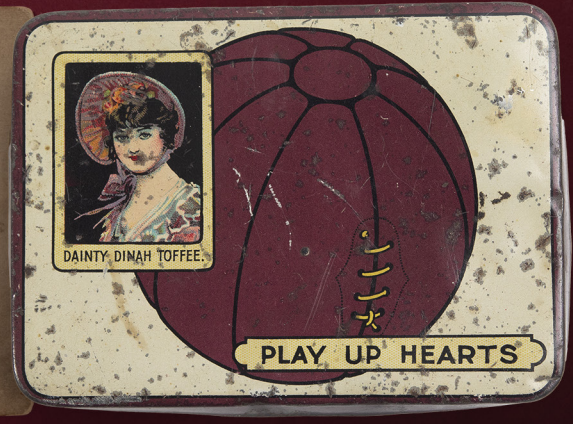


# From Medals to Toffee Tins

A History of Hearts in  
150 Memorabilia Objects

Gary Cowen



Foreword by John Colquhoun

## Foreword

# John Colquhoun

For some people, the best memories are simply recalling the sights, sounds, smells and feelings of a time or event; for others, these memories are evoked by something more tactile. For me, it is the former. If I close my eyes, I can transport myself back to the European nights of the 80s. I can see the glorious dimly lit Tynecastle pitch as we ran out for a big game, the green of the grass (or brown of the mud in the case of the game against German giants Bayern Munich), the cacophony of noise as our fans roared a welcome at the top of their voices at the first sight of us players, their heroes. The love for their club and their men was obvious. The disgustingly delicious smell of the brewery and the feeling of anticipation and hope that we all had as we pulled as one to achieve another special result for the famous Heart of Midlothian.

**B**ut as I sit down to pen this foreword for a book that celebrates tactile elements of the history of this great club through its memorabilia, I completely understand why supporters love these pieces.

If the prehistoric people hadn't passed the knowledge of what they had learnt to their children and then every successive generation hadn't done the same, we would still be starting fires by rubbing sticks together and, likewise, if the custodians and supporters of the club hadn't passed down the great, and not so great, moments of the club's rich history, would the love and feeling for the club be as strong as it is today? No is the answer; in fact, an unequivocal no!

The founding of the club in 1874 through the proud, yet sad story of McCrae's Battalion and then the less important epic wins and losses are passed down in stories on supporters' buses, in the bars of Edinburgh and beyond, and around kitchen tables. But when someone produces a ticket from the

1956 Scottish Cup Final or a scarf from the Texaco Cup Final in 1971, a programme from 1998 when Lockie and Stevie Fulton held up the Scottish Cup after such a long wait or maybe even a seat from the recently replaced old main stand, it certainly brings more life and more attention from the listeners. It makes those memories tangible and brings them to life.

For those of us fortunate enough to have worn the maroon jersey and been a part of this wonderful football club, certain pieces of memorabilia conjure immediate visions of glory and heartache, but always unwavering loyalty. This book encapsulates the never-say-die spirit through the lens of the artefacts that have chronicled our shared history. It is this attitude that motivated thousands of fans of Hearts to save the club when all looked lost. It is why it is a very special football club. It is also why they can genuinely call themselves supporters. No fanbase has supported the club in quite the same way as those down Gorgie way.



As you turn the pages, you will encounter a curated collection of memorabilia that speaks volumes about the club's legacy – from worn jerseys and faded ticket stubs to triumphant trophies and personal mementos from players who have become legends. Each item is a fragment of a larger narrative, one that has been lovingly pieced together by a man's love of his football club. Painstakingly gathered over a lifetime of devotion and the only difficulty must have been narrowing down the choices to the 150 on the pages which follow.

I am particularly moved by the way this collection highlights the club's unique ability to bring people together. It is a reminder that, whether on the pitch or in the stands, whether we are lifelong hereditary supporters or adopted sons and daughters of the JTs, we are all part of the same maroon family. The memories embedded in these objects transcend individual experiences, capturing collective moments of joy and despair that resonate with all of us who cherish this club.

To the fans, young and old, I hope this book offers a window into the soul of Heart of Midlothian FC. May it inspire you to cherish the past, celebrate the present and look forward to the future with the same spirit that has defined Hearts for 150 years.

To the next generation of players and supporters, may you find in these pages the inspiration to carry on the legacy of determination, skill and passion that is the hallmark of this beloved club and, perhaps, even begin a collection of your own.

With all my Heart,

John Colquhoun



## 001 1875 Team Group

The Heart of Midlothian Football Club has a long and illustrious history and the mysteries surrounding the origin story of the club themselves form part of that tale. Elements of the story are well documented, but there are some which, although they can't be verified, have entered into club folklore by repetition over many decades. For many years, there was even debate concerning the very date of the formation of the club. In William Reid's 1924 book, *The Story of the Hearts*, he begins by noting that 'it will never be determined to a day and an hour when the Heart of Midlothian Football Club came into existence' but concludes that 'with indubitable proof that the club was a good going concern in the summer of 1875, it is a fair assumption that the Heart of Midlothian Club came into existence not later than the autumn of 1874'.

**W**e do know that the club took its name, at the suggestion of its first captain, Tom Purdie, from a dance club, the Heart of Mid-Lothian Quadrille Assembly. The Assembly, in turn, took its name from the Heart of Midlothian, the nickname of the hated tollbooth and jail near St Giles' Cathedral made famous in Sir Walter Scott's novel and which, despite being demolished in 1817, was sufficiently iconic that the former entrance to the building was, from 1860, marked by a heart-shaped design in the cobbles of the pavement, a design which was later incorporated into the badge of the club bearing the building's name.

We know that it's likely that members of the dance club were present at an exhibition match played at Rames Park, Bonnington in December 1873 between members of two Glasgow clubs, Queen's Park and Clydesdale, designed to introduce association rules to Edinburgh. The story goes that the Hearts players were instructed by a policeman at the Tron Kirk to take their football match to the Meadows and that the players duly purchased a ball from Percival King's sports shop in Lothian Street and although we know that the club played matches on the pitches on the East Meadows, that part of the legend can't be confirmed. Tom Purdie always insisted that the club was formed in 1873 and it's quite possible that, before the exhibition match, the club did exist but played a form of football which was a cross between football and rugby.

By 1875, the club, with its 45 members and clubhouse at Mother Anderson's pub, was sufficiently well established not only to be founder members of the Scottish Football Association and the Edinburgh Football Association but to have a team photograph taken.

This iconic photograph would have been taken in the studio of one of the many professional photographers in the city keen to take advantage of the fast-developing science behind photography and would have been sold to team members and, potentially, supporters. This 1875 photograph is the earliest Hearts team group known to exist. The players, unrecognisable from today's athletes, wear white short-sleeved shirts, with a large heart prominent on the left breast, and long white trousers with a coloured seam to the side; this notwithstanding that Hearts had registered their club colours with the SFA as 'marone'. Hugh Wylie, second from the left in the back row, is the only player to wear a different style, with a plunging V-neck trimmed in a different colour. In keeping with the fashion for football photographs of the era, the players lounge almost nonchalantly, some sitting or laying down with their arms resting on the legs of others, while those standing have their hands on their hips or their arms folded. Captain Tom Purdie rests one hand on the ball. Left-back John Templeton, laying on the far right, has the most lavish Victorian 'mutton chop' whiskers.

## 002 1877 Cabinet Photo

After the promising start, Hearts hit the buffers in late 1876 as a shortage of players led to the club withdrawing from the Edinburgh FA and the Scottish Cup, where we had been drawn against Dunfermline.

**M**any of the remaining players moved to another Edinburgh football club, St Andrews, which played in red, white and blue. What happened next is lost to history, but the Hearts lads, buoyed by the addition of the St Andrews players, seem to have persuaded those players that they'd be better off competing under the name Heart of Midlothian and the club was re-established by the beginning of 1877, having amalgamated St Andrews.

This iconic cabinet photograph shows that team and is the only team photograph showing the players wearing the red and blue-striped white jerseys emblazoned with MFBC on the front, standing, it seems,

for Midlothian Foot Ball Club. The sepia photograph has seen better days but is an original print on thick card and, therefore, represents one of the oldest pieces of Hearts memorabilia still in existence.

There are 17 players pictured, although these include one who it has not been possible to identify. Starting with the back row (from left), the players in the photograph are: Peter Begbie, Bob Barbour, John Aitken, Andrew Borthwick, Jake 'Three Fingers' Reid, Hugh Sweeney, 'Unknown', James Templeton, James Whitson and George Barbour. The middle row has Hugh Wylie, Tom Purdie, the club's first captain, Peter McBeth and Jock MacDonald. At the front are John Sweeney, George Mitchell and William Harley.

**Hearts' first recorded match against Hibs was on Christmas Day 1875. Hearts won 1-0.**



# 003

## 003 1878 EFA Cup Medal

Another of the very earliest items of memorabilia in my collection represents our first-ever trophy win. Hearts became one of the four founder members of the Edinburgh Football Association in August 1875 and, before the days of league football, the EFA Challenge Cup (which began in 1876) and the Scottish Cup (which started in 1874) were the most important matches on the fledgling Heart of Midlothian's calendar. Having been knocked out of the national competition by early October 1877, the club focused its attention on the Edinburgh competition. In the first round, Hearts were drawn against Brunswick, with the match to be played on the EFA's ground at Mayfield Park, Newington. Hearts triumphed by 3-1 to set up a semi-final with Dunfermline at the same ground, which Hearts won 2-1.

This teed up an epic battle with Hibs which is credited with establishing the rivalry between the two clubs which exists to this day. On 9 February 1878, Hearts travelled to Mayfield Park once again, this time to meet their Edinburgh rivals. Roughly 1,000 fans – crowds were still very low in those early days – watched the teams slug out a 0-0 draw, with Hibs having two goals chalked off for fouls. *The Scotsman* reported that 'the Hearts forwards did not seem altogether in trim'. A week later, the teams met again at the same venue, playing out another draw. This time, though, it was 1-1, with the Hearts goal coming after a 'scrimmage'; in those days, a ruck of players could force the ball across the line.

So, it was on to a third game a week later and this time, 1,200 saw another 1-1 draw. Rourke scored for Hibs, but Burns equalised late in the game for Hearts, prompting a crowd of around 800 fans to break into the ground without paying. That led to a change

of venue for the fourth game, which was played at Bainfield, but it didn't alter the outcome, with yet another 1-1 draw after extra time.

The sides were finally separated at the fifth time of asking when they met at Powburn on 20 April. With the score at 0-0 at half-time, Hibs took the lead early after the restart before Hearts equalised through John Alexander. The Greens scored again, but Hearts were determined and George Mitchell once again levelled the scores before Alexander got his second goal to win the game 3-2 and secure Hearts' first trophy. *The Scotsman* reported that 'the victory was well received, well fought for, and was due in no small degree to the good generalship and play of Purdie, the captain of the Heart, who was most disgracefully set upon by a lot of roughs after passing Powburn Toll and had to take refuge in a house in Causewayside'. Elsewhere, it was reported that Purdie had had to defend himself against his attackers with a cabbie's whip.

**'The Heart were left winners of the Cup, each member of the winning team also receiving a Maltese cross.'**

*Scotsman* 22 April 1878

The players were presented with medals in the shape of a Maltese cross, a fashionable design for medals at the time. The medal is silver in colour with bright blue enamel on the four points of the cross and 'EFA 1878' overlaid on the enamel. The central ball features the words 'Challenge Cup' and the reverse has the name of the recipient, James Whitson. We don't know much about Whitson other than that he was a forward who played at outside-right for the earliest Hearts teams. This medal, together with a medal Whitson won in the football competition at the Hearts annual sports in 1882, showed up on eBay in 2007. Club historian David Speed was quoted in the press at the time as saying: 'This is a hugely significant artefact for Hearts. I've never seen one of the first cup winners' medals before so I would be delighted to see it brought back to Edinburgh.' The medal has been on display at the Hearts museum since it opened in 2016, so David and countless other Hearts fans have been able to see this amazing piece of the club's history.



## 004 1883 Hearts Sports Barrel

File this under things that were common in football for decades but you just don't see any more. In 1881, Hearts were growing in strength. They were the first Edinburgh club to play the Glasgow giants of Queen's Park and, in the Edinburgh FA Cup, beat Anchor by a huge 21-0. The time was right for Hearts to acquire their own playing field and they moved into the original Tynecastle, on the site of what is now Wardlaw Place and Wardlaw Terrace.

**H**earts would hire out their ground to raise some extra income and clubs like Hearts which boasted running tracks around their pitches soon found that they could attract fans by hosting their own athletics meetings, with a few five-a-side football matches thrown in for good measure. Hearts hosted their own sports events from 1881 onwards and both Rangers and Celtic staged sports events at Ibrox and Parkhead from the 19th century right through to the 1950s. It's amazing to me that as early as just seven years after the club laid its tentative foundations, it was organising an athletics competition at its own playing fields.

I've seen various prizes which were awarded for events at Hearts' own sports events, including medals, silver trays and large silver cups (as we'll see), but this wooden and metal barrel trophy is the most unusual one I've seen. I'm not even sure what a barrel like this would be used for. Perhaps a store for biscuits or as an ice bucket? I suspect it was intended to be purely decorative. Certainly, the florid design of the barrel's lid suggests that it was supposed to be put on display by the lucky winner.

The 1883 Hearts Sports was the third year in which Tynecastle had hosted the

event. It was advertised in the local press as: 'Heart of Midlothian FC Annual Amateur Athletic Sport. Saturday, 2 June 1883 at 2.30pm at Tynecastle Park. Well known competitors from leading clubs, schools and universities of Scotland have entered. There will also be one and two mile bicycle handicaps. Admission 6d (2.5p) with the stand 6d extra.'

The shield on the front of the barrel reads: 'Heart of Midlothian FC Sports, 1883, One Mile Handicap, 1st prize. Won by.' Unfortunately, the winner's name isn't inscribed but we can look to the contemporary newspapers for an answer. The *Athletic News* of 6 June 1883 reported that the One Mile Handicap was won by D.S. Duncan of the Royal High School, who received 20 yards of a start from the scratch men.

Much later, especially after the war, football clubs saw these competitions as a good way to prepare players for the coming season and it wasn't uncommon for Hearts to be asked to provide a team for numerous different five-a-side competitions each summer. If you're looking for a nice set of programmes to collect, you could do a lot worse than look out for programmes involving Hearts in five-a-side (and, more recently, six-a-side) competitions.





## 005 1883 Hearts Sports Trophy

Amazingly, I also have another prize from the same Hearts sports event, this time a handsome (if somewhat damaged and, as a result, lopsided) silver trophy. About 12in high and beautifully engraved with flowers and other elaborate designs, it also bears the engraving 'Heart of Midlothian FC Sports 1883, ¼ Mile Handicap, Confined 1st Prize' on the front and, to the rear, is inscribed 'Won by ... Donald Sinclair'.

**B**ecause the athletics events were for amateur competitors, a handicapping system was put in place to – theoretically, at least – even up the competition and allow every athlete an equal chance of success. But the *Athletic News* of 6 June 1883 complained that a Mr Smith, responsible for handicapping on the day, had done a 'simply disgraceful' job, with many of the best athletes being so heavily penalised that they didn't even make the podium. The vitriol didn't stop there, with the journalist penning that: "It is very hard that a club like the Hearts should suffer through the ignorance of one on whose efforts so much of the success depends. Surely, there are gentlemen in Edinburgh who could do better than he who handicapped the races

on Saturday. I think they could not have got a worse one, even if they had spent weeks in looking for him.'

For the same reporter, even the good weather wasn't enough to cheer him up (and we can be fairly sure it was a him): 'The day was fine and the ladies took advantage of it in a way which, while certainly invigorating to them, did not altogether harmonise with the true objects of the gathering. Dancing is all very well in its own way but slightly out of place at an athletic meeting.'

I think Donald Sinclair would have been pretty happy to take home a lovely trophy like this for winning a single race at the Hearts Sports and it's great news for us that it has survived for the last 141 years as a piece of Hearts' history.

**'Dancing is all very well in its own way but slightly out of place at an athletic meeting.'**

## 006 1886 Team Group

Commercial photography started in the 1840s but became popular around the time that Hearts were formed in the mid-1870s. By the 1880s, there were hundreds of studios all over the country, taking advantage of the craze for photography. The carte-de-visite, a small wallet-sized portrait, became fashionable in the 1870s but was replaced a decade later by the cabinet photograph, which was, at approximately 17cm by 11cm, larger and could be put in a frame.

This team group from 1886 is an example of a cabinet photo, created by reproducing a thin albumen print and affixing it to a stiff card. The back of the cards often had a prominent advertisement for the photographer's studio and this is no exception, the rear featuring an elaborate design for Alex Ayton, whose studio was in North Bruntsfield Place.

The team group is typically Victorian, with players looking relaxed and casual, hands on the shoulders of their team-mates and players looking off into the middle distance. The trophy on display is the Rosebery Charity Cup and this team was the second Hearts side to win it in only its fourth season, beating Hibs 1-0 in a final which had to be played three times. In the first match, Hearts trailed 0-2 to Hibs when James McGhee's tackle broke the leg of Hearts' Peter Bell. The Hearts followers rushed on to the field in protest and the match was duly abandoned. In the replayed game, the tables were turned as Hearts led 2-0, Bob McNeil's second goal for the Maroons prompting the Hibernian fans to invade the pitch and force a second abandonment.

At the third time of asking, the fans behaved and the players made it all the way

through 90 minutes, Hearts winning by a single goal scored by Willie Mackay. In the photograph, Mackay is sitting second from the left. The back row (from left) comprises the club vice-president Mr Smith, Jake Reid (who was an ex-player turned committee man), Jimmy Adams, keeper Willie Gibson, Davie Aitken and George Fairweather. Those seated are Tom Jenkinson, who scored the first goal at the new Tynecastle Park, Mackay, McKinnon, George Whyte, Jim Wood and Bob McNeil. Jim 'Curly' Fraser lies at the front.

You might have noticed that some of the players are wearing caps, whilst two of them wear shirts adorned with a large badge. Both the caps and the badges would have been awarded to those players who played for the Edinburgh FA in representative matches. Interestingly, the two large badges show different seasons. Mackay's badge is for four matches in 1885/86 whereas Fraser's badge is for a match against Glasgow in 1884/85.

1886 was, of course, the year that Hearts moved across Gorgie Road from the original Tynecastle Park to the new stadium on the northern side of the road, with the first game being a 4-1 win against Bolton Wanderers before a crowd of around 5,500. We'll return to that match in due course.





007



## 007 1886 Rosebery Cup Medal

If you look carefully at the picture in the last chapter, you'll notice that the players are all wearing their hard-earned Rosebery Charity Cup medals, won in the marathon three-game series against Hibs, pinned to their shirts.

**B**ob McNeil had scored Hearts' second goal in the second abandoned match and he sits at the far right of the team group, his medal proudly displayed on his maroon shirt. And here we have that very medal. Seen up close, it's a thing of real beauty.

The front of the gold medal has a shield-shaped plaque topped with a ring fastening, but it's the painted design which really catches the eye. It shows a player with a maroon shirt and long white shorts above long blue stockings standing in front of a

rudimentary goal frame and above a brown football. There are hints of green grass and trees behind the goals and blue sky and the whole thing is very intricately decorated when you consider the size of the medal itself. One of the nicest designs on a medal you're likely to see.

The reverse is inscribed: 'Rosebery Charity Cup ... HMFC ... R McNeil ... 1886.' Bob McNeil only played a couple of seasons at Hearts but had this beautiful medal to show for his time at the club.

**'... within five minutes of time, McKay scored for the Hearts amid loud cheering.'**

*Scotsman* 25 June 1886

## 008 1886 Hearts Season Ticket

In the early days of football in the late 19th century, supporters would become a 'member' (or sometimes 'subscriber') of their favourite club. A supporter would pay a subscription for the season, usually before it started, which would not only entitle the club member to attend all of the club's home fixtures but would also entitle them to vote for the committee which ran the club at the time. In recognition, the club would issue them with a member's ticket, usually with a hard cardboard backing and which included a list of the club's fixtures for the coming season. As committees gave way to boards of directors and the votes of regular supporters became seemingly less important, the member's ticket gradually became a season ticket, with clubs realising that fans would pay in advance to attend all its matches for a season without necessarily having a vote on who should run the club.

About ten years ago, a piece appeared in some national newspapers speculating that the oldest football season ticket known to exist was about to be gifted by a fan to Burnley Football Club, the club to which the ticket related. The ticket was for season 1884/85, some three years after the formation of the Lancashire club. The ticket was a member's ticket. But, as was pointed out at the time, there are older member's tickets known to exist; the fantastic Everton collection, catalogued and displayed online, contains member's tickets going back to 1881/82. There are also pictures on the internet of Arsenal member's tickets from the 1890s.

But take a look at this Hearts season ticket for 1886/87. Encased in maroon leather and embossed in gold with the club crest and the date, it stakes a claim as the earliest genuine season ticket known to exist. For the first full season at the new Tynecastle Park, the season ticket makes it clear that it belonged to a member or subscriber, Mr W. Leggie (or possibly Leckie), who lived at an address which might have been Braid Place and that Mr Leggie had paid his subscription for the season of three shillings (15p), this 'being his

subscription for the year ending May 1887'. The ticket also boasts that the club was the winner of the Rosebery Charity Trophy for the previous season.

What makes this ticket stand out, however, is that, opposite, there is an actual mechanism for recording attendance at specific matches. The older English member's tickets merely have fixture lists, but it's impossible to tell from those tickets whether the holder had attended a particular match. This season ticket has rows of numbered squares, each corresponding to a fixture. When Mr Leggie attended a match, a checker would punch a hole through the page of Mr Leggie's ticket to ensure that he couldn't simply pass his season ticket through the fence to one of his friends. As the printed wording notes: 'Checkers will receive instructions to punch a certain number for each match. Not available twice on the same day.'

This is the oldest season ticket I've seen anywhere which has a checking mechanism like this one. Does that make it truly the oldest season ticket in existence? Perhaps, but in any event, it's a truly remarkable piece of Hearts' history.

