

Tributes pour in for former Hibs' star John Ogilvie

Tributes have been pouring in for former Hibs and Leicester City player John Ogilvie who sadly passed away this week aged 91.

Older supporters still recall his ability however his entertaining contribution in the excellent BBC Alba documentary about the Famous Five introduced him to a whole new generation of fans.

John joined Hibs from Thornliewood United and played for the club in their most successful era when three league trophies were won.



He made his League debut aged 20 against Queen of the South on Christmas Day 1948 then subsequently came to prominence in the latter part of the following season.

John was a joiner to trade and was popular with his teammates for his singing talent and quick wit as well as his swift tackling and no-nonsense approach however injuries limited his appearances for the club to 56.

He played in the 1951 League Cup Final against his hometown club Motherwell but an injury ravaged Hibernian side lost 3-0 to the Steelmen having only weeks before beaten them 6-2 at Fir Park.

Later that year in the Scottish Cup semi-final at Tynecastle against Motherwell, watched by an enormous crowd of 46,000, he suffered a transverse fracture of his leg following a fearless challenge which prevented Jimmy Watson scoring.

Willie Ormond also suffered ligament damage in the second half so Hibs effectively played with nine men and the game ended 3-2 to Motherwell although Gordon Smith had a 'goal' controversially disallowed with five minutes remaining.

That result was even more upsetting considering the Hibs had beaten the mighty Rangers 3-2 at Ibrox en-route to the semi-final and were considered favourites to complete the double.

By this time, John was a first team regular, having made the left back position his own, playing the best football of his career, and the day after the semi-final, Hugh Shaw visited him in the Western General Hospital to give him a new contract.

John would be out of the game for over a year and ironically spent much of his recuperation using Motherwell's swimming baths.

He only played one more game for the club however, a 2-2 draw with Rangers before Hibernian granted him a free transfer and in September 1955 he joined Leicester City for whom he made 85 appearances between 1955 and 1960. He was a key figure at Filbert Street during that time – including as an ever-present in the team that won

promotion back to the top-flight as Second Division champions in 1957 where he formed a defensive partnerships with Northern Ireland international Willie Cunningham and later with Stan Milburn.

John helped the Foxes consolidate their top-flight status in the following seasons, while cementing a reputation as the chief dressing room joker and one of the most popular figures at the Football Club. He scored his second and last goal for the Foxes from the penalty spot against Portsmouth in his final game for the Club – helping the team avoid relegation in the process.

Following his time with Leicester City, Ogilvie moved to Mansfield Town in January of 1960, before a spell with Bedworth Town two years later from October 1962, after which he returned to Leicester to work in the knitwear and printing trades.

While in Leicester, he would also stay involved with football through Club Ambassador Alan Birchenall's charity teams as well as achieving a Preliminary FA Coaching Badge in 1975.

The club was pleased to welcome John as a regular guest to King Power Stadium in recent years at home matches – visits that included a presentation of an 'Ogilvie 90' shirt to mark his 90th birthday on 27 October, 2018.

Former team-mate at Leicester and Scotland international Frank McLintock told the Edinburgh Reporter: " I remember John well from our time at

Leicester City. He was a great character and the life and soul of that team and a great singer. He was always the joker of the pack and when I think back on my career in the game and the players I have played with and against I often think about John.

“He was like the captain of our team, even when he wasn’t playing he never felt sorry for himself and always carried on as normal.

“When I arrived at Filbert Street as a 17-year-old there were about 40 Scotsmen at the club as players and staff and we all got on well.

I used to see John at Leicester games and he was always shouting for the team.

I was so sorry to hear that he had died and would like to offer my condolences to his friends and family.”

Close friend and former Hibs and Leicester city star Davie Gibson told the Edinburgh Reporter: “I was sad to hear that my good friend .John had passed away. He left Hibs just before I joined then left Leicester just before I moved there but I got to know him well after he retired from football.

“We were part of the ‘Alan Birchenall Geriatrics’ side that used to play charity games although John was invited along because he was such good company and had a million stories. His party piece was singing ‘Dark Lochnagar’ and he had a tremendous voice. I used to see him regularly at Leicester games and we reminisced about great players we had played with and against over the years such as Stanley Matthews, Tom Finney and his favourite the great Duncan Edwards who was killed in the Munich Air disaster.

“Sadly due to the Corona Virus I won’t be able to go to his funeral but I would like to send my condolences to his wife Doreen and his family.”

A statement on the Hibernian website read: “Everyone at Easter Road was saddened to learn of the passing of former Hibe John Ogilvie.

“John featured alongside the Famous Five, in a team that captured the imagination of those who saw them play.

“Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this difficult time.”

A statement on the Foxes’ website reads: “Leicester City Football Club is deeply saddened to learn of the death of former player John Ogilvie, who passed away at the Leicester Royal Infirmary on Saturday at the age of 91.

“The thoughts of everybody at Leicester City Football Club are with John’s family and friends at this difficult time.”