



# FREE-SCORING BERTIE FREEMAN

By Kieran Smith

Bertram Clewley Freeman was born in Birmingham in October 1885. His father, Thomas, was a gold jeweller and his mother, Sarah, worked as a fancy draper.

Their trades allowed them to live in the popular and relatively wealthy area of Handsworth and although some of his siblings were already showing signs of following their parents skilled trades, Bert would make his name via the skill in his feet.

Early on in his career, Bert was playing for Gower Street Old Boys in the Aston & District League and in April 1904 he signed for Aston Villa. However, he failed to make the first team and in November 1905 he joined Woolwich Arsenal. He fared much better in London, scoring 24 goals in 49 games, and attracted the attention of Everton in April 1908.

He made his Blues debut in a 0-0 draw against Liverpool at Anfield on Good Friday and scored his first goal against Notts County on Easter Monday in what was his third match in four days.

Bert was sensational in his first full season, scoring 38 goals in 37 league games as Everton finished First Division runners-up to Newcastle United. That tally was a Football League record that was broken in 1925/26 by Blackburn Rovers' Ted Harper and it was a Club record that stood until the 1927/28 campaign when Dixie Dean obliterated it by scoring 60!

Bert scored 22 in 1909/10 but then lost his place the season after when the goals dried up and he was allowed to join Burnley.

His first two full seasons with the Clarets saw him amass 63 league goals but it was the 1914 FA Cup final that



Freeman turns away after scoring in the 1914 FA Cup final

etched him into Turf Moor folklore. After defeating Sheffield United in a semi-final replay at Goodison Park, Burnley faced Liverpool at the Crystal Palace in the final and Bert scored the only goal of the game.

Indeed, Bert Freeman remains the only player to ever score an FA Cup final winner for Burnley Football Club.

After 189 games and 115 goals for the Clarets, he moved to Wigan Borough and ended his career with spells at Kettering Town and Kidderminster Harriers.

Despite reports in 1925 that Bert was coming to enter the world of football management, he never did. He returned to the industrial trades of his native city of Birmingham and worked in electro-plate manufacturing.

Bert passed away on 11 August 1955, leaving behind one of English football's great legacies, having totalled 219 goals at club level and three in five appearances for England...two whilst with Everton and the other three during his Burnley days. ●



Bertram Clewley Freeman