



PRESS RELEASE:
**Breaking Ground
Art, Archaeology
and Mythology**

Edited by
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Breaking Ground
Art, Archaeology & Mythology

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interviews and artist works

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Combining thoughtful essays, personal history, photography, interviews and fascinating archive material, *Breaking Ground* is the culmination of a two year artist-led project initiated by a trip to visit the long abandoned former football ground of Bradford Park Avenue, undertaken by Neville Gabie and Jason Wood in 2013.

The ground that once boasted a capacity of 35,000 people, with a double-sided Archibald Leitch stand, has long since been demolished, leaving a terrace to be overrun by nature. But in amongst the 30 year-old trees, the concrete terraces are still intact under a shroud of leaves. Bradford Park Avenue was once a top-flight club and the first major club to go bankrupt, leaving fans without a home. Finding such an extraordinary location with a wealth of history inspired Gabie to develop a project with archaeologists, artists, fans and historians, bringing back to life this lost place – Art, Archaeology and Mythology.

It began with a world first – an archaeological excavation of a goalpost hole in 2013 – and led to a complete geophysical survey of the former pitch, with sound artists commissioned to respond to the data. A botanical artist recorded and documented all the trees and plants that have since ‘self-seeded’, while historic passages of play were recreated from archive photographs and casts were made of the goalpost holes. In the process we re-discovered a floodlight bulb from the ground and a Victoria Cross in the National Football Museum’s Archive and many extraordinary stories from fans, including the now intriguing story of goalkeeper Tommy Farr and the nappy pin.

The publication *Breaking Ground* was only made possible by the support of former and current fans of the reformed Bradford Park Avenue, who through subscription and pre-publication orders, funded the printing of the book. It has since gone on to attract the interest of a wider football community, some of whom might never otherwise have heard of Bradford Park Avenue or their rich history as a football club. In 2017 the project was exhibited in Manchester at the National Football Museum.

REVIEW: It reminds me of Damien Hirst’s archaeological book of his Diamond Skull, but it’s more Jeremy Deller than Hirst; the camaraderie and enthusiasm of all involved chimes with conventional excavation. This was a project that didn’t take itself too seriously, yet resonates deeply for many: community archaeology at its most creative. Mike Pitts @archaeologyuk