



▲ When the citizens of ancient Rome packed into the Circus Maximus, loyalties were divided between four teams of charioteers, the Reds, Whites, Greens or Blues.

Modern day Liverpool is divided in much the same way, albeit not as many outsiders might imagine.

True, the question most often asked when Liverpudlians first meet is this: 'Are you a Red, or a Blue?'

Yet the reason why they answer one way or another is often down to pure chance. Unlike in Glasgow, the choice has nothing to do with religion (though some historians have tried to make that assertion), and both teams have an equally strong fanbase in Ireland (although because of its European success, Liverpool has developed a larger following from further afield).

Certainly the part of the city from which you come has no real bearing, and not even family traditions are necessarily decisive. Many a Merseyside family is split, the most famous of which was the Moores. John Moores, founder of the Littlewoods Pools empire in the 1920s (see *Chapter Nine*), owned shares in both clubs before finally becoming Everton's chairman in



1960. Yet his nephew David would later be chairman of Liverpool.

Even in the aftermath of the big split of 1892, when John Houlding formed Liverpool in retaliation for Everton's members breaking away, the two clubs often shared resources. For example they printed a joint matchday programme until 1930, and both employed the same architect, Archibald Leitch.

But what makes the city's divide even more random is the fact that for the first 24 years of their existence Everton wore a variety of colours; first white, then black and white, then blue and white, then black with a wide scarlet sash. In fact when Everton played their first League match at Anfield in 1888 they were actually dubbed 'the Reds!' Next, at Goodison in 1892,

they adopted salmon pink and dark blue, before switching to ruby shirts with blue trim and dark blue shorts. For the first ever local derby in the League in 1894 – watched by a record 40,000 fans – Everton wore blue while Liverpool played in blue and white squares. Only in 1896 did Liverpool opt for red, and it would be another five years before Everton finally settled on blue.