

A TALE OF TWO TIERS

Prior to their recent meetings in the Premier League, the last time Brentford came to Goodison Park in the league was in the old Division Two in the 1950s.

Back in the thirties, Brentford had risen from the third tier to play in the First Division in just three seasons. However, after the Second World War, the Bees were unable to repeat their success and were relegated at the end of the 1946/47 season. Similar ignominy befell Cliff Britton's Blues in 1950/51, setting up three seasons of fixtures with Brentford in Division Two.

The meeting here on 23 August 1951 was Everton's first home game of the campaign in the lower division, and followed a lacklustre 1-0 defeat at Southampton. It could only get better? The Everton attack was led by Harry Catterick, who found himself up against Brentford's record signing Ron Greenwood, later to be a frequent foil as manager of West Ham in the 1960s, while alongside Greenwood at half-back was a young Jimmy Hill. It was a dour affair, and 'Stork,' of the *Liverpool Daily Post*, reported, 'Everton Scrape Through' after an unconvincing 1-0 victory, the goal coming from Ted Buckle. By the season's end there would be no swift return to the top flight, the Blues finishing a disappointing seventh.

By the time of the Goodison meeting the following term, both clubs were struggling - Everton in 14th place and Brentford 17th. Nevertheless, the Blues put in one of their best performances of the season, running out 5-0 winners, with goals from Eglington and Buckle, and a hat-trick from new hero of the number nine shirt, Dave Hickson. A former occupant of that iconic shirt was leading the Brentford attack as player-manager - a certain Tommy Lawton. In spite of the excellent showing against the Bees, this was still a rebuild in progress and Everton

EVERTON AND BRENTFORD IN THE FIFTIES



• Dave Hickson, John Willie Parker and Tommy Eglington

could manage only a lowly 17th-placed finish.

The 1953/54 season, however, witnessed greater consistency, both in team selection and performance. In the run-up to the Brentford fixture at Goodison in February 1954, Everton had been unchanged in nine of the previous 10 games, and started the day in fourth place, while the Bees were second from bottom. A revitalised home side delivered another emphatic performance in a 6-1 drubbing, with the Cannonball Kid scoring a brace, as did John Willie Parker, with one apiece from Wainwright and Fielding.

While Everton's dalliance in the lower division would end with a return to the top-flight in 1954, Brentford were heading in the opposite direction, relegated to the Third Division South at the end of the season and finally landing in the fourth tier by 1962.



• Brentford's Tommy Lawton