

HISTORY LESSONS

Researcher and historian Dr TOSH WARWICK uncovers treasures from Middlesbrough Football Club's past. This issue: the Brian Clough statue in Albert Park...

Born on 21 March 1935 in Grove Hill, Middlesbrough, Brian Clough was one of the town's most celebrated sons who excelled on the pitch in the North East and on the touchline in the East Midlands.

In his first full season in the Boro first team the promising young forward hit an incredible 38 goals in 41 league matches, before going on to top the club's goalscoring charts for five seasons hitting 40 goals on a regular basis.

In all, during a Boro spell spanning 213 league games, Clough scored 197 league goals to become the third top scorer in Middlesbrough FC's history – with an overall total of 204 goals in all competitions.

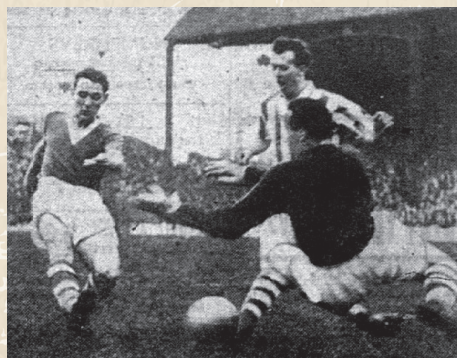
During his days at Ayresome Park, the confident and opinionated Clough excelled in attack – but often found himself at odds with teammates and club officials as the side leaked goals and missed out on promotion. By 1961, Cloughie's time at Boro was up as he moved to local rivals Sunderland.

He continued his striking success at Roker Park before injury cruelly brought an end to his playing career. A move into management followed with Hartlepool United before he

moved to Derby County and transformed the Rams from a second-tier outfit to First Division champions. Later, he repeated the feat with rivals Nottingham Forest and led the City Ground side to two European Cups, four League Cups and numerous other club and personal awards as he proved himself to be in the self-acclaimed "top one" of managers!

Following Clough's death in 2004, moves were soon under way in Middlesbrough to commemorate "Old Big 'Ead". These were led by the Brian Clough Memorial Fund set up by councillor John McPartland and supported by Middlesbrough Council, the local community and fans around the world. Fundraising efforts included sponsored bungee jumps from the iconic Tees Transporter Bridge, music gigs and the Heritage Lottery Fund support.

In 2007 on an emotional day at Albert Park the football great's widow, Barbara, assisted by local schoolchildren unveiled the statue by Vivien Mallock depicting Clough, aged in his early 20s, walking through the park, complete with football boots over his shoulder. As sports statue historian Dr Chris Stride has noted, the statue is unusual in not adopting the more



Above: Brian Clough in Christmas Day action.

typical pose for a footballer – playing, lifting a trophy or celebrating a goal.

A delve into the archives and Clough's own autobiography reveals the deep-rooted context of the statue's Albert Park home. In fact, the statue is shaped by and located in the world that Cloughie knew – a short distance from his Grove Hill home, the site of Ayresome Park and the location of the building that housed Rea's Café where he met his wife Barbara.

As Clough recalled in a 1990 interview: "When I worked at Middlesbrough Football Club as a player I used to walk through Albert Park. And there was Rea's Café at the corner of Ayresome Street where we used to go for a milkshake after training, or an ice cream or whatever we could afford. But mainly we just used to sit there because we had nowt. I met Barbara in Rea's Café and it was the best thing I ever did in my life – was I lucky."

As well as following in the footsteps of the great man, his autobiography *Cloughie: Walking On Water* reveals further connections to Albert Park predating his Boro days. In fact, Albert Park was where Clough spent much of his childhood, and also formed the backdrop to skipping school...

"I vividly remember a scary feeling inside when I decided to do a bunk and spend the afternoon in Albert Park, tadpoling in the stream. I fell in. I was terrified of Mam and Dad finding out... but somehow I managed to talk my way out of trouble and they never discovered the truth."

Although Clough's statue has suffered some mishaps and required some restoration – the statue is currently awaiting repair work – it remains a proud link to the star's connections to Albert Park and Middlesbrough.



Above: Brian Clough's statue in Albert Park.

Last year, a new interactive "From Ayresome Park to the Riverside" Huntlee Heritage Trail was developed, including a stop at Clough's statue. More info: www.mfc.co.uk/news/discover-middlesbrough-from-ayresome-park-to-the-riverside

DR TOSH WARWICK

Dr Tosh Warwick is a Middlesbrough-born historian and heritage consultant at Heritage Unlocked. He established Heritage Unlocked in 2018 and has worked on heritage projects with a number of local and international organisations. He has appeared as expert contributor for BBC Television (Match Of The Day 2, Great British Railway Journeys), BBC Radio (Leeds, Sheffield, Teesside) and the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. He has authored a number of books including *Memories Of Middlesbrough In The 1970s And 1980s* and *Memories Of Stockton In The 1970s And 1980s* and is currently writing a biography of Boro and England goalscoring legend George Camsell. Visit www.heritageunlocked.com

