

= Tiverton Preedy =

Tiverton Preedy (22 January 1863 ? 26 April 1928) was an English clergyman who worked in Yorkshire and London from 1887 until his death , where he was noted for his work with the poor . He was particularly interested in the use of sport within ministry , and founded a church football team in the town of Barnsley which became the modern Barnsley F.C.

In 1883 he moved to London to become curate of a church in Islington , and later opened a nearby mission . He opened a boxing club at the mission and organised dances for local flower sellers . In recognition of his work , he was appointed a prebendary of St. Pauls Cathedral in 1926 . He died two years later and is buried in Islington Cemetery . In the 1990s , supporters of Barnsley F.C. located and restored his grave .

= = Early life = =

Preedy was born in Hunstanton in the county of Norfolk in 1863 , the second son of a local estate agent . He attended Bloxham School near Sleaford , Lincolnshire before entering Lincoln Theological College in 1885 , where he trained to become a minister in the Church of England . In 1887 he was ordained as a deacon , and in the same year was appointed to the position of Assistant Stipendiary Curate at St Peter 's church in the centre of Barnsley . The church had originally been set up as a mission to tend to the people of the poverty @-@ stricken area , but was licensed as a parish in its own right in 1887 . Preedy was engaged to assist the vicar , John Lloyd Brereton .

During his time at Theological College , Preedy had become keen on the concept of using sport to engender moral values , an idea much in vogue at the time and known as muscular Christianity . To this end , he decided to join a local sporting club , through which he hoped to come into closer contact with the local people . He initially joined a rugby football club , but resigned in protest at the team 's decision to play a match on Good Friday .

= = Formation of Barnsley Football Club = =

Shortly after his split from the rugby club , Preedy encountered by chance a group of young men discussing the idea of forming an association football club . Preedy was taken with the idea , not least because football was seen in the area as the " poor man 's sport " and his involvement would therefore bring him into greater contact with the poor people he wished to help through his ministry . To this end he formed a football club in September 1887 . Preedy acted as principal fundraiser and organiser of the club , dubbed Barnsley St Peter 's F.C. , and even played in its first match . A keen supporter of the Temperance movement , Preedy demanded high standards of behaviour from his players , and once refused to allow St Peter 's to play a match against local rivals Ardsley Old due to the conduct of the latter 's supporters .

Preedy was also responsible for securing the use of the land on which the Oakwell stadium still stands . After being refused permission to hire a field belonging to the owners of the Barnsley Brewery , Preedy 's appeal to the wife of one of the owners ultimately led to the club being granted permission to play at Oakwell . In 1891 Preedy was instrumental in the formation of the Barnsley Charity Football Association and the creation of the Barnsley Charity Cup . St. Peter 's reached the inaugural final but were surprisingly defeated by underdogs Ecclesfield .

= = Departure from Barnsley = =

In 1893 Preedy moved to London to become curate of St. Clement 's Church in Islington . Such was the regard in which the clergyman was held in the town that a civic reception was held to mark his departure , and tributes were printed in the Barnsley Chronicle . The St. Peter 's players presented him with a walking stick , a pipe and a tobacco pouch . Four years after his departure , the club severed its links to the church and became known simply as Barnsley F.C.

Preedy spent four years at St. Clement 's before being appointed to run a nearby mission in what was then an extremely deprived area of the city . At the time of his appointment the mission operated out of converted cowsheds and the house with which Preedy was provided had no furniture . Preedy once again endeavoured to use sport as part of his ministry and opened a boxing club at the mission . Future world champion Terry Allen boxed at the club as a youngster , and among the wrestlers who trained there was future British champion and Olympic Games competitor George MacKenzie . Preedy also organised dances for the girls who sold flowers on local streets .

Preedy remained in contact with the football club he had founded in Barnsley and was a guest of honour at the 1912 FA Cup Final , in which Barnsley defeated West Bromwich Albion to lift the trophy . The victorious team presented him with the match ball , which he displayed in his study until his death .

= = Later years = =

In 1926 Preedy was appointed a prebendary at St. Pauls Cathedral , in recognition of his work in Islington . At around the same time he began to suffer from heart problems , and died in his sleep in April 1928 . His funeral was attended by several thousand mourners , and he was buried at Islington Cemetery in Finchley . His obituary in the Islington Gazette described him as " a generous friend to the poor " and the Bishop of Stepney in his eulogy called him " a wonderful parish priest and a splendid friend " , and made particular reference to his use of sport in his ministry .

In 1997 representatives of the club he founded located his grave in London and laid wreaths in the club 's colours . Full restoration of the grave was later carried out by the Barnsley F.C. Supporters ' Trust .