



Left: John Willie  
(front row,  
second right)  
lines up with his  
Everton teammates  
in March 1953

# When Parker Tamed Tigers

By David Prentice

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**un through the list of Everton's record scorers against almost every club we've ever faced and one name predictably dominates.**

William Ralph Dean.

Everton's top scorer against Arsenal? Dixie with 12 goals.

Liverpool? Dixie with 19.

Chelsea? Dixie again with 10.

But not today's visitors Hull City.

The man who tormented the Tigers even more than the celebrated Dixie throughout his career was another Everton striker, a man who doesn't feature as frequently whenever lists of Everton's great forwards are mentioned but whose goals return was impressive.

John Willie Parker was described as a "stylish inside-forward" who played much of his football for Everton during the brief spell we spent outside the top flight between 1951 and 1954.

He scored 89 goals in his 176 Everton appearances, many of them in that spell – and in the promotion campaign of 1953/54 top-scored with 31 goals in 38 starts.

He scored once against Hull that season, but it was in Everton's first campaign of Second Division football that he topped up his Tigers' tally with a Good Friday hat-trick in front of 42,980 ecstatic Evertonians.

Hull City were a struggling Second Division side at the time and escaped relegation to the third tier of English football by only three points.

The Liverpool Daily Post's Leslie Edwards took that very much into account when he filed his report for the next day's newspaper.

'In Football you play as well as the others allow,'

Edwards wrote. 'That is why part of the victory must be taken with reservation.'

Hull City's forward line that day was led by the English striking legend Horatio 'Raich' Carter – who in 1936 became the youngest man ever to have captained a First Division title-winning side when he led Sunderland to glory, and followed that up with victory in the FA Cup final a year later, scoring the second Sunderland goal in a 3–1 win over Preston North End.

But by the time he came to Goodison almost 15 years later his best days had long since gone.

'In the game Horatio Carter and Neil Franklin retain their glamour but that is not to say that either is measurably as he was,' added Edwards.

'Indeed, the thought crossed my mind more than once that there should be a law against former England players prolonging their careers to the point at which they gently fade away, showing no hint of the greatness they once possessed. Horatio stands not where he did.

'Everton played some inspired stuff, but I would like to see them produce this football against better opposition than Hull City.'

They duly did – beating West Ham the following week, but it was still only enough to elevate Everton to a seventh-placed finish.

After a worrying slump to 16th the following season, in 1953/54 Everton finally secured promotion to the top flight – where they have remained ever since.

John Willie enjoyed two seasons in the top division before joining Bury in May 1956.

But his place amongst Everton's pantheon of celebrated strikers is secure – still lying just outside the top 10 for leading league scorers.

And he still managed more against Hull City than Dixie!