



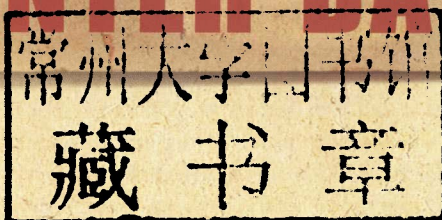
*Postcards*  
from the Edge of  
**FOOTBALL**  
*A Social History of a British Game*  
**HUNTER DAVIES**





G843/149

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MAINSTREAM  
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**T**he illustrations in this book are postcards from my own collection. With the captions in the book which accompany each postcard, I have mainly tried to describe the contents, interest or importance and estimate the date. The list of illustrations at the end of this book is an attempt, where possible, to identify the artists, photographers and postcard publishers, though alas a great many of the cards contain no clues, on either side, to their creators. The point of listing credits is to give credit, acknowledge those who produced those cards, so thank you very much indeed, but it is also to help those who might be so totally fascinated by a certain card that they want to track down a copy for themselves and need a few facts to go on. If a card is not listed it means the back is blank, there is no clue to its origin or creator, or at least none that I can decipher. Whenever possible I have tried to date and credit them, but I apologise to all

those long-gone photographers and designers and artists I have not been able to identify but whose work I have used. With more modern cards, I have tried my best to contact the publishers and give due credit to the creators, but again this has not always been possible. I will make amends in future editions if I have missed any necessary credits. I am particularly grateful to the Football Association for permission to reproduce cards that they own, also to the National Portrait Gallery, the National Football Museum, Stuart Clarke, Mark Richards, Boomerang, Rev. Roger Lee, Lorenzo Agius and Nick Bull of Getty Images. Scans of certain cards, giving me better images than the ones I have, were kindly provided by Phil Smith of Bloomsbury Collector's Fair and Graham Budd of Graham Budd Associates and Sotheby's.

Also, personal thanks for help to Eric Krieger, David Barber of the FA and Kevin Moore and Peter Holme of the National Football Museum.





Just in  
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don't miss the  
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perfectly sweet  
Fred took him  
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Lake on Sunday.  
were talking  
the day of  
were very lively  
ing but end  
8.15 h.



SONNY'S





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SONNY'S







# INTRODUCTION

**F**ootball is the world's most popular game. It's the beautiful game, it's the people's game, it's a funny old game, all things we tell ourselves, we trillions of football fans all over the world.

I like to think when I am going to a game, anywhere, that I am communing with millions of other fans doing exactly the same thing, all over the world, watching the same game, with the same rules, using very much the same language – as the words for 'goal' and 'penalty' and 'football' have been adopted by most languages. I like to imagine I am experiencing much the same emotions, effing and blinding along with trillions of others, in, of course, our own words and accents.

I also like to think I am communing with football fans in the past, that I am part of that vast global brotherhood – and sisterhood – who have gone before, who have played the game, watched the game, loved the game. It is true in one sense, as Bill Shankly said, that football is more important than life and death, in that it goes on, and will go on, long after our lives and our deaths. At least I hope it will. Be a poor do otherwise.

I've been thinking of football's past for well over 40 years, since I was at the 1966 World Cup final and deliberately kept every scrap, including my ticket and the nasty World Cup Willie postcards and mementos, telling myself 'this is an historic moment, it will probably not happen again in my lifetime, certainly not England winning a final'.

I began to wonder about past historic moments, how football started, who were the stars in the early days, the great teams, the great events, where did nets come from or were they always there?

Since then I have collected a great deal of football memorabilia, which was pretty cheap 40 years ago, then the prices started to soar once Sotheby's and Christie's came on the football scene. Investors arrived, some with very little real interest in the game, hoping prices would go up and up, but fortunately such investors seem mainly to have disappeared. Collectors of football memorabilia do tend to be real football fans.

I don't collect shirts, especially the allegedly autographed shirts, as I always suspect fiddles. Anyway, what can you do with a shirt? Do you





**“SORRY REF., BUT SOMEONE’S BEEN MESSING ABOUT WITH MY LOCKER.”**



Comic footer cards will be coming later, please contain yourselves, but here is a taster of the highly amusing cards which were very popular at seaside in the 1950s.

hang it up, frame it, wear it, shove it in a drawer? I much prefer stuff that has content, which I can read and study, stare at and enjoy. So in my collection of 3,000 or so football items, it's mainly books, programmes, magazines and, most of all, postcards.

I started looking for ones of my favourite team, Tottenham Hotspur, and then any of the well-known professional teams, as long as the postcards and the teams depicted were old enough, say from somewhere between 1900 and 1939. They were relatively cheap, between about four and eight pounds, when I first began.

Alas, those days have gone. I don't know whether it has been investors who have put the prices up, or because football fans are better off, or if it's simply a matter of inflation. I prefer, though, to believe that it is because today there is a real interest in the history of football. People genuinely want to know more about how it all started. It could also be mingled with patriotism, wanting to enjoy and feel proud of Britain's contribution to the game.

So about ten years ago I mostly gave up looking for famous clubs, once I'd seen the prices, and found myself collecting postcards of un-famous clubs – those semi-professional, junior, district, local, amateur, school, college, factory, rural, ad hoc, knockabout teams.

You see them all the time at postcard fairs, at car boots, jumbles, often mixed up with other categories, other boxes. The players are unnamed, unremembered, long gone. The teams and clubs are mostly forgotten as well. Often only the initials live on. But I still buy them whenever and wherever I see them, regardless of the fact that I don't know anything at all about them.

I look into their innocent faces, wondering what became of them. I study their shirts, boots, shorts, trying to date them. I look for clues in the background. As my collection of Unknown Teams grew, I started to subdivide them, making up my own categories.

At the same time, I am always on the lookout for comic cards featuring football, the players





Above: One of the Great Unknown teams, circa 1910, which I can study for ages, looking in their faces, wondering what became of them, where did they buy those caps.

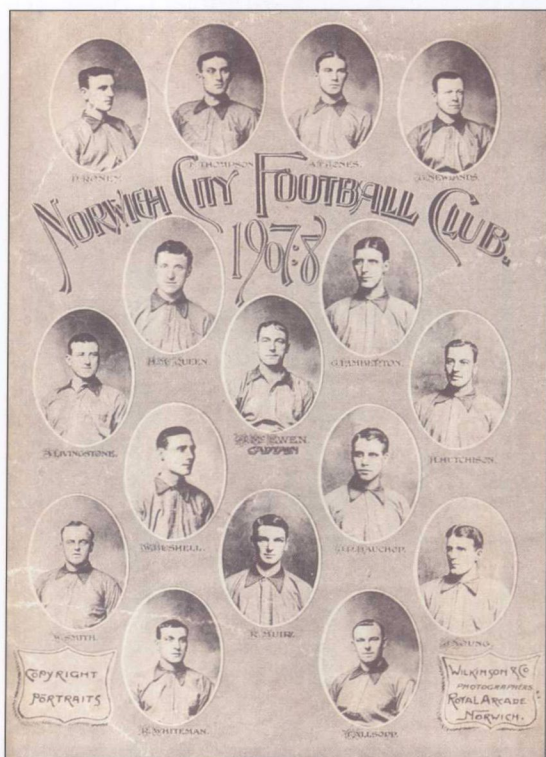
Right: One hundred years later, today's most well-known football event, the World Cup. Postcard for South Africa 2010.

or the language, or for advertising cards using a football image – for any sort of cards, really, that have a football element. Postcards, after all, are a visual record of our social history, and football postcards reflect the history of football.

It then struck me that the height of postcard mania, around 1900, was roughly coincidental with the height of football mania – the period when football first properly established itself as a dominant force in popular culture. So the histories of the two, postcards and football, are intertwined, each reflecting the other. I like to think I have therefore stumbled upon a new topic – the history of football as seen through postcards – which is getting a bit carried away, but that's what collectors do.

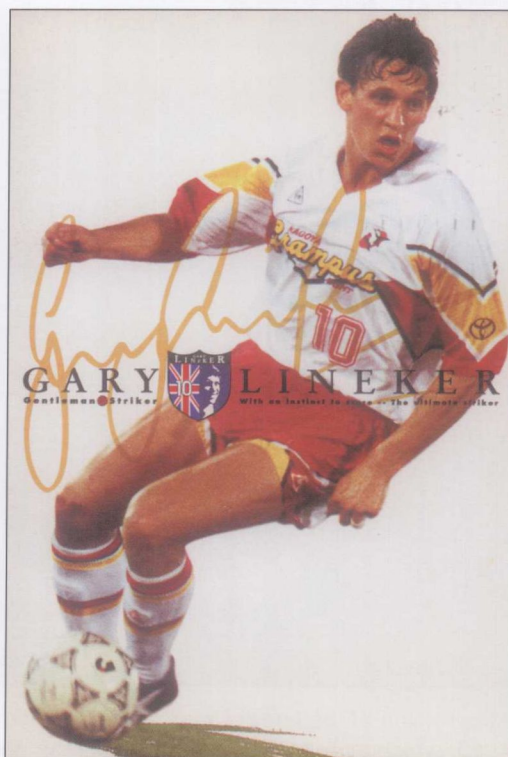






Classic team card, prettily arranged:  
Norwich City, 1907-08.

Obviously, a full history of football can't possibly be told solely through postcards, but then again, loads of so called 'full' histories and encyclopaedias of football have already been produced, a lot of them filled with too many stats and league tables for my liking. And they have missed out postcards in going for the bigger picture (bigger in size but not always bigger in content, as postcards, as we shall see, reveal much that is hidden).



A real Known, Gary Lineker with  
Grampus Eight, Japan, 1993.

This history is therefore only a sideways look at football. By examining football postcards, how they mirrored and recorded and commented on what was going on in football and in mainstream life, I hope to illustrate, in both senses of the word, the importance of football and its place in the cultural and social history of the last 150 years. Right, let's kick off...



GOAL!

BACHELOR GIRL'S CLUB

WEMBLEY STADIUM

# Chapter One

