

**Games, Greek and Pluck: Athleticism,
Classicism and Elite British Education,
1850-1914**

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Classicism and Elite British Education, 1850-
1914**

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Abstract

The leading English public schools were dominated in the second half of the nineteenth century by classicism and athleticism, two strands of school life that have been studied as either competing, focusing on struggles for control between athletes and aesthetes, or else entirely separate. This thesis rejects this siloed approach and explores the ways in which classicism and athleticism were closely entwined within public schools and elite universities, and how classical ideas impacted on the reorganisation and reform of sport emanating from these institutions between 1850 and 1914. As a prerequisite for entry to elite public schools, university and many professions, classical education was used as an indicator of gentlemanly status and was deliberately exploited to create an effective barrier to exclude those from the lower classes. Simultaneously, classical ideas and imagery informed elite males' conceptions of manliness and masculinity, and this was reflected in the content of school magazines, which have been important sources for this research. Contemporary movements, such as muscular Christianity, were also influenced as much by Graeco-Roman as Judeo-Christian traditions. The study of ancient sport was coloured by Victorian ideas of sport and sportsmanship which produced a distorted and over-familiar view of Greek games. This was used to justify resistance to working-class participation, as well as to illustrate the possible debilitating consequences of commercialisation. Using a variety of methodologies, including prosopography and biography, and a range of sources, many of them produced by the schools, this thesis demonstrates how a few comparatively small and overlapping networks of public schoolmasters, university classics tutors, and their pupils, were instrumental in overseeing the transformation of sport in late-Victorian Britain, and how the Hellenism of these groups, particularly those involved in rowing, shaped attitudes towards amateurism and professionalism, and influenced the culture of the modern Olympic movement.

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Contents

Abstract.....	1
Acknowledgments and Thanks	3
Introduction	13
Research Context.....	13
Class, Classicism and Gender.....	19
Classicism and the Language of Sport	27
Methodology	30
Structure of the Thesis	35
Research Aims.....	43
Chapter 1 – Classics in the Public School: Exclusivity, Excellence, and Indifference	45
Introduction.....	45
The Background to Endowed Schools	48
Endowed Schools and Paying Boarders.....	51
The ‘Learned Languages’ and the Rise of Greek	53
The ‘Learned Languages’ as a Social Barrier.....	58
Classics in Public Schools: Indifferent Teaching and Widespread Cribbing	61
Classics at Oxford and Cambridge	73
The Defence of Classics.....	78
Classics and Elite Employment.....	80
The Wider Influence of Classical Education	84
Conclusion	89

Chapter 2 – Manliness, Masculinity and Morality: Ancient Graeco-Roman Influences on Education	95
Introduction	95
Athleticism and Classicism in the Public School	97
Athleticism at University	118
The Rise of Muscular Christianity in the Public School.....	122
Muscular Christianity, Athleticism and Aggression	131
The Rise of Social-Darwinism and its Effect on Muscular Christianity.....	142
Social Darwinism and Laconophilia	147
Sparto-Christianity.....	150
From Sport to Soldier: The Role of the Rifle Corps	161
Conclusion.....	169
Chapter 3 – ‘At Home at Oxbridge’: British and Irish Literature on Ancient Sport 1749-1974	173
Introduction	173
E. Norman Gardiner and his Connections	179
Early References to Classical Sports	185
Greek Cultural Influences in the Early Nineteenth-Century.....	189
British Classicists and Modern Greek.....	196
British Classicists and Ancient Sport	201
Classicists and Sporting Culture	210
The Evils of Professionalism	214
The Influence of E. Norman Gardiner	218

After Gardiner	225
Conclusion	227
Chapter 4 – Warre, Welldon, Etonian Classicism, and Victorian Sport.....	239
Introduction.....	239
Warre The Scholar.....	242
Eton’s Athletic Masters	248
Boys, Masters, and the Control of Etonian Sport.....	258
Crack Houses and Educational Achievement	267
James Welldon – Sporting King’s Scholar.....	275
Welldon’s Circle – Masters and Footballers	278
Conclusion	284
Chapter 5 – Henley, Class, and the Application of Classical Influences on Sport	289
Introduction.....	289
Rowing, Classicism and Class	291
Elite Networks and the Henley Royal Regatta	299
Henley and the Birth of International Sport	304
Henley and the Modern Olympics	310
The Hellenisation of the Modern Olympics	315
The Practical Impact of Ancient History on Modern Sport: The Case of the Discus	328
Conclusion	344
Conclusions.....	347

Chapter Summaries	353
The Impact of Hellenism on British Sport	361
The Importance of Edmond Warre	366
Aquatic Amateurism and the Classics	368
Paradoxes and Differences	371
Signposts to Future Research	375
Sources and Bibliography	381
Primary Sources	381
Ancient Texts	381
Articles in Journals	381
Books	384
Census Returns	388
Government Papers	389
Newspapers and Periodicals	389
School and College Registers	391
School and University Magazines	392
Secondary Sources	395
Articles in Scholarly Journals and Collections	395
Books	403
Newspapers and Periodicals	411
Oxford Dictionary of National Biography	411
School and University Magazines	412
Appendix A: Guide to the Prosopographical Data	413

Introduction.....	413
Sheet 1. Biographical Data.....	413
Sheet 2. School and College Attendance Map.....	415
Sheet 3. Eton Attendance Map	416
Sheet 4. Oxford Attendance Map.....	416
Sheet 5. Cambridge Attendance Map	417
Sheet 6. Winchester Attendance Map.....	417
Sheet 7. Harrow Attendance Map	417
Sheet 8. Rugby Attendance Map	418
Sheet 9. Etonian Sporting Connections Map	418
Sheet 10. Additional Etonian Biographical Detail	419
Sheet 11. Etonian Network Meeting Points.....	420
Sheet 12. Ancient Sports History Articles in Victorian and Edwardian Periodicals	421
Sheet 13. The British Olympic Network.....	422
Sheet 14. A Snapshot of Public School Control of Sport 1880-1912	422
Sheet 15. Eton Ramblers Map.....	423
Sheet 16. Council of the British Olympic Association 1908.	423
Appendix B - Research Dissemination to Date	425
Peer Reviewed Journal Articles	425
Published Online Articles.....	425
Personal Blog Entries	426
Presentations.....	426

Podcasts.....	426
Other	427

Introduction

Research Context

This thesis considers British approaches to ancient sports history in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century, and the extent to which they were intended to, and actually did, influence contemporary attitudes to sport. It was prompted by a paragraph in *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, in which the author, E. Norman Gardiner, broke off from introducing sport in the ancient world to rail against the alleged shortcomings of the Football Association, accusing them of tyranny ‘conducted in the interests of various joint-stock companies masquerading as Football Clubs’ and claiming that ‘Under these circumstances the history of the decline of Greek athletics is an object-lesson full of instruction.’¹

At first glance, Gardiner’s comment seems odd. Football was a modern team game whereas ancient Greek sport, with few exceptions, concentrated on solo events. Furthermore, Gardiner’s talk of amateurs, professionals and joint-stock companies employs terminology that would have been incomprehensible to an ancient Greek, placing sport in an explicitly commercial context. Gardiner maintained that ancient Greek sport was the antithesis of commercialism, tracing its roots to aristocratic funeral games and religious festivals such as the Olympics. However, while he maintained that the zenith of ancient Greek sport around the fifth century BCE was pure, he also thought it subject to a slow and steady decline from that point forward.

¹ Edward Norman Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, (London: Macmillan, 1910), 6

Throughout his work, Gardiner repeated this theme, which he blamed on the rise of a professional class of sportsman.² For Gardiner, sport under the Romans was barely sport at all, and he saw sportsmen of the Roman period as little better than slaves, forced to entertain large crowds in purpose-built stadia. Gardiner directly equated this with modern sport and predicted it would undergo a similar decline in moral and physical standards in a population ever more obsessed with spectator sport and the partisan hero-worship of their favourite sportsmen.³

Gardiner was not alone in drawing parallels and warnings for modern sport from antiquity. His work was the culmination of an intense period of British academic studies of the subject beginning with John Pentland Mahaffy's trip to Athens in 1875 and continued with the work of Percy Gardner and others throughout the 1880s and 1890s.

Mahaffy emphasised the connections between Greek sporting dominance in the ancient world and British sporting dominance in his own time. In Mahaffy's view the Anglo-Saxon gentleman amateur was the heir of the aristocratic Greek sporting hero, and the ancient world had much to teach the modern sportsman about the pitfalls of organised sport. Importantly, he drew a distinction between athletic and agonistic competition, equating them with

² *Ibid.*, 122

³ Edward Norman Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 50

amateurism and professionalism.⁴ Gardner, who had been closely associated with Mahaffy for many years as a member of the Hellenic Society, took a similar line and established a second enduring myth to accompany Mahaffy's invention of the Greek gentleman amateur, 'the idea that ancient sport was specialised and corrupted, and thus in decline from the fourth-century BCE on'.⁵

Gardner was also concerned by the increasingly important part that sport had come to play in education, claiming that athleticism was demanding too much time and attention in public schools and universities.⁶ Gardner's remarks here put his thinking, and that of Mahaffy and Gardiner, into context. They were writing at a time when sport was going through an unprecedented period of change, combined with an enormous surge in popularity. British sporting culture had been revolutionised by the emergence of organised team sports in the public schools in the 1850s. This new movement of athleticism, prompted by a combination of the practical requirement to improve discipline in boarding schools and the spiritual inspiration of muscular Christianity, rapidly spread through the public schools and was carried forward into the universities as schoolboys became undergraduates. Although cricket and some other sports were established in many schools beforehand, Mangan dates the advent of athleticism in the public schools to 1853, with the foundation of the *Harrow*

⁴ John Pentland Mahaffy, *Old Greek Athletics*, *Macmillan's Magazine*, 36 (1877), 61

⁵ Percy Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, (London: John Murray, 1892), 266-267; Sofie Remijsen, *The End of Greek Athletics in Late Antiquity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 6

⁶ Gardner, *New Chapters*, 303

Philathletic Club and Cotton's *Circular to Parents* at Marlborough.⁷ Within a decade, the need for a common code had led to the foundation of the Football Association, and within twenty years rugby had broken away, international matches had been established in both codes and hundreds of clubs were in existence, with players from all social backgrounds. Sports created, or at least heavily revised, in elite educational establishments, and initially dominated by teams from the same background became increasingly open, causing anxiety and conflict in some quarters.

The period between 1875 and 1910, when Mahaffy, Gardner and Gardiner were writing, was a time in which public schools and Oxbridge were dominated by classicism and athleticism. Classics dominated the syllabus at most public schools and knowledge of Latin and ancient Greek was a requirement for entrance to Oxford or Cambridge.⁸ At the same time, sport had come to be such a dominant force in public school and university life that some parents selected schools based on their sporting rather than academic records, and the graduate who possessed one or more varsity 'blues' was at a distinct advantage when seeking employment as a schoolmaster.⁹ Furthermore, Oxbridge culture in the late nineteenth-century was arguably more socially-elite than academically-elite. Most students entered as 'commoners', which is to say they paid their own way and would most likely take an ordinary rather

⁷ James Anthony Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 22-34

⁸ Cloudesley Brereton, *The Examination Chaos, School: A Monthly Record of Educational Thought and Progress*, 1, no. 1 (January 1904), 26

⁹ Malcolm Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness: The Legacy of Thring's Uppingham*, (Truro: Sunnyrest Books, 2015), 248

than honours degree. Many had no intention of ever taking any exams and treated university as a dining and sports club. As Mangan observed 'Some studied; others studied and played; many simply played'.¹⁰ However, most played and studied. Oxford had 1,482 students in 1858 and had grown to 3,091 by 1900 and Cambridge was of a similar size.¹¹ Given that both universities spread these students across about twenty colleges, the communities were actually quite small, and the opportunity to play sport at a reasonably high standard correspondingly common. Consequently, late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Britain was a society whose leaders in academia, politics, church and the military were often surprisingly closely linked via bonds forged on the playing fields.

Given the dominance of classicism and athleticism in the educational landscape, it comes as no surprise that some classicists turned their attention to the study of ancient sport. Mahaffy, Gardner and Gardiner were all keen amateur sportsmen. Mahaffy shot and played first-class cricket for Ireland,¹² Gardner rowed, and Gardiner played in trials to represent England as a rugby union international.¹³ This both explains their tendency to draw parallels between ancient and modern sport, and suggests they had links and influence with contemporary sportsmen.

¹⁰ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 126

¹¹ Arthur Jason Engel, *From Clergyman to Don: The Rise of the Academic Professional in Nineteenth-Century Oxford*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 291

¹² William Bedell Stanford and Robert Brendan McDowell, *Mahaffy: A Biography of an Anglo-Irishman*, (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1971), 61-63

¹³ Register of Pupils at the City of London School 1837-1860, 1, 382; *Devon Evening Express*, 6 November 1888, 1; *Western Times*, 7 November 1889, 4

To understand the context of British literature on ancient sport between 1875 and 1910 we must look at the systems which produced its authors. This requires a study of nineteenth-century educational history, particularly in relation to the interplay of classicism and athleticism. While there have been studies into nineteenth-century education generally, classical dominance in schools, and the rise of athleticism, most have looked at their subject in isolation and little work has been done on the impact of classicism on sport and vice-versa. This project addresses that problem and show the extent and impact of such interplay.

The ancient sports literature of 1875-1910 is also considered in a wider context by examining how it fits into the timeline of the literature which preceded and followed it. Certain themes, such as narratives of imperial decline and the supposed natural sporting superiority of Anglo-Saxons were present from the eighteenth through to the late twentieth-centuries.¹⁴ The attitudes expressed in much of this literature drew on classically-based ideas of manliness and masculinity, but also adapted its interpretation and choice of ancient sources over time to fit external factors, particularly in relation to class, race, and the politics of exclusion.

Finally, this thesis examines how literature and beliefs about ancient sport interacted with modern sport. Gardiner and others looked at ancient Greek

¹⁴ Andy Carter (2021) 'At home at Oxbridge': British views of ancient Greek sport 1749–1974, *Sport in History*, 41:2, 280-307

sport through the lens of nineteenth-century athleticism, but to what extent, and how, did their observations actually impact sport and sportsmen in their own day? Certainly, beliefs about ancient sport played a part in the establishment of the modern Olympics and its forerunners in Greece and England, but Olympic revivals were also heavily influenced by developments in British public school and varsity sports.¹⁵ This thesis sets out to illustrate that the culture of classicism and athleticism prevalent in the major public schools, and Oxford and Cambridge universities, in the third quarter of the nineteenth century permeated elite amateur sport in Britain in such a way that many participants thought about themselves, their teammates, and their opponents through a frame of reference based on classical descriptions, attitudes, and philosophy. This thesis looks at the academic and sporting networks at play in these institutions and how they operated and overlapped. In particular, the leading Victorian rowing coach and headmaster of Eton, Edmond Warre, emerges as an important and influential figure.

Class, Classicism and Gender

The idea of class, and social-exclusion based on class, is central to this thesis. By the early nineteenth-century, access to public schools, originally intended to educate boys from a wide cross-section of society, was increasingly limited to the better-off.¹⁶ The sports which subsequently developed in the public

¹⁵ Matthew P. Llewellyn and John Gleaves, *The Rise and Fall of Olympic Amateurism*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 23; David C. Young, *The Modern Olympics: A Struggle for Revival*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 141

¹⁶ Colin Shrosbee, *Public Schools and Private Education: The Clarendon Commission 1861-64, and the Public Schools Acts*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 11

schools from the mid-century onwards were to be zealously guarded with a form of amateurism designed not so much to stamp out the practice of awarding prize money as to limit access to certain sports and competitions to those from an acceptable social class.¹⁷ Social-exclusion was generally justified on the education and profession of the individual. However, at the same time, the idea of the gentleman amateur was based on a supposed model of ancient aristocratic amateurism rooted in the class structures of ancient Greece. While this suggests, particularly to those familiar with the work of David Young and others, that such thinking was based on a cynical manipulation of history to justify contemporary social exclusion, it is also important to remember that for public schoolboys, immersed in an entirely classics-based educational system, such beliefs might be genuinely held.¹⁸

Karl Marx's view of class as a hierarchical pyramid with aristocratic landowners at the top, capitalists in the middle, and the working class at the bottom provides a simple and readily understood framework for broadly defining layers within society. This Marxist framework is remarkably like the class structure of Greek city states in the Archaic (700-480 BCE) and Classical (480-323 BCE) periods when males were divided into three classes, πλούσιοι (*plousioi*), πένητες (*penêtes*) and πτωχοὶ (*ptochoi*), with similar boundaries.¹⁹ Marx's early life was steeped in classicism. He grew up in Trier, a city with

¹⁷ Malcolm MacLean, Conflict and Accommodation, in Mike Huggins (Ed.), *A Cultural History of Sport in the Age of Industry*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 125-128

¹⁸ David C. Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*, (Chicago: Ares, 1984), 51; Carter, 'At home at Oxbridge', 297

¹⁹ Paul Christesen and Rose MacLean, The Purpose of Sport, in Paul Christesen and Charles H. Stocking (Eds.), *A Cultural History of Sport in Antiquity*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 28

extensive Roman remains, learned ancient Greek as a schoolboy, and wrote his university dissertation on Democritus and Epicurus.²⁰ Marx regarded Aristotle as the greatest thinker of antiquity and was familiar with the section in *Politics* which dealt with the inhabitants of Greek cities, dividing them by occupation and wealth.²¹ It seems likely that both Marx and the nineteenth-century scholars who looked at the history of ancient sport, went through a similar process in mapping ancient class divisions to their own time.

However, a three-tier model cannot adequately deal with the complexities of social differences and barriers between the classes because the middle and lower classes are so large and varied, having their own internal barriers, to require further sub-classifications. Ronald Neale, for example, put forward the idea that a Middling Class sat between the Middle and Working Classes, with the latter further subdivided into proletarian and deferential layers.²² Neale's five-tiered class model is useful in distinguishing between the well to do members of the Middle Class who initiated and codified the amateur sport revolution in the public schools and universities from 1850 to 1875, and the members of the Middling Classes to whom they increasingly delegated the day to day running and administration of their sports in the final quarter of the century.²³ As Norman Baker observed, a prominent role in administering

²⁰ Heinrich von Staden, Greek Art and Literature in Marx's Aesthetics, *Arethusa*, Spring 1975, 8, no. 1, 119-120

²¹ Ibid., 139; Geoffrey Ernest Maurice de Sainte Croix, 'Karl Marx and the History of Classical Antiquity', *Arethusa*, Spring 1975, 8, no. 1, 24

²² Ronald Stanley Neale, 'Class and Class Consciousness in Early Nineteenth Century England: Three Classes or Five?', *Victorian Studies*, 12, no. 1 (1968), 6-23

²³ Norman Baker, Whose Hegemony? The Origins of the Amateur Ethos in Nineteenth Century English Society, *Sport in History*, 24, No. 1, (2004), 6

sporting organisations was taken on by members of many of the new 'professions' which emerged in the nineteenth century. Not only were these highly motivated and well-organised individuals prepared to take on the onerous task of sports administration, they were sensitive to their own position in society, deferential to those above them, and acted as effective gatekeepers between the Middle Class and the lower orders.²⁴

The possession of a classical education was central to Middle Class identity in the nineteenth century. As the century wore on, and the public school sector rapidly expanded to meet the demands of the new Middling Class, they too enthusiastically adopted the trappings of classicism as a means of cementing their status and differentiating themselves from the common man. As Chandos remarked, this classicism often went no deeper than to provide a selection of Greek and Latin quotations which could be dropped into conversation as evidence of social status, but it was a powerful marker of difference.²⁵ Thomas Arnold, who many later Victorians regarded as an unimpeachable source of pedological wisdom, was particularly influential in encouraging the elevation of Greek over Latin as the more important element of classical education, his reasoning being that Roman historians were unreliable and prone to scandalous exaggeration, whereas Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon were always impartial.²⁶ Arnold's reasoning may have been naïve, or it may have masked the less altruistic motive that Greek was a more effective bastion

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-11

²⁵ John Chandos, *Boys Together: English Public Schools 1800-1864*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 159

²⁶ Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 61

of elitism than Latin. As education permeated downwards, a reasonably literate working man might master Latin if he so desired, Greek was more of a challenge, as Hall and Stead wrote;

The rarity of knowledge of ancient Greek and its strange alphabet gave the language a mystique in the popular imagination. In low-class circles, more often than Latin, Greek was associated with extreme, other-worldly intellectual prowess and arcane, even sinister arts.²⁷

The dominant position of Classics in the curriculum meant that ideas and values directly imported from ancient Greece dominated the way in which Middle Class males thought of themselves and other men. Sport was the arena in which boys could learn and demonstrate manly virtues and appreciate the value of comradeship. The school magazines that chronicled the growing culture of house and school sports matches were filled with accounts of cricket and football transformed into feats of Homeric valour.²⁸ Taking a lead from ancient poets and sculptors, the public schoolboy learned about masculine beauty and the love that could exist between men. Given that the nineteenth century public school was overtly and avowedly Christian, such love was expected to be a Platonic and brotherly love, rather than anything sexual, but

²⁷ Edith Hall and Henry Stead, *A People's History of Classics: Class and Greco-Roman Antiquity in Britain and Ireland 1689 to 1939*, (London: Routledge, 2020), 324

²⁸ Andy Carter, Athletic philistines? Edmond Warre and his Etonian sporting masters, *Sport in History*, 42, No. 2, (2022), 186-187

in that exclusively male environment transgressions were inevitable, and homosexuality was not uncommon.²⁹ Such was the homosocial nature of the public school and universities that boys, who might have left home at age seven and spent the next fourteen years or so in an all-male environment, often found it difficult to relate to women. The fact that women in ancient Greece were marginalised and excluded from political and commercial life only served to reinforce these difficulties by encouraging the idea that women were naturally intellectually and emotionally inferior, and many former public schoolboys struggled to develop the depth of friendship, even with their own wives, that they had with old schoolfriends. John Tosh felt that this explained why so many Middle-Class men were devotees of clubs and societies; they needed the comfort of an all-male environment to retreat to from the alien unfamiliarity of family life.³⁰

Given that sports clubs within public schools and universities were initially created in an entirely male environment, the issue of female participation in sport did not arise, and as football, rowing, and athletics clubs spread out from educational establishments into wider Middle-Class society, they did so as specifically male-only spaces. The homosocial model of sport inherited from public schools and colleges was reinforced by the example of the ancient Greeks, who had forbidden females to take part in the Olympics, making it a capital offence for married women to attend.³¹ In Victorian England, the

²⁹ Chandos, *Boys Together*, 284-296

³⁰ John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 170-194

³¹ Nigel Spivey, *The Ancient Olympics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 124

attitude to female spectators was somewhat different and while some professional sports were seen as unsuitable for ladies to watch, public school and university sport, particularly rowing and cricket, provided a useful social space in which families of similar status could mingle. The only role open to women in this male-dominated sporting environment was to act as decorative prizegivers. At Much Wenlock, while visiting William Penny Brookes' Olympian Games, Baron Coubertin was enchanted by the tradition of having pretty girls presenting the victors' wreaths and medals, and he saw this as an appropriate role for women in his revived games.³² Had it been solely Coubertin's decision, this would have been the only role open to women in the modern Olympics, and as late as 1914 he was still trying to outlaw female participation in the games because 'It was not seemly for women to take part in open contests before the public.'³³

Late Victorian attitudes towards women's participation in sports were also linked to the issue of class. Ladies' constitutions were assumed to be delicate and therefore strenuous effort was to be avoided lest they damaged their health and reduced the likelihood of being able to have children. Not only did this ignore the reality that childbirth was far more stressful and strenuous than anything women were likely to encounter on the sports field, it adhered to a standard which was only applied to middle and upper-class women.³⁴

Working-class women were often involved in heavy labour, either in domestic

³² John J. MacAloon, *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 165

³³ Olympic Games: The Paris Congress, Preparing for 1916, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 July 1916, 11

³⁴ Marjorie Levine-Clark (2002) Testing the reproductive hypothesis: or what made working-class women sick in early Victorian London, *Women's History Review*, 11:2, 183

service or in industrial or agricultural labour, but such women had little or no access to sporting opportunity and the kind of sports generally considered genteel enough for females, such as tennis, golf, and croquet were economically beyond their reach.

Women were not only widely considered too delicate to take part in many sports, their ability to cope with the intellectual rigours of Greek was also called into question. The novels of George Eliot, presumably as the result of real-life experience, feature a recurring theme of insecure male characters characterising women as being incapable of learning Greek.³⁵ This reflected the reality, up until the 1860s, that if girls received any formal schooling at all, it focussed on 'accomplishments', which is to say furnishing a young lady with a range of skills in music, dancing, and painting that might make her a more attractive marriage proposition, as well as teaching subjects such as modern languages and geography which were considered too 'lightweight' by many boys' schools.³⁶ In the wake of the Taunton Commission, girls' schools spent less time on accomplishments and more on a broad liberal education, but with modern languages generally occupying the position held by Greek and Latin in boys' public schools.³⁷ This, combined with the tendency for girls' schools to focus on dancing and deportment rather than sport, meant that they had little culture of classicism or athleticism and thus do not feature in this thesis.

³⁵ Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 63

³⁶ Susan N. Bayley and Donna Yavorsky Ronish, (1992) Gender, Modern Languages and the Curriculum in Victorian England, *History of Education*, 21, no. 4, 364

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 375

Classicism and the Language of Sport

That some elements of the vocabulary of modern sport are classical in origin is obvious, but the way in which ancient Greek and Latin terms have survived, and in some cases changed in meaning, tells us something about the development of sport in the nineteenth century.

The words 'athletic' and 'athlete' in their wider sense apply to any sport involving physical exertion, and certainly when historians of ancient sport talked about athletics, they included fighting events, and even equestrianism, as well as running and throwing.³⁸ Similarly, when the terms were adopted for use in modern sport, they were not solely limited to the context of track and field, and when Victorians talked of athleticism in their schools and universities the term covered most sports with the exception of hunting, shooting, and fishing.

However, there is an irony in the adaptation of the word athletics in its nineteenth century sense. The word athlete is based on the ancient Greek ἀθλητής (*athletes*), literally meaning, 'one who competes for prizes.'³⁹ Whilst, on the one hand, this accurately describes the serious gentleman amateur, who competed, not only for the love of the game, but to strive to be the best, it also proved to be problematic over time. Early public school and university sportsmen saw no moral problem in competing for valuable trophies, or even

³⁸ Stephen G. Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 13-14

³⁹ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 16

cash prizes for that matter, but as class-based tensions between amateurs and professionals came to the fore later in the century the use of the terms athlete and athletics might have been called into question. Certainly, Gardiner equated ἀθλητής with modern professionals and blamed them for the decline in ancient sport, but by the time he made that point the word was firmly established in modern use.⁴⁰ Mahaffy had earlier made the distinction between athletic and agonistic competition, claiming that the former applied to competition for prizes, as for example was the case at the Panathenaic Games, whereas the latter was for honour only, which was supposedly the terms under which the ancient Olympics took place.⁴¹ By this logic, agonistics rather than athletics might have been a much more comfortable term for Victorian gentleman amateurs. However, Mahaffy's assertion was inaccurate insofar as the concept of ἀγών (*agon*), which meant contest or struggle, was pervasive in Greek sport, but as Huizinga pointed out, it was also central to notions of ancient Greek masculinity and success in politics and war. The effort expended on, and prestige to be won, at one of the great panhellenic festivals was no less than that to be gained on the battlefield, such was the importance of sport to the Greeks.⁴² In contrast the Roman concept of games, *ludus*, is much less serious being much more related to play and entertainment.⁴³ Roger Callois, in his critique of Huizinga's work chose a different interpretation and used the term *ludus* to represent the most serious level of games. Callois' view was that the most serious sport took place in an entirely separate sphere of

⁴⁰ Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 130

⁴¹ Mahaffy, *Old Greek Athletics*, 61

⁴² Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1949), 30

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 35

time and space to everyday life with its own rules and rituals which do not apply in the real world. This was true of Roman sport which was deadly serious, in that it was often literally a matter of life and death for the participants, but which were also clearly distinguishable from everyday life.⁴⁴ Gideon Dishon has used Callois' work to draw parallels between this view and the place of team games within the Victorian public school.⁴⁵ However, I would argue that Callois' model does not apply to public schools because, as with elite males in ancient Greece, there was no discernible boundary between sport and other aspects of life.

Whether the name of the *Harrow Philathletic Club* was suggested by pupils or was the idea of their headmaster, Charles Vaughan, is unknown, although as the club was officially a pupil-led initiative we should assume the former. That the club was named *philathletic* as opposed to *philagonistic* perhaps implies that winning prizes was deemed more important than merely taking part, and certainly the provision of a number of trophies was one of the club's earliest priorities.⁴⁶ Of course, nobody at Harrow in 1853 would have foreseen the bitter disputes over amateurism and professionalism which were to erupt over the following decades. In 1898, James Cotton Minchin wrote of Harrow's earlier sporting heroes 'This was an aristocracy of the finest cricketers and "footer" players that the School could for the time produce.'⁴⁷ Certainly, some

⁴⁴ Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1958), 13

⁴⁵ Gideon Dishon (2017) Games of character: team sports, games, and character development in Victorian public schools, 1850–1900, *Paedagogica Historica*, 53, no.4, (2017), 364–380.

⁴⁶ *Philathletic* implies a love of prizes whereas *philagonistic* would imply a love of competition for its own sake. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 224

⁴⁷ James George Cotton Minchin, *Old Harrow Days* (London 1898), 150

of Harrow's players were literally members of the British aristocracy, but Cotton Minchin was using the word in its original sense, ἀριστοκρατία (*aristokratia*), meaning 'rule of the best', where the element ἄριστος (*aristos*) alluded to excellence and was linked to the spirit of ἀρετή (*arete*), a term which not only implied excellence, but moral virtue, and which was deeply embedded in Greek attitudes towards both sport and education.⁴⁸

Methodology

This is an archive-based project, guided by current historiographical practice.⁴⁹ A very wide range of primary source materials have been utilised, allowing for a comprehensive survey of references to, and the influence of, ancient sport and classical philosophy and ideals in nineteenth-century sport. These included books and articles from periodicals, sporting and training literature, public school and university registers, school and university newsletters and magazines, original correspondence, diaries, newspaper reports and obituaries, autobiographies and memoirs, contemporary fiction, census returns, government reports (particularly the Clarendon and Taunton Commissions), Football Association records, and International Olympic Committee records. In some cases, it has also been appropriate to directly reference ancient texts.

⁴⁸ Stephen G. Miller, *Arete: Greek Sports From Ancient Sources*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), xv

⁴⁹ Good examples include Martin Johnes' work on Archives and Historians of Sport and Andy Harvey's observations on the use of historical fiction in sports history. Both are included in Wray Vamplew and Dave Day (Eds.), *Methodology in Sports History*, (London: Routledge, 2017)

Source materials were selected and used in order to cover the research objectives of the project. Broadly speaking, these aligned with each of the five chapters and covered the influence of classicism on the public schools, and the way in which it was deliberately used as a tool of social exclusion; the ways in which classicism permeated and influenced the introduction of athleticism into elite schools and universities; a review of the literature created around ancient sports history in the Victorian and Edwardian periods, combined with a prosopographical assessment of the men behind it; an investigation into the networks of masters and pupils who came to influence the development of late nineteenth century sport and their classical influences; and finally, a study of the Henley Royal Regatta, and how the social network of the classically influenced elite rowing establishment came to play an important part in establishing and Hellenising the modern Olympic Games.

In seeking to answer these questions, this thesis has naturally focussed on those sources which provide evidence of the permeation of classical influences into the sporting culture of public schools, universities, and by extension, elite amateur clubs and sports' governing bodies from the mid-nineteenth century until the First World War. This thesis does not set out to claim that sport in that period was only ever looked at through a classical lens, the vast majority of writing on, and reporting of, Victorian and Edwardian sport is straightforwardly expressed in the language of the time and makes no use of classical imagery. However, research for this thesis did uncover a significant culture of classicism within sports reporting in elite schools and universities. This was all the more significant when considered in tandem with the identities

of the individuals who were being written about, or who were writing, in this way, and their subsequent influence in the development of sport in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In particular, the research shows a clear line of classical influence from Etonian and Oxford rowing circles into elite amateur rowing which in turn influenced the birth of the modern Olympics.

While this project has extensively used primary sources, especially school magazines and autobiographies, to illustrate the extent to which classical influences and imagery permeated public school culture and sports, it has also utilised a prosopographical approach.⁵⁰ For this, key biographical details, such as dates and places of birth and death, information about family background, such as father's profession, and details of educational and sporting careers, have been collected for many of the key figures in classical education and elite amateur sport in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. This information enables us to track the lives of individuals and note how, and when, they came into contact with others in the study. This provides the raw data from which it is possible to begin to build a compelling picture of personal networks involving sporting links, common periods at school and university, and family background. Information has been collected for over 130 individuals and has been recorded and analysed using Microsoft Excel.

⁵⁰ Samantha-Jayne Oldfield, Narrative, Biography, Prosopography and the Sport Historian: Historical Method and its Implications, in Dave Day (Ed.), *Sports and Coaching: Pasts and Futures*, (Crewe: MMU, 2012), 48

A full explanation of the prosopographical data collected in this exercise, along with screenshots showing some of the content, is included in Appendix A. This provides the basis of a three-level approach in considering biographical information within this study. At a basic level, the prosopography provides the means of enabling us to recognise patterns and trends across large groups of people. In this thesis, I have primarily used it to talk about the similar backgrounds of those involved in ancient sports history and running the Henley Royal Regatta. For some groups it has been possible to fill in further levels of information to provide collective biographies, sketching in more detail. At this level it is possible to talk about similarities in beliefs, backgrounds, experiences and behaviours across a smaller group of individuals. I have used this to talk about similarities between small groups, for example Edmond Warre's athletic schoolmasters and James Welldon's classmates. Finally, for the most important figures in this thesis, Warre, Welldon, Mahaffy and Gardiner, more detailed biographical information is included.

To assess how classical influences spread into organised sport via public school education, and to consider the extent to which the attitudes expressed by historians of ancient sport had any effect on contemporary sportsmen, the prosopographical part of this project enables us to look at the relationships between public schoolmasters, those of their pupils who went on to become prominent figures in Victorian and Edwardian sport, and those who were involved in researching and publishing ancient sport history. As the project progressed it became evident that Eton was both the most influential individual school in Victorian sport and the most well-documented, so there is a particular

focus on Etonian masters and boys. As research continued, it also became evident that, although the influence of classicism was to be felt across many sports, it was particularly strong in rowing. Looking across these three groups, it was not only possible to see some overlaps in personnel, but to identify certain key individuals who were explicitly involved as early British representatives to the modern Olympic movement. Consequently, we can imagine four overlapping groups showing the personal links which connected the study of ancient sport with Eton College, amateur rowing and the modern Olympic movement.

By mapping individuals onto this picture, it is possible to see where these groups overlapped and how they potentially influenced each other. The narrative which emerges shows how the culture of classicism in the mid-nineteenth century public schools and universities inspired an interest in ancient sport, which attempted to apply the lessons of antiquity to its own time. At the same time, the classics dominated the culture of the public schools, encouraging boys to think of themselves and their sporting endeavours via a classical lens. While this classical influence was seen across the breadth of public school and university sport, it was particularly evident in Eton and Oxbridge rowing circles, and, via the Henley Royal Regatta, fed directly into Coubertin's efforts to revive the Olympic Games and influenced their Hellenisation.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into five chapters, broadly forming three parts. The first two chapters look at the development and purpose of classicism and athleticism in nineteenth century public schools, the third chapter looks at the discipline of ancient sports history in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and how historians in the field were both shaped by their own environment and tried to influence contemporary sport based on their convictions. The final two chapters consider how networks of classically educated elite British males shaped sport from the 1860s through to the First World War.

Chapter 1 looks at the history of classics in the public school showing how colleges that were founded in the medieval and early modern periods, so that local boys from humbler backgrounds might pursue clerical careers, morphed by the early nineteenth century into expensive fee-paying boarding schools for a limited social elite. This change was accompanied with a shift in emphasis from classics acting as a social-enabler to acting a social barrier.⁵¹ The chapter also examines how a knowledge of classics became an entry requirement for many professions, consciously employing the so-called 'Learned Languages' as a tool for social exclusion, at a time when many public schools were resisting calls from reformers to widen the curriculum to include modern subjects. The chapter also looks at the role of the classics in Oxford and Cambridge universities where, as with the public schools, a knowledge of

⁵¹ Martin Stephen, *The English Public School*, (London: Metro, 2018), 87

Greek and Latin were essential entry requirements, although there was a widespread feeling that academic standards were in decline.⁵² Finally, the chapter considers the wider influence of classical education, particularly the increasing emphasis on Greek language and philosophy, and specifically applies Tozer's analysis of the three phases of classical focus in the nineteenth-century to the development and changing phases of athleticism as identified by Mangan and others.⁵³

Chapter 2 begins by looking at the reasons why games culture became dominant in public schools and examines its popularity with pupils, masters and parents. A wide range of contemporary literature is referenced to illustrate how sport was viewed via a classical lens. The phenomenon of the athletic schoolmaster, the tendency of public schools to give more weight to a potential master's sporting credentials over his academic ability, and the effect this had on school life and standards of education is considered. The chapter also looks at hero-worship of the successful school sportsman and how this fitted within competing frameworks of Christian and classical masculinity.

Next the chapter considers the beginnings of muscular Christianity and the networks which linked it with Christian Socialism and the Broad-Church movement, showing how all were influenced by classical philosophy. This in

⁵² Colin Shrosbee, *Public Schools and Private Education*, 50

⁵³ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 13; James Anthony Mangan and James Walvin, *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 1

turn leads on to a discussion of the evolving nature of muscular Christianity over time. The idealistic vision of Thomas Hughes centres around the idea that the young Christian should be tough, reliable and not afraid of a fight, should avoid fighting for fighting's sake, and always be prepared to intervene on behalf of the weak and helpless. Later muscular Christians were more inclined to forcibly impose their ideas of religion and morality on those they regarded as heathens.⁵⁴ This shift in the nature of muscular Christianity was closely linked to an increasingly militaristic outlook in public schools as they were increasingly called upon to provide boys fit to build an empire. Now muscular Christianity was also increasingly linked with the idea of Social Darwinism, which encouraged the idea of a natural hierarchy for both class and race. This was particularly manifested through the idea of laconophilia in which the militaristic Spartans were held up as the ideal Greeks, displacing the intellectual Athenians previously in vogue.⁵⁵ The chapter finishes by considering the philosophy and practice of Sparto-Christianity.

Chapter 3 features a comprehensive survey of British and Irish literature on ancient sport between the mid-eighteenth and mid-twentieth-centuries. The chapter begins with a brief description of Gardiner's career explaining how he came to be regarded as the pre-eminent authority on ancient Greek sport throughout much of the twentieth-century until challenged by Pleket, Young,

⁵⁴ John J. MacAloon, Introduction: Muscular Christianity After 150 Years, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 23, no. 5, August 2006, 687

⁵⁵ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 122

and Kyle, explaining how Young in particular regarded Gardiner and others as guilty of deliberate bias in their interpretation of the past.⁵⁶

The history and context of British and Irish writing on the history of ancient Greek sport is presented, from Gilbert West's *Dissertation on the Olympick Games* through to the work of Harold Harris. There is also a discussion of earlier European work and ancient sources on which West drew, and German publications in the early nineteenth-century, which formed the main body of early academic writing on the subject. Particular attention is given to the body of work produced between Mahaffy's visit to the Zappas Olympics of 1875 and Gardiner's death in 1930. This was an intense period of activity involving the exchange of ideas between a well-connected group of scholars working in Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin. This was also a period which coincided with the height of athleticism in public schools and universities, and which saw a series of bitter debates over the role and status of amateurs and professionals in many sports.

The chapter then looks at the historians, collecting details of their fathers' professions, school and university careers and participation in sports in a brief prosopography. This shows over half had Anglican clergymen as fathers and almost all attended public school. The work goes on to look at their relationships and subsequent careers, revealing that many had close links to important figures in the sporting world. The latter part of the chapter looks at

⁵⁶ Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*, 51

the attitudes to contemporary sport expressed by Mahaffy, Gardner, Gardiner, and Harris.

Chapter 4 considers the life and career of Edmond Warre, and the network of athletic schoolmasters around him at Eton College. Warre and his colleagues turned Eton into the dominant force in late-Victorian public school sport. Etonians dominated the sports teams of Oxford and Cambridge and the influence of Warre and his fellow masters passed via these players into the universities and beyond, particularly in association football, rowing, cricket, and athletics.

Warre became headmaster of Eton in 1884, his appointment being seen in some quarters as a victory for athletic philistines.⁵⁷ However, my research challenges Warre's reputation as a philistine, showing that it was based more on an internal Etonian power struggle between King's Scholars and Oppidans than actual fact. Eton College pupils were divided between the 70 King's Scholars who were educated for free on the original foundation and more than ten times as many 'Oppidans' fee-paying boarders who were generally regarded as boorish oafs. Historically, scholars had mainly come from clerical families and Oppidans from the landed gentry and aristocracy and the two groups were mutually hostile. It was rare for Oppidans to excel academically

⁵⁷ Academicus, The Head-Mastership of Eton, *The Times*, 26 July 1884, 10;

and King's Scholars regarded the top teaching positions at Eton as their own. Warre was thus seen as a dangerous and unwelcome interloper.

Warre's main rival for the post of headmaster, James Welldon, while certainly more successful as a theologian and published classicist, was scarcely less a sportsman than Warre, and was closely involved with many of the leading figures in association football in the 1870s.⁵⁸ The chapter compares the academic achievements of Warre and Welldon, as well as putting their respective social circles into the context of sports development. Also considered is the struggle between athletes and aesthetes at Eton, particularly in relation to the factions around Warre and Oscar Browning during Hornby's headmastership, and how this was informed by Greek ideas of masculinity in a homosocial environment.⁵⁹

The development and regulation of Etonian sport by the boys themselves, particularly in relation to classics as their main cultural reference point is described. Classical imagery was frequently employed in the extensive reporting of school sports in the *Eton College Chronicle*, and there are numerous examples of school footballers and athletes described in Homeric and Pindaric style. Similarly, correspondents to the magazine frequently employed classical references and *nom-de-plumes* and boys were constantly

⁵⁸ *The Eton Register, Part IV, 1871-80*, (Eton: Spottiswoode & Co, 1907), 2; Keith Warsop, *The Early F.A. Cup Finals and the Southern Amateurs*, (Beeston: Soccer Data, 2004), 47, 134.

⁵⁹ Henry S. Salt, *Memories of Bygone Eton*, (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1928), 25; Paul R. Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men: British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850-1920*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 181

exhorted to display classical virtues. Etonian rowing was especially rich in Greek cultural references, and these were carried forward into varsity rowing.⁶⁰

By the third quarter of the nineteenth-century, attendance at Oxford or Cambridge, and preferably the acquisition of a blue, were seen as the natural progression for the successful schoolboy athlete. While the vast majority of Etonians left school with neither educational qualifications nor notable sporting achievement, many of Eton's most successful sportsmen also met with academic success. This is evident both from the memoirs of pupils and masters, and from statistical studies of academic success among university oarsmen.⁶¹ The implication is that many of those who played hardest, also worked hardest, either from a natural sense of self-discipline or because reaching university entrance standard was necessary for the continuance of their sporting careers. Given the heavy classical bias in Oxbridge entrance requirements, this further embedded classical culture in leading sportsmen.

The chapter concludes by rejecting Mack's condemnation of Warre as eminently fitted for turning out athletic philistines and concentrates instead on the depth and extent of his influence within the world of Victorian classicism.⁶²

⁶⁰ George Gilbert Treherne Treherne, *Record of the University Boat Race, 1829-1883*, (London: Bickers & Son, 1884), 243; Ibid. 272

⁶¹ Richard Frederick Clarke, *The Influence of Pass Examinations*, (Oxford: 1869), 4; Mark C. Curthoys and Hugh Stuart Jones, Oxford athleticism, 1850-1914: a reappraisal, *History of Education* 24, no. 4 (1995), 312-313

⁶² Edward C. Mack, *Public Schools and British Opinion Since 1860*, (New York, 1941), 129

Warre enjoyed discussing ancient Greek in great detail and did so in person and by correspondence with many leading classicists, particularly Jowett and Gladstone.⁶³ He was also passionately interested in the history and development of Greek boating, and was regarded as the predominant authority on ancient Greek rowing by Gardner, Gardiner, and later, Lord Desborough, all of whom he advised.⁶⁴

Chapter 5 considers Warre's connections via his Oxford and Henley rowing links with the early British representatives to the International Olympic Committee, and a large proportion of the members of the British Olympic Association, in the period up to and including 1908. Additionally, there is a case study, showing how the historians of ancient sport, led by Gardiner, disagreed with, and tried to influence, the development of modern discus throwing in the early modern Olympics. The chapter concludes by agreeing with John MacAloon's observation that 'Hellenism was ... the thinly spread but strong symbolic glue which held nascent international sport together', but argues that the source of that Hellenism was strongly rooted in the class-elitism of the English public schools and their promotion of an amateur ideal based on a past that never was.⁶⁵

⁶³ Charles Robert Leslie Fletcher, *Edmond Warre*, (London: John Murray, 1922), 176; *Ibid.*, 129; *Ibid.*, 196-197

⁶⁴ Percy Gardner, Boat-racing among the Greeks, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 2. (1881), 92; Edmond Warre, *Athletics; Or, Physical Exercise and Recreation*, (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1884), 8-13; William, Grenfell, Lord Desborough of Taplow, *The Story of the Oar*, (Edinburgh: Philosophical Institution, 1910), 14

⁶⁵ MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 197

Research Aims

Overall, this thesis aims to present a number of new areas of study.

- The rise of socially elite amateur sport originating among public school and university men in the mid-nineteenth-century is reconsidered against the background of classical education, and its use as a deliberate tool of economic and social exclusion. This is in contrast to previously siloed studies which have looked at classicism and athleticism in isolation.
- An intensive study of the literature in school magazines which presents a new appreciation of the extent to which classical culture and references permeated the way in which Victorian public schoolboys thought about sport and sportsmen.
- Consideration of the extent to which nominally Christian elements of public school culture, particularly the rise of muscular Christianity and its attendant ideals of manliness, were driven by ancient Greek and Roman ideas of virtue and masculinity rather than Judeo-Christian culture.
- Victorian and Edwardian ancient sports history is examined to show the extent to which historians working in that field were influenced by their own education and sporting backgrounds, and how this led them to project the issues of their own day onto the distant past while simultaneously seeking to use inappropriate examples from ancient history to influence sport in their own time.
- The extent of the personal networks that existed between leading classicists, ancient sports historians, sporting schoolmasters, sports

administrators and politicians is examined. This reveals a web of relationships linking figures across these fields which provides a strong indication of how they may have influenced each other.

- The common perception of the Victorian public school as being divided between academic aesthetes and athletic philistines is challenged, with evidence suggesting that successful sportsmen were often highly motivated individuals who performed well academically.
- The importance of Edmond Warre and his immediate circle is examined, showing him to be a central figure in the interplay of classics and sport who exerted influence in both directions.
- The extent to which rowing in particular was saturated in classical influences and the disproportionate extent to which British rowers influenced the revived Olympics.

The first step is to understand the rise of classicism as the dominant element of nineteenth-century elite education and how this came to be inextricably linked to the idea of the English gentleman.

Chapter 1 – Classics in the Public School:

Exclusivity, Excellence, and Indifference

Introduction

Public schools changed considerably between 1789 and 1914, and although they fiercely resisted outside pressure to modernise, certain themes are evident throughout the period. Classics, although under attack from reformers both before and after the 1864 Clarendon Commission, remained the dominant subject in most public schools, and May notes that ‘As late as 1914, a list of 114 headmasters revealed 92 to be classicists.’¹ The reasons why classics remained a dominant subject subtly changed over time and standards of both teaching and learning varied considerably from school to school, and from pupil to pupil.

Honey’s work gives an idea of just how many schools aspired to public-school status by the third quarter of the nineteenth-century.² Many of these consciously aped the practices and traditions of the more established ‘Great’ schools. The idea of the ‘Great’ schools had been somewhat flexible over the preceding centuries and various schools had risen and fallen. At the time of the Clarendon Commission, they were somewhat arbitrarily considered to be Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Charterhouse, Rugby, Shrewsbury, Westminster, Merchant

¹ Trevor May, *The Victorian Public School*, (Oxford: Shire, 2009), 31

² John Raymond Halstead de Symons Honey, *Tom Brown’s Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School*, (London: Millington, 1977), 238-295. Honey includes several tables showing schools by various criteria over the period in his chapter on the public school community, but for an indication of the numbers he states that 104 schools were in the Head Masters’ Conference in 1902. p.252

Taylors' and St Paul's.³ Of course, many of these 'traditions' were comparatively new, the 'Great' schools themselves having completely transformed over the previous half-century. The Victorian age, a time of great technological change and vast social upheaval, was characterised by the active use of the past as an anchor. The public schools consciously drew from separate strands of history to create an illusion of timeless stability and continuity when in fact they were in a state of flux and many were either new institutions or had in recent times been perilously close to collapse.⁴ These strands typically consisted of the ancient past, the medieval, and the recent past. From the ancient past the schools drew their classical curriculum and this not only provided much of the rhetoric and philosophy by which they were run, but also created their own terminology, which helped foster identity for those inside schools and colleges, and create an air of mystique and impenetrability for those outside.⁵ The medieval was constantly invoked in the architecture of new buildings as the public schools expanded, for example in the cathedral-like chapel built for Lancing College.⁶ Actually few public schools had truly medieval roots. Eton and Winchester have long argued about which is the oldest, although both are several hundred years younger than the King's School, Canterbury, if its claim to be founded in the seventh-century is true.⁷ In reality, nearly every other public school had started life either as one of the grammar schools endowed in the reign of Edward VI, as foundation schools from the seventeenth-century, or as new propriety schools

³ Martin Stephen, *The English Public School*, (London: Metro, 2018), 78

⁴ Alicia C. Percival, *Very Superior Men: Some Early Public School Headmasters and Their Achievements*, (London: Charles Knight, 1973), 70

⁵ Stephen, *The English Public School*, 3

⁶ May, *The Victorian Public School*, 27

⁷ *Ibid.*, 11

in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries.⁸ Less tangible than the medieval influence in the physical architecture of schools, but nevertheless important, was the strong belief among many of the masters that they and their pupils for the most part came from Anglo-Saxon stock and that this gave them certain natural strengths and characteristics. Finally, many public schools worked hard to put as positive a spin on their recent history as possible. They produced elaborate school registers detailing the career successes of former pupils and wrote extensive and detailed school histories, lionising former headmasters and polishing past glories whilst quietly omitting past scandals. Additionally, former pupils who wanted to keep playing football and cricket together began to form Old Boys' associations and, although these were initially purely sporting in nature, they very quickly became important supporters and projectors of each school's image to the outside world.

This chapter examines why classics were considered important in the first place, their social impact on the status of pupils, the divisions evident between those who took to the subject and those who did not, and the reasons why classics long remained entrenched as a core differentiator between public and other schools. In particular, this chapter shows how classical education went from being an enabler of social mobility to a tool of social exclusion. This in turn was to mean that the rise of public school athleticism was to take place in a socially-exclusive environment, the inhabitants of which often viewed outsiders in a negative light.

⁸ Percival, *Very Superior Men*, 3-6

The Background to Endowed Schools

In the early nineteenth-century the boundary between grammar and public schools was blurred, something which the 1864 Clarendon Commission only partially addressed. In fact, the Commission created an entirely arbitrary boundary between the schools it included and other schools, some of which had very similar histories. Furthermore, the powerful Old Etonian representation in Parliament frustrated the Government's aims of making public schools both more financially accountable and more suited to the needs of a rapidly democratising industrial society. In his recent work on the charitable status of elite schools, Roy Lowe looked at the way in which many public schools not only exploited laws concerning tax and charity to their financial advantage but had a hand in shaping those laws. In doing so he dismisses Martin Stephen's 2018 work, *The English Public School*, as an example of 'eulogy delivered in the form of reminiscence'.⁹ Unsurprisingly, given his career as the headmaster of several public schools, Stephen has much to say that is positive about public school education, but he also writes at length about their faults and is particularly vocal on the subject of financial mismanagement and the way in which many of the most prestigious public schools have historically sought to evade their responsibility to provide free education to the poor.¹⁰ Crucially, the method by which the schools did this was by providing an almost exclusively classical education.¹¹

⁹ Roy Lowe, The Charitable Status of Elite Schools: The Origins of a National Scandal, *History of Education* 49, no. 1, (2020), 5

¹⁰ Stephen, *The English Public School*, 75-94

¹¹ Colin Shrosbee, *Public Schools and Private Education: The Clarendon Commission 1861-64, and the Public Schools Acts*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 25

Schools in the early nineteenth-century were generally either endowed schools, meaning that they had been set up in the past to run in perpetuity from the proceeds of an endowment, or proprietary, meaning that they were privately owned businesses run for profit. Many of the endowed schools were three or four hundred years old. Some, like Eton, were royal foundations, others were either founded by wealthy individuals, often merchants, or city guilds such as the Merchant Taylors, Haberdashers and Mercers.

The model for grammar schools had been established by William of Wykeham when he founded Winchester College in 1382.¹² His intention was to provide free education for seventy boys who would otherwise not have been able to pursue careers in the church or the law. In this respect, late medieval grammar schools represented an early attempt to provide social mobility to the disadvantaged. It should be stressed that the terms of endowments varied considerably between foundations. Schools like Winchester and Shrewsbury were fairly typical in that their original charters specified that a certain number of deserving boys from within a particular geographical boundary should be educated for free. Very occasionally, as was the case at Appleby in Leicestershire, a school might widen the terms of its endowment to admit free scholars from a much wider area, in this case, anywhere in England.¹³ Some other endowed schools limited the beneficiaries of scholarships to boys whose fathers were connected to a particular trade. For example, Aldenham School in Hertfordshire offered free places to boys from the town, or to those connected

¹² Stephen, *The English Public School*, 1

¹³ Howard Staunton, *The Great Schools of England*, (London: Strahan & Co, 1869), 421

with the Brewers' Company in London.¹⁴ In some cases, endowments provided for heavily subsidised, rather than completely free, education or eligibility depended on the pupil's parent or sponsor being eligible for local taxes, as was the case at Bedford, where only householders could apply.¹⁵ Conversely, some endowments were specifically aimed to help those most in need. Dr Geoffrey Glynne of Bangor, Caernarfonshire left money in 1557 to found a school for the free education of one hundred boys, 'the poorest preferred'. Glynne further specified that the ten poorest boys would be lodged in the school, and not only receive a free education, but forty shillings a year besides.¹⁶

Evidence of the success of early endowed schools in promoting social mobility can be seen in the careers of men like Thomas Wolsey, who rose from humble origins via his education at Ipswich's grammar school to become a cardinal and Henry VIII's chief minister. However, by the start of the nineteenth-century such opportunities for the poor were largely a thing of the past. Certainly, of the nine 'Great' schools considered by the Clarendon Commission, only St Paul's and Merchant Taylors', both entirely day schools and both situated in the City of London, were taking boys from humbler backgrounds. Significantly, both were subsequently able to avoid inclusion in the Public Schools Act of 1868.¹⁷ Analysis by Bamford of new entrants to public schools between 1801 and 1850 shows that, in the entire fifty-year period, Harrow and Rugby took no boys from the lower classes and Eton only two. In these three schools the pupils were

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 419

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 429

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 426

¹⁷ Shrosbee, *Public Schools and Private Education*, 191

overwhelmingly drawn from landed gentry, titled aristocrats, and the clergy, although the proportions varied. At Rugby, gentry were vastly in the majority with clergy a distant second, and aristocracy third. At Harrow, the three groups were more evenly balanced in 1850, although the proportion of clergymen's sons had increased fivefold since 1801. Eton was far and away the most aristocratic institution, with twenty-nine percent of boys coming from titled families in 1801 and twenty-six percent in 1851. In comparison, only five boys from aristocratic backgrounds attended St Paul's between 1801 and 1851. However, even at schools like St. Paul's, where free places were available to a wider public, the numbers of lower- and middle-class pupils fell. From 1801 to 1810, St Paul's admitted 63 lower-class boys and 134 from the middle-class, respectively 16.4% and 34.9% of the total admissions. For the period 1841-1850 these figures were down to 18 and 42, representing just 7.3% and 17.1%.¹⁸

Endowed Schools and Paying Boarders

Many endowed schools, like Winchester, had clauses in their founding charters which enabled them to take on additional fee-paying students in addition to those receiving free or subsidised places.¹⁹ Not only was this financially lucrative, especially when combined with fees for boarding, it also enabled some schools to build reputations as places where important introductions could be made. Winchester's original charter allowed for only 10 paid boarders in addition to the 70 free places Wykeham wanted to provide. The original intention in

¹⁸ Thomas William Bamford, Public Schools and Social Class 1801-50, *British Journal of Sociology* 12, no.3 (September 1961), 225

¹⁹ Stephen, *The English Public School*, 1

allowing paid boarders was to provide an income for the school in addition to that provided by the original endowment in order to make good any shortfall in the funds available for providing free education. However, it quickly became apparent to schools and masters alike that boarders were lucrative. Unsurprisingly, many other endowed schools subsequently increased the proportion of paid to free pupils over time. In many cases these increases were far in excess of the stipulations made in their original charters, but many governing bodies decided that they could be flexible in this respect. The same governing bodies generally proved less flexibility in their willingness to extend the provision of free education beyond Greek and Latin. The extent to which this had become the norm in the leading schools by the mid-nineteenth century is shown by the Clarendon Commission's survey of 1862.

Table 1.1 Numbers of Foundationers and non-Foundationers in Leading Public Schools 1862 ²⁰

School	Foundationers	Paid Pupils	Ratio of Paid Pupils per Foundation Place	Percentage of Foundationers
Charterhouse	44	92	2.1	32.4
Eton	70	770	11.0	8.3
Harrow	32	449	14.0	6.7
Rugby	61	402	6.6	13.2
Shrewsbury	26	114	4.4	18.6
Westminster	40	96	2.4	29.4
Winchester	70	146	2.1	32.4

²⁰ Staunton, *The Great Schools of England*, 18; The original table published by the commission and reproduced by Staunton shows total numbers of Foundationers and boys paying full fees for each school. The additional columns produced for this study show the number of paid pupils for each boy on a foundation place and the percentage of pupils receiving free education on the foundation.

The terms of endowments generally allowed only a modest stipend for a master, but boarding fees could be set at quite profitable levels. As the table indicates, the more prestigious a school was, the higher the demand for paid places, and the more it was likely to grow. At schools, such as Eton, Harrow, and Rugby, a range of boarding options sprang up, with different houses offering varying levels of comfort, amenities, and catering. Originally, these lodging houses were run by landladies who were referred to as Dames. Later, they were bought out and run by assistant masters who acted as private housemasters, in which capacity they usually made far more money than their basic salary as a teacher.²¹ Mangan describes how this system was allowed to flourish in many public schools as a means of recruiting good teachers, the idea being, that whilst a school may only be able to offer an able master a certain level of salary, it could offer him the opportunity of making considerable additional income via the house system. The downside to this was that some unscrupulous masters ran houses purely for profit, with little care for their charges. Such abuses would eventually lead to calls for reform, and houses were eventually brought back into the direct control of schools, although this process was not completed everywhere until the late 1930s.²²

The ‘Learned Languages’ and the Rise of Greek

The original purpose of these schools had been to educate promising young men in a particular locality in the rudiments of Latin and Greek grammar so that

²¹ Percival, *Very Superior Men*, 31; At schools which operated this system the housemasters continued to be referred to as Dames even after they were all male.

²² James Anthony Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 148-149

they might be able to embark upon clerical careers; hence many were referred to as grammar schools. Latin, because of its use in both church and law, and as the *lingua franca* of the educated classes throughout Europe, had always been the primary focus of these schools. Latin was treated as a living language, still useful for conversation, while Greek from the outset was recognised as primarily for reading, in order to reacquaint Renaissance man with ancient wisdom.²³ Greek was first taught in England in the 1460s by William Grocyn at New College, Oxford.²⁴ Grocyn was highly influential, teaching several figures who would go on to become headmasters of endowed schools in the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-centuries. These included John Colet, the founder of St Paul's School in London, and William Horman, later headmaster of first Eton and then Winchester.²⁵ From the Elizabethan period onwards, the study of ancient Greek language and ideas started to challenge the previous dominance of Latin in the curriculum, as observed by Potter.

Two features of sixteenth-century schooling made it more attractive to the masses: increased access through endowed schools lowered the economic barriers to education, and changes in the curriculum reflected the move towards a humanist model of education offering a program of classical studies based more on civic ideals for daily life

²³ Martin Lowther Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain, 1500-1900*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 19

²⁴ Samuel Knight, *The Life of Dr John Colet*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1823), 24

²⁵ Matthew Adams, The Introduction of Greek into English Schools, *Greece and Rome*, Second Series, 61, no. 1 (April 2014), 103-106

than on the traditional pedagogical literature of didactic commentary.²⁶

Despite this, for the next two hundred years Latin was clearly the senior partner in the relationship between the learned languages, both because it was more useful in daily life and because competent teachers of Greek were not always available. Therefore, while every grammar school taught Latin, not all were able to teach Greek. Roman culture was seen as worthy of emulation in the late Stuart and early Hanoverian periods, with James II and George II both represented as Roman generals in public statuary, and when Britain started to think of itself as a global power after the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) it looked to the Roman Empire as a model for emulation.²⁷

However, from the latter part of the eighteenth-century, as Hobsbawm's *Age of Revolution* approached, a series of events revived the fortunes of Greek. In 1762 James Stuart and Nicholas Revett published *The Antiquities of Athens* and sparked a renewed English interest in ancient Greece.²⁸ As the Enlightenment continued the idea of comparing the British Empire to Rome became less attractive. Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* seemed to offer a stark warning of what might lie in store, particularly when the American colonies broke free.²⁹ British commentators started to characterise the British

²⁶ Ursula Potter, *To School or Not to School: Tudor Views on Education in Drama and Literature*, *Parergon*, 25, no. 1, (2008), 103

²⁷ Jeremy Black, *Contesting History: Narratives of Public History*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 67

²⁸ Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1980), 5

²⁹ Black, *Contesting History*, 72

Empire as mercantile and marine, rather than overtly militaristic, inviting comparison with ancient Athens rather than Rome.³⁰ When, in 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte declared himself Emperor of France and openly adopted many of the aesthetic trappings of imperial Rome, the British moved further towards Hellenism, finding parallels between classical liberalism and Athenian democracy, whilst condemning Napoleon's similarity to the despotic popularism of Roman emperors.³¹ In the immediate post-Napoleonic period there was a blossoming of interest in ancient Greece among German scholars. Karl Otfried Müller, strongly identified the Dorians of ancient Greece with the Germanic peoples of northern Europe, and when his book, *The Dorians*, was published in English in 1839 it had a profound effect on influential British scholars.³² Among those who adopted his ideas were John Ruskin and Walter Pater, and such was the prestige of those endorsing Müller's ideas that they still had currency when E. Norman Gardiner wrote *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals* in 1910.³³ Those, like John Stuart Mill and James Harris, who defended the prominent position of Greek also argued that its grammatical rigour helped one to think better in any language, and publications on English grammar often maintained that it was impossible to speak English properly without a knowledge of Greek language and authors.³⁴ John Chandos neatly summed up this use and abuse of Greek.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 71

³¹ Luke Cooper, The Global Transformation: Critical Reflections on the Historical Sociology of the Long Nineteenth Century, *Journal of Historical Sociology* 31, Issue 1, 85

³² Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 167

³³ Edward Norman Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, (London: Macmillan, 1910), 9

³⁴ Simon Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek? Contests in the Cultural History of Hellenism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 203-204

As the nineteenth-century progressed it was also evident that, in some quarters, Greek was especially attractive because of its exclusivity. As literacy among the general populace increased the ability to read Greek provided an obvious way of standing above the crowd. Only a minority of public schoolboys ever really mastered Greek, but they could learn enough to set themselves apart from the common man. To most boys, who never got near the sixth form, nor desired to, the public schools imparted just sufficient quotations to play into conversation to support their claim for admission to polite society. At the same time, they acted as an efficient agent of social exclusivity by providing nothing which could be of the slightest use in preparing them to earn a living in commerce or industry, or in any employment other than the learned professions and select government service, the latter being in any event in the patronage of the friends and relatives of those destined to obtain them.³⁵

This understandably caused resentment in some quarters. Radicals like William Cobbett railed against the privileges afforded to those who knew the learned languages, which he felt were apt to make a man's mind 'frivolous and superficial'.³⁶ More particularly, he was outraged that the knowledge of Greek was used to bestow economic benefits upon those with the least need, citing that the normal fee to be admitted to the bar in 1817 was £100, but this was

³⁵ John Chandos, *Boys Together: English Public Schools 1800-1864*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 159

³⁶ William Cobbett, *The Political Register* 32, no. 34, 29 November 1817, 1076

reduced to six or seven pounds for those who had attended university, something which at that time required at least a superficial understanding of the language.³⁷

The 'Learned Languages' as a Social Barrier

By the nineteenth-century, Latin and Greek were of less practical use in the world, but they became an effective social barrier with which to segregate education. Now some schools sought to exclude boys from poorer backgrounds by raising the age of school entry and setting minimum standards of Greek and Latin proficiency before pupils could be admitted. It became usual for new pupils at public schools to have either been tutored at home, especially if their fathers were clergymen who had the necessary time and knowledge to do so, or have attended a preparatory school. This eventually created a system of which A.J.P. Taylor observed.

The children of the masses went to free day schools until the age of 14; the children of the privileged went to expensive boarding schools until 13. The dividing line here was as hard as that between Hindu castes. No child ever crossed it.³⁸

It would be fair to describe the level of proficiency shown in classics by entrants to public schools as variable. At their best they had been meticulously prepared

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1082

³⁸ Alan John Percivale Taylor, *English History 1914-1945*, (London: Penguin, 1965), 225

and were able to produce outstanding original work at a young age. Families like the Palmers of Mixbury in Oxfordshire, headed by a prosperous country vicar, were able to educate their sons at home to a remarkably high standard starting them on Latin at age five and Greek at six. By the time they went to Rugby school aged eleven the Palmer boys were thoroughly grounded in Latin, English literature, and classical mythology and they were reading the New Testament in Greek.³⁹ However, given the evidence of the poor standard of Greek and Latin displayed by some public schoolboys it may be assumed that the entrance requirements were often fairly minimal and easily cribbed, their main purpose being to exclude those with no knowledge of classics, and no means of acquiring it, rather than those with little ability but ample financial and social resources.

By creating a requirement of prerequisite knowledge of Greek and Latin, the public schools were not only able to exclude those of lesser social standing, but they were also able to either divert those free school places specified by original endowments from the poor to those who were perfectly able to pay for education themselves, or else to let the entire practice of free places wither and die. In the latter case the substantial funds allotted for this purpose in the original endowments were either diverted to other uses or sometimes disappeared altogether.⁴⁰ The Taunton Commission, set up in 1864 to follow up on the Clarendon Commission's work by looking at all endowed grammar schools, found cases of schools which no longer had any pupils at all on their rolls and

³⁹ Chandos, *Boys Together*, 48

⁴⁰ Shrosbee, *Public Schools and Private Education*, 3

others which, though endowed, had no free pupils.⁴¹ At the same time schools which wished to remain socially exclusive used their founding charters to insist that they could only teach Latin and Greek grammar and no other subjects, making themselves unsuitable for the sons of tradesmen who needed to learn more practical subjects like mathematics and science. Not only did they insist that they were largely limited by their founding charters to concentrating on Greek and Latin grammar, but they also insisted that free or subsidised places could only be granted for boys already proficient in, and intending to study, classics. As Stephen points out, the founding fathers of Eton, Winchester and other similar schools may have intended to educate the deserving poor, but by the nineteenth-century there was little or no chance of a genuinely poor pupil having the requisite skills to take advantage of the available scholarships and when, in 1940, the Provost of Eton stated that places were available to any poor child as long as he knew Latin and Greek, his disingenuity was bordering on the ridiculous.⁴²

Less socially exclusive grammar schools, particularly those in provincial towns with strong mercantile and industrial aspirations, were more inclined to move with the times and adapt their curriculums to the needs of business. Indeed, during the eighteenth-century many provincial grammar schools started to move away from classical education and at least 16 had dropped Latin altogether by 1799, with a further 56 following by 1837.⁴³ A survey of endowed schools,

⁴¹ Stephen, *The English Public School*, 85

⁴² *Ibid.*, 87

⁴³ Richard S. Tompson, *Classics or Charity: The Dilemma of the 18th-Century Grammar School*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971), 60

carried out in the wake of the Taunton Commission revealed that, by 1869, although there were still a great many that were designated as entirely 'classical', they were slightly outnumbered by those regarded as 'semi-classical', while a rather smaller proportion were classified as 'non-classical' and a handful as 'commercial'.⁴⁴

However, while the governors of many schools, and often the local authorities, wanted to teach modern subjects, headmasters and better off parents were often opposed. After 1805 those who wanted to resist modernisation were aided by the legal definition of grammar schools set by Lord Eldon which enshrined their duty to teach only the so-called 'learned languages'.⁴⁵ Furthermore, many of these schools were also under financial pressure because their original endowments were not sufficient in themselves to keep them running. Such schools relied on attracting substantial numbers of paying pupils and needed to demonstrate a degree of academic success. As entry to most universities still required knowledge of Latin and Greek, they found themselves further bound to these subjects.⁴⁶

Classics in Public Schools: Indifferent Teaching and Widespread Cribbing

The standard of classics teaching within public schools was variable. Shrewsbury had a very good reputation and was able to make the leap from

⁴⁴ Staunton, *The Great Schools of England*, 415-552

⁴⁵ Lord Eldon, *The English Reports*, 32, Chancery XII, 1080

⁴⁶ Shrosbee, *Public Schools and Private Education*, 25

being a provincial grammar school to a leading public school precisely because standards elsewhere were lax.⁴⁷ Some of the leading public schools were taking in boys like the Palmers, who had exceedingly good groundings in classics, but providing little or no advancement in their skills over the next four or five years. In the 1790s the future essayist, Thomas De Quincey was a pupil at Bath Grammar School.⁴⁸ He polished his skills by translating his daily newspaper into ancient Greek and later claimed to be able to speak the language better than any other scholar of his times.⁴⁹ However, he was utterly contemptuous of his teachers' level of knowledge of the subject.⁵⁰ Writing in the 1860s, Anthony Trollope explained that at Winchester, such teaching as took place in classics was done by the boys rather than the masters, and that the focus was on learning to repeat lines of Greek and Latin rather than understanding grammar or classical culture.⁵¹ Much evidence from eighteenth and nineteenth century schools does suggest that many masters did have less of a grasp of Greek than would be expected, but one wonders, if his teachers were so poor, what De Quincey's frame of reference was in deciding that he knew what spoken ancient Greek sounded like. He went on to say that Harrow was even worse, in that no teaching of classics was attempted at all, the purpose of the classics masters merely being to hear the boys construe.⁵² A similar state of affairs appeared to exist at Marlborough in its early years.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 130

⁴⁸ Robert Morrison, *The English Opium Eater: A Biography of Thomas De Quincey*, (London: Phoenix, 2010), 28 Bath Grammar School is today known as King Edward's School and was an endowed grammar from the reign of Edward VI.

⁴⁹ Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, (London: Keegan Paul, Trench & Co, 1885), 14

⁵⁰ Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek?*, 180.

⁵¹ Anthony Trollope, *Public Schools*, *Fortnightly Review*, no. 2, October 1865, 479

⁵² *Ibid.*, 482-483

Writing of his time there from 1843 to 1851, Edward Dowdeswell Lockwood said;

I knew no more of the subjects which formed the curriculum of the school, than I did when I first arrived eight years before...No one had ever made the feeblest attempt to teach me anything, and the cane had completely failed to drive the Latin grammar into my head.⁵³

Lockwood added that most of his contemporaries were in the same position. In 1866 William Jelf contributed a lengthy article to *The Contemporary Review*, detailing certain faults at Eton, which he felt the Clarendon Commission had failed to deal with. He was concerned that there was a particular class of boy who, because they came from extremely wealthy backgrounds and would never have to make their own way in the world, simply did not see the need to engage with schoolwork at all, and that this group were dragging the whole school down in the eyes of the public;

The characteristic which popular opinion attributes to Eton is, alas inveterate idleness, an utter want of any obligation to work, the utter fruitlessness of years of nominal education; and public opinion scarcely goes beyond the truth of the matter. It is a melancholy fact

⁵³ Edward Dowdeswell Lockwood, *The Early Days of Marlborough College*, (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co, 1893), 126

that most boys leave Eton ignorant of the very elements of what they have been nominally learning for periods varying from three to six years.⁵⁴

In this environment, cheating was both widespread and seemingly both expected and tolerated. Jelf went on to complain that 'If the lessons are got up at all, it is with "cribs" and they are forgotten the moment that school is over.'⁵⁵ Fifty years later, cheating still appeared to be rife and Alec Waugh's recollections of Sherborne relate how boys would buy English language versions of the classics from which to crib their translations.⁵⁶ Waugh also described the extent to which cribbing was, if not actively encouraged, tacitly acknowledged by explaining, via an imaginary dialogue between a teacher and Socrates, how boys were allowed to work in pairs to do their Greek and Latin homework thus enabling the more able to carry the less able through.⁵⁷ Despite numerous attempts at reform and widening the curriculum, the grip of classics at the leading public schools was remarkably resilient, even after legislation dictated that a wider range of subjects be taught. T.C Worsley won a scholarship to Marlborough aged twelve in 1919. He later recalled that new boys were 'rammed through the School Certificate course' in their first year so that general education could be put behind them and they could concentrate on classics alone from the age of thirteen onwards.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ William Edward Jelf, Eton Reform, *The Contemporary Review*, 3 (September-December 1866), 557

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 561

⁵⁶ Alec Waugh, *The Loom of Youth*, (London: Pantianos Classics, 1917), 6

⁵⁷ Alec Waugh, *Public School Life: Boys, Parents, Masters* (London: Collins, 1921), 101-113

⁵⁸ Thomas Cuthbert. Worsley, *Flannelled Fool*, (London: Alan Ross, 1966), 20

The domination of the classics within nineteenth-century public schools can also be illustrated by a study of the masters recruited to teach at them. The records of Harrow School for example gives the following breakdown of teachers recruited between 1819 and 1919 by subject.

*Table 1.2. New Harrow Schoolmasters by Subject 1819-1919*⁵⁹

Period	Classics	Maths	Modern Languages	Modern Side ⁶⁰	Natural Science	Army Class	Engineering	History
1819		1	1					
1820-29	3							
1830-39	4	2	1					
1840-49	9	2	1					
1850-59	10	2	2					
1860-69	7	2			1			
1870-79	9	1		5	1			
1880-89	10	4	1		1	2		
1890-99	8	2	1	3	1	1		
1900-10	5	4	2	6	3	4		
1910-19	3	7			5	1	1	1

This classical bias was by no means a feature of Harrow alone. The Clarendon Commission's report on the numbers of masters in each subject at the great public schools at the end of 1861 shows that only at Merchant Taylors' did classics masters not form an overwhelming majority.

⁵⁹ John Hubert Stogdon (Ed.), *Harrow School Register 1845-1925*, (London: Longman, Green & Co, 1925), Vol. 1, 451-462

⁶⁰ The 'Modern Side' was introduced to Harrow by Edward Bowen and was intended to educate up to 80 boys in a specifically non-classical curriculum in which subjects deemed useful for the leaders of the future, such as modern languages, history, science, geography, and mathematics, would dominate. James Anthony Mangan, Philathlete Extraordinary: A Portrait of the Victorian Moralist Edward Bowen, *Journal of Sport History*, 9, no.3, (Winter, 1982), 31

Table 1.3. Numbers of Pupils and Masters Teaching Classics, Mathematics and Modern Languages in the Great Public Schools, 1861 ⁶¹

School	No. of Boys	Classics	Maths	Mod. Lang
Eton	806	23	8	1
Winchester	200	7	2	3
Westminster	136	5	2	2
Charterhouse	116	5	1	3
St. Paul's	146	4	1	2
Merchant Taylors'	262	6	4	2
Harrow	481	16	4	2
Rugby	463	14	3	2
Shrewsbury	131	4	1	1

Not only did classicists continue to be recruited in greater numbers than teachers of other subjects throughout the nineteenth-century, but they were also paid considerably more. At Rugby in 1861 for example, an assistant master teaching classics earned an average annual salary of £966, compared to an average of only £877 for mathematics masters and as low as £100 for modern language teachers.⁶² Furthermore, in most public schools only a classicist could hope to rise to the position of headmaster and at Eton, for most of the nineteenth-century, only classics masters were allowed to wear gowns while non-classicists were banned from becoming housemasters.⁶³

⁶¹ *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools and the Studies Pursued and Instruction Given Therein*, Vol.1, (London: HMSO, 1864), 19

⁶² Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe*, 299

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 299

Although the classics were deemed important for shaping a boy into a gentleman, they also had a practical application in that, in the same way that a basic knowledge of them was a prerequisite for entrance to many endowed schools, it was impossible to matriculate to Oxford or Cambridge universities without some proficiency in Latin and Greek. Only a minority of boys from even the most prestigious schools went on to university at this time and many went straight into the armed services, the civil service, or training for medicine or the law, neither of which necessarily required a university education. Others left to run family estates or businesses or simply to live the life of a gentleman of leisure. Even the academically gifted did not always go to university. Cecil Harcourt-Smith went straight from Winchester to the British Museum, before running the British School at Athens, and eventually becoming director of the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁶⁴ University was necessary for those intending to take holy orders, become schoolmasters, or pursue a career in academia. It had also long been regarded in some circles as a kind of ‘finishing school’ where the manners learned at school could be refined for adult life through a process of formal dining and social networking.⁶⁵ Increasingly, from the mid-nineteenth-century onwards it was also a bastion of organised sport. Athleticism quickly took root in the Oxbridge colleges and many students went up to the university with the sole intention of playing sports, particularly after it became apparent that sporting prowess as much as academic ability was likely to secure future employment as a schoolmaster.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Obituary, *The Times*, 29 March 1944, 7

⁶⁵ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 122

⁶⁶ Malcolm Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness: The Legacy of Thring's Uppingham*, (Truro: Sunnyrest Books, 2015), 248

Those entering Oxford and Cambridge Universities could either pay their own way, in which case they merely had to demonstrate a sufficient level of familiarity with classical languages, or they could compete for scholarships and exhibitions, which would pay for their fees and some, or all, of their living costs at university. Scholarships could either be open, meaning that anybody could compete for them, or closed, whereby only students from a particular school or locality, or those with connections to specific institution, such as a livery company, could apply for them. Generally speaking, the wealthier a school was the more closed scholarships it was likely to have, but historical circumstances meant that sometimes comparatively modest schools might have access to a surprising number of such scholarships. For example, the school at Bangor in Caernarfonshire had no less than seven; three at St John's College, Cambridge and two each at Queen's College, Cambridge and Jesus College, Oxford.⁶⁷ Looking at results for the open scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge is useful for giving some indication of the effectiveness of teaching at public, grammar, and proprietary schools, because such scholarships were highly competitive. From 1886 until 1900, results of scholarship examinations were published annually as *The Public School Record*, a tabular feature which first appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, subsequently moving with its editors, Edward Tyas Cook and Harold Spender, to the *Westminster Gazette* and finally the *Daily News*.⁶⁸ The main table showed how many public scholarships each school had won, as well as the total number of pupils on each school's roll. This enables calculation of the number of scholarships per pupil, which

⁶⁷ Staunton, *The Great Schools of England*, 426

⁶⁸ Andy. Carter, 'No true or just test of merit': 'The Public School Record' 1886–1900, *History of Education*, 51. no.5 (2022), [739](#)

perhaps gives a broad indication of the quality of instruction at different schools. Then, as now, the publication of such 'league tables' was not universally popular with schools and the headmaster of Sherborne protested that such 'fallacious lists ...encourage the idea that scholarships are the end of education'.⁶⁹ In 1888 the most successful institution in obtaining open scholarships was not a school at all, but Wren and Gurney, which was a 'crammer', a type of college set up to help young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty pass the entrance examinations for the Army, Navy, Civil Service and the universities.⁷⁰ That such establishments were necessary for young men who had already had several years of expensive schooling is something of an indictment of the system, but they were evidently highly effective.

⁶⁹ The Public School Record 1887-1888, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 October 1888, 1

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1

Table 1.4. Oxford and Cambridge Scholarships by School 1888 ⁷¹

School Name	Scholarships Won	No. of Pupils	Pupils per Scholarship	Percentage of Scholarships
Clifton College	15	650	43.3	2.3
Merchant Taylors'	15	515	34.3	2.9
St Paul's	13	540	41.5	2.4
Manchester Grammar	12	820	68.3	1.5
Marlborough College	10	570	57.0	1.8
Winchester College	10	380	38.0	2.6
Bath College	9	111	12.3	8.1
Eton College	8	900	112.5	0.9
Shrewsbury	8	235	29.4	3.4
Christ's Hospital	7	750	107.1	0.9
Birmingham King Edward's	6	350	58.3	1.7
City of London School	6	734	122.3	0.8
Ipswich School	6	200	33.3	3.0
Leamington College	6	130	21.6	4.6
Llandovery College	6	182	30.3	3.3
Oxford High School	6	90	15.0	6.7
Rossall School	6	290	48.3	2.1
Dulwich College	5	600	120.0	0.8
Haileybury College	5	500	100.0	1.0
Christ College, Brecon	4	125	31.3	3.2
Sherborne School	4	300	75.0	1.3
Rugby School	3	440	146.7	0.7
Harrow	1	550	550.0	0.2
Wellington College	1	387	387.0	0.3

At first sight, it would appear from this table that the major public schools performed very poorly compared to some provincial schools, particularly Bath College and Oxford High School. However, the table does not tell the whole story as the *Pall Mall Gazette* was at pains to point out that it did not include closed scholarships. Indeed, Westminster, one of the leading public schools,

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1-2; The *Pall Mall Gazette* tables only give the number of public scholarships won and the total number of pupils in the school. To put this into context, and in order to give an indication of the relative performance and effectiveness of schools, columns have been added to show the number of pupils in the school for each scholarship won in 1888 and the percentage of boys in the school winning a scholarship that year. In reality however, only the boys in the final year would be competing for scholarships so the ratio of pupils per scholarship would be lower and the percentage of scholarships higher. On average, most schools had boys spread across five years, so the figures can probably be roughly adjusted by a factor of five (at Haileybury for example 5% of sixth formers, or one in five boys may have won a scholarship). However, as not all schools operated the same criteria for moving between years it may be inaccurate to use this method in all cases and the data does not allow this to be a definite assumption. Nevertheless, the available data does give an indication of the relative performance of schools.

does not appear in the table at all because it had so many closed scholarships at its disposal that it simply did not need to compete for any open ones.⁷² This probably also explains the seemingly awful rates of success achieved by Harrow, Rugby, Wellington, and Eton.

Precisely because open scholarship results alone made the most prestigious public schools look quite bad, they prevailed upon the *Pall Mall Gazette* to also include lists of passes in the Higher Certificate, which exempted boys from the Oxford and Cambridge entrance examinations, and, by this measure, they did rather better, although Eton and Harrow were still below average.

*Table 1.5. Higher Certificates by School 1888*⁷³

School	No. of Certificates	No. of Pupils	Pupils per Certificate	Percentage of Boys Gaining Certificates
St Paul's	24	540	22.5	4.4
Rugby School	20	440	20.0	4.5
Marlborough College	18	570	31.7	3.2
Eton College	16	900	56.3	1.8
Bradfield College	15	126	28.4	11.9
Bedford Grammar	14	550	39.3	2.5
Llandovery College	13	182	14.0	7.1
Wellington College	13	387	29.8	3.4
Westminster School	12	280	23.3	4.3
Bath College	10	111	11.1	9.0
Bradford Grammar	10	450	45.0	2.2
Lancing College	10	200	20.0	5.0
Clifton College	9	650	72.2	1.4
Harrow	9	550	61.1	1.6
Rossall School	8	290	36.3	2.8

⁷² *Ibid.*, 2

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 2; As with the previous table, the original data in the *Pall Mall Gazette* only gives the number of certificates and total number of pupils for each school. The same caveat regarding ratios and percentages applies.

However, while the leading public schools may not have dominated competitive examinations to the extent that might be expected they nevertheless still provided the bulk of actual entrants to Oxford and Cambridge universities. Analysis of new entrants to Jesus College, Cambridge between 1849 and 1885 shows that 818 of the 1,290 students came from public schools, 217 from grammar schools and 211 from other private schools and tutors. Of those from public schools, Harrovians with 63 and Etonians with 50 were by far the largest groups with Uppingham, Haileybury, Marlborough, Shrewsbury, Repton, and Rugby all having between 25 and 33 students.⁷⁴ This analysis is broadly in line with William Rubenstein's study of the social origins of Oxbridge matriculants between 1840 and 1900, which also shows Eton and Harrow as the largest contributors to both universities with Eton dominating at Oxford and Harrow at Cambridge.⁷⁵ The situation at Jesus College may have been typical of Oxford and Cambridge colleges in regard to proportions of boys entering from major public schools, but some schools and colleges enjoyed especially close relationships because of their foundation status and the closed scholarships associated with them. Eton was especially associated with King's College, Cambridge, for example, and Chandos describes the stream of Etonians who returned to senior positions at the school after graduating from King's as 'a closed shop...providing jobs for Old Boys'.⁷⁶ Winchester had a similar archaic relationship with New College, Oxford. This allowed Old Wykehamists to qualify for a lifelong fellowship directly from school, and news

⁷⁴ Arthur Gray and Frederick Brittain, *A History of Jesus College*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 176-177

⁷⁵ William D. Rubenstein, The Social Origins and Career Patterns of Oxford and Cambridge Matriculants 1840-1900, *Historical Research*, 82, no. 218 (November 2009), 722

⁷⁶ Chandos, *Boys Together*, 24

of new vacancies was directly conveyed from New College to Winchester by a special messenger called the 'Speedy Man', who made the journey from Oxford to Winchester on foot.⁷⁷ Although Winchester only won 10 open scholarships in 1888, it was still sending 49% of its leavers to university in 1893. This figure was actually down from the 64% they were sending to Oxbridge in 1836, but both figures are much higher than for many other public schools.⁷⁸

Classics at Oxford and Cambridge

To a large extent the place of classics in the universities mirrored that of its place in the public schools. In the latter part of the nineteenth-century other English universities such as London and Liverpool began to expand in importance, particularly in the teaching of science, while for a long time Oxford and Cambridge remained strongholds of classics and athleticism. Like the public schools, Oxford and Cambridge also invested heavily in the idea that they were bastions of tradition and continuity. Newer universities might teach modern subjects in a business-like manner, and this was considered appropriate for institutions whose purpose was seen as turning out middle managers, accountants, and engineers. At Oxford and Cambridge, the assumption was that those passing through the universities were destined to become leaders in law, church, and government. Some genuinely believed that a classical education provided a grounding in philosophy, logic, and rhetoric, which ideally prepared a man for such roles, but the shared culture of

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1984), 155; *Ibid.* 115

⁷⁸ William Joseph Reader, *Professional Men*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966), 214

manners, language and behaviours provided by an Oxbridge education undoubtedly smoothed the path to the highest positions in the land.

One characteristic which Oxford and Cambridge seemed to share with public schools was a tendency for some students to make little progress in classics once they had passed the entrance examinations. Some evidence of a falling off in standards, once the hurdle of entry was passed, is visible in that on one occasion 200 Cambridge undergraduates were tested with the previous years' entrance exam and 101 failed.⁷⁹ That this was the case is not entirely surprising; between 1850 and 1914 well over 70% of Oxford undergraduates were 'Commoners', which is to say they had been admitted based on their ability to pay their way and an elementary level of Greek and Latin.⁸⁰ Engel's figures for between 1814 and 1900 put the proportion of Commoners even higher than Curthoys and Jones with combined Scholars and Exhibitioners only accounting for between 20 to 25 percent of students.⁸¹ Most of these students, if they took a degree at all, would study for an ordinary rather than an honours degree, and many would leave without completing a course of study at all. Many commoners during this period went up to university with the express intention of playing as much sport as possible so they were barely seen in a lecture room or examination hall at all, and some Oxford colleges,

⁷⁹ Denys Arthur Winstanley, *Late Victorian Cambridge*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947), 146

⁸⁰ Mark C. Curthoys and Hugh Stuart Jones, Oxford athleticism, 1850-1914: a reappraisal, *History of Education*, 24, no. 4 (1995), 305.

⁸¹ Arthur Jason Engel, *From Clergyman to Don: The Rise of the Academic Professional in Nineteenth-Century Oxford*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 291

notably Brasenose, Hertford, and Worcester, turned themselves over to sport to the extent that their academic reputation seriously suffered.⁸²

All this is not to say that Oxford and Cambridge, did not produce great classical scholars during the nineteenth-century. On the contrary, the best in the field were very able indeed and their work still resonates today, but they often rose to greatness in spite of, rather than because of, the system. In the early years of the nineteenth-century, the majority of academic posts in Oxford colleges belonged to the Fellows, ordained Anglican clergymen attached to the various colleges, who could retain their posts as long they remained celibate. The original intention of this system was that young graduates would teach those below them for a few years before marrying and moving on to life as parish priests. However, by the 1800s this system was in chaos. Competition for fellowships was fierce, and sometimes corrupt, and there were plenty of Fellows, not inclined to marry, who carried out little or no teaching or research and were content to live in college and collect their stipends for life. Not only were many of these Fellows ineffective, but the system also discouraged many academically gifted young men because the prospects of promotion to posts that allowed them to marry were poor.⁸³ The situation eventually improved with the arrival of professional college tutors and the reform of the fellowship system, but this was an extremely long process. The Oxford Act of 1854 enabled the employment of college tutors, and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act of 1877 allowed colleges to change their constitutions and

⁸² Curthoys and Jones, *Oxford athleticism*, , 315-316

⁸³ Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, 2-13

change the rules around fellowships, but the colleges themselves only gradually implemented such reforms between 1882 and 1914.⁸⁴

As the nineteenth-century progressed the same concerns which had led to calls for reforming the curriculum in public and endowed schools were raised for Oxford and Cambridge. In continental Europe, language had been important in establishing and reinforcing the identities of the new nation states that sprang up throughout the nineteenth-century. As a result, the study of Greek and Latin in many European countries became specialist subjects rather than the mainstay of the education system. Nowhere was this truer than in Germany, where the drive for unification in the second half of the century emphasised the importance of the national tongue. Freed from a system where classics and theology completely dominated the university curriculum, the German universities flourished and became internationally recognised centres of learning, particularly for the sciences, but also, ironically, for the study of ancient Greece.⁸⁵ By the end of the century, British university students who aspired to academic careers often had to master German in order to keep abreast of developments across a wide range of subjects. Percy Gardner was alarmed at the extent to which Oxford and Cambridge were being left behind by the German and American universities and, in 1903, put forward an impassioned plea for modernisation. While many other classicists strongly resisted assaults on the preeminent position of their subject, Gardner pointed to the progress Germany was making.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 55; *Ibid.* 257-287

⁸⁵ Shrobsbee, *Public Schools and Private Education*, 50

That Germany is the land of fact and knowledge is a familiar truth to all who attempt to pursue beyond the rudiments any branch of natural or human knowledge. Into whatever sea of facts one may sail, one is almost sure to find that the German investigator is there already with his telescope and his microscope, with his tables of statistics and his infallible indexes.⁸⁶

Gardner was particularly concerned that Oxford and Cambridge colleges showed little inclination to produce original research whereas many European universities were racing ahead.⁸⁷ He conceded that many of the newer British universities, particularly in Wales, were trying their best, but were hampered by a lack of funds.⁸⁸ He believed Oxford was faced with a stark choice.

The fact is that at present Oxford is faced with a dividing of the ways. Of the two paths before us, one tends more and more towards narrowness and stagnation, the other towards effectiveness and energy.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Percy Gardner, *Oxford at the Crossroads: A Criticism of the Course of Litterae Humaniores in the University*, (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1903), 5

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 47-62

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 60

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 3

The Defence of Classics

However, even while he was advocating a more open and dynamic curriculum, and a style of teaching coupled with an environment where research was actively encouraged, Gardner could not abandon the preeminent position of classics entirely. He devoted much of the second half of *Oxford at the Crossroads* to defending the classics and showing how, in his opinion, they helped considerably in the study of science and were the natural basis of all other humanities.⁹⁰ Others went much further in their defence of the classics. Writing in *School* in 1904, Professor John Phillimore of Glasgow University defended the classics against attack by what he called the 'Commercial Outcry'.⁹¹ There is an element of snobbery here harking back to the idea that those 'in trade' are of lower class. Phillimore went on to rephrase the debate over classical education as liberal education versus technical education, claiming that a technical education was merely training for a trade and led nowhere beyond an understanding of a specific type of work, whereas understanding the classics opened up a complete understanding of humanity, especially in relation to the 'knowledge, management and government of men.'⁹² He further stated that the difference between technical and liberal education was that the former was 'an education that pays' while the latter was 'an education that educates.'⁹³ Here we have in education the equivalent of attitudes in sport, with the recipient of a technical education taking on the role of avaricious professional while the recipient of a liberal education is

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, See the chapter on Defence of the Classics, 62-75 The Classics and Human Science, 105-111 and Suggested Reforms, 112-125

⁹¹ John Swinnerton Phillimore, A Defence of the Classics, *School: A Monthly Record of Educational Thought and Progress*, 1, no. 2 (February 1904), 75

⁹² *Ibid.*, 75

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 75

supposedly learning for learning's sake and therefore akin to the gentleman amateur.

Phillimore was keen for boys to study modern languages as well but held that they could only really excel in them if they already had a grounding in Latin, and preferably Greek as well. In fact, he went so far as to say that they could not really be proper scholars of English literature without this grounding. He was completely dismissive of science as a school subject. He went on to say that many more students were now studying modern history at Oxford but in his opinion, they might as well be reading novels.⁹⁴ Phillimore felt that modern history was necessarily biased by one's background, nationality, and political and religious beliefs, whereas one could look at ancient history dispassionately.⁹⁵ For Phillimore, anyone who attempted to study history without Greek and Latin was only a 'so-called historian' who could only regurgitate the ideas and commentaries of others. He finished by claiming that any attack on the classics was an attack on all the Arts. In his beliefs about modern history, he was perhaps ahead of his time, but, unfortunately, he was blinkered to the possibility that ancient sources were just as prone to these distortions as modern historians.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 76

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 77

Classics and Elite Employment

Regardless of whether the domination of classics in public schools was the best way of educating boys, it had to be viewed in the wider context of Britain at the time. It is true that the country required more men with technical and vocational skills if it were to effectively keep pace with its major imperial rivals. However, on an individual basis, parents and boys had to think of their own prospects and future career paths, and here again, classics was in the ascendancy. Even if a boy did not intend to go to university, to progress in almost any profession required a knowledge of the classics. As Dr Gaisford, Dean of Christ Church when Thomas Hughes was a student, claimed of ancient Greek, 'it not only elevates above the vulgar herd, but leads not infrequently to positions of considerable emolument'.⁹⁶ Thus, Greek and Latin not only kept the less well-off out of endowed schools and enabled the better off to take advantage of scholarships originally intended for those in genuine need, they also formed an artificial barrier to career progression. This too might explain Shrewsbury, which was only on the borderline between the Clarendon Commission's public schools and the other grammar schools, having the best record for classical scholarship in the nineteenth-century, while Eton, with its 'fashionable court connections' had the worst.⁹⁷ The future of many Etonians was already assured by the inheritance of large estates or an easy passage to Parliament via Lords or Commons, whereas the pupils of Shrewsbury were more likely to need to work and qualify for a profession.

⁹⁶ Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe*, 135

⁹⁷ Shrosbee, *Public Schools and Private Education*, 28

Edward Dowdeswell Lockwood, after claiming to have learned nothing in his eight years at Marlborough, found that the sudden prospect of unemployment concentrated the mind. He claimed to have largely made up the lost time in his last six months at school when he was allowed to hire one of the masters, Mr Hutchinson, as his private tutor.⁹⁸ Lockwood's sudden burst of learning in his final year was prompted by his desire to qualify for the East India Company college at Haileybury. Lockwood enjoyed his time at Haileybury but was surprised to find a curriculum still dominated by classics. The final examinations did include some scientific and mathematical questions which may have been of practical use in governing India, but also included the following:

Give the substance of Müller's remarks on the style of Sophocles.

Give the laws of the metre in which the Parabasis of Comedy was written.

In what manner has Strabo divided the Gymnosophists?

Point out any passages in the Tusculan disputations which throw any light on the nature and object of the Eleusinian mysteries.⁹⁹

Lockwood was scathing of the emphasis which East India Company training put onto the classics, and quite reasonably felt that the effort would have been

⁹⁸ Lockwood, *The Early Days of Marlborough College*, 127

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 147

much better spent on getting to grips with Indian languages and agriculture, citing cases of British officials in charge of Indian farming who were unable to speak Hindi or recognise maize.¹⁰⁰

A table prepared for the Headmasters' Conference of 1898 lists the examinations required in order to enter a number of institutions and professions. The careers included physicians, surgeons, veterinarians, dentists, barristers, solicitors, actuaries, accountants (chartered and certified), architects, civil engineers, pharmacists, and civil servants. The table also noted the entry requirements for training as an army or navy officer and for Oxford, Cambridge, and London universities.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 148

Figure 1.1. Table of Entrance Requirements for Various Institutions and Professions.¹⁰¹

SCHOOL: A MONTHLY RECORD OF						
A TABLE OF EXAMINATIONS PRELIMINARY TO THE PROFESSIONS						
Professional Council.	English.	Latin.	Mathematics.	Other Languages.	Other Subjects.	Standards of Exemption, etc.
GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL. (1909 Oxford Street, W.C.) Also Dentists and Veterinarians.	English Language Grammar, Composition.	Grammar, Set Translation Unseen.	Arithmetic, Algebra to Simple Equations, Euclid I.-III.	One Language besides Latin (or Logic).	Logic (or one Language).	Arts degree of any Univ. exempts. Inferior exams. not accepted unless containing the required subjects. O. and C. Lower Certif. Junior Locals, Coll. of Proc. 2nd Class are accepted.
COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION. (Lincoln's Inn.) For Barristers.	English Language, English History.	Latin Language.				Any University Exam., Army, Higher Civil Service, and any other exam. that the examiners think sufficient.
INCORPORATED LAW SOCIETY. (Chancery Lane, W.C.) For Solicitors.	Dictation, Composition, Geography of Europe, History.	Elementary (Higher Latin as alternative).	Arithmetic to Fractions (Algebra to Simple Equations, Euclid I.-IV., as alternative to one Language).	Any two Languages, of which one may be Higher Latin, but Mathematics as alternative.		No exemptions named in Regulations; but Junior Locals will exempt. Leod. Matric. reduces articles by one year: a degree by two years.
INSTITUTE OF ACTUARIES. (Staple Inn Hall, W.C.)	Writing, Composition.		Arithmetic, Algebra to Simple Equations.			Exemption may be claimed by candi- date. None suggested in Regula- tions.
INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS. (Moorgate Place, E.C.)	Dictation, Composition, Geography of Great Britain and Europe, History.	Elementary.	Arithmetic, Algebra to Quadratics, Euclid I.-IV.	One Language, which may be advanced Latin.	One of these: Higher Maths., Physics, Chemistry, Zoology, &c., Shorthand.	Junior Locals, if candidate was under 16 and passed in all the required subjects, or 1st Class Coll. Proc.
SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS. (4 King Street, E.C.)	Dictation, Grammar History, Geography.	Elementary.	Arithmetic, Algebra to Eqq. and Fractions, Euclid I.	French or German.		Junior Locals or Coll. Proc. if requisite subjects contained.
ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS. (9 Conduit Street, W.)	Dictation, Composition, Geography, History.		Arithmetic, Algebra, Elements of Plane Geometry.	One of Latin, French, German, Italian.	Geom. Drawing, or Perspective, Freehand Drawing, Mechanics, Physics.	Senior Locals or 1st Class Coll. Proc. (if requisite subjects included) exempt except in Drawing.
INSTITUTE OF CIVIL ENGINEERS. (Great George Street, W.C.)	English Literature, Geography, History.	Translation, Composition, Grammar.	Two papers: Euclid I.-IV., Elem. Conics, Trig. to Sol. Trig., Alg. to Bin. Th., Logarithms.	One Language besides Latin.	Elementary Physics, Chem., Mech., Geom. Draw., Freehand.	Candidates must be over 18. The language papers may be taken separately.
PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY. (Bloombury Square, W.C.)	Grammar, Composition.	Grammar, Caesar I., or Virgil AEn. I.	Arithmetic.			Junior Locals (if requisite subjects contained).
NAVAL CADETS.	Dictation, Composition, Geog. of British Empire.	Translation, Grammar.	Arithmetic, Algebra to Simult. Eqq., Euclid I.-III.	French (Translation, Dictionary, Conversation).	(Not obligatory.) Drawing, Higher Maths., German, Elem. Science.	Candidates are limited in age to 14½ to 15½.
ARMY: Woolwich.	Composition, Spelling, Handwriting.	Latin.	Arithmetic, Alg. to Bin., Logarithms, Euclid, Trigonometry, Mechanics.	French or German (extra marks for Conversation).	Geom. Drawing.	Geography, Freehand Drawing, and any two of the following: Higher Maths., German (or French), Greek English History, Chemistry, Physics, Geology, are optional. Same.
Sandhurst.	Same.	Latin.	Same without Mechanics.	Same.	Same.	
OXFORD RESPONSIONS.		One Book, Grammar, Latin Prose.	Algebra to Simult. Equations, Euclid I.-II., Arithmetic.	Greek.	The additional subjects are any one of: (a) certain Greek or Latin Books, (b) certain French or German Books, (c) Bacon, (d) Logic.	Oxford and Cambridge Higher Certif.
CAMBRIDGE PREVIOUS.		One Book, Grammar.	Algebra Elementary, Euclid I.-VI., Arithmetic.	Greek Book, Grammar, Greek Testament.	Paley or Logic, French or German or Mechanics and Trig.	Oxford and Cambridge Higher Certif.
LONDON MATRICULATION.	English Grammar and Composition, History of Language and Literature, English History.	Selected Book, Unseen Translation, Grammar, Composition.	Arithmetic, Algebra to Progressions, Euclid I.-IV.	(Optional.) Greek, French, German, Sanskrit, Arabic.	General Elementary Science, including Mechanics, Physics, and Chemistry. (Optional.) Sciences, Chemistry, Mechanics, Sound, Heat Light, Electricity and Mag. Botany.	English, Latin, Mathematics, and General Elementary Science are compulsory. In addition, either one of the optional Languages or one of the Optional Sciences must be taken.
CIVIL SERVICE: 18-20. Admiralty Cashier, &c.	Composition (including <i>Précis</i>). English History.	General.	Arithmetic, Algebra to Binomial, Euclid I.-VI. Trigonometry to Sol. of Tri.	French, German, Greek.	Chemistry, Physics.	English Composition and Arithmetic are compulsory. Only five other subjects may be taken, of which two must be languages.
CIVIL SERVICE: Inland Revenue. 19-22.	English Composition, Geography.	General.	Euclid, Algebra.	French, German.	Book-keeping, Political Economy.	Only one language allowed.

Prepared by Dr. Gow (for H.M. Conference, 1898)

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 26

A qualification in English was required by all except, remarkably, Oxford and Cambridge.¹⁰² Proficiency in Latin was required for all except actuary and architect, although architects had to be able to speak one of French, German, Italian, or Latin. A knowledge of ancient Greek was only compulsory for entrance to Oxford or Cambridge, although it was also acceptable for a language qualification instead of German or French if applying to join the Civil Service.¹⁰³ There were legitimate advantages to having a knowledge of Latin for some of these professions. Pharmacy and medicine used Latin terminology as did parts of the legal profession. Greek was arguably only of direct use to those intending to teach it or a related subject, or clergymen and theologians. It is therefore difficult to escape the conclusion that a principal driving factor behind the wide range of institutions requiring classical qualifications was social exclusivity.

The Wider Influence of Classical Education

The dominance of classical literature in public schools had a profound effect on the philosophical outlook of masters and students. Although all public schools were nominally Christian institutions, many with formal ties to the Anglican or Catholic church, the views which they instilled into boys concerning morality and masculinity owed as much, if not more, to Graeco-Roman culture than Judeo-Christian traditions. The ideal boys that were produced by schools

¹⁰² English was not specifically taught at many public schools throughout much of the nineteenth-century, even after most had introduced elements of mathematics and science. It was generally expected that boys would develop good English skills as a natural by-product of learning the rigours of Greek and Latin grammar. Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe*, 138

¹⁰³ Cloudesley Brereton, *The Examination Chaos, School: A Monthly Record of Educational Thought and Progress*, 1, no. 1 (January 1904), 26

for the service of the Empire would eventually be, as Philip Mason put it, 'Hardy as Spartans and disciplined as Romans'.¹⁰⁴ Other, more aesthetic, pupils might aspire to take orators like Cicero or great Athenian philosophers such as Plato as their role models. This classical bias was not without opponents as it troubled some Christian commentators who were worried that it was a corrupting influence on young minds.¹⁰⁵

However, how the influence of classics in general, and ancient Greek literature in particular, shaped the culture of public schools, and the boys who graduated from them, was far from uniform. Rob Boddice warns that there is 'a tendency in public school historiography to conflate one public school with another' going on to further caution that such histories are often very loosely periodised.¹⁰⁶ He makes a valid point in that the pressures which acted on schools were different over time, as was their commitment or resistance to change. However, the expansion of the public school system in the second half of the nineteenth-century was such that there were eventually over two hundred of them, all at different stages of evolution and often making changes based on the force of personality of individual masters. A strictly chronological approach is therefore not always appropriate or necessary in tracing some of these trends.

¹⁰⁴ Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army; its Officers and Men*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), 391

¹⁰⁵ Chandos, *Boys Together*, 36

¹⁰⁶ Rob Boddice, In loco parentis? Public-school authority, cricket and manly character, 1855-62, *Gender and Education*, 21, no. 2, March 2009, 160

Having said this, Tozer points to the domination of certain aspects of ancient Greek culture in the public school and university curriculum at particular times.¹⁰⁷ In much the same way that Hobsbawm divided the long-nineteenth century into three ages, Tozer illustrates that the main focus of Greek studies in schools was also split into three periods, roughly in line with Hobsbawm's divisions. From the Enlightenment through to the middle years of Queen Victoria's reign, Britons looked to Athens in the fifth-century BCE for inspiration, with Plato, Aristotle, and Thucydides being particularly influential. Plato certainly influenced those like Thomas Arnold, Thomas Hughes, Charles Kingsley, and George Cotton who were associated with Christian Socialism and the early days of muscular Christianity. Arnold wanted Rugby to be an ideal Christian society, but his view of this ideal leant heavily on Plato's *Republic*.¹⁰⁸ He moulded together elements of Christianity with Plato's moral philosophy in such a way that they were acceptable to a broad audience having been stripped of overt paganism and left with a moral framework compatible with the teachings of Jesus. The Church of England at this time was in the midst of a bitter struggle between Evangelicals and Tractarians, much of it played out in theological debates at Oxford and Cambridge, which sought to push the Church towards respective protestant and catholic positions.¹⁰⁹ For Arnold, both extremes were distasteful, and risked the Church being too inward gazing and bound up with theological issues, to be a force for practical good in the world. Arnold, following Plato's ideas on consensus and tolerance, became an influential early member of the Broad Church Movement, and his

¹⁰⁷ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 13

¹⁰⁸ John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 85

¹⁰⁹ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 20-24

tenure at Rugby reflected this.¹¹⁰ Christianity was important to the school, but it aimed to be neither strident nor aggressive, and this allowed a classical philosophy to be taught without being condemned out of hand. The vast majority of public schools were nominally Anglican institutions, and in the nineteenth-century, most had headmasters who were ordained clerics. Following Arnold's perceived success at Rugby, many schools tended to pursue a Broad Church line, where the interpretation of Christianity was focused on morality and behaviour rather than adherence to particular theological tenets. Much attention has been given to Arnold's weekly sermons and how they set Christianity and the school chapel at the heart of Rugby school's life. Such was the public perception of Arnold's preaching and its effect on the morality of his pupils that many of those schools that did not have chapels felt compelled to build one. Arnold's sermons were important, and served to put morality, manliness and good behaviour into a Christian context for his pupils. Additionally, for those boys not in the sixth form, it was the only time they were likely to hear him speak. However, the time spent listening to sermons in chapel was greatly exceeded by the time spent on classical philosophy in class. In these schools, while such attributes may have been reinforced from the chapel pulpit on Sundays, more time was probably expended on them in the classics' classroom.

¹¹⁰ John Witheridge, 'Thomas Arnold: Legend, Tradition and History', in Patrick Derham and John Taylor (Eds.), *Cultural Olympians: Rugby Schools Intellectual and Spiritual Leaders*, (Buckingham: University of Buckingham Press, 2013), 6-7

The rise of athleticism, although to some extent rooted in Platonic ideals of balance between body and mind, and the culture of the ancient gymnasium, was eventually associated with a shift whereby the Spartans, with their commitment to tough physical regimes and emphasis on the team over the individual, held sway. Eventually, as Britain moved into the age of imperialism there was a further shift, in which the focus moved away from Spartan culture towards the earlier, heroic age of Homer.¹¹¹

This last phase emphasised personal heroism and self-sacrifice and was in vogue from the death of General Gordon at Khartoum until the First World War. However, although these shifts in emphasis existed as broad trends, examples can be found where headmasters with strong personal beliefs ensured their school took a different path to the majority. Thring at Uppingham and Almond at Loretto in particular stand out. As many schools moved towards increased athleticism, sometimes to the detriment of classics, Thring stood firm in attempting to maintain a healthy balance, and classics at Uppingham maintained its predominantly Athenian flavour. Almond, although at the forefront of the move to Spartanism, and somewhat scornful of what he saw as aesthete and effeminate elements of high Athenian culture, was implacably opposed to the kind of hero worship encouraged by Homer, although he also encouraged every boy to read the *Odyssey*, which he described as ‘an education in itself.’¹¹² Although opposites in many ways, Thring and Almond

¹¹¹ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 14

¹¹² Hely Hutchinson Almond, *Letter to Mr George Gordon Coulton*, 3 December 1901, quoted in Robert Jameson Mackenzie. *Almond of Loretto; Being the Life and a Selection from the Letters of Hely Hutchinson Almond* (London: Archibald Constable and Co Ltd, 1905), 351-352

were both fervently opposed to the introduction of school Rifle Corps, and resisted calls to introduce them to their schools on the grounds that sport provided everything a boy needed to learn about fitness, teamwork and leadership.¹¹³

Conclusion

By the outbreak of the First World War most public schools were in the process of steadily widening their curriculum. Changes that they had steadfastly resisted in the face of The Clarendon and Taunton Commissions could no longer be ignored, and all were now devoting a significant proportion of teaching to subjects deemed to be in the 'modern side'.¹¹⁴ Subjects which they had once disdainfully avoided as only fit for the sons of tradesmen, such as science, mathematics, modern languages, and engineering were now taught even in the great schools of Eton, Harrow and Winchester. Voices for reform had long been calling for the introduction of these subjects in order that the public schools could produce the kind of leaders which a modern industrial and commercial nation required. However, it was ultimately imperial militarism which eventually provided the impetus to push these subjects onto the agenda. The rapid rise of the German military, British vulnerability during the Second Boer War of 1899-1902, and the rapid victories of industrialised nations in the Spanish-American War of 1898, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 and

¹¹³ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 286

¹¹⁴ By the late nineteenth century, many public schools were following Harrow's lead and referring to subjects other than Classics as the 'modern' side. While most of the leading public schools continued to offer a largely classical curriculum with only limited concessions to modern subjects some of the newer public schools offered pupils the choice of enrolling for a classical or modern education.

the Italo-Turkish War of 1911-1912 provided ample evidence that games, Greek and British pluck alone would not be enough in any future conflict.

The landscape and demographics of the public schools had also radically changed. At the time of the Clarendon Commission only nine institutions had been considered worthy of the status of public school, although there were already many other endowed and proprietary schools which aspired to join them. The greatest of these schools educated the sons of the aristocracy and the wealthier members of the clergy and other professionals. Boys from these backgrounds still attended public schools in the early twentieth-century, but by now they were outnumbered by the sons of the aspirant middle classes. As Tozer observes, this changed the attitudes, aspirations and purpose of parents sending their sons to public schools.

The mid-Victorians had idolised 'scholarship and manliness', now the Edwardians worshipped 'manliness and good breeding'. The newly rich acquired their good breeding second-hand through successful marriage into landed families, and strived to imitate those who inherited old money by aping their fashions, their mode of life and their interests. Matthew Arnold's 'Philistines' sought to become 'Barbarians'.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 361

However, a knowledge of the classics was still deemed the mark of a gentleman and thus Greek and Latin remained both a means of exclusion and a badge of membership, however imperfectly acquired. Liberal use of classical allusions and phrases was a useful tool to signal one's background and dazzle the masses, but the testimonies of public schoolboys, from Hughes and Lockwood at Rugby and Marlborough in the first half of the nineteenth century through to Worsley and Waugh in the early twentieth-century, illustrate that for the majority, classics were a chore to be endured, and if possible circumvented as much as possible by cheating and indifferent assessment. The overall impression is that boys worked hard to reach the basic level of proficiency required to gain entry to public schools after which those who were not intending to enter a profession or university no longer felt the need to work. Even among the comparatively small proportion who went on to university, those who enrolled on ordinary rather than honours degrees paid scant attention to their studies once they had arrived in Oxford or Cambridge.

This is not to downplay at all the quality of scholarship among the best classicists of the long nineteenth-century. It was a remarkable period and figures like Walter Pater and Benjamin Jowett were enormously influential. Many of those who held teaching positions in the universities and schools were extremely impressive scholars who thought and conversed in the ancient languages on a daily basis. The best that the universities produced might also go on to have a profound impact in the life and development of the nation. However, genuine in-depth understanding of ancient Greek was always a commodity in short supply. In 1858, for example, there were 186 academic

staff in total at Oxford University.¹¹⁶ All would have had some knowledge of Greek, but as this total covered all subjects it may be safely assumed that the number who were experts were far lower. Jowett, the master of Balliol College and a world authority on Plato, considered that there were so few people capable of doing worthwhile research at university that no formal system of research funding would ever be required. John Honey certainly felt that the pool of talent in late Victorian classics was small when he commented 'so limited in 1889 was the range of erudition expected of a Hellenist that at the age of only twenty-three Gilbert Murray could be described by a fellow-classicist (Jebb) as "the most accomplished Greek scholar of the day"'.¹¹⁷ Honey, may have had a point, but equally Murray appears to have been a prodigious talent, Jebb's comment coming as Murray, barely graduated from Oxford himself, succeeded him to the chair of Greek at Glasgow University. In a further illustration of how tightly knit the circle was at this level, Murray's marriage that same year was conducted by Benjamin Jowett.¹¹⁸

Certainly, by the time athleticism was at its peak in the following decades standards could be relaxed, as in the case of Clement Jackson who became a tutor with only a third-class degree.¹¹⁹ Similarly, of the 1,482 students enrolled at Oxford in 1858, only 349 were studying for honours degrees on Scholarships or Exhibitions.¹²⁰ Of these, only a proportion were taking

¹¹⁶ Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, 291

¹¹⁷ Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe*, 132

¹¹⁸ Christopher Stray, Murray (George) Gilbert Aime, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/35159>, last updated 03/01/2008, accessed 12/06/2020

¹¹⁹ *Oxford Magazine*, 6 November 1924, 81; *The Isis*, 5 November 1924, 15

¹²⁰ Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, 291

Classics, with only a few of these going on to achieve first-class degrees. Lord John Russell paid a compliment to the oratorical skills learned by the best when he recalled that in his early days in Parliament, there were always more than a dozen men who could craft elegant speeches, peppered with classical analogies, but tempered the observation by adding that there was not another dozen that could understand them.¹²¹ John Ruskin presumably felt Russell was being too kind when he commented that erudition was often mistaken for education, a point echoed by Disraeli in his novel *Endymion* when he satirised the habit of Members of Parliament of peppering their speeches with classical *bon mots*.¹²² 'In the last parliament we often had Latin quotations, but never from a member with a new constituency. I have heard Greek quoted here, but that was long ago, and a great mistake. The House was quite alarmed.'¹²³

The dominance of classics as a subject in the public schools meant that it permeated their culture and philosophy at every level. Masters and boys took examples from the classics as their reference points for every aspect of their lives; in many cases their education was sufficiently narrow that they had no other reference points. Even where outside influences and movements played a part in shaping school and university environments they were often seen through a classical lens. Thomas Arnold's original vision for Rugby and his adherence to the Broad Church movement may have been carried out in Christ's name, but his underlying philosophy was shaped as much by Plato,

¹²¹ Chandos, *Boys Together*, 159

¹²² Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 62

¹²³ Benjamin Disraeli, *Endymion*, (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1900), 348

Aristotle, and Thucydides as the Gospel, and when Arnold consulted the New Testament for guidance he was as likely to read the Greek original as the King James version. Similarly, the debates which raged in Oxbridge common rooms as Evangelicals and Tractarians fought for control of Anglicanism, not only called on scriptural evidence, but support from the philosophers of antiquity.

By 1914, the era of classical dominance was coming to a close. In the elite public schools, it had been dealt a blow by the requirements of the Army and Civil Service for broader education in an uncertain world. Elsewhere, there was social pressure to remove classical qualification requirements which were seen as barriers to the ordinary man. Oxford and Cambridge would retain their premier status, but the foundation of a string of alternative universities across England and Wales meant that they were now under the pressure of academic competition and would broaden their curriculum in response. Without the advent of war, it is possible that this process would have been a very long one and change gradual. However, the war changed everything. Public schoolboys and university men, brought up with a classically tinged vision of duty and patriotism formed the vast majority of the junior officers of the British Army. They died in disproportionately high numbers. A generation of new schoolmasters and fathers keen to give their sons a classical education was lost. Many of those who survived rejected Homeric notions of heroism after seeing the realities of war. A new egalitarianism was also in evidence. It did not entirely take hold, but neither did classics ever quite regain its previous pre-eminence.

Chapter 2 – Manliness, Masculinity and Morality: Ancient Graeco-Roman Influences on Education

Introduction

The early nineteenth-century public school had something of an unwholesome reputation. Relationships between some schools and the communities that hosted them were often strained by theft, brawls, vandalism, and poaching carried out by boys in their free time. Within the confines of the schools themselves, drunkenness, bullying, sexual abuse, and rebellions against masters were all common occurrences.¹ The antics of Flashman in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* brought the short-comings of the system into the public eye and shocked many middle-class sensibilities, but Hughes' version of Rugby was heavily bowdlerised and the reality was far worse; within a few short years Eton had witnessed a serious stabbing by a pupil, and a notorious case in which a boy was actually beaten to death.² The introduction of organised sport was seen as an important step in restoring school discipline, having the dual benefit of keeping boys occupied for long periods and making them too tired to get up to mischief afterwards.

If the classics remained unchallenged by other academic subjects in most public schools for much of the nineteenth-century, their dominant place in

¹ John Chandos, *Boys Together: English Public Schools 1800-1864*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 133-154

² In 1821 Eton pupil, Tom Hoseason stabbed Edward Trower during an argument in the school chapel. *Ibid.*, 137; In February 1825, thirteen-year-old Francis Ashley died after a fight with another boy lasting two and a half hours. *Ibid.*, 142; In 1730 there had been another murder at Eton when a pupil named Edward Cochran had been stabbed to death by a classmate, Thomas Dalton, *Ibid.*, 137

school life was challenged by the rise of organised games. Accounts of school life in this period are packed with references to the ever-expanding place of sport in the daily routine of pupils and its increasing importance in forging the identity of, and loyalty to, house and school. By the end of the century, sport was so integral to the impression of a school's success that many parents were as likely to pick a school based on athletic prowess as academic effectiveness, and the exploits of the leading public school sportsmen were eagerly reported in the national press, particularly in cricket.³ This would have an important impact on the ethos of schools and the type of masters that were recruited, and would change the dynamics of pupil-teacher relationships and the ways in which boys regarded each other. Sport was to become something of an obsession in the public school, but it always lived alongside, and never eclipsed, the classical tradition. This chapter will look at how athleticism came to prominence within public schools and how it was influenced by, and interacted with, their existing classics-based curriculum. Unsurprisingly, the classically educated often drew on examples from antiquity when describing contemporary sport and were also influenced by classical ideas of manliness and masculinity.

While there were sound practical reasons for the introduction of sport, it was also closely linked to a moral movement in the shape of muscular Christianity. This chapter will look at the way in which this philosophy drew on classical as well as Christian sources, and how it was tightly aligned to the Broad Church

³ Malcolm Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness: The Legacy of Thring's Uppingham*, (Truro: Sunnyrest Books, 2015), 245

movement and key figures within the world of public school education. The chapter will also consider how the nature of muscular Christianity began to shift in reaction to Britain's changing perception of itself and its role in the world. As the Empire expanded, Social Darwinism began to influence muscular Christian thinking and a new, tougher, version dubbed Sparto-Christianity would emerge. Finally, it will look at how the sporting culture of the public school would find itself becoming increasingly militarised, as European nations began to aggressively compete for control of overseas territories.

This chapter seeks to go beyond the siloed approach to public school history often taken by previous studies and look at the interaction of athleticism and classicism in detail. This is achieved via an intensive study of the literature in school magazines which presents new evidence of the extent to which classical culture and references informed the way in which Victorian public schoolboys thought about sport and masculinity. This chapter also reveals the extent to which nominally Christian elements of public school culture, particularly muscular Christianity and ideals of manliness, were largely driven by ancient Greek and Roman ideas of virtue and masculinity rather than by Judeo-Christian culture.

Athleticism and Classicism in the Public School

Mangan pinpoints the advent of athleticism in the public schools to 1853 with the founding of the Philathletic Club at Harrow and George Cotton's '*Circular*

to *Parents'* at Marlborough.⁴ Within a generation the leading schools had developed a compulsory games culture and put considerable resources into developing sports facilities, often acquiring extensive new tracts of land for the purpose.⁵ In some cases this requirement led to the wholesale relocation of long-established schools. King's College School and Christ's Hospital, both of which occupied cramped sites in central London, were forced to hire playing fields in the suburbs during the 1860s.⁶ This was not a satisfactory long-term solution as the travel time and expense involved for games was not sustainable. Ultimately, many of London's great schools ended up leaving the city. Some, like St Paul's and King's College School, moved to London's new outer suburbs. Others, such as Charterhouse and Christ's Hospital, left the capital completely and moved to rural locations where they could build new boarding accommodation and create extensive playing fields.⁷

Every school played cricket and a form of football, and other sports such as fives, rowing, hockey, and athletics were also common. Schools developed complex sporting calendars involving inter-house competitions and external matches, and the average public schoolboy found himself committed to several hours of sport every week, with more if he were selected for representative teams.⁸ At the same time the sporting prowess of each school

⁴ James Anthony Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 22-34

⁵ *Ibid.*, 71

⁶ Nicholas John Humble, *Leaving London: a study of two public schools and athleticism 1870-1914*, *History of Education*, 17, no.2 (1988) 150

⁷ *Ibid.*, 149

⁸ Martin Stephen, *The English Public School*, (London: Metro, 2018), 99

became not only a point of honour for its masters and pupils but also a major selling point for prospective parents.⁹

The main drivers for sports may have been improved school discipline and health combined with Christian evangelism, but it was Greek inspired ideas of manhood to which boys aspired. The ideal sporting body type was informed by classic sculpture and, because of their educational background, boys could not help but describe their new found obsessions in classical terms.¹⁰

Alongside the rise of school sport came the advent of school magazines, the pages of which are packed with reports of school and house matches, often employing heroic and classical imagery to recount the action on the sports field with muddy schoolboys recast as Spartan and Trojan warriors. An account of the Two Cock House Match at Rugby from February 1869 gives a flavour of the sort of pastiche regularly written in school magazines of the time.

Had I then the pen of a Homer, I might perhaps hope to put before my readers a few of the many brilliant exploits that grouped themselves round that hard-used ball. I might tell how the invincible son of Brown with well-leathered toe inflicted dire destruction on the wind-swift shin of mighty Jones, while cheering on his men with vast

⁹ John Raymond Halstead de Symons Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School*, (London: Millington, 1977), 114

¹⁰ Joanne Begiato, *Manliness in Britain, 1760-1900*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 35-36

clamour; or how Robinson out-sprang from the crowd, and would have struck the ball in close encounter, but could not pass the fence of serried shins, and in mighty overthrow fell tower-like on the plain.¹¹

This style of writing was the natural outcome of Classical education. Boys were taught to write in the style of ancient poets, and even when they wrote about modern subjects, they often composed using the structures and conventions of the ancient world. As Henry Salt dryly observed, the average Etonian ‘learned to write poetry in a dead language before they could understand prose in their own.’¹²

A good example of such writing is a piece written ahead of the Eton College Mile Race in 1866. Set as an imaginary dialogue between Pedantes, Damon, and Pythias, the main contenders, along with their qualities and chances, are discussed. In this dialogue, Pedantes represents a Master, while Damon and Pythias, who were a pair of friends from Syracuse, renowned in ancient Greece for their steadfast devotion to one another, presumably represent Etonian pupils.¹³ Pedantes compares the Eton Mile to the ancient Olympics saying of the starters, ‘the noblest Greeks are here’ and going on to ask the boys.

¹¹ The Two Cock House Match, *The Meteor*, no. 24, 6 February 1869, 5

¹² Henry S. Salt, *Memories of Bygone Eton*, (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1928), 90

¹³ Betty Radice, *Who's Who in the Ancient World*, (London: Penguin, 1971), 97

A minute since I thought

I was in Elis. Were you ever taught

For what 'twas famous?

To which Damon replies.

Well, I fear I'm beaten

Geography is not much taught at Eton

But stay! I'm sure there's something about sports

I had 'Olympia' in my longs and shorts

A nice word for an ending

Then there was something too about contending:

"*Praelia multa gerunt*" then "Arena"

And in the next short line "*laurus amoena*" ¹⁴

The spirit of the ancient games was again called on for the Eton Steeplechase
of 1870.

Again, with anxious hearts we seek

¹⁴ Pedantes-Damon-Pythias, *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 53, 1 March 1866, 210

The shrine of great Apollo,
Who, for unerring prophecies,
Beats all Olympus hollow.¹⁵

Alfred Lyttelton's success in the school sprints in November 1874 was celebrated by a similar epic verse, which began;

'Twas in November's second week
The Eton champions met;
And boldly Greek encountered Greek
As none will e'er forget.

Later in the poem Lyttelton is described in terms which would not be out of place in ancient heroic verse.

His mighty frame did shake the ground
Streamed in the wind his hair.¹⁶

¹⁵ Anticipations of the Steeplechase, *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 132, 17 February 1870, 528

¹⁶ The Races, *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 214, 19 November 1874, 856

However, it was football which probably generated the most classically themed poetry of any Etonian sport, particularly the traditional Wall Game between Collegers and Oppidans on St Andrew's Day. The divide between Collegers and Oppidans at Eton was historically very significant. Colleger is another term for King's Scholar, one of the 70 boys educated at Eton for free on the original foundation. These boys were elected by competitive examination and it was from their ranks that most of Eton's most academically successful pupils came. Technically, only these scholars were members of Eton College. The remaining boys at Eton were referred to as Oppidans, a word derived from the Latin oppidum, meaning town. This was because fee-paying Etonians lived in one of the many boarding houses in Eton town rather than in the actual college. Oppidans were generally less academically able than Collegers, although there were always exceptions. Additionally, Oppidans were always from very wealthy, and often aristocratic backgrounds. Collegers could theoretically be from any background although in practice many came from clerical or teaching families in the nineteenth-century.

Writing about a combative game in which the Collegers and Oppidans spent hours gradually pushing each other in a gruelling trial of strength, Etonian poets were able to fully indulge themselves in Classical pastiche. Horace's phrase '*poetica nascitur, non fit*' – 'a poet is born, not made' was quoted in the *Chronicle's* poem about the Wall Game in both 1875 and 1883. *A Lay of St Andrew's Day*, written about the 1875 match is a

very lengthy verse, but puts the game very much into a Homeric context,
as is evident from this passage.

All at their posts with just a space
Between each phalanx, face to face.
Alas! No Homer lives to tell
How heroes fought, how heroes fell,
What gallant deeds were done by those
Who met each other there as foes.
While gazing on the novel sight,
Imagination taking flight,
Methought I saw once more at strife
The Greeks and Trojans come to life.
Beneath the wall of ancient Troy,
I saw a hero in each boy.
Wise Agamemnon, king of men,
Sage Nestor, four-score years and ten,
The Telamonian Ajax bold,
Headstrong in battle as of old,
Brave Hector seemed to sally forth

To meet Achilles' nursing wrath,

While, only in another name,

Ulysses play'd his crafty game.

These heroes of a mythic age,

Fresh from old Homer's classic page.¹⁷

In 1883 the *Chronicle*'s correspondent went for a less poetic approach claiming that 'it is not easy to be the Pindar of the contest' but including a quote in Greek for good measure.¹⁸

These examples from the *Eton College Chronicle* illustrate that, at least to some extent, Etonian sportsmen saw themselves as belonging to a classical tradition. The purpose of athletic culture in the public schools was to promote manly virtues such as toughness, self-discipline, stoicism, team-work, and fair play, but the framework in which masculinity was understood was firmly based in Greek and Roman culture. This is explicit in Hugh Macnaghten's *Sons of Eton*, a poem which comes with the Greek subtitle *διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν* meaning 'to serve and give the soul'.¹⁹

¹⁷ A Lay of St Andrew's Day, *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 234, 15 December 1875, 936-937

¹⁸ St Andrew's Day, *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 374, 13 December 1883, 1495

¹⁹ This is actually a sub-section of a much longer quote which appears in the Bible in both Mark 10:45 and Matthew 20:28 where it is usually translated as 'to serve and give his life' but by stripping away the rest of the sentence, which is about Jesus, the meaning is slightly altered.

Rome eternally stands, And Hellas is always young,
We bow to the same commands, The message of either
tongue
For this was a Roman faith, And this was a Spartan creed,
That obedience unto the death, Is the glory of all who lead.²⁰

What the athletic schoolmaster was apt to refer to as ‘pluck’ was a mixture of Greek *aristos* and Roman *virtus*, and in the heavily classicised environment of public schools and Oxbridge it was natural to accept a narrative in which sport had a direct link to the ancient world.

In some schools the cult of athleticism would eventually go so far as to bestow immense power on the most successful school athletes.²¹ They would be exempt from ordinary school rules, almost untouchable by masters, and regarded as demigods by younger boys.²² By the time athleticism reached its peak, contests between the major public schools, and even more so, Oxford and Cambridge universities, had become major sporting events, reported in the national press, and often attracting huge crowds, not all of whom were directly associated with the institutions taking part. Those who earned

²⁰ Hugh MacNaghten, *Fifty Years at Eton*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1924), 88

²¹ At Marlborough for example the First XI were referred to as ‘the Gods’, Thomas Cuthbert Worsley, *Flannelled Fool*, (London: Alan Ross, 1966), 81

²² For an extensive description of the powers, privileges and process of gaining house and school colours see Alec Waugh, *The Loom of Youth* (first published 1917). This is a thinly disguised autobiography describing a boy’s ascent through the sporting and praefectorial hierarchy at the fictional Fernhurst School, actually based on Waugh’s time at Sherborne.

representative honours in these competitions were feted by their schools and colleges in a manner reminiscent of the treatment of victors in the ancient Olympics by their home states. For those who still considered schools to be primarily places of learning, this could be a bitter pill to swallow;

The prominence, too, which the public press gives to them, and their arrangements and details, is quite out of proportion to their real importance. It is the cricketer who gets leave to London to play public school matches; it is to the boats that immunities are given to enable them to obtain that proficiency which is looked upon as a point of vital interest to the school.²³

While faultless Latin and Greek may have been what every public school boy should aspire to, it was the *esprit de corps* created by playing in house matches that were seen by many as one of the most valuable things he would take away with him.²⁴ As one boy wrote in *The Marlburian*, a passion for games created;

Hero-worship: that worship which has lain at the root of half the greatness that ever existed in this world's history, which overcame the frivolity and scepticism of Alcibiades, which stirred the highborn gentlemen of England to pour out their blood like water on the fields of Naseby and Marston Moor.²⁵

²³ William Edward Jelf, Eton Reform, *The Contemporary Review*, 3 (September-December 1866), 563

²⁴ John Anthony Mangan, Athleticism: A Case Study of the Evolution of an Educational Ideology, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 27, no. 1-2, (2010), 66

²⁵ *Marlburian*, II, no.17, (October 1867), 202

This issue of hero-worship is an interesting one. Later on, commentators like E. Norman Gardiner would draw comparisons between gladiatorial and equestrian sporting celebrity in Rome and the public adoration of professional footballers, portraying hero-worship as one of the evils of modern sport.²⁶ Yet within schools hero-worship of successful sportsmen was encouraged almost to the point of cult status. The successful school sportsman would be marked out with caps, colours and special ties, blazers, and privileges. In some schools they would be referred to as ‘hearties’, ‘bloods’ or similar terms, ordinary rules did not apply to them and they were almost beyond the reach of masters if they transgressed those rules that they were still subject to. The sporting exploits of successful former pupils would be breathlessly followed and reported in school magazines, following their careers through college and university matches and on into first-class cricket or top-level rugby or association football.

The rise of organised sport in schools presented classics with a challenge far more serious than that which any academic subject would be able to mount for another half a century. Games may have initially been encouraged to keep boys usefully occupied during their leisure hours, but they were soon taking up an increasing proportion of the school week. Furthermore, while learning Greek and Latin appealed to some boys, those who preferred classics over games were very much in a minority. Autobiographies of former pupils such as Alec Waugh’s *Loom of Youth* and T.C. Worsley’s *Flannelled Fool* reveal a culture where boys, and often masters too, were obsessed with house sports

²⁶ Edward Norman Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, (London: Macmillan & Co, 1910), 5

results. As the cult of athleticism took off and schools began to select masters for their sporting as opposed to their academic abilities many found that they had indifferent classics masters teaching indifferent pupils, as Worsley confessed.

It was purely on my athletic record that, after leaving Cambridge, I became an assistant master at a well-known Public School. At my own school, Marlborough, I had been in the Cricket Eleven for three years and the Rugger Fifteen my last year. At Cambridge I had done pretty well all round at games and had kept well within the Old Boy network. This was the important thing for job-getting in those days. It more than counteracted a poor II 2 in Classics and an even poorer Third in English.²⁷

Such masters may have been popular with the boys, at least those boys who excelled in sports, but were not universally popular with parents, as one anonymous contributor to *The Contemporary Review* revealed;

As for the masters, we must say that many of them treat the school sports as if they were of far more importance than the school studies. We know an instance of a father going down to one of the great schools to see the master in whose house his son boarded.

²⁷ Thomas Cuthbert Worsley, *Flannelled Fool*, (London: Alan Ross, 1966), 11

He wanted to know how his boy was going on. He stayed three quarters of an hour, trying in vain to draw the conversation to the subject of his visit. Nothing could he get from the master but idle talk of the prospects of the school in the next match at something or other.²⁸

There was a widely quoted story that a varsity blue received telegrams with job offers from no less than five public school headmasters on completing his century at Lord's.²⁹ The tale was probably apocryphal but reflected a reality in which the athletic schoolmaster often found it easier to secure employment than his academic counterpart. Another contributor to *The Contemporary Review*, H.J. Spenser, described this type of master as being typically 'healthy, selfish, philistine and generally slack', further complaining that they were apt to desert teaching for a comfortable and easy life in a vicarage once they got too old to play sport themselves.³⁰ However, not all athletically minded masters conformed to this stereotype. Some, like the Marlborough housemaster T.C.G. Sandford, himself an Old Marlburian, stayed in post until retirement and played a major part in shaping the schools they served in. In Sandford's case this included resisting the efforts of the headmaster, Frank Fletcher, to bring what he saw as athletic excesses under control.³¹ Sandford operated a Spartan regime in which new boys were forced to prove their prowess on hanging rings suspended from the dormitory ceiling and caned if they could not meet the

²⁸ Athletics, *The Contemporary Review*, III, (September-December 1866), 390

²⁹ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 248

³⁰ Harry Joseph Spenser, The Athletic Master in Public Schools, *The Contemporary Review*, LXXVIII, (July 1900), 113-117

³¹ Mangan, *Athleticism: A Case Study of the Evolution of an Educational Ideology*, 72

required standard.³² It might be expected that such a master would be regarded with dread by the boys, and he probably was by those who were less physically able, but sport-obsessed pupils remembered him with affection. Worsley, who was a member of his house, described 'Sandy' as the very embodiment of the Greek ideal, 'a triple blue who even in middle age was an accomplished player of cricket, hockey and rugby and who had both a Spartan and Athenian side'.³³

An earlier master in a similar mould was Edward Bowen who taught at Harrow from 1860 until 1901 and was very influential in Harrow's move towards athleticism. He saw games as crucial in shaping a boy's character and helping him to develop manliness and endurance. The virtues Bowen hoped to bestow upon his pupils were distinctly Hellenistic in nature; stoicism and honour; his methods were distinctly Spartan; fresh air and plain living were the order of the day and hot baths and warm studies were not approved of.³⁴

Eton, by far the largest of the public schools, already had strong traditions in football, rowing, and cricket, but in the 1860s, considerably reinforced their commitment to athleticism with a string of appointments of athletically minded masters, the most important of whom was future headmaster, Edmond Warre.³⁵ As one of the major figures in nineteenth-century rowing, both as an

³² *Marlburian*, XCIX, (Lent Term 1964), 30

³³ Worsley, *Flannelled Fool*, 77

³⁴ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 241

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 258-259

athlete and mentor, Warre had very strong views of physical education and competition. Warre saw games as essential to school life and discipline, feeling that they promoted fairness, patience, courage, and skill and could 'repress vanity and vainglory, and, more than all, any brutality or meanness in them.'³⁶ Many public schools maintained the fiction that games were almost entirely an initiative of the boys rather than the masters, and that if any move to compulsory rather than voluntary games was made, this was also at the pupils' instigation. However, Warre's attitude rather suggested that, at Eton at least, compulsory games were a master-led innovation.

A very large number of boys, perhaps the majority, would, if left to themselves, do nothing but "loaf" as it is called, being unwilling to submit to the discipline and fatigue of games in common. It is owing to this that cricket and football fagging are in force at some of the public schools, which ensure that the younger boys shall at least be present at the games so many times a week.³⁷

Warre may have encouraged athleticism at Eton, but he was also a classicist and his brand of athleticism was closely aligned to classicism. Following in Percy Gardner's footsteps, he put his favoured sport of rowing at the heart of classical civilisation. Indeed, according to Warre, western civilization owed a huge debt to rowing as it had brought literacy to Greece from Phoenicia, taken

³⁶ Edmond Warre, *Athletics; Or Physical Exercise and Recreation, Part I*, (London: Clowes & Son, 1884), 50

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 50

the Greeks to Troy, and saved Europe from Persian despotism. According to Warre, both Greeks and Romans had enjoyed boat races, but under the Romans, and later the Venetians, rowing had become the preserve of galley slaves. He equated slaves with professionals and felt that neither they, nor the boats they rowed in, were worthy successors to the Greeks.³⁸ He was also apt to pepper his prose with classical phrases. Hence, he described racing when unprepared as the act of the *mens insane* and invited his reader to take his advice if they have any regard for their *sanum corpus*.³⁹ His book on athletics contains a chapter on rowing and the section entitled *Notes on the Stroke* actually opens with an untranslated dialogue in ancient Greek from Aristophanes' play *The Frogs*.⁴⁰ In not providing a translation, Warre was assuming that his audience were familiar with the language and thus from a similar background to himself. His choice of text might also have been intended to convey a subtle message about elite participation in rowing as Charon the ferryman refuses to let Dionysus' slave into his boat and makes him walk around the lake. With the slave safely out of the way, Charon invites Dionysus aboard and teaches him to row.

Χάρων: οὐ μὴ φλυαρήσεις ἔχων ἄλλ' ἀντιβὰς ἐλᾷς προθύμως

Διόνυσος: κᾶτα πῶς δυνήσομαι ἄπειρος ἀθαλάπτωτος ἀσαλαμίνιος

ὦν εἴτ' ἐλαύνειν

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 56

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 81

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 68

Χάρων: ῥᾶστί· ἀκούσει γὰρ μέλη κάλλιστ', ἐπειδὴν ἐμβάλης ἅπαξ

Charon: Stop fooling around; lean your body forward and pull with a will.

Dionysus: How can I row? Inexperienced, un-seafaring, un-Salaminian.

Charon: It's easy. You'll hear songs most delightful, when once you lay into it.⁴¹

When Warre eventually became headmaster of Eton it was taken by many as evidence of the complete victory of athleticism over education with some opponents of his appointment feeling that his athletic rather than academic credentials had won him the post.⁴² There was also a view, expressed by Eton housemaster A.C. Benson and others, that the cult of athleticism had gone too far in idolising athletes and producing boys who;

Hate knowledge and think books dreary, who are perfectly self-satisfied and entirely ignorant, and, what is more, not ignorant in a wholesome and humble manner, but arrogantly and

⁴¹ Aristophanes, *The Frogs*, 202; The delightful songs to which Aristophanes refers are the timing songs provided to help the rowers keep rhythm by the eponymous frogs. Coincidentally, in the same year, 1884, that Warre was quoting these lines from *The Frogs*, students at Yale University adopted the frog's chorus as a ritualised college cheer which was used at Yale sporting fixtures until the 1960s. Judith Ann Schiff, *Old Yale: The Greatest College Cheer*, *Yale Alumni Magazine*, 61, no. 7, (May 1998)

⁴² Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 114

contemptuously ignorant – not only satisfied to be so, but thinking it almost unmanly that a young man should be anything else.⁴³

Long before Warre became headmaster in 1884, Jelf was already expressing concerns about what he saw as the ‘undue preponderance of amusement’ at Eton.⁴⁴ In 1866 he wrote;

None can believe more emphatically than we do that “all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy;” but we believe no less firmly that there is one thing which makes a duller Jack still, and that is “all play and no work;” and this is simply the case at Eton at present, at least with nine-tenths of the school.⁴⁵

Certainly, games were taking up an ever-increasing proportion of the timetable. By the 1890s, boys were spending the greater part of most weekday afternoons in compulsory team games.⁴⁶ At Marlborough, where the First XI generally played two two-day cricket matches per week, they were excused school from 11 o’clock on, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.⁴⁷ A measure of the importance of games to the school day was that at Loretto, where the days could be very short in winter, Almond introduced his own time

⁴³ Arthur Christopher Benson, *The Schoolmaster*, (London 1914), 65

⁴⁴ Jelf, *Eton Reform*, 560

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 561

⁴⁶ Humble, *Leaving London*, 151

⁴⁷ Worsley, *Flannelled Fool*, 82

zone for the school, fifteen minutes ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, in order to be able to fit in the two and a half hours allocated to sport in every afternoon's timetable.⁴⁸

However, it is important to recognise that not all headmasters were enthusiastic or complicit in the headlong rush towards athleticism. Games may have helped curb some of the antisocial behaviour observed in many early nineteenth-century boarding schools, but doubts about the excesses of sporting culture in schools were soon being voiced too. George Cotton was urging caution when addressing his pupils, as early as 1858.

Undoubtedly there is a danger lest at this particular season the due proportion of work and relaxation should be inverted, lest your interest should be so absorbed in this particular excitement that you forget the main business for which you have been sent to this place.⁴⁹

After Cotton, successive Marlborough headmasters sought to reduce the emphasis on sport, particularly in relation to the hero-worship of the school's leading athletes and their growing power in college politics. Dean Farrar, who had served under Cotton before eventually becoming headmaster himself,

⁴⁸ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 230

⁴⁹ George Edward Lynch Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses Delivered in the Chapel of Marlborough College*, (Cambridge 1858), 220-221

sounded a classically-tinged note of caution about the excesses of athleticism in a lecture to the Royal Institute in 1882.

The marble which is brought to us is white and precious, and it is the fault of our method and our system if the statue which we hew out of it is so often, not a Zeus or a Hermes but an Adonis or an athlete.⁵⁰

Later headmasters, at least at Marlborough, continued this fight, although they often faced strong opposition, not only from the boys, but athletic schoolmasters and sport-obsessed parents. Towards the end of his headship, G.C. Bell's prize-day speeches were increasingly critical of games culture. His successor, Frank Fletcher, was positively hostile to the power and respect afforded to the captains of school sports.⁵¹

He found that the cult of games had weakened the position of the Marlborough prefects until they had become the *rois-fainéants* of a community in which the captains were the mayors of the Palace. He set himself to right this Merovingian condition and gradually, against much opposition, the ball made room for the book.⁵²

⁵⁰ Frederic William Farrar, Lecture delivered to the Royal Institute, 31 Jan 1868, published in *The Fortnightly Review*, 1 March 1868, 237

⁵¹ Mangan, *Athleticism: A Case Study*, 71

⁵² *Marlburian*, LXXVII, (Winter 1954), 1065

Between Fletcher's appointment in 1903 and the early 1930s some Marlborough boys split into factions, the 'aesthetes' and 'hearties' as the academics and athletes fought to gain the upper hand.⁵³ A similar split was evident in many schools and sometimes reflected the social class of each group, as in the divide between King's Scholars and Oppidans at Eton. The former, although often from wealthy backgrounds themselves, were at Eton on merit and based on their academic ability. Those few pupils from humble circumstances at Eton were always in this group. Jelf recognised that this group were inclined to work with 'far greater industry' than Oppidans and were less distracted by 'the *esprit de jouer*'.⁵⁴ The Oppidans were boarders in the various external houses and were at Eton largely by virtue of wealth and pedigree. Worsley, writing of the rift between the aesthetes and hearties of Marlborough said that, as someone who had won school colours, he was expected to show unswerving allegiance to the former by showing contempt towards both cleverness and schoolwork.⁵⁵

Athleticism at University

Against the view that students were divided between aesthetes and athletes, Curthoys and Jones produced evidence suggesting that for many, particularly those involved in rowing, a healthy balance was possible.⁵⁶ However, they were writing specifically about Oxford University and there should be a strong

⁵³ Mangan, *Athleticism: A Case Study*, 72

⁵⁴ Jelf, *Eton Reform*, 560

⁵⁵ Worsley, *Flannelled Fool*, 40

⁵⁶ Mark C. Curthoys and Hugh Stuart Jones, Oxford athleticism, 1850-1914: A reappraisal, *History of Education*, 24, no. 4 (1995), 312

caveat in that universities differed considerably from public schools. Only a relatively small proportion of boys went on to university, and while some went merely to enjoy themselves or specifically to play sport, it should be assumed that it was generally the more academically minded boys that did so. Some contemporary studies, such as that by R.F. Clarke, a fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, found that between 1861 and 1864 those who rowed were more likely to gain honours degrees than those who did not, and that 60% of Fellows elected by competitive examination in the 1860s were active rowers or cricketers.⁵⁷ Furthermore, Curthoys and Jones highlighted poor rowing performances by colleges such as Trinity and Christ Church, which had a reputation for being less academic, but devoted to aristocratic leisure pursuits such as hunting.⁵⁸

Curthoys and Jones illustrate that university life was less dominated by athleticism than school life, showing that some students from athleticised schools like Eton were relieved to find Christ Church and Balliol less demanding.⁵⁹ They also showed that at the same time Oxford and Cambridge were supposedly becoming over-athleticised there was also an extraordinary flourishing of cultural activity in the universities.⁶⁰ Overall, the picture is confused, but as we already know, some played, some worked and some did both. Perceptions also varied enormously from one person to another. Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse and Hubert Llewellyn Smith were friends and

⁵⁷ Richard Frederick Clarke, *The Influence of Pass Examinations* (Oxford, 1869), 4

⁵⁸ Curthoys and Jones, *Oxford athleticism*, 313

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 308

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 310

contemporaries at Corpus Christi, Oxford in the early 1880s. Hobhouse felt the college dominated by 'wealth, snobbery and sport' while Llewellyn Smith, although a scholarship holder from a relatively less well-off background, found the college very amenable, joined several societies and took up rowing.⁶¹ Of course, their different attitudes may also have stemmed from the particular pressure they felt under to fit in.

There was a difference between sport in the public schools and universities in that cricket and football dominated the former, but rowing was recognised as the most important and popular in the latter. Eton and Westminster schools had strong rowing traditions, but other schools did not. Many colleges preferred to train up new rowers from scratch and rowing was a sport in which those who had not necessarily excelled in other sports might discover an aptitude.⁶² Attitudes of Oxford colleges to previous rowing experience changed over time. In the 1840s the University College boat club 'preferred taking raw hands and training them, to men who had previously learnt the art at Eton or Westminster.'⁶³ However, by 1900 rowing had become a much more technical sport, particularly with the advent of sliding seats, so previous experience became more advantageous.⁶⁴ This encouraged colleges such as Magdalen, New College, and Christ Church to recruit Old Etonians specifically to row,

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 310

⁶² *Ibid.*, 306

⁶³ Robert Blachford Mansfield, *New and Old Chips from an Old Block*, (London, 1896), 34

⁶⁴ William Edward Sherwood, *Oxford Rowing*, (Oxford 1900), 42; Eric Halladay, *Rowing in England*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 52

prompting complaints of professionalism from Joseph Wells, warden of Wadham College.⁶⁵

Some Oxford colleges became associated with low academic standards and high sporting ones. These were the colleges which attracted the 'sporting commoner' those reading for pass degrees who could afford to devote nearly all their time to sport with a bare minimum of actual study. By the 1890s some Oxford colleges were already offering scholarships and exhibitions on games playing ability alone. Cricket matches timed for twelve o'clock starts meant that lectures were effectively cut down to one a day.⁶⁶ Between 1900 and 1914 Oxford had more places available than students applying for them and colleges like Brasenose, Worcester, and Hertford, unable to attract scholars, looked to attract athletes instead.⁶⁷ Worcester College went so far as to oppose entrance examinations in 1914, on the grounds that they would precipitate such a drop in applicants able to pass that the college would face financial ruin.⁶⁸ Such colleges also had low academic, but high sporting standards, for the staff they hired. The rowing Blue and former Uppingham schoolmaster, R.H. Owen was hired to lecture at Worcester College in 1913 despite only having a third-class degree.⁶⁹ Earlier, another third-class graduate, Clement Jackson, at one time considered to be the world's best

⁶⁵ Joseph Wells, *Wadham College*, (London, 1898), 202

⁶⁶ Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe*, 111

⁶⁷ Curthoys and Jones, Oxford athleticism, 315-316

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 316

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 316

hurdler and a founder of the Amateur Athletics Association, had secured an academic post at Hertford College.⁷⁰

The rise of athleticism at Oxford was greeted with alarm in some quarters, even by those, such as Percy Gardner, who were keen amateur sportsmen themselves. A healthy regard for exercise accompanied by friendly competition was what they wanted, but he was worried that the university's elite sportsmen were essentially full-time athletes and that they, and their supporters, were in danger of losing perspective.

At present in Oxford there is a tendency to level up in athletic sports, and to level down in studies. The athletic ideal is constantly rising; records are daily being broken; the man who excels is placed on a pinnacle for the worship of his contemporaries; a football match excites more attention than a battle or a great literary achievement. But meanwhile the average man is neglected; for him there is no regular or methodical training.⁷¹

The Rise of Muscular Christianity in the Public School

Classicism may have had a part to play in framing the sporting references of public schoolboys and university sportsmen, but muscular Christianity was

⁷⁰ *Oxford Magazine*, 6 November 1924, 81; *The Isis*, 5 November 1924, 15

⁷¹ Percy Gardner, *Oxford at the Crossroads: A Criticism of the Course of Litterae Humaniores in the University*, (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1903), 129

also a driving force for athleticism. Headmasters of the major public schools were traditionally clergymen and chapel services and sermons had long been part of the weekly cycle for boarders, but even at schools like Marlborough, specifically founded for the sons of clergymen, it was difficult to get boys to engage with religion.⁷² However, in the mid-nineteenth-century the works of authors like Thomas Hughes and Charles Kingsley coalesced into the philosophy of muscular Christianity. This sought to harness the newfound enthusiasm for athleticism and combine it with spirituality. Whereas Christianity had traditionally tended to regard the human body with suspicion, if not disgust, muscular Christians believed that if man was made in God's image it was his duty to look after his body as if it were a temple. Hughes laid out the main duties of a muscular Christian in his novels about Tom Brown, fully expanding them in *Tom Brown at Oxford*, where Tom continues his successful sporting career from Rugby, additionally becoming a first-class oarsman. Hughes explains that one should aspire to physical manliness, chivalry, and masculinity of character.⁷³

The true muscular Christian has hold of the old chivalrous and Christian belief that a man's body is given to him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men.⁷⁴

⁷² Edward Dowdeswell Lockwood, *The Early Days of Marlborough College* (London 1893), 92.

⁷³ Gillian Mary Hibbins, 'The Cambridge Connection: The English Origins of Australian Rules Football' in J.A. Mangan (Ed.), *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society*, (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 109

⁷⁴ Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford*, (London: Amazon, 1861), 65

Rob Boddice argues that 'historiography treads an often-precarious line between literary representations of public schools and the lived experience therein', his point being that Hughes' fictional version of Rugby was both liberally romanticised and twenty years out of date by the time it was published in 1857.⁷⁵ However, to a large extent, the fact that Hughes' work was fiction, and therefore to some extent entertainment, is what gave it traction. As a best-selling novel it influenced a far larger section of the public than the obscure memoirs of a real-life individual ever could. Hughes, like his contemporary Charles Dickens, was able to use fiction to highlight some of the issues facing schools while at the same time pushing a manifesto to create young men who would be both manly and Christian. Such was the power and popularity of works by Hughes, Kingsley, and their imitators that they shaped the aspirations and beliefs of boys and parents alike. That Hughes' version of Rugby was considerably less violent and sordid than the reality of some public schools in the 1840s and 1850s also played well with Victorian sensibilities. Regardless of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* being fiction, out of date, and painting a picture of Thomas Arnold which hagiographically glossed over his shortcomings, it was regarded as largely factual by the public at large.

Like Thomas Arnold, Hughes and Kingsley were heavily influenced by Plato and thus muscular Christianity was injected with a strong strain of Platonism. Hughes' Platonism was undoubtedly a product of his education under Arnold at Rugby, but Kingsley's came later in life, when he was a student at

⁷⁵ Rob Boddice, *In loco parentis? Public-school authority, cricket and manly character, 1855-62*, *Gender and Education*, 21, no. 2, March 2009, 160

Cambridge.⁷⁶ Kingsley was also heavily influenced by the Romanticism of Coleridge and Wordsworth, the philosophical ideas of John Maurice, and the idealised, chivalric, semi-mythological medieval world represented by poems such as the *Morte d'Arthur*, *Faerie Queen* and *Song of Roland*.⁷⁷ There was a further element to Kingsley's beliefs in that he was interested in the science of health, believing that hygiene, exercise, and good diet meant that people could enjoy longer and more productive lives, and that such lives could be spent in the service of God. He directly alluded to Juvenal's '*mens sana in corpore sano*' when writing to his fiancée Frances Grenfell in 1841 'Unless I get frantic exercise of body, my mind won't work.'⁷⁸

Manliness was implicit in Kingsley's vision of masculine development. Drawing from his love of medieval literature he believed in the chivalric ideal of the perfect knight, sworn to protect the weak and oppressed, and loyal to God and king. This perfect knight was heroic and self-sacrificing, yet, despite his heroism, he was a team-player rather than an individualist. Indeed, individualism, along with many other traits such as self-indulgence, lack of public spirit, and pietism were condemned by Kingsley as effeminate, an adjective which he applied to Evangelicals and Tractarians alike.⁷⁹ At the core of Kingsley's ideal was the Platonic virtue of θυμός (*thumos*) which he translated as 'rage' or 'pluck'.⁸⁰ Interestingly, Kingsley's interpretation of θυμός is quite limited and is similar to its meaning in modern Greek. Its usage in

⁷⁶ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 54

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 55

⁷⁸ Frances Kingsley, *The Life and Letters of Charles Kingsley*, (London, 1887), Vol. 1, 336

⁷⁹ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 58

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 58;

ancient Greece had a range of masculine connotations, including soul, life, breath, heart, will, passion, desire, anger, wrath, love, thought and mind. Not all of these are necessarily compatible with the idealised Victorian public schoolboy, although they do apply to the capricious individualistic warrior heroes of Homer. Given that the etymological roots of θυμός are in the Indo-European word for smoke it is easy to imagine how it applied to the ever-shifting mood swings of early Greek aristocrats who would often claim that their actions were directed or affected by the Gods. However, many of these uses might be considered archaic and Jerry Toner considers that θυμός in most ancient Greek texts means soul, spirit or heart.⁸¹ Hughes' Tom Brown came to be seen as the epitome of 'pluck', but plucky heroes are at the heart of all muscular Christian novels, and would continue to be so throughout the nineteenth century and on into twentieth century literature, with authors like John Buchan creating heroes with explicitly muscular Christian values.

However, even among the founders of muscular Christianity, the exact nature of manliness was elusive, and their interpretations of the concept varied. As early as 1858, the *Edinburgh Review* was highlighting differences between Hughes' portrayal of Rugby school, which it said was heavily influenced by Kingsley, and the philosophy set forth in Arnold's own articles and correspondence.⁸² Arnold's vision of manliness was austere and overtly Christian compared to the physical vigour which was the hallmark of Hughes

⁸¹ Jerry Toner, *Key Greek Words*, (Cambridge: Oleander Press, 2004), Unit 13

⁸² Heather Ellis, 'Thomas Arnold, Christian Manliness and the Problem of Boyhood', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 19, No. 4, (2014), p.427; 'Tom Brown's Schooldays', *Edinburgh Review*, no. 197 (January 1858), 176

and Kingsley's work.⁸³ Whereas all muscular Christians condemned effeminacy, their opinions on what should be included as acceptable attributes of masculinity differed. Kingsley and Hughes may have greatly valued chivalry, but Arnold rejected it as putting personal honour above the obligation to serve God humbly and submissively.⁸⁴ He wrote that he felt chivalry was 'neither reasonable nor Christian, but essentially barbarian' and largely blamed it for the retardation of European culture between the fall of the Roman Empire and the modern era.⁸⁵

Arnold's difficulties in accepting quite as vigorous an interpretation of muscular Christianity as Kingsley and Hughes came in part from attempting to balance Christian theology and standards of manliness with the classical antecedents which informed much of public school morality. Even Arnold's rejection of chivalry was part of this struggle. Arnold identified that Christianity only provided a thin veneer over early medieval pagan notions of the barbarian warrior class, but surely must have recognised that they shared common Bronze Age roots with the culture of Homeric Greece. His main problem, however, was how to balance classical Greek and Roman ideas of manliness, which pervaded the public school curriculum, with the teachings of Jesus and St Paul. Arnold was particularly interested in the Roman world; as a young man he had taught himself German specifically to be able to read the work of Barthold Niebuhr, and in the last few years of his life wrote and published a

⁸³ Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 70-71

⁸⁴ Ellis, 'Thomas Arnold, Christian Manliness and the Problem of Boyhood', 440

⁸⁵ Thomas Arnold, *The Miscellaneous Works of Thomas Arnold*, (London: Fellowes, 1845), 365; *Ibid.* 90

three volume *History of Rome*.⁸⁶ He subscribed to the view that ancient historians provided excellent models for factual accuracy and balanced judgement, and thus felt that they were the most important authors for his pupils to study, shifting the focus from poetry to prose in many of Rugby's Greek and Latin classes. He regarded this knowledge of ancient history and philosophy as essential prerequisites for developing a manly intellect.⁸⁷

The difficulty he faced was that some of the traits required to fulfil the ideals of Christian manliness laid down by St Paul were very different from those required of the ideal Roman. St Paul's letters to the Corinthians are in large part a reaction to their criticisms of his failure to come up to those ideals. For the citizens of Corinth, which was particularly noted for the intense rivalries between its sophists, St Paul was regarded with suspicion.⁸⁸ Partly this was because he did not conform to Roman ideas of a public speaker in either the way he looked or the way he spoke; both important elements which could make or break the impact of an argument, regardless of its actual content.⁸⁹ Indeed, contemporary criticism of Paul seems to imply that he was regarded as an able writer but extremely poor orator.⁹⁰ More importantly, he subverted several key tenets of Roman manhood. An elite Roman was expected to display virility and strength, but Paul stressed the meekness and gentleness of Christ, qualities

⁸⁶ John Witheridge, 'Thomas Arnold: Legend, Tradition and History', in Patrick Derham and John Taylor (Eds.), *Cultural Olympians: Rugby Schools Intellectual and Spiritual Leaders*, (Buckingham: University of Buckingham Press, 2013), 6

⁸⁷ Ellis, 'Thomas Arnold, Christian Manliness and the Problem of Boyhood', 437

⁸⁸ Jennifer Larson, Paul's Masculinity, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 123, no.1 (2004), 87

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 90

⁹⁰ 2 *Corinthians* 10, 10

which Romans would have seen as effeminate.⁹¹ Paul's further admission, in his second letter to the Corinthians, that he had in the past been flogged, was shameful to most Romans because it was a punishment which could only be given to non-citizens and was strongly associated with slaves.⁹² Paul's social status would have been further reduced in the eyes of wealthy Corinthians by his admission that he lived by manual labour. He may have been a free man, but as a labourer he would have been regarded by elite Romans as only marginally better than a slave and Cicero, one of Arnold's favourite Roman authors, declared workmen to be '*illiberales et sordidi*' or 'mean and nasty'.⁹³ Worst of all, Paul placed himself in a state of 'willing slavery' to Christ and as Larson says 'The essence of the Graeco-Roman concept of masculinity was that a "real" man does not cede power or control to another, as women and slaves do.'⁹⁴ The irony is that many of the qualities which made St Paul an outsider to Romans would have equally set him aside from nineteenth century gentlemen. They too defined themselves by how they dressed and spoke. They too tended to regard manual labour, and in many cases any form of labour, as sordid and beneath their station. They too operated in a society where expectations and punishments for misdemeanours were gradated by social status. Finally, as the century progressed, they increasingly lived by a code which emphasised masculinity and strength while despising weakness and effeminacy.

⁹¹ 2 *Corinthians* 10, 1

⁹² 2 *Corinthians* 11, 23-25; Larson, Paul's Masculinity, 94

⁹³ Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1, 150

⁹⁴ Larson, Paul's Masculinity, 91

Although muscular Christianity came to be regarded as a philosophy in its own right, its origins were tightly linked to the ideals of Christian Socialism, and it was undoubtedly intended to be a benign force. Hughes and Kingsley's muscular Christians never used their physical prowess to bully or intimidate others. Physical strength was to be developed to make oneself healthy and, above all, to protect the weak and helpless. Certainly, in encouraging the development of a sporting culture at Marlborough this also seems to be what George Cotton had in mind.⁹⁵ At the same time as Cotton was encouraging games at Marlborough, Charles Vaughan, encouraged by his regular dining companion and visiting preacher Charles Kingsley, was doing the same at Harrow.⁹⁶ In both cases the introduction of a games culture was at least partly designed to divert pupils from their previous destructive behaviour. At Marlborough, Cotton had taken over after the previous headmaster had been removed as the result of a student rebellion.⁹⁷ Harrow had already been under Vaughan's control for several years, but was renowned for the sadistic cruelty of its pupils, particularly towards animals. Horses on and around Harrow-on-the-Hill were regularly stoned and blinded, and some boys made a hobby of killing cats with dogs.⁹⁸ If sport distracted boys from such practices it could serve as a force for good.

⁹⁵ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 24-27

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 30

⁹⁷ Alicia C. Percival, *Very Superior Men: Some Early Public School Headmasters and Their Achievements*, (London: Charles Knight, 1973), 261

⁹⁸ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 31-32

Muscular Christianity, Athleticism and Aggression

The way in which muscular Christianity reinforced the athleticism which was taking hold in public schools at the time was not universally welcomed. Some felt it legitimised athleticism at the expense of academic study, at least in some pupil's eyes. As Jelf put it, 'When the muscular theory places the duty and perfection of man in athletic excellence, it perhaps is no wonder if the Eton boy follows suit, and embraces heartily the notion that amusement is as much his duty as work.'⁹⁹ Others were less concerned about the impact of sport on schoolwork, as on its impact on devotion to God, and as Damian Grace commented 'the irony of muscular Christianity is that it elevated sport more than the Gospels.'¹⁰⁰ Certainly, Kingsley faced vocal criticism from John Henry Newman with whom he had a long running series of arguments, although Newman's objections to Kingsley's literature was more to do with its anti-Catholic slant than his opinions of what constituted manliness.¹⁰¹

John MacAloon explains that in time the gentle muscular Christianity originally envisaged by Hughes and Kingsley evolved into a 'hyper-masculinist, chauvinistic and self-righteous version' and that it was this version which attracted both criticism in the late-Victorian period and the bulk of scholarly interest in the twentieth century.¹⁰² Mangan cautions that much of the late

⁹⁹ Jelf, *Eton Reform*, 560

¹⁰⁰ Damian J. Grace, *Values, Sport and Education*, *Journal of Christian Education*, 43, no.2, (2000) 17

¹⁰¹ Nick. J. Watson, Stuart Weir and Stephen Friend, *The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond*, *Journal of Religion and Society*, 7 (2005), 6

¹⁰² John J. MacAloon, *Introduction: Muscular Christianity After 150 Years*, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 23, no. 5, August 2006, 687

Victorian public school culture characterised as muscular Christian was only superficially so.

Within the schools the dominant rhetoric was that of the fashionable and acceptable muscular Christianity, but the reality was more often atheistic. It was frequently Stoicism making bland use of Christian phraseology with the same purpose and deceit as the fifteenth century *chevalier*.¹⁰³

Such Stoicism was inherent in the experience of being at public school. Like the ideal Roman officer, the schoolboy would be toughened by adversity and learn to accept hardship without complaint. He would endure brutal bullying, and possibly sexual assault, until he learned to fight for himself and his fellows. He might also suffer arbitrary, harsh, and often unjust corporal punishment, both from prefects and masters, some of whom took immense pleasure in administering it. Finally, he would spend several years in a challenging physical environment, lacking in home comforts and often with inadequate food and heating, but plenty of opportunities for playing sport. To quote John Honey 'All the machinery of the nineteenth-century boarding school...was designed for a toughening, extending process, where your character was forged like steel in the fire.'¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ James Anthony Mangan, Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 27, no.1-2 (2010), 86

¹⁰⁴ John Raymond Halstead de Symons Honey, The English Public School: Its Dismal Past and Doubtful Future, *Proceedings of the Conference of Boarding Schools Association*, (University College, Oxford, Jan 1979), 3

Richard Nevinson, later one of the most noted war artists of the First World War, was educated at Uppingham, which his parents had selected because of its liberal and nurturing reputation. Uppingham under Edward Thring deserved that reputation, but Thring had died in October 1887 and was replaced by Edward Selwyn, who was a very different character.¹⁰⁵ A politically well-connected theologian who was a product of Eton and Cambridge, he immediately set about putting his stamp on Uppingham, introducing much of the paraphernalia of other late nineteenth-century schools which Thring had resisted. Selwyn introduced colours for sport, swept away Uppingham's unique football code in favour of rugby, changed the school uniform, and introduced a Rifle Corps.¹⁰⁶ Initially, membership of the Corps was voluntary but eventually Selwyn was to make a proclamation that every boy in the school was to take a shooting test, and until they had passed, they were banned from school sports and barred from winning school prizes.¹⁰⁷ This last innovation was part of a calculated move by Selwyn to make Uppingham a feeder school for the military, as he also introduced specialist classes for the Sandhurst and Woolwich entrance examinations.¹⁰⁸ Selwyn's reign at Uppingham serves to show how much of a school's character was in the power of a headmaster. Within a few short years Uppingham moved from one end of the spectrum to the other. It was a move that initially proved commercially successful; Selwyn increased pupil numbers from 300 to over 400, although Thring had been strict on limiting pupils to the lower number, and had a long waiting list, so Uppingham's spectacular growth under Selwyn may not have been entirely

¹⁰⁵ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 312

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 313

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 315

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 312

down to increased popularity.¹⁰⁹ However, the type of family sending their sons to Uppingham changed. Thring had attracted the sons of the professional classes; they were largely replaced under Selwyn by the children of northern England's *nouveau riche*.¹¹⁰ The new Uppingham eventually became infamous for its brutality, and after 1900, pupil numbers began to fall and Selwyn was forced to resign, but not before Nevinson had undergone several years of misery at the hands of the athletic 'bloods' as a member of Selwyn's house:

The brutality and bestiality in the dormitories made life a hell on earth. An apathy settled on me. I withered. I learned nothing: I did nothing. I was kicked, hounded, caned, flogged, hairbrushed, morning, noon and night. The more I suffered, the less I cared. The longer I stayed, the harder I grew.¹¹¹

If he emerged from processes like this relatively unscathed, a young man would be expected to have achieved something close to the Roman *virtus*. This was a concept of manliness which was usually specifically applied to martial prowess and the service of the state. It encompassed such traits as bravery, self-control, and discipline.¹¹² Without doubting the commitment of some individual schoolmasters and writers to muscular Christianity, Mangan argues that it essentially provided a fashionable label.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 312

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 319

¹¹¹ Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson, *Paint and Prejudice*, (London: Methuen, 1937), 7

¹¹² John Coulston, Courage and Cowardice in the Imperial Roman Army, *War in History*, 20, no.1 (2013), 14

At best this is Stoicism not Christianity...but a hard, secular morality much more akin to the tenets of the social Darwinism preached by Herbert Spencer...Consideration of public-school life in Victorian and Edwardian England reveals that the public image seldom mirrored the private morality. Too frequently, there was an ideology for public consumption and an ideology for personal practice – in a phrase muscular Christianity for the consumer, Social Darwinism for the constrained.¹¹³

Elsewhere, James Mathisen identified Pierre de Coubertin's Olympic movement as close in spirit to the mid-Victorian sporting version of muscular Christianity to be found in the public schools of the 1860s and 1870s.¹¹⁴ This is not surprising given his interest in, and visits to, English public schools in the years leading up to the establishment of the modern Olympics. Indeed, Coubertin directly credited Arnold and Kingsley as progenitors of modern amateur sport and regarded muscular Christianity as 'a Greek formula perfected by Anglo-Saxon Civilization.'¹¹⁵ The work of the YMCA was complimentary to the Christian Socialists' work in setting up Working Men's Institutes, helping to keep a healthy body for the urban male while the Institute improved his mind. Mangan and Walvin, building on the work of David Newsome, neatly summed up this transformation.

¹¹³ Mangan, *Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education*, 82

¹¹⁴ James A. Mathisen, *Reviving Muscular Christianity: Gil Dodds and the Institutionalization of Sport Evangelism*, *Sociological Focus*, 23, no. 3 (August 1990), 236

¹¹⁵ Watson, Weir and Friend, *The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain*, 10

In the second half of the nineteenth century...the concept underwent a metamorphosis. To the early Victorian it represented a concern with a successful transition from Christian immaturity to maturity, demonstrated by earnestness, selflessness and integrity; to the late Victorian it stood for neo-Spartan virility as exemplified by stoicism, hardiness and endurance – the pre-eminent qualities of the famous English public school system.¹¹⁶

The Christian Socialists had envisioned a world in which the disadvantaged would gradually be lifted up by education and kindly treatment in the same way that sport had supposedly rescued the early nineteenth-century schoolboy from drinking, gambling and violence, which coincidentally they felt were holding back the urban poor. However, this more egalitarian side of muscular Christianity only really gained traction among a comparatively small group of intellectuals. For the majority of the upper and middle classes social reform was a cause for concern, and privilege something to be jealously guarded. The physical culture encouraged by muscular Christianity was seen as perfect for producing a cohesive culture for those destined for leadership roles, but the new organised sports which the movement spawned soon became social battlegrounds. Particularly in rowing, athletics, and both main football codes, struggles would erupt between those who wished to keep sport socially exclusive and those who wanted to extend it to all. Often such debates ostensibly centred on the question of amateurism versus professionalism, but,

¹¹⁶ James Anthony Mangan and James Walvin, *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 1

in reality, the definitions of, and therefore the boundaries between, the two concepts were neither clear nor consistent, and the real underlying issue was class. To add to this class element, in parallel with the development of rugby and association codes based on public school games, traditional folk football suffered a catastrophic decline throughout the nineteenth century as the aristocracy and landed gentry first withdrew their support and later backed official suppression of such games. Having created a socially exclusive form of football, the subsequent banning more inclusive traditional forms of the game must have contributed as a push-factor to encourage working-class participation in soccer and rugby.¹¹⁷ By the end of the century, muscular Christians would still extend fair play and sympathy to others of their own caste, but often had little empathy for those without a shared background. Even Hughes, for all his talk of muscular Christians defending the weak and helpless, and only fighting for righteous causes, acknowledged that they sometimes misused their strength. *Tom Brown at Oxford* includes several references to fights of various sizes between 'town' and 'gown' which, to an extent, glorify the students' pluck and prowess at beating up townsfolk. Hughes' hedged his bets by having his narrator, presumably himself, say one thing and Tom Brown and his friends another. After describing the run up to Tom's first 'town and gown' fight, which he excuses him for because young men like him 'desire to fight their poorer brethren just as children have the measles' Hughes goes on to say that he wished to disclaim;

¹¹⁷ For an account of this process see, Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players*, (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1979), 38-45

All sympathy with town and gown rows, and with all other class rows and quarrels of every sort and kind, whether waged with sword, pen, tongue, fist or otherwise. Also to say in all such rows, as far as I have seen or read, from the time when the Roman plebs marched out to Mons Sacer, down to 1848, when the English chartists met on Kennington Common, the upper classes are most to blame. It may be that they are not the aggressors on any given occasion; very possibly they may carry on the actual fighting with more fairness (though this is by no means true as a rule); nevertheless the state of feeling which makes such things possible, especially in England, where men in general are only too ready to be led and taught by their superiors in rank, may be fairly laid at their door.¹¹⁸

The accounts of the actual fights emphasise the bravery and resourcefulness of the college men, which is favourably compared to the disorganised, vicious, but ultimately cowardly mob. Later, safely back in college, Tom discusses the fight with the captain of the college boat, a veteran of many such skirmishes. The captain tells him of a particularly large and violent brawl with labourers and mechanics, which prompts a revealing dialogue.

“But of course, you licked them?”

“We said we did.”

¹¹⁸ Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford*, 65-66

“Well, I believe a gentleman will always lick in a fair fight.”

“Of course you do, it’s the orthodox belief.”

“But don’t you?”

“Yes; if he is as big and strong, and knows how to fight as well as the other. The odds are that he cares a little more for giving in, and that will pull him through.”

“That isn’t saying much, though.”

“No, but it’s quite as much as is true. I’ll tell you what it is, I think just this, that we are generally better in the fighting way than shopkeepers, clerks, flunkies, and all fellows who don’t work hard with their bodies all day. But the moment you come to the real hard-fisted fellow; used to nine or ten hours’ work a day, he’s a cruel, hard customer.”¹¹⁹

The dialogue ends with Tom realising that college men are not invincible, and he goes to bed sickened by the experience of the fight, but relieved that the captain has confided in him. The following day he reveals the conversation to several of his fellows, who are equally shocked at the revelation that a gentleman can be bested in a fight. The members of the common room confront the captain about his heretical beliefs. When he stands by them, the discussion moves on to sport, first cricket, then rowing, tennis, and hunting, and in all cases the professional is judged to be better than the amateur.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 75

Finally, there is a discussion about officering the army, and again the professional is deemed best. The captain finishes his argument by explaining that gentlemen are generally only better than the average man because they have usually had access to more and better training, and that given the same opportunities there was no reason why the ordinary man should be inferior.¹²⁰

Hughes' suggestion that the ordinary man was only separated from the gentleman by lack of opportunity was radical, and some would have considered it dangerous. The initial attitude of Tom Brown and his friends reflected the orthodox public school view. Gentlemen considered themselves naturally superior and expected privilege to come with that superiority. The discussion in the common room touched on many of the gentleman's underlying insecurities at a time when revolution and electoral reform left him feeling potentially vulnerable. As often happens when confronted with imminent change attitudes hardened rather than softening to accept change. Just as in India, where the recent Mutiny had led to increased racial segregation, the suggestion of equality of opportunity at home prompted those in positions of privilege to erect greater barriers to advancement. The way in which endowed schools used legislation in the 1860s to restrict their obligations to the poor was one example. At the same time the privileged classes sought to justify their exclusivity by claiming they were naturally superior.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 76-77

The use of the phrase *οἱ πολλοί* (*hoi polloi*) embodies this shift in attitudes. The changing nature of this phrase over time illustrates the attitudes which accompanied the study of Greek as the nineteenth-century progressed. The phrase was familiar to English students from Pericles' Funeral Oration in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Pericles used it to refer to the people, and did so in a complimentary way, in support of Athenian democracy, comparing the *hoi polloi*, or people, favourably to the *οἱ ὀλίγοι* (*hoi oligoi*), the few, or the oligarchs.¹²¹ By the time Charles Darwin was an undergraduate at Cambridge, from 1828 until 1831, he records *hoi polloi* as referring to those students, like himself, who were taking ordinary rather than honours degrees.¹²² Here it was being used by students to differentiate the many from the few, and there are instances of it being used in the same context by Lord Byron and James Fenimore Cooper in the early part of the century. However, by the 1880s, when W.S. Gilbert used the term in *Iolanthe*, it was obvious from the context that it had come to be a derogatory term for the working classes, something which was only too clear from Gilbert's coupling it with two other insulting terms for the poorer classes, the Latin *plebs* and the French *canaille*.¹²³ Gilbert puts these phrases into the mouths of the members of the House of Lords as they resist the attempted ennoblement of a shepherd, but he is satirising the pretensions and vocabulary of the educated elite in referring to those who did not have the benefit of a classical education.

¹²¹ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book 2.34-46: "καὶ ὄνομα μὲν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐς ὀλίγους ἀλλ' ἐς πλείονας οἰκεῖν δημοκρατία κέκληται" ("It is true that we are called a democracy, for the administration is in the hands of the many and not of the few")

¹²² Charles Darwin, Letter to J.S Henslow, 2 July 1848, Letter No. DCP-LETT-1189, Published in *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)

¹²³ William Schwenck Gilbert, *Iolanthe*, Act 1, *The Savoy Operas*, (London: Macmillan, 1926), 360

The Rise of Social-Darwinism and its Effect on Muscular Christianity

Charles Darwin was no stranger to the muscular Christians. He was in regular correspondence with Charles Kingsley¹²⁴ and proposed Frederic Farrar's election as a Fellow of the Royal Society.¹²⁵ Darwin's ideas on evolution, although initially problematic for the church, and therefore by extension for most public schools, started finding acceptance from the 1860s, particularly by liberal minded clergy in the Broad Church movement. Charles Kingsley's interpretation of evolution as a form of God's will certainly helped smooth its reception, and his theories gained backing from scientists such as Joseph Hooker and Thomas Huxley, and the Oxford theologian Baden Powell.¹²⁶ By the late nineteenth-century Darwinism was largely accepted.

Darwin's own views on race were clear. He had grown up in a strongly Whig family where the emancipation of slaves and electoral reform had been important issues. He remained strongly opposed to slavery throughout his life, commented favourably on the intelligence of people of other races he met on his travels, and spoke out against the ill treatment of native peoples by colonial authorities and 'ranking the so-called races of man as distinct species.'¹²⁷ He

¹²⁴ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 53

¹²⁵ Reginald Anstruther Farrar, *The Life of Frederic William Farrar*, (London: Crowell, 1904), 88

¹²⁶ Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, (London: John Murray, 1859), 481; Peter J. Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 185; Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: Race, Slavery and the Quest for Human Origins*, (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 487-488

¹²⁷ Elizabeth Janet Browne, *Charles Darwin: Vol. 1 Voyaging*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), 196-198; John S. Wilkins, 'Darwin' in Aviezer Tucker, (ed.). *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, (Chicjester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 408-413; Tony Barta, 'Mr Darwin's shooters: on natural selection and the naturalizing of genocide', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 39, no.2 (June 2005), 116-137

was interested by his cousin Francis Dalton's theories on hereditary traits in humans, but extremely concerned that attempts to 'improve' humanity by removing those perceived as weak or degenerate would damage humanity by also removing sympathy, which he described as 'the noblest part of our nature.'¹²⁸ For Darwin, education not eugenics was the way to improve the human race.

After his death, however, numerous theories used Darwin's ideas as a justification. Mangan provides a lengthy list, encompassing both extremes of the political spectrum, because 'Darwinism has spawned a multitude of contradictory social theories.'¹²⁹ However, he goes on to highlight Michael Ruse's assertion that, despite some variance over time, certain common components apply to the term Social Darwinism, and that these imply 'some sort of evolutionary progress as man and his culture push towards some better state' and 'a bloody struggle for existence...as the weaker in society go to the wall.'¹³⁰ In the context of education in the public schools, Social Darwinism worked at two distinct levels. Within the school it was used to make or break boys in order to turn out the kind of 'natural leader' that was in demand by society. At the second level it shaped the attitude of those educated in elite British schools towards those of other classes and races.

¹²⁸ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, (London: John Murray, 1871), Vol. 1, 168-169

¹²⁹ Mangan, *Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education*, 81

¹³⁰ Michael Ruse, *Social Darwinism: The Two Sources*, *Albion*, 12, no. 1 (Spring 1980), 32

Perhaps surprisingly, given their support of Christian Socialist values, many of those associated with early muscular Christianity had decidedly racist views. Kingsley was a firm believer in the racial superiority of Teutonic peoples in general and the Anglo-Saxons in particular. He regarded the Irish as 'white chimpanzees' and thought that, what he termed as 'degenerate races', for example North American Indians and Australian Aborigines, would be better off dead.¹³¹ Most bizarrely of all for an ordained Anglican vicar, he believed Queen Victoria to be a direct descendant of Odin.¹³² Frederic Farrar wrote an article for the Ethnological Society of London in which he divided mankind into three classes, one of which he deemed to be 'irreclaimably savage'.¹³³ Farrar explicitly cited Darwinian theory to make his claim that the darker skinned a race were, the more primitive and irredeemable they were. He backed this up with a catalogue of inaccurate, and in many cases entirely false, assertions about native cultures around the world before asserting that 'Black and Red' peoples had never contributed anything at all to human civilization and were doomed to extinction, and that 'Brown and Yellow' peoples would not be far behind.¹³⁴ Farrar's views may have been particularly extreme, but the idea of Anglo-Saxon superiority, along with their supposed destiny to become the dominant force in the world, was widely held by many educated Englishmen, including Thomas Arnold.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Elsie B. Michie, *Outside the Pale: Cultural Exclusion, Gender Difference and the Victorian Woman Writer*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 49; Reginald Horsman, Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism in Great Britain Before 1850, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 73, no. 3 (Jul-Sep 1976), 410

¹³² *Ibid.*, 409

¹³³ Frederic William Farrar, Aptitudes of Races, *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, 5 (1867), 116

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 125

¹³⁵ Horsman, Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism, 401

Like Farrar, others would misappropriate Darwin's ideas of natural selection and evolution, combined with Herbert Spencer's ideas on the 'survival of the fittest' to justify imperial expansion.¹³⁶ Adventurers like Cecil Rhodes felt that it was not only their right as the stronger race to take control of swathes of Africa, but God's will since he had set Anglo-Saxons on a superior evolutionary track. Muscular Christians preferred to view it as the 'white man's burden' to save native peoples from themselves, but the end result was often the same. In either case the Empire needed a ready supply of fit young men to conquer, colonise and rule, and the athleticised schools and universities of Britain stood ready to supply them.

The pseudo-science of racial Darwinism found a receptive audience among the classically educated because it was a good fit with the ideas of northern European cultural superiority arising from the work of Müller and his theories concerning the Dorians.¹³⁷ In Müller's defence, it should be stated that he neither said that the Germans and the Dorians were the same people, or that other peoples were racially inferior. In fact, he strongly believed that all races had the same mental capacity and potential.¹³⁸ Like Darwin, his work was unfortunately all too often misinterpreted and misused by those with a racial agenda. Classics teaching in public school and universities emphasised the supposed similarities between Greek and Anglo-Saxon culture, and especially,

¹³⁶ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 52

¹³⁷ Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 167

¹³⁸ Orestis Kustrin and James Anthony Mangan, Lasting Legacy? Spartan Life as a German Educational Ideal, in James Anthony Mangan (Ed), *Militarism, Sport, Europe: War Without Weapons*, (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 34

character.¹³⁹ At the same time there was a tendency among some influential classicists to denigrate the non-European peoples of the ancient world. That the Greeks triumphed over the Persians because the latter were despotic and effeminate was a recurrent theme, and the Romans were said to have triumphed over the Carthaginians and Egyptians for the same reasons. Similarly, the collapse of Alexander the Great's Empire was often put down to his being corrupted by the influences of the east, with the decline and fall of the Roman Empire attributed to similar causes. Such narratives were sweeping generalisations which ignored inconvenient, and long, periods of Persian, Egyptian and Carthaginian dominance, but they were useful in instilling the idea of natural European superiority and separateness into future colonial administrators.

Within public schools there was also a sense in which Social Darwinism acted between boys. As the focus of the late nineteenth-century school shifted towards sporting prowess, many were overtaken by a strongly anti-intellectual culture in which the sporting heroes, the so-called 'bloods' and 'hearties' held sway. Mangan has shown through numerous examples the extent to which these groups were effectively in control of many public schools, to the extent that few masters, and certainly no other pupils were able to challenge their authority. Bloods enjoyed the privileges of a kind of aristocracy within most schools with distinctive and ostentatious dress and behaviours. In many cases

¹³⁹ Edward Norman Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 2

control of school discipline was ceded to them and masters relied on their favour and cooperation in introducing any new innovations.¹⁴⁰

Social Darwinism and Laconophilia

With the shift in emphasis of the relative importance of schoolwork and sport there was also a gradual shift in which version of Greek civilization was held up as the ideal. Perceptions of military vulnerability and the expansion of Empire changed the focus. The high culture of Athens retained influence in academic circles but was increasingly regarded as aesthetic and even effete by many. It was the warrior, the team player and the athlete that was now in vogue. Along with what Mangan refers to as the 'Greek worship of muscle' a new interest in all things Spartan became fashionable.¹⁴¹

This Laconophilia was most evident in the way it was to impact the ethos of some public schools and the training regimes adopted by sportsmen, but it had other features.¹⁴² The positive aspects of Spartan culture emphasised teamwork, stoicism, self-control, self-sacrifice, physical fitness and unswerving loyalty to comrades and country. However, there was a dark side to Spartan culture. It was harsh and callous. Failure to comply with rules or to meet standards was not tolerated and punishments were severe. The historical Spartans had conquered Laconia and ruled over the original inhabitants, whom

¹⁴⁰ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 173-177

¹⁴¹ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 122

¹⁴² The Spartan kingdom was called Laconia, hence a love of all things Spartan is called Laconophilia.

they referred to as *helots*. In line with Müller's thinking, it was generally believed that the Spartans were part of the Dorian wave of fairer northerners who conquered an earlier, swarthier people. These subject people were treated as less than human and severely persecuted.¹⁴³ Ironically, at the end of the eighteenth century, when Athenian ideals of democracy and human rights fuelled the Enlightenment, the ill-treatment of the *helots* had been frequently cited in anti-Slavery debates by Abolitionists.¹⁴⁴ By the end of the nineteenth-century, the Spartan treatment of *helots* was seen by some as a model for how to deal with the lower-orders at home and colonised peoples abroad. Such behaviour might be seen in the fagging of younger boys at school, but the attitudes engendered could be carried over into later life and were manifested in the behaviour of some former public schoolboys towards British workers, and even more so, native peoples across the Empire.

An example of these attitudes can be seen in Cecil Headlam (1872-1934), the first-class cricketer and writer. He won a scholarship to Rugby in 1886, played for three years in the school's first XI, and was head boy in 1891, before winning an exhibition to Magdalen College Oxford.¹⁴⁵ He was so committed to the classics that his gravestone in Charing, Kent is mostly taken up with a poem in Greek.¹⁴⁶ In 1903 he published an account of his part in the Oxford

¹⁴³ Paul Cartledge, What Have the Spartans Done for Us? Sparta's Contribution to Western Civilization, *Greece and Rome*, 51, no.2 (Oct 2004), 169

¹⁴⁴ Daniel Orrells, Greek Love, Orientalism and Race: Intersections in Classical Reception, *The Cambridge Classical Journal*, 58 (2012), 195

¹⁴⁵ Arthur Tompson Michell, *Rugby School Register, 3 (May 1874 to May 1904)*, (Rugby, 1904), 128

¹⁴⁶ Kaya Burgess, Can You Solve the Riddle on the Grave of Cecil Headlam? *The Times*, 1 Aug 2019; Armand D'Angour and Llewelyn Morgan, Graveyard Greek, *The Times*, 4 August 2019.

University Authentics' cricket tour to India and Burma which contained a candid admission of his feelings towards Indians.

An Englishman in India soon ceases to be surprised at the resemblance of human beings to monkeys when you see them altruistically picking at each other's heads and otherwise behaving like their cousins in the zoo. The smell of an alien race, of burning cow dung and burning Hindu no longer offends your nostrils. You learn that you must be very careful how you hit a man in India. Nearly every native suffers from an enlarged spleen and any blow to the body is likely to prove fatal. It is best to carry a cane and administer rebuke therewith upon the calves or shins. All servants in India are thieves.¹⁴⁷

We cannot tell of course where Headlam acquired these particular prejudices. The Authentics' opponents in India were mainly all-white sides with the occasional fixture against a princely XI. Headlam's journey through India would have taken place in a racially exclusive social bubble that regarded the majority of Indians with suspicion and distaste. Racial segregation in India certainly became more marked after the Indian Mutiny of 1857, and some Europeans in India developed a siege mentality, but the steady stream of British arrivals who came to administer and police India in the late nineteenth-century were

¹⁴⁷ Cecil Headlam, *Ten Thousand Miles Through India and Burma: An Account of the Oxford University Authentics' Cricket Tour*, (London: Dent, 1903), 93-94

largely classically educated products of public schools and Oxbridge. Paul Deslandes, in his extensive study of undergraduate magazines and Oxford and Cambridge between 1850 and 1920, has shown how attitudes such as those displayed by Headlam were all too likely to have originated from school and college.¹⁴⁸ The environment he describes is one where a largely homogenous student population of white, protestant, upper-class, classically educated males sought to both reaffirm the 'natural superiority' of their own group while emphasising the natural inferiority of outsiders.¹⁴⁹ Student publications such as the magazine *Moslem in Cambridge* presented a supposedly satirical view of university life, filled with crude racial stereotypes and prejudices.¹⁵⁰ Such publications reflect unease on the part of this group as the universities opened up, first to non-protestants and Jews, and later to students from Europe and India. This trend also incidentally represented an early setback to classical dominance at Oxford when students from an Indian background were allowed to substitute qualifications in Sanskrit or Arabic for the normal Greek and Latin entry requirements.¹⁵¹

Sparto-Christianity

As the Spartans came to increasingly be seen by masters as the preferred role models for young men preparing for imperial service it was only natural that their behaviour as well as their moral code would be adopted. Late Victorians

¹⁴⁸ Paul R. Deslandes, The Foreign Element: Newcomers and the Rhetoric of Race, Nation and Empire in Oxbridge Undergraduate Culture, 1850-1920, *Journal of British Studies*, 37, no. 1 (Jan 1998), 54-90

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 58

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 67-72

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 76

admired the Spartans for their military efficiency, loyalty, and record of willing self-sacrifice, but were also captivated by their physical hardiness and the harshness of the regime by which they acquired it. Walter Pater, in his essay on the Spartans, *Lacedaemon*, looked at what the ancient sources had to say about them before going on to compare them to contemporary public schoolboys. He started by providing examples to show that, even in their own times, opinions on the nature of Spartan culture were sharply divided. Protagoras wrote that the Spartans were great philosophers, and that this was their great strength, which they tended to hide from other Greeks, fooling them into copying their supposed passion for short cloaks, gymnasia and boxing.¹⁵² Pater counters this with quotations from others such as Pausanias who claimed that Spartan nobles refused to learn to read and write as a protection against the effeminacies of culture.¹⁵³ He then went on to describe the state in its heyday, reserving particular admiration for the rich agricultural landscape which a combination of stable Spartan politics and the heavily policed slave population of *helots* was able to produce, but hints at the darker side of Spartan life with a reference to nocturnal state sanctioned manhunts.¹⁵⁴ Pater draws a parallel with English public schoolboys with a passing reference to Spartan youths playing a violent team sport akin to football, almost certainly a reference to the Spartan game of *platanistas*, which Kenneth Freeman later fancifully claimed was the origin of the fags and prefects system.¹⁵⁵ Pater emphasised here that Spartan sport was rougher than that of neighbouring states,

¹⁵² Walter Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, (London: Macmillan, 1893), 177

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 179

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 183-184

¹⁵⁵ Kenneth J. Freeman, *Schools of Hellas: An Essay on the Practice and Theory of Ancient Greek Education*, (London: Macmillan, 1912), 19

mentioning that the French regarded rugby football as very dangerous; the implication being that England was to France as Sparta was to Athens.¹⁵⁶ Finally, Pater describes how young Spartans left home to be educated at what he specifically describes as public school, an institution which he felt had clear parallels to the public schools of his own day.

The place of deference, of obedience, was large in the education of Lacedaemonian youth; and they never complained. It involved however for the most part, as with ourselves, the government of youth by itself; an implicit subordination of the younger to the older, in many degrees.¹⁵⁷

The Spartan schoolboy we are told, learned the value of silence. If he spoke, he did so laconically, leaving out the adornments that cluttered Athenian speech. Pater painted a picture of Spartan education which had no room for 'selfish, reading, writing or listening' but in which the pupil would learn by heart the history and laws of the state. For Pater this education combined physical exertion with conservative social values and formidable feats of memory, exactly the traits he hoped to find in new undergraduates at Brasenose College.¹⁵⁸ Pater imagined that the ideal Spartan learned the virtues of honour, friendship and loyalty from his education, and if asked why he was prepared

¹⁵⁶ Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, 189

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 199

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 200-201

to undergo such a rigorous education would answer; 'To the end that I myself may be a perfect work of art, issuing thus into the eyes of all Greece.'¹⁵⁹

Given the increasing attractiveness of Spartan ideals as the nineteenth-century progressed, it is hardly surprising that muscular Christianity eventually morphed into Sparto-Christianity. This concept, as developed by Hely Hutchinson Almond at Loretto, was about a healthy open-air lifestyle designed to produce boys who were physically as well as mentally enriched by their time at school.¹⁶⁰ Born in Glasgow in 1832, Almond had little exposure to sport as a boy and was not particularly fond of it. However, he did show prodigious talent as a classical scholar. At thirteen he entered Glasgow College and won the Blackstone Gold Medal in Latin. The following year he was awarded first prizes for Greek and Junior Mathematics.¹⁶¹ He went on to take his initial degree at Glasgow University and, in 1850, was awarded the Snell Exhibition at Balliol College, Oxford.

Almond did not enjoy his time at Balliol and was dismayed by the donnish and sarcastic attitude of the teachers. One of them, Benjamin Jowett, doubted Almond's ability and thought that he would not even scrape a second-class degree. Almond responded by earning a first and afterward said he did it to spite him.¹⁶² While largely unimpressed with Oxford, Almond did credit the

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 209

¹⁶⁰ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 48-58

¹⁶¹ Robert Jameson Mackenzie, *Almond of Loretto; Being the Life and a Selection from the Letters of Hely Hutchinson Almond* (London: Archibald Constable and Co Ltd, 1905), 11

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 14-15

university with kindling his interest in sport; at Balliol he became an enthusiastic oarsman.¹⁶³ Looking back on his Oxford years he was later to recall 'The Balliol Eight did me more good than all the prizes and classes I ever won, even though work was not then the dreary, mechanical grind it has since almost wholly become.'¹⁶⁴ Almond enjoyed the camaraderie of the Balliol boat, and he was lucky enough to be part of a crew which was in very good form, winning head of the river twice while he was a member. When he left Balliol in 1855, his place in the college boat was coincidentally taken by the young Edmond Warre.¹⁶⁵

By the time he left Oxford, Almond was worried about the physical state of British people. He felt that the upper classes lived in a 'preposterous manner', and suffered from a variety of neurological ailments and physical weaknesses as a result. Equally, he felt the poor suffered because they were forced into unsanitary, cramped, and polluted conditions in towns and cities. He resolved to create an educational system that promoted healthy outdoor living.¹⁶⁶ He joined Loretto as a Maths teacher in 1857 and taught at Merchiston from 1858 before purchasing Loretto and returning as headmaster in 1862.¹⁶⁷ At this time Loretto had just twelve pupils. Almond decided he ideally wanted to expand to take 120 boys, a target he reached by 1882, and by 1902 he had 132 students.¹⁶⁸ Loretto by then had developed a formidable reputation for sporting

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 15

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 16

¹⁶⁵ *Balliol College Boat Club Archives*, 1855

¹⁶⁶ Mackenzie, *Almond of Loretto*, 76

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 17-23

¹⁶⁸ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 227

prowess which reflected Almond's commitment to athleticism. Other public schools may have placed sport above learning, but most would claim the impetus for this came from the students and parents, despite the efforts of the masters to guide their charges back towards their books. At Loretto, Almond consciously set physical education at the heart of his system, so much so, as Tozer has observed, that 'almost nothing else mattered'.¹⁶⁹ Hailing the Spartans as the inspiration for his new system, Almond chose as the school motto '*Spartam nactus est: hanc exorna*' (You have won Sparta: adorn her.)

Once in charge of his own school he set about introducing a series of gradual changes as he moved towards a more Spartan lifestyle for the pupils. Many of Almond's reforms were concerned with modern clothing, which he felt was far too restrictive and unhealthy. He frequently mentioned this subject in his private correspondence, sternly criticising both the modern Greeks who attended the first modern Olympics and the British Army. For Almond, his desire to move towards clothing reform was deeply rooted in his Hellenism; he regarded the ancient Greeks as the originators of sensible clothing and attributed much of their intellectual greatness to their 'respect for nature and the human form'. He even felt that sensible clothing had saved European civilization because, as he put it, 'Rational dress won Marathon'.¹⁷⁰ On taking over Loretto in 1862, Almond made it a rule that boys should sleep with the

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 229

¹⁷⁰ Hely Hutchinson Almond, *Letter to Mr George Gordon Coulton*, 3 December 1901, quoted in Mackenzie, *Almond of Loretto*, 351-352; Hely Hutchinson Almond, *Letter to Colonel William Le Poer Trench*, 19 July 1902, quoted in Mackenzie, *Almond of Loretto*, 348-350; Almond's enthusiasm for loose Greek clothing and the healthiness of having a good supply of air circulating around the body was shared by other keen sportsmen, notably Edward Norman Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 93

windows open, and he replaced the linen shirts, collars and town suits that constituted the school uniform with loose tweed knickerbockers and open necked flannel shirts without ties. In 1864 he introduced early morning cold baths and, in 1866, directed coats should be removed in class. The following year waistcoats were forbidden and in 1869, wet weather runs were introduced and 'tuck' forbidden between meals. In the 1870s he outlawed hats, except in hot weather, banned coats during golf, introduced anatomical boots and specialist sports kit, and finally replaced tweed with flannel for the entire school uniform.¹⁷¹

Almond's approach at Loretto turned a small proprietary school into the powerhouse of Scottish sport. However, initially, success was hard to come by and Robert Jamieson Mackenzie described Loretto's early, and often unsuccessful, football matches against Edinburgh Academy as 'the Homeric age of football' because the individual runner and dribbler was everything.¹⁷² Such an individualistic style of play was not only often unproductive, even if it was the accepted orthodoxy of the day, but guaranteed to attract Almond's disapproval. One of his main reasons for setting the Spartans above all other Greeks, was because they were not as strongly individualistic. In a letter to Garden G. Smith, editor of *Tatler*, Almond laid out his thoughts about many of the sports that were played at Loretto and their effect on the boys. In his early days at the school, athletics and golf had both been popular, but he thought that golf was a selfish game and had not been good for the boys' 'tone of

¹⁷¹ Mackenzie, *Almond of Loretto*, 78-79

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 54

character', as it created personal rivalries, and did not contribute to school spirit, courage, and endurance. Almond had introduced an interscholastic athletics tournament for Edinburgh public schools in 1866 inspired by the Olympian festivals taking place in England at the time. However, Almond insisted that this was primarily a team event and he had never allowed any competition for prizes among his boys.¹⁷³ During athletics competitions he preferred to hear the name of schools called rather than those of individual boys, and athletics was largely dropped from Loretto after the interscholastic games lapsed. Almond expressed a strong preference for team sports in schools, but confessed that, even here, problems could arise. He noted a tendency in cricket in recent years to have become more selfish, with more drawn games, as players became more interested in maintaining their own averages, rather than the overall success of the team. Football, by which he meant rugby union, he felt was less selfish, but he maintained that he would drop from the school team any player who was in the habit of not passing and hogging chances for himself. In Almond's opinion, the best team sport was undoubtedly rowing, especially eights, because the crew works as one and no individual is singled out above his fellows.¹⁷⁴

Because of Almond's rejection of the athletic hero, he did not award school colours to successful athletes, nor was he an advocate of cups and competitions.¹⁷⁵ Like E. Norman Gardiner, he believed that 'pot hunting'

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 54

¹⁷⁴ *Tatler*, no. 68, 15 October 1902, 119

¹⁷⁵ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 231

encouraged professional attitudes among athletes and would encourage less able boys to watch games rather than take part themselves, a phenomenon that was clearly in evidence at many other public schools. In fact, Almond was so opposed to spectator sport that he tried to avoid innovations that made watching games more attractive. However, in one respect he failed spectacularly. Following through on his threat to drop boys who would not pass the ball, he set about creating a rugby culture that relied on a running passing game. At first, he faced opposition from his pupils, who regarded passing in order to avoid being tackled as tantamount to cowardice, but when Loretto began to regularly win using the new tactics, Almond prevailed.¹⁷⁶ In doing so he revolutionised rugby in much the same way as the ‘Scotch professors’ of Glasgow were revolutionising association football, introducing a fast-passing game where speed and the ability to think on one’s feet could outmanoeuvre size and brute force. From 1878 onwards Old Lorettonians began to appear regularly, and in significant numbers, in varsity matches and rugby union internationals.¹⁷⁷

Certainly, Loretto’s regime of cold baths, cross-country runs and open windows produced hardy youths and a disproportionate number of international sportsmen, and spawned several imitators. There was, however, a dark side to this philosophy. The Laconophilia which underlay Sparto-Christianity could also admire the Spartans’ harsh treatment of the helots that they ruled over and encourage similar disdain for colonised peoples in the

¹⁷⁶ Henry Barrington Tristram, *Loretto School*, (London: Fisher Unwin, 1911), 123

¹⁷⁷ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 232

nineteenth- and early-twentieth-centuries. In 1907, Kenneth Freeman's *Schools of Hellas*, a survey of education in ancient Greece, was published. Freeman's first chapter was dedicated to education in Sparta, and he too found parallels with the English public school system. He began with a description of the social organisation of the Spartan state.¹⁷⁸ With its state-owned serfs, militaristic nature, conservative ruling class, rigid rules and eugenic attitude to sickly children, Freeman's account makes for uncomfortable reading in the light of the subsequent rise of fascism.

Freeman shows how Spartan boys were first sent off to school at the age of seven, and that, on the whole, such education was restricted to the sons of the wealthier classes. However, he also points out that some families sponsored foreign boys or helots to attend schools, although, unless they showed exceptional merit, members of neither of these groups could hope to progress to citizenship as a result of their schooling. Full Spartans, by contrast could be stripped of their citizenship if they failed at school.¹⁷⁹ The picture that Freeman paints of Spartan schools certainly had parallels with the Victorian public school. Flogging and a primitive prefect system were in evidence, but there were also differences. Masters would deliberately set boy against boy to test their mettle, and the boys were encouraged to forage for and steal food, presumably as preparation for life as soldiers in the field.¹⁸⁰ Freeman actually claimed that the stealing aspect also had parallels in public schools as certain

¹⁷⁸ Freeman, *Schools of Hellas*, 12

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 12

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 18-19

objects, such as tooth mugs, were effectively held in common and it was the job of the younger fags to purloin them on behalf of the older boys.¹⁸¹

Between the ages of 18 and 20, Spartan boys were sent out from their schools to live off the land on what was termed 'Secret Service'. Their job was to gather intelligence of the lives and lifestyles of the *helots* in a particular area, and then, at the appointed time, murder any who were deemed to have risen above their station or who held dangerous ideas; this too was to have unsettling parallels in fascist societies.¹⁸² Freeman thought the camps an excellent idea, stating that in cities like Athens where young men did not have such an outlet hooliganism was a problem, and pointed approvingly to recent developments in Britain and America where youth movements were beginning to teach boys camping skills, although his death in 1906 just preceded the founding of the Scout Movement.¹⁸³ Despite apparent enthusiasm for many aspects of Spartan life, Freeman's overall assessment of Spartan education was mixed, and he clearly saw many parallels with his own schooling at Winchester. He criticised the Spartans for their lack of literacy, but felt that this was at least partially offset by their prodigious feats of memory. He felt the weakness of Spartan education was that it was so tightly controlled and regulated that the individual never really had the freedom to learn self-restraint for himself. He also condemned the brutalising and excessive hardship of the Spartan approach and lamented their neglect of mental training. This he felt, ultimately

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 23

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 24

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 25; *Ibid.* ix

led to Sparta's downfall as their statesmen ultimately lacked the education and imagination to cope with ever-changing circumstances.¹⁸⁴ Similar charges could perhaps be levelled at some of the military personnel who were the products of the more athleticised schools in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-centuries. Certainly, Freeman's observations of the less palatable aspects of Spartan society served as warning of the attitudes that such an upbringing could foster about those outside one's peer group. As Jenkyns observed of Pater's idealised view of the Spartans compared to those who took more extreme inspiration from them; 'The Nazis wanted to bend modern society into the shape of ancient Sparta, whereas Pater only wanted to bend Sparta into the shape of an idealised England.'¹⁸⁵

From Sport to Soldier: The Role of the Rifle Corps

Following the military setbacks of the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny, and with concerns about the likelihood of a European war erupting over Italian unification, Rossall was the first school to start a Rifle Corps, in February 1860.¹⁸⁶ Within a year Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Winchester, and Marlborough followed suit.¹⁸⁷ In 1880, Harrow specifically recruited a specialist master, Joseph Welsford, to train boys for the Army.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 33

¹⁸⁵ Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 225

¹⁸⁶ Peter Bennett, *A Very Desolate Position: The Story of the Birth and Establishment of a Mid-Victorian Public School*, (Rossall: Rossall Archives, 1992), 77. Although they were the first school to establish a Rifle Corps, Rossall were following in the footsteps of Oxford University, where Edmond Warre had founded a Corps in 1859.

¹⁸⁷ Trevor May, *The Victorian Public School*, (Oxford: Shire, 2009), 57

¹⁸⁸ *The Harrow School Register 1800-1911*, (3rd Edition), (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1911), 906

While they were initially formed with an eye to home defence, as the century progressed, and the focus of British foreign policy shifted from European security to imperial expansion, school Rifle Corps increasingly became part of the machinery of empire, designed to instil the qualities required for officer recruits to Sandhurst, Woolwich, and Dartmouth. By the close of the nineteenth-century the Corps and the school team had become the twin pillars of masculine development in the public school, places where teamwork and self-reliance could be developed hand in hand. If earlier accounts of school sports had often adopted heroic, classical references to describe exploits on the field, as the century drew to a close the connection between sporting and military prowess became ever more explicit.¹⁸⁹ In the years leading up to the First World War there was a fashion for poetry celebrating this connection, the most famous of which is perhaps Henry Newbolt's *Vitaï Lampada*, which explicitly linked the ability to strive for victory in a cricket match at Clifton College with the fortitude required to face the extreme adversity of desert warfare in the Sudanese Campaign.¹⁹⁰

There's a breathless hush in the Close tonight

Ten to make and the match to win

A bumping pitch and a blinding light,

An hour to play and the last man in.

And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,

¹⁸⁹ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 179-206

¹⁹⁰ Stephen, *The English Public School*, 108

Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his captain's hand on his shoulder smote
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

The sand of the desert is sodden red,
Red with the wreck of a square that broke;
The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honour a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

This is the word that year by year,
While in her place the school is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind

"Play up! play up! and play the game!"¹⁹¹

Newbolt's poem pulls together a number of themes. There is the comforting image of the college close. For many boarders, school eventually came to have more of an emotional attachment than their own homes. Despite the discomfort and brutality of nineteenth-century public school life, most former pupils looked upon their *alma mater* with affection. They not only had strong bonds to the institution, but also to their friends as boys often formed strong and lifelong attachments, particularly to their housemates. The mention of a 'ribboned coat' and 'a season's fame', recalls the enormous status available to the successful school sportsman, but this is put into perspective by the captain's hand on the shoulder which reminds us that personal glory is not as important as service to house and school.

The second verse refers to the Battle of Abu Klea in January 1885, when just over a thousand British troops defeated a Mahdist force ten times their size on their way to try and relieve General Gordon at Khartoum.¹⁹² The dead colonel to whom Newbolt referred was the Old Harrovian, Frederick Burnaby, who was in many ways the epitome of muscular Christian manhood. His father was a wealthy vicar with substantial landholdings. At six feet four inches tall, Burnaby was reputed to be the strongest man in the British Army. As well as serving in the Household Cavalry, he was a polyglot who had a distinguished career as

¹⁹¹ Henry Newbolt, *Clifton Chapel and Other School Poems*, (London: John Murray, 1908), 8

¹⁹² John Laffin, *Brassey's Battles*, (London: Pergamon, 1986), 27

an explorer and intelligence officer, as well as twice standing for parliament as a Conservative candidate. He was one of comparatively few British casualties at Abu Klea, killed when he courageously left the security of the square to try and rescue a fallen comrade.¹⁹³

Finally, there is Newbolt's choice of title for his poem which harks back to the classical curriculum of the public schools. *Vitai Lampada*, meaning 'the torch of life', is a quote by the first-century BCE Epicurean poet Titus Lucretius Carus taken from his poem *De rerum natura* (on the Nature of Things). The idea of the eternal flame was later to find its way into the iconography of the revived Olympic Games. Newbolt was probably using the torch of life as a metaphor for how every boy could grow up to be a servant of the Empire and play their part in a story that was much greater than any individual, even if they had to sacrifice themselves to do so. This was a sentiment in tune with stoicism and Roman and Spartan ideas of manliness. However, in choosing Lucretius as an inspiration, Newbolt was stepping outside the comfort zone of some Christians. While many in the established church were comfortable with classical references, Lucretius' epicureanism was considered atheistic, something considered worse than paganism in some circles.

Although many schools followed Rossall's lead in founding Rifle Corps, they were not initially universally popular. Tozer explains that while some schools, such as Eton, Cheltenham, Marlborough, Clifton, Wellington, and Haileybury forged strong military links, with large numbers of boys going directly into the

¹⁹³ *Leicester Journal*, 23 January 1885, 8

Army, most did not. At those schools without military links, the corps struggled to compete with the popularity and importance of games.¹⁹⁴ This remained the case for about twenty years, but by the 1880s the world was taking on a very different complexion. Germany, for so long a fragmented patchwork of kingdoms and city states, was now united, and under its aggressive new Kaiser increasingly seen as a threat rather than friend. The British Empire was still expanding but found itself increasingly embroiled in a string of border wars and policing actions. Britain had avoided the disaster of another large war like the Crimean but the young officers recruited from the public schools were now more likely than not to see active service.

The record of the British Army in the years from 1879 to the end of the Second Boer War was not always impressive. There were embarrassing and costly defeats against Zulus and Boers in South Africa and Mahdists in Sudan. Often, they were the result of poor decisions by generals who, like Freeman's Spartans, lacked the imagination and education to cope with the unexpected. The usual British reaction to such setbacks was an outpouring of jingoism in which individual casualties of these failures, like Gordon at Khartoum, were lauded as heroes. The tone of school magazines, literature for boys and headmasters' speeches all began to emphasise patriotism, heroism, and self-sacrifice to a much greater degree. At the same time, school Rifle Corps rose in importance and pupils' enthusiasm for them increased. In 1900, Edmond Warre persuaded the Headmasters' Conference to pass a resolution that all

¹⁹⁴ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 286

able-bodied persons over the age of fifteen in universities and public schools should learn drill and the use of arms, and 83 of the 102 schools at the meeting agreed to start immediately.¹⁹⁵

This new enthusiasm for Rifle and Officer Training Corps coincided with a feeling in some circles that Britain's military vulnerabilities, at least partially, stemmed from too much time spent on games. Rudyard Kipling certainly thought so when he railed against the 'flannelled fools at the wicket' and 'muddled oafs at the goals', and there were those like Percy Gardner and E. Norman Gardiner, who blamed an over emphasis on sport for the Greeks' eventual eclipse by the Romans, and warned of similar consequences for England.¹⁹⁶ Sport was too heavily ingrained in British culture for Kipling's words to carry much weight and Gardiner would not have wanted to see sport eclipsed anyway, he just wanted it taken less seriously. In the public schools and universities, sport and the Rifle Corps for the most part happily co-existed, often with the same 'bloods' taking leading roles in both. For those boys aiming at an Army career after school, there was never a question of having to choose between sport and the Corps anyway, the two were generally seen as complimentary, not least by the Army itself. James Campbell has shown how sport actually became essential to the culture of Army officers in the late-nineteenth century. Team games, such as rugby, football and cricket, and equestrian pursuits, such as racing and hunting, took up much of an officer's

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 295

¹⁹⁶ Rudyard Kipling, *The Five Nations*, (London 1903), 119; Percy Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, (London: John Murray, 1892), 303; Edward Norman Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), 118

leisure time, and Campbell goes so far as to claim that an attachment to sport was a definite advantage in seeking promotion.¹⁹⁷ Concerned to increase the fitness levels of soldiers generally, the Army had created its own School of Gymnastics at Aldershot in 1860 and began a programme thereafter by which physical training instructors were trained and posted to all major barracks.¹⁹⁸ In the years that followed many regiments formed their own soccer, rugby and cricket teams, many of which played to a very high standard. The Royal Engineers were particularly successful footballers, appearing in four FA Cup Finals between 1872 and 1878, and one of their officers, Francis Marindin, was President of the Football Association from 1874 until 1900.¹⁹⁹

Given the Army's preference for sportsmen to provide its future leaders, athleticism continued to be a dominant force in most public schools, as well as at Oxford and Cambridge. At the same time, it became deeply unfashionable to be seen as an aesthete at a public school after the downfall of Oscar Wilde. More than ever the emphasis was on manliness and stamping out any trace of effeminacy. The author Richard Aldington was a pupil at Dover College from 1903 until 1910 and later used this experience as the basis for his novel *Death of a Hero*. He describes a school dedicated to producing 'thoroughly manly fellows' where the headmaster is both chaplain and Corps commander, and

¹⁹⁷ James Dunbar Campbell, 'Training for Sport is Training for War': Sport and the British Army, 1860-1914, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 17, no.4 (2000), 23

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 33

whose sermons emphasise that 'unless you know how to kill you cannot possibly be a man, still less a gentleman.'²⁰⁰

Conclusion

Malcolm Tozer gives a scathing assessment of the kind of boys typically produced by the public schools at this time. 'Most public school boys were narrow in knowledge, outlook, social conscience and responsibility. They were well-bodied, well-mannered and well-meaning, keen at their games and devoted to their schools, but they were ignorant of life about them and contemptuous of all outside their own caste.'²⁰¹ The element of moral education so important to headmasters like Thomas Arnold and Matthew Cotton had been largely replaced in the late-Victorian and Edwardian public school by lip service to Christian principles and the worship of military glory. Ironically, the schools were less Christian in character at least partially because the classical curriculum had changed. The cerebral philosophy of Plato and Thucydides had for the most part been replaced by an obsession with Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The intention was to instil in boys the heroic qualities needed for war. Tozer observes of Homer that his poetry is 'exclusively concerned with the deeds of aristocrats, for the main function of the ordinary man was to be killed by his superiors.'²⁰² This has a chilling resonance in the regimental war diaries of the First World War, when the deeds and demise of officers would be listed by name, but the deaths of other ranks

²⁰⁰ Richard Aldington, *Death of a Hero*, (London: Penguin, 1929), 65-69

²⁰¹ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 366

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 295

would be acknowledged as a daily number. Today, Horace's line '*Dulce et Decorum est Pro patria mori*' is probably best known to most English speakers as the final line of Wilfred Owen's war poem, but the lines that come beforehand 'My friend you would not tell with such high zest, To children ardent for some desperate glory, The old lie' is surely directed at the schools that produced so many of his brother officers. As Tozer observes, the public school infatuation with Homer encouraged;

The anodyne notion that young death was swift, sweet and painless...Death lost its sting as emasculated and prettified versions of Homer provided a precedent for what was happening in South Africa and other warlike corners of the Empire. The Greek age of heroes had died quickly...The Edwardian age of heroes died quickly too, but not in the same manner.²⁰³

The original impetus for muscular Christianity also had palpably classical influences. Plato's ideas on healthy living, Juvenal's healthy mind and healthy body, and St Paul's athletic allusions all played a part and combined with Greek sculptural ideas of to what kind of body young men should aspire. Later, as muscular Christianity combined with athleticism to form the games culture which dominated schools and universities for the second half of the century ancient ideas of stoicism and manliness were invoked. The fashion for team games meant that the individualism of Athens was abandoned for the *esprit*

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 368

de corps of Sparta, but the references were still Hellenic. For some, the scientific rationales of Darwin's theories were wedded with spurious theories of Dorian racial origins and interpretations of ancient history which justified colonial expansion and injustice. Finally, as outside political forces turned towards imperialism and an emphasis on military preparedness, classical references came into play again. The team spirit of the Spartan was no longer enough, boys had to live like Spartans. As the nineteenth-century progressed, and the outside world changed, so the focus of public school classicism changed. Increasing athleticism undoubtedly encouraged a degree of anti-intellectualism and demands of empire perhaps persuaded masters and parents alike that deep thinkers were less in demand than men of action. As for schoolboys, they were always more likely to prefer heroic narratives than deep philosophy, and so it was that Plato and Aristotle made way for Homer and Pindar.

However, although the favoured classical authors, and the ways in which their works were interpreted, may have changed over time, the fact remained that classicism remained the dominant influence in public school education. The depth and breadth of classical literature ensured that it was always possible to find texts to support the prevailing attitudes and culture within schools. Examples from the ancient world were used to shape public schoolboys' ideas of masculinity and manhood, and to instil in them ideals of loyalty and honour. Such ideals were intended to produce soldiers and statesmen, but were initially honed on the playing field. Sport was thus of enormous importance to late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century elite British males as the nursery of

manliness. This chapter has discussed how classicism influenced the development of sporting culture within public schools and universities, but as the former pupils of these institutions took their sports out into the wider world they would face challenges to their control, both on the field and beyond. The next chapter will discuss how ancient sports history became part of this struggle for control.

Chapter 3 – ‘At Home at Oxbridge’: British and Irish Literature on Ancient Sport 1749-1974

Introduction

This chapter considers the extent to which Victorian and Edwardian historians of ancient sport were influenced by their own education and sporting backgrounds, and shows how this led them to project the issues of their own day onto the distant past while simultaneously seeking to use inappropriate examples from ancient history to influence sport in their own time. It also tracks the relationships between these historians and uncovers their links to the wider community of classicists, sporting schoolmasters, and sports administrators. This, combined with the information on schoolmasters and sports administrators revealed in the following chapters, indicates that these historians were part of network in which classics, education and sport were closely linked.

For much of the twentieth-century Edward Norman Gardiner was regarded as the foremost authority on sport in ancient Greece and Rome. Between his first published article in 1903 and his death in 1930, he established a formidable reputation by marrying archaeological evidence with documentary sources to create a compelling vision of sport in ancient times. The world which Gardiner described was surprisingly familiar. Organised competition was taken very seriously, spectators flocked to purpose-built stadia, and the rewards for success were high, with victors at important games such as the Olympics often

feted by their home-cities for life. Sport in ancient Greece was highly sophisticated and played such an important part in social, religious, and civic life that it was a cornerstone of Greek identity. In this respect Britain at the turn of the twentieth-century was very similar. The second half of the previous century had seen a revolution in sport which had meant that more Britons than ever were playing or watching sport. As the sports developed in Britain during this period were exported to the rest of the world, athleticism and sporting prowess became as important to British national identity as it had once been to the Greeks. The obvious parallels between ancient and modern sport were often highlighted by Gardiner in his work, and, although his primary aim was to educate his readers about the distant past, he frequently commented on sport in his own time, seeking to draw lessons from the past in order to comment on contemporary sporting issues.

However, while Gardiner became the most well-known British exponent of ancient sports history, he was not the first, nor was he the first to use the example of ancient Greek sport to make observations about sport and physical fitness in his own time.¹ The academic study of ancient Greek sport in England dated back to the mid-eighteenth-century and many of the themes sometimes attributed to Gardiner, such as the myth of the gentleman amateur and the dangers of over specialisation in sport, considerably predate him. The purpose of this chapter is to look at this body of literature and consider who wrote it,

¹ Donald Kyle, 'E. Norman Gardiner and the Decline of Greek Sport', in Donald G. Kyle and Gary D. Stark (Eds.), *Essays on Sport History and Sport Mythology*, (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1990), 9

what they wrote, and why. The period under study starts with the increased interest in ancient Greek culture in the mid-eighteenth-century and runs up until the end of the career of Gardiner's disciple, Harold Harris, in 1974. This was a period which saw the rise and fall of classics as the dominant strand within British elite education as well as the genesis and subsequent decline of elite amateur sport.

At the time Gardiner and his immediate predecessors in the field of ancient sports history were writing, history as an academic discipline was well established. Guided by the source-based methodologies of Leopold von Ranke, historians constructed views of the past which were presented to the public as empirical truth. However, even at the time, the idea that history can ever be entirely objective was under attack. Across Europe history was being mobilised in support of emerging nation states and collapsing empires, each keen to develop their own sets of myth-histories intended to justify their existence, sometimes based on extremely flimsy evidence. Nietzsche suggested that historians could apply different standards of objectivity from scientists or the judiciary, claiming it was legitimate to artistically 'create' history. He explained that such history might have 'no drop of common fact in it and yet could claim to be called in the highest degree objective.'² Stephanie Barczewski has shown how a similar process was at play in Britain during the nineteenth-century whereby the semi-mythical characters of King Arthur and

² Cited by Hayden White. *Interpretation in History*, *New Literary History*, 4, no. 2 (Winter 1973), 284 from Nietzsche's original work *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*, 57

Robin Hood were recruited to help create a sense of British identity.³ However, it is not suggested that Victorian and Edwardian historians of ancient sport deliberately misrepresented the past, rather that they misinterpreted it by looking through the lens of their own beliefs and experiences. Alun Munslow recognised this phenomenon when he said;

It is all too easy for people – including historians – to look at the past through the polarising view of the present.⁴

This aligns with the view of history expressed by Salman Rushdie;

History is always ambiguous. Facts are hard to establish, and capable of being given many meanings. Reality is built on our prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as our perceptiveness and knowledge.⁵

Rushdie's observation is particularly relevant to the development of ancient sports history in nineteenth-century Britain where the narrative of the distant past was often cited as evidence of potential pitfalls in the present. It also reflects the view of Claude Lévi-Strauss that history is always written to

³ Stephanie Barczewski. *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 1-44

⁴ Alun Munslow, On Keith Jenkins, *Rethinking History*, 17, no. 2 (2013), 254

⁵ Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*, (London: Vintage, 1991) 25

promote some 'infra-scientific aim or vision.'⁶ The vision which was all too often being promoted in the coverage of ancient Greece by British sports historians was one in which the ancient Greek athlete was physically and morally identified with the Victorian gentleman amateur.

The ancient Greek athlete could be the equal of the Victorian English amateur for only one reason: namely, because the ancient Greek athlete *was a Victorian English Amateur*. Sixth and fifth-century B.C. bruisers such as Milo and Theogenes were now to walk the High Street at Oxford. All the ancient Greeks were now English amateurs, the athletes as well as Sophocles and Thucydides (who would have felt at home at Oxbridge).⁷

David Young's assessment is harsh, but he believed Gardiner and his predecessors, Percy Gardner, and John Pentland Mahaffy, to have been guided by a conscious agenda of elitism. Others, such as Kyle and Pleket have been more nuanced in their approach, seeing the way in which Victorian values were projected back onto ancient sportsmen as more of an unconscious bias brought about by the environmental factors which shaped the views of these men, namely class, education, and athleticism.⁸

⁶ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, cited in Hayden White, *Interpretation in History* 287-290

⁷ David C. Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*, (Chicago: Ares, 1984), 52

⁸ Kyle, 'E. Norman Gardiner and the Decline of Greek Sport', 34; Henri Willy Pleket, Games, Prizes, Athletes and Ideology, *Stadion*, 1 (1976), 51

To fully understand these factors, it is necessary to look at the biographical details of the authors and their associates in school and university. This reveals not only how each man influenced his contemporaries and successors but the extent to which they were involved with those who played and administered sport at the highest levels. Additionally, when the school and home backgrounds of the sports historians are taken into account it becomes evident that Christianity was also an important influence for almost all of them. Britain was an overwhelmingly Christian nation at this time and the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin were all explicitly Anglican institutions. This is confirmed by William D. Rubenstein's research.

The fathers of most Oxbridge matriculants were professional men, particularly Anglican clergymen who comprised nearly one-quarter of the total ... Until the late nineteenth-century, Anglican vicars comprised, pre-eminently, the most important single segment from whose ranks Oxbridge matriculants were drawn.⁹

Among the historians of ancient sport this proportion was even higher, yet there is little direct evidence of Christian influence in the body of work they produced. Although cultural acceptance of Hellenism meant that Christians tended to view Greek and Roman religion with far more tolerance and benevolence than other pagan faiths, there were noticeable blind spots in the

⁹ William D. Rubenstein, The Social Origins and Career Patterns of Oxford and Cambridge Matriculants 1840-1900, *Historical Research*, 82, no. 218 (November 2009), 721

way the ancient world was described. Ancient Greece usually sounded comfortable and familiar, never alien or bewildering. Those aspects of ancient Greece which made nineteenth-century Christians uncomfortable were often swept aside. Athletic nudity was considered acceptable because it was made clear that no ladies were ever present around naked men, but pederasty and homosexuality were largely ignored or else acknowledged obliquely as unspeakable evils.¹⁰ Similarly, the attitudes to losing, cheating, and the role of the individual were quite different in ancient Greece to nineteenth-century England, but this aspect of ancient sport was often downplayed in order to avoid undermining the apparent similarities between sporting elites in ancient Greece and Victorian Britain. In choosing to avoid the moral differences between ancient Greek athletes and gentleman amateurs, historians like Mahaffy and Gardiner were shaping their narrative by choosing which facts to omit and include. As Hayden White rightly says ‘there are always more facts in the record than the historian can possibly include in his narrative representation of a given segment of the historical process.’¹¹ Omission is often necessary, but it can radically change the nature of what is presented; individual facts may be true, but the overall picture may be incomplete.¹²

E. Norman Gardiner and his Connections

In 1910 Gardiner published *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*. At over 500 pages, it was packed with photographs and illustrations and combined

¹⁰ Percy Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, (London: John Murray, 1892), 303

¹¹ White, *Interpretation in History*, 281

¹² Perez Zagorin, *History, The Referent, and Narrative: Reflections on Postmodernism Now*, *History and Theory*, 38, (Wesleyan University 1999), 17

evidence from ancient text sources, archaeological exploration, material culture, and experiments in recreating throwing and jumping techniques. It was the most thorough examination of sport in the ancient world that had ever been undertaken, and was to remain the standard text on the subject for much of the twentieth-century. Given the importance of Gardiner's work, it is no surprise that it was quickly reviewed by two of the leading scholarly journals for the study of Ancient Greece, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* and *The Classical Review*. Both reviews looked kindly on Gardiner's work and paid tribute to his scholarship, but both also chose to focus on the same aspect of his narrative, namely the evils of professionalism in sport.¹³

In the first review, Clifford Allbutt opened by stating 'Professionalism in competitive athletics is a problem that has never been solved, and to-day it is all the more serious because the true nature of the evil is obscured by the question of money payments'.¹⁴ He then went on to talk about problems in the distinctions between Gentlemen and Players in contemporary cricket before

¹³ For the opponents of professionalism its supposed evils went far beyond whether a sportsman was paid or not and also covered the nature and frequency of training and preparation, over specialisation, the supposed predisposition of professionals towards cheating and corruption, the attitude to playing, the cult of the sports star, and the perceived social problems of mass spectator sport. Many of the concerns which troubled Victorian and Edwardian commentators were remarkably similar to those expressed in the ancient world.

¹⁴ Clifford Allbutt, Reviewed Works: Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals by E. Norman Gardiner, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 30 (1910), 368. Allbutt had originally been awarded a scholarship to study Classics at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge in 1856 but had switched to Natural Sciences partway through his degree and subsequently qualified as a medical doctor. Having spent nearly thirty years as a consulting physician in Leeds, and a further three as commissioner in lunacy in London, he was appointed Regius Professor of Physic at Cambridge University in 1892, a position he held until his death in 1925. However, he retained a lifelong interest in classical antiquity and in 1921 published *Greek Medicine in Rome*, a study of ancient healthcare. Humphry Davy Rolleston and Alexander Gordon Bearn. *Allbutt, Sir (Thomas) Clifford*, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30382>, last updated 24/05/2007, accessed on 28/01/2020.

finally getting around to relating this to the rewards that were available for successful athletes in the Greek world, although he conceded that the contemporary distinction between amateurs and professionals did not exist in ancient times. For Allbutt, Gardiner's message was clear. The story of Greek athletics was one of slow and inevitable moral and physical decline as sport was restricted to over-specialised full-timers, and the need to draw large crowds led to a debasement of sport in favour of spectacle. The second half of Allbutt's review was rather rushed in comparison and dealt with Gardiner's interpretation of archaeological material, which he judged very good.¹⁵

Robert Lattimer's review mentioned that Gardiner was 'himself an athlete of some repute' and that this enabled him to tackle the subject of sports history with insight and enthusiasm.¹⁶ Lattimer gave an outline of the contents of the book and explained that it tracked the deterioration of sport from being a useful grounding for the bearing of arms to sterile entertainment. He went on to relate that Gardiner was 'ever ready to apply his reading of history to the downward trend of present-day athleticism – and not without reason'.¹⁷ Lattimer continued by discussing the second half of the book in which Gardiner moved from the narrative of sports history to a discussion of the techniques employed in the various events. He particularly highlighted, and agreed with, Gardiner's contention that the method of discus throwing employed in the modern Olympics was 'grotesque, artificial, and ungraceful' and supposed that the

¹⁵ Allbutt, *Reviewed Works*, 369

¹⁶ Robert Binney Lattimer, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, *The Classical Review*, 25. no. 2 (March 1911), 59

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 59

Olympic authorities might see the error of their ways if it was brought to their attention.¹⁸

That Lattimer was largely in agreement with Gardiner's views is understandable; they had much in common. Both had won exhibitions to study Classics at Oxford, Lattimer at The Queen's College in 1881 and Gardiner at Corpus Christi in 1883.¹⁹ Both had gone on to teach at minor public schools, Lattimer at Christ College, Brecon, and Gardiner at Epsom College, from where both had continued to be involved in the wider academic community by contributing to scholarly publications.²⁰ Gardiner was particularly involved with the Hellenic and Roman Societies while Lattimer, as well as writing occasionally for the *Classical Review* and *Fry's Magazine*, was also the editor of *School*, a monthly magazine dedicated to best practices and new developments in education.²¹ Crucially, both were keen sportsmen and were particularly involved in that bastion of amateurism, Rugby Union. Gardiner, had played for Devon in the county championships and had even been selected for Western Counties in the England trials of 1888 and 1889.²² Lattimer, meanwhile, had built a reputation as one of Wales' leading rugby referees and

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 60. A dislike of the modern discus event seems to have been a reoccurring theme with the historians of ancient sport which will be discussed further in chapter 5.

¹⁹ Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford 1891), Vol. 2, 507; Vol. 3, 821

²⁰ Kyle, 'E. Norman Gardiner and the Decline of Greek Sport', 21; *Breconian*, V, no. 1 (July 1899), 22

²¹ Kyle, 'E. Norman Gardiner and the Decline of Greek Sport', 11-12; Lattimer, Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals, 59-60; *School: A Monthly Record of Educational Thought and Progress*, 7 (January to June, 1907); *Pontypool Free Press*, 11 January 1907, 6

²² *Devon Evening Express*, 6 November 1888, 1; *Western Times*, 7 November 1889, 4

was evidently also a talented coach as several of his former charges from Christ College went on to represent their country.²³

Gardiner dedicated *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals* to F.E. Thompson, offering another insight into his background and motivations.²⁴ Thompson served as an assistant master at Marlborough College from 1859 to 1895 and had been Gardiner's house master and mentor during his school years.²⁵ Thompson, too, was an Oxford-educated classicist and the author of books on Attic and Homeric Greek.²⁶ His appointment at Marlborough came just after the departure of the previous headmaster, George Cotton, to become Bishop of Calcutta.²⁷ Cotton, who had previously served under Thomas Arnold at Rugby, was credited with turning Marlborough's fortunes around.²⁸ The school had been founded only in 1843, but its rapidly expanding population of pupils were soon getting up to the kind of mischief that was all too common at the other great public schools of the early nineteenth-century.²⁹ This could include fighting, bullying, and drunkenness on school premises, and poaching, petty theft, and disorderly conduct in the surrounding area, to the distress of weaker pupils and surrounding farmers and tradesmen alike.³⁰ Cotton's solution had

²³ *Pontypool Free Press*, 11 January 1907, 6; *Breconian*, V, no. 9, (December 1905), 272

²⁴ Edward Norman Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, (London: Macmillan & Co, 1910), v

²⁵ *Marlborough College Register 1843-1904*

²⁶ Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1891), Vol. 4, 1410; Francis E. Thompson, *A Syntax of Attic Greek*, (London: Rivingtons, 1883); Francis E. Thompson, *An Elementary Greek Syntax*, (London: Rivingtons, 1889)

²⁷ *Marlborough College Register 1843-1899* (4th Edition), (Marlborough: 1900), xviii; *Ibid.* ix

²⁸ Alicia C. Percival, *Very Superior Men: Some Early Public School Headmasters and their Achievements*, (London: Knight & Co, 1973), 261

²⁹ James Anthony Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 22

³⁰ John Chandos, *Boys Together: English Public Schools 1800-1864*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 150

been to introduce prefects and a programme of organised sport, overseen by energetic young masters, some of whom were his former pupils from Rugby, recruited as much for their enthusiasm for games as their academic ability.³¹ Such was the success of Cotton's strategy that he is credited by J.A. Mangan as being one of the five key instigators of athleticism in Victorian public schools.³²

Although Cotton's tenure at Marlborough was only a short one, the ethos that he introduced was carried on by his successors, the Reverends Bradley, Farrar, and Bell, so that by the time Gardiner arrived as a pupil in 1876, coincidentally at the same time that Bell took up his post, the college was ranked among the best in the country academically and in terms of sporting prowess.³³ In fact, the movement started by Cotton and other like-minded headmasters a quarter of a century earlier had flourished and sport had been transformed as the generation of schoolboys exposed to the new games culture of the 1850s passed through university and out into the world, taking their newly codified forms of football with them.³⁴ Other sports were caught up and transformed by this same sporting zeal. Established sports such as boxing, rowing and pedestrianism were recast in new versions suitable for the participation of the 'better' classes, triggering long and bitter struggles for control.³⁵ At the same time cricket had become more competitive with the county clubs moving towards the establishment of a county championship and

³¹ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 24

³² *Ibid.*, 18

³³ *Marlborough College Register 1843-1899*, 306; *Ibid.*, ix

³⁴ Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 54

³⁵ Lincoln Allison, *Amateurism in Sport*, (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 25-27; *Ibid.* 39

completely new sports such as badminton, lawn tennis, and field hockey emerging. This welter of activity had a profound effect on young men growing up in this period. As Donald Kyle noted, Gardiner lived at a time marked by the intersection of 'the ages of athleticism (ca. 1860-1940), amateurism (ca. 1866-1913) and Victorian Hellenism'.³⁶ For Gardiner, the personal effect of this would have been heightened by the experience of growing up when these movements were in their ascendancy and his coming to middle age as they faced challenges and decline.

Given the strong emphasis on classical education already prevalent within public schools and universities, and the tide of athleticism that swept through them from the mid-1850s onwards, it comes as no surprise to find individuals like Gardiner turning their attention to ancient sport in an attempt to marry the two, but there had been earlier studies of the subject and the trigger for the first book in English on the subject was not athleticism but poetry.

Early References to Classical Sports

Gilbert West's *Dissertation on the Olympick Games* was published in 1749 as an appendix to his translations of the *Odes of Pindar*.³⁷ West delved into the history of the ancient Olympics in some depth, writing over two hundred pages,

³⁶ Kyle, 'E. Norman Gardiner and the Decline of Greek Sport', 34. It should be noted that other sources such as Lincoln Allison contend that the Age of Amateurism was much longer than that stated by Kyle. Allison splits it into three periods; Establishment 1863-95, Hegemony 1895-1961 and Decline 1961-1995. Allison, *Amateurism in Sport*, 38

³⁷ Gilbert West, *Odes of Pindar*, 2, (London: 1749)

divided into seventeen chapters. He also included a further essay on Lucian's *Gymnastic Exercises* for good measure.³⁸

Gilbert West's father, Richard West, had been one of the editors of a translation printed at Oxford in 1697.³⁹ When Gilbert came to produce his own translation, he wanted to understand and explain the background of the odes to his readers. He also wrote about the meaning and derivation of words that were new to his audience, for example 'athlete'.⁴⁰ West's approach to completing the *Dissertation* was remarkable, as Martha Zebrowski explained.

He undertook the formidable project of identifying and organising the ancient literary texts that mention the games, and, with a concern for the quality and sufficiency for the evidence, he wrote a work that incorporates a bibliographic essay, historical evidence and historical narrative, descriptions of the site, architecture, athletes and events at Olympia and an estimate of the games as, above all, a political institution.⁴¹

³⁸ West, *Odes of Pindar*, 207-276

³⁹ Hugh M. Lee, 'Gilbert West and the English Contribution to the Revival of the Olympic Games' in Barbara Goff and Michael Simpson (Eds.), *Thinking the Olympics: The Classical Tradition and the Modern Games*, (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), 114

⁴⁰ West, *Odes of Pindar*, 5

⁴¹ Martha K. Zebrowski, 'Gilbert West's Dissertation on the Olympick Games (1749): Established Upon Great Political Views', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 35. no. 2 (2012), 239

West's interest in the Olympics had originated in his passion for Pindar, a poet that he described in his introduction to the *Dissertation* as one of the great writers of antiquity. West was concerned that contemporary readers might misinterpret the status of both Pindar and the sportsmen celebrated in his odes. The point of the *Dissertation* was to show that Pindar was not merely a paid hagiographer of prize fighters and jockeys, but a man of importance and breeding, writing about others of similar station.⁴² West's concerns reflect the times he lived in and highlight the contrast between the place of both ancient Greek culture and contemporary sportsmen in the mid-eighteenth compared to the late-nineteenth-century when Mahaffy, Gardner, and Gardiner were writing. In West's time, Greek was still the preserve of a very small elite, mainly with clerical or scientific backgrounds, and sport, certainly in the case of jockeys and prize fighters, was a pastime for the lower orders in which the interests of the well-off were usually based on gambling.⁴³ By the close of the nineteenth-century a knowledge of ancient Greek was considered essential for an educated gentleman and the upper and middle classes were keen to promote elite amateur participation in sport while at the same time stamping out the scourge of gambling.⁴⁴ In both campaigns they would look to the ancient past for precedents and justification.

West's *Dissertation* lists several more benefits beyond military fitness. He asserted that the Olympics were morally uplifting. Given that they were

⁴² Lee, 'Gilbert West and the English Contribution to the Revival of the Olympic Games', 114

⁴³ Derek Birley, *Sport and the Making of Britain*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 127-150

⁴⁴ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 111-112; Holt, *Sport and the British*, 87

essentially a religious festival this is perhaps hardly surprising, but West's point was that criminals and the morally unsound were banned from competing and that this acted as an incentive for young men to behave well to avoid exclusion.⁴⁵ He felt that the awarding of wreaths rather than valuable prizes promoted the idea that one should compete not for reward but for honour and glory.⁴⁶ Here again, West is expressing ideas that would later contribute to the Victorian view of Greek amateurism, but this view ignores the bodily and social capital which victory in a major crown games brought to the individual.⁴⁷ Beyond the benefits to individual athletes, West also thought that the Olympics and other large scale games benefitted society as a whole. They provided a focus for Greek identity, promoted peace, provided an environment where trade could be discussed, and provided commercial opportunities for the communities that hosted them.⁴⁸ However, West's view of ancient sport was not exclusively rosy. In common with later historians, he wrote of the long and slow decline of athletics from the time of Plato, through the days of the Macedonian domination of the Greek world and on into the Roman period. He felt this was because athletics became too lucrative which, in turn, led athletes astray.⁴⁹ Lee points out that, in describing this process, West actually used the word 'professional' to describe them.⁵⁰ In West's time, the concept of

⁴⁵ West, *Odes of Pindar*, 191-192. Lee flags up that Young later showed this was not the case although he was not taking issue with Gilbert at the time. However, the later sources Young was questioning may have originally drawn their conclusions from West. Lee, Gilbert West and the English Contribution to the Revival of the Olympic Games, 115

⁴⁶ West, *Odes of Pindar*, 193-195

⁴⁷ The concept of bodily and social capital would have been unknown to West of course as it is a modern idea from the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Sport and Social Class, *Social Science Information*, 17 no 6 (1978), 819-840

⁴⁸ West, *Odes of Pindar*, 202-203

⁴⁹ Lee, 'Gilbert West and the English Contribution to the Revival of the Olympic Games', 115; West, *Odes of Pindar*, 183-186

⁵⁰ Lee, 'Gilbert West and the English Contribution to the Revival of the Olympic Games', 121; West, *Odes of Pindar*, 184-185

amateurism was relatively new, and focussed on enjoyment as a primary motive rather than necessarily ruling out any simultaneous pecuniary interest, but it is understandable how his use of the idea of ancient professionalism might encourage his successors to imagine that, just as in their own time professionalism had its amateur counterpart, this might also have held true in antiquity.

West undoubtedly did more than anyone previously to understand the sport of ancient Greece by analysing a wide range of Greek and Roman sources. However, as highlighted by Zebrowski, he was unable to fully understand that not all of these sources should necessarily carry equal weight, and that some should not be taken at face value.⁵¹ In particular Zebrowski argues that West failed to recognise that Lucian was a satirist and was therefore too quick to take the words he put into Solon's mouth at face value.⁵²

Greek Cultural Influences in the Early Nineteenth-Century

Concluding his study, West observed that the lessons of the past could be applied to his own 'debauched and luxurious age.'⁵³ He felt that exercise was important for physical and mental wellbeing. At its best, he said, athletic exercise bound people together, promoted good behaviour, and was morally and socially uplifting. Sport was to be encouraged, as long as the pitfalls of

⁵¹ Zebrowski, Gilbert West's Dissertation on the Olympick Games, 241

⁵² *Ibid.*, 243

⁵³ West, *Odes of Pindar*, 254

antiquity were avoided. In reaching this opinion, he was setting the tone for future generations.

In 1764, a party funded by the Society of Dilettanti, and led by the Winchester and Oxford educated Richard Chandler, set off on an expedition to Greece and Asia Minor in order to record the ancient monuments there. One of Chandler's achievements was to rediscover the exact site of Olympia, which had been lost since antiquity.⁵⁴ Chandler may well have been prompted to look for Olympia by West's monograph, but finding the site heavily damaged by the combined effects of natural disasters and looters had little to say about it, and even that was not published until 1776.⁵⁵ However, perhaps this report of Olympia inspired the painter James Barry to read West's work and produce a large and much-admired painting of Olympic scenes in 1777. West's dissertation also influenced the approach and prose style of Edward Gibbon but did not immediately inspire anybody to continue his work, and it was to be the mid-1870s before another academic study into the sport of ancient Greece was written in English.⁵⁶ In 1790, John Gillies in his *The History of Ancient Greece, its Colonies, and Conquests* touched on ancient games in passing with brief descriptions of the principal athletic events that he appeared to have derived from the accounts of Pausanias.⁵⁷ He devoted several pages to the poetry of

⁵⁴ Martin Polley, *The British Olympics: Britain's Olympic Heritage 1612-2012*, (Swindon: English Heritage, 2011), 16-17

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 18

⁵⁶ William Pressly, James Barry's Crowning the Victors at Olympia: Transmitting the Values of the Classical Olympic Games in the Modern Era, in Barbara Goff and Michael Simpson (Eds.), *Thinking the Olympics: The Classical Tradition and the Modern Games*, (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), 123

⁵⁷ John Gillies, *The History of Ancient Greece, its Colonies, and Conquests; From the Earliest Accounts till the Division of the Macedonian Empire in the East*, 1, (Basil: 1790), 227-233

Pindar and the various Panhellenic festivals, but his interest in the former was largely confined to commenting on the quality of verse rather than its relation to sport, while his interest in the latter was focussed on their religious and spiritual aspects and their similarities to Christianity.⁵⁸

In the early years of the nineteenth-century German writers dominated the study of ancient Greek sport. Two commentators on Pindar, August Böckh and Gottfried Hermann, considered the technicalities of Greek athletics, particularly the pentathlon, in order to better understand and contextualise the poetry.⁵⁹ Ludolph Dissen tried to work out the exact format of the pentathlon in 1839 and Eduard Pinder expanded on his work, writing a hundred-page treatise on the subject in 1867.⁶⁰ The most influential of the Germans, however, was Johann Heinrich Krause, writing in the 1830s.⁶¹ Krause's work strongly influenced later English scholars, particularly Gardiner, who seems to have regarded him as his most important and reliable secondary source.⁶² His influence on Gardiner is particularly evident in his treatment of the accounts of athletics in Homer.⁶³ One of Krause's most enduring legacies was his framing of the concept of agonism, which he defined as aristocratic competitive culture.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 282

⁵⁹ August Böckh, *Pindari opera quae supersunt* (Leipzig: 1811); Gottfried Hermann, *Commentationes de Metris Pindari* (Leipzig: 1822); Referenced by Percy Gardner, *The Pentathlon of the Greeks*, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1. (1880), 210 and Edward Norman Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, (London: Macmillan, 1910), 515

⁶⁰ Ludolph Dissen, *Ueber die Anordnung der Olympische Spiele*, *Kleine Lateinische und Deutsche Schriften von Ludolph Dissen*, (Göttingen: 1839), 187-191; Eduard Pinder, *Der Fünfkampf der Hellenen*, (Berlin: 1867)

⁶¹ Krause published several works between 1835 and 1841 culminating in his *Die Gymnastik und Agonistik der Hellenen* (Vienna: 1841)

⁶² Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, vii

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 8-26

German influence on later British writers was to be profound. Mahaffy, born in Switzerland and raised in Bavaria, was fluent in German and drew on the work of scholars such as Theodore Mommsen, Theodor Bergk, Augustus Meineke, and Karl Otfried Müller.⁶⁴ Percy Gardner acknowledged the contributions of Böckh, Hermann, and Pinder in his work on the pentathlon, but was also concerned at German dominance in the field of Hellenic studies.⁶⁵ Gardiner too drew extensively on German sources and maintained warm relationships with historians such as Ernst Curtius and Julius Juthner.⁶⁶

Although there was little academic interest in the United Kingdom in ancient Greek sport in the early nineteenth-century, it was not uncommon for publications about health or sport to reference the classical past. In 1807, Sir John Sinclair published *The Code of Health and Longevity*, the appendices of which included a collection of papers on athletics and exercise. One of these was a letter to Sinclair from Dr A.P. Buchan on the manner of training ancient athletes.⁶⁷ Buchan included a brief overview of the events included in the great festivals and suggested that there was much evidence in Greek sculpture to show that athleticism was the means by which the human body could be brought to the peak of perfection.⁶⁸ He also remarked on the change in social

⁶⁴ William Bedell Stanford and Robert Brendan McDowell, *Mahaffy: A Biography of an Anglo-Irishman*, (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1971), 1; John Pentland Mahaffy, *Social Life in Greece: From Homer to Menander*, (London: Macmillan 1888)

⁶⁵ Gardner, 'The Pentathlon of the Greeks', 210; Gardner, *New Chapters*, 177

⁶⁶ Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, x

⁶⁷ Sir John Sinclair, *The Code of Health and Longevity*, (Edinburgh: Constable & Co, 1807), 114-123. The letter is longer than this but the remaining few pages deal with contemporary debates concerning diet.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 115

status of athletes under the Romans and the unfortunate side effects of over-specialisation.⁶⁹

In 1813, another Scottish writer, Walter Thom, published a book on pedestrianism, the opening chapter of which was entirely devoted to 'the gymnastic exercises of the ancients.'⁷⁰ Thom mostly drew his information from West, although he also cited Pausanias and Gillies, and his opinion was that 'One Grecian could conquer ten Persians, for his body was robust and his mind was brave; and honour was the sole reward which he courted.'⁷¹ In fact, Thom was to go much further in his assessment of the beneficial effects of athleticism;

The physical, political and moral influence of the gymnastic exercises on the bodies and minds of the Greeks, was thus evinced by their superior beauty and strength – their strict observance of the laws of their country – their bravery in war – and by their temperance, sobriety, and industry in civil life.⁷²

A closer look at history would have revealed numerous occasions on which the Greeks failed to live up to these ideals, but the words were intended to be as much a wish list for modern Britons as a description of ancient Greeks. As

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 116

⁷⁰ Walter Thom, *Pedestrianism*, (Aberdeen: Chalmers & Co, 1813), 9-32

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 29

⁷² *Ibid.*, 30

Richard Jenkyns showed, when Shelley wrote in his drama *Hellas* a few years later 'We are all Greeks', he was echoing the sentiments of the time.⁷³ Britain, or at least a certain type of influential Briton, had by that stage adopted Hellenism wholeheartedly and aspired to rebuild itself in the image of Athens and Sparta at their best.

Pierce Egan's *Boxiana* also harked back to classical antecedents, the frontispiece including quotations from Homer and Terence in the original Greek and Latin respectively and Volume 2 opening with a section on boxing in antiquity. Some of this was fanciful, detailing the involvement in boxing of such mythical figures as Pollux, Hercules, and Eryx, but it followed this with an explanation of the bindings used by ancient boxers the *amphotides* and *caestus*.⁷⁴ *Boxiana* emphasised that of all ancient sports, boxing was the oldest and that it was a sport for kings and a science.⁷⁵ However, *Boxiana* did not dwell on archaic boxing and its inclusion was merely to establish a pedigree for the modern sport.

Buchan's observation that Greek sculpture showed that gymnastic training could create a perfect human body reflected the changes in attitude towards the male body triggered by philhellenism.⁷⁶ Muscular bodies had previously been the preserve of manual labourers and prize fighters, and were considered

⁷³ Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 12

⁷⁴ Pierce Egan, *Boxiana*, II, (London: Sherwood, Jones & Co, 1824), 4

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 6

⁷⁶ Sinclair, *The Code of Health and Longevity*, 115

somewhat vulgar by some members of the gentry. The popular perception of the early Georgian gentleman was of slender youth and corpulent middle-age. Gilbert West, educated at Eton and Oxford before the age of athleticism was, despite having spent some time as an army officer, called Tubby by his friends.⁷⁷ By the end of the Georgian period, gentlemen were becoming interested in exercise and physical pursuits. *Boxiana* may have catalogued the exploits of professional prize-fighters stretching back to the Restoration, but its promotion of boxing as a science, combined with the perception that it was a noble art once practised by kings, encouraged young bloods like Pierce Egan's *Corinthian Tom* to engage prominent pugilists such as John Jackson as their personal trainers.⁷⁸

For those who could not afford a trainer, or did not have one in their vicinity, help was on hand in the form of training manuals, and these often included descriptions of ancient sports, diets, and training regimes. One of the most popular was *Walker's Manly Exercises*, produced by another Scot, Donald Walker, in 1834. Walker drew on a number of examples from Greek and Latin sources in his section on training and diet, acknowledging Sinclair as his source for much of this information.⁷⁹ Intriguingly, Walker also included a section on throwing the discus.⁸⁰ This interest in discus throwing may have been prompted by the arrival in London of a Roman copy of Myron's

⁷⁷ Nigel Aston, 'The Freethinker Reformed: Gilbert West (1703-56) and the Lay Defence of Christianity in the Mid-Eighteenth-Century' in Gianni Paganini, Miguel Benítez and James Dybowski (Eds.). *Scepticisme, Clandestinité et Libre Pensée*, (Paris: Champion, 2002), 343

⁷⁸ Pierce Egan, *Life in London*, (London: 1821), 254

⁷⁹ Donald Walker, *Walker's Manly Exercises*, (London: Thomas Hurst, 1834 reprinted by Michael Joseph, London: 2018), 12

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 94

discobolus, a celebrated sculpture from the fifth-century BCE.⁸¹ While Walker suggested that discus throwing was excellent exercise the event does not appear to have taken off in England.⁸² There is no mention of it in Montague Shearman's *Athletics and Football* discussing track and field in 1887 and when John Pentland Mahaffy attended the Athens Olympic festival of 1875 he commented that 'we (the British) never throw the discus or the dart.'⁸³

British Classicists and Modern Greek

Mahaffy came away from Athens singularly unimpressed by what he had seen at the Panathenaic stadium. He did not fully understand what was going on for one thing, his grasp of modern Greek was poor, and he mistook entries in the programme concerning gymnastics for equestrian events, while the combination of ancient and modern jarred unpleasantly with his sensibilities.⁸⁴

Mahaffy was not alone in finding modern Greek both unintelligible and jarring. Over 30 years later, when Theodore Andrea Cook visited the Athens Intercalated Games of 1906, he wrote of the mutual unintelligibility of the Greek of modern Athens with the classical Greek spoken by himself and his university educated colleagues in the British fencing team. Cook was a product

⁸¹ Mike O'Mahony, In the Shadow of Myron: The Impact of the Discobolus on Representations of Olympic Sport from Victorian Britain to Contemporary China, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 30, no. 7 (2013), 698-699

⁸² Walker, *Walker's Manly Exercises*, 97

⁸³ John Pentland Mahaffy, The Olympic Games at Athens in 1875, *Macmillan's Magazine*, 32 (1875), 326. The Athens Games of 1875 were the third and final Olympiad of the series initiated by Evangelis Zappas in 1859. Zappas had died in 1865 and a second games had been held in 1870. David C. Young, *The Modern Olympics: A Struggle for Revival*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 42-52.

⁸⁴ Young, *The Modern Olympics*, 50

of Radley and Wadham College, Oxford, and his account of the games of 1906 is combined with a travelogue describing his mini-Grand Tour to get to Athens and back. Clearly writing for a classically educated readership, his account was full of untranslated Latin and Greek quotations with which he expected his audience to be familiar. Cook expressed just how closely he felt British and ancient Greek culture to be entwined when he wrote, 'If Pindar's verses could have been written by any other than a Greek they most certainly would have been inspired by one of the same race as ourselves.'⁸⁵ Such was Cook's commitment to the superiority of his education that he was in no doubt that it was the Greeks rather than himself who were speaking the language incorrectly.

Modern Greek we found entirely beyond us. Even the syllables of Euripides with a French accent appeared to be unintelligible to the native. At last we discovered that the accent, or syllabic stress, in nearly every word was wholly different from that familiar to us through the classics, and that even the quantity of the vowels had altered, long syllables becoming short, and vice versa. Such words as *Aegina* or *Phalerum* are difficult to swallow when you hear them first. The acting of *Oedipus Tyrannus* under these conditions in the Stadium inflicted tortures which Sophocles can never have imagined possible on the most distant posterity of his "barbarian" admirers. It seemed curious that one might have understood him

⁸⁵ Theodore Andrea Cook, *The Olympic Games*, (London: Constable & Co, 1908), viii-ix

better in the famous Chalkpit Theatre at Bradfield, or on the stage of the O.U.D.S. at Oxford. This was not because, being Englishmen, an English pronunciation of the Greek was more familiar to us. It was because the Sophocles of the Athenian stadium had been deliberately modernised.⁸⁶

Not everyone agreed with Cook's verdict on modern Greek. A correspondent from *The Times* reviewed the same production of Oedipus in the Olympic stadium, and while generally panning the performance had one positive note to add.

The modern Greek pronunciation was, of course, employed, and its superiority to its cacophonous English substitute amply demonstrated. The English system, which, in the interests of "quantity" ignores the accents handed down from antiquity by usage as well as by literature, finds fewer supporters every day, and its doughtiest champions would abandon the cause if they could only hear a Greek play recited by Greeks.⁸⁷

Cook included this review in his own account of the play, if only to disagree with it.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 60

⁸⁷ The Olympic Games at Athens, *The Times*, 16 May 1906, 17

It will be seen from the extract given above that its writer does not take my own view as to the effect of the modern pronunciation of ancient Greek upon a modern Englishman. These things are entirely personal questions, as to which few men can wholly agree, and I remain unconvinced.⁸⁸

The reality was that British academics had only an approximate notion of what ancient Greek would have sounded like and there would have been considerable variation because of regional dialects and the long period for which Greek had been in use. However, they would have claimed to have read and written a purer form of Greek than modern Greeks.

In a way, this was true. From the time of Alexander the Great onwards, classical Greek had been replaced in common usage by '*he koine dialektos*', meaning the 'common language.'⁸⁹ This was a continually evolving tongue which borrowed words from across the vast Macedonian domains and greatly simplified the complex grammar of ancient Greek to make it more accessible to non-Greeks. *Koine*, as this new dialect came to be known, outlived the disintegration of Alexander's empire and became the *lingua franca* of the Eastern Roman Empire, during which time it supplemented the many new words it had previously introduced from Asia with many more from western Europe. However, while the everyday language of the common people

⁸⁸ Cook, *The Olympic Games*, 81

⁸⁹ Victor Stevenson, *Words: An Illustrated History of Western Languages*, (London: BCA, 1983), 41

continually evolved, written Greek for a long time retained the vocabulary and grammar of classical Athens. This was referred to as Attic Greek and was, under Byzantine rule, the language of the Church and the law. By the fourth century BCE Attic and *Koine* had already diverged sufficiently that John of Chrysostom found that his congregation could no longer understand his Attic Greek sermons.⁹⁰ The Ottoman occupation from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries introduced a great many Turkish and Albanian loan words to modern Greek. In the wake of Greek independence, the Greek intelligentsia promoted a new version of Greek called *katharevousa* that consciously imitated the ancient language and sought to eliminate Albanian and Turkish influences from demotic Greek.⁹¹ This was to become the language of the educated elite, but was resisted by the majority with the result that it became a long running and emotive issue in Greek politics which was only resolved in 1976 with the adoption of a standardised modern Greek which drew on elements from both traditions.⁹²

However, while *katharevousa* may have been closer to ancient Greek, and drew praise from *The Times'* Athens correspondent, it was not 'pure' enough to be satisfactory in the eyes of Mahaffy, Cook, and other classically educated Britons, whose objections to modern Greek also contained traces of racial superiority, with many seeing themselves as the heirs of the Dorians while, as

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 42

⁹¹ Christina Kalouri, The First Modern Olympic Games at Athens, 1896 in the European Context, *European Studies*, 5 (2006), 66

⁹² Stevenson, *Words*, 43

Robert Carr Bosanquet wrote home to his sister from Athens in 1893, they regarded modern Greeks as 'having much Turkish and Albanian blood.'⁹³

British Classicists and Ancient Sport

On his return to Dublin, Mahaffy wrote a scathing account of the games for *Macmillan's Magazine*.⁹⁴ However, his interest was sufficiently stimulated that he decided to investigate ancient Greek sport in some detail and he produced a follow-up article for *Macmillan's Magazine* entitled 'Old Greek Athletics'.⁹⁵ It was a short piece, only nine pages in length, but it was highly significant for three reasons.

Firstly, Mahaffy opened his article by drawing attention to English athleticism, with the accompanying assumptions regarding British sporting prowess compared to other nations and the place of the Anglo-Saxon as the true cultural heirs of classical Athens.⁹⁶ By taking this stance Mahaffy was inviting his readers to subconsciously project current British values and cultural norms backwards onto the Greeks. To be fair to Mahaffy he was not alone in this line of thinking. Jenkyns and others have shown how Victorian Hellenism was full of parallels between ancient and modern, and art, literature, politics, and

⁹³ Letter from Robert Carr Bosanquet to Bessie Bosanquet, 9 April 1893 reproduced in Ellen S. Bosanquet (Ed.), *Robert Carr Bosanquet: Letters and Light Verse*, (Gloucester: John Bellows, 1938), 27

⁹⁴ Mahaffy, *The Olympic Games at Athens*, 324-327

⁹⁵ John Pentland Mahaffy, *Old Greek Athletics*, *Macmillan's Magazine*, 36 (1877), 61-69

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 61

philosophy all traded in idealised views of ancient Greece which owed as much to Surrey as Sparta.⁹⁷

Secondly, he drew a distinction between athletic and agonistic competition, contending that the former was 'rather a low thing among the Greeks' whilst the latter were purely amateur.⁹⁸ This assertion, which was to have far reaching consequences, not just for the study of ancient sport, but for contemporary sporting debate, particularly in relation to the Olympic games, was, as Young and others have subsequently shown, completely without basis.⁹⁹ The sporting landscape of the ancient Greek world blurred athletic and agonistic together, and circumstances changed from one games to another in a culture which lasted for a millennium and was spread over a huge geographical area. That Mahaffy sought to condense this down into a few sentences on the differences and relative merits of amateurism and professionalism had as much to do with his views on sport in his own time as the reality of two thousand years earlier, and was betrayed by his observation that the Greek's 'highbred contempt' for 'running for the pot' was 'not so common nowadays.'¹⁰⁰ Mahaffy's thinking on prizes and reward was a little confused in this article. For example, Mahaffy stated that there were no second prizes in any historical games.¹⁰¹ Young takes this as evidence of Mahaffy's incompetence and Miller shows that the Panathenaic games had second, and

⁹⁷ Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 60-86

⁹⁸ Mahaffy, *Old Greek Athletics*, 61

⁹⁹ Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*, 44-56; Stephen G. Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 212

¹⁰⁰ Mahaffy, *Old Greek Athletics*, 61

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 65

even third prizes, that were of enormous value.¹⁰² In fact, Mahaffy contradicts himself anyway by mentioning the prizes given out to all competitors in the funeral games of the *Iliad*, although his comparison of this to a private-school prize day is interesting.¹⁰³ Mahaffy was almost certainly taking his lead on the issue of prizes in ancient Greece from the writing of Karl Otfried Müller who attributed the Greek fascination with *agon* to the Dorians in general, and the Spartans in particular.¹⁰⁴ For Müller the role of the Dorians was ‘to completely purify all that was Philistine’ by which he meant replacing the ‘more concrete rewards’ of Homer’s athletes with the wreaths of Olympia.¹⁰⁵

Thirdly, it marked the beginning of a spate of academic writing in English about ancient Greek sport. 1880 saw the foundation of the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, the first volume of which contained a lengthy article by Percy Gardner on the pentathlon.¹⁰⁶ Gardner would follow this up with two articles on ancient rowing in the second volume, which also contained another piece about the pentathlon contributed by Ernest Myers.¹⁰⁷ Shortly afterwards, Charles Fennell, a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, authored a chapter on pentathlon as an appendix to his translation of Pindar’s Nemean and Isthmian

¹⁰² Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*, 47; Stephen G. Miller, *Arete: Greek Sports from Ancient Sources*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 81-86

¹⁰³ Mahaffy, *Old Greek Athletics*, 65

¹⁰⁴ Ingomar Weiler, Ingomar. *The Living Legacy: Classical Sport and Nineteenth-Century Middle-Class Commentators of the German-Speaking Nations*, in Mangan James Anthony (Ed.), *Reformers, Sport, Modernizers: Middle-Class Revolutionaries*, (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 17

¹⁰⁵ Karl Otfried Müller, ‘Die Dorier: Vier Bücher’ in F.W. Schneidewin (Ed.), *Geschichten Hellenischer Stämme und Städte*, (Breslau: 1844), Vol. 2, 299-301

¹⁰⁶ Gardner, *The Pentathlon of the Greeks*, 210-233

¹⁰⁷ Percy Gardner, *Boat-racing among the Greeks*, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 2. (1881), 90-97; Percy Gardner, *Boat-Races at Athens*, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 2 (1881), 315-317; Ernest Myers, *The Pentathlon*, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 2 (1881), 217-221

Odes.¹⁰⁸ A further translation of the Nemean Odes, by John Bagnell Bury of Trinity College, Dublin, included an extensive appendix on the origins of the great Greek games.¹⁰⁹ As a Trinity man, Bury was very much a disciple of Mahaffy whose guidance he acknowledged in his work.¹¹⁰

The body of work that would eventually come out of this movement was a collection of articles in periodicals and a few key textbooks that would dominate thinking on ancient Greek sport for the next ninety years. While each new article and book was to expand on existing knowledge by adding evidence from new archaeological digs and discoveries in ancient source material, many of the underlying themes and assumptions continued, or expanded on, those set by Mahaffy and Gardner between 1877 and 1880. There are two main reasons for this. In the first instance, there was a direct chain of influence from one historian to another as work progressed. As Young shows, the acknowledgement pages of their main books show Gardner thanking Mahaffy and, in turn, being thanked by Gardiner right down to Harris acknowledging Gardiner when he produced *Greek Athletes and Athletics* in 1964.¹¹¹ Secondly, Victorian academic culture was often based on seniority and a sense of building on, rather than challenging, the work of those who had gone before. Once a view became orthodox it was difficult to shift, not least because those who were seen as authorities on a subject could be caustic to anybody challenging their views. Allbutt and Lattimer would have been predisposed to

¹⁰⁸ Charles Augustus Maude Fennell, *Pindar: Nemean and Isthmian Odes*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899), vii-xiv (Originally published 1883)

¹⁰⁹ John Bagnell. Bury, *The Nemean Odes of Pindar*, (London: Macmillan, 1890), 248-264

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vi

¹¹¹ Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*, 6

give Gardiner a good review in 1910 because he was already the accepted authority on his subject, while Gardiner was not inclined to be encouraging of those who came later unless they subscribed to his views, as can be seen in his reviews of the work of others.¹¹² However, on the whole, those working on ancient sport at this period had remarkably homogenous views and this was probably accounted for by their remarkably homogenous backgrounds. An analysis of those involved (see Table 3.1) reveals several common traits and relationships.

Mahaffy emerges as something of an outlier, having neither attended a public school or Oxford or Cambridge universities. He was home schooled by his father until the age of 16 when he went to Trinity College, Dublin.¹¹³ In some quarters this has been blamed for his later reputation as not being the most reliable translator, the argument being that public schools relentlessly drilled into their pupils the importance of accuracy and checking whereas Mahaffy, working alone, may have developed bad habits.¹¹⁴ However, what he did have in common with many of the others is that he came from a clerical family. That the sons of vicars dominated the field of classics is less of a surprise if it is considered that churchmen were expected to be able to read the New Testament in Greek, and that Anglican priests who came from comfortably well off families often tutored their young sons in Greek and Latin so that they could

¹¹² Edward Norman Gardiner, Review of Olympic Victor Monuments and Greek Athletic Art by Walter Woodburn Hyde, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 42 (1922), 123-124; Edward Norman Gardiner, Review of Greek Athletics by F. A. Wright, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 45 (1925), 145-146; Edward Norman Gardiner, Review of Greek Physical Culture by Clarence Forbes, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 50 (1930), 350-351

¹¹³ Stanford and McDowell, *Mahaffy*, 14

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 145

win scholarships to the best schools.¹¹⁵ Boys with this background often arrived at school with a head start and the prospect of winning an exhibition or scholarship to university gave them a good incentive to maintain their advantage. The other graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, on the list, John Bagnell Bury, was the son of an Irish Anglican clergyman, and spent the latter part of his career as Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge.¹¹⁶

Table 3.1 Historians of Ancient Sport – Background and Education ¹¹⁷

Name	Father's Profession	School	Year Entered University	University
Gilbert West	Clergyman	Eton	1721	Oxford
Clifford Allbutt	Clergyman	St Peter's York	1855	Cambridge
John Mahaffy	Clergyman	Home Schooled	1855	Dublin
George Marindin	Clergyman	Eton	1860	Cambridge
Charles Fennell	Clergyman	Rossall School	1861	Cambridge
Ernest Myers	Clergyman	Cheltenham	1862	Oxford
Percy Gardner	Stockbroker	City of London	1865	Oxford
John Bagnell Bury	Clergyman	Monaghan Diocesan School	1878	Dublin
Robert Lattimer	Factory Manager	Durham	1881	Oxford
Edward Norman Gardiner	Clergyman	Marlborough	1883	Oxford
Frederick Wright	Postmaster	Great Yarmouth Grammar School	1886	Cambridge
John Myres	Clergyman	Winchester	1888	Oxford
Robert Bosanquet	Barrister	Eton	1890	Cambridge
George Robertson	Accountant	Winchester	1891	Oxford
Robert Nairn	Clergyman	Dublin High	1892	Cambridge
Kingdon Frost	Solicitor	Bath Grammar School ¹¹⁸	1896	Oxford
Kenneth Freeman	Barrister	Winchester	1901	Cambridge
Harold Harris	College Servant	Oxford High School	1921	Oxford

¹¹⁵ Chandos, *Boys Together*, 31-32

¹¹⁶ Michael Whitby, *John Bagnell Bury: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/32202>, last updated 23/09/2004. accessed on 01/01/2020

¹¹⁷ Andy Carter, 'At home at Oxbridge': British views of ancient Greek sport, 1749-1974, *Sport in History*, 41, no. 2 (2021), 289

¹¹⁸ Bath Grammar School (founded 1552) is now known as King Edward's School Bath.

The others shared a background of newly athleticised schools, followed by college in Oxford or Cambridge, at a time when university sport was going through an unparalleled period of expansion and influence. The old student pursuits of hunting, drinking, and gambling had been largely replaced by a fashion for organised sport, which was felt by many to have had a morally and physically uplifting effect on the student body. Others fretted that academic standards were falling as large numbers of students began to regard university as little more than a chance to continue playing as much sport as possible.¹¹⁹ However, for those who hoped to hold on to scholarships or wanted a serious academic career, sport had to take a back seat. This was particularly true for Harold Harris, who being the son of a college porter was completely reliant on scholarly ability for staying at Oxford. As he remarked late in life, he never could have become a dedicated sportsman because he simply could not run the risk of missing an academic target, which would mark the end of his education and result in a life spent in obscurity.¹²⁰

Nevertheless, most of those who wrote about ancient sport in this period were sportsmen themselves to one degree or another, some with considerable success. Mahaffy, while generally disdainful of modern sport, was fond of hunting, fishing, and cricket, which he saw as the traditional pursuits of the English gentleman. He was a very good bowler and reasonable batsman and was selected several times for the All-Ireland XI against first-class

¹¹⁹ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 122-125

¹²⁰ Harold Arthur Harris, *Sport in Britain: Its Origins and Development*, (London: Stanley Paul, 1975), 7

opposition.¹²¹ Gardiner and Lattimer were heavily involved in Rugby Union. Robert Carr Bosanquet and George Robertson, classicists who assisted Gardiner in his investigations into discus and javelin throwing, had competed against each other for Cambridge and Oxford as hammer throwers.¹²² Robertson finished fourth in the discus at the 1896 Athens Olympics and wrote an article on throwing the discus for the official handbook of the 1908 London Olympics, while Bosanquet was one of the British representatives on the IOC for the 1906 Athens games.¹²³ Percy Gardner and Kingdon Frost were both keen amateur rowers.¹²⁴

Involvement in sport, at school and university, built and reinforced bonds of friendship. From the 1870s until the outbreak of the First World War, Oxford and Cambridge were in the grip of an athletic fever fuelled by the cults of manliness, Muscular Christianity, and Social Darwinism. As Mangan points out, life at Oxbridge was in many ways an extension of life at public school and 'loyalty to the college....was demanded as rigorously as loyalty to the house once had been.'¹²⁵ The most accomplished sportsmen among the undergraduates would often find that their reputation had come before them, carried by other Old Boys of the same school, and, in the case of the more

¹²¹ Stanford and McDowell, *Mahaffy*, 61

¹²² William Grenfell, Lord Desborough of Taplow, *Fifty Years of Sport at Oxford, Cambridge and the Great Public Schools, I, Oxford and Cambridge*, (London: Walter Southwood & Co, 1922), 41-46

¹²³ Ellen Sophia Bosanquet, *Robert Carr Bosanquet: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/31976>, last updated 23/09/2004, accessed on 01/01/2020; Obituary: Sir George S. Robertson, *The Times*, 31 January 1967, 12

¹²⁴ Register of Pupils at the City of London School 1837-1860, Vol. 1, 382; William M. Dunlop, Kingdon Tregosse Frost: First Lecturer in Archaeology at the Queen's University Belfast, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 59 (2000), 3

¹²⁵ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 123

prestigious schools, reported in the press.¹²⁶ Others would find themselves undergoing trials on the river or sports field to determine how they might best serve their new college's sporting ambitions. Anyone showing any talent was expected to turn out for their college when requested.¹²⁷ Mangan cautions against assuming that college life was entirely turned over to sport; this was also an age of great intellectualism, but he neatly summed up the activities of the student body in this period by dividing it into three classes 'Some studied; others studied and played; many simply played.'¹²⁸ Those that simply played, passed through university safe in the knowledge that an indifferent degree but an enhanced sporting reputation could earn them a position as a master in a good school. Indeed, such was the demand for sporting masters in the schools that the games player had a distinct advantage over the mere academic.¹²⁹ Some of those that simply played fared even better. By the end of the century prominent university sportsmen could go on to full time sporting careers. To be sure, men like C.B. Fry, Pelham Warner, and Ranjitsinhji who stepped up from the varsity match to test cricket in the 1890s were all nominally gentleman amateurs, but all made a very good living from sport thereafter by a combination of sports writing, sports administration, and endorsing merchandise.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Andy Carter, *Beyond the Pale: Early Black and Asian Cricketers in Britain 1868-1945*, (Kibworth: Matador, 2020), 54

¹²⁷ Rowland Prothero, *Whippingham to Westminster: The Reminiscences of Lord Ernle*, (London: 1938), 45

¹²⁸ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 126

¹²⁹ William Smith, *Stretching Their Bodies: The History of Physical Education*, (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1974), 45

¹³⁰ See for example Kumar Ranjitsinhji, *The Jubilee Book of Cricket*, (Edinburgh: Blackwood & Sons, 1897)

Classicists and Sporting Culture

Living and working in the environment of the late nineteenth-century university, the historians of ancient sport were deeply embedded into contemporary sporting culture. Members of their colleges, often from their close social circles, were playing sport at the highest level, and, more importantly, were shaping and defining sport as the administrators of the new sporting bodies.

George Marindin, who wrote on ancient Greek and Roman ball games for the *Classical Review* in 1890, was the younger brother of Francis Marindin.¹³¹ Francis had founded the Royal Engineers football team, subsequently playing twice for them in the F.A. Cup Final before refereeing the final himself in 1880 and from 1884 to 1890.¹³² In 1874 he had become President of the Football Association, a post he was to hold until 1890. He also served as President of the Old Etonian football club where he worked alongside influential figures such as Arthur Kinnaird, Quintin Hogg, Alfred Lyttelton, and Walter Durnford.¹³³ George Marindin was lecturing in classics at the University of London when he wrote his article on *harpastum* but had not long finished a twenty-two-year stint as a housemaster at Eton where his pupils had included John Goldie, Robert Bosanquet, Lords Harris and Hawke, later to become arguably the two most powerful men in cricket, Cuthbert Ottaway, Alfred Lyttelton, and the future headmaster of Harrow, James Welldon.¹³⁴

¹³¹ George Eden Marindin, 'The Game of "Harpastum" or "Pheninda"', *The Classical Review*, 4, no. 4 (April 1890), 145-149; *The Eton Register, Part II, 1853-59*, (Eton: Spottiswoode & Co, 1905), 23; *Ibid.* 52

¹³² Keith Warsop, *The Early F.A. Cup Finals and the Southern Amateurs*, (Beeston: SoccerData, 2004), 104-105.

¹³³ *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 3423, 10 December 1965, 5728

¹³⁴ George Eden Marindin, *House Book, 1872-1887*, Eton College Archives, SCH HOUS 03 GEM 01

The amateur attitudes which shaped the later sporting careers of these men were largely acquired at Eton and reinforced at Cambridge. Harris and Hawke, as first-class cricketers, accepted professionalism as a long-standing feature of the game. However, professional cricketers were expected to know their place, and those who challenged this status quo were likely to find themselves unemployed.¹³⁵ The careers of Harris and Hawke, who after university captained Kent and Yorkshire respectively, and who both led England before going on to long administrative careers at the MCC, reflected this. In 1924 Hawke remarked of Cecil Parkin, a professional who had dared to criticise the way that Arthur Gilligan was leading England on their tour of Australia, that if it were up to him, he would never be allowed to set foot on a ground again, adding 'Pray God no professional may ever captain England!'¹³⁶ In contrast, George Marindin's former pupils, Cuthbert Ottaway and Alfred Lyttelton, were the very epitome of amateurism in its golden age. When Gardiner and others wrote of the dangers of over specialisation in sport, it was of men like these they were thinking. Both represented their university at five different sports and played football and cricket for England.¹³⁷ Ottaway was at Brasenose College, Oxford and Lyttelton at Trinity College, Cambridge. Both also exemplified the ideal 'university athlete' with a body type akin to the pentathletes idealised in Greek sculpture rather than the muscular bulk of which the sports historians were so disdainful. They were at their peaks just as Mahaffy started to write

¹³⁵ John Major, *More Than a Game: Cricket's Early Years*, (London: Harper, 2007), 266-269

¹³⁶ Mike Marqusee, *Anyone but England: Cricket and the National Malaise*, (London: Verso, 1994), 93

¹³⁷ Mark C. Curthoys, John Cuthbert Ottaway, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/107097>, last updated 01/09/2017, accessed on 02/01/2020; Henry Colin Gray Matthew, Alfred Lyttelton, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/34654>, last updated 03/01/2008, accessed on 02/01/2020

about ancient sport and their exploits would have been well known to Percy Gardner.

In choosing to write about ancient rowing as his subject for the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* in 1881 Gardner openly admitted that his was at least partly motivated by hoping to prove his own sport had 'greater antiquity than is commonly imagined.'¹³⁸ Further evidence of the interplay between ancient and modern sport, and the networking of public school and university sportsmen, comes from his acknowledgment that Edmond Warre had directed him to a particular passage by Arrian of Nicomedia in his *Anabasis of Alexander* concerning a Greek regatta at Babylon.¹³⁹ Gardner concluded his study of ancient racing by stating that 'it is not likely that the galley-races of the Greeks would be of much interest to the modern athlete or oarsman. The construction of the galleys afforded little scope for skill in rowing, and the rowers were often slaves.'¹⁴⁰ Here we have an echo of a point often later repeated by Gardiner and Harris when they dismissed Roman sport as a pale shadow of its Greek forebear, to them slaves were equivalent to professionals and could thus not be regarded as proper sportsmen.

However, Gardner was writing from a subtly different standpoint to Mahaffy. As a keen sportsman himself, he was looking for inspiration in the past and connections with the present. Mahaffy, although keen on what he saw as the

¹³⁸ Gardner, *Boat-racing among the Greeks*, 90

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 92

¹⁴⁰ Gardner, *Boat-racing among the Greeks*, 96

proper traditional interests of an Anglo-Irish gentleman of cricket and country pursuits, was suspicious and dismissive of much of modern sport and projected his prejudices into the past. He saw physical training as useful but felt that it was only city dwellers that needed it, as country dwellers lived healthier lives anyway. According to Mahaffy, the gymnasium was a poor substitute for the life of a country gentleman, which he equated with the Spartans, and city athletes necessarily became professional in outlook because of the circumstances in which they trained.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, Mahaffy extended his assertion that training was problematic by claiming that cricket and boating in his own time were being 'vulgarised by the invasion of this professional spirit'.¹⁴² In this context, professionalism did not necessarily signify monetary reward, merely the pursuit of applause over 'the intrinsic pleasure of sport for its own sake'.¹⁴³

How little the work of Mahaffy and Gardner initially troubled the public consciousness might be gauged from Montague Shearman's remark in his 1887 *Athletics and Football* that only one writer, 'other than the learned Strutt' had produced an essay on ancient Greek Athletics.¹⁴⁴ Shearman does not name this other writer, but the quotation he gives, 'in one respect our position is like that of the Romans. Athletics are not indigenous with us', comes from Henry Fazakerley Wilkinson's *Modern Athletics*.¹⁴⁵ The 'learned Strutt' to whom Shearman referred was Joseph, who had produced his *The Sports and*

¹⁴¹ Mahaffy, *Old Greek Athletics*, 63

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 63

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 64

¹⁴⁴ Montague Shearman, *Athletics and Football*, (London: Longmans Green & Co, 1887), 4

¹⁴⁵ Henry Fazakerley Wilkinson, *Modern Athletics*, (London: The Field, 1875), 10

Pastimes of the People of England in 1801. Strutt was largely concerned with English sport from the Medieval period through to his own time and barely mentioned the ancient Greeks, except in his final chapter which was devoted to children's games rather than sport proper.¹⁴⁶

Shearman was perhaps not aware of Mahaffy and Gardner's work because he was an Oxford man; Gardner only arrived at Lincoln College, Oxford, just as Shearman was publishing, having previously worked at Cambridge and the British Museum. However, as a first-class classical scholar himself and a keen sportsman with Blues in rugby and athletics, it is remarkable that Shearman seems not to have heard of either man's work in the field. Having said this, sport history was not the main thrust of either Mahaffy or Gardner's substantial academic output and their body of work on the subject was comparatively limited both in scope and volume.

The Evils of Professionalism

Percy Gardner's most far-reaching work on sport was his chapter on Olympia in his *New Chapters in Greek History*, which came out after Shearman's book. Gardner, who had been closely associated with Mahaffy for many years as a member of the Hellenic Society, took a very similar line by warning the sportsmen of his own era to learn from the Ancients. He opened with a particularly strong statement to that effect.

¹⁴⁶ Joseph Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, (London: Methuen & Co, 1801), 303-308

Scarcely any chapter of Greek history is of more interest, or contains more instruction for modern readers, than that which records the rise and the fall of Greek athletic sports. The chapter is a short one. The bloom of all the promising institutions of Greece was short. Abuse soon succeeded use; excess supervened on moderation; and the same causes which had made the greatness of the people, in matters athletic as in other matters, also caused its decline and eclipse.¹⁴⁷

Here Gardner was setting a second enduring myth that was to accompany Mahaffy's invention of the Greek gentleman amateur. He had introduced 'the idea that ancient sport was specialised and corrupted, and thus in decline from the fourth-century BCE on'.¹⁴⁸ In tandem, these ideas would dominate subsequent thinking on ancient sport. That Gardner thought along such lines is hardly surprising given that a similar line of thought dominated Victorian thinking on ancient Greece generally with such influential figures as Thomas Babbington Macauley, Matthew Arnold, and John Ruskin creating a narrative where Greek civilisation truly flowered for little more than a century before catastrophe struck and a long and painful decline set in.¹⁴⁹ Pleket neatly summed up this habit when he spoke of a classicist bias prompting a tendency to see rise and fall patterns where they did not necessarily exist.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, 266-267

¹⁴⁸ Sofie Remijsen, *The End of Greek Athletics in Late Antiquity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 6

¹⁴⁹ Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 73

¹⁵⁰ Henri Willy Pleket, 'Games, Prizes, Athletes and Ideology. Some Aspects of the History of Sport in the Greco-Roman World', *Stadion*, 1 (1975), 51

For Gardner this decline was characterised by the rise of professionalism and specialised training and diets, but he was surely guilty of imagining ancient sport through the eyes of a middle-class Victorian when he wrote that ‘the professional element of the competitors came in, and the gentlemanly spirit went out.’¹⁵¹ Gardner’s view of Greek sport starts in an era where he characterises the athletes as gentlemen and as belonging to the better sort, but which went downhill as a result of audiences wanting ever-more violent fighting events and unscrupulous trainers, such as Herodicus of Selymbria, ‘spoiling’ athletics by introducing specialised diets and coaching.¹⁵² Seeking to justify his narrative, he stated that Alexander I of Macedon was proud to compete in the Olympics in 504 BCE whereas 170 years later Alexander the Great declined to take part.¹⁵³ Gardner’s reasoning was that this showed that the Olympics, and therefore athletics as a whole, had been devalued over this period. However, the comparison is not at all equitable. In 504 Alexander I was not yet even a king and, as a Macedonian prince, would have been keen to compete in an Olympics to prove his Greekness at a time when some Greek states, particularly Athens, wanted to portray Macedonians as non-Greek barbarians.¹⁵⁴ For a man in Alexander the Great’s position, however, competing carried the risk of defeat, which could have had serious effects politically. Noted as a fast runner, Alexander was once asked if he would enter

¹⁵¹ Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, 300

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 300-301

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 300

¹⁵⁴ Robert Malcolm Errington, *A History of Macedonia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 4

the *stade* race, and he replied that he would as long as his fellow competitors were all kings.¹⁵⁵

Gardner concluded with two further warnings. The first concerned 'certain ugly vices' which he said took place in gymnasia, by which he was alluding to homosexuality.¹⁵⁶ The second was a plea for the rampant athleticism of Oxford and Cambridge in the 1890s to be toned down; not only was he disapproving of professional sportsmen, but he also disapproved of amateurs who took their games too seriously.

Among ourselves there has been a great revival in the practice of athletic sports, which now occupy in our schools and Universities a place which is, in the opinion of many teachers, too large and too honourable. Whether they will retain that place or not will probably depend on their capacity to acknowledge a limit.¹⁵⁷

Other notable classicists, such as Walter Pater and Richard Jebb, touched on athleticism in the ancient world in their work, but their interest was ultimately drawn towards aestheticism over agonistics; Jebb managed to write extensively on the depth and sophistication of Pindar's poetry without concerning himself too much on the subject matter. He only mentions the

¹⁵⁵ Mark Golden, *Sport and Society in Ancient Greece*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 161

¹⁵⁶ Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, 303

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 303

athletic content of Pindar's work in passing when making the point that poetry and sculpture were recognised by the poet as complimentary sister arts in which the immobility of the statue is brought to life by the vitality of verse.¹⁵⁸ Similarly Pater's essay *The Age of Athletic Prizemen* might be expected to tell us something about the golden age of Greek sport, but is concerned with sculpture, particularly that of Myron, as a means of representing masculine beauty rather than considering how and why ancient athletes achieved their body forms.¹⁵⁹

The Influence of E. Norman Gardiner

By the time E. Norman Gardiner came to write *Greek Athletics Sports and Festivals*, the contemporary sporting landscape had been completely transformed. Sport had escaped the bounds of school and university and had become a nationwide obsession enjoyed by all classes, not only as participants but increasingly as spectators. This alarmed Gardiner who echoed Mahaffy's warning when he wrote;

The story of Greek athletics has a peculiarly practical interest in the present day in view of the development of athletics which has taken place in the last fifty years, and of the revival of the Olympic Games. There are striking resemblances between the history of modern athletics and of Greek. The movement began in the sports

¹⁵⁸ Richard Jebb, Pindar, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 3 (1882), 176

¹⁵⁹ Walter Pater, *The Age of Athletic Prizemen*, *Greek Studies*, (New York: Macmillan, 1897), 286-319

of our public schools and universities, spread rapidly through all English-speaking lands, and is now extending to the Continent. Athletics are as popular among us as they were in Greece, and for us, as for the Greeks, they have been a great instrument of good. Unfortunately, the signs of excess are no less manifest today than they were in the times of Xenophanes and Euripides. History repeats itself strangely. We have seen the same growth of competition, the same hero-worship of the athlete, the same publicity and prominence given to sport out of all proportion to its deserts, the same tendency to specialisation and professionalism. Sport has too often become an end in itself. The hero-worship of the athlete tempts men to devote to selfish amusement the best years of their lives, and to neglect the true interests of themselves and of their country.¹⁶⁰

Gardiner did not like the developments he saw in contemporary sport and responded by using the past to warn of dire consequences if there was not a change in direction. However, at this stage, his warning was a moral one, he was concerned for the well-being of athletes and society at large, worried that both might be wasting too much time on trivial pursuits. In raising these concerns, Gardiner was following the lead of Roman patricians like Juvenal and Cicero who disapproved of mass spectator sport because they saw them as both pandering to the masses and a distraction from real Roman values

¹⁶⁰ Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 5

and culture.¹⁶¹ Much of the disapproval of Roman games came from patricians with republican leanings, their real objection to the games being that because they were popular this could enable unscrupulous emperors to manipulate the mob.¹⁶² A secondary objection was that gladiators, charioteers and other performers from humble backgrounds sometimes became so popular that they became the favourites of emperors and upset the *status quo*.¹⁶³ Gardiner on the other hand, merely felt that excessive adulation of sportsmen was distasteful and that spectators would be healthier if they played themselves rather than passively watching others.¹⁶⁴

That Gardiner was interested in applying the supposed lessons of the past on his present was again reinforced when he turned his attention to football;

The history of football during the last two years is ominous. On the one hand we see the leading amateur clubs revolting from the tyranny of a Football Association conducted in the interests of various joint-stock companies masquerading as Football Clubs; on the other hand, we see the professional players forming a trades-union to protect themselves against the tyranny of the same commercialism. The Rugby Union has struggled manfully to uphold the purity of the game, and has often received but scanty

¹⁶¹ Jerry Toner, *The Day Commodus Killed a Rhino: Understanding the Roman Games*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2014), 37

¹⁶² Thomas Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators*, (London: Routledge, 1992), 137-143

¹⁶³ Roland Auguet, *Cruelty and Civilization*, (London: Routledge, 1972), 164

¹⁶⁴ Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 130

encouragement for its efforts. Fortunately, there are signs that public opinion is changing, and is beginning to appreciate the efforts of the amateur bodies controlling various sports. The very existence of these bodies proves how real the danger is. Under these circumstances the history of the decline of Greek athletics is an object-lesson full of instruction.¹⁶⁵

Gardiner is directly addressing the issues of his own time here, but even when he was dealing with the distant past, he was often anxious to provide links with his present. He began his description of Greek athletics with accounts from Homer, which he seemingly regarded as literal and largely unaltered by generations of oral transmission. In the Homeric period, games were chiefly aristocratic and usually related to funerals, although they might also be held when a distinguished guest visited. Prizes were offered such as tripods, oxen, ox hides, and even women. Gardiner was at pains to explain that the value of the prizes was meant to show the generosity of the giver, or to honour the dead, rather than to attract competitors.¹⁶⁶ With an eye to the amateur ideal, he regarded the awards for competitors as gifts rather than prizes in the true sense, although the fact they were given for specific positions in particular events seems to suggest otherwise. Further on in his narrative he stated that by the close of the fifth-century BCE there was a clear distinction in ancient Greece between professionals and amateurs, claiming the former were

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 6

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 14

referred to as ἀθλητής (*athletes*) and the later as ἰδιώτης (*idiotes*).¹⁶⁷ In making this claim he was applying the terminology of his own time, and all its accompanying assumptions regarding class and pecuniary reward, inappropriately to the past. The distinction between *athletes* and *idiotes* was really about whether they took sport seriously or casually, or were skilled or unskilled.¹⁶⁸ *Idiotes*, literally merely meant a private person as opposed to a public figure.¹⁶⁹

Later, as he recounted how Greek athletics grew more sophisticated, Gardiner was able to return to the theme of professionalism, stating ‘The nemesis of excess in athletics is specialisation, specialisation begets professionalism, and professionalism is the death of all true sport.’¹⁷⁰ Gardiner was echoing concerns already expressed by Gardner and Mahaffy, but there were other areas where he went further. Gardiner was writing when Britain was at the height of her imperial power; justification for the imperial project was bolstered by theories such as Social Darwinism and some academics conducted pseudo-scientific studies intended to validate white superiority.¹⁷¹ Gardiner’s work at times fell into this trap and *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals* contains many asides which make the modern reader uncomfortable. For Gardiner, Greek athletics properly originated with the Achaeans of the Peloponnese, whom he described as fair-haired northerners, following Müller’s theory that

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 130

¹⁶⁸ Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*, 7

¹⁶⁹ Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics*, 212

¹⁷⁰ Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 122

¹⁷¹ Douglas Lorrimer, ‘Theoretical Racism in Late-Victorian Anthropology, 1870-1900, *Victorian Studies*, 31, no. 3 (Spring 1988), 405-430; Jack Williams, *Cricket and Race*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 3; Walker, *Walker’s Manly Exercises*, 21

the Dorians had more in common with modern day Germans and Anglo-Saxons than modern Greeks.¹⁷² Reiterating this point twenty years later, he was to put this down to a common central European ancestry.¹⁷³ Elsewhere Gardiner was scathing of darker skinned people and dismissive of Minoan sport as mere entertainment for the courtiers of oriental despots.¹⁷⁴ His analysis of the battle of Marathon concluded that the Persian defeat was at least partially down to the Greeks' horror at being confronted with an enemy that was long-haired and effeminate.¹⁷⁵ This was an odd statement given that his own illustrations showed that Greek men sometimes wore their hair long and in braids, but was symptomatic of his tendency to use evidence selectively.¹⁷⁶

Gardiner's thoughts on race and athleticism were in stark contrast with Percy Gardner's earlier analysis of the prowess of different races which he seems to have regarded as broadly equal when he wrote 'In fact, in the matter of athletic sports our more complicated civilisation gives us no advantage. Red Indians

¹⁷² Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 9; Much of the theory behind this belief originated with Müller's beliefs regarding the Dorians and their origins, and their subsequent development by his pupil Ernst Curtius who recognised that the Greeks' situation in classical times was very similar to that of the Germans in the nineteenth-century in that both consisted of a number of small independent, and often warring, states bound together by commonalities of language and culture. This similarity encouraged German scholars to believe in direct links between the Greeks and themselves but also importantly created an assumption that ancient Greece had the same kind of homogeneity that nineteenth-century Germany did. In reality the idea of Greece and Greekness was both varied and fluid in ancient times and the very idea of a uniformed view of Greekness is increasingly being challenged. See for example; Weiler, *The Living Legacy*, 19-28; Rebecca Futo Kennedy, *Immigrant Women in Athens: Gender, Ethnicity and Citizenship in the Classical City*, (London: Routledge, 2014), 15; Joseph E. Skinner, *The Invention of Greek Ethnography from Homer to Herodotus*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

¹⁷³ Edward Norman Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 2; *Ibid.*, 18

¹⁷⁴ Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 11

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 107

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 87

run as fast as English professionals, and some of the most distinguished pugilists have been negroes.¹⁷⁷ Having said this, Gardner apparently had a poor opinion of the Asian peoples conquered by the Greeks as he felt they infected their new overlords with despotism.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, although he characterised the Greeks as manly, he also felt that Asians were effeminate, a prejudice he evidently passed on to Gardiner.¹⁷⁹

When Gardiner came to cover athletics during the Roman period, he could not resist presenting parallels with his perceptions of the evils of sport in his own time. While conceding the resurgence in the popularity of athletics as a sport in the eastern Roman Empire he projected a range of negative connotations on it; the athletes were no longer purely Hellenic but oecumenical, even slaves were allowed to compete, the athletes who represented the cities of the east were not always native to them and were thus like Scottish footballers playing for English clubs; even the large crowds at Roman games were a sign of vulgar decline and decadence to Gardiner.¹⁸⁰ He did concede that some professional sportsmen were admirable characters, but he regarded them as a minority and, although he named some of them he did not expand on what made them special. He spent much more time on documenting what he felt were the excessive rewards and status available to successful athletes of the Roman period wondering, with a degree of perspicacity, whether victorious FA Cup

¹⁷⁷ Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, 273

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 419

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 445

¹⁸⁰ Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World.*, 50

teams might one day warrant public receptions with the mayors of their home towns.¹⁸¹

After Gardiner

By the time Gardiner died in 1930, he had dominated the study of ancient sport for twenty-five years. Something of a hiatus was to follow. Partially, this was explained by a widespread acceptance of his work and the feeling that it had been so thorough and authoritative that there was little to add. As Kyle explains, Gardiner's reputation gave him the same sort of status in sports history that Edward Gibbon enjoyed in mainstream classical history.¹⁸²

Gardiner's mantle was eventually taken up by Harold Harris who produced a body of work on ancient sport between 1960 and his death in 1974. Although Harris had a long-standing interest in the history of sport, he was able to turn his attention to it in depth only towards the end of his career and in retirement because his workload as a professor of both Classics and English at St David's College, Lampeter, left little time for personal research interests. His published body of work on ancient sport began with articles in *Greece and Rome* and the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* and culminated in the publication of *Greek Athletics and Athletes* in 1964 and *Sport in Greece and Rome* in 1972. Very much a disciple of Gardiner, Harris' work gained considerable attention as it reignited the idea of the ancient roots of amateurism at a time when contemporary sport,

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 111

¹⁸² Kyle, 'E. Norman Gardiner and the Decline of Greek Sport', 10

particularly Olympic sport, was dealing with profound conflicts over the nature and direction of sport.¹⁸³

As detailed earlier, the years following Harris' death in 1974 saw the reappraisal of ancient sports history by Pleket, Miller, Young, and Kyle among others. Kyle in particular made the point that earlier sports historians had been led astray by the classification of the major ancient festivals as *stephanitic* or 'crown' games while lesser competitions were referred to as *chrematitic* or 'valuable prize' games.¹⁸⁴ This contributed to the myth of a divide in ancient sport onto which late nineteenth-century historians were tempted to project the differences between amateur and professional circuits in their own time, with the accompanying assumptions about the motivations and relative levels of sporting purity of those taking part. In reality, no such divide ever existed and ancient athletes moved freely between games. Recent work by Sofie Remijsen has gone even further in exploring athletics in late antiquity with the result that even the distinction between crown and prize games has been called into question.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Harold Arthur Harris, *Greek Athletes and Athletics*, (London: Hutchinson, 1964), 20; Henri Willy Pleket, Games, Prizes, Athletes and Ideology, *Stadion*, 1 (1976), 51

¹⁸⁴ Donald G. Kyle, *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*, (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 72

¹⁸⁵ Sofie Remijsen, The So-Called 'Crown Games': Terminology and Historical Context of the Ancient Categories for Agones, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, BD. 177 (2011), 97-101; Sofie Remijsen, The End of the Ancient Olympics and Other Contests: Why the Agonistic Circuit Collapsed in Late Antiquity, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 135 (2015), 147-164; Sofie Remijsen, *The End of Greek Athletics in Late Antiquity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 209-212

Conclusion

In the last four decades Gardiner's work has been reassessed as successive scholars have followed Pleket's lead in questioning some of his conclusions and interpretations of the sources. In 1978 Stephen Miller wrote quite reasonably that Gardiner 'knew his subject matter intimately, cared for it tremendously, and wanted to share it generously.'¹⁸⁶ David Young took a much less forgiving line towards Gardiner's championing of ancient amateurism. Young saw much that was objectionable in Gardiner's work, some of which he dismissed as the result of poor scholarship, but much of which he put down to a deliberate class bias which he felt Mahaffy, Gardner, and Gardiner shared in common.¹⁸⁷ Kyle later cautioned that Young's assessment was perhaps too harsh and that he was in danger of 'throwing the baby out with the bath water' by dismissing Gardiner's work as little more than an exercise in reimagining the past in order to influence his present.¹⁸⁸ As Kyle says, at the time Gardiner was working, nobody had explored ancient Greek sport in such depth or been so meticulous in matching historical sources to the archaeological record.¹⁸⁹ Kyle's assessment of Gardiner was that he was an honourable, if sometimes prickly and arrogant scholar, who was conditioned to reach the conclusions he did through his background as a product of the highly athleticised environments of Marlborough College and Oxford University, combined with the prevailing orthodoxies of amateurism and Victorian Hellenism.¹⁹⁰ More recently, Kyle's work on Herodotus makes the point that authorial control has

¹⁸⁶ Kyle, 'E. Norman Gardiner and the Decline of Greek Sport', 10

¹⁸⁷ Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*, 51

¹⁸⁸ Kyle, 'E. Norman Gardiner and the Decline of Greek Sport', 11

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 13

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 34

been used to guide audiences in writers' preferred directions since the very beginnings of sports history. Like Herodotus, Gardiner could be a 'charming but credulous storyteller' leading his readers towards his preferred destination, but sometimes misleading himself in his haste to get there.¹⁹¹ By the same token, it is important to recognise that my own observations on the work of Gardiner and his colleagues is necessarily shaped by my background, education, and experiences. Like Gardiner and Mahaffy, modern observers can see many parallels between ancient games and sport today, but our changing perceptions of class, race, and professionalism in sport may lead us to reach very different conclusions. Jason König additionally observes that there is 'an odd tension between familiarity and difference in ancient athletics, and being aware of that difference is an important starting-point for addressing the ancient evidence'.¹⁹² He points out that superficial similarities with modern sport can lead us to draw false conclusions about the past and that this confusion has been magnified by inaccurate ideas about the nature of ancient Greek sport which initially arose from Victorian scholarship and have subsequently been distorted by the development and mythology of the modern Olympics.

At its worst this resulted in them viewing the athletes of antiquity as having almost identical experiences and motivations to sportsmen in their own time. In his introduction to *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, Gardiner talks about

¹⁹¹ Donald Kyle, 'Pan-Hellenism and Particularism: Herodotus on Sport, Greekness, Piety and War', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26, no. 2 (February 2009), 184

¹⁹² Jason König, *Greek Athletics*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 3

the old games having ‘an honorable and friendly rivalry’,¹⁹³ a phrase which conjures up an image of Oxbridge men smiling and shaking hands at the end of a hard-fought contest. This misses a fundamental difference between the ancient Greek and British Victorian attitude to sport. For the ancient Greek, winning was everything.¹⁹⁴ Gardiner regarded cheating and corruption in ancient sport as the inevitable side-effects of rising professionalism and said so more than once.¹⁹⁵ However, cheating and corruption in ancient sport were never solely about money, they were the by-products of the Greeks’ ‘must-win’ culture. Cheating had always been an issue at the ancient Games, hence the need for the judges to keep the athletes in line by force if necessary.¹⁹⁶ This contrasted sharply with the ideals of nineteenth-century Corinthian footballers who were outraged by the introduction of the penalty kick, on the grounds that it acknowledged the unthinkable idea that deliberate foul play was even possible.¹⁹⁷

Not only was deliberate foul play possible in ancient Greece, it was also fairly common. This was clearly evident from the row of *zanes*, bronze statues of Zeus paid for by fines for bribery, which lined the entrance to Olympia.¹⁹⁸ City states were keen to outdo each other for political reasons which led to incidents of bribery and poaching each other’s athletes.¹⁹⁹ More importantly,

¹⁹³ Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 4

¹⁹⁴ Golden, *Sport and Society in Ancient Greece*, xi

¹⁹⁵ Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 4; *Ibid.*, 146; *Ibid.*, 186

¹⁹⁶ Mark Golden, *Greek Sport and Social Status*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 56

¹⁹⁷ Dilwyn Porter, *Revenge of the Crouch End Vampires: The AFA, the FA and English Football’s ‘Great Split’, 1907-14*, in Dilwyn Porter and Stephen Wagg (Eds.), *Amateurism in British Sport: It Matters Not Who Won or Lost*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 67

¹⁹⁸ Judith Swaddling, *The Ancient Olympic Games*, (London: The British Museum Press, 2015), 39

¹⁹⁹ Kyle, *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*, 79

the ancient Greek attitude to sport differed to that of Victorian Britain in the way it viewed the individual. Greek sport was overwhelmingly a solo affair dedicated to the *arete*, the glory and valour, of the individual.²⁰⁰ This was the opposite to the ideal of sport beloved of Victorian muscular Christians, which emphasised team games and individual selflessness.²⁰¹ Almond, who had made Loretto Scotland's most successful sporting school, was so committed to this ideal that he banned golf and athletics from the school programme because he felt they encouraged selfishness.²⁰² Almond may have been influenced by the Spartans for their physical toughness and devotion to duty, but he had little time for Greek notions of personal glory. The runners and golfers of Loretto may have developed selfish tendencies as a result of solo competition, but in doing so they were arguably closer in attitude to ancient Greek athletes than the mutually supportive members of the rugby XV. Gardiner, as a keen rugby player himself, might have been expected to appreciate this and comment on it, but instead preferred to take the line that selfishness in sports was an inevitable consequence of professionalism rather than the natural by-product of solo events.²⁰³ Where he did try to draw parallels with rugby was by comparing it to an unnamed Spartan ball game which he claimed significantly 'had no less than fifteen players.'²⁰⁴ Gardiner also drew comparisons between rugby and the Spartan game of *platanistas*, an extremely violent game in which two teams of boys fought for control of an

²⁰⁰ David Sansone, *Greek Athletics and the Genesis of Sport*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 75-81

²⁰¹ Birley, *Sport and the Making of Britain*, 209-211

²⁰² Letter from Hely Hutchinson Almond to Garden G. Smith, Editor of *Tatler*, 4 October 1902, quoted in Robert Jameson Mackenzie, *Almond of Loretto; Being the Life and a Selection from the Letters of Hely Hutchinson Almond* (London: Archibald Constable and Co Ltd, 1905), 201-202

²⁰³ Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 132

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 185

artificial island.²⁰⁵ No ball was involved and no holds were barred, boys could bite, kick, punch and even gouge each other's eyes.²⁰⁶ Gardiner's contemporary, Kenneth Freeman, was so keen to equate ancient Sparta to the modern public school that he claimed it was the origin of the fags and prefects system.²⁰⁷ Freeman was a product of Winchester and Trinity College, Cambridge who returned to Winchester as an assistant master after taking his BA. A brilliant scholar who had won scholarships and a string of awards at both school and university, he was widely expected to return to Trinity as a fellow after receiving his MA but struggled with ill-health throughout his life and died aged only 24.²⁰⁸ Freeman also saw *platanistas* as a precursor of mass brawls at English schools or fights between groups of German university students, while Gardiner saw it as a forerunner of the sort of scrimmage seen in the Eton Wall Game.²⁰⁹

Such selective interpretation of the past illustrates how history is shaped by the predilections of historians; the relationship between author and output is shaped by not only what they uncover during their research, but how they choose to interpret it in the light of their own experiences and prejudices. This

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 184

²⁰⁶ Kenneth J. Freeman, *Schools of Hellas: An Essay on the Practice and Theory of Ancient Greek Education*, (London: Macmillan, 1912), 28

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 19

²⁰⁸ *Daily Telegraph & Courier*, 3 July 1907, 4

²⁰⁹ Freeman, *Schools of Hellas*, 28; Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 184; Mass brawls were not uncommon occurrences for the Victorian public schoolboy. Violence sometimes followed the Eton Harrow cricket match, for example in 1873 (see *Manchester Evening News*, 14 July 1873, 3), and could also occur within school such as in the annual confrontation between Collegers and Oppidians in October at Eton, see Chandos, *Boys Together*, 147

can be illustrated by the attitude of Gardiner towards mass spectator sport as an idea. After denouncing it for producing hero-worship, he went on to say;

Still more grievous than this waste of time and energy is the absorbing interest taken by the general public in the athletic performance of others. The crowds which watch a professional football match, the still larger crowds of those who think and read of little else, the columns of the daily press devoted to accounts of such matches, are no proof of an athletic nation, but rather of the reverse. They are merely a sign of an unhealthy love of excitement and amusement, and the absence of all other interests.²¹⁰

Here Gardiner is reflecting a paternalistic view, prevalent among the upper and middle-class amateurs of his day, who wanted to encourage the working-class to play sport rather than watch it. While this attitude was partly based on a genuine desire to see poorer people develop healthier lifestyles, providing fitter potential soldiers as a useful by-product, it was also based on a fear of social disorder at large gatherings of working men and a distaste for professional domination in sport.²¹¹

If Gardiner, Mahaffy, Gardner, Harris, and the others of their school sometimes strayed into projecting too much of their own beliefs and experiences into their

²¹⁰ Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 6

²¹¹ Birley, *Land of Sport and Glory*, 31-41

interpretation of the past, can we blame them? Postmodernists might argue that it is not really possible to do history with any degree of objectivity at all, but Richard Evans' summary of E.H. Carr's observation in *What is History?* describes the process which Gardiner and the others went through very well.

He challenges and undermines the belief, brought to university by too many students on leaving school, that history is simply a matter of objective fact. He introduces the idea that history books, like the people who write them, are products of their own times, and that their authors bring particular ideas and ideologies to bear on the past.²¹²

This is not the way that the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century historians of ancient sport would have seen it. In fact, it was one of their number, John Bagnell Bury, who in his inaugural lecture as Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, put forward the notion that history was capable of being fully factual and wholly scientific.²¹³ According to Bury, while being a man of letters was a useful attribute for a historian, the important thing was how they analysed and used the raw data they uncovered about the past.²¹⁴ 'History is a science' he said 'no less and no more.'²¹⁵

²¹² Richard John Evans, *In Defence of History*, (London: Granta, 1997), 2

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 23

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 23

²¹⁵ John Bagnell Bury, *An Inaugural Lecture: Delivered in the Divinity School Cambridge on January 26 1903*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 7

This exposes a fundamental problem with works such as *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*. Gardiner would have claimed to have written it to Bury's standard while, actually, it was written to Carr's. There is nothing wrong with pointing out parallels between past and present, but it is important for the historian to acknowledge that they are doing it based on the parameters of their own time and circumstances. Writing today for example, a historian might have a completely different take on mass spectator sport in the Roman Empire. They might focus on the comparisons between football hooligans and circus factions, or the ways in which Roman politicians used games to distract the masses, but the size of the crowds themselves would not be controversial.

The charitable approach to Mahaffy, Gardner and Gardiner's opinions regarding class, race, amateurism, and professionalism is to assume that they were the results of unconscious bias brought about by their social and education backgrounds. At the same time, it is important to recognise that our own perspectives on these issues is very different and can distort our view of men who felt they were expressing truthful and honourable opinions. However, it is possible to see that their enthusiasm for a particular line of argument may have caused them to use evidence inappropriately. One of the clearest examples of this is in Gardiner's argument on the deterioration in body-type brought about by over-specialisation in later Greek and Roman sport. In his chapter on *The Age of the Athletic Ideal*, Gardiner makes extensive use of photography, showing no less than ten pictures of idealised sculptures of male

bodies.²¹⁶ These are intended to illustrate the perfect body to which the all-round athlete should aspire, which of course was identical to the body to which the late-Victorian and Edwardian gentleman amateur aspired.²¹⁷ In his subsequent chapters, on the decline of Greek athletics and sport in the Roman period, Gardiner includes only one sculpture, a heavily-muscled representation of Heracles.²¹⁸ Gardiner instead uses extensive quotations from ancient sources to make his case that professionalism, training, and diets led to grotesque changes in body shape and produced athletes who were lethargic and generally unfit for anything other than their chosen specialisation.²¹⁹ In his choice of sources, he may have been selective, but their authenticity is not questionable. It was his choice of illustrations which was misleading. Gardiner backed up his assertions about declining physical types by showing us a sculpture that is not meant to represent a mortal man at all, but a famously strong figure from mythology. He followed this up by justifying his opinions with an analysis of the body of a Roman boxer from a mosaic at Caracalla.²²⁰ Gardiner ridiculed men like this for;

Their clumsy, ill-proportioned bodies, their scarred and mutilated faces, their small and brainless heads rendered yet more hideous by the top-knot (cirrus) in which their scanty hair is tied.²²¹

²¹⁶ Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 86-121

²¹⁷ Joanne Begiato, Between Poise and Power: Embodied Manliness in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Culture, *Transactions of the RHS*, 26, (2016), 128

²¹⁸ Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 147

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 188

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 190

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 189

Certainly, the mosaic at Caracalla is crude compared to the sculptures which Gardiner used to illustrate the perfect body, but it is impossible to judge the relative merits of their original subjects; even the best mosaic is simply not capable of representing the human form with anywhere near the realism of the best sculpture.²²² Furthermore, it may be assumed that, even in Gardiner's age of the athletic ideal, events such as the pankration, wrestling and boxing were dominated by heavier athletes.²²³ They may not have been the giant bruisers of professional Rome, but they would have been considerably larger than the body-type represented by the *discobolus*, who by definition must have been a pentathlete.²²⁴

The historians of ancient sport had raised a series of issues from antiquity which they felt were being repeated to the detriment of sport in their own time. Professionalism, specialisation, diets, training, the size of crowds and stadia, the dangers of hero-worship, bad behaviour of spectators, cheating, corruption, and negative play had all been flagged up as potential pitfalls but the reality was that the appetite for sport was so great and so widespread that the idea of restricting access to a comparatively small band of gentleman amateurs was always impossible. Certainly, the various 'evils' of ancient sport would all rear their heads again in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and arguably continue to be problems to this day, but they are the

²²² Gardiner did include a sculpture of a Roman boxer in his chapter on boxing later in the book. Certainly, the sculpture captures much of the boxer's character more than the mosaic from Caracalla. We see an older boxer, perhaps near the end of his career, with a battered face and a tired expression. There is nothing particularly grotesque about his physique however. Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 408

²²³ *Ibid.*, 416

²²⁴ Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics*, 60

inevitable side-effects of organised sport, as difficult to control in the twenty-first-century as they were two and a half thousand years ago.

However, if ancient sports history had comparatively little direct impact on the development of modern sport the same cannot necessarily be said of classical culture. The Greco-Roman world shaped the development of modern sport in a myriad of subtle ways via its impact on the education system and how it shaped Victorian notions of manliness, masculinity, and morality. These areas will be explored in the following chapters.

Chapter 4 – Warre, Welldon, Etonian Classicism, and Victorian Sport

Introduction

Of all the figures who straddled the boundary between classics and athleticism in nineteenth-century Britain, Edmond Warre was surely one of the most well-connected and influential. His detractors regarded him as the ultimate example of the athletic schoolmaster, and there were many who greeted his appointment to the headmastership of Eton with dismay, seeing it as a victory for sport over scholarship.¹ This view was forcefully expressed by a correspondent calling himself 'Academicus' who wrote to *The Times* in forthright terms.

Mr Warre is forty-seven years of age and has been for twenty-four years a master at Eton. In his youth he gained a Balliol scholarship, a First Class in the Final Schools, and a fellowship at All Souls, but for the last quarter of a century he has made no mark as a scholar, a preacher or a man of letters. His name is associated with no questions of educational reform; on the other hand, he is well known as the best rowing coach in England and as an able field-officer of volunteers. He is an oppidan of the oppidans.²

¹ Malcolm Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness: The Legacy of Thring's Uppingham*, (Truro: Sunnyrest Books, 2015), 259

² Academicus, The Head-Mastership of Eton, *The Times*, 26 July 1884, 10; Academicus was almost certainly a King's Scholar and is using Oppidan, not just to indicate that Warre had been a fee-paying pupil, but to suggest that he was oafish and boorish.

Academicus' letter was written in support of Warre's main rival for the headmastership, James Welldon, another former Etonian, seventeen years Warre's junior and, at that time, headmaster of Dulwich College. Welldon, who would go on to a successful career as headmaster of Harrow, and a rather less successful term as Bishop of Calcutta, was favourably compared by Academicus to revered figures in pedagogical history such as Thomas Arnold and Samuel Butler of Shrewsbury, but in Academicus' eyes his main advantage was that he was a former King's Scholar. The battle between Warre and Welldon for the headship was seen by many associated with Eton as a contest between Oppidans and Scholars or traditionalists and reformers.³ While it certainly was a battle between Oppidans and Scholars, the issue of who was the more educationally progressive of the two candidates was less clear cut. Supporters of both muddied the water by accusing them of the same shortcomings while really, they had much in common. Both were talented classicists with a flair for modern languages.⁴ Both were ordained Anglican clergymen, although Welldon was certainly more fervent in his belief, or at least the outward demonstration of it. Politically, they were opposed; Warre was a lukewarm Conservative while Welldon was a Liberal, but both men had links via family and friendship to leading figures in both parties.⁵ However, as Welldon himself confessed, rather undermining Academicus' endorsement;

³ *Ibid.*, 10; W. David Smith, *Stretching Their Bodies: The History of Physical Education*, (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1974), 24

⁴ Charles Robert Leslie Fletcher, *Edmond Warre*, (London: John Murray, 1922), 22; James Edward Cowell Welldon, *Recollections and Reflections*, (London: Cassell & Co, 1915), 57

⁵ Welldon, *Recollections and Reflections*, 20; Fletcher, *Edmond Warre*, 178

I feel no shame in confessing that in my view of College at Eton I am an unbending Tory. Perhaps there is a certain element of Conservatism, as of Radicalism, in everybody, and if it does not take one form, it takes another. So I have noticed that some of the strongest political Radicals are apt in domestic or social or academical or civic affairs to be the most determined enemies of change.⁶

Furthermore, while Academicus and others sought to portray Warre as primarily an athletic schoolmaster, Welldon too had an impressive sporting record, having distinguished himself at Eton as a player of both the Wall and Field games before going on to represent the Old Etonians in the 1876 FA Cup Final.⁷ Conversely, whereas the archetypal athletic schoolmaster was hypermasculine, sometimes boorish and often in possession of an indifferent degree, Warre had a wide range of interests and an excellent academic record. Both Warre and Welldon would go on to become successful and influential headmasters, ruling over Eton and Harrow respectively, at a time when classics and athleticism were far and away the dominant forces in their schools. Both were also members of a largely Old Etonian network of classicists and sporting figures who shaped the development of sport in late-Victorian Britain.⁸ Welldon was part of a sub-group that were explicitly involved

⁶ Welldon, *Recollections and Reflections*, 27-28

⁷ *The Eton Register, Part IV, 1871-80*, (Eton: Spottiswoode & Co, 1907), 2; Keith Warsop, *The Early F.A. Cup Finals and the Southern Amateurs*, (Beeston: Soccer Data, 2004), 47; *Ibid.* 134.

⁸ The network was not exclusively Etonian, Charles Alcock for example was an Old Harrovian, but he was very closely associated with the Etonians Arthur Kinnaird and Alfred Lyttelton in his role at the Football Association. Other influential non-Etonians, such as Lord Desborough, another Harrovian,

in the development of association football, but Warre was the real lynchpin of an expansive network which linked the leading scholars of classics, and ancient sport in particular, with the leading exponents and administrators of a number of sports.

This chapter examines the importance of Edmond Warre and his immediate circle, showing him to be a central figure in the interplay of classics and sport who exerted influence in both directions. This provides further evidence of the extensive network of classically educated individuals who came to control British sport by the close of the nineteenth century. This chapter also challenges the common perception of the Victorian public school as being divided between academic aesthetes and athletic philistines, and shows that successful sportsmen were often highly motivated and academically able individuals.

Warre The Scholar

Warre became a schoolmaster almost by accident when he was invited back to Eton by his former tutor, Wharton Booth Marriott, to temporarily take charge of his House during an illness. He evidently enjoyed his first taste of teaching, writing to his mother 'Education, I feel, is my line in life, and the one in which I shall show God's work to this generation.' The College was apparently sufficiently impressed with his performance to offer him a permanent position

were linked to the network by their Oxford or Cambridge college. Desborough like Hornby, Almond, Warre, and Mitchell was a product of Balliol.

in the summer of 1860. Fletcher, in his biography of Warre, notes that he was motivated to take the post to assert his financial independence and because he was £300 in debt from the expense of starting the Oxford University Rifle Volunteer Corps and did not want to be a burden on his father. Warre senior built his son a new boarding house, which would not have been a trivial expense, but it made Edmond Warre a more attractive prospect for Eton, while at the same time considerably increasing his earning potential as a housemaster.⁹

Warre was widely expected to succeed Edward Balston as Headmaster of Eton at the end of 1867, but the position instead went to James Hornby, the Second Master of Winchester College, who had previously spent several years lecturing at Durham University and Brasenose College, Oxford.¹⁰ Hornby was well known to Warre, and the two had much in common. Both were Eton and Balliol men, and both had been members of the Oxford University eight, Hornby from 1849 to 1851, and Warre from 1857 to 1859.¹¹ Hornby was appointed with the expectation that he would attempt to reform Eton, but soon abandoned his efforts to modernise the school in the face of opposition from boys and masters alike. Essentially a university academic, he was not really suited to school teaching. Henry Salt, one of the masters who served under him, described him as ‘conspicuously lacking in industry and will-power’, and

⁹ Fletcher, *Edmond Warre*, 44-46

¹⁰ *The Eton Register*, Part I, 1841-50, (Eton: Spottiswoode & Co, 1903), 23

¹¹ George Gilbert Treherne Treherne, *Record of the University Boat Race, 1829-1883*, (London: Bickers & Son, 1884), 177; *Ibid.*, 191

the new Headmaster's habit of retreating to his study led to him being dubbed 'Hornby the Hermit'.¹²

Academicus may have sought to discredit Warre by portraying him as a time-server who had wasted the last twenty-five years, but his efforts backfired. A spate of correspondents, including George Marindin and St Clair Donaldson, wrote in Warre's support. Furthermore, Academicus had himself highlighted Warre's early achievements.¹³ As a boy at Eton, he had won the Newcastle Scholarship, the college's top prize for classics, in 1854.¹⁴ This achievement was all the more remarkable because Warre was an Oppidan rather than a King's Scholar.¹⁵ At Balliol, he continued to excel, taking a first in Moderations at the end of his first year and graduating with first class honours in 1859.¹⁶ His academic reputation also gained him a fellowship at All Souls College later that year.¹⁷ Later in life, his interest in classics was not merely confined to teaching. He maintained a lively correspondence with W.E. Gladstone for example, discussing Homer's anachronistic use of adjectives.¹⁸ Although Warre and Gladstone enjoyed a cordial enough relationship, they were strongly in

¹² Henry S. Salt, *Memories of Bygone Eton*, (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1928), 18

¹³ Letters to the Editor, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 July 1884, 12; Marindin writing as a teacher himself, says that Warre not having written a book should not be counted against him as no master who undertook his duties seriously would have time for such an endeavour. Donaldson, a former Oppidan and close associate of Warre's via his considerable prowess as an oarsman, wrote to protest that Oppidan educational standards had risen considerably in recent years and the academic gulf with King's Scholars was no longer so great as in the past. Donaldson proved his point by gaining first class degrees from Cambridge in classics and theology in 1885 and 1887 respectively.

¹⁴ *The Eton Register, Part II, 1853-59*, (Eton: Spottiswoode & Co, 1905), 4

¹⁵ It was extremely rare for an Oppidan to win because the most able boys either entered Eton as King's Scholars or achieved KS status at some point during their time at school. The novelty of an Oppidan success is commented on in the school magazine when it occurs again in the following decade. *The Eton College Chronicle*, no. 9, 1 October 1863, 34

¹⁶ Fletcher, *Edmond Warre*, 26-27

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 32

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 176

disagreement about both Homer and politics, and Warre exchanged frequent epigrams, both in Latin and Greek, with his friend, the Reverend Anderson of Winsford, describing Gladstone in offensive terms.¹⁹ Anderson and Warre continued to correspond via the medium of classical epigram for many years, and Warre's biographer, C.R.L. Fletcher, quotes extensive letters in the learned languages with a variety of other correspondents.²⁰

It is difficult to judge the extent to which the Greek and Latin epigrams exchanged between Warre and many of his acquaintances were rooted in a genuine love of composing in these languages or prompted by a desire to ostentatiously demonstrate learning. His friend and colleague, Hugh MacNaghten, wrote of Warre that 'He believed in the Classics as almost essential to salvation.'²¹ Certainly, they were a way for this circle to reinforce their membership of the elite, and they also provided a way in which strong views, which they did not necessarily wish to share with the wider public, could be shared among themselves. The fact that Warre wrote much of his own diaries in Latin suggests that he enjoyed the language for its own sake, but it also allowed him to grumble about his servants without their realising, and Fletcher reports his Latin complaints about his cook, the housemaid's habit of moving his books, and the rubbish outside his backdoor.²²

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 178

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 179-204; *Ibid.*, 232-240

²¹ Hugh MacNaghten, *Fifty Years at Eton*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1924), 62

²² Fletcher, *Edmond Warre*, 222

Warre really developed as a classical scholar at Balliol where he studied under Benjamin Jowett.²³ Jowett was the major influence on Warre's view of ancient Greece. Warre also absorbed Jowett's belief in educational reform and his methods of bringing it about; 'Be a reformer but don't be found out' he advised Warre.²⁴ Jowett's confidence in Warre was shown when he unequivocally backed him for the Headmastership of Eton in 1884, and by his inclusion of Warre on a list of possible successors as Master of Balliol.²⁵ In turn, Warre influenced Jowett, convincing him of the social, moral, and physical value of rowing as an element of college life, to the extent that Jowett would often quote Warre when speaking to college rowers.²⁶ As Master of Balliol he was increasingly sympathetic towards athleticism and contributed towards the purchase of several acres of land from Merton College for use as playing fields.²⁷

As a classicist, Warre was well aware of the place of sport in the ancient world. His reputation was as a rather boring teacher who only really came alive when discussing subjects close to his heart, such as Odysseus' experiences at sea or the construction of Athenian galleys.²⁸ In 1881 he contributed to Percy Gardner's study of Greek boat racing and, three years later, wrote a chapter on ancient athletics in his own book on physical exercise.²⁹ Warre adopted a

²³ *Ibid.*, 24

²⁴ Fletcher, *Edmond Warre*, 129

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 106; *Ibid.*, 196-197

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 37

²⁷ John Jones, *Balliol College: A History 1263-1939*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 217

²⁸ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 259

²⁹ Percy Gardner, Boat-racing among the Greeks, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 2. (1881), 92; Edmond Warre, *Athletics; Or, Physical Exercise and Recreation*, (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1884), 8-13. The exhibition incidentally, nodded further towards classical antiquity by choosing as its motto a quote

similar line on Greek athletics to Mahaffy, Gardner, and Gardiner, claiming that it was in continual decline after Pindar's time as 'professional' athletes, driven by the desire for prizes, became ever more venal, lazy, coarse, brutal and stupid.³⁰ His conclusion was that this was, at least partially, a result of Greek sport lacking a collective element, and that, without the stimulus of team games, Greek athletes could not help but become selfish. The one exception to this was, of course, rowing and Warre did not miss the opportunity to highlight his own sport as 'the only athletic contest in which the effort was not that of one individual against another'.³¹

However, Warre took a different view of Roman sport to Gardiner. Whereas Gardiner focussed on the great public games, dismissing gladiator contests and Roman boxing as entertainment provided by slaves and professionals rather than genuine sport, Warre chose instead to look at the sports and exercises of the Roman citizen. The picture he paints here seems entirely recognisable to the late-Victorian public schoolboy.

To the Romans the whole question was one of health. It seemed to him a necessary part of a regular and healthy mode of life, to take strong exercise causing perspiration, before the daily bath which preceded his afternoon meal.³²

from Juvenal's *Satire X*, '*Mens sano in corpore sano*' with its implication that mental and physical well-being are inextricably entwined.

³⁰ Warre, *Athletics*, 9

³¹ *Ibid.*, 12

³² *Ibid.*, 10-11

Warre goes on to list a host of famous Romans and the athletic events they enjoyed, painting a picture in which the *Campus Martius* was a kind of proto-playing-field and claiming that Cicero's character flaws were probably the result of his disdain for physical exercise.³³ Warre's assertion was that Roman sport had, in fact, declined as a result of 'Greek and Oriental corruption' and that this 'degeneration' lay behind the eventual decline and fall of the Empire, as well as what he saw as the present-day physical inferiority of the 'Latin races'.³⁴

Eton's Athletic Masters

Hornby's lack of decisive leadership created a power vacuum at Eton. One consequence of this was that the masters below him coalesced into two factions, centred on Warre and Oscar Browning, which reflected the tensions within the school between athletes and intellectuals.³⁵ Although Hornby was initially sympathetic to Browning and his faction, Warre was able over time to use his shared experience as a rower and Balliol man to win Hornby's trust.

Hornby was undoubtedly sympathetic to athleticism. As well as his rowing credentials, he was a talented all-round sportsman, having played for Eton at Lord's as a cricketer, and was reputedly one of Britain's best alpine mountaineers and skaters.³⁶ In Warre, he already had an outstanding rowing

³³ *Ibid.*, 11

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 12-13

³⁵ Oscar Browning, *Memories of Sixty Years*, (London: John Lane, 1910), 183

³⁶ Robert Titchener-Barrett, *Eton & Harrow at Lord's*, (London: Quiller Press, 1996), 254; Obituary: James John Hornby, *The Times*, 3 November 1909, 13

coach on the staff, while R.A.H. Mitchell, who had also been educated at Eton and Balliol, returned to the school as a master in 1866 after playing for Oxford University for four years, including three years as captain, and establishing a reputation as England's leading batsman in the process.³⁷ Warre and Mitchell formed the nucleus of a closely knit group of athletic schoolmasters who were to be extremely influential in Eton's development in the second half of the century. Under their leadership Etonians were undoubtedly the dominant force in school rowing, cricket, athletics, and football for much of the next fifty years, and their former pupils took this dominance with them into university sport. They were also highly influential in the emerging administrative bodies which governed these sports. James Brinsley-Richards, a pupil at Eton from 1857 to 1864, paints a vivid picture of the rise of athleticism in this period, describing 1860 as the '*annus mirabilis*', when Warre arrived and sport was put on a more serious footing.³⁸ In actuality, efforts to increase the school's athletic standing had quietly started a little earlier. Even before Warre's arrival the College had sought to strengthen its cricket coaching, after a disastrous decade in which they had lost every encounter with the much smaller Harrow School between 1851 and 1859.³⁹ In 1858 the Old Etonian and Cambridge blue, George Richard Dupuis, son of Eton's vice-provost George John Dupuis, was recruited as an Assistant Master with cricket coaching forming part of his duties.⁴⁰ Joining the staff at the same time was Herbert Snow, who combined all-round sporting ability with a talent for the Classics.⁴¹ He had hoped to become a

³⁷ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 258; Titchener-Barrett, *Eton & Harrow at Lord's*, 19

³⁸ James Brinsley-Richards, *Seven Years at Eton, 1857-1864*, (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1883), 214

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 218

⁴⁰ Obituary, The Rev G.R. Dupuis, *The Times*, 2 February 1912, 9

⁴¹ *The Eton Register, Part I, 1841-50*,

Cambridge don, but the failure of his father's bank, combined with his desire to marry, drew him back to Eton.⁴²

He was a fine muscular master, with broad shoulders and a rather mastiff-like expression of countenance. He had pulled stroke of the Cambridge University boat in 1857, and was also a first-rate player at fives and football. He was a splendid example of the fact that physical and intellectual culture may be carried on together, for he was placed in the First Class of the Classical Tripos in 1857. He was Porson Scholar and Camden Medallist, and won the prize for Latin Ode. He was quite a schoolboy's hero.⁴³

Brinsley-Richards' enthusiastic description of Snow reflects how athletic masters were viewed by their younger charges as well as highlighting that Snow was intellectually as well as physically sound. Snow was well acquainted with Warre; they had known each other as boys although they were a few years apart, and they rowed on opposing sides in the 1857 university boat race.⁴⁴ From 1860 until 1873, when Snow changed his surname to Kynaston and departed to become Principal of Cheltenham College, he supported Warre's transformation of Etonian rowing.

⁴² Edward Daniel Stone, *Herbert Kynaston: A Short Memoir*, (London: Macmillan 1912), x-xi

⁴³ Brinsley-Richards, *Seven Years at Eton*, 183

⁴⁴ Walter Bradford Woodgate, *Boating*, (London: Longmans, Greene & Co, 1889), 271

Two other Old Etonians, who returned as Assistant Masters immediately after taking their degrees at King's College, Cambridge, were George Eden Marindin in 1865 and Walter Durnford in 1870.⁴⁵ Both were heavily involved in sport at Eton, with Marindin also finding time to become an authority on ancient ball games.⁴⁶ Durnford's arrival marked a time when the athletic group within the Eton masters reached its strongest, with most remaining in post for many years. The influence of these young sporting masters was profound, and between 1865 and 1875 their pupils included two of England's greatest all-round sportsmen, Cuthbert Ottaway and Alfred Lyttellton, future England cricketers such as C.T. Studd and Lords Harris and Hawke, leading footballers, including Welldon and Arthur Dunn, and the rower J.H.D. Goldie.

Oppidans accounted for 91.7% of pupils in 1862 and were spread across 25 boarding houses.⁴⁷ These varied considerably in size and character and were very much influenced by the Tutor or Dame who ran them.⁴⁸ The houses which excelled at sports were known as 'crack houses' and competed fiercely for the wide range of inter-house trophies which sprang up as the century progressed.⁴⁹ Housemasters who were keen on sports obviously encouraged their charges to play sport more seriously, so it is not surprising to find that the

⁴⁵ *The Eton Register, Part III, 1862-68*, vii; *Ibid.*, vi

⁴⁶ George Eden Marindin, 'The Game of "Harpastum" or "Pheninda"', *The Classical Review*, 4, no. 4 (April 1890), 145-149

⁴⁷ Howard Staunton, *The Great Schools of England*, (London: Strahan & Co, 1869), 18; Brinsley-Richards, *Seven Years at Eton*, 49

⁴⁸ Originally, all boarding houses were run on a boarding only footage, and pupils would go elsewhere for tutoring during the day. As many boarding houses were run by women, they were referred to as Dames. This title stuck, even when boarding houses were run by men. However, by the late nineteenth-century it was increasingly common for masters to own boarding houses and run tuition in-house.

⁴⁹ Brinsley-Richards, *Seven Years at Eton*, 50

houses of Warre, Durnford, Marindin, Mitchell, and Dupuis feature prominently in the lists of competition winners. All houses played football and fives, but in the summer most boys had to make a decision to become either a rower, known as a 'wet-bob', or a cricketer, known as a 'dry-bob'.⁵⁰ Boys who neither rowed nor played cricket were referred to as 'slack bobs' or 'saps' implying they were lazy, although in some cases they were missing sport in order to spend more time studying, or indulging in other intellectual pursuits. However, such aestheticism was increasingly viewed with suspicion by masters such as Mitchell and Warre, who tended to regard it as both unmanly and likely to lead to vice.⁵¹ The aesthete was also likely to be shunned by his more athletically minded classmates. Lord Hawke recalled his father's surprise when his Housemaster, Francis Cornish, enquired of him whether he was to be made to work or not. When his father insisted that he should, the young Hawke decided to steer a middle course, aware that he needed to make enough progress to ensure his passage to Cambridge, and the cricketing opportunities it afforded, but anxious to avoid 'the stigma of being called a sap.'⁵²

Mangan's perceptive remark that 'the disparagement of brains reflected nothing short of a virulent anti-intellectualism on the part of most boys and some masters' reveals the likely truth.⁵³ If athleticism created a generation of philistines in the public schools, it was largely at the behest of pupils backed

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 148

⁵¹ John Chandos, *Boys Together: English Public Schools 1800-1864*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 332

⁵² Martin Bladen Hawke, Lord Hawke, *Recollections and Reminiscences*, (London: Williams & Norgate, 1924), 23

⁵³ James Anthony Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 107

by enthusiastic young sporting masters who were often old boys of the same, or similar, schools. In this environment, intellectually minded masters could struggle to capture the imagination of their charges, and while some parents were dismayed by an over-emphasis on athleticism, others, especially those who were sporting old boys themselves, were more interested in sporting prowess than educational achievement. Honey talks of parents who would rather that their son scored a century at Lord's than win a scholarship to Balliol.⁵⁴ However, this was sometimes too much even for masters who were themselves athletically minded. Welldon related that pupils under parental pressure to do well at sports were hardly likely to concentrate on Latin, and quoted the case of a Harrow boy who was promised a guinea for every run he made and £5 for every wicket he took, earning £50 in a week, well in excess of any professional cricketer's weekly wage.⁵⁵ That a parent was able to indulge a child to this extent reveals both the economic gulf between them and the public at large, and the reality that many of the pupils at the great public schools did not need to worry about passing examinations or qualifying for a profession because they were financially secure for life in any case. Henry Salt, in his time both a pupil and master at Eton, thought the College's insistence on teaching boys to compose poetry in Latin before they could even understand poetry in English actually contributed to the air of anti-intellectualism because he estimated around 90% of boys were incapable of mastering this work.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ John Raymond Halstead de Symons Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School*, (London: Millington, 1977), 132

⁵⁵ *Public School Magazine*, II, (July-December 1898), 284

⁵⁶ Salt, *Memories of Bygone Eton*, 90

The seventy Collegers and a handful of industrious oppidans may keep up appearances by gaining university scholarships and the like, but the rank and file of the school are hopelessly and irretrievably anti-intellectual. They know little; they hate books; they regard scholars with good-humoured indifference or neglect; they worship athletes with an ever-increasing veneration: to mention the Newcastle scholar of the current year would be to the majority a painful effort of memory; the Captain of the Boats, or the Captain of the Eleven, is a deity ever present before their minds. I protest that in my experience of Eton I have known nothing so sad as to watch the gradual process of deterioration in the industry of a new boy. For the first fortnight or so all is perfection; the boy is punctual, diligent, eager to do his work conscientiously; then comes a period when he begins to look about him, and note with a mild surprise the indifference of other boys to their lessons, and the inability of masters to enforce through diligence; finally he yields to the temptation that everywhere surrounds him, eats of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge (or rather Ignorance), and gradually sinks into a state of mental inactivity.⁵⁷

Salt was writing in the journal *The Nineteenth Century*, shortly after his departure as an Eton master on Warre's accession to the Headmastership at the end of 1884. Salt, a former classmate of Welldon, had leaned towards

⁵⁷ Henry S. Salt, Confessions of an Eton Master, *The Nineteenth Century*, XVII, (January-June 1885), 179

Browning's aesthetic group of masters and had feared the worst when Warre was appointed Headmaster, imagining a new regime where games, and an outmoded adherence to the Classics at the expense of more modern subjects, would run riot.⁵⁸ A committed Socialist, Salt would have preferred Welldon in charge, not only because he was a friend, but because of his Liberal values.⁵⁹ In the circumstances, Salt felt that it was best to leave, but his subsequent criticism of Eton was based on how it had been under Hornby, and how he assumed it would carry on under Warre. In fact, Warre was quick to introduce some reforms, including his long-held ideas about replacing Greek with French or German for some boys. Warre's long-time colleague and fellow sporting schoolmaster, George Marindin, soon replied to Salt's accusations, laying out Warre's efforts to modernise the school, while at the same time stating his own belief in the importance of Greek, and why it was important that Latin should not be the only classical language taught.⁶⁰

Francis Cornish, who had been Salt's Housemaster and was still teaching, also replied in Eton's defence, claiming that Newcastle Scholars rarely went on to be great men, and that it was teamwork and camaraderie that made Etonians fit to lead the country.

⁵⁸ Salt, *Memories of Bygone Eton*, 106

⁵⁹ Welldon, *Recollections and Reflections*, 20

⁶⁰ George Eden Marindin, Eton in Eighty-Five, *The Fortnightly Review*, XXVII (January-June 1885), 753-765

What then is the Eton criterion? It is formed by the Boats, the Eleven, the society of 'Pop' – the leaders of Eton society belong to that class who will lead as men, men of action, not of ideas. That is what John Bull cares for in the main. He believes in manhood and the power of leading.⁶¹

This reflected a 'deep-rooted Anglo-Saxon suspicion of brilliance' in which even such a leading pedagogue as Thring of Uppingham was apt to warn his boys against the 'vanity of intellectualism'.⁶² This suspicion of expertise also lay at the root of the gentleman amateur's objections to specialisation and training in sport, which, while often expressed via doubtful references to classical antecedents, was actually firmly rooted in English culture. However, while Cornish may have been writing of how he felt Etonians saw themselves, he did not necessarily agree with this vision. Salt claimed that Cornish privately agreed with him.⁶³ Certainly, Cornish went on to sound a note of caution.

An Englishman does not admire professors as a German does. Rule of thumb has done very well for him and he does not appreciate the value of accuracy...He does not respect knowledge in itself. He has not flexibility enough to understand that all

⁶¹ Francis Warre Cornish, Eton Reform, *The Nineteenth Century*, XVIII, (July-December 1885), 578

⁶² Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 110; Edward Thring, *Sermons Delivered at Uppingham School*, (Cambridge, 1858), 113

⁶³ Salt, *Memories of Bygone Eton*, 229

knowledge is power, not only that which falls in his narrow experience.⁶⁴

Cornish was tactfully pointing out that German elite education was academically superior to Etonian education and that this could put Britain at a disadvantage in the long term. He wanted reform without sweeping away the positive aspects of Etonian culture and gave Warre credit for starting to overhaul and modernise the curriculum, particularly by increasing the time and importance given to French and mathematics.⁶⁵ In Cornish's view, Latin was essential for a gentleman's education, but Greek was difficult, and should thus be dropped for all but those intending to go on to university.⁶⁶ Ironically, given that the successful school sportsman often wanted to continue and crown his career by winning a varsity blue, this meant that the more athletically minded a boy was, the more he needed to immerse himself in Greek culture.

Fortunately, Warre's circle of athletic schoolmasters were all classicists and so were well placed to help those athletically minded boys who were prepared to put in the work to meet the minimum requirements for Oxbridge entry. Certainly, at times, they could be accused of giving undue attention to games over schoolwork. Warre's rowers put in extremely long hours in the weeks leading up to Henley leaving little time or energy for anything else.⁶⁷ Similarly,

⁶⁴ Cornish, *Eton Reform*, 578

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 581

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 586

⁶⁷ Robert Harvey Mason, *Rowing at Eton College* in Walter Bradford Woodgate, *Boating*, (London: Longmans Green & Co, 1889), 209

Mitchell was engaged more or less full-time in the business of cricket during the summer term and was not easily distracted from it.⁶⁸ However, most took their teaching duties seriously, even if many of their pupils were reluctant learners. Warre was disciplined, and undoubtedly worked harder than most, His daily schedule as a Housemaster was gruelling, especially in the summer, when longer daylight hours increased the time available for sport. He would rise at 6.30 and start teaching before breakfast. After breakfast there was chapel, then more teaching until midday when there would be a two-hour break for lunch and rest. He was teaching again between two and four, and then drilled the Rifle Corps for an hour until five. He would then go down to the river for three hours of coaching and rowing, returning to his house for dinner at eight. He would do the rounds of the boys in his house, aiming to finish by ten, at which point he would snatch an hour's sleep in an armchair before rising again at eleven and working on marking and preparing the following day's lessons until about 2.30 when he would finally go to bed.⁶⁹

Boys, Masters, and the Control of Etonian Sport

Until the arrival of Warre and Mitchell, sport at Eton had largely been in the control of the boys. It was they who organised both internal and external matches, and took control of training and administration of their games. In 1860 Charles Lyttelton, the Eton cricket captain, had engaged a professional, R.

⁶⁸ Robert Henry Lyttelton, Eton Cricket, *National Review*, May 1894, 432

⁶⁹ Fletcher, *Edmond Warre*, 71-72

Bell, as full-time coach for the Upper School.⁷⁰ There had already been a long history of employing professional help in rowing although changing attitudes towards the amateur-professional divide in the two sports meant that professional involvement in school rowing tailed off just as it became more of a feature in school cricket. The dangers of rowing on the tidal Thames in a very busy stretch of water had led to several fatalities early on in the history of the sport at Westminster School.⁷¹ Consequently, Westminster boys had been obliged by their headmaster to employ the services of professional watermen when they went out on the river from 1788.⁷² Although the waters at Eton were less dangerous, similar precautions were taken in the early days and professionals were employed, not only to teach boys how to row well, but also to ensure their safety on the water. It was thus a feature of early Eton crews that they would include professionals in the key roles of stroke and cox. The drive towards amateurism, and genuine competition between schools, meant that all rowing positions were taken by boys by 1828, but it was not until 1837 that Eton dispensed with professional coxswains.⁷³

While the role of professionals in public school rowing may have been concerned with safety, in cricket they had a threefold purpose, of which coaching was only part. Cricket allowed amateurs and professionals to play alongside each other, but there were strict social boundaries and the

⁷⁰ Brinsley-Richards, *Seven Years at Eton*, 219. Charles Lyttelton was the oldest of eight brothers who would attend Eton, six of whom would become first-class cricketers. A younger brother, Edward, would return as a master and eventually succeed Warre as Headmaster.

⁷¹ Neil Wigglesworth, *The Social History of English Rowing*, (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 61

⁷² *The Times*, 21 October 1788, 2

⁷³ Wigglesworth, *The Social History of English Rowing*, 62

professional was expected to know his place.⁷⁴ Professionals were often expected to act as groundsmen when not playing and to put in long hours of bowling in the nets for batting practice.⁷⁵ Cricket fagging, in which younger boys were compelled to bowl and field for senior pupils was a feature of many public schools, but while it may have been fun to knock slow balls from younger boys around the field, the serious cricketer needed good quality practice to hone his skills. For the first cricket match of the 1867 season, Eton's leading cricketers, including future England players Lord Harris and Cuthbert Ottaway, divided themselves into two elevens for a three-day practice game, during which all the bowling for both sides was carried out by two Nottinghamshire professionals, Cris Tinley and James Grundy. The match exposed something of a weakness in Eton's training methods. Tinley and Grundy were too good, bowling both sides out twice for low scores, with the result that Etonian batsmen were demoralised while their bowlers missed out on a much-needed chance for match practice.⁷⁶

A contemporary editorial in the *Eton College Chronicle* examined why Harrow, far smaller and less wealthy than Eton, was able to beat them on a regular basis. The previous year, Eton had used, not just Tinley and Grundy, but seven other First-Class professionals, engaged for short periods, as well as having in Mitchell, Dupuis, and Edward Austen Leigh, masters with First-Class experience. Harrow, by contrast relied on a single, but full-time, non-First-

⁷⁴ Derek Birley, *Land of Sport and Glory: Sport and British Society, 1887-1910*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 18

⁷⁵ Keith Arlington Patrick Sandiford, Amateurs and Professionals in Victorian County Cricket, *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 15, no. 1, (Spring 1983), 33

⁷⁶ Cricket, *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 79, 11 April 1867, 315

Class professional, plus the additional help of two, more or less full-time amateur coaches, Old Harrovians Robert Grimston and Frederick Ponsonby, Earl of Bessborough.⁷⁷ Grimston and Ponsonby, who had played for Oxford and Cambridge Universities respectively, were very experienced, having played for Surrey and the MCC, as well as being founder members of *I Zingari*.⁷⁸ In comparison, the *Eton College Chronicle* regarded professional coaches as ineffectual.

We are convinced that professional coaching is not of much use: in many cases the professionals never open their mouths; and when they do, it is generally to applaud when a straight ball is slogged away for six or so, and so encourage a hitting spirit just at a moment when it should be most studiously put down.⁷⁹

It is probably true that the professionals were not as critical in their coaching of Etonians as they should have been, but they were conditioned by a working life where they were expected to show deference to gentleman amateurs at all times. Woe betide the professional cricketer who criticised his amateur colleague; he was likely to find himself out of a job and with an uphill struggle

⁷⁷ The professional was Sam Hoare, whose father had been Harrow's professional before him, and who had started work on Harrow's groundstaff aged 12. William Frederick Mandle, *The Professional Cricketer in England in the Nineteenth Century*, *Labour History*, no. 23 (Nov 1972), 7; Cricket, *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 79, 11 April 1867, 314

⁷⁸ William Grenfell, Lord Desborough of Taplow, *Fifty Years of Sport at Oxford, Cambridge and the Great Public Schools*, III, Eton, Harrow and Winchester, (London: Walter Southwood & Co, 1922), 128

⁷⁹ Cricket, *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 79, 11 April 1867, 314

to get taken on elsewhere.⁸⁰ In such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that professionals transplanted to schools for the gentry preferred silence to constructive criticism. Grimston and Ponsonby, on the other hand, were the social equals, if not superiors, to the boys they coached. It was much easier for them to be firm with their young charges.

Boys preferred to hire professionals for short engagements for a variety of reasons. Firstly, there was an element of hero-worship involved. Secondly, the professional was likely to be more easy-going than the amateur or schoolmaster as a coach. Thirdly, short engagements were easier for boys to organise and finance. Finally, professionals were a source of interesting information and anecdotes, not all of which were entirely savoury. Edward Lyttelton, another Old Etonian schoolmaster with an impressive career in First-Class cricket, was concerned about the influence of professionals on impressionable young minds, fearing that they would pass on intemperate habits and information on 'many matters, some of them tinged with the associations of low life' as well as 'strong, though ill-balanced, opinions.'⁸¹ By Lyttelton's time as Headmaster, the school, rather than the boys, had taken on responsibility for hiring professionals, and in 1897 R.A.H. Mitchell was assisted by four full-time professionals.⁸² Undistracted by having First-Class

⁸⁰ John Major, *More Than a Game: The Story of Cricket's Early Years*, (London: HarperCollins, 2007), 268

⁸¹ Mandle, *The Professional Cricketer in England in the Nineteenth Century*, 7-8

⁸² William Justice Ford, *Public School Cricket*, in Kumar Shri Ranjitsinhji, *The Jubilee Book of Cricket*, (London: Blackwood, 1897), 289

careers of their own, their role was to assist in coaching, look after the grounds and bowl in the nets for as long as might be required.

The *Eton College Chronicle* also considered that Harrow had a natural advantage because cricket fagging was compulsory at Harrow, whereas Etonians could opt out of cricket, for the alternative of rowing.⁸³ In fact, in the 1860s, it was still just possible for an Etonian to opt out of sport altogether, particularly if he were a King's Scholar, although this was increasingly frowned upon.⁸⁴ The editor who wrote the article blaming rowing for the shortcomings of Etonian cricket happened to be C.R. Alexander, who was also Captain of the Eleven that year.⁸⁵ In this context, his was hardly a neutral and dispassionate voice, but it does reveal the tensions between the followers of the two main summer sports at Eton. Rowers were equally vocal in support of their sport. For example, a letter entitled '*Wet-Bobs v. Dry-Bobs*' four years earlier had complained that cricket took up too much time to the detriment of rowing and that too many boys spent too long on the cricket field and not enough time 'at the oars'.⁸⁶ Letters to the *Eton College Chronicle* were often anonymous, the writer either not signing at all, or else using a *nom-de-plume*. In this case, the writer signed themselves Thalamites. This name, Θαλάμιτης refers to 'one of the rowers on the lowest bench of a trireme, who had the shortest oars and the least pay.'⁸⁷ It might be reasonably deduced from this

⁸³ Cricket, *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 79, 11 April 1867, 314

⁸⁴ Smith, *Stretching Their Bodies*, 19

⁸⁵ *The Eton Register, Part III, 1862-68*, xxviii; *Ibid.*, xiv

⁸⁶ *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 5, 25 June 1863, 20

⁸⁷ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 311

name that the writer was someone close to Warre, if not Warre himself, particularly as Warre's obsession with the trireme had led him to build a life-size cross section of one which he used to explain the three rowing positions to his pupils.⁸⁸ In the same issue, a correspondent using another classically inspired name, *Fiat Justitia* (let justice be done), wrote to complain that it was unfair that boys were allowed to travel to Lord's to cheer on the Eleven, but not allowed out to support Etonian competitors at Henley or Wimbledon.⁸⁹

Rowing was originally in the control of the boys and nominally remained so. Warre may have ruled Etonian rowing with a rod of iron, but he was always careful to go through the motions of having the Captain of Boats invite him to coach the oarsmen every day. Fletcher claimed that Warre only reluctantly became involved in Eton boating after an 'earnest request' from the Captain of Boats in the summer of 1860 and only ever acted as an advisor to the boys.⁹⁰ This was not how others saw it. To many, within Eton and outside, Warre was overly involved in school rowing and oversaw a regime in which rowing was more important than academic work, with talented rowers being promoted in school hierarchies regardless of their other qualities. Certainly, within weeks of Warre's involvement as mentor to the Eton rowers there had been a marked injection of discipline and seriousness. Warre drilled the Eton VIII hard in July 1860 in preparation for a resumption of racing against Westminster School, and from 1861, he regularly took crews to the Henley Regatta, from which point

⁸⁸ William Grenfell, Lord Desborough of Taplow, *The Story of the Oar*, (Edinburgh: Philosophical Institution, 1910), 14

⁸⁹ *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 5, 25 June 1863, 20

⁹⁰ Fletcher, *Edmond Warre*, 272

forward Eton rowing was put on such a serious footing that they could beat all but the very best adult crews.⁹¹

The only interference from the masters with Eton boating prior to Warre's arrival came in 1840 when the College appointed two members of staff to oversee swimming tests after a boy drowned near Windsor Bridge. The main Etonian swimming spot on the Thames was known as Athens, and the vantage point from which the River Master viewed the swimming tests was called Acropolis. In a further nod to their classical education, those who failed to pass the test were referred to as *non-nant*, from the Latin for non-swimmer.⁹²

Athens was associated with Eton rowing by more than the name of a swimming place. To classical educated Etonians, the very idea of rowing had a direct link back to the mercantile and military power of the ancient city state. Neil Wigglesworth attributes the particularly strong definition of amateurism that was eventually to be adopted by rowers, with its notorious mechanics clause, to 'the ancient Athenian snobbery against trade.'⁹³ Wigglesworth also points out that the idea of cash prizes for athletic victories originated with Solon of Athens,⁹⁴ another Athenian tradition with which Etonians happily complied, for James Brinsley-Richards writes of carrying off several small cash prizes for being placed in school running and rowing races.⁹⁵ However, it may be

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 273

⁹² Mason, *Rowing at Eton College*, 203

⁹³ Wigglesworth, *The Social History of English Rowing*, 119

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 58

⁹⁵ Brinsley-Richards, *Seven Years at Eton*, 216; *Ibid.*, 250

assumed that this was eventually phased out as Warre wrote in 1903 that Etonians of former times 'would not have satisfied the strict amateur rules of the present day.'⁹⁶ Amateur rowing was not solely an Etonian preserve of course, but the extent to which they dominated the sport in the nineteenth-century is hard to overstate. A survey of Oxford University VIII's between 1829 and 1883 reveals that 88 Etonians rowed for Oxford out of a total of 214. The next largest contributor was Westminster with just 14. Eton did not dominate Cambridge rowing to quite the same extent, but were still the biggest group with 47 rowers to Rugby's 19, out of a total of 193. Overall, Eton provided a third of Boat Race crew members.⁹⁷ It was inevitable therefore that those involved in the administration of amateur rowing had a classical background.

Certainly, when the rowing fraternity of Oxford and Cambridge universities gathered in 1881 for a Commemoration Dinner to celebrate fifty years of the Boat Race, they gathered under a Greek motto, αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων, a quote from the *Iliad* meaning 'always strive for excellence and prevail over others'.⁹⁸ As would be expected, the largest proportion of diners present were Old Etonians, among them Herbert Kynaston, the former Herbert Snow, who delivered a specially written Latin ode entitled '*In epulum a remigibus lectis utriusque academiae decimo confecto lustro celebratum.*'

⁹⁶ Edmond Warre, Introduction, in Thomas Kynaston Selwyn, *Eton in 1829-1830*, (London: John Murray, 1903), xxiv

⁹⁷ Treherne, *Record of the University Boat Race*, 228

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 243

(On the banquet held in respect of the massed crews of each university celebrating the tenth five-year period.)⁹⁹

Crack Houses and Educational Achievement

When William Jelf pondered in the pages of the *Contemporary Review* whether athleticism at Eton had gone too far and was actively damaging academic standards, he was not alone.¹⁰⁰ The Clarendon Commission too, clearly worried about the implications of an excessive games culture and their interviews with masters frequently solicited their opinions of the correct balance between sport and study. The replies they received reveal a profession deeply divided, as exemplified in the comments of Warre and Browning.¹⁰¹ The memoirs of former pupils show that opinions among boys were equally divided. Although a noted and successful athlete himself, Edward Lyttelton was one of those who felt that perhaps too much time was devoted to sport. When he finally became Headmaster, he was in a position to act, but he noted that his first attempts to do something were in 1874 when he became Captain of the Eleven and made a 'feeble attempt' to lessen the amount of compulsory cricket. Quite how much cricket that was is made plain in a reply from George Richard Dupuis to one of Lyttelton's tutors on the subject. 'You say that if the boys play cricket for seven hours a day it interferes with their work. Prove it.' Lyttelton goes on to say that the opponents of athleticism were

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 272

¹⁰⁰ Jelf, *Eton Reform*, 563

¹⁰¹ For Warre's evidence see The Public Schools Commission, 1861-4, *Etoniana*, no. 76, 11 November 1939, 414-415; For Browning's see The Public Schools Commission, 1861-4, *Etoniana*, no. 75, 1 August 1939, 399-400

hampered by the fact that one of their number, and he may well be referring to Browning, was notorious for shirking their work, while Dupuis and Mitchell both had a reputation for being 'unflinchingly conscientious', if not the most inspiring teachers.¹⁰² Elsewhere, he notes that many of the older masters in his day often arrived twenty minutes late for a forty-five minute lesson and that the amount of actual teaching that Oppidans received was often minimal.¹⁰³ To some extent, sport was blamed for poor academic standards, but the implication is that standards were poor regardless of sport being played, rather than because of it.

James Brinsley-Richards believed that 'crack houses', i.e., those that were best at sport, also produced the best scholars, among the Oppidans at least, while some houses rarely produced anyone of note.¹⁰⁴ Although King's Scholars dominated Etonian prizes, those Oppidans who were academically outstanding, were, like Warre and the Lyttelton brothers, often extremely gifted sportsmen. Successive generations of public schoolboys, from Edward Dowdeswell Lockwood's accounts of Marlborough College in the 1850s, via Brinsley-Richards' and Edward Lyttelton's accounts of Eton later in the century, right through to T.C. Worsley's experiences at Marlborough in the twentieth century, report regimes where sport was king and teaching often varied between indifferent and non-existent.¹⁰⁵ All, also reported a world in

¹⁰² Edward Lyttelton, *Memories and Hopes*, (London: John Murray, 1925), 22

¹⁰³ Lyttelton, *Memories and Hopes*, 33-34

¹⁰⁴ Brinsley-Richards, *Seven Years at Eton*, 31-32

¹⁰⁵ Edward Dowdeswell Lockwood, *The Early Days of Marlborough College* (London 1893); Brinsley-Richards, *Seven Years at Eton*; Lyttelton, *Memories and Hopes*; Thomas Cuthbert Worsley, *Flannelled Fool*, (London: Alan Ross, 1966)

which the majority of boys were compelled to play sport with varying degrees of enthusiasm, as a result of which a minority became literally world class at a precocious age, resulting in the ability of public school Eights and Elevens to take on leading club and university opposition and often win. However, most boys did not reach these standards and merely became enthusiastic and partisan spectators. This majority did not flourish academically either, leaving at fifteen or sixteen with no qualifications beyond the social kudos and contacts they had gained at school.

Academic success in the leading public schools was largely down to self-motivation and one-to-one access to a good tutor. Hence, for example, Edward Dowdeswell Lockwood was able, despite several years during which he claims to have learned nothing, to cram intensely over his final months at Marlborough in order to pass the East India Company entrance requirements.¹⁰⁶ The serious work involved in qualification for Oxbridge scholarships went on in Sixth Form, a part of school which only a minority of boys stayed on for. At most public schools, including Eton, it was only in Sixth Form that boys had regular contact with the Headmaster, and only in Sixth Form that they could expect much help with Greek. Warre for example, liked to dangle Greek in front of lower boys in the hope that it would inspire some to study it seriously, but declined to offer them any help, hoping they would spark their own interest. Edward Lyttelton felt that this approach only worked for 2% of pupils and left

¹⁰⁶ Lockwood, *The Early Days of Marlborough College*, 127

the rest feeling helpless.¹⁰⁷ As a correspondent signing himself 'Paterfamilias' wrote to the *Cornhill Magazine* in July 1864.

The great majority of Eton boys are stated to lead easy pleasant lives spending their time chiefly in the playing-field and on the river, and not a little of it in the public-houses and taps of the neighbourhood – and, if they are so minded, but not otherwise, acquire a faint smattering of the classics in the intervals of play.¹⁰⁸

At Eton, a small minority of highly motivated students performed very well. Some were natural academics who found studying both easy and enjoyable, others had to work hard to win scholarships or pass entrance examinations. In many families, particularly clerical ones, there was a long tradition of winning scholarships and fellowships, which acted as a pressure on some boys. However, as the culture of athleticism took hold in the universities, a new motivation was added. The successful school sportsman now had an enormous incentive to work, at least hard enough to qualify for university, even if he did little but play sport once he got there. As with schoolwork, there were a few pupils who were natural athletes, but the majority of successful school sportsmen got there through long hours of practice, dedication, and coaching. The upshot of this was that there was considerable overlap between successful school athletes and successful scholars. Those who played hard,

¹⁰⁷ Lyttelton, *Memories and Hopes*, 33

¹⁰⁸ The Public School Commission, 1861-64, *Etoniana*, no. 68, 11 April 1938, 284

often worked hard too; time in formal lessons at Eton only accounted for about four hours a day, and a determined pupil could achieve a great deal with his remaining time.¹⁰⁹

The composer Hubert Parry was at Eton from September 1861 to December 1866.¹¹⁰ From January 1864 until he left, he kept a detailed diary of his school life. Although music was Parry's real passion, his father was doubtful that it could be a career so Hubert studied history and law, at Exeter College, Oxford. During the time he was writing his diary therefore, he was busy working towards his Oxford entrance examinations. Remarkably, while still in school, he was also working towards an Oxford music degree, which he completed while in his final term at Eton.¹¹¹ His diary gives a vivid account of how he balanced music, classics, and sport, while at the same time indulging in a colourful social life involving drinking, smoking, and behaving boorishly to non-Etonians. The sense one gets from the diary is that Parry thought his music was important and serious, and that he regarded much of his work with Greek and Latin as a chore. However, he wrote about his involvement in sport with a real sense of excitement and pride as he was successively selected for house and school teams in football and cricket. His diary also chronicles numerous

¹⁰⁹ *Report of Her Majesty's Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools, and the Studies Pursued and Instruction Given Therein*, II, (London, 1864), 456-458

¹¹⁰ *The Eton Register*, Part III, 1862-68, 43

¹¹¹ *An Eton Boy's Diary, 1864-1866 Etoniana*, no. 105, 1 April 1948, 69

football injuries, some of which resulted in confinement to bed for several days.¹¹²

Class sizes in the public schools were often large, so developing a good one-to-one relationship with a tutor or Housemaster was essential for a boy to advance academically. This may also explain why some houses were much more successful than others. Welldon and Edward Lyttelton both recognised that it was important to nurture all boys, but some masters were partisan. Certainly, Warre faced accusations that he favoured athletes to aesthetes, although he would have argued that he preferred balanced all-rounders to bookish boys. George Richard Dupuis, and, even more so, R.A.H. Mitchell, were seen as archetypal philistine Housemasters, and allegedly had no interest in boys who were not sportsmen, but even they were acknowledged to be hard-working teachers compared to some of the older generation of Etonian masters. In fact, ex-varsity blues like Dupuis, Mitchell, Warre, and Snow were keen to keep up the tradition of Etonian dominance in university rowing, cricket and football. Ensuring that their proteges had enough Greek and Latin to get to university was in their interests.

The idea that sportsmen were sometimes better than their peers academically is borne out by data from Oxford. W.L. Newman, a Balliol College tutor, told a parliamentary select committee in 1867 that the idea ‘the devotees of

¹¹² An Eton Boy's Diary, 1864-1866, *Etoniana*, no. 103, 22 June 1946, 33-40; *Etoniana*, no. 104, 1 December 1947, 49-57; *Etoniana*, no. 105, 1 April 1948, 65-70

athleticism are the most idle men of the place is contradicted by the facts.’¹¹³

Two years later, Richard Clarke, a fellow of St John’s College, Oxford, published a paper showing that 45.4% of college rowers took honours degrees, a favourable figure compared to undergraduates as a whole, of whom only 30% were honours students. Clarke also found that 60% of Oxford fellows qualifying from open competitive examinations after 1860 were either rowers or cricketers.¹¹⁴ In their survey of Oxford athleticism between 1850 and 1914, Curthoys and Jones point out that it was often the most successful sporting colleges, including Balliol, that were among the first to refuse to admit men who were not intending to read for honours degrees, whereas it was those colleges with a reputation for hunting and dining, such as Christ Church and Trinity, that lagged behind in both sporting and academic achievement.¹¹⁵ Further evidence of a link between athleticism and academic success comes from Clive Dewey’s study of Browning’s circle of ‘Socratic Teachers’ at Eton. While Dewey is primarily concerned with making the case that aesthetically-minded masters were fighting a battle against Warre to produce individual intellectuals rather than conformist athletes, he nevertheless reveals that Warre overhauled Oppidan educational standards, closing the attainment gap on the King’s Scholars and making Etonians far more engaged with the outside world.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ *PP* 1867 xiii Qs 273, 342

¹¹⁴ Richard Frederick Clarke, *The Influence of Pass Examinations*, (Oxford: 1869), 4

¹¹⁵ Mark C. Curthoys and Hugh Stuart Jones, Oxford athleticism, 1850-1914: a reappraisal, *History of Education* 24, no. 4 (1995), 312-313

¹¹⁶ Clive Dewey, ‘Socratic Teachers’: Part I – The Opposition to the Cult of Athletics at Eton, 1870-1914, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 12, no. 1, (April 1995), 54

We cannot necessarily read too much into the large numbers of famous sporting Etonians who were elected to the Eton Society (also known as Pop), as this was essentially a club for the most popular senior boys and came to be increasingly dominated by athletes.¹¹⁷ This was very different from W.E. Gladstone's days in Pop during the 1820s when the Society was dominated by scholars and a few athletes were admitted to 'shew that we were not down on athletics, if they were not too dull.'¹¹⁸ However, the athletes that joined Pop later in the century, driven by the imperative to reach university, were probably better educated than those in Gladstone's day. A better test of whether school sportsmen also excelled academically is to look at the lists of boys included in the Newcastle Select, the elite group of Etonian classical scholars. It is in this group that we find many of those boys who went on to becoming sporting masters, including Hornby, Warre, G.E. Marindin, Walter Durnford, Selwyn, and Welldon. Other prominent Etonian sportsmen such as Lord Harris, Edward and Alfred Lyttelton, and Robert Carr Bosanquet, found an intellectual outlet as editors of the *Eton College Chronicle*, and some, like Cuthbert Ottaway and John Goldie, were King's Scholars.¹¹⁹ The by-product of a system which encouraged hard-working and sporty boys to go on to university, was not only that Sixth Forms and university colleges became more athleticised, but that sportsmen became more Hellenised. It was in the Sixth Form that Greek tended to eclipse Latin as the main focus of school classics, and it was by

¹¹⁷ Chandos, *Boys Together*, 333

¹¹⁸ Gladstonian Gleanings, *Etoniana*, no. 122, 7 June 1969, 341

¹¹⁹ *The Eton Register*, Part II, 1853-59; *The Eton Register*, Part III, 1862-68; *The Eton Register*, Part IV, 1871-80; *The Eton Register*, Part V, 1883-89

studying at this level that boys would become more attuned to ancient philosophy and history.

James Welldon – Sporting King’s Scholar

If Warre confounded conventional expectations as an educated Oppidan, his main rival for the headship in 1884, James Welldon, was an equally rounded figure. Welldon arrived at Eton as a King’s Scholar in September 1866. His father, the headmaster of Tonbridge School, would have preferred for him to study at home, but Welldon was ambitious even as a child, and persuaded his father to let him go to Eton if he could secure a scholarship.¹²⁰ As a Collegier, Welldon’s experience of Eton was markedly different to that of the Oppidans. Welldon lodged in the Long Chamber, along with the other 69 scholarship boys.¹²¹ He joined the school at a time when traditional barriers between Collegiers and Oppidans were breaking down, and scholarship boys could have friendships with Oppidans, although they remained banned from taking part in rowing until 1869.¹²²

Welldon excelled as a pupil, both as a scholar and sportsman, eventually rising to become Captain of the School.¹²³ He was Newcastle Scholar in 1873, having spent four years in the Newcastle Select, and, from 1871, he was a member of the Eton Society.¹²⁴ As a footballer, he was prominent in both of

¹²⁰ Welldon, *Recollections and Reflections*, 26

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 28

¹²² Mason, *Rowing at Eton College*, 205

¹²³ Welldon, *Recollections and Reflections*, 34

¹²⁴ *The Eton Register*, Part IV, 1871-80, xxx

Eton's codes, having been Keeper of the Wall in 1871 and Keeper of the Field in 1872.¹²⁵ Eventually standing 6 feet 5 inches tall, and with a bulky physique that later led to his pupils at Harrow affectionately referring to him as 'the Porker' he was also well-suited to the style of football played in the early days of the association game, which essentially involved big forwards battering and hacking their way through defences in a head on rush.¹²⁶ On St Andrew's Day, the most important day in the Etonian football calendar, he was a permanent fixture from 1869 to 1876, playing for the Scholars in the Wall Game for four years, before representing Cambridge for four years in the fixture between the Old Etonian university students. Football remained his principal sport at Cambridge and beyond, although he also took part in tennis, rowing, and riding as an undergraduate. While his height may have made him a potentially powerful rower, Welldon confessed that he found the sport monotonous and he resented the prohibition against looking out of the boat.¹²⁷ He also evidently enjoyed mountaineering and accompanied Edward Lyttelton on climbing holidays in the Alps in 1887 and 1888.¹²⁸

Welldon regarded football as the ideal sport for schoolboys and students 'for the exercise which it affords with little trouble and at little cost to the largest

¹²⁵ *The Eton Register*, Part IV, 1871-80, 3; The Keeper of the Wall and the Keeper of the Field were effectively captains of the Eton Wall and Field XIs. In Eton's sporting hierarchy they came just below the Captain of the Boats and the Captain of the Eleven, the respective rulers of rowing and cricket.

¹²⁶ Christopher Tyerman, *A History of Harrow School, 1324-1991*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 364

¹²⁷ Welldon, *Recollections and Reflections*, 49; For Welldon and other casual rowers, part of the pleasure of being on the river was enjoying the scenery. Warre regarded this as frivolous and believed that the focus should be on rowing as hard as possible without distraction. Each oarsman should be looking at the back of the man in front's neck.

¹²⁸ Lyttelton, *Memories and Hopes*, 149

number of people with the least expenditure of time.¹²⁹ Certainly, football was cheaper and less time consuming than either cricket or rowing, which is what made it attractive and accessible to the working man. However, while Welldon thought it was healthy for the working man to play football, he was convinced that the game 'had been a good deal injured by professionalism', an opinion which was not surprising given that, in the late 1870s, he was a semi-regular player for the Old Etonians.¹³⁰ More pertinently to his view of professional football, he was part of the side that drew five-all with Darwen *en-route* to winning the 1879 F.A. Cup.¹³¹ Eton eventually beat Darwen after three replays, but that a working-class team from a Lancastrian mill town could challenge public school dominance of the sport came as a shock, and the presence of two Scots professionals in the Darwen side provoked outrage. Within a few years the southern amateur dominance of association football would be eclipsed by northern professionals,¹³² something which the *Athletic News* couched in classical terms when it described Blackburn Olympic's victory over Old Carthusians in 1883 as a contest between plebeians and patricians.¹³³

Playing for the Old Etonians considerably widened Welldon's range of sporting acquaintances. From his own generation, Edward and Alfred Lyttelton continued to be his teammates, as they had been at school, but playing for the old boys introduced him to the previous generation, many of whom were

¹²⁹ Welldon, *Recollections and Reflections*, 50

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 49; Warsop, *The Early FA Cup Finals*, 45

¹³¹ *Berkshire Chronicle*, 15 February 1879, 5

¹³² Matthew Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football*, (London: Routledge, 2013), 43

¹³³ *Athletic News*, 21 March 1883, 4

extremely influential in Victorian sport, including Quinton Hogg, Alfred Kinnaird, and Francis Marindin.¹³⁴ Welldon's tutor at Eton was Francis Marindin's brother, George Eden Marindin, who he described as 'a fine scholar', 'kind yet disciplined', 'elevating in character' and 'a man of high good taste.'¹³⁵

Welldon's Circle – Masters and Footballers

In his autobiography Welldon lists his closest friends from his schooldays, men who were to remain lifelong associates and influential connections. Three of them, Edward Selwyn, Alfred Cooke, and Edward Lyttelton, were to go on to become public school headmasters.¹³⁶ Selwyn succeeded Edward Thring at Uppingham and embarked on a programme of transformation which completely altered the tone of that school. His introduction of a compulsory rifle corps and a fiercely athletic environment was initially successful, but his tenure ended acrimoniously some years later amid accusations of bullying and brutality.¹³⁷ Cooke was a prominent school footballer who went on to a successful academic career at Cambridge in both Classics and Zoology before eventually becoming Headmaster of Aldenham School.¹³⁸ Edward Lyttelton eventually succeeded Warre as Headmaster of Eton, and, although a very successful sportsman himself, he was wary of the over-importance of athleticism and sought to rebalance the emphasis between sport and other

¹³⁴ *Berkshire Chronicle*, 15 February 1879, 5

¹³⁵ Welldon, *Recollections and Reflections*, 38

¹³⁶ Welldon, *Recollections and Reflections*, 45

¹³⁷ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 312

¹³⁸ *The Eton Register*, Part IV, 1871-80, 39

aspects of school life.¹³⁹ Of Welldon's other close schoolfriends, George Curzon and Alfred Lyttelton became important political figures.¹⁴⁰

Alfred Lyttelton, of whom Curzon said, 'no athlete was ever quite such an athlete, and no boyish hero was ever quite such a hero', was an outstanding all-round sportsman who played cricket and football for England and earned Cambridge blues in no less than five different sports.¹⁴¹ He was seen as intellectually as well as physically gifted, and at Cambridge, like Welldon, joined an elite discussion group known as the Apostles.¹⁴² However, despite, or perhaps because of, his tremendous success as a varsity athlete he left Cambridge with only a second-class degree and his wife later wrote that he was forever after haunted by a sense of failure and a mistrust of his own powers.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, he went on to a successful legal and political career, during the early part of which he played cricket for Middlesex, Worcestershire, and England, and he was also a leading tennis player.

Like many of his acquaintances, Alfred Lyttelton was involved in the administration of sport, serving two terms as a member of the MCC committee and one as President.¹⁴⁴ Curzon had said of him that 'He was as much adored by the so-called professional as by his brother amateur.'¹⁴⁵ Lyttelton played as

¹³⁹ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 133-134

¹⁴⁰ Welldon, *Recollections and Reflections*, 45

¹⁴¹ Edith Lyttelton, *Alfred Lyttelton, An Account of His Life*, (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1917), 414

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 76

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 79

¹⁴⁴ Warsop, *The Early FA Cup Finals*, 101

¹⁴⁵ Lyttelton, *Alfred Lyttelton*, 415

an amateur alongside professionals in both cricket and football, and while the relationship between the two groups was long established, and the professionals suitably deferential, in cricket, the situation in association football was more volatile. As a member of Old Etonians he had played when the game was purely amateur and had viewed the rise of northern professionalism with alarm. The FA had staved off a damaging split between amateurs and professionals in the mid-1880s, but tensions continued to simmer under the surface. Open conflict was largely avoided by the geographical distribution of clubs; the new professional sides were clustered in the north and midlands, while ex-public school amateurs dominated southern football. However, the eventual emergence of the Southern League and professional clubs in and around London finally brought matters to a head, and when, on 8 July 1907 representatives of the most staunchly amateur clubs met in Holborn to form the breakaway Amateur Football Association, Alfred Lyttelton chaired the meeting.¹⁴⁶ The great split found Alfred Lyttelton in direct opposition to his and Welldon's former Old Etonian teammate, Arthur Kinnaird. An enthusiast for both forms of Eton football, Kinnaird had been involved in the association game almost from the beginning. In November 1864 he had played for a Mr Thompson's XI against Westminster School in a team that featured his older Eton schoolfriend Quinton Hogg and several Harrovians including Charles Alcock.¹⁴⁷ This was the beginning of a long association between Kinnaird and Alcock. In July 1871, Alcock, by now Secretary of the Football Association, laid out the proposal for the FA Cup competition.¹⁴⁸ In the Cup's first ten seasons,

¹⁴⁶ Walter E. Greenland, *The History of the Amateur Football Alliance*, (Harwich: AFA, 1965), 24

¹⁴⁷ Westminster School, *Bell's Life in London*, 10 December 1864, 8

¹⁴⁸ Keith Booth, *The Father of Modern Sport: The Life and Times of Charles W. Alcock*, (Sheffield: Chequered Flag, 2015), 114

Kinnaird was undoubtedly the star player, being on the winning side five times and runner-up four times.¹⁴⁹ However, it was as an administrator that Kinnaird made a lasting impact on the game. Together with Alcock, and fellow Old-Etonian Francis Marindin, he was part of a triumvirate that ran the Football Association in the 1880s, successfully guiding it through the advent of open professionalism without mishap. This was not an easy or straightforward process. There was a lack of clarity for some time over the exact status of payments in the sport, and there were consequently a series of inconsistent appeals against results and disqualifications from the FA Cup in the early 1880s. Interpretations of what was broadly acceptable differed from one region to another, but there was also considerable variance of opinion and sleight of hand from individual clubs, with the result that clubs like Darwen and Blackburn Rovers, at various times stood on both sides of the debate.¹⁵⁰

Matthew Taylor argues that football avoided a damaging split in the 1880s by following the example set by cricket, allowing professionalism within strict social parameters.¹⁵¹ This is a compelling argument, not least because Alcock was also one of the leading cricket administrators of his day, and was very familiar with the dynamics of amateurism and professionalism within that sport.¹⁵² Leading amateurs in the 1880s may have been alarmed by the dominance of the new northern clubs, but would have taken comfort in the idea that professionals knew their place and that elite amateur clubs enjoyed a

¹⁴⁹ Warsop, *The Early FA Cup Finals*, 93

¹⁵⁰ Taylor, *The Association Game*, 51

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 52

¹⁵² Booth, *The Father of Modern Sport*, 126-166

certain kudos. Furthermore, in the early days of professionalism, some amateurs believed professionalism would ultimately prove a passing fad and would be unsustainable, while others were confident that the best amateur sides, Corinthian and Queen's Park, would soon reclaim the sport.

Further evidence that a cricket link lay behind football's ability to find a compromise over professionalism in the 1880s comes from Alcock's relationship with cricket's leading amateur, W.G. Grace, who played football against Alcock many times and was involved in the discussions leading to the foundation of the FA Cup.¹⁵³ For men like Grace and C.B. Fry, amateurism had to be lucrative. They wanted a sport that had loopholes enough to make a living themselves while retaining social status, but were also aware that it was commercially important to be able to play with professionals because working-class support meant larger gates. Crucially, many of them also realised that to ban professionals would effectively remove many of the best exponents of their sports, to the detriment of players and spectators alike.

There was also likely a generational difference in Etonian attitudes towards professionalism between Kinnaird and Lyttelton. Kinnaird had been at Eton in the early 1860s, when cash prizes were still available in school competitions and his ability as a runner proved lucrative. He specialised in the 350 yards, placing third in 1863 and winning in 1864.¹⁵⁴ His prizes for this were 30

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 114-116

¹⁵⁴ Desborough, *Fifty Years of Sport*, 100

shillings, and £6 13 shillings respectively.¹⁵⁵ These were not trivial amounts at a time when a working man earned about 15 shillings a week, although Etonians operated under very different economic circumstances, as illustrated by their spending £30 on a trophy for the College steeplechase in 1866.¹⁵⁶ In contrast, Lyttelton had come through Eton under the much stricter amateur ethos favoured by Warre. As public school sport entrenched itself into a culture of elite amateurism, sport in the outside world was increasingly opening up to both wider participation and increasing commercialisation. By the time Lyttelton and Kinnaird found themselves on opposing sides in the football split of 1907, conditions were very different. Collins has pointed out that when rugby's great split of 1895 occurred, 'industrial conflict and class antagonisms were to the fore' and that society had markedly changed since the mid-1880s, making compromise less likely.¹⁵⁷ The hard line taken by rugby union encouraged public school football clubs, as did the success of similarly tough approaches to amateurism taken in rowing, athletics, and the fledgling modern Olympic games. This shift, in no small part, resulted from the interpretation of amateurism taken by Warre and others, influenced by Mahaffy and Gardner's interpretations of ancient Greek sport.

¹⁵⁵ Andy Mitchell, *Arthur Kinnaird, First Lord of Football*, (Dunblane: Andy Mitchell Media, 2020), 15

¹⁵⁶ Desborough, *Fifty Years of Sport*, 100

¹⁵⁷ Tony Collins, *Rugby's Great Split: Class, Culture and the Origins of Rugby League Football*, (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 112

Conclusion

E.C. Mack described Warre as 'eminently fitted to create a model school for turning out athletic philistines.'¹⁵⁸ Mack's opinion reflects that expressed by Academicus and masters like Oscar Browning who had been alarmed by the rise, and subsequent power of athleticism at Eton. However, although Mack may have been broadly correct in equating certain aspects of athleticism with philistinism and a lowering of academic and cultural standards, he was perhaps being less fair to Eton in general, and Warre in particular. The idea that Eton under Hornby and Warre neglected learning and culture in favour of a total devotion to sport is not really borne out by the facts and can at least partially be explained by campaigns mounted in support of Browning and Welldon. As Dewey observes 'The Socratics promoted their interpretation of Eton's history in every way open to them. They built up an oral tradition in countless conversations. Boys in their houses, in their pupil-rooms, in their divisions, were exposed to the same relentless drip.'¹⁵⁹ This was a narrative whereby successive generations of aesthetic masters from the King's Scholars side of Eton were presented as aesthetic martyrs, dedicated to teaching and the development of boys' finer qualities in the face of an athletic cult dedicated to stamping out art and individualism. In reality the lines were always blurred and boys such as Alfred Lyttelton, who the self-declared intelligentsia regarded as one of their own, might also turn out to be among the most successful athletes.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, as Dewey also admits, Warre was far from being a

¹⁵⁸ Edward C. Mack, *Public Schools and British Opinion Since 1860*, (New York, 1941), 129

¹⁵⁹ Clive Dewey, 'Socratic Teachers': The Opposition to the Cult of Athletics at Eton, 1870-1914 Part II, The Counter-Attack, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 12, no. 3, (Dec 1995), 30

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 24

martinet; he was kind and well-meaning and often agonised over difficult decisions.¹⁶¹ Accordingly, he would have found it difficult to stamp out intellectualism even if he wanted to, but there is no evidence he wished to do so.

Warre's private correspondence reveals a passion for classical languages which indicate that he was as comfortable in Greek or Latin as he was in English.¹⁶² He worked hard as a teacher, coach, and administrator and spent what time was left on convivial meetings and correspondence with his extremely wide circle of acquaintances. As a teacher, Warre influenced not just the boys he taught, but also, as a result of his elevated position as Headmaster of Eton, educational and sporting practice in other schools. As an authority on rowing, he was arguably the most influential figure in the sport for much of the late-nineteenth century, and his opinions were sought, not just for advice on rowing technique and coaching, but on boat construction, the history of rowing, and the vexed question of amateurism. Such was his dominance that George Treherne referred to him as ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν, a description Homer used of Agamemnon literally meaning 'lord of men' but closer in modern meaning to 'general-in-chief'.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Dewey, 'Socratic Teachers': Part I, 58

¹⁶² Fletcher, *Edmond Warre*, 296-303

¹⁶³ Treherne, *Record of the University Boat Race*, 82; Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 52

From Eton, Warre's tentacles spread across several sports eventually allowing his influence and ideas to permeate leading exponents and administrators, not only of English games, but across the Empire and beyond, to Ivy League colleges in America, and the nascent Olympic movement in Europe. One of the earliest people on whom he would have had a direct influence was R.A.H. Mitchell, whom he inherited as a pupil when he took over Marriott's house. Warre would have been instrumental in getting Mitchell, not the most academically gifted of boys, into Balliol, and Mitchell, on his return to Eton, was steadfastly loyal to Warre for the rest of his career. It is ironic considering Warre's rowing credentials, that the two most successful sportsmen to pass through his own house were cricketers, Mitchell and Lord Harris, both of whom would go on to illustrious First-Class careers. However, Warre took as much pride in Harris's subsequent political career as his sporting achievements, as Harris acknowledged when he wrote to Warre in October 1896 to remind him that three former members of Warre's house, Elgin, Harris, and Wenlock, were simultaneously Viceroy of India and Governors of Bombay and Madras.¹⁶⁴

Once he was Headmaster of Eton, Warre's thoughts on sport's classical roots, and any relationship that might have with amateurism would have found a wide and ready audience. Warre's insistence on removing cash prizes from Etonian athletic and rowing contests was certainly taken up elsewhere and must have helped contribute to the increasingly stringent standards of amateurism that were applied as the century wore on. By the closing decades of the century, it

¹⁶⁴ Fletcher, *Edmond Warre*, 196

is possible to see how the classically tinged amateurism of the public school seeped into wider society with varying degrees of penetration. It was eventually to find particularly fertile ground in the Olympic movement, and in the next chapter, we will see Warre's direct influence on the process.

The genuinely philistine housemaster was probably more common at lesser public schools, and at Eton only Mitchell, and possibly G.R. Dupuis, really fall into this mould. However, the enthusiasm for games and a *laissez-faire* attitude to learning meant that most public schoolboys, at Eton and elsewhere, left school with philistine attitudes and a penchant for ball games. Paradoxically however, it was often the more talented sportsmen among them who were more naturally motivated and disciplined. For these boys, the prospect of university, and another three to four years of high-quality sport, was an attractive one, and often provided the necessary incentive to engage fully with schoolwork. This had the effect of producing a generation of sportsmen who were classically educated and who thought about themselves, their sports, and their place in society through a classical lens. Their superior educations and privileged backgrounds also ensured that many would go on to influential political positions or would have the time and inclination to go into sports administration. In this way, British sport came to be dominated by men with backgrounds as classicists just at the time that games culture was spreading, both socially and geographically.

Chapter 5 – Henley, Class, and the Application of Classical Influences on Sport

Introduction

This chapter considers the extent to which classicism influenced elite amateur rowing and its implications. Inspired by the traditions of ancient Greek rowing, and encouraged by a network of influential rowers, coaches and administrators with backgrounds at Eton and Oxford centred around Edmond Warre, the sport distanced itself from the long-established races of professional watermen by the introduction of socially elite clubs, and a particularly harsh interpretation of amateurism allegedly inspired by the laws of Solon of Athens.¹ Evidence is presented of the extent to which classical culture came to influence amateur rowing and how the personal network of Edmond Warre came to become important for the development of both the Henley Royal Regatta, and by extension, the modern Olympic movement. Finally, the chapter also considers how E. Norman Gardiner and his allies attempted to influence the development of discus throwing as a modern field event at the Olympic games.

By the final quarter of the nineteenth century, the dominance which public school and university men had enjoyed in most organised sports was beginning to wane. Association football had captured the imagination of the masses, and the victory of Blackburn Olympic in the 1883 FA Cup, followed by the establishment of the Football League in 1888, marked a rapid shift in

¹ Neil Wigglesworth, *The Social History of English Rowing*, (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 119

power, in which the Old Boys' sides of southern England were eclipsed by professional teams from the industrial north and midlands.² In many sports, participation expanded as middle-class schools followed the example of the major public schools and dedicated time and resources to games.³ At the same time, changes in working patterns and increased prosperity, combined with an awareness of the benefits of exercise and a drive to provide wholesome alternatives to vice, meant that participation in adult sport widened across all social classes.⁴ In the face of this expansion, the bodies controlling individual sports wrestled with a range of opposing forces. On the one hand, they sought to provide genuine and high-quality competition. This was often attractive to spectators, but raised the spectre of commercialisation, gambling, and overly-partisan support, all of which were held to be unattractive traits of professional sport.⁵ As crowd trouble became a feature of modern sport, especially in football and pedestrianism, many commentators remarked that it was a predictable consequence of throwing the game open to the lower orders, and some drew direct comparisons with reports of riots at ancient gladiatorial and equestrian contests.⁶ For those at the reins of sporting administration, many of whom came from public school backgrounds, the answer was to ensure that fair play and sportsmanship remained paramount. Throughout the British

² Richard Sanders, *Beastly Fury: The Strange Birth of British Football*, (London: Bantam, 2009), 85-105

³ John Raymond Halstead de Symons Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School*, (London: Millington, 1977), 253

⁴ Roberta J. Park and Mike Huggins, Inclusion, Exclusion and Segregation in Mike Huggins (Ed.), *A Cultural History of Sport, Vol 5: In the Age of Industry*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 145-148

⁵ Matthew P. Llewellyn and John Gleaves, *The Rise and Fall of Olympic Amateurism*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 14; Also see for example the remarks of E.H.D. Sewell and C.B. Fry in Jack Williams, 'The Really Good Professional Captain Has Never Been Seen!': Perceptions of the Amateur/Professional Divide in County Cricket, 1900-1939, in Dilwyn Porter and Stephen Wagg (eds.), *Amateurism in British Sport: It Matters Not Who Won or Lost?*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 93

⁶ Edward Norman Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, (London: Macmillan & Co, 1910), 5-7

Empire, a movement was underway to teach cricket to native peoples in the belief that it was a civilising influence that would eventually enable them to rise above their supposedly inferior state.⁷ Similarly, evangelists of muscular Christianity ventured into deprived neighbourhoods to found missions to encourage the working man to play sports on the grounds that it was good for his physical and spiritual well-being.⁸ However, hand in hand with the exhortation for the working man to spend his leisure time in wholesome exercise rather than the assumed stereotypical pursuits of drinking, fighting, and gambling, came stern warnings about the dangers of playing sport for money rather than the love of the game. While the gentleman amateur was assumed to have the moral fortitude to be able to cope with the responsibility of winning a valuable prize, it was assumed that the working man was much more easily susceptible to corruption and should be kept away from professionalism for his own moral health. Amateurism was thus a core principle of many sporting bodies.

Rowing, Classicism and Class

The sport in which the strictest interpretation of amateurism was in force was rowing, not least because this was a sport which many public school and university men regarded as their own, although it was widely accepted that

⁷ Jack Williams, *Cricket and Race*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 28; Gerald R. Gems, The Purpose of Sport, in, Mike Huggins (ed.), *A Cultural History of Sport in the Age of Industry*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 51

⁸ Michael Krüger, Sporting Time and Sporting Space, in, Mike Huggins (ed.), *A Cultural History of Sport in the Age of Industry*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 61-62; Park and Huggins, Inclusion, Exclusion and Segregation, 145-146

even the best amateur was no match for a professional waterman.⁹ Rowing was also a sport which, at least among its public school and university-educated fraternity, was particularly proud of its classical roots. In 1897, Rudolph Lehmann, the Secretary of the Amateur Rowing Association (ARA), published *The Classical Guide to Rowing*, the introduction of which traced the origins of fast rowing back to the Trojans.¹⁰ Lehmann also quoted the poetry of Robert Henry Forster which imagined how Athenian rowing coaches would have trained their charges. Forster's verse is peppered with Greek commands such as 'έτοιμοι' (ready) and 'πάντες προσω' (forwards together).¹¹ The Harrow and Cambridge educated Forster, who was captain of London Rowing Club, a respected coach, and a prolific writer about both contemporary and ancient rowing, no doubt included these phrases to add colour to his narrative, but he clearly expected the majority of his readers to understand them, and it is easy to imagine him bellowing them through his megaphone as he cycled the Thames towpath alongside his rowers.

At rowing's most socially-exclusive event, The Henley Royal Regatta, the original rules confined entrants to;

Any crew composed of members of a college of either the
Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, or London, the schools of Eton

⁹ Walter Bradford Woodgate, *Boating*, (London: Longman, Green & Co, 1889), 218; Wigglesworth, *The Social History of English Rowing*, 117-118

¹⁰ Rudolph Chambers Lehmann, *The Classic Guide to Rowing*, (Stroud: Amberley, 2016), 11

¹¹ Lehmann, *The Classic Guide to Rowing*, 13

or Westminster, the officers of the two brigades of Household Troops or members of a club established at least one year previous.¹²

While the institutions explicitly named in this list make its elite nature quite clear, the last clause theoretically left the door open to wider participation, although initially the only club which the regatta admitted was Leander, which only recruited from those organisations listed in the Henley rules.¹³ As other amateur rowing clubs became established, from which the lower-classes might aspire to compete at Henley, this door was closed in April 1879 when the committee, which included Edmond Warre, met and ‘after considerable discussion’ adopted a definition of amateurs which not only excluded anyone who had competed for cash prizes, but also anyone ‘who is or has been, by trade or employment for wages, a mechanic, artisan, or labourer.’¹⁴

Wigglesworth felt that introduction of this so-called ‘Mechanics Clause’ was inspired by ancient Athenian attitudes towards tradesmen.¹⁵ Certainly, the classically educated Victorian gentleman amateur had a very clear idea of the class distinctions of the ancient Greeks, and, seeing himself as their cultural and spiritual heir, may have been well-disposed to maintaining them. There was also a precedent in the Italian Renaissance sport of *calcio*, which also

¹² Mike Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, (London: Hambledon, 2004), 55

¹³ Wigglesworth, *The Social History of English Rowing*, 121

¹⁴ Henley Royal Regatta, *The Field*, 12 April 1879, 43

¹⁵ Wigglesworth, *The Social History of English Rowing*, 119

banned 'artisans or servants', with participation reserved for 'honoured soldiers, gentlemen, lords and princes.'¹⁶ Depending on the period in Greek history from which they drew their inspiration, those in favour of class-based exclusion in sport could draw from two models. The earlier Homeric model restricted sport to the aristocratic military elite, the βασιλεῖς (*basileis*), or chiefs. Thus, at the funeral games of Patroclus in the Iliad, only kings and princes could compete for the rich prizes on offer, and later, in the Odyssey, Odysseus was, on the one hand angrily rebuked when he tried to enter an archery contest disguised as a beggar, and on the other, proved his identity as a true aristocrat by winning a discus competition. In this period sport was inherently connected to the fundamental qualities of Greek bronze age lordship, *arete* and τιμή (*timē*). For the *basileis*, *timē* in particular was important. Conceptually, *timē* is a combination of respect and honour. Crucially, it was a relative concept, measured against other members of one's own community. Hence the Homeric aristocrat was in constant competition with his fellows to gain and maintain his relative standing, and this was something which could only be achieved via outstanding performance in sport or war.¹⁷

By the time the major ancient Greek sporting festivals were established, in the Archaic (700-480 BCE) and Classical (480-323 BCE) periods, society was far more complex and complete aristocratic hegemony no longer always assured. Broadly speaking, free Greek males were divided into three classes. The

¹⁶ Tony Money, *Manly and Muscular Diversions: Public Schools and the Nineteenth-Century Sporting Revival*, (London: Duckworth, 1997), 10

¹⁷ Paul Christesen and Rose MacLean, The Purpose of Sport, in Paul Christesen and Charles H. Stocking (Eds.), *A Cultural History of Sport in Antiquity*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 25-27

highest class, the πλούσιοι (*plousioi*), were so rich that they never had to work. The middle class, the πένητες (*penêtes*), were made up of independent farmers and the more prosperous section of the traders and craftsmen.¹⁸ Such men were not so rich that they could give up working altogether, but the climate and style of agriculture, combined with the labour of their family and servants, mean that they were still able to devote long periods to games and the gymnasium. Below the *penêtes* came the πτωχοὶ (*ptochoi*), a catch-all group comprising everything from small farmers to skilled tradesmen and outright beggars.¹⁹ Such men had little or no leisure time and were subsequently practically, although not necessarily legally, excluded from both sport and politics. Even further down the social scale, slaves were banned from competing altogether, not least because it would be socially humiliating for a free man to lose to one.²⁰ Meanwhile, the *plousioi* and *penêtes* struggled for political control in most Greek states. The eventual outcome was that many Greek states eventually adopted forms of democracy, increasing power and privileges for the *penêtes*. This in turn led to an increase in their participation in sports and an expansion, and increased complexity, of the Greek sporting calendar from the mid-6th century BCE onwards.²¹ However, David Pritchard has observed that, although the downward spread of democracy in Athens theoretically opened up sporting participation to competitors from the lower

¹⁸ An indication of how Greek class structure shifted over time is given by the fact that *penêtes* originally meant 'the poor' from *penia*, meaning 'poor' and from which we derive the word penury. However, as the middle class in Greek society became more prosperous, they still kept a name based on their position when almost all wealth was held by aristocrats. Vincent J. Rosivach, Some Athenian Presuppositions about 'the Poor', *Greece & Rome*, 38, no.2, (Oct 1991), 189-193

¹⁹ Again, this word literally meant 'beggars' or 'those who crouch', but the class of person it covered rose upwards over time. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 616

²⁰ Mark Golden, *Greek Sport and Social Status*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 42

²¹ Christesen and MacLean, *The Purpose of Sport*, 28-29

classes, economic reality meant that in practice sportsmen continued to predominantly come from the upper classes.²² Nevertheless sport, and sporting heroes, were immensely popular among all sections of classical Athenian society and even the *ptochoi* supported public expenditure on Athens' extensive and expensive calendar of sporting events and public awards for victors.²³

The Mechanics' Clause was an overt attempt by classically educated public school and university men to exclude those they saw as belonging to the lower orders from sports which they had come to regard as their own. Perhaps oddly, the clause was not seriously considered for application to association football, a sport which they had a better claim to have invented, because, by the time the working classes came to dominate football in the 1880s, it had already met with widespread condemnation. The clause was originally introduced by the Amateur Athletic Club in 1866, and was soon adopted by the ARA, as part of a determined effort on the part of gentleman amateurs to wrest control of these sports from already long-established professional traditions involving cash prizes linked to a culture of heavy gambling and drinking among the spectators.²⁴ That rowing and pedestrianism traditionally had a less savoury side enabled the ARA to claim that their campaign was about moral improvement and sporting purity rather than social exclusion, but that did little to dampen opposition. In athletics, the clause was soon dropped when the

²² David M. Pritchard, Sport, War and Democracy in Classical Athens, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26, no. 2, (February 2009), 212

²³ *Ibid.*, 229

²⁴ Eugene A. Glader, *Amateurism and Athletics*, (West Point: Leisure Press, 1978), 77

newly formed Amateur Athletics Association took over control of the sport, but in rowing the ARA stubbornly held on to the clause, prompting a split within the sport with the formation of the rival National Amateur Rowing Association in 1890.²⁵ In 1894, the ARA responded by adjusting their rules on what constituted manual labour, particularly in the case of post-apprenticeship employment. This had the effect of creating a complex three-tier classification dividing rowers into amateurs, non-amateurs, and professionals.²⁶ To further add to the confusion, they gave examples of what roles might and might not be considered manual labour. Bizarrely a watchmaker's assistant was classed as a manual worker whilst the chief engineer on a ship was not. In the same set of examples, engravers and etchers were denied amateur status, but it was granted to engineering draughtsmen, a situation which even Rudolph Lehmann, secretary of the ARA at the time, admitted was 'not easily to be reconciled.'²⁷

By this time a wide range of definitions of what constituted amateur and professional status were in play in different sports. These not only attempted to lay down the differences between amateurs and professionals, but also the extent, if at all, to which they were allowed to interact. To further add to the confusion, emerging sporting bodies in Europe and north America often had different and conflicting rules, threatening the emergence of international competition. It was largely to address these issues that Pierre de Coubertin

²⁵ John Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes 1870-1914*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 160

²⁶ Lehmann, *The Classic Guide to Rowing*, 177

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 178

called the Paris International Congress in June 1894.²⁸ The delegates discussed the thorny question of amateurism for a week, and although they resolved some issues, such as banning prize money for amateurs and refusing to recognise salaried coaches as amateurs, they ultimately came up with ‘a loose consensus instead of a strict amateur code that could not (and still cannot) be agreed upon and imposed internationally.’ However, one thing that they did agree on was that the British restriction on manual labourers was wrong.²⁹ Despite this apparent rejection of the Mechanics’ Clause, some British residents of Athens attempted to get Edward Battell and Frederick Keeping, employees of the British Embassy, banned from the cycling at the 1896 games on the grounds that, as domestic servants, they were not gentlemen. Under Olympic rules, both were allowed to compete, finishing third and second in their respective events.³⁰

The Paris International Congress may have failed to arrive at a universally agreed definition of amateurism, but it had opposed the idea that working men, by the nature of their employment, could never be considered amateurs. This was an important step towards the democratisation of sport, even if the time, opportunity, and resources to take part in many sports at the highest level remained beyond the reach of most working people. In stark contrast, the ARA remained strongly opposed to allowing those with a background in manual labour to compete in their races. Nowhere was this opposition more apparent

²⁸ John J. MacAloon, *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 190

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 195

³⁰ David Goldblatt, *The Games: A Global History of the Olympics*, (London: Pan, 2018), 47

than at Henley, where the stewards of the annual regatta strove to encourage rowing excellence while simultaneously maintaining social exclusivity.

Elite Networks and the Henley Royal Regatta

Henley Royal Regatta had been established in 1839.³¹ Positioned on the Thames between Eton and Oxford, Henley soon grew to become a major sporting and social event, and the complex rules which developed to manage multiple heats and sizes of boat became the pattern on which other regattas were modelled. This gave the organisers of Henley enormous power in amateur rowing to the extent that they effectively controlled the Amateur Rowing Association. These organisers were drawn from a very narrow social group, their backgrounds revealing an astonishing degree of homogeneity, as shown by W.B. Woodgate's list of the officials for 1889.

³¹ William Edward Sherwood, *Oxford Rowing*, (Oxford, 1900), 13; Woodgate, *Boating*, 45

Table 5.1. Officials at the 1889 Henley Royal Regatta ³²

Role	Name	School	University
President	Francis Stonor, Lord Camoys	St Mary's College, Oscott	
Treasurer	Archibald Brakspear	Marlborough	
Secretary	John F. Cooper	Marlborough	
Steward	Edmond Warre	Eton	Balliol College, Oxford
Steward	Frederick Fenner		
Steward	Herbert T. Steward	Westminster	
Steward	W.H. Grenfell (Lord Desborough)	Harrow	Balliol College, Oxford
Steward	J.H.D. Goldie	Eton	St John's College, Cambridge
Steward	William Denison, Lord Londesborough	Harrow	
Steward	Thomas Edwards-Moss	Eton	Brasenose College, Oxford
Steward	W.H. Smith	Tavistock G.S.	Brasenose College, Oxford
Steward	The Earl of Antrim	Eton	Christ Church, Oxford
Steward	The Earl of Macclesfield	Eton	Christ Church, Oxford
Steward	William Henry Vanderstegen	Eton	Brasenose College, Oxford
Steward	Alexander C Forbes	Rugby	Oriel College, Oxford
Steward	John Fowden Hodges	Rugby	Merton College, Oxford
Steward	Henry Knox	Eton	Exeter College, Oxford
Steward	John William Rhodes	Harrow	Queen's College, Cambridge
Steward	Frank Willan	Eton	Exeter College, Oxford
Steward	Charles Stephens	Winchester	Balliol College, Oxford
Steward	William D Mackenzie	Harrow	Magdalen College, Oxford
Steward	John Noble	Eton	Balliol College, Oxford
Steward	Colonel John Baskerville	Eton	
Steward	Hugh Mair		
Steward	Sir Francis George Stapleton	Sandhurst	
Steward	John Page	Eton	Exeter College, Oxford

³² Woodgate, *Boating*, 49

Given Henley's geographical location, the domination of the list by those with links to Eton and Oxford is to be expected, but it also shows that nearly all came from an environment dominated by athleticism and classicism. The few names on the list that did not attend one of the 'great' schools were included for other reasons. Lord Camoys was a major landowner in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Excluded by his Catholicism from the 'great' schools, he been educated at St Mary's College, Oscott. St Mary's provided a largely classical education, and Lord Camoys' credentials in this respect were further strengthened by his relationship, via his mother, to the Towneley family, his great-great-uncle Charles being a noted collector of Greek sculpture.³³ Hugh Mair was the scion of a Glaswegian industrial family and was the tenant of Phyllis Court, a large house in Henley whose grounds included the finish line of the regatta.³⁴ Archibald Brakspear and W.H. Smith were both included for their business acumen. Brakspear's father, who owned a large brewery in the centre of Henley, had been one of the founders of the regatta, which had originally been established to attract visitors and trade to the town.³⁵ Smith was not only the owner of Britain's biggest newsagent, but a Conservative MP and First Lord of the Treasury.³⁶ Frederick Fenner was by contrast a London stock jobber and leading member of the Thames Rowing Club.³⁷ He had been elected to the Henley stewards in 1879 and appears to have been a specialist

³³ *Tablet*, 4 June 1864, 361; *Burke's Peerage* (76th Edition), (London: Harrison, 1914). 364

³⁴ *Henley Advertiser*, 6 September 1879, 4

³⁵ Richard Desborough Burnell, *Henley Regatta: A History*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 29

³⁶ Christopher Dodd, *Henley Royal Regatta*, (London: Stanley Paul, 1981), 70

³⁷ The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891*; Class: RG12; Piece: 445; Folio: 109; Page: 33; GSU roll: 6095555; *Westminster Gazette*, 25 March 1899, 10

distance judge.³⁸ Although not a university man himself, he coached the Oxford crew in 1890, as well as acting as umpire for the University Boat Race on many occasions.³⁹ Fenner shared his Oxford coaching duties in 1890 with Edmond Warre and William Grenfell, an Old Harrovian all-around sportsman who had rowed for Oxford.⁴⁰ Grenfell was politically well-connected (he was at that time a Liberal MP, but later served as a Conservative MP and Member of the House of Lords), and was also active as an administrator across a number of other sports, serving as President, at various times, of the MCC and the Lawn Tennis and Amateur Fencing Associations.⁴¹ Grenfell's interests went beyond his sporting and political connections; he was a key member of the influential social group known as *The Souls*, wealthy intellectuals with an interest in philosophy and classicism which crossed the political divide between Liberals and Conservatives and included, among others, Arthur Balfour, Alfred Lyttelton, and George Curzon.⁴² Such was Grenfell's devotion to the classics that he staged Greek dramas at his home.⁴³ His combination of political and sporting power made him an attractive and obvious ally for the Olympic movement from the outset, and his interest in ancient Greece meant that he was eager to become involved. He served as a judge at the 1896 games in Athens and was to become closely involved in the organisation of

³⁸ *Oxford Times*, 10 May 1879, 8; *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 1 April 1895, 4; *Watford Observer*, 1 April 1899, 7

³⁹ *Sporting Life*, 18 March 1890, 3; *Standard*, 24 March 1890, 3; Fenner was called in to coach Oxford as Grenfell was called away for political business. This put Fenner in the unusual position of being both coach and umpire in the 1890 race. *Field*, 29 March 1890, 456

⁴⁰ *Yorkshire Herald*, 7 March 1890, 8; Treherne, *Record of the University Boat Race*, 175

⁴¹ *Birmingham Post*, 11 January 1945, 1

⁴² Richard Davenport-Hines, *Ettie: The Intimate Life and Dauntless Spirit of Lady Desborough*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2008), 43

⁴³ Don Anthony, *Olympic Review*, XXVI, no. 7 (Feb-Mar 1996), 66-67

both the 1906 intercalated games and the 1908 London Olympics.⁴⁴ Grenfell and Fenner were to remain closely associated for many years, with Grenfell, by then Lord Desborough, appointing him to the role of chief judge for rowing events held at Henley for the 1908 Olympic Games.⁴⁵

Fenner, although from a middle-class background, was unusual among Henley stewards, because he was neither the product of a leading public school nor wealthy and politically connected. His value to the regatta was his technical skill and willingness to work hard in support of his sport. His inclusion in the governing body of the Henley Regatta reflected a trend which was increasingly common in sports administration, as public school and university men delegated the business of refereeing, managing fixtures, finance, and breaches of the rules to those from humbler backgrounds. In fact, Henley Regatta had regarded itself primarily as a social occasion in its early years, and its organisers were entirely selected based on their social standing. It was only in December 1868, when a new trophy for eight-oared boats, the Thames Cup, was proposed that the committee decided they needed members with specialist boating knowledge, at which point they elected Edmond Warre, and Herbert Playford, one of the founders of the London Rowing Club.⁴⁶ Henceforth, the Henley stewards committee began to shift towards a membership which included influential and powerful figures from the world of rowing as well as those who represented business, political, and landed

⁴⁴ Davenport-Hines, *Ettie*, 147

⁴⁵ Richard Desborough Burnell, *One Hundred and Fifty Years of the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race*, (Marlow: Precision Press, 1979), 110-111; *Oxford Chronicle*, 31 July 1908, 9

⁴⁶ Burnell, *Henley Regatta*, 31

interests around the town of Henley. By the time of the 1889 Regatta, Warre had been joined among the stewards by other leading figures from amateur rowing. These included Grenfell, Herbert Stewart, the Westminster-educated Chairman of the ARA, and two of Warre's former Etonian proteges, John Goldie and Tom Edwards-Moss, both of whom had gone on to become important and influential figures in the sport.⁴⁷

This shift in the composition of the Henley committee to include more high-profile figures from the world of rowing reflected the growing importance and prestige of the Henley Regatta, and their involvement further accelerated this process so that Henley was increasingly regarded, not only as the highlight of the English rowing calendar, but of rowing worldwide. All these figures were staunchly committed to amateurism in its strictest sense, but their involvement meant that the Regatta was both extremely well-organised, and that it also attracted competitors of the highest calibre.

Henley and the Birth of International Sport

The Regatta attracted entries from outside England as early as 1870, when Trinity College, Dublin entered crews in four races, proving victorious in the Visitors' Challenge Cup.⁴⁸ The Dublin crew had a long journey to reach Henley, but could hardly be considered exotic given that Dublin was part of the United Kingdom and that Trinity College was culturally very similar to the Oxford and

⁴⁷ *Henley Advertiser*, 1 December 1888, 4; *The Eton Register*, Part III, 1862-68, 68; *Ibid.*, 96;

⁴⁸ Dodd, *Henley Royal Regatta*, 65

Cambridge colleges. However, in 1878 the Regatta became truly international with the arrival of two crews from the United States, Columbia College BC from New York and *Shoe-wae-cae-mette* from Monroe, Michigan, a crew entirely composed of French-Canadian watermen who had developed endurance paddling canoes in Quebec.⁴⁹ Columbia duly won the Visitors' Challenge Cup, and, being university men, they were generally accepted at Henley, although their chant of 'C-O-L-U-M-B-I-A' may have been considered vulgar by sensitive spectators. In contrast the *Shoe-wae-cae-mette* rowers were condemned in the pages of *Bell's Life* for their ungentlemanly demeanour, poor rowing posture, and brute strength. Worst of all, *Bell's Life's* correspondent accused them of the ultimate sin in English amateur rowing circles, that of having to work for a living.⁵⁰ By the time of the following Henley Regatta, the committee had adopted a new, more restrictive, definition of amateurism which effectively banned *Show-wae-cae-mette* from returning. As they were professional watermen, their banning was hardly controversial, but the new laws were so draconian as to outlaw all but gentlemen.

In 1882, another crew from Michigan, Hillsdale BC, having been American amateur champions three times, came to England hoping to race against the best in the world. They opened their tour with an impressive win at the Marlow Regatta, but they were refused entry to Henley on the grounds that their rowers were store clerks, after which every other English regatta followed suit. The unfortunate Hillsdale men were in England for three months and their only

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 65-67

⁵⁰ *Bell's Life in London*, 13 July 1878, 8

other race was a match against Thames RC, which they lost when one of their sliding seats broke.⁵¹ Nevertheless, other foreign crews began to arrive in Henley from 1880 onwards as German, French, Dutch, and Belgian clubs sought to join the Irish and Americans in testing themselves against English opposition. Individual rowers from overseas had some success, a Dutchman winning the Diamond Sculls in 1892, and an American in 1897.⁵²

In 1893 Pierre de Coubertin brought over a French crew who were defeated by Thames RC in controversial circumstances. The French were undoubtedly fouled by the Thames men, but Coubertin persuaded his compatriots not to appeal against the result of the race, as he felt protesting was ungentlemanly. However, if the French were expecting the Londoners to sportingly admit the foul and agree to run the race again, they were to be disappointed, and so they belatedly appealed several hours later. This, in turn, offended the English rowers, who expected an appeal to have been made at the proper time. The result stood and much bitterness ensued, adding to a feeling in international rowing circles, already promoted by the Americans, that the English manipulated the rules to suit themselves.⁵³

This sense, that English rowers were keen to use loopholes to avoid serious opposition, only increased when a foreign crew finally triumphed at Henley with

⁵¹ Dodd, *Henley Royal Regatta*, 68

⁵² Theodore Andrea Cook, Foreign Entries at Henley Regatta, *Fortnightly Review*, 70, no.418 (October 1901), 650

⁵³ MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 185-186

the victory of Nereus BC from Amsterdam in the 1895 Thames Challenge Cup.⁵⁴ That same year a crew from Cornell had knocked the reigning champions, Leander, out of the Grand Challenge Cup while the Argonaut RC of Canada had lost to London RC by a mere two feet in the Stewards' Challenge Cup.⁵⁵ English rowing was under threat and in 1896 *The Field* ran an article advocating that Henley be closed to foreign crews because their presence, and the extent to which they prepared, detracted from the true purpose of the Regatta, which was to provide a place where representatives of England's leading public schools and colleges could meet and mingle. *The Field* felt that the spirit of Henley should be as a sportsmanlike meeting between old friends, but the presence of highly-motivated foreign crews, bent on proving their worth, spoiled the festival by making it entirely too serious.⁵⁶

Warre, too, thought that entrance to Henley should be restricted to English crews, saying that while he admired American oarsmen, he was anxious to preserve British rowing from 'the deadly inroad of professionalism' which 'threatens to crush the very life out of the sports of merrie England.'⁵⁷ Ever the classicist, Warre quoted Horace untranslated, '*ludus enim genuit trepidum certamen et iram, ira truces inimicitias et funebre bellum*' (For sport begets a fearful struggle, and wrath, fierce anger, enmity, and deadly war) to warn that international competition ran the risk of becoming entirely too serious and could threaten good relations between friends.⁵⁸ Grenfell weighed in behind

⁵⁴ Dodd, *Henley Royal Regatta*, 212

⁵⁵ Burnell, *Henley Regatta*, 116-117

⁵⁶ Dodd, *Henley Royal Regatta*, 95

⁵⁷ *Field*, 13 July 1901, 77

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 77; From Horace 1, Epistle 19

Warre, as did other leading figures of British rowing such as Lehmann and Woodgate.⁵⁹ However, their move was eventually defeated after Theodore Andrea Cook wrote a detailed article in the *Fortnightly Review* laying out the history of foreign crews at Henley and the reasons why restricting foreign participation would eventually render Henley nothing more than ‘a quiet little gathering of stewards’ friends to whom a tasteful selection of family heirlooms can be annually distributed, without too much exertion on the part of the participants.’⁶⁰

That Henley ultimately continued to accept foreign entries, despite the reservations of several senior figures, reflects the way in which competitors and spectators alike were increasingly drawn towards international sport. By 1900, the sports developed in Britain over the previous half-century had begun to spread around the globe. Cricket led the way in establishing international fixtures as part of the sporting calendar, and test matches against Australia and South Africa drew tens of thousands to the grounds while millions more followed via newspaper reports. Home international football and rugby matches also drew huge audiences, although England did not play an association football match against a non-home nation until Austria in June 1908. England’s rugby union team had played against a predominantly Māori New Zealand touring side in 1889, but the tour ended acrimoniously with the English accusing the New Zealanders of professionalism, while the latter felt

⁵⁹ Cook, *Foreign Entries at Henley Regatta*, 653-657

⁶⁰ Cook, *Foreign Entries at Henley Regatta*, 657

the English were guilty of gamesmanship.⁶¹ British rugby teams had toured South Africa and Australia by 1900, but it was not until New Zealand returned in 1905 that England played another home game against foreign opposition.⁶² However, by that time international sport had gained some impetus with the establishment of the modern Olympic games, and both association and rugby codes of football were included in the Paris games of 1900, although Great Britain was represented in these tournaments by club sides, respectively Upton Park and Moseley Wanderers, rather than a selective international team.⁶³ Having experienced a successful, if modest, start at Athens in 1896, even Coubertin did not consider the Olympics of 1900 and 1904 to have been very successful because they were linked to, and overshadowed by, other larger festivals.⁶⁴ The 1900 Games were dwarfed by the Paris Exhibition and went largely unnoticed as the individual events were scattered throughout the year. In 1904, St Louis, which by virtue of hosting the Louisiana Purchase Centennial Exhibition was able to wrest the Olympics away from their originally intended venue of Chicago, was simply too remote to ensure adequate international participation or much interest from spectators beyond the Mid-Western United States.⁶⁵ The reputation of the Olympics was restored by the success of the tenth anniversary or Intercalated games held in Athens in 1906, and the 1908 Olympics, originally scheduled for Rome, but switched to London at short notice.⁶⁶ It is ironic that several of the figures involved in opposing the

⁶¹ Tony Collins, *The Oval World: A Global History of Rugby*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 121

⁶² *Ibid.*, 137; *Ibid.*, 154; *Ibid.*, 124

⁶³ *Dundee Evening Post*, 22 September 1900, 6; *Cornishman*, 1 November 1900, 8

⁶⁴ Martin Polley, *The British Olympics: Britain's Olympic Heritage 1612-2012*, (Swindon: English Heritage, 2011), 100-101

⁶⁵ Goldblatt, *The Games*, 60

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 72

internationalisation of the Henley Regatta were heavily involved in the organising of these games and thus turned out to be influential in rescuing the Olympics from an early demise.

Henley and the Modern Olympics

The young Coubertin, enthused by Hippolyte Taine's *Notes sur l'Angleterre* and *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, had become convinced that the blend of classicism and athleticism that permeated British public school and university life had created the class of military, political and industrial leaders responsible for the United Kingdom's preeminent position in the world by the second half of the nineteenth-century.⁶⁷ Coubertin grew up at a time when the French found themselves defeated by the Prussians and replaced by the newly united Germany as mainland Europe's most powerful state. He was consequently anxious to learn as much as he could about English elite education with the aim of eventually persuading the French authorities to adopt some, if not all, of what he identified as the best aspects of the British system in the hope that this would strengthen France's abilities to defend herself in future. In 1883 he embarked on a tour of English public schools, including Rugby and Eton.⁶⁸ Such was his fascination with the English public school system that he made several more trips over the following years.⁶⁹ However, his vision changed as he realised the potential of international sport. While still recognising that sport

⁶⁷ MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 78

⁶⁸ Eugen Weber, Pierre de Coubertin and the Introduction of Organised Sport in France, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5, no. 2 (1970), 6; Coubertin's first trip to Britain may have been as early as 1881, but this is unsubstantiated. Martin Polley, *The British Olympics: Britain's Olympic Heritage, 1612-2012*, (Swindon: English Heritage, 2011), 89

⁶⁹ Sigmund Loland, Coubertin's Ideology of Olympism from the Perspective of the History of Ideas, *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies*, IV, (1995), 55

had a part to play in keeping young men fit enough to become effective soldiers if required, he increasingly saw sport as the means by which nations could compete in friendship and peace. Furthermore, having seen the benefits of rowing at Eton and Oxford, Coubertin had become a keen rower, attending the Henley Regatta in 1888, where he almost certainly would have renewed his earlier acquaintance with Warre and others of his circle.⁷⁰ In June of the same year, he had brought a deputation from the *École Monge* in Paris to Eton.⁷¹

Coubertin visited Henley Regatta several times and was impressed with the organisation and social kudos of the event. Attracting crews from the Oxbridge colleges and the best public schools, the Regatta was much closer to Coubertin's vision of an elite sporting event than the rather bucolic Much Wenlock Olympian Games. While William Penny Brookes took Coubertin to his heart and encouraged his vision for an international games, Coubertin, although accepting of Brookes' friendship and support, later distanced himself from the Much Wenlock games, downplaying their role in Olympic history.⁷² In contrast, he waxed lyrical about the organising committee of the Royal Henley Regatta, particularly the way in which it was self-appointing, and he openly

⁷⁰ Don Anthony, Coubertin, Britain and the British, A Chronology, *Journal of Olympic History*, 5, no. 3, (1997), 18

⁷¹ Boulongne, writing for the IOC reports that Coubertin led a sports team for this visit, but neither the *Eton Chronicle* nor any British newspaper reported on any games at that time. However, the *Eton Chronicle* reported on the visit some years later, after Warre had received a letter about it from Paris, at which point that made it clear that Coubertin led a deputation to observe Etonian games to be able to establish similar activities in their own school. Yves-Pierre Boulongne, The Presidencies of Demetrius Vikelas (1894-1896) and Pierre de Coubertin (1896-1925) in Raymond Gafner (Ed.), *The International Olympic Committee – One Hundred Years: The Idea – The Presidents – The Achievements*, I, (Lausanne: IOC, 1994), 28; A French Account of Eton Games, *Eton Chronicle*, no. 679, 14 March 1895, 25-26

⁷² David C. Young, *The Modern Olympics: A Struggle for Revival*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 67

acknowledged it as the pattern for the IOC.⁷³ He described the organisation of both the Regatta and the IOC as being;

Composed of three concentric circles: a small core of earnest and hard-working members; a nursery of willing members ready to be taught; finally, a façade of more or less useful people whose presence satisfied national pretensions at the same time as it gave prestige to the committee as a whole.⁷⁴

This was a model which was already tried and tested in Britain. Not only the Royal Henley Regatta, but the majority of national and regional sporting bodies, worked along similar lines. Most had a prestigious, politically-connected and often aristocratic president, while those who filled the more hands-on roles of secretary and treasurer were often from middle-class backgrounds, (solicitors, stockbrokers, and civil servants being their typical occupations) but not necessarily public school or university educated. Even so, elite educational establishments still exerted considerable influence in British sport. In 1900, for example, graduates of Trinity College, Cambridge simultaneously occupied positions as President of the FA (Arthur Kinnaird), President of the AAA (Lord Alverstone), Secretary of the ARA (Rudolph Lehmann), President of the MCC (Ivo Bligh), Vice-President and Secretary of

⁷³ Goldblatt, *The Games*, 41

⁷⁴ Pierre de Coubertin, *Olympism: Selected Writings*, (Lausanne: IOC, 2000), 322

the Amateur Gymnastics and Fencing Association (Henry Wigram and Felix Clay), and President of the National Cyclists' Union (Arthur Balfour).⁷⁵

After announcing his intention to revive the Olympic Games in 1892, Coubertin sought to recruit members for the IOC. His aim was to invite representatives from Europe, the United States, and the British colonies, as at this point the games were very much envisaged as being limited in participation to sportsmen of European heritage.⁷⁶ Above all, Coubertin was anxious to ensure the participation of the British and Americans as they were the countries with by far the most advanced sporting cultures. Ironically, this very superiority, combined with the Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism prevalent within both Britain and the USA, made it initially harder to foster widespread enthusiasm for the Olympics within those countries; the British regarded few outside their own home nations and largest dominions as worthy opponents, whilst the most popular US sports, baseball, and American football, were not widely played elsewhere.

Nevertheless, Coubertin travelled to both Britain and America to lobby for support for his new games. In February 1894 he met with Sir John Astley, the President of the London Sports Club, Arthur Balfour, and the Prince of Wales and gained their backing.⁷⁷ At this meeting Astley agreed to be the vice-

⁷⁵ John Venn and John Archibald Venn (Eds.), *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); *Daily Telegraph*, 7 April 1900, 11; *Globe*, 19 October 1900, 6; *Referee*, 27 May 1900, 7; *Queen*, 14 July 1900, 47; *Sporting Life*, 27 April 1900, 4; *Workington Star*, 13 July 1900, 1

⁷⁶ MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 187-190

⁷⁷ Theodore Cook, The Olympic Games Fund, *Westminster Gazette*, 3 September 1903, 3

president of Coubertin's Sorbonne Congress in June. Astley was in Paris for Coubertin's conference and would undoubtedly have continued his involvement with the Olympics, but he unexpectedly died later that year after catching a chill.⁷⁸

Among those appointed to the first IOC in 1894 was Lord Ampthill who had trained under Warre in the Eton VIII from 1886 to 1888, spending the last two years as Captain of the Boats.⁷⁹ Ampthill had gone on to row for Oxford University where he had been coached by Fenner, Warre, and Grenfell.⁸⁰ Rowers featured especially heavily in early British representation on the IOC; the other British member in 1894, Charles Herbert, represented the Amateur Athletic Association, but had also been a prominent rower, having won the Silver Goblets for pairs at Henley in 1875.⁸¹ Furthermore, one of Lord Ampthill's teammates in the Oxford University VIII of 1889 had been Theodore Cook who later became another long-serving British member of the IOC.⁸² Grenfell himself, now Lord Desborough, would join the IOC in 1906.⁸³ All were part of the Oxford and Henley rowing circle connected to Edmond Warre, and

⁷⁸ *Shields Daily Gazette*, 10 October 1894, 3; John MacAloon unfortunately confuses the Winchester, Eton and Christ Church, Oxford educated peer, Sir John Astley (born Rome 19 February 1828) with the Australian born British clergyman, John Astley Cooper (christened in Adelaide 24 April 1858). John Astley Cooper was a British imperialist, often credited with being the originator of the idea for the Empire Games, but he opposed the Olympics, which he regarded as a 'hybrid, babel movement' presumably because he felt 'Anglo-Saxons' were above mixing with other nations. MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 191; Richard D. Mandell, *The First Modern Olympics*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 32-33, 178

⁷⁹ Young, *The Modern Olympics*, 108; *The Eton Register*, Part V, 1883-89, xii-xiii

⁸⁰ Sherwood, *Oxford Rowing*, 13; Woodgate, *Boating*, 356

⁸¹ Dodd, *Henley Royal Regatta*, 220

⁸² Sherwood, *Oxford Rowing*, 13; Woodgate, *Boating*, 356

⁸³ Dave Day and Jana Stoklasa, The Legacy of a Cultural Elite: The British Olympic Association, *História: Questões & Debates. Curitiba*, 68, no. 37, (Jul-Dec 2020), 237

all would have subscribed to the idea that amateurism had its roots in ancient Greece.

Warre's influence with the IOC went beyond rowers alone, however. Desborough's fellow British representative on the IOC in 1906 was Robert Carr Bosanquet, an Old Etonian athlete and archaeologist. As Captain of the School, a Newcastle Scholar, and editor of the *Eton College Chronicle* in 1890 he was in daily contact with Warre at Eton, while, as a throwing specialist and archaeologist, he was also central to E. Norman Gardiner's research on Greek discus and javelin throwing.⁸⁴ Finally, there was Warre's direct contact with the IOC. Another Old Etonian, Arthur Kinnaird, hosted the IOC's 1904 Summer Conference in London, during which one of the activities was a visit to Eton to take tea with Warre.⁸⁵ Certainly, Warre would have talked to Pierre de Coubertin and the other leading members then, but they were by that time already old acquaintances.

The Hellenisation of the Modern Olympics

To the casual observer, the links between the ancient and modern Olympics seem obvious and explicit. The language of the Olympics talks of their 'revival' as if they are literally the same ancient games brought back to life, and promotional material for successive Olympics has often featured classical imagery, particularly the figure of the discobolus; every Olympic opening

⁸⁴ Andy Carter, 'At home at Oxbridge': British views of ancient Greek sport 1749–1974, *Sport in History*, 41, no.2 (June 2021), 290; *Eton College Chronicle*, no, 522, 9 May 1890, 570

⁸⁵ Andy Mitchell, *Arthur Kinnaird: First Lord of Football*, (Dunblane: Andy Mitchell Media, 2020), 111

ceremony features a performance of the Olympic Ode in ancient Greek, and, since 1936, the arrival of the 'sacred flame' carried by torch relay from the sanctuary at Olympia. These elements of pageantry are intended to reinforce the idea of a continuity between ancient and modern Olympics, but many, if not all, were never a feature of the ancient games.⁸⁶

Coubertin certainly saw sport, particularly as it was practised in the English public school as having classical inspiration. For him, English ideals of masculinity and manliness were based on classical philosophy and were made flesh in the schools via the medium of sport, which not only helped build character, but which he felt helped to create enthusiasm for wider learning.

The English believe in the necessity of enthusiasm at this age. But they also think that it is not easy, even if it is desirable, to lead the boys to being caught up in enthusiasm for Alexander or Caesar. The dust of Olympia is still that which best and most naturally excites their emulation.⁸⁷

Coubertin may have evoked Olympia as an inspiration for modern sport, but there is little evidence that he had any desire to create a replica of the ancient Olympics. In common with the English educationalists, he so much admired, he had a singularly un-Greek fondness for team games and was to incorporate

⁸⁶ Jules Boykoff, *Power Games: A Political History of the Olympics*, (London: Verso, 2016), 22

⁸⁷ Pierre de Coubertin, *L'Éducation anglaise*, *La Réforme Sociale*, 13 (1887), 644

many, including association football, rugby union, and even cricket into the Paris Olympics of 1900. Furthermore, the modern Olympics made no attempt to revive some important events from the ancient games such as chariot racing or pankration, but did include some remarkably modern sports such as cycling, lawn tennis, and even motor boat racing.⁸⁸

It is possible to argue that, by the time of Coubertin's push to start an international games gathering, the terms 'Olympian' and 'Olympic' no longer had a specifically Greek connotation, and were merely either a means of specifying that a festival featured multiple sports, or, as Martin Polley posits, represented, 'a badge of excellence, not of provenance.'⁸⁹ Certainly, the ancient Olympics were still familiar to the educated classes, but by the 1890s there had been Olympic or Olympian festivals in several European countries, of which only those which actually took place in Greece had any real claim to be Hellenistic in nature. In 1796 the French had introduced a short-lived Republican Olympiad and local Olympic festivals also took place in parts of Poland, Sweden, and Germany during the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries.⁹⁰ England had a rather longer tradition of pseudo-Olympics, starting with Robert Dover's Cotswold Olimpick Games from 1612 to 1641.⁹¹ Dover himself did not refer to his games as Olympic, that description was probably first applied by Michael Drayton in around 1631, but he admitted that the idea

⁸⁸ Goldblatt, *The Games*, 64

⁸⁹ Polley, *The British Olympics*, 7

⁹⁰ Mateusz Rozmiarek, Pseudo-Olympics in the Grand Duchy of Posen: The Forgotten Sports Heritage of Greater Poland, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 37, no. 15 (2020), 1517-1530; Goldblatt, *The Games*, 20-21

⁹¹ Arkadiusz Włodarczyk and Mateusz Rozmiarek, The Chronology and Naming of Seventeenth-Century Pseudo-Olympics in the British Isles, *Sport in History*, 41, no. 2 (June 2021), 168

for the games was inspired by ancient Greek *agones*, although the actual sports involved were all English in character.⁹² The Much Wenlock Olympian Games, started by William Penny Brookes in Shropshire in 1850, and the subsequent National Olympian Games which they spawned between 1866 and 1883, and the Liverpool Olympic Festivals of the 1860s, were also English in character, and while the Much Wenlock games invoked the past, which they did with much pageantry, it was not the spirit of ancient Greece that they invoked, but that of medieval England.⁹³ Initially at least, the connection to Greek antiquity of the Much Wenlock games was less to do with any literal similarity between the sports organised by Brookes and ancient sport, and more about managing the sensibilities and perceptions of the Shropshire gentry. Country fairs were traditionally regarded as places where the lower classes went to enjoy themselves, and in the imagination of the mid-Victorian respectable classes this meant indulging in a range of vices, chief among which was drinking. As it happened, Much Wenlock already had a local reputation as a hotspot for drunkenness, so Brookes had to tread carefully when first proposing his games. As Catherine Beale suggests 'The veneer of respectability might be supplied by invoking the games of ancient Greece' because 'The ancient Greeks had been the most civilised people on earth.'⁹⁴ Brookes was delighted to hear of Evangelis Zappas' Athens games of 1859 and this doubtless inspired him to subsequently emphasise his own games'

⁹² Robert Dover, A Congratulatory Poem to My Poetical and Learned Noble Friends, Compilers of this Booke in Matthew Wallbancke, *Annalia Dubrensis 1636*, (Menston: Scolar Press, 1973), 66; Francis Burns, Robert Dover's Cotswold Olympick Games: The Use of the Term Olympick, *Olympic Review*, 210 (1985), 230-236; Włodarczyk and Rozmiarek, The Chronology and Naming of Seventeenth-Century Pseudo-Olympics, 168

⁹³ Catherine Beale, *Born Out of Wenlock: William Penny Brookes and the British Origins of the Modern Olympics*, (Derby: Derby, 2011), 10; 29-33

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 25

links with the ancient Olympics a little more. In 1868, the year from which cash prizes were replaced with medals in some Much Wenlock events, Brookes commissioned Edward William Wyon to create a medal featuring an image of Nike, the Greek goddess of victory, accompanied by a quote from Pindar and the Latin motto '*Arte et Viribus*' – 'skill and strength.'⁹⁵ These medals were enormously expensive, but were designed to draw elite amateurs to Much Wenlock and thus further increase the prestige and respectability of the games. Brookes' identification of his games with the ancient Olympics was about securing the approval of the social elite therefore, and in this respect, Coubertin's later journey was very similar, albeit on a much grander scale.

When Coubertin first brought up the subject of reviving the Olympics in 1892, it seems likely that what he had in mind was an international multi-sports festival based on the best of the university sports he had observed in Britain, America, and Canada, and although he shared the belief with many of the educated classes in those countries that classical ideals shaped their sporting ethos, there was not necessarily any overtly classical theme to the proposed games. Furthermore, Coubertin's original intention was that his new Olympics would begin in Paris in 1900.⁹⁶

That the games eventually took on a more distinctly Hellenistic flavour was broadly the result of four influences.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 65

⁹⁶ MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 193

First, and in the short-term the most important of these, was modern Greek nationalism and the direct intervention of the Greek state. Greece had achieved independence in 1832 and throughout the nineteenth-century was anxious to emphasise its past as the cradle of European civilisation and its place as a modern western nation after centuries of Ottoman occupation.⁹⁷ As part of this process there had been several attempts to revive the Olympics in Greece, most notably those founded by Zappas, which ran intermittently from 1859 to 1888.⁹⁸

At the Sorbonne Congress delegates were divided into two commissions, one to discuss a universal definition of amateurism while the other was to discuss the Olympics. This latter group was chaired by Demetrios Bikelas of the Panhellenic Gymnastic Society, and while it unanimously voted for the return of the Olympics, thought that 6 years was too long to wait. It therefore proposed to hold the inaugural games in Athens in 1896.⁹⁹ Holding the games in the ancient Panathenaic stadium obviously contributed to the Hellenistic feel of the revived games, and hosting the games also allowed the Greeks a certain degree of control over the programme, allowing them to include the discus and the marathon, at that time events barely known outside of Greece, but of enormous cultural significance to the Greeks.

⁹⁷ Young, *The Modern Olympics*, 2

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 13-23, 42-52, 63-67

⁹⁹ MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 195-196

Having successfully hosted the first games, King George of Greece then tried to bypass Coubertin at the closing ceremony by suggesting they should be held in Greece in perpetuity, in the same way that the ancient Olympics had always been staged at Olympia.¹⁰⁰

Mother and wet-nurse of gymnastic Games in antiquity, Greece, having undertaken to celebrate them again today under the eyes of Europe and the new world, can, now that success has surpassed every expectation, hope that the foreigners who have honoured her with their presence will appoint our country the peaceful meeting-place of the nations and permanent and stable home of the Olympic Games.¹⁰¹

This was resisted by the IOC, particularly Coubertin, who had always seen the revived games as being ambulatory, and had already secured agreement from Paris and Chicago to host the next two Olympiads. There was a counter-proposal to hold intercalated games at Athens at two-year intervals between each Olympics. Coubertin felt that this might detract from the impact of the actual Olympics, but was saved from having to actively oppose the idea when the Greeks, buoyed by nationalistic fervour in the wake of Olympic revival, launched an ill-advised attack on Turkey in 1897, resulting in defeat and bankruptcy.¹⁰² Intercalated games were finally held in Athens to celebrate the

¹⁰⁰ MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 271

¹⁰¹ Pierre de Coubertin, *Les Jeux Olympiques*, 776 av. JC-1896, (Athens: Beck, 1896), 99-100

¹⁰² MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 300-301

Olympics' tenth anniversary in 1906. Coubertin did not approve of them and stayed away, but other members of the IOC, most notably Lord Desborough and Theodore Cook, took an active part in them.¹⁰³ These games were generally deemed successful, with the Greeks repeating their suggestion that they host them every four years, but by 1912 the Greeks were once again at war with their neighbours, and the intercalated games finally died.¹⁰⁴

The second reason for the Hellenisation of the Olympics was that British and American backing was essential for the long-term survival and success of the Olympics. That the British delegation came from a classically educated background, and believed amateurism and athletic purity to be fundamentally Greek concepts, is not in doubt, and even as Coubertin was setting the wheels in motion to create his international modern Olympics, the Liverpool Gymnasium attempted to revive the Olympic spirit by hosting gatherings in 1892 and 1894 which were dubbed the 'Grecian Games'.¹⁰⁵ The president of the 'Grecian Games' was Herbert Gladstone who, like his father W.E. Gladstone, was a product of Eton and Oxford and a committed classicist who played football for his school and lectured at Keble College before following his father into politics.¹⁰⁶ While the Americans perhaps believed in a less class-bound and more open form of amateurism, the reality was that the Americans most involved in the early Olympic movement also came from classical backgrounds. Coubertin had been politely received in American universities on

¹⁰³ Goldblatt, *The Games*, 71; *The Globe*, 23 March 1906, 7

¹⁰⁴ Bill Mallon, *The 1906 Olympic Games: Results for All Competitors in All Events, With Commentary*, (London: McFarland, 1999), 15-17

¹⁰⁵ Polley, *The British Olympics*, 64

¹⁰⁶ *The Eton Register, Part IV, 1871-80*, 4

his two tours of the continent, but most were as yet unconvinced by his vision for international games.¹⁰⁷ He was saved by the enthusiasm of William Milligan Sloane, a professor of Latin and history at Princeton, who not only agreed to serve as an American representative to the IOC, but became, along with Charles Herbert of Great Britain and Coubertin himself, one of the 'triumvirate' who would led the Olympic revival.¹⁰⁸ Also representing America at the Sorbonne Congress was Charles Waldstein, the director of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens.¹⁰⁹ The American delegation was consequently enthusiastic about continuity between the ancient and modern Olympics. Thus, Coubertin had stressed the spiritual links of the proposed Olympic revival to the ancient games, most notably by commissioning the noted composer Gabriel Fauré to arrange and conduct a performance of the *Delphic Hymn to Apollo* at the opening of the conference.¹¹⁰ This no doubt encouraged those who wanted to see the modern Olympics as a continuation of the ancient games. One such man was George Stuart Robertson, an Oxford classics graduate who travelled to Athens precisely because of the games' link to antiquity and ended up entering several events. He was unsuccessful as an athlete but composed an ode to athletic prowess in ancient Greek which he was able to insert into the Olympic closing ceremony.¹¹¹ Exactly how many of the modern Greeks in the stadium were able to understand Robertson's Oxford

¹⁰⁷ MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 189

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 190

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 192

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 194

¹¹¹ Michael Llewellyn Smith, *Olympics in Athens 1896*, (London: Profile, 2004), 192-193

accented ancient Greek is unclear, but King George was evidently impressed enough to award him one of the olive branches reserved for the victors.¹¹²

Thirdly, Coubertin and the IOC came to emphasise the Greek origins of the Olympics more and more as time went by for pragmatic reasons. Having emphasised these origins at the Sorbonne Conference to encourage British and American backing, the next obstacle Coubertin faced was an initial reluctance on the part of the Greek government to host the games on the grounds of cost.¹¹³ His response was to visit Greece in person to launch a charm offensive with the aim of building popular support for the games. Coubertin wrote extensively about his trip, and consciously moved the focus of his writing in support of Olympic revival so that he constantly referenced Greece's sporting, philosophical, and archaeological heritage. At the same time, he was able to enlist the support of the Greek royal family, who saw the Olympics as desirable, both as a means of aligning themselves with Greek culture and identity, despite their comparatively recent arrival from Germany, and as a way of flexing their political muscles to push back at a government which they felt was encroaching on their prerogatives as rulers.¹¹⁴ However, the warm relationship between Coubertin and the Greek royal family was to be short-lived, ultimately floundering when the latter launched their bid to keep the games permanently in Greece.

¹¹² Young, *The Modern Olympics*, 157

¹¹³ Goldblatt, *The Games*, 71; *The Globe*, 23 March 1906, 42

¹¹⁴ MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 208

Even though Coubertin and the IOC remained committed to the idea of the games being ambulatory, and resisted their quick return to Greece, they recognised, and increasingly used, the value of their link with antiquity as a form of branding. Victors at the early modern Olympics received laurel wreaths, and winners' medals, although redesigned for each Olympics, adopted classical forms and have often featured the image of Nike the goddess of victory. The imagery used to promote the Olympics has frequently been evocative of their Hellenistic origins. The cover page of the official report of the inaugural Athens Olympics prominently featured a girl dressed as Athena presenting an olive bough, along with images of the Panathenaic Stadium and the Acropolis and the timespan 776-1896.¹¹⁵ For the 1912 Stockholm games Olle Hjortzberg's poster design featured a group of flag-waving athletic male nudes. The face and hairstyle of the main figure is a twentieth-century Scandinavian, but his body, in its musculature and pose, harks back to classical ideas of male beauty.¹¹⁶ Posters designed for the cancelled Berlin games of 1916, featured a chariot racer, while the poster for the 1920 Antwerp games gave pride of place to a naked discus thrower, a recurring theme in subsequent Olympic promotional material.¹¹⁷ Surprisingly perhaps, the modern Olympic movement adopted a Latin, rather than Greek motto, '*Citius – Altius – Fortius*', presumably because it was readable for a wider audience while still emphasising a link to the ancient world.

¹¹⁵ Coubertin, *Les Jeux Olympiques*, 1; Markus Osterwalder, *Olympic Games: The Design*, 1, (Salenstein: Verlag Niggli, 2019), 21

¹¹⁶ Osterwalder, *Olympic Games: The Design*, 1, 67

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 91; *Ibid.*, 101

Finally, although technically beyond the time window of this thesis, another driver for the Hellenisation of the modern Olympics was the influence of fascism between the World Wars. Mangan makes the point, via the work of Jacques Le Goff, that fascism 'inherited the political use of bodily metaphors from Greco-Roman antiquity.'¹¹⁸ Both Italian fascism and German Nazism sought to legitimise themselves by portraying their regimes as the heirs of the Roman Empire, with the Italian fascists even deriving their name from the *fasces*, the bundle of sticks around an axe that was a symbol of the Roman Republic. In Germany, the Nazis drew on Karl Otfried Müller's work which placed the Germans as the cultural and racial heirs of the ancient Greeks.¹¹⁹ At the start of the twentieth-century the poet Stefan George, whose work greatly influenced Hitler and the other founders of the NSDAP, wrote 'male beauty as it existed in Greece would redeem Germany.'¹²⁰ As George Mosse observed, classical ideas of Greek beauty underpinned the nineteenth-century idea of the superiority of Germanic peoples.

The metaphors of sun and nature linked the rediscovery of the body to the national stereotype. The birth of national stereotypes was based on a blend of Greek models and worship of the sun and sky;

¹¹⁸ James Anthony Mangan, *The Potent Image and the Permanent Prometheus*, in James Anthony Mangan (ed.), *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon – Aryan Fascism*, (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 13; Jacques Le Goff, *Head or Heart? The Political Use of Body Metaphors in the Middle Ages*, in Michael Feher (ed.), *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, (London, 1989), 13-14

¹¹⁹ Simon Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek? Contests in the Cultural History of Hellenism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 149-150

¹²⁰ George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe*, (Madison, 1985), 78

blonde hair, blue eyes and a white skin were regarded as marks of a superior people in both England and Germany.¹²¹

Nowhere were these stereotypes more in evidence than in the works of filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl, whose film *Olympia* was commissioned to document the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Artistically striking, if politically and morally questionable, its most enduring legacy has been the adoption of the ceremony of the lighting of the Olympic flame at the Temple of Hera by a 'high priestess' assisted by '15 robed virgins' and the subsequent torch relay to the Olympic venue as a permanent feature of subsequent Olympics. Despite the ceremony having been invented by Carl Diem, effectively a Nazi official, and having no real historical basis, it has become perhaps the most well-known and obvious Hellenistic characteristic of the modern games.¹²²

Olympia also explicitly places the modern Olympics as the direct descendent of their ancient namesake by using the technology of the day to produce a narrative which;

Through the opening use of a Greek landscape, statues metamorphizing into live Aryan bodies, and through the progress of the torch relay which serves to link Berlin physically with the

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 52

¹²² David C. Young, *A Brief History of the Olympic Games*, (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 167-169

Classical past. In this way Berlin is invested with the traditional values of Classical antiquity.¹²³

The Practical Impact of Ancient History on Modern Sport: The Case of the Discus

It is impossible to ignore that the study of ancient history had some impact on sport in the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. It particularly informed the way in which elite British males regarded manliness and masculinity, and the myth of ancient Greek amateurism, although later discredited, was widely believed at the time, undoubtedly contributing to the strength of the amateur lobby. Classical ideas and imagery permeated sporting literature and ultimately helped in the creation of the modern Olympics. In England, the closing years of the nineteenth-century saw the founding of several soccer clubs with classically inspired names, including Blackburn Olympic (1878), Corinthian (1882) and Blyth Spartans (1899). In the south of England, where a last-ditch battle for exclusively amateur association football took place, the idea of ancient Greek amateurism clearly lay behind the naming of the Isthmian, Spartan, Olympian, and Athenian Leagues in the period 1905 to 1912. However, while historians of ancient sport, such as Percy Gardner and E. Norman Gardiner, railed against the veils of professionalism, their practical impact on modern sport was generally limited.¹²⁴ The exception to this was in

¹²³ Graham McFee and Alan Tomlinson, Riefenstahl's Olympia: Ideology and Aesthetics in the Shaping of the Aryan Athletic Body, in James Anthony Mangan (ed.), *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon – Aryan Fascism*, (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 91

¹²⁴ Percy Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, (London: John Murray, 1892), 266-267; Edward Norman Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, (London: Macmillan & Co, 1910), 5

the early years of the modern Olympic revival, when their expertise was sought in connection to an event, revived from antiquity; the discus.

The discus has an ancient pedigree with aristocratic overtones; Odysseus, ragged and unrecognised on his long journey home, used his prowess as a discus thrower to prove his credentials as a true Greek and person of quality to his sceptical hosts.¹²⁵ Although not a major event in ancient Greek athletics, where it only existed as one of the elements of the pentathlon, it has a special place in modern athletics as the only event with purely Hellenistic roots.¹²⁶ Boxing, wrestling, running, and equestrianism may have all been more important to the Greeks, but they shared them with many other cultures; the discus was theirs alone.

Given this background, it might be expected that it would be a favourite event of those Victorian and Edwardian historians of ancient sport who did so much to promote the idea that modern sport had roots in Homeric Greece. However, the exact opposite was the case; from Mahaffy's account of the 1875 Zappas Olympics through to the end of Harold Harris' career a hundred years later, British historians of ancient sport were unfailingly critical of the discus. They didn't like the event, they didn't like the techniques employed, and they didn't like the composite wood and metal version used in modern athletics.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Nigel Spivey, *The Ancient Olympics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 140

¹²⁶ Stephen G. Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 60

¹²⁷ John Pentland Mahaffy, The Olympic Games at Athens in 1875, *Macmillan's Magazine*, 32 (1875), 326; Harold Arthur Harris, *Sport in Britain: Its Origins and Development*, (London: Stanley Paul, 1975), 145-147

Describing discus throwing as an excellent means of acquiring power, Donald Walker estimated in 1834 that a man of moderate strength ought to be able to throw a one-pound lead discus about 140 feet.¹²⁸ That no British discus throw was recorded until George Stuart Robertson's Olympic throw at Athens in 1896 shows us that, although Walker suggested throwing it was useful exercise, nobody in Britain considered it a competitive event. There was an attempt to establish it in England when it was included in the Liverpool Olympic Games of 1862. The *Liverpool Daily Post* reported that the event was won by Mr R.T. Parkinson, with Alexander Fairweather of Manchester finishing in second place, but unfortunately reports no further details of the competition.¹²⁹ The *London Evening Standard* informs us that there were five entrants.¹³⁰ The discus was not brought back for the second Liverpool Olympics in 1863.¹³¹

The discus was not mentioned in Henry Fazakerley Wilkinson's *Modern Athletics* in 1875, Montague Shearman's *Athletics and Football* in 1887, or Peter Lovesey and Keith Morbey's more recent compilation of British track and field results between 1866 and 1880, where the only regular throwing events mentioned were the hammer and putting the weight or shot, with references to occasional competitions in throwing the cricket ball and tossing the caber.¹³²

¹²⁸ Donald Walker, *Walker's Manly Exercises*, (London: Thomas Hurst, 1834 reprinted by Michael Joseph, London: 2018), 97

¹²⁹ The Olympic Festival of the Liverpool Athletic Club, *Liverpool Daily Post*, 16 June 1862, 5

¹³⁰ Grand Olympic Festival at Liverpool, *London Evening Standard*, 16 June 1862, 7

¹³¹ Grand Olympic Festival at Liverpool, *Sporting Life*, 17 June 1863, 4

¹³² Peter Lovesey and Keith Morbey, *British Athletics, 1866-80*, (National Union of Track Statisticians, 2016)

The Greeks had enthusiastically taken to the discus during the nineteenth-century. As an identifiably Greek event it was seen as a useful way to project a sense of national identity at a time when Greece was finding its way as a comparatively newly independent nation. However, after a fifteen-hundred-year hiatus, there was a problem; it was neither clear how the discus had been thrown in antiquity, or how victory was ascertained. Consequently, when the discus was revived for Evangeline Zappas' Olympic Games of 1859 there were two events, one for distance, the other for height.¹³³

Modern Greeks may have had little idea of how best to throw the discus, but historians of ancient sport had no clear idea either. The only thing they were agreed on was that modern throwers were getting it wrong. Mahaffy had taken exception to the athletes at the Zappas Olympic Games of 1875 using a wooden discus, but when he came to write his paper on Old Greek Athletics in 1877, he had very little to say about the discus himself.¹³⁴ He said it was mainly thrown to test distance and he assumed, because of his interpretation of the position of Myron's discobolus, that it was always thrown from a static position. Mahaffy admitted that he did not know the average size or weight of an ancient discus, nor how far an athlete might have been expected to be able to throw one, although he did say that he knew of a bronze example from Aegina that was 8 inches in diameter and just under 4 pounds (1.8 kilos) in weight. He also

¹³³ Young, *The Modern Olympics*, 22

¹³⁴ Mahaffy, *The Olympic Games at Athens*, 326

mentioned that Philostratus had described 100 cubits as a good throw, but was sceptical of the quote's validity.¹³⁵

Mahaffy set a precedent for other historians' attitudes to the discus. His assumption that the discus must be thrown from a static position seems particularly odd, given that Myron's reputation as a sculptor was built on his ability to convey movement, but it was evidently shared by early modern Greek throwers, who developed a technique whereby the arms moved and the athlete twisted from the waist, but the feet stayed still.

Following on from Mahaffy, Percy Gardner came up with some different figures for the discus, which seemed to suggest it was a more heavyweight event. He cited a quote about the ancient athlete Phayllus which suggested that 95 feet (28.95 metres) was an exceptional throw. Gardner also suggested that a discus in the British Museum weighing 11 pounds 9 ounces (5.2 kilos) was a working specimen, dismissing other, lighter, examples of the discus as 'probably only votive offerings.'¹³⁶

By the 1896 Olympics, Greek athletes had over thirty years' experience of their revived version of discus throwing and were confident of a clean sweep of the

¹³⁵ 100 cubits is about 45 metres, more than the 30 yards Mahaffy says the throwers he saw at Athens managed in 1875, but not perhaps an unreasonable distance for somebody who had been perfecting their technique for many years; John Pentland Mahaffy, *Old Greek Athletics*, *Macmillan's Magazine*, 36, (1877), 66; Mahaffy, *The Olympic Games at Athens*, 326

¹³⁶ Percy Garner, *The Pentathlon of the Greeks*, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1 (1880), 213-214

medals, not least because the majority of the other competitors were new to the discipline.¹³⁷ The Greeks looked to have won the competition, few foreign competitors having managed to even register a mark, when the American Robert Garrett, snatched victory by throwing 20 centimetres more on his last throw.¹³⁸ Garrett had managed to throw that little bit farther by pivoting around on one leg as he threw, giving him an advantage over the Greeks who had steadfastly kept their feet still.¹³⁹

After his victory, Garrett was asked to pose in mid-throw for a photograph that became one of the iconic images of the first modern Olympics. It is often reported that Garrett's achievement was all the more remarkable because he had no previous experience of the discus, and his decision to enter was a last-minute whim, but this is not the case.¹⁴⁰ A student at Princeton, where he was captain of the track and field team, Garrett specialised in shot put, long jump, and high jump, placing first, second and second in these events in Athens as well. His history professor was William Sloane, the American representative on the IOC, and it was he who suggested to Garrett that he also entered the discus. Sloane went further and had a discus made for Garrett to practice with. Seemingly, Sloane had read Percy Gardner's paper on the pentathlon, and the discus, made to Gardner's suggested dimensions, proved too heavy and unwieldy to throw. Consequently, Garrett decided that taking part would be

¹³⁷ Llewellyn Smith, *Olympics in Athens 1896*, 165

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 167

¹³⁹ Young, *The Modern Olympics*, 147

¹⁴⁰ Garrett's fellow Princetonian, A.C. Tyler, had told the Associated Press that Garrett had never seen a discus before that day, which he may have believed to be true. It certainly made for good press. Llewellyn Smith, *Olympics in Athens 1896*, 165

futile. However, he was pleasantly surprised on arriving in Athens to find the Olympic discus was less than a fifth of the weight of Sloane's version, leading him to reconsider.¹⁴¹

While modern discus throwing techniques had been developed by athletes, the English classicist E. Norman Gardiner was attempting to analyse historical and archaeological evidence to understand and reconstruct the ancient Greek method of throwing. In 1907 he published a lengthy paper, 'Throwing the Diskos', in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. Gardiner's position was that the discus originally started out as a competition in which any convenient stone was thrown, but that it eventually evolved, first into a stone disc, and later a metal one. Metal versions of the discus were made of hammered or cast bronze, or occasionally lead. Gardiner included a table of 15 different examples including their weights and dimensions.

¹⁴¹ Richard D. Smith, Perspectives: A Man's Road to Athens: Amateurism in its Finest Sense, *New York Times*, 14 July 1996, 7; George Stuart Robertson, A Test for Tradition, in Stan Tomlin (Ed.), *Olympic Odyssey*, (Croydon: Modern Athlete, 1956), 7

Table 5.2. Gardiner's Examples of Ancient Discus ¹⁴²

Finding Place	Museum	Weight in Kilos	Diameter Centimetres	Thickness Millimetres
Olympia	Olympia	5.707	34	5-13
Corfu	British Museum	3.992	23	6-13
Gela	Vienna	3.800	28	7
Amyclae	Athens	3.349	19	
Olympia	Olympia	2.945	22	6-12
Olympia	Olympia	2.775	18	11-12
Unknown	Rome	2.378	21	
Olympia	Olympia	2.083	19	3 at edge
Sicily	British Museum	2.075	21	.5
Olympia	Berlin	2.023	17.5	9-10
Aegina	Berlin	1.984	21	
Olympia	Berlin	1.721	20	7
Olympia	Berlin	1.353	20.5	4
Olympia	Olympia	1.268	17	4-12
Cephallenia	British Museum	1.245	16.5	5

The majority of these were around 20 centimetres in diameter and two kilos in weight, which meant that they were of very similar size to the discus used in modern athletics. In 1914, Frederick Webster, British javelin champion and secretary of the Amateur Field Events Association, stated that the example from Aegina referred to in the table was most likely representative of those most commonly thrown in events.¹⁴³ Yet immediately after setting out evidence which apparently authenticated the size of the modern discus, Gardiner condemned it stating,

In the last Olympic games, a wooden diskos with a metal centre was used. It is a thick clumsy object, the product of modern imagination,

¹⁴² Edward Norman Gardiner, Throwing the Diskos, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 27, (1907), 6

¹⁴³ Frederick Annesley Michael Webster, *The Evolution of the Olympic Games 1829 B.C. – 1914 A.D.*, (London: Heath, Cranton & Ouseley, 1914), 64

utterly unlike and in every way inferior to the specimens which we have in our museums. There is no authority for it whatsoever.¹⁴⁴

If Gardiner's objection was merely that the modern discus was a composite affair of wood and metal, he may have had a point about its authenticity, but his level of outrage seems excessive given that the size and weight appears to be broadly correct.

The data for Gardiner's table had been collected by Robert Carr Bosanquet, who had just returned to teach archaeology at the University of Liverpool, after several years at the British School in Athens.¹⁴⁵ Bosanquet had first-hand experience of field events, having been a leading hammer thrower, and had been one of the British representatives to the IOC for the 1906 Intercalated Olympic Games in Athens.¹⁴⁶ As an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1892 he had struggled with German descriptions of the discus and wrote to his sister that he was having a 12-pound discus made, with which he intended to work out whether Phayllus' reported throw of 95 feet was feasible.¹⁴⁷ Unfortunately, no record of how he fared survives, although based on Garrett's experiences at Princeton, he probably got nowhere near that mark, if he could throw it at all. Bosanquet later suggested to Gardiner that the

¹⁴⁴ Gardiner, *Throwing the Diskos*, 7

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 8

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 196

¹⁴⁷ Letter from Robert Carr Bosanquet to Caroline Bosanquet, 9 November 1892 reproduced in Ellen S. Bosanquet (Ed.), *Robert Carr Bosanquet: Letters and Light Verse*, (Gloucester: John Bellows, 1938), 22

ancient Greeks may have had different sizes of discus for boys, youths, and men, a suggestion that Gardiner accepted with enthusiasm, not least because it created a convenient means of skewing the data to claim that the ancient discus was much larger than the modern one.¹⁴⁸

The 1906 Games tried to cope with controversy over the nature of the discus by holding two separate events. The main competition at the Panathenaic stadium saw athletes throw using the modern rotating technique, while a second event was held at the National Gymnastic Club in which the competitors were asked to throw from a plinth, in a style which the organisers imagined replicated classical discus throwing.¹⁴⁹ Unfortunately, the instructions were a little vague.

The thrower places himself on the pedestal with the feet apart, and holding the discus in either hand. He then takes it with both hands slightly stretched, lifting them without letting go the discus, and stretching out the rest of his body in the same way in the same direction. After that he turns the trunk slightly to the right and bends sharply, so as to bring the left hand when free to the right knee, and the right hand still holding the discus, as far back as the build of the shoulder permits. At this moment, the right foot should be forward and the legs bent; the right foot rests on the sole, and the left on the

¹⁴⁸ Gardiner, *Throwing the Diskos*, 8

¹⁴⁹ George Stuart Robertson, *On Throwing the Discus*, in Alexander Devine (Ed.), *Official Handbook of the Olympic Games*, (London, 1908), 80-81

toes only. Then by a sharp and simultaneous extension of the whole body, the thrower throws the discus straight in front of him.¹⁵⁰

In the event it proved somewhat difficult to enforce these rules, with controversial results. The Greek favourite, Nikolaos Georgantas, who had rigidly followed them, was leading, but was overtaken by Verner Järvinen of Finland on the final throw. Georgantas, outraged because he felt the Finn had not kept to the restrictions of the Greek style, demonstrated his displeasure by stepping back onto the plinth and exceeding the winning throw by several metres by emulating Järvinen's technique.¹⁵¹

In his 1907 article, Gardiner criticised the plinth, or βαλβίς (*balbis*), used for the Greek style discus at the Athens games. He accused the organisers of accepting an inaccurate translation of an obscure passage in Philostratus which had led them to create the plinth with a downward slope towards the front.¹⁵² Gardiner was able to find a wealth of evidence from other sources and scholars to contradict this misunderstanding, and the event was eventually withdrawn from the Olympic games, though not before it had been held under the same rules for a second time at London in 1908.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Hellenic Methods of Throwing the Discus, Article 25, *Regulations: Part 1*, (Athens: Committee of the Olympic Games at Athens, 1905), 19

¹⁵¹ The Olympian Games, *Sportsman*, 9 May 1906, 7

¹⁵² Gardiner, Throwing the Diskos, 9-10

¹⁵³ Webster, *The Evolution of the Olympic Games*, 251

Gardiner was also critical of the circle used for the modern discus. He accepted that the discus could be thrown a long way using modern techniques, but suggested that without the precedent of hammer throwing nobody would ever have thought of swinging around to gain momentum for the throw.¹⁵⁴ He thus turned his attention to the ancient evidence. He quickly dismissed all of the ancient literary sources as either contradictory or incomplete and decided to go forward by looking at a combination of sculpture, decoration on vases, and representations on coins. These provide a variety of poses, some of which represent positions mid throw while others are clearly at rest.¹⁵⁵ Unfortunately, there are none representing the moment of release or just after, which hampers putting together a definitive sequence in which the available positions might fit together. For his part, Robertson suggested that the ancient Greeks, while not permitting the thrower to step beyond a certain point, had no rear restriction like the modern throwing circle, thus allowing a short run up before twisting into the throw.¹⁵⁶

Eventually, Gardiner, assisted by George Robertson, came up with a sequence he felt was plausible. This essentially involved stepping forward while raising the discus high, stepping back, and swinging it down and round towards the back and then swinging forward and releasing the discus on an upward trajectory as one stepped forward again.¹⁵⁷ Unsurprisingly this was the method used by Robertson at the 1896 games.

¹⁵⁴ Gardiner, *Throwing the Diskos*, 11

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 12-36

¹⁵⁶ Robertson, *On Throwing the Discus*, 81

¹⁵⁷ Gardiner, *Throwing the Diskos*, 36

Robertson wrote an article entitled 'On the Discus' for the Official Handbook of the 1908 London Olympics in which he shared many of Gardiner's opinions. He attacked both the Hellenic version of discus throwing, which he hoped would be appearing for the last time in the London games, and the composite modern discus itself, testily remarking 'Is it not too much to hope that someday we may get rid of not only the preposterous modern rules but also of the preposterous modern disc?'¹⁵⁸ This was an astonishing attack on an Olympic event in an official Olympic publication, as was Robertson's assertion in the same article that the Hellenic variant was a folly that had only been introduced to the Olympic programme by a combination of Greek gamesmanship and American ignorance.¹⁵⁹ Robertson's objections were supported by Theodore Andrea Cook, by now an influential member of both the BOA and IOC, who directly quoted Gardiner when pointing out the shortcomings of the Hellenic discus in his own book on the Olympic Games.¹⁶⁰

Like Gardner, Gardiner, and Sloane, Robertson believed that the ancient discus was much larger and heavier than the modern version, a belief he felt was justified by comparing the 95 feet throw reported by Phayllus in antiquity with the distances throwers were able to achieve by 1908.¹⁶¹ He recounted how athletes around the world had spent many years trying to emulate the technique illustrated by Myron's discobolus but explained that this had ultimately been a wild goose chase because, unbeknown to them, the statue's

¹⁵⁸ Robertson, *On Throwing the Discus*, 85

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 83-84

¹⁶⁰ Theodore Andrea Cook, *The Olympic Games*, (London: Constable & Co, 1908), 67-68

¹⁶¹ Robertson, *On Throwing the Discus*, 84

head had been detached from the body when it had been excavated, and the 18th century restorers had put it on backwards.¹⁶² This had encouraged athletes to waste years trying to mimic a position which would never have occurred in ancient times, thus encouraging the development of inefficient techniques.

By the time he came to write *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals* in 1910, Gardiner was pushing for a return to the style of throwing used by Robertson at Athens. He praised the efforts of the Greek throwers in 1896, but wrote disapprovingly of developments thereafter. He admitted that the techniques of the Americans, Finns and Bohemians were effective, but felt they were ungraceful, destroying the basic character of the exercise.¹⁶³ In reviewing Gardiner's work, his friend, Robert Lattimer, was to go even further, and echoing Robertson, describe the modern discus as 'grotesque, artificial and ungraceful'.¹⁶⁴

However, Harold Harris, usually a committed disciple of Gardiner, conceded that he was sometimes intolerant.

The tendency to idealize the Greeks can easily be carried too far.

Particularly in the nineteenth century, classical scholars were apt to

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 79

¹⁶³ Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, 336

¹⁶⁴ Robert Binney Lattimer, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, *The Classical Review*, 25 no. 2 (March 1911), 60.

write as if an Athenian of the age of Pericles could do little wrong compared with a man of any other time or place, and this rosy view is sometimes taken of the athletics of the Greeks as well as the other departments of their life. This will not do. Even Gardiner could write of the modern discus: 'It is a thick clumsy object, the product of modern imagination, utterly unlike and inferior to the specimens we have in our museums.' *De gustibus non est disputandum*, but today few people who have thrown a discus would dispute that the modern missile is far better adapted to its purpose than any ancient discus so far discovered, and that if it is well thrown its flight has real elegance.¹⁶⁵

Having said this, Harris, had apparently substantially revised his opinion of the discus ten years later when he wrote that the discus was 'not an object that any man in his senses would choose to throw.' He blamed the conservatism of the ancient Greeks for its original survival from Homeric times, and the gamesmanship of the modern Greeks for its insertion into modern athletics, describing it as a 'dangerous activity' and claiming that there was 'no good reason for retaining the event in the athletic programme.'¹⁶⁶

Quite why Harris changed his opinion of the discus quite so radically in his final years is unknown, but his championing of amateurism as the purist form

¹⁶⁵ Harold Arthur Harris, *Greek Athletes and Athletics*, (London: Hutchinson, 1964), 187; The Latin phrase means 'in matters of taste there can be no dispute.'

¹⁶⁶ Harris, *Sport in Britain*, 145-147

of sport remained a constant theme of his work. He considered that amateurism had approached its highest levels;

In Britain in the nineteenth century and in Greece in the fifth and sixth centuries. But a considerable price was paid for this; both these periods were times of great social and economic inequality, and almost all the athletes and games players were members of a privileged wealthy class, in Greece a class supported by slave labour.¹⁶⁷

Harris, perhaps because he was writing in an age when the battle against professional sport was all but lost, took a slightly less purist line than Gardiner and his contemporaries over amateurism, but was still of the opinion that 'the essence of sport is the enjoyment of the players' and that 'the pleasure of spectators is an accident.' He accepted that 'the desire of spectators to be entertained' was legitimate, as was 'the willingness of professionals to satisfy the demand', but argued that professionalism nevertheless corrupted sport because it put the demands of spectators above those of sportsmen and because he felt professional sportsmen were risk averse, tending to play to avoid defeat rather than to win.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Harris, *Greek Athletes and Athletics*, 188

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 189

It is, however, deeply ironic that Victorian and Edwardian British historians of ancient games, for all they felt they had something to say of relevance to contemporary sport as a whole, were only able to ever exert really tangible influence on the Olympic discus competition, an event of which they never really approved, and even here their impact was fleeting, ultimately eclipsed by styles and techniques drawn not from antiquity but from modern hammer throwing.

Conclusion

Classicism did much to shape ideals of manliness and masculinity among elite British males of the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries, and it undoubtedly provided a Hellenistic veneer which was useful, if not entirely essential, in facilitating the birth of the modern Olympics, but the question remains of how much practical impact the study of ancient sport had on the development of modern sport. In his study of Coubertin's efforts to revive the Olympics, John MacAloon wrote;

Hellenism was perhaps the only body of symbols and conceptions – at once sufficiently vague yet pristine, abstract yet minutely particular, familiar yet exotic and inspiring, consensual yet multivocal – to have afforded the congress the means of putting aside for a time the oppositions and factions that characterized the developing world of modern sport. And Hellenism was to serve in turn as the thinly spread but strong symbolic glue which held

nascent international sport together until the ideology of de Coubertin's 'neo-Olympism' could consolidate sufficiently to take its place.¹⁶⁹

Certainly, Hellenism provided a 'thinly spread glue' to hold the Olympics together in their early days, but arguably it is a glue which has strengthened over time in the Olympic arena, as the Olympic movement has sought to build its heritage and branding, by adding more classical elements to its imagery and ceremonial procedures. However, long before Coubertin's attempt to revive the Olympics, classicism had exerted its influence in a similar way across a range of sports in England as they developed in the public schools and universities. Nowhere was the intersection between classicism and athleticism stronger than at Eton, and Eton's influence was especially strong in rowing, a sport which became steeped in classical influences and strongly committed to an ideal of amateurism based on ancient Athenian notions of class. Arguably, by modelling the IOC on the stewards of Henley, and by virtue of the number of influential early British IOC members with rowing and public school backgrounds, the Eton-Henley-Oxford rowing fraternity played an important part in shaping the modern Olympics.

However, beyond the realm of Olympism, the impact of classicism was somewhat different. The Hellenistic unity, to which MacAloon ascribes the early Olympic movement's ability to overcome its difficulties, was based on the

¹⁶⁹ MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 197

class elitism of those involved in the IOC. Calling on a shared, if deliberately vague, vision of classical heritage worked well for middle- and upper-class males committed to elite amateur sport. From an internationalist perspective, it was also useful in promoting the idea of international sport, at least as long as that internationalism was Eurocentric. In other ways invoking the classical past was divisive rather than inclusive. This was most apparent in the way that the classical past was used, as with the Mechanics' Clause, as a blunt tool with which to exclude sportsmen based entirely on their social class and occupation. By further extension, classicism was also on occasion used to justify the exclusion of women and non-Caucasians from sport. This was possible precisely because of the qualities of Hellenism MacAloon describes, 'vague yet pristine, abstract yet minutely particular, familiar yet exotic and inspiring,' The ancient past was familiar enough for parallels to be drawn with the present, but vague enough to be plastic in the hands of those who wanted to manipulate it for their own means. For an example of this plasticity, we can again look to British amateur rowing. Led by Warre and Desborough, writers on contemporary rowing continually stressed the ancient roots of their sport and the desirability that participation be limited to genuine gentlemen-amateurs, while reinforcing their elite status by creating a classically tinged sub-culture awash with Greek quotations and Latin poetry. Yet, as Percy Gardner observed in 1881 'the construction of the galleys afforded little scope for skill in rowing, and the rowers were often slaves.'¹⁷⁰ Victorian rowing culture harked back to a past that never was.

¹⁷⁰ Percy Gardner, Boat-racing among the Greeks, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 2. (1881), 96

Conclusions

As Michael Scott wrote, 'So much of what we study about the past is defined by strict disciplinary, temporal, geographical or thematic boundaries, which means that knowledge about our past is uncovered, written about and taught in clearly demarcated silos.'¹ Scott was making the point that the ancient history of the Graeco-Roman world is often considered in isolation, especially in relation to Indian and Chinese history of the same period, but a similar observation can be made about separate strands within British history. Even in a seemingly narrow field, such as the history of English public schools between 1850 and 1914, the subjects of athleticism and classicism, surely the defining features of the field, have almost always been considered in isolation, as if the only impact they had on each other was to act as a barrier to stop boys spending all of their time on one or the other. The reality was that, as the twin obsessions of public schoolboys and public schoolmasters alike, these two strands were inexorably entwined; classics informed how masters and boys thought about sport and masculinity, and a fascination with sport, manliness and competition dictated which elements of ancient literature were singled out for particular attention.

This thesis has shown how classical ideas permeated the school and university environment out of which the nineteenth century reset of sporting ideas arose and has sought to fill the gaps between previous studies of classical reception, education, and sport in Victorian and Edwardian Britain.

¹ Michael Scott, *Ancient Worlds: An Epic History of East and West*, (London: Windmill, 2017), 5-6

Although the link between public schools and universities and athleticism has been explored in depth by many authors including Mangan and Deslandes, the role of classics in this relationship has been largely overlooked.² Conversely, other studies, like those by Honey and Shrosbee have looked at the impact of classics on public school education but given less attention to sport.³ Even those like Tozer and Chandos, who considered both athleticism and classicism, did so in separate chapters, with little commentary on the interaction between the two strands.⁴ Similarly, while authors such as Young, Kyle, and Remijsen have reassessed the assertions of Gardiner, Mahaffy, and others concerning the roots of amateurism and the nature of ancient sport, comparatively little attention has been given to the lives, education, and outlook of those historians themselves, and the role this played in shaping their opinions.⁵ Authors looking at classical reception in the nineteenth century, such as Jenkyns, and more recently Stray, Hall, and Stead, have a tendency to look at the impact of classicism on art, architecture, politics, and philosophy without concerning themselves with sport in any depth.⁶ The overall picture

² James Anthony Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Paul R. Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men: British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850-1920*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015)

³ John Raymond Halstead de Symons Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School*, (London: Millington, 1977); Colin Shrosbee, *Public Schools and Private Education: The Clarendon Commission 1861-64, and the Public Schools Acts*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988)

⁴ Malcolm Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness: The Legacy of Thring's Uppingham*, (Truro: Sunnyrest Books, 2015); John Chandos, *Boys Together: English Public Schools 1800-1864*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984)

⁵ David C. Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*, (Chicago: Ares, 1984); Donald G. Kyle, 'E. Norman Gardiner and the Decline of Greek Sport' in Donald G. Kyle and Gary D. Stark (Eds.), *Essays on Sport History and Sport Mythology*, (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1990); Sofie Remijsen, *The End of Greek Athletics in Late Antiquity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

⁶ Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980); Edith Hall and Henry Stead, *A People's History of Classics: Class and Greco-Roman Antiquity in Britain and Ireland 1689 to 1939*, (London: Routledge, 2020); Christopher Stray, *Classics in Britain: Scholarship, Education and Publishing 1800-2000*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018)

which emerges from this existing body of literature is well established. Classics and sport are acknowledged as the two activities on which the overwhelming majority of public schoolboys, and not insignificant numbers of Oxbridge undergraduates, spent the majority of their time. At the same time, the role of the Classics in creating an artificial, and largely insurmountable, class barrier which effectively barred access to public schools, universities, and the professions to those without considerable financial resources, was understood by contemporary commentators like William Cobbett at the opening of the nineteenth century and Cloudesley Brereton a hundred years later, and has been extensively commented on by historians from A.J.P. Taylor in the mid-twentieth century through to Martin Stephen in recent years.⁷ The parallel class struggle for access to, and control of, sport, and the accompanying controversies over the definition and status of amateur and professional sportsmen in the period from 1850 to 1914, has also been widely chronicled across a range of sports, as well as by those, like Glader and Allison, who have studied the phenomenon of amateurism as a subject in its own right.⁸ However, while these studies generally acknowledge the interaction between sport, education, and class, they often take a siloed approach to their subject. In particular, there has been very little work on the interaction between athleticism and classicism beyond that which is directly tied to the revival of

⁷ William Cobbett, *The Political Register* 32, no. 34, 29 November 1817, 1076; Cloudesley Brereton, *The Examination Chaos, School: A Monthly Record of Educational Thought and Progress*, 1, no. 1 (January 1904), 26; Alan John Percivale Taylor, *English History 1914-1945*, (London: Penguin, 1945), 225; Martin Stephen, *The English Public School*, (London: Metro, 2018), 86

⁸ Eugene A. Glader, *Amateurism and Athletics*, (West Point: Leisure Press, 1978); Lincoln Allison, *Amateurism in Sport*, (London: Frank Cass, 2001)

the modern Olympics, and even this has largely overlooked the role of the British rowing fraternity as a source of Hellenisation in the Olympic movement.

My research initially set out to examine the extent to which ancient sports history influenced the development of modern sport in the second half of the nineteenth century and on into the first decade of the twentieth century. Triggered by the comparisons made by Mahaffy, Gardner, Gardiner, and others between sport in the ancient world and sport in their own day, and the warnings and predictions which accompanied them, on one level the project attempted to examine whether such interventions had any meaningful impact on sport at the time, and if so, for how long. As an extension to this question, it also examined whether ancient sports history was used in good faith, or whether it was sometimes deliberately misrepresented in order to reinforce arguments concerning amateurism, specialisation, commercialisation, and training regimes in contemporary sport.

However, in making a study of ancient sports history in Victorian and Edwardian Britain it became evident that the impetus for sports history to arise as a sub-discipline within ancient history was very much tied into the contemporary dominance of classics and athleticism within the public schools and universities. Consequently, the thesis began by looking at how classicism became the dominant strand in public school education, how it came to be a tool for social exclusion, and how classical ideals of masculinity and manliness came to be associated with the idea of the English gentleman. Looking at the

classics dominated and homosocial educational environment, from which both the study of ancient sports history and public school athleticism arose, enables us to see that classicism was deeply embedded in the psyche of school and university sportsmen, meaning that it influenced attitudes to sport and society at both conscious and subconscious levels. Finally, the thesis looked at the overlapping social networks linking the historians of ancient sport with schoolmasters, sportsmen, and sports administrators, showing how classical influences spread from the classroom to the playing field.

The research for this thesis has uncovered a complex web in which personal and professional relationships, forged in public schools and university colleges, linked athletes, coaches, classicists, clergymen, teachers, philosophers, politicians, historians, and the administrators of sport in a set of interrelated and overlapping networks which controlled the newly regulated sports which sprang up between 1850 and 1900, and whose tentacles spread deep into the adjacent worlds of politics, education, and the church. Many of the individuals within these networks laid claim to more than one of the roles listed above, and some, like Edmond Warre, at one time or another performed nearly all of them.⁹ Because classicism was at the core of elite British education, it completely underpinned the common culture shared by the men who sought to reshape British sport in this period. While Chandos' observation that most public schoolboys only absorbed enough of the ancient Greek language to stand apart from the common man, rather than fully be able to

⁹ Charles Robert Leslie Fletcher, *Edmond Warre*, (London: John Murray, 1922)

communicate in it, is true, it ignores the influence that Greek and Roman ideas in translation would have had on their concept of manliness and morality.¹⁰ Additionally, it has been possible to demonstrate that at least some of the ideas that underpinned muscular Christianity had their roots in the classical rather than Judeo-Christian tradition with Plato, Aristotle, and Juvenal being among the ancient sources whose ideas were re-cycled by that movement.¹¹

Furthermore, this thesis has shown that although the majority of public schoolboys may have left school at 15 or 16 with an imperfect understanding of the classics, by the 1860s there was an increasing incentive for particularly sporting boys to get to grips with their studies in order to continue pursuing sport at university. The evidence from Eton's 'crack houses', and from some masters speaking to the Clarendon Commission, seems to support the idea that the most able and disciplined pupils were able to excel at sport and academic work. It was from among the ranks of these boys that the athletic schoolmasters, like Warre, Snow, and Welldon, that came to be so prominent in public schools from around 1860 onwards were recruited.¹² Similarly, many of the characters who came to be influential in shaping Victorian sport as administrators, such as Arthur Kinnaird, Montague Shearman, and William Grenfell, arrived at university as able classicists.

¹⁰ Chandos, *Boys Together*, 159

¹¹ See for example Tozer's assertion that in Thring of Uppingham's sermons, Platonic self-mastery was essential for true manliness. Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 165

¹² Andy Carter, Athletic philistines? Edmond Warre and his Etonian sporting masters, *Sport in History*, 42, no.2, (2022), 196-197

Chapter Summaries

In chapter 1 the public school was considered as an elite institution in which classics initially served as a barrier to entry and subsequently as an indicator of social status.¹³ A knowledge of the classics was central to the idea and identity of the English gentleman.¹⁴ However, there was also a shift in emphasis between the third and fourth quarters of the century which reflected the expansion of the public schools and the widening of the social classes sending their sons for public school education.¹⁵ When Arnold, Cotton, and others had begun to reform the public schools, the emphasis on Greek culture was on the high Athenian age and the philosophical legacy of Plato and Aristotle.¹⁶ By the end of the century the emphasis had shifted towards a harsher interpretation of classical manhood informed by Homeric valour and the military exploits of the Spartans.¹⁷ This shift fitted in with imperial expansion and national insecurities about the rising power of France and Germany, but it also focused on different aspects of manliness and favoured a culture of exclusion based on class and race, which was reflected in sporting contacts, as well as wider social interactions.

Chapter 2 expanded on this theme to show how the various movements at play in the Victorian public school; athleticism, Muscular Christianity, and, later, Social Darwinism, played into the ways in which elite males thought of

¹³ Martin Stephen, *The English Public School*, (London: Metro, 2018), 87

¹⁴ Chandos, *Boys Together*, 159

¹⁵ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 13

¹⁶ John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 85

¹⁷ Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 14

themselves, their schoolfellows and wider society. Despite the nominally Anglican Christian status of the great public schools, much of the moral and cultural parameters at play in both the curriculum and general school life were drawn from Greek and Roman influences rather than from the Bible.¹⁸ In particular, the cult of athleticism in the public schools combined with classicism to create the idea of the heroic sportsman as a natural leader of men, embodying Greek *thumos*, Roman *virtus*, and a tradition of stoicism drawn from both cultures, all of which combined to form the Victorian idea of 'pluck'; something which was intended to stand the public school man in good stead, not only on the sports field, but in military, political, or commercial life.¹⁹

While Muscular Christianity, certainly as envisaged by Hughes and Kingsley, was intended to be a force for good, its reputation was later tarnished by its negative associations with imperialism and Social Darwinism. These developments, combined with a laconophilia that was seldom critical of the less savoury aspects of Spartan history, contributed to ideas on race and class which were sometimes used to justify the ill-treatment or exclusion of those considered members of inferior racial or social groups.²⁰ At the same time, the Spartans came to be widely admired for their hardiness and devotion to duty. This resulted in a vogue for tough conditions, most notably in Almond's development of Sparto-Christianity at Loretto.²¹ However, once again, modern

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 54

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 58

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 360

²¹ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 48-58

imitators of the Spartans often only had a vague appreciation of the realities of life in ancient Sparta, which went well beyond sleeping with the windows open.

Chapter 3 concludes that Victorian and Edwardian historians of ancient sport were keen to apply the lessons of the past to sport in their own time. That they did so, is no surprise; all historians to some extent compare the past to their own time and the narratives they build are the result of careful selection of what to include and omit. Donald Kyle points out that, since the time of Herodotus, historians have always behaved thus, and the process of selection is usually driven by both conscious and unconscious factors.²² Studying Herodotus and other ancient historians had earlier prompted Robin Osborne to observe that 'history is not something that has happened, but something which one makes for oneself.'²³ Despite Thomas Arnold's assertion that ancient Greek historians were especially trustworthy and truthful, absolute truth in history has always been an elusive concept as demonstrated by Nietzsche and White among others.²⁴ Young accuses Mahaffy, Gardiner, and others of deliberate class bias in their work as well as shoddy scholarship, but Kyle and Miller are more forgiving, both recognising their tremendous contribution to learning.²⁵

²² Donald Kyle, 'Pan-Hellenism and Particularism: Herodotus on Sport, Greekness, Piety and War', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26, no. 2 (February 2009), 184

²³ Robin Osborne, *Greek History*, (London: Routledge, 2004), 4

²⁴ Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 61; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*, (Leipzig: Fritzsche, 1874), 57; Hayden White. Interpretation in History, *New Literary History*, 4, no. 2 (Winter 1973), 284

²⁵ Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*, 51; Kyle, 'E. Norman Gardiner and the Decline of Greek Sport', 10; *Ibid.*, 34

Overall, we are left with the picture of historians, as illustrated by Carr and Evans, conditioned by their own educational and sporting backgrounds to construct a particular view of the past.²⁶ As Jason König observed, the superficial similarities of ancient sport can be seductive, and draw us in to imagining a world much more like ours than it ever was in reality.²⁷ This led to a confusing cultural mix in which, Victorian ideals of fair-play, sportsmanship, modesty and the graceful acceptance of defeat were projected back onto historic figures who would neither have recognised or understood them. At the same time heroic ancient virtues were recast for use by the public school and varsity sportsman. However, while there were superficial similarities between classical Greece and Victorian Britain, it is a stretch to imagine that ancient Greek aristocrats and English gentlemen really had the same notions of honour and manliness. For the Homeric Greek warlord, *arete* and *agon* were visceral emotions and the barrier between sport, politics, and war, paper thin.²⁸ By the heyday, of high Athenian culture, they were perhaps already in decline, and it was claimed that from Alexander the Great's time, through to the collapse of the Roman Empire, as sport became less the pursuit of kings and more of a vocation for full time athletes, *arete* and *agon*, in a sporting context at least, withered and died, before being revived upon the playing fields of Rugby, Eton, Harrow, and Marlborough.²⁹

²⁶ Richard John Evans, *In Defence of History*, (London: Granta, 1997), 2; Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?* (London: Macmillan, 1961), 3-26

²⁷ Jason König, *Greek Athletics*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 3

²⁸ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1949), 63-65

²⁹ Edward Norman Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, (London: Macmillan, 1910), 122; Percy Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, (London: John Murray, 1892), 266-267

Chapter 4 looks at the network of Etonian masters and boys surrounding Edmond Warre and draws the important conclusion that, contrary to the views of some of his opponents at the times, and some historians since, Warre was far from the athletic philistine he has sometimes been portrayed as. This characterisation of Warre had its roots in factional disputes between groups of Eton masters and was exaggerated by supporters of James Welldon in the press when the pair were competing for the headmastership of the College in 1884.³⁰ Many readers subsequently felt that Mr Brandiston, the fictional headmaster in Welldon's 1895 novel, *Gerard Eversley's Friendship*, was a thinly disguised portrait of Warre.

He had no idea of any athletes who were not cricketers or football players. He had no idea of any scholars who were not good at Latin and Greek, or at mathematics; he was sometimes suspected of not setting much store even by mathematics. It would have been as disagreeable to him that any of his pupils should achieve distinction in Chemistry or German as that they should achieve it at hoops or marbles. He was a worshipper of the *mens sana in corpore sano*. The thing which he disliked most cordially was 'loafing;' but under 'loafing' he included not only idling about the street or lolling in confectioners' shops, but the irregular studious habits of boys who

³⁰ Academicus, The Head-Mastership of Eton, *The Times*, 26 July 1884, 10

sat reading books in their rooms or in the library, instead of taking part in the games.³¹

This characterisation gained traction precisely because parts of it were so accurate. Warre could not abide loafing and said so often.³² He was overly focused on classics and games, but his headmastership took the first steps in loosening the grip of classics on Eton and paving the way for modern languages as an alternative option.³³ Nevertheless, his reputation was tarnished and E.C. Mack's observation that he created a 'model school for turning out athletic philistines' inadvertently encouraged the idea that Warre was one himself.³⁴ This impression has persisted with both Mangan and Tozer largely viewing Warre in a similar light.³⁵ Mangan's observation of athletic schoolmasters was that, generally, they belonged to one of two types.

The games-master of laurelled brawn and little brain and the games-playing master often in possession of a sound measure of both cerebral and muscular ability. The former were sometimes casuists who through self-interested excess eventually succeeded in making a vice out of an alleged virtue; the latter were frequently

³¹ James Edward Cowell Welldon, *Gerald's Eversley's Friendship: A Study in Real Life*, (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1895), 83

³² Edmond Warre, *Athletics; Or Physical Exercise and Recreation, Part I*, (London: Clowes & Son, 1884), 50

³³ George Eden Marindin, Eton in Eighty-Five, *The Fortnightly Review*, XXVII (January-June 1885), 753-765

³⁴ Edward C. Mack, *Public Schools and British Opinion Since 1860*, (New York, 1941), 129

³⁵ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 114; Tozer, *The Ideal of Manliness*, 259-260

idealists who attempted through altruistic exhortation to make a virtue out of what eventually became a vice.³⁶

In fact, Warre was a deeply committed and well-connected classicist, who was well acquainted with the leading British thinkers on ancient Greek and Roman culture of his day. Furthermore, as a schoolmaster he was not alone in combining a passion for sport with an in-depth appreciation of classical literature and philosophy. Warre's predecessor as headmaster at Eton, James Hornby was a distinguished rower and classicist, Warre's rival for the headmastership, James Welldon, an accomplished footballer, theologian, and expert on Aristotle, and his successor as head, Edward Lyttelton, a classicist, first-class cricketer, and international footballer. Additionally, many of the masters making up Warre's staff at Eton were both accomplished sportsmen and academically able classicists, and many of the most successful sportsmen to come out of the school in the late-nineteenth century were among its most academically successful pupils. I have argued that the incentive to continue to play high level sport at Oxford or Cambridge played an important part in encouraging sporting pupils to work hard enough at classics to at least pass their entrance examinations for university, but many sporting Etonians, including the noted all-rounders Cuthbert Ottaway and Alfred Lyttelton were ranked among the most academically gifted boys in their years.³⁷

³⁶ James Anthony Mangan, Philathlete Extraordinary: A Portrait of the Victorian Moralist Edward Bowen, *Journal of Sport History*, 9, no.3, (Winter, 1982), 23

³⁷ *The Eton Register, Part III, 1862-68*, 69a; *Ibid.*, 102b

The rise of university sport ensured that those involved in elite amateur sport were almost exclusively drawn from the classically educated. This was especially true of rowing, the dominant sport at Oxford and Cambridge, and one which was particularly prone to Etonian influence. In rowing, more than any other sport, classical influence was the most keenly felt. In Chapter 5 the connection between the classicism of the British rowing fraternity and the Hellenism of the revived modern Olympics was shown, as well as the extension of Warre's social network into British Olympic circles. Notions of class exclusivity based on classical Athenian class structures influenced the Victorian development of an amateur ideal based on social status rather than monetary reward, and this underlay the introduction of the Mechanics' Clause to athletics and rowing.³⁸ Classical influences had a practical impact on the development of the modern Olympics, by introducing various Hellenistic elements to the revived games. While some of these elements were added at the behest of the modern Greek state as a means of celebrating its rebirth as a nation, and others were added later by fascist regimes anxious to reconnect with an imagined glorious European past, it is indisputable that Coubertin played up the idea that his games were a revival of the ancient Olympics precisely to attract the Anglo-American university athletes and administrators, without whom his games would lack credibility. Coubertin was quite open that this lay behind his commissioning of Faure to set the Olympic Hymn to music, and when George Robertson stepped forward with his Olympic Ode at the

³⁸ Neil Wigglesworth, *The Social History of English Rowing*, (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 119

closing ceremony of the 1896 games, he was providing exactly the kind of endorsement from Oxford classicists that Coubertin was hoping for.³⁹

The Impact of Hellenism on British Sport

While classical ideas influenced British ideas of the nature of amateurism and provided a veneer of Hellenism to the revived Olympics, the example of the interventions by historians of ancient sport into modern discus throwing show that they ultimately had little practical influence over the development of modern athletics. The modern composite discus was the invention of nineteenth century Greeks, albeit based on the size and shape of ancient examples, and remains in use despite the objections of historians like Gardner and Gardiner, whose devotion to the idea that the ancient discus was very much larger misled both Robert Garrett and Robert Carr Bosanquet into practising with unwieldy oversized heavyweight versions.⁴⁰ These historians were also ultimately unable to agree on how exactly the discus was thrown in antiquity, and modern techniques were ultimately developed via trial and error by athletes. In real terms, the main contribution that Gardiner, aided by Bosanquet and Robinson, was able to make to modern athletics was to discredit the so-called 'Greek style' discus event and the *balbis* from which it was thrown.⁴¹

³⁹ John J. MacAloon, *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 194; David C. Young, *The Modern Olympics: A Struggle for Revival*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 157

⁴⁰ Ellen Sophia Bosanquet (Ed.), *Robert Carr Bosanquet: Letters and Light Verse*, (Gloucester: John Bellows, 1938), 22; Richard D. Smith, Perspectives: A Man's Road to Athens: Amateurism in its Finest Sense, *New York Times*, 14 July 1996, 7

⁴¹ Edward Norman Gardiner, Throwing the Diskos, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 27, (1907), 9-10

At the Athens Olympics of 1896, the inclusion of the discus as part of the track and field programme was seen by many commentators as not so much a nod to the archaic roots of the games, as an attempt by the organisers to give the hosts an event in which they were guaranteed victory.⁴² Although Garrett's victory thwarted this intention, this aspect of the inclusion of the event serves to remind us that the discus' status as a classical event was probably only a secondary reason for its appearance in the games, and other aspects of the athletics programme were modern with events such as javelin throwing and pentathlon being conspicuous by their absence, only reappearing in the Olympic schedule at the Intercalated Athens Games of 1906.⁴³ After the Olympics had been marginalised and almost eclipsed by their role as junior partner to World's Fairs at Paris and St Louis, the 1906 games saw a conscious increase in the emphasis of their links with antiquity and henceforth this became an overt part of the marketing of the Olympic movement.

That the pentathlon eventually reappeared in the Olympic programme is no surprise. In ancient Greece, opinion on its merit was divided between the followers of Plato and Aristotle. Platonists saw it as a competition for second-rate performers.⁴⁴ Aristotle on the other hand, regarded pentathletes as 'the most beautiful, being trained for both power and speed events.'⁴⁵ The Aristotelian idea of the all-round athlete was very popular with many of the classically educated men behind the modern Olympics, and historians of

⁴² Young, *The Modern Olympics*, 146-147

⁴³ Frederick Annesley Michael Webster, *The Evolution of the Olympic Games 1829 B.C. – 1914 A.D.* (London: Heath, Cranton & Ouseley, 1914), 260-261

⁴⁴ Harold Arthur Harris, *Greek Athletes and Athletics*, (London: Hutchinson, 1964), 77

⁴⁵ Nigel Spivey, *The Ancient Olympics*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), 69

ancient sport from Mahaffy to Gardiner had repeatedly emphasised the dangers of over-specialisation in sport. Given the Victorian obsession with all-rounders, it is surprising that the pentathlon was not revived earlier in the history of modern athletics. William Penny Brookes introduced a pentathlon-style event, which he called the 'general classification', to the National Olympic Games held in London in 1866, although it consisted of high jump, long jump, a half-mile race, putting the weight, and a rope climb, rather than the traditional Greek elements.⁴⁶ Although Brookes stopped short of calling this competition a pentathlon, when he introduced it as an ongoing feature of his own Much Wenlock Olympian Games, he gave a nod to its ancient origins by making the prize a silver medal featuring an image of the goddess Nike and an inscription from Pindar.⁴⁷ Brookes' decision to award Greek inspired medals was a response to his increasing correspondence with those who were trying to revive the Olympic games in Greece, but his own games in Wenlock were always distinctly English in character and, even when he donated £10 towards a prize to be awarded at the Zappas Olympics, his suggestion was that it be given for tilting at the ring, an event surely more at home in Medieval England than ancient Greece.⁴⁸

Had Brookes been a weaker man, he might have given in to the suggestion of Lt. Col. Herbert Edwards, the guest of honour at his inaugural Shropshire Olympian Games in 1860, that he got rid of all references to the Olympics and

⁴⁶ Martin Polley, *The British Olympics: Britain's Olympic Heritage 1612-2012* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2011), 72

⁴⁷ Young, *The Modern Olympics*, 53

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 19

Nike as they were pagan and un-British.⁴⁹ Brookes persevered with the use of the terms Olympic and Olympian, but in many respects his use of this terminology, along with the use of Nike and Pindar was essentially cosmetic.

Similar ideas doubtless inspired the adoption of classically tinged names in amateur football, not only by the Corinthians, but by the Hellenically named amateur football leagues which sprang up in south east England between 1905 and 1914.⁵⁰ The names of leagues and clubs may have been largely symbolic, but the notions which underlay the type of amateurism favoured by the former public schoolboys who administered most sports were firmly rooted in classical ideas of class and masculinity. Furthermore, although the classical tinged names of amateur leagues in the south east were merely cosmetic, somebody in the Football Association took them very seriously. Inspired by the success of the Isthmian (1905), Spartan (1907), and Southern Olympian (1910) Leagues a group of teams from north London and the Home Counties formed another amateur league in 1912 which they proposed to call the Corinthian League.⁵¹ Presumably at the insistence of Corinthian FC, the FA vetoed that name, but when the teams came up with the prosaic alternative of 'The Home Counties League' this too was vetoed by the FA, who imposed the name Athenian on them.⁵² Later sister leagues followed with the names Nemean, Corinthian, Delphian, Hellenic, and Aetolian culminating in 1962 with

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 26

⁵⁰ Wigglesworth, *The Social History of English Rowing*, 119; Mike Williams, *Non-League Club Directory 2009*, (Chessington: Williams, 2009), 607; Walter E. Greenland, *The History of the Amateur Football Alliance*, (Harwich: Standard, 1965), 40

⁵¹ *Athenian League Minute Book, 1912-1921*, National Football Museum Archive

⁵² *Football Association Minute Book, May 1912*, National Football Museum Archive

the introduction of the Mithras Cup, a floodlight knockout competition for all the teams playing in these classically named leagues. Ultimately, these names were merely cosmetic; neither the game of association football nor the manner in which it was played in these competitions having any tangible connection to classicism or the ancient world. The one thing they do tell us about football between 1905 and 1962 is that although it was an overwhelmingly working-class sport, even at amateur level, the administration of the game was still largely in the hands of the classically educated middle classes.

If the overt use of classically inspired names and imagery was often little more than cosmetic, does this necessarily mean that ancient history exerted no influence on the development of modern sport? Brookes' enthusiasm for the Aristotelian ideal of the all-rounder suggests otherwise. Public school and university educated men carried a common set of values which, while nominally Anglican, were often as much to do with Plato and Aristotle as the New Testament. These ideas underlay their ideas of masculinity and gentlemanly behaviour and were reinforced by their comparatively closed social networks, which were largely composed of men with similar educational backgrounds. Even though the public school sector rapidly expanded in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, overall numbers remained small compared to the general population, the numbers going on to study at Oxford and Cambridge were even smaller, and those involved in serious sport while studying smaller still. This, combined with the networks around the sports clubs and associations which sprang up in the wake of public school athleticism, created an environment where commonly shared ideas were

naturally absorbed into the adult sporting world. As the public schools were ultimately the root of such networks, it is easy to see how inspirational schoolmasters were well placed to influence the thinking of entire generations of those at the top of British sport. By extension, those who taught the schoolmasters also wielded enormous influence; At Balliol for example, Jowett instilled a passion for the classics into Hely Hutchinson Almond and Edmond Warre, which ensured that the extremely successful sporting regimes they presided over were heavily laced with classical references.

The Importance of Edmond Warre

Warre was the doyen of Victorian rowing, but, as headmaster of England's largest and most prestigious public school, his influence stretched far beyond aquatics and boys who passed through his care at various times eventually occupied various high-profile positions in the control of association football, cricket, cycling, and athletics as well as important political and academic appointments. The full extent of Warre's connections is extremely difficult to map, but this thesis has looked at his relationships with other schoolmasters, historians of ancient sport, figures from the world of rowing, and those involved in the foundation and early organisation of the modern Olympics.

From these groups alone it is possible to see both a considerable overlap in personnel and clear lines of influence. Warre was cited as an expert on ancient rowing by Gardner, Gardiner, and Desborough, his position as one of the stewards of the Henley Royal Regatta gave him enormous influence in the

world of amateur rowing, and he personally coached, either at Eton, Oxford, or both, Lord Ampthill, Lord Cheylesmore, Robert de Courcy Laffan, Theodore Cook, and Lord Desborough, all of whom went on to be influential members of the British Olympic Association. In the world of classics, his lifelong associations with Benjamin Jowett and William Gladstone indicated his standing as a scholar of ancient Greek.

Warre's classicism was deep seated and he immersed himself in Greek and Latin to the extent that much of his diary and personal correspondence were written in these languages.⁵³ Warre's love of Greek in particular seems to have been very much linked to both Etonian and Oxford rowing culture. His translation of Thomas Kynaston Selwyn's Greek account of Etonian Rowing in 1829-1830 indicates the extent to which classicism was embedded among Etonian rowers.⁵⁴ It is also easy to imagine Warre as an undergraduate in Thomas Hughes' fictional account of Tom Brown at Oxford where the eponymous hero joins the boat club of the fictional Oxford college, St Ambrose's, and encounters a character known to his friends as Diogenes, because he likes to spend his time sitting in a bathtub.⁵⁵ When Hughes addresses those readers with experience of rowing in an eight-oared boat as $\theta\rho\alpha\nu\acute{\iota}\tau\alpha\iota$ (thranitai), a term referring to the first rank of oarsmen in a Greek trireme, he might almost be thinking of Warre.⁵⁶ As illustrated in a letter to the *Eton Chronicle*, Warre, or someone very close to him, thought of himself in

⁵³ Fletcher, *Edmond Warre*, 179-204; *Ibid.*, 232-240

⁵⁴ Thomas Kynaston Selwyn. (Trans. Edmond Warre), *Eton in 1829-1830*, (London: John Murray, 1903)

⁵⁵ Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford*, (London: Amazon, 1861) 20

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 86; James Donnegan, *A New Greek and English Lexicon*, (Boston: Hilliard, 1839), 648

very similar terms, using the name Θάλαμιτης (Thalamites), a third rank trireme oarsman as a *nom-de-plume*.⁵⁷

Aquatic Amateurism and the Classics

Rowing, at least in its elite amateur form, appears to have taken classicism to heart more than any other sport. While school and university magazines were packed with accounts of athletics, rugby, soccer, and cricket that employed plenty of classical imagery, they were usually written in English. In the world of rowing, writers like Warre and R.H. Forster were prone to including whole passages of untranslated ancient Greek in their writing and the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the university boat race in 1881, not only featured an ancient Greek motto, but Herbert Snow's after dinner ode, delivered in Latin.⁵⁸

Amateur rowing's affinity for the classics was very much driven by associations with elite education. Eton dominated school rowing, and the university boat race, along with Henley, where public school and university college crews dominated, came to be seen as the highlights of the amateur rowing calendar. The university boat race, and even more so Henley Regatta, were, first and foremost, important social occasions for the aristocratic and upper-middle-class elite. The educational background required to qualify for the university

⁵⁷ *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 5, 25 June 1863, 20

⁵⁸ Warre, *Athletics*, 230; Rudolph Chambers Lehmann, *The Classic Guide to Rowing*, (Stroud: Amberley, 2016), 13; George Gilbert Treherne Treherne, *Record of the University Boat Race, 1829-1883*, (London: Bickers & Son, 1884), 243, 272

boat race provided a natural social barrier, but for regattas like Henley and its imitators, other measures were necessary to keep those considered socially undesirable at bay. This, combined with the reality that, in the early days of amateur rowing at least, professional watermen were demonstrably superior rowers, lay behind the adaptation of measures such as the mechanics' clause. The ability of gentleman amateurs to utilise their knowledge of the classics and cite the precedence of Athenian prohibitions regarding the social background of competitors was intended to provide a degree of cultural and historical justification for such measures and act as a fig leaf to cover accusations of snobbery.

The idea of the gentleman amateur may have been marketed to the outside world as being all about fair play and the love of the game, but insiders, such as the members of London's Isthmian Club, who limited their membership to public school and Oxbridge men, fought a long battle to maintain class-based social exclusivity.⁵⁹ Ultimately, this created the greatest legacy left behind by the classical impact on British sport, the hegemony of amateurism in some sports, particularly in the way amateurism was interpreted. However, amateurism was a concept which was difficult to satisfactorily define and was under assault from the beginning. In many respects its longevity was surprising because, as Llewellyn and Gleaves observed:

⁵⁹ Dave Day, Products, Training, and Technology, in Mike Huggins (Ed.), *A Cultural History of Sport in the Age of Industry*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 90; John Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes, 1870-1914*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 159

Amateurism's vast geographical reach and pliability exaggerates its importance. Outside of the Olympic movement, as well as a handful of sports such as track and field, rugby union and rowing, amateurism paled in significance and popularity to its professional counterpart – particularly beyond the British Isles. Stripped from the unique social, cultural, and ideological fabric of Victorian Britain, amateurism failed to enjoy the same degree of success and legitimacy on foreign soil. In most instances a small coterie of colonial Anglophile elites – wielding an inordinate amount of power through the sporting bureaucracies, clubs and colleges they governed – implemented amateur legislation in opposition to both popular sentiment and established professional sporting structures.⁶⁰

The British view of amateurism was already a cause of friction with the Americans at the 1908 and 1912 Olympics, and fifty years later, at the height of the Cold War, British Olympians found themselves increasingly marginalised as they were hamstrung by the BOA's strict standards, administered by an aristocratic body increasingly out of touch with athletes and far tighter than those in play in other nations.⁶¹ By this time Coubertin had confessed in his memoirs that:

⁶⁰ Matthew P. Llewellyn and John Gleaves, A Universal Dilemma: The British Sporting Life and the Complex, Contested, and Contradictory State of Amateurism, *Journal of Sport History*, 41, no. 1 (Spring 2014), 406

⁶¹ Vanessa Heggie, 'Only the British Appear to be Making a Fuss': The Science of Success and the Myth of Amateurism at the Mexico Olympiad, 1986, *Sport in History*, 28, no.2 (2008), 217

Today I can admit it: the amateur question never really bothered me. It had served as a screen to convene the Congress designed to revive the Olympic Games. Realising the importance attached to it in sporting circles, I always showed the necessary enthusiasm, but it was enthusiasm without real conviction.⁶²

Coubertin's assertion that he only backed amateurism to get the British sporting establishment on board with his Olympic project suggests then, that like many of the more overtly Hellenistic elements of the Olympic revival, it was there as a direct result of the way in which athleticism and classicism were so deeply entwined in British elite education. The fact that Coubertin was to take Henley's Stewards' Committee as his model for the IOC, and the subsequent disproportionate involvement of figures from the amateur rowing fraternity in framing early British input into the modern Olympic revival served to further amplify this influence.

Paradoxes and Differences

Certain paradoxes are evident when assessing the impacts of classicism and ancient history on contemporary sport in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. One of their lasting legacies has been the modern Olympics, yet these were founded by an outsider, Coubertin, and subject to much criticism from ancient sports historians, as illustrated by the section of this thesis dealing with the discus. To some extent, British identification with the ancient Greeks was

⁶² Pierre de Coubertin, *Olympic Memoirs*, rev. ed. (Lausanne: IOC, 1997) 115-121

mirrored in the adoption of Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism, and there were many Britons, including Warre, who did not necessarily welcome the idea of international sport with open arms. Others, most notably John Astley Cooper, whose 1891 proposal for a Pan-Britannic Games floundered at the time but eventually paved the way for the British Empire Games, felt that international sport should be limited to white males from English-speaking nations.⁶³ They reasoned that this was at least partially justified by the ancient Greek prohibition on non-Hellenic competitors in their games. Coubertin's vision for Olympic participation was scarcely any wider; he saw the games as being primarily for white, educated, upper-middle-class males of European descent.⁶⁴

A second paradox concerns the friction between the ancient Greek obsession with individual sport and the Victorian devotion to team games. One of the constant themes to which many of the most prominent athletic schoolmasters, including Almond and Warre, returned was the importance of the team over the individual and both preferred rowing over all other team sports because it did not create star players in the way that cricket and football did and thus did not promote selfish play. Hero-worship was consistently condemned, both by headmasters decrying the tendency of schoolboys to revere members of their eights, elevens, and fifteens more than their teachers, and by historians of ancient sport anxious to condemn the side-effects of modern professionalism.

⁶³ Katherine Moore, 'The Warmth of Comradeship': The First British Empire Games and Imperial Solidarity, in James Anthony Mangan (Ed.), *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society*, (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 202

⁶⁴ Pierre de Coubertin, Why I revived the Olympic Games, *Fortnightly Review*, 90 (1908), 115

However, much of ancient Greek culture celebrated heroes and from Homer onwards concentrated on individual feats of valour and athletic prowess. Pindar and Myron, in their different ways, continued in that vein by celebrating the individual. If the Victorians looked at all to Greek role models for their team sports, it was to Spartan military exploits, but mostly the ideals of self-sacrifice and bravery they looked for on the rugby and soccer pitch borrowed Roman martial ideals, something which Warre acknowledged in his own brief excursion into the history of ancient athletics.⁶⁵

A third paradox centres on the idea of cheating, fair play, and attitudes to victory and defeat. Again, the model which Victorian sportsmen actually followed was probably closer to Roman than Greek attitudes. Although members of the Roman elite did not generally take part in sport, in matters of political and military contest they were expected to accept defeat stoically, with dignity and good grace. This was in contrast to the Greek attitude to victory and defeat which, both in games and war, was far more emotional. Greeks loudly celebrated their victories, but were devastated by defeat. These were not the responses expected from the gentleman amateur, who was ideally modest in victory and graceful in defeat, but were close to the emotions which commentators like Gardiner ascribed to the spectators of modern commercial sport, along with excessive partisanship, another trait they allegedly had in common with ancient crowds. Such were the pressures and desire to win in ancient Greek sport that cheating was not uncommon, as witnessed by the

⁶⁵ Warre, *Athletics*, 10-13

extensive documentation concerning judges, rules, fines, and floggings at Olympia.⁶⁶ Once again, this is at odds with the Victorian ideal of gentlemanly play which, at its extreme end, prompted the Corinthians to refuse to take penalties when they were first introduced, on the grounds that if their opponents had broken the rules, as gentlemen the infringement must have been accidental.⁶⁷ However, this attitude had a flip side in that, according to those who had studied the 'degeneration' of Greek sport, the modern professional would be far more liable to cheat, presumably in much the same way that it was believed the working-classes were far more easily tempted into crime.

MacAloon's description of Hellenism as 'symbolic glue' in relation to the Olympic revival might also apply to classicism's interaction with athleticism in British public schools and universities in the seventy-five years leading up until the First World War. Classics was used as a means of creating and enforcing social segregation in education. It was used as a source of inspiration for elite young men to encourage sporting endeavour and to provide reference points for ideals of manliness and masculinity. It was also extensively used as a source of illustration, both to justify the elated position of elite amateurism and to warn against the dangers of professionalism, commercialism, and mass-spectator sport. From a twenty-first century perspective, it is easy to imagine the process by which classics was co-opted in this way as nothing more than

⁶⁶ Sarah C. Murray, Rules and Order, in Paul Christesen and Charles H. Stocking (eds.), *A Cultural History of Sport in Antiquity*, (London; Bloomsbury, 2021), 110

⁶⁷ Dilwyn Porter, Revenge of the Crouch End Vampires: The AFA, the FA and English Football's 'Great Split', 1907-14, in Dilwyn Porter and Stephen Wagg (Eds.), *Amateurism in British Sport: It Matters Not Who Won or Lost*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 67

a cynical exercise by social elites in which inconvenient aspects of ancient history were overlooked in order to create a malleable past which was similar enough to modern day England to make its lessons applicable to contemporary sport. The reality was probably more nuanced. The boys and men produced by the nineteenth century public school were taught from an early age that ancient Greece, particularly Athens in its golden age, was the source of European culture and the font of much wisdom. Classical ideas informed and reinforced nineteenth century elites' ideas of contemporary social class, which, combined with their lack of exposure to life beyond the schools they were educated in, informed their world view. Certainly, cynicism played a part, particularly in later years, but ignorance and naivete also lay behind some beliefs which would now be seen as unpalatable.

Signposts to Future Research

The research has uncovered a great deal of evidence concerning the sporting, educational, political, and familial connections between many of the major figures involved in playing and administering sport in the period from 1850 to 1914. Additionally, the thesis has looked at a range of literature, especially school and college magazines and autobiographies, to understand the extent to which classical ideas and imagery underlay the sporting culture in educational institutions and beyond. However, this work has revealed several opportunities for further work.

The project highlighted that school magazines are an extremely rich source of poetry and prose about public school life in general and sport in particular. This thesis has made extensive use of these, but it is recognised that there is much more material to be visited. This thesis has tended to focus on magazines from the 'great' public schools, and it would be interesting to contrast the content of these magazines with material from a wider range of middle ranking public and grammar schools. In these schools, such as Christ College, Brecon, and Epsom College, where R.B. Lattimer and E. Norman Gardiner were respectively masters, it was usually rugby union rather than rowing that was the dominant sport. Dunning and Sheard make the point that rugby union was to become obsessed with maintaining amateurism because it was a game that was widely adopted in grammar schools and lesser public schools. They argued that the clientele of these schools was insecure about maintaining social advantages over the working man and thus jealously guarded the amateur status of their sport. In contrast, the Old Etonians and Harrovians who ultimately controlled association football were secure in their identity and status, and thus less threatened by wider participation in soccer, particularly as they still maintained a firm grip on cricket and rowing.⁶⁸ Like rowing, rugby union was aggressive in its interpretation of the amateur ideal, but anecdotal evidence points towards rugby players being more likely to be 'hearties' or 'bloods' whereas many rowers had an aesthetic and academic side. The obvious comparison would be to liken rowers to Athenians and rugger players

⁶⁸ Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players*, (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1979), 185-190

to Spartans, and it would be interesting to see whether such a pattern emerged from school and college literature.

As an offshoot of this thesis, research into late-Victorian attempts to gauge the relative academic success of public schools has already led to a published journal article on the subject of the Public School Record in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and other newspapers.⁶⁹ One of the anonymous peer reviewers for this paper was kind enough to say ‘this article will almost certainly become the definitive account of this particular episode.’ However, I believe there is enough data and correspondence available from the fifteen-year period for which the Public School Record was published to warrant further study, and it would make an excellent subject for any student interested in nineteenth century education looking for a doctoral thesis.

The prosopographical database compiled for the project contains details on many more individuals than there has been space to mention in the thesis, and maps a web of relationships via school and college ties. Cross-referencing school and university registers with census information has been a very useful way of not only tracking when and where the paths of individuals crossed, but in spotting common trends and social backgrounds. This data revealed, for example, that the majority of nineteenth century historians of ancient sport were the sons of vicars, and confirmed that the social status of treasurers and

⁶⁹ Andy. Carter, (2022): ‘No true or just test of merit’: ‘The Public School Record’ 1886–1900, *History of Education*, 51, no.5 (2022), 732-754

secretaries of the governing bodies of most sports shifted from the independently wealthy to the professional classes in the closing years of the century. The data confirms, as might be expected, that alumni of Eton, as the largest of the public schools, and Trinity College, Cambridge, as the biggest Oxbridge college, held far more senior posts in sports administration than the alumni of other institutions, thus giving those colleges disproportionate power in sport generally. At the same time, it has been possible to see how the common experience of rowing for Balliol, influenced the later teaching careers of Hornby, Almond, and Warre. Using this prosopography to look at the educational achievements of noted school and university athletes has also been a vital tool in challenging the idea of the athletic philistine.

The links revealed in the database also highlight how in late-Victorian Britain, participation in high level sport was often a precursor to, and sometimes overlapped with, highly successful political careers and the extent to which sporting relationships played a part in shaping the later lives of men like Alfred Lyttelton, Arthur Balfour and Lord Harris is an interesting area for investigation. Evidence suggests that these sporting political networks have surprisingly deep roots. The Lytteltons were, for example, cousins of Gilbert West, and moved in the same political circles as William Pitt and Frederick, Prince of Wales.⁷⁰ The prince, who acted as a centre for the Tory opposition to the Whig government of his day, was also a first-class cricketer, and it is interesting to speculate that, a century before the advent of the nearby Henley Regatta,

⁷⁰ Martha K. Zebrowski, 'Gilbert West's Dissertation on the Olympick Games (1749): Established Upon Great Political Views', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 35. no. 2 (2012), 239

West was involved in a similar admixture of sport, politics, and classicism at Frederick's home at Cliveden.

Using newspaper sources and school and college records, the research database also shows the ways in which public school and Oxbridge men dominated sports administration from 1850 to 1914, but how there was also a gradual shift in emphasis from the 1880s onwards in which former pupils of the 'great' public schools retained political control of many sports bodies while increasingly delegating the growing burden of sports administration to trusted members of the middling class. There are opportunities to observe and document this process in detail, noting the differences in speed and extent of change between different sports. Additionally, the continuing dominance of the British Olympic Association by aristocratic interests in the inter-war and immediate post-war periods, first under Lord Desborough and later by Lord Burghley, and the effect this had on British attitudes to amateurism in the mid-twentieth century, is a natural continuation of this study.

While it has not been possible, due to constrictions of both time and space, to make full use of the prosopographical data gathered for this project within the final thesis, it is intended to make this data available for future use. It is recognised that the current presentation of the data, via numerous sheets in an Excel spreadsheet, does not provide a particularly attractive or intuitive interface for users, and although some attempts at graphical representation have been made to show the overlapping careers of students and teachers at

the main schools and universities, there is much room for improvement. It is hoped that, subject to securing appropriate funding, it will be possible to construct an interactive website which will enable users to navigate the social networks linking classicism and sport, by following the timelines of individuals and educational institutions and sports clubs and administrative bodies. This would have the potential to be a readily extensible project which could, in time, move beyond the interfaces between athleticism and classicism to extend these networks into politics, the church, and the military.

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Appendix A: Guide to the Prosopographical Data

Introduction

The prosopographical data collected for this project is stored in an Excel spreadsheet. Most of this data was not directly used in the final thesis and covers a far bigger group of individuals than were mentioned, but it is hoped that this collection of data will be a useful tool going forward, and that it may be used and built upon by future projects, particularly in the sphere of public history. The spreadsheet consists of a number of pages, each focussing on a particular aspect of the project. This appendix describes the format of each page and includes a screenshot giving a flavour of the content.

Sheet 1. Biographical Data

The first sheet contains basic biographical data and reflects how the project began as a study of nineteenth century historians of ancient sport. The initial research, which is contained in the first 29 rows, collected data for British and Irish academics who were involved in research and publishing on this subject between 1749 and 1974. For each individual I aimed to collect the following data; name, date of birth, place of birth, date of death, place of death, father's name, father's profession, school, school start year, school leaving Year, university/college name, university start year, names of any school or university they taught at, the years during which this teaching took place, sports they were known to have played seriously, teams they played for, the principle sports history publication they were known for, and its year of publication. There is also partial data on whether they were married and had

children, as at one point the research might have considered to what extent these men fitted into a homosocial sub-culture.

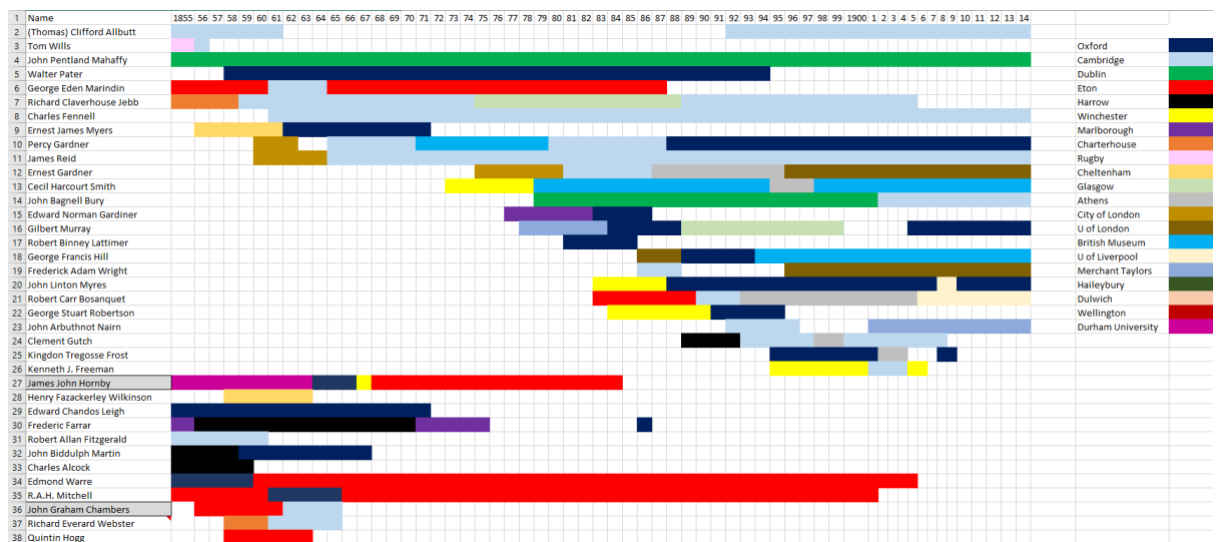
As the project expanded to go beyond the historians of ancient sport to look at classicism's interaction with athleticism in public schools, universities and elite amateur sport, the database was expanded to include major figures from these spheres.

Name	Date of Birth	Place of Birth	Date of Death	Place of Death	Father's Name	Father's Profession	School	School No.	School C.	University	Other	Teaching At	Years	Sports Played	Teams Played For	Principal Publication	Yes	Major
Robert West	18/01/1758	Beaumont, Scotland	28/03/1795	Chelsea	Robert West	Chapman	Winchester/Boon	2748	1748	Christ Church, Oxford	1748	N/A	1748			Disquisition on the Olympic Games	1748	Yes
John Gilpin	18/01/1747	Beaumont, Scotland	28/03/1795	Chelsea	Robert Gilpin	Merchant	Beaumont		1747	St George's University	1747	St George's University	1747			The History of Ancient Greece	1747	
Joseph Strutt	27/03/1749	Chelmsford, Essex	18/10/1802	Harmon Garden	Thomas Strutt	Miller	Edward VI Grammar Chelmsford		1749	Royal Academy/British Museum	1770					Sports and Pastimes of the People	1801	
(Thomas) Colford Abbott	20/07/1829	Devonbury, Yorkshire	21/02/1923	Cambridge	Thomas Abbott	Chapman	St Peter's York			Cambridge & Jesus College, Camd	1851	Cambridge	1851	1851	1851	Rav. Greek Athletics Sports & Festivals	1912	Yes
John Percival Mahaffy	24/02/1839	Wexley, Suffolk	20/04/1919	Dublin	Nathaniel Mahaffy	Chapman	Home School			Trinity College Dublin	1858	Trinity College Dublin	1858	1858	1858	Social Life in Greece	1874	Yes
Walter Fayer	04/03/1839	Stagbury	02/07/1894	Osford	Richard Gode Fayer	Physician	King's School, Canterbury	1839	1839	Queens College, Oxford	1858	Queens College, Oxford	1858	1858	1858	Age of the Athletics Proseman	1897	No
George Eden Martin	14/03/1843	Weymouth	04/02/1939		Samuel Martin	Chapman	Boon	1843	1843	King's College, Cambridge	1860	Boon	1860	1860	1860	The Games of Magnesian, Classical &	1895	
Richard Cavendish-Jebb	27/08/1841	Dundee, Scotland	09/12/1905	Cambridge	Robert Jebb	Barister	Charterhouse	1855	1855	Trinity College, Cambridge	1858	Glasgow/Cambridge	1858	1858	1858	Pindar (MS)	1882	Yes
Charles M. Arnold	14/04/1842	Weymouth, Yorkshire	04/02/1918	Cambridge	Samuel Arnold	Chapman	Revel School		1842	Jesus College, Cambridge	1861	Cambridge	1861	1861	1861	Pindar: Names and Unknown Dates	1889	
Ernest James Myers	13/11/1844	Kewstic, Cornhill	25/11/1913	Exingtonham, Sussex	Frederic Myers	Chapman	Charterham	1844	1844	Bathurst, Oxford	1861	Wadham, Oxford	1861	1861	1861	The Pindarion and its use	1881	
Fanny Gardner	24/11/1844	Weymouth	17/07/1937	Osford	Thomas Gardner	Stockbroker	City of London School	1840	1840	Christ's College, Cambridge	1861	Oxford	1861	1861	1861	New Chapters in Greek History	1892	Yes
Cecil Harcourt Smith	11/09/1850	Stratton	17/03/1944	Stratton, Surrey	William Smith	Solicitor	Winchester		1871	Jesus Museum	1871							Yes
John Baginall Bury	16/10/1841	Manorham, Ireland	01/06/1927	Rome, Italy	Edward John Bury	Chapman	Manorham Diocesan Sch			Trinity College Dublin	1878	Trinity College Dublin	1878	1878	1878	Neamean Odes of Pindar	1890	Yes
Edward Norman Gardiner	16/11/1844	Sturminster	21/10/1932	Osford	Edward John Gardiner	Chapman	Marlborough	1874	1874	Christ Church, Oxford	1881	Trinity College	1881	1881	1881	Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals	1912	No
Giles Murray	02/03/1844	Stratton, Australia	25/05/1957	Stratton Hill, Oxfordshire	Thomas Murray	Physician/Farmer	Marlborough	1874	1874	Jesus College, Oxford	1884	Glasgow University	1884	1884	1884	Rav. Greek Athletics Sports & Festivals	1911	
Robert Binney Lattimer	14/01/1847	Carlisle	21/02/1929	Carlisle	William Lattimer	Factory Manager	Carlisle High Durham School		1847	Queens College, Oxford	1881	Christ College, Oxford	1881	1881	1881	Rav. Greek Athletics Sports & Festivals	1911	
George Francis Hill	22/11/1847	Bathurst, India	18/10/1948	London	Samuel John Hill	Chapman	Presbyterian University College School		1847	St. Martin, Oxford	1881							Yes
Frederick Adam Wright	16/02/1849	Gordon on Sea, Norfolk	22/08/1948	Falmouth, Cornwall	Adam John Wright	Postmaster	Great Yarmouth Grammar	1849	1849	Magdalen College, Cambridge	1888	Bathurst, University of	1888	1888	1888	Neamean Odes of Pindar	1890	Yes
John Limes Miller	05/07/1849	Princeton	24/08/1944	Osford	William Miller	Chapman	Winchester	1849	1849	Jesus College, Oxford	1888	University of Oxford	1888	1888	1888	Neamean Odes of Pindar	1890	Yes
Robert Carr Bonington	27/06/1851	London	11/04/1935	Newcastle	Charles Carr Bonington	Barister	Boon	1851	1851	Trinity College, Cambridge	1890	University of Liverpool	1890	1890	1890	Neamean & Dionysian, Cambridge, Great Britain		Yes
George Stuart Robinson	25/08/1852	London	29/01/1957	London	John Neal Robinson	Accountant	Winchester	1854	1854	New College, Oxford	1888	New College, Oxford	1888	1888	1888	Neamean & Dionysian, Cambridge, Great Britain		Yes
John Archibald Neame	21/03/1854		18/11/1957		J. Archibald Neame	Chapman	Oxford High School			Trinity College, Cambridge	1891	Marlborough	1891	1891	1891	Pindar: Classical Review	1901	
Clarence Smith	29/04/1855		25/08/1908	Whitewell, Cambridge	John James Smith	Solicitor	Harrow	1859	1859	King's College, Cambridge	1894	Cambridge	1894	1894	1894	Greek Athletics and Athletics	1964	Yes
Kingdon Tagliaue Frost	19/06/1857	Launceston, Cornwall	14/08/1904	Mons, Belgium	John Tagliaue Frost	Solicitor	Launceston Grammar School			Lincoln, Lincolnshire, Oxford	1895	Queen's Belfast	1895	1895	1895	Greek Athletics and Athletics	1964	Yes
Leopold John Tuckman	15/08/1858	London	05/07/1905	Winchester	George Tuckman	Barister	Winchester	1858	1858	Trinity College, Cambridge	1895	Winchester	1895	1895	1895	Greek Athletics and Athletics	1964	Yes
Frederick Annetius Michael Wre	27/08/1858	St Albans	03/09/1909	Osford	Frederick Wrethor	Surgeon	St Albans Grammar School	1858	1858	Jesus College, Oxford	1901	1901	1901	1901	1901	Greek Athletics and Athletics	1964	Yes
Herold Arthur Henry	27/09/1860	Osford	28/08/1874	Osford		College Porter	Oxford High School			1911	Jesus College, Oxford	1911	1911	1911	1911	Greek Athletics and Athletics	1964	Yes

Name	Date of Birth	Place of Birth	Date of Death	Place of Death	Father's Name	Father's Profession	School	School No.	School C.	University	Other	Teaching At	Years	Sports Played	Teams Played For	Principal Publication	Yes	Major
Thomas Arnold	13/06/1795	West Gorton, Isle of Wight	22/06/1842	Ambridge, Westmoreland	William Arnold	Customs Officer	Winchester			Corpus Christi, Oxford		Rugby School	1823	1823				
Charles Darwin	12/02/1809	Shrewsbury, Shropshire	19/04/1882	Down, Kent	Robert Darwin	Physician	Shrewsbury			Christ Church, Cambridge		Rugby/Marlborough	1828	1828				
George Edward Smith Cotton	28/10/1813	Cheshire	05/10/1866	Croft, North	George Cotton	Chapman	Weymouth			Trinity College, Cambridge		Rugby/Marlborough	1834	1834				
Charles John Vaughan	16/08/1816	Leicester	15/10/1897	Clarendon, Cardiff	Edward Thomas Vaughan	Chapman	Trinity College, Cambridge			Trinity College, Cambridge		Harrow	1844	1844				
Charles Dodgson	12/06/1830	Holme, Devon	18/01/1875	Exeter, Devon	Charles Dodgson	Chapman	Exeter/Holme			Magdalen College, Cambridge		Cambridge	1848	1848				
Edward Thring	29/11/1821	Alford, Somerset	22/10/1887	Uppingham, Rutland	John Gale Thring Thring	Chapman	Boon	1825	1825	King's College, Cambridge	1841	Uppingham	1841	1841				
Thomas Hughes	20/10/1822	Uppingham, Berkshire	22/08/1896	Uppingham	Thomas Hughes	Writer	Rugby	1824	1824	Trinity College, Oxford	1842		1842	1842				
John Charles Thring	11/06/1824	Alford, Somerset	03/10/1909	Durham, Essex	John Gale Thring Thring	Chapman	Shrewsbury	1824	1824	John's College, Cambridge	1841	Uppingham	1841	1841				
James John Hardy	18/12/1824	Wimborne, Dorset	02/11/1909	Boon	James Hardy	Admiral	Boon	1829	1829	Bathurst College, Oxford	1845	Boon	1845	1845				
John Dugdale Arley	15/02/1825	Home, Essex	20/10/1894	London	Francis Dugdale Arley	Mariner	Winchester/Boon	1825	1825	Christ Church, Oxford	1846		1846	1846				
Harbert M. Playford	01/09/1830	Chingford, Essex	01/01/1883	Malden														
Frederic William Fayer	07/08/1831	Bombay, India	22/03/1903	Cambridge	Charles Fayer	Chapman	King's College London			Trinity College, Cambridge	1849	Marlborough/Harrow	1853	1853				
Edward Golds Meyer	16/08/1831	Hull	20/11/1904	Barnes	Charles Meyer	Chapman	Marlborough			Trinity College, Cambridge	1849	Marlborough/Harrow	1853	1853				
Charles Dodgson	27/01/1832	Dorchester, Cheshire	14/01/1898	Salford, Surrey	Charles Dodgson	Chapman	Rugby	1846	1846	Christ Church, Oxford	1850		1850	1850				
John Hamilton Arnold	12/06/1832	London	27/08/1893	Marlborough, Wiltshire	George Arnold	Chapman	Glasgow College	1845	1845	Bathurst College, Oxford	1850	London	1850	1850				
Henry Parkins	10/12/1832	Bathurst, Cambridgeshire	26/05/1916	New Barnes	Henry Parkins	Chapman	Bury St Edmunds			Trinity College, Cambridge	1850		1850	1850				
Edward Chando Leigh	22/12/1832	Stoneleigh Abbey, Warwick	18/05/1915		Chando Leigh	Landowner	Harrow	1847	1847	Trinity College, Oxford	1851		1851	1851				

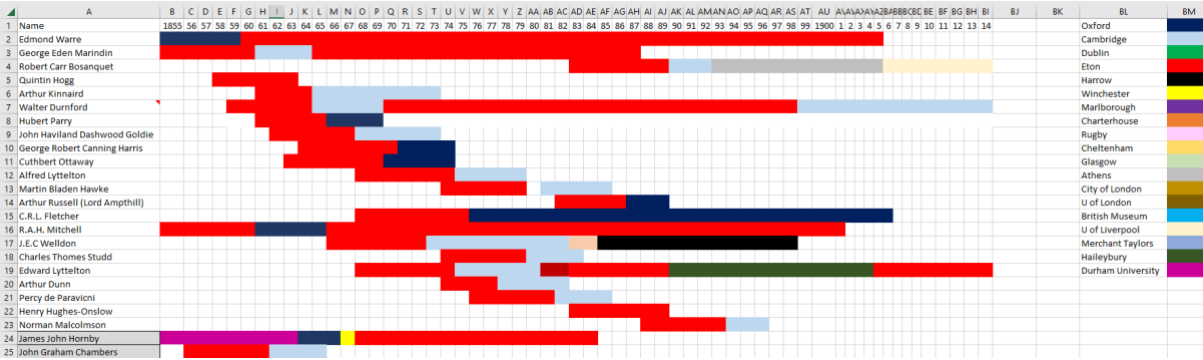
Sheet 2. School and College Attendance Map

This sheet takes all the individuals from Sheet 1 and attempts to show how they were interlinked via periods as schoolboys, students, teachers and university lecturers by a colour coded mapping showing when they were at a number of public schools and universities. The mapping covers the years from 1855 on the left until 1914 on the right. Because the spreadsheet only allows 1 year per column, it does not adequately cope with years in which individuals changed institution. When time allows, this data will be re-mapped using three columns per year to allow term by term movements to be accurately shown.



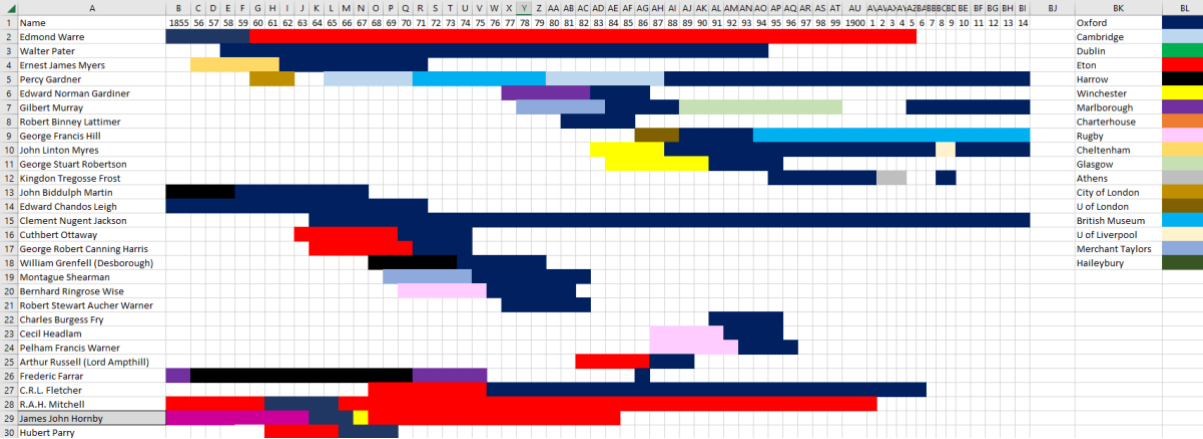
Sheet 3. Eton Attendance Map

A subset of Sheet 2 exclusively showing the overlaps for individuals associated with Eton College.



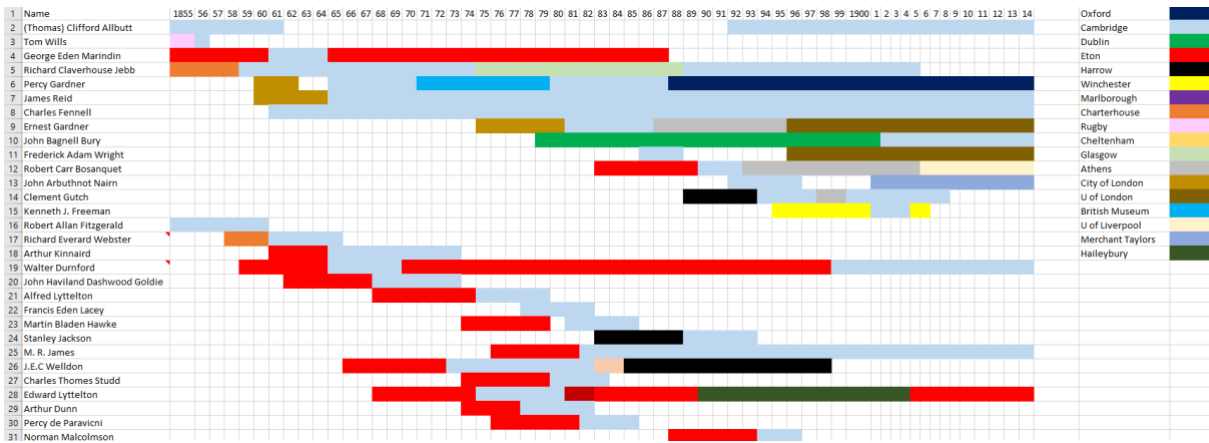
Sheet 4. Oxford Attendance Map

A subset of Sheet 2 exclusively showing the overlaps for individuals associated with Oxford University.



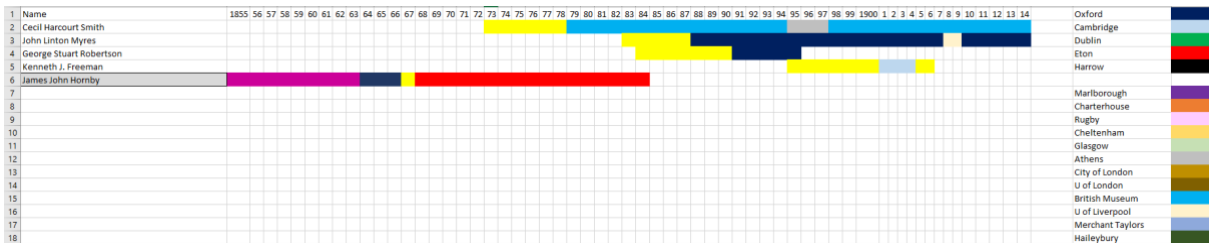
Sheet 5. Cambridge Attendance Map

A subset of Sheet 2 exclusively showing the overlaps for individuals associated with Cambridge University.



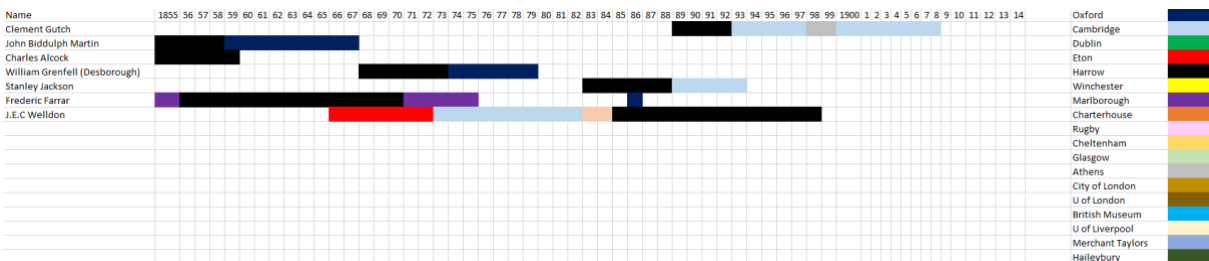
Sheet 6. Winchester Attendance Map

A subset of Sheet 2 exclusively showing the overlaps for individuals associated with Winchester College.



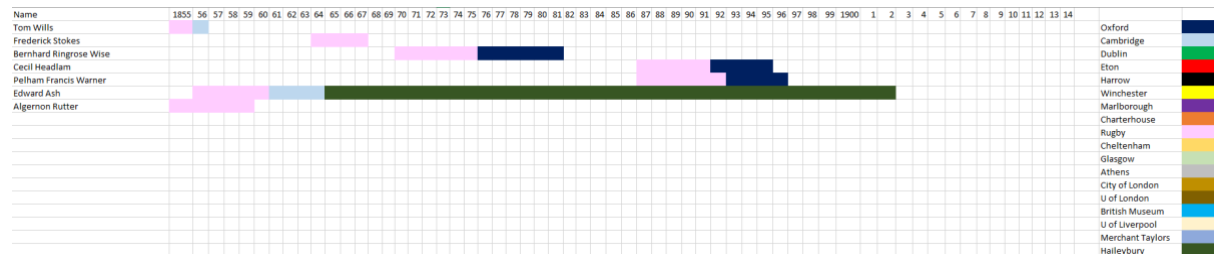
Sheet 7. Harrow Attendance Map

A subset of Sheet 2 exclusively showing the overlaps for individuals associated with Harrow School.



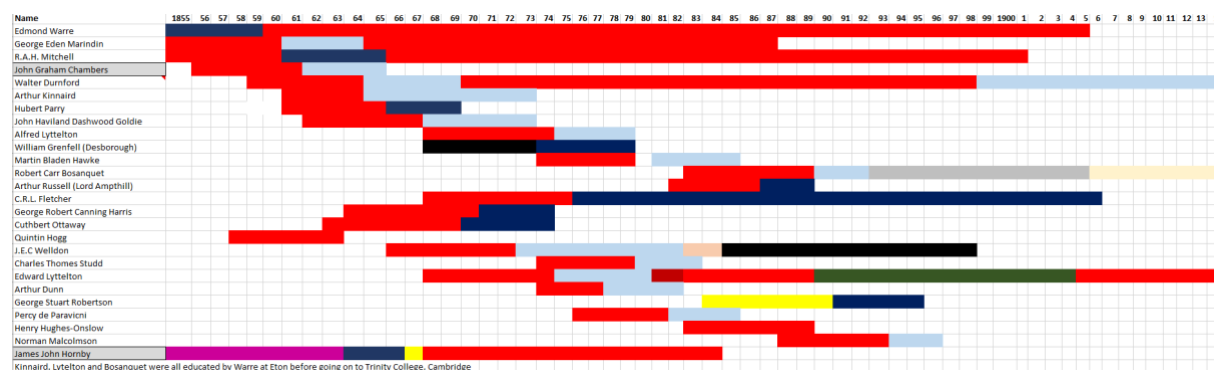
Sheet 8. Rugby Attendance Map

A subset of Sheet 2 exclusively showing the overlaps for individuals associated with Rugby School.



Sheet 9. Etonian Sporting Connections Map

A subset of Sheet 2 exclusively showing the overlaps for individuals considered in Chapter 4 of the thesis, looking at Etonian sporting masters and their proteges who went on to be influential figures in the world of sport.



Sheet 10. Additional Etonian Biographical Detail

This sheet contains additional biographical detail, much of it drawn from the *Eton College Registers*, for individuals considered in Chapter 4. For each individual the following data is recorded; name, date of birth, place of birth, father's name, father's profession, which Eton House or Houses they belonged to, Eton start date, Eton leaving date, whether they were a Colleger or Oppidan, whether they were elected to Pop and in what year, whether they played representatively in the field game and in what years, whether they played representatively in the Wall game and in what years, rowing achievements and years, membership of the cricket 1st XI and years, athletics prizes and years, membership of the Eton Rifles, including years active and rank achieved, representative honours at fives and years, representative honours at racquets and years, records of school prizes and scholarships and positions such as editor of the *Eton Chronicle* and years, university and college to which they went up as an undergraduate, year of university matriculation, record of any institution they subsequently taught at, years of teaching, principle sports played.

1	Name	Date of Birth	Place of Birth	Father's Name	Father's Profession	Eton House	Eton Start	Eton Leave	Colleg's PFD	Field	Wall	Rowing	Cricket	Athletics	Fives	Racquet	Awards	University	Years Teaching At	Years	Sports Played
2	Henry John Hardy	1821/12	Woking, Surrey	George Hardy	Farmer	CPG	Summer 1839	Summer 1840	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1839-1840	Cricket, Football
3	John Douglas Arley	1805/1826	Rome, Italy	Francis Douglas Arley	Baronet	EMP, CPG	Spring 1842	Summer 1849	Opp									Christ Church, Oxford		1846	
4	Edward Lane	1802/1817	London	James Lane	Insurance Broker	FT 1400, EC 1, 1400	Autumn 1840	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
5	Francis Arthur Mansel	1819/1838	Wiltshire	James Mansel	Baronet	WLB, MB	New Year 1839	Summer 1845	Opp									Royal Military Academy, Woolwich		1844	
6	George Eden Murray	1812/1843	London	William Murray	Lawyer	EC 1, 1400	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
7	Richard Arthur Henry Michael	22/09/1843	Leamington	W. H. Michael	Businessman	WLB, MB	Autumn 1843	Summer 1849	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1849-1850	Cricket, Football
8	John Leighton Chambers	1812/1843	London	William Chambers	Architect	EC 1, 1400	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
9	John Henry	1812/1843	London	James Henry	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
10	Arthur Henry	1812/1843	London	Arthur Henry	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
11	William Darnley	1812/1843	London	William Darnley	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
12	John Henry	1812/1843	London	John Henry	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
13	John Henry	1812/1843	London	John Henry	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
14	George Robert Lanning Davis	1812/1843	London	George Davis	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
15	William Henry	1812/1843	London	William Henry	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
16	Charles Henry	1812/1843	London	Charles Henry	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
17	James Edward Lionel Vindell	1812/1843	London	James Vindell	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
18	Edward Lushington	1812/1843	London	Edward Lushington	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
19	Robert Carl Blomfield	1812/1843	London	Robert Carl Blomfield	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
20	Charles Robert Leslie Fletcher	1812/1843	London	Charles Robert Leslie Fletcher	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
21	George Lushington	1812/1843	London	George Lushington	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
22	Arthur Darnley	1812/1843	London	Arthur Darnley	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
23	Henry Richard Hayton	1812/1843	London	Henry Richard Hayton	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
24	Charles Thomas Skidell	1812/1843	London	Charles Thomas Skidell	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
25	Henry Darnley	1812/1843	London	Henry Darnley	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
26	Arthur Russell (Lord Anghall)	1812/1843	London	Arthur Russell (Lord Anghall)	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
27	Robert Carl Blomfield	1812/1843	London	Robert Carl Blomfield	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
28	Henry Darnley	1812/1843	London	Henry Darnley	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
29	Norman Macdonald	1812/1843	London	Norman Macdonald	Lawyer	WLB, MB	Autumn 1839	Summer 1844	Opp									Trinity College, Oxford		1840-1846	Rowing
30																					
31																					
32																					
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Additionally, this sheet decodes the initials of Eton Housemasters and includes a list of Warre's house's victories in the school cricket and rowing competitions between 1866 and 1874.

Sheet 11. Etonian Network Meeting Points

This sheet tracks the whereabouts of the individuals discussed in Chapter 4.

The upper part of the sheet (down to row 30) shows how between 1858 and 1884, many of the figures involved in the early years of the Football Association passed through Eton and Cambridge and on to play in early FA Cup finals. The following roles are tracked, Headmaster (H), Master (M), Pupil (P), Cambridge Undergraduate (U), Oxford University player (OU), Royal Engineers Player (RE), Wanderers Player (W), Old Etonian Player (OE), Referee (Ref), Umpire (Ump), President of the FA (Pres).

The Middle part of the sheet (rows 31 to 60) show the presence of these individuals at Eton for the St Andrew's Day football for the years 1860 to 1886 including the roles they performed and/or teams they played for.

From Row 62 downwards, the sheet covers involvement in Etonian cricket. Rows 64 to 90 map the involvement of the network covered in Chapters 4 and 5 in the annual matches between the Eton XI and the sides fielded by the Masters and the Eton Ramblers (effectively the old boys' XI) between 1865 and 1911.

The bottom part of the sheet has data on the first-class counties associated with various Old Etonians and the years in which the individuals included in the group from Chapter 4 were Eton Ramblers players.

	Eton School Years										Cambridge										FA Cup Finals									
	1858	1860	1863	1866	1869	1872	1875	1878	1881	1884	1887	1869	1876	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884				
John James Hornby						H	H	H	H	H																				
Edmond Warre		M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	H	H																			
Francis Arthur Marindin															RE		RE					Ref			Pres					
Herbert Snow	M	M	M	M	M	M																								
George Richard Dupuis	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M																			
George Eden Marindin	P	P		M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M																			
Richard Arthur Henry Mitchell	P	P		M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M																			
John Graham Chambers	P	P																												
Quintin Hogg	P	P	P															OE												
Arthur Kinnaird			P									U				W		OE			W	W	OE		OE	OE				
Walter Durnford		P	P			M	M	M	M	M	M	U											OE	OE	OE					
John Haviland Dashwood Goldie			P	P							U																			
Hubert Parry				P																										
George Robert Canning Harris				P	P																									
Cuthbert Ottaway				P	P	P									OU	OU	OE													
James Edward Cowell Welldon				P	P	P						U						OE												
Alfred Lyttelton					P	P						U						OE												
Charles Robert Leslie Fletcher					P	P																								
Arthur Dunn						P	P																	OE	OE					
Martin Bladen Hawks							P	P																						
Charles Thomas Studd							P	P																OE	OE					
Percy de Paravicini								P	P																					
Arthur Russell (Lord Amgthill)									P	P																				
Robert Carr Bosanquet										P	P																			
Charles Alcock																														
Edward Lyttelton					P	P				M	M	U	W				Ref					Ref	Ump							
Henry Hughes-Onslow										P	P							OE												
Norman Malcolmson																														

Sheet 12. Ancient Sports History Articles in Victorian and Edwardian Periodicals

This sheet lists academic articles on ancient sport with dates, page references and authors, from the Journal of Hellenic Studies (1880-2015), Classical Review (1890-1911) and Outing (1883-1895).

Sport Related Articles Published in the Journal of Hellenic Studies

Vol		Year	Author	Pages	Title
1		1880	Percy Gardner	210-233	The Pentathlon of the Greeks
2		1881	Ernest Myers	217-221	The Pentathlon
2		1881	Percy Gardner	90-97	Boat-races among the Greeks
2		1881	Percy Gardner	315-317	Boat-Races at Athens
3		1882	R. C. Jebb	144-183	Pindar
11		1890	Percy Gardner	146-150	A Stele Commemorating Victory in a Boat-Race
17		1897	Vol	92-119	The Nika Riot
18		1898	Paul F. Perdrizet	129-132	The Game of Morra
23		1903	E. Norman Gardiner	54-70	The Method of Deciding the Pentathlon
23		1903	E. Norman Gardiner	261-291	Notes on the Greek Foot Race
24		1904	E. Norman Gardiner	70-80	Phayllus and His Record Jump
24		1904	E. Norman Gardiner	179-194	Further Notes on the Greek Jump
25		1905	E. Norman Gardiner	14-31	Wrestling
25		1905	E. Norman Gardiner	263-293	Wrestling (Continued)
26		1906	E. Norman Gardiner	4-22	The Pankration and Wrestling
26		1906	K. T. Frost	213-225	Greek Boxing
27	1907		E. Norman Gardiner	1-36	Throwing the Diskos
27	1907		E. Norman Gardiner	249-273	Throwing the Javelin
28	1908		Louis Dyer	250-273	The Olympian Theatron and the Battle of Olympia
30	1910		Clifford Allbutt	368-371	Review of Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals by E. Norman Gardiner
36	1916		Hugh G. Evelyn White	16-24	Two Athletic Bronzes at Athens
42	1922		E. Norman Gardiner	123-124	Review of Olympic Victor Monuments and Greek Athletic Art by Walter Woodburn Hyde
45	1925		E. Norman Gardiner	132-134	The System of the Pentathlon
45	1925		E. Norman Gardiner	145-146	Review of Greek Athletics by F. A. Wright
46	1926			134	Review of Olympia: Its History and Remains by E. Norman Gardiner
50	1930		E. Norman Gardiner	350-351	Review of Greek Physical Culture by Clarence Forbes
51	1931			305-306	Review of Athletics of the Ancient World by E. Norman Gardiner
75	1955		Cornelius C. Vermeule III	104-113	Chariot Groups in Fifth-Century Greek Sculpture
82	1962		H. A. Harris	19-24	Notes on Three Athletic Inscriptions
84	1964		E. K. Borthwick	49-53	The Gymnasium of Bromius
88	1968		H. A. Harris	138-139	An Athletic ἀποξενόμεινον
93	1973		W. S. Barrett	23-35	Pindar's Twelfth Olympian and the Fall of the Deinomenidai
93	1973		Hugh Lloyd-Jones	109-137	Modern Interpretation of Pindar: The Second Pythian and Seventh Nemean Odes
93	1973		E. G. Turner	192-195	The Charioteers from Antinoe
96	1976		Hugh M. Lee	70-79	The Tepma and the Javelin in Pindar, Nemean vii 70-3, and Greek Athletics
99	1979		Mary R. Lefkowitz	49-56	Pindar's Nemean XI

Sheet 13. The British Olympic Network

This sheet lists individuals involved as either, British representatives to the International Olympic Committee, or members of the British Olympic Association, between 1894 and 1912. For each person the data includes, Name, School, University, Principal Sports, and the years in which they were involved with Olympic administration.

Name	DOB	School	University	Principal Sports	1894	1896	1897	1901	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912
Charles Herbert	19/01/1846			Rowing Athletics Football Rugby Union	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
John Astley	19/05/1828	Winchester Eton	Christ Church, Oxford	Equestrianism Boxing Pedestrianism														
Lord Amptill	19/02/1869	Eton	New College, Oxford	Rowing	X	X	X											
Arthur Balfour	25/07/1848	Eton	Trinity College, Cambridge	Tennis, Golf	X													
Lord Dufferin	21/06/1826	Eton	Christ Church, Oxford		X	X												
Charles Howard Vincent	31/05/1849	Westminster	Sandhurst / University of Paris					X	X	X	X	X	X					
Robert Stuart de Courcy Laffan	18/01/1853	Winchester Eton	Merton College, Oxford	Rowing				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lord Desborough	16/02/1855	Harrow	Balliol College, Oxford	Rowing Athletics Fencing Cricket				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Theodore Cook	26/03/1867	Radley	Wadham College, Oxford	Fencing Bowing Football						X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Ivo Bligh, Lord Darnley	13/03/1859	Eton	Trinity College, Cambridge	Cricket Football Tennis Racquets						X						X	X	X
Arthur Kinnaid	16/02/1847	Eton	Trinity College, Cambridge	Football Athletics						X								
Herbert Gladstone	07/01/1854	Eton	University College, Oxford	Football						X								
Les Knowles	16/02/1857	Rugby	Trinity College, Cambridge	Athletics						X								
C.B. Fry	25/04/1872	Repton	Wadham College, Oxford	Cricket Athletics Football						X								
W.G. Grace	18/07/1848			Cricket Athletics						X								
Robert Carr Bosanquet	07/06/1871	Eton	Trinity College, Cambridge	Athletics							X							

Sheet 14. A Snapshot of Public School Control of Sport 1880-1912

This sheet used references from newspaper reports of the AGMs of sporting bodies to assess the extent of public school domination in sports administration in three years, 1880, 1900 and 1912. For each year the major office holders for a number of sports are listed along with their school and university backgrounds and other interesting biographical notes.

Public School Control across sport 1880-1900-1912	Name	School	University	Notes
1880	Football Association - President	Francis Marindin	Eton	
Football Association - Hon Secretary	Charles Alcock	Harrow	None	
Rugby Football Union - President	Arthur George Guillemand	Rugby	None	
Rugby Football Union - Hon Secretary	William Wallace			Stockbrokers Clerk, 4 Norfolk Terrace, East Shewen (1882) aged 30, born Canterbury Kent. Formerly an East India merchant's clerk. Richmond FC, played for Scotland against Wales March 1876 in a
Rugby Football Union - Vice President	James McLaren	Durham Cathedral School	St John's College, Cambridge	
Amateur Athletics Association - President	Victor Child Villiers, 7th Earl of Jersey	Eton	Balliol College, Oxford	
Amateur Athletics Association - Vice President	Barnard Wise	Queens College, Oxford		
Amateur Athletics Association - Hon Secretary	Montague Shepman	St John's College, Oxford		
Amateur Athletics Association - Treasurer	Carleton Jackson	Sarum College, Bath	Magdalen Hall, Oxford	
Metropolitan Rowing Association - Hon Secretary	Edwin Dampier Brickwood (Jughead)	Putney School	None	Born around 1838, Brickwood was from Bedfordshire and had been a War Office Clerk in 1861. By 1881, still in his early 40s he is listed as a retired civil servant living with his younger brother. He
Metropolitan Rowing Association - Chairman	Francis Playford			Born around 1825, a stock jobber from South Lambeth, already working as a clerk at 16. From a leading family of scultors
All England Tennis Club - Hon Secretary	Julian Marshall	Harrow		
Amateur Boxing Association - President	Tom Anderson			Captain of the West London B.C.
Amateur Boxing Association - Hon Secretary	F Ross Smith			Captain and heavyweight boxer for Clifton B.C. An advertising agent born about 1847. Founder member of the Mercantile Fencing Club 1899
Amateur Boxing Association - Treasurer	Barnard John Angie		None	Thomas KC, Stockbroker born c1854, a clerk by the 1871 census. Later a famous boxing referee, in his youth a boxer, sculler and gymnast
Amateur Boxing Association - Chairman	William Waddell			also Hon Sec of London Athletic Club (where his brother James was treasurer) Wm Merchants. c1835
Swimming Association of Great Britain - President	Horace Cawepont	Charterhouse	London University	From a family of manufacturing chemists in Great Russell Street Bloomsbury Member of Great London AC
Swimming Association of Great Britain - Hon Secretary	Dr Hunter Jackson Barron	Leeds Grammar School		
Swimming Association of Great Britain - Treasurer	Arthur G. Lupton	Harrow	Christ Church, Oxford	
MCC - President	St William Marsh Oyle	Bury St Edmunds	Trinity College, Cambridge	Industrialist from Leeds
MCC - Hon Secretary	Henry Parsons			
1900	Football Association - President	Arthur Kinnaird	Eton	
Football Association - Chairman	Charles Clegg	Samford School	Trinity College, Cambridge	
Football Association - Secretary	Frederick Joseph Wall	St Mark's College, Chelsea		
Rugby Football Union - President	John W. H. Thorp			Army officer. B.c.1862 Macclesfield, Cheshire. Son of a Lin Manufacturer Member of 8th Cheshire Rifle Volunteers AC Controversially played for Lancashire and Cheshire in the same season in the
Rugby Football Union - Vice President	Frederic Hugh Fox	Marlborough		Captain of the Marlborough 1877-1881, also member of the XI, Manchester and Barter
Rugby Football Union - Hon Secretary	George Rowland Hill	Christ's Hospital		Left school at 14 to join the Telegraph Company before becoming a Civil Servant
Rugby Football Union - Treasurer	William Call	Newcastle	Stutter's Polytechnic/Sorbonne Paris	
Amateur Athletics Association - President	Richard Winstanley, Lord Alverstone	Charterhouse	Trinity College, Cambridge	
Amateur Athletics Association - Hon Secretary	Charles Herbert		St John's College, Oxford	
Amateur Athletics Association - Vice President	Montague Shepman	Merchant Taylors'	Trinity College, Cambridge	
Amateur Rowing Association - Hon Secretary	R.C. Latham	Westminster		
Amateur Rowing Association - Chairman	Herbert Thomas Stansard	Harrow		
Leam Tennis Association - President	Frederick Lambton, 9th Earl of Devon	Winchester		b.1839 Surveyor and Architect, President of Leander
Leam Tennis Association - Hon Secretary	Archdale Palmer	St Bees Grammar School	Christ's College, Cambridge	Royal Navy Officer and politician
Leam Tennis Association - Chairman	William Herbert Collins			1865-1950 A leading tennis player of the 1880s and 90s he became secretary of LTA 1889 and managing director of Slazinger 1905
Amateur Swimming Association - President	Henry (Harry) Benjamin			died December 1921. Instrumental in founding the David Cup. Schoolmaster 1881-85 and afterwards a stockbroker. Member of the Council of the Olympic Games 1908
Amateur Swimming Association - Vice President	Joseph Frederick Harbutt			Harry and his brother Walter, both of Ognus Swimming Club of Tisbury Wilt, were presidents of the ASA. Appear to have lived in SS London and been brewery employees
Amateur Swimming Association - Hon Secretary	St George Fitzgerald			b. 1853 School attendance officer in Nottingham died 1900
Amateur Swimming Association - Treasurer	J.H. Fisher			1863-1916 Director of a Tinsmith manufacturers, rather a gardener in Sherborne, worked his way up from being a warehouseman
MCC - President	Ho Bligh	Eton	Trinity College, Cambridge	From Manchester/Oldham. Team Agent probably James H Fisher
MCC - Hon Secretary	St Francis Eden Lacey	Shorborne	Gonville and Christ College, Cambridge	
Amateur Gymnastics and Fencing Association - President	Capt Alfred Hutton	Blackheath Proprietary School	University College, Oxford	
Amateur Gymnastics and Fencing Association - Vice President	Mrs Henry Hampden Kilgim	Eton	Trinity College, Cambridge	Scots Guards
Amateur Gymnastics and Fencing Association - Hon Secretary	Felix Clay	Charterhouse	Trinity College, Cambridge	

Additionally, from row 79 onwards, there is a table of biographical data for the President and Stewards of the Henley Royal Regatta in 1889, as listed by W.B. Woodgate in Boating. This table also includes school and university backgrounds with biographical notes.

Sheet 15. Eton Ramblers Map.

This is a graphical representation of the Eton Ramblers data in Sheet 11, showing which seasons between 1866 and 1914 various individuals would have played alongside each other.

1	Name	1866	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	1900	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
2	George Robert Canning Harris																																																
3	Francis Arthur Marindin																																																
4	Richard Arthur Henry Mitchell																																																
5	Cuthbert Ottaway																																																
6	Alfred Lyttelton																																																
7	Edward Lyttelton																																																
8	Arthur Dunn																																																
9	Martin Bladen Hawke																																																
10	Charles Thomas Studd																																																
11	Percy de Paravicini																																																
12	Henry Hughes-Onslow																																																
13	Norman Malcolmson																																																

Sheet 16. Council of the British Olympic Association 1908.

This sheet contains information about the members of the BOA as listed by Theodore Cook as having been members in 1908 who were involved in organising the 1908 London Olympic Games. The sheet contains their name, sporting affiliation, date of birth, school and university attended, and their profession where known. Additionally, those members of the BOA who were initially appointed when the games were handed from Rome to London are highlighted in yellow. There is also a column for any additional relevant notes. For example, Lord Cheylesmore, was included in the BOA because he was an official of the National Rifle Association, but he was linked with Edmond Warre having been a member of his house at Eton and had rowed at Henley.

Council of the British Olympic Association 1908		From Theodore Andrea Cook, The Olympic Games, (London 1908)						
Name	Affiliation	DOB	School	University	Occupation	1906 Provisional BOA	Other Notes	
Lord Desborough of Taplow	Epee Club, LTA, OUBC, OUAC, IOC	30/10/1855	Harrow	Balliol College, Oxford	Politician	Yes		
Lord Montagu of Beaulieu	Automobile Association	10/06/1866	Eton	New College, Oxford	Politician	Yes	Rowed for Oxford Etonians at Henley	
Lord Chylesmore	National Rifle Association	25/01/1848	Eton		Soldier/Politician		Rowed for Grenadier Guards at Henley. Member of Warne's house	
Lees Knowles	CUAC	16/02/1857	Rugby	Trinity College, Cambridge		Yes		
Col C.E. Howard Vincent MP	IOC	31/06/1849	Westminster		Soldier/Politician	Yes		
F.P. Armstrong	Motor Yacht Club							
H. Benjamin	Amateur Swimming Association					Yes		
E.A. Biedermann	Tennis and Racquets Association	05/15/1877		Oxford				
J. Blair	Scottish Cyclists Union							
F.W.J. Brittan	National Cyclists Union	1859			Head Receiver for Bankruptcy	Yes		
Michael J. Bulger	Irish AAA							
Guy M. Campbell							FRGS	
Theodore A Cook	Amateur Fencing Association	26/03/1867	Radley	Wadham College, Oxford		Yes	PSA	
Lt Col C.R. Crosse	National Rifle Association				Soldier			
J.H. Douglas	Amateur Boxing Association	1853			Timber Merchant			
D.S. Duncan	Scottish AAA							
W Hayes Fisher	National Skating Association	15/03/1853	Halleybury	University College, Oxford	Politician	Yes		
P.L. Fisher	AAA							
May F Egerton Green	Hurlingham				Soldier			
R.G. Gridley	ARA		Eton	Trinity College, Cambridge		Yes		
F.B.O. Hawes	Lacrosse Union							
W. Henry	Royal Life Saving Society	25/06/1859						Born Joseph Nawrocki changed his name to William Henry, Olymp
R. Rowland Hill	RPS		Christ's Hospital			Yes		
Capt A Hutton	Amateur Fencing Association	10/03/1839	Blackheath Proprietary School	University College, Oxford	Soldier	Yes	PSA	
E.Lawrence Levy	Amateur Gymnastic Association	21/12/1851				Yes		
G. R. Mewburn	LTA							
Col G.M. Onslow	National Physical Recreation Society				Soldier			
E.J. O'Reilly	Irish Cyclists Association							
W. Ryder Richardson	Amateur Golf Championship Committee							
G.S. Robertson	British Junor 1906 Olympics	25/05/1872	Winchester	New College, Oxford				
C. Newton Robinson	Yacht Racing Association							
B. Heckstall Smith	Yacht Racing Association							
A.E. Stoddart	Queen's Club	11/03/1863			Stockbroker and secretary of Queen's Club		Captained England at cricket and rugby union	
E.H. Stone	Clay Bird Shooting Association							
A.W. Sutherland	Amateur Wrestling Association							
E. Syers	Figure Skating Club	18/03/1863				Yes		
H.M. Tennant	Hockey Association	15/02/1879	Blackheath Collegiate College	Wadham College, Oxford	Theatre Impresario			
F.J. Wall	FA		St Mark's College, Chelsea			Yes		
Col H. Walrod	Royal Troupshrine Society				Soldier	Yes		
Rev R.S. de Courcy Laffan	IOC	18/01/1853	Winchester Eton	Merton College, Oxford	Clergyman	Yes		
Capt F. Whitworth Jones								
In Provisional Council 1906 but not in 1908 BOA								
Charles Herbert	AAA	19/01/1846				Yes		

Appendix B - Research Dissemination to Date

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

Carter, Andy. 'At home at Oxbridge': British views of ancient Greek sport 1749–1974, *Sport in History*, 41, no.2 (June 2021), 280-307

Carter, Andy. (2021): Athletic philistines? Edmond Warre and his Etonian sporting masters, *Sport in History*, 42, no.2 (June 2022), 183-212
Carter, Andy. (2022): 'No true or just test of merit': 'The Public School Record' 1886–1900, *History of Education*, [51, no.5 \(2022\), 732-754](#)

Published Online Articles

The Discus: The Story of the Strange British Disdain for an Olympic Icon, Part One – Classical Origins, *Playing Pasts*, July 2021, <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/archival-research/the-discus-the-story-of-the-strange-british-disdain-for-an-olympic-icon-part-1-classical-origins/>

The Discus: The Story of the Strange British Disdain for an Olympic Icon, Part Two – Early British Interest (And Disinterest!) in the Discus, *Playing Pasts*, July 2021, <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/archival-research/the-discus-the-story-of-the-strange-british-disdain-for-an-olympic-icon-part-2-early-british-interest-and-disinterest-in-the-discus/>

The Discus: The Story of the Strange British Disdain for an Olympic Icon, Part Three – Greek Revival and British Academic Objections, *Playing Pasts*, August 2021, <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/archival-research/the-discus-the-story-of-the-strange-british-disdain-for-an-olympic-icon-part-3-greek-revival-and-british-academic-objections/>

The Discus: The Story of the Strange British Disdain for an Olympic Icon, Part Four – Norman Gardiner and the Dual Discus Event Olympics of 1906 and 1908, *Playing Pasts*, August 2021, <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/archival-research/the-discus-the-story-of-the-strange-british-disdain-for-an-olympic-icon-part-4-norman-gardiner-and-the-dual-discus-event-olympics-of-1906-and-1908/>

The Discus: The Story of the Strange British Disdain for an Olympic Icon, Part Five – Preposterous and No Man in his Right Mind Would Throw It, *Playing Pasts*, August 2021, <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/archival-research/the-discus-the-story-of-the-strange-british-disdain-for-an-olympic-icon-part-5-preposterous-and-no-man-in-his-right-mind-would-throw-it/>

Victorian Schools League Tables: The Public School Record 1886-1900 published on *Manchester Centre for Public History and Heritage Blog*, March

2022, <https://mcphh.org/2022/03/10/victorian-schools-league-tables-the-public-school-record-1886-1900/>

Personal Blog Entries

What's Gerard Butler's Favourite Football Team? Spartans!!, *Hindzeit*, October 2019, <https://hindzeit.wordpress.com/2019/10/04/whats-gerard-butlers-favourite-football-team-spartans/>

'We never throw the disk or the dart': British Historians of Ancient Sport and Their Strange Aversion to the Discus, *Hindzeit*, April 2020, <https://hindzeit.wordpress.com/2020/04/02/we-never-throw-the-disk-or-the-dart-british-historians-of-ancient-sport-and-their-strange-aversion-to-the-discus/>

The First Sporting Hero, *Hindzeit*, March 2021, <https://hindzeit.wordpress.com/2021/03/19/the-first-sporting-hero/>

Horses and Hooligans: Chariot Racing in the Roman Empire, *Hindzeit*, March 2021, <https://hindzeit.wordpress.com/2021/03/26/horses-and-hooligans-chariot-racing-in-the-roman-empire/>

Presentations

February 2020 – The Use and Abuse of Ancient History in Sport – MMU First Year Doctoral Talk

January 2021 - 'Athleticism and Classics in Victorian Britain: Exclusivity and Exclusion' - London Nineteenth-Century Studies Seminar conference on Struggle, Upheaval and Transformation.

January 2022 - 'Not an object which any man in his right mind would throw': Britain's Love-Hate Relationship with the Discus – MMU Postgraduate Presentation.

August 2022 – Hubert Parry, Crack House Hard Man – BSSH Conference, De Montfort University.

November 2022 – John Pentland Mahaffy: 'the contradictory and often extravagant legend' – Researching and Writing Irish Sporting Lives – University of Ulster, Belfast.

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Podcasts

July 2021 – Oxbridge and Greco-Roman Ideas – BSSH Sport in History Podcasts

January 2023 – MCPHH Podcast on Race and Victorian Cricket

Other

April 2021 - Interview for an article on ancient Greek influence in English football for the Italian sports magazine *Numero Diez*.