



Arthur's life in working-class Victorian Britain

Life in early 1900s Britain was tough if you weren't one of the wealthy few. The Industrial Revolution, (the move to new and faster production processes), intensified in Britain during the late 1800s and many people were poor and worked long hours in factories and mines. Despite coming from a rich family in the Gold Coast, Arthur had no British friends in high places to give him a helping hand.

Arthur the Publican and Tobacconist

Often football clubs would arrange other jobs for a player due to poor wages and it's likely that these jobs were the more desirable 'sweetener' jobs that encouraged loyalty from players. Across his footballing career Arthur was offered a number of jobs to supplement his earnings and there are records that Arthur, (who was known to like a drink), managed several pubs in Sheffield and Rotherham.

His first was the Albert Tavern on Albert Street, Masbrough, Rotherham, in 1891. He also had a spell running the Plough Inn on Greasbrough Road, Thornhill, Rotherham. On joining Sheffield United in 1894, he took over the Sportsman Cottage on Button Lane in Sheffield city centre. The 1901 census, taken shortly before Arthur joined Stockport County, records him as being a tobacconist, running a shop in Old Street, Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire.

Family life

In 1890 at the age of 24, Arthur married Emma Lister, the daughter of a plumber, in Masbrough, Rotherham. The 1911 census entry states that Arthur had one child who died. There is however, a convincing argument that Arthur also fathered one or possibly two children with his wife's sister Martha.

Shelia Leeson, Martha's granddaughter and Arthur's great-niece, believes Arthur had an affair with her grandmother which produced her mother Nora and her sister, Minnie. Sheila described Minnie as having a dark complexion and that on her birth certificate her middle name was Wharton. Nora refused to talk to her own children about who her father may have been, and there was no record of him on her birth certificate. In those days it was particularly shameful for affairs to happen and commonplace to 'keep face' and hide infidelities.