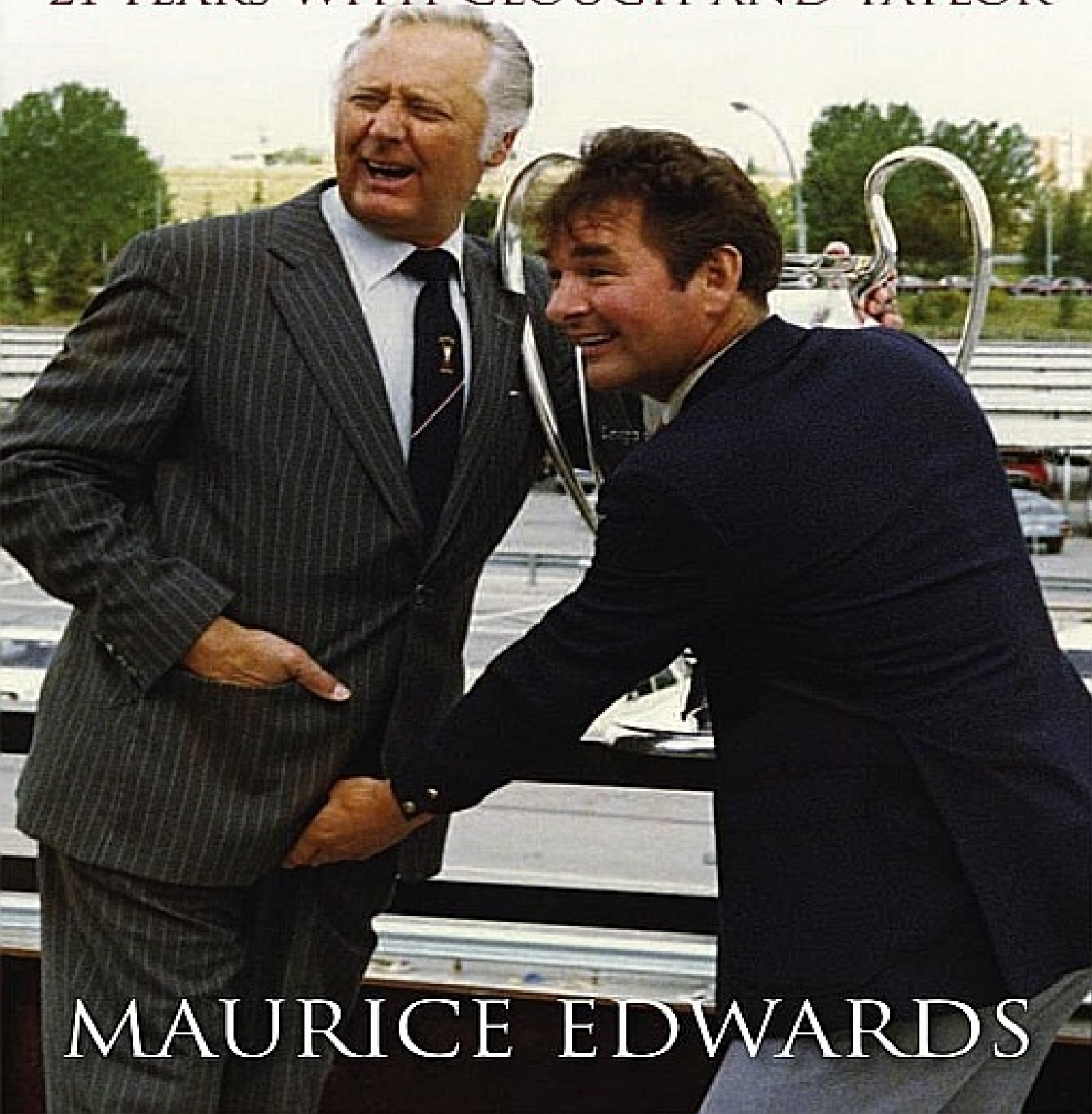


# BRIAN AND PETER A RIGHT PAIR

21 YEARS WITH CLOUGH AND TAYLOR



MAURICE EDWARDS

# **Brian and Peter A Right Pair**

## **21 years with Clough and Taylor Maurice Edwards**

When Peter Taylor joined Burton Albion in 1962, it changed Maurice Edwards's life for ever. The two became firm friends. When Peter introduced Maurice to his great friend Brian Clough, shortly after the pair of them had taken up their first managerial appointment at Hartlepool United, an association was formed that was to endure for over 20 years.

The achievements of the Clough-Taylor partnership are well known. But the stories that Maurice Edwards has to tell, of life behind the scenes at each of the clubs they worked for, have remained untold until now. As referee, scout and trusted friend, Maurice was privy to many of Taylor and Clough's dealings with clubs, managers and individual players, and is uniquely placed to reveal the details of what made their relationship so special, and so successful.

Here are the stories of how the major signings of Clough and Taylor's careers were made, from Trevor Francis, the first £1 million player, to Peter Shilton, a goalkeeper Taylor had admired for years. Then there are the ones that got away, Kevin Keegan and Alan Hansen among them. Peter and Brian worked as a team: Peter the supreme judge of players and team dynamics, Brian the charismatic front man at ease with everyone from tea ladies to directors.

This absorbing personal memoir of a life in football sheds new light on the years that Peter and Brian spent working together and is sure to appeal to fans of all clubs.

Maurice Edwards was born in Burton upon Trent in February 1927, and from the age of 11 his time when not at school was spent helping his mother in his parents' pub. Upon the outbreak of World War Two, Maurice volunteered to join the Royal Navy and, following promotion, spent his three-year career aboard an Aircraft Carrier attached to the British Pacific Fleet in the Far East, later joining the Royal Navy Football Squad.

After the war Maurice's involvement in football took a remarkable turn. After his burgeoning football career was halted by injury, he became a local referee and formed a friendship with Peter Taylor, who then paired up with the

inimitable Brian Clough. So began a remarkable relationship within the game, with Maurice following the pair to all their various clubs in the role of Chief Scout.

Now in his 80s, Maurice continues to work alongside some of football's great personalities, after over 50 years in the game.

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# Foreword

No one is better qualified to write a book about Brian Clough and Peter Taylor than Maurice Edwards. They both trusted Maurice as managers and took him to their various clubs, and he has had an insight into both their football and private lives. Maurice was their chief scout through the highs and lows of Derby, Brighton, Leeds United and Nottingham Forest. No one in football knew Brian and Peter better.

Like me, you will enjoy the inside track on the many stories and situations involving this brilliant pair. The fascination about the Clough and Taylor partnership, Brian's larger-than-life outspoken personality and the incredible successes at Derby and Forest ensures their names will live on in the fables of football history. But just when you think there is no more to discover, along comes this book from Maurice.

Brian, as manager, was the public face. His TV interviews were always unpredictable; he was literally a show-stopper. Football grounds hosted packed, noisy match-day social clubs in those days, but when Brian suddenly appeared on the lunchtime TV football programme it all went quiet. You could have heard a pin drop. He understood the media; he knew how to make the headlines. Peter was the quieter one in public. But they were a partnership. Peter was both the talent spotter and the calming influence.

Brian and Peter fell out with each other in the end; however, it never worked out for either of them on their own. It was a shame but it should never take the shine and wonderful memories off their tremendous rollercoaster ride together through football: the titles, the Cups and the back-to-back European Cup triumphs.

It is scandalous that we have to say 'they were the best that England never had'. I will always believe England could have won the World Cup under Clough and Taylor. That is to take nothing away from the likes of Sir Bobby Robson, however. It is just that I always believed together they could achieve anything.

I miss them both in football and in life. Brian was always good to me. His lovely wife Barbara kindly tells me that Brian was always very fond of me. The feeling was mutual. I felt privileged when Barbara asked me to do the public compèring for the unveiling of Brian's statue in Nottingham.

Peter, like Brian, was a great family man. I worked with his son-in-law John Dickinson, a TV producer, for many years and got to learn a lot about Peter. He would be a good card-marker and contributed to the wit that was in abundance in their company.

Peter brought Maurice into football in their Burton upon Trent days. Not so much has been written before about Peter. Maurice restores that balance. He is the third man with, as he rightly describes it, 'A right pair'.

**Gary Newbon,  
December 2009**

# Timeline

## **Burton Albion**

1962

*Peter Taylor signed as goalkeeper in the Southern League.*

1963–64

*Appointed manager, finished in eighth position.*

1964–65

*Won Southern League Cup.*

## **Hartlepoons United**

1965–66

*Joined manager Brian Clough, finished 18th position, Division Four.*

1966–67

*Finished fourth position, Division Four.*

## **Derby County**

1967–68

*Brian appointed manager, Peter appointed assistant manager.*

1968–69

*Division Two Champions.*

1969–70

*Finished fourth position, Division One.*

1970

*Watney Cup winners (beat Manchester United 4–1).*

1970–71

*Finished ninth position, Division One.*

1971–72

*Won Texaco Cup (26 April), Division One Champions.*

1972–73

*European Cup semi-finalists (lost to Juventus), finished seventh position Division One.*

1973–74

*Beat Manchester United away 1–0 (13 October), Brian and Peter resigned following week.*

## **Brighton and Hove Albion**

1973–74

*Brian appointed manager, Peter appointed assistant manager, finished 19th position, Division Three.*

1974–75

*Finished 16th position, Division Three.*

1975–76

*Peter appointed manager, finished fourth position, Division Three.*

## **Leeds United**

1975

*Don Revie appointed England manager, Brian appointed Leeds manager, sacked after 44 days.*

## **Nottingham Forest**

1975

*Brian appointed manager (January), finished 16th position, Division Two.*

1975–76

*Finished eighth position Division Two.*

1976–77

*Peter appointed assistant manager, won Anglo-Scottish Cup.*

1977–78

*Won League Cup at Wembley, Division One Champions.*

1978–79

*Won Charity Shield at Wembley, won League Cup at Wembley, runners-up (to Liverpool) in Division One, won European Cup in Munich.*

1979–80

*Won League Cup at Wembley, won European Cup in Madrid, won Super Cup in Barcelona, finished fifth position, Division One.*

1980–81

*Super Cup Finalists (lost to Valencia on away goals), Intercontinental Cup Finalists in Tokyo (lost to Nacional Montevideo), finished in seventh position, Division One.*

1981–82

*Finished in 12th position, Division One.*



1982–83

*Finished in fifth position, Division One, Peter retires through ill-health.*

### **Derby County**

1982–83

*Peter Taylor appointed manager (November), finished 13th position, Division Two.*

1983–84

*Severe financial troubles, Peter retires through ill-health (April), relegated to Division Three after finishing 20th position, Division Two.*

# Preface

## *How it all began*

I have often been approached by sports journalists with national newspapers for stories of my 21 years (1963–84) working with Peter Taylor and Brian Clough as part of their very successful management team.

I have put Peter and Brian's names in that order because it was Peter's arrival at Burton Albion that started it all. From Peter's conversations, I soon realised what a close friend of his Brian Clough was, from their playing days together at Middlesbrough. Peter talked about Brian as a prolific scorer of goals and bemoaned the loss to the game after his unfortunate collision with the Bury goalkeeper on Boxing Day in 1962, while playing for Sunderland. That season he had scored 28 goals in 28 appearances. His goalscoring record is there for all to see: in eight seasons (1955–63) playing in League Division Two and Cup, he made 293 appearances scoring 266 goals, a strike rate of 90 per cent. I would have liked to have seen him play, but I was refereeing on most of the match days. After two years on the injured list at Sunderland, who were by then in the First Division, he attempted to resume his career, but after only three games he had to call it a day. Brian told me that he had tremendous respect for Alan Brown, the Sunderland manager, for his patience and giving him the chance to play again.

I was introduced to Brian when he and Peter were in charge together at Hartlepoons United. I fully appreciate how fortunate I was to have been taken on board by these two football geniuses. I never imagined that I would meet and work with so many different well-known personalities, and be able to enhance their careers, allowing them in many cases to go on to win trophies and become household names. With Peter and Brian my life took off in a completely different direction to what I had anticipated.

I was to be the only person to work with Brian and Peter at all the League clubs that they managed together: Hartlepoons United, Derby County, Brighton and Hove Albion, Leeds United and Nottingham Forest. I also worked again at Derby County with Peter on his own.

Although I had been in professional football since 1951, at the beginning I knew of them only through what I had read in the national press. I had not seen either of them play as I was involved in football myself on match days. I was,

however, able to see one or two Division One matches in midweek after floodlighting had been introduced.

As Peter and Brian have now both passed away, far too early, I have decided to put pen to paper to record my memories of them, among which there are many stories that have not been told before.

Once I got to know Peter and Brian really well, I realised that they were two quite different people. I have heard it said many times that two complete opposites can make a great team. Their aim in football was exactly the same – to be highly successful – and there is no doubt that they achieved this. Together they could solve most problems and resolve difficult situations, making sound decisions that were promptly carried out. When Brian and Peter were working in football management separately each of them achieved only partial success at the top level. The manager is only as good as his immediate staff in this wonderful game, and this pair had a tremendous belief in each other. Their different temperaments meant that they were not always on the same wavelength and arguments, even serious ones, did ensue, but they listened to one another and always steered their way out of trouble. On occasion when there was a serious difference of opinion, with neither man prepared to give way, Peter would leave the ground to cool off, ring me to pour out the trouble, then either ring Brian from home or leave it until the next morning. At Derby these spats were usually resolved within 24 hours.

Where one fell short in running a successful Football League side, the other excelled. Brian's leadership was excellent and his handling of playing staff was exceptional. He got the best out of them, and whatever problems arose, no matter how serious or upsetting, he could handle it and sort things out before the situation worsened. Peter had a natural footballing brain and was a keen judge of players' ability and potential. He had a vital role in the recruitment of players. The two men shared the same vision of how the game should be played, and together they achieved many outstanding successes.

Peter Taylor was born in Nottingham on 2 July 1928. I was 17 months his senior. His football career started off at Nottingham Forest as a teenage goalkeeper. Harry Storer, manager of Coventry City, signed him in 1950, part-time, until he had completed his apprenticeship in the building trade. Coventry were then playing in Division Two of the Football League, but were relegated to Division Three South in 1952. After making 86 appearances Peter was transferred to Middlesbrough in 1955, playing in Division Two as goalkeeper cover for Bob Dennison, their manager. He made 140 appearances before leaving in 1959. During this time Peter had become the best of friends with Brian Clough. Jimmy Gordon was then coaching at Middlesbrough and was later

to become an integral part of the Brian and Peter team.

Having spent time with Peter I discovered that he was a highly nervous character and impetuous. When he decided on a course of action it had to be carried out straight away. He was a very heavy smoker when I first knew him, but I think he used to chew more cigarettes than smoke them. He never enjoyed the crowds and the celebrity of football, and he was at his best remaining in the background. Peter liked a bet on football and horse racing and would enjoy an afternoon at the races, but he always kept away from the crowd. At horse race meetings celebrities recognised by the public are rarely pestered as the horses and bookmakers take pride of place. Peter was never very willing to discuss football with people not actually in the game. He had no interest in their opinions, and he was serious about his own view of how the game should be played.

Harry Storer was Peter's great mentor. Harry spent 30 years managing in the Football League, twice with Coventry City and also with Birmingham City and Derby County. Peter always said that Harry knew more about the game than anyone else he had ever met, and the two men spent hours talking football. While playing with Middlesbrough Peter introduced Brian to Harry. I never had the opportunity to speak to Harry, and he passed away shortly before Brian and Peter were appointed at Derby County.

Many of the club directors that Brian and Peter worked for did not appreciate how much input Peter had to the partnership, but he preferred it that way. Much of his work was done away from the home ground. Several times questions were asked about Peter's role, but he declined to give details of the hours that were spent on fruitless scouting journeys which went largely unrecorded. It was important that his missions were kept close to his chest, as scouting and signings are sensitive operations. It is a complete waste of time recording scouting missions with no end product. Peter warned me at a very early date not to disclose to directors anything that I was doing; he thought that the less they knew about possibilities at the early stage the better, as sometimes a player being targeted might not appear, for a variety of reasons.

Brian, however, was the ideal front man, full of confidence in his own ability and not afraid to make decisions promptly. He was almost always in full control of the sporting press, and television interviewers often felt that he had finished up by interviewing them. He was controversial at times and knew how to court publicity. He was always of the opinion that two in management were better than one, if compatible, and in this case he and Peter had contrasting talents, which complemented each other. Almost every player that they took on to the staff, no matter the fee or how experienced they were, improved their standard of play

considerably under Brian and Peter. If they did not, they were soon moved on.

Brian did not like to be on his own for long; he preferred company and he was almost always accompanied when out. Most of his close friends were not involved in football. Brian enjoyed eating out in restaurants in company and did not mind the public attention, but if someone was rude to him he could easily shut them up without causing a scene. He enjoyed squash, and he would find time for a game when at work if it was possible. Only on rare occasions did I know him to gamble, and that was a bet on football. He always seemed to have time for and affection for children and the elderly.

Away from football Peter and Brian spent little time together socially. Their private lives were very separate and they both enjoyed time with their families and were very attached to their pet dogs. I hardly ever met up with either of them away from football duties, but occasionally Peter would accompany me to a race meeting in an afternoon. I did not socialise with him in the evenings.

I always did and still do hold both Peter and Brian in high esteem. They brought into my life something that I could never have even dreamt about, and I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it. The amount of knowledge that I gleaned from them both was immense. I took it all on board and it helped me greatly in my judgement of players. I learned how to deal with and spot talent, and how to analyse games and team performances. Any scouting and dealing with prospective recruits was carried out with the utmost secrecy between the three of us, as any publicity that revealed my involvement would have restricted my activities. More often than not I was completely on my own at matches, which suited me as I was then able to concentrate on the job in hand.

Fortunately for me, football did not interfere with the business I ran. I was able to cope with both occupations alongside each other as the jobs took place at different times of day. With the football I had only Brian and Peter to satisfy and I never feared being sacked: they were my only bosses. I was never put under any pressure from them, and their confidence helped me to achieve results. I cannot recall ever being reprimanded by either of them during our working association. I never refused to go anywhere I was asked, and never skimmed a duty assigned to me.

In the many books that have been published about Brian and Peter, my name is mentioned as their chief scout in only a couple. This is probably because I was always able to operate without anyone connecting me with them. The national press reporters that knew who I was never quizzed me on the subject, knowing that they would be wasting their time.

Peter and Brian were ruthless at work. Any players, or non-playing and backroom members of staff, who were not up to the standard that they required,

or anyone rocking the boat, were soon despatched. There was no room for passengers in the quest for footballing success.

# Introduction

An insight into talent discovery Each club in the Football League uses a scouting system, the depth and intensity of which varies with each club. Mostly scouts are employed on a part-time basis, working from home, and have other full-time employment.

Premier League clubs have the whole of the British Isles covered. The area covered by each scout varies, usually depending on how many League grounds are in the vicinity of where their own homes are situated. The majority of scouts are ex-Football League players. Obviously the payments received for doing this work vary from club to club, with the larger clubs usually paying a monthly retainer plus travelling expenses. Many scouts operate on expenses only. An example of how the country might be split into scouting areas might be: the North West stretching from Manchester to Carlisle, the North East from Sheffield to Newcastle, the North Midlands stretching from the West to the East, the South Midlands down as far as Cheltenham, Wales as a whole, the Eastern Counties covering the North London area, the South Eastern counties with the rest of the London area, the South West from Bristol, one or possibly two in Scotland and the same in Ireland. Many clubs have one or two scouts in Europe; the larger and wealthier clubs have many more representatives and go further afield. Arsenal are having considerable success with recruiting through this avenue. Manchester United, I understand, currently have two full-time scouts operating in Brazil, and the 2008 acquisition of the twins Rafael and Fabio da Silva shows that this operation is proving well worthwhile. In most countries clubs are not allowed to sign boys as professionals until they are 18. This is the reason that more and more of these teenagers are creeping into our academies. The majority of these young lads are under the guidance of agents, but no transfer fees are payable to the clubs that they are attached to. This means that youngsters with great potential can be bought for much less money than similar teenagers in the British Isles.

In practically all cases scouts are instructed by a chief scout, employed at the parent club; although there are odd chief scouts who operate from their homes and are not full-time. In midweek some full-time coaches carry out scouting missions, and as expenses are cheaper for these visits, which use company transport, they are becoming more common.

Scouts are given instructions about which games to visit, and possibly the names of the players on which to make a special report. I personally prefer to

keep an open mind about which players to pass judgement on. Nowadays, more than ever before, great emphasis is placed on scouts completing 'match reports', as one or both teams may be due to play the home club in the near future. To do a report on both teams efficiently is a difficult task, simply because of the amount of work and sketching and writing to be done, although you are provided with pitch diagrams and markings. Included in the report are sketches of the line up formation, details of the attacking and defending positions, whether the defensive marking is zonal or man-for-man is used, how dead-ball situations are handled, including corners, any weaknesses in line ups and individual performances by players. All this entails a tremendous amount of work and you are tied up for the whole of the 90 minutes, as well as having over three hours work to do later at home. Today laptops, fax machines and dictaphones are in general use and speed up the operation, which is often essential as some clubs expect to receive the report by 11am the next day. Another difficulty today is that many clubs will only provide one ticket for each scout, so you cannot take along anyone to help you observe the match. There are now one or two private sporting agencies that provide match reports. I do not know how this compares, either cost-wise or in the standard of the information provided, with clubs instructing their own representatives. I was approached some years ago to join a private agency, but after looking into it I gave the excuse of my age to turn it down, although the money was good.

When assessing a player I ideally prefer to see him playing on three occasions, once on his home ground and twice away. You should have firmly made up your mind by then. Often, if you see that a player has some serious faults in his game, you are wasting your time returning after your first look. Today scouts use an A B C D code to grade players, A being the best and D the worst. If prior to going I know nothing about the lad, or his history, I refer to the Sky Sports Football Yearbook, or check the internet before I set out. The age of the player is also an important factor.

Premier League scouts visiting clubs to complete match reports are mostly specialists in this kind of work and they normally stick to it. They become very proficient and fully understand what their management are looking for, which varies from club to club. Brian Clough did not want a lot of this information: he used to remark, when it was suggested to him, 'Let the b\*\*\*\*\*s worry about us, not us them'.

Nowadays there are fewer scouts than there used to be. The rise of agents and the close season for making signings are just two of the reasons. In the two lower divisions managers are restricted because of the costs involved. I am firmly convinced that the quality of players and the type of game played in the two



lower divisions of the Football League has dropped markedly, and that the gap between each League has widened. It seems more difficult today for a player to step up to reach the higher grade very quickly. Nevertheless, in spring 2008 I was present at Shrewsbury for the England Under-19s versus the Dutch Under-19s. There were over 50 of us there on scouting missions, together with one or two managers, and for once I came away with a very good impression of the standard of the English lads. I feel sure that in only a few years time we will see several of these players emerging in top football to make their mark.

Premier League reserve-team matches now command a lot of attention from the lower Leagues. Players who cannot make the first-team squads and youngsters coming through are the targets, particularly early in the season. The loan system is now very popular both with the borrowing clubs and the parent clubs. The top club players are gaining vital playing experience while going out on loan and they are usually monitored at intervals to check their progress. Playing at a senior level certainly increases their maturity.

From my own experience I can tell you that you can cover thousands of miles without finding a player who catches your eye and is within your buying range. The luck in it is being there watching on the right day. Never let the fact that you have not recommended anyone for some time cloud your judgement; if you are in doubt, recommending a failure will soon rebound on you. When you are successful in bringing a player to your club and he blossoms, it is a wonderful feeling. Non-League professional clubs, such as those playing in the Blue Square, Ryman, and Unibond Leagues do get attention, but not on such a large scale. However, word rapidly spreads when any player under 23 years of age is showing good potential. Odd players from these leagues do arrive on the scene. Michael Kightly, in his early 20s, now at Wolverhampton Wanderers, having joined them from Grays United, is a fine example. Nigel Clough at Derby picked up three good recruits from non-League clubs in 2008–09. In the past when I had no special instructions I would go along to a fairly local game, as you never know who you might see. My special claim to fame was Garry Birtles, who I spotted and who we bought for £2,000. He was later sold for £1.25 million.

Good scouting comes with experience and knowledge of what is required. Most of those doing it are loaded with experience and have been doing it for a very long time. Over time you get to know them reasonably well. Managers and chief scouts change clubs fairly regularly and tend to take their trusted and seasoned scouts with them.

There are about 12 qualities that we scouts are looking for in a player. I do not recall ever having seen a player with them all. With the modern ball and the speed of the game played today the priorities have changed somewhat since I

first started scouting. I look for his first touch when receiving the ball, from any direction, how quickly he gets the ball under control, his first-time passing and shooting (how accurate is he and how strong), his pace, the strength of his tackling, what he is like in the air, his reading of the game, whether he ball-watches, has he made himself ready to receive a pass...this is about half of what I am looking for in total. Attacking players and defenders obviously differ with their brain work. Goalkeepers for me preferably have to be tall, brave, have body strength, be quick off the mark, have a good pair of hands and ideally kick with both feet, which saves vital time. They need positional sense and to be fully awake at all times and vocally very active. I often see a lack of sound communication from the back: goalkeepers should remember that often that they are the only player facing the play. Nowadays kicking the ball a fair distance is not a problem, but when I was a player kicking against the wind on a very wet day was difficult and goalkeepers could hardly kick the ball out of their own penalty area. Full-backs would often take goal-kicks for the 'keeper.

Most professional players today have agents. Generally speaking I am of the opinion that this has not been good for the game as a whole. In 2008–09 payments to agents, in the Premier League alone, amounted to £12 million. When agents were first allowed in Brian Clough was totally against the use of them and would not deal with them. Dennis Roach was the first to persuade Brian otherwise, but my recollection is that the players he brought to him were never great buys. Agents come armed with tapes of the players that they represent, and it is obvious that any inadequacies the player may have will have been edited. I am fully aware that players come from different educational backgrounds, and that given the complexity of contracts and salaries representatives can be required to assist, but the rewards reaped by the agents seem over the top. I was recently surprised to learn that even some of the younger players in the Blue Square Leagues have their own agents.

A friend of mine has a son who has recently become old enough to sign as a professional. He had been with a Premier League club since the age of 12 and he has now signed a professional contract and is being allowed to go to university to continue his education. On the afternoon of his birthday he went with his parents to a meeting with the chairman of the club and he duly signed his professional forms. All, quite rightly, were extremely proud. That same evening, after they got home, an agent called at the house. I am not prepared to mention any names as no rules have been broken, and the agent, on signing him up, agreed not to take a percentage of his salary until it reaches a certain figure, but the question I have asked myself is how did the agent know that the lad was signing his contract that day?

We constantly hear and read that the number of British players competing in our professional Leagues is diminishing year by year. Why is this happening? It is certainly a well-paid job now. I have gathered some facts from the Burton upon Trent area, where I live. Every Saturday afternoon there used to be well over 60 teams competing as amateurs in the area, which extends to cover the Lichfield and Uttoxeter areas. Virtually no games now take place on that afternoon. The bulk of matches are played on Sundays, and many of the sides began as pub teams. I often watch matches near my home and, frankly, the physical condition of some of the players betrays their team's origins. Only about 40 teams now play locally, and the quality of football is certainly not up to the old standard. League club scouts were regular visitors in the old days, and most years one player went into League football to make a career for himself. Today this rarely happens.

Very close to my home is a large council-owned sports field where three games can be played at the same time. One pitch has excellent floodlighting available. The playing surface is kept in very good condition. Originally it was a lake, which was filled in as a tip by the council and with the ash waste from the local power station, then covered with soil and seeded. I have lived here for almost 10 years and have never seen a puddle of water on the surface. Recently a new block of changing facilities, toilets and showers was built on the very large car park at a cost of £250,000. Sadly, only one game takes place each Sunday, while on two or three nights each week training takes place under the lights. Surely local schools could take advantage of facilities such as these? One afternoon per week 12 to 16-year-olds could have inter-school competitive games. The youngsters would certainly enjoy it and it would give them the necessary break from their studies. Sporting facilities at most schools are diminishing each year.

One shining light has emerged in this area during recent years. The Burton Technical College allows teenagers one day a week off their studies for sporting activities. This was the brainchild of John Barton, the former Everton and Derby County full-back, a lecturer at the college. Burton Albion have formed a youth team with these lads, and when Nigel Clough was the Burton Albion manager he actually coached them. One player, John Brayford, joined Burton Albion as a professional. He gained several caps playing for the non-League international team and drew the attention of League scouts. He was bought by Crewe Alexandra and became a regular in their first team. I had myself recommended him to League clubs. I am unaware of any similar arrangements with colleges anywhere else, but I would highly recommend it. The FA could attempt to promote such partnerships. John Barton has a job with the Football League Education and could advise them.

My own career as a scout is discussed later in the book, but my role as chief scout with Brian Clough and Peter Taylor was a different arrangement from most clubs. I had an advantage because for two years I was instructed by and received tuition from Peter, who was generally regarded as one of the best spotters of football talent that there has been in the game. I travelled with him to dozens of games and he pointed out the qualities that individual players possessed. At no time was I put under any pressure. The added bonus was that Brian Clough improved every player that was brought to him.

### **Academies**

There are 40 Academies of Football in this country at present, which are run completely separately from the senior part of their parent clubs. They take in boys from the age of eight to be coached in the skills of the game, with the aim that they will eventually be able to get a living from football. There are around 40 boys in each age group. Boys under the age of 13 must live within an hour's drive (around 35 miles) of the club, while for older boys the catchment area is extended. A contract is signed by the parents and the club and is reviewed every two years. I personally am not in favour of signing these agreements at such an early age, because of the restrictions imposed by the contracts. I understand that the boys are not allowed to compete in competitions for their own schools against other schools. I believe this is part of growing up, and nothing is more enjoyable at school than competing at sport against other schools with children of the same age, and being on the winning side.

Unfortunately, sports are disappearing from more and more school curriculums. Our home was in Repton for many years and the renowned Repton School was less than a mile away. This school has well above average sports facilities and many scholars from there have gained international sporting recognition. From football, household names such as Doug Ellis and Don Revie had their boys educated there. I often went along during the autumn to watch the school teams play, sitting on the wall overlooking the pitches. At one time Derby County had three of their young players attending the college, but they were not allowed to take part in competitive matches. Of course, the club were financing their education and entitled to make these stipulations. Incidentally, none of the three made the grade with the Derby County first XI.

The Aston Villa Academy has the most successful record for the number of boys that become professional. At the moment 33 per cent of graduates make it into the Football League, 9 per cent into the Premier League. Manchester City have the next best record, but all the rest have only averaged 1.5 per cent. However, Birmingham is the ideal catchment area as its concentration of

population means that a greater number of lads are available to choose from. Only five or six boys each year graduate from the academies to the professional ranks.

Bryan Jones, the very successful head of the Academy at Aston Villa, originates from the Burton upon Trent area. As a teenager attending Burton Technical High School he received football coaching from Peter Taylor, who coached these school boys on two days of the week for a period of two hours. He had been recruited by the sports master at the school, who was a director of Burton Albion, Percy Davies. If any of the boys showed any real promise they were invited to play for the Burton Albion reserve side in the Burton and District Second Division. Bryan Jones joined Burton Albion after leaving school, playing as a striker. The youth team that Peter had assembled was very successful, winning every competition they were entered in, including the second division of the Burton league. At that time I trained with the Burton Albion players for my refereeing, and during this period I got to know Bryan very well. He must have taken on board much of Peter's coaching, just as I did.

# My early days in football

I was born in Burton upon Trent on 1 February 1927. My father was a carpenter, my mother a cinema projectionist. I was their second child; my older brother had died aged one of scarlet fever, a disease which in those days took many lives.

After Infants and Junior school I took the 11-plus and qualified to go to the Guild Street Central School. The sportsmaster there taught rugby, cricket, athletics and swimming. There was no soccer, which I and my pals loved, so we played on the recreation grounds in every spare moment. Boots were the only kit. We had coats for goalposts. In the summer we played cricket and swam: a highlight of the autumn was the Swimming Championships held at the Burton baths. When the baths were demolished after the war my 25 and 50yd sprint records still stood.

When war broke out our school was taken over by a Royal Artillery regiment and we shared premises with another school. I went to voluntary Saturday morning classes to learn shorthand and typing. I left school after Christmas, shortly before my 15th birthday in 1942, and started work in the cask office at the Ind Coope brewery offices, earning 17s 6d for a 48-hour week.

Our home at that time was a rented three-bedroom terraced house, owned by the tenants of the Star in the Victoria Ward in Burton. When our landlords retired my parents took on the tenancy of the pub and we moved in 1938. During the war beer was rationed and the pub could only open for three days each week. My father went back to his trade, working as a carpenter fitting cabs to army steel lorries at a nearby factory. This was a reserved occupation. In his absence I had to help my mother in the pub, looking after the beer cellar, tapping the barrels and connecting the pipes. When I was older I would serve behind the bar, playing darts with customers in quiet moments.

As a teenager I cycled a lot with my friends, going away for weekends and holidays to stay in youth hostels. Petrol was rationed so the roads were quiet.

Army call-ups meant that there were lots of local vacancies and so I changed my job, becoming a secretary at the local Gas Works offices. The wages were £2 per week for 48 hours.

As soon as I was old enough I volunteered to join the Royal Navy. On 1 September 1944, aged 17 and seven months, I began training at HMS Royal Arthur, the ex-Butlin's holiday camp at Skegness. On completion of the initial training I was posted to the Naval Barracks at Plymouth, then almost immediately sent to Belfast as part of the commissioning crew for a new Light

Fleet Aircraft Carrier, HMS Glory. We soon went on to the ship and sailed to the Clyde to do our sea-going trials. Then the war in Europe ended and for two days we were allowed to go into Glasgow to celebrate.

We sailed to Malta to pick up our two Fleet Air Arm Squadrons to do landing and take-off trials. When these were satisfactorily completed we set sail, calling at Alexandria then through the Suez Canal to Trincomalee.

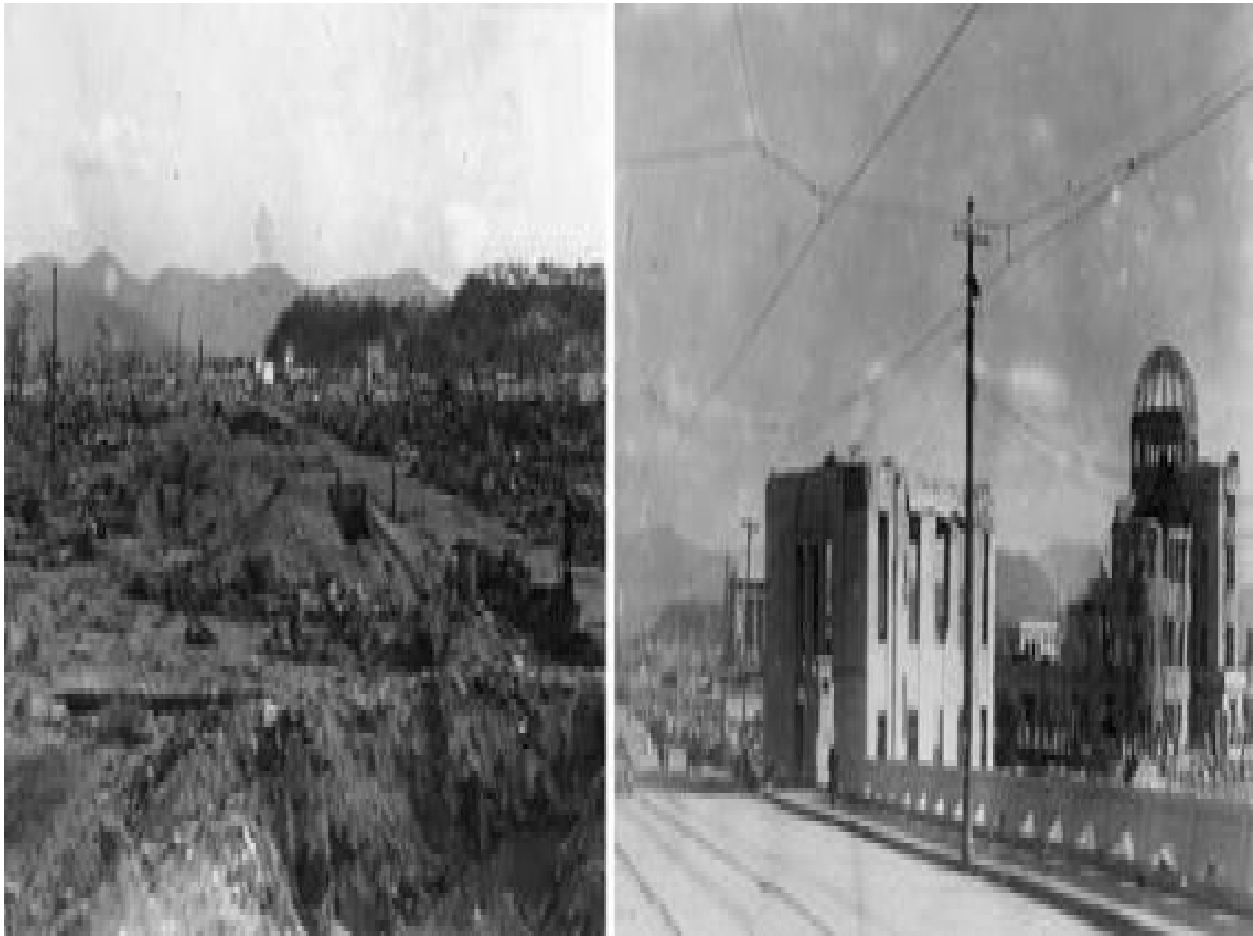




*HMS Glory in Valetta harbour, Malta.*

When my Chief Petty Officer was demobbed there was literally no one else but me to be the senior rating in the Captain's Office. I had to be upgraded to a Petty Officer. I was only 18, but there was nothing in the King's Regulations to prevent the appointment and I was promoted for a three-month period.

We were taking on supplies in Trincomalee Harbour in Ceylon (now called Sri Lanka) when it was announced that the war with Japan was over. We soon sailed to join the Pacific Fleet. Our first mission was to inspect the area close to Hiroshima, where we witnessed utter devastation.



*Hiroshima, Japan, shortly after the first atomic bomb raid by the Americans.*

*Left: In the foreground is the crater that was caused when the bomb exploded in the air immediately above.*

*Right: Photograph taken on the extreme side of Hiroshima, where some shells of buildings remained, after some of the main roads had been cleared of debris. One strange observation that I made was that the railway station buildings were completely gone, but the railway track itself was hardly damaged.*

We were then ordered to Sydney, Australia, to undergo a major refitting to become a Troop Carrier. Over 1,000 double-decker bunks were installed in the

hangers in no time at all and we sailed to collect ex-prisoners of war from the Malaysian Islands, all Australians and New Zealanders, taking them home firstly to Australia and then to Wellington. We immediately returned to the Malaysian Islands to collect British ex-prisoners of war for the long journey right across the Pacific Ocean via Hawaii to Vancouver, as the first part of their journey back home. I became extremely fit during this period playing deck hockey. The flight deck was completely empty and the pitch was situated between the two hangar lifts. The puck was made out of a circle of rope, the ends sewn together to form a circle, then soaked in tar and allowed to dry completely. We used primitive hockey sticks. The game was played at a very combative speed on the shiny steel deck, and the sea was calm for most of the journey. A knock-out cup was organised between the teams from the different messes, and the passengers who were physically able to get up on to the flight deck thoroughly enjoyed watching the games being played.



*Anchored off Manila, where ex-POWs from the Phillipines have just embarked to commence their long voyage home to the British Isles, October 1945.*

Our ship was later given to the Australian Navy as they had no aircraft carriers. Most of the crew were offered the chance to stay with the ship and transfer to the Australian Navy, but I could not wait to get back home to be demobbed. I was left behind with many others at Singapore Barracks to wait for a ship to take me back to Plymouth. I was there for about a month with no duties, so to pass the time I joined the Royal Naval Football Squad. Frank Scrine, the Wales winger, was in charge. He was capped three times for Wales when he got home. I played soccer on three occasions against other servicemen stationed out there, and this was when I first got a real liking for the game. I was eventually demobbed during the summer of 1947. Amazingly, according to the statistics on my release papers I had grown from a recorded 5ft 5in to 5ft 11 1/2in, and my weight had increased from 10st 3lb to 12st.

My introduction to competitive football at adult level back home was during the 1947–48 season in the Burton & District Association League Second Division playing at right-half for the Municipal Officers Guild (MOG). We finished in fourth place the first season, but eight places lower the next year. After that I joined Stapenhill FC with some of my close pals, and we duly won our league. I played at right-back for them.

I was invited to join Burton Albion as an amateur at the beginning of the 1951–52 season. The team had been formed the previous season, playing in the Birmingham Senior League. Billy Wigglesworth (ex-Manchester United winger) was the manager and Bertie Mee was the trainer. He had played for Tutbury Hawthorn as an outside-left in the Burton and District League and I had played against him. He had apparently recommended that the Albion sign me to play at full-back. The ground was in Wellington Street adjoining Lloyds Foundry and the dressing rooms were 100 yards away in the men's shower room in the foundry. For the first time Burton Albion had entered a reserve team in the Burton & District League Division One. We won the league by 16 clear points, unbeaten throughout. I was ever present.



*Me wearing Burton Albion's striped black and amber strip at the Wellington Street ground.*

Bertie Mee, who would go on to manage Arsenal to an historic League and Cup double in 1970–71, was an important influence on me. Bertie lived in Tutbury on the outskirts of Burton upon Trent. As a player he had been at Derby County as an outside-left, but he had not made the grade. He went to the Etwall Rehabilitation Centre near Derby to study physiotherapy, a discipline which was in its infancy, and he joined Burton Albion to gain practical knowledge of football injuries. It was a stroke of good fortune for me to be under an experienced former professional footballer, and Bertie was brilliant with me. He altered my style of running, shortening my early strides, which put two or three yards on to my sprinting speed. As a result my game improved considerably. He also recommended that I take one cod liver oil capsule every day, which I have done ever since.

There had been a change of manager at Burton Albion and Bill Sneddon was in charge. I was offered professional forms playing part-time, but I refused. I had gained three Amateur caps playing for Staffordshire and took part in the North versus South trial game for the International team, which we won 3–0. I was hoping that I would be selected for the England Amateur XI squad for the forthcoming international, but 90 per cent of the squad was selected from the south to save travelling costs, as the game was being played in southern England. This influenced my decision to take up the offer from Burton Albion to turn professional, playing in the Birmingham Senior League. When I made my debut in the first team I was the only member of the side not to have experience with a Football League club.

At the end of the 1953–54 season I had an approach from Chesterfield Football Club offering me a full-time weekly contract of eight guineas in the first team, six guineas in the reserves and six guineas summer wages. My salary for the Gas Board was £60 per month, while football with Burton Albion earned me £5 a match, plus £2 for a win and £1 for a draw in the first team, £3 in the reserves, and £8–10 was brought in from a Sunday newspaper agency, bringing in over £30 per week. I turned the offer down.



*Burton Albion, August 1954. Standing, left to right: Dave McAdam, Maurice Hodgkin, Jack Stamps, Bill Townsend, Geoff Tye, Phil Aston. Kneeling: Phil Giles, Dave Neville, Reg Weston, Maurice Edwards, Les Evans.*

One game stands out in my memory, an FA Cup tie at Bedworth in an early round. I was not in the selected XI, but at away games a reserve forward and a defender travelled in case they were required. On this occasion I was the reserve defender. Burton had its own motor bus for travelling, a 19-seater Bedford. Arriving at Bedworth I left my kit on the bus, not expecting to need it. With all of us crammed into a small dressing room, myself and the other reserve decided to go out to get some air. I was a superstitious player. Before a game I would not have anything to eat, and I always went to the toilet before putting my playing gear on. Having not eaten since breakfast time, and given that it was a cold autumn afternoon, I went to the burger stall and purchased a large beefburger with onions and mustard and tucked in. At about 20 minutes to three there came an announcement over the loudspeaker: 'Would Maurice Edwards report to the Burton Albion dressing room immediately'. I shot off to the dressing room. Reg Weston, the player-manager, said 'Get stripped, you're playing'. Apparently the club captain, 'Nobby' Hadfield, had a spasm in his lower back and could not move. There followed a panic call for the coach driver, Jock Middlemas, who was sent to get my bag. I got my kit on and dashed onto the pitch. The teams were lined up for the kick-off and there were over 3,000 spectators in the ground. My superstitions about eating went out of the window as I was pleased with my performance.

We were one up after about 20 minutes, Ray Russell scoring the goal. Shortly before half-time Jack Stamps, our centre-forward, suffered a broken leg when tackled. No substitutes were allowed then so we were left with 10 men. It was pouring with rain and the pitch was a quagmire. We had our backs to the wall. About five minutes before full-time, Bill Townsend, our goalkeeper, went to the edge of the penalty area to collect the ball and slipped in the mud. I covered behind on the goalline as the Bedworth forward with the ball advanced. 'If it goes past me I'll dive and save with my hands,' I decided, 'even if it gives a penalty away'. However, he shot wide of the post and we won 1-0. We did not get back to Burton until after 8pm, as we were waiting at the hospital for Jack to come out, complete with his plaster.

As a player you remember the good games, but you remember the stinkers as well. I was playing at Kidderminster in a Birmingham League game. It was a night match under floodlights at the beginning of February. There was a large crowd and it was very cold. The pitch was frozen but flat and my boots were



fitted with leather studs. I weighed about 12 stone at the time and the conditions meant that I was having great difficulty turning and moving off from a standstill, and I could not make any sliding tackles. The outside-left against me was a 17-year-old Gerry Hitchens, weighing barely 10 stone and wearing gym shoes. We lost 1–3 and Gerry scored all three goals. Within a few days he had become a Football League player, later signing for Aston Villa and gaining seven international caps.

At work I was transferred from the East Midlands to the North Thames Gas Board to their training college at Fulham. On four nights a week I was attending evening classes at Westminster Technical College and Battersea Polytechnic, studying to become a Gas Engineer (Distribution). During this period I finished tuition on Friday afternoon and had Saturdays off, which allowed me to travel home to Burton for Saturday games. There were a few evening games in the spring and as we did not have floodlights it had to be an early kick-off, so I took a day's holiday leave to play.

During March 1955, while still working in London, I was approached by Guildford with a view to joining them. They were then top of the Southern League. It was left that I would go to see them before the start of the next season to discuss the offer. Unfortunately my career came to an end through injury before then.

In 1955 my reasonably short career came to an end in a Staffordshire County Senior Cup game against Hednesford United. We were winning 4–1. Towards the end of the game I was well forward with the ball and fancied my chance to score. Having never done so before, I decided to go and have a pop. While standing on my left leg preparing to shoot I was tackled from behind and was carried off with severe pain in my left knee. Next morning I was still in considerable pain and needed to go to the Burton Hospital for an examination by an orthopaedic surgeon. An X-ray revealed I needed surgery as the cruciate ligaments in the knee were damaged. In those days the injury was not repairable, unlike today, although a lengthy period of rehabilitation is still necessary. After my operation there was no stability in my knee joint and the surgeon informed me that my playing career was over. He warned me that if I was to damage that left knee again, it might result in it being stiffened for the rest of my life. Fortunately this has not occurred. At the time the muscles in my left leg were very wasted and I had to work extremely hard to build them up. It was a hard slog, involving weights and hours of jogging.

It was 19 weeks before I was able to return to my employment with the North Thames Gas Board at their college in Fulham and the evening classes at the two colleges. After successful completion of my studies I was transferred to the

Camden Town District Office and given my own district to run. I changed my digs to a house at nearby Chalk Farm where were four other guests, all much older than myself. One was the Revd Foyle, brother of the famous book shop owner, while the others were all solicitors working in the City. My evenings were mostly spent jogging round Regent's Park on the running track.

My knee was causing me considerable concern and the muscles in my left leg were taking a long time to regain strength. I had developed a limp. One evening as I was going to White Hart Lane to see Spurs play I passed the Middlesex Rehabilitation Centre and Bertie Mee sprung to mind: I was sure that he had taken up an appointment there after qualifying at Etwell. I decided next day to see if I could trace him, as it was not very far from my digs. I located him and found the centre full of athletes, tennis players and rugby and football stars, all working on different types of apparatus. Once again I was deeply indebted to him, as under his guidance I spent many months on a rehabilitation programme involving weights and running. The muscles built up very well and I eventually lost my limp. Bertie's attention and advice were extremely helpful. My progress was so good that I wanted to play football again. I went as far as playing one game for Burton Albion reserves. By then they had moved to their new ground at Eton Park, and this was my only playing appearance there. Next morning my knee was very sore and swollen so I decided that this was really it for football. The same happened with golf: I paid for lessons to teach me to play left-handed to reduce the impact of the swivel action on my left knee, but I was unable to master it and had to give up.

Soon after this Bertie Mee was appointed physiotherapist at Highbury. He had been treating Arsenal players for their injuries for some time and they eventually decided to have their own physio. This turned out to be a wonderful move for both parties. In 1966 Bertie was appointed manager of Arsenal and he had 11 rewarding years in the job, becoming the first manager to land the League and Cup double in the same season, 1970–71. He was ably helped and supported by his non-playing staff.

While working in London I was able to go to Wembley to see the 1956 FA Cup Final, between Manchester City and Birmingham City. I will never forget the match, which ended in victory for Manchester. The outstanding player was Don Revie in midfield. He was fully in control from start to finish, and for many years after it was known as the Don Revie Final. After the game it was revealed that Bert Trautmann, in goal for Manchester City, had played almost the whole match with a broken neck.

The Burton Albion board of directors were very good to me when it became clear that I would not be able to play again. I was offered a Benefit Match, to be

played at Eton Park, or the receipts from the Saturday night dance at the Town Hall that they had been allocated once a month (a sell-out virtually every time). As I was living most of the week in London, and it had been over 12 months since I last played for the Albion's first team, I opted for the night hop at the local Town Hall. It proved a great success and I received over £500 from the club, which was a tremendous amount of money in those days.

I was finding working in London arduous and lonely. Travelling home each weekend was stretching the finances considerably, although I held a good position at work and was quite happy with my job with the North Thames Gas Board. However, chances of further promotion seemed remote due to my age (I was the youngest in charge of a district in the office) and unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future. I decided to look for something near Burton upon Trent and I thought about running my own business. At that particular time it was difficult to borrow money for such a venture, and it came to my attention that a sub-Post Office in a good position in Burton had been for sale for some time without finding a buyer. I made enquiries and put in an offer for the premises, which was quickly accepted. With the help of a gift from my parents, the sale of my almost brand-new car that I had paid cash for and pension money from a plan I had been paying into for over 12 years, I was able to raise the necessary capital.

I handed in my one-month notice to the Gas Board and was summoned to headquarters to explain to the top Gas Engineer why I wanted to leave. He told me how much the board had spent on my education and training since I had been in London, and said that I had a bright future if I remained. I did not waver, however, and stood by my decision. He then amazed me by telling me that he would keep my job open for three months in case things did not work out.

My application for the sub-postmaster vacancy was accepted by the Post Office and I took over in September 1957. Having had only two days training at the work in a very busy office, I would have struggled badly had it not been for the existing staff. There was one very experienced part-time lady and a 17-year-old who had been there since leaving school. Both were very efficient and helped me to settle in quickly.



*Wellington Street Post Office, 1958.*

At the beginning of the 1958–59 football season, I was persuaded by a member of Burton & District Football Association to become a referee in the local leagues. I began as a Class 3 referee and progressed to become a Class 1 official in the minimum period possible. In my first season I was promoted to officiate in a semi-professional footballers' league, which was classed as a feeder league for referees to advance into the Football League. I honestly thought that I was a better referee than a player and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. Obviously the experience I had gained as a player was a big help. John Westmancoat, who at that time was the secretary of the Birmingham Football Association, privately told me that I had been recommended to go on to the Referees List of the Football League for the forthcoming season. I kept my fingers crossed. Unfortunately, the authorities reduced the age limit for qualification by 12 months, which meant that I would be six months too old. This was a huge disappointment, but I enjoyed refereeing so much that I decided to continue at the same level.

Shortly after the beginning of the new season I was appointed the main official for a second-round FA Cup tie between two non-League sides, which went very well. When I had begun refereeing I had obtained permission to train with the Burton Albion lads at Eton Park, taking part in the six-a-side practices and refereeing all their friendly matches.

My business venture was proving very successful and I needed more shop space. I purchased the wool shop next door and had the two premises joined together under one roof. The work was carried out by the late Sir Stan Clarke, a plumber, who had recently started up on his own in the building trade. He gave me a good price to do the work as he wanted a showpiece in the town. I also purchased a nearby newsagent, closed it and moved the trade into my premises. This was a sound move and I soon had to increase the staff to four full-time and four part-time assistants, plus 14 paperboys and girls. I was still managing without my own car, being determined not to have one until I could pay for it in full and have the one I wanted. After six years I bought a Jaguar Mark 2 for £1,500. The number plate was HFA 777.

# Meeting Peter and Brian

None of us are aware of what lies around the corner, and I never imagined how my life was about to change. In July 1962, Peter Taylor joined Burton Albion from Port Vale as a goalkeeper to replace Bill Townsend (ex-Derby County) in the Southern League side. Bill was the manager and had decided to retire from playing. Peter moved into a council house in Winshill with his wife Lilian and two young children, daughter Wendy and son Philip. On training nights I got to know Peter quite well. He was a great talker and very interesting to listen to. Our conversations were usually about football and horse racing, and I quickly realised that he liked to gamble. We became friends, probably because we were of similar age while most of the others were much younger.

I only saw Peter make one appearance for the Albion. I remember that he threw the ball much farther than he could kick it and that he was a very nervy goalkeeper, who disliked having defenders in the box with him when the team was under pressure. He wanted plenty of space. He was 6ft 2in and 13 stone, but not the bravest of 'keepers. At the end of the season Bill Townsend, who had acquired a very good public house in a village on the outskirts of Burton, was given six weeks' notice by the chairman, Trevor Grantham. Peter was then offered the position of manager, which he accepted. It was an ambition of his to become a manager in the Football League. At 35 years of age, the chance to get into management had come rather earlier than he expected. He stopped playing himself when he took up the appointment.

At the start of the 1963–64 season several new faces attended training sessions. It was obvious that Peter's intention was to quickly build a side of his own, and to that end he had raided local clubs: Matlock Town, Loughborough Brush, Kidderminster and Hinckley United. Richie Barker, a professional draughtsman with an electrical engineering firm in Loughborough, who had previously been with the Albion as a striker with a very good scoring rate, came from Matlock Town, Les Green came from Nuneaton Borough for a fee of £750, and there were several others. George Pycroft, Peter's friend from school and youth days in Nottingham, was his scout. I could remember him playing for Peterborough (non-League) and Loughborough Brush, and he knew the players of good ability at that level. He was a big help to Peter in signing these new recruits. Another friend of Peter's from Nottingham, Brian Newton, played the odd first-team game and looked after the reserve team while also helping with the coaching.

Peter suffered an early setback, losing 1–0 in the second round of the FA Cup to

Kidderminster, who were playing in the Birmingham League, a grade below the Southern League. One or two members of the board were calling for his blood. Peter was genuinely worried and a meeting was called by the chairman at his house for the Sunday afternoon. However, he was granted a stay of execution.

Peter, with the security of his three-year contract, purchased a newly-built Canadian-style bungalow by the side of the lake at the Newton Park Hotel in Newton Solney, between Repton and Burton. By this time I had got to know him quite well.

My extensive building alterations to the Post Office and private living quarters were now completed, and I had my own transport. After Easter, as the football season was coming to a close and with the annual drop in the amount of pools business, I was able to spend afternoons at flat race meetings, when they were within reasonable travelling distance. Peter would come along with me as often as he could. He was not a well-known figure in those days and he enjoyed his racing. A sensible punter, prepared to wait until he really 'fancied one', he was a much heavier gambler on football results. He used his knowledge of the game to good effect. At the races I introduced him to a bookmaker course layer, who agreed with Peter that he would accept his football investments passed through me, which meant that Betting Tax was not deducted from his winnings.

In his contract with Burton Albion, Peter, with great foresight, had negotiated that the club would pay him a crowd bonus of one shilling for every paying spectator through the turnstiles over 2,300. Peter told me that this would be his available betting money. It was paid fortnightly by cheque and he asked me if I would kindly change it each other Friday for cash. The exact amounts were only known between the two of us. Usually there was just one home game gate included, but as his rebuilt side achieved success gates increased considerably, and were soon regularly over the 3,000 mark, bringing quite lucrative rewards.

I refereed all the friendly matches and practice games at the club. My instructions were to referee the games exactly as if they were normal matches, with full authority. I would have done that anyway. It was at around this time that I was first introduced to David Pleat, a fresh-faced teenager who used to come over to see Peter from Nottingham. He was a player with Forest at the time, but he had suffered a badly broken leg and was convalescing. They had both belonged to the same cricket club in Nottingham. I sat in the stand with David and he seemed, even at that early age, to have a great knowledge of the game. Much later Peter was instrumental in getting David his first taste of football management, recommending him to Nuneaton Borough in 1978. David has been highly successful and to this day he is extremely active. I still bump into him occasionally and we usually have a short, sensible chat about the game

in hand. His knowledge and experience are widely used by the television companies and he is currently an advisor to Nottingham Forest.

In spring 1964, there was an exceptionally long spell of very low temperatures, with severe frosts each night. In those days before under-soil heating was popular, very little football was being played. The skies were cloudless, with full sunshine throughout the day, but by about 5pm the temperature fell. Malcolm Allison's Bath City were playing in the Southern League at the time and were due to play at Eton Park one Saturday. When I arrived for my training session on the Thursday evening, Peter Taylor took me out on to the pitch to ask my opinion of the chance of the game being played on the Saturday, the forecast for the weather being for little change. Peter had a completely injury-free squad, and all the players were raring to go. The playing surface was flat, with no lumps or ruts to cause any problems, but very hard. Peter and I decided to meet the groundsman, Tom Eckleshaw, at 2pm on the Friday, which was when the referee would carry out his inspection on the match day and decide whether the game could go ahead. We walked all over the playing area. The overnight frost had gone, apart from a stretch of about two yards on the Popular side. This was because the sun was only just coming to shine on that part, where the corrugated roof over the supporters' space shaded the turf. We decided to cover this area. A local farmer was contacted and he brought down 10 bales of hay and many tarpaulin sheets. The area was completely covered with the hay and the tarpaulin placed on top, while the surplus was put on the penalty areas. Fortunately there was very little wind to disturb the cover. The two local radio stations were told to announce that the game would definitely take place.

At 9am on Saturday morning Peter, myself and the groundsman arrived and, with the help of several supporters, the covers were removed in the full sunshine. There was no sign of frost from under the covers: the hay had done the trick. The frost on the rest of the pitch was already beginning to disappear. At 10am Bath City were told to travel, and the radio stations were instructed to confirm that the game was on. At 1pm the referee arrived, changed into his football boots, did a few sprints and abrupt stops, then came over smiling, saying that he was satisfied. He congratulated the groundsman on the state of the playing surface. Tony Book, one of the Bath City players, also congratulated the groundsman. There was no other professional football played that day within a radius of 30 miles. The gate was over 4,000, and Burton won 3-1. Bath City were top of the Southern League at that time so Peter was over the moon.

That same season Burton went on to win the Southern League Cup against Weymouth. They were managed by Frank O'Farrell, who later became the manager of Manchester United. The home leg of the final was played before a



record crowd of 5,806, an Eton Park record which stood until the ground's closure.

### **Peter and Brian join Hartlepoons United**

During October 1965, Peter came to see me to say excitedly that Brian Clough (Peter's big chum from his playing days at Middlesbrough) had called him to say that he had been offered the position of manager at Hartlepoons United. Peter was meeting Brian the following day to discuss forming a partnership to manage the club.

The purpose of Peter's visit was to discuss the implications of taking the offer up. It would mean a cut in his weekly income of £24 a week, as he would lose the money from coaching at the Burton Technical School and his crowd bonuses. My advice was that he should talk it over with his family, but I pointed out that he had recently signed a new three-year contract and that he had a beautiful bungalow. His playing side were doing exceptionally well, and I considered it only a matter of time before he was contacted himself about a manager's position in the Football League. Hartlepoons United were struggling at the bottom of the Fourth Division and had applied for re-election again the previous season. None of this deterred Peter, who said that it was his great ambition to get into League football. He thought that a partnership between himself and Brian could not fail. I was well aware of the strong bond between them that had been forged in their Middlesbrough days.

Brian had remained on the coaching staff at Sunderland after his injury, coaching the youth team. Sunderland were managed by George Hardwick. When he was sacked Ian McColl was his replacement, and Brian also soon lost his job and so was out of work for a time.

The meeting between Peter and Brian, and their wives, was to be at a hotel near York Racecourse. Len Shackleton, the Sunderland and England inside-forward who later worked for the Sunday People, had recommended them to the Hartlepoons chairman, remembering their days together in the North East.

They met as arranged and decided to give it a go, taking over on 29 October 1965. The chairman, Ernest Ord, would not allow Brian, who was only 30 years of age, to bring Peter in as his assistant manager, saying that the club could not afford it and there was not enough work for two of them. Instead, 'Trainer' was the title given to Peter to justify his existence to the club.

Brian and Peter got off to a good start at Hartlepoons with three straight wins. At the end of the first season they finished seventh from the bottom of the Fourth Division. For the first time in recent years they did not have to apply for re-election, so considerable improvement had been achieved. During the season

Peter rang me on several occasions just to keep me up to date. He said that several players had to go, as they were nowhere near good enough, and that Brian had passed his driving test so he could drive the team coach, to save on costs. I told Peter how Burton Albion were getting on, and he asked how my luck was with the horses. Peter, of course, could not afford to strike any bets.

One morning, shortly before the commencement of the 1966–67 season, Peter rang to ask whether I was still training with Burton Albion at Eton Park. I told him that I was. He then asked me to approach Les Green (Burton Albion's goalkeeper) on the quiet to ask whether he would play at Hartlepoons if Brian made an offer for him. Peter had originally brought Les to Burton from Nuneaton. As luck would have it, I was due to referee the final warm-up game before the season's start at Eton Park on the Saturday. I decided that I would ask Les then. There were over a thousand spectators at the game. I waited until the ball went behind the net for a goal-kick, then followed Les and delivered my message. 'Peter rang yesterday to ask if you would play for him at Hartlepoons if they made an offer to Burton for you,' I said. Without hesitation he said yes and after the game he came into the referees' room to bring me his home telephone number, which I passed on to Peter the same evening. A few days later he was transferred to Hartlepoons United for an undisclosed fee. This was the first recruit that I helped them with.

Peter introduces me to Brian Clough

One Monday morning early in the 1966–67 season Peter rang for a chat. 'While you are out refereeing you must come across a player or two that would be good enough for our League,' he said. 'We're short of numbers, having sent one or two packing, but there's very little money available'. At the time I was officiating in quite a good standard of non-League semi-professional football.

'What a pity you didn't ring me last week,' I said. 'Do you remember Tony Parry, a young local lad that you signed on professional forms when you were at the Albion? He's from Burton, slight build, has pace, good control, he's 21 now and has come on a ton. He's as good a lad as I have seen and his skill on the ball is amazing. He's not a bit frightened in the tackle and has two good feet, both in the gym and out on the grass. I still play in the six-a-side training sessions and he is exceptional and has got into the Albion's first XI recently.

'I've told you about Bertie Mee, and how good he was with me. Well, I owed him a big favour so I wrote to him about this boy Tony Parry and said that Arsenal might like to take a look. Bertie has written back to me to say that if the Arsenal like the boy, they'll be only too pleased to sign him. He included George Swindon's (chief scout at Arsenal) telephone number in the letter and asked me to contact him, so I've to meet him at Burton Railway Station at 2pm next

Saturday, to take him to Eton Park.’

Peter then asked ‘How highly do you rate him?’

‘He’s the best inside-forward for a youngster that I have seen,’ was my reply.

‘What a coincidence,’ said Peter. ‘Here at Hartlepoons we’ve taken on a 16-year-old who has huge potential, John McGovern. He took part in one of our recent Saturday morning trials for youngsters. A Grammar School boy, Brian was told by his headmaster that he was reluctant to agree to him going into football as a career, as he thought he could get A-levels and go to university.’

I wonder now whether that headmaster was still alive to see John lift two European Cups – not many people have that achievement on their CV.

The following Thursday morning, shortly after 11 o’clock, I was behind the counter in the Post Office with customers queuing in each position. It was the busiest day of the week. I looked up to serve the next customer, and in front of me was Peter Taylor. ‘Can you spare a few moments? I have someone I would like you to meet’. I called for an assistant from the shop to come and take my place behind the counter.

A very smart young man in a blue blazer and grey flannels stood with Peter. ‘Meet Brian Clough,’ said Peter. Brian shook my hand warmly. ‘Peter has spoken very highly of you, pleased to meet you,’ he said.

‘What brings you here?’ I enquired. They said that they had come to see Alex Tait, the Burton Albion player-manager (a former Newcastle United player), who had a shop nearby. I gave them directions. ‘It’s just around the corner, across the road. It’s a large pram and toy shop, you can’t miss it. He should be there.’

The penny had not dropped as to why they were there. At about 2pm they came back to the Post Office and Peter said ‘We’ve come to say cheerio, we’re off. We’ve got Tony Parry in the car with us.’ Away they went.

This was my first real experience of the speed at which they operated when bringing in new players. I was left with the task of ringing George Swindon, to save him the journey, and writing to Bertie Mee. I had a reply from Bertie thanking me and saying that they would have Tony watched playing for Hartlepoons. He asked me to give him a call if a similar youngster turned up.

Tony and John McGovern soon appeared in the first team at Hartlepoons, and I was invited up to the North East to see them play in an evening fixture at the Victoria Ground. I drove up during the afternoon, returning home the same evening. It poured with rain the whole time. I sat in the famous directors’ box, with a bucket next to me catching the water dripping from the corrugated roof above. What I witnessed that night has always stuck in my mind: the sight of Peter in a tracksuit running on to the field with a bucket of water and a sponge. When I asked him what he would have done if there had been a serious injury to

a player, he smiled and told me that they had made a donation to the St John's Ambulance Service, who had two of their men standing by.

In addition to the transfer fee of £2,000 that was agreed for Tony Parry, there was also a visit, in November, of the full Hartlepoons first team to play a Burton Albion side at Eton Park. When they came down Les Green, Tony Parry and John McGovern were on view, plus a surprise: Brian Clough turned out as well. Having suffered no ill-effects from this match, Brian agreed to play for the Albion in another friendly game, against Port Vale two weeks later. I refereed both games. Opposite Brian as guest players for Port Vale were the legendary Sir Stanley Matthews CBE, MBE, aged 51, their general manager, and player-manager Jackie Mudie. Again it poured with rain the whole evening. I can remember how Sir Stanley shielded the ball, his close control making it impossible to take it away from him without fouling him, and how the other Port Vale players called 'Sir Stan' when they wanted to attract his attention. I did not have the opportunity to speak to Brian after the game; he was substituted for the second half because of the long drive home to Middlesbrough. Considering the atrocious weather, an excellent gate of 1,390 turned out to watch the stars in action.

Tony Parry passed away in November 2009 at the early age of 64 after a short illness, bringing back memories of him being the very first player who I recommended to a Football League club. He had later regularly attended Pride Park as an ex-player guest of Derby County and we had many chats together.

Peter told me that they were having problems with the chairman at Hartlepoons, who had brought his son into the backroom staff and said that for economic reasons he wanted Brian to sack Peter. Shortly after this one of the directors, local councillor John Curry, who was a staunch supporter of Brian and Peter, persuaded the rest of the board to oust Ernest Ord as chairman.

At the end of the season Peter and Brian resigned from Hartlepoons and moved on to a Division Two club. Angus McLean, the new manager, was to reap the rewards of the work that Brian and Peter had put into building the team by gaining promotion to Division Three the following season.

After the pools business had stopped for the summer season I had more leisure time to go flat racing. I made a good friend during one strange meeting on the Doncaster races car park, where I parked my Jaguar next to an almost identical one. The owner was in his 50s and had an insurance brokers business, with several of his clients being connected with horse racing. He was a large, well-built man, about 5ft 10in tall but about 161 D2 stone. As it turned out that we often drove the same route I offered to take him to future race meetings, picking him up from where our journeys met. We attended almost all of the midweek

meetings during the summer.

One of my friend's clients was Lester Piggott. Before a race meeting at Newmarket we would usually go to Lester's home to deliver some freshly caught salmon from the River Severn, which was one of the foods that he could eat without having any weight worries. My friend usually had a coffee but I always stayed in the car. There were always stories about how careful Lester was with his money, and one tale has stuck in my memory. One morning Lester rang my friend to ask if he was travelling to Newmarket that day. 'Yes', came the reply. 'And I've got two beautiful salmon for you, seven pounds each.' Silence from Lester. Realising why, my friend said, 'Seven pounds in weight, that is.' Lester immediately replied, obviously relieved, 'They should be very nice, see you just now.'

This friendship lasted for over 12 years, until unfortunately my friend became ill and unable to drive, passing away shortly afterwards. The racing information that I gathered I used to pass on to Peter Taylor after he came to Derby. I may add that it did us both good financially during this period.

# **Life begins at Derby County**

During the summer, one Sunday evening, I had a phone call from Peter. This was not unusual, but I did not expect to be told that Peter and Brian had accepted the Derby County job, Brian as the new manager and Peter as assistant manager. I knew that Tim Ward had not been offered a new contract, and that for some time it had been rumoured in the press that the Derby directors were not satisfied with the results, having finished 17th in Division Two. It had not crossed my mind, however, that Brian and Peter would be considered for running the club. The appointment was to begin on 1 June 1967.

Hartlepool United had finished eighth from the top of Division Four at the end of the previous season. Brian and Peter had made many changes to the playing staff, vastly improved performances and attendances were very encouraging. However, without contracts they were completely free to go.



*Brian Clough and Peter Taylor receive a welcome handshake from Sam Longson, the Derby County chairman, outside the Baseball Ground.*

Peter said 'As soon as we are settled in, I will be over to see you.' He came over after they had been at Derby a few days and explained to me how the move had come about. Len Shackleton had again been the one to do the recommending, suggesting Brian and Peter as candidates to the Derby chairman, Mr Sam Longson. After only a very short meeting with Mr Longson and his directors the pair were duly appointed, with a promise of £70,000 available as transfer funds. Peter had apparently had to persuade Brian to take the job, as he was reluctant to leave the North East. Peter was keen to return to the Midlands to be among his family and friends, and fortunately for him the lure of a big club like Derby County was enough to convince Brian. They both moved into nice houses with their families, Brian at Ferrers Way, Darley Abbey, and Peter at Findern.

Peter went on to tell me that they would like me to become more involved. They wanted me to referee all the friendlies, practice games behind closed doors and pre-season games. It was their intention to commence Sunday morning trials at Sinfin training ground, and I was to officiate at those as well. Peter would be recruiting his own scouting staff to operate over the whole of the country. He had several contacts in mind, but was also keen for me to join the scouting staff. Any player I spotted that was above average I would bring along to a Sunday morning session. Peter's pal George Pycroft had been appointed chief scout and I had met him during the Burton Albion days.

Once the season got under way, the number of Sunday morning trialists increased week by week. Half-hour sessions started at 11 o'clock, usually finishing at about one. Lads arrived from all over the country, the general standard was good, and soon the sessions were stretching into the afternoon. Some lads were only on the pitch for a short time, while others stayed longer, some occasionally playing for two sessions, depending on what Peter saw in them. He was helped to assess the talent on view by two of the coaching staff and the local scouts. Brian often turned up during these trials with his two boys and their pet dog, and spent time talking to parents and trialists, but it was not his scene and he did not stay long. Some boys were invited back to be looked at again, while odd ones were signed to play for the club on the day. Jim Walker was picked up at one of these Sunday stints. He came from the Crewe area and was brought over for a trial by our scout in the Potteries area, Ron Astbury. Jim made over 50 appearances in the Derby County first XI and was the Aston Villa physio for many years after he finished playing. I sat with him at a Derby



County reunion dinner at Pride Park recently. He currently spends two days with Sheffield United, two days at the Belfry golf club and two days in his surgery in Birmingham.

Another signing as an apprentice at the same time was Alan Lewis, a young left-back from Yorkshire, who signed professional at the end of the 1972 season and made two first-team appearances at 18 years of age. He was thought highly of, but Brian, showing what a strict disciplinarian he was, cancelled his contract the day that a tearful club landlady, who looked after several of our boys, came to see Brian to report a serious incident in her home. Brian would not stand any stupid behaviour from any member of staff.

During this period Peter began taking me along with him on scouting missions, at midweek evening games and Saturday morning reserve-team games in the Midlands. Usually he used a very low-profile approach, keeping away from spectators and hoping not to be recognised in his muffler and old cap. No one knew me. Over a two-year period I learnt a tremendous amount from him. This was my training, which went on to stand me in good stead. He taught me what to look for and points in a player that he did not like. He had a mental checklist, the most important aspects of which were: how well does the player receive the ball, from any height, first touch and to control it; what does he do with it; is he aware of players, both his own and opponents, around him; how comfortable is he when moving with the ball, does he use both feet; if a forward how well does he strike the ball, has he got pace, is he able to use both feet; as a defender how good are his clearances, what length does he achieve, can he move forward with purpose keeping full control of the ball; what is his heading ability, how high does he jump when heading; what are his stamina and mobility like? If a player fulfilled a lot of these criteria, Peter knew he was a serious prospect. He did not waste time once he thought that the target was not good enough, and he did not often go to watch a player again hoping to see an improvement. This very rarely occurred, and he knew his time was valuable.

Peter was not the best or the bravest goalkeeper in his playing days, but his judgement of 'keepers was superb. I think that he was fully aware of his own shortcomings and thus, when he saw someone who excelled in these areas he took notice. As often as he could we used to go along to see Peter Shilton play in goal for the Leicester reserve team. Shilton was a teenager at the time, but he was almost faultless. Peter Taylor was completely obsessed with him and told me countless times that the lad was going to be something special. How right he was! Most League clubs in those days played their reserve fixtures on Saturdays, usually a 3pm kick-off, but on some occasions they played at 11am, which suited us much better.

By strange coincidence, at that time I had a friend with a couple of greyhounds who used to race them at Coalville flapping track. Peter Shilton also owned greyhounds which regularly raced there, so I was often in conversation with him about the dogs and their chances. I never let on that I was scouting for Derby County, so football was never discussed.

Gordon Banks was the first-team goalkeeper at Leicester City and the England international custodian. David Nish was also a promising young player at Leicester City, so it was well worth the journey to see these reserve boys play. I must have seen Peter Shilton play more times than any other young footballer. I had actually become a fan without realising it.

Until Gordon Banks was sold to Stoke City for £60,000 Peter had only made the odd appearance in the first team. Even though he won 125 caps, in my opinion there should have been more. Ron Greenwood had a period when he was England manager of alternating Peter with Ray Clemence, who himself gained 61 caps.

In later years I did begin to think that Peter Schmeichel at Manchester United was slightly the better 'keeper of the two, but the difference was marginal. Those two were the best in the business.

### **The signings commence**

In July 1967, the rebuilding of Derby County commenced with the signing of John O'Hare, a young Scottish centre-forward from Sunderland. Brian had coached John from the age of 15 through his time as a youth-team player and John became a great servant for Brian. He cost £21,000 and made 308 appearances, gaining 13 caps for Scotland. What a bargain. John scored in his very first League game at the Baseball Ground and was a player that always gave his all.

The next recruit was Roy McFarland. One Monday Peter rang for his habitual chat. When there had been a good result on the Saturday I knew I would receive a call early. I asked him which game had he been to on Saturday and he told me that he had been on the long journey to Torquay to see newly-promoted Tranmere Rovers in Division Three. A young central-defender, Roy McFarland, was the target. At Hartlepool the previous year, playing for Tranmere Rovers, 19-year-old Roy had impressed Peter greatly, and he told me that he had thought of him as soon as he and Brian were appointed at Derby. However, in Saturday's match Roy had not been outstanding, but he had been pitted against a very robust centre-forward who roughed him up a time or two. Tranmere were at home on Friday evening and Peter went to the game with Brian. This time McFarland's quality shone through and the pair stayed after the game and agreed

a transfer fee of £24,500. Roy made 530 appearances for Derby, gaining 28 caps with England, and it would have been more had injury not curtailed his chances.

Peter and Brian's perseverance in negotiating for players was evident. Roy had left the ground by the time an agreement was reached with Dave Russell, the Tranmere manager, and Peter and Brian decided to go to his home, where they met his parents. Roy was already in bed. Brian and Peter explained that they had agreed the transfer with Dave Russell and now they needed Roy's signature. While they were waiting for Roy to come down they chatted to his father, an Everton supporter. When Roy appeared a problem arose because Roy had heard that Liverpool might be interested in him, and he was keen to join them. Brian then revealed some of the plans he and Peter had for Derby County. Roy wanted to have the weekend to think it over, but Brian said that he and Peter would not leave without a definite answer. Roy thought a moment then turned to his father for advice. 'Roy,' said his Dad, 'sign for Derby County. It seems they are going to go places and I've been impressed with these two. Liverpool must have watched you loads of times, but they've never been in touch.' Roy nodded, and Brian whipped out the forms and put a pen in his shaking hand. Peter always said that of all his signings Roy was the best. In later years I worked for Roy as a scout and got to know him well. He is a super guy for whom I have the greatest respect.

Besides the playing signings, new non-playing staff had also been brought in. Jimmy Gordon came from Blackburn Rovers as first-team trainer/coach. Jim had been with Brian and Peter when at Middlesbrough, where he started his career as a coach. John Sheridan came from Hartlepool as a coach and looked after the second team. Brian Newton (who was one of Peter's helpers at Burton Albion) also joined the coaching staff. Gordon Guthrie, the physiotherapist, had been at Derby when Brian and Peter took over and he stayed on. He has been at the club for over 40 years and is still on the staff in 2009.

Alan Hinton was the next player to be brought in, from Nottingham Forest for £29,000. He made 316 appearances. A speedy wide player, he could play on either wing and had the best two feet I have ever seen. You could not tell, watching him play, which was his natural side. I asked Alan about it and he told me that he was naturally right-footed, so I asked him how he had developed his left so well. He told me that when he was with Wolves, he used to stay behind at the ground in the afternoon with the youth team. He would train wearing a boot on his left foot and a plimsoll on his right, hitting dead balls on the pitch and in the shooting alley, the concrete floor and walls under the North Stand at Molineux. It certainly worked. The accuracy of his crosses and his power were exceptional. It took a while for the Derby crowd to appreciate his ability with the

ball as he rarely tackled, but Brian did not play him to do that. In the modern game he would be priceless.

Next there came a rare unsuccessful signing. Pat Wright, a full-back from Shrewsbury, cost £5,000 and made only 12 first-team appearances. He departed at the end of the season. His defensive qualities did not meet the required standard. Peter told me that he had not obeyed his golden rule of watching a player three times when deciding to sign Pat and he had only seen him once. Pat has done very well coaching young footballers and has made a career out of it. I bump into him on occasions at games.

Richie Barker, a striker, cost £2,500 from Burton Albion (he scored 157 goals for them) and signed on full-time, from being a draughtsman playing part-time football in the Southern League. Peter said that he would get goals anywhere. He made 45 appearances for Derby, scoring 14 goals.

Another early signing that Peter brought in was Arthur Stewart, a midfield player from Glentoran, who made 33 appearances before returning to Ireland. I cannot recall ever seeing him play.

Barry Cornforth, our scout in the North East, highly recommended a player called John Robson, who was playing in local youth football. Peter travelled all the way to see him play one weekend and came back with his signature. He made 211 appearances at left-back, completely justifying the urgency of his signing.

The following were already on Derby County's books when Brian and Peter arrived: veteran goalkeeper Reg Mathews, 34 years old, who had replaced Peter in goal at Coventry some years earlier; Colin Boulton, another goalkeeper, the son of a policeman from Gloucester, who was showing promise in the reserves; Peter Daniel (21), Ronnie Webster (23) and John Richardson (22), full-backs, who had come through the youth scheme; Alan Durban, a 26-year-old Welsh international, bought from Cardiff City for £10,000 as a forward four years earlier; and a fairly recent signing, Kevin Hector, a 23-year-old striker, bought from Bradford Park Avenue for £38,000 early the previous season. Together with the new signings the side was beginning to take shape. Brian and Peter were reasonably happy. However, the season ended with Derby in 18th position in Division Two, one place lower than the previous season. The vice-chairman, Mr Sydney Bradley, was soon asking questions, as money had been spent but no improvement was shown.

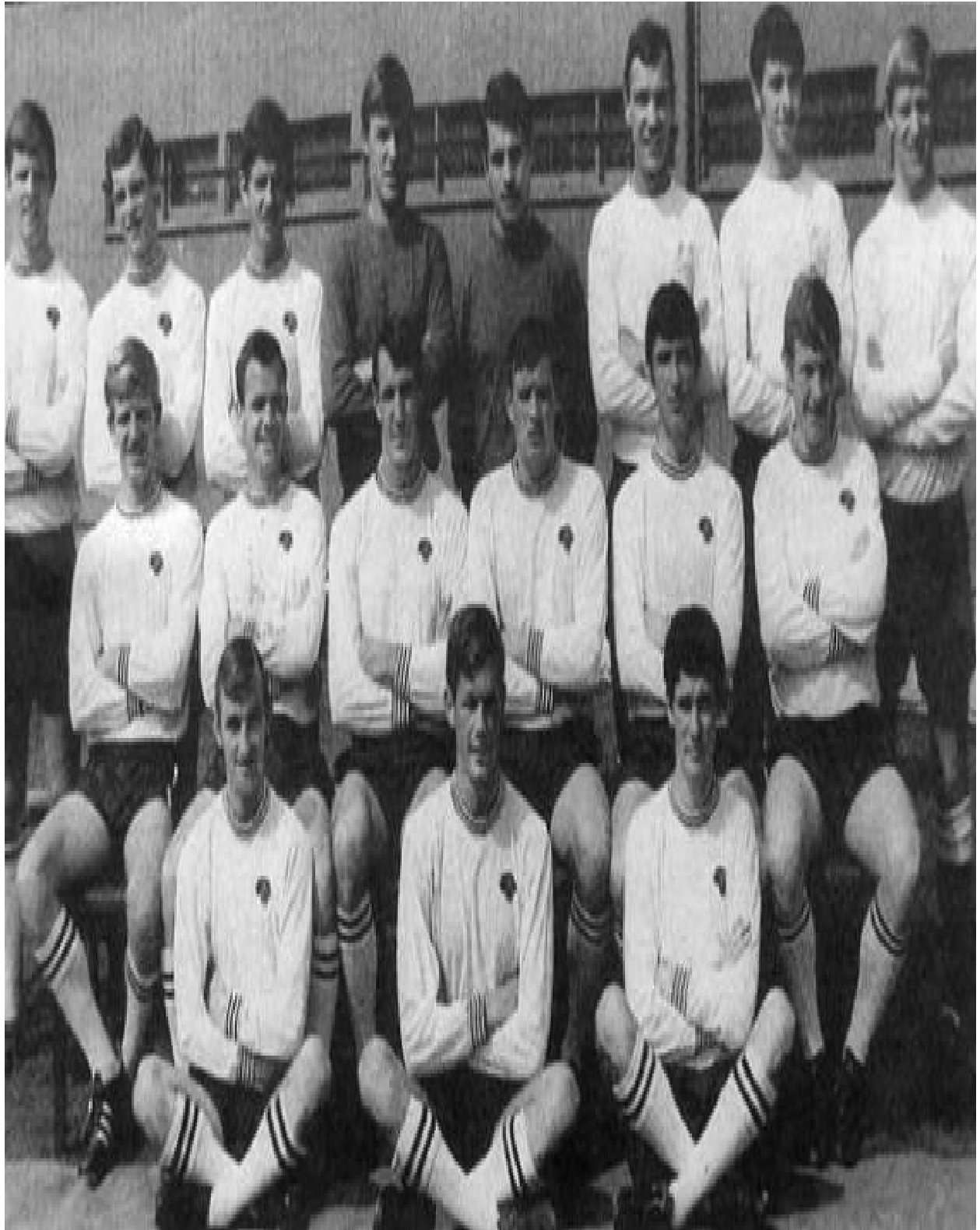
After Brian and Peter's discussions with the board, there was no panic. They seemed unperturbed and they said that the sun would soon be shining. One of their main aims was to get an 'old head' into the side, to steer the ship on the field and bring the best out of the youngsters. Peter's biggest disappointment was

Kevin Hector, whom he thought should have scored more goals, and he attempted to arrange a straight swap of Kevin with Ken Wagstaff of Hull City. Apparently, when Hull City came to the Baseball Ground Wagstaff had been very good and Hull had won that game 2–1. However, their manager, Cliff Britton, would only take Roy McFarland as the player in exchange. There was absolutely no chance of this happening, as after his first season with Derby Roy was very highly rated. The matter was then dropped.

The next season Kevin began to deliver, an example of how Brian could improve players if they were willing to take on board what he said to them. By the time he finished at Derby Kevin had made 589 appearances, scoring 201 goals, and had won one Second Division Championship and two First Division Championship medals, plus two England caps.

### **Promotion into Division One**

The 1968–69 season began with the signing of Les Green, a goalkeeper from Rochdale. He made 129 appearances for Derby and had previously been signed by Peter at Burton Albion and Hartlepoons. Jimmy Greaves once told me, after his retirement, that Les Green had made the best save he had ever seen a goalkeeper make, in a match Jimmy had played in for Tottenham Forest against Derby in the early 1970s.



*Derby County, 1968–69. Back row, left to right: Pat Wright, Russ Bostock, Ron Webster, Colin Boulton, Les Green, Tony Rhodes, Barry Butlin, Jim Walker.*

*Middle row: Alan Durban, Arthur Stewart, Richie Barker, John O'Hare, Kevin Hector, Alan Hinton. Front row: John Richardson, Peter Daniel, John Robson.*

The priority, however, was still to bring in an experienced 'old head' before the start of the season. After lengthy discussions Peter and Brian decided to go for Dave Mackay, the Tottenham Hotspur legend. Brian set off the next day for London, as they had discovered, from the enquiries they made, that a proposed move for Dave back to Scotland with Hearts might not be finalised. Brian spoke to Dave at White Hart Lane and he agreed to come up to Derby for further discussions, to talk about the actual role he was wanted for. He was told he would be sweeping at the back alongside the young Roy McFarland and would be made skipper, in full charge on the pitch. He would not be running around, but would be the anchor man at the back. Dave was a little doubtful, as he had spent his whole career in midfield with a roaming role, but after a lengthy discussion he agreed to sign. He had actually thought that his playing days were over, but Brian convinced him that there was more to come. The £5,000 fee turned out to be one of the best-value transfers of all time. Dave made 145 appearances in three superb seasons and enjoyed it immensely. He proved to be the missing ingredient, and in one of his seasons, 1970–71, he played in every League game. He shared the Football Writers Association Footballer of the Year award with Tony Book of Manchester City, another great oldie, in the 1968–69 season.

Dave Mackay made his debut playing for Derby County alongside Roy McFarland in central defence, against Sunderland in a pre-season friendly on a Saturday evening at the Baseball Ground. I refereed the game and the two linesmen were from Burton upon Trent. The three of us regularly officiated together. The Derbyshire Referees Association objected to my being in charge, as they thought matches should be covered by Derbyshire officials, not those from the Birmingham Association. Until then they had always done it. Brian met six representatives from the Derby Football Association and the Derbyshire Referees Association to discuss the matter. Brian rejected their objections and gave them six complementary tickets for the game, saying 'See for yourselves whether you can find any fault with the handling of this game by Mr Edwards. If so, come back and I will listen to what you have to say.' They attended, but not another word was heard from them. Until I gave up refereeing I continued to officiate at all friendly matches that Derby County were involved in, both home and away.

Colin Todd played in that game for Sunderland. There was a good attendance and the new signings had generated much interest. During the game I had a few

words with Dave Mackay: he was testing me with some banter. I quickly told him that the game was being handled as if it was a normal League match, and to pack it in. He was no more trouble. Brian and Peter were delighted with their team's performance.

The season opened with two 1–1 draws, bringing forward the need to make another vitally important signing. On the Tuesday evening we were due to visit Sheffield United at Bramall Lane. Peter rang to say that it was very important for him to attend the game and would I take him, as it was imperative that he was at the ground very early, before our team coach got there. I picked him up late afternoon at his home in Findern and on the way to Sheffield he told me that he wanted to be at the stadium early so that he could speak to Willie Carlin before the kick-off. This was the first time that I had heard Willie's name mentioned. Peter went on to tell me that Willie Carlin had played for Carlisle prior to joining the Blades, and that he and Brian had been in trouble with the FA for making an illegal approach to the player. They had been warned about their future conduct, and if there was a slip up now the FA would throw the book at them. We arrived at the ground just before six o'clock. Peter obtained our tickets from the office and we had to enter the ground through this way, as the turnstiles were not yet open. We made our way up into the stands. Our seats were about level with the halfway line. Peter left me and said that he would not be too long. The pitch was only lit by one set of floodlights and they were only partly switched on. I could hardly discern anyone on the ground. In the centre circle I could just pick out two figures, one tall, in a long coat, and a much smaller figure in a tracksuit. One or two others were kicking balls about in the far goalmouth.

Peter returned to his seat about half an hour before the kick-off. We left the ground some minutes before the end. Sheffield were winning 2–0. On the way home Peter told me that he had spoken to Carlin and that he was sure that he would sign for Derby before the weekend. Later in the week Peter rang to tell me that Carlin had signed for a £63,000 fee (he made 89 appearances), and he seemed very pleased with the transaction. The next Saturday, in another 2–0 defeat away at Huddersfield, Carlin did not make his debut as the transfer was not quite complete. Derby had gained only two points out of a possible eight. On the Monday morning Peter rang me early: 'Give Ladbrokes a ring and ask what price we are to win Division Two this season. We are certainties, this is the final piece in the jigsaw'. I rang him back with the price offered: 100–6, a quarter of the odds to finish in the first three. 'Will you bet me £60 each way and the same for Brian?' Peter asked. I was very surprised as Brian rarely gambled. I thought to myself that I had better have a slice of the pie. I went and drew £360 out of my Lloyds bank account and placed the bet in Ladbrokes.



The same afternoon I went on my own to Wolverhampton races. At the bar I met Jack Taylor, an international and Division One referee. This was his local race meeting. He was a master butcher by trade and butchers were closed on Mondays, so he was there regularly. I joined him for a drink and a chat as I had met him recently when he was over at Burton giving a talk to the Referees Association. I related the story of the bets that I had struck that morning and the signing of Carlin, and said that Brian and Peter were convinced that they would definitely win Division Two.

Who should then walk in to the bar but Arthur Rowley, the manager of Sheffield United. He came straight up to Jack, but he did not know me from Adam. Jack introduced me to him by my Christian name only, making no mention of my involvement in football.

‘Will you both join me in a bottle of Moet?’ Arthur asked. ‘I’ve just completed the best deal in football with Cloughie.’

‘Cheers!’ Jack Taylor replied. ‘Tell us the story.’ Arthur related exactly the same story as I had already told Jack. He went on to say that Carlin had been a bag of trouble at Sheffield, always getting booked, could not keep his mouth closed, been sent off three times. ‘I can run faster than him,’ he said. ‘It pleases me to have pulled one over on Cloughie.’

During the afternoon I saw Alec Bird, a professional gambler from Manchester, whom I knew fairly well. I told him of the bet that I had struck with Ladbrokes on Derby County winning Division Two of the Football League and showed him the betting slip.

When Willie Carlin arrived at Derby he was firmly told by Brian what was expected from him and emphasis was put on his conduct on the field. Improvement was soon evident. The form of Derby County changed immediately and they went 14 games unbeaten. I have often wondered whether Arthur Rowley ever had any second thoughts about the Carlin transfer. He lost his job at the end of the season and Johnny Harris resumed the team duties.

In November John McGovern was signed from Hartlepoons United. Brian and Peter knew his potential, having signed him as a 16-year-old when they were managing the club. This time he cost them £7,000.

### **A new signing that cost absolutely nothing**

I was still refereeing in the professional non-Leagues, which was mainly on Saturdays. On blank Saturdays I filled in with a Burton & District Division One game. After refereeing Linton United once or twice I took a liking to one of their team. He was useful on the ball, had great skill and continually scored goals. Jeff Bourne was 23 years old and worked on the coal face at a local pit. He was well

overweight for a young man. I was given to understand that he was a heavy beer drinker, but his type of play and his skill in getting goals really impressed me.

I knew his fitness problems could be overcome if he put his mind to it. Peter Taylor, during my tuition period, had told me not to consider age or physique. Can he play? This is the most important assessment. I decided to invite Jeff to Sunday-morning trials at the Sinfin Lane training ground, if he fancied taking a shot at League football. He jumped at the chance. I told him that I would be refereeing the trial games, and gave him instructions about what time to arrive, where it was and what kit he should bring. When I arrived at the ground on the Sunday morning I made sure that Cliff Notley, who did all the organising of these trials, taking down the lads' names and addresses and sorting out the playing teams, was fully aware that Jeff was coming and what position to play him in, as a joint striker of a pair. I did not speak to Peter about him in advance. Jeff's trial period began and I kept as close to him as I could, continually giving him instructions, telling him when to hold on to the ball, when and where to pass and shoot. It worked a treat and he scored three good goals in the half-hour period, watched by Peter, who kept him on for a further half-hour session. After the game he was offered a contract to turn professional. Jeff accepted the terms without any hesitation, although it was a lot less than what he was earning down the pit. No transfer fee was involved: he did not cost the club one penny.

On Jeff's first Monday morning at the Baseball Ground, Brian set his eyes on him for the first time and remarked on his weight. He sent him to the Sinfin training ground with the instructions 'no ball work' and 'no drinking'. He was to help with hand-digging a trench around the pitch, which was to carry the cables for the floodlighting. It was four weeks before this work was completed and Jeff was then allowed to train with the others, do ball work and join in with the normal routines. By this time he had lost over two stone in weight and was soon included in the reserve team. He immediately started to score regularly and progressed into the first-team squad, where he was used mainly as an attacking midfield player. He made 70 first-team appearances, scoring 14 goals in League Division One and gaining a Division One Championship medal under Dave Mackay in the 1974–75 season. In 1976, after Colin Murphy became manager, he decided to accept an offer to play in Canada for the next six years, during which he had two short spells playing in the Football League, during the Canadian close season. Jeff was a fine example of how Brian could make a player out of raw material.

In February 1969 there was a very cold spell with few games taking place. The only fixture completed at the Baseball Ground was the win against Cardiff on 1 February. I had no matches to referee and was frustrated, so I asked if I could go

to the City Ground to see Forest play Leeds United, who were Division One Champions elect. I could only get in standing at the Trent End as there were over 36,000 spectators and the rebuilding of the Main Stand had not been completed. I wanted to see Jim Baxter play. When I have read a lot about a player I like to form my own opinion of him.

The exclusive Victoria Club had recently been opened. The owners were George Aitken and his brother, Nottingham bookmakers. The Nottingham Forest team had been invited to one of the opening evenings, and a big gossip story that had rapidly spread among the sporting public was that Jim Baxter, having had too much to drink, had urinated on their luxurious carpet. It was well into the second half at the City Ground and Forest were kicking towards the Trent End. At the time Leeds were winning 1–0. Jim Baxter received the ball in the right-hand defensive quarter of Leeds United and ran with the ball towards the edge of the penalty area. A hush came over the crowd in anticipation. Suddenly, a very loud voice yelled ‘Go on Jim, score and then you can come and piss on our carpet!’ The Trent End erupted with laughter. Leeds won the game 2–0. Before I went to the game, Peter told me to have a good look at Henry Newton in midfield. It was the first time I had seen him play and I thought he was Forest’s best player. He was strong in the tackle and worked hard the whole game. Peter said ‘I thought you would be impressed.’

The February lay-off caused a build-up of fixtures and Peter was worried about the amount of responsibility for getting goals that rested on Kevin Hector and John O’Hare. He felt that another strongly-built striker was required as a stand-by in case either became injured, as the results were now showing that the Championship was a strong possibility. No replacement had been signed after Richie Barker’s transfer to Notts County. It was decided to sign Frank Wignall from Wolves for £20,000. This was entirely Peter’s doing and Wignall made his debut on 1 March, coming on as a substitute for Willie Carlin and scoring. By the season’s end he had made six appearances, scoring four goals, justifying the purchase. He played 54 League and Cup games before he was sold to Matlock Town in November 1971.

When League games resumed after the cold spell Derby County were only defeated once during the remainder of the season and won the title by seven clear points.

The winnings from the large bet that I had struck had to be collected from Ladbrokes. They had offered to pay me by cheque, but as it had to be divided I had asked for cash. I did not want to be seen collecting such a large amount so I persuaded a close friend, a bank clerk, to collect the returns of £4,110 in a leather case, as used by banks. I was waiting outside in my car. Few people knew of the

investment. Soon afterwards I bumped into Alec Bird at Newmarket races. He immediately came up to me with a big smile and shook my hand vigorously. He told me then that he had put £600 each way on Derby County after seeing me at Wolverhampton. Alec never forgot this and he did me some very good turns in later years. He was a real gentleman, and at that time he was the bookmakers' most feared professional gambler. As an example, when I wanted an alternative betting account to the one I had with Ladbrokes, Alec suggested William Hill. On the application form I named Alec Bird to verify my application. The credit account was opened with a limit of £400. I had asked for a much larger sum and I rang Hill's for an explanation. They said that the connection with Alec Bird was the reason, and they said that they were worried that I might be asked to place some of his investments; however, at no time did he ever ask me to do this.

Soon after gaining promotion Peter told me that an approach to Nottingham Forest had been made via Matt Gillies to find out how much they would expect for Henry Newton. Matt put it to the Forest committee, but they had heard that Derby County had tried to swap Kevin Hector for Wagstaff at Hull and had been turned down, so they asked if they could have Kevin in part-exchange for Henry. Brian refused and said he was not available. Two days later Matt confirmed that the committee would not agree to Henry going to Derby for cash.

As a reward for getting promotion, Mr Sam Longson increased Brian and Peter's salaries. Their basic salaries were now £13,000 per year. At the first press conference Brian gave after news of this increase had leaked out, one reporter, feeling brave, asked 'Did you know, Brian, that your salary is twice the size of that paid to the Archbishop of Canterbury?'

'Young man,' responded Brian, 'I will tell you why. The Baseball Ground is full on Saturday, but on Sunday the churches are almost empty.'



*Derby County captain Dave Mackay holds the trophy high. The Rams are Division Two champions in 1969.*

## **The rewards of Division One**

Before the 1969–70 season began, the people of Derby had gone football crazy. Their idols were about to step into the Football League Division One for the first time since 1953, after a gap of 16 years. The ever-growing number of supporters had great expectations and the team certainly did not let them down.

The new Ley Stand had been completed, which had covered the whole length of the Popular side at a cost of £230,000, increasing the capacity to over 40,000. The average gate when Brian and Peter had first arrived was 16,000; they were now averaging 35,000. On 20 September 1969 the attendance record was broken when 41,826 witnessed a 5–0 drumming of Spurs, Dave Mackay's former club.

In the first game of the campaign in Division One, John McGovern became the first player to have played in all four Divisions of the Football League: what an achievement for a 19-year-old.

No new signings were made. Brian and Peter were satisfied with the present staff and, with the work that had been done at the ground and at the Sinfin training ground, there was no money available. Derby were unbeaten in the first 11 games. During the season John Rhodes, Peter Daniel, Arthur Stewart and Jim Walker were called on for odd games from the reserves. I was still refereeing and travelling to matches with Peter, scouting for possible new recruits. Now Derby were in the top flight higher quality players were required. We also assessed some of the teams we were due to play. On Saturdays Peter was usually with Brian at first-team matches.

It was the New Year before the first signing of the season was made, with Derby County's first six-figure purchase coming when Terry Hennessey, a Welsh international defender, joined from Nottingham Forest for £103,000. He made 82 appearances and stayed for just over four years, but he was plagued with injuries and absent for long periods. Terry had been bought to replace Dave Mackay, but he did not turn out to be one of Peter's best purchases. He had some outstanding performances, but others were below par. Terry was not strong mentally, and it is hard to detect that until you actually work with someone. First he picked up an ankle injury, then a knee condition. Brian and Peter did not think that he worked hard enough to get rid of these injuries and get back to full fitness. Terry lacked Dave's tenacity, courage and willpower. Dave, of course, was a very hard act to follow as he was someone very special. Nevertheless, Brian lost some faith in Terry and his last game for Derby was against West Bromwich Albion in January 1973, after which he had to retire through injury.



*Peter witnessing the double signing of Tony Bailey (£3,500) and Terry Hennessey (£103,000).*

When Terry was signed Peter told me that the reserves needed strengthening in the central defence positions. He asked me whether I had seen anyone recently that could be brought in immediately. Tony Bailey came to mind. He was a local lad, in Burton Albion's first team, 23 years old and barely 6ft tall. He was not the most strongly built defender, but he read the game well, was strong in the tackle, jumped and headed well and had courage in the air. I thought he could play a bit of football, but would not make a top League performer. Peter paid Burton Albion £3,500 for him and he stayed with Derby for four years, making only one appearance in the first XI, against Leeds at Elland Road at Christmas 1971. He stood in for Colin Todd that day. Leeds won 3–0. It would have been hard for anyone to fill Colin's boots, however. Tony went on loan to Oldham, then moved to Bury for £6,000. In all he made over 300 appearances over six years, and injury brought his career to an early close.

Derby County finished in fourth place in Division One in 1969–70.



## Signings and scouting

Before the second season in the top flight began, a very important change was made to the non-playing staff. Club secretary Malcolm Bramley had been away from his desk for some time, apparently suffering from a mental breakdown and exhaustion. He claimed that attendances had doubled from 16,000 to 32,000 during the season, with no increase in the number of office staff. However, the 1969 accounts showed that there was a shortage of £3,000 in receipts from season ticket sales. Lodging allowances were being paid to apprentices rather than directly to landladies, some players' contracts had not been lodged correctly and £2,000, in £20 lots, that had been paid to Dave Mackay for programme contributions was outside the terms of his contract. All these irregularities were cited when the Football League later brought charges against the club.

In all this administrative chaos a replacement club secretary was urgently required. Jimmy Gordon suggested that Stuart Webb, the assistant secretary at Preston North End, would be the ideal candidate. Jimmy knew him well from his days there. Stuart had been a youth-team player at Preston but had not been offered a contract when he reached 18. However, he was offered a job in the office, where he had helped out as an apprentice. His good work had led to him becoming assistant to the secretary.

Stuart Webb was interviewed at the Midland Hotel and appointed very quickly. He was a dynamic young man and soon had the office converted to his way of working. He was an excellent addition to the non-playing staff and I found him of tremendous help to me. Brian and Stuart did not particularly get on, and were never close, but they had terrific respect for one another in the way that they did their respective jobs. However, they certainly each made sure the other knew who was in charge of their own domain. Brian wanted to handle some of the season ticket sales, but in the first altercation between the two Stuart made his position very clear and told him that all players and staff relating to the footballing side of things was Brian's domain, and that he expected him not to touch anything concerning the administration or non-footballing staff.

This situation was quickly borne out. One morning Stuart was in his office early, when there came a knock on the door. He opened it to see Special Constable Dunford stood before him. 'Can you tell me,' he said 'why my son Michael was given the sack yesterday?' After hearing Stuart's reply that he was unaware of the dismissal, the Special Constable explained 'Mr Clough dismissed him yesterday afternoon.'

Stuart went straight to Brian's office and gleaned that Brian had wanted to get into the safe in the office but Michael (who was in fact acting on Stuart's orders) had refused to hand over keys, for which Brian had sacked him. Upon hearing this, Stuart said 'You can't sack him, he's on my staff and nothing to do with you. I told you this two weeks ago. I'm recalling him.' True to his word, and despite Brian's displeasure, Stuart went to Michael's father and told him to send him back to work as soon as possible. Michael has since had an excellent career in the game and at the time of writing is in the position of chief executive at Birmingham City.

In April 1970 the FA and Football League announced the results of their investigations into the administrative irregularities at the club. Derby were fined £10,000 and banned from playing against European teams in any matches, competitive or friendly. The fourth-place finish in 1969–70 should have qualified them for a place in the Fairs Cup, but they could not enter the competition. Planned pre-season friendlies in France and Germany were cancelled.

Derby were invited to play in the Watney Cup. Peter and Brian accepted the invitation and the matches were played during the fortnight before the new season commenced. I was actually in the office when the two of them discussed how they intended to approach the competition. It was decided to play the full first team to get them in fine shape for the new season in the League. Brian said 'We're in it, let's give it our best shot.' We duly won the handsome trophy.

1 August a 5–3 victory away at Fulham, first round

5 August a 1–0 victory home to Sheffield United, semi-final

8 August a 4–1 victory home to Manchester United Final (United's full first team)

There had been concerns about risking the first-team players in these highly competitive games, but no injuries were sustained.

The League campaign began with a loss at Chelsea, which was followed by three wins and a draw. Peter was not satisfied and said we would have to introduce more pace and skill into the side.



Dave Mackay having received the Watney Cup from Sir Stanley Rous in 1970.

### **My appointment as chief scout**

A dramatic change was soon made to my role with Derby County. I got a telephone call from Stuart Webb, the club secretary, saying that Brian wanted to see me in his office as soon as I could get over. There was no mention of the reason for the meeting. I said I would be there in an hour. With some apprehension I drove to the club. I met Brian in his office. It was just the two of us. He shook my hand. 'Sit down!' he said. He got straight to the point. 'I've had to sack George Pycroft on instructions from the chairman, Mr Sam Longson', he said. 'Mr Longson saw George shortly before kick-off at the last three home games, from his office overlooking the street by the main entrance in Shaftesbury Crescent. He said that he wasn't paying him to be there, he should be out looking for prospective players. Peter and I had not been fully aware of this – obviously our attention on match days is focused on our team preparation – so we have had little choice but to act on the chairman's instructions.' The chairman loved to have a go at Brian when he got a chance, particularly if there was a sound reason. He continued 'Peter has recommended that I offer you the job of chief scout of this club. He says that you know what we require and will be fully capable of doing the work. It will mean you packing in your refereeing, which you enjoy so much. I know how I missed playing when I had to finish. You will be directly responsible to Peter, he will tell you what he wants covering, there will be, of course, a monthly salary. Think it over!' I accepted straight away. Brian welcomed me on board and shook my hand and wished me the best of luck.

He then gave me some sound advice. 'If at any time you think you have stepped out of line with an approach to a player, don't sleep on it, tell me as soon as possible to enable me to kill it before it becomes serious, so that I can get it sorted out.' Peter came in and shook my hand and congratulated me. He said that occasionally I would be asked to do a match report on forthcoming opposition, although neither of them were believers in worrying about the opposition and the importance of match reports. All my work was to be top secret, only to be discussed with Brian or Peter.

### **My first assignment**

Stuart Webb had recommended to Brian and Peter that we go after Archie Gemmill at Preston, a young Scot with an Under-23 pedigree, who had been signed by them from St Mirren. Stuart had been the assistant club secretary at

Preston when Archie had joined them over three years ago. Archie had pace and had consistently improved since he first arrived, and Stuart had continued to monitor his progress.



*Left: Stuart Webb, the dynamic secretary. Right: Archie Gemmill delivering. Stuart Webb, Derby County secretary, recommended the player having known him at Preston North End. Peter saw him just once before completing a very speedy transfer, with Everton also hot on his trail. A little difficulty was encountered, but Brian overcame the problem.*

This was to be my first assignment as chief scout and on Saturday 19 September Peter told me to go to Villa Park, as Preston were the visitors and I would get a good look at Gemmill. At 12.30pm on Saturday, Peter rang to tell me that there had been a change of plans. He said that a definite decision had to be made that day as they had learned that Harry Catterick of Everton was about to make an offer to Preston for Gemmill. Peter was going to Villa and I was to go to Peter's match to do a report on West Bromwich Albion, who we were due to play the next week. It was a good move. Peter was very impressed with Gemmill's performance and he and Brian travelled up to Preston the same evening. They arrived at Deepdale in time for Alan Ball Senior's (the father of that wonderful footballer of the same name) return from Villa Park, and after discussions they agreed a transfer fee of £64,000. They then went to see Archie Gemmill at his home for talks that went on for some considerable time. Negotiations were difficult. Archie himself was fairly quiet and reasonable, but Mrs Gemmill did not care for Brian, having formed an opinion of him from watching him on television. In the end Peter decided to make the journey home, leaving Brian to do the talking. Brian was determined not to go home empty-handed and slept at Archie's home, hoping to complete the deal on the Sunday morning. This proved worthwhile and Archie signed early in the morning, with his wife's consent. Brian rang Peter and said that he had got the signed contract and was on his way home.

On the Monday morning, Harry Catterick rang Alan Ball to arrange to go over to Preston to sign Gemmill. He was told that he was too late and that Archie had joined Derby County. This was another fine example of how Brian and Peter operated. The late change of plans had worked perfectly. If I had gone to Villa Park instead of Peter, even if I had made the same assessment, the signing would not have been completed so quickly and he would, in all probability, have become an Everton player. Peter said to me that Archie would develop into an even better player after a couple of months. He gained his first Scottish cap in 1971 against Belgium. I have always rated the signing of Gemmill as one of the major signings that Brian and Peter made during their partnership. Archie made 404 appearances for Derby and gained 43 full international caps for Scotland and

two Division One Championship medals.

Willie Carlin, whose place Archie was to take, was sold to Leicester City for a £38,000 transfer fee in October. Carlin had done a tremendous job in getting us out of Division Two and established in Division One, but in football there is no room for sentiment and the time had come for Willie to move on. Although he was reluctant to go, for the club it was a shrewd deal: a new, younger arrival for only £26,000 expenditure.

### **Peter taken ill**

On the way to play Arsenal at the end of October 1970, Peter was taken ill in the coach while in London. It turned out to be an early warning of a heart problem. When he was ill again a couple of months later a heart specialist recommended that Peter take a few weeks' rest away from the club.

During Peter's absence Brian brought in Colin Boulton, the reserve-team goalkeeper, to replace Les Green, who had played in every game for the Rams since his arrival at the club. On Boxing Day 1970, at home to Manchester United in front of over 34,000 spectators, the final score was 4–4. Les Green was judged to have been mainly responsible for this surprise result, perhaps due to the Christmas festivities. Brian was furious and some unprintable words were exchanged between him and Les after the game. Les was dropped and Colin Boulton grabbed his opportunity with both hands, being ever present until he missed two games at the end of the 1972–73 season through injury. Les Green left the club at the end of the season and joined Durban City, the South African side. The whole saga was an example of how Brian handled behaviour that was deemed to be out of order. Players would be sidelined and moved on quickly to avoid disrupting the other players in the dressing room.

Brian also made one of his rare signings on his own judgement while Peter was away. Colin Todd joined us from Sunderland in February 1971 for £170,000, a record transfer fee at that time. He made 371 appearances, gaining 27 international caps and winning two Division One Championship medals with Derby County. Several clubs had attempted to sign him from Sunderland but had been turned away. Brian, with family and friends in the North East, knew that Sunderland were having a few financial problems. As soon as Alan Brown, who had returned as their manager, paid £100,000 for David Watson from Rotherham, Brian stepped in immediately with the offer for Todd.

Peter returned to active duty shortly after this. With Colin in the side Derby won the first game against Arsenal, but they lost five of the next seven games. Peter had told me that he would not have bought Todd and referred to him as a 'bread and butter player'. I am sure that this was because Brian had signed Colin



and there was a little jealousy involved. I thought that Colin was a good acquisition. He had pace and strength and his ball control was excellent. Also, Brian had known him very well when he was coaching at Sunderland. Peter later changed his opinion, however, and agreed that there had been a big improvement in his play. I think that Peter secretly thought 'I wish I had brought him in'.

Peter asked me to go to Scunthorpe United, who were playing Stockport County in a Division Four match. The target was Kevin Keegan, playing for Scunthorpe, and I had instructions to make a thorough examination of his game. At the match I recognised about six other scouts, two of them from top clubs. Keegan was playing in the right-half position. I made him about 5ft 6in height, slight of build, possibly 10 stone in weight. He kept wide right most of the time and his performance did not inspire me at all. He did not work hard enough, never challenged strongly for the ball and was reluctant to hold on to the ball and go wide forward down the wing. He parted with the ball far too quickly and gave me the impression that he did not fancy the physical part of the game. I decided not to recommend him in my report. Maurice Lindley, the Leeds United chief scout, sat next to me. Shortly before the game ended he asked me whether I had come to look at Keegan. I said I had and told him that I had not been impressed. Maurice said that Don Revie had sent him after having received a very good report, but he was not impressed either. I submitted my report to Peter next morning. Peter then revealed that he and Brian had been to see Keegan the previous Friday at Southend. 'We paid to go in and stayed at the YMCA to keep the visit very quiet, and we came away with exactly the same verdict,' he said.

During the close season Kevin Keegan was transferred to Liverpool for £140,000, the deal having been completed at Christmas. Bill Shankly had allowed him to stay at Scunthorpe until the end of the season, to ensure their survival in the Football League, as they were perilously close to having to seek re-election. The transfer had been a very closely kept secret. Our excuse for missing this great player was that we came on the scene after all the negotiations had been completed. I certainly never saw a glimpse of the player he became at Liverpool and in Hamburg.

The official date of Keegan's transfer was May 1971. In August of the next season he made his debut for Liverpool and he never looked back. We always referred to him as 'the one that got away'. George Pycroft had ribbed Peter about missing out on Keegan, after George had recommended him when he was available for £35,000, and he later stated that the falling-out they had as a result had led to his sacking from Derby County.

Sheffield Wednesday were playing in midweek against Santos, a Brazilian club, in a friendly at Hillsborough. Peter asked me to take him to the game, and on the

way he said that we would learn something to our advantage that afternoon. We were not disappointed. The two Brazilian full-backs on view that afternoon were awesome. I could not take my eyes off them. They did not win tackles the way our defenders usually did, they pinched the ball with perfect timing. Their control on the ball was excellent, and their pinpoint passing set up endless attacks. They were superb. Peter could not stop talking about them on the way home. He remarked to me that David Nish of Leicester City was the only player in the country who would be able to do that job for us.

The Boxing Day 4–4 draw with Manchester United at the Baseball Ground was still in Peter's thoughts, although he had been off ill at the time. The return fixture at Old Trafford was to take place on Easter Monday. United were due to visit the Victoria Ground to play Stoke City towards the end of March and Peter wanted to watch the game, but the first team were away at Anfield and he had to travel with them. Thus he asked me to go to Stoke to do a match report.

Manchester United defeated Stoke City 2–1 with George Best scoring both their goals. This was the first time that I had seen 'Bestie' play in a game from the stands. He was fantastic. It was one of his outstanding performances. The playing surface was extremely heavy and it rained continuously. For one goal that he scored he collected the ball on the edge of his own penalty area, running with the ball almost the whole length of the pitch on the right-hand side, leaving in his wake several bewildered Stoke players. Nonetheless, I picked up on a couple of areas in the United defence that I thought were vulnerable and concentrated my report on these. At Old Trafford a wonderful result was achieved. We came away with a 2–1 victory, John O'Hare scoring both of the goals. I heard the news on my car radio on the way home from another game. It gave me a wonderful feeling as we had lost five games out of the last seven. Peter rang me that same evening, very pleased.

Derby County finished in ninth position at the end of the season, due to the very poor run up to Easter. Dave Mackay had been ever present for the first time in a season during his entire career. Some 34,000 supporters turned up to see his final game to say thank you. Dave Mackay had always been one of my idols from when he first joined Spurs. When he came to Derby I was over the moon and he gave magnificent service. I had asked if I could be present at this game, as it was the last game of the season. He left the field to tremendous 'thank you' applause from the spectators. What a player, what a man.

For the first time I went on the club's end-of-season break to Cala Millor in Majorca for seven days. In the evening of the arrival day a Derby County XI played a Palma side. The only Derby County first-team players missing were those away on international duty. I refereed the game with two Majorcan

linesmen. There was a good crowd in attendance, both holidaymakers and locals enjoying the occasion. I found it very hot and stuffy but the players enjoyed themselves. The refreshments went down well afterwards. Our share of the gate money went towards the cost of the holiday. Our evening meal was held at the 'Shack', as was usual on the first night, and guests were invited; some of the players had friends and relations over. The practice was that all meals for guests had to be paid for by the staff member who brought them along. Mr Sydney Bradley, vice-chairman, was in charge of the party and the collection of the monies. I had no guest. Mr Bradley came to me for my contribution, saying that any part-time members of the club were to pay in full. Mr Bradley did not know about my role with the club. Stuart Webb reimbursed me when he was told about it.

The holiday was the first I had taken away from my business for 10 years. The first evening we went out and I thought I was dressed alright – at least, no one said anything to me. The next morning Stuart Webb told me that he wanted to take me into town, and he took me to a gents' outfitters and bought me a pair of denim bell-bottomed trousers and a modern, dark-blue shirt to match, all on the club. He then said 'If you're coming out with us to the bars and dancing, you must look as though you belong to us.' When I went home I underwent a severe grilling.

### **Aston Villa and Brian**

While Peter was off ill there was a midweek Derby County reserve-team game at Villa Park. Brian asked me to go along with him and he picked me up at the shop on the way. I drove his car to Birmingham. Our reserves won the game 3–1 and after the final whistle Brian went to the dressing room to speak to the lads. He told me to wait in the visitors' reception room and have a cup of tea, and he would come for me when he was ready. After about half an hour Brian popped his head round the door and said that he was ready to leave. We walked along the corridor towards the car park and as we were passing the chairman's room out came Mr Ellis. Locking the door, he turned and in his charming way congratulated Brian on the victory.

'Well done Brian, you've got some very promising young lads.'

'That's very kind of you, Mr Chairman' Brian replied, equally as charming. He introduced me to Mr Ellis. There were only the three of us in the corridor. There was a short pause, then Mr Ellis said to Brian 'How would you like to come and work for a good big club, Brian?'

There was another pause and then Brian, in his majestic way, said 'Mr Ellis, that is a wonderful offer. I would jump at the chance, but seriously, do you think

that you and I could work harmoniously together? I personally have considerable doubts’.

‘Brian, you are probably correct,’ said Mr Ellis, before shaking our hands and wishing us a safe journey home. On the way home in the car we did not discuss the exchange, and I never knew whether Peter was told about it.

In the book *Deadly* by Doug Ellis there is a chapter about Brian and Peter sounding Doug out about being offered the managership of Aston Villa. This took place when they were having a drink together at the Baseball Ground after the transfer of John Robson to Aston Villa from Derby County during December 1972. Unfortunately, John contracted meningitis and died young, his promising career cut unfairly short.

At that time Villa were in League Division Two and managed by Vic Crowe. Derby County had finished the previous season as Champions of League Division One. The story goes that a further meeting took place over lunch in a restaurant in Lichfield, which ended with Mr Ellis saying almost the same as Brian had said to him at Villa Park when I was with them. ‘Look Brian, it would never work. There’s only one boss at Villa Park and that’s me – you and I could never work together.’

I was never told of these meetings, and until I read Mr Ellis’s account of them in his book I had absolutely no knowledge of them, although Peter usually discussed behind the scenes happenings with me. Perhaps a reason for this was that relations between the Derby County board and Brian and Peter were a little strained at the time, mainly due to money.

## 1971–72 Division One Champions

With everyone back at the club for pre-season preparations, fully refreshed, the priority was to find a reserve goalkeeper to provide cover for Colin Boulton now that Les Green had left the club. Only friendly games were being played and no one was sure where a goalkeeper might be available. Peter had no one in mind, but wanted a promising young recruit.

Blackburn Rovers had been relegated to Division Three. We had a tip-off that their goalkeeper, Graham Moseley, who had just signed as a full professional from their youth team, was useful. At the same time Jimmy Gordon, the first-team trainer, suggested that a young lad at Middlesbrough (his old club) might be worth a look. The decision about which of them to follow up was left entirely to me. I decided to travel to Ewood Park first to watch Moseley. He was efficient and looked the part, but he did not have much to do. The Middlesbrough reserves were playing on a Wednesday afternoon and I decided to go and watch them too. Jimmy Gordon got permission from the boss to come with me. It was a good chance for him to visit some old friends. We travelled up in the morning, checking before leaving that the lad we were interested in would be playing. During the game he let in two goals, and he was not tall enough for my liking. Even Jimmy was disappointed. The following Saturday, the season proper having just begun, I went back to Blackburn to watch Graham Moseley a second time. This time he was downright impressive and he joined us for £18,000 two months before his 18th birthday.

It was April 1973 before Graham got his chance in the first team when Colin was injured. Before he left Derby he made 44 appearances.

Brian and Peter both forecast a good season ahead. The pre-season games had gone well, and they thought that the side would fulfil its potential. Only Roy McFarland was missing for the first three games due to an injury picked up while on international duty. Derby had a great opening to the campaign, going 11 games unbeaten, including knocking Dundee out of the Texaco Cup after home and away games, 8–5 on aggregate.

Peter was quite a nervous character, and this became very apparent during a scouting trip to Old Trafford. Four of us – Brian, Peter, Stuart and myself – travelled together in Brian's car. At the ground we sat three rows back from the front in the directors' box, and shortly before the game commenced Sir Matt Busby came down and introduced himself, shaking each of our hands and welcoming us all to Old Trafford. To my surprise, it was Brian who seemed to be

overwhelmed by all this – he kept on whispering to Peter, ‘Fancy Sir Matt Busby doing that. We’re now being recognised by the top people.’

On the way home down the M6 it was all Brian could talk about, and his mind must have been elsewhere as his speed kept on creeping up to over 100mph. Terrified Peter, sitting in the front passenger seat, kept telling him to slow down, and eventually he screamed at Brian to pull over as he wanted to get out. Brian pulled into the first lay-by, and Peter jumped out, slammed the door and declared he was not going any further. Brian started to move off, but Stuart managed to persuade him to wait and promise not to exceed 70mph for the rest of the trip. After a short while Peter got back in the car, but hardly a word was spoken by anyone for the remainder of the journey back to Derby.

My first assignment of the season was to go to see Roger Davies play for Worcester City in the Southern League. Mick Walters, one of our scouts (skipper of Burton Albion when they won the Southern League Cup when managed by Peter), had recommended that we sign Roger. I went along to see them play in their next two games, one home and one away. Roger scored in both of these matches. He had only been at Worcester City a month, having signed professionally for them from Bridgnorth Town at the beginning of the season. A 20-year-old centre-forward weighing 13 stone, he had good body strength. His skill on the ball was exceptional for such a big lad and he had pace and a good work rate, and was good in the air. I was convinced. I reported to Peter what I had seen, adding that he should go to see him as soon as possible, because obviously there would be competition from other clubs.

Worcester City were at home the following Saturday and Peter had decided that we would go together. I drove and we arrived at the St George’s ground about an hour before the kick-off. Unannounced, we paid to go in, Peter complete with flat cap and muffler, and we went to the far end of the ground where there would be fewer spectators. As it turned out they were mostly youngsters and no one recognised Peter. Roger scored two goals, one of which was spectacular: he received the ball at his feet just inside the opponents’ half, going down the slope, beating two or three defenders on the way to the edge of the penalty area, before side-footing the ball past the ‘keeper.

Shortly after, with 10 minutes to go, Peter said ‘Let’s go’. As we arrived at the turnstiles, the gates open, Paddy Ryan, the chief scout for West Bromwich Albion, emerged from behind the pay box.

‘What did you think of the big lad, Peter?’ he enquired. Without stopping, Peter replied ‘Not good enough for our League Paddy, he lacks class. Cheerio, we’re off’. There were several other scouts close by, earwigging. In the car Peter said ‘Let’s go for a pot of tea at a café.’ A short distance away we found a café and

had tea and toast. Peter rang the Baseball Ground from the payphone in the café. He came away smiling. Brian had told him that they had beaten Stoke City 4–0, and that he was on his way down to meet us. I drove back to Worcester's ground. The place was almost deserted. Peter went into the office to see the secretary and I stayed in the car. The chairman and his brother (owners of a local building firm) were still there. After about an hour Brian arrived, driven by Michael Keeling, a club director. Roger Davies also returned. It was almost eight o'clock when Brian and Peter emerged from the offices. Peter came to me and said that Roger had signed, but it had cost £14,000. He had only expected to pay about £10,000, but apparently the shrewd brothers had pointed out that Arsenal, Coventry City and Portsmouth were all showing interest, offering trials. Peter went home with Brian and I drove back on my own, thoroughly satisfied with events.

The following Wednesday evening Derby County were playing Dundee United in the home leg of the Texaco Cup fixture. Roger was to be presented to the supporters prior to the kick-off. Peter told me that he wanted me to attend, never mentioning that the chairman was unhappy about the fee. He asked me to arrive early. I was there about an hour before the kick-off. I walked through the doors in Shaftesbury Crescent and at the bottom of the passage Mr Longson, the chairman, was waiting to greet me. 'Ee lad, I want to see thee in my office,' he said, in a stern Derbyshire accent. In I went. 'They tell me that this signing is your doing. £14,000 for a non-League player! Have you gone mad? It'll cost you your job, if he's not good enough. Don't you forget what I'm saying.' Brian and Peter were laughing when I came out. They had set me up.

That first season, when Roger was in the reserves, they won the Central League. At the beginning of the following season he went out on loan to Preston North End, but after only three months he was recalled due to his impressive performances there and injuries within our first team. His debut for us was in November 1972 away at Manchester City, in a 4–0 defeat. The team that day had four regulars missing: Webster, Durban, Gemmill and Hector. His next game was a 4–0 thrashing of Arsenal at the Baseball Ground, and he was soon picked for the first team on merit. His outstanding games were in the FA Cup, scoring at Peterborough and at home in the 1–1 draw with Spurs in front of almost 38,000 spectators. In the return leg at White Hart Lane, in front of another full house of 53,000, in extra-time Roger scored a memorable hat-trick. I had travelled with the team that night, and as there were no seats available I had stood the whole game at the end of the tunnel to the dressing rooms. I had a wonderful proud feeling watching Roger perform. These performances earned Roger an England Under-23 cap. After making 166 appearances and scoring 44 goals, he was sold

to Brugge KV for £135,000. I cannot recall Mr Longson ever saying thank you. Roger is currently working at Pride Park as a PR officer.

Steve Powell, the 16-year-old son of Tommy Powell, made his debut for the Rams on 20 October 1971 in a Texaco Cup tie against Stoke City. He played three games in the League for the first XI during the season. He had been outstanding in the reserves, having come through from the youth team, and had set an age record.

At the beginning of December I was given the task of travelling up to Carlisle to watch a lad in his early 20s, a striker that they had taken from Crewe Alexandra (then in the Fourth Division) for a £12,000 fee, Stanley Bowles. Peter told me that there was considerable interest in him and he was linked to several clubs. I was greatly impressed. Although not tall, his skill and general standard was very good. As was our usual practice I checked thoroughly on his background. He was a Manchester boy and had been with Manchester City as a youngster. Joe Mercer, who was their manager in those days, let him go to Bury after some bad behaviour outside the club. He was only at Bury for a short while. I discussed what I had unearthed about Stan with Peter, who said that he would take a chance on him as Brian would soon sort him out. Peter made an approach to Carlisle but could not get Ian MacFarlane to consider less than £90,000 for his transfer. Brian was not too keen on his past history either, so it was decided not to proceed with the transfer. In September 1972, Queen's Park Rangers manager Gordon Jago paid £112,000 for Stan and his goals-to-games ratio during his time with them was better than 30 per cent. QPR were Division Two runners-up in 1972–73 and Division One runners-up in 1974–75, so Stan did very well with them.

### **A rare scouting trip away with Brian**

By 8 January 1972, Derby County had only won two of their last four games, and had only won 1–0 at home against Chelsea on New Year's Day. This was causing some concern, as the reasons for the lacklustre performances were not clear. During the week it was decided that Peter and I should travel to Bournemouth on Saturday to take a look at their player Ted MacDougall. In the previous season he had scored 42 goals in Division Four, which had lifted Bournemouth into Division Three. He was still scoring regularly in Division Three but no one at our club had seen him play. We were to set off early on Saturday morning on our 400-mile round trip.

On Friday morning Peter rang to say that there was a change of plans for the weekend. They were going to try a new approach to the pre-match preparations of the first team, to freshen things up a bit. Brian was going to go with me to



Bournemouth, leaving that afternoon if I could manage it. The proposed time of departure was 2pm from my shop, travelling in Brian's car and staying overnight in Bournemouth. The first team were due to travel to Southampton and stay overnight. Peter would join them at the Dell at 2pm on Saturday and tell them that Brian would be along later. Peter was going to give the team talk.

I told Peter that I would be able to go. Shortly after 2pm Brian arrived and walked into the shop. I was ready and waiting. 'Have you ever driven an automatic Merc?' he asked.

'No,' I replied, and he threw me the keys.

'You'll soon learn.' He went round to every member of my staff, greeting them with a smile and a few words, with his usual charm.

'I'll look after him,' he shouted, as we walked out of the door. When we got in the car he told me that he had only taken delivery of the car that morning. There were only 125 miles recorded on the clock. Before we reached Lichfield, a matter of 15 miles, Brian was fast asleep in the front passenger seat. He did not wake up until we were travelling round the Winchester bypass. I then asked where we were staying in Bournemouth.

'The Royal Bath,' Brian answered. 'The reservations are made in your name.' I had stayed at the hotel before and was able to drive straight there. On arrival we were met by two porters. One took our bags to the reception, the other took the car into the garage. We were guided to our respective rooms and arranged to meet in the lounge at 7.30pm. Before we went into dinner Brian said 'Peter's explained to you the reason for the change of plan?' I nodded. 'Let's hope it works,' he said.

This was the first time that I had been on my own with Brian for a long period. He went on to describe at great length why a partnership has to be with someone that you have complete faith in. He thought that this was crucial when important decisions had to be made. He was hopeful that the players would get a different approach to pre-match routine from Peter and that it would be successful. Brian was also pleased to get a look at MacDougall, as he thought he knew what a centre-forward was required to do. After the meal we had a couple of beers and went off to bed, agreeing to meet at nine o'clock the next day for breakfast in the dining room.

Next morning Brian appeared in a tracksuit. 'We'll go for a jog after breakfast', he said. Fortunately Peter had pre-warned me and I had taken tracksuit bottoms, a polo-neck pullover and gym shoes. We ran for about four miles along the seafront, to Canford Cliffs and back, talking generally and with him quizzing me about all kinds of things. This was an experience that I will never forget. I enjoyed it immensely. He was a naturally intelligent man, very interesting and

completely relaxed. There was no tension and the time passed very quickly. We got on extremely well. He asked me the reason that I had never got into the Football League as a referee, and I told him that it was because of my age. It was a seven-year apprenticeship and I was a late beginner. He told me that I had always impressed him when officiating and said that he was sure that I would have reached the top grade. He went on to tell me that he had always told his players not to get involved disputing referees' decisions as there was nothing to be gained. I wonder what he would think of the happenings on the field of play now?

Back at the hotel it was time for a quick shower then into the lounge at 12.30 for a beer. The waiter brought the menu for lunch. Brian said 'My favourite, boiled beef and carrots. Have you tried it? It's delicious.'

Finishing our lunch, we packed our belongings into the car and set off for Dean Court, arriving about 10 minutes to three. The car park pass and tickets were in my name and we went straight to our seats. Brian did not want to go to the board room at half-time, nor did he want to know the score from Southampton. We left the game about five minutes before full-time. When we got into the car and began to move Brian asked what I had thought of MacDougall's performance as a centre-forward. I told him that I was not impressed and that he was not as good as John O'Hare or Roger Davies. Brian was of exactly the same opinion.

'Let's have the sports report on, its almost five,' he said.

I switched on and we discovered that Derby County had beaten Southampton 3-2. From the debate it seemed that it was a good result.

'Good old Peter, it's worked!' shouted Brian. 'After six, stop at the first village pub we come to for a beer, I need one.' At five past six we went into a very nicely set out village pub. There was not a soul inside, not even behind the bar. The radio was tuned in to the sports reports. Through the strings of beads in the doorway a middle-aged man appeared. He could not have been more surprised than he was when he saw Brian standing at his bar. All Brian said was 'Two halves of beer please'. Looking round he saw a dartboard. He asked me if I played darts and I said that I did. 'Let us play,' he said, asking the landlord for two sets of darts. 'We're playing for £1 a game, to make it interesting,' said Brian. I won the first game. 'Double or quits, come on,' Brian said. This game I won more easily, and he paid up. 'Why didn't you say that you could play like that?' he asked. I then told him that I had grown up in a pub. He said that he would never ever play me again, and he didn't. That is how much winning at anything meant to Brian.

Brian was soon fast asleep in the front passenger seat, and when I reached my house I had to wake him up. It had been a most enjoyable trip with an amazing

man.

Frank O'Farrell eventually signed Ted MacDougall for Manchester United for £140,000 but it was a purchase that never fulfilled its potential.

We heard very good reports from Hartlepoons about Tony Parry (bought by Brian and Peter from Burton Albion). He was now 27 years old and Peter decided to bring him to Derby County for a £6,000 fee in January 1972 as we were short of cover again. In February 1973 he made his debut, and in all he played six times for the first team. There were high hopes for him. At the end of the season he joined the annual trip to Cala Millor for seven days, but having had too much to drink one night he was guilty of serious misbehaviour in the hotel and was sent home in disgrace the next day by Peter. John Sheridan took him to Palma airport, bought a ticket for Birmingham and made sure he got on the plane. This was another example of the discipline that Brian and Peter exercised over all their staff. He never played for Derby County again after that.

One Tuesday in January, Peter rang to ask if could I pick him up at his home just after 6pm and then pick Brian up at his home, as he wanted to go with us to a game at Sheffield Wednesday. They were then playing in Division Two. Shortly before I left home I got a call from Brian, to ask what time I would be there. I said about half past six and he said he would not be home by then so he would make his own way to Hillsborough. I collected Peter and told him that Brian was running late. 'I bet he won't turn up,' Peter said.

In those days when we arrived at Hillsborough we were allowed into the ground car park through the large iron gates, which were manned by an elderly steward. On arrival Peter told him that we were from Derby County and he gave Peter the envelope with the tickets inside. Peter went on to tell the steward: 'I must warn you that a man in a Mercedes car will probably call here and tell you he's Brian Clough. Don't let him in – he's an impostor pretending to be Brian so he can get free admission. It happens regularly, so don't you let him in.'

It was a bitterly cold winter's evening. Once the game was underway, Peter turned to me. 'I told you Brian wouldn't be here'. Ten minutes before half-time Brian arrived, red-faced and out of breath. He was furious. He had arrived at about kick-off time, but the old man would not let him into the ground under any circumstances. He had parked his car about two miles away and run all the way back. We both burst out laughing. He glared at us. 'You pair of b\*\*\*\*\*ds!'

Shortly before the end of the game we all left together. We took him in my car back to where he had parked, and it was indeed a fair distance away.

Ian Storey-Moore became the next target from Forest, a wide attacking player with pace who possessed a wonderful goalscoring record. Peter was firmly fixed on bringing him to Derby County. He knew his capabilities very well. Ian was

the best player in his position around at that time. From the outset the committee that ran Forest was determined not to lose another player to Derby. An agreed figure of £200,000 was well documented in the press, but Manchester United came on the scene, prepared to match the asking price. Ian was given the choice between the two clubs. I understand that he chose Derby County, as it would mean not having to move home, and at this time more honours were likely to be won at Derby. United were going through an unusually quiet period.

Ken Smales, the secretary of Nottingham Forest, was instructed by his committee not to sign the transfer forms under any circumstances. At the next home game, Ian was paraded in front of the Derby County crowd as their latest signing, but the ruse failed badly. Later that evening Ian and his wife, Carol, returned to their Nottingham home. Shortly afterwards two visitors were at the front door, Sir Matt Busby and Frank O'Farrell, the Manchester United manager, armed with a bunch of red roses for Carol. Ian, inwardly realising that Forest were determined not to let him join Derby, signed for United that same evening. The transfer went through without the slightest hitch. Unfortunately, after a very successful period playing in the first team, gaining international recognition and doing well, Ian severely damaged his leg ligaments. Although he worked hard to recover, the injury caused his career in League football to come to an end. During his stay at Manchester United no honours were won, while Derby County won the Championship in 1971–72 and 1974–75.

This saga ended with the Football League fining Derby County £5,000 for parading Ian in front of the Baseball Ground fans when he was not their player, which was classed as a breach of regulations.

With the continuous amount of good copy coming out of Derby County, journalists used to wait for hours in the press room under the Main Stand, supping tea, waiting in hope to get a few words from Brian, or a breaking story. Most of the dailies were canny; they used a good guy and an unpopular guy (with Brian) for writing sports stories. The ones who had upset Brian he would have nothing to say to, while the good early stories were released to the trusted.

### **My 24 hours with Manchester United**

On four occasions during my time in football I was offered a full-time appointment and only once did I verbally accept. My private Post Office business, with its security and financial rewards, meant that I had no need to make football my full-time occupation.

To my knowledge this story has never been told before. In February 1972, Peter rang me to say that he had been approached by Frank O'Farrell to become his assistant manager at Manchester United. At that time United was going through

a very difficult period. Frank and Peter had known one another since they were both successful managers of clubs in the Southern League. Peter said that the offer was very good and that he was very flattered to have been asked. He had asked Frank if I could be recruited as his main assistant for scouting. I was sure that this was because he was nervous about being on his own and he wanted someone by his side whom he could trust. Frank had agreed, but only if I would join them on a full-time basis. This offer shook me for a few moments and I felt as if I had not the faintest idea what had been said. Manchester United! There could not be a bigger incentive to go full-time. I asked if I could talk it over with my family before making a final decision. Peter said that he had arranged to meet Frank in the car park by the canal at Willington, near Peter's home, the next Sunday morning.

By Sunday I had decided that I would join them, if I could be paid a minimum of £400 per week (that was the sum of money that my business was making me) and be allowed up to four months to sell my house and business and move up to Manchester. After his meeting with Frank, on Sunday afternoon Peter came over to my house to let me know how things were progressing. Frank did not foresee any problems with my requests, and it was all to go before the full board of directors in the morning.

Early on Monday afternoon Peter rang to say that the Manchester United board of directors had thrown Frank's proposals out. They had not given him any reasons why. Peter was extremely disappointed, but strangely it did not affect me. I was perfectly happy with my present arrangements, but at the same time I was mystified about why Frank's plan had been refused. After a couple of days turning it over in my mind, I decided to ring Alec Bird at his home at Nether Alderley. I knew that Alec was a very close friend of Mr Louis Edwards, the United chairman, and saw him regularly at their Lodge meetings. In fact, the house that Alec lived in had been purchased from Mr Edwards. I explained what had taken place at the meetings with Frank O'Farrell and asked whether he would be able to find out, discreetly, why the board had thrown the plan out.

A week later Alec called me back. Apparently all the members of the board had agreed to the proposed appointments, but Sir Matt Busby was very much against it, although he had no problem with the two men involved. Sir Matt's reasoning (he was probably spot on) was that Brian Clough would murder Manchester United in the media and on television for stealing his right-hand men.

I told Peter what had actually happened, and he thought it very likely that Brian would have had a go at them. There the matter was laid to rest. The story was never leaked and Brian never got an inkling of it. Manchester United were relegated into League Division Two at the end of that season and Frank lost his

job, while Derby County went on to win the Division One Championship.

### **Tickets for 'all ticket games' and train seats**

With the continued success on the field, top-of-the-League matches, Cup games and later European Cup games had become all-ticket affairs. Supporters from the Burton upon Trent area and South Derbyshire, who gave Derby County tremendous support, were having difficulty in getting to Derby to purchase tickets when they went on sale at the Baseball Ground. I discussed the situation with Stuart Webb, the club secretary, who agreed to let me have 3,000 tickets for each game, for the standing enclosure, to sell at my shop. The restrictions were that tickets could not be put on sale until they were available on open sale at Derby, and each person could purchase no more than two tickets. I agreed to these terms and I had to pay for the tickets fully up front. These tickets were some of the 35,000 tickets that were made available for home supporters. On every occasion I was completely sold out. The newspaper department of my shop opened at 5am every day, including Sundays. I made sure that I had ample staff to cope with the extra demand each time. It brought me rewards, as well, because most fans picked up cigarettes, sweets, pop, stationery or greetings cards when buying their tickets, and many became regular customers even after I had left Derby County. It was such a success that Stuart arranged for one of the special British Rail trains that took fans to away games, often to London clubs, to leave from Burton station. For these I would have 100 tickets giving a seat on the train and a ticket for the game to sell. This again was very popular and appreciated by local supporters.

### **A most memorable telephone call**

As in previous years Peter, with one director, had taken the players (except those on international duty) and senior staff to Cala Millor in Majorca for an end-of-season break. Brian was in the Scilly Isles with his family. When we left England, all our fixtures had been completed and we were top of League Division One. There were one or two outstanding games to be resolved, and the League table actually read:

	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Pts</b>
Derby County	42	24	10	8	69	33	58
Leeds Utd	41	24	9	8	72	29	57
Manchester City	42	23	11	8	77	45	57

Liverpool	41	24	8	8	64	30	56
Arsenal	41	22	7	11	57	38	51

*Games still to be played: Leeds away to Wolves, Liverpool away to Arsenal*

It was an unbelievable climax to the season. If Leeds drew or won away they would be Champions. Liverpool had to win to be Champions. In the event, Leeds lost 2–1 at Wolves and Liverpool drew 0–0 at Arsenal.

When we left England few people thought that Derby County had any chance of being crowned Champions. On the night that the matches were played the senior staff all stayed in the bar of our hotel, the Bahia. You could feel the tension. Some of the players drifted in and joined us. About 15 minutes before the games were due to end, Peter was called into the foyer of the hotel by a porter. A British journalist had rung Peter from Molineux and told him not to hang up, as at that moment Derby were Champions. When Peter did not return, one by one we crept into the foyer. There was complete silence, all eyes were glued on Peter. He was ashen white. This dreadful suspense lasted for 20 minutes that seemed like two hours. Suddenly he raised his free arm in the air and shouted. ‘We’ve won it, we’ve won it!’ The place erupted. Back in the bar the party started. The other guests at the hotel all joined in and the celebrations went on until the early hours of the morning. Not one sports journalist from the United Kingdom was in Cala Millor that evening.

Early next morning, shortly after breakfast, a Spanish television crew arrived to film us relaxing round the pool at our hotel. As the pool next door at the Castel de Mar, where the players were staying, was much bigger and would allow better filming we moved over there. No players had surfaced at that time, so five of the staff, including myself, swam for them in the pool as they wanted the film urgently so that it could be relayed out for the early news bulletins. When the pictures were shown in the UK it was said that we were Derby County players, but they were all still tucked up in bed. By the time of the evening meal, both the hotels were swarming with sports journalists from the British national press doing interviews with Peter and the players. The rest of the holiday seemed to drag for us all; we just wanted to get home to our relatives and friends.

The remarkable achievement of winning the League had been done with the use of only 16 players during the whole season, including three appearances by Jim Walker, two by Steve Powell and one by Tony Bailey.

It had been a wonderful season that ended in glory and celebration. After that, the winning of the Texaco Cup went almost unnoticed. This was a trophy played

home and away that included teams from the Scottish Football League. Derby won the competition by defeating Dundee United, Stoke City, Newcastle United and Airdrieonians. Because of the large number of fixtures Barry Butlin was brought back off loan to play in these games. In the Texaco competition alone, over 100,000 spectators witnessed the games played at the Baseball Ground. Over the whole season more than one million spectators had been to the Baseball Ground, compared to 300,000 five years before.

Footnote to the season: another record signing

During the summer of 1972, the annual Burton and District Tennis Championships had reached the final stages. The Men's Singles was an open event. One of my close friends, Ian Tate, had reached the final and was recognised as the best player in the Burton District. He was also a good class rugby player and a regular in the well-known Leicester Tigers. He had been educated at Burton Grammar School (well-known for producing top sportsmen) and was the nephew of the famous Sussex and England cricketer Maurice Tate.

Ian invited me to the final, saying that perhaps I knew his opponent, David Nish, the Leicester City footballer. The event was taking place on the council tennis courts at Shobnall Fields, only a mile from my house. My ears pricked up and I immediately thought 'I hope I get chance to speak to him on his own'.

When I arrived in the car park, who should pull up immediately alongside but David Nish himself. What a stroke of luck! I greeted David and he asked where the changing rooms were as it was his first visit.

'I'll walk with you,' I said. 'You're playing one of my friends.' I wished him good luck in the game and then went to my seat.

David won the final very impressively. He was well above average at tennis. I waited for him to receive the trophy, shower and get changed. I then walked back to the car with him. The many spectators had left by this time. I had decided to make an approach about joining Derby County. I would never get a better opportunity. I explained my job with Brian and Peter at Derby County and said that they would very much like him in their side for the start of the following season, to play as left-back. I asked him if he was interested. He said he was. The prospect of playing in the European Cup was very attractive. We exchanged telephone numbers and I told him to keep the conversation under his hat, promising that he would soon hear something officially from his club.

That evening I spoke to Peter in Majorca and told him everything that had transpired. Peter flew back from his holiday the following Monday very pleased, and before the end of that week David Nish joined Derby County for a fee of £225,000, a new transfer record. He made his debut on 26 August 1972 at Norwich and went on to make 237 appearances for Derby County, including 38



League appearances when they won the League Division One Championship, gaining a medal under Dave Mackay in the 1974–75 season. He was capped five times for England and but for illness it would have been more.

Brian, who was also away on holiday, did not know a thing about this transfer until it was all completed.

Unfortunately, David's career came to an end prematurely when he severely damaged his right knee ligaments, while still playing at Derby County. He would have been a great player with the modern ball. I met him recently at a Derby County reunion and I reminded him about the tennis. He told me that as a teenager he had had the chance to be a professional tennis player, but had chosen soccer.

# The Derby dream dies

The 1972–73 season started with great hopes. For the first time in the history of Derby County they would be competing in Europe. It was also a first for Brian and Peter.

With the arrival of David Nish, and the emergence of Steve Powell, John Robson, who had been a great servant at full-back, was sold to Aston Villa for £90,000 as soon as Nish qualified to play in the third round of the European competition.

The first round was satisfactorily completed with a 4–1 aggregate victory over a Yugoslavia side, FK Zeljenicar, in Sarajevo. The second round was against Portuguese side Benfica and the first leg was played at Derby. The ground had been saturated with water during the day by the groundsman, on Brian's instructions, and to put it mildly the going was heavy. No members of the press were allowed into the ground until after 5pm. A 3–0 victory was the result and the score was 0–0 in the return leg. John McGovern's superb goal was one to be remembered. John told me that he had met Eusebio recently, and after 35 years he had brought up the condition of the Baseball Ground that evening. Eusebio said that the pitch that night was the worst that he ever played on.

The third round involved a long journey to Czechoslovakia to play Sparta Tranava, where the Rams lost by a single goal. They won the return leg 2–0, Kevin Hector scoring both of the goals at the Baseball Ground.

On 7 March, in the semi-final of the European Cup, Derby were knocked out over the two legs in controversial circumstances. The first leg in Turin resulted in a 3–1 victory to Juventus, before a 72,000 crowd; however, there were several unsatisfactory incidents prior to and during the game. The players and the team staff were staying at a hotel in the hills outside Turin, while the directors, senior staff and the press were staying in the city. Stuart Webb had arranged a dinner for the press and special guests at which Brian was to be the guest speaker. Brian was still in his tracksuit playing cards with several of his players when the time to go arrived. Being late for appointments was a bad habit of Brian's. Peter came and reminded him that they would be late for the dinner date and an argument followed between the two in front of the players, which was not a good thing before such an important game. Peter refused to go without Brian and went up to his room. Neither of them went to the dinner; I assume Stuart had to make the speech himself. Next morning, sensibly, they patched up their differences. The team was announced and with it came a big surprise: Tony Parry was included in

the side instead of Alan Durban, to play in midfield. Peter had not seen the teamsheet the night before and he told Brian that playing Tony Parry in a game of such magnitude was ridiculous. At this late stage Brian decided to make the change. He told Alan Durban to go and put the number-four shirt on. This was in the last minute before the team left the dressing room. When Alan arrived on the pitch the teams were actually lining up, and the press were unaware of the change until the game was ready to begin.

John Charles, who had played for Juventus at centre-forward some years previously, travelled with the team to help with the language and familiarize the players with their surroundings. I had met John Charles at the wedding of one of my close pals, Dave MacAdam, in Leeds. Dave was in the Leeds United team when John joined them as an 18-year-old and Major Buckley, the Leeds manager, had put John in the same digs as Dave and instructed him to look after him.

John went to the Derby dressing room about half an hour before the kick-off to warn Brian and Peter that he had seen one of the Juventus subs, Helmut Haller, (who had played for Germany at Wembley in the 1966 World Cup Final) talking with the referee, Gerhard Schulenberg, also a German. At half-time the pair were talking as the two teams trooped off the field. Peter joined them to earwig, angry words were exchanged and Peter was arrested and kept in custody at the stadium until the two teams were back on the field to resume playing. Peter told me that he was in such a state he had completely lost his temper. Two of our most influential players, Roy McFarland and Archie Gemmill, were booked after innocuous tackles on Juventus players, which meant that they would miss the return leg at the Baseball Ground.

It could not be proved that Haller and the referee were in cahoots. The rules stated only that no players or team representatives were allowed to enter the referee's room. An official complaint was made to UEFA about the referee's handling of the game, but after an enquiry no apparent action was taken. However, shortly afterwards the referee became the owner of a brand new car and never officiated at international level again.

The second leg, two weeks later at Derby, finished 0–0. Juventus went through to the Final and there were no complaints this time. We had much more early possession of the ball in the game, but Alan Hinton unusually missed a penalty and later Roger Davies was sent off the field. Brian Glanville of the Sunday Times acted as the interpreter for Brian Clough (Glanville spoke fluent Italian) and even to this day he sometimes mentions in his articles the goings-on in Turin. One further interesting observation from these games against Juventus is that Fabio Capello, now in charge of the England international football team,

played on both occasions.

One evening, while attending a game at Villa Park, I was sitting with Brian having a cup of tea when Bill Nicholson the Tottenham Hotspur manager, came into the room and sat with us. He congratulated Brian on winning the Division One title the previous season. Brian thanked him, then said that he wished that he was with a big club like Bill's. Bill replied that management of any London club was no great joy.

'In smaller towns and cities you know where your players are on the Friday evening before a home game,' he said. 'If they were out on the town, someone would tell you. In London we have no chance. Last Saturday morning Martin Chivers didn't turn up until midday looking really rough. We'd made numerous attempts to locate him, but they can easily get lost in the big city. Morning pre-match preparations are virtually impossible to do.' Nowadays doormen, photographers and the media are always on the lookout for players, so it is not so easy to get away with it. The London nightlife certainly caused Bill a few headaches, and the following season he decided to leave White Hart Lane after 16 years of considerable success.

New signings were now at a minimum because of European restrictions on when signings had to be completed for a player to be eligible to play in the European Cup. For me it was a quiet time. The team was of such a high standard that it had become much harder to find new players who might gain a place in the first team. Fortunately there were no long-term injuries. I went abroad two or three times to assess forthcoming opposition, twice with Peter and once on my own. Brian was very wary of flying.

Behind the scenes, week by week, problems were arising between Brian and Peter. Brian's work away from the club, and the time he spent away from the Baseball Ground travelling and making television appearances, particularly on Fridays, were at the heart of the matter. When this had begun the chairman had been glad of the PR opportunity that the increased media attention brought.

At about this time Brian was offered a full-time position with ITV by Brian Moore, to be a football critic and an analyst of games, but he turned it down. However, Brian was also in demand for opening supermarkets and petrol stations, and these engagements meant that Peter was having to spend more time with the team. Peter occasionally made local public appearances himself, but he regularly turned down invitations to appear as a guest speaker. He was too nervous to attempt these on his own.

I could sense a real rift developing between Brian and Peter. When I asked Peter what the problem was he poured out the whole story. Unsurprisingly, money was the root of the trouble. He said that in Hartlepool's days he and Brian

had agreed that extra payments and bonuses outside of their contracts should be equally shared. I knew that football bonuses were always split; however, I did not agree with Peter, and told him so, that he should be getting a share of the TV money and the income from other activities. I argued that this money was earned by Brian's personality and popularity with the general public. I felt myself that these were his own earnings. In reply Peter said that Brian would not be able to carry on with his TV and promotional work if Peter did not stand in for him. Peter was spending more time with the team, particularly on Fridays. Stuart Webb had also let slip to Peter that the chairman had paid Brian an extra £5,000 without Peter's knowledge. Another factor was that at this time Peter was gambling heavily on football results. I knew because I was putting the bets on for him. He was having a run of poor form with these.

There was a marked deterioration in League performances on the pitch. I put this down to the emphasis that Brian and Peter put on the European games, and these differences that kept on arising between them. The existing playing squad was also not large enough to cope with the extra games.

There was a blank Saturday in the fixture list for the first team on 7 April. It was decided that eight of us would travel up to Scotland on a scouting mission to watch four games in the lower divisions of the Scottish Football League. There were two cars, Brian's and Michael Keeling's, with four of us in each car. We set off before lunch on the Friday morning: Brian, Peter, Jimmy Gordon, John Sheridan, Brian Newton, Cliff Notley, Michael Keeling and myself. We all went to a game at St James' Park during that evening, staying overnight in a hotel in Newcastle. On Saturday morning after breakfast we set off for Scotland, where we split into four pairs. One pair from each car was dropped off at the first venue selected, while the two left in the car went on to another game, returning later to pick up the pairs that were dropped off. These arrangements went without a hitch. I remember that I was at Stenhousemuir with Cliff Notley. The game was of a much poorer standard than I had expected, having not watched any Scottish games live before. I was of the opinion that they were not up to the standard of Burton Albion. We all drew a complete blank and did not see even one spark of talent. It was a completely wasted journey. We arrived home shortly before midnight.

As the season drew to a close, one morning Mr Arthur Whittaker, the bookmaker whose betting shop was opposite the Baseball Ground in Shaftesbury Crescent, came to see Brian. I was in his office at the time. Mr Whittaker was very concerned because one of the Derby County first-team players had run up a debt of £700 of losing bets. Attempts to get the player to pay up had failed. Brian reacted immediately. He was fully aware that things like this could cause players

to lose form. He rang Stuart Webb, the club secretary, and asked him to bring £700 to his office as soon as possible. Stuart arrived quickly and the money was passed over to Mr Whittaker. Arthur was then told that as of that moment all staff and players of Derby County Football Club would be barred from his betting shop. Brian instructed Stuart to send out a letter to everyone with this information. His quick thinking and decisive action meant that there was never a leak of the story to the public. It was yet another example of how quickly Brian dealt with internal problems so that they did not become more serious. The player in question had to repay the money to the club, but I did not hear whether he was punished further.

### **An offer to work for Don Revie**

One Friday evening, 16 March 1973, I was enjoying a well-earned cup of tea, having just finished my work in the Post Office. I had been working on the weekly account balance since closing time and I was contemplating going to the chip shop next door to fetch fish and chips for a ritual Friday evening meal. The telephone rang and my immediate thought was that one of my customers had not received their evening paper, which would mean me turning out to deliver it. I picked up the telephone.

‘Am I speaking to Maurice Edwards?’

‘Yes,’ I replied tentatively, as I did not recognise the voice.

‘This is Don Revie,’ the voice continued. My immediate reaction was that one of my friends was playing a prank.

‘Come on Timmo, stop taking the piss,’ I said. There was a low chuckle.

‘Who are Derby County playing in the FA Cup tomorrow?’

‘Leeds United,’ I replied, realising that it really was the great Don Revie.

‘We’re staying at the Riverside Hotel at Branston. Have you eaten yet?’ he asked. I said no.

‘Would you join me for a meal here? There’s something I’d like to discuss with you.’

‘Thank you,’ I said. ‘I’ll be there in about half an hour’.

Entering the lounge at the Riverside, I saw Don Revie on a settee on the far side of the room alongside a middle-aged gentleman. I went over. Don stood up and shook my hand, then introduced me to Les Cocker, his first-team coach, who had a pint of beer in his hand. I sat down and joined in their general conversation. One of the coaching staff came out of the dining room and told Don that the players had finished their evening meal. Did he want to have a few words before they retired to their respective rooms? Don excused himself and went into the restaurant, leaving me on my own with Les Cocker. I quickly

realised that Les had been drinking for some time. His speech was slurred and he said 'Who the f\*\*\*\*\*g hell are you, what are you here for? There shouldn't be any part-timers in this game.' Half turning towards me, he fell off the settee full-length onto the floor, spilling his beer all over the carpet. At that moment Don returned and was not very pleased with what he saw. He called for two of his staff to take Les to his room, with instructions to lock him in and bring the key back. Don then apologised to me for Les's behaviour.

We then went into the dining room; there were just the two of us at the table. Our evening meal was ordered, together with a bottle of wine. I was still unsure what the meeting was all about. Don began by telling me that he had received one or two very reliable reports about my work with Brian and Peter. He had also heard from pressmen that the two of them were having a few problems and he asked whether these affected me in any way. I said that they did not and that I was completely out of internal affairs at the club. Differences were always happening in football and as long as I was not directly involved I ignored them. Don then came to the main reason for the meeting. 'I've got a proposition to put to you,' he said. 'I want you to come and work for me, to be my personal scouting rep. We would keep close secrecy between us, you would discuss your findings with me and no one else. You could continue working from home. I'm prepared to make you a good financial offer, certainly more than you are getting.' I was very flattered, if a little taken aback. I thanked him very much for the offer, but refused it. I went on to explain that I owed everything to Peter Taylor and without him I would not have achieved what I had in League football.

'Money doesn't come into it at all,' I said. 'I'll stay with them as long as they want me to be part of the team.' Before I left, Don produced a briefcase. Out came a large number of handwritten papers. He showed them to me briefly; they were reports on each of the Derby County players, very descriptive of their assets and shortcomings.

'This is how I prepare for all of our games,' he said. 'Who will be the main threat to Leeds tomorrow?'

'Archie Gemmill', I replied. He promptly pulled out the dossier on Archie.

'This is the reason why I'm keen to have you working for me,' he said. The last thing he said to me before I left was that he admired my loyalty to Brian and Peter.

'I wish some of my staff had the same principles,' he said. 'If you ever change your mind, give me a ring.'

His preparations for the game must have worked. Derby County were knocked out of the FA Cup the next day.

I never said a word to Peter or Brian about meeting Don or what had transpired.

To this day I am not certain whether or not it was altogether genuine. At the back of my mind I wonder whether it was a ruse to take me away from Brian, to rob him of one of his main back-room assistants. At that time they were certainly bitter enemies, as later events went on to prove; however, I am sure that deep down they each admired what the other had achieved.

I must admit I was impressed by my meeting with Don Revie. I was proud to have been approached and I had enjoyed it immensely. When Peter and Brian inevitably split from Derby County, Don did telephone me to say that the offer was still open if I wanted it, but I remained loyal to my bosses.

Don Revie was appointed successor to Alf Ramsey as manager of the England team in April 1974. If I had decided to join Don Revie at Leeds United, when Brian was appointed their manager the first person to have been shown the door would have been me. When Don was appointed England manager he did not ask me to join him. In fact, I never once came face to face with him again, nor spoke to him on the phone. This contributed to my feeling that the original approach was intended to split up our camp at Derby County.

It is interesting to compare Don Revie's record with Brian and Peter's (when they were working together). Brian and Peter had 12 years at Derby County and Nottingham Forest; Don had 14 years at Leeds United. Brian and Peter won six major trophies and were runners-up twice, while Don won five major trophies and was runner-up 10 times. With all his thoroughness in preparation I concluded that Don erred on the side of caution. In my opinion at least five of those runners'-up medals should have been trophies. The main difference between them was that Brian and Peter's pre-match preparations were focussed on their own sides, whereas Don's were focussed on the opposition. In Brian's classic words 'Let the b\*\*\*\*\*ds worry about us.'

### **Brian and Peter resign**

At the start of the 1973-74 season, Peter had received a big tip-off about a schoolboy in the Doncaster area that had exceptional skills. He asked me to go up on a Friday evening to offer his mother and father an apprenticeship at Derby County when he left school.

Armed with his address I went up to Bawtry and knocked on the front door. I explained where I was from and was invited into the front room. Mr Rix listened to all that I had to say. He also told me that another club had already spoken to him. He asked whether I could come again the following week and they would give me a definite answer.

I duly went along the following Friday. When I arrived there was a brand new car outside. Once again I was invited into the front room, which had been



completely refurbished and decorated, carpeted wall to wall. It was clear that my journey had been wasted. Mr Rix thanked me for the interest that we had shown, and asked that I pass regards on to Brian. To be fair, we were second on the scene. Graham, their son, joined Arsenal as an apprentice in 1974. He went on to make 464 appearances for Arsenal and won 17 international caps.

Mr Longson would never have agreed to gifts of this kind being given by Derby County in the quest to sign players. I took this new experience on board.

In late September 1973, Henry Newton became a Derby County player after Peter's third attempt to bring him to our club. He joined us from Everton for £100,000 and he was the only major signing for the new season. He only made three appearances under Brian and Peter, including a 1–0 victory away at Old Trafford. His total number of appearances for Derby was 156, including 36 during the 1974–75 season when they won the Division One Championship under Dave Mackay.

Each week something different occurred behind the scenes. Some of Brian's comments about other clubs, Leeds United in particular, which were aired on television and in the media, were very forthright. Complaints from other chairmen were upsetting the Derby County board, and away from football Sam Longson's friends in his village began to get at him about how rude and awful 'your Mr Clough' was.

I could sense that breaking point was not too far away. When Brian had first taken on this television work, Mr Longson had encouraged him, saying that it was good publicity for Derby County. Since then he had had a change of heart. Sam knew that there was a chance that he might be elected to the Football League Committee, and he thought that Brian's televised remarks were diminishing his chances.

Another incident took place after an excellent win away at Old Trafford 1–0, before a 43,000 crowd. Mr Jack Kirkland, a fairly new recruit to the boardroom, had seen Peter present at the game and asked, at the next meeting of directors, why Peter was on such a high salary when he just sat with Brian at games. Peter was made aware of this statement, and he did not take too kindly to it.

Mr Longson was not handling the situation very well and the other directors were worried that the FA would step in. Peter was getting worried and he told me of his concern. He had been shown a letter sent to Brian by Sam Longson telling him that he must give up his work on television and writing articles in the national press. On the following Sunday Brian and Peter decided that they would hand in letters of resignation, but they had not done this by the Tuesday.

Peter rang me at lunchtime. He wanted me to take him to Bury, a Division Four side, to see Derek Spence play. The centre-forward was of interest because of the

number of goals he was scoring. 'Will you pick me up at home at 4.30? Kick-off is 7.30, but the chairman wants to come with us to see one of the directors of Bury, Canon Reg Smith.'

I had met Canon Smith some time before on the aeroplane that took the Derby County players and staff to an away tie in the European Cup. He sat next to me. He was a very jovial man, and that day he said to me on take-off, 'This is my first experience of flying. I suppose this is the nearest that I shall ever get to my gaffer!' In the car on the way to Chapel-en-le-Frith, where Sam Longson lived, Peter told me that we had been invited to have tea by Mrs Longson. When we arrived we were taken into a large conservatory where the table was well laid out, with china tea cups, sandwiches with the crusts taken off and serviettes. We were made most welcome.

When we left, I was driving and Mr Longson and Peter sat in the back. This was obviously what had been planned.

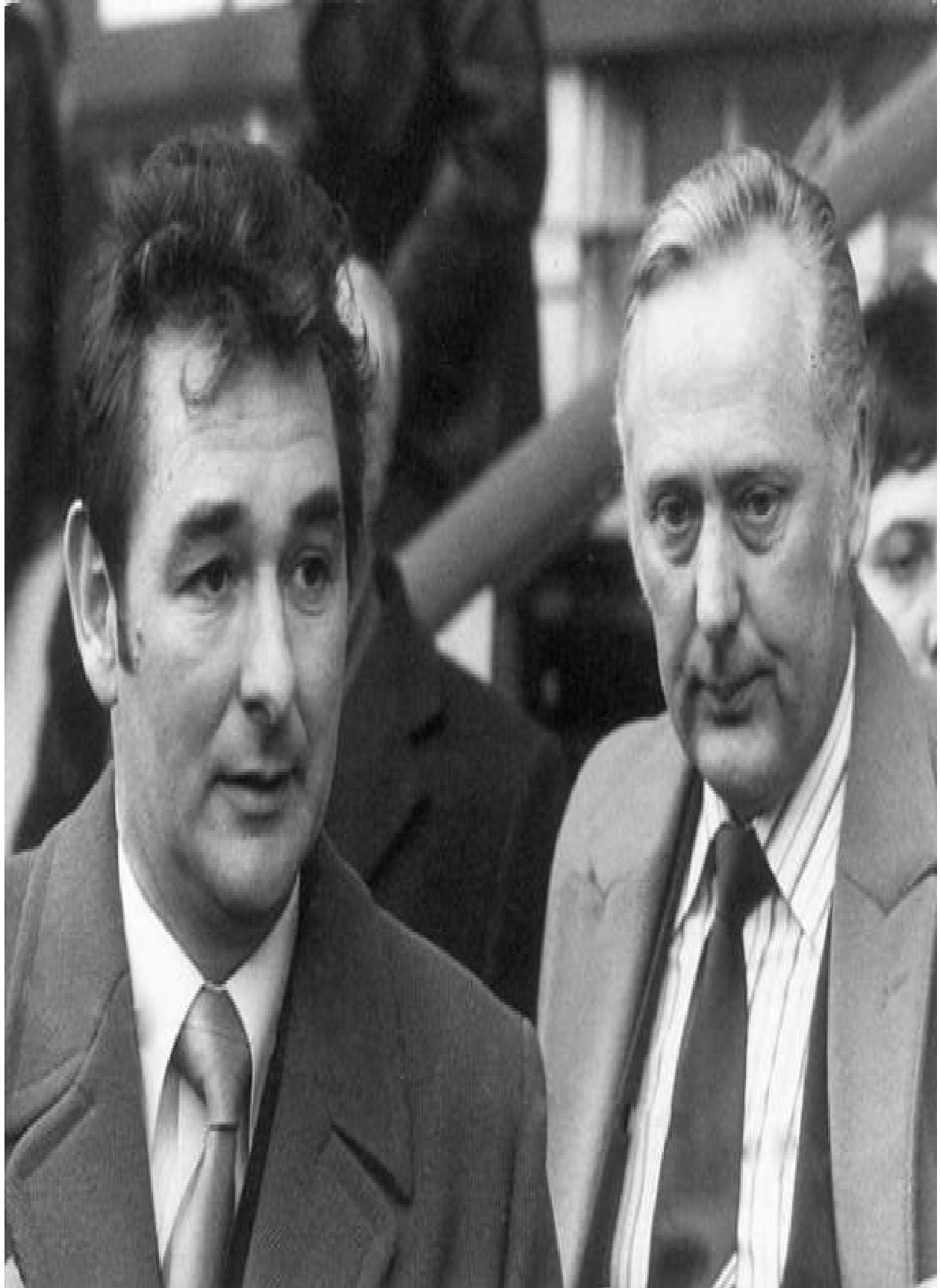
'Peter, I want you to take over as the manager of the club,' said the chairman. 'The directors and I have decided that Brian has to go. We feel that he has really overstepped the mark this time, and we're in no doubt that you are fully capable of running the football side of the club. We are prepared to give you a large increase in salary.'

Peter was superb at handling the situation.

'Forget it, Mr Chairman,' he said. 'In two weeks time the problems between you and Brian will have blown over and the two of you will be the best of friends again. I don't want to carry on this discussion; let's settle down and think about what we're looking for at Bury'.

When we arrived at Bury's ground Sam went into the directors' room and sat in their box to watch the match. Peter and I sat at the very rear of the directors' box. On the journey home no more was said about the situation at Derby, although the chairman did ask us what had we decided about Derek Spence. Peter told him that we would not be making an offer.

On 15 October, Peter and Brian handed in their written notices. I also sent in my written resignation. I did not attend any of the protest meetings; it really was no concern of mine. Strangely, all these problems had not affected the performances of the team. Derby County were actually lying in third place in the League, having won four, drawn two and lost one of the first seven games. Attendances were almost up to capacity and financially the club was in a healthy position, with over £200,000 in the bank.



*Early in the 1974 season Brian and Peter began seriously talking about their dissatisfaction with the board. Their resignations soon followed.*

### **Dave Mackay's appointment as manager**

Almost immediately Dave Mackay was appointed as manager of Derby County. He brought with him his assistant, Des Anderson. Dave had only been in charge at Nottingham Forest for 11 months, having begun his management career at Swindon Town for the previous year. His appointment at Derby was a very clever move by the chairman. The players had great respect for Dave Mackay and so did the supporters, which calmed the situation down very quickly.

Stuart Webb rang me the following week asking if I would come along to the Baseball Ground to see Dave. I went the following afternoon. Dave and Des had certainly done their homework. As I entered the manager's office I saw on the cocktail cabinet about 10 bottles of Mackeson, my drink in those days. I shook hands with both Dave and Des and I accepted a drink that was offered. Dave said that they wanted me to become their chief scout, on double the wages that I had been on. The meeting lasted about two hours and we discussed how they were going to take the club forward, and what my role would be if I joined them. The wages were not an incentive – my Post Office business was doing well – but I did enjoy my involvement in football at that level. However, I knew that Brian and Peter had already been approached by two League clubs, Birmingham City and Coventry City. I had great admiration for Dave and I was impressed with Des, who seemed a very likeable fellow. Over the years I have got to know them very well, and I am sure I would have enjoyed working for them. But I turned down their offer. I gave them my genuine reason: I intended to carry on working with Brian and Peter in the future when they were fixed up with another League club. I felt I owed them for taking me with them on their journey. I thanked Dave and Des for giving me the opportunity to join them and wished them every success. I have never regretted staying with Brian and Peter.

With two top-class additions to the side that they had inherited, Bruce Rioch and Francis Lee, Derby County again became League Division One Champions at the end of the 1974–75 season. During a game against Luton Town Roger Davies became the first Rams player to score five goals in a League game. I was delighted at the club's success. To this day I have a great affection for Derby County.

### **Derby County lose Russell Osman**

Despite my respect for Dave and Des, they did make a mess of their attempt to

gain Russell Osman's signature. I took Russell along to Derby at the age of 13 and he attended coaching lessons, but he could not be put on forms until he was 16. Russell's parents, Rex and Diane, were friends of mine who at that time ran the Bull's Head in Repton. Rex had been a professional player with Derby County during the 1950s, making two first-team appearances, and was with the Rams for several seasons. He was captain of the reserves and we used to joke with him that he was only retained each season because of his golf – he was the major player in a very good club golf team.

Two of his sons, Mark and Russell, were educated at the Burton Grammar School. Rugby and cricket were the main sports taught there. Each of them in their respective years was captain of the England Schools Rugby Fifteen, an outstanding achievement. Almost every night they played soccer with the other boys in the village, and at the inn there was a very large car park, surrounded by three walls with a tarmac surface, which was ideal for developing skills. During this time I was refereeing in the Burton & District leagues. Both boys played for Repton Casuals, the village team, which was a very well-organised club. The club's youngsters were a very good side, winning several local trophies. I watched them playing on Sunday mornings and occasionally refereed their matches. I asked Rex if I could take Russell along to Derby County to be coached and to play with our youngsters. He agreed but disputed my choice: he was of the opinion that Mark, the elder of the two, was the better prospect. We had many a chat about it. Mark never went into League football.

John Sheridan, one of our coaches at Derby County, looked after the boys when they were in for coaching and training sessions. Russell had always played in the wing-half position when I had seen him. John, in his wisdom, moved him into central defence with considerable success. Russell continued to play football for Repton Casuals and rugby at school. Russell was 16 on St Valentine's Day 1975. This was the season that Derby became Division One Champions again. Dave Mackay and Des Anderson went to visit Rex (Russell's father) with the intention of completing the forms for Russell to officially become a Derby County player. I was not present in the Bull's Head that evening, but they went away without obtaining his signature. Rex and Di told me about the visit, saying that Dave and Des had arrived having had too much to drink and had offended Rex, who was a strong character and had asked them to leave the premises. What a loss to Derby Russell Osman turned out to be!

Frank Upton, a playing colleague of Rex's at Derby, was the chief scout at Aston Villa. He lived in the next village to Repton and heard what had happened when he called in for a drink one day. He arranged for Russell to go to Villa Park for a trial with other youngsters during the Easter holidays. A lot of boys were on

trial that day and Russell was played out on the right wing. He did not have the pace for that position and he came away very disappointed. Frank Upton was furious when he was told the story of the trial. It was unfortunate, but Russell was never going to be a winger. He was not asked to return for a further trial. I told his father not to worry and forecast that a big club would come his way. I was then at Nottingham Forest with Brian, at the bottom of Division Two of the Football League. I spoke to Rex about taking Russell to Forest but he declined – he was still anti-Forest from his playing days.

Shortly after this, Tom Robson, brother of Bobby (who was then manager of Ipswich Town), came to see Rex to offer Russell a trial at Ipswich. Tom Robson was a mining engineer and had been transferred to Moira, only a few miles from Burton upon Trent. Working alongside him in the same office was Les Holland, a member of the Burton & District Football Association Committee. Bobby had told his brother Tom that Ipswich did not have a scout in that part of the country and that he should be on the look out for any talent. Tom quizzed Les about young footballers with a chance of getting into the professional game. Les told him about Russell and the rest is history. Russell signed for Ipswich on 1 March 1976. Later his parents, Rex and Di, went to live in the Ipswich area. Rex passed away suddenly in 2005.

Russell's prowess came as no surprise to me. He made over 600 League and Cup appearances, gaining 11 international caps. There cannot be many lads who have played international football and rugby union for England. On occasions Russell has popped in to see me as I have stayed in touch with the family. He does a wonderful amount of good for charities and in 2006 cycled from Lands End to John O'Groats.

## Moving on

At the end of October 1973, Peter rang to say that he and Brian had an appointment at the Waldorf Hotel in London with Mike Bamber, the chairman of Brighton and Hove Albion. He said that there was a strong possibility that they would take on the management of the club. The chairman did a good job and persuaded them to join Brighton. Peter was very upbeat about the move, but Brian was not as keen.

They took over at Brighton on 1 November 1973. The club was sixth from bottom of Division Three and the average gate was around 6,000. About six scouts that had been at Derby, including myself, joined up with them immediately. John Sheridan, the second-team coach at Derby, also joined them. Peter, with his wife Lilian, daughter Wendy and son Philip, moved to Brighton.

Brian and his wife Barbara viewed several houses, but the ones that they liked were too expensive for them and they eventually decided on a house that was under construction in the Hove district. Until its completion they would continue to live in Derby, and Brian would travel home on a Saturday after the game, his great friend Colin Lawrence picking him up from wherever they had been playing. He would return to Brighton on an early train each Monday morning and stay at the Courtlands Hotel. Barbara told me that she was looking forward to moving into their newly built house as it was very close to the sea.

Peter rang me regularly for a chat or to place a bet, and to tell me which matches to attend. He and Brian did not get off to a very good start at Brighton: they were very disappointed in the quality of the players that they had inherited and there were only 16 professionals on the books. It was imperative that they got some new blood in quickly and signings were soon made.

In one of Brian's early books he stated that four disappointing players, whom he named, had been recommended by Maurice Edwards and Dave Blakey (at that time Dave was chief scout at Burnley with Jimmy Adamson). After I read this I rang Dave to ask if he had recommended the players in question. Dave said that Peter had rung him for some recommendations, but he had been unable to come up with any names off hand. I personally had never seen any of the players in action and had certainly not made any recommendations.

Some time later I saw David Pleat at Leicester City's Filbert Street ground. I knew he was still in touch with Peter. I asked David if he had read Brian's book, in which he had blamed myself and Dave Blakey for four poor recruits at Brighton. I went on to say that neither of us knew anything about these players,

who were all from London clubs. David Pleat grinned in his usual way and said that he had been the one to put the names forward, although he had told Peter that he should only sign them if he was absolutely desperate!

It was difficult to get Midlands players interested in going down to Brighton. The wages were not much better than they were being paid with their present clubs, but Brighton was well known to be one of the most expensive towns in the country to live in. I actually approached five players that would have easily got into their side, but they were not interested. Even playing for Brian Clough was not a big enough pull. The only player who signed a contract for Brighton was an 18-year-old goalkeeper from the Worcester area that I sent down for a week's trial.

Three scout meetings were held at Brighton during the season, and I attended all three. The earliest that I was able to leave home was about 7.30pm on the Friday evening, because of doing the weekly account for the Post Office. Usually I arrived at the hotel at about 11.30pm, after a long drive of 187 miles. The meetings were held on Saturday mornings, and the afternoon was spent at the Goldstone Ground to watch the first-team game. Obviously Brian and Peter were present at the meetings, and they entertained us in the evening. The chairman, Mike Bamber, always came round and had a few words with each of us; he was a very amiable man. I never heard Brian or Peter say a wrong word about him, and in fact in later years they referred to him as the best chairman they ever worked for. I set off home after lunch on the Sunday. It cost me £100 each visit to get a reliable friend to look after the newspaper side of my business, collecting the papers from the wholesalers each morning and opening the shop at a quarter to five, then staying until all the deliveries had been made.

Barry Butlin, a striker who had been at Derby County when Brian and Peter first arrived there, played for Brighton on loan from Luton Town for eight games, scoring five goals, to help save the team from relegation at the end of the season.

Brian never really settled in Brighton, what with the travelling backwards and forwards each weekend and having to live in a hotel on his own away from his family. This, along with the fact that the standard of football in Division Three, after what he had been used to, was relatively poor, meant that as the weeks passed by Brian began to lose interest and was becoming less involved with the day-to-day running of the club. Peter found that he was doing more and more of the work and occasionally poured his troubles out, telling me that he wished I was closer at hand. Brian took time off, with the chairman's permission, to go to America to see Mohammed Ali fight Joe Frazier for the World Heavyweight title in New York. Shortly after that he flew out to Tehran to have talks with the Shah



about he and Peter becoming joint managers of the Iran national team. I heard very little about the visit, but I could not imagine them sitting on camels on the touchline watching a game of football. Peter, although he was a sun-worshipper, never seemed interested in going to Iran at all.

At the end of the season Brighton escaped relegation comfortably, results having improved greatly in the New Year. Brian's new house was not yet completed but would be before the commencement of the next season. John Sheridan decided to leave Brighton because he was struggling financially, despite a considerable rise in his pay.

### **The epic of the famous 44 days at Leeds United**

It was a telephone call with a difference. Peter rang to say that the Leeds United chairman, Mr Manny Cussins, and Mr Roberts, a director, were travelling down to meet our chairman, Mr Mike Bamber, at the Waldorf in London. Brian and Peter were also to attend. I said it sounded very promising, and Peter said he would ring to let me know what had happened. I spoke to him the following morning and he told me that the two of them had agreed to join Leeds United. Brighton were to receive £75,000 compensation as part of the deal. Peter and Brian wanted me to go with them. I jumped at the chance as I had been completely downhearted at Brighton, having had little success. It was agreed that I would travel up to Leeds one day during the next week.

On Sunday night I was in bed and asleep at 10pm as I got up at 4.30am to be ready to open the shop. My son John came into the bedroom and woke me up with the words 'Brian Clough's on the phone wishing to speak to you, Dad.' I did not believe him. 'Pick up the phone then,' he said. I lifted the bedside telephone to my ear.

'Maurice!' said Brian. 'I've woken you, I'm sorry, but have you heard the evening news? Your mate, the b\*\*\*\*\*d, is staying at Brighton. He's accepted an offer from Bamber to become manager. Hasn't he been in touch at all?'

'I haven't spoken to Peter since Friday morning, when he arranged to see me next week in Leeds,' I replied, still shocked.

'What are your feelings?' asked Brian. 'Will you stay at Brighton with Peter, or are you coming to Leeds with me?' I replied without hesitation.

'I haven't enjoyed my season at Brighton, I haven't achieved anything.'

'Good,' said Brian. 'When I've settled in next week I'll give you a ring from there, now go back to sleep.' I could not go back to sleep. I was so surprised, I could not take it in. How strange that Peter was staying at Brighton.

I sensed that Peter's decision to stay had come as a complete shock to Brian. He later told me that he had never settled down at Brighton, although Mike

Bamber had been very good. I figured it out correctly in the end: Peter had been lured with a handsome signing-on fee out of the Leeds compensation money.

I went up to Leeds the following Friday. Brian showed me around and introduced me to several non-playing staff, the club secretary and the office girls, and my first impressions were good. Then, as he was about to introduce me to Maurice Lindley, the chief scout, he was called away, leaving us alone. We knew one another from being at football grounds together scouting. This was to be my first experience of what would unfold in the next few weeks. I held my hand out, intending to shake Maurice's hand, but he ignored the gesture completely.

'Welcome you!' he spat. 'You must be joking. You're here to take my f\*\*\*\*\*g job, you can piss off.' I tried to tell him that I would not interfere with his job: he would remain in charge of all the scouts all over the country and receive their reports. He would be liaising with me on reports that were recommending a player. I would then take over and go myself to see the player before making a decision on him. But he just did not want to listen to me. Little did he know that only a short time ago Don Revie had offered me exactly the same job.

When Don Revie took the England manager's appointment he took with him Les Cocker, the head coach at Leeds. To replace him Brian quickly brought in Jimmy Gordon from Derby County. Players John McGovern and John O'Hare followed, also from Derby. The early results were very disappointing and Leeds lost to Liverpool in the Charity Shield at Wembley. I understand that at this time Brian made a futile attempt to lure Peter away from Brighton, during a phone conversation in the early hours of the morning. Apparently, Brian discovered that Peter had been granted a £5,000 initial payment and given a lucrative two-year contract, and he fully intended honouring his chairman's persuasive agreement. He did not wish to take up the Leeds appointment. At the time neither of them mentioned this chat to me.

Almost a month later Peter rang me. He seemed a little embarrassed but he then began to quiz me about what was happening behind the scenes. He knew more than he was making out about the situation, however: a press member was marking his card. I sensed that he was feeling a little smug that there were major difficulties. Peter then asked me if I would still put his bets on for him. I said no problem, as I had not fallen out with him. From then on we were back to speaking every week, and he agreed to come up to see me once a month to settle up paying or drawing.

About seven members of the Leeds United first team were not prepared to give Brian a fair chance. Their ringleader was being coached every evening by Don Revie, who made suggestions about what could be done to sabotage Brian's efforts. Don's dislike of Brian must have been very deep and he was certainly

doing everything in his power to bring an early end to his reign at Leeds. There was, however, a 'mole' in the Leeds camp who kept Brian informed of the mafia-type operation that was going on, and Jimmy Gordon was also keeping his ear to the ground. Jimmy himself was not on the receiving end of any trouble. This was the worst period of Brian's career. He was completely on his own and powerless against the saboteurs. He told me the names of the seven bad guys and the mole, but I am not prepared to name any of them. A lot of water has passed under the bridge and there is nothing to be gained, but the culprits must have had it on their conscience.

Brian rang to say he had decided to bring a big name into the team to steady the ship, and could I come up with somebody. I thought for a while, then mentioned Duncan Mackenzie of Nottingham Forest. He certainly would not be fazed by the move. I had seen him twice recently, and thought that although he was playing in Division Two he would still be able to get goals in Division One. Peter had told me that his contacts in Nottingham rated him.

The transfer cost Leeds United £240,000 and was signed on 24 August 1974. Duncan made 81 appearances, scoring 30 goals, and was sold to Anderlecht for £200,000 when Jimmy Armfield decided to part with the three players Brian had brought in, so it was not too bad a signing. Mackenzie's record at Leeds was slightly better than at Forest, and Leeds recouped most of their original outlay.

In Peter's book he made reference to the signing of Duncan Mackenzie, saying that this was a bad move. He had previously called the signing of Colin Todd at Derby County a poor signing, although he later changed his mind. This was a reaction that Peter had to signings he had had no part in. He also said that Brian was wrong to bring in three new players so quickly, and should have let things settle first. Whether that would have made any difference to the outcome of the saga will never be known.

Brian kept in touch, ringing two or three times a week. He was becoming more and more depressed. Several times I went up to Leeds, but there was very little I could do. The results on the field were not showing any real improvement. Don's strategy was to make most of the players fearful of Brian's attempts to change things. This had certainly worked, and day by day the situation was getting worse. It had become evident to me that Mr Cussins and his co-directors would soon have to step in. Brian had no intention of resigning.

The match played on Saturday 12 October 1975 against Luton Town, one of the less formidable sides in Division One, only resulted in a 1–1 draw and proved to be the final League game before the Leeds directors gave Brian the sack. The irony was that the Luton goal was a stunning effort from Barry Butlin, whom Brian had sold to Luton Town after loaning him out to Notts County. After the

game Brian and Barry met in the passage near the dressing rooms in front of the waiting press. Brian flung his arms around the lad and presented him to the press, saying 'This is who you want to write about after that wonderful goal. He deserves it.' Barry played for Brian at both Brighton and later at Nottingham Forest.

On 15 October 1974, Brian was sacked. Don had achieved his objective. The episode convinced me that Don's offer to me of a job at Leeds was a serious attempt to harm Brian. I certainly made the right decision. The financial settlement that Brian received made him financially secure, but the shock of being dismissed was a bitter blow. I received all the monies due to me by post. Jimmy Armfield took over at Leeds and achieved moderate success, the team finishing as runners-up in the European Cup that season.

Was Mr Cussins right to take Brian to Leeds? This question could never be answered. Brian and Peter were the best management team in the country at the time, and if they had gone to Leeds together, as intended, the outcome might have been very different. History has shown that in football the two of them were better together than as individuals.

The rest of the year passed quietly and quickly. I was busy in the Post Office and my work there required my full attention. I had little time to reflect on the Leeds episode.

Peter continued to telephone me regularly with his investments and popped up to see me as promised. He asked me whether Brian had been in touch, saying he had had no contact with him at all. I did receive one telephone call from Brian during his off-duty spell. A couple of days before Christmas he rang to wish me and my family a Merry Christmas and I returned the compliments. He told me that he had been spending most of his time walking his dog in the nearby Derbyshire countryside and enjoying some time with his family. He enquired about 'my mate', and his parting words were that his batteries were now charged up and after Christmas he would be hoping for a football job to turn up.

### **The beginning of eight years with Nottingham Forest**

There were rumblings in the press that Allan Brown, the Nottingham Forest manager, was about to lose his job. The team had only won nine of the first 24 games of the season in Division Two. On the last Saturday of the old year they lost at home to neighbours Notts County and this was the last straw for the committee. Brown was dismissed from the club and Bill Anderson, the assistant manager, was put in temporary charge for an FA Cup tie at the City Ground, which resulted in a 1–1 draw against Tottenham Hotspur, a Division One side. It did not come as a surprise to me, and it had crossed my mind that Brian might be

considered for the job.



*Brian Clough on his first day at the City Ground, Nottingham. He was raring to go with his batteries fully charged after spending three months out of the game.*

On 6 January 1975, Brian was appointed manager of Nottingham Forest as replacement for the departed Allan Brown. At that time Forest were lying 13th in the Division Two League table. During that afternoon he rang me to ask me to go over to the City Ground the next day. It had been 115 days since his departure from Leeds United and I had only spoken to him once, just before Christmas. At the meeting he got straight to the point. He said that he wanted me to be the chief scout, doing exactly the same duties as I had done at Derby County but with him, in the absence of Peter. He offered me a salary, with the cost of any travelling expenses. I accepted and we shook hands. We had a general chat on what he hoped to do, but before he rushed into any signings he wanted a good look at what the players already there had got to offer. He asked if Peter had been in touch since Christmas. I said he had, but only to place a couple of bets on the football. He had not been up to see me for a few weeks. I then said, no doubt he'll ring in the next few hours to quiz me about what is happening over here, which raised a smile from Brian. He went on to say that he was fully charged up for any challenges and could hardly wait for the games to begin. I soon was on my way as he said that he had several more calls to make, but he seemed a very relieved young man.

Nottingham Forest, the second oldest club in the Football League, was unique. There were no directors. The club was run by a committee of nine, elected from the 200 Club members. The chairman was chosen from these nine men, to officiate for a period of two years. Mr Jim Wilmer was the chairman who made Brian's appointment and Mr Stuart Dryden was the vice-chairman. Mr Dryden was the main force that persuaded the committee to choose Brian, despite the reservations that several of them had about Brian's outspoken nature. At that time there was no waiting list to become a member of the 200 Club, the reason for which was probably the fact that the club had been relegated from Division One at the end of the 1972 season.

Brian immediately began appointing his own staff. Jimmy Gordon came in as first-team coach (he had been a coach at Middlesbrough when Brian was playing there, and later worked with Brian at both Derby County and Leeds United). Jimmy had been employed as a storekeeper at the Rolls-Royce factory since leaving Leeds United. John Sheridan, the second-team coach already at the club, remained (he had played for Brian at Hartlepool United and had been a coach for Brian at Derby County). Jimmy Gordon had asked Brian if John could stay,

as he had great respect for his coaching work. John had been at Brighton with Peter Taylor but had returned to the Midlands because of the cost of living in Brighton. He is now the football coach at Nottingham University.

Out went first-team coach John McSeveney, and Bill Anderson, the assistant manager, resigned. Brian rang to ask me to go over to Nottingham on the Thursday morning, to meet the staff and have another look around. I was then introduced to Ken Smales, the secretary at Forest. He was the secretary the whole time I was with the club. I had never spoken to him before, although I remembered him from his county cricket playing days. He became a tremendous help to me at all times and I held him in high esteem. He was not as dynamic as Stuart Webb at Derby County, but was genuine, reliable and efficient. He was a quiet, intelligent man, and any problems that I encountered when travelling and attending matches when out scouting, he would quickly put right.

### **The action on the field begins**

The last side to be selected by Allan Brown that played against Notts County, losing 2–0, is printed in one of this book's picture sections. Only two players, Liam O'Kane and Ian Bowyer, were to become part of Brian's great success story at Nottingham Forest. John Robertson, Martin O'Neill, Tony Woodcock and Viv Anderson were also at the club but were not selected.

Brian's first game in charge was a trip to White Hart Lane in an FA Cup replay on a Wednesday evening, 8 January 1975. Forest won 1–0. It was an excellent beginning, with Neil Martin scoring the only goal. The only change Brian had to make was to bring Martin O'Neill in playing on the wide left to replace Dennehy, who was injured. The following morning Brian rang me. He said little about the game but I could sense that the initial tension had been released. His main concern was that we urgently needed someone to play forward wide right side. At that time he had not seen John Robertson play.

On Friday morning Brian rang me to ask whether I would take him up to Liverpool that evening to see Bob Paisley about us taking Phil Boersma. I picked Brian up at about 3.30pm at his home in Darley Abbey, arriving at Anfield just after six o'clock. We went straight into the famous Boot Room, and the first person to greet us was Tommy Smith. Several of the first-team players were there and they made us most welcome. Bob Paisley was only the temporary manager at that time.

'Hello Brian, have you come for the job?' Tommy asked. Bob Paisley then walked in, greeting Brian with the same question.

'Have you come for the job, Brian?'

'You've got the job, Bob and doing well,' Brian replied.



'I don't want it, it's too big for me to take on,' Bob said. Brian put his hand on his shoulder.

'Don't be daft, you'll take it in your stride.' Tommy Smith brought each of us a welcome mug of tea. That season Liverpool finished runners-up and they were League Division One Champions for the next two years under Bob Paisley. Bob came over as a really nice guy.

After the early chit-chat, Brian said 'Can I explain the reason for our visit? I would like to sign Phil Boersma to come and play for us at Forest, if you are agreeable.' Bob said that if Phil was happy to move then he would allow it. Phil was called. He and Brian sat down and discussed the move privately. In the end, Phil said that he did not want to leave Liverpool, but very much appreciated being asked, and he wished Brian every success. Brian respected his decision, shook his hand and wished the lad all the best for the future. We stayed for a drink with Bob in his office. I had thoroughly enjoyed myself. It was the first time I had been behind the scenes at such a top club.

On the way home, Brian said 'How can you get anyone to leave a club like that? Weren't they a great bunch.' He was right. He then went on to explain the priorities for new recruits. He was looking for young players but with some experience, who could go straight into the side. There was a limited amount of money available, which had to be spent right to make progress.

The next day, Saturday 11 January, brought the first League fixture, away to Fulham. Brian made no changes to the side that had beaten Tottenham Hotspur earlier in the week. Once again it was a 1-0 win; this time Barry Butlin got the important goal. Brian had made a good start at his new club. Everyone was beginning to warm to him and the initial tension was evaporating.

On Sunday morning I got an early call from Brian, who said he still wanted somebody to play wide right. He said we would go up to Manchester to see Tommy (Docherty) at United, who might let us have a youngster. United were making one of their rare visits to Division Two, having been relegated the previous year. We arrived unannounced at their Mottram Hall retreat at about seven o'clock on the Friday evening. It was absolutely hilarious. About 15 of their players were there, and Brian and Tommy were in great form. Unfortunately our visit was fruitless, but what a night. I cannot remember ever having so many laughs.

### **Two that we missed**

On 15 January I watched a midweek game at Eton Park in the Birmingham Senior Cup. Burton Albion beat Atherstone Town 4-2 and it was very entertaining. I came away that evening with two players on my mind. First was

the young goalkeeper for Atherstone, Gerry Peyton. He was 18 years old and had an outstanding game, keeping the score down. Second was a Burton Albion player, Peter Ward, who was small for a striker, but sharp with quick feet. He scored a very good individual goal and caused the opposing defence many problems. The next day I discussed these two players with Brian. I said that they would not cost the earth, and that they were certainly players for the future. Brian explained that his urgent need was for players that could go straight into the first team, and said that we already had two young goalkeepers who were promising and highly thought of. As strikers we had Barry Butlin, Martin O'Neill and Neil Martin, so any money available had to be spent to bring in experienced players.

During this time Peter asked me if I had been to see any games. I told him I had seen a couple at Eton Park. He was looking for a striker to strengthen his playing staff. I told him about Peter Ward at Burton Albion. Peter was immediately interested, but I told him that I did not want to get involved because of my long connections with Burton Albion. I told him that Ken Gutteridge was the manager and suggested he rang him for a full run-down on Peter Ward. Soon afterwards Peter joined Brighton for £4,000. He did well and scored 21 goals in 50 outings. Ken Gutteridge himself left Burton Albion very shortly afterwards to become assistant manager at Brighton and Hove Albion. It was a big surprise locally, but not to me, as on two occasions during the last 12 months Peter had offered me the post, but I had turned him down.

I did Peter another good favour by marking his card about Brian Horton at Port Vale, for whom he paid £27,000. I had run the rule over him while I was at Leeds United.

Some time later, in April, Dave Blakey of Burnley rang to ask me whether I had seen a young goalkeeper good enough for them. Due to injuries they were desperate to find one. I told him that I would ring him back. This gave me time to speak to Brian to obtain permission to recommend Gerry Peyton to Burnley. He gave me the nod, saying that we were fine for goalkeepers. I rang Dave back and told him that the lad was playing for Atherstone and that Gill Merrick (the former Birmingham goalkeeper) was their manager. I said he was 18 and had been released from Aston Villa. I thought that playing under Gill was probably the reason for his improvement. Atherstone were due to play at home the next Monday evening. It was arranged that I would go to the game and meet Jimmy Adamson (the Burnley manager) outside the gates shortly before the kick-off. Jimmy paid for us both to go in and we watched the game from behind the goals. Gerry was faultless and Atherstone won 1-0. Five minutes from time I left the ground. Jimmy shook my hand and thanked me, and said he was staying to see

Gill Merrick. That night Gerry Peyton travelled with Jimmy to Burnley. The transfer fee was £1,000. Burnley sent me a small present for my help. Eighteen months later he was sold to Fulham for £40,000. During his career he played for nine League clubs, making over 600 appearances in League and Cup games, also collecting 33 Republic of Ireland caps. He later coached two clubs in Japan, where he met Arsene Wenger, who quickly brought him in to be the goalkeeping coach at Arsenal. First signings for Nottingham Forest

On 1 February, my birthday, Forest suffered their first defeat under Brian, 0–1 away at Oldham in the League. Two more defeats in the next 10 days included being knocked out of the FA Cup at the third attempt by Fulham. Brian said to me that he was going to bring in John McGovern and John O’Hare from Leeds: he knew exactly what he was getting. They cost £60,000, half what was paid when Brian took them to Leeds United from Derby County. John McGovern made his debut on 22 February at the City Ground against Cardiff City. The game ended in a draw. John O’Hare played in the next game at Oxford United. Again the result was a draw, this time 1–1.

John Middleton, John Robertson, Martin O’Neill, Ian Bowyer, Liam O’Kane, Tony Woodcock, Viv Anderson and Barry Butlin were all youngsters who Brian wanted to have a good look at. Most of them became very much a part of the Forest success story. Barry was an unusual member of the playing staff: he played for us for a total of eight seasons at three different clubs, but he had never been signed by Peter or Brian. He was always signed by the out-going managers.

The first serious casualty on the playing staff was Paddy Greenwood at left-back, who suffered a broken leg and never played for the club again. Paul Richardson was drafted into this spot from midfield. Brian Appleby QC had now taken over as the Nottingham Forest chairman and begun his term of office.

With the arrival of John McGovern and John O’Hare, Martin O’Neill had been dropped from the first team. In the reserves Martin had been scoring regularly and he thought he deserved a run back in the first team. Apparently in the dressing room the lads had said to him ‘Go in and ask the boss why you haven’t had your chance’. At a midweek reserve team game Brian was present and Martin scored two goals. This gave him courage. Very nervously he knocked on the manager’s office door. ‘Come in! Yes young man, what can I do for you?’

Martin, shaking, said ‘Boss, can you tell me why I am still in the reserves? I feel that I am playing well and scoring goals.’

There was silence for a couple of minutes. Then Brian said ‘I’ve seen you play recently. You’re dead right you’re playing well – that’s the reason you’re in the reserves, because you’re “too good” for the third team!’ Martin was out of the door in a flash. This was Brian at his wittiest.

Jimmy McCann, a 20-year-old youngster from the reserves, was given his debut as a striker alongside Barry Butlin in the last game of the season against West Bromwich Albion, resulting in a victory of 2–1. Barry scored both of the goals. Martin O’Neill was returned to first-team duty for this final game.

The season ended with the team finishing in 16th place in Division Two, with the average gate just over 13,000. Brian told me that he was reasonably satisfied with the progress that had been made, and that he could see daylight at the end of the tunnel. Although the team had finished in a lower position than the previous season, this was the same pattern that he had experienced at Derby County.

### **The groundwork for a new signing**

During February 1975 Brian took several telephone calls from an Alan Curran, who was the elder brother of Terry Curran, a young right-winger playing for Doncaster Rovers. Terry had been playing there just over 12 months, having been taken on by Maurice Setters when he was their manager, from non-League football with his local side Kinsley. Alan told Brian how well his young brother was playing, and said that Brian should have a look at him. One Monday morning I happened to be in Brian’s office when he received such a call. Brian put his hand over the phone, looked at me and said ‘Can you go to Doncaster on Wednesday night?’ I nodded and Brian told Alan that someone would definitely be there. I went to the game. I had not seen Terry play before, and he possessed pace and good control, went down the touchline well and crossed the ball into the penalty area perfectly with power and precision. I reported my observations back to Brian, who said ‘You’d better go again on Saturday, if he’s that good, and take a second look.’ Terry scored two goals, both from the edge of the box, low and well struck. This confirmed the opinion I had formed of Terry on my first visit.

The following Saturday Doncaster were due to play Barnsley away. The first team did not have a game, as their opponents were still in the FA Cup, so Brian said that he would come with me. Early on the Saturday morning he rang to tell me that he was going to Stoke, who were playing Forest’s reserves in a match with an 11 o’clock kick-off, to see two of our young lads play. He said he would pick me up from the shop at around 1pm.

Brian was late as usual and we left my shop at 2.15pm. It was a one and a half hour journey to Barnsley. The M1 was not very busy and we made good time, but as we passed Chesterfield flashing blue lights chased us and a loudspeaker instructed us to pull on to the hard shoulder. Brian obeyed and two police officers came to the car. One of them said to Brian that he had been clocked at

94 miles an hour and asked him for his driving licence, which Brian produced without saying a word. The officer proceeded to book him. Brian only answered the questions that were put to him, took the ticket and said 'Thank you'. The officer said 'Watch your speed, have a safe journey. Good afternoon Mr Clough.' Brian said good afternoon and we carried on with our trip to Barnsley, arriving during the half-time break. Our seats were on the front row of the directors' box. Fortunately Terry was playing right under where we were seated and he was outstanding. He scored twice and Doncaster won 3-0.

Back at the City Ground on Monday Alan Hill, who had recently joined the staff, made enquiries about his availability. Doncaster wanted £140,000 for him. Brian said 'That is a ridiculous price, we'll sweat it out.' Terry's brother Alan rang later the same morning. He was fully aware that Brian had been to see him play at Barnsley. During the conversation Brian learned that Terry's contract with Doncaster ran out at the end of the season. Brian told Alan Curran that he would definitely sign Terry before the start of next season. 'Don't let him sign an extension to his present contract, to save complications,' he said. 'Keep the whole matter hush hush.'

Three or four weeks later Stan Anderson, the Doncaster manager (Brian played with him at Sunderland), rang Brian and accused him of tapping Terry up to join Nottingham Forest. Brian, in all truthfulness, told Stan that he had never spoken to Terry Curran, nor had any member of the Forest staff. Two weeks later Stan Anderson rang Brian again, this time in a furious mood. Terry had refused to sign a new contract. Brian pleaded ignorance and told Stan that it was his problem. In the middle of May Alan Curran rang Brian to say that Doncaster Rovers had stopped Terry's summer wages and the lad had not got any money at all to live on. His summer wages were £25 a week. Brian asked him for Terry's telephone number and told him that one of our staff would get in touch with him. Brian rang me with the phone number and we discussed the money problem. He said that there was no way the Forest committee would sanction any payment of this kind to be made to Terry. I said 'Leave that to me, I will take care of it.' Brian said 'Be careful, the committee will go spare if any of this gets to them.'

On the phone I agreed to meet Terry every Friday evening at seven o'clock in the square at Bawtry. I used to park my car then get in the queue at the chip shop. Terry joined the queue behind me and I slipped him his £25. This went on for seven weeks and I paid out £175 of my own money. Brian asked 'How the devil are you going to recover that amount?'

'I'm in no great hurry for it,' I said. 'What if this season, in my expenses, I claim back some each month? I will soon recover the money.'

'That should be okay, if you're happy,' said Brian. 'I'll sanction and sign all the

scouts' expense claims, and no one will query them.'

### **Addition to the backroom staff**

Brian had decided that someone was needed to deal with the paperwork and assist with the office work on the footballing side, and to liaise with the team of scouts. As a result Alan Hill was brought on to the staff from Derby County. He actually lived in Nottingham. A Barnsley lad, he was the goalkeeper for Rotherham United in the 1967–68 season when Tommy Docherty was their manager. He was transferred to Nottingham Forest, then under Matt Gillies, but unfortunately broke an arm during the home game against Everton on 28 February 1970 and was never able to play again. At Derby County he had been working as a youth development officer. He was recommended to Brian by Jimmy Gordon and his main duties were organising the scouts from all over the country, passing me any favourable reports on prospective signings and being a general help to Brian.

I had never met Alan before and when Brian introduced us he said that to begin with Alan would accompany me on scouting trips so that we would get to know one another well and know the type of player we were looking for. From then on we would be working closely with one another. Over the years we have become good friends and are still in touch. Alan is still very active within the game and he is still scouting. At the time of writing he is back at Forest with Billy Davies.

When Brian retired from Nottingham Forest Frank Clark was appointed their manager. Alan Hill became his assistant manager and the two were later together in similar appointments at Manchester City, during a six-year period from 1993–99.

### **My attempt at the jackpot**

At the end of the season Charlie George was having problems with Arsenal and I had heard from a good source that he would be available for transfer. Brian had said to me that he would like to come up with a big signing to help us push up into the top League. I suggested Charlie George, but Brian thought there was no chance that he would come down to our League. I said that I should go to see him, as we would never know if we did not try, and Brian agreed.

I had been given a horse that was a supposedly 'good thing' at Royal Ascot. I decided to combine going to the races with my trip to see Charlie. Peter Taylor had asked me to back the horse for him too. It was to be ridden by Lester Piggott, trained in Ireland and named Gay Fandango. I placed a very substantial bet at the course and decided to go to the very top of the Main Grandstand to watch the race. The view of the course was magnificent. I was the only person

up there. Shortly before the off Vincent O'Brien came up and stood about two yards away from me. The horse won easily and I was the first person to congratulate the great Vincent O'Brien before he shot off down to the unsaddling enclosure.

I left the course early to avoid the traffic queues and travelled on to Enfield. I arrived at Charlie George's house shortly before six o'clock and knocked at the door, which was answered by Mrs George. I asked whether Charlie was at home and she said he was across the road at the pub helping his friend the landlord to get ready for opening time. I had a long chat with Charlie in the pub, telling him that Brian would like him to come to Forest, and that if he was interested the wheels could be set in motion. Charlie told me that Arsenal had said that he could go to any club bar Tottenham Hotspur, and to thank Brian for the offer but he really wanted to stay in Division One (Forest were still in Division Two). However, if no one came in for him before the season started, he would seriously consider joining Nottingham Forest, liking the idea of playing for Brian.

The days ticked by. Shortly before the season was due to start Brian rang me one evening to say that Charlie George had signed for Derby. 'You've not marked Webby's card, have you?' he said. Until then I had forgotten about my meeting with Stuart some months before. During the period after the Leeds United debacle, when I was without a club, Stuart had come to see me about returning to Derby County. I had thanked him for the offer but said I was going to wait until Brian joined another club. Before Stuart left that day he asked me who my first target would have been if I'd gone back to Derby. I had said Charlie George. Apparently Stuart also heard, months later, that Charlie was still available. Dave Mackay was golfing near London, so Stuart rang Dave on the golf course and told him that the board had given the go ahead for Charlie to be signed. Dave went into London to do the necessary. It seems that what I had said to Stuart had registered. Charlie George was signed that afternoon.

# The first full season at Forest

The 1975–76 season was Brian's first full season with Forest. Terry Curran came to pre-season training, supposedly on trial, then signed a contract. He did not appear in any of the friendly matches, but made his Nottingham Forest debut in the opening game of the new season, on 30 August 1975, at the City Ground against Notts County in League Division Two. The result was an unpopular 0–1 defeat. To my knowledge there were no repercussions from Doncaster over the signing, and Terry became a regular member of our first team.

I began to recover the money I had spent paying Terry's summer wages. As I did not want to be questioned about my expenses, I was careful not to over do it. I only included a couple of extra trips each month. Then there was a slight hitch. On one of my claims I had included a trip to Molineux. Alan Hill had also claimed for a trip there on the same night. One of the committee members spotted this and they refused to pay us both. When confronted Brian told the committee that he had sent Alan to the game himself, but he did not know why I was there. Brian rang me to tell me what had happened at the meeting. 'Why the claim?' he asked.

'This is my last-but-one claim, to recover the money I paid to Terry Curran during the summer.' I said.

'What do you suggest I tell the committee?' asked Brian.

'Tell them that I went to Molineux two weeks earlier (I had), but the player I had gone to see hadn't convinced me one way or the other, so I decided another visit was needed. Not having spoken to Alan, I didn't realise that he would be going to the game, or he could have saved me the journey.'

The committee accepted the explanation, but they said that Alan and myself had got to liaise better because the cost of two of us travelling in two cars to the same game was not acceptable.

It was almost Christmas before I was fully reimbursed. Terry Curran could have cost Nottingham Forest £140,000 in transfer fees. The committee was never told how the transfer had been handled and only Brian, Alan Hill and myself were involved. Even the club secretary Ken Smales had no knowledge of what had transpired.

Some time later, the FA were doing an investigation into transfers in and out of Nottingham Forest. The News of the World, along with other newspapers, had a team of sports reporters out interviewing players who had been bought and sold by Brian, looking for evidence to incriminate him.



One Sunday morning, at about 11 o'clock, I got a telephone call from a close friend. He said 'I knew that you would make the News of the World one day. Have a look at the front page!' We sold about 300 copies of the News of the World each Sunday. No one else had spoken to me about the article. I immediately got a copy and read the article, and the story was there. It was written by a reporter who had interviewed Terry Curran about joining Nottingham Forest from Doncaster Rovers. Terry had told him that the only money that had been paid to him was £25 per week for his summer wages, saying that a guy called 'Maurice' used to bring it to him each week, until he signed a contract to play for Forest. At the time the article appeared I was not working for Brian, and no one else has ever mentioned the article to me.

During the following summer I bumped into Terry at York races. This was the first time I had spoken to him since he joined Forest. After a short chat I asked him what had made him tell the News of the World reporter about me giving him the money each Friday evening in Bawtry. He said that the reporter had put him under intense pressure to tell him anything that he could remember about the transfer, but he could not remember my surname and had nothing else to tell him. The Sunday People had apparently later carried a similar report.

### **More additions to the playing staff**

During the close season Brian had heard from Doug Weatherall, sports reporter for the Daily Mail in the North East, that Frank Clark was going to be released from Newcastle United on a free transfer. At the first opportunity Brian travelled up to see Frank to discuss him joining Nottingham Forest, and an agreement was quickly reached. Frank was brought in at 33 years of age and proved an ideal signing. He had looked after himself and was in fine shape. With his knowledge and experience of the game he arrived at exactly the right time for us. An 'old head' was what Brian had been searching for; he had told me many times the previous season that one was needed in the side. Frank gave great service at left-back, going on to make 182 appearances for Nottingham Forest, collecting medals for a Division One Championship, two Football League Cups and a European Cup – not bad for a free transfer signing.

When Frank decided to call it a day he went back to the North East as assistant manager to Ken Knighton at Sunderland, later managing Nottingham Forest and Manchester City. He is still actively involved with the game as a representative of the League Managers' Association, and he lives in the Nottingham area.

Brian was still concerned about the midfield. He told me that he wanted to bring someone in to do a job similar to what Dave Mackay had done for us at Derby County, to give our midfield some education during a game. I slept on it

and came up with Howard Kendall. I had recently seen him playing for Birmingham City reserves. I rang Brian and he thought it was a brilliant suggestion. He left it to me to fix up a meeting between them.

I spoke to Howard the same evening and told him exactly what Brian had in mind. He was extremely pleased with the offer, but he had been offered a coaching job with a Football League club which he was going to accept. He said it was his ambition to become a manager in the League and he hoped this would be a stepping stone. He asked me to thank Brian on his behalf. I reported back to Brian, who said 'Good luck to him, he deserves to get on.'

Howard Kendall soon joined Stoke City as a player-coach, which did lead on to him having a successful career in management. During three periods at Everton and one at Manchester City he gained several major honours.

Our next target was a central-defender. Brian said 'I want you to go to Maine Road to see Manchester City reserves this week and have a good look at Tommy Booth, he may do for us for a couple of seasons.' I had not seen Tommy play for several seasons, but it was soon evident that he would not be suitable. He was showing wear and tear, his pace had gone and he was taking things very easily. I could not possibly have recommended him. Once I had realised this I could focus on the other players on the field.

My attention was being continually drawn to the Manchester City left-back, who was doing all the right things. He was young, fresh-faced and fair-haired, with very good pace. He went forward quickly, had good control and a strong left foot and crossed the ball well. He could use his right pretty well too. I looked at the team sheet: Colin Barrett. I did not know of him and had never seen him play before. I stayed to the end of the game, then decided to make some discreet enquiries while I was still in the ground. There had been only one other League club scout present at the match.

I discovered that Colin had been with the club since he was a boy and had made his debut in the first team at the age of 20. He had made 69 appearances in League and Cup, and he had played in both full-back positions. He had also had some games at centre-half. Colin had been out of the game for some time due to breaking a leg, and this game was his first 90 minutes since his recovery. When I returned home I immediately went through his playing records, which matched what I had been told. Surprisingly he was now 23 years old – he did not appear that age on the field.

On Sunday morning Brian rang to find out how I had got on. I gave him the full report and said how impressed I had been with Colin Barrett's game. I said that there had only been one other League club represented at the game, but I knew that the way Barrett had played would soon create some interest. I said we

should act quickly. Brian was pleased and said he would get on with it on Monday morning. After lunch Brian rang me to say that he had spoken to Tony Book, the Manchester City manager, and that Barrett was available at a fee of £30,000. He had arranged a meeting with Tony and his chairman, Mr Peter Swales, at an inn between Stoke and Uttoxeter for lunchtime on the Tuesday.

Michael Keeling, a friend of Brian's, drove him to the meeting. Michael had met Mr Swales several years back. On these occasions Brian was at his brilliant best. He told Mr Swales that he was prepared to pay the asking price, but, as he had not seen Colin play, and he was returning from a serious injury, he asked to have him at Forest for a week to satisfy himself. Brian said to me that the small transfer fee had made him cautious. Tony Book agreed with the proposal and Colin came for a week. Brian was impressed with the lad and he was duly signed. What a good signing it turned out to be. If it had not been for injuries he would definitely have gained full international recognition. Colin never gave Brian an ounce of trouble, and he described him to me as a 'model professional'. He played 99 League and Cup games, gained promotion to Division One and won a Division One Championship medal. The actual transfer fee had been £29,000. Torn medial ligaments and another spell out through injury curtailed his number of appearances and medals.

This signing has always given me the greatest satisfaction. Colin had that extra touch of class for a defender. Eventually he sustained further injuries and was unable to regain his place at Forest. He was later transferred to Swindon Town. To this day I have never spoken to him, although I understand he still lives in Nottingham.

### **A chance meeting with Peter Shilton**

The search was still on for a player to play wide on the right-hand side. Shortly before the end of the season I went to the Victoria Road Ground to see a Stoke City reserve game, an evening fixture. In the first half Sean Haselgrave impressed me. He had good pace and could cross the ball well; it was the first time I had seen him play. There was only a small attendance at the game. In the tea room at half-time, waiting for my turn in the queue for a cup of tea, a hand came down on my shoulder. I turned. It was Peter Shilton. I had not spoken to him since he had been with Stoke City in goal. 'Maurice!' he exclaimed. 'What brings you here tonight, almost at the end of the season?' I told him we were looking for a good wide attacking player for the right-hand side, and said that Sean Haselgrave had impressed me during the first half. Peter said Sean would do well in our League. He had made over 100 appearances in the Stoke first team but was out of favour with Tony (Waddington). He thought Sean would be

available for a reasonable fee.

I changed the subject. 'We're hoping to gain promotion next season. If we do, can I tempt you to join us at Forest?'

'I'd love to play for Brian,' Peter said. 'Will he have any money to spend?'

'I'm sure he'd bend over backwards to have you in our side,' I replied. 'He'd find some cash.'

Sean did just as well in the second half. I told Brian the full story, and Haselgrave became a Nottingham Forest player for a fee of £50,000. The following season he made his debut at Fulham on 21 August. He had suffered one or two niggling injuries, then gained a first-team spot when Terry Curran was injured. However, after six consecutive games he badly damaged both ankles and was out of the game for some time. He never regained his first-team place.

When Archie Gemmill joined Forest from Derby County, Sean was sold to Preston North End (by coincidence Preston had been Archie's first English League club). Forest recovered £25,000 of his purchase price from the sale. He had two very good seasons at Preston under Nobby Stiles before moving to Crewe and then York City, ending his career playing for Torquay United. In all he made 493 appearances in League football, but owing to injury only seven were for Forest. He eventually went back to Preston as a youth-team coach and obtained a UEFA (A) badge. I understand he is now employed as a coach at the Cardinal Newman College and is the English Colleges head football coach.

During the season Bryn Gunn, a full-back aged 17, and Peter Wells, a 19-year-old goalkeeper, made their debuts from the reserves and did well. The team finished in eighth position in the League. We were now moving in the right direction.

I was able to go to Cala Millor with the team for an end-of-season break. Brian, Alan Hill and myself were walking back to the hotel in the evening along the seafront, where a few yards in front of us there were a few people laughing. In the roadway Liam O'Kane and Sammy Chapman were on their stomachs, larking about pretending to be swimming. When they saw Brian they jumped up and walked away. Next morning they asked Alan whether the boss had made any remark. Alan told them that he had just smiled and seemed to dismiss the incident.

When the players reported back for pre-season training, a deputation of ladies came so see Brian to ask if he would allow two of the Forest players to take part in a charity swimming gala. He sent for Liam and Sammy, and told them what the ladies had come for. 'As I saw in Cala Millor, you two are good at swimming. I knew you'd fit the bill.' The pair quickly accepted. Brian rarely

missed a trick.

### **Peter and Brian together again**

Towards the end of June, Peter came up to see me at the Post Office, supposedly to say hello and collect some winnings that I had for him. I congratulated Peter on gaining fourth spot in Division Three with Brighton. Surprisingly he did not seem overjoyed. In fact, he was in very low spirits and said that he thought they should have gone up. He had lost some of his enthusiasm for life down there. He was always full of respect for the chairman, Mike Bamber, but he was completely exhausted and was having trouble with his immediate non-playing staff. He could not rely on them and he wanted to find someone he could trust to share the workload. It was all getting him down and he went on to say that he wished I lived much closer. His original two-year contract was almost over. He asked me again whether I would go down to Brighton full-time as his assistant. I told him that football life was too precarious for me, and that I would be foolish to give up what I had.

I then suggested to him that Brian might welcome him with open arms. Great strides had been made with the playing staff at Forest, all the dead wood had gone and next season we might be promoted to the top division.

‘Why don’t you bury the hatchet?’ I asked. ‘The time is absolutely right for you to come to Forest, and Brian is more focused on the job than I’ve ever seen him.’ Peter shrugged his shoulders. ‘I’m going to our apartment in Cala Millor tomorrow to join up with Lil and the kids. I need a month’s rest and some sun, to recharge. This will give me an opportunity to think seriously about next season and what we as a family want to do.’

Brian had often asked me whether I had spoken to Peter, always referring to him as ‘your mate’. Recently he had become more inquisitive, asking how Peter seemed in himself, although at no time did he directly ask me whether Peter had mentioned working together again.

When Peter got back from Majorca he rang, supposedly to talk about his bets for the following football season. I had given my feeling that he and Brian should be reconciled a lot of thought. I was the obvious mediator, as I was the only one still close to them both. I had an ideal opportunity to bring the question up, and Peter would always discuss his private feelings on issues with me.

‘Have you thought about letting bygones be bygones and joining us at Forest?’ I asked. ‘I reckon Brian would bend over backwards to get you back on board.’ Peter’s reply was quick and to the point. He said that he had thought about it, but no way was he going to be the one to make the first approach. If Brian rang him himself then he would meet him to discuss the possibility. I was delighted.

I could hardly wait for the first opportunity to dash off to Nottingham to see Brian. I explained what Peter and I had discussed.

‘He wouldn’t come,’ was Brian’s first reaction. ‘He’s had a very good season, things have gone well at Brighton, they only just missed promotion.’ Obviously he had taken a big interest in how Brighton had performed. We discussed the idea for about half an hour and it became clear that neither man wanted to make the first move. It was just a matter of personal pride: I was convinced that both of them wanted it to happen.

‘I’m not ringing Peter,’ said Brian, after a short pause. ‘He’s the one that stopped speaking to me. Next time you speak to him, tell him to ring me at home. I would definitely be willing to discuss the move and fix a meeting to clear the air, with no strings attached.’ I rang Peter straight away and told him to ring Brian that same night. Apparently, after sleeping on it, Brian flew over to Cala Millor to put the offer to Peter face to face and came back with the okay. Peter must have returned to his apartment there. I never asked about any of the details, I was just delighted that they were back working together again. When they told me about it, they each claimed that the other made the first move, although to my mind Brian going over to Cala Millor is the most likely story. Peter would have been nervous about making the first move.

A short time later, in July 1976, Peter resigned as manager at Brighton and Hove Albion, leaving the playing side in a healthy state, far better than when he first went there. Alan Mullery was appointed as his successor and took them up into Division Two at the end of the forthcoming season.

Shortly after Peter and Brian had made their agreement, they met Brian Appleby QC, the Nottingham chairman, and Stuart Dryden, vice-chairman, at the City Ground. A contract was signed. This was probably the most important signing I was ever involved with. Brian rang to say Peter had signed the contract, then Peter rang me and thanked me for my part in it. It was almost two years since they had spoken to each other. I was over the moon that they were back together again and I knew things would happen quickly at Forest now. However, even I did not imagine what they would achieve in the coming seasons, it was magnificent. I did follow my instinct, though, and had £100 each way at 20–1 on them winning Division Two. Nottingham Forest finished in third place, gaining promotion to Division One, winning me £400.

I was of the opinion that the ordeal that Brian had gone through at Leeds United, together with the large pay settlement he received from them, and the almost three months without having a job, had done him the world of good. He looked at things in a different light and seemed to have matured.

# Back Together

The first priority was for Peter to get to know the players and assess their ability as he had not seen this Nottingham Forest squad perform. The backbone of the side was already in place: John Middleton and Peter Wells (goalkeepers), Colin Barrett, Frank Clark, John McGovern, Liam O’Kane, Sammy Chapman, Ian Bowyer, Terry Curran, Martin O’Neill, John O’Hare, Barry Butlin, G. Saunders and Sean Haselgrave. Viv Anderson came through from the reserves and Tony Woodcock had been out on loan, with Lincoln City and Doncaster Rovers, Brian doing Stan Anderson a good turn after the Curran saga.

Peter watched the first team while I carried on my scouting duties. He said that he was reasonably surprised at the quality of the first-team players but that we desperately needed a proven goalscorer and an experienced central-defender.

My first instruction from Peter was to go to watch Peter Withe, a striker with Birmingham City. He gave me a rundown of his attitude and fitness level. I went twice. Peter had had Withe all lined up to join him at Brighton from Wolves, but the news leaked out. Peter was not very happy about this, and Freddie Goodwin had topped Brighton’s offer by £10,000, so he had lost him. Peter Withe became Peter’s first new recruit. At £43,000 he seemed a good buy. He made his debut appearance on 25 September at the City Ground against Carlisle United. Forest won 5–1 and Withe scored one goal.

Peter Withe finished his first season with a tally of 20 goals, Forest gaining promotion from Division Two. In his second season Forest became Division One Champions; Withe’s contribution was scoring 19 goals. Shortly after the commencement of his third season he was sold to Newcastle United for £250,000, making the club a handsome profit. He was replaced by at first by Steve Elliott and soon after by Garry Birtles, both from the Forest reserves.

Peter said that a centre-half was the priority because Sammy Chapman ‘had shot it’. He brought in on loan the giant Larry Lloyd, a central-defender from Coventry, formerly in Liverpool’s Championship side. He made his debut at Hull on 2 October, but after five appearances no transfer fee could be agreed, so he went back to Coventry.

Sammy came back in central defence after Larry returned to Coventry and stayed with the club until the end of the season, making 32 appearances. Shortly after that Larry was finally transferred permanently to Nottingham Forest. The fee was £55,000. He made his debut as a member of the playing staff on 4 December at the City Ground against Bristol Rovers. The Pirates had been his

first League club, as he was born in Bristol. He went on to form a wonderful partnership with the equally strong Kenny Burns, winning a Division One Championship medal and a Football League Cup-winners' medal.

Early on in his career with Forest, Larry turned up for an away fixture to join the team coach dressed in an open-neck sports shirt and casual trousers, when every other player was dressed in club blazer and flannels. He was sitting on the coach waiting to leave when Brian, always the last person to arrive, climbed aboard and spotted him. 'Hey big fellow,' said Brian. 'Where are you going?'

'To Highbury, boss' replied Larry.

'Not dressed like that,' Brian replied. 'You know the rules. Go home, get dressed properly and get yourself to London. If you do you can play tomorrow. But don't claim any expenses!'

Larry took part in the game.

Rescued from falling into obscurity, Larry had five good seasons at Forest, creating a central-defensive partnership with Kenny Burns that was the best in the English League and making 219 League and Cup appearances. He picked up one or two reprimands from the boss along the way, about the dress code and his weight, but they were all for his own good.

### **The luck of the game**

Letters recommending players to Forest were now coming in at the rate of over 100 per week. The legible, sensible letters were all distributed to the scout operating in the area concerned. The ones requiring further assessment were passed over to me for action.

One Saturday in October 1976, Burton Albion were playing in the FA Cup against Long Eaton at Eton Park. The game I was scheduled to attend, also in the FA Cup, was called off very late, so as I had no specific game to go to, I decided to watch Burton Albion. They won 5-0, so the 15-minute journey was not in vain. A young, slim lad playing centre-forward for Long Eaton, Garry Birtles, kept causing the Burton defence problems with his control and pace. He was completely on his own and had hardly any support from his teammates, but he never gave up. All weekend I kept thinking about what I had seen. It seemed unreal that in a side losing heavily it was the losing centre-forward who had registered with me. I did not mention what I had seen: Peter was still tied up with Brian and the Forest first team. I decided to pay another visit to Long Eaton during the next week for a second look. The game was a Derbyshire Cup game. The weather was awful, with heavy rain showers, and there were only a handful of spectators. I was able to watch the game from the comfort of my car, parked by the side of the pitch. The score at full-time was 1-1, so extra-time under



floodlights was necessary. There were puddles all over the pitch. Just before half-time in the extra period, Birtles received the ball on the halfway line, sped off towards the goal and beat two defenders with control and pace. The 'keeper came off his line, and from the edge of the penalty area Birtles drove the ball past him, giving him no chance.

The following Saturday Long Eaton were away to Enderby Town. I had decided to go for a final look. During the morning Brian rang to say that Peter had gone to Oldham with the first team, and he asked where was I going.

'Enderby Town', I said.

'Where the devil's Enderby?' asked Brian.

'Near Leicester,' I replied. 'I'm leaving my place just before two o'clock.'

'I will be at your shop by then for sure,' Brian said. He arrived on time and passed me his car keys. 'Here, you know the way.' On the way he asked 'Who are we watching?' I told him that for the last two weeks I had been watching a young centre-forward who was worth another look. 'Interesting, I like judging centre-forwards,' said Brian.

I wanted to arrive just after the game had started so that spectators and well-wishers would not be surrounding Brian as we watched from the touchline. It was a bitterly cold October day and shortly before half-time Garry Birtles was carried off with a hamstring injury. The score was 0-0, and apart from some honest running and his control ability we had not seen much.

At half-time Brian said 'Let's have a Bovril to warm us up.' We learned then that Garry was not coming back on in the second half. Brian said 'Let's get off then.' On the way home, Brian came out with what became a well-known phrase when he was asked what he had thought of Garry Birtles when he first saw him: 'The Bovril was better than what I had seen'. Before he got out of the car he said 'If you fancy him I leave it to you, see their chairman and fix it up for him to come to the City Ground, I won't object.'

On the Monday I contacted the Long Eaton chairman, John Raynor, and agreed a transfer fee of £1,000, making arrangements for Garry to report to Alan Hill at Forest as soon as his hamstring had recovered. During the week I heard from Long Eaton that his injury was not as serious as first thought and that he would be able to join Forest the next Monday. I passed this information on to Alan Hill. Before the weekend I got a call from Alan Hill asking whether I was sure about Garry, pointing out that he had been on schoolboy forms with Notts County and they had released him as 'not good enough'. Two of our scouts operating in the Nottingham area had also said that they did not think he would be good enough and that he lacked the physical strength to cope with League football. I said that I had seen enough of him to bring him into our club, and that I believed he was

worth signing.

On Sunday morning, Peter rang me. 'Garry Birtles,' he began. 'You've arranged for him to be signed by us and agreed to pay £1,000 fee. He's arriving at our ground in the morning to sign. The staff here are telling me that he isn't good enough.' I explained to Peter that I had personally watched him play three times and had seen enough to convince me. Peter went quiet for a few minutes, then he said to me, 'Get in touch with the Long Eaton chairman and tell him that we want to have Garry here at the City Ground for the week to have a good look at him. If we are still keen on signing him we will pay £2,000.' This was not a problem with John Raynor, the chairman. He had no doubts about Garry's ability, and he said that £2,000 would be most welcome.

Garry was played in the reserve team away at Coventry during the week. Peter went to the game himself, to make an assessment. He only stayed until half-time: he was convinced. The transfer was completed the next day and Long Eaton received £2,000. Garry made his debut at the City Ground against Hull City on 12 March 1977, but he did not appear for the first team again until the home game with Arsenal on 9 September 1978.

When Peter Withe was sold, Garry was brought in to replace Steve Elliott, in front of John O'Hare. He never looked back and, scoring on a regular basis, he kept his place. Peter had persuaded Brian to give Garry his chance, although reports from Ronnie Fenton, who was the second-team coach at Forest, were not very encouraging about him. Ronnie had been the manager at Notts County when Garry was released as 'not good enough'. Garry went on to win two European Cup medals, a League Cup medal and three international caps.

In October 1980, Garry was sold to Manchester United for £1.25 million. Brian asked the Nottingham Forest committee – I was unaware of this – to give me a present of £500. This was refused, as it was not in my contract to receive payments when a player that I had originally brought into the club was sold. One member of the committee was apparently heard to say, 'He's got more money than most of us and drives a new Jaguar.'

In later years I worked for Ian Storey-Moore when he was chief scout at Nottingham Forest. One day Ian said to me, when we were going to a game together, 'Maurice, I believe you saw Garry Birtles for the first time in an FA Cup game playing for Long Eaton at Burton Albion. I played in that game: we beat them 5–0 and I scored a hat-trick, why didn't you recommend me?'

I replied 'You were over 30, Garry was 21. If I had recommended you Brian would have sacked me.'

Some time ago I went to see Garry Birtles at the Pirelli Stadium, Burton Albion's ground. He was working for ITV, who were televising a game live. I

had never talked to Garry before, but I wanted some details from him for this book. At first he did not believe who I was. A few weeks earlier I had written to him via the Nottingham Evening Post, but he had ignored it because he did not believe my story. When I recounted the initial games I had seen him play in he was convinced, but he told me that he was always under the impression that a scout living in Nottingham had recommended him, and Peter Taylor had clinched it. Peter, of course, had only seen him play the once, at Coventry during Garry's trial period at Forest, when the final decision was made whether or not to sign him. This was a fine example of how my work was carried out without any publicity within the club.

One of the young Forest players, Steve Elliott, a striker, was recommended by Brian to play in the England Under-21 squad. While he was away with the young hopefuls, Steve discovered that most of them were on much higher wages. When he returned to Forest he told Alan Hill that he was going to ask the boss for a raise. Alan advised against this, but Steve plucked up the courage to go and ask Brian. His request was refused, and Brian replied sharply that he would not recommend him for international duty again, if this was the sort of thing he was going to learn. Steve was never called-up again.

In the morning Peter and his dog used to arrive very early at the City Ground. He had stated to the staff that he could go through the morning post thoroughly without being disturbed, and this was the time when he could read Sporting Life without being interrupted or seen by anyone. He could select his football and racing bets for the day. Brian was fully aware of this but did not let on. One day, when Alan Hill and Brian were early, Brian said to Alan, 'Let's knock on Peter's door then listen to him rush his Sporting Life into a drawer, out of sight'. This duly happened, Alan said. As they went in there was no sign of a newspaper, but they had heard the rustling very clearly.

### **My first sight of Tony Woodcock**

One morning in October 1976, Brian, Peter and myself were together in Brian's office when his phone rang. 'Give me a couple of days and I will give you a definite answer', he said, putting the phone down. 'That was another call from Graham Taylor,' he said to us. 'Asking what price we want for Tony Woodcock. It's strange, Graham had Tony on loan last season and he keeps increasing his offer. Tony is on loan at Doncaster this season, I let Stan Anderson have him to sweeten him after the Curran episode. Three other clubs in the past week have also enquired about him. Has anyone been up to see him play at Doncaster recently?' We had not. When Brian arrived at Forest Tony had been playing for the reserves in midfield. Not having looked anything special, he had been sent

out on loan to give him chance to grow stronger and mature. I checked and he had only played three times for Doncaster up to that day.

After a short discussion it was decided that I should go on the Saturday to watch him play at Doncaster. He played alongside the centre-forward and scored a goal for good measure. I was very impressed with his game. I had never seen Tony play before and he had pace, a good first touch, control and perpetual motion. In the Forest reserves he had been playing in midfield and at full-back, but this striking role at Doncaster seemed to suit his game ideally. I reported to Peter the following morning exactly what I had witnessed. Tony was recalled the next day. On the Wednesday Forest were in Scotland playing the second leg of the Anglo-Saxon Cup against Ayr United. Tony was included in the side and gave an impressive display, scoring one of the two goals, which earned him a place in the first team the next Saturday against Blackburn Rovers at the City Ground, which Forest won 3–0.

He never looked back and kept his place, scoring 16 more goals before the season ended. Forest were promoted to Division One that year. Tony gained his first of 42 international caps in 1978, and he also won a League Division One Championship medal for season 1977–78. Tony was sold to Cologne for £650,000 in 1979. He refused to sign for Tottenham Hotspur (their offer was £1 million) because he was set on playing in Europe. He continued to be selected for England while playing in Germany, where he still lives. Arsenal brought him back to England, paying over half a million pounds for him to return to Division One, teaming him up with his previous Forest teammate Viv Anderson. They both gained several international caps with the Gunners. Quite recently an ex-Arsenal player who was in the side at the same time told me the story that when Tony arrived, the day before a League game, they went out as usual to do some serious training. Tony told them that at Forest they rarely did a training stint the day before a match. Brian usually took them for a stroll along the River Trent instead. He often used to do very unusual things to take the stress away from the players before matches; his theory was to keep the brain active.

Barry Butlin was released to Peterborough United after Tony Woodcock took his place in the first team, after three years of valuable service.

### **Two top Scottish players we didn't get**

At the beginning of 1977, six of the staff, including Peter and Brian, went on a scouting mission to Scotland, hoping for more success than we had had on a similar journey when with Derby County. We did not have any scouts operating in Scotland at that time. We went in two cars to Edinburgh and stayed overnight. In pairs we went to three different games. Alan Hill and I went to Partick Thistle.

We were very impressed with a tall young central-defender, Alan Hansen, who was only 21 years of age. Neither Peter nor Brian had seen anything special at their games. We discussed our findings with Peter. Hansen had been outstanding, his style of play was very similar to Roy McFarland, who had been fantastic for us at Derby County. I knew Peter would have been of the same opinion.

The next morning I went to the City Ground to report to Peter about how impressed we really were with Hansen. When I likened him to McFarland he became very interested and quizzed me for some time about his game. I pointed out that at the end of the previous season Partick had been promoted up to the Scottish Premier Division and that Hansen had been almost ever-present in the second half of that season. At the end of our chat Peter rang Partick Thistle to make an enquiry about his availability. Peter was told that an agreement had been reached with Liverpool, and that Hansen was staying with Partick until the end of the current season, to help them retain their place in the Scottish Premier League. Peter asked what he had fetched and was told over £100,000. He officially joined Liverpool in August and the published transfer fee was £110,000. What a 12-season career he enjoyed at Liverpool.

With Peter focussed on Scotland, we kept reading and hearing stories of the goalscoring exploits of Kenny Dalglish. I was sent up to Scotland on two occasions to watch him playing for Celtic and he scored on both occasions. His passing was top class, and he always gave the impression of goals to come. I gave my reports to Peter and he went up to see him play. Forest made enquiries to Celtic, but Peter said that the asking price of £400,000 was much more than the player was worth. He reminded me that he was 26 years of age and he did not think he would find the English Division One as easy to score in as the Scottish Premier. Dalglish went to Liverpool during the close season. Peter remarked to me that they had more money available than we did.

Peter did admit to me afterwards that he had been wrong about Dalglish, who had proved a better player than he had thought he would, and he wished that he had come to us. However, we were in Division Two at the time, although soon to be promoted to the First Division. Kenny would never have come, given a choice between us and Liverpool. Of course, Dalglish and Hansen went on to achieve great things for Bob Paisley.

### **Promotion in Peter's first season**

Promotion from Division Two was achieved after a very eventful season. Forest won the Anglo-Saxon Cup, beating Leyton Orient 5–1 on aggregate, and finished in third place in the League behind Wolves as Champions and Chelsea as runners-up. It was a very satisfactory ending to the season, Peter's first with

Forest. For my part the season had flown by. I had been constantly involved and had also won £400 on the place finish.

The only disappointment to me was the loss of Alan Hill, who resigned from the club due to unfortunate circumstances. Alan had been invited by Radio Nottingham to be the guest in a phone-in request programme answering questions about Forest. Peter Taylor was in Germany with the pre-season tour squad. One supporter rang in and asked the question, 'Would Forest have been promoted if Peter Taylor had not joined Brian at Forest?' I did not hear the programme myself, but I understand that Alan replied 'Yes, in my opinion, as the nucleus of the side was in place before the season started. But Peter's arrival put the icing on the cake.'

By chance, Peter's daughter Wendy was listening to the programme and took a dislike to what was said. She told her father about it on his return from Germany and Peter tackled Alan about it. Although Alan related exactly what was said on the radio, Peter would not accept it and from then on Peter gave Alan a hard time. Alan felt that he could not continue working for Forest under those conditions. It was some time before I knew exactly what had gone on. If I had been asked the same question I would possibly have given a similar answer. Peter had brought in Peter Withe and Larry Lloyd: both were certainly very good signings and fully justified, and they both made substantial contribution to the promotion gained from Division Two. Alan Hill is a very genuine person and would not intentionally hurt anyone's feelings. The existing squad were certainly moving towards being promoted, as only one game had been lost before Peter's two recruits made their debuts.

During July I decided to take my nine-year-old son to London to see some of the well-known historic places of interest. We left home early, going by train, which in itself was special to him. From his first taking an interest in football he had always been a keen Arsenal fan and I knew he would enjoy seeing Highbury. I told him that he would not be able to see any of the players, however, as they would be at the training ground at London Colney.

We arrived at the stadium shortly before midday and stood across the road opposite the main entrance looking at the huge ground. Don Howe appeared through the main doors and stood at the top of the steps. He called me over. I knew him from his managerial days at West Bromwich Albion and he had recently returned to Arsenal to join the coaching staff. He asked to why I was there, and I said that John was a very keen Arsenal supporter and that I had brought him to see the stadium. He asked if we would like a tour. We jumped at the chance and he took us all over. There were only a few people about, painters putting final touches to the structures for the coming season, and odd clerical

staff. It certainly made our visit to London a day to remember. Don gave John some memorabilia which he treasured, he certainly made one small boy very happy. I sat next to Don in 2008 at Birmingham City's ground; he was still connected with Arsenal then.

## Life in the top flight

At a committee meeting shortly after the end of the season, Brian persuaded the committee to make extra funds available to prepare for life in Division One. Additional playing staff would be required. There had already been a big increase in sales of season tickets for the forthcoming season, and an all-round increase in gate receipts was expected.

Peter asked me to try to get in touch with Mick Channon, who was with Southampton, still in the Second Division, to see whether he fancied joining us now we had been promoted. Peter said that he was going on holiday, but that if he was willing to join us I was to let him know immediately. He said to me that Mick was just what we wanted, a regular goalscorer who had impressed greatly in the League and Cup games against Southampton the previous season. Mick was 28 and perhaps the money for the transfer would be of interest to him, as would the chance to play in Division One.

I obtained Mick's home telephone number and spoke to him one evening. He was very good with me and listened to what I had to say and to the offer of Division One football, but he turned the offer down, saying that he was very happy with life at Southampton. He lived on his farm and was very fond of life with his horses. He asked me to thank Brian for offering him the chance to join Forest, but he had no desire to leave his present set-up.

To my surprise, a very short time afterwards Mick was transferred to Manchester City for £300,000, a sum which Forest had been willing to pay. Manchester City had finished runners-up to Liverpool in Division One. Peter had me up about it, doubting whether I had put over our story well enough.

Some 20 years later, when I was scouting for Sunderland, my chief scout was Tony Book, who had been manager of Manchester City when Mick Channon joined them. One day this crossed my mind and I asked him how he had managed to persuade Mick to join them. I explained the attempt I had made at that time to get him to join us at Forest. Tony laughed and said that he had spoken to Mick himself and had obtained the same story exactly. When he told the Manchester City chairman, Mr Peter Swales, about his failure, Mr Swales did the deal himself. At that time he was the chairman of the England International Selection Committee.

The irony for Mick was that he thought that he had a good chance of honours with Manchester City. Nottingham Forest won the Football League Cup at Wembley and also won the Division One Championship that season, and then



went on to greater successes. Mick played his last game for England in October and was never picked again; the move from his home club seemed to have unsettled him. If we had bought him, how he would have reacted is anybody's guess. He returned to Southampton after a couple of seasons despite scoring 24 goals in 72 appearances. His love of horses led him to becoming a very successful racehorse trainer.

### **A mission with a difference**

The next assignment given to me was to do a spying mission on Kenny Burns, and here I did have success. Peter was in no doubt about his ability as a footballer, but press reports all wanted to paint a poor picture of Kenny, with problems off the field of play, including drinking and gambling. A well-known sports journalist in the Midlands, working for a morning national newspaper and living in Birmingham, told Peter and Brian that these stories were very misleading, as Kenny was not like that. Peter asked me if I would do a private investigation into Kenny's behaviour as I would not be recognised as anyone connected with football in the Birmingham area. I learned that Kenny was a regular at the dogs and frequented the Kings Arms in Tamworth. For three consecutive weeks I trailed Kenny. It proved a very worthwhile exercise, given the magnificent results this surveillance achieved both for Kenny and Nottingham Forest. No one knew me from Adam. I set up camp each meeting at Perry Barr Greyhound Stadium, and Friday nights in the Kings Arms at Tamworth, completely on my own, keeping very close to Kenny on each occasion. I was there to observe all of Kenny's habits and transactions. I never saw him have more than two pints any evening, even ordering a shandy at times. As for his gambling, he did not bet on every race and his largest investment was £20. Usually he had a tenner on. At the dogs he spent much of his time kicking a ball about at the side of the stadium with the young lads, enjoying himself immensely.

In my report I said that he behaved himself immaculately on each occasion; that he looked a bit overweight was my only criticism. Brian purchased him for £145,000 from Birmingham City and he proved a wonderful investment for Nottingham Forest. On his arrival he did not go into the first team immediately; Brian put him through a strenuous training programme to get him into shape. When he was selected it was as central-defender alongside Larry Lloyd, which surprised Kenny himself, as well as everyone else. He had trained hard and responded so well to this central-defensive role, that at the season's end he was voted Footballer of the Year by the Sportswriters' Association. It was another of Brian's shrewd team placements.

## **Championship year**

Before the 1977–78 season commenced, Peter was very optimistic about our prospects for the coming season. The County Cup Charity game against Notts County was played at the City Ground before the start of the League fixtures. The game hung in the balance after Notts scored a goal almost from the halfway line. John Middleton, in goal, made a terrible hash of attempting to save: he got both hands to the ball and let it slip through into the net. Fortunately, Ian Bowyer levelled the scores to save many blushes. Peter was wild and he said that the goalkeeper would have to be changed if we were going to succeed.

Terry Curran had played in each of the friendly games, but before the season started Peter Taylor had a serious altercation with him. Peter had decided that Terry was going to be moved to play in midfield. When Peter told Terry, he complained that he had always been a striker. His scoring rate was 25 per cent in games played since his arrival. Peter said he thought that Terry would do a good job in midfield, but the argument worsened and cross words were exchanged. Terry never played in the first team again. I was very surprised. Terry had made 48 appearances for Forest scoring 12 goals, and had been a regular in the side that gained promotion from Division Two, even with two spells out through injury. However, falling out with the management was not a wise thing to do.

Terry was selected to play in the reserves at an away game. Peter was in charge of the team, everyone was in the coach waiting to leave bar Terry, and Peter said ‘we will give him a quarter of an hour’. Shortly afterwards Terry arrived in the car park and headed straight towards the club office. Peter jumped off the coach and shouted to Terry, who waved a letter in reply. As Peter approached, Terry said ‘It’s my letter requesting a transfer – I’m not playing in the reserves.’ Peter went back to the coach, sat down and opened the letter, at which point he burst out laughing. Showing it to the bus, he remarked ‘It’s his bloody gas bill – I hope he doesn’t think I’m paying that!’

Terry was loaned out to Bury in October 1977, then sold to Derby County for £50,000. During his career he played for eight different League clubs, including Sheffield Wednesday, whom he joined for £100,000. During the 1979 to 1982 seasons, under the managership of Jackie Charlton, he scored 35 goals. When his playing career ended he had made 421 League appearances, scoring a total of 72 goals.

Peter knew that Terry would not be a great loss. John Robertson, who was a midfield player when Brian arrived at Forest, had now developed into a wonderful left-winger, and Martin O’Neill, who had been with the club since 1971 from Distillery in Ireland, was fully able to fill the wide right spot. These

two had emerged as our key players. They are not doing badly today at Aston Villa either, where they are in management together. Some three weeks had passed when, one morning in Brian's office, I was with Peter and Brian when they were holding the inquest into their defeat at Arsenal by three goals. Brian said that he could not stand the performances of John Middleton any more.

Chris Woods, the young reserve goalkeeper, had been getting excellent reports, and was being seriously considered, but no change was made for the following game away against Wolves, which ended in a 3–2 win for Forest. John Middleton took the blame for the two Wolves goals. Again I was present in the office when his future was discussed. It was decided that Peter would notify all clubs that they were open to offers for John. Peter asked Brian what fee he should quote. They settled on £40,000, but would consider any offers. Brian reiterated that John had to go.

Just then, the phone rang. Brian answered, then looked up at Peter with his hand over the mouthpiece. 'It's Tommy Docherty, who's he after?' Tommy was put through to Brian and the conversation began.

'You're asking a lot, Tommy, he's our only experienced 'keeper, but if the money is right, with us, every player is available. Peter is with me, let me ask him.' Brian put his hand back across the mouthpiece. 'He wants Middleton, what shall I tell him?'

'Tell him that we would want £100,000,' said Peter, smiling. There was some chit-chat, then Brian said to Peter, with a smile and a wink 'Tommy says that the Derby board wouldn't let him have that kind of money for a 'keeper, the most he can muster would be £60,000.'

'Tell him yes if we can have Archie Gemmill as part of the deal,' said Peter, quick as a flash. Brian then said to Tommy 'We will do a deal, but you must top it up with Archie.'

The transfer was completed that afternoon and Gemmill moved to us for £20,000. Two superb deals had been done completely out of the blue. Archie gave two years' fine service, and while playing for Scotland in the World Cup side he scored a highly memorable goal during his stay.

As soon as Brian had finished his conversation with Tommy, my brain clicked into motion. I brought up the conversation I had had with Peter Shilton at Stoke some time ago. He was still in top form, and there were rumours that Stoke City were having financial problems. 'What do you feel about an approach to Stoke?' I asked. Peter Taylor was up in a flash. 'We must do it!' A record transfer fee of £250,000 was agreed the same afternoon, and Peter Shilton became the highest-paid player in the League. I cannot recall three better deals being completed in one day by any other club.

Manchester United had been interested in buying Peter Shilton but the fee was considered too high. Sir Matt Busby famously said 'Peter Shilton is too costly. Goalkeepers don't win you games.' I believe United learnt a lesson from this signing by Forest. Sir Alex Ferguson signed Peter Schmeichel from Brøndby in August 1991 for £550,000, and how many games did Schmeichel win for them? I wonder if Peter Shilton ever crossed Sir Matt's mind when making that decision.

Archie Gemmill was given the number-seven shirt and Martin O'Neill was left out of the side. In November two away games were lost, both 0–1, to Chelsea and Leeds. Brian and Peter were quick to react. Ian Bowyer was taken out of the side, Archie Gemmill was given the number-eight shirt and moved into midfield and Martin was brought back into the side in the wide right position wearing the number-seven shirt. The changes proved a great success and a steady stream of good results followed. The side was playing the best football since Brian's arrival at Nottingham.

Martin O'Neill, in all his wisdom, chose completely the wrong time to pluck up enough courage to go to see the boss again. Apparently he was unhappy playing wide right and preferred his role in midfield. He honestly thought he was more suited to that position. Shaking a little, he knocked on Brian's office door. Brian shouted, 'Come in! Yes, son, what can I do for you?' Martin asked whether he could revert to wearing the number-eight shirt in midfield. There was complete silence for a minute or two, then Brian replied, in his indomitable way: 'Do you expect me to leave Archie Gemmill out of the side to accommodate your wishes? This next Saturday you can have a straight choice, the number-seven shirt or the number-12.' Martin was out of the office in a flash. He wore the number-seven shirt a further 150 times with considerable success, and he never mentioned it again.

The side only lost one game during the rest of that season and that was in the FA Cup sixth round, 0–2 at West Bromwich Albion. They had achieved a consecutive run of 42 games in the League without defeat. Peter and Brian must have got the positions of the players right.

### **The England manager vacancy**

In December 1977 Brian was interviewed at Lancaster Gate for the position of manager of the England international team. I said to Peter at the time that I would be extremely surprised if the 'gentlemen' at the FA had the courage to appoint Brian, although he really was the outstanding candidate. Brian came away from the interview feeling that it had gone exceptionally well, and believing that he and Peter would be appointed. Peter rang me and said that if

appointed they would invite me into the England set-up as well. However, the excitement was soon over. The FA chose a well-respected gentleman, Ron Greenwood, to fill the position.

Ron caused no trouble but did not win anything major. He was replaced by Bobby Robson in 1982. In the same four-year period Brian won a Division One Championship, two Football League Cups and two European Cups. We shall never know how successful Brian would have been. Peter and Brian were appointed joint managers of the England Youth team as a consolation. I was not involved. After a while they gave it up as, with their work at Nottingham Forest, it was proving too much.

### **Winning the Football League Cup**

Shortly before Christmas Larry Lloyd broke a toe. Peter moved very quickly and signed David Needham from Queen's Park Rangers, a Division One side, for £140,000. David had previously played for Notts County and the signing raised a few eyebrows with the Forest supporters. However, his performances and the team results soon dispelled their fears, and he turned out to be another excellent signing by Peter Taylor.

At about this time, a young goalkeeper at the club was on his own in the players' dressing room. Brian rang down from his office. John Turner answered. 'Yes! Who do you want to speak to?' he asked, in a sharp voice.

Brian said 'Do you know who this is speaking?'

Realising, young John said 'Do you know who you are speaking to?'

'No,' replied Brian. The young goalkeeper put the phone down and scampered out of the room on to the pitch.

A major trophy was soon to come to Nottingham Forest. On 22 March 1978, after a replay at Old Trafford in which they beat Liverpool 1–0 having drawn the first game 0–0 at Wembley, they won the Football League Cup. Liverpool were the holders of the European Cup. John Robertson scored the only goal from the penalty spot. This was an outstanding achievement as Forest were without Peter Shilton, David Needham and Archie Gemmill (all three Cup-tied), and Colin Barrett and John McGovern were both out injured. The average age of the team was under 26 years. Chris Woods, in goal, aged only 18 years and four months, had been superb in every round.

Peter gave me five tickets for the replay. It was a very enjoyable night and one I will always remember. There were three of us, Edna, my son John and myself, plus our friend from Tarporley (a Manchester United season-ticket holder) and his son Nicky. In the main stand we sat next to Stan Boardman the comedian and his family, who were staunch Liverpool supporters. Stan had us all in hysterics

throughout the game and the two young lads were mesmerised. Although his team had lost there was no animosity and he was full of praise for Peter and Brian and told me to congratulate them both on their success.

At Wembley, for the first game, Brian had asked the League management for permission for Peter Taylor to join him in leading the Forest team out on to the hallowed turf, in recognition of their partnership in bringing success to Nottingham Forest. Mr Hardaker, in his wisdom, refused his request. Peter was hugely disappointed.

Some time earlier, before the kick-off, Peter decided to go out on his own to sample the feeling and atmosphere of Wembley. A strange meeting took place in the tunnel leading to the pitch. Peter came face to face with Alan Hill, who was there working for the Nottingham Evening Post. They had not spoken to each other since Alan had left his employment at Forest. Alan now ran the Rancliffe Arms at Bunny on the outskirts of Nottingham. I had been to visit Alan there two or three times, but Peter had put Alan's premises out of bounds to the Forest players. Only Liam O'Kane ignored the order, and I never told Peter myself when I had been to visit Alan. Happily, this chance meeting at Wembley resulted in Brian getting the two together in his office. I do not know what transpired, but they shook hands and Alan made a most welcome return to his previous duties at the City Ground.

During the last 10 weeks of the season I had been sent out to do match reports on the upcoming opposition, with only the odd scouting mission. The scent of winning the League Championship was strong, so nothing was being left to chance. The good run continued until the end of the season and Forest were clear winners of League Division One and qualified to play in the European Cup competition in the following season.

I was invited to join in the team's seven-day celebrations at Cala Millor in Majorca, but I almost missed the flight from Castle Donnington. Peter had told me to be there for 9am, but this was the actual time that the plane was due to depart. I had been working in the newsagents, then a friend drove me to East Midlands Airport. When I arrived, at 8.40am, Ken Smales was waiting for me with my tickets, very anxious. I was whisked on to the plane and we were airborne at 10 past nine. The celebration dinner took place in 'The Shack' that evening, a restaurant specialising in fish meals which were first class. I had previously been to the same restaurant with Derby County, but this time I was not asked to contribute. It was a very enjoyable holiday, and it topped off possibly my most memorable and successful 12 months in football.

# European football

The first transactions of the 1978–79 season were Peter Withe's move to Newcastle (the emergence of Garry Birtles allowed this to happen) and Chris Woods' move to QPR. He had been brilliant in his occasional first-team appearances, but with Peter Shilton in such fine form it was not in his interests to hold him back. He had a superb career and gained 43 caps for England. He is now goalkeeping coach at Everton.

No one knew what was in store for Nottingham Forest in Europe. The draw had us lined up against Liverpool in the first round of the European Cup, the first leg to be played at the City Ground. The press and television pundits gave Forest little chance of progressing into the next round. The opening match resulted in a 2–0 home victory, which gave me great personal satisfaction, the two goals being scored by Garry Birtles and Colin Barrett. Over 38,000 Forest fans witnessed this outstanding beginning. It was followed by a 0–0 draw at Anfield, securing the passage into the next round.

I was sent to Greece to run the rule over our next opponents, AEK Athens. In round two the first leg was away on 18 October. We had achieved a 1–1 draw there in a pre-season friendly in early August, and this time goals from John McGovern and Garry Birtles gave us the victory. The return leg, before more than 38,000 fans at the City Ground, resulted in a comfortable 5–1 victory, Forest going through 7–2 on aggregate. Peter and I had both backed Forest to get through to the next round.

The regulations governing playing in the European Cup competition curtailed some of my scouting work as players we signed would not be eligible to play in Europe. The number of games I attended was about the same, but the standard of play at Forest was much higher than in the early days, so finding someone who would get a chance in the side was much more difficult.

Match reporting was not too intense for Peter and Brian as they did not require drawings of set plays or attacking and defending situations. They wanted me to concentrate on the strengths and weaknesses of individual players.

That season only 16 players were mainly used; four others played 12 games between them during the season in League and Cup games. We lost both Colin Barrett and Kenny Burns with knee problems during the early part of the season, but Forest came through without losing a game until the 2–0 defeat away at Liverpool, after 42 consecutive League games without a loss. We had been lucky that no other players had been injured.

With the satisfactory progress in the European Cup, Peter and Brian thought that there was a chance of us winning it; however, they decided that a top-class player was needed if we were to achieve this.

### **Creating the first million-pound transfer**

It was decided that Trevor Francis was to be the target. There were strong rumours in the press that Trevor was discontented at Birmingham City. He was being linked with Liverpool, Everton and Coventry City. It was the middle of January 1979. The date for signing a player to be eligible to play in the next two rounds had passed, but it was still decided to go ahead with an attempt to sign Trevor.

Peter was given the task of setting it all up. My instructions were that it was to be kept top secret, not a whisper to be leaked. The priority was to ascertain whether or not Trevor was interested in joining Nottingham Forest, without the press or Jim Smith, the Birmingham City manager, getting a sniff. I was given the telephone number of a Midlands sports journalist for a national daily who lived in the Birmingham area. Contact with Trevor could be made with his help. The same journalist had been a tremendous help to us in signing Kenny Burns.





*Trevor Francis was the first player to cost £1 million. The preparation work for the transfer was done by Peter and myself three weeks beforehand and was the best-kept secret in the game. Only a handful knew when various stages of the move had been completed.*

After giving it a lot of thought, I spoke to the journalist that evening and outlined how and where a meeting might take place between Trevor and Peter Taylor. I suggested the following Monday or Tuesday. He said that he would speak to Trevor to see if the proposed transfer would be of interest to him. The next morning he rang me to say that Trevor was definitely interested and that Tuesday would be the best night.

Trevor was asked to drive to the Burton Town Hall, arriving at 7pm, a distance of 50 yards from where I lived. My dark blue Jaguar would be parked in the parking area in front of the main building. He would park next to me and join me in my car. I would then drive him to my closest friend's house, which was outside Burton, the first of six houses leading to Bladon Castle. We would not pass the windows of any of the other houses. My friend was on his own in the house as his wife was away in London. Everything went perfectly to plan. Peter was already at the house when we arrived, and after shaking hands and making introductions, my pal and I disappeared to a pub on the main road, leaving Peter and Trevor to their discussions for a couple of hours.

We returned at about 9.30pm to be greeted by two smiling faces. They said that everything had been discussed. I drove Trevor back to his car. I had remembered how Sir Matt Busby and Frank O'Farrell had thought of Carol, Ian Story-Moore's wife, bringing her a large bunch of red roses when they successfully got him to sign for Manchester United. It was approaching Valentine's Day and my stock of goodies had arrived at the shop. There were some seven-pound boxes of Cadbury's milk chocolates and I gift-wrapped one with a label to Helen from Brian Clough and gave it to Trevor from the back seat of my car, saying that Brian had sent it for Helen. He told me to thank Brian.

Peter rang me shortly after I arrived home and said that he thought the meeting had gone very well. Trevor had seemed satisfied with what was on offer, and now we had to keep our fingers crossed. I told him about the chocolates and he thought it was a brilliant idea. Our friendly journalist had tipped me off that Helen, Trevor's wife, would be an important factor in his decision; however, I am sure that the progress that Forest were making in the European Cup was Trevor's main motivation for deciding to join us.

Next morning everything was passed on to Brian to set up the transfer deal. Brian did not make his initial approach until the last day of January, to make sure

that it had been kept secret. He made his enquiry to the board via Jim Smith and a few days later an agreement was reached which went through without a hitch. On 8 February football history was made. Trevor Francis signed for Nottingham in a record million-pound transfer. I do not think Jim has ever known about our meeting with Trevor. I have read that Jim held out for the one million pounds, but Brian was always adamant that he did not pay above £999,995, saying Jim must have put the extra £5 in himself. I was never able to verify this story. With the taxes and bits and bobs the total sum was well over the million-pound mark. In the media there was much talk at the time of conflicts between Kenny Burns and Trevor at Birmingham City, and it was said that they would not get on with each other; however, no problems ever arose. They shook hands at their first reunion, when Trevor was introduced to the playing staff, and they realised that in the team they were good for each other.

Because he was Cup-tied, ineligible to play in the FA Cup, it was not until 3 March that Trevor Francis made his debut, away at Ipswich in a 1–1 draw. Garry Birtles was the scorer for Forest.

What became a nice little earner for me for several seasons then cropped up. A Sunday Mirror football correspondent persuaded me to let him have any snippets of information about transfers that I came across. I said that there was no way I would divulge any of our own activities, and he realised that, but he also knew that I must see and hear things about other clubs when out on my travels. The snippets were printed each week, along with others, under the reporter's assumed name.

### **Further progress in the European Cup**

The day after Trevor made his debut I had what was possibly the longest day of my life. There had been a break of three months between the second and third rounds of the European Cup. Our opponents in the third round were the Grasshoppers in Zurich. The first leg was at home. I was asked to travel to watch them play in their last game, against Servette, before visiting the City Ground, to do an assessment of their side.

What a day it turned out to be! It was a Sunday. I got out of bed at four in the morning and fetched my supply of newspapers from the wholesaler on Burton railway station. I opened my shop at five and put up 15 rounds of Sunday newspapers for the paperboys to deliver. Two of my staff arrived at six so I could go. I changed my clothes, ate a couple of bacon sandwiches and checked with my staff that they would be able to handle everything in the shop, Sundays being the busiest morning of the week in a paper shop. I then set off on my journey. A friend took me to East Midlands Airport, where I took off on a British Midland

flight to Amsterdam at 9.30am. I changed on to a Dutch flight to Zurich, arriving at about noon. I had lunch at the airport then walked to the stadium. It was a brisk, sunny winter's day and the scenery was eye-catching with the Swiss mountains covered in snow. The kick-off, under floodlights, was at three o'clock. The game was completely controlled by the Grasshoppers, who won 3–1, but I was not very impressed by the standard. The only player to give me concern was a striker, Raymond Ponte, who looked sharp and caused a few problems. He scored a good goal, but providing he was kept quiet I could not see any problem, they were well below our standard. I left at the end, with the feeling that we had nothing to fear on the following Wednesday.

I had another bite to eat at the airport while waiting for my return flight. I flew by Swiss Air to Brussels, where I changed onto a British Midland flight to Birmingham, arriving there just after midnight. I think I had the best part of an hour's sleep during the journey. I took a taxi from Birmingham to my house, arriving shortly before half past one. I had been on the go for over 21 hours, and was up again before five to begin another day's work. Later in the morning I went over to Nottingham to deliver my report. The journey had been very satisfactory, and Peter and I had a substantial bet on Forest to go through to the next round.

The first leg was at home and resulted in a comfortable 4–1 win by Forest. In the return match in Zurich a goal by Martin O'Neill gave us a 1–1 draw, a 5–2 aggregate, which made it all worthwhile.

In the semi-final we were drawn against Cologne. The first leg was at home and I was at the game. Forest struggled to get a 3–3 draw and at one time they were 2–0 down. I was of the opinion that Peter Shilton was to blame for the second goal, which for him was a rarity. The pitch was very heavy and did not suit our style of play. It was very difficult to run with the ball, but goals from John Robertson, Garry Birtles and Tony Woodcock put Forest in front. I thought Cologne's equaliser was deserved, however. I was very despondent leaving the ground, as I felt the replay was going to be very difficult.

The sporting press said we would struggle to get through to the Final. Cologne were the current German Champions. However, in a hard-fought game Forest did progress to the Final with a 1–0 win, Ian Bowyer scoring the goal. Archie Gemmill had an injury and had been replaced by Ian. This unexpected victory was in front of a 60,000 partisan crowd. I watched the game on television. I had not been to Germany prior to the games, as Peter had been to run the rule over Cologne. He always went to Germany on his own, as he stayed with his brother and relatives over there. To this day I have never been to Germany to watch football.

Peter seemed to be the only one giving Forest a chance before the game. The bookmakers were offering 4–1 to win the game at the Müngersdorfer Stadium, and Peter fancied them so much that he asked me to place a bet to win him £1,000, which I did. I missed out as I did not have the same confidence as him. I fought shy of having a bet.

Despite collecting 60 points in the League we finished runners-up to Liverpool in another tremendous domestic season.

Archie Gemmill was not selected for the European Cup Final. He had missed the last four League games through injury, but had declared himself fit. Ian Bowyer was kept in the side. Apparently Brian had promised Archie that he would play, then put him on on the bench. Archie afterwards made his feelings about this treatment very clear. He never played in another League game for Forest, and before the start of the next season Archie was sold to Birmingham City for £150,000. Martin O'Neill was left out because of injury, although he had also declared himself fit. He missed the Final but he kept his thoughts to himself. Archie was later asked to return to Forest but he refused, saying that too much had been said for the rift to be healed. Brian and Peter said that their decision was vindicated because they won the European Cup. Soon afterwards Martin broke down playing for Northern Ireland, so once again Brian's decision proved correct.

### **The first European Cup Final**

The Final was to be against Malmö, the Swedish team. I travelled with Peter to watch them. Coached by an Englishman, Bob Houghton, they played doggedly with very little flair. They seemed to be satisfied to nullify the opposition and hope to grab the odd goal, and in the game we saw they did just that. It was not very pretty to watch. Peter came away full of confidence; he could not see us being beaten if everyone kept their heads.

The Final was played at the Olympic Stadium in Munich in front of a capacity crowd of 57,000. It was to be Trevor Francis's first game in the competition as in previous rounds he had not been eligible. The plan was to go out and attack right from the beginning of the game, utilising the full width of the pitch to stretch their compact defensive approach. However, our team was feeling the pinch of a very hard competitive season. The forwards were continually falling offside and our lads had lost the edge of their game. However, just before half-time Trevor scored, with a very rare headed goal, to justify the enormous outlay on his transfer. It was not one of our better displays, but we came away with the right result. No substitutes were called on; the 11 starters completed the whole game. About 20,000 extremely happy Forest supporters had made the journey to

Germany.

In their contract Brian and Peter had had written into it that each should receive a £5,000 bonus if they won the European Cup, but would not receive even one penny if they finished runners-up. Peter talked Brian into joining him in having £1,000 on Malmö at odds of 6–4, which Peter referred to as their insurance money. I placed the bet for them, but I did not bet myself as I did not have any incentive bonuses in my contract. They were both very happy. It was the first time I had seen Peter laugh after having a losing bet. Brian gave me a cheque in a few days, but I had to wait a while to get the whole amount off Peter. It was in cash, as his heavy betting was still a close secret.



*John McGovern, with a captain's pride, holding the European Cup aloft.*

This Final rounded off another absolutely wonderful season, which had begun with us winning the Charity Shield at Wembley 5–0 against Ipswich Town. This game was witnessed by 65,000 spectators. The Football League Cup had been retained by beating Laurie McMenemy's Southampton 3–2, also at Wembley, in front of a full house of 100,000. And, of course, we were runners-up to Liverpool in League Division One.

The total number of games played during the season by the Forest first team was as follows: 42 League, one Charity Shield, eight in the League Cup, three in the FA Cup and nine in the European Cup competition. John Robertson and Peter Shilton played in every one of these games plus 10 friendlies and two County Cup games. That is a total of 75 matches. Compare this with the appearances of the top players in the Premier League today. I have read that playing so many matches cannot be done and that physically it is not practical. Yet these two internationals also made appearances for their country that season, playing on many atrocious surfaces.

Attendances at all matches played during that season totalled over 1.25 million.

### **1979–80: two new signings**

Before Peter and Brian left for their well-earned holiday, I was given the task of looking for a left-back. Colin Barrett was struggling badly after injury, and Frank Clark, in Peter's words, had 'shot it', but what a wonderful servant he had been, having taken part in 31 games the previous season. Before the start of the new season Frank went back to the North East, joining Sunderland as the assistant manager to Ken Knighton.

One beautiful sunny Friday evening in early July, my wife Edna and I decided to go for a drive in the country and call for a drink somewhere. We were in the vicinity of East Midlands Airport when a large jet flew overhead going in to land. This gave us the idea of going to the airport for a drink to watch the planes coming and going.

There is a saying that you never know what is around the corner. In the bar, which was packed with holiday-makers, we queued a while to get served. We managed to sit near the entrance, watching everything happening around us. Through the door came two couples and my attention was drawn to one of the men. It was Frankie Gray. I remembered Frankie from the infamous 44 days with Brian at Elland Road. He was in the reserves playing at left-back then, as an enthusiastic 19-year-old. I had never spoken to him there. He now was in the



first team at Leeds United playing on the left side of midfield. I remembered Peter saying that the priority was to recruit a left-back to replace Frank Clark. I had seen Frankie play in the Leeds first team during the previous season and I quickly decided that he would be ideal in the left-back position for Forest. I remembered the Santos game at Sheffield Wednesday and I knew Peter would like his style. He was not the best tackler in the world but was very useful with the ball. Frankie and his friend went up to the bar and ordered drinks for their party. As they were being served, I leaned over Frankie's shoulder and said 'I'll pay for those.' He turned with a surprised look. 'When you've taken the drinks over to the girls, can I have a few words with you?'

He returned to me and thanked me for the drinks. We moved away from the bar, to as quiet a spot as I could find. I then explained that I was working for Brian at Nottingham Forest, and that I had been at Leeds with him during our short stay there. He did not remember me. I asked him whether he would consider joining us next season to play in the left-back position. Forest were covered in European Cup glory and had been runners-up in the League, while Leeds had only had a mediocre season. He seemed very interested, but he said that they were waiting for a flight to Tenerife for a two-week holiday. I said that was alright and that it could be done as soon as he got back if an agreement could be reached with Jimmy Adamson, the Leeds United manager. I agreed to telephone Frankie at his home on the Friday evening at eight o'clock in two weeks' time, when he should be back from holiday. We exchanged home telephone numbers, shook hands and I wished him a happy holiday. We returned to our respective drinks.

Over the weekend I rang Peter in Majorca and told him what had happened. He was in full agreement. I told Peter that Frankie had made over 190 first-team appearances for Leeds United. Peter remembered how well he had played when Forest defeated Leeds 2-1 at Elland Road near the end of the season. Peter said that he would be returning home from holiday at the weekend to prepare for the coming season, but he asked me to get in touch with Jimmy Adamson to find out what they would expect to receive for his transfer. He told me not to let them know we wanted him for the left-back position, so they would assume it was to play in midfield. I spoke to Dave Blakey, who was Jimmy's right-hand man, and asked him whether Frankie Gray would be available and if so at what price. They both owed me a favour for pointing them in the right direction when they signed Gerry Peyton for Burnley. The price Dave came back to me with was £400,000. I said it would be a week before Peter came back from holiday and that he would be dealing with it. When he returned to the City Ground Peter agreed the deal with Jimmy Adamson, but he was told that Frankie was away on holiday.

On the Friday evening when Frankie was due home I checked that his plane had landed on time. As agreed, I rang his home at Wetherby to tell him that the two clubs had come to an agreement on the transfer. I asked him to keep quiet and turn up for pre-season training as if nothing had happened and wait for Jimmy to call him into his office. He should not even tell his brother. Brian and Peter went up to complete the transfer and within a couple of days he was a Nottingham Forest player. In two very good seasons he played in 81 League and 39 Cup games, winning a European Cup and being a runner-up in the League Cup.

The other new signing was Asa Hartford from Manchester City for £450,000. He was bought to replace Archie Gemmill, who had left before the end of the previous season. This was Peter's first real mistake in the transfer market since joining us at Forest. Asa only made three League appearances: he made his debut at Ipswich, Tony Woodcock scoring the only goal, then played in two home games. Although all three games were won, he had fallen short of Brian and Peter's expectations. They then made one of their ruthless decisions. They liked Asa as a lad, and he was a current Scottish international, but he was not the player that they wanted. There was too much short ball with little variation, and he was not prepared to hit passes longer than 20 yards. His game had been misread and was not what they expected from a midfield player. I was not sure how much homework Peter had done on this signing. I certainly had not been asked to see him play on any occasion, so our usual pattern of scrutiny of an incoming player had not been followed. I felt that the reported interest by Everton had caused Peter to jump the gun. In Asa's defence, being asked to replace Archie Gemmill was a massive task.

Peter got out of jail by remembering that Gordon Lee, the manager of Everton, had been linked with signing Asa before they stepped in. Gordon was informed that Asa was available and the transfer went through immediately, Forest recovering almost all of the original outlay.

It was going to be extremely difficult to follow the successes of the previous season. Two players who would be greatly missed were Frank Clark and Archie. Both had been wonderful servants, the type you want in the game. Trevor Francis would be an absentee, and Colin Barrett had not regained full fitness.

We were again in the European Cup and the Super Cup against Barcelona, home and away, together with the domestic Cups. Five pre-season friendlies in Europe was the chosen warm-up, during a 16-day trip away. Trevor Francis was absent because of a knee injury picked up during the summer playing in America. Brian had been afraid of this happening, but when Trevor had signed, it had been on the condition that he would be able to play in America during our

close season. Brian had reluctantly agreed, as he did not intend losing Trevor's signature at this stage.

The season opened brightly with six wins and a draw, before losing away to Norwich 3–1. In the first round of the European Cup we were drawn against a little-known Swedish club, Oesters Vaxjoe, but we were unable to accrue much information about them. Over the two games we won by a comfortable 3–1 aggregate. Trevor Francis was able to return to the side much sooner than had been expected, but he was not risked in the European games. Our next opponents were the Romanian League Champions, Arges Pitesti. They were despatched with a 4–1 aggregate win. I had not been sent to see either of these early opponents; Peter had been over himself to assess them both.

In mid-November two shock defeats were suffered in the League, at home to Brighton and away to Derby County. These hurt Peter very much as both were his old clubs. This was the beginning of an unusual poor run and Forest did not win again until Boxing Day when they beat Aston Villa 2–1 at the City Ground.

### **Another disappointing signing**

Peter was still complaining about the lack of a left-sided attacking midfield player. In December 1979 Stan Bowles was signed from QPR for £250,000. I pointed out to Peter that we had withdrawn from a transfer for Stan in 1971, when we were at Derby County, because of the reports of his unreliability and gambling habits.

Stan's record at QPR was excellent, however. They had gained promotion to Division One and also finished runners-up in Division One. Tommy Docherty was their manager at that time and he convinced Peter that he was a reformed character. Peter had always admired his wonderful ball skills. Stan made his debut, now almost 31 years of age, on 22 December against Manchester United. We lost 3–0. In the next two games that Forest won he scored a goal. He made 24 appearances, scoring only two goals. He did not play in the first leg at home against Barcelona in the Super Cup, Forest winning 1–0, but he did travel to the second leg at the Camp Nou stadium which was a 1–1 draw, Forest winning the trophy.

Stan made one appearance in the third round of the European Cup, losing 1–0 to Dynamo Berlin at the City Ground, but he was not in the side when Forest won 3–1 away and proceeded to the semi-final. He had not turned up at the airport and the squad travelled with one short. Stan claimed that he had a fear of flying. He had also missed training several times and was still gambling heavily. Reports of his nights out up in Sheffield had also been filtering through.

Brian had reached breaking point. The irony was that if Stan had caught the

plane, he would have played. When he was on the mat for not turning up he gave his reason as severe fear of flying. Brian was furious, but he had never really taken to Stan and did not rate him very highly as a player or a person. There was no room in his camp for problem players and Stan was transferred during the close season.

Charlie George was on loan from Southampton during January and February so Forest could assess his fitness, but when offered a contract Charlie refused it, saying he wanted to remain in the south. He then changed his mind, but it was too late: Brian had gleaned that he was suffering from a dodgy knee and would not complete the deal.

Brian had pet names for most of the players and staff at the club. He did not use them to their faces, but mostly they were humorously intended and you would recognise who he meant. One day the first-team squad were going off for a friendly game behind closed doors, something that happened frequently as a break from routine training. I was in his office when there was a knock on the door. 'Come in!' called Brian. Liam O'Kane popped his head round the door.

'What time is the coach leaving, Boss?' asked Liam.

'I don't know,' said Brian. 'Ask Clever Bollocks, he'll tell you.' This was the name Brian used for Martin O'Neill because he was attending college and training to become a solicitor. Liam left chuckling.

Brian referred to Alan Hill as 'Busy Bollocks' because he was always rushing all over the place. He always called me 'Peter's mate' when talking to the rest of the staff. There were some ruder names as well.

At this time Peter was not putting in the same work on the recruitment of new players as he had been. I was never sure whether to put this down to ill health or disagreements with Brian about the workload, but he was certainly not showing the enthusiasm I had been accustomed to.

Further progress in the European Cup

Before the semi-final of the European Cup there came a trip to Wembley to play Wolverhampton Wanderers in the Final of the Football League Cup. Having held the trophy for the last two years, Forest suffered a 1–0 defeat due to a mix-up in the penalty area between David Needham and Peter Shilton in front of 100,000 spectators.

The home leg of the European Cup semi-final was played on 9 April against Ajax Amsterdam, Forest winning 2–0 with goals from Trevor Francis and a penalty by John Robertson.

For the second leg in Amsterdam I was invited to travel with the club. With the fame of Ajax and us going with a lead of two goals the media attention was enormous. I think the scribes fancied the venue as much as the game in hand.

Our hotel was very near the notorious red light district. On the evening before the game, Brian, as usual, had dreamt up something surprising to take everyone's mind off the game. He took the whole squad to see the girls offering their trade. Outside the hotel he counted us all one by one. We walked down the notorious Canal Street with orders shouted to us that 'no one must stop'. We walked in a block, seeing the ladies sitting in the windows beckoning to us. It opened my eyes: I had led a very sheltered life.

During this stroll Brian, up to his mischievous best, got hold of the youngest member of the playing squad Gary Mills (brought along to gain experience) and told him to ask one of the ladies how much she charged for her services. He gave him a pen and a piece of paper to jot it all down. Gary, hugely embarrassed, went off and came back to Brian with the answer, to a round of applause from us all. This was just a ploy to relieve any tension building up in the players' minds. We returned to our hotel and were counted again before entering; there were no absentees. Brian then took us to a quiet pub nearby for two or three rounds of beers. We chatted to the locals for a short while, then headed back to our rooms in the hotel. Everyone seemed fully relaxed, and there were no signs of any tension.

The desired result was earned after a very hard rearguard action game. Forest lost by only one goal, which meant that they were through to the Final again. Peter did not have a bet; he had not been convinced that we would go through this time.

### **The second European Cup**

On 28 May 1980 Forest played Hamburg HV in the European Cup Final. Kevin Keegan was their star and at the time was rated the best player in Europe. Peter and Brian had tremendous respect for him. The Final was to be played in Madrid. If Forest did not win the Final they would not qualify for European competitions the following season.

Peter had been over to Germany on two occasions, once with Brian, to size up the opposition. He was confident that John Robertson would give their right-back Kaltz a hard night. Peter told me that the plan would be to string five across our midfield to keep Keegan's possession of the ball limited and hope that we could sneak a goal. It worked perfectly. John Robertson scored the all-important goal after only 20 minutes, then it was a supreme defensive performance from the whole team that brought the result.



*The Forest squad in Madrid, celebrating the winning of the European Cup for the second time.*

The team that played was Peter Shilton, Viv Anderson, Frankie Gray, John McGovern (Capt.), John Robertson, Larry Lloyd, Kenny Burns, Martin O'Neill, Garry Birtles, Ian Bowyer and Gary Mills. The only substitute used was Bryn Gunn, who came on for Mills. This was to give the two youngsters invaluable experience.

Trevor Francis had ruptured an Achilles tendon during the 4–0 victory against Crystal Palace in April and was unable to play because of the injury. Stan Bowles had left the club. Martin O'Neill deserved his medal for the wonderful service that he had given the club. He had also missed out on the previous year's success because of injury.

I had again placed £1,000 on Hamburg to win for both Peter and Brian, as insurance money. They were once again on a bonus of £5,000 each for winning the European Cup, but nothing if they did not. Both were more than happy to lose their bets. I watched the game on television in the old Dragonora Palace Hotel in Malta, on my annual holiday with my wife Edna and two children, Sarah and John. Also gathered round the television were about 20 Nottingham people on holiday in the hotel. Most were actually regular supporters at the City Ground. The Maltese are big supporters of English League football. Liverpool and Manchester United each have large supporters' clubs that are very active. Our celebrations round the pool went on until about 4am.

Forest finished the League campaign in fifth position. During this season Peter Shilton, Larry Lloyd, Garry Birtles and John Robertson had been ever present, making 65 appearances each. Kenny Burns had missed only one. For the second season running over 1.2 million spectators had been to see Nottingham Forest play.

## Separate ways

At the start of the 1980–81 season John O'Hare was released to a non-League club. He was having trouble with his ankles. This must have been a sad moment for Brian, as John had been with him as a footballer from the age of 15 when he coached him at the Sunderland Academy. John had been a wonderful servant, giving us 13 valuable years. Peter brought in two new signings to replace the departed Archie Gemmill and Stan Bowles.

Ian Wallace came from Coventry City for £1.25 million. He was a regular scorer in their side and had been there for four years since being bought from Dumbarton. His goalscoring record was good. I had gone with Peter to see him before the end of the previous season. He was small and lively, with bright ginger hair, and could turn on a sixpence. For the first three seasons he scored frequently, but in his last season at Forest he only scored three in 36 appearances. Peter made the excuse that Ian needed a big forceful centre-forward to play off, to supply him with knock-downs. I was always of the opinion that Ian was not one of Peter's better signings. After Peter's 'retirement' Brian sold him to the French club Brest. Sunderland soon brought him back into the Football League, but he only scored six goals in 34 appearances in two seasons for them, and the club were relegated during that period.

The second signing was Raimondo Ponte from Grasshoppers in Zurich for £230,000, a striker whom Peter had been impressed with during the two games against the Grasshoppers in the European Cup. He was purchased to replace John O'Hare. There was serious concern that our glory period was coming to an end and replacements were wanted. Trevor Francis was likely to be out for some considerable time. On a brighter note Peter was upbeat about a crop of five or six youngsters coming through from the reserves. Gary Mills, Bryn Gunn, Colin Walsh, Stuart Gray, Chris Fairclough and Stephen Hodge were mentioned.

However, the fears of a drop in performances were soon to become reality. Defeat by the Bulgarian side CSKA Sofia, in the first round of the European Cup and by Watford in the fourth round of the League Cup was in contrast to the success of recent seasons. The team also lost to Arsenal at Highbury and to Manchester United at home during this period.

In October, Garry Birtles was sold to Manchester United for a massive £1.25 million. With the departure of Garry, Peter persuaded Brian to buy Peter Ward from Brighton. In 1979, an attempt to get Peter Ward for £300,000 had failed, due to Alan Mullery stating that he was playing at the peak of his form and



putting the price at £600,000. Brian and I had doubts about him being a consistent goalscorer in Division One, but Peter was adamant. Peter made the point, rightly, that he knew him better than either of us. The fee was £450,000. In two seasons in 33 League appearances he scored 11 goals and in 11 Cup appearances five goals. After Peter's retirement Ward only made two substitute appearances and was sold to Seattle Sounders, in Canada, who were at that time coached by Alan Hinton. Trevor Francis returned to the side during December as predicted by the medics, which was a welcome relief. He scored in his first League game back, at Sunderland, and three more in the next four games, to the delight of everyone. Martin O'Neill was sold to Norwich City for £280,000 in February, scoring in his last game for Forest. He had been at the club when Brian had taken over the management six years earlier. Peter told me many times that the successes achieved by Nottingham Forest had been down to the wonderful wide play from John Robertson and Martin O'Neill.

Martin was another player with whom I never came into contact. When I went away with the club after the season's end Martin was always away on international duty. Brian was wary of Martin, as he was of all 'intellectuals', but at the same time he admired him greatly as a player, which was the main factor.

Ian Bowyer, another great servant to the club, was sold to Sunderland. He will always be remembered for his wonderful goal in Cologne, which got us into the Final of the European Cup in Munich. Almost at the same time Larry Lloyd was allowed to leave to take up an appointment as player-manager of Wigan Athletic in Division Four.

The home game against Norwich on 28 March saw the debut of Jan Einar Ass (not surprisingly he asked for his name to be pronounced 'Oss'), a Norwegian central-defender, 25 years of age, who was signed from Bayern Munich. He had played the previous autumn at Wembley for his national team, and Peter and Brian had been to see him play in Germany on two occasions. I had not seen him play. They paid £250,000 for him to replace the departed Larry Lloyd. During the season five stalwart players had left during the rebuilding process. Four youngsters had been promoted into the first-team squad as forecast, and they were proving themselves: Gary Mills, Bryn Gunn, Colin Walsh and Stuart Gray.

Raimondo Ponte had been bought after being closely scrutinised as a person and a player. He could speak good English, and being Norwegian he should have had no trouble settling down in this country, but Raimondo found it very difficult to adapt his style of play to the English game. There was no room for passengers and he had to go, having scored only seven goals in 32 appearances. He went to play for Bastia in Sardinia. It was a big disappointment that he was not as good as expected, as he had been bought after a thorough examination. When mistakes

on signings were apparent, Peter and Brian were ruthless. Gary Mills stepped into his shoes for the last few matches of the season.

It was a very quiet season for me with no rewards to show. I had travelled thousands of miles searching for young talent to come into the club without spotting anyone for the positions I had been given.

The final League position was a disappointing seventh with no trophies to be added to the trophy cabinet.

### **More rebuilding of playing staff**

The first signing of the 1981–82 season was Justin Fashanu from Norwich for £1 million. He was a 20-year-old striker, and I am sure Peter had not done his homework on this signing. All he talked to me about was Fashanu's wonderful volley, shown on television, against Liverpool, which earned him the Goal of the Year award in Norwich's relegation season. This goal had certainly influenced Peter. He made his debut at home to Southampton together with Mark Proctor in a 2–1 win. Trevor Francis scored both goals in what was his penultimate game, as he was to be transferred to Manchester City for £1.2 million. His goals would definitely be missed. The fee would balance the money paid out for Fashanu, but certainly not compensate for the loss of the player.

The dropped clanger was soon evident. Fashanu turned out to be a very disappointing signing and it was 10 games before he scored. He was only with the club for one season, making 36 appearances in League and Cup, scoring only four goals. Brian did not take to him one little bit, and there were stories about him visiting clubs and gay bars in the evenings. When challenged by Brian about his behaviour he denied these allegations, but his performances and efforts on the field were certainly not what was expected from a young player. He never buckled down to the job in hand. Brian loaned him out to Southampton but he did not last long there and was sold to neighbours Notts County for only £150,000. Brian was happy to get that. This must have been the only player they had purchased who had resulted in a major amount of money being lost.

Ass then picked up a bad injury, which meant a lengthy spell away. Willie Young, a 30-year-old, was purchased from Arsenal to take up the central-defensive role. Hans-Jurgen Roeber, almost 28 years old, a German who had been playing in America, was brought in to play wide out on the right. Gary Mills had been injured. Roeber was another player brought in without the right scrutiny. He played in 26 games, scoring only four goals. He was released by Brian at the end of the season.

Brian was sick for three weeks over the Christmas period and Peter was in complete charge. Performances were below the standard we had been used to.

Forest were in a serious decline and the number of players coming and going had made it difficult to get a settled side. In the first FA Cup game of the season, in round three, Forest played Wrexham at the City Ground and it ended in a 1–3 defeat. Three of the newcomers were included in the side. Shortly after that Ian Bowyer was brought back from Sunderland to steady the ship.

Out of 11 of the final games that season, seven had been lost; in fact, in the last 24 games Forest had only scored 18 goals, five of those in the last two games, four of which were scored by 21-year-old Peter Davenport, who had just been brought into the side.

After the defeat by Manchester United 0–1 at the City Ground, Peter told Brian that he was going to resign and that he was having difficulty coping with the job. His impetuous nature caused him to rush in to this decision. I think that the mistakes that he had made with new signings, such as Ponte and Justin Fashanu, and to a lesser extent Wallace, were taking their toll. I had thought for some time that he was worried and nervous. He had not been as successful with his gambling on football as in previous years, and he seemed at a very low ebb. Nonetheless, his resignation came as a complete shock and he had not told me that he was considering it. When the two of them had signed an extension to their contracts he had said that they now had some leeway to bring the side back up to scratch. After his resignation the Nottingham Forest committee gave Peter a £25,000 cheque in recognition of his services to the club, and they also gave him the dark blue 2.8-litre Jaguar that he had been using for the last few months. The season ended with Forest finishing in 12th position, their lowest placing for five years.

At the end of the season, my wife and I and the two children went off to Cala Millor to stay for a week in the Taylors' apartment. Peter had promised it to us a few weeks before. One day, I was walking along the sea front as a familiar voice bellowed out 'Maurice! Maurice!' and Brian came running up to us in his shorts. He was staying with his family at his apartment, which was close to Peter's. We spent some time with them over the next few days, chatting and laughing. There was certainly no animosity about Peter's departure. Brian agreed with me that Peter's health had been deteriorating for some time and he was concerned.

### **Life without Peter at Nottingham Forest**

By the beginning of the 1982–83 season, Peter Shilton had been sold to Southampton. His service to the club had been superb. To this day I have only seen one 'keeper I thought was better: Peter Schmeichel at Manchester United. Steve Sutton was given the task of following a great player. Steve had been with the club for some time, having been signed from Ashbourne, Derbyshire, as a

teenager.

Colin Todd had been brought in to play in midfield. Brian had coached him as a youth at Sunderland and, of course, he had been a member of the very good side that was built at Derby County. In his second game at home against Manchester United he was sent off for a deliberate hand ball. With 10 men we lost 0–3. Hans Van Breukelen was brought in to replace young Steve Sutton after this defeat, making his debut in the 4–0 defeat of Brighton. This game also brought the welcome return of Garry Birtles. Brian had re-signed Garry after his unsatisfactory spell with Manchester United, at a much cheaper price. Garry showed how pleased he was to be home, scoring four times in his first five games back. He did not play in the 0–4 defeat at Villa Park, in which Ian Bowyer was sent off for a professional foul.

During October two young employees from Lloyds Bank came into my Post Office regularly. They always had a chat about football and asked me about the best bets on the coupon. They attended Burton Albion home games and they asked me whether I had seen Richard Jobson playing. He was a young player who had recently got into Burton's first team. 'He's good,' they said. 'You want to come and see him play, he's only our age.' I decided to go on the first Saturday they were at home. Jobson played with the number-four shirt on his back and I was impressed. He was about 6ft 2in tall and weighed about 12 stone, tackled well and had good pace.

On Monday morning, reporting to Brian, I told him that I had been to see Burton Albion. 'I was watching a boy that had been recommended to me,' I said. 'He's only played five times for them, he's been at university. He lives in a village just outside Burton. I don't want to tap him up round the back door though, my business is in Burton and if it leaked out I would get a lot of abuse from their spectators. Also I know one or two of the directors personally, and the club's been good to me since my playing days there.'

'Go and see Warnock [the Burton manager],' said Brian. 'Ask him if we can have him on loan for a couple of weeks, and tell him we'll pay a good fee if we think he's what we want.'

I made a big mistake. I did it the proper way and lost a valuable recruit. This was the first time I had spoken to Neil Warnock. I went to see him at the ground later that day. 'Tell Brian that he can't have him on trial at all,' he said. 'You must make your mind up and offer me a price. In fact, if you're prepared to pay £10,000, you can sign him now.' I reported back to Brian exactly what had been said.

'When are they next at home?' Brian asked, and I told him Wednesday night. This was the first youngster we had attempted to take on since Peter left the club

and Brian was reluctant in case it was money thrown away. 'Right Maurice, John Sheridan, the reserve-team coach, will come with you to see him play at Eton Park. Make the arrangements to go with him'. I rang Warnock to tell him that we were coming to the game on Wednesday night and I asked him if Richard could wear the number-six shirt. He asked me why. I said 'He's naturally left-footed and will do things more quickly on that side, although he can use his right.' Warnock replied that he had picked the side and Richard would wear the number four.

John Sheridan and I went to Eton Park on the Wednesday evening. We stood on the Pop Side, level with the halfway line. Believe it or not, Burton Albion trotted out with Richard Jobson wearing the number-six shirt. He had a very good game, and was better than he had been when I had seen him play the previous Saturday. We left just before the end. I asked John what he thought and he said that we should take him as he was already good enough for our reserves.

As soon as I got home I rang Brian at home and told him that the verdict was a definite yes. 'Tell Warnock that Forest will pay the asking price,' Brian said. 'Bring him over as soon as possible, I will discuss wages etc. with him.' I immediately rang Eton Park and got an answerphone message: 'The office is now closed until nine in the morning'. I rang Neil Warnock the next morning, to tell him Forest would pay the £10,000, but he took great delight in telling me that Graham Taylor, the manager of Watford, had been at the game and had signed Richard Jobson when the match ended.

I immediately realised the connection. Warnock and Taylor had been together at Lincoln City. This definitely would not have happened if it had been any other club but Burton Albion, it would have been done the way Peter Taylor had taught me.

Richard had an excellent career in the game, playing for nine different League clubs and making 694 appearances. But for several bad injuries it would have been many more. I understand he suffered several lengthy lay-offs. His transfer fees totalled over £1 million over a 20-year period. He is now assistant manager to Gordon Taylor, in charge of the Players' Union. The only satisfaction I got from the whole affair was that I was right in my judgement.

I later learned that Richard's father Mike was a Nottingham Forest supporter, so when I was writing this book I spoke to him about this occasion. The conversation was most interesting. He told me that a few days before the signing he had heard that I was interested in Richard for Nottingham Forest and he had come to my Post Office to confirm whether or not it was true. Apparently it was in his dinner hour from work, and owing to a large queue at the counter he could not get to see me, so he left.

When I told him the actual story he was astounded. He then went on to tell me what had occurred that evening. Neil Warnock had told his friend Graham Taylor about Forest's interest in Richard, and said that he should come up to Burton to watch him play as Forest were about to make a final decision. Watford had been promoted into Division One the previous season. The irony of it all was that Graham had lost his way to Eton Park and did not arrive until part-way through the second half. Whether or not he had time to form his own opinion I have no idea, but sometime after Richard had gone home, Neil Warnock and Graham Taylor followed him, driven by the Burton Albion chairman. They collected Richard and his father and returned to Eton Park. Mike Jobson, on the way back to the ground, asked Neil Warnock whether Nottingham Forest had been interested in signing Richard. Warnock replied that they had asked about him earlier, but had not followed it up.

I later spoke to the Burton Albion chairman socially one day, and he told me that he had been unaware of Forest's interest in Richard, which was interesting as he was a big fan of Brian's. It was only then that I learnt that Watford actually paid £14,000, although the purchase price had been quoted to me as £10,000.

At the end of his third season at Watford Richard was sold to Hull City for £40,000, then he moved to Oldham Athletic for £460,000. Howard Wilkinson then signed him for Leeds United, paying £850,000. I am pleased it turned out well for Richard. To this day I have never spoken to him.

Back at Forest Viv Anderson sustained a serious injury and Brian immediately brought in Kenny Swain to take his position at right-back. Young Chris Fairclough from the reserves was in the first team for the injured Willie Young at centre-half. The results on the field were now showing vast improvement and the much-changed first XI were settling in.

Peter appointed manager of Derby County

Another season was upon us. Peter spent the first month of it at his apartment in Majorca. When he came back, he told me that Derby County had offered him the manager's position. He had rung Brian to see whether the two of them might go, but he had been given a very firm 'No'.

Peter's appointment at Derby, which came only six months after he resigned at Forest, came as a huge surprise to me and many others. He would replace John Newman, who had only been in the job nine months and who had been sacked by the new chairman, Mike Watterson from Chesterfield. Stuart Webb, the club secretary, was obviously the one who had recommended Peter.

Peter immediately brought in Roy McFarland as his assistant manager and Mick Jones as first-team coach from Bradford City. This incurred a fine of £10,000 from the FA for an illegal approach and Derby were forced to pay

£55,000 as compensation to Bradford.

Archie Gemmill signed as a player, immediately followed by John Richards, a striker from Wolverhampton Wanderers on loan for a period of 10 games. Bobby Davison was signed for £80,000 from Halifax as a striker and a prolific scorer. He proved a good signing.

In December, Peter rang me to ask if I would go with him to open a new shop in the Burton Cooper's Square Shopping Centre as he did not fancy going on his own. I had not spoken to him since his appointment. He picked me up at my home in Repton in his blue Jaguar, which had been a gift from Forest. On the way he told me that he now had two big cars as Derby County had provided him with a Ford Sterling. He said he was finding it expensive to keep the two on the road and asked me if I was interested in buying the Jaguar. It had only 23,000 miles on the clock and looked in perfect condition. I asked what price he wanted and he had no idea, so we agreed that he would take it to Wadham Kennings in Nottingham, from where it had come brand new. He would let them give him a price as if they were taking it off him with no part-exchange for another car. I said that whatever they priced it at I would give him £500 on top. He came back with the figure of £4,000 and I agreed that I would give him the full £4,500. We shook hands on the deal.

At that time Peter owed our bookmaker £9,000. He told me that I could have the car, keep the £4,500 and pay half of the debt off. I was pleased as the bookmaker had made some anxious remarks to me as he had not had any money for some months. Peter brought the car over to my house the following week, complete with the log book. He then told me that the log book was in his wife's name for tax purposes, having been a gift from Forest, and he therefore asked me to give him a cheque for the full amount, which I made out to Mrs L. Taylor. This meant that there would be no money for the bookmaker. Peter said that he had been promised a large cash-in-hand from Mr Watterson for agreeing to join Derby County, but this had not materialised.

As soon as I got the car I took it to my garage in Burton for a thorough check. All the mechanics discovered was that the brake pads needed replacing. This showed what a nervous driver Peter was. When they had to be replaced again, the car had completed 83,000 miles.

The next day Peter rang to say that a paperback book *With Clough* by Taylor had just been published. It had been ghostwritten by John Sadler, a journalist. Peter was also doing a series of articles about his time with Brian in *The Sun*, so he thought he would be able to get his hands on some cash. I was concerned about the money owing to the bookmaker as it was me who had introduced Peter to him.

Peter then asked me to join Derby County as the chief scout. I had been very happy working with Brian at Forest without Peter and we had been reasonably successful. Progress was being made. I asked Peter to give me a few days to consider the offer. Forest were in a far better position than Derby County, but after much thought I decided to go with Peter at Derby. The reason was purely the money that he owed my bookmaker friend. I thought I was more likely to get the money owing if I went: if I stayed at Forest the chances of getting the money would diminish. I wanted to go over to Brian to see him face to face, as it was only fair. He had always treated me well and it was going to be difficult, although Forest were now going in the right direction and the first team had begun to gel.

On the Monday of the next week I went over to the City Ground to see Brian, to tell him that I wanted to leave. I was with him for quite a long time. I explained that Peter had asked me to join him at Derby County. My reason for going was that the club was near the bottom of the Second Division, while Brian's lads were back on song and the team had been rebuilt. I also said that I felt indebted to Peter, and that without him I would never have been introduced to Brian or got into scouting. At no time did I mention gambling or the losses Peter had incurred. Brian was superb. He said that it had crossed his mind that I might join Peter. He shook my hand and thanked me for all the help I had given to him over the years and said he hoped we would remain friends. He thought Peter had taken on a massive job. 'Give my love to Edna and the bairns,' were his parting words.

A few years later I told him that one day I would tell him the real reason I went to Derby County with Peter, but the right opportunity never arose.

### **Back at Derby County**

On my first day back at the club it was nice to meet Stuart Webb again. He knew his job and we had always got on well together. In my first chat with Peter he told me that virtually all the money that was available had been used up. The chairman had not come up with the promised amount. Peter said he wanted me to cover the non-professional Leagues to see if there were any likely lads. Derby's League position had not improved, wins were extremely hard to come by and gates were below 15,000.

In January Paul Fitcher joined the club from Oldham, along with Peter Hooks, a 23-year-old midfield player from Notts County. Just after the turn of the New Year Derby played 15 consecutive games without a defeat. They took Kenny Burns on loan from Forest for the run-in as there was no money to buy him. Kenny played in seven of the last nine games and was not on the losing side



once.

From near disaster Derby County climbed up Division Two to finish in 13th position. Peter was reasonably happy.

The 1983–84 season soon came round. Peter had signed John Robertson from Forest behind Brian's back, and his book was in the shops. Brian had not even been aware that Peter was writing it. I did not see Brian but I understand he was in a furious rage, calling Peter all sorts of names. He sent Viv Anderson (injured at the time) and Mark Proctor to knock on the door of Peter's house saying that they had come to be signed for Derby County. Peter apologised to the two lads, who were apparently embarrassed and distressed, and they could not get away fast enough, walking all the way back to the City Ground. When Peter next rang he told me the story and was furious about it. It was at this time that Brian said he would never speak to Peter again, and I was sure that Peter would never have the courage to break the ice. Neither ever asked me if I had spoken to the other.

Derby had a disastrous start to this second season with Peter in charge. Of the first 14 games in the League and League Cup they only won two. Some new players came on to the scene: Dave Watson, a 37-year-old central-defender who had come back to England from playing in Canada; Graham Harbey, who was promoted from the reserves; Kevin Wilson, who had missed the first eight games, came back from injury; Andy Garner was promoted from the reserves to the first XI; Steve Devine, a wide-right player, joined from Wolves; and Kenny Burns was taken on loan again. However, the tide could not be stemmed. Gates had dropped to around 12,000. Mike Watterson, the chairman, had departed, leaving the club in a dire situation. The cash handout that Peter had been promised never materialised, and the Inland Revenue instigated winding-up petitions.

After a 1–5 drubbing away at Barnsley Peter left the club, never to return, blaming his ill-health. The winding-up petitions had been lifted after Stuart Webb secured financial help from Robert Maxwell. Roy McFarland took over until the end of the season. Despite not losing any of the remaining home games, and collecting 13 points, Derby could not gain a single point away from home. They were relegated to the Third Division, finishing in 20th position.

I had spent my worst 18 months in football. There had not been a penny available from start to finish. There was one player from non-League Telford United, who went on to make the grade in the League, that I could have got for £10,000, but there was no chance of the money. Peter did say later that it was a mistake not to have signed him. The only consolation I had was that Peter had given me £4,500 cash for our bookmaker from the sale of his book, halving his gambling debt. This, after all, had been my reason for going back to Derby.

I decided to leave the club. Stuart thanked me and said he was sorry. As a parting request I asked Stuart if he could get me four tickets for the Frank Sinatra concert at the Royal Albert Hall. My wife and I were big fans. He said that he thought he would be able to but that they would be expensive. He obtained them for me at a cost of £200 each, but we very much wanted to see him live. With two friends we had a wonderful evening. Anita Harris sat next to my wife. At that time she was a star in her own right, but she was in raptures over Frank. It was money well spent.

The following season, in Division Three, Arthur Cox was appointed manager at Derby County. He had just steered Newcastle United into the top division but had not been able to agree new contract terms with them. He appointed Roy McFarland as his assistant manager, and within three seasons they had returned Derby County to Division One.

## Next steps

It was Thursday 9 May 1985. I had not spoken to Brian since the day I had been to his office to tell him that I was joining Peter at Derby County, when out of the blue I got a telephone call in the evening. 'How are you? Have you spoken to your mate recently?'

'We're all fine, thank you,' I replied. 'It must be 12 months since I last spoke to Pete, he's spending a lot of his time in Cala Millor. It's nice to hear from you.'

'I was at Doncaster Rovers last night,' Brian said. 'Someone said that you were there too, but I never saw you.'

'Yes, I was there. You were probably in the directors' box,' I said.

'Who were you looking at?' asked Brian. 'And who are you working for these days?' Ian Snodin was my reason for being at the game, but I evaded the second question.

'Tell me,' said Brian, 'If you had been working for me, what would your report have said?'

'I would have given you an emphatic "no",' I replied. 'Ian isn't your type of player. He doesn't work hard enough, his vision's not the best, he's only got average pace. I can't see many goals in him, he's nowhere near your standard and you are three divisions above. He's definitely not worth the asking price of £450,000. I would say at 21 years old he might be worth £150,000, hoping that you would get more out of him, which you probably would, then you wouldn't lose any money.'

'These b\*\*\*\*\*ds I have here [Forest] working for me want me to buy him for that money. That settles it, he won't be coming to us. We've only two more fixtures left and the last one at home is on Saturday. Are you anywhere yet this week?'

'No, that was my last for the season,' I replied.

'Bring your John to the game on Saturday then,' said Brian. 'I'll put two tickets for the directors' box on the door. Don't rush off after the game though, I want to see you in my office.'

Everton, managed by Howard Kendall, were the visitors. They had just been declared the champions of League Division One. Good judges have said that this was the best side Everton ever had. Young Nigel Clough would be in Forest's line up and I was looking forward to seeing him. He had recently gained his place in the first team and had scored his first goal in the previous home game. The League table had Forest finishing in ninth position.

John and I duly went. We collected our tickets on the door, exactly as Brian had said, for the directors' box. Sitting next to me was Manchester United's chief scout, Tony Collins, who had managed Rochdale for eight years previously. Everton were to be United's opponents at Wembley in the FA Cup Final the next Saturday, and he was doing a match report on Everton. Forest won 1–0. There were signs that Everton had taken their foot off the gas now the League was over and Wembley was in their sights. It was the first Division One game I had seen all season. Nigel, in his early 20s, did well. Before I left my seat Tony Collins asked me whether I had noticed anything interesting. I told him that a major feature of the Everton defence was that the back four played very square, relying on the pace of Kevin Ratcliffe to cover behind. Forest had won the game with a through diagonal ball by Steve Wigley between the defenders, with Birtles, running behind, hitting the ball first time into the net. In the Cup Final Norman Whiteside scored the only goal from just such a through ball. I was sent a thank-you bottle of champagne.

I knew Brian would be in high spirits when he came into the committee room where John and I were waiting. The room was full of sports reporters and we had a very welcome cup of tea. After about half an hour Brian came in, greeted everyone and sat behind his small table. He was on top form. 'You all know Maurice!' he said to the reporters. 'Now let's have the questions.' Half an hour passed quickly. I clearly remember David Moore of the Daily Mirror (press officer at Pride Park at the time of writing) standing up and asking a question. Brian had known David since the early Derby County days when he was the programme editor. 'David, that is the most stupid question I have been asked,' said Brian. 'Go outside and stand in the passage at attention until I call you back.' David left. After 20 minutes Jeff Farmer of the Daily Mail stood up. 'Have you forgotten David, Brian?' A big grin appeared. 'Whoops! Open the door!' David was still standing at attention against the opposite wall. There was laughter all round. 'That's all now,' said Brian, bringing a halt to the questions. 'I have some business to do with Maurice. Goodnight gentlemen.'

I hadn't a clue what he wanted me for. Several things had crossed my mind, including the idea that he might ask me to go back to working for him. He picked up the phone and rang the dressing room. 'You can all come in now,' he said. In trooped Ronnie Fenton, Liam O'Kane, Alan Hill and Archie Gemmill; altogether there were eight of his staff in the room. 'Maurice, come and sit by me,' Brian said. He turned to the others. 'I've asked Maurice to come today to tell you b\*\*\*\*\*ds why we are not signing Ian Snodin.' I felt about 3ft tall. 'Go ahead,' said Brian to me. This was certainly unexpected. I told them exactly what I had said to Brian on the phone the previous Thursday. I was not involved

with Nottingham Forest, and I did not change what I had previously said. I had formed my own genuine opinion of the player.

Before the start of the next season Ian Snodin was transferred to Leeds United, in Division Two, for the lesser sum of £200,000. Billy Bremner was the manager at Doncaster Rovers and Eddie Gray was the manager of Leeds, and they had played together at Leeds. Leeds did well out of the deal; they in turn sold him to Everton for £840,000, which did surprise me. Ian was converted to a right-back defender in an emergency and stayed there, but he suffered several injuries, at one point missing a whole season. In eight seasons he made only 148 appearances, costing over £5,500 per appearance. This was unfortunate for both the lad and the club.

Joe Royle then took him to Oldham Athletic who were playing in the newly formed Premier League, the old Division One.

### **A surprise evening out with Brian**

I had another surprise phone call from Brian early one Saturday morning the following June. 'Maurice, some help from you if you can,' began Brian. 'Brian Moore and his wife Betty are staying with us for the weekend and the weather forecast for today is sunny all day. Brian [Moore] likes to go racing. As you know I don't pay much attention to it, is there a race meeting on anywhere near today, what can you suggest?' I told him that there was an evening meeting at Doncaster that night, although it would be very crowded. It was extremely popular. 'Can you come with us and put us right?' asked Brian. I suggested that I contact the Doncaster racecourse office to see if we could get in the club enclosure. The two of them would not want to be smothered with well-wishers all evening. 'Right lad, I will leave it to you to arrange it. It seems a good idea.'

I rang the secretary's office and spoke to the secretary. I asked if I could have five tickets for the evening's meeting, explaining that I was coming with Brian Clough and his wife, and Brian Moore and his wife. I explained that if they were outside of the club enclosure their evening might be spoilt by public attention. He said that he could make the necessary arrangements and he fully understood the circumstances. He said he was looking forward to having them attend and to meeting them, and said he would leave the tickets on the door. I asked if we could park in the car park near the entrance with our two cars and he said it was no problem.

I rang Brian back and told him it was all laid on, I suggested that I took Barbara and Betty in my car, and that Brian follow in his car with Brian Moore. That was satisfactory. I had not been to Brian's house in Quarndon and he explained to me that it was opposite the cricket ground. We had to be on our way at five. I arrived

there at five and we had a good journey, arriving at the racecourse at about six. The car park was almost next to the entrance and the steward was expecting us. We collected our complimentary tickets for the club enclosure and up we went, to a very warm welcome from the secretary. Everyone was obviously pleased with their presence. I left them once they were all settled: the priority for me was to find some winners. During the evening I managed to glean information about two subsequent winners, and I took these tips back to the others. Fortunately, both won. The result was a wonderful evening. All five of us had won money, and they were very impressed with the hospitality they had received. After handshakes all round we set off on our journey home, arriving at Quarndon about 11pm.

On the Monday Brian rang me to thank me. He said that it had made the weekend for them – he himself had won £25 – and how much they had all enjoyed themselves.

### **A short period not working for any one club**

I had by now sold my Post Office in Burton upon Trent. Two years later I got a letter from the Inland Revenue stating that I owed them a large sum of money in Capital Gains Tax. I had not been informed by my accountant that this would happen. They had been right back to 1957 when I first purchased the Post Office business. Fortunately, I had put money away in a savings account and had spent only a small amount of it, so I was able to pay it without a great deal of difficulty.

I learnt that if I purchased another similar type of business I could get a roll-over sum of money back. It was then that I bought a newspaper business in the village of Melbourne from Mr and Mrs Willie Carlin. Our intention was to stay there for four or five years, but we enjoyed our time in Melbourne. We got on with the villagers very well and the East Midlands Airport close by was beginning to grow quickly. The business did well and we stayed over eight years.

During this period I worked for about four different Football League clubs, but not in senior positions. I also spent two years scouting for a Maltese Division One club, attempting to take footballers over to Malta to play. It was very difficult. I only managed to get two to go over there, and they each came back after only one month. The pitches were very poor – mostly not grassed at that time – and wages were well below even non-League standards over here, so I gave it up.

One Sunday afternoon I was in bed in my home at Repton, having been up since 4am with the Sunday newspapers. Lil Taylor, Peter's wife, and his

daughter Wendy came to our house. Lil stayed in the car and Wendy came to the front door and spoke to my wife Edna. She asked to see me, but she was told it was difficult unless it was very urgent. Edna was told that the asking price was £2,000 more than what I had paid for the car. Apparently they had been to Wadham Kennings in Nottingham and seen an almost identical Jaguar (second-hand) priced at £6,500. This was the asking price to sell to a buyer, not to purchase off a private owner. Edna explained how the price had been reached when Peter and I had done the deal. I understand that Edna and Wendy agreed to disagree, and Wendy and her mother left. Peter obviously was not aware of their visit and nothing further was heard from them.

Shortly after this my bookmaker friend asked me if I would contact Peter about the outstanding £4,500, as it had been almost two years since his last instalment. I went over to Tollerton armed with a letter to Peter stating the reason for my visit, intending to leave it if they were not at home. They were out so I posted the letter through their letterbox. Within half an hour of returning home Peter rang and gave me a few 'verbals', saying I should not have left the letter, because his wife knew nothing about it. He said she would have gone ballistic if she had read it. He warned me not to do it again, and said that when he had got the cash together he would bring it over. Both the bookmaker and Peter have passed away, and the outstanding sum of money was never paid.

### **Two failed transfers**

During the 1988–89 season I got a telephone call from Dave Mackay, who was managing Doncaster Rovers, then playing in the Fourth Division of the Football League. He asked whether I had been to any of Burton Albion's games recently. I said that I had been twice. He then asked 'How do you rate Steve Cotterill and John Gayle?' I said they had done well and would certainly get him goals. Doncaster had seen them too, and Dave asked me to go and see the chairman and offer him £15,000 for the pair. There was no more money available.

I went over to Eton Park the next day and saw Mr Sam Brassington, the chairman, and delivered the message. I personally thought there was a chance, as both had only been at the club a short while. Cotterill had cost £4,000 from Alvechurch and Gayle had been brought in on a free. Mr Brassington asked me to tell Dave that he was looking for much more than their offer, more like £25,000. I phoned Dave to give him this verdict and he thanked me, saying again that there was not another penny available.

Shortly after that the two were transferred to Wimbledon, playing in Division One of the Football League. The chairman of Burton Albion was apparently a friend of Mr Sam Hammam. Both players were sold on within four years: Steve

Cotterill for £80,000 to Bournemouth, playing in Division Two, and John Gayle for £175,000 to Birmingham City. Both had good careers and are still working in the game.

In the transfer contracts with Wimbledon, Mr Brassington had written in further payments of £1,000 for a certain number of appearances in the first team, plus a percentage of any sell-on transfer fees Wimbledon obtained. It turned out to be a lucrative deal for Burton Albion, as the actual sum received was in the region of £120,000. This proved yet again that there is good talent to be found in non-League football.

A classic signing of a young prospect

Another fine example of what Brian could achieve when given good prospective talent to work with was the signing of Roy Keane.

Noel McCabe, a postman working in Cork in the Republic of Ireland, was a part-time scout, trawling the area on his trusty motorbike looking for talented young footballers for Nottingham Forest. He made an approach to Cobh Ramblers about their young player Roy Maurice Keane. He was informed, however, that the Tottenham Hotspur scout was taking him to London for a trial period. Roy was turned down by Spurs and he returned home to Cork.

On hearing this Noel McCabe got on the phone to Alan Hill at Forest, saying that he would like to send Roy, with two more lads, over to Nottingham for trials. Arrangements were made for travelling and accommodation and the three duly arrived, taking part in training and a coaching programme plus a game at the end of the week. Unfortunately the game had to be cancelled owing to poor weather conditions. The lads returned home to Ireland, but Roy Keane, an 18-year-old, had caught the eye of Alan Hill, Liam O'Kane and Archie Gemmill. His attitude and ability had become apparent during the training sessions and it was decided that Roy should be invited back to play in a midweek game at Tranmere Rovers. Archie Gemmill was the coach with the team, and Alan and Liam travelled to Tranmere to make an assessment of Roy. He had an absolutely outstanding game playing in centre midfield. Back at the City Ground, Brian was told that they had certainly found a player, and his staff recommended that Keane should be signed. Brian said that he liked his staff to be positive in their decisions. All three who had seen Keane play were in full agreement about the lad. Brian said they would sign him as soon as possible.

Contact was made with the chairman of Cobh Ramblers and a meeting was arranged at Forest. He would fly over to Nottingham with Roy to complete the transfer. The discussion took place between Brian, Ronnie Fenton, Alan Hill and Roy, with the Cobh chairman, and the terms of the transfer were agreed. Ronnie, Brian's assistant manager at the time, was to deal with all the financial details.



Brian then asked Alan to bring in a bottle of Scotch whisky to celebrate the deal. Brian signed the label and handed it over to the Cobh chairman. Brian told me that he seemed more pleased with the whisky than the deal agreed. The fee was £10,000 immediately, with a series of add-ons up to a total of over £100,000. The date of the signing was 12 June 1990, and he joined up with the rest of the Forest squad for the commencement of the 1990–91 season.

Roy's first game was in a pre-season Under-19 tournament, taking place in Haarlem, Holland. Forest reached the Final of this tournament, Roy playing in central midfield in the games leading up to the Final. For the Final itself it was agreed that he should play wide right in a 4–4–2 system. Their opponents were the mighty Barcelona side who had been the favourites from the start to win the competition. Keane had an outstanding game in the Final and was instrumental in Forest winning the tournament. On their return to the City Ground, Alan and Archie reported to 'the Gaffer', Brian's name to all the staff, 'We have some player on our hands.'

Brian was very anxious to see Roy play in a competitive game. As it was still pre-season he organised a match at Sutton in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire. Archie Gemmill was again in charge of the team, while Brian would travel separately, unannounced. Alan Hill picked Brian up at the Post House at Sandiacre, and they travelled together, arriving soon after the kick-off. Brian asked if 'the Irishman' (Brian's name for Roy) was out on the pitch playing and Alan said no, but that he had definitely been in the squad that left the City Ground. At half-time Brian and Alan went for a coffee on the team coach. Brian instructed Alan to go to the dressing room and tell Archie that Roy was to be put on in midfield for the second half. However, the second half kicked-off without Roy Keane. Brian jumped out of his seat and shouted 'There's no Irishman!' He jumped over the low fence onto the pitch and asked the referee, Brian Saunders, to stop the game. Brian yelled to the bench 'Young Gemmill off, Irishman get on!' (Scot Gemmill was Archie's son.) Roy showed his qualities and Brian was very impressed with what he saw. After the game, Brian reminded Archie with a few choice words that when he gave orders, they were to be carried out.

The new season kicked-off with a 1–1 draw with Queen's Park Rangers at the City Ground. On the following Tuesday Forest were due to play Liverpool. Late in the morning Brian was informed that Steve Hodge had gone down with the flu and was not fit to play, and Franz Carr was doubtful. Brian asked Alan Hill who was available to play in midfield. Alan said that Starbuck and Keane were fit. Alan was instructed to arrange for them both to travel up to Liverpool and on the way to pick Brian up at his home in Quarndon. Alan arranged for Ronnie Fenton to drive them all up to Anfield. On arrival the rest of the team were out on the

pitch deciding which boots to wear, with leather or rubber studs, when Brian asked Keane, who was still in the dressing room, what he was doing. Roy replied that he was helping Liam O'Kane with laying the kit out. Brian said 'That's great! But you see that number-six shirt son, you will be wearing that tonight.'

Roy sat down, went ghostly white and said 'What, me?' Brian said 'Yes, you son.' The rest of the team had now returned to the dressing room. Brian told them that 'the Irishman' would be making his debut, and that Phil would be in the side too, and that they were to look after them. As the bell rang in the dressing room for the players to make their way out on to the pitch, Brian said, in his inimitable way 'Irishman, come here', then proceeded to give him a big hug and a kiss, and said 'Go and enjoy it, son.' The match ended in a 2–0 defeat but it was the start of a wonderful career.

In only three seasons, Roy Keane made 154 appearances for Forest. Brian retired at the end of the 1992–93 season. Before the next season commenced, Nottingham Forest's new manager, Frank Clark, and his assistant manager Alan Hill, sold Roy Keane to Manchester United for £3.75 million.

### **My third time with Derby County**

Roy McFarland was appointed manager of Derby County in October 1993. They were then in League One, the old Second Division. He had been assistant to Arthur Cox, who had had to retire due to a severe back problem. At this time Roy brought in Alan Durban as his assistant manager and I joined them as a scout. Ron Dukes was the chief scout. He was a good organiser, but I did not consider him the best judge of a player.

Obviously cash was still a problem with the club. In Roy's first season they got into the Play-offs to go into the Premier League, but they unfortunately lost to Leicester City in the Final.

During the second season Paul Kitson was sold to Newcastle United for £2.25 million, and Martin Taylor, the goalkeeper, broke a leg during October. Gary Charles and Tommy Johnson were both sold to Aston Villa for £2.9 million at the end of the year. Gordon Cowans was brought in but there were no big purchases.

Having not been involved in day-to-day work in football I was a not right up to date with what was happening in the game. Alan Durban asked me to go to Preston, who were in Division Three. I could not keep my eyes off a young midfield player: he controlled the whole game and scored a superb goal. My report was virtually all about him. Alan Durban rang me on the Monday and said he had my report. 'Did you not know that this player David Beckham is on loan from Manchester United to gain experience? He's rated the best youngster on

Man U's books!' At that time I genuinely had not been aware of him. Ever since I have had a few chuckles to myself.

There were two players I did recommend. One was Robbie Savage, a slim 18-year-old midfielder playing for Crewe Alexandra in Division Three. He had been released by Manchester United, I presume because of his physique, but Dario Gradi could improve this type of incomer to his club. However, to be completely fair, Roy McFarland and Alan Durban went together the following Wednesday to see him play and rang to tell me that he had done well, but they doubted whether or not he would be up to the rigours of the higher divisions. I pointed out that he did not shirk anything and had never stopped working when I saw him. No action was taken to bring him on board. Nevertheless, what a career he has had in the game.

The other player was Emile Heskey. Playing for Leicester City reserves against Aston Villa reserves at Villa Park, he scored two goals in a 3–1 victory and worried the Villa defence to the extreme. He was only 17 years old and I listed his statistics in my report, along with a strong recommendation. Two days later I went into the Baseball Ground to see Ron Dukes. He said to me 'I've read your report from earlier in the week,' and fetched it out of his drawer. 'You like him because of his physique,' said Ron, 'big and strong'. I replied that his skill on the ball was excellent and that his pace and shooting power were also very good. Ron held the report up in front of me and tore it up. Emile Heskey has had an amazing career. Cloughie would have loved him at that age.

At the end of the season Alan Durban sent me to Burnley to see them play Sunderland at Turf Moor. The result was a 1–1 draw. This was Peter Reid's first game as manager at Sunderland. They finished the season in 20th position, just escaping relegation from League One. He had a tremendous reception from the travelling supporters from Sunderland as he walked to his place on the bench. I sent my usual type of report in to arrive on the Monday. Alan rang me and asked if I could go over to see him, which I did in the afternoon. He had on his desk my report. Then he put the team sheet in front of him and asked me to give him a complete run-down of every Sunderland player, with plusses and minuses. I spent about an hour with him. He thanked me and I left without him giving me a clue what it was for.

That season Derby finished in ninth position in League One. Considering the loss of four important players for the majority of the season and the fact that there had been no major newcomers, this was quite good. Nonetheless, Roy's contract was ended with no offer of an extension.

Jim Smith was appointed the new manager and brought in Steve McClaren as his assistant. Derby County finished in second place and gained promotion to the

Premier League.

### **Joining Sunderland FC**

In this wonderful game of football there is a surprise around every corner. Before the beginning of the 1995 season I received a telephone call from Alan Durban. He had been appointed chief scout at Sunderland and wanted to know whether I would join their scouting staff and work the Midlands area. It suddenly dawned on me why Alan had wanted the Sunderland team report last season. I had heard nothing from Derby County since Jim Smith had taken over, and since I had not signed a contract I was free to join Sunderland.

All the scouts were invited up to Roker Park for a meeting. We were introduced to the senior staff: Peter Reid, his assistant Paul Bracewell, chief coach Bobby Saxton (Bobby had been a player at Derby County, but I had never spoken to him. Two years later he became assistant manager.) and Adrian Heath (whom I had attempted to sign as a schoolboy). Alan was the only one present that I knew well. Mick Buxton, who had been the previous manager, had been replaced when Sunderland had come perilously close to relegation into Division Two at the end of the previous season.

The first season under Peter Reid ended with Sunderland achieving promotion to the Premier League, topping the table by four points, ahead of runners-up Derby County. Unfortunately the Black Cats went straight back down at the end of the next season. The new stadium, to seat 48,000 spectators, was being built, and there was no money available to bring in players of the standard required in the top division. Niall Quinn, whom Peter had brought in from Manchester City, missed 26 games through injury, which did not help.

Towards the end of April Alan sent me to Chesterfield to have a good look at Kevin Phillips, who had returned to Watford's team after almost 12 months out through injury, having damaged his leg. When the game started he was on the bench as a sub having strained a muscle a couple of games before. He was brought on during the second period to try to get a goal. It had been a dour 0–0 game. He was a small lad, slightly built, who showed some nice touches on the ball and received it well. I thought he lacked the sharpness to break clear and to me he was not fully fit. I sent my report in to Alan. He rang and apologised for the fact that Kevin had only been a sub, but said he had also seen him twice recently and had come away with the same impression as me. Watford had not scored in either game and Kevin was obviously rusty.



*Niall Quinn and Kevin Phillips celebrate for Sunderland. A young, half-fit Kevin Phillips had not impressed on a scouting trip to Watford on behalf of Sunderland, but he was later signed for the club and went on to form a partnership with Niall Quinn which produced 43 goals in their first season together.*

Two or three weeks before the new season was due to kick-off, Alan went to a dinner at which he sat next to one of the Watford staff. He asked how Kevin was doing in pre-season training and was told that he was going like a bomb having done plenty of fitness work over the summer. If Sunderland wanted him, now would be the time to do the deal, before everyone saw him. On Alan's recommendation Sunderland paid £325,000 for him.

In League One, in 1997–98, Kevin Phillips made his debut at the Stadium of Light against Manchester City, scoring a goal in a 3–1 win. He had a wonderful first season, pairing up with Niall Quinn – little and large! – and they scored 43 goals between them. Sunderland finished in third place but lost out on promotion in the Play-offs. Magnificent attendances of over 40,000 were regular.

Alan Durban left the club and was replaced as chief scout by Andy King. He had plenty of experience and he knew the top level game well from his work at Everton. Shortly before the end of the season he was on a flight to Denmark. On the same flight was Peter Schmeichel. Manchester United had become champions of the Premier League with two games to go and Sir Alex Ferguson had given him permission to go home. Peter asked Andy who was he going to see, and Andy told him that he was going to watch a central-defender. Schmeichel asked 'How are you for a goalkeeper?'

'We could do with a good 'keeper,' Andy replied, 'we've kept only three clean sheets in the last 16 games'.

'You want to go to Odense,' said Peter. 'There's a lad there that's been at Old Trafford for a trial period, but the club can't make up their mind whether to offer him a contract. He's only 22 years old, I'm sure he is good enough.'

On Peter's recommendation Andy decided to go to see the lad. The outcome was that Thomas Sorensen joined Sunderland and became their first-team goalkeeper from the beginning of the 1998–99 season, only missing one League game. He was sold to Aston Villa before the 2003–04 season began, after making 171 appearances. The transfer fee was £2,225,000: not a bad day's trip to Denmark for Andy. At the time of writing Sorensen has become Stoke City's goalkeeper in the Premier League.

In 1998–99 Sunderland won League One by 18 clear points. Phillips and Quinn shared 41 goals. From the beginning of the New Year the team lost only one game. Home attendances continued to exceed 40,000. I had spent most of the season doing match reports, with some scouting, but I had not been involved

with any of the new recruits.

A close friend of mine, an ex-Charlton centre-forward living in Wexford, Eire, rang me to tell me about a young 16-year-old, Michael Reddy, who he had seen scoring a lot of goals in junior football. He asked whether I could get over to see him play. Officially I did not deal with under-18s. Andy King had left Sunderland to become head coach at Swindon Town, so I got in touch with Tony Book, former player and Manchester City manager, who was the new chief scout at Sunderland, thinking that we would have a scout in Southern Ireland. We did not. Tony asked me whether my friend was a good judge, and when I said he was Tony asked me to get the full details of the boy and we would work from there. My friend told me that the lad was due to finish at grammar school, so arrangements were made for him to come to Sunderland for trials with our academy. The academy took him on and he was signed professional. He played in the reserves and graduated to the first team, playing in the Premier League in 1999–2000. He made eight appearances, scoring his first goal away at Middlesbrough. The club kept me informed and gave very rosy reports about how well he had progressed. A bright future was forecast for him and he gained a Republic of Ireland Under-21 cap. Unfortunately, he was dogged by several serious injuries, but Sunderland kept him on for seven seasons, loaning him out on occasions to speed his recovery. Michael was transferred to Grimsby and in two seasons he made 84 appearances and scored 22 goals, a 25 per cent strike rate. Another problem occurred with a further hip injury. Russell Slade had him at Yeovil in an attempt to get him playing again, but unfortunately he was forced to retire following a third hip operation. In 2008 he successfully completed his UEFA 'B' coaching course with the PFA. May he have different luck in this field.

Soon after the commencement of the next season in the Premier League, I was asked to go to West Bromwich Albion to look at a wide left player, Kevin Kilbane. He had been with them for just two years having been purchased from Preston North End. West Brom were playing in League One. Kevin did well, and I understand that he was watched another couple of times with satisfaction. He was bought for £2.5 million, twice as much as his club had paid for him. In 2003 Kevin was sold to Everton, then Wigan Athletic and most recently joined Hull City, along the way gaining over 100 international caps for the Republic of Ireland.

In 2001, I saw Jermaine Jenas at 17 make his first-team debut for Nottingham Forest. I had seen him twice in the reserves at the City Ground. He did okay, but did not get another game until the following season. I watched him in two of his first three games of the new season and was very impressed. I filed a report

saying how good he was and recommending that we pursue him. Tony Book (chief scout) went to see him and he was also impressed. In early September Peter Reid put in a bid of £1.5 million for Jermaine Jenas. Paul Hart, the manager at Forest, turned the offer down and said he was looking for much more. Tony Book told me that this was the absolute maximum we could muster, as money was tight. Jenas continued to impress. It was an unusual surname, and I recalled having seen a Jenas playing for Burton Albion. He had been a striker, a good goalscorer, and enquiries revealed that it had been Jermaine's father, Dennis.

In February 2002, Bobby Robson, manager of Newcastle United, paid £5 million for Jermaine Jenas. He made his debut at home against Southampton in a 3–1 victory. Early in the 2005 season he joined Tottenham Hotspur for £7 million.

In the early part of the new season Peter Reid was sacked. We were all told verbally that we had finished at Sunderland. I was very disappointed as I had been impressed with the club. The season was ticking along when I had a telephone call from Sunderland asking me to go to a game for them. I told them that I was no longer with them. They asked me who I was with and I replied no one. I was told that as far as Sunderland were concerned I was still a scout, but they would confirm it. Shortly afterwards one of the directors rang me personally to tell me that I was still on the staff, and I should not have been told otherwise; however, he went on to tell me that they wanted me to join their academy staff searching for under-18s good enough for training to become League players. I agreed to do this for them and they kept me fully employed, using me two or three times per week. Many of the games were played in the late morning, which was not a problem for me as I had retired. During the year I managed to get two recruits into the academy. Jack Witham also remained on the staff as a scout for the new manager, Howard Wilkinson, who had been at the FA, but he only lasted a few months. Mick McCarthy was put in charge having recently lost the Republic of Ireland position. Against the odds he got Sunderland back into the Premier League in his second season.

I heard an interview on Radio Five Live one evening that began with the interviewer praising Mick's achievement before introducing Mr Sanders, who held the purse strings at the Stadium of Light. He said, roughly, 'We'll see just how good he is now, as he'll have no money to spend.' This did not seem a nice way to talk about someone who had just secured the club promotion. Mr Sanders had also put the brakes on Peter Reid. After hearing these remarks I had a large bet that Sunderland would be relegated to Division One. Mick was barely given a chance, and they won only three games in the whole season.



This nine-year period had been very good for me personally. Collectively the staff that I had worked with as regards scouting were top class, and I believe that if there had been good funds made available most of the time then Sunderland would have been a major force in their superb stadium. The directors all treated us with great respect. Mr Sanders held the purse strings, though I never met him, and in my humble opinion his ultra-careful attitude stopped the club from rising to be among the elite – no manager can be successful when there are no funds available.

At around the time Mick joined Sunderland I lost my scouting job, although I doubt whether Mick had anything to do with it. The club had taken on two coaches to run the academy from Ajax football club, and they were establishing Dutch rules that no youths outside a 35-mile radius of the club would be taken in. I lived a three-hour drive away and so would be of no use to them. The new arrangement lasted one season and then the two ex-Ajax coaches were dismissed.

During my 12-month spell with the Sunderland academy, one morning I had a telephone call out of the blue. The gentleman explained that he was from a football agency and he had received a very favourable report about me. He went on to ask me if I would work for them recruiting players who I thought would make the grade at a reasonable level, both home and abroad. He offered me a salary of £10,000 per year plus expenses, and a bonus relating to the players' transfer fees. It would mean me working abroad at times, possibly being away for a week or more at a time. I said that if I had been offered this job 20 years ago I would probably have jumped at the chance, but I pointed out that I was in my 70s, and said my wife would not be very happy about me being away abroad for days. I thanked him for the offer. He apologised, saying that they had not realised my age. I have often wondered what Peter Taylor and I could have earned if agents had been allowed 40 years ago.

### **A return to Nottingham Forest**

Early in the 2003–04 season I was at Eton Park watching Burton Albion. I ran into Ian Storey-Moore, who was chief scout for Nottingham Forest. He asked me if I was still with Sunderland. I said 'No, I finished there at the end of last season and at the moment I don't have a club.' He asked me if I would consider working for Forest again. I did not have to think twice. I thanked Ian very much and said I would be willing to join their scouting staff. He rang me at home next day to confirm everything.

Paul Hart was the Forest manager, having been appointed after David Platt was dismissed in the summer of 2001. He was their fifth manager in five years. Dave

Bassett, in his one year as manager, had put them back in the top division, but between them Ron Atkinson and David Platt, over a three-season period, had left the club in a financially precarious state. Some of their expensive buys had failed miserably. Paul was promoted to manager from the Youth Academy, where he had been a tremendous success. Several youths from the Academy were given the chance to prove themselves with the first team; there was little option, as there was no money in the kitty.

From the start I was told that there was a shortage of funds and all the scouting staff found it difficult to bring anyone into the club. Each time a player was suggested we were told that the money was out of the question. After 13 consecutive games without a win the fear of relegation crept in and Paul was dismissed in January. Joe Kinnear was appointed to replace him and enjoyed reasonable success, losing only two more games. Forest gained a better-than-hoped-for 14th place in Division One. Right up to the end of that season I had been kept busy, mainly doing match reports but also scouting.

The only player to catch my eye was Kris Commons playing for Stoke City. He had a mixed season, missing many games through injury, but he played in each of the last nine games of the season. I did not think he would cost a great deal in the transfer market. He was of diminutive build, had good pace and close control, and was mainly left-footed although he could use his right. I saw improvement each time I watched him. Ian, after seeing my reports, went along to form his own opinion. At the beginning of the following season Kris became a Forest player for £300,000, which was about what I thought he was worth. When he left to join Derby County at the beginning of the 2008–09 season he had made 138 League appearances. His transfer was under the Bosman ruling so no transfer fee was involved.

In 2004–05 the League renamed the divisions. Below the Premier League was the Championship, and below that League One and League Two. We were in the Championship. The Joe Kinnear magic was not in evidence and in December he resigned, giving ill-health as his reason. The team had not won a match in 10 games. Even at this early stage relegation was being discussed.

Gary Megson was brought in as the new manager on 10 January 2005. He had recently lost his job with West Bromwich Albion. I received a letter, signed by Gary, stating that owing to the financial situation at Forest the scouting staff were being dismissed. Gary hoped that things would improve and that he would be able to get in touch with the scouts again, but I never heard from him. The club were relegated to League One at the end of the season. After only 12 months at Forest Gary Megson departed in February 2006. To be fair he did not have a chance. A lack of finance will always get you in the end.

When I have gambled on football in pre-season I have always based my selections on clubs with funds rather than clubs with no money, and this has proved a successful strategy. When I first joined Forest with Brian in January 1975 they were almost at rock bottom, but in eight superb seasons he effected a total transformation and the empty shelves in the trophy room were filled. Brian was able to achieve success and balance the books, a rare gift indeed.

Since leaving Forest for the last time in 2005 I have not taken on a scouting job with any League club. I act as a freelance and am available to attend a game to give my opinion of a player. I still attend at least two League games each week and my opinions are continually sought. My only problem is the time it takes to drive to matches through the heavy traffic, so I now only attend midweek games that are close to home.

My estimate is that I have been to over 4,000 games during almost 40 years in football scouting, and I have enjoyed it. As I have said many times, you cannot prejudge what your next game is going to be like, and many lower League games turn out to be more interesting than those in the higher divisions. There is always hidden talent around the corner, waiting to be given a chance.

It has been a great pleasure to have worked with so many football household names and characters and I have many wonderful memories. I would like to make special mention of Dave Blakey, Tony Book, Alan Durban, Alan Hill, Andy King, Ian Storey-Moore, Roy McFarland, John Sheridan, Peter Shilton and the senior staff at Sunderland, Peter Reid, Bobby Saxton and Adrian Heath. It will soon be 60 years since I first joined a professional football club. I am still close friends with four others from those long-ago Burton Albion days: Maurice Hodgkin, Dave McAdam, Geoff Tye and Ray Bowering.

### **Footnote: Burton Albion Football Club**

In 2008–09 Burton had a memorable season, gaining promotion into the Football League over 100 years since the town was last represented at that level. I have always held them in high regard, taking a keen interest in their results and happenings over the years. Their progress has been steady. I give credit to the chairman, Ben Robinson, a Burtonian who has been successful in business. He has always run the club in ideal fashion, in my opinion, appointing a manager to run the team while he ensures that the rest of the operation runs smoothly. His heart is sincerely with Burton Albion.

Burton's old ground at Eton Park was 50 years old and looked it. Ben Robinson took a brave gamble and purchased ground from the Pirelli Tyre Company to build the Pirelli Stadium. After a few teething problems the playing surface is in tip-top condition and the gamble has paid off. First-time visitors are pleasantly

surprised at the quality of the facilities.

The stadium was opened in 2005 by Mrs Barbara Clough and Sir Alex Ferguson, who brought his Manchester United side to play a friendly match. The site is in a wonderful position in the town, on the north side, approximately one mile from the railway station and serviced by five different bus routes. It is only four miles from the A50/A38 junction.

Ben Robinson brought in Nigel Clough as manager over 10 years ago. At the time Nigel had no experience as a club manager, but he nonetheless achieved continuous progress on the field. Nigel, having put together a side good enough to play League football, left to join Derby County in January 2009 with the Albion in a handsome lead at the top of the Blue Square Premier League. Roy McFarland took over to complete promotion.

To replace Roy McFarland the chairman appointed Paul Peschisolido and Gary Rowett. They were unproven in management but so far this bold move seems to be working very well.

On my travels I have visited about 90 per cent of all the League grounds in the country. The Pirelli Stadium is up there with the best of them in the way that visiting club representatives are looked after. Car parking and refreshments are supplied free of charge, and excellent seats in the centre of the main stand are allocated, which is valuable for those doing match reports. There is a trend among some clubs to withdraw this type of hospitality, which makes the job of compiling a match report much harder than it needs to be. At one ground I was sat behind the goal only four rows from the front, when there were empty rows up in the Main Stand. It is a shame that the job we are doing is not recognised properly among all staff at these grounds. There is always a chance that a visit by a scout might mean a big transfer fee for the host club – and I should know, I've created enough of them!

# Epilogue

## *My final tribute*

In closing I wish to pay a sincere tribute to both Peter and Brian. They added something very special to my life. When you have to give up the sport you play due to an injury it comes as a severe shock. The younger you are, the more it hurts. Meeting Peter, then Brian, more than filled the gap that might have arisen. I feel extremely honoured to have been taken on board with them and I enjoyed the whole journey immensely. I am the only member of staff to have worked with them at every club.

Peter's natural gift for spotting the talents of players and sizing up how different teams functioned was immense. Fortunately, after spending hours with him, watching the same players and hearing his analysis, I was able to take it all in. His knowledge of players' skills and teams' tactical operations was second to none. He disliked discussing football with people outside the game, and he would not discuss it with directors either: he thought they should be busy running the club. Peter never liked the limelight and was always nervous of being on his own without a trusted partner. Being number two was his ideal position at a club. Peter's record throughout his career, until the last two years at Forest, was exemplary, and even the semi-failures that occurred towards the end were due to impetuosity, and his not feeling physically up to it. Peter struggled with adversities: this was why Brian was such a great partner for him. After Peter left his manager position at Derby County he hardly ever contacted me, and I never visited his new home in Widmerpool. I believe he spent most of his time in Majorca. I will always remain deeply indebted to him for the knowledge of this wonderful sport he gave me. In 21 years we never had one serious argument.

Brian was second to none in football. I have never met a man like him. He excelled in dealing with problems and problem players, and boardroom members were no trouble to him either. Peter never was happy with them because the vast majority are not football men, they are businessmen, who have been successful in their own field. My relationship with Brian was almost all on the football side. His great gift was that he was a born leader, and given a player with either proven ability or raw talent, providing they were willing to take his advice and

instructions, he could improve him.

While under his charge 24 players gained international caps for their respective countries. The total number of caps won by these players while at Nottingham Forest alone was 283. During his managerial career he even improved seasoned players such as Dave Mackay (in the role he was given), Larry Lloyd, Alan Hinton, Alan Durban, Willie Carlin, Frank Clark and Kenny Burns. Over 50 other younger players became household names while under him. Brian did not have favourites, for him it was what they could do on the field, that was where he made his real judgement. Yes, he liked the players who never caused problems off the field. If you supplied the goods to him he would polish them and help them achieve their best. He was wary of all intellectuals. Any sport he participated in he always wanted to win.

When Nigel Clough came to Burton Albion as their player-manager, I saw Brian many times and had many good-humoured chats with him. I remember distinctly one occasion in 2003. Derby County had been relegated from the Premiership, and they were lying at the bottom of Division One (now the Championship). John Gregory had been sacked. I was sitting about six or seven rows back from Brian in the stand at Eton Park. During half-time, Brian turned round and shouted 'Maurice, let's you and me go to Derby and sort the b\*\*\*\*\*ds out. We could still do it!'

I saw Brian at Burton Albion with Ronnie Fenton only a short time before he passed away. He called me to him and we had a nice few words and a laugh.

Both Peter and Brian said a similar thing to me that has stuck with me. 'Nothing seems to change you,' they said. 'You're always placid, you treat everything calmly and easily cope with adversities.' I explained that for me, working in football was my relaxation. I put my business worries behind me, and my livelihood did not depend on my football. Neither of them ever put me under any pressure, but the two of them were always under pressure to keep up the results and team performances, to satisfy chairmen, press and the supporters. I admired them for that.

Peter's son Philip went into the newsagents' business in the Wardwick in Derby, and Brian's son Simon has a newsagency in West Bridgford, Nottingham. Brian's closest friend Colin Lawrence was a perfumery salesman visiting chemists and the cosmetic retailers. He purchased a very busy Post Office and newsagents in Park Farm, Derby, after visiting my Post Office in Burton. Colin has passed away, but his son Peter is still the sub-postmaster. One of Brian's brothers took over the newsagents in Duffield. I always think that these ventures were related to Peter and Brian seeing how successful I was with the one I owned.

I want to finish by saying what a great honour it was to have been a member of Peter and Brian's very successful team. I am glad to have been helpful on occasions, and to have had a hand in their achievements. I am also happy to have been associated with them both as a friend. I shall always be of the opinion that they passed away far too early, after illnesses that were brought on by their work and the stresses and the effort involved. However, both men will no doubt live on in thousands of people's sporting memories for many many years to come.

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