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# Chelsea Stars we remember

No. 2  
**GEORGE  
HILSDON**

*By True Blue*

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**D**URING the past few weeks the name of one Chelsea star, Peter Brabrook, has been frequently mentioned. The newspapers have used up a lot of space discussing the future of the outside-right. Much of this has been just chatter, and I am in no kind of position to sort the wheat from the chaff, and even at this stage of the proceedings I don't know anything real about the future of this winger whose football skills have given a lot of us a great deal of pleasure.

With much of the talk about the possible transfer of Peter, the name of the West Ham United club has been freely mentioned. That fact served as a reminder about the regularity of player changes in which the Chelsea and West Ham clubs have been concerned.

Without making any sort of effort at a complete list I would suggest that during the years the players of note who have made the short journey from east to west of London would at least amount to a football team in the number sense. One of these players who gave most valuable service to Chelsea was George Hilsdon.

He certainly occupies a leading place among the Chelsea stars whose memory remains fresh in our minds. From 1906 to the end of the 1910-11 season he played in one hundred and fifty League games in the Chelsea first team, and in the course of that period his total of League goals only failed by a couple to reach the century mark.

## **Top of the tree by accident?**

Before going further into details regarding this particular star there is another point connected with him which came to my mind. I began to wonder how many footballers who have risen to the top of the tree, have been discovered more or less by accident. I could even make a long list of star players whose merits have been

spotted by managers or scouts as a sequel to journeys made by them for the express purpose of watching another player of the same club. And that applies to George Hilsdon, as well as other players who have worn the blue shirt of a Chelsea player.

## **A lucky find**

During Chelsea's first season in serious football, Jackie Robertson, at that time player-manager at Stamford Bridge, made the journey across London for the express purpose of watching a player in a reserve team match between West Ham United and Fulham. The name of the player in question doesn't matter. The plain truth is that in the words of Robertson he had no eyes for the player he had gone to size up.

His attention was glued on a lad nineteen years of age who was playing at inside-left for the Hammers. The name of the player which went into the book of the sort managers carry about for future reference was George Hilsdon. And in Robertson's memory box—if not written in the book—was the firm conviction that he had seen a boy whom he felt certain would fit in with his ideas of the needs of Chelsea.

## **As centre-forward**

Cutting a longish story short, the negotiations between the Bridge manager and West Ham officials were brought to a satisfactory conclusion by the transfer of this player from the east end of London in time for him to start the 1906-7 season, not as an inside-left but as a centre-forward.

The newspaper editors of those days did not consider football as important as they do in the modern times. The transfer of a boy from one London club to another was dismissed with the minimum use of type. And we didn't hear much more about George Hilsdon until the opening day of