

CHARLIE AITKEN (INSIDE FORWARD)

MOTHERWELL FC 1949/50 – 1966/67



Charlie Aitken
Motherwell Football Club

MOTHERWELL KITS WORN BY CHARLIE



1950/51

Seasons 1951-54

Seasons 1954-57



1957/58

1958/59

1959/60 (home socks)



1959/60 (away socks)

1959/60 (home socks)

1960-62



1961/62

1962/63

1963-66



1966-68

Charles Alexander Aitken was born in the small Lothian village of Gorebridge on 19th July 1932. On leaving secondary school as a 15 year old he worked as a grocer for only 4 weeks as having to work on a Saturday and being unable to play football was not for him. He then worked as a slater and resumed part-time football as an inside right with amateur under-age team, Gorebridge Victoria. From there he moved to junior team Arniston Rangers where he had his first experience of playing in the defensive position of centre back. His performances for Arniston attracted the attention of Motherwell scout Mr Robertson who asked him on his thoughts about joining Motherwell, Charlie didn't immediately say yes and after delaying his decision a visit to Gorebridge by manager George Stevenson and director James Hepburn in 1949 convinced him to join Motherwell.

He remained with Arniston for the 1949-50 season before making his debut for Motherwell on 7th April 1951 at home to Rangers in a 3-2 defeat. According to the 1950-51 club handbook he was 5' 8" and 11 st 10lbs when he arrived at Fir Park.

Charlie was called up for National Service and served as a gunner in the Artillery in Cypress. He returned from the Mediterranean island after his demob in 1954.

He was only back in 'civvies' for a fortnight and having played only one reserve game against Rangers at Ibrox he made his first big mark wearing claret and amber in a Scottish Cup semi-final against Celtic on 27th March 1954. Charlie didn't expect to play with such little game time since his return but when manager Stevenson read out the team with 25 minutes before kick-off, he read "Aitken" at inside-right. With Motherwell trailing 2-1 he scored an equaliser with a last minute header from a Willie Kilmarnock free-kick, an ability which was to become his trade mark. For someone of his height he seemed to have an extraordinary talent for leaping and seeming to stay in the air before a ball arrived at his head.

When Bobby Ancell took over as manager he moved Charlie to right-half where he became a regular.

On 23rd October 1954 Motherwell reached the League Cup Final at Hampden against Hearts, before a crowd of 55,640. Unfortunately not the outcome that Charlie or the 'Well fans wanted, Hearts won 4-2 with Willie Redpath and Alex Bain scoring for 'Well.

Motherwell team; Weir, Kilmarnock, McSeveney; Cox, Paton, Redpath; Hunter, Aitken, Bain, Humphries, Archibald Williams.

In season 1957/58 on 5th April 1958 in a Scottish Cup semi-final game against Clyde trailing 3-0 to a John Coyle Hat-trick 'Well staged a dramatic last few minutes with goals by Pat Quinn and Jim Forrest reducing the score to 3-2 and in the last minute with the referee looking at his watch Motherwell earned a corner which Charlie met perfectly only to see his header crash down from the underside of the bar but not go in.

The Scottish international selectors weren't as enamoured with Charlies play as much as 'Well fans were and although he didn't get the international recognition that he deserved he did play in a Scotland 'B' team that lost 4-1 to England at Birmingham City in 1957 and for the Scottish League teams against the League of Ireland and Irish League in 1959.

The only cup final that he played whilst with the 'Well was the 1965 Summer Cup victory over two legs against Dundee United, winning 3-1 at Fir Park on 29th May and losing 1-0 at Tannadice on 2nd June.

After 17 loyal years at Fir Park he was awarded a testimonial and on 24th May 1967 a Motherwell XI drew 1-1 with Rangers at Fir Park. The Motherwell XI line-up was; Peter McCloy, David Whiteford, Matt Thomson; Dave MacKay ('Spurs), John Martis, William Stevenson (Liverpool); Bobby Hogg (Hibs), Willie Hunter, Ian St John (Liverpool), Sammy Reid (Berwick Rangers), Andy Weir. Subs; Dixie Deans and Jackie McNally. Note; Bobby Hogg was signed on a free transfer by Motherwell from Hibs immediately after this game.

In his 17 seasons at Fir Park he made 314 appearances scoring 38 goals, add to this a number of friendly games during those years.

He was named Motherwell Supporters Association 'Player of the Year' in 1956/57 and 1957/58 (he was the only 'Well player to play in all 34 league games) and Scottish Player's Union 'Player of the Year' in 1966.

It is reported that after his testimonial he returned to his original trade as a slater and later a postman in Arniston. Sadly he never stepped inside Fir Park again.

Here are a couple of quotes from fellow team members.

Ian St John wrote in his autobiography "We also had a player who seemed to me at the time - and that image has never dwindled down the years - to represent the best that a professional could be. That was Charlie Aitken".

Billy Reid "He always shunned away from publicity and that could explain why he was never noticed by those picking the national side at the time".

This is only a brief summary of his career whilst wearing claret & amber but it can be clearly seen that he is one of the clubs legends and long remembered as a member of THE ANCELL BABES.

Charlie died on 12th January 2008, aged 75.



Charlie Aitken and Andy Donaldson drinking out of Summer Cup in 1965

Geo. Sandoz. Valerian

John Montis Charles Archer
— L. Phee.
Andy Weir
Bobby R. Rust
Morris Stevenson
Bobby Young
Allan Wyllie

NO 148424
FC

Autographs c.1960's

MOTHERWELL F.C.

Bobby Delist.

Andy West

W. H. H. H.

Ben McLean.

Jim Roberts

Charles Parker

Alan Wyllie

Bobby McCallum

Pat Delaney

Matt Thomson

Joe M. Brown

Geo Lindsay

John Martin

With Best Wishes

Motherwell F.C. 1963-64

Autographs 1963/64

Please Sign
Motherwell Football & Athletic Club, Ltd.

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Manager—
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Office, 129; House, 1366

195

MOTHERWELL F.C.
Autographs.

Charlie Pot.
Niklas Humphries.

W. Reid
Forrest

Willie Mc Giverny.

Bobby Stewart.
Jimmy Stewart.

Alastair Watt

Ian Macpherson.

W. F. Morrison.

Sam Gardiner.

Charlie Aitch

Tommy Stewart

Bobby Stewart

W. Shaw

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SCOTTISH LEAGUE—DIVISION A



MOTHERWELL

versus

RANGERS

FIR PARK, MOTHERWELL

SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 1951

Kick-off 3 p.m.

Official Programme, 2d Series 3—No. 17

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WISHAW Tel.: Motherwell 295

Programme from Charlies debut at Fir Park



Ian St John & Dave MacKay line up for Motherwell at Charlies Testimonial

24th May 1967 v Rangers at Fir Park



Charlie in action v Hibs in May 1967 Summer Cup semi-final, 'Well lost 2-0 in the away leg (11,047) on the 22nd but won 6-2 in home leg (7,600) on the 26th

*Back : McSeveney, Holton, McFadyen, Gardiner, Brown, Cowie, Martis, Forrest, Aitken.
 Middle : B Ancell, A Weir, McCann, Campbell, Shaw, H Weir, Stenhouse, McCallum, McPhee, St John, J Hunter
 Front : Ellis, Quinn, Hunter, Reid, Baker, Rea, Newman, Kerr. Kneeling : Reid.*



SEASON 1957/58



1958-59 Season

*Back: McSeveney, Holton, MacFadyen, Gardiner, Brown, Cowie, Martis, Forrest, Aitken
Middle: A.Weir, McCann, Campbell, Shaw, H.Weir, Stenhouse, McCallum, McPhee, St.John
Front: Reid, Quinn, Hunter, Reid, Baker, Rea, Newman, Kerr*

1959-60 Season

*Back: Forest, McCallum, Cattenach, H.Weir, Wylie, Martis, Delaney
Middle: St.John, McCann, Stewart, McSeveney, McCallum, Roberts, Martin, Aitken
Front: Young, Quinn, W.Reid, S.Reid, Stevenson, A.Weir, Lindsay, Hunter, Kerr*





1960-61 Season

*Back: McSeveney, Strachan, H.Weir, Aitken, Martis, Roberts
Front: Young, Quinn, McCann, Hunter, A.Weir*

1961-62 Season

*McCann, Weir, Quinn, Hunter, Thompson, Aitken, McPhee, McCallum, Thomson, Roberts,
McCallum, McSeveney, Murray, Wylie, Delaney and Martis, are only sixteen of the above squad.*





How many can you name?

J Baines cards were issued from 1887 until just after WW1 and sold in packets of 6 for 1 halfpenny



J. Baines c.1897



J. Baines c.1900



J. Baines c.1905



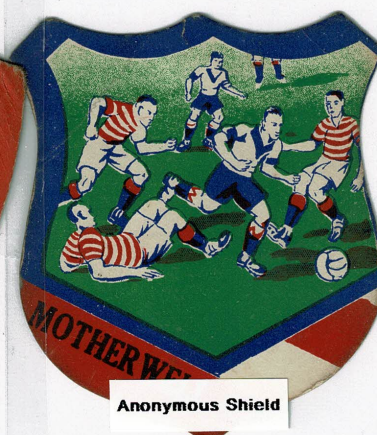
J. Baines c.1922



J. Baines



City Bakeries c.1940



Anonymous Shield

CITY BAKERIES & J BAINES CARDS ISSUED 1897-1940



Looking up Brandon Street from Motherwell Cross



Brandon Street towards the Cross from near the Odeon Cinema



Brandon Street with the Royal Hotel on the left



Manse Road with the Fir Park Ice Café c.1932

