

## **1<sup>st</sup> Season 1872-3**

A report in a local newspaper dated Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October 1872 announced “A football Club has just been established in Exeter, under the patronage, amongst others, of the Earl of Devon, Sir J.D. Coleridge M.P., S.J.B. Karslake, Mr. Arthur Mills, and Mr. W.C. Sim. The first match will come off on the 19<sup>th</sup> inst. when the club will enter into competition with the training college”. The first recorded match between these opponents actually took place, a week later than announced, on the 26<sup>th</sup> at Millbrook, Topsham Road, and was played in very unfavourable weather. The game lasted two hours after which the result was declared to be a draw since neither side managed to kick a goal.

The club then met the Volunteer Rifles in an 18-a-side game at Millbrook in November, a match which provided the first victory, and there followed in December a 16-a-side game against the Royal Artillery. For the next two matches the opposition was provided by the enigmatically named A.N.Y club. No indication is given about the origin of this club though it could have been made up of students returning home for the Christmas holiday.

In the New Year, return matches against the Royal Artillery and the Training College ended in a draw and a victory. In March 1873 the club travelled outside the city boundaries for the first time playing Budleigh Salterton in “unpropitious weather”. Exeter won this match and the return game at the end of the month at the new home location of Victoria Park, Mount Radford.

Thus ended the first season for Exeter Football Club (1872-3) which was regarded as a successful one, nine matches having been played resulting in four victories and only one loss though this solitary defeat has yet to be identified. Four drawn games would not have been unusual in such a short fixture list as at this time a game could not be won unless a goal had been kicked.

The initial appointed captain was Reginald Benson though he did not play in all the game and others filled this role.