

INTRODUCTION

WHY a book on the early F.A. Cup finalists? The simple answer: 'because they are there' demands some expansion. The original motivation for this project arose from a request for help in discovering the Christian names of the early finalists. During the search for these it became clear that comprehensive material about the players of this period was available. Because of their social status, most of them attended public school and went on to Oxford or Cambridge University before entering one of the major professions such as the Army, the church or the law. This in turn meant that many archives were accessible, a substantial number of which had been published so that a detailed who's who would not be an insurmountable task with the use of, among others, many public school 'old boy' registers, volumes of Oxford and Cambridge alumni, the annual *Army List*, *Crockford's Clerical Directory*, *Men at the Bar*, *The Medical Directory*, *Who Was Who* from 1897 to 1953 plus obituaries in *The Times* and *Wisden's Cricketers' Almanack*.

The next stage was to define exactly what comprised 'the early Cup finals'. Obviously, the finals from the first one in 1871-72 to 1880-81, the last season in which two southern amateur teams met, would be included. However, in 1881-82 Blackburn Rovers were beaten by the Old Etonians and the following season the Etonians lost to Blackburn Olympic. As most of the players in these Etonian teams had appeared in earlier finals, it made sense to include their 1881-82 and 1882-83 sides in the project but the decision was taken to exclude the Blackburn clubs on the grounds that rather different research methods would have to be followed and that they also included professionals even though the F.A. had not yet made them legal. *Bell's Life* of 1st April 1882 quite clearly stated:

'No winning team has ever met with the enthusiastic reception which greeted the Old Etonians on Saturday last. The causes of this satisfaction are not difficult to find. It was practically a contest between an eleven of amateurs, in the strictest sense of the word, and a team mostly composed of professionals, some of them according to the ordinary acceptation, of the most pronounced type.'

From these games a list of players then had to be compiled. As details given in modern reference publications did not look completely reliable and threw up a number of questions, it was necessary to return to the match reports in the leading sporting newspapers of the day, in particular *The Sportsman*, *Bell's Life in London*, *The Field* and *The Sporting Life*.

These clarified a number of issues; that there were two A.H. Tod(d)s, one with a second 'd' and one without; that Quintin Hogg did not take part in the 1875 replay, instead Francis Heathcote Wilson replaced him in goal; that 'A. Boyle' and 'M. Faner' in modern publications were actually Adam Bogle and Matthew George Farrer whose names have been misprinted in the list of finalists given in Geoffrey Green's 1953 F.A. history and copied inaccurately into later books such as Rothmans Yearbook.

There was also confusion caused by changes of name. For instance, in February 1873 Frederick Patey Chappell changed his name to Frederick Brunning Maddison; then the brothers Albert Childers and Charles Maude Thompson hyphenated their surname as Meysey-Thompson in 1874 so that in the 1875-76 final Albert played as 'Meysey-Thompson' and Charles as 'Meysey', a complication which caused problems for reporters at the time which, even in today's record books, have not always been sorted out. In later years Henry Edward Drummond Moray became H.E. Stirling-Home-Drummond when he succeeded to the Blair Drummond estate in 1884 and Frederick Crofton Heath became Heath-Caldwell in 1913. The original 'prince of

dribblers', Robert Walpole Sealy Vidal became R.W. Sealy from 1892 because that had been the family name and his father had adopted Vidal only on inheriting some Vidal property.

Eventually, though, the definitive list of players was completed and it totalled 158. The research into these has produced the dates of birth for all except Edward Albert Ram (Clapham Rovers 1879-80) and the dates of death for all except William Dallas Ochterlony Greig (Wanderers 1875-76).



Oxford University 1877-78. Back: HS Otter; Standing: EH Parry, AF Hills, JT Twist; Seated: EH Alington, JH Savory, OR Dunell, WR Page, PJM Rogers*; Front: E Waddington, RT Heygate (* did not play in final).*