



■ The 1910 FA Cup final replay between Newcastle and Barnsley

GOODISON CUP FINALS . . .

By Reg Fletcher

Goodison Park is famous for having hosted five matches at the 1966 World Cup, as well as a smattering of other international fixtures through the decades, most recently in 1995 when Brazil played Japan.

Less appreciated, maybe, is that it has also been the venue for the final of the world's most famous club knockout competition, the FA Cup.

The 1893 final, when Wolves narrowly beat Everton, was staged at the ill-equipped Fallowfield stadium in south Manchester and as a result of the chaos which ensued, the FA wisely chose a purpose-built football stadium in the shape of Goodison Park to host the following year's final between Notts County and Bolton Wanderers.

Crystal Palace (the location of the current athletics stadium) was the final's home for the next 18 years, but Goodison Park would get a second bite at the cherry in 1910 when a stalemate in London between Newcastle United and Barnsley (who had knocked out Everton in the semi-final) necessitated a replay. Goodison got the nod for the



■ Bill McCracken

match and despite it being a midweek tie, 60,000 crammed into the ground, with a good number spilling onto the pitch before kick-off, being ushered back by mounted police.

The Cup was presented to the Newcastle captain by Lord Derby and the medals by the Lady Mayoress of Liverpool, with the cheering crowd occupying most of the pitch.

At right-back for Newcastle that day

was Northern Irishman, Bill McCracken, who had a remarkable two decades with the club, making in excess of 400 first-team appearances. He had joined the Magpies from Linfield in 1904 and it's said that his 'cute' methods of getting opposing players adjudged offside helped to force a change in the offside rule in the 1920s (from three to two defenders between the foremost attacker and the goalline). Capped 16 times by Ireland, McCracken was also selected by England for two wartime internationals. He was exiled from the Irish team for 12 years over a pay row and had to wait until 1919 to get his seventh cap, when the IFA had changed the payments. McCracken went on to have a managerial career at clubs including Hull City and Millwall. He passed away in 1979 at the age of 95.

A connection to Everton FC Heritage Society is that McCracken was the great-uncle of member, Reg Fletcher, who runs a stall in St Luke's church hall on matchdays. This season offers home and away supporters a final opportunity to enjoy the unique St Luke's experience. Doors typically open three hours before kick-off.

