

**“ENTERPRISE WITH VENGEANCE”: PARTIES,  
PERFORMANCES, EXCURSIONS, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
EARLY SCOTTISH FOOTBALL, 1865-1902**

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**Abstract**

This article discusses the formative years of organised Scottish football through the examination of the social gatherings, musical and dramatic concerts, and holiday excursions of early football clubs and associations. The development of early football was heavily linked to fraternalism, both on and off the pitch, often in public houses and hotels. The game was furthermore connected to the culture of the street, and footballers sought inspiration from music hall and its performers for their own musical and dramatic programmes. Football clubs' tours of the Scottish countryside and England, meanwhile, were also related to ideas of conviviality and friendship. As over-socialisation was often blamed for poor performances on the field, however, and as professionalism continued its onward march, the press discourse helped to mould and critique a social scene that often had little to do with rational recreation.

**Keywords:** Scottish football; music hall; fraternalism.

**Resumo**

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## **"Iniciativa à vera": grupos, performances, excursões e o desenvolvimento dos primórdios do futebol escocês (1865-1902)**

Através da análise de encontros sociais, espetáculos musicais e teatrais, e excursões de férias das primeiras associações e clubes de futebol escoceses, este artigo discute os anos de formação organizativa do futebol naquele país. O desenvolvimento dos primórdios do futebol esteve bastante ligado a irmandade, tanto dentro quanto fora do campo, às vezes em tavernas e hotéis. Ademais, o jogo estava ligado à cultura das ruas, e os jogadores buscaram inspiração nas casas de show e naqueles que nelas apresentavam atrações musicais e dramáticas. As excursões dos clubes de futebol às áreas rurais escocesas e à Inglaterra, entretanto, também se relacionavam às ideias de sociabilidade e amizade. Contudo, às vezes se atribuía a má performance no campo ao excesso de socialização; e, na medida em que o profissionalismo continuou a avançar, o discurso da imprensa ajudou a modelar e criticar um cenário social que raramente se aproximava da recreação racional.

**Palavras-Chave:** futebol escocês; música; irmandade.

### **Introduction**

The social arena is now recognised as a primary component of British sport's early development. The purpose of this article will be to ascertain the importance of maintaining these social relationships in a specific sporting context. In particular, this article will examine the off-field activities of Scottish football clubs and associations during the period 1865-1902, with specific reference those based in the west of Scotland and Buteshire, throughout the different tiers of the Scottish game. Through this investigation, the organic development of the Scottish game can be examined in a very different light, one which places the focus on places, events and activities that would not initially seem relevant to the games themselves. The social undertakings of Queen's Park, Third Lanark, Rangers and other "elite" Scottish football clubs were crucial in creating and maintaining social networks with the region's political and industrial establishment, and their social gatherings emphasised the respectability which these clubs engendered. Nevertheless, working-class clubs also participated within this social circle with their own version of local, national and imperial patriotism on the pitch

being matched in the social and cultural theatre. Footballers, their patrons and officials, as well as their various hangers-on, especially in the media, did not separate physical and cultural performance, and were keen to emphasise their prowess in both. But such participation trod a fine line between socialisation and self-indulgence, and revealed a tension between the new, emerging professional order and football's traditional status as a folk sport, with alcohol, gambling and sex long being associated with traditional sporting culture (COLLINS e VAMPLEW, 2002, p. 5-10). This article will begin by examining both elite footballers' participation in socialisation, and conversely the working-class game's early links to alcohol and the pub trade. The connection between football, singing and theatre will then be explored; and, afterwards, this article will examine the ideas behind early holiday tours of Scottish football clubs, and how they connect not only to ideas of sociability, but to a distinct component of Scottish domestic tourism. Throughout it all, this article will also examine the collision between these various contradictory interests, and how football's social scene eventually became a target of criticism in the initially enthusiastic press.

### **1. The "Elites"**

By the early-1880s, illegal, underhand professionalism was believed by the press to exist in the pre-League world of Scottish football (McCARRA, 1984, p. 17). While the creep of professionalism should have arguably dictated a more focused approach towards fitness-oriented pursuits and training, Scottish football's conviviality was as relevant as the game itself, so much so that the *Scottish Referee*, from the newspaper's 1888 inception, periodically included a column known as "The Social Circle" to discuss

the various concerts, suppers and conversaciones of sports clubs.<sup>2</sup> The social standing of clubs – earned or unearned – was maintained heavily by their presence in the social scene. The following year, the *Referee* stated that sociability was equal, and sometimes paramount to performance on the field. “Now is the season for concerts”, it stated, referring the festive period, and “[any] club that has not had its “smoker” or its conversazione is voted out of fashion”.<sup>3</sup> Amateur musical and choral groups, as well as amateur dramatics, were also discussed in depth by the *Referee* and *Scottish Sport* by the turn of the 1890s; and, at the same point, enough of these social functions occurred that their worthwhileness was already being debated, in both the sport papers, and the local dailies and weeklies. The lines, then, between sporting and cultural performances, were not always immediately clear at this early point in Scottish football’s history.

Richard Holt (1989), in his landmark *Sport and the British*, states that the “intense” sociability of the sporting “club” as a social unit often drives the “fierce loyalty” that is attached to more successful ones. “Conviviality”, he states, “has been at the heart of sport” (p. 346-47). In the context of Scottish sport, Hamish Telfer’s (2004, 2006) and John Weir’s (1992) examinations of Victorian Scottish athletes and their social activities capture the interplay between sport and fraternity brilliantly. That one of sport’s main purposes is socialisation has long been considered the case for more elite sporting outfits, ones which initially formed clubs not only for sporting participation, but also for social networking and solidifying the bonds of corporate clubbability (HUGGINS, 2004, p. 100). Queen’s Park FC, Scotland’s first formal association football club (formed in 1867), were comprised of Perthshire businessmen who settled in Glasgow, ones who had a loose alliance with English public schoolboys

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<sup>2</sup> The first such instance of this is in *Scottish Referee*, 10 Dec. 1888.

<sup>3</sup> *Scottish Referee*, 30 Dec. 1889.

Corinthians FC. Queen's Park were also at the centre of the 1873 formation of the Scottish Football Association (SFA) (CRAMPSEY, 1967, p. 5, p. 7, p. 13-17; ROBINSON, 1920, p. 8-12, p. 233-34, p. 327). As this was a university-educated, middle- to upper-class circle, their notions of sport derived from similar ideas of camaraderie, brotherhood and patriotism to those inculcated in the so-called "games ethic" of British private schooling (MANGAN, 1981). Queen's Park's genesis as not only the first club, but also as the tastemakers of Scottish football, was displayed in a poem written by Queen's Park's H.N. Smith (described by the *Third Lanark Chronicle* as "the *first* football poet", and distributed by the club for their July 1869 match on the ground of Hamilton Gymnasium:

Loud the acclaim that ends the game,  
The Queen's Park men have won;  
So well they wrought, so well 'twas fought,  
And not too cheaply victory bought,  
Right well, in sooth, 'twas done.  
The laurel they may proudly wear  
Which from that field of fight they bear.<sup>4</sup>

The legend of the poem, and its origins, serves as a useful reminder that Queen's Park's cultured aura was every bit as important as its success on the football pitch. But it was not only poetry that interested Queen's Park; in 1869, the club initiated a committee for the purpose of putting together an amateur concert, complete with singers from the public. Nothing concrete emerged until the following year, when on 9 December 1870, Queen's Park's first "conversazione" was held, and deemed a great success (ROBINSON, 1920, p. 440-41).

Queen's Park's close relationship with their South-Side neighbours, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers, ensured a great deal of intermingling between the two

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<sup>4</sup> Third Lanark Chronicle, v. 1 (Dec. 1888).

groups, as well as a sense of shared cultural aims. The 3<sup>rd</sup> L.R.V. produced Scotland's most successful regimental football club, later known simply as Third Lanark Athletic Club. Well into the 1890s the regiment's periodical, which had since stopped publishing details of the then-unrelated Third Lanark, still published the details of the regiment's reading room and dramatic club, including the details of several plays written by members of the unit being staged in January 1895.<sup>5</sup> Six years earlier, the *Scottish Referee* reported that "'All's well that ends well', or 'Love's labour not lost', is the title of a new comedy which will shortly be published by a prominent 3<sup>rd</sup> [football] man".<sup>6</sup> Two of Third Lanark's officials were known as good singers: Lt. Col. James Merry, an important figure in the early SFA, was capable of "sing[ing] a first-rate song", in Scots, English or Gaelic, while H.J. McDowall was an "accomplished musician and trained vocalist".<sup>7</sup> Queen's Park eventually established a Musical and Dramatic Society whose concerts were regularly announced. One concert was held on the night of 6 May 1885 at the Good Templars' Hall on Glasgow' South Side.<sup>8</sup> The Society, formed in 1883, was not connected to the club itself, but overwhelmingly consisted of members of the football organisation, most notably Charles Campbell. After their 1885 Good Templars' Hall concert, *Scottish Umpire* believed that: "The Queen's Park Musical and Dramatic Association is rapidly becoming, if not a household word, at least a clubhouse word."<sup>9</sup> The commitments of the Society were considered important enough to abscond from football altogether if needed, as many of the footballer-performers once did for a concert in Dundee. Since the football organisation was controlled separately, there was

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<sup>5</sup> Third Lanark Chronicle v. 8, n. 11 (Jan. 1895).

<sup>6</sup> Scottish Referee, 11 Feb. 1889.

<sup>7</sup> The Bailie, n. 346 (4 Jun. 1879); The Bailie, n. 972 (3 Jun. 1891).

<sup>8</sup> Scottish Umpire, 6 May 1885.

<sup>9</sup> Scottish Umpire, 13 May 1885.

little that could be done to punish players for not taking part in matches (ROBINSON, 1920, p. 439-40).

Rangers FC were formed in 1872, similarly by middle-class migrants from Argyllshire (RALSTON, 2009). By the mid-1870s, Rangers were based in Kinning Park, on the south shores of the River Clyde, in the heart of Glasgow's shipbuilding area; in 1887, they moved further down the shore to Ibrox. Rangers were not slow to notice their South-Side rivals' cultural achievements. In 1885, three of Rangers' members formed a subcommittee to enact a "Literary and Musical Association".<sup>10</sup> The Association became a regular participant on the local football and cultural circuits. For example, in 1891, their players were present both at Partick Thistle FC's ball in March, and at the Plantation Parish Church in October.<sup>11</sup> The Rangers Musical Association, amongst other topics, even sang about their host organisation. At the 1894 annual social of Rangers FC, J.B. Preston performed a song called "The Rangers". "It possesses a catching chorus", stated the *Govan Press*, "and before he was finished the hall was ringing with it as Ibrox Park will likely be some Saturday afternoon".<sup>12</sup> The club did not merely rely on its designated musical section for entertainment. On 25 January 1887, an advert was placed in the *Scottish Umpire* for Rangers' "usual fortnightly smoking concert", to be held at Ancell's Restaurant at 8pm.<sup>13</sup> The following week's paper stated that the concert was "interesting as usual", although added forlornly that there was "[l]ots of talent, but no piano".<sup>14</sup>

## 2. The Pub, Match-Day Hospitality and Alcohol

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<sup>10</sup> Scottish Umpire, 14 Jan. 1885.

<sup>11</sup> Govan Press, 14 Mar. 1891, Govan Press, 3 Oct. 1891.

<sup>12</sup> Govan Press, 3 Oct. 1891.

<sup>13</sup> Scottish Umpire, 25 Jan. 1887.

<sup>14</sup> Scottish Umpire, 1 Feb. 1887.

It is easy to see this merging of sport and sociability as a merely middle-class phenomenon. The link between sport and fraternalism, however, was hardly new, despite the young age of Scottish football's institutions. The existence of holiday football in the west of Scotland's communities confirms the resilience of something a bit more permanent, indicative of long-existent working-class networks of sociability. Judging from the intentions of some of these matches, during New Year's Day and other holidays, one can assume the quality of play was largely unimportant. Ayrshire's Mauchline FC took part in an annual April match of single vs. married men, "Bachelors" and "Benedicts".<sup>15</sup> A similar annual New Year's match between married and single men took place between the inhabitants of Tollcross, Glasgow, where after their 1890 game at Germiston Park, songs and "recitations" were given at the Bruce Arms Hotel.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, when Ayrshire's Troon FC took on "Old Portland" (Troon Ancients) at a holiday match during New Year's 1893, according the *Kilmarnock Standard*: "The chief part of business took place in the Commercial Hotel, where both teams sat down to a good repast served out in Mrs. Ligg's excellent style."<sup>17</sup> Matches such as these were holdovers from the pre-codified era of sport. Married vs. single teams were a common thread of many folk football tournaments throughout pre-codified British sport, while New Year's Day was already of considerable importance to the traditional Scottish sporting calendar (HORNBY, 2008; MacLENNAN, 1999).

There was more at work than just tradition, however. Within the central belt of Scotland, the development of sporting clubs was also linked to workplace fraternalism, and sports in turn were considered an overall part of the "robust associational culture" of such locales (MAVER, 2008, p. 513-16). Many of these social circles, as well as their

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<sup>15</sup> Irvine Herald, 23 Apr. 1881.

<sup>16</sup> Scottish Sport, 7 Jan. 1890.

<sup>17</sup> Kilmarnock Standard, 7 Jan. 1893.



accompanying spheres of employment, discriminated against Irish Catholics and their descendants, the result being that Catholic footballers started clubs within church-related organisations (BRADLEY, Jo., 1995; FINN, 1991a, 1991b; MURRAY, 2000). The great working-class popularity of a sport like football dictated that sites of socialisation in industrial communities, especially public houses, would be front and centre in the development of the game. By the late-nineteenth century in Scotland, the male-only social universe of pubs mimicked football itself, and both in turn reflected the work-home gender divide of working-class life (FRASER, 1995, p. 240-43). The converse was also true: Tony Collins and Wray Vamplew (2002) state that sport was “an integral part of the day-to-day culture” of the British pub during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (p. 24). The pub, then, not only served as an agent of socialisation, but as a focal point around which community sport clubs were often situated. This was especially the case outside cities, more so in counties like Ayrshire, where in 1880 eight clubs registered with the SFA had as their changing rooms public houses or hotels (WEIR, 1992).<sup>18</sup> Celtic FC, despite its 1887 formation as a Catholic charity, became closely related to the drinks trade, with many of its original shareholders being publicans, and with its early players being set up with public houses and whisky shops (MURRAY, 2000, p. 83-84, p. 87-91). Clubs’ connections to the alcohol trade enabled many players to have careers after football, especially since professional wages allowed for a purchasing power hitherto unseen. Many footballers, especially Catholic ones, viewed the alcohol trade as a means of social mobility, and the purchase of public houses was common amongst tradesmen willing to save for the opportunity (KENNA e MOONEY, 1983, p. 7). The first Scottish professionals to arrive in English football, both prior to and after the Football Association’s legalisation of professionalism in 1885,

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<sup>18</sup> SFA Annual 1880-81, p. 46-49.

were often given jobs in hospitality by their new clubs, and hiring footballers was seen as a way for pub owners to attract clientele to their establishments (COLLINS & VAMPLEW, 2002, p. 14; LEWIS, 1997). The proximity of working-class sport to the licensed trades, then, undoubtedly influenced the culture of conviviality seen amongst early Scottish footballers.

This was an era when drinking certain types of alcohol was, in concert with sporting competition, encouraged for alcohol's supposed health-giving properties. Drink was, and would long remain, a part of the UK's sporting landscape (VAMPLEW, 2005). The public house, outside of the pitch itself, was the main space for socialising and networking within the world of early Scottish football. In both the "senior" ranks of Scottish football, as well as the "junior", and for different levels of football competition, on match day it was considered incumbent on the host club to provide after-match refreshments and entertainment, usually in a local public house. ("Junior" is a Scottish appellation that refers not to players' ages, but translates roughly to "semi-professional football" (TAYLOR, 2008, p. 131-32).) The legalisation of professionalism in Scotland in 1893, as Weir (1992) states, created a more "mercenary" element to "senior" clubs, therefore inhibiting their social expenditure. One example is Third Lanark, who in 1897 were forced to end their practice of providing hospitality to visiting clubs. In both the senior and junior ranks, entertainment at away matches was considered a key part of the footballing experience. At the September 1928 reunion of the old members of Dunbartonshire's Vale of Leven FC, Rangers legend Tom Vallance provoked laughter when "remember[ing] in the old days after a [Vale of Leven and Rangers] match they used to meet in Jamie Kinloch's public-house, and the pies had a taste that no other pies in the world had" (FERGUSON e TEMPLE, 1927, p. 181). The size and the stature of

the clubs involved, however, did not otherwise affect the engagement in “tea”. In November 1892, Virginia, a junior club from Partick, Glasgow, travelled to the seaside town of Gourock, Renfrewshire for a match. “The Virginia”, stated the *Partick and Maryhill Press*, “think there is no place like Gourock, where they got a splendid entertainment from the locals Saturday last”.<sup>19</sup> A 5-0 defeat in December 1893, at the hands of Springburn, Glasgow’s junior Reid Thistle, did not dissuade Lanarkshire’s Gartcosh Griffin from “entertaining their guests to a splendid tea and concert”.<sup>20</sup> The quality of the after-match festivities often superseded the need for a good game. The *Scottish Referee* did not seem concerned with football when it mentioned in 1889 that “clubs who want a good reception” should play against teams in the affluent Milngavie, Dunbartonshire.<sup>21</sup>

The dominant discourse of the period can be very deceiving as to the actual participation of allegedly more cultivated footballers within this social circle. From the outset Queen’s Park tempered their cultured pursuits with more carnal ones as well. In connection with the return trip of Hamilton Gymnasium to Glasgow in July 1869, the club formed a committee “to look after the providing of provisions, tent, etc.” While initially paying for this themselves, Queen’s Park would later demand the equal sharing of funds for refreshment. For a club obsessed with maintaining an image of respectability, it is telling that a paragraph of Richard Robinson’s 1920 history of Queen’s Park was devoted to the amount of money spent on filling the Scottish Cup with alcohol, from which the players and officials would drink after the club’s early victories in the tournament. The club president during the 1875-76 season, W.C. Mitchell, one time arranged a “private symposium” with the cup and certain SFA

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<sup>19</sup> Partick and Maryhill Press, 19 Nov. 1892.

<sup>20</sup> St. Rollox and Springburn Express, 7 Dec. 1893.

<sup>21</sup> Scottish Referee, 7 Jan. 1889.

officials before the cup's presentation to the victorious Queen's Park. The club's duties as tastemakers of the Scottish game involved treating the Glasgow Charity Cup Committee, and their officials received from Queen's Park hospitality "dispensed on a lavish scale, and in the best hotels" (ROBINSON, 1920, p. 402-03). Queen's Park were similar to many other local football clubs in another respect: they had their own favourite public house: the Atholl Arms Hotel, owned by fellow Perthshire native Alexander Gow, who hosted many "high festivals" within the establishment's walls (ROBINSON, 1920, p. 426-27; WEIR, 1992). Certain pubs became overwhelmingly associated with the game, and advertised their services to footballers. In the mid- to late-1880s, *Scottish Umpire* included adverts for Ancell's Trades Hall Restaurant and Grill Room, 83 Glassford Street and Virginia Place, Glasgow. "Soirees, Marriage Parties", and other events were "purveyed for", while there was "Special Accommodation for Football Clubs".<sup>22</sup> Newspapers of the 1880s and 1890s similarly made similar references to certain Kilmarnock and Ayr pubs – the Wheat Sheaf Hotel and the Clarendon Bar respectively, to name a few – as being hives of activity associated with local football.<sup>23</sup> There was even a parallel temperance-based space in Glasgow for footballers: William Lee's Mikado Tea Rooms, which marketed themselves specifically to athletes. Tea rooms in Glasgow, by the late-1880s, were beginning to target niche audiences to ensure a loyal customer base, not unlike public houses themselves (KINCHIN, 1991, p. 41-57). There was a significant teetotal element within Scottish football, in its most prominent member was the Glasgow University footballer and athlete W.W. Beveridge, a United Presbyterian minister (WEIR, 1992). Unless discussing these gatherings at the Mikado, however, and unless explicitly defined as a

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<sup>22</sup> This specific advertisement is in *Scottish Umpire*, 1 Feb. 1887.

<sup>23</sup> *Scottish Athletic Journal*, 7 Dec. 1883; *Scottish Referee*, 6 May 1889; *Scottish Referee*, 11 Nov. 1895.

temperance gathering, footballers' social gatherings were overwhelmingly alcoholic in nature.

The line between the more working-class leisure of the public house, and the song and dance routines of the middle-class footballers, was increasingly becoming blurred. The press painted the interactions of different classes within Scottish football's social circles as the equivalent of two foreign tribes meeting each other. One match in 1882 involved Queen's Park visiting Lugar, Ayrshire, to take on Lugar Boswell Thistle, a team overwhelmingly composed of coalminers and ironworkers. The *Kilmarnock Standard* seemed surprised at the singing talent of both sets of clubs meeting after the game at the Lugar Schoolhouse: "The musical ambition of the football players can't be disputed; they can all sing... it is really astonishing to notice the amount of talent that turns up at the meetings". At the same time, however, the *Standard* believed that Thistle were the fortunate ones, "lucky at having such eloquence at their backs".<sup>24</sup> The location of football clubs, their after-parties and concerts however, typically dictated the context in which such cultural escapades took place. Like Queen's Park, Renfrewshire's Port Glasgow Athletic similarly considered music an important exercise in providing healthy recreation. Chairing a concert of theirs in April 1883, club official Dr. Carmichael went on to discuss the benefits of combining physical and cultural recreation:

I am very glad to be able to say that so far as can be found out, we are the only club in the West of Scotland that provide healthy recreation for their members on the Saturdays, and try so far as we can to raise their minds above the ordinary things of life to the inculcation of music during the week – thereby not only raising our mental condition, but also between the members, cementing the bonds of friendship from week to week, and forming ties which, I am certain, the lapse of years will never break.

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<sup>24</sup> Kilmarnock Standard, 26 Aug. 1882.

As can be hinted at from Carmichael's quote, however, the tone used to address the players was slightly different. The conductor at this concert was Archibald Purdon, a draughtsman at the local D.J. Dunlop & Co. shipyard.<sup>25</sup> As Neil Tranter states in his article on the 1899 Cappielow Riot, Port Glasgow Athletic's players and supporters were overwhelmingly drawn from the town's considerable Irish Catholic community, so these cultural events took place firmly within a working-class milieu (TRANTER, 1995). But the distinction was a hazy one within football associations themselves, bodies where different classes of footballers and officials interacted. Local associations were indeed keen to emphasise the musical talent in *their* ranks. After the 1894 Glasgow Junior Cup final at Partick between Ashfield and Glasgow Perthshire, the *Govan Press* crossed their fingers, hoping to rouse a performance from the Association president:

Can President Liddell sing, was the question asked by not a few gentlemen present at the [Glasgow Junior Football Association] meeting on Saturday evening. Yes, I have heard him in a poetic mood, when he recited to a spellbound [audience] one of his popular lays. However, he did not perform this interesting part of the night's entertainment on Saturday evening.<sup>26</sup>

Similarly the same year, the *Partick and Maryhill Press* attempted to stir enthusiasm for the Association's artistic endeavours. "Have you heard the latest?" asked the *Press* of an imaginary reader. "No – what? The Glasgow Junior Association are about to start a Male Voice Choir".<sup>27</sup>

### 3. The relationship between football and music hall

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<sup>25</sup> Greenock Telegraph, 18 Apr. 1883.

<sup>26</sup> Govan Press, 14 Apr. 1894

<sup>27</sup> Partick and Maryhill Press, 16 Feb. 1894

Meanwhile, on the dramatic side of the stage, Queen's Park and Third Lanark were not the only clubs attempting to achieve legitimacy. In April 1889, members of Partick Thistle "intend[ed] to air their histrionic talent" in a production of *Rob Roy* produced by the local St. John's Lodge of Freemasons.<sup>28</sup> Lanarkshire's Airdrieonians FC took part in another version of the Walter Scott tale to a more pragmatic end, as *Scottish Referee* reported in 1895:

Airdrieonians, although not busy with football, are making a bold attempt to clear off their debt. On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Monday 25<sup>th</sup> inst., they have a grand production of "Rob Roy" in the Town Hall in Airdrie. The entertainment will be produced by the Airdrie Dramatic Club, who number in their ranks many capable artists. Mr. James Connor, the Airdrieonians' president, takes a warm interest in the Dramatic Club – in fact, is himself one of the cast, and it is largely his influence that the national drama is being produced for the expenses. The colossal (good word) characters of the production, however, necessitates an expenditure of £35 for two nights, which means that the friends of the Airdrieonians will be required to rally around them to make their venture pay.<sup>29</sup>

Other productions were different. In keeping with themes of ethnic humour, in 1888 Motherwell FC put together a production of *The Shaughraun*, the Dion Boucicault play regarding a fugitive Fenian.<sup>30</sup> In September 1887, the Vale of Leven FC Dramatic Society performed the play *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* to a crowd of seven hundred people in Alexandria.<sup>31</sup> This particular choice of work is intriguing, as the play was originally a novel written by the Baltimore-based Timothy Shay Arthur, a well-known writer of temperance literature in the southern United States (ARTHUR e KOCH [ed.], 1964; CARLSON, 1998, p. 681). The book, far removed from the ethnic-comedic world of *Rob Roy* and *The Shaughraun*, is a harrowing tale of a judge's drink-fuelled descent into poverty, murder and ultimately redemption. There is no indication, however, that

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<sup>28</sup> Scottish Referee, 25 Mar. 1889.

<sup>29</sup> Scottish Referee, 15 Feb. 1895.

<sup>30</sup> Scottish Athletic Journal, 20 Mar. 1888.

<sup>31</sup> Scottish Athletic Journal, 27 Sep. 1887.

Vale of Leven FC were collectively active as pro-temperance footballers, as Greenock Morton FC were when they began their existence in 1874 (GILLEN, 1998). Indeed, in a less surprising choice, Vale of Leven, too, performed the obligatory *Rob Roy* the following week.<sup>32</sup> *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* was heavy drama, but it is more likely that *Rob Roy* was performed in pantomime (KING, 1987, p. 169-70).

Football's overall culture was not a top-down elite plot. The popularity and borderline necessity of cultural performances, in music, drama, and pantomime, can be attributed to the prominent position of music hall in Scottish society. Keith Gregson and Mike Huggins (1999) state that early football in the north of England existed in close proximity to the music hall circuit, far more so than legitimate theatre. The "smoking" concerts of English football clubs, beginning regularly from the mid-1880s, often contained music hall performers, music hall routines performed by club members, or both. This certainly appears to have been the case in Scotland as well, albeit with a different social context: Scottish music hall, and even legitimate theatre and dancing, faced incredible pressure and disapproval from the Established Church of Scotland well into the nineteenth century (MALONEY, 2003, p. 3-6). Like sport, Scottish music hall similarly struggled with the concept of rational recreation. By the 1880s, however, Scottish music hall culture was influenced by more bourgeois forces, ones seeking middle-class respectability for the traditionally working-class genre. This included, churches, temperance forces, Volunteers and even local councils, who by the end of the century were offering a populist alternative to the alleged debauchery of the music hall. And, much in the same way as sport, Scottish music hall underlined a unique Scottish national identity, one that saw no conflict with being strongly pro-British Empire (MALONEY, 2003, p. 158-82, 191-93). Along with music hall repertoire, printers and

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



newspapers by the mid-nineteenth century were producing cheap novels, poetry and ballads, fuelled by a booming industry of street performance and ballad vendors (KING, 1987, p. 148-50). Some of these, too, found their way into footballers' programmes. Moreover, as an attraction to working-class audiences, retired players commonly took part in lucrative music hall performances, with the specific example of Billy Hall, "St. Mirren's famous singing goalkeeper". One extreme example involved Dundee FC, who along with a city official gave official patronage to Dundee's Empire Theatre of Varieties at its 1900 opening. Football furthermore served up a rich vein of topical humour for many music hall performers (MALONEY, 2003, p. 191-93, 201). Music hall performances in England, aside from being given at club functions, were used to raise money for still-amateur football clubs of limited financial means (GREGSON e HUGGINS, 1999, p. 83). Associations like the Glasgow Junior FA, then, with their Male Voice Choir, similarly used entertainment to raise funds for their bodies.

Such assemblies often acted as the face of respectable popular culture, a manifestation of local and national patriotism. Local newspapers were especially interested in the attendance and performance aspects of their local clubs, on both the senior and junior level. Their social gatherings were treated very much as entertainment events with a respectable civic sheen, with their programmes dissected act by act. One such example was the *Partick and Maryhill Press*'s coverage of the short-lived Ailsa FC's grand concert in the holiday season on 1892. The event, held at Hillhead Burgh Hall, in Glasgow's West End, was chaired by Councillor Pirie, "in the unavoidable absence of [Liberal politician] E.P. Tennent, who sent an apology".<sup>33</sup> Other honoured guests were Mr. Jas. Saunders, Lt. Smith and Mr. Somerville, with a "good" attendance:

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<sup>33</sup> Partick and Maryhill Press, 17 Dec. 1892.

Among the vocalists Misses McEwan and Nimmo, contralto and soprano, the former singing “the Auld House” and the latter “Ever of Thee” in the first part of the programme, besides other pieces in the second part, were highly appreciated. Mr Gray recited “The lost Football,” and as an encore “A trip in a Hansom Cab,” the audience became convulsed with laughter during both recitals. Miss Anderson sang “Cam ye be Athole,” Lieut. Smith sang “The song that reached my Heart,” Mr Robertson played solos on the corner; Mr Munro played banjo selections and songs were sung by Miss Lamorcka. The concert was a very successful one, and was followed by an assembly, attended by a large company of ladies and gentlemen, who kept up the enjoyment till an advanced hour.<sup>34</sup>

Ailsa were not the only modest club, however, to enjoy such seemingly lavish ceremonies. Ibrox Thistle, a junior club that existed in close proximity to Rangers, held a similar concert in 1895 after their victory in the Kirkwood Shield.<sup>35</sup> The concert, attended by ex-Govan Provost Ferguson, began with Helen Taylor’s rendition of “The Star o’ Rabbie Burns”, and then proceeded with some comic humour from two Irish comedians, Charles and Cowan, “the happy honest men”. There was also a ventriloquist entertainment from Capt. Howden and his “wooden-hearted family”. The last portion of the night, however, featured an entertainment of considerably more patriotic gravitas: a reading by elocutionist W.S. Ross through slide show displays of the club, a recitation of “The Loss of the *Victoria*”, and concluding with an account and pictures of the recent America’s Cup race between the Clyde-built *Britannia* and the *Vigilant*.<sup>36</sup> An 1895 gathering of Glencairn Athletic Club’s football section, held at the Mikado Tea Rooms in Glasgow, secured two talents: black-faced minstrel A. McLay “of Dandy-coloured Coon fame”, and R.H. Warden, the author of a piece entitled “Ma Wee Dug’s Deid” (vernacular for “My Little Dog’s Dead”).<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Partick and Maryhill Press, 13 Apr. 1895.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Scottish Referee, 10 May 1895.

Beyond the city, these occasions were also very popular. Royal Albert FC of Larkhall, Lanarkshire, held their 1885 concert at the local Evangelical Union church. John McDowall, the SFA secretary, chaired the event. Performers included McAllister and Johnston, footballers with Kilmarnock Athletic FC, while G. Armstrong of Queen's Park sang solos and duets with Miss Turner of Wishaw. The accompanist was Mr. Tait, "a blind pianist from Hamilton". After the more formal proceedings, thirty couples "carried on until an early hour".<sup>38</sup> Two years later, Annbank FC, from the Ayrshire pit village, held their annual social meeting, attended by a hundred ladies and gentlemen, containing a musical programme "ably sustained by members of the club". There was dancing "until an early hour" at the social, with "Mr. Vance's quadrille band supplying excellent music".<sup>39</sup> At the Christmas 1900 dance of Ayrshire junior club Irvine Meadow XI FC, over one hundred couples attended a gathering that lasted until 4:30am.<sup>40</sup> At the December 1888 "smoker" of the 1<sup>st</sup> Renfrewshire Rifle Volunteers FC, prominent in the list of special guests were fellow military officers.<sup>41</sup>

Most of the above gatherings took place overwhelmingly in Protestant social circles. While members of Catholic clubs were often excluded from these spheres, they too used their own unique heritage as a vehicle for patriotism, morality and humour. At the holiday concert of junior Springburn footballers St. Mungo's FC in December 1892, Father Cornelius, who presided over the concert with Father McManus, gave a sermon decrying "teetotal intolerance" towards publicans and consumers.<sup>42</sup> Glasgow's junior St. Cuthbert's FC held their March 1899 annual "smoker" at the Irish National League Hall on South Wellington Street in Glasgow. Their party featured members of Edinburgh's

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<sup>38</sup> Scottish Umpire, 4 Mar. 1885.

<sup>39</sup> Scottish Umpire, 11 Jan. 1887.

<sup>40</sup> Dalry and Kilbirnie Herald, 28 Dec. 1900.

<sup>41</sup> Scottish Referee, 10 Dec. 1888.

<sup>42</sup> St. Rollox and Springburn Express, 5 Jan. 1893.

Hibernian FC and Queen's Park as well as the club's forty-strong membership.<sup>43</sup> The third annual concert of Airdrie St. Margaret's FC, held in March 1900 in St. Margaret's Hall, had not only the local priest in attendance, but an array of local talent. These included singers Mr. McClymont ("several Irish selections"), Miss O'Donnell ("Come back to Erin") and tenor Mr. Mellon ("Ould Plaid Shawl", "Ora Pro Nobis"), but also the Brothers' Hogg and – "by special request" – Mr. Myers, "an elocutionist with remarkable dramatic power", who read a piece entitled "Kissing Cup's Race".<sup>44</sup> Local and ethno-religious patriotism, however, was also intertwined with a new, sporting patriotism which was largely self-aware. The greatest example of this was at the January 1885 joint social between two South-Side Glasgow sporting outfits, Battlefield FC and Langside Bicycle Club. The Crosshill Burgh Halls featured eighty couples dancing until 2:00am. The party was catered for by Queen's Restaurant Co., and members of Queen's Park, Partick, Southern and Blairlodge Football Clubs were present. Quite appropriately, the hall's lights were encased by bicycle lamps.<sup>45</sup>

As these various gatherings pointedly reflected the aspirations and cultural preoccupations of the clubs, players and officials involved, they sometimes revealed more uncomfortable truths about the period, particularly with the presence of "ethnic" humour. Blackface minstrelsy was frequently used as a comic device during the period; for example, the 1898-99 concert season of the Glasgow Good Templars Harmonic Association featured only two out of thirty-two concerts without the presence of negro minstrels (KING, 1987, p. 170). The 1891 Partick Thistle ball featured the presence of Mr. J.A. Wilson, who performed "a negro song and dance", "a comic song with banjo",

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<sup>43</sup> Glasgow Observer, 4 Mar. 1899.

<sup>44</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 17 Mar. 1900.

<sup>45</sup> Scottish Umpire, 21 Jan. 1885.

and a “high pedestal clog dance”.<sup>46</sup> When discussing his ex-clubmates, *Scottish Athletic Journal*’s junior correspondent “Juvenis” referred to his ex-Kelburn club James Gillies as “a budding engineer... with a strong fancy to be a nigger minstrel”<sup>47</sup> Similar entertainments were even used during half-time at games, as was the case with a match between juniors Kenmure Thistle and Garthland at the Oak Foundry, Townhead, Glasgow, in February 1893.<sup>48</sup> Michael Pickering (1986) believes that this particular art-form’s popularity existed in an imperial context, with the negro’s otherness constructed as anathema to the white, Protestant work ethic. Paul Maloney (2003), however, differs slightly in this interpretation, calling the whole of Scottish music hall culture “a cheerful diatribe of racial and social incorrectness [which]... represented nothing so much as the cusp of respectability” (p. 2).

#### **4. Out of control?**

Regardless of what blackface minstrelsy represented to early Scottish footballers, casual racism was far from the concern of most of the Scottish game’s internal and external critics with regard to any of these social functions. Whether they took place at the pub, the church, or the local burgh hall, concerns were mounting regarding the alleged over-indulgence of those involved in football’s social scene, including how these events affected players on the pitch, and what it was beginning to cost clubs financially. The criticism that existed of this over-indulgence came through the press; but, as hinted before, the newspapers often encouraged clubs to display their prowess in the social circle. For an excellent example of what happened when staked too much on the outcome of their social functions, one only need to look to Motherwell’s junior

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<sup>46</sup> Govan Press, 3 Oct. 1891.

<sup>47</sup> *Scottish Athletic Journal*, 3 Jan. 1888.

<sup>48</sup> *St. Rollox and Springburn Express*, 2 Mar. 1893.

Dalziel Rovers and their 8 February 1895 concert. For a month in advance, the *Motherwell Times* continually advertised the event, billed to be an incredible one. One advert was particularly vainglorious:

At last! At last! What?  
Dalziel Rovers' concert  
On Friday February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1895  
The finest of high-paid artistes will appear.  
Look out for bill shortly.<sup>49</sup>

Three weeks later, the *Times* told its readers to get tickets for the concert at several shops in town, or from the club's members themselves.<sup>50</sup> Alas, the result was disappointing for all parties involved:

The entertainment was not patronised as it deserved to be. The juniors ought to have had a better reward for their pluck and energy in bringing such a splendid array of talent before their patrons, and it is just an open question yet whether the committee will be able to make ends meet. Never mind, Rovers, better luck next time.<sup>51</sup>

Similarly, Grove Athletic, in 1895, arranged a benefit match for Coatbridge, Lanarkshire's junior League Rangers at Celtic Park, for a failed concert venture had placed the club in considerable debt.<sup>52</sup>

Excessive expenditure on the social calendar might even be blamed for drastically harming the ambitions of footballers in Largs, a seaside resort in Ayrshire. The link between Scottish tourism and early football will be discussed further in a bit, but the tourist season seemed to have little to do with some baffling financial decisions made by the local Largs and District Football Association. Like many seaside towns in Britain, land was at a premium; and, with seasonal recreation being favoured, team sports like football found it hard to procure suitable space in resort locales, in contrast to

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<sup>49</sup> Motherwell Times, 5 Jan. 1895.

<sup>50</sup> Motherwell Times, 26 Jan. 1895.

<sup>51</sup> Motherwell Times, 16 Feb. 1895.

<sup>52</sup> Scottish Referee, 19 Apr. 1895.

other, lighter forms of sport and leisure (DURIE e HUGGINS, 1998). The fledgling, heavily-indebted Largs and District FA, in the mid-1890s, were dominated by the local club, Largs Thistle, who owned the sole football ground in town, Aubery Crescent.<sup>53</sup> Thistle's secretary even had to deny, if somewhat tellingly, that the club and association had a connection in management and membership that stretched "further than caterers".<sup>54</sup> When the association and Largs Thistle abruptly converted from "senior" to "junior" status in preparation for the 1896-97 season, the association spent a shocking £25 on purchasing a new silver challenge cup, apparently "the handsomest cup in Scotland".<sup>55</sup> These expenses did not keep the Largs Junior Football Association, as it had become known, from making a bold play to bring top-notch New Year's entertainment to Largs that season. The New Concert Hall in Largs witnessed a Hogmanay performance by Durward Lely that was paid for the by the association.<sup>56</sup> Lely was a famed tenor in comic operas, well-known for his time at the Savoy Theatre in London, most notably as Nanki-Poo in the 1885 Gilbert and Sullivan musical *The Mikado* (BAILY, 1952, p. 223, p. 246-48). Attendance at the Largs event was poor; but, rather than criticise them for further indebting their own exchequer, the *Largs and Millport Weekly News* sarcastically encouraged the Association to go through with the venture one more time, for some oxymoronic reasons which had little to do with football:

We are informed that at the request of a great many who heard Mr. Durward Lely when here in December, and in order to recoup the loss sustained on that occasion, the Committee of the LJFA have engaged Mr. and Mrs. Lely for Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Lely is to give one of his song and story recitals, the programme of which will be entirely different from his last. Bravo, LJFA! This is surely enterprise with

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<sup>53</sup> The level of debt owed by the Association to Largs Thistle was discussed at one badge-presenting ceremony: *Largs and Millport Weekly News*, 25 April 1896.

<sup>54</sup> *Largs and Millport Weekly News*, 2 Jan. 1897.

<sup>55</sup> *Largs and Millport Weekly News*, 29 Aug. 1896; *Largs and Millport Weekly News*, 19 Sep. 1896.

<sup>56</sup> *Largs and Millport Weekly News*, 2 Jan. 1897.

vengeance. We can quite understand the feeling which prompts the secretary to write us that if the entertainment does not get the support it deserves, he imagines the LJFA will quit the field in this line of business. Outside of Mr. Lely's own merits, the committee have proved such exceptionally good caterers that we hope the public will make sure this catastrophe will not fall upon us.<sup>57</sup>

Fortunately for the Association, £20 profit was made, with Lely giving back part of his fee to the Association, and treating members to “a sumptuous supper in the Royal Hotel after the concert”.<sup>58</sup> That same week in March, however, at the other end of the same newspaper, however, the increasingly-critical football correspondent, “Referee”, wondered why the Association's committee were absent from the local cup tie: “The Largs Association have a Committee of ten. Four were at Aubery on Saturday. Where were the other six? Echo answers where.”<sup>59</sup> The local governing association of football, then, was more interested in putting together a different kind of entertainment than its chief product, and were considered better caterers than managers of football, in a region where the game struggled to gain a foothold.

It was not merely debt and mismanagement that lurked around the edges of these social gatherings, however, for they were becoming rowdier and more boisterous affairs, aided by the inebriating effects of alcohol. For example, in January 1894, a court action was taken in Glasgow's Northern Police Court against Andrew Walkinshaw of Maryhill, the secretary and treasurer of the junior Craigvilla FC. It was alleged that Walkinshaw used a public hall for the purposes of a club dance. The problem was, however, that he organised the party despite having his licence application rejected. One shilling was paid for admission to the party, while fifteen shillings were given to the property's owner. A “complaint had been made by the residents at the noise made by the dancing”,

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<sup>57</sup> Largs and Millport Weekly News, 16 Jan. 1897.

<sup>58</sup> Largs and Millport Weekly News, 6 Mar. 1897

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.



exposing the football club to legal scrutiny.<sup>60</sup> As was the case in Largs, local associations typically led the way with regard to overspend on social occasions. In March 1890, *Scottish Sport* commented on the Dunbartonshire FA's opulent social gatherings, and the amount of cash that went into financing them. Such was not only reserved for stand-alone parties, however, but also for after-match socials and cup presentations:

Rumours are current that the Committee of the Dunbartonshire Football Association will have a warm time of it when the annual meeting comes round. Most of their doings seem only to be giving satisfaction to themselves, but the officials of clubs, and even the players themselves, they are at loggerheads. One of the greatest causes of discontent is the unwarrantable expenditure indulged in. The advent of a county final, or even an inter-county match affords them an opportunity to indulge in a miniature Lord Mayor's banquet, always heralded in a style that would put some ceremonies of almost a national character to the blush. The principle on which the invitation lists are compiled for such festive occasions has always been an impenetrable mystery to the uninitiated – and indeed, to all except one or two members of the association committee. Most of this year's leading lights are old stagers on the committee, who have evidently got imbued with their "don't care a farthing" style in days when the county earned for itself the title of "champion county of Scotland." Unlike the clubs themselves, who have had to adopt themselves to circumstances, the association still pursues a suicidal policy of expenditure, with the result that things are not as they ought to be, or as the association's best friends would like to see them.<sup>61</sup>

With feelings running high after games, "tea" could become a tense affair. After a match won by Glasgow's Northern FC in September 1882, the *Scottish Athletic Journal* was more entertained by the singing than the embarrassing, pained speech given by Northern's captain, one apparently of the "Sorry you were beaten; glad we won" variety.<sup>62</sup> A nastier affair occurred between arch-enemies Renton and Vale of Leven at Ancell's Restaurant after the former's Scottish Cup replay victory in March 1885, where a physical game preceded insults shouted from the Vale players towards

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<sup>60</sup> Govan Press, 6 Jan. 1894.

<sup>61</sup> *Scottish Sport*, 25 Mar. 1890.

<sup>62</sup> *Scottish Athletic Journal*, 29 Sep. 1882.

match officials (WEIR, 1997, p. 35).<sup>63</sup> But perhaps the best example of a social gathering gone wrong was at the Renfrewshire FA's March 1889 celebration of the victory of Paisley's Abercorn FC in the Renfrewshire Cup. The invitation list was apparently extended too far, with the omnipresent x-factor, alcohol, creating a riotous atmosphere:

The after-social of the Renfrewshire final was one of the rowdiest gatherings we have seen in the whole range of our football experience. The day certainly was not one calculated to put people on their best behaviour, but this can hardly be given as an excuse for the gross violation of rules of quietness, decorum and even decency which prevailed during the presentation of the cup and badges. The committee made an egregious blunder in extending their hospitality so far... [not] confined to the teams and officials concerned... The... rowdy element from the adjoining lobbies, setting order and defiance, invaded and took possession of the hall when the presentation of the cup and badges was to be made. The scene that followed defies description. Men mounted the tables, which gave way beneath them, and the meeting resolved itself into a perfect pandemonium. The cup was presented in fair order, but when badges were to be handed over, it was in a sorry show of partisan revelry. The able president of the Association occupied the chair, did his best to maintain order, and had the energetic assistance of the secretary, but even their combined efforts failed to quell the disturbance, which was increased by some injudicious speechifying. Ultimately, the meeting dispersed and ended proceedings which, we trust, for the honour of the Association and the good name of football will never be repeated.<sup>64</sup>

The *Scottish Athletic Journal* equally blamed clubs for creating scenes such as these, and noted with dismay in 1883 that: "...it is right and proper that the team and those who officiated at the match should receive refreshment after the game was over, yet it is a scandal that where team should be provided for thirty at the very outside, forty or fifty, and even seventh sit down".<sup>65</sup>

Newspapers did not always make excuses for players who showed up hung over to Saturday's games from parties the previous night; in some cases they were critical,

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<sup>63</sup> Scottish Umpire, 4 Mar. 1885.

<sup>64</sup> Scottish Referee, 25 Mar. 1889.

<sup>65</sup> Scottish Athletic Journal, 27 Apr. 1883.

but either way they always took note. The most notorious example is of James Cowan, the Scotland captain whose poor performance at the 1898 international against England was attributed to his intoxicated state from the night before (WEIR, 1992). This was far from an isolated incident, however. At their 1891 concert, the Govan club Linthouse FC ironically noted their historic 8-2 victory of Partick Thistle as a one-off:

The Linthouse did not take very much credit for that victory, because they remembered that the Partick had on the night previous held their annual festival, and they knew that people after dancing till four or five in the morning, were hardly in a condition to play football a few hours later.<sup>66</sup>

The Linthouse party was quite an affair itself: one that made football injuries miraculously heal. The *Govan Press* noted that Charles McEwan, “although suffering from the effects of a strained ankle... danced the Highland Fling so well that it was evident he had forgotten the fact that his foot was disabled”.<sup>67</sup> In November 1888, a shipbuilding engineers’ ball in Dumbarton one Friday night drastically affected the performance of Dumbarton FC the next day. “They had been up overnight at the engineers’ ball”, stated the *Scottish Referee*, “and found the tripping of the fantastic toe, however congenial, was not conducive to great football playing”.<sup>68</sup> Dumbarton did not learn their lesson from this incident, however. On a holiday voyage to Forfar during New Year’s 1889-90, they were thrashed by the local team. “Sympathisers blamed the 7 to 0 defeat from Forfar on the long wearisome journey”, stated *Scottish Sport*, “but the players themselves did not think the journey a bit long or a bit wearisome – indeed the fun was so good that they did not find time to go to bed that night – the night of their

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<sup>66</sup> Govan Press, 21 Mar. 1891.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Scottish Referee, 26 Nov. 1888.

arrival”.<sup>69</sup> The *Scottish Referee* had harsher words for Ayrshire’s Hurlford FC after their loss to Clyde in March 1889 following the night of their social, stating that: “These Friday evening sprees must be knocked in the head”.<sup>70</sup> Such sociability did claim casualties. In May 1895, the *Dalry and Kilbirnie Herald* gave a “retrospect” to “the Late” Irvine Rangers FC, which had by the 1894-95 season been filled with members who “went for the sole purpose of playing at cards”. Intriguingly, the paper believed that the club’s enthusiasm for football was punctured at their annual social meeting the previous year, where an altercation broke out between several members.<sup>71</sup>

While Telfer (2004) states that many of the official sports club functions such as these were “homosocial”, events that opened their doors to the public typically included many women. Players, officials and the press lobbied heavily for the presence of women at club socials and conversaciones. When Partick Thistle attempted to substitute a dinner for the usual conversazione in December 1888, the *Scottish Referee* chastised the club president, stating: “That’s rough on the fair sex, Mr. Smith”.<sup>72</sup> Around the same time, when Dumbarton’s Methlan Park FC issued too many invitations to their annual dance, the *Referee* noted that: “The Invitation Committee have already received so many acceptances that it is the prevailing opinion that “wall-flowers” will be abundant”.<sup>73</sup> Despite the hostility and suspicion aroused toward women in early Scottish football as a whole, women were also viewed by early Scottish footballers as sex objects. Women’s proximity to footballers in the public houses was consistently noted by the press, and they were doubly noted when clubs travelled away from home. Hampden XI, a junior reserve team of Queen’s Park, had a wild time of their New

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<sup>69</sup> Scottish Sport, 7 Jan. 1890.

<sup>70</sup> Scottish Referee, 11 Mar. 1889

<sup>71</sup> Dalry and Kilbirnie Herald, 10 May 1895.

<sup>72</sup> Scottish Referee, 10 Dec. 1888.

<sup>73</sup> Scottish Referee, 26 Nov. 1888.

Year's 1885-86 visit to Oban, ostensibly a visit to play Oban FC. The *Scottish Athletic Journal*, however, noted that after the game "the gay youths might have been seen in bevvy's hovering about the bars of certain hotels doing a quiet mash with the unsuspecting Highland barmaids".<sup>74</sup> The *Scottish Athletic Journal*'s Juvenis, later in 1886, exclaimed the virtues of a "maiden fair... whom all South-Side footballers [were] raving about", more than likely a "devotee" of Glasgow's footballers.<sup>75</sup> Weir (1992) discusses a similarly explicit affair, whereby in 1895 Glasgow Sheriff Erskine Murray investigated complaints of South-Side football clubs using their club premises as "brothels", allowing women access to the ground through keys given to them by the clubs. Insufficient evidence was found, and the matter was quickly dropped.

## 5. Holiday excursions

Travels within Scotland, and to England, were very popular amongst Scotland's Victorian football clubs during the festive season and Easter, as too was the return visit from the host clubs (WEIR, 1992). Why these excursions were so popular was a subject of debate amongst commentators of the time, both within the football apparatus and the press. The more optimistic commentators believed that not only were such trips designed to raise funds for clubs, but also to provide healthy recreation through strengthening bonds of friendship and competition between opponents of different backgrounds. The *Partick and Maryhill Press* believed that the pursuit of money was largely behind these holidays, stating in 1892 that Partick junior clubs were interested in travelling to lands "flowing with milk and honey".<sup>76</sup> Two years later, the same paper

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<sup>74</sup> Scottish Athletic Journal, 5 Jan. 1886.

<sup>75</sup> Scottish Athletic Journal, 24 Aug. 1886.

<sup>76</sup> Partick and Maryhill Press, 10 Dec. 1892.

was fascinated by the idea of holidays in the countryside cleansing the spirits of the area's local clubs:

Several of our local clubs had a change of air during the winter vacation, and by the appearance of those who had visited the spots where clean air predominates, it was evident that the breath of "fresh, exhilarating," which they had received had painted them with rosy cheeks, quite unknown in this dusky locality.<sup>77</sup>

The *Press*, in this instance, was firmly on the side of recreational invigoration being provided by such trips. This would have dovetailed with Victorian-era scientific beliefs, ones which believed in the restorative powers of clean air and (especially) water, with the demand for the latter driving a significant sector within the Scottish tourist industry (DURIE, 2003, p. 86-108; DURIE, BRADLEY, Ja., e DUPREE, 2006).

This was at least part of the reason for some of early Scottish football clubs' travel destinations. Rothesay, on the isle of Bute, was one such location. More historical research in general needs to be performed on the link between team sport and tourism, vis-à-vis sports more traditionally associated with Scottish tourism, such as hunting and golf (DURIE, 2003, p. 109-23). Like Largs, Rothesay's desirability had increased from around 1840 due to its status as a locality for hydropathic tourism. By the 1870s, "hydros", as they were known, had stopped catering solely to an unhealthy clientele, and began marketing itself to those urban dwellers suffering merely from overwork (DURIE, 2003, p. 103). Needless to say, footballers engaged in a steady diet of league and cup matches certainly fit this description, and they were amongst those who went to Rothesay to recuperate not only from injuries, but to prepare for important matches. For example, during Christmas and New Year's 1900-01, the entire Celtic club took part in some rest and relaxation not only in Rothesay, but also at Glenburn Hydro, "where they took salt water and Turkish baths". This was all in preparation for the club's upcoming

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<sup>77</sup> Partick and Maryhill Press, 12 Jan. 1895.

first-round Scottish Cup tie against Rangers. During this same trip, however, Celtic still played an exhibition match against local club St. Blane, and managed to raise £5 for charity.<sup>78</sup> As in Largs, restrictive ground arrangements, a cliquish local officialdom, and complicated provisions for transport hindered competitive football's growth.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, mainland football and its administrators had connections with Bute. Alexander Bannatyne Stewart, a Glasgow-based businessman and Rothesay native, one with ties to Rangers, provided the first association football match on Bute to feature mainland clubs when he bought Rangers and Queen's Park to Rothesay on 23 August 1879 (FINN, 1999, p. 60-62). Five thousand spectators were present at the Public Park for the match, and *The Buteman* noted that: "A great many of those present were, however, from Glasgow, as was evident from the 'knowing' manner in which they discussed the probable result of the match and the familiar style in which they addressed the various players."<sup>80</sup> Similarly, to attract urban spectators during the summer tourist season, perennially debt-ridden Rothesay clubs by the early-1890s were attempting to lure mainland sides to Bute (usually unsuccessfully) in order to coincide with the Glasgow, Paisley and Falkirk Fair Holidays, held in July, August and September respectively. This was despite the SFA's refusal to allow the Buteshire Football Association to have major mainland clubs on the island during summer months, and thus during its closed season.<sup>81</sup>

In one sense, then, football was becoming a part of the overall Scottish tourist culture, in that it was being used to advertise certain locales to potential travelling support. Footballers often doubled as tourists themselves, however, whether they went

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<sup>78</sup> *The Buteman*, 12 Jan. 1901.

<sup>79</sup> Research on early football in Largs, Rothesay and Millport will be the subject of an upcoming manuscript to be written by the author.

<sup>80</sup> *The Buteman*, 30 Aug. 1879.

<sup>81</sup> *The Buteman*, 25 Jul. 1891.

to Scottish destinations, or to England, for their game-day holidays. Another motive for these tours, besides money and health, was conviviality. The purpose of Greenock Morton's trip to Newcastle-upon-Tyne in January 1889 was to meet up with their friends "with whom they passed a brief and happy time".<sup>82</sup> *The Bailie*, in 1877, weighed the arguments of SFA secretary William Dick for trips to England. "Nothing is dearer to him", stated the satirical paper, "than an opportunity of showing attention to some English team while in town, his belief being that matches with them help to unite us more closely to our ancient foes". This suggestion was humorously rubbished, the paper believing that "commodities known as Bass and Allsopp are more potent influences in this direction".<sup>83</sup> Such New Year's celebrations were often riddled with excess, and it was typically the publicans and hospitality workers in the host clubs' locales who were at the receiving end of it. In 1883, the *Scottish Athletic Journal* noted that:

Generally, when any of our Association teams go to England they run riot with everything and everybody they come across. They stick at nothing, not even dressing themselves in policemen's clothes and running pantomime-like through the streets with roasts of beef not their own. This was what the frolics of one of our leading teams consisted of when in Manchester last Christmas (*Scottish Athletic Journal*, 13 Apr. 1883, apud WEIR, 1992).

A far less madcap, more menacing account was given of Kilmarnock FC's holiday exploits in England by *Scottish Umpire*, who stated of the clubs' 1886-87 holiday trip that: "The Lancashire hotel-keepers have a wholesale dread of the Kilmarnock FC, and it has been suggested that a suite of iron rooms, with furniture to match, be prepared for their next visit".<sup>84</sup> Even members Queen's Park, typically considered above the fray by the press, were known for being rowdy when away from home. After a match in Nottingham in 1878, two Queen's Park members were fined

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<sup>82</sup> *Scottish Referee*, 7 Jan. 1889.

<sup>83</sup> *The Bailie*, n. 220 (3 Jan. 1887).

<sup>84</sup> *Scottish Umpire*, 11 Jan. 1887.



twenty shilling each for “disorderly conduct” (VAMPLEW, 2005, p. 399). The Hogmanay may have had something to do with the behaviour of these clubs. During Hamilton Academical’s visit to Carlisle and Workington, Cumbria over New Year’s 1889-90, “Accies” lost their New Year’s Day match against Workington 3-2, nevertheless precipitating “a right ‘jollification’” afterwards.<sup>85</sup>

The many elements of footballers’ cultural lives – cultural performance, rejuvenation, bonding, friendship, as well as hedonism – were on display for Partick Thistle’s May 1888 pair of friendlies with Lockerbie’s Mid Annandale FC. The first half was played in Lockerbie, with the *Govan Press*’s coverage detailing every dimension of the trip, most of it not devoted to the game itself: The first passage describes the train trip to Lockerbie, and Partick Thistle’s being perplexed at their celebrity status in the Border town:

The trip was arranged by Mr. Dobbie, one of the patrons of the Mid Annandale, and a most enthusiastic supporter of that club, and who received the Partick men at Central Station in Glasgow, and conducted them to the saloon carriage he has engaged for their use. Here they found the arrangements made for their comfort complete in every respect, and the wherewithal to refresh the nine men was conspicuous by its presence. At Motherwell, and again at Carstairs, refreshments were served round, and the tedium of the journey was beguiled by the vocal efforts of the musically-inclined members of the party. Lockerbie was reached at 1:20, and several members of the Mid Annandale were in waiting to conduct their visitors to the King’s Arms where an excellent luncheon was spread, and was done ample justice by the Partickonians. Taking a walk through town to see the “lions,” the team were somewhat disconcerted to find themselves being lionised, and were greatly relieved when they regained the shelter of the hotel...<sup>86</sup>

After a brief account of the game, the *Press* further describes the after-match tea, and Thistle’s departure:

After the match the Thistle team, were entertained to dinner in the “King’s Arms,” the chair being taken by Mr. Dobbie... The company

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<sup>85</sup> Hamilton Advertiser, 4 Jan. 1890.

<sup>86</sup> Govan Press, 5 May 1888.

joined in singing “Auld Lang Syne,” and then the Partick team started for the station, where they were accompanied by a large crowd. Getting aboard their saloon amid the cheers of the crowd, the Thistle treated their admirers to a sample of their vocal accomplishments, and as the train moved off to the strains of “Will ye no come back again” followed them on their homeward journey.<sup>87</sup>

The arrangements for the return trip by Mid Annandale to Partick two weeks later were seen to be Thistle president J.N. Boag, who loaned out his Dumbarton Road public house for the after-match festivities.<sup>88</sup>

A mixture of business and pleasure was also evident with Reid Thistle, who spent their New Year’s holidays of 1892-93 touring through Perthshire, and were guests of honours at the 2 January 1893 smoking concert of Crieff Juniors. Reid Thistle solidified the bonds of camaraderie with footballers in Crieff and Comrie by not only drinking with them, but by assisting in football:

After spending a very enjoyable evening they retired to the Victorian Hotel for the night. Getting up the next morning fresh as daisies, they left Crieff by special brake for Comrie, distant seven miles where they were engaged to play the Comrie lads. As some of the local men could not get away from work, the Reid Thistle had to ask some of the Glasgow Minerva, who played them the day previous, to assist the local team. Lost 9-2. Entertained at McNeil’s Commercial Hotel. Came again to Crieff next day. Won 2-0 in front of 500 spectators.<sup>89</sup>

The games themselves being ad hoc affairs, with Minerva’s players showing support for Comrie’s absent members, trips like Reid Thistle’s were crucial in underlining the mutual respectability of working-class clubs. What was being created was a trans-class culture of friendship and solidarity between fellow footballers throughout Scotland; and this socialisation, even in excess, cemented Scottish football’s convivial bonds.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Govan Press, 12 May 1888

<sup>89</sup> St. Rollox and Springburn Express, 12 Jan. 1893.

## Conclusion

The *Kilmarnock Standard* was one of several papers that began witnessing the passing of the after-match social in football's senior spheres. "There seems to be a desire", stated the *Standard* in 1893:

on the part of many to do away with after-meetings. I don't agree with this. There is barely a football match played but some disagreeable incident happens. The players at such a meeting have an opportunity of mending matters and with songs and sentiment forgetting the field squabbles.<sup>90</sup>

But, despite the purging of the more exorbitant aspects of club functions, such a culture of conviviality remains to this day. Broadcaster Stuart Cosgrove (2001) believes that: "Drink, drugs, sex and scandal are part of the fabric of Scottish football" (p. 10). Eyebrows may have been raised in 2009 at an all-night drinking session involving Rangers' Barry Ferguson and Allan McGregor whilst on international duty with Scotland, but such attitudes regarding football's fraternal and convivial benefits are hard-wired into the Scottish game's DNA.<sup>91</sup> Gradually, clubs' more cultured pursuits fell by the wayside, but what existed in their place, a burgeoning "lads" culture, was sown in the same spirit as the early musical and dramatic societies which surrounded football clubs. Even as the turn of the twentieth century saw Scottish clubs finally tackling their bloated hospitality bills, the roots of this culture still exist, and continue to complicate Scotland's attempts to be taken seriously in the world of professional sport. The bonds of clubbish Victorian fraternity echo uncomfortably in the global professional football industry of today.

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<sup>90</sup> Kilmarnock Standard, 7 Jan, 1893

<sup>91</sup> The Herald, 3 Apr. 2009.

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