple meanings, triggers for memories, signifiers of places and people, markers along a timeline, expressions of cultures. Each is a story of a place and a time and a set of relationships between people – fans, players, managers, directors, advertisers, young hopefuls, old pros, stars and journeymen, local lads and exotic foreigners. They are touched by tales of triumph and of tragedy, of meteorology and technology, of work and play. Sometimes, when I was at the game and can still recall its highlights, the programme provides a tangible and personal connection, but even when a programme was just collected it can still have a resonance, not just for great occasions but also for the rich and banal struggles of everyday lives.

The book takes a broadly chronological approach to this canvas. Chapter 2 begins with programmes which date from World War II. Chapter 3 draws on the programmes from some schoolboy representative games, giving glimpses of 'stars of the future' at the time when I was myself a young schoolboy.

Chapter 4 explores the professional game in the early 1950s when floodlights and foreign opposition were grasped as means to stem the fall in attendances, at a time when Britain struggled to define its place in the post-war world. The next chapter, 'Soccer Diaries', takes its title from the diaries I kept, recording a mid-1950s humdrum life anchored around football, bad spelling and watching ITV. Chapter 6 charts the passage from the 1950s to the 1960s, a period when politicians told British voters that they 'had never had it so good', and football had to compete with other sources of entertainment for the masses. Chapter 7 looks at the careers of England's 1966 World Cup winners, then Chapter 8 reviews the 1960s more generally. Chapter 9 marks my own migration to Scotland and the Scottish programmes in the collection. Chapter 10 covers programmes and experiences from the 1970s, a period marked by industrial unrest, rampant racism on the terraces, but also some great games. Football's status as a 'slum game' is the central theme of Chapter 11 with its focus on the 1980s. It is here that the reason for the preponderance of Torquay United programmes in the collection of a man who has never visited the English Riviera resort not known for its football prowess is revealed. Chapter 12 takes my life and the programme collection to foreign fields, leading to the wider globalisation of the game since the 1990s, the theme of Chapter 13. Finally, Chapter 14, reflects on the gulf between the game in the post-war years, and the state of the industry when Covid-19 induced a lockdown and games were played behind closed doors for a TV audience.

Programmes cited in Chapter 1 that are in the collection:

- 1 September 1906, Aston Villa 4 Blackburn Rovers 2, Football League First Division (reprint)
- 28 April 1923, Bolton Wanderers 2 West Ham United 0, FA Cup Final (reprint)
- 16 September 1926, Hertford Town Reserves v. Wood Green Reserves, (result unknown), Spartan League Second Division
- 27 August 1927, Hertford Town v. G.E. Romford, (result unknown), Spartan League First Division
- 26 December 1952, Manchester United 2 Blackpool 1, Football League First Division
- 7 February 1953, Manchester United 3 Aston Villa 1, Football League First Division
- 20 April 1953, Manchester United 3 Liverpool 1, Football League First Division
- 20 May 1964, Scandinavia 2 Rest of Europe 4, friendly (Danish Football Union 75th anniversary)
- 13 November 1971, Airdrieonians 2 Hibernian 2, Scottish League First Division
- 4 November 1980, Cambridge United 0 Coventry City 1, Football League Cup fourth round replay
- 22 November 1980, Middlesbrough 2 Wolverhampton Wanderers 0, Football League First Division
- 23 January 1982, York City 1 Tranmere Rovers 3, Football League Fourth Division