



MIKE DONOVAN

A Book Fit For A King
Dundee Evening Telegraph

The King of
**DENS
PARK**

The Authorised Biography of

ALAN GILZEAN

Foreword by Ian Gilzean

The King of
**DENS
PARK**

The Authorised Biography of
ALAN GILZEAN

Foreword by Ian Gilzean

MIKE DONOVAN



Contents

Foreword	11
Prologue	15
1. Fly High, Grandad	19
2. Spiritual Home	32
3. Coupar Angus Remembers.	50
4. 'The Man Who Turned Down Alan Gilzean and The Beatles'	65
5. Goalscoring Machine	78
6. Gordon Smith's Red Porsche.	90
7. Ahead of Eusébio	108
8. A Man for All Seasons	125
9. Times They Are A-Changin'.	136
10. A New Kingdom.	154
11. G-Men	169
12. Peenie's Picture House Dream Comes True	183
13. I Predict a Riot.	200
14. 'We Got On Well, Martin and Me'	214
15. Euro Glory	236
16. Behind the Scenes	249
17. Tweet	263
18. 'The Saddest Day of My Life'	280
19. 'That's a Scottish Legend, Son'.	290
20. Managing.	303
21. Dad	316
22. 'I've Never Been a Recluse'	327
23. The Last Suppers	342
24. 'I Need Your Grace to Remind Me to Find My Own'	350

25. 'Golden Sunset'	366
26. 'We Didn't Realise It'd Be So Quick'	377
27. 'Gillie Would Be Outstanding Today'.	390
28. The King's Club Historians	406
29. The King's Scribes.	413
30. The King's People	422
QI (Quite Interesting)	437
Statistics.	442
Acknowledgements.	470
Quotation Credits	473
Picture Credits	483
Bibliography.	485
Index.	488

Fly High, Grandad

THE WET weather was *dreich* – to use a generic Scottish term to describe dreary and bleak – in Dundee that morning. The two football kingdoms of Alan Gilzean had joined family and friends to pay last respects to their ‘sovereign’, who had left them, and us, aged 79 as a result of a brain tumour 12 days earlier.

The death announcement had been put into the 12 July 2018 edition of the *Dundee Courier* by the family and read, ‘GILZEAN Peacefully, at Greenhill Care Home, London, on Sunday, July 8, 2018, Alan, a dearly loved dad, father-in-law, grandad and brother. A celebration of his life will be held in Dundee Crematorium on Friday, July 20, at 12.30 p.m. All relatives and friends are respectfully invited. Family flowers only, please. Donations, if desired, for Dundee Youth Development Program and Tottenham Tribute Trust will be received at the Crematorium. Black ties not required.’

The coffin of Gilzean – visible through the windows of a black hearse – was transported up the long, straight, residential Clepington Road, en route to the city’s crematorium. Behind, the cortège included a black limousine

carrying the family of the King of White Hart Lane and Dens Park and swish grey people carriers conveying representatives of the clubs – Tottenham Hotspur and Dundee – which crowned him.

Groups young and old, male and female, had gathered on dampened pavements outside pubs, shops and homes along the way. Some in replica clothing, some in day-to-day wear. Some quietly clapping, some silent.

Suddenly, one figure caught the eye. It was Doug Cowie, the legendary Dundee and Scotland World Cup defender from the 1950s. He stood outside his home on the road with son Douglas and was waving his walking stick. Cowie said, 'The day of Gillie's funeral I was unable to attend but was told the time the cortège was passing my front door en route to the crematorium and I paid my respects along with Douglas outside my house to a great player and true gentleman.'

He won back-to-back League Cups with Dundee in the 1950s and was in the Dark Blues side which missed the title by a point in 1949. Most pertinently, he was rated by Gilzean as the best centre-half he had ever seen. In his 90s and hard of hearing, Cowie, who also played wing-half, was clearly determined to say his farewells.

Cowie, who made a club record 446 competitive Dee appearances, had been there at the beginning. He was a team-mate when Gilzean made his senior Dark Blues debut in a 4-1 League Cup home defeat against Motherwell on 22 August 1959 and, with the help of his son, it moved those who witnessed his active role at the end. Ian Gilzean, the youngest son of the deceased, said, 'Dad had told me where Doug lived and we realised who it was when we saw him waving his stick as we went by. So poignant. To see the all the people come out for Dad was quite touching.'

Cowie was also noticed by those in the people carrier containing Cameron Kerr, the Dundee vice-captain, director

Bob Hynd, one of Gilzean's closest friends, manager Neil McCann, assistant boss Graham Gartland, stadium manager Jim Thomson and former skipper Brian Scrimgeour. As he was by the occupants in another containing other members of the Dundee staff, including director David Grey, secretary Eric Dysdale and chaplain Mike Holloway.

Cowie's gesture was apposite because the previous year multi-tasker Dave Forbes, another friend, unofficial PR, a former Dee director, club reunion organiser par excellence and Clepy Road newsagent, had arranged for Gilzean, whom he'd known since the early 1960s, to visit the former defender at his home. Forbes said, 'It was one of those great moments. Doug is very deaf in one ear so it was better to go to his house and sit with him. I asked Gillie, "Will you come with me to see Doug?" He said, "I'd be delighted to."

'So we went along. I said to Gillie, "We'll probably be about half an hour." We were there for three or four hours. The pair had a great discussion. Doug surprised Gillie greatly with his knowledge of tactics and players. One thing he told Gillie was his lack of understanding as to why players head the ball away. That it would be better to head it down to feet. That was something he did. Could trap a ball with his head, cushion it.

'It was tremendous just listening to them. Backwards and forwards. Wished I'd taped it. Doug's son was there. He asked to be there when he found out Gillie was coming. He'd never met him and was over the moon to do so. Went for a meal after with Alan. We had a good chat about Doug. He was really taken by him. I'd taken a picture of them together and Gillie said to me, "Dave, I've got to have a copy of that picture." I sent it to him. It was a great day for both of them.

'When I spoke to Doug afterwards he expressed his great pleasure at having had the chance to exchange views on football north and south of the border. They both commented

on the vast knowledge the other had of the game. Was he a hero to Gillie? Yes. Most people who knew Doug through his days at Dens said there wasn't a better player. Probably one of the finest players Dundee ever had. Dave Sneddon, who also played with Doug, has raved about him. Doug was over the moon Ian had seen him waving his stick at the funeral.'

Hynd added, 'Alan could never work out how Doug trapped the ball with his head! I told Doug that Gillie thought he was the best centre-half that he had ever played with and against. What an accolade. Alan played against the best in Europe.'

Cowie enjoyed the meeting and waxed lyrical on Gilzean the player, mutual respect across the generations. He said, 'When Gillie came to the club he was already playing as an inside-left but he was obviously not the Billy Steel-type of player, which was a dribbler. However, right away you could see he could put the ball in the net. He had something when playing up front that others didn't. A strong physique and a great spring in the air.'

'Don't forget Dundee had a good side and players who could play to Gillie's strengths, particularly with Gordon Smith and Hugh Robertson able to swing good crosses in with regularity. Gillie grew in confidence. He knew he was better in the air than opponents and that gave him the belief that every time he went into the penalty box or up for a corner kick he could win the ball. So Dundee played well that way with Gillie up front.'

The evening before, Gilzean's coffin had been laid out in the Alan Gilzean Lounge at Dens Park, minded by a handful of club volunteers, the idea to ease congestion at the Dundee Crematorium the following day. Hundreds entered the room with Gilzean memorabilia on its walls – including a prized Stoke shirt when he performed in a star-studded testimonial for Sir Stanley Matthews – and were able to contain their

emotions. But it was clearly all too much for one fan with a London accent and sporting a Spurs shirt and scarf. She broke down in tears when entering the room. It was as if she was shedding them for millions of supporters of the club at which Gilzean became an icon for over ten years in the middle of the home where he first made his name.

Funeral day saw clans in Gilzean's life meet up at Dens in the late morning before making up the cortège; Ian, who followed in his dad's footsteps as a professional footballer with Spurs and Dundee, and elder brother Kevin and their partners Christine and Justine and grandchildren, plus other family members and former colleagues.

The hearse stopped at the main entrance to the Dark Blues's ground as the club chaplain Mike Holloway, having only got back from holiday in Canada in the early hours, said a few words of remembrance to the hundreds gathered in the rain. Hynd, in charge of funeral arrangements, said, "There were more than we thought. I should have got our chaplain a microphone.'

Spontaneous applause broke out from those present – many with umbrellas up as the hearse eased off behind the 'pager' in top hat and tails ahead of the cortège – in a now common display of respect for a deceased, high-profile footballer, ever since the traditional minute's silence was largely replaced by applause at football grounds across the country following the passing of George Best in 2005.

A middle-aged female threw a bouquet of flowers reminiscent of the gesture enacted during the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, 21 years earlier. Well, Gilzean's adopted moniker did more than indicate he was royalty. A group offered more applause as the procession entered through the crematorium gates, having turned off Clepy Road.

The Reverend David Robertson, the former club chaplain and Minister of the St Peter's Free Church in Dundee, who

knew Gilzean, conducted the service in a packed building. Bobby Wishart, Gilzean's best friend in football, Bobby Seith and Pat Liney, three of the four survivors of Dundee's only Scottish league championship-winning team, attended the service.

Liney, who kept goal that historic season, said, 'There were a lot of people who turned out for Alan. He was such a popular guy, just for being himself. He was not a show-off. Everybody misses Gillie. I never met one person in all my time with football that didn't like him, didn't get on with him. You can't say that about a lot of people. Such a nice guy.'

Wishart remarked that the funeral helped reveal how his pal 'misread the situation' on how much affection and respect there was for him in the football community, having largely withdrawn from it after his retirement from the game, only returning seriously in his later years. He said, 'Alan told me, "Who wants to see an old guy?" He was very popular. There was a tremendous representation from Tottenham at the funeral. So many of his old team-mates made the effort to come up.'

Wishart had never lost touch with his pal. He said, 'It's the old story. It's what you put into a relationship, but once you lose the relationship there's certainly a hole. He was a special player, a special guy. So many happy memories of the guy. That's what makes it all bearable. I miss him. I miss his phone calls. Anything that was coming up in Scotland, I would phone him. I always had his mobile number. They'll be a lot of friends of Alan Gilzean but next door to his sons I reckon I'd be number one. Nice bit of comfort to take with me.'

Gilzean's former Spurs team-mates flying the flag for his second club across his ten years at White Hart Lane were Pat Jennings, Phil Beal, Mike England, Alan Mullery,

Steve Perryman, John Pratt, Cliff Jones and Martin Chivers. They all helped dreams to come true for the youngster, who wished for Wembley glory as he watched Pathe newsreels at the Queen Street picture house in his native Coupar Angus, a small rural town 14 miles outside Dundee.

The Tottenham contingent – in club ties and smart suits, sponsored by Spurs and organised by the club's senior event venue manager Richard Knott – impressed. Gilzean's former Dundee team-mate Craig Brown, the ex-Scotland manager, said, 'The significant thing to me was every one of them was in club uniform, wearing the club tie. They were immaculate. The respect they gave to Alan and his sons Ian and Kevin was quite noticeable.'

Mullery, Gilzean's captain when Spurs lifted the 1972 UEFA Cup, told Brown, 'They call Alan the King of White Hart Lane – and he WAS the King of White Hart Lane.' Brown said, 'Gillie might have been Scottish and Mullery an England international but he was so respectful the way he said it. And when you consider the quality of players Spurs have had, that is some compliment.'

Perryman, who holds the Tottenham appearance record, said, 'You don't wish to be at such an event but you should be there. We met his sons and other members of the family. The love was flowing out of them for this great man. There's a playing life and there's a life. And it was obvious these people were in awe of this great man and were there to pay their respects as much as we were. We all showed our respect. Credit to Tottenham for paying for the former players to be there. And the measure of the man was the quality of the people who attended his funeral.'

'I'd been to Scotland and people spoke to me about him, but they also asked about Dave Mackay, Bill Brown and Alfie Conn [other Scots who played for Spurs]. This day it was purely about Gillie. It was his day. I hadn't witnessed the

sort of adulation for him we witnessed as he was applauded through the streets on the way to the crematorium. It was lovely. It was Gillie's day and rightly so. Very honoured to have been there.'

Just three years earlier, Gilzean was part of a similar group which attended the funeral of former Spurs, Hearts and Scotland legend Dave Mackay in Edinburgh – along with Sir Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United icon who had been in the St Johnstone side relegated as Gilzean hit two goals to clinch the 1962 Scottish league title for Dundee at Muirton Park.

Ian Gilzean said, 'One of the former players told me that Fergie went up to Scott Gardiner [the Hearts chief executive who once worked at Tottenham and Dundee] and asked, "Is that Alan Gilzean over there? Would you mind taking me over and introducing me?"'

He added, with a smile, 'Was Fergie a fan? Was he giving us an idea of the esteem Dad was held in? It might have been, "You whacked me years ago and I've not seen you since!"'

The Scottish FA, in the shape of president Campbell Ogilvie, showed its respects by attending the service for the 22-times-capped international who wrote his name into the country's folklore by scoring the winning goal against England in front of over 133,000 at Hampden Park in 1964. Bob Hynd said, 'Campbell was the secretary of Rangers for a number of years. He told me years ago that the first match that he attended was with his father in 1961 when Dundee won 5-1 at Ibrox – and Gillie scored four!'

As part of the service, Reverend Robertson gave the eulogy on behalf of the family. Ian Gilzean said, 'We [the family] were never going to be able to do that. It is tough enough at the best of times. I take my hat off to people who do it. We wrote something down about Dad's life and the minister read it out. Paddy [Barclay, a former journalist,

author and Dundee native and fan] covered all Dad's football side, which was great.'

Barclay said, 'I was asked to put Alan's playing career in a bit of context for younger people. On the way into the crematorium I noticed that Cammy [Kerr], a local boy, was there representing the players. The manager at the time was Neil McCann and his assistant Graham Gartland, but I kind of directed what I was saying to Cammy. I asked, "How good a player was Gillie?" I said, "If we were discussing now or in the last ten years who was the greatest header, attacking header of a football, it would be a toss-up between Cristiano Ronaldo and Alan Gilzean. That was how good he was as a user of the ball in the air. It was remarkable he only won 22 caps but he was unlucky as he was with a provincial not Old Firm club and his career coincided with Denis Law, one of the three greatest players Scotland has ever produced. If not the greatest."

'I also said a team looks for big performances from its big players in the big matches. That's what Gillie did in arguably the three biggest matches in Dundee's history. He scored four in a 5-1 win against Rangers at Ibrox to convince the whole of Scotland that his team could win the title, the club's only one. Two to kill the game when we beat St Johnstone to be absolutely sure of it. He got a hat-trick in an 8-1 win against Cologne when Dundee began a European Cup run to the semi-finals.

'As a player, certainly, he would be a candidate for the greatest player ever to play for our club but you know he also achieved a similar status in probably more lauded company at White Hart Lane with the best partner he ever had, Jimmy Greaves. Although a goalscorer extraordinaire, particularly at Dundee, he was also a team player as was proved by his complete re-invention at Spurs.

'He dropped off and became a number ten with equal success while still chipping in with 15-20 goals a season.

Whatever you wanted, he could do. And he did it with such modesty and style. A wonderful man.'

Cameron Kerr was 'honoured' to represent the current Dundee playing squad. He said, 'It was a surreal experience for me. I remember the day very well. I thought it was important a player from today was there for Alan. Show appreciation. Streets were filled up with Dundee fans waving scarves, reflecting the good times he helped bring. The happiness.'

Kerr was moved by mention of him by Barclay during the eulogy. He said, 'I felt I didn't deserve to be in the same sentence as Alan with the man he was and what I've done in my career. I am a Dundee boy but he was and is a Dundee legend. It was special. I met Alan Gilzean's family, had a chat with Ian and one of Alan's grandsons. Obviously a very emotional day for them. I said to them "I'm honoured to be here."'

Gilzean had split from his wife Irene in the 1970s, but she attended the funeral. Ian Gilzean said, 'What happened happened, but Dad was a big part of Mum's life for a lot of years. They had two sons together, Kev and myself. Nice she turned up? Yeh. Mum wanted to come. Superb she did.'

Ron Ross, a school football team-mate of Gilzean, sat next to her for the service at the crematorium. Ross said, 'I didn't recognise Irene. I saw this blonde woman and there was a seat vacant next to me. She looked on and I said, "Yes, it is free." And she sat down in it. There was a wee while to go before the service started and I said, "I'm here because I was at school with Alan." She said, "I'm here because I was married to him." I said, "I didn't know it was you, Irene. I'm Ron Ross." She said, "I remember you." So we spoke.

'Her demeanour was okay. I wasn't surprised to see her there. I don't know what went wrong with the marriage. They were a devoted young couple. Their families lived in houses about 150 yards apart. In those days you married girls locally.

I knew her as a schoolgirl and that was it. I remember her as a young police constable at the top of a busy street. One of the first policewomen in Dundee I would say, especially doing such a highly visible job of directing traffic.'

Invited guests returned to Dens. Wishart had a cup of tea as he spoke to Irene and said, 'It was good to meet her. The club did very well and gave Alan a great send off.' Ian Ure, the fourth survivor of the 1961–62 Dark Blues team, joined the invitees after being forced to miss the service due to public transport problems on his 200-mile round trip from the west coast of Scotland. He said, 'I had a friend waiting to take me to the service off my train. But my train got in so late it was too tight to go to the service and we went straight to Dens. Met Irene. She was very nice. And Ian, whom I've seen at umpteen club dos. Had a good blether with the Spurs players. Good to see them. Everybody was there.'

All the while, flags flew at half-mast in Coupar Angus for the first time since the funeral of the People's Princess. And a rain-spattered Dundee FC flag fluttered at half-mast on the pole erected in town native Bob Hynd's garden.

Kerr appealed in the local *Evening Telegraph* for his club to give Gilzean the 'send-off the Dens legend deserves' in Dundee's first match following the funeral, a home League Cup tie against Dunfermline two days after it. The match programme – which had been handed out to the Spurs eight at the funeral – was given over to articles about the player rated the greatest to don a dark blue Dee shirt in many learned quarters. Even though the team were unable to secure a victory – suffering a 1-0 loss – the occasion enabled young and old to join in embracing the memory of a player who once sprinkled stardust over the same patch of green that Neil McCann's were toiling on. In a more glorious era.

Tributes poured in from old team-mates from north and south of the border before and after that grey day. Dundee

stated, 'Everyone at Dundee Football Club are devastated to learn that club legend Alan Gilzean passed away this morning after recently being diagnosed with a brain tumour. The thoughts of everyone at the club are with Alan's family and friends at this difficult time.'

Spurs stated, 'Everyone at the club is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of our legendary former striker Alan Gilzean. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this extremely difficult time.' Perhaps the most poignant came from Jimmy Greaves, the other half of the G-Men – arguably the most lethal, prolific goalscoring partnership ever seen when they were together at Spurs – and stricken by ill health. It came on the day of Gilzean's passing. Greaves official Twitter feed posted, 'Heartbreaking news today. The great Alan Gilzean passed away this morning. Sympathy to his family. He was a lovely man and obviously one of the all-time Spurs greats ... RIP from all of us associated with Jimmy. He loved you and always said you were the best striking partner ever.'

Mullery informed the Spurs official website that day, 'It was only two months ago we were laughing and joking before the games and reminiscing on old times. We're going to miss him, no doubt about that. We missed him for about 35 years but when he came back it was like old times, the stories, the laughter. He wasn't just a good player, he was a genius, untouchable. We joined in the same year, 1964. Gillie joined just after me. He's one of the best headers of the ball I've ever seen, terrific control. I remember playing against him for England against Scotland and he called me all the names under the sun! I thought, "That's not the Gillie I know", but it was England against Scotland!'

The Scottish FA, who had welcomed him into their hall of fame close to ten years earlier, joined in. It said, 'We are fortunate that the history of our game is littered with

entertainers who captivated supporters. Alan Gilzean was certainly among them. Our thoughts are with his friends and family.'

And the sentiments were revealed to have spread worldwide when FIFA president Gianni Infantino wrote a letter to SFA president Alan McRae from Zurich dated 7 August 2018, 'Please accept my deepest condolences on hearing that former international player Alan Gilzean has passed away. On behalf of FIFA and the worldwide family of football, I wish to extend our deepest condolences to the Scottish FA and, mostly importantly, to his family, friends and loved ones. We would hope that, in some way, our words of support my help bring a little more peace and solace at this time of sadness.'

Gilzean himself – 'retaining Perthshire lilt' – told *The Scotsman's* Alan Pattullo, in what he claimed was his first major newspaper interview in 40 years on 14 January 2012, 'I was just a guy whose dreams came true. I have no regrets. I have got friends. I go out. I enjoy myself. You have to at my age. You don't know how many bottles of red wine you have left. You are waiting for the call.'

It seemed he would be accepting of its arrival. It is those who loved and admired him who struggle to recognise it since it came.

'Fly high, grandad', posted Ian's daughter Amy on Facebook. Alan John Gilzean always will be in the mind's eye of those who saw him soar on the field and in the imaginations of those who wish they had.