

## **The history of Tynecastle Football Club**

### **Pre-1939**

The original Tynecastle Club was founded in 1928 and at the outset had a membership of 10 boys and was formed as a Meccano club to build models of various descriptions. They met one night of the week at Tynecastle Secondary School. Under the leadership of Norman Murchison, then a teacher at the Tynecastle School, the numbers increased and so did the activities which led to the formation of Tynecastle Former Pupils Club.

Up to 1939 and before the Second World War, teachers and headmasters administered all sport including that of football. Outings were considered an exciting adventure in those days and Tynecastle were one of the first clubs to use the National Association of Boys Clubs training centre at Dalguise House in Perthshire.

### **1939 to 1945**

When the war did intervene the vast majority of leaders went to fight for their country and at one stage the club was in serious danger of folding. To the rescue came Andrew McAlpine, the first club leader. 'Mac' was a tremendous character where his enthusiasm, affection and leadership throughout those war years laid the very foundation of the Tynecastle Club.

In 1944 Jimmy Aitken took charge and the club became Tynecastle Boys Club. Previously Jimmy had been one of the original boy members and was well indoctrinated in the boys club movement. For the next 20 years Jimmy controlled the show, two or three nights a week within a small hut next to the school in McLeod Street.

### **1960's**

The early sixties saw the first and biggest change with Tynecastle Athletic joining forces. Coupled with that was the move along Gorgie Road to a premise within the confines of Pentland School later to become Tynecastle High School Annexe. The move was attributed to the efforts of Bailie James Ross whose arm twisting with the City powers led to having our own true first home.

Football and Table Tennis continued to be the main sporting activities and as interest grew in playing so did the membership numbers. In 1965 Davie Hogg took over as Club Leader and the football teams increased from the 21s, 19s and under 17's, to include younger players at 15 and 16 years. Three years later, John McConnell became club leader and it was during this period that the club experienced it's first European adventure with a tour to Germany.

Whilst the Club enjoyed great success in local competitions, team success in Scottish Cup Finals was proving elusive with seven attempts at the National award bringing defeat and heartache. However many players during the Sixties moved on to play professional football and many were successful in making a long and successful career in the sport.

### **1970's**

On the 23rd of June 1971 the club finally won it's first Scottish Cup, defeating Gairdoch United by 4 goals to 2 in the under 16's final played at Saughton Enclosure.

Since then the club has won many more national competitions at a number of different age groups and in one unique weekend saw the team of 15s win two Scottish Cups, one on the Saturday and the other on the Sunday, such was the structure of youth football at the time that allowed dual participation in competitions. This team should also be recognised for remaining undefeated for four years. On their day they were simply awesome and a credit to the Club.

### **Douglas Dalgleish**

Douglas took the Club Leader's helm in 1973 and the following year oversaw the first international trip to Winnipeg in Canada to play in the centennial tournament of the city at under

16 level. The winning of any international tournament is special but to defeat the West German National team in the process will always be regarded as one the major achievements at Tynecastle. For the record the score was 2 goals to 1 with a crowd of 1,500 containing predominately exiled Scotsmen. The celebrations that day can never be forgotten!!

### **50th Anniversary**

1978 saw the Club celebrate it's 50th and Jubilee year. A special Dinner was held on Saturday 28th October where past and present members, honoured guests and Director representative's from Heart of Midlothian F C, Hibernian F C and Meadowbank Thistle (now Livingston F C) joined us for a very gala occasion.

### **Balgreen School**

For the next 20 years the club continued to prosper both on and off the field of play and it was during this period, in 1984, that the club moved to its present location within the confines of Balgreen School, directly opposite the playing fields at Saughton Park. The club are much indebted to the work of Club President Jimmy Mclauchlin and Eric Milligan, ex Lord Provost and still a City Councillor, for securing the premise and the facilities that are now enjoyed.

### **Edinburgh Festival Football**

From 1985 and for the next 8 years the club organised the highly successful Edinburgh Festival Football Tournament, a tournament that at under 14 and under 16 was recognised as one the best in the country with participating teams of the highest calibre.

### **1990's**

In 1990, in conjunction with the City Council and Balgreen Primary School, the club financed the building of the first local based astro playing surface within the school play area, to be used exclusively by school and club members.

### **The new millennium**

The latter part of the nineties and the start of the new century were probably the lowest part of our history with team and member numbers reducing to such an extent that we nearly went out of business. However a merger with Hearts Boys Club, then under the control of the Heart of Midlothian Football Club, and the return of Douglas Dalglish to the management saw the club change its name to that of Tynecastle Hearts and become predominately a youth football club for both boys and girls. The arrangement with Hearts was terminated 2 years later and thus the club name was restored to 'Tynecastle' with 'Football Club' added.

### **East of Scotland Football League**

With the number of teams now on the increase, in 2004 the Club entered into an arrangement with the City Council for the exclusive use of the pitches at Saughton. Later that same year we became members of the East of Scotland Football League with the merger of then League members, Tollcross United. This merger meant that Tynecastle F C were admitted to the senior levels of Scottish football for the first time and provided a pathway for players to remain at the club playing at one of the highest levels in Scotland.

On the 5th of August 2004 the club played their first ever senior match at their home venue of Fernieside Recreation Ground, a pre-season friendly against Premier League side Hibernian. The match ended in a very credible 2 – 2 draw.

### **Craig Gordon**

On 13th November 2007 the club received a windfall of nearly £90,000 after former player and Scotland goalkeeper Craig Gordon was transferred from Hearts to Sunderland for £9 million. Under new FIFA regulations, grassroots clubs were now entitled to a percentage of any transfer. The monies received provided financial stability for the club and allowed also for investment in a number of projects that would secure the future of the club.

### **Sister club in the USA**

In January 2008, the club affiliated to a sister club in the American city of Everett, near Seattle called Tynecastle International F.C. It was set up by former Tynecastle and Bolton Wanderers player and now resident of Everett, David Hoggan.

### **David Bingham and Gary Mackay**

At the start of the 2008 season, former Livingston and Gretna player, David Bingham was appointed as player/coach of the club. He joined former Hearts legend Gary Mackay on the coaching staff at Tynecastle F.C. Gary later became the club's first Commercial Director.

On 16 May 2009, Tynecastle defeated Gretna, 4-0 to secure the East of Scotland League First Division Championship and as a result were promoted to the Premier Division for the 2009–10 season.

### **New appointments in 2009**

August 2009 was a busy month for Tynecastle with a number of important events happening. Firstly the club announced the appointment of Eddie Smeaton as Club Manager with Douglas Dalglish moving 'upstairs' to the role of Chairman.

The club also announced the appointment of its first Technical Director, with David Bingham taking this post as well as continuing his involvement in the senior set up as player/coach. Tynecastle was awarded the SFA Quality Mark which is awarded to show good practice in on and off field matters.

And finally Tynecastle opened the new Fernieside Recreational Ground pavilion with a game against a Heart of Midlothian XI, the new pavilion having been given to Tynecastle on a long term lease from the City Council. As well as all this happening in August, the senior team played its first game as Tynecastle FC in the Premier League of the East of Scotland League.

### **Re-introduction of an Amateur side**

In 2012, the Club increased the team capacity to include that of an Amateur side which again allows members to remain with the Club after their youth days. The Club also launched a Soccer Academy for the very young players and this section is already going from strength to strength as young players are taught the right way to progress in our modern game.

### **Playing in Canada and Sweden**

The Club has continued to travel overseas with visits in 2000, 2003 and 2008 to Toronto in Canada to participate in the Robbie International Tournament, as well as becoming annual visitors to Gothenburg, Sweden to participate in the Gothia Cup, the world's largest youth football tournament. Against teams from around 55/60 other countries, success is rare but we should be proud of the fact that we reached the latter stages of the tournament and in 2011, the Semi-Finals of the under 15 competition.

### **Scottish Cup**

Success in the Scottish Cup continues and in 2013 the Under 16s complete a four year cycle of being in the national final since formation of the team at Under 13. For the record, three wins and one defeat, a truly memorable achievement in today's game.

The Under 14s made it a double day of success on the 11th of May 2013 when at the Airdrie Excelsior Stadium they joined the under 16s to lift the coveted National trophy.

### **Jamie Skinner**

The playing of football was put into perspective when in December 2013, one of our players collapsed and died on the pitch whilst playing a game for the club. A tragic event for the under 14 team who witnessed the circumstances of the death of Jamie Skinner.

## **2016 - 2020**

The Club continued to have success on and off the field with many of the teams winning national competitions. We also continued to participate in overseas tournament with the 15's only narrowly missing out on achieving ultimate success in the Gothia Cup, this to add to the unbelievable achievement of winning all national and local cups and league in the one season. From the same squad of players many have moved to professional clubs and have latterly been the subject of large transfer fees. In 2017 the 1st Team moved to play all their home matches at Meggetland Stadium sharing the ground use with Boroughmuir Rugby. It was a magnificent achievement for the club to now play in the stadium park where 4,000 spectators could be accommodated, 500 in the main stand with all it's facilities. In 2019 the Club moved it's youth base after many happy years at Balgreen to that of Saughton Park.

## **The Covid Pandemic**

In March 2020 the Covid Pandemic struck the World with complete lockdown of all movement and football was no exception with a shutdown of all playing, training and meeting. This was to have a massive impact on all operations of the football club and it's safe to say that we have taken a great deal of time to recover. Success has been limited and the process of operational recovery continues