

# The Andei

**I**N 1967 Boro won their first promotion for 38 years and had their most successful season since they had finished fourth in the old Division One in 1939. The Boro manager, Stan Anderson, then in his first full season of management stayed with Boro until early 1973, when, frustrated with Boro's inability to perform consistently enough to clinch promotion, he resigned. The following season, Jack Charlton took what was essentially Anderson's squad to a storming, record breaking Second Division Championship.

Stan Anderson achieved a great deal for the Boro under what were difficult circumstances. Without the excellent squad of players he left behind, it is arguable as to whether Jack Charlton would have achieved so much so quickly. Respect is long overdue.

Stan Anderson left Newcastle United to join a Middlesbrough Football Club in rapid free-fall. He was Boro manager Raich Carter's last signing, having previously skipped both Newcastle and Sunderland in a distinguished career. However, he did not originally intend playing for Boro as such, nor was it Carter who enticed him to Teesside: 'It was Eric Thomas (Boro's then Chairman) who persuaded me to join Middlesbrough. I was always interested in becoming a coach, and he said to me "Boro are struggling - come and be our coach,"

The laid back style of Raich Carter's management is exemplified by a story that Stan told me.

Soon after Stan joined Boro as player/coach, the team were on their way to a vital away game that they could not afford to lose; relegation was staring them in the face. Stan takes up the story: "On the coach going to the match, I had a word with Raich and told him that he needed to give the players a strong team talk before the game; he really needed to gee the lads up, because we were dropping down the league like a stone.

"So as the coach pulls to a halt in the car park, Raich stood up and said "Right lads, here we are, safely arrived at our destination. Look at this man sitting next to me who drove us here; he got us here correctly, safely and did a smooth professional job. That's what I want from you tonight lads, give me a professional job. Right, over to you Stan."

Anderson continues: "I was just speechless. I had to get up and follow that! I did my best, but of course, we lost the match. The problem was that because Raich was such an exceptionally gifted footballer in his day, he thought that everybody else could do the same, and couldn't understand that most players would never be as good as he was no matter how hard they tried.

Sunderland were not very charitable to Stan in the run up to his testimonial game. He was informed that the match would not go ahead unless he paid for the match ball!

The only time in his career that Stan came under fire from the fans was when he left Sunderland - and even then it wasn't his fault.

In 1963 Sunderland were managed by one of Stan's former playing colleagues, Alan Brown, and Stan was trying to get back into the team after a short absence through injury: "Once I was ready for a game, I was put into the first team squad, and that meant going with them to all of the matches as a spare player, because there were no substitutes in those days.

"The problem was that I wasn't getting picked, so I would spend the whole day with the team, but not be involved with the match. I wanted to play in the reserves, just to keep the edge, but Alan wouldn't have it; he wanted me with the first team.

"It all came to a head after I was picked to go with the first team down to Torquay I think. I spent the whole journey there fuming inside because I knew I wouldn't get a game (Sunderland to Torquay, in 1963 would have been quite a trek; even with today's motorway network it is still 400 miles each way).

"On the coach coming back I had a word with Alan and told him that come what may, I must play for the reserves the following week; I really needed to be playing. Alan said, 'Well, we'll see eh?' but I was insistent, because it just wasn't fair or right.

"Anyway, I reported to Roker as usual on the Monday, and I was called into Alan's office. He said to me 'Right, well you're still not playing for the reserves this week - I've just sold you to Newcastle'. And that was it. I had to go. In fairness, I was ready for a move by then, because I needed to play. I came in for a fair bit of stick from Sunderland fans, especially for going to Newcastle (Stan continued to live in Mackemland in an SFC house for a few years after, but that's another story) but ultimately, it wasn't my decision."

Boro's new 'coach' found himself playing in the Boro first team the week after he joined. It was 20 November 1965, and despite a debut goal from Anderson, Boro still went down 3-4 at Ayresome to Cardiff City. Interestingly, this match also marked the league debut for a 16 year old Welsh lad called John Toshack, who scored two of Cardiff's goals.

Anderson's experience was invaluable to the young but woeful Boro side, and he was made team captain, thus he is still the only player ever to have skipped all three of the top

(Below) Stan in Boro colours in 1965 against Huddersfield Town at Ayresome Park



**KEOGH'S KORKER:** From which club did ex-Boro 'keeper Jim Platt resign as manager recently after only a few weeks in charge?

## Stan's playing career

Signed professional 1951  
Played for **Sunderland** 1952 - 1963 402 apps, 31 goals  
**Newcastle United** 1963 - 1965 81 apps 13 goals  
**Middlesbrough** 1965 21 apps 1 goal

## INTERNATIONAL CAPS:

**England** schools/Under-23 - 4, full international caps - 2



# son years

north east clubs.

By February 1966 Boro were as good as relegated to the old Division Three for the first time in their history, so manager Raich Carter – a hugely successful player and manager until joining Boro – was fired.

Managerless Boro ambled along until April when 32 year old Anderson was appointed. It was a daunting prospect. "Once I'd joined Boro, I knew that there was never a hope in hell we were going to stay up. If you're at the bottom of the table with a decent side you can still get relegated, so you've got no chance if you are at the bottom with a bad side." It is ironic that 32 years later a decent Boro side suffered the same fate as the woeful lads of '65.

The only thing that Boro fans had to look forward to was the end of the season, in the approaching summer of 1966, Ayresome Park was to host several World Cup games, involving Italy, USSR, Chile and North Korea. The Boro faithful, downhearted and dejected knew that these matches were likely to be the best football that would be on show at Ayresome for some time to come.

Anderson had taken on a massive task – nothing less than promotion at the first attempt could guarantee his survival. He started with a huge cull of the playing staff. "The Boro team that I inherited was the worst team that I have ever seen in my life" he remembers. "We had people who just didn't want to play for the Boro. There was one who, if he arrived early for training, he would sit in his car outside until two minutes to ten rather than come in a few minutes early. On another occasion I had the players doing some shuttle runs, and after doing a couple, one of the players collapsed in a heap. I asked him what was up, and he was really annoyed and said 'Look, if we're gonna do shuttle runs, you must give me a days notice – don't you realise I've had a big plate of egg and chips this morning!' I got rid of about 20 players in the first season, and apart from Ian Gibson, I think they all went on a free transfer because I knew I wouldn't get anything for them"

Boro conceded 23 goals in the first nine matches in Division Three, winning only twice; at one point they were second bottom. New blood was required, and in his first year in charge, Anderson, a shrewd judge of players, made a total of four signings who all made their mark and are still talked about to this day. First in was David Chadwick, followed by the legendary John O'Rourke. A young full back called John Hickton followed, then goalkeeper Willie Whigham, who, at £10,000 says Anderson was "the best buy I ever made, for the money I spent".

Anderson remembers signing John Hickton, (who became Boro's leading scorer for six successive seasons) because he thought he was buying a defender! Hickton was at Sheffield Wednesday, who were managed by Alan Brown, one of Anderson's former colleagues at Sunderland: "Alan offered me Hickton for £20,000, and said he can play at full back or centre half. We played him at full back, but in one match he took the ball up field and scored a fantastic goal from outside the box. After that, we kept him playing in a number two shirt, ostensibly a full back, but as soon as matches started, we moved him up front, dropping Billy Horner back and putting Eric McMordie in midfield.

Of course, this ploy took opposing teams completely by surprise, and it was near the end of the season before we were found out."

Hickton oozed class, but his lack of recognition still puzzles Anderson: "John was a tremendous acquisition; he was strong, confident and good in the air. When you look at some players who have won international caps, I can hardly believe



(Above) Stan signs on the dotted line for the Boro. Long-standing Club Secretary Harry Green looks on

that John Hickton was overlooked."

Anderson feels that the Boro crowd were needlessly harsh on the local born players: "Alan Moody had a hard time just because he was local – he was a much better player than he ever showed at Boro." Moody left Boro and went on to make 444 appearances for Southend United, a club record that stands to this day. "What people couldn't understand was that all the local lads who didn't cost the club a penny to buy – Moody, Horner, Horsfield, Gates and Gordon Jones – these were tremendous assets to the club. They were so Boro orientated that when they got into the side they were over the moon, but the crowd would have a go at these lads if they were having an off day, whereas they would tolerate bad days by the paid for players like John O'Rourke. The only local lad who became a crowd favourite was Willie Maddren."

John Hickton and Willie Maddren's careers might not have been half as successful were it not for Anderson's shrewd judgement. Hickton came to Boro as a full back, and Maddren was being groomed as a centre forward. It was Anderson who converted them, and in effect, gave them the opportunity to earn the legendary status that they now enjoy among Boro fans: "It was only when John showed that he could give us the power up-front that we needed that I then felt able to ask Willie to drop back to defence".

After a shaky start, the team found their feet, culminating

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Stan's all time Boro top five:

- Wilf Mannion ● Micky Fenton ● John Hickton ● Emerson ● Graeme Souness

Stan's most memorable Boro signings:

- O'Rourke ● Hickton ● Maddren ● Mills ● McIlmoyle ● Stiles ● Boam ● Craggs ● Platt ● Armstrong Foggion ● Souness

Keogh's Korner:  
Answer: Gateshead.

in what is widely regarded as the most memorable night at Ayresome – the promotion clinching 4–1 win over Oxford United, who were captained by one Ron Atkinson. Anderson recalls: "Halfway through that season, people were made up that we were getting gates of 18,000 at Ayresome, and I would say 'but this place holds 40,000'. They'd scoff and say 'you'll never see that many in here again!' Of course, the Oxford match proved them wrong, because there was more than 40,000 there that night. The official gate was just under 40,000, but that was just those who paid to get in! So many fans had jumped over the fences that the terraces were full up, so hundreds of people watched the match from the running track. I find it amazing that after everything Boro have achieved since then – the Charlton, Rioch, Lawrence and Robson promotion seasons – people that I speak to still regard that Third Division year as the most exciting."

Of the famous Oxford game Anderson recalls: "I don't even remember giving a team talk that night. They knew what they had to do."

Boro consolidated well after promotion, and under Anderson missed out on promotion to the top flight every year, but never finished lower than ninth. However, Boro had a reputation for selling their best players: "The supporters felt that the club didn't want to get to the First Division, but there was always problems with the bank; we always had to get guarantors. I remember when I told them I wanted to spend £55,000 on John Craggs, they nearly fell off their chairs! But I always felt a bit sorry for Eric Thomas, because he always backed me, particularly when I had to virtually beg the board to buy Graeme Souness."

The acquisition of Souness confirms just how good a judge of players Anderson is. Of the 38 players that he bought in or brought up through the ranks, 12 are all-time Boro legends, although not all of them fulfilled their potential: "Hugh McLimoye was a wonderful player. He should have got 50 caps for Scotland, but he wasn't ambitious, and didn't reach the level he was capable of. Then when I got Alan Foggon – who I stole from Cardiff, I couldn't believe they let me have him for only £10,000 – I told him I wouldn't play him until he had lost a stone in weight. I was desperate to put him in, but I couldn't play him in that state. To his credit, he worked very hard, and he was very quick. Jack Charlton got the best out of him and made a good profit when he sold him on to Manchester United."

One of Stan's most memorable signings was Nobby Stiles: "I needed someone like Nobby to be in the dressing room and get people going as much as anything. He probably didn't do as well as we wanted him to, but his legs were going because he had taken so much punishment over the years. He was such a smashing feller though."

The Anderson years saw Boro embark on two memorable FA Cup runs. In 1972 Manchester City were beaten in the 3rd round, only for Boro to fall to mighty Manchester United in the fifth round after a replay. But most memorable was the 1969–70 campaign, when Boro beat First Division high-fliers West Ham 2–1 at Ayresome in the 3rd round, only to be beaten in a sixth round replay by Manchester United. "I still can't believe that we got beat in 1970 at Old Trafford. It was 1–1 and the referee gave United a penalty when he was standing in the other half of the field, from which they scored their winner. It was a hard game – Bill Gates was punched and ended up playing the last 15 minutes with a broken jaw." After United went ahead from the penalty, Joe Laidlaw had what appeared to be a perfectly good goal disallowed, so it was not Boro's night. Victory would have been sweet in front of 63,418 people at Old Trafford.

In the League, Boro's frustrating inability to land a promotion spot was taking its toll, though Anderson can see some humour in it all now: "Just before I resigned, I had watched the first team and the reserves play four or five matches in the space of two weeks, and we didn't score one goal. So at the next reserve match, I said 'right, I want as many people up front as you can get – don't worry about defence – just push forward and get me a bloody goal.' So up they went, and the ball came across the face of their goal, past the goalkeeper straight to Eric McMordie, who was only a yard out; he tried to sidefoot it and it went between his legs and out for a goal kick! I couldn't believe it. It had got to the stage where it needed someone else to change things around, but basically, we did have very good players, as Jack Charlton proved." ■