

# 'Super' John McGinn had an eventful career at Hibs



After a summer of speculation, 'Super' John McGinn finally left Hibs and moved to Aston Villa for an undisclosed fee and the Edinburgh Reporter looks back at his short but impressive and eventful career at Easter Road.

Alan Stubbs signed the youngster from St Mirren for around £100,000 plus a sell on fee during the summer of 2015.

Then aged 20, McGinn was already a hero amongst the 'Buddies' fans due to his role in the club's 2015 League Cup final victory over Hearts.

At that time Hibs were in the Championship and McGinn's debut came in a 2-1 defeat at Dumbarton. His first goal arrived five weeks later in a 3-0 home victory over Alloa Athletic in front of just 7774 fans.

The Hibs' fans quickly took the youngster to their hearts and composed a song in his honour to the tune of 'Achy Breaky Heart' which was regularly belted out at Easter Road.

During that memorable season, McGinn scored four more times as he helped Hibs to a play-off place which unfortunately ended in a controversial defeat to Falkirk and his wonderful strike at Tynecastle in the League Cup semi-final against St Johnstone meant a trip to Hampden Park for the final against Ross County. A last minute goal from the 'Staggies' however meant that he left the national stadium with a runners-up medal.

The Scottish Cup was a different matter however and McGinn helped Hibs to a famous replay victory over city rivals Hearts after a 2-2 draw at Tynecastle.

On 21st May 2016 he returned to Hampden and played a significant part in the club's historic Scottish Cup victory over Rangers, ending a 114 year hoodoo in the competition.

His performances caught the eye of Scotland manager Gordon Strachan and he earned his first cap against Denmark in March 2016 when he played to whole 90-minutes and won the 'man of the match' award.

Neil Lennon replaced the Rotherham bound Alan Stubbs that summer and McGinn was a driving force as Hibs finally gained promotion at the third attempt. Another Scottish Cup run saw Hearts eliminated again in front of a packed Easter Road and the club were unlucky not to make the final after narrowly losing the semi to high flying Aberdeen.

His only season in the top flight with Hibs followed as did memorable victories over Hearts, Rangers and Celtic. His contribution to the club's record points haul and fourth place finish which meant European qualification was appreciated by the supporters and recognised by bigger teams.

His grandfather Jack McGinn was a previous chairman of Celtic and it looked likely that he would join his boyhood heroes, especially after scoring two fantastic long range goals in a 2-2 draw at Parkhead.

Celtic's manager Brendan Rodgers was known to be an admirer and with only one year left on his contract, a move along the M8 looked a certainty however the Celtic Board tried to take him on the cheap with a ridiculously low bid and Steve Bruce pounced and persuaded him to test his undoubted skills at Aston Villa.

His last appearance came in a 3-0 home victory over Motherwell at Easer Road and his late substitution was met with a well-deserved standing ovation from the Hibs' fans in the 17,494 crowd, an increase in almost 10,000 from his debut.

After signing for Villa, following in the footsteps of Hibs' legends Alex Cropley who helped the club to a League Cup victory over Everton and Des Bremner who won a league title and European Cup in the claret and blue, McGinn said: "I'm proud to join a fantastic football club and I'm really looking forward to getting started. I was at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival when I got the phone call so I jumped on a flight and had a look around the place and met the manager (Steve Bruce) and the coaching staff. There was a real good feeling about the place.

"When I sat in the stand at Villa Park and I could picture myself playing in such a brilliant stadium and the fans are so passionate. The facilities here are second to none.

"The manager made me feel really welcome and I think I can have a good relationship with him. I've been lucky to have worked with some great managers such as Alan Stubbs, Gordon Strachan and Neil Lennon."