

Everton and Chelsea go Dutch



By Brendan Connolly

Chelsea Football Club was founded in 1905 and their initial rise was fairly rapid.

Finishing third in Division Two in their first season, they improved on that by one place the following year, finishing runners-up behind Nottingham Forest, and thus gaining promotion to the top-flight.

Other teams in the second tier that season included Gainsborough Trinity, Glossop, Clapton Orient and Burton United.

In 1907-08, their first season in the First Division, Chelsea enjoyed success on Merseyside, completing the double over Everton, and also beating Liverpool 4-1 at Anfield.

They beat Everton 2-1 at Stamford Bridge and then their 3-0 win at Goodison in April was secured by a George Hilsdon hat-trick. Hilsdon was the very first player to reach 100 goals for Chelsea.

The Londoners earned themselves a creditable mid-table finish, ending their inaugural top-flight campaign on the same points as Everton.

However, at the end of that season, a further fixture took place between today's opponents when Everton and Chelsea were invited by the FA to participate in an exhibition game in Haarlem, Holland.

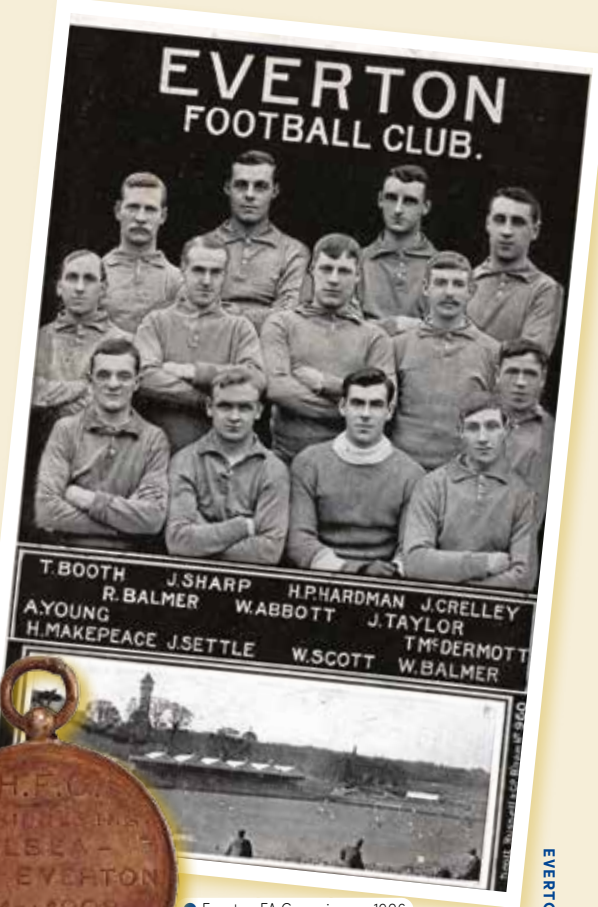
The Everton minute books disclose that whilst Everton requested a fee of £100 for the trip, they had to settle for 'expenses only'.

The handsome sum of £55 from their hosts was eventually enough to tempt the Toffees, who took the opportunity to visit Brussels and Paris on the trip.

The board instructed that no players should be put under pressure to make the trip, but what young man would decline such an opportunity to travel to Europe over 100 years ago?

Well it appears Jack Sharp and Sandy Young may have declined, as they were absent from the original named squad, being replaced by Harry Mountford and Hugh Bolton.

On 1 May 1908, the Everton party consisting of the director Mr Edward Bainbridge and Jack Elliott, the trainer, plus twelve players, left Liverpool Central Station and headed for Paris.



● Everton FA Cup winners 1906

This was only Everton's second venture overseas, following a tour of Austria and Hungary three years previous.

The game in Haarlem ended in a 4-0 win for Everton, although unfortunately no trace can be found of the goalscorers.

The Everton party included the Balmer brothers - Billy and Bob, who played over 500 first-team games between them for the Toffees. Pictured is the reverse of the medal presented to the victorious Everton team in Haarlem.