



They'll give a degree to anyone these days...

As exam season approaches, football's finest prove you don't always need to have brains to get your hands on a university degree

While Oxford University famously turned down Maggie Thatcher for one in 1985, the University of Bedfordshire was only happy to dish one out last year to Garth Crooks (who also has two hard-earned degrees of his own). The award of honorary degrees, it seems, is as unpredictable as a Jose Mourinho press conference.

The first ever honorary degree was dolled out way back in 1479 when Lionel Woodville, the Dean of Exeter, was made a Doctor of Canon Law by Oxford. The fact he was the brother-in-law of King Edward IV and they wanted the free publicity had nothing whatsoever to do with it. Honest.

Since then, universities have been throwing them around like confetti



Hat-trick heroes

and more recently the football fraternity have been getting in on the act. Jack Charlton was one of the first back in 1994 when the University of Limerick made him an honorary Doctor of Science. The floodgates were opened. Alex Ferguson now has three under his belt while Arsene Wenger got one in 1999 from the University of Hertfordshire to add to the 'real' degree in engineering he earned at the University of Strasbourg.

Some awards, however, are more contentious than others. The University of Strathclyde's decision to make Henrik Larsson a Doctor of the University in 2005 might have gone down well with the Celtic faithful but left Rangers-supporting students distinctly unimpressed.

"I wish to express my utter contempt

at the shameless publicity-seeking inherent in the decision to award Larsson an honorary degree," raged one fan in the Scottish Mirror. "His services were entirely restricted to scoring goals for the football team he played for."

Which is presumably what clinched it for Alan Shearer when he donned a mortar board and gown to collect his honorary Doctorate of Civil Law degree from Northumbria University in 2006.

A number of other freebies have been just plain daft. St Andrews made Denis Law a Doctor of Laws while the big cheeses at the University of Teesside had surely been on the pop when they decided to make Steve McClaren a Doctor of Professional Studies.

Of course, football's finest find little practical use for their honorary awards. As the artist David Hockney said after receiving an honorary doctorate, it doesn't even allow you to write prescriptions for your own drugs.

HONORARY DEGREES THE LIST IN FULL

- Henrik Larsson** Doctor of the University, University of Strathclyde, 2005
- Lucas Radebe** Master of Social Science, University of Cape Town, 2005
- Dario Gradi** Doctor of Technology, Loughborough University, 2003
- Richard Keys** Doctor of Letters, Coventry University, 2002
- Denis Law** Doctor of Laws, St Andrews University, 2005
- Sepp Blatter** Doctor of the Arts, De Montfort University, 2005
- Arsene Wenger** Doctor of Science, University of Hertfordshire, 1999
- Sir Alex Ferguson** Master of Science, Manchester Metropolitan and University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST), 1998; Doctor of Letters, Glasgow Caledonian University, 2001; Doctor of Laws, St Andrews University, 2002
- John Motson** Doctor of Letters, University of Hertfordshire, 2006
- Steve McClaren** Doctor of Professional Studies, University of Teesside, 2006
- Sir Trevor Brooking** Doctor of the University of Essex, 2001
- Matt Le Tissier** Master of Arts, Southampton Institute, 2003
- Gordon Strachan** Doctor Honoris Causa, Aberdeen University, 2005
- Pierluigi Collina** Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science, University of Hull, 2004
- Alan Shearer** Doctor of Civil Law, Northumbria University, 2006
- Sir Bobby Robson** Doctor of Civil Law, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 2003
- Gordon Banks** Doctor of Keele University, 2006
- Alan Curbishley** Masters Degree, University of Greenwich, 1998
- George Best** Doctorate of Queen's University, 2001
- Jack Charlton** Doctor of Science, University of Limerick, 1994
- Garth Crooks** Master of Arts, University of Bedfordshire, 2006
- Brian Clough** Doctor of Science, University of Teesside, 2003
- Roy Keane** Doctor of Laws, Cork University, 2002
- Joe Kinnear** Doctor of Science, University Of Luton, 2003
- Gary Mabbutt** Doctor of Science, University of Hertfordshire, 1998

WORDS IAIN SPRAGO



"Ere, didn't you used to be fat?" Two great football minds think alike

Mad Dog and Englishman

A photographer is never off duty. As these shots from Argentinian snapper Ezequiel Suranyi prove...

Diego Maradona and Paul Gascoigne in the same room together? Hugging?! The mind boggles.

But for the men (and, very occasionally, women) who spend their time patiently hanging around with a camera for something good to happen, such scenarios are the stuff of dreams. And that particular dream came true for one particular snapper: Ezequiel Suranyi. "The picture was taken after Soccer Aid at Old Trafford last May," explains the Argentine-born photographer. "A restaurant in the Lowry Hotel was closed to everyone except Maradona and his intimate circle of friends and hangers-on. Then Gascoigne came by with a framed picture for Maradona to sign. They spoke for a while in Italian. As someone who grew up loving Serie A

in the '80s and early '90s, this felt like a truly special, historic moment."

Suranyi's moments of opportunism don't end there, however; he's been around the world polishing his lens so you don't have to. This is one of many pictures that will be on display in London for four weeks from mid-April at an exhibition of his work. The collection includes material from his native Argentina, last summer's World Cup finals in Germany and, er, the London Underground – see the devastated Spurs fan below, captured just after his team missed out on Champions League qualification to Arsenal on the last day of the season.

The World's Greatest Gatherer is at the Argentine Embassy on weekdays from April 18 to 11 May. Entry is free. See www.argentine-embassy-uk.org



Boca fans prepare to face River



"I said talk to the hands..."



"Wanna see our lovely baps?"



Milan descends on Manchester

EMPIOS

The Devil Wears Replica

So we've suggested an alternative Manchester United logo...

If the devil was to exist, which team would he support? An interesting theological question, which has reared its head this month thanks to one rather excitable religious fellow.

George Hargreaves, Head of the Scottish Christian Party, is convinced that Man United are Satan's side thanks

to the club's Red Devil emblem. "We urge Wayne Rooney not to honour the devil by wearing this shirt or kissing the badge," he froths. "Manchester can never be united under Satan!"

The only way the Old Trafford outfit and its fans can avoid this eternity of fiery damnation, Hargreaves argues,

is to replace their blasphemous crest for something, well, a bit less devilish. He suggests the Christian Cross or the Star of David but somehow we don't think that would go down well in the churches and synagogues of the world.

So FourFourTwo would like to offer our two pennies' worth by offering up an alternative insignia. And what could be more appropriate than that shining red beacon displayed each week on the face of United's very own saviour, Alex Ferguson.

