

BILL SHANKLY - THE GLENBUCK YEARS

Researched and written by David P. Worthington BA (Hons), PG Dip, MA.

Typeset by Elaine Bell, Baird Institute, Cumnock

December 1997

The almost abandoned village of Glenbuck sits quietly and unpretentiously on the edge of the Ayrshire coalfield just off the main road from Muirkirk to Ayr. The settlement had started life as one that relied on agriculture; however, by around 1800 it had been dragged into the world of industrialisation. Glenbuck was home to 800 people with public housing built in for them. It also had an ironworks with its foundry and blast furnace, a limestone quarry, two dedicated ironstone pits, two coal mines and two pits that gave up both coal and ironstone. The ironworks were closed in 1813 but the coal miners remained enabling the locals to eke out a hard and difficult existence.

It was against this background that John Shankly moved to Glenbuck from the nearby village of Douglas to seek work in the chosen profession of tailoring. He met and married Barbara Blyth who came from one of Glenbuck's most celebrated families. Her brother Bob, a top class sprinter, played football for Glasgow Rangers, Middlesborough, Preston and Dundee before becoming player-manager and finally chairman at Portsmouth. A second brother, Billy played for Portsmouth, Preston, and Carlisle before joining Bob as an administrator and director, and then chairman of Carlisle.

Bill, or Willy as he was more commonly known, was born to John and Barbara Shankly on the 2nd September 1913, the ninth of ten children, youngest of five boys. The family home was in Auchenstillloch cottages, known locally as `Miners Row` or `Monkey Row`, the Shanklys had two houses next to each other knocked into one to accommodate their large family. They later moved to some new council houses that were constructed in the area. Life was hard for the Shanklys and the other families of Glenbuck and Bill later said of his life there, "I never saw a bathroom until I left Glenbuck".

THE SHANKLEY BOYS...AND GIRLS

The Shankly boys managed to avoid, or in some cases simply postpone, a life in the pit by virtue of their ability on the football field. The eldest son Alec, or Sandy as the family knew him, played inside forward for Ayr United prior to World War I when he joined the Royal Scots Fusiliers and then the Royal Flying Corps. Following the end of the war and with his football career over he sadly bowed to the inevitable and went down the pit. Jimmy played as centre half and then centre forward, having spells at Portsmouth, Halifax, Sheffield United, Southend and Barrow, his final club before his retirement in 1933. The middle brother John, was an outside right for Portsmouth, Luton Town, Alloa, Blackpool and Greenock Morton. John suffered from ill health and was forced to retire from football returning to Glenbuck and the certainties of life as a miner. He was to die in tragic circumstances, not in the pit, but in a soccer stadium, at Hampden Park during the Real Madrid versus Eintracht Frankfurt European Cup Final of 1960. John suffered a massive heart attack at the game and died later that night in hospital. The fourth brother, Bob, was to have a highly successful managerial career taking Dundee into the latter stages of the European Cup, and at Falkirk after having played there and with Alloa.

Just as famous in village life as their brothers were the Shankly girls. The five sisters, Netta, Elizabeth, Isobel, Barbara and Jean were popular figures in the village. Netta and Isobel were responsible for washing the boy's footballing clothes. Elizabeth was the life and soul of Glenbuck, she was known locally as 'Liz the loudspeaker'. Jean was an animated individual who constantly being told to "sit still" at school something she found impossible. Like her older sister Isobel, Jean had fiery red hair. She was the only one in the family who went on to Higher Grade School in Muirkirk.

SHANKLY THE SOCIALIST

Bill Shankly's political ideas were a product of his hard surroundings in Glenbuck. He had a good grasp of politics having educated himself on the subject both from books and life. Shankly's political leanings were to emerge in his later football life when it was clear he has shown noticeable animosity towards some directors of clubs. His life experiences were based on his education, and particularly on the works of Robert Burns. He was later to use the famous Scottish poet to reinforce his own philosophy:

"Burns was early socialist - the first was Jesus Christ of course. He didn't think that God made people to be unequal, he thought everyone should share in the work and the rewards".

Shankly was no blind follower of Burns he knew of his idols shortcomings especially those involving ladies:

"In his day if a man committed fornication, the local minister would humiliate him in front of the Congregation by sitting him on the Cutty Stool. Burns had a season ticket!"

SHANKLY THE MINER

In 1927 the young Bill Shankly left school and found work in the mines earning 2s 6d (12 1/2p) per day. After six months of emptying coal trucks Shankly found himself at the pit bottom and was later described by many of his colleagues as having a fetish for fresh air. Many of the miners briefly escaped from their hard lives by drinking, but not Shankly. He was teetotal. He did however, have one vice and that was playing cards in a card school that took place in the hills outside the village. He also shared his fathers love of the cinema and revelled in the gangster movies that abounded on the screens on the late 20's and early 30's. By 1930 Bill Shankly found himself unemployed, a victim of the depression.

THE GLENBUCK CHERRY-PICKERS

It was said that any Scottish town or village that didn't have a decent football team had got its civic priorities wrong. Glenbuck was certainly no exception to this rule, the club had its beginnings in the late 1870's and was founded by Edward Bone, William Brown and others. It was originally called Glenbuck Athletic and wore club colours of white shirts and black shorts. The Glenbuck team had two earlier grounds before finally settling at Burnside Park. It was at the turn of the century that the team changed its name to that of Glenbuck Cherrypickers. Initially a nickname, Cherrypickers was soon adopted as the clubs official name, something that continued to the end. Over the years The Cherrypickers won numerous local cups including the Ayrshire Junior Challenge Cup, the

Cumnock Cup, and the Mauchline Cup. Despite all their honours the real place of Glenbuck in footballing history was as a nursery of footballers. It is thought that Glenbuck had provided around fifty players who plied their trade in senior football at least half-a-dozen who played for Scotland - not bad for a village whose population never exceeded twelve hundred.

Bill Shankly was never destined to join the illustrious band of Cherrypicker alumni. The first year he would have been able to play for them, 1930/1, he was not considered good enough. This was no disgrace as they once again captured the Ayrshire Junior Challenge Cup. However, this victory was to be their last, the final pit had closed and the Cherrypickers disbanded as the men were forced to seek work in other areas. When the next season began, Shankly had no club to play for and was forced to begin his career playing right half for Cronberry Eglinton. Cronberry were a decent local side but this was merely a stepping-stone for the eighteen-year-old Bill Shankly for whom greater things waited around the corner.

SHANKLY THE PRO

In the summer of 1932 the young Shankly was attracting the attention of Football League scouts. Two in particular, Peter Carruthers of Carlisle and Bobby Crawford of Preston, were visitors to see Cronberry play. Both clubs offered Shankly a trial and he agonised through the summer about which club to try out for. Preston were undoubtedly the glamour club of the two, but Carlisle had a family connection (his uncle Billy Blyth was a director), it was closer to home, and as a struggling lower league team offered him a better chance of first team football. Shankly chose Carlisle and after a certain amount of soul searching, passed his trial with flying colours. He was signed as a full time professional and earned the princely sum of £4 per week.

THE REAL WORLD OF FOOTBALL

Bill's first season with Carlisle was far from ideal, the club was in financial difficulties and the squad reflected this, being a mixture of youth and the more experienced professionals. He was to share digs with two of these old pros, right back Bobby Bradley and goalkeeper Johnny Kelly, a fellow Scot who was in his final season as a player. Bill finally made his first team debut against fellow strugglers Rochdale on new year's eve 1932, a game which finished 2 -2 His first season proved to be a difficult one and Carlisle ended the season only two points away from seeking re-election. Shankly's performances in the 1932/3 session established him as a first time regular and a firm favourite with the fans who loved his all action style.

Following his impressive season Preston renewed their interest in Shankly and whilst at home for the summer he received a telegram from Carlisle, which read, "Report to discuss transfer to Preston North End". Shankly met Preston representative Bill Scott and discussed the possible move. Although flattered by Preston's attention, Shankly had several reservations about joining the Lancashire club. Firstly, he feared a return to reserve football. Secondly, he felt his increase in wages of only ten shillings would not cover the higher cost of digs in Preston and increased train fares home. Finally, he was happy with the family atmosphere at Carlisle and feared a move to a bigger club. So Shankly rejected a move to Preston much to the disgust of his older brother Alec. Following a frank exchange of views between the two chased after Shankly brothers, Scot

and Bill finally signed for Preston in a railway carriage just outside Haltwhistle. The transfer fee was £500. Although he spent the first few months in the reserves, Shankly broke into the first team by the Christmas of 1933. Bill's first season at Preston saw them promoted to the top flight. His contribution to their success was noted in other quarters of the Football League. Beaten F.A. Cup finalist Portsmouth, and league champions Arsenal both pursued Shankly but to no avail as he opted to stay at Deepdale. The next two seasons saw Preston develop from Division One new boys to a solid mid-table club, also reaching the sixth round of the F.A. Cup. Preston's growing reputation was mirrored by that of Bill Shankly, who was fast becoming regarded as one of the best left backs in the country. In 1937 Shankly had his first taste of Wembley when Preston reached the F.A. Cup Final only for them to be defeated 3-1 by Sunderland.

1938 was a superb year for Bill Shankly. Preston finished third in the First Division and then went on to defeat Huddersfield 1-0 in the first ever cup final to be televised live. George Mutch scored the winning goal in the last minute, from the penalty spot. To cap everything, 1938 saw Bill make his Scottish debut against England at Wembley Stadium. He described his international debut as "*The greatest day of my father's life*".

BRAVEHEART SHANKLY

Bill Shankly was a nationalistic Scotsman and he treated his international call-ups as if he was going to war. He always wanted revenge on the English whom he regarded as the pit owner to Scotland's miner. Shankly got his wish on his debut when Scotland ran out 1-0 winners with a goal from Tommy Walker. He played his second international against Ireland in Belfast in October 1938; with the Scots winning 2-0. A month later the Welsh were beaten 3-2 at Edinburgh's Tynecastle. Scottish legend Alex James singled Shankly out for praise: "*He is a real Scotland player who will fight until he drops*"

Two further games for Scotland followed a 3-1 win over Hungary at Ibrox and finally, at Hampden Park in April 1939, a game against England. The Scots went down 2-1 to an England side containing the likes of Tommy Lawton and Stanley Matthews. The deepening political crisis in Europe meant that this would be the last full international game between the old enemies for eight years. Bill Shankly's full representative career was over at twenty-five.

THE WAR YEARS

During World War I the Establishment had tried to suppress team games, but during the Second World War the government recognised the value, in terms of morale, of team sport continuing. The Football League was suspended for the duration but regional matches were encouraged. Bill Shankly continued to play for Preston in the Northern League, it was during this period that he first teamed up with the young Tom Finney who earned the tribute from Shankly as "*The greatest player I ever saw*"

Preston became champions of the North in 1941, and went on to face Arsenal in the Wartime Cup Final. The first game at Wembley was 1-1 draw with Preston winning the replay 2-1 at Blackburn. Shankly was an ardent anti-fascist and began to help the war effort as soon as hostilities were declared on 3rd September 1939. He went to work for the local firm Thomas Crofts where he shovelled sand. He then had a spell as a riveter

working on Hampden bombers, but he was bored with factory life and not surprisingly soon joined the RAF enlisting on the 18th June 1940. Bill had a series of postings of throughout the country never missing the chance to play football for whichever side were local to him. He also indulged in another of his sporting passions, boxing, trying out for his camp at middleweight. Bill also continued to play for Scotland; he amassed seven caps through the war, once captaining Scotland in a 3-1 defeat against England in front of 78,000 at Hampden in May 1941.

During the war player registration rules were relaxed and Shankly played for Cardiff City, Liverpool, Bolton Wanderers and East Fife. When based in Great Yarmouth Shankly even used the name `Rod Newman` to play for Norwich when senior officers were not keen on releasing servicemen to play. From Norfolk he moved to Henlow, just north of Luton where he took advantage of his close proximity to London by playing for Arsenal much to the annoyance of the local press who felt he should have played for Luton Town. He helped Arsenal to the Football League South title and played in all but one of the games leading up to the League South Cup Final at Wembley. However, for the final Arsenal recalled their own players from all over the country this infuriated Shankly who even refused the tickets and money they offered him. He never played for the Highbury Club again leaving to play for Luton.

In September 1943 Bill was on the move again, this time to Bishopbriggs in Glasgow. It was on compassionate grounds to allow him to be closer to his dying father. As he left the train at Glasgow he was greeted by directors of Partick Thistle, who wanted him to play with them. Bill wanted to play for Rangers but the Scottish F.A ordered him to play for Partick, the closest team to his Bishopbriggs base. Partick were good to Bill and paid £150 necessary to have his troublesome cartilage removed. It was during his convalescence that he first met Agnes Fisher, or Ness as she was soon to be known. It was not love at first sight for Ness but Bill's persistence finally paid off and the couple were married on 29 June 1944 - the date carefully planned so it didn't coincide with football season.

Bill Shankly was always famous for his wit and sharp replies. One such story concerns Ness, "Of course I didn't take my wife to see Rochdale as an anniversary present. It was her birthday. Would I have got married during the football season? And anyway, it wasn't Rochdale, it was Rochdale Reserves".

THE POST WAR YEARS

Bill remained in the RAF until January 1946 when he was demobbed; he was now a father, his first child Barbara having been born just prior to being released from the services. Bill, now pushing thirty-three, prepared to start the new season in August 1946. There was some disquiet amongst the Preston Board as to whether he could still cut the mustard in the highest echelons of the game and whether his commitment to the club was still there. He answered his critics by moving his young family down from Glasgow to Preston and having a solid season for the club, who finished seventh in the league.

THE END OF THE LINE

On the verge of his thirty-fifth birthday, the club committee felt that Bill's life as a first team player was over. He was offered a new three year deal with the plan for him to play in the reserves and bring the young players on. He was not happy with his state of affairs but as

the consummate professional he was Bill continued to turn in good performances. This paid dividends and on 23 October he was recalled to the first team for a crunch match with fellow strugglers, Huddersfield - Preston won 2-0. His reprieve was short-lived and Bill was dropped following Preston's 6-1 thrashing by Manchester United in the next game. Then followed an acrimonious period in his relationship with the Preston Committee. This was to leave a bitter taste in his mouth, and reinforce his distrust of the 'amateurs' who ran football. Preston wanted to retain Bill's services, but not as a first team player, he felt used and was unwilling to sign the three year contract in case other opportunities presented themselves. In February 1949, Carlisle United approached Bill and offered him the post of a manager. Shankly was unsure as to whether he should move, then Preston made things worse by threatening to withhold his benefit (about £750) if he left. They also offered him a benefit game if he agreed to stay at the club.

This proved to be the final straw for Bill and he left Preston on 19th March after playing his final game for the club - a 3-1 defeat at home to Sunderland. He then embarked on his managerial career, earning the sum of £14 per week. As a dual-postscript to this story the Preston supporters, aware they had lost something special, instituted a testimonial fund which raised £169 5s 7d. for Shankly. Preston was also relegated in May 1949! Bill Shankly had had a glorious football career, perhaps his greatness as a player was diminished by the war but he will still live on in many people's minds as a superb wing-half with an appetite for the game few could match. For many his achievements as a player would have been enough, but not for Shankly. His thirst for the game was unquenchable but who could have guessed that when he took over at lowly Carlisle in 1949 that Bill Shankly's greatest years were still to come? No-one except perhaps Bill Shankly himself!

SHANKLY THE MANAGER

Shankly's managerial career at Carlisle started somewhat inauspiciously. He joined a club who were safe from relegation with only seven matches to play. They drew four, lost two and won one. Shankly's first purchase was typical of the man - it was not a new player but a new strip for the team. The move was purely symbolic but Shankly justified it in his own imitable way: *"If you treated your players as if they were the cream they might start to believe it and play like it"*

Shankly once again proved he was a man of the people and that his greatest concerns in football were for his players and the supporters. He arranged for the club to buy a house and convert it into flats to help players' accommodation in the midst of the post-war housing shortage. Another Shankly innovation was his pre-match broadcasts to the crowd informing them of team changes and imploring them to give their support to the players.

His first full season in charge was a bit of an anti - climax with Carlisle finishing ninth, but all was not lost, as Shankly had created a great team spirit and enthusiasm in the club. His zest for the game not only rubbed off on his players but also in Carlisle itself where season ticket sales for the 1950/1 season were a record. The season started well with Carlisle flying high in the league and progressing to the third round of the cup where they drew Shankly's old enemies, the Arsenal! Carlisle went to Highbury and came away with a highly creditable 0-0 draw. Unfortunately reality returned in the reply and they were soundly defeated 4-1. The Arsenal defeat and the strain of some of his best players being

taken by National Service meant that Carlisle's season ended in disappointment with them eventually finishing third.

Bill had been offered a bonus by Carlisle if he got them into the top three, however the directors did not keep their part of the bargain. This, coupled with the lack of resources at the club, influenced Shankly's decision to leave Carlisle and join Grimsby Town in the summer of 1951.

THE ONLY WAY IS UP?

The situation that greeted Bill at Grimsby could not have been different from the one he left at Carlisle, morale was at an all-time low the Mariners having slipped from mid-table respectability in the First Division and cup semi-finalists in the mid-thirties, to the Third Division North. Shankly lifted the mood of gloom immediately, encouraged local amateurs to try out to the team and allowing the police side to use the pitch to train. This was until he was stopped for speeding, the officer involved told him, "You were going a bit fast there Mr Shankly."

To which he replied "You must have been going fast yourself to keep up with me." He received a fine and Police use of the Blundell Park pitch ceased.

Bill introduced several new players into Grimsby's aging ranks and an embarrassing innovation, short shorts! The crowd give Grimsby the whistle but Shankly was unrepentant, "What do you want to be running around with bits of cloth flapping around for?"

By Christmas Bill had got his side playing the way he wanted on the results were beginning to reflect this, however, by mid-January they were still nine points behind league-leaders Lincoln City. Despite a late surge they could not close the gap and finished second, failing to gain promotion. The 1952/3 season started promisingly with four straight wins but it began to tail off with Shankly once again failing foul of the National Service opponent. A disappointing season saw Grimsby finishing fifth and Bill, for the first time in his football career, was left feeling despondent. The new season began and Shankly's dissatisfaction with the Board deepened so much so that he resigned on 2nd January 1954. With him gone, interest in the club continued to decline and Grimsby were forced to apply for re-election eighteen months after his resignation.

FROM THE BOTTOM LOOKING UP

Shankly's next appointment was certainly one of his most challenging. In January 1954 he was given the job as manager of Workington, a club in crisis having only been elected to the league two years earlier but already having to have sought re-election both seasons. Bill's task was clear to save the club from the ignominy and heartbreak of returning to the ranks of the non league. Shankly faced the usual problems of a lack of funding but he also had a strange bedfellow at the Borough Park ground - Workington Town Rugby League Club. The town was Rugby League mad and the side were successful so he had a problem new to him, the motivation of the public to support their football club.

Shankly attacked his task with his usual venom, his arrival signalling a run of results that was to take Workington out of the bottom three. There was never any question of Workington knocking on the promotional door but they managed to end the season in a highly respectable 20th place clear of re-election and with gates having risen by an

average of the two thousand per match. Although promotion was a dream Workington could not hope to achieve, a good cup run was always possible and most desirable in morale-boosting and financial terms. The 1954/55 season saw such a run with Workington defeating Hyde United 5-1 in the first round. Their prize was an away tie against the more fancied Leyton Orient. Workington defied the odds and won the game 1-0, they then drew Luton who were on their way to promotion to Division One. This time not even the Shankly magic could work it's spell and the Reds were hammered 5-0. The season was their best in the League to date with the club finishing eighth, amassing a total of fifty points.

As the new season began Bill was already casting a wandering eye to a bigger, better things. In October 1955 his close friend, and former colleague at Preston, Andy Beattie approached him with a view to becoming his assistant at First Division strugglers Huddersfield Town. On November 1955 Shankly accepted the post and left Workington on December 10th. Few at the Cumbrian club have been surprised by his move, and must have known for sometime that he was destined for greater things. Bill had now served his apprenticeship and was ready for the big time.

HUDDERSFIELD OR BUST

When Bill joined Huddersfield they were bottom of the First Division with only eight points from sixteen games. Andy Beattie placed Shankly in charge of the reserves recognising his talent for bringing on youngsters. Despite a late revival Huddersfield were unable to fend off the spectre of relegation and were condemned to life in Division Two after Aston Villa won their final game. Huddersfield were looking to bounce straight back into the First Division but they had a shaky start to the season and by November were only ninth in the table. The opposite was true of the Shankly led reserves, who were in the Central League. It was therefore no surprise when Bill Shankly was appointed manager on 3rd November 1956. His Huddersfield career started well with a 5-0 win at Barnsley but then things reverted to normal and they managed just ten points from his first ten games in charge.

Shankly soon realised that his team was too inconsistent to challenge for promotion. He recognised the talents of youngsters like Ray Wilson, and spotted a superstar of the future when he gave a debut to a skinny Scottish youngster called Denis Law, then just sixteen. Law had been courted by several big clubs, including Manchester United, but Bill's powers of persuasion worked and he signed professional forms with Huddersfield. Shankly felt he had the basis of a good side but inconsistency meant that they failed to progress in the way he would have liked - something he found extremely frustrating. Bill was always a great believer in team spirit and building the confidence of his players - even after some of them had left the club! Ray Wilson gained his first England cap five months after leaving Leeds Road and Shankly wrote him a letter saying: " I've been capped for Scotland but being capped for England where there's 75% more people to pick from, that's a great thing"

Shankly had been linked with Leeds United in November 1958, but this move never materialised. However, as the 1959/60 season began he was once again seeking a move to bigger and better things. His fate was sealed when the Liverpool Chairman, T.V. Williams, went to Leeds Road to watch Huddersfield Town to play Cardiff City. The Liverpool supremo was transfixed by the vocal urgings coming from the Huddersfield bench, so much so that at full-time Williams put his arm around Shankly and said: "How would you like to be manger of Liverpool?"

Bill was a cagey old devil and played the Liverpool board for all he could get. He secured full managerial control over the team selection, money for new players and an annual rise bringing his salary to £2,500! Shankly tendered his resignation at Huddersfield and went to Liverpool taking charge of his first game on 19th December 1959.

ANFIELD: THE LAND OF DREAMS

The Liverpool Football Club of 1959 was not the one we know today - they were a sleeping giant. They had been relegated from Division One in 1954, and had been the nearly men of promotion ever since. Even more irksome to Liverpool than their poor performances, was the fact that Everton were still in Division One and definitely top-dogs on Merseyside. The one thing that Shankly now had in his favour was the fact that he had come to a city where the people were as obsessed with football as he was - this was his 'Land of Dreams', where anything was possible. To make things happen Shankly had start from the bottom up. The first thing was the ground, he had described Anfield as an `eyesore` with no facilities for watering the pitch - this was put right at a cost of £3,000. Bill then turned his attention to the staff - Bob Paisley, Joe Fagen, Reuben Bennett and club captain Ronnie Moran were all about to begin their long and profitable relationships with the man who would bring the glory years back to Liverpool Football Club. Bill used his first season as a form of assessment, weeding out players not good enough for what he envisaged Liverpool as becoming - despite this Liverpool finished third losing only five of the twenty-one games under Shankly.

The turning point came in the summer of 1961 when the club acquired a new director, Eric Sawyer. He had no great understanding of football but wanted success for the club, and Shankly realised that for the first time in his managerial career he was to have money he needed to build up a really successful team. Sawyer was also in agreement with Shankly on upgrading the facilities at the club and ensuring that the players travelled in comfort. He was also a realist and saw that there would be a huge gulf between the First Division and the rest now that the maximum wage had been abolished. With this in mind there was only one place for Liverpool and that was in the First Division. With his new financial backing Shankly dipped into the transfer market prising Ian St John away from Motherwell for a fee of £37,500 a few weeks he also secured the signature of giant centre-half Ron Yeats from Dundee United for £30,000. After this signing Shankly remarked, "With him in defence, we could play Arthur Askey in goal."

Shankly's signings inspired his existing players and the club were promoted scoring ninety-nine goals in the season, Roger Hunt getting forty-one and Ian St. John eighteen. Anfield was becoming a ground that visiting teams feared, only three teams managing a draw on their visits there. Bill now tasted success and he was hungry for more, but this time in the Big League, the First Division.

THE LIONS DEN

The players may have entered the Lions Den of the First Division with feelings of trepidation but their manager knew no fear. Liverpool equipped themselves well in their first season in the top flight finishing a promising eighth and reaching the semi-final of the F.A. Cup only to lose to Leicester City. The only dark cloud on Anfield horizon was the fact that Everton were crowned champions putting pressure on Shankly and his team to

perform at the highest level. Just prior to the 1963/64 season Shankly signed Peter Thompson of Preston. With his team now complete he now felt fully equipped to attempt to relieve Everton of their league title. As Easter 1964 approached Liverpool found themselves well placed to become champions but they had a difficult run in. They responded to the challenge reeling off seven straight wins to take the championships, sealing victory with a 5-0 thrashing of Arsenal in their final home game.

The next season Liverpool became F.A. Cup winners for the first time defeating the Don Revie led Leeds United in the final. Liverpool brought the Cup back to Lime Street Station and Ron Yeats displayed it to half a million people at the civic reception. Not content with beating Leeds, the Red's took the field later that week in the semi-final of the European Cup, their opponents were Inter Milan, then regarded as the finest club side in the world. Despite being totally dominant Liverpool only took a 3-1 lead back to Italy for the return leg. Unfortunately for Liverpool their naivety was exposed and some dubious refereeing decisions saw them lose 3-0 and go out of the competition. Shankly was livid and could not believe his Liverpool side could have been decisively beaten, "No team in the world can beat Liverpool 3-0. They must be drugged up to the eyeballs and the referee was bribed".

THE ROLLER COASTER RIDE OF FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT

The 1965/6 season was to prove a roller coaster ride of a time for Liverpool, however, there were more ups than downs. They again won the First Division title, fell at the first hurdle in the F.A. Cup losing to Chelsea, and were once again active in European competition. They were playing in the Cup Winners Cup and had a difficult passage to the final overcoming Juventus, Standard Liege, Honved and Celtic. In the final they faced German Club Borussia Dortmund at Hampden Park. Winning a European competition on a Scottish ground would have been the icing on the cake for Shankly, but it was not to be as Liverpool played badly and were easily beaten. The following season Liverpool suffered European humiliation at the hands of Ajax of Amsterdam losing 7-3 over the two legs. Their League form was also mediocre by their standards finishing only fifth.

Shankly had gone nearly two years without introducing any new faces to Liverpool, a worrying period without a trophy, and he was forced to dip into the transfer market. In March 1967 he signed Emyln Hughes from Blackpool for £65,000 and later that year he signed Tony Hateley from Chelsea for £96,000. 1968/9 was another disappointing season until Liverpool only finishing second to Leeds in the league. Shankly made a poignant comment on football management, he stated, "Managing is a soul-destroying job. You have to have a stomach made of cement to take the blows"

REPLACING THE OLD GUARD

Shankly knew his team was in rut and he also knew he must make changes in personnel if he was to return to the glory days at Anfield. Having suffered greatly by the ending of his own career he was reluctant to do this to other players, however, Shankly recognised that Liverpool Football Club was more important than any one player. The first hint of changes to the old guard came in a cup tie against Leicester at Anfield when Bill replaced Hunt, the Liverpool goal scoring machine. Hunt did briefly regain his place in the first team but was never a permanent fixture again. Ian St John felt the axe during the 1969/70 season soon

to be followed by Ron Yeats, Gerry Byrne, and Tommy Lawrence. It is clear that dropping these individuals affected Shankly greatly and club secretary Peter Robinson summed up his mood, " He did find it difficult. He did tend to fall in love with his players and it was only results that eventually forced his hand"

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF A LEGEND

With most of his 60`s legends gone or going Shankly was faced with the task of rebuilding. He disliked dabbling in the transfer market for established stars preferring to pick up local youngsters or lower division players. He tried to get players from the North-West as they found it easier to settle in. Prime examples of this policy were Alec Lindsay and Steve Heighway, who were joined by Ray Clemence and Kevin Keegan, players who were playing the game in the north of England. By December 1970, most of his new team was in place and the usual line-up was Clemence, Lawler, Lindsay, Smith, Lloyd, Hughes, Callaghan, McLaughlan, Heighway, Toshack and Hall. The 1970/1 was the best season for some time with Liverpool being unbeaten at Anfield and finishing fifth in the League. They played in the European Fairs Cup defeating Bayern Munich 3-0 at Anfield, and gaining a 1-1 draw in Germany to progress to the next round. The following Saturday Liverpool were to play the old enemy Everton in an F.A. Cup semi-final at Old Trafford. Shankly always kept special remarks for Everton games, and following Liverpool's defeat of their Merseyside rivals he said, *"Sickness would not have kept me away from this one. If I'd been dead, I would have had them bring the casket to the ground, prop it up in the stands and cut a hole in the lid"*.

The Fairs Cup campaign was to end in defeat by their English rivals Leeds United. Arsenal were to also end Shankly's dream of adding to the Anfield collection when they defeated the Merseysiders 2-1 after extra-time in the F.A. Cup Final. It was following this defeat that Shankly was seen at his superb best in terms of crowd manipulation. Despite the fact that they had lost 300,000 people turned up to cheer on their heroes. Shankly took the microphone and raised his hands for silence, with this the adoring throng fell quiet. Brian Hall, the university-graduate turned Liverpool-star, likened Shankly's performance to Hitler in the propaganda film, *Triumph of the Will* directed by Leni Reifenstahl, Bill would undoubtedly been unhappy at being linked with Hitler even if the comparison was meant in a complementary way! What was clear was the fact that Shankly could control a crowd, manipulate a crowd, and that crowd would leave believing everything he said and still liking him as a person - how many politicians today would envy this ability.

THE KEEGAN FACTOR

Bill Shankly had replaced his team of the 60`s with a new crop of players, they were becoming a good team, but what they needed was the spark which would turn them into a great team. That spark was Kevin Keegan, he had been signed in 1971 from Scunthorpe United for £35,000, but like most Shankly youngsters he had to learn his trade in reserves. With Keegan it was not his footballing ability that needed developing, but his mental attitude for the game. The 1971/2 season saw Keegan in the first team developing a brilliant striking partnership with Welshman, John Toshack. Keegan was small and he fed off the aerial power of the larger Toshack. This partnership propelled Liverpool towards the top of the table, leaving them needing a win at Arsenal in the last game of the season

to snatch the title from Derby County. Liverpool scored at Highbury with five minutes to go but the referee disallowed the goal leaving Liverpool to finish third in the table.

BILL SHANKLY: THE ORIGINAL MR MOTIVATOR

With such a near miss many teams could have been forgiven for letting their heads drop, but Shankly would never let one of his sides suffer from self-pity. He believed they could win and as per "*The Bible According To Shankly*", they therefore believed they could win. His sheer personality and will to succeed was transformed to his played as if by some telepathic gift. Liverpool-great Tommy Smith summed up Shankly's zest for the game and his belief that football was the most important thing in his life:

"He was infectious, got you buzzing, kept you interested in the club. Nothing else but football though. You could mention something and he'd equate it to football.. You'd say something about the weather, 'Aye son, good day for skidding the ball across the grass'."

The 1972/73 season was to prove to be the zenith of Shankly`s reign at the club. Liverpool clinched the league title with a goalless draw against Leicester City on the final Saturday of the season. But this was just the beginning of celebrations that engulfed half of Merseyside. Liverpool beat Eintracht Frankfurt, A.V.E. Athens, Dynamo Berlin, Dynamo Dresden and Spurs on their way to meeting German side Borussia Mochengladbach in the two legged UEFA Cup final. With the first leg at Anfield, Liverpool were painfully aware of the need to keep a clean sheet. But for once in his life Shankly was fooled by statements coming from the German Camp that they intended to attack the Merseysiders from the outset. This was not the case and Liverpool`s defensive formation made for an unexciting stalemate. As if by divine intervention the rains came to the city and the game was abandoned after half an hour.

Shankly was always capable, and big enough, to learn from his mistakes and this was no exception. Following a blazing row with John Toshack, (left out of the team for the abandoned game), he decided play the Welsh striker to expose the Germans lack of inches at the back. Shankly`s decision to replace Brian Hall with John Toshack was justified with the Red`s running out 3-0 winners with all the goals coming from their aerial dominance. The second leg may have appeared to be a formality but Liverpool found themselves 2-0 down at half time and facing a humiliating reversal. Once again in stepped Shankly the motivator, he told his players, "They've gone completely, no way they can score in the second half".

He was right and Ray Clemence's goal remained intact for the whole of the second half giving Liverpool their first European trophy 3-2 on aggregate.

" AND NOW THE END IS NEAR...."

Despite their unique success of league title and UEFA Cup the Liverpool players kept their feet firmly on the ground as they prepared for the 1973/4 season. They were always going to be fighting a losing battle to retain the league championships after Leeds opened the season with a twenty-nine game run unbeaten. Liverpool never gave up of catching the Yorkshiremen but in the end they were forced to settle for the runners up spot. They also suffered disappointment in the European cup when they suffered defeat at the hands of Red Star Belgrade. But they faired far better in the F.A. Cup reaching the final where they

faced Newcastle United and their star striker Malcolm McDonald. Shankly's confidence that his side would win was borne out by their second half performance in which two goals from Kevin Keegan and one from Steve Heighway sealed the victory. It was a devastating performance in one of the most one-sided F.A. Cup finals in living memory.

It was during the civic celebrations for this cup win that Shankly was to make one of his most famous statements that would stamp his genius on Liverpoolians for life. As the open top bus approached Lime Street, Shankly tapped Brian Hall on the shoulder.

"Son", he said "You know about these things". (a reference to Hall's university education)

"What's the name of the Chinaman. Red book. Lot of sayings?"

Hall replied, "Do you mean Chairman Mao?",

"He's the fellah," said Shanks.

Hall thought that his manager had finally flipped but all was to be revealed when they went out onto the balcony of the St.George's Hall in front of 300,000 rampant supporters. Shankly held his hands up for silence and when the noise abated he said, "Even Chairman Mao has never seen a greater show of red strength".

Hall's thoughts that Shankly's brain had become addled by too much football were quickly replaced by a different sentiment, with the crowds almost saint-like adulation, Hall remembered thinking to himself, "You're not just a clever so and so you're a genius, you are".

" AND SO I FACE THE FINAL CURTAIN..... "

As far back as February 1974 questions were being asked as to how long the sixty-year-old Shankly could continue to manage Liverpool. His contract was due to end on 31st May that year and the club were confident he would continue at the helm. In June 1974 Bill Shankly's achievements were recognised when he was awarded the O.B.E. in the Queens Birthday Honours List for services to the game.

It was therefore a huge surprise to everyone when Liverpool Football Club called a press conference for 12th July. John Smith announced that Bill Shankly had decided to retire from Football League management. The press and public alike were stunned by his decision to quit whilst still very much at the top of his profession. The football world gathered to pay tribute to one of the great managers of the modern game. Tommy Docherty related the tale of the offer by Adidas to present Bill with a golden boot in recognition of his services to the game. They spoke to Bob Paisley who asked Shankly what size he took. He replied with his usual wit and sense of humour, "If it's gold, I'm a twenty-eight".

Having witnessed Liverpool's demolition of Newcastle in the 1974 Cup Final, it is quite probable that Shankly felt he had become as close to perfection on the football field as it was possible to achieve. Since his early managerial days at Carlisle Bill Shankly had wanted to create the ultimate football side, he may well have felt that he had done this and that to continue would have been an anti-climax. His thoughts were always with the Liverpool Club, the players, and above all with the supporters, so he would have wished to bequeath his successor Bob Paisley a healthy and well balanced team capable of continuing to win trophies without his enthusiastic input.

"... Parting is such sweet sorrow...."(W. Shakespeare, Romeo & Juliet 1594/5)

Bill Shankly had definitely been the one who made the decision to leave Liverpool Football Club. That was the easy part; the hard part was keeping away from the club. He had rejected the General Manager's job and hadn't fancied a seat on the board. These were things he could do without but staying away from the training ground Melwood was a different matter. Some felt that his presence was casting a huge shadow over Bob Paisley's early managerial days. The club said he was welcome at Melwood but they wanted him to do this in the afternoon. Bill was greatly hurt by this and felt the club treated him badly. Retirement didn't sit easily on Shankly's shoulders, he had given his life to football and he knew little else. His feelings on retirement were abundantly clear:

"Retire is a terrible, silly word. They should get a new word for it. The only time you retire is when you're in a box and the flowers come in. You can't retire because your mind will get sick. If you're bored with nothing to do, then you're dead".

Liverpool football club were not kind to Bill in retirement, it is true he could be stubborn and said what he thought where diplomacy would have been a better route. They may have looked at the situation at Old Trafford, where Matt Busby sat on the Manchester United board, and felt that they did not want a patriarch looming over them. It is clear that Bill despised directors all his life and would not have been able to sit quietly at board meetings if he felt these `amateurs` were doing something to harm the football club and supporters he loved. However, Liverpool should have recognised that Shankly was too proud to ask for anything, they should have taken the bull-by-the-horns and offered him a club directorship. After all had Shankly not revitalised the club when he did then it could have remained Second Division also-rans rather than a giant of English and European football.

LIFE AFTER LIVERPOOL

Liverpool Football Club did give Shankly a testimonial in 1975 and put up the Shankly Gates in 1981 but many felt they could have done more to honour him. Kevin Keegan has always felt that Liverpool should now play in the Shankly Stadium. Once he got over the wrench of leaving the club he loved Shankly began to spend more time with his family and to work with the Liverpool Society for the Blind. However football still coarsed through his veins and he regularly gave advice to younger managers. He was also approached by several clubs, who wanted to inject their own bit of Shankly genius, but he rejected all overtures.

THE END OF AN ERA

It is always said that people can remember where they were when they heard the news that President Kennedy had been shot. The same must be true on Merseyside when news came that Bill Shankly had died. It was with disbelief that many would have greeted this sad news, as Bill was still an incredibly fit man for his age. In September 1981 he suffered a heart attack, Shankly was admitted to Broadgreen Hospital where he suffered a second heart attack, which killed him. His loss was perhaps felt most keenly in Liverpool but his passing affected not only the football nation, but also the nation as a whole. The Labour party, whose conference was taking place at the time, stood in silent tribute to a soccer legend. His funeral was a state affair on Merseyside. Canon Arnold Myers summed up the mood of the moment in his address:

"Bill Shankly did not live for himself but for a team, a vast family, for a city, for an ideal"

On the Kop of a banner was unfurled which read `Shankly Lives Forever`. The final tribute to this giant of the game came in Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral where 1,400 people gathered to give thanks for his life and to hear tributes from Tom Finney, Bob Paisley and Kevin Keegan. During the service, Gerry Marsden led the congregation in "You'll Never Walk Alone".

THE LIFE, LINES, LIVERPOOL AND LEGACY OF BILL SHANKLY

`From little acorns great oak trees grow` - this was certainly the case with Bill Shankly. He came from humble origins in the Scottish village of Glenbuck, where his ideology on life had its origins. He gained his early knowledge and morals from his much admired mother. Football was in the blood in Glenbuck so his elevation to the professional ranks was nothing out-of-the-ordinary. Shankly was a gifted and super-keen professional his achievements being somewhat curtailed by the Second World War. But it was when he moved into management that 'Shankly the God' began to emerge from his mortal body.

Even in his early managerial posts at Carlisle, Grimsby, Workington and Huddersfield he fired his teams with a will-to-win and enthusiasm that was sadly not shared by the directors. It was only when he came to Liverpool that he found a club city that mirrored his own philosophy that, "Football is not a matter of life and death, it's much more important than that".

He transferred his total football approach to making Liverpool the greatest team in English football. He had a self-confidence, which few could match and this was illustrated in his teams. He would never admit defeat or even that his side had played badly and he would back his players to the hilt in front of the press. He would handle set backs in a way that would give him an invincible demeanour. After hearing that Celtic's Lou Macari had turned down Liverpool in favour of Manchester United, he covered his obvious disappointment by saying, "He couldn't play anyway. I wanted him for the reserve team".

He was not the most successful football manager ever, but to many he was the greatest. He laid the foundations for the famous Liverpool 'Boot Room' dynasty whose teams dominated English and European football from the mid 70's to the mid 80's. Shankly was not only a great football player and a manager without equal but he was a man apart, his integrity and love of people set him apart even footballing greats of that period. The great Don Revie at Leeds could not even hope to command the respect that Bill Shankly did within the game and beyond.

Shankly's retirement was a difficult period in his life. His wife Ness saw more of him in his last seven years than in the rest of their married life, but he was never truly at ease outside the world of football looking in. Bill Shankly's death in 1981 was a watershed not just in football but also for the British society as a whole. The city of Liverpool entered a difficult period of unemployment and social decline; it was as if their guardian angel was no longer watching over them. It was perhaps merciful for Shankly to die when he did, firstly, that he achieved one of his life's ambitions to die whilst still fit. Secondly, that he saw very little of the 1980's, a decade where Thatcherite policies created a society where money was everything and people palled into insignificance. This is a world totally alien to Bill Shankly who spent his life fighting for the common people, he was without doubt a 'working class hero' and a man who inspired thousands to play the game he loved.

On 4th December 1997 a statue was unveiled on Merseyside to Bill Shankly. It is ten feet tall - some would say 'life-size', some that Nelson's Column could not really have represented the contribution Shankly made to football and Liverpool Football Club in particular. The inscription was unwittingly supplied by the great man himself. When someone asked him what he was trying to achieve in football he said that his only ambition was to make the people happy. Shankly had certainly done that and few would argue with his epitaph;

"Bill Shankly 1913-1981 - He Made The People Happy".

Bibliography

Bowler,D., Shanks, (Orion Books, London, 1996)

Rev Faulds,M.H., & Tweedie Wm, Jnr., The Cherrypickers, (Cumnock & Doon Valley District Council, 1981)

Thompson, P., Shankly, (The Bluecoat Press, Liverpool, 1993)

Researched and written by David P. Worthington BA (Hons), PG Dip, MA.

Typeset by Elaine Bell

Baird Institute
Cumnock

December 1997

SHANKLY QUOTATIONS OR QUOTES ABOUT SHANKLY

- 1: A working class hero (John Lennon)
- 2: Shankly on R. Burns
- 3: Alex James on Shankly
- 4: Shankly on marriage to Ness
- 5: Shankly at Carlisle
- 6: Shankly after signing Ron Yeats
- 7: Shankly on football management
- 8: Shankly on Liverpool v Everton
- 9: Tommy Smith on Shankly
- 10: Shankly's Chairman Mao quote
- 11: Shankly on retirement
- 12: Cannon Myres on Shankly at his funeral
- 13: Shankly on football
- 14: Shankly on Shankly

QUOTATIONS

- 1:** A working class hero is something to be (John Lennon).
- 2:** Bill Shankly was an ardent socialist, and he used the works of Robert Burns to reinforce his own philosophy, " Burns was an early socialist - the first was Jesus Christ of course. He didn't think that God made people to be unequal, he thought that everyone should share in the work and the rewards".
Shankly was no blind follower of Burns he knew of his idols shortcomings especially those involving Ladies, "In his day if a man committed fornication, the local minister would humiliate him in front of the congregation by sitting him on the cutty stool. Burns had a season ticket !"
- 3:** Following Scotlands 3-2 victory over Wales at Tynecastle, Scottish legend Alex James singled Bill Shankly out for praise, "He is a real Scotland player who will fight until he drops".
- 4:** When Shankly married his wife Ness in 1944 he was determined that this happy event would not clash with the football season. He later made the following statement, "Of course I didn't take my wife to see Rochdale as an anniversary present. It was her birthday. Would I have got married during the football season? And anyway, it wasn't Rochdale, it was Rochdale reserves".
- 5:** When Bill Shankly took over as manager of Carlisle his first purchase was not a new player but a new strip for the team. The move was purely symbolic but Shankly justified it in his own imitable way, "If you treated your players as if they were cream they might start to believe it and play like it".
- 6:** After signing giant centre half Ron Yeats from Dundee United Shankly remarked, "With him in defence, we could play Arthur Askey in goal".
- 7:** Following the 1968/9 season when Liverpool finished second to Leeds in the league, Shankly made a poignant comment on football management, "Managing is a soul destroying job. You have to have a stomach made of cement to take the blows".
- 8:** The games that mattered most to Shankly were the Merseyside derby`s. In 1971 Liverpool faced Everton at Old Trafford in an F.A. Cup semi-final. Following their victory Shankly said, "Sickness would not have kept me away from this one. If I'd been dead, I would have had them bring the casket to the ground, prop it up in the stands and cut a hole in the lid".
- 9:** Liverpool-great Tommy Smith summed up Shankly's zest for the game and his belief that football was the most important thing in his life, "He was infectious, got you buzzing, kept you interested in the club. Nothing else but football though. You could mention something and he'd equate it to football. You'd say something about the weather, `Aye son, good day for skidding the ball across the grass."
- 10:** It was during the celebrations that followed the 1974 F.A. Cup Final victory over Newcastle that Shankly showed his huge admiration for the Liverpool supporters. He went out onto the balcony of the St. Georges Hall in front of 300,000 rampant supporters,

raised his hands for silence and said, "Even chairman Mao has never seen a greater show of the red strength".

11: Retirement didn't sit easily on Shankly's shoulders, he had given his life to football and he knew little else. His feelings on retirement were abundantly clear, "Retire is a terrible, silly word. They should get a new word for it. The only time you retire is when you're in box and the flowers come in. You can't retire because you're mind will get sick. If you're bored with nothing to do, then you're dead".

12: Bill Shankly's funeral was a state affair of Merseyside. Canon Arnold Myers summed up the mood of the moment in his address, "Bill Shankly did not live for himself but for a team, a vast family, for a city, for an ideal".

13: Shankly's dream of finding a football utopia only came true when he arrived at Liverpool. It was only then that he found a club and a city that mirrored his own philosophy that, "Football is not a matter of life and death, it's much more important than that".

14: On 4th December 1997 a statue was unveiled on Merseyside to Bill Shankly. The inscription was unwittingly supplied by the great man himself. When someone asked him what he was trying to achieve in football he said that his only ambition was to make people happy. Shankly had certainly done that and few would argue with his epitaph:

" Bill Shankly 1913-1981- He made The People Happy "

"A working class hero is something to be" (John Lennon): The life and lines of Bill Shankly (1913 -1981)