

Former Hibs' player Willie Hunter dies aged 80

Former Hibs and Motherwell and Scotland player Willie Hunter has died aged 80.

He joined Motherwell from Edinburgh Norton in 1957 and became part of the famous side that became known as the 'Ancell Babes,' playing inside left, and his performances at Fir Park earned him three caps for the Scotland national team scoring his only goal in his first cap in a 3-3 draw with Hungary. He also played in defeats to Turkey and Wales.

In May 1967, the Detroit Cougars paid £14,000 for his transfer and Willie moved to the new American professional league, the NASL, where he spent one season before Hibs' manager Bob Shankly persuaded him to move to Easter Road.



Joe McBride, Willie Hunter and Pat Quinn

Willie made his debut on February 1 1969, in a 2-1 win over Clyde at Easter Road alongside Pat Stanton, Jimmy O'Rourke, Peter Marinello, Joe McBride, Peter Cormack and Eric Stevenson, and scored his first goal for the club a month later in a 3-4 defeat away to Morton.

Before the end of the season, Willie had played in six games, but competition for places meant that he was only able to start four times in the following campaign, although he was a substitute in the Scottish League Cup Final defeat to Celtic.

Also playing in that game was his friend and team mate both at Motherwell and Hibs, Pat Quinn who also passed away last month.

Willie also represented Hibs in the Inter Cities Fairs Cup second round second leg against Portuguese team Vitoria Guimareas, which the Easter Road side won on aggregate.

After leaving Hibs, Willie spent four years playing in South Africa, before returning to Motherwell as former team-mate Ian St-John's assistant manager, a role he held for three years.

He later had a short spell as manager of Queen of the South and Inverness Caledonian.

The 80-year-old has been a long term supporter of the work done by the Football Memories Project and regularly visited and spent time with former players suffering from dementia, an illness that he firmly believed can be attributed to regularly heading the older heavy footballs used in the past.

The Edinburgh Reporter sends our condolences to Willie's friends and family.