

A century after his Olympic win sportsman Eric Liddell will be remembered

It was in April 1924 that Eric Liddell ran his record-breaking 400 metres in Paris, and now a century later, when the Olympics return to the French capital, the Eric Liddell 100 is to be launched.

This will be a large group of people and organisations who represent excellence in their fields of sport, education and culture.



Coming together at The Eric Liddell Community are (left to right) John MacMillan, CEO, The Eric Liddell Community, Graham Law, Senior Corporate Affairs and Stakeholder Manager at Scottish Rugby holding Eric Liddell's reissued Scottish International rugby cap, Kieron Achara, former Olympic basketball player and broadcaster holds commemoration of Eric's induction into the Scottish Rugby's Hall of Fame, Gemma Burton, former Olympian and teacher with Eric's three medals, including his gold for the 400m in the Paris Olympics of 1924 and Colin Hutchison, CEO, Scottish Athletes with the award given to commemorate Eric as the first inductee of the Scottish Sports Hall of Fame.

PHOTO: Mike Wilkinson

John MacMillan, CEO of the charity launched in the name of the Olympic athlete in 1980, said: "While best known for his sporting prowess, Eric was also known as a compassionate, multifaceted man, who embraced life and encouraged, empowered and enabled others to get the most out of their lives.

“I believe that as CEO of an organisation that felt so strongly about Eric Liddell that a charity was established in his name, I have a duty to ensure that his life, sporting achievements and community service are remembered and valued. I am however, not embarking on this project alone and am delighted that Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal has agreed to be its Patron.”

“I have had fantastic support from Eric Liddell’s family, The Eric Liddell Community Board, Scottish Rugby, Scottish Athletics and the University of Edinburgh – all organisations have strong links with Eric Liddell. We have also had many other supporters already joining us from the business, education and cultural sectors in Scotland, the rest of the UK and internationally. I feel honoured by the calibre of the people and organisations which have joined or pledged allegiance to the project”

The centenary of Eric Liddell’s gold medal win on 12 July 1924 provides an important marker and an opportunity to recognise and celebrate his achievements, and the intention is to launch and sustain the work of The Eric Liddell 100 up to and beyond this date.

Events will be held to celebrate the sporting legacy and with the help of three task forces, to create a major campaign to ensure that Liddell’s legacy lives on.

As part of this, Olympic silver medallist and teacher Gemma Burton, has been seconded to develop a school curriculum with a focus Eric’s life and achievements.

Eric was renowned for his speed at sprinting and for his unique style of running.



Colin Hutchison, Kieron Achara, Gemma Burton, Graham Law and John MacMillan (holding the portrait of Eric Liddell, on display at the National Portrait Gallery.)

PHOTO Mike Wilkinson...

Colin Hutchison, CEO, Scottish Athletics commented: “2024 provides an ideal opportunity to celebrate the legacy of Eric Liddell’s iconic 400m gold medal win at the 1924 Paris Olympics. His sporting achievements along with inspiring life story, made Eric Liddell a sporting hero to be remembered and cherished.”

From a Scottish family, although born in China where his parents were missionaries, Eric attended Edinburgh University and was chosen to represent Scotland in international rugby.

Graham Law, Senior Corporate Affairs and Stakeholder Manager at Scottish Rugby said: “Eric Liddell was best known for his athletics success, but he was also one of Scotland’s great rugby players, winning seven caps for his country. To mark his contribution both on and off the pitch, Eric was inducted into Scottish Rugby’s Hall of Fame on the 100th anniversary of his

first cap earlier this year. As someone who epitomised the values of our game, Scottish Rugby is delighted to support The Eric Liddell 100.”

Kieron Achara, former Olympic basketball player and broadcaster said: “The story of Eric Liddell’s life and achievements is as relevant and inspiring today as it was one hundred years ago. I am pleased to support the programme to celebrate this Scottish sporting icon.”

The University of Edinburgh is the keeper of Eric’s sporting medals and also has a statue of its famous student on display in the Reception of Old College.



Professor Peter Mathieson, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh with John MacMillan, CEO, The Eric Liddell Community with the statue of Eric Liddell at Edinburgh

University PHOTO Mike Wilkinson...

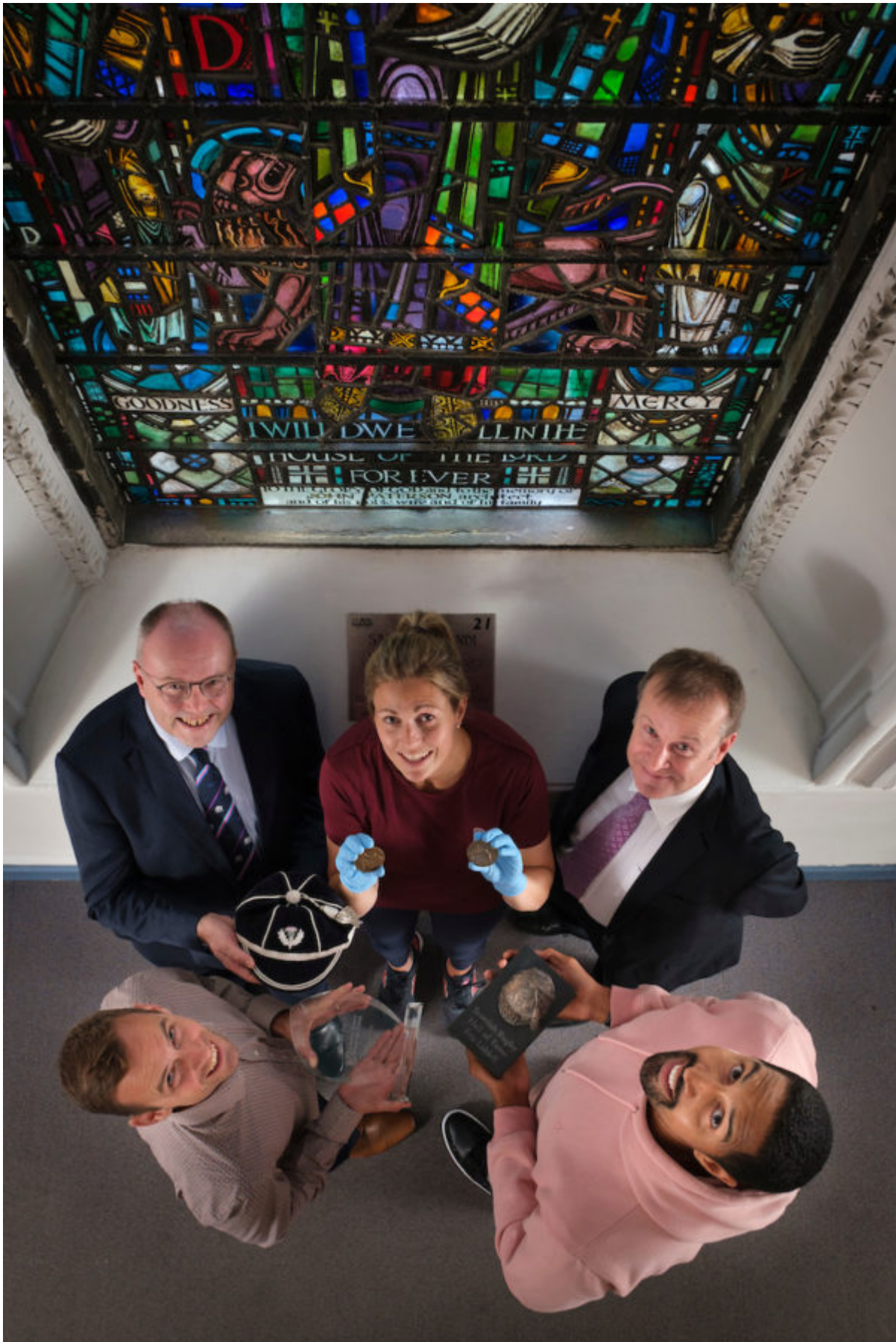
Professor Peter Mathieson, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh said: "Eric Liddell was an early example of a University scholar who was equally dedicated to his degree studies in Pure Science, and the pursuit of sporting excellence in both athletics and rugby.

"His legacy at the University continues today, with a gym dedicated to his memory, sports scholarships in his name and as the first inductee into our much-heralded Sports Hall of Fame. We are delighted to support The Eric Liddell 100 to ensure the remarkable story of his life is available for future generations."

One of the ways Eric's life will be celebrated is to establish a commemorative exhibition showcasing his life, including his inspirational work in China where his memory is preserved, particularly at a rural mission station in Xiaozhang which served the poor. Eric took up post there in 1941 and remained until his untimely death 1945 at the age of forty-three.

Andrew Kerr, OBE, Chief Executive of The City of Edinburgh Council said: "Edinburgh has strong links with Eric Liddell as the location of his family home and is where he studied, worked and competed in sports. The Eric Liddell Community is also based in Edinburgh and we are pleased to be working with the charity and other partners to recognise and celebrate Eric's achievements and values."

Sally Magnusson, broadcaster and writer said: "Through the research I did in the early 1980s for "The Flying Scotsman", my biography of Eric Liddell, I was privileged to meet many of Eric's family and peers. They gave me an unforgettable insight into qualities that had not for a moment faded from their memories. This is a man who deserves to be known again."



Looking up at the Eric Liddell Community are: Colin Hutchison, Kieron Achara, Gemma Burton, Graham Law and John MacMillan (holding a portrait of Eric Liddell) PHOTO Mike Wilkinson...