CASUALTY OF FIRST WORLD WAR WHO CROSSED STANLEY PARK

Words // Tony Wainwright

David Murray may not be a name familiar to most Everton fans, but in common with the likes of Johnny Morrissey, Kevin Sheedy and Peter Beardsley, he is on the shortlist of players who have crossed Stanley Park and played for Everton and Liverpool.

Murray was born on 4 December 1882 in Busby, East Renfrewshire, Scotland. Growing up there, he was awarded the Royal Humane Society's Certificate for Bravery for saving a child from drowning.

Murray's career as a footballer began with Busby Rosemount in 1898, where he featured as a full-back, playing on both flanks. He moved to Leven Victoria FC in 1900 and then to Glasgow Rangers, possibly on a loan or trial basis. (He never made a first-team appearance.) The deal to bring him south of the border to Everton was concluded with Leven Victoria in 1903. He signed professional forms after impressing in a trial match against South Liverpool.

Murray made his Everton debut at left-back in a 1-0 defeat at Sheffield Wednesday before playing his only other senior game for Everton in another 1-0 loss to Sunderland at Goodison Park. For the rest of his time with the Blues, Murray regularly played for the reserves, earning a Combination League Championship medal in 1904.

The Toffees board decided not to retain his services at the end of the 1903/04 season and after a fee could not be agreed with Manchester City, Liverpool entered the pursuit and Murray joined the newly-relegated Reds.

Liverpool were promoted straight back to the top-flight, during which time Murray made 12 appearances. They won the League Championship on their return, but he played only three first-team games in the title-winning campaign. Released by Liverpool in 1905, he was signed for £150 by Second Division newcomers Leeds City. After 85 appearances with them, Murray dropped out of first-class football, joining Midland League club Mexborough Town in late 1909. He settled in the town and worked at Frickley coal mine, turning out for Mexborough Town at the weekend until the 1913/14 season.



David Murray

Just weeks after the outbreak of the First World War, Murray enlisted as a private in early September 1914 with the 11th (Service) Battalion, Princess Louise's (Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders). Training commenced almost immediately, and by 9 July 1915 they had landed in France.

By mid-October 1915, Private Murray had fought in the intense Battle of Loos and survived unscathed, only to be killed in action on 10 December 1915 by an exploding shell during the trench stalemate which followed. He was just 28 years of age. Precise details are unknown. He may have been given a burial at the time but owing to the devastation of the landscape in the months that followed, he is listed as having no known grave. His name appears on the Loos Memorial to the Missing, located at Dud Corner.