Manchester United FC

1970 to 1994.

**For Ben.**

Tutor: We were back in the Busby years.

*Student: Yes, we were.*

Which finished in 1969.

*When Sir Matt retired.*

But they called him back for a season.

*A year later.*

Because there was a bad patch.

*Yes. A period of poor results.*

Several years of them.

*Several new managers, too.*

Yes.

*They came and went.*

Tommy Docherty was one.

*For a while.*

No silverware.

*Relegation, even.*

Back in the second division again.

*They hadn’t been there for years.*

Not since before the Second World War.

*Not since before Matt Busby came along.*

But now they were.

*For the 1974 – 1975 season.*

Tommy Docherty was in charge.

*And Man U took the second division championship.*

And promotion again at the end of the season.

*Back in the first division.*

Where they have stayed ever since.

*And they reached the FA cup final twice in the next two seasons.*

Lost it the first time, in 1976.

*To Southampton.*

But beat Liverpool in the final in 1977.

*The old enemy.*

These were high times for Liverpool.

*They won the League championship that year.*

*And the European cup.*

They were riding high.

So an FA cup would have given them the treble.

*You’ve got to go some to win the treble.*

But they lost the FA cup to the old enemy.

*Man U.*

This must have put noses out of joint at Anfield.

*Probably.*

The old enemies.

*Yes.*

*But then Tommy Docherty was sacked.*

As manager of Man U.

*Yes, as manager of Man U.*

Nothing to do with the football.

*No.*

The football was good.

*It was nothing to do with the football.*

It was a scandal.

*Nothing to do with football.*

He ran off with the wife of the club physiotherapist.

*Not so good.*

No. Not so good.

*So there was a lot of bad feeling inside the club.*

And off he had to go.

*Dave Sexton was appointed as the new manager.*

He came from QPR.

*He started in 1977 – 1978.*

To begin with there was nothing to write home about.

*Man U finished 10th in his first two seasons.*

Not that bad.

*Still in the first division.*

Not that good, though.

*No. Not that good.*

But Man U reached the FA cup final again in 1979.

*And what a final that was.*

The most exciting finish in any FA cup.

*They were playing Arsenal.*

2 – 0 down with 5 minutes to go.

*But two goals in two minutes from Man U made it 2 – 2.*

The crowd was absolutely wild with excitement.

*Both sides were!*

The stands were heaving.

*Then Arsenal scored, just before extra time.*

It was a mad few minutes.

*3 goals in less than 5 minutes.*

Absolutely mad.

*3 – 2 to Arsenal, though.*

Well, you can’t win them all.

*No.*

Although the board of directors seemed to think you should.

*How do you mean?*

Well, they sacked Dave Sexton.

*Oh.*

Man U finished 8th in the next two seasons.

*Not good enough, you think?*

No. No silverware.

*No.*

So then they appointed Ron Atkinson.

*For the 1981 – 1982 season.*

And he bought players for big money.

*Bryan Robson, for example.*

He came to Man U from West Bromwich Albion.

*And he would turn out to be a good buy.*

You can say that again.

*He was Man U’s longest serving captain.*

Yes, he was.

*He was captain for 12 years.*

The longest of anyone.

*As yet.*

Yes. As yet.

*Bryan Robson was one big name at the club.*

Another was Ray Wilkins.

*But this period really belongs to Liverpool.*

This was their decade, really.

*They won the championship in 1982, 1983 & 1984.*

Man U were never that far behind.

*But never that close either.*

No.

*3rd or 4th in the division.*

And a couple of FA cups.

*1983 & 1985.*

Good, but not good enough for the board of directors.

*Not with Liverpool doing so well for so long.*

So Atkinson was sacked.

*And a new manager arrived.*

Scottish bloke.

*Yes.*

He had played quite a bit of football.

*Nothing very special.*

Good, but not that good.

*No.*

This guy was no superstar on the pitch.

*He’d played for Dunfermline.*

Falkirk too. And Ayr United.

*Not the biggest names in football.*

Not even Scottish football.

*Then he became a manager.*

At East Stirlingshire.

*Where?*

Exactly!

*That job was only part time!*

£40 a week.

*So he moved.*

To St Mirren.

*Which we’ve at least heard of!*

Well, we certainly had by the time the new manager left.

*He took St Mirren from a sleepy club.*

Bumbling along in the bottom of the second division.

*Playing boring football.*

All the way to first division champions.

*Playing lovely football.*

Plenty of attack.

*Young players.*

Lots of goals.

*Good football.*

Then people began to notice this guy.

*Aberdeen, for example.*

Yes. Aberdeen appointed him manager.

*And were soon taking silverware home.*

By the bucketful.

*Scottish cup.*

European cup winners cup.

*European super cup.*

Scottish cup.

*Again.*

So now this guy was a proven winner.

*Several clubs wanted him.*

Tottenham

*Wolves*.

Maybe even Liverpool.

*You’re joking!*

It’s what some people say…

*But he came to Manchester.*

Man U, actually.

*Yes. Man U.*

Where he would stay for 26 years.

*Even longer than Matt Busby.*

He was, of course…

*Alex Ferguson.*

And it was 1986.

*He was a tough guy.*

He took no nonsense from anybody.

*No*.

He was known as a very strict manager.

*With a temper on him.*

Apparently.

*Maybe you have to be strict to manage a football team.*

Well, you certainly have to be strong-minded.

*Which Alex Ferguson surely was.*

Some people said he was bloody-minded.

*Maybe you have to be that, too.*

For example, when he came to Man U first, he was not pleased.

*Some of the big name players were coasting.*

Enjoying the good life too much.

*Parties.*

Drink*.*

*Money.*

Not keeping absolutely fit.

*That’s no good.*

Not at that level. No, it’s not.

*So he had to read the riot act.*

Throw his weight about.

*Make the players shape up.*

Which he did.

*Sold some.*

And slowly the tide began to turn.

*But it wasn’t all plain sailing.*

No. There were some good wins, but no cups for a while.

*Four years without any silverware.*

The board of directors was probably getting shifty.

*People thought he might lose his job.*

Liverpool were champions again.

*Nobody at Man U likes to see that!*

No.

*But then, in 1989, he gets his first silverware.*

The FA cup.

*Crystal Palace.*

On a replay.

*3 – 3 first leg.*

1 – 0 to Man U on replay.

*A close thing.*

Many people think Ferguson would have lost his job if the cup had been lost.

*Maybe he would.*

But now things begin to look up.

*Liverpool are fading, for one thing.*

But now it’s the turn of Man U.

*Because they have a run of good results.*

Well, some very good, some not so good.

*A 17 year old Ryan Giggs plays his first match in 1990.*

But it’s a 2 – 0 defeat at home by Everton.

*Yes. And then they were hammered by Liverpool.*

4 – 0. At Anfield.

*So there was some good stuff for the fans.*

And some pain.

*Yes.*

But things were on the up.

*The European cup winners cup, for example.*

Yes. 2 – 1 against the mighty Barcelona.

*And the league title in 1993 – 1994.*

Their first in 26 years.

*And another star player arrived at Old Trafford.*

A French bloke by the name of Cantona.

*Eric Cantona.*

Magic.