

Football Teams



In the UK, works football teams go back many years, with many evolving to become professional organisations. Coventry City Football Club started life as the Singers Bicycle Works Club, and Manchester United was originally founded as a Manchester railwaymen's team. There are no records showing a direct link between the papermaking and printing industry and existing professional teams. However, there is no doubt that thriving printers' football clubs existed in the major printing centres in Scotland.

We also had a football team because there were so many apprentices in the AUP. Not only on the typesetting side but the printing section as well had apprentices. We used to play other sizeable printers.



In Aberdeen, printers' clubs played informal 'friendlies' with other printing sides at venues such as Seaton Park. In Glasgow, many printing teams played in the Glasgow and District Hospitals League. In Edinburgh, on the other hand, many works football teams played in a factories shield competition in the 1890s. Later, many works teams played in the Edinburgh Amateur League, where they competed with other clubs to move up the divisions.

We did not play other mills ... we joined the Edinburgh League, the weekend league, Sunday league and we played every Sunday and if you were in the top two in the league at the end of the year you went up a league. And the first league we went in was Division Seven and we ended up in Division Two.

Many teams were sponsored by their employers, who gave them free access to recreational spaces to practice. The firms sometime also purchased football strips for the team. If financial support was not forthcoming, funds could be acquired through the Union Chapel, as was the case of the *Haddington Courier* works team, whose footballs were supplied by the local chapel.

