

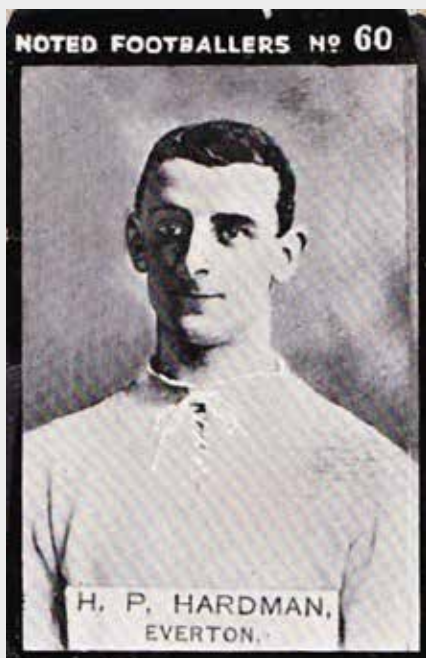
AN EVERTON AND MANCHESTER UNITED HERO

Harold Hardman left an indelible mark on both Everton and Manchester United, as player and figurehead respectively.

At Goodison he was a dashing left-winger in the early 1900s. Fifty years later, he helped steer Manchester United to greatness in the face of tragic adversity.

Manchester-born but Blackpool-raised, Harold was 21 when Everton poached him from his adopted hometown club. His Blues debut was at Goodison in the first game of the 1903/04 season against Blackburn Rovers. The slightly built wide-man got off to a flying start, raiding down the wing, pinging in dangerous crosses and scoring in a 3-1 victory. *Athletic News* reported, 'Settle and Hardman were in a class to themselves, and the latter never seemed satiated with work: he could not get the ball too often, and what is more, he made good use of it when in possession.'

Harold followed his father into the legal profession and had to absent himself from some matches in order to study and sit exams. As an amateur player he was invited by letter from Everton secretary Will Cuff to appear in matches - responding in the affirmative when he was available. He would form a devastating attacking partnership with Jack Sharp on the right wing and Alex "Sandy" Young at centre-forward - winning the FA Cup by overcoming Newcastle United in 1906 final. He played four times for England and won gold at football for Great Britain in the 1908 Olympics.



Having qualified as a solicitor he secured his release from Everton in order to join Manchester United, located closer to his business premises. With first-team opportunities limited at Old Trafford, Harold would move on to Bradford City before finishing his playing career at Stoke City. Remarkably he joined the Manchester United board whilst still turning out for the Potters.

After the First World War he would combine his legal business interests with football administration. He rose to become Chairman of Manchester United in 1951 - backing the manager as he pieced together the famous Busby Babes side. In the wake of the 1958 Munich Air Disaster, Harold played a key role in steering the club through these troubled times. Weeks after seeing United win the 1965 league title, he passed away at the age of 83.

In 2014 Harold's grave in Sale Cemetery was restored by a group of Manchester United supporters - a fitting tribute to a hero for these two great Lancastrian clubs.



By Rob Sawyer
[EFC Heritage Society]