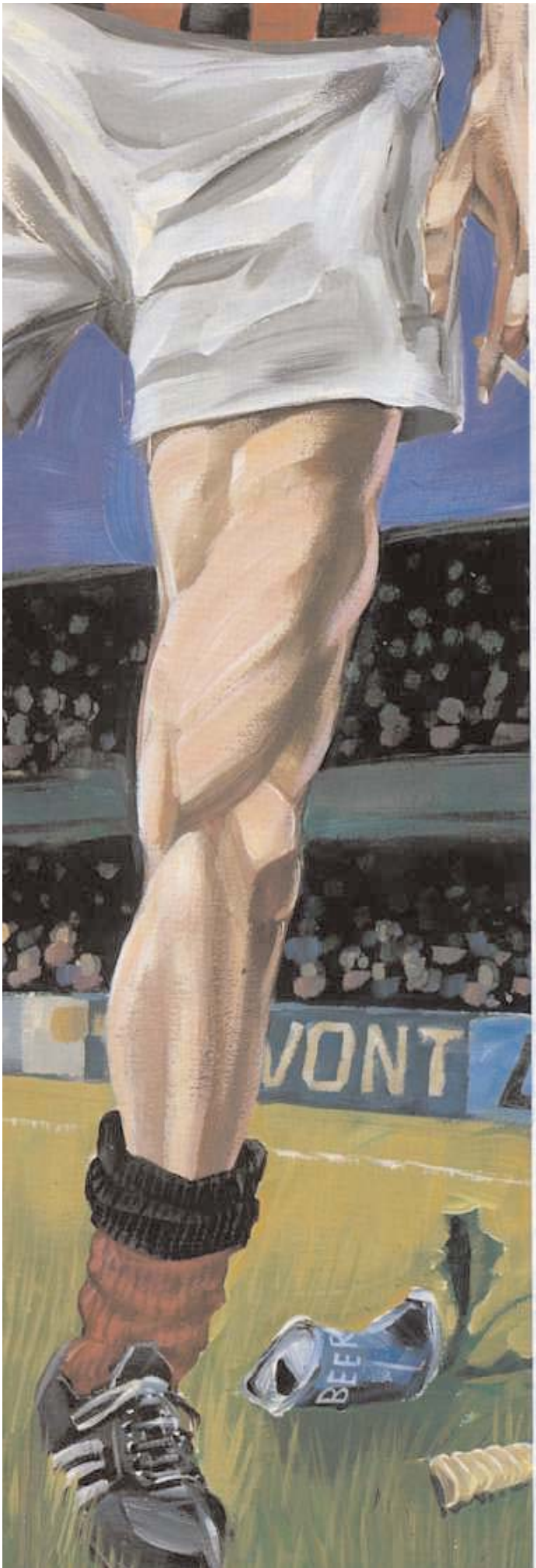

It isn't winning or losing that matters, it's how you play the game. Well, not necessarily. Paul Donnelley blows the whistle on great soccer scandals, and hands out a few red cards.

FOOTBALL BABYLON

Pele once described it as 'the beautiful game', but TV pundit, Jimmy Greaves, was more succinct. Football, he declared, was 'a funny old game'. With extensive newspaper and TV coverage, football is a sport you can't ignore, be it Paul Gascoigne blubbing in the World Cup or Kevin Keegan plastered all over the front page of *The Sun*, telling us of his ordeal at the hands of a group of robbers. But whether we derive greater pleasure from the antics on the pitch, or off it, it must be said that football has provided its fair share of scandals over the years.

In *Penthouse* this month, we turn our thoughts to football's seamier side, away from the crowd and the floodlights.

We in Britain may believe we invented the game, but these days it has its adherents – and teams, naturally – all over the world. Like South America, scene of our first footballing scandal. It went something like this. Back in 1970, under the management of Sir Alf Ramsey, England were competing in the World Cup in Mexico. Captain Bobby Moore had led the team to a thrilling 4-2 extra time victory over West

ILLUSTRATION BY MAX ELLIS

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Germany at Wembley four years earlier. Once again, Moore was the power behind England's surge for further glory.

To acclimatise the team to the high altitudes of Mexico, manager Ramsey had arranged a brief tour of Columbia and Ecuador for England. The players arrived in the Columbian capital of Bogota, where they were warned to avoid trouble by staying in large groups. Some of them went sightseeing, while Bobby Moore and Bobby Charlton confined themselves to a window shopping trip in the hotel arcade, where they looked at some jewellery. Returning to the lobby, the two England stars sat down. As they sat chatting, they were approached by a shop assistant, and a man who mumbled something the two players couldn't understand. An interpreter was called, and it became clear that the two men were accusing Moore of stealing a bracelet. Moore was taken away by the police for interrogation. The British Consul rushed to his aid and put the full weight of his office behind the England defender. Eventually, the case against him collapsed, but many of the England party think, to this day, that Moore was framed in the hope that this would prevent England winning the World Cup.

Another football hero falsely accused of theft was Belfast-born George Best. This little episode began on 23rd November 1973, when 19 year old Marjorie Wallace became the only ever American winner of Miss World. Garnering quite a reputation for herself, she is alleged to have had affairs with Tom Jones, tennis playboy Jimmy Connors and record company boss Berry Gordy, but it was George Best who received the worst publicity.

On 21st February 1974, Best was arrested and accused of stealing a mink coat, a passport, a tiara, a diary, a sash, and alcoholic drinks worth £20 from Wallace. A few days later, the passport, and a medallion belonging to Miss World, turned up in a telephone box, after a call to the *Sunday People*. Marji fled abroad to escape press attention, and announced she was resigning her title. Then, exercising a woman's privilege, she changed her mind and declared she was staying on, but on 8th March Marji was dethroned. The police dropped the case against Best, and the judge told him that he left the court 'without a stain on [his] character'.

Recalls Best in his second autobiography, *The Good, The Bad And The Bubbly* (Simon & Schuster), 'The affair, really no more than a two-night stand, was more trouble than it was worth.'

Trouble and George Best seemed to go hand in hand. After his retirement from the game, at the age of 26, he only made the headlines through his drinking.

'I was so used to being number one in football, I had to be number one in everything, even drinking. I had to be the greatest drunkard ever,' is the way he puts it. Being the 'greatest drunkard' left Best bankrupt (he is still undischarged), and serving a 12-week stretch in prison for driving while drunk. In a desperate attempt to get off booze once and for all, George had a drug pellet inserted in his stomach, that would make him ill if he took a drink. It didn't work, so a second pellet was inserted – and that didn't work either. After being out of the headlines for some time, George made a return to the front pages earlier this year, when he appeared drunk on the popular BBC-TV chat show *Wogan* and offended many with his colourful language.

> 'I was so used to being number one in football, I had to be number one in everything. I had to be the greatest drunkard ever,' said Best.

Cars and drink should not mix – just like footballers and chat-show hosts. Many feel that when it comes to really bad combinations, cars, drink and footballers should not even be in the same country. For reasons unknown, Arsenal have had more than their fair share of offenders as far as drink-driving is concerned. In 1977, two of the club's star players, ace centre forward Malcolm MacDonald and midfield wizard Alan Hudson, were sent home from a pre-season tour of Singapore and Australia by then-manager Terry Neill for excessive drinking. Neill announced that neither player, both expensive signings, would ever wear the club's famous red and white shirt again. Although MacDonald made his peace with Arsenal, and continued playing at the age of 29, Hudson moved on to American side Seattle Sounders for £95,000, less than half the fee he had cost when brought from Stoke City in December 1976.

In July 1981, Arsenal striker Alan Sunderland found himself driving along Bramley Road in Enfield, Middlesex after a charity cricket match, when he was involved in an accident that resulted in the deaths of two people. Charged with driving without due care and attention (the charges were later dropped), Sunderland was fined £100 and received a year's driving ban.

Towards the end of last year, club captain Tony Adams was sent to prison for four months for driving under the influence of alcohol. Driving at high speed after a party, Adams demolished a front garden wall, totalling his car in the process. Upon his early release from prison, Adams quickly regained his place in the Arsenal first team – and the club captaincy.

Drink has not been the only rock on which footballers have, if not perished, certainly come to grief. Scotland's Willie Johnston produced positive results in drug tests taken during the '78 World Cup in Argentina. And Maradona? The greatest footballer to have emerged in the last decade may well have to retire prematurely in the light of a ruling from FIFA, football's governing body. The hugely-gifted Argentinian undertook drug tests recently and was found to have traces of cocaine in his blood. FIFA has imposed a 15-month ban on him which he is currently appealing against.

Look hard and you'll see just how tarnished some of soccer's idols have become. Ex-Arsenal midfield hard man, Peter Storey, has not had the best of fortunes since retiring from the game. After an unsuccessful attempt at running a pub, Storey was found guilty of living off immoral earnings, and sent to prison. Following his release, he failed to stay on the straight and narrow, and was once again imprisoned – for importing illegal videos.

You want more scandal? You don't have to look too hard. How about former England goalkeeper, Peter Shilton? In 1986, his wife Sue called the police to their home during a blazing midnight row. Shilton spent a night in the cells, cooling off, and the following morning Mrs Shilton took her

husband home. She later claimed to have dialled 999 because she was 'feeling low' after a bust-up. Her patience was tested to the limit two years later, in April 1988, when Shilton, somewhat the worse for drink, allegedly tried to book a room in London's five-star Westbury Hotel with two young ladies. A member of the hotel staff told *News Of The World* reporter Morven Kinlay, 'The girls were very young, very common and very loud – definitely not the sort of guests to encourage in any hotel.' After being refused a room Shilton and his 'friends' left.

If it's not sex, drink or drugs, then footballers can often find themselves in trouble over gambling. Arsenal (again) and England left-back Kenny Sansom found his gambling problems almost insurmountable as his debts rose to £100,000. While at Crystal Palace, Sansom and his brother opened an ill-fated bookie's. The money the former received when he moved to the Gunners helped, but Sansom made more than a few elementary business errors and was badly advised by financial consultants.

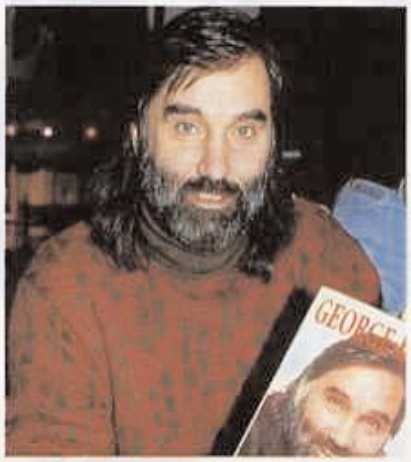
The managerial career of Lou Macari, formerly boss at Swindon Town and West Ham United, was not helped by gambling, either. In fact, the scandal of an alleged gambling ring at Swindon Town resulted in the club being demoted by the Football League, from the First Division, to which they had just won promotion, to the Third. On appeal they were reinstated to the Second Division. The club has paid a high price for incurring the wrath of the League. A spirit-sapping episode like this has taken its toll and Swindon Town are now struggling in the lower regions of the Second Division.

It is often said that players should set a good example to young fans, yet players are not the only ones who can become household names. What about the footballing dynasties that spring up around clubs?

The Edwards family, long in charge at Manchester United, have often been involved in controversy. Back in '79, Louis Edwards, father of the present chairman, was at the centre of a 12-month long investigation by *World In Action*. Four weeks after Granada TV broadcast the programme's findings, Edwards was discovered dead in his bath.

The story began shortly after the Munich air disaster when Edwards, a friend of then-manager Matt Busby, was given the task of rebuilding the club. In 1965, Edwards became chairman, and 14 months after that, had secured a controlling interest in the club. He then spent £24,000 to buy another 1,956 shares, in order to give himself a majority shareholding in what is still the best supported club in the country. *World In Action* alleged that Edwards manoeuvred himself into the chairmanship by carrying out transactions that bordered on the illegal. Why, it asked, had Edwards bought shares at one price and then entered them in the company books at a lower one? Was it because he didn't want his fellow directors to know just how keen he was to get a majority shareholding? Or was it because he didn't want possible rivals to know just how much he was prepared to pay for the shares?

World In Action also alleged that Edwards indulged in dubious business practices, giving free or discounted meat, cash and gifts, to win lucrative contracts to supply meat to Manchester Council. They



also claimed that he operated a slush fund to give financial inducements to promising schoolboys and their families. Had these allegations been proven, United could have been expelled from the League.

The day after the programme was screened, the newspapers were awash with the accusations, and Louis Edwards was linked with serious charges of bribery. In the House of Commons, members called for an inquiry into the club's finances. The head of Scotland Yard's CID subsequently asked for a copy of the programme to decide if criminal action should be taken, but no prosecution was ever brought against Edwards – he died on 25th February 1980. His son Martin claimed that his father's death, from a heart attack, was brought on by the 'character assassination' undertaken in the Granada programme.

Bang up to date, as it were, a recent shocker involved two unnamed players and an 'orgy'. Property developer Robert Culverhouse arranged parties at his house in Vicarage Road, Watford, which were attended by well-known players. On 23rd February 1991, Culverhouse invited two leading First Division players to a party which, it is claimed, turned into a 'full scale orgy'. The players were secretly filmed, romping with a 22 year old blonde 'secretary' called Amanda Dobson, who had been hired as a French maid especially for the event. She told the *News of The World*, 'I was... a waitress for the party... I knew what kind of party it was going to be – a swinging party, and that people would be involved in sex. Men had their trousers down and women were doing things to them.' Dobson claimed that the two footballers pestered her for sex. She continues: 'There was a scene in the jacuzzi with the players. We had a three-way thing. They wanted to have sex with me on my own, and I said I would get a key to another room. But the room didn't empty, so we didn't get the chance to go in there. Everywhere I went, they chased me. I didn't have sex with any others. It was just those two. They would not leave me alone and kept making a bee-line for me and one thing led to another. You just get carried away in the atmosphere, after a few drinks.'

Culverhouse then offered the video tapes to a national newspaper as part of a package, and offered to set up the players in his 'honeytrap'. A journalist from the newspaper was approached and pretended to be interested in purchasing the tapes. Instead, he went straight to Scotland Yard's Obscene Publications Squad, who subsequently raided the Watford house and took away sackfuls of videos.

It's just possible that you might start to feel a mite resentful when you consider that, every time you pass through the turnstiles, you are helping to pay for the extravagances you have just been reading about. In the end, though, it really doesn't matter, because your football team and its players are like your children. They can annoy or infuriate you, leave you over the moon, or indeed sick as the proverbial parrot... you'll often despair of them but, through it all, through thick and thin, wind and rain, snow, sleet and relegation worries, you go on loving them. And that, in the final analysis, is what football is *really* all about.