

Hibs Fan Completes Charity Bike Ride from London to Edinburgh



Hibs' fan Hugh Cockburn has arrived back home in Sunderland after completing the 455 mile bike ride from London to Edinburgh. The money continues to flow in on behalf of the St Patrick's Branch of the Hibs Supporters Club's project to buy a suitable memorial to former manager Dan McMichael who is buried in an unmarked grave in the cemetery behind the Famous Five Stand.

57 year old Hugh cycled the route in only four days, setting off from Tower Bridge last Friday morning and arriving in Holyrood Park on Monday afternoon.

After completing the journey, Hugh kept going and cycled an extra mile to his beloved Easter Road where a sizeable group of fellow St Pat's members greeted him, along with Hibs' manager Pat Fenlon, who invited Hugh onto the hallowed turf for a photo shoot, and presented him with a signed football to mark his superb effort.

Hugh told The Edinburgh Reporter:- "It was fabulous, totally beyond what I expected. I knew that some of the St Pat's members intended to meet me at Easter Road, but I was over an hour late, so I thought that most would have left, but when I turned the corner and saw about thirty people cheering, it was very emotional.

"Mr Fenlon has also waited behind for me to arrive and the next thing I knew was that I was taken onto the pitch. I was like a kid in a sweet shop. I couldn't describe how it felt. It was right up there with the birth of my children. Totally

amazing, and I don't think it has sunk in yet.

"I was presented with a signed Hibs football, which has pride of place in the house, although my wife Dawn may have other ideas. When I got back, she had made a cake and a card to celebrate.



"It was hard going though, and on the second day, on the way to York, I seemed to be getting nowhere, and I could easily have given up, but the thought of the St Pat's lads and my family kept me going, so I gave my head a shake and kept peddling. Then the following day, about 40 miles south of Morpeth, I had three punctures and at that point, I could have loaded the bike into the support van, but again the thought of why I was doing it kept me going.

"Afterwards, I was taken to the Hibs Club, and everyone was very kind. One chap put a £20 note in my hand and told me to get a meal, but when I refused, he wouldn't take the money back. The club treasurer was also there and his phone kept pinging with people making pledges. I understand that two of Dan McMichael's great granddaughters have made sizeable donations, and although I don't know exactly how much has been raised, I know it is well over £1000."

Hibs boss Pat Fenlon said: "It was a phenomenal effort from Hugh – he really has gone the extra mile for a great cause. To cycle all the way from London to Edinburgh in four days and push on through the pain barrier is inspirational stuff. It was good to be part of it all and full credit to Hugh and the St Pat's branch for raising the funds."

Dan McMichael was the last Hibs manager to win the Scottish Cup. He was born in Ireland in 1865, and moved to Edinburgh in the mid-1890s, joining Hibs a few years later where he filled every role from secretary to treasurer, manager to physio. The highlight of his time at Easter Road was the 1-0 win over

Celtic in the 1902 Scottish Cup Final at Parkhead

Dan's Hibs then won the Glasgow Charity Cup beating Celtic 6-2 which meant that the Easter Road Trophy Room held four pieces of silverware, including the Rosebery Cup and the East of Scotland Cup. The following season Hibs won the League Title for the first time, finishing six points ahead of nearest rivals Dundee.

Dan's story ended tragically in 1919 when he was one of 100 million victims worldwide of Spanish flu possibly having picked up the infection working in the docks at Leith. He collapsed on his way home from Brockville on February 1, 1919, after a 1-1 draw with Falkirk.

Taken home to be with his wife, Jane, at 247 Easter Road, he was confined to bed, where he died peacefully five days later. His funeral was well attended and Hibs directors paid for a wreath in the shape of a broken harp, reflecting the Irish heritage of the manager and the club.

No stone was placed on the grave however, and the St Pat's Branch, with the help of Hugh aim to rectify the situation in the near future.

Fans can donate to the charity by visiting <http://www.hiberniansaintpatricks.co.uk/donate/>.

Images by James McGachie