



By Rob Sawyer

FRANCIS HAMILL - THE GOODISON BUGLER!

Everton Football Club has traditionally shunned the use of in-match music to spur on the team or celebrate goals scored. However, many decades before the English national team started being accompanied by a band, and before the concept of a large drum behind the goal started to catch on, the Toffees had a one-man brass section, known as the Goodison Bugler.

Born in 1894, Francis Hamill hailed from Belfast and served in the First World War, moving across to the RAF in 1918. One can assume he honed his musical skills while in service on the Western Front. Once demobbed he moved to Liverpool with his wife Margaret (née Ennis), the couple raising three daughters in the city. On the 1921 census, Francis's occupation was given as a general labourer (out of work) and with the move to Merseyside came a firm attachment to the Blues. It was probably



Francis Hamill

in the late 1920s that he decided to start bringing his bugle to Goodison Park. Normally sat in the Park End stand, Francis would sound the charge when Everton were on the attack. It drew

the attention of George Green, the celebrated *Liverpool Echo* illustrator, and Francis started to feature in his cartoon strip, which appeared in the newspaper and later in the official matchday programme.

After the Second World War, Francis's appearances at Goodison became less frequent, as commented upon in George Green's cartoons. He wasn't forgotten by supporters, though, and a fellow Toffee wrote to the BBC suggesting that he feature in the regular *Noises from Home* item on their forces radio schedule, intended to give British personnel stationed overseas familiar things to hear. He duly appeared on the programme, playing his bugle! As the *Liverpool Echo* commented: 'It should bring back happy memories for Everton supporters in uniform overseas'. In early February 1954 came the sad news that Francis had passed away. The death notice in the *Echo* stated, touchingly, 'Bugler's Last Call.'

• George Green was the *Echo* illustrator for many years. He was born in 1892, the year that Goodison Park was built, and it was said he could draw before he could walk. His first cartoon contribution was an FA Cup tie between Sunderland and Everton at Roker Park in 1925 that ended 0-0. George provided illustrations for the Everton programme during the 1938/39 Championship season and resumed the role in the 1950s. His last *Echo* cartoon was in November 1956, featuring a 1-0 Goodison win against Sheffield Wednesday – he passed away in February 1957.

