

THE STORY OF EXETER'S ST JAMES' PARK

Land of Grecian Glory

Aidan Hamilton

Once a humble field used for fattening pigs, this site has seen extraordinary things from murder and menageries to circuses and celebrities.

Aidan Hamilton traces the land's ownership from its scandalous aristocratic origins in the seventeenth century through to its role as home to Supporters' Trust-owned Exeter City Football Club in the twenty-first century.

This book commemorates the 125th anniversary of the first association-football match ever played at St James' Park in 1894, a ground that has also hosted cricket, rugby, athletics, cycling, boxing, baseball and American football.

At the turn of the century, football was booming in this rugby stronghold but there were substantial setbacks to the club's ambitions including two world wars; a devastating fire that destroyed the original grandstand; and the death of former manager Arthur Chadwick in the newly rebuilt stand.

There were good times too: hard-earned promotions; historic FA Cup giant killings; and visiting international superstars, as well as continual ground improvements over the decades, making it safer than ever before.

To this day, Exeter City and its stadium remain constant threads throughout the remarkable social and economic changes both in football and wider society that are charted in this fascinating book.

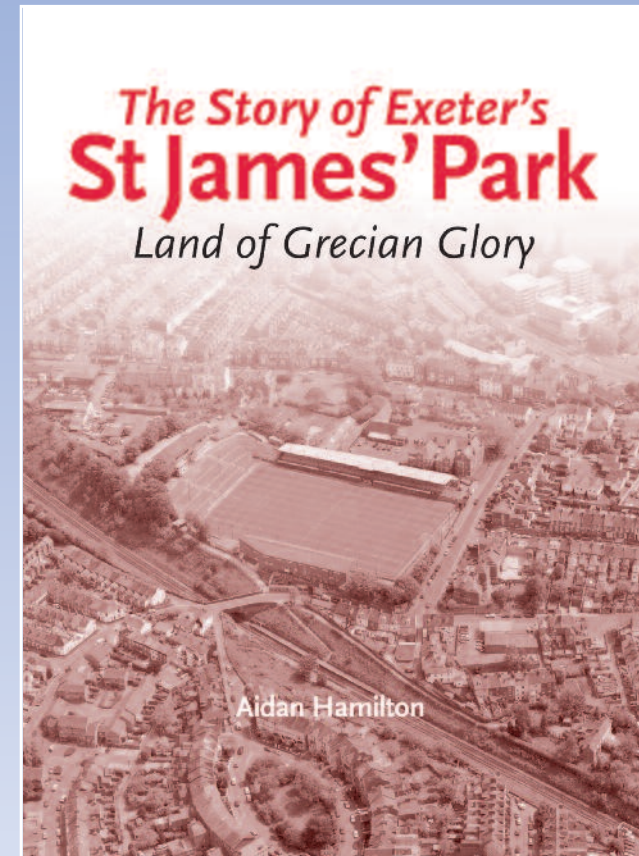
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aidan Hamilton was born in Taunton. As a 13-year-old, over Easter 1971, he travelled down by train to watch two games at St James' Park, both 0-0 draws. In the mid-1990s, he wrote his first articles for the Exeter City programme, and he joined the Exeter City Supporters' Trust in 2004. An advisor to the Trust's History Group and a trustee of the Exeter City Football Club Museum Trust, he is the author of *Have You Ever Played Brazil? The Story of Exeter City's 1914 Tour to South America* (2014). He has taught English in Brazil, China and France, where he currently lives.

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The grandstand following the fire in November 1925
Source: The Grecian Archive, photographer unknown



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B	1-0
C	1-0
D	1-0
E	1-0
F	1-0
G	1-0
H	1-0
I	1-0
J	1-0
K	1-0
L	1-0

Above: Supporters at Exeter City's first-ever Cup tie, against Weymouth, 3 October 1908. The wooden structures to the side of the grandstand were for the press
Source: Dave Fisher collection, Westcountry Studies Library, Devon Heritage Centre



Left: Billy Smith at St James' Park in December 1919, with from left to right Charlie Pratt, John Dockray, Arthur Chadwick and Dick Pym
Source: The Grecian Archive, from the collection of the descendants of Billy Smith, photographer unknown

Below: A horse-drawn steam-powered fire engine at St James' Park, c.1900
Source: © Western Morning News, from the Grecian Archive



St James' church provides the backdrop for this cycling event, 1890
Source: © J.S. Hines

Exeter City official programme for a reserves' game, 18 April 1914
Source: © ECFC, from the Grecian Archive, Norman Shiel collection

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'Up Grecians!'

R... the Grecians have a fine record to their credit...

The Grecians have a fine record to their credit...

Example of a double-page spread.

