

## *Introduction*

*'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive.'* **William Wordsworth** penned those lines on the French Revolution but had the great poet still been around in the 1960s he might well have equally applied them to Scottish football in the historic season of 1966-67.

Modern supporters under the age of 45 may wonder what all the fuss was about. Many, weary of the tales told by those longer in tooth, greyer of beard, fuller of paunch and thinner of hair, may have tired of the stories of this seemingly fabled past and questioned the memory – if not the sanity – of those who proclaimed that these were indeed the 'good old days.'

And yet they were. The record books don't lie. During this single season Scottish footballers did indeed ascend football's Everest. The world champions were humbled in their own backyard. The might of Europe bowed down to Scotland's finest. Record books can give us the bare facts but they can never describe the passion, excitement and sheer exultation of those who were there or those who watched on TV. Those who can remember what happened and who, when they tell their tales of olden glory, exaggerate not one whit.

Yet amid the great achievements of the national team and Scottish clubs in Europe – **Scotland's** humbling of England, **Celtic's** victory in the European Cup, **Rangers'** march to the Cup-Winners Cup Final and the great performances in continental competition from **Kilmarnock, Dundee United** and **Dunfermline Athletic** – came other equally historic moments. Such as **Berwick Rangers** triumphing over their Glaswegian namesakes in the Scottish Cup. Perhaps the biggest shock in that competition's long history. Historic too, but for the wrong reasons, was the demise of **Third Lanark**, one of the founder members of both the SFA and the Scottish League.

That sad event came at the end of a season the likes of which may never be seen again in several lifetimes. But at the time few considered 1966-67 to be unique. It was regarded in some quarters as merely the restoration of football's rightful order. The *'Wha's Like Us'* brigade found recruitment easy forty years ago.

But in the main it was a triumphant rather than triumphalist Scotland in 1967. Just like the French Revolution it was a year few could have predicted beforehand but many could explain afterwards. For those who can remember the events of those halcyon days, the next line of Wordsworth's poem is the most apposite. *'But to be young was very heaven!'*

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## *Down South*

*(The 'Anglos' in 66-67)*

If the agony of England's World Cup win had rankled so badly north of the border then spare a thought for the hundreds of thousands of Scots living and working in England who had to put up with the assertions of global supremacy on a regular basis. And of those, surely the Scots in the worst position of all must have been the several hundred who earned their corn as players, trainers, coaches and managers in English football. They had to endure the gloating every single day.

It might be difficult to comprehend now - in an era when there are more Dutch and French players in the English Premiership than there are Scots - but there were over 100 Scots playing in the top division alone in England in 1966-67, 110 to be precise. Of the 22 top flight clubs all but one had at least one Scot on the books. The exception was West Ham United and at the end of the season they broke the world record transfer fee for a goalkeeper to sign Kilmarnock's Bobby Ferguson! There were few jokes about Scottish goalkeepers either in 1966 as many top English clubs relied on them. In one extreme example, Burnley had THREE Scottish keepers - Adam Blacklaw, Harry Thomson and Matthew Tyrie. But they were far from alone. Chelsea had Tommy Hughes, Liverpool had the 'flying pig' - Tommy Lawrence - and he was backed up by John 'Tubby' Ogston. Ex-Killie man Campbell Forsyth was at Southampton and another former Rugby Parker, Sandy McLaughlan, was with Sunderland. Bill Brown was, as he had been for several years, with Spurs. And even some of the nominally English keepers had Scots connections. Both Bob Wilson of Arsenal and David Harvey of Leeds became Scottish internationalists while Gordon Marshall of Newcastle had previously played for Hearts and his son - also Gordon - became another Scottish international keeper a generation later. Another seventeen Scots turned out regularly as keepers in the lower English divisions - seven in Division Two, four in Division Three and six in Division Four.

Sunderland and Leicester City both had ten Scots players registered with them but taking pride of place were Leeds United with eleven - not counting Harvey. When it came to top flight managers Scots were well represented too. The flamboyant and controversial Tommy Docherty was in charge of Chelsea, the quieter spoken but no less effective Matt Gillies was boss at Leicester and ex-Scotland gaffer Ian McColl was manager of Sunderland. Then of course there were the two giants of English club management - Bill Shankly of Liverpool and Matt Busby at Manchester United.

As always, Scots were well to the fore in English football in 1966-67. In the League Docherty's Chelsea and Shankly's Liverpool were among the early leaders before Man Utd put together an impressive run. Busby's side lost six times by Boxing Day but then embarked on a twenty-match unbeaten run to the end of the season. While the genius that was George Best naturally drew many of the plaudits - Best was the only United player to feature in every League and Cup match - there was a trio of Scots who played a significant part in Busby's team. Pat Crerand was the driving force in midfield and up front the Scots pair of Denis Law and David Herd carried all before them. For the past four seasons they had been Man Utd's top scorers - eclipsing even Best and Bobby Charlton. This season was no different and that was all the more remarkable considering Herd missed the run-in. The striker broke a leg while scoring in the first minute of the game against Leicester. Herd was close to his 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday and he never really regained the form which made him one of the outstanding goalscorers of the 1950s and 1960s. His strike against Leicester was his sixteenth in the League this season. He had banged in four against Sunderland and a hat-trick v West Brom. Overall, he scored almost 270 first class goals in English football in a career spanning almost two decades.

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Denis Law, by comparison, was in his prime. The only Scot ever to be crowned European Footballer of the Year (in 1964) had just turned 27 and was still the most expensive player in British football, having cost United £115,000 to sign from Torino in 1962. Law scored 25 times this season, 23 in the League and was on target twice at Upton Park in early May when United clinched the title with a 6-1 thrashing of West Ham – an occasion which led to rioting in the crowd and many fans taken to hospital. For Matt Busby this was the fifth time he had led Man Utd to the championship. They had finished runners-up on a further six occasions, reached four FA Cup Finals and won two of them. It was a fantastic record in its own right. Considering the rebuilding which had to take place after the Munich disaster in 1958 – when Busby's own survival hung in the balance for weeks – it is an even more remarkable set of achievements.

But if the Scottish influence was big at Old Trafford it was absolutely massive at Roker Park. Sunderland had always had a strong Scottish connection – having been founded by a Scottish teacher back in 1879. But in 1966-67 it was larger than ever. In Neil Martin they had the only Scot to score more goals in England this season than Denis Law. Martin hit twenty in the League and a further six in the FA Cup in which Sunderland lost in an epic fifth round clash against another heavily Scottish influenced side – Leeds United. Sunderland's main concern was survival though and this they achieved under Ian McColl and thanks to the efforts of players like Martin, John O'Hare, the three Georges – Herd, Kinnell and Mulhall – and club record signing Jim Baxter. Also playing a role at Roker Park were the likes of Harry Hood, Bobby Kerr and Billy Hughes.

At Leicester, Matt Gillies went about things in his usual understated and unruffled way. His team finished eighth in the table, ahead of several more fancied clubs. Aberdonian John Sjoberg was a rock in defence but the Scottish contingent was better represented up front with Jimmy Goodfellow and Davie Gibson providing the ammunition for Jackie Sinclair to score 21 league goals.

Law, Martin and Sinclair may have led the way but they weren't the only Scots to take centre stage at their clubs this season. George Graham was top scorer at Arsenal with 11 despite spending the first quarter of the season with Chelsea. Andy Lochhead was top striker at Burnley with 18 and a number of other Scots – although not top scorers at their clubs – nevertheless weighed in with significant contributions. There was Herd of course but also the likes of Frank McLintock scoring nine from midfield at Arsenal. That was a tally also reached by Ian St John at Liverpool and Peter Lorimer of Leeds. Mulhall bagged eleven at Sunderland and Alan Gilzean netted eighteen times for Spurs.

These players were all what would now be called 'high-profile' figures in English football but all of them – even Law – were to a large extent overshadowed by the two biggest personalities in the English game. Both of them managers. Both of them Scots. Bill Shankly and Tommy Docherty had taken their respective clubs from the Second Division doldrums to the top rank in England.

Shankly had already won two English titles and an FA Cup with Liverpool in the three preceding seasons. By his own high standards 1966-67 was a quiet season. Liverpool finished fifth in the League and were knocked out of the FA Cup by rivals Everton. There wasn't even the League Cup to fall back on as a domestic consolation. Then, as now, this tournament was regarded as second-rate by the big clubs. The difference was that entry wasn't compulsory. Liverpool – along with Everton – decided not to even take part in the competition. This was because the Merseyside giants were involved in Europe and Shankly's great ambition was to become the first British manager to win the European Cup.

In his one previous attempt his Liverpool team had come mighty close. Only dodgy refereeing decisions had seen the Reds go down in the semi-final against Inter Milan. This time Liverpool thought they were better prepared. But they struggled against Romanians Petrolul

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Ploesti. A 2-0 Anfield win was wiped out by a 3-1 loss in Romania. The away goals rule was yet to be introduced in the European Cup so Liverpool were forced into a play-off on neutral territory. At a stadium later to witness one of the game's worst tragedies and in which Liverpool were also present – the Heysel in Brussels – Shankly's side won 2-0. Their next opponents were the little known and even less-fancied Ajax of Amsterdam. On December 7<sup>th</sup> 1966 a Liverpool team packed with Scots – Tommy Lawrence, Bobby Graham, Billy Stevenson, Ian St John and skipper Ron Yeats – was given a footballing lesson in the Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam in front of a crowd of 55,722. By half-time they were four goals down as the Dutch team – led by an unknown called Johan Cruyff – tore them apart. It was the first glimpse of what would be known as 'total football' and the Reds had no answer to it.

Liverpool were five down before grabbing a consolation goal in the last minute. Even after such a systematic demolition, Shankly was typically bullish about his side's prospects, claiming that the Anfield atmosphere could see them overturn the deficit. Cruyff – and the wily Dutch coach Rinus Michels – had other ideas. And even the Koppites among the crowd of 53,846 must have known there would be no revival when half-time arrived with the game goalless. Cruyff scored twice in the second half with Roger Hunt responding for Liverpool both times so that the second leg finished 2-2. But Bill Shankly's second attempt to win the European Cup was over.

England's other European entrants all had strong Scottish contingents. Everton departed the Cup-Winners Cup in the last sixteen, beaten by Real Zaragoza, despite the presence of Jimmy Gabriel, Sandy Brown, Alex Scott and Goodison idol Alex Young – the 'Golden Vision' in their ranks. In the Fairs Cup, West Bromwich Albion were comprehensively beaten by Bologna – also, like Liverpool and Everton, in the last sixteen. In the Baggies team were Eddie Colquhoun, Doug Fraser and Bobby Hope. It was a double disappointment for Fraser and Hope as they had also been in the West Brom side which threw away a two-goal lead in the first League Cup final played at Wembley when they were beaten by Third Division QPR four days before the second leg against Bologna.

Burnley performed better in Europe, reaching the quarter-finals before bowing out to Eintracht Frankfurt. Blacklaw, Thomson and Lochhead all assisted their campaign, as did young winger Willie Morgan. The English side that did best in Europe was Leeds United and they were the most 'Scottish' of them all. Willie Bell, Billy Bremner, Bobby Collins, Eddie Gray, Peter Lorimer and – before he returned north to join Aberdeen – Jim Storrie all lent a hand to the Yorkshire club's European exploits as they marched through to the semi-finals where we shall meet them again in a later chapter.

Absent from Europe this season were Cardiff City who were frequent Cup-Winners Cup entrants by virtue of winning the Welsh Cup. They had to take a back seat while rivals Swansea played instead – and were eliminated in the first round. Cardiff's Scots boss Jimmy Scoular had his hands full fighting relegation to the Third Division. That achieved, Scoular led his team – with Scot Don Murray a key player – to Welsh Cup success in 1967, thus securing European football for 1967-68. Another Scot with a successful season who could look forward to Europe was veteran defender Bob McKinlay who skippered Nottingham Forest to runners-up spot in the League.

The one manager who matched Shankly in the 'quoteability' stakes loved by the English media was Tommy Docherty. The 'Doc' had transformed Chelsea from standing joke into one of the top clubs in the land – the epitome of swinging London. Their gate receipts for 1965-66 were a club record. But like Liverpool, 1966-67 wasn't their best season in the League and Docherty – not for the last time – found himself in trouble with officialdom, being fined £100 by the FA for insulting a referee and was later censured by his own directors over comments made in the press. Having fallen out with some of his players, notably Terry Venables (who he transferred to Spurs),

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over club discipline and with the team slipping towards mid-table, Docherty's survival at Stamford Bridge was now in question for the first time since his appointment in 1962.

His position was strengthened (for the meantime anyway) with a run in the FA Cup. Chelsea had never won the trophy and had appeared just once in the Final – and that was back in 1915. Docherty had taken them to two successive semi-finals, both at Villa Park and both lost. In 1967 he led them to a third Villa Park semi but this time they beat Leeds United 1-0 to take them into the first all-London FA Cup Final to be played at Wembley.

Their opponents were Tottenham Hotspur – a club with a far better pedigree than Chelsea with four previous FA Cup triumphs – two of them as recently as 1961 and 1962. Docherty fielded three Scots in his line-up. Eddie McCreadie at left-back and wingers Charlie Cooke and John Boyle. Spurs, managed by Bill Nicholson and with Venables in the team, also had three Scots – striker Alan Gilzean, right-winger Jimmy Robertson and left-half and captain Dave Mackay.

Mackay was one of the most decorated players in the game with League and Cup medals from both sides of the border with Hearts and Spurs. He was also at the veteran stage of his career and had recovered from two career-threatening leg breaks. For neutrals otherwise uninterested in this inter-London clash, Mackay – and by extension Spurs - was the popular choice.

In front of a full house of 100,000 at Wembley on May 20<sup>th</sup> 1967 Scots provided the game's pivotal moments. Surprisingly it was the comparatively unheralded pair of Robertson and Boyle rather than their more celebrated countrymen who took centre stage. Five minutes from the break it was the former St Mirren man Robertson who grabbed the opening goal and midway through the second half the same player set up Frank Saul to score Tottenham's second. Chelsea's only reply was a late goal from Bobby Tambling, provided by a cross from the Motherwell-born Boyle.

In truth 2-1 was a flattering scoreline as Spurs had dominated the match. Docherty would have to wait ten more years to manage a winning team when his Manchester United side were successful in 1977. But for Dave Mackay it was the crowning moment of his career. Mackay had played in that horrendous Wembley game when England beat Scotland 9-3 in 1961. Yes, he had those other FA Cup victories in his medal haul but this was different. Not only had he recovered from those terrible injuries, for the first time he was the captain of the winning Wembley side. It was his seventh – and last – appearance as a player at Wembley – three for Scotland, three for Spurs and once as a schoolboy back in 1950. There could be no better way to mark the occasion than to climb the famous steps and lift the FA Cup.

When Mackay hoisted the trophy before the jubilant Spurs fans the curtain rang down on the English season. For Scots in the English game it had been another successful year and one in which they could hold their heads high after having to live through the aftermath of the World Cup. How badly did that day in 1966 affect Scots living in England? Famously (or infamously, depending on which side of Hadrian's Wall your perspective is from), Denis Law preferred to play golf rather than watch the match. Perhaps more surprisingly is the fact that in all the years since, despite the repeats, the videos and the DVDs, Denis Law STILL hasn't watched the 1966 World Cup Final. He has though seen the goals and maintains – like hundreds of thousands of other Scots – that the third goal never crossed the line.

Law and Mackay were two of the all-time greats of football and that can be stated without fear of contradiction. Here were two proud Scots who spent the greater part of their careers (in Law's case virtually all of it) in English football and their role has been officially recognised. England's National Football Museum first opened its doors in Preston in 2001 and a year later it launched its Hall of Fame. Of the many thousands of players who were eligible for

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consideration just twenty-two were selected for inaugural membership. Denis Law and Dave Mackay were among them. A further indication of the standing of Scots in English football in the 1960s is that of only six managers similarly inducted, Sir Matt Busby and Bill Shankly were both included. Of all the Scots who have played and managed in England in the forty years since then just one player – Kenny Dalglish – and one manager – Sir Alex Ferguson – were also among the inaugural Hall of Famers. And of those inducted since then there have been only three more Scots – Wembley Wizard Alex James, ex-Liverpool star Alan Hansen and another Sixties legend – Billy Bremner. That's nine Scots in total, representing over 140 years of organised football. **In 1966-67 five of those nine were either playing or managing in English football.**

They too – and their hundreds of compatriots working south of the border – played their part in making this Scotland's greatest ever season.