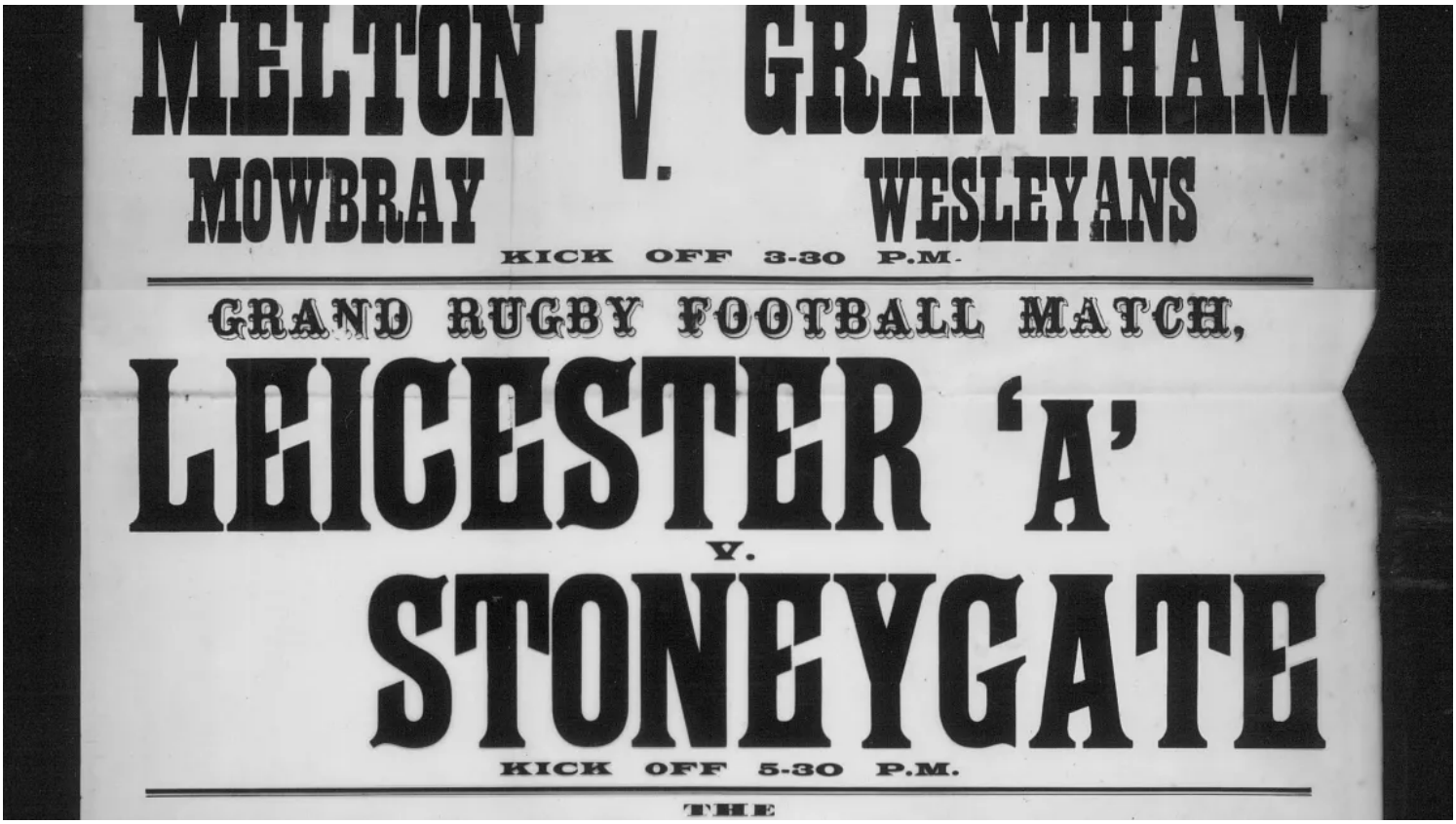


A rugby poster from 1903

The mini exhibition – which opens on Friday (18 September) – will explore the history of rugby in Leicester through the stories of local people and with the help of more than 30 artefacts and some fascinating rugby ephemera.

Audio clips of grassroots players and loyal fans will help bring 140 years of rugby history to life, and items such as Martin Johnson's England shirt, a photograph of the first rugby team in Leicester, and some 1920s rugby-inspired cigarette cards will reflect the city's enduring passion for the sport.

Curator Philip French said: "This new exhibition will bring together a selection of fascinating objects and recordings from our oral history project.

"The photographs, the ephemera and the audio clips will combine to tell the story of 140 years of rugby in Leicester – and allow us to hear how rugby has been an integral part of the lives of so many local people."

Assistant city mayor for culture, leisure and sport Cllr Piara Singh Clair said: "As the city prepares to welcome Rugby World Cup 2015, this small exhibition provides an opportunity to look back at the early days of the sport and to hear the stories of the grassroots players and supporters who have helped make rugby the global phenomenon that it is today."

Leicester Rugby, Leicester People: A Community History opens at Newarke Houses Museum on Friday (18 September) and continues until 10 April 2016.

The exhibition is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and has been coordinated by Leicester City Council in conjunction with the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society.

Vanessa Harbar, Head of HLF East Midlands, said: “Rugby has a long and illustrious history in Leicester. It has provided many memorable sporting successes and has fascinating links to the story of the city’s economic development. Now, as the whole country gears up to welcome the World Cup, it’s a fitting moment to explore and celebrate this history with the opening of this new exhibition. Thank you to National Lottery players whose money has made this possible.”

The city council is grateful to the Leicester Tigers, the World Rugby Museum at Twickenham, Leicestershire Schools Rugby Union, and the many individuals who have loaned items or given interviews.

A number of other free rugby-themed events will be taking place at Newarke Houses Museum during the exhibition’s run, including family activity days and history talks.

The first of these takes place on Sunday (20 September), when the Tigers’ official historian Stuart Farmer will explore how the Leicester Tigers have become a globally-recognised club.

Expanding Horizons – the growth of Leicester Tigers through its fixture list takes place at 2pm on Sunday. Although the event is free of charge, those wishing to attend are advised to reserve their place in advance by calling the museum on te: 0116 225 4980.

Newarke Houses Museum is open every day and admission is free of charge.

More information is available at the Story of Leicester website.

Notes to editors

The Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society are pleased to support the Leicester Rugby, Leicester People exhibition. The society was founded in 1835 as a non-sectarian organisation to support the advancement of education in literature, science and art, discussing ideas “dispassionately and without animosity”, it meets on alternative Mondays October to March at New Walk Museums. For more information see the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society website.

Further information

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