

Hibs' memory project helps people with dementia

The Hibernian Historical Trust's Football Memories Project has gone from strength to strength in recent times with between 25-30 men and women turning up at each meeting.



Around fifty Football Memories groups have been established across Scotland, from the Shetland Isles in the north to Stranraer in the south, where people with dementia and other memory problems gather to enjoy looking back at old photos and memorabilia.

Unlike some other groups however, the meetings held at Easter Road cater for fans of all teams and not just those of a green and white disposition.

Many of those affected have short term memory problems, but are able to recall events from the past with some clarity, and recognising this, a joint project between Alzheimer Scotland and the Scottish Football Museum at Hampden Park, helps people (but more usually these are men) with dementia by reviving memories of players, matches, goals and incidents from football matches in their younger days.

The project is a partnership between Alzheimer Scotland and the Scottish Football Museum, and is supported by the players of the People's Postcode Lottery and BUPA Care Homes.

The work is also backed by the Scottish Professional Footballers Association, the Scottish League Managers and Coaches Association and the Scottish Highland League.

Club Historian Tom Wright told The Edinburgh Reporter: "It is a worrying statistic, but over 84,000 people in Scotland have

a diagnosis of dementia, which is the equivalent of every spectator on an average Scottish football weekend.

“The project was launched a few years ago and trains volunteers to spend time with people with dementia who have an interest in football, talking about teams and matches from the past and working with images and memorabilia to stimulate memories.

“We have plenty volunteers willing to help and we are looking to expand our involvement in the programme. Hibs provide excellent facilities and we are keen to help as many men and women as possible. Although the meetings are held in Easter Road, fans of all teams are made welcome, not just Hibs’ supporters. In fact, since we started Celtic, Rangers, Hearts and St Johnstone fans have attended.

“The only stipulation is that we cannot guarantee transport so anyone wishing to attend has to make their own way to and from the stadium although we are happy to accommodate friends or family who want to accompany them.

“The meetings are held between 11.00 and 12noon on the first Monday of the month and refreshments are provided free of charge. So far this year, the group have had a day out at the Hampden museum, enjoyed several question and answer sessions with former players including Hibs’ legends Peter Cormack, Eric Stevenson and John Fraser and also had a visit from the Scottish Cup and everyone had their photograph taken with the trophy. Little did we know that the cup would be back a few weeks later and have pride of place in our trophy cabinet.”

[Find out more here.](#)