

Part two: Playing football in the back garden

When his mum went out at 6pm, David often played football in the back garden. It was a small garden, ten paces by ten paces, but he was able to kick a ball around. He practiced keepy-uppies. His record was 347.

The day after the Liverpool-United game, David was playing the back garden, trying to do keepy-uppies with his feet and his head.

That's when it happened for the first time.

He kicked the ball high, then headed it, then kicked it again and then – losing control – it flew over the high fence and into the next garden.

David frowned. He'd lost his ball! His only ball! His life would be rubbish without a ball. And there no way he could get it back. He didn't know whose garden it was.

He was just about to start crying when, like a miracle, the ball came back, perfectly weighted to his feet.

David was startled. How had that happened?

He was so amazed – and so puzzled – that he kicked the ball back over the fence. Just too see what would happen next?

The answer came quickly. The ball was lofted back to him.

So he headed it over the fence again.

And it came back. Again.

This went on until it was dark, when David had to go in.

He shouted thank you to whoever had been kicking the ball to him. But no-one replied.

That night, as he went to sleep, David did not think about playing for United. His mind was too busy wondering who was on the other side of the fence. Was it another child? Or a man? It certainly couldn't be the old man's back garden. There was no way an old man would be able to play football like that.