

PAGE FROM THE PAST: SEASON 1958-59

IN Chelsea's thirteenth post-war League season a final position of fourteenth (a drop of three places) was certainly disappointing after an excellent start which brought 13 points from the first ten matches. An interesting comparison with the efficient defensive systems of today is that those games produced no fewer than 57 goals—30 of them to Chelsea and eleven of them in an incredible 6-5 home win over Newcastle United.

At that stage only Arsenal had found the net more often than ourselves, and already Jimmy Greaves had scored 16 goals—including five in the 6-2 home win against Wolves and three in our 4-1 victory over Nottingham Forest.

For Jimmy this was indeed a golden season and, with 32 goals in 42 League games (he was our only ever-present player that season), he broke the individual Chelsea record of 30 goals in a season by Bob Whittingham in the Second Division in 1910-11. Not surprisingly, after numerous Under-23 appearances Greaves won his first full cap for England on their summer tour, appearing against Peru, Mexico and U.S.A.

October saw Chelsea's good start tossed away. First, a visit to Burnley brought a 0-4 reverse, followed by defeat in the next two matches. By the end of 1958 only five clubs stood below Chelsea in the table, and the last 14 games had produced only eight points. Fortunately, that proved to be the low-water mark and an average of a point per game thereafter kept us out of trouble. But 98 goals conceded was our worst in a season of League football.

The F.A. Cup contained small comfort. After the season's outstanding performance which brought a 4-1 victory against those "Cup Kings of the Fifties," Newcastle United, at St. James's Park in a twice-postponed third round tie, Aston Villa won 2-1 at Stamford Bridge five days later.

The season brought Chelsea's first European venture—in what was known as the International Industries Fairs Inter-

Cities Cup, a competition then stretched over two seasons. Chelsea were selected to represent London—the rules of the competition somewhat strangely allowing "not more than three players" from other clubs in the same city to be included. Chelsea used no such reinforcements.

Frem, from Copenhagen, provided the first round opposition and a 7-2 aggregate win resulted (3-1 in Denmark, 4-1 here). Belgrade, however, proved altogether tougher proposition in the following round, and a 1-0 first leg win at Stamford Bridge proved totally inadequate, Belgrade winning the return in Yugoslavia by 4-1.

Despite experience supplied by Reg Matthews, the Sillett brothers, Peter and John, John Mortimore, and Frank Blunstone (fit once more after nearly two seasons' inactivity with a twice-broken leg), the side was basically a young one.

Among those introduced were Barry Bridges and Bobby Tambling—both scored on their debut in a 3-2 win at home to West Ham on a day in February when the Chelsea forward line was our youngest ever at an average age of 18½. Junior captain and right-back Ken Shellito returned from a successful Youth Tournament in Cannes at Easter to make his League debut in a 3-1 win away to Nottingham Forest.

HOW THEY FINISHED IN 1958-59

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wolverhampton W.	42	28	5	9	110	49	61
Manchester United	42	24	7	11	103	66	55
Arsenal	42	21	8	13	88	68	50
Bolton Wanderers ..	42	20	10	12	79	66	50
W.B.A.	42	18	13	11	88	68	49
West Ham United ..	42	21	6	15	85	70	48
Burnley	42	19	10	13	81	70	48
Blackpool	42	18	11	13	66	49	47
Birmingham City ..	42	20	6	16	84	68	46
Blackburn Rovers ..	42	17	10	15	76	70	44
Newcastle United ..	42	17	7	18	80	80	41
Preston N.E.	42	17	7	18	70	77	41
Nottingham Forest	42	17	6	19	71	74	40
Chelsea	42	18	4	20	77	98	40
Leeds United	42	15	9	18	57	74	39
Everton	42	17	4	21	71	87	38
Luton Town	42	12	13	17	68	71	37
Tottenham Hotspur	42	13	10	19	85	95	36
Leicester City	42	11	10	21	67	98	32
Manchester City	42	11	9	22	64	95	31
Aston Villa	42	11	8	23	58	87	30
Portsmouth	42	6	9	27	64	112	21