

**West of Scotland Football Club Records  
East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Trust (EDLC)  
Final Project Report**

**James Towe, Freelance Archivist  
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*GD321/17/1/1 Photograph of West of Scotland Football Club Champion Team 1888/89*

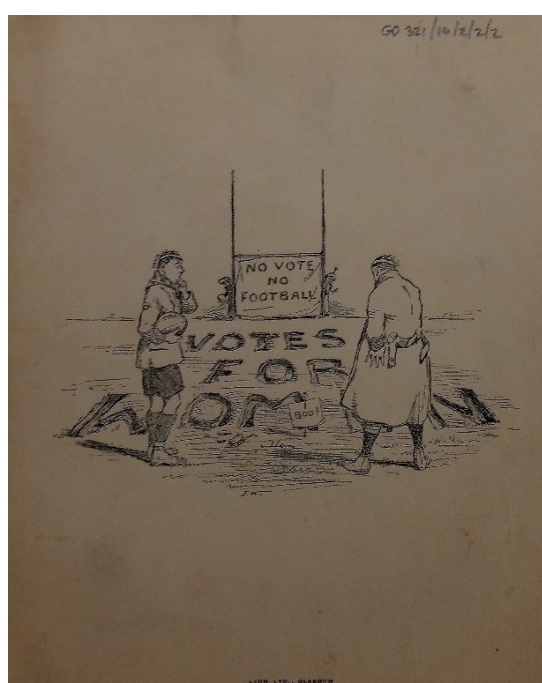
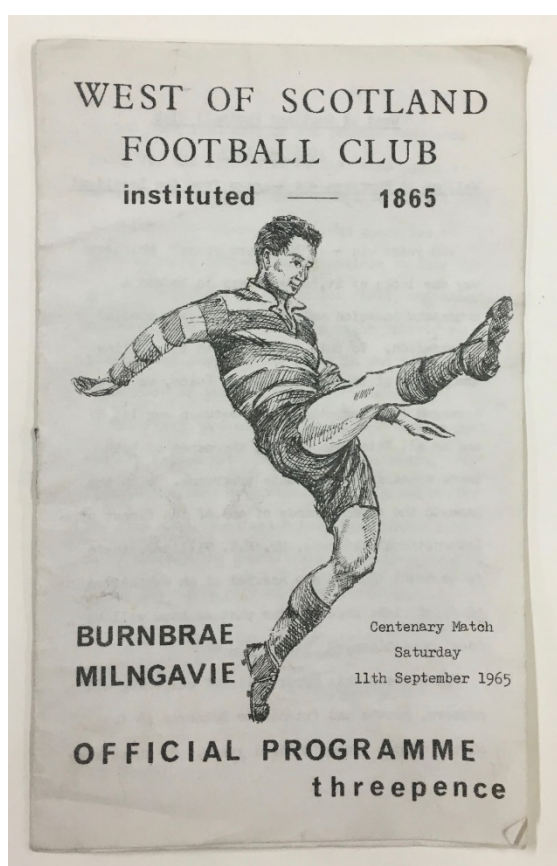
## **Introduction**

The winner of the 2020 BAC Grant for Business Archives related to Sports was East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Trust for a project to catalogue the archive collection of the West of Scotland Football Club. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic recruitment for the project was delayed from November 2020 to May 2021. Following the recruitment process, I was hired as a Freelance Archivist to undertake 32 days cataloguing work to be delivered over six months to end November 2021.

## West of Scotland Football Club

West of Scotland Football Club, known as West, are a rugby union club based at the Burnbrae ground in Milngavie, Scotland. Established in 1865, West are one of the oldest rugby clubs in the world, and a founding member of the Scottish Rugby Union. West have enjoyed a long and varied history with periods of great success, winning numerous Scottish Championships and producing a great many Scottish internationalists and several British and Irish Lions. They are perhaps most notable for their successes of the 1960s and 1970s and were considered a true powerhouse of British rugby. West today is an active community amateur sports club servicing the Milngavie and Bearsden area and prides itself in being a vibrant part of that community.

## The Collection



GD321/14/2/2/2 'Votes for Women, No Vote No Football' cartoon from toast list, c 1918, (above) and GD321/12/2/5 Programme for West of Scotland Football Club Centenary Match, 11 September 1965, (left).

The collection was formally donated by West of Scotland Football Club to EDLC in 2020. Prior to this it was held on loan, having been deposited with the then Strathkelvin District Council library service in 1994 and 1995.

The collection consists of material produced and amassed by West between 1871 and 2001. It includes minutes, administrative and financial records, membership records, grounds and property records, player and coaching records, fixture records, and photographs. The collection also includes the personal papers of C.D. Stuart, who played for West from the 1908/09 season and later authored their centenary history.

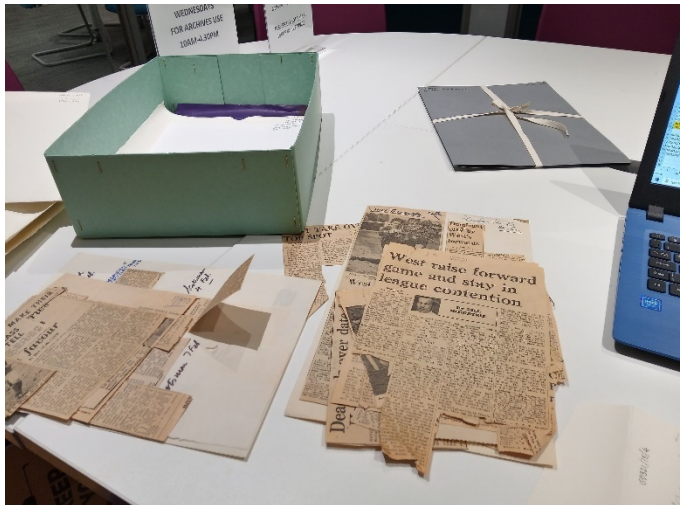
## Research Strengths

- The collection relates to one of the earliest Scottish rugby union clubs and includes papers concerning the formative years of West, and those of the Scottish Rugby Union.
- The club is an important part of Scottish social and cultural history, a representative of the 'new leisure revolution' of athletic clubs that sprang up across Britain in the mid-nineteenth century.
- The collection represents an almost uninterrupted continuity of 130 years of West's administrative, financial, and social history and its role in the local community.
- It includes records from a period in the 1960s and early 1970s when West enjoyed a period of great success and popularity, with notable internationalist players including Quintin Dunlop, Gordon Brown, Peter Brown, Alastair McHarg, and Sandy Carmichael.
- The 20<sup>th</sup> century records document the transition from a recreational sports club to becoming a sports business, a potential new aspect of sports history.
- Records from the 1990s show the impact of professionalisation on the Scottish game and the Glasgow district in particular, and the effect of this new landscape on a club which chose to retain its amateur status.

## Potential Use and Partnerships

- The catalogued collection will be of much interest to West, its supporters and members, former players and their families and associates, and to the community of Milngavie. West consider the cataloguing *'a tremendously valuable and useful piece of work for the club'*.
- West and its players are firmly rooted in the Milngavie community and improving access to the archives through this project will allow the collection to be used for community engagement projects such as sporting reminiscence sessions.
- Digitised items will be used in reminiscence sessions delivered by the EDLC Libraries service, Sports Heritage Scotland Memories Programme and made available to local groups such as Alzheimer's Scotland.
- Selected items will be digitised for upload to Flickr and on sporting memories websites.
- Support for the collection has been expressed by representatives of organisations including The University of Edinburgh and the Scottish Football Museum.
- It is hoped the collection will form the basis of an exhibition at the Lillie Art Gallery, Milngavie in late 2022.

## Cataloguing the Collection

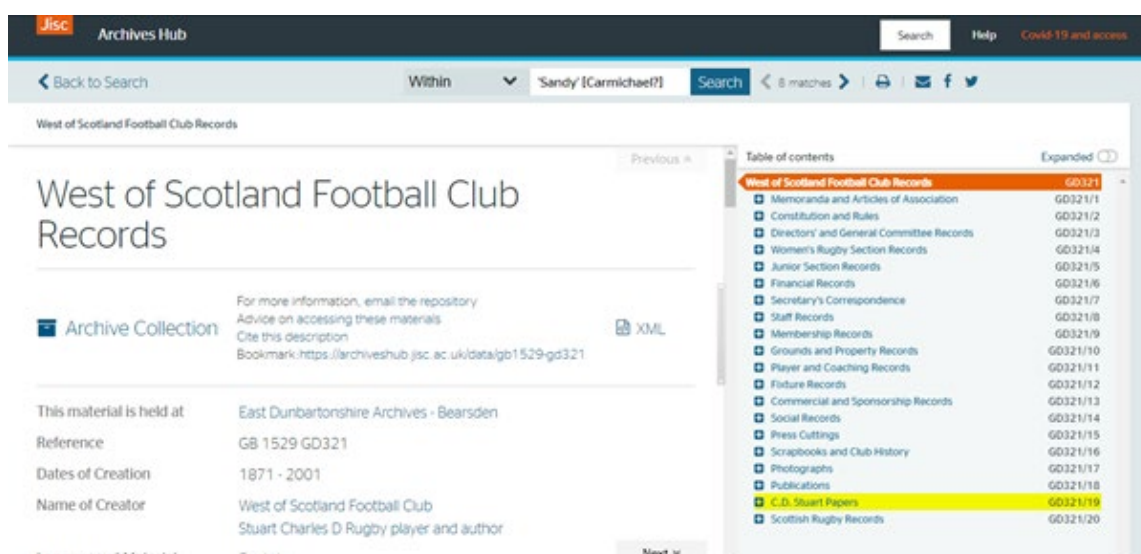


*Cataloguing and repackaging press cuttings, GD321/15.*

- 56 boxes of material were catalogued over 32 days between May and November 2021 to ISAD(G) standards.
- Limited box lists were available and these were checked against the collection. Any existing reference numbers were noted as previous references in the new catalogue.
- There was little sign of a coherent original structure to the records so a function-based hierarchy was imposed. I aimed to create a user-friendly hierarchy that reflects the operational functions of the club and allows for future accruals; a process complicated by historically loosely defined and shifting roles at West.
- Youth and Women's Rugby are underrepresented in the collection but are important features of the modern club. They are featured prominently and distinctly in my catalogue structure to reflect this significance, and to allow for the possibility of further accruals.
- For ease of editing the collection was catalogued first in Excel and then copied to the Archives Hub. This process proved relatively time consuming. The Archives Hub's new spreadsheet template and system of upload, not available at the time of cataloguing, would expedite this process.
- Although the collection was catalogued thoroughly, in detail, and to a high professional standard, a small number of useful 'further actions' remained incomplete due to time constraints. These consisted of the detailed listing of press cuttings and several correspondence files, and the measuring of photographs. Potential 'further actions' were recorded on the Excel sheet and funding has been found to allow for the completion of these tasks.
- Generally the collection was found to be in reasonable condition and fit for production. Any conservation issues were noted as part of the cataloguing process and the collection was reboxed and repackaged.
- Parts of the collection, especially the post c 1990 correspondence, were weeded extensively.



## Outcomes



*Screenshot of the Archives Hub catalogue.*

- The full catalogue, consisting of some 700+ entries, is now available via the Archives Hub, complete with a detailed collection level description and appropriate searchable access points.
- As part of the cataloguing process documents which might be particularly suited for digitisation and/or physical exhibition, either due to their aesthetic appeal or special historical significance, were noted.
- A detailed club history, timeline, and lists of key players and personnel have been completed to support future outreach and exhibition work.



*GD321/14/2/1 Annual Dinner Menus, c 1900s  
and GD321/9/4/1 Window Sticker, 1990s.*

