

# NUNEATON FOOTBALL HERITAGE HEROES

## No. 2

# Thomas Arthur Hilditch



Thomas Arthur Hilditch was born in Cheshire on January 10th 1885 and played in the goalkeeper position for his local club Sandbach Rovers and also Crewe Alexandra Reserves before joining Nuneaton Town in 1905. A brilliant, if eccentric, keeper, he was captain of Nuneaton's 1906-07 Birmingham Junior League championship side, assisted Aston Villa Reserves and was a Junior International trialist.

He was described in newspaper reports as being a brilliant goalkeeper and it was only a matter of time before he gained recognition, but true to his sporting instincts, he would remain an amateur and although Aston Villa secured his signature, he continued to play for Nuneaton Town in view of the number of stiff matches that had to be played before the Birmingham Combination title was secured.

A fine all-round amateur sportsman, T.A. was a cricketer of County standard, making eight appearances for Warwickshire from 1907 to 1913. In later years he assisted Nuneaton and Attleborough Cricket Clubs and remained one of Nuneaton's most popular sportsmen until his death in August 1957. The Tommy Hilditch Memorial Trophy is still played for by local cricket clubs around the Nuneaton area to this day.

Tommy made his debut for Warwickshire in 1907, aged 22, against Northamptonshire at Edgbaston. He was caught out in the first innings with only two runs to his credit and didn't get to bowl in the Northants' first innings, but was given a try in the second innings and returned figures of two wickets for eight runs, "a start which should give him encouragement in his future matches."