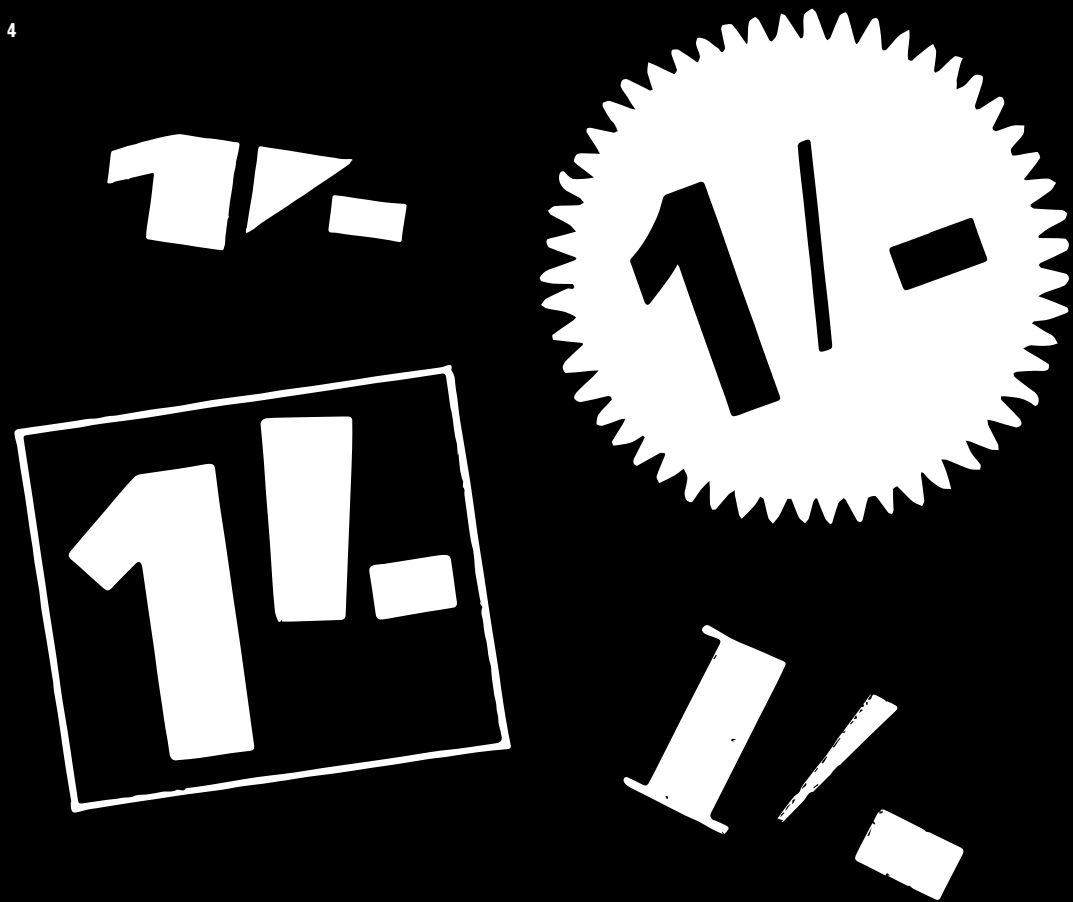


1 SHILLING

**THE FOOTBALL PROGRAMME
DESIGN REVOLUTION OF 1965-85**

1!

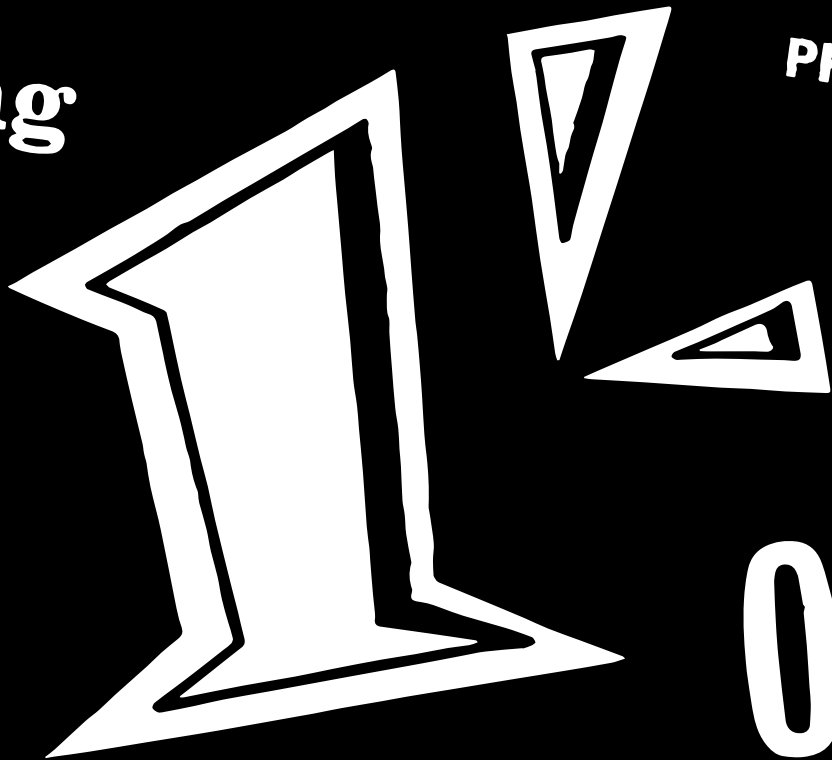
1/4



One Shilling



**PRICE
1/-**



ONE SHILLING

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You didn't have to live through the 70s and 80s to know that football design culture used to look a lot cooler.

Most of us have a retro football shirt we herald as a classic, and I doubt it's one from the 2010s with a great big, bubbly, betting website slapped on the chest. Programmes from the 2010's are equally as unpleasant, you have to go back 30+ years before you start seeing great pieces of design.

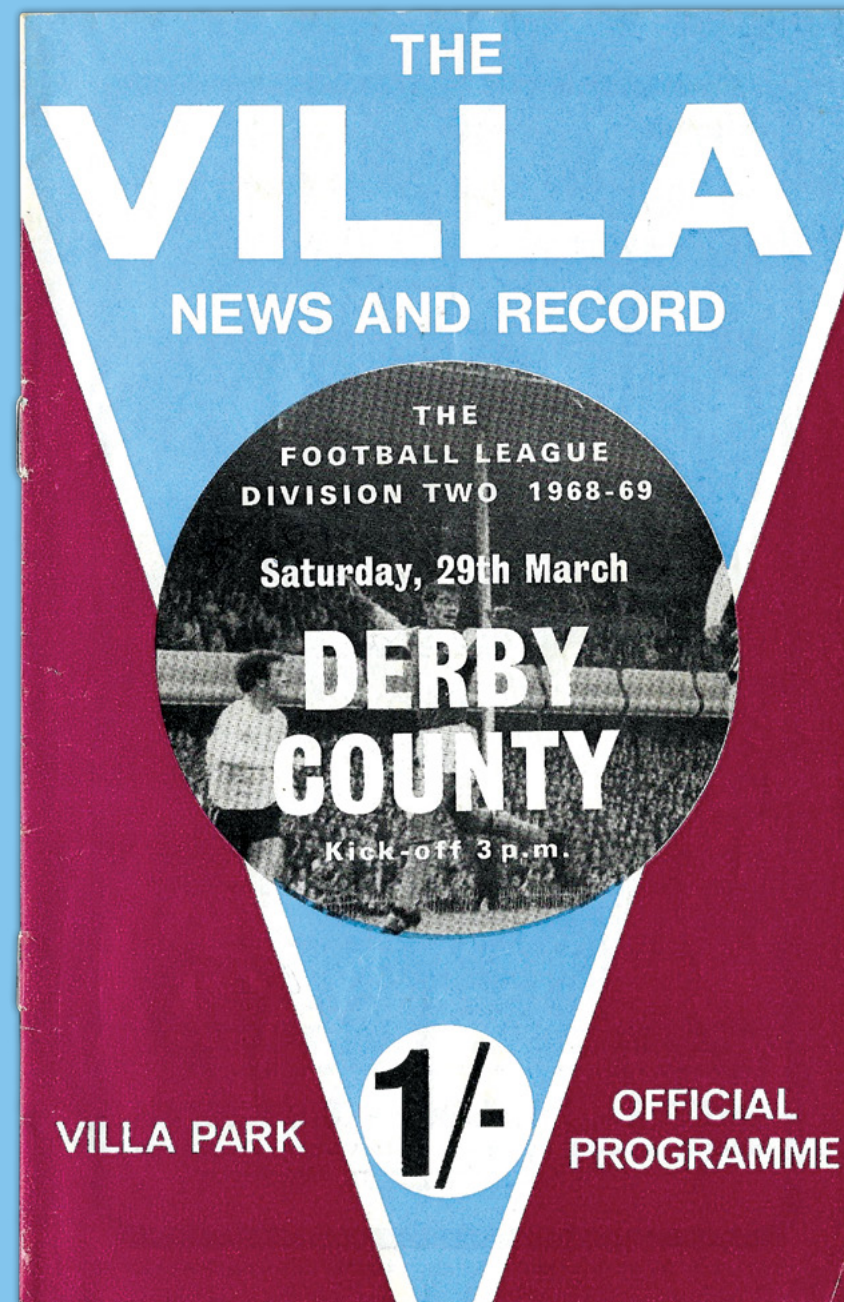
Conveniently, and the sole reason I subsequently began collecting programmes at all, my Dad has a vast collection of Aston Villa programmes, collected over the past 50 years. Each one is pristinely stored chronologically, shelved in what are now discontinued programme binders in a sacred room called 'the study' — another term for a place where he can safely store his hoardings without Mum throwing them out.

One winter, and by some freak chance (perhaps a post-Christmas-dinner-induced coma had eased his nerves), he granted me exclusive access to the room which has long been off limits to anyone without immaculately clean hands. I couldn't wait to delve into the fusty smelling repository... but where-oh-where to start?

I picked up a folder marked '68-69' and extracted an Aston Villa v Derby County programme, still partially folded from when it had been stuffed into the back pocket of his flares half a century ago. The cover was instantly iconic to me: a large graphic v-shape commanded the cover's structure, balanced with two different sized circles within it. One contained a black and white image of a Villa player mid-air, the print slightly misaligned and breaching the circle's circumference. The second circle was filled with a large '1/-'. I later deciphered the meaning of this bizarre currency (it was still two years until Britain would go decimal). Full width at the top of the cover reads 'THE VILLA', the no-nonsense abbreviated name reflecting the club's uncompromising abilities on the field (at the time).

As I turned its hallowed pages, chants of fans and the stench of Bovril filled the room. Oh, the atmosphere that this programme must have experienced... the goals it must have borne witness to (actually it turned out that the game ended 0-1, thanks to a familiar Aston Villa own goal).

[OPPOSITE]
ASTON VILLA 0
DERBY COUNTY 1
29TH MARCH 1969
DIVISION 2
ATTD: 49,188
PRICE: 1 SHILLING



A wonderful moment in time had been effortlessly captured by these cheaply printed, unpretentious, single-stapled leaves of paper resembling a budget time capsule, designed by an unknown Midlands design guru. And to top it off, on page 5 I learnt all about the Claret & Blue's mid-week training trip to Majorca and how they were accompanied by a handful of supporters who had paid an all-inclusive price of £25 to holiday with their heroes!

Of course, this was just the start of a long afternoon of browsing designs and listening to my dad reminisce, recalling each result and who scored, as if it were his chosen subject on Mastermind. These significant hours homogenised my two loves: design and football. It wasn't long before I started to collect programmes myself and the desire to find the next great cover became my holy grail.

Almost immediately I realised that I had kickstarted a pretty unglamorous hobby because, let's face it, eBay isn't exactly an inspiring weekend hang out — and neither are programme fairs in church halls on soggy Sundays. A lot has changed since Phil Shaw's 1980 book *Collecting Football Programmes* where the author describes collecting these items as 'Britain's fastest growing hobby, for everyone aged 7–70'. 40 years on and those earnest seven-year-olds have morphed into podgy forty-seven-year-olds (almost exclusively male), buying and selling in covert areas of the dark web.

But it's not good design that my collecting comrades find so absorbing. More likely they'll be hunting for that 1972 Luton Town programme which has eluded them for the past 50 years. They won't give a buggger what that funky, bubble-style, typeface is called, or if it really is the same one used on James Brown's Polydor album cover from the same year. When visiting collectors fairs, I could bet that I'd be the only person in the village hall looking for examples with era-defining covers and belting typography. But nevertheless I'd always be in good company. I'd often find myself surrounded by passionate experts who love to see someone under the age of 50 getting stuck in, even if they are completely baffled why anyone would be so snobby as to judge whether their cherished memorabilia is 'well designed'.

“Design classics?! We used to get these for 12 pence back in 1976 down the Molineux.”

[OPPOSITE]
MEXICO 1970
WORLD CUP BROCHURE
CHAMPIONS: BRAZIL
DESIGN: LANCE WYMAN

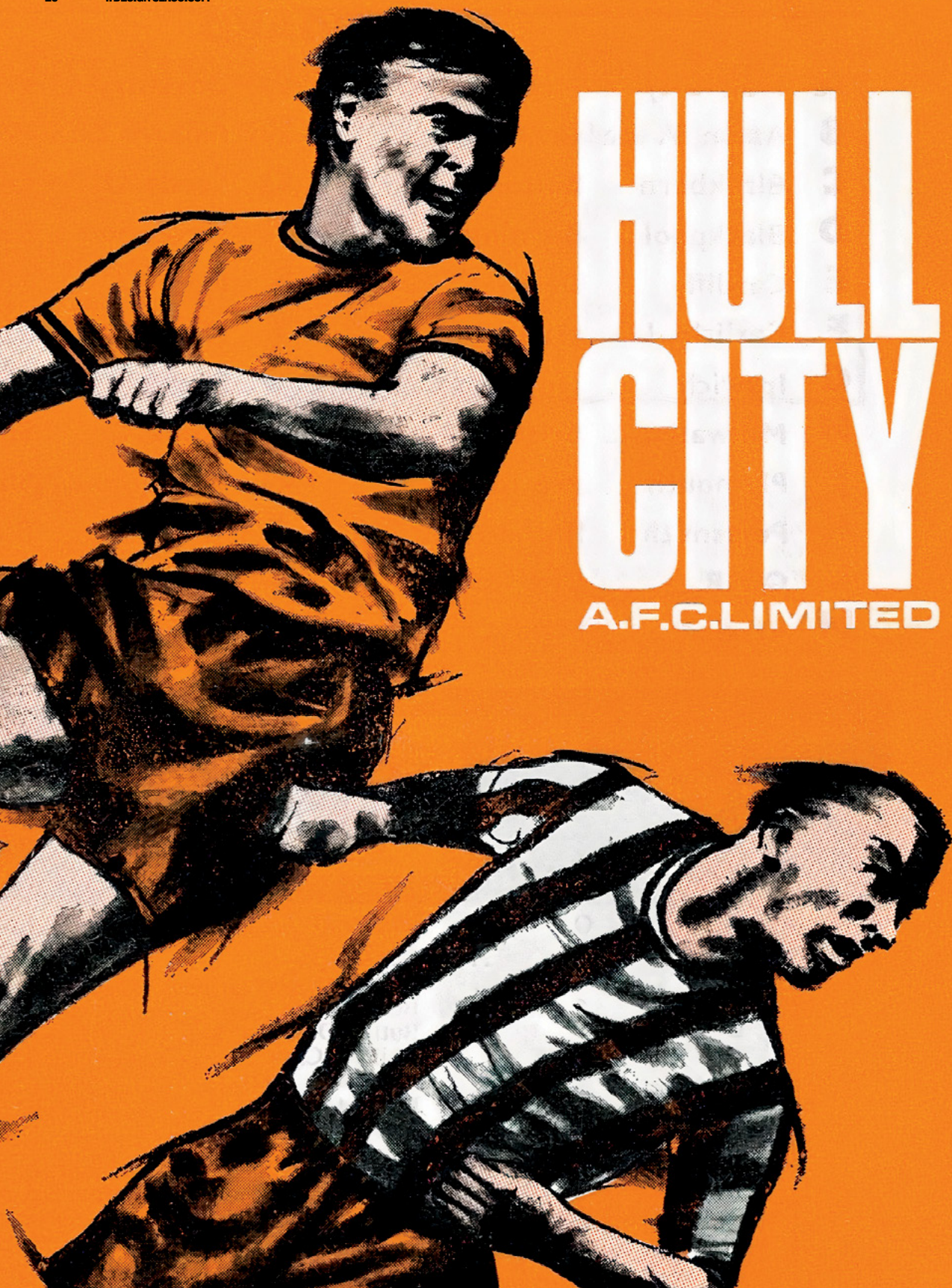
Read more about this programme on P30.



From our point of view, the heyday of the football programme spans around 20 years, between 1965–1985. Within these two decades there was an alignment of a few fundamental stars, the first being that all designers of the era had to be natural born artists. Not just anyone could graduate from art school — and compared to today where anyone with a MacBook Pro can claim to 'do layout' — the chosen few designers who found themselves in charge of the matchday programme were highly regarded by their peers.

These skills are demonstrated with an abundance of bold, yet at times kooky (let's call it brave), typography on covers from Stirling to Southampton. Typefaces like *Zipper*, *Neil* and *Frankfurter* are synonymous with the period, yet are growing in popularity again in the 2020s. High contrast mugshots and action photos, iconic headlines, psychedelic colour pairs and daring patterns are also trademark of those times.

Many clubs opted for illustrated covers over graphic interpretations. Be it Hull City's two towering defenders battling for a skull-crunching header, Fulham's bird's-eye view of Craven Cottage on a matchday or Lance Wyman's iconic trophy depicted on the official Mexico 1970 programme, there are so many styles to feast your eyes upon. We also owe a lot of thanks to the lithographic print process. A limit of three or so vibrant colours in an entire



HULL CITY

A.F.C. LIMITED

HULL CITY 0
MIDDLESBROUGH 2
 23RD SEPTEMBER 1967
 DIVISION 2
 ATTD: 17,727
 PRICE: 6D

For years, players' names were shown in the traditional 'position view' format. This all changed towards the end of the 1960s with managers (initially at a European and international level) diversifying their tactics, opting out of the classic 2-3-5 formation. Ever since we have seen our heroes lined up in endless lists, with players numbers going up to 99.

HULL CITY										
Colours: Amber & Black						Sub: Ron YOUNG				
1 Ian McKECHNIE						3 Norman LEES				
2 Paddy GREENWOOD						6 Chris SIMPKIN				
4 Alan JARVIS						8 Frank BANKS				
7 Terry HEATH						10 Ken HUGHTON				
9 Ken WAGSTAFF						11 Sam BUTLER				
Referee: Mr. L. J. HAMER (Bolton)						Linemen: Amber Flag— Mr. J. G. B. PEEBLES (Doncaster) Red Flag— Mr. J. H. HOLMES (Rushden)				
11 Jimmy LAWSON						7 Ray LUGG				
10 John CROSSAN						8 Arthur HORSFIELD				
9 Eric McHORDIE						4 Billy HORNER				
6 Gordon JONES						5 Dick ROOKES				
3 Geoff BUTLER						2 John HICKTON				
1 Willy WHIGHAM						Sub: Don MASSON				
Colours: Red & White						Sub: Don MASSON				
MIDDLESBROUGH										
Printed by A. R. Jackson and Co. Ltd., Alfred Collier Street, Hull										

programme concentrated the designer's mind and brought about a level of consistency and purity that is painfully lacking in today's programmes. Mono-coloured photography was also a consistency enforcer — full colour repro was still a romantic vision. Staying in the world of technology, the early computers with their limited visual potential hadn't yet become a creative obstacle. But possibly there was one characteristic within the game at the time which was unwittingly the single biggest influence on programme design: clubs were still by and large an extension of their local community. They were yet to become vehicles for making the rich richer. The thought of a club being owned by a Middle Eastern Royal family or a Far Eastern hedge fund was unimaginable... let alone fretting about brand awareness in across the globe. In those simpler times, programme designers enjoyed unencumbered creative freedom — constrained only by having to find quarter-page holes to accommodate ads for the local butcher or suit hire company, most of which were probably owned by the club Chairmen!

The joy of admiring a well designed programme doesn't end there. All of these visual cues are wonderful insights into society and culture from a time when Britain and the rest of the world was changing at a rate of knots. On the fun side, Sex Pistols' posters in the Torquay United programmes get us thinking about the music scene, whilst job adverts for 'cutting a career in coal' tell us about the demographics of the supporter base. On the dark side, a plethora of cigarette adverts hint at what pubs smelt like before kick-off. Crowd behaviour warnings on front covers also remind us of the lunatic fringes brought on by social unrest.

On the pitch, the second half of the 1960s will forever be synonymous with the English game's greatest achievements...

England's 1966 World Cup victory over West Germany, Celtic's European Cup win in 1967, and then Manchester United repeating the magnificent feat the very next year. Success, joy, pride — call it what you will — all helped to kickstart a new era of football mania. Newspapers devoted more space to games and gossip than ever before, the number of specialist magazines multiplied, and for younger fans there was a multitude of pocket money footie goodies on offer: comics, bubble gum cards, badges, posters and stickers. Accompanying the headlines and merchandising, the football programme, at that time the game's unheralded yet most steadfast companion, was in the throes of a design revolution, the very same kind of creative force that was revolutionising our entire visual universe.

Graphic designers, many fresh out of art school, were sought out to give their local club's matchday programme a visual boost — whether imagining a club mascot, painting an action-packed scene for the programme cover, or sprinkling logos and colourful lettering over a collage of star players kicking, heading and tackling. The cover wasn't the only element to have a makeover. The presentation of the football programme's often limited contents (team statistics, line-ups, pen-pictures of the players, even the adverts) were also getting a makeover. In some cases, the most revolutionary transformation of the publication was the idea of reaching out to the supporters by opening up the club to their ideas and their concerns. This all meant that the elements were in place for the football programme to break free from the patriarchal and formal tone of its written content that was set in stone since the game's earliest days.

'Communicate' was the mantra of John Elvin, perhaps the greatest ever football programme designer who, in his short career, set out a manifesto for a new kind of matchday read. Elvin's stint at West Bromwich Albion in 1969/70, then at Coventry City in 1970/71, offered up a remarkable template for the possibilities of 'communication' in something as unexceptional and ephemeral as a football programme.

From an office in the front room of a terraced house bang opposite Coventry's Highfield Road ground, John wrote in the same way he'd have talked to his readers if they'd have met him on their way to the turnstiles. 'Visual, absorbing and exciting is a graphic designer's job', he'd write in his regular column 'Say So!' Elvin's experimental layouts and heart-on-his-sleeve editorials were not for everyone. Some fans described his approach as "a perfect example of modern art", while others declared that his work was "brash", "crude" or "bizarre".

It's clear that even by the mid-1960s, compared to the emerging youthquake in pop music and fashion, the impact of TV, and the aforementioned 'modern art', the landscape of professional football was still deeply conservative. However in the years after the Second World War there had been a concerted attempt to break away from the traditional minimal news sheets of football programmes past. During the 1948/49 season, Chelsea FC replaced their utilitarian slimline issue with a 16-page publication complete with earthy chit-chat never previously imagined. There was even a black and white photograph of a player on the cover. At the time the publication was met with cynicism and complaint, but it inspired others to follow suit. For their landmark 1948 programme, Chelsea doubled the price from threepence (3d) to sixpence (6d). 22 years later when Coventry City rebranded their *Sky Blue* magazine, the cover price leapt from one shilling (1s) to two shillings (2s). At the time its designer John Elvin defended the cost to the fan's pocket: 'I hope that by the time you've read it you will find it well worth the price you pay!'

In August 1966, Oldham FC re-launched their programme as an official magazine with a new name, *The Boundary Bulletin*. The club was then owned by Ken Bates, the businessman who in 1982 would famously take over a financially stricken Chelsea FC for just £1. The Chairman saw the large format issue (named after the club's home ground) as part of a comprehensive renovation of the Division 3 club: 'The modern supporter rightly demands consideration and comfort', Bates claimed. Oldham had raised the cover price from 6d to 1s to cover the costs of the *Boundary Bulletin* — but actually gave it away to fans paying admission at the turnstiles. This concept was only sustained for two seasons before the club returned to a more conventional publication, both in terms of its format and how it was sold on matchdays.

The real turning point in the development of the programme was at Coventry City in 1967/68, when the all-new *Sky Blue* was launched to mark the club's first ever season in the top flight. Just like the *Boundary Bulletin*, the programme



B R A D F O R D
CITY

Association Football Club (1908) Ltd.

Directors :

Mr. S. Heginbotham (Chairman), Mr. C. K. O'Keeffe (Vice-Chairman)
 Mr. C. R. Booth, Mr. M. G. F. Dickens, Mr. G. D. Ide, Mr. E. L. Porter
 Hon. Medical Officer : Dr. R. P. Davies
 Manager : Mr. W. Harris Secretary Mr. J. Mellor



WEDNESDAY, 16th MARCH, 1966

versus

HALIFAX TOWN

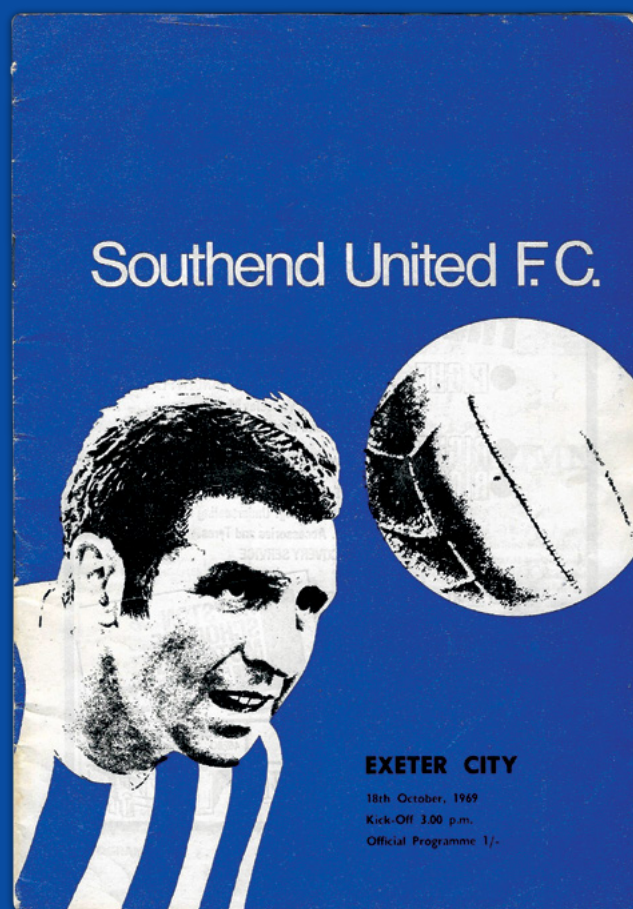
KICK-OFF 7-30 P.M.

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME - SIXPENCE

BRADFORD CITY 0 - 1 HALIFAX TOWN

16TH MARCH 1966 / DIVISION 4

ATTD: 4,993 / PRICE: 6D



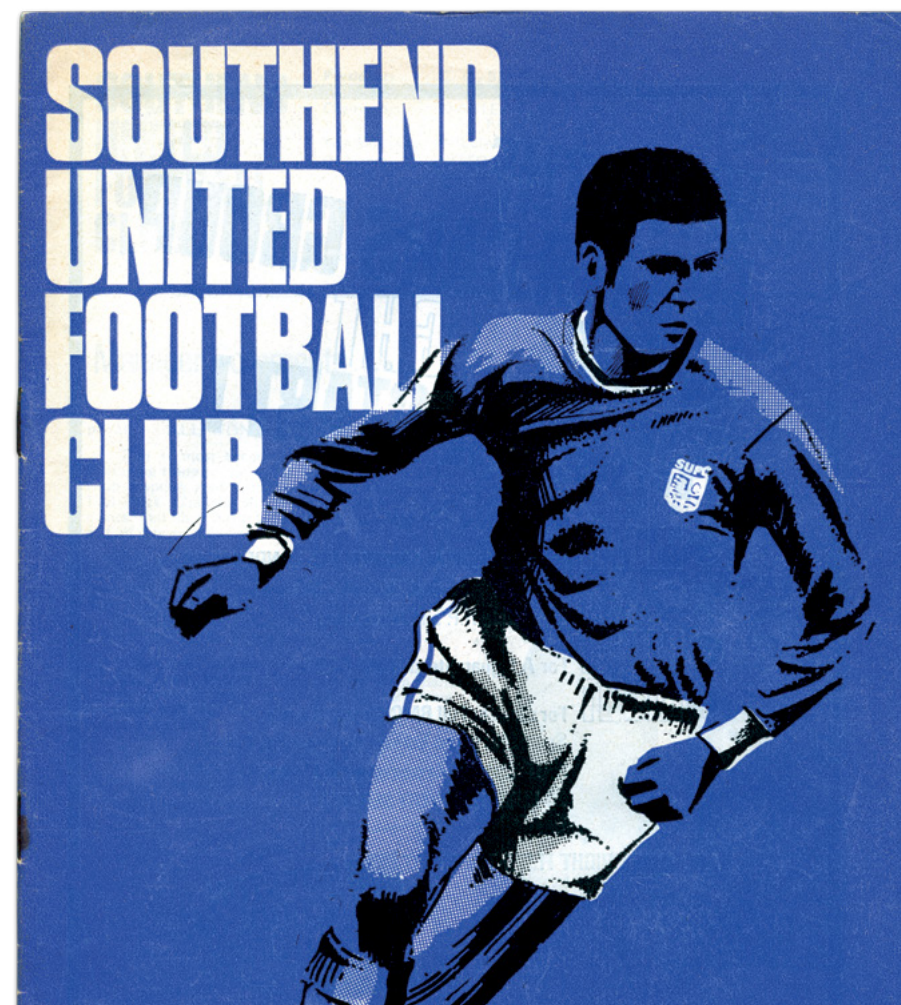
[RIGHT]
 SOUTHEND UTD 1
 EXETER CITY 1
 18TH OCTOBER 1969
 DIVISION 4
 ATTD: 6,218
 PRICE: 1 SHILLING
 DESIGN: JOE SIMS


Joe Sims, a graduate of Southend's Art College, was running his own design agency when he got the call from his beloved hometown football club Southend United, not only to re-design their official programme, but to also reimagine their *Sammy Shrimper* mascot for the 1968/69 season. Sims was given an unusually healthy budget for a Division 4 team. In Southend United's first match of the campaign versus Halifax Town, Sims writes in his editorial that '...work on the programme began as early as last Christmas, a committee was formed and every league club programme was studied. It is the most ambitious regular publication that Southend United have ever presented...'

Sims' vision was not just to enlarge the page count and photographic content, but to make the programme look stunning. He would even seek out ideas from the award-winning designer John Elvin whose company 'Sportsgraphic' was flying high in the football scene. With bold blue lettering at the top of the cover, and a painted illustration of two players leaping for a header, Southend United's 1970/71 design came 3rd out of all the 92 clubs in the Programme of the Year awards. Not bad for a team who had ended the season in 18th place in the lowest division of the Football League!

Spurred on by the promotional frenzy after World Cup '66, the *Football League Review* (published from its Lytham St. Annes HQ and distributed free inside the majority of the 92 club matchday programmes) reported that 'never in the history of British Football have so many people spent so much time and cash on reading about the game'. In 1968, almost half a million copies of the *Review* were printed, accompanying the proliferation of football-themed books, annuals, comics, souvenir booklets, and assorted bric-a-brac. The Manchester United club shop announced a shooting demand for anything from Red Devils car stickers to tea towels adorned with the image of superstar George Best — and by the 1970/71 season, the sales per attendee of their matchday programme was almost 90%. In the same season, only Wembley Stadium could top that figure where more programmes were sold than the actual attendance. For the Tottenham v Aston Villa League Cup Final, a capacity 100,000 crowd purchased every one of the 120,000 programmes that were printed. But in the eyes of graphic designers already working in the game, quantity doesn't

[BELOW]
 SOUTHEND UTD 2
 HALIFAX TOWN 1
 10TH AUGUST 1968
 DIVISION 4
 PRICE: 1 SHILLING
 DESIGN: JOE SIMS





TORQUAY UNITED AFC

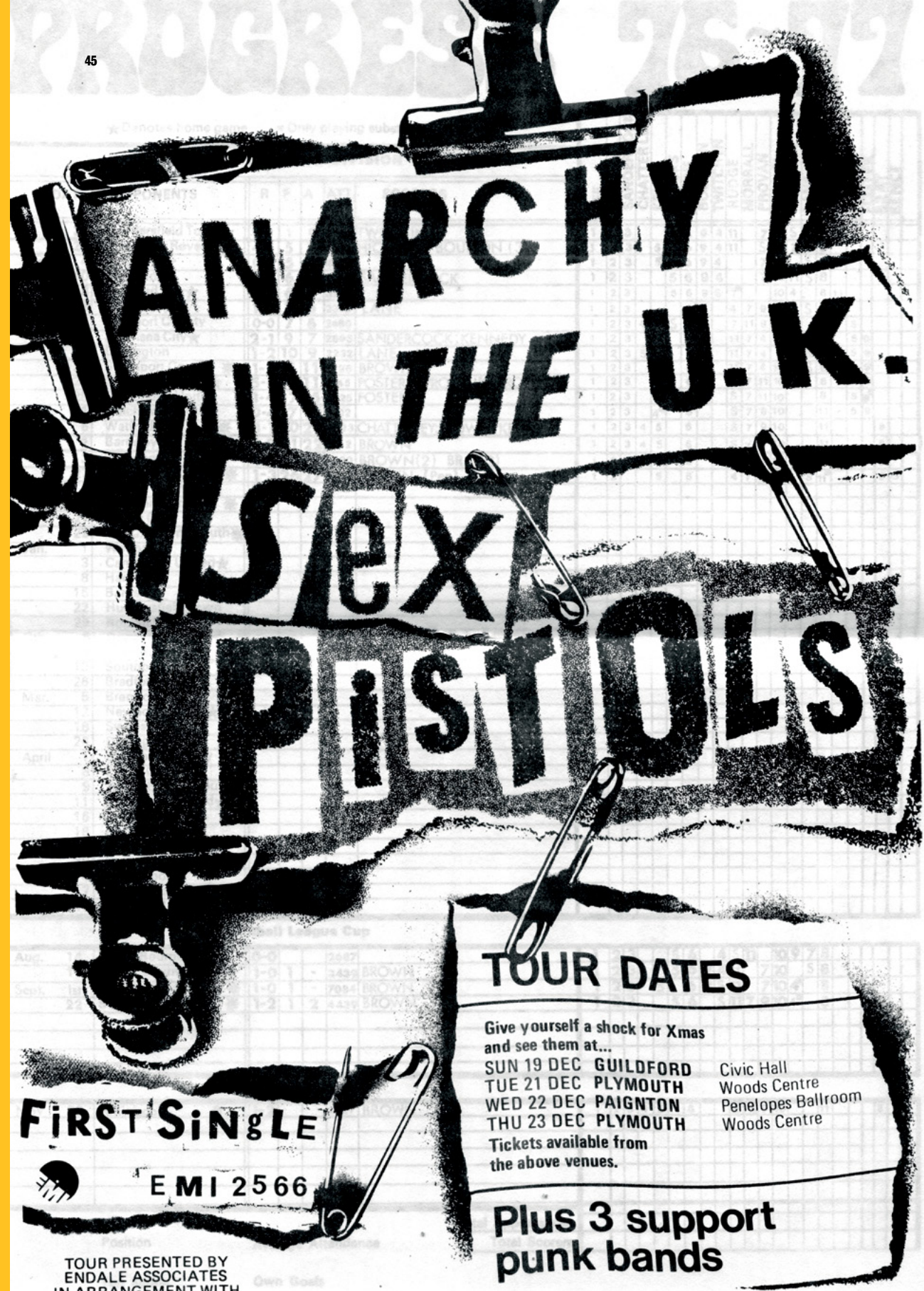
Plainmoor ground, Torquay

Programme team

President: G. H. Gillin
 Chairman: A. J. Boyce, Vice-Chairman: M. C. Spedding
 Directors: H. G. Lidstone, C. W. S. Williams, J. H. Perry,
 Lt. Col. J. Elliott, MBE, FCIS
 Secretary: D. Easton, Manager: M. Musgrove
 Player-Coach: L. Chatterley, Captain: C. Boulton
 Commercial Manager: F. E. Easton
 Pools Organiser: A. Jackson
 Hon. Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon: R. S. M. Ling
 Club Physiotherapist: W. J. Wright
 Hon. Medical Officers: J. C. Lindsay, MRCS, LRCP
 C. D. W. Davies, MBBS, MRCS, LRCP

MAGAZINE 10P

TORQUAY UTD 0 - 0 SOUTHEND UTD
 18TH DECEMBER 1976 / DIVISION 4
 ATTD: 2,151 / PRICE: 10P
 DESIGN: N.F. JOPE



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WED 22 DEC	PAIGNTON	Penelopes Ballroom
THU 23 DEC	PLYMOUTH	Woods Centre

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**Plus 3 support
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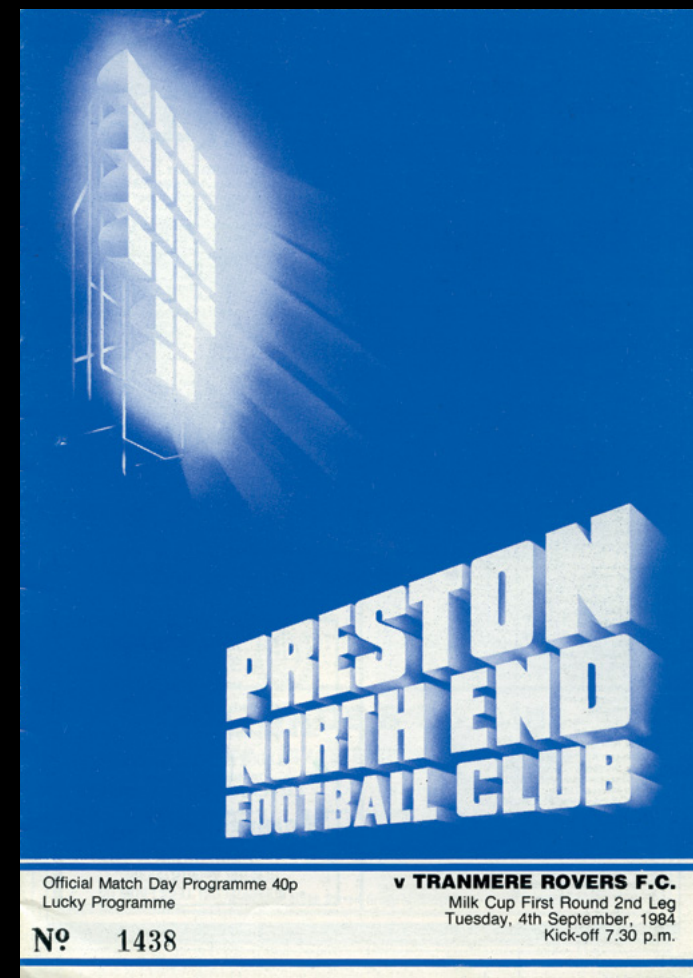


PRESTON
NORTH END
FOOTBALL CLUB

PRESTON 2 (5) – (4) 2 TRANMERE

4TH SEPTEMBER 1984 / LEAGUE CUP RD1 LG2

PRICE: 40P



With the three-day week a now distant memory, one designer at Preston North End decided to show off the Deepdale floodlights in exuberant fashion. A three-dimensional stack of condensed letters reading 'PRESTON NORTH END FOOTBALL CLUB' resembles something close to the 20th Century Fox logo – illuminated by the dazzling floodlights which poke ominously out of the night sky. Strangely, it was

these floodlights (erected in 1953) that were condemned by health and safety the season after this stunning design was published. This meant that night-time games were out of the question and fans had to bunk off work or school to attend mid-week fixtures. PNE's lowest ever attendance (2,007) came during this period but the issue was rectified with the new lights fitted in 1986.