

No 52 George H. Handley

George was a dashing forward and a natural goal-scorer, playing mainly as an inside-forward but he was equally at home in the centre-forward position.

The future schoolboy international, who also loved swimming and photography, was born in Wednesbury in 1913 and joined Hednesford Town in September 1931, making his debut for us against Stourbridge in a 3-1 home victory, 24 October, that same year.

Hednesford were performing in the very strong Birmingham League, which housed the reserve teams of all the major midland clubs: Villa, Albion, Wolves, etc., who obviously had an early look at new, young talent.

The 5'8" 11st 4lb 'livewire', who scored goals in bunches, came to the attention of Albion during his first season, their interest was rewarded when he signed for them in the summer of 1932.

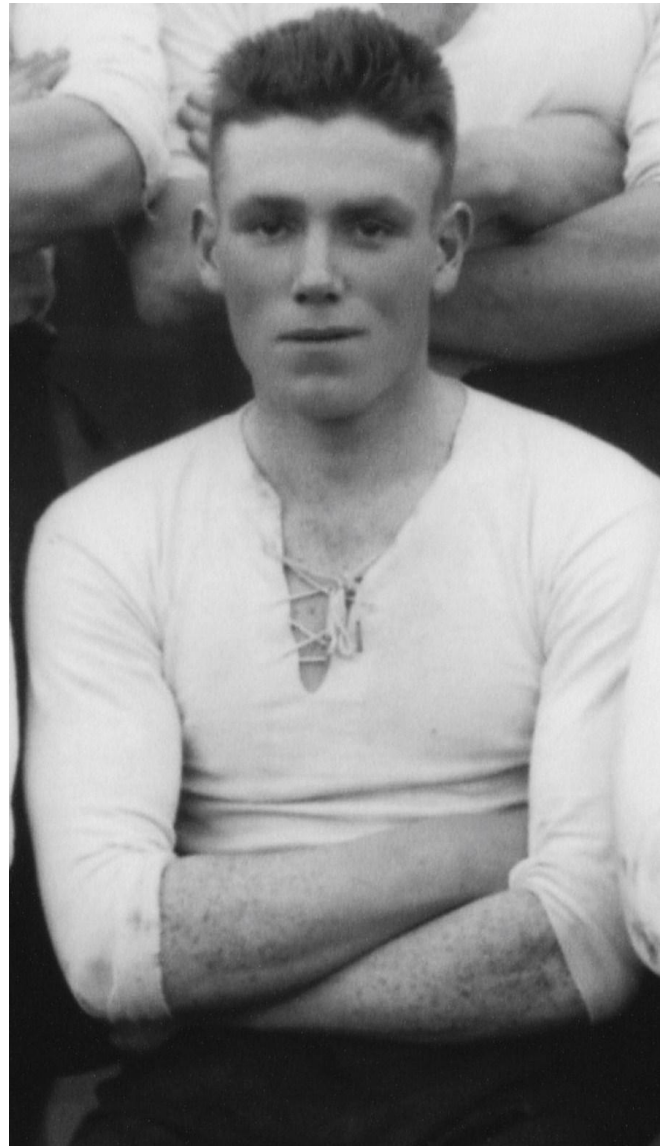
In his debut for the Baggies' reserves, against Wolves' reserves, George scored two goals and was reported as being 'a bundle of energy', a trend which had seen him star for Hednesford and one which continued with his new club.

He scored five goals during one game in January 1934 and four in a game two months later. Just to show it was no fluke, George hit another five in one game before the end of the season. That show brought him a junior international cap, operating at centre-forward.

George was top of the Albion's scoring list but, with the club gaining promotion to the country's top division and also winning the FA Cup, they were reluctant to change a strong winning side and he was not given a chance in the senior team.

At the end of the 1933-34 season, Third Division South's Crystal Palace took George south where he played only five games before being shipped-out to Brierley Hill Alliance in 1935 and later to Darlaston until the outbreak of WWII.

Lance-Corporal George Handley was 'killed in action' in Sicily, 9 June 1943.



George seated second from the left with his Hednesford Town team-mates in the 1931-32 season.