# FAMOUS TARTAN ARMY MAGAZINE

Est 2005

2023_ISSUE 3

DEDICATED TO THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM & SUPPORTERS

## Craig Brown tribute




Victory in Norway

Gordon McQueen tribute

Denis Law

Disabled facilities

Chick Young

Christie Murray interview

SWNT

and lots more

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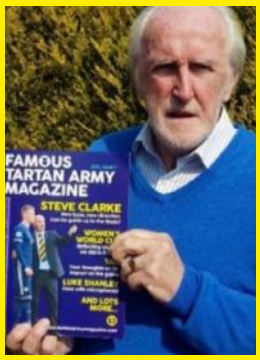




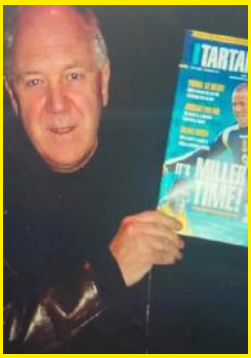


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# STEVE CLARKE In his own words...

**Steve Clarke reflecting on the late 1-2 win in Oslo:**
Sometimes, when it's your moment you just have to ride the wave. The boys believed in themselves and kept going. Obviously, we were disappointed to lose the goal, but the reaction to that was good. I was reasonably pleased with what they did before that. The lads have dug themselves out of a tight corner and we stay top of the group, which is nice. If we want to qualify for major tournaments, you know you have to go away from home against good teams and pick up points. This is three points which is big, but we have to go again. We keep going to the end and got our rewards. It says a lot about the character, the spirit, the quality from the bench. One of the things I keep banging on about with this group of players, the quality we have got, and they want to do well for their country. I was pleased with the performance, we were disciplined and passed it quite well at times. Obviously, you have got to soak up a lot of pressure against a good Norwegian team. And we never stopped believing. We keep going to the end and got our rewards. And when I turn to the bench and I know I need to make changes to freshen it up, I am putting top-quality players on the pitch. It was just about getting the timing right. After losing the goal, I felt it was better just to stay in the fight for a little bit to make sure the game didn't run away from us. After that, we had to chase the game, it was pretty logical - you are going to take off a defender and push John McGinn a little bit further forward. We brought Kenny to the game, Billy Gilmour to the game, brought Stuart Armstrong to the game, fresh legs to try and get forward and they were involved in most of the best things towards the end of the game. Even Dominic Hyam comes on at the end and sticks his head on a couple. Congratulations to Dominic, first cap, not a bad place to do it, not a bad score.

**Steve on beating Georgia 2-0 at Hampden and the rain that stopped play:**
Apart from the birth of my three children, I think it was the longest day of my life, there was moments that it was quite surreal. The worst one was, I think after the first stoppage, everyone was getting ready, warming up and we're saying, 'You go warm up, lads, you're going to start again in 15 minutes', and the two teams got in the tunnel, and it was absolutely tipping it down and that was that was when you start thinking maybe, maybe we don't start. So, look we dealt with it. Mentally, I think the players were great. But I have to mention the fans. The fans were magnificent. It would have been easy for them to get a little bit down a little bit, a little bit thinking about going home because the game could have been called off. They stayed. Every time we went to the pitch, they got behind us, they cheered, they lifted the lads. So all the volunteers that got the brushes and the brooms and everything to get the water off the pitch, you got to say thank you

**On being top of the group with maximum points:**
It's a good start, a really good start. I said six points wouldn't qualify us and I don't think 12 points will. But we're a hell of a lot closer to the points tally that will qualify us. Nobody knows what the points tally will be. So, let's just keep picking up points as often as we can and then at the end of the group, we'll tally up and see if we've made it. The second half of the campaign is three tough away games and a difficult home game against Norway. So, we have to come back in September and focus and go again. So, we focus on the next game and we try to win.

**On turning 60 (happy birthday Steve)**
I always plan to leave reflections for when I retire, turning 60 is obviously a milestone, but it's one I would rather not be reaching if I'm being honest. Listen, I have no complaints about where I am at the moment. But I also understand football very well and it can change very quickly. I will just stay focused and try to pick up the points and try to make the country as successful as I can


Photo by Colin Robinson Imaging

# FAMOUS TARTAN ARMY MAGAZINE

Est 2005

**Welcome to the 2023, issue 3 of Famous Tartan Army Magazine**

This issue is dedicated to Craig Brown and Gordon McQueen. Enjoy the magazine. Enjoy being top of the group.
**Iain Emerson** Editor



Photo: Scottish Sun



Photo: Scottish Sun



Iain Emerson
Editor



John Bleasdale
Chief Feature Writer



Chris Robinson
Photographer



Alistair Aird



Hazel Guilder



Craig Brown



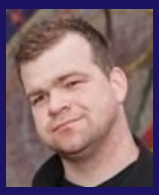
Alex Gordon



Elsie Cook



Chick Young



Michael McEwan

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Cover photo: Scottish Sun


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Photo: Scottish Sun

# WHY DOES IT ALWAYS RAIN ON US

## Scotland 2 Georgia 0

| GROUP A | | P | GD | PTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Scotland | 4 | 8 | 12 |
| 2 | Georgia | 3 | -1 | 4 |
| 3 | Norway | 4 | -2 | 4 |
| 4 | Spain | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 5 | Cyprus | 4 | -6 | 0 |

No slip ups as Scotland got maximum points from their first four games. Scotland scored early but due to the torrential rain the pitch became waterlogged, and play was halted. The delay seemed like an eternity, and at one stage it looked like it may be called off. However, after the referee doing all sort of checks, including checking the ball bounced on the pitch, the game restarted!

Scotland went on to win 2-0. Well done boys, and well done to the fans for sticking with it, with many fans getting home at ridiculous times due to the delays. Days like these could only happen to Scotland, however thankfully this one had a happy ending, maybe lady luck, finally, is on our side.


Photo: Scottish Sun


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# CRAIG BROWN

## REMEMBERED BY IAIN EMERSON



Photo: Scottish Sun

**It was devastating news to hear on 26th June this year, that ex Scotland boss Craig Brown had passed away.**

It came as such a shock, especially as I had just been in touch with him over the past few months as he had agreed to write a regular column for 'Famous Tartan Army Magazine'. He had contributed two very interesting and informative columns.

In a telephone conversation I had with him, I had been over the moon that the ex-Scotland boss had been so generous with his time to talk to a mere mortal like me, and his chat was infectious. He had so many tales to tell, all told with a great sense of humour, and he laughed as he told them, often interjecting to say, 'this one is not for the magazine' and I assured him, 'don't worry Graig, what goes on tour stays on tour'! Craigs connection with our magazine dates to around 2006 when we had interviewed him in a pub in Prestwick. Again, lots of jovial chat and time spent telling his tales and adventures as he enthused about his involvement with the Scotland national teams and his connection with the fans, the tartan army, which he loved. He gave another interview to the magazines John Bleasdale in 2013 and I believe he again agreed to this interview without hesitation. I had been part of 'Craigy Broons Tartan Army' at The Euros in 1996 and at the World Cup in France 1998, and so was absolutely delighted that he had agreed to write a column for our magazine. I am now just so disappointed that we won't get to read the many more tales he had to tell. Craig was softly spoken, a very likeable man with a lovely laugh, who had a steely determination to succeed in football management. I liked it when he pointed out in his first column for the magazine that the FIFA stats backed his team's performance that day at The World Cup in France, as Scotland crashed out after losing 3-0 to Morrocco. Craig, even all these years later, was rightly defending his record as the boss, and the following stats he provided did indeed suggest the scoreline wasn't merited. They read:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Corners | Scotland 6 | Morocco 1 |
| Shots | Scotland 22 | Morocco 14 |
| Shots on goal | Scotland 9 | Morocco 5 |
| Fouls | Scotland 13 | Morocco 18 |
| Players sent off | Scotland 1 | |

I was pleased to include these stats in the magazine.

Craig believed in fairness, and again, without hesitation, agreed to give a witness statement on the magazine's behalf to the Court of Session in Edinburgh when the magazine, and I personally, were being taken to court over the name 'Tartan Army' being used in our title of the magazine. Craigs voice, along with many others who gave statements, ensured the judge got a fair understanding of our right for the magazine to keep using its name 'Famous Tartan Army Magazine', and we won the case. Thankyou Craig.

In recent years, as Scotland qualified for the EUROS, Craig's time as the Scotland boss was again in the spotlight, as he had been the last boss to take us to a major tournament final back in 1998. BBC 1 made an excellent light-hearted documentary titled 'Mr Browns Boys' featuring Craig and some of the players and fans who were there. We, a small group of fans, were contacted by the producers and took part for our '3 minutes of fame', as we had borrowed 'The Bannockburn Flag' to take to France. Craig said he loved that story and made a video message to me and the other three fans (the Bannockburn 4) who had been involved in its kidnap, to say 'your good guys and thanks for returning the flag'. Again, that meant a lot to us. I've met fellow supporters and heard about Tartan Army clubs that Craig has appeared to talk at, and everyone has always said how accommodating he has been. Never once, have I heard anyone say something negative about him, which is so unusual in such an opinionated environment as the world of the football fan. This says everything about the man and his legacy.



**Continued**

As an example of how he touched so many people is in the comments made by Stephen Reside in this issue of the magazine.
'…one who stuck in my mind is Craig Brown, an absolute gentleman, he gave some great insight to why he left Motherwell at the time of interview. I was just a guy who interviewed him for over an hour, but he texted me on Xmas Day about two months after the interview to wish me a Merry Xmas, now he didn't have to do that, that shows the type of man he was'
Craig Brown will be a big miss to us all, but he leaves behind so many memories, and the history books will tell how he led us to two major finals.
The last email he wrote to me contained content for his column, and in that email, he referred to 'Famous Tartan Army Magazine' as an 'excellent magazine'. That's good enough for me. ■

## Coach and management of the Scotland national teams

Craig was in charge of Scotland's youth teams. In 1989, he coached Scotland's Under-16s to the final of the World Cup at Hampden.
In 1992 he coached the under-21s to the semi-finals of the UEFA Under-21 Championship.

Craig then became assistant manager to Alex Ferguson for the Scotland senior team's campaign at the 1986 FIFA World Cup (the appointment he said 'changed his life' as it enabled him to move from being a part-time manager and teacher to a full member of the national coaching setup). He served the same role under Andy Roxburgh at the 1990 FIFA World Cup and UEFA Euro 1992.

He succeeded Andy Roxburgh to become the national team's longest-serving manager, he was in charge for 71 games from 1993 to 2001, qualifying for Euro 96 and the 1998 World Cup. Craig Brown, is the last man to take Scotland to a World Cup finals.



Photo: Scottish Sun

## Tributes >>>

**Chick Young**
You'll search long and hard to find a man or woman who wasn't an admirer or a friend of Craig Brown. No-one has a bad word for him. He had an impish sense of humour; I knew him very well from the days he was manager of Clyde. Craig would want people to remember him with a smile. You can't help but become endeared with him.

**Fred MacAulay**
Trying, with difficulty, to find the right words about Craig Brown. A man who was respected by all who met him. Our paths crossed many times over the years and I admired him greatly. A year since I last saw him and he was his usual genial self. Condolences to his family."

**Mike Mulraney (SFA)**
He deserves his place in the pantheon of great coaches. Words cannot do justice to the impact Craig Brown has had on Scottish football. The greatest tribute that can be paid to his professional capabilities is the respect in which he was held by his peers, who also happened to be our all-time great coaches: among them Jock Stein, Sir Alex Ferguson, Walter Smith, Jim McLean and Andy Roxburgh

**Dave Cormack (Aberdeen FC)**
He was one of those rare individuals who was not only effective at what he did but universally loved by all who got to know him. A gentleman who loved his family, friends, and football.

**Ally McCoist**
Very saddened at the news about the great Craig Brown. Craig was a good man who had time for everyone, and always time for a laugh. We have some fantastic memories that will live forever. Thoughts, condolences and love with Craig's family & many friends.

**Steve Clarke**
Craig led the way in bringing sustained qualification to the men's national team, first as assistant to Andy Roxburgh and then in his own right. He was a student of the game and I am proud to say that I followed in his footsteps by taking a Scotland team back to a major tournament.



Photo: Scottish Sun



# CRAIG BROWN
## Tribute by John Bleasdale

**WHENEVER a celebrity who has affected your life in a positive way passes away, whether it'd be a sports personality, an actor or a musician, there is naturally an outpouring of grief from fans about how those personalities influenced their life.**

The reaction to Craig Brown's death has hit people in a different way than just someone they saw on TV or from afar in the stands as he led Scotland to two consecutive major finals, making him one of just two managers to do so. The many tributes online speak about the personal touch, about how Craig gave his time to help them for an interview, at a charity event or even just saying hello. He was willing to give time to almost anybody who asked him and speak about his long and successful career as a player, coach and manager.
Personally, Craig played a positive role in my life that stretches beyond his time as Scotland manager, and even beyond someone willing to give me an interview for an article, podcast or a book. He became a friend to me.

My first encounter with Craig was back in 2013 when I interviewed him for Famous Tartan Army Magazine. I was doing an article looking back at the '99 game at Wembley as part of a preview of the upcoming match setup as part of the English FA's 150th anniversary, and Craig spent most of his car journey waxing lyrical about Scotland's performance that night in a game we deserved more than the 1-0 win that wasn't enough to overturn a two-goal deficit. Craig admitted himself he'd rather we got a lucky win to take us to Euro 2000 than take the plaudits from another glorious failure chapter.

I then got in touch with him again in 2020 during lockdown to get his memories of both Euro '92, where he was Andy Roxburgh's assistant, and Euro '96 for the magazine again. As with all my subjects for written pieces, I sent a copy to him beforehand, and he sent me a text and phoned me to tell me that the article was a superb analysis of the two Euros. That meant the World to me for someone like Craig to give such a glowing review of my work. He also text me out of the blue to say I wrote a great piece about the 3-2 win over Israel for this website in 2021, though he also pointed out a grammatical error by putting your not you'd. This was typical of Craig, attention to detail!

Back to 2020, and I got to speak to him again for SFF Podcast as I recorded a pre-Serbia special that also contained BBC commentator Paul Mitchell and Hampden Roar podcast contributor Gordon Sheach. Paul and Gordon, I'm sure will agree that Craig was the crown jewel of that feature, and as always was in great form, despite the fact he'd just recovered from having an aneurism, and shared a great story about his Serbian friend Nico joking that Serbia could even beat Scotland at caber-tossing. When Scotland beat Serbia that night, Craig was as pleased as anyone that we finally qualified for a tournament for the first time since his class of '98.

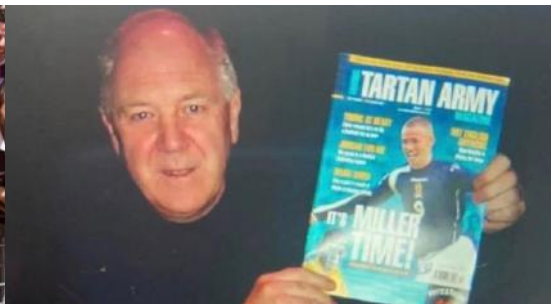
Craig was obviously a great help to my debut book Scotland's Swedish Adventure, even contributing a foreword that he didn't want anything in return. His support stretched to him attending the book launch with his brother Jock, ex-international Dave McPherson and journalist, and host for the day, Hugh MacDonald. He was very complimentary about my son Callum making a speech about the Ukraine war and, as ever, gave his time to anyone who wanted to speak to him or get a photograph with him.

My favourite memory of Craig Brown though doesn't involve interviews for magazines, podcasts or book launches. It was January 2022 when I met up with him on two occasions in Aberdeen. Firstly, I met up with him and my friend Grant Campbell, whom he spoke to for three hours for Campbell's Footballs podcast, and I attempted to give him a bottle of wine to say thank you for his assistance with the book. He initially refused to take it before agreeing on the condition he paid for lunch! Later on that day, I bumped into him again at Ardoe Hotel, Aberdeen ahead of an Eoin Jess event hosted by Ally Begg. When the organiser asked Craig to come backstage to see Eoin and Ally, to which Craig replied "can I bring my two pals with me" in reference to me and my mate Antony. Getting to hang out with the three of them was amazing, and you can only imagine the stories that we got to hear, which will remain between us! Again, this was typical of Craig's generosity and making you feel welcome. For these reasons, I consider him a friend, and there are so many who will do so too for similar reasons.

Of course, it was his impact as the Scotland National Team manager from 1993 until 2001 that makes Craig Brown a sought-after character. Taking us to Euro '96 and France '98 was incredible and those are the two main tournaments that standout, particularly the opening game of the World Cup against Brazil at the Stade de France. As 23 long years passed without qualification, his tenure became more appreciated than perhaps it did then, and he was always proud of his record as he rhymed off the stats that supported his view. A win percentage of 45% from 71 matches, taking his country to two consecutive major finals and running us close to another two with an ageing squad, with a win at Wembley thrown in, he certainly has reason to be proud.

That record, and his mannerisms are what makes Craig such a popular figure in the game, and why he is going to be sadly missed. He can rest now knowing that he's not the last manager to take Scotland to a major finals and that we have a talented squad of players and manager to take us, potentially, to more in the coming years. Victory over the Auld Enemy in the Men's National Team's next home match at Hampden would also be a nice tribute to, arguably, the greatest Scotland Manager of all time.









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Photo: Scottish Sun



Photo: Scottish Sun

# GORDON MCQUEEN: 1952–2023

## A TRIBUTE BY JOHN BLEASDALE

WHEN the Auld Enemy come calling to Hampden on 12 September 2023 as part of the 150th anniversary celebrations for the Scottish Football Association, memories will come flooding back to a fixture that kicked off internat ional football back in 1872. There have been many moments for the Tartan Army to cherish from games gone by against their greatest rivals both at the National Stadium and at Wembley.

Arguably, the most treasured of them all was a certain 2-1 win in 1977 and Gordon McQueen's towering header that opened the scoring, a match that provoked the mother of all pitch invasions as the Tartan Army covered the Wembley turf, taking bits home in the process.

It is without doubt the highlight of McQueen's 30 cap Scotland career, and that header past Ray Clemence in the England goal was played on every news item when his sad passing at the age of 70 was announced. It was a moment he was happy to recall when he spoke to the Famous Tartan Army Magazine for the Spring 2007 edition, and how the Tartan invasion inspired the away team that afternoon.

"That game in '77 when I scored was probably one of the last games at Wembley with a massive Scotland support," he began. "We had around 80,000 fans inside the stadium - that's surely the biggest travelling support in the history of international football for one game. The atmosphere was phenomenal that day. Both teams walked onto the pitch at the same time in these days and Mick Mills led the England team out as captain. It's a big walk up that tunnel at Wembley until you reach the pitch, and I vividly remember Mick saying to me 'oh god it's your mob out there' and I said 'you better believe it, you can smell the whiskey from here.' The whole stadium was Scottish."

Gordon McQueen made his Scotland debut on 1 June 1974 in a 2-2 defeat to Belgium. Although this was his first cap, his excellent form at club level as part of Don Revie's famous title-winning Leeds United side saw him make that summer's World Cup squad in West Germany alongside teammates Billy Bremner, Joe Jordan and Peter Lorimer. McQueen had to sit on the sidelines as Scotland exited the tournament on goal difference.

A year later, McQueen got the honour of captaining his country in a European Championship qualifier away to Romania in Bucharest. That occasion also brought about his first Scotland goal with a fine right footed half volley from just inside the 18-yard box with a minute to go that salvaged a 1-1 draw.

Scotland didn't qualify for those Euros, but they were beginning to qualify regularly for World Cups, and McQueen played in the 2-0 win over Wales at Anfield that secured the second of five consecutive appearances on the World's greatest football showpiece event. Unfortunately, despite being named in Ally McLeod's squad, he picked up an innocuous knee ligament injury at Hampden, ironically against Wales in the British Home International Championships, shortly before the squad flew out to Argentina, and had to watch in agony as Scotland went out on goal difference – again!







**Continued**

"That was the biggest blow I've ever had in my life," he recalls. "There were only three of us – me, Kenny Dalglish and Alan Rough – who played in every qualifying game. The injury meant I had to miss the game against England and then the World Cup – it was devastating."

Nearly twelve months on from that devastating blow, McQueen scored the last of his five Scotland goals, a typically towering header from a corner that completed a 4-0 win in Norway. How fitting was it that, just two days after his death, that the class of 2023 should claim a victory in Oslo, with the same never say die attitude that epitomised Gordon McQueen as a player. His last cap came against Wales in 1981, and he retired from playing in 1986 at the age of 33 after an impressive club career that saw him play for St Mirren, Leeds, Manchester United and Hong Kong outfit Seiko.

After playing, McQueen had a season as manager of Airdrie and coaching spells with St Mirren and Middlesbrough, whilst also becoming a respectable pundit on Scotsport and Sky Sports. He never hid his passion for the Men's National Team whenever he was asked to cover a Scotland game, and his reaction of "GOAL – I DON'T BELIEVE IT" to James McFadden's winner in Paris in 2007 that went viral encapsulated that. He was also inducted to the Scottish Football Hall of Fame in 2012.

Sadly, McQueen was diagnosed with vascular dementia in 2021. His daughter, and Sky Sports presenter, Hayley McQueen bravely went into detail about his condition on Good Morning Britain earlier this year, confirming that he was bed-ridden but that he was still able to recall many football memories of the past. He passed away on 15 June 2023, twelve days before his 71st birthday. Scotland players wore black armbands in the recent double-header against Norway and Georgia, with a minutes applause from the Tartan Army preceding the latter at Hampden.

He achieved many accolades in the game, including a league title winners medal with Leeds and an FA Cup winners medal with Manchester United, plus playing in a European Cup Final with the Elland Road side in 1975. But it was his time in dark blue that Gordon McQueen cherished the most, and he confirmed this to our magazine in an interview in 2007 when he summarised his career.

"My time at Leeds was great, winning the league, and then at Manchester United when we won the cup and we're getting to cup finals regularly. But all my big moments were with Scotland. Being captain when I was only 22 in a European Championship qualifier in Romania – that was terrific. That was as good as it gets. I know it might sound corny, but I grew up wanting to play for Scotland. When I was a bit older, I wanted to play for them, score for them and beat England at Wembley. And all these dreams came true for me. I fulfilled all my football ambitions with Scotland."









Photo: Scottish Sun




# AROUND THE NORDICS IN 4 DAYS

## The European Championship Qualifying Group A – June 2023

### by Hazel Guilder

Photo: Scottish Sun

If you who do not know me by now (was that not a Simply Red classy song in 1989?), I live in Cambridgeshire and have a full-time role in the city of London as a global compliance officer. I would compare my day job to being like a national team coach where my squad are made up of demanding fund managers and fast paced traders. They all need to be reassured from time to time that they are working collaboratively as team, not falling foul of the offside rules and certainly not picking up any yellow or red cards; our VAR just happens to be the Financial Conduct Authority!

When I signed up to be the SNMT features writer for our magazine, I was both excited and apprehensive about making an impact with such an established team of professional writers who currently make up our editorial team. In September 2022, for the remainder of 3 nation league games, I had to book several flights from Stansted to Glasgow and then back onto Krakow. The madness of getting home to Cambridge from Glasgow late on a Sunday night and turning around 2 cases at midnight, going to bed for 4 hours sleep before getting up to driving down a dark road to Luton airport to get to the flight to Krakow to cover the last game was just taster of what was to come and what it would be like to be on the road in 2023. However, what a trip that was and what a way to end our nations league tournament in 2022, a promotion to League A and leap frogging Engerland. We all had a few great days away in Poland with the Tartan Army and all making it back home in one piece. I say that with a lot of naivety at that point as that was the first away trip as a writer and interviewer with fans and I never realised what was about to hit me with away games in 2023! So, with the announcement of 8 games both home and away to Norway, Cyprus, Spain and Georgia, I spent several days planning my away games and the travel involved around my work schedules. I am excited that there will be lots of adventures and cities to be explored and as part of my Christmas presents, I was provided with several travel books so I could plan to take in the sights whilst I was away. All that, in between covering those away games, a chance of interviewing travelling fans and home fans, maybe an interview with some-ex-footballers as well as soaking up the local cultures and the obligatory drinking that is involved as part of travelling with the Tartan Army. I remember doing my research on most of the cities we would be visiting, which went to press last December in 2022.

Sadly, we won't be visiting Nicosia or Barcelona however there will be rich pickings for us all in around Cyprus with most of us staying in Paphos, Larnaca as well as Ayia Napa and then Seville in October. Now that we have two extra friendly games, one pre-arranged Hampden friendly as part of our 150th anniversary between Scotland and England in September and then with the World Cup runners up for 2022, with the highly anticipated meeting of Mbappe with France which is being held in Lille a few days after our nervy game against the Spaniards in Seville; will there be more Rodri tears? Let us hope so and I hope we can get as many of us into the stadium to ensure we do exactly the same as we did in Oslo and rally behind our Scotland team to bring 3 points and goals back to Scotland. Lille will be an interesting city to get to from Seville and at the time of this going to press, I have yet to make my plans up through Spain and France however there are many of us from our club, "Loony Alba", who are planning to do a 14-hour train journey up to Lille from Seville which will involve no doubt many changes etc, hopefully not losing anyone on the way up changing platforms etc, so we always look forward to creating more memories for our London and South East TA group. Thanks to Kevin Donnelly and the crew for always offering the best advice around for us living down south and providing the usual WhatsApp entertainment on forthcoming/past games.

Now that I am involved in a couple of magazines, planning an away trip presents a challenge for me as a female FTAM SNMT writer. Firstly, working out the logistics of getting to the city; I know some of you are also in the same boat as there are many cities which do not offer direct flights from Scotland and to keep costs down

**Continued**

given the living crisis as it is expensive to be part of the Tartan Army, one has to look at the cheapest options of getting to the away games. I have done most of my flights by using Avios points which I have accumulated by using via a BA credit card. When planning my trips, I realised that there would be a lot of changes in different cities and indeed, different countries. What I will say as a woman, and one who will be requiring a variety of clothing going from the surface of the sun again in Cyprus and having a few pool days between the game in Cyprus, to then taking clothes fit for a hospitality game between Scotland and England. I have yet to master the art of travelling lightly and with that, this next trip will be a challenge for me to keep to one smaller case than the body sized case I took with me when I went to Oslo.

I will report back in the next edition on how I got on but with a wobbly case and no Mark to help with the luggage (he incidentally is not my beloved Passepartout though I am sure we will both be in Germany, Germany…. next year together) so I am on my own again so I will be packing over the bank holiday weekend to make sure that I am able to travel as lightly as a female can and I know he will go through my stuff asking me why I need 5 brushes and more clothes than a high street retailer.

For this particular trip to Norway back in June, I was lucky to fly directly from London Heathrow to Oslo however in order to get back from Oslo was never going to be easy. I heard that many fans went via various destinations to get to Oslo and back to Scotland, I had to get back on a 6am flight from Oslo to Stockholm, which seemed crazy to be going east to go west, however as mad as it sounds, it was the only almost affordable direct route I could do with my BA points so it was a very quick pit stop in Sweden, a run from the furthest gate it seemed in Stockholm, off of the plane from Oslo to find that there were the longest queues in the world for non-European passport holders. This is now a reality for all UK passport holders however I would like to thank the friendliest of passport controllers who welcomed both myself and the travelling tartan army including the buckled wheel of our piper all standing waiting to get our passports stamped in Oslo when we arrived there on the Thursday night. I am used to seeing the most miserable of passport workers behind the Perspex glass, especially given that it was well after 11.30pm and yet we were welcomed with a smile, a massive greeting to the tartan army and indeed that we all enjoyed our time both visiting our city and a great match on the Saturday. Stockholm passport control was a different experience and of course, in order to make the flight back to Edinburgh, I had to use my negotiation skills to move myself up to the front of the queue given that my flight back to Scotland was already boarding and I did not fancy a day wandering around a very expensive airport. So having had knee arthroscopy 4 weeks beforehand, I still managed to bolt it to the last gate in a huge airport and make it onto the plane just in time.

So, for our future tartan army travellers, if you have not done any away games this year already, make sure you give yourselves plenty of time to get to Larnaca airport and get through passport control. Forget about the extra round of shots of ouzo or KEO beer. Once you are through, then by all means have a few extra beers and hopefully these are extra celebratory drinks from our win and 3 points, before we all head back to take on the auld enemy but please do not miss the match of a lifetime by missing the flight back all for the sake of those extra rounds of shots in Ayia Napa.

I have to say, my own Norway trip was not without its own incidents, I had over packed this time around given that the prediction for the game itself and weather during our time in Oslo in a Northern Hemisphere country was out of character and it was like being on the surface of the sun and then I had also packed in the all-weather gear which was a very lucky guess given the monsoon monstrosities we all experienced in Hampden against Georgia. That particular game now holds the world record of having the longest stoppage time of over 100 minutes before it restarted again after 9pm. I am sorry to the folk who had to leave early given some had small children as well as long travelling distances to get home as well as the transport links closing down at 11.50pm. A massive thank you to all the ground staff and stewards for clearing the excess rainwater off of the park that night and allowing that game to restart despite it finishing into the following day by one minute past midnight. At the start of my Norway adventure, I felt sorry for the gentleman aka the piper who I met in the BA lounge waiting for the same flight to Oslo. I only found this out when I could finally understand him through his large consumptions of the usual "help yourselves to spirit measures" in that particular lounge that evening. I suspected he had made the trip down earlier from Scotland to Heathrow and was killing time by drinking the bar dry. This man was rigged out in the full Scottish bagpiper dress code as we sat in the lounge, and he slowly slipped into a bit of a wee sleepy coma, but he told me to wake him with the other tartan army brigade who had also spotted him when the flight was called. When it was time to board, 6 tartan army fans and I had to help him up on his feet and get him out of the lounge and out onto the walkway towards the gate along with his heavy bag piping case. If any of you can remember the tv of the 70's and 80's, this had all the makings of "It's a knockout", and I could hear Stuart Hall laughing at the several attempts to get the piper to time his feet onto the moving walkway towards the gate without him falling over and baring all given I am sure he was a true Scotsman underneath his kilt.

It was indeed a farce and it had us all in hysterics at him hanging onto the handrail whilst trying to keep his feet walking forward trying to hold his case. It took a collaboration of all of those tartan army supporters including myself and a father and son who had to take his bag piping case off of him to prop him up, keeping him with us in the middle of us all. We thought we had completed our ordeal in the airport however we then had to get


Photo: Scottish Sun



Photo: Scottish Sun

**Continued**

him on a bus to take us to the plane. Never have I seen a fully kilted Scottish bagpiper roll around a bendy bus as this driver madly sped towards the plane to take us to Norway. Worried that this poor guy would be left back in Heathrow, we decided that between us all we would push him up the steel steps, 4 at the back and 2 of us holding his hands to reach the top of the plane door. Our despair and pleading with the cabin crew that indeed our piper was due to be piping at the game, touched their hearts and we were told that we needed to get him into his seat and strap him in. We assured the cabin crew that he just needed a wee sleep as he had been up all day and that he would be no bother to anyone from London to Oslo. Thankfully to all of us, he shut his eyes before the doors even closed and when the plane wheels hit the runway in Oslo with such force, he woke up looking delirious and asked where are we? I said we have made it to Oslo pal. He said what happened after the lounge to which most of said, mate, the Norse gods must have been shining on you tonight, but you have made it onto Norwegian soil.

**Norway, famous for its land of fjords, Viking folklore and one well known footballer Erling Haaland.**
The Tartan Army, who arrived on mass in Oslo on Friday, 8th June, could have been persuaded that they had landed on the surface of the sun instead of the Nordic region in what was a wave of extreme temperatures of 32c+ in Oslo. Given the need to quench their thirst first of all, most of the Tartan Army ended up at the famous The Scotsman. It was indeed "Taps Aff" weather and all who were there enjoyed soaking up the local delights despite the astronomical alcoholic prices. For most of the fans who I met on that Friday the night before the game, the atmosphere was electric, and the Norwegians could not have been any more welcoming to their North Sea neighbours despite the highly anticipated game.

What an amazing night of partying, mainly in the centre of Oslo, many kilt wearing Tartan Army fans found solace from the heat of the night in those fountains, which seems to be a staple by visiting Scotland fans wanting to cool down in whichever city the games are played. Many of us, including myself, sat outside enjoying the party atmosphere of those bars with our new Norwegian friends discussing the match and predictions on scorelines.

Sure, our Viking friends felt that with the return of Erling Haaland back in the squad after missing the March games due to injury, they were adamant that the Scots would struggle against the formidable Haaland alongside KT's teammate, Martin Odegaard. Nevertheless, drinks and stories were exchanged about previous meetings between Scotland and Norway in what felt like a never-ending twilight of midnight sun and most of us, including myself, enjoyed the early morning sunrise and the welcomed noise of bird song replacing the usual songs about super John McGinn and we'll be coming down the road. Indeed, it was time to hit the pillow at 4.45am for me and be back up again to do it all over again.

I have to say that during breakfast the following day and staying in a hotel outside the main centre of Oslo, I spoke to many Tartan Army fans who have travelled far and wide, mainly from the UK. The feeling, mainly down to the lack of sleep and hangovers starting to kick in, that we were about to take on a challenge of ascending the Galdhøpiggen, which is Norway's highest mountain. The optimism we all had the previous day was wavering and reality was starting to kick in.
As drinks flowed again throughout the city during match day, an even hotter day of temperatures above 34c+ awaited us. Many of us yet again quenched our thirst in the bars around the centre and by the stadium to steady our nerves as well as stave off a few hangovers. Oslo's transport was absolutely top class in providing easy access to get the stadium. The stadium and facilities were superb, the Norwegian stadium staff were extremely welcoming to the Tartan Army and made sure that we were all provided with as much free water as we could drink. I did feel for the squad warming up as there was literally no shade at all in the Ullevaal stadium and yet again, we felt we were all standing on the surface of the sun.

**Norway v Scotland – The game**
As the teams lined up for the national anthems, despite us all emitting extreme body heat around us, the travelling Tartan Army stood united during Flower of Scotland by joining up and linking arms and waists and it felt like we were all there as one. I believe that the feeling of pride by the Scots resonated with the players who also stood linking arms around each other's waists.

Clarke's side employed a flat back five out of possession and tried to keep a high line. The only time Haaland got the ball in a decent position in the first half, Callum McGregor quickly tracked back to make a penalty-box tackle; a heart stopping moment for us all.
Haaland was really pushing the Scottish defence in the second half and he did not have long to wait for a spot-kick. Erling, fresh from Man City's celebrations after winning the treble, looked set to attack from Sorloth's cross and his shirt was pulled down in the penalty area by Ryan Porteous and the referee immediately pointed to the spot when **Haaland went down before picking himself up and scoring from the spot (61st minute).**
It was a real kick in the guts for the squad and the Tartan Army as we knew that this game was going to be a blueprint against Israel at Hampden back in October 2021 where we would need to dig deep and try and fight our way back to try and get an equaliser.
Despite the "Scorchio" heat, a piper who was clearly overheating in his full piper regalia, stood up and belted out Flower of Scotland. I have been at a few away games where a piper has








**Continued**

stood amongst the masses but with only 2,500 of us in that section, we all stood up in unison and sang the full national anthem at full pelt. I know that this resonated across onto the pitch as the Norwegian players and fans were almost hypnotised by the impact but we saw how much this spurred on the players and in the space of 5 mins from the end of what had been a hot-headed game both from the heat in the stadium and the intensity of what the outcome of the game would mean for either nation, Scotland turned the game on its head in sensational fashion with two goals in two minutes Lyndon Dykes capitalised on some **hesitancy in the Norway defence to level, which at this point, the whole section of Scots went crazy. Still celebrating the equaliser, we were barely sat down before Kenny McLean slotted home in the 89th minute to make it 2-1 and sparked the wildest Scotland celebrations that I have seen since both the Israel game where we won 3-2 in 2021 as well as Faddy's 30 yarder against France in the Parc de Princes.**

This victory saw Steve Clarke's side make it three wins from three to move eight points clear of Norway, who were left bottom of Group A, with five games remaining ahead of Scotland's clash with Georgia at Hampden Park on Tuesday.










# CHRISTIE MURRAY INTERVIEW

**by John Bleasdale**



THERE aren't many Scotland internationals who can say they went to a European Championship Finals, a World Cup Finals AND played in a side that defeated England. In the modern era, that's very rare, certainly not from the men's side given there's only been one major tournament appearance since they last tasted victory against the Auld Enemy in 1999.

However, there are five players from the Scotland Women's National Team who played their part in defeating their greatest rivals before going onto play at Euro 2017 and World Cup 2019. Jen Beattie, Kim Little, Rachel Corsie and Hayley Lauder all started against the Lionesses in the Cyprus Cup tournament in March 2011, and produced a shock 2-0 win thanks to goals from Little and Beattie.

Coming off the bench that night was Christie Murray, who also boarded the plane to those tournaments in Netherlands and France respectively. The attacking midfielder replaced Leanne Ross with 20 minutes to go and helped her side see the game out to claim only their fifth, and to date last, victory over the Auld Enemy. "It was nice to be part of it," she begins, "I can recall Jenny Beattie playing up front with Kim Little. So, that was a great game, and they had some really good players playing at the time as well. For us, that was a nice moment to be part of, and obviously a Scotland-England game's always tasty, so it was nice to come on and play a little part in that as well."

Murray made the first of her 80 Scotland appearances to date in March 2010 against New Zealand, just two months shy of her 20th birthday. It was a dream come true for a girl who, like most of her teammates at that stage, had to play with her brother and the boys in her school with no recognised girls' teams around in those days. Recalling her journey from overcoming stereotype behaviour from others to Scotland international, she said: "It was always funny because, when we used to go and play at the local park, or if my brother and I would go on holiday, we'd initially be the last pick, and then after we played a few games it was between my brother and I who would get picked first. So, you just had to go and earn your respect by playing and for them to see I could compete, and I was actually not bad. I think always being the only girl was challenging, and I was quite quiet and introverted growing up, but I think because I loved football I just, kind of, got my head down and wait for my chance for them to see that I could play."

By the time Murray earned her first cap, Scotland were already making significant strides in their attempts to reach a major finals for the first time. Players like Suzanne Grant (now Winters), Pauline Hamill and goalscoring machine Julie Fleeting all raised the standards in the Women's National Team and were tantalisingly close to reaching the Euro 2009 Finals, losing to Russia on away goals in the playoffs.

For Christie Murray, learning from these players was valuable for her education. "They were the main starting players when I was started up, and I ended up rooming with Suzanne for a bit, which was nice because she's a senior player and she's so outgoing, so it made it a lot easier for me to integrate into the squad. Pauline was my coach at the National Performance Centre at the time as well as playing alongside her, so I obviously have a good relationship with Pauline as well, and it was always nice to tap into the senior players knowledge."

Speaking on what it was like rooming with Suzanne Winters, who previously admitted to Famous Tartan Army Magazine she enjoyed being the prankster in the changing room, Murray added: "Oh my god pranks! She gave me some amazing, absolute belters, just always had people laughing. You just need people like her in your squad that are just absolutely bonkers. She was always up to something, winding people up, giving them frights and making stupid videos, and honestly just absolutely hilarious!"

Learning from those role models had a positive effect on Christie as she established herself in the squad and built on her experience. Her first goal came on her 20th appearance, and it's one to remember for all sorts of reasons. Trailing 1-0 to the Republic of Ireland at Tynecastle in a Euro 2013 qualifier, Rhonda Jones equalised on 86 minutes with a header, before Murray grabbed a sensational winner a minute later with a beautiful curling effort into the left-hand corner of the Irish goal.

"It's still one of my favourite memories playing for Scotland," she said. "I remember it was a rainy night at Tynecastle. The pitch was lovely, and I just remember having a good feeling. Even though we were losing, we were playing ok, obviously we conceded a goal and stuff, and then after Rhonda's goal went in, we won the ball back from the centre kick and scored the goal literally one or two minutes later after her goal. I had a couple of shots similar to the one I scored before it, so, I don't know, just in my head I felt "if I get a chance to shoot, I'm going to do it." I'd been watching the game and seeing where the space was potentially, and the keeper was off her line slightly, so if I get my shot off early from deep enough, I'm going to try it, and it came off. We ended up having a pile on, I ran and ended up sliding on my belly and, literally, the whole team piled on, and there's a picture of Rhonda Jones taking a runner and star-jumping on top of it. That was good, that was a great memory, because it kept our hopes alive in qualifying."









**Continued**

Despite that great turnaround, Scotland again missed out on the European Championships having suffered more playoff heartache against Spain in extra time, before defeat to Netherlands over two-legs two years later ended their World Cup 2015 prospects.

Those defeats, however, were just delaying the inevitable, as qualification for a major international tournament was just around the corner. As Fleeting and co gradually moved on, along came a core group of exciting prospects in Caroline Weir, Erin Cuthbert and Claire Emslie to join Corsie, Little and Beattie, who'd all gained valuable experience that would help propel the Scotland Women's National Team into a history-making era.

It was, therefore, no surprise when Scotland qualified for their first ever tournament when they won seven out of eight qualifying matches to reach the 2017 European Championships. Murray was picked as part of the 23-player squad and, although she never got any game time in the Netherlands, being in the first Scotland Women's National Team squad to appear at a major tournament was a huge honour for her.

Summarising the progression of the Women's National Team and that historic first qualification, Murray said: "We had a lot of near misses, but we had a lot of young players coming through at the time that were really promising, and you could tell that what we were building was something really good. We still had a point to prove that we could compete at the top stage, so for us that was our aim was to reach a major tournament, so then to do that back-to-back was amazing. I think it was just believing that we could do it. It's just showing consistency during the qualification campaign, and you're learning from your mistakes as well. It was amazing to be selected and be part of the first major tournament."

Despite a 6-0 defeat in their tournament bow, Scotland performed well and were only denied a quarter final place on goal difference. That first major appearance at a major international tournament was a significant moment for the Women's National Team, but it was only the beginning for this talented group of players. Winning another seven matches out of eight in their qualifying section, Scotland qualified for their first ever World Cup Finals, clinching it with a 2-1 win in Albania.

The impact that qualification had on Women's football in this country was huge. The popularity in the sport, from attendances to media exposure, was huge, and even led to the Scottish Government providing funding to allow players not full time to train full time from January 2019 until the finals in France. To top it off, the girls played at Hampden for the first time, with a crowd of 18,555 seeing them defeat Jamica 3-2 in their final pre-World Cup friendly.

Murray summed up the impact by saying: "It was amazing! I think anybody who loves football thinks of the World Cup when you're thinking about international football, it's nothing else. When you're playing club football, you're probably thinking about the Champions League but, for me, in terms of the pinnacle is to play at a World Cup. Not many footballers can say that they've been at one. Some, unfortunately, just because of the international team that they play, and how competitive, they might never make one, so to be in the squad, and play in the first game, was a huge honour. That (Jamaica) game was a turning point. Having qualified for the World Cup, having the send off game and seeing that many people turn out was so nice to see. The whole squad lined up for the national anthem together, normally it's just the starting eleven, but it was everybody and it was so nice to walk out in our national stadium in front of our families. It showed how much the game has pushed on because, for other qualification games, we'd have 5000 max, or 3000 at that point, so to then almost triple it was amazing, and to win was a massive confidence boost as well going into the three big games in the World Cup."

Having been part of the Euro 2017 squad, getting into the SFA Roll of Honour by winning her 50th cap against Belarus during the qualification journey, and playing at the National Stadium, Christie Murray was about to fulfil another ambition in France. She was named in the starting eleven for Scotland's first ever game at a World Cup Finals, and fate decreed it would be England once again, this time in Nice and, this time, Scotland were a lot more competitive as they went down 2-1 to, at that time, the World ranked number three side. From being last pick at school to a starting role in a World Cup match, it was quite the journey for Murray.

"Personally, it was a dream come true to, first, make the squad," she begins, "but then actually to play was massive. My family were there watching as well, which was so good, and then everybody being able to watch back home because it was live on BBC, and millions have watched it. Then we played well, and we were unfortunate not to get anything from the second half of the game. To be part of that, it was just an amazing experience, to qualify for a major tournament, especially the World Cup with Scotland.

An injury sustained in that match ruled her out of the following two games, but Murray was hoping to be back for the knockout stages that Scotland looked on course for as they led Argentina 3-0 at the Parc des Princes going into the last 20 minutes.

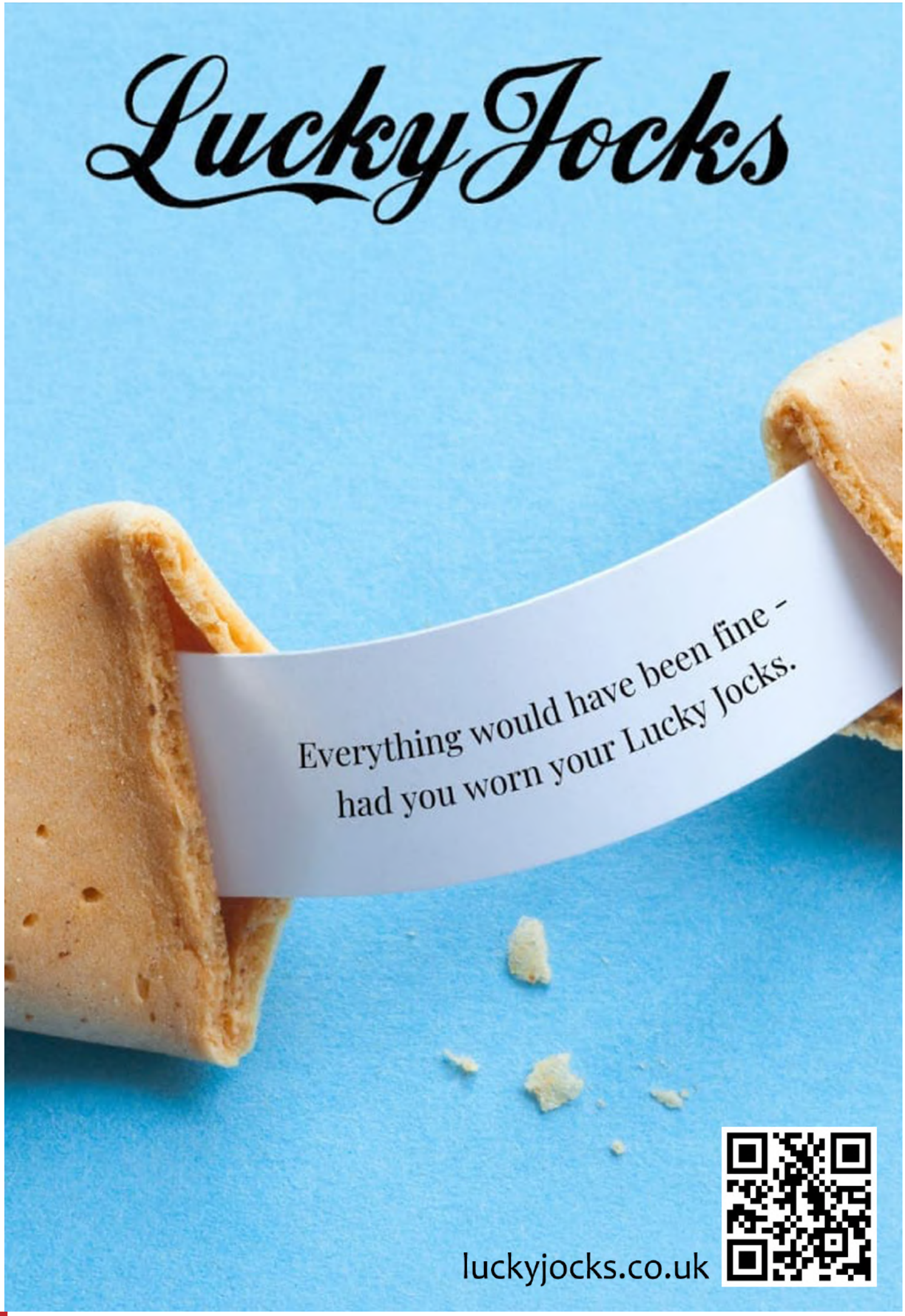
Then disaster struck as Argentina quickly narrowed the deficit to 3-2 before earning a controversial penalty after a lengthy VAR check. Lee Alexander saved the penalty, but another lengthy VAR check harshly ruled that both her feet were off her line, and the South Americans converted the retaken spot kick. Incredibly, despite the lengthy VAR delays, the referee blew her whistle just 20 seconds after the restart, and Scotland's World Cup dream was over.

Having qualified for back-to-back tournaments, it was a major disappointment that Scotland failed to qualify for both the delayed European Championships in 2022 and this year's World Cup Finals. However, there is hope that the Scots can end that barren run as they enter the inaugural Women's Nations League campaign, with the European Championship qualifiers running next year, and is something that Murray no doubt wants to be involved in.

Christie Murray has packed a lot into her international career that most Scots can only dream of. Playing in a win over England, racking up 80 caps, making the squad for a European Championship, playing at Hampden and making an appearance at a World Cup Finals is pretty good going for a girl who had some obstacles to overcome to make the breakthrough as a Women's Footballer.

To summarise what playing for Scotland means to her, she simply said: "It's the highlight of my career, without a doubt! Scotland is full of people who are passionate about football, love their football, so to be able to represent my country is the biggest honour!" ■




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# THE CHICK YOUNG COLUMN

**Esta volviendo a casa, as they say in old Madrid. Poor England. It never came home.**
I have no particular gripe with the Lionesses, but I did get a bit fed up with the patriotic manure.
Home? The world's first international match was played in Glasgow, and we invented the game. If football was coming home to the neighbours, then there is something wrong with their satnav. I tried to stop myself.

I'll be the voice of reason and support them, I told myself. After all I spent two periods of my life living in England. And loved it. I'll need to tell you about the adventures in London in the early seventies some time. Any way, it was all mostly legal. But I digress…

Dear friends live there, and the country can be stunningly beautiful. I genuinely like England and the English and have no time for fruit bats who want to man the border. My godson and his family live in England for heaven's sake. His weans are English.

Grow up, I told myself. And mature I stayed. But I couldn't go the distance. By the eve of the final, I had cracked and the tv remote was bouncing off the wall of my lounge. It's not the girls. It's not the fans…well, mostly not.



In Steve we trust





**Seeing Germany**

It's their media. Journalism?
They couldn't even spell it and for sure couldn't deliver it. Bitter and twisted old Scottish punter? Guilty as charged.

Major important news stories relegated down the running order or kicked into touch while 66 got more mentions than a year in a bingo hall.

The first England team to win a World Cup in nearly sixty years they promised. I'll bet dear old Bobby Moore is up there punching the heavenly air.

Oh, and my other nephew lives in Estepona. And his weans are Spanish. So, my conscience was clear. Anyway, let's learn the lesson.

Scotland are about to navigate a series of fixtures from the giddy heights at the top of European qualifying group. The view is stunning, but don't start assuming we can see Germany from here. Cyprus, England, Spain and France…and curiously the allegedly least challenging one is the most important of all.

Show me the counter where we trade defeats to England and France for a win in Cyprus and a draw in Seville and I'll start the queue.

The 150th anniversary celebration match against the people from the other side of the wall - when football is actually really coming home - matters not a jot if we blow it in Cyprus.
A friendly in France is tickety boo, but Seville - the graveyard of Scottish European club dreams of glory- is hold your breath material.

There is a Ready Brek glow (ask your parents) of contentment and ability round this squad led by a manager who knows the road to tread.

In Stevie we trust. And there is as much chance of him letting his players getting ahead of themselves as there is of seeing Neymar at a food bank.

Four points and we can dare to dream, although that habit can be bad for your health.

Just ask the Lionesses..











**Cyprus-the most challenging match ahead**

# JOYFUL JULY AS SWNT EXTEND WINNING RUN

## BY JOHN BLEASDALE

THIS summer's Women's World Cup would no doubt have been tough for the Scotland Women's National Team to watch, with the agony of that playoff defeat on home soil to Republic of Ireland still lingering. However, with the inaugural Women's Nations League coming up in line with the Euro 2025 qualifying campaign, there is no time for the girls to dwell on what might've been, and they concluded their preparations with two summer friendlies against Northern Ireland and Finland.

It would turn out to be a productive camp for the Scots as they won both matches, increasing their winning run to four consecutive matches having also won both April friendlies against Australia and Costa Rica respectively. Here's a roundup of how events unfolded.

**14/7/23: Scotland 3-0 Northern Ireland, Kilmac Stadium, Dundee**

Boosted by the Easter weekend victories, Scotland came into this friendly in confident mood to face a Northern Ireland side who'd played in their first ever major finals at last summers European Championships. Taking the game to the City of Discovery proved to be a good move as a crowd of 5,148 came along to see the hosts sweep their opponents aside with three goals in a seven minute spell.

Firstly, in the 32nd minute, Emma Watson's low ball into the area was met on the run by the right foot of Erin Cuthbert, and her effort squirmed under Turner in the Northern Ireland goal. Five minutes later, the Scots doubled their advantage when Sam Kerr got her head onto Caroline Weir's corner, which deflected over Turner to give the new Bayern Munich signing her first goal for her country. Only a couple of minutes passed when Scotland put the game to bed when Kirsty Hanson's cross from the left hand side was flicked by a Northern Ireland defender who attempted to flick it away from danger, only for the ball to ricochet off Martha Thomas's chest and into the net via the inside of the post. There were no second half goals as Scotland comfortably saw the game out to claim a morale boosting win ahead of their trip to Finland.

**FIRST CAPS** – Kirsty McLean and Amy Rodgers

**18/7/23: Finland 1-2 Scotland, Tampere Stadium, Tampere**

Scotland made it two wins in the July international window with an impressive victory in Finland, the side who ended their European Championship hopes in 2020. The Scots took the lead after 13 minutes when Emma Watson turned her marker and played the ball neatly into the path of captain for the night Caroline Weir. The Real Madrid star then cooly slotted the ball through the goalkeepers legs to cap her 100th appearance with her 17th international goal. Six minutes later, Scotland doubled their advantage when Kirsty Hanson went on a run down the left hand side and passed the ball into the feet of Watson. With her back to goal, the teenager turned and curled the ball with her right foot neatly into the left hand corner to net her third goal in four internationals.

Finland then grabbed a lifeline on 25 minutes when a low shot from Elli Pikkujamsa squeezed into Lee Gibson's right hand corner to narrow the deficit. Despite pressure from the hosts in the second half, the Scots held out to make it four consecutive wins for Pedro Martinez Losa's girls, a real momentum booster ahead of the upcoming Women's Nations League campaign.

**MILESTONE** – Caroline Weir became the 15th player in the Scotland Women's National Team to reach the landmark of 100 caps.

**UP NEXT** – Scotland travel to Stadium of Light, Sunderland on 22 September to take on defending European champions England in their opening Nations League match. Four days later, they welcome Belgium to Hampden.




# Book Review by Iain Emerson

## Scotland 42 England 1, An Englishman's Mazy Dribble Through Scottish Football

Now here is dedication for you. The author, Mark Winter, who resides south of the border in Dover, has visited all 42 league clubs in Scotland, and has written his adventures down in this excellent book titled 'Scotland 42 England 1'. Now, if only that title was a real scoreline!

The nearest Scottish club to his home is some 394 miles away, which only highlights his dedication to undertake this mammoth task. His love affair with Scottish football stadiums should not be underestimated, and what I like about this book is that he captures his adventures in such a way that you feel your undertaking the trip yourself. It's a very enjoyable journey to go on.

This book is one that you can dip in and dip out of reading, as every chapter is a full story in itself, and so you can read the chapters in any order you want. I'm not sure if Mark intended this, but it's good for me as I've got a habit of not reading a book from start to finish in the order it was intended, instead choosing chapters that capture my interest first. I'm strange that way!

As I live in Stirling, I decided to read the chapter about his visit to Stirling first. Mark's plan being to visit Forthbank Stadium to watch Stirling University play a match there. Mark describes how he arrives from Aberdeen, via Edinburgh, where he drops of his bags at a hostel, before heading on to Stirling. After a bit if sightseeing he gets to the stadium to be told Stirling University now play their games in Falkirk and that no one had updated the website to let fans know!

I then chose another chapter on Stirling to see if he had better luck this time. Mark went to take in a pre-season friendly at Forthbank Stadium, as Stirling Albion hosted Notts County. Mark explains that he arrives at the stadium only to be told that game is not on, despite being advertised on The SFA website. Instead, there was already a match taking place, Scotland v England Under 16's which was now into the second half. Mark asks if he can get into watch the remainder of the game but is refused and told no, as no one is allowed entry after the second half starts. This is unbelievable jobsworth (my words, not his) behaviour from the Forthbank official. I was really disappointed for Mark, but he describes in the book that he would persevere and doesn't complain.

This leads to a third chapter about Stirling, however you can read that one yourself to see if he actually managed to get into the stadium to watch a game. And if he did, was it worth it?

These three trips to Stirling give a only glimpse of Marks dedication, despite the obstacles in his way, to complete his travel to all 42 grounds. It is testimony to his determination and character that he overcomes such difficulties and constantly remains upbeat.

Throughout the book, Mark talks up the friendliness of the Scots that he has met, and about how beautiful Scotland is with its history and countryside and tells many funny stories about his experiences. It's not just about the football, and you know how much he has thoroughly enjoyed these trips. The book is an excellent read and definitely recommended.

**Review by Iain Emerson**

Star Rating **Five stars out of five**
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# The Scottish stadium that never sleeps

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The Scottish stadium that never sleeps
There is so much going on at Hamilton off the field that it sets a great example of how football stadiums can serve the whole community, beyond just the football team. Colin McGowan recently sold the football club so that he could spend more time developing the social side of the stadium.
The stadium activities continue to grow, and if you walk around the stadium, you will find evidence of this. There is an Art Wall which was opened at a ceremony by renowned artist Peter Howson. Theres a beautiful Serenity Garden with its flower's, benches and stone fountain. There are five cabins that are home to Lanarkshire Shedmen, a wonderful organisation. Theres a play park area with its very own little sweet shop, and then there's a sensory cabin. Finally, you will come across a community five a side pitch called Cruyff Court. But these are just evidence of a fraction of what is actually going on at the stadium.

**Stadium owner Colin McGown explains how Hamilton is the stadium that never sleeps.**
'I owned the football club previously, but it was mainly the board of directors who managed the football side of things, I was doing everything that wasn't football which included the financial side of things, raising money, attracting sponsorship and building the social conscious of the club which is my real passion. The charities and in particular our work in the field of addiction is my passion. So really, I'm delighted the football club has a new custodian in Seref and 1874 Holdings ltd, which is fantastic as that will give me more time to develop further the community-based side of things, as that is where my real passion lies'.



COLIN McGOWAN
CEO HAFC Stadium Ltd

'Many stadiums fall into bad states of disrepair, as they only play around 18 league games and a handful of cup games a season, but I won't allow that to happen here at this stadium. It is here to serve the whole community the whole year round. Whether it's a halloween night, firework nights, recovery meetings during the week, foodbanks or helping the more vulnerable of our community. There will be lots of fun days too, carnivals and galas days, as I believe that football clubs are the new cathedral of the people, and I think we can do so much more. Only a very small percentage of people in Hamilton buy a season book, but there's 54,560 people in Hamilton, so there's the rest of the community to reach and to serve. At the stadium we are going to serve the community all year round the best we can. And in all these events we are raising money that goes to the vulnerable in the community. Examples of this being the children's charity Blameless and Hamilton Accies Community Trust as it helps the elite youth academy. I am sure you will agree that we can all achieve more by working together, the football people getting on with the football, supporters supporting the team, and the area I am in with non-football people. I'm sure if we all get behind making all these other events a success and then all roads will lead to Rome. Together we can do so much more than just simply football. I am totally focussed on this, and I look forward to being able to spend more time to develop this'.



Always great to see youngsters in our stadium getting involved in the camps






Our art walls

Then came the art wall. They went out to local artists and some not so local. They came from near and far to paint portraits and other art on the back wall, the wall that is seen from the Accies main stand. Renowned artist Peter Howson even attended our opening ceremony.

These artists all donated their time and expertise totally free of charge.

Alex McGrath owner of Pro Signs gifted the design artwork and banners that cover the walls at the bottom half of the art wall.

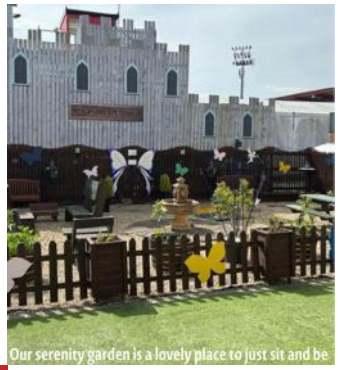


Peter Howson









Our serenity garden is a lovely place to just sit and be



food-banks are well stocked with food and a few luxuries for families



Lots to keep the little ones occupied and happy at our beach

core
CLINIC



- Sports Medicine
- Physiotherapy
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# Stadium

Issue 1: Summer 23


## "Community is Everything"




## Hamilton Stadium

"The Stadium that Never Sleeps"


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# ELSIE COOK

Elsie was joint founder and honorary secretary of Scottish Women's Football Association in 1972.
She went on to manage the Scotland Women's Team in 1974.

**Elsie writes here for Famous Tartan Army Magazine in her own unique Ayrshire way….**





**Rose Reilly, Bestie, Pat Crerand, myself and Mary Davenport with Mary Anderson and Kathleen Rush in front and Tommy Docherty in background.**

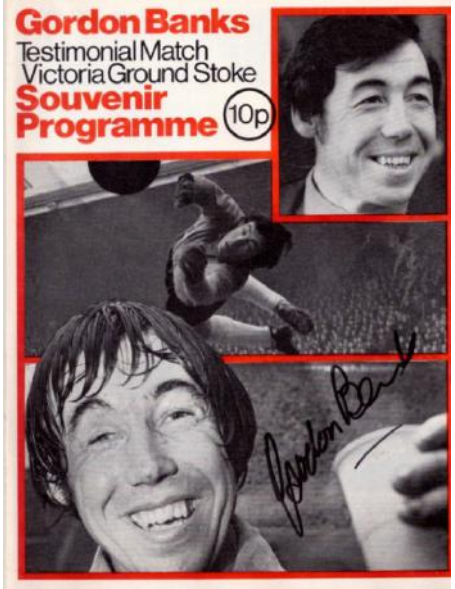
**GORDON BANKS TESTIMONIAL**
**STOKE CITY V**
**MANCHESTER UTD SELECT**
**Victoria Ground, Stoke**
**12 December 1973**

Here's anither wee story, a fantastic memory...of top player, Edna Neillis.

I was invited by a Manchester Corinthians' contact tae get a team tae play an exhibition match prior tae the Gordon Banks Testimonial at Stoke, a Stoke Select v Manchester Utd Select, 1973. What an honour for us lassies! We travelled tae Stoke by train thinkin' how lucky are we?

Intae the hame dressin' room tae get changed, stomach churnin' wae excitement, hangin' ma claes up oan a peg allocated tae George Best...wae George Bests' name on it...stripped, and ready tae go! We lined up in the tunnel, it was absolutely freezin' and pourin' wae rain ootside, in fact, a deluge, the rain actually stoatin' straight doon, similar tae the Eintracht game v Killie aw thae years ago. We splashed ontae that pitch tae take oan Stoke LFC.

Despite the dire conditions we played some amazin' fitba. Wae midfielder and Captain, Margaret McAulay bossin' the midfield, outside right Rose Reilly struttin' her stuff, Irvine's Mary Strain up front by inside right, wee 'Jinky', redhead, Edna Neillis, showin' some fantastic ability oan the baw...and...a packed Stoke City crowd chantin', "Scotland, Scotland" fae the first 5 meenits! An incredible English audience cheerin' on us, Scots lassies! Well, we ran riot, completely overpowered the Stoke Ladies and the great interplay between




Margaret, Edna, Rose and young Mary, was so well appreciated! I was so proud of this fantastic team effort!

We were cheered off the park, winnin' 4-0, a most satisfactory result, a game we'd never forget! Then we were met in the changin' rooms by an impressed, Gordon Banks who took the time tae thank us all, personally, for puttin' oan such an entertaining match... then! The fun began!

Well. that was certainly a great experience, and we were aw oan a high, shame we have tae go hame noo! As we were makin' oor wae oot tae the waitin' minibus...I spotted the one and only hero fae the 1966 World Cup, no Bobby Charlton, no Geoff Hurst or Bobby Moore! There was a forlorn looking Eusebio, sittin' all alone, kinda crestfallen in the changin'room, he must've been subbed, or maybe injured, but he certainly didnae look too happy, but nothin' ventured nothing gained (my motto)! I approached him and I asked if I could take his photo wae Rose! He agreed but no a happy bunny! I daren't even mention 1966 and the impression, he, and that great Portuguese team of '66 had on me…but it might've cheered him up!

Then the Rest of the World X1 v Gordon Banks Select gemme was over and we were hanging aboot ootside in the rain, excitedly hoping' tae get a glimpse of George Best, but, not tae be, we were physically bundled, unceremoniously, by Edna, intae the back o' oor waitin' van, and she banged the roof o' the van and shouted, "Take it away driver!"

Edna had spotted George Best makin' his way oot the stadium and stayed behind and here we were on oor way back tae the train station, while a grinnin' Edna and the others left behind, saw the world's top players emerge fae the stadium...we peered oot the back winda as the stadium and a wavin', grinnin' Edna, faded fae view, lost in the deluge…we were ragin'!

We gets tae the railway station, and wee Mary Anderson suggests going intae the nearby, plush, Grosvenor Hotel, posh, or whit? .... for a coupla screw taps, a cairry oot for the train...in we goes!

Oor hair plastered tae oor heids, duffle coats and flaired trousers soaked straight through tae oor knickers, wae the rain.... and, this handsome, posh guy, maitre d', in an immaculate tuxedo approaches us

Continued

as we emerged fae the revolvin' doors.... picture it!! He frowns! Looks us up and doon, "Excuse me ladies just who are you?" "Och we were playin' at Gordon Banks Testimonial the nicht and we were just lukin' for a coupla screw taps for the train hame!" The gallus Mary Anderson fae East Kilbride says and explains tae him whit a screw tap is! "Come in, come in!" says he wae a huge, welcomin' smile, "Go upstairs in the lift to the powder room!" Honestly, a 'powder room!' LOL! "Dry your hair, sort yourselves out, then come straight back downstairs, there's a reception waiting for you in the main lounge!" Along there on the right! In the name o' the wee man, ye couldnae mak it up! .....a reception for US!

Well, imagine the giggles...we were made up! A reception for US! We hung oor soakin' wet duffle coats on pegs next tae mink jackets, ha! Dried and backcombed ma hair, as best as I could, tidied up ma streaky mascara, re-applied a wee bit lippy and back doon in the posh lift tae 'oor reception!'
Pink champagne, sparklin' wine glasses, posh nibbles beautifully laid out on the tables, and we were first in...picture it!

As we giggled helplessly and got stuck in....in walked Bestie wae the obligatory blonde hangin' on his arm. Followed by Bobby and Norma Charlton, Paddy Crerand, Sir Alf Ramsay, Tommy Docherty etc etc So, there we were, bletherin' awa tae them aw and pouring pink champagne for Georgie boy and gettin' oor photos taken, and I was havin' a great time arguing wae Tommy Docherty! We had a blast! It all passed too quickly!

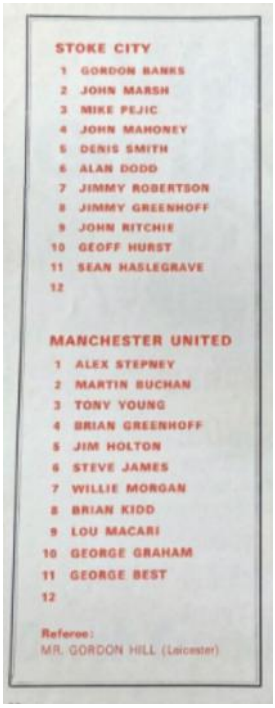
Then, hauf an hour later, in walks wee Edna!

Wet, ginger hair, matted, stuck tae her heid! Her face was skelpin', as red as her hair, she wis loupin' wae anger! "whit the ****'s gaun oan here?" says she, loudly! We lassies aw burst oot laughin'! Almost immediately, we had tae run for the train! That memory will never leave us Edna, yer wee trick didnae work that time!!!

It's the unexpected things that can happen in life, that makes life interestin'!

Learned, in next days newspaper, Pele was desperate tae play in his auld rival, Gordon Banks Testimonial but Brazil insisted he did not take part! A shame he wid've loved these lassies and they wid've been equally impressed! I think of it noo! Jist whit kinda reception wid Pele have gie'd oor Edna!? Aw well! Pele's loss!















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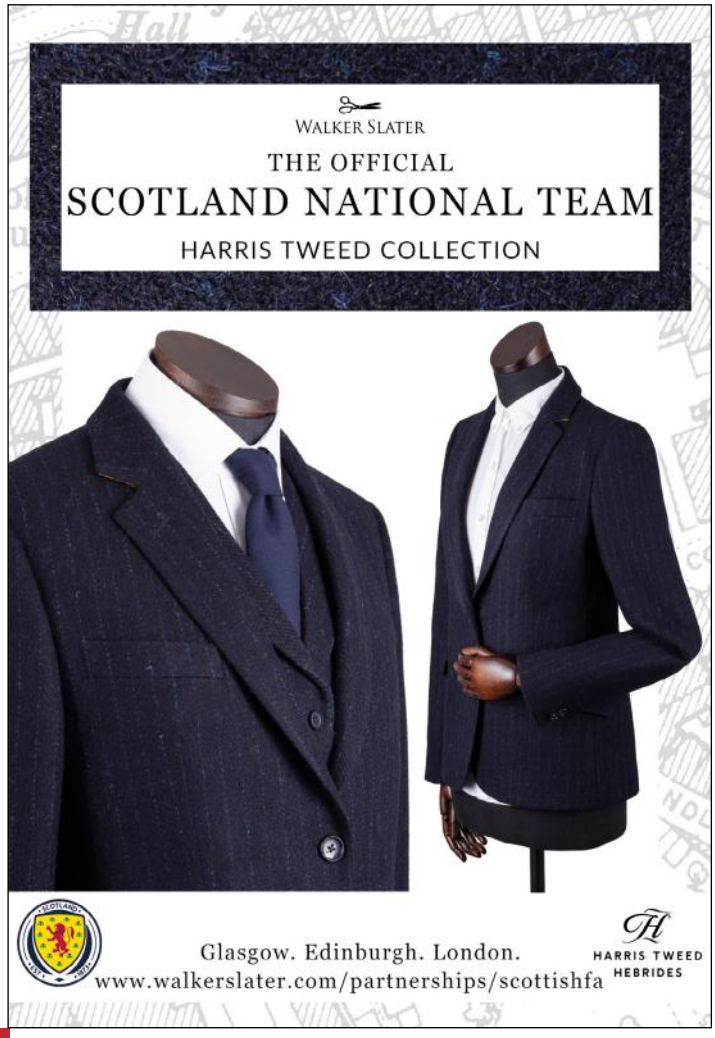
C'mon Scotland!!!

FAMOUS TARTAN ARMY MAGAZINE

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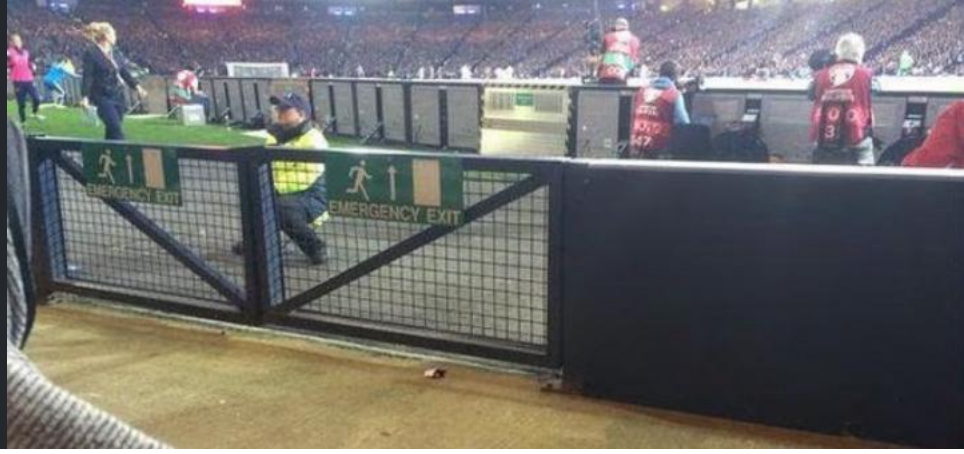
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# A Different View

## Michael McEwan talks to fan and campaigner Stephen Reside




Stephen Reside is 29, passionate football fan. A Scotland and Motherwell supporter, who has a YouTube channel called 'A Different View', and travels around Scottish football grounds to review their disabled facilities.

His focus is accessible facilities, not always possible, but he doesn't want to become one of these Youtubers who make a living out of just going to matches, he strives to make a difference.

**Michael: Why do you think there was a need for your channel?**

**Stephen:** 'I think that you go to a lot of these grounds and disabled facilities were an afterthought, just slotted in, they didn't look at what might be needed. What I try to do with the channel is focus on how the facilities can be made better for all who use it, as everyone has different needs. Clubs have recently made some changes; Kilmarnock have put in a new platform, Celtic has put in View 67, Rangers and SFA at Hampden are currently looking into how they can improve their facilities, I don't know if any of these changes are because of my coverage, but I'd like to think it is effecting change, or at least getting people to think about it'.

'I think the credit must go to the clubs who have taken the action, but we can't stop there, I always look for the elevated view at grounds, as most of the disabled seating is pitch side. One example of this is the South Stand at Hampden, which at ground level can be impossible to get overall view of play'.

'Firstly, look at improving pitch experience for physical disabilities, then address needs for less visible disabilities such as autism, how can we put in sensory rooms or make pitch experience less over stimulating, the show covers all aspects of disability'.

**Has your channel been well received by clubs and fans?**

'The channel's getting great feedback, I think perhaps as the purpose behind it is to improve the lives of disabled football fans. I really enjoy doing these interviews, if it's a good interview I forget that I've structured it and we're just having great chat, the planning is just there to refer to.

I've been lucky to interview some great people, Tam Cowan, Sam Noth out of adventures, there's an example of a Youtuber who does some great works, one who stuck in my mind is Craig Brown, an absolute gentleman, he gave some great insight to why he left Motherwell at the time of interview. I was just a guy who interviewed him for over an hour, but he texted me on Xmas Day about 2 months after the interview to wish me a Merry Xmas, now he didn't have to do that, that shows the type of man he was.

It's for moments like that, along with many other times that I've enjoyed starting the channel, as I'd never have had so many experiences otherwise. People come up to me to say, 'well done, its great what you're doing', but in myself I'm always looking for the next thing so sometimes I don't take the time to enjoy it.

I think that grounds have been working on accessibility plans even before I started the channel, but if I've in some way made them think differently then that's a positive. Clubs such as St Mirren have also invited me in to review their facilities, so my feedback matters to them as a disabled fan and a platform which reaches many more fans.

My view is that many disabled fans facilities are stuck in the 90's, so we need to bring them into the 21st century, technology improves very day so it shouldn't be so hard to improve fans' match day experience'.

**How important is it for clubs to appoint disability access officers?**

'I think that those currently in this role are on the front foot, constantly looking at how they can improve facilities. I've spoken to several of them that on match day they try to make sure that disabled fans do get the best experience possible and if there are any complaints or issues, they try to rectify these for the next game'.

**What would you like to see all football clubs in Scotland, not just the topflight, address for disabled fans going forward, budget notwithstanding? (I know it's a big question to ask!)**

'Even if its small changes it makes a difference, some staff at ground take food orders at half time from disabled fans, as access to the kiosks is an issue for several reasons, maybe it creates more work for them, but it shows they're trying to give best experience on the day. One of the reasons this matter is that they may need their carer to take them to toilet, for example, and they are queuing for however long at a kiosk, causing additional distress. An idea I have is maybe bringing in guest commentators for audio to the blind supporters, again






**With James McFadden friends for over 20 years**



**Wearing his beloved Scotland top**

Continued

this might be down to money being better spent on bigger improvements.

It's so important for people to volunteer in any small way, but ultimately the clubs must act.

If you look at public buildings across the UK there is legislation in place for access of disabled people and they must meet a certain standard, so why are football stadiums any different? Football stadiums are some of the most used public buildings in the country, they might say that there are basics in place, but should we not be looking more at not just ticking a box, but looking to maximise it?

Scotland has been at the forefront for a lot of big developments in the world, such as medicine, TV, inventions and we invented football, despite what others may say. So why are we not the country pioneering the best disabled facilities possible in the world?

**Do you think that people with a disability are forgotten about at times?**

It is more a naivety than on purpose, until you either experience it or your mind is opened up to issues faced, this encapsulates what I'm trying to do with the channel, to open people's minds. It's not about getting preferential treatment, but it's about equality - an able-bodied person can sit anywhere in the stadium with his mates, have any view that they want but disabled fans don't have that luxury, we are told where to go, so it's about using the stadium to maximise the experience for all. These clubs with more facilities in place are doing this, they're using what they've got but making it better. I'm not expecting disabled facilities in every stand, but maybe in say 10 years' time with all these new stadiums being built or developed, why wouldn't we have an option in every stand, why shouldn't we have an elevated view?

1/7th of people on the planet, over a billion estimated, have a disability so it's a big section of the population, who are not given options to meet their needs.

**What do you think of the recent creation of sensory room or additional needs support for young fans, such as those with Downs Syndrome or Autism?**

I'm aware that developments will take time and won't happen overnight, but as I say any small changes that can be implemented and rolled out across the nation is a step in the right direction. The first step is raising people's awareness of what is possible. Mostly I think there should be less cost to the clubs, humanitarian change is needed, not a physical change but a change in attitude. How those with a disability are perceived and welcomed equally into their stadium. 61% of disabled people at one point in their life will experience loneliness or say that they are chronically lonely, and this is as high as 70% for young disabled people. ■

Watching football for 90 minutes, I'm not disabled, and that goes for millions of other fans with a disability. I'm not thinking about the disability, just about the game, meeting other people in a similar situation, just that itself can improve someone's life massively.

***you can check Stephen's channel out at https://www.youtube.com /c/adifferentviewscot**



**Wearing his beloved Motherwell top**



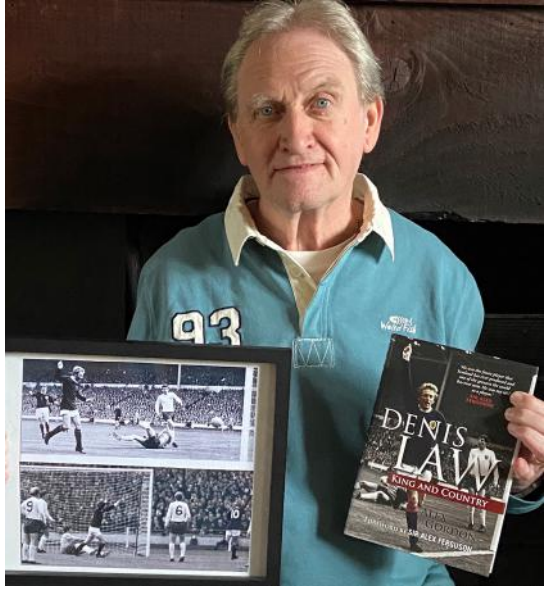
At Celtic Park






# DENIS LAW

## Alex Gordon describes his love affair with the King




**Artiste and assassin. Entertainer and executioner. Showman and swordsman.**
Denis Law. The name simply shimmers and sparkles with charisma. It whisks you off to a golden, bygone era when football truly was the beautiful game. Performing for his country, he was the Dark Blue Pimpernel, a character with a rare and spectacular combination of elegance and menace; a debonair destroyer; a master of improvisation; a contortionist in the penalty box. He was the Demon King, clinical and nerveless, possessor of lightning, gravity-defying reflexes to unleash hell, or open the gates to heaven, depending on which side you were on.

**Unique and uncompromising. Beguiling and brave. Flamboyant and fearsome.**
Denis Law. Scotland's favourite footballing son, the offspring - the last of seven - of an Aberdeen trawler man and a school cleaning lady. A special talent whose daring deeds on the field of battle are the stuff of legend. A one-off, the genuine article, there will never be a replica. An exponent of danger zone spontaneity; a devotee of creating mayhem in packed defences. The millions who were fortunate to get a close-up view of this extraordinarily-gifted individual were swept along as he lived the dream.

**Talented and tenacious. Performer and predator. Cavalier and controversial.**
Denis Law. A free spirit who engaged your mind, emotions and ambitions. An individual who embodied and captured the very essence of a small and proud nation that was always up for the skirmish, always determined to punch above its weight. An icon who was never addicted to the spotlight; a man who never craved publicity. Try to give him the red-carpet treatment and he'll head for the back door. Put him in a football strip, though, and things happened. Marvellous, exceptional and memorable things. He was the football hero's football hero.

**And Scottish... passionately Scottish.**
He brought Hollywood to Hampden. The shock of blond hair, the arm thrust into the air, the cuff tightly gripped, the back ramrod-stiff, the jersey flapping outside the shorts and the magisterial strut after leaving another scene of devastation behind him.

He was the main attraction, irresistibly so. The quintessential Scotsman. There may have been imitators and even impostors, but Denis Law was the real deal. You really shouldn't compete with a legend. He was light years away from us mere mortals, but somehow had a relationship with us; some sort of captivating connection with the man on the terracing.

How else can you explain a collection of schoolboys congregating outside a tenement block at 54 Dougrie Road in Castlemilk, a council estate on the south side of Glasgow, on the freezing cold evening of 7 November 1963 preparing to walk almost two miles to Hampden Park to watch Scotland play Norway, hardly a world force and consisting almost solely of amateur players?

It was a friendly encounter of very little importance, the game largely meaningless and the result, too, probably. But Denis Law was in town, in the team and around ten young lads - aged between 11 and 13 - weren't going to pass up the opportunity of witnessing their soccer god in action. Another 35,400-or so supporters agreed with us.

The weather was dreadful, and, in fact, the game had to be put back 24 hours after a blanket of fog had engulfed the city the previous evening. However, we trekked to the national stadium bursting with curiosity, wondering what Law might conjure up beyond the relative mundane, muck and nettles of ordinary football fare served up on a weekly basis in domestic football. There wasn't anyone to compare with the great man. Yes, we had Jim Baxter, Jimmy Johnstone, Willie Henderson, Billy McNeill, Alan Gilzean and so many other exceptional worthies. But they weren't Denis Law.

He possessed something extra that the others didn't have and, as an 11-year-old, obviously I would have found it impossible to define. Nevertheless, it was there alright. We could merely watch in wonderment and awe as he performed as only he could. Floating majestically in mid-air, a snap of the neck muscles like an angry cobra, pent-up energy released to perfection at the moment of impact, and the ball whizzing beyond another bewildered goalkeeper. Only the terminally stupid among the defensive fraternity ever eagerly anticipated confronting this combustible character.
My pals and I, a mixture of supporters of Celtic, Rangers, Clyde, Third Lanark, Partick Thistle, Queen's Park and, if I recall correctly, one Falkirk fan, met on that particular November evening in 1963 with the skies already turning slate grey; the fog being replaced with the very real threat of a downpour. Naturally enough, as you might expect, not one of us hardy souls would be the possessor of that wonderful invention, the umbrella.

No matter. Off we went along Dougrie Road, passing St. Margaret Mary's Secondary School and then the stretch of three-storied tenement buildings on Birgidale Road on our left, Castleton Primary School on the opposite side and eventually turning right into Carmunnock Road and heading down towards Croftfoot roundabout, passing the Bluebell Woods on our left, the vibrant summer colours having long since surrendered to the dark and dank conditions of an uncompromising change of season. Then we journeyed beyond a row of shops on either side and onto Aikenhead Road, with King's Park, very


photo: Daily Record


photo: Daily Record

Continued

stately we thought, on the right.
Our determined trek would take us past the Wylie and Lochhead funeral parlour at the corner of leafy Southwood Drive. On the same trip a couple of years later, there was always a pause at this particular juncture among the Celtic-supporting fraternity. They would go through the 'we are not worthy' salutations directed towards a neat and tidy bungalow at the end of the stretch; home of the legendary Jock Stein. Somehow you always felt in awe of this particular pile of bricks and mortar. Jock Stein actually lived here.

We couldn't have been more impressed if The Queen herself had invited us in for tea at Buckingham Palace. The voyage would continue along Aikenhead Road past the Territorial Army recruitment centre. We would pass the Beechwood Bar, bulging with Scottish supporters and obviously doing brisk business.

Our hearts pumped a little faster as the towering Hampden Park floodlights, at half-beam some 40 minutes before kick-off, loomed into view. Valhalla was a mere handful of minutes away. There was a great wee fish and chip shop on the way and some of my chums would look at their admission money and wonder if it was worth taking the risk of purchasing a poke of chips - 3d - and then relying on some kind supporters to give them a lift over the turnstile.

It happened all the time back then and that was when you actually envied the wee guys. There never seemed to be a problem with them. Me? I think I came out the womb at six foot two inches, so there was little point in me making such a request to some bloke who came up to my navel. Denis Law or a poke of chips? There was only ever going to be one winner.

Then our travels would come to a halt outside Scotland's football fortress. We had arrived at our destination and we would soon be watching the Great Man in action. Exciting times, indeed. Even pre-match, Denis Law looked special. He was style personified. The way he caressed the ball, the manner in which he kicked it, the stabbed pass to a colleague.
Then it was time for the 7.30pm. kick-off, the floodlights now on full-beam and lighting up the pitch, illuminating the frosty, glistening playing surface. We had our own little spot in the middle of the terracing about halfway up the West Stand, known commonly as the Rangers End. We didn't even think of such things back then. As far as religious matters were concerned, we were a motley crew from Castlemilk; Catholics, Protestants, believers, non-believers, don't-knows and don't-cares. We were football fans.
Once again, on the evening in question, our idol didn't disappoint. In fact, he sent a bunch of kids all the way back home with beaming smiles, the rain now drifting into our exposed faces. No-one complained as we had just witnessed one of those extraordinary one-man displays that Denis Law seemed to be able to produce


photo: Daily Record

with wondrous regularity. He thumped in four goals during a runaway 6-1 triumph, with Spurs' Dave Mackay helping himself to the other two. Drenched, we would get to our homes about an hour later; smiles still intact. Happy days.

Years later, on Friday 23 May 1975, to be exact, Denis Law impressed me once again. I was 23 years old at the time and working on the sports desk of the Daily Record as a sub-editor. The location had switched from Glasgow to London and the Scottish support had arrived mob-handed, as usual, for the bi-annual encounter with the Auld Enemy, England, at Wembley. Half of Scotland seemed to have poured itself into the two bars in the White House Hotel on Euston Road near Regents Park. The bevvy was flowing, the hours were ticking down and it was clear to see that the alcohol was taking hold of a few who had probably saved up for two years for this event.

There was a great wee pub in York Street along Glasgow's Broomielaw called Dick's Bar. A lot of the Daily Record and Sunday Mail journalists used it as a favourite watering hole and there was a real eclectic mix in this establishment, which, alas, is no longer there. John Dick was the genial host, but he and his son Alan ruled with a rod of iron.

There was such a thing as 'The Wembley Fund' and the book opened probably minutes after the final whistle at Wembley for another two years of collecting cash before the fixture came round again. If someone felt flush, had a win on the horses, fiddled their expenses or found a pound they would put some money behind the bar, saving for the trip across the border. Now, take it from me, they never saw a penny of that cash until they were ready to travel to Wembley two years later.

It didn't matter that they might be about to be evicted or their kids hadn't eaten for days. They knew the score. John and Alan Dick put the cash away for them and told them it was under lock and key for the next 24 months. Then, and only then, would they get their money in full.

Punters from that pub used to arrive at Wembley Stadium in stretch limos they had so much disposable dosh.

Anyway, more than a few of the revellers in the White House Hotel the evening before the match must have had similar arrangements with their local pub owners. As so often happens, some of them had seen their senses washed away in a sea of booze. A few of them appeared to have parked their brains at the border. I detected friction among some of the supporters. It didn't matter they were all wearing kilts and looking like extras from Braveheart, they were more than ready for a little bout of handbags at dawn.

It wasn't quite The McDonalds v The Campbells, but there was more than hint of trouble in the air. It was about to turn a tad nasty when a bloke wearing a crisp white open-neck shirt, dark blue jacket, smart grey trousers and black slip-on shoes came in the front door. 'Now, boys', was all he said. They seemed to snap to attention, almost saluting in the process. Peace had broken out. Only Denis Law could have achieved that. Pity he couldn't turn out the following day; we were walloped 5-1.

It would be another 14 years before I was finally introduced to Denis Law, at Hampden of all places. The setting was another Scotland v. England confrontation and, by this time I was sports editor of the Sunday Mail. I went along to the game with the newspaper's two top sportswriters, Don Morrison and Dixon Blackstock. It was a glorious


photo: Daily Record

**Continued**

May day as we mulled about the packed pressbox. Don and Dixon, as you might expect as field operatives, had met Denis on numerous occasions but, having worked mainly as a production journalist, I had never had the pleasure.

I was reading the match programme when I received a tap on the shoulder. Don said, 'Alex, I would like you meet someone.' I turned and smack in front of me was my all-time football hero. Denis Law was standing there, balancing a pile of sandwiches, sausage rolls and pies. Juggling with the eateries, he managed to shake my hand.
Great to meet you,' I gushed, or it could have been, 'Meet to great you' I was so taken by surprise. 'Same here,' returned Denis with that cheeky grin of his. He told me he was covering the game for radio - the BBC's World Service - and I said, 'I see you are looking after your colleagues,' pointing to the mountain of grub he had selected. 'No chance. These are for me - the English can look after themselves,' he laughed. And with that he was off.

If Neil Armstrong will never forget landing on the moon, then it's an identical feeling for me meeting Denis Law. Sounds way over the top, I accept, but it's true. I would interview him several times after that and you will not be surprised to discover he was always a complete gentleman, helpful and courteous. A genuine rarity in that he would take the time to telephone you back, too, if you left a message. Denis Law telephoning Alex Gordon? Wonder of wonders.
The long and winding journeys for a primary school kid to Hampden on bitingly-cold winter evenings in the early sixties to witness first-hand a master craftsman going about his profession seem an eternity ago.

**Unforgettable, though.** ■

**By Alex Gordon**
Alex is the author of many football books


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# HAMILTON FC A Scottish Club with ambition

**Why am I writing a piece on Hamilton FC? Well hopefully it will give some insight into how a Scottish club is striving to bring through the next generation of Scottish footballing talent.**

Hamilton was not a club I was too familiar with; however, I was drawn to Hamilton stadium through a charity game that was taking place there featuring Scotland legends Colin Hendry and Rose Reilly. Hamilton Football Club had recently been taken over by new CEO Seref Zengin and I was interested to find out the new plans for the club moving forward. I wondered, in this economic climate we are in, what their plans are. Seref quickly pointed out the plans are clearly not to survive, but to strive. Seref invited me to the newly refurbished boardroom for a chat with himself and Gerry Strain, Director of Football and Chairman John Brown. The first thing that struck me was Seref's genuine enthusiasm for the game. Not just his vision to take Hamilton FC back to the Premiership, but his time involved in grassroot football upwards. Throughout the conversation this enthusiasm and vision was shared by Gerry and John.

Seref explained.
'I love football. I still do grass root coaching for the young boys on a Saturday morning, and if anyone stands out, I bring them over to Hamilton and give them opportunities. Football is my passion. I start from early in the morning on a Saturday coaching, before coming here to Hamilton's game'.He jokes, 'no one interferes with my Saturday, my wife knows not to try to plan anything on that day'! 'I've been involved with Hamilton for over 13 years, I'm a supporter. I started of supporting the youth development at the club, and gradually increased the sponsorship to the first team, then I became a director in 2017. Recently, I thought I'd like to implement new ideas and that's why I purchased the club'.

'As a club, we had a terrible time last year, I felt the club needed a new direction and leadership, I felt we needed to maximise the resources within the club. I felt the answer was not to get rid of the manager John Rankin, but instead I asked Gerry Strain to step in to give him a hand, and they are currently doing a terrific job. New players were identified to bring to the club and Gerry helped with this, and we find our self where we are in the position where we have a happy dressing room, happy manager and a happy boardroom.' The new players are certainly making an impact as Hamilton currently sit top of Scottish League 1 with four straight wins. John explained the player turnover.

'Sixteen players left, and we have brought in fourteen new permanent players, all within a six week period. One loan player.

Seref
'We have a plan, we don't want a survival team, I wont settle for second best as I want us to go out and win the league. The whole aim is to get back in the premiership'.

Gerry who was heavily involved working round the clock to bring the players to the club explains.'The players are all from the central belt so can travel daily to training, so no accommodation is needed, so keeping costs down'.'We have a scouting department in place covering games that involve over 400 players per week. A medical department in place, sports science and nutrition department in place and we want to build on all of this infrastructure that's here. The sports clinic is supporting our players excellence. The infrastructure is that of a premier league set up'.

Seref
'Our Youth Academy will continue to be part of the plan, and I want to bridge the division that seems to have happened over the last couple of years between the youth and first team.

Regarding the board John explains
'There are six board members who all have a vote, and who share the vision. There is a lot of skill on the board. Leadership and vision have changed, and all the board members now have a say in the decisions, from the team to background staff, and on to the commercial side of things.'Everyone is on board with our vision. Seref's brought autonomy to the board that wasn't there before. We are also engaging with supporters. We know the supporters love this club. A majority of the board members are solution focussed, so if there's a problem, we try to fix it. We are open with our discussions; transparency is the key.'Hamilton have an excellent Youth Academy set up, but the plan is to expand and tap into the wider football community, and we are fostering links with a local amateur team. The idea is that the fringe players will play for them to give them match experience. It's all about partnership and that can work both ways, it is about sharing a vision'.

Seref
'I feel over the years the fans have been kept at a distance. We are now listening to them. There are key fans we are going to have 1:1 discussion with to get opinions and then to see if we can achieve their wishes. For example, the fans wanted the full hoops on their strip this year, so we ensured this happened. Next year our 150th anniversary we will consult the fans with the design for that. I was in amongst the fans at the game we played in Edinburgh and the guy I was talking to told me he had supported the club for over 47 years, and these are the type of new fans, the next generation we want to encourage to support Hamilton.
'We are inviting one male and one female fan to our board meetings so they can sit and listen to the discussion and plans. This will continue going forward'.

Gerry adds.
'This is all visionary, I don't think there's another top football club in Scotland who do this, invite fans to the board meetings. If we are transparent, then people will buy into our club as this will be what makes Hamilton unique from other clubs. If there's accountability, transparency and honesty then we can't go wrong. 'John introduced me to the board, I met Seref, and although I don't know him that well he appears honest with integrity and is clearly a winner'.

Regarding leasing the stadium

Seref
'We own the football club, rent the stadium. Fans have asked why you don't buy the stadium and I say my priority is the team, the football club, so we can concentrate fully on that. Regarding the community teams, women's teams, charity games that take place at the stadium, that is all good, as you'll find new fans amongst those who use the stadium. An example was that eight boys' clubs who came to watch the charity game and be part of the event at the weekend, and hopefully some will become supporters. It's a lively stadium which is good.

**Iain Emerson**







Seref Zengin

*"Scottish Football needs to open the door and let progress in."*

Henry McLeish March 2021

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