In the 20th century football became a very popular sport in Scotland. During the First World War (1914-1918) football matches were allowed to go on because most people believed that the war would not last for long.

After the war football became even more popular with huge crowds going to watch matches. Its popularity continued even through the Depression in the 1920s, and the First and Second World Wars. Two world records for attendance in the space of one week were set at Hampden Park in 1937. When Scotland beat England 3-1 a crowd of 149,415 came to watch. Celtic's 2-1 victory over Aberdeen in the Scottish Cup final attracted 147,365. Nowadays crowds like this would not be allowed into modern football stadiums in Scotland for safety reasons.

In 1927 the first radio broadcasts of football games were made, and this was the start of football being used to sell many different products. In the early days of radio the Scottish Football Association were suspicious of broadcasting matches as they believed it would keep the spectators away. By 1939 almost ¼ of the population had a radio and listening to football was a "must" for fans. The demands for sports programmes on the radio became very popular. Sport on the radio helped to bind the country together during the dark and bleak days of the war.

Rattles were used during the Second World War to alert people of gas escapes. The loud noise of the rattle when it was whirled around told everyone to "stay away". After the war fans used rattles at football grounds when cheering on their favourite team.

In 1929 Scotland played their first official matches abroad. They went to play in many European countries, such as, Norway, Germany, Netherlands, France and Switzerland, but the greatest challenges still were at home with international matches against England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Hampden Roar
Back in the 1930s and 40s fans didn’t sing or chant together the way they do today. There was usually “communal” singing before big games. Song sheets would be handed out and the spectators would sing popular songs of the day. A band often accompanied them and the bandleader would stand on a platform and lead the crowd in the singing. By the early 1960s football fans were beginning to make up their own songs and chants.

Football Clubs
A number of old football clubs did not survive the war. St Bernards of Edinburgh folded as did Kings Park of Stirling. Forthbank, the home of Kings Park was even damaged by a stray bomb during the war.
Other clubs like Forfar Athletic, East Stirlingshire, Stranraer, Cowdenbeath and Montrose closed down for the duration of the war and reopened once peace had been restored.

World War 1
Football continued during the First World War and the armed services often recruited outside the football grounds. Famous football players enlisted in the forces and on occasion whole teams (e.g. Queen's Park and Hearts).

Hampden Park
When present day Hampden Park first opened in 1903 it was the greatest state of the art football stadium of its time. In 1937 when the world attendance records were set the stadium had a capacity of 183,724. In 1950 the Maracana in Rio de Janeiro broke the world record with just below 200,000 spectators. Hampden still holds every major European attendance record.

Radio
The early radio commentaries used “zones” to help explain where the ball was to the listener. A drawing of the football field was divided into zones and the commentator would call out the number of the zone when the ball passed into that area. The listener could look at the drawing and quickly determine where the ball was on the field.

Key Objects

John Player’s Hints on Association Football Cigarette Cards
1910s
GLASF.1999.1097
Wembley Wizards Football
1928
GLASF.2000.179

Football Rattle
GLASF.1999.318