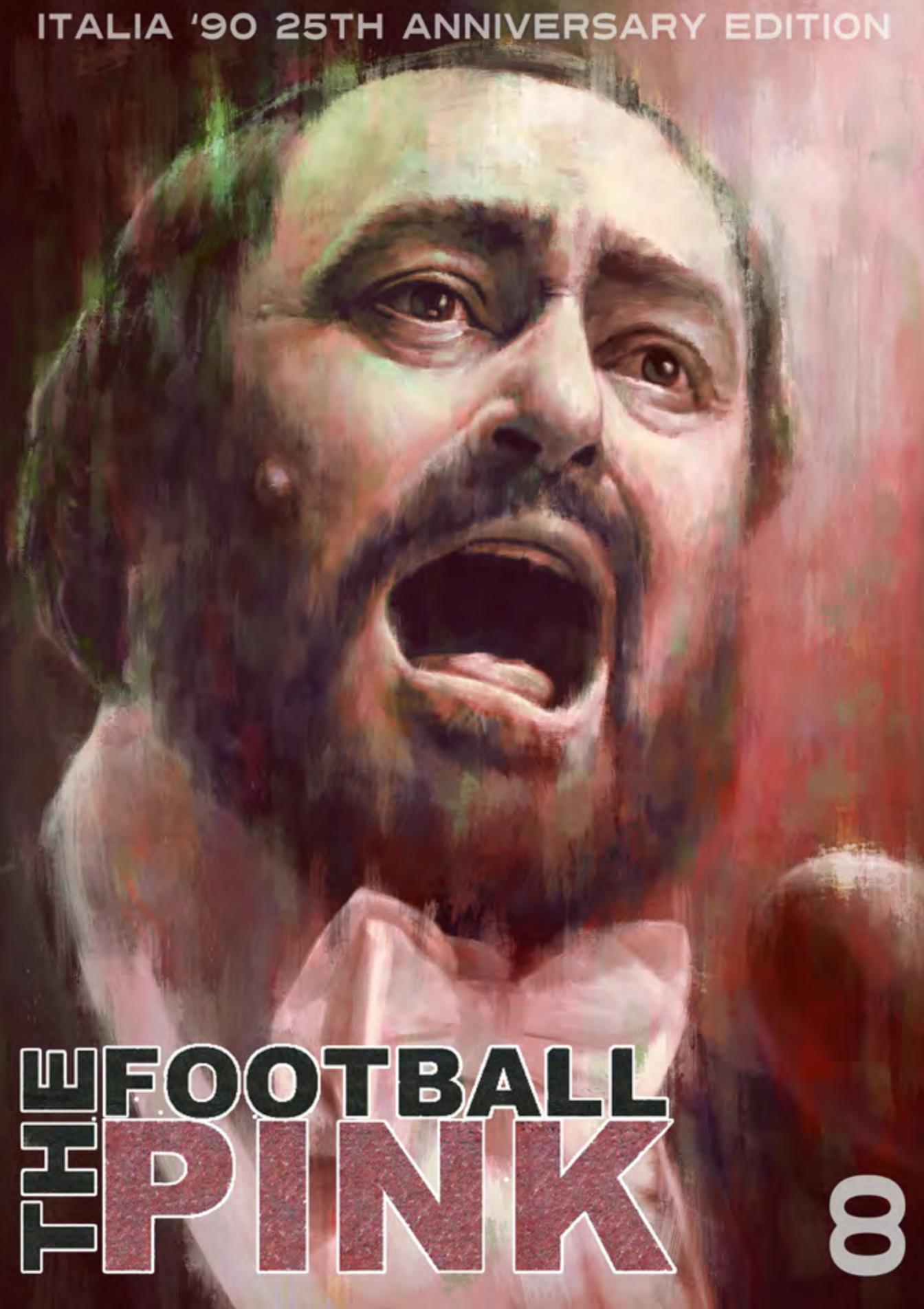


ITALIA '90 25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



WE FOOTBALL
THE PINK

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EDITORIAL/CONTENTS

In the summer of 1990 I was about to turn 14-years-old. It's a funny age; no longer a child, not yet a young adult. Too old for hide and seek, too young for girls and drinking cider on the swings. Despite this – or perhaps partly because of it – that summer was possibly the most exciting time in my life, and at the very heart of that was the World Cup held in Italy.

I know I'm not the only one who looks back at that tournament and that time with great fondness. For some it was the

music they were listening to – we touch briefly on some of it in this issue – others the situation they found themselves in; a particular job, girlfriend, holiday, their social life or the joy of Thatcher eventually being turned on and ousted by her erstwhile whipping boys. Whatever your reason for the nostalgic, rose-tinted retrospect, surely Italia '90 – with all its drama, controversy, heroes and heartbreak – remains pivotal to those feelings.

People like me reminisce favourably about that World Cup – probably due to an English viewpoint and the rollercoaster ride our national side compelled us to endure during that month of football. In reality, it was potentially the poorest renewal of the competition in living memory with sterile, overly-tactical matches, overreliance on cynicism and gamesmanship, and a record low goals per game

ratio that still stands a quarter of a century on. All of which were in stark contrast to last year's excitement in Brazil.

However, there were plenty of other reasons why Italia '90 has remained embedded in the conscious of so many people and in popular culture across the globe. Of course, there are the personal connections I eluded to earlier, but there are so many stories to tell and so many amazing characters that emerged from the heat of battle that we simply don't have the space in this publication to relive them all; but we're giving it our very best go!

From the moment Diego Maradona's reigning champions were scythed down by supposed no-hopers Cameroon in the San Siro to West Germany's ultimate and deserved triumph exactly a month later, we're going back to a somewhat simpler time before the jackboots of image and corporate finance really began to forge their imprints all over football and the sport's greatest festival.

You may either be too young or not even have been born when Italia '90 happened but you've no doubt heard of its legend and the impact it had – in the same way I was regaled with tales of the World Cup in 1970 before I was alive – so whether you were around or not, feast on this specially dedicated issue of The Football Pink. It may have been 25 years ago, but as you'll appreciate from what you're about to read, Italia '90 was far from 'just' a World Cup.



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VINCERÒ!

VERY FEW THINGS EVOKE MEMORIES OF THE SUMMER OF 1990 LIKE THE MAJESTIC TONE OF A LEGENDARY ITALIAN OPERA STAR. MARK GODFREY LOOKS AT HOW NESSUN DORMA BECAME THE SIGNATURE TUNE OF ITALIA '90.

MARK GODFREY - @TheFootballPink <http://footballpink.net>

A

n angelic choir fades in with a sound seemingly from on high, "Il nome suo nessun saprà, E noi dovrem, ahimè, morir, morir!" followed by Luciano Pavarotti's Calaf, the epitome of operatic power and control; building, soaring to its glorious crescendo of brass and tenor;

"Dilegua, o notte! Tramontate, stelle! Tramontate, stelle! All'alba vincerò! Vincerò! Vincerò!"

Played out to a visual backdrop of golden-hued renaissance art, an interpretive dance representation of Silvio Gazzaniga's sculpted masterpiece and a montage of footballing greats viewed through the slow-motion, frosted glass of memory, Nessun Dorma provided the unlikely, yet instantly recognisable signature to the BBC's coverage of the FIFA World Cup of 1990.

The aria forms part of the final act of Turandot by Italian composer Giacomo Puccini. The central male character, Calaf, falls madly in love with the opera's beautiful, but cold-hearted eponymous princess who insists that any potential suitor correctly answers three riddles she poses if they wish to make her his bride. Failure on his part to do so brings about an ignominious end; beheading.

Calaf passes these tests but Princess Turandot reneges on the agreement and refuses to marry him. Undeterred, Calaf – his identity as yet unknown to her – gives Turandot an ultimatum; discover his name by dawn and she can execute him, otherwise she must go through with the marriage. Cruelly, she decrees to her subjects "Nessun dorma" – "None shall sleep" that night until one of them finds out what she wants to know, and should they fail, they'll all be put to death.

As the final act opens in the moonlit palace gardens, the aria begins, culminating with Calaf taunting the absent Turandot, certain that he will be victorious;

"Dilegua, o notte! Tramontate, stelle! Tramontate, stelle! All'alba vincerò! Vincerò! Vincerò!" – "Vanish, o night! Fade, you stars! Fade, you stars! At dawn, I will win! I will win! I will win!"

Puccini died in Brussels on November 24th, 1924 as a consequence of the ravaging treatment he had been receiving for throat cancer leaving Turandot unfinished at the point in the story where Calaf takes the resistant princess in his arms and kisses her. Eventually, he tells her his name, sparing her subjects and putting his own fate in her hands. Declaring that she had both hated and loved him, she relents and announces to the jubilant crowd of onlookers that they are finally lovers. The opera was completed in 1926 by Franco Alfano, although his additions are regularly altered or edited out completely in the majority of productions.

The decision by the BBC to use Pavarotti's 1972 recording

of Nessun Dorma as the opening theme for their month-long TV coverage was no doubt risky, but potentially inspired. Previous efforts by both the national broadcaster and its rival commercial station ITV were hit and miss. The Beeb's own 1986 effort for Mexico – "Aztec Lightning" by Heads - while edgy in a synth-inspired mid-80s American cop show kind of way, failed to catch the public imagination as much as ITV's more poppy "Aztec Gold" by Silsoe; a tune so infused with the occasional clatter of castanets and sunshine it wouldn't be out of place in an advert for Calippo ice-cream. Despite its apparent fleeting, throwaway appeal, Aztec Gold remained in active service by ITV for its coverage of the European Championships of 1988 and its regular football magazine show "Saint and Greavsie" until 1991.



ITALIA '90 WAS GOING TO BE A BIG DEAL FOR THE BROADCASTERS. CAREERS WOULD BE MADE OR DASHED ON THE SCALE AND DELIVERY OF THE PRODUCTION



Going back even further, West End-composer-luvvie Andrew Lloyd-Webber was commissioned by the BBC to pen the themes for the 1982 and 1978 World Cup opening titles. For Spain in '82, the rather peculiar choice of the already-written "Jellicle Ball" – performed by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra – from his musical CATS was selected; upbeat and occasionally dramatic, its inclusion served as a less-than-discreet plug for Lloyd-Webber's new production which had been running in London for about a year and had just opened on Broadway in New York.

Argentina '78 was 'graced' by an original Lloyd-Webber track, "Argentine Melody" by San Jose featuring the aptly-named Rod Argent (whose band, Argent, recorded the original version of "God Gave Rock And Roll To You" – a tune made more popular by KISS and the soundtrack to the 1991 movie Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey). It was the type of limp, faux-Latin electro-waltz that one could possibly have been subjected to in any Spanish hotel lift over the last three decades. Still, with the negative ratings impact caused by England's non-qualification, the BBC probably didn't give a shit – comparatively speaking.

Italia '90 was going to be a big deal for the broadcasters. Careers would be made or dashed on the scale and delivery of the production, so any innovation or 'out-of-the-box' thinking as TV executives might call it, could help tip the balance in the BBC/ITV match-up. Credit for the credits, and more specifically the use of an operatic theme tune that wasn't yet embedded in the nation's conscious in the same way as Rossini's Largo al Factotum or Di Capua's O Sole Mio, seems to be due to a committee from the BBC sports department with three individuals particularly instrumental.

In 1989, Philip Bernie – now the Head of TV Sport at the BBC – was a producer working on a short 30-minute film about Italy's preparations for hosting the tournament. Having heard Nessun Dorma played on BBC Radio 4's Desert Island Discs – the show where celebrity 'castaways' choose eight records, a book and a luxury item to take with them to a mythical desert island – Bernie thought it would be an appropriate accompanying piece of music for his documentary. Although that particular plan was shelved, he resurrected the idea of using Pavarotti's stunning performance to overlay video inserts he intended to use during coverage of the World Cup Finals draw in December 1989.

In particular, Bernie recognised the audio-visual harmony of Nessun Dorma's dramatic finale, the word 'Vincerò!' – 'I will win!' – belted out thrice fold in an ever-heightening sense of passion, mixed with the iconic footage of open-mouthed Italian midfielder Marco Tardelli overcome with euphoria when celebrating his goal in the 1982 World Cup Final. This simple connection of sound and vision proved to be a moment of genius.

Bernie was appointed assistant editor of TV Sport at the BBC

a few months later and was charged with the task of creating the opening titles for the World Cup itself, so after the success of Nessun Dorma during the draw, the final decision on its inclusion rested with Bernie's immediate superior – senior editor Brian Barwick.

According to Bernie, Barwick – who went on to become chief executive of the Football Association from 2005 to 2008 – was keen to use a piece of Pavarotti's work, and specifically, Nessun Dorma. At a critical preparatory production meeting, it was the ardent backing from the BBC's face of televised sport – legendary presenter Des Lynam – that resulted in Puccini's aria being given the green light. Bernie created the opening sequence, keeping the climactic Tardelli/ Vincerò ending.

Initially, Pavarotti's record company Decca were reluctant for the track to be used by the BBC. It's possible they feared a potentially detrimental link between the working-class, uncouth world of football – with all its troubles surrounding hooliganism – and the sophisticated, elitist world of opera. Perhaps they held the myopic belief that by allowing the popularisation of the tune this would over-commercialise, and thus de-gentrify Pavarotti and the wider operatic community. Either way, they made what turned out to be the correct decision and agreed to the BBC's request. Far from damaging the image of opera or, of course, their artist, the affection with which Nessun Dorma was received across all sections of British society and further – on the back of the Italia '90 World Cup – enhanced its appeal beyond their wildest dreams. Opera leapt, kicking and trilling, into the mainstream, and with it came ample new revenue.

And what of Pavarotti himself? Although by 1990 he was a leading figure in operatic circles and synonymous with the genre, the new found level of fame brought about by Nessun Dorma's eagerly-awaited daily airing on the BBC propelled him to megastar status; his name elevated alongside any popular music contemporary, political statesperson, movie star or sporting legend. Prompted by its widespread positive reception on World Cup Grandstand, Nessun Dorma was released by Decca as a single and went to number 2 in the UK pop charts. Pavarotti went stratospheric.

On July 7th 1990 – the eve of the World Cup final between West Germany and Argentina – at Rome's ancient Baths of Caracalla, Pavarotti performed the first of the 'Three Tenors' concerts with fellow opera music titans Plácido Domingo and José Carreras. Zubin Mehta conducted. The recording of this memorable televised performance went on to become the biggest selling classical album of all time (since surpassed), shifting around 6 million copies to date. It also won a Grammy Award in 1991 for Best Classical Vocal Performance. Nessun Dorma became integral to the show with all three singers taking it in turns to bellow different sections of the lyrics into Rome's warm evening air; the third and final "Vincerò!" roared in supreme harmonious unison. In that instant, it was no longer just Britain and the BBC who appreciated this cultural and sporting crossover hit, but the whole world.

Fast forward 25 years and even for those who weren't around to witness either that World Cup or the BBC's wonderfully crafted opening title sequence, Nessun Dorma almost is Italia '90, encapsulated in two minutes and fifty-five seconds of Italian operatic splendour. Riding on the wave of national pride created by England's run to the semi-finals, it could also be argued that Pavarotti and Puccini – with significant help from Philip Bernie and the BBC – not only catapulted the stuffy, closed-off world of opera and classical music into the public domain, but also aided in the initial rebirth of our under-fire national game – weary and battered from the previous decade of decline, decay and tragedy – two years before Sky and the Premier League claimed that credit entirely for themselves.

BEFORE IT STARTED

DIFFERENT TIMES, DIFFERENT GAME. AND AFTERWARDS, EVERYTHING WOULD BE DIFFERENT. MARTIN CLOAKE REMEMBERS WHAT THAT SPECIAL SUMMER OF 1990 MEANT TO HIM.

MARTIN CLOAKE - @MartinCloake <http://www.martincloake.com/>

Before It Started... well, it's very hard to remember what it was like before Italia '90 started. Because when it was over, everything had changed. Everything. We didn't realise how much. You never do. When you live through a time that changes everything you never realise. It's not like a TV series or a film where the visual devices and the choice of music signal the significance of the events as they unfold. All we had when it was all over was a flat feeling, emotional exhaustion after England had taken us on a once-in-a-lifetime ride but ballsed it up in the end. For a few days at least. Then we just got on with life, as we did in those days when football was important but not all-consuming. Italia '90 was done. There was a summer to finish. Another season would start soon enough. We didn't realise what was around the corner.

As I reached back through the memories to try and order my thoughts before writing this piece, I realised how difficult it was to call up and rewind any genuine memories of what it was like Before It Started. Italia '90, more so than Sky's entrance to English football in 1992, is recognised as the start of when football changed and so the narrative of what has happened since has been shaped most by those who have benefitted most from football's transformation. Lots has been written about that transformation, in fact so much attention has been paid to how the game has changed it is very hard to remember exactly what it changed from.

There is, of course, a packaged version of what football was like Before It Started, but that's all too often a combination of tall terrace war stories and elaborate theories about trainers and kagouls – all the better to flog a bit of retro schmutter off the back of. I remember it differently.

Before It Started, football was a thing some of us had. And we valued it because not everyone had it, not everyone got it. If I had a pound for every time I've read that, before Italia '90 and Sky came along to make football respectable it was a slum game played in slum stadiums and watched by slum people, I'd have almost enough to pay for a modern season ticket. Yes, football was looked down upon by many and, yes, the room did tend to go a bit quiet in some situations if you said you actually went to games. But quite a few of us liked it, quite a few of us got it. We just didn't feel the need to demonstrate how footballistically footballly we were at every opportunity.

The World Cup was our treat – a festival of football, the highest level at which the game could be played. At a time when there was some concern that certain clubs were prepared to spend as much as £5million – £5million! – on a single player, the World Cup was also a competition in the truest sense of the word – played between teams who could only choose players who were nationals of the country the national team represented. (And at the time, there was no argument about whether this in itself was some kind of

xenophobic affront to the free movement of labour, it just seemed pretty straightforward.)

As the tournament approached, those of us who got it began to savour what was to come and to plan how we'd watch the tournament. And we did so with that sense of superior pleasure that comes from knowing you're about to experience something that not everyone understands. It's a bit like seeing a band live a few times before the first album comes out and ruins things by making them popular – a comparison I realise dates me and makes things no clearer for readers under the age of 30.

At the time, the England team had not become a symbol of everything that was wrong with football. England fans were, but not the England team. So most of us wanted to see our players in the team, and wanted England to do well. And we furrowed our brows at the stories of impending apocalypse that began to appear more regularly in the news pages as the media hyped up the prospect of trouble. One thing that has hardly changed at all is the inability of much of the media to understand that all football fans are not the same.

There was some debate over whether Bobby Robson, this in the days before he had been elevated to the status of everyone's favourite football uncle, was using the right players in the right way, a debate taken up with extra verve by our little group of Spurs fans who'd never quite forgiven Robson for not building a team around the genius that was Glenn Hoddle. Robson had also incurred the ire of the press and many fans by letting it be known he'd be leaving the post he'd held for eight years to go and manage PSV Eindhoven. He was hammered by the football press, and lurid stories about his private life were also printed.

For us, there was a different mood in the air. It was the time of the Second Summer of Love, when football and music and style had briefly morphed into a thing that meant the mood on the terraces was changing. The soundtrack of the summer was infused with an infectious mix of Happy Mondays, 808 State, Technotronic, Soul II Soul, Orbital and the Stone Roses and there was an inkling of what was to come as clothing brands such as Duffer began to issue football-retro-influenced clobber and bands such as St Etienne, Eusebio and – ahem – Bocca Juniors tapped into the football and fashion crossover.

Football may have been a bit more loved up than it had been, but it was also still troubled. Towards the end of the previous season, 96 Liverpool fans had died at Hillsborough. It was a reminder – to those of us who knew and to those who cared to listen – of much that was still wrong with the way fans were treated. In many ways, Hillsborough fuelled the solidarity of those of us that got it – it was another example of how others didn't get it.

All of those factors came together for the group of us that ended up watching much of the tournament together at a time when we were in our mid-twenties – just the right age to have a bit of cash, not too many responsibilities and be able to indulge ourselves. The core of the gatherings was our little group of Spurs fans, friends who

had met through college, fanzines and the independent supporters movement, and that group was augmented by boyfriends, girlfriends, workmates and friends – just a collection of people who found ourselves in the same orbit at an extraordinary time.

The first sign that things would be different came when the Official World Cup Song was released. Football songs were usually pretty poor affairs, or at best novelty bits of fun. World In Motion was different. It was actually a decent song, and it was sung by an actual decent band. Phil Thornton, in his excellent book *Casuals*, calls it a “tuneless travesty... the record that cemented this dangerous collision of footy and pop”. I get his point, but it’s all relative – innit? At the time it seemed extraordinary that a band as cool as New Order would get involved in a football song, and I’m going to beg to differ and say it wasn’t such a bad tune either. Despite the John Barnes rap, about which many a sociological tract has already been written.

The lyrics were producer Anthony Wilson’s wry joke on ecstasy entering the mainstream, something lost on most of the mainstream that embraced the song and soaked the airwaves with it. So much so that it is almost impossible to think of that time without the song segueing into *Nessun Dorma*, the theme the BBC chose to introduce its coverage and which also suffused the summer.

It wasn’t for us, all about England either. Maradona, at the time the world’s greatest footballer, would also be there. As would Italy’s Roberto Baggio. The Dutch had a swathe of brilliant players, including Marco van Basten – still the best striker I have ever seen play. There

was Romania’s Gheorghe Hagi, and a certain Jurgen Klinsmann of West Germany, whose path we would cross again before too long. We supported England without prejudice, but we were eager to soak up the whole tournament. A World Cup in Italy, a country that understood what football was all about. What could be better?

Cameroon got things started nicely. I had a hunch they might cause an upset and put £20 on them for a win. They were stupid odds and when I picked up my winnings the bloke in the bookies handed over my cash with the most ill-grace I’ve seen outside of a Jose Mourinho post-match interview when Chelsea have lost.

The tournament was warming up nicely before we gathered to watch the first England game. We’d decided to watch each England game at a different flat, then go out for a drink afterwards – a decision which may have been slightly perverse because most of our Spurs-infused crew lived around Highbury and Finsbury Park at the time. And so, from the most inauspicious beginnings watching England open up against the Republic of Ireland in a game that prompted the headline ‘No Football Please, We’re British’ (which will have gone down well in the Republic) there began a rollercoaster few weeks. Shouting and cheering and arguing and drinking late into the night; huddled around TVs in rented flats, spilling out into the pubs and beer gardens and eventually the streets as the numbers in the football party swelled; shirtsleeves and pints at midnight; an increasing state of exhaustion as the weeks wore on; an increasing sense of amazement that bungling old England might actually do something.

The story of what happened in that tournament is laced through this issue, and has been told many times. The best account of the tournament is Pete Davies’s *All Played Out*, in my opinion the book

that really opened the door to the wave of quality football writing we now take for granted. Reading it again today makes me realise just how special that book is, especially because the realisation it could never be written in today’s branded, bland, safe and self-important world of football leaps from every page. Davies is an accomplished writer – his account of the 1997 general election campaign, *This England*, is one of the finest and most perceptive accounts of the state of this nation I’ve ever read – and his skill combines with the access he managed to get to produce a read of real quality.

When the book was published he was lambasted by the ‘proper’ sports journalists for betraying confidences and generally not playing the game – but the only game Davies didn’t play was that of the football press big beasts. They could hammer Robson as much as they wanted, but woe betide the writer who reported that the players and the manager didn’t see eye to eye on tactics. Davies’s fascinating account of the players’ criticism of Robson’s tactics and the revolt that led to England’s adoption of a sweeper system irked Robson who, like Bill Nicholson in 1971 when *The Glory Game*

came out, said he regretted giving permission for the book to be written. Graham Taylor would express similar regrets some years later over a TV documentary. Plus ca change. Assessing the impact of *All Played Out* in 2014 for *Esquire* magazine, Paul Wilson said: “That it re-creates England’s almost-finest hour, as part of a larger moment when football changed, is both splendid and important.”

He is right. Football did change after that extraordinary summer. What we didn’t know was that the elation and exhaustion that

swept over us as we followed not only England but the Republic of Ireland too – I have rarely seen celebrations such as those that engulfed Quinns Irish bar in Camden Town after Packie Bonner saved that penalty against Romania – were already being seen as evidence of the raw materials that could be mined and exploited to create Modern Football.

But this is not a lament. Not another nostalgic hark-back to a mythological ‘better time’. There is debate about what has changed, how the change has come and what the change means – but this is not the point of this piece. In fact, I’m not sure whether I’ve succeeded in the point at all. Perhaps it’s all too long ago, perhaps too much has changed. But I remember something of what it was to those of us that had a passion for football had before that passion became so packaged and so defined by everyone and everything. And I wanted to write about that. Even allowing for the passage of time and the tendency to rose-tint the past – and the cynicism that comes with getting older – it still seems to me that we had something as we approached Italia ’90 that was worth having, and that has been, if not lost, then almost forgotten. And, in a strange way, remembering what we had makes it easier to make sense of why the passion for what is now a very different proposition still burns.

Maybe it’s nothing to do with the football. Maybe it’s more to do with looking back on something that happened half a lifetime ago and coming to terms with the fact that I’ve become a different person in those 25 years. That all of us, if we’re still in touch at all, have become different people since that summer. Football has certainly become a different thing. And finishing this, looking for a pay-off line, I can’t shake the feeling that the something we all had is finally slipping from my grasp. That something we all had Before It Started.



THE BIG WASTE

CORRUPTION, CASH AND CONSTRUCTION – PAUL GRECH LOOKS AT SOME OF THE CONTROVERSY THAT SURROUNDED THE HOST NATION’S WORLD CUP BUILDING PROGRAM.

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For English football, the Italia '90 World Cup marked a real inflection point in its history. Inspired by the team's unexpected run to the semi-finals and the resulting heart-breaking defeat, people once again fell in love with the game. It brought to an end decades of criminal neglect by the authorities which had - directly or indirectly - led to harrowing disasters like those in Bradford and Hillsborough whilst doing little to quell hooliganism other than treat all fans like criminals.

Within two years of that World Cup, the Premier League was born and with it the gentrification of the sport.

The competition doesn't evoke similar happy memories in the country that hosted the World Cup. Italy entered the tournament as favourites and justified such billing throughout the competition. But then, with the final in sight, they froze against a Maradona-inspired Argentina side and went out on penalties. The national dream of one final, glorious notte magica (magical night) had come crashing down.

Worse than that however, was the legacy of that World Cup. Italy had won the right to host the competition based on the promise of delivering some of the world's biggest stadia and they delivered on that promise. Eventually.

Indeed, the construction of the stadia was so late that when Sepp Blatter moved to defend the pace of work on the stadia prior to last year's World Cup in Brazil, it was with Italy that he drew a comparison.

"Worried because of the delays? Not in the least," he said. "This will be my tenth World Cup and three weeks before the start, the same worries always crop up. In Italy, they were still bolting in place the seats in the stadia on the eve of the kick-off."

Yet such horrendous delays weren't even the biggest scandal in as far as Italia '90 stadia were concerned. Not even close.

From the start, the project was ambitious. In total, twelve stadia were chosen, the same number used in Germany sixteen years later despite there being twelve games less.

Only two stadia were built for the World Cup (Stadio Delle Alpi in Turin and Stadio San Nicola in Bari), but most underwent significant renovations. An additional tier was added to Milan's San Siro stadium along with the now highly identifiable cylinders. So much work was put into Rome's Stadio Olimpico that it was practically completely different by the time the World Cup kicked off.

Indeed, there were similar stories throughout. Naturally, the final costs obscenely exceeded original projections. In total, it is estimated that

€3.74 billion was spent on Italia '90 (which roughly would equate to €7.5 billion today) with the spend on stadia coming in 80% more than originally budgeted.

All of which wouldn't have been too bad if the work had been up to standard. Sadly that wasn't the case.

Within months of the end of Italia '90, the pitch at the San Siro started cutting up badly. The reason, it eventually transpired, was that the additional tiers added on top of the existing structure had drastically reduced the level of light filtering on to the pitch and this in turn killed off the turf. It necessitated the constant relaying of the pitch with AC Milan and Inter often being forced to play on muddy swamps whenever the turf reached its accelerated end of life.

That was the first in a series of incidents that would ultimately reveal the slapstick and amateurish approach taken by the Italian authorities where the desire to go for the grandiose had over-ridden all practicalities.

The top tier at the San Paolo stadium in Naples, for instance, was closed off after it emerged that the reverberations of people jumping on that tier could create a seismic effect that could endanger the whole structure. Equally, the Stadio Delle Alpi in Turin had been projected as a futuristic stadium yet the athletic track around the pitch pushed spectators too far away from the action, the irrigation system had been badly planned meaning that the pitch often ended up flooded whilst the size of the stadium ballooned the costs of maintaining it.

The same goes for the Stadio San Nicola in Bari, designed by the renowned architect Renzo Piano, that not only greatly exceeds the needs of the local side but the materials chosen to build the roof - which gave it a futuristic look - have proven to be ill-suited to resist rain, wind and sun.

There are similar stories everywhere. The Stadio Sant'Elia in Cagliari has been at the centre of an argument between the club and local authorities who own it, with capacity going up and down depending on the maintenance work that they manage to put in. Udinese's Friuli stadium is another white elephant that greatly exceeds the needs of the local side.

All of this does not even begin to cover the obscenities involved in improving the country's infrastructure in time for the competition; some of which were never even finished. In Rome, a train station in Monti della Farnesina - built at the cost of around €7.5 million - was used for just four days and was closed in October 1990. The same happened at the Ostiense Air Terminal that was built at a cost of around €180 million and which was only used for a few weeks.

In Naples, three bridges in Fuorigrotta built to ease access for the World Cup were demolished in 2012 as they were never utilised. In Milan, a maxi-albergo (essentially a hotel on steroids) was built in Ponte Lambro but never completed. This too was demolished in 2012.

In typical Italian fashion, there have been many investigations looking into these stories of criminal waste and horrendous planning. Criminal, is indeed the key word, with suspicion being that criminal organisations ended up being the biggest beneficiaries of the state's largesse.

And so, today, these stadia are falling one by one. Juventus showed the way and now everyone is moving away from the bloated corpses of the Italia '90 stadia. Roma, Lazio, Milan and Udinese have all put forward plans for new stadia or else radically rebuilding existing ones. Others will undoubtedly follow as Italian football finally tries to leave behind the big waste of Italia '90.



R. MILLA

CAMEROON

MILLA AND THE LIONS: EMERGENT GLORY A DECADE IN THE MAKING

CHRIS SMITH LOOKS AT WHETHER CAMEROON AND THEIR SNAKE-HIPPED TALISMAN ROGER MILLA REALLY DID COME OUT OF NOWHERE TO TAKE ITALIA '90 BY STORM. ILLUSTRATION BY KEVIN MCGIVERN.

CHRIS SMITH - @cdsmith789 <http://www.therussianlinesman.com/>

Roger Milla once skipped school after forgetting to do his homework. Hiding out in Douala delayed a “flogging” but it also kept him out of an important football match. Milla’s teacher, who’d often shuttle the teenager from game to game on a motorbike, sent school friends to retrieve him. There’d be no trouble, he said, as long as Milla got himself to the game.

“When I arrived on the pitch, everyone was chanting my name. I saved the match and we won. I was treated like a hero”.

A unique set of circumstances later, this formative occurrence was reflected in the defining moments of Milla’s career, at the World Cup finals in Italy. By which time he was 38.

Preparing to be Pelé

Italia '90 was a generation away from Milla in the 1960s, then just a kid moving around Cameroon as his football-mad father worked the rail roads. Years of earning fees turning out for amateur sides spawned a Cameroonian second division debut aged just 15. Two years later, Milla became high school high jump champion. Physical strength and second-nature control shaped him but the forceful swagger of 1960s Cameroon icon Mbappe Leppe and the slick power of Pelé gave Milla style. Pelé became the youngest ever World Cup winner a month after Milla’s sixth birthday, and won the trophy for a third time just after his 18th.

“Without Pelé, Brazil won matches but the presence of Pelé in a team motivates the other players. My presence had the same effect”.

Milla joined Léopards Douala in 1970. A three-year, 89-goal spell helped seal Léopards’ only first division titles in 1972 and 1973, and earn a national call up. Milla had to wait for six games over three years for his first goal but garnered widespread recognition following a move home to Tonnerre Yaoundé. A blissfully successful period yielded a Cameroon Cup in 1974, the inaugural African Cup Winners’ Cup in 1975 and the African Player of the Year award in 1976. 25-years-old and hepped up on glory, Milla accepted an offer from French side Valenciennes; his passage to the periphery of Europe’s limelight was secure.

Milla left behind a vibrant national game. Between 1978 and 1981, Canon Yaounde and Union Douala won five African titles as Cameroon’s home-grown stars began to resonate. Charismatic keeper Thomas N’Kono, perhaps summed up best by his own description of a 1978 African Champions Cup Final save - “I parried the ball on to the crossbar and then got hold of it by doing a forward roll” - was named Africa’s best player twice. Feisty, assured Emmanuel Kundé, canny midfielder Grégoire M’Bida, and the stylishly capable Théophile Abega linking through to Milla developed into a quality core just in time for two major tournaments.

A productive 1981 for Milla - nine goals in 14 games - encapsulated Cameroon’s first AFCON qualification for a decade

and first World Cup appearance ever. The Indomitable Lions performed well in both but were left almost identically frustrated. Both tournaments saw Cameroon draw three, score their only goal within a minute of conceding, and exit at the group stage undefeated. Crueller still, a single goal rendered Italy’s three draws a better three draws, sealing their path to eventual glory in Spain. Six major tournament games without a win did not sit well with the new generation, least of all Milla who’d just passed 30.

Claude the Liberator: The Lions begin to roar

Milla struggled at Valenciennes and Monaco where he won the French Cup in 1980, but settled at Bastia with whom he retained the trophy. During the latter, prescient final, Milla started as the only non-Frenchman and scored the winner - arguably his finest hour at club level. Milla’s form gave Cameroon confidence heading into AFCON '84 but first up they were defeated by Egypt. Wins over Togo and hosts Ivory Coast set up a semi-final with Algeria - penalty shoot-out glory kept the dream alive. A wonderful one-two goal from Abega put paid to Nigeria in the final: a 3-1 win and first AFCON title at long last.

Radioje Ognjanović soon departed to leave Cameroon searching for a sixth manager in 10 years. As for the fans, three strong campaigns and a long-awaited trophy had them desperate for more World Cup football. Sixteen brutal first-half qualifying minutes away at Zambia, however, destroyed all hope. Between the 24th and 40th minute, Zambia spectacularly hit four with full debutant Michael Chibala scoring a hat-trick. It was a two-legged tie but there was no doubt: as the world gathered in Mexico, the African champions would be staying at home. Supposedly the start of recognition, 1982 now looked an anomaly.

Frenchman Claude Le Roy, the son of activists who fought for African independence, took charge a year later - his third post on as many continents in 1985 having coached Al Shabab after leaving Grenoble. It was Le Roy’s first national job in Africa; he’s currently enjoying his seventh. Living in Cameroon and favouring home-based talent endeared Le Roy to supporters, but he still reserved special affection for Milla: “In terms of pure quality, Roger Milla really belongs among the greater players. If he’d played in his era for Brazil, that fact would be properly recognised”. It was chiefly Milla who helped forge the now legendary manager’s name.

Milla scored in every round at AFCON '86 as Cameroon cruised through the group and past Ivory Coast into the final - every round except the final itself. M’Bida and André Kana-Biyik missed the decisive penalties after a 0-0 draw with hosts Egypt. Fans were dejected but backed their manager enough to be fully confident of victory next time round - Milla’s golden opportunity to leave at the top. Once again, it came down to Nigeria in the final; once again the Indomitable Lions broke hearts, Kundé this time obliging with a sturdy spot-kick. Glory for Le Roy’s Cameroon, goodbye for Milla: a Cameroonian hero and pioneering African departs.

HIGUITA'S DESPERATE, FAILED ATTEMPTED FOUL ON MILLA WAS ONE OF THE TOURNAMENT'S SNAPSHOT MOMENTS.

Always go back: Life begins at 37

50 caps, 32 goals, one African Player of the Year award and two AFCON titles – a fine international haul but not one that set Milla apart. The following, however, is utterly unique: the Legend of Roger Milla truly begins. Holidaying on Indian Ocean island Réunion, Milla eventually stayed for nine months after his friend, coach of Jeunesse Sportive Saint-Pierroise, twisted his arm. Retirement revoked at 37. Just like Bastia, Milla had found himself an island paradise to punctuate with football.

"To finish my career that way seemed idyllic because the football there was African, technical, just like I played".

Le Roy had left for Senegal and been replaced by Soviet novice Valery Nepomnyashchy who'd originally been intended for one of Cameroon's youth sides. His first chance to establish himself had proven a disaster as Cameroon exited AFCON '90 at the group stage. Cameroon reached the World Cup but huge numbers of fans remained disillusioned. Bereft of their inspirational manager and best ever player, the public was anxious. For most, the answer was Milla. The stage was set, the audience waiting: now for the inevitable coincidence.

The legendary Abega laid on one final, unwitting assist by inviting Milla to Cameroon for his testimonial six months before the World Cup. Milla: "People started to ask why I retired so early. The president [Paul Biya] insisted I should be part of the team". Nepomnyashchy wasn't convinced. The public rallied, Biya persisted - the dotting class mates and faithful teacher of Milla's youth reimagined. Biya's impassioned phone call had the desired effect; a second retirement reversed - longevity in the strictly Roger Milla sense. Several impressive warm-up displays smoothed it over. The comeback headed Italy's way.

Starting dauntingly with champions Argentina, Cameroon's "tactics [...] were simply to shut out Maradona" according to Milla, although Claudio Caniggia may disagree. Benjamin Massing's outrageously violent hack on Caniggia - a studs-way-up lunge come full-body charge - sent his right boot sent flying into the air. Accusations of thuggery were fair but the Africans had impressed their number one target. Maradona: "I don't think they had any intentions of beating us up, I cannot make excuses. They were the best side". After his brother was earlier dismissed, François Omam-Biyik scored a fortuitous winner to send shockwaves throughout the world: Africa had triumphed over a historical super power and champion.

Milla was fortunate to join the action with the scores level against Romania after N'Kono had superbly kept his side in it. Two late, Romanian defensive errors swung the game and enabled an old man to enter the record books. First, Ioan Andone hesitated as a long ball bounced, then Gheorghe Popescu dallied as Milla managed to force a one-two - a calm left-foot scoop, a right-foot

thrash: two glorious goals courtesy of the World Cup's new oldest goal scorer. Milla celebrated by wiggling his hips in front of the corner flag - a "totally spontaneous" outburst which became one of football's most iconic, symbolic moments.

Pride of Africa, apple of the world's eye

In an eyebrow-raising final group game, already-eliminated Soviet Union tonked Cameroon 4-0. Was Nepomnyashchy's nationality a misleading coincidence? Well, perhaps. The round of 16 clash with Colombia saw Milla's regular second-half cameo extended when the game ended goalless. Yet another explosive brace emphatically refuted doubts over his 38-year-old joints. A sharp turn and dart saw Milla through on goal, just like against Romania but this time on his left foot. The finish was identical: thrashed high beyond the keeper. As Milla jiggled in the corner, the watching millions beheld the precise spectacle they'd tuned in to witness.

And then René Higuita gifted another. Thirty-five yards out of goal - which is no start to a goalkeeping sentence - the pirate-haired joker tried to compensate for a bad pass. Upgrading his brisk jog to full sprint as the ball approached Higuita, Milla forced a maniac keeper into a snap call between a sensible option and a drag-back. He easily intercepted. Two goals in three minutes: from the sublime to the ridiculous back to the sublime. Higuita's desperate, failed attempted foul on Milla was one of the tournament's snapshot moments. Cameroon's crowning glory: Africa's first ever World Cup quarter-finalists.

England awaited Cameroon thanks to David Platt's magnificent volley against Belgium, and the same unbelievably wide grin was on show early doors as Stuart Pearce's whipped cross was headed home. Poor finishing cost Cameroon a hatful as they tore through England's midfield with ease, but 20 minutes of second-half Milla time were sufficient to turn the tide. First inducing a careless Paul Gascoigne tackle to enable another firm Kundé spot-kick, then delaying to deftly assist Eugène Ekéké, Milla transformed the game: all magic, no dancing. The semi-finals were in Cameroon's reach; the killer goal was there for them.

Particularly when Omam-Biyik chased Milla's precise through-ball which Pearce should have dealt with. The youngster's audacious, saved back-heel may ultimately stick in his throat given how close Cameroon came to the semis but this was confident expression befitting a side of such captivatingly joyful football. Serial hacker Massing brought down Lineker in the box and repeated the error (with help from N'Kono) in extra-time. Lineker made no mistake: England had emerged victorious and stuttered their way to momentum. Cameroon's and Africa's best ever World Cup was over.

Since 1974, the misleading memory of Zaire's Mwepu Ilunga breaking the wall to blast the ball had undermined African players. And then suddenly Milla, jiggling in the corner as his teammates battled behind him. Africans outwitting, outfighting and stroking the ball around beautifully; slamming the ball into the back of the net and gyrating at corner flags; smiling, dancing, giving pride to their people. And they could have done more. "Come out of nowhere" is the catchphrase reaction to Cameroon's Italia '90 exploits. After the most successful decade in their entire history during which mere penalty kicks denied three straight AFCON titles, 'let themselves down' is perhaps the more accurate reflection.

As you'd expect from a man who never really retires, 1990 wasn't the end for Milla. He still had 131 goals to poach, but only one for his country. On June 28, 1994 in Palo Alto, California, four years and five days since his last international goal, the infamous Higuita moment, 42-year-old Milla updated his own oldest goal scorer record with a consolation in a 6-1 defeat to Russia. Aged 44, he finally... stopped playing football for a bit. Better to burn out than to fade away? If possible, it's surely best to do it the Roger Milla way.

THE VILIFICATION OF BOBBY ROBSON

LONG BEFORE ENGLAND BOSS BOBBY ROBSON WAS HERALDED AS A SAINT, THE BRITISH PRESS HOUNDED HIM MERCILESSLY, AS CHARLES DUCKSBURY RECALLS.

CHARLES DUCKSBURY - @cducksbury

The most sustained campaign of press humiliation the game has ever seen.' So said Guardian writer Dave Smith, correctly surmising how Sir Bobby Robson was treated during his eight-year tenure as England boss. And although at times the press, particularly in written form, went too far, were they correct in their assertions that Robson wasn't the right man to lead England? Certainly now, he is portrayed as a saint, the last true gentleman of the English game, but if it wasn't for that glorious defeat in Turin at Italia '90, would opinions be completely different of 'Wor Bobby'? After all, this is a man with a lower win percentage as England manager than Steve McLaren.

Italia '90 was a strange tournament for England. Though of course it was statistically their second best World Cup ever, it could all have been so different. England only played well in two games: Holland in the group stage, and West Germany in the semi-finals. That they didn't win either game is perhaps telling; no-one does glorious failure quite like the English.

But a quick analysis of the other games, and the potential consequences is a reminder that Robson could very easily be remembered as one of the worst England managers of all time, rather than one of the best. A draw with Jack Charlton's Ireland was no disgrace, though hardly an impressive start to the campaign. The only win of the group stage (and indeed, the only win in normal time during the whole tournament) was a 1-0 win against Egypt. Without that 58th minute header from Mark Wright, England would have had to draw lots to see who would progress from the group.

In the knock-out stages, Belgium hit the woodwork three times against a lacklustre England before David Platt superbly volleyed home past Michel Preud'homme in the last minute of extra-time. Against Cameroon in the quarter-finals, England were seven minutes away from an embarrassing exit before Gary Lineker equalised with a penalty, adding another from the spot in extra-time. If history contrived to change any of these events ever so slightly, then perhaps the press would have been proven correct in their observations over the previous eight years.

When Robson spoke to the author Niall Edworthy, he explained the difficult transition of going from Ipswich Town manager, in the quiet and tranquil surroundings of rural Suffolk, to the goldfish bowl of the England job. "I had 14 years of happiness working with lovely people and then - well, then the England job. Nothing, nothing, can compare you for the England job." The English press are notoriously ruthless when it comes to the England manager, and on occasions overstep the line that separates constructive criticism and personal attacks. When Robson left the FA, Nigel Clarke of The Daily Express sought him out and told him that nothing he's said and written was ever personal, but that he was just doing his job.

Yet it is a blurry line between doing your job and publicly humiliating someone. You'd be hard pressed to find anyone who has a bad word to say about Sir Bobby now, yet pre-Italia '90, the haranguing was at its most vicious following Robson's announcement he'd be joining PSV after the World Cup. 'PSV off Bungler Bobby' screamed one headline when news leaked that the Geordie would be heading to Holland. After

championing for him to be axed for the majority of his tenure, Robson was now accused of showing little loyalty to the cause, with some even wanting him gone before the World Cup.

Since the moment he arrived in the job, Robson was vilified by many, with Brian Cough the preferred choice. After failing to qualify for Euro '84, Robson even offered to resign if it allowed Clough to take the job, such was the clamour for the recently crowned double European Cup winner. FA chairman Bert Millichip talked him out of it (he would do the same following a disastrous Euro '88 too). Clough was a vocal critic of Robson, though he did eventually pander to Robson to let him scout opponents at Italia '90, an offer Bobby refused, taking Ipswich's John Lyall instead.

The failure to make the 1984 tournament in France was in part down to a defeat in qualifying to Denmark, Robson's only qualifying loss in 28 games. Not long after that loss, England went down to the USSR at Wembley in a friendly, a result that saw Robson spat on and showered with beer as he walked to the dressing room on the game's completion. He was similarly spat on in Newcastle when he dropped Kevin Keegan from the England squad in 1982, somewhat diluting the memory that he was always adored by the Geordie hoards.

Mexico '86 saw a brief respite for Robson, as Maradona put paid to any England hopes of reaching the semi-finals with his heaven and hell performance at the Azteca stadium, using both his hand and then feet to dump England out and leave Robson flabbergasted.

England had played relatively well and due to the manner of the defeat, was cut a little slack from the press.

But after exiting Euro '88 after three straight losses to Holland, Ireland and USSR, the knives were back out. England had played badly, The Daily Mirror pleading 'In the name of God, go!', whilst The Sun opted for 'Plonker'. Robson again offered to resign only to be talked round by Millichip, with Robson explaining "I told Bert I'd walk and explained we'd played poorly and the press were on my back. He simply said if I could stick it, so could they."

After an awful draw with Saudi Arabia, The Mirror went back to their divine headlines, this time announcing 'In the name of Allah, go!', whilst The Sun this time chose 'England Mustafa new boss'. But it was clear that Bobby would be leading England in Italy. He was fortunate that when the pressure was at its highest, he could count on the erratic Paul Gascoigne to take some of the focus away from him.

'Gazza' announced himself on the international scene with three assists and a goal during a 4-2 win over Czechoslovakia just prior to the World Cup. His performances during the tournament were relatively good, but he will always be remembered for his tears against West Germany, perhaps the second most iconic image in English football history after Bobby Moore holding the Jules Rimet trophy on the Wembley pitch.

After the heartbreaking defeat to West Germany, Robson was a national hero. A humble man, he went on to win trophies in Holland, Portugal and Spain before managing Newcastle. He died a national hero in 2009, something that would have been unthinkable just prior to Italia '90. Had certain key moments gone against him, would he be thought of the way people think of, say Graham Taylor? Perhaps, but what did happen was a seismic swing in a nations mood in the time it took to play six football matches.



ON THE ONE ROAD

IAN CUSACK REMINISCES ABOUT BIG JACK'S BOYS, TRANSISTOR RADIOS AND THE BIRTH OF THE ALL-DAY DRINKING SESSION AS IRELAND BATTLED THROUGH TO THE QUARTER-FINALS.

IAN CUSACK - @PopularSideZine

<http://payaso-de-mierda.blogspot.com/>

The 1988 European Championship finals provided Irish football fans, both at home and abroad, with a tangible sense of the validity of both the sport itself and the presence of the national team on a continental stage. Received wisdom had said that, prior to the backdoor qualification for West Germany (an 83rd minute Scotland winner away to Bulgaria effectively booked the tickets), football in Ireland predominantly meant Gaelic football in the eyes of ordinary citizens from Malin Head to Wexford and that soccer (as only the Irish working classes and English elite call it) was the game of choice only in Dublin and surrounding areas. Undoubtedly there was some truth in this; across Ireland, bizarre social and geographical sporting factors persist, comparable to Fife's role as the cradle of Scottish cricket, whereby rough and raucous Limerick is the spiritual home of Irish rugby and currently only 13 of Ireland's 32 counties are represented by teams in the League of Ireland.

Interestingly, in 1988/1989, 13 of Ireland's 32 counties were represented by teams in the League of Ireland. However, the level of support in Ireland for the national side increased vastly in the aftermath of the 1988 finals and in England, those of us who had never been able, in all honesty, to even view ourselves as English never mind support their team, were finally provided with a focus for our sporting ethnic identification. Put simply, Ray Houghton's 7th minute winner over England in Stuttgart was the highpoint of our Irish supporting lives for hundreds of thousands of second and third generation Anglo-Irish football fans. Such a shame that the 3.30pm kick off time on a Sunday afternoon meant almost all of us watched it at home.

Something deeply significant happened that would profoundly affect the Tyneside Irish diaspora I am proud to be a member of, between Wim Kieft's heartbreaking late winner for the Dutch on 18th June 1988 in Gelsenkirchen that denied Jack Charlton's team a place in the semi-finals, and the 0-0 draw with the North at Windsor Park that marked the start of Ireland's qualifying campaign for Italia 90 just shy of three months later. On Monday 22nd August, English licensing laws, that had restricted the sale of alcohol in the afternoon ever since the introduction of the 1914 Defence of the Realm Act, were liberalised to the extent that pubs were now able to remain open all day, except on a Sunday where closure between 3.00pm and 7.00pm was still a legal requirement. Effectively, though the legislators weren't to know it at the time, this would mean that the 1990 World Cup was the first tournament any of us had watched in the pub. Frankly, it was probably also the first World Cup finals that grabbed the entire collective imagination.

The infrequent and irregular broadcasting of live matches in those days, not to mention the lack of readily accessible information in the pre-internet era, meant the centrality of international games to the football fan's experience was not as pronounced as it supposedly is today. While I recall the rescheduling of an important meeting at work in September 1989 to allow football fans to get home for a tea-time kick off between Sweden and England, in the game Terry Butcher split his head open ("people have won a VC for less," according to Bobby Robson), international breaks were given less prominence than the week long cancellation of



all other games, like a period of prolonged and solemn mourning for proper football, we are forced to endure now. Partly it was due to the lack of media exposure, partly due to the absence of widespread sporting hyperbole in the pre-Sky era and partly because of a lack of coherence in fixture scheduling. For instance, Ireland's home games would kick off in the afternoon, even midweek, as Lansdowne Road didn't have floodlights until 1993. The result of these factors was that teams completed their qualifying campaigns almost unnoticed, as it was only the tournaments themselves that really grabbed media attention. For us in the diaspora, it was only after Ireland's 3-0 trouncing of the North on 11th October 1989 that the true significance became clear; avoid defeat in Malta and qualification would be assured. The 2-0 victory courtesy of a double by John Aldridge meant Ireland were on our way to Italy. On Tyneside, Jack Charlton's dismal spell in charge of Newcastle United had been conveniently forgiven and forgotten for those of us with green blood feeding our black and white hearts.

The labyrinthine draw for the final groups for Italia 90 took place on Saturday 9th December 1989. Sulking over post match pints of Porter in The Wheatsheaf in Felling following a 3-2 home loss to Oxford United, the atmosphere was lifted by Grandstand passing on the news that Ireland had been grouped with Holland, Egypt and, best of all, England. Spontaneous shouting and roaring broke out, supplanted by a prolonged chant of 'There's only one Ray Houghton' rending the air. However, unlike today there was no sense of gathering hysteria at the imminent tournament. For a start, there was half a domestic season to endure, not to mention five unbeaten friendlies before the whole thing kicked off.

Received wisdom tells a narrative that suggests the 1990 World Cup finals were watched with deep regional pride in the north east as Beardsley, Gascoigne and Waddle, as well as Bobby Robson represented the Geordie Nation; that isn't how I recall it at all. Personally, I was deeply upset that Newcastle's uncompromising full back John Anderson didn't get the nod to join Jack's boys in Italy, but I'd got over it by the time the whole thing kicked off with Cameroon hoofing Argentina all over the shop on Friday 8th June.

Twenty five years is a long time; exactly half my life to be precise. However, my memories of the tournament as a whole, if not the actual games themselves, remain clear. English patriotism,

ON TYNESIDE, JACK CHARLTON'S DISMAL SPELL IN CHARGE OF NEWCASTLE UNITED HAD BEEN CONVENIENTLY FORGIVEN AND FORGOTTEN FOR THOSE OF US WITH GREEN BLOOD FEEDING OUR BLACK AND WHITE HEARTS.

rather than a more insidious form of nationalism that appeared to develop at later tournaments, was widespread, infectious and often remarkably innocent. Despite the occasional news footage of raddgies in Union Jack shorts and oxblood Doc Marten's repeatedly firing volleys of plastic patio furniture at advancing riot cops, the reality of the World Cup for those in England itself was a lot more relaxed, with fun being the keynote.

As a Joy Division fan, I regard New Order as being very much an inferior act, but they managed to surf the zeitgeist with World in Motion. I'd imagine you've not even heard the Ireland World Cup song 'Put 'Em Under Pressure', combining a sample from 70's Donegal prog-rockers Horslips with a sample of Jack Charlton's rhetoric; you're not missing much. However, the team took the message on board and the opening 1-1 draw with England, courtesy of Kevin Sheedy's long range finish, was richly deserved. The best accounts of watching the games actually in Ireland are by Roddy Doyle; a factual essay can be found in the When Saturday Comes book My Favourite Year, but far more memorable is the description of events in a Barrytown bar in his novel The Van. I couldn't hope to match his prose in attempting to convey the passion, excitement and pride involved in supporting Ireland that night. Suffice to say, a packed Wheatsheaf almost exploded with delight as the equaliser went in, followed by clenched fists, serious drinking and atonal singing of traditional songs well past closing time by about 50 of us, an eclectic collection that embraced 60-year-old Irish fellas who could have been members of The Dubliners and 19-year-old students in Celtic shirts. For the avoidance of doubt; this wasn't anti-English, it was pro-Irish. Unlike certain enclaves of North London or the West of Scotland, to celebrate Irish cultural identity wasn't to try and focus on events in Belfast. We kept politics out of sport, even when singing about Sir Roger Casement, the last Englishman to do as much for Ireland as Jack Charlton did.

In contrast, the following Sunday's 0-0 draw with Egypt slipped by almost unnoticed. While England and Holland had played out a similar stalemate the night before, cheered on by thronged pubs the length of the land, the Sunday afternoon alcohol holiday denied Ireland fans this opportunity. You watched it in the house, or not at all. Shamefully, I'll admit to watching it on video as I used to play 5-a-side on Sunday afternoons at Eldon Square Leisure Centre and this took precedence. However, at least I got to see that game;

even if it was so terrible I fast forwarded my way through most of it. The following Thursday saw the deciding group games, with the BBC opting to show England versus Egypt. These days that would not provide a particular problem, as Setanta show Irish sporting fixtures on subscription across the world. They didn't exist in 1990. Back then there was no internet streaming, no satellite TV coverage, no digital radio, no email or text updates and, in many cases, not even any Ceefax enabled tellies to keep abreast with the scores.

Gathering in The Wheatsheaf, the only option was to crowd round an elderly solid state transistor, tuned in to the shaky reception provided by RTE radio. The signal was terrible and after half an hour of murmured conversations being shushed and murderous glances shot at those who drank loudly or drew noisy on their smokes, during which time Ruud Gullit's quality finish had put the Dutch ahead, we abandoned the project and nervously watched England crawl to a 1-0 win, while waiting for updates from Palermo. During the second half there were none and, glumly, we assumed the worst. A crowd of us stood chain smoking like expectant fathers in maternity waiting rooms when Des Lynam, who used to be Irish a long time ago, cut to footage of Niall Quinn's brutal equaliser. It was the quintessential Irish goal; Packie Bonner leathered it up the pitch, Barry van Aerle's back pass had too much behind it, Hans van Breukelen fumbled the ball and Quinn slid the loose ball home. As the realisation hit we'd made the last 16, pandemonium broke out. Glasses and drinks went everywhere as fellas scrambled onto tables and the counter, punching the air. Even better, it turned out that as both teams had identical records; lots had been drawn to find out the next round's opponents. High tech or what? No matter, the good news was we'd be playing Romania not Germany.

The following Monday was perhaps the most tense I've ever been watching a game on television in my life. Despite half the bar's clientele taking a day's holiday in preparation and drinking themselves into a fervour for the 5pm kick off, the stakes were now so high that you couldn't enjoy it. Ninety scoreless minutes were followed by an equally barren period of extra time; penalties. It wasn't football, it was chess. Jack Charlton couldn't watch; he scrounged a smoke off a spectator and looked away. In The Wheatsheaf some went outside, others prayed; only half a dozen of us could watch it all. Eight regulation spot kicks were converted and then; Timofte. The sight of Packie Bonner, huge, diving the right way, emerging hands aloft was a perfect image for the tournament. The fact that David O'Leary scored the decisive kick was almost incidental. There was no triumphalism this time among our crowd; there were tears. The tension broke, the adrenaline crashed and the stunning reality of a World Cup quarter-final place for Ireland dawned on us. Almost silently, spent, the bar emptied long before Italy booked their place with a 2-0 win over Uruguay.

Ireland's 1994 World cup campaign was Jack's last hurrah and the 1-0 win over Italy in New York, courtesy of Ray Houghton, was the moment of the tournament for me. Sadly in 1990, Ireland were too respectful and lost 1-0 when Salvatore Schillaci, a man entirely of the moment, pounced after Bonner's parry and drove the ball home for a winner. In the bar, we took defeat with grace and dignity; sure we'd not expected to get this far and frankly, wallets were empty and livers enlarged by three weeks of serious drinking.

In looking back at the tournament, I see a very different Ireland and a very different world. Never again would Ireland be patronised and mocked as an international football team. While the moans and snide digs about the 'Granny rule' and mercenary players persisted in some quarters, the real influence was that young Irish kids were enabled to play whichever version of football they wanted; GAA or Garrison Game. Through a quarter of a century of boom and bust, of Celtic Tiger and Merkel's bail-out, Irish football has undergone similar highs and lows. What began in Stuttgart in 1988, became real in Italy in 1990 and continues to this day, is the importance of the Ireland national team at home and abroad; for that reason Italia 90 will live in my memory forever.

TICOS AND SUPERHEROES

AS ÁLVARO MURILLO EXPLAINS, NOBODY GAVE TINY COSTA RICA A CHANCE IN ITALY, BUT AGAINST ALL ODDS, THEY SHOCKED THE WORLD – AND THEMSELVES.

ÁLVARO MURILLO - @_AlvaroMurillo_



Miguel Gómez was 7 years old on Monday, June 11, 1990, the day of Costa Rica's debut at the World Cup. He lived in downtown San José and there was no school that day; the Government had declared a public holiday. Like almost everybody else in the country, he got up early, showered and sat down in front of the TV, eager to see how the third world, 'handicraft' footballers of Costa Rica would fair against Scotland. So sure of defeat was he that he combined watching the game with playing his own game in the park outside his house. But he and 3 million other Costa Ricans – or Ticos - were about to meet their future heroes. Costa Rica beat Scotland one-nil.

Eighteen years later, after studying film in Los Angeles and finishing a job on the Iron Man movie, he began to think how it would be nice to make a film about his own country's superheroes. He asked himself who his idols had been during childhood. The answer was obvious: he had to make a film about the Costa Rica team at Italia '90, those footballing Cinderellas who stunned Scotland, lost to Brazil by the minimum of margins and went on to beat Sweden and qualify for the second round. Czechoslovakia then thrashed them 4-1, but by then it didn't matter. The summer had gone down in legend, forever marked in the collective memory of a country with so few sporting achievements to speak of.

Miguel's film – entitled Italia '90 - premiered in 2014, just as the

Costa Rican national squad was preparing for the World Cup in Brazil. Costa Rica is about as well-known for its film-making as it was for its footballing skills pre-Italia '90, but the film proved to be a good omen if nothing else. Because the class of Italia '90 are still heroes in Costa Rica, even for people born after the event. The courage and humility the squad showed became benchmarks for what was expected of subsequent national sides, something that proved to be a tall order prior to 2014 - the Ticos failed to qualify in 1994, 1998 and 2010, and couldn't get beyond the group stages at Japan-Korea 2002 or Germany 2006.

"Italia '90 was a landmark in Costa Rican football, but it went way beyond football. What that team achieved spoke of the character of the Costa Rican people, setting out to do something most people thought impossible, but wanting it and pulling it off anyway," says Miguel. He admits that his film – made for 210,000 dollars and shot over a few short weeks – goes straight for the heartstrings, aiming to capitalise on the footballing sentimentality of a country where most people come out in goosebumps whenever they hear *Lo Daremos Todo* (We'll Give It Everything), the song the players recorded before heading for Italy.

Gómez chose to use non-professional actors who resembled his heroes rather than professional actors. He says this was because it was difficult to dramatise characters who very much remained in the public eye as media commentators, in television commercials, in the dugouts of the country's leading clubs (Saprissa and Alajuelense) or in endless television replays of the Italia '90 tournament itself, when a group of long-haired guys put Costa Rica on the FIFA map. Before Italia '90, Costa Rica's main footballing claim to fame related to the 1950s and a generation given the somewhat unimpressive nickname of 'Los Chaparritos de Oro', 'The Golden Shorties' - an accolade earned for being the second best team in Central America, behind Mexico, for almost a decade.

"The rest of the world used to get us confused with Puerto Rico," ventures Roger Flores, the centre-back and team captain at Italia '90, a man many former players still call *El capitano*. "There were fewer tourists and there was even less investment."

At the time, Flores played in Costa Rica's domestic league, as did all his team mates. International experience of any sort was rare. Only one of them 'half-spoke' English. Some of them fitted training sessions in around factory jobs, or did 'shrimp work', as odd jobs are called in Costa Rica. Indeed, some of them still do; Italia '90 led to coaching careers and contracts at second-tier European teams for some, but for others it simply brought domestic fame. Héctor Marchena, a tough defender, is basically remembered as the man who squared up to the great Careca against Brazil.

Two of the taxis the government awarded to every member of the squad, ensuring them a source of income for life, still circulate the streets, but not all the players needed to make use of them. Post-Italia '90, Hernán Medford played for clubs in six different countries and went on to manage teams in Mexico and Guatemala. The midfielder Alexandre Guimarães, a Costa Rican of Brazilian decent, managed Panama in the 2010 World Cup qualifiers and has been in charge of clubs in half-a-dozen countries. Defender Ronald González and playmaker Óscar Ramírez have managed Costa Rica's top domestic sides and recently came face to face in the final of the Tico championship. Luis Gabelo Conejo is goalkeeping coach for the national side, having triumphed as a player for Albacete in Spain. Keylor Navas, the current Tico Number One, followed in his footsteps, beginning his La Liga career at Albacete before ending up at Real Madrid.

Thus many members of the Italia '90 squad can now be described as worldly, but back in June 1990 they relied heavily on their Serbian manager, Velibor 'Bora' Milutinovic. Having managed Mexico at the 1986 World Cup, the Costa Rican FA hired him on the eve of the 1990 World Cup, to assist the team in all areas. More than being a tactical mastermind or master of psychology, he was like a cultural guide to the players, a teacher of etiquette, a life counsellor and a translator of customs. "He knew what a World Cup was all about, nothing fazed him, and while he always treated us with respect, he taught us many things," recalls Flores. "For example, we were given wine with our meal and we thought they were trying to poison us, to tempt us into a life of excess, but Bora said, 'lads, this is European culture, if you want a glass of wine with your meal, it's okay, go right ahead'."

Go out and enjoy yourselves!

That 1-0 win against Scotland: it was night time in Genoa, but morning in San José; fans spilled out onto the streets, incredulous. The 1-0 defeat to Brazil was celebrated too - even the most optimistic supporters had expected to lose by three goals at least. Then came the 2-1 win against Sweden and the party to end all parties. Qualification for the second round had been achieved by a bunch of kids playing with a sense of fun and adventure, aided by the astute management of Bora and spurred on by their own fierce sense of pride. "We had nothing to lose," says Juan Cayasso, scorer of the goal against Scotland, "but there was also honest commitment shown by everyone."

Guimarães, - whose son Celso Borges would go on to play professionally in Brazil and Sweden, curiously enough, before starring at the 2014 World Cup - remembers Italia '90 as "collective madness". Having overseen Costa Rica's qualification for the 2002 World Cup, the Ticos' first finals appearance since Italia '90, he knows all about the pressure heaped upon subsequent national teams. "I experienced it myself as manager in 2002. The thing is, what happened in Italy all seemed so simple (...) We were a very united team, like a family, big characters and good people, and we outdid ourselves. What I've always said to Celso is that you have to make sure you enjoy playing at the World Cup, despite the fact that the pressure after Italia '90 was so high."

According to the film, that's exactly what Bora said to his players: "Go out there and enjoy yourselves, you're winners just by being here." The epic achievement was about to follow. "Milutinovic mentally prepared a humble but hungry squad of young players to perform at the highest level, to put the country on the football map and earn unimagined qualification for the second round. From then on, this football-mad country would well-up with emotion for those players, because they broke down boundaries and opened doors to playing abroad," summarises Rodrigo Calvo, a journalist

and sports historian. At the 2014 World Cup, the majority of the squad played for foreign teams; only two members of the starting line-up against Uruguay were on the books of domestic teams.

Antonio Alfaro, editor of the *Al Día* newspaper, even goes so far as to use the symbols 'BI' and 'AI': Before Italy and After Italy. "Italia '90 represents a moment of self-recognition for all Costa Ricans, including those who weren't born yet or don't even like football. It goes way beyond eleven blokes kicking a ball about (...) it's to do with national pride, like those heroic battles you get in history books: the story of a small nation's moment of glory." For the young Miguel Gómez, it was the story of a bunch of superheroes.

"ITALIA '90 WAS A LANDMARK IN COSTA RICAN FOOTBALL, BUT IT WENT WAY BEYOND FOOTBALL. WHAT THAT TEAM ACHIEVED SPOKE OF THE CHARACTER OF THE COSTA RICAN PEOPLE, SETTING OUT TO DO SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE THOUGHT IMPOSSIBLE, BUT WANTING IT AND PULLING IT OFF ANYWAY

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THE GENIUS OF PALERMO

LAYTH YOUSIF LOOKS DEEP INTO THE LIFE – AND THE WILD, STARING EYES – OF ITALY’S UNEXPECTED SIX-GOAL HERO, SALVATORE ‘TOTO’ SCHILLACI.

LAYTH YOUSIF - @laythy29

Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them - William Shakespeare

Palermo. A patronising travel writer would call this Sicilian port city founded by the Phoenicians nearly three millennia ago a ‘bustling’ place. Or if they were fond of it in an inarticulate fashion they might even label it ‘vibrant’. But they would be wrong to lightly dismiss this deeply working-class citadel.

It is a place which, in common with staunchly proud blue-collar towns the world over people know and care about each other, where a real sense of community exists – where, in the vernacular known to millions - people simply ‘look out for each other’.

Centred in a hub of this ‘bustling’ place so dismissed and written-off by those not from the area lies a ‘vibrant’ market called La Vucciria. A bazaar, which commences at midnight and ends just after lunch when the heat is too much to bear. A souk which sells the finest, freshest seafood.

As you cut through this famed setting, amidst the frenzied cries of hawkers offering their wares, mingled with the shouts of shoppers born with a flair for haggling, you will find a stone carving.

A stone carving of a man with an aged face, but, with a youthful, muscular body. Forever destined to stay young and powerful, imbued with a forceful sense of opportunity and hope.

Hope that will never be stalled by the onset of reality and wisdom which comes with maturity.

This imposing but graceful, mesmerising yet potent artefact is known locally as: “Genio di Palermo.” Translated into English it means: “The Genius of Palermo.”

The face is older now, laughter lines round ridges around the mouth. A furrowed forehead is evidence of the shifting of time, a sense of the seasons shifting from spring to summer, with autumn on the horizon. Yet the man has an easy laugh, and betrays no impression of bitterness at the loss of what he had once. He laughs again and says: “The eyes, the eyes. Every time I meet people they always want me to do the ‘wild eyes’.”

“It was an instinctive gesture that has stuck in people’s minds, and I have done it many, many times. There have been times when people have just burst into tears when they meet me. It is great that when I meet people I see a big smile on their faces, they are so happy to meet me. I think success is hard won so it is nice when people still remember you. The tough thing is when people no longer appreciate you. So I don’t mind the attention at all.”

The eyes belong to Salvatore Schillaci. Toto to his friends. And to anyone who remembers Italia ‘90.

In La Vucciria the carving of Il Genio embodies a hope that lasts an eternity. And so do pictures of Toto Schillaci taken during that immortal summer. The finest summer I ever knew for football.

What defines greatness in football? Is it consistency? A career conducted at the highest levels, for the longest time, laden with trophies? Yes is one answer. But what if your star blazes brightly

for only a short time? What if you rise to the challenge when the eyes of the world are on you, when the weight of expectancy from 60 million countrymen does not drag you down with fear – but elevates you to the form of your life? What if you soar in the world’s greatest international tournament when the entire planet watches on? Is that not greatness?

And even if you have no medal to show for it, you have the knowledge that you did your best – and that your best was more than good enough; even if your subsequent career trajectory stalls and you plummet back down to earth.

Is the fact you spent four weeks with the gods not good enough for you to be labelled as a great – even if you ultimately failed, and never remotely touched such heights again?

Toto Schillaci started his footballing career with an amateur team in his native city, Palermo earning 4000 lira per goal. Or £1.50 if you’re counting.

Toto playing for Italy was a fairytale which the majority of his friends, family and compatriots in Palermo could only dream of. But the Sicilian striker fought hard for his chance, struggling along with the rest of his pals in that tough port city.

Toto never went to school, growing up in true poverty in Palermo’s teeming slums – but the Genius of Palermo had the love of the common people, and a dream to cling to...

He moved to Sicilian club Messina, where he played until a year before the Italian World Cup of 1990. In 1989 he showed his promise – if not greatness - by becoming Serie B top-scorer in 1988-89 with 23 goals.

Il Vecchia Signora – Juventus - soon snapped him up. Suffering from a word called transition after the glories under astute manager Giovanni Trapattoni earlier in the decade, Toto’s arrival sparked a return to form under the direction of Italy’s 1982 World Cup winning captain and goalkeeper Dino Zoff.

Toto netted 15 goals in 89/90 which saw Juve clinch the Coppa Italia and the UEFA Cup. His resourceful, powerful and creative attacking style forced Azzurri head coach, Azeglio Vicini, to pick him on the final day of March, 1990 – a mere two months before Cameroon played Argentina in that never-to-be forgotten upset in the tournament’s opening match.

Incidentally, as we all know, that 1-0 win over the 1986 Champions which included Maradona saw contrasting fortunes for the brothers Bijik: François Omam scored the winning goal, shortly after seeing brother Andre Kana sent off for serious foul play.

Like all the best tournaments, Italia ‘90 hosted numerous sub-plots and stories that would grip for time immemorial – just like *Nessun Dorma* and *World in Motion*, would never, ever, be *All Played Out* - *One Night in Turin* would see to that. But that’s another narrative for another day.

The Azzurri were to play Austria first. Toto was on the bench - unaffected by unwittingly driving into the middle of 3,000 furious



S. SCHILLACI

ITALY

Fiorentina Ultras who surrounded the Italian pre-World Cup training camp in Florence prior to the tournament. The reason for their real anger? Their idol Roberto Baggio's sale to his club Juventus from Fiorentina hours earlier. Toto had to be rescued by the Carabinieri. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time. It was the last time he was that glorious summer.

Toto recalled: "I had got the last place in the squad so I did not even expect to be on the bench. I thought I would be watching from the stands. So, late in the game, with the score 0-0, when the manager Azeglio Vicini called me over and told me to get warmed up because I was coming on, I could not believe it. I asked him, do you mean me?!"

Alongside Schillaci was Stefano Tacconi, his Juventus teammate. A keeper who told him to "go on and score a header like John Charles".

Toto indeed emulated Charles by scoring a powerful header which looked as if he had spent all season watching grainy black and white videos of the remarkable and much loved Welshman and Juve hero. Yet it was the first goal Toto had scored with his head all season.

Is the ability to improvise also a sign of greatness?

Toto added: "When I scored, I just started running and did not stop until I got to the bench, where I hugged Tacconi because of what he had said to me. It was an immense joy."

Vicini, cautious and unwilling to embrace the growing clamour for Toto to start gave him another substitute appearance in a slender 1-0 triumph over the US. The manager like many before – and after him – bowed to the relentless clamour to pick a rising star – and partnered him with Roberto Baggio against Czechoslovakia.

Of course, it was Baggio a touring Madonna – not Maradona – described as having the eyes of a Roman god. Yet, already Schillaci's eyes were gaining attention from those who knew and loved the game. His blazing, bulging pupils denoting true passion, joy and frustration – the eyes of the common man embodied by Toto.

The pairing netted a goal each as the Azzurri eased past a wilting and intimidated Czechoslovakia in that Roman gladiatorial bearpit, the Stadio Olimpico.

"Italy in delirium with Schillaci-Baggio," *Gazzetta Dello Sport* erupted. Before rhetorically asking, as histrionically as you longed it to: "How beautiful you are."

How beautiful indeed.

Toto fired in one against Uruguay in the second round, reffed by the FA's, and Spennymoor's officious George Courtenay no less (It's amazing what footballing detritus remains in the memory). He added a strike against Jack's valiant Boys In Green who were yet another sub-plot - sinking them in the quarter-finals, ensuring Schillaci's name would reverberate far beyond the confines of the tournament.

The Genius of Palermo was now seen as Italy's talisman – and the nation's favourite player. Magic Nights - the tournament's official dirge was commandeered by others as his personal theme song. (The song was composed by Giorgio Moroder who should have known better.)

Argentina, Maradona et al, were the opponents on an emotionally charged night in Naples on July 3rd, 1990. The small Argentine imploring the South to support his South Americans because: "The rest of the year Italy doesn't give a shit about you." Maybe that was true.

But Toto's loyal friends and family in the port town of Palermo in the Southern Italian island of Sicily did. As did the majority of people in the South: seeing Toto as one of their own – despite Maradona's increasingly deluded pronouncements as the

tournament wore on.

Can you trace the highest point of your entire life? The moment you know in your heart you will never surpass? The second you understand the remainder of your existence will always be secondary to, no matter what you do? Maybe it's a good thing us mortals don't have to (although everyone can no doubt, in their own personal way).

Toto scored in the 17th minute against Argentina to put his country 1-0 up.

For Toto, this was it. You can pinpoint the exact millisecond his life peaked in the eyes of the rest of the world. And in his own (Just take a look at the goal on Youtube. And his eyes. 'The eyes').

This was the moment Toto became great. Not just because he scored a goal in a World Cup semi-final. Not just because he went flaming mental in the aftermath. But because it was a culmination of that summer's work for his country. A summer in which Toto reached greatness. Italy should have won. Italy would have won. Italy could have won. But they didn't. Argentina equalised and won on penalties.

Gazzetta dello Sport had the headline: "End of a Dream" while *Corriere dello Sport* wrote: "NO" on its front page.

For me, watching that tournament as a kid with unrealistic dreams, an embarrassing haircut, and a drawer full of C90 tapes of the Happy Mondays, facing a world full of hope and opportunity which would later fall to despair and disillusion - Toto became great because he didn't win. He became great because of what he stood for: an embodiment of unexpected hope and opportunity in a world where you thought anything was possible.

A barefooted urchin with no qualifications later winning the World Cup. Except, of course, he didn't win the World Cup. He became great because of his failure. And sometimes failure is more alluring. More enticing as a narrative. More romantic.

Toto reached greatness in the act of failing. He did his best, he rose to the challenge, he became a force of nature carrying his far more lauded teammates to the brink of immortality. His efforts, his commitment, his character, his performances, his goals saw him reach greatness. But only for that summer. That glorious summer.

Yet because he flew too close to the sun, the gods decreed he would not win a World Cup singlehandedly. They granted that honour to Maradona in '86 and weren't keen on such an achievement becoming devalued by allowing it to be commonplace. They, in their wisdom couldn't bring themselves to allow such fleeting impudence gain immortality. The footballing gods value consistency. Mere mortals like me prefer romance in the game we love. Even if it is fleeting romance like Toto's.

A Toto – free from bitterness - said later, much later, after his career stalled and ended: "We deserved to win. I think if we had beaten Argentina we would have gone on to win the World Cup. In that period I know a lot of people in Italy named their dog 'Toto' though. When people arrived in Italy around that time the first thing they would say to the border police was: 'Toto Schillaci'. And a lot of Italians have told me that when they went abroad, the first thing people said to them when they found out they were Italian was my name. That makes me very happy."

They say in Palermo, the day Italy lost to Argentina, Il Genio di Palermo - situated in 'bustling' La Vucciria market - actually shed a tear. The statue wasn't the only one to cry that day.

The day Toto Schillaci - forever destined to stay young and powerful, imbued with a forceful sense of opportunity and hope – reached greatness for all eternity.

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IT'S THE HOPE THAT KILLS

THERE'S NOTHING GLORIOUS ABOUT 'GLORIOUS' FAILURE. JUST ASK ANY SCOTLAND FAN – LIKE WILLIAM HEANEY

WILLIAM HEANEY - @midfieldveteran

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

It isn't easy being a Scottish sports fan.

Our nation's sporting history is littered with tales of what might have been. While Stephen Hendry, Chris Hoy and Rhona Martin competed and triumphed at the highest levels of their respective pursuits, they are exceptions rather than the rule; their moments of glory outnumbered by examples of individual athletes or teams falling short.

As recently as February, Andy Murray squandered the opportunity to add the Australian Open to his two Grand Slam tennis titles, being defeated by Novak Djokovic. Also this year, our cricketers narrowly lost out to Afghanistan at their World Cup, when they seemed set for their first ever win in the competition.

Likewise, any golf fans who followed the fortunes of Colin Montgomerie during the 1990's, couldn't help but despair as a succession of chances to win Majors slipped through his fingers.

However, no person or group epitomises the pain and suffering our country regular endures on the world stage like the national football team. Whether it's glorious failure, utter humiliation or something in between, Scotland's footballers have been there and done it.

In 1978, Ally McLeod whipped fans into such a frenzy that there were people - even the normally sane - talking up Scotland's chances of actually winning the World Cup. A hammering against Peru and a draw with Iran soon put a stop to such nonsense. There was the famous victory against Holland – including Archie Gemmill's wonder goal – but it was too little, too late.

Four years later in Spain, there was more agony. This time the USSR denied us a place in the next round on goal difference, a fate all the more painful due to a comical clash between Alan Hansen and Willie Miller which led to the Soviets second goal in the decisive final game.

Those appearances were part of a remarkable run. For five consecutive World Cup finals, Scotland were there. For a generation of fans, being on the game's biggest stage was the norm. Sure, they were more supporting cast than leading role, given they had never managed to go beyond the group stages. But it was an exceptional qualification record, one which is all the more impressive when held up against what has happened since.

The last of those tournaments was, of course, Italy in 1990. Qualification had been hard earned, finishing second in a group behind an excellent Yugoslavia side, but ahead of both France and Norway.

The man in charge was Andy Roxburgh. Despite spending seven years in his post, it would be stretching reality to suggest that Roxburgh was anything more than tolerated by many players and fans. The former SFA Director of Coaching, he guided Scotland to the 1982 European under-18 Championship title and landed the top job four years later.

It was the type of appointment which, were it to happen nowadays, would be considered innovative and a breath of fresh air. However, back then it left many feeling underwhelmed.

On the playing front, the squad perhaps wasn't as strong as in previous campaigns. There wasn't a Bremner, Dalglish or Law

to call on, but there was still enough talent in the 22-man pool to suggest that the promised land of the knockout stages was a realistic destination.

The Scottish Premier Division provided home based players like Jim Bett, Richard Gough, Paul McStay and Maurice Malpas. Beyond the domestic game, other clubs represented in Roxburgh's squad included Chelsea, Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund – imagine a similar situation now.

A decent run in the competition would not only let the world see what we were capable of when it came to our national game, it would ease the pain and shame of the previous sixteen years. Millions of Scots waited, hoped and expected.

I was one of them. When Argentina and Cameroon got the tournament off to a sensational start, I was thirteen years old. This was the third World Cup that I could remember - 1978, mercifully, coming a wee bit too soon for me.

My memories of Italia '90 are as much about the post-match-kickabouts – played immediately after the afternoon kick-offs had finished - as the real thing. I think of warm summer nights and the school holidays fast approaching, though I'm sure the weather wasn't quite as glorious in reality as it is in my mind.

We were lucky, I suppose. My friends and I were probably the last generation who could play football in the street with a minimum of fuss. Back then, the south-side of Glasgow still had plenty of spare ground which could quickly be transformed into the fields of our dreams. Nowadays, any free land quickly becomes a housing estate or a mini shopping complex.

I have so many other memories of that time. For me, it was about Madchester. It was about Joe Bloggs and Benzini clothes. It was about The Big Day music festival at venues around the centre of

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my home city, where many artists took the opportunity to protest about the introduction of the Poll Tax.

I was even fortunate enough to be living in that year's European City of Culture...yes, I do mean Glasgow.

Football wise, things weren't going so swimmingly. My club team weren't faring so well and going into the tournament, Scottish football was stunned by the news that Hearts were planning a takeover of Hibernian. So, for many people, Scotland's introduction to the tournament on the fourth day of matches was a welcome distraction.

Scotland v Costa Rica

Over the past twenty years, the phrase 'there are no easy games in international football' has become something of a mantra for players, managers and the media. They're right – the gap between the best teams on the planet and the rest has narrowed and the former Soviet and Balkan states competing as independent nations has made things a lot more interesting.

Back then though, many fans still believed that Scotland only had to turn up to overcome some opposition, the word 'only' still part of their vocabulary. It was 'only' Costa Rica in this case, but the warning signs were there prior to the tournament.

After beating Argentina in a March friendly (becoming unofficial world champions for a second time), a 3-1 home defeat to Egypt was one of a number of poor results in the lead up to the real thing.

As I rushed home from school on the day of the match however, I still expected Roxburgh's team to ease their way into the competition with a comfortable victory – which shows just how wrong you can be.

Scotland created enough chances to earn the win, they just didn't take any. Luis Gabelo Canejo in the Costa Rican goal put in an inspired performance and, at the other end, when Juan Cayaso clipped the ball over the advancing Jim Leighton early in the second-half, it would prove to be the only goal of the game.

It was another torrid, gut-wrenching, heart breaking, letdown. For my generation, this was our Peru – so I pity anyone old enough to have experienced both.

Scotland v Sweden

I didn't actually watch this game live. Instead, I was playing football with a few mates, on a patch of grass along the road from my family home. That was more down to my preference for playing the game over watching, rather than any disgust with the outcome of the first match.

I remember a warm Saturday night and large numbers of people passing by our makeshift pitch. Most were carrying bags containing some light refreshments, as they made their way to somewhere with a television, in order to watch events from Genoa.

We were also provided with regular updates. At a house just across the street, a group of guys in their late teens and early twenties were in attendance for a 'social gathering'. A mixture of shouting, drunken chanting and dance music blasted from the property, and we were made fully aware of how the game was developing.

Stuart McCall would later say that the match was won in the

tunnel. The Scottish players, apparently, intimidated and 'got in the faces' of their Scandinavian opponents, who had also lost their first fixture. It clearly worked, with the then Everton man scoring in the opening minutes.

The score remained the same deep into the second period. Then, back in Glasgow, a head popped out of an upstairs window and screamed over to us.

"Penalty for Scotland."

We immediately stopped what we were doing and waited.

Another goal would surely kill off the Swedes and put our campaign back on track. Those of us who belonged to the green and white side of Glasgow tried to ignore the fact that Mo Johnston (still my least favourite player of all time) was taking the spot-kick.

A year before, Johnston had agreed to return to what he described as 'the only club I've ever wanted to play for', before changing his mind and signing for Rangers. While I abhor the bigotry and hatred which blights football in Glasgow, I reserve the right to maintain a strong dislike for Johnston to this day.

That said, I managed to display some uncharacteristic maturity. Like most people in my street that night, I felt relieved when I heard that the penalty had been converted. Despite conceding a late goal, Scotland had gained vital two points. We were back in business.

Scotland v Brazil

Something strange happened in the days and hours leading up to this match. Suddenly, people around me who previously had no interest in football were voicing their opinions on the national team's final group game. Followers of New Kids on the Block and WWF (wrestling, not wildlife) were dishing out score predictions and telling Roxburgh – and the rest of us – who to pick. Even the teachers were getting involved.

The 'real', all-year round football fans, me included, were less than impressed. One of the biggest games in my lifetime and all these outsiders were suddenly interested in football. It was my first real experience of the game going beyond regular supporters and reaching the wider population.

I have two memories of the game itself – Murdo McLeod being knocked out, and Jim Leighton clutching a late Brazilian shot at goal with both hands.

Only one of those actually happened. McLeod, while standing in the defensive wall, was indeed struck full in the face by a shot by Branco, leading to a concussion. However, Leighton didn't hold a shot from Alemao and Muller tapped home after the ball broke to him. Scotland had been eight minutes from gaining the point that they required to make the knockout stages.

The minute that ball crossed the line, it was over. I knew it, and so did every other deflated and devastated fan at home or at the match. There wouldn't be any heroic equaliser when the game was in its dying embers. That's not what Scotland did...or do.

As we had done in 1974 and would do again at Euro '96, Scotland had come agonisingly close to escaping from their group. However, the upset against Costa Rica denied anyone involved the opportunity of calling this 'glorious' failure – this was just failure.

However, it was also the end of an era. The run of World Cup appearances was coming to an end, with France in 1998 the only time that we have graced the finals since. Such is the decline in the Scottish game, that disappointing campaign a quarter of a century ago could almost be looked upon fondly – you don't know what real mediocrity is until you don't qualify at all. Were Gordon Strachan to take us to Russia in 2018, he'd make himself a hero, irrespective of how we performed when we got there.

As for me, I look forward to Scotland's next tournament appearance. While it's nice to reminisce, I'd like more from the national team than just increasingly distant memories.

THE DEATH OF THE PARTY: A TOURNAMENT RETROSPECTIVE

GREG THEOHARIS SUMMARISES THE EVENTS OF ITALIA '90 AND THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT IN WHICH IT PLAYED OUT.

GREG THEOHARIS - @Sofalife <http://dispatchesfromafootballsofa.com/>

The first hammer blows had been struck during that memorable Berlin night of November 1989. Within the wall's rubble, soon to be packaged and sold off as dusty commemorations to totalitarianism, the triumphalism of the neoliberal ideology would quickly become encapsulated in the notorious trumpeting that we had at last reached "the end of history". From this point on, markets would be left unimpeded to

devour everything and everyone who stood in their way as long as you could affix a price tag; and as we now know, that's pretty much everything the whole damned planet has to offer.

However, with it came the promise of hope. The impoverished populations of Eastern Europe, who for years had played the role of repressed pawns in the phony conflicts of the Cold War and who had suffered at the hands of egomaniacal sociopaths, would soon break themselves free of the yoke of Soviet style communism. Germany would finally be reunited. In December, Romania followed in far bloodier circumstances. One by one they fell, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the USSR itself and finally the horrors of the Yugoslav break-up would unravel before us as we looked on in helpless paralysis. But amongst all this chaos and flux, it bears repeating, there came the promise of hope.

The summer of 1990 saw the world delicately balanced on a precipice; one that would tumble us towards an uncertain and undefined future. Nelson Mandela had walked to his freedom months earlier and Margaret Thatcher was in the final throes of her tumultuous time as British Prime Minister. Young people were dancing in fields high on ecstasy and love whilst being condemned by a reactionary media as dangers to themselves and society. People were rioting on the streets and we were still trying to process the tragic events of Hillsborough.

Wherever you cared to look, it seemed as though we were being presented with choices. Profound ones. The ones of the

life-changing, epoch making kind. Who would therefore have thought that a football tournament would serve as the window into these possible futures and would tantalisingly dangle hope into our living rooms for the most fleeting of moments before 'non-history' took its course. Italia '90 wasn't a by-product of these alleged end times. What Italia '90 would in hindsight become is the historical bridge between the past and the future present we now inhabit.

That the role of hosting the World Cup had fallen upon Italy was strangely apt within the prevailing historical mood. Amidst

the glorious ruins of centuries past, staunchly grounded upon a set of traditional values centred upon the unspoken allegiance to codes of honour and family, the country was perennially at odds with the geographical divisions within itself. Probably as a consequence of this persistent national angst, the Italian squad flirted with hysterical anxiety from an early stage, burdened as they were by the weight of their own footballing history and the expectations of a demanding public. It would fall to a virtual unknown Southerner, going by the name of Salvatore Schillaci, to offer them the salvation that would carry them all the way to the second most heartbreaking



penalty shoot-out defeat of the competition. In a country so steeped in the feats accomplished by Catholic saints, it was perhaps telling that Schillaci emerged from obscurity to forever be feted for six goals that would enshrine him in the nation's folklore. Moreover, the bulging eyes and wild gesticulations he became synonymous for, were part of a wider Italian tradition for high melodrama that, for outsiders, found its outward expression in the sonic gravitas of what became the tournament's unofficial anthem, *Nessun Dorma* – an aria of impassioned love that results in tragic loss. When seen through Italian eyes therefore, the climax to their tournament was in keeping with such operatic pathos.

The turbulent winds of change may have been sweeping all before them but elsewhere in the tournament, inevitabilities like Italy's demise, proved that some things remain stubbornly



consistent despite the instability of everything around them. Scotland yet again managed to conspire to knock themselves out of the group stages, Brazil couldn't vanquish the ghosts of 1970 and (controversially) exited at the second round stage and the resentments and hatreds of history bubbled over and were delivered in a phlegmy globule by Frank Rijkaard into Rudi Völler's bubble perm during West Germany's bad-tempered encounter with the Dutch in the last 16.

Rijkaard's exocet of hate may have been shocking, but it was a damp squib in comparison to the seismic shift in the status quo that brought the curtain up on the tournament. It wasn't just the fact that Cameroon beat the World Champions Argentina on opening day, it was the manner in which they went about brutally dismantling a squad comprised of egos that caught the world's imagination. Claudio Caniggia was virtually decapitated by Benjamin Massing and as the aggressor was shown the inevitable red card for his transgressions, he graciously trudged off and took our applause. A message had been sent out. Cameroon were not here to merely make up the numbers as so many African sides who had gone before them had. It proved to be no fluke. Yet another virtual unknown, this time answering to the name Roger Milla, wiggled his bum and scored his way into football's pantheon as Cameroon continued on an upward trajectory that would push England to the very brink in the quarter finals. Here, yet again, was the promise of something new. That African teams have failed to surpass the achievements of the Indomitable Lions is another example of how the spark of a footballing heartland has inevitably been snuffed out and homogenised by the dominant hegemony of European football.

Where Cameroon were able to catch their opponents on the back foot because of their relative anonymity before the tournament, the advent of the internet and the regular familiarity of seeing African players excel in European leagues has made such giant-killing runs less likely. As a result, the vibrancy and contrasting styles of World Cups has suffered. And while such results are not impossible, they are far less likely and consequently, the delirium and joy that that Cameroon squad continues to evoke in us, will forever be locked within the framing of this time and this place.

In that regard, Italia '90 serves us well as a historical document. Take a quick glance at the countries represented

and you get a sense of the enormity of the social and political upheaval that took place during this time period. Three of these countries have ceased to exist in one form or another and it is notable that their respective destinies in the tournament gave us an indication of how their respective fates would unfold.

The Soviet Union who had only two years previously contested the European Championship final and were blessed with players of international renown such as Oleg Protasov and Rinat Dasayev, laboured to dismal defeat in their opening two games as if their players had already decided to give up the ghost of socialism. It would be an inglorious demise for a football nation that had at times pushed the boundaries as to what was possible on a football pitch.

Meanwhile, Yugoslavia emerged from a difficult group to defeat the ubiquitous underachievers Spain only to find themselves dumped out of the tournament by an increasingly cynical Argentinian team. The delicate balancing act/social experiment of meshing together such disparate talents and ethnic identities, including the majestic Dragan Stojkovic, would never be seen again and the fragility of the Yugoslav state would fragment with such ferocity that the national team would subsequently be forced to relinquish its berth at the European Championship of 1992.

Of these dissolving nations, it was only West Germany who pursued the trophy with any kind of conviction buoyed by their impending rebirth as a reunified sovereign state. Ten goals were scored in the group stages against opposition, the United Arab Emirates notwithstanding, expected to present much sterner tests for the eventual champions. This was a West German collective that had it all. Defensive solidity in the form of Andreas Brehme and Jürgen Kohler was reinforced by the midfield drives of captain Lothar Matthäus that was in turn ruthlessly executed in attack by Völler and Jürgen Klinsmann. As ever more challenging opposition was dispatched with each passing round, it became apparent that West Germany's victory in the final would act as a catalyst of sorts which would bring the new country together whilst simultaneously paying tribute to the successful efficiency and organisation which had once before dragged Germany out of the ashes of war. That it would take the new Germany another twenty-four years to reclaim the World Cup is perhaps an indication of how difficult the process of reunification had

been but what transpired in Rio in 2014 was a culmination of a country that was able to adapt and respond to the challenges put in its path.

The final, despite playing out in West Germany's favour, will never be remembered with fondness. It was a cynical exercise in attrition that resulted in two players sent off for the first time in the tournament's showpiece finale. If Italia '90 was indeed the bridge between two eras, then Argentina's presence in the final was a clear indication that something had to change within the game. It would seem that Cameroon's smash and grab job in the opening game brought out the darker character of a side that was just as capable of producing football of exuberant brilliance when the mood took them. Argentina in 1990 had clearly decided to abandon their footballing principles and it signalled the beginning of the end for arguably the greatest player in the game's history.

Diego Maradona, as in 1986, was clearly a cut above his contemporaries and it is testament to his talents that he once again led his country to the final. However, even the casual observer could sense that he had begun to sink into the mire of his own hubris. Whether that was the self-absorbed arrogance of his pre-match kick-up routine against Cameroon or his very real belief that Neapolitans would switch their allegiances from their national side to their own club's talisman in the build-up to the semi-final against Italy, there was a sense that even this most outrageous of footballing talents had reached its apex. The next time we were to see him, he would be careering towards a camera on an American football pitch, with veins popping and eyes intense and we would at that point realise he would never again reach those dizzying football heights.

The same would apply to a star that burned brightly for an even briefer moment than Maradona's. Paul Gascoigne's arrival on the world stage has been much mythologised and eulogised in the years that have passed but it would not be overstating it to suggest that he was at the vanguard of what seemed at the time to be a cultural shift in what England could be as a footballing nation.

The signs were not overtly obvious as the tournament began. English fans had been spirited away to the outpost of Sardinia by the authorities for fear of them turning the festival into a riotous orgy of violence. England's opener was an equally desultory condemnation of British football as they played out a kick and rush draw against the Republic of Ireland. However, against Holland, Bobby Robson showed that English players were adaptable in ways that had not been manifestly apparent for generations. In that match, they proved that they could match the artisans of Europe, both tactically and aesthetically with Gascoigne having the cheek to execute a 'Cruyff backheel' on the European champions.

To think that by the semi-final, they were fully capable of winning the trophy is somehow unimaginable these days. To think that after they arrived back at Luton airport to scenes of jubilation and fake breasts, shows us just how deliriously bright

the future seemed to be at the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century. After everything English football had gone through, there did at last seem to be sunlight bursting through the gloom. Then came the catastrophe of the Graham Taylor years in tandem with the formation of the Premier League and every subsequent England exit has slowly taken on the form of pastiche of that star-dusted night in Turin. We should have known this when Gazza launched his self-destructive tackle in the 1991 FA Cup final. With his shattered bones came the realisation that we would never experience anything as magical as 1990 again.

Because unlike today's stars who increasingly resemble detached drones from a computer simulation, those players seemed like they were of us and with us. Whilst Gazza's tears and Gary Lineker's childlike grin of glee after the last gasp goal against Belgium have crystallised themselves into the collective consciousness, it is the image of Chris Waddle and Terry Butcher moving their arms in unison whilst disco dancing that has endured in my memory. Looking at these two men, you get the sense that they wouldn't feel so far removed from those supporters on the terraces who in themselves did much

to dismiss the notions that we were all feral yobs on the hunt for violence. Never again would we feel so connected to our own players. For a short moment in time, love really did have the world in motion.

Nothing lasts forever. Things must necessarily change and objectively assessing Italia '90 from beyond the mirage of warm nostalgia, it was an exercise in negativity. So began the process of re-constructing the game. With some irony, the USA had qualified for a World Cup for the first time in forty years and whilst they did not leave any lasting impressions, they would be a presence at every World Cup since then. The country

that had proclaimed its ideological supremacy in this new world order was to become a key player in football's embracing of a free market philosophy that would pursue its globalised visions with missionary zeal. The 1994 World Cup would shake off the perception that football was a game for two continents. Football would now truly become the world's game and whilst this strikes a utopian chord with the eternal optimist in us, it would also set us down the path of avarice and corruption that will eventually culminate in this philosophy's apotheosis in Qatar in 2022.

Perhaps that's an oversimplistic analysis of what transpired in the wake of Italia '90. Hindsight is after all the most beneficial of tools to have when writing retrospectively about an event. Maybe writing this piece from the cynical vantage point of looming middle age is difficult to separate from the youthful exuberance of a twelve year-old. But when I replay those tears in my mind, I don't just see the pain of courageous defeat streaming down the face of my childhood hero. I see the unconscious acknowledgement of having lost something before it ever truly began. The future was Rupert Murdoch's. It was Sepp Blatter's too. We had our chance and we blew it and we've been lamenting it ever since. Italia '90 was indeed the end of history in one sense. There would be no going back after that.



DOWNFALL – MARADONA AND THE MEZZOGIORNO

BEFORE THE SEMI-FINAL BETWEEN ITALY AND ARGENTINA, DIEGO MARADONA – HERO OF NAPLES – TRIED TO IGNITE THE COUNTRY’S NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE TO GET HIS NEOPOLITAN WORSHIPPERS ON SIDE. JOHN O’SULLIVAN INVESTIGATES THE ROOTS OF THE DIVIDE AND HOW DIEGO FAILED.

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“He who behaves honestly comes to a miserable end”
– Calabrian proverb.

In Jimmy Burns seminal biography, “Maradona the Hand of God”, the author points out two important events in the footballer’s early childhood that were to have a profound effect on Diego’s life. When he was just a toddler he became disoriented in the dark and fell into the family cesspit, the traumatised child was rescued by his uncle, Cirilo, who prophetically cried out; “Diegito keep your head above the shit!” It was the same uncle who was involved in the second formative event in Maradona’s childhood when he gave the boy a present for his 3rd birthday, a football. In these two events we can see the conception of the two Maradonas; Diego, the man who would constantly fall back on his family in times of trouble and the boy with the football, Maradona, who would become the figure so revered and loved by millions. At times in his life it would be nearly impossible to say where one ended and the other began, even the man himself would refer to himself in the first person and the third person in the same interview, but it is crucial to any exploration of Maradona to take into account these, sometimes conflicting personalities. In the darkest hours of his life Maradona would turn to drugs to ease the pain of Diego and recreate the omnipotence of Maradona.

In hindsight, Maradona’s move to Italy seems somewhat odd to us today, it’s worth remembering that Serie A was considered the best league in Europe in the mid eighties, but why Napoli? After his unhappy time at Barcelona, where he saw at firsthand what “mes que un club” actually meant and his experience of the snobbery of Catalan society, Maradona jumped at the chance of escape that Juventus or Napoli promised. When Maradona flew into Napoli’s San Paolo stadium on the 5th July 1984 he would begin the journey that would see him crowned King of football and simultaneously set off on the path to self destruction. To understand why Napoli was the perfect fit for the maestro we have to look back on the history of not only the city of Naples, but the history of the whole country, particularly the south; the mezzogiorno.

“Now that Italy is made, we need to make Italians” – Massimo d’Azeglio.

Italy, at the time of unification in 1861, was a disparate group of provinces divided into three main kingdoms; the Northern city states, the Vatican states in the middle and the largely peasant Kingdom of the two Sicilys in the south. However, it is only after World War 2 and the fall of fascism that the fledgling nation began to take shape.

The largely communist resistance fighters in the North were the most powerful bloc, but by clever manoeuvring by the newly formed Christian Democrats (DC) and their leader - the brilliant politician De Gaspari (who had the backing of the Vatican and the U.S) - they were coaxed into a power sharing agreement that considerably diluted their influence. The elections of 1948 would see the Americans interfere with Italian politics in the most audacious fashion. They promised \$176 million in interim aid, along with the promise to return the city of Trieste, if the people voted against the Communists. The DC would run their campaign with the slogan “All intelligent people will vote for De Gaspari because he’s obtained from America the flour for your spaghetti, as well as the sauce to go on it”. Together with a promise for agrarian reform in the south the DC obtained a majority without the help of the left. They would cling on to this power until 1992. The promised agrarian reforms were indeed delivered but at a snail’s pace. The powerful southern landlords, with the help of the mafia, doled out largely unusable land to the peasant farmers and labourers and then only to card carrying members of the DC. There were several rebellions at this time



but they were either ruthlessly crushed by the police in collusion with the mafia or skilfully defused by De Gaspari’s diplomacy where he would promise everything and deliver nothing. Continued investment in the North of the country saw the powerful industrial cities grow and prosper while their compatriots in the South lived a hand to mouth existence sometimes subsidising their

income by petty crime; paying a small cut to the mafia of course. So while change happened at an incredible rate in the north, the people in the south grew increasingly disillusioned; by 1960, 62 out of 64 provincial prefects and all 135 police chiefs and their deputies had been employed under Mussolini. Small wonder that the people of the mezzogiorno and particularly Naples began to look inwards, to their own communities and more importantly to their immediate family.

“From the bitter experience of many battles fought and lost, of many promises made and never kept, of emigration and of war, the southern peasantry had developed a philosophy which mixed fatalism, solidarity and distrust.” – Paul Ginsborg; A History of Contemporary Italy.

The notion of the family above everything else has been a mainstay of Italian life since the mid 15th century. Massive industrialization in the north, together with high levels of education and employment, led to more social inclusion and responsibility and a steady decline in the importance of the nuclear family through the 20th century. The exact opposite happened in the south. The American sociologist, Edward Banfield, described the practise as

"amoral familism" which had as its main tenet "maximise the material, short run advantage of the nuclear family; assume that all others will do likewise." The northern Italians had a derogatory name for this cult of the family; they called it *mammismo*. This is a crucial point in understanding the ease that Maradona felt among the Neapolitans. The steady stream of migrant workers following the harvests from hemisphere to hemisphere, known as the *golondrinas* (swallows), led to a historical connection between the *mezzogiorno* and the *favellas* of the River Plate like La Boca. Maradona's family, through his mother, were descended from Italian migrant workers; even his beloved Boca Juniors were founded by immigrants from Genoa.

By the late 1980s Italy was in economic boom. Subsequently there was mass migration from the south to the north, particularly to the cities of Milan and Turin, with these migrants eager for assimilation many began to support Juventus and AC Milan causing even further hatred for the big two in the south. One notable phenomenon of the boom was the sharp rise of women in employment – from 1970 to 1985 it had risen by 50% - which in turn had seen a marked increase in the wealth of families now with two incomes instead of one. This was not reflected in the south where the level of women in employment was still comparable to the fifties. The inherent mistrust of government, both national and local, was still prevalent in the eighties despite the boom, with most people firmly believing that the economic upturn had taken place in spite of the rulers not because of them. Thus, the DC struggled on in power, largely in coalition with the socialists, a situation which favoured neither party and hindered progress and transparency. Despite all this, Italy's GDP was \$599.8bn in 1986 compared to the UK's \$547.7bn. It is worth noting that 12.5% of GDP was due to mafia activities such as drug trafficking, extortion, thefts, kidnappings and corruption; an astonishing figure which shows how extensive the tentacles of organised crime pervaded Italian society.

The north/south divide was equally apparent in football with only one team from the south, Cagliari in 1970, winning Serie A since its inception in 1929. When the Maradona-inspired Napoli captured the Scudetto in 1987, it ensured his elevation to the great pantheon of saints worshipped in almost pagan fashion in the city. Unbeknownst to the outside world, Maradona was at this time actively being courted by the Neapolitan mafia the *comorrah*. While it is uncertain whether the unfortunate Diego sought them out to satisfy his cocaine habit or that the *comorrah* sought out glory by association with Maradona the saint, what is known is that it was common knowledge in Naples at the time, even to journalists. Whether they were afraid to report it because of the possible consequences or because they considered it unimportant, is not known. One thing is for certain, Maradona would be very attracted to the *comorrah* ethos of honour and the family, indeed in the infamous photograph of Maradona posing with the notorious Giuliano family, one is struck by the similarity between them; they have the relaxed camaraderie of siblings. Maradona would deliver the Scudetto to the city again in 1990, but already the knives were being sharpened. The journalists and even some ordinary Neapolitans were just waiting for an excuse; the great festival of Italia '90 would provide one for them.

"For 364 days of the year they treat you like dirt, now they expect you to cheer for them?" – Maradona prior to the semi-final with Italy.

Italia '90 is remembered above all for the drama, despite the football being dire; red cards, dubious penalties and shootouts were the order of the day. By the time the semi final in Naples between Italy and Argentina came around, most Neapolitans would find themselves conflicted. Did they support their national team, symbol of the society that had oppressed them for so many years, or did they cheer on their beloved Maradona, symbol of their pride as partenopei and the rebel leader of the south? In the end they did neither. The Northern press were predictably vociferous in their condemnation of this perceived treachery; they would ensure a hostile reception in Rome for the final. 74,000 took their seats in the Stadio Olimpico for the climax of Italia '90; there were no neutrals, as the camera panned

down the Argentines during their anthem, which was being roundly booed, Maradona was picked up by the TV cameras mouthing "sons of bitches!" after all he'd done for Italian football, this was the ultimate betrayal. After the ignominious defeat to the Germans, it was clear that the love affair was over. Nobody seems to know exactly why the Giuliano family suddenly withdrew their protection from Maradona, some speculate that it was the star's failure to throw certain games, but it became common knowledge that Maradona was now fair game.

After a game against Bari, on the 17th of March 1991, the Napoli doctors tested Maradona twice for drugs. Unsurprisingly, he tested positive for cocaine; surprisingly the club released the details to the media. Maradona received a 14 month ban; he would never play for the partenopei again. Over the subsequent months, scandal after scandal would break involving Diego. Tales of cocaine fuelled orgies, drunken binges that caused him to miss important matches and the shadowy figures from the *comorrah* who were part of his inner circle. But perhaps the most damning scandal was the revelation that Maradona had fathered a child with his Italian lover Cristiana Sinagra. Was his subsequent denial and desertion of the mother and his son the ultimate betrayal in the eyes of the Neapolitans; a crime against the honour of the family? However, when a scandal breaks in Italy you can be sure that you are never far away from an even bigger one. Maradona was about to be blasted back into the shade by a scandal that would shake Italy to its roots and completely change the political landscape of the whole country.

On the 17th of February 1992, a Socialist politician, Mario Chiesa, was accused of taking a bribe from a cleaning company to award them a lucrative state cleaning contract. The party hierarchy moved swiftly to disown him, a betrayal that caused him to accuse many of his party colleagues of taking bribes themselves. A chain of accusations and counter accusations began that would involve politicians at all levels, company directors and even the President, Bettino Craxi. Within a relatively short period the scandal, known as *tangentopoli* (bribesville), would see many of the politicians and businessmen commit suicide rather than face the ignominy of public disgrace and imprisonment. The all-powerful Christian Democrats and their coalition partners, the Socialists, would be driven to extinction and Craxi himself would flee to Libya where he would die in exile. It is estimated that bribes to the value of \$4bn were changing hands annually in the 80's. Nobody knows the full extent of the corruption as far as Italia '90 is concerned, but most observers agree that it was rife. The overall budget for the tournament was estimated to have been exceeded by as much as 84%, with vast sums still unaccounted for; the money seems to have simply vanished. The cost of building new stadia in Rome and Turin, the redevelopment of the San Siro and Bari, were all council funded projects that left stadia which quickly became old fashioned and impractical to run. There were other projects that were unfinished or not even started like the hotel complex in Rome that cost millions of Euros. Even as late as 2011 the Italian government was still providing funds in the budget to pay back interest on loans secured for Italia '90.

Life goes on in the *mezzogiorno* as it always has, although they now face an even greater threat in the shape of the Legia Nord group (a kind of Italian UKIP) who want to cut them loose from Italy altogether; their argument being that the south is not part of Europe, it's part of Africa. Italy needs a strong government, but as one politician put it "the Italian people would not vote for a strong government, because they refuse to believe that such a thing exists." But to suggest, as Legia Nord does, that the introspective familism of the *mezzogiorno* is merely a lifestyle choice and not the result of decades of underinvestment and institutional racism, is to simplify an incredibly complex and delicate situation. Maybe the *mezzogiorno* needs more Maradonas, new reasons to feel that it's an identity to be proud of and celebrate. As for Diego, well he pops up now and again, still rubbing people up the wrong way, and above all, still keeping his head above it.



P. GASCOIGNE

ENGLAND



THE DARKNESS AND THE LIGHT

THROUGH IAN HAMILTON'S 'GAZZA AGONISTES', ALEX STEWART EXAMINES OUR COMPLEX AND CONTRADICTIONARY FASCINATION WITH POSSIBLY ITALIA 90'S MOST DIVISIVE CHARACTER - PAUL GASCOIGNE

ALEX STEWART - @AFHStewart <http://putnielsingoal.com>

The first time I recall seeing Paul Gascoigne play was the Euro '96 game against Scotland. David Seaman has just elbowed Gary McAllister's penalty onto the crossbar and the ball loops out for a corner. England win a free kick which Seaman lumps up field. There are around twelve minutes left. The ball is flicked out to Darren Anderton by Teddy Sheringham; Anderton plays a deft, scooped ball into the path of the onrushing Paul Gascoigne. Gazza, all peroxide bustle and dash, knocks the ball up over the closing Colin Hendry with his left foot, leaving the Scot on his arse as he sprawls to recover, before hammering a volley with his right past Rangers club-mate Andy Goram. He explodes, seemingly unable to know what to do with himself, the energy and relief that accompanies any goal compounded by his own personal joy at performing in front of the home crowd, his mentor Terry Venables, and at issuing yet another rejoinder to the critics who said his sojourn north of the border was symptomatic of his wane. And then, in a moment of pure Gazza, attended to by his coterie of teammates turned fellow clowns, he throws himself on the ground, arms outstretched, as they squirt water into his mouth from bottles to evoke the dentist's chair drinking game of a pre-tournament trip to the Far East. This is Gazza redux, a moment of sublime, game-turning wonder followed immediately by tomfoolery and mirth, a rejoinder and release at the same time, a bathetic silliness to accompany the moment of at-once-cool and instinctive footballing brilliance.

I was fourteen when Euro '96 unfurled in resolutely English fashion, promising so much and then failing to deliver at the last. I was too young to read the tabloids, too young to be aware of Paul Gascoigne, or more appropriately of his dominant alter-ego Gazza, as anything more than the sometime flickering genius around whom we built our hopes in the tournament. I do not remember Italia '90, when, so we are told, a nation fell in love with football, nor was I especially part of the post-'92 modernisation, or gentrification, of football. I did, occasionally, watch Football Italia on Channel 4, and I suppose I should remember Gazza from his appearances on that, but in truth, I was there for the goalkeeping, not the oddities of presentation that made this idiosyncratic football show such a retrospective pleasure.

This period was a watermark, the era when, as Simon Featherstone writes, football appeared to undergo "a revocation of [its] working-class heritage", the result of an

attempt "to broaden the appeal of football by dissociating it from the restrictive cultural codes that had marked its earlier history in England" and a growth of fan "discourses of emotion or passion...[displacing] the largely inarticulate social rituals of football's past." Gazza straddled this period, had a gifted footballing foot in both the old and new.

Granta is a highbrow literary magazine, not the expected location for a piece on a footballer. In 1993, the year after Fever Pitch and Sky, it published a full-length essay-cum-biography by poet and critic Ian Hamilton titled *Gazza Agonistes*. The title is a pretty horrible pun on Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, evoking a parallel between strong, dumb Samson and gifted, dumb Gascoigne (Samson also suffered being tricked and dying in Gaza, which is a bit toe-curling even to write, let alone dwell on). Milton asks "But what is strength without a double share / Of wisdom?" and Hamilton, it seems, does the same. He first saw Gazza playing in the black and white of Newcastle nine years before I saw him in the white of England: "I didn't exactly fall for him that day but I certainly looked twice." Hamilton was looking for a hero, though, for his team Spurs and for England: "Most soccer fans have a need to get hooked on the fortunes of a single player, to build a team around him so to speak. When England played well without Hoddle, I took a diminished pleasure in their triumphs...On the other hand, if Glenn had played, had made the winning goal, our patriotic joy would have been boundless."

Hamilton describes this odd process of discernment and fixation, of fanaticism, of being "part yob, part connoisseur." Hamilton describes too the interplay between the Newcastle instantiation of Gazza and his forward, the Brazilian flop Mirandinha. He speculates that Gazza is trying to get a rise out of the expensive import, to send him up by playing the ball to where he should have been, before deciding that, in fact, Gazza is trying to impress the striker, to please him. As Hamilton correctly states, such supposition is "the spectator's fate – we watch but in the end we have to guess." It is this distance that allows us to project such interpretations or, even, fantasies, onto players, and no one invited such projection more than Gazza.

As Hamilton says towards the end of the book, "we live in dreams, we soccer fans, and after a time we learn how to hoist ourselves from one dream to the next." Hamilton began to dream of a Lilywhite Gazza, despite the usual caveats expressed by all and sundry, the weight, the headless chicken approach to matches, the occasionally selfish play, the (god forbid) banter, the pranks and drinking and vulgarity. His dream came true and the "Geordie hick", as some unkind

London souls described him came south to the Big Smoke, the “brilliant but inconsistent” talent at once energising and frustrating Spurs fans. His time in the white of north London came to an end with the infamous tackle against Nottingham Forest, which injured his knee, his pride, and his chances of fulfilling both his long-term potential and, in the immediate, his move to S.S. Lazio, which was eventually completed for a reduced price. Hamilton charts his time with the Italian club, the successes and the injuries, the home-sickness and stupid antics, what Hamilton describes as Gascoigne’s ability to make “short work of his halo”. He also describes his time at Rangers, with domestic success marred by indiscipline and failure in European competition, as well as the stupid sectarian celebration and the pressure of Glasgow’s febrile footballing atmosphere. The original essay ends with the dribbling away of Gascoigne’s promise at Middlesbrough, although the book version adds a postscript, to which I will return.

Of course, Gazza is perhaps most known for being metonymic of the English men’s national team’s succession of near misses and spectacular failures in the period. While Hamilton describes Gazza as at times appearing “oafish and deranged, not at all the sort of man to whom you would entrust a nation’s pride”, he recognises that as the most gifted midfielder, or perhaps player, of his generation, Gascoigne could have brought something special to England. Indeed, at times, he did, but it is fitting that his most memorable moment is one of bathos, of failure, the tears during the Italia ’90 semi-final. As Hamilton notes, “The warrior’s tears were felt as patriotic tears, our tears” despite their elicitation being the result of selfishness of being booked and thus condemned to miss the final, should England have reached it, as Hamilton

himself recognises. Such conflicted reaction was typical of the weirdly oscillating view of Gazza that he had to endure for his whole career. When things were good, Gazza was good: “His immaturity was now being hymned as ‘childlike’; his aggression was ‘fire’, ‘guts’, ‘determination’; his yob prankishness sprang from a simple need to ‘entertain’.” When things were not good, when he played poorly or behaved so appallingly that even the greatest Gazza apologists had to censure him (such as the hideous litany of domestic violence and abuse visited on his partner then wife Sheryl), the press’ appetite for uncovering yet more pushed Gazza further into the spiral of drinking and isolation that football increasingly did little to ameliorate. As Hamilton points out, this media-driven desire to expose and criticise, while sometimes merited, became obsessive: after the Cup Final tackle “in England the fear that a great talent may have been destroyed was less pressing than the need to pontificate, to gloat.”

But there is sympathy in Hamilton’s essay for this tortured, hounded Gazza, the “daft as a brush” lad, first seen as “plump, twitchy, and pink-faced, and on the small side” (the twitching especially, the result of witnessing a childhood friend die in a car accident) transformed into a poisonous clown, capable of reminding us of his sublime gifts, but ultimately at best asinine,

at worst deeply unpleasant. The sympathy stems from the root of this transformation or, rather, the situation that seemed to force Gazza into much, if not all, of his behaviour (there never is and never will be an excuse of any sort for domestic violence). Gazza was unlucky enough to emerge at a period of transition in football, as I described above. Alongside the increase in press interest in footballers and the general growth of celebrity and tabloid ‘culture’, the post-Sky explosion of the game’s financial clout merged with the cultural shifts described above. Gazza was subject to all of this. He was one of some sort of ‘us’, one of the terrace lads of old football, but he was also glitzy, tabloid, famous, rich, a harbinger of new football. And he cried. That was new football, the football of Hornby, sport as psychological catharsis, not working class pastime. Hamilton describes this tension as rooted in class: “In England, there was an essential hostility to Gazza: a class fear, a culture-dread...If we were to meet him, we’d be ill at ease – both awed and condescending, with condescension somehow managing to win the day.” Of course, this is a very subjective ‘we’, the ‘we’ of ‘new’ football. Hamilton, as a poet, literary figure, intellectual, presents an engaged, even affectionate portrait of Gazza, but he cannot escape the fact that his sketch of the man is distanced by his own position. A review in The

Independent described Hamilton as an “armchair biographer”, an unfair slight given his regular attendance at games and his visits to Rome when Gazza was at Lazio to do research, but this elision with the sort of fan who came flocking to football post-Italia ’90 is instructive. Hornby and Hamilton were genuine, match-going fans, but they represented a shift in the football consumer and gave that new consumer a voice. Gazza’s tragedy was that he straddled this period, as much as it was his personal

demons, the alcoholism and eating disorders, the twitches and obsessive behaviour. He could not fit neatly into old or new football and ended up being disliked or, at the least, distrusted by both.

Hamilton himself, in his postscript to *Gazza Agonistes* in the Faber edition, recalls that Euro ’96 goal against the Scots, my first experience of Gazza, describing it as a “beautifully crafted” goal followed by “a tawdry spectacle” of a celebration. With horrible prolepsis, he writes in hope that he might see “the real Gazza, at long last, in top form for the millennium. And why not? After all, in 2000, Gascoigne will only be – what? – thirty three. The best, perhaps, is yet to come.” It was, of course, not to come. Gazza’s career tailed off into further injury, short spells for lower league clubs and a tiny stint in China, an unsuccessful attempt at coaching, and then a continuing tailspin into alcoholism and occasional mania. He is now a fallen idol, a shattered fraction of his former self, prone to meltdowns on social media and destructive, insane behaviour. His elevation and debasement was in some ways an unwanted, though perhaps necessary, exorcism of the ‘old’ football in the eyes of its neophyte consumers but it left a broken man in its wake. *Gazza Agonistes* is at once a fitting tribute to that man and emblematic of the process that broke him.

LET THE BULL LOOSE

THE ENGLAND SQUAD WASN'T ALL FANCY-DANS AND PART-TIME POP STARS. THE BLACK COUNTRY'S UNLIKELY LAD STEVE BULL ALSO MADE THE TRIP TO ITALY. WOLVES FAN JOHNNY PHILLIPS TALKS ABOUT HIS HERO.

JOHNNY PHILLIPS - @SkyJohnnyP

S ometime after the 1990 World Cup finals in Italy, the BBC aired a documentary about the tournament. It was a World Cup diary by a fan called Kevin Allen about his trip to watch England until they were knocked out. It was made from the fans' perspective, with much of it set against the background of the hooliganism that had followed the England team abroad over the previous decade, and the subsequent treatment of supporters by the authorities in Italy. Allen made a great film and, amongst other highlights, managed the coup of gaining access to England's hotel complex one day to conduct an interview with manager Bobby Robson, something that couldn't possibly happen in this controlled media era.

But for me, the film's best moment was probably the one with the poorest production values of all. It involved a drunken Allen sat at a piano after a night out following the quarter-final win over Belgium. He had composed an ode to Steve Bull, the Wolverhampton Wanderers striker, which looped continuously along the lines of "Ooh Bully, Bully, Ooh Bully, Bully." This made me immensely proud. It was yet another example of the player infiltrating the nation's consciousness, and putting my club on the map once more. Because for a short time leading up to Italia '90, Steve Bull was the nation's backyard hero. And, as an impressionable young Wolves fan, he was definitely mine.

It all began in 1986, not long after England's previous World Cup finals appearance. Wolves had just come out of receivership for the second time in four years and had come perilously close to being wound up. They played in a ground that was half-closed and one of the two stands that remained open stood marooned 50 yards from the pitch, a constant reminder of a ground redevelopment that ran out of money. Crowds had dipped below

3,000 and the club was languishing at the bottom of Division Four.

Graham Turner had replaced Brian Little as manager in October. It wasn't a particularly popular appointment following Turner's previous unsuccessful spell as manager of neighbouring Aston Villa. One of his first decisions was to spend £65,000 of a director's own money to bring Bull and fullback Andy Thompson from arch-rivals West Bromwich Albion. The first thing they did as Wolves players was drive up to Burnden Park, Bolton to watch from the stands as the club lost 3-0 to Multipart League part-timers Chorley in an FA Cup First Round replay.

But the darkest hour was indeed just before the dawn, because what followed was beyond comprehension for even the most optimistic of supporters. Bull's 19 goals in the 1986/87 season helped steer the club to the brink of promotion, before eventually losing out in the first ever season of the play-offs to Aldershot. Over the following two seasons, Bull and his strike partner Andy Mutch scored an incredible 148 goals between them, 102 of them from Bull. In the 1987/88 season he scored 52 as Wolves celebrated a Fourth Division title and Sherpa Van Trophy double. In the 1988/89 season he scored 50 as Wolves won Division Three.

It was enough to earn him an England call-up, and on Saturday 27th May 1989 he came off the bench for his debut against Scotland at Hampden Park to score, whilst still a Third Division player.

"Bull...and again...Oh!" shouted an incredulous Barry Davies in the commentary box. And at home in Liverpool, I leapt around the living room with my Dad in delight that our hero from crappy old Wolverhampton Wanderers had just scored on live telly in front of the nation. And at school on Monday morning, all my Liverpool and Everton supporting mates came up to me and said they saw Bull score for England.

There was never any doubt that Bully would go to the World



Cup the following year. Well maybe there was, it was between him and Arsenal's Alan Smith, but from the minute he scored two goals in a Wembley friendly against Czechoslovakia, both set up by Paul Gascoigne, he was on the plane. I listened to snippets of the Radio Two commentary of that game on a small radio at the back of Liverpool Cathedral where I had been dragged by my school to perform in a concert.

The following day I went out and bought all the papers to keep the cuttings, as I did whenever I thought Wolves, or more likely Bully, had a chance of making the national papers. Living in Liverpool and supporting the club through hereditary misfortune meant opportunities to indulge in Wolves-related material in the pre-digital age were negligible.

By the time England left for their World Cup preparations at the end of the 1989/90 season I was beside myself with excitement. Bully had scored 27 goals in Division Two and had every chance of grabbing a place in the starting line-up alongside Gary Lineker, with only Peter Beardsley in competition for the second striker's berth. Obviously I had bought the Panini World Cup sticker album and had made sure I had Bully's sticker. It was easy enough to get hold of via a playground swap. John Barnes, Beardsley and Steve McMahon were the sought after ones in our Scouse yard.

And then I went down to the local barber shop and said, "I want a haircut like that please", and pointed to the photo of my hero on the sticker. The hairdresser took one look at the photo of the crewcut footballer, who looked more like an England fan straight off the terraces, and replied, "Does your Mum know you've come here?" Ten minutes later, with a number two shave all over, I was back off home and ready for England's final World Cup warm-up game.

It was away in Tunisia and Bully wasn't playing. This turned out to be a blessing. England were hopeless and trailed for most of the game after a mistake from Paul Gascoigne in the first half let in a lively Tunisian striker for a tremendous finish. Davies was in the commentary box again and wasn't happy. I was at home on the sofa but was happy because this was all part of the masterplan. It was set for my hero to come to the rescue. Finally, with ten minutes to go, Bully came off the bench. And with a minute left he stooped low at the near post to meet a Barnes cross with a deft flick header into the far corner. "It's that man Bull again!" screamed Davies. England's blushes had been spared and Bully was the saviour again.

The World Cup began and all the talk off the field was of England's hooligans and whether or not posting the team to Sardinia, and so containing them on an island, would work. On it, ahead of the opening game against Ireland, there was a mixture of excitement and trepidation. Robson had his old favourites down the spine of the team; Peter Shilton, Terry Butcher, Bryan Robson and Lineker. But there was excitement at the inclusion of Gazza in the starting line-up. The more experienced Beardsley was preferred to Bully up front, with the manager opting for his tried and trusted partnership despite the Liverpool striker's poor form. 1-1 (Lineker).

Seven minutes for my hero as a substitute and onto Holland. No Beardsley this time, but what's this? A sweeper system? In comes Mark Wright at the back, Lineker is on his own up front and there's still no place in the team for the main man. 0-0. But he did get half an hour as a sub this time. Things were looking up.

By the final group game Bobby Robson was backed into a

corner. They had to go for it against Egypt and the team was still misfiring. The build up to the match was probably as good as it got for us Bully devotees. There was Jimmy Greaves on Saint & Greavsie wearing a t-shirt with 'LET THE BULL LOOSE' printed on it. He wasn't the only one of course, I'd bought mine from the Molineux club shop months ago. Every national newspaper was clamouring for the Wolves man to be given a go from the start. Harry Harris, Nigel Clarke, David Lacey. I shouldn't really remember the names of football journalists from so long ago but I do because they were all writing about Bully.

And it worked. He started against the Egyptians. Ninety minutes later England were through thanks to Wright's header from Gascoigne's free kick. On reflection, Bully's involvement had been peripheral, but to this fevered schoolboy who was living and breathing his hero's every step, this was a triumph. I convinced myself that Bully had been instrumental in drawing the attention of Egyptian defenders at the pivotal set piece, allowing Wright the space to score. Every bit as important as if he had scored himself, of course.

Naturally I was a bit disappointed to see Bully back on the bench for the second round clash with Belgium, but he was there again at the heart of the action when it mattered, this time occupying more defenders at another free kick when David Platt hooked in the match-winning volley in the final minute of extra time. I keenly studied the post-match analysis of the winner just to check. Yes, that was definitely Bully celebrating the goal in that pile on with Platt and Lineker.

England were in the quarter-finals, but Bully wouldn't play again. Robson kept him on the bench as they scraped through a frantic five goal thriller against Cameroon before that epic semi-final in Turin, where Bully was an unused substitute once more. What started out as a dreary, fractious campaign on and off the field ended in heroic failure and a nation uplifted by football once more. In Pete Davies's 1990 book 'All Played Out', a peerless account of England's campaign, the author spent much of his time interviewing the players on rest

days during the tournament itself. He asked Bully what it meant for him to be out at the World Cup with England. The uncomplicated response from the player was simple. "I'm one of the best 22 players in the country." This was the crux of it. It was hard to believe that a player, who 12 months previously was playing in the Third Division, had found such illustrious company at the World Cup finals. As Wolves fans, we loved that. He was our player, and no matter that he didn't score, he was out there representing us.

For Bully, the England story was over in 1990. When Robson was replaced by Graham Taylor I misguidedly thought he could be the perfect manager for him. Taylor loved a target man for his wingers and Bully was surely the man to lead England into a bold future. It never happened. After a couple more squad appearances he was out of the picture for good. Thirteen caps and four goals doesn't quite tell the story - his goals per playing time ratio painted a much better picture. I never gave up hope that Bully would earn a recall, but as England stumbled into a disastrous European Championships campaign in 1992 and then failed to qualify for the World Cup in 1994 maybe he was better off out of it. England's 1990 campaign remains the country's best ever on foreign shores and is fondly remembered by all who witnessed it. That there was a place in the squad for a Second Division striker from Wolverhampton Wanderers still warms my heart.

I WENT DOWN TO THE LOCAL BARBER SHOP AND SAID, "I WANT A HAIRCUT LIKE THAT PLEASE"

WE COULD CRUSH THE WORLD

THEY ARRIVED AT ITALIA '90 AS THE YOUNG, VIBRANT DARK-HORSES. WITHIN TWO YEARS THEY WERE TORN APART BY CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND THEIR CONTROL, AS CHRIS ETCHINGHAM EXPLAINS.

CHRIS ETCHINGHAM - @CArmband <https://emancipationforgoalposts1.wordpress.com/>

Football so often is a tale of journeys, of teams, individuals and clubs. For some, those journeys end in glorious triumph; the Germans' victory in the World Cup last year was the culmination of 14 years extraordinary work following their awful performances in Euro 2000. For most though, the journey ends in failure and the empty feeling of what might have been. One team that had so much promise to be cruelly wrenched away from them by politics and civil war was the Yugoslav team of the early 1990's, and in particular, its team at the 1990 World Cup in Italy.

The team was made up of a mixture of seasoned professionals and those who had graduated from the side which won the 1987 World Under-20 championship in Chile. With the experienced Dragan Stojkovic and promising Robert Prosinecki, Yugoslavia had two of the most natural and creative talents at the World Cup – with the obvious exception of Argentina's captain and number ten.

Though much of the squad was based within Yugoslavia and played for the powerhouses of the Belgrade clubs Red Star and Partizan as well as Dinamo Zagreb and Hajduk Split, several were based abroad in France, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland and Italy. They were all gifted footballers, not your typical Eastern bloc international team, and there was a real feeling that they were a part of something and that their time was now. Within two years a team from Yugoslavia would be European champions and the country would be tearing itself apart in an orgy of violence, destruction and brutal nationalism. The Yugoslav team which qualified for Euro '92 were expelled from the tournament. Italia '90 was to be the Yugoslavs' last chance to play together as the six republics which made up the state before the inevitable oblivion. The end had already begun, the riot at the Maksimir football stadium in May 1990 had ramifications for the Yugoslav team as Zvonimir Boban - the gifted playmaker - was banned because he assaulted a policeman on the pitch in the middle of the riot.

This was all in the future though; the real story for this

Yugoslav team began three years earlier on the other side of the world at the Under-20 World Cup in Chile.

Initially reluctant to take part in the tournament, the Yugoslavian FA only sent a team to satisfy their obligations to FIFA. The team was already depleted as captain Aleksander Djordjevic was serving a four match ban for being sent off in the final qualifier, several players were injured and Sinisa Mihajlovic, Alen Boksic and Vladimir Jugovic were advised to stay at home as it was felt that they would gain more by playing for their respective clubs than in the tournament itself.

They beat hosts Chile 4-2 in the opening game of the tournament, a victory which was as sublime as it was fluent in the way they played. Suddenly these uninterested players found a belief, they also realised that if they won their next two

games, they would be able to stay in Santiago for the rest of the tournament. Santiago had a large population of Yugoslavian extraction and it also had nightlife. A lot of nightlife. Journalist Toma Mihajlovic who followed the team to Chile said that expectations were that the team would fulfil their three group fixtures and return home but "when they got to Chile those players found another face. They found a nice country and good accommodation...and so many girls" Indeed, defender Igor Stimac had fallen for the winner of Miss Chile 1987 and the team decided that they wanted to stay after all.

Next up was Australia who were beaten 4-0 followed by another win over Togo (4-1) and with Brazil next in the

quarter finals, suddenly Yugoslavia felt that they could achieve something. The players began to feel a sense of togetherness (a feeling which Slaven Bilic says carried on through subsequent teams as far as the Croatian squad of France 1998) and that they could win the entire tournament.

Red Star decided to recall Prosinecki, the star of the tournament to that point, for a UEFA Cup match but he didn't want to leave. The players protested to both the competition organisers and also FIFA. Red Star relented. Prosinecki gave thanks to his teammates by scoring a last minute winner against Brazil to set up a semi-final with East Germany which they subsequently won 2-1. Victory came at a price though; both

WHEN THEY GOT TO CHILE THOSE PLAYERS FOUND ANOTHER FACE. THEY FOUND A NICE COUNTRY AND GOOD ACCOMMODATION... AND SO MANY GIRLS

Prosinecki and Pedrag Mijatovic were suspended for the final against West Germany.

Boban, their other gifted midfielder, gave Yugoslavia the lead in the 85th minute before the Germans equalised through a Marcel Witeczek penalty. Ironically, it was Witeczek who missed the decisive penalty in the shoot out giving Yugoslavia a thoroughly deserved success. Not surprisingly the squad spent the next few days celebrating in Chile, extending a special invite to the dentist who had repaired Dubravko Pavlicic's teeth after they were knocked out by East Germany's Matthias Sammer. When the squad returned home to Yugoslavia there was a real feeling that this was the start of something big; players cried when saying their farewells and midfielder Srecko Katanec believed that they were on the verge of something special and given the chance they could "crush the world". Italia '90 would be their opportunity.

Five of the team who played in Chile made it to Italia '90 with the full national team – goalkeepers Tomislav Ivkovic and Dragoje Lekovic as well as Robert Prosinecki, Robert Jarni and Davor Suker joined a squad that was bursting at the seams with talent. Alen Boksic, Darko Pancev, Dragan Stojkovic and Dejan Savicevic were just some of the other names that leap off the page as you read the names of the players involved. There was no room for Sinisa Mihajlovic, Igor Stimac and Slaven Bilic whilst Zvonimir Boban was left out as he served his suspension for his Maksimir misdemeanours.

Qualification from the group stage was fairly pedestrian despite an opening 4-1 reverse against a rampant West Germany. Yugoslavia's next match was a 1-0 victory over Columbia followed by a more emphatic 4-1 win over the United Arab Emirates which featured a brace by Pancev. They met Spain in the last 16 and it was here that Stojkovic left his mark on the tournament.

The score was 0-0 after 77 minutes when a cross came in from the left which was flicked on by Katanec towards Stojkovic. He had plenty of time in which to volley the ball from ten yards out into the back of the net. Being Stojkovic, however, he killed the ball stone dead with his right foot and whilst the Spanish defender - who was fully expecting to make a last ditch block onto a volley that never came - slid straight past, Stojkovic calmly slammed the ball into the back of the goal. It was a truly breathtaking piece of skill. Spain equalised through Julio Salinas and forced the game into extra time, where in the 93rd minute Stojkovic struck again. Savicevic was fouled some 25 yards out and in the centre of the pitch and whilst everyone knew what was coming it was very difficult for anybody to do anything about it. Stojkovic curled the ball with his right foot around the wall and beyond the despairing grasp of Spanish keeper Andoni Zubizarreta to give Yugoslavia a 2-1 win.

In the quarter-finals they met an Argentina team which had toiled from the beginning and had been dragged kicking and

screaming into the last eight by Diego Maradona. They had finished third in their group having famously lost to underdogs Cameroon. They scraped a draw with Romania before making heavy work of dispatching an underwhelming Brazil 1-0 in the last 16.

The match itself was a tense 0-0 and would be decided in a classic penalty shootout which featured twists of epic proportions. Jose Serrizuella scored first for Argentina before Stojkovic stepped up for Yugoslavia. Of all the players, he was the one considered most reliable to get the team off to a steady start in the shootout. As it was, Stojkovic hammered his penalty onto the crossbar. Jorge Burrachaga and Prosinecki then scored their respective penalties before, inconceivably, Maradona had his attempt saved by Ivkovic diving to his right. Savicevic scored his penalty and with Pedro Troglio missing again for Argentina, Yugoslavia were agonisingly close to a semi-final spot. However, Dragoljub Brnovic missed his and with Gustavo Dezotti slotting his penalty away, Faruk Hadzibegic had to score to take the shootout to sudden death. He struck it towards the left hand side of the goal and Sergio Goycochea, who was having the tournament of his life in goal for Argentina, guessed correctly and made a comfortable save. That was that. Heartbreak for a Yugoslavian team who had promised so much. They went home in the most dramatic and gut wrenching way possible.

This was not the end for Yugoslavian football though; it had one last shot at making history. This time though at club level as Red Star took on Marseille in the 1991 European Cup Final in Bari, Italy. Four of the starting line up for Red Star represented Yugoslavia at Italia '90 and curiously enough, Stojkovic was named amongst the Marseille substitutes too. The match itself was a drab, goalless affair and went to penalties. Red Star scored all theirs and it was left to Manuel Amoros to be the Marseille fall guy as he missed his spot kick. Red Star were champions and what began as a few youngsters travelling to Chile to half-heartedly take part in a tournament they didn't really want to be at, ended with a Yugoslav club team reaching the peak of club football, all via World Cup heartbreak along the way.

Unfortunately, this was as good as it got for Yugoslavian football. The nationalist genie let loose by both sides at the Maksimir riot the previous year was never going to be placed back in the bottle. Srecko Katanec was supposedly left out of the Italia '90 quarter-final against Argentina having been forewarned of consequences should he take part in the match. Prior to the second half of the 1991 European Cup Final, Red Star fans unfurled an enormous Serb flag and began passing it amongst themselves in a show of nationalist solidarity. Within weeks the country was beginning to fall apart. Slovenia broke free after a brief war in June 1991 and Croatia began its bid for independence shortly afterwards. Bosnia Herzegovina soon followed suit. The national team continued, however, and qualified for the Euros in 1992. Had the country somehow managed to stay together and the team not been thrown out of the competition due to the civil war, then they stood a very good chance of matching Red Star's achievements and winning a competition at international level. As it was, the sunbathing Danes took their chance and took everyone by surprise and won.

Football then is a tale of journeys, from humble beginnings to great achievements and the story of the Yugoslavian national team from the late 80's and early 90's is no exception. There was no happy ending; only tragedy. Robert Prosinecki was named the best young player at Italia '90, a foretelling of what could have been for him and the fractured generation of Balkan talent he belonged to.



SON OF THE WIND

FLEET OF FOOT, LONG OF HAIR – ARGENTINA’S SPEARHEAD ENJOYED THE LIFE OF A BON VIVEUR AND KISSING MARADONA, AS HARRY PEARSON EXPLAINS.

HARRY PEARSON - @camsell59 <http://harrypearson.blogspot.co.uk/>

With 88 minutes gone in the opening match of Italia '90 Argentina forward Claudio Caniggia collects the ball a few yards from the right hand corner of his own penalty area. He glances up and sets off towards the halfway line.

With his long blonde hair, high cheekbones and aquiline features, Caniggia looked like a cross between Michael Bolton and the US beefcake calendar boy Fabio, but he was quick and had an instinct for goals. He'd begun life as a sprinter out in the little farming town of Henderson, five hours drive from Buenos Aires. He'd run as a junior in regional championships, clocking a personal best of 10.7 seconds for the 100metres, before signing for River Plate. In 1988 he'd made his name with a solo goal for *Los Millonarios* against San Lorenzo that had started from much the same position he was in now. On that occasion he'd galloped 60 yards, flaxen locks streaming out behind him like a vapour trail, before chipping the 'keeper from the edge of the box. He'd been playing for Racing since he was a teenager, but the goal at *Estadio Pedro Bidegain* changed everything. It made him a star. It got him a big money move to Hellas Verona of Serie A.

In the San Siro, Caniggia accelerates swiftly just as he had at San Lorenzo. The Cameroon goal seems to be the only thing on his mind. There is little time to lose. The World Champions are trailing a Cameroon side rated 500-1 outsiders by the game's only goal (a prodigious leap by Francois Omam-Biyik, a feeble piece of goalkeeping by veteran Nery Pumpido). It is shaping to be one of the biggest shocks in World Cup history. In the press tribune, journalists are scribbling the words North Korea and USA onto their notepads.

Caniggia's spell at Verona had not lasted long, just a season. Already there were whispers about the forward's love of the high life. He chain-smoked, played drums in rock bands, ran around with models, and there was talk of drugs (Cocaine. What else? It was the eighties after all). Hellas had financial problems. Atalanta took a risk and signed Caniggia in 1989. He rewarded them with 26 goals in 84 appearances. It was the most stable period of his career, but clouds were gathering. Sold to Roma, he scored brilliantly against Milan in the *Copa Italia* then, in 1993, a random drug test confirmed the rumours. He received a 13 month ban.

When the drug ban ended, Caniggia joined Benfica. His hair was darker, his face less angelic. His skin had begun to crinkle, but he was still fast and skilful. He made the Argentina squad for USA '94, scored twice as Alfio Basile's side defeated Nigeria playing football that delighted purists. Afterwards his pal, Argentina's skipper, Diego Maradona was led away, smiling, for a drug test. His urine came back positive for so many things it would have been quicker to list what he didn't take. Argentina's World Cup imploded.

Head down, the ball controlled by the right foot he favours almost as much as Maradona does his left, Caniggia advances to the

HE CHAIN-SMOKED, PLAYED DRUMS IN ROCK BANDS, RAN AROUND WITH MODELS, AND THERE WAS TALK OF DRUGS

half-way line. A Cameroonian midfielder flies in at him from the left, the ball a secondary consideration. One of the Africans – the goal scorer's brother Andre Kana-Biyik – had already been dismissed for a foul on the man the Italian press would call 'The Son of the Wind'. On that occasion, Caniggia went to ground with such a display of histrionics he might as well have waved a lavender-scented handkerchief as he fell. This time he ignores the chance to claim a free-kick, vaulting over the tackler's outstretched leg like Ed Moses taking a hurdle.

Maradona's relationship with Caniggia was singularly close. 'To me, Cani's like a soulmate,' the Argentina captain would later say. It was claimed in the lead up to Italia '90 that Maradona had told his coach, the fearsome gynaecologist Carlos Bilardo, that he would resign if Cani was not selected.

Bilardo had acquiesced, but opted to start with World Cup Winner Jorge Burruchaga for the opening match. Caniggia had come on as a second-half substitute, his pace and directness adding some much needed panache to a side that seemed unable to shift out of neutral.

As Caniggia gallops onwards, the crowd in the Giuseppe Meazza Stadium roars, not in support of the onrushing forward, but of the next defender bearing down upon him. Argentina are bitterly detested in Milan. Or rather Maradona is. He's just lead the southerners Napoli to the Scudetto, squeezing out the Rossoneri by two points. He's booed every time he touches the ball. The pattern is maintained whenever Argentina play in the north, growing in vehemence as the tournament wears on. Maradona reciprocates, mouthing obscenities at his tormentors whenever the TV cameras projected his face onto the stadium big screen. 'Sons of whores' Maradona repeats as the teams line up before kick-off, and the catcalls and the whistling rise to a hysterical frenzy.

In 1995, Caniggia joined Maradona at Boca Juniors. He scored goals from all parts of the field, tap-ins, bullet headers, and powerful shots from outside and inside the box. His partnership with Diego (whose own ban for cocaine use had run for 15 months) was tight and productive and scandalous. In 1996, the soulmates caused sensation by snogging wetly after teaming up to create a goal in the derby against River Plate. Caniggia's then wife, Mariana Nannis a former-model turned celebrity foghorn, protested about the kiss on TV: "At times I believe Diego is in love with my husband. It must be the long hair and the big muscles."

The truth was different: the kiss a protest against the intolerance of new national team boss, Daniel Passarella who had banned long hair and ear-rings from his side and said that there was no place in football for 'homosexual tendencies'.

Maradona mocked Passarella's feeble-minded intolerance. 'If I give Cani an assist for a goal, I will suck his face off' he said, adding that it would teach Passarella a life lesson about prejudice. Sadly it didn't. The Argentina coach remained intransigent and unrepentant. There was no place in his 1998 World Cup squad for two of his country's best, Fernando Redondo of Real Madrid and Caniggia. Both had long hair.

In the San Siro, the seconds ticking, Caniggia crosses the halfway line and advances a further five yards before another scything lunge - aimed to take him out at the knees - flies in. He vaults over the flailing limbs, less easily this time. Temporarily losing his footing he stumbles, veering off to the right, the ball a yard ahead of him.

While things went well on the field at La Bombonera, off it they were increasingly messy. Caniggia's wife and in-laws kept up an incessant chatter to tabloid hacks. The glossy gossip magazines of Latin America lapped it up, one described the Caniggia-Nannis clan as 'a hotbed of confrontation and endless disputes'. It proved too much for Caniggia's mother, Nelida. Depressed by the constant attention and an increasing estrangement from her three grandchildren, she threw herself off a fifth floor balcony and died. Caniggia took a year's sabbatical from the game: to mourn her loss, he said. To go onto rehab his in-laws blathered to any reporter who'd listen.

After that his career started and stuttered. He played for Dundee and Rangers. He went to the World Cup in Korea/Japan, but got sent off while sitting on the subs bench in the group game with Sweden. His marriage fell apart. His playing career ended in Qatar. His eldest daughter appeared on the Italian version of Celebrity Survivor alongside Mario Balotelli's ex-girlfriend, but got evicted early after ignoring her mother's advice to go topless as

often as possible. Cani retired to Marbella. He looks way older than he is - a footballing Steve Tyler, a South American Gazza. *Still struggling to regain his balance, Caniggia heads towards the left corner of the Cameroon penalty area. Running from the edge of the D, looking to intercept him is Cameroon's centre-back, the aptly named Benjamin Massing. The defender was six feet tall but seemed much bigger. He played his football for Diamant Yaounde. Raw boned and powerful, Massing is so uncompromising he makes Passarella look like a Swedish diplomat.*

Caniggia has just about straightened out from the second tackle when Massing hits him. There is no intention to play the ball. The Cameroonian comes in like an all-in wrestler, chest thrust out. Not even Dick Fosbury could jump over this tackle. The Argentinian goes down in a whirl. The impact so violent, the tackle so chaotic, Massing's boot comes off and spins across the turf.

Caniggia hits the ground and rolls towards the touchline. He stays down, face towards the advertising hoardings. A minor scuffle breaks out. Massing aims a kick at Burruchaga. Referee Michel Vautrot pulls the players apart and, calling over Massing, reaches into his top pocket. Nobody has any doubt what colour the card will be. Though the defender effects surprise when he sees it. The second sending off makes no difference. Nine man Cameroon hang on to win. They have bludgeoned the opponents into submission, but they are the underdogs, so nobody cares.

Miraculously, Caniggia is not seriously injured. Argentina scrape through into the next round as best third place team. They play one of the favourites, Brazil. Maradona produces some of his best football, a surging run takes him from half-way, past defender after defender, before he threads a pass to Caniggia inside the opposition box. As Claudio Tafarel rushes out, Cani dummies to shoot, then ducks to his left, around the diving keeper, and sweeps the ball into the net.

In the semi-final against Italy, Caniggia scored with a header, the first time in Italia '90 anyone had put the ball past Walter Zenga. Later, after Italy have equalised, Cani pointlessly, blatantly handles the ball near halfway. What is he thinking of? He is yellow-carded, as he must have known he would be. It is his second booking of the tournament. Argentina go through in a penalty shoot-out, but he misses the final against West Germany. It is a game of play-acting malevolence and spite. Argentina come off second best, an Andreas Brehme penalty settling it. His loyal friend Maradona later tells the press that if Caniggia had been playing they would have retained the trophy. You can see why he might say that, but it's wishful thinking, surely?



THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH

THE TOURNAMENT'S STANDOUT PLAYER HAD THE WORLD AND THE WORLD CUP IN HIS HANDS IN THE SUMMER OF 1990, BUT AS ALL BLUE DAZE EXPLAINS, IT WAS ALL DOWNHILL FROM THERE. ILLUSTRATION BY KEVIN MCGIVERN.

ALL BLUE DAZE - @All_Blue_Daze <http://allbluedaze.com/>

Back in January 2015, Lothar Matthäus, hero of West Germany's Italia '90 World Cup victory, was embroiled in a bout of verbal sparring with Arsenal striker and compatriot Lukas Podolski. Speaking on German television, Matthäus remarked that "Lukas has his qualities; now he must prove them by bringing them back to the pitch. In the past we heard how he tweets more than he plays. He needs to concentrate on football." The comments came during speculation regarding a potential move for Podolski to Inter Milan. It was advice that Podolski did not take too kindly to, however. Apparently not content to leave it there, Matthäus also took a swing at his former club saying, "Inter is no longer the team of the past. Italy lost charm. Too many scandals, little modern infrastructure. In the 90s Inter and AC Milan have written the history of football, had players like Gullit, Van Basten, Hansi Müller and Karl-Heinz Rummenigge. Today the top players play in Spain, Germany and England, not in Italy." The Nerazzurri tifosi must have loved that one. 'A fanabla, Lothar!'

At the time, many fans outside of Germany may have wondered why such an exalted figure would indulge in mud-slinging. In Germany however, few would have been surprised, such has been the fall from grace for Matthäus. Here was a man who reached the heights of fame and glory in 1990 only to spend much of his time since indulging in an apparent orgy of self-destruction of his image and reputation, and finding himself not on the ground, but in a hole of his own construction. Podolski was certainly aware of the character he was dealing with. The 29 year-old responded by saying, "I find it very amusing that Matthäus should give me precise tips on how to behave." He then added emoticons of a bride and love heart, plus the hashtag 'Erfolgcoach', translated as 'success coach'. It was an extremely thinly-veiled reference to the fact that Matthäus has had four failed marriages and a less than auspicious managerial career.

That such sarcasm should be delivered to a man with an outstanding record both at club and international level may seem strange. For a player with a collection of accolades the like of which very few could match, modern players should surely be hanging on his every word, soaking up the invaluable advice dispensed by a man who had done it all. Imagine for a second how the late Bobby Moore would be regarded in this country had he not been taken from us at such an early age. The respect that would have been afforded to him by all linked to the game would be huge. Now imagine he had also won multiple league titles and cups, as well as skippering his country to World Cup glory. I'm sure you get the picture. For Matthäus however, the situation is somewhat different. In Germany, if not actually seen as going from 'hero to zero', the level of regard he is held in is rapidly diminishing.

The question is, how did such a dramatic fall from grace occur?

For the West Germany captain, the Italia '90 World Cup tournament came almost precisely halfway through his 21-year career and probably marked the zenith of his powers. The all-action midfielder was the epitome of the modern footballer. In a game that demanded a physicality to match ability, here was a man for all occasions. In his country's first game of the tournament, he set the tone for his squad by notching a brace in a Man of the Match performance against Yugoslavia. It was from here he was to maintain throughout and enough for none other than Diego Maradona to describe him as his most difficult ever opponent. The world duly concurred with the opinions of the Argentine star. Matthäus became European Footballer of the Year and secured the inaugural FIFA World Player of the Year award to boot, the only German player ever to be awarded the global accolade. For good measure, he also inevitably picked up the German national award.

When he retired, Matthäus had a collection of medals that included seven Bundesliga titles, three German domestic cups, two UEFA Cups and a Serie A title. On the international stage, as well as triumphing in Italy he also won the European Championship in 1980. He missed the Euros in 1992 through injury, but was fit for his country's attempt to retain the world title in the USA in 1994.

Now 33 and with ageing legs, he was positioned as the sweeper, nominally at the heart of the defence but with ample license to step out into midfield and dictate play, very much in the mold of another German great, Franz Beckenbauer. Eliminated by a Hristo Stoichkov-inspired Bulgaria, it seemed his international career was over when he was omitted from the squad for the Euro '96 tournament that Germany won. Surprisingly, he earned a recall for the World Cup in France in 1998 at the grand old age of 37. It was in this tournament that he broke the record for appearances in World Cup finals tournaments, reaching 25. This less-than-vintage German team was unceremoniously sent packing by debutants Croatia. Incredibly, his international career - encompassing precisely 150 German caps - was extended another two years until Euro 2000. The Germans slumped to a group stage exit there prompting the curtain to fall once and for all on his 20-years with the Nationalelf.

It was around the time of the 1998 World Cup that bottled-up resentment first began to be pour forth, with Matthäus revealing himself to be a dispiriting combination of bitterness and envy and possessing a lack of grace, perhaps only matched by an appetite for an erratic social life. Talks of a rift with Berti Vogts and Jurgen Klinsmann surfaced, over the former's decision to make the latter captain of the Mannschaft ahead of a returning Matthäus. A true legend on the pitch, his life off it quickly began to fall well short of the standards he once set on it.

A brief couple of years after his triumph in Italy, Matthäus'



L. MATTHAUS

W. GERMANY

first marriage of 11 years broke up around the time he returned to Bavaria following his four years with Inter Milan. He stayed in Germany for the next eight years, during which time he married his second wife, Swiss model and TV presenter Lolita Morena, in 1994. The relationship was not to last, however, and shortly before moving to the USA for an abortive stint in the MLS in 2000 that led to retirement, the marriage ended.

It was assumed that Matthäus would go on to coach in the Bundesliga and then perhaps, one day, graduate to take charge of the national team itself. It was no surprise therefore when he took up the managerial reins at Austria Vienna. His first post lasted less than a season though and was hardly a resounding success. He then joined Partizan Belgrade during their December mid-winter break, leading them to the league title by the following May. As they were already top of the table when he joined, that may not be quite the achievement that it initially sounds. Almost precisely a year after joining the club, Matthäus unceremoniously departed amid rumours that he was to take over the Hungarian national team.

Those rumours proved accurate and as manager of the Magyars, Matthäus participated in an unpleasant mutual mud-slinging row with his former employers. If the Hungarian FA thought their new man was worth the aggravation he brought with him, they were quickly to be disavowed of the opinion. Following a failed World Cup qualifying campaign, both parties agreed to part company, and Matthäus moved on to new pastures – this time to South America and Brazilian club, Atletico Paranaense. The falling out with the Hungarians was not without the now-customary ungracious Matthäus swipe, as he accused the Hungarian FA of “not contributing, but exploiting Hungarian football” and alleging that “it’s not coincidental that the Hungarian bid to host Euro 2012 didn’t receive any votes”.

Whilst in Belgrade, Matthäus met the urbane Marijana Kostic. The already twice-married socialite was to become his third wife in 2003. By this time, his private life was almost becoming a soap opera back in Germany, and it was no surprise that this marriage lasted a mere four years before separation and an acrimonious divorce in 2009 following a year-long wrangle over the division of assets.

Whether the brief sojourn to South America was a contributory factor in the break-up, a consequence of it, or a mere passing irrelevance is unclear. Although results on the pitch were not bad – five wins and two draws in an undefeated seven games – Matthäus reported to the club that he had need of an urgent journey to Europe. He flew out, never to return, faxing his resignation from Germany. The club were clearly less than pleased, not only due to the manner of his sudden departure, but also because he left them with an unpaid \$6,000 telephone bill. A clear pattern was now emerging that although any Matthäus tenure was likely to be short, it was unlikely to be sweet – especially at its denouement.

Logic would suggest that Red Bull Salzburg would be ‘wide awake’ and alert to the potential problems of employing the former German skipper. Nevertheless, he returned to the Austrian Bundesliga in 2006, and after being joined by his former Inter manager Giovanni Trapattoni, he secured the league title. Just over a year after joining however, Matthäus was sacked by a unanimous board decision.

A further single season followed with Israeli club Maccabi Netanya, before a reported financial crisis at the club ended his tenure there. Whilst working for the Israelis however, Matthäus – now 47 – met the 21-year-old Ukrainian model Kristina Liliana at a beer festival in Munich. She was studying journalism at a Tel Aviv university. They married in Las Vegas in 2008 but were already living separately by early 2010. Lurid tabloid speculation about the relationship was seemingly vindicated when the fourth Mrs.

Matthäus was captured by paparazzi in flagrante delicto with an Italian, more her own age, in southern France. The whole sorry episode was revisited by the press sometime later, when she was also arraigned in America and accused of third degree larceny for allegedly stealing a boyfriend’s charge card and going on a shopping spree. Whilst professing her innocence, Liliana’s lawyer claimed, “She is considered a treasure by German society and has conducted her life in an exemplary fashion.” Lothar Matthäus may dispute that.

Cuckolded, his position apparently cost him the opportunity of succeeding Paul Le Guen as manager of Cameroon. In a statement, Matthäus related: “These photos were like a punch in the face. As soon as I saw them, I lost faith. On the pitch I struggled, but my marriage I’ve lost. I cannot have any future with a woman who behaves in this way. The wife of the President of Cameroon has heard of my marital crisis and has refused to let me lead the nation.” It’s difficult not to sympathise with such a scenario, but the lifestyle Matthäus had built for himself was always likely to have some such outcome eventually. Even in his native Germany, empathy was in short supply. After years of being heralded as a national hero, his reputation had by now crumbled, and such outcomes, on the back of unsavoury outbursts hardly helped matters. A Hitler jibe against the Dutch and a racist and sexual taunt to a women’s basketball team only served to further alienate him from his country’s affections.

By now, the marriage-separation cycle was rapidly becoming as familiar as the coaching appointment-departure scenario. Following a break from the game, he was appointed to head up the Bulgarian national team. After serving his now seemingly ‘regulation’ one year in post, a failure to qualify for the Euro 2012 tournament brought about an apparent end to his coaching career. His time in Sofia had seen some ignominious scenarios, including players been found on a drunken all-night party after an embarrassing defeat to Belarus. Some reports say Matthäus stumbled on the players’ shenanigans, whilst others say he was part of it. It also was whilst in post with the Bulgarians that Matthäus issued the comment aimed at the women’s basketball team. As his reputation plummeted, a sustained period as a columnist for Sport Bild, a publication famed for the sort of lurid stories often written about Matthäus, would hardly have helped matters. A case of ‘if you can’t beat ‘em...’ one imagines.

That Lothar Matthäus saw himself as some kind of playboy is probably beyond question. At one stage, his website even had him pictured in a high-society hotel, adopting the guise of some minor royalty or mid-European aristocrat, clinging onto the remnants of a faded glory – perhaps it was more apposite than he imagined. A couple of years ago, in an overt attempt to project himself back into the public eye, he sought to instigate a Facebook campaign stating that he would launch a playing comeback if he could achieve one million ‘likes’. Whether the paltry response he achieved was a measure of contempt or just lack of interest is unclear. Safe to say however, that there was no comeback.

Now 53, it seems that any hopes he may have harboured of coaching in his native country have now gone. As each appointment was gained and then lost, together with each unsavoury tabloid headline, the chances receded from unlikely, through improbable, and now to virtually impossible. The baggage that Matthäus would bring with him would surely be too heavy a burden for any but the most desperate of clubs to bear. Perhaps a period of anonymity is now in order. For a man who achieved fame, and then seemingly courted infamy, a reflective period away from the glare of publicity may be the only way to restore a squandered dignity and respect. Someone needs to tell the fallen-hero that when you’re in a hole, it’s probably time to stop digging.

THE VIEW FROM VENEZUELA

THEIR NATIONAL TEAM WERE A LAUGHING STOCK AND WERE NEVER LIKELY TO QUALIFY FOR THE TOURNAMENT, YET AS MONTAGUE KOBBE EXPLAINS, VENEZUELAN CELEBRATED THE JOY OF THE WORLD CUP AS MUCH AS ANYONE.

MONTAGUE KOBBE - @MontagueKobbe <http://mtmkobbe.blogspot.com>

When Mexican referee Edgardo Codesal blew his whistle and pointed to the penalty spot, an air of incredulity spread through the web of electromagnetic waves that - over the course of the previous four weeks - had kept a firm grip on an entire country's emotional (as well as commercial) interests. Back in 1990, FIFA had not yet come up with the creative tool that is its world rankings, but it didn't take a genius to understand that Venezuela was neither very good at nor very much into football. However, the FIFA World Cup and football are two altogether different propositions, and so much was evident when the initial incredulity that arrested the hearts of millions of Venezuelans was swiftly displaced by a thick, dark cloud of indignation that swept through the air like a mist arrived from the coldest sea. While Codesal was being manhandled by a hoard of Argentinian players, every spectator, commentator and pundit—specialised or not—in the country highlighted the unfortunate performance by the officials on the day, questioned the referee's impartiality and, in short, shrouded the occasion in a veil of suspicion and controversy that to this day persists, at least among Latin American fans. And then came hope, like a glimmer of light shining through the smouldering ashes of everything that had been burnt—integrity, respect, expectations—over the previous ninety seconds, when left back Andreas Brehme stepped forward, relieved captain Lothar Matthäus from his duties and positioned himself to take the penalty—with his supposedly weaker foot, the right one.

Back in 1990 there were five terrestrial TV channels in Venezuela: two state-owned ones, including Channel 5, the country's "cultural" channel, and three private ones, one of which,

Televen, was still being tested. Italia '90 was broadcast by the three major TV channels in the country excluding Channel 5 and Televen, and all three teams of commentators and pundits featured key journalists at the time in Venezuela, but in the collective memory of Venezuelans any significant football-related event from the mid 1980s to the late 1990s is inextricably linked to the voice—simultaneously raspy and shrill—of Lázaro Candal, affectionately known by all as "Papaíto" (quite literally, the "Daddy").

Lázaro Candal was the anchorman at Radio Caracas Televisión (RCTV) and for years developed an affectionate relationship with the considerable number of people who followed Spanish football every weekend. Candal's passionate and

unreservedly partial style was contagious and proved immensely popular among an audience that was looking for intensity, excitement, entertainment – even over knowledge. Game after game, Candal walked the fine line between a nervous breakdown and a heart attack, and the final of Italia '90 was no exception: Candal, a Galician Spaniard by birth, called the penalty, cried to the heavens, remonstrated against fate, his voice breaking, his speech muffled, and right at the moment when you could almost sense his lower lip quivering, German football specialist Andrés Salcedo stepped in to put things in perspective. Unlike Candal's harsh Spanish accent, Salcedo's northern Colombian diction was similar to Venezuelan, except mellower, gently sprinkled with a foreign touch that could be explained with his long residence in Germany and that in Venezuela at the time infused his commentary with an

aura of distinction, of sophistication and, naturally, of erudition. Thus, as Brehme placed the ball on the spot, measured his run-up, took a deep breath, looked around and began his sprint, Salcedo explained that the left back (Andy, he called him, never Andreas) was ambidextrous, recalling his powerful left-footed free kick against France four years before, brought up his wonderful right-footed goal against the Netherlands earlier in the competition, and that was it, he had no time to say anything else,

IN THE BEST STYLE OF TRUE PURISTS, VENEZUELA FELL IN LOVE WITH EVERY UNDERDOG—AND NO TEAM WAS MORE OF AN UNDERDOG THAN ROGER MILLA'S CAMEROON.



because “Papaíto” Candal was back, shouting from the very top of his lungs (and then some) “Gooooooooooooooooo”, as Brehme calmly rolled the ball past the right hand of keeper Goycochea. Venezuelans learned the hard way what the English already knew: that the Germans hardly ever miss a penalty.

It was the 85th minute of the biggest match in four years, and the city of Caracas—usually a buzzing cauldron of tropical heat, chaotic traffic and South American effervescence—suddenly went silent. But not for long. Before the end of the game the first flat, isolated detonations announced the joy of at least a portion—however small—of the population. Once Codesal signalled the end of the tournament, Caracas’s sky was speckled with a flurry of fireworks that could be heard a lot better than they could be seen (since it was just past four in the afternoon), and by the time Matthäus landed the first of many kisses on the cup, the city was already covered in the cloud of smoke and the smell of powder that marked the beginning of a big celebration.

Traditionally, football has never been a major sport in Venezuela. Even today, after a progression of approximately fifteen years during which the national side has developed certain levels of respectability, baseball and basketball remain far more popular in the country. Initially considered a sport for European (and consequently white) immigrants, football took a long time to become organised in the country, and far longer to filter to the cultural roots of its people. The Venezuelan FA was only established in 1951, and the national football league has only been disputed since 1957. Back in 1990, Venezuela had only ever won a single match in World Cup qualifying rounds and one other match in the Copa América (both against Bolivia), Venezuelan clubs had never made it past the second group stage of the Copa Libertadores, and only two Venezuelan players had ever signed for a foreign club (Freddy Elie, 1971; Herbert Márquez, 1987).

And yet, since the dawn of the age of colour TV in 1970 Venezuelans have had a periodic, fleeting but explosive love affair with the World Cup in general (and with Brazil in particular, the sweetheart of Venezuelan football fans ever since the image of Pelé being carried on the shoulders of his teammates was chiselled in the memory bank of an entire generation). Every four years the spark of that relationship is rekindled with the sort of fierceness that can only be found in neutral fans, undaunted by the prospects of their team progressing to the final stages of the competition and driven only by a hedonistic desire to partake in the most emblematic global party of them all.

In 1990, the World Cup fever started in Venezuela even before the tournament, with the infectious tune by Gianna Nannini seemingly getting more radio playtime than Sinéad O’Connor. In the best style of true purists, Venezuela fell in love with every underdog—and no team was more of an underdog than Roger Milla’s Cameroon. Suddenly geography lessons at school dropped their regular programme and were tailored around the games scheduled for each day: I recall the name Yaoundé from

those days, though I still have trouble pinpointing it on a map and have never learned how to pronounce it properly. Flag sales for the most random of nations reached all time highs and the likes of Colin Hendry (aka “Highlander”) and Toto Schillaci became instant cult heroes among the younger generations. Brazil’s exit to the hand of arch rivals Argentina was mourned with the same intensity as Colombia’s demise to the Indomitable Lions was celebrated, and as it became evident that Diego Armando Maradona would be the sole bearer of Latin American pride, allegiances switched rapidly and the vast majority of the country turned albiceleste.

Not that this was particularly evident on the night of July 8th after Brehme’s penalty sealed the fate of an Argentinian side that had exhausted its luck in the penalty shootouts of the previous two rounds of the tournament. That night, Caracas was brought to gridlock by the sheer volume of people and cars that emerged from all neighbourhoods to have a party. At least that was the landscape on the eastern portion of the city, where I—a ten-year-old child—rode with my father in his small Fiat Uno, sporting my cotton replica Adidas Germany shirt, elated beyond measure to see my team win and at the same time confused to find so many others joining in my delight. To top things off, the traffic, now at a standstill, gave me the chance to detail the people around me, men and women of all ages waving flags from all over the world—flags of Spain and Italy, of course, but also flags of Mexico and Portugal, countries that hadn’t even made it to the World Cup, and other countries I didn’t even know existed. I asked a girl with a flag tattooed on each cheek—Germany on the right one and Argentina on the left one—what team did she support and she simply said she didn’t care. “Why are you here, then?” And her answer (“To celebrate! Here, have a beer”) left me mystified for years.

But it also provided me with the tools to understand—many moons later—how Lázaro “Papaíto” Candal could go within seconds from almost breaking down over the prospect of seeing a penalty unjustly awarded against Argentina to shouting like there was no tomorrow once Germany had converted that very same penalty. Had my ten-year-old self asked Candal why he was shouting he would likely have answered the same thing as the girl with the two flags on her cheeks: “To celebrate!” Because football is a celebration of life, and goals are the culmination of a collective effort towards that celebration, and as such should always be recognised with a healthy dose of enthusiasm. By the same measure, the World Cup is a celebration of football, and the culmination of that celebration comes when the winner of the tournament is allowed to hold the cup and present it to the rest of the world watching. Venezuelans were watching closely in 1990, and all the while they revelled in the opportunity to bring and share joy, just for the sake of it.

Over the last two decades football has grown exponentially in the country, to the point where a victory on the pitch—which once would have been a landmark in itself—is no longer enough to bring joy or even satisfaction to the thousands of fans that now follow the sport: it has to be accompanied by the right performance. This progression results from the institutional stability and infrastructural investment that has allowed the national side to improve to the point where our dreams of someday reaching a World Cup are now coated with a glimmer of legitimacy. Venezuelan football has been moving in the right direction for a long time, and this can only be a good thing—but all progress comes at some expense, and the price to pay for realistic expectations is the extinction of the purest form of support for the beautiful game. Never again will Venezuelan fans live a World Cup like my generation did Italia ‘90—but don’t expect many of us to be looking back nostalgically when the Venezuelan national anthem is played in Russia in three years’ time!

PAVING THE WAY - A FORGOTTEN IRISH PIONEER

GERRY FARRELL LOOKS AT THE STORY OF A MAN WHOSE CAREER IN THE LEAGUE OF IRELAND HELPED BLAZE A TRAIL FOR THE BLACK PLAYERS IN JACK CHARLTON'S ITALIA '90 SQUAD.

GERRY FARRELL - @gerrytastic

It was on a still, sunny November afternoon last year on the approach to the Aviva Stadium (Lansdowne Road as was) that I spotted Paul McGrath. Paul was, like the rest of the crowd, on his way to the FAI Cup final between Derry City and his former club, St. Patrick's Athletic. He is, of course, no stranger to the old ground; he strode its turf with gazelle-like grace over the course of his 12-year international career, and it was his performances in a green shirt that have ensured his status as a sporting legend in Ireland. Despite his much publicised personal problems - or perhaps because of them - Paul is not only respected by the Irish public, but genuinely loved. It is that hint of vulnerability that was so at odds with his commanding, assured performances that struck such a chord with football fans.

He was my footballing hero growing up, my early childhood helpfully coinciding with an unprecedented level of success for the Irish national team. Paul was, of course, a key part of that success, a national talisman, and a rock during the nations' first tournament involvement; Euro '88, Italia '90 - where the team reached the quarter-finals - and USA '94. For many, the opening game in World Cup '94 was Paul's defining moment in a green shirt, when an ageing McGrath - dodgy knees, painkilling injection in his shoulder - dominated an Italian attack featuring Giuseppe Signori and Roberto Baggio. If the World Cups were the peak of his career, then his presence at Lansdowne Road last November was a reminder of his more humble beginnings as a professional footballer.

Despite playing only a single season for St. Pat's (1981-82), Paul remains a legend at the club based in the south Dublin suburb of Inchicore. It was pleasing to see by his attendance at the final that Paul hadn't forgotten his roots. Such was his popularity with the Pat's faithful that Paul became known as "The Black Pearl of Inchicore", a reference to Benfica legend Eusebio. Paul was the first player to be given that moniker by the Pat's fans, but not the last, as both Curtis Fleming (later of Middlesbrough and Crystal Palace) and Paul Osam were given the "Black Pearl" sobriquet.

Though perhaps the most prominent person of colour to play for the national team, Paul was not the first. The first black player to don the green jersey in a senior international was Spurs' Chris Hughton back in 1979, six years before Paul's debut. Like Paul, he would also feature in Euro '88 and World Cup '90. As for the first black player in the League of Ireland? Well we have to go back a little further...

In fact we'll have to go back to May 1961, back to the FAI Cup final, this time held at Dalymount Park, and just as in 2014, St. Patrick's

Athletic were one of the teams in action. Pat's would win the final in 2014, as they also did in 1961 though in the intervening 53 years, the Saints would contest seven cup finals and lose them all. One other thing that the finals of 2014 and 1961 had in common was that my father was in attendance at both. We sat together in the South Stand in 2014, but back in 1961 he was in Dalymount Park as a member of Drumcondra F.C.'s under-18 team watching their senior counterparts lose 2-1 to St. Pats. As an outside-right he would have been paying special attention to the senior player in his position, a 21-year-old full of skill and trickery named Ray Keogh.

Ray, as far as any historian or statistician can confirm, was the first black player in the League of Ireland. British football has, in recent years, started to pay attention to the contribution made by players of colour in the early years of football's development. Men like Andrew Watson, Walter Tull and Arthur Wharton have begun to have their input to the game recognised, and there is a growing understanding that the early decades of British football were not as white and homogenous as once portrayed. However, in Ireland, there has been little discussion on similar subjects. In the absence of any earlier players being mentioned I'd like to talk a little about Ray's career in the League of Ireland.



Ray was raised in a white family in the Dublin suburb of Rathfarnham in the 1940s. The area was in close proximity to Glenmalur Park, Milltown, the then home of Shamrock Rovers, one of the country's biggest clubs. Ray joined them as a teenager after playing schoolboy football with Castleview and

the famous Home Farm club, and made appearances for the Rovers' reserve side in 1958 before making his first team debut a year later. Some reports mistakenly stated that Ray was part of the Rovers team in 1957 that took on Busby Babes-era Manchester United early in their tragic European Cup campaign, mistaking a 17-year-old Ray for the similarly named Shay Keogh. Despite his talent and versatility, primarily as an outside right (though he played in a variety of positions), first team opportunities at Rovers were limited for Ray. They had been League Champions in the 56-57 and 58-59 seasons and their forward line was full of Irish internationals such as Paddy Ambrose, Liam Tuohy, Tommy Hamilton, "Maxie" McCann and experienced player-manager Paddy Coad.

A move was needed and initially it was a trip north-west to Longford Town in the 59-60 season. Longford were a "B" division side at the time playing against reserve sides of the likes of Shamrock Rovers and other smaller and regional sides. His stay with Longford was brief, however, as he moved back to the top-flight of Irish football and to Drumcondra FC. Based in the north Dublin suburb of the same name, "Drums" had been

Shamrock Rovers' great rivals throughout the 50's. The club had been home to players of the highest quality such as Alan Kelly Sr. (a Preston North End legend with a stand named after him at Deepdale) as well as League of Ireland stars like Jimmy Morrissey and Christy "Bunny" Fullam.

While Drums lost out in that 1961 final, they qualified for the European Cup as League Champions for 1960-61, which was Ray's first full season with the side. Ray would feature in the European Cup defeat at the hands of German champions FC Nurnberg in the first round, but would fare better the following year in the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup, when Drumcondra made football history by becoming the first Irish side to win a European game on aggregate, defeating Danish side Odense 6-5 over two legs, with Ray playing both games. They were drawn against Bayern Munich in the following round. Ray didn't feature in the heavy 6-0 defeat in Munich, however he did return to the starting line-up for the home leg and helped restore some pride as Drums beat Bayern 1-0.

He would also win representative honours representing the League of Ireland selection on a number of occasions. Inter-league games were usually against British and occasionally mainland European league sides, and were considered to be highly prestigious at the time. The fact that Ray, on several occasions, was judged to be among the best players in the league and worthy of selection is testament to his ability. He made his debut in 1961 against a Scottish XI in a 1-1 draw and would make several appearances for the league before a move to his next club - Ards based in the County Down town of Newtownards in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Irish league was traditionally dominated by the bigger Belfast sides like Linfield and Glentoran, though Ards had enjoyed a league title success in the 1957-58 season. Though signed by Johnny Neilson, the manager for the majority of Ray's stay north of the border was George Eastham Sr., a former Bolton Wanderers player and father to Arsenal and Newcastle star George Eastham Jr. The town of Newtownards was overwhelmingly Protestant and it must have been somewhat daunting for a black, Catholic Dubliner venturing over the border in 1964. Although the horrific violence of "the Troubles" was still a few years off, it was still a time of tension in Northern Ireland. The IRA's ill-fated border campaign, which led to the use of internment on both sides had only ended two years previously, while the beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement would soon be heard in the city of Derry. Ray would spend two seasons with Ards with the team itself struggling at the lower end of the Irish League table, as well as a brief unhappy spell with Portadown.

His next move would take him to the other end of the island, moving almost 700km south to Cork, where he would spend a season lining up for Cork Hibernians before moving again after the arrival of former Irish international Amby Fogarty as player-manager. This move was to Drogheda FC. During his time with Drogheda, Ray worked with some notable managers, first former Middlesbrough player Arthur Fitzsimons who had previously coached the Libyan national team, and later, player-manager Mick Meagan; the tireless former Everton defender who combined these roles with his position as manager of Republic of Ireland national team. Meagan would bring in other experienced players such as Ronnie Whelan Sr. to add to the emerging young stars at the club such as Mick Fairclough. Despite the talent at the Lourdes Stadium, the best that Drogheda would achieve during Ray's stay would be a fifth place league finish in 1967-68. They would make it to the Cup Final of 1970-71, but by that stage Ray had moved on to pastures new.

By then on the wrong side of 30, Ray would drop out of senior football and move into coaching, first with Tullamore Town where as player-manager he would win the Intermediate Cup and the League of Ireland "B" division, and then on to Parkvillia F.C. based in Navan. Despite the drop down from senior football ranks, Ray - as both player and manager - would still encounter players of real quality. Parkvillia's title rivals Pegasus included a young Kevin Moran, who would go on to make

his name at Manchester United, while another rival side were Dalkey United who featured a young full back by the name of Paul McGrath - another future star who found his way to Old Trafford. Dalkey is a well-healed south-Dublin coastal town that also happened to be home to one of the orphanages where Paul grew up. It is tempting to see Parkvillia versus Dalkey United, an unglamorous amateur tie probably watched by a couple of dozen spectators, as somehow significant: Ray, a trailblazer in his own way but now in his late 30s, encountering an 18-year-old Paul McGrath at a point before his career took off. Two black Dubliners who would help to change the perception of what the traditional view of what it means to be Irish at a time when to be Irish seemed to be synonymous with words like white and Catholic, denying the pluralism (albeit stifled and hidden) that has always existed in Irish society.

So what sort of player was Ray and how was he treated by spectators of the day? From talking to those who watched him and who played alongside him, his main attributes were his passing ability and dribbling, fast without being lightning quick he was also excellent on set-pieces. Newspaper reports are full of descriptions of him humiliating fullbacks, constantly beating his man and delivering excellent crosses. While usually employed as an old-fashioned, chalk-on-your-boots right winger, Ray was versatile playing across all of the old front five positions, his awareness and passing ability assisting his role as an inside forward, reports referring to him as a "delightful ball player". He also played centre forward with some success, no small feat for a man described as "diminutive" even by the standards of the day and he also played as a sweeper during his later years as a player-manager. The fact that he was black didn't seem to stimulate much comment either, a few early reports noted the talents of the young "coloured" player and while at Longford he was referred to as "Nigerian forward Ray Keogh". He did attract some bizarre and offensive nicknames such as "Darky" Keogh and the more esoteric "Blessed Martin" after Saint Martin de Porres, the 16th Century Peruvian monk who was the mixed-race son of a Spanish nobleman and a freed Panamanian slave.

Ray's senior playing career coincided with the golden age of the League of Ireland, the 50's and 60's where an era of big crowds, bigger clubs often having gates of over 20,000 while cup finals could see over 40,000 in attendance. The League was also able to keep more of the better quality Irish players in the country. The maximum wage remained in place in England until 1961, and even after the limit was lifted it was still often more financially beneficial for a player to stay in Ireland than to go to England. Domestic players were truly local heroes, especially at clubs like Shamrock Rovers and Drumcondra, who enjoyed a great popular sporting rivalry through the 50s and 60s. Ray got to play in front of big crowds, win league titles, compete in cup finals, play in Europe against the likes of Bayern Munich, and represent his league in prestigious games. He was a local icon but because of the era he played in, the strange role that domestic football played in Irish society at the time, and the lack of surviving TV footage, Ray is mainly remembered these days by groups of ageing Drumcondra fans who hold on to memories of a club that disappeared from senior league football back in 1972.

When the Irish national team enjoyed its own golden age, reaching its peak at Italia '90, players like Chris Hughton and Paul McGrath were household names. The constant replaying of the penalty shoot-out against Romania, Kevin Sheedy's equaliser against England and the pain of Pat Bonner's parry and Schillaci's finish means that their players of that era are never likely to be forgotten. Nor will the way that Jack Charlton's side helped that process of redefining Irishness. That men from Dublin, Cork and Donegal could line up alongside men from Glasgow, London and Manchester, be they black or white, Catholic or Protestant and still represent Ireland and the green jersey with pride had a profound effect on how we viewed our nation and diaspora. And in a small way, we should remember the contribution of a man named Ray Keogh to that process.

FAC293 – ARRIVEDERCI, IT'S ONE ON ONE

FOR THE FIRST, AND POSSIBLY ONLY TIME, AN ENGLAND WORLD CUP SONG SURMOUNTED THE SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE DIVIDE BETWEEN FOOTBALL AND THE CULTURALLY COOL. LAURA JONES LOOKS BACK AT HOW NEW ORDER'S HIT SURFED THE ZEITGEIST.

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When the licence for the infamous Hacienda nightclub in Manchester was due for renewal in the April 1990, Greater Manchester Police were ready to oppose it. The

reason? Drugs...lots and lots of illegal substances.

It's no secret that those who owned, appeared in and frequented the nightclub were partial to experimentation. Anyone who has seen the film *24 Hour Party People* will know what I mean but one man was determined to argue that club was 'culturally valuable' to Manchester and not just a den of iniquity.

Tony Wilson, manager of the Hacienda, record label co-owner and local TV presenter, was as infamous as his club. According to his biography *You're entitled to an opinion but...* by David Nolan, Wilson wrote an article in the *Manchester Evening News*, prior to being taken to court, which highlighted that the Hacienda was integral to the city's value 'in terms of youth culture, international kudos and local economy.'

Here was a man who could take a shitty occasion, cover it in glitter and make you want to buy it. Looking back it was very perceptive of the Football Association to approach Tony Wilson to help create the 1990 England World Cup song.

As we near the 25th anniversary of the release of *New Order's World in Motion* song, it seems like an appropriate time to discuss why this anthem, of all the other England anthems, has remained in our consciousness. Is it because it is the "least worst" or because, as Tony Wilson may have argued, it is a culturally valuable piece of our football and music history?

During the 1980s, the music culture had shifted in Britain, stylistically and geographically. Manchester was breeding bands from The Smiths to Inspiral Carpets, Happy Mondays to The Stone Roses. Tony Wilson's Factory Records were at the heart of the success of some of these bands. The Hacienda opened in 1982 and it provided a live venue for this scene to thrive.

In the late eighties dance music began to penetrate the scene and with it the drug culture rose too.

Ecstasy was becoming the leisure drug of choice by 1988 and the Hacienda fed into this loved up mood. Although New Order and The Stone Roses were still playing and becoming increasingly successful, House DJ's were now being invited to play for the crowds. With the likes of Graeme Park and Frankie Knuckles on the stage, clubbers were now choosing to come for the DJ and not just the 'baggy' bands.



Culturally, the youth scene had an acid house smiley face pinned firmly on the map, right in 'Madchester.'

Meanwhile, David Bloomfield was appointed media liaison for Bobby Robson and the England team. He was also a New Order fan. When he was tasked to look at the World Cup anthem for Italia '90, he knew what would appeal to young football fans, he knew who he wanted and he knew who he had to go through to get to them.

New Order didn't want to do it. Why would they? They were successful, talented and artistic. The England World Cup song was just a variation on a theme; England players wearing ridiculous clothing, singing badly devised puns about playing football and winning victory for the great nation.

Their interest in football was also fairly limited. Bernard Sumner, New Order's lead singer, was a lapsed Manchester United fan from a family full of Manchester City supporters. Peter Hook, the bassist, is also a United fan but in an interview with *Absolute Radio* in 2012 he confessed he found "the fans were vastly more interesting than the actual football."

Tony Wilson had tried to make the connection between the band and the game in 1988, when he asked them to write the music for a new show he had pitched to Granada called 'Best and Marsh.' It was a seventies nostalgia show presented by Wilson with George Best and Rodney Marsh, reminiscing about their playing days. The band obliged their manager but confessed the experience was all a bit underwhelming and unsatisfactory.

The decision to take the FA up on their invitation divided a band, who by 1990, were already divided by internal politics, finances and personalities. Bernard Sumner doesn't conceal the fact that he wanted to work on another project at the time.

Michael Powell, director of *Black Narcissus* and the seminal film *The Red Shoes*, wanted to work with the band on an art film project. The prospect excited some members of the band

NEW ORDER DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT. WHY WOULD THEY? THEY WERE SUCCESSFUL, TALENTED AND ARTISTIC.

but others were more pragmatic. There would be a buy-in to the Powell project of £100k where as the England World Cup song had the potential to make them money. As the Hacienda continued to haemorrhage money (as co-owners, New Order put in an estimated £1 million each to stop the club from going under), the band came to the agreement that the FA's offer made more sense.

New Order would have free rein over the artistic direction of the World Cup anthem with only one caveat from the FA, it mustn't make reference to hooliganism.

The perceived football culture and the reality of football culture in the eighties couldn't have been any worse. Violence on the terraces was a reflection of the dissatisfaction of an ever-marginalised underclass. Years of unemployment, strikes and austerity had left a mark on the working classes. As their sport of choice it was a release of tensions and frustration.

Maybe I'm being too generous about their plight, some of these people just wanted to fight each other.

The FA engaged in talks with Tony Wilson less than a year after the Hillsborough disaster. At the time the rhetoric was very much about fans causing the deaths of 96 of their own. It would take years for the findings to emerge about cover-ups, corruption and incompetence.

Lyricaly, *World in Motion*, or called by its Factory Records catalogue number FAC293, put the love back into football. From Sumner's lyrics "Love's got the world in motion", not football. In an interview with CNN in 2014, band member Stephen Morris said;

"I think up until that point it (football) was all very laddish and after 'World in Motion' everybody got a bit loved-up with it. Love is a universal thing, so is football."

The cultures of football, music and drugs came together in one set of song lyrics, the love of football, the love of good music and the euphoric feeling of taking ecstasy. Keith Allen, who was brought in to help translate New Order's vision into football terms, wanted to call the song 'E for England' but the FA point blank refused to be associated with any hint of drug taking. Although, Allen maintains that the lyric "it's one on one" is a double entendre of being on an ecstasy high meaning 'are you on one'.

The music was an easier concept for New Order. Maybe indicating their lack of enthusiasm for the project, they "cannibalized" a tune that band members Stephen Morris and Gillian Gilbert had written for a TV programme. They had written the theme tune for a BBC youth programme called *Reportage*, which they adapted and presented to the rest of the band.

The day of recording did nothing to improve the musician's opinion of football or the project they were embarking on. In the book *Shadowplayers: The Rise and Fall of Factory Records* by

James Nice, Gillian Gilbert from the band recalls her feelings of meeting the chosen footballers.

"When you've not met any footballers, you have an image of what they're like. We were really disappointed. It was like having a load of lager louts let loose in the studio, making jokes about the size of our organs."

Bernard Sumner elaborates on this in his autobiography when he recalls Gazza walking into the studio, taking one look at the mixing desk and saying "fucking hell, man, that's a big organ." Whether it was a salacious remark as Gillian Gilbert thought it was or whether Gazza just didn't know what a keyboard looks like, we'll never know.

Although the band thought the players were "lager louts" it was difficult for some of them to take the moral high ground. Sumner admitted to meeting the players with his "head still in a bucket" after spending the previous evening supporting 808 State at the G-MEX. The "buckets of champagne" in the studio allegedly calmed all the participants' nerves.

It was Keith Allen who wrote the infamous rap. The decision to add one was again a drunken and drug-fuelled one. The FA had insisted that England footballers appear on the record, as was the tradition. The ones chosen for the task were Paul Gascoigne, Steve McMahon, Chris Waddle, Des Walker, Peter Beardsley and John Barnes.

Barnes was the only one who had the timing and the accent to get away with rapping, although the rest of the players did audition. How I would dearly love to hear Peter Beardsley rapping.

World in Motion survives on a wave of nostalgia. Much like Skinner and Baddiel's *Three Lions*, the fondness for the song is closely connected to the success of the England team. Beyond the 1966 World Cup win, 1990 and 1996 were the most successful periods of football for England in tournaments. As each game passed, the songs continued to be played everywhere.

Culturally it does stand the test of time because it is a microcosm of the music and football scene at the time. FAC293 was the final song for New Order on the Factory Records label. Musically it was the end of an era.

Bernard Sumner in his autobiography, *Chapter and Verse*, said "We weren't setting out to change the face of football records, but we wanted to write a good song." Bad or good, football songs are remembered but a great song like *World in Motion* will continue to be relevant in our football history as long as people of a certain age can still recite the John Barnes rap verbatim.





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The central block contains a logo consisting of a circle with the letters 'K', 'M', and 'C' inside. Below the logo is the text 'KEVINMcGIVERN ILLUSTRATION'. At the bottom, there are contact details for email and website.