



By Dave Prentice

The amazing story of Jack Cock

Goalscoring centre-forward, film star, war hero who read his own obituary – Everton and Chelsea have boasted few more fascinating players than the celebrated Jack Cock.

Jack - or John Gilbert Cock to use his full title - was a subtle, skilful centre-forward of the 1920s who top scored in three successive seasons for Chelsea, then after a drought of one goal in 11 appearances was sold to Everton in January 1923, scoring on his debut for the Blues against Stoke City

A Cornishman who made his name at Brentford and then Huddersfield, Jack scored 53 goals in 111 appearances for Chelsea - and opened his England goalscoring account within 30 seconds of his debut against Ireland in 1919.

Only three players have scored quicker England goals, another Everton and Chelsea hero Tommy Lawton, Bolton's Harold Hassall in 1953 and Bryan Robson at the 1982 World Cup.

Jack found Goodison Park very much to his liking, scoring nine goals in his first 15 Everton appearances.... eight of them at Goodison.

The local press seemed as taken by Cock's appearance as his marksmanship. "He takes a pride in his appearance and his black hair is always brushed well back from his prominent forehead."

On the big screen, Jack played himself in the 1920 silent movie, *The Winning Goal*, and he obviously did well because in 1930 he was asked to feature in another football film, *The Great Game*, notable for being the first appearance on screen of a certain Rex Harrison.

Jack was also a war hero. During the Great War he signed up to the 17th Service Battalion of Middlesex Regiment, better known as the 1st Footballers' Battalion,



▶ Jack Cock

because it consisted mainly of professional footballers.

Posted to the Western Front he was awarded the Military Medal for bravery at the Somme and at one stage was reported missing, presumed dead.

Jack survived the war, however, and later in life became a publican.

He died in April 1966, aged 72.



▶ Rex Harrison - Jack's co-star!