

No.22 Walter Edward 'Tod' Bowen

Tod was born in Hednesford in 1891 and had developed into a lean, fair-haired six footer by the time he joined Hednesford Town in 1909.

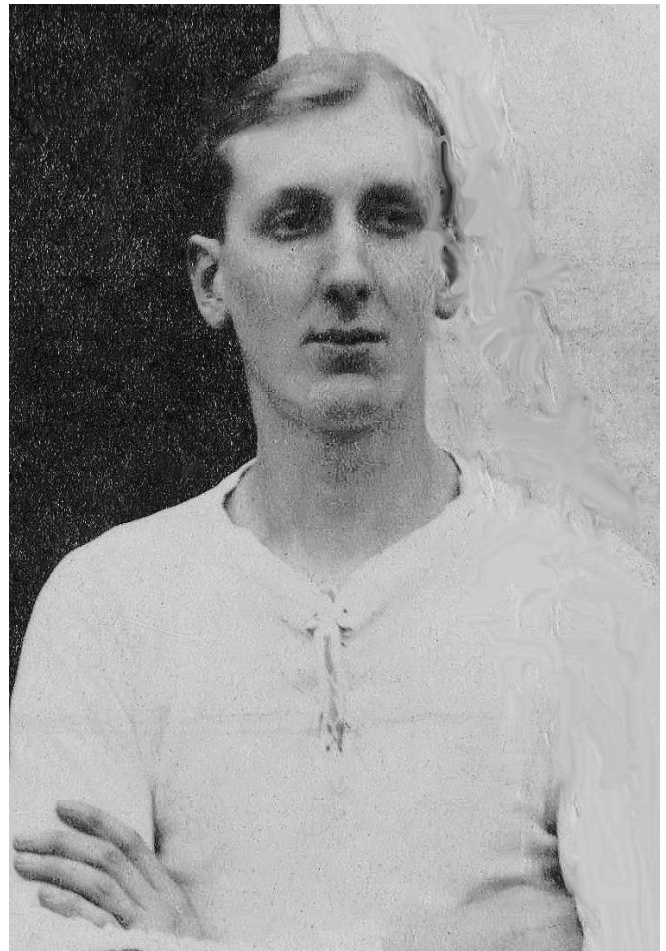
Centre-half Tod made his way to West Bromwich Albion, via Nuneaton in 1914, to make his debut, deputising for the long-serving Sid Bowser, away at Liverpool in front of a 16,000 gate, 24 March 1915. The 2-1 defeat would be a bitter disappointment.

That was his one and only game at Albion for, at the end of that season WWI intervened and the Football League programme was closed down for the next five years.

During those turbulent times Tod was captain of the Hednesford Colliers team which was based at our old Cross Keys ground.

The 'Colliers' were one of the star teams in the Birmingham Works League for the period 1915-19 and kept the flag flying with at least a few hours of normality. They carried off the Ansell's Shield and were runners-up in the Dewar Shield and the Black and White Cup; the local coalmines of the area supplied the players, who were either Football League players back on the Chase and on leave from their clubs, or young lads destined for a much higher grade of football.

Tod's best years lost, he returned to Hednesford Town when the Football League programme began again in 1919 and later played for Stamford Town. He died in 1944, almost at the end of yet another World War.



The West Bromwich Albion squad before the start of the 1914-15 season. Tod Bowen is the tall lad standing in the back row. Former Hednesford team-mate Jack Nicholls is the player far left one row down.