

100th anniversary of Hibs Legend's death



Today marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Hibernian legend Dan McMichael who led the club to the 1902 Scottish Cup and the 1903 Scottish League title.

Born in Ireland in 1865, Dan was a ship's carpenter to trade. He moved to Edinburgh in the mid-1890s where lived with his brother-in-law, James 'Judge' Murphy.

Although he had never played professional football, Dan had been a renowned sprinter in his younger day. Described as a 'tall, serious-looking man with a bushy moustache who was never known to speak harshly or ungenerously to anyone,

Dan joined Hibs a few years later and filled every role from secretary to treasurer, manager to physio, with the highlight being that 1-0 win over Celtic in the 1902 Scottish Cup Final which Dan sportingly agreed would be played at Parkhead following a disaster at Ibrox which claimed the lives of 18 supporters at a Scotland v England game a few weeks previously.

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 became club secretary for a short spell, but returned to lead the club for a further 15 years, after his replacement Phil Kelso left to join Arsenal.

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 their house at 187 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.

A few years ago, many Hibernian supporters were saddened to discover that Dan was buried in an unmarked grave in the Eastern Cemetery behind the Famous Five Stand.

Funds were raised by the St Patrick's Branch of the Hibernian Supporters Club and a suitable headstone was purchased to mark Dan's final resting place. Among the fundraisers was Hugh Cockburn pictured above who completed a lengthy cycle ride.

Amongst those present at a Rededication Service held on 8 December 2013 were members of the McMichael family, club owner Sir Tom Farmer, Hibs' legend Pat Stanton, then manager Terry Butcher, Chairman Rod Petrie and directors, Bruce Langham, Amanda Jones, Brian Houston, Jamie Marwick, Garry O'Hagan and Colin McNeil.