

A proud city that got the ball rolling

A new exhibition is bringing to life Sheffield's historical connections with the development of football as we know it today. Jack Houldsworth was on the ball.

FOOTBALL as we know it today is almost totally unrecognisable from its earliest manifestation. Billions of pounds are ploughed into the sport every year and players are remunerated on an unfathomable scale, armed with multi-million-pound sponsorship deals.

But the sport that has spread across the world, providing hope and disappointment in equal measure, started from humble beginnings. Sheffield played a leading role in its establishment, with the city recognised by many as being the birthplace of the modern game.

John Clarke is trustee of the charity Sheffield Home of Football, which was set up with the aim of celebrating the city's proud football heritage and establishing its first museum dedicated to the sport.

"Sheffield's role in the evolution of football is absolutely fascinating," he says. "Little things like the world's first floodlit football match took place at Bramall Lane (in 1878). The rules were developed in Sheffield, the world's oldest football club, and the world's oldest existing football ground. They're all within our city."

Football is widely thought of as, at least in the beginning, being a working-class pastime. Not so, says John. "It came out from the rich people, members of the athletics and cricket clubs," he details. "The men's game was formed by the elite."

This month, John and his charity unveiled a new attraction – Sheffield the Open Air Museum of Football. The exhibition includes an array of artefacts and memorabilia documenting the timeline of Sheffield's association with football.

John says: "Among the items are some unique 19th century original hand-coloured press drawings of some of the very early games, including the famous Blackburn Olympic v Eton FA Cup victory in which Sheffield's Jack Hunter brought the FA Cup home, thus breaking the elite's grip on the game."

"We also have a lithograph of the programme for the Sheffield United v Tottenham Hotspur FA Cup Final, which was the

first time rail excursions were used to any great extent with a crowd of over 100,000."

People can also see programmes from the first matches in the US, the country where the FIFA World Cup is due to take place next year. "Nobody realised that Sheffield took football to America in the form of the Pilgrims," John notes. "The Pilgrims were a team formed by a Sheffield United player called Frederick Houghton Milnes. We've got the original match programme for their first game."

Even Manchester United, one of the most famous clubs in world football, is heavily grounded in Sheffield, according to John. The club's origins were as Newton Heath but a name change came with a 'fresh start' in the early 1900s, following financial troubles. "The football followed the railway line," John says. "Newton Heath, which became Manchester United, was the end of the Sheffield line to Manchester. Sheffield United were very famous at the time... and so the new team was named Manchester United."

Such tales of football run through the city like thread in a tapestry, coinciding with Sheffield's social, economic and industrial development. Its links with the sport have brought up some remarkable stories.

"I found a game in 1863 organised in Sheffield," John explains. "To give money to Lancashire for the cotton workers who were starving because they weren't getting the cotton from America. Barnsley won the FA Cup final at Bramall Lane in 1912, just after the *Titanic* had gone down. The crowd receipts went to the *Titanic* fund. So, we were using football at a very early stage to fund charities."

When it comes to football, John says that Sheffield as a city is an open air museum. Many of the artefacts on display in the new exhibition in Sheffield Town Hall relate to buildings and places within the city. One of the sites people can visit is the place, marked with a blue plaque, where the rules of the game were drawn up to, in John's words, "enable people to play more peacefully together".

"A new map will guide visitors to those places of historical importance in the city



BALL PARK: Bramall Lane is the home of Sheffield United, which hosted its first game in 1862; inset, John Clarke, charity trustee.

with each artefact on display connecting to a physical location across the city, many marked with blue plaques," John explains. "People will be able to walk to these sites and see how the rules of the modern game echo through history. Creating an index of artefacts in one place which turns the city into an 'open air museum', has never been done before and we are grateful for the assistance of Sheffield City Council."

The exhibition and its artefacts are not the sole aim for the charity, however. John and his team are also working to get Shef-

field internationally recognised for its historical significance when it comes to football and believe doing so could mean financial gain for the city.

"We want to raise the value of the city," he says. "The next stage is UNESCO (recognition), but we have got to designate Sheffield as a unique area with unique documentation. We have managed to find the first ever recorded picture of a football team, Sheffield FC. That is also in the exhibition."

The seeds of football that were to blos-

om in Sheffield in the 1800s is an important story to recognise and cherish as the very essence of the game we appreciate today, John believes. "If you lose track of where you come from, you don't know where you are going," he says. "The stories are based here, we've still got them, and it's our job to try and tell the tale."

Sheffield the Open Air Museum of Football runs until October 4 at Sheffield Town Hall and can be viewed during the building's opening hours. Visit sheffieldhomeoffootball.org

It's the big kick-off and festival fever kicks in

Jack Houldsworth
FEATURES WRITER

LAST week, it was the A-level students who received their results and this week it's the turn of GCSE pupils. Here's a look at that and what else is taking place in the week ahead.

FOOTBALL

The Premier League is back and tonight, Leeds United face the first test of the new season as they host Everton at Elland Road. Leeds will then be travelling to title hopefuls Arsenal in London to continue their campaign on Saturday.

Leeds's two years out of the top flight came to an end when they secured the

Championship title in the final game of last season. Manager Daniel Farke will be hoping that his team, including his new signings, can start on a positive footing.

ARTS

It's the last week of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Locals and tourists alike have been descending on the cobbled streets of the Scottish capital. Since 1947, the festival has acted as a 'rite of passage' for many aspiring comedians and performers of all genres. This year is no different, with an eclectic blend of promising acts.

MUSIC

Sticking with festivals, the renowned Leeds Festival rolls back into town on August 21. The annual festival boasts a glistening line-up this year, with headliners Hoz-

ier, Chappell Roan, Bring Me The Horizon and Travis Scott.

This will be a European exclusive headline set from Travis Scott, as an array of household names share the Bramham Park stage, including Becky Hill, Rudim3ntal, The Kooks and AJ Tracey.

This year's edition of Leeds brings a transformation to festival camping, with new campsite areas created to reflect the needs, interests, and energy of festivalgoers.

AUCTION

Unseen sketches of Queen Elizabeth II which were drafted ahead of one of her most famous portraits are set to fetch more than £5,000 at auction this week.

The art by Jeff Stultiens is set to be sold at Hansons Auctioneers in Royston, Hertfordshire, on August 24.

Stultiens produced one of Her Majesty's most famous portraits for her Golden Jubilee in 2003. The 7.5ft painting evoked worldwide recognition for its grandeur and realism.

EDUCATION

There will be some nervous parents and young people this week as students across the country eagerly await their GCSE exam results.

From 8am on Thursday, students will be able to find out their grades to complete the end of their secondary school teaching.

In England, children must continue in some form of education or training until the age of 18, whether that's at a sixth form or college, through apprenticeships or traineeships, or combining work with part-time training.



ROYAL REWARD: Unseen sketches of Queen Elizabeth II are up for auction.

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