THE JOURNEY FROM GOOD TO GREAT

Every day. Every game.
THE JOURNEY
FROM GOOD TO
GREAT

FROM
THE CLIFF

TO
CARRINGTON
Manchester United first moved to The Cliff in 1938, agreeing a rental with the Clowes Estate up to March 1944, securing the tenancy for the A team, Juniors and general practice at a rental of £110 plus rates.

Manchester United Junior Athletic Club was formed and based at The Cliff. This was the first youth programme set up by Manchester United as the cash strapped club sought to sign local players rather than make big money purchases.

To know the story of The Cliff is to know the history of Manchester United. It’s where the Busby Babes were formed, where Best, Charlton, Cantona and other legends trained. It’s the ground where Alex Ferguson built his treble winning team.

It’s where Manchester United went from good to great. As these exclusive photographs taken in 2013 show, The Cliff is largely unchanged. And if you sit there quietly and listen, perhaps you can hear the echoes of those great players from the past?

DID YOU KNOW?
Before Manchester United moved to The Cliff it was a venue for other sports, most notably Rugby League. The Cliff was also the venue for one Challenge Cup final – Leigh surprisingly defeating Halifax 13-0 in April 1921.
The outbreak of the war in 1939 saw the ground taken over by the Royal Air Force for a barrage balloon squadron. By the time Matt Busby joined United in 1945, The Cliff was in a poor state of repair. But it wasn't long before it was back in operation for training and junior matches.

The Cliff soon became an integral part of Manchester United's training plans. During 1950/51 season United installed floodlights for both evening training and evening junior matches. The Cliff became the main training ground for Manchester United at all levels, but became inextricably linked with the 'Busby Babes' and Manchester United's five successive FA Youth Cup victories during the 1950s. It can be argued that it was at The Cliff that Matt Busby's and Jimmy Murphy's ideas for the future of Manchester United were put into practice.

Manchester United's first team moved to the Trafford Training Centre at Carrington in 1999/2000 season. Since then The Cliff has still been used for training for youth and junior players, and for Academy floodlit matches.

**DID YOU KNOW?**
The Cliff hosted floodlit matches a full five years before Old Trafford hosted its first one in 1956.

**DID YOU KNOW?**
The Cliff was also used for Eric Cantona's community service, coaching local school children after his 'kung fu kick' incident at Selhurst Park.
When the railwaymen of Newton Heath organised a team to play other departments on the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway, did they know that they were founding one of the world’s greatest football clubs.

Newton Heath began playing football in 1878 – a full ten years before the Football League was even created. Then, as now, money was a big issue in football (albeit on a slightly smaller scale) and Newton Heath were plagued by financial problems. By 1902, little more than 20 years since its creation, it looked as if Newton Heath football club was doomed for extinction.

It was wealthy local brewery owner, John Henry Davies, who came to the rescue at the eleventh hour. He agreed to invest some of his fortune in Newton Heath (about £200) in return for some involvement in running the club. One of his first significant acts was to suggest Newton Heath marked its rebirth with a new name. You might have found yourself supporting Manchester Celtic or Manchester Central - but it was the name Manchester United that was decided upon.

A year later United appointed its first proper manager, Ernest Mangall. Under his guidance – and bolstered by a few good signings – the team pushed for promotion from the Second Division. They finished third two seasons running but the 1905/06 season proved to be their best yet. United not only reached the quarter finals of the FA Cup, they also gained promotion to the First Division. After 12 years of toil, Manchester United reclaimed its place in top flight football.
‘United’ seemed to have the momentum at this time. Additional new signings included Billy Meredith from Manchester City. Nicknamed the ‘Welsh Wizard’, Meredith was forced to leave City after being implicated in a bribery scandal.

The winger proved inspirational and United won the Football League Championship for the first time in 1908. They also won the first ever Charity Shield in 1908 and topped it all by winning the FA Cup at the end of a tremendous run in 1909.

In 1910 two more words entered the United lexicon: Old Trafford.

John Henry Davies had bought the land in 1908 and paid for the building of the stadium. At the end of their first full season at Old Trafford in 1910/11 United were crowned League Champions for the second time and the Charity Shield was theirs again as well. How long could this success last?
Sadly, the highs of the 1910/11 season were soon to prove fond memories for United and their supporters. The following season the defending champions began to falter finishing thirteenth in the League. Manager Ernest Mangall bore the brunt of the criticism and resigned to join rivals Manchester City.

There was no quick turnaround. United avoided relegation by a single point at the end of the 1913/14 season and before any plan of recovery could be initiated the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 put everything on hold. The Football League was suspended (temporarily of course – the war would be ‘over by Christmas’) and those men who were not sent to the trenches were left to play in regional competitions.

When League football finally resumed in the summer of 1919, only two players from the pre-war Manchester United team were left.

Over the next decade United suffered a near-fatal decline. During the 1920s the club slid down the League. They endured relegation and managerial scandal. As the 1930s dawned, although now back in the First Division, their situation did not improve.

In the 1930/1931 season, United made their worst start in history losing their first 12 matches in a row. With a start like that it was perhaps to nobody’s surprise that they were relegated at the end of the season.

And things just got worse. Only 3,500 supporters turned up to watch United’s first game of the 1931/32 season and by December there was no money left to pay the players’ wages. Bankruptcy loomed once more.
For the second time United was saved from financial collapse when James Gibson, a manufacturer of army uniforms invested £30,000. However their dreadful form continued and at the close of the 1933/34 season United were on the brink of relegation to the Third Division. Survival was only secured on the last day of the season. That very same week, Manchester City won the FA Cup with a man named Matt Busby in their side.

For the rest of the decade United's fortunes on the pitch waxed and waned remarkably. They won the Second Division Championship in 1935/36 but won only ten games all season in the First Division and were relegated straight back down. However, United's incredible bungee-like form saw them bounce straight back to the First Division in 1937/38.

United's giddy supporters had a short time to settle down in the following season when United finished a sober 14th and Manchester City took their turn to be relegated. Once again, however, the highs and lows of football were to be completely overshadowed by the arrival of a World War.
THE START OF
SOMETHING SPECIAL

It was the post-war period and the arrival of the legendary Matt Busby in 1945 that properly marked the start of Manchester United's march to success and stardom.

Busby's contract was for five years. Given United's turbulent history to date, it would have been inconceivable to most people that he would still be managing the Club 25 years later, or that he would oversee the complete transformation of the club and its international profile.

Busby's impact was immediate. His own leadership qualities were not in doubt but he was also astute enough to know the value of having a first class off-field team. Apart from his knack of finding the right player for the right position on the pitch, his greatest early signing was arguably that of Jimmy Murphy who Busby had met during war service. Murphy became Busby's assistant manager in the spring of 1945 and together they went on to create – and recreate - the United teams of legend.

In the first season after the Second World War, Busby's side almost won the League at the first attempt, finishing second to Liverpool – it was the club's highest placing for 36 years. In 1948 they lifted the FA Cup – 39 years after last doing so.
The history of Manchester United Football Club in the 1950s and 1960s does not need re-telling for any United fan. These are enshrined in the memory as the Busby years - years that are familiar to supporters who were not even born at the time.

Mixing established players, inspired new signings and some remarkable young men from the Youth Academy, Busby's team won the League Championship three times before the horror of the Munich air disaster shattered everything. It didn't seem possible that United could ever recover from such an appalling loss.

But, having recovered from his injuries, Busby - together with Murphy - set about building another side that would rise to even greater heights and bring the club and its players to worldwide prominence.

They were League Champions twice; they won the FA Cup and, ten years after his European dream team was destroyed in Munich, Busby won the European Cup in a scintillating final at Wembley in 1968. Busby had achieved everything and more. Retiring in 1969, Busby capped an extraordinary 25 years when he was knighted.
The 1970s and 1980s offered sporadic success for United. Managers came and went but despite some periods of high excitement and superb football, the trophy cabinet was only opened three times – for three FA Cup wins.

The last manager to arrive in the 1980s was Alex Ferguson – the man who had already won everything Scottish football had to offer with Aberdeen, including a European Cup Winners’ Cup.

Ferguson was given – by today’s standards – a generous amount of time to establish himself and his squad. Having arrived in 1986, his team’s first silverware did not arrive until the FA Cup win of 1990. But this allowed United to make their return to European competition after an absence of five years. In May 1991 United beat Barcelona to win the European Cup Winners Cup.

It was the beginning of a new era for Manchester United that would secure its position as the ‘world’s favourite football club’.

Sir Alex’s teams have, to date, won 12 Premier League trophies, four League Cups, ten Charity Shields, a FIFA World Club Cup and three European Cups – not to mention numerous near misses. Within this list of achievements are the historic treble winning season of 1999 and clinching a record 19th top division title in the 2010/11 season.

The finish to the 2011/2012 could not have been more dramatic as United’s bid to secure 20 League titles was snatched from them by Manchester City in the finals seconds of the season. For the neutral it was scintillating. For United and their millions of worldwide supporters it was heartbreaking.

Will Sir Alex and United be celebrating in May 2013? We can’t wait to find out.
The DHL story began in San Francisco in 1969 – the year Sir Matt Busby retired.

Three men (Mr Dalsey, Mr Hillblom and Mr Lynne) had little more than a few hundred dollars and a bright idea. But that idea – to fly customs documents ahead of cargo ships so the contents could be cleared in advance and save the operators time and money – was the beginning of a revolution in express delivery.

DHL understands what it means to start small and grow into a worldwide institution. It has achieved its success through a passion for excellence, innovation and teamwork. These are values it shares with Manchester United and why it is proud to be an official partner of the world's greatest football club.