

The Football PINK





*See, O Readers, the statutes and judgments which I write for thine eyes this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them.
 The Lord our God hath made a covenant with us
 The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.
 Stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt
 keep unto thee, and that thou may do them in the land which He gave thee to possess it.
 For this is the word, and the word is good.*

3. I AM THE LORD THY GOD. THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME

7. THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE

11. THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN

14. REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY

18. HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER

22. A GAME OF TWO HALVES

26. THOU SHALT NOT KILL

29. THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY

33. THOU SHALT NOT STEAL

37. THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOUR

41. THOU SHALT NOT COVET

Visit our website <http://footballpink.net>
 Contact us on Twitter: @TheFootballPink
 OR

By email: TheFootballPink@hotmail.co.uk

You can now purchase a digital subscription of The Football Pink for your laptop iPhone or iPad (excluding print copies) by visiting www.exacteditions.com/thefootballpink

COPYRIGHT. All rights reserved. This magazine or any part thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a review.

MARK GODFREY – EDITOR

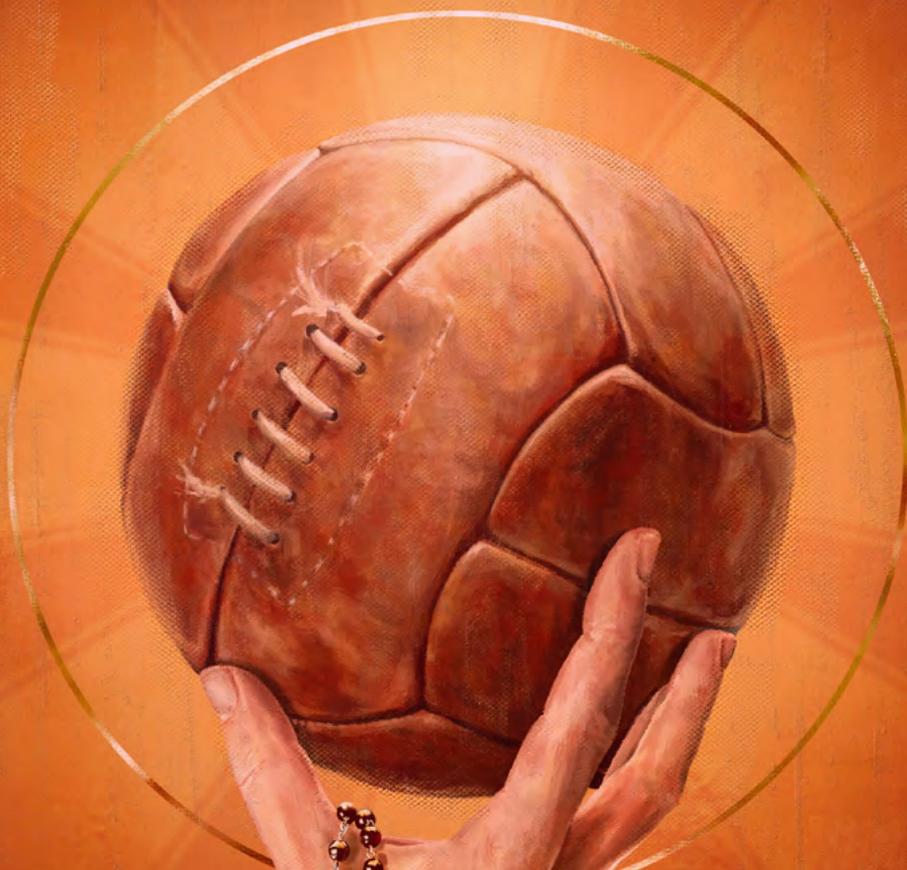
Magazine design by Andy Sanders - andysanders81@hotmail.com

Cover artwork by Kevin McGivern

Illustrations: Michael Atkinson, Spudgun, Oxbox74, Kevin McGivern, Graeme Bandeira, Steph Bourne

Writers: Mark Godfrey, Ian Cusack, Steve Kay, Alex Leonard, Andrew Boulton, All Blue Daze, Chris Smith, Chris Clark, Gerard Farrell, Alex Stewart, Gad Salner.

First published 2015



**I: I AM THE LORD
THY GOD. THOU
SHALT HAVE NO
OTHER GODS
BEFORE ME**

GERRY FARRELL EXAMINES HOW TRADITIONAL RELIGION SHAPED FOOTBALL'S DEVELOPMENT AND WHETHER IT'S PLACE IN SOCIETY IS BEING USURPED BY IT, AS MORE AND MORE PEOPLE CHOOSE TO WORSHIP THE SPORTING IDOLS OF CONCRETE BOWL CATHEDRALS INSTEAD.



m. g. j. v. e. l. l. o

The Spanish Conquistadors brought much to South and Central America; a lust for conquest, cannon and Spanish steel, deadly European diseases and, indeed, Christianity. But there were things that they found in New Spain that were new to these violent colonisers as well. Just picture the scene; a scorching hot day in the glorious Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán, surrounded on all sides by lakes and swamps, it is the site of the modern metropolis of Mexico City. In a formal cordoned off rectangular space beneath tiers of grey stone steps populated by the masses of the city, ordered by social rank, a group of men compete fiercely in a ball game. The two teams face off, the purpose of the game is to get the hard, heavy, solid rubber ball through a circular hoop or goal at either end of the field. The players can't handle the ball but propel it with amazing skill with their hips, knees and buttocks. This is sport but not as we know it today, instead it is part ritual, part religious rite.

Andreas Campomar in his encyclopaedic study, *Golazo!* on the history of football in Latin America emphasises the sheer importance of these sort of ball games not just to the Aztecs but to the Mayans and other pre-Colombian civilisations. For example, thousands of rubber game balls were paid as tribute to kings, the myths of great societies featured stories of ferocious ball games played against gods and monsters, and most frighteningly of all there was a very real connection between these ball games and forms of religious human sacrifice. There are stories of losing sides in games being beheaded in ritual sacrifice in the civilisations of Veracruz. Stories of racks of human skulls being kept pitch-side displaying the chilling fate of previous competitors, and artworks showing fountains of arterial blood bursting forth from the neck of recently decapitated players. The Christian Spaniards saw these ancient ballgames as forms of witchcraft but the Mesoamerican people viewed them with much greater awe and significance, in many cases the ball itself seems to have had an almost spiritual quality, this circular orb flying through the air in games providing a metaphor for the orbit of the sun and the stars. Another view was that their ballgames were a form of proxy war, literally competitions of life or death or of communing with the divine.

While the ancient games of the Mayans were part of religious ritual, those who codified the game of football, the British Victorians, also viewed their sport as having a religious element. Sports were part and parcel of the ethos of "muscular Christianity" that found favour in the public school system of 19th century Britain. Health and wellbeing, exemplified by the gentlemanly virtues of team sports were seen as an absolute "moral good", taking inspiration directly from the Bible, for example the passage in Corinthians which noted:

19. What know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

While the conquering Spaniards saw the ballgames and customs of Latin American as one of many vices to be expunged by colonialization and the introduction of Christianity, the Victorians viewed the role of sport in muscular Christianity as a great virtue and to some measure as part and parcel in the manufacture of robust soldiers and sailors for the British military and hence the creation of the British Empire. The competitive nature of team sport, its focus on defence and attack in unison, and its obvious role in physical development helped form a generation of officers for the British military. To take the most critical viewpoint of this movement would be to say it formed a part of an outlook not dissimilar to the American concept of

"Manifest Destiny" or the earlier notions of the "virtuous" Crusaders of the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries, a "born to rule" mentality. The author James George Cotton Minchin when writing on the influence of the British public school system was moved to speak of "the Englishman going through the world with rifle in one hand and Bible in the other" and added, "If asked what our muscular Christianity has done, we point to the British Empire." George Orwell, himself a former Eton schoolboy, was highly critical of what he saw as the recent and cultish growth in sport, he wrote the following after the tour by Dynamo Moscow to Britain in 1945 on the topic of "serious sport" and football in particular: "It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words it is war minus the shooting." Perhaps closer to the brutal games of Mesoamerica with their emphasis on sport as a proxy war than we might like to admit?

If the role of team sports like football had a part to play in the creation and spread of the British Empire and militarism, and the idea that this had a certain divine authority, then religious organisations were also keen to use football to promote the causes of their churches and the social causes that they supported. The more appealing side to the notion of "muscular Christianity" would be that these muscular Christians had a duty to protect the weaker and more downtrodden in society.



During the age of industrial upheaval towards the end of the 19th century and into the 20th century many saw sport as a way to support the working classes who faced terrible living conditions, poor sanitation and were excluded from many areas of society. As Peter Lupson notes in his book *Thank God for Football* many of the most historic clubs that make up the top divisions in England today were founded as part of church groups, whether it was Aston Villa, Tottenham Hotspur, Bolton Wanderers or Everton, whose Goodison Park stadium has a church nestled in one corner between its famous Gwladys Street End and Goodison Road stand. Manchester City were formed out of St. Mark's West Gorton FC, founded by the public school educated clergyman Arthur Connell and his proselytising daughter Anna. Concerned about the violence and alcohol abuse that were rampant in the West Gorton area of Manchester, St. Mark's was established as a way to get the men of the area to focus their energies elsewhere, first in cricket and then later in football. There were many such links with church groups and sports clubs and often with a specific connection to the temperance movement of the late 19th and early 20th century.

From the ancient ballgames of Central America and their religious, ritualistic significance, to the Victorian use of football and other team sports to create a notion of the muscular Christian (whether as soldier and imperialist or as social and sporting evangelists for the disadvantaged in society) we can see how religion and sports

were crucially interlinked, however, the point would come when football would move beyond religious links. With the rise of Communism in the early part of the 20th century there was a move, nominally at least, towards atheistic societies. As Karl Marx famously said:

“Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness”

In some ways the early view of football in Communist nations was not dissimilar, there was an opinion that football was a distraction from the issues that should have been of greater concern to the disenfranchised working classes. That football was another “opiate” just like religion to use the phraseology of Marx and de Sade. We can turn again to George Orwell on this matter and take a quote from his seminal piece of dystopian fiction 1984 in which he described the future of the working classes as; “Heavy physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbour, films, football, beer and above all gambling filled up the horizon of their minds. To keep them in control was not difficult”.

It was not long however before Communist nations realised the propaganda value of sport. Rather than acting as a distraction to the masses why could football not work as the perfect exemplar of the successful Communist state? An example not of individual dominance but of cooperation, planning, teamwork and self-sacrifice for the greater good. One high profile clash between a supposedly atheist Communist state, Yugoslavia, and the Republic of Ireland took place in 1955 in Dublin. Much of the controversy surrounded the Croatian Cardinal Aloysius Stepinac who had been imprisoned by Josip Tito’s government, ostensibly on the basis that he had collaborated with the fascist Ustaše group during World War 2. However, critics of Tito’s regime claimed that Stepinac’s trial and imprisonment was a show trial brought about because the Cardinal had been critical of the new Communist post-war regime in Yugoslavia. Although Stepinac was released in 1951, it was viewed that Yugoslavia, and Tito in particular, were actively persecuting the Catholic Church.

It should be noted that the Ireland of the 1950’s was not necessarily a bastion of freedom either. The modest economic growth and modernisation that would take place under Sean Lemass’ tenure as Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) were still some years in the future and Ireland of 1955 was an impoverished nation with a high rate of unemployment and mass emigration. The social and intellectual sphere was limited, in literature alone despite there being a glut of talented writers emerging in Ireland at the time many fell

afoul of draconian censorship laws (such as Brendan Behan, Liam O’Flaherty and later Edna O’Brien) which meant their works were banned from publication, never mind the works of non-Irish writers (Balzac, Huxley, Salinger et al). Furthermore, the Irish Constitution of 1937 protected freedom of all religions but made special mention of the Catholic Church:

The State recognises the special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens. – Article 44.1.2 of the Irish Constitution (1937)

It was no surprise that the “special position” of the Catholic

Church was recognised in the Constitution as Fr. John Charles McQuaid was one of the key advisors on the creation of the document to his old schoolmate, Taoiseach Eamon de Valera. This same Fr. McQuaid would, within three years of the Constitution being ratified, become Archbishop of Dublin. It was in his role as Archbishop of Dublin that McQuaid helped scupper a modest 1951 proposal from Health Minister Dr. Noel Browne to provide free health care to mothers and children. He stated that the “Mother and Child scheme” was against the moral teaching of the Catholic Church which led to Browne’s resignation from Government.

It was against this background that in 1952 McQuaid persuaded the FAI to cancel a proposed match with Yugoslavia. However, the Football Association decided to arrange another game against the Yugoslavs three years later. McQuaid called for a boycott of the game and urged the FAI to cancel the match but the Association persisted with the fixture scheduled for Dublin’s Dalymount Park on Wednesday 19th October 1955. McQuaid’s view was in con-

trast to the recent instructions of Pope Pius XII who recommended against the Church or politics taking any stance on sporting events.

This game was never likely to pass without controversy. It was alleged by FAI board member Peadar Halpin that he had agreed to the arrangement of the fixture against the Yugoslavs on the advice that Archbishop McQuaid had been consulted and given his approval. Upon learning that the Archbishop was opposed to the game he still backed the match to proceed but only because to do otherwise would cost the FAI a significant chunk of cash. The call for a boycott of the game had other consequences; the FAI could not secure a band to play the anthems on the day after the Irish Army No. 1 band withdrew so they resorted to playing a recording of both nations’ anthems over a record player in the stadium. The regular trainer for the Irish national side, Dick Hearn of Dublin club Shelbourne, also withdrew his services from the team and had to be replaced by Shamrock Rovers trainer Billy Lord. It was ensured by de Valera that

RELIGION IS THE SIGH OF THE OPPRESSED CREATURE, THE HEART OF A HEARTLESS WORLD, AND THE SOUL OF SOULLESS CONDITIONS. IT IS THE OPIUM OF THE PEOPLE. THE ABOLITION OF RELIGION AS THE ILLUSORY HAPPINESS OF THE PEOPLE IS THE DEMAND FOR THEIR REAL HAPPINESS

President Sean T. O'Kelly (notionally at least the First Citizen of the State) would not attend the game in an official function, nor would de Valera himself or any of his senior ministers. The voice of football at the time on RTE radio, Philip Greene, also made himself unavailable to cover the game. It was suggested that this was in part a direct response to a call from Archbishop McQuaid not to cover the match and led to the infamous headline "Reds turn Greene Yellow". The lone political representative of note in the ground that day was Oscar Traynor TD who was also President of the FAI and a noted former footballer with Belfast Celtic. He received a rapturous welcome.

Despite the various organs of the theoretically separate Church and State boycotting the match, a decent crowd of 22,000 turned out. Although larger attendances of around 35,000 were recorded at other home matches around this time it is worth noting that the Yugoslavia game was a midweek friendly played in wet and overcast conditions. The FAI were at pains to point out that no tickets were returned on account of the Bishopric denunciation and it is striking that in a country so under the influence of the Catholic Church that 22,000 football fans ignored the condemnations and calls for boycott of one of the most powerful men in Ireland. In doing so they had to pass a cordon of irate, anti-Communist, placard-carrying Legion of Mary members. Not only were there fans in the ground but newspaper reports state that they gave the Yugoslavs a warm reception and a rousing ovation at the end of the game. The Yugoslavs had put on a fine attacking display and run out easy 4-1 winners against the Irish, a display that had obviously impressed the home crowd.

Shamrock Rovers' young forward Liam Touhy, who made his debut that day, summed up the opinion of the players when he said their only concern about playing Communist Yugoslavia was that the game might be called off and the players might miss out on a cap. Tuohy was also quoted as saying that many of the Yugoslavs blessed themselves upon entering the pitch and that "there were nearly more Catholics on their side than there were on ours". The Yugoslavs for their part were bemused at the involvement of the Catholic Church having not encountered previous calls for the boycott of matches. North of the border in Belfast, Unionist politicians cited the interference of the Archbishop as another example of the dangers of having Dublin involved with any of the affairs of Northern Ireland due to the strength of influence of the Catholic Church in the Republic.

It would be decades before the scale of the abuses of power perpetuated by the Catholic Church in Ireland would emerge; in the culture of silence that existed the simple act of attending a football match after the Church had called for a boycott was a powerful statement, not only against the influence of the Church but also in support of the beautiful game. This wasn't sport in service to religious ritual as in Central America, or sport in the service of Christianity as in Victorian Britain but sport as a form of protest against religious power and hypocrisy. Perhaps the next evolutionary step would be football as religion and footballers as icons or even messianic figures?

Such comparisons between football and religion are as obvious as they are simplistic, the stadium as Cathedral, the chants of fans as psalms or hymns, even collective footballing passion and hysteria could be seen as having religious counterparts whether that is spiritual possession or speaking in tongues. There is also a devotional and messianic aspect, a form of footballer worship, many players have engendered a certain cult around themselves, developed followings not only convinced of their significance but even of their divinity. The most extreme example is probably that of Diego Maradona, a man who has inspired his own devoted Church and following, the Iglesia Maradoniana. While El Diego is not averse to religious comparisons himself, the Hand of God being the most

obvious example, the creation of a religion complete with prayers, ceremonies, works of devotional art and even its own calendar (we're in the year 55, the calendar starts in 1960 the year of Maradona's birth), is another step entirely. While many feel uncomfortable with this worship of a hugely talented but highly flawed human being, some viewing it as blasphemy, others are happy to pass on their Maradona related creed to succeeding generations, to their sons (many named Diego) and their daughters. The "religion" unsurprisingly borrows heavily from the Christian faith and Roman Catholicism in particular, there is an "Our Diego" prayer modelled on the Our Father and there are Ten Commandments to live by. Such syncretism with Judeo-Christian faiths can create further searches for parallels between Maradona's life and that of Jesus Christ. Would Claudio Caniggia be the apostle John, the favoured disciple? Or could Die-



go's infant grandson, the son of Manchester City star Sergio Agüero, be a "Second Coming" of the divine? While the Iglesia Maradoniana is an extreme example of the footballer as saviour or messianic figure the form of secular devotion and religious comparisons drawn with football are plain to see. That's without even mentioning ex-footballers who might think themselves as saviours. The ex-Coventry City and Hereford United goalkeeper David Icke famously declared at a 1991 press conference that he was "Son of the Godhead".

Football; from the ancient ball games of Central America which were part of religious ritual to the 19th century role of religious organisations in the early growth and development of the game as social good, the interaction between the game and religion has developed over time. While religious institutions helped to create circumstances for the growth of football they were not necessarily prepared for rejection by the newly popularised game. Even in good Catholic Ireland, football could become a rare form of resistance against dominant religious interference. Today, at a great remove from the Corinthian, public school, class-orientated view of "muscular Christianity" one would imagine that Thomas Hughes or any of the other propagators of that phrase would struggle to recognise the highly commodified, modern professional game. They would certainly balk at the idea that professional footballers would be idealised, and dare we say worshipped as secular idols well beyond the confines of their mega-stadiums and into the homes of their acolytes around the world. While not every footballer will have his own Church or followers like Diego Maradona, for an increasing number of people the ritual of following their football team is the closest they will come to a religious experience. Now, altogether...

Our Diego, who is on the pitches,
Hallowed be thy left hand....

GERRY FARRELL - @gerrytastic
<https://abohemiansportinglife.wordpress.com/>
Illustration by Kevin McGivern - @KevMcGivernArt
<http://kevinmccgivern.com>

II: THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE

ANDREW BOULTON CASTS HIS SCEPTICAL GAZE TOWARDS THE
HEROISM, HUBRIS, HORROR AND HILARITY OF STATUES IN FOOTBALL.



Spend any length of time in Nottingham's Old Market Square and you will see what we will politely refer to as 'sights'. Teenage skateboarders tumbling churlishly against the concrete, their drastically over-exposed underpants providing little genuine protection against pavement burns and pigeon sick. Maudlin office workers weeping quietly into jacket potatoes so enormous they could briefly be mistaken for human heads. I even once saw a man angrily thrashing a phone box with a fishing pole.

Amongst the oddities of the day you'll also notice people – a surprising number of people – saluting Brian Clough. The Clough statue, on the corner of King and Queen Street, is a beacon for public affection. Warm exchanges pass between the citizens of Nottingham and this monument on a daily basis. Parents and grandparents explain, with little success, that this ragged looking character had twice led little Nottingham Forest to become the finest team in Europe.

For a generation that sees little beyond Messi and Ronaldo (and the specific button combination that executes physiologically impossible overhead kicks on FIFA) the idea of Forest as European Champions is, understandably, difficult to comprehend.

Perhaps it is the sheer impossibility, the impenetrable disbelief that has grown over a 35-year decline that defines the need for such a statue. How appropriate that less than a mile away from Clough's effigy, stands an equally prominent statue of Robin Hood, a fellow outlaw whose deeds can only be contemplated in the modern world as a myth.

Of course, aside from the girth of our potatoes and the inventiveness of our lunatics, Nottingham is not unusual in celebrating its football heroes. A fascinating research project led by Dr. Chris Stride and Ffion Thomas for the University of Sheffield has compiled a database of football statues throughout the world, recording over 400 across 56 countries.

From the earliest tribute, sculpted in 1903 (an anonymous player in Copenhagen) there has been a recent boom in immortalising footballers and managers. Dr. Stride notes that almost 95% of the world's existing statue population has emerged since 1990.

'The primary reasons for this increase are football clubs' marketing strategies based around branding through nostalgia and authenticity, along with the desire of fans to project their club's distinct identity in an increasingly globalised game' explains Dr. Stride.

It is, on face value, a slightly depressing explanation. At best it is an inducement to fans – a club affecting the same kind of artificial empathy they use to sell your children a third kit that appears to have been designed by squirrels gnawing on a printer cartridge.

Some statues are, I'm sure, chiselled from nothing more profound than a raw slab of commercialism. And perhaps, in this particular era of professional football, a universal monument to cynicism is a fitting tribute.

But it seems there should be, and often is, a great deal more to this curious idolatry.

For example, there are the statues that capture remarkable moments in a club's history. Outside Old Trafford, 'The United Trinity' by the renowned sculptor Philip Jackson is a fitting way to remember the incredible frontline of Bobby Charlton, Denis Law and George Best – with 665 United goals between them and each a former European Player of the Year. (Tellingly it is Charlton, the one with the most enduring influence at the club who clutches the ball – some who have left Old Trafford in unhappy fashion may suggest he still does.)

And, yes, the relationship between Charlton and Best was not

necessarily always as fraternal as the statue suggests, but this was never supposed to be a monument to anything more complicated than sporting magnificence.

Jackson has also been responsible for another prominent shrine to distant victories, perhaps the most distant of them all. The World Cup Sculpture, or simply 'The Champions', can be found near West Ham's soon to be departed Boleyn Ground. It recreates English football's most famous photograph – as Hammers Bobby Moore, Geoff Hurst and Martin Peters, with Ray Wilson of Everton, celebrate their 1966 World Cup victory.

Rival fans occasionally sneer at West Ham for celebrating a trophy they didn't themselves win. For West Ham fans however, the source of the victory isn't especially up for discussion.

Of course, the act of building a shrine to achievement is very much intended to preserve and perpetuate a club's legends. Dixie Dean, for example, is remembered as a brawny guardian outside Goodison Park – his muscles bearing the exaggerated definition of an action figure. Based on this representation of the man, he could quite easily burst a banana boat between his thighs.

Yet it's difficult to argue with the act of immortalising those individuals who defined a club, the ones who changed everything.

Outside the Camp Nou, Hungarian striker László Kubala is captured a second before he inevitably thunders a trademark free kick into the back of the net – or perhaps some inattentive defender's unguarded groin.

Kubala was the driving force behind the famous 1951-52 'Cinq Copes' team. More than the five trophies they won that year, it was a season that reignited pride and belief in the club. It has even been argued that the allure of this remarkable Hungarian was the catalyst for Barca's move to a larger stadium. The creation of the Camp Nou forever legitimised the Barcelona ideal of being 'more than a club'. And, according to Sid Lowe, the Camp Nou was 'the house that László built'.

Of course football clubs, like any successful enterprise, are rarely carried on the shoulders of one individual, or even a single period in time. Tellingly, when Arsenal chose to commemorate the figures that took them to their own magnificent new stadium they gave thanks to three different generations.

The vision and invention of Herbert Chapman, the leadership of Tony Adams and the contemptuous brilliance of Thierry Henry were all chosen as cornerstones for an esteemed modern club. The Wenger statue is sure to follow (if he can be persuaded to splash out on bronze or marble – perhaps an effigy in empty Fanta cans awaits).

Incidentally, the statue of Adams in particular raises an interesting, if rather unkind, point. While some players, physically and spiritually, lend themselves to immortality, some have faces more suited to a plaque on a park bench.

Handsome, lean and endearingly arrogant, the statue of Henry feels cinematic and inspiring. Yet, while no one could question Tony Adams as a leader, his statue – arms outstretched in celebration of an unlikely goal – still strangely feels like a whispered joke. Perhaps a more familiar pose – like tugging a shirt, triggering a perfect offside trap or jabbing a sly thumb into an opponent's pancreas – would feel like a better presentation of the man and the player.

What most clubs choose to ignore as they commission their tributes is the inescapable dalliance with hubris. The inevitable downside to enshrining your most glorious moments is that they serve as a cruel mirror to any modern failings.

At Elland Road, Leeds United's most successful manager and

captain – Don Revie and Billy Bremner – gaze down upon a beastly mess, trembling in their bronze boots for the day when Massimo Cellino decides to smelt them down and build a cathedral to his own boundless benevolence.

At least Leeds' decline has been a blow softened by time, the steady erosion of belief with each period of increasingly dubious stewardship. At Manchester United the statue of Sir Alex Ferguson – looking a little too much like a kindly granddad for one of football's most notorious shits – glares down at a club that began to flounder with him just a few steps outside the front door.

A celebration of glory is invariably a burden to any club in pursuit of it. Whether through the recent gloom of Ferguson's shadow or the distant, lingering shade of Revie, to enshrine the standards by which all coming generations will be judged is an act of supreme confidence or hopeless presumption. Sensibly, Nottingham Forest decided to celebrate their most incomparable manager in a place where the current incumbent does not feel his disobliging glare.

Of course, erecting a statue isn't just an invitation to the mischief of fate, there are plenty of earthly forces ready to riff on a rival's vanity.

From the cheekiness of dressing Jack Walker in a Burnley kit to the more malevolent acts of daubing Billy Bremner's face in Huddersfield blue, a club's statue inevitably becomes a beacon for local one-upmanship. It's a peculiar brand of iconoclasm that seems to manifest itself either in strangely old-fashioned japes or crude acts of violence. A silly wig or a sledge hammer to the neck.

Satisfyingly, the preserve of statue-bothering isn't a strictly British affliction. In Douala, Cameroon a (frankly baffling) statue of Samuel Eto'o has been decapitated (possibly in the name of art), while even a statue of Pelé in Salvador has had his arms snapped off.

Rather generously though, there are some clubs who save opposition fans the trouble of making their statues laughable.

The North East is a particular hotbed for unintentionally entertaining monuments. At St. James' Park, Alan Shearer is captured in a pose supposed to recreate his famous goal celebration.

But fans have likened the unusual stance to everything from the Gangnam Style dance to a man raising a tentative hand to indicate he has just won the pub's meat raffle. Tellingly, Shearer's only comment was to thank the sculptor for giving him hair.

Never to be out-rubbished by their neighbours, Sunderland chose to remember their FA Cup winning manager, Bob Stokoe. The pose was meant to depict a jubilant Stokoe dashing on to the pitch during their 1973 final win. Unfortunately, the reality is the stuff of nightmares – a wild-eyed maniac lunging towards you, arms outstretched in readiness to scoop up your children and gnaw on their tiny bones.

If it's any consolation, no one appears to be safe from an unflattering statue. Diego Maradona, for example, is subject to an abundance of sculpted tributes – including a distinctly unbiblical cameo in a Neapolitan nativity scene.

And yet, even such a lofty figure in the game can be artistically mistreated. To celebrate the Argentinian's 50th birthday a fan in Naples created a papier mâché figure in his honour. If the reality of the player is defined by a muscular poetry, the likeness is best described as looking like a paper bag filled with damp coconuts.

Of course if there's one thing funnier than an unflattering likeness it's an obsequious one. Step forward then, the enormous bronze statue of Cristiano Ronaldo. Actually, judging by the size of

his disturbingly engorged genitals, I'm not sure he could (or indeed should) be stepping anywhere.

Unveiled by the man himself in his childhood home of Funchal in Madeira, the statue depicts Ronaldo in his typically hammy free kick stance. Add to that a perplexingly disproportionate mass of testes and even Ronaldo had the decency to look a little sheepish.

And even for an industry that measures design in half-and-half scarves and Gazprom billboards, no one hesitates to sneer at a tribute gone wrong.

Down at Southampton, an attempt to celebrate Ted Bates – a man who had devoted half a century of service to the club – ended in a fan revolt. The initial statue, bearing a haunting resemblance to Jimmy Krankie, lasted just a week before fan fury led to it being replaced with a less mirthful attempt.

The Bates affair – as nobody calls it – is probably the starkest example of one of the most peculiar contradictions in this strange business of football statues. To earn a statue one must be, by definition, an instantly recognisable character. And yet so many clubs produce a likeness that the subject's own children would be reluctant to accept a lift from. As an expression of devotion it's rather like writing your true love a song that sounds exactly like an old woman furiously gumming dry Weetabix.

Of course, there are far worse scenarios for a fan than to see their heroes inadvertently besmirched by a well-meaning club. Imagine, if you even can, if the club had done it on purpose.

Eternally mistreated Blackpool fans are one of the few clubs to have had their own statue used as a weapon against them. Known by none as the Lancastrian Gandhi, Chairman Karl Oyston responded to fans' growing annoyance by spiriting away a statue in honour of Stan Mortensen – scorer of a hat trick in the Tangerines' 1953 FA Cup final win.

Incredibly, tampering with a club legend failed to quiet the fans' unrest and, following some murmured explanation that it had been a police issue (which the Lancashire Police swiftly denied) the statue was sheepishly returned.

So, aside from politely expressed reservations about the Oyston public relations model, this sorry episode did at least serve to illustrate how any of these monuments are only permanent until, suddenly, they aren't.

Sometimes though, amidst the masturbatory posturing, the political wrangling and the wildly distended testicles, a football statue can serve to represent something more meaningful than the game itself.

Joachim Reisner's 1986 bronze sculpture commemorating the Bradford City fire is measured, dignified and deeply poignant. Representing the devastated stadium, the heroism of the rescuers and the 'eternal bond between the living and the dead' it is an expression of grief in a sport often paralysed in such moments by its own frivolity.

Similarly moving memorials are sadly plentiful throughout the world – partly because of the many tragedies the game has endured, partly because of football's enigmatic capacity to absorb emotion.

Drenched in the shock of Gary Speed's suicide, Leeds fans found their way to the Billy Bremner statue at Elland Road. Draped in Leeds scarves, Welsh flags and an agonising sense of disbelief, Bremner then represented to fans precisely what he always had done – a club taking care of their own.

Far from Yorkshire, the city of Kiev also shares this same unhappy shadow between sport and death. At the Start Stadium

there stands a bold, romantic bronze – a defiant, celestial player bursting forward with the ball at his feet.

The statue is in remembrance of what has been known as 'The Death Match' – a game played in Nazi-occupied Kiev in 1942 between FC Start, a local bakery side, and a German military team. The Start team – containing a delegation of professionals from Dynamo Kiev – won the game 5-3 and several of the players were later arrested and then executed.

It's a harrowing story, but one that was been cynically twisted by Nazi, Soviet and even Hollywood propaganda (the story is the loose inspiration behind the Michael Caine film 'Escape to Victory').

In reality, the players were not executed or even arrested immediately after the game for embarrassing the might of the Reich. In danger of spoiling some healthy misinformation, the Start team had already thumped the Nazi side 5-1 in an earlier fixture.

Also, although there were undeniably arrests made from within the team, the reasons given were (ostensibly) because the players were accused of being Soviet spies. Four Start players were eventually executed by the Nazis, while others from the team were punished by Stalin for collaboration with the Germans.

It's a murky, twisted episode where football is dwarfed by a far deadlier political and ideological game. However football truly figured, if at all, the statue in Kiev nevertheless carries a distinct and enduring chill.

But what does this trot across the eclectic map of football statues really tell us? What do these grand, grotesque altars of indulgence say about the sport and its devotees?

If nothing else, it is reassuring to see that it's a medium, perhaps neither fully of art or sport, but one where democracy is alive and well. One where greatness will be memorialised, in all its guises.

For example, at Tranmere Rovers, Johnny King – the club's most successful manager – is immortalised with a statue funded by the club's fans. The Bristol City Supporters Trust themselves raised the money and voted on the design for a tribute to John Atyeo, a prolific goal scorer who perhaps means little beyond the walls of Ashton Gate but means an incalculable amount within them. Everyone, it seems, has their own Ronaldo. Often, thankfully, with pants that fit.

What's more, there's something reassuring about the fact that countries all over the world – nations with the kind of football credentials the 'Best League In The World™' brigade would most likely sneer at – are still getting giddy about their heroes.

At a roundabout in Oruro in Bolivia, the magnificently nicknamed Humberto 'Gunboat' Murillo is celebrated for his thunderous shooting in the cause of a successful San Jose de Orulo side from the 1950s (so successful, they were known as 'The Hungarians', the global benchmark for greatness at the time). Meanwhile, in Shenyang a monolithic team sculpture gloriously commemorates China's first ever World Cup qualification.

And even if you find wealthy football clubs or associations patting themselves on the back a little wearisome, there is a sub-strand of football statues that celebrate the more unexpected stories.

At a shopping centre in the Bangu district of Rio de Janeiro there is a statue commemorating Thomas Donohoe, the Glaswegian factory worker some say first introduced football to Brazil. (If your hipster-sense just quivered violently, it's because the commonly credited pioneer is Charles Miller, a Sao Paulo born son of a Scottish engineer. Some historians suggest Donohoe's game pre-dates the more famous Miller kick-about.)

Picking figures to idolise, outside of the obvious choices, is

an utterly mixed bag. In the Canadian town of Saskatoon a local amateur footballer called Hugh Cairns stands above the town's war memorial (Cairns, a player for the local championship-winning church team, was awarded both the Victoria Cross and the Legion d'honneur during the First World War).

But if you like your subjects a little less deserving, if you're perhaps intimidated by valour or the pioneer spirit, then you my friends can take your trifling pick from the following.

Will it be a visit to the Sea Life Centre in Oberhausen to gaze perplexedly at the statue of everyone's favourite extra-sensory cephalopod, Paul the Octopus?

Or would you rather travel back in time to the days when a 7-foot, Technicolor likeness of Michael Jackson loomed down over fans arriving at Craven Cottage – winning the ferociously competitive race to become football's most baffling non-sequitur. Never one especially prone to arriving at unlikely conclusions, Mohamed Al-Fayed even directly attributed The Cottagers' relegation from the Premier League to the removal of the statue.

So just when you think you've made your mind up about statues in football, someone throws an elaborate bronze octopus in to muddy the waters. And contradictions like this are everywhere. For every piece of thoughtful, compassionate art like Reisner's Bradford memorial, there will be an obnoxious monument to football's insidious cash-cowery – exactly like the Ronaldo statue at Nike's Portland campus.

It seems impossible to understand statues in football, let alone determine the necessity of their existence. Are they a depressing idol to football's insular, corrosive tribalism? Are they a glorious expression of the shoulders on which our modern affections (not to mention riches) have been hoisted? Are they merely an excuse to titter at a man's disproportionate nuts?

It's clear that to appreciate, even enjoy, these statues you have to gnaw through some substantial concerns. The misappropriation of reflected glory by cynical authorities and organisations is a fairly meaty one. Yet more fuel to the wearisome cult of personality in football is another that may take some protracted chewing.

And yet, blinded perhaps by Alan Shearer's preserved hairline, Dixie Dean's taught thighs or simply Brian Clough's rumpled, unaffected greatness, I can't help but find these statues mostly endearing. I sort of choose to see them as a final expression of thanks, something enduringly appreciative in an increasingly ephemeral sport.

Probably what has won me over most of all is that, by a statue's very nature, it possesses a resilience and evenness that modern football lost long ago. A statue won't screech odious things at a football stadium, it won't wail pitifully down the line to a radio phone-in or demand the immediate death of someone whose face they had tattooed onto their neck just a few weeks before. It won't scrawl menacingly on a bed sheet or the back page of a newspaper. It won't sulk or shirk or snooze its way through a perfectly reasonable question. It won't overburden a personal assistant or be a terrible DJ or punch a horse or say something inane or give Danny Mills a position of responsibility or Instagram a picture of its room full of snapback caps.

Statues, within the world of football at least, are much easier than people. Even, perhaps especially, Michael Jackson.

ANDREW BOULTON - @Boultoni

<https://ballacheblog.wordpress.com/>

Illustration by Michael Atkinson - @ATKMichael

<http://www.michaelatkinson.co.uk/>

III: THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN



THERE IS REVERENCE AND THERE IS BLASPHEMY. TO ELEVATE A MERE FOOTBALLER AND HUMAN TO GODLIKE STATUS COULD BE CONSIDERED AS BOTH, AS ALEX STEWART EXPLAINS.



Is there anything more profane than sport? It inspires devotion bordering on the mindless, based in pure substance. There is skill and grace and genius, of course, but it is rooted in the actual, the elevation of something everyday into brilliance by the efforts of those who are extraordinarily good at something otherwise very ordinary, that any of us could do if we were

blessed in the same way. And yet, sport's profanity extends beyond merely not being sacred: its spectacle is often described in words borrowed from the religious. Ecstatic fans are simply filled with enormous joy; they are not, in fact, undergoing a mystical moment of transcendental experience that brings a union with God. Fans worship their idols, they praise, and they build shrines, venerating a shirt or a match ticket as if it were some sort of relic. None of this is wrong, of course, in itself, but the fervent adulation of things not of God or gods is the very essence of profanity and the sort of thing that religious groups like the Puritans railed against.

Matthew Henry was not a Puritan, but he was a Non-Conformist and would have been a Puritan but for being born around 100 years too late. Henry was a theologian and minister who

wrote an extensive, exhaustive even, commentary on the Bible in six volumes. He called it *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, just in case there was any room for doubting the serious and all-encompassing nature of his work. In his exposition of Exodus 20:7, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;

for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (KJV), Henry states that "the third commandment concerns the manner of our worship, that it be done with all possible reverence and seriousness." Henry cites five ways of breaking this third of the Ten Commandments: hypocritically professing God's name but not living up to that profession; breaking an oath sworn on God's name; making such oaths rashly; making false oaths; and using God's name "lightly or carelessly, without any regard to its awful significancy." Henry goes on: "The profanation of the forms of devotion is forbidden, as well as the profanation of the forms of swearing; as also the profanation of any of those things whereby God makes himself known, his word, or any of his institutions; when they are either turned into charms and spells, or into jest and sport, the name of God is taken in vain."

***AT SOUTHAMPTON,
HE WAS, AND STILL
IS, ADORED. THE DELL
WAS HIS TEMPLE,
THE TERRACE CHANTS
HIS LITURGY. HE IS
ARGUABLY THE MOST
FAMOUS ONE-CLUB
MAN AFTER STEVEN
GERRARD IN THE
PREMIER LEAGUE ERA***



Which brings us to Matthew Le Tissier.

Because everyone knows, or ought to, that Matthew Le Tissier is Le God. Before we get into the theology of this, a few words on possibly the greatest player ever to pull on the shirt of my beloved Southampton. Le Tissier scored 161 goals in 456 appearances, and was the first midfielder in the Premiership era to score 100 goals. His style of play was at times confounding, an indolent stroll interspersed with incisive moments of trickery and control that left defenders sprawled and confused. His grasp of space, the geometry of the long ball, the dipping volley, or the rasped, low finish, was Euclidean, so instinctively gifted that it seemed axiomatic, as if there was no other way to place that ball or sweep that pass. He was also a master of the dead ball, so much so that one journalist, writing in 1995, suggested he should be in the England side purely for his free-kick and penalty taking. Indeed, Le Tissier's conversion rate from penalties was astonishing: he scored 47 of 48 attempts from the spot.

At Southampton, he was, and still is, adored. The Dell was his temple, the terrace chants his liturgy. He is arguably the most famous one-club man after Steven Gerrard in the Premier League era, his loyalty possibly bolstered by the comforts of familiar surroundings, but certainly unswerving and rightly celebrated. He was the Fans' Player of the Season 1989-90, 1993-94, and 1994-95, which begs the question, just who was good enough to unseat him (not a question I'm going to answer – you can Google it)? He was also recognised beyond the south coast, more for his moments of individual brilliance than as a great team player. He won the Goal of the Month three times, was twice Player of the Month, and in 1994-95 season was in the PFA Team of the Year and won Goal of the Season (when he was also nominated for a swirling long-range effort against Aston Villa), picking up the ball just into Blackburn's half, going on one of his classically insouciant runs, turning Mark Atkins twice, before accelerating into a small pocket of space and firing a shot, fully 35 yards from the goal, that dips and curves, leaving Tim Flowers sprawled against his post. "Only Matthew Le Tissier can score goals like that," says Jon Champion, stating the obvious. It wasn't even his best; hell, it is not even possible to say which his best is, though the impudent flick to tee himself up from Jim Magilton's free-kick against Wimbledon is surely the quintessential Le Tissier goal.

Le Tissier was not speedy, nor did he ever appear to put in

much effort, but his ability to take on defenders, his control at times appearing like a ramshackle melange of touches guided by strangely telescopic legs, defied that basic lack of pace (and application – or is that harsh?). Many of his finest goals involved beating a number of players in a manner reminiscent of a lankier, less direct Paul Gascoigne, before hammering a finish, often with slight curve, into the furthest reaches of the goal. The great Xavi, himself no mean footballer, said in an interview that Le Tissier was the "man I loved absolutely watching as a kid...His talent was out of the norm. He could dribble past seven or eight players, but without speed – he just walked past them." This apparently relaxed approach, a product of sight bias, perhaps, if one is being kind to Le Tissier's never knowingly svelte form, made Alex Ferguson say that he wouldn't want Le Tissier in a team he managed. But then, he also said he would never want to play against him.

Matthew Le Tissier, one-club loyalist, weaver of spells and bringer of magic, like a genius thrust into a pub team and yet not really looking out of place, was a very human God. His nickname is, of course, utterly against the third commandment, not simply because Le Tissier was a footballer, not an actual deity, but because he was Le Tissier. There was nothing overtly godlike about him, except for his skill. He admitted betting on one of his own matches and desperately trying to put the ball out of play to win some money. He looked lethargic, could go absent from games for long periods of time; there was nothing heroic about his efforts, nothing especially self-sacrificing. He likes Malibu and Coke. And yet, that was the very essence of his divinity among us on the south coast. Xavi, in that same interview, described Le Tissier as an idol, but (his somewhat static nature aside), Le Tissier was very much of us. In this way, he was more of a folkloric god, say a god of Norse mythology, blessed with powers beyond our grasp but also prone to very human, very understandable and relatable weaknesses. He was no sheltered modern day footballer, alive to us only through press conferences and social media, but was often to be found out of an evening in Southampton. He was no sculpted deity like Cristiano Ronaldo, but an ordinary looking bloke with ragged teeth and a massive nose, a slight paunch and an oddly ramshackle gait. But this ordinariness was also what highlighted his majestic skill, his sublime footballing talent: while he looked and acted like a normal fan, only he could do those things with a football.

John Calvin, in the Institutes of the Christian Religion, wrote that the use of God's name was by implication an oath, a request of the part of the oath-maker for God to bear witness to the truth of his or her words, and that "an oath is not appointed or allowed for passion or pleasure, but for necessity." And the truth is, that when Le Tissier played, there was something divine happening, in front of our eyes, that needed no profession of faith, because it was there and it was tangible with every languid run and every dead-eyed pass and every rippling net. Thus, Matthew Le Tissier, the greatest of the Saints, scorer of the final goal at The Dell in 2001 (against Arsenal in a 3-2 win), gifted beyond belief but as human as the rest of us, is Le God, not for passion or for pleasure, but because calling him anything else just wouldn't make sense.

ALEX STEWART - @afhstewart

<http://putnielsingol.com/>

Illustration by Oxbox74 - @AnOxInTheBox

<https://www.behance.net/AnOxInTheBox>

IV: REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY

IAN CUSACK LOOKS AT HOW THE ADVENT OF THE PREMIER LEAGUE, SKY SPORTS' INVOLVEMENT AND CHANGES IN BRITAIN'S PUB LICENCING LAWS HAVE CHANGED SUNDAYS AND THE WAY MOST OF US 'CONSUME' OUR FOOTBALL FOREVER.



Have you ever pondered just how our society has evolved to the extent that Sunday has been transformed from a day of inertia, when all forms of recreation were stifled by the state-endorsed intolerance enshrined in anachronistic, extremist Christian legislation, into the weekly festival of hedonistic, epicurean excess it has become? Pubs across the land are as busy on Sunday afternoons for food and football as they are on Friday nights it seems, not that I spend much time carousing at my age.



Certainly some of the credit for Britain throwing off the straitjacket of imposed Reformation morality, to dance topless in bacchanalian liberation, must go to the 1988 Licensing Act, which modified Sunday opening hours to the extent they changed from 12pm-2pm and 7pm-10.30pm to 12pm-3pm and 7pm-10.30pm. An extra hour of bevvy may not have been the revolutionary event that altered the fabric of the English Sabbath forever, but it did serve as a kind of foot in the door, that made change inevitable once another enormous cultural shift established itself on the nation's collective consciousness half a decade later. Casting one's mind back to 1992, it seems that the unequivocal narrative that repeatedly extols the greatness and perfection of the Premier League was not accepted by all sections of the media. While the Murdoch Empire crowed in hubristic glee at the fait accompli of the establishment of the Greed is Good League, as Brian Glanville so memorably described it, others were more agnostic in their response. However, in the spirit of sporting Social Darwinism, the eventual decisive victory of satellite television in creating and, more importantly, establishing the hitherto unimaginably financially successful Premier League could only be toasted during Monday Night Football. Seeing off your pint and heading home for a 4pm kick off on Sunday was seen as a vile restraint of trade by licensed victuallers and Sky subscription dealers across the nation.

The curious anomaly of the dry Sunday afternoon was a relic of a bygone era of Christian observance utterly out of step with the reality of late 20th century life, which persisted until The Sunday Hours Licencing Act permitted all day opening 7 days a week from 1995 onwards. Look at the timeline; 7 years since the previous act, but only 3 since the Premier League was formed. Coincidence? Not at all. This modification of the 1988 Act came as a result of pressure, aided by sweetheart stories in News International's publications, from

both those in the pub trade, who identified a potentially lucrative market in family Sunday lunches and the retail sector, who had gained the legal right for shops to open every day of the week via the 1994 Sunday Trading Act and saw a clear potential link between the two areas of consumer consumption. The internet may have hit city centre outlets hard, but twenty years ago, the social aspect of shopping maintained a curious and influential hold over much of the populace. As is ever the case when rapacious capitalists see an opportunity to earn a quick buck, those who suffered were the workers. Employees in retail and attendant industries, long before the iniquitous zero hours contracts became a distressing, depressing reality, have long had conditions of employment imposed on them that see no difference between, say, a Tuesday and a Sunday; no time and a half or double time for weekend graft for the undervalued and often non-unionised workers in the service sector. Remember that next time you feel compelled to kick off with the person who forgets the horseradish to go with your roast beef.

In our current era, where the mammoth Friday evening check-out queues at supermarkets of the 1980s have largely been replaced by a Sunday snarl up in the dairy products aisle, it seems difficult to recollect an earlier time when the Day of Rest was precisely that. Prior to the famed game on ITV that ended Tottenham Hotspur 2-1 Nottingham Forest in October 1983, which ushered in the concept of live domestic league and cup games on British television, the only football you'd see on a Sunday would be international tournaments every couple of years. I'm too young to remember the 1970 World Cup, though I distinctly remember Holland's losses in '74 and '78, as well as Panenka's iconic penalty that won Czechoslovakia a victory over West Germany in the 1976 European Championships, all taking place on Sundays.

During the 1974 Miners' Strike, the crumbling Conservative government of Edward Heath introduced a rolling programme of power cuts across the country. As a result, a few clubs played games on Sunday to circumvent the potential problems of either needing a generator or kicking off early, by exploiting a kind of administrative sleight of hand that meant spectators were not paying for entry, but for a programme, to circumvent licensing restrictions. Despite encouraging crowds, these games were seen as bizarre curiosities and, rather like the talkies in 1928 or guitar groups in 1962 according to Decca Records, there was no future in them. It didn't appear that way in Ireland, where since independence, games had always been played on Sundays. Looking at the results in the paper on a Monday was a weekly highlight in the mid-70s for a certain 10-year-old supporter of Cork who lived in Gateshead.

While football declined the opportunity of investigating the possible benefits of the great experiment further, other sports actively embraced the Sabbath as an integral part of their calendar. Horse racing and greyhounds were prohibited, on account of a blanket ban on gambling on Sundays, but motor racing only ever took place on the Day of Rest. Rugby League, unlike the more Calvinistic 15-man code, saw its entire fixture programme take place on a Sunday, bar the one game each week which was moved back to the Saturday for live TV coverage. I'm sure there's a level of irony in that fact. Long before Sunday Grandstand became a regular feature, BBC2 would show an entire John Player League 40 overs

cricket game; a much loved competition that began in 1969 and lasted in one form or another until 2009. Indeed, the concept of a "rest day" in test matches was abandoned also, as test venues put up the HOUSE FULL signs for the first 4 days of all matches, as crowds flocked to the novel surroundings of a sporting event on a Sunday.

Spare a thought for the amateur sportsman back then. Sunday league football and Sunday league cricket were an integral part of the sporting life of many in the North East, and they remain so to this day. Football games kicked off at 10.00am so you could get to the bar for opening time and many cricket clubs managed to secure exceptional licences that allowed drink to be served all afternoon. I recall halcyon afternoons, attired in sweat-soaked football gear, stretched out near the boundary at Felling Cricket Club, supping pints of Exhibition and watching Madan Lal win games single-handedly. It's the nearest I've got to a Brideshead Revisited moment.

To the average adult citizen in the 1980s, the very idea of not only pubs being open, but domestic football games regularly taking place on Sunday afternoons, seemed an unrealistic fantasy. Nostalgia often adds an air of innocence to our recollections, but I can recall walking through the almost entirely deserted centre of Newcastle on any Sunday afternoon in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when a potential customer would be restricted to spending their hard earned on either the range of wares on offer at Boots the chemist by Grey's Monument or RS McColl's newsagents at the top of Pilgrim Street. That was it, other than a few dismal cafes near the Central Station, populated by the lonely, the marginalised, the transient and the haunted. The city was predominantly silent and virtually deserted.

Sunday professional football was, of course, in its infancy back then as well. The rarity of such an occurrence as a fixture change means it is easy to recall the infrequent instances of games not taking place at 3pm on a Saturday. A brace of losses to Liverpool (0-2 in November 1984 and 1-4 in September 1987), two games against Manchester United, a goalless league fixture in November 1988 and a 2-3 loss in the FA Cup fifth round in February 1990, as well as a spectacular 4-0 hammering of West Ham in November 1986 were the only televised Sunday games played at St. James' Park before the advent of Sky TV's takeover of the national game via the

Premier League. In addition, there were two derbies against Sunderland that were subject to noon kick-offs on Police advice; 1-1 in February 1990 and 1-0 in March 1992. Neither game was shown live.

Keen students of chronology will note Newcastle United were not in the top flight in the Premier League's debut season, hence they missed out on such delights as hosting The Shamen miming to Ebenezer Goode, as they did at Highbury during the interval of Arsenal vs. Manchester City. Not to be outdone by the new kids on the block, ITV got in on the live football broadcasting act, by showing as many Sunday afternoon games from League Division 1 as it was then called, as they could feasibly manage. Obviously back then ITV was a selection of autonomous companies, each one broadcasting to a defined audience; the homogenised centralisation of the entire network these days would make such bold scheduling impossible.

For Newcastle United, who stormed to the title with Kevin Keegan at the helm in 1992/1993, this meant local broadcasters Tyne Tees moving home ties with Swindon Town, Millwall, Derby County, Birmingham City, Sunderland and Leicester City for live transmission. Strangely, the first four fixtures were all drawn, while the last two saw Magpie wins. Leicester resulted in a 7-1 victory on the day the league trophy was presented; a magnificently joyous occasion. From 20 years distant, the recollection I have is that the only grumbles about the intervention of television were related to the fact that it was impossible to get a drink after the game. Perhaps the feelgood factor and relative infrequency of fixture changes minimised

dissent.

As regards the away fixtures, various ITV companies shifted games at Brentford, Sunderland, Barnsley, West Ham United and Tranmere Rovers, for live transmission, resulting in three wins, a draw and a defeat at Oakwell. Only that game and the one at Roker Park were all ticket. For the others, it was pay on the gate. These live broadcasts were a welcome novelty if you couldn't afford or didn't have the inclination to travel. From a personal point of view, ever since then I've not been able to listen to a game on the radio. The not knowing exactly how play is developing, regardless of the competence or otherwise of the commentator, is simply too frustrating and nerve wrack-

TO THE AVERAGE ADULT CITIZEN IN THE 1980S, THE VERY IDEA OF NOT ONLY PUBS BEING OPEN, BUT DOMESTIC FOOTBALL GAMES REGULARLY TAKING PLACE ON SUNDAY AFTERNOONS, SEEMED AN UNREALISTIC FANTASY.

ing. The world changes I suppose, which is why I “follow” the action on line or on Twitter if I can’t see live pictures these days.

Looking back from more than two decades distant, it seems incredible that nearly a dozen Newcastle games were broadcast on Sunday afternoon, all free to air; could you imagine that now? Frankly, I can’t remember the last time the Magpies appeared on terrestrial television. The FA Cup 6th round away to Chelsea in 2006 perhaps? During the season following the club’s promotion, the anachronism encapsulated by Sunday pub closing could clearly be seen after home games against Blackburn Rovers and Liverpool by the presence of gangs of blokes hanging around in city centre pub doorways, waiting for opening time and Sky’s second showing of that afternoon’s game. For the away games, it was a case of being locked in, if you know where to go, or being locked out if you didn’t. I distinctly remember queues similar to those seen at the Gallowgate turnstiles outside every pub on the Haymarket, waiting for access to the re-run of Andy Cole’s famed hat trick in the 3-0 demolition of Liverpool in November 1993. As I said earlier, bearing in mind such enthusiasm from potential punters and the chance for turning a dollar by packing the pubs for the live showing of games, it would be foolish to discount the influence of Rupert Murdoch on the British political establishment in terms of providing a vastly increased market for his product, in the days before domestic satellite and cable television was the norm, if not compulsory. Nowadays, everyone has access to Sky Sports; hell I’ve got it for free on my phone. However, what has been introduced into the British weekend experience, from the 1995 relaxation of licensing hours, is the concept of going to the pub on a Sunday afternoon to watch the Sky game, whoever may be playing. Mates of mine, who sacked off St. James’ years ago, even before Ashley assumed ownership in some instances, never miss a Super Sunday afternoon swallow down the local.

As far as I’m concerned, this is the clearest indication I can think of which demonstrates the process of transformation of large numbers of those interested in football from being dedicated fans to interested observers. Consumption has checked passion and the ubiquity of the televised product must be one of the main causes. If you’re so inclined, there are at least three and sometimes four live games, domestic and European, broadcast every Sunday. In one baffling (to me at least) development, my student son and his housemates, from a variety of locations, supporting a range of teams, have a regular Sunday evening get together over a takeaway to watch La Liga. The blokes in their late teens and early 20s may not be in Sid Lowe or Guillem Balague’s league, but they know more about Spanish football than I would have thought possible for any undergraduate resident of Headingley. While family connections in Euskal Herria mean that my lad is a passionate supporter of Athletic Club, his pals have looser bonds with their teams of choice. Barca. Real. Atleti even. There is an oft stated, but vague and nebulous promise that they’ll all take in a game at Camp Nou or Santiago Bernabeu at some point in the future. For now, their Sunday gatherings are primarily social rather than sporting events. A time to observe rather than actively support.

Contrast the frat boy pizza party with the last Sunday I

spent at a game. August 9th 2015. First game of the season at St. James’ Park; that palpable sense of anticipation and optimism, mixed in with an element of apprehension and an unhealthy dollop of cynicism that hung like a cloud over the city centre on the walk up to the ground. The quickening of the pulse as the teams emerged. Sounds of the crowd. Louder than the home team deserves. A rip-roaring 2-2 against Southampton, with 50,000 plus in attendance. The vast majority passionate in their support. Running the gamut of emotions as the game swung from one side to the other, before ending even. Outside the ground, the pattern of ordinary city life may have continued unabated, shops, restaurants and bars all doing a roaring trade. Chinese buffets on Stowell Street, thronged to the doors by fashionably attired families, seeking exotic comestibles after a gruelling morning’s retail therapy, but Newcastle is a football city.

Full time, I walk away from the ground and towards The Bodega for a pint. I see a middle aged Southampton fan in their away shirt striding down Westgate Road, presumably on the way to the station. I offer my hand and he shakes it.

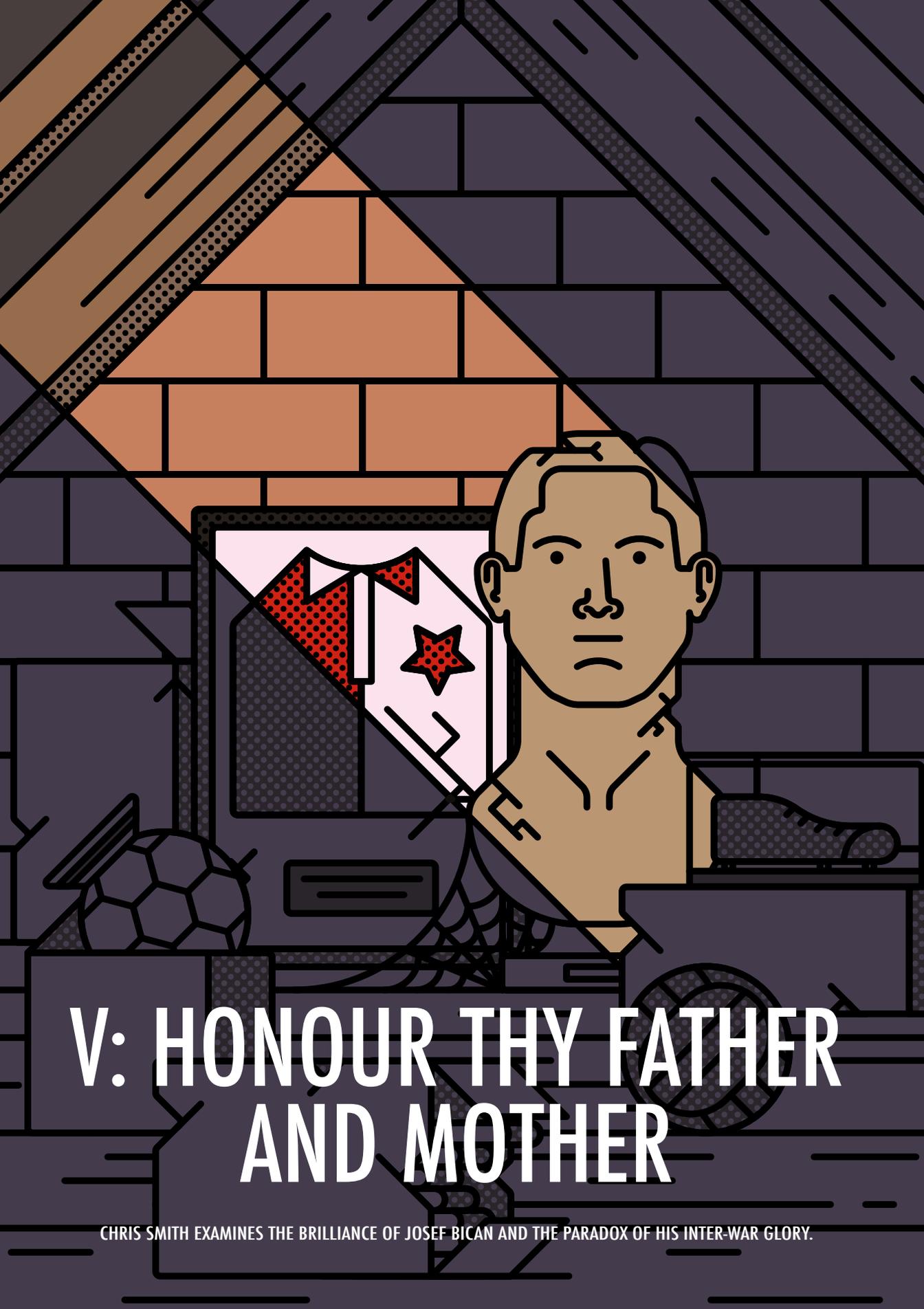


“Blinding game fella. All the best for the rest of the season.”

“You too pal. Safe journey.”

Regardless of the commercialisation and commodification of a sport that dominates most news sources all day, every day, there are still moments of joy and beauty to be found in the simple pleasure of supporting your team, whatever day of the week it may be.

IAN CUSACK - @PopularSideZine
<http://payaso-de-mierda.blogspot.co.uk/>
Illustration by Michael Atkinson - @ATKMichael
<http://www.michaelatkinson.co.uk/>



V: HONOUR THY FATHER AND MOTHER

CHRIS SMITH EXAMINES THE BRILLIANCE OF JOSEF BICAN AND THE PARADOX OF HIS INTER-WAR GLORY.

Not many footballers can take their place amongst the greatest players of two separate nations. Few people flourish in a life defined by war. It's unfathomable for a striker to score more than Pelé and Puskás yet evade widespread recognition. But there we have it: Josef Bican, a truly exceptional footballer.

Josef 'Pepi' Bican amassed a staggering 805 goals in 503 games, finishing as top scorer in his domestic league a record 12 times. For this latter achievement, the International Federation of Football History and Statistics (IFFHS) awarded him the Golden Ball as the top goal scorer of the 20th century. Capable of running the 100 metres in 10.8 seconds and taking penalties with both feet, Bican was an attacking enigma. His arduous 24-year career (1928-1952) was aptly unique. But how did Bican come to turn his back on his Austrian motherland, during the Wunderteam era no less, for Czechoslovakia, the homeland of his mother and father?

The Czech Heart

Bican was born in Vienna on September 25, 1913, 10 months before the First World War commenced, just over five years before Austria-Hungary, an empire of over 52 million people, was defeated and divided. It was during the same period of post-war reconfiguration that Czechoslovakia was formed, a republic of approximately 6.5 million people. This radical shift in European identity was reflected in the Bican family: Austrian Josef suddenly politically different to his Bohemian father František Bican and Viennese-Czech mother Ludmila.

Football held great significance for young Josef. Not only was his father a goalkeeper for local side Hertha Vienna, remarkably, he lived on the same street as fellow Wunderteam legend, Matthias Sindelar, arguably Austria's greatest ever player. Bican may have even been The Paper Man's paper boy. Two Austrian legends were amongst the countless Viennese children who kicked hadraks, "rag balls" of socks in Bican's words, "all day, from morning to evening" in the streets. Their extreme poverty, representative entirely of Vienna's wider situation, ironically enriched the youngsters' football ability. Bereft of shoes, close control was honed and perfected from an early age.

Tragedy struck the Bican family in 1921 when František received a brutal kick in the kidney whilst playing for Hertha. He died a short while later after refusing an operation. Ludmila's kitchen worker wages didn't go far in a country subjected to trade embargoes in the aftermath of war. Amidst widespread social unrest, Bican describes the respite of summer trips to visit his grandparents in Czechoslovakia: "We went on a train called The Czech Heart. Hundreds of children took that train to Czechoslovakia for those two months every summer. My grandmother was poor, really poor, but those two months were like heaven on earth to me".

Fittingly, Bican's first steps in football followed his father's. Aged just 12, he began to play with Hertha Vienna's junior side. The schilling he received for every goal helped minimise his mother's financial struggles. Ludmila attended very few of Josef's youth games but on one particular occasion, she certainly made her presence felt. Incensed by a rough tackle on Josef, and perhaps reminded of her late husband's fate, Ludmila ran onto the pitch and began thwacking the aggressor

about the head with her umbrella. She learned to stay away, maybe she was told. Either way, by the age of 18, it wasn't mother-centric anecdotes but goal scoring that had Vienna discussing Bican.

A political farce

Signed by Rapid Vienna, the city's biggest club, in 1931, Bican was soon earning 150 schillings a week. "A good worker got 20/25 schillings", he said. Two years, 24 games and 21 goals later, this was increased to 600 schillings per week. A superb 1933/34 season (22 games, 28 goals) saw 20-year-old Bican assimilated into Austria's national team under the legendary Hugo Meisl. A key figure in professionalising football and devising the Central European International Championship (CEIC) and the Mitropa Cup (precursors to the European Championship and Champions League respectively), Meisl forged his domestic reputation with the Wunderteam, Austria's best ever side.

Led by elegant, fluid centre-forward and captain Sindelar who was backed up by the skilful Anton Schall and the powerful Josef Smistik, the Wunderteam had won the CEIC in 1932 and headed into the 1934 World Cup in Italy on the back of a 14-game unbeaten run. Meisl's side had swept aside nearly all rivals, claiming one-sided victories in most matches, and the addition of European hotshot Bican in 1933 seemed to complete the repertoire. Indeed, Meisl's men entered the World Cup as favourites – a mere afterthought once Italy's fascist government had sunk their corrupt teeth into the tournament and bribed/threatened their way to victory on home soil.

Bican's extra-time winner saw off France 3-2 in Round One and he was also crucial in the 2-1 win over Hungary a game later. In the semi-finals however, Austria simply had no chance. Mussolini had urged Italian officials to corrupt international counterparts throughout but a scare against Spain forced him to take matters into his own hands. The USA, who finished third in the 1930 World Cup, were surprisingly thrashed 7-1 by Italy but determined Spanish resistance forced a replay, which the hosts of course won controversially. Mussolini had his men corrupt both Swiss René Mercet and Belgian Louis Baert previously, but for the semi, he met Swede Ivan Eklind in a restaurant the night before.

Italy had profited from disgraceful officiating: punches per-



mitted, solo goals ruled out for offside, goals denied for fouls on the keeper, goals permitted for worse fouls on the keeper, but Eklind's antics against Austria dismayed Bican. He said: "When I passed to the right wing, one of our players, [Karl] Zischek ran for it and the referee headed it back to the Italians. It was unbelievable". Enrique Guaita's offside effort which benefited from a clear foul on Austrian keeper Rudolf Vierl settled the game in Italy's favour – what would prove Bican's most meaningful flirtation with international recognition: a political farce.

Annexation exile

Bican won three consecutive Austrian titles with two clubs between 1935 and 1937, but reduced involvement, legal disputes and bans sullied these achievements. Rapid ended the 1935 season as national champions, but just three games amidst rows over his role alienated Bican. He left for rivals Admira Vienna only to endure a similar fate. Banned for breaking his Rapid contract, Bican was restricted to 15 and 11 matches respectively in back-to-back title wins. He also earned just nine caps after the World Cup in 1934. Germany's takeover of Austria compounded Bican's disillusionment with his homeland, and when Hitler mobilised troops on the border in 1937, Bican had to leave.

Slavia Prague failed to land Bican in 1935 during his initial Rapid problems. His concerns about the Austrians' style of play were mirrored in his opinion of the Czechs. But he'd had enough, and when Slavia agreed to pay the significant sum to free him from his contract, Bican jumped at the chance to leave. He began paying Slavia back immediately as fans flocked not only to games, but to see him train too. Bican would line up glass bottles on the crossbar before efficiently toppling them from range. Legend has it he'd leave only one in 20 still standing on a bad day, which probably isn't true, but has a nice ring to it.

Slavia had won seven of the last 10 league championships. Winning over new teammates wasn't smooth sailing for Bican. Several envious Slavia players apparently took to calling him "Austrian bastard" which, though racist, is quite funny. Eight goals in his first two matches immediately demonstrated Bican's value, and put simply, his standards never let up. Five league titles followed in 11 years with Slavia, along with three Czech Cups and one Bohemian Cup, once in the form of a treble in 1941. The side's crowning glory was victory in 1938's Mitropa Cup with Bican top scoring with 10. Whilst 1938 marked the first of a whopping ten top goal scorer awards he accrued at Slavia, it also marked the end of his association with Austria.

Following the German–Austrian annexe in 1938, Bican received a call-up to the German national side. Vehemently opposed to their fascist principles, he declined, hoping instead to represent Czechoslovakia. The Czechs had finished as runners-up at the 1934 World Cup. Like Austria, they were screwed by the corrupt Eklind in the final in line with Mussolini's orders. They were in good shape heading into the 1938 World Cup in France. Indeed, Josef Meissner's side may have been favourites had an administrative error (or transparent spoil tactic, depending on your viewpoint) delayed Bican's registration until two days after the World Cup was over.

The form of his life

Just like his club career in Czechoslovakia, Bican immediately hit the heights for the national side, scoring eight in his first

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SPECULATE HOW BICAN WAS FEELING DURING THIS UTTERLY UNIQUE OCCASION, BUT ONE THING WE CAN BE SURE OF, HE DIDN'T LET HIMSELF OR THE COUNTRY OF HIS MOTHER AND FATHER DOWN AGAINST HIS OWN HOMETLAND.

three matches. Due to the Second World War, he'd then go eight years before earning another Czech cap. Since Hitler's 1933 ascent to power, the largely German-speaking inhabitants of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland had been enticed by National Socialist policies; unifying German speakers in one 'living space' appealed to the impoverished population. As part of England and France's failed appeasement policy, Hitler was permitted to annex the Sudetenland in 1938. A year later, under the occupation name Bohemia and Moravia, Germany occupied all Czechoslovakia.

There was a poetic symmetry to Bican's one and only appearance for the national side in that guise. Bican lined up for Bohemia and Moravia against Ostmark, the newly-Christened state of Austria which had also been subsumed into Nazi rule. It's impossible to speculate how Bican was feeling during this utterly unique occasion, but one thing we can be sure of, he didn't let himself or the country of his mother and father down against his own homeland. The 4-4 draw was secured in the main thanks to Bican's hat-trick, a return which preserved his singular appearance for Bohemia and Moravia in folkloric glory.

Domestically, Bican was in the form of his life. Literally. 105 inter-war league matches yielded a monumental, statistic-skewing 229 goals. As conscription and mass enlisting altered the personnel of European squads, and the destructive conse-

quences of war leading to leagues being suspended, Bican kept scoring. He never fought in the war. Instead, he was the top scorer in world football for five straight years (1940-44). Therein lays the debate which has undermined Bican's goal scoring exploits ever since. Let's take a closer look at that goals record. Pre-war: 105 games, 110 goals, 1.04 goals per game; Inter-war: 105 games, 229 goals, 2.19 goals per game; Post-war: 121 games, 147 goals, 1.21 goals per game.

The inter-war years represent a significant spike. During these years, Bican's goals to game ratio more than doubled. Why? Were inter-war defences rubbish? Were all the decent goalkeepers conscripted? Did Bican cope with the emotional toll better than most? Did ages 26-31 merely represent his peak? At his peak, was he really that good? We're left with many questions but all of this essentially boils down to a personal whim: do the conditions of Bican's phenomenal inter-war goal scoring leave you with the feeling that credit should be taken away? Given his entire life, particularly this five-year period, had been dictated by war, does he in fact deserve more credit?

The wilderness years

After the war, Bican extended his stay at the top of the Czech scoring charts for another four years, but lost his spot in the world rankings as Ferenc Deák and Puskás of Hungary usurped him. With the Nazis defeated and Czechoslovakia liberated (in theory at least) by the Soviet Union, the Czech national team recommenced in its traditional semblance. Shortly after, Italian giants Juventus made an offer to bring Bican to Serie A, but fearing the rise of Communist rule in Italy, he turned it down. Cruelly, Communism took centre stage in Czechoslovakia less than a year later, though Bican resisted Klement Gottwald's Communists like he'd previously resisted Hitler's Nazis.

Fearing for his safety, Bican left Prague for second division, Vítkovické Zelezarny, a club with working class origins in Ostrava's steelworks. A two-year stay involved promotion and then the final First Division top scorer award of his career as Vítkovické finished fourth. A short spell at Hradec Králové which ended in "two comrades" escorting Bican to the train station, with passing workers offering to go on strike if he was under threat, eventually led back to Slavia, renamed Dynamo Prague by the Communists. One final burst of goal scoring

prowess (22 goals in 29 games) and 42-year-old Bican had shuffled off his playing coil; retired at long last in the Czech heart of his adopted home.

Bican's post-retirement years right up to the Velvet Revolution in 1989 were thoroughly unbecoming of one of world football's finest strikers. During both the war and his Vienna heyday, Bican's regular fraternising with famous actors gave him a celebrity status of his own, underscored by his football exploits. Bican's popularity and consistent refusal to join the Komunistická strana Československa (KSČ) had given him credibility with anti-Communists. As the KSČ took an ever stronger grip of the country, his popularity became a stick to beat him with. Painted as part of the selfish bourgeoisie, a suggestion aided by Slavia's largely middle class support, Bican's reputation suffered.

Commenting on her son's plight, Ludmila Bicanova said: "We lost our friends. Our phone didn't ring. When Pepi visited the Union, they ran away like rats so they wouldn't have to greet him. Nobody gave us any support". Bican took coaching jobs right up until he was 64, but the Communist party's paranoid desire to limit his influence saw him mainly grafting in the lower leagues, and eventually in Belgium. On his return to Czechoslovakia, Bican took a coaching post at Bohemian side SK Benešov – one final tribute to his father – before being forced to take a railway job and eventually returning to poverty. Speaking in 1989, he said: "Apart from losing one's health, becoming poor is the worst thing that can happen to anyone".

Curious paradox

Fortunately, Bican's quality of life improved post-revolution. Seized property was returned, his good name was restored, and at long last his accomplishments were acknowledged. Wartime goals had been disregarded for a previous award which Bican had rejected, claiming they'd "stolen his goals", but with the 229 inter-war goals added in 2000, the IFFHS awarded him the Golden Ball for the 20th century. A year on, Bican was given the Freedom of Prague – suitably contrasting treatment to the Communist threat which had him flee the city in fear. In December 2001, Bican died of heart failure aged 88. To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of their greatest player in 2013, Slavia fans displayed mosaics and banners of Bican during 2013's Prague derby.

Born into the drastic poverty of post-war Vienna, he died amidst the hopeful comfort of post-revolution Prague. Bican's career was a curious paradox: war created the conditions for his footballing excellence to flourish, yet ensured his achievements would be undermined forever. His life serves as a lesson in European socio-political history and an account of the transformative identity of 20th century Czechs. Beyond all, however, whatever your particular view of inter-war goal tallies, or indeed your assessment of the Austrian and Czechoslovakian leagues, Bican's undoubted quality cannot be denied. Whether or not he pips the likes of Pelé and Puskás to the title of football's greatest goal scorer, holding his own amongst such immensely capable company is the mark of a true great.



CHRIS SMITH - @cdsmith789

<http://www.therussianlinesman.com/>

Illustration by Spudgun - @emptyspudgun

<http://emptyspudgun.co.uk/>



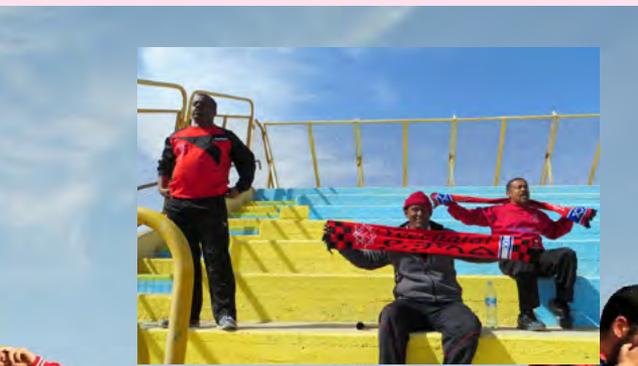
A GAME OF

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY GAD SALNER
AND VADIM TARASOV

TWO HALVES

يَا أَهْلَ بَلَدِي يَا أَغْلَى النَّاسِ





Kaduregel-Shefel (translated from Hebrew as 'peripheral' or 'low' football) is a project that was started many years ago by two Israelis, Gad Salner and Vadim Tarasov, in an attempt to find the places where a passion for true football still exists. As photographers and lower-league football enthusiasts, they try to capture the engagement of the Israeli and Arab people in a common cause – football. From forgotten Arab villages in the north to dusty Jewish neighbourhoods in the south, they visit places where the seemingly ever-present tension between cultures evaporates and where diversity is embraced, encouraged and celebrated. Their work puts more emphasis on the human, urban and cultural landscapes of their divided and diverse society and less on-the-pitch action itself.

The initial inspiration behind their adventure might sound somewhat naïve: they were always intrigued by the lower leagues, especially in the UK, and the mystery of some of the names they encountered whilst playing the Championship Manager video game at the end of the 1990s. This motivated them to explore the lower league scene in Israel. It's a very small country, but very diverse and full of energy. Initially, it didn't even start as 'a project', they just wanted to experience the type of excitement and passion they felt was missing from the 'professional' leagues in Israel and from what they 'consumed' from European leagues on TV.

As Gad explains, "Our advice is this: Go on and enjoy old school football, support your local club. We've found out an incredible world of colours and passion, and most of all we've met people and got to places that we never thought of getting to. Our latest project, creating a club football museum in Rahat, Israel's largest Bedouin city, is the best example. Many people have a bad image of this place, so we visited there a couple of times to watch football; the derby match attracted a crowd of thousands. So we travelled all the way to the south, to pick up old shirts and old memorabilia from the teams and set up our exhibition. We met the most amazing people there, people we would never have encountered without the project".

"We know that it might seem odd to audiences from abroad, but Jews and Arabs are playing together on all levels and all leagues here. It's not an 'issue' here, but might surprise people abroad to find out that, for example, Bnei Sahknin - an Arab village from Galilee - won the national cup and represented Israel in Europe".

"And if you're still asking 'why?' - It's a passion and true love for the game of football. It's something that is really emotional, to see how people of all faiths still turn out to watch their local clubs, with their crumbling stadiums, to watch players that are just like you and me. But on one day of the week they become stars for 90 minutes. It's like a religious ceremony, with the same rules; something which takes place everywhere on earth".

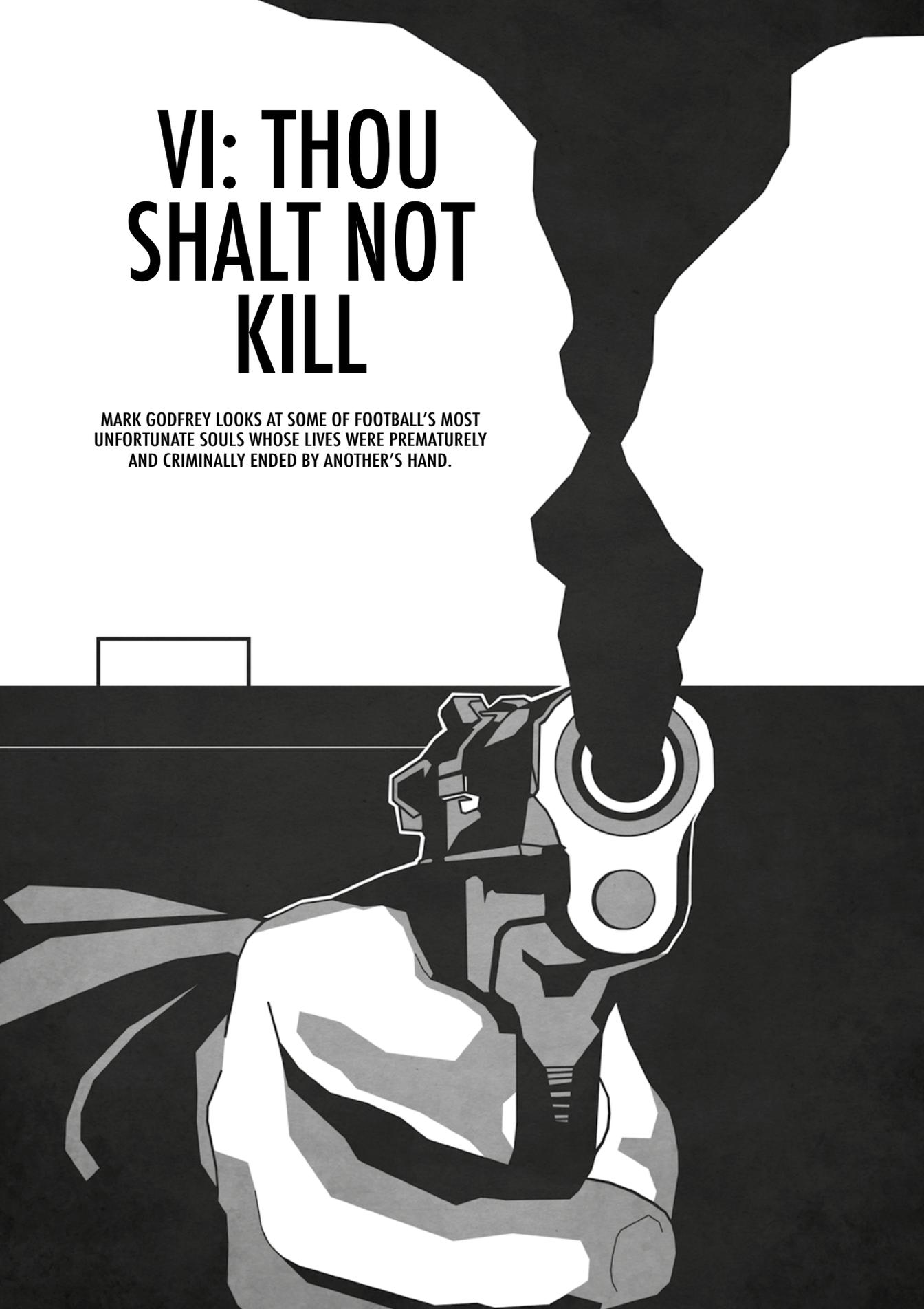
Gad Salner and Vadim Tarasov

www.facebook.com/kaduregelshefel
kaduregelshefel.tumblr.com
 @kaduregelshefel
 Kaduregel.shefel@gmail.com



VI: THOU SHALT NOT KILL

MARK GODFREY LOOKS AT SOME OF FOOTBALL'S MOST
UNFORTUNATE SOULS WHOSE LIVES WERE PREMATURELY
AND CRIMINALLY ENDED BY ANOTHER'S HAND.



Football and crime are familiar bedfellows; from match fixing to drink driving, sexual assault to spousal abuse, the 'beautiful game' is far from immune to the uglier side of human nature and it doesn't get much darker than murder. Probably the most notorious example of a player having his life brutally ended came after the 1994 World Cup held in the United States. Colombian defender Andrés Escobar, who had scored an unfortunate own goal during a group match with the hosts which they lost 2-1, was shot six times in his car by drug cartel henchman Humberto Castro Muñoz in the parking lot of a bar in his hometown of Medellín in the early hours of July 2nd 1994. His execution is believed to have been ordered by gangster Santiago Gallón, who reputedly bet – and subsequently lost – large sums of money on the outcome of the Colombia vs. USA game just 10 days earlier.

Colombia has gained itself quite a reputation; players have often been kidnapped, threatened, beaten and been cut down by violence there, but you won't be surprised to learn that the whole of South and Central America is a particularly lawless hotspot. It seems that one of the most dangerous activities a footballer can undertake on that continent – as Escobar found out to his cost – is to go out and socialise in bars and nightclubs situated in less than reputable areas of town. There are several cases, spanning El Salvador, Panama, Colombia and Uruguay of players going out for an evening's relaxation only to have been gunned down; most in uncertain circumstances and with unclear motives, although the assumed link to gangs and potential reprisal killings is corroborated by both the amount of these cases being either unsolved due to witness intimidation and silence, or the assailant somehow wriggling off with a lenient custodial sentence or, in some instances, no jail time at all thanks to substantial bribes paid to secure a successful outcome in their favour at trial.

Evidently, being in one's vehicle provides little immunity to attack, with taxis in particular often turned into mobile shooting galleries.



One of the most curious instances of a player's death came in 2003 in Honduras and the shooting of national team goalkeeper Milton 'Chocolate' Flores. He drove 200km from La Ceiba to San Pedro Sula – home of his team Real Espana – having been a substitute in his team's victory hours earlier. He parked up, with a prostitute in his car, in the notorious red light district of La Union. To be labelled notorious in San Pedro Sula is quite a feat; it is the world's most violent city with 187.14 homicides per 100,000 residents, easily outstripping its nearest rival - Caracas, Venezuela - for that dubious honour. At 2.45am on January 19th 2003, a hail of AK-47 machine-gun fire rained down on his car, peppering Flores with seven bullets while his lady companion received only minor injuries. In a vain attempt to flee, he tried to start the car but crashed it into a nearby tree, his gunshot wounds claiming his life at the scene. The area's youth gangs were blamed for his death which was mourned all across Honduras, such was his popularity with football fans; thousands turned out for the funeral in his home town of

La Lima.

Over in Africa, another region often noted for its precarious safety situation for footballers and their families, the most high profile murder came way back in 1971. The victim was the colourful and controversial Ghanaian goalkeeper Robert Mensah. He began his career at the wonderfully named Mysterious Dwarfs club (whose stadium is now named after him) before making his name with Asante Kotoko, with whom he won the African Clubs Cup in 1970. He also appeared for Ghana at the 1968 African Cup of Nations and the Olympic Games of the same year. Mensah was renowned for goading opposition players by reading a newspaper in his goal if he found himself redundant during matches, and in retaliation, opponents would often try to remove his trademark cap, believing that it invoked some kind of magical power on the keeper's behalf. Whether his choice of headgear had any real positive effect on the pitch or not is unlikely, but his good luck certainly ran out, however, on November 2nd 1971. A few days earlier he was drinking at a bar in Tema when a fight broke out with two men. A third – Isaac Melfah – followed him out into the streets afterwards and stabbed him with a broken bottle. Mensah survived the initial wounding but succumbed in hospital when doctors had thought he would pull through following an operation to save his life.

Europe, supposedly more enlightened and sophisticated, has not been immune to such tragedies either, although the circumstances surrounding murdered footballers here are very different to that of South America and Africa. During the Second World War, the barbarism of Nazi Germany undoubtedly accounted for a significant number of players killed – not in battle, under the accepted rules of engagement – but by cold-blooded extermination. Probably the first tale that springs to mind is that of the players of FC Start from Kiev in Ukraine, in what was then the German-occupied area of the Soviet Union. The team, founded by a local bakery director of Germanic descent called Joseph Kordik, was made up of former Dynamo and Lokomotiv Kiev players who had returned from the battle front. From the end of 1941, football was once again permitted by the Nazi occupation forces and so, in August 1942, what has since become known as 'The Death Match' took place between FC Start and a German military team called Flakelf. What we know for certain is that on August 6th 1942, the Ukrainian side defeated the Germans 5-1 and so, just three days later, a hastily arranged rematch – billed with a 'strengthened' Flakelf playing for 'revenge' – took place. It was this second game that became lumbered not only with its ominous title, but also an enduring myth concocted by the Soviet state propaganda machine to serve its own ends.

The game itself resulted in another win for FC Start, this time by five goals to three. It's at this point where the waters were muddied by the Soviet version of events that followed. For years, the accepted story was that the players were led away to a place called Babi Yar, still wearing the kit they played in, and were executed en masse. Several investigations in the post-war years determined that this simply wasn't true. In fact the team played another game against local club Rukh a week later. However, after a Gestapo raid on the bakery where the players worked, FC Start's Nikolai Korotkykh, who had been a member of the NKVD – the Soviet secret police – was arrested and tortured to death in the aftermath of 'The Death Match' while the rest of the team were sent to a concentration camp. In February 1943 three of those men - Nikolai Trusevich, Alexei Klimenko and Ivan Kuzmenko – were shot and killed while in detention.

The Nazis were also responsible for the murder of two Polish players who had been internationals during the 1920s and 1930s. Leon Sperling and Józef Klotz were Jewish and born in Kraków at the turn of the 20th century. The Germans killed them both in 1941; Sperling, a highly-skilled winger, took part in the country's first ever

friendly (against Hungary) in 1921, while Klotz scored Poland's first ever international goal in 1922.

Fast forward to the early 1980s and we encounter the story of Lutz Eigendorf. During a trip by his club - BFC Dynamo of East Berlin – over the tightly-guarded border to West Germany to play against 1.FC Kaiserslautern in a so-called 'friendship' match, the opportunistic East German midfielder legged it when the team coach stopped off in the town of Giessen on the journey back behind the Iron Curtain. Eigendorf's defection was of particular political embarrassment to the Stasi (the GDR's secret police) and its head, Erich Mielke, especially given the organisation's close links to the BFC Dynamo club.

Eigendorf eventually joined Kaiserslautern but only after serving a one year ban imposed on him by UEFA for his defection. He may have thought he'd left the oppressive nature of Communism behind – along with his wife and daughter – but the Stasi never forgot about him, keeping tabs on his movements throughout his time in the West. In 1983, they caught up with him having decided he had to go; in a typically intriguing Cold War style demise that reads more like a scene from a James Bond film, he supposedly drove his car off the road and into a tree whilst heavily under the influence of alcohol having been blinded by the lights of an oncoming truck on a hazardous bend. Yet, the people who Eigendorf had spent the evening with claimed he had actually drunk very little which was entirely at odds with the autopsy report. After German reunification in 1990 the truth about Eigendorf's death began to emerge – he was the victim of a Stasi plot which involved his poisoning and them making the crash look like an accident. The alleged perpetrator was an East German agent called Karl-Heinz Felgner who had tried, and failed, to woo Eigendorf's estranged wife after he had defected.

In another unusual incident, Lazio star Luciano Re Cecconi was shot and killed in 1977 in a Rome jewellery store. The man known as the 'Angelo Biondo' – or 'Blond Angel' – was a renowned practical joker and on the night of January 18th, he and team mate Pietro Ghedin pounced on the jewellery store owner, and friend, Bruno Tabochini pretending to carrying out a robbery. Tabochini's store had recently been the subject of a real hold up just weeks before, so he had a shotgun handy in the event of another occurring. Ghedin threw his hands in the air immediately after being confronted, yet Re Cecconi continued with the charade, hiding his face behind his coat, jokingly concealing his identity as a thief might. Tabochini, unaware that this was a prank, discharged his shotgun into the Scudetto winner's chest. Re Cecconi died thirty minutes later in hospital – unwittingly killed by a friend as a consequence of one joke too many. Tabochini was never prosecuted.

George Stagg of Perry Barr in Birmingham tried to claim accidental death in his defence during his trial for the murder of Aston Villa defender Tommy Ball. The former owned a couple of cottages in Brick Kiln Lane and rented the one next to his own to Ball and his wife Beatrice in October 1922. The neighbours' relationship very quickly turned sour; Stagg claiming that Ball's chickens continually wandered into his garden causing a nuisance. Just over a year after the Balls moved in, on the night of November 11th 1923, there was murder most 'fowl' when Tommy and Beatrice returned home late from an evening at the local pub, the Church Tavern. When Ball went into the garden to get his dog, there was an altercation between him and Stagg followed by a gunshot. By the time Mrs. Ball arrived on the scene from upstairs, her husband was "in a very distressed state, reeling towards her". Stagg fired his weapon again, the second bullet narrowly missing the couple. Ball died very soon afterwards from his injuries, becoming the only Football League player ever to be murdered.

Despite protestations by Stagg that Ball came at him over their

AFTER GERMAN REUNIFICATION IN 1990 THE TRUTH ABOUT EIGENDORF'S DEATH BEGAN TO EMERGE – HE WAS THE VICTIM OF A STASI PLOT WHICH INVOLVED HIS POISONING AND THEM MAKING THE CRASH LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENT

adjoining fence and that the gun went off accidentally when he and Ball were tussling, the jury at his trial were not convinced and found him guilty of murder. The judge, Mr. Justice Rowlatt, sentenced him to death, although this was reduced to life imprisonment on appeal after he was declared insane. He spent the rest of his life in Broadmoor hospital.

Tommy Ball's death was greatly mourned in Birmingham with thousands lining the streets for his funeral while a poem was written in his honour soon after his passing:

*Twas on a Sabbath evening in drear November days,
Two friends were heard creating, in Perry Barry's byways.
High words just fed the anger, now this young man's life is fled,
A shot and then another! And Thomas Ball lies dead.*

The same city tragically lost another ex-servant of one its clubs in 2015. Denis Thwaites – once of Birmingham City – was one of the 38 people killed in the terrorist attacks on the tourist beaches of Sousse in Tunisia.

Footballers, despite their elevated place in society and the affections of supporters, are just as vulnerable to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune as us mere mortals and equally as likely to fall victim to the ultimate criminal act. Whether their public profile makes them more or less of a target is something they should bear in mind the next time they go out drinking, take a taxi or get involved with another man's woman, or worse – dabble in politics.

MARK GODFREY - @TheFootballPink

<http://footballpink.net>

Illustration by Michael Atkinson - @ATKMichael

<http://www.michaelatkinson.co.uk/>



VII: THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY

STEVE KAY LIFTS THE LID ON THAT MOST SALACIOUS OF TOPICS – ADULTERY – AND ASKS IF IT IS A PURELY MODERN PHENOMENON IN FOOTBALL OR WHETHER THE MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC'S APPETITE FOR SCANDAL HAS UNCOVERED A PROBLEM THAT HAS BEEN IN THE GAME ALL ALONG.

A bit on the side seems almost as compulsory for your modern footballer as well-defined quadriceps and parking your Porsche outside the tattoo parlour. After all, if you are only contracted to a couple of hours training a day you have to fill your time somehow. Everyone knows they are just lazy, pampered, overpaid, disgraceful role models who can't keep it in their pants. Don't they?

I approached this subject from the perspective of a libertarian atheist, who believes that what people get up to in private is their own business, and that it only becomes wrong when it does harm to others. It is not the sanctity of marriage that is the issue — it is the betrayal, the breaking of a contract whether implied or explicit that is the wrong. Whether you call it adultery, philandering or being a love-rat, there seems a lot of it in football. Even if you haven't mourned the demise of the News of the World or wouldn't even stoop to tear up the Daily Mail to hang on a nail on the back of the privy door, you cannot fail to notice the constant parade of sorry sagas of professional footballers caught with their pants down, or the latest kiss-and-tell allegation.

In recent years we have had, in no particular order, the following, to name but a few:

John Terry taking legal action to obtain a super-injunction in order to try to protect his image and 'business interests,' in the guise of claiming a right to have a 'private and family life.' This gagging order was overturned by the High Court and the tabloids went to town with stories of affairs, furious rows and other 'consequences.' The judge in the case said it was crucial that newspapers should not be prevented from reporting details of his philandering ways just because they were 'socially harmful.'

Ashley Cole was widely reported as being a love-rat, the offence being aggravated by him being married to a bona-fide national treasure. An open letter from the woman who claimed to have slept with Cole was published, dishing out advice in

public to his then wife - the lovely Cheryl - who soon obtained a divorce. In one kiss-and-tell on 'love-rat Ashley,' a former 'beauty queen' says he blamed his philandering on getting married, "that things change when you get married — you go from being someone's boyfriend to being the husband, it changes quite a lot of things. Once you're a husband you can't act in a way that you would have done if you were a boyfriend." Profound words indeed.

The seemingly perfect family man, David Beckham, faced the Rebecca Loos scandal, which he seemed to have emerged from with his public reputation (and more importantly his value to advertisers and sponsors) pretty much undiminished.

There was the previously saintly figure of Ryan Giggs, whose halo slipped somewhat following allegations of an affair with his brother's wife, and another one of those super-injunctions against a 'big brother star and model' — aren't they always? This all fell apart when an MP revealed his name under parliamentary privilege to stop the nonsense of ordinary people being prosecuted for repeating gossip on Twitter about the Manchester United legend and BBC Sports Personality of the Year.

Who else do we mention from the modern era? Wayne Rooney was subjected to a kiss-and-tell, and David Seaman admitted his adultery as grounds for his divorce. You could go on.

One of the old chestnuts is that it is only the prima-donnas of the modern era who behave like this — as somehow proof that the game has further sold itself to the devil. Those good old boys who played in pit boots, who walked to the ground and went down the same pub as the supporters were a different breed. Is that really the case? And how easy is it to review the historical record? As you trace it back, you find misbehaviour from Ally McCoist through to Peter Shilton, who was once arrested for drunk-driving after being found in a compromising position at 5am in a country lane with a woman called Tina, who wasn't his wife.

The 1970s would appear to have been a golden era for



footballers who chose not to play by the rules. Most notorious of them all was probably Frank Worthington, the title of whose autobiography, *One Hump or Two*, says it all.

It is hard to uncover accounts going back beyond the 1970s — not only was society more straight-laced but there was a cosy relationship between reporter and players. Sports reporters had unprecedented access to the dressing room but in return kept football for the back pages. You only need to read Brian Glanville's *The Rise of Gerry Logan* (published in 1963) to realise that he was getting away with writing about what went on under the (at times, thin) guise of fiction. It seems clear that the means, opportunity and motive for footballers existed almost as much in those after war years as now. Jimmy Greaves recalled the: "gentleman's agreement about what could and could not be written. The press have seen minor indiscretions on the part of players, but kept them to themselves." And we were perhaps all better off for that.

It was really the superstar qualities of George Best that broke the cosy relationship that had kept so much of the indiscretions of footballers out of the public eye to that point. The intense interest in 'the fifth Beatle' Best, made the money-men realise just how much was to be gained from changing the rules of engagement, and a new generation of not-so-gentlemen-reporters were happy to deliver.

But before the swinging sixties things were different, surely? If anyone says, "that wouldn't have happened in the good old days," remind them that the very legend of the cloth-cap types, Stanley Matthews, succumbed to the temptation of a younger model, finally divorcing his wife of thirty-odd years eight years later.

The further back you go the more things were, not only not reported by the press, but positively hushed up by the clubs and society. Fiction again comes to our aid. The book that has a claim to be the oldest football novel, *The Arsenal Stadium Mystery*, first published in 1939, featured a married footballer (and murder victim), John Doyce, who was a serial womaniser. This story was clearly not ungrounded in reality; the author, Leonard Gribble, clearly knew something about football's inner workings and it is likely this account was rooted in fact.

Going further back still, it was when I was researching my book *The Evergreen* in red and white, about the first Romani footballer, Rabbi Howell, that I came across something interesting from genealogical research. I had been intrigued as to why he was apparently sacked just a couple of weeks before his club, Sheffield United, won the English Championship in 1898. All the rumours and club folklore hinted towards match fixing — but those were just rumours to fill a vacuum of truth. The real story was more fascinating, and the truth a much more ancient one: another woman. It was perhaps not quite the same as today's players in that there was no divorce back then unless you were wealthy; but nonetheless it was, in the late Victorian era, a scandal that could never be revealed or it would have brought the club into shame and disrepute.

So what is it about the modern era that drives this feeding frenzy for stories about footballers? At the time of the whole Terry affair, the *News of the World* lawyer spoke to ITN about the lifting of the super-injunction — he said that too often the public's right to know is overlooked in favour of 'wealthy and pampered' celebrities and footballers. What a nonsense this is. This 'freedom of the press and public interest' argument always

THERE WAS THE PREVIOUSLY SAINTLY FIGURE OF RYAN GIGGS, WHOSE HALO SLIPPED SOMEWHAT FOLLOWING ALLEGATIONS OF AN AFFAIR WITH HIS BROTHER'S WIFE, AND ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE SUPER-INJUNCTIONS AGAINST A 'BIG BROTHER STAR AND MODEL' — AREN'T THEY ALWAYS?

gets tripped out, but what they really mean of course is their freedom to print whatever they like, however it is obtained, and whether or not it is true, in order to sell as many copies as possible and ramp up their advertising revenue.

The public do, of course, appear to have an insatiable appetite for these stories. They are prepared to pay to read them, so the editors will wave wads of cash to get them, openly seeking people to contact them with tittle-tattle about celebrities. It doubtless conforms to the laws of supply and demand. Football is a cash-cow in so many ways — interest in these salacious details is the flipside of why sponsors pay such large sums of money for these men to wear their logos.

But are these stories really in our interest or do they

diminish us all as people. Do they make us all guilty in effect? The press has to feign outrage on the public's behalf, otherwise their whole 'public interest' argument starts to look very thin when it comes to considering the ethics of parading the stories of what footballers do behind closed doors. Most fans probably have a bit of a laugh, shrug their shoulders in a "so what?" kind of way, or, if they're not Chelsea fans, will have fun chiming "Same old Terry, always cheating" until they get bored. And it really is rank hypocrisy when the press harp on about role-models. If they were really that worried about the effect these gods with feet of clay really had on impressionable, young minds they would stop dredging the murky depths for details and stop printing them alongside photos of alleged mistresses in as scanty an example of swimwear as they could procure. Without this, our kids could instead just watch the football, admire the skills, read their Match of the Day magazine, and be none the wiser.

There is a particularly British problem here with 'celebrity' — something about having to drag people down who get above their station. And it seems it is particularly class-driven — these footballers earning such sums of money, outrageous when they didn't even go to the right kind of school. We don't see the same obsessive harrumphing with rich golfers, tennis players or Formula 1 drivers — even though the top players in those sports earn figures way in excess of all Premier League footballers. The fact is that golfers, tennis players and Formula 1 drivers cannot easily get on in their sports without financial backing from families, or if they are lucky, sponsors, from a very young age. They come from a better class of person. I wrote in The Football Pink Issue 9 about how attitudes to football from the 19th century still infect the game today — this is just another example. We love to talk about boys whose natural talents were honed on the back streets or on the local rec. We put them in the glaring floodlights in front of 70 000 fans, idolise them, then drag them back down if they turn out to be human.

There is undoubtedly a problem with the way our clubs treat their players. Players have always been commoditised, only of use so long as they give a financial return. Steven M Ortiz, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Oregon State University has researched the marital relationships of

athletes — his findings would seem to apply equally to British footballers. He says there exists a culture of adultery in professional sport, that managers and coaches usually ignore, and that fellow players may often encourage. They have to "deal with boredom, peer-group pressure, team loyalty, opportunity, sense of self-importance, and the availability of women who seem to be irresistibly attracted to professional athletes." He says: "There clearly seems to be a 'fast-food sex mentality' amongst professional athletes."

Do the clubs fail in their responsibilities to their players? I am sure there is a huge variety of approaches adopted by clubs as to how they bring up and educate their players from the academies through to the professional ranks. This is evidenced, for example, from the frank admissions of Stan Collymore in his autobiography, where he tells about his own infidelity amongst other things, but also gives insights into how the football business treats their players and the wide differences in pastoral care. Do clubs provide the support and education needed for turning boys into grown-ups, or do they effectively just collude in the process of infantilising them so they never have to take responsibility for their lives or their actions, with PR men and women to mop up after them. It is a vicious circle no doubt — the media are never interested in good news stories. The charitable works of football clubs and of players — sometimes of a very substantial nature — get overlooked all too easily. Think, for example, of the charity set up in Sierra Leone by Craig Bellamy, with figures of £1.4 million mentioned, compared to the column inches for his misdeeds. Am I suggesting we feel sorry for these players — probably not — not when I compare them to others I see as I travel round workplaces. I do, however, recognise that today's players' achievements and dedication are often to be admired. You only have to see how long it takes some players to work their way back from serious injury, involving operations on knees; not just once, but twice or three times. To get to the level of skill they have requires phenomenal commitment from themselves and their families from an early age, fitting work at academies around schooling. It now requires discipline in fitness, diet, training etc. to reach and stay at that level.

Football does, however, have serious structural and cultural problems that it needs to sort out. The PFA often seems to have to pick up the pieces when surely the principal duty of care must rest with the clubs. The not always positive role of players' agents cannot be overlooked either.

In some ways football is improving with clubs recognising their role in community, and organisations drawing on the power of the game to unite people across the globe (despite the awful example set by FIFA). In the UK the stance on racism is improving, even on homophobia, but there is still so much to do: so much resistance to ideas that morality, personal, as well as institutional, has any part in the game.



STEVE KAY - @SteveK1889

<http://stevek1889.blogspot.co.uk/>

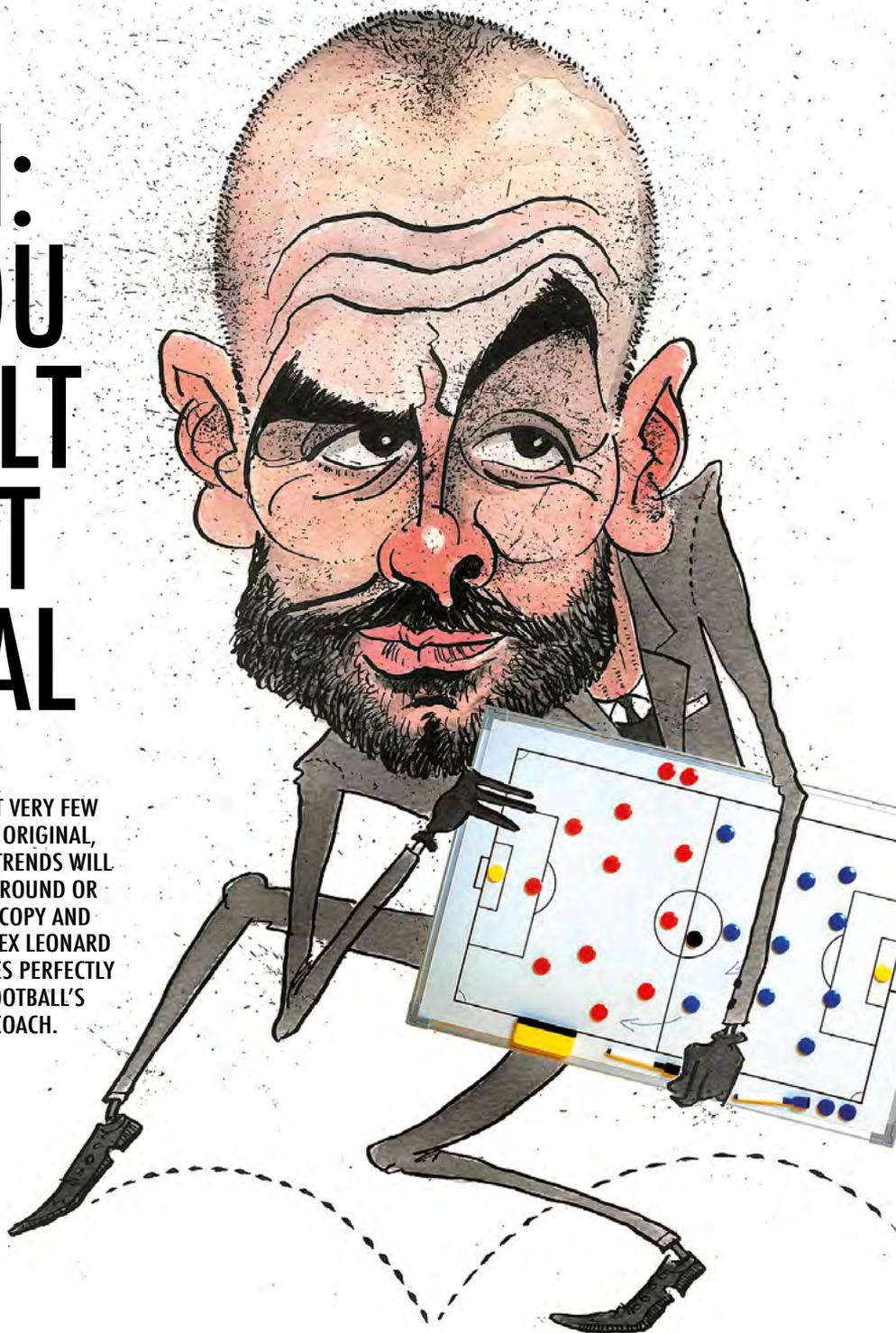
<http://www.theevergreen.co.uk/>

Illustration by Steph Bourne - @stephbourne

<http://www.stephbourne.co.uk/>

VIII: THOU SHALT NOT STEAL

IT'S OFTEN SAID THAT VERY FEW THINGS ARE NEW OR ORIGINAL, AND THAT IDEAS AND TRENDS WILL EITHER COME BACK AROUND OR INSPIRE OTHERS TO COPY AND ENHANCE THEM. AS ALEX LEONARD EXAMINES, THIS APPLIES PERFECTLY TO MODERN DAY FOOTBALL'S MOST REVERED COACH.



One of football's modern and most famous thinkers, Pep Guardiola, believes thievery to be a fundamental element for success. The Catalan is a self-confessed "ideas thief" – and to incredible effect. His teams are renowned for their unmatched intensity and stunning accomplishments, a result of his incomparable devotion and work ethic to the sport. In Martí Perarnau's intriguing 'Pep Confidential', this technique of Guardiola's is explored in detail: "Ideas belong to everyone", comments the man behind the wheel at Bayern Munich, a club which barely ever takes its foot off the gas. "And I have stolen as many as I could."

According to the dictionary, 'steal' is defined as the following: "1. to take (something) from someone without permission or unlawfully. 2. To use (someone else's ideas or work) without acknowledgement." In terms of stealing footballing ideas, tactics and methods, Guardiola's 'theft' would be classed as the latter. His famous coaching ethos is a mosaic of the ideas and methods of many before him.

Interestingly, thievery in this manner – 'stealing' abstract concepts or intellectual property, that is – has become commonplace in modern society. To consider how and why, it is worth referring to the Bible's Ten Commandments. In Exodus 20: 1-17 of the Old Testament, Moses receives the Decalogue from God at Mount Sinai, the eighth instruction being: 'thou shalt not steal'. It is understood that at the time in history during which the Bible was written, God's eighth commandment refers to the stealing of fellow humans for slavery; yet its modern understanding relates to the stealing of the possessions, ideas or work of another.

The understanding of the eighth commandment has changed immensely since it was first written in Hebrew, just like several of God's other instructions. As a result of the gradual secularisation of society, the first and second commandments – 'thou shalt have no other gods before me', and 'thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image' – carry less influence within society. In contemporary culture, famous, talented people can be easily represented as god-like by the media – for example, a significant factor which drove Guardiola to resign as head coach at Barcelona in 2012 was due to the manner in which he was being portrayed. Due to his immense success, the Catalan media was beginning to characterise him as godly and otherworldly. 'Spain in shock as 'God-like' Guardiola quits Barcelona', wrote CNN as the coach departed.

Similarly, 'thou shalt not steal' is interpreted in relation to contemporary social values. The dictionary's definition outlines that possessions, work or ideas can be stolen; it does not consider that people, in terms of slavery, can be stolen. Yet despite its reference to stealing intellectual property, to use another's idea without acknowledgement is not always a crime; for what it means to 'steal' always has been and remains open to interpretation. The stealing of intellectual property, ideas and abstract concepts is absolutely necessary in order for not only football, but many other forms of human expression, to develop.

In 1996, Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple Inc., echoed a famous saying which he attributed to a certain Spanish painter: "Picasso had a saying – 'good artists copy; great artists steal'." What exactly the late Jobs was implying was recently explained in depth by Apple executive Phil Schiller. He defined the difference between what it means to steal, and how this therefore relates to the act of copying: "Copying means - I believe this is what he [Jobs] meant when he said it because we talked about it back then - doing the same thing. I think what he meant by 'steal' was you learn, as

artists have, from past masters; you figure out...what you want to incorporate into your idea, and you take it further and do something new with it. I can see why people might confuse that with the current use people have for that phrase." In an artistic sense, Jobs interpreted 'steal' to fundamentally mean 'taking inspiration' from the work or ideas of another.

Art would never progress, develop or advance if new artists did not 'steal' in this manner from those before them. One of countless examples of this ongoing, constant transition begins with Impressionism, a 19th century movement that originated in Paris. Rejected by the art establishment, a diverse group of artists – which included Claud Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Camille Pissarro among others – organised their own exhibition in 1874. While choosing to paint landscapes like many other artists before them, the Impressionists aimed to portray reality through their own perceptual impression of striking yet mundane contemporary objects. They were making the ideas of others very much their own.

Yet, this radical style was not bold enough for some. When Dutch artist Vincent Van Gogh died aged 37 on July 29th 1890 of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, he left behind a collection of revolutionary paintings. Developing upon the Impressionists' work along with several other independent artists who also rejected the movement's emphasis on naturalism, Van Gogh spent his later years reinterpreting their style. Just take a look at his painting *The Garden of Saint-Paul Hospital* of December 1889; the painter's turbulent emotions are reflected in the angry, red undertone and distorted shapes.

Despite his work being considered insignificant during his own lifetime, the troubled Van Gogh would influence artists like Picasso himself (specifically his self-portrait, I, Picasso). Furthermore, his ideas were the blueprint for movements such as Fauvism, pioneered by Henri Matisse, at the turn of the 20th century. The Fauves projected moods and emotion through the use of colour in their work, and in doing so reinvented the role of colour in painting and allowed it to exist on the canvas as its own element.

Ultimately, Matisse broke away from the easel altogether and began working with large-scale paper cut-outs, which became pivotal in the progression of modern art. As a result of the Fauves' pioneering attitude towards colour, and Matisse's venture away from the canvas, modern art grew and transformed into new movements such as Abstract Expressionism. The work of American painter Jackson Pollock, which is arguably more likely to provoke the response of "I could have done that" than that of most other artists, ensnares the viewer in a web of light, texture and colour. His work, while incredibly challenging and ground-breaking itself, reflects the pioneering ideas of numerous artistic movements before him, emphasising how pivotal it is to 'steal' ideas. Would the work of Pollock exist without that of Monet?

To attempt to answer that question could take forever. Hopefully, however, this fleeting look at modern art functions as an analogy for how 'stealing' the ideas of others can inspire an intellectual domino effect. Just as one work of art is influenced by countless others, the intricate tactics and particular style of play Guardiola's world-beating Barcelona side exhibited would not have existed without the ideas of many footballing pioneers before him. It is completely conceivable that, if any one detail in the following narrative was different, Guardiola may never have become a successful coach and therefore this article would never have been written. Of course, such a theory consists only of ifs and buts; yet considering how the world of football is - just like art - entirely flexible, such an idea is completely plausible. To begin to understand this concept

it is essential to recognise the role a certain enigmatic footballing philosopher plays in the progress of the sport.

On November 25th, 1953, the Lancashire-born James 'Jimmy' Hogan sat in the stands of Wembley Stadium watching Hungary destroy England 3-6. The Hungarians ran the English ragged, inflicting upon the hosts their first ever home defeat by a foreign nation. As England's invincibility and confidence was ruthlessly crushed by the 'Magnificent Magyars', Hogan may well have been the only member of the home crowd who felt it appropriate to smile; for the pioneering style of the football Hungary displayed on that day in 1953 began with his very own innovations. He was, as labelled by the English, a traitor; yet he is, some may argue, the father of modern football itself.

When later questioned about Hungary's victory, Sandor Barcs, president of the Hungarian Football Federation, reflected how: "Hogan taught us everything we know about football". Barcs, whose nation the coach first visited almost forty years earlier, was alluding to a tale now buried deep in dusty history books.

Upon leaving Bolton Wanderers and calling time on his modest playing career in 1913, Hogan sought to teach to others what he had not been taught. He disagreed with the 'hit-and-hope' playing style Britain adored, and his ethos was simple: retain possession, pass the ball on the ground, and exploit space. Hogan found the Europeans' attitude to football far more to his liking. Even in the sport's early days, continental clubs played a far more attractive and flowing game. They used training sessions to work with the ball whereas the English focussed solely on cardiovascular training.

Hogan began working with Austrian national team coach Hugo Meisl. Due to complex political reasons, he took over at MTK Budapest for the duration of the Great War, winning two Hungarian league titles in simple, superior fashion. Following the conflict, Hogan worked with Young Boys Berne in Switzerland then returned to MTK before joining German side SC Dresden in 1925. An inspirational "father" of football to the Germans, he toured the country, sharing his knowledge with players and fellow coaches before returning to work with Meisl, who was crafting the Austrian Wunderteam. By the 1934 World Cup they were a revolutionary side, despite being eliminated by eventual winners Italy. After an incredible career abroad, Hogan had revolutionised the thinking of numerous clubs in Holland, Austria, Hungary, Germany and Switzerland and left a lasting imprint upon world football.

In 1934, Hogan returned to England, entering a short-lived affair with Fulham and spent four years at Aston Villa before calling time on coaching and working exclusively with youth players. Yet a gap of over a decade still remained between this moment and when England took on Hungary in 1953, and the Hungarians had not yet mastered Hogan's teachings. That particular job fell to a disciple (of sorts) of the English coach: Márton Bukovi. During his post-war managerial stint at MTK in the late 40s and early 50s, Bukovi fused his own tactical intelligence with Hogan's philosophies. He continued to evolve Hogan's values, developing an effective and flexible 4-2-4 system which Gusztáv Sebes, coach of the national side, transferred to his team. Under Sebes, Hungary won gold at the 1952 Olympics, destroyed England 3-6 at Wembley (and 7-1 in a reverse fixture a year later), went unbeaten for nearly four years and were somehow defeated 3-2 by West Germany at the 1954 World Cup final.

Bukovi's 4-2-4 formation had become famous on the world stage, yet it did not guide the Magyars to the Jules Rimet trophy. That was reserved for Pele's unrivalled Brazil side of 1958. At the quarter-final stage of the 1954 tournament, the Canarinho were

defeated 4-2 by the Hungarians in a violent encounter branded 'The Battle of Bern'. However, upon reinventing the Hungarians' formation as their own, Brazil breezed through the tournament in Sweden. Their system had been partially developed by famous Hungarian coach Béla Guttmann (of Sao Paulo, AC Milan and Benfica and other clubs), who had moved to Brazil during the 1950s. In the final the Brazilians demolished the hosts 5-2, with the 17-year-old Pele scoring a brace. Nevertheless, Brazil did not attempt the same trick twice; over time, the flexible 4-2-4 formation changed. In 1962, Brazil once again claimed the World Cup with one forward dropped into midfield to create a devastating yet secure 4-3-3.

Three years later, Rinus Michels applied the 4-2-4 system to Ajax, the only club for which he had played, as he took over as coach for the 1965/66 season. As a player, Michels had worked under Englishman Jack Reynolds, who spent 27 seasons in charge of the Amsterdammers over three separate spells. Reynolds, influenced by the teachings and coaching styles of Jimmy Hogan, transformed Ajax into unrivalled domestic champions, establishing the club as the greatest in Holland. Michels, just as Reynolds was inspired by Hogan, was influenced by the thinking of his former coach. The concept which would later be known as 'Total Football' was born, with Piet Keizer, Johan Cruyff, Sjaak Swart and Henk Groot as the attacking quartet. From 1966 to 1970, they won four Dutch league titles and Michels, towards the end of this initial



managerial tenure at the club, switched to an effective 4-3-3 just as the Brazilian side had almost a decade earlier. After leaving Ajax in 1971, the coach headed for Barcelona and Cruyff followed. Together they won the 1974 league title, and Michels subsequently departed to find (eventual) success with the Dutch national side in 1988.

Coincidentally, this was the very same year Cruyff was appointed coach of FC Barcelona. Here, El Flaco ('the skinny one') adapted the 4-3-3 in which he played under Michels to a 3-4-3, populating and dominating the middle of the pitch. During his managerial tenure in Catalonia, Cruyff won the 1992 European Cup in addition to a Cup Winners' Cup, four league titles, one Spanish Cup, one European Super Cup and three Spanish Super Cups, crafting the 'Dream Team' as he did so. The pivot of its midfield four was a skinny, intelligent man who would later go on to comment how "Cruyff painted the chapel...Barcelona coaches since merely restore or improve it."

Of course, that man was Pep Guardiola.

Cruyff's ideas played a significant role in moulding Guardiola into the coach he is today before he had even broken into the Barcelona first team. During the Dutchman's first week at the club, he went to watch a youth team match at the Miniestadi, a short

JUST AS ONE WORK OF ART IS INFLUENCED BY COUNTLESS OTHERS, THE INTRICATE TACTICS AND PARTICULAR STYLE OF PLAY GUARDIOLA'S WORLD-BEATING BARCELONA SIDE EXHIBITED WOULD NOT HAVE EXISTED WITHOUT THE IDEAS OF MANY FOOTBALLING PIONEERS BEFORE HIM.

distance from Camp Nou. At half-time, Cruyff instructed then youth coach Charly Rexach to relocate the right-midfielder, a young Guardiola, to pivot – and he stood out instantly.

Guardiola's interpretation of football is shaped by his experience playing in this position, and he has relayed it to others throughout his coaching career. His fascination with the role, and how important he perceives it to be, resulted in the irreplaceable Sergio Busquets' rise to success and the surprising transformation of Philipp Lahm from right-back to holding midfielder. Naturally, possession is the primary focus of the pivot role. Both retaining it and recovering it are the fundamental objectives of a holding midfielder's job – and the principles Guardiola applies throughout the clubs he has worked with significantly reflect these values. From goalkeeper to striker, the objectives remains the same: control the possession and keep on passing.

Of course, this is far from just passing the ball aimlessly. Guardiola made his dislike for 'tiki-taka' and the implications of the term obvious to Perarnau: "I loathe...all that tiki-taka. It's so much rubbish and has no purpose. You have to pass the ball with a clear intention, with the aim of making it into the opposition's goal. It's not about passing for the sake of it." And his stance on this subject

has been consistent since his days at Barça B: "I don't want you all trying to dribble like Leo Messi—pass it, pass it and pass it again," he once told his players. "Pass precisely, move well, pass again, pass, pass, and pass. I want every move to be smart, every pass accurate—that's how we make the difference from the rest of the teams, that's all I want to see."

Echoing the fundamental notions of 'Total Football' in addition to his personal values, Guardiola's characteristic style of play stems



from Jimmy Hogan's wanderings, innovative Dutch philosophy and Hungarian tactical development. Furthermore, the self-confessed "ideas thief" was directly inspired by the Dutch teachings of both Cruyff and Louis Van Gaal under whom he played. Like Cruyff he worked with a 4-3-3, sometimes modifying it into a 3-4-3, and on occasion even opting for a dominating 3-3-4 (somewhat reminiscent of the early 4-2-4). He revived and reinvented what FC Barcelona stood for. During his time as manager, the club became fashionably superior once again, exciting the world of football and contributing hugely to Vicente del Bosque's peerless Spanish national side. "It is no coincidence", commented El Flaco himself, "that Spain in 2010, with seven of Guardiola's players, became world champions".

In modern football, the name 'Guardiola' refers to more than simply the coach of Bayern Munich. As he suggested when referring to stealing ideas, he is the flag-bearer of a footballing ethos that was born out of revulsion over a century ago. Since then, the vision of attractive, effective football that Jimmy Hogan pursued has grown and transformed into a monstrous football phenomenon as a result of continuous 'stolen' ideas. Football, just like art and other countless forms of expression, would come to an absolute standstill if intellectual thievery was not commonplace. This article itself would not exist without that very act, for multiple stolen ideas have come together to form it, just like every article in The Football Pink and indeed near enough everything you could ever read, watch or create. Perhaps, it could be argued, nothing can truly be original in contemporary society, as every single idea or work is inspired by another, no matter how subtle. Football will eternally transform and grow, and Hogan's legacy will play a constant role in its progression. What exactly the future holds for our beautiful game is very difficult to predict, however, one thing is certain: the revolutionary ideas and innovations seen in tomorrow's world will be stolen from those of today.

ALEX LEONARD - @AlexLen1995

<http://thealexleonardblog.blogspot.co.uk>

Illustration by Graeme Bandeira - @GraemeBandeira

<http://altpick.com/bandy>

IX:THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOUR

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE'S RISE TO THE PINNACLE OF FRENCH FOOTBALL IN THE LATE 80S AND EARLY 90S WAS ACHIEVED WITH STAR NAMES AND GLAMOUR, ALL PROVIDED BY THE RICHES OF COLOURFUL BUSINESS TYCOON BERNARD TAPIE. UNFORTUNATELY, ALL WAS NOT AS IT SEEMED, AS ALL BLUE DAZE DESCRIBES.



For the French public, the Tour de France is a matter of national pride, and to deliver the home nation success in the three-week event is almost a guarantee of acclaim, regardless of other misdemeanours. In 1983, Bernard Tapie provided the finance and teamed up with disgruntled French hero Bernard Hinault to form the La Vie Claire cycling team named after Tapie's chain of health stores. 'The Badger' had suffered an acrimonious split from the Renault-Elf-Gitane team and in him Tapie saw a man smarting for revenge who could deliver the prestige he so desired. This would be no 'easy ride', however. Tapie demonstrated the character to not only contain Hinault's fury, but to also add the maverick American rider Greg LeMond. In 1985 the team won the Tour with Hinault, and reprised the result the year after with LeMond. Tapie's finance had created the team, but his dynamism, will to win and ability to hone disparate parts into a cohesive unit had made it triumphant. To his nation, Tapie was a hero.



Born in Paris in 1943, whilst the French capital was still under the jackboot occupation of Hitler's Third Reich, he was a working-class boy made good through enterprise and entrepreneurship, rising from a quiet family background to accumulate a multi-million franc fortune by the time he was forty. A penchant for buying ailing businesses, turning around their fortunes, before selling them on at a profit was the cornerstone of his wealth. Years later, he was to apply a similar approach to Ligue 1 club Olympique de Marseille (OM), turning a struggling club into the dominant force in French football, bringing four successive league titles and after finishing runners-up two years earlier, also delivered the Champions League title to the Stade Vélodrome in 1993. His success was not, however, limited to the sporting field and commercial arena. His energetic presence, Gallic good looks and magnetic personality also brought political success. Standing for election to the French National Assembly in 1992 as a left-wing hero of the youth, he swept to victory on a wave of *savoir-faire*. Bernard Tapie had it all.

Today, Tapie has an entirely different image; a star in his own long-running legal saga. The French newspapers label it as *L'Affaire Tapie*, as the mega-high stakes melodrama drags on apparently interminably with the judicial system seeking to resolve a morass of accusation and counter-accusation involving multi-million euro deals, deceit and deception. In the twenty-odd year journey between being lauded as a 'Zorro of Business' by the French media and adored by millions, to a position bordering on ridicule and disgrace, Tapie has tumbled through scandals, prison and bankruptcies. At one stage, he was even on the edge of a deal to acquire the Full Tilt Poker online gambling organisation before his empire collapsed like a house of cards, and now he's gone 'all in' to redeem

his losses in a case against the French state that once lauded him for his enterprise.

As with all great labyrinthine intrigues, finding a starting point can be as tricky as walking through a maze of smoke and mirrors, but the eight years that Tapie served as president of OM neatly bookended his rise and fall as nadir chased zenith like some vengeful truth determined to have its day over false witness.

In 1992 Tapie was on the crest of a personal wave of popularity. His club had become dominant in French football. He had entered the French socialist government of François Mitterrand as the minister for city affairs and had purchased the German sportswear business Adidas, supported by huge loans from the Crédit Lyonnais bank. His political career then, however, came into conflict with his commercial aspirations. Late in 1992, he was advised by then Prime Minister Pierre Bérégovoy that in order to maintain his political position he would need to dispose of some of his assets, including Adidas.

The following year he requested Crédit Lyonnais to arrange the disposal and the bank purchased Adidas back from him for a sum reported to be in the order of 315 million euros. One year later however, it sold the business on at a price in excess of 700 million euros. Some may call that good business by the bank, Tapie chose to call it fraud and sought to sue. And so began *L'Affaire Tapie* that travelled through legal victories, losses, further victories and further losses, political intrigues and other such nefarious actions as the serpentine nature of the affair continued. But that was all for the future. At the time of the disposal, however, Tapie's interests in OM were about to offer him his greatest triumph – and his fall from grace.

Bernard Tapie had taken over control at the Stade Vélodrome in April 1986, with the assistance of the then mayor of the city, Gaston Defferre. In moves that would later be echoed by the likes of Roman Abramovich at Chelsea, Sheikh Mansour at Manchester City and members of the Qatari ruling family under the Qatar Sports Investments banner in his native Paris with PSG, Tapie sought to use his fortune and prestige to build a club that would not only bring footballing glory to an impoverished city where nearly one in five were unemployed at the time, but also doubtless to build an edifice within whose reflected glory he wished to bask. He had succeeded with La Vie Claire and could do it again with OM. The list of player acquisitions to wear the famous white shirt reads like a Who's Who of the top footballing talent of the time. Alain Giresse, Jean-Pierre Papin, Didier Deschamps, Marcel Desailly and a young Eric Cantona were among the domestic stars at Marseille, whilst Germany internationals such as Karlheinz Forster, Rudi Völler and Klaus Allofs joined the throng and England's Chris Waddle also pitched up there. All were doubtlessly more attracted by the largesse of Tapie's francs than the city's famous bouillabaisse soup. With such an array of talent, there was little surprise that OM began to deliver on the investment. The league title was secured by 1989, and from there began a monopoly of Ligue 1 that would last across the following four domestic campaigns.

As with the owners of Chelsea, Manchester City and PSG, the big one - the Champions League - was really the aim of the whole investment. The title of Champions of Europe had evaded French clubs since the competition's inception in 1956. Stade de Reims were beaten finalists as Real Madrid began their hegemony of the competition in the first ever final, and lost again in the final three years later to the same opponents. France had then had to wait until 1976 when Les Verts of Saint-Etienne also came up short in the final, this time against Bayern Munich.

In 1991 however, Tapie's team of expensively assembled stars won through to the final played in Bari, Italy. Marseille had such luminaries as Waddle, Papin, Manuel Amoros and Carlos Mozer in their side, whilst opponents Red Star Belgrade fielded top Balkan stars like Robert Prosinecki, Sinisa Mihajlovic and star striker Darko Pancev. Both teams had progressed through the tournament with displays full of flair and skill. It was an eagerly anticipated final. Ironically, for a game that promised so much with the talent on the pitch, it petered out into a sterile 0-0 draw. Eventually, Yugoslav efficiency prevailed in a penalty shoot-out as France international Amoros failed to convert from 12 yards.

Tapie was distraught to have come so close to the glittering prize and then fallen short. It did not, however, diminish his desire and further investment saw OM back in the final two years later as they squared up to the Rossoneri of AC Milan at the Olympiastadion in Munich. In another game that failed to spark as expected, the French side were - on this occasion - triumphant as muscular centre back Basile Boli headed the winner two minutes before the break. Fabian Barthez became the youngest goalkeeper and Didier Deschamps the youngest captain to lift European club football's elite trophy as Olympique de Marseille became the first, and so far only, Ligue 1 team ever to ascend to the summit of the continental game.

From that high summit, there was to be a horrific fall. Whilst Tapie shed tears of joy after the game, probably shared by triumphant midfielder Jean-Jacques Eydelie, the pair would later be sharing tears of a different kind, as events that had taken place weeks before the final in Munich, found their way out into the public domain. It was something that would leave a dark stain on the white shirts of Marseille.

On 20th May, OM had triumphed 1-0 against lowly provincial club Valenciennes. It was a result that almost guaranteed Tapie's club their fifth consecutive domestic title, and one that surprised very few, although perhaps a greater margin of victory could have been expected. At the time, it was a low key result in a low-key match. Later however, it would later serve to unlock the door behind which was sheltering a web of corruption. When the story first broke that the game was the subject of allegations of match-fixing, and that trails seemed to lead through a clandestine web of intrigue back to OM's president, reactions were mixed. Supporters of the club understandably saw nothing but a plot by the Paris hierarchy, whose jealousy had been inflamed by the resurgence of pride and the thrusting ambition of the city of Marseille engendered by the success of its football club and Tapie's ambition. That the popular Tapie was being corralled into the dock of the accused - in this city of so many docks - was clearly an unjust character assassination. The reaction at the time of OM supporters' spokesman Michel Baillou was typical of the sentiment around the city. "Marseille are innocent," he declared. Questioning, "What interest would we have in bribing a small team like Valenciennes?" The answer to that would become clear later. For others, however, it was the reality of a suspicion long-held that Tapie's flamboyant lifestyle and apparent run of success hid dark secrets.

A mere three weeks after the triumph in Munich, detectives arrived at the home of Valenciennes player Christophe Robert's aunt, and proceeded to dig up the garden at the rear of her house. They were seeking a very special type of buried treasure and found it hidden in an envelope precisely where they had been told it would be. A short while earlier, Robert had reported to his club coach that Jean-Jacques Eydelie the Marseille midfielder, along with the club's general manager Jean-Pierre Bernes, had offered him and teammates Jacques Glassmann and Jorge Burruchaga money, not only

to ensure that OM won the game, but also that the Valenciennes players would hold back in any tackles to ensure none of Tapie's stars were injured ahead of the Munich final. The bribe reportedly amounted to some 250,000 francs - equivalent to approximately £30,000 at the time.

Some may question why Eydelie would allow himself to become embroiled in such a risky enterprise. For Bernes, there may have been little choice as he owed his patronage to Tapie, but for a footballer to risk his career seemed foolhardy. It was later reported that Eydelie's wife told detectives that he had done so in order to ensure he was selected for the final in Munich. Whether that story was true is unclear, but if so, it adds a further depressing twist to the whole episode.

After discovering the money, and particularly the evidence that the envelope itself presented, detectives then raided the offices of OM paying particular attention to Bernes' office. They apparently found further quantities of the same brand of envelope in the office. As it was a relatively unusual type, it added further weight to the case. Whilst this was going on, the players and coaching staff were away on a pre-season training camp. Arriving back, they were met by the waiting police and a number were placed under arrest.

***AND SO BEGAN
L'AFFAIRE TAPIE THAT
TRAVELLED THROUGH
LEGAL VICTORIES,
LOSSES, FURTHER
VICTORIES AND
FURTHER LOSSES,
POLITICAL INTRIGUES
AND OTHER SUCH
NEFARIOUS ACTIONS
AS THE SERPENTINE
NATURE OF THE AFFAIR
CONTINUED.***

Eydelie and Bernes were charged, but for a while the investigation stalled as although the evidence was compelling, it was purely circumstantial and nothing definitively led to Tapie himself. After a couple of weeks of maintaining strenuous denials, Eydelie eventually cracked and wrote to the investigating judge Bernard Befy requesting a meeting. Befy duly attended and after a meeting lasting most of the day, Eydelie confessed that he had paid the bribe. The public prosecutor in the case, Eric de Montgolfier, knew the dam was broken and it was now likely that a torrent of truth would sweep through the breach. "It's a decisive step," he declared at the time.

And so it proved. The web of corruption was exposed and as each man sought to minimise his punishment, the trail led higher and higher until there was only one place for it to end. Tapie was compromised and was to join his former employees as guests of the French legal system in his first, but not only period in prison. As time went on, further allegations of match-fixing – or attempts to do so – were reported. Although the accusation was later withdrawn, the coach of CSKA Moscow claimed that OM officials had attempted to bribe a number of his players ahead of a Champions League game the previous season. Despite the withdrawal, it seems a strange scenario to have concocted such a story with absolutely nothing to gain.

OM were relegated to the second division as punishment, where they would remain for two years before regaining promotion to Ligue 1. Perhaps strangely, they were allowed to retain the Champions League title. Was the Russian coach leaned on to withdraw his accusation so that UEFA could keep their hands clean and their competition above the morass of dirt washing around the gutters of Marseille and domestic French football? There's no evidence that I can find to suggest that was the case, but there may well have been suspicions.

One of the people close to the implications of the affair, who clearly believed that the Valenciennes affair was not an isolated incident, was Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger. At the time, the Frenchman was manager of Monaco and he clearly identifies himself and his club as victims of deceit. During the early nineties, Monaco twice finished runners-up to Tapie's Marseille in Ligue 1. It seems that Wenger's understandable anger stems from a belief that any institutionalised corruption by Tapie during that period clearly denied Monaco titles that should – and would – have been theirs without such underhand dealings.

In articles from *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph* back in 2013, Wenger portrays how the situation affected him, and relates that, "It was the most difficult period of my life." Going on to add that, "When you're in a job like mine, you worry about every detail. But then to go to work and know that it is all useless is a disaster."

Although it's difficult to envisage someone like Wenger falling into a pit of ennui, there's an undeniable logic at work here if, as seems the case, there was a strong belief that no matter how good a job he, his club and his players did, they were always going to be cheated out of their prize by corrupt practices. Such an attitude illustrates a conviction that Tapie's wealth was not only being used to accumulate the best talent available, but not sated by that, he sought further assurances for success by also buying-off the opposition. It seems that Wenger's concerns were clearly not restricted to a single game between OM and Valenciennes.

In the *Guardian* and *Telegraph* articles, Wenger explains how there were too many results that didn't seem right and some games seemed to lack any competitive edge where, given the circumstances of the clubs involved, that simply shouldn't have been the case. It

also seems clear that he was not the only person involved in French football that had similar concerns. "There were little incidents added one to the other, in the end there is no coincidence," Wenger recalled. "[But] it's very difficult to prove. You hear rumours, but after that you cannot come out in the press and say this game was not regular. You must prove what you say and to come out is different from knowing something. Feeling that it is true and then afterwards coming out publicly and saying, 'Look, I can prove it' can be very difficult." The tone of the Arsenal manager's words betray both bitterness and the feeling of apparent helplessness at having to compete on a playing field that wasn't level at all. It was crooked, in more ways than one.

For all Arsenal fans may complain of Wenger's intransigence on certain matters, there is no doubting his principles. The Valenciennes coach at the time of the scandal was the Bosnian Croat, and former Yugoslavia international, Boro Primorac. It was Primorac who compelled his players to go to the authorities about the bribe. It was the event that kicked open the door to the investigation. Later, Primorac was to give evidence as a prominent witness as the legal proceedings progressed.

As is often the case in such matters, however, instead of being lauded for his honesty, Primorac was ostracised by the French football establishment as it sought to wash itself clean of the whole affair. Wenger, perhaps grateful to the Bosnian for at last exposing the affair, took the honourable Primorac with him, first to Grampias Eight in Japan, and then on to Arsenal. "He did very well," explained Wenger, perhaps a little rueful of his country's attitude to the man who blew the whistle. "Because it's not always the fact that you stand up against it, it's the consequences of it after." He then added a hint that perhaps, even now, only part of the full story is known. "I can tell you that story one day and you will be surprised. But I always felt in the end it would come clean again. At least I can look back and think I behaved properly."

It often seems that it is a dominant player that succumbs to the temptation of giving themselves an even sharper edge of advantage. The players that Tapie had assembled at the Stade Vélodrome almost certainly constituted the most complete squad in French domestic football at the time. Arsene Wenger was an outstanding manager, and his Monaco team were certainly talented. In any 'straight' game between the two, most pundits would surely have expected OM to come out on top more often than not, and across a season not only the talent of its stars, but also the depth of the squad would probably have held sway. The question then arises as to why risk everything by 'buying' an edge.

The answer is difficult to establish with any certainty. The feeling at the time, at least outside of the port city of Marseille, seems to have been that it was just the way Tapie did business. He had to win. Success in the Tour de France had built his prestige and reputation. Failure simply was not an option to be contemplated. There's little indication to say how long it will be before L'Affaire Tapie is finally concluded, but should the flamboyant former millionaire, politician, entrepreneur, Tour de France team owner, football club owner, financier, prisoner and tumbled personality ever take to the witness box, his testimony will certainly be considered by some as simply offering false witness. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

ALL BLUE DAZE - @All_Blue_Daze

<http://allbluedaze.com>

Illustration by Oxbox74 - @AnOxInTheBox

<https://www.behance.net/AnOxInTheBox>

X: THOU SHALT NOT COVET

CHRIS CLARK RECALLS THE MULTI-MILLIONAIRE SCOUNDREL WHO COULDN'T HELP HIMSELF LOOKING ENVIOSLY AT WHAT SOMEONE ELSE HAD AND WHO WOULD DO HIS UTMOST TO HAVE IT FOR HIMSELF.



Two months in 1983 were like no other in history for local rivals Oxford United and Reading. Two clubs with a rich history and with their own identity, Oxford's owner Robert Maxwell wanted to take the pair down one of football's most controversial paths and merge them together to create a new, contrived entity - Thames Valley Royals.

Czechoslovakian-born Maxwell (real name Jan Ludvik Hyman Binyamin Hoch), colourful media mogul and former Member of Parliament for Buckingham had saved Oxford United from bankruptcy in 1982 and now chaired the club. As well as owning Oxford, he also held 19% worth of shares in Reading who, under their chairman Frank Waller, were experiencing financial difficulties at the time.

On April 16th 1983, about a month before the end of the 1982/1983 season, Maxwell announced to the BBC that he was on the verge of taking a controlling interest in the Elm Park club prior to amalgamating the two clubs, "I am proposing to merge the club with Reading. If we in the Thames Valley are to retain a league club, we've to unite Reading and Oxford. Everything in the world that cannot pay its way must go the way of merger to combine into stronger units". As this news was being relayed by David Coleman on that Saturday afternoon on Grandstand, the Oxford United players and management were preparing for a game at Doncaster Rovers. Jim Smith, the incumbent manager who was guiding Oxford through the Football League at the time via successive promotions, was understandably concerned about his future. "Your first thought is 'Am I going to have a job?'. But that was soon guaranteed by Mr. Maxwell." Smith was assured he was going to be the manager of the newly formed Thames Valley Royals, but what about the players? Unlike modern football a squad of 40 plus players was unheard in the 1980s, and several players were fearing for their future. Smith, to appease his players before the Doncaster game, told them the only reason the merger was taking place was so that they could have the highly rated Reading forward Kerry Dixon on their side and informed him that all their places in the side were safe.

Whilst Smith was placating his players, Maxwell issued a statement announcing that Oxford United were poised to acquire Reading by purchasing all of that club's issued share capital, comprising 73,000 shares at £3 per share (a total cost of £219,000) and that Frank Waller and a group of Reading board directors, holding a majority of the shares in Reading F.C. had "irrevocably accepted" the offer. The two clubs would continue separately for the last few weeks of the 1982/83 campaign, and Thames Valley Royals would begin play at the start of the 1983-84 Football League season. Maxwell claimed to have support in principle for the move from the Football League. The ex-Army captain also stated that the combined team would ultimately be based in a new stadium, built somewhere between Oxford and Reading (the two are roughly 25 miles apart) and that in the meantime the club would alternate home games between the two old grounds, Manor Ground in Oxford and Elm Park in Reading.

Both sets of fans were understandably aggrieved. There had been no hint or prior warning that anything of this magnitude would occur. Oxford entertained Wigan Athletic a week after Maxwell's announcement; the kick off was delayed as approximately 2,000 supporters staged a sit-in protest both on the centre circle and around the ground as numerous banners proclaiming Maxwell to be a "Judas" could be seen draped from various parts of the stands.

Maxwell attended the game, watching on as usual from his place in the director's box, utterly determined not to shy away from confrontation with the home supporters. In his mind he was correct. Just a few days later he spoke to supporters again, this time during a phone-in on local radio. Despite the opposition, Maxwell was adamant his plan must go

ahead. "If they want to become supporters of someone else, they're entirely welcome" he said "If the deal does not go through, both Reading and Oxford will be dead before the beginning of the next season. Nothing short of the end of the earth will prevent this from going through."

Whilst many Oxford supporters acknowledged that Maxwell had been instrumental in saving the club the previous year, most perceived merging with another club as tantamount to killing both Oxford United and professional football in the city. A spokesman for Oxford United Supporters Club at the time called the idea "crazy and unworkable". Ex-Oxford manager, and then current Manchester United manager Ron Atkinson also expressed his concerns with Maxwell's plan - "Mr. Maxwell obviously believes if you add 6,000 Oxford fans to 6,000 Reading fans you'll get 12,000 fans at a new club. You won't".

Reading supporters were also incredulous at Maxwell's plan, as both sides had a strong rivalry with each other. Mike Habbits, then chairman of the Reading Supporters club, said "Our fans can't stand Oxford fans and I can't see them travelling to Oxford to watch the new team." Whilst Reading fans wouldn't travel to Oxford to see the Thames Valley Royals play, an Oxford fan writing into the Oxford Mail went one stage further, "I will not follow Thames Valley Royals, or whatever their name is, if they played at the end of my street!"

Despite overwhelming objections from their own supporters, Oxford's board of directors unanimously supported Maxwell's proposed merger at a board meeting, their only reservation was regarding the name; they preferred Thames Valley United. Their arrogance was all too apparent, that when they were so willing to fly in the face of public opinion, their only reservation was a trivial detail in the plan.

The chairman of the Football League Jack Dunnett had also been swayed by Maxwell's plans as he called the proposed merger "a bold and imaginative move." Despite the uproar consuming both sets of supporters Maxwell was bulldozing this deal through as quick as he could, as he now entered talks with Oxford City council over proposed local stadium sites. Maxwell favoured a site in the northern suburb of Marston but could not get council permission to buy the land. The mayor of Didcot, a small town about halfway between Oxford and Reading, suggested that Thames Valley Royals could build a ground there, however this was met with resistance from the locals in Didcot who were concerned that hooliganism would breakout in the town when two previously opposing sets of football fans were supposedly going to support the same team.

Meanwhile at Reading, plans were afoot to derail the merger and key architect behind this was ex-Reading player Roger Smees - "I was building my own business and my only respite was to go down to Elm Park, watch some terrible football, moan about it and go home having had a thoroughly good afternoon. I did actually read the accounts and noticed they had some shares that had been authorised in annual general meetings that had been unissued. Then there was suddenly this announcement that an irrevocable agreement had been reached between Maxwell and the directors of Reading Football Club. I was probably the only person in the world who at that point thought: 'That's unusual. A year ago they (the directors of Reading) didn't have a majority, so how on earth have they issued these shares to themselves while Reading was a public company?' That would be against the law."

Roger Smees then contacted Roy Tranter, a director who opposed the merger, and Tranter's legal team got to work.

Frank Waller, the Reading chairman, and Robert Maxwell emerged from a press conference they had called to officially announce the merger on April 22nd, and they received an unexpected surprise from Roy Tranter's legal team. Tranter's solicitors handed Waller a High Court injunction forbidding the sale of the unissued shares.

Maxwell, behaving with his characteristic belligerence, called the

MAXWELL ATTENDED THE GAME, WATCHING ON AS USUAL FROM HIS PLACE IN THE DIRECTOR'S BOX, UTTERLY DETERMINED NOT TO SHY AWAY FROM CONFRONTATION WITH THE HOME SUPPORTERS. IN HIS MIND HE WAS CORRECT.

matter "a side show" and made a fresh bid to all the Reading shareholders, and on May 1st, Maxwell informed the press that he and his supporters at Reading controlled 40% of the shares. On the same day, Oxford and Reading met at Manor Ground in what many were calling "the last Thames Valley Derby". Both sets of fans held protests before and after the match, a match which Reading won 2-1. However, there was a bigger match to be played at the High Court a few days later.

On May 3rd, the judge Mr. Justice Harman, sided with Tranter and Smee and handed down a new injunction forbidding trading in Reading stock until June 13th 1983. Following a Reading board meeting on May 12th, Waller resigned his position as chairman and returned the disputed unissued shares to the club. Meanwhile on the pitch, Reading were relegated to what was then the Fourth Division, but the supporters were still jubilant as banners filled Elm Park Stadium, kindly informing Robert Maxwell just where he could go.

At an extraordinary meeting in July 1983, matters came to a head, in which a vote was taken to decide between Maxwell's takeover bid and a rival offer from Roger Smee, supported by Roy Tranter. Smee's offer won the vote and he took over as chairman of Reading, putting an end to the planned merger.

Maxwell reluctantly dropped his merger plans, but still retained a 19% share in Reading F.C.

This left him little alternative (for the time being at least) to concentrate his efforts fully on Oxford United. Ironically, the defeat of his personal merger crusade kick-started Oxford's greatest ever period. Under the management of Jim Smith, the club gained successive promotions and played in the top flight for the first time in their history in 1985/1986. That season, however, team affairs would not be presided over by Smith; he had a falling out with Maxwell during contract negotiations. Smith wanted £50,000 a year to manage the club while Maxwell only

offered £45,000. The chairman remained unrepentant stating, "If he wants to go, he can go". The players were devastated, "Robert Maxwell should have given Jim anything he wanted to keep him at the club because of what he achieved", said key man Les Phillips.

Oxford went on to win the Milk Cup (League Cup) at the end of the 1985/1986 season under new manager Maurice Evans, yet this was not enough to quench Maxwell's thirst for more power and prestige. In 1987, he gained ownership of Derby County and became the club's chairman, installing his son Kevin as his replacement at the Manor Ground. Maxwell may have moved on to the East Midlands but everyone knew exactly who continued to pull the strings at Oxford.

Later on that year, Maxwell attempted another bold manoeuvre, this time trying to buy Watford from Elton John. This prompted the Football League to constitute new regulations preventing the major shareholder of any member club from owning more than 2% of another league team. While Maxwell was able to keep his stakes in Derby, Oxford and Reading under a grandfather clause, the new rules prevented him from adding Watford to his football empire. Maxwell had little choice but to grudgingly concede.

Whilst at Derby, Maxwell continued to court controversy as Arthur Cox got the Rams promoted to the First Division in 1987. Maxwell decided this was now the time to share in the glory. He announced the high profile signing of England goalkeeping legend Peter Shilton for £1million from Southampton. In actual fact only £100,000 went to Southampton, the rest was covered by salary and incentives over a three year contract – but it needed Derby to win everything in sight to reach the £1million mark. It was typical Maxwell spin. Mark Wright joined the club for £760,000 a month later, Derby had never known anything like it. Maxwell, however, set two provisions for his time in charge at Derby – the maintenance of impeccable behaviour at the Baseball Ground and average home attendances of more than 20,000.

Maxwell spent money on the basis that the attendances were over 20,000 yet they were never close. Nevertheless, Dean Saunders was brought in for £1million in 1988. Johan Cruyff was even sounded out about taking the role of technical director. With debts rising up to £2million by 1990, and with the last home game's attendance against Wimbledon a paltry 12,469 Maxwell announced Derby County were up for sale.

Incredibly, he then turned his attention to Tottenham Hotspur in early 1991, so keen was he to move up the football food chain. It was a daring play he never got the opportunity to complete, although he did provide Spurs' chairman Irving Scholar with a £1million loan which enabled the club to meet the final instalment on its payments to Barcelona for star striker, Gary Lineker.

Maxwell died on November 5th 1991 after apparently falling off his yacht off the Canary Islands. His naked body was found floating in the Atlantic Ocean, the exact circumstances surrounding his death unknown. This sent his creditors into panic mode; they began calling in the Mirror Group's vast loans. Unfortunately, the cupboard was bare. Maxwell had robbed the company's pension scheme to the tune of millions of pounds in order to shore up the group's ailing share value.

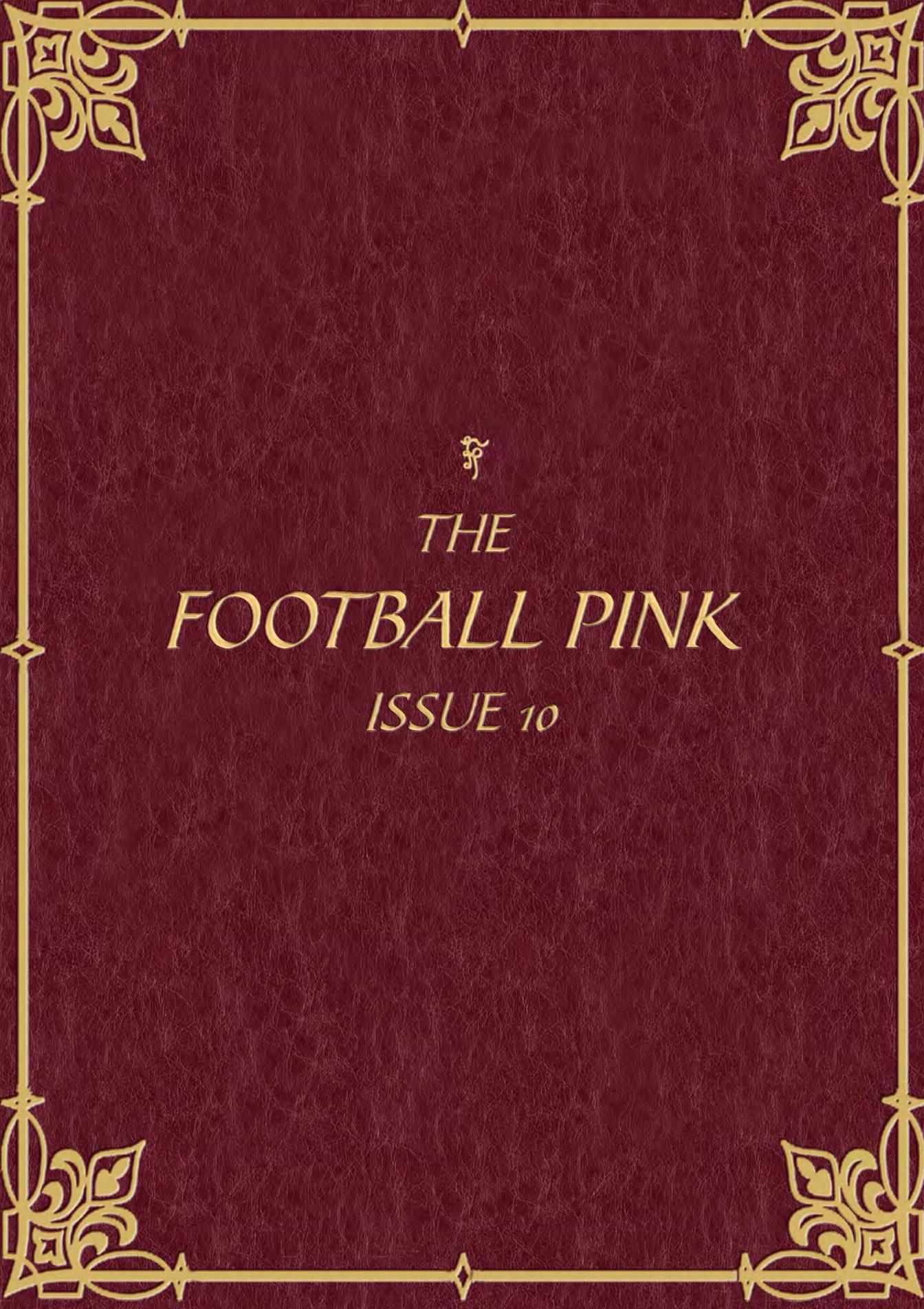
Robert Maxwell – who rose from impoverished eastern European Jewish roots to wealthy western media magnate - had a profound impact on every business he was involved in during his tumultuous career, and none more so than in those few months of 1983 when he rocked Oxford and Reading fans' worlds.

CHRIS CLARK - @Chrisclark1975

<http://christopherclarkspots.blogspot.co.uk>

Illustration by Graeme Badeira - @GraemeBadeira

<http://altpick.com/bandy>



⌘

THE
FOOTBALL PINK
ISSUE 10