

Left: The Morris Evans Household Oils postcard displaying the Club's first FA Cup winners

Sponsorship deals in the early 1900s 'Everton by Postcard'

By Brendan Connolly

In the early 1900s, postcards were the equivalent of current day text messages. Very few people had telephones, so the postal system was the main method of communication. As a result, demand dictated that there were four mail deliveries per day, with the last post being late in the evening. It was not unusual to post a letter or postcard early in the morning and receive a reply the same day.

Postcards carried a lower postal rate than letters and by the early 1900s picture postcards had become very popular and companies seized the opportunity to use them to advertise.

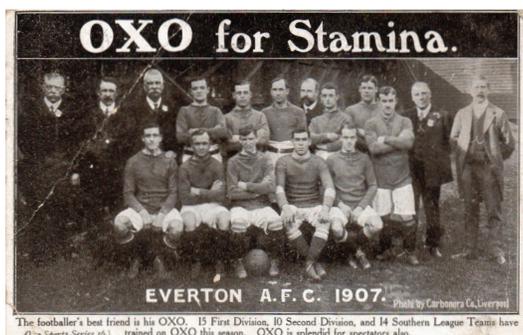
Morris Evans Household Oils were based in Festiniog, North Wales and put their name to a postcard illustrating our 1906 FA Cup-winning team. The company claimed that their products were a remedy for rheumatism, sciatica, lumbago and sore throats. They also prided themselves on how effective their oils were for dogs and farm animals!

By the following season Everton were linked to a much more famous 'sponsor'. Entitled "OXO for Stamina", the postcard also stated: "The footballer's best friend is his OXO", adding that "15 First Division, 10 Second Division and 14 Southern League teams have trained on OXO this season". It was another 50 years before there was any restriction on advertising and a requirement to substantiate such claims.

A search of the Everton Board minutes delivers no results on Morris Evans Household Oils, indicating that the Club may not have even received a payment from the company who proudly linked themselves with the FA Cup winners.

There is, however, an entry in the minute books in 1905, revealing that tenders were received from Bovril and OXO for the sale of their condiments at the ground the following season. The secretary was instructed to advise Bovril that an offer of £20 would secure the privilege for them; otherwise, OXO's tender would be accepted.

How times have changed!



Above: The 1907 Everton squad were apparently fuelled by OXO...