

George Milligan

By Rob Sawyer, Everton Heritage Society



To date, 71 men have made a solitary first team start for Everton during their playing careers – from Harry Warmby and John Keyes in 1888 through to Harry Charsley and Fraser Hornby in December 2017. For George Milligan, his sole outing came 80 years ago shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War.

George hailed from Failsworth and played for Manchester North End in the Cheshire County League before switching to Oldham Athletic in 1935. At 6ft tall and weighing 13 stone he was a physical presence in the midfield and quickly drew the attention of other clubs. In May 1935 he moved to Everton for a fee of £3,150.

With Everton hitting top form in the 1938–39 season it is unsurprising that George had to wait for a first-team opportunity. It arrived in October when team captain Jock Thomson was struck down with flu and George came in at left-half at Bolton's Burnden Park. George played his part in a thriller – his lobbed pass over an opponent set Torry Gillick free to feed Lawton for Everton's equaliser. However, Wanderers were not to be denied and



ran out 4-2 winners.

With Thomson fit again, George returned to a Central League team boasting Charlie Gee, Cliff Britton and George Jackson in its ranks. During the War, George saw service driving tanks which led to circulatory issues in his legs. After being referred to a specialist by Everton, he was obliged to retire from the game on medical grounds in 1946 at just 28 years of age.

George actually represented 'Everton' more times at cricket than

first-team football! Combined Everton and Liverpool footballers often played cricket matches against local teams and George was a regular alongside the likes of Stanley Bentham, Charlie Gee and Robert 'Bunny' Bell.

Post-war, he and his brother founded Pleasant View camping site in North Wales. He served Rhyl Town FC as a director and manager and remained friends with T.G. Jones who was managing Bangor City. George did some scouting for Everton and in the mid-1970s he spotted a promising young goalkeeper playing for Bangor City. Everton chose not to act on the resulting recommendation but a few years later George's good judgement was vindicated when Neville Southall eventually joined the Blues from Bury.

George passed away in 1983 and was laid to rest in Rhuddlan cemetery. He may have made only one appearance but what better team to make it in than the School of Science's Class of '39?



● George Milligan is fourth from the left