

No.35 Samuel Edward Bowen

Few more consistent defenders have over the years moved into league football from Hednesford than fullback Teddy Bowen

Teddy was born in Hednesford, 17 November 1903, spending his early years (along with his lifelong friend Alec Talbot) at West Hill school under the inspiration of Mr. Philip Foster a sports master who, over many years, discovered and coached a whole host of future stars.

Teddy first joined Hednesford Town in August 1918, moving to Hednesford Prims soon afterwards (in a line-up including Harold Shaw, Alec Talbot and Teddy himself – a trio which was destined to make over 700 football league appearances) but teaming up again with the Town in 1921.

During May 1923 Alec signed for Aston Villa, Teddy joined him the following August, making his debut in the 1923-24 season. Harold joined Wolves about the same time.

In his 11 years at Villa Park, Teddy had the remarkable record of playing for either the first team or the reserves every match-day during the whole of his time at the club and contemporary reports indicate that he gave the same hundred per cent effort in Central League games as he did in the Football League.

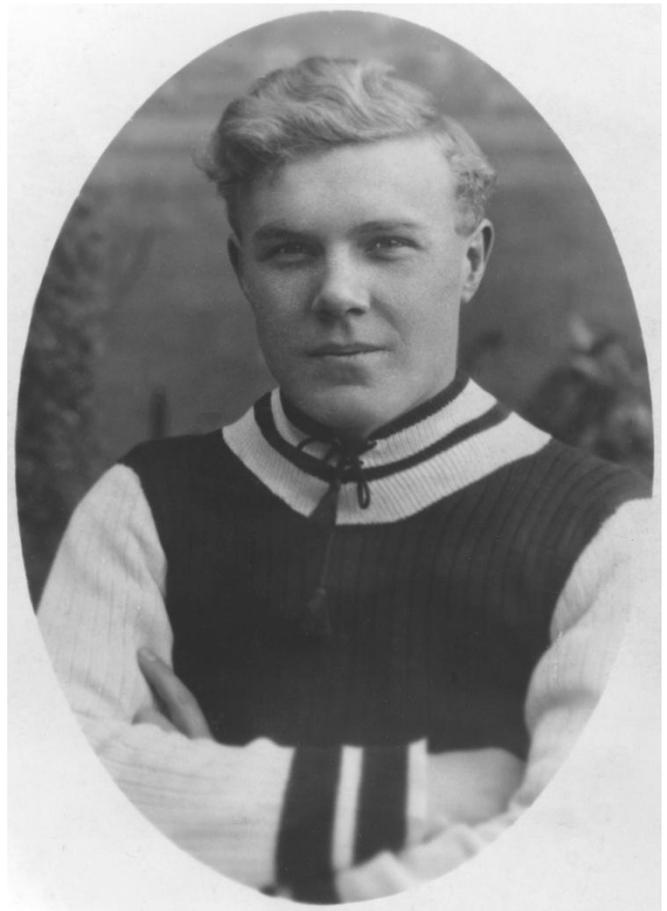
Though he was heavily built, Villa programmes of the time speak of him as 'speedy and a capital tackler' and refer to his 'steady and clever play' and as being 'dainty, gentle, efficient and canny'; he won a Central League Championship medal in 1929-30.

Teddy played 191 First Division games for Villa (it would have been decidedly more if Mort and Smart hadn't been around) and made 12 FA Cup appearances before, in October 1934, he moved to Norwich City, who had just won a Second Division place for the first time.

During this time, he went out of his way to visit Hednesford mate Jackie Maund, then at Villa Park, when Jack was taken into a Norwich hospital with appendicitis.

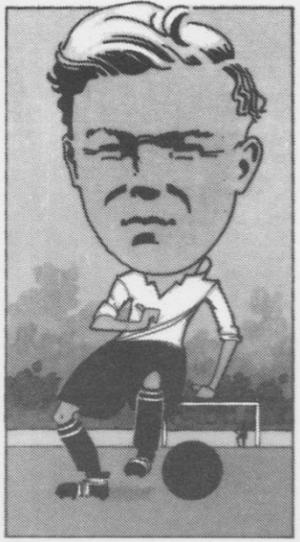
In the course of the next four seasons, Teddy scored two goals in his 129 league and 10 FA Cup games for Norwich, being an ever-present in 1934-35; finally, with his football days almost over, he became a Torquay United player until his retirement from the game in 1938.

He had spells on the scouting staff of both Norwich and Villa. One of his recommendations to Villa being former Hednesford and Villa player, and Everton manager, Gordon Lee. From 1947 until his retirement, Teddy worked for the Hednesford & District Social Services Department. He died in Stafford in 1981.



The 1920 Hednesford Prims Church & chapel team. Three of the players in the back row are Alec Talbot, second left; Teddy Bowen, fourth left and Harold Shaw, far right. Also included: Frank Birch, centre of front row (he went on to play for West Brom).

From the Dave Shaw archive.



From a set of 24 by Dave Shaw