

QUESTION & ANSWER

Programme Editor Albert Sewell puts the questions to the young player who has progressed a very long way in the short time he has been with Chelsea:

GEORGE GRAHAM

FOUR months ago, you were Chelsea's "unknown" new boy, but now you are the Club's leading goalscorer. Have you always been a sharpshooter?

I wasn't much of a goalscorer until I came here. When I left Aston Villa, I didn't just change my club—my whole football outlook changed. In training, the Boss and coach Dave Sexton have kept impressing on me the need to become goal-minded, and things have come off for me. But, frankly, I've surprised myself getting among the goals as much as this.

Can we go back to the start, for a brief outline of your life before you came into big football?

I was born at Bargeddie—that's just outside Glasgow—and grew up in the next village, Baillieston. I am the youngest of a family of five boys and two girls. Father died when I was only two weeks old and my mother had a very hard time bringing us all up. My football began in the Ayrshire & Coatbridge District schools team. Willie Henderson, of Rangers, was in the same forward line and we won the Scottish Schoolboy Cup. I went on to gain five Schoolboy caps in 1959-60. In two of those games (against England at Aberdeen and Wembley) I came up against Ronnie Harris; the other three were against Ireland, Wales and Germany. When I left school at 15½ a number of Scottish League clubs were after me . . . but so were Aston Villa and Newcastle. I went to see Villa Park for myself, and the fact that

there were several young Scots there made me decide to join them.

Then you went on to Youth International honours?

Yes, I played in all four games for Scotland in the 1963 International Youth Tournament — against Switzerland, Germany, Greece (that was a rough-house match at Tooting; we won 4-0, I got three goals and was knocked out by a Greek in the dressing-room afterwards), then in the semi-final at White City, where England beat us 1-0. The following November I was in the Rest of the U.K. team against England at Wembley, my fifth game for Scotland Youth.

Meanwhile, how were you progressing at Villa Park?

I was finding it frustrating. The longer I was there, the more Villa seemed a club with a past and, for me, no future. We young ones had to do a lot of the running for the older players, and fellows seemed to play more for themselves than for the team. That's how it looked to me, anyway. I had two League games for them in season 1962-63 (I got a goal on my debut against Liverpool) and six last season. The player who helped me most there was Phil Woosnam—he's terrific on tactics—but I wasn't sorry when Villa put me on the list at the end of last season.

And in June you came to Chelsea?

Yes, but it wasn't for the first time. They