Manchester United FC

1945 to 1970.

**For Ben.**

Tutor: Where had we got to?

*Student: The end of the Second World War.*

1945.

*Yes.*

The year Matt Busby arrived at Old Trafford.

*Right!*

We said we’d talk about the Busby years.

*They were very good years for Man U.*

Some people say Matt Busby is the most important man in the history of Man U.

*A lot of people do.*

Well, he did manage the club for 25 years.

*Indeed he did.*

And they were years of glory and tragedy.

*Matt Busby came from Scotland.*

His Dad had worked down the mines.

*Digging coal.*

Yes.

*But he was killed in the First World War.*

So were three of Matt Busby’s uncles.

*Matt worked down the pit too.*

For a year or so.

*Mmmm…*

But he was very good at football.

*Played for a local club.*

He was spotted by a scout for Man City.

*Who offered him a place.*

Which he took.

*This was in 1928. Matt was 18.*

Players didn’t get big money in those days.

*Matt Busby started at £5 a week.*

About the average working man’s wage for the time.

*Not like today!*

No!

*He was a very big star!*

But big name footballers weren’t rich in those days.

*They took the bus home after games.*

Lived close to the club.

*In an ordinary house.*

In an ordinary street.

*Like everyone else.*

Not like today!

*Anyway, Matt was in the Man City team that won an FA cup.*

But was sold to Liverpool in 1936.

*Where he finished up as captain.*

Then the Second World War came along.

*And the football league stopped.*

Matt still played a bit of football.

*No big stuff.*

But he was also a fitness coach for the army.

*Where he met Jimmy Murphy.*

Another famous Man U name.

*In 1945 the war ended.*

League football began again.

*Man U wanted a new manager.*

The chairman of Man U asked to meet Matt.

*Matt Busby turned up in his army uniform.*

And got the job as manager of Man U.

*Even though he demanded a lot.*

Things which managers did not demand.

*Not in those days.*

He must have seemed really cheeky.

*He wanted control over training.*

Control over the selection of players on match days.

*Control over where they should play.*

And how.

*Control over which players were bought and sold by the club.*

We think that makes sense today.

*That’s how it is, today.*

Yes.

*But in 1945 it was cheeky.*

Especially when he told the directors he knew more than they did.

*Which he did, of course.*

So there he was, manager of Manchester United at the age of 35.

*A young man, really.*

And a man who wanted to buy young players.

*Build a young team.*

Which he did.

*The press called them “Busby’s Babes”.*

That’s right. They did.

*“Busby’s Babes”.*

They were young, but they were good.

*Won back-to-back championships in 1955 – 1956 and 1956 – 1957.*

Their average age was just 22.

*One player was just 16.*

Busby’s babes!

*The youngest team in the football league.*

And champions twice already.

*But tragedy was just round the corner.*

It was.

*In 1958 they played an away game in Belgrade.*

On the way home their plane landed in Munich.

*It was February 6th.*

Winter.

*Very cold.*

It began to snow heavily.

*The pilot tried to take off.*

*Twice.*

Slid all over the place.

*Very dangerous.*

Maybe he should have left it at that.

*But he decided to try a third time.*

The people on board must have been worried.

*They were.*

We know they were.

*Really?*

Liam Whelan was heard to say “This may be death, but I’m ready”.

*And it was, for him.*

Poor man.

*Yes.*

The plane was quite small.

*Only two engines.*

Propeller engines. Not jets.

*There was a lot of snow on the runway.*

The plane slid and crashed.

*The pilot was afraid of fire.*

He told everyone who was still alive to get out and run.

*Most of those who could get out did that.*

But Harry Gregg stayed.

*He was the goalkeeper.*

He helped to pull people out of the plane.

*Before it caught fire.*

Which it could have done any moment.

*And did, after a while.*

Goalkeepers had to be brave, in those days!

*Harry Gregg certainly was.*

23 people died.

*Out of 44 on board.*

Some very good players.

*Eight players died that night.*

And many were injured.

*Some never played again.*

No.

*Matt Busby was badly injured.*

People expected him to die.

*But he didn’t.*

It became known as the Munich air disaster.

*There’s a memorial at Old Trafford.*

And a clock known as the Munich clock.

*It was a huge shock to football.*

Not just in Manchester.

*One player who escaped that night was Bobby Charlton.*

He was rescued by Harry Gregg, in fact.

*He was injured.*

Yes. Without Harry Gregg he wouldn’t have got out.

*Jimmy Murphy took over from Matt Busby.*

While he recovered.

*And Jimmy had some success.*

The team he put together finished 9th in the first division.

*And reached the FA cup final.*

Losing 2-0 to Bolton Wanderers.

*Man U were knocked out of the European cup, of course.*

Real Madrid won, for the third year in a row.

*And suggested Man U should be given the cup.*

Which was good of them.

*Yes.*

It didn’t happen, but it was good of them.

*Matt Busby was 2 months in hospital.*

He thought of giving up football altogether.

*But the lads all wanted him back.*

So back he came.

*He set about building the team up again.*

Bobby Charlton still played.

*Yes.*

He would go on to win a world cup, of course.

*That’s right.*

In 1966.

*At Wembley.*

Some new names arrived at Man U.

*Denis Law.*

George Best.

*Nobby Stiles.*

Nobby Stiles was another world cup winner.

*He was.*

I remember him dancing on the pitch after the final.

*With the world cup in one hand and his false teeth in the other!*

That was the world cup.

*1966.*

Back to Man U, though.

*In the 1960s.*

Busby won a lot more silverware for the club.

*It took a year or two.*

But he bought some good players.

*And trained them himself.*

Him and Jimmy Murphy.

*Yes. Him and Jimmy Murphy.*

They took the FA cup in 1962 – 1963.

*Beat Leicester 3-1 in the final.*

That was the season George Best arrived at Old Trafford.

*From Ireland.*

George best was something else!

*He had such ball control.*

Such pace, too.

*And looks.*

Girls went mad for him.

*They did.*

He was the first football superstar, really.

*For a while, he could do no wrong.*

And Man U won the league in 1964 – 1965.

*And in 1966 – 1967.*

And in 1968 they lifted the European cup.

*At Wembley.*

At long last.

*The first English club to win the European cup.*

Beating Benfica 4-1.

*In extra time.*

Yes.

*Bobby Charlton and George Best both scored.*

That was the high point of Matt Busby’s career.

*I suppose it was.*

Just ten years after the Munich air disaster.

*And they were lifting the European cup.*

There were three European footballers of the year in that team.

*Bobby Charlton, Denis Law and George Best.*

Matt Busby knew how to pick players.

*And train them.*

He would be a hard act to follow.

*But they needed to find someone who could.*

Because he retired in 1969.

*He was knighted in 1968.*

He stayed on as a director for 11 more years.

*That must have felt strange.*

Not being the manager any more?

*Watching other people make mistakes.*

Like George Best, I’m afraid.

*Mmmm…*

He was such a beautiful player.

*But it all went wrong.*

All that fame.

*All that glory.*

All that money.

*All those parties.*

All those girls!

*All that drinking!*

Such a shame.

George Best could do it all.

*Maybe he really was the best?*

Well, maybe he was.

*A lot of people think so.*

Especially people who actually saw him play.

*Lucky people!*