The Emergence of Association Football in The Potteries, 1840-1880: People, Clubs, and Governance

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The Emergence of Association Football in The Potteries, 1840-1880: People, Clubs, and Governance

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Abstract

During the nineteenth century, association football emerged as one of the most popular sporting activities in Britain. The city of Stoke-on-Trent, more commonly referred to as The Potteries, was a hotbed of football activity throughout this period, yet the area has been overlooked in scholarly studies of the association game. This thesis is the first academic study to examine the development of football in The Potteries and focuses on the period 1840 to 1880. It contributes to the growing literature concerning the historiography of the game by presenting a regional study which demonstrates how football evolved in a localised context. Three key themes are considered: clubs, people, and governance. First, this thesis explores the emergence of the first generation of formal association football clubs in The Potteries and analyses their origins, structure, and activities. Second, it utilises a combination of two biographical methods, prosopography and individual biography, to analyse the lives of the men that were actively involved in the game as players and administrators. This includes a mass prosopography that identifies 247 recreational football players and biographical accounts of two key figures that drove the development of the game in the region. Third, it examines how football evolved from an informal recreational activity, that was played on an ad hoc basis with few written rules, into the most popular sport in The Potteries, which was played regularly under the governance and jurisdiction of the Staffordshire Football Association. This thesis utilises detailed archival research which draws heavily upon local newspapers, diaries, and census materials to provide fresh insight into a previously unseen football culture. Furthermore, this thesis seeks to be more than just a regional football history. It considers varying themes that encompass urban, economic, and social history whilst simultaneously showcasing the history and heritage of The Potteries.

Keywords: Association Football, The Potteries, Origins of Football, Nineteenth Century Sport, Prosopography.

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In 2009, just a couple of months after I had started an undergraduate degree at the Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), I found myself on the verge of withdrawing myself from the course. I had struggled to acclimatise to university life and the transition from Further Education into Higher Education had been more challenging than I had ever envisaged. It was Dr. John Daniels, the programme leader at the time, who convinced me to persevere and continue my studies during a ten-minute conversation in his office.

Now, over a decade later, I recite this story having successfully produced this PhD thesis.

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Contents

Association Football in The Potteries: An Introduction 1

Aims, Objectives and Method 6

Contribution to Knowledge 10

Chapter One: Life and Sport in Victorian Britain and The Potteries 17

Life in Victorian Britain 17

Sport in Victorian Britain 25

Life in 'The Potteries' 40

Sport in 'The Potteries' 50

Conclusion 60

Chapter Two: Early Association Football Activities in The Potteries 63

The Origins of Football Debate 66

The Orthodox Position 66

The Revisionist Position 71

Early Football Activities in The Potteries 75

The First Formal Association Football Club in The Potteries 81

The Formation of Stoke Ramblers (Stoke City FC) 82

The Development and Resilience of Myths 87

The Formative Years of Stoke Ramblers (Stoke City FC) 95

Conclusion 106

Chapter Three: The Emergence of Club Football in The Potteries 110

An Explosion of Football Activity 112

The Victorian Sports Club 118

Club Football in The Potteries 124

Workplace Football Clubs 128

Football Clubs with Religious Affiliations 130

School Affiliated Football Clubs 133

Football Clubs that Emerged from Pre-Existing Cricket Clubs 136

Public House and Temperance Football Clubs 138

Football Clubs Established due to Geographic Location 142

Club Structure, Activities and Facilities 144

Transitory Teams 149

Conclusion 151

Chapter Four: Association Football Players in The Potteries, 1873-1878: A Prosopographical Approach 154

An Introduction to Prosopography 156

The Data Set 159

Prosopographical Analysis 164

Biographical Data: Age, Martial Status and Family Context *164*

Social Class *168*

Location *185*

Data Synopsis – A Portrait of an Association Football Player 191

Conclusion 193

Chapter Five: Governance and Regulation 197

The Demand for Greater Governance 200

The Influence of Thomas Charles Slaney 209

The Staffordshire Football Association 218

Conclusion 233

Association Football in The Potteries: Conclusion 235

Fernand Braudel and the Longue Durée 238

Common Themes and Key Findings 245

Methodological Reflections and Suggestions for Future Research 249

Bibliography 256

Appendices 275

Appendix One: *Early Football Activities in The Potteries, c.1844-1869.* 275

Appendix Two: *Stoke Ramblers Players, 1868-1870* 278

Appendix Three: *Complete Database of Association Football Matches in The Potteries, 1868-1878* 280

Appendix Four: *'Explosion' of Football Activities, 1868-1878* 281

Appendix Five: *Formal Association Football Clubs in The Potteries, 1868-1878* 282

Appendix Six: *Analysis of Club Football in The Potteries, 1868-1878* 283

Appendix Seven: *Prosopographical Database: Association Football Players in The Potteries, 1873-1878* 284

Appendix Eight: *Prosopographical Questionnaire: Association Football Players in The Potteries, 1873-1878* 285

Appendix Nine: *Social Class and Occupation of Association Football Players in The Potteries, 1873-1878* 286

Appendix Ten: *Association football players in The Potteries, 1873-1878 – Occupation of committee members and club captains.* 288

Appendix Eleven: *Location of players representing Boothen All Saints (1876 -1878).* 289

Appendix Twelve: *Location of players representing Hanley Rangers (1874 -1878).* 290

Introduction

Association Football in The Potteries: An Introduction

In the final year of Queen Victoria's reign, prior to her death in 1901, the monarch ruled over a country that would have been unrecognisable to the one that had existed when she ascended the throne in 1837. Britain had experienced a period of dramatic societal change where almost every aspect of daily life had been revolutionised. The dual processes of industrialisation and urbanisation reshaped the nation whilst technological advancements, the emergence of fresh attitudes, and the generation of new knowledge transformed life both at home and in the workplace.[1] It was also during the Victoria era that Britain was described as 'the birthplace of modern sport' with activities emerging and developing into their recognisable modern forms during what has been referred to as a 'sporting revolution'.[2] At the start of the nineteenth century, sport had primarily taken the form of informal recreational pastimes that were organised on an ad hoc basis, with few written rules, and consisting of only a small commercial fringe of professional sportsmen and promoters. However, by the end of the period sport had become widely codified and commercialised with a significant increase in the number of formal clubs, participants (both recreational and professional), and spectators who were engaging in regular activities that were played using standardised rules and overseen by governing organisations. There were an increasing number of competitions, cups, and leagues being established with sport also becoming much wider in its geographic scope whilst a vibrant sporting industry consisting of promoters, sporting goods manufacturers, and sporting publications also emerged.[3]

By the end of the nineteenth century, association football had evolved into a recognisable modern form. There had been a clear, definitive split between the association game and its rugby counterpart and matches were played under an unanimously agreed set of rules, many of which remain pertinent in the present day. The English Football Association

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[1] See Michael Paterson, *A Brief History of Life in Victorian Britain: A Social History of Queen Victoria's Reign* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2008); John Gardiner, *The Victorians: An Age in Retrospect* (London: Hambledon, 2007); and Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000).

[2] Tony Collins, *Sport in a Capitalist Society: A Short History* (London: Routledge, 2013), 49; Mike Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport* (London: Hambledon, 2004), 6; and Neil Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society in Britain: 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 13

[3] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society,* 48.

(FA) had cemented its position as the exclusive governing body of the sport whilst various county football associations worked under its umbrella to govern, shape, and develop the game. Association football had also emerged as one of the most popular and prominent sporting activities in the country. At one end of the spectrum was the professional game which was characterised by a growing number of elite clubs that adopted company status with shareholders and limited liability, assembled teams of professional players that competed in the Football League, and regularly attracted thousands of paying spectators who watched matches in purpose-built stadia. This was underpinned by an expansive grassroots culture that consisted of thousands of recreational clubs that competed in local competitions and existed purely to enable members to enjoy playing the game.[4]

Much has been written about the 'birth' of association football in Britain. Over the previous four decades the origins of the modern game has been a vibrant and active area of study with a growing number of academics, historians, and researchers contributing to the expanding body of literature.[5] However, despite this wealth of research the historiography of the game during the early-mid nineteenth century has been the source of much discussion, debate, and disagreement. Academics have failed to reach a consensus regarding the origins and early development of the game and this has resulted in the emergence of two competing paradigms, referred to as the 'orthodox' and 'revisionist' positions, and the 'origins of football' debate.[6] Furthermore, it was during the nineteenth century that association football became 'the people's game', yet, despite the importance of this period in the development of the sport, there remains significant gaps in our understanding.[7] Collins states that 'of all the major cultural activities that rose to prominence in nineteenth century-Britain, football has been the least well served' and that once the reader has consumed the writings of a cluster of prominent scholars they are 'left with a rather thin diet of serious work about … what would become the world's most popular sport'.[8]

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[4] See Matthew Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2008); Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980); and Adrian Harvey, *Football: The First Hundred Years, the Untold Story* (London: Routledge, 2005).

[5] See Graham Curry, 'Introduction: Towards a Deeper Understanding of the Development of Early Football', *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2018): 1-4.

[6] For a synopsis of the origins of football debate see Adrian Harvey, 'The Emergence of Football in Nineteenth Century England: The Historiographic Debate', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, no.18 (2013): 2154-2163; and Taylor, *Association Game*, 20-29.

[7] James Walvin, *The People's Game: A Social History of British Football* (London: Allen Lane, 1975).

Much of the research regarding the development of football during this period has tended to view the subject from a national perspective, but there is an increasing acceptance that the formative years of the game cannot be adequately explained by one broad overarching paradigm or grand narrative. Instead, it has been suggested that greater emphasis needs to be placed on how football developed in specific towns, cities, and regions with the spotlight now shifting away from a national angle to a more localised view. It has been noted that 'the growth of the game in one specific region or city may not necessarily be representative of other areas' and that 'countrywide studies cannot fully address the issues surrounding the origins debate'.[9] In the last decade an increasing number of academics, historians, and researchers have made progressive contributions to the discourse by publishing regional studies that have examined how the game emerged in a specific local context. Regional studies have already explored the emergence of the association game in Manchester,[10] Lancashire,[11] Sheffield,[12] Derbyshire,[13] Birmingham,[14] Nottinghamshire,[15] and the North East[16] with the focus now directed towards areas of the country that remain overlooked in terms of historical research. Furthermore, academics have begun to consider the origins of football in Wales,[17] the United States,[18] Germany,[19] and Australia.[20] It is becoming evident that the development of football in Britain during this period was subject to clear regional variations and that the growth of the game was shaped by local idiosyncrasies as much as any broad national movement. Walton and Walvin have highlighted the positive value of local studies, suggesting that they provide a new perspective to historical understanding, enable deeper analysis, and 'undermine superficial, over-generalised interpretations by illustrating the diversity of local experiences'.[21] Each regional study acts as a brick in the wall in an attempt to build a clearer understanding of the formative years of the modern game. Only once a multitude of towns, cities, and regions have been examined can scholars take a step back, consider the picture before them, and begin to identify the pertinent themes that can explain how the game developed.

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[8] Tony Collins, 'Early Football and the Emergence of Modern Soccer, c .1840-1880', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no.9 (2015): 1127.

[9] Martyn Cooke and Gary James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers: The Early Development of Association Football in The Potteries', *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2017): 6.

[10] See Gary James and Dave Day, 'The Emergence of an Association Football Culture in Manchester, 1840–1884', *Sport in History* 34, no.1 (2014): 49–74.

[11] See Peter Swain, 'Cultural Continuity and Football in Nineteenth-Century Lancashire', *Sport in History* 28, no.4 (2008): 566–582.

[12] See Graham Curry, *A Crucible of Modern Sport: The Early Development of Football in Sheffield* (New York, Nova, 2018); and Kevin Neill, Graham Curry and Eric Dunning, 'Three Men from Two Villages: The Influence of Footballers from Rural South Yorkshire on the Early Development of the Game in Sheffield', *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2018): 123-135.

[13] See Graham Curry, 'Stunted Growth: The Early Development of Football in Derby and South Derbyshire', *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2018): 24-34.

[14] See Adam Benkwitz and Gyozo Molnar, 'The Emergence and Development of Association Football: Influential Sociocultural Factors in Victorian Birmingham', *Soccer and Society* 18, no.7 (2017): 1027-1044.

[15] See Graham Curry and Eric Dunning, 'The 'Origins of Football Debate' and the Early Development of the Game in Nottinghamshire', *Soccer and Society* 18, no.7 (2017): 866-879.

[16] See Paul Joannou and Alan Candish, 'The Early Development of a Football Hotbed: The Onset of the Game in Tyne and Wear, 1877-1882', *Soccer and Society* 19: no.1 (2017): 107-122.

One area that has been overlooked by scholars is the city of Stoke-on-Trent, located in North Staffordshire and part of the West Midlands. It is commonly referred to as 'The Potteries', a direct reference to the pottery and ceramic industry for which the area became renowned in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and has never been the subject of an in-depth academic study into its sporting history.[22] The Potteries is of interest to those examining the emergence of football in the nineteenth century as the game is central to the region's modern identity and evidence of an association football culture in the area can be traced back to the first half of the Victorian period. It possesses what is perceived to be the second oldest surviving professional football club in England, Stoke City FC, whilst it was also the initial location of the Staffordshire Football Association, one of the earliest County Football Associations to emerge in Britain.[23] Arnold Bennett remarked that:

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[17] See Martin Johnes and Ian Garland, '"The New Craze": Football and Society in North-East Wales, c.1870-90', *The Welsh History Review* 22 (2004): 278-304.

[18] See Brian Bunk, 'Football Outside the Schools in the United States before Codification', in *The Early Development of Football: Contemporary Debates*, ed. Graham Curry (New York: Routledge, 2019), 11-25.

[19] See Hans-Peter Hock, 'The Beginnings of Football in Germany in Light of Contemporary Sources', in *The Early Development of Football: Contemporary Debates*, ed. Graham Curry (New York: Routledge, 2019), 26-45.

[20] See Roy Hay, 'Researching the Origins and Early History of the Football Codes: A View from Down Under', in *The Early Development of Football: Contemporary Debates*, ed. Graham Curry (New York: Routledge, 2019), 46-60.

[21] John K. Walton & James Walvin, 'Introduction', in *Leisure in Britain: 1780-1939*, eds. John K. Walton & James Walvin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 2.

[22] See Alan Taylor, *Stoke-on-Trent: A History* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2003); Cameron Hawke-Smith, *The Making of the Six Towns* (Hanley: City Museum and Art Gallery, 1985); and David Sekers, *The Potteries* (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2009).

> *'Football alone reigns supreme and has no serious rival. The Potteries was one of the first centres of football, and in the history of the association game, the name Stoke on Trent is glorious … there is nothing like football in North Staffordshire'.*[24]

Although Bennett's storylines were fictitious, his writings were founded on his experiences of living in The Potteries during the Victorian era with the various features of his stories based on genuine people, places, and businesses (although often under alternative names). By the 1880s, association football had become established across the region and the game captivated the local populace to such an extent that other sporting activities struggled to gain popularity.[25] Furthermore, several prominent local figures were key contributors to the development of the game both locally and nationally. For example, Thomas Charles Slaney was a central figure in the emergence of association football in the West Midlands, Harry Lockett was elected as the first secretary of the Football League in 1888, and William Heath was a leading administrator and referee.[26] From a modern perspective, the game remains a central feature of the region's identity in the twenty-first century. The Potteries is the smallest city in England to host two professional football clubs, Stoke City FC and Port Vale FC, and there are no other professional sports clubs present in the area. The region has never possessed a cricket or rugby club of national repute, local horse racing had disappeared entirely by the 1870s, and athletics diminished in popularity during the early-twentieth century. This has resulted in association football becoming established as the primary sporting pursuit of the local populace, both in terms of playing and spectating, for over a century.[27] However, barring some scattered interest in the history of Stoke City FC and Port Vale FC, both scholars and local historians alike have failed to consider why football came to hold such influence, interest, and enthusiasm in The Potteries.

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[23] Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 6.

[24] Arnold Bennett, *The Card: A Story of Adventure in the Five Towns* (Yorkshire: Methuen, 1911), 281.

[25] 'Staffordshire County Cricket Club', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 1, 1894, 2.

[26] Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 13-18; Matthew Taylor, *The Leaguers. The Making of Professional Football in England, 1900-1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 50-51; and Martyn Dean Cooke, 'The Inextricable Link Between Sport and the Press in the Victorian Era: The Example of the "Sentinel Cup"', *Sport in History* 39, no.1 (2019): 16, 19.

[27] See Martyn Dean Cooke, 'The Development of Sport in the Potteries during the Nineteenth Century: An Initial Survey', *Midland History* 49, no.2 (2021): 178-191.

Aims, Objectives and Method

The primary purpose of this thesis is to establish an understanding of the origins, development, and evolution of association football in The Potteries between 1840 and 1880. During this period the game underwent a dramatic transformation in which it began to adopt many of the characteristics that remain recognisable in the present day. In the first half of the nineteenth century, association football in The Potteries remained an informal recreational activity that was played on an ad hoc basis using rules that were derived from local oral traditions whilst there were no formal clubs, organisations or governance. By 1880, the game had emerged as the most popular sport in the region which was played and spectated by a growing number of people who were members of an increasing volume of formal clubs that were governed by the Staffordshire Football Association. This thesis seeks to explore this period of development by addressing four key areas:

- To trace the evolution of football in The Potteries and explore why the game experienced a period of dramatic transformation and expansion between 1840 and 1880.
- To examine the first generation of formal association football clubs to be established in The Potteries by analysing their origins, structure, and activities.
- To use a combination of two biographical methods, prosopography and individual biography, to identify and analyse the lives of the men that were actively involved in the game in The Potteries as players, committee members, and administrators.
- To explore how the Staffordshire Football Association sought to provide greater governance for the game in The Potteries by analysing its origins, structure, and formative activities.

This thesis employs a narrative approach to demonstrate how association football evolved in The Potteries between 1840 and 1880. Day and Vamplew suggest that within sport history 'storytelling is the means through which the once real past is related by the historian'[28] whilst Booth defines narrative as 'a coherent story comprising of a series of sequential and consequential relationships'[29] that is validated by relevant sources and evidence. Narrative has been described as a 'powerful stimuli to the imagination, and to the mind's effort to learn and explore'.[30] A variety of methodological tools have been utilised to identify, collect, and analyse the data presented within this thesis, which has enabled a more detailed narrative to be developed. This combination of methods has provided the author with the opportunity to maximise the potential value of various historical sources, materials, and evidence, some of which would have been overlooked if there had been a reliance on a single methodological tool.

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[28] Dave Day and Wray Vamplew, 'Sports History Methodology: Old and New', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 15 (2015): 1715.

First, biography is used to explore the life courses of individuals who made significant contributions to the growth and development of association football in The Potteries. Cowman defines biography as 'at its simplest, the history of an individual's life'[31] whilst Oldfield states that it 'describes turning-point moments in individual's lives by interpreting data to present a holistic version of a life course'.[32] They are subjective accounts that are constructed using empirical evidence to present an idiosyncratic perspective that is placed within the wider historical context. It can be used to 'study complex historical developments by explaining the interactions between man and environment' especially when the actions, decisions, and motives of an individual are central to understanding events.[33] Lee claims that biography 'is the safest way, to protect memory form oblivion'[34] although Smith warns that 'biography becomes not an end in itself, but a helpful element in the pursuit of other ends'.[35] Furthermore, the accuracy, validity and 'trustworthiness' of creating biographies has been questioned with one concern being that the biographer will empathise with the subject and fail to critically examine the evidence. This can result in the construction of hagiographies, which present an idolised account of an individual's life with their flaws, faults, and mistakes being removed, overlooked or distorted so that their achievements and impact on society are accentuated. Such accounts lack realism, result in one-dimensional narratives and absolves the subject of critical discussion.[36]

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[29] Douglas Booth, *The Field: Truth and Fiction in Sport History* (London: Routledge, 2005), 13, 92.

[30] John S. Lyons, Louis P. Cain, and Samuel H. Williamson, eds., *Reflections of the Cliometrics Revolution: Conversations with Economic Historians* (London: Routledge, 2008), 190.

[31] Krista Cowman, 'Collective Biography', in *Research Methods for History*, eds. Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 83.

[32] Samantha-Jayne Oldfield, 'Narrative Methods in Sport History Research: Biography, Collective Biography, and Prosopography', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 15 (2015): 1861.

[33] Ibid, 1861.

[34] Sidney Lee, *Principles of Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 8–9.

[35] Louis M. Smith, 'Biographical Method', in *SAGE Biographical Research*, ed. John Goodwin (London: SAGE, 2013), 16.

The subjects of biographies are primarily individuals who are exceptional or unique and this often results in those that are deemed as ordinary being overlooked. However, prosopography is not concerned with understanding individuals or extraordinary people, but rather it seeks to explore the common characteristics of a wider population whilst determining similarities and differences. Verboven and colleagues state that 'prosopography is not interested in the unique but in the average, the general and 'commonness' in the life histories of more or less large numbers of individuals'.[37] The overarching purpose of prosopography is to collect data on a target population through uniformed questioning in order to identify commonalities, differences, and phenomena that transcend individual lives.[38] Within this thesis, prosopography is used to examine the life courses of two specific populations: the players that represented the first formal association football club to be established in The Potteries, Stoke Ramblers; and the individuals that played for recreational association football clubs in The Potteries between 1873 and 1878. Both target populations consist of individuals that are mostly anonymous, with limited historical materials or evidence detailing their lives, yet prosopography can organise scarce data that has limited value when viewed in isolation in such a way that it reveals connections, patterns, and commonalties.[39]

Finally, this thesis is underpinned by a significant amount of empirical data that has been gathered through archival research. A large amount of historical evidence is located in private, public or institutional archives with King noting that 'archival research is for many modern historians the bread and butter of their professional experiences'.[40] However, some scholars have challenged the perception that archives are simple, straightforward sites of knowledge. Vamplew warns that 'archives are sites of power that privilege some information above other information'[41] whilst others have highlighted examples of historical sources being fabricated, destroyed or concealed.[42] However, the nature of historical research is changing, driven by unprecedented advancements and developments in technology within what has been described as the 'digital era'.[43] An increasing volume of historical materials are being digitalised and uploaded to online archives where Optical Character Recognition (OCR) enables instant keywork searches.[44] Johnes and Nicholson likened traditional archival research to 'searching for the proverbial needle in a haystack',[45] but the digital era now provides historians with access to more information, that is easier to search, than ever before. Despite these benefits, the digital era is also underpinned by several practical limitations. Many digital archives are hidden behind a paywall or are incomplete whilst OCR technology and keyword searches can be erratic, leading to relevant material being overlooked.[46] Ultimately, Osmond and Phillips concluded that 'available online sources will not always be sufficient' and that physical 'archival materials, only available to be viewed in person, remain important to historians'.[47]

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[36] Carl Rollyson, 'Theoretical Discussions of Biography: Approaches from History, Microhistory and Life Writing', *Biography* 36, no. 2 (2013): 393-394; and Josh Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (London, Longman, 1999), 68.

[37] Koenraad Verboven, Myriam Carlier and Jan Dumolyn, 'Art of Prosopography', in *Prosopography Approaches and Applications: A Handbook*, ed. Katherine S.B. Keats-Rohan (Oxford: Linacre College, 2007), 41.

[38] Lawrence Stone, 'Prosopography', *Daedalus* 100 (1971): 46; and R. Arvid Nelson, 'Race and Computing: The Problem of Sources, the Potential of Prosopography, and the Lesson of *Ebony* Magazine', *Annuals of the History of Computing* 39, no. 1 (2017): 35.

[39] Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn, 'Art of Prosopography', 37.

[40] Michelle King, 'Working With/In Archives', in *Research Methods for History*, eds. Simon Gunn and Lucy Fair (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Press, 2011), 13.

Local newspapers and publications, such as the *Staffordshire Sentinel* and the *Staffordshire Advertiser*, have proven to be an invaluable source of information throughout this study. Hignell has highlighted how regional newspapers regularly published reports concerning local sporting events and occurrences throughout the nineteenth century at a time when few sports clubs sought to produce club histories or considered preserving records.[48] For this thesis, local newspapers and publications have provided an important insight into the football activity was occurring across The Potteries through the publication of match reports, results, and advertisements. Furthermore, they also capture the voice of the local populace as these regional publications regularly published football related correspondence, in the form of letters that were sent to the editor, whilst also reporting on the annual meetings of various teams, clubs, and organisations. Additional primary materials were also utilised throughout the study including school records, official logbooks, and personal or organisation diaries with genealogical information obtained through accessing census records in addition to birth, death, and marriage certificates. This enabled the triangulation of key elements of the research, which reinforces the validity of the work, whilst providing further depth and detail.[49]

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[41] Wray Vamplew, 'History of Sport', in *Social Sciences in Sport*, ed. Joseph Maguire (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2014), 16.

[42] Douglas Booth, 'Sites of Truth or Metaphors of Power? Refiguring the Archive', *Sport in History* 26, no. 1 (2006): 97.

[43] See Gary Osmond and Murray G. Phillips, *Sport History in the Digital Era* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015).

[44] Gary Osmond and Murray G. Phillips, 'Introduction', in *Sport History in the Digital Era*, eds. Gary Osmond and Murray G. Phillips, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 17.

[45] Martin Johnes and Bob Nicholson, 'Sport History and Digital Archives in Practice', in *Sport History in the Digital Era*, eds. Gary Osmond and Murray G. Phillips (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 55.

[46] Adrian Bingham, 'Digitization of Newspaper Archives: Opportunities and Challenges for Historians', *Twentieth Century British History* 21, no. 2, (2010): 226; Bob Nicholson, 'Digital Detectives: Rediscovering the Scholar Adventure', *Victorian Periodicals Review* 45, no. 2 (2012), 201; Martin Johnes, 'Archives and Historians of Sport', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 15 (2015): 1789; Johnes and Nicholson, 'Digital Archives in Practice', 63; and Toni Weller, 'Introduction: History in the Digital Age', in *History in the Digital Age*, ed. Toni Weller (London: Routledge, 2013), 7.

[47] Osmond and Phillips, 'Introduction', 15.

[48] Andrew Hignell, 'Participants and Providers: A Micro-Scale Analysis of Cricket in Cardiff During the Nineteenth Century', *Sport in Society* 14, no.2 (2012): 166.

Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis makes a significant contribution to knowledge in several pertinent ways. First, on a broad level, it enhances our understanding of the historiography of association football during the nineteenth century by presenting an in-depth regional study which examines the development of the game in a specific localised context. There have been calls for more regional studies to be undertaken, so that the diversity of local experiences can be illustrated, and The Potteries has never been the subject of an in-depth academic study despite it being a hotspot of association football activity during the Victorian era. [50] This thesis represents another piece of the mosaic of regional football studies that are being conducted as scholars seek to create a clearer understanding of how the game grew nationally. Although The Potteries possesses a unique geopolitical and industrial composition this should not deter comparisons with other towns, cities, and regions. Various locations in Britain retain prominent idiosyncrasies, which is precisely why association football developed at an uneven rate during the nineteenth century. As such, every localised study can be used for comparative purposes so that commonalities and differences can be identified which can inform the national debate.

Second, this thesis contributes to the origins of football debate by examining the emergence of the association game in The Potteries in relation to the orthodox and revisionist paradigms. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, the evolution and development of association football in the region does not align completely with either position, which further reinforces the notion that neither of these two overarching paradigms adequately explain the emergence of modern football. This thesis concludes that a new approach is required when considering the origins of football in Britain. It is evident that the development of the game cannot be reduced to a clear-cut choice between the orthodox or revisionist position and that attempting to impose either of these grand narratives is counterproductive. Instead, scholars need to consider new methods of analysing the evidence and to reframe the debate rather than simply repeating and retracing long-standing arguments. This thesis applies the concept of Fernand Braudel's Long Durée which encourages historians to take a more long-term view of history rather than becoming consumed by single events, occurrences or time periods.[51] Several contributors to the origins of football debate have been criticised for presenting isolated historical events as 'proof' of the existence of an extensive association football culture existing.[52] In contrast, the Long Durée supports historians to move beyond creating event-based histories.[53] This thesis does not claim that the Fernand Braudel's framework will resolve the origins of football debate, but rather that it demonstrates how applying a new concept enables us to reframe the discourse and approach the evidence from a new perspective.

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[49] Vamplew, 'History of Sport', 17; and Johnes, 'Archives and Historians', 1793.

[50] Graham Curry, 'Introduction', 1.

However, this thesis is more than just another contribution to the origins of football debate. It is a comprehensive historiography of the association game in The Potteries between 1840 and 1880 which considers a variety of key themes, topics, and discussions by utilising several methodological tools and theoretical models.

Chapter Two also examines the origins and formative years of the first formal association football club to be established in The Potteries, Stoke Ramblers. The origins of the club have been the source of much discussion, debate, and confusion with contrasting narratives emerging as to when it was established whilst there has been uncertainty regarding who founded the club and who played in the team during its formative period.[54] This thesis resolves many of these uncertainties. It confirms that the club was created in 1868, five years later than claimed in traditional histories, whilst the founder, Harry John Almond, has been successfully identified with a biographical account of his life constructed for the first time. Furthermore, a prosopographical approach has been used to distinguish and examine the first cohort of players that represented the club. More broadly, Stoke Ramblers is used as a case study to discuss the concept of myths and mythologizing in sport history by examining why myths emerge and gain a power and resilience that enable them to persist in modern society.

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[51] See Fernand Braudel, *On History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

[52] Tony Collins, 'Early Football', 1134; and Gary James, 'Historical Frameworks and Sporting Research', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33, no.10 (2016): 1170.

[53] Lincoln Allison and Alan Tomlinson, *Understanding International Sport Organisations: Principles, Power and Possibilities* (London: Routledge, 2017), 56; and William McNeill, 'Fernand Braudel, Historian', *Journal of Modern History* 73, no,1 (2001): 133.

Stoke Ramblers remained the only formal association football club in The Potteries until the mid-1870s when the game experienced a dramatic expansion across the region. Chapter Three explores how improving socio-economic conditions and the adoption of the half-holiday stimulated a significant increase in the number of formal clubs that were established and the amount of people playing the game. However, it has been highlighted that 'ordinary sports clubs have largely been ignored by historians of sport'[55] with research tending to focus on those that are the most prestigious and successful, especially if they remain relevant in the modern era.[56] To counter this theme, Chapter Three applies Vamplew's 'ideal-type' model of the sports club to identify the formal association football clubs that were established in The Potteries for recreational purposes during the 1870s.[57] This includes determining their origins, discerning their purpose, and analysing their activities, structure, and facilities in order to present a comprehensive account of the emergence of club football in the region. This ensures that this thesis not only considers the most prominent club in The Potteries during this period (Stoke Ramblers / Stoke FC) but also examines the significant number of 'ordinary' grassroots clubs that were equally as important to the development of the game in The Potteries.

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[54] See Martyn Dean Cooke, '"Many Details Remain Sketchy": Revealing the "Truth" Behind the Origins and Formation of Stoke City Football Club', *Soccer and Society* 21, no. 4 (2020): 395-407.

[55] Keith Gregson and Mike Huggins, 'Ashbrooke Whit Sports, Sunderland and its Records: A Case Study of Amateurism in Late Victorian and Edwardian Athletic and Cycling Competition', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33, no.9 (2014): 994.

[56] Gavin Kitching, '"Old" Football and the "New" Codes: Some Thoughts on the "Origins of Football" Debate and Suggestions for Further Research', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, no.13 (2011): 1742.

[57] Wray Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies: A Historical Exploration of the Sports Club in Britain', *International Journal of Sports History* 30, no. 14, (2013): 1572.

The thesis then progresses by considering who the members of these recreational football clubs were. It proposes that the men who represented these local clubs alongside friends, family or colleagues in front of a handful of bystanders are just as important to understanding the development of the game, perhaps more so, than those that played for prominent clubs in front of thousands of paying spectators. Huggins notes that we know little about the memberships and participation rates of recreational sports clubs whilst few scholars have sought to explore who played for specific association football clubs during the nineteenth century.[58] Chapter Four addresses this gap in the literature by using a prosopographical method to identify, examine, and analyse individuals that were actively playing association football for recreational clubs that were based in The Potteries between 1873 and 1878. The use of mass prosopography provides aggregate data that enables the analysis of ordinary people or an anonymous population which can be difficult to facilitate using alternative methods due to a lack of surviving materials and evidence.[59] This study successfully identified 247 players and the subsequent analysis enabled the author to generate a clear image of who these men were, including their age, marital status, occupation, social classification, and family background. This provides a fresh insight into the individuals who played the association game during the nineteenth century.

As the reader navigates their way through this thesis, they may come to a realisation that women have been omitted from the narrative almost entirely. This is not a purposeful decision on the part of the author, but rather this occurs because of the practical realities of the period being investigated and the scope of the research. Sport in Britain during much of the Victorian era was undoubtedly primarily a male pursuit, with the majority of participants and spectators being comprised of men. It was not until the final decades of the nineteenth century that women, as they started to agitate for improved economic, social, and political conditions, began to become a more tangible and visible presence in British sport. This is certainly true of football, both in terms of the dribbling and handling forms of the game. Williams has noted that the first recorded formal association football match in which women participated took place as late as 1888, although more informal occurrences of varying descriptions have been identified in earlier decades.[60] This thesis utilises various primary sources, including hundreds of reports published in newspapers, yet there is little mention of women having been involved in the emergence of the association game in The Potteries. There are no examples of women playing the game in the region during this period whilst only a scattering of advertisements for football matches during the late 1870s and early 1880s, in which they note that women can enter a ground free of charge, indicate their presence as spectators. Ultimately, female sport in Britain remains under-researched and there is much that we have yet to discover. However, although a growing number of academics are seeking to rectify this matter, this thesis does not have the appropriate focus nor evidence to contribute to this element of discourse.

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[58] Mike Huggins, 'Second-Class Citizens? English Middle-Class Culture and Sport, 1850-1910: A Reconsideration', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 17, no.1 (2000): 10.

[59] Kathleen E. Kennedy, 'Prosopography of the Book and the Politics of Legal Language in Late Medieval England', *Journal of British Studies* 53 (2014): 566.

During the 1870s, despite association football experiencing a period of growth and expansion in The Potteries, the game itself remained unstructured and somewhat fractured. Contrasting sets of rules and varying interpretations of the game were present in the region which led to regular disputes between players, teams, and clubs.[61] Chapter Five considers how a growing demand for greater governance emerged as the 1870s progressed which ultimately concluded in the establishment of the Staffordshire Football Association in 1877. Thomas Charles Slaney was the foremost figure in the formation of the organisation and a biography of his life is presented which considers how he emerged as one of the leading sporting administrators in the Midlands during the final three decades of the nineteenth century. Mangan and Hickey have highlighted how many of the men who played a central role in the development of the association game at a local level as administrators during this period have been overlooked by existing research.[62] Chapter Five helps to partly address this gap in the literature. Similarly, the origins, organisation, and activities of county football associations that emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century have received minimal scholarly attention. This final chapter examines the formative years of the Staffordshire FA for the first time and considers how the organisation sought to bring governance to the game in The Potteries whilst also facilitating its growth by introducing the region's first knock-out cup competition.

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[60] Jean Williams, *A Game for Rough Girls? A History of Women's Football in Britain* (London: Routledge, 2003), 26.
Harold L. Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign, 1866–1928* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010).

[61] Taylor, *Association Game*, 31.

[62] James Anthony Mangan and Colm Hickey, 'Keeping the Ball Rolling: Administering the Game', *Soccer and Society* 9, no.5 (2008): 769.

Ultimately, this thesis presents the first comprehensive study of the development of association football in The Potteries whilst also considering a variety of themes and topics that encompass urban, economic, and social history. It is underpinned by a significant amount of empirical evidence, the vast majority of which has not been utilised in broader national studies, whilst a variety of methodological tools have been used to analyse and interpret the information available. It culminates by making several conclusions.

First, that some form of football was present in The Potteries in the first half of the nineteenth century and that it was actively encouraged rather than being subject to suppression. However, it was only the arrival of Harry John Almond in the region, who had just concluded his studies at Charterhouse school, that stimulated the formation of the first formal association football club in 1868. Second, it was not until the mid-1870s that the association game experienced a period of significant expansion. An increase in the number of formal clubs coincided with the adoption of the half-holiday in The Potteries, which provided the local populace with a regular block of free time, and a general improvement in socio-economic conditions, primarily an increase in disposable income. These clubs emerged from a variety of pre-existing organisations or were created due to the geographic proximity of their members. Third, association football possessed a working-class character from the 1870s onwards, although it was middle class individuals who often held positions of authority. The majority of recreational players were drawn from the working classes, but the committees of formal clubs tended to consist of middle-class men who possessed occupational skills and knowledge which were suited to running a sports club. Fourth, the association game remained somewhat fragmented during the 1870s with the presence of various contrasting sets of rules leading to regular disputes and disagreements amongst players, officials, and clubs. It was Thomas Charles Slaney that instigated the formation of the Staffordshire Football Association in 1877 to bring greater structure and governance to the game in the region. The organisation adopted one set of rules, established a knock-out cup competition, and led efforts to further promote and develop association football in The Potteries. It was enthusiastic individuals, such as Slaney, that facilitated the evolution of the game in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Finally, this thesis concludes by encouraging scholars to explore new ways of viewing the origins of football in Britain and to move away from the traditional overarching paradigms that have dominated the discourse. Fernand Braudel’s Long Durée is adapted and applied to showcase how taking a more long-term view of history can enabled us to reframe debates and view evidence from a new perspective.

Chapter One[1]

Life and Sport in Victorian Britain and The Potteries

Life in Victorian Britain

Throughout the nineteenth century, Britain experienced a period of dramatic societal change where the mechanics of everyday life were revolutionised by technological advancements and industrial innovation coupled with the emergence of fresh attitudes and the generation of new knowledge. In the final year of Queen Victoria's reign, prior to her death in 1901, the monarch ruled over a country that would have been almost unrecognisable to the one that had existed when she ascended the throne 63 years earlier. It is difficult to think of any aspect of life that was not subject to change or of any beliefs or perceptions that were not at some point challenged and debated.[2] By the turn of the twentieth century candles had been replaced by gas lighting, telegrams and telephones had altered the speed and range of communication, and transport had been transformed by the expansion of the railway system and the invention of the motorcar.[3] The way in which people travelled, communicated, worked, dealt with sickness, and spent their leisure time changed dramatically amidst a whirl of modernity. By the late Victorian period, even the concepts of religion and gender relations, which had been immune to the societal changes that affected almost all other aspects of life, were both challenged as evolutionary theory threatened interpretations of conventional faith and religion whilst the emergence of the suffragette movement defied traditional perceptions of the role and influence of women.[4] However, whilst some modern histories have referred to the Victorian era as a 'Golden Age' it is misleading to suggest that the period progressed without some degree of disruption, disharmony, and uncertainty as the population adapted to industrial life. The period was characterised by economic prosperity, as industrialists sought to enhance productivity and real wages increased for workers, and the generation of knowledge, which saw significant improvements in science, medicine, and education, but these benefits were not experienced by all members of society. For the lower classes, the Victorian era was a period of turbulent change that resulted in the exploitation of workers, many who operated in poor conditions, for long hours and little financial gain, and growing levels of poverty and inequality. The civil unrest that preceded Queen Victoria's reign, characterised by the Peterloo massacre in Manchester (1819) and the Reform Act Riots (1831), continued into the mid-nineteenth century as the population were encouraged, or concerned, by the prospect of political reform and broader socio-political movements, as exemplified by the General Strike (1842).[5]

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[1] Content from this chapter has been published in the following articles or chapters: Martyn Dean Cooke, 'The Development of Sport in the Potteries during the Nineteenth Century: An Initial Survey', *Midland History* 49, no.2 (2021): 178-191; and Martyn Dean Cooke, 'The Inextricable Link Between Sport and the Press in the Victorian Era: The Example of the 'Sentinel Cup'', *Sport in History* 39, no.1 (2019): 1-23.

[2] See George M. Young, *Portrait of an Age: Victorian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1964); John Gardiner, *The Victorians: An Age in Retrospect* (London: Hambledon, 2007); and Susie L. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 2017).

[3] See Michael Paterson, *A Brief History of Life in Victorian Britain: A Social History of Queen Victoria's Reign* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2008).

[4] See Gardiner, *An Age in Retrospect;* Harold L. Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign, 1866–1928* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010).

Britain became a global power during the Victorian era as intensive industrialisation revolutionised the manufacturing process and facilitated the emergence of an industrial society that emphasised the importance of productivity, efficiency, and financial profit. Whilst the Industrial Revolution was instigated during the eighteenth century, its effects and influence continued to grow throughout the following epoch with Britain becoming the most highly industrialised country per capita in Europe and being described as the 'workshop of the world'.[6] The introduction of technological and conceptual advances, such as steam power and the factory system, enabled previously unsophisticated industries to move away from the small-scale cottage-style mode of production to a comprehensive business model that employed larger workforces and created greater outputs. The previous agrarian model, which utilised a permissive cyclical approach that was largely dependent on seasonal variation, was replaced by the industrial factory system that implemented authoritarian regimes and regimented working hours.[7] The rhythm of rural life was determined by the cycle of the farming year where periods of intense activity, such as during the planting, harvesting and shearing seasons, were interspersed with stages of irregular work.[8] In contrast, the adoption of the industrial mode of work altered the valuation of time with the factory system seeking to maximise productivity through stricter working procedures and longer, consistent working hours. Lowerson and Mysercough state that this was characterised by 'the practice of clocking-in at work and the affixing of clocks to public buildings after the 1840s [which] provided ways to measure wasted time and the means to save it'.[9]

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[5] See Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000); and Paterson, *Life in Victorian Britain;* Gardiner, *An Age in Retrospect.*

[6] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital*, 40.

[7] Samantha-Jayne Oldfield, 'Narratives of Manchester Pedestrianism: Using Biographical Methods to Explore the Development of Athletics During the Nineteenth Century' (PhD diss., Manchester Metropolitan University, 2014), 1.

[8] Wray Vamplew, 'Industrialization and Sport', in *The Oxford Handbook of Sports History*, eds. Robert Endleman and Wayne Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 131; and John Lowerson and John Myerscough, *Time to Spare in Victorian England* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1977), 8.

Developments in transport and communication, notably the railway and steam liner, enhanced the geographic scope of industrial production and allowed businesses to export and sell products, goods, and resources on a national and global scale.[10] Birley notes that between 1830 and 1850 exports doubled, encouraging a significant increase in profits and investment, and that the expansion of the railway system, which provided links between ports, factories, coal fields, and an increasing number of conurbations, was key to generating momentum in industrial production and stimulating economic growth.[11] Britain became the leading industrial power of the period with a dense flow of goods, capital, and labour being disseminated across Europe and new technological revolutions beginning to emerge. Whilst the prominent products of the Industrial Revolution were initially iron, coal, and textiles by the mid-nineteenth century chemical and electrical innovations were being incorporated into the factory system. Artificial dyes, telegraphy, explosives, and photography were all transferred from the laboratory to the factory and were being extensively manufactured or utilised in the production process by the end of the Victorian era.[12] Furthermore, Britain's influence extended far beyond the British Isles. The British Empire, which constituted over 400 million people and covered almost a quarter or the world's landmass at its height, was a unique 'economic resource to be used for the benefit of the mother country' which facilitated trade links across the globe whilst simultaneously disseminating British values, sports, and education.[13]

Industrialisation drove the British labour force during the nineteenth century and stimulated significant alterations to employment procedures and working practices as the factory-based system replaced the agrarian model that had previously existed. However,

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[9] Lowerson and Myerscough, *Time to Spare*, 14.

[10] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital*, 52-53.

[11] Derek Birley, *Sport and the Making of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 201.

[12] See Edward A. Wrigley, *Continuity and Change: The Character of the Industrial Revolution in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[13] Paterson, *Life in Victorian Britain*, 299.

Vamplew emphasises that industrialisation was a long, drawn-out process, with agriculture remaining the largest employment sector for much of the first half of the nineteenth century, and it was only the widespread application of steam power from the second quarter of the century onwards that began to accelerate the emergence of factory-based industries.[14] The increasing importance placed on productivity and efficiency in the workplace saw industrialists prioritising profit generation, sometimes to the detriment of the health, safety, and wellbeing of their workforce. It was common for employees, including women and children, to work in excess of twelve hours a day, which in some factory-based industries could rise up to eighteen hours, over a six-day working week for what was often minimal pay with little job security.[15] Factory workers often faced unsanitary and dangerous conditions with sanitation, ventilation, and the safety of machinery the prominent concerns whilst colliers faced the more obvious dangers of the collapse or flooding of mineshafts. Despite this, for much of the period there were limited demands from the employees themselves for the improvement of working conditions with Birley noting that 'to such pragmatic working classes having a job and trying to secure a good wage were more important'.[16] Vamplew has noted that 'economic change was not confined to the industrial sector' and that 'agriculture too underwent a transformation' that resulted in changes to working patterns and habits in rural areas.[17] There was a significant increase in the amount of land brought into cultivation whilst investment in enclosure, drainage, roads, and the construction of farm buildings resulted in landowners and farmers becoming more concerned with productivity and maximising resources as the period continued.

As the nineteenth century progressed there was a growing demand for implementation of legislation to improve working conditions and reduce working hours in factories and workshops, resulting in multiple Factory Acts and amendment bills being implemented to regulate the conditions of industrial employment. The early Acts were initially concerned with the cotton mills of northern England but from the 1860s onwards there was a significant expansion in the number of industries that were brought within the jurisdiction of the Factory Inspectorate. The Factory Acts gradually assisted the wellbeing of employees, with a particular emphasis on children and women, limiting the working week to ten hours a day in some industries and ameliorating working conditions through demanding improved ventilation, sanitation, guarding around machinery, and protection against accidents.[18] The working week continued to evolve with the introduction and acceptance of the half-holiday, which allowed employees to work what was effectively a half-day on either Saturday or, in some cases, Thursday. The 1850 Factory Act required textile workers to be granted leave on Saturday afternoons starting at 2:00 p.m. and this was gradually adopted within other industries.[19] The dissemination of the half-holiday was dependent on local variation with the concept being embraced quicker in regions that were dominated by single manufacturing industries or possessed trade unions that could wield significant influence. The 1878 Factory Act permitted all those employed in factories or workshops the same right as textile workers although shopkeepers, clerks, servants, and unskilled workers would often still be required to work through Saturday depending on the local political environment. The acceptance of the half-holiday provided the working- and middle-classes with a weekly block of free time which would facilitate the emergence of a thriving sport and leisure culture in Britain.

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[14] Vamplew, *Industrialization and Sport*, 132.

[15] Hugh Cunningham, *Time, Work and Leisure: Life Changes in England since 1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 58.

[16] Birley, *Sport*, 202.

[17] Wray Vamplew, 'Sport and Industrialisation: An Economic Interpretation of the Changes in Popular Sport in Nineteenth Century England', in *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700-1914*, ed. James Anthony Mangan (London: Frank Cass, 1988), 9.

Despite industrialisation transforming working patterns and restricting the amount of free time available for much of the population, many traditional customs continued to be upheld during the nineteenth century. The practice of Saint Monday, ‘whereby employees often treated the day as leisure and subsequently absented themselves from work’, continued in many regions despite the introduction and enforcement of stricter employment procedures.[20] Reid indicates that by the mid-nineteenth century ‘Monday was generally kept as a holiday by a great proportion of the working classes’ and was present in small-scale domestic industries and certain heavier trades, such as the steel mills of Sheffield, the iron and glass works of the Midlands, and the brickfields and collieries of Staffordshire.[21] Other customs linked to religious, seasonal, and regional calendars also continued with annual celebrations, such as Shrove Tuesday, retaining their popularity in many regions. Furthermore, Poole reveals that ‘the wakes’, a religious festival in origin that marked the dedicated day of a church and its patron saint, was a common feature of life in the Midlands and the north of England.[22] The celebration would see local factories and businesses close for a day, or in some cases a week, but it became removed from its religious purpose and was adopted as a day of leisure. Despite continuing resistance from industrialists and business owners ‘in nearly all cases employers had to settle for some form of compromise … [and] had to submit in some degree to the force of custom’.[23] However, as the period progressed the threat of unemployment combined with the introduction of the half-holiday gradually eroded the popularity of many of these traditions, although in specific regions and industries some customs survived into the twentieth century.[24]

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[18] Signey Webb, 'Preface', in *A History of Factory Legislation*, ed. B. L. Hutchins and A. Harrison (London: P.S. King & Son, 1911), vii-xiv; and Cunningham, *Time, Work and Leisure*, 61.

[19] Mike Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport* (London: Hambledon, 2004), 15.

[20] Lowerson and Myerscough, *Time to Spare*, 13-14; and Graham Curry, ‘Football Spectatorship in mid-to-late Victorian Sheffield’, *Soccer and Society* 8, no.2-3 (2007): 187.

[21] Douglas, A. Reid, ‘The Decline of Saint Monday, 1766-1876’, *Past and Present* 71 (1976): 81, 91.

Throughout the nineteenth century there was an unprecedented increase in the population of Britain, doubling from an estimated total of 24,000,000 in 1831 to upwards of 41,000,000 in 1901, with advancements in medicine and sanitation contributing to a decrease in mortality and prolonging life expectancy.[25] Midwinter notes that there was a significant decline in the death rate, almost halving by the second half of the century, whilst the birth rate remained consistent.[26] The expanding population became more extensively and intensively urbanised with large concentrations of people living in relatively large, dense, and complex urban settlements and emerging industrial cities. Meller states that ‘the congregation of the majority of the population into large cities’ was ‘one of the most remarkable social changes in nineteenth century Britain’.[27] London would always remain the largest conurbation throughout the period, but the era witnessed a significant increase in the number of cities that grew to contain a population that exceeded 100,000. By 1914, forty-two cities had a population of 100,000 or more, compared to just sixteen in 1861. In a fifty-year period between 1811 and 1861 the population of Liverpool multiplied five times, the resort town of Brighton seven times and the textile centre of Bradford eight times.[28] The composition and complexity of these cities was determined by regional idiosyncrasies, such as their geographical and political scope, and processes or developments attributed to industrialisation, such as prominent industries and technological advancements. Railway companies, who owned up to nine percent of the urban area in some cities, emerged as significant forces that could shape the urban environment whilst from the 1850s local authorities invested in the proliferation of public buildings and amenities.[29] New technologies emerged to further shape industrial cities with most major conurbations installing gas lighting by the 1820s, glazed pipes to ease the problems of water supply and sewage disposal by the 1840s, and iron-framed buildings, lifts, telephones, and trams during the 1880s.[30] However, the rapid pace of urbanisation during the nineteenth century led to an aggravation of traditional urban problems. Concerns were raised 'about public health and morality as population density, slum conditions, pollution, and the loss of open spaces were associated with sedentary lifestyles, epidemics, and a vibrant tavern culture'.[31] In the early Victorian period these problems had been considered the vices of only the largest cities, yet now they were prevalent issues across an increasing number of growing urban conurbations.[32]

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[22] Robert Poole, ‘Oldham Wakes’, in *Leisure in Britain, 1780-1983*, ed. John. K. Walton and James Walvin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 72.

[23] Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1880* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 58.

[24] Reid, ‘Decline of Saint Monday’, 81, 91; and Lowerson and Myerscough, *Time to Spare*, 9-10.

[25] Gardiner, *An Age in Retrospect*, 9.

[26] Eric Midwinter, *Parish to Planet. How Football Came to Rule the World* (Warwickshire: Know the Score Books, 2007), 87.

[27] Helen Elizabeth Meller, *Leisure and the Changing City, 1870-1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 1.

The extensive urbanisation of Britain and the rapid population growth experienced by industrial towns, cities, and regions was initially stimulated by large-scale migration from rural areas. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the rural population had continued to expand as the demand for farm labour in newly enclosed or reclaimed land increased, whilst craft and mining industries were established and diversified the rural economy.[33] In 1801, 66.2% of the total population resided in the countryside and most rural areas saw a peak increase in their population between 1811 and 1821, but, from the 1830s there was a 'complex wavelike motion which led to a redistribution of population'.[34] Migration was predominantly a rural to urban movement with those who chose to relocate to the expanding industrial towns and cities tending to be young, unmarried adults with agricultural hubs experiencing a period of continuous and prolonged depopulation.[35] By the mid-nineteenth century, for the first time in history, more people lived in urban areas than in the countryside, and by 1900 70% of the total population of Britain resided in dense, urban settlements, with one contemporary writer noting that rural areas were becoming 'depleted'.[36] The fundamental causes of the redistribution of the population and the emerging trend of large-scale migration were the outcome of push and pull influences resulting from industrialisation. The mid-nineteenth century saw a reduced demand for farm labour, due to technological advancements, and the loss of craft industry, which was replaced by the factory system, as reduced employment opportunities in agricultural hubs 'pushed' labourers towards industrial towns and cities. There was also a growing industrial and service employment in urban areas with workers attracted by the prospect of the regular, consistent working hours of the labour-intensive factory-system. Rural labour could also be 'pulled' into the towns and cities by the wider range of social amenities and higher wages available whilst, from the 1850s, transport into urbanised centres became easier and cheaper as the railway system widened and was more widely utilised.[37] Meller suggests that 'all migrants, making their way to the city, had raised expectations that they might find a freer and fuller life than they had known before, even though their incentive for migration was economic opportunity'.[38] The result was that the extensive urbanisation of Britain, stimulated by the large-scale migration caused by industrialisation, led to prolonged rural depopulation and a rapid increase in the population growth of towns and cities.

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[28] Robert J. Morris and Richard Rodger, 'An Introduction to British Urban History 1820-1914', in *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914*, ed. Robert J. Morris and Richard Rodger (London: Longman, 1993), 1-3.

[29] See John R. Kellett, *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities* (London: Routledge, 1969).

[30] Morris & Rodger, 'Introduction to British Urban History', 7.

[31] Michael T. Friedman and Jacob J. Bustad, 'Sport and Urbanization', in *The Oxford Handbook of Sports History*, eds. Robert Endleman and Wayne Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 147-148.

[32] Meller, *The Changing City*, 11.

[33] See Richard Lawton, 'Rural Depopulation in Nineteenth Century England', in *English Rural Communities, The Impact of a Specialised Economy*, ed. Dennis R. Mills (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1973), 195-219.

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[34] Morris & Rodger, 'Introduction to British Urban History', 3; and Lawton, 'Rural Depopulation', 206.

[35] Richard J. Dennis, *English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century: A Social Geography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 35-41.

[36] Morris & Rodger, 'Introduction to British Urban History', 3; Peter A. Graham, *The Rural Exodus: The Problem of the Village and the Town* (1892; repr., London: Forgotten Books, 2017); and William J. Baker, 'The Making of a Working-Class Football Culture in Victorian England', *Journal of Social History* 13, no.2 (1979): 242.

[37] See Lawton, 'Rural Depopulation', 195-219.

[38] Meller, *The Changing City*, 16.

Sport in Victorian Britain

During the Victorian era, sport, in parallel with the broader societal changes that were taking place, underwent a dramatic transformation that has been described as a 'sporting revolution'.[39] What started the nineteenth century as largely recreational pastimes that were integrated in a small-scale communal way of life, organised on an informal basis with few written rules, and had a small commercial fringe of professional sportsmen and promoters, was transformed into a commercialised, mass spectator entertainment industry that was governed by national sporting institutions. Sport became much wider in its geographic scope whilst the number of people participating and spectating matches, races, and contests increased exponentially. By 1901, this sporting revolution had facilitated an entire industry of professional clubs and athletes that competed in formal competitions that were supported by promoters and sporting goods manufacturers whilst being observed by a vibrant culture of spectators and journalists.[40] These changes are exemplified by the pronounced differences surrounding the first FA Cup final in 1876 and the equivalent match in 1901. The inaugural contest, between Wanderers and Old Etonians, was viewed by an estimated crowd of 3,500 while the 1901 final, between Tottenham Hotspur and Sheffield United, attracted 114,815.[41] Whilst the size of the crowd had significantly increased it is also noticeable that the venue of the game, in a commercialised sporting venue, the way that supporters travelled to the stadium, via a range of trams, buses and trains, and how the public were informed of the result, through countless national and regional newspaper reports, had all drastically altered. By the end of the Victorian era 'sport had become extensively institutionalised, codified and commercialised and had spread beyond a purely local or regional arena into national and even international competition'.[42]

A sporting culture already existed in Britain before Queen Victoria ascended the throne and many of the characteristics that would come to define sport in the final three decades of the nineteenth century had already begun to emerge during the eighteenth century. Tranter notes that 'sports like cricket, horseracing, pedestrianism, prize-fighting and rowing had a long history of mass spectating, profit-seeking promoters, paid performers, stake money contests and gambling' whilst governing bodies that implemented written rules started to emerge during the eighteenth century. The Jockey Club (formed in 1751 or 1752) and the Marylebone Cricket Club (1787) were established as the governing institutions for horseracing and cricket respectively during the Georgian period and possessed the power to develop and enforce rules and arrange competitions.[43] In addition, written rules that determined the conduct of play were introduced as early as 1670 for bowls, in 1727 for cricket, and in the 1740s for prize-fighting with some, such as the laws for cricket and golf, becoming nationwide in scope prior to the mid-nineteenth century.[44] Whilst the sporting revolution ultimately transformed the sporting landscape in Britain it is incorrect to suggest that many of its underpinning characteristics, such as commercialisation, codification, and institutionalisation, were novel or new innovations.

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[39] Tony Collins, *Sport in a Capitalist Society: A Short History* (London: Routledge, 2013), 49; Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, 6; and Neil Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society in Britain: 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 13.

[40] Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, 142-150.

[41] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society,* 48.

[42] Tranter, S*port, Economy and Society*, 1.

However, at the start of the nineteenth century these examples of formalised and institutionalised sporting activities remained the exception rather than the rule and were something of a rarity in a society that was still adapting to the driving force of the industrial revolution. Much sport was initially integrated in a small-scale communal way of life, with recreations being bound by local customs and traditions whilst being organised on an informal, ad-hoc basis when people had the free time to participate. Sport was localised in its geographic range and irregular in its timing, yet it retained a prominent enough position within communities to survive and be passed from generation to generation. These traditional games were often unique, due to their localised nature and the influence of long-standing provincial traditions, but tended to include activities such as blood sports (including animal baiting or fighting), stick and ball games, physical contests and races, and various forms of football.[45] Formal sporting events occurred only occasionally and were often incorporated into holiday celebrations that were linked to religious and seasonal calendars, such as the annual football contest in Ashbourne during Shrovetide, or commercial events, like horseracing meetings, pedestrian competitions, and prize-fights.[46] The size and scope of these formalised contests could range from two pugilists competing at a small fete that was only of local interest, to Captain Robert Barclay, a renowned pedestrian, whose feat of walking 1,000 miles in 1,000 hours for 1,000 guineas in 1809 attracted widespread attention and bets that exceeded £100,000.[47] As the nineteenth century began, formal sporting events were infrequent whilst informal sporting activities operated on the margins of everyday life, being irregular but not rare.[48]

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[43] Birley, *Sport*, 5, 148.
[44] Tranter, S*port, Economy and Society*, 14.
[45] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 14.
[46] Huggins, *The Victorians and Spor*t, 1.

Some early historians concluded that by the start of the Victorian era traditional sporting activities had largely declined and, in some cases, disappeared entirely.[49] It was explained as an unavoidable consequence of a rapidly changing society as the introduction of the factory system altered the working regime of employees, expanding urban areas and the enclosure of common ground limited the space for sport to be played, and new attitudes condemned violence, brutality, and activities that were seen to promote immoral or criminal behaviour.[50] First, the emergence of the factory system enforced new attitudes towards work and introduced authoritarian, regimented, and longer working hours which resulted in a reduction in the amount of time that was available to employees for leisure.[51] Second, the expanding industrial towns and cities became intensively urbanised and that there was minimal space among the complex networks of streets and buildings for physical recreations. This issue of space was further augmented as numerous parliamentary Enclosure Acts between 1750 and 1830 resulted in excess of six million acres of waste or common land becoming enclosed, leading to a decline in sports that required large outdoor spaces.[52] Furthermore, the establishment of more effective policing systems during the first half of the nineteenth century allowed local authorities to stamp out traditional pastimes that were considered inappropriate for urban communities or were seen to promote public disorder. Finally, the Victorian era saw the continuation of what Elias described as being a 'Civilizing

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[47] See Peter Radford, *The Celebrated Captain Barclay: Sport, Money and Fame in Regency Britain* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2001); Derek Martin, 'Captain Barclay's Contemporaries: Practising Pedestrianism 1790-1820' (paper presented at the International Sport and Leisure History Colloquium, Crewe, England, March 3-4, 2017); and Derek Martin, 'A Short history of the Barclay Match 1809-1909' (paper presented at the International Sport and Leisure History Colloquium, Crewe, England, March 1-3, 2018).

[48] Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, 1.

[49] For examples see Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentleman and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football* (London: Routledge, 1979); James Walvin, *Leisure and Society, 1830-1950* (London, Longmans, 1978); and Robert Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

[50] Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, 188-257.

[51] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 17; and Tranter, S*port, Economy and Society*, 4.

[52] Ibid.

Process', where there was a general refinement of manners and social standards that resulted in a number of aspects of human behaviour coming to be seen as being distasteful or inappropriate.[53] This also included a lowering of the 'threshold of repugnance' regarding bloodshed and other manifestations of physical violence that resulted in sports that were deemed to be cruel, including bull-baiting and cock-fighting, or excessively violent, such as large-scale traditional 'mob' football, coming under attack and being eroded.[54] However, whilst the civilizing process has been used to explain the development of sport during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including both codes of football, it is not unanimously accepted by academics.[55] These changes in attitudes were further exacerbated by the feeding of Evangelical and Methodist values into wider society with hostility towards activities that promoted violence, immorality or criminal behaviour and attempts to bring 'rational' recreations to the lower orders.[56] Thompson concluded that by the early nineteenth century 'the average working man [had] become more disciplined, more subject to the productive tempo of the clock, more reserved and methodical, less violent and less spontaneous' with 'traditional sports … displaced by more sedentary hobbies'.[57]

However, the interpretation that the initial impact of industrialisation and urbanisation led to the decline of sporting and recreational activities during the early nineteenth century has been subject to criticism with Cunningham suggesting that these twin processes were as likely to encourage sport as to suppress its development.[58] There is no reason to assume that the desire for recreation was any less during the early Victorian era than in previous decades and the expansion of large urban communities and the rise in real income during the first half of the nineteenth century would have facilitated new opportunities for sporting activities. Vamplew states that 'in 1830 England was far from being an urbanized industrial nation and thus could accommodate some of the old sporting activities',[59] whilst Friedman and Bustad add that 'despite the virtues of rural life, only the city offered the critical mass of potential participants, spectators, and media outlets that enabled modern sport to emerge'.[60] Furthermore, although many traditional sports did come under increasing attack in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it is disputed as to how effective this assault was. It was not until 1857 that the Metropolitan Police Force model and practices were adopted on a national scale, meaning that the impact of any legislation aiming to suppress traditional recreations was diluted by the attitudes and resources possessed by local authorities.[61] Evidence suggests stability, or in some cases growth, in many sporting activities during the early Victorian period. Pedestrianism boomed between the 1740s and 1860s with large crowds and purpose built running tracks, rowing and sculling continued to attract large numbers of spectators throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, and sports such as cricket, bowling, and wrestling continued to survive and expand.[62] It was the most violent or disruptive pastimes that were widely condemned or were prone to decline with Tranter concluding that: 'too readily they [early sports historians] assumed that the erosion of animal blood sports like cockfighting, throwing cocks, bear and badger baiting and bullrunning, and the efforts of the authorities to stamp out particularly violent and unruly sports like football and prize-fighting, were representative of what happened to popular sport as a whole'.[63]

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[53] Jason Hughes, 'Norbert Elias', in *Key Sociological Thinkers*, ed. Rob Stones (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 168-183.

[54] Patrick Murphy, Ken Sheard and Ivan Waddington, 'Figurational Sociology and its Application to Sport', in *Handbook of Sports Studies*, ed. Jay Coakley and Eric Dunning (London: Sage, 2000), 92-105.

[55] Tony Collins states that some elements of the 'Civilizing Process' are underpinned by 'the problem of hindsight (history viewed with direct and perpetual reference to the present), the problem of progress (the idea that history proceeds in a linear fashion) and the problem of perspective (understanding the contemporary context in which historical events took place)'. It has also been suggested that proponents of the theory have not examined a representative sample of activities and have paid insufficient attention to non-contact sports. See Tony Collins, 'History, Theory and the 'Civilizing Process'', *Sport in History* 25, no.2 (2005): 289-306; and Ruud Stovkis, 'Sports and Civilization: Is Violence the Central Problem?', in *Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process: Critique and Counter-Critique*, eds. Eric Dunning and Christopher Rojek (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 121-36.

[56] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 53-54*;* and Tranter, S*port, Economy and Society*, 4.

[57] Edward P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Norfolk: Lowe & Brydone, 1963), 451.

[58] Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution,* 15.

What is unanimously agreed is that sport in Britain underwent a revolution in the final three decades of the nineteenth century as largely recreational pastimes were transformed into formalised activities that were subject to codification and commercialisation, eventually emerging as mass-spectator entertainment industries. The scale and nature of the transformation of Britain's sporting culture helped to make it 'the birthplace of modern sport' with a broadening geographical scope that enabled activities to become disseminated nationally, or in some cases internationally.[64] However, Van Bottenburg suggests that the British modes of sports were not unquestioningly adopted by people on the continent whilst the evolution and dissemination of sport across the globe is much more complicated than the traditional narrative presents.[65] Many of the defining characteristics of this sporting revolution were not novel or new ideas with many having initially emerged during the eighteenth century, but it was the sheer scale and speed of change that transformed British sporting culture.

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[59] Vamplew, 'Changes in Popular Sport', 10

[60] Friedman and Bustad, 'Sport and Urbanization', 145

[61] See Clive Emsley, *Crime and Society in England 1700-1900* (London: Longmans, 1987).

[62] Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, 27; Dennis Brailsford, 'Sporting Days in Eighteenth Century England', *Journal of Sport History* 9, no.3 (1982): 41-54; Eric Halladay, 'Of Pride and Prejudice: The Amateur Question in English Nineteenth Century Rowing', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 4, no.1 (1987): 39-55; and Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 20-23.

[63] Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society*, 6.

At a micro level there was a dramatic expansion in the range of sports being played, the number of sports clubs that were established, and the number of people playing or spectating sporting activities. This growth is exemplified by the increasing number of formal clubs that were established in the second half of the Victorian era. The first lawn tennis club was founded in 1872, yet by 1914 around 1,000 clubs were affiliated to the Lawn Tennis Association.[66] Similarly, as late as 1879 there were only 72 golf clubs in Britain, but by the turn of the century the number of clubs had risen to almost 1,200 in England alone.[67] In Scotland, following the formation of Queens Park in 1867, 166 association football clubs were affiliated to the Scottish Football Association by 1906, and the number of clubs affiliated to the English Rugby Football Union increased from 32 in 1871 to 481 in 1893.[68] The increasing popularity of sport facilitated the emergence of mass-spectator activities or events, which stimulated the adoption of commercialisation and professionalism. In the final third of the nineteenth century many sports grounds became enclosed, with purpose-built facilities or stadia being constructed, and spectators charged for admission to watch growing numbers of professional sportsmen compete for an increasing number of clubs that adopted limited liability company status. In 1885, the Surrey Cricket Club had a total income of under £500 but the emergence of gate-money cricket meant that by 1899 its receipts from match attendances alone were £13,593.[69] Sports clubs invested heavily in new facilities or improved stadia to keep up with the increasing number of members and spectators as exemplified by the Royal Liverpool Golf Club, who invested £8,000 in a new club house in the 1890s, and Manchester United FC, who spent almost £36,000 on new stands in 1909.[70] These sporting facilities became a necessity for many clubs as sport became an industry in its own right.[71] Collins describes the 'sporting circle of life' which emerged where, to be commercially viable, a club needed to attract paying spectators to generate income, which meant acquiring the best athletes to ensure sporting success, which necessitated the construction of enclosed grounds.[72] However, many stadia became more than just a venue for sport. As the period progressed, they became a 'home' to players and spectators, emerging as sites that 'reflected deep senses of familiarity and attachment' and became a 'critical site for the construction and expression of particular kinds of personal and collective identity'.[73] Furthermore, at a macro level, the revolution was reflected in the establishment of governing bodies that possessed the power and authority to develop and implement rules, organise competitions, and facilitate the development and growth of sport, with written laws becoming the norm rather than the exception. In England, national governing bodies were established for association football (in 1863), rugby union (1871), amateur athletics (1879), cycling (1885), and lawn tennis (1888) with the new laws of bowling disseminated in 1849, the Marques of Queensbury rules for boxing compiled in 1867, and the Jockey Club's *Rules of Racing* made compulsory in 1850.[74]

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[64] Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, 6.

[65] Maarten van Bottenburg, ‘Beyond Diffusion: Sport and Its Remaking in Cross-Cultural Contexts’, *Journal of Sport History* 37, no.1 (2010): 43-46.

[66] Holt, *Sport and the British*, 130-131.

[67] John Lowerson, ‘Golf’, in *Sport in* Britain, ed. Tony Mason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 188.

[68] Wray Vamplew, *Pay Up and Play the Game: Professional Sport in Britain, 1875-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 128.

[69] Keith A. Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1994), 69; and William F. Mandle, ‘Games People Played: Cricket and Football in England and Victoria in the Nineteenth Century’, *Historical Studies* 15, no.60 (1973): 3.

The number of professional sportsmen and the total number of males actively participating in sport remained relatively small by the start of the twentieth century, with the number of women who were involved limited to a minority, but the thriving sporting culture that had emerged created affiliated industries that employed and engaged a much greater number of people. The increasing popularity of sport and its increasing commercialisation led to new employment opportunities in positions such as groundsmen, greenkeepers, and turnstile attendants whilst there was a growth in industries and trades that provided sport with its playing equipment, clothing, stadia, and amenities for spectators and promotional material.[75] At its peak, sports retailer William Shillock could sell up to 50,000 footballs per year and over 260 books relating to golf were published between 1870 and 1914 as popularity and interest in sport grew.[76] In addition, some businesses, such as breweries, recognised that the large crowds that assembled at sporting contests provided a ready-made marketplace in which to sell their products with many making a conscious effort to associate or affiliate themselves with burgeoning mass-spectator clubs.[77] However, whilst the number of people involved in sport undoubtedly increased during the final three decades of the nineteenth century Tranter suggests that regular participation was still a minority interest by the start of First World War. He highlights research which indicates that by 1914 no more than one in twenty males aged 15-39 actively played association football and that Liverpool, with a growing population that had exceeded 500,000 people, had just 224 cricket clubs by 1890.[78] During the late Victorian period sport did not undergo a general, continuous expansion and many recreations, such as professional athletics and rowing, experienced periods of temporary contraction. Sport was also influenced by a multitude of local and regional differences, including prominent industries and entrenched traditions, which determined what activities were prone to expansion or grew in popularity. For example, association football was adopted at a much quicker rate in areas that possessed factory-based industries, such as Manchester, Lancashire, and North Staffordshire, than in regions where prominent trades were not unionised, such as Liverpool, where the acceptance of the half-holiday was delayed and stifled the growth of some sports.[79]

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[70] Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society,* 21; and Vamplew, *Pay Up,* 34.
[71] Vamplew, *Pay Up,* 54.
[72] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society,* 51.
[73] Richard Giulianotti, *Sport: A Critical Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 124-125.
[74] Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society,* 24.
[75] Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, 112.

The sporting revolution was facilitated by changes in the social and economic environment of the late nineteenth century with the growth in sport's popularity reflecting changes in late-Victorian society. There were five key interlinking factors: an increase in free time, greater disposable income, rising literacy levels and the emergence of a mass popular written press, technological advancements, and a change in attitudes towards the importance of winning. Furthermore, the rising standards of nutrition and the development of new medical practices ensued that a much broader portion of the population possessed the health and energy to engage in physical recreations on a regular basis.[80] Collins suggests that 'the absence of any of these [factors] would have severely restricted the growth of modern sport'.[81]

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[76] Ibid., 22.

[77] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society,* 51-52.

[78] Tranter, S*port, Economy and Society,* 13; and Vamplew, 'Changes in Popular Sport', 12.

[79] Matthew Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2008), 5.

[80] Vamplew, *Pay Up*, 51-52.

The Factory Acts that were passed during the mid-nineteenth century resulted in a gradual reduction in working hours and provided much of the population with more free time. In addition, the introduction of the Saturday half-holiday created a consistent block of time in which people could participate in regular, weekly sporting activities with Sunday sport being considered inappropriate and taboo.[82] Vamplew notes that 'sport has a temporal aspect to its demand … the time available for the consumption of sport is not just a matter of the volume of free time, but also where those non-working hours are located in the work-leisure calendar'.[83] There was a re-patterning of sporting time in the late Victorian era. The establishment of a Monday to Friday working week and the acceptance of the Saturday half-holiday resulted in the majority of sports being restricted to occurring on Saturday afternoons, where events, fixtures or contests could be scheduled on a weekly basis.[84] Despite these changes, Malcolmson suggests that 'work and recreation were commonly polarised' with many industrial employers perceiving sport to be an impediment to productivity in the workplace.[85] Injuries caused by participating in sport could result in employees being unable to work whilst the excessive drinking and gambling which could often occur at spectator sports could undermine the work ethic.[86]

There was a gradual shift in how employers viewed sport and during the final three decades of the nineteenth century some industrialists began to acknowledge that supporting, promoting or facilitating sporting provision could aid productivity. It became adopted by many businesses as part of a broader band of industrial welfare activities that were intended to encourage workforce loyalty whilst reducing absenteeism and employee dissatisfaction, with workplace teams or clubs becoming a common feature of the sporting landscape.[87] In addition to the alterations to the working week, the industrial revolution led to a period of unprecedented economic well-being that directly benefitted the middle and upper classes but also saw the benefits diffused across the British population. This economic boom resulted in an increase in employment opportunities and there was an increase in real wages from the late 1860s.[88] Vamplew suggests that there is a substantial agreement among historians that real wages increased, quoting a rise of some 60% from 1870 to the 1890s, but also warns that there were significant regional and occupational differences that need to be taken into account.[89] Birley adds that 'between 1850 and 1875 wages went up 50%, 33% in real terms' but that there were dramatic fluctuations in unemployment rates 'which dropped as low as 2% in 1882, [but] shot up to 10% four years later'.[90] Although the Victorian period was characterised by drastic inequality between the different strata of society, these differences did not inspire revolution, as witnessed in parts of Europe, because industrialisation did increase the prosperity of those that could find regular, consistent work.[91] This economic surplus facilitated the rise of a consumer society and, with an increasing number of people having access to disposable income, many chose to invest their money in leisure activities, including sport.[92]

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[81] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 53.

[82] Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, 15.

[83] Vamplew, *Pay Up*, 53-54.

[84] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 53; Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, 15-16; and Tranter, S*port, Economy and Society*, 19-20.

[85] Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations*, 94.

[86] Vamplew, 'Changes in Popular Sport', 8-9.

[87] Michael Heller, 'Sport, Bureaucracies and London Clerks, 1880-1939', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 25, no.5 (2008), 580; and Wray Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies: A Historical Exploration of the Sports Club in Britain', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, no.14 (2013): 1576.

The final three decades of the nineteenth century coincided with the rise of mass-literacy and the expansion of the national, regional, and local press in Britain. The Education Act of 1870, which introduced inclusive school provision for all children between the ages of 5 and 12 in England and Wales, enabled more people than ever before from across all classes of society to be able to read and write.[93] This expanded audience and the lifting of punitive taxes between 1853 and 1861, also referred to as the 'taxes on knowledge' which included stamp, paper, and advertisement duties, resulted in a substantial increase in the number of written publications that were established during the second half of the Victorian era.[94] Only sixteen towns possessed at least one daily newspaper in 1868 and there were less than 400 weekly newspapers being produced across the country in 1856, but by 1900 seventy-one towns could boast a daily publication whilst an estimated 2,072 weekly newspapers had been founded.[95] As the century progressed there was a growing recognition that the drama, speculation, controversy, and larger-than-life figures associated with sport, together with the increasing popularity and regularity of activities, events, and competitions, meant that there was a real appetite among the public for sporting news. Sport and the press were mutually beneficial; sport provided a continuous conveyor belt of content for journalists to report whilst newspapers provided enhanced publicity and exposure in return.[96] Although newspapers had been reporting on sport, leisure, and recreational activities since the eighteenth century, the Victorian press accepted sport as an essential component that had the ability to enhance readership and circulation figures.[97]

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[88] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital*, 217-223.

[89] Vamplew, *Pay Up*, 51; and Henry Phelps Brown and Margaret Browne, *A Century of Pay: The Course of Pay and Production in France, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, 1860-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1968), 444-445.

[90] Birley, *Sport*, 264.

[91] Ibid.; and Vamplew, *Pay Up* 51

[92] Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, 14.

[93] Andrew J. H. Jackson, 'Civic Identity, Municipal Governance and Provincial Newspapers: The Lincoln of Bernard Gilbert, Poet, Critic and 'Booster', 1914', *Urban History* 41, no.1 (2015): 113.

[94] Mark Hampton, 'Newspapers in Victorian Britain', *History Compass* 2, no.1 (2004): 2; and Tom O'Malley, 'Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory and the late Victorian and early Twentieth Century Press', *Victorian Periodicals Review* 48, no.4 (2015): 592-593.

As sport became widely reported in mainstream national, regional, and local newspapers a specialised sporting press began to emerge and flourish in parallel. These specialist newspapers and periodicals were launched in response to the popularity and demand for sporting news and by 1880 a wave of sporting weeklies had been established. *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle* was launched in 1820 and was followed by *The Field* (1853), *Sporting Life* (1859), *Sporting Gazette* (1862), *Sporting Opinion* (1864), *Sportsman* (1865), *Sporting Times* (1865), *Sporting Chronicle* (1871), and *Athletic News* (1875) in addition to a variety of regional and local publications.[98] Although some of the titles that emerged during the Victorian era were short-lived, others such as the *Athletic News* became extremely popular, being described as 'the voice of football' with a claimed weekly circulation that had risen to 200,000 by the early twentieth century.[99] The development and dissemination of codified sporting practice and its expansion into a commercialised, mass spectator industry facilitated the growth of the sporting press and the 1880s witnessed the introduction of the Saturday-night football special editions to meet the demand for the day's results.[100]

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[95] Steve Tate, ''Tityrus' of the Athletic News (1860-1936): A Biographical Study', *Sport in History* 25, no.1 (2005): 100; and James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain* (London: Routledge, 1991), 43.

[96] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 56-57.

[97] Tate, 'Tityrus', 100-101; and David Toms, 'The Cork Sportsman: A Provincial Sporting Newspaper, 1908-1911', *Sport in Society* 19, no.1 (2016): 24-25.

[98] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 57; and Tate, 'Tityrus', 101.

[99] Tate, 'Tityrus', 98.

Newspapers and the sporting press were not merely commentators and observers of sport and, although a large portion of their coverage concerned the reporting of matches, events, and competitions, they were also active participants in its development and dissemination. Newspapers advertised meetings, fixtures, and events whilst providing a forum for disputes, debates, and discussions, and they would often lead calls for improvement, hold officials to account, and look to sway public opinion.[101] Publications could also have a more direct influence on sporting activities by playing a key organisational role. This is exemplified by *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Gazette*, which acted as a sporting concierge in the mid-nineteenth century by using its pages to arrange and provide publicity for sporting events whilst also acting as a stakeholder, holding prize money and bets.[102] Furthermore, the *Staffordshire Sentinel*, a regional newspaper located in North Staffordshire, established a self-titled association football competition in 1892 to act as advertisement tool whilst John Bentley, who acted as editor for the *Athletic News* in the late-nineteenth century, also demonstrated the close link between the press and sport when he became a committee member, and later president, of the Football League.[103]

Industrial technological advancements also contributed to the growing popularity of sport and played a key role in facilitating an environment where activities could be played and spectated with increasing levels of quality and comfort. The development of lawnmowers and rollers was critical in enhancing the playing surfaces for sports such as bowls, cricket, and lawn tennis where flat, trimmed pitches or courts were vital to play matches effectively. In addition, technological advancements such as vulcanised rubber, inner tubes, and rubber-strips resulted in the production of lighter, more efficient tennis, rugby, football, and golf balls that had greater longevity and could be struck over greater distances, making participating and spectating more exciting. The enhancement of iron and steel refinement techniques led to the construction of larger, safer grandstands or pavilions that provided spectators with greater comfort and a superior viewing position whilst it was also applied to sports such as cycling and golf where it was used to produce more effective frames and club-heads respectively.[104]

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[100] Tony Mason 'Sporting News, 1860-1914', in *The Press in English Society from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Michael Harris and Alan Lee (London: Associated University Presses, 1986), 170-173; and Toms, 'The Cork Sportsman', 24.

[101] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 57.

[102] Mason, 'Sporting News', 169.

[103] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 57; and Cooke, 'Inextricable Link', 1-23.

The development of an improved transport system, due to the widening scope of the railway during the nineteenth century, was also a critical contributing factor in the expansion and dissemination of sport. Walvin suggests that the railways 'transformed and influenced sport' by enabling a greater number of spectators, drawn from a much wider geographic area, to attend events and that the structure and organisation of sport was enhanced by enabling athletes, teams, and administrators to travel further afield.[105] Vamplew claims that the 'railways revolutionised sport by widening the catchment area for spectators',[106] whilst Simmons concurs, proposing that the railways 'contributed largely to the growth of spectator sports'.[107] However, Huggins and Tolson argue that too much emphasis has been placed on the role of the railways in the sporting revolution and that other factors, such as the growing population of urban conurbations, an increase in disposable income, and a higher quality of athletic performance, were of greater importance and that 'a more balanced view is that the railways were largely facilitators of trends which were already evident, especially in terms of spectatorship'.[108] It has been noted that improved transport systems did have a more substantial impact on the development of team games. In the case of association football, Mason notes that the railways enabled teams to organise fixtures against opposition from other areas of the country, providing the opportunity to make new contacts, experience new rules, and learn new methods of playing.[109] Furthermore, regional research by Dyer specifically highlighted the role of the London and North West Railway Company and its employees in the emergence of the sporting culture that developed in Crewe and the surrounding area during the late nineteenth century.[110] It is agreed that the geographic scope of sport was transformed from being predominantly local recreations at the start of the

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[104] Lowerson, 'Golf', 194; and Tranter, S*port, Economy and Society*, 33.

[105] Walvin, *Leisure and Society*, 24-5.

[106] Vamplew, *Pay Up*, 47.

[107] Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway* (London: Thames and Hudson 1991), 301.

[108] Mike Huggins and John Tolson, 'The Railways and Sport in Victorian Britain. A Critical Reassessment', *Journal of Transport History* 22, no. 2 (2001): 100-102.

[109] Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980), 146-7.

[110] See Liam Dyer, 'The London and North Western Railway Company and the Crewe Alexandra Athletic Club in the Late Victorian and Edwardian Periods' (PhD diss., Manchester Metropolitan University, 2018).

Victorian era to national, or in some cases international, activities by the start of the First World War as the enhancement of transport enabled greater mobility for participants and spectators. Furthermore, the widening geographic scope and ease of movement for people encouraged the widespread codification and institutionalisation of activities as participants from differing localities wanted to compete under the same set of rules.

Finally, the increasing popularity and geographic expansion of organised sport during the nineteenth century occurred in parallel with changing attitudes towards the importance of winning. Sports became more competitive as the century progressed and, rather than just being a means of displaying skill or strength, securing victory and the recognition of success replaced wholehearted enjoyment as the driving factor of contests and events. Furthermore, the sports pitch, court, stadium or arena was largely free from the restrictions of working life and the excitement of competition, either as a participant or a spectator, provided brief respite from the rigorous demands of industrial life. As mass-spectator sports began to emerge and become commercialised during the second half of the Victorian era, clubs and organisations began to recognise that the most successful athletes and teams attracted the largest crowds and, therefore, provided greater revenue opportunities.[111] Securing the best talent and achieving success became the most pressing issue for organisers, promoters, and advocates in the sports industry and this resulted in a significant increase in the number of players and athletes that were paid to participate in matches and contests. However, sport became underpinned by a wider reward system that went beyond payments and dissemination of prize money. Promoters provided trophies, cups or alternative physical prizes whilst in some sports, particularly association football, athletes were offered convenient employment positions by clubs to secure their services rather than cash payments.[112] The second half of the nineteenth century saw increasing tensions between those that were accepting of professionalism and others that were aligned to the ideals of amateurism, which was based on the belief that the sport should be characterised by 'fair play' and not be played for material gain.[113] Association football and rugby were shrouded in a continuous debate regarding the emergence of professionalism, with the Football

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[111] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society,* 51

[112] Taylor, *Association Game*, 48.

[113] See Richard Holt, 'The Amateur Body and the Middle-Class Man: Work, Health and Style in Victorian Britain', *Sport in History* 26, no.3 (2006): 352-369.

Association (FA) and Rugby Football Union (RFU) adopting differing approaches with contrasting results. The FA agreed to legalise professionalism in 1885, although initially under tightly controlled circumstances, which, despite some opposition, facilitated its growth into the most prominent and popular sport in the country by the start of the twentieth century. In contrast, the RFU opted to introduce strict amateur regulations in 1886. However, this resulted in a cohort of northern clubs breaking away from the RFU in 1895 and establishing a new rugby code that accepted professionalism, rugby league, causing a definitive split in the sport.[114] Collins notes that the 'debate over professional sport in the late nineteenth century reflected the wider debate in bourgeois society about the rising power and self-confidence of the working class'.[115] Furthermore, the nature of sport encouraged gambling and whilst some activities had a symbiotic relationship with betting, such as horse racing, there were broader societal concerns about the practices that were becoming more apparent. Working-class gambling was perceived as a threat to family life and workplace productivity whilst betting was seen by some as undermining the amateur ethos of sport.[116]

The emergence of modern sport during the nineteenth century can only be partly understood by looking at the broad trends and themes that became apparent as the period progressed. The dissemination and development of sport was subject to regional differentiation, both in terms of what activities became adopted by the local populace and how they evolved. Britain was a diverse arena where the geographical, political, industrial, and cultural landscape could differ markedly from region to region and, ultimately, these varied environments facilitated the development of sport in differing ways. Scholars examining the origins of association football have found that overarching paradigms or grand narratives do not adequately explain the development of the game with localised studies demonstrating clear regional variations and differences.[117] Research into other sporting activities has uncovered similar differentiation. Cricket came to be seen as an important representation of Yorkshire identity as the century progressed, yet the sport did not gain the same level of popularity in other regions such as South Staffordshire.[118] Dyer's examination of Crewe, where the London and North Western Railway Company came to define the town, exhibited how sport could shaped by prominent industries, companies or businesses.[119] In Manchester, pedestrianism retained its popularity into the second half of the nineteenth century and Oldham Road, in Newton Heath, emerged as a unique focal point of contests due to the influence of publicans, with forty public houses having links to sporting entertainment.[120] From a broader perspective, some academics have sought to explore the potential 'North-South divide' where the attitudes, perceptions, and approaches towards sport, especially the discourse surrounding amateurism and professionalism, differed significantly between different areas of the country. These regional differentiations have resulted in a growing trend for academics and historians to engage in localised studies of sport, with each element of research contributing a new piece of the jigsaw that is the historiography of sport in Britain during the nineteenth century.

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[114] Adrian Harvey, *Football: The First Hundred Years, the Untold Story* (London: Routledge, 2005), 225-228; and Tony Collins, *Rugby's Great Split: Class, Culture and the Origins of Rugby League* (London: Frank Cass, 2006).

[115] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 34.

[116] Vamplew, *Pay Up*, 71.

[117] See Graham Curry, 'Introduction: Towards a Deeper Understanding of the Development of Early Football', *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2018): 1-4.

Life in 'The Potteries'

The city of Stoke-on-Trent is located in the West Midlands, England, where, together with the neighbouring boroughs of Newcastle-under-Lyme and the Staffordshire Moorlands, it forms the broader region of North Staffordshire. It is situated in a prominent central location with the sprawling industrial conurbations of Manchester and Birmingham located to the north and south respectively, whilst, in contrast, the agricultural communities of North Wales lie to the west with the idyllic natural beauty of the Peak District National Park in the east. It is unique in that it is the only polycentric city in the United Kingdom, not one vast metropolis but rather a collection of six smaller towns and neighbouring villages that amalgamated and united as a federation in the early twentieth century. Stoke itself stands as the principal town from which the city adopted its name and is joined by Burslem, Hanley, and Tunstall in the north, and Fenton, and Longton to the south. The city of Stoke-on-Trent is more commonly referred to as the 'Six Towns' or 'The Potteries', a direct reference to its unique composition and the pottery and ceramic industry for which the area become renowned in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[121]

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[118] See Rob Light, ''In a Yorkshire Like Way': Cricket and the Construction of Regional Identity in Nineteenth-Century Yorkshire', *Sport in History* 29, no. 3 (2009): 500-518.
[119] See Dyer, 'London and North Western Railway'.
[120] Oldfield, 'Narratives of Manchester Pedestrianism', 102-103.

Six clear, distinguishable conurbations developed along a broad north to south axis with Burslem, Tunstall, Hanley, Stoke, Fenton, and Longton becoming established as the largest and most significant communities in North Staffordshire. The geographical and urban development of The Potteries was unique, differing from other major conurbations such as Manchester and Birmingham in that there was no central, prominent focal point in its emergence. Each of the Six Towns experienced a similar rate of growth and expansion during the early part of the century but possessed distinctive features in terms of industry, business, locality, structures, and municipal amenities that distinguished them from their neighbouring communes. Each town possessed 'differing names, varying ambitions, fluctuating fortunes and distinct rivalries' and considered itself to be completely independent of the other five with each conurbation being self-governed by elected representatives that resided in separate town halls.[122] A strong sense of local patriotism existed and throughout the nineteenth century each town went its own way, expanding its boundaries and making attempts to improve its standing and significance in the region whilst protecting its own identity. The Six Towns had limited interaction and even those that were in close proximity, such as Tunstall and Burslem, cooperated only sparingly when there was a strong, shared interest that would be mutually beneficial for both communities. However, as the century progressed it became clear that each conurbation would have difficulties in meeting the governmental and administrative challenges posed by a rapidly growing population, with a combination of common issues, particularly around the structure of policing and provision of public amenities in the region, and parliamentary reform encouraging greater collaboration between each local government.[123]

The industrial revolution stimulated a period of significant growth in the region. The pottery and ceramic industry, which had first emerged as the defining characteristic of the area during the eighteenth century following the contributions of innovators and entrepreneurs such as Josiah Wedgewood, grew exponentially as technological advancements and the factory system facilitated an increase in the quality of wares whilst reducing the time and cost of production.[124] During the Victorian era, The Potteries became an industrial power in the Midlands, with world-renowned brands such as Doulton, Wedgewood, and Minton being established and the resulting wares being disseminated throughout Britain and much of the world.[125] The bottle shaped kilns of the pottery and ceramic factories that defined the skyline of each of the Six Towns became synonymous with the region, yet, equally as important, were the coal and clay mines of North Staffordshire that provided the fuel and raw materials that were required to ensure the continuous growth of manufacturing.[126] The success of the staple industries encouraged a large-scale migration of people from the traditional agricultural hubs in the countryside to the expanding major conurbations with the prospect of employment in the factories and workshops acting as the primary attraction. This resulted in The Potteries becoming increasingly urbanised with each of the Six Towns continuously expanding throughout the nineteenth century, both in terms of population and boundaries. Between 1811 and 1881 the population of Tunstall increased from 1,677 to 14,246 whilst during the same period the population of Hanley expanded from 9,968 to 48,361. In 1811, the total population of the Six Towns was less than 50,000 but by the start of the twentieth century this had almost tripled to more than 140,000.[127]

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[121] See Alan Taylor, *Stoke-on-Trent: A History* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2003); Cameron Hawke-Smith, *The Making of the Six Towns* (Hanley: City Museum and Art Gallery, 1985); J.G. Jenkins, *A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 8* (London: Victoria County History, 1963); David Sekers, *The Potteries* (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2009); and John Ward, *The Borough of Stoke-upon-Trent* (London: W. Lewis and Son, 1843).

[122] 'The Children of The Potteries', *The Pall Mall Magazine*, January, 1904, 1.

[123] See Jenkins, *The County of Stafford*.

During the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, several industries in Britain began to take on a distinctive spatial character which became characterised by concentrated 'hotspots' of industrial activity and regional specialisation.[128] Some towns, cities or broader regions became synonymous with specific industrial outputs or processes that became central to both the economic prosperity and identity of the locality. Whilst Stoke-on-Trent became more commonly known as The Potteries it was not the only area to adopt a title from its most prominent industry. Sheffield was renowned for expertise in steel and metal work, being referred to as ‘Steel City’, and Lancashire was dominated by the production of cotton and textiles, with Manchester known as ‘Cottonopolis’.[129] The geographical concentration of entire industries had never previously been experienced in Britain and as the Victorian period progressed whole sectors of production were condensed in specialized conurbations and regions.[130] Belussi and Caldari note that if a localised industry (one that is concentrated in a certain locality) has existed for long enough it undergoes ‘compound localisation’ and ‘is transformed into an industrial district’.[131] Alfred Marshall is seen as the ‘father’ of the theoretical concept of the ‘Industrial District’ with the ‘Marshallian Industrial District’ recognised as a valuable tool in both historical and contemporary studies regarding industrial economics. The Potteries has been widely cited as an example of a traditional Industrial District with Popp and Wilson stating that it, along with other locations that became intimately associated with certain industries such as Sheffield, Birmingham, and Lancashire, meant that Britain ‘can rightly claim to have earned … the title of workshop of the world’.[132]

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[124] Sekers, *The Potteries*, 5.

[125] 'The Potteries – Introduction', *The Art Union,* April, 1874, 83.

[126] Taylor, *Stoke-on-Trent*, 34-37.

[127] See R. A. Lewis, *Staffordshire Population Since 1860* (Stafford: Staffordshire County Council Education Department, 1975).

[128] Pat Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), 101-102; and Andrew Popp and John F. Wilson, 'The Emergence and Development of Industrial Districts in Industrialising England, 1750-1914', in *A Handbook of Industrial Districts*, eds. Giacomo Becattini, Marco Bellandi and Lisa De Propis (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2009), 46.

Many traditional Industrial Districts initially emerged due to advantageous physical conditions.[133] The abundance of coal, clay, and iron situated across North Staffordshire provided the pottery and ceramic industry with immediate access to the basic natural resources that were vital to the industrial process.[134] However, these factors eventually became much less important to the longevity and permanence of Industrial Districts when compared with non-natural resources, particularly the specialised skills and knowledge that gradually became embedded within the local population.[135] Furthermore, Industrial Districts were often found in trades that remained reliant on craft skills and in which outputs included a wide array of different products, styles, and variations of quality. Scanton noted that a world of ‘endless novelty’ meant that large numbers of companies could exist simultaneously in a condensed geographical space on the premise that specialisation and differentiation of goods existed both within and between firms.[136] The Potteries became associated with several world-renowned brands, such as Wedgwood, Doulton, and Minton, which were characterised by large workforces and the production of expensive, high-quality wares. However, these large companies were far outnumbered by hundreds of less prominent firms that employed anywhere between a dozen and a hundred individuals and which produced either specialized pieces or, alternatively, products that were affordable to the wider population.[137] In addition, even into the twentieth century, the pottery and ceramic industry was only partly mechanised and remained reliant on craft skills and specialised knowledge. Throughout the industrial process the roles and responsibilities of employees revolved around manual skills – from throwers and slip-makers who prepared the raw materials, to modellers that created the initial moulds, to placers and fireman that baked the wares, to engravers and painters that decorated the final product.

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[129] Popp and Wilson, ‘Industrial Districts in Industrialising England’, 46.

[130] Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution*, 101-102.

[131] Fiorenza Belussi and Katia Caldari, ‘At the Origin of the Industrial District: Alfred Marshall and the Cambridge School’, *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 33, no.1 (2018): 337.

[132] Popp and Wilson, ‘Industrial Districts in Industrialising England’, 45-46.

[133] Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution*, 111; and Popp and Wilson, ‘Industrial Districts in Industrialising England’, 48.

[134] Belussi and Caldari, ‘Origin of the Industrial District’, 336-337.

[135] Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution,* 111.

Marshall identified that Industrial Districts provided several advantages to firms that were concentrated in a particular location.[138] First, that the specialised skills and knowledge that are central to the industry become hereditary and are transmitted from one generation to the next, eventually becoming a characteristic qualification of the region. The nature of the pottery and ceramic industry, with its reliance on manual craft skills and individual expertise, meant that many of the techniques, methods, and practices that were employed during the production process were unique and became embedded within the local workforce. The transfer of knowledge from generation to generation ensured that The Potteries possessed expertise and knowledge that was not present in other areas of Britain.[139] Second, Marshall states that subsidiary trades emerge that supply the industry 'with implements and materials, organizing its traffic, and in many ways conducing to the economy of its material'.[140] As the pottery and ceramic industry continued to flourish during the nineteenth century a variety of affiliated trades also emerged that were involved in the production process. The mining industry provided the raw materials necessary whilst transportation, especially the extensive canal and railway system that developed, enabled products to be disseminated across the country. The proximity of these subsidiary trades ensured that materials and transport were easily accessible and that costs remained low.[141] Third, that highly specialised machinery is developed and disseminated throughout the Industrial District. Throughout the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries The Potteries was at the forefront of technological advancements in the production of pottery and ceramic wares. The ovens and kilns that were used to bake the products continued to evolve alongside finishing techniques, such as glazing, and methods of decoration, such as lithographing.[142] Finally, Marshall noted that Industrial Districts provided a 'constant market for skill' which meant that firms had access to an immediate pool of specialised workers.[143] Throughout the nineteenth century there was a continuous cycle of pottery and ceramic firms being established and those that failed were quickly replaced. There was a constant pool of specialised workers that were available for employment and it was not uncommon for individuals to regularly move from firm to firm in search of better pay, working conditions, or a fresh start. Belussi and Calderi note that over time an Industrial District will acquire what Marshall called 'a special atmosphere' which facilitates the advantages discussed above as the industry becomes embedded within area.[144]

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[136] See Philip Scranton, *Endless Novelty: Specialty Production and American Industrialization, 1865-1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).
[137] Marguerite W. Dupree, *Family Structure in the Staffordshire Potteries, 1840-1880* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 53.
[138] Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics* (London: Macmillan, 1920), 271.
[139] Popp and Wilson, 'Industrial Districts in Industrialising England', 50, 51.
[140] Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, 271.

Industrial Districts were also characterised by a unique combination of competition and cooperation. Whilst firms were undoubtedly competing against each other for a share of the market, they were also simultaneously in cooperation, although this could either occur intentionally or automatically.[145] First, when an industry was located in a condensed geographical location the transmission of information, knowledge, and ideas between firms occurred through both formal and informal channels. Pollard states that regions like The Potteries provided 'as it were, a system of walls within which the new ideas could reverberate and gain reinforcing strength … instead of being diffused ineffectually across the length and breadth of a mostly unreceptive island'.[146] Second, specialisation by firm, where the focus remained on the variety and differentiation of products, facilitated an economic environment where the market could be shared between hundreds of organisations.[147] It has been suggested that, although Industrial Districts possessed some large-scale firms, the absence of all-encompassing businesses monopolising the industry enabled the existence of significant numbers of small-medium firms that created accelerated economic progress and innovation.[148] Finally, Industrial Districts were often able to acquire superior public services and transportation when compared with other towns, cities, and regions. Marshall stated that 'the very fact that a number of firms are producing in the same district means that this district comes to obtain railway and shipping and public services which are worth giving because the volume of manufacture is on such a scale, and would not be worth giving to scattered firms'.[149] Many waterways and railway systems in Britain were initially regionally constructed, financed, and owned, often remaining inward looking with companies structuring freight rates to benefit the regions that they served.[150] The pottery and ceramic industry based in The Potteries initially drove the construction of the canal and railway system across North Staffordshire. The Trent and Mersey Canal, along with its branch into Staffordshire, the Caldon Canal, were primarily constructed to allow the quicker, safer, and cheaper transportation of materials, goods, and wares across the region and to provide a direct connection with other parts of the country.[151] Similarly, railway branch lines were initially established to facilitate the transfer of raw materials from the collieries and mines to the pottery and ceramic firms before evolving to link the major conurbations together and to other regions.[152]

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[141] Taylor, *Stoke-on-Trent*, xv.

[142] Reginald G. Haggar, Arnold R. Mountford and J. Thomas, *The Staffordshire Pottery Industry* (Staffordshire: Staffordshire County Library, 1981), 13, 27.

[143] Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, 271.

[144] Belussi and Caldari, 'Origin of the Industrial District', 337.

[145] Ibid., 338, 339.

[146] Sidney Pollard, *Peaceful Conquest: The Industrialization of Europe, 1760-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 19.

Industrialisation saw factories and businesses in The Potteries demonstrate an increasingly lax attitude towards the health and safety of their workers as maximising productivity and profits became the primary concerns. The mortality rate in The Potteries was much higher than the national average, with chest diseases and lead poisoning caused through exposed work with coal and clay among the leading causes of death, and the average life span of a pottery worker during the nineteenth century was ten years less than that of employees in other industries.[153] Almost half of the total number of cases of lead poisoning that were reported in England during 1898 were attributed to workers based in North Staffordshire and it was noted by one contemporary reporter visiting the region that there was ‘a somewhat excessive death rate from pneumonia and bronchitis’.[154] In reality the region was engrossed in a severe health epidemic, but the complications associated with the pottery industry would not be fully understood until the turn of the century, as exemplified by one report from the 1871 that incorrectly concluded that ‘the industry, generally, is a healthy one’.[155] In addition to the risk of contracting chest diseases, those employed by mining companies faced other, more obvious, dangers underground. Between 1855 and 1900, 25 collieries based in The Potteries were involved in fatal accidents, the gravest of which occurred during Christmas 1866 when the collapse of a mineshaft in Talke resulted in the deaths of 91 colliers. The major conurbations also suffered from extensive pollution caused by the continuous burning of kilns, with contemporary reporters noting that ‘there can be no disputing the fact that there is a serious pollution of atmosphere by smoke’ which resulted in a ‘deficiency of sunlight’.[156]

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[147] Popp and Wilson, 'Industrial Districts in Industrialising England', 49.

[148] See Katia Caldari, 'Alfred Marshall's Critical Analysis of Scientific Management', *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 14, no.1 (2007): 53-75.

[149] Alfred Marshall, *Industry and Trade* (London: Macmillan, 1929), 203.

[150] Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution*, 102, 103.

[151] Hawke-Smith, *Six Towns*, 28-30.

[152] Taylor, *Stoke-on-Trent*, 65.

However, contemporary writers painted wildly contrasting pictures of what life was life in the Six Towns. Whilst one reporter described the region as a ‘knot of forlorn and ugly little towns’,[157] another remarked that ‘we find ourselves surrounded by the hum of a swarming population, and by the presence of industry; and yet, at the end of nearly every street, in the presence of nature’s living green – of meadows, hills and woods’.[158] These contrasting accounts may simply be a reflection of each writer’s personal preference, experience, or bias, whilst it is important to emphasise that each of the major conurbations possessed its own defining features. For example, an individual visiting Hanley in the mid-Victorian period, with its sprawling urban structures, heavy industrial presence, and large population, would have a very different perception of the region than someone who had visited one of the smaller, peripheral towns, such as Longton, which would have been surrounded by countryside with a greater distance separating it from the main urban centres.

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[153] Ernest. J. D. Warrilow, *A Sociological History of the City of Stoke-on-Trent* (Hanley: J. J. Brookes Printers, 1960), 261.

[154] Harold Hodge, ‘Lead Poisoning in The Potteries’, *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature and Sport* 86, no.2233 (1898): 200.

[155] ‘A Glimpse at The Potteries’, *The Leisure Hour*, February 11, 1871, 94-96.

[156] G. Petgrave Johnson, ‘Smoke Pollution of the Atmosphere in The Potteries’, *Journal of the Royal Sanitary Institute* 42, no.6 (1922): 323.

[157] Hodge, ‘Lead Poisoning’, 200.

[158] ‘A Glimpse at The Potteries’, *The Leisure Hour*, 94.

The growth of The Potteries during the nineteenth century, with the constant expansion of the Six Towns both in terms of population and boundaries, meant that there was a growing consensus that the major conurbations of the region should be unified. Jenkins reflected the thoughts of many onlookers during the period when he commented that ‘it seems natural that a geographically compact area whose inhabitants are predominantly engaged in a common industry should be treated as a single unit for the purposes of local government’.[159] The first suggestion of amalgamation was aired in 1817 yet, despite the potential benefits that unification would provide in terms of governance and administration, it would take almost a century before any universal agreement would be reached. Each of the Six Towns opposed the prospect of amalgamation at various stages throughout the period with disagreements primarily revolving around who would lead any prospective federation and how much influence each conurbation would have. In 1836, Burslem residents and officials published their concerns, which would be repeated multiple times during various discussions throughout the century, and concluded that ‘this meeting is decidedly of the opinion that [the] incorporation under one Municipal Government would be productive of endless discord and jealously, and would give one town an undue influence over the others’.[160] Amalgamation presented the Six Towns with an opportunity to unify and combine resources, yet the possibility of sacrificing their independence and unique identity to be part of a federation where there was no guarantee of an equal share of power or influence was a move that many local government officials were not initially prepared to make.

There was also the question of who would lead any new local government in a unified form of The Potteries. As the nineteenth century progressed there was extensive investment in municipal amenities and public services as each of the Six Towns strived to create a strong civic identity that would enable them to wield greater political influence or even stake a claim for leadership should amalgamation be agreed, with thirteen town halls being constructed between the late eighteenth century and the confirmation of federation in 1910.[161] Hanley,

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[159] Jenkins, *The County of Stafford*, 252.
[160] ‘Staffordshire’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, July 9, 1836, 1.
[161] See Hawke-Smith, *Six Towns*.

Burslem, and Stoke all considered that they had the strongest claim to lead any unified adaptation of The Potteries, based on their size, economic influence, and ecclesiastical authority respectively, and were especially proactive in the proliferation of ostentatious public buildings in an effort to surpass their rivals. Stoke possessed the ancient church, retained control over the largest parish, and was the location of the largest railway station; Burslem adopted the title of 'The Mother-Town' or 'Mother of The Potteries' and was seen as the fountainhead of the pottery and ceramic industry; and Hanley, once its boundaries had expanded to consume the surrounding districts, stood as the largest conurbation in the region.[162]

Stoke, Burslem, and Hanley invested heavily in the provision of municipal buildings as each town attempted to create a civic identity that allowed them to retain or improve its status in a fluid political order. Between the three conurbations, nine increasingly elaborate and expensive town halls were built between 1794 and the amalgamation of the Six Towns in 1910 despite there being little need for grand institutional buildings. The proliferation of these town halls was motivated by the desire to gain prestige and make statements of power as the possibility of amalgamation became more likely, leaving each conurbation with the opportunity to position itself as the most prominent town in The Potteries. For example, in 1850, Stoke completed the inception of a new town hall with the support of leading local figures and manufacturers, despite already possessing a suitable institutional building, in a clear attempt to position itself as the centre of the region and to pre-empt the question of leadership with unification of the Six Towns under discussion. Meanwhile, Burslem started construction on its fourth town hall as late as 1900 in a desperate attempt to resist the prospect of amalgamation, although the new building was redundant when it was finally completed in 1911 as The Potteries had already unified as a federation one year earlier. What makes this 'battle of the town halls' more striking is that these grand institutional buildings stood alone as glamourous structures amidst a sea of poverty stricken or, at best, modest urban streets that were occupied by the working classes.[163] They were ambitious, some might say overzealous, attempts to gain or retain power and status amid the growing concerns of which conurbation would lead or have the most significant influence in a new unified region.

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[162] *A Descriptive Account of The Potteries (Illustrated). 1893 Advertising and Trade Journal*. (London: W. Kent & Co., 1893), 46.

[163] See Hawke-Smith, *Six Towns*.

Despite the first suggestion that the Six Towns of The Potteries should unify being made as early as 1817 it was not until 1910 that any form of universal agreement was reached. For much of the late nineteenth century the idea lay dormant with each conurbation determined to retain its independence, but the rapid expansion of the region's population and urban growth led to a greater need for cooperation and collaboration as the boundaries of each town began to merge and become less certain. In 1906, it was Longton that reignited the first genuine discussions around the prospect of amalgamation in over a decade when it proposed that it should unite as a Parliamentary Borough along with Stoke and Fenton. However, one year later the Local Government Board indicated that any potential federation should embrace a much larger geographical area in the interests of economy and sufficiency, initiating three years of debate, dispute, and negotiations amongst the major conurbations. On March 31, 1910, the unification of the Six Towns was agreed with each conurbation ceasing to exist as a separate entity and local government being dissolved to create a federation under the title of the County Borough of Stoke-on-Trent.[164] There were initial efforts to circulate the new central government between the existing town halls of each town, although this was short lived with Stoke becoming the primary location. Its ample town hall became the chamber for the region leaving the remaining elaborate institutional buildings in other conurbations to fall into disuse. In 1925, Stoke-on-Trent was granted city status by King George V, despite the region's relatively diminutive population in comparison to other major conurbations in the Midlands, by virtue of being the centre of the country's pottery manufacturing, and it remains the only polycentric city in the United Kingdom, reflecting its unique composition of Six Towns.[165]

Sport in 'The Potteries'

As the dual processes of industrialisation and urbanisation transformed The Potteries from a collection of small towns into a prominent manufacturing power during the nineteenth century, the changing environment enabled a thriving sporting culture to emerge and prosper. At the start of the century, recreations, consisting of traditional games such as quoits, prison-bars, and physical contests, were usually organised on an informal, ad-hoc basis during annual holidays or festivals, but, by the start of the First World War, the region possessed an array of prominent mass-spectator sports clubs, a flourishing grassroots network of clubs and athletes, and an increasing number of municipal facilities, including public parks and swimming baths. Sport and leisure were central themes within each of the Six Towns and, as the century progressed, the authorities governing each conurbation recognised that the provision of sport and leisure facilities could be used to develop a strong civic identity. The Potteries became a centre of innovation for the development of association football in the Midlands, exemplified by the key role played by Stoke (City) FC and its members in the formation of the Football League, but the region also possessed influential clubs and organisations in sports such as athletics, bowls, cricket, cycling, swimming, and horse-racing.[166] North Staffordshire was undoubtedly a hive of activity during the nineteenth century and some elements of the sporting culture that was established during the Victorian era have been retained through to the present day.

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[164] See Jenkins, *The County of Stafford*, 252-258.

[165] John Beckett, *City Status in the British Isles, 1830-2002* (London: Routledge, 2005), 80; and Taylor, *Stoke-on-Trent*, 68.

Central to the region's sport, leisure, and recreational history are 'the wakes'. The wakes were originally a religious festival that celebrated the anniversary of the dedication day of the church and its patron saint, but by the start of the Victorian era it had evolved into an annual holiday where factories and businesses would close for a week and the local populace would engage in various leisure activities, including sport.[167] The survival of the wakes were confined largely to the north of England by the start of the nineteenth century and The Potteries held three separate celebrations: Burslem Wakes, honouring St. John the Baptist, were held in the week following June 24th; Tunstall Wakes, dedicated to St. Margaret, were organised in late July; and Stoke Wakes, commemorating St. Peter ad Vincula, which occurred in the first week of August.[168] The celebrations had lost their religious significance by the late eighteenth century and had instead become a time of general merry-making, feasting, and participation in sport and leisure activities with the glorious finale of Stoke Wakes being 'Trentham Thursday', when the Duke of Sutherland would open his estate and gardens to the public. Amusements varied from town-to-town but often included leisure activities such as bazaars, acting booths, and shooting-galleries along with sporting recreations encompassing foot-racing, quoits, prison-bars, football, wrestling, horse-racing and, prior to their exclusion, blood sports.[169] The wakes were enjoyed by all classes, from pottery makers to country gentleman, and provided the people of The Potteries with a short break from the drudgery of everyday industrial life and were the only means of mass entertainment during the first half of the nineteenth century.

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[166] Mervyn Edwards, *Potters at Play* (Leek: Churnet Valley Books, 1996), 8

[167] See Poole, 'Oldham Wakes', 71-98.

[168] See Edwards, *Potters at Play*, 8; and Taylor, *Stoke-on-Trent*, 61-63.

However, the wakes were not met with unanimous approval. Manufacturers, factory owners, and church leaders were among the principal opponents of the annual holiday, complaining that the celebrations disrupted productivity and encouraged immoral and dissolute behaviour.[170] Indeed, Lowerson and Myerscough reveal that many traditional celebrations, such as the wakes, 'were opportunities for extravagant excess and licentious fun' whilst some perceived it to be an occasion where 'traditional social rules [were] inverted for the day'.[171] Josiah Wedgwood protested that 'the Wakes must be observed though the world was to end with them' and although the Burslem Board of Heath, consisting of pottery and ceramic factory owners, successful banned the Burslem Wakes in 1879 it was reinstated the following year.[172] The second half of the nineteenth century saw a gradual reduction in the popularity of the holiday, due in part to the decline in attendances at local events as people used the railways to travel to seaside resorts, and the trio of celebrations were amalgamated into a single 'Potters Holiday' that was based on the timing of the Stoke Wakes.

The wakes provided the local populace of the Six Towns with an annual block of time where they were free to engage in leisure activities and, in an industrial environment where employees in some pottery and ceramic factories were expected to work twelve-hour days, this undoubtedly helped to facilitate the continuation and development of sport in the early Victorian era. However, outside the remit of these local holidays, it was enthusiastic individuals and entrepreneurs that were responsible for organising formal sporting contests and events in the region during the first half of the nineteenth century. Each of the Six Towns had patches of land known as 'holiday fields' that were rented out or, in some cases, opened up at no cost as an act of philanthropy for sport and leisure activities by private landowners who either recognised an opportunity to make a profit or simply wanted to provide a service for their local community. In 1860, 370 students from the church schools in Northwood engaged 'heartily in cricket, football and other games' in a field that was 'kindly leant by Mr. Udal' whilst Stoke (City) FC spent its formative years playing matches on a field rented out by Mr. Sweeting in the Boothen district of the town.[173] Finney Gardens, initially a picnic and garden space located in Hanley, was converted into an entertainment hub by Theophilus Cartlidge during the 1860s and 1870s. Cartlidge was effectively one of the first sports promoters in The Potteries and used the land to hold pedestrianism challenges, cricket matches, prison-bar contests, and horse-racing events in an attempt to capitalise on the town's interest in sport.[174] Similarly, the swimming facilities in the major conurbations were initially provided by entrepreneurs such as John Kilvinton, a 'medical galvanist' residing in Burslem, who established a Turkish Baths during the early 1860s, prior to local authorities investing in public baths during the second half of the nineteenth century.[175]

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[169] Edwards *Potters at Play*, 8-15.

[170] See Ward, *Stoke-on-Trent.*

[171] Lowerson and Mysercough, *Time to Spare*, 9.

[172] Neil McKendrick, 'Josiah Wedgewood and Factory Discipline', *Historical Journal* 4, no.1 (1961): 20-55, 46.

The sporting revolution experienced by Britain during the final three decades of the nineteenth century was replicated throughout The Potteries where the irregular activities of the early Victorian era were replaced by formal sports clubs that organised contests and events on a more consistent basis. The introduction and acceptance of the Saturday and, in some industries, the Thursday half-holiday across the region during the 1870s provided the local populace with a regular, weekly slot of free time which many people chose to invest in playing or spectating sport. By the turn of the century, The Potteries had become a hub of sporting activity with a multitude of sports clubs being established in each of the Six Towns to facilitate a wide variety of activities including bowling, bicycling, swimming, and water polo whilst there were regular reports of pedestrianism feats, pugilism contests, and aquatic festivals being organised.[176] Sports clubs or teams often emerged from existing institutions, such as a church congregation or a place of employment, or were established to represent a specific town, district or street. In some cases, contests or competitions concluded with the winner receiving some form of prize, either financial or material, like the leg of mutton that the victor of a swimming race was handed in 1863.[177] However, the sporting landscape in the region during the second half of the nineteenth century was dominated by four sports: football, cricket, athletics, and horse racing.[178]

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[173] 'Hanley', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 8, 1860, 4; and Tony Matthews, *The Encyclopaedia of Stoke City, 1868-1994* (West Bromwich: The Lion Press, 1994), 6-7.

[174] Edwards, *Potters at Play*, 35; Examples of sporting activities held at Finney Gardens include 'Finney Gardens', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 29, 1876, 5; 'Finney Gardens, Hanley – 1,000 Miles in 1,000 Hours', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, October 18, 1873, 1; and 'Bucknall Races', *Staffordshire Advertiser,* September 26, 1868, 5.

[175] 'Galvanism', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 14, 1861, 1; and 'Important Reduction in Turkish Baths', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 26, 1863, 4.

[176] Examples of various sports include: 'Burslem Cycling Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 31, 1889, 3; 'Water Polo Notes', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 12, 1889, 3; 'Longton Swimming Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 3, 1889, 3; and 'Bowls', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 1, 1881, 3.

Formal horse racing was present in The Potteries as early as the 1820s, with an annual meeting being held at the Etruria Racecourse until 1841 before being resumed in 1850 under the title of 'The Pottery Races' with a new course built on Boothen Meadows.[179] The Pottery Races became a central feature of the Stoke Wakes and could attract crowds in excess of 20,000 during their peak, despite some leading local religious figures complaining that the meetings promoted an 'evil tendency' that would lead to 'intemperance, lewdness, gambling, thieving, quarrelling, fighting, cursing and swearing'.[180] Such was the popularity of the meeting that regular improvements were made to the course, including the erection and extension of a grandstand, and it sparked the establishment of 'The Newcastle Races' in the neighbouring borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme. The Newcastle Races never captured the attention of the public in the same way as its counterpart in Stoke, but organisers scheduled the meeting for the two days after The Pottery Races had taken place to try to capitalise on spectators and entrants that had already arrived in the area. However, horse racing in The Potteries never reached the same stature of some of Britain's more prestigious meetings, such as Ascot, Derby, and Epson, and the improved transport links provided by the expansion of the railway in the second half of the nineteenth century allowed those that wished to see 'proper' racing travel further afield. Furthermore, Vamplew suggests that the emergence of enclosed meetings, which could entice the best horses and jockeys by using gate receipts to increase the prize money on offer, meant that many local courses gradually disappeared or were seen as being of inferior quality.[181] By the mid-1860s, The Pottery Races were no longer operating as financial pressures combined with dwindling public interest. There was a short-lived attempt to revive horse racing in the region during the late 1860s and early 1870s on a smaller scale by the proprietor of Finney Gardens, Theophilus Cartlidge, although the entrepreneur's efforts were largely unsuccessful, with events only attracting a handful of entrants and a diminutive crowd.[182]

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[177] 'A Swimming Match', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 29, 1863, 4.

[178] 'A Retrospect of Sport in North Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 28, 1889, 3.

[179] Edwards, *Potters at Play*, 33-35; and Ward, *Stoke-on-Trent*, 392.

[180] 'Pottery Races', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 3, 1850, 1.

[181] Wray Vamplew, 'Horse-Racing', in *Sport in Britain*, ed. Tony Mason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 215-216.

Athletics emerged as a staple sporting interest in The Potteries during the second half of the nineteenth century with the Stoke Victoria Athletic Club becoming one of the most prominent sports clubs in the region. It initially evolved from a cricket club of the same name, the Stoke Victoria Cricket Club, which had been formed as early as 1847, although it was not until 1868 that the contemporary press began to publish accounts of any athletic activities or events being organised.[183] The athletic club had outgrown its cricket roots by the early 1870s and established itself as a separate entity, facilitating a variety of local events with its main feature being a grand Athletic Fete that was organised during the Stoke Wakes. Although the club changed location on multiple occasions during its formative years, by 1879 it had adopted a permanent home in Boothen which included a cinder track of 533 yards, a straight turf course of 200 yards, and a grandstand that could hold 1,000 spectators.[184] The Athletic Fete was scheduled over two days and became a key feature of the Stoke Wakes, filling the void that had been left by the demise of local horse racing, with 20,000 spectators attending the first day of the 1889 fete alone.[185] It developed into a prominent meeting that attracted entrants from across the country, with the *Staffordshire Sentinel* describing it as one of 'the best provincial festivals in England' where 'sufficiently liberal prizes were offered to induce some of the best amateur athletes of the day to enter the lists, for success at Stoke brings the dual advantage of honour conjoined with tangible reward'.[186] As early as 1874, athletes were travelling from as far afield as Sunderland and London to participate and in 1880 it was noted that 'there were no fewer than thirty events on the card … many of the prizes were on view in the field – a goodly display of valuable articles – and enough to stir competitors to strong emulative exertion'.[187] At the end of the nineteenth century, it was remarked that the Stoke

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[182] 'Bucknall Races', *Staffordshire Advertiser,* September 26, 1868, 5.
[183] 'Victoria Cricket and Athletic Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 9, 1870, 1.
[184] 'Athletic Sports at Stoke', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 7, 1878, 3; and 'Victoria Athletic Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 19, 1879, 5.
[185] 'Stoke Victoria Athletic Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 26, 1889, 4.
[186] 'Stoke Victoria Athletic Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 7, 1880, 7.
[187] 'Stoke Victorian Athletic Club. The Sports Yesterday', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 6, 1874, 2; and 'Stoke Victoria Athletic Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 7, 1880, 7.

Victoria Athletic Club 'still stands above all other similar institutions of the district' and yet the national appeal of the Athletic Fete had begun to diminish.[188] Newspaper reports noted that the number of competitors had begun to decline in final decade of the century due to the emergence of alternative large-scale athletic meetings in the West Midlands.[189] Ultimately, the club retained its local importance into the twentieth century, but its national prestige was gradually eroded.

As early as the 1840s and 1850s the local press was reporting various occurrences of cricket matches taking place across The Potteries and it is evident that several formal clubs were already in existence. These clubs differed markedly in size and stature, with the Stoke Victoria Cricket Club claiming to have 100 members whilst more diminutive clubs were established in smaller conurbations, such as Dresden and Kidsgrove, or emerged from places of employment and consisted solely of an enthusiastic group of employees.[190] Cricket was undoubtedly the most popular summer sport in The Potteries with reports indicating that it was played in schools, at local events, and in the street, much to the annoyance of local industrialists and businessmen.[191] By 1869, the local press was receiving such a large volume of cricket-related correspondence that it was remarked that 'several letters and paragraphs relating to cricket matches are unavoidably crowded out'.[192] There were also some intriguing examples of innovative forms of the game taking place. In 1855, a match was played on a frozen lake in Trentham which was described as a 'somewhat novel performance' whilst in 1874 and 1875 the members of Hanley Cricket Club played a contest against a team of clowns at Finney Gardens that was reportedly watched by 5,000 people over the course of the two-day event.[193] Furthermore, cricket, above all other sporting activities in the region, was promoted as being 'one of the most legitimate means of recreation that young men could indulge in' and that 'if entered into in a temperate manner, tended to benefit the body, invigorate the mind, and keep young men from dissipation and moral ruin'.[194] Despite this, the game did not extend its popularity beyond being a recreational pursuit and it is noticeable that The Potteries never possessed a cricket club of national repute or standing.

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[188] 'A Retrospect of Sport in North Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 28, 1889, 3.

[189] 'Stoke Sports', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 7, 1889, 3.

[190] 'Stoke Victoria Cricket Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 7, 1854, 8; 'Cricket', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 21, 1855, 5; and 'Stoke. Cricket Match', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 9, 1854, 4.

[191] 'Hanley County', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 31, 1874, 2.

[192] 'Notice to Correspondents', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 24, 1869, 5.

[193] 'Trentham', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 24, 1855, 5; 'The Clown Cricketers at Hanley', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 9, 1874, 3; and 'Clown Cricketers at Hanley', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 24, 1875, 3.

[194] 'Albert Cricket Club Dinner', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 15, 1874, 2; and 'Hanley Albert Cricket and Athletic Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 20, 1875, 4.

The Staffordshire County Cricket Club was established in the early 1870s and was initially based in Lichfield, South Staffordshire, but was transferred to Stoke in 1884 due to a lack of public interest.[195] It was hoped that the move would enable to the club to capitalise on the larger population in the north of the county, yet it continued to struggle to gain popularity and was subsequently undermined by financial concerns. There were two main issues. First, it was noted that the neighbouring counties of Derbyshire and Warwickshire possessed well-established and prestigious county cricket clubs that were within a reasonable travelling distance. Second, as remarked at a meeting of the Staffordshire County Cricket Club in 1884, the public had yet to 'appreciate cricket to its full value' and that 'in the neighbourhood [The Potteries] people were too taken up with football matches'.[196] By the final decade of the nineteenth century, it was admitted that 'instead of the club growing in popularity every year, it might be said to have arrived at a point beyond which it could not move' with just 355 members on the books.[197] However, cricket did flourish at a recreational level. Birley states that 'cricket leagues sprang up in industrial districts, where both players and spectators responded to the idea of Saturday afternoon matches that could be played to a finish'.[198] The North Staffordshire Cricket League was established in 1889, one of the earliest competitions of its kind, with Hollowood stating that such leagues enabled players to participate in meaningful, competitive fixtures which also 'attracted good crowds' where 'spectators were so vociferous that they could be described as active participants in the game'.[199]

The general expansion of sport and its increasing popularity was replicated across each of the region's major conurbations and, as the prospect of amalgamation began to become a genuine possibility, each of the Six Towns recognised that sport and leisure could be used as a tool to build a strong identity that would enhance their political authority and influence. The geographical disposition of The Potteries naturally created intense inter-town rivalries and it was not uncommon for individuals or teams from differing communes to compete in sporting events against opponents from adjacent towns. In 1850, during the Stoke Wakes, men from Stoke and Burslem were selected to represent their parish in a prison-bar match in which the victors received half a sovereign each and won local bragging rights over their neighbours.[200] Particularly from the 1870s onwards changing attitudes towards local affairs resulted in the emergence of a civic self-consciousness that garnered a competitive spirit between towns and cities across the country, yet the unique geopolitical nature of The Potteries exacerbated these perceptions for each of the Six Towns. Meller states that 'municipal facilities for recreation and leisure, including branch libraries as well as parks and swimming baths, came to be considered as part of the basic social equipment of urban life' yet adds that 'one of the curious facts … was how little their development owed, in most instances, to popular demand'.[201] The second half of the nineteenth century saw the local authorities governing each of the Six Towns take a much more central role in the provision of sport and leisure facilities as they jostled to position themselves as the leading conurbation in any potential unified region. This was exemplified by the construction of public swimming baths and municipal parks as each town built increasingly extravagant facilities to surpass their rivals.

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[195] 'Staffordshire County Cricket Club', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, February 1, 1873, 1; and 'Staffordshire County Cricket Club', *Tamworth Herald*, November 1, 1884, 4.

[196] 'Staffordshire County Cricket Club', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 1, 1894, 2.

[197] 'Staffordshire County Cricket Club', *Staffordshire Chronicle*, February 16, 1889, 8.

[198] Derek Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket* (London: Aurum Press, 1999), 151-2.

[199] Bernard Hollowood, *Cricket on the Brain* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970), 22.

Stoke Baths were opened in 1860 and described as being a 'handsome' and 'excellent' facility that consisted of a public pool, which held 39,000 gallons of water, and twelve private baths, which were designated for first-class and second-class gentleman and ladies, whilst the building was ornately decorated with glazed bricks and vitreous tiles provided by prominent local manufacturers.[202] Hanley responded by investing £6,000 on an extensive public bathing facility that opened in 1874. The site covered an area of more than 10,000 feet with an impressive Gothic exterior that had a road frontage of nearly 100 feet whilst the swimming bath itself contained 50,000 gallons of water. The Hanley baths were significantly larger and more expensive than its counterpart in Stoke and was described as being 'certainly the best in the district', provoking a stern retort from residents in neighbouring communes.[203] One letter published in the *Staffordshire Sentinel* declared that 'while we admire the public spirit shown by Hanley in the erection of handsome and commodious public paths, we cannot allow the statement that "Hanley had set an admirable example" to go uncorrected'. The author noted that the Stoke Baths had been established fourteen years earlier, was in constant use, and had been 'an encouragement to other towns desirous of having public baths'.[204] Longton unveiled their public baths in 1881, ignoring criticism from some members of the council who queried whether the conurbation required such a facility whilst residents were opposed to the subsequent rise in taxes that financed the £8,000 project, with Tunstall and Burslem establishing their swimming provisions in 1890 and 1896 respectively.[205] Leading figures in Burslem council were increasingly frustrated at being surpassed by neighbouring communes and in a public meeting in 1893 Alderman T. Wood complained that 'Burslem was styled "the Mother of the Potteries", and all her children around her had [public] baths whilst she had none'.[206] The competition and one-upmanship between the conurbations was further highlighted by the decision of Stoke councillors to invest a further £2,500 in their own facility in 1881, a direct response to the opening of Longton Baths, and it is clear that the provision of pubic baths were perceived by local authorities as being key to creating strong civic identity.[207]

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[200] 'Stoke Wakes', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 10, 1850, 4.
[201] Meller, *The Changing City*, 97, 99.
[202] 'Stoke, The Public Baths', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 28, 1860, 4; and 'The Baths at Stoke', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 16, 1875, 4.
[203] 'The Opening of the Hanley Public Baths', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 16, 1874, 3.

These attitudes were also replicated in the provision of municipal parks across the region with Edwards stating that 'the establishment of parks in the Potteries from 1888 came partly as a result of the Six Towns' internal battle to assert their singular identities'.[208] Longton was the first to invest in a public park in July 1888 and was followed by Burslem (opened in 1894), Hanley (1897), Tunstall (1904), and Fenton (1924). Each provision was designed to be more extravagant than those built by neighbouring communes both in terms of its size, the facilities that were incorporated, and its total cost. Queens Park (Longton) initially consisted of large open spaces, small lakes, and gardens for the public to enjoy, although park-users were forbidden from bathing in the water, riding bicycles or participating in any physical activities or games such as football, cricket or prison bars. In contrast, Hanley Park, which opened nine years later, was more extravagantly furnished with football pitches, bowlinggreens, a skittle alley, gymnasium, and tennis courts with subsequent parks in other conurbations designed to facilitate sport and leisure activities.[209] There was a significant change in attitude towards the provision of municipal parks in the Six Towns as the century progressed with local authorities recognising that they could be utilised to enhance their reputation, influence, and prestige in the region. The earliest suggestion of building a public park in Hanley emerged as early as the 1850s, but the mayor, John Ridgeway, declined to support the idea and instead opted to use the space earmarked for public gardens to create a cemetery.[210] However, the growing threat of amalgamation and the increasing popularity of sport and leisure as the century progressed persuaded council members to invest in excess of £70,000 in the late mid-1890s to build the largest and most imposing municipal provision in the region at the time.

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[204] 'The Baths at Stoke', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 16, 1875, 4.

[205] Edwards, *Potters at Play*, 60; and 'Longton Baths Opening Ceremonies', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 14, 1881, 4.

[206] 'Ward Meetings on the Baths Question at Burslem', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, May 13, 1893, 5.

[207] 'Longton Baths Opening Ceremonies', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 14, 1881, 4.

[208] Mervyn Edwards, *Potters in Parks* (Leek: Churnet Valley Books, 1999), 9.

Conclusion

The Victorian age was a period of significant societal change and, as the dual processes of industrialisation and urbanisation came to shape the British landscape, large urban conurbations that wielded substantial industrial power became the focal points of different regions across the country. Distinct industries often came to characterise specific towns, cities or areas. Lancashire became synonymous with the cotton mill, Sheffield was renowned for the manufacturing of steel, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne prospered from shipbuilding and heavy engineering.[211] The city of Stoke-on-Trent, as indicated by its more commonly used name of The Potteries, emerged as an industrial power in the Midlands during the nineteenth century and became the creative centre of the British pottery and ceramic industry. It was home to several internationally recognised brands, which produced high-quality wares that were then sold across the globe, and hundreds of smaller firms, that thrived due to the differentiation and specialisation of products. The industry came to define the region, with most of the population either employed by pottery and ceramic firms or within associated subsidiary trades, such as mining or transport.

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[209] Edwards, *Potters in Parks*, 45.

[210] Taylor, *Stoke-on-Trent*, 57.

[211] Popp and Wilson, 'Industrial Districts in Industrialising England', 46.

As the nineteenth century progressed, sport came to be a central feature of life in The Potteries as an increasing number of formal clubs, events, and competitions were established for a variety of different sports, ranging from athletics, cricket, and football to horseracing, water polo, and quoits. However, much of the sporting culture that emerged during this period either did not survive into the second half of the twentieth century or only continued at a recreational level. The wakes remained a popular tradition despite attempts by local government and industrialists to suppress it at various points during the Victorian period, but it gradually lost its sporting flavour and instead evolved into a practice that was used as an opportunity for the people of The Potteries to participate in day trips or short holidays outside the region.[212] It survived into the twentieth century under the title of the Potters Holiday but has since declined in popularity and had all but disappeared by the 1990s. Horse racing in the region had been incredibly popular during the mid-nineteenth century but, barring periodic efforts by entrepreneurs to revive the tradition, it failed to survive into the late Victorian period. Similarly, despite its initial popularity, the Stoke Victoria Athletic Club was unable to maintain its position as a prestigious race venue on a national scale, although it did retain a high degree of importance on a local level.[213] By 1889, the *Staffordshire Sentinel* concluded that the most pertinent sporting events in The Potteries were 'almost strictly confined to two games – cricket and football' and that 'of all the games and pastimes that are played, or that take place in the northern part of the county, none command more support and attention than does football'.[214]

Association football remains the most popular sporting activity in the region and in the modern era is a defining characteristic of Stoke-on-Trent and the broader region of North Staffordshire. The pottery and ceramic industry that established The Potteries as an industrial power during the Victorian era has all but disappeared – as late as the mid-twentieth century almost 100,000 people were employed in the industry, but by 2010 this figure had dwindled to less than 9,000 – leaving the area without a clear modern identity.[215] Football has come to partly fill that void. Despite this, little is known about the development of the association game in The Potteries and, barring some interest in the history of Stoke City FC and Port Vale FC, the emergence of the game during the nineteenth century has been widely overlooked by academics and historians alike. This is surprising considering the historical significance of the game in the area. Stoke City FC is widely perceived as being one of the oldest surviving professional football clubs in England, the Staffordshire Football Association was one of the first county associations to be established in the country, the first secretary of the Football League was based in Hanley, and the tradition of 3:00pm kick off times for professional matches were partly introduced to align with the closing times of pottery firms to enable workers to attend.[216]

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[212] Edwards, *Potters at Play*, 13-15.

[213] See Cooke, 'An Initial Survey', 178-191.

[214] 'A Retrospect of Sport in North Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 28, 1889, 3.

[215] Ian Mahoney and Tony Kearon, 'Social Quality and Brexit in Stoke-on-Trent, England', *International Journal of Social Quality* 9, no.1 (2018): 1-20.

The following chapter begins the process of constructing a historiography of the game in the region and filling the current gap in the literature by examining the early football activities that were occurring in The Potteries between 1840 and 1868. The chapter utilises primary materials, in the form of local newspapers and publications, to identify and examine what forms of football activity were taking across the region. In addition, it investigates the formation of the first formal association football club in The Potteries, Stoke Ramblers (Stoke City). There has been significant confusion regarding the origins of the club and the chapter explores the multiple contrasting narratives that exist whilst determining how myths in sport history emerge, gain power and resilience, and become entrenched in our collective knowledge. Finally, the development of the game in The Potteries is placed within the broader national picture in relation to the origins of football debate.[217]

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[216] Midwinter, *Parish to Planet*, 89; Matthew Taylor, *The Leaguers. The Making of Professional Football in England, 1900-1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 51; and Martyn Cooke and Gary James, ‘Myths, Truths and Pioneers: The Early Development of Association Football in The Potteries’, *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2017): 6.

[217] See Adrian Harvey, ‘The Emergence of Football in Nineteenth Century England: The Historiographic Debate’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, no.18 (2013): 2154-2163.

Chapter Two[1]

Early Association Football Activities in The Potteries

Numerous scholars have noted how modern society has a seeming obsession with understanding origins and beginnings, often searching for that one moment in history where something was created, invented or first began. Gould surmised that 'we yearn to know about origins',[2] whilst Kitching suggests that our love of story-telling and celebration has stimulated an interest in how popular sporting activities and pursuits first emerged and developed.[3] However, history is very rarely clear cut, linear or precise and Taylor warns that 'determining a precise moment of origin for a sport is a difficult, some might say futile, endeavour' and that 'few sports were 'born' or 'invented' at a specific historical moment that can be clearly identified and accepted by all'.[4] These challenges have been highlighted by the deconstruction of the long-standing traditional narratives that explained the creation of baseball and rugby, with modern research indicating that neither Abner Doubleday or William Webb Ellis were responsible for the invention of their respective sports.[5] The origins of sport are rarely the result of individual inspiration at a precise moment in time and are more often the culmination of a prolonged and complex series of modifications and compromises.[6]

Much has been written about the 'birth' of association football in Britain over the previous three decades with an increasing number of academics, historians, and researchers focusing their efforts on exploring the origins of the modern game. The publication of Dunnning and Sheard's *Barbarians, Gentleman and Players* in 1979 signalled the start of rigorous, in-depth academic study into the early history of football and provided the foundation on which a significant body of literature has been built.[7] However, despite this wealth of research, academics have failed to reach a consensus regarding the historiography of eighteenth and nineteenth century football, with two competing narratives emerging, described as the 'orthodox' and 'revisionist' positions, within the 'origins of football' debate.[8] Dunning and Curry, discussing the dissimilarities between the two paradigms, noted that 'our differences are in part paradigmatic or perspectival in character and not simply questions regarding the discovery, substantiation and interpretation of facts (though, of course, they are that too)'.[9] The continuing discourse has encouraged a growing number of scholars to engage in what Curry describes as 'more than a decade of robust yet healthy disagreement'.[10] Curry and Dunning have remained the key proponents of the orthodox paradigm whilst Harvey has been joined by Swain and Goulstone in promoting the revisionist position.[11] Others, such as James and Kitching, have attempted to reach a consensus whilst Collins has been critical of both sides of the debate.[12] James noted that 'the debate between historians has at times appeared to become personal' and has suggested that 'it is vital we also engage with each other and find ways to cooperate rather than criticize'.[13]

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[1] Content from this chapter has been published in the following articles or chapters: Martyn Dean Cooke and Gary James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers: The Early Development of Association Football in The Potteries', *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2017): 5-23; and Martyn Dean Cooke, '"Many Details Remain Sketchy": Revealing the "Truth" Behind the Origins and Formation of Stoke City Football Club', *Soccer and Society* 21, no. 4 (2020): 395-407.

[2] Stephen Jay Gould, *Bully for Brontosaurus: Reflections in Natural History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), 45.

[3] Gavin Kitching, 'The Origins of Football: History, Ideology and the Making of "The People's Game"', *History Workshop Journal* 79, no:1 (2015): 128.

[4] Matthew Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education, 2008), 20.

[5] See David Block, *Baseball Before We Knew It: A Search for the Roots of the Game* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); and Tony Collins, *A Social History of English Rugby* (London: Routledge, 2009).

[6] Taylor, *The Association Game*, 20.

One proposed solution is for academics to further examine the origins of football in local contexts by undertaking research that focuses on specific towns, cities or regions. It has been noted that 'countrywide studies cannot fully address the issues surrounding the origins debate because the growth of the game in one specific region or city may not necessarily be representative of other areas' and that more localised research 'will help to build a clearer picture of how the game originated and developed across the country'.[14] Regional studies have already explored the emergence of the association game in Manchester,[15] Lancashire,[16] Sheffield,[17] Derbyshire,[18] Birmingham,[19] Nottinghamshire,[20] and the North East[21] with the focus now shifting towards areas of the country that remain overlooked. Curry states that 'the most encouraging aspect of the debate on the early development of football has been the detailed research undertaken … into local variants of the game' although it should be emphasised that multiple studies examining the same locality have resulted in differing conclusions being presented.[22] For example, James and Swain disagree strongly about the emergence of the game in Lancashire whilst Sheffield has become an ideological battleground for proponents of the orthodox and revisionist paradigms alike.

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[7] Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentleman and Players* (London: Routledge, 1979).

[8] See Adrian Harvey, 'The Emergence of Football in Nineteenth Century England: The Historiographic Debate', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, no.18 (2013): 2154-2163; and Taylor, *Association Game*, 20-29.

[9] Eric Dunning and Graham Curry, 'The Curate's Egg Scrambled Again: Comments on 'The Curate's Egg Put Back Together'!', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 19, no.4 (2002): 200.

[10] Graham Curry, 'Introduction: Towards a Deeper Understanding of the Development of Early Football', *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2018): 1.

[11] See John Goulstone, 'The Working Class Origins of Modern Football', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 17, no.1 (2000): 135-143; and Peter Swain, 'The Origins of Football Debate: The 'Grander Design and the Involvement of the Lower Classes', 1818-1840', *Sport in History* 34, no.34 (2014): 519-543.

[12] See Gary James, 'Historical Frameworks and Sporting Research', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33, no.10 (2016): 1169-1187; Gavin Kitching, '"Old" Football and the "New" Codes: Some Thoughts on the "Origins of Football" Debate and Suggestions for Further Research', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, no.13 (2011): 1733-1749; and Tony Collins, 'Early Football and the Emergence of Modern Soccer, c. 1840-1880', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 9 (2015): 1127-1142.

[13] James, 'Historical Frameworks', 1170.

The city of Stoke-on-Trent, more commonly referred to as The Potteries, is one region that has been overlooked by those engaging in the origins of football debate, despite the area possessing an association football culture that can be traced to the first half of the nineteenth century. It is traditionally perceived that Stoke City FC is the second oldest surviving professional football club in England, having supposedly been established in 1863, whilst the Staffordshire Football Association was one of the earliest County Football Associations to emerge in Britain, being formed in 1877.[23] Furthermore, prominent figures from the area were involved in the development of the game, at both a regional and national level, as the century progressed. This makes the region of interest to those debating the historiography of football in the nineteenth century and a localised study concerning the area can be used to contribute to the origins of football debate.

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[14] Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 6.

[15] See Gary James and Dave Day, 'The Emergence of an Association Football Culture in Manchester, 1840–1884', *Sport in History* 34, no.1 (2014): 49–74.

[16] See Peter Swain, 'Cultural Continuity and Football in Nineteenth-Century Lancashire', *Sport in History* 28, no.4 (2008): 566–582.

[17] See Graham Curry, *A Crucible of Modern Sport: The Early Development of Football in Sheffield* (New York, Nova, 2018); and Kevin Neill, Graham Curry and Eric Dunning, 'Three Men from Two Villages: The Influence of Footballers from Rural South Yorkshire on the Early Development of the Game in Sheffield', *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2018): 123-135.

[18] See Graham Curry, 'Stunted Growth: The Early Development of Football in Derby and South Derbyshire', *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2018): 24-34.

[19] See Adam Benkwitz and Gyozo Molnar, 'The Emergence and Development of Association Football: Influential Sociocultural Factors in Victorian Birmingham', *Soccer and Society* 18, no.7 (2017): 1027-1044.

[20] See Graham Curry and Eric Dunning, 'The 'Origins of Football Debate' and the Early Development of the Game in Nottinghamshire', *Soccer and Society* 18, no.7 (2017): 866-879.

[21] See Paul Joannou and Alan Candish, 'The Early Development of a Football Hotbed: The Onset of the Game in Tyne and Wear, 1877-1882', *Soccer and Society* 19: no.1 (2017): 107-122.

[22] Curry, 'Stunted Growth', 24.

[23] Cooke, 'Many Details Remain Sketchy', 395-407.

This chapter challenges and reframes the dominant paradigms regarding the early development of football in Britain by examining the emergence of association football in The Potteries prior to 1870. This includes producing an account of the earliest reported occurrences where some form of the game was taking place in the region and exploring the formation of the first formal association football club to be established in the area. It is evident that the traditional narratives that are used to explain the creation of Stoke City FC in 1863 (titled Stoke Ramblers during its formative years) is undermined by inaccuracies, exaggeration, and distortion. Therefore, this chapter presents fresh academic research that underpins a new timeline for the existence of the football club, including an accurate date of formation and a biographical account of the founder, and considers the role of myths in sport and how they retain power, resilience, and influence in modern society. The formative years of Stoke City FC have received little attention in traditional accounts of the club's history and very little is known about the first cohort of players that represented the club prior to 1870. The final section of this chapter utilises a prosopographical approach to present new biographical information regarding the men that played for Stoke Ramblers between 1868 and 1870, providing unprecedented insight into the individuals that were members of the region's first formal association football club. Ultimately, this chapter concludes by considering how the emergence of the association game in The Potteries fits into the broader, national picture and how the findings align with the origins of football debate.

The Origins of Football Debate

The Orthodox Position

Scholars have painted a definitive picture of what football looked like prior to the start of the nineteenth century, presenting a game that was rough, at times violent, and characterised by a 'large indistinguishable mob wrestling for the ball'.[24] There were no written rules, with the format often being determined by local oral traditions, whilst games were contested by unlimited numbers of players with the overall objective of driving the ball into the opponent's

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[24] Adrian Harvey, *Football: The First Hundred Years, The Untold Story* (London: Routledge, 2005), 1.

‘goal’ or scoring area.[25] The relative isolation of villages and towns prior to the advancements in communication and transport that were facilitated by the industrial revolution resulted in various idiosyncratic forms of the game emerging. Whilst some were based on kicking others including a large amount of handling, or a mixture of the two, and the size and shape of the ball and playing area would differ depending on the locality.[26] The agrarian model that existed in the pre-industrial era was reliant on seasonal variation and this facilitated periods of free time that provided opportunities for participation in recreation and leisure, including football, whilst prominent matches also occurred during holidays and festivals, such as Shrove Tuesday.

Central to the orthodox position is the notion that this traditional form of ‘folk’ football was subject to what has been described by Dunning as ‘cultural marginalisation’, which saw the game decline in popularity and almost disappear entirely from British society during the late eighteenth century. Although attempts to suppress football can be traced back to the fourteenth century it was during the Georgian period that the twin processes of ‘civilising’ and ‘state formation’ resulted in the game becoming marginalised.[27] The civilising process lowered the threshold of repugnance towards violence with recreations that were perceived to be especially unruly and violent coming to be regarded as abhorrent and lacking in respectability.[28] Furthermore, football also became seen as a threat to the social and political order as it attracted large gatherings of the lower classes. The introduction of improved methods of policing enabled authorities to have more effective control and allowed them to suppress unruly pastimes. By the early nineteenth century, it is claimed that the industrial revolution and urbanisation had also contributed to the decline of traditional forms of football. The introduction of the industrial factory system, with its implementation of authoritarian regimes and regimented workings hours, meant that workers had less time to engage in leisure and recreation. In addition, the extensive urbanisation and rapid growth of towns and cities resulted in a reduction of space in which to participate in traditional recreations that required a large playing area whilst the prospect of football taking place in the streets, causing disruption to commercial activities and damage to property, was strongly rejected by businessmen and factor owners.[29] As a result of this combination of influences, which supressed and dissuaded the game, those supporting the orthodox paradigm claim that football suffered a drastic decline in popularity and had all but disappeared from British society by the mid-nineteenth century.[30]

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[25] Steven Tischler, *Footballers and Businessmen: The Origins of Professional Soccer in England* (London: Holme & Meier, 1981), 7-18.

[26] Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915* (Brighton: Harvester, 1980), 9.

[27] Dave Russell, *Football and the English: A Social History of Association Football in England, 1863-1998* (Preston: Carnegie, 1997), 7.

[28] Harvey, *The First Hundred Years*, 55-57.

As a consequence of the decline in traditional forms of the game, the narrative proposed by orthodox academics turns to the role played by the elite public schools and universities, whilst Harvey highlights the perception that 'the future of football after 1830 was seen as resting with the public schools'.[31] During the 1830s and 1840s public schools were increasingly seen as providing an inadequate education and headmasters, such as Thomas Arnold at Rugby, stimulated a period of significant reform which resulted in new perceptions of the place of sport and physical activity within the curriculum.[32] Within these newly reformed institutions, organised games, including football, were actively encouraged as educators came to acknowledge the potential benefits of sport, which allied with the ideals of Muscular Christianity and manliness. Football was considered to encourage a range of 'manly' characteristics, including teamwork, courage, and self-restraint, whilst it also had the added practical benefit of keeping students occupied.[33] Birley notes that physical games were also perceived to encourage loyalty, unselfishness, and a sense of honour whilst also stimulating mental activity, although there were contemporary sceptics that thought such claims to be dubious.[34] Taylor notes that 'if boys were sent to bed tired, it was thought, the chances of them indulging in rowdy behaviour … would be minimised',[35] whilst Mason adds that 'it was clear that playing games did have certain advantages, both in keeping the boys out of mischief on free afternoons, and in providing an experience in which the masters and boys might share to the ultimate benefit of both'.[36]

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[29] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 10.

[30] Taylor, *The Association Game*, 22.

[31] Taylor, *Association Game*, 22; and Harvey, *The First Hundred Years*, 55.

[32] Russell, *Football and the English*, 8-9.

[33] James Anthony Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (London: Frank Cass, 1981), 9; and Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History*. (Oxford, Clarendon, 1989), 89.

[34] Derek Birley, *Sport and the Making of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 257.

[35] Taylor, *The Association Game*, 23

[36] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 12.

New forms of football began to develop within the public schools and unique versions of the game emerged in each institution, with the rules and style of play being moulded to suit the space and environment available. What was essentially a handling game emerged at Rugby School, Charterhouse School adopted a kicking or dribbling game whilst Eton School developed a 'wall game' which was a mixture of running, kicking, and handling.[37] It is proposed that football within the public schools differed greatly from the traditional forms of the game as they were subject to written rules, rather than oral ones, that dictated the duration of matches, size of the playing area, and the number of individuals that were allowed to participate, with teams now comprising of equal numbers of players. In addition, whilst the games undoubtedly remained rough and boisterous, the levels of permissible violence were restricted with an increased emphasis on skill and fair play.[38]

Rugby School became the first institution to commit its version of football to paper in 1845 or 1846 and they were subsequently followed by other prominent public schools.[39] There was generally little interest within the student communities to arrange contests against other educational institutions with football being restricted to internal competitions between houses or different groupings of pupils. Between 1827 and 1860 only ten matches were arranged between pupils attending the nine most significant public schools where some form of football was being played.[40] This was partly a result of the students' pride in their own forms of the game and a fear among the school hierarchies that inter-school sport could incite violence or disorderly behaviour.[41] Sport, including football, also emerged as a central feature of university life from the 1850s. However, with the student population consisting of ex-public schoolboys who had been 'brought up on the peculiar footballing traditions of their former schools' it was clear that common rules needed to be developed if they wished to continue playing. During the mid-nineteenth century, efforts were made by students at Cambridge University to formulate a universal set of rules and in 1863 students facilitated 'a committee of undergraduates from Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Marlborough, Shrewsbury and Westminster,

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[37] Russell, *Football and the English*, 9; and Phillip Gibbons, *Association Football in Victorian England: A History of the Game from 1863-1900* (Leicester: Upfront, 2002), 13.

[38] Harvey, *The First Hundred Years*, 18-39.

[39] Taylor, *Association Game*, 23-24.

[40] Adrian Harvey, 'The Myth of the Public Schools as the Inventors of Modern Soccer: The Ultimate Revisionism', *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2018): 53.

[41] Birley, *Sport*, 210-211.

[which] formed the basis of the discussions undertaken by the embryonic Football Association (FA) during the same year'.[42] By the mid-nineteenth century, football, in varying forms, emerged as a key aspect of life at many public schools and universities around the country with the game becoming refined and codified with written rules being published.

At its core, the orthodox paradigm indicates that these various forms of rationalised football that had begun to be codified in the elite public schools were transmitted and disseminated to wider society.[43] It is suggested that this transition was accomplished in two ways. First, Dunning and Sheard proposed that the popularity of football in the second half of the nineteenth century began to emerge after public schools started to publish printed books containing the rules of their form of the game. They propose that the main incentive for Rugby and Eton to compile and print their rules during the 1840s was that each institution was vying to ensure that their version of football became more widely adopted.[44] However, this view has few adherents and revisionist academics have highlighted that there is little evidence to suggest that anyone beyond the walls of the public schools, especially members of the general public, were influenced or interested in the written rules of elite educational institutions.[45] Second, it is suggested that it was the direct actions of ex-public schoolboys that played a prominent role in the promotion and popularisation of the game in the second half of the nineteenth century. These individuals, wishing to continue playing football after leaving school, acted as 'missionaries' by disseminating the game to the wider public with Walvin proposing that:

> *'… deliberate and organised attempts by men who had passed through the public schools [were made] to transform the game of football they found in existence around the country. Where it did not exist, they introduced it.'*[46]

It was through these 'missionaries' that public-school football became disseminated amongst the lower orders with many taking up prominent roles within clubs and organisations. The direct influence that a select group of public schools and universities had upon the formation of the FA in 1863 and the emergence and success of 'old boys' teams are used to demonstrate that it was ex-public schoolboys that drove forward the rationalisation, codification, and popularisation of the game in the mid-nineteenth century.

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[42] Taylor, *The Association Game*, 24.

[43] James Walvin, *The People's Game: A Social History of British Football* (London: Allen Lane, 1975).

[44] See Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentleman and Players*, 73-76.

[45] Harvey, *First Hundred Years*, 48-49.

[46] Walvin, *The People's Game*, 45,

The Revisionist Position

Throughout the late twentieth century the orthodox position was acknowledged by academics, historians, and the wider football community as the prominent paradigm that explained how the association game emerged and developed. It was accepted that traditional folk or mob football was an unruly, chaotic, and violent game that was gradually suppressed and had all but disappeared from wider society by the early nineteenth century before it became adopted by the elite public schools. Within these institutions football was codified, civilised, and ultimately reinvented before being disseminated across the country as an acceptable form of physical activity and recreation.[47] However, the start of the twenty-first century coincided with the orthodox account coming under scrutiny with the central pillars of the paradigm being challenged. Harvey began the modern reconsideration of the origins of association football and presented an alternative interpretation of the early development of the game, based on his research utilising previously unused primary sources, principally the newspaper *Bell's Life in London*, that has subsequently become referred to as the revisionist position.[48]

Central to this new paradigm were three key claims. First, that traditional forms of football had not disappeared from wider society by the early nineteenth century as previously assumed; second, that a football culture existed beyond the confines of the public schools and that the games played were equally as sophisticated and rule-bounded as those found in the elite educational institutions; and third, that it was the working and middle classes, not elite ex-public schoolboys, that were central to the development and dissemination of the game.[49] The revisionist position challenged the core values of the long-standing orthodox paradigm and presented an alternative, contrasting view of how the association game originated and developed during the nineteenth century. Further academics, notably

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[47] Gibbons, *Football in Victorian England*, 13-14; Taylor, *Association Game*, 20-24; and Walvin, *The People's Game*, 9-49.

[48] Roy Hay, Adrian Harvey and Mel Smith, 'Football before Codification: The Problems of Myopia', *Soccer and Society* 16, no.2-3 (2015): 157; and Harvey, 'The Historiographic Debate', 2155.

[49] See Harvey, *The First Hundred Years*.

Goulstone and Swain, presented research supporting Harvey's assertions and thus the battle lines for the 'origins of football' debate were drawn.[50]

Those adhering to the revisionist position refute the claim that between 1750 and 1850 there was a significant and rapid decline in the recreational activities favoured by the lower orders. It is suggested that a combination of mitigating factors led to the suppression and, in some cases, extinction of traditional forms of recreation by the mid-nineteenth century. First, that the local gentry were discouraged from sponsoring the labouring population's sport due to the immorality and disorder that stemmed from them and the subsequent introduction of legislation to eliminate recreations that caused disruption and damage to commerce. Second, that the industrial revolution resulted in an increasing portion of the population living in the growing industrial cities, where there was limited space to organise sport or physical activity, and working within the factory system, which increased the number of working hours and restricted leisure time for workers.[51] However, these notions are challenged by revisionists. First, revisionists claim that the gentry were largely uninfluenced by critics of popular recreations and, more importantly, that by the late eighteenth century it was commercially orientated figures, such as publicans, that had taken the leading role in the organisation or sport for the lower classes. Second, it is suggested that no significant legislation to suppress sport was introduced until the 1830s and that, due to the Metropolitan Police Force model and practices not being adopted nationally until 1857, their impact was diluted by the attitudes and resources of local authorities.[52] Third, the notion that there was limited space in urban cities was 'considerably less' of a problem than envisaged by early scholars with those promoting the revisionist position highlighting that the government and local authorities made concerted efforts to promote recreational areas.[53] Finally, the claim that an increase in working hours resulted in a reduction in leisure time is disputed. It is claimed that there was little difference between the working hours of employees in agricultural and factory settings whilst many routines were transferred from rural to urban environments and persisted throughout the early nineteenth century.[54]

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[50] See Goulstone, 'Origins of Modern Football', 135-143; and Swain, 'The Grander Design', 519-543.

[51] See Robert Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); and Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution 1780-1880* (London: Croom Helm, 1980).

[52] See Clive Emsley, *Crime and Society in England 1700-1900* (London: Longmans, 1987).

[53] Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, 93.

Revisionist academics claim that not only did football survive attempts at suppression and the dual processes of industrialisation and urbanisation, but that it also thrived. Harvey has argued that a football culture existed in Britain outside the confines of the public schools in the first half of the nineteenth century and that the matches being played were equally as sophisticated as those found within the elite educational institutions. He suggests that 'for at least 300 years matches have been occurring between teams made up of equal numbers of players, often consisting of fewer than ten people on each side' and that numerous football teams existed that organised games with varying regularity.[55] Whilst academics supporting the revisionist position acknowledge that mass-mob football, such as the annual contest at Ashbourne held on Shrove Tuesday, did occur, they suggest that a parallel form of the game, bound by rules and no less civilised than its public school counterpart, was equally, if not more, common.[56] However, attempts by revisionists to quantify this football culture have proven to be problematic with critics highlighting the limited number of organised matches that have been identified.[57] For example, Goulstone claims that 'modern-style eleven-a-side matches appear to have been fairly common by the early years of Victoria's reign' and yet is only able to offer 14 examples during a fourteen-year period.[58] Similarly, Collins notes that the majority of the teams that have been discovered by Harvey existed for only one match, with only four surviving longer than a year, and argues that this hardly constitutes a thriving culture nor indicates 'any direct continuity between these games and the modern codified football codes in rules, modes of play, organisation, or the way that people related to them'.[59] Curry and Dunning have been staunch opponents of revisionist claims of a football culture and maintain that the evidence presented by the likes of Harvey, Goulstone, and Swain is 'extremely sparse'.[60]

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[54] Eric Hopkins, 'Working Hours and Conditions During the Industrial Revolution. A Reappraisal', *Economic History Review* 35, no.1 (1982): 65-66.

[55] Harvey, *The First Hundred Years*, 1.

[56] Taylor, *The Association Game*, 27.

[57] Collins, 'Early Football', 1134.

[58] John Goulstone, *Football's Secret History: A 3-2 Sporting Retrospective* (Upminster: 3-2 Books, 2001), 29.

[59] Collins, 'Early Football', 1135.

[60] Graham Curry and Eric Dunning, 'The Power Game: Continued Reflections on the Development of Modern Football', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33, no.3 (2016): 240.

The revisionist paradigm also disputes the centrality of public-school influence in the development of the modern game. The traditional orthodox interpretation suggests that it was within these elite educational institutions that the game became rationalised, civilised, and codified before being disseminated to wider society via the publication of written rules and through students acting as 'missionaries' who transmitted knowledge of the game to the lower orders. Whilst it is acknowledged that numerous public schools decided to publish the written rules of their unique forms of the game from the 1850s onwards, exemplified by Eton, Harrow, and Rugby including their rules in Fred Lillywhite's *Guide to Cricketers* in 1861, revisionists argue that the wider population remained ignorant to what was occurring within the walls of each institution. Harvey notes that each set of rules were intended for those that were familiar with the game or to resolve disputes and that there was little effort to make them accessible to outsiders.[61] In December 1861, the editor of *The Field* indicated that the rules for the various forms of football were often obscure and ambiguous with Eton's code being almost unintelligible.[62] Ultimately, revisionists conclude that the printed codes of the various forms of public school football are unlikely to have had a significant impact on the dissemination of the game to the wider population. In response, Neill, Curry, and Dunning argue that although the rules of public schools may not have been adopted en bloc by those playing football in wider society, by just being aware of public-school practices people would have been influenced as to how they played the game.[63]

In addition, whilst it is theoretically possible that ex-public schoolboys aided the transmission of football those supporting the revisionist position highlight a lack of supporting contemporary evidence. Harvey claims that there are no examples of public schoolboy influence on the game amongst the lower orders before 1860 and that their link with socially prestigious institutions was more likely to intimidate and discourage outsiders rather than lead to co-operation.[64] Revisionists also highlight that British society during the nineteenth century was highly segregated and claim that it was rare for those from differing strata to have personal contact in terms of social intimacy.[65] They argue that such limited interaction would hardly have been conducive to the elite ex-public schoolboys disseminating their recreational and leisure interests among the working classes.

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[61] Harvey, *The First Hundred Years*, 48-50.
[62] *The Field*, December 14, 1861.
[63] Neill, Curry and Dunning, 'Three Men from Two Villages', 126.
[64] Harvey, *The First Hundred Years*, 49-50.
[65] Harvey, 'The Ultimate Revisionism', 51.

Revisionists contend that attempts to suppress football in wider society during the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth century were unsuccessful and that the game became embedded in the social lives of the population beyond the confines of the public schools. It is claimed that the lower and middles classes were more pertinent to the development of the modern game and Hay, Harvey, and Smith suggest that football 'was not something that had to be explained or handed down to them'.[66] This is exemplified by the contemporary reports of football matches taking place that were characterised by teams of equal number and governed by definitive rules which, significantly, pre-dated the formal organisation of public school football.[67] In addition, the development of an organised football culture in Sheffield during this formative period, complete with a prominent club, popular support, and a regulated set of rules governing the game in the area, further challenges the perception that the public schools were key to the emergence of the modern game.[68]

Early Football Activities in The Potteries

Within the origins of football debate there has been a robust discourse between proponents of the orthodox and revisionist paradigms regarding the state of football in Britain outside the elite public schools during the early-mid nineteenth century. Those supporting the orthodox position claim that the raucous, ill-disciplined folk or mob football of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century was suppressed and that it became extinct beyond the walls of the elite public schools. However, revisionists argue that there was 'significant football activity in the general society that was unrelated to the influence exerted by public schools' with a sophisticated football structure existing in wider society where various forms of the game were 'governed by rules, achieving a high degree of organisation in certain regions'.[69] This section of the chapter examines the early football activities that were occurring in The Potteries prior to 1870, identifying and analysing contemporary reports published in the local press to determine the prominence, popularity, and sophistication of the game in the region during this period.

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[66] Hay, Harvey and Smith, 'Football Before Codification', 161.

[67] Harvey, *The First Hundred Years*, 1.

[68] Taylor, *The Association Game*, 28.

[69] Adrian Harvey, 'Football's Missing Link: The Real Story of the Evolution of Modern Football', *The European Sports History Review* 1 (1999): 93; Hay, Harvey and Smith, 'Football Before Codification', 157; and Collins, 'Early Football', 1129.

Whilst it was not until the 1860s that the first formal association football club was established in The Potteries, and a further two decades until the game emerged as the primary sporting activity in the region, it is clear that some form of football was being played throughout the Six Towns during the early nineteenth century. Contemporary local newspapers such as the *Staffordshire Sentinel* and *Staffordshire Advertiser* made references within their pages to 'football' or 'foot-ball' taking place although, due to a lack of detail and the relative ambiguity of reports, it is impossible to determine what form these early contests took. Between 1844 and 1867, 43 newspaper reports have been identified that refer to football matches taking place across The Potteries and in the neighbouring borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme at fetes and festivals, on religious occasions and holidays, during work outings or trips, and within local schools (see Appendix One).[70] There were no formal clubs or teams during this period whilst there is no evidence to suggest that any written rules existed. Matches were organised on a casual, ad-hoc basis when enough people had the free time to engage in a sporting recreation with contests being governed by oral traditions, indicating that football was viewed as a form of entertainment rather than a serious competition. Despite the informal nature of these early activities, it is apparent that some form of the game existed and that enough people were engaging in football, either through participating in matches or spectating, to ensure its continuation with knowledge being transferred between generations.[71]

Football activities were particularly popular during 'the wakes', where factories, collieries, and other local businesses would close for a one-week community holiday to mark the adopted saint of each major conurbation. In The Potteries, football was first reportedly played during the short community holiday in 1708 when it was noted that gentlemen attending an event in Stoke participated in various physical contests and leisure activities 'in order to make some impression on their mistress' hearts' before organising a 'football match'.[72] During the nineteenth century it was reported that 'football … became common' at the wakes, although it appears that matches were impromptu, spontaneous, and arranged on the basis that enough people were present and suitable space was available to facilitate a contest.[73] Events that were organised as part of 'Wakes Week' could attract a large attendance, assuming that the weather was favourable and the attractions generated interest. In 1844, an event in Newcastle-under-Lyme included football as one of a number of physical amusements that were conducted with 'much spirit' in the presence of a 'large concourse of spectators' whilst over 2000 people were present at Longton Hall in 1863 when a game of football was one of the 'miscellaneous objects of entertainment'.[74] Although it is admittedly unlikely that the entirety of those in attendance at such events would have participated in the football match itself, these early contests undoubtedly helped to spread the knowledge of the game throughout local communities, even among those who may have just been interested onlookers.

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[70] Examples of football in The Potteries include 'Stoke Wakes', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 9, 1856, 4; 'Temperance Fete', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 16, 1860, 4; and 'Trentham Day', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 8, 1863, 8. Examples of football in Newcastle-under-Lyme include 'Newcastle Wakes', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, September 21, 1844,3; 'Newcastle – School Treats', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 9, 1862, 4; and 'Congregational Church', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, September 24, 1864, 8.

[71] Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 9.

Sport appears to have been particularly popular amongst pupils who attended schools throughout The Potteries, and it is apparent that various educational institutions promoted participation in physical activities, including football. The logbook from St. Peter's School, located in Stoke and comprising of up to 200 pupils during the mid-nineteenth century, details how the local rector, Reverend Lovelace Thomlinson Stamer, presented pupils with a football in 1863 and allowed them the use of the church grounds on which to play.[75] Stamer's memoirs do not indicate that he had an interest in football, although his education at Rugby School and Trinity College, where forms of the game were played at both institutions, suggests that he would have been aware of the game and that he intended to replicate some of the assumed benefits of physical activity at St. Peter's School. An interest in football was replicated in other educational establishments throughout The Potteries where school 'outings' or 'trips' would often result in ad-hoc matches being organised if there was an appropriate amount of space in which to play. In 1860, the Burslem Parish schools arranged an outing to Trentham for pupils and upon arrival 'several games of cricket and football were formed and entered into with such zeal as procured for them a good appetite for dinner'.[76] A further example occurred in 1861 when 350 scholars from the Hanley Sunday School were conveyed to Cannock Chase for a day trip where 'wickets were pitched, footballs thrown down, and several other exhilarating games heartily entered into'.[77] The enthusiasm that pupils had for the game continued beyond the school boundaries and in the 1860s there are reports in the contemporary local press of 'youths' being cautioned by police officers for playing football in the street.[78] This demonstrates that there was certainly an interest in the game among the youth of the region.

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[72] 'Stoke Wakes', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 11, 1860, 4.

[73] 'The Wakes', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 9, 1856, 4.

[74] 'Newcastle Wakes', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, September 21, 1844, 3; and 'The Longton Hall Fete', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 18, 1863, 1.

[75] John W. Thomas, *St. Peter's High School Logbook and Records* (Stoke: Stoke-on-Trent City Archives, 2016).

Football was also played at local fetes and festivals across the region during the mid-nineteenth century with games taking place at a variety of rural, horticultural, floral, and temperance galas.[79] The occurrence of matches at these events appears to have been largely unplanned and is further evidence that indicates the popularity of the game among the local populace who saw it as a recreation that could be organised whenever people had the free time and space to do so. However, as the period progressed, fetes and festivals began to purposely list football on advertisements as one of the primary attractions. In 1863, an advertisement for the 'Annual Gala and Floral Exhibition at Milton' stated that 'a great variety of attractive amusements have been provided, included Aunt Sally, Cricket, Football … and other English sports',[80] whilst the Longton 'Grand Annual Gala' in 1860 noted 'foot-ball' among a 'programme of sports'.[81] The use of football as an advertisement tool indicates that it was a popular recreation in The Potteries that was perceived by event organisers and promoters to be a significant attraction to the local populace, either through the opportunity to play or observe a match.

Contemporary reports demonstrate how businesses, societies, and other organisations also saw fit to facilitate opportunities for their employees and members to play the game. In 1860, the Newcastle Rifle Volunteer Company travelled to Kypersley Hall where they engaged in training and practiced manoeuvres before ‘the [local] villagers joined in the volunteers at football’.[82] During the same year, the Bray and Thompson Co. provided their employees with a ‘treat’ which involved the workforce travelling to Alsager for a day where ‘football, cricket and other games were entered into with great zest … and [were] heartily enjoyed’.[83] Furthermore, an article published in the *Staffordshire Advertiser* in 1861 described how at the County Lunatic Asylum ‘more than two hundred of the less harmful patients … [were] mingling with youthful delight at cricket, football and a score of other sports’.[84] An indication of the popularity of the game in The Potteries is also demonstrated in an advertisement published by John Wisden and Co., a London-based cricket outfitter, in 1860 which purposely highlighted the sale of footballs among their list of services.[85] Although the company was not based in the region, the fact that it was seen fit by the proprietors to promote the sale of footballs in a North Staffordshire newspaper suggests that they perceived the game to be prominent enough in The Potteries to be considered a profit-making opportunity.

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[76] 'National Schools', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 25, 1860, 4.

[77] 'St Mark's Day and Sunday Schools', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, May 25, 1861, 4.

[78] 'Caution to Boys', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 3, 1869, 8.

[79] Examples of football taking place at rural, horticultural, floral and temperance galas include 'Rural Fete and Floral and Horticultural Exhibition at Milton', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 31, 1861, 4; 'Endon, Longsden, and Stanley Floral and Horticultural Association', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 22, 1863, 5; and 'Temperance Fete', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 16, 1860, 4.

[80] 'Annual Gala & Floral Exhibition at Milton', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, July 18, 1863, 1.

[81] 'Grand Annual Gala', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 4, 1860, 1.

It is evident from the volume and variety of references contained in contemporary local newspaper reports that some form of football was being played in The Potteries throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Football activities were taking place in contrasting environments by people of different ages, from the ‘youths’ playing on the street to the patients kicking a ball in the grounds of the County Lunatic Asylum, and that the game retained a significance that led businesses and event organisers to include it as a key aspect of their advertisements. It is also worth noting that the informal nature of sport during this period means that many activities and occurrences went unreported. Most reports referring to football taking place occurred not because of the actual match being played, but because of the factors, events or circumstances that surrounded them. For example, in 1855 the *Staffordshire Sentinel* noted that football had been taking place after four youths had fallen through the ice and into a lake whilst attempting to retrieve a ball.[86] If the youths had not fallen through the ice and required assistance then it is entirely likely that the match would not have been mentioned in any publications. Cunningham suggested that 'this kind of football, precisely because it was so casual, was unlikely to leave behind many records',[87] whilst Swain noted that many instances of football taking place would only be reported by newspapers during the early nineteenth century if a criminal act had been committed.[88] Meller concurs, stating that 'much day-to-day activity [in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries] went unrecorded … leaving no traces for the historian'.[89] Whilst it cannot be assumed to use 'phantom' matches as a barometer to measure the popularity of the game, it is a genuine consideration that raises the question of how much football activity, whether an organised match or simple kick-a-round in the street, took place without being referred to in contemporary publications.

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[82] ‘Visit of the Newcastle Rifle Volunteer Company to Knypersley’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, September 14, 1860, 4.
[83] ‘Burslem – Treat to Workmen’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 15, 1867, 4.
[84] ‘County Lunatic Asylum’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 17, 1861, 7.
[85] ‘Cricketing Outfitters – John Wisden and Co.’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 24, 1860, 2.
[86] ‘The Ice’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 3, 1855, 5.

In contrast to the orthodox paradigm, which suggests that football had become almost extinct beyond the walls of the elite public schools by the mid-nineteenth century, in The Potteries football emerged and continued unsuppressed with enough people possessing knowledge of the game, either through playing or spectating, to ensure that it was passed between generations. Furthermore, football was not limited to one specific location in the region. Some form of the game was apparent across each of the Six Towns and surrounding conurbations, including in Newcastle-under-Lyme, demonstrating that the activity had a broad geographical popularity. These occurrences clearly disprove the orthodox notion that football had died out and, rather than being subject to attempts of suppression, the game was accepted as a prominent part of the local custom of the wakes. However, it would be inaccurate to suggest that the early football activities in the region align with the key underpinning notions of the revisionist paradigm. Although some form of the game existed, there is no evidence to indicate that a sophisticated football culture was present in The Potteries during this period and matches appear to have been organised on an ad-hoc basis, with no written rules or formal teams, but rather simply when the local populace had the time and space to participate.

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[87] Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, 128.

[88] Peter Swain, 'The Origins of Football Debate: The Evidence Mounts, 1841-1851', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no.2 (2015): 302.

[89] Helen Elizabeth Meller, *Leisure and the Changing City, 1870-1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 206.

Furthermore, the ambiguity of contemporary reports in the local press results in only a fragmented picture being provided. There are limited details available regarding the rules being applied, the size of teams or which members of society were participating, making it difficult to determine the intricacy of the game compared to those played in prominent public schools. However, the lack of continuity suggests that football was not a highly organised or structured activity in the region. Only 43 reports of football taking place have been identified in the local press over a 33-year period in The Potteries, equating to just 1.3 reports per year, whilst teams were established to participate in one specific contest, with none having been in existence longer than a day or two. This does not constitute the highly sophisticated football culture that revisionists claim to have existed outside the walls of the elite public schools in the early-mid nineteenth century. Ultimately, neither overarching paradigm can be used to adequately explain the early football activities that were taking place in the region and further supports the notion that 'no key opens all doors' when analysing the game's origins.[90] Instead it can be argued that attempting to impart a 'grand narrative' upon this early period in the game's development is counterproductive and fails to acknowledge potential regional specificity and nuances. In the case of The Potteries, some form of football was present as early as 1708 and yet even by the mid-1860s it had yet to evolve into a sophisticated culture. There was an underlying knowledge of the game, but it required the input, influence, and involvement of an enthusiastic individual to begin the process of formalising football in North Staffordshire.

The First Formal Association Football Club in The Potteries

A central feature of the orthodox paradigm is that various forms of football emerged and developed within the elite public schools before being transmitted to wider society by students who acted as 'missionaries'. It has been claimed that ex-public schoolboys established many of the first formal association football clubs in England, although revisionists dispute these assertions, citing a lack of supporting evidence and suggesting that links with socially prestigious institutions would have discouraged co-operation with the lower classes.[91] This section of the chapter examines the establishment of the first formal association football club in The Potteries, Stoke Ramblers (which would later evolve into Stoke City FC). The origins of the club have long been debated with multiple narratives existing that have been subject to exaggeration, distortion, and inaccuracies. Determining what is 'myth' and what is 'truth', if indeed it is possible to find the 'truth', is a key methodological consideration for those studying the history of sport and the following sections perform two functions: first, to present new academic research based on interpreting previously unused contemporary primary sources which concludes that Stoke Ramblers were formed in 1868, five years later than is officially claimed; second, to discuss how myths emerge in sport and how they retain power, resilience and influence in modern society.

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[90] Curry, 'Stunted Growth', 24.

[91] Walvin, *The People's Game*, 45; Hay, Harvey and Smith, *Football Before Codification*, 161; Harvey, *The First Hundred Years*, 48-50; and Harvey, 'The Ultimate Revisionism', 51.

The Formation of Stoke Ramblers (Stoke City FC)

Despite some form of football being played throughout the region during the first half of the nineteenth century it was not until the 1860s that the first formal association football club was established in The Potteries. The nature of the area's prominent industries meant that a large portion of the population were required to work long, regimented hours for six days of the week, leaving only limited periods of time to invest in leisure or recreational activities. A lack of free time undoubtedly hindered the emergence of formal clubs and it is noticeable that only a handful of cricket teams and one athletics club were in existence prior to the second half of the nineteenth century. Stoke Ramblers were undoubtedly the first fully functioning association football club in the region, yet the club's origins and early history are clouded with uncertainty, confusion, and ambiguity. The club claim to have been formed in 1863, theoretically making it the second oldest surviving professional club in England, which is emphasised on the official website where it is stated that 'Stoke City are the world's second oldest football club … and what a journey it has been'.[92] The 1863 date is proudly emblazoned across the club crest and in 2013 a variety of commemorative events were arranged to mark its supposed 150th year anniversary. However, despite this, club historians admit that 'uncertainty clouds the actual date of formation' and that 'many details remain sketchy' whilst multiple contrasting narratives emerged during the twentieth century as officials, supporters, and historians attempted to pinpoint and explain the origins of Stoke City FC.[93]

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[92] Stoke City Football Club, 'The Story of Stoke City FC', https://www.stokecityfc.com/the-story-of-stoke-city-fc. (accessed April 30, 2018).

The traditionally accepted account depicting the formation of Stoke City FC suggests that the club was established in 1863 as Stoke Ramblers, (it would not be until the twentieth century, after the six primary conurbations of The Potteries would amalgamate and eventually be granted city status, that the club would adopt its current title), by four ex-public schoolboys from Charterhouse. These four 'Old Carthusians' are commonly named as Armand, Bell, Matthews, and Phillpott, and it is suggested that they arrived in the region to become apprentices with the North Staffordshire Railway Company.[94] Football at Charterhouse School was commonplace and students favoured a dribbling form of the game that was comparable to that which became prominent under association rules.[95] It is proposed that the four students who relocated to The Potteries, equipped with their existing knowledge of football, acted as missionaries, introducing and disseminating the game to the local populace. During the formative years of Stoke Ramblers it is claimed that the team consisted mainly of employees from the North Staffordshire Railway Company who were convinced by their ex-public schoolboy colleagues to take up the game.[96] However, this traditional narrative is undermined by a lack of contemporary evidence and major discrepancies. First, research conducted by the author has failed to identify any of the four Old Carthusian founders who supposedly established Stoke Ramblers in 1863. The Charterhouse school records do not refer to a Phillpott and whilst there are multiple students that are listed with the surname Bell none fit into the appropriate time frame. A Henry John Almond (a possible corruption of the name Armand) and a William MacDonald Matthews did attend the institution during the mid-nineteenth century, but they would have been aged 12 and 13 respectively when the club was purportedly formed and had yet to finish their studies.[97] Neither Almond or Matthews would have possessed the knowledge or experience to form a new formal football club in a region that was located 180 miles away from their school at such a young age. Second, research has failed to locate any evidence that indicates that a formal football club existed in The Potteries before 1868. The establishment of a club would have been of interest to the local populace, and it would have been highly unlikely that no reference would have been made by the local press, even a minor comment, for five years. The traditional narrative that Stoke Ramblers were formed in 1863 by four ex-public schoolboys from Charterhouse is inherently flawed by a lack of evidence and discrepancies relating to time periods and key dates.

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[93] Stoke City Football Club, 'In the Beginning', http://www.stokecityfc.com/club/history/1863.aspx. (accessed August 20, 2016).

[94] Frederick Wall, *The Book of Football: A Complete History and Record of the Association and Rugby Games 1905-06* (London: Amalgamated Press, 1906), 87.

[95] Taylor, *The Association Game*, 23.

[96] Wade Martin, *A Potter's Tale: The Story of Stoke City Football Club* (Buckingham: Sporting and Leisure Press, 1988), 11; and Tony Matthews, *The Encyclopaedia of Stoke City, 1868-1994* (West Bromwich: The Lion Press, 1994), 5-6.

[97] R. L. Arrowsmith, *Charterhouse Register: 1769–1872* (London: Phillimore, 1974); Census Returns, Paddington, 1861 (RG 9/12); and Census Returns, Kensington, 1861 (HO 107/1468).

Based on the interpretation of previously unused contemporary primary sources, this thesis contends that Stoke Ramblers were formed in 1868, five years later than the official date of formation, and identifies the club's founder as Harry John Almond. In 1868, a report in *The Field* magazine stated that 'a new club has been formed [in Stoke-upon-Trent] for the practice of the association rules under the charge of H.J. Almond, one of the most prominent performers of the Charterhouse School XI last year'.[98] This is the first contemporary reference found to date of a formal association football club existing in The Potteries and articles throughout the following two years provide further proof that Stoke Ramblers were formed in 1868. Local publications clearly affirm that the team were 'a new club, having only started this year [1868]', that the first match was played in October 1868, and that in 1870, when the club dropped the moniker from its name, the *Staffordshire Sentinel* reported that it 'has had two previous seasons under the title of Ramblers'.[99] In addition, from 1868 there are numerous reports in local, regional, and national publications of the club arranging and playing matches against a variety of opponents throughout the region and adjoining counties.

The H. J. Almond described in *The Field* article in 1868 was Harry John Almond, listed as Henry in the Charterhouse school records, and who is referred to as one of the founding members of Stoke Ramblers in the traditional narrative of the club's origins.[100] He was born on April 17, 1850, in Kensington, London, and was the son of William Almond, an outfitter who was commissioned by the British army to supply clothing for troops during the Crimean

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[98] *The Field*, September 26, 1868.

[99] 'Stoke Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel,* October 15, 1870, 5.

[100] Arrowsmith, *Charterhouse Register: 1769–1872*.

War and was described as a ‘gentleman’.[101] Between 1863 and 1868 Harry Almond attended Charterhouse school where he became a prominent figure within the institution during the final two years of his studies due to his athletic prowess. Between 1867 and 1868 he became a regular feature in the school football team, the Charterhouse XI, where he was described as one of the most ‘conspicuous’ performers, whilst newspaper reports also indicate that he played cricket and competed, with considerable success, in athletic events.[102] In 1868, Almond was a member of the organising committee that arranged the annual Charterhouse School Sports and he was also an active participant, finishing first in the 100 yard-race, Quarter of a Mile race, and shotput.[103] Furthermore, he appears to have been equally as active in other school activities, exemplified by his inclusion as an actor in the Charterhouse Christmas theatre performance in 1867.[104]

Almond arrived in The Potteries in 1868 to become a civil engineer with the North Staffordshire Railway Company, although it is unclear why he chose to relocate to a region that was such a considerable distance from his family home in Kensington. He undoubtedly possessed a considerable knowledge of football, specifically the dribbling form of the game, from his time representing the Charterhouse XI and his involvement in the organising committee for the Charterhouse School Sports indicates that he understood how to arrange and manage a sporting event. Almond would not have been content to give up his participation in sport following the conclusion of his studies and his experience at Charterhouse, in addition to his status as an ex-public schoolboy, provided him with the knowledge and prestige to enable him to form Stoke Ramblers in 1868. He would have discovered an existing interest and awareness of the game in The Potteries, as presented and discussed earlier in this chapter, that he could use to establish the region’s first association football club. It was Almond that captained the team in the inaugural match in October 1868 against a team selected by E. W. May and he also scored the club’s first goal, yet that would be the culmination of his contributions.[105] Within a month he had departed the region to follow a career in engineering with *The Sportsman* commenting that 'Stoke Ramblers laboured under disadvantage by the recent loss of their captain, Mr H. J. Almond, who has from unavoidable circumstances left the district'.[106] It is difficult to trace his exact movements following his departure but records from the Institute of Mechanical Engineers indicate that he was employed in Sunderland during the mid-1880s, had moved to Spain where he married his wife, Lucy Jane Howes, in 1887, and eventually worked for the La Guayra and Caracus Railway Company in South America.[107] Research has failed to identify if Almond had any further influence on football or sport beyond the creation of Stoke Ramblers prior to his death at sea on March 12, 1910.[108]

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[101] Arrowsmith, *Charterhouse Register: 1769–1872*; Census Returns, Kensington, 1851 (H0 107/1468); and ‘Royal Commission on Army Clothing and Contracts’, *London Evening Standard*, December 9, 1858, 3.

[102] Examples of football include ‘Wanderers vs Charterhouse School’, *The Sportsman*, October 26, 1867, 4; and ‘Avengers vs Charterhouse School’, *The Sportsman*, November 21, 1867, 4. Examples of cricket include ‘Charterhouse School – Gown Boys vs The School’, *The Sportsman*, August 13, 1867, 3; and ‘Flying Dutchmen vs Charterhouse School’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, February 10, 1868, 9.

[103] ‘Charterhouse School Sports’, *The Sportsman*, May 7, 1868, 4.

[104] ‘Theatricals at the Charterhouse’, *Morning Post*, December 12, 1867, 5.

Ultimately, the lack of evidence underpinning the traditional narrative combined with this new research confirms that Stoke Ramblers were not formed in 1863, but rather that the club was established at some point in 1868 under the direction of Harry John Almond. However, it is worth noting that suspicions regarding the origins of Stoke City FC have existed since the mid-twentieth century. In 1963, historians admitted in a souvenir booklet that was published to commemorate the club's centenary anniversary that they had been unable to identify any of the four individuals that had been traditionally cited as the founding members of Stoke Ramblers in 1863. Similarly, Tony Matthews, a local historian from North Staffordshire, published *The Encyclopaedia of Stoke City* in 1994, which remains the most comprehensive account of the club's history, and concluded that Stoke Ramblers had been formed in 1868.[109] Despite these contributions, the 1863 formation date has become mythicised and retains a power, resilience, and influence that ensures that it remains embedded as the accepted narrative within contemporary society. To fully comprehend the disparities over the formative years of Stoke City FC it is important to examine the development and resilience of myths in sport history.

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[105] 'Football', *The Sportsman*, December 31, 1868, 4.

[106] 'The Stoke Ramblers', *The Sportsman*, November 7, 1868, 8.

[107] *Mechanical Engineering Records, 1890* (London, UK: Institution of Mechanical Engineers) s.v. 'Harry Almond'; and *Mechanical Engineering Records, 1896* (London, UK: Institution of Mechanical Engineers) s.v. 'Harry Almond'.

[108] Arrowsmith, *Charterhouse Register: 1769–1872*.

[109] Matthews, *The Encyclopaedia of Stoke City*, 1-2.

The Development and Resilience of Myths

The history of sport is afflicted by myths with Baker noting that 'sport, more than most forms of human activity, lends itself to myth making'.[110] These are events, narratives, and incidents in the annals of history that either did not occur, are incorrect, or have been distorted and exaggerated. Berryman defines the process and concept of mythologizing events as 'a tendency to misinterpret, oversimplify, misrepresent or even falsify the actual record' suggesting that a myth emerges as a direct consequence of poor research being conducted and presented.[111] However, this is not to suggest that all myths are fiction or that such things never happened, but rather that the key entities, dates, timescales, and events may have been distorted or exaggerated. Voigt stresses that 'a myth is not a lie' and many consist of elements of factual evidence that have been interpreted incorrectly or are undermined by errors. They are 'dramatic stories' that have been fashioned around particular incidents in an attempt to justify popular institutions and customs or to explain a present practice, value or behaviour by relating to what supposedly happened in the past.[112] Similarly, McKay proposes that myths are not 'total delusions or utter falsehoods' but rather 'partial truths which accentuate particular versions of reality and omit others'.[113]

Kyle suggests that there are two categories of myths. Micro-myths are minor, specific or local narratives that are traditional tales perpetuated by oral traditions to explain and entertain. In contrast, macro-myths are broad narratives that transcend generations and local cultural boundaries which are largely historically inaccurate but are ideologically durable and compelling.[114] However, while they assume numerous forms, the most eminent and tenacious myths involve the origins of individual sports, specific sporting teams, sporting communities, and conspiracies, with the human mind being powerfully drawn to the subject of beginnings.[115] Gould proposed that 'we yearn to know about origins, and we readily construct myths when we do not have the data … or we surpass data in favour of a legend when a truth strikes us as being too common place'.[116] What can be concluded is that myths abound in sport history and, despite research and evidence to the contrary, many have acquired a power and resilience that has enabled their resonance to live on, primarily because they often articulate the desire for an individual, sport or institution to have special social significance.[117] In addition, there is often an unwillingness to accept challenges to cherished notions of the past and many myths, particularly those that refer to origins or beginnings, have been sealed off from any critical discussion resulting in them transcending rational analysis, which in turn prevents them from disappearing.[118]

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[110] William Baker, 'William Webb Ellis and the Origins of Rugby Football: The Life and Death of a Victorian Myth', *Albion* 13, no.2 (1981): 117.

[111] Jack Berryman, 'Introduction', in *Essays on Sport History and Sport Mythology*, eds. Donald G. Kyle and Gary D. Stark (College Station, TX: Texas A & M Press, 1990), 3.

[112] David Q. Voigt, 'Myths after Baseball: Notes on Myths in Sport', *Quest* 30, (1978): 46-57.

[113] Jim McKay, *No Pain, No Gain?*: *Sport and Australian Culture* (Sydney: Prentice Hall, 1991), 2.

[114] Donald G. Kyle, 'E. Norman Gardiner and the Decline of Greek Sport', in *Essays on Sport History and Sport Mythology*, eds. Donald G. Kyle and Gary D. Stark (Texas: Texas University Press, 1990), 7.

[115] Douglas Booth, *The Field: Truth and Fiction in Sports History* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 124; and Kitching, 'The Origins of Football', 12.

Two of the most prominent myths that have emerged within sport, which still retain power in contemporary society, are those regarding the origins of rugby and baseball. It was initially assumed that William Webb Ellis and Abner Doubleday were the 'inventers' of rugby and baseball respectively during the first half of the nineteenth century, yet both narratives have been subsequently debunked by academics and historians. Collins determined that 'the fictional exploits of William Webb Ellis … had no bearing on the development of the game [of rugby]',[119] whilst Block concluded that it has been 'proved beyond reasonable doubt that the Doubleday story was pure fiction'.[120] Despite these myths being discredited, they remain widely accepted within their respective sports. The victors of the Rugby World Cup are presented with the William Webb Ellis trophy whilst Major League Baseball continues to promote Doubleday as the founder of baseball and have erected the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, where the first game was supposedly played. The last decade has seen numerous academics re-evaluating, challenging, and modifying various other traditional scholarly interpretations concerning the history of sport.[121] Eaves and Lake concluded that the Davis Cup, the first international tennis competition, was not founded by Dwight Davis.[122] Osmond concluded that Duke Kahanamoku's contribution to the origins of Australian surfing, although not an outright falsehood, has been subject to accentuation and exaggeration.[123] Dave Day has sought to readdress some of the inaccuracies that have become embedded within the narratives that surround Sam Mussabini.[124] All are examples of various myths that continue to resonate in contemporary society with traditional narratives often still persisting and being accepted despite evidence to the contrary.

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[116] Gould, *Bully for Brontosaurus*, 45.

[117] Tony Collins, 'The Invention of Sporting Tradition: National Myths, Imperial Pasts and the Origins of Australian Rules Football', in *Myths and Milestones in the History of Sport*, ed. Stephen Wagg in (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 8-31.

[118] James O. Robertson, *American Myth, American Reality* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1980), 346; and Stephen Wagg, *Myths and Milestones in the History of Sport* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[119] Collins, *Social History of English Rugby*, 3.

[120] Block, *Baseball Before We Knew It*, 18.

[121] Kyle, 'E. Norman Gardiner', 8.

[122] Simon Eaves and Robert J. Lake, 'Dwight Davis and the Foundation of the Davis Cup in Tennis: Just Another Doubleday Myth?', *Journal of Sport History* 45, no.1 (2018): 1-23.

The myths, inaccuracies, and distortion that relate to the origins of Stoke City FC are not necessarily difficult to debunk, yet the traditional narrative that promotes the formation of the club in 1863 by four Old Carthusians has acquired a power and resilience that has allowed it to endure. It is now accepted as fact, despite there being a definitive lack of evidence to support this interpretation of the club's beginnings, as demonstrated by the Stoke City FC crest, which is emblazoned with the incorrect date of formation. However, whilst it is important to challenge myths and provide an accurate, evidence-based revised interpretation of the past it is also beneficial to generate an understanding of how these incidents came to be mythologised and how they became embedded within our collective knowledge.

After Harry John Almond arrived in The Potteries and established Stoke Ramblers in 1868 it is clear that contemporary publications had a definite understanding of who, why, and when the club had been formed. However, over the following four decades the accuracy of reports became slowly distorted with the proposed story and date of the club's origins becoming more erroneous. In 1870, local publications were correctly stating that Stoke Ramblers had been formed in 1868, yet by the mid-1870s this narrative had already started to alter with the *Athletic News* commenting that 'some uncertainty prevailing as to whether it was first instituted in 1866 or 67'.[125] By the 1880s regional and national newspapers were reporting that Stoke Ramblers had been established in 1865 and this imprecision continued until the turn of the century when it was concluded that the club had been formed in 1863.[126] In 1905, *The Book of Football* proposed that in 1863 the club was 'founded by some Old

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[123] Gary Osmond, 'Myth-Making in Australian Sport History: Re-evaluating Duke Kahanamoku's Contribution to Surfing', *Australian Historical Studies* 42, no.2 (2011): 260-276.

[124] Dave Day, 'Mussabini Myths: Lacking Wisdom', Playing Pasts, https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/athletics/mussabini-myths-lacking-wisdom/ (accessed April 02, 2020); and Dave Day, ''Play it Again Sam'. Mussabini and Wisdom: A Biographical Conundrum' (paper presented at the British Society of Sports History Conference, Glasgow, Scotland, September 6-7, 2012).

[125] 'Football in the North: The Stoke Club', *Athletic News*, March 2, 1877, 1.

[126] 'Stoke Club Resigns', *Sheffield Independent*, June 18, 1908, 11; and Wall, *The Book of Football*, 87.

Carthusians – Armand, Bell, Matthews and Phillpott, young men who were at the time pupils at the North Staffordshire Railway Works'.[127] This interpretation of the club's origins became accepted and was replicated by subsequent publications throughout the twentieth century, allowing the myth to become entrenched as the recognised story of Stoke City FC's beginnings. This gradual distortion was facilitated by two emergent factors during the formative years of the club that created a 'narrative space'.

First, after the departure of Harry John Almond the club continued to operate in his absence, yet the lack of substantive long-term engagement from the founder would have accelerated the uncertainty surrounding the story of the team's origins. Who would have been able to provide a more accurate account of how Stoke Ramblers had first been instituted than the man who had formed the club? This would have been further compounded by the extensive changes in membership that the club experienced during the first half-decade of its existence. By the early 1870s only two of the original players who participated in the inaugural season were still active members of the club. With no records of Stoke Ramblers' early history being preserved it would have been through word of mouth that successive generations, the majority of whom would not have been actively involved with the team in 1868, passed on knowledge of the club's beginnings. With neither Almond nor the original members of the club being present to provide an accurate account, a 'narrative space' was created that provided an opportunity for speculation and supposition which eventually resulted in a distorted and exaggerated final narrative.[128]

Collins has suggested that myths often emerge at pivotal moments in the history of sport. He cites that the 'the Doubleday myth emerged in the mid-1900s, at the same time that baseball was emerging from the turmoil of labour relations' and intra-league disputes, which had led to the National League's acceptance of the American League'.[129] Similarly, the fictional exploits of William Webb Ellis were created in the late nineteenth century 'when the story brought comfort to those concerned at the direction rugby had taken in the 1880s and

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[127] Wall, *The Book of Football*, 87.

[128] Martyn Dean Cooke, ''Many Details Remain Sketchy. Myths and 'Truth' in Sports History: The Origins of Stoke City Football Club' (paper presented at the International Football History Conference, Manchester, England, June 6-7, 2019); and Martyn Dean Cooke, ''Some Details Remain Sketchy': Revealing the Truth behind the Origins and Formation of Stoke City Football Club' (paper presented at the British Society of Sports History Conference, Worcester, England, August 31-September 2, 2017).

[129] Collins, 'Invention of Sporting Tradition', 12.

1890s'.[130] Furthermore, the suggestion that Stoke Ramblers had been formed in 1863 by four Old Carthusians first materialised in the early 1900s at a point when the club was besieged both on the pitch and off it. Cooke and James conclude that the origins of this narrative can be traced to 1905 and *The Book of Football* which 'appears to be the first significant publication to name the four founders' but also highlight that 'mistakes, inaccuracies and approximations do appear within its club history sections'.[131] During this period Stoke City FC were relegated from the First Division and were stricken by financial difficulties which would culminate in bankruptcy in 1908 and demotion from the Football League. At a time when the club's existence, status, and standing was under threat, accepting the 1863 narrative and the suggestion that the club was one of the oldest football teams in the country provided Stoke City FC with a facet of prestige and heritage that their opponents did not possess. It legitimised the club's position as a member of the Football League despite the shortcomings of the team's performances on the pitch and its deteriorating financial situation. The development and acceptance of the 1863 myth aligns with Booth's assertion that myths emerge at a time when they resonate with prevailing issues and interests of individuals, organisations, and institutions.[132]

Once a myth has emerged and becomes accepted as an accurate interpretation of the past it develops a resilience that allows it to persevere. Academics, historians, and researchers can experience difficulty in challenging existing notions of history, especially when these views hold particular significance to an individual, organisation or institution. There is often an unwillingness to accept or acknowledge revised narratives that question cherished traditional views of the past, regardless of the colluding evidence that is presented, if it is deemed to reduce or damage prestige, heritage or legitimacy. It has been suggested that those who might seek to demythologise or present a less than celebratory view of significant moments in the history of sport are considered to be profane and that many key events have been made sacrosanct and sealed off from any critical discussion.[133] Powerful myths often transcend rational analyses and Collins has suggested that those that support these inaccurate interpretations of the past 'often base their position on an act of faith rather than historical evidence or research'.[134] So entrenched and established are particular narratives in sport that there is a reluctance to accept alternative interpretations despite the evidence which underpins them. Stoke City FC have maintained that the club was formed in 1863 despite acknowledging that there is uncertainty regarding the origins of the club and that the first reported game occurred in 1868. By accepting a revised interpretation of its beginnings that promotes a later formation date it could be perceived that the club would lose a degree of prestige, heritage or legitimacy through losing its status as the second oldest surviving professional football club in England. There could also simply be a reluctance within the modern Stoke City FC hierarchy to be seen as admitting that they have been in some way 'wrong' or 'guilty' of promoting an incorrect view of the club's early history. Furthermore, as the 1863 date is such a central feature of the club's crest and features prominently on official club merchandise, any alteration would have significant logistical and financial ramifications from a commercial standpoint.

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[130] Collins, Social *History of English Rugby*, 3.

[131] Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 7.

[132] Booth, *The Field*, 123.

[133] Booth, *The Field*, 125; and Collins, 'Invention of Sporting Tradition', 8.

However, 'narratives in themselves do nothing' and for a story to obtain power it must 'come to live through human actions'.[135] This is echoed by Prakash who states that 'no matter how grounded in universal myth the … narrative may be, fans and the media must subscribe to it in order for it to endure'.[136] Therefore, the resilience, endurance, and persistence of the mythicised origins of Stoke City FC is predominantly the result of the 1863 narrative being readily accepted by the club's fanbase. The 1863 formation date is central to the identity of the club and its supporters due to the lack of significant on-pitch success that has been apparent throughout its history. Stoke City FC have won just one major trophy in over 150 years in existence, the League Cup in 1972, and the team has spent most of this time competing outside the top-flight of English football. Within the increasingly tribalized context of modern football, where discussions and media focus often centre on which clubs are the most significant and successful, Stoke City FC supporters have few examples of achievements from the modern era to draw upon. The 1863 formation date empowers the fanbase and makes the club historically unique when compared to many of their contemporary competitors. This fits into the broader narrative and identity adopted by the club's fanbase which is one of consistent on-pitch failure yet continuing historical significance. The team may never have won a top-flight league title, yet the club's position as one of the oldest remaining professional sides in the country remains intact. This is further reinforced by the official Stoke City FC badge. Some football clubs celebrate the number of titles that they have won by adding a star to the club crest, yet Stoke City FC are unable to do that and instead use the 1863 formation date as the centrepiece of the official badge. The date becomes the unique marketing point of the club, rather than on-pitch performances. Similarly, Prakash noted that the inability of the Boston Red Sox's baseball team to win a World Series since 1919, rather than being problematic, has been used by the club to generate a unique identity that bonds supporters and is used as a marketing tool.[137] The 1863 narrative empowers Stoke City FC supporters and enables them to find value in following the team whilst also positioning their club in the hierarchy of the human social world of sport. This aligns with the work of Plummer who suggests that powerful narratives enable people to place themselves 'on a pecking order, raising the possibilities of narrative debasement and empowerment'.[138] Furthermore, the Stoke City FC fanbase has continued to support the traditional 1863 formation date despite new evidence and research coming to the fore.[139] Osmond notes that 'narratives are legitimised not because of their compelling empirical bases but because they satisfy audience expectations'.[140] The comforting generalisation that Stoke City FC remains historically significant in the absence of on-pitch success ensures that supporters continue to protect the 1863 formation date and widely ignore debates regarding the club's origins.

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[134] Collins, 'Invention of Sporting Tradition', 12.

[135] Ken Plummer, '"Whose Side are We On?" Revisited: Narrative Power, Narrative Inequality, and a Politics of Narrative Humanity', *Symbolic Interaction* 43, no.1 (2019): 48.

[136] Abhijay Prakash, 'Comprehending the Narrative Power of the "Curse of Bambino"', *Journal of Baseball History and Culture* 13, no.1 (2004): 121.

It is suggested that 'once a date becomes embedded in our collective knowledge, it is often difficult to convince others that this was an error or incorrect assumption'.[141] This can lead to subsequent researchers focusing their efforts on locating evidence that corroborates the established narrative rather than broadening their view to consider alternative interpretations of the past. In 1963, a souvenir booklet was published to commemorate Stoke City FC's supposed centenary anniversary with historians attempting to prove definitively that the club was established in 1863, yet their research failed to identify any of the four Old Carthusian founders, casting doubt over the club's origins. Unable to locate any material to support the traditional narrative the publication instead presented an alternative interpretation of the club's beginnings that maintained the 1863 formation date. It quoted an interview from 1935 with a Mr. S. Sargeant who proposed that football in The Potteries was instigated at St. Peter's School (Stoke).

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[137] Prakash, '"Curse of Bambino"', 127.
[138] Plummer, '"Whose Side are We On?"', 53.
[139] Cooke, 'The Origins of Stoke City Football Club'.
[140] Osmond, 'Myth-Making in Australian Sport History', 275
[141] Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 8.

> *'The first football introduced into Stoke was thrown down in the playground of St. Peter's School when he was a pupil there in 1862. He said teachers from the school formed the Stoke club the following year, and they may well have done so in conjunction with the apprentices previously named [Armand, Bell, Matthews, and Phillpott]'.*[142]

This revised view of Stoke City FC's origins is undermined by the same factors that negate the traditionally accepted narrative, particularly relating to the identity and age of the Charterhouse students and the lack of any contemporary reports of a formal football club existing in the region until 1868. In addition, as presented earlier in this chapter, football existed in The Potteries prior to the first ball supposedly being 'thrown down' in the playground of St. Peter's School in 1862, disproving the claim that the game originated from that institution. Whilst the school logbook confirms that a football was handed to pupils in 1863, one year later than claimed, there is no indication that a formal club was established or that the game was formally organised in any manner.[143] This revised view of the origins of Stoke City FC is based on an inaccurate account provided by one individual over seventy years after the events were claimed to have taken place. It is an example of how researchers can become engrossed on proving an existing date or narrative rather than considering alternative or new interpretations.

The resilience of myths can also be explained by what Wagg termed as the 'Great Man Theory of History' where the past is rendered simply as the doings of specific individuals who are presented as definitive heroic figures.[144] This results in one-dimensional accounts being developed which focus on the people who win trophies, break records, devise tactics, and govern sport without exploring the social or political context of such events. Kitching has suggested that this ‘may be partly explicable in terms of the desire to mark and celebrate [key events], but also by the human love of stories and story-telling’.[145] The modern sporting fraternity, notably the sports media, has an affinity with simplistic narratives that present history as having a clear plot with easily identifiable defining moments and heroic figures that wielded significant influence. In the case of the Doubleday myth, the notion that baseball was invented by one figure at one location on one specific date is a much more compelling tale than promoting a lengthy, complex, evidence-based narrative of evolution, emulation, and social influence which was facilitated by thousands of people. Voigt links the survival of myths to a general discomfort with uncertainties and random explanations, and to the modern desire for scientifically precise understandings of events and behaviour.[146] In addition, complicated interpretations of the past are rarely compatible with revenue generating schemes or the production, sale, and consumption of a wide variety of commercial products by sporting organisations such as clubs, leagues, and governing bodies.[147] For example, Rugby Union’s acceptance of the Webb Ellis myth has facilitated the commercialisation of the name of the sport’s inventor as exemplified by the naming of the Rugby World Cup trophy and the exclusive ‘Webb Ellis’ restaurant which is located at Twickenham Stadium in England. Hutchins has suggested that the commercial value of myths has created a self-perpetuating cycle that helps to affirm the power and reliance of incorrect narratives. In relation to the origins of Stoke City FC, the account that four Old Carthusians arrived in the district and threw down the first football seen in the region is a more compelling tale than accepting that the game was already present in The Potteries and that the formation of a formal club was the next logical evolutionary step. This aligns with the thoughts of Osmond who states that the potency of mythicised narratives ‘is aided by the propensity of audiences for generally simply, compelling stories that offer a clear point of departure’.[148]

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[142] See Peter Buxton, *Stoke City Football Club Centenary Handbook, 1863–1963: A History of the Club Over the Past One Hundred Years* (Nottingham: Pyramid Press, 1963).

[143] See Thomas, *St. Peter's School Logbook*.

[144] Wagg, *Myths and Milestones*, 2.

The Formative Years of Stoke Ramblers (Stoke City FC)

In 1870, Stoke Ramblers dropped the moniker from its name and adopted the formal title of Stoke Football Club, although contemporary reports also referred to the team as Stoke-on-

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[145] Kitching, *The Origins of Football*, 128.

[146] See Voigt, *Myths After Baseball.*

[147] Collins, ‘Invention of Sporting Tradition’, 25-26.

[148] Osmond, ‘Myth-Making in Australian Sport History’, 275.

Trent Football Club.[149] The term 'Ramblers' or 'Wanderers' was often attached to the name of a team during the nineteenth century to signify that the club did not play their fixtures on one specific ground or pitch and this also appears to be the case with Stoke Ramblers. It is unclear from initial contemporary newspaper reports where the team was based during its first two years of existence, but in 1870 the club adopted the Stoke Cricket Ground as its primary location, coinciding with 'Ramblers' being dropped from its name. By 1872 it had become established as the first fully functioning association football club in The Potteries, arranging regular fixtures against opponents in surrounding counties during the winter months, holding annual meetings where an executive committee was elected to govern the team's activities, and having frequent reports published within local newspapers.[150] During these formative years the club remained the only prominent formal football club in the region, although informal activities continued to take place throughout the Six Towns, and it would not be until the mid-1870s that that the association game would emerge as the most popular sport in The Potteries.

The most significant challenge facing the club during its formative years was the lack of local opposition, and it would not be until 1874 that other formal association football clubs would begin to be established in The Potteries. Matches were initially organised against 'scratch' teams that were formed for a one-off occasion and consisted predominantly of groups of friends, acquaintances, and colleagues that came from wealthy, middle class backgrounds.[151] Furthermore, there was a tendency for players from these teams to merge with Stoke Ramblers following the contest, resulting in the development of one prominent team rather than the formation of multiple formal clubs. For example, in its first year in existence Stoke Ramblers arranged matches against scratch teams brought together by William Eustace May, whose father was a colliery owner, and Michael John Godby, a solicitor, and it is evident that players from both sides chose to join the club following the match rather than continue as a separate team. A formal association football club was established in the neighbouring borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme in 1868 by the regional Young Men's

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[149] 'Stoke Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 15, 1870, 5.

[150] 'Stoke-upon-Trent – Football', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, March 29, 1873, 5.

[151] Examples matches that Stoke Ramblers played against scratch team include 'The Stoke Ramblers v Me O Gordon's Team', *The Sportsman*, November 7, 1868, 8; 'Stoke Rambers v Mr Cooper's Team (Porthill)', *Birmingham Daily Post*, January 25, 1869, 7; and 'Stoke Ramblers v Mr M Godby's Team', *The Sportsman*, November 24, 1879, 3.

Christian Association (YMCA) and there is evidence that they intended to organise games on a regular basis, renting a field to play on and purchasing 'football materials'.[152] The Newcastle YMCA did organise a contest against Stoke Ramblers in December 1868, ending in a two-goal defeat, but there are no reports of the club arranging any further matches.[153] It is likely that the club become insular, with informal contests being arranged between members of the YMCA rather than against any external opponents, whilst contemporary newspaper reports indicate that there were issues with the loss of their ground.[154] In addition, Stoke Ramblers, who played under association rules, also made attempts to organise contests against clubs that had adopted alternative forms of the game. In December 1868, a match was organised in South Cheshire against Congleton, who were described as an 'old-established [club] … conforming to the Rugby rules'.[155] Stoke Ramblers convinced their opponents to play under association rules and ultimately ended the contest victorious, yet it emphasised the lengths that the club were forced to go to in order to find opposition in the near vicinity.

Between 1869 and 1873, reports indicate that the club played just one match against opposition located in The Potteries. The lack of appropriate teams to play against resulted in the club looking further afield in search of fixtures and subsequently games were arranged against sides located in South Staffordshire, such as Burton-upon-Trent,[156] Rugeley,[157] and Whitchurch[158]; Derbyshire, via Derby Grammar School, and Derwent[159]; South Cheshire, where opponents came from Congleton[160], Crewe,[161] and Sandbach[162]; and Nottinghamshire, with a single contest against Nottingham Forest in 1872.[163] The ease of travel provided by the

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[152] 'Young Men's Christian Association: Cricket and Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 23, 1869, 5.

[153] 'December - At Newcastle-under-Lyme', *The Sportsman*, January 7, 1869, 4.

[154] 'Newcastle Young Men's Christian Association', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, April 3, 1869, 5; and 'Young Men's Christian Association: Cricket and Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 23, 1869, 5.

[155] 'The Ramblers v Congleton', *The Sportsman*, December 9, 1868, 4.

[156] 'Football', *The Sportsman*, December 9, 1871,3; and 'The Return Match – Burton v Stoke-on-Trent', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, March 16, 1872, 11.

[157] 'Football. Stoke-upon-Trent v Rugeley', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, January 13, 1872, 4.

[158] 'Stoke Football Club', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 24, 1870, 4; 'Stoke-upon-Trent v Whitchurch', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, March 16, 1872, 11; and 'Stoke-on-Trent v Whitchurch', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, February 8, 1873, 5.

[159] 'Stoke Football Club', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 24, 1870, 4; 'Derby School v Stoke-on-Trent', *Derbyshire Advertiser*, November 2, 1871, 7; and 'Stoke-on-Trent vs The Schools, Derby', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 28, 1872, 6.

[160] 'The Ramblers v Congleton', *The Sportsman*, December 9, 1868, 4; and 'Stoke-on-Trent v Congleton', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 28, 1872, 6.

[161] 'Stoke-on-Trent v Whitchurch', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, February 8, 1873, 5.

[162] 'Stoke-upon-Trent v Sandbach', *The Sportsman*, December 2, 1871, 6.

[163] 'Stoke-on-Trent v Notts Forest Club', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 28, 1872, 6.

North Staffordshire Railway (NSR), opened in 1848, facilitated the extended travelling undertaken and it is evident that matches were arranged against teams situated along the services branch lines.[164] The development of the railway system aided the growth of team games, such as football, because it made inter-city competition a realistic possibility, enabling clubs to play matches against opposition in neighbouring regions where they would have been exposed to new rules, methods, and techniques.[165] James and Day have noted how the opening of railway lines in and around Manchester enabled football to spread across the region and allowed early forms of the game to 'flow westwards'.[166] It is clear that this was similar in The Potteries where the extensive NSR system provided Stoke Ramblers with the opportunity to play matches against clubs located in neighbouring towns, cities, and regions.

However, these fixtures were rarely uneventful or proceeded without incident and the further afield the team travelled the greater the variation of rules that they encountered. In 1870, the newly titled Stoke FC faced Derby School and it was noted in reports that 'the game was played by rules with which the Stoke players were not familiar and they suffered material loss from their opponents claiming free kicks as penalties for any infringement of them'.[167] Similarly, a contest against Congleton in 1872 was noted for the 'Congletonians … utter disregard for the handling rule', due to being accustomed to Rugby rules, whilst in 1871 the result of a contest against Derby was disputed after the ball was blocked on the goal-line by a spectator who was stood between the posts.[168] Stoke FC definitively looked to play games under association rules and on only one occasion they did attempt to play a handling form of the game. In January 1873, the team had intended to travel to Whitchurch but, due to a delay, had missed their train at Crewe station. The team opted to head to the Crewe Football Ground where an impromptu match was arranged under Rugby rules, but contemporary reports demonstrate the disdain that the players had for the alternative form of the game. One report in the *Staffordshire Advertiser* described how, upon arriving at Crewe, they 'set to work to play all who were on the ground (nineteen in number) by the Rugby rules, the chief object in which seemed to most of the Stoke men to be to lie in a dyke as long as possible accumulating as many of the opposite side on them as they could hold'.[169] This discredits some assertions made in conventional history texts that, incorrectly, claim that Stoke Ramblers (and subsequently Stoke FC) was initially a rugby club or favoured a handling form of football.[170]

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[164] See Rex Christiansen and Robert Miller, *The North Staffordshire Railway* (Exeter: David and Charles, 1971).

[165] William J. Baker, 'The Making of a Working-Class Football Culture in Victorian England', *Journal of Social History* 13, no.2 (1979): 242; and Mike Huggins and John Tolson, 'The Railways and Sport in Victorian Britain. A Critical Reassessment', *Journal of Transport History* 22, no. 2 (2001): 110.

[166] James and Day, 'Emergence of Football in Manchester', 54.

[167] 'Stoke Football Club', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 24, 1870, 4.

[168] 'Stoke-on-Trent v Congleton', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 28, 1872, 6; and 'Stoke-on-Trent vs The Schools, Derby', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 28, 1872, 6.

Traditional histories detailing the origins of Stoke City FC have rarely sought to examine the formative years of Stoke Ramblers in any significant detail or depth. Instead, they provide a vague picture that is painted with broad strokes and very little, if anything, is stated about the players that represented the club during its first two years in existence. Modern publications have tended to suggest that the inaugural team was a collection of workers who were employed at the North Staffordshire Railway Company, assuming a link with the club's supposed Old Carthusian founders who were apprentices at the company, without providing any empirical evidence to support such claims.[171] In contrast, others, although equally as vaguely, have alluded to the club consisting of a variety of 'gentlemen' although no examples are provided.[172] However, through the analysis of contemporary newspaper reports it has been possible to identify the names of 20 individuals that are recorded as representing Stoke Ramblers at least once between 1868 and 1870. It should be noted that this is certainly not a comprehensive list of players. Many of the early match reports provide incomplete lists of those that were participating in contests or only name individuals that had a significant impact on the result. As such, in addition to the 20 names uncovered, it is possible that other men represented the club during this period but were simply not mentioned in newspaper reports. For those that were identified, further in-depth genealogical research has facilitated the construction of a prosopography (see Appendix Two) which presents valuable biographical details concerning the first cohort of players that represented Stoke Ramblers. This information provides unprecedented insight into the men that played for the club in its first two seasons.[173]

Of the 20 individuals identified in contemporary match reports, 14 have been successfully uncovered and examined, providing significant biographical information and revealing several key shared characteristics. First, the club consisted of young men and the average age of the group in 1868 was 18.7 years, with the youngest player being 16 whilst the oldest was 22. This supports the notion that football during this period was a game for young men due to its physical, robust and, at times, violent nature whilst they undoubtedly still possessed the youthful exuberance and enthusiasm to participate in sport. Midwinter concurs, noting that ‘football was just one, if one of the most successful, of the answers that were rehearsed as to what to do with all this youthful energy and vim’.[174] Second, these men were predominantly unmarried and living in close vicinity to the club itself. Only one of the players identified was married when the 1871 census was conducted, although it is unclear whether he had been married whilst he had been representing the club, with the remaining individuals either residing with their parents or boarding in accommodation close to their place of employment. These players had yet to be restricted, both in terms of time and finances, by the responsibilities that came with adult life, particularly those relating to marriage, raising a family, and owning or renting a property. They could afford to direct some of their attention, energy, and time towards engaging in sport as, at that point in their lives, there were few further concerns for them to contend with. Third, most of the players were employed in respected middle-class or white-collar positions. Four were clerks, three were engineers, one was listed as a food or provision dealer, two worked for their father’s business as colliery agents, and one was a teacher. These were positions that afforded a greater amount of flexibility and free time when compared to industrial workers who were engaged in physically draining trades over a six-day working week. Birley suggests that ‘the likes of railwaymen and other superior tradesmen had the Saturday half-holiday by the early sixties’ and this provided them with the opportunity to participate in sport, leisure, and recreation.[175] Finally, these players emanated from a position of wealth and were raised by middle- or upper-middle class families. Ten of the individuals grew up in households that employed servants and at least 65% had fathers who owned their own businesses (colliery proprietors, shop owners or provision merchants, and army outfitters). As such, these young men had no immediate financial pressures with two having the opportunity to attend the elite educational institutions where physical activity and sport was becoming commonplace. This partly resonates with comments made in the *Book of Football*, published in 1905, which noted that, in addition to an Old Carthusian influence, the Stoke Ramblers team initially consisted of the 'sons of businessmen, manufacturers, and country gentlemen'.[176]

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[169] 'Stoke-on-Trent v Whitchurch', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, February 8, 1873, 5.
[170] Wall, *Book of Football*, 87.
[171] See Martin, *Potter's Tale*; and Matthews, *Encyclopaedia of Stoke City.*
[172] Martin, *Potter's Tale*, 11-14.
[173] For more information on prosopographical method see Chapter Four.

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[174] Eric Midwinter, *Parish to Planet. How Football Came to Rule the World* (Warwickshire: Know the Score Books, 2007), 87.
[175] Birley, *Sport*, 265.

This first cohort of Stoke Ramblers players were certainly not sporting celebrities, barring William Lace Clague who later became a renowned amateur runner, and it would not be until the early-mid 1870s that the club would start to attract crowds of significant size to matches. These were men who established a formal association football club because of their enthusiasm for the game, coupled with the fact that they had the free time, disposable income, and limited domestic responsibilities that enabled them to play. It is highly unlikely that any of those involved would have envisaged that within a decade the club would evolve into a commercialised entity and that matches would be attended by thousands of spectators. The general anonymity of these players and the absence of any formal club records from the period makes it a challenge to develop a comprehensive account of each of their lives. However, it has been possible to formulate some short biographies of specific individuals who represented the club, thus providing further depth and detail that compliments the information presented within the prosopography.

William MacDonald Matthews was born in 1861 in Sydney, Australia, but spent much of his childhood living in Kensington, England. His father was a land proprietor and possessed enough wealth to send his son to be educated at Charterhouse school where the eventual founder of Stoke Ramblers, Harry John Almond, also studied.[177] Matthews and Almond were clearly closely associated. Both played alongside each other in the Charterhouse football team in 1867 before arriving simultaneously in The Potteries at some point during 1868 to become apprentices with the North Staffordshire Railway Company.[178] Whilst contemporary newspaper reports name Almond as the founder of Stoke Ramblers in 1868, it is not certain what role Matthews played in the establishment of the club or its continuation after his fellow Old Carthusian had departed the region after playing just one match. He was listed as captaining the team once in November 1869 but, despite residing in The Potteries until 1873, he is not mentioned in any further match reports.[179] If Matthews had filled the gap in the club that was left by Almond's departure, then it was only temporarily and to no fanfare. He returned to London in the mid-1870s where he initially worked as a civil engineer before later being recorded as living on his own means prior to his death in 1916.[180]

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[176] Wall, *Book of Football*, 87.

[177] Australia Birth Index, 1851 (Volume V1851258); Census Returns, Middlesex, 1861 (RG9 12/142); and Census Returns, Kent, 1901 (RG13 896/17).

[178] 'Wanderers v. Charterhouse School', *Sporting Life*, October 30, 1867, 4; and 'Amateur Athletic Club v Charthouse School', *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, December 7, 1867, 8.

William Lace Clague was a regular feature in the Stoke Ramblers team during the club's first two years in existence, but it was his achievements on the athletics track that earned him prominence in sporting circles. In 1875, the *Athletic News* dedicated a full front-page feature that outlined his athletic career after it was announced that he would no longer be entering any formal running events or competitions. It was commented that Clague was 'well known in amateur circles as the representative man, *par excellence*, of Lancashire athletes' and that 'his performances during the last six years have been so numerous, and his victories so many, that we cannot … do justice to them all'.[181] He had been born in Kendall, a small town in the South Lakeland District of Cumbria, but by 1868 he had moved with his father, who was employed as bread baker, mother and younger sister to The Potteries where they resided in Burslem.[182] It was during this period that Clague began his sporting career. He was described as 'displaying a fair turn of speed at school' which resulted in him making his first sporting appearance in August 1868 at the Stoke Victoria Athletic Club. The youngster made what 'must be considered a most successful debut' in which he won the 120 yards handicap (despite opponents being given a five yard head start), the sprint hurdle race, the high jump, and the 'hop, stride, and jump' event.[183] By December 1868, he had also begun to play association football and was selected for the Stoke Ramblers team that travelled to Congleton in the club's first 'foreign fixture', but very little is known about his endeavours on the pitch due to the ambiguity of match reports and the sporadic arrangement of matches.[184] Subsequent accounts of his life fail to mention his early engagement in football, primarily because of his success as an amateur runner, although it should also be noted that once he had departed The Potteries in 1870 he appears to have no longer participated in the association game. Clague became a minor celebrity due to his success on the running track. He entered competitions in London, Sheffield, Derby, Huddersfield, and across Cheshire where he participated predominantly in short distance running races of between 100 yards and 600 yards.[185] Clague pursued a career in education, moving to Long Eaton, Derbyshire, in the early 1870s to become an Assistant Master at a college before spending over three decades working as an Inspector of Schools in London and Middlesex.[186] He married Emma Elizabeth Cooke in 1875 and the couple raised three children.[187] The family were undoubtedly middle class, employing two servants, whilst Clague's death in 1925 resulted in his widow receiving a probate totalling £4630.[188]

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[179] 'Stoke Ramblers v. Mr. M. Godby's Team', *The Sportsman*, November 24, 1869, 3.

[180] Census Returns, Kent, 1901 (RG13 896/17); Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineers (London: Institute of Civil Engineers , 1917) s.v. 'Wiiliam MacDonald Matthews'; and Arrowsmith, *Charterhouse Register: 1769–1872*.

[181] 'Eminent Athletes. No.11 – W. L. Clague, of Stockport', *Athletic News*, June 21, 1875, 1.

[182] Census Returns, Lancaster, 1861 (RG9 3159/17).

[183] 'Eminent Athletes. No.11 – W. L. Clague, of Stockport', *Athletic News*, June 21, 1875, 1.

[184] 'Stoke Ramblers v. Congleton', *The Sportsman*, December 9, 1888, 4.

Charles May and William Eustace May were the sons of Charles Bower May, who was the proprietor of Sneyd Colliery, located north of Stoke, which was employing 63 men in 1871. The brothers were born in The Potteries and were two of six siblings that were living with their father, mother, and three servants in Burslem prior to the 1870s.[189] Both were part of the initial Stoke Ramblers team that emerged during the late 1860s and Charles May became an integral feature of the club during its formative years. He played for eight consecutive seasons, making his last appearance in January 1876, and, such was the respect that he had amongst his peers, he was nominated as captain with one report noting that he 'coached the men up in excellent style, and as the result showed [a 5-0 win], was well rewarded for his trouble'.[190] Charles May initially worked as an agent at his father's colliery before moving to Gloucestershire and then Bechuanaland (Botswana), where his uncle and aunt resided, with records listing him as a mining engineer.[191] He died in 1902 of 'enteric fever' at the age of 54 and had no wife or children.[192] William Eustace May, did not have the opportunity to replicate his brothers impact and influence with the club after he was killed in a boating accident at Rudyard Lake at the age of 18 in 1869.[193] However, it should be noted that he was the man credited with bringing together the scratch team that opposed Stoke Ramblers in the club's first formal fixture in October 1868.[194]

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[185] 'Eminent Athletes. No.11 – W. L. Clague, of Stockport', *Athletic News*, June 21, 1875, 1.

[186] Census Returns, Long Eaton, 1871 (RG10 3556/58); Census Returns, London, 1881 (RG11 301/9); Census Returns, London, 1891 (RG12 195/10); and Census Returns, Middlesex, 1901 (RG13 1243/34).

[187] Margaret Roberts, e-mail correspondence, July 19, 2016; and Census Returns, Middlesex, 1901 (RG13 1243/34).

[188] England & Wales, National Probate Calendar - Index of Wills and Administrations, 1923 (Online Database).

[189] Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1861 (RG9 1920/49).

[190] 'Football: Stoke v. Macclesfield', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 19, 1876, 2.

[191] The Bednall Archives, Private Collection (Reference BC1/868, Box 7).

[192] 'Deaths', *London Daily News*, November 18, 1902, 1.

[193] Margaret Roberts, e-mail correspondence, July 12, 2019.

Percy Holme Trubshaw also had a long-standing affiliation with Stoke Ramblers having played for the club in each of its first five years in existence before making a handful of sporadic appearances between 1875 and 1877. He was born in Stafford in 1852 and his father, Charles Trubshaw, was the county surveyor who provided accommodation to three architect pupils alongside his family.[195] Percy Holme Trubshaw arrived in The Potteries in the late 1860s to take up a position at the London and North Western Railway company and is one of the few individuals identified that matches the traditional narrative of Stoke City FC's origins which suggests that the team initially consisted of railway employees.[196] He lived and worked in The Potteries until his death in 1932, with census returns recording his occupation as being an engineer or engine fitter.[197] Match reports indicate that Trubshaw played as a back or half-back for Stoke Ramblers where his 'cool play' often made him 'equal' to any advances made by opponents.[198] It is also worth noting that on two occasions he was named as the captain of the second team when inter-club fixtures were arranged, indicating that he was a well-respected figure within the club.[199]

Edward Lake was born in Staffordshire in 1850 and his father, Thomas Lake, was a grocer and provision dealer who owned a store in a prominent location along Glebe Street in the centre of Stoke. He was one eight siblings and the Lake name would be a regular occurrence in football match reports during the 1860s and 1870s. Edward Lake made his first appearance for Stoke Ramblers in November 1869 and the following year, when the team dropped the moniker from its name and became known as Stoke FC, he was elected as the club's secretary. He was employed as a clerk during his early life and the literacy skills that he developed through his occupation made him suitable to undertake the administrative responsibilities at the club. Edward Lake was the first Stoke FC player to be identified as a goalkeeper in match reports whilst it was noted in one article that his play 'was especially admired'.[200] He emigrated to North America in the late 1870s, where he lived until his death in 1938, with census records indicating that he resided in Chicago, with his wife and four children, and that he was an accountant. Two of Edward Lake's younger brothers would also represent Stoke FC during the mid-1870s, developing a strong connection between the club and the family. Charles James Lake, who was employed as a clerk, secretary, and teacher at various times throughout his life, made his first appearance in March 1876 and would also emigrate to North America whilst George Lake was a mining surveyor who played his first game for the club in October 1874.

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[194] 'Stoke Ramblers v. E. W. May's Team', *The Sportsman*, December 31, 1868, 4.

[195] England and Wales Civil Registration Birth Index, Staffordshire, 1852 (Volume 6B); and Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1861 (RG9 1908/126).

[196] Margaret Roberts, e-mail correspondence, July 12, 2016.

[197] Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1871 (RG10 2862/8); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1881 (RG11 2709/142); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1891 (RG12 2156/73); and Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1901 (RG13 2621/77).

[198] 'Football – Stoke-on-Trent v. Manchester Association', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 17, 1877, 9; and 'Stoke v. Ashbourne', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 27, 1877, 7.

[199] 'Stoke Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 19, 1870, 5; and 'Stoke – Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 27, 1875, 2.

In summary, these were young, single, and unmarried men whose occupation and background provided them with the free time, disposable income, and absence of responsibility that made joining a formal sports club a possibility. These findings align with previous research which suggests that many of the earliest association football clubs were predominantly influenced by social or sporting elites and the middle classes. Russell states that, prior to 1870, 'to be a footballer was to be a gentlemen … [and a member of] the local and perhaps the national male elite',[201] whilst Mason claims that most early players 'seem to have been recruited mainly from the local professional and manufacturing elites'.[202] This theme has also been demonstrated in research exploring the origins of specific individual clubs. Taylor has noted that Queen's Park consisted predominantly of professionals and established an image of social prestige whilst Mason and Harvey found that individuals of middle-class occupations dominated the membership lists of Sheffield FC during the late 1850s.[203] Furthermore, in the North East the initial wave of football teams consisted of professional men or the sons of leading local families whereas Johnes and Garland, when examining the emergence of football in Wales, concluded that 'football had something of a middle-class character but with a clear working-class involvement'.[204]

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[200] 'Stoke-on-Trent v. The Schools, Derby', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 28, 1872, 6; and 'Stoke Football Club', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 24, 1870, 4.

[201] Russell, *Football and the English*, 11.

[202] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 24.

[203] Taylor, *Association Game*, 42.

[204] Mike Huggins, 'The Spread of Association Football in North-East England, 1876-90: The Pattern of Diffusion', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 6, no.3 (1976): 305-306; and Martin Johnes and Ian Garland,

Conclusion

Despite the wealth of research now informing the origins of football debate the staunch proponents of the orthodox and revisionist positions appear no closer to reaching a consensus regarding the emergence of the game in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 2017, Collins claimed that the debate was 'effectively dead' and that it had become clear that neither paradigm alone could fully explain the emergence of modern forms of football.[205] This chapter has examined the emergence of football in The Potteries prior to 1870 for the first time, uncovering and analysing early football activities in addition to discussing the formation of the first formal association football club in the region. It is evident from the information presented here that the development of the game in this locality does not completely align with either the orthodox or revisionist paradigm, but instead straddles and overlaps several of the key underpinning notions of each position in different ways.

First, it is clear that some form of football existed in the region in the first half of the nineteenth century and that, rather than being supressed, it was actually adopted as a prominent part of the local custom of the wakes. Sufficient people were playing or spectating the game often enough for knowledge to be transferred from generation to generation, in contrast to orthodox claims that football had effectively become extinct outside the walls of the public schools during this period. However, these findings do not fit the revisionist paradigm either. Whilst some form of the game was played in The Potteries there is no evidence to suggest the presence of a highly sophisticated football culture as revisionists have asserted. Between 1844 and 1869, 43 reports of football activities occurring in the region have been identified in newspapers, equating to just 1.3 per year, whilst teams were only ever established to participate in one specific contest. Admittedly, the informal nature of the game during this period is unlikely to have left behind much evidence and many occurrences would have gone unreported. Ultimately, whilst some form of football was present in The Potteries, it was far from being the refined, rule-bound, and prominent culture that revisionists envision.

'"The New Craze": Football and Society in North-East Wales, c.1870-90', *The Welsh History Review* 22 (2004): 287.

[205] Tony Collins, 'From Georgian Football to Global Soccer' (paper presented at the British Society of Sports History Conference, Worcester, England, August 31-September 2, 2017).

Second, it is equally as problematic aligning the formation of the region's first formal association football club to either paradigm. Although research has identified that it was an ex-public-school boy, Harry John Almond, that instigated the formation of Stoke Ramblers in 1868 it is incorrect to unequivocally conclude that he acted as some kind of football 'missionary'. Whilst he undoubtedly brought his enthusiasm and experience of a dribbling form of the game, which was played at Charterhouse school, to the region it is somewhat ambitious to suggest that he alone was responsible for the emergence of the inaugural formal football club. When Almond arrived in The Potteries, he would have discovered a region where some form of the game was already present. Rather than disseminate football to the unknowing local populace, he was able to capitalise on an enthusiasm and understanding of the game that already existed. Furthermore, it is also important to acknowledge that Almond played only one game for the club and had departed the region within a month of Stoke Ramblers being established. This lack of long-term engagement meant that it would have been local players that ensured the continuation of the club and subsequently had the greatest influence on its development and direction. The prosopographical analysis of Stoke Ramblers players between 1868 and 1870 presented in this chapter demonstrates that the club consisted of members that were distinctly middle class in nature. This contrasts with some revisionist claims that it was the lower orders that had the greatest influence on the emergence of the game during the early-mid nineteenth century. Finally, academics have begun to question how significant some of the earliest formal association football clubs were in the development of the game. As the following chapter will demonstrate, whilst Stoke Ramblers were the first formal football club in The Potteries, it did not spark an immediate increase in the popularity of the game and it would not be until the mid-1870s that the next cohort of clubs in the region began to be established. How significant is the 'first' local club that was established, if it took almost a decade for a wider formalised football culture to emerge in the area?

The origins of football debate has become increasingly redundant in recent years and it is evident that scholars need to adopt a new approach when considering the historiography of the association game during the nineteenth century. For many towns, cities, and regions the emergence and early development of football is unlikely to be reduced to a clear-cut choice between the orthodox and revisionist positions and attempting to impart a grand narrative upon this early period in the game's development is counterproductive. Furthermore, it is evident that the evolution of the football in Britain differed from region to region and that neither paradigm can account for the localised nuances that shaped the emergence of the game in different localities. Simply continuing to repeat and retrace long-standing arguments in which no agreement is reached has little value and we must consider new ways of reframing discussions and analysing the evidence to facilitate the generation of new knowledge.

A growing number of scholars have suggested that the work of Fernand Braudel and his framework of the longue durée has potential value for those considering the history of sport.[206] Several contributors in the origins of football debate have warned of scholars becoming too focused on specific moments, events or personalities and then using them as evidence of broader themes or processes (such as using an example of one match as proof of the existence of a football culture). Braudel's framework encourages historians to move beyond creating event-led history and to take a more long-term view that considers longer timeframes.[207] He suggested the use of three categories of social time: the longue durée (the long-term – several decades or a century), moyenne durée (cyclical history – years or decades) and courte durée (the history of events – individual moments).[208] By undertaking an analysis using all three dimensions of time historians can search for broader themes, patterns, and connections that would not necessarily be apparent when constructing a short-term event-led history.[209]

The concept of the longue durée is applied in the conclusion of this thesis where the 'origins' of association football in The Potteries is considered from a more long-term perspective. Rather than just focusing on the early football activities discussed within this chapter, it also considers later periods and how various developments are interlinked. This moves away from the traditional origins of football debate by taking a more holistic, long-term view of the game's development by determining key themes and the significance or lasting impact of specific events or individuals. Although this thesis does not claim that Braudel's framework is the solution to the discussions, disputes, and disagreements regarding the early history of association football, it does showcase how scholars can use new methods to reframe the discourse and consider the evidence from a new perspective.

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[206] See Stephen Hardy, ''Evolutions in American Sport'', *Journal of Sport History* 36, no.3 (2009): 337-347; James 'Historical Frameworks and Sporting Research', 1169-1187; Samuel Clevenger, 'Transtemporal Sport Histories: Or Rethinking the 'Invention of American Basketball'', *Sport in Society* 23, no.5 (2019): 959-974; and Roger Penn and Damon Berridge, 'The Dynamics of Quadropoly: League Position in English Football Between 1888 and 2010', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33, no.3 (2016): 325-340.

[207] Lincoln Allison and Alan Tomlinson, *Understanding International Sport Organisations: Principles, Power and Possibilities* (London: Routledge, 2017), 56; and William McNeill, 'Fernand Braudel, Historian', *Journal of Modern History* 73, no,1 (2001): 133.

[208] James, 'Historical Frameworks', 1171.

[209] Lincoln Allison and Alan Tomlinson, *Principles, Power and Possibilities*, 56.

Chapter Three[1]

The Emergence of Club Football in The Potteries

Whilst the formation of Stoke Ramblers in 1868 is undoubtedly a key milestone in the emergence and development of association football in The Potteries, its initial impact on the growth and evolution of the game across the region was limited. It did not initiate an immediate surge in the popularity of the game amongst the local populace and it was not until the mid-1870s that the next generation of formal clubs were established. For six years Stoke FC (the moniker 'Ramblers' was dropped from the club's title in 1870) remained the only formal club in The Potteries and its formative years were characterised by difficulty in finding opposition against whom to play. The club were forced to travel further afield in search of competition and arranged matches in neighbouring counties, where different variations of the game were often present, or in some cases convinced rugby clubs to play under association rules. Stoke FC arranged a regular schedule of matches during this period and yet there appears to have been no attempt by other enthusiastic individuals from across The Potteries to establish alternative association football clubs in the region. Instead, informal football activities continued across each of the Six Towns with occurrences being reported during the wakes, in schools and at local fetes, community events, and outings. Although the local populace retained an interest in the game, this did not immediately progress into a desire to set up formal clubs. However, the mid-1870s resulted in an explosion of interest in the association game across the region. There was a dramatic increase in the number of matches being played and, more importantly, in the number of formal football clubs that were established. From 1874 onwards football developed into the most popular and prominent sporting activity in The Potteries with the *Staffordshire Sentinel* asserting that 'of all the games and pastimes that are played, or that take place in the northern part of the county, none command more support and attention than does football'.[2]

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[1] Content from this chapter has been published in the following articles or chapters: Martyn Dean Cooke, ''Many Details Remain Sketchy': Revealing the Truth Behind the Origins and Formation of Stoke City Football Club', *Soccer and Society* 21, no.4 (2020): 395-407; and Martyn Dean Cooke, 'The Emergence of Club Football in The Potteries: Bottle Kilns for Goalposts', in *The Early Development of Football: Contemporary Debates*, ed. Graham Curry (New York: Routledge, 2019), 79-98.

[2] 'A Retrospect of Sport in North Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 28, 1889, 3.

Football historians have tended to take what Kitching described as a 'winner's history' approach when examining the historiography of the association game during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[3] The focus of research has often been directed towards the most prominent, prestigious, and successful clubs, especially if they remain relevant in the modern era, yet this can result in other clubs being completely overlooked. James and Day indicate that the histories of Manchester's professional clubs, especially Manchester City FC and Manchester United FC, is assumed to tell the story of the sport's development in the city and their research has sought to address this by providing a comprehensive account of how the game emerged in the region. They suggest that although 'it is true that much has been written about association football in Manchester … this has tended to focus on the history of its major clubs … rather than assessing the conditions that led to nineteenth-century Mancunians adopting the game in the first place'.[4] This has also been the case with the limited attention that the history of football in The Potteries has received, where multiple authors have sought to outline the development of Stoke City FC and Port Vale FC whilst paying scant notice to other clubs that existed across the Six Towns.[5] This chapter seeks to rectify this by exploring the origins, structure, and activities of the region's formal clubs between 1874 and 1878 in addition to the formative years of Stoke FC.

This chapter begins by examining the expansion of football activity which occurred in The Potteries during the mid-late 1870s. First, the formative years of Stoke FC are outlined whilst details are provided that explain why no other formal association football clubs were established in the region until 1874. Second, the dramatic increase in the popularity of the game is demonstrated by studying the football activities that were taking place on an annual basis and exploring the social conditions that enabled a greater portion of the local population to play on a more regular basis. Central to this chapter is a comprehensive database that identifies and lists occurrences of an association football matches taking place in The Potteries that were reported in the press between 1868 and 1878 (see Appendix Three). This resource enables researchers to track the increase in the number of matches taking place but also provides valuable details regarding how active individual clubs and teams were. The chapter continues by discussing the importance of the 'sports club' in the development of modern sport during the second half of the nineteenth century and applies Vamplew's 'ideal-type' model to determine the number of formal football clubs that were active in The Potteries during the 1870s.[6] This is pertinent as academics have been critical of research that has presented examples of teams that played just one match as being proof of an extensive football culture.[7] There is now greater emphasis being placed on the importance of differentiating between short-lived transitory teams that were formed for a specific match and formal clubs that possessed a membership that engaged in regular activities and had recognised administrative governance. The main body of this chapter analyses the formal association football clubs that were present in The Potteries between 1874 and 1878, examining their origins, structure, activities, and the facilities that they utilised. Furthermore, there is also an examination of the transitory football teams that were present in the region during the same period. This is a purposeful decision to avoid a 'winner's history' approach, meaning that all formal clubs active in the region are discussed rather than the focus being solely on Stoke FC.[8] Ultimately, this chapter provides a detailed account of how club football emerged in The Potteries, exploring how the game in the region evolved from informal ad hoc activities into a flourishing culture that was underpinned by a significant body of formal clubs that were increasingly active.

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[3] Gavin Kitching, '"Old" Football and the "New" Codes: Some Thoughts on the "Origins of Football" Debate and Suggestions for Further Research', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, no.13 (2011): 1742.

[4] Gary James and Dave Day, 'The Emergence of an Association Football Culture in Manchester, 1840–1884', *Sport in History* 34, no.1 (2014): 50.

[5] See Tony Matthews, *The Encyclopaedia of Stoke City, 1868-1994* (West Bromwich: The Lion Press, 1994); and Jeff Kent, *The Valiants' Years: The Story of Port Vale* (Stafford: Witan, 1990).

An Explosion of Football Activity

Despite the formation of Stoke Ramblers in 1868, it would not be until a decade later that association football emerged as the most popular and prominent sporting activity in The Potteries. The establishment of the first formal association football club in the region did not spark an immediate exponential growth in the game, as might be assumed, and it would take a further six years until the next generation of organised teams and clubs began to tentatively emerge. The most prevalent issue Stoke FC faced during its formative period was the lack of local opposition against whom to play, with a distinct lack of opportunities in The Potteries. However, during this period a vast array of informal football activities continued to occur across the region with some form of the game taking place at fetes and festivals, on religious occasions and holidays, during work outings or trips, and within local schools, continuing much as they had done for the first half of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, Stoke FC's matches and activities were well documented in contemporary regional newspapers and it seems somewhat odd that, despite a formal club already being in existence and an obvious interest among the local population in the game, that the emergence of new teams was so slow to occur.

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[6] Wray Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies: A Historical Exploration of the Sports Club in Britain', *International Journal of Sports History* 30, no. 14, (2013): 1572.

[7] Tony Collins, 'Early Football and the Emergence of Modern Soccer, c .1840-1880', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no.9 (2015): 1134; and Gary James, 'Historical Frameworks and Sporting Research', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33, no.10 (2016): 1170.

[8] Kitching, 'The Origins of Football', 1742.

There are two contributing factors that may have influenced the slow emergence of organised football and the formation of formal clubs in The Potteries between 1868 and 1874. First, whilst the formation of Stoke Ramblers can be perceived as a significant moment in the region's sporting history, the club consisted primarily of middle class individuals who had the opportunity to engage in leisure pursuits on a semi-regular basis due to the flexibility and strength of their financial and employment background.[9] This was in stark contrast to the vast majority of the local population who were still restricted by the societal and economic conditions of the mid-Victorian period. Those that were employed in one of the staple industries of The Potteries faced a six-day working week where they were expected to work up to eighteen hours per day and had limited disposable income that they could invest in sporting pursuits.[10] Sunday would have been the only block of free time in the working week, yet this was seen as a day reserved for religious activities and participation in alternative leisure was still perceived as being taboo.[11] Quite simply, the generic working man had neither the spare time nor the disposable income to facilitate his participation in a formal sports club during the 1860s and early 1870s. Second, Stoke FC's position as the first and, therefore, most prominent football team in The Potteries would have naturally made it the most appealing option for any individuals that did possess the time, money, and interest to play the game. The opportunity to join a club that was already established and consisted of like-minded individuals would have been a much more attractive proposition than attempting to formulate a new club from scratch. In its first two years of existence Stoke Ramblers arranged fixtures against 'Mr. E. W. May's Team', 'Mr. O. Gordon's Team', and 'Mr. M. Godby's Team' and it is noticeable that a number of players that participated in these sides subsequently appeared for the Stoke club in the ensuing months and years.[12] For example, of the 12 players that represented 'Mr. M. Godby's Team' in November 1869 at least four (Michael John Godby, William Webb Paddock, Ernest Gordom and George Walker) can be identified as playing for Stoke Ramblers in the following eighteen months. Therefore, it can be argued that the presence of one prominent club in The Potteries played a role in restricting and constraining the emergence of new teams in the region by drawing in any individuals that had an interest in the game, rather than encouraging the formation of new teams.

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[9] Martyn Cooke and Gary James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers: The Early Development of Association Football in The Potteries', *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2017): 9; See Chapter Two for a comprehensive analysis of the individuals who represented Stoke Ramblers during its first two years in existence.

[10] Marguerite W. Dupree, *Family Structure in the Staffordshire Potteries, 1840-1880* (Oxford: Carendon Press, 1995), 61-62.

[11] Wray Vamplew, *Pay Up and Play the Game: Professional Sport in Britain, 1875-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 33-34.

Between 1874 and 1876, there were tentative signs that the informal football subculture in the region was beginning to transition into a more formal and organised recreational activity. Nine new teams were established across The Potteries in 1874 and, although many were short-lived, with reports indicating that most only participated in one or two matches, it signified the start of the formalisation of the game. These teams materialised from a variety of different backgrounds including religious organisations (Burslem St Pauls), places of employment (Mintons and Co. and Wellington), educational institutions (Chapel Chorlton Collegiate Academy), public houses (Spread Eagle), and based on geographic locations (Talke Rangers, Hanley Rangers, Hanley Albert, and Newcastle Brampton). Of those named, only three (Hanley Rangers, Mintons and Co., and Talke Rangers) would survive beyond eighteen months, although no contemporary newspaper reports exist that explain their relative longevity or why other teams quickly dissolved. It is apparent that Stoke FC dwarfed these new teams in terms of size and scale with club officials demonstrating an unwillingness to arrange fixtures against these newly formed localised opponents. The Stoke FC first team arranged only two contests against sides located in The Potteries in as many years and continued to base their fixture schedule around matches against opposition located in neighbouring counties. This suggests that the club considered the emergent teams in the region to not be suitable competition, which was emphasised in November 1874 when a second-string team consisting of 13 players defeated a Wellington side that had 20 individuals on the pitch.[13] However, it is clear that there was a growing interest in formalising football in the region beyond the narrow remit of Stoke FC and this is demonstrated by the increase in the number of matches arranged. Between 1868 and 1873 only 19 matches involving teams located in The Potteries were reported in the contemporary press, the vast majority organised by Stoke FC, yet in the 1874/75 season alone, 18 contests were reported which had risen further in the 1875/76 season to 35 games.

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[12] 'At Stoke-upon-Trent. Stoke Ramblers v. Mr E. W. May's Team', *The Sportsman*, December 31, 1868, 4; 'The Stoke Ramblers v. Mr. O. Gordon's Team', *The Sportsman*, November 7, 1868, 8; and 'Stoke Ramblers v. Mr M. Godby's Team', *The Sportsman*, November 24, 3.

It was the 1876/77 season that represented the moment that association football came to the forefront of the region's sporting conscience and began to blossom in terms of popularity and interest (see Appendix Four). There was an unprecedented explosion of formal football activity throughout The Potteries both in terms of the number of teams that were established and the volume of matches that were occurring. Contemporary newspaper reports indicate that there were 39 teams active in the region with 154 individual matches being reported and the following season there continued to be a dramatic increase, with a total of 93 teams identified and 279 reports of individual matches being published in the press. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that these figures could have been significantly higher and that many matches went unreported. For example, seven match reports have been identified in the press that comment on games that Boothen Rangers participated in between November 1877 and April 1878, suggesting that the club engaged in a relatively diminutive schedule of fixtures during what was its first year in existence. However, a subsequent article that was published following the conclusion of the season, which described the club's annual dinner, included a statement from the secretary in which he claimed that 'the club was in a prosperous condition … the number of matches played during the season was 20, out of which 15 were won'.[14]

It was not until the late nineteenth century that newspapers in Britain began to employ specialist journalists to write about sport and throughout the Victorian era the provincial press rarely directed reporters to sporting events.[15] Instead, it was the responsibility of club officials, most commonly the secretary, to write and submit articles that described matches and other affiliated activities that would be considered for publication by the local newspaper. Some clubs chose not to engage in this practice, particularly those that were not motivated by results, whilst others would only write articles that commented on matches in which their team had been victorious or performed well. This process was reliant upon the interest and compliance of editors who were under no obligation to publish every sport-related submission they received, nor did they have the space to do so, and it can be assumed that numerous articles would have been omitted. It is also worth noting that many of the match reports that were published had a tendency, unsurprisingly, to be biased in favour of the club that had submitted the piece whilst some were heavily exaggerated or fabricated.[16] With this in mind, it can be stated with relative certainty that the volume of football matches that occurred, and perhaps the number of active teams, in The Potteries during this period is much greater than the accumulation of individual match reports alone indicates.

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[13] 'Football. Stoke-Upon-Trent (Second Team) Against Wellington Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 19, 1874, 3.

[14] 'Boothen Rangers Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 17, 1878, 3.

An article published in the *Staffordshire Sentinel* in December 1876 summarised the dramatic expansion of the association game in The Potteries and proclaimed that ‘the old English game of football is evidently becoming increasingly popular in this district … and the revival of this healthy and nerve-bracing game is a matter of congratulation’.[17] This was also reflected in the emergent trend of clothing stores choosing to alter the garments that they were selling in order to capitalise on the growth of football activity. By November 1877 Richard Stanway, a clothing retailer based in the neighbouring borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme, was producing a range of football specific items for purchase, including jerseys, caps, and knickers in seven different colour combinations.[18] Such was the growing popularity of the game that he made the sale of these football garments central to the advertisements that were published in the local press whilst his offer of a ‘special discount price for clubs and schools' further demonstrated that football had risen to prominence in the region.[19] It was not uncommon for local clothing retailers and equipment manufacturers to switch to the production of sporting items where there was a demand, with the focus being on the participant market rather than the spectator one. Whilst the supply of such items was initially a profitable endeavour many of the smaller local retailers and manufacturers began to disappear in the final decades of the nineteenth century as mass-production technology undermined small-scale craftsmen.[20] By the mid-1880s Richard Stanway had dropped any mention of football from his advertisements and was presenting the company as being a 'railway and police clothing and uniform manufacturer'.[21]

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[15] Martyn Dean Cooke, ‘The Inextricable Link Between Sport and the Press in the Victorian Era: The Example of the “Sentinel Cup”’, *Sport in History* 39, no.1 (2019): 4-5.

[16] See Tony Mason ‘Sporting News, 1860-1914’, in *The Press in English Society from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Michael Harris and Alan Lee (London: Associated University Presses, 1986), 168-186.

[17] ‘The Old English Game’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 12, 1876, 2.

[18] ‘Richard Stanway’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 25, 1878, 1.

The expansion of football activity that occurred in the region between the summer of 1876 and 1878 can be attributed to two prominent societal and economic changes: the introduction of the half-holiday and an increase in the standard of living. First, as the nineteenth century progressed there was a growing demand for the implementation of legislation to improve working conditions and reduce working hours in factories and workshops with multiple Factory Acts and Amendment Bills instigated to regulate the conditions of industrial employment.[22] The gradual development of this legislation assisted the wellbeing of employees with a key component being the introduction of the Saturday or, in some cases, Thursday half-holiday, which effectively granted workers a half-day off that would ultimately evolve into the five-day working week. However, the dissemination of the half-holiday was largely dependent on local variation with regions that were dominated by factory-based industries quicker to adopt the concept than those where prominent trades were not unionised. The acceptance of the half-holiday provided the working and middle classes with a consistent block of free time in which they could participate in regular, weekly sporting activities and it is little surprise that its implementation in North Staffordshire from 1874 onwards coincided with a dramatic increase in football activity. Vamplew also notes that 'the time available for the consumption of sport is not just a matter of the volume of free time, but also where those non-working hours are located in the work-leisure calendar'.[23] The Saturday half-holiday ensured that work finished at 2:00pm, although this was open to regional variation, thus providing workers with an afternoon of daylight in which they could organise, participate in, or spectate sport. Football benefitted significantly from the concept of the half-holiday as the game required relatively little time, resources or equipment to play when compared to other sports, such as cricket, which some perceived to be too time consuming.[24] The acceptance of the half-holiday had similar beneficial impacts on the development of football in other regions with Birley noting that in Birmingham the number of clubs 'rose from one in 1874 to 20 two years later and to 155 in 1880' as the concept became adopted.[25]

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[19] 'Richard Stanway', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 4, 1876, 1.

[20] Wray Vamplew, 'Industrialization and Sport', in *The Oxford Handbook of Sports History*, eds. Robert Endleman and Wayne Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 138.

[21] 'Richard Stanway', *Volunteer Service Gazette and Military Dispatch*, August 4, 1883, 14.

[22] Signey Webb, 'Preface', in *A History of Factory Legislation*, ed. B. L. Hutchins and A. Harrison (London: P.S. King & Son, 1911), vii-xiv; and Hugh Cunningham, *Time, Work and Leisure: Life Changes in England since 1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 61.

Second, there is a consensus among academics that the final three decades of the nineteenth century witnessed an increase in the standard of living which was partly facilitated by an increase in real wages and, as a result, the amount of disposable income that all members of society had access to. Vamplew suggests that real wages rose until the turn of the century and, although there were significant regional variations and the calculation of earnings in parallel with the cost of living can be imperfect, the most commonly quoted source suggests that there was a 60% increase from 1870 until the 1890s.[26] This increased spending power combined with general improvements to medicine, health, and diet provided the working and middle classes with greater energy, enthusiasm, and willingness to engage in physical activities. Many people chose to invest their disposable income in leisure activities, including sport, with the additional financial flexibility enabling them to pay for subscription or membership fees to access clubs and meet transport costs when traveling to fixtures.

The Victorian Sports Club

Historians consider the sports 'club' to be central to the development of modern sport and they became a definitive characteristic of the sporting revolution that occurred in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century. In some cases, they were also a key facet of pre-modern sport and yet it was during the Victorian era that there was a significant expansion in the number of clubs that facilitated sporting provision across the country.[27] By the start of the First World War, there were around 1,000 lawn tennis clubs, 1,200 golf clubs and in excess of 500 rugby football union clubs established in England, whilst there were 158 professional and over 12,000 junior clubs affiliated with the English Football Association.[28] The sports club had become established as a social institution by the end of the nineteenth century, but Collins suggests that the formation of clubs was 'a consequence of the commercialisation, organisation, and growth of sport, rather than its cause'.[29] Swain has noted how the emergence of association football clubs during the second half of the nineteenth century signalled the transition of the game from one played for occasional amusement to an expansive organised system of formal teams playing regular, pre-arranged matches.[30]

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[23] Vamplew, *Pay Up*, 53-54.

[24] Adam Benkwitz and Gyozo Molnar, 'The Emergence and Development of Association Football: Influential Sociocultural Factors in Victorian Birmingham', *Soccer and Society* 18, no.7 (2017): 1031.

[25] Derek Birley, *Sport and the Making of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 265.

[26] Vamplew, *Pay Up*, 51.

Vamplew suggests that sports clubs emerged from the desire of people to collectivise their leisure experience, allowing individuals with a common interest or purpose to come together and engage in sporting provision under shared rules, regulations, and ideologies. However, sport certainly did not invent the notion of the club, but rather it was a concept that was borrowed from existing structures operating in other areas of British life and culture, which were then adopted and adapted for its own purposes.[31] Lowerson has demonstrated that amateur dramatic and operatic societies, among others, utilised a club structure that were similar to those adopted by sport in the nineteenth century.[32] Sports clubs offered much more to members than simply facilitating an opportunity to play with and against like-minded individuals. The club stimulated socialisation, conviviality, and the creation of social capital, in addition to the development of a binding community interest that was often identifiable through the use of distinctive uniforms or, in many cases, some form of selective membership to ensure social homogeneity.[33] For many people, it would have been the feeling of community and group solidarity that being a member of a club offered, rather than success on the track, pitch or court, that would be the most appealing factor. Hardy argues that a club or society has instrumental and expressive functions.[34] The instrumental function of sports club, or its primary goal, is to promote a form of sporting activity and members contribute to achieving this by combining to acquire playing space, equipment, and facilities that can be utilised for this purpose. Whilst instrumentality was the primary factor in their formation it was the expressive functions of clubs, through creating a sense of identity and social capital, that often held the membership together and facilitated longevity and sustainability.[35]

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[27] Wray Vamplew, 'Playing Together: Towards a Theory of the British Sports Club in History', *Sport in Society* 19, no. 1 (2016): 455.

[28] Neil Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society in Britain: 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 23; Nicholas Fishwick, *English Football and Society, 1910-1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 1, 26; Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 126; and Vamplew, *Pay Up*, 238.

[29] Tony Collins, *Sport in a Capitalist Society: A Short History* (London: Routledge, 2013), 10.

[30] Peter Swain, 'Football Club Formation and the Lancashire Leisure Class, 1857-1870'. *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 34, no.7-8 (2017): 498.

[31] Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies', 1581.

[32] John Lowerson, 'Sport and Middle Class Culture: Some Issues of Representation and Identity before 1940', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 21, no.1 (2004): 34-49.

Vamplew has developed a theoretical construct in which he suggests that sports clubs embody various forms of capital, including physical, financial, human, cultural, and social.[36] Social capital has been the most prominent feature in academic discussions regarding the emergence and development of sports clubs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, yet the concept has been described as ‘diffuse and contested’ with definitive differences in the approaches and arguments of key theorists.[37] Bourdieu refers to social capital as ‘the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition’ and indicates that individuals intentionally build relationships for their own benefits.[38] It is suggested that social relations are only beneficial if they connect individuals to those with resources or power whilst people who gain capital through social networks often do so due to the exclusion of others.[39] In a sporting context, Bourdieu uses the example of golf clubs where existing members have the opportunity to improve business relationships by proposing colleagues or clients as new members with the relative physical isolation of playing on the course providing a scenario where pleasure and networking could co-exist.[40] However, Vamplew notes that the unique nature of golf, where ample time for conversation naturally occurs between shots, is not necessarily replicated across many other sporting activities, although similar discussions could take place in the clubhouse after a contest or event regardless of the activity being pursued.[41]

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[33] Vamplew, ‘Playing Together’, 455.

[34] Stephen Hardy, ‘The City and the Rise of American Sport’, *Exercise and Sports Sciences Review* 9 (1981): 193-198.

[35] Vamplew, ‘Playing Together’, 458.

[36] See Wray Vamplew, ‘Concepts of Capital: An Approach Shot to the History of the British Sports Club before 1914’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 39, no.2 (2012): 299-331.

[37] Fred Coalter, ‘Sports Clubs, Social Capital and Social Regeneration: ‘Ill-Defined Interventions with Hard to Follow Outcomes’?’, *Sport in Society* 10, no.3 (2007): 540.

[38] Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital’ in *Education: Culture, Economy and Society*, eds. A. H. Halsey, Hugh. Launder, Phillip Brown and Amy Stuart Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 51

[39] See John Field, *Social Capital* (London: Routledge, 2003).

[40] Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital’, 51-52.

Putnam defines social capital as the 'connections between individuals [and the] social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' with the related concepts of 'bridging' and 'bonding' being described as having the most relevance to the examination and analysis of sports clubs.[42] Bridging social capital exists between different social groups and refers to the creation of broader identities by drawing people together from diverse social divisions in an inclusive agenda that surpasses social barriers such as class and gender. In contrast, bonding social capital draws people together from a similar social group or occurs within an existing community, creating strong ties between similar individuals and enforcing a homogeneous group identity. Vamplew notes that academic studies have identified that sports clubs create beneficial social capital, but only to a restricted and selective membership, and suggests that the evidence indicates the domination of bonding capital over bridging.[43] Research has highlighted that many sports clubs in the nineteenth century restricted their membership to specific social groups, seeking to exclude rather than act as an source of social integration, with Tranter noting that 'sport was an opportunity for social differentiation not conciliation'.[44] Some clubs were formed to demonstrate social exclusivity whilst others were created because their members were excluded from other organisations, with people preferring to play sport with like-minded individuals of similar social standing and background.[45] Vamplew theorises, although admitting that there is little supporting evidence, that bridging social capital would have been apparent in the post-match conviviality, especially following the introduction of league and cup competitions where clubs were designated opponents rather than free to select who they arranged fixtures against.[46]

Early sports clubs often began in isolation and in many cases, due to their idiosyncratic nature and geographic location, there was not a group of similar organisations against which to arrange contests or interact with. As a result, they began as insular bodies that provided recreational sport for their members with activities limited to ‘in house’ matches or events that saw participants split into practical groupings, such as ‘marrieds’ and ‘singles’.[47] Whilst some remained in isolation throughout their existence the majority looked to capitalise on the emergence of new clubs that were facilitated by the sporting revolution by arranging ‘friendly’ fixtures or contests against geographically and, some suggest, socially suitable opposition. As the nineteenth century progressed, there was a growing demand among sporting participants throughout Britain for more meaningful events, matches, and contests. There were significant attempts to expand what was a relatively diminutive schedule that was dependent upon ‘friendly’ fixtures with clubs entering emerging league and cup structures that provided opportunities to participate in competitive sport.[48] Each club possessed differing motivations and ambitions. Some preferred to remain small organisations that facilitated recreational sport and social gatherings for their members whilst others strived to be competitive bodies that were successful on the field, court or track. Sport history has tended to focus on examining prominent or prestigious clubs that evolved into the backbone of the mass-entertainment industry that elite level sport became in the final decades of the nineteenth century, yet, in contrast, these were far outnumbered by grassroots clubs that were small in scale and motivated by conviviality and survival rather than growth. Indeed, not all clubs were successful and many were short-lived with Vamplew noting that it is important for historians to consider ‘the death of clubs and reasons for their demise’.[49]

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[41] Vamplew, 'Playing Together', 460.

[42] Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of the American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster), 18.

[43] Vamplew, 'Playing Together', 460.

[44] Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society*, 41.

[45] Mike Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport* (London: Hambledon, 2004), 99.

[46] Vamplew, 'Playing Together', 462.

Sports clubs in the nineteenth century had to operate within a challenging and changing economic environment that was not always favourable whilst physical limitations, exemplified by the need to locate and pay for suitable playing facilities, were also significant considerations.[50] The geographic location of a club could also negatively affect sustainability and longevity, especially if there were multiple similar organisations attempting to attract the same group of potential members. One solution was for clubs to amalgamate with other similar bodies, forming one united structure which allowed the accumulation and sharing of resources, whilst different sports clubs would work hand in hand by sharing facilities and, in some cases, membership.[51]

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[47] Vamplew, ‘Theories and Typologies’, 1574.
[48] Wray Vamplew, ‘“It is Pleasing to know that Football can be Devoted to Charitable Purposes”: British Football and Charity, 1870-1918’, *Sport in Society* 19, no.3 (2016): 357.
[49] Vamplew, ‘Theories and Typologies’, 1576.
[50] Neil Wigglesworth, *The Story of Sport in England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 109-118.

There is no current consensus among academics, both those that study modern sport or those that examine it from a historical perspective, regarding how to accurately define the 'sports club'. Vamplew has suggested that 'clubs are not a coherent body of organisations and have different functions and structures and hence cannot be embraced by a simple definition',[52] whilst Allison found that 'there was no agreed definition of a sports club'.[53] The term 'club' has historically been used to describe a variety of groupings that have formed in order to facilitate participation in sport, ranging from a group of friends that have a regular booking at a sports facility to an established sporting institution that consists of multiple formal teams across an array of different age groups, making it difficult to construct an accurate definition that encompasses all idiosyncrasies. However, Vamplew has sought to provide a solution by drawing on the works of contemporary academics and organisations to construct a model of the 'ideal-type' sports club which outlines the essential attributes and characteristics that all clubs should possess. It is postulated that the 'ideal-type' club should associate with playing or watching sport at either a recreational or competitive level, possess a formal membership that participates in regular activities, have access to suitable facilities either through ownership, tenancy, hire or invitation, and should be governed by some form of administration that can range from one person to a full committee.[54] It excludes informal activities, such as one-off sporting occasions or impromptu get-togethers, and does not allow self-certification of groups which may engage in regular activities but lack formal structure. This model is a useful structure to apply to historical examinations of sport as it provides a clear, concise outline of what constitutes a sports club and allows differentiation between a team that may have come together for the purpose of one match and a club that engaged in regular activities and had a much longer lifespan.

Several prominent figures in the origins of football debate have warned against other researchers in the field making definitive conclusions based on scattered references of matches taking place or teams that had a diminutive life span. James has been critical of 'some researchers publishing articles listing every occurrence of the word football they have identified in online newspaper archives' in an attempt to present a wealth of material, noting that robust analysis of the evidence is required in order to construct progressive contributions.[55] Furthermore, Collins has cautioned academics against being reliant on presenting teams that had a life of no longer than one match as conclusive evidence of a broad football culture existing.[56] Taking this into consideration, this thesis applies Vamplew's 'ideal-type' model of sports clubs to differentiate between teams, many of which were simply a one-off gathering of individuals that participated in a single game, and clubs, which were formal, structured organisations that engaged in regular activities. When examining the football subculture that developed in Sheffield during the first half of the nineteenth century Curry emphasised the importance of the emergence of what he describes as 'club football' as central to the region's sporting narrative, rather than compiling a list of informal activities or one-off teams.[57] Similarly, the remainder of this chapter seeks to expand on this concept by using Vamplew's ideal-type model to identify the emergence of club football in The Potteries.[58] A club has only been included in the subsequent analysis if it possesses the four essential attributes and characteristics as outlined in Vamplew's model - that it associates with playing the association game, consists of a formal membership that participates in regular activities (for this thesis, a minimum of three games in a season), has access to suitable playing facilities and is governed by some form of administration. This excludes informal activities or ad-hoc occurrences of matches taking place and enables the chapter to focus specifically on examining the clubs that participated in football on a regular basis and were central to the emergence and development of the region's footballing subculture.

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[51] Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies', 1575.
[52] Ibid., 1570.
[53] Mary Allison, *Sports Clubs in Scotland* (Edinburgh: SportScotland, 2001), 21.
[54] Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies', 1572.

Club Football in The Potteries

Using Vamplew's 'ideal-type' model, between 1868 and 1878 a total of 58 individual association football clubs have been identified throughout The Potteries, the neighbouring borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme, and within the region's immediate geographic vicinity (see Appendix Five and Six). From 1868 to the spring of 1874, Stoke Ramblers (later Stoke FC) remained the only association football organisation in the region that participated in regular fixtures. However, during the subsequent season four new clubs had emerged, based in Newcastle, Hanley, and Stoke respectively, with the total almost doubling to 11 by the end of the 1875/76 season. As football activity dramatically increased in the region during the mid-late 1870s, there was a significant expansion in the number of football clubs that were established and, by the summer of 1878, 53 were active across The Potteries and the immediate surrounding areas. The geographic spread of these clubs followed a relatively logical pattern that related to the size of each conurbation – the larger the population of the specific town or urban locality, the greater the number of football clubs that were present. During this period, Stoke (14 clubs) and Hanley (13) were the largest and most populated of the Six Towns and possessed 46% of the region's football clubs, undoubtedly also aided by their position at the centre of The Potteries. Longton (8), Burslem (5), Tunstall (4), and Newcastle (4) were all large enough in size to facilitate the emergence of multiple clubs whilst the most diminutive of the Six Towns, Fenton, could boast of only two. Football clubs were also established in some provincial towns and villages that were either situated in geographically prominent locations or were surrounded by significant industrial sites. One club was established in the outlying village of Talke, the site of significant mining activity throughout the nineteenth century, with large facilities owned by the North Staffordshire Coal and Iron Works, opened in 1872, both attracting workers and providing a collective identity. It was a similar case for Goldenhill, which was surrounded by collieries and situated within walking distance of the pottery and ceramic factories based in the larger neighbouring conurbation of Tunstall, whilst Endon acted as a transport hub positioned on a main route by road between The Potteries and the Staffordshire Moorlands and was dissected by the Cauldon Canal. The evidence suggests that formal, organised football in The Potteries appears to have undergone what Bale termed as hierarchical diffusion, where the game spread down the urban hierarchy.[59] Club football started in Stoke and Hanley, the largest conurbations in the region, before the concept was adopted by the remainder of the Six Towns and eventually was diffused among the smaller provincial towns and boroughs.

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[55] James, 'Historical Frameworks', 1170.

[56] Collins, 'Early Football', 1134.

[57] See Graham Curry, *A Crucible of Modern Sport: The Early Development of Football in Sheffield* (New York: Nova, 2018).

[58] Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies', 1572.

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[59] John Bale, 'Geographical Diffusion and the Adoption of Professionalism in Football in England and Wales', *Journal of the Geographical Association* 63, no.3 (1978): 195.

Analysis suggests that these football clubs were well-organised and relatively sustainable, with just two of the 58 identified surviving less than one year. They arranged and participated in matches on an increasingly regular basis with the number of reported games for each club increasing year on year, doubtlessly aided by the growing list of opponents that were emerging locally. Furthermore, contemporary newspaper reports help to identify the administrative structure put in place within these clubs, with a committee tending to comprise of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and Captain, whilst the fact that members were willing to write match reports to be published within the regional newspapers indicates a strong degree of organisation. Of these 58 clubs, 18 are reported to have possessed multiple sides with first, second and, in some cases, third-string teams being established. For example, within eighteen months of being formed in 1875 Hanley Rangers had introduced a second team and later added a third team in 1878.[60] The ability of a club to operate multiple sides simultaneously demonstrates that it was well organised financially and logistically whilst also possessing a sizeable membership that were willing to engage with the club and participate in matches. Whilst informal and ad-hoc football activities highlight that an interest and understanding of the game existed in the mid-nineteenth century it was the development of a network of organised, structured clubs and the emergence of formal club football from 1875 that marks the period where the association game began to flourish in the region.

The significant increase in the number of association football clubs established during the 1870s and early 1880s was not a phenomenon that was unique to The Potteries. During this period a number of regions across Britain, especially in the north of England and the Midlands, experienced a period of exponential growth.[61] As a broad starting point, the English Football Association (FA) had ten clubs affiliated to it when it was inaugurated in 1863 and by the turn of the century this had increased to in excess of 10,000.[62] On a more localised level, all 40 clubs affiliated to the Lancashire Football Association in 1880 were established in the proceeding decade, 34 new clubs joined the Sheffield Football Association between 1870 and 1880, whilst 23 clubs were established and affiliated to the Northumberland and Durham Football Association in a two year period between 1879 and 1881.[63] However, it should also be noted that not all football clubs joined their local association, either through choice or because they simply did not survive long enough, whilst not all towns, cities, and regions experienced a period of growth during this timeframe. Russell suggests that in areas where the arrival of the Saturday half-holiday was delayed, such as in Liverpool, which had a significant number of non-unionised and casual workers, the game grew much more slowly.[64] In the contemporary local press during the 1879/80 season only two matches were reported in Liverpool compared to over 800 in Birmingham.[65]

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[60] 'Hanley Rangers 3rd Team v. Northwood Wesleyan', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 14, 1878, 4.

[61] Adrian Harvey, *Football: The First Hundred Years, The Untold Story* (London: Routledge, 2005), 206-207; Matthew Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2008), 31-34; Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980), 31; and Dave Russell, *Football and the English: A Social History of Association Football in England, 1863-1995* (Preston: Carnegie, 1997), 11.

[62] Russell, *Football and the English*, 11.

During the nineteenth century a significant proportion of football clubs that were established in Britain came into existence via organisations or institutions which already existed for alternative purposes.[66] Mason suggests that these institutions tended to be connected to education, religion, and the workplace, whilst the importance of public houses and pre-existing clubs that facilitated other sports has also been noted.[67] Each form of organisation had varying motives for facilitating, or at least allowing, the emergence of football although the amount of influence, involvement or assistance that they asserted remains unclear and differs between individual cases. The creation of teams or clubs tended to be the result of passionate or entrepreneurial individuals with pre-existing institutions providing them with what Walvin describes as ‘a point of entry’ - access to an existing group of potential participants that could be convinced to take up the game.[68] The remainder of this chapter provides detailed analysis of the formal association football clubs that were active in The Potteries between 1874 and 1878. The origins of clubs are considered with six main categories emerging: workplace football clubs; football clubs with religious affiliations; school affiliated football clubs; football clubs that emerged from pre-existing cricket clubs; public house or temperance football clubs; and, finally, football clubs that were established based on geographic locations.

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[63] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 31.
[64] Russell, *Football and the English*, 13.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Harvey, *The First Hundred Years*, 206-207; and Taylor, *Association Game*, 34.
[67] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 21-22.
[68] James Walvin, *The People’s Game: A Social History of British Football* (London: Allen Lane, 1975), 59.

Workplace Football Clubs

The workplace was a common site for the formation of sports clubs during the second half of the nineteenth the century, although Vamplew indicates that more research is required to determine the degree of control that employers or owners exerted over sporting provision.[69] Heller suggests that the formation of work-based sports clubs from London bureaucracies during the late nineteenth century was not initiated by the management, but rather by the staff themselves.[70] For some companies the relationship was merely symbolic, lending only their name to the club and leaving the responsibility of running it with those workers involved, whilst Mason adds that even those organisations that provided financial and logistical support only did so as long as the team were successful and the finances manageable.[71] However, the provision of work-based sport did emerge as part of a broader range of progressive welfare concepts that provided both employers and employees with tangible benefits and Fitzgerald's study of industrial welfare firmly identifies the place of sport within organisational development during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[72]

Some industrialists and companies came to see sport as a positive that could facilitate greater productivity within their workforce with Heller commenting that it could play a role in reducing 'staff turnover, absenteeism and employee dissatisfaction, which were seen as detrimental to the long-term viability of the enterprise'.[73] Not only was sport a method of improving the fitness and health of the workforce, but it also had the additional benefit of providing and enhancing a collective identity among employees that encouraged loyalty to the company.[74] Furthermore, Vamplew suggests that another early motive for the provision of workplace sport by employers was their shared views with many contemporary religious and temperance reformers who viewed sport as a countermeasure to unrespectable behaviour, including drinking and gambling.[75] It has also been noted that sport connected organisations with the outside world, with teams facing local opposition and match reports published in the press acting as an advertising tool, provided enhanced publicity and visibility.[76] Such were the potential benefits that many companies, although not necessarily adopting a central position in the creation or running of a sports club, would allow and, in some cases, facilitate their existence by providing logistical support, such as land to play on. Munting notes that the provision or facilitation of sports clubs by companies tended to be underpinned by a rational economic basis where a contented labour force and an attractive working environment would maximise productivity.[77] However, Bowell contends that in some cases they were a genuine attempt by employers to provide labour welfare and were displays of community.[78] Taylor warns that not all employers and companies were keen to facilitate the provision of sport and suggests that some would have sought to restrict involvement by only allowing 'reputable' workers, if any, to participate.[79]

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[69] Vamplew, 'Playing Together', 1572.

[70] Michael Heller, 'Sport, Bureaucracies and London Clerks, 1880-1939', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 25, no.5 (2008): 580.

[71] Taylor, *Association Game,* 36,

[72] See Robert Fitzgerald, *British Labour Management and Industrial Welfare, 1846-1975* (London: Croom Helm, 1988).

[73] Heller, 'London Clerks', 580.

[74] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 28.

[75] Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies', 1576; and Vamplew, 'Industrialization and Sport', 140.

Of the 58 association football clubs that were established between 1868 and 1878 in The Potteries only two have been proven to have emerged directly from a place of work. The most prominent of these was Minton's Star (initially named Minton's Co.), which was established in 1874 by employees of Minton China, one of the largest and most renowned pottery firms in the region with the contemporary press commenting that 'there is possibly no English china factory with better-known name'.[80] Within two years the club consisted of two teams that arranged regular fixtures against local opposition and by 1877 it was considered reputable enough to become one of the founding members of the Staffordshire Football Association. During the 1870s, the company was owned by Colin Minton Campbell yet there is no evidence to suggest that he had any interest in facilitating a sports club for his employees. Instead, the football club appears to have been the inspiration of his cousin, Herbert Minton Junior, who was involved in the management and commercial side of the firm.[81] Although there is no evidence to suggest that he personally participated in matches, he undoubtedly possessed an interest in the game, which led to his involvement in the inauguration of the Staffordshire Football Association in 1877 when he was nominated as one of the vice-presidents.[82] Furthermore, Robert Minton-Taylor, the cousin of Herbert Minton Junior who also had involvement in the company during the 1860s and 1870s, was a prominent figure in sporting circles in The Potteries. He was the patron of the Stoke Victoria Athletic Club in 1874 whilst also sitting on various cricket club committees, with reports demonstrating that he adopted the role of president and vice-chairman at two different clubs.[83]

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[76] Heller, 'London Clerks', 588.
[77] Roger Munting, 'The Games Ethic and Industrial Capitalism Before 1914: The Provision of Company Sports', *Sport in History* 23, no.1 (2003): 48-49.
[78] Jonathon Boswell, 'The Informal Social Control of Business Britain: 1880-1939', *Business History Review* 57, no.2 (1983): 245.
[79] Taylor, *Association Game,* 37.
[80] 'Chats About China', *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, June 25, 1928, 8.
[81] Paul Atterbury and Maureen Batkin, *The Dictionary of Minton* (Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 1990), 13-17.

The extended Minton family clearly possessed an interest in sport, which appears to have filtered into the company workforce and as early as 1854 employees of Minton were participating in a cricket match against another local pottery and ceramic firm.[84] Munting suggests that many manufacturers during the second half of the Victorian era promoted the development of sports teams because of the enthusiasm and interest shown by family members and this would appear to be the case with Minton's Star.[85] Similarly, George Cadbury's interest in sport was the driving factor behind the development of recreational clubs at Cadbury's whilst the Colman family were keen cricketers, which was reflected in the encouragement of their workforce to take up the game.[86] It is unclear exactly how much influence or control Herbert Minton exerted over Minton's Star, with current research failing to uncover any documentation that may provide further insight, yet his interest in football would suggest that his involvement was more than just symbolic.

Football Clubs with Religious Affiliations

Churches, chapels, and other religious organisations also played a prominent role in the creation of football clubs during the nineteenth century as clerical attitudes towards sport began to change.[87] The philosophy of 'Muscular Christianity' gradually altered traditional religious perceptions of physical recreations with sport being acknowledged as having moral value and developing favourable physical and psychological characteristics. Its adoption in the elite public schools and universities, where many curates, vicars, and ministers were educated and would have been persuaded of the moral and physical value of sport, undoubtedly aided the facilitation of football clubs in the second half of the nineteenth century by religious institutions. In Birmingham during the 1870s and early 1880s, 25% and of football clubs had religious affiliations whilst in Liverpool 25 of the city's 112 clubs were church-related.[88] This was a pattern reflected across Britain with many of the most prominent clubs of the Victorian era emerging as church-based teams, including Aston Villa, Bolton Wanderers, and Scottish side Queen's Park. Walvin suggests that clergymen used football as a way of combatting urban degeneracy and unrespectable behaviour, with team sports being seen to develop athleticism, teamwork, and discipline.[89] The adoption of the Saturday half-holiday provided the lower classes with a regular block of free time in which to engage in leisure pursuits and religious organisations saw football as being preferable to the potential excessive drinking and subsequent unsolicited behaviour that the practice could stimulate.

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[82] 'Proposed Football Association for North Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 21, 1877, 5; and 'Football in North Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 29, 1877, 6.

[83] 'Stoke Victoria Athletic Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 5 August 1874, 3; 'Victoria Cricket Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 16, 1867, 5; and 'Hartshill Cricket Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 2, 1869,5.

[84] 'Stoke. Cricket Match', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 9 September 1854, 4.

[85] Munting, 'Games Ethic', 58.

[86] Laura Stuart, *In Memoriam: Caroline Colman* (Norwich: Fletcher and Son, 1896), 34; and John Bromhead, 'George Cadbury's Contribution to Sport', *The Sports Historian* 20, no.1 (2000): 97-117.

[87] Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies', 1577.

For some religious organisations the formation of a football club was an extension of the additional social activities that they provided with a view to increasing their membership or congregation, with Huggins indicating that church attendance was already falling by 1851.[90] The growing popularity of football among the working classes during the second half of the nineteenth century meant that the game could be used as a method of drawing the working man and their families into worship.[91] Furthermore, the provision of church sports clubs not only provided physical activity and recreation for members but could also encourage solidarity, commitment, and loyalty.[92] This notion is disputed by Harvey who notes that, although theoretically some members would have adopted the beliefs and values espoused by the clergy, many simply used the church as a way of accessing football and were fully prepared to abandon the institution if the religious aspect became too intrusive.[93] Russell concurs, stating that once churches 'imposed what were deemed unacceptable or ideological demands upon a team, then their relationship was either re-negotiated or ended'.[94] In 1877 Christ Church, the precursor of Bolton Wanderers, split from the church after attempts by the vicar to impose compulsory attendance for players who represented the club.[95]

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[88] Taylor, *Association Game,* 35.

[89] Walvin, *The People's Game,* 56.

[90] Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, 38.

[91] Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies', 1577.

[92] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 25.

[93] Harvey, *First Hundred Years*, 207.

It is not clear how central the church itself was in the creation and running of each club. Taylor indicates that some curates, vicars, and ministers were active players themselves, having learnt the game at public school or university, and played a prominent part in the formation of football clubs, such as the vicar of Durham village club Tow Law who was the team's inaugural captain in 1881.[96] In contrast, Walvin uses the example of Aston Villa, founded in 1874, suggesting that the Villa Cross Wesleyan Chapel played no part in the formation of the football club and that the impetus and organisation came from the members themselves.[97] In addition, it is important to recognise that not all religious organisations would have been supportive to the proposition of sport. Huggins indicates that some religious figures considered sport to be morally degrading and that 'to the most puritan, all sport was improper use of God-given-time'.[98] Furthermore, membership in church clubs would have been restricted to regular or respected churchgoers whilst not all public school and university educated curates, vicars, and ministers would have considered sporting provision to be a central part of their responsibilities.[99]

Of the football clubs that had been established in The Potteries by 1878, 10 emerged from churches or groups that were tied to religious organisations. It is not clear what role vicars and other members of the clergy played in the formation and organisation of these clubs although their absence from match reports indicates that they did not participate as players. In September 1876, Reverend John Watson of St. John's Church, located in Hanley, proposed 'to organise parochial societies and classes of which will be an association for young men during the winter months' and a football club was successfully introduced the following year.[100] Matches were arranged against local opposition, with a particular emphasis on playing against other sides located in Hanley, and such was the success of the club that by the end of its first year in existence it comprised of two teams. Similarly, by 1877 the congregation at the Hanley Tabernacle church had risen to 250 following the introduction of various affiliated groups, including a mutual improvement class, mothers' meetings, and a football club, with the Reverend James Legge especially 'glad to find that young members had increased'.[101]

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[94] Russell, *Football and the English*, 16.
[95] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 25.
[96] Taylor, *Association Game,* 35.
[97] Walvin, *The People's Game,* 59.
[98] Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, 39
[99] Taylor, *Association Game,* 27.
[100] 'Hanley. St John's Church', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 9, 1876, 5.

In 1873, Goldenhill Church became embroiled in a public controversy when Reverend Osmond Dobree was appointed as the new vicar of the parish. His arrival was met with staunch resistance from a considerable section of the congregation who opposed, what they considered to be, Dobree's 'extreme opinions'.[102] There was a secession in which 'three quarters' of the congregation established the Christ Church on the opposite side of the town, which left the Goldenhill Church 'in a terrible storm'.[103] In response, the church established several affiliated groups, including a cricket and football club in 1875, which were facilitated by Dobree and other key figures as an attempt to maintain the loyalty of the church's remaining members whilst attracting new followers.[104] By 1877 the congregation had grown to around 250 with the number of scholars attending the day school reaching 400, suggesting that the provision of sport contributed to the successful recovery of the Goldenhill Church.[105] The football club quickly became established as a successful entity and by 1877 matches had begun to attract crowds consisting of hundreds of spectators.[106] The club had outgrown the church and for the start of the 1877/78 season it adopted the name Goldenhill Wanderers, supporting Harvey's suggestion that members were prepared to abandon the church they were affiliated to if circumstances required.[107]

School Affiliated Football Clubs

The 1870 Education Act initiated the development of a school system in England and Wales that would ensure that all children between the ages of 5 and 12 received a compulsory education. Birley suggests that, in addition to the expansion of the number of elementary schools, the overall school population rose from 1.25 million to 5 million with an immediate demand for more teachers.[108] As a consequence, there was a significant increase in the number of teacher training colleges that were established across the country and the volume of qualified teachers that were being distributed throughout the education system. Gibbons has suggested that teacher training colleges were a stimulus for football activity, identifying Saltley College, located in Birmingham, as a prime example of an institution which produced an array of high-profile players that represented prominent clubs during the second half of the nineteenth century.[109] Furthermore, Mangan has proposed that teacher training colleges promoted the ideals of athleticism and an enthusiasm for sport, especially football, that was then disseminated to schools across the country via the teachers educated at such institutions.[110] However, the effect of such colleges on the development and dissemination of the game, although significant, has yet to be fully examined by academics.[111]

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[101] 'The Tabernacle Church, Hanley', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 17, 1881, 4; and 'Hanley Tabernacle Chapel Annual Tea Party', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 31, 1877, 3.

[102] 'Parishioners' Meeting at Goldenhill. Protest Against the Appointment of a Clergyman', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 5, 1873, 4.

[103] 'Goldenhill Church Annual Tea Party', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 7, 1875, 3.

[104] 'Cricket. Oliver Cromwell v. Goldenhill Church', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 15, 1875, 2; and 'Goldenhill. Football: Talke Rangers v. Goldenhill', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 3, 1875, 2.

[105] 'Goldenhill. Church Tea Party', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 12, 1877, 2.

[106] 'Goldenhill Wanders v. Talk-'o-th'-Hill', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 30, 1877, 4.

[107] Harvey, *First Hundred* Years, 207.

Teachers, in addition to their enthusiasm to play the game themselves, also drove the popularity of football among the pupils under their guidance by facilitating recreational games on the playground or, in some cases, a formal school team. James Allen, a teacher employed in the North East, is traditionally named as an instrumental figure in the organisation of the club that would ultimately evolve into Sunderland FC, whilst a number of pupil teachers were responsible for establishing Middlesbrough's earliest football clubs.[112] Walvin indicates that football within schools was of crucial importance to the development and sustainability of the game by generating and maintaining an interest among the next generation of players, especially working-class boys who had limited recreational opportunities.[113]

Cobridge Collegiate was the most active association football club to emerge from an educational institution in The Potteries during the mid-1870s. Located in Cobridge, mid-way between Hanley and Burslem, the Collegiate was described as 'a medium and higher grade boarding and day school' which operated under the instruction of principal John F. Earp and his six assistants. It was attended by up to 45 pupils and possessed 'excellent and well-equipped premises', which occupied several acres of land and included dormitories, classrooms, and a laboratory.[114] It is apparent that the proprietors of the Collegiate had an interest in facilitating physical activity and sport with pupils having access to a gymnasium and playing field, something that was highlighted in advertisements and considered to be an attractive selling point, whilst the school also hosted large 'Athletic Sports' days that included a variety of events and competitions. An insight into the school's philosophy is provided by an article published in the *Staffordshire Sentinel* that reported on the 'Cobridge Collegiate Athletic Sports' in June 1877. It was noted that:

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[108] Birley, *Sport*, 267-268

[109] Phillip Gibbons, *Association Football in Victorian England: A History of the Game from 1863-1900* (Leicester: Upfront, 2002), 22-23.

[110] James Anthony Mangan, 'Missing Men: Schoolmasters and the Early Years of Association Football', *Soccer and Society* 9, no.2 (2008): 174, 176.

[111] Taylor, *Association Game,* 34.

[112] Mike Huggins, 'The Spread of Association Football in North-East England, 1876-90: The Pattern of Diffusion', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 6, no.3 (1976): 302.

[113] Walvin, *The People's Game*, 59.

> *'… the duties of educators of youths was to combine mental with physical training, and that it was highly probable that those who received these advantages would be more likely to succeed in the arduous duties of life than those who were mentally trained only. Physical power had great influence on success … [sport] spur[s] them on to great and noble deeds, teaching in them, as it did, the value of self-resilience, courage and perseverance.'*[115]

These ideals were reflected in the Collegiate's decision to establish a cricket team in 1874 and a football club in 1876, which provided students with the opportunity to participate in further sporting activities.[116] The football club arranged 11 fixtures against a variety of local opposition during its inaugural year, making it one of the most active in the region with only eight other clubs in The Potteries playing more matches during the 1876/77 season. However, beyond a handful of short match reports published in the contemporary local press, there is very little information available regarding the structure or background of the club. There is nothing contained within these articles that suggests Earp or any of his assistants were central to the formation or running of the club, yet it would be difficult to envisage the school allowing students to play under the institution's title without having some form of control or input.

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[114] 'Cobridge Collegiate', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 02, 1881, 8.

[115] 'Cobridge Collegiate Athletic Sports', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 16, 1877, 6.

[116] 'Cricket – Cobridge Collegiate v. Granville Victoria', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 05, 1874, 2.

Contemporary newspaper reports refer to a football club playing under the title of 'Mr. Hemmings School' in The Potteries during 1876.[117] Theophilus Hemmings was a distinguished teacher and musical professor who was well known for his contributions aimed at improving education in Stoke, where he was responsible for the construction of two new schools, and his philanthropic involvement as a prominent church worker. He arrived in the region around 1866, having been born in London and started his teaching career in Wolverhampton, becoming head of the St. Peter's Church Schools and by the mid-1870s he had become principal at the Stoke-on-Trent Middle-Class School.[118] The institution was located on Copeland Street and consisted of 'large and commodious buildings' whilst 'the course of instruction pursued at this school is specially and carefully adapted to the acquirement of a thoroughly sound and practical education, with the Classics, French, and German, Mathematics, Music, and Drawing'.[119] It is not clear why a football club emerged from the institution. Unlike Cobridge Collegiate, Stoke Middle-Class School possessed no prominent sport or recreational facilities whilst there is no reference to Hemmings having any personal interest in sport himself. Despite this, the use of his name in the football club's title would suggest that Hemmings advocated and supported the club's activities to some extent, if not through direct involvement in its organisation then at least an appreciation of its existence and purpose. Again, the lack of information available relating to Hemmings and his Middle-Class School makes it difficult to construct definitive conclusions, although there was a clear desire and interest among the pupils at the institution to participate in football.

Football Clubs that Emerged from Pre-Existing Cricket Clubs

During the nineteenth century, football clubs were often born from, or preceded by, existing sports clubs and organisations. These pre-existing organisations already consisted of a group of like-minded individuals that had an interest in sport and physical activity so, as the association game grew in popularity, it was not uncommon for there to be a transitioning to football. Mason notes that a significant number of professional football clubs, including Sheffield Wednesday, Preston North End, and Everton, emerged from pre-existing cricket clubs and suggests that it would be futile to list all the clubs that have cricketing affiliations embedded within their origins.[120] Cricket was widely perceived as being the most prominent sporting activity in Britain during the summer months and members saw football as a way of maintaining continuity during the winter. The culmination of the cricket season generally coincided with the start of the football schedule, providing members of cricket clubs with a way of keeping friendship groups together and sustaining fitness levels through playing football.[121] Furthermore, maintaining club activities during the winter also had commercial benefits, with any finances generated during the winter providing a subsidy for the summer game through membership subscriptions and, as the century progressed, gate money. Harvey notes that this relationship expanded in some cases and indicates that from the middle of the 1870s, exemplified in the cases of Darwen, Bolton, and Bradford, 'the money created by the admission charges levied on football spectators enabled the cricket teams to survive'.[122] This emergence of football from existing sports club was not limited to cricket. For example, Nottingham Forest was initially formed following a meeting of an established 'shinney' or 'shinty' club (a hockey-like game).[123]

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[117] 'Football. Boothen Victoria v. Mr. Hemmings Scholars', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 10, 1876, 2.

[118] 'Oldest Staffordshire Schoolmaster. Death of Mr. Hemmings of Stoke', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, November 28, 1931, 9.

[119] 'Middle-Class School, Stoke-on-Trent', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, January 27, 1872, 1.

Benkwitz and Molnar state that in Birmingham 'cricket and football lived side-by-side' during the mid-nineteenth century and that cricket was 'an initial catalyst in forming football clubs'.[124] However, cricket's influence on football was relatively short-lived as the football season began to encroach into the summer months during the 1880s, resulting in players having to choose between the two sports. The emergence of club football in The Potteries during the mid-1870s also appears to have followed a similar trend and cricket had a significant influence on the establishment of the initial wave of formal clubs that appeared across each of the Six Towns. Of the football clubs that have been identified 22 (37.9%) were preceded by a cricket team of the same name and many worked in close co-operation and shared players, facilities, and resources. The Hanley Catholic Cricket Club was formed in the summer of 1876 and, following the arrival of winter, subsequently established a football club of the same name. Three of the members were on the committee of both the cricket and football club, and multiple players represented both sports whilst both teams held a joint annual meeting in 1877.[125] However, in some cases, football could also stimulate the development of cricket. For example, Shelton Rangers were established in 1876 as a football club but by the summer of 1877 had also formed a cricket team of the same name.[126]

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[120] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 31.

[121] Russell, *Football and the English*, 14.

[122] Harvey, *First Hundred* Years, 208.

[123] Graham Curry and Eric Dunning, 'The 'Origins of Football Debate' and the Early Development of the Game in Nottinghamshire', *Soccer and Society* 18, no.7 (2017): 870.

[124] Benkwitz and Molnar, 'Emergence of Football in Birmingham', 1030-1031.

By the final decades of the nineteenth century, it was noted in the local press that the most prominent sporting activities in The Potteries were 'almost strictly confined to two games – cricket and football'.[127] Whilst both activities remained popular at a recreational level, it was football that developed into a mass-spectator spectacle as the period progressed and by the turn of the century the area possessed two professional clubs, Stoke City FC and Port Vale FC, that had the capacity to attract thousands of spectators. The Potteries never possessed a cricket club of national standing or repute but it was the site of one of the first recreational cricket leagues to be established in Britain, which encouraged the game amongst local teams and clubs.[128]

Public House and Temperance Football Clubs

During the eighteenth century, a culture existed in Britain where 'nothing could be done without drink' and the public house became a widespread institution that supplied alcohol and entertainment.[129] However, as the Victorian era progressed there was a gradual change in attitudes towards the role of alcohol in everyday life with some questioning its position in society, which was reflected by the emergence of the temperance movement.[130] The nineteenth century saw a growing number of temperance societies established across the country which aimed to increase the awareness of the evils of drink, primarily concerned with drunkenness and the anti-social behaviour that it facilitated, through public meetings, lectures, and anti-drink campaigns. Despite these efforts, a prominent drinking culture remained and alcohol, particularly forms of ale and beer, were considered to be a beneficial part of the working-class diet.[131] The publican and the public house played a significant role in facilitating the growth of sport during the nineteenth century with Oldfield demonstrating their importance in enhancing the popularity of pedestrianism in Manchester.[132] They were also associated with a variety of other sports and leisure activities including boxing, cricket, football, and blood sports, as well as more conventional pub games.

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[125] 'Hanley'*,* *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 7, 1877, 2.

[126] 'Cobridge Victoria v. Shelton Victoria', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 25, 1877, 4.

[127] 'A Retrospect of Sport in North Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 28, 1889, 3.

[128] Derek Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket* (London: Aurum Press, 1999), 151-2; and Bernard Hollowood, *Cricket on the Brain* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970), 22.

[129] Samuel Couling, *History of the Temperance Movement in Great Britain and Ireland: From the Earliest Date to the Present Time* (London: William Tweedie, 1862), 10.

[130] Michael A. Smith, 'Social Usages of the Public Drinking House: Changing Aspects of Class and Leisure', *The British Journal of Sociology* 34, no.3 (1983): 367.

Mason suggests that public houses stimulated the formation of some football clubs as they could offer material benefits for potential teams, such as offering land to play on, providing changing facilities prior to a match, and dining opportunities afterwards.[133] Furthermore, at a time when few public rooms were available for hire, the pub proved to be an attractive venue for the working man where a wide array of societies and clubs could hold meetings.[134] Publicans facilitated football from their institution in the hope that more people, in the form of players and spectators, would be attracted into the pub with more drink sold. Likewise, temperance societies also sought to establish sports clubs in an attempt to attract new members, particularly the working man, to their cause. Football was an expansion of the temperance movement's traditional activities and was offered as an alternative and more productive way of people spending their free time rather than drinking.[135] Meller notes that temperance leaders recognised that young men did not have the same commitment to cultural activities, such as penny readings, concerts, and meetings, but could be engaged through sporting activities.[136]

The most prominent temperance society that emerged in The Potteries during the final third of the nineteenth century was the Independent Order of the Good Templars, more commonly referred to as The Good Templars, which originated in America before being introduced to England in 1868. The Good Templars were a fraternal society that promoted

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[131] Derek J. Oddy, 'Food in Nineteenth Century England: Nutrition in the First Urban Society', *Proceedings if the Nutrition Society* 29, no.1 (1970): 154.

[132] See Samantha-Jayne Oldfield, 'Narratives of Manchester Pedestrianism: Using Biographical Methods to Explore the Development of Athletics During the Nineteenth Century' (PhD diss., Manchester Metropolitan University, 2014).

[133] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 26-27.

[134] Pamela Horn, *Pleasures & Pastimes in Victorian Britain* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 63; and Richard Holt, 'Football and the Urban Way of Life in Nineteenth-Century Britain', in *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700-1914*, ed. J. A. Mangan (London: Frank Cass, 1988), 76.

[135] John Lowerson and John Myerscough, *Time to Spare in Victorian England* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1977), 69; and Helen Elizabeth Meller, *Leisure and the Changing City, 1870-1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 170.

[136] Meller, *The Changing City*, 165-166.

complete abstinence from alcohol and consisted of 'lodges' that were geographically spread across Britain and linked into an overarching fraternal, hierarchical structure. Members had to pay a regular subscription fee, an initiation fee, and an additional payment for each time they were promoted within the order, making it accessible only to those that had appropriate disposable income. Furthermore, whilst The Good Templars initially sought to combat intemperance it gradually became more concerned with providing a sheltered, exclusive community for its members rather than seeking to save the wider public from the ills of alcohol.[137] Despite criticism of its membership costs, elaborate ceremonies, and general secrecy surrounding its activities, by 1880 the society had accumulated a total membership of 200,000 in England, which accounted for a large segment of the temperance movement.[138] The Good Templars established lodges throughout The Potteries and by 1873 reports suggest that at least fifteen had been formed in the region with a cumulative membership of over 18,000.[139]

Shiman notes that The Good Templars took a considerable interest in the social life of its members with each lodge regularly arranging a variety of events, including meetings, day trips, musical performances, and public parades, in order to maintain and enhance its membership.[140] With association football emerging as the most prominent sporting activity in The Potteries during the 1870s it is little surprise that some lodges chose to establish a football club in an attempt to capitalise on the growing popularity of the game. Newspaper reports indicate that lodges affiliated with The Good Templars contested 14 association football matches during the 1877/78 season, yet the lack of any further evidence greatly restricts the analysis that can be undertaken. The Loyal Franklin Lodge (based in Stoke), Happy Home (Longton), and Etruria Safeguard Lodge (Hanley) were the most active temperance groups that engaged in formal football activities, although it is noticeable that they only played against opponents that held similar values. The Happy Home and Etruria Safeguard Lodge only participated in fixtures against other lodges affiliated with The Good Templars or alternative temperance societies whilst only three of the seven matches arranged by the Loyal Franklin Lodge were against external opposition that had no links to the wider temperance movement.[141] This indicates that these clubs were established to act as a form of entertainment for the movement's existing members, whilst also encouraging loyalty and creating a sense of collective identity, rather than football being used as a tool to interact with or attract the intemperate.

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[137] Lilian Shiman, *The Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England* (London: Macmillan Press, 1988), 178-179.

[138] John Wooley and William Johnson, *Temperance Progress of the Century* (London: Linscott Publishing, 1905), 109.

[139] 'Temperance Petitions', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, May 7, 1873, 2.

[140] Shiman, *The Crusade Against Drink*, 178-179.

Meller states that although the Temperance movement became established in Britain, the sheer number of public houses, inns, and taverns in urban conurbations meant that reformers faced an insurmountable volume of opposition.[142] However, somewhat surprisingly, there is no evidence to suggest that any of the football clubs that were established in The Potteries during this period directly emerged from a public house, with none of those identified including the name of a drinking establishment in their title. This is not to suggest that pubs and publicans played no role in the development of the game in the region, but rather that the limited information available makes it difficult to identify links. Huggins states that 'the small number of public house teams does not reflect their importance'.[143] Players would still have required a suitable venue to hold meetings, engage in post-match conviviality, and to change with public houses often being the 'principal meeting place in the district' whilst publicans themselves would have sought to capitalise on the game's growing popularity.[144] There are some examples of various clubs utilising public houses and hotels for meeting venues. Hartshill were granted use of a 'spacious room' at the rear of the Borough Arms by the proprietor, Mr. Hyslop, for meetings where 'the toasts drunk were numerous and well received' and part of the evening was 'set aside for singing'.[145] Hanley Rangers used the Vine Inn, Hanley, as a venue, Basford utilised the Victoria Inn, Newcastle, for their annual dinner whilst Boothen Rangers had use of the Granville Hotel, Hanley.[146] A more detailed example is provided by John William Hunt, more commonly known as Lloyd Clarence, who was the proprietor of the Station Inn, Tunstall, and was described by the local press as a 'beer house keeper, caterer of public amusement and comedian'.[147]

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[141] 'Etruria Safeguard v. Newcastle Good Templars', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 20, 1877, 4; and 'Etruria Safeguard Lodge and the Hanley Happy Home', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 14, 1878, 4.

[142] Meller, *The Changing City*, 209

[143] Huggins, 'Football in North-East England', 312.

[144] Holt, 'Football and the Urban Way', 76; Lowerson and Mysercough, *Time to Spare*, 65; and Meller, *The Changing City*, 209.

[145] 'Hartshill. The Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 18, 1878, 3.

[146] 'Rangers' Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 21, 1877, 5; 'Basford. Football Dinner', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, May 13, 1878, 3; and 'Boothen Rangers Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 17, 1878, 3.

[147] 'Local Intelligence', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 14, 1881, 2.

Adjoining the inn was a walled enclosure that was known as Phoenix Park which was used by Hunt to host community events during the wakes week whilst the grounds were also used for football, cricket, and athletics.[148] He was taken to court in October 1881 after organising foot races on the park, which attracted over 400 people, and facilitating illegal betting.[149] Phoenix Park was used by the Tunstall Football Club from 1878 and it is highly likely that the players would have used the Station Inn for changing rooms, meetings, and post-match conviviality. Such sporadic and ambiguous reports provide only a limited insight into the potential relationship between the public houses and clubs, yet it does demonstrate that there was some form of link apparent in selected cases.

Football Clubs Established due to Geographic Location

Not all football clubs emerged from pre-existing organisations and many originated simply because of the shared geographic location of members. Mason notes that 'football teams in many places must have been set up by groups of young men who just lived close to each other' and that 'there can be no doubt that neighbourhood clubs were prominent'.[150] Holt has suggested that organised team sports, especially football and cricket, were integrated into a close-knit pattern of collective life and that the neighbourhood became the basic unit of sporting organisation in the Victorian city. Furthermore, the pattern of urban change in the second half of the nineteenth century accentuated residential solidarities as the growing size of factories and the development of affordable forms of transport meant that it became less common to live and work in the same locality, resulting in the working man living alongside those from different trades.[151] In Birmingham, Liverpool, and Sheffield, football clubs named after streets or places were considerably more numerous than those that originated from churches or the workplace.[152] Furthermore, Tranter's study of football in Stirling between 1876 and 1895 identified that 37 of the 68 clubs that existed were named after the part of a town.[153] The fact that many football clubs were named after a specific location, when it would have been easy to have based their title on the basis of a myriad of other pre-existing institutions or organisations, indicates that a strong sense of residential solidarity and pride existed and that neighbourhood relationships had greater meaning than the solidarity of the factory or church.[154]

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[148] 'The Wakes in Tunstall', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 9, 1879, 8; and 'Cricket. Tunstall v. Congleton Unitarian', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 5, 1874, 2.

[149] 'Staffordshire Autumn Sessions. First Court – This Day', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 19, 1881, 3.

[150] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 31.

[151] Richard Holt, 'Working Class Football and the City: The Problem of Continuity', *The British Journal of Sports History* 3, no.1 (1986): 7-8.

[152] Holt, *Sport and the British*, 150-151.

[153] Cited in Holt, 'Football and the Urban Way', 25.

Many football clubs originated from the coalescing of street-based football teams into formal clubs that represented specific neighbourhoods, boroughs or towns with Holt proposing that 'teams often sprang from a formalizing of casual street relationships, bringing a shape and a continuity to that most basic of feelings – a sense of place'. [155] Taylor concurs, stating that the dissemination of the association game during the second half of the nineteenth century was not solely the result of pre-existing organisations, noting that a significant number of clubs originated from suburbs, neighbourhoods or specific streets, and that the creation of clubs was often the product of independent initiative that demonstrated autonomous popular enthusiasm for the sport.[156] However, our understanding of these clubs is limited with information relating to their organisation, membership or longevity being sparse.[157] Furthermore, we must also be wary when making firm conclusions based on the name of a club alone because, although a name may refer to a specific location, that does not necessarily mean that it was not affiliated to an organisation, for example using a public house as a meeting place.[158] Examining the names of clubs, Holt admits, is 'only a very rough and ready means of identifying the actual origins of clubs'.[159]

In the unique geopolitical context of The Potteries, where each of the Six Towns were effectively rivals vying for political and economic prosperity, there would have been an accentuated desire to demonstrate residential solidarity and civic pride among the populations of each conurbation. Of the 58 football clubs established in The Potteries prior to 1879, 33 appear to have evolved based on the geographic location of its members whilst only six clubs adopted a name that did *not* include the title of a town or residential area. Birley has suggested that the names of streets were important when naming football clubs as they were natural social units, yet in The Potteries only one club was titled after a street (Bath Street Star, although the club later adopted the name Winton Rangers mid-way through its first year of existence).[160] This can be explained by the nature of the Six Towns, where identifying yourself as being from one of the major conurbations or a smaller, peripheral town was a more important factor in the creation of a civic identity than what street you resided in. Russell has highlighted that football was 'an especially potent force in helping new urban and industrial communities cope with the dramatic growth of previous decades' and this would have been pertinent in The Potteries which underwent a dramatic urban and industrial transformation during the nineteenth century.[161] Football clubs provided communities with an identity, were symbols of loyalty and vehicles for civic pride.[162]

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[154] Holt, 'Working Class Football', 7-8.

[155] Holt, 'Football and the Urban Way', 73; and David Kennedy, 'Locality and Professional Football Club Development: The Demographics of Football Club Support in Late Victorian Liverpool', *Soccer and Society* 5, no.3 (2004): 373.

[156] Taylor, *Association Game*, 36-37.

[157] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 31.

[158] Taylor, *Association Game*, 37.

[159] Holt, 'Working Class Football', 7-8.

Club Structure, Activities and Facilities

It is important to emphasise that the vast majority of the formal association football clubs that were established in The Potteries between 1874 and 1878 were small-scale organisations that were created primarily for the purpose of likeminded people collectivising their leisure experience. They were not commercial enterprises and the priority was ensuring survival and facilitating participation rather than generating profits or attracting paying customers. Most clubs played matches on communal pieces of land or rented fields and only attracted a handful of spectators who were acquaintances or interested bystanders. Stoke FC, which could attract thousands of paying fans to matches that were played in a purpose-built enclosed ground, was the exception rather than the rule and it was dwarfed in number by other formal football clubs across the region that were small in size and existed purely for recreational purposes. Whilst very few of these clubs survived into the twentieth century or ever obtained the prominence and prestige of Stoke FC, they are still worthy of study as they provide insight into how the game emerged at a grassroots level.

These football clubs were initially established to allow people to collectivise their leisure experience, with the motivation being pleasure and enjoyment rather than performance and profit.[163] However, the formation of a formal club required financial commitment, with the main forms of expenditure including purchasing equipment and renting a suitable playing facility. Collins suggests that even ‘clubs that began as local associations of workers, church-goers or neighbourhood residents soon found that to operate … meant functioning as a capitalist enterprise’.[164] This required clubs to introduce an internal organisational structure, in the form of a committee, to ensure their success and survival. A committee tended to consist of a chairman, who oversaw the committee and ensured that it functioned effectively, a secretary, who arranged fixtures, dealt with correspondence, and submitted reports to the local press, a treasurer, responsible for finances, and a captain, who selected the players that would participate in each match. The individuals that filled these roles were elected by club members at an annual meeting and were often those that possessed the enthusiasm, skillset and, especially for the captaincy, playing ability, that made them stand out. An individual’s occupation and the skills that they developed through their everyday employment, in particular the ability to read, write and, in some cases, handle money, were seen as invaluable features.[165]

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[160] Birley, *Sport*, 265.

[161] Dave Russell, 'The Historical Significance of Locality and Regional Identity to Football', in *Routledge Handbook of Football Studies*, eds. John Hughson, Ramón Spaaij and Joseph Maguire (London: Routledge, 2016), 20.

[162] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society,* 50.

The primary form of income for this first generation of formal football clubs in the region would have been generated through club members who paid a subscription fee in order to play. Only a minority of clubs, with the obvious exception being Stoke FC, were able to attract crowds of a significant size that made charging gate money a viable prospect. Hanley Rangers, which had developed into one of the largest clubs in The Potteries by the late 1870s and possessed enough members to field three teams on a regular basis, charged spectators 2d to gain admission to the ground on Finney Gardens.[166] However, it is not clear how successful this was as match reports do not comment on the number of people in the crowd, possibly suggesting that there were not enough people present to make it worth commenting on. Subscription fees and, in some cases, a scattering of gate money was rarely enough to cover the running costs of a club for the season and Meller suggests that committee members ‘had to exercise considerable ingenuity in [organising] fundraising activities’.[167] Clubs sought to boost their finances by holding bazaars, sports days, and social events, such as singing and theatrical performances, whilst others sometimes received donations from local dignitaries.[168] Talke Rangers held a benefit concert in February 1877 and 1878, both of which consisted of a variety of musical performances and singing that took place ‘before a large and select audience’ and ‘under the patronage of the Marquis of Stafford and ladies and gentlemen of the neighbourhood’.[169] In May 1877, Hanley Rangers hosted a fete which included a variety of entertainments and that concluded with a football match between the hosts and a scratch team for a prize of £1 1s - unsurprisingly Hanley were the victors.[170]

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[163] Vamplew, ‘Theories and Typologies’, 1581.
[164] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 52.
[165] A detailed analysis of the composition of formal football club committee members is featured in Chapter Four.
[166] ‘A Football Match Every Saturday’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 2, 1878, 1.
[167] Meller, *The Changing City*, 234.

Mason indicates that some clubs during this period also ‘had fairly well established annual athletic sports meetings which brought in healthy sums [of money]’.[171] This was particularly true for Stoke FC as it became more closely aligned with the Stoke Victoria Athletic Club as the 1870s progressed, sharing facilities and resources whilst organising an annual athletic meeting where it was common for players to participate. In August 1873, the event also included a ‘novel kind of race’ where ‘the competitors had to run 440 yards and kick a football in front of them … which excited much interest’.[172] Two players from Stoke FC finished in the top three positions with one, Tellwright, stopping short of the finish line, despite leading, to allow the participant who was not a club member to win the contest. Formal football clubs during the 1870s and 1880s were rarely profitable with many simply seeking to survive without making a loss, yet the very nature of sporting activity is not necessarily conducive to financial stability.[173] The fact that football was a seasonal activity, that only a limited number of clubs could achieve success, and that from the mid-1870s onwards there were a significant number of clubs established in each of the Six Towns, created an environment where club committees faced the ongoing issue of generating income. Those that failed to become financially viable disappeared or sought to amalgamate with more prominent clubs located nearby, with Vamplew noting that many sports clubs during the nineteenth century were limited in their life cycle.[174]

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[168] Alan Metcalfe, ‘Football in the Mining Communities of East Northumberland, 1882-1914’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 5, no.3 (1982): 278; and Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 37.

[169] ‘Football. Rangers Concert’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 6, 1878, 3; and ‘Entertainment’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 24, 1877, 5.

[170] ‘The Foresters’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, May 9, 1877, 2; and ‘Foresters Fete’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, May 31, 1877, 2.

[171] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 37.

[172] ‘Stoke Victoria Athletic Club’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 9, 1873, 4.

[173] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 52.

The facilities used by formal football clubs during the 1870s were rudimentary and only the most successful teams, that had the capacity to attract crowds, invested in ensuring that the ground was suitable for spectators.[175] Mason states that 'few early football grounds had even a pavilion in which the players could change let alone a grandstand or raised terracing' and it was only 'once it was clear people wanted to watch … [that] efforts were made'.[176] In most cases the ground that a club used to host and play matches was little more than a field that had been rented from a local businessman or landowner and the quality of the playing surfaces could vary dramatically. For example, in 1877 Boothen Star played on a ground 'which had formerly been a plough field' that was in 'very bad condition'.[177] However, those more fortunate, either through having the finances to rent a more suitable venue or the good fortune of being in close proximity to one, were able to secure access to a wider range of facilities that were of better quality.

Several formal clubs in The Potteries were able to use areas of land that were part of multi-purpose recreational grounds where a field was set aside for football.[178] The Borough Gardens and Recreation Ground in Cobridge consisted of a botanical garden and a large open piece of land that was used for a variety of community events, sporting contests, and other entertainments. In addition to being the home ground of a number of football clubs based in the vicinity, mainly those from Cobridge and Hanley, the Recreation Ground was also used for cricket, athletic races, and a range of fetes whilst it was noted by the local press that the proprietor 'appears to spare no pains to provide attraction for the public'.[179] In Hanley, the Slack Field Recreation Ground was opened in 1875 after the landowner, James Meakin, leased the grounds to the local government 'for seven years at a very low rental' and donated a further £250 towards ensuring its suitability for the public.[180] It was used by a number of the less prestigious football clubs in the area including Hanley Caxon and Hanley Saint John's with the more prominent sides electing to use the superior facilities at Finney Gardens.[181] Some football clubs were able to use facilities that were already being utilized for other sports and entertainments and found themselves having access to pavilions, changing rooms, and grandstands that had already previously been built.[182] The Meir Recreation Grounds in Longton were opened in 1876 for the purpose of 'Trotting Races' with a circular track being laid out, tents being erected, and a small paddock of terracing being constructed for potential spectators.[183] Later in the same year the Normacott Football Club was established, quickly being followed by an athletic club and a cycling club, with all of the groups sharing the land and facilities.[184] The proprietor of the grounds, Mr S. Swift, also owned the New Crown Hotel in Longton and would provide refreshments when any sporting events were taking place in an attempt to generate additional income.[185] By the late 1870s Finney Gardens in Hanley had been acquired by W. H. Price, and it was arguably the most popular multi-use venue in the region with facilities including a public garden, picnic area, playing fields, bowling green, and 'a lounge for the tired artisan'.[186] It facilitated football, cricket, pedestrian competitions, and dancing parties in addition to being accessed by the general public with entry costing one penny. Hanley Rangers Football Club used an enclosed football field on the grounds and likely used the lounge as a changing room and for post-match social events whilst the Hanley Cricket Club also rented part of the grounds 'at no small sum of £14 per season', indicating the cost of accessing the facilities.[187]

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[174] Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies', 1574-5.

[175] Harvey, *First Hundred Years*, 220.

[176] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 139.

[177] 'Boothen Star (2nd) v. St Peter's National School', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 26, 1877, 3.

[178] Metcalfe, 'Mining Communities of East Northumberland', 281.

[179] 'Borough Gardens and Recreation Ground, Cobridge', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, May 26, 1873, 1; 'Rose Show at the Borough Gardens', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 15, 1873, 3; 'Cricket. Hanley Albert v. Tunstall Albert', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 14, 1875, 2; 'Boothen Methodist New Connexion', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 29, 1880, 3; and 'Hanley Albert Athletic Sports', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, May 18, 1875, 3.

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[180] 'Opening of the Recreation Ground, Hanley, This Day', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, May 25, 1875, 3.

[181] 'Hanley Caxon v. Boothen Rangers 2nd', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 17, 1877, 3; and 'Hanley Caxon v. Hanley St. John's', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 5, 1878, 4.

[182] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 139.

[183] 'Trotting Races at Longton', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 16, 1876, 6; and 'To Be Sold, A Valuable Piece of Freehold Land', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 4, 1877, 1.

[184] 'Bicycle Sports', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, May 31, 1880, 3; and 'North Staffordshire Athletic Club Sports', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 21, 1880, 3.

[185] 'Longton. Prison Bars', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 20, 1876, 2.

[186] 'The Finney Gardens', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, May 14, 1878, 1.

[187] 'Finney Gardens. To the Editor of the Staffordshire Daily Sentinel', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 25, 1873, 4.

Transitory Teams

By the late 1870s association football had become cemented as the most popular and prominent sporting activity in The Potteries with the region possessing a significant array of formal clubs that were located across the Six Towns. Furthermore, Stoke FC, driven by the enthusiasm and leadership of Thomas Charles Slaney, had started to build a national reputation by participating in a comprehensive fixture schedule that included matches against some of the most prestigious clubs in Britain during the period.[188] Whilst Stoke FC were undoubtedly the most prominent football club in the region, to such an extent that the first team rarely played against local opposition, and had the capacity to attract thousands of spectators to games, the football culture that was developing was built on the vast number of smaller clubs outlined in this chapter. This collection of formal clubs was also complimented by an array of transitory teams that had short lifespans and yet remained a crucial facet as the game continued to grow.

These teams were informal in their nature, had a short lifespan and played only a minimal number of fixtures, often being created for specific occasions.[189] Metcalfe has noted that ‘for the most part these transitory teams remain hidden from view’ and that they were ‘created for specific occasions and disappeared immediately afterwards’.[190] Through his research examining the emergence of football in East Northumberland he identified multiple teams that were created for community celebrations, as a way of raising money for worthwhile causes, and for entertainment at shows and festivals. Collins has cautioned against researchers placing too much emphasis on teams that existed for only one match or a diminutive amount of time yet, coupled with the formal football clubs previously discussed, they can provide further insight into the football activity that occurred in The Potteries during the mid to late 1870s.[191]

In the region, 51 transitory teams have been identified between 1868 and 1878, all of which played no more than two matches and existed for less than a year, although the limited and somewhat ambiguous newspaper reports provide relatively sparse information. Of those identified, 19 were named after a specific geographic location, further underpinning the notion that the unique geopolitical context of the region resulted in civic pride and identity being a key feature of community life. Many of these teams were formed for the purpose of playing against a formal club based in the same locality, indicating that they consisted of a group of friends or neighbours that were willing to sample the game and were persuaded in part by the limited distance to travel. In addition, 15 of the teams identified emerged from the workplace whilst a further 7 were representing a school or educational institution and these were created on an ad hoc basis to play matches against opposition from a similar background. The Endowed Middle School, located in Newcastle, arranged two consecutive fixtures against Cobridge Collegiate in March 1877 with matches taking place within the school grounds, presumably with the headmaster's support, though they are not reported as playing any subsequent matches.[192] Similarly, Cross Street School organised a contest against Harpfield School in December 1877 and yet neither institution was reported as playing any further fixtures.[193] These matches were an opportunity to represent a specific company, manufacturer or school. In addition to the usual array of representative workplace teams, several sides were established based on the occupation of the players. In 1876 a collection of Stoke Clerks, including Joshua Palby who would play a key role in the development of Manchester's early football clubs, came together to form a team as did the 'Stoke Pupil Teachers', 'Stoke Guilders', and 'Teaching Power of Hanley' in 1878.[194] The remaining transitory teams in the region emerged from churches, temperance groups, and public houses.

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[188] Thomas Charles Slaney and his contribution to the development of Stoke FC and the association game in North Staffordshire is discussed in Chapter Five.

[189] Metcalfe, ‘Mining Communities of East Northumberland’, 270-271.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Tony Collins, ‘Early Football’, 1134.

The number of transitory teams that were present during the mid to late 1870s provides further evidence of the growing popularity of the association game in The Potteries and indicates the development of a prevalent football culture in the region. It is not entirely clear why so many of these teams had such a short lifespan and the limited information available makes it difficult to make any definitive conclusions. A lack of interest in the game combined with financial and time constraints could have dissuaded teams from continuing whilst it may also be the case that those players that were talented or more enthusiastic simply chose to represent a more established, prominent formal club.[195] For example, Joshua Palby became a member of Stoke FC soon after appearing for Stoke Clerks whilst Charles Alfred Copestick, who became a notable local player in the east of the region, left Dresden Amateurs, who arranged just two matches, to play for Fenton Rangers, a much more prominent formal club, during the 1877/78 season.

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[192] 'Football', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, March 31, 1877, 4.

[193] 'Stoke Board Football Club', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 22, 1877, 10.

[194] 'The Stoke Pupil Teachers v. The Teaching Power of Hanley', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 8, 1878, 4; and 'The Shelton Guild and the Washington Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 12, 1877, 4.

Conclusion

The mid-1870s saw association football in The Potteries transform from a game that was played on an ad hoc basis for recreational amusement into a dynamic organised system of formal clubs and teams that were increasingly active. This explosion of interest was not initiated by the formation of the first formal club in the region, Stoke Ramblers in 1868, with evidence suggesting that it initially hindered and constrained the establishment of new teams. Instead, it was the introduction and adoption of the Saturday half-holiday combined with an increase in the living wage that provided the people of The Potteries with the free time and disposable income that could be invested into participating in sport. By 1875 the staple industries of the region had adopted the half-holiday, which coincided with a dramatic increase in the number of formal football teams and clubs being established and the volume of matches being arranged and contested. It was during this period that the association game began to cement itself as a key facet of the local culture.

Football historians have often been critical of researchers using teams that played only one match or had a short lifespan as evidence of a conclusive football culture.[196] With this in mind, this chapter has applied Vamplew's 'ideal-type' model of the sports club to differentiate between the formal football clubs and transitory teams that were present across the region during the 1860s and 70s.[197] The development of a network of organised, structured clubs and the emergence of club football in the region is a more accurate reflection of the popularity of the game and the scale of the football culture that was emerging during this period. Although 58 formal clubs have been identified between 1868 and 1878 there was considerable differentiation. Whilst Stoke FC remained the most prominent club in The

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[195] Wigglesworth, *Sport in England*, 109-18; and Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies', 1576.
[196] Collins, 'Early Football', 1134; and James, 'Historical Frameworks', 1170.
[197] Wray Vamplew, 'Theories and Typologies', 1572.

Potteries, with the capacity to attract thousands of spectators to matches played at a purpose-build ground, it was outnumbered by smaller clubs that existed purely for recreation and enjoyment. However, the nature of these clubs also differed greatly. Boothen Star essentially played on a plough field, possessed a small membership, and attracted only a handful of interested spectators whilst, in contrast, Hanley Rangers had enough members to field three teams on the same day and Goldenhill Wanderers often attracted a sizeable crowd numbering up to a hundred.[198] Ultimately, these clubs were initially established to collectivise the leisure experiences of likeminded people and whilst a small number did evolve into charging gate money, although never on the same scale as Stoke FC, the majority remained purely recreational in nature with the focus being on enjoyment and conviviality. They emerged from a variety of pre-existing organisations, with many having affiliations with places of employment, religious organisations, public houses or temperance groups, and educational institutions, whilst some were simply created due to the shared geographic location of members.

By 1879, The Potteries possessed a dynamic, emergent football culture that included one club of growing national repute, Stoke FC, which was underpinned by a network of smaller formal clubs and transitory teams. However, due to the size and recreational intent of many of these clubs and teams the surviving evidence is fragmented and scattered. Few official records detailing the grassroots sport endure with many of the smaller clubs not keeping records at all, leaving the historian constructing only a partial picture from the information provided in contemporary newspaper reports and supplementary sources. Despite this, this chapter provides an overview of how club football emerged in The Potteries and presents new information regarding the origins, structure, and activities of clubs and teams across the Six Towns. Whilst this shows how the association game began to become increasingly popular and formalised between 1874 and 1878, it does not reveal who the individuals were that were playing the game during this period. To help understand how an association football culture emerged in The Potteries it is necessary to examine the life stories of those that were directly involved. The subsequent chapter uses prosopographical research to identify and analyse who the men were that were members of the formal clubs and teams that were active across the region.

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[198] 'Hanley Rangers 3rd Team v. Northwood Wesleyan', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 14, 1878, 4; and 'Goldenhill Wanders v. Talk-'o-th'-Hill', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 30, 1877, 4.

Chapter Four

Association Football Players in The Potteries, 1873-1878: A Prosopographical Approach

The expansion of association football activity across The Potteries was stimulated by a combination of factors, primarily the introduction of the Saturday half-holiday, and the thesis so far has examined how formal clubs emerged, were structured, and evolved as the decade progressed. Whilst it has shown how the game became increasingly popular and organised in the region during the 1870s, it has provided little insight into who played the game on a regular basis or the individuals that were active members of clubs. To understand how association football became embedded within the culture of The Potteries, this chapter expands on some of the life stories of those involved.

At its core, sport is shaped by the actions, decisions, and contributions of various individuals and groups of people.[1] Therefore, to generate a more comprehensive understanding of the history of sport there is a need to examine those that played, spectated, coached, officiated, and administered it. Cowman has noted that many historians are focusing their interest and research on individuals and their subjective experiences as part of a broader shift away from on emphasis on collectivities, nations, and systems.[2] How an individual is affected by these or acts within them is seen as being worthy of greater consideration and historical sporting discussions often centre on individuals and their narratives.[3] The study of life stories can be used to examine complex historical developments especially when 'state of mind and state of affairs may be critical in explaining events'.[4] Furthermore, James states that it 'enables us to consider sport's place within topics such as class, gender, race, fashion, media and so on'.[5] In the context of this thesis, the analysis of the individuals and groups of people who actively participated in the association game throughout The Potteries during the 1870s provides an opportunity to generate a more comprehensive understanding of how football emerged as the most prevalent sport in the region during the mid-Victorian era.

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[1] Martin Polley, *Sports History, A Practical Guide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 52.

[2] Krista Cowman, 'Collective Biography', in *Research Methods for History*, eds. Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 83.

[3] Samantha-Jayne Oldfield, 'Narrative Methods in Sport History Research: Biography, Collective Biography, and Prosopography', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no.15 (2015): 1861.

[4] Jonathan Haslam, 'Biography and its Importance to History', *Past and Future* 11 (2012): 10-11.

[5] Gary James 'Historical Frameworks and Sporting Research', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33, no.10 (2016): 1169.

The historiography of association football during the nineteenth century has received considerable scholarly attention over the last four decades with research encompassing themes such as the origins of the modern game, the emergence of professionalism, and the establishment of prominent clubs, competitions, and governing organisations. However, our understanding of who played the game during the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s is limited with studies tending to focus on specific, prominent individuals and clubs from the period. Taylor has suggested that 'we know most about the ex-public school men who became the game's first administrators' whilst those players that represented the most pertinent clubs of the era have also been examined.[6] However, few historians have sought to develop a detailed understanding of the life stories and social background of the earliest association football players who were active in a specific locality, especially those that were members of clubs or teams that were established for recreational purposes, were diminutive in size, and had a short lifespan.[7] Gregson and Huggins note how 'ordinary sports clubs … have been largely ignored by historians of sport' primarily because of the lack of surviving materials and evidence that can be utilised when compared to larger clubs.[8] Furthermore, Huggins states that 'we know more about the elite clubs and national organisations, competitions, and governing bodies, than we do about the actual membership and participation rates of more local sports club'.[9] Holt suggests that the recreational sports club 'remains in some respects a kind of secret society' and that 'anyone who could crack the 'social code' of a single club [or sport] could provide a fascinating piece of historical anthropology'.[10] This chapter addresses the current gap in the literature by using a prosopographical approach to identify, examine, and analyse individuals that were actively playing football in The Potteries during the 1870s.

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[6] Matthew Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2008), 42-43.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Keith Gregson and Mike Huggins, 'Ashbrooke Whit Sports, Sunderland and its Records: A Case Study of Amateurism in Late Victorian and Edwardian Athletic and Cycling Competition', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33, no.9 (2014): 994.

[9] Mike Huggins, 'Second-Class Citizens? English Middle-Class Culture and Sport, 1850-1910: A Reconsideration', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 17, no.1 (2000): 10.

[10] Richard Holt, 'Introduction', in *Sport and the Working Class in Modern Britain*, ed. Richard Holt (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 2-3.

This chapter consists of three central elements. First, there is an introduction to prosopographical method which includes an explanation of what it is and how it can be applied to sports history. Second, there is a discussion relating to the specific data set collected for the purpose of this thesis. This incorporates information relating to how the prosopography for this study was undertaken, what information has been included or omitted, and the methodological issues that were experienced throughout the research process. A total of 247 players were identified and examined with a prosopographical database constructed to store and showcase the data collected. This provides a rich foundation of information that has been analysed and presented within this chapter, but the database itself can be used by future researchers to undertake their own examinations or comparisons (see Appendix Seven). The third and final element of this chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the prosopographical database and presents a synopsis of the men that were actively playing association football in The Potteries between 1873 and 1878. The findings enable us to generate a clear image of these individuals, from their average age when they first became football active to their social classification and family background, and thus provides a fresh perspective on the historiography of association football whilst meeting a current gap in the literature. By using a distinctive methodological approach, which has been scarcely used within the field of sports history, this chapter presents new information and fresh insight into the men that played football at a recreational level during the nineteenth century.

An Introduction to Prosopography

Sporting biography has emerged as a popular genre of writing in contemporary society with biographical methodology prevalent across both academic and non-academic disciplines.[11] Discussions about sport tend to focus on the actions, behaviours, and feats of athletes, coaches, and administrators which makes their life stories of interest to both academics and sports fans alike. As such, biography has been acknowledged as a useful tool for sports historians yet further methods that examine life stories, such as collective biography and prosopography, have had limited use within the discipline despite being long valued in mainstream history. It has only been in the last three decades that sports historians have begun to use such techniques to explore topics relating to the sporting past.[12] Within discussions of historical method, it has been common for the terms 'biography', 'collective biography', and 'prosopography' to be used interchangeably as if they were one and the same or produced the same outcomes.[13] However, each approach, despite some similarities, generates very different results and enable historians to analyse life stories in varying, diverse ways.[14] Whilst biography and collective biography focus on the life stories of individuals or a limited group respectively, being 'subjective' and 'close focused', prosopography is only concerned with individuals in terms of the common characteristics they share with a much wider population, being more 'objective'.[15] Stone defines prosopography as 'the inquiry into the common characteristics of a group of historical actors by means of a collective study of their lives',[16] whilst Caine suggests that it should be viewed separately from biography as 'its aim is not in any way to create or establish a better understanding of individuals'.[17] Verboven and colleagues stress the difference between biography, which studies 'the entire personality of individuals', and prosopography, which 'emphasises the external similarities and differences between individuals within a given population'.[18] The use of interchanging terminology has blurred the boundaries between biography, collective biography, and prosopography leading historians to overlook or misunderstand the limitations of each methodology or viewing one approach as being simply a 'watered down' version of another.[19]

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[11] Polley, *Sports History*, 52.

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[12] Examples include Samantha-Jayne Oldfield, 'Narratives of Manchester Pedestrianism: Using Biographical Methods to Explore the Development of Athletics During the Nineteenth Century' (PhD diss., Manchester Metropolitan University, 2014); David Kennedy, 'Locality and Professional Football Club Development: The Demographics of Football Club Support in Late Victorian Liverpool', *Soccer and Society* 5, no.3 (2004): 371-391; Liam Dyer, 'The London and North Western Railway Company and the Crewe Alexandra Athletic Club in the Late Victorian and Edwardian Periods' (PhD diss., Manchester Metropolitan University, 2018); Lisa Taylor, 'The Women's Amateur Rowing Association 1923-1963: A Prosopographical Approach', *Sport in History* 38, no.3 (2018): 307-330; and John Gleaves and Mark Dyreson, 'The 'Black Auxiliaries' in American Memories: Sport, Race and Politics in the Construction of Modern Legacies', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no.16 (2010): 2893-2924.

[13] Cowman, 'Collective Biography', 83.

[14] Oldfield, 'Narrative Methods', 1865; and Cowman, 'Collective Biography', 85.

[15] Katherine S.B. Keats-Rohan, 'Introduction: Chameleon or Chimera? Understanding Prosopography', in *Prosopography Approaches and Applications. A Handbook*, ed. Katherine S.B. Keats-Rohan (Oxford: Linacre College, 2007), 16; Oldfield, 'Narrative Methods', 1865; and Cowman, 'Collective Biography', 85.

[16] Lawrence Stone, 'Prosopography', *Daedalus* 100 (1971): 47.

[17] Barbara Caine, *Biography and History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 58.

[18] Keonraad Verboven, Myriam Carlier and Jan Dumolyn, 'Art of Prosopography', in *Prosopography Approaches and Applications. A Handbook*, ed. Katherine S.B. Keats-Rohan (Oxford: Linacre College, 2007), 41.

[19] Oldfield, 'Narrative Methods', 1865; and Cowman, 'Collective Biography', 85.

Verboven and colleagues state that ‘prosopography is not interested in the unique but in the average, the general and ‘commonness’ in the life stories of more or less large numbers of individuals’.[20] Whilst biography and collective biography focus on the life stories of unique individuals, when using a prosopographical approach ‘extraordinary people are less appealing … because they are out of the ordinary’.[21] The overarching purpose of prosopography is to collect data on a target population through uniformed questioning in order to identify commonalities, differences, and phenomena that transcend individual lives.[22] This is achieved by the prosopographer electing and defining the population to be studied and using a pre-determined ‘questionnaire’ to guide the collection of relevant biographical information (such as name, age, location, etc.) before further questions are posed that link directly to the specific research interest (which may require information relating to family, employment, education, etc.).[23] The historian seeks to compile as much information as possible, with questions being partly determined by the feasibility of an answer being supplied, before the data is subject to multivariate statistical analysis.[24] Stone distinguishes two ‘schools’ of prosopographical research: one which explores the commonalities of a relatively small group of well documented elites; the second, described as ‘mass prosopography’, which studies groups of mostly anonymous people.[25] Kennedy suggests that whilst prosopographical method can provide insight into the lives of historical elites, the use of mass prosopography can provide aggregate data that allows the analysis of ordinary people which can be difficult to facilitate using alternative methods.[26] Oldfield concurs, stating that ‘the anonymous population are also worthy of discussion’ and that this method allows persons of lower social status, who are common to all historical periods and may not require, or be suited to, extensive profiles, to be examined.[27]

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[20] Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn, ‘Art of Prosopography’, 41.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Stone, ‘Prosopography’, 47; and R, Arvid Nelson, ‘Race and Computing: The Problem of Sources, the Potential of Prosopography, and the Lesson of *Ebony* Magazine’, *Annuals of the History of Computing* 29, no.1 (2017): 35.

[23] Keats-Rohan, ‘Chameleon of Chimera?’, 7-8.

[24] Kathleen E. Kennedy, ‘Prosopography of the Book and the Politics of Legal Language in Late Medieval England’, *Journal of British Studies* 53, no.3 (2014): 566; and Oldfield, ‘Narrative Methods’, 1866.

[25] Lawrence Stone, ‘Prosopography’, in *Historical Studies Today*, eds. Felix Gilbert and Stephen R. Grubard (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1971), 109; Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn, ‘Art of Prosopography’, 42; and Cowman, ‘Collective Biography’, 84.

[26] Kennedy, ‘Prosopography of the Book’, 566.

[27] Oldfield, ‘Narrative Methods’, 1865, 1867.

The Data Set

Verboven and colleagues propose a step-by-step guide to conducting prosopographical research.[28] First, the researcher must determine and define a target population within geographic, chronological, and thematic boundaries. For this element of the thesis, the target population was defined as male association football players that were actively playing the game in The Potteries between 1873 and 1878. Using the database of association football matches reported in the contemporary press between 1868 and 1878 (see Appendix Three) it was possible to identify the names of players that represented various formal clubs during the designated period. Hignell has noted that local and regional newspapers dutifully chronicled the actions of recreational sports clubs during the nineteenth century and often remain the only surviving historical materials.[29] Holt concurs, stating that 'the main source for this 'submerged' tradition of popular recreation' is the local press that came to prominence during the Victorian era.[30] As the period progressed, it became increasingly common for club secretaries to include a list of players that participated for each team within match reports. Even reports that did not include an extensive list of players often referred to specific individuals within the description of the match if they had made a notable contribution (such as scoring a goal) making it possible to distinguish some of those involved. However, it is impossible to create a complete list of players that were active throughout the region during this period as not all matches were recorded and not all match reports contained a list of participants. Warsop states that research has failed to identify many of the players that scored in the FA Cup Final prior to 1883, demonstrating the difficulties in definitively identifying individuals through the press, whilst in some cases players are also known to have used pseudonyms.[31] Despite these issues, it was possible to identify 799 names from contemporary newspaper reports which were then used to create a prosopographical database and undertake additional research.

Of the 799 initial names included in the initial prosopographical database only 247 could be accurately determined through further genealogical research due to variety of methodological issues. First, many of the match reports published in the contemporary press only listed or referred to players using their surname, whilst some also included the initials of forenames or, in rare cases, a complete first name. This ensured that the accurate identification of individuals was a significant challenge. In many cases, the researcher only had limited information at their disposal - the surname of a player, a general geographic location where the club that the player represented was based, and a period in which the player was active – from which to deduce who the player was. Second, many of the names listed within match reports were homonyms where several different individuals within the same geographic location possessed the same surname and / or initials. This was especially prevalent when players had common names (such as Smith, Jones, and Brown) whilst even when initials of forenames were available the issue often remained (for example, T. Smith could refer to Thomas, Toby, Terrance or any other variation).[32] In some cases, there were significant numbers of individuals that matched the criteria and thus made it impossible to accurately determine who the match report had been referring to. Third, the mobility of individuals also made it difficult to track their location. Black and Macraild have noted that migration was a characteristic of life during the Victorian period and there were a multitude of examples where identified players simply disappeared from genealogical records related to The Potteries.[33] Attempting to trace the movement of these individuals, many of whom relocated to a different area of the county or, in some cases, emigrated to North America, posed an additional methodological challenge.

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[28] Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn, 'Art of Prosopography', 47-48

[29] Andrew Hignell, 'Participants and Providers: A Micro-Scale Analysis of Cricket in Cardiff During the Nineteenth Century', *Sport in Society* 14, no.2 (2012): 166.

[30] Holt, 'Introduction', 2.

[31] Keith Warsop, *The Early FA Cup Finals* (Nottingham: Tony Brown, 2004), 30.

Any individuals that could not be accurately identified were omitted from the final prosopographical database (see Appendix Seven) so as not to negatively impact the validity of the research. A lack of basic biographical data can prevent prosopography being undertaken and the methodological issues cited demonstrate the difficulties related to identifying individuals within the general population.[34] Despite these limitations it was still possible to successfully identify a significant number of individuals and, although this only accounts for 30% of the names originally listed, a subject group of 247 is large enough to undertake a legitimate analysis. Furthermore, it is also important to recognise that there are some gaps within the prosopographical database where genealogical research was unable to uncover the relevant information. Whilst this would be an issue in biographical research the nature of undertaking a mass prosopography, which incorporates a significant number of subjects and is focused on determining commonalities and themes, means that such gaps have minimal, if any, bearing on the overall findings.

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[32] Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn, ‘Art of Prosopography’, 58.

[33] Jeremy Black and Donald M. Macraild, *Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 69.

[34] Kennedy, ‘Prosopography of the Book’, 566; and Oldfield, ‘Narrative Methods’, 1866.

The second step of Verboven and colleagues guide requires researchers to develop specific historical questions concerning the target population.[35] These questions are presented as a prosopographical questionnaire, which provides a structure that determines what information needs to be obtained or omitted from the prosopography. The researcher focuses their efforts on collecting data that enables them to answer the specific historical questions that have been selected. The prosopographical questionnaire for this research (see Appendix Eight) focused on three key periods within the life of each player: their early life, which sought to examine the social context of their childhood and family background; when they were football active, which focused on each individual player's status and standing when they began to formally play the game; and later life, which considered their actions once they had finished playing for a formal club. Questions were primarily concerned with the basic biographical details of the target population (including their age and geographic location) and the sociological context of their lives (such as their social classification, occupation, and family environment). However, there were three key themes: social class, biographical detail, and location.

Social class has remained the most prominent mode of analysis for historians and sociologists studying Britain during the nineteenth century and it is equally as pertinent for those studying the history of sport. Within the origins of football debate, it has been a key feature of the ongoing discourse between those endorsing the orthodox position and revisionists. As such, determining the social class of football players in The Potteries was a key consideration whilst affiliated questions regarding whether clubs were socially exclusive and which individuals held positions of authority within them also emerged. Second, the fundamental biographical details of individuals when they were actively playing the game were vital to build an understanding of why they chose to engage in association football. Information such as age, marital status, whether they had children, and the living arrangements of players when they were actively playing the game provides valuable insights into the social context of their lives and decision-making processes. Finally, the unique geopolitical composition of The Potteries, with its Six Towns and subsequent vivid rivalries, makes location an important feature of the prosopographical research. Questions sought to explore if football clubs were extensions of pre-existing close-knit communities or whether they were unique social entities, whilst the impact of migration was also considered.

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[35] Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn, 'Art of Prosopography', 36.

Prosopographical questions are partly determined by practicability and the probability of generating a suitable answer which ultimately determines the shape of the prosopography.[36] Due to the anonymous nature of the target population outlined for this research, where historical evidence and relevant materials were scarce, several questions had to be revised or omitted entirely. For example, one of the initial inclusions within the original prosopographical questionnaire related to the educational background of each individual player, yet from a logistical (time constraints) and practical (lack of archival materials) standpoint this was not feasible and thus had to be removed. Similarly, in an early draft of the questionnaire the religious affiliation of individuals was considered, yet for that to be accomplished the researcher would have been required to search through fragmented and scattered records of hundreds of churches. This line of questioning was subsequently omitted. As with any historical research project, the prosopographical questionnaire is likely to evolve as the researcher investigates each question and uncovers new data whilst time constraints and the availability of information also influences the direction of inquiry.[37]

The third step of Verboven and colleagues guide requires the researcher to engage with primary sources and the literature to answer the questions posed within the prosopographical questionnaire.[38] Information and sources are gathered before being entered into a uniform prosopographical database which presents the data in an accessible format (see Appendix Seven). This requires a combination of genealogical and archival research as the researcher seeks to obtain as much information relating to each individual subject as possible.[39] The more detail that the researcher can collate for each subject, the more complete the final subsequent analysis can be. However, when examining an anonymous population, it is not uncommon for there to be gaps or disparities within individual profiles due to the scarce and fragmented records that remain. There are several gaps within the prosopographical database included within this thesis where it was not possible to uncover the relevant information. When considered in isolation these gaps may prove problematic, but when viewed as part of a mass prosopography they become insignificant due to the amount of complementary data. For example, research was unable to determine the age of two players when they first became football active due to a lack of information relating to the year of their birth. However, this has a negligible impact on the final analysis as the prosopography successfully determined the age of the other 245 players. Whilst such gaps naturally frustrate researcher, they are also a normal feature when studying anonymous populations.

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[36] Oldfield, ‘Narrative Methods’, 1866.

[37] Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn, ‘Art of Prosopography’, 55.

[38] Ibid., 48.

[39] Keats-Rohan, ‘Chameleon or Chimera?’, 16.

Once the prosopographical database has been completed the researcher must then analyse the data and synthesize the results, with outcomes often based on statistical findings. Vamplew suggests that historians of sport have tended to ignore the power of numbers and has called for more quantitative approaches, citing that it 'can add strength to an argument by providing a statistical basis for historical assertions' and that it can enable 'historians to be more precise in their answers'.[40] Statistical data enables hypotheses to be tested, can add strength to an argument, and provides a basis for historical assertions, yet such studies are often a rarity within sport history as the focus tends to be directed towards individuals and their experiences. However, Booth has been critical of quantitative research methods in sport history, noting that they can often 'fall into the realm of 'elementary descriptive statistics''.[41] For the purpose of this element of the thesis, the statistical data provided through the prosopographical research is beneficial as it enables greater specificity when undertaking analysis. For example, when examining the age of association football players when they first became active the prosopographical database enables the researcher to determine a specific average age rather than applying broad, overarching blanket terminology such as 'young', 'middle-aged' or 'old'. Ultimately, the prosopographical research facilitates answers to historical questions which are underpinned by statistical data.

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[40] Wray Vamplew, 'The Power of Numbers: A Plea for More Quantitative Sports History', *Sport in Society* 19, no.3 (2016): 314.

[41] Douglas Booth, *The Field: Truth and Fiction in Sports History* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 19.

Prosopographical Analysis

Biographical Data: Age, Martial Status and Family Context

There is a general consensus that participation in most forms of sport during the nineteenth century was favoured by young men who possessed the energy, enthusiasm, and youthful exuberance to embrace physically demanding activities. It has been noted that the growing popularity of sport, particularly during the final three decades of the century, owes much to the fact that the British population had an increasingly youthful character. Throughout the Victorian era a large portion of the population were under the age of thirty, with the mean age being 26, whilst estimates suggest that up to a third were children under the age of 14.[42] Thus, sport had a large demographic which it appealed to whilst young boys were encouraged to participate in physical activities, recreations, and sports during childhood which naturally continued into their early years of adulthood. However, few studies have sought to accurately determine the age of sporting participants, particularly those that engaged on a recreational basis.

The prosopographical database enables the researcher to specifically determine when the individuals identified first began to play for formal association football clubs in The Potteries. The data, as presented in Table One, reveals that the average age of players when they were first included in a match report, assumed to be their first appearance for the purpose of this study, was 21. The youngest player recorded was 14 when they were reported as playing for a formal club whilst the most senior player identified was aged 37. Further analysis reveals that 46.9% of players were between the ages of 15 and 19, 31.9% between 20 and 24, 12.2% between 25 and 29, with only 9% above the age of 30. Football was undoubtedly favoured by adolescents and young men with 78.8% of the total number of players identified having been under the age of 24 when they were first reported to have been playing the game. During the nineteenth century, association football was an activity that was physically demanding, somewhat unrefined and could also be violent, so it is little surprise to see that the game was favoured by young participants. The high percentage of individuals between the ages of 15 and 19 (46.9%) also indicates that there was a continuation between childhood and adolescence. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, young boys were engaging in various forms of informal football in The Potteries during the 1850s and 1860s and, although it is impossible to determine how widespread this was, it is clear that many retained their enthusiasm for the game. Holt suggests that ‘organized teams provided a bridge between the childish and the adult male world, a means by which the playful enthusiasm of boys was turned into the tougher style of men’ and that football clubs were ‘part of the wider process of male socialization’.[43]

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[42] Eric Midwinter, *Parish to Planet. How Football Came to Rule the World* (Warwickshire: Know the Score Books, 2007), 87; and James Walvin, ‘Children’s Pleasures’, in *Leisure in Britain: 1780-1939*, eds. John K. Walton and James Walvin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 228.

Table One: Association football players in The Potteries, 1873-1878 – Age.

Age Breakdown:	
15 to 19	**46.9%**
20 to 24	**31.9%**
25 to 29	**12.2%**
Above 30	**9%**
Average Age:	
21	

Lowerson states that the physical demands of team sports during the period were suited to those under the age of thirty and that only a handful continued to play into later life.[44] Individual sports enabled participants to select opponents who had similar capabilities with many not requiring any physical contact and which could be played at a steady pace, yet in team sports it was almost impossible to escape the fast, physical nature of contests.[45] Several studies have concluded that association football during the nineteenth century was the preserve of young men who possessed ‘youthful energy and vim’ which replicates the findings of this prosopographical research.[46] Similarly, Collins has noted that rugby, which was equally as demanding physically as its association counterpart, was also a recreation primarily for 'boys and young men'.[47] In comparison, Gregson and Huggins examined the Ashbrooke Whit Sports (Sunderland) during the late nineteenth century and analysed the demographic of participants in both athletic and cycling events. It concluded that 77% of the individuals that competed in athletic events were under the age of 24, concluding that 'older runners were rare' and that it largely attracted 'younger participants'. Of those that participated in cycling events 62% were under the age of 24, somewhat surprising considering the cost of bicycles, although there was a wider span of ages with 22% of entrants over 30.[48] Cricket attracted a much wider range of ages. The game was popular among young boys and had an increasingly strong presence in schools as the period progressed whilst commentators remarked that joining a cricket club could prevent young men from 'getting into loose habits and immoral practices'.[49] However, cricket was also widely played by men over the age of thirty and W. G. Grace, the most famous player of the period, competed well into his 50s.[50] Tennis and badminton also attracted a wider range of ages, among both men and women, whilst golf 'could be played at almost any age'.[51] All three required only moderate exertion, did not involve physical contact, and enabled participants to select opponents that were comparable both in terms of age and ability.[52]

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[43] Richard Holt, ‘Working Class Football and the City: The Problem of Continuity’, *The British Journal of Sports History* 3, no.1 (1986): 7.

[44] John Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes, 1870-1914* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1993), 67.

[45] Tony Collins, *Sport in a Capitalist Society: A Short History* (London: Routledge, 2013), 44.

[46] Midwinter, *Parish to Planet,* 87; Adam Benkwitz and Gyozo Molnar, ‘The Emergence and Development of Association Football: Influential Sociocultural Factors in Victorian Birmingham’, *Soccer and Society* 18, no.7 (2017): 1033; Gavin Kitching, ‘What’s In a Name? Playing “Football” in the Mid-Victorian North-Eastern England’, *Ethnologie Française* 41, no.4 (2011): 602; and Mike Huggins, ‘The Spread of Association Football in North-East England, 1876-90: The Pattern of Diffusion’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 6, no.3 (1976): 305.

It has also been suggested that participation in some sporting activities during the nineteenth century, especially team games, was favoured by men who were not only young but also unmarried.[53] The introduction of both the Marriage Act 1836 and Registration Act 1836 further encouraged and underpinned the importance of marriage in England and Wales and there was a continuous increase in marriage rates with at least 60% of all adult females having been married between 1871 and 1951.[54] The average age of first marriage for men in

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[47] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society, 32.*

[48] Gregson and Huggins, 'Ashbrooke Whit Sports', 1002-1003.

[49] Jack Williams, 'Cricket', in *Sport in Britain, A Social History*, ed. Tony Mason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 130-131; 'Correspondence', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 20, 1874, 3.

[50] Keith A. Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1994), 115-117.

[51] John Lowerson, 'Golf', in *Sport in Britain, A Social History*, ed. Tony Mason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 188-189; and Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society,* 44.

[52] John Lowerson and John Myerscough, *Time to Spare in Victorian England* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1977), 126.

[53] Huggins, 'Second-Class Citizens?', 15-16.

[54] Jen Beaumont, *Social Trends 41: Households and Families* (London: Office for National Statistics, 2011), 9; and Shani D'Cruze, 'The Family', in *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Chris Williams (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 267.

Britain during the nineteenth century was 25.1 years old and Paterson notes that it was ‘expected to be entered into responsibly and undertaken only when the man was able to afford it’.[55] The working classes tended to delay marriage until it was financially sustainable whilst many middle-class men tended to remain single until their late-twenties due to the difficulty of sustaining a family in parallel with a comfortable middle class lifestyle.[56] The prosopographical data reveals that, of the individuals whose marital status could be confirmed, 65.3% of players were not married when they first began to play association football for a formal club in The Potteries. This is not surprising considering that the average age of players identified (21) is significantly below the average age of marriage during the period (25.1). These findings align with other studies which have also concluded that it was primarily young, unmarried men who sought to play association football during the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s.[57] Few studies into other sports appear to have considered marriage as a key factor in determining participation, although Gregson and Huggins did establish that ‘athletics largely attracted young, and usually unmarried, participants’.[58]

The prosopographical data also demonstrates that not only were association football players in The Potteries generally young and unmarried when they first began to join formal clubs, but that they also tended not to have children whilst many were still residing with family members. Of the individuals identified 72.1% did not have children when they were reported as making their first appearance for a formal club whilst 56.8% were living with a relative and were not recorded as being the head of the household. Raising a family and producing children placed additional financial, social, and physical stress upon parents. A child’s health could never be guaranteed, with infant mortality a common theme of Victorian society among the lower classes, whilst their spiritual and moral well-being was regarding as being a primary concern for families.[59] At the most basic level, having a child meant that parents had one more individual that needed to be fed, clothed, and housed with much of the fiscal responsibility falling to the father. Similarly, leaving home to live either independently or with a spouse also resulted in enhanced financial pressure, in terms of paying rent and ensuring the upkeep of the home, and it was not uncommon for children from working class backgrounds to reside with their parents, extended family members or in-laws until they had reached their late twenties when financial independence was a more practical prospect.[60] Furthermore, the responsibility of being head of a household is also likely to have deterred men from participating in physical activities where there was an increased risk of injury. For a working-class man, who rented a property and had a small family, suffering a serious injury whilst playing football, such as a broken leg, would effectively leave the household without any direct source of income until he had recovered and was able to work again. Ultimately, this was a risk that many were unwilling to take as they adopted greater financial and social responsibilities. The stresses and financial pressures of raising children and owning or renting a property greatly restricted the amount of free time and disposable income that men, who in most cases were solely responsible for generating income for their household, had access to. It is perhaps little surprise then that the prosopographical database indicates that association football players in The Potteries tended to be men who had neither of these restrictions.

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[55] Michael Paterson, *A Brief History of Life in Victorian Britain: A Social History of Queen Victoria’s Reign* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2008), 210.

[56] Susie L. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 2017), 131, 134.

[57] Midwinter, *Parish to Planet,* 87; and Huggins, ‘Football in North-East England’, 305.

[58] Gregson and Huggins, ‘Ashbrooke Whit Sports’, 1002-1003.

[59] Black and Macraild, *Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 249; and D’Cruze, ‘The Family’, 261.

Social Class

Defining Class

For those historians and sociologists that have sought to comprehend the developments which occurred during the nineteenth century in Britain, social class has remained the most prominent mode of analysis despite it being a ‘vast, complex and controversial topic’.[61] Steinbach suggests that Victorian Britain was a deeply class-ridden society and that everyone was aware of class and recognised it as a meaningful social reality.[62] It was deeply embedded in the social fabric with Hewitt noting that, for much of the century, it was ‘the bedrock of understandings of political and social change, and of the narratives which were constructed around them'.[63] As such, scholars have declared that class, and questions of class, are fundamental to understanding the nineteenth century experience.[64]

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[60] D’Cruze, ‘The Family’, 258.

[61] Ivan Reid, *Social Class Differences in Britain* (London: open Books Publishing, 1977), 1.

[62] Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 124.

However, the centrality of class to social history has been heavily critiqued and debated over the course of the last three decades.[65] Reid acknowledges that there are now a wide range of opinions concerning the use of class, particularly regarding how it should be defined, and notes that 'everyone, or so it seems, has their own ideas and theories'.[66] At its core social class is a multi-directional concept that relates to the grouping of people into categories based on clear criteria and an understanding of how these influence society. Despite this, White has claimed that it remains 'the most contested category in the whole lexicon of social science' and that it 'elude[s] both scientific definition and enumeration'.[67] Researchers applying the approach of Karl Marx associate class with an individual's relation to the means of production whilst those using the work of Max Weber perceive it to be linked to multiple economic processes, including income, education, and values. Others reject the concept of class entirely. Calvert has proposed that class does not exist whilst Joyce has been dismissive of using class as an overarching theory and stresses that other elements of life were much more important.[68] Furthermore, it has been noted that several commentators, whilst engaging in class-based research, fail to provide definitions of social class and at times sidestep questions relating to categorisation and class boundaries.[69]

Cannadine highlights that historians have tended to adopt one of three enduring models when analysing social class: a hierarchical model where each layer of society merges imperceptibly with the next; a triadic model with 'upper', 'middle', and 'lower' categories of society; and a dichotomous model consisting of adversarial 'upper' and 'lower' groupings. All three models have been criticised for being crude, oversimplifications that fail to capture the complexity of the historical process whilst it has been acknowledged that class characteristics and class boundaries are rarely, if ever, obvious. [70] Furthermore, few believe that there was one 'middle class' or 'working class' in Victorian society and the common view is that each large grouping was subject to internal divisions, although there is no consensus as to the internal workings of different groups and issues of transference between classes.[71]

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[63] Martin Hewitt, 'Class and the Classes', in *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Chris Williams (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 305.

[64] Black and Macraild, *Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 98; Hewitt, 'Class and the Classes', 305; and Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 124.

[65] John Benson, *The Working Class in Britain, 1850-1939* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 2.

[66] Reid, *Social Class Differences*, 3.

[67] Jerry White, *The Worst Street in North London: Campbell Bunk, Islington Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 2003), 27.

[68] Peter Calvert, *The Concept of Class: An Historical Introduction* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1982); and Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[69] Reid, *Social Class Differences*, 52; and Hewitt, 'Class and the Classes', 307.

It is apparent that 'class is both controversial and fraught with methodological and ideological difficulties' and yet it remains a central feature of social history research despite claims that there is a terminal crisis in the use of the concept.[72] Cannadine insists that if historians and sociologists accept that class was, and still is, central to British life then it remains a vital area of consideration. In addition, it has been noted that the continuing prominence of class is in part due to the lack of alternative theoretical frameworks that can be used within historical analysis to understand nineteenth century social structures.[73] Traditional interpretations of social class, such as the Marxist approach, may no longer carry conviction within academia but the 'immediate task is neither that of denying nor rehabilitating old-style class analysis, but of defining the subject afresh and envisioning it anew'.[74] It has been noted that some of the methodological and ideological pitfalls of utilising social class within academic research can be offset by creating a taxonomy of social class which clearly explains how classifications have been defined and created. Whilst any interpretation of class is likely to receive criticism and critique, by presenting a taxonomy to the reader it facilitates a degree of clarity and transparency.[75]

For the purpose of this thesis, a taxonomy of social class has been adopted using the triadic model with individuals defined according to their occupation. Benson suggests that using occupation to determine class remains one of the most effective approaches, both due to the availability of occupational data and the relative simplicity of analysis.[76] Furthermore, occupation is an important determinant of possessions, lifestyle, and place of residence and is used as a measure of social standing by contemporary government, commercial researchers, and sociologists.[77] For most individuals, the main determinant of their wealth, and therefore their standard of living, is their form of employment and Burnett states that 'although no two sociologists would ever agree about a definition of social class, there would be fairly widespread concurrence … that occupation is one of the major – perhaps the major – determinant of social class'.[78] Whilst concerns have been raised about the use of a single indicator to determine class, it is accepted within this thesis as a beneficial and effective method of classifying individuals into large social groupings.[79]

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[70] David Cannadine, *Class in Britain* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 19-20.

[71] Canandine, *Class in Britain*, 60; Mike Cronin, 'What Went Wrong with Counting? Thinking about Sport and Class in Britain and Ireland', *Sport in History* 29, no.3 (2009): 395; and Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 128.

[72] Black and Macraild, *Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 104; and Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, 15.

[73] Hewitt, 'Class and the Classes', 307; and Reid, *Social Class Differences*, 6.

[74] Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, 16-17.

[75] Martin Nunlee, *When Did We All Become Middle Class?* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 52; and Dyer, 'The Crewe Alexandra Athletic Club', 15.

[76] Benson, *Working Class in Britain*, 4.

Steinbach suggests that most Victorians viewed their society as being divided into three groups - the working class which obtained income from wages, the middle class which derived income from salaries and profit, and the upper class that possessed wealth through property, rent, and interest.[80] This tripartite view of society was reflected and reinforced by the development and structure of both transport and the education system as the nineteenth century progressed. The railway system was segregated with its first-, second-, and third-class carriages whilst the three major school inquiries of the mid-Victorian era, the Newcastle Commission, Clarendon Commission, and Taunton Commission, considered the education of the working, middle, and upper classes respectively.[81] However, whilst the triadic model is easy to understand, Steinbach asserts that each class were subject to internal divisions. Hewitt divides the middle class into three distinct groups: the commercial and entrepreneurial middle class which was dependent on profits; the professional middle class which derived income from fees; and those that drew salaries from employment in 'white collar' occupations.[82] Similarly, Hewitt acknowledges that the working class consisted of three groups: skilled artisans who could command premium wages; a semi-skilled cohort that received lower wages; and the unskilled working class that relied on casual labour, charity, and the limited social provision provided by the Poor Law.[83] Whilst the triadic model has been criticised for its over-simplification it has been noted that 'the vast majority of Victorians accepted, even endorsed this system' whilst its clearly defined categories provide a solid framework to operate within.[84]

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[77] Reid, *Social Class Differences*, 7; and Roxanne Connelly, Vernon Gayle and Paul S. Lambert, 'A Review of Occupation-Based Social Classifications for Social Survey Research', *Methodological Innovations* 9 (2016): 1.

[78] Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, 3; and John Burnett, *A History of the Cost of Living* (London: Penguin, 1969), 292.

[79] Reid, *Social Class Differences*, 7.

[80] Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 125.

[81] Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, 89-90.

[82] Hewitt, 'Class and the Classes', 308.

[83] Ibid.

Applying this taxonomy of social class, it is possible to categories the individuals included within the prosopographical database by analysing their occupation (see Table Two and Appendix Nine). It is evident that association football in The Potteries was primarily the pursuit of working class (59.6%) and middle class (27.9%) men whilst a small number of individuals were either unemployed (0.8%) or their occupation was unknown (12.5%). This comes as no great surprise as during the nineteenth century The Potteries was characterised by predominantly working-class industries that centred on the production of goods, which also resulted in the emergence of a range of middle-class occupations. Existing research has noted that members of the upper class had minimal involvement in the development of association football during the mid-nineteenth century and, with such a minimal aristocratic influence in The Potteries, it is to be expected that the game would be favoured by the working and middle classes.[85] The taxonomy that has been applied to the prosopographical analysis also enables the researcher to separate each class into more specific internal divisions. Amongst the working classes, the game was favoured by those that were skilled artisans (22.7%) or semi-skilled workers (27.9%) but had minimal engagement from unskilled working men (9.0%). The majority of middle-class participation came from white collar workers (17.0%) with additional engagement from the professional middle class (8.1%), yet the game had limited interest amongst the commercial and entrepreneurial middle class (2.8%). From a broad perspective, it can be concluded that association football in The Potteries during the 1870s was predominantly a working-class activity that also had significant participation amongst the lower middle classes. The subsequent sections provide additional in-depth analysis of social class and association football in the region.

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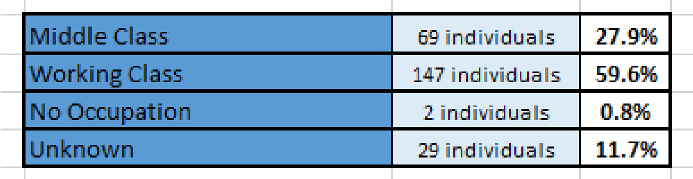
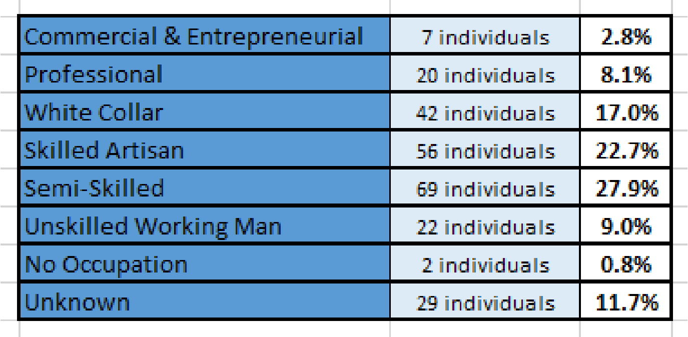
[84] Pat Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), 203; and Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 125.

[85] Mike Huggins, 'Sport and the British Upper Classes c. 1500-2000: A Historiographic Overview', *Sport in History* 28, no.3 (2008): 364-388.

Table Two: Association football players in The Potteries, 1873-1878 – Social Class.



Middle Class	69 individuals	27.9%
Working Class	147 individuals	59.6%
No Occupation	2 individuals	0.8%
Unknown	29 individuals	11.7%



Commercial & Entrepreneurial	7 individuals	2.8%
Professional	20 individuals	8.1%
White Collar	42 individuals	17.0%
Skilled Artisan	56 individuals	22.7%
Semi-Skilled	69 individuals	27.9%
Unskilled Working Man	22 individuals	9.0%
No Occupation	2 individuals	0.8%
Unknown	29 individuals	11.7%

A Working Class Character

Throughout the nineteenth century Victorian society was predominantly made up of the working classes, with calculations suggesting that between 75% and 80% of the British population fell within this social grouping.[86] However, the working class was far from being one homogenous group and there were considerable variations in the experiences of different collectives in terms of living standards, income, and working conditions.[87] An agricultural labourer earning 5 shillings per week had a much different comprehension of, and outlook on, society than a shipbuilder who could earn as much as 20 shillings per week during periods of economic affluence.[88] Furthermore, a skilled artisan such as a master potter would have a vastly different experience of life than someone residing in a workhouse. Despite this, all four occupations would fit within the broad, overarching classification of the working class. Work determined two fundamental elements of working-class life – how individuals spent most of their waking hours and how much income they had at their disposal – yet much employment was precarious, physically taxing, and often poorly paid.[89] Steinbach states that most working class families were 'engaged in a daily struggle not only to survive but to do so with dignity', which meant ensuring that they stayed on the right side of the divide between the 'rough' and the 'respectable' by making sure that family members were clothed, fed, and housed.[90] Men were expected to earn a wage that was sufficient to support the family, although in some regions specific industries flourished that allowed women and children to provide additional income, which often required working over 12 hours per day, six days a week, for the majority of their lives. The working class were generally perceived by those that were socially superior to be uneducated, uncultured, and passive victims of their fate and although there were opportunities to climb the social ladder, Hewitt suggests that the reality was much more static.[91]

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[86] Benson, *Working Class in Britain*, 4.
[87] Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution*, 212.
[88] Black and Macraild, *Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 103.
[89] Benson, *Working Class in Britain*, 9; and Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 130.
[90] Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 129.

Association football in The Potteries during the 1870s had a working-class character with 59.6% of the players identified in the prosopographical database falling within this social category (see Table Two). Most individuals were artisans (28.3%) and semi-skilled workers (22.7%) that occupied the vague space that existed between the boarders of the working and middle classes. 28.3% of players were employed in artisanal occupations with 41 of the 56 individuals working within the pottery and ceramic industry which, due to the sheer number of workshops and factories throughout the region, provided an abundance of opportunities for those that had specific skills. Dupree notes that in The Potteries by the mid-nineteenth century there were 180 large pottery and ceramic firms employing an average workforce of 167, yet this was dwarfed in number by a vast array of smaller workshops and potworks.[92] The production of wares required a variety of skilled and artisanal occupations with each step in the production process requiring varying specialised talents – from the modellers, handlers, and mould makers who created the ware, to the painters, printers, and compositors that decorated them. Similarly, the semi-skilled category is also dominated by men who were employed in the pottery and ceramic industry (21 of the 56 individuals classified as being semi-skilled) whilst there was also a significant number of colliers and miners (13 of the 56). Whilst the pottery and ceramic industry became inextricably linked with the identity of The Potteries, the mining of clay, coal, and other ores also became a central feature of the region. The close proximity of natural resources, particularly the North Staffordshire coalfields, facilitated the emergence of a diverse mining industry in the area with colliers providing the essential fuel and raw materials that enabled the pottery and ceramic industry to continue production.[93] Finally, whilst association football was popular amongst the skilled artisans and semi-skilled working classes, only a small number of unskilled working men were identified as playing for formal clubs (9.0%). All 21 of the individuals who fall within this category were either labourers or employed as warehousemen. Whilst skilled artisans and semi-skilled workers were provided with premium pay and stable work respectively, unskilled working men often faced insecure employment conditions and poor pay. Whilst those in the upper echelons of the working classes often had access to some disposable income those at the lower end of spectrum had limited money which could be invested in activities such as sport, with Brailsford identifying 'the gulf between the skilled man in one of the premier industries and the destitute slum-dweller'.[94]

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[91] Hewitt, 'Class and the Classes', 310.

[92] Marguerite W. Dupree, *Family Structure in the Staffordshire Potteries, 1840-1880* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 53.

[93] Alan Taylor, *Stoke-on-Trent: A History* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2003), xv.

From the 1870s onwards it was working-class men that were responsible for the growing popularity of the association game, both in terms of participation and, as the century progressed, spectating. Birley states that 'by the last quarter of the century the great bulk of new players came from the urban working classes',[95] whilst Collins has stressed that 'although the working class had little influence on the development of modern football in the first two-thirds of the century, the opposite was true in its last three decades'.[96] At a practical level, association football possessed the general characteristics that made it an appealing prospect for young working-class men in the mid-late Victorian era.[97] The game, particularly as rules became more formalised and universal, was relatively easy to play, required little equipment that could be purchased at minimal cost, and a match could be completed within a reasonable span of time. Baker has noted that some members of the contemporary press described it as a 'democratic game' that was 'within easy reach of absolutely anyone' and it was true that it could be played by anyone, regardless of size or strength, almost anywhere.[98] The attraction of football to the working classes lay in the excitement that was facilitated by the combination of skill and physical confrontation.[99] It provided an opportunity to demonstrate athletic prowess, to strive for heroic triumph, and internally satisfy a sense of self-importance.[100]

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[94] Dennis Brailsford, *Sport, Time and Society. The British at Play* (London: Routledge, 1991), 113.

[95] Derek Birley, *Sport and the Making of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 268.

[96] Tony Collins, 'Early Football and the Emergence of Modern Soccer, c. 1840-1880', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no.9 (2015): 1139

[97] Huggins, 'Football in North-East England', 303 – 304.

[98] William J. Baker, 'The Making of a Working-Class Football Culture in Victorian England', *Journal of Social History* 13, no.2 (1979): 243.

[99] Martin Johnes and Ian Garland, '"The New Craze": Football and Society in North-East Wales, c.1870-90', *The Welsh History Review* 22 (2004): 291.

[100] Baker, 'Working Class Football Culture', 246, 247.

However, not all sporting activities were easily accessible to the working classes. Some were simply too expensive whilst some clubs and governing organisations actively sought to exclude the lower orders through the introduction of specific rules or membership requirements. Prior to the final decade of the nineteenth century bicycles were initially expensive to purchase, therefore working class participation in cycling clubs was initially minimal with it being noted that entrants in competitions tended to come from a 'higher class'.[101] Similarly, the cost of playing golf combined with the amount of time it took to play a round meant that it remained the preserve of the middle classes into the twentieth century.[102] Members were required to pay subscription fees, purchase clubs and balls, employ a professional or caddy whilst also engaging in conviviality after play – indeed, it was remarked that 'golf is not a poor man's game'.[103] Furthermore, golf clubs introduced a vetting process that only allowed access to individuals if they were proposed by established members, thus enabling them to exclude those deemed unsuitable for admission.[104] Athletics and rowing both attempted to formally exclude members of the working classes from their respective sports as they sought to define and differentiate between a professional and the gentleman amateur. The Amateur Rowing Association barred any 'tradesmen, labourers, artisans or working mechanics' whilst the Amateur Athletic Club, forerunner to the Amateur Athletic Association, explicitly excluded anyone who was 'a mechanic, artisan or labourer'.[105] However, both athletics and rowing did retain considerable working-class participation, although clubs, competitions, and events were subject to social segregation. Cricket is the sport most lauded by academics for its potential for mixing different social groups. Despite this, Tranter has noted that 'in practice class distinctions were rigidly preserved and perhaps even reinforced'.[106] The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) and other prominent English county clubs remained dominated by middle and upper class individuals whilst membership lists were strictly controlled.[107] Montgomeryshire only allowed gentleman to be members whilst

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[101] Brailsford, *Sport, Time and Society*, 111, 118; and Gregson and Huggins, 'Ashbrooke Whit Sports', 1002-1003.

[102] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 44; Lowerson, 'Golf', 188-189; and Huggins, 'Second-Class Citizens?', 2-3.

[103] Richard Holt, 'Golf and the English Suburb: Class and Gender in a London Club, c.1890-1969', *Sports Historian* 18, no.1 (1998): 77.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Derek Birley, *Land of Sport and Glory. Sport and British Society, 1887-1910* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 57; and Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 31.

[106] Neil Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society in Britain: 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 39.

[107] Lowerson, *Sport and the Middle Classes*, 80; and Neil Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society in Britain*, 39.

Carmarthenshire at one point strictly excluded tradesmen.[108] On the pitch, the lower orders had opportunities to mix with their so-called social superiors if they had the skill and ability to become professionals whilst at a recreational level the social composition of local teams and the opposition that they faced were sharply divided along class lines.[109] In terms of rugby, Collins notes that, although most teams during the 1870s were initially established by members of the lower-middle classes, in the latter years of the decade there was a mass influx of working class players after the success of cup competitions generated public interest in the game.[110]

While association football took on an increasingly working class character during the final three decades of the nineteenth century, there have been few examples of genuinely proletarian clubs during the 1860s and 1870s that consisted exclusively of working class members.[111] Elswick Leather Works (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) was described as being 'working class in origin and run by working men for working men' but even the Darwen first eleven that reached the latter stages of the FA Cup in the late 1870s and early 1880s were comprised mainly of textile workers but still had a sizeable middle class element.[112] Many clubs possessed a significant middle class influence that, although generally outnumbered in membership lists, often held positions of power and authority on club committees.[113] This is apparent when examining the prosopographical data for association football players that were active in The Potteries during the 1870s, where a large body of working class players were complemented by a significant number of middle-class individuals.

Middle Class Influence

The middle class during the nineteenth century amounted to between 15% and 20% of the British population.[114] Hudson notes that, similar to the working class, it was far from one homogenous group and that the experience of a large industrial employer differed markedly to that of a white collar employee.[115] Certain lower-middle-class occupations provided income of only around £100 per annum whilst at the alternative end of the spectrum the entrepreneurial and commercial middle class could generate income of up to £1000 per annum.[116] The middle class encompassed an increasingly complex array of occupations and professions but collectively possessed characteristics that differentiated them from the working classes, including owning property and acknowledging the importance of appearance.[117] Furthermore, whilst the middle class worked, they did not engage in manual labour, dirty or physical work like their working class counterparts, instead undertaking 'brain' work that enabled them to dress neatly and required some form of education or formal training.[118] The entrepreneurial and commercial middle class generated income from profits and consisted of factory owners, manufacturers, and commercial dealers whilst the professional middle class was comprised of teachers, doctors, and lawyers whose income derived from fees. In addition, from the 1860s there was a significant growth in the number of 'white collar' occupations available and between 1870 and 1920 the number of male office workers increased by a factor of five. The growth of bureaucracy, the service industry, and state-provided education combined to create new, modestly paid roles including clerks, bookkeepers, and agents.[119] The middle classes received praise from their contemporary social superiors for their attitudes to respectability, morality, and their increasing influence in local government, yet Cannadine also highlights that they were often disparaged for being 'ill-mannered, under-bred, middle-class upstarts … who bought their way into land in the vain hope of acquiring high social standing'.[120] Whilst there were opportunities for individuals to move into the upper strata of society, these were limited and there was a much greater likelihood, and indeed a fear, of movement in the opposite direction.[121]

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[108] Birley, *Sport*, 254.
[109] Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, 2; and Tranter, S*port, Economy and Society*, 39.
[110] Tony Collins, *A Social History of English Rugby Union* (London: Routledge, 2009), 25.
[111] Taylor, *Association Game*, 43.
[112] Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980), 32-3.
[113] Taylor, *Association Game*, 43.
[114] Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 128; and Hewitt, 'Class and the Classes', 308.
[115] Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution*, 212.

The growing popularity of association football in The Potteries during the 1870s may have been established predominantly on working class participation but there was also considerable involvement from the middle classes, with 27.9% of the players identified in the prosopographical database falling within this social category (see Table Two). Of the individuals identified 9.1% were employed in the professional middle class and maintained occupations including schoolteacher, station master, and mechanical engineer. This aligns with existing research with Mason suggesting that many of those that played the association game in London during the nineteenth century were ‘already either professional men … lawyers, doctors, clergymen, teachers, or in the process of becoming such’.[122] Huggins concluded that most players in the North East ‘were drawn from the professional and commercial middle class’,[123] whilst Wednesbury Town, established in 1873 and located in South Staffordshire, recruited players principally from the ‘local professional and manufacturing elites’.[124] However, despite these similarities, suggestions that teachers played a crucial part in the initial development of the association game in various regions, specifically the North East, is not replicated in The Potteries where only four of the 247 players identified worked in education.[125] Why teachers had such a limited involvement in football in the region is unclear, especially considering that the game was popular in schools and amongst students. A further 17% of the players included within the prosopography were classified as white-collar workers with 38 of the 42 individuals employed as clerks. Due to the prominence of clerks within the prosopographical data, this occupational group is subject to more in-depth analysis in subsequent sections of this chapter. Finally, 2.8% of players identified were classified as occupying positions within the commercial and entrepreneurial middle class.

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[116] Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 128.
[117] Black and Macraild, *Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 109; and Hewitt, 'Class and the Classes', 308.
[118] Hewitt, 'Class and the Classes', 309; and Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 134.
[119] Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 113-134, 138; and Geoffrey Crossick, 'The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain: A Discussion', in *The Lower Middle Class in Britain*, ed. Geoffrey Crossick (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 12.
[120] Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, 71; and Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution*, 220.
[121] Hewitt, 'Class and the Classes', 310.

As the nineteenth century progressed the size of the middle-class population in England gradually increased. Lowerson notes that their ‘income levels and working experiences were especially conducive to participation in leisure activities’ and it is apparent that sport was one of a multitude of avenues in which the middle classes chose to invest their disposable income and free time.[126] However, how does an individual determine what sporting activity to pursue? Cost was clearly a factor. For example, the high expense of purchasing a bicycle, particularly prior to the final decade of the century, meant that cycling clubs were more readily accessed by the middle classes.[127] Furthermore, Cronin states that

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[122] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 22.
[123] Ibid., 24.
[124] Huggins, ‘Football in North-East England’, 305.
[125] Ibid., 305.
[126] Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes*, 5-12.
[127] Brailsford, *Sport, Time and Society*, 111, 118.

‘class solidarity and exclusiveness, as well as a desire to be connected with the right group, also informed people’s leisure choices’.[128] The upper-middle classes aspired to reach the upper echelons of society and as such they often sought to mimic the behaviours of their upper-class counterparts, including in their selection of leisure activities. As such, they opted to pursue recreations that combined modest exertion with social exclusiveness whilst they also possessed the financial means to pay higher fees for equipment and memberships. Tennis, croquet, and badminton became increasingly popular within this group whilst golf had the added advantage of sustaining or extending social networks or improving business connections.[129] In contrast, it has been suggested that the lower-middle classes had much more in common with those from the upper-working classes, even if their dress, speech, and lifestyle was different. This extended into their choice of leisure activities, including sport.[130] Most sports clubs in the North East from the 1870s to the 1890s (including football, rugby, athletics, and bowls) contained players derived from a mixture of the working and middle classes.[131] From the 1870s onwards members of rugby clubs were increasingly made up of the lower-middle classes with an expanding working class interest.[132] Similarly, Gregson and Huggins’ study of the Ashbourne Whit Sports (Sunderland) revealed that the majority of entrants were from the ‘permeable borders between the working and middle class’.[133] This was also the case in some regions where association football was prevalent, with Johnes and Garland’s examination of early Welsh teams established during the mid-late 1870s concluding that it ‘had something of a middle-class character but with a clear working-class involvement’.[134] During the 1870s, in The Potteries, just 2.8% of the players identified through the prosopographical research were categorised as being from the commercial and entrepreneurial middle class whilst, in contrast, a combined 25.1% were from the lower middle classes. It is apparent that men who were from the professional middle class or were white collar workers shared an enthusiasm and interest for football with the working classes that was not apparent among those situated in the upper middle classes.

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[128] Cronin, ‘What Went Wrong with Counting?’, 399.
[129] Lowerson and Myerscough, *Time to Spare*, 126; and Cronin, ‘What Went Wrong with Counting?’, 399.
[130] Huggins, ‘Second-Class Citizens?’, 15.
[131] Ibid., 24.
[132] Collins, *A Social History of Rugby*, 25.
[133] Gregson and Huggins, ‘Ashbrooke Whit Sports’, 1007-1008.
[134] Johnes and Garland, ‘New Craze’, 287.

Even in sports that had significant working-class participation it was often members of the middle class that held positions of influence, authority, and power on club committees. Budd suggests that the development of sport in Middlesbrough during the nineteenth century was directed by a small number of middle-class men who were prominent across various club committees.[135] Various studies have concluded that the committee members of rugby, athletic, cricket, and bowls clubs throughout Britain were dominated by middle-class individuals.[136] In his examination of the various committees of the Crewe Alexandra Athletic Club, Dyer revealed that 51% were middle-class individuals compared to just 16% that were deemed working class.[137] This was also a common feature in association football. Johnes and Garland traced seventeen of the secretaries from the twenty clubs that were affiliated with the Football Association of Wales (FAW) in 1880 and concluded that they had a predominantly lower-middle class profile.[138] It can be concluded from the prosopographical database that the middle classes were heavily involved in the committees of formal association football clubs in The Potteries during the 1870s. Of the committee members that could be successfully identified 75% were middle class and were employed as clerks, bookkeepers, insurance brokers, and commercial travellers (see Appendix Ten).

Such occupations required specific skills and competencies to be successful, such as being literate and capable of dealing with finances, which could easily be transferred into a sporting context. During the Victorian era formal sports clubs, even those that were formed purely for recreational purposes and remained diminutive in size, became commercial entities and required a significant amount of administrative expertise to operate and survive.[139] Whilst formal association football club membership lists in The Potteries were dominated by the working classes, it was from middle-class members that clubs in the region found the skills and experience necessary to run effectively. However, this middle-class dominance was not apparent when examining the social class of individuals that were listed as being a club captain, with 70.8% having working-class occupations. The position of captain in many formal clubs had minimal, if any, administrative responsibilities and the role primarily revolved around team selection and, as the period progressed, tactics. As such, the suitability of individuals to take up the role was not dictated by their occupational skillset, as was the case for most committee positions, but instead required someone who possessed a good knowledge of the game, was well respected within the club and who was a superior performer on the pitch. This meant that working-class members were more likely to be elected as captain when compared to other committee positions and the significant number of working-class captains identified through the prosopographical database reflects their domination of club membership lists.

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[135] Catherine Budd, *Sport in Urban England: Middlesbrough, 1870-1914* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2017), 7.

[136] Huggins, 'Second-Class Citizens?', 24; Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, 71; Birley, *Land of Sport and Glory*, 35, 62; Taylor, *Association Game*, 43; and Richard Holt, 'The Amateur Body and the Middle-Class Man: Work, Health and Style in Victorian Britain', *Sport in History* 26, no.3 (2006): 365.

[137] Dyer, 'The Crewe Alexandra Athletic Club', 141.

[138] Johnes and Garland, 'New Craze', 287.

[139] Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society*, 52.

Clerks

From the 1860s onwards there was a significant growth in low-level white-collar work across Britain as increasing levels of bureaucracy and administration created a range of modestly paid but non-manual job opportunities.[140] Clerical work emerged as a key cog in the industrialisation process as the nineteenth century progressed with the efficient operation of day-to-day business for many companies, both small and large in scale, relying on the contribution of clerks. They were responsible for completing fundamental administrative duties and often processed sensitive information, handled money, and worked closely with managers, proprietors, and owners.[141] For small organisations the task of handling paperwork was shouldered by one or two individuals whilst larger institutions relied on the contribution of ten, twenty or more clerical workers.[142] Orchard estimated that in Liverpool during the 1870s the average number of clerks that were employed by businesses and firms was four.[143] The gradual introduction of compulsory education in Britain during the final three decades of the nineteenth century resulted in improved levels of literacy and numeracy across the country and subsequently increased the number of people that could undertake clerical work, which required a high degree of competency in reading and writing. As such, there was a steady growth in white-collar employment as demonstrated by Steinbach's assertion that between 1870 and 1920 the number of men undertaking office work increased by a factor of five.[144]

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[140] Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 138.

[141] Michael Heller, 'Sport, Bureaucracies and London Clerks, 1880-1939', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 25, no.5 (2008): 586.

[142] Paterson, *Life in Victorian Britain*, 234.

[143] B. G. Orchard, *The Clerks of Liverpool* (Liverpool: J. Collinson, 1871), 7.

A significant number of association football players that were active in The Potteries during the 1870s were white-collar workers (Table Two). Of the total number of individuals identified 17% were undertaking white-collar work whilst 38 of those 42 were employed as clerks. The role of the clerk in the growth and development of sport during the nineteenth century has yet to be adequately explored although scattered references from various studies indicate that they played a significant part. Huggins and Tolson indicate that railway clerks were influential figures in several clubs that entered the Football League,[145] Dyer revealed that clerks were a prominent feature on the committee of sports clubs in Crewe,[146] and Heller determined that clerks employed in London during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century actively participated in employer-provided sport.[147]

The large number of clerical workers who were members of association football clubs in The Potteries can be explained through two perspectives. First, Holt notes that the environmental and working pressures experienced by office workers during the nineteenth century has been overlooked or understated. The desire to escape temporarily from industrial life through sport would have been just as prevalent amongst men that were employed in white-collar occupations as it was by colliers, factory hands, and other industrial workers.[148] Working conditions in many offices, although certainly not as poor or as dangerous as those found in some working-class occupations, were still far from pleasant. Clerks were often required to work in small, cramped rooms where a lack of natural light, fresh air, and heat were familiar problems whilst they faced the prospect of being confined to a desk for the entirety of the working day, with back pain and rounded shoulders common physical ailments.[149] Furthermore, administrative duties often came with associated pressures, from dealing with deadlines to worrying about career progression, whilst the work itself could be mentally tiring and, in some contexts, modestly paid. This combination of factors meant that clerks were equally as keen to establish a work-life balance and achieve an equilibrium between work and play as their working-class counterparts.[150]

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[144] Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 140.

[145] Mike Huggins and John Tolson, 'The Railways and Sport in Victorian Britain. A Critical Reassessment', *Journal of Transport History* 22, no. 2 (2001): 113.

[146] Dyer, 'The Crewe Alexandra Athletic Club', 146

[147] See Heller, 'London Clerks', 579-614.

[148] Holt, 'The Middle Class Man', 356, 359-361.

[149] Paterson, *Life in Victorian Britain*, 235

Second, male clerical workers also found it problematic to construct positive and meaningful identities with issues specifically revolving around masculinity. Tosh suggests that 'as a social identity masculinity is constructed in three arenas – home, work and all-male association', with white-collar workers facing difficulties in all of them.[151] In the home arena, material and occupational circumstances meant that young clerical workers often could not achieve full middle-class respectability (being married, having a family, owning a home and employing a servant) until their late twenties whilst all-male association was shattered during the 1880s as women began to take up white-collar work in greater numbers.[152] In the arena of work, clerks were separated from the working classes as their role relied upon their mental skill rather than physical power, yet this also threatened their masculinity as, outside the office environment, they were perceived as having little skill, ability, or physical strength.[153] The working classes adopted a form of utilitarian masculinity that emphasised the use of skill and strength to produce useful objects whilst the masculinity of the upper class and upper-middle class was derived from their independence, wealth, and authority over other men. Clerks fitted neither form of masculinity – they were criticised for 'pushing paper rather than goods' whilst being 'seen as obsequious in the face of management'.[154] Furthermore, prior to the mid-nineteenth century, clerks were a small, exclusive fraternity, making up less than one percent of the population, that were highly proficient at reading, writing, and numeracy. However, compulsory education from the 1870s onwards meant that they lost further 'professional mystique and status' as the period progressed.[155]

Spurr suggests that clerks were anxious about 'their precarious position within middle-class society' and sought out 'positive cultural experiences and masculine socialisation on narrow budgets'.[156] Sport, including football, was welcomed by clerical workers as it provided not only an escape from the stress and pressure of industrial life but was also seen as being 'manly'. It was physically demanding, combative, and provided an opportunity to demonstrate strength, 'thus offering valuable support to a vulnerable sense of occupational masculinity'.[157] White-collar workers were also attracted to a range of other clubs, societies and organisations, including the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), yet by 1881 over half of the clerks in England were under the age of 25 and sport became a primary attraction for these young workers.[158] In addition, the skillset of clerical workers also meant that they were seen as potentially being valuable assets for sports clubs. Their knowledge and experience (including handling money and administrative competence) coupled with high levels of literacy enabled them to take up positions of authority on club committees. This not only gave clerks a degree of power over other men, something which they lacked in their employment, but also differentiated them from other general club members. By actively engaging in football, clerks were able to contribute towards their work-life balance, reinforced their identity and masculinity by participating in a 'manly' activity, and acquired social capital by adopting positions on club committees which improved their social standing in the local community.

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[150] Holt, 'The Middle Class Man', 356.

[151] John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 2.

[152] Geoffrey Spurr, 'The London YMCA: A Haven of Masculine Self-Improvement and Socialization for the late-Victorian and Edwardian Clerk', *Canadian Journal of History* 37, no.2 (2002): 276.

[153] Crossick, 'Lower Middle Class: A Discussion', 23.

[154] Heller, 'London Clerks', 604.

[155] Paterson, *Life in Victorian Britain*, 236.

[156] Spurr, 'The London YMCA', 284.

Location

Two of the key characteristics that shaped Britain during the Victorian era were urbanisation and migration, both of which were inextricably linked. From the 1830s onwards there was a 'complex wavelike motion which led to a redistribution of the population' with much of the populace relocating to live in one of the rapidly expanding urban settlements emerging across the country.[159] At the start of the nineteenth century 66.2% of the total population resided in the countryside, yet by 1900 there had been a dramatic shift which saw 70% of people living in urban areas.[160] These towns and cities became central to the development and dissemination of sport and, as such, location and migration have become key themes to consider when examining the period.[161]

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[157] Heller, 'London Clerks', 605.

[158] George Grossmith and Weedon Grossmith, *The Diary of a Nobody* (London: CRW Publishing, 1892), 233.

[159] Richard Lawton, 'Rural Depopulation in Nineteenth Century England', in *English Rural Communities, The Impact of a Specialised Economy*, ed. Dennis R. Mills (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1973): 206.

[160] Robert J. Morris and Richard Rodger, 'An Introduction to British Urban History 1820-1914', in *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914*, ed. Robert J. Morris and Richard Rodger (London: Longman, 1993), 3.

Of the individuals included within the prosopographical database 79.1% were born in North Staffordshire with 65.7% having resided in The Potteries during their childhood. A further 19.7% had migrated from other regions in England and Wales, primarily from the surrounding counties of Cheshire, Derbyshire, Shropshire, and the West Midlands, although there were also instances of families having travelled from much further afield, including Berkshire, Devonshire, and Hertfordshire (see Table Three). Black and Macraild have noted the centrality of migration to Victorian society and suggest that it was largely a characteristic of skilled workers lives.[162] Of the 31 families that migrated to The Potteries, 15 fathers took up semi-skilled occupations (such as colliery workers and auxiliary roles in the pottery industry), three adopted artisanal employment (including a cordwainer and draper) and eight undertook white collar jobs (as clerks and cashiers).

The largest emigrant group in Britain during the final third of the nineteenth century were the Irish, with over 560,000 people arriving in England during the 1870s and 1880s. Irish emigration had been equally as prevalent earlier in the period, particularly during the 1840s and 1850s due to the Great Famine (Potato Famine), with estimations indicating that over 1,000,000 people entered Britain during that decade.[163] Liverpool proved to be a popular passage, with over a quarter of its population in 1851 being Irish born, but it was not uncommon for migrants to settle further inland.[164] Jenkins indicates that there was a significant Irish population in The Potteries with over 2,000 residing in the Six Towns in 1850, a figure which had increased to 20,000 by the turn of the century, with most finding employment in collieries.[165] Despite this, only one individual included within the prosopographical database had migrated from Ireland. This is perhaps not as surprising as it may first appear.

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[161] Birley, *Sport*, 265.
[162] Black and Macraild, *Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 69.
[163] Birley, *Sport*, 223.
[164] Robert F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972* (London: Penguin Group, 1988), p. 268.
[165] J. G. Jenkins, *A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 8* (London: Victoria County History, 1963), 271.

Table Three: Association football players in The Potteries, 1873-1878 – Place of birth / location of childhood residence.

Place of Birth / Childhood Residence		
The Potteries	**149**	**60.4%**
Staffordshire	**33**	**13.4%**
Newcastle-under-Lyme	**13**	**5.3%**
Cheshire	**11**	**4.5%**
West Midlands	**6**	**2.4%**
Shropshire	**4**	**1.6%**
Derbyshire	**3**	**1.2%**
Lancashire	**3**	**1.2%**
Devonshire	**2**	**0.8%**
Hertfordshire	**2**	**0.8%**
North America	**2**	**0.8%**
Yorkshire	**2**	**0.8%**
Wales	**2**	**0.8%**
Berkshire	**1**	**0.4%**
Buckinghamshire	**1**	**0.4%**
Gloucestershire	**1**	**0.4%**
Leicestershire	**1**	**0.4%**
Lincolnshire	**1**	**0.4%**
Northamptonshire	**1**	**0.4%**
Ireland	**1**	**0.4%**
Unknown	**8**	**3.2%**

Association football was much slower to develop in Ireland than in many parts of England, with the first formal clubs emerging in the late 1870s, therefore it is unlikely that Irish migrants brought with them any pre-existing knowledge of the game.[166] Furthermore, the majority of Irish emigrants were unskilled workers who, as previously discussed, made up only a small percentage of association football players in The Potteries due to financial and social restrictions. Swift also notes that several studies have revealed that Irish emigrant populations in Victorian England often had limited integration within native communities and sometimes faced hostility from the local populace, deterring them from engaging in popular local recreations.[167] Furthermore, there are only two examples of individuals having emigrated from North America to reside in The Potteries. The invention of the steamship enabled quicker, safer and more comfortable travel across the Atlantic, yet it was not until the late nineteenth century that the cost of tickets became more affordable.[168] In 1860, the price of a ticket was around £9, effectively one month of wages for a baker, meaning that only those that were financially secure embarked upon the journey to Britain.[169] It is perhaps unsurprising considering the working class industries and occupations that were prevalent throughout The Potteries that few Americans sought to emigrate to the region.

Holt indicates that when historians consider the growth of association football during the nineteenth century they need to consider collective life more closely, highlighting that players in early teams tended to live in close proximity to their teammates.[170] This is echoed by Mason, who proposed that many clubs during the period were established ‘by groups of young men who just lived close to each other’.[171] The research undertaken for this chapter can provide some further insight into such suggestions, with the residence of each individual when they first began to formally play for a club being determined through analysis of census materials. However, due to the fragmented nature of examining an anonymous population it is impossible to present a complete picture. When considering the individuals that were successfully identified on a club-by-club basis, in many cases only a handful of players could be accurately determined from each team making it precarious to reach substantial conclusions. Despite this, there were some clubs where a considerable number of players were identified and, subsequently, it was possible to plot their residence on contemporary maps of the region and look for patterns.

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[166] See Martin Moor, ‘The Origins of Association Football in Ireland, 1875-1880: A Reappraisal’, *Sport in History* 37, no.4 (2017): 505-528.

[167] Roger Swift. (2009). ‘Identifying the Irish in Victorian Britain: Recent Trends in Historiography’, *Immigrants and Minorities* 27, no.2-3 (2009): 134-151.

[168] Ian Whyte, ‘Migration and Settlement’, in *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Chris Williams (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 281.

[169] Peter J. Hugill, *World Trade Since 1431: Geography, Technology and Capitalism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1993), 128; and Arthur L. Bowley, *Wages in the United Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900), 133.

[170] Holt, ‘Working Class Football’, 6.

[171] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 31.

For example, it is apparent that the players that represented (Boothen) All Saints Recreation lived near each other. A quarter of the team resided in Wood Street or George Street, which ran parallel to each other and were located directly opposite the All Saints' Church, whilst other players lived nearby in Rosemount and Sheppard Street (see Appendix Eleven). The club was clearly a neighbourhood team that consisted of individuals that lived near to each other, would have likely attended the same church, and were part of a tight-knit community within an urban suburb. Such players would have felt some sense of neighbourly solidarity and Huggins has suggested that local identity could be socially constructed through playing for a local team.[172] In contrast, the individuals that played for Hanley Rangers were located across a much larger geographical spread (see Appendix Twelve). Whilst Boothen was a small suburb south of Stoke, Hanley was the largest of the Six Towns of The Potteries and possessed the greatest population of any urban conurbation in the region. The membership for Hanley Rangers were drawn from across the entire town, with those located on opposite sides often being situated several miles apart. However, this is not to suggest that there would not have been some sense of neighbourhood solidarity. In many cases, players resided in small groupings where they lived just a street away from a couple of teammates whilst the improving transport networks, including the introduction of trams in Hanley, would have enabled individuals to travel with relative ease. From these two examples it can be determined that players did live near to, at least some of, their fellow players.

As the prosopographical database was constructed it became apparent that it might be possible to identify some links that association football players in The Potteries had during their childhood and whether these continued into adulthood. As children, did players live near to and grow up with individuals whom they would later play alongside for a formal football club? Did friendships and neighbourhood connections that were developed during childhood continue into their adult lives and influence the emergence of sport in the area? These are pertinent questions, yet due to the incomplete nature of some aspects of the prosopographical research (primarily the identification of only a small number of players who represented the same formal club) it is impossible to make any definitive conclusions. However, there is some evidence that suggests that potential friendships or neighbourhood connections that were made during childhood continued into adulthood and had a direct influence on the association football culture that emerged as the century progressed.

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[172] Huggins, 'Football in North-East England', 308.

The most prominent example occurred in George Street, Stoke, where nine individuals, from eight different families, resided during their childhood with seven going on to play for the same association football club (Boothen All Saints) during the mid-1870s. Due to the close proximity in which they lived, it is clear that each of the individuals would have known each other and socialised together during their childhood. It appears that this friendship group survived into adulthood and resulted in their collective participation in the same football club. Many football teams and clubs during the nineteenth century emerged simply due to the fact that individuals lived on the same street or near to each other.[173] Holt states that 'teams often sprang from the formalizing of casual street relationships' and that sport in urban conurbations 'was a matter less of the anonymity of the city than of the intimacy of the street'.[174] Furthermore, sports teams and clubs, even those that operated at a recreational level, helped to establish a communal sense of identity amongst local residents.[175] Men would play or watch football with friends, family members, neighbours, and work colleagues, many of whom would live in close proximity, and for the working class man success on the football field became a vehicle for community pride.[176] There are a multitude of other parallel examples. As children, Robert Fox, William Green, and Isaac Green were neighbours living on High Street, Goldenhill, and as adults all three made their first appearance for Goldenhill Church Football Club in 1878. Similarly, David Sambrook, Ralph

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[173] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 51; Birley, *Sport*, 265; and Holt, 'Working Class Football', 7.

[174] Richard Holt, 'Football and the Urban Way of Life in Nineteenth-Century Britain', in *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700-1914*, ed. James Anthony Mangan (London: Frank Cass, 1988), 73; and Holt, 'Working Class Football, 6.

[175] Hignell, 'Cricket in Cardiff', 166.

[176] Richard Holt, 'Football and the Urban Way', 20-21; and Alan Metcalfe, 'Football in the Mining Communities of East Northumberland, 1882-1914', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 5, no.3 (1982): 282.

Urwin, and John Davies represented Chell Football Club during the late 1870s having initially grown up on the same street in High Park, Chell. These cases illustrate that some of the friendships and relationships that were developed during childhood between those that lived in close proximity often continued into later life and were reflected in their collective participation with specific football clubs. However, how young boys progressed from having a childhood 'kickabout' into becoming a member of formal, adult football club is a significant question, yet the lack of data and archival material makes this a difficult task.[177]

Data Synopsis – A Portrait of an Association Football Player

The prosopographical research undertaken for this chapter enables us to construct a general profile of the individuals that were actively playing association football at a recreational level between 1873 and 1878 across The Potteries. It is a portrait of the men that typically played the game during this period and it enables the researcher to offer some suggestions as to what motivated them to engage in football. Due to the nature of examining an anonymous population, with limited source materials or evidence to draw upon, it is impossible to accurately depict the life of individual players. However, when undertaking prosopographical research it is possible to uncover commonalties, differences, and phenomena that transcend individual lives. It must also be noted that this portrait is only a reflection of association football in The Potteries and may not be an accurate representation of the profile of players from other areas since the growth and development of the game was subject to regional differentiation.

It is evident that association football in The Potteries during the 1870s was favoured by those under the age of 24 (78.8%) and was particularly popular among those in their late-teenage years between the ages of 15 and 19 (46.9%) with the average age of a player when they were reported as making their first appearance for a formal club being 21. Furthermore, when players first became football active, they were predominantly unmarried (65.3%), did not have children (72.1%), and were still residing with family members whilst not being recorded as being the head of the household (56.8%). These individuals did not have the social or financial responsibility of providing for a family or maintaining a residence and thus were able to invest some of their free time, energy, and money on becoming members of a formal football club. Such responsibilities, which for most men occurred during their late-twenties and early-thirties, often restricted participation in sport, particularly when they became the main wage-earner in a household or where activities had a high risk of injury. The large percentage of teenagers that were actively playing indicates that the enthusiasm for the game that individuals had possessed when they were children continued into their early adulthood, although, as Holt notes, further research is required to determine how young boys moved from 'kickabouts' into the adult world of formal football clubs.[178] Players tended to have lived in The Potteries during their childhood (79.1%), suggesting a limited amount of external influence on the football culture that was emerging, whilst it is evident that many friendships or neighbourhood connections made whilst infants continued into adulthood. This is most pertinent when examining the men that played for Boothen All Saints, where seven of the players had resided on George Street, Stoke, when they were children with several growing up directly next to each other.

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[177] Holt, 'Working Class Football and the City', 7.

One of the key findings that emerged from the prosopographical research was that association football in The Potteries during the 1870s was built upon a foundation of working-class participation. Almost two thirds of the players identified were drawn from the working classes (59.6%) and it is apparent that the game was favoured by skilled artisans and semi-skilled workers who had access to some disposable income and were the main beneficiaries of the introduction of the Saturday half-holiday. However, there was also substantial middle-class involvement in the game (27.9%), particularly from white collar workers and those from the professional middle class. Men from the lower middle classes had much more in common with those from the upper working classes than the upper strata of society and as such they were drawn into similar recreations, including football. The game was popular among clerks who, despite their office based occupation, had the same desire as their working class counterparts to use sport as a way of temporarily escaping industrial life and creating a work-life balance.[179] Clerks also found it problematic to construct positive masculine identities, as their work required neither skill nor strength whilst they were also subservient to their bosses, and they subsequently used football, deemed to be a 'manly' activity, as a source of positive cultural experience and masculine socialisation.[180] It is also pertinent that although association football in The Potteries was dominated by the working classes, it was men from the middle class that rose to positions of power and authority on the committees of formal clubs, primarily as their occupational skillset was well suited to effectively undertaking a role that was central to the operation of a club. 75% of committee members identified in the prosopographical database were drawn from the lower-middle classes.

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[178] Ibid., 7.

[179] Holt, 'The Middle Class Man', 356.

Whilst this chapter has created a more definitive overview of the social background of recreational association football players during the 1870s, it is much more difficult to determine what their motivation for playing the game would have been. The 'sporting revolution' which occurred in Britain during the final three decades of the nineteenth century was facilitated by various interlocking social factors, particularly an increase in free time and disposable income, yet this fails to explain why these men chose to participate in football over other leisure pursuits available in The Potteries during this period.

Conclusion

Despite the historiography of football during the nineteenth century receiving considerable scholarly attention it has been noted that little is known about the men who played the association game at a recreational level and who were members of 'ordinary' clubs during the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s.[181] However, the men that played the game alongside their friends, family or work colleagues for a recreational club on a spare patch of ground after the conclusion of their shift on a Saturday afternoon are just as important to understanding the growth of the sport, perhaps more so, than those that represented Stoke FC in front of thousands of paying spectators. This chapter has sought to meet this current gap in the literature by identifying and analysing the individuals who were actively participating in association football and were members of formal clubs in The Potteries between 1873 and 1878. Furthermore, by utilising a prosopographical approach, it has been possible to determine biographical information and shared characteristics of 247 individuals, thus allowing the author to create an overview of who these men were, to comment on what their motivations may have been, and facilitating comparisons with other sporting activities during the period.

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[180] Spurr, 'The London YMCA', 284.

[181] Gregson and Huggins, 'Ashbrooke Whit Sports', 994; and Huggins, 'Second-Class Citizens?', 10.

Due to the nature of recreational sport during the nineteenth century, where not all sporting occurrences or activities were reported in the press and where many local clubs either did not keep or preserve records, few historians have sought to examine local sporting populations in a specific town, city or region.[182] When studying groups of people where there is a scarcity of historical material or evidence to draw upon, traditional approaches to research, such as biography and collective biography, can prove to be ineffective. However, prosopography can provide a solution.[183] It can enable historians to compile and corroborate what may be scarce data that has little value when viewed in isolation and organise it 'in such a way that they acquire additional significance by revealing connections and patterns influencing historical processes'.[184] Furthermore, as it is only concerned with the normalities and commonalities of the group, rather than exploring individual life stories, detailed analysis can be conducted with themes and links examined even if there are gaps or omissions in the data.[185] Within this chapter, the use of prosopography has enabled the author to compile the scattered fragments of historical evidence regarding an anonymous population (recreational association football players) and undertake analysis which would not have been possible when using other methodological approaches. It provides a unique and invaluable insight into the men that were playing the association game for ordinary clubs during the nineteenth century. Not only has this element of the thesis generated new knowledge and contributed towards filling a gap in our existing understanding, but it has also generated a substantial data set that can be utilised by others. The prosopographical database created (see Appendix Seven) provides a significant amount of information that can be accessed by others to be analysed in new ways or used as a comparison for new research.

However, it should be noted that there are limitations to this kind of research. First, the process of conducting prosopographical research requires a significant investment of time and energy from the researcher in order to collect, record, and analyse a considerable amount of information concerning a large number of individuals.[186] Time constraints and a lack of historical materials or evidence also restrict some potential avenues of investigation. For example, it would have been beneficial within the prosopography to have considered the educational and religious affiliations of players to seek additional patterns and connections, yet the limited amount of surviving information and the amount of time available made this impractical. In addition, 'many historical sources … do not lend themselves to themselves to the rigorous coding required by standard database structures.'[187] One of the primary challenges the author faced was how to compile, code, and present a significant amount of data, sourced from various forms of historical materials, in the form of a prosopographical database. Furthermore, the prosopography does not consider when or why individuals stopped playing football. Considering why people stopped participating in sport during this period is equally as valuable as understanding why they began. This was, again, related to time constraints but there is no reason why future research cannot build upon the existing prosopographical database and add further information to satisfy these limitations.

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[182] Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1880* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 128.
[183] Nelson, 'Race and Computing', 30.
[184] Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn, 'Art of Prosopography', 37.
[185] Oldfield, Narrative Methods', 1866.

This thesis has established at this point that during the 1870s the association game had become increasingly popular throughout The Potteries with a significant increase in the number of formal clubs that had been established and the quantity of matches being played. Furthermore, whilst Stoke FC remained the elite club in the region it was underpinned by a growing number of recreational clubs that possessed memberships that were comprised of working class and lower-middle class men. However, during this period the game itself remained relatively unstructured with various rules being favoured by different groups of players, resulting in regular disputes and disagreements. In addition, there was no formal competition that clubs could enter and players had to be content with participating in friendly matches. Although there was undoubtedly a growing interest in association game across the region it was apparent that an organisation was required to provide some form of structure, to oversee disputes, and facilitate the continued development of the game. The subsequent chapter examines the establishment of the Staffordshire Football Association, considers the attempts to introduction one universal set of rules, and explores the introduction of the Staffordshire Challenge Cup.

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[186] Michelle King, 'Working With/In Archives', in *Research Methods for History*, eds. Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Press, 2010), 19, 20.
[187] Keats-Rohan, 'Chameleon or Chimera?', 13.

Chapter Five[1]

Governance and Regulation

Szymanski states that the formulation of an agreed fixed set of rules and the adoption of governance are two of the principle characteristics of modern sport.[2] As part of the 'sporting revolution' that Britain experienced during the nineteenth century, sport transformed from informal recreational activities with few written rules into a mass entertainment industry that was administered by governing bodies and played under specific sets of guidelines that were commonly accepted across the country.[3] By the final three decades of the century, every prominent sport in England possessed a governing body that had the power and authority to develop, implement, and enforce rules. Tranter notes that the proliferation of governing bodies of sports, both at a national and local perspective, reflected the impact of the sporting revolution at a macro-level where recreational activities increasingly became codified, structured, and controlled.[4] For Huizinga, this development represented the dividing line between modern sport and informal recreation or 'play',[5] whilst Vamplew suggests that the standardization of rules was critical as it enabled the widespread diffusion of sport.[6] Syzmanski claims that 'the adoption of rules represents the shift from anarchy to organisation, and at the same time the adoption of government'.[7]

The formation of the English Football Association (FA) in 1863 is often used by scholars as a key milestone that represented the formal emergence of association football in its modern form, with Bragg claiming that the original set of FA rules was one of the books that

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[1] Content from this chapter has been published in the following articles or chapters: Martyn Dean Cooke, 'The Emergence of Club Football in The Potteries: Bottle Kilns for Goalposts', in *The Early Development of Football: Contemporary Debates*, ed. Graham Curry (New York: Routledge, 2019), 79-98.

[2] Stefan Szymanksi, 'A Theory of the Evolution of Modern Sport', *International Association of Sport Economists* 6, no.30 (2006): 15. Guttman (1978) identified seven key features of modern sports: secularism, equality, bureaucratization, specialization, rationalization, quantification, and the obsession with records.

[3] Tony Collins, *Sport in a Capitalist Society: A Short History* (London: Routledge, 2013), 49; and Mike Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport* (London: Hambledon, 2004), 6.

[4] Neil Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society in Britain: 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 24-25.

[5] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon press, 1955), 197.

[6] Wray Vamplew, 'Playing with the Rules: Influences on the Development of Regulation in Sport', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 24, no.7 (2007): 844.

[7] Szymanksi, 'Evolution of Modern Sport', 15.

'changed the world'.[8] However, whilst the FA would ultimately develop into one of the most powerful sporting governing bodies in England during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in reality, its initial impact on the growth, development, and diffusion of the game was limited. Taylor claims that 1863 should be regarded as 'something of a false start in the game's development' and highlights that it was not until the late-1870s and early-1880s that the FA began to evolve into a truly national body.[9] During its formative years it represented a small number of mainly southern clubs with Midwinter noting that it had just 30 member clubs by 1868, all located in the south of England, and that this had risen to just 50 by the early 1870s, exemplifying its 'unrepresentative and limited start'.[10] Furthermore, the elite public schools were initially hostile to the FA and its laws, wishing to protect their own unique forms of the game, and it was not until 1868 that the first major school sides, Charterhouse and Westminster, became affiliated.[11] During the 1860s and early-1870s association football remained largely geographically confined with different forms of the game being played under various rules across the country. At first, the Sheffield Football Association, established in 1867, and the 'Sheffield Rules' that it developed and disseminated were far more influential than those of the FA, especially in the north of England and the Midlands. The Sheffield FA possessed more affiliated clubs and players during its formative years whilst many prominent northern football clubs chose to play under Sheffield Rules.[12] It was not until April 1877 that the Sheffield FA came under the affiliation of the FA and one set of unanimous rules were agreed. Arnold notes that it was only during the mid-1880s that the FA 'dominated the administration of the association code in England'.[13]

For much of the 1860s and 1870s association football in England remained unstructured and somewhat fractured, with various forms of the game being conducted under different rules across the country. Even within specific towns, cities, or regions it was not uncommon for multiple contrasting versions of a dribbling form of football to be in existence.[14] Whilst football was undoubtedly beginning to emerge as the most prominent and popular winter sport in many areas of England during this period, it was far from being a truly national game. As demonstrated in Chapter Three, although The Potteries may have possessed an increasing number of formal association football clubs and transitory teams during the mid-1870s there were several contrasting rules in existence that had been adopted to officiate matches. Contemporary match reports indicate that preferences relating to the length of the contest, the number of players allowed on the pitch, and the fundamental rules of the game fluctuated and contrasted wildly from club to club. Unsurprisingly, this created an environment where disputes, disagreements, and peculiar occurrences were commonplace.

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[8] See Melvyn Bragg, *12 Books That Changed the World* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2006).

[9] Matthew Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2008), 31.

[10] Eric Midwinter, *Parish to Planet. How Football Came to Rule the World* (Warwickshire: Know the Score Books, 2007), 58.

[11] James Walvin, *The People's Game: A Social History of British Football* (London: Allen Lane, 1975), 43.

[12] Taylor, *Association Game*, 31

[13] Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980), 15.

[14] Taylor, *Association Game*, 31.

The formation of the FA in 1863 had minimal influence over how the game developed in The Potteries during this period, reflected in the prominence of Sheffield Rules in the region, whilst it is noticeable that Stoke FC did not enter the Football Association Challenge Cup (FA Cup) until as late as 1883.[15] Due to the initial limited jurisdiction of the FA, various county football associations began to be established from the 1870s onwards to provide governance, structure, and regulation. At first, these operated independently of the FA, although all would eventually become affiliated during the 1880s, and they were established by enthusiastic individuals who sought to implement standardized rules, introduce cup competitions, and promote the game in their specific region. The Staffordshire Football Association was established in 1877 and adopted the responsibility of developing the game in The Potteries and North Staffordshire, providing formal governance for the first time.[16] The importance of county football associations in the evolution and development of football in England during the nineteenth century has been highlighted elsewhere, yet the influence, activities and nuances of these organisations have been overlooked and under researched.[17]

This chapter examines the deliberate and organised attempts that were made to provide governance and regulation for association football in The Potteries during the late-1870s and early 1880s. It is split into three distinct sections. First, despite the expansion of football activity in the region during the mid-1870s, which was characterised by a dramatic increase in the number of formal clubs in existence and the volume of matches being organised, the game itself had yet to mature and evolve into its organised, modern form. The opening section explores how association football in The Potteries during the 1870s was played using multiple contrasting rules with matches contested over varying lengths of time by differing numbers of players. The lack of one standardized set of rules led to regular disputes and disagreements, which ultimately resulted in calls for greater governance and regulation. The second section is a biographical account of the life of Thomas Charles Slaney who was one of the region's first sporting pioneers. He drove the development of Stoke FC, with his efforts as captain and secretary transforming the club from a prominent local organisation into a football institution of national repute, whilst he was the leading figure in the establishment and formative years of the Staffordshire FA. It was primarily through his enthusiasm and administrative capabilities that association football in North Staffordshire began to become more widely codified, structured, and controlled. Finally, this chapter provides a detailed account of the formative years of the Staffordshire FA, including its establishment in 1877, the introduction of a knock-out cup competition, and early issues with governance and acceptance.

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[15] Simon Lowe, *Stoke City: A Nostalgic Look at a Century of the Club* (Yeovil: Haynes Publishing, 2011), 8.

[16] See Robert Speake, *One Hundred Years of County Football – The Staffordshire Football Association, 1877-1977* (Staffordshire: Staffordshire Football Association, 1977).

[17] Szymanksi, 'Evolution of Modern Sport', 15; Vamplew, 'Playing with the Rules', 850; and Martin Westby, *England's Oldest Football Clubs, 1815-1889* (Sheffield: Martin Westby), 209.

The Demand for Greater Governance

The explosion of football activity that occurred in The Potteries during the mid-to-late 1870s resulted in the game emerging as the most popular form of sporting activity in the region. The growing number of formal clubs were complimented by transitory teams, that were formed for specific occasions, whilst informal activities, such as football being played in the street or spontaneous matches being organised as part of the entertainment at community events, exemplified the emergent association football culture. At one end of the spectrum was Stoke FC, the most prominent formal club in the region that attracted over 1,500 paying spectators to matches, whilst at the opposite extremity were three boys who were charged for playing football in the street, with their actions being described as 'a perpetual nuisance'.[18] The diversity in the types of football activity taking place, the range of organisations from which clubs and teams emerged, and the scope of players that came from across the working and middle classes, signifies the growing popularity of the sport in the region during this period.

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[18] 'Stone Throwing Nuisance', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 8, 1877, 10; and 'Stoke v. Nottingham Forest', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 18, 1878, 4.

However, whilst the foundations of a football culture that would continue to flourish into the twenty-first century were being laid in The Potteries during the 1870s, it would not be until the final two decades of the nineteenth century that the game would adopt a more formal, organised structure that would include stricter governance, a unanimous set of rules, and the introduction of multiple league and cup competitions. Instead, football in the region during the 1870s was still undoubtedly in its formative stages and was somewhat fractured, with multiple sets of contrasting rules being applied simultaneously by clubs and players, which created a significant amount of confusion and, at times, conflict. The influence of FA was not felt in The Potteries until the early 1880s and although some reports in the contemporary press refer to 'London Association Rules' being used it is apparent that these are dwarfed by the number of matches that were played using Sheffield Rules or unnamed local interpretations.[19] Furthermore, clubs and teams relied upon 'friendly' matches to form the basis of their fixture schedule in the absence of formal cup competitions or leagues, although the increasingly regular disputes and disagreements that became apparent as the period progressed suggests that many players were still enthused by the prospect of winning. This opening section presents the organisation and structure of football in the region during the 1870s as being fractured, disjointed, and, despite the obvious increasing popularity and growth of the game, far from being a sophisticated culture.

First, the basic principles of the game, both in terms of the length of matches and the number of players permitted to participate, differed markedly between various clubs. The length of matches fluctuated from being a predetermined set time to being decided by external factors. Contests were reported to have lasted for one hour, an hour and fifteen minutes, an hour and a half, and two hours with most matches kicking off between 2:45pm and 3:15pm to align with businesses closing as part of the Saturday half-holiday.[20] In contrast, Hanley Rangers and Keele simply opted to continue playing until darkness, which meant that the players could not physically see the ball, when they met in December 1877 whilst in January 1878 a contest was ended prematurely when the ball burst and a replacement could not be procured.[21] There were also significant differences in terms of the number of players that a team was comprised of. In December 1876, Talke Rangers fielded just eight players, although match reports indicate that teams generally appear to have consisted of 11, 12 or 13 individuals.[22] However, competing sides did not necessarily always have an equal number of players. It was not uncommon for teams to play with one or two men more (or less) than their opponents, although Burslem Providence contested a fixture against Goldenhill Wanderers in November 1876 with 'five men less'.[23] In some cases this was a purposeful attempt to balance the quality of each side to ensure a competitive match, such as when Stoke FC arranged an internal game between the 'First Twelve' and 'Next 20', but in other cases it was often due to players arriving late or not turning up at all.[24] Furthermore, match reports also indicate that players did not always participate for the entirety of the contest and sometimes had to leave mid-way through, such as in March 1877 when Talke Rangers were left one man short against Macclesfield following the absence of F. Wade who had to depart after the interval.[25] Some clubs did allow opponents who were shorthanded the opportunity to use 'substitutes' to boost their number, either by lending them some of their own players or pulling enthusiastic spectators out of the crowd. Boothen All Saints arrived at their fixture against Stone in January 1878 short of players and subsequently 'borrowed' two members from their opponents to 'equalise their numbers'.[26] The following month Cobridge were not quite as fortunate when they were two men short for their contest against Basford and had to resort to convincing two spectators to play, yet 'it was evident … that this was their first attempt at football'.[27] It was a similar case for Stoke FC in December 1876 where they 'played under great disadvantages, employing three substitutes who knew little of the game'.[28] If substitutes could not be acquired then teams had to be content to play with a numerical disadvantage whilst some match reports indicate that clubs ‘declined to accept substitutes’, presumably to preserve a sense of pride.[29]

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[19] For examples see 'Stoke v. Stafford', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 6, 1876, 3; 'Cobridge v. Stoke (2nd Team)', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 22, 1877, 4; and 'Stone v. Wolstanton', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 13, 1877, 4.

[20] 'Normacott v. All Saints, Stoke', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 27, 1876, 4; 'Cobridge v. Wolstanton', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 14, 1878, 4; 'Hanley Catholic Boys v. Hanley Caxon', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 14, 1878, 4; and 'Hartshill (2nd) v. Knutton', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 18, 1878, 4.

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[21] 'Hanley Rangers v. Keele', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 10, 1877, 3; and 'Mount Pleasant Rangers v. Newcastle Rangers', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 21, 1878, 3.

[22] 'Football. Talke Rangers 2nd Team v. Basford', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 4, 1877, 2; and 'Cocknage v. Uttoxeter', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 5, 1876, 3.

[23] 'Burslem Providence v. Goldenhill', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 28, 1876, 3.

[24] 'Stoke 1st Team v. The Next Twenty', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 24, 1877, 4.

[25] 'Talke Rangers v. Macclesfield', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 4, 1877, 4.

[26] 'Stone v. Boothen (All Saints) Recreation', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 10, 1878, 3.

[27] 'Cobridge 2nd v. Basford 2nd', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 5, 1878, 4.

[28] 'Stoke v. Stafford', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 6, 1876, 3.

The greatest challenge facing football clubs in The Potteries during the mid to late 1870s was not finding opposition against whom to play, as had once been the case, but now rather agreeing upon the rules of the game itself. Russell notes that football retained the appearance of a fledgling sport and that the rules were fluid, often characterised and shaped by regional idiosyncrasies, and subject to dispute.[30] The formation of the FA in 1863 had minimal impact on the growth and development of the game in The Potteries. Its activities were not reported in the local press and it was not until 1883 that Stoke FC became the first club from the region to enter the flagship FA Cup competition which had run since 1871.[31] The reach and appeal of the FA was initially predominantly limited to the south of England with Taylor commenting that ‘there is precious little evidence that the FA did much to spread or popularise its new code’ in the years immediately following its formation.[32] It was the Sheffield FA, formed in 1867, that had the greater influence in the north of England and the Midlands with its Sheffield Rules being subsequently adopted within numerous regions, although certainly not comprehensively. Harvey has suggested that it was the influence of Sheffield FC, who were members of the FA but continued to play using their own Sheffield Rules, that was instrumental in the FA modifying its own code, arranging exhibition matches, and sending its rules to club secretaries across the country as an attempt to broaden its appeal.[33] The Sheffield FA possessed more clubs and members than the FA during its formative years and even when the two bodies agreed a unanimous set of rules in April 1877 many clubs and teams across England continued to play under Sheffield Rules into the 1880s. Furthermore, a multitude of local interpretations of the game and unique rules remained prominent across various regions with many persisting into the late nineteenth century and beyond, exemplified by Ashbourne’s traditional Shrove Tuesday contest which continues to be played in the twenty-first century. The evolution of association football during the second half of the nineteenth century was messy, disjointed, and it took two decades before the FA secured its position as the game's leading authority.

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[29] ‘Talke Rangers v. Burslem’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 6, 1876, 3.

[30] Dave Russell, *Football and the English: A Social History of Association Football in England, 1863-1998* (Preston: Carnegie, 1997), 10.

[31] Lowe, *Stoke City*, 8.

[32] Taylor, *Association Game*, 31.

[33] See Adrian Harvey, ‘“An Epoch in the Annals of National Sport”: Football in Sheffield and the Creation of Modern Soccer and Rugby’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 18, no.4 (2001): 92-116.

This trend also characterised football in The Potteries during the 1870s with clubs and teams playing the game under various sets of rules. Match reports published by the local press indicate that matches were contested under 'London Association Rules', 'Sheffield Rules' ('Old' and 'New'), and additional local interpretations.[34] A letter to the editor of the *Staffordshire Advertiser* commented that football 'is perhaps of all games the most diverse in its rules, and the one that admits of most varieties' but that 'there are certain common elements'.[35] In order to arrange and participate in regular fixtures most clubs and teams had to reach some form of compromise with their opponents in relation to the rules of the game, often resulting in them playing under laws that they were unfamiliar with. Russell suggests that captains would agree to play a match using their opponents preferred rules on the condition that they could dictate the terms of a reverse fixture, whilst it was not unknown for the rules to be switched at half time in an attempt to ensure that neither side were disadvantaged for the entirety of the game.[36] Whilst these agreements and a willingness to be flexible undoubtedly helped to facilitate a greater number of fixtures, it also resulted in confusion, frustration, and regular disputes.

In October 1877, Cobridge and Stoke FC (Second Team) agreed to play 'the (off-side game) new Sheffield Rules' but such was the confusion that this caused that the match was halted and only recommenced when both captains agreed to revert to an alternative set of rules familiar to players from both sides.[37] Such disputes were not always resolved in such an amicable fashion with many contests being prematurely ended due to disagreements. In February 1876, a contest between Hanley Albert and Normacott failed to reach a conclusion when 'two of the players fouled each other, and after some disputing the visitors determined to break off the match'.[38] Similarly, Cocknage refused to play the second half of their match in November 1877 after disputing two goals scored against them whilst later that month the captain of Boothen Star 'picked up the ball [midway through the game] and would not proceed' following a dispute.[39] When a goal was disallowed for offside in a match between Wolstanton and Boothen Recreation 'the Wolstanton captain … refused to continue play unless the goal was given … this not being acquiesced in by the Boothen captain, the game was brought to an abrupt termination'.[40] Match reports reveal that disputes were a regular occurrence, that players often did not thoroughly understand the rules being used, and that some clubs and teams 'caused great disturbance by their squabbling'.[41] There were also a number of practical disagreements, such as whether the ball had gone under or above 'the tape' that acted as a crossbar, or interference from spectators, exemplified in a match between Normacott and Hartshill in March 1878 where a man from the crowd ran onto the pitch and cleared a goal-bound shot off the line.[42] A more comical example occurred in February 1878 when 'Clewlow, for the [Fenton] Excelsior, was making a fine run up the ground … when the Dresden team saw that he was bound for another goal they pulled up the goal-posts and would not allow the ball to pass'.[43]

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[34] For examples see 'Stoke v. Stafford', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 6, 1876, 3; 'Cobridge v. Stoke (2nd Team)', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 22, 1877, 4; and 'Stone v. Wolstanton', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 13, 1877, 4.

[35] 'Football. To the Editor of the Staffordshire Advertiser', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, November 4, 1876, 2.

[36] Russell, *Football and the English*, 10-11.

[37] 'Cobridge v. Stoke (2nd Team)', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 22, 1877, 4.

[38] 'Football. Hanley Albert v Normacott', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 26, 1876, 3.

The responsibility of officiating matches and resolving disputes between players during the 1860s and 1870s was assumed by two umpires, with one being nominated by each of the competing sides, although in some cases this practice was ignored and the players, especially the two captains, governed the game themselves.[44] Each umpire was positioned in one half of the pitch and were required to consider any appeals made by players during the contest, such as foul play, offside or whether the ball had crossed the goal line, before reaching a joint decision as to the appropriate course of action.[45] Mason notes that it was not uncommon for the match to continue whilst the two umpires deliberated an appeal and that the, subconscious or deliberate, bias of those selected often hindered their ability to reach a unanimous agreement.[46] A fixture between Talke Rangers and Stoke FC in February 1876 was stopped after half an hour, not because of a dispute between the players, but rather due to the umpires being unable to agree 'as to their proper position on the field'.[47] Even if the officials reached an agreement there was no guarantee that it would be accepted by the players. In November 1877, the Boothen All Saints captain 'thought fit to dispute the decision of the umpires' with the game eventually brought to an early conclusion.[48] Furthermore, just because an individual was selected to act as an umpire did not automatically confirm that he had an adequate understanding of the game or rules being employed. The match report from a fixture between Market Drayton and Keele described the umpire as someone 'who seemed to know nothing of the game' and concluded that 'from his subsequent decisions and behaviour we should say he had never been on a football field in his life … and for his own sake we would advise that he never go on one again'.[49]

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[39] 'Cocknage v. Normacott', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 5, 1877, 3; and 'Boothen Star (2nd) v. St. Peter's National School', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 26, 1877, 3.

[40] 'Wolstanton v. Boothen Recreation Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 24, 1877, 7.

[41] 'Cocknage v. Normacott', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 5, 1877, 3; 'Wolstanton v Boothen All Saints', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 20, 1877, 4; and 'Winton Rangers (alias Bath-Street Star) v. Boothen Star', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 10, 1877, 4.

[42] 'Tunstall Churches (United) v. Great Chell', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 14, 1878, 4; and 'Hartshill 2nd v. Normacott 2nd', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 2, 1878, 4.

[43] 'P Walker, hon. sec. to Fenton Excelsior writes as follows', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 12, 1878, 4.

[44] Russell, *Football and the English*, 31.

[45] Taylor, *Association Game*, 87.

[46] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 160, 210.

However, the majority of clubs and teams appear to have been content to accept the decision of the umpires, even if they did not necessarily agree, so that play could continue, although club secretaries made a conscientious effort in their match reports to highlight if goals had been disputed. It was noted how 'unlike some clubs Cocknage … behaved in the most handsome manner' whilst the captain of Stoke FC 'to avoid dispute … gave the visitors [Wolstanton] the benefit of a very questionable doubt' and permitted an offside goal to stand so that the match could resume.[50] From 1871 neutral referees were introduced in the latter stages of the FA Cup to resolve disagreements between umpires, although this practice was only slowly adopted by clubs across Britain.[51] The referee was initially a peripheral figure who adjudicated from the side of the pitch and it was not until the late 1880s that they were permitted to police the game from within the playing area with the two umpires becoming linesmen.[52]

During the 1870s, football, although having developed into a more rule-bound activity when compared to some of the traditional forms of the game present in the first half of the century, was still a physical and robust recreation that had the potential to cause serious injury. Kitching notes that during this period the game was open to a large degree of interpretation as to how it could be played, specifically in terms of the positioning of players on the field and tactics, which resulted in the 'radically underdeveloped nature of lateral play, passing, and open field play'.[53] The general strategy adopted by teams during this period was to move the ball down the middle of the field through a mixture of individual dribbling or sheer force. If a forward in possession of the ball was halted, then a teammate would attempt to follow up and continue the attack whilst play would often be mired in 'scrimmages' where multiple players from each side would tussle for the ball simultaneously. Passing of the ball was not entirely absent, although it only tended to occur in the form of long punts made by players to clear the ball from danger or, more infrequently, very short passes between small groups of forwards who were running forward together.[54] The *Staffordshire Advertiser* noted that 'a rough game football is no doubt, especially as it is played sometimes – a nose is broken now and then, or an arm, or a rib or two, or it may even be a leg' although it was claimed that is was 'as safe as rinking [ice-skating] and ten times as safe as fox-hunting'.[55]

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[47] 'Talke Rangers v. Stoke-on-Trent', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 12, 1876, 7.
[48] 'Wolstanton v. Boothen All Saints', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 20, 1877, 4.
[49] 'Market Drayton v. Keele', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 5, 1878, 4.
[50] 'Stone v. Wolstanton', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 12, 1877, 4; and 'Stone v. Cocknage', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 15, 1877, 3.
[51] Russell, *Football and the English*, 31.
[52] Taylor, *Association Game*, 87; and Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, 210.

There were several reports of football resulting in serious injuries across The Potteries including broken arms and legs.[56] It was the occurrence of scrimmages that afforded the greatest threat of injury with one report commenting how 'in a struggle for the ball, Hampson [and] … other players fell to the ground, and, their legs being entangled in the fall, the result was that Hampson's leg snapped below the knee'.[57] In extreme cases injuries sustained whilst playing football could also be fatal. In March 1879, a bank clerk from Staffordshire, identified by the press as George (referred in some reports as Charles) Ross, was participating in a match at Leek when 'he was knocked down by one of the opposing club … and [was] so injured internally that he died'.[58] It was later suggested that the deceased man had already been suffering from illness and that his death was 'accelerated' by the injuries he sustained.[59] Similarly, in February 1879 it was reported that Herbert Whitelock, a member of Goldenhill

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[53] Gavin Kitching, 'What's In a Name? Playing "Football" in the Mid-Victorian North-Eastern England', *Ethnologie Française* 41, no.4 (2011): 605.

[54] Ibid., 605.

[55] 'Football. To the Editor of the Staffordshire Advertiser', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, November 4, 1876, 2.

[56] 'Fenton. Accident in the Football Field', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 21, 1876, 3; and 'Burslem. Another Football Accident', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 4, 1878, 3.

[57] 'Accident to a Football Player', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 20, 1877, 3.

[58] 'Another Death from Football', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, March 8, 1879, 11.

[59] 'Alleged Death from Football', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 8, 1879, 8.

Wanderers, ‘in a match against Tunstall … received injuries which resulted in his death’.[60] However, it is worth noting that such serious incidents, especially those that resulted in death, do not appear to have been a regular occurrence and not all matches were physical contests. In December 1877, with ‘the play being chiefly on the Cocknage half of the ground … the Normacott backs, not being troubled, indulged themselves in leapfrog and other games to keep out the cold’.[61] Many contemporary commentators were keen to emphasise the benefits of the football, suggesting that ‘our pale-faced potters, and clerks, and shopmen would be better mentally as well as physically for the free play of the limbs and the unlimited inspiration of fresh air which a game of football encourages’.[62] Furthermore, despite the physical nature of the game and possibility of injury, football appears to have been widely accepted as an appropriate recreation with no complaints apparent in the local press. In contrast, leading religious figures had venomously criticised and protested the presence of horse racing in The Potteries during the 1850s and 1860s, writing to the *Staffordshire Advertiser* to warn of the ‘evil tendency’ it promoted.[63]

By the latter years of the 1870s association football had developed into the primary sporting pursuit in The Potteries, yet it was undoubtedly still a recreation that was in its infancy in terms of its structure and this was reflected in the various rules adopted by clubs, the varying numbers of players that teams comprised of, and the fluctuating length of matches. Football across the region required governance and structure if it was to become sustainable with Midwinter suggesting that it could not rely upon the enthusiasm of individual clubs, teams, and players alone when their interpretations of rules and play were often contradictory.[64] Sheffield (1867) and Birmingham (1875) had successfully established county football associations to provide the game in those localities with greater stability, facilitating further development, and acting as an adjudicator in disputes over matches and rules of play.[65] It was clear that The Potteries and the broader region of North Staffordshire required a similar organisational body under the leadership of an enthusiastic individual to organise, govern, and regulate the football activity occurring across the area.[66]

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[60] ‘Kidsgrove. The Football Accident’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 13, 1879, 3.

[61] ‘Normacott v. Cocknage’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 18, 2.

[62] ‘Football’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 22, 1878, 2.

[63] ‘Pottery Races’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 3, 1850, 1.

[64] Midwinter, *Parish to Planet*, 60.

[65] Mike Huggins, ‘The Spread of Association Football in North-East England, 1876-90: The Pattern of Diffusion’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 6, no.3 (1976): 308; and Taylor, *Association Game*, page 39-40.

The Influence of Thomas Charles Slaney

During the early 1870s, Stoke FC remained the only formal association football club in The Potteries and, although it was an organisation of local importance, it had yet to emerge as a club of national repute. The lack of local opposition against which to play meant that the activities of the club during its formative years were somewhat limited and the team engaged in a relatively limited fixture schedule predominantly against sides located in neighbouring counties. For example, reports from the contemporary press indicate that during the 1871/72 season the team participated in six matches and this had reduced to just four matches the following campaign.[67] Furthermore, although Stoke FC did attract sizeable attendances during this period, often numbering in the hundreds, it had yet to evolve into a mass-spectator club. It would not be until the mid-1870s that thousands of gate-paying supporters would attend fixtures and the club would begin to transform into a commercial entity, ultimately concluding with it becoming registered as a limited company. As with many sports clubs during the Victorian period, Stoke FC required the input and influence of an enthusiastic individual that could transform it from what was effectively a recreational team into a club of national repute. For Stoke FC, that individual was Thomas Charles Slaney.

Thomas Charles Slaney first became associated with Stoke FC in 1871 and came to be regarded as one of the key footballing pioneers in The Potteries over a twenty-year period.[68] His involvement with the club as a player, captain, secretary, treasurer, and umpire laid the foundations that enabled it to become a leading national sporting institution, ultimately culminating in an invitation to become one of the twelve founding members of the Football League in 1888.[69] In addition, Slaney also took the lead role in the development and growth of the game in Staffordshire and was the principal figure in the establishment and formation of the Staffordshire FA in 1877 where he served as secretary and president for a combined seventeen years.[70] His influence on football in the region was unprecedented, yet he also became involved in the governance of local cricket, was a vociferous political campaigner, and came to be regarded as something of a local celebrity, with his death attracting hundreds of mourners to his funeral.[71] Mangan and Hickey highlight that Slaney was not only synonymous with Stoke FC but that he was also one of the most prominent figures in football in the Midlands during the 1870s and 1880s, yet he has been overlooked by modern histories of the game and 'has now disappeared from view'.[72] This subsequent section rectifies this gap in the literature by providing a biographical account of Thomas Charles Slaney's life, his influence with Stoke FC, and how he led the development of association football in North Staffordshire through his involvement with the Staffordshire FA. It draws upon a variety of primary sources including genealogical material, contemporary newspaper reports, and institutional logbooks, diaries, and records.

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[66] Martyn Cooke and Gary James, ‘Myths, Truths and Pioneers: The Early Development of Association Football in The Potteries’, *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2017): 16.

[67] James Anthony Mangan and Colm Hickey, ‘Early Action: Founding and Furthering Clubs’, *Soccer and Society* 9, no.5 (2008): 641-642.

[68] Tony Matthews, *The Encyclopaedia of Stoke City, 1868-1994* (West Bromwich: The Lion Press, 1994), 6; and Cooke and James, ‘Myths, Truths and Pioneers’, 14.

[69] Matthew Taylor, *The Leaguers. The Making of Professional Football in England, 1900-1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 1-5.

In May 1873, Michael John Godby resigned from his position as captain of Stoke FC at the annual meeting held to mark the culmination of the season.[73] He had been involved with the club since its formative years and under his leadership it was noted that 'the organisation had prospered, but did not play many matches', reflected by the positive balance of £1 7s and yet only a scattering of matches arranged during the campaign.[74] The departure of Godby, who was leaving the region and was presented with a gold locket by members of the club in recognition of his efforts, was followed by the resignation of Edward T. Gardom, who had served as club secretary for at least two seasons, one year later.[75] This effectively created a power vacuum where the two primary positions of authority within the club were unfilled and provided an opportunity for new individuals to provide the organisation with fresh ideas, impetus and enthusiasm. It was Slaney who would come to fill both roles simultaneously and act as a transformational leader, providing Stoke FC with a new direction and purpose.

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[70] See Robert Speake, *The Staffordshire Football Association*.

[71] Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 14-16.

[72] Mangan and Hickey, 'Early Action', 641-642.

[73] 'Stoke. Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, May 8, 1873, 2.

[74] 'Football in the North. No.14 – The Stoke Club', *Athletic News*, March 3, 1877, 1.

[75] 'Stoke-upon-Trent. Football', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, March 28, 1873, 3; and Westby, *England's Oldest Football Clubs*, 473.

Thomas Slaney was born in Market Drayton, Shropshire, in 1852 and was one of four children raised by Charles and Jane Slaney. By 1861 the family were residing in Princes Street, Penkhull, a district affiliated with the town of Stoke, with his father employed by a local hotel as an ostler (stableman) and coachman.[76] Slaney had three younger siblings, Frederick, Arthur, and Francis, and attended St. Peter's School (Stoke) which was under the governance of headmaster John Whitta Thomas, who was a prominent figure in local sport due to his association with the Stoke Victoria Athletic Club. The institution was attended by 200 young boys from across the town and was profoundly influenced by the Rector of Stoke, Reverend Lovelace Tomlinson Stamer, who took a keen interest in improving education across the region and permitted the teachers and students at St. Peter's the use of the church grounds for activities, events, and sports.[77]

Slaney prospered as a student and the school logbook makes regular references to his academic acumen and accomplishments, including him being the most prominent reader among his peers and winning a regional academic competition in 1863.[78] It is apparent that he was held in high regard by his tutors and he was appointed as 'monitor of the 3rd class to assist master Boddington' whilst his name is mentioned so frequently in the school records that the number of references made to him dwarf those made to other students.[79] The teachers and clergymen involved with the school actively sought to facilitate a variety of sports and physical recreations for the boys under their stewardship with cricket and football being regular pursuits. Cricket matches were played on the school yard or in the adjoining church grounds whilst Reverend Stamer 'made the boys a present of a football' in 1863 once lessons had concluded and encouraged them to organise a game.[80] Cricket was often formally organised by teachers who, during the summer, would often '[take] the boys out [of lessons] earlier than usual for a cricket match' whilst football appears to have been a more informal, ad hoc activity that was arranged by like-minded students.[81] Slaney certainly engaged in these sporting activities and these early experiences would have a significant and lasting influence that would facilitate his exploits in later life. The school logbook notes that during one cricket contest 'Slaney managed to break, accidently of course, one of the large classroom windows while playing on the school yard … Made him go and order a new one in its place as punishment'.[82]

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[76] Census Returns, Penkhull, 1861 (RG 9/1938); and Census Returns, Penkhull, 1871 (RG 10/2869).

[77] See Denis Stuart, *People of the Potteries* (Keele: University of Keele, 1985).

[78] John W. Thomas, *St. Peter's High School Logbook and Records* (Stoke: Stoke-on-Trent City Archives, 2016).

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

In January 1871, Slaney relocated to Birmingham where he attended Saltley Teacher Training College (also referred to as Saint Peter's) for two years.[83] The college was established in 1852 and by 1871 it was attended by 88 students who undertook a comprehensive educational programme that also required them to gain practical teaching experience in a school during their second year of study.[84] The impact of teacher training colleges on the growth, development, and dissemination of sport during the nineteenth century has yet to be fully considered despite their potential importance. Mangan proposed that they promoted the ideals of athleticism and encouraged an enthusiasm for sport within teachers which was then filtered down throughout the schools and students that they interacted with.[85] Furthermore, Gibbons has noted that Saltley College had an exceptional reputation for producing an array of teachers that that had prominent careers as association football players or administrators during the final three decades of the nineteenth century.[86] It was during his time whilst enrolled at Saltley College that Slaney first became associated with Stoke FC, making his playing debut in January 1872, yet his academic commitments limited his participation in club activities and he rarely featured in the team until the autumn of 1873.[87]

He returned to The Potteries permanently in 1873 following the conclusion of his studies at Saltley College and embarked on a teaching career that saw him work at St. Peter's School (Stoke), St. John's School (Hanley), and Longsden Day School (Leek) over a twenty-five-year period.[88] He was a fierce disciplinarian in the classroom and whilst headmaster of Boothen School (Stoke) in 1876 he was summoned to court following an altercation with a parent who had complained at his son receiving a 'thrashing' and 'unmerciless beating' as a punishment for ‘insulting and defying language’. The charges were eventually dismissed as it was decided that ‘the boy had been rude and deserved punishment’ although Slaney’s ‘severe handling’ of the student was commented on, underlining his authoritarian, no-nonsense approach to discipline whilst teaching.[89] The occurrence appears to have been a somewhat isolated incident of overzealousness on Slaney’s part, but it does provide a different perspective on his personality and character, which were often presented as being faultless once he had emerged as a prominent public figure during the late 1870s and 1880s.

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 15.

[84] 'Saltley Training College. New Model and Practising Schools', *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, September 10, 1869, 3; 'Saltley Training College', *Birmingham Daily Post*, May 17, 1872, 6.

[85] James Anthony Mangan, 'Missing Men: Schoolmasters and the Early Years of Association Football', *Soccer and Society* 9, no.2 (2008): 174-176.

[86] Phillip Gibbons, *Association Football in Victorian England: A History of the Game from 1863-1900* (Leicester: Upfront, 2002), 22-23.

[87] 'Football. Stoke-upon-Trent v. Rugely', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, January 13, 1872, 4; and Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 15.

[88] 'Death of Mr. Thomas C. Slaney', *Leek Post and Times*, March 12, 1898, 8.

Mangan and Hickey highlight that teachers played a central role in the growth and development of association football during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. They identify several teachers who made significant contributions to the administration of both amateur and, later, professional football with many holding significant positions of influence within individual clubs, county football associations, and governing bodies (both national and international).[90] The notion that teachers were crucial to the emergence of the game is not new. As early as the 1954, Marples proposed that ‘thousands of clubs must have been started at one time or another by schoolmasters’,[91] whilst more recently Walvin noted that ‘one factor which encouraged the growth [of football] … was the role of training colleges and the teachers they educated’.[92] However, Mangan observes that ‘the part that elementary schoolteachers played in the early development of modern English football remains puzzlingly untold’.[93] Slaney encapsulates the importance of teachers. Here was an individual who was introduced to football whilst a student at St. Peter’s School (Stoke) and for whom a commitment to the game was fostered whilst at Saltley College where he was imbued with the ideals of athleticism. He returned to The Potteries determined to encourage the development of the game, first exerting his influence at Stoke FC before later facilitating the formation of the Staffordshire FA. His excellence in reading, writing, and oration, which were continuously being utilised in his occupation as a teacher, provided him with the basic tools required to excel at his administrative responsibilities at both club level and when involved in the governance of the game across the region.[94]

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[89] ‘Charge Against Two Schoolmasters’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 21, 1876, 3.

[90] See James Anthony Mangan and Colm Hickey, ‘Keeping the Ball Rolling: Administering the Game’, *Soccer and Society* 9, no.5 (2008): 750-772.

[91] Morris Marples, *A History of Football* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1954), 167.

[92] Walvin, *The People’s Game*, 61.

[93] Mangan, ‘Missing Men’, 174.

Following his return to The Potteries, Slaney quickly became a prominent figure within Stoke FC both as a player and as a committee member. By the start of the 1874/75 season he was playing for the first team on a regular basis as a forward, although he played a multitude of positions throughout his career, and was described as being a 'fine and dashing player' who was 'judicious and energetic'.[95] He was evidently well respected by his peers who elected him as secretary in 1873 and midway through the following season (1874/75) he was also appointed as captain after the previous incumbent resigned from the role.[96] This effectively provided Slaney with the authority and power to run the club to his own preferences with the dual roles of secretary and captain empowering him to determine what fixtures to arrange and what players would be selected to participate in matches. Over the subsequent decade he retained control over the club's affairs and was described by *The Book of Football* as being 'the leading light and mainstay of the club' and having a 'long and honourable association'.[97] During his tenure, Slaney transformed the club from being a successful local organisation that arranged few fixtures into one of the most reputable association football clubs in the north of England that attracted thousands of spectators to matches by the early 1880s.

He immediately sought to expand the club's fixture list and prioritised arranging contests against the most prominent clubs in the country over capitalising on the increase in newly formed local sides across The Potteries. Between 1873 and 1877 Stoke only played five matches against local opposition with Slaney ensuring that only sides with an eminent reputation that could provide his players with a stern test, whilst also attracting spectators, were selected. Instead, Slaney concentrated on securing matches against clubs from further afield that were of significant repute, could guarantee large attendances, and wielded influence in the game. Contests were arranged against the likes of Birmingham, Notts County, Nottingham Forrest, Manchester Association, and Manchester Birch whilst a prestige match against Scottish club Queens Park, christened by the press as being the best football club in the world, was also arranged.[98] These events generated substantial interest among the local populace, further promoted the game both in the region, and provided a healthy financial boost through increased gate receipts, with renowned opposition often resulting in the size of the crowd doubling compared to standard matches. In October 1876, Stoke FC faced Notts County with 'the number of spectators being larger than any previous [in the region]' and five months later the visit of Birmingham attracted over 2,000 people.[99] Matches also had a promotional purpose, with contests held in Manchester in January and March 1878 against Manchester Birch, a rugby club that was seeking to explore the association format, and Manchester Association used to encourage the game itself.[100] In December 1877, Slaney arranged for Queens Park to travel to Stoke for what was widely accepted as being the most prestigious football match that the region had seen to date. The visitors were described as 'a team that is admittedly the strongest in Scotland, and is, perhaps, as good a one as the world ever produced' with over 6,000 spectators in attendance.[101]

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[94] Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 14-16.

[95] Matthews, *Encyclopaedia of Stoke City*, 6.

[96] 'Football in the North. No.14 – The Stoke Club', *Athletic News*, March 3, 1877, 1.

[97] Frederick Wall, *The Book of Football: A Complete History and Record of the Association and Rugby Games 1905-06* (London: Amalgamated Press, 1906), 87.

Within four years of assuming control of the club, Slaney had transformed Stoke FC into a profitable enterprise, with a large paying membership and significant gate receipts that continued to increase, and almost 40 matches being played in a season with fixtures arranged against some of the most prestigious opposition in the country.[102] The exposure that these contests provided helped the club to build a national reputation, to make connections with a network of other well-established football clubs, and to cement a place as the primary sporting organisation in The Potteries. This foundation, laid through Slaney's drive, and enthusiasm, allowed Stoke FC to enter the 1880s as one of the leading clubs in the country, which culminated in an invitation to become one of the founding members of the Football League in 1888. Taylor notes that the original 12 founding members were selected 'based on existing networks of contact between clubs and club officials' in addition to being some of the best supported. [103] It was Slaney and his strategy of arranging fixtures against prominent clubs, rather than those located in The Potteries, that facilitated many of these connections between Stoke FC and other nationally significant clubs. In *Association Football and the Men Who Made It*, published in 1905, it was commented that the 'enthusiasm such as Mr Slaney had was of paramount value and necessity of well-being of a club' before stating that 'to a large extent the prosperity of the Stoke Club is due to his indefatigable efforts'.[104]

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[98] Examples include 'Stoke v. Birmingham', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 24, 1877, 8; 'Stoke v. Notts County', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 4, 1878, 3; 'Football Match at Manchester', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 28, 1878, 4; 'Stoke v. Birch (Manchester)', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 29, 1878, 3; and 'Queens Park (Glasgow) v. Stoke-on-Trent', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 15, 1877, 8.

[99] 'Stoke v. Notts County', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 4, 1878, 3; and 'Stoke v. Birmingham', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 24, 1877, 8.

[100] 'Football Match at Manchester', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, January 28, 1878, 4; and 'Stoke v. Birch (Manchester)', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 29, 1878, 3.

[101] 'Stoke v. Glasgow', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 11, 1877, 3; and 'Queens Park (Glasgow) v. Stoke-on-Trent', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 15, 1877, 8.

[102] 'Stoke Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 1, 1877, 5.

Slaney played only sporadically for Stoke during the early 1880s and, as his playing ability began to diminish, he relinquished the captaincy in 1882 and initially took up umpiring, officiating several matches for Stoke FC and contests between other unconnected teams.[105] His continuing involvement in the club after his playing days had ended and his engagement in the broader local football community demonstrates his enthusiasm for the game. It was not uncommon for prominent players or administrative figures to remain involved in football through umpiring once they had stepped away from playing or administration. The role of officiating the match became increasingly important as the period progressed with the introduction of formal cup competitions adding new importance to the overall result and ensuring that players adhered to the rules of the game. Piercey suggests that the performance of match officials subtly began to be measured and recorded towards the end of the nineteenth century whilst the role suited individuals with an in-depth knowledge of the game who were, preferably, well-respected.[106] However, by 1883 Slaney had stepped away entirely from all the roles and responsibilities that he had previously held with Stoke FC and his resignation coincided with the emergence of professionalism in the region. Slaney does not appear to have been opposed to the concept yet within two years of his departure Stoke FC had adopted professionalism and were paying broken-time payments to seven players.[107] It may be that his influence within the club had begun to wane following the end of his playing career or that he wished to step aside and allow a new figure to guide the organisation into the professional era.

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[103] Taylor, *The Leaguers*, 1-5; Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 14-16.

[104] Alfred Gibson and William Pickford, *Association Football and the Men Who Made It (Volume III)* (London: Caxton, 1905), 118.

[105] Examples include 'English Association Challenge Cup (Third Ties). Bolton Wanderers v. The Druids', *Wrexham Advertiser*, January 13, 1883, 8; 'Football. Birmingham Association Challenge Cup', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 15, 1880, 3; and 'Staffordshire Challenge Cup. Stoke v. All Saints, Boothen', *Athletic News*, October 19, 1881, 6.

[106] Nicholas Peircey, *Four Histories about Early Dutch Football, 1910-1920* (London: University College London, 2016), 127.

[107] Matthews, *Encyclopaedia of Stoke City*, 8.

He did re-emerge in local sport for a short period during the late 1880s and early 1890s when it was announced that he would be taking up the role of secretary for the Staffordshire County Cricket Club and he was also present at a meeting in 1889 to discuss the prospect of establishing a national governing body for baseball in Britain.[108] Slaney was described in later years as having been a prominent cricket player, although very little evidence exists to support this beyond a handful of match reports from the early 1870s, but it is clear that he retained an interest in the sport which he had first experienced as a schoolboy.[109] Slaney's ongoing desire to remain involved in the administration and governance of sport in the region beyond football can be interpreted in two ways. First, that he retained an enthusiasm for sport and felt that the skills and experience that he had acquired within football could still be put to good use in other contexts. Alternatively, it could be deemed that Slaney, having gradually lost his authority and influence in football as the period progressed, simply wished to remain relevant and hold a prominent position of power. Cricket was the obvious route for him to explore considering his interest as a schoolboy and the Staffordshire County Cricket Club requiring new leadership.[110] His later involvement in the formation of the National Baseball League of Great Britain in 1890 is also explained by his connections within football and cricket, two areas that those seeking to promote baseball were attempting to exploit. Three of the four teams that entered the league were professional football clubs (one being Stoke FC) whilst many matches were played on cricket grounds. The league itself, which was professional, lasted for only one year although amateur baseball continued in various parts of the country until the turn of the century.[111]

Thomas Charles Slaney died in March 1898 at the age of 45 after contracting typhoid fever and pneumonia whilst travelling in Ireland. His death was reported in publications across the country and he was described as 'jovial, hearty … the life and soul of every circle he joined' with 'genial manners [which] endeared to all who had the pleasure to make his acquaintance'.[112] The *Athletic News* stated that 'when the death of the genial sportsman, Mr. T. C. Slaney became known in the Potteries, quite a gloom was cast over the district, for the deceased gentleman had won his way into the hearts of all who knew him'.[113] The funeral took place in Leek on March 8, 1898, and attracted a substantial gathering of sympathisers from across the country, to such an extent that a special train had to be arranged in order to transport over 100 people from Stoke, whilst 'political, social, and athletic associations [from across the region] … sent deputations to show respect, love and esteem'.[114]

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[108] 'Cricket. Prospects in Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, May 4, 1889, 2; and Daniel Bloyce, '"Just Not Cricket": Baseball in England, 1874-1900', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 12, no.2 (1997): 210.

[109] 'Cricket. Stoke v. Leek', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 16, 1873, 2.

[110] See Chapter One for further details on the Staffordshire County Cricket Club and its precarious financial status during the late nineteenth century.

[111] See Bloyce, '"Just Not Cricket"', 211; and Daniel Bloyce and Patrick Murphy, 'Baseball in England: A Case of Prolonged Cultural Resistance', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 21, no.1 (2008): 126-130.

Whilst Slaney is primarily known for his efforts in transforming Stoke FC into a prominent sporting organisation, he also made a significant contribution to the growth and administration of the game in The Potteries and the broader region of Staffordshire. He was instrumental in the formation of the Staffordshire FA in 1877 and the introduction of the Staffordshire Challenge Cup, the first knock-out cup competition in the area, whilst he also led the Association during its formative years. For over a decade Slaney simultaneously held positions of power at the forefront of the most prominent football club in The Potteries and the local governing body, effectively making him the leading authority on the game in the region. The early history of county football associations has been generally overlooked by academics and, barring a scattering of individual histories, little information exists as to the activities of these bodies during the nineteenth century. The remainder of this chapter examines the formation of the Staffordshire FA and considers its activities, influence, and impact during its formative years.

The Staffordshire Football Association

Tranter suggests that the proliferation of the governing bodies and organisations of sports, both at the national and local level, during the final three decades of the nineteenth century in Britain was a reflection of the 'sporting revolution' which saw recreational activities become codified, structured, and controlled.[115] The emergence of county football associations played a crucial role in the development and dissemination of the game and from the 1870s they increased dramatically in number.[116] Associations were established in Surrey, Cheshire and Lancashire (in 1878), Durham and Northumberland (1879), Cleveland, Lincolnshire, and Norfolk (1881), and Nottingham, Liverpool, Shropshire, Derbyshire, and Cambridgeshire (prior to 1884) to name but a few.[117] Harvey claims that by 1885, 'almost every football club in Britain was embraced by a local association' and that 'the growth of such bodies accelerated during the first half of the 1880s'.[118] However, despite historians recognising the importance of regional football associations in the growth, development, and dissemination of the game they have remained under researched.[119] Huggins states that 'such associations were set up with the intention of giving the infant game more stability, allowing remote clubs to feel part of a greater association, and acting as an adjudicator in disputes'.[120] They gradually evolved to have further ancillary roles including managing leagues and cup competitions, raising money for local charitable causes, and facilitating the growth of junior and schoolboy football.[121] The earliest regional football associations acted independently of the FA and governed the game in their locality with no oversight and in their own unique fashion, often adopting rules that were in contrast to those endorsed by the London association. It was not until the 1880s that the FA absorbed these regional outfits, acting as an umbrella body that entrusted local associations with the power to enforce standardised rules and regulations, and in 1887 its constitution was remodelled so that one representative from each regional body formed the FA Council.[122]

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[112] 'Death of Mr. Thomas C. Slaney', *Leek Post and Times*, March 12, 1898, 8.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society*, 24-25.

By 1877, the popularity of association football in The Potteries was growing rapidly following the adoption of the half-holiday and improving socioeconomic conditions, which enabled the local populace to invest their free time and disposable income on sport. However, as demonstrated earlier in this chapter, the game across the region remained somewhat fractured and dysfunctional, with various rules in existence that created confusion, disputes, and disagreements between clubs.[123] There was a clear need for some form of overarching structure to be established in order to provide governance, to unite clubs under one set of standardised rules, and to provide a direction for the development of the game. With the FA yet to evolve into an organisation with nationwide power and authority, it would be through local innovation that the game in The Potteries would initially be governed.[124]

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[116] Harvey, *First Hundred Years*, 208-209.
[117] Taylor, *Association Game*, 39-40.
[118] Harvey, *First Hundred Years*, 208.
[119] Jim Lusted, 'Playing Games with 'Race": Understanding Resistance to 'Race' Equality Initiatives in English Local Football Governance', *Soccer and Society* 10, no.6 (2009): 726.
[120] Huggins, 'Football in North-East England', 308.
[121] Harvey, *First Hundred Years*, 210.
[122] Speake, *The Staffordshire Football Association*, 32; and Midwinter, *Parish to Planet*, 60.
[123] Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 17-19.

The efforts of Thomas Charles Slaney to expand Stoke FC's fixture schedule by arranging matches against well-established clubs that were located in various regions exposed him, and his fellow club members, to new innovations in the game that were not necessarily present in The Potteries. The development of the railway system across Britain during the nineteenth century enabled football players, administrators and, eventually, spectators to travel the length and breadth of the country where they encountered new approaches to the game. Huggins and Tolson suggest that this provided an opportunity to 'learn new methods and techniques' whilst also experiencing differing interpretations of rules.[125] This notion is supported by Mason, who states that the development of association football during the nineteenth century was partly aided by advancements in transport and communication, which broke down geographic boundaries.[126] By arranging matches against clubs beyond the confines of The Potteries, Slaney and other members of Stoke FC were able to experience alternative rules, approaches to play, and innovations in the game that were present in other regions. Ideas were transferred and shared both through the experience of physical play and the networking that occurred during post-match conviviality, with many clubs providing refreshments once a contest had ended. It was Slaney who first proposed the idea of establishing the Staffordshire FA and he arranged the initial meeting of clubs to discuss the concept in April 1877. It is quite possible that he was inspired by his experiences travelling across the country with Stoke FC and he was essentially replicating what he had witnessed and heard in Derbyshire and Birmingham during the preceding two years.

The South Derbyshire FA was formed in 1871 but it is often overlooked as it only existed for five years before disappearing, with the modern incarnation eventually being formed in 1883. Information about the original organisation is limited, but in 1873 it was reported to have consisted of 12 clubs and possessed over 1,000 members, although it is noticeable that it never inaugurated a knock-out cup competition.[127] From late-1874 to early-1876 Stoke FC arranged regular fixtures against three clubs that were members of the South Derbyshire FA - Derwent (Derby), Derby Grammar School, and Derby St. Andrew's.[128] Match reports refer to several of the players from the Derby-based clubs also being members of the South Derbyshire FA representative team and it is likely that the fledgling organisation would have been a topic of interest for Slaney and other prominent members of Stoke FC. In October 1874, the *Staffordshire Sentinel* reported that 'the Derwent Club sent a very powerful team (amongst whom were seven players who represent their county) down to Stoke',[129] whilst it was noted after the reverse fixture five months later that the Derwent team were 'nearly all representatives of their county'.[130] Furthermore, at least five players who participated in a contest arranged by the South Derbyshire FA against the 'Town' (of Derby) in April 1873 played against Stoke FC for their relevant clubs during the following two years.[131]

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[124] Taylor, *Association Game*, 31.

[125] Mike Huggins and John Tolson, 'The Railways and Sport in Victorian Britain. A Critical Reassessment', *Journal of Transport History* 22, no. 2 (2001): 110.

[126] Mason, *Association Football*, 9.

Similarly, during the 1876/77 season Stoke FC arranged two matches against Birmingham FC (not associated with Small Heath which was the precursor of Birmingham City). Both contests generated significant interest amongst the local populace in both regions with the first game, played at the Lower Grounds, Birmingham, attracting 1,500 spectators whilst the return fixture in March 1877 was watched by an estimated crowd of 2,000.[132] Significantly, in 1875 Birmingham FC had been founding members of the Birmingham and District Football Association, which had been established as 'clubs were weary of friendlies, cancelled games, a lack of unity of rules, and the general lack of organisation amongst the football teams' in the region.[133] 11 clubs were present at the first annual meeting where it was determined that it would adopt Sheffield Rules, choosing not to use those of the FA, and in 1876 a Challenge Cup was established that would be contested by affiliated clubs.[134] Following each contest between Stoke FC and Birmingham it is reasonable to suggest that the formative years of the Birmingham FA and the inaugural season of the Birmingham Challenge Cup would have been particular topics of interest to Slaney, especially as a month later he called a meeting in The Potteries for 'the purpose of considering the desirability of forming a football association for North Staffordshire and district'.[135] Slaney also had further links with the Birmingham FA, although of much less significance, through Saltley College, where he had been a student for two years at the start of the decade. Saltley College had also been founding members of the association and had several of members filling prominent roles on its committee.[136]

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[127] Westby, *England's Oldest Football Clubs*, 214-218.

[128] Example include 'Stoke-upon-Trent vs. Derwent (Derby)', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 5, 1874, 2; 'Football Match', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 2, 1874, 2; and 'Stoke v. Derby St. Andrew's', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 18, 1876, 7.

[129] 'Stoke-upon-Trent vs. Derwent (Derby)', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 5, 1874, 2.

[130] 'Stoke-on-Trent vs. Derwent (Derby)', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 25, 1875, 3

[131] Westby, *England's Oldest Football Clubs*, 217.

[132] 'Stoke v. Birmingham', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 28, 1876, 3; and 'Stoke v. Birmingham', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 24, 1877, 8.

[133] Mike Bradbury, *Lost Teams of the Midlands* (Bloomington, USA: Xlibris, 2013), 47.

[134] Adrian Harvey, *Football: The First Hundred Years, the Untold Story* (London: Routledge, 2005), 209; Bradbury, *Lost Teams of the Midlands*, 47-48; and Taylor, *Association Game*, 39-40.

The South Derbyshire FA and the Birmingham FA were innovative concepts for the game in the Midlands and, discounting the FA, the only other county football association in existence during this period was located in Sheffield. They were the first county football associations to be established in England during the 1870s and their existence would have certainly attracted the interest of other leading figures involved in football across the Midlands, including in The Potteries. Slaney would imitate some of the key elements of each association during the formative years of the Staffordshire FA. Both the South Derbyshire FA and Birmingham FA had adopted Sheffield Rules, something that was replicated by the Staffordshire FA, whilst the notion of inaugurating a knock-out cup competition appears to have been inspired by the Birmingham and District Senior Cup.[137] Westby suggests that the decline of the South Derbyshire FA may have been partly as a result of its failure to introduce a knock-out cup competition for members to participate in, something that Slaney may have been wary of repeating when he inaugurated the Staffordshire Challenge Cup in the first year of the Staffordshire FA's existence.[138]

The first meeting of the Staffordshire FA was held on April 14, 1877, at the Copeland Arms Hotel, Stoke. Slaney acted as chair and representatives from a total of 14 clubs were present, consisting of 12 based in Staffordshire, one from Derbyshire (Ashbourne) and one from Cheshire (Macclesfield). It was agreed that an organisation was required to govern the game across the region, that a knock-out cup competition should be established for competition amongst the association's members, and that the Sheffield Rules would be adopted by affiliated clubs. Slaney was elected as secretary whilst two other members of Stoke FC were accepted into roles on the executive committee, highlighting the significant authority that the club possessed within the association and which would continue, resulting in some discontent, for much of its formative years.[139] 'It was resolved that Stoke [would] be the headquarters of the association' as 'the inhabitants of that town being most enthusiastic in their support of the game' whilst it was suggested that one advantage 'is that the inhabitants will be able to witness [matches] without travelling to the south of the county'.[140] During this initial period the association predominantly governed the game in North Staffordshire and The Potteries until the 1880s when a growing membership of clubs from the south of the county altered its geographic focus. Whilst subsequent histories have correctly identified Slaney as the primary figure in the Staffordshire FA's formation, they have failed to credit that his inspiration derived from South Derbyshire and Birmingham. The general structure of the Staffordshire FA, including the adoption of Sheffield Rules and the establishment of a challenge cup competition, was an identical reflection and reproduction of the Birmingham FA and the two associations were closely aligned during the late 1870s and early 1880s, working together to avoid fixture clashes and allowing affiliated clubs to compete in both regional cup competitions.

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[135] 'Proposed Football Association for North Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 1, 1877, 4.

[136] Bradbury, *Lost Teams of the Midlands*, 47, 278.

[137] Westby, *England's Oldest Football Clubs,* 214-218, 220-226.

[138] Ibid., 216.

In September 1877, the *Staffordshire Sentinel* commented on the emergence of the newly formed Staffordshire FA and reflected on the growth of the game in The Potteries, stating that 'the last three years have witnessed a remarkable development of this ancient and truly English game in our midst'.[141] It was revealed that 16 clubs had joined the association for its first season and, as demonstrated by the scale of club football discussed in Chapter Four, it is clear that a large number of clubs in the region opted not to become members. Some clubs may have viewed the Staffordshire FA sceptically as a new development and it was not immediately clear what exact role it would fulfil, others may not have agreed with the adoption of Sheffield Rules, whilst many may have wished to retain their independence or simply had no interest in joining a broader union of clubs. Furthermore, the purpose of many sports clubs during the nineteenth century was to facilitate recreational participation, where playing regular matches alongside friends was the primary motivation, and the notion of competing for a Challenge Cup would not have appealed to all. In comparison with other regional football associations established during the 1870s and early 1880s, the Staffordshire FA possessed a respectably sized membership when it was initiated. The Birmingham FA consisted of 16 clubs in 1877, the Lancashire FA boasted 28 clubs when it was formed in 1878 whilst the Northumberland and Durham FA had just three members in 1879.[142] The creation of an association did not automatically mean that every club or team in the vicinity had the means, desire, or interest to join it.

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[139] 'Proposed Football Association for North Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 1, 1877, 4.
[140] 'Football in North Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 28, 1877, 6.
[141] 'Football in North Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 29, 1877, 6.

The inauguration of cup competitions coincided with the emergence of county football associations and the Staffordshire FA immediately introduced the Staffordshire Challenge Cup for the forthcoming 1877/78 season.[143] In an era where fixture lists were dominated by 'friendlies' and the FA Cup had yet to emerge as an all-encompassing national competition, such local cup competitions provided clubs with more than just honour to play for and provided tangible benefits for various stakeholders.[144] Taylor notes that cups were 'a major fillip to the game by generating interest and excitement' whilst the knock-out element brought 'greater enthusiasm [amongst players and spectators] than an ordinary friendly match'.[145] The cups provided by regional associations were viewed by clubs as being especially prestigious during the 1870s and early 1880s, particularly prior to the emergence of leagues, charity cups, and other local competitions, and were often perceived as being the pinnacle of the game in the region.[146] The Staffordshire FA purchased a silver trophy worth 50 guineas to be the prize of the Staffordshire Challenge Cup with the money being raised through subscriptions, private donations, and the gate receipts generated by an exhibition match organised in September 1877.[147] The contest between 'Blue and Black' and 'Nondescripts' saw two teams consisting of a mixture of players from across the region play in front of a 'large' attendance at Stoke FC's ground with Slaney captaining one of the sides.[148] One onlooker commented that as 'an outsider' they had 'thoroughly enjoyed witnessing the game throughout, although the last half turned out to be a more one-side affair than was expected'.[149]

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[142] Taylor, *Association Game*, 39-40.

[143] 'Proposed Football Association for North Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 1, 1877, 4.

[144] Wray Vamplew, *Pay Up and Play the Game: Professional Sport in Britain, 1875-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 61.

[145] Taylor, *Association Game*, 41.

[146] Bradbury, *Lost Teams of the Midlands*, 47; and Harvey, *First Hundred Years*, 209.

[147] 'Football in North Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 29, 1877, 6; and 'The Challenge Cup of North Staffordshire. Final Cup Tie', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 25, 1878, 4.

[148] 'North Staffordshire County Association', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 1, 1877, 4.

The first Staffordshire Challenge Cup was won by Stoke FC after they defeated Talke Rangers in the final tie in March 1877. The match attracted a crowd of 2,000 people and it was noted that 'the spectators completely lost themselves' after the only goal of the game was scored and that 'the excitement which prevailed is beyond description'. Supporters rushed onto the field of play and 'seized Boddington … [and] hoisted him on their shoulders, carrying him around the field' whilst 'for some time the excitement continued and could not be subdued'.[150] Cooke and James have suggested that this match, which was witnessed by a large crowd with victorious players being carried off the pitch upon the shoulders of spectators, should be recognised as the moment where an association football community had successfully emerged.[151] The Potteries now possessed a multitude of formal football clubs that engaged in a regular schedule of fixtures, some of which could attract significant numbers of spectators, a governing organisation that had sought to implement a unanimous set of rules, and a knock out cup competition. The following month a ceremony was held at the Copeland Arms Hotel, Stoke, where members of the winning team were awarded with 'a gold medal, or maltese cross and locket combined' whilst Talke Rangers were presented with 'jerseys' to acknowledge their efforts in reaching the final.[152] Stoke FC were able to retain the cup the following year, defeating Cobridge in front of 4,000 spectators, whilst the popularity and interest generated by the competition was demonstrated by ties in early rounds, often involving less prominent clubs, attracting significant crowds.[153] As the Staffordshire FA become more established and the game across the region continued to grow in popularity the Staffordshire Challenge Cup began to attract entries from clubs based in the south of the county and beyond, including Aston Villa and West Bromwich. After Stoke FC won the 1879 cup final the competition became dominated by clubs located outside The Potteries with over a decade of winners originating from south Staffordshire and Birmingham. This ultimately resulted in the association moving its headquarters out of Stoke to a more centralised location, becoming recognised as the governing body for the entire county rather than just the north as was initially the case.[154] The Staffordshire Challenge Cup continued to be one of the most prestigious sporting competitions in the region until the turn of the century when clubs were permitted to field their second or reserve team which, combined with the emergence of professional football and concurrent recreational competitions, gradually eroded its importance.[155]

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[149] 'The Manly Game of Football. To the Editor of the Staffordshire Daily Sentinel', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 2, 1877, 4.

[150] 'The Challenge Cup of North Staffordshire. Final Cup Tie', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 25, 1878, 4.

[151] Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 18.

[152] 'The Stoke Football Club', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, October 9, 1878, 3.

[153] 'Staffordshire Football Association. Stoke v. Cobridge for the Cup', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 28, 1879, 4.

To facilitate greater interest in the game and to showcase the talented players that the region possessed, county football associations began to organise inter-county matches, taking inspiration from county cricket.[156] The associations themselves were initially responsible for organising fixtures, although this function was eventually adopted by the FA as it grew in influence as the century progressed. Slaney assumed the captaincy of the Staffordshire team with matches against North Wales, Cheshire, Sheffield, and Shropshire being arranged during the first two years, attracting large numbers of spectators and further enhancing the visibility of the game. The 'debut' of the Staffordshire side against North Wales in December 1877 was attended by a crowd of 3,000 people, more than Stoke FC were often able to attract on a regular basis at that point, whilst in March 1878 the return fixture against Sheffield was played in the presence of over 1,000 onlookers.[157] These early inter-county matches generated significant interest among the local populace with newspaper reports commenting that such occasions 'caused considerable excitement' whilst 'many opinions were expressed as to the result, and not a few bets were made'.[158] The Staffordshire FA also had the bonus of receiving significant gate receipts from these contests, which helped to ensure its financial stability during its formative years whilst leading figures had the opportunity to network with officials from other regional football associations. The results of these inter-county matches were not initially impressive, with the team only winning once during its first two seasons, against the newly formed Cheshire FA in November 1878.[159] In December 1877, the Staffordshire team faced the Sheffield FA and were resoundingly defeated by six goals, with match reports noting that ‘it was thus early evident that the team was overmatched’, whilst three months later in the return fixture they lost by four goals.[160]

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[154] Speake, *The Staffordshire Football Association*, 24; and Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 18.

[155] Ibid.

[156] James Walvin, *The People's Game*, 46.

[157] 'North Staffordshire Football Association. Grand Match at Stoke', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 3, 1877, 4; 'Grand Football Match at Stoke. Staffordshire Association v. Sheffield Association', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 11, 1878, 3.

[158] Ibid.

[159] 'Grand County Football Match: Cheshire v. Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 11, 1878, 4.

The Staffordshire team was consistently impeded by criticism and controversy relating to the selection of the side, the responsibility of Slaney, which was further compounded by players refusing or being unable to participate in matches. In November 1878, nine of the players in the Staffordshire team that faced Cheshire were members of Stoke FC, with the local press complaining ‘that it cannot be called a representative team of the county’.[161] Whilst Stoke FC were undoubtedly the most prominent club in The Potteries during this period and possessed several of the best players in the region, Slaney was often accused of bias in ensuring that members from his own club were selected. Furthermore, as Stoke FC tended to avoid playing matches against local opposition, Slaney’s knowledge of other players in the area may have been impaired somewhat, especially if the two clubs had not played each other. The other prevalent issue facing the Staffordshire team was convincing players to turn up for county fixtures. This was exemplified in March 1878 when three Ashbourne players who had been selected to face Sheffield failed to attend, reportedly in protest at a dispute that had occurred between their club and Stoke FC earlier that month in which the Staffordshire FA had subsequently opted not to rule in their favour.[162] The *Staffordshire Sentinel* commented that ‘no less than four district players that were honoured with a selection could not, or would not play’ for the Staffordshire team due to play Cheshire whilst in February 1878 ‘two players from Leek, who had been selected [to play Shropshire], did not put in an appearance’.[163] It was noted that ‘this state of things is to be deplored, and it is likely to injure the Staffordshire Association when players won’t represent their county’ and it was not until the mid-1880s that the association introduced a rule that allowed it to punish clubs when players refused to participate in county matches.[164]

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[160] ‘Football. Sheffield v. Staffordshire’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, December 17, 1877, 4; and ‘Grand Football Match at Stoke. Staffordshire Association v. Sheffield Association’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 11, 1878, 3.

[161] ‘Grand County Match at Stoke. Cheshire v. Staffordshire’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 11, 1878, 4.

[162] ‘Grand Football Match at Stoke. Staffordshire Association v. Sheffield Association’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 11, 1878, 3.

[163] ‘Grand County Match at Stoke. Cheshire v. Staffordshire’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 11, 1878, 4; and ‘The Staffordshire Football Association at Shrewsbury’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 24, 1879, 2.

[164] ‘Grand County Match at Stoke. Cheshire v. Staffordshire’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, November 11, 1878, 4.

Speake suggests that during its first three years in existence ‘all was not well within the [Staffordshire] Association’ and that ‘a good deal of ill feeling was expressed about the unfair influence of the Stoke Club’.[165] Indeed, members of Stoke FC dominated the county team whilst three also filled prominent roles on the association committee, with Slaney wielding the most power and authority in his position as secretary. There is no tangible evidence to suggest that there was a purposeful bias towards Stoke FC, but such a perception was perpetuated by several occurrences where the Staffordshire FA supported the club during disputes which involved other sides. In March 1878, Stoke FC and Ashbourne contested one of the semi-final ties of the inaugural Staffordshire Challenge Cup with newspaper reports stating that the former had won the contest by one goal.[166] However, Ashbourne claimed that the goal had actually been disallowed due to a player being offside and stated in a subsequent letter to the *Staffordshire Sentinel* that the match had actually finished as a draw and that the tie should be replayed.[167] The Staffordshire FA chose to ignore the protestations and allowed Stoke FC to progress to the cup final, which they ultimately won, much to the disproval of Ashbourne who refused to allow three of their players to represent the county team later that month and withdrew from the association before the season had concluded. This drew a stern rebuke in a subsequent match report, most likely having been written by Slaney himself who wrote periodically for the local press, where it was claimed that ‘the association, however, will not eventually suffer much, as a club of the disposition of the one in question [Ashbourne] cannot be very creditable to any honest association such as we know Staffordshire to be’.[168]

A similar controversy enveloped the Staffordshire Challenge Cup the following year when the final tie between Stoke FC and Cobridge ‘ended in a very unsatisfactory manner’.[169] Cobridge disputed that a goal scored by Stoke FC had crossed the line, causing a significant amount of confusion with one match report suggesting that they had refused to continue the game.[170] With the two umpires unable to agree, the designated referee was called to adjudicate, despite initially admitting that he had not seen the incident from his position in the crowd, and decided to allow the goal to stand after conferring with spectators![171] The incident caused a significant amount of discussion within the pages of the local press with one letter noting that 'if Stoke retain possession of the cup … it will be no credit to them, and that it will be a positive injury to the game of football in the district'.[172] The general consensus from the letters published in the *Staffordshire Sentinel*, although admittedly only the views of a handful of spectators from a crowd that had consisted of thousands, was that the ball had not crossed the line and that the morally correct action would be to replay the match. The Staffordshire FA came under increasing pressure to act and, despite initially staying remarkably subdued about the incident, eventually decided that the cup final would have to be contested again. The controversy helped to swell the attendance of the replayed match, with over 4,000 spectators in the crowd despite poor weather, which Stoke FC ultimately won, with the local press commenting that 'it leaves no sting in the minds of the Cobridge players … so all's well that ends well'.[173]

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[165] Speake, *The Staffordshire Football Association*, 30.

[166] ‘Football. Staffordshire Football Association’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, March 25, 1878, 6.

[167] ‘Ashbourne Football Club: The Final Tie’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 14, 1878, 2.

[168] ‘Grand Football Match at Stoke. Staffordshire Association v. Sheffield Association’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 11, 1878, 3.

[169] 'The Staffordshire Football Challenge Cup', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 7, 1879, 3.

[170] ‘The Staffordshire Football Challenge Cup. Cobridge v. Stoke – Final Tie’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 7, 1879, 3.

There was also a degree of dissatisfaction with how the Staffordshire FA was conducting its administration because, after it had been initially established in 1877, it failed to hold an annual meeting or publish a balance sheet for its first two years in existence. A letter to the *Staffordshire Sentinel* commented that 'it is with regret I now learn that a spirit of discontent is growing in various clubs belonging to the Association' and that 'the more frequent holding of committee meetings and the issuing of an annual report and statement of accounts would probably check the growth of discord'.[174] Further correspondence noted that 'the Association was formed in 1877, and up to this date no balance sheet has been issued, nor do any of the committee know in what position the Association is … [this] is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs'.[175] An indication of the discontent was visible when Slaney did eventually hold an annual meeting in July 1879 where, despite the accounts indicating that the association was in a positive financial position, only representatives from six clubs were in attendance.[176] However, this appears to have had little impact on the appeal and attractiveness of the organisation and four new clubs were affiliated as members. Slaney's lax attitude towards the administration of the Staffordshire FA during those formative years was replicated in his, regularly belated, correspondence with other clubs, associations, and organisations. Westby has noted that Slaney's submissions for the *Football Annual* were often late (if, indeed, they arrived at all) and had to be requested on multiple occasions.[177] The absence of meetings and balance sheets during the inaugural two years of the Staffordshire FA has no obvious explanation. It may have been that Slaney was attempting to juggle too many different roles simultaneously, as there were no similar issues in his administration of Stoke FC, or, in contrast, that he was being duplicitous, bias or simply took a careless approach to governance during this period. Whilst he was later described as one of the defining pioneers of football in the region it is also evident that Slaney was not a universally popular figure beyond the confines of Stoke FC during the late 1870s and early 1880s. Whilst attending a cup tie between St. George's and Leek in November 1883 he was 'mobbed by the great unwashed, but fortunately escaped without injury'. Leek had been expelled from the same competition by the Staffordshire FA the previous year and defeat against St. George's resulted in Slaney bearing the full force of the frustrations of some of the spectators, although his enthusiasm for the game remained unperturbed following the incident.[178]

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[171] 'Saturday's Football Match. To the Editor of the Staffordshire Daily Sentinel', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 8, 1879, 2.

[172] Ibid.

[173] 'Staffordshire Football Association. The Final Cup Tie', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 10, 1879, 4; 'The Staffordshire Sentinel Comment', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 28, 1879, 2; and 'Staffordshire Football Association. Stoke v. Cobridge for the Cup', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 29, 1879, 4.

[174] 'The North Staffordshire Football Association. To the Editor of the Staffordshire Daily Sentinel', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 24, 1879, 3.

[175] 'Staffordshire Football Association. To the Editor of the Staffordshire Daily Sentinel', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 17, 1879, 4.

Whilst the Staffordshire FA undoubtedly experienced an array of issues during its formative years its inauguration did stimulate further interest in association football across the region, provided a Challenge Cup that continues to be contested to the present day, and introduced structure and governance that had significantly improved and become more effective by the end of the nineteenth century. From 1879 the association arranged regular committee meetings and ensured that it became more transparent by publishing information regarding its administration and finances in the local press. Piercey has suggested that the publication of the proceedings of committee meetings was also a way of demonstrating that 'football was a game of order, regulations and of properly exercised authority'.[179] At the annual meeting held in July 1881 Slaney was presented ‘with a handsome gold watch, as a token … of the energy he has shown and the interest he has taken in conducting the affairs of the association since its commencement’, suggesting that much of the early discontent amongst affiliated clubs had been quelled.[180] Harvey notes that it can be difficult for historians to calculate the exact number of clubs that belonged to the various county football associations, due to the incomplete nature of the evidence where valuable data, such as minutes from meetings, either do not exist or have been misplaced over time, yet the general consensus is that there tended to be an annual increase.[181] By 1881 the Staffordshire FA consisted of 24 clubs which had risen to 32 by 1884, with *The Sportsman* stating that it made ‘the Association one of the strongest in the country … and thoroughly respective of the county’, whilst by the turn of the century there were 143 affiliated clubs.[182] The Staffordshire Challenge Cup remained the most prominent competition in the region until the formation of the Football league in 1888, which facilitated professional football in The Potteries and mass spectatorship for a number of local clubs, and in 1885 a Staffordshire Junior Challenge Cup was introduced to supplement a growing number of charity cups.[183] The Staffordshire FA also engaged in philanthropy by donating a percentage of its income to local organisations, primarily infirmaries and hospitals, from 1881 onwards and facilitating exhibition matches to raise additional money, exemplified by a ‘North v. South of the county’ contest in July 1881.[184] Charity cup competitions and matches became a regular feature of organised sport in the second half of the nineteenth century with Vamplew suggesting that the football community prided itself on its contribution to charity, raising more money than any other sport.[185]

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[176] 'Staffordshire Football Association: Annual Meeting', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 24, 1879, 3.
[177] Westby, *England's Oldest Football Clubs*, 228.
[178] Speake, *The Staffordshire Football Association*, 30-31.
[179] Piercey, *Four Histories*, 123.

Inter-county matches also continued to be organised, although Speake indicates that the selection of Stoke FC players became a less regular occurrence by the mid to late 1880s as the club adopted professionalism and joined the Football League, helping to relieve some of the previous tensions surrounding the composition of the team.[186] In 1888, it was claimed that the Staffordshire FA team 'stood at the head of the football counties' due to its unbeaten record that season, a somewhat bold statement considering that the side had only played four matches![187] Ultimately the association also provided an effective structure and form of governance for the game in the region, enforcing rules and regulations whilst continuing to act as the deciding authority in the event of disputes between clubs. This standardisation and stability enabled clubs to organise a greater number of fixtures, due to the unity provided by the association, and reduced the number of disagreements regarding the rules, by providing a single, consistent version of laws. The Staffordshire FA were quick to seize upon any club that stepped out of line by the 1880s and was described as being 'determined, as far as it lies in its power, to put down some of the worst features of … matches'.[188]

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[180] ‘Staffordshire Football Association’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 25, 1881, 4.

[181] Harvey, *First Hundred Years*, 209-210.

[182] ‘Staffordshire Football Association’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 7, 1881, 3; ‘Staffordshire Football Association’, *The Sportsman*, September 8, 1884, 3; and Speake, *The Staffordshire Football Association*, 56-57.

[183] ‘Staffordshire Football Association’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, September 25, 1885, 7.

[184] ‘Staffordshire Football Association’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 25, 1881, 4.

[185] Wray Vamplew, ‘“It is Pleasing to Know that Football can be Devoted to Charitable Purposes”: British Football and Charity, 1870-1918’, *Sport and Society* 18, no.3 (2016): 375; and Martyn Dean Cooke, ‘The Inextricable Link Between Sport and the Press in the Victorian Era: The Example of the “Sentinel Cup”’, *Sport in History* 39, no.1 (2019): 15.

Slaney acted as secretary of the Staffordshire FA until 1891, when he resigned and was replaced by William Heath, who would also have a significant impact on football in the region, although he remained associated with the organisation until 1894 as president.[189] He left the post due to work commitments, although 17 consecutive years in governance within the rapidly evolving context of sport during the final third of the nineteenth century would have surely have taken its toll, and he was 'elected a life member of the Association'.[190] Reflecting on Slaney's life and career following his death in 1898 the *Leek Post and Times* noted that 'it was characteristic of him that he should voluntarily take upon himself the most difficult position' of founding the Staffordshire FA and acting as secretary during its formative years. It was further remarked that his efforts brought him 'into close contact with everybody prominently interested in the game, and his genial manners made him not only widely known, but endeared to all'.[191] By the time of Slaney's death the Staffordshire FA had successfully established itself as the leading authority of the game in the region, second only to the FA itself, and had succeeded in nurturing the game so that an association football culture would remain a defining characteristic of the area into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

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[186] Speake, *The Staffordshire Football Association*, 29.
[187] 'Staffordshire Football Association', *Lichfield Mercury*, September 7, 1888, 7.
[188] 'The Staffordshire Football Association', *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, November 3, 1887, 3.
[189] Cooke and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 17-18; and 'Staffordshire Football Association', *Birmingham Daily Post*, August 31, 1891, 7.
[190] 'Death of Mr. Thomas C. Slaney', *Leek Post and Times*, March 12, 1898, 8.
[191] Ibid.

Conclusion

Regional football associations played a central role in the growth and development of the game during the final four decades of the nineteenth century and were especially pertinent prior to the FA emerging as an organisation of truly national influence in the early 1880s. However, few scholars have sought to investigate their functions, activities, and impact. Several regional football associations have published official pamphlets or books outlining their history in celebration of a significant anniversary, yet these tend to differ markedly in their quality, accuracy, and objectiveness. Furthermore, the records of these organisations are often incomplete. No official records of the Staffordshire FA from the nineteenth century survive, leaving a scattering of reports published in contemporary newspapers as the primary source of information. Despite these methodological challenges, this chapter has examined the origins and formative years of the Staffordshire FA for the first time and has considered how the organisation influenced the development of the game in The Potteries.

The Staffordshire FA was established in response to the somewhat fractured and fragmented nature of the association game in The Potteries during the 1870s. The existence of multiple contrasting interpretations of rules meant that confusion, disputes, and disagreements were a common feature with many clubs and players causing significant issues by their quarrelling. The lack of one unanimously agreed set of rules and absence of any form of formal governance undoubtedly began to have a negative impact on the growth of the game with the local press leading the calls for greater structure and organisation. It was Thomas Charles Slaney that emerged as the leading football administrator in The Potteries during the nineteenth century and he organised the inaugural meeting to discuss the prospect of establishing a football association for the region. He had risen to an unprecedented position of power and authority within Stoke FC during the early-1870s and was exposed to new innovations and concepts in the game as the club travelled across the country to play matches. It appears that he took inspiration from the emergence of the South Derbyshire FA and Birmingham FA, with Stoke FC having played against various clubs that were members of each organisation, which were the first county football associations to be established during the 1870s. Slaney was elected as secretary of the Staffordshire FA following its formation in 1877 and he was at the forefront of the organisation for almost two decades. No other individual figure made such a significant contribution to the growth and development of football in The Potteries during the nineteenth century and yet, as with so many other sporting administrators during this period, his impact has been widely overlooked.

During its formative years the initial influence and authority of the Staffordshire FA was limited. Only a small number of clubs became members and there were concerns regarding how the business of the organisation was being conducted, with a lack of transparency and accusations of a preferential bias towards Stoke FC among the primary complaints. Despite the organisation's initial teething problems, it did ultimately come to provide the game in the region with greater stability, brought individual clubs together as part of a larger association, promoted the sport through the inauguration of formal competitions and county matches, and introduced one standardised set of rules whilst acting as an adjudicator over disputes. The Staffordshire FA facilitated the continuous growth of the association football in The Potteries over the subsequent decades and its presence enabled the game to become firmly established as the most popular sport in the region. If the organisation had failed and been disbanded, such as the South Derbyshire FA, then it is interesting to consider how the development of the football across the Six Towns would have been impacted and if this would have enabled an alternative sport to come to the fore.

By the start of the 1880s, association football had become firmly entrenched within the lives of a growing number of local people throughout The Potteries. The region possessed one football club of national repute, which was underpinned by a significant number of recreational clubs and transitory teams whilst the Staffordshire FA provided structure, governance, and authority. The inaugural Staffordshire County Cup final in March 1877 marks the moment when the association game in The Potteries had evolved beyond its formative stages with a football community having emerged in the region. The image depicted by reports in the local press of Boddington, who had scored the only goal of the contest, being carried off the pitch on the shoulders of a jubilant crowd was a signal, albeit perhaps appearing to be a reflective cliché, that football had been adopted by the local populace.

Association Football in The Potteries: Conclusion

This thesis has presented an in-depth, detailed examination of the development of association football in The Potteries between 1840 and 1880. It was during this period that Britain became 'the birthplace of modern sport' with activities evolving into their recognisable modern forms and by the end of the century sport had become extensively institutionalised, codified, and commercialised.[1] In the case of association football, the game transformed from an informal recreational activity, which existed in a variety of idiosyncratic formats, into one of the most popular sporting activities in the country (both in terms of participation and spectatorship), possessing a powerful national governing body and a prominent network of professional clubs, which were underpinned by a flourishing grassroots culture. By the end of the nineteenth century, it had become established as 'the people's game'.[2]

However, it is evident that the dissemination and development of sport was subject to regional differentiation, both in terms of what activities became adopted by the local populace and how they evolved. Britain was a diverse arena where the geographical, political, industrial, and cultural landscape could differ markedly from region to region and, ultimately, these varied environments facilitated the development of sport in differing ways. Much of the research exploring the development of football during the nineteenth century has tended to view the subject from a broad national perspective yet it has become increasingly apparent that one overarching paradigm or grand narrative cannot adequately explain the formative years of the modern game. It has been noted that 'the growth of the game in one specific region or city may not necessarily be representative of other areas' and there have been calls for research to shift away from a national perspective to a more localised view.[3] It is only once a multitude of regional studies have been undertaken that historians will be able to build a clearer understanding of the development of football during this period by considering similarities, differences, and common themes across various locations. This thesis acts as another brick in the wall of regional football studies whilst also fulfilling a more general gap in the literature as the sporting history of The Potteries has never been considered by an in-depth academic study.

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[1] Neil Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society in Britain: 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1; and Mike Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport* (London: Hambledon, 2004), 6.

[2] James Walvin, *The People's Game: A Social History of British Football* (London: Allen Lane, 1975).

[3] Martyn Cooke and Gary James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers: The Early Development of Association Football in The Potteries', *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2017): 6.

Whilst localised research can provide valuable opportunities for deeper analysis and prevent over-generalised interpretations it can also highlight the length and breadth of regional differentiation and diversity.[4] Much of this thesis has presented The Potteries as being unique in terms of its urban, political, and industrial development. It is the only polycentric city in Britain, which created a distinctive geo-political climate during the nineteenth century, whilst the scale, size, and significance of the pottery and ceramic industry was exclusive to the area.[5] If The Potteries is so unique with such distinctive idiosyncrasies, then what conclusions can be drawn from this thesis in terms of the broader development of sport during this period?

As more localised research continues to be published it is becoming increasingly evident that the exclusive characteristics and idiosyncrasies possessed by various towns, cities, and regions facilitated the development of football in different ways. First, the industrial development of a region had a significant impact on how quickly the game was adopted by the local populace and its rate of expansion. In Liverpool, the association game was slow to emerge due to the nature of its prominent industries, where most trades were not unionised until the final decades of the nineteenth century. [6] In contrast, football was adopted earlier in areas that possessed factory-based industries, such as Birmingham, Lancashire, and Yorkshire.[7] As a more specific example, in Winchester the economy was reliant on the service sector whilst a large military barracks was located in the centre of the city.[8] As a result, ‘the middle class and the wealthy dominated early football in the region’ whilst there was a consistent presence of military-based teams and clubs.[9]

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[4] John K. Walton & James Walvin, 'Introduction', in *Leisure in Britain: 1780-1939*, eds. John K. Walton & James Walvin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 2.

[5] See Alan Taylor, *Stoke-on-Trent: A History* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2003); Cameron Hawke-Smith, *The Making of the Six Towns* (Hanley: City Museum and Art Gallery, 1985); and David Sekers, *The Potteries* (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2009).

[6] Matthew Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2008), 5.

[7] See Adam Benkwitz and Gyozo Molnar, 'The Emergence and Development of Association Football: Influential Sociocultural Factors in Victorian Birmingham', *Soccer and Society* 18, no.7 (2017): 1027-1044; and Peter Swain and Adrian Harvey, 'On Bosworth Field or the Playing Fields of Eton and Rugby? Who Really Invented Modern Football?', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 29, no.10 (2012): 1425-1445.

Second, educational institutions also facilitated the association game in varying ways in different locations. In Lincolnshire during the 1860s, it was in towns that possessed prominent grammar schools where football teams first began to emerge.[10] Similarly, Derby Grammar School was crucial in the early development of the game in Derbyshire, yet research indicates that there was limited interest in football within schools in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.[11] Several studies have suggested that the emergence of football in Sheffield was shaped by public school influence, although this has been subject to debate.[12] In contrast, Winchester College, despite students developing their own unique form of the game, remained exclusive and had no impact on the local populace.[13]

Third, the political context and how football was perceived in each locality also had a significant influence upon its development. Initial forms of the game were readily accepted as part of local traditions and customs in some regions, such as in Shrewsbury where football was encouraged and occurred at ‘various social occasions’ including festivals, fetes, and school outings.[14] However, in other areas football was subjected to attempts at suppression. Street football was banned in Derbyshire in 1846, which resulted in the growth of the game being ‘stunted’, yet football survived a similar ban in Manchester.[15]

The fact that there is so much regional diversity and differentiation is why the origins of football debate is becoming increasingly redundant. It is unfeasible to expect one overarching paradigm or grand narrative to successfully incorporate these local variations and nuances. Instead, historians need to reconsider how they frame research and discussions regarding the formative years of the modern game and move away from viewing the evidence through the lens of the origins of football debate. As noted by James, 'it seems that we are no nearer to establishing the true development of the sport than we were a century ago' when using the traditional framework or 'orthodox' and 'revisionist' paradigms.[16] However, the presence of diversity and differentiation within the development of football during the nineteenth century does not mean that broader conclusions cannot be made, but rather that a new framework is required so that common themes, similarities, and differences can be more easily identified and discussed.

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[8] Ian Denness, ‘What About the South? A Case Study of Soccer’s Early Development in Winchester’, *Soccer and Society* 21, no.4 (2020): 382.

[9] Ian Denness, ‘Football in Winchester, in Town and College, Before 1884: ‘Very Fast and Interesting to Look On At’’, in *The Early Development of Football: Contemporary Debates*, ed. Graham Curry (New York: Routledge, 2019), 177, 186.

[10] Ian Nannestad, ‘From Sabbath Breakers to Respectable Sportsmen: The Development of Football in Lincolnshire circa 1855 to circa 1881’ (MA thesis, De Monfort University, Leicester 2003), 44.

[11] Graham Curry, ‘Stunted Growth: The Early Development of Football in Derby and South Derbyshire’, *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2018): 31-32; and Paul Joannou and Alan Candish, ‘The Early Development of a Football Hotbed: The Onset of the Game in Tyne and Wear, 1877-1882’, *Soccer and Society* 19: no.1 (2017): 109.

[12] Graham Curry and Eric Dunning, ‘The Power Game: Continued Reflections on the Development of Modern Football’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33, no.3 (2016): 241.

[13] Denness, ‘Football in Winchester’, 179-182.

[14] Graham Curry, ‘Early Football In and Around Shrewsbury: Soccer in the Sticks’, in *The Early Development of Football: Contemporary Debates*, ed. Graham Curry (New York: Routledge, 2019), 155.

[15] Graham Curry, ‘Stunted Growth’, 30; and Gary James and Dave Day, ‘The Emergence of an Association Football Culture in Manchester, 1840–1884’, *Sport in History* 34, no.1 (2014): 52.

Fernand Braudel and the Longue Durée.

Hardy has previously stated that sport historians should consider the work of Fernand Braudel and his framework of the longue durée.[17] Braudel, although not a historian of sport, believed that traditional history was too focused on single events and individual personalities whilst focusing on short-term analysis that overlooked how events could be interrelated.[18] He remarked that the 'concern for the short time span, for the individual and the event, has long accustomed us to the headlong, dramatic, breathless rush of its narrative.'[19] Short-term history has dominated certain topics in recent decades and this has been particularly evident within the origins of football debate where researchers have focused on single events (such as a specific match or formation of a club) without considering its significance, long-term impact, or how it may be interlinked with later developments. Furthermore, it can lead to events being selected or omitted retrospectively, once a pattern is known, which has been a criticism directed towards some individuals within the debate.[20] Guldi and Armitage argue that historians tend to focus on short timespans and have abandoned long-term thinking.[21]

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[16] Gary James, 'Historical Frameworks and Sporting Research', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33, no.10 (2016): 1170.

[17] Stephen Hardy, ''Evolutions in American Sport'', *Journal of Sport History* 36, no.3 (2009): 344.

[18] Lincoln Allison and Alan Tomlinson, *Understanding International Sport Organisations: Principles, Power and Possibilities* (London: Routledge, 2017), 56; William McNeill, 'Fernand Braudel, Historian', *Journal of Modern History* 73, no,1 (2001): 133.

[19] Fernand Braudel, *On History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 27.

[20] James, 'Historical Frameworks', 1171-1172.

[21] Jo Guldi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 7.

In 1958 Braudel published the longue durée, which proposed that historians should consider three categories of social time: the longue durée (the long-term), moyenne durée (cyclical history), and courte durée (the history of events).[22] The longue durée represents the full history of something, with Braudel's work considering the history of the Mediterranean, and can consist of hundreds or even thousands of years.[23] In a sporting context, it could signify the history of an individual club or an entire sporting activity. The moyenne durée, sometimes referred to as a conjucture, are shorter periods of time or 'eras' that represent several years or decades within the longue durée.[24] They are periods of transformation where it is possible to discern particular trends, cycles or patterns that demonstrate significant societal change, such as the Industrial Revolution, but are distinct from daily events.[25] Within sport, the moyenne durée may represent specific eras within the history of a club or sport, such as the inter-war years or the period of a sporting ban. Finally, the courte durée relates to individual events or episodes that span hours, days or weeks that occur within the moyenne durée.[26] From a sporting perspective this may be an individual match or incident or even an entire season.

The purpose of Braudel's framework was to encourage historians to take a more long-term view of history within their analysis and to avoid focusing on single events. It enables the historian to search for broader themes and commonalities within the three dimensions of time and to determine the influence, impact, and transformation facilitated within specific time periods.[27] Despite this, the concept of the longue durée has been widely overlooked by historians of sport. It has been applied by James within his research examining the development of association football in Manchester, which has some similarities with the nature of this thesis, Clevenger utilised it as part of his work considering the origins and invention years of American basketball, whilst Penn and Berridge applied it in their study exploring the competitive balance of top-tier English league football.[28] The framework has been applied to the findings of this thesis as a method of analysing the historiography of association football in The Potteries through an alternative lens whilst also simplifying the process of summarising the work and identifying commonalities with other regional football studies. Braudel has been criticised for his perceived lack of interest in events and his preference for considering the medium and long-term.[29] However, for the purpose of this analysis, greater emphasis is placed on the specific events that occur within the courte durée whilst still maintaining a focus on the medium and long-term elements of the moyenne durée and longue durée.

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[22] James, 'Historical Frameworks', 1171.

[23] Samuel Clevenger, 'Transtemporal Sport Histories: Or Rethinking the 'Invention of American Basketball'', *Sport in Society* 23, no.5 (2019): 962.

[24] Braudel, *On History*, 29; Allison and Tomlinson, *Principles, Power and Possibilities*, 412; and Roger Penn and Damon Berridge, 'The Dynamics of Quadropoly: League Position in English Football Between 1888 and 2010', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33, no.3 (2016): 326.

[25] James, 'Historical Frameworks', 1172.

[26] Braudel, *On History*, 28; and James, 'Historical Frameworks', 1172.

[27] Allison and Tomlinson, *Principles, Power and Possibilities*, 56.

This thesis considers the formative years of modern association football in The Potteries between 1840 and 1880. This time period represents the longue durée, although this could easily be extended to encompass preceding or subsequent decades for future research. There are four transformational periods identified within the moyenne durée – early football activities (1840-1868), the first formal club (1868-1874), the emergence of club football (1874-1877), and formalisation and governance (1877-1880). The courte durée identifies the specific events, occurrences, and individuals that were influential within each transformational period that had a medium or long-term impact on the development of the game in the region.

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[28] See James 'Historical Frameworks and Sporting Research', 1169-1187; Clevenger 'Transtemporal Sport Histories', 959-974; and Penn and Berridge, 'The Dynamics of Quadropoly', 325-340.

[29] Ulysses Santamaria and Anne Bailey, 'A Note on Braudel's Structure as Duration', *History and Theory* 23, no.1 (1984): 81.

The Formative Years of Modern Association Football in The Potteries (1840-1880)

(Longue Durée)

Association football transforms from an informal recreational activity into its recognisable modern form. What started the period as a game that was played on a ad hoc basis with no written rules evolved into a football culture consisting of a significant number formal clubs, a governing body that implemented a unanimously agreed set of rules and the inauguration of a knock-out cup competition.

Moyenne Durée

Coutre Durée

Early Football Activities (1840-1868)

Informal forms of football were present in the region and played with enough regularity that knowledge of the game was transferred between generations. There were no attempts to suppress football, but rather it was accepted as a part of local traditions and customs.

- The Wakes become removed from their religious origins and purpose. Instead they are adopted by the local populace as an opportunity for leisure with various sports and activities, including football, being facilitated.
- There are no attempts to suppress or restrict football with the game being actively encouraged. In contrast, horse racing was widely criticised during this period for encouraging immoral behaviour and tendencies.
- Informal football activities become increasing popular at fetes, festivals and within schools whilst young boys are reported to be playing in the street. There is no evidence to suggest that a sophisticated football culture was present, but rather that the local populace organised spontaneous games when they had the time, space and inclination to do so.

The First Formal Football Club (1868-1874)

Stoke Ramblers is established in 1868 by H. J. Almond, becoming the first formal football club in the region, and is retitled Stoke FC in 1870. However, the club has difficulties in arranging fixtures and are forced to look further afield in search of matches. Its presence does not encourage the formation of new local clubs, but instead restricts it.

- H. J. Almond arrives in the region in 1868 to work at the North Staffordshire Railway Company. Having played a dribbling form of the game whilst a student at Charterhouse School, he establishes a formal association football club under the title of Stoke Ramblers.
- However, Almond departs the region after the club's inaugural game, but the club continues it activities.
- Due to limited local opposition, Stoke Ramblers play against rugby clubs (under association rules) or travel to neighbouring counties in search of matches. However, it is clear that it is an association football club with the team consisting of young, unmarried middle-class men.
- The presence of Stoke Ramblers restricts the formation of new local clubs. Several matches are arranged against scratch teams in the region, but opposition players subsequently opt to join Stoke Ramblers rather than establish a new club themselves.
- In 1870, Stoke Ramblers are retitled Stoke FC after securing a permanent ground to play on.

Emergence of Club Football (1874-1877)

From 1872 there is an explosion of football activity in the region characterised by an increasing number of formal clubs being established with societal conditions facilitating the growth of the game. T. C. Slaney emerges as a prominent figure within Stoke FC and begins the process of enhancing the club's activities and reputation, resulting in large number of spectators attending matches.

- Increases in real wages and the adoption of the half-holiday in the region provides the local populace with greater amounts of disposable income and free time. This results in an explosion of football activity as new formal clubs begin to be established. In the spring of 1874 there was only one club present in the region (Stoke FC), but by the summer of 1878 this had increased to 52.
- This new generation of clubs emerge from pre existing organisations (such as places of employment, schools, churches and temperance groups) but the geopolitical context of the region is reflected in the number that were named after a specific location. There was a noticeable absence of pub-affiliated teams in the region, but newspaper reports indicates that pubs still played a crucial role in facilitating the emergence of the game.
- Club memberships were primarily working class in nature with committee positions held by members of the middle class.
- T. C. Slaney emerges as a central figure within Stoke FC and is elected as captain and secretary. He transforms the club by arranging a greater number of matches against prominent clubs in the Midlands. This enhances Stoke FC's reputation, both locally and nationally, and large crowds begin to be attracted to matches with gate charges introduced.

Formalisation and Governance (1877-1880)

The growing popularity of football results in different interpretations of the game and rules emerging in the region, leading to regular disputes between clubs and a call for greater governance. T. C. Slaney establishes the Staffordshire FA in 1877 and the organisation adopts the Sheffield Rules and introduces a knock-out cup competition and regional representative team.

- Football becomes increasingly popular in the region. However, this proves problematic as varying forms of the game and rules begin to emerge, resulting in regular disputes between clubs.
- Stoke FC play matches against clubs that are members of the South Derbyshire FA and Birmingham FA. T. C. Slaney recognises the need for a similar organisation to provide governance for the game The Potteries.
- In 1877, T. C. Slaney establishes the Staffordshire FA. Sheffield Rules are adopted, a knock-out cup competition is inaugurated and a representative team for the county established.
- The formative years of the Staffordshire FA are arduous. It fails to hold a general meeting or publish accounts for its inaugural year and faces accusations of being biased in favour of Stoke FC.
- By 1880, football in the region has become more formalised. The Staffordshire FA have evolved into a reputable and effective governing body.
- Stoke FC continue to organise fixtures against prestigious opposition (including Queens Park) and attract an increasing number of spectators. This further enhances the club's reputation and which culminate in Stoke FC being invited to become founding members of the Football League in 1888.

Within the first transformation period, it is evident that some form of football existed in The Potteries and that enough people were either playing or spectating the game to ensure its continuation between generations. However, it was an informal recreational activity that had no written rules, with no formal clubs in existence, and where matches were organised on an ad hoc basis when groups of like-minded local people had the free time to do so. The Wakes played a key role in facilitating these early football activities. It had initially been a religious festival that was scheduled to mark the anniversary of the dedicated day of the church and its patron saint, but by the first half of the nineteenth century it had lost its religious significance and had been adopted as a time of leisure. It was during this period that football activities began to occur with increasing regularity at local fetes and festivals whilst the game was also played by students in schoolyards or as part of school outings. Most of these occurrences were spontaneous, but as the century progressed event organisers began to use football as part of advertisements for local events, obviously considering it to be a potential attraction. Research has indicated that football was played at local events, fetes, and festivals in other regions where the game quickly emerged and grew in popularity.[30] The evolution of the Wakes from a religious celebration to a time of general leisure facilitated the continuation of football and provided it with a platform that would see it emerge as the most popular sporting activity in The Potteries. Additional research is required to determine what role the Wakes and other regional traditions and customs played in the development of modern sport in Britain. Furthermore, football in The Potteries was able to increase in popularity as it was not subject to attempts at suppression. Local horse racing was condemned by religious figures in the region who suggested that it encouraged immoral behaviour, yet football avoided similar criticism. Other towns, cities, and regions in Britain sought to ban football activities at various points during sixteenth, eighteenth, and early-nineteenth centuries which, in some cases, stunted the growth and development of the game.[31] In contrast, football in The Potteries continued without suppression and was readily adopted by the local populace.

Within sport history there is often additional emphasis or importance placed on research that uncovers the ‘first’ occurrence of something. However, Collins has been critical of this traditional view and suggests that just because something is the 'first' of its kind does not automatically mean that it had a long-lasting impact or influence.[32] The second transformational period considers the emergence of the first formal association football club in The Potteries, Stoke Ramblers. The club was established in 1868 by Harry John Almond, an ex-public schoolboy that had attended Charterhouse School where a dribbling form of the game was popular, who arrived in the region to work at the North Staffordshire Railway Company. Whilst football was already present in the region, it took the arrival of an enthusiastic individual to instigate the formation of the first formal club. However, Almond only played in Stoke Ramblers' inaugural match before leaving the area due to work commitments, with the club continuing under the guidance of local individuals. The influence of ex-public schoolboys has been a central feature of the origins of football debate and whilst Almond provided the initial spark for the club to be created, his influence was short-lived. More crucial were the young, unmarried middle-class men that formed the membership of the club during its formative years. These individuals possessed the free time and disposable income to participate in a formal club whilst not being restricted by the financial obligations of having a family. Research has uncovered similar findings in Nottingham, Derbyshire, Newcastle, and Winchester where the earliest teams primarily consisted of the middle classes.[33] Furthermore, whilst Stoke Ramblers were the first formal association football club to be established in The Potteries, its formation did not instigate an immediate growth in the popularity of the game. It would not be until the mid-1870s that the next generation of formal clubs began to emerge. The presence of one prominent club initially restricted and hindered the initial development of the football in the region, with individuals who possessed an interest in the game drawn towards Stoke Ramblers rather than establishing a new club.

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[30] Curry, ‘Shrewsbury: Soccer in the Sticks’, 155-156.

[31] Curry, ‘Stunted Growth’, 30; and James and Day, ‘Emergence of Football in Manchester’, 52.

The third transformational period resulted in The Potteries experiencing an explosion of football activity during the mid-1870s. An increase in real wages and the adoption of the half-holiday in the region provided the working population with a greater amount of disposable income and free time. Several regional studies have highlighted the importance of the half-holiday in the development of the game and how its adoption in a specific location often resulted in a dramatic increase in popularity.[34] In The Potteries, the number of formal football clubs established in the area rose from just one in the spring of 1874 to 52 just four years later, with most emerging from pre-existing organisations such as places of employment, religious organisations, schools, and temperance societies. This concurs with the existing literature that emphasises the importance of the workplace, religion, and schools in the development of club football.[35] However, the geopolitical context of The Potteries, where civic identity and local pride were pertinent elements of daily life, resulted in greater emphasis being placed on the geographic location of clubs. Of those identified, only six clubs did *not* include the title of a town or residential area in their name, indicating that a strong sense of residential solidarity and pride existed. It was also during this period that Thomas Charles Slaney initially rose to prominence within Stoke FC. By 1874 he had been elected as the captain and secretary of the club, providing him with complete authority over club decisions, and he immediately sought to increase the club's activities. Slaney expanded the schedule of matches and arranged fixtures against prominent teams located across the Midlands, generally ignoring the new generation of clubs that were being established in The Potteries. This had two pertinent effects on the development of Stoke FC. First, it enabled the club to enhance its reputation, both nationally and locally, which generated significant local interest that was reflected in increasing attendances and the introduction of gate charges. Second, it exposed its members to new variants of the game, styles of play, and rules whilst simultaneous enabling senior figures to network with other clubs. It was Slaney's enthusiasm that would drive the development of Stoke FC over the next two decades and cement it as one of the leading clubs in the Midlands.

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[32] Tony Collins, 'Watching the Clock: Time, Contingency and Comparative Football History' (paper presented at the International Football History Conference, Manchester, England, June 6-7. 2019).

[33] Graham Curry and Eric Dunning, 'The 'Origins of Football Debate' and the Early Development of the Game in Nottinghamshire', *Soccer and Society* 18, no.7 (2017): 870, 876; Curry, 'Stunted Growth', 32; Joannou and Candish 'A Football Hotbed', 109; and Denness, 'Football in Winchester', 177.

The final transformational period resulted in football becoming formalised with the emergence of a governing body and unanimously accepted set of rules. By 1877, the game was continuing to grow in popularity, yet this interest also resulted in various sets of contrasting rules being used by clubs. It was noted in the local press that football 'is perhaps of all games the most diverse in its rules' with the presence of London Association Rules,

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[34] Benkwitz and Molnar, 'Emergence of Football in Birmingham', 1031; and Curry and Dunning, 'Development of the Game in Nottinghamshire', 874-876.

[35] Taylor, *Association Game,* 35; Walvin, *The People's Game,* 56; and Michael Heller, 'Sport, Bureaucracies and London Clerks, 1880-1939', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 25, no.5 (2008): 580.

Sheffield Rules (Old and New), and local interpretations.[36] This resulted in regular disputes and disagreements between clubs and calls for greater governance. It was also during this period that Stoke FC organised a series of matches against clubs that were affiliated with either the South Derbyshire Football Association (formed in 1871) or the Birmingham and District Football Association (formed in 1875). These organisations would act as the inspiration for Thomas Charles Slaney to suggest forming a similar organisation for the purpose of governing the game in The Potteries. The Staffordshire Football Association was established in 1877 with Slaney instigating the inaugural meeting and being elected as secretary. It was agreed that affiliated clubs would adopt Sheffield Rules whilst a knock-out competition and county representative team were also introduced. However, the formative years of the Staffordshire FA were problematic. The organisation did not have a general meeting or publish a record of accounts for its first year in existence whilst Slaney and other members of Stoke FC, who held several key positions on the executive committee, faced accusations of bias. Furthermore, whilst the Staffordshire FA possessed a respectable membership during its formative years, it is worth noting that many teams in The Potteries did not choose to immediately become affiliated. Despite this, by 1880, the Staffordshire FA had begun to evolve into a genuine local governing body with the number of affiliated clubs increasing year on year and its jurisdiction beginning to spread into South Staffordshire. The Staffordshire Challenge Cup developed into the most prominent football competition in the region whilst the country representative side 'stood at the head of the football counties'.[37] The emergence, activities, and influence of regional football associations during the nineteenth century has yet to be fully considered by academics.

Common Themes and Key Findings

The application of Braudel's longue durée to the findings of this thesis has enabled the author to highlight several pertinent themes that were central to the development of association football in The Potteries during the nineteenth century. When comparing these findings with other regional or localised studies it is evident that these themes resonate with some of the current literature.

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[36] 'Football. To the Editor of the Staffordshire Advertiser', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, November 4, 1876, 2.

[37] 'Staffordshire Football Association', *Lichfield Mercury*, September 7, 1888, 7.

First, The Potteries possessed the environmental conditions that enabled the association game to grow. The presence of The Wakes during the first half of the century and their gradual transformation from a religious festival into a week of general merriment and leisure provided the local populace with regular points in the year when they had blocks of free time to participate in sporting activities. It was during the Wakes that many early informal football activities occurred, allowing the game to remain present within the region and continue across generations. The Wakes were a common feature of life in the Midlands and North of England, but their popularity differed depending upon the town, city or region being considered.[38] The presence and importance of the Wakes within The Potteries facilitated the continuation and survival of football in the region. This provided a foundation which enabled a dramatic increase in the popularity of the game in the 1870s as socio-economic conditions began to alter.

The expansion of football activity that the region experienced during the mid-1870s was stimulated by rising real wages and, more importantly, the adoption of the half-holiday. The dissemination of the half-holiday was adopted dependent on local variation with the concept being embraced in areas that were dominated by single manufacturing industries or factory-based industries.[39] The adoption of the half-holiday during the 1870s in The Potteries provided a greater portion of the working population with a regular, weekly block of free time which they could utilise for sport and leisure, with football a popular attraction. An increase in leisure time facilitated the emergence of an association football culture in Yorkshire as early as the 1860s, the game in Nottinghamshire experienced a dramatic rise in popularity in the mid-late 1870s as working hours began to be reduced, and the adoption of the half-holiday in Birmingham stimulated an increase in football activity.[40] This is also reflected in the slow emergence of football in regions where the half-holiday was embraced at a later point in the nineteenth century. The game only began to grow in popularity in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Liverpool during the mid-late 1880s and this coincided with 'the introduction of more free time for workers, notably the Saturday half-holiday'.[41] One of the key societal changes that facilitated the emergence of association football across different areas of the country was the working classes having access to greater amounts of free time.

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[38] Robert Poole, 'Oldham Wakes', in *Leisure in Britain, 1780-1983*, ed. John. K. Walton and James Walvin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 72.

[39] Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, 15.

[40] Benkwitz and Molnar, 'Emergence of Football in Birmingham', 1031; and Curry and Dunning, 'Development of the Game in Nottinghamshire', 874-876.

Second, how the sport was perceived in each specific locality also determined how football developed. In The Potteries, the association game was never subject to attempts at suppression which enabled it to continue with minimal resistance throughout the nineteenth century. In contrast, other areas drafted legislation specifically to ban football. Manchester was subject to a football ban as early as 1608, although the game did survive into the nineteenth century. In 1846 street football was formally banned in Derbyshire with Curry stating that this had a definitive negative impact on the growth of the game. In contrast, regions where football continued unsuppressed, including Sheffield, Nottingham, and Shrewsbury, experienced a quicker rate of growth.[42]

Furthermore, during the nineteenth century the term 'football' could refer to a variety of different forms of the game.[43] It is significant that association football in The Potteries was able to emerge and cement itself as the most prominent winter sport in the region with minimal competition from other activities. Rugby, or a handling variety of football, is noticeable by its absence. It is not clear why rugby did not emerge at the same speed as its association counterpart, but it is evident that its absence allowed the dribbling form of the game to flourish. In contrast, it was rugby that was initially more popular in Manchester and it was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that association football was able to emerge as a prominent winter sport.[44] It was a similar case in Hampshire, which had a strong rugby presence that was not equalled by the association game until the 1880s.[45] In addition, it is also worth noting that the presence of some sporting activities could enhance or support the growth of football. In Birmingham, many of the earliest football clubs emerged from pre-existing cricket clubs where members were looking for a sport that could keep them active during the winter months.[46] This was replicated in The Potteries, where a strong recreational cricket presence can be traced back to the early nineteenth century with a significant number of formal football club established during the 1870s linked with cricket teams.

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[41] Paul Joannou, 'Football Grows Far and Wide in the North East: Development to 1890 and the Creation of the Northern League', in *The Early Development of Football: Contemporary Debates*, ed. Graham Curry (New York: Routledge, 2019), 145.

[42] See, Graham Curry, *A Crucible of Modern Sport: The Early Development of Football in Sheffield* (New York, Nova, 2018); Curry, 'Shrewsbury: Soccer in the Sticks', 155-173; and Curry 'Stunted Growth',24-34.

[43] Gavin Kitching, 'What's In a Name? Playing "Football" in the Mid-Victorian North-Eastern England', *Ethnologie Française* 41, no.4 (2011): 602, 604-605.

[44] James and Day, 'Emergence of Football in Manchester', 59-60.

[45] Denness, 'Football in Winchester', 185.

Third, this thesis has stressed the importance of individuals and groups of people to the development of the game in The Potteries. Historians of sport can sometimes become engrossed with what Vamplew describes as 'sportifacts' – simply recording the results of matches, competitions, and races or the accomplishments of prominent athletes, coaches, and administrators.[47] It is apparent that the growth of the game in The Potteries was reliant on the contributions and efforts of enthusiastic individuals, although the environmental conditions at times restricted who could participate. Prior to the 1870s, the game was the preserve of the middle classes with players tending to be young, unmarried men that did not have family responsibilities or pressures. The adoption of the half-holiday in the region altered the landscape. The game took on a working-class character yet still retained a strong middle-class influence. Whilst it was the working classes that dominated the membership lists of local formal football clubs it was middle-class individuals who wielded greater power and authority as part of club committees. Middle-class occupations required individuals to possess a specific set of skills, including reading, writing, and handling money, that made them suitable candidates for various club committee roles. It was working-class enthusiasm and participation that grew the popularity of the game, but it was the middle classes that determined its general direction. Other localised studies have uncovered similar findings. The first clubs in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and Winchester were distinctly middle-class in nature, yet during the 1870s and 80s football experience an influx of working-class participants.[48]

During the nineteenth century, it was enthusiastic individuals that facilitated the emergence of the game. Despite The Potteries being a site of informal football activities for over a century, it was only the arrival of Harry John Almond in the region that stimulated the formation of the first formal association football club in the area. Without his influence, it is not necessarily clear how long it would have been until the region possessed a formal club, but it is evident that the game required the input of a pertinent individual to kickstart the formalisation process. Similarly, Stoke FC remained a formal club of only local significance during the early 1870s, engaging in a diminutive schedule of fixtures and attracting limited numbers of spectators, until the emergence of Thomas Charles Slaney. Slaney's enthusiasm, vision, and drive transformed the club into organisation of national repute by enhancing the club's activities, arranging fixtures against prominent opponents across the Midlands, and developing a commercial element through the introduction of gate money. Furthermore, it was Slaney who led the establishment of the Staffordshire FA in 1877 and he was at the forefront of the development of football in The Potteries for over two decades. Similar individuals had a significant impact on the game in other towns, cities, and regions. Nathaniel Creswick has been highlighted as a crucial figure in the emergence of the game in Sheffield, particularly in the formative years of Sheffield FC, whilst research has also identified the 'leading actors in early Shrewsbury football' and three individuals who shaped football in Penistone and Thurlstone.[49] It was these enthusiastic and influential individuals that sought to progress the development of the game in the nineteenth century.

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[46] Benkwitz and Molnar, Emergence of Football in Birmingham', 1030-1031.

[47] Wray Vamplew, 'History of Sport', in *Social Sciences in Sport*, ed. Joseph Maguire (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2014), 16.

[48] Curry and Dunning, 'Development of the Game in Nottinghamshire', 870, 876; Curry, 'Stunted Growth', 31-32; and Denness, 'Football in Winchester', 183-184.

Methodological Reflections and Suggestions for Future Research

The history of sport is shaped by the actions, decisions, and contributions of individuals and various groups of people.[50] This thesis has utilised a blended approach by using individual biographies and prosopographical research to examine, analyse, and interpret the development of association football in The Potteries during the nineteenth century. Whilst biography showcases the lives of unique individuals, prosopography can enable researchers to explore the life stories of large populations of 'ordinary' people.[51] A reliance on one method would have limited the focus and depth of this thesis. Using biography alone would have provided valuable insight into unique individuals that had a definitive impact on the development of the game in the region, yet it would have been unsuited to examining recreational football players due to the limited evidence available. Similarly, relying only on prosopography would have facilitated valuable data on ordinary people by identifying common characteristics and phenomena that transcend individual lives, but would have overlooked unique individuals due to its overriding interest in 'commonness'.[52] However, the use of biography and prosopography in conjuncture within this thesis has resulted in a much richer understanding of the historiography of the game in the region being developed which considers both the contributions of unique individuals and the life stories of ordinary people.

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[49] See Curry, *A Crucible of Modern Sport*; Curry, 'Shrewsbury: Soccer in the Sticks', 164-165; and Kevin Neill, Graham Curry and Eric Dunning, 'Three Men from Two Villages: The Influence of Footballers from Rural South Yorkshire on the Early Development of the Game in Sheffield', *Soccer and Society* 19, no.1 (2018): 123-135.

[50] Martin Polley, *Sports History, A Practical Guide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 52.

[51] Kathleen E. Kennedy, 'Prosopography of the Book and the Politics of Legal Language in Late Medieval England', *Journal of British Studies* 53 (2014): 566.

Much of the evidence that has been presented within this thesis has been drawn from contemporary local newspapers, including the *Staffordshire Sentinel* and *Staffordshire Advertiser*. Newspapers, periodicals, and magazines have become the principal source of evidence for historians of sport and provide a rich source of information. During the nineteenth century, the press reported on matches, events, and competitions, advertised fixtures, and also provided a forum for disputes, debates, and discussions, making newspapers a valuable source of historical data.[53] However, 'the use of newspapers as a source has inherent problems, not least in relation to impartiality, objectivity, comprehensiveness and accuracy.'[54] Beck has complained that historians have been too reliant on newspapers whilst Hill has warned against information reported in the press being immediately accepted as fact, suggesting that it needs to be interpreted and interrogated rather than be taken at face value.[55] Publications are often lacking in neutrality and the content produced is frequently written from a specific political or social perspective whilst the preferences, bias, and knowledge of journalists influence how they report on events or occurrences.[56] During the nineteenth century, newspapers became primarily concerned with building loyal readerships and generating profits rather than accurate reporting with the emergence of 'New Journalism' resulting in greater use of elaboration, embellishment, and speculation to appeal to readers.[57] Vamplew highlights that 'journalists write tomorrow's news – not history.'[58] However, much of this thesis has been concerned with exploring football at a recreational level and Cunningham suggests that 'this kind of football, precisely because it was so casual, was unlikely to leave behind many records.' Many informal occurrences of football taking place went unreported whilst few formal clubs during the nineteenth century were concerned with preserving records or producing club histories.[59] Alternative documentary sources, including logbooks and published materials, have been used within this thesis, yet due to the lack of alternative evidence contemporary newspapers have remained the central feature.

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[52] Koenraad Verboven, Myriam Carlier and Jan Dumolyn, 'Art of Prosopography', in *Prosopography Approaches and Applications: A Handbook*, ed. Katherine S.B. Keats-Rohan (Oxford: Linacre College, 2007), 41.

[53] Martin Johnes, 'Archives and Historians of Sport', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no.15 (2015): 1785.

[54] Denness, 'Football in Winchester', 186.

[55] Peter Beck, *Scoring for Britain: International Football and International Politics, 1900-1939* (London: Frank Cass), XII; and Jeffrey Hill, 'Anecdotal Evidence. Sport, the Newspaper Press and History', in *Deconstructing Sport History: A Postmodern Analysis*, ed. Murray G. Phillips (New York: University of New York Press, 2006); 121, 127.

[56] Douglas Booth, *The Field: Truth and Fiction in Sports History* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 89.

However, the reliance on newspapers as the primary source of information and evidence within this thesis has posed its own methodological challenges. Much has been written about how the nature of historical research is changing due to unprecedented advancements in technology within what has been described as the 'digital era'.[60] Two of the most crucial developments have been digitization, which has enabled primary source materials to be recorded and made available for online viewing, and the introduction of Optical Character Recognition (OCR), which facilitates instant keyword searches.[61] This has provided historians with access to more information, that is easier to search, than ever before. Despite this, only a small quantity of historical material has been digitized and whilst the British Newspaper Archive currently holds more than 180 titles and is expanding at a rate of over 8,000 pages per day, the vast majority of titles are currently incomplete with few able to offer uninterrupted coverage.[62] This was certainly the case when utilising the *Staffordshire Sentinel* and *Staffordshire Advertiser*, where only a limited number of years of each publication had been digitized. In addition, the researcher consistently came across gaps in the coverage or faced more practical challenges such as some materials being ineligible or experiencing limited success when utilising keyword searches. Osmond and Phillips suggest that ‘available online sources will not always be sufficient’ and this was undoubtedly the case with the research conducted for this thesis.[63] Where the researcher was unable to utilise digital archives, they had to revert to the traditional process of physically visiting an archive and ‘searching for the proverbial needle in a haystack’.[64] Most of the historical materials presented within this thesis were gathered through traditional archival research, which demonstrates the continuing importance of physical archives and the skills required to utilise them effectively when conducting historical research, despite the advancements facilitated by the digital era.

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[57] Martyn Dean Cooke, 'The Inextricable Link Between Sport and the Press in the Victorian Era: The Example of the "Sentinel Cup"', *Sport in History* 39, no.1 (2019): 4.

[58] Vamplew, 'History of Sport', 17.

[59] Andrew Hignell, 'Participants and Providers: A Micro-Scale Analysis of Cricket in Cardiff During the Nineteenth Century', *Sport in Society* 14, no.2 (2012): 166.

[60] See Gary Osmond and Murray G. Phillips, *Sport History in the Digital Era* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015).

[61] Gary Osmond and Murray G. Phillips, 'Introduction', in *Sport History in the Digital Era*, eds. Gary Osmond and Murray G. Phillips, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 17.

[62] Martin Johnes and Bob Nicholson, 'Sport History and Digital Archives in Practice', in *Sport History in the Digital Era*, eds. Gary Osmond and Murray G. Phillips (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 55.

It is also evident that, at certain points within this thesis, there is an apparent absence of materials from official archives. When undertaking research into a prominent professional sports club, such as Stoke City FC, or a sporting governing body, such as the Staffordshire Football Association, it would be easy to assume that such organisations would have established comprehensive archives which contain historical materials from their past. However, in both cases this assumption would be incorrect. At the time of writing, neither Stoke City FC nor the Staffordshire Football Association have official archives or an official historian, either in a voluntary or professional position. The role of dealing with enquires of a historical nature was often dealt with by staff who did not possess the experience or knowledge required to be benefit the research being conducted, primarily individuals working in a media capacity. Furthermore, there was an admission from both organisations that they were not aware of where historical materials from prior to the Second World War may be located or if they existed at all. As previously noted, few sports clubs during the nineteenth century were concerned with maintaining records and it is not uncommon for any materials that were preserved to have been misplaced or destroyed in the subsequent decades if not archived. However, despite this, many contemporary newspapers during the nineteenth century published articles that provided details on the activities of sports clubs and organisations, including reporting on meetings. This emphasises the importance of newspapers when undertaking historical research, especially when there is an absence of other materials.

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[63] Osmond and Phillips, ‘Introduction’, 15.

[64] Johnes and Nicholson, ‘Digital Archives in Practice’, 55.

This thesis has developed a comprehensive understanding of how association football developed in The Potteries and whilst it makes a significance contribution to knowledge there are several areas that should be considered for future research. First, although there is undoubtedly a wealth of research considering the 'birth' of association football in Britain, this thesis has highlighted that there is much still to learn.[65] It also demonstrates that there is a need for us to unlearn some of the traditional ways of thinking if we wish to continue the advancement of knowledge in the field. The origins of football debate has dominated the academic discourse for almost two decades, yet many of the current discussions are simply repeating long-standing arguments between those promoting either the orthodox or revisionist positions, with no sign of a consensus being reached. This thesis has demonstrated that the development of association football in The Potteries cannot be reduced to a simply clear-cut choice between one of the two overarching paradigms. Other localised studies have echoed this conclusion and it is evident that scholars need to take a step back, reframe the debate, and view the evidence through a fresh lens if tangible progress is to be made. Within this study, Fernand Braudel's framework of the longue durée has been applied and, although this thesis does not claim that Braudel's work is the ultimate solution to the disputes and disagreements regarding the early history of association football, it does showcase how scholars can use new methods to reframe the discourse and consider the evidence from a new perspective. Scholars need to explore new theories and frameworks rather than become mired in a decades-long debate which has seen limited movement from proponents of either paradigm.[66]

Second, there remains fundamental gaps in the historiography of the association game during the nineteenth century. Although there has been an increasing number of localised studies there remains a multitude of towns, cities, and regions that have yet to be considered. The development of the game during this period was shaped by local idiosyncrasies and it is vital that overlooked areas of the country are examined so that common themes can be identified.[67] Furthermore, future research needs to consider how different areas of the country were linked, connected or influenced. For example, whilst this thesis provides a comprehensive examination of the development of football in The Potteries, it makes only tentative suggestions as to how it influenced, or was influenced by, other regions. For example, Joshua Palby, who played for several clubs based in Stoke during the 1870s, became a key figure in the development of Manchester's early association football clubs whilst the creation of the Staffordshire FA in 1877 was heavily influenced by the presence of the South Derbyshire FA and Birmingham and District FA. Further research is required to determine the strength and significance of these connections. There are also several additional gaps in the existing literature. Scholars have yet to adequately explore the impact that regional football associations had on the development of the game during the 1860s and 1870s prior to the Football Association (FA) emerging as a truly national governing body. In addition, it has been suggested that teacher training colleges played a key role in the dissemination of association football as the period progressed, yet this is an area that has yet to be considered in current studies.

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[65] For a synopsis of research regarding the origins of modern football see Adrian Harvey, 'The Emergence of Football in Nineteenth Century England: The Historiographic Debate', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, no.18 (2013): 2154-2163; and Taylor, *Association Game*, 20-29.

[66] Tony Collins, 'From Georgian Football to Global Soccer' (paper presented at the British Society of Sports History Conference, Worcester, England, August 31-September 2, 2017).

[67] Martyn and James, 'Myths, Truths and Pioneers', 6.

Third, historians of sport have tended to adopt a 'winner's history' approach when examining the historiography of football during the nineteenth century.[68] The focus is often directed towards the most prestigious clubs or individuals whilst recreational teams or 'ordinary' participants have tended to be overlooked. This thesis has placed equal emphasis on the unique and the general. Whilst the early history of Stoke City FC has been explored, so too have the mass of recreational football clubs that were established throughout The Potteries during the 1870s. Equally, whilst biographies of key individuals have been presented and the first generation of Stoke Ramblers players considered, a mass prosopography was constructed to examine the life stories of hundreds of recreational football players. It is vital that scholars find an appropriate balance. Recreational sport and its participants are just as important to understanding the history of sport as elite clubs, competitions, and athletes. Likewise, simply presenting the narratives of pioneers or trailblazers alone is insufficient when it was the emergence of mass participation and spectatorship that helped Britain to become the 'birthplace of modern sport'.[69] This thesis has demonstrated the importance of human agency when considering the development of sport during the nineteenth century and it is important that these sporting lives and legacies are analysed and preserved.

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[68] Gavin Kitching, '"Old" Football and the "New" Codes: Some Thoughts on the "Origins of Football" Debate and Suggestions for Further Research', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, no.13 (2011): 1742.

[69] Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, 6.

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Appendices

Appendix One: *Early Football Activities in The Potteries, c.1844-1869.*

Date	Location	Activity Description
21/04/1844	Newcastle	‘Foot-ball’ was one of several activities that occurred as part of the ‘wakes’ celebrations.[70]
04/08/1851	Burslem	Students from the Burslem Parish Schools were entertained as the school-room with tea before participating in football, cricket and other games in the adjoining field.[71]
09/08/1856	Stoke	An article detailing the activities of the ‘wakes’ celebrations, suggesting that football was ‘common’.[72]
11/06/1860	Sandon	Individuals affiliated with the North Staffordshire Temperance movement held a community gala where activities included games of football.[73]
04/08/1860	Longton	A ‘Grand Annual Gala’ was organised by the Longton Literary and Musical Entertainments Committee. Entertainments included cricket and football matches.[74]
11/08/1860	Stoke	An article outlining the history of the wakes claims that a football match had taken place as earlier as 1708 and that sports were a vital component of the celebrations.[75]
17/09/1860	Hartshill	A rural fete took place in which football was cited as being one of the attractions.[76]
08/11/1860	Knypersley	The Newcastle Rifle Volunteer Company travelled to Knypersley where they engaged in training and manoeuvres before playing a game of football against local villagers.[77]
20/08/1860	Burslem	300 students from the Burslem Parish Church Schools participated in an annual trip. They travelled to Trentham Park where ‘several games of cricket and football were entered into’.[78]
06/09/1860	Northwood	370 students from the Northwood Church Schools spent the afternoon in a neighbouring field and participated in various sporting activities including football, cricket and other games.[79]
19/09/1860	Newcastle	Students from the Wesleyan Methodist School were given a treat – spending part of the day in a field on Clayton Road where they participated in football, cricket and other games.[80]
20/05/1861	Hanley	350 students from St. Marks Day and Sunday Schools spent the day at Cannock Chase where ‘wickets were pitched, footballs thrown, and several games heartily entered into’.[81]
22/07/1861	Tunstall	Members from the Tunstall Church School spent the day playing various game, including football and cricket, in a field provided by Mr. Wood.[82]
05/08/1861	Longton	The ‘Highfield Gala’ was held for the third year where football and cricket were cited as being among the activities that occurred.[83]
17/08/1861	Staffordshire	More than 200 of ‘the less harmful# inmates from the County Lunatic Asylum played various sports in an adjoining field, including football and cricket.[84]
26/08/1861	Milton	Football, cricket and a number of other ‘recreative sports’ were ‘enjoyed’ as part of a Rural Fete.[85]
05/08/1862	Milton	A ‘Rural Fete’ was interrupted by rain but in the intervals between showers attendees played football, cricket and quoits.[86]

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[70] ‘Newcastle Wakes’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, September 21, 1844, 3.

[71] ‘Parish Church Schools’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 9, 1851, 4.

[72] ‘Stoke Wakes’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 9, 1856, 5.

[73] ‘Temperance Fete’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, June 16, 1860, 4.

[74] ‘Grand Annual Gala’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 4, 1860, 1.

[75] ‘Stoke Wakes’, Staffordshire Sentinel, August 11, 1860, 4.

[76] ‘Rural Fete at Hartshill’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, September 14, 1860, 1.

[77] ‘Visit of the Newcastle Rifle Volunteer Company to Knypersley’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, November 10, 1860, 4.

[78] ‘National Schools’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 25, 1860, 4.

[79] ‘Northwood Church and Sunday Day School’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 8, 1860, 4.

[80] ‘Newcastle. School Treat’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, September 22, 1860, 8.

[81] ‘Hanley. St Mark’s Day and Sunday Schools’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, May 25, 1861, 4.

[82] ‘Tunstall Church Schools’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, July 27, 1861, 4.

[83] ‘Gala at Highfield, Longton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 10, 1861, 4.

[84] ‘County Lunatic Asylum’*, Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 17, 1861, 7.

[85] ‘Rural Fete and Floral and Horticultural Exhibition at Milton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 31, 1861, 4.

[86] ‘Milton Horticultural Fete’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 9, 1862, 5.

07/08/1862	Newcastle	Various schools from Newcastle celebrated 'Trentham Day' in a field in Clayton where various games were played, including football and cricket.[87]
13/07/1863	Longton	A fete held at Longton Hall was attended by 2,000 people who participated and spectated in various activities including singing, comedians, acting and football.[88]
21/07/1863	Milton	Football was listed among the 'amusements' that occurred as part of a 'Gala and Floral Exhibition'.[89]
05/08/1863	Hanley	260 students and 170 teachers and friends from Hope Congregational Schools (Hanley) spent the day at Sandon Park where footballs and quoits were provided for 'their recreation'.[90]
06/03/1863	Stoke	Reports of the 'Stoke Wakes' and 'Trentham Day' suggest that there were attempted to play football as part of the celebrations, although the rain 'restricted the success'.[91]
18/08/1863	Endon	The Endon, Longsden & Stanley Floral and Horticultural Association arranged a local fete where football was named as one of the alternative attractions.[92]
24/08/1863	Norton	A number of sports were, including football, were played during the 'Norton Wakes'.[93]
01/09/1863	Caverswall	A 'Rural Fete' was organised on behalf of Caverswall School to raise funds, Various sports were arranged as part of the programme of activities, including football, archery and quoits.[94]
1863	Stoke	Reverend Lovelace Thomlinson Stamer presents the students at St. Peter's School with a football and allowed them the use of church grounds on which to play.
27/07/1864	Stoke	Students from the Stoke School were 'treated' to a 'handsome tea' on the grounds of MR. Wilkin after which various game, including football and shuttlecock, were arranged.[95]
18/08/1864	Endon	The Endon, Longsden & Stanley Floral and Horticultural Association arranged a local fete where football was named as one of the alternative attractions.[96]
22/08/1864	Norton	An advertisement for a 'Rural Fete' organised during 'Norton Wakes' cites football as one of the amusements that were planned.[97]
23/08/1864	Tunstall	Football was among the 'traditional English games' played by local people during the wakes celebrations.[98]
12/09/1864	Stoke	Students from the Church Schools were provided with a 'treat' where they 'enjoyed football' and other games.[99]
20/09/1864	Knutton	Students from the Congregational Church School participated in football and other games as part of their 'annual treat'.[100]
04/09/1865	Hanley	Over 600 students from the Old Church Schools enjoyed their 'annual treat' where football and cricket were among the amusements.[101]
27/08/1866	Norton	At the 'Norton Gala and Flower Show' visitors had 'ample means of enjoyment' including pony racing, foot racing, archery, shooting and football.[102]
10/06/1867	Burslem	Employees from Bray and Thompson were given a 'treat' where they were conveyed to Alsager and participated in football, cricket and other sports.[103]
01/07/1867	Longton	A 'Fete' held at Longton Hall attracted 1,300 visitors and included football amongst the entertainment.[104]
27/07/1867	Burslem	Students and teachers from the New Communion Sunday School spent the day at Clough Hall where footballs, bats, bales and swings were provided for entertainment.[105]
04/08/1867	Stoke	Various schools provided 'treats' for their students with football and cricket matches being commonplace.[106]

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[87] 'Newcastle. School Treats', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 9, 1862, 4.

[88] 'The Longton Hall Fete', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 18, 1863, 5.

[89] 'Annual Gala and Floral Exhibition at Milton', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, July 18, 1863, 1.

[90] 'Hope Congregational Schools, Hanley', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 8, 1863, 8.

[91] 'Trentham Day', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 8, 1863, 8.

[92] 'Endon, Longsden & Stanley Floral and Horticultural Association', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 22, 1863, 5.

[93] 'Norton Wakes', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 29, 1863, 5.

[94] 'Caverswall School Fete', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, September 5, 1863, 5.

[95] 'Grand Treat to the Stoke Schoolchildren', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, July 20, 1864, 3.

[96] 'Endon, Longsden & Stanley Floral and Horticultural Exhibition', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 20, 1864, 5.

[97] 'Norton Wake – Gala and Floral Exhibition', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 20, 1864, 1.

[98] 'Brindley Ford', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 27, 1864, 5.

[99] 'Church Schools', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, September 17, 1864, 5.

[100] 'Congregational Church', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, September 24, 1864, 8.

[101] 'Old Church Schools', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, September 9, 1865, 4.

[102] 'Norton-in-the-Moors Gala and Flower Show', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, September 1, 1866, 5.

[103] 'Burslem. Treat to Workmen', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 15, 1867,4.

[104] 'Literary and Mechanics' Institute', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 6, 1867, 5.

[105] 'Tunstall. The Wakes', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 27, 1867, 5.

[106] 'School Treats', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 10, 1867, 8.

08/08/1867	Trentham	During the ‘Trentham Day Fete’ football, cricket and other ‘healthful’ sports occurred.[107]
20/08/2867	Shelton	Students from the Shelton Sunday School travelled to Sandon Park which was ‘soon alive’ with football, cricket and races.[108]
26/08/1867	Norton	The ‘Norton Wakes and Fete’ were held over two days with football being cited as being among the attractions.[109]
27/08/1867	Hanley	420 students from Earl Granville’s School spent the day in a field adjoining Etruria Hall where amusements provided included football.[110]
03/04/1869	Stoke	Five ‘respectably dressed’ boys were summoned and cautioned by police after being caught playing football in the street.[111]

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[107] ‘Trentham Day’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 10, 1867, 4.

[108] ‘Annual Trip of the Shelton Sunday and Day Schools’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 24, 1867, 4.

[109] ‘Norton Wakes Flower Show and Gala’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, August 31, 1867, 6.

[110] Hanley. Earl Granville’s School’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 31, 1867, 4.

[111] ‘Caution to Boys’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, April 3, 1869, 8.

Appendix Two: *Stoke Ramblers Players, 1868-1870*

Generic Information			Childhood			Stoke Ramblers			Later Life		
Name	**DoB**	**DoD**	**Residence**	**Father's Occupation**	**Living With**	**Residence**	**Occupation**	**Living With**	**Residence**	**Occupation**	**Living With**
Harry John ALMOND[1]	1850	1910	Wonersh, Surrey	Army Outfitter	Father, mother, five siblings and three servants	Stoke (before moving to Newcastle / Sunderland)	Civil Engineer (Railway)	-	Cartagena, Spain (before moving to Caracas, Venezuela)	Mechanical Engineer / General Manager (Railway)	Wife
William Lace CLAGUE[2]	1847	1925	Lancaster, Lancashire	Bread Maker	Father, mother and sister	Burslem, Staffordshire before moving to Long Eaton, Derbyshire	Assistant Master at College	Boarding	Hackney, London (before moving to Hornsey, Middlesex)	Inspector of Schools	Wife, three children and two servants
William Oliver GORDON[3]	1848	1907	West Bromwich, Staffordshire	Colliery Proprietor (Employing 325)	Father, mother, two siblings and two servants	Trent Vale, Staffordshire	Agent to Colliery Proprietor	Father, mother, nine siblings and six servants	Stapley, Cheshire	Farmer (employing 8) / Living on own means	Three servants
John HANNEN[4]	1848	1920	Fordingbridge, Hampshire	Shop Keeper	Father, mother and five siblings	Shelton, Staffordshire	Railway Clerk	Boarding	Portsea, Portsmouth (before moving to Canada	Licensed Virtualler	-
Edward LAKE[5]	1850	1938	Stoke, Staffordshire	Grocer and Provision Merchant	Father, mother, seven siblings and servant	Stoke, Staffordshire	Writing Clerk	Father, mother and six siblings	Cook, Illinois (USA)	Accountant	Wife and five children
John Thomas MASTERS[6]	1852		Fenton, Staffordshire	Railway Point Maker (Blacksmith)	Father, mother and three siblings	Shelton, Staffordshire	Writing Clerk	Father, mother and two siblings	Stoke, Staffordshire	China Clay Merchant's Clerk (later a China Clay Merchant)	Wife, four children and servant

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[1] Census Returns, Surrey, 1861 (RG9 438/194); *Mechanical Engineering Records, 1890* (London, UK: Institution of Mechanical Engineers) s.v. 'Harry Almond'; *Mechanical Engineering Records, 1896* (London, UK: Institution of Mechanical Engineers) s.v. 'Harry Almond'; British Armed Forces and Overseas Banns And Marriage (GRO Consular Marriages, 1849-1965), 1887, (Page 3); England & Wales, National Probate Calendar - Index of Wills and Administrations, 1910 (page 27); R. L. Arrowsmith, *Charterhouse Register: 1769–1872* (London: Phillimore, 1974).

[2] Census Returns, Lancaster, 1861 (RG9 3159/17); Census Returns, Long Eaton, 1871 (RG10 3556/58); Census Returns, London, 1881 (RG11 301/9); Census Returns, London, 1891 (RG12 195/10); Census Returns, Middlesex, 1901 (RG13 1243/34); 'Eminent Athletes. No.11 – W. L. Clague, of Stockport', *Athletic News*, June 21, 1875, 1; Margaret Roberts, e-mail correspondence, July 19, 2016; England & Wales, National Probate Calendar - Index of Wills and Administrations, 1923 (Online Database).

[3] England and Wales Civil Registration Birth Index, Staffordshire, 1848 (Volume 18, Page 632); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1871 (RG10 2870/67); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1881 (RG11 2775/102); Census Returns, Cheshire, 1901 (RG13 3354/38); England and Wales National Probate Calendar, 1907 (Page 258).

[4] Census Returns, Hampshire, 1861 (RG9 669/16); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1871 (RG10 2862/9); Census Returns, Hampshire, 1881 (RG11 1144/80).

[5] Illinois Deaths and Stillbirths, 1938 (Online Database); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1861 (RG9 1938/21); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1871 (RG10 2869/17); Census Returns, Chicago Ward, 1900 (Microfilm 1240275, Page 2).

[6] England and Wales Civil Registration Birth Index, Birmingham, 1851 (Volume 16, Page 363); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1861 (RG9 1940/106); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1871 (RG10 2862/12).

William MacDonald MATTHEWS[7]	1851	1916	Kensington, Middlesex	Land Proprietor	Father, mother, sibling and servant	Stoke	Civil Engineer (Railway)	-	Kent	Living on Own Means	Wife, nine children and seven servants
Charles MAY[8]	1848	1902	Burslem, Staffordshire (Sneyd Farm)	Colliery Proprietor (Employing 63)	Father, mother, six siblings and three servants	Burslem, Staffordshire (Sneyd Farm)	Agent to Colliery Proprietor	Father, mother, five siblings and three servants	Bream, Gloucestershire / Bechuanaland (Botswana)	Mining Engineer	As a boarder
William Eustace MAY[9]	1851	1869	Burslem, Staffordshire (Sneyd Farm)	Colliery Proprietor (Employing 63)	Father, mother, six siblings and three servants	-	-	-	-	-	-
John TOWLE[10]	1852	1930	Nottingham, Nottinghamshire	Grocer	Father, mother, five siblings and servant	Hanley, Staffordshire	Fruit Dealer	Father, mother and two siblings	Shelton, Staffordshire	Grocer	Wife and four children
Percy Holme TRUBSHAW[11]	1852	1932	Castle Church, Staffordshire	Architect and Surveyor	Father, mother, four siblings and servant	Stoke, Staffordshire	Civil Engineer	Boarding	Kidsgrove, Staffordshire (before moving to Tunstall and Bradley Green, Staffordshire	Engineer / Steam Engine Fitter	Wife and three children
Frederick SCOTT[12]	1849	1919	Kidsgrove, Staffordshire	Agricultural Labourer	Brother and brother's wife	Talke, Staffordshire	Blacksmith	Wife, daughter and niece	Burslem, Staffordshire	Wife and nine children	Engineer (Colliery) Mechanical Engineer
Francis Jesse SHAW[13]	1846	1917	Shelton, Staffordshire	Potter's Manager	Father, mother and a servant	Shelton, Staffordshire	Commercial Clerk	Mother and servant	Stoke / Hanley, Staffordshire	Wife, five children and two servants	Coal Merchant
Henry STEEL[14]	1845	1910	Chesterton, Staffordshire	Tailor	Father, five siblings and a servant	Congleton, Cheshire	Tailor	Wife, daughter and a servant	Chesterton, Staffordshire	Wife and four children	Tailor and Grocer

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[7] Australia Birth Index, 1851 (Volume V1851258); Census Returns, Middlesex, 1861 (RG9 12/142); Census Returns, Kent, 1901 (RG13 896/17); Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineers (London: Institute of Civil Engineers , 1917) s.v. 'Wiiliam MacDonald Matthews'; R. L. Arrowsmith, *Charterhouse Register: 1769–1872* (London: Phillimore, 1974).

[8] England Births and Christenings, Staffordshire, 1848 (Film Number 1470941); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1861 (RG9 1920/49); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1871 (RG10 2852/116); Census Returns, Gloucestershire, 1881 (RG11 5223/136); The Bednall Archives, Private Collection (Reference BC1/868, Box 7).

[9] England and Wales Civil Registration Birth Index, Staffordshire, 1851 (Volume 17, Page 328); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1861 (RG9 1920/49); 'Deaths', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, August 7, 1869, 5.

[10] Census Returns, Nottinghamshire, 1861 (RG9 2459/25); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1871 (RG10 2867/47); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1881 (RG11 2726/144); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1891 (RG12 2173/57); England and Wales Civil Registration Death Index, Staffordshire, 1930 (Volume 6B, Page 172).

[11] England and Wales Civil Registration Birth Index, Staffordshire, 1852 (Volume 6B); Census Returns, Stafford, 1861 (RG9 1908/126); Census Returns Staffordshire, 1871 (RG10 2862/8); Census Returns, Wolstanton, 1881 (RG11 2709/142); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1891 (RG12 2156/73); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1901 (RG13 2621/77); National Probate Calendar – Index of Wills and Administrations, 1932 (Page 149).

[12] Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1861 (RG9 1923/43); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1871 (RG10 2836/73); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1881 (RG11 2712/11); Census Returns, 1891 (RG12 2159/35); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1901 (RG13 2592/24); England and Wales Civil Registration Death Index, Staffordshire, 1919 (Volume 6B, Page 155).

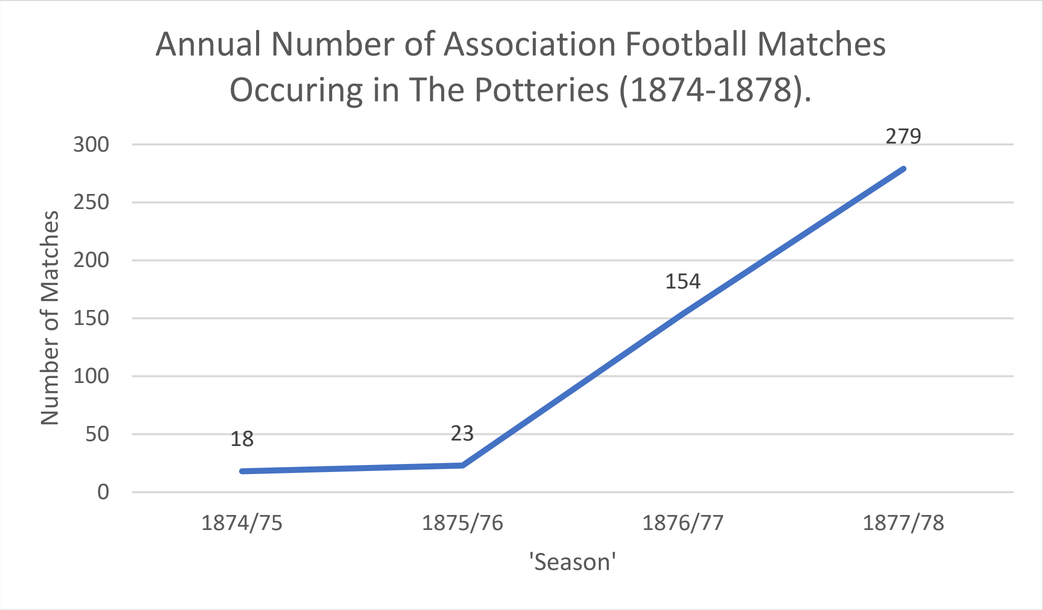
[13] Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1851 (HO107 2006/54); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1871 (RG10 2862/9); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1881 (RG11 2722/26); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1901 (RG13 2607/86); National Probate Calendar – Index of Wills and Administrations, 1917 (Page 22).

[14] England and Wales Civil Registration Birth Index, Staffordshire, 1845 (Volume 17, Page 7); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1861 (RG9 1921/115); Census Returns, Cheshire, 1871 (RG10 3706/79); Census Returns, Staffordshire, 1881 (RG11 2701/11); National Probate Calendar – Index of Wills and Administrations, 1910 (Page 262).

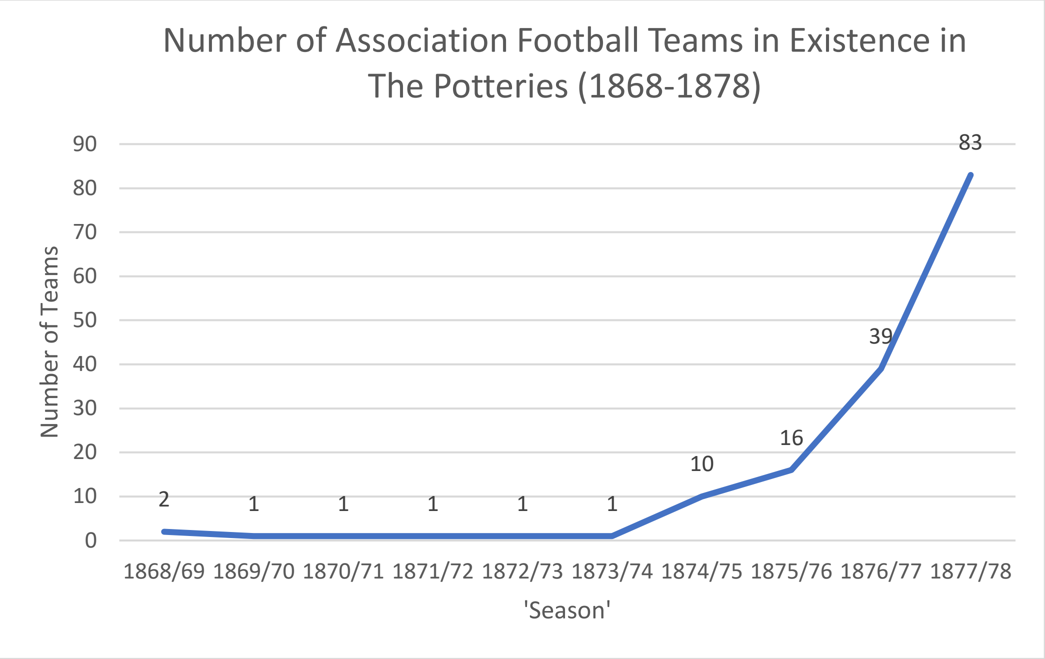
Appendix Three: *Complete Database of Association Football Matches in The Potteries, 1868-1878*

This appendix is an electronic database that can be accessed via the storage device provided.

Appendix Four: ‘*Explosion’ of Football Activities, 1868-1878*

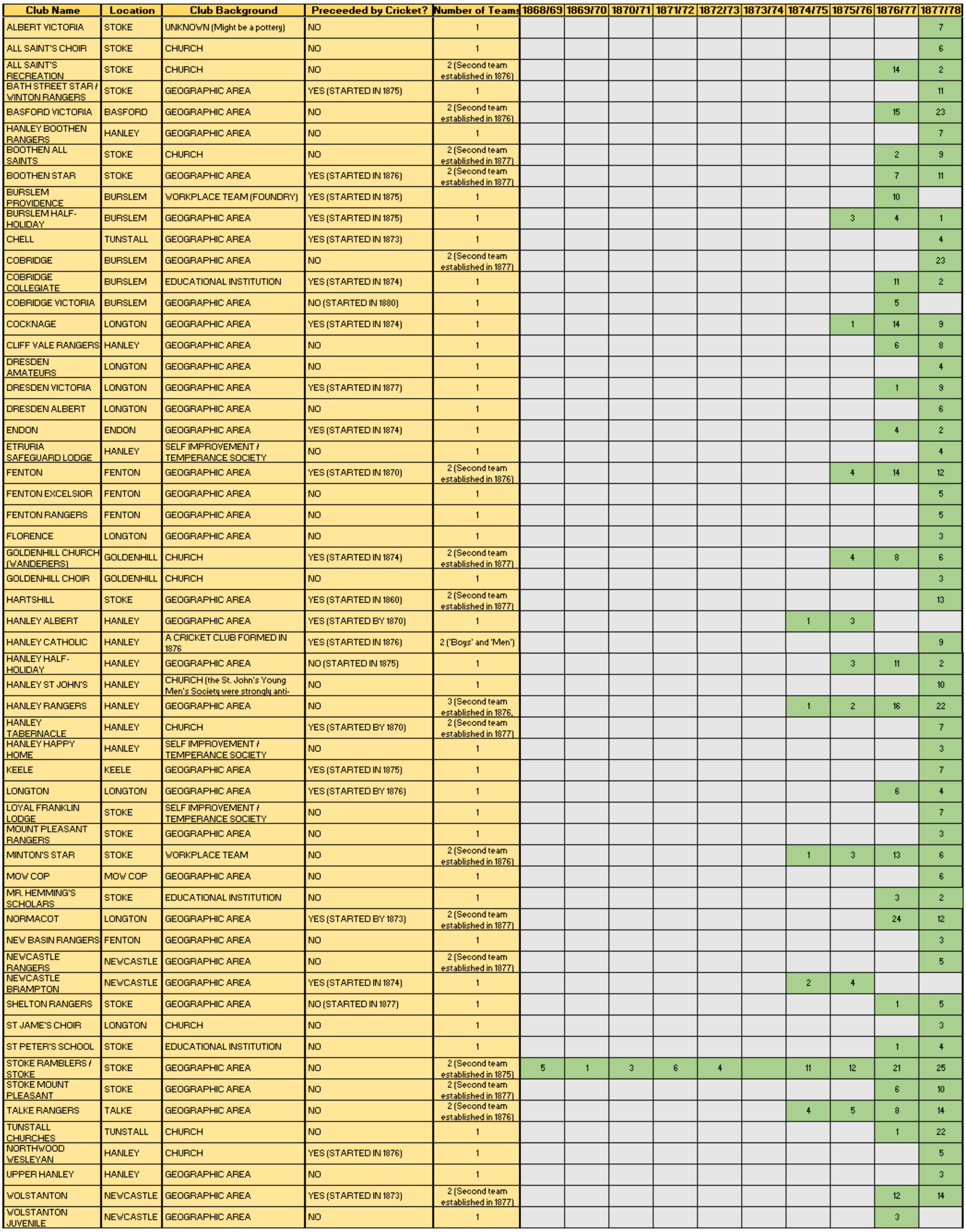


‘Season’	1874/75	1875/76	1876/77	1877/78
Number of Matches Reported	18	23	154	279



Number of Teams in Existence									
1868/69	1869/70	1870/71	1871/72	1872/73	1873/1874	1874/75	1875/76	1876/77	1877/78
2	1	1	1	1	1	10	16	39	83

Appendix Five: *Formal Association Football Clubs in The Potteries, 1868-1878*[1]



Club Name	Location	Club Background	Preceeded by Cricket?	Number of Teams	1868/69	1869/70	1870/71	1871/72	1872/73	1873/74	1874/75	1875/76	1876/77	1877/78
ALBERT VICTORIA	STOKE	UNKNOWN (Might be a pottery)	NO	1										7
ALL SAINT'S CHOIR	STOKE	CHURCH	NO	1										6
ALL SAINT'S RECREATION	STOKE	CHURCH	NO	2 (Second team established in 1876)									14	2
BATH STREET STAR / WINTON RANGERS	STOKE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED IN 1875)	1										11
BASFORD VICTORIA	BASFORD	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	2 (Second team established in 1876)									15	23
HANLEY BOOTHEN RANGERS	HANLEY	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	1										7
BOOTHEN ALL SAINTS	STOKE	CHURCH	NO	2 (Second team established in 1877)									2	9
BOOTHEN STAR	STOKE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED IN 1876)	2 (Second team established in 1877)									7	11
BURSLEM PROVIDENCE	BURSLEM	WORKPLACE TEAM (FOUNDRY)	YES (STARTED IN 1875)	1									10	
BURSLEM HALF-HOLIDAY	BURSLEM	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED IN 1875)	1								3	4	1
CHELL	TUNSTALL	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED IN 1873)	1										4
COBRIDGE	BURSLEM	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	2 (Second team established in 1877)										23
COBRIDGE COLLEGIATE	BURSLEM	EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION	YES (STARTED IN 1874)	1									11	2
COBRIDGE VICTORIA	BURSLEM	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO (STARTED IN 1880)	1									5	
COCKNAGE	LONGTON	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED IN 1874)	1								1	14	9
CLIFF VALE RANGERS	HANLEY	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	1									6	8
DRESDEN AMATEURS	LONGTON	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	1										4
DRESDEN VICTORIA	LONGTON	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED IN 1877)	1									1	9
DRESDEN ALBERT	LONGTON	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	1										6
ENDON	ENDON	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED IN 1874)	1									4	2
ETRURIA SAFEGUARD LODGE	HANLEY	SELF IMPROVEMENT / TEMPERANCE SOCIETY	NO	1										4
FENTON	FENTON	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED IN 1870)	2 (Second team established in 1876)								4	14	12
FENTON EXCELSIOR	FENTON	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	1										5
FENTON RANGERS	FENTON	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	1										5
FLORENCE	LONGTON	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	1										3
GOLDENHILL CHURCH (WANDERERS)	GOLDENHILL	CHURCH	YES (STARTED IN 1874)	2 (Second team established in 1877)								4	8	6
GOLDENHILL CHOIR	GOLDENHILL	CHURCH	NO	1										3
HARTSHILL	STOKE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED IN 1860)	2 (Second team established in 1877)										13
HANLEY ALBERT	HANLEY	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED BY 1870)	1							1	3		
HANLEY CATHOLIC	HANLEY	A CRICKET CLUB FORMED IN 1876	YES (STARTED IN 1876)	2 ('Boys' and 'Men')										9
HANLEY HALF-HOLIDAY	HANLEY	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO (STARTED IN 1875)	1								3	11	2
HANLEY ST JOHN'S	HANLEY	CHURCH (the St. John's Young Men's Society were strongly anti-	NO	1										10
HANLEY RANGERS	HANLEY	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	3 (Second team established in 1876,							1	2	16	22
HANLEY TABERNACLE	HANLEY	CHURCH	YES (STARTED BY 1870)	2 (Second team established in 1877)										7
HANLEY HAPPY HOME	HANLEY	SELF IMPROVEMENT / TEMPERANCE SOCIETY	NO	1										3
KEELE	KEELE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED IN 1875)	1										7
LONGTON	LONGTON	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED BY 1876)	1									6	4
LOYAL FRANKLIN LODGE	STOKE	SELF IMPROVEMENT / TEMPERANCE SOCIETY	NO	1										7
MOUNT PLEASANT RANGERS	STOKE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	1										3
MINTON'S STAR	STOKE	WORKPLACE TEAM	NO	2 (Second team established in 1876)							1	3	13	6
MOW COP	MOW COP	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	1										6
MR. HEMMING'S SCHOLARS	STOKE	EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION	NO	1									3	2
NORMACOT	LONGTON	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED BY 1873)	2 (Second team established in 1877)									24	12
NEW BASIN RANGERS	FENTON	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	1										3
NEWCASTLE RANGERS	NEWCASTLE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	2 (Second team established in 1877)										5
NEWCASTLE BRAMPTON	NEWCASTLE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED IN 1874)	1							2	4		
SHELTON RANGERS	STOKE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO (STARTED IN 1877)	1									1	5
ST JAME'S CHOIR	LONGTON	CHURCH	NO	1										3
ST PETER'S SCHOOL	STOKE	EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION	NO	1									1	4
STOKE RAMBLERS / STOKE	STOKE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	2 (Second team established in 1875)	5	1	3	6	4		11	12	21	25
STOKE MOUNT PLEASANT	STOKE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	2 (Second team established in 1877)									6	10
TALKE RANGERS	TALKE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	2 (Second team established in 1876)							4	5	8	14
TUNSTALL CHURCHES	TUNSTALL	CHURCH	NO	1									1	22
NORTHWOOD WESLEYAN	HANLEY	CHURCH	YES (STARTED IN 1876)	1										5
UPPER HANLEY	HANLEY	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	1										3
WOLSTANTON	NEWCASTLE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	YES (STARTED IN 1873)	2 (Second team established in 1877)									12	14
WOLSTANTON JUVENILE	NEWCASTLE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NO	1									3	

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[1] The figure included in each of the green boxes indicates the number of matches played by the club during that 'season'.

Appendix Six: *Analysis of Club Football in The Potteries, 1868-1878*

Number of Formal Clubs Possessing Multiple Teams	
18	31.%

Location of Formal Clubs		
Basford	1	1.7%
Burslem	5	8.6%
Endon	1	1.7%
Fenton	4	6.9%
Goldenhill	2	3.4%
Hanley	13	22.4%
Keele	1	1.7%
Longton	8	13.8%
Mow Cop	1	1.7%
Newcastle	4	6.9%
Stoke	15	25.8%
Talke	1	1.7%
Tunstall	2	3.4%

Background of Formal Clubs		
Church	11	18.9%
Educational Institution	3	5.3%
Geographic Area	37	63.1%
Self-Improvement Society	3	5.3%
Workplace Team	2	3.6%
Existing Sport Club	1	1.9%
Unknown	1	1.9%

Football Clubs Preceded by a Cricket Club of the Same Title		
Yes	22	37.9%
No	36	62.1%

Appendix Seven: *Prosopographical Database: Association Football Players in The Potteries, 1873-1878*

This appendix is an electronic database that can be accessed via the storage device provided

Appendix Eight: *Prosopographical Questionnaire: Association Football Players in The Potteries, 1873-1878*

Early Life

1. During childhood, were individuals raised in The Potteries or is there evidence of migration / emigration?
2. During childhood, is there any evidence that individuals made connections that continued into later life and facilitated engagement with a formal association football club?
3. During childhood, what was the social class of the family (based on the father's occupation)?
4. During childhood, did the family employ a servant?
5. What was the size of the family and how many children were there is total?

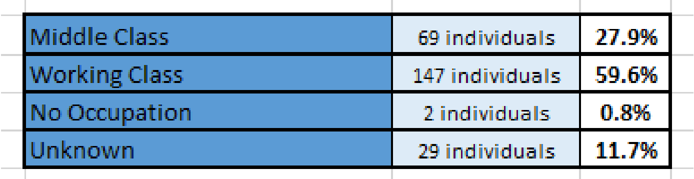
Football Active

1. How many individuals were actively playing association football for a formal club in The Potteries between 1873 and 1878?
2. What age were individuals when they first began to actively play association football for a formal club?
3. Where individuals married when they first began to actively play association football for a formal club?
4. Did individuals have children when they first began to actively play association football for a formal club?
5. Did individuals live in close proximity to other members of the formal association football club that they represented?
6. What was the social class of the individuals that were actively playing association football for a formal club (based on occupation)?
7. Were formal association football clubs socially exclusive or did memberships consist of individuals from various social classes?
8. Did individuals who were actively playing association football for a formal club employ a servant?
9. Was it common for multiple siblings from a family to play in the same team?

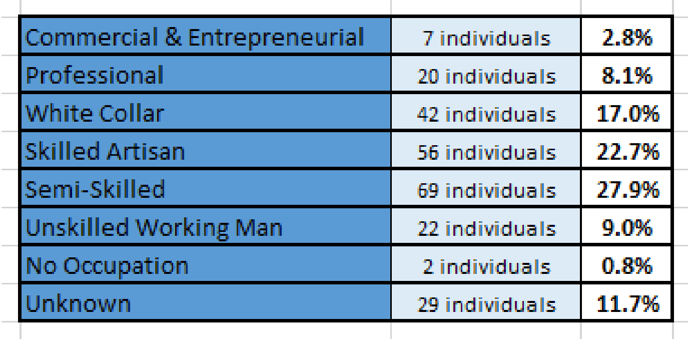
Later Life

1. What was the average lifespan of individuals that had played association football for a formal club?
2. Did individuals marry in later life when they were no longer actively playing association football for a formal club?
3. Did individuals have children in later life when they were no longer actively playing association football for a formal club?
4. Is there evidence of individuals migrating / emigrating away from The Potteries during later life?

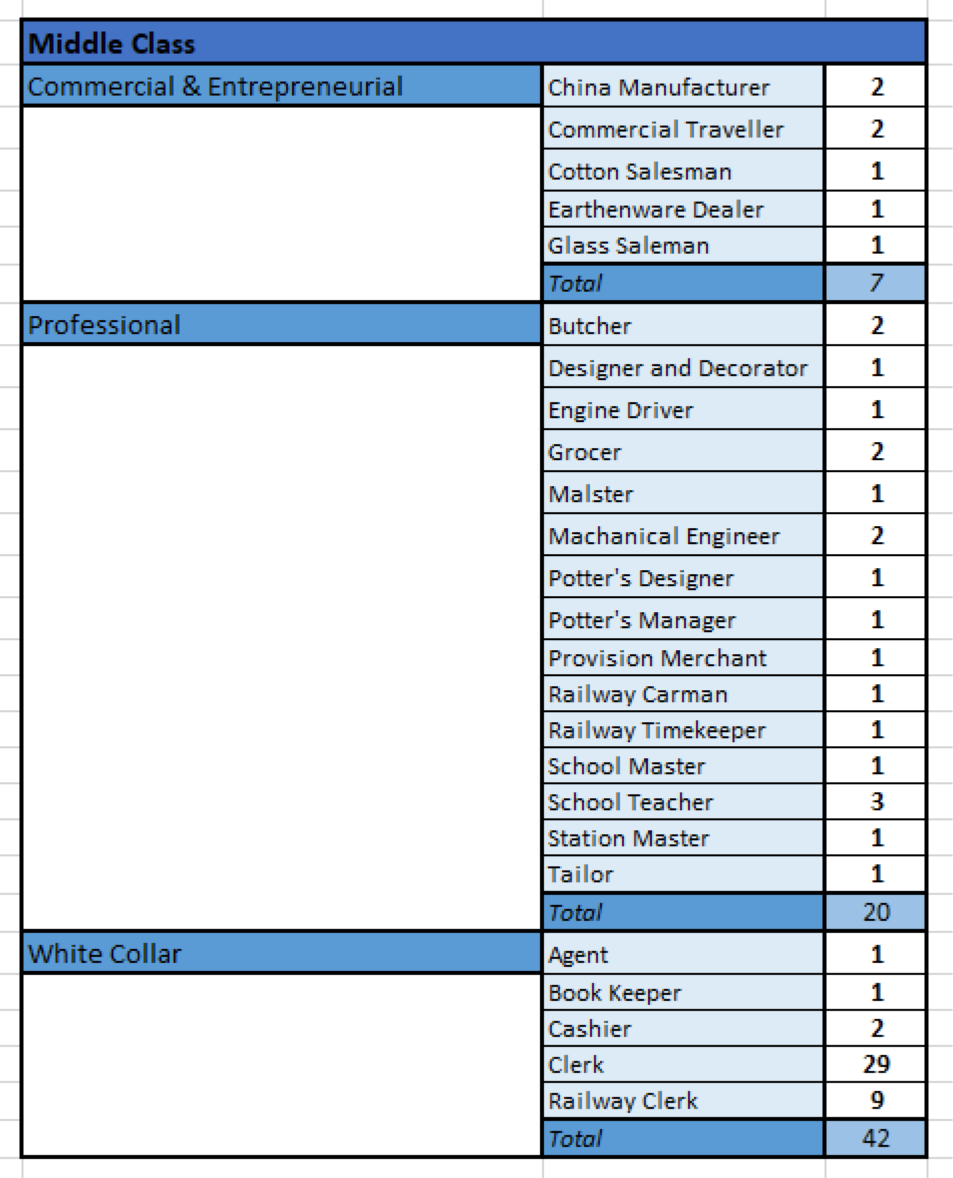
Appendix Nine: *Social Class and Occupation of Association Football Players in The Potteries, 1873-1878*



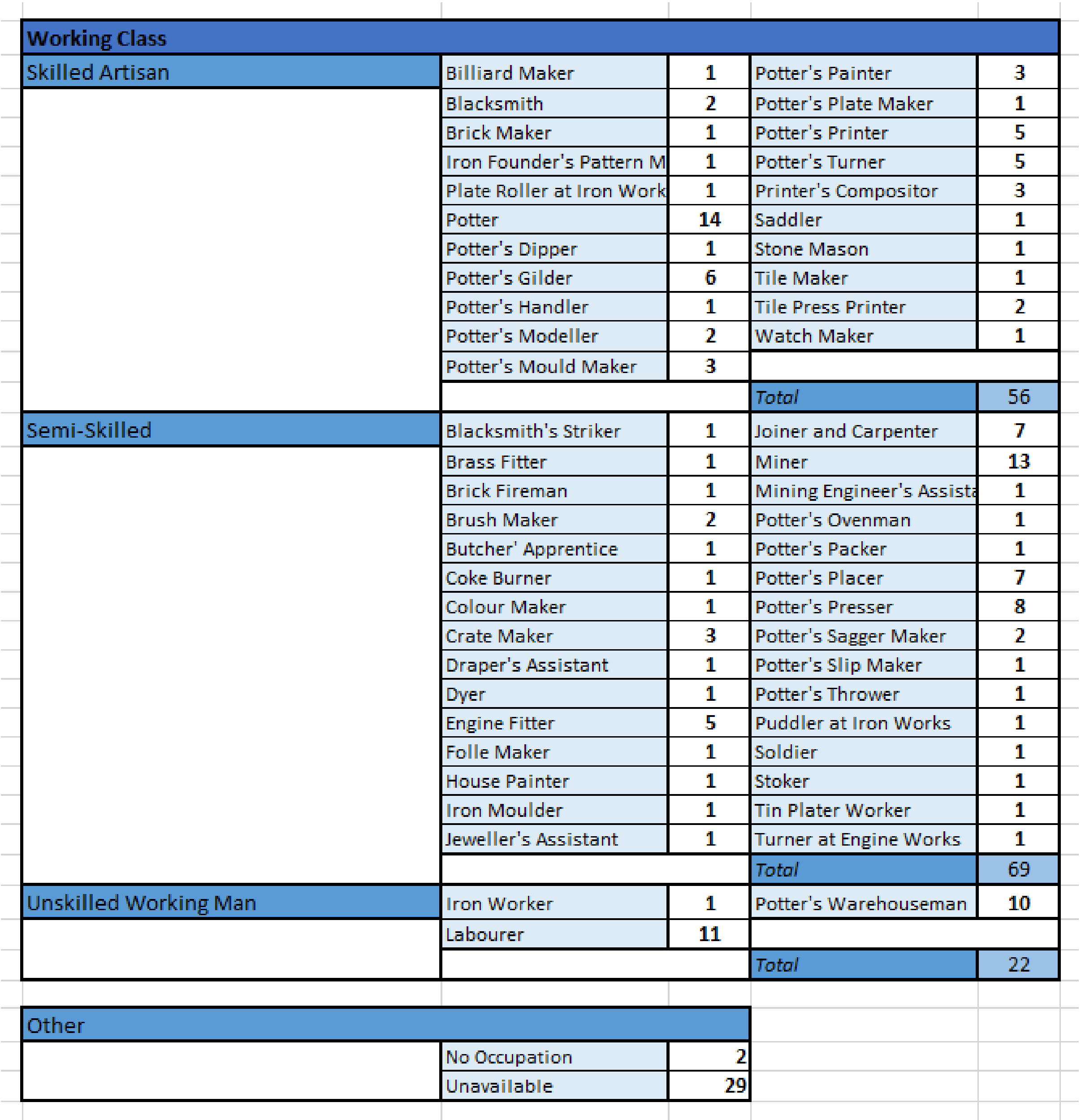
Middle Class	69 individuals	**27.9%**
Working Class	147 individuals	**59.6%**
No Occupation	2 individuals	**0.8%**
Unknown	29 individuals	**11.7%**



Commercial & Entrepreneurial	7 individuals	**2.8%**
Professional	20 individuals	**8.1%**
White Collar	42 individuals	**17.0%**
Skilled Artisan	56 individuals	**22.7%**
Semi-Skilled	69 individuals	**27.9%**
Unskilled Working Man	22 individuals	**9.0%**
No Occupation	2 individuals	**0.8%**
Unknown	29 individuals	**11.7%**



Middle Class		
Commercial & Entrepreneurial	China Manufacturer	**2**
	Commercial Traveller	**2**
	Cotton Salesman	**1**
	Earthenware Dealer	**1**
	Glass Saleman	**1**
	Total	*7*
Professional	Butcher	**2**
	Designer and Decorator	**1**
	Engine Driver	**1**
	Grocer	**2**
	Malster	**1**
	Machanical Engineer	**2**
	Potter's Designer	**1**
	Potter's Manager	**1**
	Provision Merchant	**1**
	Railway Carman	**1**
	Railway Timekeeper	**1**
	School Master	**1**
	School Teacher	**3**
	Station Master	**1**
	Tailor	**1**
	Total	20
White Collar	Agent	**1**
	Book Keeper	**1**
	Cashier	**2**
	Clerk	**29**
	Railway Clerk	**9**
	Total	42



Working Class				
Skilled Artisan	Billiard Maker	1	Potter's Painter	3
	Blacksmith	2	Potter's Plate Maker	1
	Brick Maker	1	Potter's Printer	5
	Iron Founder's Pattern M	1	Potter's Turner	5
	Plate Roller at Iron Work	1	Printer's Compositor	3
	Potter	14	Saddler	1
	Potter's Dipper	1	Stone Mason	1
	Potter's Gilder	6	Tile Maker	1
	Potter's Handler	1	Tile Press Printer	2
	Potter's Modeller	2	Watch Maker	1
	Potter's Mould Maker	3		
			Total	56
Semi-Skilled	Blacksmith's Striker	1	Joiner and Carpenter	7
	Brass Fitter	1	Miner	13
	Brick Fireman	1	Mining Engineer's Assista	1
	Brush Maker	2	Potter's Ovenman	1
	Butcher' Apprentice	1	Potter's Packer	1
	Coke Burner	1	Potter's Placer	7
	Colour Maker	1	Potter's Presser	8
	Crate Maker	3	Potter's Sagger Maker	2
	Draper's Assistant	1	Potter's Slip Maker	1
	Dyer	1	Potter's Thrower	1
	Engine Fitter	5	Puddler at Iron Works	1
	Folle Maker	1	Soldier	1
	House Painter	1	Stoker	1
	Iron Moulder	1	Tin Plater Worker	1
	Jeweller's Assistant	1	Turner at Engine Works	1
			Total	69
Unskilled Working Man	Iron Worker	1	Potter's Warehouseman	10
	Labourer	11		
			Total	22

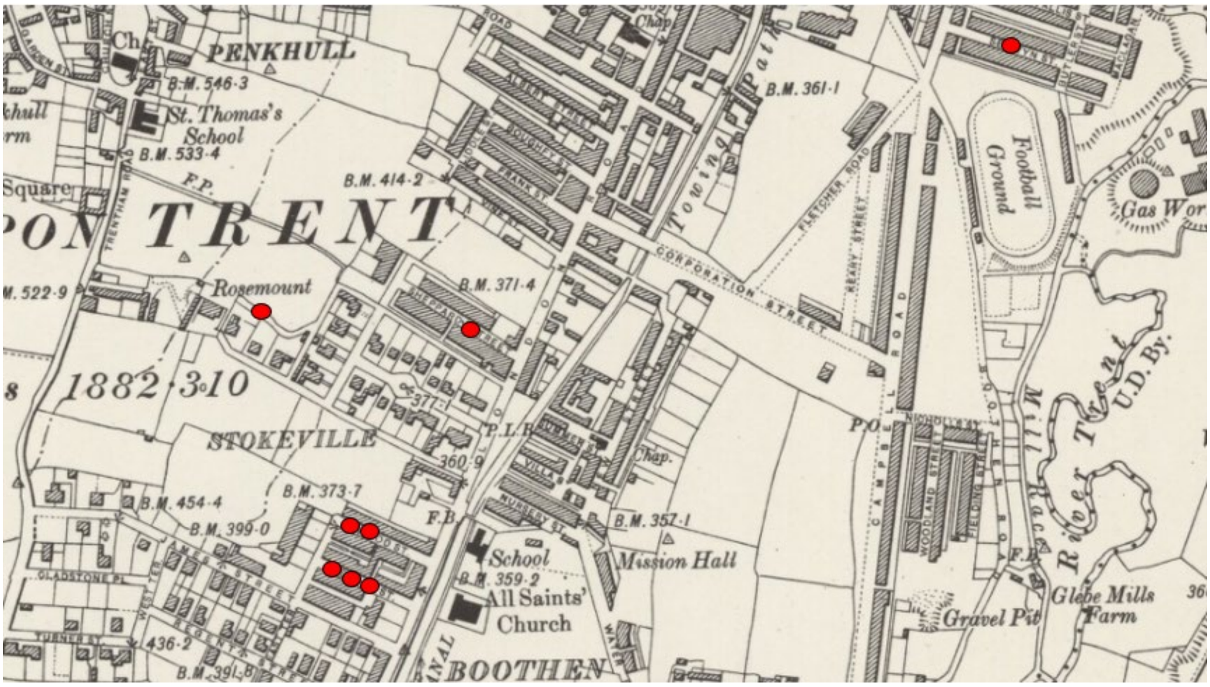
Other		
	No Occupation	2
	Unavailable	29

Appendix Ten: *Association football players in The Potteries, 1873-1878 – Occupation of committee members and club captains.*

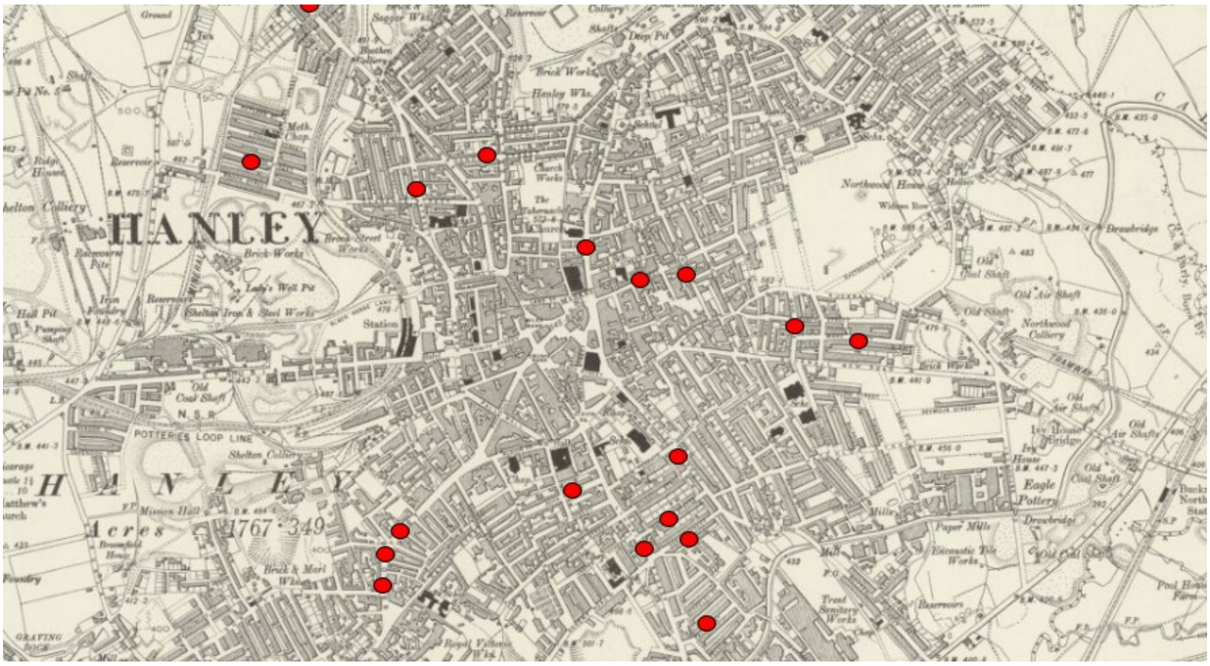
Occupation of Committee Members		
Clerk	**3**	*Middle Class*
Potters Gilder	**2**	*Working Class*
Bookkeeper	**1**	*Middle Class*
Commercial Traveller	**1**	*Middle Class*
Insurance Broker	**1**	*Middle Class*
Potters Mould Maker	**1**	*Working Class*

Occupation of Club Captains		
Clerk	**6**	*Middle Class*
Potters Presser	**2**	*Working Class*
Potters Placer	**2**	*Working Class*
Bookkeeper	**1**	*Middle Class*
School Master	**1**	*Middle Class*
Cashier	**1**	*Middle Class*
Commercial Traveller	**1**	*Middle Class*
Mechanical Engineer	**1**	*Middle Class*
Potters Gilder	**1**	*Working Class*
Sagger Maker	**1**	*Working Class*
Potter	**1**	*Working Class*
Crate Maker	**1**	*Working Class*
Moddler	**1**	*Working Class*
Potters Printer	**1**	*Working Class*
Miner	**1**	*Working Class*
Potters Dyer	**1**	*Working Class*
Potters Turner	**1**	*Working Class*

Appendix Eleven: *Location of players representing Boothen All Saints (1876 -1878).*


PENKHULL
Ch.
B.M. 546·3
St. Thomas's School
B.M. 533·4
Square
F.P.
TRENTHAM ROAD
ON TRENT
Rosemount
M. 522·9
1882·310
STOKEVILLE
B.M. 414·2
B.M. 371·4
377·1
P.L.B.
360·9
Chap.
B.M. 361·1
Towing Path
Football Ground
Gas Wor
CORPORATION STREET
FLETCHER ROAD
CAMPBELL ROAD
P.O.
NICHOLLS ST.
WOODLAND ST.
Mill Race
River Trent
U.D. By.
F.B.
Glebe Mills Farm
Gravel Pit
B.M. 373·7
B.M. 454·4
B.M. 399·0
GLADSTONE PL.
TURNER ST.
436·2
B.M. 391·8
School
B.M. 359·2
All Saints' Church
B.M. 357·1
Mission Hall
BOOTHEN

Appendix Twelve: *Location of players representing Hanley Rangers (1874 -1878).*


HANLEY
Station
POTTERIES LOOP LINE
N.S.R
Northwood House
Eagle Pottery
Paper Mills
Trent Sanitary Works
H A N L E Y
Acres 1767·349