

Scotland's role in helping to create the modern game of football to be celebrated in December

Scotland's role in helping to create the modern game of football will be celebrated in December, marking the bicentenary of the world's first football club, founded in Edinburgh in 1824.

Sports historian Andy Mitchell will give talks in Edinburgh and Glasgow to reveal how members of The Foot-Ball Club played the game and wrote the first known rules of the game.

Andy, who researched and wrote the history of the club along with John Hutchinson, said: "While football has been played for centuries, the Foot-Ball Club was the first known organisation devoted to the sport. Precisely two hundred years ago, on a winter's day in 1824, the founders bought a football – a leather casing with an inflated pig's bladder inside – and set up goalposts in a field just outside the city boundaries.

"They met once or twice a week for almost two decades, and the city's young men flocked to the Foot-Ball Club to play the game they loved. Some of them went on to influence the early development of our most popular sport, long before it split into the different codes like rugby and association football."

The club's founder, John Hope, managed the Foot-Ball Club throughout its existence until it was wound up in 1841. Because he was a pedantic hoarder, the club records survived within his unique and extensive archive, now held at the National Records of Scotland where the first of the talks will take place. The second talk will be at the Scottish Football

Museum in Glasgow.

Andy added: “The Foot-Ball Club was born into an exciting environment. Edinburgh had sport in its DNA and by the time the footballers met up in 1824, the city already had the world’s earliest clubs in golf, bowls and gymnastics. John Hope and his footballers were very much of their time and place.”

Andy Mitchell, a former head of communications at the Scottish Football Association, runs a sports history website and has written several books on football history.

Both talks are free and can be booked online.

Wednesday 4 December 2024 at 1.30pm at Register House, Princes Street,
Edinburgh <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/200-years-of-football-in-edinburgh-hybrid-event-tickets-1050483312867>

Wednesday 11 December 2024 at 6.00pm at the Scottish Football Museum, Hampden Park, Glasgow

The book ‘1824: the World’s First Football Club’ is available online, price £10: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Worlds-First-Football-Club-philanthropy/dp/1986612449/>