

Hibs' fans emotional tribute to former manager Dan McMichael



Hundreds of Hibs' fans attended yesterday's rededication service for former Manager, Secretary and Treasurer Dan McMichael at the Easter Cemetery in the shadow of the Famous Five Stand.

The event was organised by members of the St Patrick's Branch of the Hibernian Supporters Association after it was discovered that Dan had been buried in an unmarked grave and a decision was quickly taken to rectify that situation.

Funds were raised and a suitable headstone was purchased to mark the resting place of the man who led Hibernian to their last Scottish Cup win in 1902.

Amongst those present were members of the McMichael family, club owner Sir Tom Farmer, Hibs' legend Pat Stanton, current manager Terry Butcher, Chairman Rod Petrie and directors, Bruce Langham, Amanda Jones, Brian Houston, Jamie Marwick, Garry O'Hagan and Colin McNeil.



Dougie McLeod, chairman of St Pat's, 'compered' the event and gave a brief history of Dan's involvement with the club, before handing over to club legend and branch patron Patrick Gordon Stanton who unveiled the impressive headstone before talking of his pride at being asked to do so.

Mike Riley, Hibernian Supporters Association Chair then made a speech on behalf of the Hibs' fans before Dan's grandson Anthony McMichael replied on behalf of the family.

'Tony,' told how Dan lived on a small flat at 287 Easter Road with his wife Jane, her brother James 'Judge' Murphy (So named because he wore a wig) who also played for Hibs and the couple's ten children so it was perhaps not surprising that he was happy to spend so much time at the club.

He then paid tribute to Hibs' fan Hugh Cockburn whose charity bike ride from London to Edinburgh last year had raised much of the funds needed to buy the headstone, and presented him with a framed portrait of his grandfather.

Tony also mentioned that although Dan had never been known to say a bad word about anyone, he did take delight in beating a certain team from Glasgow who also played in green as they were forever trying to poach his players.

Terry Butcher joked that he also took delight in beating the team in green from Glasgow, but insisted that he also wanted to beat the team in blue as well. He then said that now that he knew where to come, he would be visiting Dan's grave and asking him how he managed to win 'that cup'.

He also spoke of his pride at having been asked to speak at the event.



Club Chairman Rod Petrie then told how Dan had been in charge of Hibs for 598 number of matches and as Confucius said, 'a journey of 1000 miles begins with a single step' so therefore Terry Butcher only has 596 games to go to equal his record.

Rev Father John McFadden OMI – Parish Priest of St Mary's Star of the Sea (Dan's own Parish where he was a member of the Catholic Young Men's Society) then blessed the gravestone before Paul White played a piper's lament to end the emotional ceremony.

Everyone was then invited to the Pat Stanton Suite of the

Hibs' Supporters Club in Sunnyside for refreshments.

Afterwards a club spokesperson said: "The club are delighted that such a fitting memorial to Dan McMichael has been created. It's almost 100 years since he passed away, but he made a monumental contribution to Hibernian Football Club.

Full credit to the St Patrick's Branch for going the extra mile and showing true Hibernian spirit to make the headstone become a reality. We look forward to being part of the unveiling ceremony.

"Special thanks to Douglas McLeod, Gordon McKinley and everybody involved at the St Patrick's Branch for making the McMichael memorial happen and all-time great Pat Stanton, the descendant of our first ever captain Michael Whelahan, will unveil the gravestone."

The McMichael family were then invited to attend the game against Partick Thistle as guests of the club watched from the directors' box in the West Stand.

Dougie McLeod told the Edinburgh Reporter: "It's been absolutely fantastic. We couldn't have had a better day. Meeting the McMichael family has been superb.

"The idea to buy a headstone to mark the grave of Dan McMichael came from two members of the St Patrick's Branch of the Hibernian Supporters Club, Willie Wilson and Gordon McKinlay, who happened to meet in the graveyard one day.

"As usual, the conversation turned to Hibs and Willie knew that Dan was buried there, and Gordon was astonished to discover that there was no gravestone so right away we knew that this would be our next project.

"Member Hugh Cockburn galvanised the whole thing with his bike ride from London to Edinburgh and Big G (Gordon McKinley) kept it going and finally the funds were raised, but it's really

been a team effort.

"I would like to thank the whole of the St Pat's committee for their efforts, including Gordon McKinley, Stuart McLeod, Rory McLeod, Jamie Millar, Steven McPhillips, Alan Gallacher, Robert Devine, Ian McNeill and Tam McVay, and also make a particular mention to our patron Pat Stanton. When I phoned him to ask him if he would be available and willing unveil the stone, he agreed immediately as he always does to any request, and assured us he would be there.



Hugh Cockburn said: "It's been an unbelievable day. I travelled up this morning from Sunderland to attend the event and even had a text from a Hearts supporter friend wishing me well. I never for one minute thought I'd be mentioned in the speeches. When I volunteered to do the bike ride from London to Edinburgh to help raise money for this worthwhile cause, I only expected a few people to chip in some coppers, but the donations came in at a phenomenal rate. I'm not sure exactly how much was raised but someone mentioned it was around £1700.

"Today has also brought the McMichael family together, some of whom have never met each other before which is fantastic, and for Dan's grandson Tony to present me with a picture of the great man is overwhelming."

McMichael family friend Ian Anderson from Leith said: "It's been an absolutely fantastic day with excellent speeches which brought Dan McMichael to life. I was particularly impressed the social history mentioned by Dan's grandson Tony in his speech and Terry Butcher showed his passion and commitment to the Hibs' cause by his presence and kind words. It's been a tremendous occasion for the McMichael family. I also understand that Sir Tom farmer had to change his plans to attend the event which was very good of him to do.

Anthony McMichael said: "I would like to thank Dougie McLeod

and the members of the St Patrick's Branch of the Hibs Supporters Association for the way they organised today's event. It's been absolutely fantastic to get the family together. I had never met some of them before and others I hadn't seen for forty years.

"My father was the youngest of ten children and Dan died when he was only twelve, but there have always been a few Hibs stories in the family. My father was also called Tony and he used to have the Waverly Hotel in Bonnyrigg where there were photographs of the old Hibs teams in the bar.

"I was also delighted that Hibs legend Pat Stanton unveiled the headstone and that the manager Terry Butcher was able to attend and what a great speech he gave, with no notes. I am glad that my speech was before his as I couldn't have followed him.

In remembrance of the St Patrick's Branch member Steve Archibald 16/5/63 – 23/10/2013