

Olympic history makers remembered

The centenary of one of Scotland's greatest Olympic triumphs is to be marked with a special sporting event in Edinburgh on Saturday, 20 January.

While many eyes will be on commemorating the centenary of Scottish athlete Eric Liddell's Olympic gold on the track in 1924 not to be overlooked is the achievement of WK Jackson's rink who won the curling gold medal at the inaugural Winter Olympics in Chamonix, France, in January of that year.

CurlEdinburgh, who operate out of the Murrayfield rink, organise the Jackson Trophy annually but the 2024 instalment will be bigger and better according to Ian Keron, club president, who says: "On January 20 Edinburgh Curling Club is running the Jackson Trophy Bonspiel, involving 14 invited teams to play a three game Bonspiel.

"We will also have invited guests, from each of the three families that made up the WK Jackson team, plus the 2002 women's team that won Olympic gold in Salt Lake City."

They are Rhona Martin, Debbie Knox, Fiona MacDonald, and Janice Rankin.

It is understood Bruce Mouat's rink, who recently won the European title in Aberdeen were invited but will be competing in Canada at the same time as the Capital bonspiel.

Mr Keron added: "The Jackson team was made up of William

Kilgour Jackson, his son, Laurence Jackson, Tom Murray and Robin Welsh. The first three named were from Biggar with Welsh from Edinburgh.”

Other events have either taken place or are in the process of commemorating the Jackson rink achievement.

In September a blue plaque was unveiled at the original home of WK Jackson. This was organised by the current owner of the house, Lorraine Noble-Thompson.

And, from November 2023 until March, the Biggar Museum is holding an exhibition to celebrate the gold medal success called “From Biggar to Olympic Gold”.

Advertising the exhibition in a flyer, the museum state: “Curling was initially an outdoor game, played on natural lochs or stretches of standing water. The game grew in the Scottish countryside, the sport of farmers – outdoor work being impossible during the time when, as curlers put it, ‘the ice is bearing’.

“Upper Clydesdale was ideal country for the game where there were a large number of ponds in use for curling in the 19th century.

“In the early 20th century the sport started to move indoors to ice rinks such as that at Haymarket in Edinburgh which opened in 1912.

“The famous story of the 1924 Olympics is the one of Eric Liddell. It is less known that four Scots had already won Olympic gold medals that year – the curling team, in the

first Winter Olympics at Chamonix. Scotland’s Willie Jackson, the finest curler of the period, and two men he played with regularly (his son Laurence and Tom Murray), were selected, plus another well-known curler, Robin Welsh.

Britain beat both France and Sweden, and so became Olympic

champions and the four Scots were awarded gold medals. However, curling was dropped from the Olympics after 1924 and did not return as an official event until 1998.”

This exhibition at Biggar Museum displays some of the Jacksons’ medals and albums in which Tom Murray recorded his travels and victories.



Willie Jackson is believed to be the only curler commemorated with a bronze bust!



The original world championship trophy won on several occasions by Willie Jackson and his Scottish rink



Curling memorabilia marking the Scottish Olympic triumph.