



tant, incongruously exulted in his own demise by posing for the cameras before Big Ben as it chimed for nine o'clock. "What's the time? Nine past Haffey" became the joke of the day.

One distraught punter got the jail for wreaking his own bizarre personal vandalising revenge on a renowned Salvador Dali painting because it reminded him "o' yoan Haffey hingin' frae the bar." Wretched Frank ultimately found solace from persecution in a flight to Australia and a new life as a cabaret singer and radio disc-jockey. It was a one-way ticket.

Peter Bonetti, similarly ostracised after England's 3-2 World Cup defeat in Leon, Mexico, 1970 eventually sought assuaging refuge as a postman and hotelier on Islay.

It had been his seventh cap. Few cared to recall that in his previous six internationals England won the lot, and the Chelsea keeper conceded only one goal.

So next time you see a stoical Nick Colgan dipping into his copy of 'The Outsider' by Albert Camus, French existentialist, winner of the 1957 Nobel Prize for literature, you'll know he's seeking comforting consolation in philosophy. Camus was a goalie too. He could appreciate the lonely angst.

# Hampden hero Denis a Law unto himself

IT'S THE Season of Glad Tidings and Global Gongs: Pele and Maradona, Redgrave the Magnificent - and Denis. The Lawman himself, now officially canonised as Scotland's Greatest Ever Player at this month's Hampden Heroes Dinner. A far cry from the specky wee Aberdonian boy, son of a fishing trawler engineer, who first played for his school at left back in boots borrowed from the lad next door.

Bill Shankly first spotted that sublime, fiery talent, that explosively agile brain, that extraordinary gymnastic capacity,

that ruthless puma's pounce lurking within the seemingly fragile frame.

"He could dance on egg-shells", beamed mentor Shanks of his irrepressible, infectiously impudent protege, to whom he took to Huddersfield aged 16.

A scoring baptism for Scotland followed at 18 in 1958, the youngest Scot to have represented his country since 1899. A madcap year in Turin with ex-Hibee Joe Baker was then the prelude to a ten-year 236-goal reign at Old Trafford, King of the Stretford End, alongside

Crerand, Best and Charlton. Ignore the zany Transylvanian accent. As he stepped up exuberantly to receive his accolade, memory drifted readily back to that arm raised triumphantly aloft, No. 10 shirt fluttering around the wiry frame, the broad, cocky grin beneath the shock of blond hair.

It wasn't hard to fantasise that Denis could still, even yet, add to his 55 caps and 30 goals in dark blue. The audacious tartan D'Artagnan of the penalty box. Gloriously true to type, a Law unto himself.