

By Chris Goodwin

# GOODISON'S INTERNATIONALS . . .

Last Saturday, as Everton were playing at Leicester, was the 75th anniversary of the England national team playing a significant match at Goodison Park. On 21 September 1949, the newly-formed Republic of Ireland team beat England 2-0. Significant, why? Because it was the first time England had failed to win a match on her own green and pleasant land against a non-UK country.

Significant also, but less so, because it was the first time England had failed to score at home since 1938.

England had dispensed with the trend of using a local player to attract the crowds, but the Irish Selectors were a touch more astute, as they fielded their own Peter Farrell and Peter Corr on the right wing. Farrell, who usually played in the halfback line, replaced Boro's Arthur Fitzsimmons on the inside, and the result of his change of position saw Farrell score his first international goal in front of almost 52,000 spectators.

As it turned out, however, it was just a blip in the record books. England had won six of their previous eight visits to Goodison, all British Championship



■ England v Northern Ireland at Goodison in 1973

matches – four against Ireland and two against Scotland.

Goodison was still looking after its own when Dixie Dean scored one of the goals – the winner, in fact, in the 1928 Ireland fixture, which resulted in England's first home victory for four years. Dean became England's youngest penalty-kick taker, although by 1928 there had been only 10 kicks awarded, and they contrived to miss

seven of them, including one from Dean himself.

Twenty months later England thrashed Portugal in a Festival of Britain match at Goodison and they also won their next match here in 1953 against Ireland. Harold Hassall scored the first goal after just 22 seconds, which helped ensure a successful route to the 1954 World Cup finals in Switzerland.

Then, in the glorious year of 1966, England drew here against Poland with Goodison overseeing Bobby Moore's first entry onto the international goalscoring list.

England's senior side last visited Goodison in the most unusual of circumstances. Northern Ireland were not the visitors but, rather, the hosts. The match, officially recorded as an England away victory, was played on 12 May 1973, at the height of the IRA troubles, and because of that, no visiting nation would cross the Irish Sea. A 2-1 victory did not prevent the Goodison slow handclapping or the jeers following a somewhat disjointed England performance.



■ The Republic of Ireland team that pulled off a historic victory at Goodison in 1949