

# FOOTBALL LATEST: STRATHBUNGO 2 OLD FIRM 0

Fanciful? No, historical fact, though unlikely to be repeated anytime soon. Football historians may recall Third Lanark Athletic Club, the team which scored notable victories over both Celtic (1889) and Rangers (1905) in the Scottish Cup Final, as well as winning the league in 1904. The club is sadly now a distant memory, having gone bankrupt in 1967, but few realise that the once great club had its origins firmly in Strathbungo.

## The 3<sup>rd</sup> Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers

In the late 1850s, fear of war with France led to the Rifle Volunteer movement, the

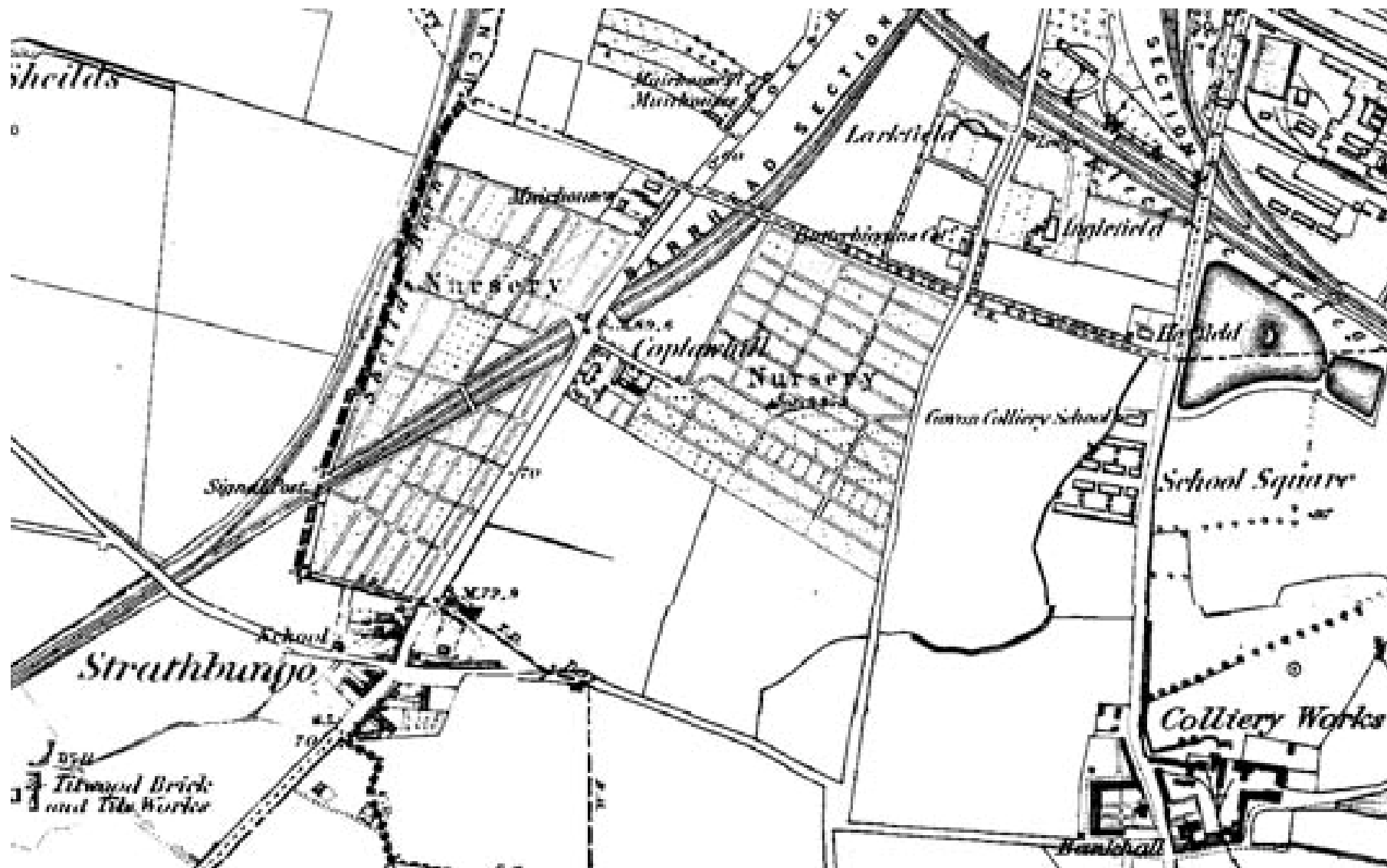
forerunners of today's Territorial Army. Volunteer Corps were raised at Etna Foundry, manufacturers of fine cast iron grave memorials, on Lilybank Road (later the gasworks off

Maxwell Road), Messrs Cogan's Spinning Factory, a number of temperance societies, and the Old Guard of Glasgow; a group of Napoleonic Veterans, one of whom was 88 years old! In 1860 they were incorporated into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers, based in Strathbungo.

At this point a little reflection on the local geography would be pertinent, for while much of Third Lanark's story will seem more closely related to Govanhill and Crosshill, the 3<sup>rd</sup> LRV really did belong originally to Strathbungo. In the 1860s, Strathbungo was a weavers' village, centred on Pollokshaws Road and Allison Street, and surrounded by fields and



*The 3<sup>rd</sup> LRV regimental badge*



*Map of Strathbungo & Coplawhill circa 1863*

nurseries, such as the nursery at Coplawhill. Govanhill didn't exist apart from the Little Govan Colliery to the East. The concept of Strathbungo as confined to the Squares and Gardens between

Nithsdale Road and Titwood Road is a more modern invention, stemming from Alexander "Greek" Thomson's development of one of the first railway suburbs.

## **A Football Club is Born**

The first ever international football match, Scotland vs England, was played at the West of Scotland Cricket Ground in Partick on St Andrew's Day, 1872. The match was organised by Queen's Park FC, who provided the entire team, although several of the players, such as Pte William McKinnon, were also members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> LRV.

Inspired by the match, the regiment set up its own football team twelve days later. The Third Lanark Rifle Volunteers Football Club was born on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1872, at a meeting in the Regimental Orderly Room in East Howard Street, in the centre of Glasgow, with the support of

Lieutenant Colonel Humphry Ewing Crum-Ewing, the majority of officers and 25 men.

Captain John Inglis was elected president, and much of the initial organisation was down to John Wallace, goalkeeper, and Colonel John Bennie Wilson, striker, who was later to score Third Lanark's first ever league goal. Practice was undertaken at the regimental parade ground off Victoria Road.

In 1875 the club moved to Old Cathkin Park in Govanhill, a site provided by Dixon's Blazes, the famous iron foundry. A grandstand was built, and a Scotland-England international was played there in 1884. Scotland won 1-0, watched by a crowd of 10,000.



*3<sup>rd</sup> LRV Camp of Instruction at Queens Park, 1873*

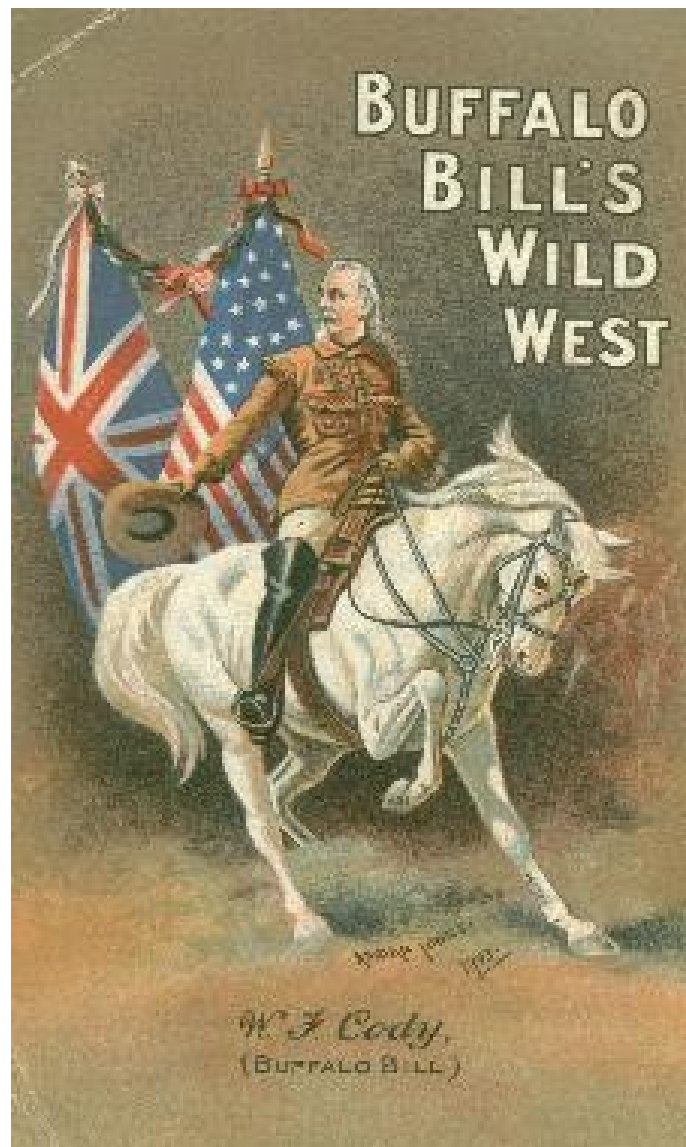
John Wilson, the Thirds first striker, was also an architect, and designed a new Headquarters and Drill Hall in Coplaw Street. The drill hall, built 1884-5, is still there, recently Brown's Gym, and now private flats.



*Regimental Drill Hall*

The Thirds may also have a claim to the world's first black footballer, Robert Walker, who played for them in the Scottish Cup Final of 1876.

If football wasn't spectacle enough, the regiment's parade



ground, at Cathcart Road, and Dixon Street, also hosted Buffalo Bill's Wild West touring show for 6 days in 1904.

In 1903 Queen's Park moved to their third (and current) Hampden Park. Third Lanark bought second Hampden Park, and renamed it New Cathkin Park. There they stayed, until their demise under dubious financial circumstances in 1967. Cathkin Park is now owned by



*Cathkin Park Football Stadium*

the Council. The football pitch is still there, a most curious sight, where trees grow out of the terraces that once held 45,000 people, the day the Thirds played Rangers in 1954.



So there you have it, Strathbungo – one of the great pioneers of the beautiful game.

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