



by **MATT BARLOW**

Roy meets Godfather of English coaching

IT WAS the perfect way to celebrate the first St George's Day at St George's Park as Roy Hodgson came face to face with Sir Walter Winterbottom, his predecessor by some 66 years.

Winterbottom was England's first manager but lots more besides. He was also a Manchester United centre half, an RAF officer, a pioneering coach, an influential administrator and a national servant who would have been 100 years old last month.

He died in 2002 and yesterday Hodgson unveiled the FA's tribute, a striking bronze bust which will stand inside the education department of the national football centre in Staffordshire.

It seems an appropriate place for a schoolteacher who turned coach and led England to four World Cups.

'I'm not sure I would ask him about going to Brazil in 1950,' said Hodgson. 'Some of the things he probably had to go through in those days in terms of preparation I'm sure would be

WINTERBOTTOM: FACTS AND FIGURES

Years as England manager

1946-1962

P139 W78 D37 L51 F383 A196

Win percentage 56

Players managed 162

Biggest win

10-0 v Portugal, Lisbon, 1947

Biggest defeat

7-1 v Hungary, Budapest, 1954

like horror stories to my eyes, when you think about how we prepare today.

'But I would have liked to ask him about his ideas on coaching and leadership and how he dealt with a group of players from different backgrounds and clubs. I'm sure I could listen to him for hours and his wisdom would have been fantastic to tap into.'

In an old interview, played at the unveiling ceremony, Winterbottom recalled how a nine-man selection committee would pick his team. Once, he asked the committee if anyone had seen his goalkeeper play that season. 'No,' he was told, they had not.

On another occasion, when the England squad returned from the 1958 World Cup in Sweden, Winterbottom was greeted at Heathrow by tearful son Alan, nine, who begged to know: 'Why didn't you pick Bobby Charlton?'

To reach the World Cup finals in 1950 in Brazil, England's flight lasted 31 hours and they arrived five days before their first game without Stanley Matthews, who had been sent on an FA goodwill trip, and two Manchester United players, on tour with their club in the USA.

The modernisation which enabled Sir Alf Ramsey's team to win the World Cup was forced through by Winterbottom but the progress made during his 16-year tenure is often eclipsed by the glory of 1966.

Winterbottom took the job at 34 in 1946. His playing days had been ended prematurely by injury



PICTURE: IAN HODGSON

Inspired: Hodgson at the unveiling of Winterbottom's statue

and legends like Matthews, Wilf Mannion, Raich Carter, Frank Swift and Tommy Lawton found it hard to understand what they could learn from someone who had never worn the Three Lions.

Until then, these players had organised their own training and tactics at England level but Winterbottom changed the norm.

Hodgson referred to him yesterday as the 'Godfather of English coaching'. *Sportsmail's* Jeff Powell once called him 'The Father of Modern English Football', a phrase which was adopted as the title of a biography published this year. It has been written by Graham Morse, who married Winterbottom's daughter Janet in 1963 and spent three years scouring old files, diaries, letters and books he retrieved from his father-in-law's study.

Morse regards Hodgson as a 'kindred spirit' of Winterbottom, aware of the broader duties of the England manager and the FA to protect the long-term development of English football and to produce better players and coaches.

Winterbottom was also the FA's director of coaching and established the first national coaching programme. The courses he set up at Lilleshall inspired Sir Bobby Robson, Ron Greenwood, Don Howe and Malcolm Allison,

who in turn influenced another generation.

Winterbottom saw football advancing at an accelerated rate overseas, producing more technical players and powerful coaches like Italy's Vittorio Pozzo and Hungary's Gustav Sebes.

'He made sure coaching was recognised and appreciated as a profession,' said Sir Trevor Brooking, the FA's director of football development. 'When he became England manager he set up a succession structure with coaches like Dave Sexton, Bobby Robson, Don Howe and Terry Venables to be sure young coaches were coming through.'

Hodgson was one of those to benefit, launching his long coaching career in Sweden in 1976, but English coaching has taken a few knocks since and English players are still accused of lacking technique.

This theme reappears if the Champions League climaxes without a Premier League team or Hodgson bemoans an absence of home-grown talent but there is hope of a brighter future at St George's Park, designed as the home of England's coaching and where, from now on, tomorrow's coaches can take inspiration from their Godfather.

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CLEARLY insufficient. Don't you just love the Football Association when they come over all masterful? According to the guardians of our game, the standard ban of three matches for violent conduct would, in the case of Luis Suarez, be inadequate. How times change. When Jermain Defoe did much the same thing in 2006 the offence was deemed worthy of no more than a yellow card. Off you go you little scamp, said the FA, it really is none of our business.

For an organisation with a media arm so grand it may shortly qualify as an independent nation in the European Championship group stages, the FA behave as if we exist in the pre-internet age. In the good old days before Google, discipline could be dispensed on the hoof, after a lively lunch and with scant regard for precedent or consistency.

To question the FA's stance required both a cuttings library and a damn good memory. Garrincha was sent off in the 1962 World Cup semi-final for Brazil against Chile. At his FIFA hearing it was claimed he had acted only under severe provocation and had never been dismissed in his career. By a vote of five to two, he received a 'symbolic reprimand' and was cleared to play in the final, which Brazil won.

In fact, Garrincha had already been sent off three times for his club, Botafogo, twice in Brazil and once against Barcelona of Spain. In 1962, though, who knew? Yet the moment Suarez sank his teeth into Branislav Ivanovic, a rudimentary search for 'football biting' immediately turned up an incident between Defoe and Javier Mascherano in October 2006.

And also the FA's scandalous reaction to it.

From this we know that Defoe's manager, Martin Jol, dismissed it with a joke, that Defoe downplayed the seriousness of it in his half-hearted apology and that, most appallingly, the FA considered the matter closed with the issue of a yellow card by referee Steve Bennett. Seen and dealt with was the official line. Can't re-referee the game, old chum.

No mention of a punishment that was clearly insufficient. No citing of a rule, highlighted this week by former FA compliance officer Graham Bean, that gives the governing body power to issue a misconduct charge 'if the penalty does not fit the crime'. A rule that would appear to trump the mealy mouthed excuse of not wishing to undermine officials by pronouncing twice on the same event.

For if the FA have a get out of jail card linking crime and suitable punishment then the inertia we have witnessed over violent conduct in recent weeks — and for months and years before that — is inexcusable.

The FA witness tackles that could break legs, see arms thrown that cause brain damage, and pretend to be powerless to act. Then they alight on a show case and pounce. If they can weigh off the odd unsympathetic character like Suarez or John Terry, it makes them look decisive and principled.

The reality is they hide behind the skirts of FIFA, quivering when men of honour would take a moral lead.

We know what should have happened to Callum McManaman of Wigan Athletic, to Manchester City's Sergio Aguero, to Sheffield United captain Chris Morgan many years ago when he left Iain Hume of Barnsley with a fractured skull.

We know what should have happened to Defoe, too. Instead, the FA will get their day in court and, amid a blaze of self-serving publicity, call it justice.

Suarez will miss the rest of this season and as much as one month of next because, randomly, referee Kevin Friend was unaware of the extent of his transgression. Had he followed Bennett's lead and merely booked Suarez, we presume nothing would be done. The governance of football cannot rely on oversights or bizarre twists of fate.

The FA must be putting their hands together in thanks for Friend's ineffectuality. With an attentive referee they would not be able to indulge another favourite pastime: responding to big headlines.

There is nothing the FA loves more than a steaming, great call for something to be done. Always providing they are in the mood to do something.

Remember when Eden Hazard of Chelsea kicked that ballboy at Swansea City? Disgraceful. Yet when Matt Ritchie of Swindon Town did the

Numbers leave Gunners short

THOSE inside the Arsenal boardroom play a very interesting numbers game with the sale of Robin van Persie. They factor in his wages, his transfer fee, the players bought with that resource, and calculate what a good deal it was from a financial perspective. Arsenal are far from guaranteed a place in next season's Champions League as yet and on Sunday the players will form a guard of honour for Van Persie (right) and his Manchester United team-mates, now celebrating a 20th title. Maybe United will pay similar tribute to Arsenal's balance sheet.



same to a teenager at Oxford United less than a year earlier? No further action required. No headlines, no glory, not worth the fuss.

Hazard's was another punishment that the FA considered clearly insufficient, yet they never consider addressing the problem in their rule book. A player is bitten and the FA issue statements as if the inadequacy of the system has come as a total shock. They were forced to climb down over Hazard when their double standards were exposed, but this will be different. There was wider public sympathy for the Chelsea player than exists for Suarez, so the FA can don the black cap with confidence.

CERTAINLY, only the most one-eyed admirer of the Uruguayan, or of Liverpool, is building a case for the defence. Biting is one of those offences that goes beyond the pale.

Gus Poyet, Suarez's compatriot and manager of Brighton and Hove Albion, has attempted to debate why English football abhors it, yet often indulges a vicious tackle that could shatter bones, but few are ready for nuance just yet. They want Suarez brought to book and the FA are puppy-dog eager to oblige.

Yet is this the way forward for the game? Are we merely to rely on a set of haphazard circumstances falling fortuitously if justice is to be served?

We will act, say the FA, always providing an offence has been clearly committed, the referee hasn't seen it, an old rule can be dug up and a man of principle is running the show that day. Otherwise, they are their own Mr Loophole, getting miscreants off the hook with jargon and technicalities.

So what if FIFA frown on additional

THE SCREAMER ...IT'S THE TALK OF FOOTBALL

edited by SIMON JONES

EVERTON are giving a trial to South African midfielder Daylon Claasen, 23. Claasen cancelled his contract with Belgian side Lierse yesterday and his agent, Ivan Modia, said: 'He is a player similar to Steven Pienaar. He has been labelled his successor in the national team.'

Wenger returns to Fazio

ARSENAL have revived interest in Sevilla's Federico Fazio. The defender, 26, was a target in 2009 after the departure of Kolo Toure. However, Sevilla rebuffed a £5.5million bid. The Spanish club are struggling financially

now and Arsene Wenger is keen on the 6ft 5in Argentine. Wenger has also asked about Swansea defender Ashley Williams, valued at £12m. Liverpool's Martin Skrtel is understood to be too expensive.

KEVIN DAVIES is set to join MLS side Toronto today with Bolton paying half his wages. The former skipper, 36, is out of favour at the Reebok and will be out of contract this summer. Toronto wanted to sign him on a free but could not afford his wages without Bolton's help.