



**THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF
ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL IN THE
LIVERPOOL DISTRICT, c.1879 UNTIL
c.1915**

THOMAS JOHN PRESTON

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ABSTRACT

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL IN THE LIVERPOOL DISTRICT, C.1879 UNTIL C.1915

**THOMAS PRESTON
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE
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This thesis examines how association football evolved in Liverpool in the period before the Great War, and how the sport impacted on the lives of Liverpudlians during this period. Specific consideration is given in the first two chapters to the introduction of football to Liverpool and its progressive commercialisation. The third chapter examines the backgrounds of the city's professional footballers and their relationship with supporters and clubs. The role in Liverpool of amateur, semi-professional, and schoolboy football is considered in the fourth chapter. Identities form a common theme of the final chapters, which examine the local culture of football supporters and newspapers' relationship with the game. The study uses a wide range of primary and secondary sources, including some previously unconsidered evidence.

It is argued that previous interpretations of the sport's introduction are misleading and that football actually originated as a Muscular Christian initiative by Cambridge-educated clergy at the end of the 1870s. Despite this comparatively late introduction, political and business interests influenced football, and in Liverpool the sport underwent an intense process of commercialisation. Profit seems to have been a priority for the original Everton FC and its positive commercial prognosis led to the club's selection as a founder member of the Football League.

The scale of importation of professional footballers by Everton and Liverpool football clubs was to the detriment of local talent, although the city's amateur game was thriving by the 1900s. Though football was immensely popular in Liverpool, the city's unusual social and economic demography meant that a significant proportion of its population were unable to attend professional matches, or to make a significant contribution to the amateur game. From the 1900s, attendances in Liverpool grew more slowly as major football clubs in other cities attracted more spectators.

The game's overall popularity in Liverpool stimulated the growth of its symbiotic relationship with certain local newspapers, and this helped to reinforce notions of urban and regional identity. This study argues that football in Liverpool helped to counteract the city's exceptionalist tendencies by maintaining specifically Lancastrian and English linkages.

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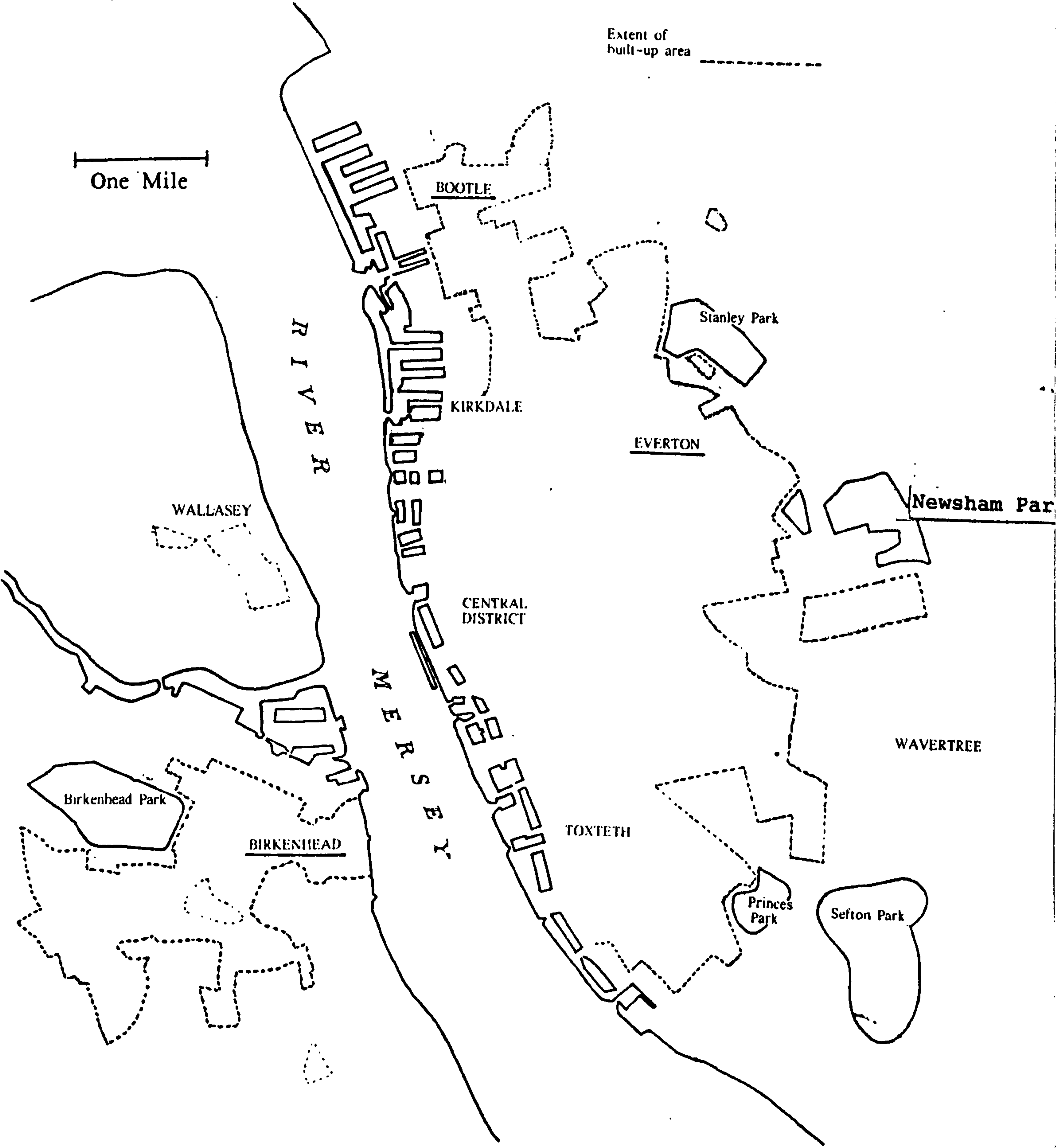
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Liverpool Conurbation c.1879

One Mile

Extent of built-up area



INTRODUCTION

Until the city's limited regeneration of recent years, many Britons in the later twentieth century regarded Liverpool as a byword for terminal social and economic decline. The city's problems can perhaps be traced back to the overwhelming Irish migration following the Great Famine, a refugee crisis unprecedented in British history. Since that time in the mid-nineteenth century, Liverpool has endured persistently high levels of deprivation, although paradoxically, as the nation's busiest port, it was also the most prosperous provincial city. Great wealth and its visible manifestations, co-existed in close proximity with dire poverty. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the working-class in urban Britain began to benefit materially in the favourable climate of social reform and economic growth, but whilst many thousands of working men in Liverpool did progress both socially and economically, many tens of thousands more, far more proportionally than any other British city, emphatically did not. Poverty and deprivation were endemic in Liverpool and would remain so. This is just one of many peculiarities of Liverpool, a city of paradox and sometimes dumbfounding bafflement to the outsider, a northern English city like no other that defies conventional analysis. In the words of John Belchem, Liverpool is 'outside the main narrative frameworks of modern British history', and its 'past has been characterised as different, the exception which proved the rule.'¹

There is one aspect of Liverpool's popular culture which conflicts with the city's characterisation as a metaphor for inexorable decline, an aspect in which the city has excelled for over a century, and that is its pre-eminence in the sport of association football. Liverpudlians have achieved much in several fields of endeavour, not least in the popular arts and literature, but for many of its citizens, success on the football field has been the most satisfying accomplishment. During the city's darkest days of urban

¹ Belchem, J., *Merseypride: essays in Liverpool exceptionalism*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), p. xi.

strife and unemployment in the 1980s, Liverpool FC enjoyed a glorious period of dominance, and Everton also had a brief sojourn at the top of English soccer. Both clubs also have a record of achievement going back over the course of a century. Liverpool is the only place that has been continuously represented in the top division of commercial football since the creation of the Football League in 1888. Liverpool FC was created after the original Everton club split into two irreconcilable factions, remaining at Everton's former Anfield Road ground, whilst Everton FC's new Goodison Park was the first large-scale football stadium in England. Liverpool FC's record of five European and eighteen domestic championships is unsurpassed, and only Manchester United and Arsenal seem capable of emulating it. Dixie Dean's sixty League goals for Everton in 1927-28 is a record that seems in little danger of being broken, even after eighty years. The city has produced more top class footballers than any other equivalent area.² Liverpool's contribution to football is simply unprecedented, an 'exceptionalism' for a city of 'exceptionalisms':

Despite an unparalleled record in senior professional football, and the centrality of the game in the popular culture of the city over the past one hundred years, the social history of football in Liverpool has been relatively under-researched.³ Academic historians have largely ignored the game's development in English cities and to date only one PhD thesis has examined the early evolution of football in Liverpool. This recent work by David Kennedy took a close look at the circumstances surrounding the bifurcation of Everton FC in 1892, and its implications for football in Liverpool, but the current study has a much broader canvas. Its main aim is to study the ways in which football evolved in Liverpool, and in turn, reacted with and influenced the lives of its citizens. This is the first detailed study to examine the early development of several categories of association football within a large city, exploring the relationship between clubs, spectators, and players in both the professional and amateur spheres, and drawing on many unused sources of original material.

² Bale, John, *Sport and Place*, (London: Frank Cass, 1982), pp. 32-38.

³ Mason, Tony, *The Blues and the Reds*, (Liverpool: Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1985), Kennedy, D. *The division of Everton Football Club into hostile factions: the development of professional football organisation on Merseyside, 1878-1914*, (2003), University of Leeds, unpublished PhD thesis.

The scope of football's wider assimilation and significance within Victorian and Edwardian society can be determined by looking at the precise mechanisms of its diffusion, organisation, expansion, and commercialisation at local level. Richard Holt has called for closely contextualised original local studies on sport, 'informed by wider issues within social history about the nature of urban and working-class experience.'⁴ Important investigations of local football have included Charles Korr's study on the social history and development of the east London club, West Ham United, David Hunt's comprehensive history of Preston North End, A.J. Arnold's business history of professional soccer's relationship with rugby league in Bradford, and Colm Kerrigan's recent examination of the much neglected topic of elementary school football in pre-1914 London.⁵ There have also been some interesting region-based studies, such as Robert Lewis's broader exploration of the origins and development of professional football in east Lancashire, and Martin Johnes' study of football in south Wales before the Second World War.⁶ The present thesis is an original study of the broader development of football within a specific city and its immediate environs, not simply the evolution of one particular League club, but bringing together aspects of the sport, both professional and amateur, and how these impacted on the citizens of Liverpool from the 1870s until the Great War.

⁴ Holt, R., 'Football and the Urban Way of Life in Nineteenth-Century Britain', in Mangan, J.A. (ed), *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism*, (London: Frank Cass, 1988).

⁵ Korr, C., *West Ham United: the Making of a Football Club*, (London: Duckworth, 1986). Arnold, A.J., *A Game That Would Pay: a Business History of Professional Football in Bradford*, (London: Duckworth, 1988), Hunt, David, *The History of Preston North End Football Club: the Power, the Politics, and the People*, (PNE Publications, Preston: 2000), Kerrigan, Colm, *Teachers and Football: Schoolboy Association Football in England, 1885-1915*, (Abingdon: Routledge Falmer, 2005).

⁶ Lewis, R. (1994) *The Development of Professional Football in Lancashire 1870-1914*, unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Lancaster. Johnes, M. (2002), *Soccer and Society: South Wales, 1900-1939*, (University of Wales Press, Cardiff: 2002).

GENERAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

Only in the past 30 years has the history of sport has been regarded as an area for scholarship and a select group of authors have seriously attempted to outline the social, cultural, and economic history of the most popular spectator sport, association football. The first significant work in 1975 was, James Walvin's *The People's Game*, a turning point in the study of football from a historical and sociological standpoint.⁷ Since then, a number of important studies have appeared, and these seminal works of football historiography still have great relevance to some of the issues explored in this thesis.⁸ Tony Mason's *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915* is the landmark work on football history before the Great War. Though more than 25 years have elapsed since its publication, it is still a major reference point for subsequent researchers and was crucial to the formulation of key questions for this current study, particularly with regard to his findings on the backgrounds of professional footballers, spectators, and on the role and function of the footballing press. Steven Tischler's *Footballers and Businessmen* is an influential but curious and flawed work in football historiography. As an American, Tischler brought an outsider's perspective to the evolution of English professional football though he misunderstood a fundamental difference between British and American professional sport.⁹ By applying a strictly American mentality to English football, he failed to appreciate that American and English approaches to commercialised sport were not completely compatible.

⁷ Walvin, James, *The People's Game: a social history of football*, (London: Allen Lane, 1975). A number of articles have also appeared in periodicals such as the *International Journal of the History of Sport* and *The Sports Historian*.

⁸ Mason, T., *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915*, (Brighton: 1980). Tischler, S., *Footballers and Businessmen*, (New York: 1981). Vamplew, W., *Pay Up and Play the Game*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1988). Holt, R., *Sport and the British*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Russell, D., *Football and the English*, (Preston: Carnegie, 1997).

⁹ Tischler, *Footballers and Businessmen*, p.86. Fishwick, Nick, *English Football and Society, 1910-50*, (London: Frank Cass, 1989), p.x. Mason, *Association Football*, p.47, 'Tischler argued that directors exploited players and spectators for material profit, and that the game was used to "control" the exploited socially.' Fishwick also makes the point that 'Tischler was more fundamentally hampered by depending on a rigid model of football that would have been better suited to an inherently commercial sport like rugby league.' Fishwick, *Football and Society*, 'Introduction', p. x.

Nevertheless, his contention that with the realisation that the working-classes had spare time, ‘entrepreneurs grasped the emerging possibilities of leisure and recreational enterprises’, such as football, is relevant in the construction of key questions for this thesis.

In his seminal work, *Pay Up and Play the Game*, Wray Vamplew conducted an examination of the early years of a number of British commercial sports from the perspective of economic history. Vamplew contended that sport had started to undergo its own ‘industrial revolution’ from the mid-nineteenth century and that profit was not the over-riding goal of some sport promoters. English football clubs tended to be profit maximisers even though their controlling committeemen generally prioritised playing performance. Vamplew urged economic historians to consider other perspectives when studying an industry where conventional economic analysis is not always applicable. Matthew Taylor made a similar point on the ‘exceptionalism’ of football economics, ‘the football industry was simply not like other industries: its ‘firms’ were intrinsically both partners and competitors; they did not pursue profits above all else; and many were able to survive in the face of the sort of long-term losses and debts that would have meant bankruptcy for any other kind of company.’¹⁰ As we shall see in Chapter 2, during Everton FC’s formative period, the emphasis was on profit rather than playing performance. Despite high attendances at the club’s Anfield ground, the Lancashire FA actually banned Everton from their senior challenge cup competition because of doubts regarding the team’s ability.¹¹

Commercial considerations aside, there are a number of other unresolved key questions on the early development of football, particularly the mechanisms by the working-class adopted this elite game and their cultural perspective towards it. In *Sport and the British*, Richard Holt examined the role of the British in revolutionising sport in the nineteenth century and explored one of his favourite themes, the evolution of modern sport within an industrial urbanised culture. Holt doubts that the

¹⁰ Taylor, Matthew, *The Leaguers*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p. 286.

¹¹ Sutcliffe, C.E. and Hargreaves, F. *History of the Lancashire Football Association 1878-1928*, (Blackburn: Lancashire FA, 1928), p. 46.

discontinuity between traditional and modern codified sport was as profound as it has often been made out. He questioned the assumption that traditional folk football became entirely moribund during this transitional period. 'We cannot simply assume that so long and well established a folk game had simply disappeared by the middle of the century. We know from the research of the Opies¹² on children's games how tenacious are the traditions of the street.... Kicking a rag and paper ball round the streets in the early twentieth century may not have been so different from the way boys had played in previous generations and might be considered as much a survival as an innovation copied from their betters.' Tony Mason too remains 'unconvinced that we really understand the process of transformation undergone by the old forms of football.'¹³ This is a point given extensive analysis in a recent book by Adrian Harvey, who concluded that the Football Association's standardised rules of 1863 were not universally pervasive and that some local traditional forms survived far longer than previously thought. According to Harvey, clubs and schools were initially reluctant to use the FA code as individual public school codes continued to remain influential, and it was only the later cooperation of the Sheffield Association that gave the FA wider legitimacy.¹⁴ Harvey has shown that there were formally organised working-class traditional football clubs in several parts of mid-nineteenth century England, including, intriguingly, the parts of Lancashire where soccer later flourished in the 1870s.¹⁵ Former Harrow pupils had introduced football to working-class men in Darwen and Turton, in Lancashire,¹⁶ with the latter team initially using the Harrow code rather than the still obscure FA code.¹⁷ Harrovians were plentiful in Victorian Liverpool, but there is no evidence of them having introduced the game to working-class Liverpudlians, nor of a pre-existing local version of folk football.

¹² Opie, P. and I., *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

¹³ Holt, *Urban Life*, p.71. Mason, Tony, 'Football and the Historians' in *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 5, 1, (1988), pp. 136-141.

¹⁴ Harvey Adrian, *Football: the First Hundred Years: the untold story*, (London: Routledge, 2004).

¹⁵ Harvey, A., *Hundred Years*, Chapter 3, 'Football outside the public schools', but particularly p. 72 and p. 76.

¹⁶ Russell, *Football and the English*, p. 18.

¹⁷ Harvey, *Hundred Years*, p.173.

Other seminal works of football history have had a considerable influence on the present investigation. Dave Russell's *Football and the English* covered the entire period of association football until 1995 with much original insight in synthesising the conclusions of his own and others' previous work. His main aim was to examine the relationship between football, represented by players, management, and spectators, and contemporaneous English society. Russell included topics on class and regional identity, the nature of crowd culture, and football's relationship with the media, and these subjects are also explored within a local context in this present study. Eric Dunning's and Kenneth Sheard's *Barbarians, Gentlemen, and Players*¹⁸ used sociological methodology to examine the evolution of rugby football and the class relationships within rugby and with soccer. This is relevant here because rugby was played by the lower middle-classes in Liverpool, before soccer became more dominant among similar social groups.

Despite the status of the Liverpool region as a hotbed of professional football over the past century, relatively few noteworthy historical investigations have been attempted. Most of these have been popular works aimed at fans and general readers; what Fishwick has referred to as 'scarf and rattle' accounts.¹⁹ The first such was the *History of the Everton Football Club 1878-1928* by Thomas Keates, a former director whose associations with the club dated back to the earliest days.²⁰ Keates actually witnessed certain events, though some of his assertions are unsupported by other evidence and cannot be independently verified. Keates tells us that Everton FC derived from an existing club, itself the football section of a Methodist church cricket club, St. Domingo, which played matches against other church clubs in Stanley Park, Anfield. All subsequent historians of Liverpool football, including Young, Rees, Mason, and even the most recent, David Kennedy, have accepted this version of Everton's origins. The next significant local history was written in 1963 by Percy M. Young, the last of

¹⁸ Dunning, Eric, and Sheard, Kenneth, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: a sociological study of the development of rugby football*, (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1979).

¹⁹ Fishwick, *English Football and Society*, p. ix.

²⁰ Keates, T., (1928), *History of the Everton Football Club 1878-1928*, (Liverpool: Thomas Brakell, 1928).

his series of club histories which demonstrated a little more depth than routine ‘scarf and rattle’ books.²¹ Young clearly spent much time perusing newspaper sources, with which he skilfully complemented some of Keates' earlier material. Interestingly, Young devoted 103 pages to pre-Great War football but even though this was then the most eclectic account, its level of analysis rarely deviated beyond the superficial.

Serious investigations of Liverpool football from an academic perspective have been rare. One of the earliest such studies was Roy Rees' dissertation on the evolution of modern sport in Liverpool during the nineteenth century, a source frequently quoted in major sports histories. Rees unearthed some previously unknown material, but the level of research and analysis in the football sections has since been superseded although his work is valuable as a starting point for further investigation.²² Tony Mason's *The Blues and the Reds*, a short paper on the formative years of both Everton and Liverpool clubs, did include analysis of the social constitution of directors, players, and supporters, though not in as much detail as his earlier study on late-nineteenth century English football. Only fairly recently have the dynamics of the formation and development of early football infrastructures in Liverpool received rigorous examination in David Kennedy's PhD thesis on the bifurcation of Everton FC:

Kennedy's project was actually started after the commencement of research for this present thesis, and to some extent he has pre-empted some of this study's findings relating to factionalism in the pre-1892 Everton FC. His fundamental objective was to explore Everton FC's pre-1892 evolution within the social milieu of north Liverpool and a subsidiary aim was to consider the impact of commerce and competition on Everton's progression from St. Domingo's to a 'nationally successful professional football organisation.'²³ However, Kennedy's conclusions are predicated on Thomas Keates' assertion that members of the St. Domingo's New Connection Methodist congregation founded the club that evolved into Everton FC. He does not examine in detail the actual process of the introduction of football to Liverpool, even though he

²¹ Young, Percy M., *Football on Merseyside*, (London: Stanley Paul, 1963).

²² Rees, R. (1968), *The Development of Physical Recreation in Liverpool during the Nineteenth Century*, MA Thesis, University of Liverpool.

²³ Kennedy, *Thesis*, 'Introduction', p. 2.

actually implies that his study includes a substantial account of the ‘embryonic stage of professional football club development in Liverpool.’²⁴ The present study provides compelling evidence that St. Domingo’s FC never existed and that Everton FC actually derived from a pre-existing Church of England football club.

In his third main aim, to compare and contrast the ‘early organisational development of Everton with that of Liverpool’, Kennedy’s analysis has more validity. Following the split, the two new football clubs adopted ‘distinct patterns of organisational ownership and control’, which reflected the attitudes of the former competing factions.²⁵ The current study shows that these patterns were not simply due to contrasts in commercial practice, but also reflected contrasting attitudes to management of players.

The majority of football histories have concentrated on the evolution of the commercial game but Richard Holt has reminded us that the ‘playing of football has been rather overlooked in the rush to explain its commercialisation. Amateurism may have been a middle-class code but we should not forget that the great majority of ‘amateurs’ were working-class.’²⁶ Some recent work has addressed this. Amateur football featured in Johnes’ investigation of football in south Wales and Colm Kerrigan explored the relationship between schoolboy and amateur football in London in his recent study. Matthew Taylor has also indicated the lacuna in our understanding of football as a participatory sport and the motivations and problems experienced by recreational footballers.²⁷ The two main studies of Liverpool football before 1914, by Mason and Kennedy, have both ignored the phenomenon of local amateur football even though Liverpool’s newspapers show that there was a flourishing amateur

²⁴ Kennedy, *Thesis*, ‘Introduction’, p. 9.

²⁵ Kennedy, *Thesis*, ‘Introduction’, p. 2.

²⁶ Holt, ‘Urban Life’, p. 68.

²⁷ Taylor, M., ‘Football Archives and the Historian’, *Business archives: Sources and History*, (1999) pp 1-12, in Kerrigan, *Teachers*, p. 132, also Chapter 6, ‘Schoolboy football and Amateur football’ pp. 132-156. Metcalfe, A., ‘Organised Sport in the Mining Communities of South Northumberland 1800-1889’, *Victorian Studies*, 25, 4, (1982), pp. 480-484. Tranter, Neil, ‘The Social and Occupational Structure of Organised sport in Central Scotland during the Nineteenth Century’, in *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 4, 3, (Dec. 1987), pp. 301-314.

infrastructure in pre-1914 Liverpool. Amateur football ranged from spontaneous kickabouts, to organised leagues, with some amateur clubs even making the transition to semi-professionalism. This study broadly examines the range of amateur football in Liverpool, from elite to working-class varieties, and examines its relationship with the professional game.²⁸

As well as the main source of primary evidence for modern historians, the local press was the predominant means of generating publicity for forthcoming matches, reports, results, and providing informed football speculation to the masses, and in so doing it was a crucial element in developing a sense of communal identity. Tony Mason has repeatedly returned to the question of the footballing press, noting that ‘there is an important symbiotic relationship between the expansion of the game, both amateur and professional, and the growth of a specialised press and the spread of football coverage in the general newspapers...’²⁹ How the football press developed and its relationship with clubs and players, both amateur and professional, is of pivotal importance in reconstructing the attitudes of early football supporters. This thesis explores the extent of the symbiotic relationship between journalists and readers in Liverpool and the part it played in the evolution of a regional football culture centred on the city.

Mason’s evidence on Liverpool-based spectators accords with the accepted consensus view that football spectators of the period were generally from the skilled working-class (with some lower middle) and were predominantly male. This study shows that Mason’s findings, though broadly valid, are based on evidence of spectators in the grandstand, the most exclusive section of the ground. A recently discovered Mitchell and Kenyon film, providing a unique opportunity to examine the social composition, gender, and supporting habits of a Liverpool football crowd of 1902, has provided evidence which offers a fresh interpretation of the composition of football crowds of the period.

²⁸ Mason, *Association Football*, pp. 82-88.

²⁹ Mason, *Association Football*, p. 187.

SETTING THE CONTEXT: THE CHARACTER OF LIVERPOOL C. 1880 TO 1915

Football was unknown in Liverpool at the start of the period covered in this thesis, but in the years before the outbreak of the Great War the city's two main football clubs were among the nation's elite, and many thousands of Liverpudlians regularly attended First Division matches at Goodison and Anfield. Everton and Liverpool were big commercial clubs located in England's second largest city, during this period at the end of the nineteenth and the start of the twentieth centuries, an exceptional and culturally diverse mixture of rich and poor, connected to the wider world, and reaching its apogee as a vibrant centre of power and influence.

During this period before the First World War, British society underwent significant social and political change. There had been a fundamental shift in the nation's demography as the urban population overtook the rural. The 'labour aristocracy' now had the right to participate in the democratic process. The quality of life in cities improved, and death and birth rates were reduced. Even though Britain's industrial primacy was overtaken by the USA and Germany, real wage levels improved and the price of food fell. Education became compulsory and there were increased opportunities for the masses to enjoy leisure.³⁰ However, in the peculiar social and economic circumstances of Liverpool, these benefits were generally less widespread and slower to take effect. Liverpool was a major world city, the busiest port in Europe and the nexus for trade and emigration to the Americas and the rest of the world, but it was a paradox, an exceptionalism, its refractory tendencies constantly threatening to neutralise its industrious, progressive aspect.

There were in essence three Liverpools: with the elite rich and the desperately poor at polar opposites, and the respectable working-class and lower middle-class in the middle. At the apex was wealthy Liverpool, mostly comprising the families of

³⁰ Harris, Jose, (1993), *Private Lives, Public Spirit: a social history of Britain 1870-1914*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 251-256.

merchants and ship-owners who dominated local society and fraternized at the exclusive Wellington Rooms, 'where Unitarian Liberals and vehement Tories mingled socially on polite and friendly terms.'³¹ Though numerically the smallest of the three Liverpools, the extent of the elite's wealth can be gauged by some notable statistics. Firstly, the 159 Liverpool magistrates appointed in the fifty years before 1885, left estates worth *on average* £160,000.³² In 1879-80, Liverpool Schedule D taxpayers (on business profits) contributed £11 million, whilst the total Schedule D tax paid in the whole of Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, and Sheffield was slightly less than this despite a combined population of more than twice Liverpool's. From 1880-1899, Liverpool had more millionaires than the combined total of south-east Lancashire, the West Riding, Birmingham and the Black Country, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and East Anglia.³³ These were the great and the good of the local establishment, celebrated in Guinness Orchard's sycophantic directory of late Victorian Liverpool, the '*Legion of Honour*'.³⁴ During the mid-nineteenth century they generally retreated from the city proper to the villas and mansions of Princes and Sefton Parks, or even as far as the semi-rural satellite villages, mostly to the south and east of Liverpool. By the 1870s this class of Liverpool society were able to enjoy a range of sports, including cricket, rugby, and polo. In the nation at large, particularly in the south of England, this was the social class which had been instrumental in the formation of the Football Association, yet despite the many elite Liverpudlians who had attended high-status schools such as Eton and Harrow, where soccer-type codes were played, no elitist association clubs had been formed in Liverpool. Rugby was the local elite's preferred code and indeed, the senior local club had been founded as early as 1857. It was only in the 1880s, some years after the introduction of soccer to Liverpool, that the merchant classes established their own association club.

For the lowest stratum of Liverpool society there was no such culture of sporting opportunity. Several hundred thousand of the poorest citizens lived in substandard

³¹ Walton, J.K. *Lancashire, a social history, 1558-1939*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), p. 235.

³² Walton, *Lancashire*, p. 237.

³³ Lane, Tony, *Liverpool: Gateway of Empire*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1988), p. 55.

³⁴ B. Guinness Orchard, *Liverpool's Legion of Honour*, (Birkenhead: Orchard, 1892).

multi-occupation courts and cellars, squeezed in the unhealthy spaces between workshops and warehouses, mostly in the squalid dockland districts. In such oppressive environments, organised rational recreation was virtually impossible. There was little, if any, public space in which to play sport, and endemic ill health and lack of physical fitness also precluded participation. Brutal sports and games, such as dog fighting were commonly indulged, though the associational culture of the Catholic Church helped to counteract this for the Irish Liverpudlians in the north docklands.³⁵ Football only became important for the lower classes once it had been learned at school, but it seems to have had little relevance until the 1890s.

Between these two extremes of Liverpool life were the respectable working-class and the lower middle class, members of the newly enfranchised urban groups emerging in towns and cities across late Victorian Britain. In Liverpool, a significant proportion of these people were in-migrants from other parts of England, Wales, and Scotland. These classes generally resided in the ring of new suburbs surrounding the inner city, from Everton and Bootle in the north to Toxteth in the south.³⁶ Whilst far from wealthy, their limited affluence and leisure time were beginning to allow this third group of Liverpudlians to start to take part in organised sport, particularly in the new public parks that had opened in the suburbs since the 1860s. It was among such social groups in north Liverpool that association football clubs were first established in the late 1870s.

³⁵ Smith, J., 'Class, Skill, and Sectarianism in Glasgow and Liverpool 1880-1914', in R.J. Morris (ed), *Class, Power and Social Structure in British Nineteenth Century Towns*, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), p. 179. Walton, J.K. and Wilcox, A. (eds), *Low Life and Moral Improvement in Mid-Victorian England: Liverpool through the journalism of Hugh Shimmin*, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991), pp. 58-64, 'The Sparring Match', pp. 65-70, 'The Dog Fight'. Rees, *Thesis*, Chapter 1.

³⁶ Pooley, C.G., 'The Residential Segregation of Migrant Communities in Mid-Victorian Liverpool', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, NS 2, (1977), pp. 370-374.

LIVERPOOL'S GROWTH

By coincidence, Liverpool received its city charter in 1880, not long after football arrived. Even when the Football League began eight years later, Everton were still the only one of the twelve original clubs from a properly constituted city. Liverpool was then England's largest provincial city with more than half a million citizens, and by the eve of the Great War this had increased to three quarters of a million. A comparison of the populations of the other major football towns of Lancashire illustrates the monumental scale of Liverpool. The combined total of the 1881 populations of the other five Lancashire towns that provided original members of the Football League was still only 70 per cent of Liverpool's 611,000. The population of Everton alone was nearly 110,000, bigger than in any of the football towns of Blackburn, Bolton, or Preston. The enormous population of Liverpool would suggest that there were enough people to sustain the viability of many commercial football clubs, but the crucial factor was not population, but demography. The social composition of the other Lancashire football towns, all centres of the cotton industry, was roughly homogeneous, whereas Liverpool had a radically different and heterogeneous economic and social structure.³⁷

Liverpool had developed as a major seaport from the beginning of the eighteenth century. The population increased thirty-fold to 223,000 in 1841, just before the town was overwhelmed by the enormous levels of Irish immigration in the wake of the Great Famine. The Irish settled in the most squalid part of Liverpool, which ranged for the best part of a mile north of the city centre, adjacent to the docks and continuing inland as far as the lower slopes of Everton. This massive Irish settlement forced further development outward from the centre, and the northern suburbs of Everton, Kirkdale, and Bootle were constructed from the 1860s. Hundreds of streets of closely packed terrace houses were erected by Welsh builders, and made available for rental for between 5 shillings and 7s. 6d. per week. With little, if any, industry, and with no pollution and better sanitation, the suburbs provided a congenial and healthier environment. Several new public parks considerably augmented the salubrious

³⁷ Phillips, C.B. and Smith, J.H., *Lancashire and Cheshire from AD 1540*, (Essex: Longman, 1994), p. 229. Spiegl, F. (ed), *An Everyday Illustrated History of Liverpool and Merseyside*, (Liverpool: Scouse Press, 1996), (no page numbers, see 1881 census page), Walton, *Lancashire*, Chapters 10-13.

surroundings, providing much needed space for rational recreation. Ninety-five acre Stanley Park, designed by Edward Kemp, was opened in Anfield in 1870, complementing the smaller Shiel Park, and nearby Newsham Park was added in 1872.³⁸

Liverpool's physical expansion temporarily slowed somewhat from about the 1880s, as housing construction lessened, and though the population continued to rise, an appreciable portion of this was due to the political accretion of surrounding townships. At 617,032 in 1891, the population was not appreciably much bigger than it had been ten years earlier. A 'Greater Liverpool' was created in 1895, when Walton, Wavertree, and parts of West Derby and Toxteth were added to the Corporation. In the 1900s, Bootle successfully resisted absorption although Garston was incorporated unwillingly, and the still rural outposts of Fazakerley, Woolton, Childwall, and Allerton had succumbed to Liverpool's advances by 1913. The 1911 census showed the population of the city to be 746,566, but the combined Manchester and Salford conurbation had by then overtaken Liverpool, and the mantle of second-city status had now been assumed by Birmingham. In the 1890s, Everton's attendances had been the largest in the Football League, but in a little over a decade, several clubs from other expanding cities had developed fan-bases in excess of those established by Everton and Liverpool.³⁹

³⁸ Pooley, C., 'Choice and Constraint in the Nineteenth Century City: a Basis for Residential Differentiation' in Johnson, J. and Pooley, C. (eds), *The Structure of Nineteenth Century Cities*, (London: 1982), p. 214. Waller, P. J. *Democracy and Sectarianism, a social and political history of Liverpool, 1868-1939*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1981), p. 9 and p. 63. Lawton, R. and Pooley, C.G., 'David Brindley's Liverpool: an aspect of urban society in the 1880s', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Historical Society*, Vol. 126, (1975), p. 154., Farley, Ian D., *J.C. Ryle, First Bishop of Liverpool*, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999), p. 126.

³⁹ Davies, Sam, *Liverpool Labour: social and political influences on the development of the Labour party in Liverpool 1900-1939*, (Keele: Keele University Press, 1996), pp. 97-101. Tabner, Brian, *Through the Turnstiles*, (Middlesex: Yore Publications, 1992), pp. 62-66.

OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE

Liverpool owed its prosperity to its extensive docks where casual, unskilled work predominated. Between 20 to 25 per cent of the male workforce were employed in casual work, 'the most degrading as well as the most insecure form of employment,' in the opinion of Liverpool's historian Ramsay Muir; 'There is probably no city of anything like equal size in which so small a proportion of the population is maintained by permanent and stable industrial work.'⁴⁰ The dock workforce had doubled between 1860 and 1890, and at the start of the twentieth century it remained the city's largest single class of employer with 19,594 dock labourers. Very few dockers earned more than 30 shillings a week and even these might only average regular employment for three days per week. The highest grade were stevedores, who loaded ships to their optimum capacity. The remainder of the dock system's casual labour force was mired in endemic poverty. About half of dock labourers received 20 shillings or less and the rest earned 15 shillings a week.⁴¹

Though Liverpool was not a manufacturing centre, processing industries also employed many thousands of workers.⁴² By necessity, these were generally located near the docks, and included such diverse enterprises as tobacco, soap manufacture, saw-milling, sugar refining, and flour milling. At its zenith around 1910, the port both directly and indirectly provided 60,000 people with a livelihood.⁴³

Banking and insurance made Liverpool the main financial centre outside London, so it is not surprising that the next largest group of Liverpool wage earners were clerks, an occupation which demonstrated wide variations in status and wages. In the 1900s, thirty per cent of male clerks earned more than £160 per annum, with a further 40% on less than £100. It could take a bank clerk, between 12 and 17 years to reach the higher pay grades, and if he kept his weekly expenditure down to 24 shillings, he might have

⁴⁰ Muir, 1907, quoted in Lane, *Gateway*, p. 88.

⁴¹ Waller, *Democracy*, p. 4. Taplin, Eric, *The Dockers' Union: a study of the National Union of Dock Labourers, 1889-1922*, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991), pp. 17-21.

⁴² See Waller, *Democracy*, p.2 and p. 357.

⁴³ Lane, *Gateway*, p. 43.

been able to employ a servant and even take a summer holiday. Poorer clerks may have earned about the same as some dockers, that is, about £80 per year, and could face a real struggle to make ends meet. As we shall see in Chapter One, clerks constituted the single largest employment group in the earliest football teams in Liverpool, with a sizeable minority of teachers and skilled manual workers. Casual unskilled workers, on the other hand, had little involvement with football in the early years.

SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY

A great port like Liverpool was characterised by its polyglot population. Relatively high wage rates attracted people from all over Britain and there were large proportions of English in-migrants, Welsh, Manx, and Scots, with smaller but significant concentrations of Germans, Scandinavians, east Europeans, Italians, Greeks, and Chinese. In 1911, 12,000 people of African and West Indian descent also lived in the city. Of course, the Irish remained the most conspicuous component of the city's population; in the years after the Famine, nearly a quarter of Liverpoolians were actually Irish-born, although this proportion declined gradually over the rest of the century.

Pooley's research on ethnic settlement in the 1870s reveals an explicit fabric of spatial segregation between groups in Liverpool, a pattern that became apparent much earlier than in other British cities. The Irish and foreign ethnic groups were the poorest, confined to the constant grinding poverty of the squalid courts around the inner city. The Welsh, however, were further up the social scale. In 1881 there were 21,563 Welsh-born in Liverpool, equivalent to perhaps as many as 70,000 ethnic Welsh, with the largest concentration primarily in north-west Kirkdale and Everton. A good number of Welsh workers were involved in the building trade and indeed the Welsh's main contribution to the city's culture was arguably the vernacular dwelling-style of Victorian Liverpool, still prevalent today in what had then been the outer suburbs.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Pooley, Colin G., 'Living in Liverpool: The Modern City' in Belchem, J., *Liverpool 800: Culture Character, and History*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), p. 172. Waller, *Democracy*, p. 9.

The largest proportion of in-migrants, historically the most overlooked, were the Liverpudlians originating in other regions of England. They were resident across the whole city but in some districts, particularly south-east Everton, English in-migrants accounted for nearly half the citizens.⁴⁵ This group included not only the merchant elite but more importantly from the point of view of this study, such groups as the higher-grade church-going clerks who could afford a live-in servant. Young men from this particular social and ethnic group were prominent among the pioneer footballers in Liverpool and had the most direct influence on football's evolution in the city.

ISSUES OF POVERTY AND CLASS RELATIONS

Liverpool was exceptional in so far as extremes of poverty and wealth co-existed within the same city. The degree of poverty and deprivation was appalling but it was essentially confined to the overcrowded docklands where, in 1880, about 70,000 people lived in unfit courts. In the 1880s the national infant mortality rate was 142 per thousand births, but in Liverpool it was significantly worse at 183.⁴⁶ However, in the Vauxhall ward, just north of the city centre, it was nearly twice the national average at 264 per thousand. Poor and unsanitary conditions persisted for the whole of our period and beyond. In 1905, in Burlington Street in South Scotland ward, a notoriously squalid area of mainly court housing, the death rate was 44 per thousand. The 1905 rate for the whole of Liverpool was actually less than half that at 20.6 per thousand.⁴⁷ As far as most members of the merchant classes were concerned such social problems may well have been occurring on another continent. A few had taken the trouble to discover the scale of their fellow citizens' suffering but the degree of contact between social classes was much lower than it was in other Lancashire towns. 'Paternalism' was virtually an unknown concept and as an 1870s sociological survey expressed, 'In Liverpool, almost alone amongst the provincial cities of the kingdom, the intercourse between masters and men, between employers and employed, ceases on payment of

⁴⁵ Pooley, 'Migrant Communities', p. 372.

⁴⁶ Walker, B. and Hinchcliffe, A., *In Our Liverpool Home*, (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1978), p. 21.

⁴⁷ Lane, *Gateway*, p. 93.

wages.’⁴⁸ This lack of paternalism had a profoundly retarding effect on the diffusion of elite sports to the lower classes. Whilst this was possible in east Lancashire, the city’s divisive social protocol inhibited class relations. For instance, 20 years were to elapse after the formation of the exclusive Liverpool rugby club before lower middle class groups started to seriously participate in the sport. The Liverpool Gymnasium even specifically went to the trouble of excluding the membership of artisans, despite its prohibitive subscription.⁴⁹ Conditions in Liverpool for the dissemination of elite sports to the working-class were far from favourable and this study will show that the active intervention of outside agencies was essential for soccer to be introduced to the masses.

The low level of church attendance and protracted social problems of Liverpool attracted the attention of evangelical religious groups. One strategy favoured by churchmen involved the invigoration of churchgoing through sport, in other words, Muscular Christianity, a diffuse notion of ideas connecting religious devotion and manly physical activity, much promoted in the writings of Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes.⁵⁰ During the 1870s there seems to have been a concerted effort by young sporting curates from Cambridge University to stimulate involvement in the church among working-class men in certain parishes in north Liverpool. This initiative seems to have been more successful in Bootle, but the parallel mission in Everton, though less productive from the church’s point of view, did lead to the formation of Everton FC.

⁴⁸ W.S. Trench and C. Beard, *Workingmen’s Dwellings in Liverpool*, (1871), quoted in Belchem, *Exceptionalism*, p. 156. ‘Friendly and responsible relations between master and man disappeared from the Liverpool scene earlier than anywhere else’, from Simey, M., *Charitable Effort in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Century*, (Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool, 1951), p. 12.

⁴⁹ Rees, *Thesis*, p. 82, Chapter 4.

⁵⁰ For Muscular Christianity see Mason, *Association Football*, pp. 12-15, Russell, *Football and the English*, p. 15, Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp. 92-95 (and for rational recreation, pp. 136-148).

SECTARIANISM

In Liverpool, religion's influence was pervasive, although paradoxically, church attendance was among the lowest of major English towns and cities. Serious religious bigotry was long-standing even before the mass immigration following the Famine but the scale of Irish settlement then was so overwhelming that Catholic-Protestant antagonism inevitably became a defining characteristic of Liverpool. It was even more entrenched than in Glasgow, despite the notoriously unyielding culture surrounding the latter city's Celtic and Rangers football clubs. In north Liverpool, Everton's Great Homer Street formed the frontier between the two factions, where sporadic bloody skirmishes were commonplace. However, during the early years of the twentieth century matters took a distinctly downward turn as itinerant street preachers, several from London, began a sustained programme of virulently anti-papist demagoguery with predictably violent results.

The most prominent of these demagogues was George Wise, who, with the tacit support of the Bishop of Liverpool, J.C. Ryle, had preached in the city since 1888. Wise's power base was in Everton, where he had a mission in Netherfield Road, but ever the demotic showman, Wise had a preference for monster prayer meetings in a local natural amphitheatre, St. Domingo's Pit, frequently attended by tens of thousands of his fanatical followers. Crowds, inflamed by Wise's fevered rhetoric, often went on the rampage against local Catholics and their institutions. Links between sectarianism and football in Liverpool are inescapable. The ultra-Protestant, Working Mens' Conservative Association (WMCA), an ostensibly political organisation that forbade consorting with Roman Catholics, was popular in Everton, and included John Houlding, the man who became the main promoter of Everton and Liverpool football clubs, amongst its more prominent members. Wise's favourite preaching locations were in the exact area where several early football clubs were formed, including Everton FC.

Moreover, local folklore alleges that Everton are a Catholic club and Liverpool, Protestant, in a similar, though less extreme way, to Celtic and Rangers in Glasgow. This is a controversial topic which has divided historians. Bill Murray, produced no

evidence to support his contention that the religious associations of the two big Liverpool clubs 'were a reality', and whilst Mason has acknowledged such differences he 'detected a little uncertainty as to which club was associated with which religion.'⁵¹ In a city with such a reputation for religious sectarianism, this feature of Liverpool football needs clearer resolution. Frank Neal, author of a respected study of Liverpool sectarianism,⁵² believes that the supporters of Everton and Liverpool had no religious affiliations, and in the modern era this is undoubtedly true, but anecdotal evidence suggests that certainly as recently as the 1960s, that Liverpudlian Catholics tended to support Everton whereas Protestants favoured Liverpool.⁵³ The fact that the Everton district was one of the main centres of sectarian discord and the preponderance of early church clubs, suggests that there could be some basis to the claims. It is hoped that some of the new evidence presented here will help to clarify this contentious issue.

POLITICS

The volatile relationship between Liverpool's Catholic Irish and the extreme Protestants dictated the city's peculiar political culture. Anti-Irish prejudice and anti-Catholicism was a potent force in Liverpool politics, and the Tories exploited this for their electoral advantage through such organisations as the WMCA. Nationally, socialism was emerging as a popular political force but it was weak in Liverpool despite the successes of New Unionism on the docks, and politically the city remained a bastion of urban Conservatism. This was not Liverpool's only political exceptionalism: the massive Irish community around Scotland Road ensured that from the 1880s until the 1920s the city had the only mainland constituency with an Irish Nationalist MP. In this unusual political climate, Liberalism was particularly weak and was further undermined by its associations with elite Non-conformists and the lack of a popular movement equivalent to the Tories' WMCA.

⁵¹ Murray, Bill, *The Old Firm: Sectarianism, Sport and Society in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1984), p. 118, note 19, Mason, *Blues and the Reds*, p.17.

⁵² Neal, Frank, *Sectarian Violence: the Liverpool experience*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

⁵³ Murray, *Old Firm*, p. 118, note 19.

The working-class character of Tory Democracy in Liverpool resulted in a curious hybrid ‘municipal socialism’, giving rise to such surprising innovations as a progressive housing policy. Sir Archibald Salvidge, the Tory leader in the early decades of the twentieth century, notoriously used ‘electoral machine’ tactics to manipulate voters in the closest British approximation to Tammany Hall ‘Boss’ politics, though without the levels of corruption seen in America. In the Everton district, Councillor John Houlding, a self-made brewer, was building up his own political machine, of which Everton FC was but one crucial component. Walvin certainly had Houlding in mind when he wrote: ‘For politicians the years after the 1884 Reform Act posed a challenge in the form of a new electorate which had to be wooed rather than led. What better way was there of establishing a reputation, of ensuring that one was before the eye of the male electorate and for posing as a man of the people, than by belonging to the people’s game; the local football club.’⁵⁴ According to Kennedy, some Everton players were actually pressed into service to campaign for Houlding, whose influence in the area was such that he was known as ‘King John of Everton’. He instinctively realised that Everton, with an electorate of predominantly Protestant skilled artisans and clerks, was to some extent a testing ground for new experiments in Tory Democracy.

LIVERPOOL AS A REGIONAL CAPITAL

Liverpool was the largest city in the north-west of England, although before 1914, its Lancashire rival Manchester had emerged as the larger conurbation, as the ‘two distinctive economic and cultural regions were cohering within Lancashire and extending into adjoining counties.’⁵⁵ Manchester’s mainstream economy and politics, together with its importance to the cotton industry, made it the more natural capital of the region. Liverpool was isolated both geographically and also by its own exceptionalism. It was perceived as a non-English, non-Lancashire, Celtic city, and even included north Wales within its significant sphere of influence. Its newspapers, notably the *Echo* and *Daily Post*, emphasised this particular notion of regional identity. In-migration from the hinterland tended to reinforce a city’s status as a regional capital

⁵⁴ Walvin, *People’s Game*, p. 83.

⁵⁵ Walton, *Lancashire*, p. 2.

but in Liverpool's case the migration was long-distance and multi-ethnic, 'setting it apart from surrounding Lancashire (and from the rest of England)'. John Belchem suggests 'the "melting-pot" of in-migration gave Liverpool its unique identity, a construction riven with considerable cultural, sectarian, and political division.'⁵⁶ Whilst this is true, it will be argued in this study, that professional League football helped to maintain links with the nation at large, and, therefore, reinforced the English and Lancastrian aspect of the city's identity.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Several historians, for example, Joan Smith and Sam Davies, used the concept of 'exceptionalism', to comment on Liverpool's social and political peculiarities.⁵⁷ Even though Belchem has been one of the main promoters of the notion of exceptionalism as a critical factor in the definition of a 'Liverpool' identity, he basically ignored the role played by football in his otherwise insightful investigation of Liverpudlian 'apartness'. The extensive newspaper coverage devoted to football in pre-1914 Liverpool attests to the importance that the game had for its citizens. It is clear that football in Liverpool has greater social significance beyond mere recreation, though even on this level, Russell has argued that sport is central to the lives of many people and is a 'vital and defining part of their existence.'⁵⁸ In view of the growing historiography on football and the obvious importance of the sport in the social milieu of Liverpool's popular culture, Belchem's omission is all the more extraordinary.

This thesis attempts to redress this omission by examining the development of football in Liverpool and the influence that the sport had on Liverpudlians. Once the lacunae in our knowledge and understanding of this early period in its development became evident, the key questions for debate could be clearly identified. Firstly, what were the mechanisms by which football was introduced and initially developed in Liverpool? The existing literature acknowledges that the churches were involved in the early

⁵⁶ Belchem, *Exceptionalism*, p. 203.

⁵⁷ Davies, *Labour*, pp. 19-20 and Chapter 1, pp. 27-52. Smith, J., 'Class, Skill, and Sectarianism', Belchem, *Exceptionalism*, Preface, pp. xi-xvii.

⁵⁸ Russell, *Football and the English*, p. 60.

development of football but the commonly accepted interpretation of St. Domingo's as the progenitor of Everton FC is evidently inadequate, and the role of the Church in the introduction of the sport to Liverpool needs a more detailed explication. Chapters One and Two basically concern themselves with answering this first key question although the findings of these chapters overlap considerably with the other aims of the project. The second key question relates to the relationship between the local amateur and professional game; given the strength of amateur and even the semi-professional game in the area, why did Everton and Liverpool make so little use of local players? In the modern era, Liverpool and its environs produce more professional footballers than any other region, yet in their formative years, Everton and Liverpool relied on players imported from other parts of Britain, most notably Scotland. This study will show that despite a thriving amateur infrastructure before 1914, comparatively few of its players chose to become professional players.

The final questions posed ask how football contributed to a Liverpool identity and why did it become such a popular local phenomenon? The answers to these questions pervade the entire study, although they are most relevant in Chapters Five and Six. Everton were the new Football League's best patronised club in the 1890s, yet less than fifteen years previously there had been no football in Liverpool at all. This study examines the role that various agencies played in promoting the sport in the locality, including the church, politicians and entrepreneurs, and the press. The latter may ultimately have been the most influential promoter of football through publicity, reporting, and providing a forum for public involvement; it certainly had a symbiotic relationship with the sport which benefited both parties.

This study's exploration of the broad impact of football on Liverpool society before the First World War utilises many previously neglected sources. It presents a new interpretation of the diffusion of football to the Liverpool area and its importance as a cultural phenomenon in the city, and poses new questions about football's place in the realisation of regional identity. The first two chapters adopt a chronological structure whilst the remainder are thematic in scope. Initially, the entire project was to have been outlined chronologically but as the project progressed it became apparent that Liverpool professional football had evolved to a virtual maturity by the mid-1900s. As

a consequence, certain significant events, such as the winning of League championships and Cup finals, and a match-fixing scandal of 1915, are mentioned only in passing. Chapter One explores the reasons why football was a late starter in Liverpool, and shows how the Church of England played a major role in introducing the sport and organised a local network. The Muscular Christian strand was of a particularly pure type, its ideals rapidly contorted by an entrepreneur with political and commercial motives. The trend towards commercialisation was evident at a very early stage, with Everton and Bootle emerging as the dominant local clubs until the formation of the Football League. The second chapter shows how football in Liverpool matured into a recognisably modern form. Internal divisions within Everton FC led to that club's reconstitution and to the separate formation of Liverpool FC. The public preoccupation with football also led local entrepreneurs to initiate short-lived attempts to form other local professional clubs. Some of this chapter has been covered by David Kennedy's 2003 thesis, but this study includes additional material on the clubs' contrasting attitudes to team management, the Houlding family's withdrawal from football, as well as the possibly deliberate obfuscation of Everton's origins to exaggerate the role of the club's management in the formation of the original club.

Chapter Three examines the backgrounds of the men who became professional footballers with Everton and Liverpool and how they fitted into contemporary Liverpool society. This includes detailed analysis of the reasons for the clubs' preference for Scottish players and the way in which professionals and their families were affected by their chosen career. The chapter also examines how restraints on players' freedom of trade affected employee-employer relations and the contribution of Liverpool-based players to footballer unionisation. The fourth chapter explores the world of local amateur football, in its range of social class, organisation, and links with the schoolboy and professional varieties. The scale of amateur football is shown to be much greater than previously thought, predominantly due to the expansion in urban working-class teams. The football culture in some peripheral districts was so pervasive that the better teams were able to convert to semi-professionalism and play in regional leagues. This chapter also explores reasons why so few Liverpool-born amateurs converted to professionalism before 1914.

Chapter Five looks at the nature of football spectating and fan culture in pre-1914 Liverpool. Vast numbers of spectators attended Everton and Liverpool matches before 1900, though by the second decade of the new century, several other city clubs had overtaken them in popularity. Using newly available sources, a new interpretation of the age range, gender, and socio-occupational composition of Liverpudlian football crowds has been made. Issues of early fan culture, such as travel, supporter groups, and costume are addressed. This also includes an investigation of the phenomenon of religious sectarianism in Liverpool football. The penultimate section looks at issues connected to the evolution of the local footballing press, and how this contributed to the development of fan culture and helped define a sense of local identity. In Liverpool, football and the popular press appeared at roughly the same time and following the formation of the Football League, both were locked into a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship. This chapter will show that local newspapers provided a means for fans to interact with both the professional and amateur game. There is evidence that the press exerted an extraordinary level of influence over local professional football through its attempts to increase circulation in far-flung corners of the Liverpool sub-region.

This study is an original contribution to the social history of professional spectator sport, and also supplements parallel work on the city's urban culture already undertaken by earlier historians of Liverpool such as Waller, Neal, and Belchem. It links together previous social and political studies on late Victorian and Edwardian Britain and the social history of England's major recreational sport.

APPROACH, METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

Rather than repeatedly using the unwieldy term, *association* football, the game will be generally referred in the text simply as '*football*' and occasionally as '*soccer*'. Rugby football shall generally be termed '*rugby*'. The project concerns itself with football played in the area of the city of Liverpool, plus the satellite areas of Bootle, Crosby, Maghull, and Kirkby. Though not primarily concerned with football in the Wirral and St. Helens, occasional digressions on the football culture of these districts is unavoidable. The word 'Merseyside', in the context of this study, is an anachronism

dating from the 1920s, and it will not generally be used in either its geo-economic or political sense. The preferred term here will be the *Liverpool district*. The temporal parameters of the project were selected because no record of football has been found in the Liverpool press prior to 1879, and though most normal social activity was suspended on the outbreak of war in August 1914, football controversially continued until May 1915.

The contemporary local press provided the most comprehensive and continuous source of information. Football coverage in the local press started in 1879, but rugby was reported for some years prior to this. Initially, match reports consisted of copy sent by local club secretaries. The available material at this stage must be considered selective, as some football clubs may not have contacted the press. However, such anecdotal reports do give some insight into the inner workings of early clubs in the city. Though the use of the local press has its limitations, there are certain advantages as a primary source. There was detailed weekly, and sometimes daily coverage of local football together with occasional feature articles on matters of interest, such as pen-pictures of footballers. The main newspaper sources are the *Liverpool Courier* (very useful for the early period), and the *Liverpool Echo* (which from the late 1880s had a parallel football version). The weekly *Liverpool Review* also contained substantial football coverage from the late 1880s to about 1900. Crucially, most match reports in the early stages include team lists, and in some cases individual names can be cross-referenced with the 1881, 1891, and 1901 censuses, providing data on address, age, occupation, birthplace, and family background.

Comprehensive data on professional footballers for both senior Liverpool clubs for the period 1888-1915 is obtainable from the player databases compiled by Lamming⁵⁹ for Liverpool and the *Breedon Complete Records* for Everton by Ross and Smailes, and Liverpool by Brian Pead. A very useful recently published source are Tony Matthews' *Who's Who* books for both Everton and Liverpool,⁶⁰ including player birthplaces, birth

⁵⁹Lamming, D., *Who's Who of Liverpool FC*, (Derby: Breedon Books, 1989).

⁶⁰ Matthews, Tony, (2004), *Who's Who of Everton*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2004), and Matthews, Tony, *Who's Who of Liverpool*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2006).

dates, and general biographical information. Michael Joyce's comprehensive directory of League footballers from 1888 to 1939 was particularly useful for ascertaining Liverpool-born players who were not employed by either Everton or Liverpool.⁶¹ Team lists for amateur and semi-professional clubs were obtained from the *Football Echo* and suburban newspapers, such as the *Crosby Herald* and the *Prescot and Huyton Reporter*. The names of players from team lists printed in the local papers were, as for the professionals, cross-referenced with censuses and street directories. Data regarding the number of potential football pitches and the design of football grounds was ascertained from contemporary ordnance survey maps, particularly 1:2500 and 1:500 scale.

Several chapters benefited from Brian Tabner's invaluable tables on attendance data for professional clubs.⁶² Illustrations (sketches and photographs) in the press also provided valid evidence. 'Stills' taken from Mitchell's and Kenyon's recently discovered collection of football films have been utilised in the chapter on spectators. Contemporary newspaper competitions were a useful source for ascertaining the specific individual readership of the football pages of local newspapers. Names, and in some cases, specific addresses were supplemented with further evidence from censuses and street directories, to give a broader view of age, occupation, and family background. A diversity of additional sources provided abundant contextual evidence relating to the political, social, and economic background of the development of Liverpool's football industry. Statistics on relevant social and economic matters were collected from census reports and magistrates' licensing records.⁶³

There have been few detailed local studies of football history. This is a wide-ranging in-depth investigation into the development of early football in an English city. The thesis includes much original empirical research and a level of micro-detail that few similar studies have attempted. Hopefully, this work's structure could also provide the model for other investigations of early football in other major cities.

⁶¹ Joyce, Michael *Football League Players' Records 1888 to 1939* (Nottingham: Soccer Data, 2002).

⁶² Tabner, *Turnstiles*.

⁶³ Waller, *Democracy*, and Belchem, J., *Popular Politics, Riot and Labour: Essays in Liverpool History, 1790-1940*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992).

CHAPTER ONE**CLERKS, CLERICS, AND COMMERCIALISM****: THE BEGINNINGS OF FOOTBALL IN LIVERPOOL, 1879-1888***INTRODUCTION*

Association football was a game initially formulated as a set of compromise rules formulated by a consortium of leading public school 'old boy' football clubs in 1863. It was largely an elite sport until men from lower social groups began to show interest, prompted in many cases by upper middle-class evangelicals with altruistic and religious motives. However, economic and cultural differences between the groups meant that obdurate attitudes of the working-class towards elite notions of rational recreation eventually led to commercialism and professionalism. By the late 1870s, such attitudes, along with particularly entrenched perceptions of urban identity, led certain football clubs in east Lancashire to recruit skilled footballers from distant regions and pay them for their services. Huge crowds of several thousand people were attracted to watch football matches in these areas.

At this time in the 1870s, the game of association football had no presence at all in Liverpool, although rugby was played by the elite class and was becoming popular with lower social groups. According to Thomas Keates, an early chronicler of Everton FC, various church teams were playing soccer in Stanley Park in north Liverpool in the last two years of the decade. These teams were mostly Anglican in origin but the sole exception, the Methodist St. Domingo's FC gave rise to Everton FC, ultimately to become the district's most powerful football club.¹ In his 1985 paper, Tony Mason quoted the recollections of an early participant who stated that the churches were involved in football

¹ See Young, Percy M., *Football on Merseyside*, (London: Stanley Paul, 1963), pp. 13-18, Keates, Thomas, *History of the Everton Football Club 1878-1928*, (Liverpool: Thomas Brakell, 1928), pp. 1-7.

from the outset.² Rees also provides evidence that clergymen were involved in the promotion of sport and physical exercise in 1870s Liverpool.³ Therefore, some sort of Muscular Christian initiative very probably lay behind the introduction of soccer to the lower classes of Liverpool, but no previous author has in any way, fully investigated the precise mechanism by which this was achieved. Even David Kennedy, in his recent study on the bifurcation of Everton FC, completely accepts the club's St. Domingo origin, and as we will see, this seriously affects the context of his overall findings.⁴

Dave Russell has commented that 'Liverpool may be described as a late starter with a soccer culture', but by the late 1870s the city had already begun to develop a popular rugby culture among lower middle class men.⁵ Richard Holt has said of Liverpool (and Manchester) that 'the phenomenal speed at which football spread from the mid-1870s to the mid 1880s rules out the possibility of seeing the game as a rational recreation initiative 'from above'.' This implies that the working-class had some sort of existing predisposition to soccer, perhaps through the survival of a form of traditional football.⁶ Adrian Harvey has recently argued that plebeian local varieties of football developed sophisticated codes of rules independent of the influence of public schools.⁷ According to Harvey, the overwhelming acceptance of 'civilising' theories, which give greater currency to the hegemony of codified public school football, has obfuscated historians'

² Mason, Tony, *The Blues and the Reds*, (Liverpool: Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1985), p. 2.

³ Rees, R., *The Development of Physical Recreation in Liverpool during the Nineteenth Century*, (1968), MA Thesis, University of Liverpool, p. 194.

⁴ Kennedy, D., *The division of Everton Football Club into hostile factions: the development of professional football organisation on Merseyside, 1878-1914*, (2003), University of Leeds, unpublished PhD thesis.

⁵ Russell, D., 'Sporadic and Curious: The Emergence of Rugby and Soccer Zones in Yorkshire and Lancashire, c. 1860-1914', in *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 5, 2, (1988), p. 189.

⁶ Holt, R., 'Football and the Urban Way of Life in Nineteenth-Century Britain', in Mangan, J.A. (ed.), *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism*, (London: Frank Cass, 1988), p. 71.

⁷ Harvey Adrian, *Football: the First Hundred Years: the untold story*, (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 86-90.

receptiveness to an alternative interpretation that older forms of football survived far longer into the nineteenth century than previously believed.⁸ Harvey believes that such varieties of football were ‘very much part of the existing sporting culture.’⁹ The working-class were ‘capable of constructing very detailed rules to regulate ...sporting contests,’ such as wrestling. Harvey also suggests that the original Football Association of 1863 was a weak and unstable organisation, and that its rules were frequently ignored even by its constituent members. The FA subsequently underwent a major revision of its code in 1868, and adopted many rules from the far more stable and lower social class Sheffield Association. Harvey has produced some evidence that organised forms of folk football survived in east Lancashire, but there is very little to suggest that anything of the sort occurred in or near Liverpool, unless it was an unreported children’s version.¹⁰

As this chapter will show, the origin of soccer in Liverpool differs significantly from the version which has coloured the interpretations of several historians of Liverpool football. The chapter deals with the introduction and early development of football in the Liverpool area until Everton became one of the founding members of the Football League in 1888. It is a significant period not least because of the extraordinary rate of development undergone by the football industry in Liverpool. In 1878 there was no football in Liverpool, but a little over ten years later, more people attended professional football matches in Liverpool than elsewhere. New evidence is adduced to show the true origin of soccer in the city, and the process through which, Everton and Bootle, the district’s two leading clubs, began to develop as commercial concerns.

⁸ Dunning, Eric, and Sheard, Kenneth, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: a sociological study of the development of rugby football*, (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1979), Chapters 2-5.

⁹ Harvey, *First Hundred Years*, p. 230.

¹⁰ Though see *Liverpool Mercury* report of April 30th 1874 on page 33 of this chapter.

SPORT IN LIVERPOOL PRIOR TO 1879

For the majority of its citizens in the mid-nineteenth century, Liverpool was a brutal and squalid place. Liverpool genuinely was a town of 'Two Nations'; enormous wealth was encountered in close proximity to unimaginable squalor, exacerbated by massive Irish immigration in the decade following the Great Famine.¹¹ The higher echelons of Liverpool society enjoyed quite a vibrant sporting culture, including rugby, cricket, curling, polo, tennis, and yachting, and they could also acquire membership of the Liverpool Gymnasium, which specifically excluded the artisan classes, even though high subscriptions precluded their membership anyway. During the 1860s, several so-called Olympic sports festivals attracted many thousands of respectable citizens.¹² The lower orders, however, did have their own recreational culture focussed on pubs and taverns, an interest shared by some members of the privileged classes. The contemporary social commentator, Hugh Shimmin provided vivid and detailed descriptions of this and other aspects of mid-Victorian working-class life in Liverpool, including dog fights and the social festivities associated with Aintree race meetings. On urban pugilism, he wrote, 'The house where it was held is noted for all the sports of the fancy – fighting, running, rapping, dog racing, badger baiting, and their concomitant vicious practices.'¹³ For people living in the satellite villages and developing suburbs, a limited culture of traditional sports and games did survive. The early nineteenth century historian of the Everton township, Robert Syers, mentioned that a traditional football game had been played in Everton's Folly Field.¹⁴ This annual game had a good deal in common with other folk games played throughout England until their widespread abolition by the magistracy during the early nineteenth-century. The Everton game was apparently moribund by the time that Syers

¹¹ Belchem, John and MacRaid, Donald, M., 'Cosmopolitan Liverpool' in Belchem, J. (ed), *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character, and History*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), pp. 328-330.

¹² Rees, *Physical Recreation*, pp. 72-75, Chapter 4.

¹³ Walton, J.K. and Wilcox, A. (ed.s), *Low Life and Moral Improvement in Mid-Victorian England: Liverpool through the journalism of Hugh Shimmin*, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991), p. 60, 'The Aintree Meeting', pp. 78-86.

¹⁴ Syers, R., *History of Everton*, (Liverpool: G. and J. Robinson, 1830).

wrote his history in 1830. Rees provides evidence that sparring, wrestling, and quoits, remained vibrant in the local sporting culture of taverns and fairs.¹⁵ Illegal sports such as prizefighting and cockfighting remained popular but clandestine activities. However, *rational* recreation only began to be indulged in by groups other than the elite classes of Liverpool, when the working week began to be shortened during the 1860s. With an economy based on casual labour and commerce such a social benefit took place later in Liverpool than in other industrial cities of the North and Midlands.¹⁶ That greater numbers of young men now had leisure time is reflected in Rees' figures for the formation of cricket clubs which show a marked increase during the 1860s (Table 1.1).¹⁷ The *Liverpool Mercury* even reported that the 'lowest and most despicable characters' of the working-class gathered to play cricket, football, and pitch and toss on Parliament Fields.¹⁸

Table 1.1 Formation of cricket clubs in the Liverpool district

Year	New clubs formed
1850	11
1855	14
1860	30
1865	74
1870	147
1875	139
1880	146
1885	233

Source: Rees (1968), p.68.

The Liverpool (Rugby) Football Club was reputedly the earliest established in the north of England, dating from 1857. Its membership was very exclusive, predominantly composed

¹⁵ Rees, *Physical Recreation*, pp. 192-193, Chapter 1.

¹⁶ Taplin, Eric, 'False Dawn of New unionism? Labour Unrest in Liverpool 1871-1873', in Belchem, J. (ed), *Popular Politics, Riot and Labour: Essays in Liverpool History 1790-1940*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), pp. 139-141. Rees, *Physical Recreation*, p. 46.

¹⁷ Rees, *Physical Recreation*, pp. 67-72, Chapter 4.

¹⁸ *Mercury*, April 30th 1874.

of ex-public schoolboys, and generally the Liverpool club played other teams of high status such as Manchester, Trinity College, Dublin, and Rugby School.¹⁹ However during the 1870s, increasingly empowered and educated groups with increasing leisure time, such as clerks, were taking up even this previously elite sport. At least 18 Liverpool-based rugby clubs existed in the 1879-80 season, considerably more than the eight reported by Rees (Table 1.2).²⁰

Table 1.2

Rugby clubs in Liverpool 1880
Alfred Wanderers
Bootle Wasps
Crescent Wanderers
Dingle
Edge Hill Wanderers
Fairfield
Fairfield Wanderers
Litherland
Liverpool
Liverpool College
Liverpool Institute Old Boys
Meteor
Orrell Rangers
Resistance (Dingle)
Walton
Waterloo
Wavertree

Source: *Liverpool Courier* 1879-80

Twenty-one players from five teams have been traced using the 1881 census. Though this is perhaps too small a sample to be fully conclusive, these rugby footballers were

¹⁹ Darglish, JRA, *Red, Black, and Blue : 125 Years of Liverpool (RU)FC*, (Liverpool: Liverpool Rugby Football Club, 1982), Chapter 1.

²⁰ See *Liverpool Courier* throughout November 1879. Further information on clerks in Anderson, Gregory, *Victorian Clerks*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976).

predominantly from the lower-middle and skilled working-classes (**Appendix 1.3, page 77**).

These rugby clubs did not play matches with the elite Liverpool club, and their social composition had more in common with other Lancashire clubs such as Rochdale Hornets and Manchester Rangers.²¹ Rugby was a violent and even dangerous sport, and employers were reportedly intolerant of absences occasioned by serious injury. An office manager expressed irritation with the frequent absences of rugby-playing clerks whose ‘childish vanities’ inspired ‘the strong muscles and weak brains of a number of young fellows to risk by the most clownish and dangerous struggling, the doing to one another of some bodily injury under the guise of sport.’²² The violence inherent in rugby contradicted the morality with which Muscular Christians wanted to inculcate the urban working-class and is perhaps one of the reasons why the clergy did not feel it an appropriate sport with which to evangelise.²³ A *Mercury* correspondent commented that rugby’s decline in Liverpool in the 1880s, was probably due to its ‘many fatal accidents’.²⁴

THE INTRODUCTION OF ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL TO LIVERPOOL

The dribbling versions of football were considered to be generally simpler and safer than handling versions such as rugby but also had the advantage of smaller teams (at a time when rugby rules required 20 a side). The presence of former pupils of a school at which the dribbling variant of football was played could be a crucial factor in the spread of the game within a particular geographic area, in other words, a ‘centre of diffusion’. The Harrow School code of football proved to be particularly influential and a significant number of Harrow football rules were adopted in the drafting of the original FA code in 1863. Old boys of Harrow School were also influential in the formation of football clubs.

²¹ Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians*, pp.134-135.

²² *Porcupine*, 23rd Nov. 1878, in Rees, *Physical Recreation*, p. 181.

²³ Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians*, p. 138, and p.140.

²⁴ *Mercury* Oct. 8th 1883.

Harrovians established the “No Names” club based in Kilburn, Middlesex, and Forest FC (later re-named Wanderers FC) of Epping Forest was formed in 1859. In 1870 the Old Harrovian brothers, John and Robert Kay, had initiated the formation of the Turton FC in an isolated Lancashire village between Blackburn and Bolton. For its first two years, Turton used the Harrow rules, and indeed according to Harvey were actually oblivious to the FA code.²⁵ Soon afterwards, almost parallel developments occurred in nearby Darwen. The three Walsh brothers, sons of Nathaniel Walsh, a prominent Darwen millowner, had attended Harrow during the late ‘sixties and early ‘seventies. The boys instructed some of their father’s employees in the ways of the game. By the end of the decade, the Darwen team, composed largely of working-class cotton operatives had penetrated the public school exclusivity of the FA Cup competition.²⁶

During this period there were a greater number of Harrovians from Liverpool families than there were from cotton Lancashire. Between 1850 and 1875, 75 Liverpool boys had attended Harrow School (**Figure 1.1, page 72**). Four of these had actually represented the school at football. Additionally, over the same period, 33 Harrovians were from the Liverpool hinterland, of which six were capped by the senior school XI.²⁷ None of the Kay and Walsh brothers gained a school cap but they had such great enthusiasm for the game that they played it in their home districts and participated in matches with youths from humbler backgrounds. Given that there were over a hundred Harrovians based in the Liverpool district over 25 years of the mid-Victorian period it might, therefore, be expected that there was a greater probability of diffusion of the Harrow code to some lower-middle and working-class Liverpoolians. However, despite the large numbers of Liverpool Harrovians, no evidence has been found of a football initiative on the Turton/Darwen model. Given the other examples of proselytising Harrovian groups cited above, Liverpool’s lack of initiative in disseminating the football code seems all the more peculiar.

²⁵ Harvey, *First Hundred Years*, p. 143.

²⁶ Fabian and Green, *Association Football*, Vol. 3, p.10-11.

²⁷ Daughlish, M.D., *Harrow School Register 1801-1901*, (London: Longman, 1901).

Despite such a core of potential footballers in Liverpool, regular football games were not feasible unless indigenous non-public school players were included. Rigid social divisions within Liverpool society certainly precluded this. Football teams with a broad-based social composition may have been possible in the paternalistic environment of the east Lancashire industrial squirearchy but Liverpool sports clubs retained significant barriers of entry to the working-class.²⁸ As we have seen, the Liverpool Gymnasium even went as far as to specifically bar artisans. The case of the Liverpool rugby club also highlights another aspect of the exceptionalism of Liverpool class relations. The club, containing significant numbers of members from high status public schools such as Eton and Harrow, tended to play other socially exclusive teams from around the country, yet Dunning and Sheard claim that ex-pupils from the top public schools displayed such social status confidence that they were content to play matches with lower-class teams.²⁹

In Liverpool, the actions of outsiders were needed to introduce football to the public and this eventually happened at the end of the 1870s, when, by coincidence, two separate agents of diffusion arrived in the area more or less at the same time. One agent was a prominent Welsh footballer, recently settled in the locality, who wanted to continue to play the game he had enjoyed in the Wrexham area. The more significant agency was actually a group of young, athletic curates from Cambridge University, who continued their interest in sport by involving local youth in playing football. It was this latter group that had the most direct influence on the introduction of football to Liverpool itself. The first of the Cambridge curates to arrive in the region was 25 year old Alfred Keely. In 1877 he was appointed curate in the docklands parish of St. John's in Bootle. Keely was

²⁸Joyce, Patrick, *Work, Society, and Politics: the culture of the factory in later Victorian England*, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 134-157. Also see White, B.D., *A History of the Corporation of Liverpool 1835-1914* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1951), p.3. 'The essence of the matter, as far as the social attitude of the Liverpool merchant class is concerned, seems to be that the merchant was not usually a large-scale employer of labour, nor did he as a rule come into personal contact with the productive process by which the other classes lived, though these were of course the ultimate basis of his own wealth.' See also footnote 46, 'Introduction', p. 18.

²⁹ Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians*, p. 140.

the son of a prosperous Nottingham merchant, and had recently graduated from St. John's College, Cambridge. Five of the curates also attended St. John's during the 1870s, and all five had been there together in 1875 and 1876. The college had played a major role in the evolution of Cambridge's football rules, which, in turn, were influential in the drawing up of the first Football Association code. Keely and William Chapman, in fact, were the only curates who had actually played for the college football club (**Figure 1.2, page 73**).³⁰ With an annual subscription of 8 shillings, this long-established club (formed 1857) precluded the membership of poorer students such as sizars.³¹ Three of the curates (Edward Moseley, Richard Marsh, and Christopher Carter) had depended on sizarships, which were basically comparable to modern grants or exhibitions, and a necessity for the less wealthy, such as the sons of clergy, to offset the high cost of an Oxbridge education. As the son of a Yorkshire farmer, Carter was the only one of the future footballing curates from a relatively humble background (**Table 1.4**).

³⁰ Curry, Graham, 'The Trinity Connection: an analysis of the role of members of Cambridge University in the development of football in the mid-nineteenth century', *The Sports Historian*, No. 22, 2, (Nov. 2002), pp. 65-66.

³¹ See St. John's College magazine, *The Eagle*, Nov. 1874, Vol. IX, No. L, p. 189. Venn, John, *Alumni Cantabrigienses: a biographical list of all known students, graduates, and holders of office at the University of Cambridge from the earliest times to 1900*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944 edition). Rothblatt, Sheldon, *Revolution of the Dons*, (London: Faber, 1968), pp 76-78, on sizarships.

Table 1.4: Footballing curates in Liverpool, late 1870s to early 1880s.

Name	Born	Birthplace	School	Cambridge college	College status *	Curacy
Alfred Keely	1854	Nottingham	* see below	St. John's, 1874-77	Pensioner	St. John's, Bootle, 1877-82
Edward Moseley	1852	Rotherham	Oakham GS	St. John's, 1871-77	Sizar	St. Saviour's, Everton, 1878-81
Christopher Carter	1853	Dent, Yorks.	Sedburgh	St. John's, 1872-76	Sizar	St. Mary's, Kirkdale, 1878-96
Richard Marsh	1855	Plaistow	City of London	St. John's, 1874-78	Sizar	St. Benedict's, Everton, 1879-85
William Chapman	1856	Suffolk	Dedham	St. John's, 1875-79	Pensioner	St. Michael's, L'pool, 1879-80
William Jackson	1852	Blackheath	Blackheath PS	Corpus Chr., 1873-77	Pensioner	St. George's/ St. Benedict's, 1877-82
Henry Langley	1854	Bristol	Univ. Coll. Bath	C. C. / Christ's, 1873-77	Pensioner	St. George's, Everton, 1879-81

Source: *Crockford's Clerical Directory*, St. John's College, Cambridge Archives.

*Keely completed his schooling at a crammer run by the Rev. William G. Wilson, fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, at his rectory, Fornsett St. Peter, Norfolk.

A 'pensioner' was a student dependent on his family's contribution, whereas a 'sizar' depended on a sizarship (a form of grant).

Though only Keely and Chapman had played for the college team, the other curates were no less sporting. Carter had been captain of the Sedburgh School cricket team as well as a rower with the college boat club. Also, four of the curates originated from, or attended schools in, areas where early organised football had been played. Keely himself was from Nottingham, where the game had been played since at least the early 1860s. Richard Marsh was the son of a Plaistow clergyman, and lived close to West Ham where the pioneering association club, Upton Park, had been formed in 1866. Marsh had been educated at the City of London School, at about the same time as fellow pupil and future Prime Minister, H.H. Asquith. His school's playing field was Victoria Park, Bethnal Green, where local lads played a form of traditional football. Moreover, Upton Park FC organised an annual sports day at the park, where in 1868 another pupil at the City of London School, whose father was also a Plaistow clergyman, won a prize. The implication is strong that Marsh could well have been involved in some way with football in east London in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Marsh may even have seen C.W. Alcock's Forest FC playing only three miles away at Snaresbrook. Edward Moseley was from Rotherham, within the sphere of influence of the Sheffield FA, and went to school at Oakham in Rutland, a possible contributory source for some of the earliest Sheffield rules,

and a near neighbour of Uppingham, another enterprising football school and early FA member. William Jackson had been at Corpus Christi, rather than St. John's, but he had attended Blackheath Proprietary School, which played no small part in the development of the rugby game.³²

The sporting prowess of the Cambridge curates cannot be doubted. But why did Keely and the other young clergymen settle on Liverpool as a place to commence their clerical career? To answer that question we need to consider the ethos that prevailed at the university in the second part of the nineteenth century. During the 1870s, Cambridge was in the midst of an evangelical re-awakening. Daily worship continued to be compulsory and a third of all graduates went on to ordination in the Church of England. Evangelical students often involved themselves in selfless altruistic activity such as teaching and preaching in local Sunday Schools.³³ The influence of Christian Socialist intellectuals such as F.D. Maurice remained strong as the clergy began to develop a keener awareness of social problems. Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes assimilated the ideas of Maurice and focused on the body as a force to promote physical and spiritual well-being. In the public mind, Hughes and Kingsley were thought of as 'muscular Christians', an influential movement in the public schools of the 'sixties and 'seventies, popularised in Hughes' novel *Tom Brown's Schooldays*.³⁴ The words of a contemporary Cambridge evangelical appropriately sum up the climate prevailing in the university at the time: 'There are a large number of Christian men... leaders too in boating and athletics... whose one aim and prayer was the desire to lead men to Christ.'³⁵ A closer examination of the subsequent career of one of the curates, William Jackson, gives an insight into his own particular motivations. Jackson attended Corpus Christi, the most fervently religious of Cambridge's

³² I am indebted to Malcolm Underwood, archivist at St. John's College, Cambridge, for providing access to archive material.

³³ See Barclay, Oliver R. *Whatever Happened to the Jesus Lane Lot?*, (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1977), pp. 17-19.

³⁴ See Rothblatt, *Revolution*, pp. 143-151, and pp. 170-172 on Muscular Christianity.

³⁵ Sir Algernon Coote, quoted in Barclay, *Jesus Lane*, p.17. Coote played a major role in the formation of the evangelical Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Union (CICCU) in 1877.

colleges. From 1877 to 1884 he was curate to the Rev. William R. Trench at St. George's, Everton. Trench had earlier established a branch of the Church of England Temperance Society (CETS) before being succeeded as vicar of St. George's by the Rev. W.H. Knight-Bryce in 1882. The latter only stayed in Everton a year before moving to Bethnal Green, the former parish of Stewart Headlam, the controversial Liverpool-born founder of the Christian Socialist Guild of St. Matthew. Jackson followed Knight-Bryce to Bethnal Green as curate, and remained with him when the latter became Bishop of Bloemfontein in 1886. When he returned, Jackson served as vicar in two east-end parishes, where Christian Socialist ventures such as the Oxford House Mission were commonplace. The latter establishment was described as 'a place for making friends with working men, and extending the scope of the public school values and discipline, rules, and team work.'³⁶ The early careers of Keely, Moseley, and Carter show that they had some interest in working together in similar such ventures. Contact with the urban poor of Cambridge, through missionary work, strongly influenced by the precepts of Christian Socialism and Muscular Christianity, inspired in such young men a desire to continue such a mission in a challenging environment. The city of Liverpool certainly presented such a challenge to the Church. Given the city's sheer size, and the numbers of Irish and other immigrants, Liverpool's Anglican church attendance figure was significantly lower than that for other towns and cities during this period. Only 19.9% of Liverpool's half million population were churchgoers in 1881, which compared to 40% in Bristol, and 24% in Nottingham, Burnley and Bolton.³⁷ No doubt this was a factor that made Liverpool a particularly unappealing destination for Oxbridge-educated clergy. In 1871, only 37% ministered in the city (rising to 41% in 1902) compared to a national average varying between 55 and 58%.³⁸ It was therefore, relatively uncommon for 1870s Cambridge graduates to seek ministries in the city, so for five men from the same college to do so over a two year

³⁶ Winninton-Ingram, Bishop of London quoted in McLcod, Hugh, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City*, (London: Croom Helm, 1974), p.111.

³⁷ Chadwick, Owen, *The Victorian Clergy*, (London: 1970), pp. 219-220.

³⁸ *Crockford's Clerical Directory 1871 and 1902, Gore's Liverpool Directory 1871 and 1902*, Chadwick, *Victorian Clergy*, p. 249.

period was unusual, given that in 1871 there were only four clergymen in Liverpool who were St. John's graduates, and in 1902 there was only one (Table 1.5). The implication is that the St. John's curates deliberately chose to continue their friendship by ministering in challenging city parishes and that the opportunity to establish parish football clubs may well have been intentional from the outset.

Table 1.5: University origins of Liverpool clergy, 1871 and 1902.

Institution	1871	1902
Trinity College, Dublin	19	4
Oxford	11	16
Cambridge (including St. John's)	13	14
College of Divinity	9	22
Other University	2	13
No University	5	5
TOTAL	59	74
St. John's College only	4	1

Source: *Crockford's Clerical Directory* 1871, 1902.

The weakness of church ministry for the new urban masses was a major pre-occupation for the Church of England at this time. The situation in Liverpool was seen as particularly acute, especially the inadequate provision of churches for in-migrants in the new artisan suburbs. No church in Everton had less than 8,000 parishioners, and most far more, whilst in Kirkdale there were two parishes with 20,000 persons each. Some churchmen regarded John Charles Ryle's appointment as the first Bishop of Liverpool in 1880 as an experiment to see whether the Anglican Church 'was to have any effective impact on a modern, urbanised, industrial and commercial city.'³⁹

Bootle presented such a challenge where church attendance was half the national average.⁴⁰ Up to the middle of the century Bootle had been an isolated farming village.

³⁹ Farley, Ian D., *J.C. Ryle, First Bishop of Liverpool*, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000), p. 95.

⁴⁰ An unofficial non-conformist church census of 1881 claimed that overall church attendance (all denominations) in Liverpool was 19.9%. From the survey's sample of 25 English towns this was the

The town developed as the dock system encroached northward; by 1871, the population had quadrupled to 16,000, rising by another eleven thousand over the next ten years. Keely's parish was in the poorest part of the new town near the great timber yards, an area described, 'as almost overnight having evolved into a notorious slum'.⁴¹ Keely may have initiated a football club shortly after settling in Bootle, but it was only after the arrival in the Liverpool district of another proselytising enthusiast, some two years later, that proper fixtures between clubs began to be properly organised. Robert Lythgoe, an official of the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company, established a football club on the Cheshire side of the Mersey in Birkenhead, not long after his arrival in the district in 1879 (**Figure 1.3, page 73**). According to Robert Lewis, football spread by contiguous diffusion from Merseyside to north-east Wales, but in fact Lythgoe was responsible for the reverse process.⁴² Lythgoe and his family lived at the Shropshire Union's Liverpool headquarters at the Pier Head from where he could easily travel to Birkenhead by ferry. The Birkenhead team may have been predominantly composed of Lythgoe's fellow employees in the Shropshire Union Company. As well as Lythgoe there was certainly at least one other employee among the players. More than half of the players were clerks and these may also have been employees of the canal company (**Table 1.6**).

lowest figure. The average for the whole English sample was 38%. Source : C.S. Miall, (*Church Guardian*, 1882, no.20, quoted in Chadwick, *Victorian Clergy*, p.226.

⁴¹ Marsden, B., 'Education : Late Nineteenth Century Disparities in Provision', in Pope, R., *Atlas of British Social and Economic History since c. 1700*, (New York: Macmillan, 1989), p.205.

Table 1.6: Birkenhead AFC players 1879-80.

Name	Address (1881)	Age (1881)	Profession	Birthplace
Robert Lythgoe	2 Irwell St., Liverpool	31	Canal official	Chester
Charles Churchill	28 Stanley St., Tranmere	24	Elementary teacher	Swindon
James Mayor	11 Falcon Grove, Birkenhead	22	Cashier	Birkenhead
Arthur Bourne	50 Milton Road, Tranmere	22	Canal carrier	Newcastle-under-Lyme
William Crellin	8 Princes Place, Tranmere	26	Domestic coachman	Tranmere
Walter Edwards	4 Quigley St., Tranmere	21	General clerk	Tranmere
F.V.R. Hopper	18 Old Rectory, Birkenhead	23	Shipping clerk	Birkenhead
Henry Joy	108 Old Bidston Road, Birkenhead	20	App'tice pattern maker	Liverpool
Percy Studdard	342 Beckwith St., Claughton	23	Pattern maker	Manchester
John Farquarson	2 White St., Birkenhead	23	Commercial clerk	Liverpool

Source: *Liverpool Courier*, 1881 census.

The first reported match between the St. John's Church and the Birkenhead football clubs occurred in November 1879. St. John's regular team included several skilled artisans and teachers, as well as Keely and another curate, William Chapman, who had also played for the St. John's College club in Cambridge, and Godfrey Turner, a middle-class chemist who later played for the patrician Liverpool Ramblers club. Keely also persuaded his two brothers, Septimus and Edwin, to join him in Bootle and they too became occasional team members (Table 1.7).

St. John's footballers displayed a wider social mixture than the Birkenhead players, perhaps reflecting the Keely's evangelical intentions in forming his team. Of all the early football clubs in Liverpool, the St. John's and St. Mary's teams, despite being based in working-class parishes, seem to have had the most diverse social backgrounds, although the majority of players were still from the skilled artisan and lower middle groups (Table 1.8).

⁴² Lewis, Robert W., 'The Genesis of Professional Football: Bolton-Blackburn-Darwen, the Centre of Innovation 1878-85' in *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 14, No. 1, (April 1997), p. 43.

Table 1.7: St. John's, Bootle, AFC players 1879-80.

Name	Address (1881)	Age (1881)	Profession	Birthplace
Richard Gosson	13 Selwyn St., Kirkdale	24	Teacher	Shrewsbury
Alfred Allsop	9 Hamlet St., Bootle	25	House joiner	Bootle
Charles Allsop	9 Hamlet St., Bootle	23	Tinsmith	Bootle
Godfrey Turner	48 Chestnut Grove, Wavertree	25	Brewer	Slough
Alfred Keely	6 Morningside, Bootle	26	Curate	Nottingham
Septimus Keely	6 Morningside, Bootle	21	Tutor	Nottingham
Edwin Keely	6 Morningside, Bootle	22	Teacher	Nottingham
William Chapman	(left area before 1881)	25	Curate	Suffolk
William Mascheder	153 St. John's Rd., Bootle	24	Commercial clerk	Liverpool
Joseph Mascheder	153 St. John's Rd., Bootle	19	House carpenter	Liverpool
Walter Skillicorn	85 St. John's Rd., Bootle	22	Schoolmaster	Isle of Man
Robert Betts	10 Esk St., Kirkdale	22	Schoolmaster	Liverpool
Simpson Jones		29	Saw mills foreman	Staffordshire

Source: *Liverpool Courier*, 1881 census.

Table 1.8: St. Mary's, Kirkdale FC players, 1879-80

Name	Address (1881)	Age (1881)	Profession	Birthplace
Stephen Bancroft	35 Everton Valley, Liverpool	21	Cotton broker	Liverpool
Thomas Bancroft	35 Everton Valley, Liverpool	19	General broker	Liverpool
Christopher Carter	81 Walton Lane, Walton	27	Curate	Dent, West Riding
Harry Clarkson	64 Kirkstall St., Kirkdale	20	Clerk	Liverpool
Arthur Dovey	Walton Road, Kirkdale	15	Scholar	Liverpool
Thomas Dunbar	195 Stanley Rd., Kirkdale	23	Shop assistant	Birkenhead
Edward Gee	52 Tintern St., Kirkdale	21	Whitesmith	Wigan
William Gorrie	42 Barlow Lane, Kirkdale	17	Pupil teacher	Liverpool
Richard Gorrie	42 Barlow Lane, Kirkdale	19	Joiner	Liverpool
Evan Killey	73 St. Domingo Rd., Everton	17	Apprentice fitter	Liverpool
James Mennie	42 Bonsfield St., Kirkdale	25	Teacher	Liverpool
John Myles	161a Walton Lane, Kirkdale	24	Clerk	Scotland
George Rowson	Leigh Terrace, Walton	18	Commercial clerk	Lancashire
Otto Schumacher	24 Barlow St., Kirkdale	24	Labourer	Germany

Source: *Liverpool Courier*, 1881 census.

Their players ranged from working-class labourers at one extreme to professional upper middle-class men at the other. The social mixture of the teams supports the notion that St. John's and St. Mary's conformed most closely to the ethos of the curates' Muscular Christian intentions. A *Manchester Guardian* correspondent noted in 1884, that the introduction of elite sports to the working-class brought together 'all classes in football and athletics on terms of perfect equality'. In the rest of England there was a relative

harmony in class relations between c.1850 and c.1880, but in the acutely class-divided society of Liverpool it took the actions of outsiders like Keely to overcome local prejudices.⁴³

Lythgoe's Birkenhead team played their early games on a pitch in St.Anne's Field, near the Old Chester Road in Tranmere. St.John's F.C. used a field near Irlam Road, Bootle, some three-quarter's of a mile to the north of the dockland church. Though parts of the town had been urbanised by 1880, away from the docks, Bootle still retained aspects of a village, though tracts of housing were soon to cover its expanses of fields, as the population doubled between 1881 and 1891. The close relationship between the St.John's and Birkenhead F.C.s was further exemplified by the latter's fixture with Blackburn Olympic F.C. in late February 1880. That a team of such esteemed status (three years later they were the north's first F.A. Cup winners) were prepared to send a team to play lowly Birkenhead is indicative of the respect that Lythgoe already commanded in the north-west soccer community. He made careful preparations for this important match, and 'borrowed' several key St.John's players including Alfred Keely's two brothers.⁴⁴

FOOTBALL IN EVERTON

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, Everton, like Bootle, had been a physically separate township from Liverpool. The population had quadrupled to 110,000 between 1851 and 1881. This was substantially more than certain Lancashire football towns, including Blackburn (104,014) and Bolton (105,414), though Everton was mainly a residential district with virtually no industry of its own. Any rural aspect had vanished as the township developed into a burgeoning suburb of Liverpool (Figure 1.4, page 74). Twenty thousand homes had been built, settled by an influx of other skilled artisans,

⁴³ *Manchester Guardian* Nov. 30th 1884, quoted in Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians*, p. 195.

⁴⁴ *Liverpool Courier*, Mar. 1st 1880. Edwin Keely (1857-1929), educated Shrewsbury and Trinity College, Cambridge (both these institutions had a significant role in the development of association football). Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*. Edwin and Septimus Keely were living with their brother Alfred at 6 Morningside Road, Bootle (1881 census).

clerks, and shop owners.⁴⁵ The parish church of Everton, St. Georges, crowned the heights of the township and as the population increased its parish was split into four smaller units.⁴⁶ In 1878, Edward Moseley, who had been a fellow undergraduate of Keely's at St. John's College, was appointed the curate at St. Saviour's on Breckfield Road, Everton. Following the formation of the Bootle and Birkenhead clubs, Moseley and other curates of the Everton parishes also started an association football club during 1879.

The Everton United Church Football Club represented the four Anglican churches of the Everton township. Lay officers of Moseley's St. Saviour's Church provided several of the original players and the team also included many clerks (Table 1.9). Matches were played in nearby Stanley Park but the Everton United team seem to have been decidedly inferior to the teams from Bootle and Birkenhead. A greater number of Everton United's players seem to have had close connections with the church than was the case for other teams. Apart from the three curates, the St. Saviour churchwarden's sons, the sexton's sons, the superintendent of the Sunday school, and a teacher at the church's elementary school, all played for the team. A good proportion of the team were clerks, and unlike other clubs, there were no artisans; in other words, a greater proportion of the team were engaged in sedentary jobs, and also the team was older (average age 24.5 years) than their rivals (average 23.5 years).⁴⁷ The United Church also played the least number of matches, and this infrequency may be another crucial factor in their poor record.⁴⁸ The O'Whatmore, a

⁴⁵ Pooley, C., 'Choice and Constraint in the Nineteenth Century City: a Basis for Residential Differentiation' in Johnson, J. and Pooley, C. (eds), *The Structure of Nineteenth Century Cities*, (London: 1982), pp. 199-233.

⁴⁶ Mould, R. F., *St. George's Church, Everton: The Iron Church*, (Everton: St. George Press, 1977), p. 2. C.B. Phillips and J.H. Smith, *Lancashire and Cheshire from AD 1540*, (Essex: Longman, 1994), p. 229.

⁴⁷ Birkenhead's average age was 23.5 years and St. John's was 23.6. Lythgoe's Birkenhead FC only sent their second team to play the United Church.

⁴⁸ O'Whatmore also described the pioneering footballers' kit, 'Some of the players had donned special garments, but the majority wore their ordinary clothes, and piled their superfluous garments by the side of the goalposts.' O'Whatmore in *Porcupine*, Dec. 26th 1908.

1900s football correspondent with the Liverpool magazine *Porcupine*, had been an early pioneer in Stanley Park, and confirmed that games were comparatively infrequent. A good number of Liverpoolians still had to work on Saturday afternoons in the late 1870s and so it was difficult to raise a full team of eleven men.

Table 1.9: Everton United Church FC 1879-80.

Name	Address (1881)	Age (1881)	Profession	Birthplace	Details
William M. Higgins	84 Red Rock St., Anfield	26	Commercial clerk	Liverpool	Later with Everton FC
John W. Wilkinson	11 Bulwer St., Everton	24	Shipping clerk	Liverpool	
Thomas Bethel	65 Premier St., Everton	21	Articled engineer	Liverpool	Father, sexton of St. Saviour's
John McGregor	73 Friar St., Everton	19	Commercial clerk	Liverpool	Later with Everton FC
Tom Evans	28 Faraday St., Everton	28	Commercial clerk	Codnor	Later with Everton FC
James A. Smith	7 Bulwer St., Everton	29	Book keeper	Burnley	Superintendent, St. Saviour's Sunday school
Edward Moseley	5 St. Domingo Vale, Ev'ton	28	Curate	Rotherham	Curate, St. Saviour's
Richard Marsh	28 Rupert Lane, Everton	25	Curate	Plaistow	Curate, St. Benedict's
William Jackson	28 Rupert Lane, Everton	28	Curate	Blackheath	Curate, St. Benedict's
Charles Hiles	35 St. Ambrose Grove, Anf.	28	Insurance secretary	Baschurch	Later with Everton FC
James Houlgrave	11 Argyle Rd., Anfield	22	Clerk	Aigburth	Father, churchwarden of St. Saviour's
John Houlgrave	11 Argyle Rd., Anfield	19	Not known	Aigburth	Father, churchwarden of St. Saviour's
Tom Marriott	116 Grey Rock St., Anfield	20	Forwarding agent	Liverpool	Later with Everton FC
Edwin Horsfield	23 premier St., Everton	25	Teacher	Rochdale	Teacher, St. Saviour's School
William Hitchon	68 Conyers St., Kirkdale	25	Provision merchant	Burnley	

Source: *Liverpool Courier*, 1881 census.

Another witness to these early football experiments was a local entrepreneur and aspiring politician, John Houlding. Though too old to actively play, he was over the next 15 years, to exercise the greatest influence over the development of Liverpool football. Houlding was a very popular grass-roots local politician, with 'deep sympathy' for 'the labouring classes', and 'kindly feeling of the men who were fated to obtain from such occupation the modest means of subsistence,' his 'parochial patriotism' earning him the nickname, 'King John of Everton' (Figure 1.3, page 73). He was much involved in the politics of the Working Men's Conservative Association, a solidly Protestant organisation linked with the emerging Tory Democracy movement. Houlding greatly admired the local M.P., Viscount Sandon, and named his new flagship hostelry in Sandon's honour. Houlding's roots were appropriately modest. His father was a cow keeper in the Scotland Road area,

which in the 1830s was on the edge of built-up Liverpool, and the young John and his younger brother William were able to enjoy an active childhood playing in the meadows and ponds of the then semi-rural Everton. John assisted his parents by selling their cow's milk door to door, but at about 20 years of age, his father found him a position in an office in the commercial quarter, and here John acquired a sound knowledge of business methods.⁴⁹ Houlding was astute enough to eventually be able to buy a public house, benefiting from the relative lack of restrictions on licensing by the magistrates that prevailed in Liverpool in the mid-nineteenth century, and in 1864 had even started his own brewery in Everton. By the late 1870s, he owned a total of five public houses, scattered around the Everton district⁵⁰

Houlding had been involved in the organisation of such charities as the Liverpool Aged Poor Dinner and Relief Fund since the late 1860s and the Stanley Hospital from its foundation in 1870. He was also the charity representative of the Anfield Masonic Lodge. Such experience probably helped when he was elected to the local poor law union, the West Derby Board of Guardians, in 1874. He eventually became the Union's president in 1887, by which time it was the largest poor law union in England. He had a particular interest in public health and hygiene matters, and represented the corporation at sanitary conferences across the globe. Houlding had, no doubt, been politicised by the Liberal government's licensing legislation of 1872, which among other measures had restricted the hours of opening of pubs. Almost overnight most publicans became ardent Tories. The newly enfranchised urban working-classes took umbrage and this legislation was thought to be a critical factor in the Liberal election defeat two years later. Even the Liberal Prime Minister, William Gladstone himself, remarked that, 'we have been borne away in a torrent of gin and beer.'⁵¹ In 1881, Houlding was elected to the city council, projecting a public

⁴⁹ Houlding's obituary, *Courier*, March 18th 1902. 1851 Liverpool census.

⁵⁰ Licensing Records of the Liverpool Petty Sessions, 1877, 347 JUS. Waller, P. J. *Democracy and Sectarianism, a social and political history of Liverpool, 1868-1939*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1981), p. 63 and p. 495.

⁵¹ 'The importance of the drink interest was if anything reinforced by the further spread of the vote among the "drinking classes", and the politicisation of the publican was accentuated by Gladstone's

image as a proactive man of the people. The newspapers of the 1880s and '90s are punctuated with his exploits. When opening the Cottage Homes orphanage's swimming pool in 1890 he donned bathing attire and sampled the water himself.⁵²

Houlding appears to have been intimately involved in the organisation of an Everton Football Club perhaps as early as December 1879.⁵³ This was a separate organisation from the Everton United Church club but Houlding had been on the lay vestry committee of St. Saviour's, the church that provided the core of the Everton United Church team.⁵⁴ He would have known the curates personally, together with the laymen who played football. His imposing villa overlooked the United Church's pitch in Stanley Park, so he must have been directly aware of the public interest generated by football matches. Houlding also already had considerable experience in the organisation of a sports team; he had been President of the Everton Quoits Club for the preceding eleven years. Victorian publicans were renowned for their promotion of entertainment and sport. The latter generally included pedestrianism, prize fighting, and quoits, and these activities generated links with organised gambling. Quoits was played extensively in northern England, the midlands, Wales and Scotland and the rules had been nationally codified at a conference in Birmingham in 1869 though other varieties continued.⁵⁵ Essentially it was an outdoor game, the object being to throw as accurately as possible at a peg. Quoits had once been popular with all social classes but by the nineteenth century it was perceived as rather a

restrictive licensing legislation of 1869 and 1872, which reinforced the widespread alliance between brewers, publicans and Tories.' Walton, J.K., *The Second Reform Act*, (London: Methuen Lancaster Pamphlet, 1987), p. 47. Houlding's political career peaked in the late 1890s, when he was elected an Alderman, and then two years later, Lord Mayor.

⁵² *Review* May 10th 1890. 'John Houlding getting his swimming drawers ready.'

⁵³ An Everton Football Club was reported as playing the church team, St. Peter's in December 1879.

⁵⁴ Everton Quoits Club, see *Courier* Dec. 6th 1879 and *Waterloo Times*, Mar. 30th 1880, St. Saviour's Parish Records (vestry committee) April 1871- Oct. 1878, 283 SVR 9/1 Parochial Church Council Minute Books, Liverpool Central Library, Local History Department.

⁵⁵ The Association of Amateur Quoits clubs for the North of England published 15 rules in *The Field* in 1881. www.tradgames.org.uk/games/Quoits.htm

vulgar game for the masses. In Liverpool, however, it was still played by all classes though with little social mixing.⁵⁶ One of the country's top quoits players was the Liverpudlian, James Hood, five times English champion in the early 20th century.⁵⁷ The Everton Quoits Club was based at the Cabbage Hall Hotel at the end of Anfield Road. Eleven members have been identified in the 1881 census. Unsurprisingly, four of these were connected to the drinks trade (including Houlding and his son William), three were clerks, and the rest were skilled men. Apart from Houlding senior, all the men were aged from late 20s to late 30s. Significantly, some members were closely associated with Houlding, and several were later actively involved with Everton Football Club.

Given his involvement with these activities, together with the nature of his business, political ambitions, membership of the quoits club, and the fact that he was Everton FC's President in 1881, it seems highly likely that he was, at least, intimately involved in the formation of Everton Football Club. However, we do not know the precise mechanism of its foundation, whether the main driving force came from disgruntled United Church players, a group of novice players, or from Houlding himself. The United Church played very few organised matches and it may have been that some members wanted to play more frequent games but that the clergy were unwilling to relinquish control in case the evangelical purpose of the club was lost. Something similar occurred in Bolton in 1874, when Christ Church FC experienced antipathy between players and clergy and the former went on to form Bolton Wanderers.⁵⁸ Some of the Cambridge curates had temperance sympathies and Houlding's background as a brewer would not have endeared him with the

⁵⁶ More on quoits see Arlott, J. (ed), *Oxford Companion to Sports and Games*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp 805-806. Also see Davidson Peter, *Memories of the Childwall Quoiting Club, and some of its members*, (Liverpool: Henry Young, 1934).

⁵⁷ www.lindahome.freeuk.com/Quoits1/introduction.htm

⁵⁸ Bailey, Peter, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: rational recreation and the contest for control 1830-1885*, (London: Routledge, 1978), pp. 138-139.

former.⁵⁹ There may have been some tensions here and it is significant that The United Church never played a match against the new Everton FC, perhaps hinting at some sort of acrimony. None of the Cambridge curates subsequently played for the new club, though many lay members of the Church team did sign up. With the politically ambitious brewer Houlding as benefactor, the new Everton club was well organised and had more attractions for football playing clerks and skilled men than those that the church had to offer (Table 1.10).

Table 1.10: Everton FC players, 1881.

Name	Address (1881)	Age (1881)	Profession	Birthplace
Robert Morris	58 Breckfield Rd., Everton	30	Joiner	
Charles Lindsay	32 Coltman St.	19	Invoice clerk	Scotland
Joseph Pickering	50 Conway St.	24	Bricklayer	Liverpool
John Arlow		16	Pattern maker	Pembroke
Alexander Provan	171 Towson St.	16	Accountant	Govan, Scotland
David Provan	171 Towson St.	19	Accountant	Govan, Scotland
John Asbury	8 Norwood Grove, Anfield	23	Provisions clerk	Hawarden, Flint
Charles Hawthorne	15 Rydal St.	26	Rail clerk	Liverpool
Sidney Chalk	55 Kensington	18	Accountant	Middlesex
George Bargery	22 Walton Rd.	19	Bank clerk	Stepney
Francis Brettell	62 Aughton St.	18	Teacher	Liverpool

Source: *Liverpool Courier*, 1881 census.

Keates' history of the club tells us that Everton FC derived from the St. Domingo's New Connection Methodist Church FC, which itself was an offshoot of the latter's cricket club. Keates also claims that St. Domingo's played several teams in Stanley Park, including St. Mary's (Kirkdale), and three other church teams from Everton, the United Church, St. Peter's, and St. Benedict's. However, whilst matches involving the latter teams were frequently reported in the contemporary press, not a single mention of St. Domingo's has been found in Liverpool newspapers of the period. Moreover, *no* football was reported in the local press in the Liverpool district during 1878-79, the only year of St. Domingo's

⁵⁹ William Jackson was curate at St. George's, Everton, where a branch of the Church of England Temperance Society (CETS) had been established in the 1870s (see this chapter, page 7). Mould, *Iron Church*, p. 29.

alleged existence. There is also, as we have seen, overwhelming evidence of a deliberate Muscular Christian football initiative by Cambridge-educated curates in Everton, Kirkdale, and Bootle. John Houlding, being a member of the St. Saviour's vestry committee, the church most closely involved in the organisation of the United church club, and the President of an existing Everton-based sports club (quoits), seems a likely candidate to have made the most significant contribution to the formation of Everton FC. This new evidence, considered together with the inconsistencies, strongly suggests that St. Domingo's FC was not only not the predecessor of Everton, but that it never existed at all. Further evidence against the existence of this apparently mythical club is presented in Chapter Two, and it implies a somewhat devious motive for the myth's origin.

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF EVERTON AND BOOTLE FOOTBALL CLUBS

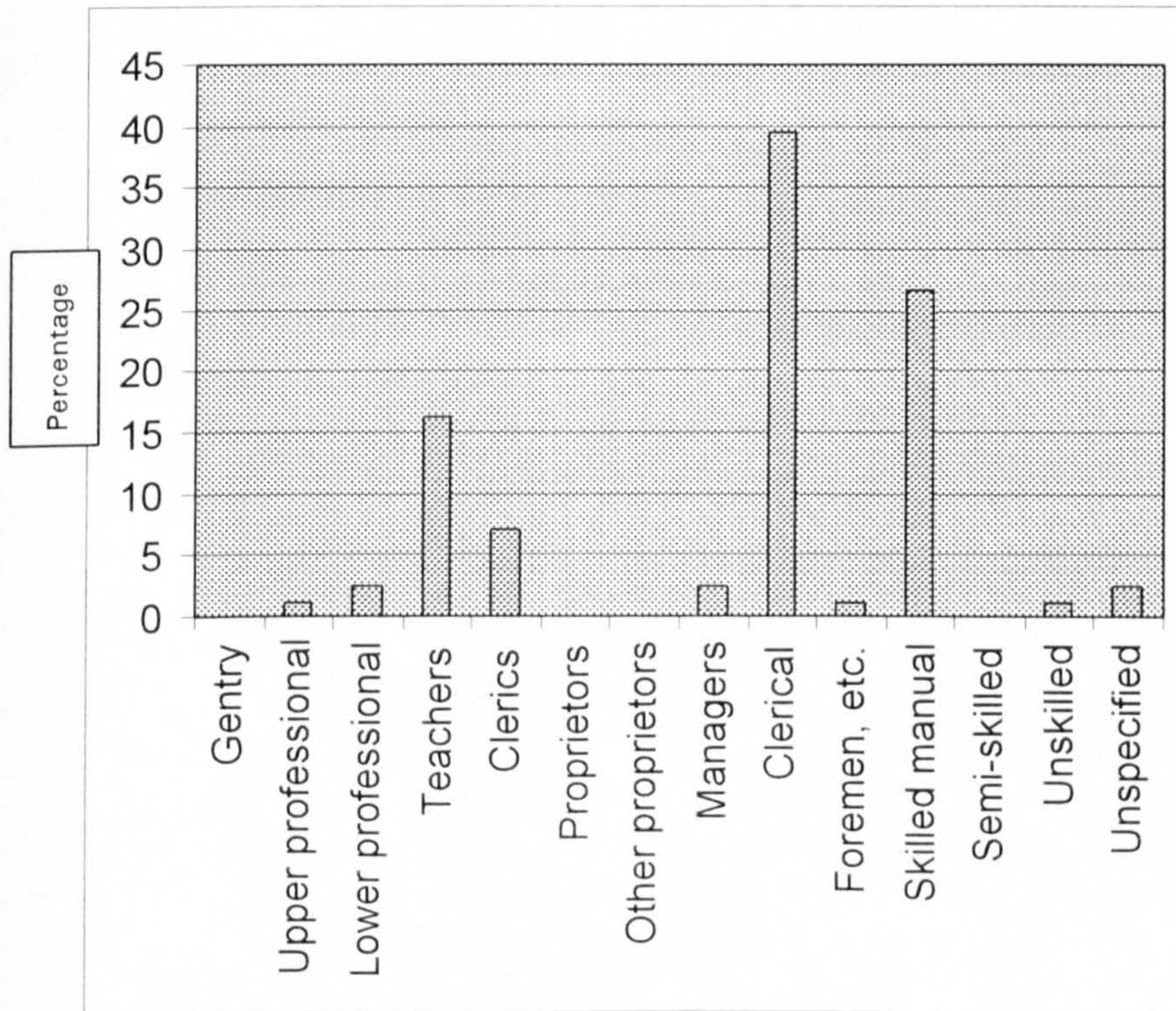
Clubs did not necessarily play matches every Saturday, particularly during the height of winter. It may be that some games were not reported in the local press but organisational problems certainly must have frustrated the regular playing of fixtures.⁶⁰ A common difficulty concerned the raising of a full team of eleven players. There are numerous examples from the contemporary press of teams being a man or more short. Late starts were sometimes inevitable given that many players were prone to the vagaries of their employment. It was common for clerks, for example, to be required to work Saturday afternoons at short notice. To alleviate such problems, clubs would generously loan their own players to balance the number of participants. Another solution was for both teams to agree to play 10 men a side. Calls for volunteers from the crowd were also made.⁶¹ Often

⁶⁰ *Porcupine*, Dec. 26th 1908, quoted in Mason, *Blues and the Reds*, p.2. 'The O'Whatmore', an early witness of Liverpool football and later the football correspondent of '*Porcupine*', confirmed that, 'matches took place but infrequently during the early stages.'

⁶¹ Bootle FC was three men short for the game with Everton in Stanley Park in March 1881, but three spectators were pressed into service. Two of these particular volunteers were normally regular players with the Liverpool Association FC. *Waterloo Times*, Mar. 12th 1881.

during the winter months, there was insufficient time for matches to be played for their normal duration. Often only an hour's play was possible before darkness set in.⁶²

Figure 1.5: Occupational categories of footballers in Liverpool 1879-1883 as percentages of the whole sample of 86 players.



Source: see Table 1.12.

Clerks were the dominant occupational group among the early footballers of Liverpool. Census data on the 86 identified players from this period shows that nearly 40% were clerks (of varying levels), with skilled manual workers accounting for just over a quarter, and teachers comprising about 16% (**Appendix 1.2, page 77, and Figure 1.5, above**). Mason has indicated that clerks were particularly prominent among early players and that the organisational skills of clerks were 'essential to any football club with aspirations'.⁶³

⁶² *Porcupine*, Dec. 26th 1908.

⁶³ Mason, *Association Football*, p. 30 and p. 53.

The greater presence of clerks in the Everton-based teams indicates the preponderance of this particular occupation in that suburb.⁶⁴

For the first twelve months of their existence, Everton FC mostly arranged fixtures with other teams from Liverpool and its hinterland, but, bravely ambitious, in November 1880, the club decided to enter the Lancashire FA's Challenge Cup competition. However, Everton's first encounter with an east Lancashire club was a salutary indicator of the competitive attitudes in the game's heartlands. Everton lost their match with Great Lever FC, but successfully protested a refereeing decision to the Lancashire FA. The tie was replayed at Great Lever, a small industrial township near Bolton, but Everton's legal manoeuvrings did little to endear them to east Lancashire townfolk. The *Liverpool Courier* commented:

To say the reception accorded them (*Everton*) was brusque is putting a mild construction upon the outlandish behaviour of the Great Lever folk. Great Lever won the match but even this did not conciliate the blatant crowd which thronged the ground, whose demeanour was so threatening that the visitors, and even the referee felt a chilling influence. When the Liverpool team retired from the field they were assailed with taunts and abusive epithets. 'Tha'll get na cheese an' bacon ta neet', sneered one of the irreconcilables to an Evertonian – that being the staple of Great Lever hospitality when in a generous mood. Nor did the Evertonians get the proverbial cheese and bacon. They were only too glad to escape from a district where so much hostile partisanship was displayed. If this is a fair specimen of the spirit in which football is played at Great Lever it is a matter which should be taken cognisance of by the county executive, otherwise there will arise a disinclination on the part of well-conducted clubs to take part in these cup contests.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Pooley, C., 'Living in Liverpool: the Modern City' in Belchem, J. (ed), *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character, and History*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), pp. 328-330. p. 202.

⁶⁵ *Courier* Dec. 4th 1880. Such east Lancashire antagonism was not reserved for relative outsiders such as Everton. On the same afternoon as the Everton-Great Lever match, Blackburn Rovers played neighbours Darwen in front of a huge 10,000 crowd. Even though this was a non-competitive fixture tensions between the teams and their supporters ran high. Following an on-field fracas, a group of spectators proceeded to join in the mayhem. The situation rapidly deteriorated and resulted in the eventual abandonment of the match. Jackman, M., *Blackburn Rovers: an illustrated history*, (Derby: Breedon, 1995), pp. 13-14.

Less acrimonious but equally genuine rivalries existed even in the new football district of Liverpool. An apparently mundane fixture in November 1881 with local rival, Liverpool Association FC 'was marred by much unseemly disputation' and precipitated protracted discussion in the local press⁶⁶ Everton FC seem to have absorbed the unsportsmanlike attitudes prevalent in east Lancashire. Recourse to the press and legal disputation were unsporting tactics, apparently initiated in order to intimidate opponents into submission.

By 1881, Everton had improved to a level where they were capable of defeating Halliwell Jubilee FC (from the football heartlands of Bolton) and the recent achievements of the club were trumpeted in the press: 'Few association clubs have made so much progress in such a brief period as Everton, its proud position being no doubt chiefly due to a course of practice during moonlight nights and in the summertime.'⁶⁷ The latter was due to the club captain, Jack McGill, a 'football professor' from Ayrshire.⁶⁸ Houlding may have recruited McGill to improve the efficacy of the football team. McGill's brief defection to Accrington in 1882 implies that he may have been a journeyman professional.⁶⁹

The Rev. Keely still exerted a strong influence in the Bootle club and remained very much the football proselytiser. At Christmas 1880, he organised a select team from the Liverpool area to play a representative match in Birmingham. The match attracted some 3,000 spectators, and the *Waterloo Times* reported that 'the game proved very fast and

⁶⁶ *Courier*, Nov. 19th 1881. Much correspondence in the local press centred on the impartiality or otherwise of the referee, Mr F. Parry. The Liverpool team contended that Parry was actually an occasional member of the Everton team and that he had apparently failed to see a disputed Everton goal which the Liverpool umpire had claimed was offside. It is probable that F. Parry was Frank Parry, the 13 year old brother of regular Everton player W.H. Parry!

⁶⁷ *Courier*. Nov. 5th 1881. Even the team's attire attracted comment, their all-black kit prompted the *Courier* to describe their appearance as 'business-like.'

⁶⁸ Fabian and Green, *Association Football*, Vol. 4, pp.16-17. Early soccer depended on a primitive long-ball game but the Scots played a tactically advanced style of 'passing the ball' - the 'Combination game'.

⁶⁹ Keates, *Everton FC*, p.9. Jackman, M. and Dykes, G., *Accrington Stanley - a Complete Record 1894-1962*, (Derby: Breedon, 1991), p. 361.

not withstanding the strenuous efforts of the Lancastrians they were beaten somewhat easily. The play of the brothers Keely, who represented Bootle on this occasion was very commendable.⁷⁰ More than half of the Birmingham side were members of Aston Villa, who were described as ‘much in favour for the Association Challenge Cup this season.’ An important representative match like this helped Liverpool football to assert itself on a much wider national stage.

Whilst still attached to the Birkenhead club, Robert Lythgoe acted as an umpire in the Lancashire Cup final between Darwen and Blackburn Rovers.⁷¹ His selection as a match official attests to the regard that Lythgoe commanded in wider football circles. Perhaps because his own club were ineligible to enter the prestigious Lancashire competition, Lythgoe transferred his allegiance to the reconstituted Bootle FC during the summer of 1881 (the ecclesiastical prefix St.John’s was dropped around this time).⁷² Under Lythgoe’s guidance, Bootle FC became a more ambitious organisation, entering both the Lancashire and FA Cup competitions (Figure 1.6, page 75).⁷³ The Bootle team that attempted to play two cup ties in one afternoon in November 1881, (an abortive Lancashire Cup match with Preston North End had been immediately preceded by an FA Cup tie against Law FC of Blackburn), included both Lythgoe and Keely, the two principal agents for the introduction of football to Liverpool.⁷⁴ 1882 marked the end of this first stage of Liverpool football as both men wound down their playing commitments. In the Bootle-Everton game of January 1882, Lythgoe was Bootle’s umpire, and Keely was the

⁷⁰ *Waterloo Times*, Jan. 1st 1881. Such prestigious representative matches became a regular feature in the early football seasons of the 1880s.

⁷¹ *Courier*, Mar. 22nd 1880.

⁷² *Courier* March 9th 1880, Nov. 7th 1881. F.G. Heaton had played for both Birkenhead and Bootle. their relationship had been characterised by mutual cooperation.

⁷³ Everton and Liverpool AFC had entered the Lancashire Cup but both shied well away from the English FA’s main competition. The Bootle club had inadvertently over-extended itself by playing an English and Lancashire Cup ties on the same afternoon in November 1881. *Courier*, Nov. 7th 1881.

⁷⁴ *Courier*, Nov. 7th 1881.

referee.⁷⁵ Later that year Keely left the district for good, to embrace a career as a suburban parson in Wimbledon. In March, fourteen hundred people witnessed another exhibition match between Mr. Tom Evans' Everton team and Mr R.M. Sloan's Bootle team. The Everton FC sub-captain, Tom Evans, who at 29 was one of the older footballists, was a clerk originally from Codnor in Derbyshire. Sport was evidently a family obsession. The six-foot Evans was also a passionate cricketer and his brother had represented the Birmingham and District FA in a game with the London FA in November 1881. Evans was another pioneer who left within the season, moving eight miles away to the small industrial town of Garston.⁷⁶

A surviving Everton FC fixture card from 1881-82 is a valuable source on the club executive and the sort of teams played during this period. Fixtures were now arranged for most Saturdays between September and April and can be classified into three types. Just over half of all matches were against local Liverpool teams such as Bootle, Linden, and Liverpool AFC. A third of fixtures were with teams from Liverpool's hinterland, in west Lancashire and Cheshire, including Burscough, Earlestown, Haydock, and Northwich Victoria. The remaining matches were against more distant opposition including relatively exotic organisations like Manchester Wanderers and Halliwell Jubilee.⁷⁷ Most contact with east Lancashire teams was confined to Lancashire Cup ties in which Everton were usually outclassed.⁷⁸ Distant fixtures caused organisational problems, necessitating an early start and much logistical planning using Bradshaw's Railway Guide. An away match with Chester Rovers in November 1881 was marred because Everton arrived with only seven players 'owing to the inconvenient service of trains'. Local volunteers made up the

⁷⁵ Young, *Merseyside*, p.17. *Daily Post*. Jan. 14th 1882. The *Daily Post*, in its report of this match described Everton and Bootle as being 'in advance of all others playing under the rules of the Association in this neighbourhood.'

⁷⁶ *Courier*, Nov. 5th 1881. Keates, *Everton FC*, p.8. As shown in Chapter 5, Garston developed its own passionate football culture.

⁷⁷ Everton FC membership and fixture card 1881-82, (Everton FC collection).

⁷⁸ Everton progressed no further than the second round losing to Lancashire's oldest club, Turton, whose team included the future football administrator, J.J. Bentley.

remainder but 'were practically of little use'.⁷⁹ Everton were an ambitious club and the practicalities of travelling to away games though far from straightforward, needed to be overcome if the club wanted to establish parity with the increasingly professional clubs of east Lancashire.

The arrangement of fixtures was the responsibility of the club's honorary secretary and treasurer, John W. Clarke, who resided at the Queen's Head, Everton, a hostelry managed by his parents. Clarke was 26 years old, somewhat older than most young footballists, and was by profession an articled engineer. According to Keates, it was in the Queen's Head that Everton FC were constituted from the short-lived St.Domingo's FC, but as suggested earlier, it seems improbable that the latter club had existed. Clarke moved from the district in the early part of 1882 and played no further part in the development of Everton FC. The rest of the club committee consisted of eight young players, most of them clerks.⁸⁰ Everton FC's President was John Houlding and the club patrons listed in the fixture card show that he was well connected to the Liverpool elite through his Conservative party contacts, which included local MPs, a ship owner, and some prominent brewers.⁸¹ Houlding ensured that his club remained in the consciousness of influential Liverpudlians when in 1882, in the words of Thomas Keates, an 'adroit circular' was sent to the 'well-to-do gentry of the city':

EVERTON FOOTBALL CLUB

Allow us to introduce to your notice the position attained by the above named organisation and to solicit your most valued sympathy and support.

Established in 1879, it has gradually improved in strength and importance, until it now occupies a position second to none in the district; nor do its claims for consideration rest here, for as the club has, season by season, grown in strength, its effect upon the public has been both marked

⁷⁹ *Courier* Nov. 7th 1881.

⁸⁰ The Everton committee included Charles Hawthorne, John Asbury, James Richards, Tom Marriott, Charles Hiles, Frank Brettell, Robert W. Morris, and Alexander Provan, virtually all originating from immigrant families (membership card 1881-82).

⁸¹ They included Houlding's political mentor, Viscount Sandon, and Edward Whitley MP of the Warrington brewing family, Robert Blezard, another local brewer, ship owner C.M. McIver, Earl Dalhousie, and Everton councillor, J. Barclay Smith.

and encouraging, so much so, that at any of its important fixtures there are large gatherings of persons, numbering 1,500 to 2,000, seeking the Saturday afternoon's recreation, which the public parks are intended to provide for.

In order to popularise the game, we are this year playing a number of clubs of considerable renown from long distances.⁸²

It was presumably hoped that these people would provide donations in order to fund travel and financial guarantees to the renowned distant clubs. In acting as an intermediary for the club Houlding must have also hoped to benefit to his own political ambitions. The appeal to the influential of Liverpool must have been at least partly successful because the next season's (1882-83) club patrons included three MPs and two JPs.⁸³

At the start of the new football season, the *Courier* commented that soccer's popularity was beginning to overtake rugby in Liverpool. The paper promoted the idea of a confederation of the district's 20 or so clubs. 'It is only by means of such an organisation, and the consequent focussing of the best talent of the district into a representative team, that a series of annual first class matches can be secured.'⁸⁴ A succession of correspondents during the autumn of 1882 took up the idea of a local 'confederation'. Frank Brettell, the young secretary of Everton FC, suggested such an organisation along the lines of a Whit-week competition initiated by John Houlding in aid of the Stanley Hospital. This had brought all local clubs together in May 1882 and a special committee of club secretaries was convened to organise it. The outcome of this agitation in the press was the establishment of the Liverpool and District Football Association. The main advantage of the new affiliate association was that the Liverpool area could now have its own challenge competition, with the greater probability of small-scale success more attainable than in the Lancashire or national competitions. The original members of the Liverpool Association included the district's premier clubs, Everton, Bootle, Liverpool

⁸² Keates, *Everton FC*, pp. 10-11.

⁸³ Everton FC fixture card 1882-83. The club patrons also included people of humbler status such as Houlding's fellow quoter, plumber Arthur Boylett and John C. Brooke, an Irish-born customs officer.

⁸⁴ *Courier*, Sept. 30th 1882.

AFC and Birkenhead AFC (the latter two soon to be defunct), together with the patrician Liverpool Ramblers club, and a rump of minor park-based teams including St. Peter's, St. Benedict's, and St. Mary's.⁸⁵ The secretary was Bootle FC's Robert Lythgoe who was already an influential figure in the Lancashire FA.

The heartland of Lancashire football, centred on the district around Blackburn and Bolton, was riven by fierce urban rivalries, which prompted clubs to sign 'professional' players, mostly from Scotland. The Lancashire FA regarded the Liverpool clubs, despite their Lancastrian ties, as distant second-rate relations, and indeed this was a factor in the setting-up of the Liverpool and District FA. Despite the formation of the new local organisation, Everton continued to further their contacts with powerful east Lancashire teams, such as Bolton Wanderers, Eagley, Turton, and Halliwell. The gulf between the standard of Everton and east Lancashire clubs is illustrated by Everton's 0-8 defeat by Blackburn Rovers in the Lancashire Cup.⁸⁶ However, some east Lancashire football secretaries were impressed by the standard of some individual Everton players. Following the Blackburn cup-tie Everton's Scottish captain Jack McGill was persuaded to join Accrington FC. No doubt attracted by a generous consideration, McGill played 15 consecutive games for Accrington over the following three months, gaining valuable experience against first class opposition, not only from east Lancashire, but also the midlands and Scotland too. As if to further underline the massive gulf between Liverpool teams and those of the east, McGill even scored a hat-trick in a 12-0 annihilation of Bootle just before Christmas 1882.⁸⁷ Though Everton were generally the victim of player 'poaching', their neighbours Bootle FC were already open practitioners of the 'borrowing' of players. For the match against Everton in November 1882, Lythgoe persuaded three 'guest' footballers to appear for Bootle, including a Darwen player and one of his former colleagues from Ruabon Druids. In their next encounter in January 1883, Lythgoe secured

⁸⁵ Lythgoe's own club, Bootle, prevailed over Everton in the semi-final, eventually winning the inaugural Liverpool Cup competition. Young, *Merseyside*, p. 18.

⁸⁶ 1881-82 was the season when Rovers became the first northern side to play in an FA Cup Final.

⁸⁷ Jackman and Dykes, *Accrington*, p. 361.

the services of Jack Brodie, a Wolverhampton teacher who had been one of the founders of Wolverhampton Wanderers in 1877.

THE RISE OF COMMERCIALISM

For the season 1883-84, Everton had moved to Coney Green, a private ground across the road from Stanley Park, and in the spring the club won its first significant trophy, the Liverpool Cup, beating Earlestown FC of Newton-le-Willows in the final (**Figure 1.7, page 75**).⁸⁸ As holders of this trophy, Everton now had a measure of credibility in attracting the interest of the more important Lancashire clubs. ‘Through the impetus given to football last season and the interest that was roused among the public, the Everton club have determined to give their supporters a chance of seeing some of the finest football clubs extant, and have arranged to play exhibition matches with the following clubs: - Burnley, Darwen, Great Lever, Blackburn Rovers, Olympic, and Accrington...’⁸⁹ In addition, fixtures were arranged with Bolton Association, Bolton Wanderers, Witton (of Blackburn) and Preston Zingari. All these clubs were pioneers of professionalism. The Rovers team contained three Scottish professionals, Preston Zingari also had three, and Bolton Wanderers’ team contained five Scots along with two ex-members of Robert Lythgoe’s former club, Druids. In 1884 Everton moved to another enclosed ground, close to Houlding’s home on Anfield Road, and from this point the process of commercialisation of the club became more intense. The Everton management were determined to attract distinguished opposition to their new ground, but Everton were still regarded as a second-rate club, and of the four fixtures against Blackburn Rovers that season, three were played against Rovers’ second team. In order to maximise proceeds from ‘gate’ takings, fixtures were arranged to the end of May, well into the preserve of the cricket season.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Keates, *Everton FC*, p.13.

⁸⁹ *Mercury*, Aug. 15th 1885.

⁹⁰ Ross, G. and Smailes, G., *Everton FC - a Complete Record*, (Derby: Breedon, 1992), p. 178.

This meant that the number of games played over the season had been increased to at least 37. More remarkably, however, a disproportionate number (23) of these 37 were played at Anfield Road. This policy of 'profit maximisation' by concentrating on home fixtures was deliberately pursued by the Everton management for the next three years until the creation of the Football League. Fixtures against top Lancashire opposition attracted a decent attendance at Anfield but it is certain that a home match against Everton would not have excited great interest with the folk of the cotton towns. Everton were still regarded as a minor, peripheral club. But a large gate at Anfield could guarantee visitors a substantial amount of appearance money and the major east Lancashire clubs seemed happy with this arrangement. No doubt the latter would have demanded a substantial fee as the price of their appearance. Almost half of Bolton Wanderers' gate receipts (£1630) in 1884-85 were shared (£698) with visiting clubs, and it would be expected that Everton shared a similar proportion of gate-money with their visitors.⁹¹ If the attendance at a major fixture was about 3000, then Everton could have guaranteed their visitors a sum of about £20. Everton's income from gate-money in 1884-85 was only £200, although this may represent the sum left after guarantees had been paid.⁹²

Not only was 1884-85 significant for being the last purely amateur season before 'professionalism' was legitimised, it also marked a turning point in Liverpool football when the city's leading clubs accelerated the route to commercialism. The formative years when young amateur footballers managed the organisation of Everton and Bootle were coming to an end. Both clubs had started to look further afield for opposition, mostly to the increasingly professional clubs of east Lancashire, and significantly both Bootle and Everton now began to employ their own players from outside the area. Following Bootle's experimentation with 'guest' importations, by spring 1885, Everton also contracted three paid players, including George Farmer from their regular opponents, Oswestry FC, and George Dobson from Bolton Wanderers. Two players from the FA Cup winning

⁹¹ Mason, Tony, *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915*, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), p.36.

⁹² Keates, *Everton FC*, p. 126.

Blackburn Rovers side, Herbert Fecitt and Jimmy Douglas, may have guested for Everton in a charity match in May 1885. However, though the number of professional importations rose over the next two seasons, even in 1886-87, the penultimate season before the Football League, about half of Everton's first-team regulars remained local amateurs.⁹³

A good number of the amateur players were employed as clerks or artisans and the regular requirement to travel to away fixtures must have presented them with considerable difficulties. Generally such men habitually worked until Saturday lunchtime, and clearly finishing work this late made it impossible to catch morning trains to distant locations in east Lancashire or the midlands. The continued regular deployment of amateur players for away games in the early and mid-1880s suggests that these men had very compliant employers who did not mind regular absence from Saturday work. Clubs may have recompensed employers for the lost time and senior amateurs may have been found positions with firms sympathetic to the football clubs. By this stage, Bootle and Everton must have covered the expenses of their amateur players, and considering the latitude given to senior amateurs players by their employers, they were cosseted from some of the extreme inconveniences of their hobby. They presumably regarded themselves as virtually indistinguishable from the 'professionals' and indeed it is not inconceivable that a few were actually given some financial reward for their services. The evidence for such practices is sketchy at best, but Everton's censure after a notorious English Cup tie with Bolton Wanderers in 1887, indicates that the club were secretive regarding the true status of some players. After the legalisation of professionalism in 1885, there were no restrictions on the deployment of professionals in privately arranged fixtures. However, the regulations regarding the usage of professionals in challenge cup competitions were tortuously complex and clubs, anxious to limit the effectiveness of their opponents, ruthlessly exploited any perceived breach of the rules.⁹⁴ Bolton won the tie, but Everton

⁹³ Keates, *Everton FC*, pp 20-22. Ross and Smailes, *Everton Complete Record*, p. 183.

⁹⁴ Everton had actually first entered the English FA Cup competition in 1886-87 and had been drawn to play Glasgow Rangers at home. However at the eleventh hour, it was discovered that an Everton player was ineligible under FA Cup rules and the game proceeded as a 'friendly'. Young, *Merseyside*, p. 25.

subsequently discovered that a Bolton professional was technically ineligible as his re-registration was received three days after the deadline. Bolton retaliated by questioning the eligibility of an Everton player.⁹⁵ Everton's complaint was upheld but after eventually losing the cup-tie, Bolton claimed that Everton had offered these players 'situations as an inducement to join them.' An FA commission held in Liverpool in early December 1887 heard evidence that Everton had used seven paid players but that three of these had been declared as amateurs so as to comply with FA Cup regulations. These Everton players were declared to be illicit professionals, Everton's cup win was expunged from the records, and Anfield was ordered closed for one month.⁹⁶

By 1888, Everton were regarded as a medium level professional club with a better-than-average ground, capable of attracting many thousands of spectators to its matches. Other leading Lancashire and midland clubs had a haughty regard for Everton, believing them worthy of only occasional fixtures, and perhaps then only with their reserve sides. Bootle FC seem to have commanded more respect in the wider football world, no doubt helped by the high profile of the club's secretary, Robert Lythgoe, a senior official in both the Lancashire and Liverpool Football Associations. Although Bootle's ground was inferior to Anfield, generally attracting far fewer spectators, leading clubs seem to have been more prepared to arrange fixtures with them rather than with Everton. Yet, within a year, Everton had joined the elite new professional Football League, whilst Bootle's failure to do so signalled the beginning of the end for their pretensions as a major club.

EVERTON, BOOTLE AND THE NEW FOOTBALL LEAGUE

The leading professional clubs had developed into small but lucrative businesses; thanks to strong urban identities and local rivalries, high attendances of several thousand were

⁹⁵ Residentially, Izatt was probably qualified, as he had previously played for Bootle, however, he may have lacked the necessary FA permission to play for another club. Keates, *Everton FC*, p. 22.

⁹⁶ The Liverpool and District FA decided that the integrity of their own challenge cup competition was besmirched by Everton's underhand behaviour, and in April 1888 repossessed their own trophy from the Sandon Hotel. Keates, *Everton FC*, pp. 22-25.

common at matches, and the commercial imperative drove clubs to arrange profitable fixtures. However, the system was haphazard. If a potentially more lucrative fixture presented itself, a long-arranged one with a less attractive team could be summarily dropped. This club, in turn, would search for replacement opposition and the knock-on effects of such complications resulted in chaos and financial losses. It became obvious to football club secretaries that some sort of order and a binding commitment to fixtures was essential.⁹⁷ In March 1888, William McGregor of Aston Villa sounded out four other senior professional clubs (Blackburn Rovers, Preston North End, West Bromwich Albion, and Bolton Wanderers), regarding his idea for a binding regular home and away fixture programme. McGregor's proposal drew a reply from Bolton's J.J. Bentley who suggested eight further candidates, including Burnley, Halliwell, Accrington, Wolves, and Notts County. Stoke and Derby County emerged as late contenders, but in all the preliminary discussions, neither Everton nor Bootle appear to have been considered as members of this cartel, even though both featured regularly on the fixture lists of the clubs up for candidature. Everton were apparently the last of the twelve clubs to be shortlisted for League membership. In terms of footballing achievement, Everton could have been regarded as one of the weaker members, but the crucial factor was the 'need for financial security' and the chosen few were 'those clubs capable of drawing the largest gates.'⁹⁸ In this regard, Everton were manifestly well-qualified, and the League steering committee must have also been strongly impressed by the management ability of Houlding and his colleagues.

The new Football League was clearly intended as a commercial venture and the new organisation evoked criticism from several quarters, not least from those clubs who had, temporarily at least, been excluded from it. An unsympathetic journalist from Birmingham presciently commented, 'The League, as it is at present constituted, is not formed for the purpose of encouraging football. It is formed so that the allied clubs may make more

⁹⁷ Tischler, Steven, *Footballers and Businessmen: the origins of professional soccer in England*, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), pp. 57-59.

⁹⁸ Russell, Dave, *Football and the English*, (Preston: Carnegie, 1997), p.33.

money than they already do. As matters stand, many of our leading clubs are nothing better than circus shows.’⁹⁹ The *Athletic News* reported that ‘Some of the ‘twelve most prominent’ Association clubs, who are to form the new League have been knocked into smithereens by teams who, so far, have been left in the cold.’¹⁰⁰ Bootle were very unhappy about their exclusion from the new competition, even more so in view of Everton’s inclusion, and indeed the club enjoyed considerable sympathy in the press. ‘They have a splendid record, a splendid ground, and get good gates,’ commented the *Athletic News*. The *Football Field* was another journal critical of the new League’s membership, remarking on Bootle’s victories against Accrington and Burnley in September 1888, ‘and yet Bootle are not good enough for the League.’ However, the truth is that Bootle were probably never seriously considered for League membership at this stage.¹⁰¹

At the club AGM of 1887, the club’s income was declared at £643, compared to Everton’s aggregate gate of £1456. The following year, Bootle’s gate money amounted to £1006, with a wage bill of £196. Everton’s gate money for the same period was £2111, with a £460 player wage bill. Though Lewis has claimed that Bootle’s average gate over the period 1886 to 1890 was between 4,000 and 5,000, the club consistently attracted fewer spectators than did Everton, exacerbated by the latter’s deliberate ‘spoiling’ policy of playing home games on the same afternoon. In October 1886, Bootle attracted a respectable gate of 4,000 for the visit of Bolton Wanderers to Hawthorne Road but at Anfield, 5,000 watched Everton play Glasgow Rangers. The following April, 5,000 went to Hawthorne Road for a match with Blackburn Rovers, but Everton even managed to gather 7,000 people for the visit of the considerably less exciting Padiham FC. The disparity in attendances between Bootle and Everton continued to widen. On March 24th 1888, Bootle attracted 2,000 people for the visit of League candidates Halliwell, whilst 10,000 were at Anfield to see Everton play Aston Villa. A few weeks later, the *Football*

⁹⁹ Inglis, Simon, *League Football and the Men Who Made It*, (London: Collins, 1988), p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ *Athletic News*, Sept. 8th 1888, quoted in Lewis, R., *The Development of Professional Football in Lancashire 1870-1914*, (1994), unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster.

¹⁰¹ *Football Field*, Sept. 8th 1888.

Field commented, 'the gate at Bootle today (2,000) was affected by the extraordinary attraction at Everton', who were playing West Bromwich Albion in front of 9,000 spectators.¹⁰² Bootle's gates were reasonably acceptable by the standard of several other leading clubs, but the fact was that, in comparison with Everton, they were second-rate, and William McGregor had admitted that the crucial criterion for League membership was the commercial potential of high attendances. Bootle's League ambitions were also stymied by McGregor's initial policy to include only *one* club per town or city.¹⁰³

CONCLUSIONS

Association football was a comparatively late starter in Liverpool. Soccer, or at least a close variant, had been played in southern Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, and northern Staffordshire since the 1860s, and had been played in east Lancashire and the west midlands from the early 1870s. Rugby had been introduced to Liverpool in the 1850s, and whilst retaining a socially exclusive aspect, some lower middle-class clubs had been established by c.1878. The unusually non-paternal nature of class relations in Liverpool militated against the dissemination of a football culture from the elite to lower social groups. Despite large numbers of former pupils of high status footballing schools, such as Harrow and Eton, the social protocol of Liverpool would not allow social intercourse between elite and lower classes, and this retarded the dissemination of sport. Liverpudlian old boys were from the wealthy merchant class rather than the aristocracy, and did not have the social confidence that other Etonians, Harrovians and the like, may otherwise have shown towards lower groups.

As a result of this non-paternalistic culture and social fragmentation due to the city's many groups of in-migrants, mid-nineteenth century Liverpool had no surviving variant of traditional folk football. The notion that there may have been a pre-existing folk football culture in Liverpool, which Richard Holt believed may have been the reason for the

¹⁰² *Football Field*, Oct. 30th 1886, April 9th 1887, April 7th 1888, 27th April 1888, and May 11th 1888.

¹⁰³ Inglis, *League*, p. 6 and p. 10. *Athletic News*, May 8th 1888.

alacrity of football's growth in the city, seems to have no basis.¹⁰⁴ In effect, Liverpool was a 'vacuum' into which an outside agency could introduce new elite sports. Harvey's idea that sophisticated indigenous forms of football were widespread before the general acceptance of FA authority, is not relevant in the context of Liverpool which instead followed an archetypal path of downward diffusion from one of the purest of football's elite sources, the University of Cambridge.¹⁰⁵

Richard Holt has suggested that Muscular Christians were less common amongst the wider nineteenth century clergy than previously supposed.¹⁰⁶ In Birmingham, for instance, most of the initiatives leading to the foundation of church football clubs came from lay members, rather than the clergy. However, in Liverpool a group of Cambridge curates deliberately disseminated soccer to the urban working-class as part of a purposeful educational and moral crusade. The curates' initiative seems to have been a device to encourage involvement with the Church, rather than as part of a grand 'hegemonic project', though its underlying ideology seems traceable to broader notions of upper class hegemony by stealth.¹⁰⁷ In other words, the elite classes were attempting to get the working-class 'on side' during the mid-Victorian interval of quiescent class relations. The Everton United Church FC seems to have been a rather half-hearted Muscular Christian project, mostly involving middle-class lay churchmen, rather than working men, but the St. John's (Bootle) experiment was socially more interesting, with upper middle and working-class players in the same team.¹⁰⁸ However, though these early Liverpool football clubs included artisans, relatively few unskilled men were involved and large sections of the city's population were not targeted. The model thus accords with John Hargreaves' notion

¹⁰⁴ See Holt, 'Urban Life', p. 71.

¹⁰⁵ Though Liverpool did not have a pre-existing form of traditional football, there was a working-class culture of sports within which soccer could have been accommodated. The fact that John Houlding ran a quoits club prior to organising Everton FC, suggests that this could have been one of the links between old sporting forms and the new.

¹⁰⁶ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 139.

¹⁰⁷ Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians*, pp. 139-140.

¹⁰⁸ Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians*, pp. 195-196.

of a 'philanthropic strategy', splitting the working-class by favouring its better-educated components.

The curates who introduced the lower middle and working-class to football, had genuine altruistic and religious motives but John Houlding, an ambitious local politician and brewer, happened to be perfectly positioned to see the wider popularity of football as a vehicle for local identity, and its possible exploitation for political and commercial gain.¹⁰⁹ Houlding seized his opportunity to establish a rival football club in Everton as the Anglican church club faded. It cannot be established with certainty whether the curates abandoned their Muscular Christian experiment because of the growing involvement of political and commercial interests represented by Houlding, but there are several precedents for working men rejecting clergy's control over church football clubs. Houlding's re-formation of the Everton church club shows that the working-class subverted the intentions of Muscular Christians and applied their own values, taking 'what was intended as moral instruction and turned it into popular theatre.'¹¹⁰ By about 1883, most of the curates, possibly by then disillusioned, had abandoned Liverpool to pursue clerical careers elsewhere. Everton FC emerged from the remnants of the local church club, and Houlding furnished them with a slick playing kit, appointed a Scottish 'football professor' to train the team, and arranged fixtures with clubs from a wide area around Liverpool. The emerging trend was towards professionalism and commercialisation.

The formation of the Liverpool Football Association in 1882 provided local teams with their own competition, allowing Liverpool clubs to consolidate and build confidence. By this time, Bootle and Everton emerged as the dominant local clubs, occupying private enclosed grounds where admission could be charged to the growing numbers of local football followers. A few professional players were hired and both clubs adopted commercial practices to hinder the development of later entrants to the local football

¹⁰⁹ Houlding, was a lay member of St. Saviour's vestry committee. St. Saviour's Church Vestry committee minutes, 1877-78, 283 SVR, Liverpool Record Office.

¹¹⁰ Russell, *Football and the English*, p. 71.

industry. Bootle FC initially had the edge but by 1887, Everton FC, in both commercial and footballing terms, had moved ahead of its rival. Everton attracted many thousands to their much-improved ground, and to Bootle's chagrin this was the crucial factor when clubs were being considered for selection to the new Football League.

Football's part in defining an individual's sense of personal identity in the city, had particular validity in the case of Liverpool. Both Bootle and Everton had developed from villages to townships between the 1860s and 'eighties, but retained distinctly separate civic identities. Everton and Kirkdale had a combined population of nearly 180,000 in 1891, but though both townships were subsumed within the city of Liverpool, Everton FC remained a focal point for notions of both suburban and wider civic identity. Bootle, which became a county borough in 1877, maintained a particular sense of its own urban identity, but a professional football club was barely sustainable if reliant solely on the town's small population (only 49,217 in 1891). The Liverpool city boundary was only 230 yards from Bootle FC, but residents of north Liverpool had little desire to support the neighbouring town's club, even though Kirkdale was coterminous with Bootle. Kirkdale residents were Liverpudlians after all, and they preferred to identify with their city's main club, Everton.

The notion that football was introduced to Liverpool by Everton FC's predecessor St. Domingo seems unsupportable in light of the overwhelming evidence of the Muscular Christian initiative. The currency of the St. Domingo legend is inextricably linked to the circumstances behind the progressive factionalisation within Everton FC that became apparent at the end of the 1880s. In the next chapter we will see how the internal rifts within the club, mostly relating to the debate about the extent of commercialised football, led to the formation of Liverpool FC, and how the local market for football could not sustain more than two professional clubs.

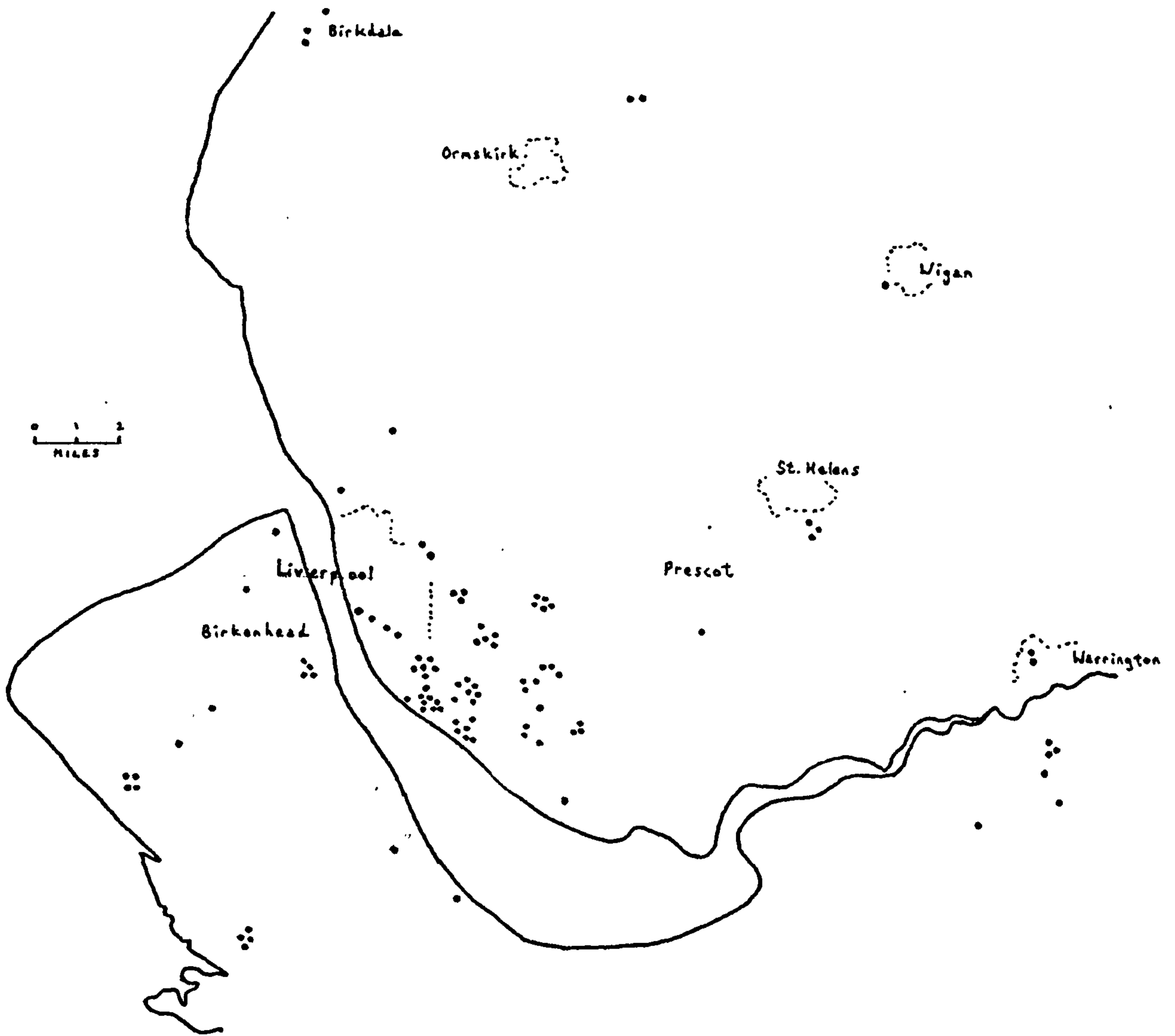


Figure 1.1: Harrovians in the Liverpool district 1850-73.
Source: *Harrow School Register 1800-1900* (1901).



Figure 1.2 St. John's College, Cambridge, FC 1876-77
 A.W. Keely is standing (front, extreme right) and W.J. Chapman is sitting (third from left).

Figure 1.3



Rev. A.W. Keely,
1877



Robert Lythgoe
c. 1900.



John Houlding (as
Lord Mayor of
Liverpool, 1898).

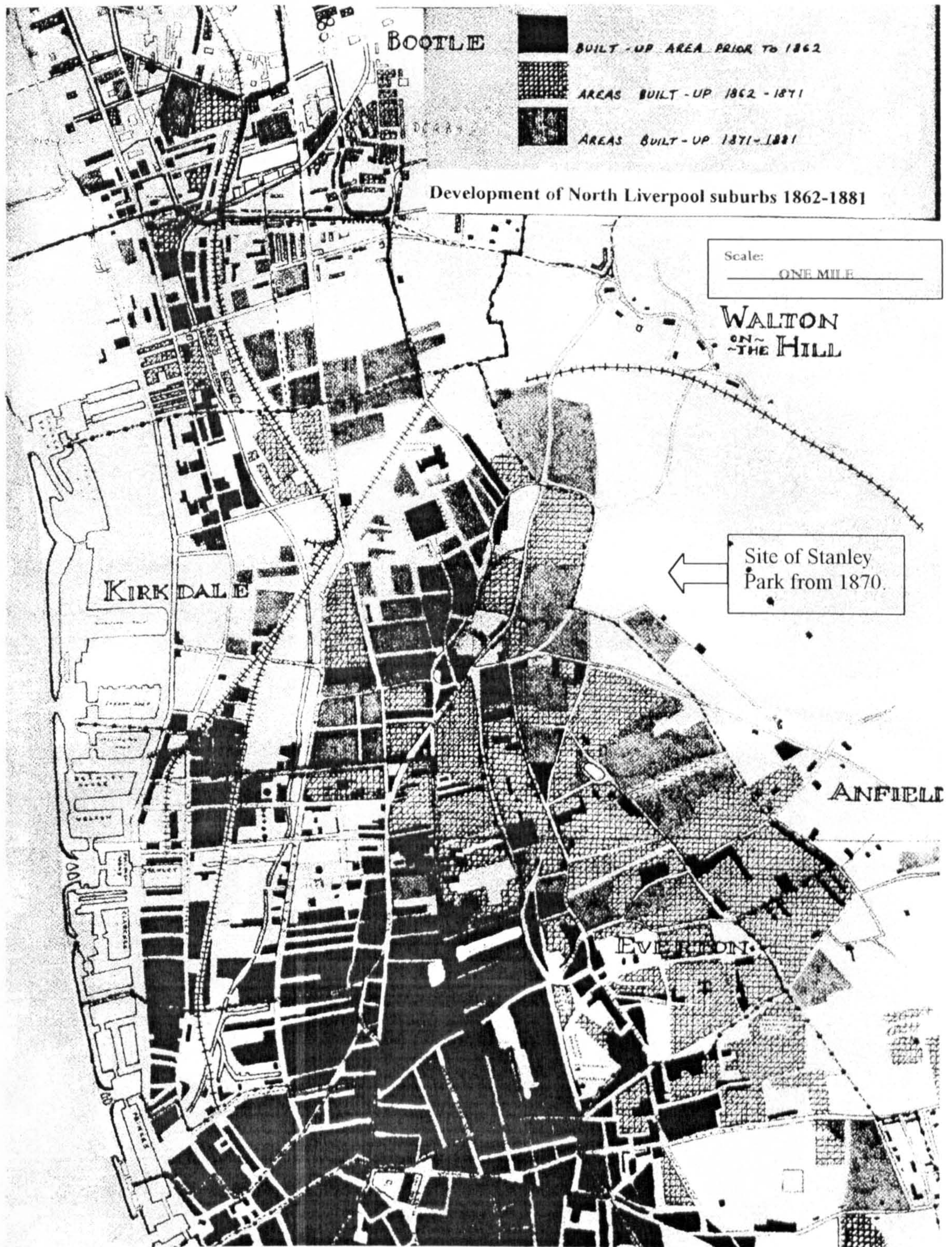


Figure 1.4: Development of north Liverpool suburbs c. 1862-1881.
 (Derived from 1:2500 O.S. maps, 1871, 1881 censuses, *Gore's Street Directories*).



Figure 1.6 Bootle FC 1882-83

Standing from left: J.E. Grayson, Charles Allsop, Simpson W. Jones, C. Evans, E. Corey.
Seated: Alfred Allsop, R.M. Sloan, T.R. Ashton, Robert Betts, J.W. Rogers, Fred Owen.



Figure 1.7 Everton FC 1884

Rear, from left: H. Williams, Unknown, Unknown, Robert Morris, Joseph Pickering.
Middle: Unknown, Unknown, W.H. Parry, Jack McGill, Unknown, Edwin Berry, Frank Brettell.
Front: Unknown, Unknown, Mike Higgins.

Appendix 1.1**Identified early footballers in Liverpool 1879-83****Liverpool Association FC players 1879-83**

Name	Address (1881)	Age (1881)	Profession	Birthplace
Frederick Angell	44 Ash Grove, Wavertree	25	Teacher	Birmingham
John H. Bebbington	74 Premier St., Everton	22	Teacher	Cheshire
Edwin Berry	189 Granton Rd., Everton	25	Solicitor's clerk	Witney, Oxford
Roger Beynon	38 Ullswater St., Everton	16	Clerk	Liverpool
William Beynon	38 Ullswater St., Everton	24	Teacher	Liverpool
Edward Mylie	25 Brunel St.	23	Baker	Birkenhead
Robert Mylie	25 Brunel St.	20	Teacher	Liverpool

Liverpool Linden FC players 1883

Name	Address (1881)	Age (1881)	Profession	Birthplace
George Brett	38 West Derby St., Liverpool	19	Lithographic artist	Liverpool
Charles Fleay	26 West Derby Rd., Liverpool	19	Lampmaker	Liverpool
Benjamin Newport	14 Dodderidge Rd., Liverpool	18	Office clerk	Liverpool
William H. Rowe	5 Sydney Place East, Liverpool	20	Horse keeper	Yorkshire

Toxteth Wanderers FC players 1883

Name	Address (1881)	Age (1881)	Profession	Birthplace
Robert Ackers	88 Clevedon St., Toxteth	16	Solicitor's clerk	Liverpool
John Bews	62 Toxteth St., Toxteth	19	Clerk	Liverpool
James Bews	62 Toxteth St., Toxteth	15	Office messenger	Liverpool
George Preston	58 Hill St., Toxteth	25	Butcher	Liverpool
Robert Woosey	14 Beresford Rd., Toxteth	20	Painter	Liverpool
Thomas Woosey	14 Beresford Rd., Toxteth	19	Bricklayer	Liverpool

Miscellaneous footballers 1879-83

Name	Club	Address (1881)	Age (1881)	Profession	Birthplace
Walter Darke	Excelsior	Freehold St., Fairfield	17	Assurance agent	Isle of Man
William Caife	St. Peter's	Windsor St., Toxteth	26	Railway clerk	Liverpool
Roderick McLennan	St. Peter's	142 Crown St., Liverpool	20	Office apprentice	Liverpool
Arthur T. Kemble	Wirral	All Hallows Rectory, Allerton	19	Articled law clerk	Cumberland
Samuel Cockayne	St. George's	Northumberland Terrace, Everton	18	Banker's clerk	Derby
John Joliffe	St. George's	30 Winchester Rd., Liverpool	17	Cabinet maker	Liverpool

Sources: *Liverpool Courier* 1879-83, 1881 Census.

Appendix 1.2: Occupational categories of identified footballers in Liverpool 1879-83

Occupational group	St. John's	Birk'd	Ev'ton United	St. Mary's	Ev'ton FC	L'pool AFC	Toxteth Wand.	Linden	Misc.	Totals	%
A Gentry											
B Upper professional	1									1	1.2
C Lower professional				2						2	2.3
Teachers	5	1	1	2	1	4				14	16.3
Clerics	2		3	1						6	7
D Proprietors											
E Other proprietors											
F Managers		1	1							2	2.3
G Clerical	1	4	8	3	7	2	3	1	5	34	39.5
H Foremen etc.	1									1	1.2
I Skilled manual	3	4	1	4	3	1	3	3	1	23	26.7
J Semi-skilled											
K Unskilled				1						1	1.2
L Unspecified			1	1						2	2.3
Totals	13	10	15	14	11	7	6	4	6	86	100

Sources: *Liverpool Courier*, 1881 census.

Percentages used in graph (Figure 1.5) on page 53.

Occupational categories adapted from Vamplew, *Pay Up*, p. 157 and originally derived from occupational divisions for the 1911 census. See Vamplew, W., *Pay Up and Play the Game; Professional sport in Britain 1875-1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 157.

Appendix 1.3: Rugby players in Liverpool 1878-79

Name	Club	Address (1881)	Age	Profession	Birthplace
Fownes, George	Litherland	168 Upper Parliament St., L'pool	20	Engineer's draughtsman	Crosby
Tarbuck, James	Litherland	Linwood, Toxteth	24	Brewer	Liverpool
Lycett, Edward	Litherland	39 Menzie St., Toxteth	22	Painter	Liverpool
Rodway, Sidney	Litherland	Crosby	24	Public accountant	Sandbach
Redford, John	Litherland		23	Merchant's assistant	Liverpool
Charleson, Richard	Litherland		25	Galvaniser	Peru
Brodie, John	Walton	12 Hemans St., Toxteth	30	Civil engineer	Newcastle-on-Tyne
Brodie, William	Walton	20 Upper Park St., Liverpool	27	Articled draughtsman	Scotland
Moir, James	Walton		29	Insurance manager	South Shields
Ansdell, Henry	Walton		26	Provisions clerk	Cheshire
Shingler, Arthur	Alfred Wndrs	17 Harewood St., Everton	20	Solicitor's clerk	Liverpool
Shingler, William	Alfred Wndrs	17 Harewood St., Everton	18	Chemical clerk	Liverpool
Layfield, Samuel	Alfred Wndrs	20 Edward St., Liverpool	18	Corn merchant's clerk	Yorkshire
Hacking, Thomas	Alfred Wndrs	41 Upper Beau St., Everton	18	Clerk	Liverpool
Beauclerk, Autrey	Alfred Wndrs		18	Insurance clerk	Southampton
Chantrell, Percy	Meteor	11 St. James Mount, Liverpool	19	Analytical chemist	Liverpool
Eastwood, Arthur	Liv. .Inst. OB	86 Falkner St., Liverpool	19	Broker's assistant	Liverpool
Eastwood, William	Liv. .Inst. OB	86 Falkner St., Liverpool	20	Cotton salesman	Liverpool
Bell, Henry	Liv. .Inst. OB	97 Canning St., Liverpool	22	Bank clerk	Liverpool
Bell, Russell	Liv. .Inst. OB	97 Canning St., Liverpool	19	Corn merchant	Liverpool
Cowper, Henry	Liv. .Inst. OB	199 Upper Parliament St., L'pool	20	Commercial clerk	Brazil

Source: *Liverpool Courier* 1878-79, 1881 census.

CHAPTER TWO

FOOTBALL FEVER:

THE CONSOLIDATION OF PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL IN LIVERPOOL 1889-C. 1906

THE NEW FOOTBALL FEVER

As the 1880s gave way to the 'nineties, Liverpool reached its summit as a cosmopolitan world city. The 1891 census showed that the city was the second city of England, with a population of 518,000. It was Europe's nexus of immigration for the Americas, with more than 260,000 'huddled masses' passing through Liverpool each year. The wealthiest and poorest Britons outside the capital co-existed in Liverpool but some citizens of the new northern and central suburbs were beginning to enjoy a limited degree of affluence. The population of the Everton and Kirkdale districts alone was over 176,000, larger even than several important industrial towns.

Local newspapers matured into a recognisably modern form, featuring a diet of international news, local and national politics, and crime and scandal. However, the local press also showed that a growing preoccupation of the Liverpool public was the weekly performance of local professional football teams. Everton FC was the new Football League's best-patronised member and for a brief period in 1892, Liverpool even managed to sustain *four* professional clubs. The local press, from the *Conservative Courier* to the *Liberal Review*, contained many pages of football news and gossip. Indeed the *Review* recognised the public's collective obsession, calling it *Football Fever*¹, an obsession not just confined to the skilled working-class, with even brokers from the Exchange 'taking a hilarious interest in football matters.'² Gambling on the outcome of matches was rife and even aging civic dignitaries, with no expert knowledge of the game, were regular guests of honour at matches. 'Football mania' characterised male working-class recreational habits in most English and Scottish towns of this period, and Liverpool's preoccupation with football has since continued unabated.

¹ Title of football column, *Liverpool Review*, 1892-93.

² *Liverpool Review* (hereafter *Review*), Feb. 11th 1893.

No one study has fully concentrated on the period of English football covered in this chapter, though other authors have given the main issues a general treatment within the context of a wider investigation. Professional football of the 1890s onward was recognisably different from its counterpart in the 1880s. The process of commercialisation begun in that decade had been taken a stage further by the creation of the Football League. This was an immediately popular innovation, and ensured a programme of fixtures between leading clubs over the course of a season. Though Russell rightly described the League as a ‘viable and credible structure’³, a significant number of its more financially insecure members were lost during its initial decade, generally based in small towns, with Bootle FC being typical of such failure. Though Matt Taylor’s recent history concentrated on the post-1900 years of the Football League, he made some perceptive remarks on its unrefined condition in the 1890s. Of particular interest here is the standard of the original Second Division, which some contemporaries perceived as consisting of a ‘mere appendage’ of uninspiring second-rate clubs.⁴ Wray Vamplew has written of an ‘industrial revolution’ in the football world of the 1890s, central to which was the coherent structure and competitive possibilities presented by the Football League.⁵ At the start of this decade, the infant League still consisted of one division of 12 clubs, none of which had been incorporated as a limited company, and a regulatory web of player registrations and transfers had not yet properly developed. By the mid-1900s, the League consisted of two divisions of 18 clubs each, and the numbers of spectators attending matches had increased eightfold since the foundation of the League, although professional footballers had considerably less freedom of contract than fifteen years earlier. Football, along with other aspects of working-class life, was assuming a recognisably modern form which did not essentially change until the 1960s. As Russell has pointed out, ‘by 1914, (football) lay at the heart of much English male culture.’⁶ This process of consolidation may even have been complete by 1906, which by coincidence was the season that Liverpool football reached its pre-war zenith, Everton winning the FA

³ Russell, Dave, *Football and the English*, (Preston: Carnegie, 1997), p. 34.

⁴ Taylor, M., *The Leaguers*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p. 7.

⁵ Vamplew, W., *Pay Up and Play the Game*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 282-283.

⁶ Russell, *Football and the English*, p.30.

Cup, and Liverpool the League championship for the second time. By this time, John Houlding, the driving force of commercialism in Liverpool football, was dead, but his former acolytes and adversaries showed fortitude and perspicacity in the management of both Liverpool and Everton. David Kennedy's recent thesis on the bifurcation of Everton FC in 1892, shows that there were irreconcilable commercial, political, and religious differences between the managing committee and the Houlding faction, although his interpretations of the events of 1892 and after must be reconsidered, particularly in regard of the true nature of Everton FC's origins revealed in Chapter One. Kennedy concentrated on Everton's and Liverpool's divergent attitudes to business administration, but as we will see, the clubs adopted contrasting styles of team management too.

This chapter traces the development of professional football in Liverpool from the Football League's inaugural season to the stage, in about 1906, when the game attained a recognisable modernity. It includes a detailed account of the crisis within Everton FC, which led to the formation of Liverpool FC, and an exploration of the contrast in team and business management styles shown by the reconstituted clubs. The *Football Fever* of the period was characterised by over-optimism, shown by the abortive attempt to launch a new professional club in south-central Liverpool, followed by the liquidation of Bootle FC a year later, and the context for the failure of these ventures is examined. By the 1900s, Everton and Liverpool had emerged as equally powerful forces in English football and both were regarded as members of the League's elite clubs.

'HOULDING KICKED OFFSIDE': THE FORMATION OF LIVERPOOL FC

During the summer of 1888, the Liverpool public and local press were initially optimistic about Everton's prospects in the new League, but after a good start the season's campaign had gone awry and the club finished in a mediocre eighth place. Selection of team players was in the hands of the committee and they were criticised for making arbitrary and frequent changes, ignoring the claims of untried men. In November, the *Liverpool Review* voiced serious doubts about the harmony of the team, and proposed that Nick Ross, the Everton captain, who had been lured away

from Preston North End for the high wage of £10 per month, be appointed in effect to be Everton's 'player-manager'. The newspaper went on, 'if a few really practical playing members were added to the committee, and Ross had an entirely free hand in the picking and placing of the players, the teams selected for matches would be much more efficient and the combinations much better.'⁸ A week later, an Everton club member replied (anonymously) to the *Review* article. 'Every week there is a change in the team, and it is an open question whether the same team has played two matches successively. Judging generally, the men are a good lot individually, but as a combination they are simply not in it with some of our leading clubs. The sooner this mixing up of the players is done away with the better for the players and the credit of the club.'⁹ There was certainly some truth in the charges. The team had been changed by at least one player for each of the 10 League games then played. In total Everton used 35 men in 22 League games, a turnover of manpower which did not compare favourably with other League clubs. For example, champions Preston only used 18 players, Wolves 19, Accrington 22, and Blackburn Rovers used a total of 23 players.¹⁰ Everton's entire 13 man committee would debate team selection and in order to pacify as many factions as possible, everyone's personal favourites would eventually be guaranteed a game. This is not to say that other clubs had particularly enlightened ideas of team management – they basically used selection committees too – but the Everton committee had not grasped the idea that team continuity was a desirable objective in the quest for success on the playing field.

The disappointing final position in the League provoked continued criticism of the club's management. The most critical faction claimed, 'Certain members of the

⁷ Leading article on Everton FC crisis, *Review* Mar. 19th 1892.

⁸ *Review*, Nov. 17th 1888, 'Ross was one of the best authorities on football matters in England, knowing more about the game than all the members of the committee put together; that he was allowed no voice in team selection.' Ross returned to Preston after one season.

⁹ *Review*, Nov. 24th 1888, quoted in Young, Percy M., *Football on Merseyside*, (London: Stanley Paul, 1963), p. 31.

¹⁰ Rigby, Ian and Payne, Mike, *Proud Preston: Preston North End's 100 seasons of Football League History*, (Lancaster: Carnegie, 1999), p. 10. Matthews, Tony, *The Essential History of Wolverhampton Wanderers*, (London: Headline, 2000), p. 188. Jackman, M. and Dykes, G., *Accrington Stanley*, pp. 244-245. Jackman, Mike, *The Essential History of Blackburn Rovers*, (London: Headline, 2001), p. 193.

executive are not practical footballists; are mere theorists in fact, and that most of the matches lost by the Everton men would have been won if the players had been handled properly.’¹¹ This particular critical group, perhaps 20 to 30 strong, were ironically known as the ‘Sandon Clique’, after the hostelry that was the club headquarters. Prior to the club’s AGM in late May 1889, a faction sympathetic to the club’s landlord, John Houlding, resolved that it was ‘desirable in the interests of the club to take immediate steps to form a limited liability company for the purpose of acquiring the Everton Football Ground.’ The Sandon Clique was against this proposal because the club would become a commercial concern largely in Houlding’s control. His sponsorship of Everton FC would facilitate his political ambitions and certainly bring him personal financial gain. It was also the logical outcome of Houlding’s grand plan for the commercialisation of Everton FC. In the event the committee acknowledged the criticism of the Sandon Clique and the clamour for the club’s incorporation ebbed away. However, among the new men elected to this body at the subsequent AGM were George Mahon, a solicitor, Dr. James Baxter, and W.R. Clayton, a forwarding agent.¹² Within a few years these three were to be the instigators of an irrevocable break in the ranks.

During the second League season (1889-90), the committee sensibly exercised restraint over the total of players utilised so that the first team was able to properly cohere. Over the whole season only 21 players were deployed, and this new stability had dramatic effect as the club finished as runners-up to Preston (**Figure 2.1, page 115**). For 1890-91, more Scots players were recruited and an even smaller pool of players (20) was used, consolidating and extending the good progress made during the previous season.¹³ Everton ended the season as League champions, a remarkable achievement given the humble status of the club only five years previously. However, despite being champions and probably the wealthiest League club, Everton was again riven by internal discord. at a more serious level than in 1888, and centred on the

¹¹ *Review*, May 25th 1889

¹² *Review*, May 25th 1889.

¹³ Everton probably made extensive use of the football agent, J.P. Campbell who was based in Liverpool in 1891, and who reputedly had useful contacts north of the border. Mason, *Association Football*, p.92.

club's relationship with its principal benefactor and landlord, Councillor John Houlding.¹⁴

Discontent regarding the club's relationship with its President predated even the rumblings over the selection strategy of the committee in 1888-89. When Everton Football Club had taken residency at Anfield Road in 1884, the original arrangement with the landlord, Joseph Orrell, had been very informal: 'That we the Everton Football Club, keep the existing walls in good repair, pay the taxes, do not cause ourselves to be a nuisance to Mr. Orrell and other tenants adjoining, and also pay a small sum as rent, or subscribe a donation each year to the Stanley Hospital in the name of Mr. Orrell.'¹⁵ As the process of commercialisation commenced, and professional players began to be employed by the club, the arrangement with Orrell was put on a firmer business footing. Houlding bought what had been John Orrell's plot, and leased part of Joseph's land, sub-letting the whole to the Everton committee for a sum of £100 per annum. According to Kennedy, Houlding subsequently acquired the land from John Orrell in 1885, but in fact the latter had actually died 2 years earlier. A condition to the purchase stated that if Joseph Orrell wished to build houses on his land, then an access road should be built between the two plots.¹⁶ The entire area surrounding the ground had been built over in the period 1881-91, and on an 1891 map of the area, the configuration of buildings strongly suggests that the ground was also intended for housing development (**Figure 2.2, page 116**). It appears that the Orrells had planned to develop the land in the mid-1880s, but John's premature death tempered Joseph's enthusiasm for such a project, and he was satisfied for Houlding to lease his brother's land on behalf of the football club. During the summer of 1888, the club committee wished to improve facilities on the ground in preparation for the new Football League, and wanting to formalise the informal agreement with Houlding, it applied for a long-term lease on the land. In the event,

¹⁴ Tabner, Brian, *Through the Turnstiles*, (Middlesex: Yore Publications, 1992), p. 62.

¹⁵ Keates, Thomas, *History of the Everton Football Club 1878-1928*, (Liverpool: Thomas Brakell, 1928), p. 15. The Anfield ground was also known as Oakfield Road.

¹⁶ Kennedy, D., 'The Split of Everton Football Club 1892: the creation of distinct patterns of boardroom formation at Everton and Liverpool football club companies', *Sport in History*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (Summer 2003), p.4.

Houlding rejected this and he more than doubled the club's annual rent to £240, rather justifiably given the prospect of huge attendances.¹⁷

At the beginning of the season following Everton's Championship in 1891, Joseph Orrell threatened to end the club's tenancy unless improvements were made to the ground. This may have related to the muddy state of the ground's approaches which had been complained of before (in 1888), and which would certainly have affronted the football club's genteel neighbours, and thus breaking a condition of the original 1884 contract.¹⁸ Certainly the valuable estate could have earned more for the landlord if it was built over with housing. It is also possible that Houlding may have prevailed upon Orrell to issue the warning with a view to provoking the membership to accept his long-held intention to incorporate the club. Houlding had bought land adjoining the ground and both he and Orrell were prepared to sell their respective plots if the Everton club adopted limited liability.¹⁹ Six months after Everton had won the League championship, 280 members of the club met to discuss Houlding's plans. The land owned by Orrell and Houlding, together with the stands and offices, was offered for sale to the club for the grand total of £9,237 10 shillings. The majority rejected this proposal, and the chair of the meeting, George Mahon, suggested that the committee negotiate the renting of additional land from Houlding and Orrell (**Figure 2.3, page 115**).²⁰ Both factions, Houlding on one side and Mahon and the committee on the other, were ably led, and their determination, financial backing, and organisation, resulted in a confrontation of considerable intrigue and acrimony, which gripped the Liverpool press for several months in 1892.

Over the next few weeks the committee attempted to reach some sort of accommodation with Houlding and Orrell, but Houlding reacted by threatening the club with eviction from Anfield Road if it did not accept his proposals. By the new year, the *Review* reported the claims of an 'outside source that the malcontents in the

¹⁷ He also insisted that if 'refreshments should be required on the ground, the landlord shall have the sole right to supply.' Keates, *Everton FC*, p. 38.

¹⁸ *Courier*, Sept. 1st 1888.

¹⁹ Young, *Merseyside*, p.40.

²⁰ Keates, *Everton FC*, p. 38.

Everton Football Club are “climbing down” nicely to the King of Everton’s ideas.’²¹ However, Houlding was facing fresh pressures; he had been ill and the death of the sitting Everton MP, Edward Whitely, precipitated some distracting ructions in the constituency, resulting in the local party’s rejection of Houlding as the new candidate.²² Far from ‘climbing down’, the Everton membership remained implacably opposed to Houlding’s proposals mainly because minor shareholders would have little say in the control of the club. The leaders of the anti-Houlding faction, George Mahon and William R. Clayton easily persuaded the Everton membership to finally reject Houlding’s proposal to incorporate the club.²³ Mahon revealed that he had arranged a lease on some waste land, Mere Green, on the other side of Stanley Park, for the purpose of constructing a new ground.²⁴ A fund was set up to finance the incorporation of Everton FC and to purchase the Mere Green site, and included donations by two local magnates; jam manufacturer W.P. Hartley and the soap maker Robert W. Hudson, together with a thousand pounds interest-free loan from the committee’s own Dr. James Baxter.

From this juncture it was clear that the opposing factions were not going to be reconciled. The majority were determined to re-constitute the Everton club at the new ground to be built at Mere Green. Houlding defiantly remained a member of the club and still believed that he could still out-manoeuvre the majority and persuade them of his case. Just over a week later, the *Review* reported that ‘Houlding was a lot too smart for the agitators in Everton Football Club when he registered the new company to run the club.’ This was the *Everton Football Club and Athletic Grounds Company Limited*, with a directorate consisting of Houlding, his son William, and five other Houlding supporters.²⁵ Houlding hoped that the FA and League would see this pre-

²¹ *Review*, Jan. 9th 1892. According to the paper, ‘they were ill-advised to quarrel with him.’

²² Waller, P. J. *Democracy and Sectarianism, a social and political history of Liverpool, 1868-1939*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1981), p. 124. Also *Review*, Jan. 9th 1892

²³ John McKenna, one of the latter’s most fervent supporters was censured by the chairman of the meeting when he accused the restive Clayton of personal animosity towards Houlding. Clayton claimed that, ‘Those with the longest purses would hold the voting power and they would take great care to place men on the directorate after their own hearts.’ *Courier*, 29th Sept. 1891.

²⁴ *Review*, Jan. 30th 1892.

²⁵ The others were Edwin Berrv, former secretary Alec Nisbet, J.J. Ramsay, J.Derwent, W.F. Evans, and John McKenna. *Review*, Feb. 6th 1892.

emptive tactic as evidence of an indivisible link between the Everton club and his Anfield ground, and that they would, therefore, recognise him and his supporters as representative of the football club. Houlding still believed that he could persuade the Everton club membership that his new limited company was the embodiment of the reconstituted football club.

By March 1892, it was manifestly clear that the majority of members were not coming over to Houlding's side, and he resigned his club membership, shortly followed by the de-selection of his only two supporters on the Everton committee.²⁶ The majority faction subsequently incorporated their own entirely separate *Everton Football Club Company Limited* with a capital of 2500 shares of £1 each, held between 431 shareholders. The Mere Green site was bought for £8,090, and by the late summer construction work had begun on the new ground. In April both the FA and League had recognised that the new Everton FC company was the legitimate successor to the unincorporated club that had existed since 1879. The FA also decided that legal proceedings between the two sides were to be abandoned, with each side paying its own costs, and that Houlding's company would pay £250 to the Mahon group's new club as compensation for the stands and hoardings erected over the years at Oakfield Road. Nevertheless, in spite of the arbitration, rancour persisted. Houlding's employees tried to prevent some representatives of the Mahon group from removing some office equipment and turnstiles from Anfield Road.²⁷

There had been speculation that 'King Houlding will run a new football club in the present Everton ground in Oakfield Road' and in April the *Liverpool Echo* reported that, 'the new club has become affiliated to the Association (FA) under the title of Liverpool FC'.²⁸ Perhaps other names were considered but instead of an appellation representing what was now a mere suburb, the new club's name proclaimed

²⁶ Mahon offered him the chair of the meeting but Houlding icily responded 'I am here on trial, and a criminal never takes the chair; he stays in the dock.' This false humility was greeted by heckles and one member shouted, 'Best place for him!', Young, *Merseyside*, p.41. *Review*, Mar. 19th 1892, and March 26th 1892. Alec Nisbet, and Howarth were then voted off the Everton committee and a motion to move to the proposed new ground was formally passed.

²⁷ *Review*, May 28th 1892.

²⁸ *Liverpool Football Echo* (hereafter *Echo*), 30th April 1892.

geographical affinity with the entire city, which, intentionally or otherwise, gave the new club an apparent symbolic superiority over the Goodison-based company.²⁹ Despite having no playing staff, Houlding's Liverpool company boldly applied to join the new First Division of the enlarged Football League. This application failed, not primarily because of the lack of players, but because of an ostensible Football League ban against clubs based within 3 miles of an existing member.³⁰ For the same reason, Liverpool were also precluded from joining the new Second Division, because of the inclusion of Bootle, but the club were successful in their application to join the Lancashire League.³¹

Initially, the relationship between Everton and its neighbour was complicated by the short-lived presence in the city of other newly incorporated football companies, namely Bootle and Liverpool Caledonians. But the acrimony of the pre-1892 factionalization within Everton FC hampered the early months of the relationship with Liverpool FC, and as the new season approached, the local press claimed that some Everton spectators had 'made some mutual compact not to support the Liverpool club when Everton are away but to patronise Bootle.'³² Perhaps this did occur initially on a limited scale, but 6,000 did go to Anfield to see Liverpool play a friendly against Notts County in mid-September on a day when Everton were at Aston Villa, prompting the *Review* to speculate that 'the unsportsmanlike talk about 'boycott' is likely to be falsified.' In the event, Liverpool's average attendance for the season in the Lancashire League was 2100, only marginally superior to that of their struggling

²⁹ However, it was only on June 3rd that Houlding officially changed the name of his company to the *Liverpool Football Club and Athletic Grounds Company Limited*. Recruitment from the fertile playing fields of the officially amateur Scottish clubs most conveniently satisfied Liverpool FC's need for a ready-made full-strength playing staff. Houlding and his lieutenants were, of course, well-practised exponents of such importation. Deputations were sent north of the border, led by John McKenna and W.E. Barclay, and no doubt recourse was also made to the clearing systems of football agents. Sufficient players for both first and second teams were recruited; thirty in all, and of these, 16 were considered 'first team men.' *Review*, Sept. 17th 1892.

³⁰ Vamplew, *Pay Up*, p. 137.

³¹ There would be precedents for ready-made clubs' successful applications to the Football League in future years, not least Chelsea in 1905. Inglis, Simon *League Football and the Men Who Made It*, (London: Collins, 1988), p. 59

³² *Review*, Sept. 10th 1892.

Second Division neighbour, Bootle, whilst Everton's was 13,230.³³ Even reserve matches were attracting regular crowds of 6,000 to Goodison, so local football spectators, if not actually hostile to the new Liverpool club, certainly showed a marked degree of apathy.³⁴

The lack of cooperation between the two clubs continued. One incident involved the staging of an annual charitable football match in support of local hospitals. This event (a match involving pantomime artistes and professional footballers) had, of course, been held at Anfield Road before 1892 and Houlding and his lieutenants wished to continue the tradition.³⁵ The new Everton club had been invited to cooperate but their management insisted that, in future, such matches should be staged at Goodison. The resulting deadlock was at the expense of the hospital charities and was roundly criticised in the press; 'Is Charity to be ridden over for Jealousy's sake?' thundered the *Review*. The match was belatedly re-arranged for Anfield Road in early March, without the participation of Everton FC. Another instance of Everton sullenness occurred at the end of the final of the 1893 Liverpool Cup, in which the club had lost to Liverpool.³⁶ Everton's petty gamesmanship at the end of the match prevented Liverpool from parading with the trophy. Despite the antagonism of Everton, Liverpool's first season had been highly successful, both in commercial and playing terms, for in addition to the Liverpool Cup, the club were Lancashire League champions, and these achievements were consolidated at the end of the season when Liverpool FC were accepted as new members of the Football League's Second Division.³⁷

³³ Tabner, *Turnstiles*, p.63.

³⁴ *Review*, Sept. 16th 1892. The Combination match between Everton and Dresden United was watched by 6000 at Goodison, a thousand more people than attended the Division Two game at Anfield, against Lincoln City.

³⁵ *Review*, Dec. 17th 1892.

³⁶ *Review*, April 29th 1892.

³⁷ John McKenna responded to a Football League advertisement in the *Athletic News*, inviting applications to apply for the vacancies for the expanded Second Division. He summarily despatched a telegram without consulting his fellow directors and Liverpool were immediately accepted into the Second Division. Young, *Merseyside*, p. 46.

Though Everton FC had become a highly profitable business in the twelve years since its formation, profit *per se* was not the only motivation behind its progressive commercialisation. Houlding's primary intention seems to have been to be seen as the main driving force behind a successful and popular civic amenity. Here was a man who got things done and did them well, benefiting his standing in the community, and hence his political ambitions. Following his deposition as Everton's landlord and benefactor, Houlding could have opted to relinquish his interest in the Anfield ground, which was ideally located for housing development in the burgeoning suburb, but he was aware that the ground was a prime asset in maintaining his popular public profile. He would be abandoning the football industry, just when the club with which he had been long associated had won the League championship, and when the Liverpool public seemed to have an insatiable appetite for professional football. He needed to maintain the momentum of interest and to turn the moment of defeat to his advantage. After all, he had a wealth of knowledge and experience in running a major football club, so starting a new club at that particular moment made sense. The city of Liverpool ultimately benefited by having two professional football clubs and the pattern was set for the rivalry between Everton and Liverpool that has continued to the present day. However, before it became fully clear that Liverpool would emerge as Everton's counterpart, the latter's former rivals, Bootle FC, seemed poised for a revival.

THE RISE AND FALL OF BOOTLE FC

Attendance levels and potential drawing power were the crucial factors for membership of the new Football League in 1888. For 14 years, since the Rev. Keely set up the original St. John's FC, Bootle had played a major role in the evolution of football in Liverpool, but in a period of increasing commercialisation, Bootle's small population and the proximity of a more popular rival, Everton FC, meant that the club struggled to maintain decent 'gates'. When in the spring of 1888 it became clear which twelve clubs were going to constitute the forthcoming League, the secretary of one of the overlooked clubs, J.G. Hall, of Crewe Alexandra, organised a consolation 'second league'. Twenty clubs were to constitute the so-called 'Combination', and

amongst them was Bootle FC.³⁸ The rules of the Combination did not oblige members to play *all* the other clubs on a home and away basis. The constituent clubs only needed to complete a minimum of *eight* fixtures in the manner of the then cricket county championship.³⁹ Since the primary function of the Combination was simply to guarantee members a minimum number of fixtures against good quality opposition, a final league table was an irrelevance and this lack of a competitive dimension signalled the league's demise. Unsurprisingly, the next season, the majority of Combination teams were re-organised into a properly constituted league, known as the Football Alliance.⁴⁰ Bootle performed well in its inaugural season; finishing as runners-up to Sheffield Wednesday, and some attendances reached 4000. However, some members of the committee expressed the view that Bootle FC was over-reaching itself.⁴¹ To them the high expense of regular distant travel and the inherent lack of appeal of certain fixtures in the Alliance made membership of the Lancashire League a more congenial prospect.

In 1888, both Everton and Bootle had been included in a newspaper chart of senior English and Scottish clubs.⁴² A few months later, when the Football League began, some quarters had expressed the view that Bootle were unjustly excluded from the original 12 by the inclusion of their supposedly inferior neighbours Everton.⁴³ Indeed R.W. Lewis has claimed that Bootle's exclusion from the League was a turning point

³⁸ Inglis, *League*, pp. 8-9. The other invitees included Blackburn Olympic, Derby Junction, Mitchell St. George's (of Birmingham), Halliwell, Derby Midland, Notts Rangers, Leek, Witton, Long Eaton Rangers, Sheffield Wednesday, Nottingham Forest, Small Heath Alliance (Birmingham City), Walsall Town Swifts (Walsall), Burslem Port Vale (Port Vale), Newton Heath (Manchester United), and Darwen. The latter seven clubs were eventually included in the Football League.

³⁹ By the end of the season Bootle had actually played 16 games against fellow Combination members, and though above the lower limit, some member clubs were not played at all. Barnes, *Third Time Lucky*, p.10.

⁴⁰ The twelve founder members were Birmingham St. George's, Bootle, Crewe Alexandra, Darwen, Grimsby Town, Long Eaton Rangers, Newton Heath, Nottingham Forest, Sheffield Wednesday, Small Heath, Sunderland Albion, and Walsall Town Swifts.

⁴¹ *Football Field*, April 2nd 1892, Feb. 18th 1893.

⁴² *Wolverhampton Star*, Feb. 18th 1888, in Young, *Merseyside*, pp. 26-27.

⁴³ *Courier*, Sept. 8th 1888.

in its fortunes but in truth the beginning of the club's decline pre-dated this.⁴⁴ From the mid-1880s, Everton had overtaken Bootle, benefiting from a better location and rising attendances. It could be argued that over the same period, the playing strength of both clubs was roughly equal, but Everton's increasing 'gate' income allowed them to edge forward, attracting better players and to improve ground facilities. Bootle's low attendances during the crucial years prior to the formation of the Football League were a critical factor in its rejection but did not deter the club from making subsequent applications for membership.

Bootle's unsuccessful attempt to join the Football League in May 1889, polled the third highest number of applicant's votes (equal with Sunderland). A year later, Bootle was again unsuccessful but this time Sunderland *were* voted in. However, in spite of a couple of mediocre Alliance campaigns, Bootle were among the majority of Alliance clubs co-opted to form the new Second Division of the Football League in 1892.⁴⁵ It may have seemed that Bootle's ambitions were finally achieved but once again sentiments were voiced that the club had over-extended itself. At the time of the announcement of the intention to establish a Second Division, the Bolton *Football Field* had thought it 'pretty certain that they (Bootle) will *not* join any combination of clubs which will necessitate the expenditure of any large amount of travelling expenses.'⁴⁶ Even earlier, in February 1890, the same newspaper presciently warned '...if receipts cannot pay current expenses, from whence is to come the capital for importation? Generous, influential, enthusiastic support can alone maintain a professional team today and if this is not forthcoming...Bootle...must abandon its pretensions and fall out of the race to the goal of every well-regulated club's ambitions.'⁴⁷ Press pessimism was justified. Some clubs even rejected the offer of a place in the new division due to 'doubts over the standard and appeal of the other

⁴⁴ Lewis, *Thesis*, p.209-10.

⁴⁵ Barnes, *Third Time Lucky*, p. 12

⁴⁶ *Football Field*, April 2nd 1892. Bootle had been struggling to afford to travel to such Alliance outposts as Sunderland Albion and Grimsby.

⁴⁷ *Football Field*, Feb. 1st 1890.

applicants.’⁴⁸ Bootle’s declining attendances were partly explained by the relatively low population of the town (58,000 in 1891), together with the general unattractiveness of fixtures with decidedly unglamorous clubs, but another aspect of the problem was concurrent scheduling of matches with those of Everton’s.⁴⁹ Bootle’s attendances were comparable with other more isolated football clubs but geographical proximity to Everton was a permanent barrier to long-term development.⁵⁰ Chronically low attendances compounded Bootle’s financial difficulties but the management gambled (wrongly as it turned out) that the reflected prestige provided by membership of the Football League would excite the custom and support of local citizens.

The committee decided to supplement meagre funds by various money-raising schemes such as prize draws, smoking concerts, and an athletics festival. In the first six months of 1890, Bootle’s deficit had doubled to to £800 and ⁵¹ the Everton committee then decided to assist Bootle with ‘a benefit match in order that they might be able to extricate themselves out of (their) monetary difficulties.’ ⁵² Unfortunately, this brought only temporary respite and in spite of gate income and donations of £1,055, the club needed an advance of £250 to ensure that it could remain solvent until the end of the 1890-91 season. The financial situation was so serious that the *Football Field* believed that without ‘practical support for the club, the only question for (the) committee will be a decent internment of one of the oldest Association football clubs in Lancashire.’ ⁵³ The largest single contributors to club funds came from three local politicians (the mayor, John Vicars, who was also the club chairman, together with the local MP and the Bootle-born prospective candidate for West Toxteth). These men were keen to ensure that Bootle remained a senior club

⁴⁸ Taylor, Matthew, *The Leaguers*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p.7. Three non-Alliance clubs, Sheffield United, Burslem Port Vale, and Northwich Victoria, were also elected to the new Second Division.

⁴⁹ *Football Field*, April 7th 1888, in Lewis, *Thesis*, Chapter 5.

⁵⁰ Compare Accrington’s proximity to Blackburn and Burnley. *Darwen News*, Aug. 26th 1893.

⁵¹ *Liverpool Athletic Times*, July 1890. The club was £400 in the red and it was believed that inefficient financial management was largely to blame. By mid-July 1890 the deficit had doubled to £800.

⁵² *Football Field*, Aug. 16th 1890.

⁵³ *Football Field*, Jan. 3rd 1891, in Lewis *Thesis*, p. 301. By January 1891, the deficit was back to £533.

for reasons of municipal prestige, and, of course, to be seen to be an active financial supporter of the local professional club was generally a potential vote winning tactic.⁵⁴

Even more alarmingly, the formation of Liverpool FC in 1892 meant that Bootle's years of financial struggle in competition with Everton was now to be compounded by an additional club on the other side of Walton-on-the-Hill. But matters were further complicated by the unexpected creation of a third potential competitor, albeit situated in distant Wavertree (Figure 2.4, page 117). Liverpool Caledonians FC were incorporated in April 1892 after a nine-month 'pilot' programme of friendlies and local cup games had convinced the promoters that a professional club in south-central Liverpool was viable.⁵⁵ Shares were being 'freely taken up' and Wavertree tradesmen came forward 'liberally with support.'⁵⁶ Most of the 64 shareholders were from the nearby Toxteth and Edge Hill districts. Caledonians seem to have deliberately cultivated a somewhat 'Scottish' image, though in reality, links with Scotland were fairly tenuous. Apart from the club's name, the only connection was that a few directors were of Scots origin. It could be that the directors were either targeting the relatively overlooked ethnically-Scottish Liverpudlians or attempting to exploit the public's perception of the Scots' talent for football.⁵⁷

Liverpool Caledonians FC was set up as an ambitious professional organisation from the start. The club ground, Woodcroft Park, in Wavertree, was a large banked bowl,

⁵⁴ Kennedy, D., 'Class, Ethnicity and Civic Governance: a Social Profile of Football Club Directors on Merseyside in the Late Nineteenth Century', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 22, No. 5, Sept. 2005, p. 854.

⁵⁵ Caledonians' first season was not spent in a league but in playing friendlies against senior local semi-professional clubs such as Prescot, plus the reserve teams of League clubs such as Nottingham Forest, and Scots teams such as Aidrieonians. Gates varied between 1000 and 2000. The club won the Liverpool Shield, beating Southport Central in front of 4000, and this probably convinced the organisers to incorporate as a limited company in June 1892. Kennedy, D., 'Locality and Professional Football Club development: the Demographics of Football Club Support in Late Victorian Liverpool', *Soccer and Society*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Autumn 2004, p. 374.

⁵⁶ *Review* Sept. 24th 1892.

⁵⁷ Kirkland was a 38 year old confectioner who in partnership with his brother ran a bakery and restaurant business. (Watson Rutherford was later MP for Edge Hill).

replete with cinder cycle track, allegedly capable of accommodating the remarkable number of 30,000 persons, making it comparable to the new Goodison Park, and considerably larger than the Bootle FC enclosure at Hawthorne Road. It was also sensibly located near a railway station, facilitating the potential attendance of spectators from far and wide. A large playing staff was recruited for both first and second teams with some established names including several former Everton and Bootle footballers.⁵⁸ Together with the new Liverpool FC, Caledonians were accepted into the Lancashire League, and initially the outlook seemed promising. The *Review* claimed, 'The number of spectators when the first team is at home is large, and that support was good even for away fixtures.'⁵⁹ The paper even predicted that the Caledonians were ultimately more likely to succeed than Houlding's Liverpool FC. But despite this promising start and apparent confidence, the Caledonians company was suddenly wound up three months into the season in December 1892. The highest attendance (2000) was for the visit of Blackpool FC at the start of the season, but the average declined to perhaps less than 1000 thereafter. The club were eighth in the Lancashire League at the time of resignation and liabilities amounted to £540. The *Review's* correspondent, who had supported the venture from the outset, felt that the club was still viable, 'the local Scots were rapidly making a name for themselves, and the venture would inevitably have been a success. If half-a-dozen wealthy Scotsmen would come forward, the club might yet be saved.'⁶⁰ The identification with Scotland may have been a mistake as it could have alienated other local groups in Liverpool. However, the promoters of Caledonians seem to have had no great interest in football as a sport, and the club seems to have been launched purely as a business venture. Perhaps Liverpool FC's early success in the Lancashire League also damaged the confidence of the Caledonians' directors. The Bootle management may have initially regarded the collapse of Caledonians with collective relief at the demise of a potential local competitor but it was a sobering portend of the realities of football club economics.

⁵⁸ *Review* Sept. 24th 1892.

⁵⁹ *Review* Sept. 10th 1892. Caledonians also signed Bootle forward Billy Hastings.

⁶⁰ *Review* Dec. 31st 1892.

The incorporation of Bootle FC was not completed until late October 1892, but typical of the club's fortunes, other crises came to the fore. The Second Division campaign had started poorly, and by early December 1892 the club had amassed only four league points. There had even been some serious misbehaviour by certain players, resulting in their dismissal.⁶¹ More positively, after Christmas, there was an improvement in results and only three league games were lost during the rest of the season.⁶² Attendances, however, did not improve; a paltry 800 attended the league match with Ardwick, on the same afternoon as 20,000 people went to Goodison for an FA Cup tie with West Bromwich Albion. In the same month, Bootle were unable to pay the guarantee to Fleetwood Rangers after a friendly at Hawthorne Road. Even though Bootle's average League attendance for the season was only 2000, the average per club in the division was only marginally higher at 2270.⁶³ The doubts and anxieties of Second Division clubs over the 'standard and appeal of other applicants' seems to have been justified. Two Lancashire Cup matches in the spring both attracted crowds of 10,000 to Hawthorne Road, but by the end of the season, Bootle's 'gates' were of the order of about a thousand people.⁶⁴

Everton dominated the local football scene, but Bootle, Liverpool Caledonians, and Liverpool FC were vying for the custom of potential supporters in the early 1890s.

One aspect of commercial competition between neighbouring football clubs, often overlooked by football historians, is the effect of reserve team football. Everton reserves supplied a cheaper form of footballing entertainment when the Football League team was playing away. Moreover, as the Everton reserve team contained many high-class professional footballers, it was virtually the equal of a Football League club in its own right, and many thousands of spectators were attracted to its matches. Both Everton (and from 1892, also Liverpool FC) reserve matches frequently attracted attendances that were higher than those of many Football League clubs. Everton were able to occasionally field a predominantly reserve team in the

⁶¹ Barnes, *Third Time Lucky*, p. 12.

⁶² Barnes, T. *Third Time Lucky*, p. 14.

⁶³ Only Walsall Town Swifts (1310) and Burslem Port Vale's (1200) had inferior attendance records.

⁶⁴ *Football Field*, Aug. 5th 1893, in Lewis *Thesis*, Chapter 5. The club's balance sheet for the 1892-93 season showed that gate income totalled £1,365 8s 10d, with £1,073 5s 6d paid in wages, and creditors' liabilities amounted to £312 16s.

League and still managed to win, as for instance, against West Bromwich Albion in September 1893.⁶⁵ The high standard of players in the Everton reserve team also explains its phenomenal success in regional league football. The second team were regional champions on eleven occasions in the 24 seasons prior to the cessation of football in 1915, including eight continuous titles. Reserve football also provided an opportunity for minor semi-professional clubs to play host to a representative of a top Football League club (albeit a second eleven). Everton's loyalty to such a junior league as the Combination gave its other members in Cheshire, north Wales, and the north midlands, an auspicious fixture with a big club, attracting a bumper 'gate' to humble venues. Four thousand people attended Everton's Combination match at Oldham County in September 1895.⁶⁶ Everton were the only major club in the Combination until joined by Liverpool in 1898.⁶⁷ A season later, both Everton and Liverpool switched to the more prestigious Lancashire Combination, which provided fixtures with the reserve sides of leading local League clubs to minor clubs in north-west England. Reserve team football was a significant part of the local football industry, not only generating additional income for the two football companies, but also providing an economic lifeline to many minor clubs in outlying parts of the region and beyond, and in the case of the Combination, Everton single-handedly guaranteed financial viability to what would otherwise have been an unstable and loose association of clubs. Though financially advantageous to these outlying clubs, in Liverpool itself the fortnightly reserve fixture presented additional burdens to the financial viability of the city's smaller professional clubs like Bootle and Liverpool Caledonians.

During the close season of 1893, the Football League decided to enlarge the Second Division, and Liverpool FC was successful in applying for one of the two extra vacancies. The presence of two Liverpool-based clubs in the same division should perhaps have had the effect of stimulating local interest in football. Liverpool's

⁶⁵ *Review*, Sept. 23rd 1893.

⁶⁶ Williams, Graham, *The Code War: English Football in the Historical Spotlight* (Middlesex: Yore, 1994), p. 139.

⁶⁷ In this, Everton's last Combination season, the league contained a record 15 clubs, of which a third were from the Liverpool area (the rest including Tranmere Rovers, White Star Wanderers [Bootle], South Liverpool, and Garston Copper Works). *Echo*, season 1898-99, various league tables.

attendance levels during the past season in the Lancashire League were 2158, only slightly better than Bootle's, but the Hawthorne Road club was also competing for customers against First Division Everton and Everton reserves. The delicate equilibrium of commercial football in Liverpool was dramatically altered by Liverpool's promotion to the Football League, and Bootle FC with its chronically low attendance record was most threatened by this new arrival. As the club spent the summer in preparation for the new campaign, the resignation of Accrington from the Football League on the 3rd August prompted the Bootle directorate into a realistic appraisal of the club's imminent prospects. Like Bootle, Accrington had been suffering poor gates in the shadow of a successful competitor (Blackburn Rovers), but now having been relegated to the Second Division, decided to resign from the League. Accrington's place was hurriedly filled by Middlesbrough Ironopolis, themselves only to survive a single Football League season. Three weeks later, Bootle FC surrendered to the inevitable and also resigned from the Football League, (though it was a further two months before the club went into voluntary liquidation). The Football League, having only recently been inconvenienced over the unpropitious withdrawal of Accrington, were unable to replace Bootle at such a late stage, and for the 1893-94 season, the Second Division contained an odd number of clubs.⁶⁸

Bootle's population in 1891 was only 58,000 and this was probably insufficient in itself to support a professional League club. In addition, as in the case of Accrington, the presence of bigger neighbours made sustainability in the Football League even less viable. Perhaps it should have been possible for Bootle FC to attract custom from outside the borough but although the space between Bootle and Liverpool was a continuous urban area without a natural boundary, Liverpudlians seemed to regard Bootle as a distinctly separate and foreign territory. Whilst a high population catchment area was desirable for a home club's support, it was not the only factor. A city the size of Liverpool should perhaps have been able to sustain several professional clubs but late entrants to a large football market had not perhaps appreciated the degree to which citizens had already attached their sympathies to a football club already located in their city. Liverpool Caledonians failed despite providing good quality football in a large stadium and being located four miles from

⁶⁸ Tabner, *Turnstiles*, p. 63.

Everton's new home at Goodison. This may have happened because the Wavertree locals were apathetic to football or already had an existing loyalty to Everton.

Whether successful or failing, the Liverpool football clubs were seen as symbols of collective urban identity, and all of them attracted the attentions of ambitious local politicians. Even though both Bootle and the Caledonians would ultimately fail, local politicians were intimately involved in their affairs, recognising that there were some electoral advantages in affiliating even with mediocre football clubs. The archetypal local politician-cum-football entrepreneur was, of course, John Houlding, the so-called 'King of Everton', intimately involved in the foundation of both Everton and Liverpool football clubs. In the next section, we derive more insights into the motivations of such a politically inspired football promoter, as the management approach of Houlding's Liverpool FC is contrasted with that of the post-1892 Everton club.

PATTERNS OF CLUB MANAGEMENT

John Houlding's reach in the public life of Liverpool ran deep. As well as being involved in the foundation of both Liverpool clubs, Houlding was a councillor, poor law guardian, freemason, and Orangeman. Research for this study showed that other prominent members of Liverpool FC and the pre-1892 Everton FC had close links to the Anglican church, the Conservative party, and freemasonry though the full extent of this political and commercial involvement has been revealed in recent research by David Kennedy.⁶⁹ Mason believed that the directorates of both Everton and Liverpool had essentially similar social backgrounds, but Kennedy has argued convincingly that there were also clear differences in religious and political outlook in the management of both clubs.⁷⁰ Politically ambitious men were attracted by the opportunity to participate as directors and the board of Liverpool FC, in particular, had a very Conservative complexion. A third of the protagonists in the Houlding camp in the

⁶⁹ Kennedy, D., *The division of Everton Football Club into hostile factions: the development of professional football organisation on Merseyside, 1878-1914*, (2003), University of Leeds, unpublished PhD thesis.

⁷⁰ Mason, Tony *The Blues and the Reds*, (Liverpool: Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1985), pp. 111-112.

1892 dispute were actually members of the city's influential Constitutional Association, the controlling organisation of the Liverpool Conservative caucus. Several were also active in other Conservative bodies throughout the city. For instance, John Houlding and his son William, together with Edwin Berry and Simon Jude were Tory members of the city council, whilst Sir James Willox was the Everton MP, and Benjamin Bailey was the chairman of the West Derby Conservative Association. Two other Liverpool directors, H.O. Cooper and T.C. Howarth, were also prominent members of local Conservative groups.⁷¹

The role of the staunchly Protestant Working Men's Conservative Association in the management of Liverpool FC was even more marked. In 1894 the WMCA, described by Waller as 'the engine of Protestant power in the Conservative party,' had 18 branches in the city with a total membership of 6,000.⁷² The WMCA was utterly opposed to ritualist tendencies in the Anglican church and members were even forbidden from consorting with Roman Catholics. Willox, Jude, Bailey, the Houldings, and the Berrys, all held office at various times in the local WMCA hierarchy.⁷³ There is an abundance of further evidence to show that Liverpool FC was an organisation run by men with strong Protestant beliefs. All but one of the directors were Anglicans; ironically the sole exception was a New Connection Methodist, the sect strongly represented on the board of Everton FC.⁷⁴ Several Liverpool directors also held lay positions in the Church of England, both locally and nationally. Willox was president of the National Protestant Union, T.C. Howarth was a member of Liverpool Church Council, Albert Berry was churchwarden of St.Mary's, Liscard, and, of course, John Houlding had been on the vestry committee of St.Saviour's in Everton during the 1870s and '80s.⁷⁵ The local poor law union also had a significant presence in the Liverpool boardroom. Seven directors were closely linked with the West Derby Union, a body of considerable civic power and influence. John Houlding, Simon Jude, Edwin Berry, John McKenna, Tom Howarth, William Briggs, Ben

⁷¹ Kennedy, 'Split', p. 16.

⁷² Waller, *Democracy*, p. 286.

⁷³ Kennedy, 'Split', pp. 16-17.

⁷⁴ Kennedy, 'Split', p. 19.

⁷⁵ See Chapter One: *Clerks, Clerics, and Commercialism*, p. 11.

Bailey held elected posts or senior salaried positions within the union.⁷⁶ Almost a quarter of the original 46 shareholders in 1892 were employees of the West Derby Union.⁷⁷

Freemasonry was also widespread among the directors and shareholders of Liverpool FC. Fifteen directors in the period before the Great War were masons and some held high office in the movement. Simon Jude was Past Master of the Merchant and Prudence Lodges and⁷⁸ Robert H. Webster had been Worshipful Master of the Everton Lodge in 1885.⁷⁹ Unsurprisingly, John Houlding was also prominent, having been initiated into the Everton Lodge in November 1869, and becoming Worshipful Master in July 1877. Houlding was also a member of four other lodges in the West Lancashire district and achieved national office, as Grand Deacon of England in 1898.⁸⁰ In marked contrast with Liverpool FC, only two Everton directors of this period were known to be freemasons.

One of the principal reasons for the bifurcation of Everton FC in 1892 had been John Houlding's connections with the brewing industry and several other directors in the new Liverpool club maintained the link. These included Houlding's son William and his son-in-law, Thomas Knowles. The latter was a member of a well-connected industrialist family from Wigan, whose interests included not only a mine and

⁷⁶ The Everton director, Dr. J. Baxter was the union's medical officer.

⁷⁷ Kennedy, 'Split', pp 22-23.

⁷⁸ *Everton Masonic Lodge Centenary Brochure* 1960, Houlding obituary, *Courier*, 18th March 1902. *A Dictionary of Edwardian Biography (Liverpool)*, (Edinburgh: Peter Bell, 1987), see p. 263 for Simon Jude (a reprint of *Liverpool and Birkenhead in the Twentieth Century: Contemporary Biographies*, W.T. Pike, Brighton, 1911). J.J. Ramsey, John McKenna, W.C. Briggs, and Edwin Berry also achieved high local rank in the movement.

⁷⁹ The highest rank in a local lodge was Worshipful Master (WM), preceded by Senior Warden (SW), and Junior Warden (JW). The lodges of Liverpool were subordinate to the Province of West Lancashire, based in Hope Street, Liverpool, which was controlled by the Provincial Grand Master (PMG).

⁸⁰ Houlding was also a founder member of both the Hamer and Anfield Lodges, and a member of the Sir Walter Raleigh Lodge and the Lathom Lodge in Southport. *Courier*, March 18th 1902. Also Kennedy 'Split', pp 20-22.

ironworks, but also a brewery.⁸¹ Several other Liverpool-based brewery companies had large block holdings in the club, including Bent's and Threlfall's.⁸² As well as these, several individuals had positions in local victuallers' and brewers' societies, and once again the names of John Houlding, Edwin Berry, Simon Jude were prominent. Sir James Willox and Liverpool FC auditor, Joseph West (who was also Simon Jude's accountancy partner), were officials in the local brewers' and wine merchants' trade association. Though John Orrell played no direct part in the affairs of the new Liverpool FC company after 1892, he had been one of the joint landlords of the Anfield ground and as a brewer and property developer had particularly close business and perhaps even social connections to Houlding.

John Houlding died in 1902 whilst visiting a resort on the Bay of Biscay. He had been connected with the organisation of football in Liverpool from its inception, when the Cambridge curates introduced the game twenty-three years earlier. Not only had the game progressed enormously since then, but his own family's position had undergone considerable social advancement. Both his children married into wealthy industrialist families. Knowles family money and connections ensured that Houlding's grandsons were educated at Eton. John's son, William (1862-1939) was educated at Liverpool College and studied chemistry at Edinburgh University. Whilst in Scotland, he met and later married Henrietta Tinsley, whose family (conveniently for the Houlding beer business) were manufacturers of glass bottles. William had some diverse business interests, as well as being a director of his father's brewery, he was also on the board of Liverpool's Empire Theatre. He also pursued a political career in Liverpool, representing the Everton ward for ten years until 1905. However, the Houlding family interest in Liverpool FC was not destined to long outlast John Houlding. Rather

⁸¹ Source: Houlding family genealogical information supplied by Mr. Ted Corran. Also 1881, 1891, 1901 censuses.

⁸² In 1894 Bents bought 100 shares in Liverpool FC (equivalent to 9.4% equity) Total 1019 shares. Threlfall's bought 50 shares in the club in 1899, out of an expanded total of 2,593 shares (Both breweries had 5.1% of total equity in 1899). Kennedy, 'Class', p.859. A clause in the prospectus stated that 'The office of director shall not be vacated by his being concerned or participating in the profits of supplying the company with any goods or stock, or otherwise contracting with the company or for execution of any work for the company.' The other primary businesses of the directors were advertised in the original Liverpool FC programme, notably Empire Theatres (of which William Houlding was a director) and some other breweries connected with the club. Kennedy, 'Split', p. 14.

abruptly, in 1905, William and his brother-in-law Thomas Knowles divested themselves and the entire Houlding family of all shareholdings in Liverpool FC. Perhaps being associated with a commercial football club did not befit the image of the landed gentleman *arriviste* that William now wished to project. A few years later, William and his wife retired permanently to Peebleshire. His daughter Audrey married an executive of the brewing company, Ind Coope, and in 1938, the year before his death, William sold the Houlding brewery and associated public houses to the latter company for £250,000.⁸³

The Houlding sell-out in 1905 was the only major disturbance to the share equity of Liverpool FC before the Great War. The constitution of the Liverpool FC company ensured that the board of directors retained careful control over the shareholdings. No doubt this was to frustrate the possibility of a members' revolt such as that which initiated the split in the original unincorporated club in 1892. For this reason, Liverpool FC had a comparatively small shareholder base. In fact most of the shares were owned by the directors (56%, increasing to 79% after the Houlding shares were sold in 1905⁸⁴); evidence, perhaps, of their aversion to shareholder interference, and indicating their intentions to avail themselves of the commercial and political opportunities that ownership of a professional football club could provide. In contrast to the ethos of Liverpool FC, the new Everton company contrived to continue the traditions and practices of the original unincorporated club. In 1892 there were 453 shareholders and 85% of these had small holdings of 10 or less shares. Only one person owned more than 25 shares in the first decade of the new company's existence and the ten original directors collectively only owned 6.1% of the company's 2,263 shares. The new Everton club strived to be democratic; its constitution only permitting each member to have one vote at meetings.⁸⁵ Everton also differed from Liverpool FC in the Liberal complexion of its directorate. Dr. Baxter became a Liberal councillor for Liverpool's St. Anne's ward, and Dr. William Whitford, was chairman both of Everton FC and the Everton and Kirkdale Liberal Association. William Clayton was chair of the Formby Liberal Association, Alfred Wade's brother

⁸³ Information supplied by Mr. Ted Corran.

⁸⁴ Thomas Knowles also sold his shareholding in 1905. Kennedy, 'Split', p. 14.

⁸⁵ Kennedy, 'Split', p.13.

held the same position with the Walton Liberal Association, and Will Cuff, George Mahon and Wade were also actively involved with Liberal politics. The latter three were New Connection Methodists, a sect renowned for its brand of 'Liberal Methodism'. Though some Everton directors were Anglicans, they displayed little of the staunch Protestantism of their Liverpool counterparts.⁸⁶

The gulf between the two new clubs could also be gauged by the version of Everton FC's origins which was promoted by the club in the years after 1892, according to which, Everton derived from the earlier St. Domingo's New Connection Methodist FC. The earliest versions of this story appeared in the 1900s but it was given particular credibility by the publication of Thomas Keates' history of Everton FC in 1928. Keates died just before publication, but he had apparently been closely associated with various Everton committeemen from the club's earliest days and had himself been a director. Keates claimed that St. Domingo's was one of the handful of teams playing in Stanley Park in the late 1870s, but curiously it seems to have been the only one of those teams whose activities were *never* reported in the local press.⁸⁷ The fact that it was supposedly the most prominent team, makes its omission in the contemporary press all the more curious.

A St. Domingo's Cricket Club was playing in Stanley Park during the summer of 1880 and presumably, by then, had done so for a number of years.⁸⁸ At least six of its officials were linked to the New Connection chapel on St. Domingo's Vale, Everton, and furthermore, these men had intriguing links with both Everton FC and the Everton United Church FC. Two of the cricketers named were also members of Everton FC, whilst the club captain H. Hiles had also skippered the United Church team. However,

⁸⁶ Kennedy, 'Class', p.847. Four of the original ten Everton directors whose religion was known were non-conformists whilst Dr. Baxter was a Roman Catholic.

⁸⁷ The matches of many secular and church-based teams, i.e. St. John's (Bootle), Birkenhead, Liverpool AFC, Everton United Church, St. Mary's (Kirkdale), St. Peter's, St. Benedict's, were reported in Liverpool newspapers during 1879-80, but St. Domingo's FC are never mentioned. Earliest reference to St. Domingo's FC yet found, is a 1906 Ogden's cigarette card. France, D.H., *Toffee Cards: the Tobacco Years*, (Essex: Skript Design, 1997), p. 9.

⁸⁸ 1880 St. Domingo Cricket Club membership card, in McElroy, Robert and MacDougal, Grant, *Football Memorabilia: Evocative Artefacts of the Beautiful Game*, (London: Carlton, 1999), p. 150.

if St. Domingo's had a football section then surely Hiles would have been its captain? The evidence of football's introduction to the Everton area, presented in Chapter One, that it was a direct import from Cambridge University by the footballing curates, includes no mention of a St. Domingo's *Football Club*. Also St. Domingo's FC was allegedly founded in 1878, yet there is no evidence of football in Liverpool before 1879, the year that St. John's of Bootle, Birkenhead, and the Everton United club were active. The only sensible conclusion to be drawn from all these inconsistencies is that there was no St. Domingo's FC. Why, in view of considerable contrary evidence, was Thomas Keates insistent that Everton FC had derived from this apparently mythical club? The likely answer lies in the religious affiliation of leading members of the faction opposed to Houlding in 1892. Several senior officials at Everton FC, including George Mahon (chairman) and Will Cuff (secretary), were prominent New Connection Methodists. Mahon was the organist and Cuff was the choirmaster at St. Domingo's chapel.

John Houlding had close links with the United Church FC, the actual precursor of Everton FC, through being a member of the vestry committee of St. Saviour's church, located only a few yards from the St. Domingo New Connection chapel. It seems unlikely that in the early 1880s, George Mahon could have been unaware of such a prominent citizen as John Houlding or his connections with local football. He must have been aware of the existence of the Everton United Church club. According to the 1881 census, two United Church footballers lived either side of Mahon's house in Bulwer Street, Everton. Despite this, Samuel Crosbie, an early benefactor of Everton FC, claimed that it was he that introduced Mahon to the game of football. Collectively, this evidence suggests that St. Domingo's FC did not exist and that the actual pioneering club in the Everton district was the Anglican United Church FC, and it is difficult to believe that George Mahon was unaware of the latter's existence.

Why then, did Mahon, and later Will Cuff and other members of the Everton directorate, do nothing to dispel the myth of the club's St. Domingo origin? It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that New Connection members of the Everton club were complicit in the propagation of this myth. This may indicate the level of antagonism between the Mahon and Houlding groups in the original Everton FC. New Connection members of the club seem to have been attempting to undermine

Houlding's contribution to the development of the club since 1879, obscuring the significance of his involvement and by promoting an essentially untrue version of events which gave the impression that their own chapel played a major role in the formation of Everton FC, and by definition, football's introduction to Liverpool. The fortuitous links between Everton FC and the St. Domingo's CC mentioned earlier provided a credible connection by which the truth could be distorted. By the 1900s, the possibility of dissent from the New Connection's version of events had diminished because by then, few people remained who had been involved in the early years of Liverpool football. Following Houlding's death in 1902, his son sold all family interests in Liverpool FC and moved to Scotland. The Anglican curates had moved away many years previously.⁸⁹ Even by the 1900s, few people may have been aware of the existence of the short-lived Everton United club of 20 years earlier, which had been rapidly superseded by Houlding's Everton FC.

The promotion of the false origin of Everton FC demonstrates that the depth of antipathy between the post 1892 Everton and Liverpool football companies was profound and irreconcilable. Everton directors included men from a range of religious denominations, including Methodist and Catholic, they were mostly of a Liberal cast, and generally supportive of temperance. Liverpool's directors, by contrast, were mostly staunch Anglicans, Conservatives, Freemasons, and supporters of the drinks industry. Moreover, the shareholder base of Everton was broad and democratic, whilst Liverpool's was smaller and more restrictive, control being rigorously maintained by the small number of directors, a legacy of the events of 1892, when the Houlding faction lost control of the pre-incorporation Everton. As we shall see in the next section, the contrast in attitudes to overall management between the two clubs was also reflected in different perspectives to team management.

PATTERNS OF TEAM MANAGEMENT

Liverpool FC's first two seasons in the Football League were tumultuous; the club had achieved immediate promotion to the First Division, followed by an equally rapid relegation. The board of directors were in control of team administration, but in effect,

⁸⁹ Except Rev. C.E. Carter (St. Mary's, Kirkdale), who remained in Liverpool for the rest of his life. He died in 1944 at the age of 89.

it was left in the capable hands of John Houlding's trusted lieutenants, John McKenna and the part-time secretary, W.E. Barclay. For the return season in Division Two, McKenna and Barclay signed up a fresh cohort of mostly Scottish players, and their skills and tactical superiority, ensured that, yet again, immediate promotion back to the First Division was achieved. During the summer of 1896, McKenna was alerted to the availability of a man, who though not a footballer, would exert a profound influence over the club for the remainder of the entire period before the Great War. Tom Watson had been the organising force behind Sunderland FC's spectacular reign as the 'Team of All the Talents', during which they had secured the League championship three times (**Figure 2.5, page 115**). Born in Newcastle in 1856, the son of a police constable, Watson had started his working life as a clerk, becoming involved with football in his thirties, providing administrative services for several Tyneside clubs, including Newcastle East End, the forerunners of Newcastle United. He had come to the attention of Sunderland in 1889, and was appointed match secretary, responsible for the administration of team affairs and the arrangement of fixtures. The Sunderland committee came to respect his opinions on the recruitment and selection of players, and this advice gradually became an accepted part of his secretarial role.⁹⁰ In 1890, Sunderland became the first new club to be elected to the Football League, and were dominant during the next few seasons under Watson's guidance. By 1896, 'The Team of All the Talents' had started to decline and Watson decided to retire to manage a tobacconist's shop. He would presumably have remained in his native north-east for the rest of his life, until John McKenna seized the opportunity to offer him a secretarial position with Liverpool of similar latitude to that which he had enjoyed at Sunderland.⁹¹ Watson's proven success and his network of contacts, mostly north of the border, particularly impressed McKenna. 'The Team of All the Talents' was predominantly Scottish, a characteristic which resonated with Liverpool's (and Everton's) policy of importing talented Scottish players. Having a full time official responsible for the day-to-day administration of the club, showed the modern businesslike attitude of the Liverpool club and Watson's organisational skills

⁹⁰ Hutchinson, Roger, *Into the Light: a complete history of Sunderland FC*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2000), pp. 34-35.

⁹¹ Hutchinson, *Light*, p. 63.

certainly helped improve the team's performance.⁹² In his first season, the club reached fifth position in the League, the average gate rose to over 12,000, and the club even reached the semi-final of the English Cup. By 1900-01 the Liverpool club had won its first League championship.

In the 1890s, it was highly unusual for the selection of players to be vested in the authority of an individual but the evidence suggests that Watson did enjoy this rare privilege. Normal practice in Victorian and Edwardian professional clubs was for the selection of players to be undertaken by special committees of directors. Preston North End's entire board of twelve directors was reportedly involved in selection, even though nominally this was within the purview of a smaller sub-committee.⁹³ Watson may well have been the first individual team selector for a major professional club. The *Football Echo* referred to 'Watson's team' whilst the 1902 reserve team were intended to be 'purely local talent of which Tom Watson has a plethora to pick from' and from which it was hoped he would 'unearth some good youngsters'.⁹⁴

Although Watson did perform some of the functions of a modern team manager he had no specific brief regarding tactics, coaching, or training. Standard practice dictated that players worked out strategy themselves under the direction of team captains. Exercise, practice, and medication were generally the responsibility of the team trainer. In October 1896, Everton FC introduced a compulsory daily training schedule for the players consisting largely of walking, sprinting, and skipping rope exercises. Rather than being inspired by a desire to improve the footballing staff's fitness, these instructions seem to have been formulated mostly to placate criticism from shareholders and supporters by ensuring that players were purposefully occupied during the week, it being felt that players were prone to 'loaf around' aimlessly. Everton could have been one of the earliest beneficiaries of progressive team

⁹² It is possible that Watson's role at Liverpool was more limited than it had been at Sunderland.

Liverpool never achieved the sustained dominance that the Wearsiders had enjoyed in the 1890s and Watson was described in *Gore's Directory* (1913) merely as a 'clerk', rather than the more specific title of 'football club secretary'. Watson died May 1915.

⁹³ Hunt, David, *The History of Preston North End Football Club: the Power, the Politics, and the People*, (Preston, PNE Publications, 2000), p.108.

⁹⁴ *Football Echo*, Aug. 30th 1902

management, had the club's directorate shown a more enlightened attitude towards industrial relations. John Cameron had been the Ayrshire-born secretary of the first footballers' trade union during his brief interlude as an Everton player, but the club had reacted by purging the team of its mainly Scottish unionists. Like others in his position, Cameron moved to the Southern League, and he was appointed player-secretary of Tottenham Hotspur in 1898, enjoying latitude commensurate with that of Tom Watson but as a player he had the additional advantage of a tactical perspective.⁹⁵ Cameron's managerial skills were well appreciated in the wider football fraternity, particularly after his team won the English Cup in 1901. Preston shareholders unsuccessfully lobbied club directors in 1902 for the appointment of a team manager 'like Mr. Cameron of Spurs', who would supervise their supposedly indisciplined players.⁹⁶ Had Everton directors shown more foresight, team affairs could possibly have benefited as early as 1888 by the knowledge and insight of an experienced footballer, when there had been unheeded calls for Nick Ross to be team selector as well as Everton captain.⁹⁷

Unlike Tom Watson, Everton's secretary, Richard Molyneux played little, if any, part in team selection. At Everton this remained the responsibility of the directors. Everton's preferred method of team selection was nearer to the Preston model than it was to Liverpool's. Keates had been an Everton director and had admitted that whilst players had a profound practical knowledge of the game, 'the looker-on sees more than the players, and that his judgment is likely to be more independent, unbiased and reliable.'⁹⁸ In marked contrast to Liverpool's approach to team management, Everton continued to use a selection committee certainly until the 1930s, and even revived the practice in the 1950s, though the managers inbetween were subject to considerable directorial interference.⁹⁹ Will Cuff replaced Molyneux in 1901 and remained secretary until 1918.¹⁰⁰ Cuff, a solicitor, had been a director since 1895 and he re-

⁹⁵ Goodwin, Bob, *An Illustrated History of Tottenham Hotspur*, (Derby: Breedon, 1995), p.16.

⁹⁶ Hunt, *Preston*, p. 104.

⁹⁷ Young, *Merseyside*, pp. 30-36.

⁹⁸ Keates, *Everton FC*, p. 113.

⁹⁹ Apart from a brief period with Cliff Britton as nominal team manager from 1948 to 1956. Everton then reverted to a selection committee for two years.

¹⁰⁰ Keates, *Everton FC*, p. 120.

joined the board in 1921. Cuff's dictatorial manner and intimate knowledge of the administration of Everton FC suggests that he was the prime influence behind player selection at this time. The press certainly perceived him as the chief spokesman for the club.

How successful were the management styles of Everton and Liverpool in terms of winning competitions? Despite winning only three trophies between 1888 and 1915, Everton's overall record in League and Cup was still statistically impressive in comparison with the leading clubs of the time. By 1915, Everton, Aston Villa, Blackburn Rovers, and Sunderland were the only four clubs which had never been demoted from Division One. In fact, Everton, Villa, and Sunderland had taken 50 of the 108 possible First Division top four places between 1889 and 1915.¹⁰¹ Liverpool's record was not quite as distinguished as Everton's, but the club still won two League titles before 1915. However, Liverpool's mean winning percentage (in other words the proportion of total League games won), was only 50.8% for the period 1893-1914, whereas Everton maintained a winning percentage of 56.9%, the third highest mean winning percentage of any League club.¹⁰² In the context of pre-Great War football, selection by committee would seem to have been at least as effective, and possibly more successful, than, the selection of players by an individual manager, such as Watson.

A consistently stable team line-up is usually one of the key elements of football success particularly in the context of a long-term campaign such as the Football League. Tischler provided evidence of player turnover (that is, changes to teams) for three of the most consistently successful clubs of the period, Aston Villa, Sunderland, and Everton.¹⁰³ His methodology determined 'starting line-ups' for these clubs by averaging the number of games that individual footballers played during the first five weeks of the season. For the comparative purposes of the present study, additional data was also collected for Liverpool FC and Preston North End. As might be expected, the results showed that in successful seasons fewer changes were made to

¹⁰¹ Russell, *Football*, p.53.

¹⁰² Only Aston Villa and Sunderland had a higher mean winning percentage. Vamplew, *Pay Up*, p. 132.

¹⁰³ Tischler, Steven, *Footballers and Businessmen: the origins of professional soccer in England*, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), p.97.

teams, and that more changes were made during seasons when teams performed badly.¹⁰⁴ The averages for number of team changes for each club from 1889 until 1915 give Liverpool the least at 3.73 changes, Preston 3.96, Everton 4.12, Sunderland 4.65, and Aston Villa 4.65 (the latter two being the most successful clubs). These results are perhaps too marginal to make profound conclusions, but the implication is that individual selectors, such as Tom Watson, were generally reluctant to change the team even during an extended run of poor results, and that selection committees appear to have been more willing to experiment with team changes though perhaps not always for the most objective of reasons. Though he was not a ‘manager’ in the modern sense, with wide-ranging responsibility for tactics and player selection and training, Watson had been the guiding force behind three Sunderland championships and two for Liverpool FC. His methods of working were a step on the way to modern football management rather than a radical change in approach. Directors deferred to his judgement on the selection of players but in an era before ideas of team management had fully developed, when most clubs determined such matters by consultation between directors, there does not seem to have been any particular advantage to either method of team selection.

Watson had a proven record of success as a club secretary at Sunderland FC, where he fulfilled the role of a ‘manager’ in the commercial sense. He was ‘headhunted’ to do a similar job for Liverpool FC (though he had technically already ‘retired’) and presumably he was guaranteed a degree of relative autonomy in his working practices. Liverpool FC’s corporate ethos – echoing the motivations of the pre-1892 unincorporated Everton club – was that of a ‘profit maximiser’ and that Watson was engaged to oversee day-to-day administration of the club/company, effectively he was its general manager or chief executive. Liverpool FC were one of the first football club companies to adopt modern business practice by devolving the routine running of

¹⁰⁴ For Sunderland’s championship seasons, 1892 saw four changes made, 1893 just one, and 1895, four again. In Preston’s first championship of 1889, only two players were changed during the season. Everton’s championship of 1891 saw *six* team changes, contrasting with the runners-up position of 1905, which was achieved with *no* team changes across the season. Liverpool made only one change to regular team personnel during their first championship season in 1901, and only three changes in the second championship of 1906. Tischler, *Footballers and Businessmen*, p. 97.

the company to a paid official. Everton, on the other hand, continued with a commercial structure which paralleled the company's origins as a committee-run football club. Molyneux and Cuff, the two Everton secretaries before the Great War, were 'in-house' appointments, having been associated with the club since the pre-incorporation period. Even though the 1892 Everton club was a commercial company, it was still managed on the democratic lines of a members' club. Major decisions, including team selection, were conducted in committee, though Will Cuff probably exercised more autonomy than did his predecessor.

CONCLUSION

In the fifteen or so years following the formation of the Football League, the professional game matured into the form that it assumed until perhaps as late as the 1960s. The Football League brought about a quantum leap in public excitement, which was recognised at the time; Charles Edwardes called it the 'New Football Mania', and in Liverpool the press dubbed it 'Football Fever'. In no other town or city was the increase in the level of public interest in the game more dramatic. Only a year before the creation of the League, Everton FC were regarded as a peripheral minor club, whose only auspicious achievement was its increasing crowd size. This, rather than prowess on the football field, was the crucial factor for economic success, and as the new League was primarily a commercial cartel, this ultimately ensured Everton's membership.

As Matthew Taylor has pointed out, there was no grand plan for the development of League football, which evolved in a tentative, piecemeal fashion.¹⁰⁵ A similar paradigm applies to the evolution of professional football in Liverpool. Everton FC won their second League championship in the final season before football was suspended during the Great War. But the limited company that achieved this was a radically different organisation to the one that won the club's first championship twenty-four years earlier in 1891. At that time Everton were still a members' club and about to face a crisis that would result, not only in the re-formation of the Everton club, but the creation of an entirely new commercial football club, Liverpool FC.

¹⁰⁵ Taylor, *Leaguers*, p. 2.

In the history of English football this situation was unique. No other major club, having just won the prime honour in the commercial game, has given rise to another club, which also went on to win the championship. In other cities with two or more League clubs, the pattern of evolution was completely different. It seems to be another example of Liverpool exceptionalism and the peculiar political structure of Liverpool was certainly paralleled in the factional composition of its main football club. In this enclosed organisation, the two factions were inevitably set on a course of conflict. This case also has implications about one of the main debates in sports history, that is, were gate-money clubs profit or utility maximisers? Wray Vamplew has written: 'The question ...is what sort of business had the firms in the sports industry become, or more precisely, what were their ultimate objectives?' American sports clubs were mostly profit maximisers, but in Britain clubs were generally 'highly inefficient profit maximisers' and 'that some other goal had priority over profits.'¹⁰⁶ The top Lancashire football clubs were utility maximisers as their priority was to have a winning team better than their geographical rivals, but the management of Everton in the period before and after the creation of the Football League suggests that it was operated as a profit maximiser.

This is illustrated by the lackadaisical approach to team management shown by Everton in the inaugural League season when good players were poorly managed, in contrast with the club's huge attendances. Everton had a large captive market for football but the quality of the product seems to have been a secondary consideration as the crowds came regardless.

The performance of Everton as a sporting and commercial institution provides an illustration of the result when the two opposing philosophies of football club management collided. Everton were regarded as one the Football League's weakest clubs, fortunate to be selected over the claims of Bootle. The League, however, was a commercial organisation and as Everton was probably the most profitable football business even in 1888, it was considered essential to include the club. The 'Sandon Clique' were concerned about the standard of the team, whereas the Houlding faction seem to have been pre-occupied with increasing profit. When Everton won the

¹⁰⁶ Vamplew, *Pay Up*, p.77.

League championship in 1891, Houlding probably felt that with success on the football field, the arguments of his detractors would be negated, and therefore, it was the ideal opportunity to fully commercialise the club. However, he misread the mood of the membership, who valued control over the team (utility maximisation) as a priority.

The enormous size of the football market in Liverpool and Everton's commercial success, prompted the formation of another profit maximising football club in the south of the city. Liverpool Caledonian's backers withdrew financial support after attendances dwindled, even though the team's performance was reasonably satisfactory. As Lancashire towns with populations of 100,000 were supporting one professional club, it is curious that Liverpool with a population six times larger could not support more than two.¹⁰⁷ The fact that new entrants such as Caledonians could not survive, implies that perhaps the demand for professional football was not evenly distributed throughout the city. Lewis has pointed out that the demographic structure of a club's catchment area was crucial to its success or failure though late entrants to a football market had not perhaps appreciated the degree to which the public had attached their support to a pre-existing club located in the city. In most two-club (and some three-club) cities, the rival clubs had usually come into existence at roughly the same time, so both had had time to garner local support. Only in Sheffield was there a long interval between the formation of the first major club (Wednesday, 1867) and the second (United, 1889), but even here, the latter club originated as the football section of a long established cricket club. The unusual circumstances of Liverpool FC's formation as an offshoot of Everton, meant that, though technically a late entrant to the local football industry, the former perhaps received a disproportionate level of residual 'goodwill' from the latter.

The contrasting constitutions of the new football companies reflected the internal rifts within the pre-1892 Everton club. The new Everton company deliberately retained democratic aspects of the pre-incorporation members club whereas the Houlding faction reinforced their autocratic control in the restrictive share structure of Liverpool FC. The Goodison club was an entirely new business organisation, whilst

¹⁰⁷ Tischler, *Footballers and Businessmen*, p. 82.

Liverpool FC was effectively a continuation of pre-1892 Everton but managed in the policies of player selection and team way that Houlding had intended. The clubs' management also seem to have reflected their contrasting commercial philosophies. Though there were internal rifts within the original Everton FC they could not be attributable to Houlding's commercial subversion of New Connection values as this sect of Methodism had not instigated the originating club.

Kennedy is the latest in a succession of football historians to accept the St. Domingo origin of Everton FC and given the theme of his thesis that 'the split of 1892 was the culmination of a process whereby the original Everton club's communal identity was challenged by emerging and competitive and commercial considerations...', this assumption must affect the context of his findings. Kennedy's 'analysis of the aims of the original club's religious founders' (i.e. New Connection Methodists) is irrelevant as the Everton club actually originated as a secular district club.¹⁰⁸ The extent of the political and religious divisions suggest that the management of the post-1892 Everton club (containing several New Connection Methodists) were so antithetical to John Houlding and his Conservative dominated faction that they obscured his role in the formation of the original club in 1879. They were determined to purify its origins of any connection with Houlding, the brewing industry, and Conservatism.

¹⁰⁸ See Kennedy, *Thesis*, p. 4.

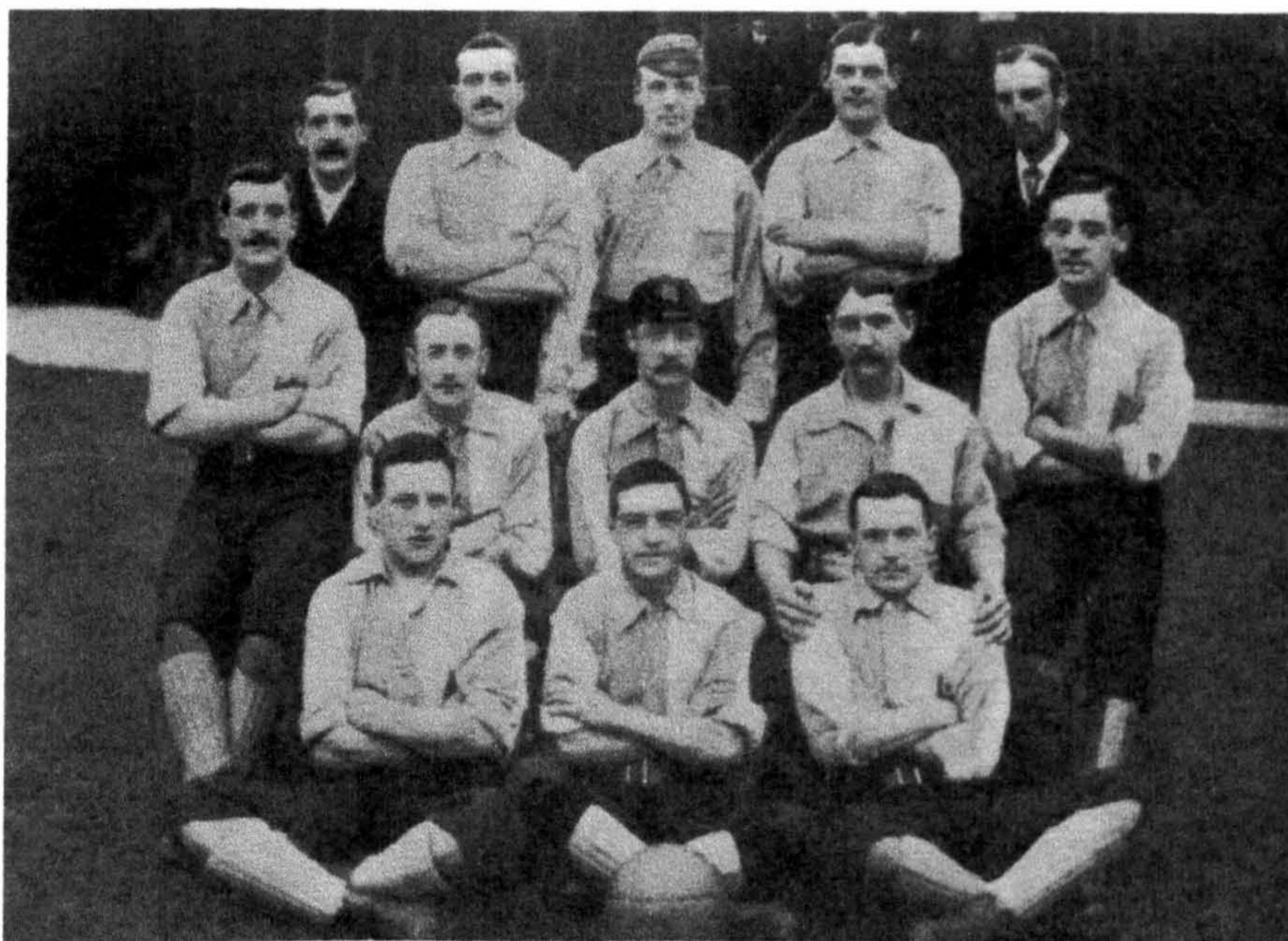


Figure 2.1: Everton FC first team, 1889-90, pictured on the bowling green behind John Houlding's Sandon Hotel, Oakfield Road, Anfield.

Back row: David Waugh (trainer), Alex Hannah, Robert Smalley, Dan Doyle, Richard Molyneux (club secretary).
Middle: Alex Latta, J. Weir, John Holt, George Farmer, Edgar Chadwick. *Front:* Charlie Parry, Fred Geary, A. Brady.



Figure 2.3: George Mahon, chief instigator of the rebellion against Houlding's control of Everton FC.



Figure 2.5: Tom Watson, secretary of Liverpool FC 1896-1915.

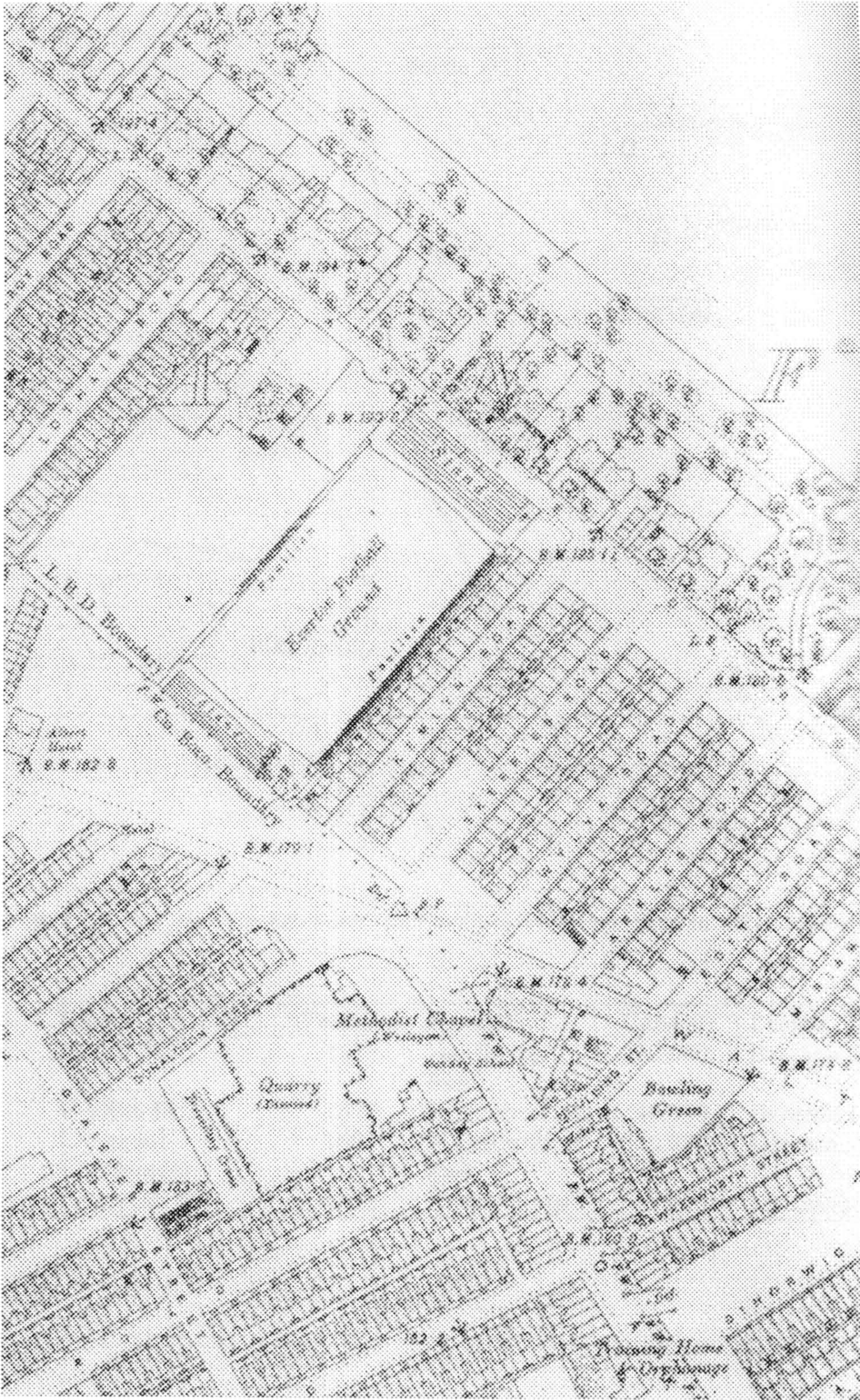


Figure 2.2: The Anfield Road ground and surrounding streets c. 1890.
(O.S. Lancashire sheet 106.07, 1890).

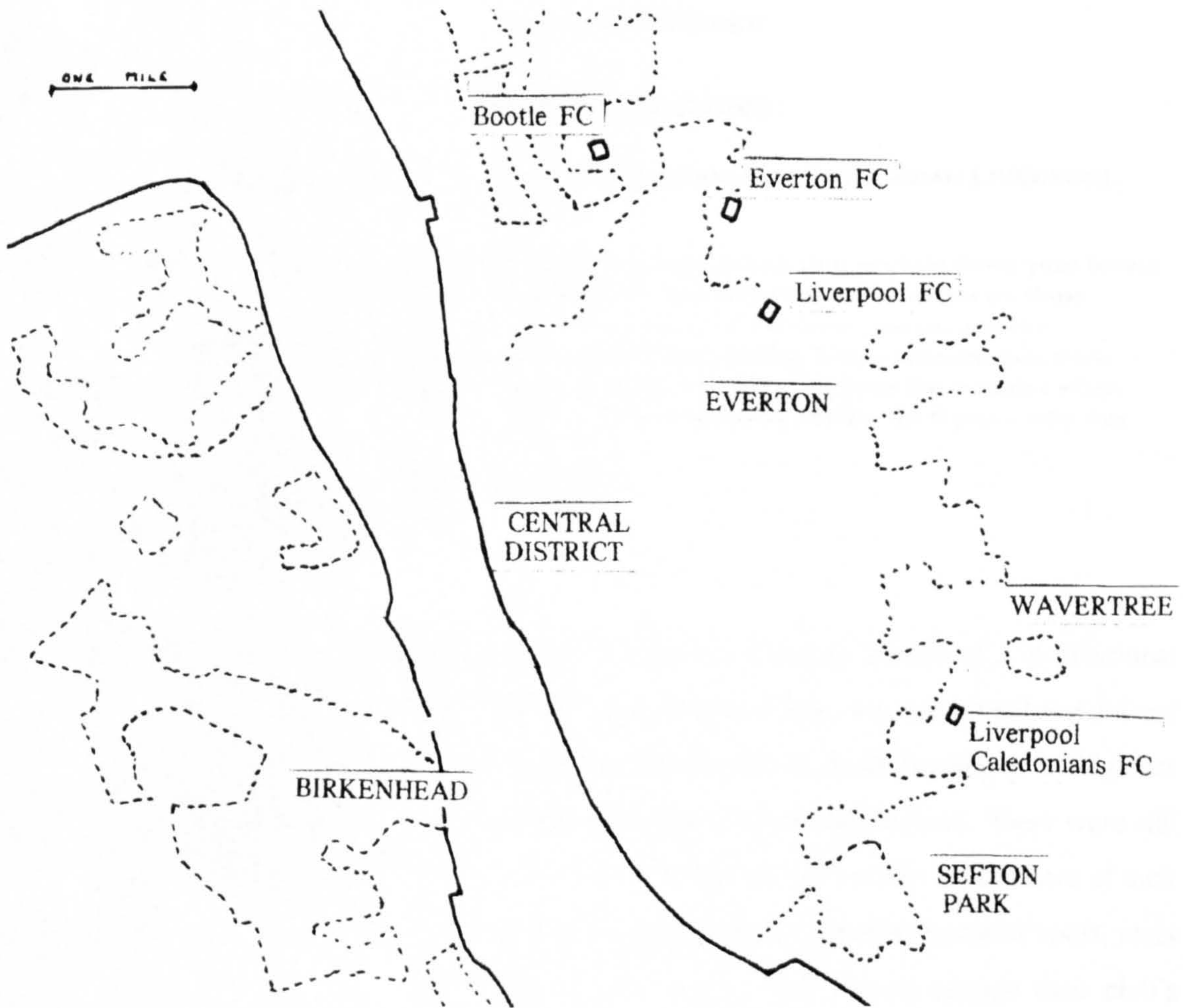


Figure 2.4: The 'New Football Fever', four professional football clubs in 1892 Liverpool.

Club	Founded	Ground	Capacity	League	Defunct
Bootle FC	1879	Hawthorne Road	10,000	Division 2	1893
Everton FC	1879	Goodison Park	40,000	Division 1	n/a
Liverpool Caledonians	1891	Woodcroft Park	30,000	Lancashire	1892
Liverpool FC	1892	Anfield Road	18,000	Lancashire	n/a

CHAPTER THREE

THE MATADORS:

PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLERS IN VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN LIVERPOOL

“ Jos, you ought in justice to have been Jose, with a thin necktie down your breast (instead of a line of mud up your back), and embroidered breeches on those miraculous legs, and an income of a quarter of a million pesetas, and the languishing acquiescence of innumerable mantillas. Every moment you were getting older and stiffer; every moment was bringing near the moment when young men would reply curtly to their doddering elders: ‘Jos Myatt – who was ‘e?’.”

**The Matador of the Five Towns,
Arnold Bennett, 1912.¹**

INTRODUCTION

In the above passage Bennett subtly evokes the transient nature of a professional footballer’s career and the fact that his fame, such as it was, was ephemeral and did not excite the same degree of public passion that the life-or-death heroics of bullfighters did in Spain. Mike Huggins has pointed out that in Victorian England, ‘there were still relatively few sportsmen whose names were widely known outside the confines of their own sport’.² Though football was becoming the nation’s premier spectator sport, most professional footballers ‘existed in a local world’, little known outside their club’s home town. Very few players of the era, apart from the likes of true stars like Steve Bloomer and Billy Meredith, could be described as ‘nationally prominent’, and none from Liverpool-based teams approached that level. Footballers were not celebrities in the modern sense, but some of them did briefly achieve exalted status within their own communities, though often footballers were not natives but had been imported from distant regions.

The dependency of football clubs on imported players has been a feature of the English professional game since the early 1880s. John Osborne showed that in the First Division of 1910, the majority of footballers were from the north midlands and Scotland, with smaller but significant numbers from north-east England and

¹ Bennett, Arnold, ‘The Matador of the Five Towns’, in Glanville, Brian, *The Footballer’s Companion*, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962), pp. 28-58.

² Huggins, Mike, *The Victorians and Sport*, (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), p.167.

Lancashire. The footballing culture of their home districts must have had some bearing on the development of their skills and ability. This chapter will show that both Everton and Liverpool, particularly in the early League period, relied on Scottish players to an extraordinary degree, and only from the 1900s did footballers from other regions become prominent.

Despite the mostly non-local origin of players, football followers still showed reverence for certain favoured players. Tony Mason, in a paper dealing with the heroic status of Steve Bloomer, has himself suggested that before the Great War, football heroes were ‘part of the urban social fabric ... essentially local.’³ Mason’s objective was to explore the relationship between Bloomer and their ‘local audience’, and to examine the notion of star quality in the football world before 1914. This chapter takes up some of the issues identified by Mason to explore the Liverpool public’s perception of their own local football heroes.

Arnold Bennett also implied that the remuneration of footballers was relatively low. The question of player incomes has been widely researched, and the consensus is that regular players received rates commensurate with middle managers and members of professions, though only for the relatively short duration of their football career. Mason showed how some footballers used their relatively high incomes to improve their status in society, for example, in their post-football careers or in the context of social mobility.⁴ More mundane aspects of players’ private lives, such as housing, marital status, and children, have not generally been explored. Mason indicated that most footballers were from skilled occupational backgrounds, though Tischler claimed (without hard evidence) that there were also significant numbers of unskilled men.⁵ This study widens the definition of occupational background to include parental

³ Mason, Tony, ‘“Our Stephen and Our Harold”: Edwardian Footballers as Local Heroes’ in Holt, Richard, Mangan, J.A., and Lanfranchi, Pierre (eds), *European Heroes: Myth, Identity, Sport*, (London: Frank Cass, 1996), p. 72.

⁴ Mason, Tony, *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915*, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 118-123.

⁵ Tischler, Steven, *Footballers and Businessmen: the origins of professional soccer in England*, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), p. 93.

employment, and uses previously unavailable census data to give a more accurate picture about players' formative development.

Over the period of the League's first 27 seasons, footballers lost their status as relative free agents and were gradually constrained by regulations on wages, contracts, and transfers. The football industry did not escape the prevailing climate of polarising industrial relations, and some players reacted to their progressive lack of freedom by forming their own trade union, in which several Liverpool-based men played a significant part. This organisation proved abortive and Everton and Liverpool players supposedly played little part in the activities of the re-formed union of the 1900s. In fact, as this chapter will show, Liverpool-based players showed a high level of militancy in the belligerent dispute between the League and the Players' Union in 1909.

The principal aim of this section is to illuminate the socio-occupational background of Everton's and Liverpool's professional players; where they came from, and why the two clubs recruited footballers from these specific areas. We then examine what effect higher affluence had on their families' lives, and ascertain more about their domestic circumstances. The chapter also investigates the level of trade union activity engaged in by Liverpool-based players, post-football careers undertaken after retirement, and finally the role played by footballers as Liverpoolian heroes. Before looking at the above issues, we will examine Everton's and Bootle's initial experiments with 'professionalism' and the pioneering professional players in the Liverpool area.

PLAYER RECRUITMENT

From the early 1880s, both Everton and Bootle football clubs started to recruit players from outside the Liverpool area and such 'guest' players may have been given some sort of consideration for their services, though pure 'professionalism' as such, remained a proscribed practice. Bootle were the first to 'borrow' from other clubs, including the Welsh international player, W. Williams, from Robert Lythgoe's former team, Druids of Ruabon. In the spring of 1885, Everton engaged the services of 23 year old cotton worker George Dobson from the Bolton area and a 22 year old

skinner, George Farmer from Oswestry FC.⁶ Farmer had just been capped twice by Wales and his club had played in the previous two Welsh Cup finals. Everton must have attracted Farmer with a substantial sum as he willingly moved to Liverpool but his actions evidently incurred the disapproval of the Welsh FA and he was never again selected for international matches. After his sojourn with Bootle, W. Williams, a veteran of 11 international matches between 1876 and 1883, also never again played for Wales. Prejudices against professional players remained strong even when the English FA sanctioned the limited use of professional players.⁷ Though Everton deployed increasing numbers of professionals during the mid-1880s, local amateurs continued to provide the core of the senior team. Professionals only pre-dominated in the penultimate season before the formation of the Football League. According to the Bolton paper, *The Football Field*, Everton had 5 registered 'professionals' in 1887 and Bootle had 4. In comparison, Accrington had 19 professionals and Bolton Wanderers 18. A year later, Everton had 14 registered professionals and Bootle 7.⁸

With the formation of the Football League, Everton virtually abandoned the use of local amateurs, and concentrated on the importation of professional talent. Everton's and Liverpool's reputation for recruiting by importation was even reflected in contemporary fiction. In Arnold Bennett's *The Card* (set c.1890), England's greatest centre-forward Callear is a Bursley man who had been spirited away from the Potteries at the start of his career by the wealthy Liverpool City.⁹ Both Everton and Liverpool had contacts in favoured recruiting grounds like Scotland and occasionally resorted to

⁶ Keates, Thomas, *History of the Everton Football Club 1878-1928*, (Liverpool: Thomas Brakell, 1928), p.20.

⁷ Keates, *Everton FC*, p. 9 and p. 20. Fabian, A.H. and Green, G., *Association Football*, (London: Caxton Press, 1960), Vol. IV, p.269 and p.273, 1881 census. Professionalism was initially subject to stringent residency conditions.

⁸ *Football Field*, Oct. 1st 1887, Sept. 22nd 1888, quoted in Lewis, Robert W., 'The Genesis of Professional Football: Bolton-Blackburn-Darwen, the Centre of Innovation 1878-85' in *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 14, No. 1, (April 1997), pp. 50-51.

⁹ Bennett, Arnold, 'Callear's Goal' from 'The Card' (1909), in Glanville, Brian (ed), *The Footballer's Companion*, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962), pp. 19-27.

using footballer agents.¹⁰ If a recommendation was taken seriously, a director was despatched to view the prospective player in action.¹¹ Transfer rules only covered transactions involving the movement of professional players between English clubs, so Scottish players, still all officially amateur, were particularly vulnerable to such predators.¹² As a consequence, direct approaches from the directors of wealthy clubs such as Everton or Liverpool were often undertaken in strict secrecy. If the venturesome director was suitably impressed with the prospective player then terms would be swiftly agreed and the new man may well have immediately accompanied the director back to Liverpool. Canny players could receive progressively higher offers in a 'bidding war' between English clubs anxious to secure his services. John McKenna complained, 'it seemed to require the wealth of Croesus and a Liverpool shipyard thrown in to tempt them south.'¹³

Wholesale importation from Scotland was not the only way in which players could be recruited. Contacts between former colleagues were a useful conduit with which to exploit player-club disputes to advantage. In the summer of 1904, Ned Doig, Sunderland's Scottish international goalkeeper, was at loggerheads with the club's directorate after being offered reduced wages for the forthcoming season. The Liverpool secretary, Tom Watson, knew Doig well from his time at Sunderland and acted quickly to secure the goalkeeper's services. There was an element of brinkmanship in the somewhat protracted negotiations as Sunderland were reported to have offered improved terms to Doig in mid-August. However, it was already too late; Doig had already travelled to Liverpool to complete his transfer and Sunderland

¹⁰ Mason, *Association Football*, op. cit. pp. 92-94. The Liverpool-based football agent, J.P. Campbell, advertised his 'stable' of available footballing talent in the Manchester-based *Athletic News* in the spring of 1891.

¹¹ Inglis, Simon, *League Football and the Men Who Made It*, (London: Collins, 1988), pp. 80-81. In 1892, the Everton director James Griffiths travelled to Dumbarton with the intention of signing Richard Boyle and was paid £16 4s 2d expenses by the club. Rogers, Ken, *One Hundred Years of Goodison Glory*, (Derby: Breedon, 1992), p. 27.

¹² The Scottish FA only legitimised 'professionalism' in 1893.

¹³ Inglis *League*. p. 81.

accepted a fee of £150.¹⁴ In January 1905, Chesterfield goalkeeper Sam Hardy was signed by Liverpool following a Second Division fixture with his club. Despite Chesterfield losing 6-1, Tom Watson was so impressed by Hardy that he persuaded the board to pay £300 for his transfer. Once registered, a new player would normally be consigned to a spell in the reserves, waiting for a vacancy to occur in the first team.¹⁵ Everton or Liverpool signed few local players unless they were intended specifically to be reserves, the main function of which was to provide emergency cover for injured first-teamers.¹⁶ Promising amateurs were occasionally given trials in reserve games and, if fortunate, offered professional contracts.¹⁷ Everton's and Liverpool's recruitment methods became more formalised with the introduction of longer contracts and inter-league transfer agreements from the 1890s, though organised networks of scouts were still a thing of the future.

ORIGINS OF EVERTON AND LIVERPOOL FOOTBALLERS

The chart below (**Table 3.1**) shows that First Division League clubs had a variety of geographical preferences regarding the recruitment of players. It might have been expected that football clubs would recruit a significant number of footballers from their localities. Indeed, the two Black Country clubs did generally select only locally born players but Everton, together with Bolton and Sunderland utilised an overwhelming majority of Scots.¹⁸

¹⁴ (<http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/doigsdan/NedDoig.htm>) Hereafter known as *Doig Family website*. Hutchinson, R., *Into the Light: a Complete History of Sunderland Football Club*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2000), p.72.

¹⁵ Keates, *Everton FC*, p. 51.

¹⁶ Regulations regarding club registrations could be circumvented by the use of amateurs.

¹⁷ Hamilton, Aidan, *An Entirely Different Game: the British Influence on Brazilian Football*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1998), p. 85.

¹⁸ West Bromwich Albion had a deliberate policy of recruiting local Black Country footballers which was adhered to until 1928.

Table 3.1 Origins of Division One Footballers 1897-98

Club	English Players	Scottish Players	Welsh Players	Irish Players
Bolton Wanderers	1	9	1	None
Sunderland	2	9	None	None
Everton	2	9	None	None
Stoke	2	7	1	1
Preston NE	5	5	1	None
Bury	5	6	None	None
Liverpool	6	5	None	None
Derby County	6	5	None	None
Notts County	6	5	None	None
Blackburn Rovers	7	4	None	None
Sheffield Wednesday	7	4	None	None
Aston Villa	8	3	None	None
Nottingham Forest	9	2	None	None
Sheffield United	10	1	None	None
Wolverhampton W.	10	1	None	None
West Bromwich Albion	11	None	None	None

Source: an article in the *Liverpool Review*, Oct. 23 1897.

Professor John Osborne conducted an analysis of birthplaces for Football League players for the season 1909-10. He found that for the First Division of the Football League, 30% of footballers had been born in the north central (midland) region, 15% had been born in north-east England, whilst Scotland provided 23% of the Division's playing staff.¹⁹ A similar analysis conducted for this study (for the previous season 1908-09), showed that Scotland was a slightly more significant source for both Liverpool clubs, with Everton deploying an equal number of north-west players, and Liverpool using nearly 40% from the home region (Table 3.2). Players from the north midlands contributed about a fifth of each club's squad. There had been a marked reduction in the proportion of Scottish players in the ten years since 1898, but they remained a significant contributor to both Everton and Liverpool.

¹⁹ Osborne, John, 1988, quoted in Vamplew, Wray, *Pay Up and Play the Game*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p205. See also Kerrigan, Colm, *Teachers and Football: Schoolboy Association Football in England, 1885-1915*, (Abingdon: Routledge Falmer, 2005), p.167, on the changes in geographical origins of Sheffield Wednesday and United players.

Table 3.2: Geographical origins of footballers in Football League First Division 1909-10, Everton FC players 1908-09, and Liverpool FC players 1908-09

Area of origin of footballers	Football League Div. 1, 1909-10		Everton FC 1908-09		Liverpool FC 1908-09	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Southern England	27	5.1			1	4.5
London	13	2.5				
South Central England	47	8.9	2	8.7		
North Central England	163	30.9	4	17.4	5	22.7
North East England	80	15.2	2	8.7	1	4.5
North West England	52	9.9	6	26.1	8	36.4
Wales	11	2.1			1	4.5
Scotland	124	23.5	6	26.1	6	27.3
Ireland	7	1.3	3	13		
Overseas	3	0.6				
Total traced	527		23		22	

Sources: Osborne (cited in Vamplew, *Pay Up*, p. 205). Source: Matthews, *Who's Who of Everton*. Matthews, *Who's Who of Liverpool*.

However, a much wider analysis of Everton and Liverpool players' birthplaces was also undertaken for the entire 1888-1915 period (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Geographical origins of Everton FC players 1889-1915 and Liverpool FC players 1893-1915

Area of origin of footballers	Everton 1889-1915		Liverpool 1893-1915	
	Number	%	Number	%
Scotland	90	35.9	73	45.9
Lancs and Cheshire	26	10.4	22	13.8
Midlands	35	13.9	18	11.3
Liverpool area	38	15.1	17	10.7
North-east England	16	6.4	9	5.7
Ireland	8	3.2	1	0.6
Southern England	10	3.9	7	4.4
Rest of Northern England	6	2.4	7	4.4
Wales	7	2.8	5	3.1
Unknown	15	6		
Total	251		159	

Source: Matthews, *Who's Who of Everton*; *Who's Who of Liverpool*; Joyce, *Football League Players*. Ross, G. and Smailes, G., *Everton FC - a Complete Record*, (Derby: Breedon, 1992), Pead, B., *Liverpool FC - a Complete Record*, (Derby: Breedon, 1986), and Lamming, D., *Who's Who of Liverpool 1892-1989*, (Derby: Breedon, 1989).

The dominance of Scottish players is starkly evident for both clubs; Scotland's contribution was more than double the contribution from Lancashire or the midlands. Local origins seem reasonably high until one considers that the vast majority of the 55 Liverpoolians who played for their home city clubs before 1915, made only single-figure appearances. However, both Liverpool clubs' local recruitment was paltry in comparison to the overwhelming numbers of Black Countrymen used by Wolverhampton Wanderers and West Bromwich Albion. To further underline this anomaly about local recruitment, John Bale's data for the early 1980s indicates that Merseyside is one of the principal producers of football talent with a per capita footballer production twice the national norm.²⁰

Why did both Everton and Liverpool have such an overwhelming preference for Scots-born footballers? Scottish football had provided a reservoir of talent to east Lancashire clubs since the late 1870s but Everton and Liverpool relied on Scots players to an extraordinary degree. Indeed, the earliest Liverpool FC teams were almost exclusively composed of Scotsmen. When the Scottish players' birthplaces were plotted on a map a more precise geographical pattern of recruitment to the Liverpool clubs can be observed (**Figure 3.1, page 158**). Unsurprisingly, the results show significant clusters in the major cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, with a larger but more scattered concurrence in the industrial areas of Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, and Renfrewshire. There were smaller concentrations among the coalfields of Stirlingshire, the textile areas of Forfarshire, and the shalefields of Linlithgow. But the most concentrated cluster, especially for Everton and Liverpool players signed before 1895, is located in the Vale of Leven district of Dunbartonshire (**Table 3.4**).

The Vale of Leven was the so-called 'cradle of Scottish Soccer', and practically dominated Scottish football from the 1870s to the early 1890s. Local rivalries between the close-knit industrial towns generated a strong spirit of competition between teams similar to that existing in east Lancashire. The developing industry and shipyards of Dunbartonshire attracted large-scale migration from the Highlands and other parts of Scotland and Ireland. Dumbarton (population 1881, 13,786) was a centre for

²⁰ Bale, John, *Sport and Place*, (London: Frank Cass, 1982), pp. 32-38.

shipbuilding, and had expanded rapidly during the 1870s, whilst the smaller neighbouring communities of Renton and Alexandria were noted for their textile and dyeing industries. The churches were major elements in the social life of the towns as were secular organisations such as the volunteer movement. The propagation of Highland culture also remained important in the immigrant community of the Vale.²¹ The traditional Highland team game of shinty continued to be popular even after football arrived as a simpler alternative following an exhibition match by Glasgow's Queens Park FC.²²

Table 3.4 Dunbartonshire footballers employed by Everton and Liverpool in the 1890s

Name	Club	Born	Birthplace	EFC/LFC debut
George Davie	EFC	1868	Dumbarton	Nov. 1888
Robert Kelso	EFC	1866	Renton	Jan. 1889
Alex Latta	EFC	1867	Dumbarton	Sept. 1889
Andrew Hannah	EFC	1868	New Kilpatrick	Sept. 1889
Duncan McLean	EFC	1869	Dumbarton	Nov. 1890
Alex McGregor	EFC	1870	Alexandria	reserve
Richard Boyle	EFC	1869	Dumbarton	Sept. 1892
James McBride	LFC	1873	Cardross	Sept. 1892
Malcolm McVean	LFC	1871	Jamestown	Sept. 1892
Abraham Hartley	EFC/LFC	1872	Dumbarton	March 1893
John Bell	EFC	1868	Dumbarton	April 1893
John T. Robertson	EFC	1873	New Kilpatrick	April 1896
John D. Taylor	EFC	1872	Dumbarton	Sept. 1896
Laurence Bell	EFC	1872	Dumbarton	Sept. 1897

Source: 1881 and 1891 censuses, Matthews, *Who's Who* guides.

At least ten local teams were founded in the early 1870s, including Dumbarton, Renton, and Vale of Leven.²³ However, the attitude of the Dunbartonshire players of the time seems to have been at variance with the ideals of the Glaswegian gentleman-

²¹ Lynch, Michael, (ed.), *Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, (Oxford: OUP, 1990), Jarvie, Grant, and Walker, Graham, (ed.s), *Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation: Ninety Minute Patriots*, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1994). (For information on Dunbartonshire see www.genuki.org.uk/big/sct/DNB/).

²² For 'shinty' see: Arlott, J. (ed), *Oxford Companion to Sports and Games*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 919-921.

²³ Soar, Phil and Tyler, Martin, *Encyclopedia of British Football*, (London; Marshall Cavendish, 1979), pp. 140-154, for names of these other Dumbarton teams. Also see Fabian and Green, *Association Football*, Vol. IV, pp. 14-21.

amateur. Like their Lancashire counterparts, 'winning' was of paramount importance. In their sensational defeat of the previously invincible Queen's Park in 1875, it was reported that the Vale of Leven players had used illegal boot studs to gain an advantage in footing.²⁴ The supporters too showed a fanaticism that was none too sporting. Whilst playing for his hometown club Arbroath against Renton in 1888, the future Liverpool goalkeeper Ned Doig warned a friend, 'they are wild men in Renton and you must not show favour to Arbroath.'²⁵ The three major 'Vale' clubs dominated the Scottish Cup for 15 years, and were included among the founders of the Scottish League in 1890. Thirty-six footballers from the Leven district were capped by Scotland in the 1880s and early '90s.²⁶

In 1888, Renton won the Scottish Cup and were subsequently invited to play English Cup holders West Bromwich Albion in a challenge match grandiloquently billed as the 'Championship of the World'. The Scots amateurs proved themselves convincingly superior to the Black Country professionals, arousing the curiosity of other English clubs who promptly dispatched their representatives to Dunbartonshire.²⁷ By the mid-1890s, 13 Dunbartonshire players were regular members of the Everton and Liverpool first teams. Most of the ex-Renton players originated from the nearby village of Cardross on the banks of the Clyde, where the mainstays of the local economy were shipbuilding, cloth printing and dyeing. That such a village of only 521 people (1881) could produce so many professional footballers is testimony to the degree of passion that the game of football held in such a close-knit community. There was little incentive for Everton to nurture their own local talent when highly skilled 'off-the-peg' Scottish players could easily be lured southwards.²⁸

²⁴ Fabian and Green, Vol. IV, pp. 14-15.

²⁵ *Doig Family website*, 'In the Beginning', p. 10

²⁶ Fabian and Green, Vol. IV, pp. 257-265.

²⁷ Albion, ironically, remained true to their local recruiting policy.

²⁸ Hutchinson, *Into the Light*, Chapter 2. Everton may have been the main recruiter of Leven footballers, but Sunderland and Celtic also recruited extensively in the area as later, of course, did Liverpool (adhering to the recruitment policy prior to the split of 1892).

Ayrshire provided the second greatest number of Scottish footballers to the Liverpool clubs. Only a handful of Scots had played for Everton before the start of the Football League, but at least two of these, Jack McGill and Alec Dick had Ayrshire connections. Even before professionalism was legitimised, out of a total of 55 Scots players with Lancashire clubs in 1884, nineteen were Ayrshire men.²⁹ Ayrshire was the third most populous Scottish county in 1881, with an economy dependent on mining, textiles and agriculture. The county's workforce readily assimilated football following its early introduction in the 1860s and clubs were established in industrial settlements. Kilmarnock and its hinterland developed a significant football infrastructure, which included the nearby villages and small towns of the Irvine valley. Eight of the 22 Ayrshire men who played for Everton and Liverpool before the Great War came from this area.³⁰

The third highest concentration of Scottish footballers that played for Everton and Liverpool were those from the industrial belt of Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire. In 1881 this region accounted for more than a quarter of Scotland's entire population (including the city of Glasgow). The hinterland of Glasgow was highly industrialised and over 400 coal mines and 300 ironworks spread out among the small tightly-knit communities. Economic migrants arrived from other regions of Scotland together with significant numbers from Ireland. Within a generation villages were transformed into dismal, smoky slums of heavy industry. The unattractiveness of such towns meant improved prospects for the Irish and even as early as 1841, 50-60 % of the population of Coatbridge were Irish-born. Similar levels of Irish immigration were common in other parts of Lanarkshire. Irish-born footballers with Everton and Liverpool only began to be notable in the latter years before the Great War, but a significant proportion of Scots imports were of Irish extraction.³¹

²⁹ Lewis, Robert W., 'The Genesis of Professional Football: Bolton-Blackburn-Darwen, the Centre of Innovation 1878-85' in *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 14, No. 1, (April 1997), p.54. The proficiency of Ayrshire's early footballers can be gauged by the fact that seven natives of the county gained Scottish caps in the 1870s and '80s. Fabian and Green, Vol. IV, pp. 257-265.

³⁰ See www.genuki.org.uk/big/sct/AYR/ for Ayrshire economy.

³¹ 1881 census. Kelso, Hannah, and Boyle were from the extensive Irish communities of the Leven valley, Givens, Battles, Brady, and McInnes were Ayrshire Irish. The McQueen brothers and William

Lancashire and the midlands also provided a significant number of players to both Everton and Liverpool. During the 1870s and '80s, Scots importations had enriched football in Blackburn, Preston, and Bolton and about half of the Lancashire players with Everton and Liverpool were from these football heartlands.³² The birthplaces of midland-born players showed three particular clusters; specifically in the Potteries, the Black Country and Birmingham, and a larger but more diffuse concentration in the area between Sheffield and Nottingham. Whether players came from Scotland, Lancashire, or the midlands, there were common features in the types of communities where they had originated. Characteristically, such places were small industrial communities which had a high proportion of economic migrants and where football helped to forge a sense of communal identity. Such features were typically seen in mining communities, and indeed, miners made up the largest single occupational group for pre-1914 footballers with the Liverpool clubs. Most mining communities were dismal and unhealthy environments. In 1911, the medical officer for Ayrshire claimed that most miners' accommodation in his jurisdiction consisted of only two small rooms and inadequate hygiene systems exacerbated poor health. Apart from pubs, shops, and churches, facilities in small mining communities were often primitive.³³ The Ayrshire mining village of Hurlford, near Kilmarnock, was a prolific producer of footballers during this period. In addition to the mines, Hurlford had an ironworks, brickworks, quarries, and a railway. The local club was established in the 1870s, and achieved moderate success, winning the Ayrshire Cup twice and being a regular entrant to the Scottish Cup. The village produced an extraordinary number of first-class footballers, including some of the earliest importations to Lancashire. Sandy Turnbull of Manchester United, one of the period's outstanding and most controversial players

Michael from Lanarkshire, the volatile Dan Doyle from Paisley, and Dan Kirkwood of Linlithgow, who eventually became an Everton director, all had Irish fathers.

³² 1881 and 1901 censuses. One of the first imports from the Blackburn district was Jimmy Costley, a cotton spinner who had scored the winning goal for Blackburn Olympic in the celebrated 1883 Cup Final against the Old Etonians. Ironically, Costley had actually been born in Liverpool in 1862 and his family migrated to Blackburn in the 1870s to work in the mills. Subsequently, when his footballing career ended he returned to Blackburn and his former job in a cotton mill.

³³ Benson, John, *British Coal Miners in the Nineteenth Century*, (London: Longman, 1989), pp. 23-25. The cramped miners' rows of Annbank were particularly unhealthy, p. 96.

was a Hurlford man. Among the village's footballers recruited by Everton and Liverpool in this period were the Goldies, Archie, William and Hugh, William Dunlop, Alex Brady, and Walter White, most being from mining backgrounds. Nearby alleys and fields provided ample opportunity for the practice of football skills. The tiny mining village of Newbold near Chesterfield, not only provided Liverpool's celebrated goalkeeper Sam Hardy, but was also the birthplace of Sheffield United's renowned 1890s international, Ernest 'Nudger' Needham. As a purposeful pastime that gave meaning to a dismal existence, association football spread rapidly throughout mining communities in Scotland and the midlands during the 1870s.³⁴ Crucially to the miner's livelihood, where physical fitness was of optimum importance, there was less risk of serious injury in football than there may have been in other team sports such as rugby, though ironically, this was the dominant code in the mining districts of Lancashire and south Wales.³⁵

Tony Mason found that professional footballers were largely recruited from the ranks of skilled workers, although most of the players in his sample of 67 were actually part-time. The Everton and Liverpool directorates preferred full-timers, as this ensured that they could concentrate on football and minimised the real possibility of industrial injury unconnected to their Saturday job. Since Mason's survey, data from three censuses (1881, 1891, and 1901) has become available, allowing a broader analysis of players' occupational background based on their parents and siblings. It has, therefore, been possible to ascertain occupational data for over 130 players out of the total of approximately 400 men who played for Everton and Liverpool before 1915.

The results showed that the overwhelming majority of Liverpool-based professional footballers traced in the census were from skilled or semi-skilled working-class backgrounds, with a small proportion being of lower middle-class origin with fathers in managerial or professional occupations. Another common factor in these small

³⁴ Allan, John, *The Story of the Rangers, Fifty Years of Football, 1873-1923*, (Glasgow: Rangers FC, 1923), pp. 14-37. Soar and Tyler, *Encyclopedia of British Football*, pp. 142-146. Lewis, 'Genesis', p.54.

³⁵ Russell, D. 'Sporadic and Curious: The Emergence of Rugby and Soccer Zones in Yorkshire and Lancashire, c. 1860-1914' in *International Journal of the History of Sport* 5, 2, 1988, p.193.

communities was the early establishment of football. Football had been introduced to Ayrshire in the 1860s, Dumbarton and Lancashire in the early '70s, and even earlier in Sheffield and the east and north midlands.³⁶ Football's longer period of settlement in such places meant that players from these areas could have benefited by learning and practising skills worked out by an earlier generation of pioneering footballers. In Scotland this long evolutionary process had resulted in a 'scientific' method of combination play, characterised by team-work, less rigidity in positional play, and short, accurate passing. The skills of individual players benefited from this tactical approach, and made them desirable targets for English professional clubs. Football had only been introduced to Liverpool at the end of the 1870s, and the skills of native Liverpudlian players were far behind those of the Scots. An early participant in Liverpool football noted that local players lacked tactical sense and basic ball skills, 'Of combination and dribbling nothing was known. The idea was to kick the ball as far as possible, and run after it in the hope of getting it again...'³⁷

STANDARDS OF LIVING

Mining was a common occupational background among Liverpool and Everton footballers (see **Table 3.5**). Miners were paid something in the order of 30 shillings per week in 1888 and the attraction of considerably higher wages as a professional footballer is clearly evident.³⁸ By 1891, most Everton players were being paid 60 shillings a week. However, six years earlier in 1885, when the FA first sanctioned limited professionalism, Everton were reportedly paying their handful of early professionals only 30 shillings per week, roughly commensurate with the wages paid by other Lancashire clubs. Thirty shillings was not a great deal more than the modest

³⁶ The original Derbyshire FA had been founded as early as November 1872. Williams, 1994, p.56, and Mason, *Association Football*, p.15. Williams G., *The Code War: English Football under the Historical Spotlight*, (Middlesex: Yore, 1994), pp. 23-24, and pp. 32-33, also Inglis, Simon, *The Football Grounds of Britain*, (London: Collins, 1996), p.346. Two young ex-public schoolboys apprenticed to the North Staffordshire Railway Company introduced football to the Potteries as early as 1868. Football had existed in Nottingham, Chesterfield, and Stoke-on-Trent as early as the 1860s.

³⁷ O'Whatmore, *Porcupine*, quoted in Mason, Tony *The Blues and the Reds*, (Liverpool: Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1985), p. 2.

³⁸ Mason, *Association Football*, p. 103.

amounts paid to Liverpudlian manual workers at the time. For instance, David Brindley, a railway porter/cargo checker who lived in Anfield in the 1880s, earned 21 shillings a week in October 1882, 24 shillings by 1883, and 30 shillings in 1888.³⁹

Table 3.5: Professional footballers' initial and subsequent occupations

Name	Born	Club	Initial occupation (if known)	Subsequent occupation (if known)
Sam Thompson	1862	EFC	Iron miner	
Nick Ross	1863	EFC	Slater	Died 1893, still a footballer
George Farmer	1863	EFC	Skinner	Tinsmith
Dan Doyle	1865	EFC	Coal miner	Publican
Robert Kelso	1865	EFC/LFC	Shipyards labourer	Shipyards labourer
Alex Brady	1865	EFC	Boiler maker	
Alec Dick	1865	EFC	Iron turner	
George Davie	1865	EFC		Provision warehouseman
Alex Latta	1867	EFC	Apprentice boatbuilder	Manager boatyard
John Southworth	1867	EFC	Apprentice joiner	Orchestral musician
Robert Smalley	1867	EFC	Clerk	Accountant
Fred Geary	1868	EFC/LFC	Lace bleacher	Publican
Dan Kirkwood	1868	EFC	Shipbuilder	Chandler/Everton director
Edgar Chadwick	1868	EFC/LFC		Baker
Jack Bell	1869	EFC	Apprentice butcher	Cycle dealer
Peter Meehan	1872	EFC	Miner	
Harry Mountford	1884	EFC	Potter's presser	
Robert Turner	1885	EFC	Shoe clicker	
James Meunier	1886	EFC	Gas/electricity engineer's pupil	
Tom Fern	1886	EFC	Coal miner/farm labourer	
James Henderson	1865	LFC	Iron miner	
James Ross	1866	LFC	Plumber/gas fitter	Died 1902, still a footballer
Ned Doig	1867	LFC	Apprentice baker	Insurance agent
Alex Raisbeck	1879	LFC	Coal miner	Football manager/scout
Fred Buck	1880	LFC	Fitter in engineering works	
Alf West	1881	LFC	Fitter lace machine apprentice	
Peter Platt	1882	LFC	Cotton weaver	
Messina Allman	1883	LFC	Potter's painter	
Tom Rogers	1886	LFC	Commercial clerk	
Joseph Brough	1886	LFC	Potter's hollowware presser	
Henry Lowe	1886	LFC	Coal miner	

Sources: 1881, 1891, and 1901 censuses, Matthews, *Who's Who* guides.

³⁹ Keates, *Everton FC*, p. 33. Reserve players were paid only 5 shillings a week. Lawton, R. and Pooley, C.G., 'David Brindley's Liverpool: an aspect of urban society in the 1880s', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Historical Society*, Vol. 126, (1975), p. 156.

However, footballers' pay rates were about to increase dramatically. Everton's increasing attendances from 1886 to 1888 enriched the club's coffers so that they were able to pay premium wage rates, attracting the services of leading players. The turnaround was remarkable and Everton rapidly developed a reputation for high (even abnormally high) wages.⁴⁰ Nick Ross was lured from Preston North End for the inaugural league season and paid the enormous sum of £10 per month (about twice an unskilled man's wage). By comparison, Burnley FC, another of the Football League's original founders, was reputedly paying its players a mere 25 shillings per week in 1889.⁴¹

Everton's centre-forward John Holt was being paid £3 per week all year round in 1890, and by the following year, all of Everton's first team regulars had reached this figure (about double the wages of a skilled worker).⁴² Everton players were generally paid more than professionals with other senior clubs. In 1893, two years after Everton players reached that level, the *Athletic News Football Annual* claimed that the average pay of a football professional was £3 during the season and £2 in the summer, whilst members of Sunderland's remarkable 'team of all the talents' were being paid £3 all year round. The spiralling levels of pay provoked controversy in the Liverpool press. In 1892, the new Liverpool FC was reportedly signing a Nottingham player for £250 p.a. whilst other Liverpool-based clubs had been scouting in Scotland and offering as

⁴⁰ *The Football Field* (Bolton) reported in early 1889 'the executive of a certain Liverpool club... has been trying its best to run up the wages of professional players to an abnormal degree.' March 2nd 1889.

⁴¹ *Football Field*, March 2nd 1889, quoted in Lewis, R.W. (1994) *The Development of Professional Football in Lancashire 1870-1914*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster.

⁴² Rowlands, J.K., *Images of Sport: Everton Football Club 1878-1946*, (Stroud: Tempus, 2001), p.26. £3 a week for the entire 12 month period from May 1st 1890 to 30th April 1891 (the entire playing season plus summer recess).

Jack Southworth was signed from Blackburn Rovers in 1893. The *Football Field* reported that he had asked for £3 a week all year round plus a signing-on bonus of £10 (Sept. 2nd 1893). Reserve players at both Liverpool clubs were paid a lower retainer during the summer months. In 1900, Everton bought a reserve player, Ellis Green, from Stalybridge Rovers for £120. In addition to his signing-on fee of £10, he was guaranteed £4 a week during the football season but only £2 10s. during the summer. *Football Field*, Jan. 20th 1897.

much as £300 p.a. The *Review* even claimed that some professionals were paid three shillings per minute of play, the equivalent of £13 per game. The paper also suggested that the total wage bill for the city's four professional clubs was between £12,000 and £15,000. One team (presumably Everton) were allegedly paying £4000 (equivalent to £6-7 per week) in wages for the whole season.⁴³ These claims were undoubtedly wild exaggerations, because even by 1897, average remuneration for Everton and Liverpool first teamers was only £4 per week, and reached £5 two years later.⁴⁴

The basic wage, of course, could be augmented by bonus payments.⁴⁵ Both Everton and Liverpool had offered players a £2 bonus per man as an incentive to win the English Cup and it was reported during 1897 that should Everton finish higher in the League than Liverpool, their team would receive £5 extra per man. Smaller bonuses were also awarded for beating certain League teams, for instance, in 1899 the Liverpool management offered £1 and £2 respectively for defeating Blackburn Rovers and Newcastle United.⁴⁶ People outside the football clubs were even prepared to reward footballers. The *Review* reported in February 1893, that a local bookmaker who had won an 'immense sum on an Evertonian victory' had promised each Everton player a £5 note as a reward.⁴⁷ From 1910, officially approved 'talent' money was distributed between high-achieving teams in Cup and League.⁴⁸

Often the tenancy of public houses was offered as part of the remuneration package. In 1891 Dan Doyle broke his contract with Everton to return north of the border with Celtic. Everton failed to persuade him to return even with the offer of £5 per week and

⁴³ *Review*, May 7th 1892, June 11th 1892.

⁴⁴ *Football Field*, Dec. 4th 1897.

⁴⁵ *Football Field* in Lewis 1994 'Mr. McKenna (*i.e.* John McKenna, then a senior member of the Everton committee) is another advocate of the principle of higher finances... some of whose men have been paid as much as £7 per week, aye and £8 and £10 when bonuses are reckoned.' *Athletic News* 1891, quoted in Young, *Merseyside*, p. 71.

⁴⁶ *Football Field*, Feb. 27th 1897 and Mar. 11th 1899.

⁴⁷ *Liverpool Review* (hereafter simply *Review*), Feb. 11th 1893.

⁴⁸ Taylor, Matthew, *The Leaguers*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p110. First Division champions received £275 for distribution between the team, down to a sum of £55 for fifth place.

a pub tenancy.⁴⁹ When he signed for Liverpool in 1904, Ned Doig refused the offer of the large and lucrative Arkles Hotel on Anfield Road on the grounds that it was not a suitable environment for his children.⁵⁰

The loyalty and long-service of popular players could be rewarded by special benefit games. In May 1888, 10,000 attended such a match for the long-serving Everton player, Mike Higgins.⁵¹ If we assume that the admission was only 3d, this may have realised as much as £125 (before costs). A testimonial at Anfield in March 1891 raised £123 *each* for three Everton players.⁵² Fred Geary and Dan Kirkwood were honoured in 1894, the latter described as an ‘old incapacitated Evertonian...deserving of much sympathy.’ Perhaps in 1894 he was ‘incapacitated’, but he invested the proceeds in his tobacconist shop and was such an astute businessman that he eventually became Everton FC chairman.⁵³ From the early 1900s, the FA would permit a proportion of gate money from a specified League or Cup game to be allocated to a deserving player.⁵⁴ Everton’s Robert Balmer and Harry Makepeace were given permission to receive £300 each from benefit matches in 1908, whilst Robert’s elder brother, William, was allocated half the revenue for the League game with Leicester Fosse in April 1909.⁵⁵ Jack Parkinson was guaranteed £150 by the club in his testimonial between Liverpool first team and reserves in 1909.⁵⁶

The Football League’s imposition of a maximum wage in 1901 was an annoyance to Everton and Liverpool as well as other wealthy clubs. Smaller town-based clubs had

⁴⁹ See entry on ‘Dan Doyle’ in MacBride, Eugene, O’Connor, Martin, Sheridan, George, *An Alphabet of the Celts: a Complete Who’s Who of Celtic FC*, (Leicester: ACL, 1994).

⁵⁰ *Doig family website*. ‘Liverpool FC 1904-08’, p. 2

⁵¹ *Athletic News*, May 29th 1888.

⁵² *Review*, Mar. 28th 1891.

⁵³ *Review*, April 24th 1894.

⁵⁴ From 1901, clubs were entitled to grant a benefit at the end of a player’s career, or after 5 years’, and 10 years’ continual service. Taylor, *Leaguers*, p. 106.

⁵⁵ *Liverpool Football Echo*, (hereafter *Echo*), April 24th 1909.

⁵⁶ A typical benefit for Sheffield players (United v. Wednesday) would generate between £150 and £250, whilst Aston Villa generally allowed between £300 and £450. Charles Sutcliffe thought that c.£200 was typical. Taylor, *Leaguers*, p.107.

campaigned for a wage limit for several years as a means of ensuring that they could afford the services of top players.⁵⁷ The Liverpool team who won the last League championship before the imposition of the maximum wage, were each earning £7 per week (£10 with bonuses in some cases).⁵⁸ Both Everton and Liverpool vigorously opposed the wage limit, and at the FA's annual meeting, the delegates of Liverpool FC and Aston Villa, did succeed in persuading a majority (but alas an insufficient one) to rescind the ruling. Most League clubs simply circumvented the maximum wage rule and there is no reason to suppose that Everton and Liverpool did otherwise. For instance, Liverpool captain, Alec Raisbeck, was given the certainly spurious post of bill poster checker for the Anfield Road ground.⁵⁹ Liverpool FC also devised even more extravagant ways around the rule. In July 1906, the board rewarded their championship team with a week-long trip to Paris (without wives but accompanied by the manager, chairman, and three directors). The visit included several organised trips, with excursions to Fontainebleau and Versailles, together with a day at the races. The Football League, however, regarded the visit as an illicit payment and asked Liverpool FC for an explanation.⁶⁰ Everton and Liverpool remained convinced that the maximum wage was only a temporary measure unsustainable by market economics. The *Echo* sports editor, Ernest Edwards, no doubt relying on briefings from senior Everton directors, had written that the maximum wage rule would be gone by 1910.⁶¹ It actually lasted until 1961.

Even with their earnings limited to a maximum, footballers were still considerably better-off than the majority of the sport's working-class followers. In the early 1900s, footballers' incomes were commensurate with lower grade professional men, such as senior bank clerks, local government officials, and senior police officers. It should have

⁵⁷ As a result of pressure from a coalition of poorer professional clubs and its conservative anti-professional elements, the FA imposed the maximum wage limit in 1901 to prevent the top clubs garnering the best players and monopolising the League.

⁵⁸ Young, *Merseyside*, p. 71.

⁵⁹ Mason, *Blues and the Reds*, p. 9. Some clubs, effectively ignored the new ruling and continued to pay premium wages to their players. Some Manchester City players were paid as much as £6 10s prior to the FA's punitive censure of the club in 1904.

⁶⁰ *Doig family website*, 'Liverpool FC 1904-08', p. 11.

⁶¹ *Echo*, Sept. 4th 1909.

been possible, therefore, for footballers to use their income to adopt the same standard of living as this strand of the middle-class. Footballers should have been able to live in Liverpool's leafy suburbs, in semi-detached houses, perhaps able to employ servants, and given their children a private education. However, most of the Liverpool FC players, whose addresses have been found, lived very close to the Anfield Road ground, in the same streets and amongst the clerks and skilled artisans who had founded the original Everton FC at the end of the 1870s. Professional Everton players also lived in the same Anfield streets when their club still occupied the ground before 1892. In this district, players were readily contactable and under the scrutiny of club officials and supporters, a good number of whom also lived there.⁶² After the split of 1892, several Everton FC players continued to reside in Anfield and Everton, but the sample was more scattered. Most players lived close to Goodison Park but a few chose to locate as far out as semi-rural Fazakerley (see **Appendices 3.1 and 3.2, page 160-161**). Because Anfield and Goodison were unusually close football grounds, there was, of course, considerable overlap in the residential clusters of both clubs' players (**Figures 3.2 and 3.3, page 159**). Some houses were certainly owned by the club and rented to players and their families at favourable rents, a standard arrangement until the 1960s.

Some players lived in rooms above local shops. In 1891 young Everton reserve Alex McGregor shared rooms with his older fellow Rentonian Andrew Hannah above a shop on Oakfield Road, close to John Houlding's Sandon Hotel and the football ground. Tom Wyllie and his wife lived in rooms above a greengrocer's shop further down the same street. The majority of Everton professionals were untraceable in the 1891 census (the football season having already concluded before the census was undertaken), so it must be assumed that they had already returned to their home towns for the summer. With a longer season by 1901, far more players appear in the Liverpool census and give us a great deal of background information on the private lives of the senior clubs' professional footballers.

⁶² In 1891, Everton FC secretary, Richard Molyneux, lived in Wylfa Road, within yards of the Anfield ground.

Single players usually boarded, either with a local family or in the household of a teammate.⁶³ Placing single footballers in the homes of respectable older women was a deliberate ploy designed to curtail the potential excesses of a player's social life. The late morning start to daily training enjoyed by footballers must have made late night drinking an even greater temptation so a regime of early cooked breakfasts and ordered living kept young players in check. Older hands like Billy Dunlop could act as mentors to the younger players. Trusted family men could ensure that a raw recruit like John Hunter was not tempted by the attractions available to a well-paid young man in a large cosmopolitan city.

A sizeable proportion of Liverpool-based footballers in 1901 were married householders. A few players had married women from their hometown and the birthplaces of other wives suggest that their husbands had met them earlier in the course of their football career, before joining Everton or Liverpool. Given most footballers' opportunities for socialisation and free time, there was probably no difficulty in them finding a suitable partner, although some players were so committed to their sport, that they only contemplated marriage after their career ended. This was said to be a reason for Jack Cox's retirement from Liverpool in 1909.⁶⁴

From the early 1890s, as the football season gradually became longer and greater numbers of mostly Scottish players began to be employed by the clubs, there was more demand for better quality accommodation for the players and their families. The streets of Anfield, Walton, and Everton, and indeed much of the rest of Liverpool, were filled with very distinctive terraced houses of three basic types. Virtually all Victorian houses in Liverpool had been designed and built by Welsh builders from Everton, and most were finished to a high specification. The housing in Anfield was typically medium size terraced, set back from the pavement behind a low wall, with six rooms and a small back-yard. The greatest concentration of Liverpool players' residences was in the area

⁶³ John Hunter boarded with fellow Ayrshireman William Dunlop and his young family. Next door, on Arkles Road, Shropshire-born Maurice Parry lodged with Mrs Jones, a 74 year old widow. Scot Tom Robertson, lived with several other (non-footballer) lodgers in the household of another ageing widow, at 93 Wye Street, Everton.

⁶⁴ *Echo*, Sept. 4th 1909.

between Breckfield Road and Oakfield Road, and also in the triangle of streets to the east of the ground, along Anfield Road.⁶⁵

After his transfer from Sunderland in 1904 this was where Ned Doig, his wife and seven children lived. They were initially at 314 Anfield Road, before moving two years later a short distance away to 18 Miriam Road, where Doig remained until his death in 1919. The respectable terraced houses of Anfield and Walton must have seemed an almost unattainable extravagance to men more accustomed to the likes of mining cottages in industrial villages.⁶⁶ The majority of terraced homes in Anfield were of medium size and comprised two reception rooms, a hall, scullery, a yard, a small outhouse, and a small and two large bedrooms. There was usually enough room to accommodate a live-in domestic servant. Players' wives, used to more primitive domestic conditions may have encountered difficulty in adapting to the relative luxury and social distinctions of managing such a household. This, and other impediments such as accent, may have inhibited social relations with neighbours although consolation may well have been sought with other footballers' wives in the neighbourhood. Very little is known about wives and footballer's domestic circumstances. Nick Ross's wife apparently did not like living in Liverpool during his sole season with Everton and she may have been instrumental in the family's return to Preston.⁶⁷

Everton's centre-forward Jack Bell married Isabella Graham, a dressmaker, in the spring of 1898. She was the Liverpool-born daughter of Scots parents who ran a grocery in Everton. Perhaps Jack knew Isabella through attending the nearby

⁶⁵ One of the main builders in Anfield was John Hughes and his Anglesey roots were reflected in the street names adjacent to the ground, namely Kemlyn, Skerries, and Wylfa Roads.

⁶⁶ These Liverpool houses may well have been of better quality than those provided in other towns. Ned Doig's homes in Anfield were superior to the one-storey terrace (17 Foster Street) that his family occupied in Sunderland. *Doig family website*, 'Sunderland: Team of All the Talents', p. 3.

⁶⁷ 'I like Liverpool and expect to get along all serene. You see I've been more or less used to a large seaport nearly all my life.' Ross declared that life in Preston was too slow compared with Liverpool. Ross interviewed for *Lancs Evening Post*, Sept. 19th 1888, quoted in Hunt, David, *The History of Preston North End Football Club: the Power, the Politics, and the People*, (Preston, PNE Publications, 2000), p.63.

Presbyterian church in Everton Valley. Scottish players did not feel entirely comfortable in the cosmopolitan, polyglot culture of Victorian Liverpool, and tended to seek out support networks run by fellow Scots.⁶⁸ A few months after their wedding, Isabella followed Jack to Glasgow during his spell with Celtic, and their son James was born there in 1900. The Bells later returned to Liverpool when Jack rejoined Everton. Ned Doig married Davina Bertie in September 1890 in Arbroath after a courtship of five years. A few weeks after marrying, Ned signed for Sunderland, where they lived for 14 years. Seven of their eight children were born in Sunderland, the eldest three being 13, 12, and 10 at the time of the move to Liverpool. Such upheaval must have had a profound effect on the footballer's children. Leaving schoolfriends, joining a new school in a distant city, having a famous father, and being teased about their Wearside accents, were among the difficulties no doubt faced by the older Doig children. Bill, Ned's third son, seems to have had a particularly hard time making the adjustment, suffering marked behavioural problems. As a child, he was regularly in trouble with the police, and even deserted from the Navy to the Army during the Great War.⁶⁹

RELATIONS WITH EMPLOYERS

The standard of living enjoyed by professional footballers in Liverpool was evidently comfortable but there were also disagreeable aspects to the life of a player. The professional was hidebound by regulations designed to protect his employer's investment in him, and Billy Meredith, a pioneering football trade unionist as well as one of the most celebrated players of the 1900s, claimed that 'the life of a professional football player is not quite so gilded an occupation as it might appear'⁷⁰ For players, the most contentious issue seems to have been increasing curtailment on their contractual freedom rather than the restriction on their pay. Proud men from tough industrial backgrounds were not likely to react sheepishly to their perceived status as mere functionaries of football clubs run by middle-class men in a strange city far from their birthplace.

⁶⁸ Munro, Alasdair and Sim, Duncan, *The Merseyside Scots: a study of an expatriate community*, (Birkenhead: Lyver Books, 2001), p. 9 (Caledonian societies) and p. 42 (churches).

⁶⁹ *Doig family website*. 'St. Helens Recs. FC 1908-10, p. 6, 'Full time', p.2.

⁷⁰ Mason, *Association Football*, pp. 117-118.

The balance of power between professionals and clubs began to alter as the economic structure of football evolved following the creation of the Football League. In order to stimulate the spirit of competition, the new League needed its constituent teams to be of almost even ability. As the larger clubs became more powerful and attracted the best playing talent, this delicate equilibrium began to de-stabilise. Small town clubs began to realise that they could not compete with the financial resources of big city clubs like Everton and Liverpool. Average attendance figures hint at the relative poverty of the smaller clubs, for whom high wage levels were unsustainable.⁷¹ In order to provide a variety of regular high quality opposition, it was, of course, in the long-term interest of wealthy clubs to ensure the survival of the small clubs. However, as the big clubs did not want to pool gate money, it became evident that some control over the registration and transfer of players would have to be introduced to equalise competition. The smaller clubs wanted the power to retain their professional players from one season to the next without the fear that wealthier clubs would 'poach' them.

Since 1885, all paid players had been required to re-register annually as professionals but after 1888, the Football League insisted that players were not free to leave their club without its express permission.⁷² Another club could buy a footballer's registration and the holding club compensated monetarily for the loss of their former player. This 'retain and transfer' system acted as a restraint on players' trade for the next seven decades. Although it was not possible to move between Football League clubs without permission, there were no restrictions on players moving to clubs in Scotland or to clubs in the Southern League. However, in 1897 the Football League and the Scottish League set up the Inter-League Board agreeing to make the 'retain and transfer' legislation binding in both countries.⁷³ Scottish players, in particular, were provoked into militancy by the closure of the free escape route to Scotland. In late 1897 several leading professional players in Lancashire and the midlands decided

⁷¹ Tabner, *Turnstiles*.

⁷² Fabian and Green, *Association Football*, Vol. III, p.279.

⁷³ Until this agreement, players could cross the border and sign a legal contract of re-registration. Dan Doyle had done this in 1891 when he left for Celtic and was the subject of unsuccessful legal action by Everton (Glasgow High Court, January 1892). Young, *Merseyside*, p.40.

to establish their own trade union.⁷⁴ Some of the leading participants were from among the Scots contingent of Everton. The elected secretary of the new Association Footballers' Union (AFU) was John Cameron, part-time Everton reserve and a clerk at Cunard. The union HQ was set up in offices in Lord Street, Liverpool.

A Scottish Branch of the union was also established following Everton's Christmas friendly with Glasgow Rangers. Former Everton player Dan Doyle was pivotal in its formation, a development greeted with alarm in some sections of the press, alert to Doyle's militant reputation.⁷⁵ By February 1898, union membership was 250 strong and the AFU was hopeful that it would be recognised by the FA. However, the sports governing body took exception to the union's claim to protect 'the interests of members against undue or arbitrary measures' imposed by itself or the Football League.⁷⁶ The FA insisted that grievances could always be aired through their official channels.⁷⁷ A fund raising match was organised between the Scottish Union and the English Union at Ibrox Park and a number of players with connections to Liverpool clubs took part. Storrier, Robertson, and Bell of Everton played for the English IX together with Liverpool's Frank Becton. The team also included two New Brighton Tower players, J.W. Robinson and former Everton forward, Alf Milward. The Everton directorate were angered by the degree of involvement of the players in the nascent union, particularly the militant 'Scottish element' and did not re-engage these players at the end of the 1897-98 season (though their registrations remained with the club).⁷⁸ However, many activists, mostly, but not all Scottish, damaged the integrity of the new union by exploiting the lack of a transfer agreement with the Southern League by breaking their contracts and moving to southern clubs at 'apparently fabulous salaries'.⁷⁹ The exodus occasioned a dramatic change in the character of the Everton team which temporarily contained a majority of Englishmen for the first time since the

⁷⁴ 'The recent international agreement arrived at between the English and Scottish Leagues has had the effect of stimulating players in England to take action to safeguard their own interests.' Harding, John, *For the Good of the Game: the Official History of the Professional Footballers' Association*, (London: Robson, 1991), p. 8.

⁷⁵ Harding, *Good of the Game*, p. 10.

⁷⁶ Harding, *Good of the Game*, pp. 12-13.

⁷⁷ Harding *Good of the Game*, 1991, p.13.

⁷⁸ Harding, *Good of the Game*, 1991, p.16.

⁷⁹ Some clubs were reportedly including signing-on fees of £100.

League was founded.⁸⁰ Several former Everton defectors to the Southern League and Scotland remained central to the heart of the union and some took part in another fund raising union 'international' at the Crystal Palace in March 1899. However, the defection of key officials like Bell and Cameron, critically affected the union's organisation and it was disbanded in the early 1900s. The southern escape route remained a viable option for disgruntled players until 1909 when the Southern League eventually healed its differences with the Football League.⁸¹

The revived Players' Union (PU) of 1907 was based in Manchester, and few Everton or Liverpool players took a leading role, though Jack Bell, by then player-manager of Preston, did attend the inaugural meeting.⁸² This was the era of reforming Liberal government, the national mood was more receptive to trade unions than it had been a decade earlier, and even the normally intransigent FA had allowed the Players' Union a limited amount of recognition, though it still insisted on absolute authority in football trade disputes. By the end of its first year the union was 1300 strong and increasingly confident in its challenge to FA autocracy, announced, that, if necessary, it was prepared to contemplate legal action in disputes against employing clubs.⁸³ The FA retaliated by withdrawing its earlier recognition of the union and from April 1909 inserted a new clause in player registration contracts re-asserting its overall authority in potential trade disputes. The union had also been in consultation with the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU), which implied to the FA the potential possibility of strike pay and sympathetic industrial action by footballers in other trade disputes.

⁸⁰ Liverpool players were not quite as responsive as some Everton footballers had been, but Harry Bradshaw of Liverpool went to Spurs in May 1898. The union secretary, Cameron moved to Tottenham, where he was soon appointed player-manager and guided the club to their English Cup triumph in 1901. Goodwin, Bob, *An Illustrated History of Tottenham Hotspur*, (Derby: Breedon, 1995), pp. 15-26.

⁸¹ Southampton FC, Cup finalists in 1900 and '02, was a particularly attractive destination for former Everton and Liverpool players. Twelve Liverpool and Everton footballers transferred to Southampton.

⁸² Liverpool-born Harry Mainman was PU chairman in 1909, and Jimmy Ashcroft was a leading member. Harding, *Good of the Game*, p. 59 and p. 65.

⁸³ Using the Trades Dispute Act, or the Workmen's Compensation Act. The FA considered itself the only intermediary in club-player disputes.

The FA consequently demanded that PU members resign from their union by 1st July 1909 or have their player registrations declared invalid.

This threat prompted Everton and Liverpool players to adopt a militant stance against their club management, as well as against the League and the FA. On the morning of an important relegation decider at Newcastle, 'several prominent members of the Liverpool team' refused to sign new contracts. The club immediately reported them to the FA.⁸⁴ The majority of the Everton team were PU members and also refused to comply with the FA ultimatum. Some of them had very militant reputations. For example, Robert Turner had just been fined the enormous sum of £50 for demanding a signing-on fee of £100 for Everton, ten times the official rate.⁸⁵ During June, most Everton players had been incommunicado from developments in the dispute, as they were involved in a gruelling summer tour of Argentina, but by the July deadline, 'Stud Marks' in the *Echo* reported that the majority of the team had still not resigned from their union.⁸⁶ Moreover, one of their number, John (Tim) Coleman, who had not been involved in the foreign tour, and who had scored 20 goals in the preceding season, had his summer wages stopped by the Everton board. On their return from South America, the other players were outraged and publicly declared their solidarity, both with Coleman and with fellow unionists who had been suspended by Manchester United. Each player even sent the directors a postcard, giving notification of their renewed union membership.⁸⁷

There was little sympathy in the press for the players' actions. In June, the *Echo's* sports editor, Ernest Edwards (BEE), declared that the Players' Union 'was laid to rest' and continued, 'Long live football as it is governed at present. But death to football which shall be player-managed.' Edwards reminded his readers that he had been an early advocate of a footballers' union, and that footballers' views on 'certain questions ought to be considered' but he felt that the FA 'was a body that can be

⁸⁴ *Echo*, May 1st 1909.

⁸⁵ *Echo*, April 3rd 1909. This was relative leniency, another recent miscreant had been banned for life.

⁸⁶ *Echo*, July 3rd 1909 The summer-playing cricketers, Makepeace and Sharp, stayed in England.

⁸⁷ *Athletic News*, Sept. 6th 1909. Perhaps Coleman, left behind in Liverpool, had been put under undue pressure by the Everton board.

approached.' Edwards mistakenly believed that the abolition of the maximum wage was the players' primary concern, and he berated them for contemplating industrial action on an issue that was, he believed, within a year of natural resolution. The tenor of Edwards' piece suggests that he had the ear of the Everton and Liverpool management, in particular the autocratic Everton secretary, Will Cuff, and that he was averse to offending them for fear of losing the *Echo's* access to Goodison and Anfield. Public sympathy for the union was also doubtful. In Liverpool, players were comparatively well paid, their standards of living were certainly the envy of many working families in the city, and as some contemporary commentators had noted, in the eyes of ordinary workers the restraints on footballers' trade may not have been perceived as particularly onerous.⁸⁸

Everton players may have expected some sympathy from the club chairman Dan Kirkwood, who as a former Everton player was cast from the same working-class background as most of them, but the attitude of the secretary, Will Cuff, must have been particularly intransigent. John Harding in his study of the footballers' union, describes Cuff (who became Football League President in the 1930s) as 'a dictatorial, "hard as nails" character' and 'no conciliator'⁸⁹ On the eve of the football season, following an open meeting between the FA and players in Birmingham, a truce was declared and the football season began as normal. In October 1909, the FA insisted that the PU disaffiliate itself from the GFTU. The PU had suffered a major setback, and although not a calamitous one, many players had resigned membership in fear of the FA's threat over registrations. The recent transfer agreement with the Southern League blocked the escape option for frustrated players, and coupled with the intransigence of Cuff and the financial might of the club, the previously militant Everton footballers were compelled to withdraw from the Players' Union. By 1914 a few Liverpool players had re-joined the union, but significantly none from Everton did so.⁹⁰ Within two years of the footballers' threatened industrial action, Liverpool was

⁸⁸ *Echo*, Sept. 11th 1909. Article by Tom Veitch.

⁸⁹ Harding *Good of the Game*, p.172 and pp. 202-203.

⁹⁰ Mason, *Association Football*, n 4 p.133, and p. 116. According to Charlie Roberts, the following First Division clubs also had no union members: Aston Villa, Blackburn, Chelsea, Middlesbrough, Sheffield Wednesday, and Tottenham.

crippled by a general transport strike, involving seamen, dock labourers, and railwaymen amongst others, and caused by 'long standing grievances of low pay, harsh work discipline, insecurity of employment and belligerent employers with strong anti-union sentiments.'⁹¹ In such an atmosphere, the complaints of a few well-paid footballers were not likely to provoke much sympathy amongst the majority of Liverpool's working population.

BETTERING ONESELF

Given that a reasonably successful football career gave players a few years earning a higher than average income and an opportunity to make some useful contacts, they should have been capable of making an overall improvement in their permanent circumstances. Indeed, Table 3.6 shows that, of the players on which information has been found, ex-footballers seem to have ultimately attained a higher status occupation than their fathers, or, if they had been old enough to have worked in 1881, better than their own pre-football jobs. The gloomy predictions of low status post-football employment made by contemporary commentators did not generally materialise, except in the case of a few unfortunate individuals.⁹²

Most footballers pursued stolid rather than spectacular post-career occupations. Ned Doig showed commendable foresight in maintaining a career in insurance parallel with his football employment. He started as a baker in his home town of Forfar but harboured white-collar ambitions and early in his football career, while still with Arbroath, he had become an insurance agent. He continued his insurance work whilst a goalkeeper with Sunderland and Liverpool. The hours of a part-time agent conveniently dovetailed with those of a professional footballer (he also sold drapery

Table 3.6: Professional footballers' subsequent employment and fathers' occupations

Name	Born	Club	Father's occupation (if known)	Player's subsequent occupation
Frank Sugg	1862	EFC	Solicitor	Sports outfitter

⁹¹ Taplin, Eric, *Near to Revolution: the Liverpool General Transport strike of 1911*, (Liverpool: Blucecoat press, 1994), p. 13.

⁹² Mason, *Association Football*, p. 120.

William Lewis	1864	EFC		Stonemason/publican
Robert Howarth	1865	EFC	Foreman moulder ironworks	Solicitor
Robert S. Jones	1868	EFC		Dock labourer
William Malcy	1868	EFC		Manager Celtic FC
William Owon	1869	EFC	Coachman (uncle)	Publican
Jack Hillman	1870	EFC	Railway labourer foreman	Newsagent
Tom Wylie	1870	EFC/LFC	Wool weaver	Newsagent
James Adams	1870	EFC	Housepainter	Stonemason (USA)
Abraham Hartley	1872	EFC/LFC	Master tailor	Dock labourer
Smart Arridge	1872	EFC	Shoemaker	Furniture dealer
Alf Milward	1872	EFC	Baker and corn dealer	Publican
Joseph Turner	1872	EFC	Potter oven man	Brewery worker
Albert Flewitt	1872	EFC	Glass warehouseman	Carpenter
John Cameron	1873	EFC	Grocer	Football manager/journalist
Herbert Banks	1874	EFC	Refreshment keeper (mother)	Engineering factory worker
George Eccles	1874	EFC	Potter	Bolton Wanderers trainer
Alf Schofield	1874	EFC	Father died before 1881	Businessman
Hugh Goldie	1876	EFC		Carter
George Kitchen	1876	EFC	Coachsmith	Golf professional
Albert Sharp	1876	EFC	Butcher	Director Everton FC
Walter Abbott	1877	EFC	Manglor (mother)	Car factory worker
Samuel Ashworth	1877	EFC		Architect
Jack Sharp	1878	EFC	Butcher	Sports outfitter/chairman Everton FC
Harry Makopeace	1882	EFC		Cricketer/trainer
Harold Hardman	1882	EFC		Solicitor
Francis Bradshaw	1884	EFC		Factory worker (Taunton)
Frank Jeffries	1884	EFC		Millwall FC trainer
James Galt	1885	EFC	Engine fitter at works	Motor engineer
William Jordan	1885	EFC	Blacksmith's labourer	Cleric
Anthony Browell	1888	EFC	Coal miner	Bus driver
Tom Browell	1892	EFC	Coal miner	Tram driver
George Harrison	1892	EFC		Publican
Matt McQuoon	1863	LFC		Insurance agent
Harry Storer	1870	LFC	Engine smith	Hotel manager
William Dunlop	1871	LFC	Coalminer	Newsagent
Andy McGuigan	1878	LFC	Post driver	Newsagent
Arthur Berry	1888	LFC	Solicitor	Barrister
Augustus Bochy	1889	LFC	Certified teacher	Confectioner

Sources: 1881, 1891, and 1901 censuses, Matthews, *Who's Who*.

door-to-door) and Doig's celebrity must have helped him to gain clients, with whom he was not averse to 'showing off' by demonstrating some of his more spectacular 'goalkeeping' tricks.⁹³

⁹³ *Doig family website*. 'Full Time', p. 2. Doig succumbed to Asian flu in the epidemic of 1919.

A significant number of the better-known Everton or Liverpool players may have bettered their circumstances as a result of their playing career, but for others there was no permanent improvement. We have no information on the large number of players who only made a few first team appearances, but even a few well-established senior players returned to humbler roots. Following his successful career with Everton, Bob Kelso went back to work in a Cardross shipyard. Abraham Hartley's fate was genuinely tragic. Not only did he slip down the social ranks, having originated from a lower-middle class background in Dumbarton, he ended up as a dock labourer in Southampton, where he suffered a fatal heart attack at the age of 37.⁹⁴

The working week of players included only a few hours of training and many took opportunity of their abundant spare time to run businesses concurrent with their football career. A variety of such enterprises were undertaken in pre-1914 Liverpool, including a cycle business, confectioners, newsagents, sports outfitters, and of course, public houses. It was common practice for footballers to take on the tenancy of a hostelry after retirement but some players ran hostelries or off-licences whilst still actively playing.⁹⁵ Brewers like Houlding had considerable influence, so the acquisition of a tenancy in Liverpool must have been a relatively straightforward procedure for footballers. The downside of public house management was the daily exposure to the temptation of alcohol. At least four former Everton and Liverpool footballer publicans died prematurely, though it is not clear in every case whether this was because of an alcohol-related disorder. Dan Doyle had managed at least three pubs in Glasgow and died at the age of 53 in 1918. Charles Parry also died in his early fifties after getting into financial difficulties as a landlord.⁹⁶

Occasionally players' businesses could distract them from football. In the 1890s, this was a reason given for Fred Geary's neglect of his duties as an Everton player, but generally it was in the clubs' interests to help enterprising players because businesses gave them roots in the city, and discouraged any desire to move. After 1901, a player's

⁹⁴ Mason, *Association Football*, p. 120.

⁹⁵ Hunt, *Preston*, p.104.

⁹⁶ Fred Geary was a tectotaller but managed several pubs in the Anfield district including the Cabbage Hall, home of the Everton Quoits Club in 1879. He lived to the advanced age of 84.

business could also have been used as a 'cover' to pay bonuses in excess of the maximum wage. Businesses usually continued when the man's playing career ended and if footballers had originated elsewhere they generally remained in the city to tend their businesses rather than uproot again and restart in their home region.⁹⁷ Two of the more successful footballer businessmen, Jack Sharp and Jack Bell, already had a family background in business.⁹⁸ The sons may well have absorbed their fathers' business knowledge and experience during their formative years, which would later benefit their own Liverpool-based enterprises as a sports outfitter and a cycle dealer. Additional business advice or even financial assistance could have been forthcoming from the football clubs, particularly as directors obviously had a wealth of knowledge of such matters.

The types of businesses undertaken by footballers such as pubs, sports shops, and tobacconists, echoed the conviviality of the male-only environment of the football club. Footballers may have felt comfortable in a close approximation of their previous working environment and many actually continued to work in the professional game. Several former Everton and Liverpool players were involved in club management, training and coaching, and a few became directors of football clubs. Mostly, these were part-time temporary positions, continued in tandem with a former player's main employment. Ten former Everton players became managers. Among those notable in management roles were John Tait Robertson who was the first Chelsea manager, and John Cameron, who became secretary of Spurs in 1899 and led them to their FA Cup victory of 1901. As we saw in the previous chapter, Cameron was regarded as a model of progressive management.⁹⁹ One of Everton's pioneering players, Frank Brettell, who had, of course, played in the pre-professional era, started as a schoolteacher but subsequently had a long and distinguished career as a secretary-manager. Among the clubs Brettell managed were Bolton, Spurs (immediately prior to Cameron), Portsmouth, and Plymouth Argyle. Many former Everton and Liverpool players became trainers or coaches in their subsequent careers but often this was combined

⁹⁷ Bell, Kirkwood, Sharp, and Geary remained in Liverpool for the rest of their lives.

⁹⁸ Both their fathers were self-employed butchers (Sharp in Hereford, and Bell in Dumbarton).

⁹⁹ Hunt, *Preston*, p. 104.

with other business interests. Edgar Chadwick remained a baker whilst a coach and Jack Bell maintained his cycle business in Liverpool whilst he was Preston North End's player coach in the 1900s.¹⁰⁰ Both Jack Sharp and Dan Kirkwood achieved the ultimate football transformation, from player to club director. Kirkwood, started as a labourer in a west Lothian oil works, before playing for Sunderland, and at the same time, working in the Wearside shipyards. After returning to Scotland, he subsequently moved to Everton where he spent four years as a player. Kirkwood ran a tobacconist's shop before becoming a chandler. In 1900, he became a director of Everton FC, and was elected chairman in 1909. Jack Sharp joined Everton from Aston Villa in 1898. He had a parallel career as a first class cricketer with Lancashire and was capped by England at both cricket and football. He ran a sports outfitter business with his brother Bert, who also had played for Everton and became a director. The business was immensely successful and brought Jack a large detached villa in the leafy suburb of Aigburth. He left £24,000 when he died in 1928. Matt McQueen, a Liverpool star of the 1890s, became an insurance agent, and was elected to the Liverpool board for a short period in the early 1920s. He was also briefly manager and chairman.¹⁰¹

The majority of Everton and Liverpool footballers before 1914 played only a handful of matches and remained comparatively unknown. Very few achieved genuine fame even in a regional context and for both Liverpool clubs the most popular players were imported from other areas rather than indigenous locals. Tony Mason's observation that 'before 1914 football heroes were essentially local' was emphatically not the case for Liverpool, although this probably mattered less in a city with such a cosmopolitan mixture of English, Welsh, Scots, Irish and foreign nationalities.¹⁰² Liverpool had to wait until as late as the 1920s for its first locally produced football star with a national

¹⁰⁰ Edgar Chadwick, and Sam Wolstenholme were interned in Germany during the Great War, where they were coaching alongside more celebrated names like Steve Bloomer and Fred Spiksley. William Wareing (Everton) used his athletic experience in a non-footballing capacity, becoming a physical instructor at the Liverpool Gymnasium. Matthews, Tony, *Who's Who of Everton*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2004), Matthews, Tony, *Who's Who of Liverpool*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2006).

¹⁰¹ Rowlands, *Images*, p.27. Harold Hardman, a Mancunian solicitor, was an amateur with Everton, winning an FA Cup winners' medal in 1906, became a director of Manchester United in 1911 and was chairman from the 1950s until his death in 1965.

¹⁰² Mason, 'Our Stephen', p. 72.

reputation. William Ralph 'Dixie' Dean was a name instantly recognisable even to non-football followers and thanks to his record 60 goals in 1927-28, still has resonance today.

According to Mason, football heroes need 'to produce a regular series of eye-catching performances (as) without consistent heroic performances a player could hardly achieve heroic status.'¹⁰³ Such status was not achievable unless a potential hero played consistently well over a fairly substantial period, perhaps a season or more. Only 57 footballers made 50 or more appearances for Everton before 1915. Of these, four had local origins: the two Balmer brothers, Jack Crelley, and Harry Makepeace, but only the last named was held in widespread esteem, and this may have had as much to do with his eminence as a cricketer. Thirty-two men played over a hundred games but even some of these players do not seem to have particularly excited the passions of local supporters. Heroes were not necessarily those who made the most appearances, 'in sport...one requires that hard-to-define 'presence' which inspires confidence in those on the field and in the stands.'¹⁰⁴

There are ways in which such an ethereal concept as 'star quality' can be determined after an interval of 90-plus years. Newspaper reports would seem to be an obvious indicator of the notion of the outstanding star player. As Mason has suggested, the local press's 'judgement of who had played well, and who badly, influenced the public perception of "heroes" and "villains".'¹⁰⁵ Newspaper competitions also played upon the public's perception of currently 'popular' players. For instance, *Liverpool Echo* competitions often required readers to nominate their best players for a 'hypothetical' best team. Another indicator of 'star quality' in the early twentieth century were the particular footballers selected to be depicted on cigarette cards. The most popular Everton players on cards were Jack Sharp (at least 13 different cards), Harry Makepeace and John Macconachie (11 cards each), Jack Taylor and Val Harris (7 cards each), Billy Scott (6), and Jimmy Settle (5).¹⁰⁶ Sharp and Makepeace were, of

¹⁰³ Mason, 'Our Stephen', p. 75-76.

¹⁰⁴ Mason, 'Our Stephen', p. 73.

¹⁰⁵ Mason, 'Our Stephen', p. 76.

¹⁰⁶ France D.H., *Toffee Cards: the Tobacco Years*, (Essex, Skript Design, 1997), pp. 1-18.

course, adept Lancashire cricketers, and this greatly enhanced their heroic reputation in the eyes of the public. Harry Makepeace had lived in Liverpool since childhood, and his cricketing exploits gave his 'hero status' an extra dimension. Sharp remained in the city for the rest of his life, becoming Everton chairman. Like Makepeace, his parallel cricket career continued beyond his football years, but his name remained highly resonant for decades still as Liverpool's foremost sports equipment dealership. Cigarette cards were only issued from the late 1890s, and before then the wider popularity of players was almost entirely dependent on the local press. Caricatures and pen-pictures appeared regularly in the *Football Echo* and give an indication of the public's favourite players (Figure 3.4, page 158). A caricature in the local paper was effectively confirmation that a player had attained the status of a 'football hero'. Most of the early football heroes in Liverpool were Scots, but Fred Geary was an early English star who played for both Liverpool clubs. Born in Nottingham and originally employed as a bleacher, Geary had impressed Everton directors while at Notts Rangers and was signed in 1889.¹⁰⁷ He was immensely popular in Liverpool and his status with the public was reinforced in the press. Geary was a 'character' and his popularity was cemented by his decision to remain living and working in Liverpool, as a publican (and a *teetotaller* no less) once his playing days ended.

Strength, fortitude, and skill were essential elements of the nebulous concept of the local football hero, but 'humour' was an additional factor that cemented the public's reverence. Another great Goodison hero of the 1890s was Blackburn-born John Holt. Like Geary, his exploits on the pitch were assiduously reported in the local press. Holt's public persona was that of a 'cheeky chappie', and this quality further endeared him to the Goodison crowds. Thomas Keates well expressed this aspect of Holt's character, and his 'fascinating robbery of giants, and amusing mastery' were a 'serio-comic feature of the games that made him a great favourite.' Part of Holt's appeal was his artistry in 'the perpetration of minor fouls. When they were appealed for, his shocked look of injured innocence was side-splitting.'¹⁰⁸ Some of Holt's antics

¹⁰⁷ Geary once scored all seven goals in Notts Rangers FA Cup defeat of Sunderland in 1887. *Echo*, Oct. 7th 1893.

¹⁰⁸ Keates, *Everton FC*, pp. 26-27.

backfired, however. After a typical Holt manoeuvre, a Blackburn Rovers player gave him a 'good blow on the nose', and after feeling his 'damaged proboscis for a moment', Holt retaliated by landing the Rovers man 'one between the eyes.'¹⁰⁹

The best players and those most revered by the public were characterised by determined and sometimes even eccentric personalities. For instance, some players showed a fanatical devotion to practice. As a teenager, Ned Doig devised onerous training and practice schedules using homemade equipment. Heroes were often bloody-minded individuals, a quality typified by the period's most celebrated players, Steve Bloomer and Billy Meredith. In the case of the latter, this came to the fore in his forthright trade union activities, and as we saw earlier, Everton's Jack Bell was also a resolute campaigner for players' rights. Extraordinary levels of determination and fortitude could be portents of flawed personality traits. For instance, on receiving the news that his Liverpool contract was not to be renewed, Ned Doig frightened his children by the violence of his reaction, smashing crockery and overturning furniture.¹¹⁰ Their heroes choosing to live among the Liverpool community no doubt enhanced the public's reverence for popular players. Geary and Holt were outsiders who lived in Anfield but their contemporary, Edgar Chadwick, an England-capped forward, commuted from his home-town of Blackburn, and this perhaps diminished his standing somewhat. An 'outsider' might achieve 'hero' status, but if he did not live amongst the faithful he was not a true 'honorary citizen', an extra dimension that ensured public adulation, and so was not revered to the same extent. Bell, Geary, and Sharp married local women and stayed in the city. Their decision to remain was, no doubt, strongly influenced by the reverence in which they were held by the public, of which they were aware, and had little desire or incentive to return to their places of origin, where a life of obscurity and relative poverty beckoned.

CONCLUSION

¹⁰⁹ *Review*, Oct. 21st 1893.

¹¹⁰ Doig threatened Sunderland colleagues with a knife following a prank. *Doig family website*, *Prince of Goalkeepers* p. 11. Kelly, Stephen, *The Kop: Liverpool's Twelfth Man*, (London: Virgin, 2005), p. 6.

Professional footballers tended to originate from working-class communities, generally located in small industrial towns or villages. In such places, football was by far the dominant sport, so pervasive in the local culture that it often occupied virtually the entire male population, either as players, officials, or spectators. Certain players (such as Ned Doig) practiced obsessively in order to improve their skills. In the case of Doig, this obsessiveness accords with his meticulous and sometimes even aggressive personality. Football in cities may have mattered to numerically more people, but large urban conglomerations presented a diverse range of alternative activities, and their less intense football culture seemed to militate against the evolution of highly skilled players. Another common factor in the places of origin of Liverpool-based footballers, was that the sport had generally been introduced at a very early stage of its development, typically during the 1860s or '70s. This had allowed the sport a longer time to develop tactically, which in parts of Scotland resulted in a 'scientific' style of play, characterised by such desirable abilities as speed, tactical awareness, and precision passing. Put simply, the best footballers tended to come from places where football was long-established, passionately played, and tactically sophisticated.

A professional football career with Everton or Liverpool before 1914 was lucrative and rewarding, probably more so than with most other League clubs of the period, and, more often than not, was a passport to a comfortable post-football living. Tony Mason has shown that most early commercial football clubs preferred part-time professionals but employing full-time professionals gave clubs more control over their living assets. As fully commercialised companies, Everton and Liverpool did not want their players to have mixed loyalties and the additional possibility that part-timers could suffer injuries in their non-football employment. Full-time players, however, were left with a good deal of spare time, and in an attempt to combat the tendency towards idleness and also to maximise the return on their investment, clubs instituted daily programmes of training.

Both Everton and Liverpool had a paternalistic attitude towards their playing staff. The clubs found accommodation for the majority of their imported professionals in the Liverpool 4 postal district, close to Goodison and Anfield. Apart from the convenience for daily training, players could be contacted quickly and kept under close scrutiny.

They were also visibly part of the local community, and whilst this gave them little anonymity, to some extent it replicated the small town atmosphere from which most of the players had originated. Men were encouraged to attend local functions which helped to increase their own popularity, and also promoted the 'friendliness' of the clubs. To some extent players were cosseted from the cares of everyday life but the clubs ensured that compliance was the price to be paid for such benefits. Clubs may have briefly tolerated players' trade unionism but they ultimately crushed such activities, Everton, in particular, making it clear that they would have had little compunction in cancelling the players' contracts if they maintained union membership. A significant number of Liverpool-based players achieved a limited degree of social elevation as a result of their football career. Some enterprising footballers launched businesses, mostly in the licensed trade or retailing, which cemented their roots in the community, and along with a locally-born wife and children, was perhaps a factor in remaining in Liverpool once their playing career was finished.

We still know little about the social and domestic life of pre-1914 footballers. Desmond Morris has shown that the main pastime of modern footballers is sport, particularly leisurely non-team games such as golf,¹¹¹ and there are parallels here with early professionals – Alex Raisbeck was a noted amateur bowler – but there is, as ever, a paucity of hard data.¹¹² Players' domestic relationship with their wives and children is a neglected topic which would benefit deeper research. The tiny amount of existing evidence suggests that some wives and children may have found it difficult to adjust to life in a large and unfamiliar city.¹¹³

Few Liverpoolians managed to become professional footballers with their home city clubs, and those players most revered by the public tended to be outsiders who displayed the skills and traits desirable in football 'heroes'. The latter qualities of fortitude and toughness, together with a commitment to settle in the city, becoming

¹¹¹ Morris, Desmond, *The Soccer Tribe*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981), p. 179-186.

¹¹² *Doig family website*, 'St. Helens Recs', p. 6. Ned Doig was a lifelong breeder of canaries.

¹¹³ Nick Ross's wife may well have been instrumental in his return to Preston in 1889.

adopted 'honorary' citizens, particularly endeared such players with the Liverpool public.

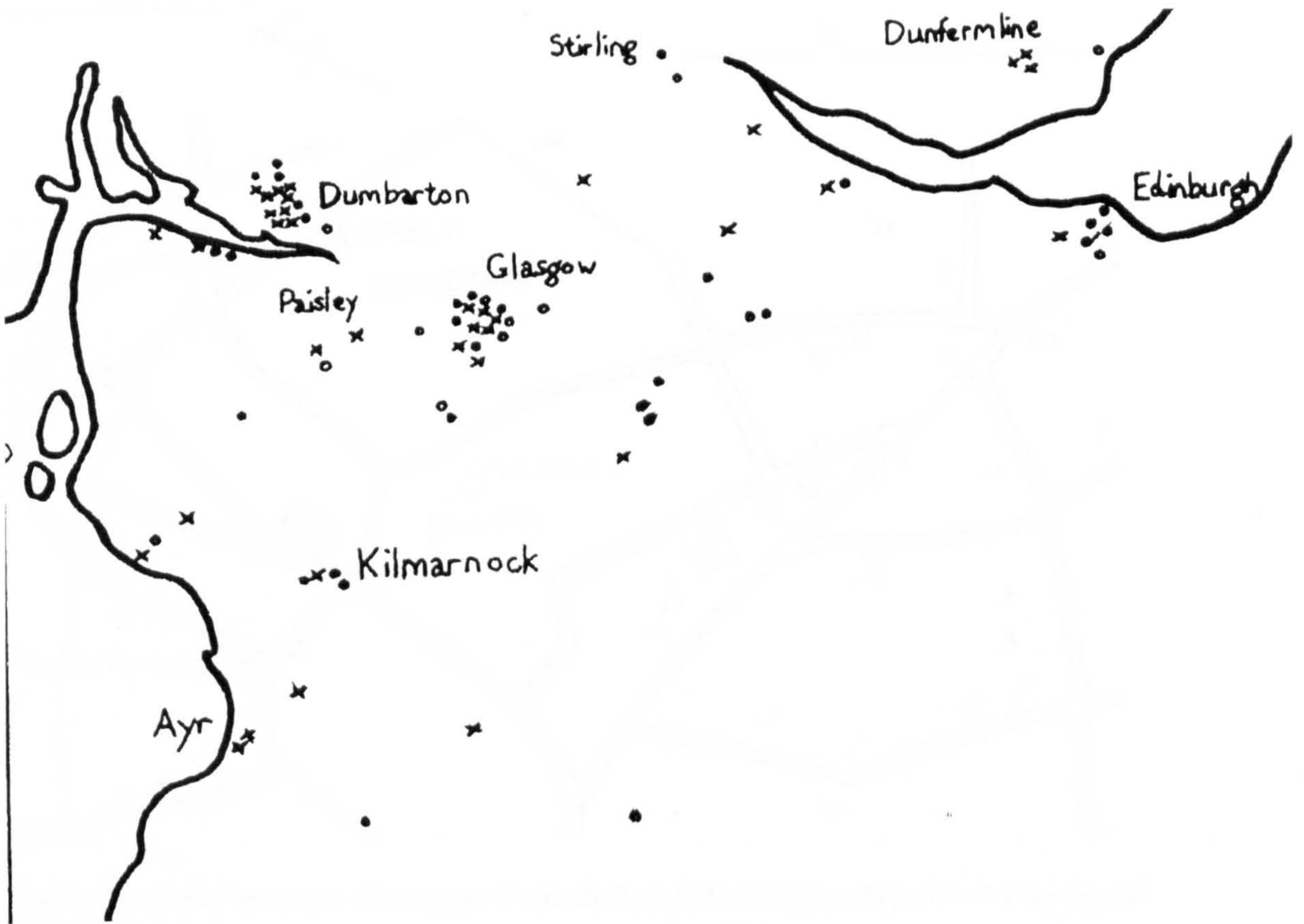


Figure 3.1: Birthplaces of Scottish footballers with Everton (o) and Liverpool (x), 1888-1915. (Sources: Lamming, *Who's Who of Liverpool*, Matthews, *Who's Who [Everton]*, *[Liverpool]*.)

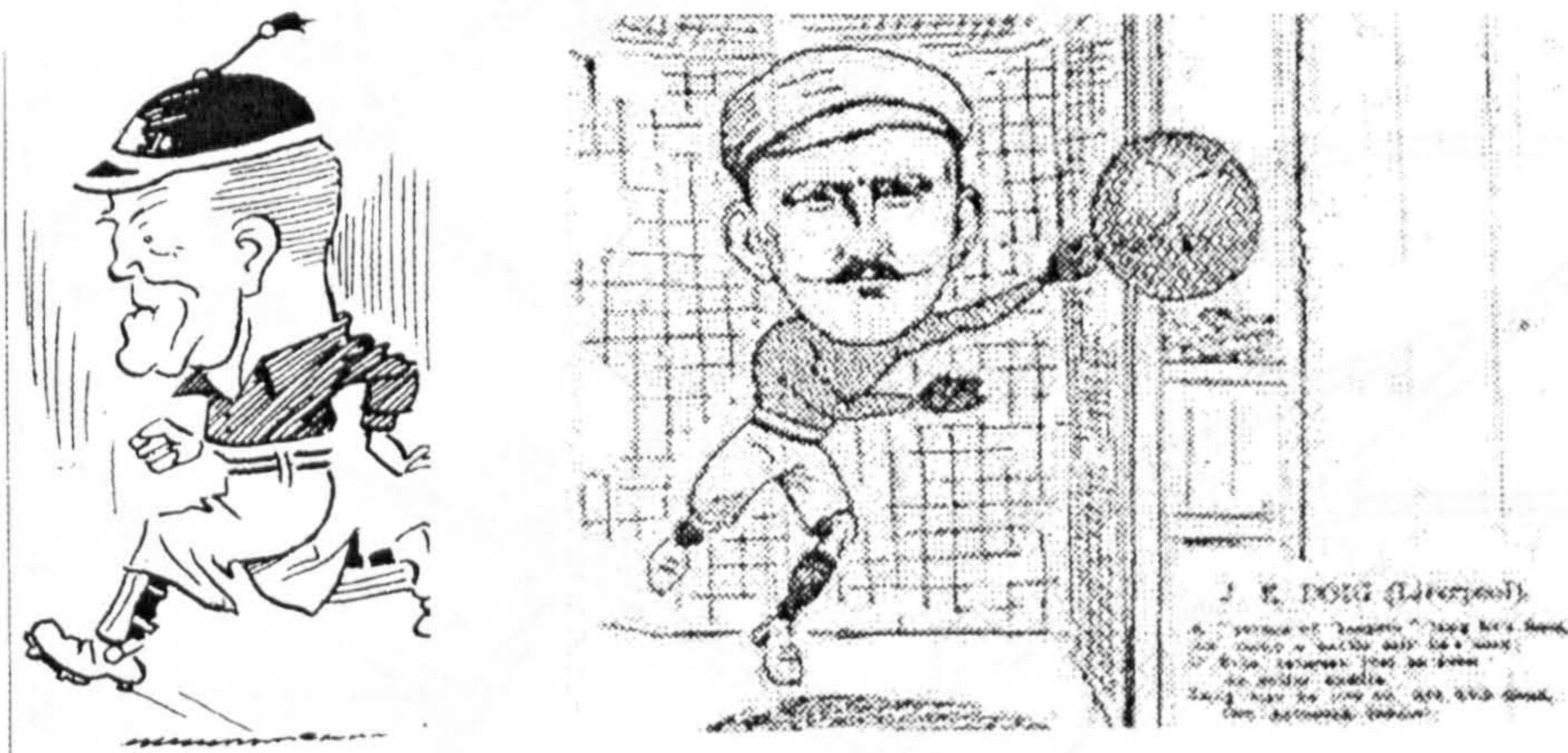


Figure 3.4: Newspaper caricatures of Ned Doig (Liverpool FC 1904-08), and Fred Geary (Everton FC 1889-95 and Liverpool FC 1895-99). (*Liverpool Football Echo*).

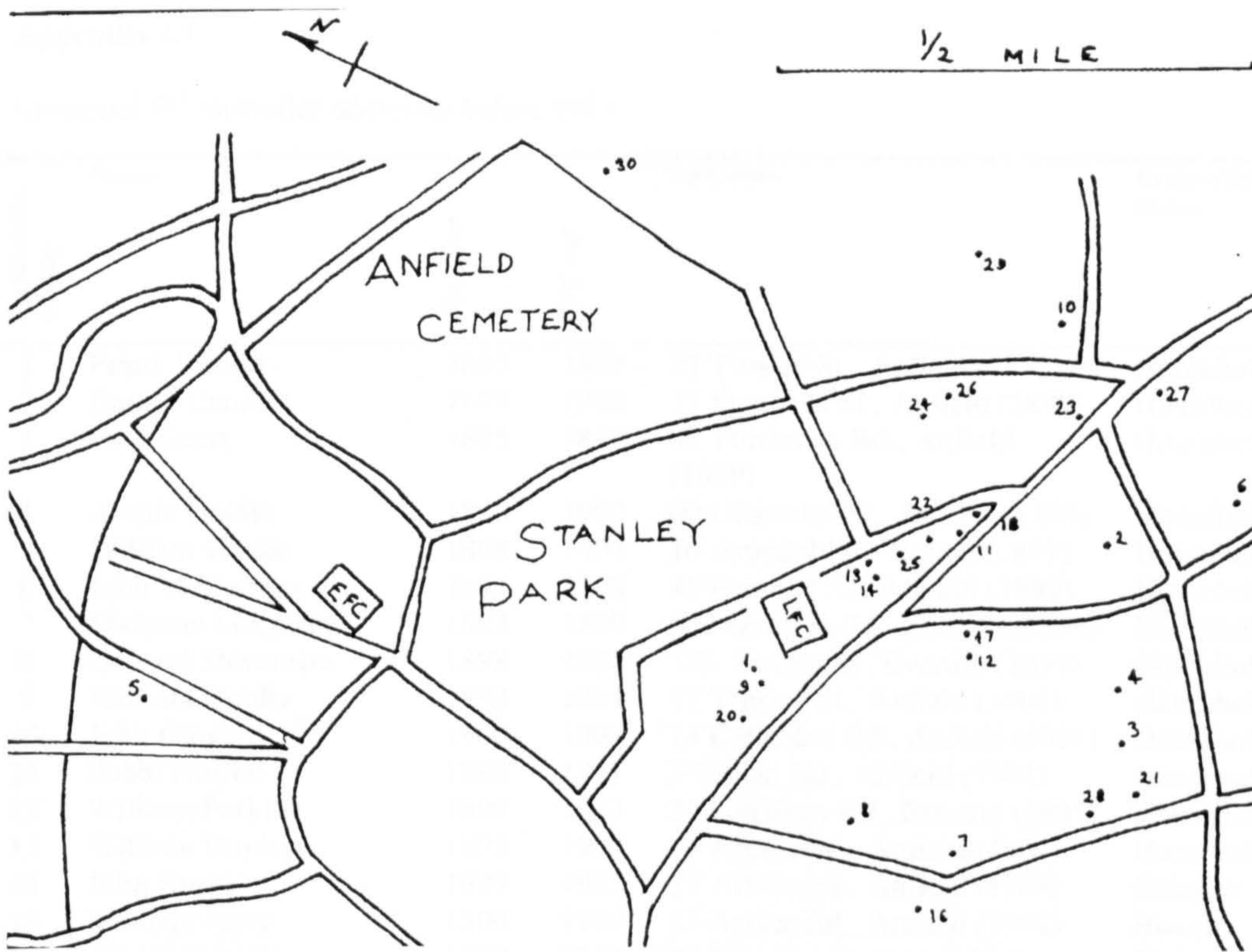


Figure 3.2: Home addresses of Liverpool FC footballers 1892-1915 (see Appendix 3.1 for precise identifications).

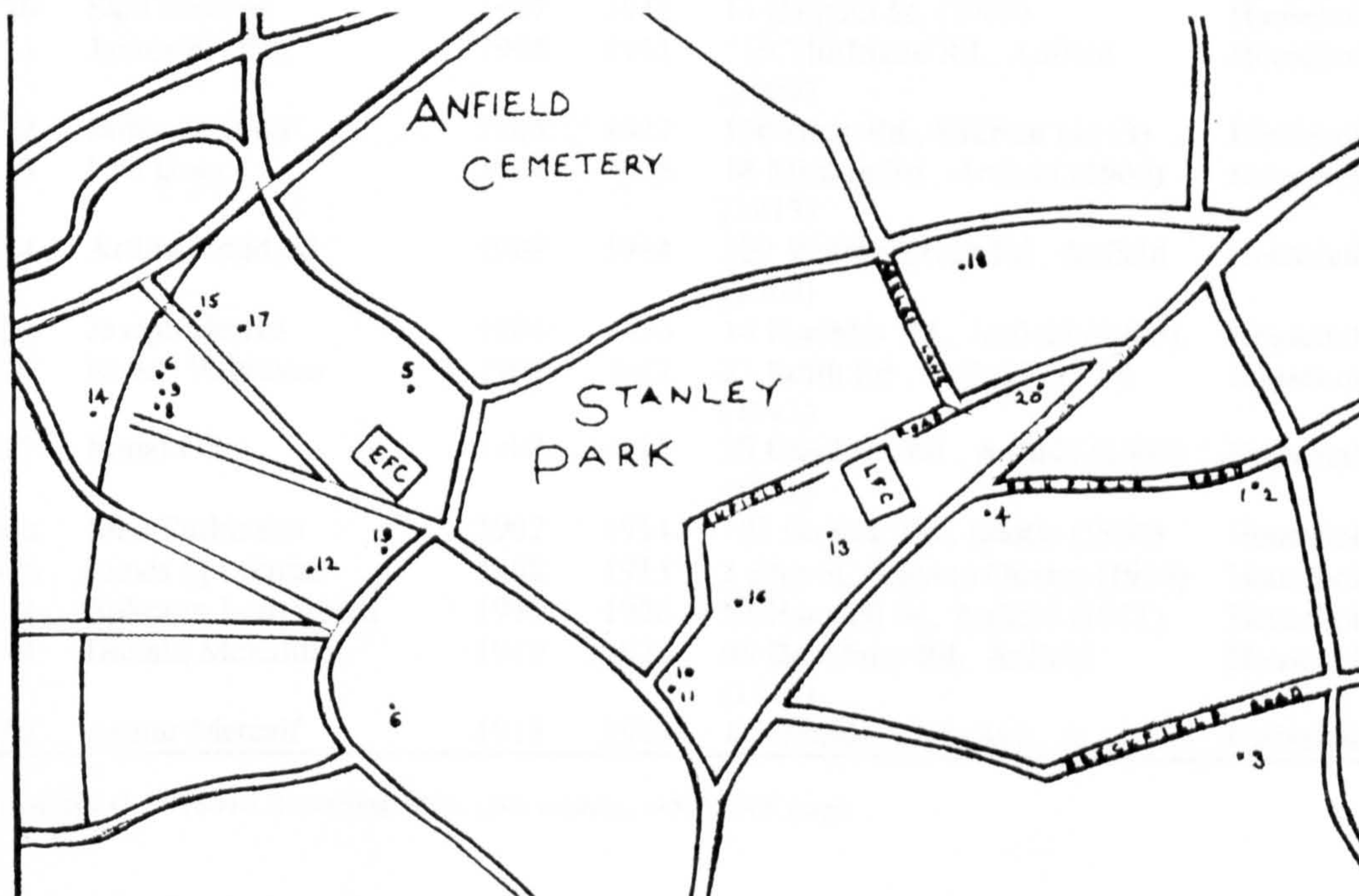


Figure 3.3: Home addresses of Everton FC footballers 1888-1915 (also see Appendix 3.2).
EFC = Goodison Park, LFC = Anfield Road ground.

Appendix 3.1

Liverpool FC footballer addresses before 1915

Location no. on map	Name	LFC		Addresses	Residential Status	Type of dwelling
		start	end			
1	Frank Becton	1895	1898	31 Tinsley St., Anfield (1899)	Householder	Small Terrace
2	Daniel Cunliffe	1897	1898	37 Stonehill St., Anfield (1899)	Householder	Small Terrace
3	Fred Geary	1895	1899	68 Thirlmere Rd., Anfield (1899)	Householder	Public house
4	Archie Goldie	1895	1900	60 Ullswater St., Anfield (1899)	Householder	Medium Terrace
5	William Goldie	1898	1904	16 Arundel St., Walton (1899)	Householder	Medium Terrace
6	John McCartney	1892	1898	49 Esmond St., Anfield (1899)	Householder	Medium Terrace
7	Matthew McQueen	1892	1899	168 Granton Rd., Everton (1899)	Householder	Medium Terrace
8	General Stevenson	1898	1900	122 Vienna St., Everton (1899)	Householder	Small Terrace
9	William Goldie	1898	1904	19 Tinsley St., Anfield (1901)	Householder	Small Terrace
10	John Glover	1900	1903	14 Cathedral Rd., Anfield (1901)	Householder	Medium Terrace
11	Rabbi Howell	1898	1901	3 Lillian Rd., Anfield (1901)	Householder	Medium Terrace
12	William Perkins	1899	1903	20 Salisbury Rd., Everton (1901)	Householder	Medium Terrace
13	William Dunlop	1895	1909	29 Arkles Rd., Anfield (1901)	Householder	Medium Terrace
14	John Hunter	1899	1902	29 Arkles Rd., Anfield (1901)	Boarder	Medium Terrace
15	Maurice Parry	1900	1909	27 Arkles Rd., Anfield (1901)	Boarder	Medium Terrace
16	Tom Robertson	1898	1902	93 Wye St., Everton (1901)	Boarder	Medium Terrace
17	Hugh Morgan			20 Salisbury Rd., Everton (1901)	Householder	Medium Terrace
18	Sam Raybould	1900	1907	5 Lyon Rd., Anfield (1903)	Householder	Medium Terrace
19	Alex Raisbeck	1898	1909	16 Elsie Rd., Anfield (1909)	Householder	
20	Sam Bowyer	1907	1912	14 Bagnall St. (1909)	Householder	Small Terrace
21	James Bradley	1905	1911	110 Thirlmere Rd., Anfield (1909)	Householder	Medium Terrace
22	James Bradley	1905	1911	130 Dacy Rd., Everton (1913)	Householder	Medium Terrace
23	Ned Doig	1904	1908	18 Miriam Rd., Anfield (1909) (1913)	Householder	Medium Terrace
24	Arthur Goddard	1902	1914	327 Walton Breck Rd., Anfield (1909)	Householder	Medium semi- detached
25	Joseph Hewitt	1904	1910	14 Finchley Rd., Anfield (1909)	Householder	Small Terrace
26	Robert Robinson	1904	1912	23 Edith Rd., Anfield (1909) (1911)	Householder	Medium Terrace
27	Ronald Orr	1908	1915	70 Clapham Rd., Anfield (1909) (1911)	Householder	Medium Terrace
n/a	John Parkinson	1902	1914	103 Balfour Rd., Bootle (1909)	Householder	Medium Terrace
n/a	James Speakman	1908	1913	2 Elm St., Huyton Quarry (1909)	Householder	
28	Ephraim Longworth	1910	1928	53 Hanwell St., Anfield (1911)	Householder	Small Terrace
29	Donald McKinlay	1910	1929	98 Dewsbury Rd., Anfield (1919)	Householder	Medium Terrace
30	Arthur Metcalf	1912	1919	130 Stanley Park Ave., A	Householder	Medium Terrace

(Sources: Gore's Street Directories, 1891, 1901 censuses, O.S. 1:2500 maps)

Appendix 3.2

Everton FC footballer addresses before 1915

Location no. on map	Name	EFC		Addresses	Residential Status	Type of dwelling
		start	end			
1	Andrew Hannah	1889	1891	15 Oakfield Rd., Anfield (1891)	Householder	Shop flat
2	Alex McGregor	1890	1892	15 Oakfield Rd., Anfield (1891)	Boarder	Shop flat
3	Tom Wyllie	1889	1891	167 Oakfield Rd., Anfield (1891)	Householder	Shop flat
4	Andrew Hannah	1889	1891	45 Rutland St., Everton (1892)	Householder	Small terrace
5	John Proudfoot	1898	1902	92 Gwladys St., Walton (1901)		Medium terrace
6	Walter Abbott	1899	1908	17 Dyson St., Walton (1901)	Householder	Medium terrace
n/a	Smart Arridge	1893	1897	28 Wentworth St., Wallasey (1901)	Householder	
7	Jack Bell	1892	1898	223 Walton Rd., Walton (1901)	Householder	Shop flat
8	John Blythe	1899	1906	4 Dyson St., Walton (1901)	Householder	Medium terrace
9	George Eccles	1899	1902	6 Dyson St., Walton (1901)	Householder	Medium terrace
10	Alex McDonald	1900	1901	40 Walton Lane, Walton (1901)		Medium terrace
11	Robert Gray	1899	1901	40 Walton Lane, Walton (1901)		Medium terrace
12	James Settle	1898	1907	18 Eton St., Walton (1901)	Householder	Medium terrace
13	John Sharp	1899	1910	86 Rockfield Rd., Anfield (1901)		Large terrace
14	John D. Taylor	1896	1910	24 Manderville St., Walton (1901)	Householder	Medium terrace
15	Joseph Turner	1900	1901	143 City Rd., Walton (1901)		Medium terrace
16	Sam Chedgoy	1910	1926	31 Hayfield St., Anfield (1913)	Householder	Small terrace
n/a	Tom Fern	1913	1924	First Avenue, Fazackerley (1915)	Householder	Medium terrace
17	Tom Fleetwood	1910	1923	24 Keith Avenue, Walton (1915)	Householder	Medium terrace
18	Harry Makepeace	1903	1915	74 Sunbury Rd., Anfield (1915)	Householder	Medium terrace
n/a	John Page	1913	1920	5 Stuart Grove, Bootle (1915)	Householder	Small terrace
19	Bobby Parker	1913	1921	35 Spellow Lane, Walton (1915)	Householder	Medium terrace
20	William Scott	1904	1912	14 Elsie Rd., Anfield (1919)	Householder	Medium terrace
n/a	Leonard Woods	1906	1908	50 Leopold Rd., Kensington	Householder	Medium terrace

(Sources: *Gore's* Street Directories, 1891, 1901 censuses, O.S. 1:2500 maps)

CHAPTER FOUR

MUDDIED OAFS ON THE MERSEY

AMATEUR AND SEMI-PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL IN THE LIVERPOOL DISTRICT 1879-1915

Then ye returned to your trinkets; then ye contented your souls
With the flannelled fools at the wicket or the muddied oafs at the
goals.
The Islanders
Rudyard Kipling

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the early development of amateur football in Liverpool. Historians have generally been preoccupied with the evolution of commercial football, and thus relatively little work has been undertaken on the amateur side of the game; a point made by Richard Holt who has commented that whilst ‘amateurism’ was perceived as a middle-class code, ‘we should not forget that the great majority of ‘amateurs’ were working-class.’¹ Holt has often articulated some of the ideas informing the issues raised in this chapter. In essence, he has argued that working-class men found a meaningful context for their life in cities through the socialisation and communal identity provided through sport, and football in particular.

Holt also believes that the alacrity with which the new sport of soccer was taken up by the urban masses in cities such as Liverpool ‘rules out the possibility of seeing the game simply as a rational recreation initiative “from above”’, implying that such places may have had some pre-existing tradition of working-class sport.² This suggests that the conventional view of football, as a game developed by the elite classes, codified by the FA, and then disseminated down to the working-class, has been accepted too willingly. This point has been emphasised recently by Adrian Harvey, who has argued that sophisticated localised football persisted as late as the second half of the nineteenth century in certain places such as Bolton.³ Unlike Bolton, however, there is

¹ Holt, R., ‘Football and the Urban Way of Life in Nineteenth-Century Britain’, in Mangan, J.A. (ed), *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism*, (London: Frank Cass, 1988), p. 68.

² Holt, ‘Urban Life’, p. 71.

³ Harvey, Adrian, *Football: the First Hundred Years: the untold story*, (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 76.

little evidence of earlier traditional football in Liverpool. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the extent of informal football played in the city's streets and waste grounds, with 'hazy rules and imaginary touchlines', indicates that an earlier version could have mutated into a modern version of football "as much a survival as an innovation."⁴ Although this process seems unlikely in Liverpool, it should be noted that the number and diversity of in-migrants was such that some people did originate in regions with a strong tradition of folk football. Holt also felt that it would be instructive to know more of the process by which boys progressed from informal 'kickabouts' to properly organised league football. As this chapter shows, there were some low status amateur leagues, whose teams played with little proper kit or equipment, that overlapped at the level of informal 'street' teams, and these may have provided such a conduit to the organised game. The scale of amateur football in late nineteenth century Stirling, uncovered by Neil Tranter, suggests that informal street teams were an important factor in the town's extensive football culture.⁵

Colm Kerrigan's recent work on the origin of elementary school football in London, has also shown similar links between school football and the amateur game, as old boys and their ex-teachers started to form adult clubs such as Dulwich Hamlet. This chapter contains much new material of the evolution and scale of the amateur game in Liverpool, and the relation between informal, working-class and middle-class varieties of football. It also highlights connections with the evolving professional game, and attempts to answer the paradox that Liverpool's huge amateur culture produced so few professional players. Firstly, we return briefly to the pre-professional era to examine Liverpool's response to the ethos of the 'gentleman-amateur'.

⁴ Holt, 'Urban Life', p. 71.

⁵ Tranter, Neil, 'The Social and Occupational Structure of Organised sport in Central Scotland during the Nineteenth Century', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 4, 3, (Dec. 1987), pp. 301-314.

MIDDLE-CLASS AMATEURS

In the earliest years of Liverpool football all footballers played the game for their own individual satisfaction. Yet even at the time that football was being introduced to the district by the Cambridge curates, the seeds of the professional game had already been sown in east Lancashire.⁶ The early Liverpool game, the product of a 'Muscular Christian' initiative by Cambridge-educated curates and the Welsh footballer Robert Lythgoe, was, at this early stage, utterly untainted by these developments. However, a combination of popular initiative and inevitable contact with Lancashire clubs, meant that this pure state of gentlemanly-inspired amateurism was not to last for long. The pioneering curates in the Everton parish played no part in the formation of brewer John Houlding's separate Everton club and may have felt alienated because his values did not accord with their Muscular Christian principles. One of the consequences of Robert Lythgoe's involvement with Bootle FC, was the widening of the membership beyond the boundaries of the town, some players being 'borrowed' from other teams. The Ayrshire footballer, Jack McGill, was probably being paid to play for Everton FC by John Houlding as early as 1880, though Everton's remuneration must have been less than that offered by professional east Lancashire clubs, and indeed during 1881 McGill left to spend a few months with Accrington FC.

During the formative period of football in Liverpool between 1879-82, teams included footballers from a range of social classes. Churchmen had initiated most of the earliest teams, so middle-class involvement was palpable from the start.⁷ The Rev. Alfred Keely had founded St. John's church football club before it evolved into the secular Bootle FC and the early teams frequently included several ex-public schoolboys, together with local teachers and skilled working men. In November 1881, Bootle

⁶ Lewis, Robert W., 'The Genesis of Professional Football: Bolton-Blackburn-Darwen, the Centre of Innovation 1878-85' in *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 14, No. 1, (April 1997), pp. 24-31.

⁷ The *Manchester Guardian* had noted the role of sport in promoting the ideal of social integration: 'The idea has been to bring together all classes in football and athletics on terms of perfect equality.' *Manchester Guardian*, 30th Nov. 1884, quoted in Dunning, Eric, and Sheard, Kenneth, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: a sociological study of the development of rugby football*, (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1979), p. 195.

played Law FC of Blackburn in the first round of the English Cup. The Bootle team included a brewer, the parish curate, an official of the Shropshire Union Company, a sawmill foreman, a tinsmith, an Old Harrovian, Percy Bateson, and a merchant's son, Edward Rayner.⁸ How did the last two, members of Liverpool's social elite, come to be playing in a football team alongside artisan tradesmen? The social protocol of eastern Lancashire of the 1870s may have permitted such mixing to occur in Turton and Darwen but this was a novel innovation in the social hierarchy of Liverpool.⁹ The football playing Cambridge curates provided a social catalyst between working-class members of their parish and the patrician elite, perhaps persuading the merchants' sons that they too had a role in the promotion of Muscular Christianity. Percy Bateson may have been particularly amenable, as his brother had attended St. John's College, the alma mater of the Rev. Keely and most of the other footballing curates.

When the curates moved away from Liverpool in the early 1880s, the conduit for such close fraternization between the social classes was broken. Without the intercession of their clerical intermediaries, former public schoolboys were perhaps unwilling to continue to play in the same team as their social inferiors, but the numbers of public-school and university-educated young men in Liverpool business life made a solely patrician association football club a viable proposition. In February 1882 some Old Harrovians and Etonians met in the city centre offices of Percy Bateson's father with the object of establishing an exclusive football club. Liverpool Ramblers FC was founded in the tradition of the public school 'old boy' and regimental clubs which had come together in 1863 to form the Football Association. The first season's fixtures included matches with the public schools at Shrewsbury and Rossall, as well as intra-club matches between Harrovians and Etonians, and a game with a touring Cambridge University team.¹⁰ However, Bateson continued some of his established contacts, because some fixtures were also arranged with lower status local teams, such as Bootle, Everton, Stanley, and St. Mary's of Kirkdale. Old Etonians and Harrovians generally displayed greater confidence about their position in the social hierarchy than

⁸ *Courier*, Nov. 7th 1881.

⁹ See *Clerks, Clerics and Commercialism*, Chapter One of this thesis, p. 33.

¹⁰ Anon., *Liverpool Ramblers Centenary Brochure* (Liverpool: Ramblers FC, 1982).

did former pupils of newer public schools, and were perhaps more amenable to sporting encounters with working and middle-class teams.¹¹

The Ramblers secured a playing field close to Aigburth Hall, with changing facilities provided in Liverpool Cricket Club's new pavilion. Close connections with the cricket club were inevitable given the Ramblers' social status. Edward Rayner's father had been a member of the cricket club since the 1870s and such close family connections facilitated the subsequent invitation to share the cricketers' facilities.¹² At the inaugural meeting of the Liverpool and District FA in October 1882, it was revealed that the Football Association had agreed that Liverpool would host the forthcoming international match against Ireland, and four months later this was staged at the Cricket Club in the presence of 2500 spectators. Ramblers were closely involved in the organisation of this prestigious event in which several prominent gentlemen footballers played, although half the England team was already composed of players from emergent midland and northern clubs such as Notts County, Aston Villa, and Sheffield Wednesday, reflecting the progressive shift in the balance of power in English football.¹³ No local players were selected, underlining the low regard in which Liverpool football was still held.

Players' mercantile duties often precluded their availability for team selection and frequently resulted in cancelled or postponed matches. Percy Bateson was on more than one occasion forced to telegraph opponents at the eleventh hour in order to apologise for Ramblers' inability to fulfil a scheduled fixture. Even when able to attend, individual Ramblers often had to leave games early in order to meet prior engagements. Percy Bateson himself did precisely this before the end of a cup-tie with the Druids in Ruabon in 1885.¹⁴ Hampered by a chronic inability to field a full-strength

¹¹ Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians*, p. 136, p. 177, and pp.188-189.

¹² Walker, P.N., *The Liverpool Competition: a study of the development of cricket on Merseyside*, (Liverpool: Countywise 1988), p. 15.

¹³ Though in the early 1880s this group of players were still amateur, though perhaps nominally in some cases.

¹⁴ Onslow, Tony, *Everton FC: The Men from the Hill Country- The development of Everton football club during the reign of Queen Victoria*, (Birkenhead: Countywise, 2002), p. 23 and p. 64. In October

team, Ramblers were sometimes soundly beaten by working-class teams although such profound defeats may also be explained by the Rambler's gentlemanly aversion to training. 'Toil and sweat' were not to be exuded in gentlemanly exertions, and therefore 'training' was regarded as unnecessary, even virtually immoral.¹⁵ Unease at social contact with teams who were prepared to contemplate such distasteful notions as the serious preparation for matches, was no doubt, a factor in the Ramblers' gradual withdrawal from local football circles, although they remained a model gentlemen's club for local middle-class players to emulate (Figure 4.1, page 206).¹⁶

To regularly participate in football in the Liverpool of the 1880s, players needed free Saturday afternoons and at least a moderate level of income to cover what could be an expensive hobby. Players also needed to show dedication and loyalty, and particularly for the club secretary, a degree of organisation unprecedented for a recreational activity. As speedy communication was essential, players needed to either live close to each other, be work colleagues, or to know each other through another social organisation. There were many expenses; players' kit, footballs, refreshments, first aid, not to mention the rental of a suitable pitch, in a public park or private field, with secure storage for items such as goalposts. Travel to away matches needed careful co-ordination, and if an opponent was located many miles distant, this could present significant complications. One of the more onerous tasks was the arranging of fixtures with other clubs, entailing a good deal of laborious correspondence. Appeals for fixtures were a regular feature of newspaper sports columns, particularly in September, as clubs frantically tried to set up last minute matches for any free Saturdays in the forthcoming season. All the problems encountered by professional clubs regarding last moment cancellations and lapses in coordination also occurred in the amateur game. Therefore the introduction of local amateur leagues in about 1890, went a long way to smooth out organisational problems. The Liverpool and District Alliance comprised

1882, an apology was sent to the Great Marton club, near Blackpool, to explain Ramblers' difficulties in meeting a Lancashire Cup tie: 'Most of our players being in offices here, are unable to get away at such a time as 12.25 pm and there was no train that would suit.'

¹⁵ 'The Corinthian of my day never trained', thundered G.O. Smith, 'and I can safely say the need of it was never felt.' Also Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians*, p.148.

¹⁶ Young, *Merseyside*, pp. 21-22.

clubs from Bootle in the north of the city to Garston in the south, and included church and works teams. The somewhat more elite Liverpool and District Combination had a wider geographical reach, beyond the boundaries of the city, but in 1895, some member clubs left to establish an even more exclusive amateur league network.

This was the I Zingari League, comprising ten middle-class clubs, mostly old boys, university, and volunteer brigade teams, from across the Liverpool district. Initially, I Zingari teams simply agreed to play a certain quota of 'friendlies' but proper home and away fixtures were soon enforced and the league was eventually re-organised into three divisions with a total membership of 40 clubs.¹⁷ Several members of the I Zingari League modelled themselves according to the gentlemanly precepts of southern 'old boy' clubs. Old Xaverians' FC was the old boys' club of St. Francis Xavier's College, the city's senior middle-class Catholic boys' school.¹⁸ The college was an offshoot of Stonyhurst, the Jesuit public school near Clitheroe, and originally played the latter's version of football before finally adopting FA rules in the 1880s. Old Xaverians' annual subscription in 1892 was five shillings, well beyond the means of working-class players, and in the early 1900s club members could even afford to embark on a series of continental tours.¹⁹ A solicitor, Arthur Morton, had founded the Old Xaverian club, and was also the I Zingari League's first chairman. In 1899, Morton established the even more exclusive Lancashire Amateur League, a countywide organisation whose founding members included his own club and the Liverpool Casuals. Old Xaverians did not return to the I Zingari fold until the demise of the Lancashire Amateur League in 1911.²⁰ The Xaverians and Casuals were also among early entrants for the prestigious

¹⁷ Anon., *I Zingari Football League Centenary Brochure, 1895-1995*, (Moreton: Primary Four, 1995).

The I Zingari League was followed in 1904 by the I Zingari Combination for the senior members' reserve teams, and the subsidiary I Zingari Alliance in 1912.

¹⁸ Everton FC director, Dr. James C. Baxter, was a former pupil. Young, *Merseyside*, p. 32.

¹⁹ *I Zingari Brochure*.

²⁰ Sutcliffe, C.E., and Hargreaves, F., *History of the Lancashire Football Association 1878-1929*, (Blackburn: Lancashire FA, 1928), p. 247, and *I Zingari Brochure*.

Lancashire Amateur Cup, a county-based equivalent of more exclusive national challenge competitions, such as the FA Amateur Cup.²¹

Another prominent I Zingari club was the Crosby-based Marine FC, which had been established in 1894 by a group of local traders and professional men primarily for their teenage sons.²² Most of the boys were still playing with the club four years later when Marine joined the I Zingari League. By then these young men were embarking on careers and their occupations would suggest that Marine was a somewhat lower status club than the Ramblers and Xaverians, despite the team's occasional usage of vacationing Oxbridge blues.²³ Amateur football clubs commonly originated as boys' teams, which later progressed to adult leagues as the membership grew up together.²⁴ By the time that Marine won promotion to the I Zingari's senior division in the early 1900s, the elite teams had seceded to form the Lancashire Amateur League, and this somewhat altered the social character of the league. The remaining clubs consisted of mostly lower middle class players, some of whom were even prepared to contemplate professional football careers. Kirkdale, Harrowby (Wirral), Valkyrie (Aigburth), Melrose, and Balmoral, were amongst the I Zingari's senior clubs which played an important role in nurturing future professionals. None of Marine's players at this time were taking up professional careers, but their middle-ranking social status occasionally incurred the unsporting disdain of socially superior clubs. For instance, in 1903, Marine had arranged to borrow an enclosed ground for a Lancashire Amateur Cup tie with Liverpool Casuals, but the latter refused to play on an unfamiliar ground and as a result, Marine were unable to earn some much-needed additional gate money.²⁵ However, some of the club's own followers hankered after the old standards, retaining a strict interpretation of the ethos of the 'gentleman-amateur', particularly on the

²¹ Morton and the redoubtable R.E. Lythgoe were prominent among the organisers of this competition. Sutcliffe and Hargreaves, *Lancashire FA*, pp. 79-80.

²² The founders included the proprietors of a bakery, stationers, a pharmacy business, and a coal merchant as well as senior clerks. 1901 census.

²³ Wotherspoon, David, *The Mighty Mariners: the story of Marine AFC*, (West Lancashire: The Author, 1997), p. 15.

²⁴ Kerrigan, Colm, *Teachers and Football: Schoolboy Association Football in England, 1885-1915*, (Abingdon: Routledge Falmer, 2005), Chapter 6, pp. 132-156.

²⁵ Wotherspoon, *Mariners*, p. 28.

subject of charging admission. When in 1903, Marine secured its own enclosed ground, Rossett Park, for an annual rent of £10, some sections of the local press opined that, ‘a club with (such) a large membership as Marine, and backed up by so many influential gentlemen, should find it unnecessary to keep ... afloat by gate money.’²⁶ Membership of Marine was by no means inexpensive, annually costing 5 s. in 1907-08, a year when the club made a surplus of £7 9s. Total subscriptions that season amounted to £13 2s. 6d., with gate receipts totalling £16 5s. 11d., and some extra income was also raised by concerts.²⁷ However, it was not just the necessity of charging for admission that irked Marine’s critics, but also the purity of some players’ amateurism. Marine full-back, Jack London caused the club to be excluded from the 1911 Liverpool Amateur Cup when it was revealed that he had already been suspended while playing for an Ormskirk team, and had also received payment in excess of expenses while playing for Birkenhead.²⁸ This was, no doubt, seen as the thin end of the inevitable march towards the evil of professionalism. The plight of Marine highlights the class pretensions of provincial administrators and their obsession with maintaining the purity of their amateur game. Any breach of the amateur code was strictly punished as it was considered essential for clubs to maintain their respectability. A few talented I Zingari players were turning professional but the prevailing ethos of this level of amateur football remained that of the middle-class ‘gentleman-amateur’. Liverpool-born ‘professional’ players were more likely to graduate from a less restrictive working-class amateur football culture. Though considered by the local press and the local football establishment to be of subordinate status to the middle-class soccer infrastructure, such a network did begin to evolve at the end of the nineteenth century.

Table 4.1: Marine FC: original team players from 1894.

²⁶ Wotherspoon, *Mariners*, p. 30.

²⁷ Wotherspoon, *Mariners*, p. 32.

²⁸ Wotherspoon, *Mariners*, p. 34.

Player's name	Age (1894)	Birthplace	Occupation (1901)	Domestic details etc.
Dick Lawson	13	Liverpool	Bread shop manager	Lived Waterloo. Father: bakery business. 2 servants.
John Lawson	12	Liverpool	Marine engineer apprentice	(as above)
George Greenwood	15	Walton	Mercantile clerk	Lived Seaforth. Father: accountant (1881). 1 servant (1881)
Walter Quayle	13	Liverpool	Invoice clerk (mercantile)	Lived Toxteth (1901). Father: book-keeper ('81), insurance agent (1901).
Arthur Macabe	13	Liverpool	Marine engineers' apprentice	Lived Seaforth. Father: drapery clerk (1881). 1 servant (1881)
William Neale	14	Ulverston	Draper's assistant	Lived Waterloo.
William McCullough	11	Liverpool	Telegraphist	Lived Toxteth.
Reginald Walmsley	12	Accrington	Assistant manager to printer (father's business)	Lived Waterloo. Father: Printer/Stationer (1901).
John Alexander	16	Liverpool	Dental surgeon	Lived Waterloo. Father: Druggist (1901).
George Alexander	14	Bootle	Chemist's assistant	(as above).

Sources: Wotherspoon, *Mariners*, 1881, 1901 censuses.

WORKING-CLASS AMATEURS

The number of football clubs in Liverpool and the surrounding area increased steadily during the 1880s. Between 1882 and 1884, the Liverpool and District FA had increased its membership from 12 to 36 teams, some based beyond the conurbation, in Southport, Ormskirk, Skelmersdale, Haydock, Warrington, and the Wirral. With fewer recreational opportunities available in such smaller and more isolated communities, football spectating and playing was perhaps relatively more popular than in Liverpool. As a consequence of urban rivalries, and the funds generated by substantial crowds attending their matches, small town football clubs were not averse to recompensing some of their more skilful players. This was not full-time waged professionalism in the formal sense, but perhaps involved paying certain players a little more than out-of-pocket expenses. Surprisingly humble clubs from the Liverpool hinterland were actually registering certain players as professional following legitimisation in 1885.²⁹ For example, Golbourne FC from near Leigh had 12 registered professionals in 1887, and the following year, neighbouring Ashton-in-Makerfield FC had two. In west Lancashire, Gillibrand Rangers had two 'professional' players and Skelmersdale United had five. Even genteel Southport managed to sustain four football clubs with a combined total of 24 registered professionals. Unpaid colleagues of 'professionals' in

²⁹ Lewis, 'Genesis', pp. 50-51.

such teams would not have conceived of themselves as 'amateur' footballers in the sense that a team such as the Old Xaverians may well have done.

Such amateurs made significant contributions to these semi-professional teams and similarly some continued to do so with Everton FC, though increasingly this was in the reserves rather than the first team. Second elevens had existed since the start of football in Liverpool but the differential between the standard of Everton's first and second teams widened following the introduction of paid players. Even then the Everton first team were considered to be of such lowly status that the major clubs of east Lancashire were often only prepared to field their own second elevens against them. By the mid-1880s, the second team's primary purpose was basically to provide cover for injured or under-performing first team players. Amateurs were generally confined to the second XI as the number of professionals increased, although even some of the latter never managed to progress beyond the reserves.

Following the lead of the Football League in 1888, a number of localised leagues were established. The first in the Liverpool area was the West Lancashire League in 1889-90, comprising 'the best clubs in the district after Everton and Bootle', within a catchment area that extended from the Wirral to Wigan.³⁰ After one season, the league changed its name to the Liverpool and District League, but by the third season, it was wound up 'due to poor organisation and lack of commitment.'³¹ Even though some teams did utilise professionals, several clubs were unable to ensure the regular availability of eleven men, and those outside the Liverpool conurbation had particular difficulty in meeting fixtures on time.

As a complement to its original cup competition, which had started in 1882, the Liverpool and District FA established several new knockout competitions during the 1880s and 'nineties. The senior of these subsidiary competitions was the Liverpool Shield, which was intended for the higher strand of local amateur teams. In 1897-98,

³⁰ Upton, Gilbert, *Tranmere Rovers 1881-1921 : a New History*, (Southport: Author, 1997), p. 2; also Walker, Neville, *From Slacky Brow to Hope Street: a century of Prescot football*, (Huyton: Knowsley Libraries, 1990), p. 2. *St. Helens Newspaper*, Sept. 7th 1889.

³¹ Upton, *Tranmere*, p. 2.

the Shield competition included at least 12 entries, ranging from elite clubs such as the Ramblers and Casuals to works teams such as the Police Athletic and Garston Copper Works.³² In 1886, the Liverpool Junior Cup was instituted for ambitious working-class teams. By 1897-98, this competition attracted entries from at least 35 teams across west Lancashire and as far as Widnes, Chester and the Wirral. Local followers of amateur football held the Junior Cup in high regard. In November 1901, Garston Gasworks' second round tie with Corporation Carriage Works attracted a thousand spectators to the Banks Road ground in Garston. Such potentially large crowds meant that possession of an enclosed ground was considered essential to participants. On the same day as Garston's game with the Carriage Works, Clarendon, a Wirral-based club, were forced to surrender home advantage to Garston Church FC because they did not have a fenced-off ground.³³ Victory in the Junior Cup ensured enthusiastic celebrations. Following Prescott FC's victory in the 1890 final, a volunteer battalion band led the players and 'an immense crowd' to the club's headquarters at the Eagle and Child pub. Local players regarded victory in the Junior Cup final as a significant career milestone.³⁴ Garston North End full back, William Whiting, eventually fulfilled his long-standing ambition of a winner's medal in 1905. The lowest class of Liverpool's knockout football competitions was the 'minor medals', intended for teams of players under 19 years. In 1897-98, the 'minor medals' attracted 46 entries mostly from church, works, neighbourhood, and youth and volunteer brigade teams. Some amateur clubs entered teams in both the Junior Cup and Minor Medal competitions.³⁵

By the mid-1890s many hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of young men in Liverpool were playing football on Saturday afternoons. The *Liverpool Review* claimed, 'In this district there is probably a larger number of footballers and a greater host of followers

³² These clubs comprised the better amateur clubs in the district, and indeed the Police Athletic and Casuals were good enough to actually win the Lancashire Amateur Cup during the 1890s and even included the future professional club, Tranmere Rovers

³³ *Prescot and Huyton Reporter*, Nov. 16th 1901.

³⁴ Walker, *Slacky Brow*, p. 4.

³⁵ *Courier*, Oct. 2nd 1897.

of the great winter game than in any other centre of the country.’³⁶ The number of participating footballers increased dramatically throughout the first decade of the new century. In late 1898, 12 Liverpool-based league tables were listed in the *Liverpool Echo*. By 1901, this had increased to 18 local leagues, rising to 21 by 1905, and there were 41 by 1909.³⁷ A total of 339 separate teams in the Liverpool area were listed in league tables for 1901-02. Assuming that teams may have between 11 to 14 regular players, this would suggest there were between 3700 and 4800 active footballers in the Liverpool area in 1901.³⁸ The numbers of leagues in the Liverpool district indicate that there was more direct participation in football in Liverpool than in neighbouring Lancashire. The areas under the jurisdiction of the Lancashire FA had only 9 leagues in 1900, 32 in 1910, and 50 on the eve of the Great War.³⁹ The playing record of Liverpool-based teams in the Lancashire Amateur Cup also suggests that Liverpool footballers had begun to equal, if not outshine, their county-wide counterparts by the 1890s. Aintree Church FC were the first winners of this competition in 1894 and over the next 20 years, Liverpool-based teams won the trophy on six occasions.⁴⁰

By 1901, most amateur football in Liverpool was organised within a network of local leagues, the larger ones sub-divided into several divisions (**Appendix 4.1, pages 208-216**). There were obvious links between some leagues because of the presence of first team and reserve sides, and this gives us some idea of the hierarchy of the local amateur league system. This is also evident in the amount of newspaper coverage given over to the activities of clubs in the more prestigious leagues. Full reports on games were generally confined to those teams playing in the middle-class I Zingari and Lancashire Amateur League, and the long-established, mostly working-class Liverpool and District Alliance.⁴¹ Subsidiary to the latter league was the Everton and District

³⁶ *Review* May 7th 1898.

³⁷ *Echo*, see any report for 1898-99 football season, and for 1901-02, 1905-06, and the 1909-10 season.

³⁸ *Echo*, Jan. 4th 1902. See Appendix. 4.1.

³⁹ Sutcliffe and Hargreaves, *Lancashire FA*, p. 127. Sunday school leagues were especially popular in east Lancashire.

⁴⁰ Sutcliffe and Hargreaves, *Lancashire FA*

⁴¹ This league contained works sides such as the Corporation Carriage Works, Johnson’s Dye works, and church-based teams such as Garston Church FC and Linacre Bible Class.

Junior Alliance, which in 1901 contained only three teams actually from Everton, as well as the reserve sides of some Liverpool Alliance clubs such as Bootle Amateurs and Garston Church. The so-called Everton and District Junior League was evidently of an even lower standard, as it included the third team of Garston Church FC. Most of the amateur leagues in Liverpool included teams far beyond their apparent catchment areas. Even seemingly humble organisations such as the Oakfield Junior League (centred on Oakfield Road, Anfield, close to Liverpool FC) contained teams from not just Anfield and Everton but also Wavertree, Toxteth, and the Wirral. On the other hand, the Wavertree and District Junior League and Seaforth and District Junior Alliance were unusually localised. These particular leagues were presumably of low status and had no match reports or teams listed in newspapers. Some of these lower status leagues appear to have been ephemeral groupings, which lasted only a year or so although it is possible that some apparently short-lived leagues may have simply changed name. Wavertree League clubs were based on neighbourhoods, pubs, and churches, but there were no works teams, a further pointer perhaps to its humble status. Team names suggest that clubs had five basic kinds of origin; works-based teams, church-based teams, teams based around youth groups or volunteer brigades, pub teams, and local neighbourhood or street teams.⁴² Some lower-status leagues may not even have been affiliated to the Liverpool FA.⁴³ Certain workers, for example, dockers or those in retail trades, still had to work Saturday afternoons, but were given free time during the week. A number of leagues were set up for such men to play football on their own half-day. The Birkenhead, Liverpool and District Thursday League contained teams of shopworkers, postal workers, soldiers, and shoemakers among its ranks.⁴⁴ Teams in the lower status leagues may have been little better than the informal youth teams that played on waste ground and in parks, and indeed there may have been a good deal of transience between these levels of amateur team.

⁴² *Echo*, Oct. 12th 1901. Seacombe Albion and Aigburth Vale Juniors both played in Div. 1 of the Liverpool Junior Alliance in October 1901.

⁴³ Kerrigan, Colm, *Teachers and Football: Schoolboy Association Football in England, 1885-1915*, (Abingdon: Routledge Falmer, 2005), p. 133. Kerrigan reports that 'prominent clubs in South London football did not even belong to the LFA (London FA).'

⁴⁴ Thursday leagues also existed in Preston and Blackburn, Sutcliffe and Hargreaves, p.127.

By using team lists in the *Football Echo* from the 1901-02 season, suitable names were cross-referenced with the 1901 census to obtain data on their occupational and domestic backgrounds. It was generally possible to locate clubs by reference to their names. For example, most teams were associated with streets, works, hostelrys or churches, and all these were listed in *Gore's Directory*. Occasionally, it was not possible to precisely identify which individual sibling in a particular family was the footballer (because first name or initial was not given in team lists in newspapers), and in these cases all brothers were listed.

Table 4.2: Liverpool amateur football team players traced in 1901 census.

Club	Player's name	Age (1901)	Birthplace	Occupation
<i>Corporation Carriage Works</i>	William Dobbin	24	Liverpool	Cleaner of Electric Cars
	John Kenting	20		General Clerk
	James Lightfoot	22	Cheshire	Engine driver
	Alex Love	18	Liverpool	Joiner's apprentice
<i>Johnson's Dye Works</i>	Charles Rothwell	25	Ormskirk	Blacksmith striker
	Harold Plews	19	Bradford	General labourer
	Ernest Mearns	21	Liverpool	Light colour dyer
	James McAleer	23	Liverpool	Miller labourer
<i>Ogden's</i>	Edward Sherman	18	Liverpool	Printer's labourer
	Richard Sherman	20	Liverpool	Corporation labourer
<i>Hudson's</i>	Arthur Rostock	21	Liverpool	Electric car conductor
	Ernest Mainman	21	Liverpool	House plumber
<i>Kirkdale FC</i>	Charles Gwilliam	20	Liverpool	Bricklayer's labourer
	Fred Furey	20	Liverpool	General labourer
	Robert Don	18	Liverpool	General labourer
	Andrew Don	20	Liverpool	Railway clerk
	Peter Don	22	Liverpool	Fruit merchant's clerk
	John Don	27	Liverpool	Dock labourer

Source: *Liverpool Football Echo*, 1901 census.

Table 4.3: Overhead Railway FC players identified in 1898 team photograph

Player's name	Born	Birthplace	Occupation	Residence (1901)
William Allert	1869	Aughton	Railway Electric Motor Driver	Seaforth
John Carruthers	1880	Everton	Driver	Everton
John Abrahams	1881	Liverpool	Assurance agent	Bootle
Arthur Antrobus	1874	West Derby	Living on own means	Seaforth
William C. Griffiths	1874	Liverpool	Electric Tram Car Conductor	Seaforth
Henry Andrews	1876	Aston, Birmingham	Tramway Cashier	Kirkdale
Fred Randall	1880	Staffs	Electrician	Bootle
Fred Rowley	1878	Liverpool	Stamper in General Post Office	Walton
Thomas James	1876	Liverpool	Machine Engine Fitter Labourer	Seaforth

Source: Overhead FC photograph, 1901 census.

Table 4.4: Garston-based amateur footballers c.1901

Club	Player's name	Age (1901)	Birthplace	Occupation
<i>Garston Church</i>	John Teare	25	Liverpool	Stockbroker's clerk

	Hugh Balmer	21	Todmorden	Clek
	Thomas Doswell	19	Liverpool	Grocer's porter
	James Lightburn	19	Crewe	Railway clerk
	William Lightburn	21	Crewe	Engine fitter
	Ernest Wynne	21	Garston	Ironmonger's assistant
<i>Garston Gasworks</i>	Len Salt	17	St. Helens	Boiler maker apprentice
	Edward Stanton	19	Garston	Labourer copper works
	Arthur Newton	29	Garston	Gas stoker
	John Helliwell	22	Mytholmroyd	Engineer
	William Crawford	20	Everton	Blacksmith's striker
	Horace Marshall	17	Birmingham	Gardener
<i>Garston North End</i>	Herbert Wood	25	Garston	Wood turner bobbin works
	Elijah Birkenhead	23	Garston	Machinist
	Ernest Birkenhead	20	Garston	Crane driver docks
	Henry Pugh	22	Radnor	Dock crane oiler
	William H. Whiting	23	Bagillt	Gas works labourer
	Mark Grace	20	Halewood	General labourer

Source: *Prescot and Huyton Reporter*, 1901 census.

The particular clubs listed in the above tables were fairly durable and well-organised, generally lasting from the end of the 1890s to the dawn of the Great War. If the players listed represent a cross-section of footballers in Liverpool amateur working-class leagues, it can be surmised that between about a quarter to a third were labourers, half were skilled manual workers, and one-fifth were clerks. An 1898 photograph of Overhead Athletic FC gives precise identification of sitters, and their names were cross-referenced with the 1901 census (Figure 4.2, page 206). In 1901, its main team played in the first division of the Liverpool Junior Alliance, which included teams from a wide geographic area, extending as far as west Lancashire and the Wirral. The reserve Overhead Juniors played in the third division of the same league. As a railway works team there was a greater proportion of players with skilled manual jobs, than was the general norm for working-class football in Liverpool. Overhead Athletic was the works team of the Liverpool Overhead Railway, which had opened in 1894, and ran the length of Liverpool's waterfront. Indeed, a substantial number of the players traced were employees of the Railway Company though some may have left in the three years between the photograph and the census. However, census data on other works team players suggest that recruitment of non-employees was a common practice. Amateur team photographs were regularly featured in the *Football Echo* from the 1900s, and these could be a useful source of evidence on the social and domestic backgrounds of a broad range of working-class amateur footballers when the census of 1911 becomes available.

Amateur clubs in such leagues as the Liverpool and District Alliance and the Junior Alliance, played teams across a wide geographical area, including not just those within the city, but also from south-west Lancashire and the Wirral. Clubs such as Corporation Carriage Works, Johnson's Dye Works, and Overhead Athletic represented the higher echelon of working-class amateurism in the Liverpool district. Players were predominantly skilled men and by the 1900s had the time and money to travel to play football, and to pay contributions and subscriptions. A few unskilled labourers did play alongside their artisan colleagues, but at this higher level of working-class football, there is little evidence that some teams had a majority of unskilled players. Such clubs may have played in the lower status localised leagues, but because newspapers did not publish team lists or reports of lower level games, we cannot find specific census evidence to support this. However, the general absence of works teams and the preponderance of neighbourhood and street teams might imply that such teams were only able to afford to play in their locality and that they tended to be younger, unskilled men.

FOOTBALL IN PRESCOT AND GARSTON

Urban rivalry, rapid population growth, and restrictive opportunities for alternative forms of recreation were factors which stimulated interest in football in small industrial towns, particularly in Scotland, east Lancashire, and the midlands. These criteria may not have applied to a city the size and scale of Liverpool, but similar townships did exist just outside its boundaries, and in two particular satellites, a strong football culture did develop. Prescott was 7 miles east of central Liverpool, a traditional centre of watch-making and also from the mid-nineteenth century, for the manufacture of cables. Garston, on the other hand, had been little more than a village until the middle of the century when it grew as a result of rapid industrialisation (Figure 4.3, page 205).

Prescot's cricket club had existed for thirty years when some of its members established a football section in 1884. The main organiser seems to have been a local earthenware manufacturer, Pearson Gill Twist, who continued to play sport despite already being in his late thirties. He appears to have been somewhat of a philanthropic

enthusiast of rational recreation for the cricket club's less affluent members.⁴⁵ Most of Prescott FC's early players were young watchmakers, employed in the town's maze of small private workshops. The working practices of such small businesses allowed flexibility about free Saturday afternoons, and Prescott had plenty of access to open spaces where the game could be played. By the 1890s, there were at least nine Prescott-based clubs, including some based in peripheral villages such as Whiston.

Prescott FC remained the town's leading club and were among the founders of the abortive West Lancashire League in 1889, continuing after the latter's abandonment, as members of the Liverpool and District League. Football was extremely popular in the area, and Prescott FC often attracted crowds of two to three thousand to matches at their Warrington Road ground. Such high attendances and the town's connection to the regional railway network allowed Prescott FC to compete in semi-professional Lancashire leagues. In 1895 Prescott joined the Lancashire Alliance, and remained there apart from two seasons spent in somewhat higher-level leagues (1897-98 in the Lancashire Combination and 1901-02 in the Lancashire League).⁴⁶ Comparatively high attendances (even while the club was still competing in the Liverpool and District League in 1891, the gate receipts amounted to £165) ensured that the club was able to accumulate moderate funds and some players were even paid, though only about a shilling a match. Four years later, however, a few players were expecting as much as 7/6.⁴⁷ Over the same period, profits of £30 went down to £4-11s-5 ½ d due primarily to increased wages and travel. Paradoxically, membership of a more prestigious league brought more fixtures with uninspiring distant clubs, of little appeal to the population of insular towns like Prescott. Such over-ambition had partly accounted for Bootle's downfall, with too many unattractive fixtures generating insufficient gate-money.

⁴⁵ Several of the founding players continued to exercise control over the club even in the mid-1890s: Pearson Gill Twist was the President, and Charles Wilkinson was the treasurer. Walker, *Slacky Brow*, p. 5.

⁴⁶ In 1893 the *Lancashire Alliance* comprised 3 clubs from St. Helens, 4 from Leigh, 3 each from Chorley and Bolton, and one each from Lancaster, Southport, and Blackpool. *Echo*, Oct. 7th 1893.

⁴⁷ Walker, *Slacky Brow*, p. 6.

Similarly over-ambitious plans may have been partly responsible for the demise of Garston's Copper Works club after two seasons in the semi-professional Combination. If so, the club's problems may have deterred other Garston clubs from pitching themselves so highly in the hierarchy of regional football. Garston's other senior clubs, emerging following the termination of the Copper Works FC, all operated within the Liverpool amateur system.

Football arrived in Garston sometime in the 1880s. A likely candidate for its introduction may have been the pioneering Everton player Tom Evans, who moved to Garston in 1882 to take up a clerical post with the Midland Railway. He came from a sporting Derbyshire family (his brother was a distinguished cricketer and footballer in the midlands). Evans had been an early Everton FC secretary and it seems unlikely that he would not have continued his connection with sport, perhaps organising a football team for the railway or local church.⁴⁸ The precise early evolution of football in Garston is not known but the Copper Works FC certainly existed by 1888, and the Garston Bible Class was an early member of the Liverpool and District Amateur Alliance.⁴⁹ By 1901, the latter league included Garston Church, Gasworks and North End, which had emerged as the township's three leading clubs. In this period, the town's lesser clubs included Garston South End and Garston United, which both played in the Everton and District League, Garston Wesleyans in the Edge Hill and District Junior League, and Cardwell who played in the Newsham and District League. In addition, the three senior Garston clubs also ran reserve and even third teams. Garstonians were fervent supporters of their local amateur teams; it was not uncommon in the 1900s for a thousand or more people to attend neighbourhood matches.

Modern Garston is subsumed entirely within the city boundaries of Liverpool but at the turn of the last century it was physically and politically separate from Liverpool

⁴⁸ Railwaymen were a significant occupational group in Garston in 1911 (14% of the local male workforce). Davies, *Labour*, p. 207.

⁴⁹ *Echo*, Oct. 7th 1893.

(reluctantly becoming part of the city corporation in 1902).⁵⁰ In fact, Garston's links with the city were somewhat tenuous despite its relative proximity. It was perceived as an 'exotic southern colony' where the inhabitants did not even speak with a Liverpool accent.⁵¹ Garstonians themselves felt little affinity with Liverpool. The township started to develop from the middle of the nineteenth century when the St. Helens Canal and Railway Company established a dock on the banks of the Mersey. Industry followed and the main factories were the copper works opened in 1865, the gasworks constructed in 1891, the Hamilton Iron Works, (employing over 500 men) and Wilson's Bobbin Works which had relocated from Todmorden on the Lancashire-Yorkshire border. Economic migrants were attracted to Garston from other English regions, as well as Wales and Ireland, and the population increased enormously, commensurate with the phenomenal rates of other Victorian boom towns.⁵²

Garston developed in two main areas; the north end, close to the original heart of the village, and the less respectable southern sector, closer to the docks and factories, popularly referred to by locals as 'Below the Bridge' (Figure 4.3, page 205). Most of the predominantly manual labour force of Garston lived in 'Below the Bridge's' cramped housing, built in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Fourteen per cent of Garston's male workforce were railwaymen (the highest proportion of any Liverpool ward), with 19% being labourers, 12% white collar, and the remainder an assortment of manual workers.⁵³ Most of the football clubs were based in this part of Garston and the township's relative isolation ensured that the working-class amateur game was particularly strongly patronised with matches extensively reported in the local press.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Swift, Rev. J.M., *The Story of Garston and its Church*, (Garston: A.M. Proffitt, 1937), pp. 139-156.

⁵¹ Davies, *Labour*, p.99.

⁵² e.g. Barrow-in-Furness, Middlesbrough, Birkenhead. See Hoskins, W. G., *The Making of the English Landscape*. (London: Penguin, 1955), p. 229.

⁵³ 1911 census reports, Davies, *Liverpool Labour*, p. 207 and pp.372-381.

⁵⁴ *Prescot and Huyton Reporter* Amateur football reports for season 1901-02.

As already mentioned, Garston Copper Works FC were initially the town's senior club, which briefly managed to compete at regional level. The Works originated as an offshoot of the Bibby Shipping Line and it initially processed copper plate in Birkenhead for the company's vessels. In 1865, the factory relocated upriver to Garston, and by the time the football team had been established in the 1880s, the plant had diversified into the manufacture of locomotive fireboxes. In the late 1890s there was a concerted effort to elevate the works team to a higher level and the club joined the semi-professional Combination league alongside the reserve teams of Everton and Liverpool. The Combination covered Cheshire, north Wales, and the northern midlands, so the cost and convenience of travel would have been well beyond a normal working-class amateur team. It therefore seems likely that the club must have operated with the blessing of the Bibby management and that some non-employees may have been drafted in and perhaps even paid for their services.⁵⁵ The Bibby company was known to have a paternalistic streak towards the welfare of their employees, suggesting that the Copper Works FC had some parallels with Arnold Hill's Thames Ironworks FC in east London, which later spawned West Ham United. Copper Works FC survived for two seasons in the Combination but the parent company came under new management and the subsidisation in money, labour, and time of a semi-professional football team may not have been considered so important. The club seems to have disbanded before 1900 and the Church, Gasworks, and North End clubs vied with each other to take its place as Garston's senior team.

Rivalry was acute between the senior Garston clubs with little love lost between them. In January 1902, it was reported that Garston North End were successful in an official protest over the eligibility of a certain Garston Church player in the quarter final of the Junior Cup, resulting in the latter club's exclusion from the competition. In fact, Garston NE were regular resorters to protest and the Liverpool Association upheld three of their complaints about various opponents that season.⁵⁶ There are also indications that the behaviour of Garston supporters could be raucous. The poor behaviour of Prescott players and supporters had also been noted at the time. Certainly

⁵⁵ Such as electrician Jimmy Ashcroft, who had previously played for Anfield Recreation FC.

⁵⁶ *Echo*, Jan. 25th 1902.

the ethos of the amateur game practiced by the urban working-class was far removed from the gentlemanly manner exemplified by the Ramblers and Old Xaverians.

Of 19 Garston footballers positively identified in the 1901 census, 10 were employed in skilled or semi-skilled occupations, and five were labourers (Table 4.4). Only three were clerks and significantly these all played for the Garston Church FC, perhaps reflecting the white-collar bias in church attendance. This occupational analysis is consistent with the economic profile of Garston, with many players working in the main local industries, and includes further evidence to indicate that works teams tended to include non-employees. The gasworks team included a labourer in the copper works and a local gardener, whilst William Whiting, who was employed in the gasworks as a labourer, actually played for the rival North End club. Whiting's reputation as a full-back was such that he was persuaded to join Garston North End from Huyton FC (near Prescott) in 1901.⁵⁷ Though much closer to Liverpool than St. Helens, cultural links persisted with the latter and Garston football continued to be reported in St. Helens' newspapers. George Salt's family had migrated from St. Helens during the 1890s, and one of his brothers reputedly played rugby league, the favourite sport of St. Helens. Two Garston footballers originated from Todmorden, in Yorkshire, the prior home of Wilson's Bobbin Company. In 1892 Wilson's opened their new works in Garston and many of their workers migrated from the West Riding. William Whiting had been born in Bagillt, Flintshire, in 1878, and initially played football for Whiston Ramblers, near Prescott. Whiting's father, a miner, had migrated from a colliery in Flintshire to Whiston, but had originated in Somerset and had spent his adult years travelling throughout England and Wales in search of work.⁵⁸

Though both Prescott and Garston were similarly sized towns, as many as eleven Prescott-born players went on to Football League careers in contrast to only three Garstonians. The newly created Hull City developed a particularly close bond,

⁵⁷ *Prescot Reporter*, March 18th 1905.

⁵⁸ In December 1901, two Garston footballers were given trials in Liverpool's reserve team. Stanton was the other. A few weeks later, one of them, the former Garston Church goalkeeper, Horace Marshall, made his one and only senior appearance – in the derby match against Everton. Leonard Wood was another Garston-based amateur who managed to play for the Everton first team.

attracting at least seven Prescott-born players. The first to join was William Robinson in 1905, when Hull started to recruit professionals for its inaugural League season. The new Hull team also included two Prescott-born St. Helens Recreation FC players, Edwin Neve and goalkeeper, Edward Roughley, who were both members of the team that finished third in the Second Division in 1911 (even in 2006, this remains Hull's highest ever placing). It would appear that Robinson, Roughley, and Neve were instrumental in Hull's recruitment of four more Prescott players in the 1910s. In Garston, the public's enthusiasm for football was at least as great as their counterparts in Prescott, but fewer professionals originated there, although the Liverpool area's most successful pre-1914 footballer, Jimmy Ashcroft, had played with a Garston club. Ashcroft had been born in Walton and had started his professional career with Garston Copper Works FC, before his distinguished career as a goalkeeper for Woolwich Arsenal, Blackburn Rovers, and England.

As isolated industrial communities, the canvas of life was slower in Prescott and Garston than in Liverpool, and the local culture of football assumed a disproportionate level of intensity than in the city. Football was an important element in the recreational habits of men from small communities, and the sport helped to forge a coherent local identity, particularly in rivalry with similar neighbouring towns. Such notions of identity were analogous with those of small football towns in Scotland, east Lancashire, and the midlands, with whom Garston and Prescott had more in common than with Liverpool. Prescott FC had a stronger presence in the north-west football scene than the Garston teams, but eventually both places evolved clubs (Prescot Cables and South Liverpool) which achieved modest regional success and eventually contemplated membership of the Football League, although in the event, neither were elected.

PLAYING AMATEUR FOOTBALL IN LIVERPOOL

One of the main handicaps to working-class amateur football in Liverpool during the 1890s and 1900s was the premium on available playing space within the city.⁵⁹ By

⁵⁹ Kerrigan, *Teachers*, p.36.

1900 Liverpool possessed several parks; Princes and Sefton Parks in the south, and Newsham and Stanley Parks in the north (Figure 4.4, page 207). The latter two had staged football matches from the earliest days though the city's oldest park, Princes Park, actually remained a private space until 1918, but its small size and peculiar layout would anyway have precluded the marking-out of football pitches. Nearby Sefton Park had a purpose-built cricket ground and soccer matches were permitted in some parts. In the early days, only two pitches could be marked out in Stanley Park but for a year or so there was probably no organised method of booking pitches. In London marked out pitches were balloted on a weekly basis by teams and similar practice may have followed in Liverpool. However, the parklands received a real battering, as every Saturday several matches were played consecutively on the same pitch, often until darkness.⁶⁰ The local authority were caught between the imperative to maintain the serenity and condition of parks and the demands of sportsmen, and periodically resorted to ban sports in order to preserve the grass. In 1885, the Parks, Garden and Improvement Committee informed clubs that played in Liverpool Corporation parks that no sport was to be played after October 1st, 'in order to encourage the growth of grass etc. for the summer months' games'. The ruling provoked an outcry in the press. An impassioned supporter of the winter game wrote, 'I should think that the ratepaying public will have something to say about this, seeing that in a large city like Liverpool the parks are the only place where the working-class can afford to take rational recreation....Stanley Park for many years past has been the ground on which our principal Liverpool clubs were born....The Everton, Stanley, and Cambrian football clubs all grew here, and many more clubs, though not so well known, are growing there.'⁶¹ Only the speedy intercession of Robert Lythgoe, the redoubtable secretary of the local FA, persuaded the Parks Committee to reverse the decision. The arguments about football in the parks continued over the years. In 1890, the *Liverpool Athletic Times* complained that 'the smallest excuse is taken advantage of (by the park authorities) to prevent play – except on a very limited portion... so much ground in our parks shall be reserved solely for summer sports.'⁶² Newsham Park was used by

⁶⁰ Johnes, *Soccer and Society*, p. 99.

⁶¹ *Echo*, Oct. 2nd 1885.

⁶² *Liverpool Athletic Times*, Jan. 22nd 1890.

several clubs until the mid-1880s, including the original Liverpool AFC, but the genteel residents of Newsham Drive were probably not prepared to tolerate football matches in their midst for very long. During the crisis of October 1885, a local accountant had complained about the football being played in nearby Shiel Park.⁶³ By 1900, however, the land across the railway line, adjacent to Newsham Park, contained Liverpool's largest concentration of enclosed sports grounds, with some, including the Liverpool Athletic Ground, having extensive facilities such as pavilions and stands. Such grounds obviously required a substantial rental, well beyond the outlay of a makeshift working mens' club. In April 1885, Cambrian FC had been offered a pitch in Everton but were unable to raise the £50 to get it into a playable state, and as we have seen even middle-class teams like Marine had difficulty in finding an affordable ground.⁶⁴ There were only two large common spaces in late Victorian inner-city Liverpool where the playing of football was possible. One of these was the Lock Fields, situated in the South Scotland ward between the Southport railway line and the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. This was little more than waste land but may have accommodated as many as four football pitches. The 'Sporting Page' brothers, Jack, Tom and Louis Page, who all later became professionals, were regular players on the Lock Fields from the 1900s.⁶⁵ The other site was the 'Shore Fields' in Toxteth, situated between Grafton and Cockburn Streets. This was initially also waste land, but was made into an official recreation ground in the late 1890s, before being built over in the 1900s. The playing surfaces of both these inner-city sites were quite poor impeding the playing of good football and increasing the likelihood of injury. Shore Fields may have accommodated as many as four pitches but suffered from an acute gradient. A 1900 photograph showed its uneven patchy surface with clumpy grass and large expanses of bare

⁶³ *Echo*, Oct. 10th 1885.

⁶⁴ Cambrian FC founded by teenagers of Welsh descent in Everton. Had 100 members 1885. Hugh John Roberts of St. Domingo's Vale, was secretary in 1888, while only 16 years old. His widowed mother had several young Welsh builders as lodgers. (1881 census).

⁶⁵ Jackson, Phil, *Liverpool's Sporting Pages* (Bromborough: Lechlade, 1990). Jack and Tom briefly played for Everton in the 1910s but younger brother Louis had a more durable professional career with Burnley after the Great War. In the early 1910s, Louis helped St. Alexander's to a hat-trick of Catholic School championships.

earth.⁶⁶ Often play was difficult because pitches were small and unmarked, and in an attempt to improve standards, in 1899, the FA decreed that penalty kicks were not awarded if the pitch was not correctly marked.⁶⁷ Apart from the two inner-city sites and the parks, the majority of Liverpool's football pitches were distributed within its outer suburbs. Using Ordnance Survey maps from 1908, the present study estimates that there were a maximum 81 possible football pitches in Liverpool, compared with 360 in Manchester at the same period.⁶⁸ As early as 1897, the local press had started to campaign against the shortage. Following the English Cup Final (which Everton lost to Aston Villa) the *Review* recognised that football was clearly a major pre-occupation of the citizens of Liverpool and that 'the City Fathers should recognise that a very great deal may be done for outside sports in Liverpool...season after season, (sportsmen) complain bitterly of the want of accommodation for their respective pastimes in the parks and public open spaces...the more numerous healthy open games are the better.'⁶⁹ The shortage of playing space was not only a problem for adult amateurs, but, as we shall see, was also a significant obstacle to the development of schoolboy football in Liverpool.

Finding a suitable place to play was but one of several problems faced by amateurs, not the least of which was being able to field a full team of players. Often teams were below strength because of players' work commitments or their late arrival due to the vagaries of the local transport system. Shortages encouraged teams to field unregistered players and the frequency of point deductions in Liverpool's amateur leagues attests to the level of the problem. In 1901, Overhead Athletic were disciplined by the Liverpool and District Alliance, with a deduction of 2 points and a 2/6 fine for fielding an ineligible man and 'falsifying the list of players.' Referees were also 'ordered to obtain names of players before each match', in order to further eliminate

⁶⁶ Photograph of Shore Fields in Mayer, Philip, *A Tram Ride to Dingle*, (Liverpool: Bluecoat, 1996), p. 63.

⁶⁷ When Sandown FC played Prescott YMCA at a venue in Wavertree, 'the ground was small and unmarked which greatly interfered with the play of the visitors.' *St. Helens Reporter*, Oct. 30th 1908. Kerrigan, *Teachers*, p.70.

⁶⁸ O.S. Map Liverpool 1908, Mason, *Association Football*, p. 87.

⁶⁹ *Review*, April 17th 1897.

the use of unregistered players.⁷⁰ One solution to the shortage of players, was to call for volunteers from the crowd, a practice acceptable only in lower grade leagues (unaffiliated to the district FA). Neither team in a Sefton Park League match in December 1901, 'could claim full strength and there were several "trousered individuals" showing that they had been suddenly called upon'.⁷¹ Such practices were not acceptable in the more formally constituted organisations and strict adherence to league rules was insisted upon. Halewood FC agreed to Liverpool Casuals' request to delay the start of their I Zingari fixture in November 1901, 'on account of the difficulty experienced by amateurs to get away from business...but the League stepped in, and refused to sanction the arrangement with the result that the Casuals could only bring a weakened team and throughout played with only 10 men.'⁷² The problems caused by the cost and logistics of travel were belatedly recognised by the local FA in 1909, when the early rounds of the Minor Medals and the Junior Cup were organised into districts.⁷³ Contemporary newspaper reports show that lack of punctuality was an endemic problem within the amateur game, but it was not just the teams themselves that were the cause.⁷⁴ Delays were often due to the late arrival of the referee and there could be other unforeseen and bizarre reasons.⁷⁵ At a Junior Cup tie, between Garston North End and Ogden's, spectators 'had been kept waiting for more than half an hour consequent on the visitor's togs going astray on the railway.'⁷⁶ In St. Helens, goalpost sockets in the ground were found to be full of stones, sabotaged, perhaps unintentionally, by children.⁷⁷

⁷⁰ *Echo*, Oct. 26th 1901.

⁷¹ *Prescot and Huyton Reporter*, Dec. 7th 1901. Amateurs could switch allegiance from one club to another without the protracted process of re-registration, though they could not play for two different clubs within the same competition.

⁷² *Prescot and Huyton Reporter*, Nov. 2nd 1901.

⁷³ *Echo*, June 12th 1909.

⁷⁴ *Prescot and Huyton Reporter*, Nov. 2nd 1901.

⁷⁵ 'Owing to the late arrival of the referee the game commenced 20 minutes late.' (Huyton Recs. v. Hudson's) *Prescot and Huyton Reporter*, Nov. 2nd 1901.

⁷⁶ *Prescot and Huyton Reporter*, Dec. 14th 1901.

⁷⁷ *St. Helens Reporter*, Nov. 24th 1908.

The prospect of serious playing injury was also ever present. This was a particular worry for an amateur, who could be permanently unemployable if he suffered serious injury. Medical treatment was relatively primitive and costly, and newspapers reminded players of the consequences of injury.⁷⁸ Dunning and Sheard have also made the point that soccer in the 1870s was a more violent game than it is today.⁷⁹ Despite the consequences some amateur footballers were prepared to adopt reckless tactics. Prescott YMCA 'met with very rough treatment at the hands and feet of their opponents, who were none too clean in their methods.' Following the sole YMCA goal, the Sandown goalkeeper 'showed his displeasure by deliberately kicking Norman's (Prescot's goalscorer) legs from under him.'⁸⁰ The amateur career of Garston North End's William Whiting was nearly ended by a serious injury in 1904. If they could afford to, players were advised to take out some form of insurance to cover absence from work. The *Boiler Insurance and Steam Power Company Limited* were advertising their policies to rugby (and presumably also soccer) players in St. Helens in 1889; 'insuring teams against accidents on most favourable terms.'⁸¹

Most of the higher level amateur leagues in Liverpool were rigorous in their attempts to maintain order and discipline, and rarely hesitated to use sanctions such as point deductions and fines for infringements of the rules. The local Liverpool and District Association were the usual arbiters for serious infractions in their affiliated leagues. A match in St. Helens was abandoned because a player refused to leave the field when ordered off by the referee, and the Liverpool and District FA promptly suspended the player and ordered the match to be replayed.⁸² Referees needed to show resolve and strength of character, but there is evidence of widespread disrespect for officials both from players and crowd, seemingly to a far greater degree than in the professional game. Even local newspaper reports, written usually by a representative of one of the

⁷⁸ The *St. Helens Reporter* of April 5th 1890 contained an article, reprinted from the *Lancet*, on 'Some Dangers of Football', and though aimed towards rugby players had relevance for the association game.

⁷⁹ Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians*, p. 137.

⁸⁰ *St. Helens Reporter* Oct. 30th 1908.

⁸¹ *St. Helens Newspaper*, Oct. 20th 1888.

⁸² *Prescot Reporter*, Dec. 28th 1901. Eccleston Recs v. Parr White Rose.

teams involved, could be highly biased against officials. In a reserve match between Prescott and St. Helens Recs in December 1901, a player from each team was sent off 'by the referee for some reason only known to himself.' Subsequently the referee 'received a hard blow in the face with the ball' and was rendered unconscious, the spectators apparently taking it 'as a just reward following immediately as it did on his very strange decisions.'⁸³ Not long after these incidents, the St. Helens District League was conducting referees' tests in order to ensure the strictest standards.⁸⁴

Being a player with an amateur club provided an opportunity for more general male socialisation. To raise funds, the more formally constituted middle-class clubs held regular smoking concerts, in which players would perform songs and recitations.⁸⁵ League prize-giving nights were an annual cause for celebration and were attended not only by the league's senior officials, but representatives of the Liverpool District FA, and often a couple of famous Everton or Liverpool professionals would be on hand to distribute prizes. For working-class clubs, organised social activities were perhaps less regular but impromptu post-match get-togethers continued the conviviality well into Saturday evening. However, the level of drunkenness at such post-match drinking sessions could have unfortunate consequences. At Huyton Quarry in November 1901, a player suffered serious injuries when he collided with a glass window in a railway station following a heavy drinking bout after a game.⁸⁶

SCHOOLS, INFORMAL FOOTBALL, AND LOCAL PROFESSIONALS

Several middle class Liverpool schools had adopted soccer as a winter game by the end of the nineteenth century. Liverpool College, Liverpool Institute, Wallasey Grammar, and Liverpool Collegiate School were among early winners of the *Liverpool and District Secondary Schools Association Football League*. The first two of these

⁸³ *Prescot Reporter* Dec. 7th 1901.

⁸⁴ *Prescot and Huyton Reporter*, Dec. 7th 1901.

⁸⁵ Mount Carmel Old Boys FC, of the I Zingari League, had a reunion in December 1901 at the Star and Garter inn in central Liverpool. About fifty members enjoyed an 'excellent dinner' followed by a smoking concert.

⁸⁶ *Prescot and Huyton Reporter*. Nov. 30th 1901.

schools had initially played rugby but converted to the simpler and safer game of soccer in the early 1890s. The Catholic college of St. Francis Xavier's (SFX), having previously played not rugby, but a special version of football played by its Jesuit partner college, Stonyhurst, in north-east Lancashire, only converted to association rules in 1888 and spent the next decade playing only intra-college matches. Thereafter, soccer became an important element in the life of the college. An annual friendly match was played between SFX and the Everton FC first team at the school playing field, Melwood, which was later sold as a training ground to Liverpool FC. The fixture against Everton was, no doubt, arranged through the offices of Dr. James Baxter, prominent Everton director and an old boy of the college. As noted earlier, the college also gave rise to one of Liverpool's foremost amateur football clubs, the Old Xaverians. After the Great War, most middle-class Liverpool schools abandoned soccer and reverted to rugby, partly because of the perception that soccer's ruling body was too accommodating of its professional element, and partly because football continued for a whole season at the start of the war, whilst the ruling bodies of other major sports suspended operations immediately. Unusually for a grammar school of the period, St. Francis Xavier's College maintained loyalty to the association code.

Whilst Liverpool's elite schools were taking up what proved in most cases to be a relatively brief flirtation with soccer, many elementary school teachers were already playing the game with the city's pioneering football clubs. Alfred Keely's St. John's team in Bootle included several teachers. The United Church team's J. Alderson Smith was superintendent of the St. Saviour's Boys' Sunday School, and Edwin Horsfield was the elementary school's headmaster.⁸⁷ One of the footballing curates, the Rev. W.E. Jackson, was secretary of St. George's School Committee in Everton from 1878 until 1884. Frank Brettell, an early Everton player and later manager of Tottenham Hotspur and other Southern League clubs, was a pupil teacher at Prince Edwin Street in Everton.⁸⁸ Brettell's headmaster, Sam Crosbie was a Scottish teacher who helped fund the early Everton FC and reputedly introduced George Mahon to the game.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ St. George's Church Schools Managers' Minute Books May 1859-Nov. 1884. 283 GEV/12/1. Liverpool Record Office.

⁸⁸ Barclay and Brettell in the 1881 Census.

⁸⁹ Keates, *Everton FC*, p. 141.

W.E. Barclay (later to be club secretary for Everton and Liverpool) was, in 1880, headmaster of the Everton Industrial School. Several early footballers with the Liverpool Association club, which initially played in Newsham Park, were schoolmasters, including Robert Mylie, who played for them as a pupil teacher, and for 25 years was headmaster of the Seamans' Orphanage School, which overlooked the same park. In 1880, St. Benedict's, an Everton church team, played a side from the nearby Queen's Road Board School, led by one of its teachers, 21 year old David Gay. The latter was a certificated teacher, and his Greenwich birthplace strongly suggests that he qualified at St. John's Teacher Training College in Battersea, whose pioneering influence on the importance of sport in elementary education has recently been underlined by Colm Kerrigan in his study of teachers and football.⁹⁰ Several of the teachers trained at St. John's, became footballers, referees, administrators, and most significantly, proselytisers of the game in elementary schools. The college admitted student teachers from across the country, so it is possible that David Gay was not the only St. John's-trained teacher involved in Liverpool schools.

It is, therefore, likely that at least six north Liverpool schools were playing at least occasional football by the early 1880s, but despite the links with the local promoters of adult football, the schools version of the game did not make the same impact on the local infrastructure as it did in other football towns. Schools in Wolverhampton had been playing soccer as an extra-curricular activity since the early 1870s and this stimulated the local culture of football to such an extent that Wolverhampton Wanderers FC was able to recruit local players in large numbers.⁹¹ Elementary school football was emerging in London at about the time that it started in Liverpool, but it was in the capital that the schoolboy game first became seriously organised with the formation of the South London Schools FA in 1885. The equivalent Liverpool organisation only started six years later in 1891, when the Liverpool and District Teachers Association started the Gilbert Moss League and Edward Moss Cup

⁹⁰ Kerrigan, *Teachers*, p.111. In 1910 one third of its graduates worked in London schools.

⁹¹ St. Luke's school in Wolverhampton, a contributing partner in the foundation of Wolverhampton Wanderers FC Mason, *Association Football*, p. 85. Even as early as November 1882, 23 Birmingham board schools played football.

competitions for elementary schools.⁹² Despite this relatively slow start, both the city's senior clubs maintained links with schoolboy football. In 1896, Everton FC had donated the shield for the Liverpool Secondary Schools League and both Goodison and Anfield staged important local schoolboy matches. The latter hosted a football festival in February 1894, one of the events being a Liverpool North v. South schoolboys match. Thirty thousand people attended the England – Scotland international at Goodison in April 1894, which was preceded by a schoolboy game between Liverpool and Southport boys.⁹³ However, despite this close involvement, in the period before 1914, neither Everton nor Liverpool showed particular inclinations to exploit local schoolboy football as a source of future professional talent.⁹⁴

The elementary schools that pioneered football in Liverpool were located close to the city's own 'centre of innovation' in the particularly staunch Protestant district of Everton, and indeed, Protestant schools and teachers took the lead in the development of schools football. However, given the prevailing state of acute religious sectarianism in Liverpool, Protestant schools were unwilling to compete or cooperate with their Catholic counterparts. The antagonism was entirely mutual and so in 1899, a Catholic Schools Athletic Association was established, closely followed by a Catholic Schools Football League, both organisations being entirely separate from Liverpool's existing school sports bodies.⁹⁵ The majority of schools in the Catholic league were located in the deprived Scotland and Exchange wards of north Liverpool where the majority of Catholic Irish-Liverpudlians were concentrated. In this area of extreme poverty and squalor, the level of deprivation was truly appalling. The 1892 infant mortality rate for Liverpool as a whole (189 per 1000) was significantly worse than in several comparable cities, but the rate in the Scotland and Exchange wards was nearly twice

⁹² The competition was named after a wealthy Aigburth merchant whose son, J.E. Moss, was a founder member of the Liverpool Ramblers. appropriately, won by Anfield Road School for four consecutive seasons between 1898 and 1901. Young, *Merseyside*, p.70.

⁹³ *Review*, April 14th 1894.

⁹⁴ As also happened in London. Kerrigan, *Teachers*, Chapter 7.

⁹⁵ Catholic schools in London also ran football competitions outside local SFAs. Danny Shea attended St. Patrick's School, Wapping. In 1907 he made his debut with West Ham United and was transferred to Blackburn Rovers in 1913 for the then record fee of £2000. Kerrigan, p. 163.

that of neighbouring middle class wards such as Abercromby.⁹⁶ Housing consisted of densely packed courts and terraces, often cheek-by-jowl with industrial premises. Other than the Lock Fields, whose barren surface was hardly ideal, the entire district had no suitable public space where football could be played. Venues for Catholic League games were therefore generally sited some distance from the schools. Grand merchant houses in Ullet Road, near Sefton Park, surrounded one of the favourite school pitches, the salubrious environment no doubt impressing itself on the young footballers more used to the poverty and squalor of Scotland Road. The appalling urban blight of the boys' environment and its consequences for health and diet profoundly affected their abilities and stamina. A contemporary observer had noted that the 'badly fed town boy 'of the poorest classes' weighed less and was shorter than a country boy reared on more wholesome food, better air, cleaner conditions...'⁹⁷ Hundreds of malnourished Liverpool school footballers tested themselves to the limit of their capabilities, but poor health militated against the development of latent football talent. Pat O'Mara had apparently recovered from tuberculosis but still managed to play a few matches in the Catholic League for his school team, St. Peter's. Though initially impressing his teacher by the 'brilliance' of his game, O'Mara's stamina often failed to sustain him for the duration of a match:

'I recall one time, when we were playing St. Vincent's team, dribbling the ball all the way down the field and scoring all alone. It was a play that would have done credit to a regular on Liverpool's professional team, but after that I was ready for the stretcher. Thus my dream of being photographed with arms and legs crossed as a member of the school's regular football team was never realized...'⁹⁸

Better and stronger players than O'Mara were also let down by their relatively delicate constitution. In 1905, Birkenhead Schools lost 1-5 to London in the semi-final of the inaugural English Schools Shield. The heavy defeat was partly blamed on the inferior

⁹⁶ Horn, Pamela, *The Victorian Town Child*, (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), pp. 12-13.

⁹⁷ Urwick, E.J. (ed), 'Studies of Boy Life in Our Cities', quoted by Horn, *Victorian Town Child*, p. 16.

⁹⁸ O'Mara, Pat, *The Autobiography of a Liverpool Slummy*, (Liverpool: The Bluecoat Press, c.1995 edition), p.61.

physique of the Birkenhead boys.⁹⁹ Despite the general resignation that city children did have congenitally weaker constitutions, a contemporary commentator had also observed that city boys compensated by displaying:

‘a remarkable toughness of fibre, a sort of India-rubber capacity of recovery from fatigue or injury or the damage done by his surroundings, as well an alertness and quickness of movement, which seem to be drawn from the very conditions of his town life.’¹⁰⁰

In other words, despite the malnourished state of most elementary footballers in the city, their tough upbringing may have equipped them with aptitudes useful in the playing of football. It also fulfilled boys’ need for meaningful physical expression, normally subjugated by the vicissitudes of urban existence. Football was an activity that most boys clearly enjoyed and it also benefited learning in the rest of the curriculum and improved their general well-being. An innovative headmaster, alert to the benefits of organised sport, had allegedly improved the average height of boys by 3 ½ inches, by including a programme of football and other sports as part of the curriculum at a school in London.¹⁰¹ The Board of Education, realising the improvements in mind and body engendered by meaningful physical activity, gradually allowed games to be played within school hours, as part of the overall curriculum. There was increasing official recognition of the importance of schools football with regard to health and fitness and this more enlightened mood led to calls from teachers’ representatives for a national body to regulate elementary school football. In 1904, 21 local schools associations, including Liverpool and another five from Lancashire, met to establish the English Schools Football Association. During this period, schools football continued to expand in Liverpool. By 1909, Bootle schools also had their own league and the Catholic Schools League had expanded to two divisions.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ *Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser*, April 5th 1905, in Kerrigan, *Teachers*, p.160.

¹⁰⁰ Urwick, E.J. (ed), ‘Studies of Boy Life in Our Cities’, quoted by Horn, *Victorian Town Child*, p.16.

¹⁰¹ Kerrigan, *Teachers*, p. 85.

¹⁰² *Echo*, Dec. 4th 1909, Mason, *Association Football*, p. 85.

As we saw in an earlier section, boys did not just play organised football with elementary school teams. Football clubs were organised within existing youth organisations such as the Boys' Brigade and the Church Lads' Brigade, which were themselves comparatively recent foundations. Certain football clubs, such as Marine, were formed as boys' teams and simply evolved into adult clubs as the members grew up. In the period before 1914, it was not uncommon to find boys as young as 13 playing both alongside and against adults, and some Liverpool amateur leagues accommodated teenage post-school football clubs within their existing structures.

These were organised clubs, but a considerable proportion of boys were also certainly regularly playing the casual, relatively unorganised type of football in any accessible space in Liverpool. Previous researchers have largely ignored this type of football, though it must have accounted for the highest proportion of all players of the game.

As Tony Mason has pointed out, 'The autobiographies of professional footballers often stress that it was in practice in the streets or casual games in the lanes and playgrounds that they picked up their skills.'¹⁰³ However, the urban geography and social circumstances of inner city Liverpool, must have presented young street footballers with particularly unpalatable conditions for the playing of the game. Contemporary photographs show that the poorer classes of boys regularly walked barefoot as late as their mid-teens. Even if boys were able to make a rag and paper football, playing a game on the rough textures of inner Liverpool streets would have been a painful experience. Pat O'Mara pointed out that a boy's sporting options were seriously restricted if he was a member of the 'no-boot brigade.'¹⁰⁴ Kit and equipment, particularly football boots, was well beyond the means of most boys' families. In 1911, a pair of Manfield Boys Football Boots cost 5/11 a pair.¹⁰⁵

An interesting insight into the culture of Liverpool street football of the 1900s, actually comes from a study made by J.B. Mays on juvenile delinquency in post-Second World War Liverpool. Groups of teenage boys and young men from the inner city travelled

¹⁰³ Mason, Tony, 'Football' in *Sport in Britain, a social history*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 150.

¹⁰⁴ O'Mara, *Slummy*, p. 61.

¹⁰⁵ Manfield boys' football boots advertisement, *Echo*, Sept. 1st 1911.

several miles, usually on a Sunday, to play football at a recreation ground in Aigburth in south Liverpool. Matches seemed very informal with unmarked pitches, coats for goalposts, no playing kit or referees, untimed games, and several games overlapping, but about half the number of games were pre-arranged and most teams were organised into specific neighbourhood clubs. Of particular interest here, are the comments made by an elderly spectator at the recreation ground that ‘the street matches had been going on for at least fifty years, and had become part of the local tradition.’¹⁰⁶ Mays’ observations were made in 1951, so the old man’s statement would date similar football matches back as far as the 1890s. In Mays’ report of his findings, the street names of teams seem to have been fictionalised (or perhaps he misunderstood the broad accents of his respondents), but it is possible to work out the actual street locations (Appendix 4.2, page 217). In 1951, most of the teams Mays observed were from the Dingle area, and if the teams of 50 years earlier were from the same general district, they must have played at the Shore Fields, at the time the area’s only available recreation ground.

Ironically, in the 1950s boys from the Dingle had no suitable playing space in their locality, as the Shore Fields had been built over in the 1900s. The age range of players observed by Mays in 1951 was mostly 15 to 18, although there was a parallel adult subculture (15 to 40 years) who also played football at the Aigburth recreation ground. The latter included works, pub, and neighbourhood teams and was more organised than the youth games (for instance, teams had secretaries and the players generally wore proper kit). These teams do seem to parallel very closely the transient working-class clubs in the localised and unaffiliated leagues of fifty years earlier, such as the Sefton Park League. Though this subculture of semi-informal working-class teams seemed to have taken root by the 1900s, no professional footballers emerged directly from its ranks, and most of the few who did make the transition apparently came through Liverpool’s official amateur infrastructure.

In 1909, Birkenhead again lost in the semi-final of the English Schools Shield but the local press was upbeat about the state of schoolboy football in Liverpool and district, the *Echo* claiming that ‘Local schools have provided us with several men of note in the

¹⁰⁶ Mays, *Growing Up in the City*, p. 170.

football world.¹⁰⁷ Increasing numbers of Liverpudlians were becoming professional players but the fact is that before 1914, comparatively few Liverpudlians made a real impact on the national football scene. Everton and Liverpool still relied largely on Scots, midland, and northern players, going against the trend of other leading clubs who did begin to recruit locally. West Bromwich Albion and Wolves had recruited almost exclusively in their catchment areas for many years. Kerrigan has found that increasing numbers of Sheffielders also began to play for Wednesday or United over the same period.¹⁰⁸ 35% of Sheffield Wednesday and United players in Kerrigan's pre-1915 sample were born in or near Sheffield. Kerrigan also discovered that 12% of a sample of Sheffield Schoolboy representational teams over the period 1890-1910 eventually became professionals and that the Sheffield clubs became more reliant on local players in the years before the Great War. Very few local schools footballers went on to professional careers with Everton or Liverpool before 1914. A rare exception was Harry Makepeace, who played for the Liverpool Schools team before joining Everton in 1903.

By 1915, 73 men born in the Liverpool area had played at least one game for a Football League club, and of these, 29 had played for either Everton or Liverpool (a few players for both clubs). The majority of these made only a handful of appearances, and had usually been drafted in as amateurs or reserves, but a select few did play a hundred or more games before 1915.¹⁰⁹ Apart from the Prescott-born players already mentioned, twenty Liverpool-born players also made substantial (i.e. 50 or more) appearances with non-Liverpool League clubs before the Great War.

A handful of Liverpool-born players were good enough to represent England. Jimmy Ashcroft won three caps whilst with Woolwich Arsenal and a League championship

¹⁰⁷ *Echo*, Dec. 4th 1909. Harry Makepeace had actually been born in Middlesbrough but had lived in Liverpool since infancy. He was also a prominent Lancashire county cricketer and won four England football caps.

¹⁰⁸ Kerrigan, *Teachers*, pp.167-169.

¹⁰⁹ Tom Bradshaw made 124 appearances for Liverpool 1893-97, John Parkinson 203 appearances 1902-14, and four Everton players, Robert Balmer, his brother William, Jack Crelley, and Tom Fleetwood.

medal with Blackburn. John Parkinson (1883-1942) won two caps. He was born in Bootle and played for the Aigburth-based I Zingari club Valkyrie until 1902, when he joined Liverpool and made 203 league appearances. Valkyrie FC's team of September 1908, contained 'no less than five players who are signed on by Liverpool and Everton, and the executives of the two great clubs are fully aware that there are good men who will most likely prove valuable to them.'¹¹⁰ Another I Zingari footballer who became an international was George Molyneux (1875-1942).¹¹¹ He spent 20 months with Kirkdale FC until 1896, and then made 43 league appearances for Everton until 1900. He later gravitated to the Southern League where he enjoyed some success with Southampton FC, playing in the 1902 Cup Final alongside former fellow Evertonians, Joe Turner and Edgar Chadwick, as well as the legendary C.B. Fry.¹¹² James McEwen did not represent his country but he was full back in Bury's 6-0 record win against Derby County in the 1903 English Cup Final. He had played for Dingle-based Liverpool South End (founded 1893) in the Liverpool and District League. Two other South End players, William Ball and Ben Hulse, both joined Rock Ferry in the Wirral before signing for Blackburn Rovers in 1897. Robert Struthers played in the defeated Bolton team in the 1904 Cup Final. In Liverpool he too played for Rock Ferry (and previously Kirkdale) before joining Gravesend United at the same time as Jimmy Ashcroft. Harry Mainman (1880-1953) made 130 appearances for Notts County between 1901 and 1906. He was a founder member of the revived footballers' union in 1906 and its chairman during the crisis of 1909. Harry's brother, Ernest, was a plumber and played for Hudson's (soap works) FC.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ *St. Helens Reporter*, Sept. 27th 1908. John McKenna was an Old Xaverian amateur who made a solitary senior appearance for Liverpool in 1906-07.

¹¹¹ Molyneux won 4 caps, the most of any Liverpool-born player. Fabian, A.H. and Green, G., *Association Football*, Vol. 1-4, (London: Caxton Press, 1960), p. 247.

¹¹² Molyneux played for Everton reserves, then Wigan County (1897-98). Molyneux also played for Portsmouth 1905-06, Southend United 1906-12 (player-manager 1910-12), Joyce, Michael, *Football League Players' Records 1888 to 1939*, (Nottingham: Soccer Data, 2002), p. 175, and Matthews, *Who's Who of Everton*.

¹¹³ Harding, John, *For the Good of the Game: the Official History of the Professional Footballers' Association*, (London: Robson, 1991), pp.43, 63, 65, 68-69, 85, 99. 1881 and 1901 censuses. Mainman's father had been a publican in Walton.

One Liverpool-born player who remained amateur later had a significant role in football's global development. Harry Welfare (1888-1961) was from a middle-class Wavertree family, and played football firstly for his school, and then for various teams in the *South Lancashire Amateur Combination*. As an amateur he was not tied to one particular club and made the most of the nomadic possibilities, sometimes turning out for several clubs in the same month. Welfare also played for St.Helens Recreation in the semi-professional Lancashire Combination. He was a committee member of the prestigious amateur side, the Northern Nomads, the northern equivalent of the Corinthians. In August 1912, Welfare signed amateur forms for Liverpool FC and made several Central League appearances with the reserves. He was promoted to the first team in February 1913 and the Liverpool directors offered him the opportunity to turn professional. In the event, Welfare did neither; he soon emigrated to Brazil, played for Fluminense FC and became an important influence on the development of Brazilian football.¹¹⁴

The footballers mentioned here represented the high achievers of Liverpool football before the Great War. None achieved the status of nationally known 'heroes' such as Steve Bloomer, Billy Meredith, or Charles Buchan. Most of the few Liverpool-born players were merely competent journeymen professionals, and even fewer were signed by Everton or Liverpool, who even as late as the 1910s, maintained a general policy of importing talent from other regions. The Great War had been over seven years when the first truly great home-produced Merseyside footballer burst on to the scene. His name was William Ralph Dean, better known as 'Dixie'.

CONCLUSIONS

Until 1879 association football was not played in Liverpool, but in little over a decade there existed a network of locally based amateur leagues in the city and surrounding area. According to Rees, there were 203 football clubs in Liverpool by 1890 and at

¹¹⁴ Hamilton, Aidan, *An Entirely Different Game: the British influence on Brazilian football*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1998), pp. 79-88.

least 13 amateur leagues by 1900.¹¹⁵ In fact, Rees' estimates seem relatively conservative. This study found 18 Liverpool leagues in 1901 (26, if divisions are included) with 344 clubs. Certainly by about 1910 there were more men in Liverpool regularly playing organised football than in the rest of Lancashire. The amateur game was stratified into elite, middle-class, and working-class varieties and it thrived despite the handicaps of poor pitches, under-strength teams, time and transport. Local amateur football was a major element in press coverage and because of this, played a significant role in the reinforcement of local identities.

During the formative years of the early 1880s, some teams included both former public schoolboys and working-class men, but the departure of the founding curates brought this experiment in social integration to an end. Exclusive football clubs, such as the Ramblers and Old Xaverians, were then established by the upper middle-class, though there remained hierarchies of social connections with lower middle-class clubs. Such clubs tried to maintain equality with their higher status colleagues, but the latter's complaints about standards, for example, the taking of gate money and the veto of 'unacceptable' pitches, ultimately led to social division. The I Zingari League was set up in 1895 for middle-class clubs in Liverpool and south-west Lancashire, and expanded significantly over the next 15 years. There was a socially downward trend in the teams accepted for membership, especially after the I Zingari's elite teams seceded to form the short-lived Lancashire Amateur League. Nevertheless, I Zingari clubs continued to be regarded as the apex of the local amateur infrastructure.

Some Liverpool teachers were involved in football at an early stage and elementary schools teams were playing organised matches in north Liverpool in the 1880s. Playing for a school team stimulated interest in continuing to play as an adult and working-class amateur clubs were established in increasing numbers from this time. Teams were based on neighbourhoods, public houses, workplaces, churches, volunteer brigades, and boys clubs. Urban teams within Liverpool already started to form leagues from the early 1890s and some of these were durable and well-organised, but other leagues

¹¹⁵ Rees, R. *The Development of Physical Recreation in Liverpool during the Nineteenth Century*, (1968), MA Thesis, University of Liverpool, p. 131 and p. 137.

were small-scale transient organisations. The larger working-class leagues had regulated structures to deal with disciplinary matters though the shambolic realities of working-class urban football, such as player and pitch shortages, and travel difficulties, must have been stoically accepted in lower status leagues. At an even lower level many working-class boys and young men played for scratch neighbourhood teams, learning and practising skills on waste ground, streets, and parks. Formal rules and regulations were virtually irrelevant to these players, whose main objective was camaraderie and the sheer enjoyment of physical activity.

Amateur football in isolated peripheral districts, like Prescot and Garston, was played in an atmosphere of stronger passion and commitment than in the city itself. Both townships had a large network of clubs, where the senior clubs had enclosed grounds, had a following of a thousand or more supporters, and were even able to employ a few part-time professionals. Such townships had a strong sense of community identity, and their relative remoteness from Anfield and Goodison, made the viability of semi-regional football more economically viable than for amateur clubs in Liverpool itself.

Though Garston and Prescot had comparatively small populations, a few of their players graduated to the Football League. However, despite the size of Liverpool's amateur network, there were only 73 Liverpool-born League professionals between 1888 and 1915. In 1910, there were a total of 127 professionals from north-west England in the Football and Southern Leagues,¹¹⁶ of which only 27 were from Liverpool. Of the remaining hundred, the majority had originated in Lancashire, despite a smaller amateur infrastructure than Liverpool. Why were there so few Liverpool-born League footballers before 1914? Kerrigan has highlighted the prejudices of London professional teams to former schoolboy players from the metropolitan area. This was apparently attributable to a perception that Londoners were of inferior physique and that they were simply not up to the standard of northern and Scottish players.¹¹⁷ Prejudice by the management of professional clubs may have

¹¹⁶ Osborne in Vamplew, Wray, *Pay Up and Play the Game*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 205.

¹¹⁷ Kerrigan, *Teachers*, pp. 160-161.

been a factor in the paucity of Liverpool-born professionals, but it could also be that most amateur Liverpoolians never wanted to become professional players.

In Liverpool amateur footballers tended to be members of the respectable lower middle or skilled working-class, and for those who had the chance of a professional football career such a potentially well paid but risky career may not have appealed. Apart from relatively high wages, the advantages included short hours of work, and the possibility of accumulating capital for a future business venture. The disadvantages were perhaps more significant: restrictive work contracts, frequent uncomfortable and inconvenient railway journeys, interruption to one's non-football career, and the possibility of an unwanted transfer or being retained against one's wishes. For a young man with good prospects in clerical work or a skilled apprenticeship, a career as a professional footballer may not, therefore, have been that appealing. John Cameron claimed to have to have divined from fellow professionals that 'few would let their own boys take football up as the serious business of life.'¹¹⁸

But Liverpool had thousands of casual workers living in abject poverty for whom the negative aspects of a football career listed above were not really an issue. A short-term well-paid career, whatever the downside, should have been highly appealing. Why did professional footballers not emerge from their ranks? Liverpool's mercantile economy depended on a large workforce employed in casual and unskilled occupations, mostly on the docks. Men conditioned to the tradition of casual labour had little, if any, structured recreation time. The abundance of unskilled labour in Liverpool also meant that casual workers did not usually work a full week and enforced idleness frequently resulted in undesirable habits such as drinking and gambling.¹¹⁹ Boys from these poor dockland areas had less opportunity to directly experience organised football except through school, although a robust 'street' football culture did exist in some areas. Moreover, poor diet and ill health was prevalent among casual labourers and many

¹¹⁸ Mason, *Association Football*, pp. 117-118.

¹¹⁹ Walton, *Lancashire*, p. 290. 'It was alleged that some men, especially among the considerable minority who averaged fifteen shillings a week or less preferred this pattern of irregular work (3 days a week), knocking-off to drink and loaf after earning a basic subsistence... In practice, of course, men who hung around waiting for work were liable to consume considerable quantities of alcohol...'

young men simply did not have the stamina required to play a full game of football. With acres of warehouses, densely packed courts of decrepit housing, and labyrinthine cobbled streets, there was also little space available for the playing of football. The unskilled men who did play 'street' football may have developed some football skills but as they were not fully tested in properly disciplined games, their optimum ability probably never materialised.

The large network of urban leagues in Liverpool seems to have developed as an entirely working-class initiative without involvement from the middle-class. Workers were making their own recreation rather than having it organised for them, a classic example of the rejection that working-class groups showed for middle-class conceptions of organised sport. Whether men, youth, or boys were playing in upper middle-class or casual inner-city teams, playing for sheer fun and cementing bonds within one's community were the over-riding factors. As Richard Holt has written, 'Being in a team was to be "one of the lads": it gave warmth, simple shared values and objectives, and an endless source of banter.'¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Holt, R., *Sport and the British*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 155.

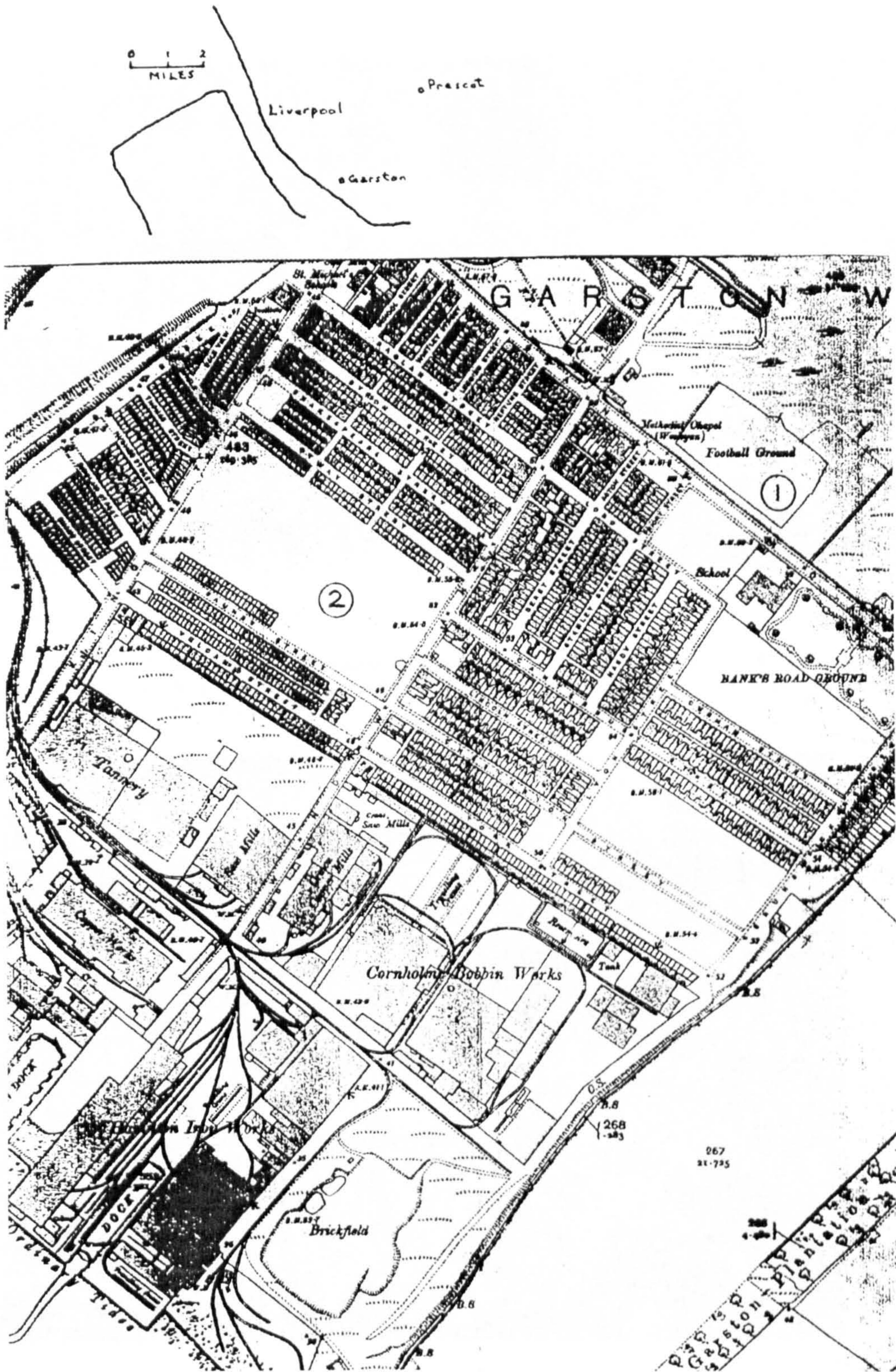


Figure 4.3: 'Below the Bridge' Garston showing locations of Garston Gasworks FC ground (1), and Garston Church FC ground (2). (O.S. 1:2500, Lancashire sheet 113.12)



Figure 4.1: Liverpool Ramblers FC, c. 1883.

Rear, from left: P.T. Stolterfoht, Percy Bateson, E. Stewart-Brown, A.B. Midwood, A. B. Hull, G. Winter, Bruce Ismay, E.V. Rayner, H. Baxter. *Middle:* J. Heald, Sir Charles Metcalfe, J. Baxter, R.M. Pilkington. *Front:* W.E. Earle, Godfrey W. Turner, W.E. Rayner.



Figure 4.2: Overhead Athletic FC, 1898.

Rear, from left: R. Inglis, L. Hanlon, Thomas W. James, John Abrahams, R. Graham. *Middle:* William Allert, A. Smith, Arthur Antrobus, S. Hughes, Fred Rowley, J. Wright, William C. Griffiths. *Front:* John Carruthers, Fred Randall, Henry Andrews, W.J. Maloney (linesman).

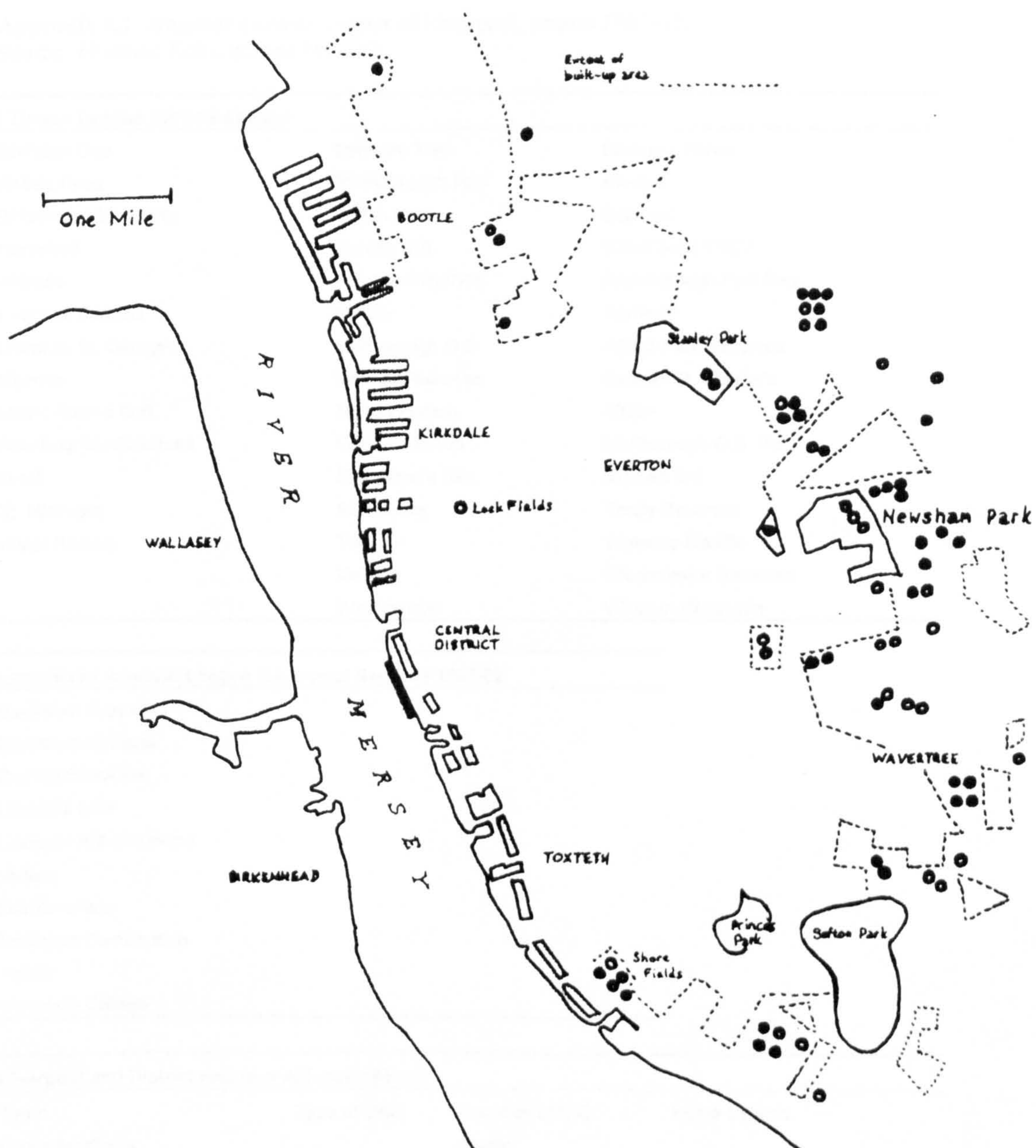


Figure 4.4: Location of main private and public playing fields in Liverpool, c. 1905.
Source: Ordnance Survey, 1:2500 scale, c.1905.

Appendix 4.1: Amateur football leagues of Liverpool, season 1901-02.Source: *Football Echo*, season 1901-02.**I Zingari League 1901-02 Season**

Division One	Division Two	Division Three
Anfield Recs	Bromborough Pool	Allerton
Birkenhead St. John's	Clifton Park	Balmoral
Halewood	Cowley O.B.	Birkenhead YMCA
Kirkdale	Kirkdale Reserves	Bromborough Pool Res.
Liverpool Casuals	Marine	Cardwell
Liverpool St. George's	Marlborough O.B.	Clifton Park Reserves
Melrose	Melrose Reserves	Everton St. George's
Mount Carmel O.B.	North Western	Kirkby
New Brighton Amateurs	Orrell Reserves	Marlborough O.B. Res.
Orrell	St. Michael's Res.	Melrose 3rd
St. Michael's	St. Pancras	Trinity Reserves
Wirral Railway	Trinity	Waterloo Melville
	Valkyrie	Westminster Reserves
	Westminster	Windsor Wesleyan

Lancashire Amateur League (Liverpool Section) 1901-02

Blackburn Cross Hill
 Blackburn Eturians
 Burnley Belvedere
 Liverpool Leek
 Liverpool Police Athletic
 Melling
 Old Xaverians
 Southport Combination
 Talbot
 University College

Liverpool and District Amateur Alliance 1901-02

Team	Type of Club	Location of H.Q.	Home Ground
Bootle Amateurs		Bootle	
Corporation Car Works	Works	Lambeth Rd.	
Edge Hill Recs		Edge Hill	
Garston Church	Church	Garston	Allerton Park
Garston Gasworks	Works	Garston	Bank Street
Garston North End		Garston	Mersey Ground
Johnson's Dyeworks	Works	Bootle	Lathom Road Rec.
Linacre Bible Class	Church	Linacre	North Park/Lathom Rd.
Parr's United			
Royal Artillery	Works	Seaforth	

Everton and District Junior Alliance 1901-02

<i>Team</i>	<i>Type of Club</i>	<i>Location of H.Q.</i>	<i>Home Ground</i>
Bootle Amateur Res.		Bootle	
Christ Church, Everton	Church	Everton	
Diamond Match Co.	Works	Litherland	Lathom Road
East Liverpool			
Everton St. George's Res.	Church	Everton	Stanley Park
Garston Church Res.	Church	Garston	Allerton Park
Garston Gasworks Res.	Works	Garston	Bank St.
Hawthorne Olympic		Bootle	South Park
New Brighton Wanderers		New Brighton	
Parr St. Peter's			
St. Saviour's, Everton	Church	Everton	
Sandfield			
Vauxhall		Vauxhall	Exhibition Ground, Edge Lane

Everton and District Junior League 1901-02

<i>Team</i>	<i>Type of Club</i>	<i>Location of H.Q.</i>	<i>Home Ground</i>
Allerton		Allerton	
Celtic			
Eastville			
Enfield			
Everton Albion		Everton	
Garston Church 3rd		Garston	
Garston South End		Garston	
Garston United		Garston	
Livingstone			
Myrtle Reserves			
St. Joseph's L.C. Junior			
Sandon	Pub	Anfield	Stanley Park
Sandhurst			
Suburban		Anfield	
Suburban Athletic		Anfield	
Walton Villa		Walton	
Wentworth			
Woodland Rovers			

Everton Junior League 1901-02

<i>Team</i>	<i>Type of Club</i>	<i>Location of H.Q.</i>	<i>Home Ground</i>
Clubmoor		Clubmoor	Clubmoor Rec.
Cope's	Works		
Eldon United		Vauxhall	
Everton Juniors		Everton	Stanley Park
Gt. Homer Wesleyans		Everton	Stanley Park
Litherland Amateurs		Litherland	
Melling Juniors		Melling	

Mersey Recs.		
Richmond	Anfield	Cabbage Hall Rec.
St. Ambrose	Everton	
St. Sylvester's		
Trinity Juniors	St. Anne St.	
Walker's United	Kirkdale	
Waverley		
West Derby Juniors	West Derby	
Vauxhall Reserves	Vauxhall	

Sefton Park and District League 1901-02

Division One

<i>Team</i>	<i>Type of Club</i>	<i>Location of H.Q.</i>	<i>Home Ground</i>
Aigburth Vale		Aigburth	Fulwood park
Aintree Albion		Aintree	
Clarence			
Garston North End Res.		Garston	Mersey Ground
Halton View		Runcorn	
Huyton Recs Reserves		Huyton	
Litherland		Litherland	
Mersey Wanderers			
Pioneer			
Sefton		Sefton Park	
Wavertree		Wavertree	
Widnes Albion		Widnes	

Division Two

Argyle			
Crosfield			
Elm Park Old Boys			Lister Drive, Tuebrook
Fir Vale		Wavertree	
Garston Church Res.		Garston	Allerton Park
Halewood Reserves		Halewood	
Knotty Ash		Knotty Ash	
Lancashire & Yorks Ath.		Gt. Howard Street	
Liverpool D.			
Pioneer Reserves			
Southill			Grafton St. Toxteth
St. Mary Magdelene		Blandford St.	
Walton St. John's		Walton	
Wavertree Reserves		Wavertree	

Liverpool Junior Alliance 1901-02

Division One

<i>Team</i>	<i>Type of Club</i>	<i>Location of H.Q.</i>	<i>Home Ground</i>
Bentley		Princes Park	
Burscough Town		Burscough	
Church of Christ	Church		Sefton Park
Hamilton		Birkenhead	

Huyton Quarry Juniors		Huyton Quarry	
Liscard CEMS	Church	Liscard	
New Brighton Wesleyans	Church	New Brighton	
Overhead			
Prescot Vics		Prescot	Warrington Road
Queen's Road Mission	Church	Everton	
Rainhill		Rainhill	
Stanley Sawmills	Works	Kirkdale	
Starfield	Pub	West Derby Road	
Sugg Athletic	Works	Lord St.	
Thatto Heath Vics		St.Helens	Thatto Heath Rugby Ground
Walton Breck		Anfield	Lower Breck Road
Division Two			
Albany			
Arrandale		Aigburth	Fulwood Park
Aigburth Vale Juniors			
Bell and Burnley		Princes Park	
Bentley Reserves		Bootle	
Bootle St. Mary's	Church		
Enfield			
Grosvenor			
Kingsley			
Lingdale			
Riversdale		Everton	
St. Augustine's	Church	Seacombe	
Seacombe Albion		Kirkdale	
Stanley Sawmills Res.	Works	Walton	
Walton Casuals		Seacombe	
Wheatland Athletic			
Division Three			
Albion			
Bedford Reserves			
Cambridge Reserves			
Cockburn			
Crescent United			
Eaton Athletic			
Florence Olympic			
Granville			
Guildford Albion			
Overhead Juniors			
Rockville			
St. Luke's			
Sugg's Athletic Reserves			
Union			
Walton Juniors			

Wavertree and District Junior League 1901-02

<i>Team</i>	<i>Type of Club</i>	<i>Location of H.Q.</i>	<i>Home Ground</i>
Aral			
Chatham		Edge Hill	
Childwall			
Cottenham	Neighbourhood	Kensington	
Edge Hill		Edge Hill	
Farnworth	Neighbourhood	Kensington	
Guildford	Pub		
Holt	Pub	Wavertree	
Myrtle Villa			
Overton			
Princes			
Sheil	Neighbourhood	Shiel Park	Newsham Park
St.Nicholas	RC Church	Copperas Hill	
Victoria Park			
Walnut Mission	Church	Edge Hill	
Woodville	Neighbourhood	Anfield	Newsham Park

Edge Hill and District Junior League

<i>Team</i>	<i>Type of Club</i>	<i>Location of H.Q.</i>	<i>Home Ground</i>
Albany			
Botanic	Pub	Wavertree	
Durning		Wavertree	
Edge Lane			
Emmanuel	Church	Kensington	
Garston Wesleyans	Church	Garston	
Greenwood Albion			
Laurel			
Lawrence			
Melville Reserves			
Olive			
Osbourne			
Robinson & Price Cycles	Works	Abercromby	
St. Margaret's	Church	Anfield	
Thirlmere		Anfield	
Wavertree Juniors			
White Star			

South Liverpool Junior League 1901-02

<i>Team</i>	<i>Type of Club</i>	<i>Location of H.Q.</i>	<i>Home Ground</i>
Derby Swifts			
St. James	Church	Toxteth	
14th Boys' Brigade	Institute		
Livingstone			
Walton Vics			
Florence Albion	Institute	Florence Insitute	

Belvedere			
Carlton			
Beresford	Pub	Beresford Rd.	Grafton Street
Cambrian			
Southill Reserves			Grafton Street
Arroll			
Ferndale		Wavertree	

Oakfield Junior League 1901-02

Division One

<i>Team</i>	<i>Type of Club</i>	<i>Location of H.Q.</i>	<i>Home Ground</i>
Albany 2nd			
Belvedere Reserves	Pub	Hartley's Village	
Crescent	Pub	Everton	
Derby Swifts Reserves			
Eastville			
Ellerslie		Tuebrook	
Englewood			
Earle United			
Grenville			
Hartley's Juniors	Works	Hartley's Village	
Kirkdale United		Kirkdale	
Mersey Mission	Church		
St. Domingo	Church	Everton	
Seaman's Orphanage O.B.		Newsham Park	
Telegraph Messengers	Works		
Windsor Wesleyans Res.	Church	Edge Hill	

Division Two

Arkles A.
 Cambrian Reserves
 Fairfield Juniors
 Herschell
 Hertford Reserves
 Melrose United
 Melville
 Merton Villa
 Parkfield, Seacombe
 Sandown Juniors
 St. Agnes
 St. Saviour's, Birkenhead
 Stanley Crescent
 21st Old Boys
 Windsor Ironworks

Newsham and District League 1901-02

Aber Swifts
Ashfield United
Cardwell
Chiltonians
Christ Church
Crescent
Crosby United
Hatfield
Northern
Oakdale
St. Winifred's
St. Dunstan's Reserves
St. Mary Magdelene
Walton Casuals

Seaforth and District Junior Alliance 1901-02

Breeze Athletic
Caradoc Mission Res.
Ferndale
Latham
North End United
Peel
Richmond
Rockville United
Sandhurst
Seaforth United
St. Anne's
Star of the Sea

Birkenhead, Liverpool and District Thursday League 1901-02

Birkenhead Half Holiday
Birkenhead Post Office
Birkenhead Shoemakers
Earlestown Thursday
Liverpool Post Office
Orford Barracks
Schofield's
St. Helen's Thursday
Widnes Half Holiday

Liverpool and Wirral Junior League 1901-02

Breckside Park
Claremont
Devonshire
Elm Park Old Boys
Orrell 3rd
Osborne
Somerville
St. John's United

East Liverpool Junior League 1901-02

Boaler
Eberle
Farnworth
Pendennis
Penton
Pollock Swifts
Proctor
Queen's
Rolfe Athletic
Tweed United
Woodville

Wirral and District League 1901-02

Division One

Bebington Victoria
Brittania
Clarendon
Liverpool Caledonians
Lodge Lane Wesleyans
St. Nathaniel's
Tranmere Rovers Res.
West Kirby
Wheatland

Division Two

Argyle
Birkenhead North End
Birkenhead St. John's
Eastham
Egremont St. John's
Liverpool Caledonians Res.
Magazine Reserves
St. Anne's
St. Edward's
Tower United
Wallasey Village
West Kirby Swifts

Division Three

Bebington St. Andrew's

Bebington Victoria Res.

Birkenhead North End Res.

Bootle Albion

Leicester

Moreton

New Brighton Tower Villa

Oxton

Poulton Boy's Club

Rakes Lane PSA

Rock Ferry St. Paul's

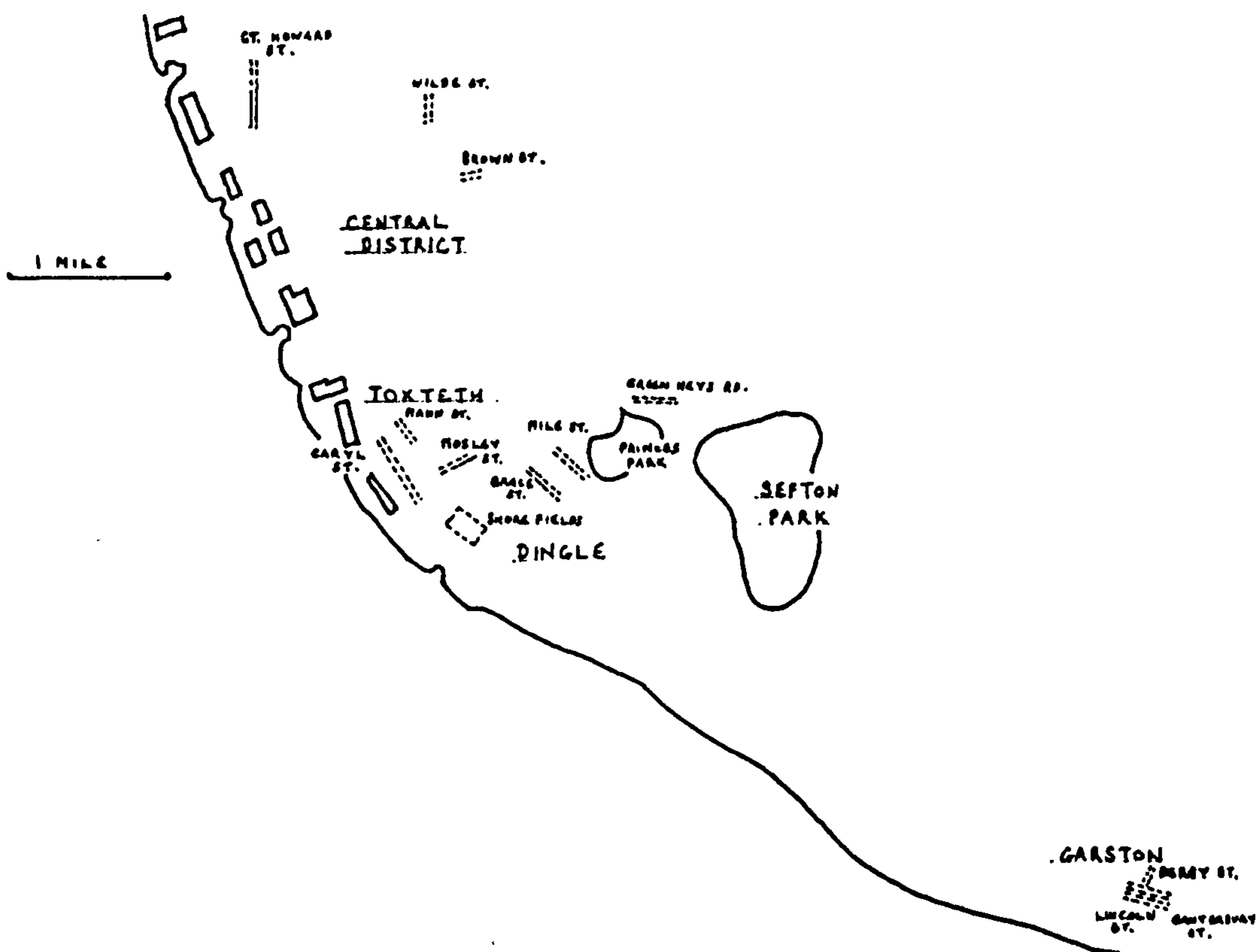
St. Edward's Res.

Appendix 4.2: Street teams observed by Mays in 1951.

Street team in May's survey	Probable actual street name
Mile Street	Miles Street, Dingle
Lincoln Road	Lincoln Street, Garston
Main Street	Mann Street, Toxteth
Wild Street	Wilde Street, City Centre
Green Park Street	Green Heys Road, Princes Park
Canterbury Street	Canterbury Street, Garston
Granary Street	Granby Street, Toxteth
Howard Street	Great Howard Street, Vauxhall
Derby Street	Derby Street, Garston
Mossley Street	Mosley Street, Toxteth
Graces Street	Grace Street, Dingle
Carroll Street	Caryl Street, Toxteth
Bolder Street	Boaler Street, Kensington
Brown Street	Brown Street, City Centre
Cliff Street	Cliff Street, Kensington

Source: J.B. Mays, 1964.

An elderly spectator at the Aigburth playing field in 1951 claimed that the tradition of these street teams went back at least fifty years, suggesting that these inner-city streets had makeshift football teams perhaps in the 1890s.



Location of identified street teams possibly existing in the 1890s.

Source: Mays, 1964.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MADDING CROWDS:

WATCHING FOOTBALL IN LIVERPOOL 1879-1915

INTRODUCTION

English football crowds were progressively increasing during the thirty years before 1914, and this national pattern was paralleled in Liverpool. Given the enormous population of Liverpool relative to the football towns of Lancashire and the midlands, it was not surprising that Everton dominated attendance records for the first decade of the Football League's existence. Large crowds of several thousand people needed to have safe accommodation and acceptable views of the action, and these requirements dictated that Liverpool's football grounds were built on a scale more ambitious than previously seen; Everton's new stadium was the venue for the 1894 Cup Final. Much has been written in recent years about the early architecture of football grounds, and Simon Inglis in particular has championed the influence of the engineer, Archibald Leitch, a notable contributor to the imposing designs of Anfield and Goodison. However, the design and construction of Victorian football grounds before Leitch's modernisations have been relatively neglected, and an attempt to redress this lacuna is made here.

Most football historians concur that skilled working-class men were the numerically dominant group at football matches, but employment patterns in Liverpool differed significantly from most industrial cities, and this could have been reflected in the composition of football crowds at Anfield and Goodison. Mason's very limited survey, based on precise identification of competition winners in a Liverpool newspaper, suggests that crowds in Liverpool accorded roughly with the national picture, but interesting new evidence has recently been unearthed which somewhat challenges conventional interpretations. This evidence has been analysed for the present study and the results are presented here. Everton's and Liverpool's dominance of attendance

records was overtaken from about 1900, as other major clubs began to attract large crowds. The population of the city had risen to about 700,000 by the 1900s, but attendance levels at Everton and Liverpool remained roughly constant until mid-decade when even though there was a significant rise, numbers remained stubbornly inferior to increasing levels at Chelsea, Newcastle, and Aston Villa. There may be a number of reasons why interest in football in Liverpool seems to tail off in this period, but the peculiar socio-economic conditions of the city may hold a key to the answer.

One of the main preoccupations of historians of pre-1914 football spectators has concerned the isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour seen at some matches. Despite Liverpool's violent reputation, there appears to be little evidence of hooliganism in Liverpool, although contemporary commentators were still far from happy about the conduct of some elements in the crowd. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a period of increasing religious conflict in Liverpool, and given the issue of the alleged religious affiliation of Everton and Liverpool Football Clubs, it may have been expected that violence spilt over onto the terraces, as was the case with Celtic and Rangers in Glasgow.¹ Tony Mason found no substantial evidence of the effects of sectarianism in Liverpool football but there remains, at least, a hint of veracity to the rumour. This chapter attempts to unravel the rumour and myth surrounding this controversial topic.

Modern 'crowd culture' has been a worthwhile source of inquiry for contemporary sociologists but the paucity of pre-1914 evidence has meant that its early incarnations have been relatively under-researched. Dave Russell has indicated that pre-1914 football crowds were 'an amalgam of various essentially male sub-cultures', and that '“rough” and “respectable” cultures mingled in the football ground.'² He has acknowledged that evidence is likely to be 'highly fragmentary', but potential researchers could 'be alert to scattered hints' relating to such characteristics as 'noise, verbal abuse, praise, (and) “sporting” behaviour'.³ It is extremely difficult to pin down

¹ Murray, Bill, *The Old Firm: Sectarianism, Sport and Society in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1984), p. 118.

² Russell, Dave, *Football and the English*, (Preston: Carnegie, 1997), pp. 57-58.

³ Russell, *Football and the English*, p. 59.

such amorphous subtleties of fan behaviour, but contemporary newspapers and other sources do allow a limited reconstruction of the attitudes and habits of early spectators, and this chapter uses such material, including recently discovered film footage of the crowd at Goodison Park in 1902, to examine such issues in the context of pre-1914 Liverpool.

Russell has also argued that social historians have failed to grasp the importance of sport in the day-to-day lives of many people, and that leisure activities were a 'vital and defining part of their existence.'⁴ The centrality of football as a facet of the popular culture of Liverpoolians is undoubtedly a feature of modern life in that city and this chapter attempts to investigate the start of this phenomenon. *The Madding Crowds* includes an examination of the design of commercial football grounds in the context of Victorian Liverpool, and goes on to explore the rising attendance levels of the two main clubs, before presenting an analysis of the socio-occupational composition of Liverpoolian football crowds. This chapter concludes with an examination of crowd culture, behaviour, and the vexed question of religion in Liverpool football. To start, we discuss the nature of the earliest Liverpool football spectators, those people who watched the game in public parks in the early 1880s.

EARLY FOOTBALL CROWDS

Most of the initial football matches in Liverpool were played in public parks. Spectators comprised helpers, relatives and friends of the players but the novel spectacle of football must also have attracted the curiosity of other park users. Early teams were mostly ecclesiastical in origin and spectators presumably included some members of the church congregations. Frequently, in accounts of these early matches, the *Courier* reports 'large gatherings' of spectators, though an early participant writing thirty years later recalled that 'there were not many people to look on'.⁵ A rare numerical estimate was the gathering of 500 spectators for an 1881 game between the

⁴ Russell, *Football and the English*, p. 58.

⁵ See 'O'Whatmore', *Porcupine*, Dec. 26th 1908, quoted in Mason, Tony, *The Blues and the Reds*, (Liverpool: Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1985), p. 2.

district's premier clubs, Bootle and Everton, and a few months later, 1400 attended the return fixture in Stanley Park. Around the touchlines, every space must have been occupied, and those stood behind must have had a very restricted view.⁶ A promotional circular produced by Everton FC during 1882 claimed: 'that at any of its important fixtures there are large gatherings of persons, numbering 1,500 to 2,000, seeking the Saturday afternoon's recreation'.⁷ Such was the shortage of space available to play football in Liverpool, that in Stanley Park it was only possible to mark out a maximum of two adjacent pitches, placing a limit on the numbers able to actively participate, so most young men could only enjoy football vicariously, by watching. This partly explains the readiness with which certain spectators could be called upon to help out on the field when a team was short of players.⁸ 'Spectating' may have been the only realistic option for some young men to be involved in this new sport on a regular basis.

The earliest Liverpool-based football clubs were located in Everton and Bootle and the majority of their early followers must also have lived in these districts. Bootle and Everton were new suburbs built from the 1860s onwards and the residential composition of the north Liverpool districts of this period indicates a large migrant element in the populations of these communities (see **Figure 1.4, page 74** and **Figures 5.1a-d, page 261**).⁹ Approximately a third of the 90,000 people living in Everton in 1871 were migrants from other parts of England, with the Welsh, the second biggest group, mostly concentrated in the central plateau of the district. There were somewhat fewer Scots, mainly living in Kirkdale, whilst the Irish congregated in large numbers in

⁶ Young, Percy M., *Football on Merseyside*, (London: Stanley Paul, 1963), p.17 and p. 18.

⁷ Keates, Thomas, *History of the Everton Football Club 1878-1928*, (Liverpool: Thomas Brakell, 1928), p. 13.

⁸ *Waterloo Times*, Mar. 12th 1881.

⁹ Everton's rate of growth was at its highest in the 1850s and '60s; the population increased by 65,054 from 1851 to 1871. Its total population was 90,937 in 1871. Lawton, R. and Pooley, C.G., 'David Brindley's Liverpool: an aspect of urban society in the 1880s', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Historical Society*, Vol. 126, (1975), p. 165. Mould, R.F., *The Iron Church: St. George's Church, Everton*, (Everton: St. George Press, 1996), p. 2.

Pooley, C.G., 'The Residential Segregation of Migrant Communities in Mid-Victorian Liverpool', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, NS 2, (1977), p. 373.

the Vauxhall-Scotland Road districts near the docks. By the early 1880s, the building of the new suburb of Everton was effectively complete but it maintained its migrant character, and to some extent its inhabitants continued to lack a coherent urban identity. Bootle's population tripled from 16,000 to nearly 50,000 in the 20 years from 1871.¹⁰ The district of southern Bootle near the docks, close to St. John's Church where the football club had originated, was densely populated and characterised by a high proportion of unskilled labour. Higher numbers of the skilled working-class were to be found in the districts of the town where matches were actually played, such as Marsh Lane and Irlam Road.¹¹ By the 1880s, most of Liverpool's skilled workers were finishing their working week at noon on Saturdays so they could have chosen to watch or play football although some occupational groups such as retail workers continued to work full Saturdays and casual workers may have preferred to maximise their meagre income by working on Saturday afternoons.¹² By 1880, the majority of Everton's mostly artisan labour force were able to attend football matches on Saturdays.

There is a scarcity of information on the exact identities of early Liverpoolian spectators. Everton club committeemen were named on membership cards, though as the most committed type of spectator, such men were not typical of the masses attending football matches. A local railwayman, David Brindley, kept a diary, and this does mention that he did watch a few matches at Anfield Road in the 1880s, though he

¹⁰ Phillips, C. B. and Smith, J.H., *Lancashire and Cheshire from AD 1540*, (London: Longman, 1974), p. 229.

¹¹ Marsden, B., 'Education : Late Nineteenth Century Disparities in Provision', in Pope, R., *Atlas of British Social and Economic History since c. 1700*, (New York: 1989), pp. 205-206.

¹² Dock workers were generally employed on half-day contracts, that is 7am to noon, and 1pm to 5pm. They were not contractually obliged to work on Saturdays but may have done so from necessity. Casual dockers were usually paid on Saturday evening, so a significant number may have elected to work for the full day if possible. Taplin, Eric, *Liverpool Dockers and Seamen, 1870-1890*, (Hull: Hull University Press, 1974), p. 6. The first Liverpool-based workers to have free Saturday afternoons did so in the late 1850s and early '60s and included stonemasons, coachbuilders, and some building workers and cabinet makers. Taplin, Eric, 'False Dawn of New Unionism? Labour Unrest in Liverpool 1871-1873' in Belchem, J. (ed.), *Popular Politics, Riot and Labour: Essays in Liverpool History 1790-1940*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992), pp. 138-141.

was not a regular attender.¹³ Even though there is little direct evidence relating to spectators' identities and social background, inferences could perhaps be drawn from data relating to the players themselves. The early spectators of teams playing in Stanley Park, probably included park users, of both sexes and all ages, together with those people who may well have had some close connection with players, either as church worshippers, friends, work colleagues, or relatives.¹⁴ The footballers' neighbours would certainly have lived close enough to Stanley Park to watch the football matches. Of course, not all men had the inclination or opportunity to watch football and spectators presumably encompassed a wide age range, but we could assume that a significant proportion of football watchers would be males of similar age to the players. Therefore, data on young men from these streets may give some indication of the occupation and background of potential spectators.

The 1881 census was used to list all males aged 15-20 in the streets of residence of identified Everton United Church footballers.¹⁵ The streets selected for analysis were Red Rock Street and St. Domingo's Vale (predominantly middle-class), Bulwer and Premier Streets (lower middle-class), and Friar Street (working-class) (Figure 5.2, page 262).¹⁶

¹³ Lawton and Pooley, 'David Brindley', p. 161 and Mason, *Blues and the Reds*, p.14.

¹⁴ Samuel Murdoch Crosbie claimed to have introduced George Mahon to football but the 1881 census shows Mahon as the immediate neighbour of two of the original Everton United Church players. Keates, *Everton FC*, p.141.

¹⁵ Kennedy, D., 'Locality and Professional Football Club development: the Demographics of Football Club Support in Late Victorian Liverpool' in *Soccer and Society*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Autumn 2004, pp. 379-381. Kennedy performed a similar analysis on streets near the Anfield football ground using the 1891 census.

Table 5.1 Percentage occupational analysis of youths aged 15-20 in streets where certain Everton United Church footballers lived (1881 census).

Occupational group	Red Rock St. %	St. Domingo's Vale %	Bulwer St. %	Premier St. %	Friar St. %	Total %
Professional		9				1.8
Teacher				12		2.4
Journalist	9					1.8
Clerical	64	52	49	43	13	44.2
Police				2	2	0.8
Retail	9	11	11		5	7.2
Craftsman	9	4	16	8	9	9.2
Skilled Manual	9	24	22	22	53	26
Maritime			2	3	5	2
Labourer				10	13	4.6

Sources: *Liverpool Courier*, 1881 census.

The results indicated that for the middle class streets nearly half of the young male residents were clerks, with a significant minority of skilled manual and shop-workers. Just under half of the lower middle class streets' young men were clerks, with just under a quarter being skilled manual workers. In Friar Street, which contained the most basic housing, only one eighth of its young men were clerks, with an equal number of labourers (the highest proportion of labourers in the sample), but more than half of the young residents were skilled workers. Though this survey is predicated on an assumption, it suggests that significant numbers of football spectators in Stanley Park could have been local clerks, together with a notable proportion of skilled men.

Within a few years, the more popular park-based clubs began to move to private enclosed grounds. There were a number of reasons for this. So many clubs were forming in the early 1880s, that there was insufficient space in Liverpool's main public parks. The park authorities also began to restrict the playing of football because the frequency of matches and increasing numbers of spectators were damaging the turf.¹⁷

¹⁶ Most of the Everton United Church team were connected with St. Saviour's Church located at the end of Premier Street.

¹⁷ During the autumn of 1885, the city corporation's Parks, Gardens and Improvement Committee summarily announced the banning of football from the parks in order to preserve the grass for summer games. The abolition of park football could have been very advantageous to Everton FC and John Houlding, by now a city councillor, may have been acquiesced in the corporation's policy. Apart from other considerations, the offending bare patches in Stanley Park would have been all too obvious to the Houlding household from the rear of their Anfield Road home. With no outlet for free football spectating in the parks, and no ground on which to play, in order to satisfy their active interest in the

Liverpool Association FC's substantial middle-class membership, including solicitors and teachers, moved the club from Newsham Park to a private sports ground in Wavertree in 1881.¹⁸ Local football organisations also began to insist on an enclosed ground as a mandatory condition for participation in their competitions. In the summer of 1883 Everton secured the use of an enclosed field at Coney Green Farm just to the north of Stanley Park. A prestige fixture was arranged to inaugurate the new ground, to be played between the new Liverpool Football Association and their counterparts from Walsall. The event was promoted several weeks in advance in the local press and so optimistic were the organisers about the possible attendance that arrangements were made with the Liverpool 'Red Buss'(sic) Company to run special transport from the Exchange to Arkles Lane. The game attracted a thousand spectators, and the experiment was deemed a success, but according to Keates, the total admission collected was only 14 shillings (which may have been the sum remaining after a guarantee had been paid to the Walsall team). In fact, the total takings for the season at Coney Green were reportedly only £45¹⁹ but given that only about 10 first-team games were played there this still may have represented an actual attendance of about three to four hundred people per game. Parsimonious spectators could still watch the free games across the road in Stanley Park.²⁰ Liverpool AFC, which had made a further move to the enclosed Walton Stiles ground in 1883, chose to charge admission only for major games and Everton may have followed a similar practice at Coney Green, though voluntary contributions were, no doubt, always welcome. Money was needed for the rental and general upkeep of a private pitch and though Coney Green had a pronounced slope it also boasted 'railings around the playing area, some sitting

game, park footballers and spectators would have had no recourse other than to pay to watch Everton, Bootle, or the few other clubs with their own grounds. *Courier*, Oct. 2nd 1885.

¹⁸ *Courier*, Oct. 11th 1881.

¹⁹ Keates, *Everton FC*, p.19. The *Courier* claimed that 'the manifestations of enthusiasm testified to the enjoyable and interesting character of the contest.' *Courier*, Oct. 29th 1883.

²⁰ *Courier* Oct. 7th 1883. According to Keates, the proceeds for the first game staged there brought a total sum of 14 shillings. It is probable that an admission charge *per se* was not made but that spectators were asked to make a voluntary contribution.

accommodation, a not very grand stand, and a not very grand dressing room for the players.’²¹

THE EVOLUTION OF ANFIELD AND GOODISON

In 1884, the landlord of Coney Green terminated Everton’s tenancy, but club President John Houlding had already secured an alternative ground.²² His close neighbour and fellow brewer, John Orrell, owned some unused land on Anfield Road, almost directly opposite Houlding’s home. The position and layout of the site on contemporary maps show that it was intended for housing development by Orrell and his brother Joseph, but the latter’s death in 1883 probably tempered John’s enthusiasm for the project. Houlding leased the land from Orrell, sub-letting it to Everton FC, with changing facilities and club headquarters located nearby at his new Sandon Hotel. The respectable residents of Anfield Road may well have had misgivings over the prospect of a regular congregation of several hundred or more people in their midst, but the primitive facilities at the new ground may have convinced neighbours that it was only a temporary venture. Initially the ground consisted of a flat enclosed field, with no raised earthworks or platforms to aid viewing, so the number of spectators able to see properly may well have been only the same as when the team played in Stanley Park.²³

²¹ Keates, *Everton FC*, p. 10.

²² Keates, *Everton FC*, p.8, p.10, and pp.14-15. Keates reported that during 1883, William Cruitt, the cattle farmer owner of Coney Green, refused to allow the club to continue to use his field, on the grounds that ‘the now familiar, vociferous exuberance of the spectators disturbed the pastoral serenity of Mr. Cruitt’s environment.’

²³ The nearby Walton Stiles ground appears to have been equally basic. To put the stark conditions of Anfield Road into context, the grounds of Blackburn Rovers, Darwen, and Burnley each had raised earthworks and grandstands by the mid-1880s. (Mason, *Association Football*, p.140). *Courier*, May 18th 1885. Stanley FC took over the tenancy of the Walton Stiles ground in April 1885 after the Liverpool AFC had disbanded. Stanley celebrated the start of their occupancy of the ground by staging a festival of football involving Darwen and Aston Villa’s reserve team. At short notice Everton deliberately arranged a home fixture for the same day as a spoiling tactic to deter spectators from attending the Stanley game (Everton v. Blackburn Rovers second team). The *Courier* suggested that there was ‘a great deal of petty jealousy between the premier clubs and the result will not be for the

Following a short spell of ground sharing with the local rugby club, Bootle FC also moved in 1884, re-joining their original co-tenants Bootle Cricket Club at a new enclosure in the town's South Park. A typical crowd at this venue was about 2000 and with no stands or embankments even such a modest gathering must have had a poor view, though in October 1886, 10,000 people reportedly attended a match against Everton.²⁴ No accidents occurred but the game was halted several times as sections of the huge crowd encroached onto the pitch. The unusually large attendance at this game and the increasing likelihood of overcrowding probably convinced John Houlding that the Anfield ground needed considerable re-development and later that month he engaged a local builder, George Rutherford, to improve its facilities.

On the Kemlyn Road side of the ground, a shallow stepped terrace was built alongside the whole length of the pitch. Opposite a small basic pavilion was erected for committee members, and flanking this were two long benches capable of seating perhaps 300 people.²⁵ An uncovered timber stand was built at the Oakfield Road end (this later would be the site of the Spion Kop) with adjacent trees providing some crude protection from the elements.²⁶ During the summer of 1888, in anticipation of the new Football League, a further £1000 was spent on the construction of a similar timber stand at the Anfield Road end. Bolton's *Football Field* reported that Everton were 'A1 in Lancashire in the matter of gates' and that the redeveloped ground bore 'the resemblance of a huge circus, with its two immense galleries rising tier above tier.'²⁷ The capacity of the whole Anfield ground at this time may have been as high as 15,000 and the ground did not undergo further development for the remainder of

benefit of the game.' Other close neighbours, e.g. Bolton Wanderers and Great Lever, had come to an agreement to avoid fixture clashes.

²⁴ Barnes, Tommy, *Third Time Lucky: a history of Bootle football club* (Litherland: Centaur Press, 1988), p.6. This game was halted several times as sections of the huge crowd encroached onto the pitch.

²⁵ Actually it was described as a 'pavilion' on contemporary maps but in reality was little more than a rudimentary shelter.

²⁶ O.S. Map 1:2500 series, 1888, Lancashire Sheet 106.07.

²⁷ *Football Field* (Bolton), Feb. 25th 1888, quoted in Lewis, R., *The Development of Professional Football in Lancashire 1870-1914*, (1994), unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, Chapter 5.

Everton's tenancy (Figure 5.3, page 263).²⁸ Preston North End's Deepdale ground had also been compared to 'a huge amphitheatre', but the timber terracing was only about six steppings high, and the unspectacular scale is evident in several contemporary photographs and plans.²⁹ Darwen FC's ground boasted a grandstand capable of holding a thousand people, but Anfield's Oakfield Road structure had 26 narrow steppings, capable of accommodating 2,500 standing spectators. The Anfield Road end was even larger with room for perhaps 5,000. There was nothing on the scale of these stands in 1880s Lancashire, and the inspiration for their design may have been Scottish. A similar stand was built at Old Tynecastle in Edinburgh in 1885, and Ibrox Park, the home of Rangers, had stands of the same basic design in 1887. The Glasgow engineering and construction firm of Fred Braby Ltd., which, intriguingly, opened a Liverpool office shortly afterwards, erected the Ibrox stands.³⁰

At this time, Bootle FC were still regarded as an ambitious organisation, attracting fixtures with several major clubs. However, Bootle's football ground, Hawthorne Road, was considerably inferior to Anfield Road, and during the close season of 1889, after suffering a second successive rejection by the League, the ground underwent substantial re-development (Figure 5.4, page 263). Behind the western end, timber terracing was constructed, similar to the type at Anfield Road. A covered stand was built in the central portion of the Bedford Road side, flanked by two smaller, open stands, but the northern and eastern sides of the ground were left undeveloped. On the cricket side of the pitch a temporary stand was re-erected annually for the duration of the football season.³¹ Even such modest improvements gave Bootle a better ground

²⁸ *Football Field*, Dec. 29th 1888.

²⁹ *Athletic News*, Dec. 29th 1885, in Mason, *Association Football*, p. 140. Hunt, David, *The History of Preston North End Football Club: the Power, the Politics, and the People*, (Preston, PNE Publications, 2000), p. 60 for plan of Deepdale, c.1890. Also Rigby, Ian and Payne, Mike *Proud Preston: Preston North End's 100 seasons of Football League History*, (Lancaster: Carnegie, 1999), p. 44.

³⁰ Hutchinson, John, *The Football Industry: the early years of the professional game*, (Glasgow: Richard Drew, 1982), pp. 66-68.

³¹ Twydell, Dave, *Rejected FC: Histories of the ex-Football League Clubs Volume 1*, (Middlesex: Yore, 1992), p. 73.

than some existing League members, and this certainly helped Bootle's successful election as founder members of the League's new Second Division in 1892.

The Everton bifurcation presented the re-formed Everton company with the opportunity to build a new modern ground from scratch. The site selected was waste land at Mere Green, just to the north of Stanley Park, close to an existing football ground, Walton Stiles, which by 1892 had become the home of Lancashire League club Stanley FC. Three thousand pounds was spent in the transformation of Mere Green into Goodison Park. There were covered stands at either end and a main stand was built on the Bullens Road side. This had extensive facilities, including a press room and separate home and away changing rooms with baths. The finished ground was capable of accommodating 30,000 people, the greatest portion of whom could stand on a broad cinder bank on Goodison Road.³² The new ground could be more appropriately described as a 'stadium' and given that Everton were also the best-supported club, the press urged the public to visit this striking edifice (**Figure 5.5, page 264**). In 1893, the *Review* claimed, 'when Goodison is 'en fete' it means something...crashing traffic up and down Scotland Road, and some 20,000 excited faces lining the incomparable football enclosures.'³³ Its scale and sophistication is evident in a recently discovered Mitchell and Kenyon film of 1902. Goodison had all the hallmarks of modernity, and was clearly much in advance of the primitive level of other grounds filmed by Mitchell and Kenyon. The new Goodison even staged several experimental floodlit games, one of which attracted ten to twelve thousand spectators, and prompting the *Liverpool Review* to enthuse that 'From a spectator's point of view the illuminated match was so entertaining that there is no doubt a few more fixtures of a like description would prove equally palatable. It was worth the price of admission to

³² Young, *Merseyside*, p. 174. O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1908, Lancs. sheet, 106.02.

Liverpool Caledonians' ground, Woodcroft Park, in Wavertree, also had a claimed capacity of 30,000, but despite having an athletics track, it consisted merely of earthwork embankments. After Caledonians demise in 1892, it was briefly the home of Wavertree Rugby Club, before being flattened and built over with housing. *Liverpool Review* (hereafter *Review*) , Sept. 24th 1892.

³³ *Review*, Sept. 23rd 1893, and Dec. 9th 1893.

see the spectacle presented by the ground alone.³⁴ However, another 63 years were to elapse before permanent floodlighting was installed.

Goodison's size and modernity persuaded the FA to use it as the venue for the 1894 English Cup Final. The former venue, Kennington Oval, could not accommodate the large crowds that the final attracted now that northern professional teams dominated the latter stages of the competition.³⁵ Manchester's Fallowfield Athletics Ground had been tried the previous year when Everton themselves were finalists, but the event had been an embarrassing debacle. Despite a record attendance of 45,000, conditions in Manchester had been far from satisfactory. The crowd encroached onto the pitch several times and the spectators' sightlines had been very poor.³⁶ Even though the Goodison final between Notts County and Bolton had attracted only 23,000 people, a far smaller number than expected, this was still ten thousand more than Everton's average 'gate' (the highest for a League club), and considerably more than the Oval's capacity. The following year, the Cup Final reverted to London, but now it was to be held at the Crystal Palace ground in Sydenham, a large, spacious venue though with rather inadequate sightlines. Goodison Park had at least guaranteed an excellent view for all spectators.

During the summer of 1894, Anfield was substantially improved in preparation for Liverpool FC's first season in the top division. A timber grandstand was constructed on the relatively undeveloped western side, and this new structure included dressing rooms, the first time such facilities were incorporated within the perimeter of the ground. A huge crowd of twenty thousand people attended the stand's inauguration, at Liverpool's first-ever Division One match against Aston Villa. The press were fulsome in their praise of the improved ground. The *Liverpool Review* described the new main stand as 'Probably...the most imposing football erection in existence,' even though

³⁴ *Review*, Dec. 9th 1893.

³⁵ The match surprisingly saw second division Notts County beating the mighty Bolton Wanderers.

³⁶ Young, *Merseyside*, p. 49, Mason, Tony, *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915*, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), p.141, *Review*, May 6th 1893.

Goodison's Bullens Road grandstand was probably slightly larger.³⁷ Anfield Road had started to evolve into a fully-fledged football stadium like its near neighbour Goodison. Both were far in advance of the basic standard of most other English grounds, and indeed in the period before 1910, only Villa Park exceeded the grand scale of the Liverpool grounds. However, the best British football grounds were to be found in Glasgow, where the high demand for football and the Scottish talent for engineering had resulted in the construction of Ibrox, Hampden, and Celtic Parks.³⁸ The Scottish civil engineer, Archibald Leitch, had been instrumental in the design of the first two of these and by the 1900s, was also gaining a reputation south of the border too. In 1906, following Liverpool's second League championship, the board of directors decided that Anfield should be entirely rebuilt, and commissioned the services of Leitch. Their decision was certainly partly influenced by the disaster at Ibrox Park in 1902, where a section of timber terracing had collapsed, killing 25 people.³⁹ Ironically, Leitch had been the supervising engineer responsible for the Ibrox design, but controversially had escaped censure for the disaster, and in the intervening years had even managed to reverse his tarnished reputation, with designs at Middlesbrough, Fulham, and Chelsea. The centre-piece of the re-developed Anfield was the innovative grandstand, built of Hennebique reinforced ferro-concrete, with 3,000 seats. The existing 1894 stand was re-erected on the Kemlyn side, whilst the soil removed in the lowering of the pitch (which was also re-sited 55 feet westward) was piled along the Oakfield Road end and fashioned into what would become the 20,000 capacity Spion Kop. The completed ground, capable of accommodating 60,000 spectators remained essentially unchanged for the next 60 years. Over at Goodison, the main improvement since the mid-1890s had been the recent construction of a double-deck stand at the Stanley Park end, but in 1909 Leitch was also engaged by Everton to supervise the construction of a much grander double-deck stand on Goodison Road. This immense structure (80 feet high) bore all Leitch's hallmark touches, such as a triangular roof-gable, and criss-cross steelwork on the balcony. It also had 3,500 seats and could accommodate 11,000

³⁷ *Review*, Sept. 10th 1894. The *Review* was involved in a feud with Everton and the *Liverpool Echo* at the time.

³⁸ Ibrox, Hampden, Celtic Parks. Five out of six of the earliest games attracting gates of 10,000 or more were in Glasgow. Mason, *Association Football*, p.138.

³⁹ Inglis, Simon, *The Football Grounds of Britain*, (London: Collins Willow, 1996), p. 218.

people standing in the lower tier, prompting Ernest Edwards, the *Echo's* sports editor, to nickname it the Mauretania stand, after the world's largest ocean liner (**Figure 5.7, page 264**). During the construction of this stand, no doubt influenced by the Everton secretary, Will Cuff, who became his firm's solicitor, Leitch decided to move the headquarters of his engineering practice to Liverpool. Both Liverpool clubs responded to the demands of increasing football crowds by building large modern stadia, continuing a programme of ground improvement throughout the pre-1914 period, with the grounds ultimately capable of accommodating nearly 70,000 people. The so-called Spion Kop, which alone could accommodate more people than the whole Anfield ground could have done a few years earlier, became the focal point for a new kind of urban spectating culture, personified by the cheery Kopite, the quintessential working-class football supporter.

PATTERNS OF RISING ATTENDANCES

The considerable developments in stadium design at Everton and Liverpool occurred because of the city's huge public demand to watch professional football. Everton's dominance of League attendance records in the 1890s was a remarkable achievement considering that football was unknown in the city until 1879. It is relevant that at the Football League's foundation, Everton was the only one of the twelve members to be located in a properly incorporated city, and that the population of Liverpool was vast (518,000 in 1891) in comparison to the football towns of Lancashire.⁴⁰ Liverpudlians were certainly excited by the prospect of this new type of *league* football. In 1888, the *Courier* proclaimed that, 'Never in the history of Liverpool football has such a large amount of public interest been evinced in the "opening of the season"... If rumour is to be credited, thousands attended the practice game at the temporary ground adjoining Belmont Road...'⁴¹

⁴⁰ Birmingham received its city charter in 1889, Nottingham in 1897, and Stoke as late as 1910. Waller, P. J., *Town, Country, and Nation, England 1850-1914*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), Chapter 8, pp. 68-126.

⁴¹ *Courier*, Sept. 8th 1888.

Attendances had been rising since the club established itself at John Houlding's Anfield Road ground in the mid-1880s. The club committee made a calculated effort to commercialise the club and by offering large financial guarantees were able to arrange fixtures with leading clubs from Lancashire, the midlands, and Scotland. High attendances in excess of 5000 were often recorded at Anfield Road; frequently bigger than those crowds at senior Lancashire clubs. East Lancashire newspapers began to recognise Everton as a major force in the game, at least in regard to attendances, and this recognition was undoubtedly a factor in their successful application to join the new Football League.⁴²

Everton did not disappoint those on the League steering committee who backed their membership. Not only were they the best supported club, but in 1890-91 Everton wrested the championship away from the 'Invincibles', Preston North End. The following season Everton's two factions went their separate ways, and the Houlding group evolved into Liverpool FC. This led to speculation on the way that the allegiances of local football supporters would develop. The *Liverpool Review* sensed that 'spectators on the Everton ground appear to have made some mutual compact not to support the Liverpool club when Everton are playing away, but to patronise Bootle.'⁴³ The first home games of the new Liverpool FC were sparsely attended but the threat of an Everton supporters' boycott, if it ever existed, never materialised. The *Review* modified its earlier prejudices, 'The first fixture (Liverpool FC's) attracted a few hundreds of spectators; last Saturday quite 6,000 people were present. Of course the Everton league team were away and that may have had a beneficial influence for the Liverpoolians. At all events the facts remain that the team is growing in public favour. All the unsportsmanlike talk about 'Boycott' is likely to be falsified. And why should it not?'⁴⁴ The rivalry of neighbouring towns and urban identity were important

⁴² *Football Field*, Jan. 9th 1886, in Lewis, *Thesis*, Chapter 5.

⁴³ *Review*, Sept. 10th 1892 sending complementary season tickets to 'a number of gentlemen, who for the past few years have done their best towards assisting association football in Liverpool and their neighbourhood.'

⁴⁴ *Review*, Sept. 17th 1892.

factors in determining spectator preferences.⁴⁵ During Bootle's sole League season of 1892-93, the club's attendances did not benefit when Everton were playing away, even though Goodison was only three-quarters of a mile from Hawthorne Road. Though Bootle FC were located close to the municipal boundary with Liverpool, the club evidently could not attract enough potential spectators from the adjacent suburbs of Walton and Kirkdale, even though these districts were as close to Hawthorne Road as they were to Goodison.

Throughout the 26 year period prior to the Great War, both Everton and Liverpool showed an upward trend in attendances (**Figure 5.8, page 265**).⁴⁶ A broad correlation between League positions and average attendance is seen in the data for both Everton and Liverpool, though the latter's average attendances lagged significantly behind those at Everton until about 1899, when Liverpool started to equal and occasionally surpass their neighbours.⁴⁷ The presence of both Liverpool clubs in the first division in 1894-95 gave a huge fillip to public interest in football in the city and Everton and Liverpool were the only two clubs that season to record average attendances exceeding 10,000. The previous year, Liverpool's first league season had resulted in an average attendance of only 5215, and following the club's relegation in 1895, attendances fell to the same paltry level.⁴⁸ This pattern suggests that when Liverpool were in the First Division, some regular Everton followers were watching them on alternate weeks, in preference to watching Everton reserves. Once Liverpool returned to the lower division the prospect of shelling out 6d or more to watch matches with the likes of Loughborough, Crewe, and Burton Swifts, was clearly not appealing to the casual attendee.⁴⁹ Interesting personal evidence on the evolution of

⁴⁵ For example, Darwen's acrimonious relationship with Blackburn. See also Waller, *Town and Country*, p. 78.

⁴⁶ Tabner, Brian, *Through the Turnstiles*, (Middlesex: Yore Publications, 1992), pp. 69-74.

⁴⁷ Liverpool was the better supported club in four seasons from 1905 until 1915. Tabner, *Turnstiles*, pp. 69-74.

⁴⁸ Tabner, *Turnstiles*, pp. 63-64.

⁴⁹ Johnes, Martin, *Soccer and Society: South Wales, 1900-1939*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), p.128.

supporting habits comes from the case of the anonymous football supporter profiled in the *Echo* in 1909:

‘Mr. J. first commenced to follow Everton in the season 1890-91 when they first won the championship of the League, and he has been a staunch supporter of the club ever since. When the Liverpool club came into existence (1892-93) and were elected members of the now extinct Lancashire League, he likewise became a supporter of the club and witnessed their home games instead of attending the Everton reserve fixture, or of travelling from home with the Everton first team, as he had been in the habit of doing.’⁵⁰

It was possible that many football followers initially ‘supported’ both Liverpool and Everton without showing specific favour to either. Having two First Division clubs provided the opportunity for Liverpudlians to view a top football match every week without travelling to away games. However, by the time of Liverpool’s third brief sojourn in Division Two in 1904-05, the average at Anfield was 14,315, only 1400 less than the previous season. This was a far healthier average than half of that season’s first division clubs, despite a second division fixture list which included such unfashionable opposition as Gainsborough, Glossop, Doncaster, and Barnsley. Such a high average attendance suggests that by 1904, the club now had a core of its own supporters and not just a cohort of football-starved Evertonians.⁵¹

THE COMPOSITION OF FOOTBALL CROWDS

Though the personal information on ‘Mr. J.’ above is interesting, it tells us nothing about the ages, social class, or occupations of the thousands who regularly attended football matches in Liverpool, though some newspaper reporters provided useful indicators. A correspondent to the *Liverpool Athletic Times* wrote in 1889, ‘I question whether a man can put himself in worse company than among the rabble which flock in their thousands to witness the so-called “Grand Football Match”, for the greater number of the crowd is composed of low, foul-mouthed, illiterate, unwashed, red

⁵⁰ *Liverpool Football Echo* (hereafter *Echo*), Oct. 6th 1909.

⁵¹ Tabner *Turnstiles*, p. 69.

neck-tied football enthusiasts.’⁵² Though the above is obviously the biased view of a middle-class writer, it seems clear that by the late 1880s, Liverpool football crowds were predominantly composed of working class men. The *Liverpool Review* also claimed that it was ‘the working-class, you know, who support the game’ but the working-class encompassed a range of levels, from skilled artisans down to casual unskilled labour working only a few days per week. How much money could be spared by a working-man for entertainment such as watching football?⁵³

In 1886, *Porcupine* organised a competition to determine who could calculate the lowest optimum weekly wage sufficient to maintain a wife and five children in Liverpool. A Kirkdale docker was the eventual winner with a final figure of 21 shillings per week. On this meagre amount, meals would consist of bread, potatoes, and meat scraps, 3d. was allowed for tobacco and 1 ½ d. for ale. Total sums of between 24 and 35 shillings per week were also suggested and some other entrants stressed the necessity of budgeting for non-essential items such as church and club subscriptions. 10 ½ d was suggested as the weekly ration for tobacco and 2 shillings on beer by an entrant who claimed that ‘life is not worth living unless you have some pleasure.’⁵⁴ A 3d admission fee for football was therefore within the reach of most working men in north Liverpool during the 1880s, and poorer spectators or those who finished work too late to attend the first half, could pay an even lower admission rate at half-time. The incursion of ‘street loafers’ into Goodison when a match with Small Heath was abandoned in 1895 suggests that they may have been waiting outside in order to pay the cheaper half-time rate or even to see the last 10 to 15 minutes for free.⁵⁵

⁵² *Liverpool Athletic Times*, 1889, quoted in Richardson, *Thesis*, Chapter 3.

⁵³ *Review*, Feb. 4th 1893. ‘Can trade be said to be bad in Liverpool... when a sum of nearly £600 is taken at the gates ... at Everton?’

⁵⁴ Waller, P. J. *Democracy and Sectarianism, a social and political history of Liverpool, 1868-1939*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1981), p. 110.

⁵⁵ E.g. Charles Buchan as a boy at Plumstead, home of Woolwich Arsenal. During the closing stages of matches, waiting groups of spectators, were allowed to enter the ground for free when the gatemen opened exits prior to the mass exodus. Russell, *Football and the English*, p. 56.

The Mitchell and Kenyon film of the Everton-Newcastle United match of September 1902, provides a unique opportunity to investigate certain aspects of the crowd. Apart from giving us an idea of the experience of watching a match at Edwardian Goodison, the film includes six different extended crowd shots, all taken in the north-west corner of the ground near St. Luke's Church. In each of these six shots, at least thirty different people are clearly visible, allowing us to make some inferences about occupation and social class for a total of 265 spectators (**Figure 5.9, page 262**). The position of the camera for each shot has been ascertained by analysis of visible background structures, and is plotted on the plan (**Figure 5.6, page 264**). 'Stills' for each shot were made from the film, and an estimate made of age and occupational type or social class, for each of the individuals in focus (**Figures 5.10 to 5.15, pages 266-268**). The latter is dependent on an interpretation of the dress convention of working-class and lower middle-class Liverpool men around 1900. Though clearly such a level of analysis is fallible, useful inferences can be made. Dave Russell has suggested that careful 'attention to hat codes', could be used to reveal subtleties of class but no academic study of working-class male costume c.1900 seems to have been undertaken, and, moreover, as some working men wore bowler hats rather than the ubiquitous cap, 'hat codes' *per se* seem unhelpful.⁵⁶ Contemporary photographic references provided the most useful information on costume. The most relevant collections of photographs were from Taplin's study of the 1911 Liverpool transport strike, and Walker's and Hinchliffe's selection of images of Victorian and Edwardian Liverpool.⁵⁷ The photographs from Taplin's book, mostly of strikers, proved to be of particular interest. Whilst the majority of striking dockers and railwaymen wore stereotypical working-men's costume (e.g. flat cap, jacket, collarless shirt, muffler), a sizeable minority were attired in white collars and ties, bowler hats or straw boaters, suggesting a sizeable presence of non-manual workers. Groups of men displaying both dress codes are mixed in several 1911 photographs. Low grade clerks were basically

⁵⁶ Russell, Dave, 'The Football Films' in Popple, S., Russell, P., and Toulmin, V., *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on Film*, (London: British Film Institute, 2004), p.175.

⁵⁷ Taplin, Eric, *Near to Revolution: the Liverpool General Transport Strike of 1911*, (Liverpool: Bluecoat, 1994), Walker, B. and Hinchliffe, A., *In Our Liverpool Home*, (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1978).

from the same social class as the manual workers, though a few of the better dressed strikers may have been manual workers in their 'Sunday best'.

The Mitchell and Kenyon film showed spectators wearing precisely this mixture of dress codes in almost similar proportions (Table 5.2). The subtleties of dress code among the 1900s working-class and clerks are clearly complex, and an estimate of an individual's place in the social order perhaps cannot be precisely made simply from appearance, but the film shows significant accord between the dress codes of the crowd at Goodison and that of transport strikers. We can surmise that the majority of spectators at Goodison were manual workers, including both skilled men and labourers, with significant numbers of low grade clerks. These findings somewhat conflict with the view of Mason and Russell, that the majority of spectators were 'probably drawn from the upper working, and to a lesser degree, the lower middle-class.'⁵⁸ Though Mitchell's and Kenyon's crowd shots were from the north west corner of Goodison, the Goodison Road and Park ends were also exclusively standing areas and there is no reason to suppose that spectators in these parts were radically different. However, the film did not show in detail the only seated area, that is, the main stand on Bullens Road, and it was presumably here were more middle-class supporters would congregate.

Less contentious is the estimate of spectators' ages although precise judgements for older men may be less accurate because of poorer standards of health than their modern equivalents. The results are tabulated (Table 5.3) and show that the overwhelming majority of supporters were in the age range 16 to 35, of which approximately 40% were aged 26-35. There was a significant minority of boys present but very few older men.⁵⁹ The most profoundly obvious feature in the film is the total absence of women, even though fifteen years earlier, they were apparently present in significant numbers at Anfield.⁶⁰ Newspaper references to female spectators generally were more common in the 1880s, and Russell has expressed surprise at the lack of

⁵⁸ Russell, *Football Films*, p.175.

⁵⁹ For detailed results of this Mitchell and Kenyon analysis, see Appendix 5.1, pages 271 to 276.

⁶⁰ Mason, *Association Football*, p. 152.

women in the entire series of Mitchell and Kenyon football films. In general, the few female attenders tended to confine themselves to more respectable parts of the ground, such as the grandstand, which the filmmakers largely ignored. The *Porcupine* competition of 1907 concentrated on main stands and yielded two female winners out of a total of thirty-six.⁶¹

Table 5.2 Hat types seen on Goodison spectators 1902⁶²

	View 1	View 2	View 3	View 4	View 5	View 6
Cap	20	11	21	35	17	15
Cap and tie	4	2	2	2	2	4
Cap (definitely manual)	1	11	1	10	2	7
Railway cap		2				
Bowler	3	8	8	16	8	6
Bowler and tie	8	2	12	4		4
Trilby	4	1	3	2	1	
Boater					1	
No hat		1		2	1	
Police			1			
Total	40	38	48	71	32	36

Source: Mitchell and Kenyon film of Everton v. Newcastle United, Sept. 1902.

Table 5.3 Age analysis of crowd, Goodison Park, 1902.

Age range	Total in each range
0-15	28
16-25	79
26-35	108
36-45	35
45+	6
Unknown	9
Total	265

Source: Mitchell and Kenyon film of Everton v. Newcastle United, Sept. 1902.

Precise information on the exact identities of Victorian and Edwardian football supporters is notoriously elusive and because the Mitchell and Kenyon film is 104

⁶¹ Mason, Tony, *The Blues and the Reds*, (Liverpool: Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1985), p. 14.

⁶² For view directions, see Figure 5.6 (page 264). Men described as 'Cap (definitely manual)' are incontrovertibly identified by their appearance as manual workers. Certain manual workers did wear bowler hats and ties, though these may have been favoured by clerical and lower middle class groups, as were the few boaters and trilbies seen.

years old, identification of large numbers of individual spectators by relatives is unlikely. However, a few other reliable sources of data exist, and fragments of useful evidence can be gleaned. One such source is the illuminated scroll presented to Everton player Robert Kelso in June 1896 on the occasion of his retirement from the club. Half of the 46 supporters and 'well-wishers' can be precisely identified through censuses, though this small, atypical example certainly includes a disproportionate number of more affluent supporters, who were somewhat well connected.

Table 5.4 Supporters identified from names on Everton player Robert Kelso's illuminated scroll (1896).

Name	Age (1896)	Birthplace	Resided (1901)	Occupation
George Barnett	24	Liverpool	West Derby	Wine merchant
William J. Ritchie	41	Renfrew	Walton	Inspector to Official Receiver
William G. Millington	29	Kirkdale	Walton	Shipping book-keeper
Richard Lowry	23	Liverpool	Liscard	Public house manager
Thomas Jagger	36	Ashton under Lyne	Kirkdale	Licensed victualler
Tom Bush	24	Liverpool	Everton	Commercial clerk
John James Ramsay	45	Ireland	Everton	Clerk in brewery
William Geary	28	Liverpool	Liverpool	General labourer
Fred Geary	28	Nottingham	Everton	Publican
Thomas E. Cuff	31	Liverpool	Wavertree	Pork butcher
Harold Sefton	44	Liverpool	Everton	Commission agent for shop and office fixtures
Edward Revell	39	Liverpool	Kirkdale	Carpenter
William Parle	47	Liverpool	Kirkdale	Coal agent
Alex Scroggie	40		Kirkdale	Father- cart owner (1881)
John Craven	44	Preston	Kirkdale	Licensed victualler
William Bramham	35	Liverpool	Bootle	Manager tobacconists.
Herbert Barker	30	Scotland	Walton	Solicitor's manager
Herbert Hibbard	43	Derbyshire	Toxteth	Athletic outfitter
William Lorimer	39	Scotland	Walton	Team owner
John Lorimer	41	Scotland	Everton	Licensed Victualler
Stanley W. Linaker	46	Liverpool	Toxteth	Brewer's agent
Ernest G. Crossthwaite	25		Everton (1881)	Father- clerk, Board of Trade
Abraham Hartley	24	Dumberton		Footballer

Sources: Kelso scroll, 1881, 1901 censuses.

Some of these supporters must have had close links to the management of Everton FC. The scroll included two of Kelso's team-mates, Abraham Hartley and Fred Geary, as well as the Liverpool FC director, J.J. Ramsay. Thomas Cuff was the brother of Everton's secretary, Will Cuff. Seven men were employed in the drink trade, eight

were self-employed in other trades, two were professional men, three were clerks, and there was one labourer. In 1901, the majority of this small sample of Everton followers lived in the north end of the city, with a small number from Toxteth, Wavertree, and the Wirral.

Mason also discovered a source on the precise identities of certain supporters, the results of a short-lived competition held by the weekly Liverpool journal, *Porcupine*, in 1907. Photographs of groups of spectators at Liverpool and Everton matches were taken at random and a £1 prize offered to those people whose faces were ringed. Mason cross-referenced addresses of winners with *Gore's Street Directory* to ascertain occupational data. Ten winners were listed in *Gore's* as householders and a further five winners were probably relatives of householders, but the addresses of nine winners could not be traced, perhaps suggesting that these people lived in low class streets not listed in the street directory. Of the 15 addresses where winners lived, the householders were predominantly engaged in skilled or clerical occupations.⁶³

Though a very small sample, Mason's data does accord with his previous research that shows that football spectators were predominantly from skilled and clerical occupational groups. But why should Mason's crowd analysis for Everton and Liverpool FCs in 1907 produce significantly different results from this study's results for Goodison Park five years earlier? Two of the *Porcupine* photographs, both taken at Everton v. Sheffield United in October 1907, are reproduced in Mason's 1985 paper. In the upper image, 13 males (including one boy) are standing around a crash barrier. Of the men who can be clearly seen, ten are wearing collars and ties, one man wears a trilby, two have bowlers and seven men have caps. The lower photograph shows 14 males (also including a boy), four of whom are sitting in front of a crash barrier, ten wearing ties, two with bowlers, four caps, and three men sporting novelty 'play up' hats. The general appearance of the men featured strongly suggests that they are of a somewhat higher class and a more 'respectable' social group to the men in the

⁶³ Jeweller, Warehouseman, Mariner, Clerk, Plumber, Manager, Stationer, Post Office Worker, Provision Broker, Postman. Non-householders identified in Mason's survey included the sons of a marine engineer, a printer, a collector, a commercial traveller, and the daughter or wife of a mariner. Mason, *Blues and the Reds*, p. 14.

Mitchell and Kenyon film. They seem to have responded politely to the photographer's request to look at the camera, whereas the spectators in the 1902 film mostly seemed a more lively and disorderly group. This impression is not only based on dress; the *Porcupine* groups responded to the camera in a sober and polite manner, whereas some spectators in the 1902 film reacted in a raucous fashion to the presence of the photographer. The *Porcupine* photographs appear to have been taken in the Bullens Road grandstand and the presence of two female winners of the *Porcupine* competition would also tend to support this. The *Porcupine* cameraman is more likely to have concentrated on affluent supporters in the more exclusive stand, who were more likely to be readers of the magazine.

Thirteen of Mason's competition winners were from north Liverpool suburbs within two miles of Anfield Road and Goodison, with a further eight from Wavertree, Toxteth, and Princes Park, in the south of the city. Seventeen out of the total of 22 men on the Kelso scroll lived in northern suburbs in 1901, the majority in Everton, Kirkdale, and Walton. The northern suburb bias in supporter origins is also corroborated by Kennedy's data on the residential patterns of Everton's 1892 shareholders. Their addresses show that 46% of the total 400 shareholders lived within half a mile of Goodison, and that a further 37% lived between half and one mile away from the ground. The data for Liverpool FC was less conclusive; shareholders' residences were divided almost equally between the three categories of half mile, mile, and mile plus zones from Anfield Road, though, of course, Liverpool's shareholder base was much narrower than Everton's.⁶⁴ The sum total of this evidence strongly indicates that support for Everton FC was concentrated in north Liverpool, and though there was less conclusive evidence in the case of Liverpool FC, given the proximity of

⁶⁴ *Echo*, Oct. 6th 1909. The fanatical 'Mr. J', referred to earlier (see page 235), was 'the greatest football enthusiast in Liverpool', according to the *Echo*. We do not know his age, occupation, address, or whether he had children. Mr. J's tenacity in watching football at Anfield Road and Goodison Park, having missed only 17 first-team games in the 18 years since 1891, suggests that he lived close to the football grounds. 'Mr J. has witnessed matches played in rain, snow, hail, sleet, frost, wind, sunshine, thunderstorms and every possible kind of weather and his good lady informs me that there never was an individual as her husband for football, and that he has many times left his Christmas dinner untested in order to be in time for the match.'

Anfield and Goodison, together with the common root of the two clubs, there seems no reason to suppose that Liverpool supporters were not concentrated in the same area.

SATURDAY RITUALS

The previous section contains plausible evidence that most Everton and Liverpool supporters lived in the north of the city, within a couple of miles of the football grounds. If these supporters also worked close to home or around the north docklands, or even in the city centre, and their employment finished between noon or 1pm, then they should have had sufficient time to be able to walk to the grounds on Saturday afternoons. In 1898 the Head Constable, Nott-Bower, had commented that supporters had time to make a brief call home before going on to the match.⁶⁵ But was it possible for supporters who lived or worked further away in distant suburbs, to be able to walk to the grounds? Walking great distances did not faze the Victorians. The railwayman, David Brindley, walked 1 ½ miles daily from Anfield to work at the Canada Dock (a journey of 20 minutes) and frequently walked five miles to visit friends in the southern suburb of Mossley Hill. If Brindley was prepared to walk this distance, then it was certainly feasible for fans living and working within the pre-1903 city boundaries, to be able to walk to the football grounds within an hour and a half. If they did not walk, supporters could have used a tram. The Liverpool tramway network had been developing piecemeal for thirty years, and was quite extensive by 1908 (**Figure 5.18, page 270**). The system had been electrified in 1898, and by then the speed and frequency of the tram service was capable of transporting large numbers of football supporters. Goodison's closest tramway was located several hundred yards away in the

⁶⁵ Nott-Bower's evidence to the Royal Commission on the Liquor Licensing Laws, quoted in Mason, *Association Football*, p. 176 and p. 196. David Brindley lived in the Everton and Anfield areas during the 1880s and '90s. His main mode of transportation was walking. Lawton and Pooley, 'Brindley', p.154 and 162.

retail thoroughfare of County Road, Walton, but Liverpool FC was somewhat more fortunate as trams could stop on Oakfield Road directly outside the ground. Mason has suggested that trams were important carriers of football fans in the late nineteenth century, and it does appear that significant numbers of football fans were travelling by tram in certain cities. In 1899 Sheffield Wednesday's new ground at Owlerton (later known as Hillsborough) was three miles from the city centre, with a tram fare of 1d.⁶⁶ According to Bill Murray, Glasgow's intra-city tram network was significant as 'a means of drawing thousands of football fans to the big football grounds from the vast population concentrated in the Clyde region.' but in Liverpool trams seem to have been of secondary importance for the working-class fan before World War One.⁶⁷ Lawton and Pooley have suggested that for ordinary working men on a 'tight budget, tramfares would have been a luxury', this being one reason why David Brindley chose to walk.⁶⁸

However, the wide popularity of newspaper football competitions (see Chapter 6) suggest that there may also have been significant numbers of football followers living in the outlying districts of south-west Lancashire, Wirral, and western Cheshire. For such distant supporters to actually see a match, rail travel was essential. There is evidence that a 22 year old railway clerk living ten miles north of central Liverpool regularly watched Everton at Coney Green as early as 1883.⁶⁹ David Brindley was also able to take advantage of cheap railway passes and is known to have travelled about 30 times by train within a 15 mile radius of his home in Anfield, to distant locations in west Lancashire, Cheshire, and south Wirral. However, rail travel would have been considerably more costly for non-railway employees and regular trips may have been

⁶⁶ Mason, *Association Football*, p. 145.

⁶⁷ Murray, *Old Firm*, p. 43.

⁶⁸ Lawton and Pooley, 'Brindley', p.166, See also S.A. Munro, Tramway Companies in Liverpool, 1859-1891, *Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Vol. 119 (1967), pp. 191-212.

⁶⁹ In 1909, the *Echo* reported that Arthur M. Fielding of Southport had sent in an old Everton FC membership card for 1883-84. *Echo*, Oct. 16th 1909. The 1881 census showed that Fielding lived at Hightown, near Formby (his father was the local stationmaster), on the Liverpool-Southport line. As a

beyond the budget of most working-class men. The local railway network was not particularly well located to facilitate mass transportation to either football ground. In fact, the nearest railway station to either club was Spellow Station, on the London and North-West line, some 570 yards from Goodison and 1 ¼ miles from Anfield (**Figure 5.17, page 269**).

Relatively few football followers from peripheral districts may have been using trains to visit Goodison and Anfield, but considerably more Liverpudlians were travelling by rail to watch away games. By the 1890s, local newspapers played a significant role in promoting a healthy demand for transportation to away games. Everton played three successive away matches in November and December 1893 and the *Liverpool Review* gave details of the special excursions that were laid on: ‘tomorrow at 12.30 p.m., a train will leave the Exchange Station for Manchester and park in time for the Newton Heath match.’ The fare was 2s. 6d. return with a one hour travelling time. The other matches involved a trip to Sheffield to see United with a return fare of 3 shillings and a 3 hour travelling time, and a trip to Blackburn for 2s. 3d., train leaving Exchange at 1.05 p.m., arriving back in Liverpool at 5.55 p.m.⁷⁰ Clearly being able to afford the time and money was a major consideration and only the better-off or self-employed supporter, could perhaps contemplate such luxuries. But substantial numbers of fans did travel. The *Review* was confident that ‘there should be plenty of Goodisonians to cheer their pets onto victory or the other thing onto foreign ground’ for a series of away matches in 1893, and remarkably, *nine hundred* Everton fans were able to afford the 2s. 3d. fare in January 1894, for a trip to see the match with Preston.⁷¹ Middle-ranking clerks working in the city centre may well have been able to catch a 12.30 pm train from Exchange to travel to other Lancashire clubs. Even less affluent supporters may have planned occasional Saturday excursions as a treat.

railway employee Fielding would have benefited from subsidised travel. Lawton and Pooley , ‘Brindley’, p.158.

⁷⁰ *Review*, Dec. 2nd 1893.

⁷¹ *Review*, Jan. 13th and Jan. 20th 1894. The train left Central Station at 12.25 p.m., arrived in Preston at 2 o’clock and returned at a quarter past six.

Travel to away matches gave the fan a sense of camaraderie with his fellow supporters, and an added incentive was to travel with their teams, and the opportunity to consort with the players and club management:

‘As the return excursion was steaming out of Stoke station on Saturday, a crowd of passengers hurriedly left their compartments in order to congregate around the players’ saloon and give “three cheers for Everton”.’⁷²

However, even if the football-following railway traveller was able to afford to travel, the logistics of a connection between the station and the ground in such distant towns for an early kick-off often presented considerable difficulties, although some affluent Liverpoolian football enthusiasts were even prepared to occasionally travel to watch other matches not involving Everton or Liverpool.⁷³ A broker in the Exchange newsroom told friends that he was so determined to see Preston North End play Sunderland, that he would be prepared to ‘walk the whole of the way, and creep into the ground on my hands and knees.’⁷⁴

Travel, even if it was only to the city’s home football grounds, was part of the Saturday ritual for football fans. Supporters approached the grounds from all directions but the greatest concentration came from the thousands of manual and clerical workers who travelled from the city centre. Several newspaper correspondents were impressed by the scale and bustle of transport from central Liverpool; ‘there was a great “gate”, and Goodison was a sight, and Scotland Road was a sight, and the trams and the buses, and the cabs and the carts were sights.’⁷⁵ Most spectators still walked, even from the central district, but one of the cheapest forms of transport was a waggonette, particularly favoured by more zealous groups of supporters. An *Athletic Times* correspondent of 1889, described his ‘enthusiastic fellow occupants in the not over-

⁷² *Review*, Feb. 3rd 1894.

⁷³ *Review*, Nov. 11th 1893.

⁷⁴ *Review*, Jan. 14th 1893

⁷⁵ *Review*, Feb. 24th 1894.

spruce turnout' (30 in number) as yelling and shouting for Everton 'the whole of the journey' from Lime Street.⁷⁶

Near Anfield or Goodison, the streets were thronged with 'hurrying crowds', hastening to the ground in order to gain the best viewing positions. The gates were usually opened about an hour and a half to two hours before kick-off, but even at this time, several thousand people could already be waiting outside to find a place in the cheaper stands. Clearly, even in the late 1880s, this collective determination to get to the grounds showed the degree of enthusiasm of Liverpudlian football crowds, and bears out the Head Constable's assertion that Saturday afternoon football reduced drunkenness, although there was still much time to get inebriated after the match.⁷⁷ For ordinary League matches in the 1890s and 1900s, supporters had not yet started to elaborate their dress with team favours in the form of scarves and rosettes. Stephen Kelly has claimed that this practice did not arise until about 1907, but specially printed 'Play Up, Everton' hats and hat-cards were available as early as 1894.⁷⁸ This may have been the habit of more affluent fans, as a few men from the main stand in the *Porcupine* competition photographs of 1907 are wearing such cards, but none of the many spectators in the Mitchell and Kenyon film of 1902 wore 'favours' of any sort, though a few of them can be seen with 1d programmes.⁷⁹ A photograph of Everton fans gathered in London for the 1906 Cup Final, shows several young men attired in their 'Sunday best' and bedecked in team colours, including 'Play Up' cards and one carrying a special blue and white umbrella. Other types of flamboyant novelty hats were popular on such special occasions as shown in photographs of waggonettes travelling to the 1907 and 1914 Cup Finals (Figure 5.16, page 265). More extravagant displays of support were rare. One of the few known instances was a banner apparently

⁷⁶ *Liverpool Athletic Times*, 1889, quoted in Kelly, Stephen, *The Kop: Liverpool's Twelfth Man*, (London: Virgin, 2005), p.3.

⁷⁷ *Review*, Sept. 23rd 1893. The correspondent noted that after the Aston Villa match at Goodison, 'several fellows in my vicinity swore they would get drunk, as I've no doubt they did.'

⁷⁸ *Review*, Feb. 24th 1894.

⁷⁹ *Porcupine*, Oct. 26th 1907, in Mason, *Blues and the Reds*, p. 11.

hung from a house in Kemlyn Road, overlooking the Anfield football ground, during Everton's match with Preston in 1889.⁸⁰

BEHAVIOUR

Whilst a number of fans took the opportunity of the Saturday match ritual as an excuse for what was in everyday contexts, somewhat eccentric behaviour, some aspects of certain supporters' conduct was considered raucous and socially unacceptable. In the 1950s, travelling Everton supporters were amongst the first to systematically vandalise trains but in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, neither senseless destruction nor physical aggression characterised the behaviour of Liverpoolian spectators, though such outbreaks were more common amongst other Lancashire fans. Most of the reports of disorder found by Lewis occurred in east Lancashire and Preston, with very few incidents reported in Liverpool.⁸¹ The extensive number of press reports examined for the present study also broadly confirms the paucity of trouble at pre-1914 matches in Liverpool. However, less serious infractions, particularly bad language, were regularly reported in the Liverpool press throughout the entire pre-Great War period.⁸² The *Review* reported that 'Bad language, it seems, is particularly prevalent amongst the spectators at Goodison Park', notably 'partisan swear-words of disappointment and disgust' in the 'heat of excitement engendered of momentous competition.'⁸³ Several correspondents complained that bad language prevented them from taking female relatives to Goodison.

The swearing and the aggressively partisan demeanour of football crowds was not likely to engender them to non-conformist clergymen, and predictably such men were

⁸⁰ *Liverpool Athletic Times*, Jan. 26th 1889, in Kelly, *Kop*, p.4.

⁸¹ All Lewis's examples were taken from the Bolton *Football Field*, but this paper did have comprehensive coverage of the whole county.

⁸² Such profanities and ignorance were not confined to Liverpoolian football followers. The *Preston Herald* was similarly critical of Burnley supporters. *Preston Herald*, Sept. 23rd 1891 quoted in Russell, *Football and the English*, p.58. Also see Mason, *Blues and the Reds*, p.16 During the early 1910s, the combined Everton and Liverpool programme rebuked certain sections of the crowd for obscene language directed at players.

⁸³ *Review*, Oct. 7th 1893.

among the most vociferous critics of football. Despite living close to Goodison Park, the preacher George Wise was no follower of football and had made disparaging comments about the game.⁸⁴ The Rev. Charles F. Aked, a young Baptist minister based at a city centre mission, was another arch-critic of Liverpudlian football crowds in the early League period. The highly-charged description of football spectators as a profane rabble made by a correspondent to the *Liverpool Athletic Times* in 1889 seem remarkably similar to comments made by Aked at this time.⁸⁵ Although highly prejudiced, Aked had actually taken the trouble to observe football crowds on several occasions.⁸⁶ Aked was convinced that football watching led to an increase in the consumption of drink but several authorities refuted his claims, including the Head Constable, Nott-Bower. According to the latter, less drink was consumed when football matches were staged because 'most men go home to change and wash themselves. Their wives have then an opportunity of becoming possessed of that, which is necessary for the maintenance of the family.' When matches were played away, men were in no particular hurry to get home and drinking was more likely because 'all thought of time, and of wife and family too are banished for the time being from their minds.'⁸⁷

⁸⁴ 'One of the destructive wills is sport, another is drink, and then there is betting and gambling... but what are we to think of the excesses of professional football.' George Wise in the 'Protestant Standard', Feb. 11th 1889, quoted in Ingram, P.J., (1987) *Sectarianism and Violence in Nineteenth Century South-West Lancashire*, unpublished PhD thesis, Lancashire Polytechnic, p.245.

⁸⁵ *Liverpool Athletic Times*, 1889, and *St. Helens Lantern*, Nov. 22nd 1889.

⁸⁶ Aked had watched games in the midlands, Nottingham, and St. Helens, and certainly attended at least one major fixture at Anfield, against Preston North End in 1889. *St. Helens Lantern*, Nov. 22nd 1889. Further information on Aked in Rees, D. B., *Local and Parliamentary Politics in Liverpool from 1800 to 1911*, (New York, Edwin Mellen, 1999), Lewis, R., 'Football Hooliganism in England before 1914: a critique of the Dunning thesis', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 13, No. 3, (Dec. 1996), p.330.

⁸⁷ *St. Helens Lantern*, Nov. 22nd 1889. Liverpool's formidable Head Constable Nott-Bower also took the line that watching Saturday afternoon football reduced levels of drunkenness due to working men giving wives their wages before going to the match evidence to the Royal Commission on Liquor Licensing Laws in 1898. Mason, *Association Football*, p.176.

The opportunity to lose self-control for a short time was clearly one of the attractions for members of the football crowd, its sheer vastness providing anonymity for letting off steam in a somewhat acceptable social context. The frequent criticisms of crowd behaviour in the Liverpool and national press tell as much about the genteel standards of the writers, as they do about the conduct of spectators, the former generally betraying a lack of insight into the realities of working-class life. The football referee and administrator, J.J. Bentley, was highly critical of a raucous faction at Everton in 1893. Bentley ruled a home player offside at a critical moment and

‘four or five thousand spectators behind the goal line almost unanimously voiced the verdict that the referee was wrong. Moreover, they were so disgusted with Mr. Bentley’s action that for the remainder of the game the air was filled with sarcastic shouts of “Offside, Bentley!”, whenever and wherever the offside rule was in the least danger of being broken.’⁸⁸

Bentley replied a week later, ‘I don’t know that the club can do anything to prevent the ignorant ravings of these particular frequenters of the ground, but if some kindly disposed person were to open a night school and instruct them in the rudiments of the game, he would do a real service.’⁸⁹ Bentley, along with other administrators of commercial football, was not comfortable with the direction along which football was being led by progressively more raucous working-class sections of the crowds. Several other contemporary commentators noted similar trends in football crowds, making profoundly derogatory observations that ‘ragged urchins’ would ‘hoot and yell at anything’ and that the ‘foulest curses of an artisan’s vocabulary are shouted.’⁹⁰ The reporter of an experimental floodlit rugby match at Goodison in 1894, noted that boys in the crowd were clearly working-class, and indulged in horseplay when the ball was kicked into the stands.⁹¹ The increasing incidence of such behaviour from the late

⁸⁸ *Review*, Sept. 23rd 1893.

⁸⁹ *Review*, Sept. 30th 1893.

⁹⁰ Tischler, Steven, *Footballers and Businessmen: the Origins of Professional Soccer in England*, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), pp.127-128. *Fortnightly Review*, 1st Jan. 1894 and *Contemporary Review*, Nov. 1898.

⁹¹ *Review*, Feb. 17th 1894. ‘The enclosure was full of gamins – schoolboys, newsboys, and the rest...’ *Linesman* spoke with a 9 to 10 year old boy. ‘He wanted to know, “which side is playing rugby?” He

1880s, supports the contention that football crowds included increasing numbers of the working-class.⁹²

A rare example of violent crowd disorder in Liverpool occurred after the abandonment of Everton's League match with Small Heath following a very rainy Christmas in 1895. The Goodison pitch was waterlogged and after half an hour of slow, muddy play, the referee decided to abandon the match. For 15 minutes the 6,000 crowd waited for a possible re-start and when this failed to materialise, the spectators in the seated sections began to leave. A small group of spectators went to the club office to demand a refund but the situation escalated into violence. Despite an offer by George Mahon of free tickets for the re-played match, a hail of missiles smashed windows and damaged the clock in the pavilion. The mob over-ran the pitch and stands but after the arrival of police reinforcements, the 'rioters' were chased through the main gate into Goodison Road. The troublemakers were said to be 'street loafers' who had apparently entered the ground as the gates were opened when the match was abandoned. Thomas Keates felt that this incident was of sufficient seriousness to warrant a substantial section in his history of the club, but contemporary press reports practically ignored the event.⁹³ The area surrounding Goodison Park was regarded as a respectable working class district, though other parts of north Liverpool had witnessed aggression between rival gangs of youths ten years previously – the High Rippers and Bootle Bummers – and there may be no reason to suppose that similar smaller scale incidents were ever entirely eradicated.⁹⁴ Sectarian violence characterised working-class Liverpool life during this period, and there have been several unproven allegations over the years that Everton

thought "it weren't nearly so good as football." He said "Was they fighting or wot?" And at half-time he said "Well! – and all that running about for nowt."'; 'at half time a ball...escaped out of the enclosure into one of the end stands, whereupon the youngsters started a miniature Runcorn v. New Brighton among themselves and the Inferno that resulted simply out-Danted Dante.'

⁹² Lewis, R., 'Hooliganism', pp.320-321.

⁹³ Keates, Everton FC, p. 144-148. Rogers, Ken, *One Hundred Years of Goodison Glory*,(Liverpool: 1992), p. 48.

⁹⁴ 'High Rip' gangs terrorised people in the Scotland D police division in June 1886. Cockcroft, W.R., 'The Liverpool Police Force 1836-1902' in Bell, S.P.(ed), *Victorian Lancashire*, (Newton Abbott: David and Charles, 1974). Waller, *Democracy*, p. 64.

was a 'Catholic team' and Liverpool, Protestant. The next section investigates the extent, if any, of religious bias in Liverpool football.

SECTARIANISM IN LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL

Several writers have commented on the parallels between the religious sectarianism of Celtic and Rangers in Glasgow and allegedly similar differences between the Everton and Liverpool football clubs.⁹⁵ Myth and uncertainty surrounds the claim that Everton was a Catholic club and Liverpool, Protestant, and the rest of this chapter examines the verisimilitude of such rumour and its relevance as a factor in football violence. There was an upsurge in violent sectarian conflict in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Liverpool and religious antagonism affected local politics and social relations to an extraordinary degree. The city's connections with Dublin and Belfast, and its position as the first drop for Irish immigration ensured that it remained at the sharp end of sectarian strife, developing an acute culture of anti-Catholicism. The sectarian problems were exacerbated by the economic infrastructure of Liverpool, which as a transport and commercial centre, had a huge casual and unskilled workforce largely of Irish origin.⁹⁶

Religion is intrinsically linked to football in Liverpool by virtue of its origins as an initiative by Church of England curates to improve the church's outreach among the working class. Religion and religious differences were characterised in the ethnic geography of the city. Irish Catholics were congregated in districts to the west of Scotland Road and along the north docks. Conversely, Canon Hume's ecclesiastical census of 1881 showed that the Everton township was overwhelmingly Protestant in character.⁹⁷ Colin Pooley's research based on 1871 census data also shows that

⁹⁵ Murray, *Old Firm*, p. 100 and p. 118. Mason, *Blues and Reds*, p.17.

⁹⁶ Neal, Frank, *Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience 1819-1914*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988). Waller, *Democracy*, pp. 2-5. Bohstedt, J., 'More than One Working Class : Protestant-Catholic Riots in Edwardian Liverpool', in Belchem, J. (ed), *Popular Politics*, pp. 173-216.

⁹⁷ Hume, Rev. Canon, Ecclesiastical census of Liverpool, 1881. Data from Anon., *An Illustrated Everyday History of Liverpool and Merseyside*, (Liverpool: Scouse Press, 1996), pages for 1881. Every parish priest in Liverpool was asked to appoint an enumerator to survey the population in each parish. Only permanent residents were included.

Everton's social and ethnic composition was distinctly different to that of the Irish dockland area.⁹⁸ Everton was populated by English, Scots, and Welsh migrants of respectable working-class and lower middle class stock. The Conservative Working Men's Association, an extreme Protestant working-class organisation with accents of the Orange Order and Low Church, had a strong presence in Everton and followers of these organisations were prominent among the men who formed the backbone of Everton FC's management. The pre-1892 Everton FC was not, therefore, a religious club in the sense that Glasgow Rangers might be so described, but it was certainly rooted in a district and culture with a very staunch Protestant character.⁹⁹ (Table 5.5).

Tony Mason claimed that there was nothing in the 1892 bifurcation of Everton FC 'which could remotely be classed as religious' but given the circumstances surrounding the split, religious factors played a significant part in delineating differences between the two parties.¹⁰⁰ The faction led by George Mahon that eventually re-sited the club at Goodison Park, was distinctly Liberal and temperance in outlook, whereas the Houlding faction (forerunners of Liverpool FC) was principally composed of men with Conservative and Protestant sympathies, as indicated above.¹⁰¹

Table 5.5: Canon Hume's ecclesiastical census of Everton 1881

Parish of Everton	Established	C. of E.	Dissenters	R.C.
St. George's, Heyworth Street	1813	6725	3432	1615
Christ Church, Great Homer Street	1849	9156	973	2423
St. Peter's, Sackville Street	1850	6747	1230	1425
St. Ambrose, Prince Edwin St.	1871	3750	2121	2763
St. Saviour's, Breckfield St. North	1868	5865	2863	875
St. Cuthbert's, Robson Street	1877	3161	1497	561
St. Benedict's, Kepler Street	1878	4885	3279	1071
St. Chad's, Everton Valley	1880	3294	1284	735
St. Augustine's, Shaw Street	1830	5134	760	1148
St. Timothy's, Rokeby Street	1861	3924	600	2554
St. Chrystostom's Aubrey Street	1853	7576	3235	1727
Emmanuel, West Derby Road	1867	4351	1202	826

⁹⁸ Pooley, C.G., 'Migrant Communities', p.369.

⁹⁹ Waller, *Democracy*, p. 63 and pp.124-125.

¹⁰⁰ Mason, *Blues and the Reds*, p.4 and p. 17.

¹⁰¹ Young, *Merseyside*, p.44.

Source: Canon Hume's ecclesiastical census, data in *An Illustrated Everyday History of Liverpool and Merseyside*, (Liverpool: Scouse Press, 1996), no page number.

In the face of considerable opposition, John Houlding's determination to maintain a professional football club based at Anfield Road, implied that he regarded the control a club to be crucial to the maintenance of his political support base aligned with working-class Conservatism, Orangeism, and Freemasonry.¹⁰² It is difficult to believe that Catholic football followers would have supported Liverpool FC given its strong Protestant and Conservative connections. The Liberal ethos of the post-1892 Everton FC, based at Goodison, must have made the club more attractive to potential supporters of Irish and Catholic origins, thanks also in no small part to the £1000 grant provided by its Catholic director, Dr. James Baxter.

Catholic football supporters may well have preferred the Goodison-based Everton, but this did not make it a Catholic club like Celtic, despite the auspicious presence of Dr. Baxter. If anything, Everton had simply been transformed from a club with strong Protestant links to a club with weaker Protestant links. A fundamental question is why, despite a larger Irish population and a superficial similarity with Glasgow, was a major Catholic Irish football club not established in Liverpool? A Glaswegian Catholic priest had formed Celtic FC with the intention of raising funds for charity. In Liverpool, a prominent Catholic clergyman, Monsignor Nugent, had organised recreational societies for young Catholics, but these did not apparently include football clubs.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, Catholic clergy in Liverpool *could* have established a football club on the Glasgow Celtic model though perhaps on a less ambitious scale. More prosperous and secure ethnic groups in Liverpool such as the Welsh and Scots had established (short-

¹⁰² Walvin, James, *The People's Game: a social history of football*, (London: Allen Lane, 1975), Mason, *Association Football*, p.45, Young, *Merseyside*, p.143.

¹⁰³ Irish cultural domination in dockland districts was such that Liverpool Scotland actually returned T.P. O'Connor, the newspaper editor, as an Irish nationalist MP to Parliament for an astonishing 44 years (1885-1929). On Mgr. Nugent, see Smith, Joan, 'Class, Skill, and Sectarianism in Glasgow and Liverpool 1880-1914', in Morris, R.J., *Class, Power and Social Structure in British Nineteenth Century Towns*, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986).

lived) football clubs.¹⁰⁴ The different political and economic structures of Glasgow and Liverpool demonstrate why there were significant obstacles against the Liverpool Irish forming a major football club of their own.

Glasgow's industrial infrastructure was based on heavy engineering and shipbuilding, with a predominantly skilled workforce. Liverpool's economy was based principally on its status as a port, and the workforce was predominantly casual, with unskilled Catholics making a significant contribution. Catholics were concentrated in the overcrowded streets and courts to the west of Scotland Road, whereas in Glasgow, the degree of occupational and residential segregation was on a considerably smaller scale. No wards in Glasgow were entirely Protestant or Catholic and there was no concentrated Irish Catholic community similar to Scotland Road.¹⁰⁵ The Liberal climate of Glasgow gave Catholics more confidence about forming their own self-help organisations and interacting with the native culture. Sectarian hostility in Glasgow was strong but not to the fanatical extent of Liverpool.¹⁰⁶ Though there is no reason why Liverpool-based Catholic football clubs could not have been formed, the probability is that they would not have matured to the professional level because of Liverpool's adverse social structure.

Of course, no major Catholic Liverpoolian club was formed but as indicated above, it is possible that after 1892 Everton could have had a minority Catholic following and Liverpool's supporters been Anglo-Protestant, so religious-inspired crowd trouble could have broken out on a limited scale. Given Liverpool's appalling record of religious discord and sectarian violence, it is perhaps surprising that this did not appear to have happened, particularly at 'derby' games. In the early twentieth century sectarian tensions in Liverpool worsened considerably and Protestant preachers, of

¹⁰⁴ In 1892, a professional expatriate Scots club Liverpool Caledonians was established in Wavertree and could well have survived but for the competition from the new Liverpool FC in the north of the city (See *Football Fever*, Chapter Two, page 93). Youths of Welsh extraction had founded Cambrian FC in Everton during the mid-1880s.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, 'Class, Skill, and Sectarianism', p.188.

¹⁰⁶ Ingram, *Thesis*, and Bohstedt, 'Riot', p. 173-216. The last major sectarian riot in the city of Glasgow itself occurred in 1875. In Liverpool, the last such major disturbance was as late as 1909.

whom George Wise was the most fanatical, shamelessly exploited the situation. Wise achieved notoriety as an opponent of ritualism in the Church of England but in the 1900s, his brand of extreme ultra-Protestantism gained a receptive welcome in the volatile atmosphere of sectarian Liverpool. Insulting Roman Catholics with the lurid fantasy of his rhetoric, Wise provoked his own followers and assorted hangers-on to repeated episodes of sectarian aggression against Catholics.¹⁰⁷ Serious lapses of public order frequently followed Wise's monster meetings in the natural amphitheatre of St. Domingo's Pit in Everton. Provocatively, this venue was close to several major Roman Catholic institutions, including a monastery, convent and school but an added piquancy was its proximity to St. Saviour's, the anti-Ritualist church, which had been an important element in the original Everton United Church FC. The epicentre of staunch Protestantism in Liverpool, was, perhaps not entirely coincidentally, the same area where football had been introduced in 1879.

Sectarian relations in the city became decidedly more tense in 1909. Several apparently trivial events roused Protestant extremists to rail against what they perceived as unacceptable acts of Catholic provocation. Curiously, most of these provocations had not originated in Liverpool; a religious bill rejected by Parliament, a protest against a Catholic procession in London, and alterations of the monarch's coronation oath were contentious issues for Liverpool Protestants, but in May the catalyst for real trouble was a local Catholic procession.¹⁰⁸ Several months of protracted rioting ensued, mostly though not exclusively, in the Everton and Scotland Road areas.¹⁰⁹ In August, Wise was imprisoned for four months for refusing to cease organising Protestant marches, but was later bailed pending appeal. If the supporters of Everton and Liverpool football clubs had religious affiliations like their Glaswegian counterparts, then this

¹⁰⁷ Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, p. 202-20. Waller, *Democracy*, p. 200. Bohstedt, *Riot*, pp.188-193.

¹⁰⁸ Another trigger was the affront to Protestant sensibilities at John Redmond's attempt in Parliament to amend the Coronation oath of faith. Extreme Protestants were incensed by the increasing boldness displayed by Catholics in asserting their collective identity in the city. In Liverpool this was manifested by public processions at which the consecrated Host was displayed and by the construction of elaborate streetside shrines, such idolatrous displays being a great affront to hard-line Protestants. Bohstedt, 'Riot', p. 178.

¹⁰⁹ Waller, *Democracy*, pp. 237-241.

surely would be the time when serious crowd trouble would be associated with football matches. The derby game of Saturday October 2nd 1909 occurred when riots were a virtually a nightly occurrence in the Everton area. Yet, despite the press's tenacity in extensively reporting sectarian ructions during this tense period, no incidents whatever were reported at the match.¹¹⁰ Three weeks later, at the court in St. George's Hall, Wise lost his appeal and was ceremoniously driven by his followers along the main thoroughfare of north Liverpool as he returned to Walton Gaol. In heavy rain, thousands of Liverpudlians thronged the pavements along the route, quietly witnessing the solemn cavalcade. The procession passed along County Road, Walton, within 300 yards of Goodison Park, just as a reserve match was ending.¹¹¹ At precisely the same time, 18,000 spectators were leaving Anfield at the conclusion of Liverpool's Division One match against Sheffield Wednesday. It seems inconceivable that some football supporters leaving Goodison and Anfield did not join the crowds gathered in County Road for the Wise procession, but if they had, and had strongly-held opposing religious affiliations, then some sort of abusive or violent confrontation might have been expected. As it happened, nothing of the sort occurred and indeed, no incidents of any kind were reported in the area on that particular Saturday afternoon.¹¹² Though this is not absolutely conclusive evidence, the absence of abuse or violence during this particular event, when a number of football supporters must have been present, further underlines the view that most Everton and Liverpool fans had no passionate religious affiliation.

CONCLUSIONS

The huge numbers attending football matches in Liverpool show that for many citizens, 'football supporting' was becoming a regular, almost obligatory, habit. Even as early as the mid 1880s the upward trend was clear. 'Gates' at Anfield Road matched those at leading clubs in Lancashire and the midlands, ensuring Everton's election to the new Football League, and the club's attendances continued to rise for the next decade. Once promoted to Division One, Liverpool's attendances virtually matched Everton's,

¹¹⁰ *Echo*, Oct. 4th 1909.

¹¹¹ Everton reserves v. Northern Nomads.

¹¹² *Echo*, Oct. 25th 1909.

but there is convincing evidence that a cohort of regular attenders alternated between watching Everton and Liverpool on successive weeks. Before the end of the 1890s, some of these were showing a preference for Liverpool FC.

The population of Bootle increased significantly between 1861 and 1891, but was still humble by comparison to the half million inhabitants of its neighbour. Bootle FC seems to have had virtually no appeal for Liverpudlians across the city boundary and indeed had fairly limited appeal even to its own citizens. Bootle's separateness seemed anomalous, as its built-up area was coterminous with its larger neighbour, but there was evidence of significant popular and municipal antipathy between Bootle and Liverpool. Chronically low attendances eventually forced Bootle's closure in 1894.

To safely accommodate the large crowds attending games at Anfield from the mid-1880s, John Houlding commissioned the building of raised viewing areas, with progressively more ambitious stands being constructed before and after Everton's removal to Goodison. When built in 1892, the latter was England's largest and most advanced stadium, comparable in scale with American baseball stadia and Glasgow's large football grounds. Both Anfield Road and Goodison Park assumed their modern dimensions and appearance when extensively re-designed by the Scottish engineer Archibald Leitch, in the 1900s.

Football crowds in Liverpool were essentially similar to their counterparts in other football towns, except perhaps that they contained proportionally more of the unskilled. They were overwhelmingly male, mainly composed of the skilled and semi-skilled working-class with a much smaller proportion of lower middle-class supporters. Ages ranged from about 9 to 50 but the majority were between 16 and 35 years old. The greater proportion of supporters lived in northern Liverpool, mostly within 1-2 miles of both Anfield and Goodison. Anecdotal and photographic evidence does imply that the tenor of Liverpudlian football crowds had become significantly more partisan and aggressively male by the 1890s, lending credence to Dunning's characterisation of the 'Dominance of the Roughts'. However, in support of Lewis, there was little sign of violent misbehaviour at Anfield and Goodison before 1914, though jeering and

swearing, were particularly characteristic of some working-class Everton and Liverpool supporters.

Different groups of supporters intermingled in the standing areas of the grounds, including boys, young manual workers, and middle-aged 'respectable' working-class. 'Play up' hatbands were being worn at League games even in the 1890s, but scarves and other favours were not evident even in the years just before the Great War. Special games, mostly cup-ties and finals, saw recognition of the greater occasion. Flowers, favours, and 'play up' cards were worn, and rattles and coloured umbrellas were common amongst certain small groups of supporters. Many fans contributed to season-long funds to travel to such matches, whether in the provinces or London, and if in the latter for the Cup Final, some groups hired horse-drawn brakes to convey them to the Crystal Palace in ceremonial fashion, although these do not appear to have been the equivalent of the solidly established Scottish supporter brake clubs. Though a formal version of such clubs did not exist, there does seem to have been a well-organised culture of rail travel to away matches, mostly in neighbouring Lancashire towns, and this involved some supporters of comparatively modest means.

Despite the city's sectarian reputation and the parallels with Glasgow, there is no specific evidence of religious affiliation in the support base of either football club.

The hard-line Protestant-Tory complexion of the Liverpool FC management and the nature of the split of 1892 when a new Everton FC emerged from a Liberal-inspired faction suggest that Protestant working men may have been more attracted to support Liverpool with Everton more likely to appeal to men of Liberal sympathies, including Roman Catholics.

By the end of the 1890s, several city-based clubs, starting with Aston Villa and Newcastle, began to overtake Everton's previous domination of attendances. Manchester and Birmingham had an expanding manufacturing economy during the Edwardian period, and the latter's population had more than doubled in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Newcastle also experienced significant economic growth and the coal industry in the north-east was at its height in the years before the Great War. Relative prosperity, expanding populations, and footballing success

contributed to the consistently high gates enjoyed by these clubs. Chelsea and Tottenham were able to provide the massive populations of north and west London with a regular diet of top northern opposition, which the region's Southern League clubs could not match. With Liverpool's huge population it may have been expected that attendances at Goodison and Anfield should have increased at a rate commensurate with that of their rival city clubs, but in Liverpool, a 'ceiling' seemed to have been reached beyond which expansion stalled. The areas of the city where Liverpool's population was most concentrated were in the dockland wards not far from the football grounds. However, despite their proximity, these were also the poorest and most deprived parts of the city, least able to afford to attend football games. Both Everton and Liverpool almost seemed to have exhausted the local supply of the social groups most likely to attend matches, and this relative stagnancy continued until after the Great War.

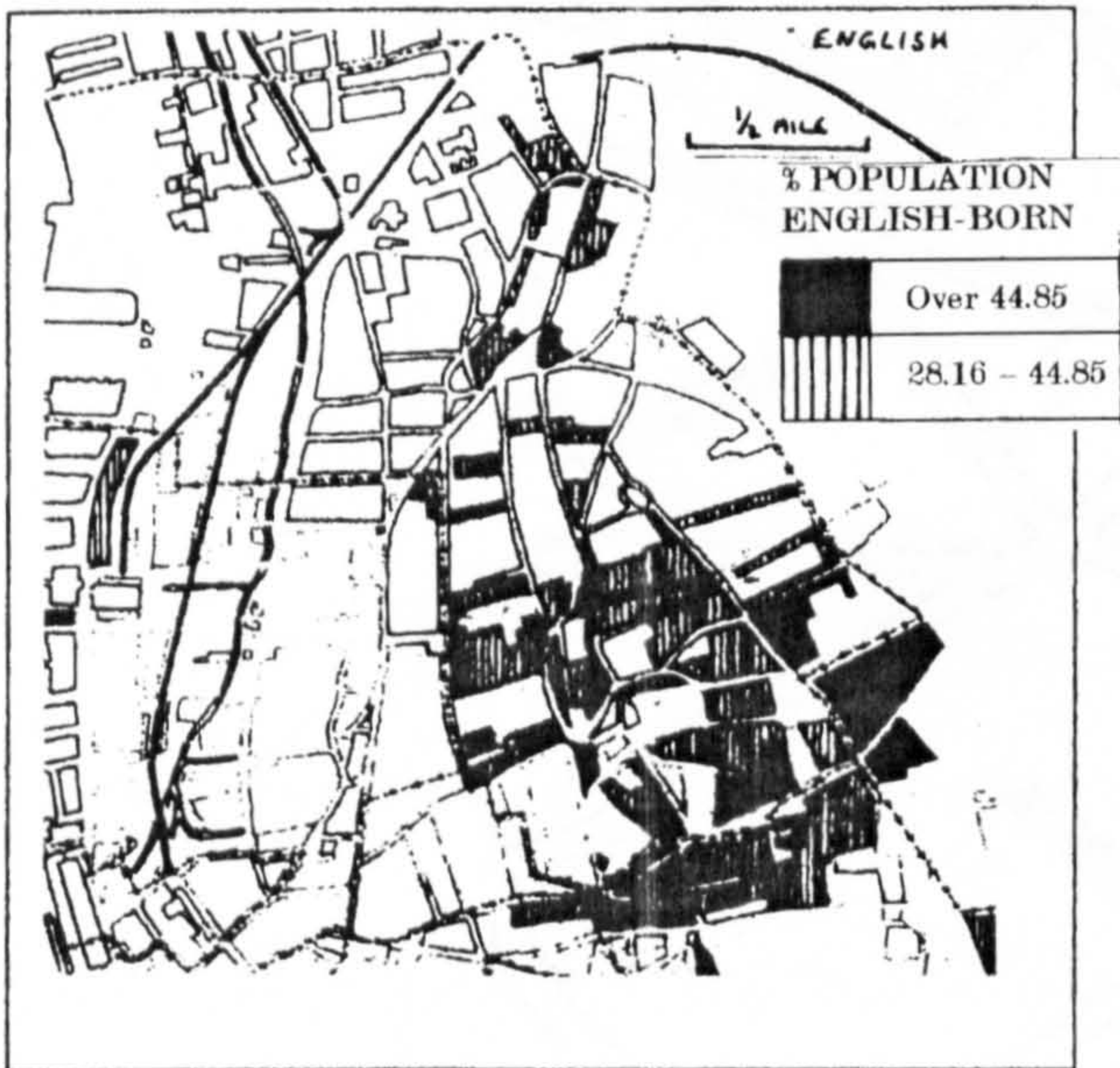


Figure 5.1a: English-born settlement in north Liverpool, 1871, based on Fig. 4, Pooley, 'Migrant Communities', p. 372.

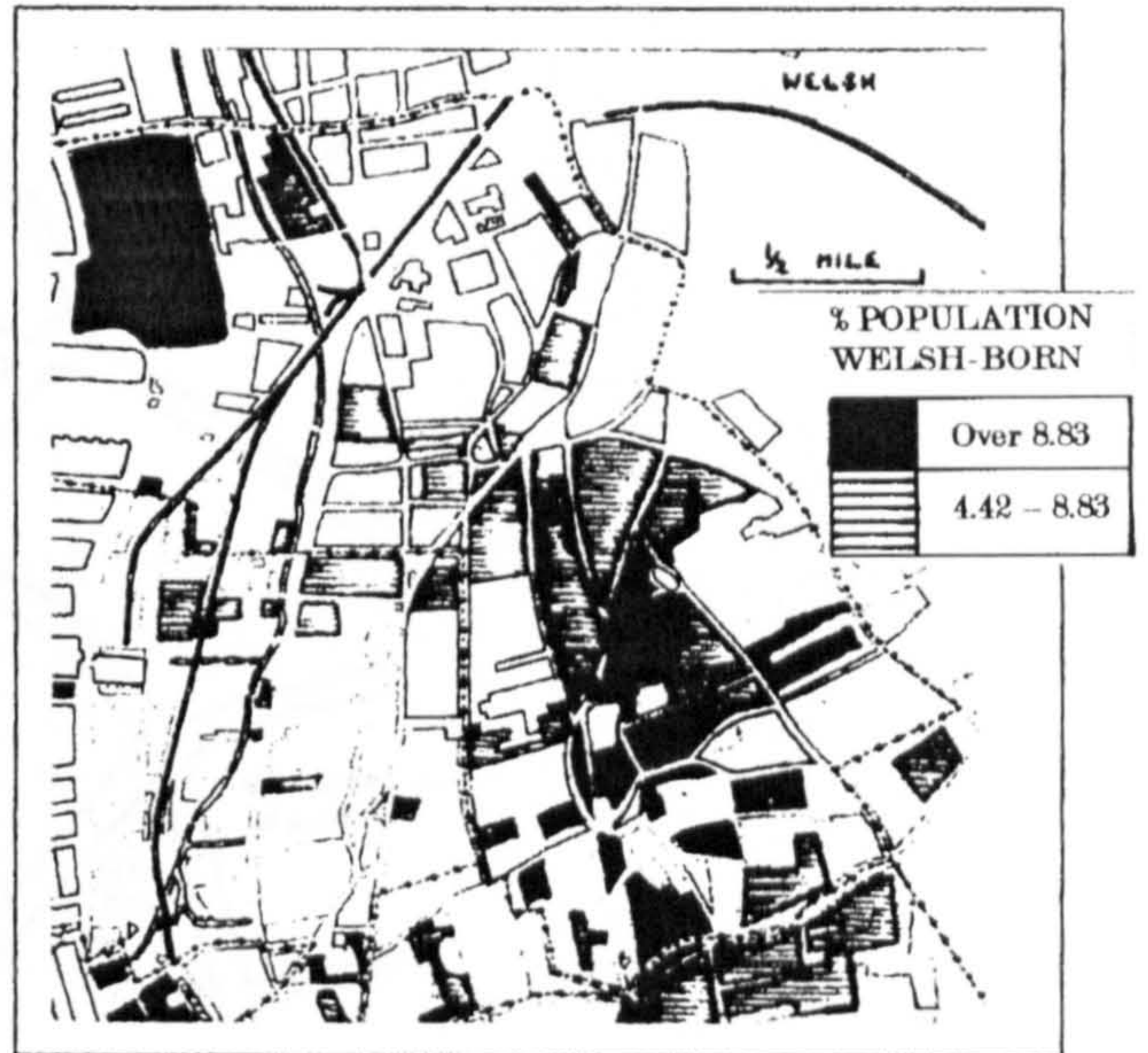


Figure 5.1b: Welsh-born settlement in north Liverpool, 1871, based on Fig. 2, Pooley, 'Migrant Communities', p. 370.

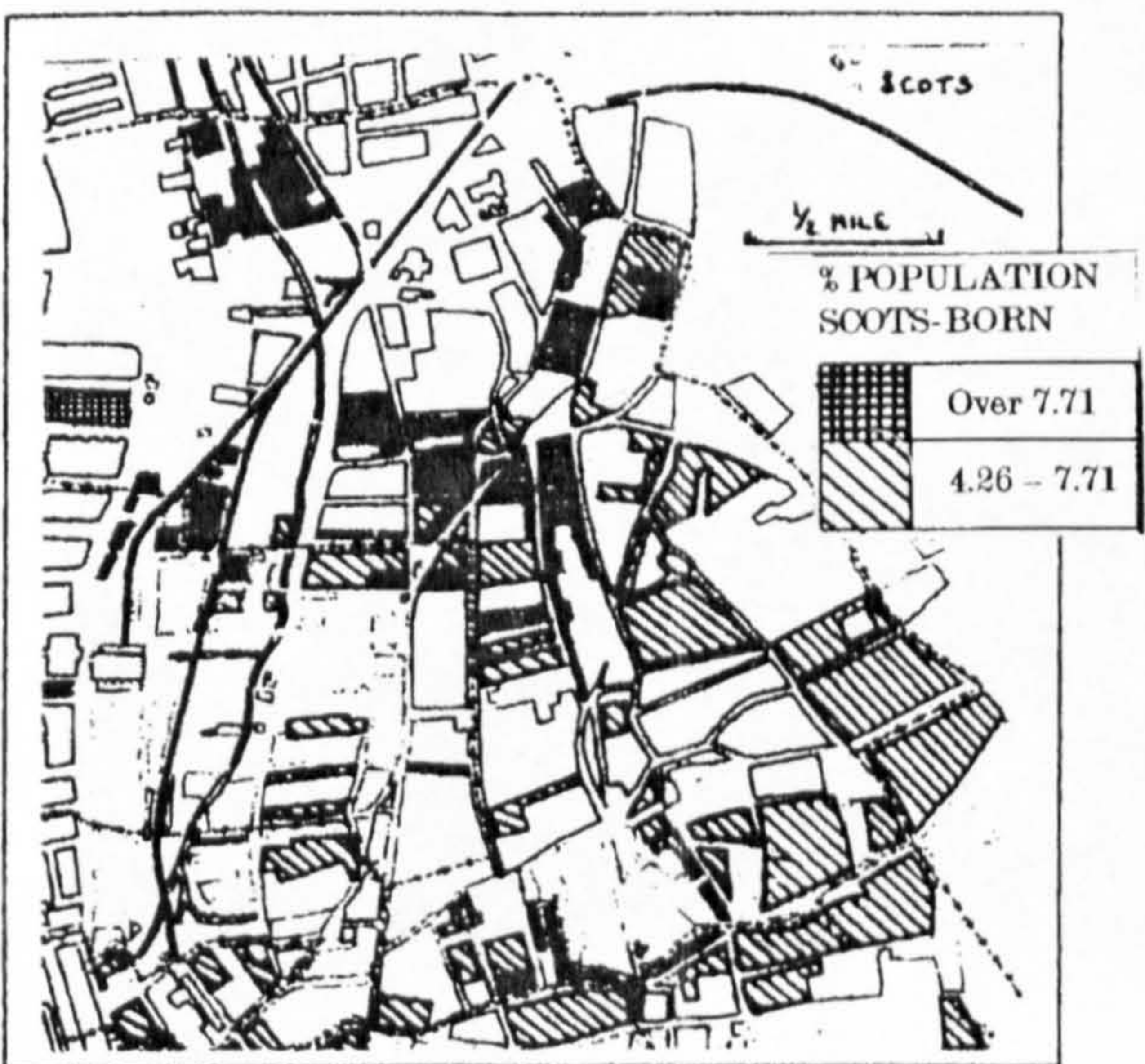


Figure 5.1c: Scots-born settlement in north Liverpool, 1871, based on Fig. 3, Pooley, 'Migrant Communities', p.371.

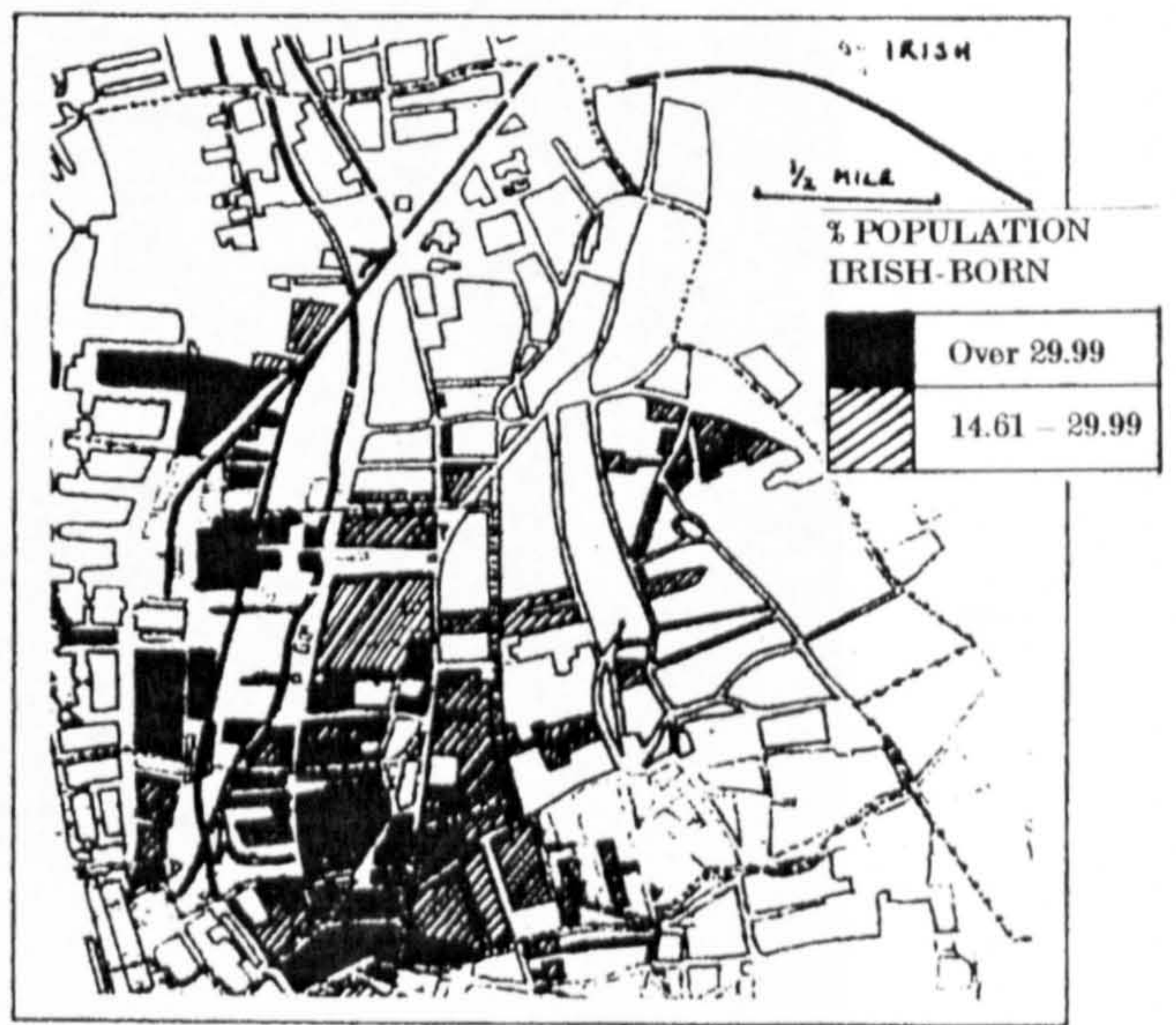


Figure 5.1d: Irish-born settlement in north Liverpool, 1871, based on Fig. 1, Pooley, 'Migrant Communities', p. 369.



Figure 5.2: Location of specific streets of residence of Everton United Church footballers (see Table 5.2).



Figure 5.9: a 'still' from the Mitchell and Kenyon film showing the crowd at the Everton – Newcastle United match in September 1902 (view 5, see page 268).

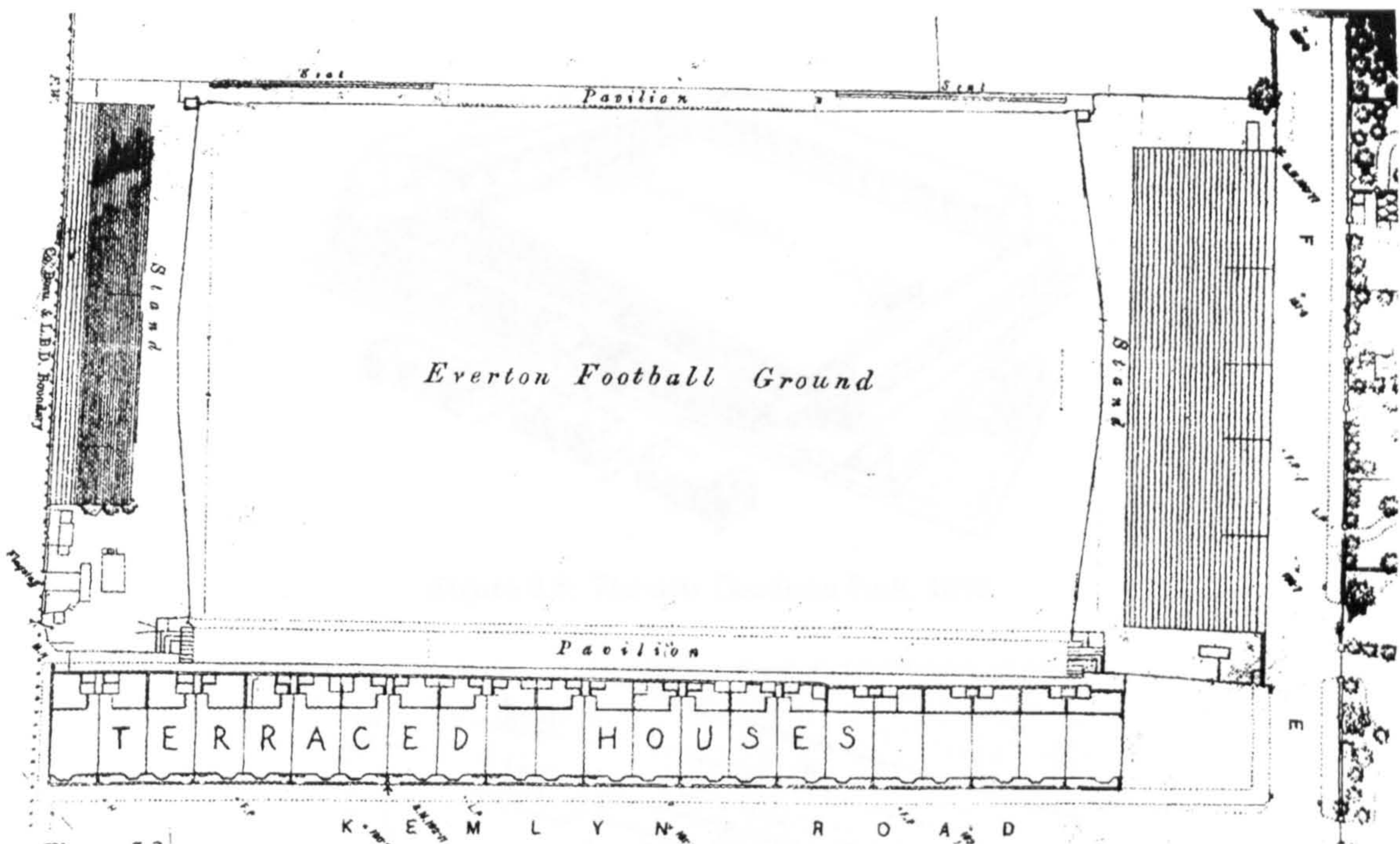


Figure 5.3: Plan view of Anfield Road football ground, c. 1891. (O.S. 1:1000)

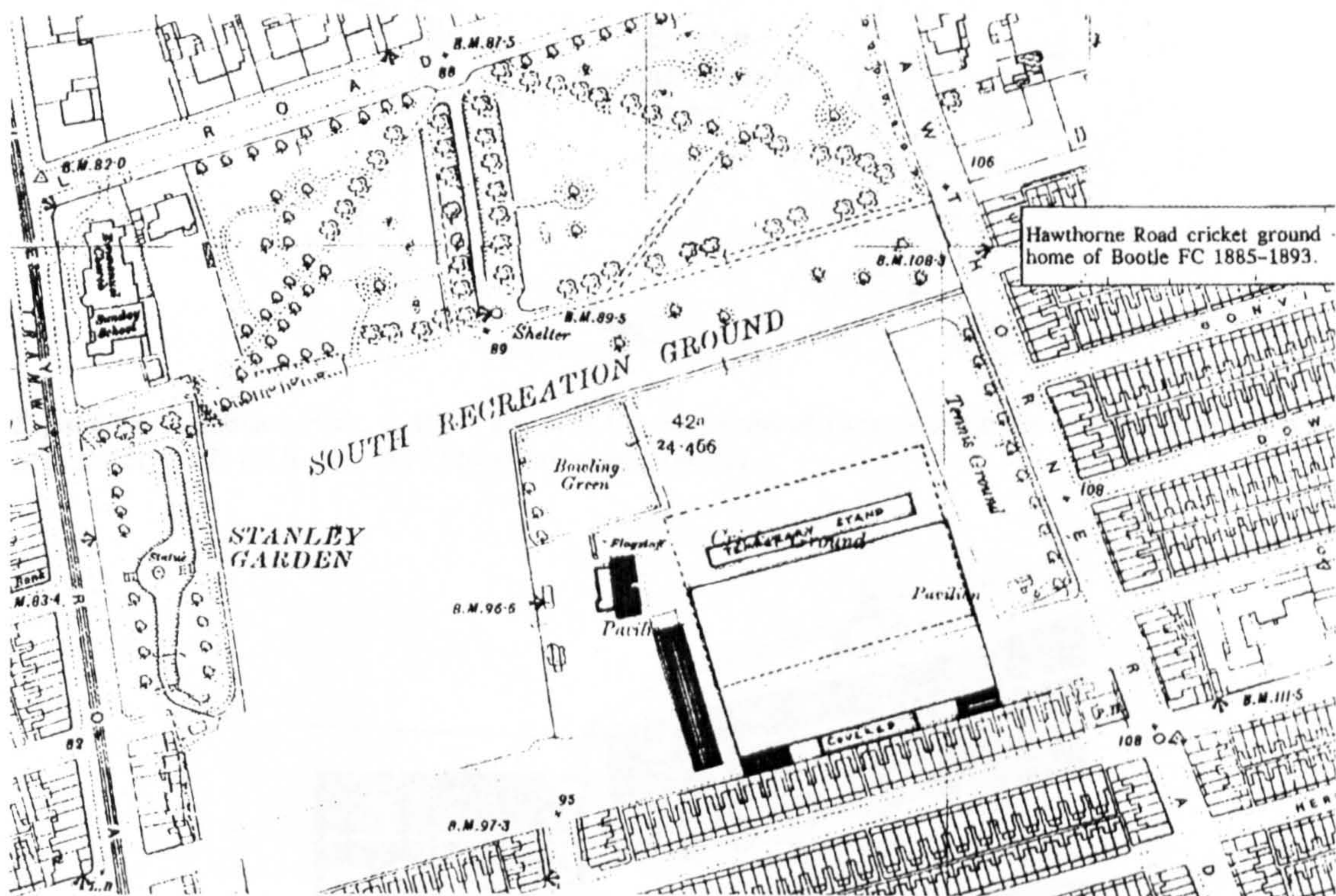


Figure 5.4: Hawthorne Road cricket ground, home of Bootle FC 1885-1893. (O.S. 1:2500, Lancashire sheet 106.02).

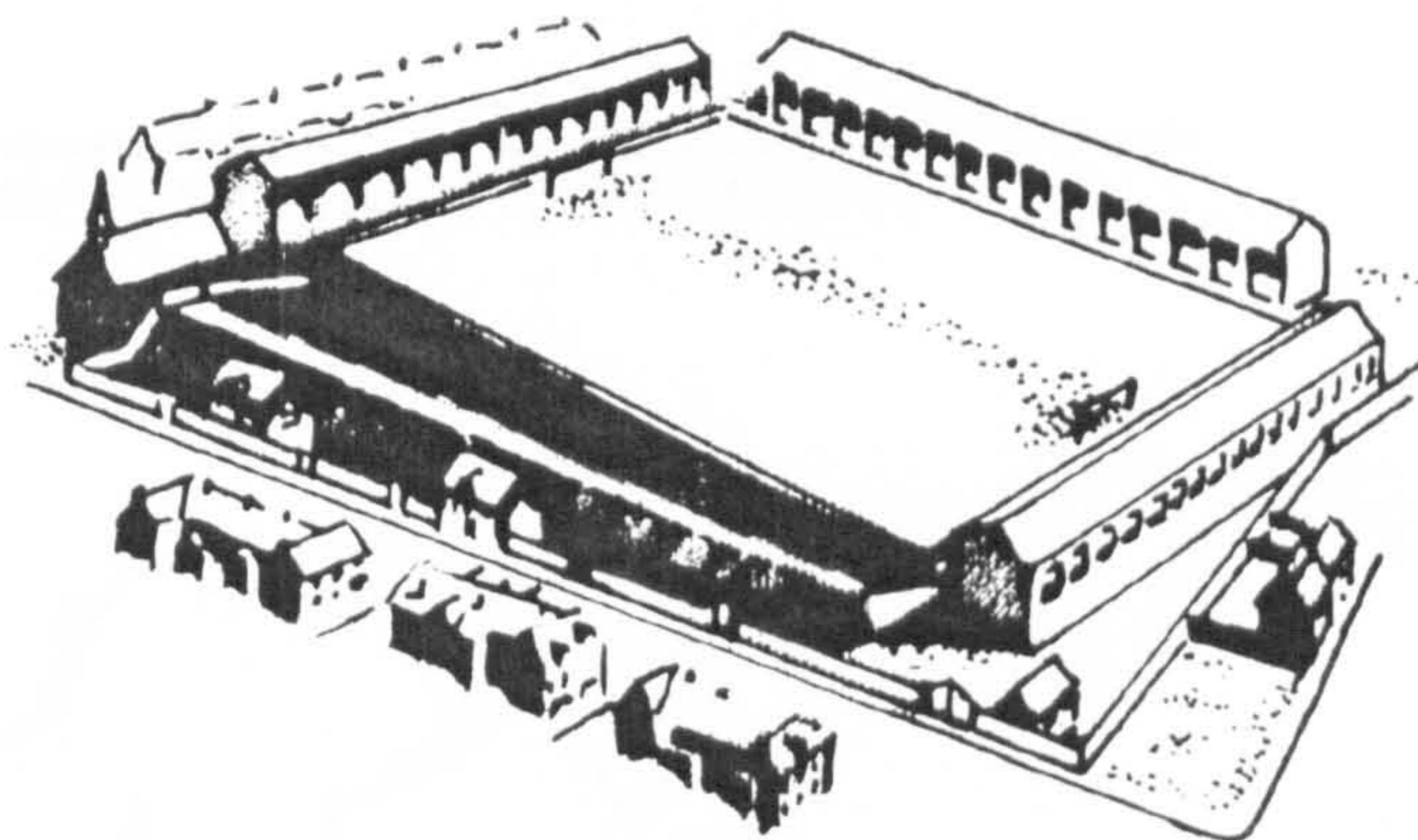


Figure 5.5: The new Goodison Park, 1892.



Figure 5.6: Goodison Park, c. 1900, showing the directions of viewpoints in the Mitchell and Kenyon film, September 1902. (O.S. 1:2500, Lancashire sheet 106.02).

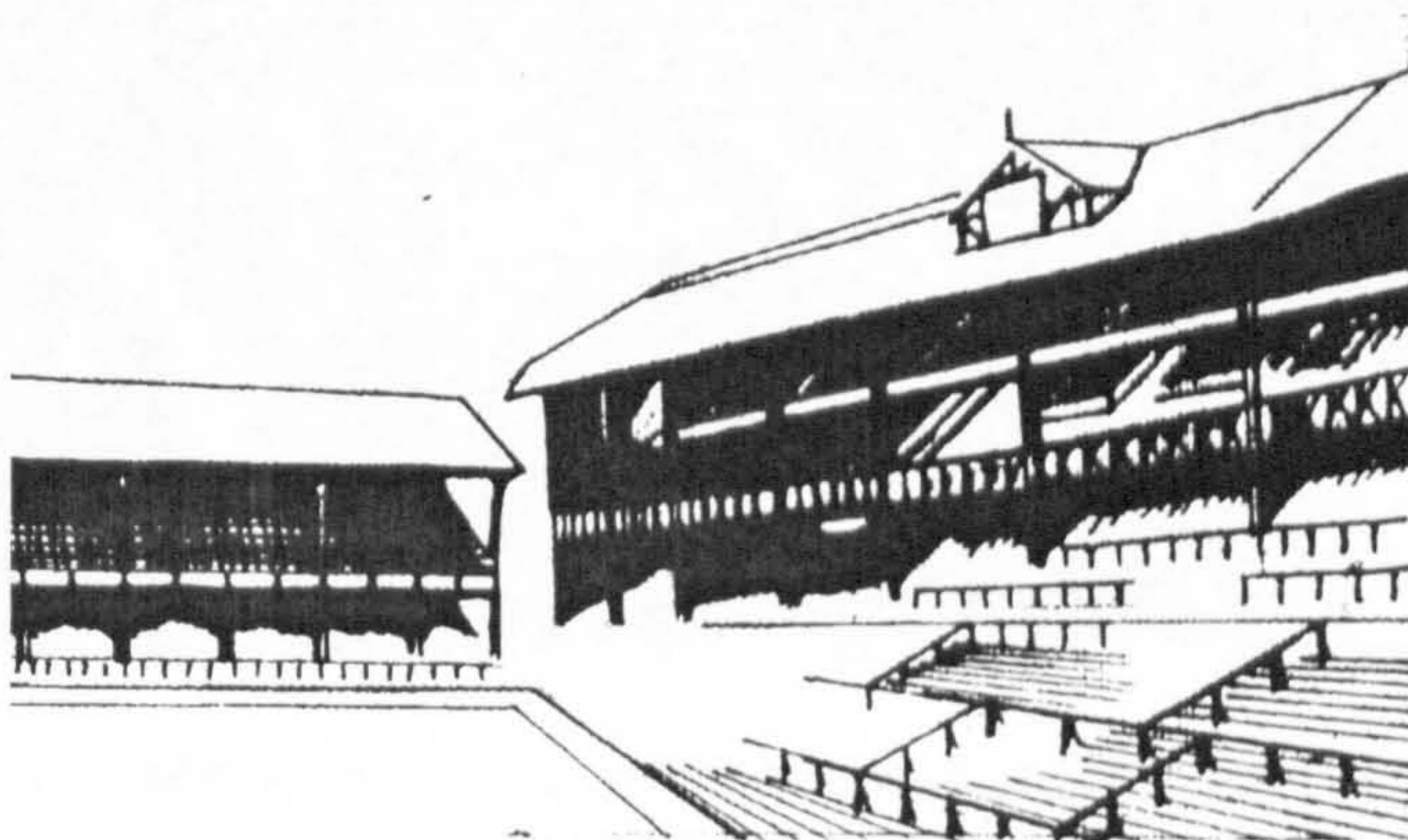


Figure 5.7: The double tier Park end stand (1907) on the left and Archibald Leitch's main stand (1909).

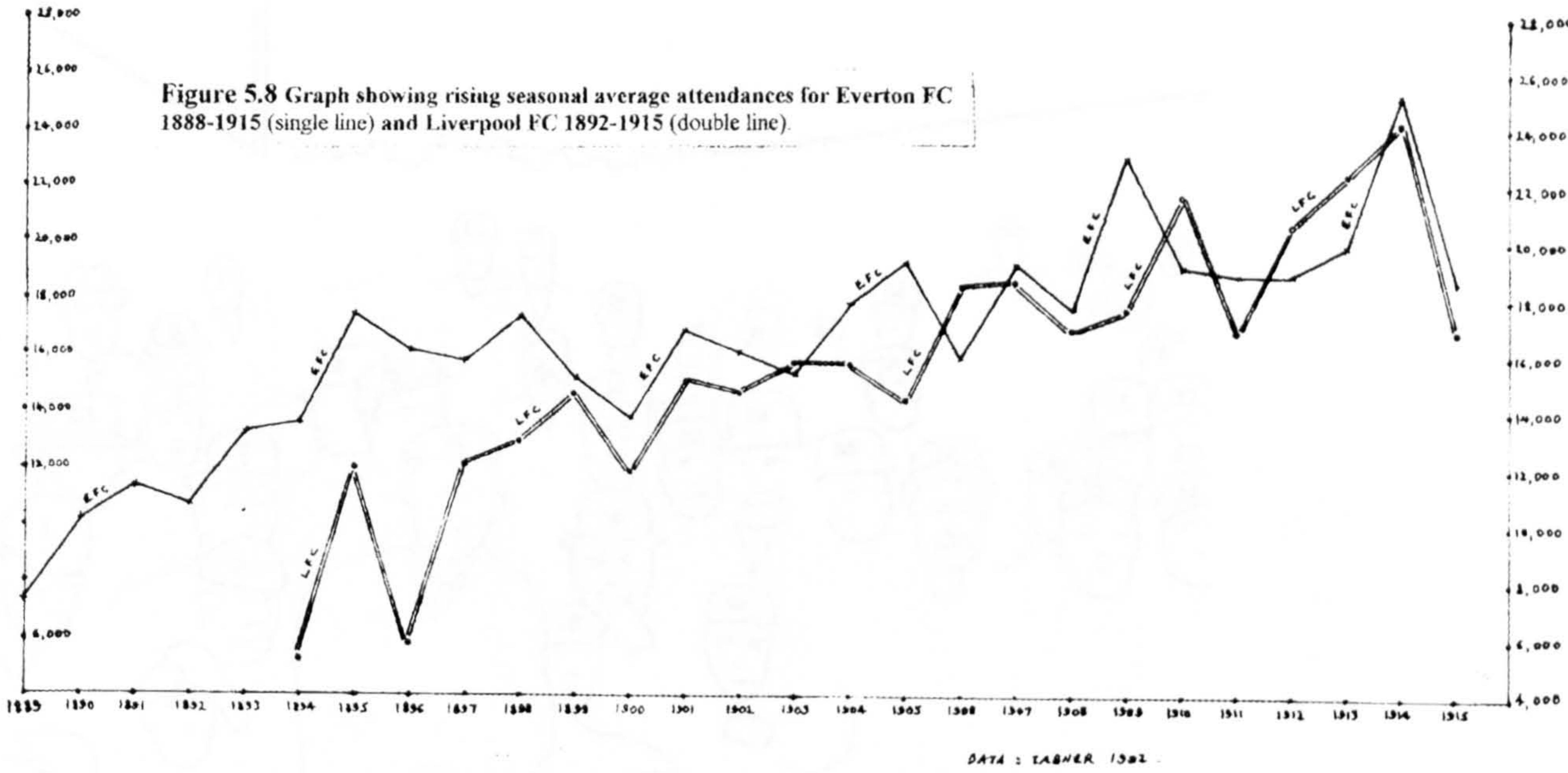


Figure 5.8: Everton's and Liverpool's rising attendances before 1915.
Source: Tabner.

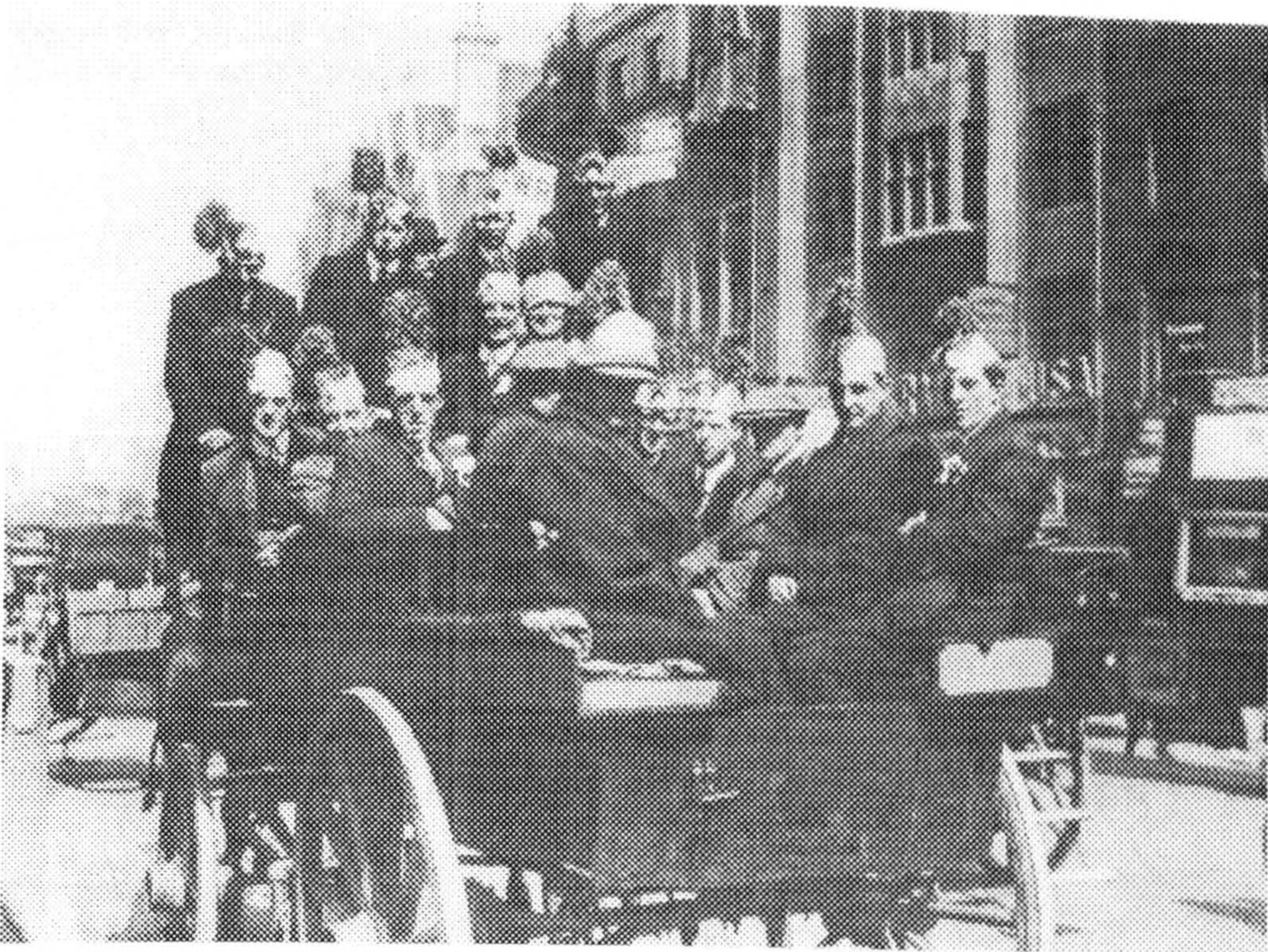


Figure 5.16: Liverpool FC supporters traveling through south London to the 1914 FA Cup Final at the Crystal Palace.

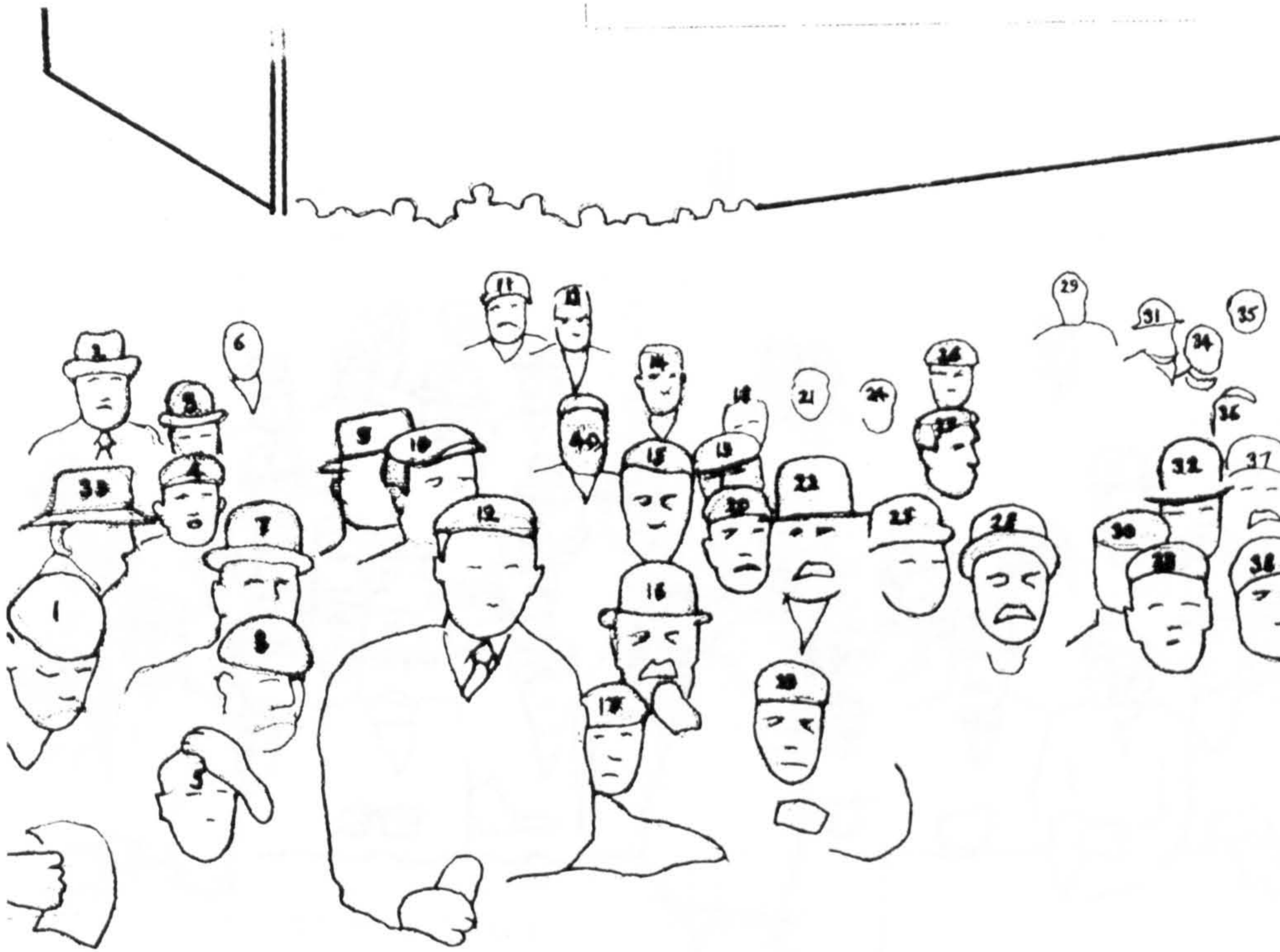


Figure 5.10: Mitchell and Kenyon view 1.
North-west corner of Goodison Road terrace looking towards church.

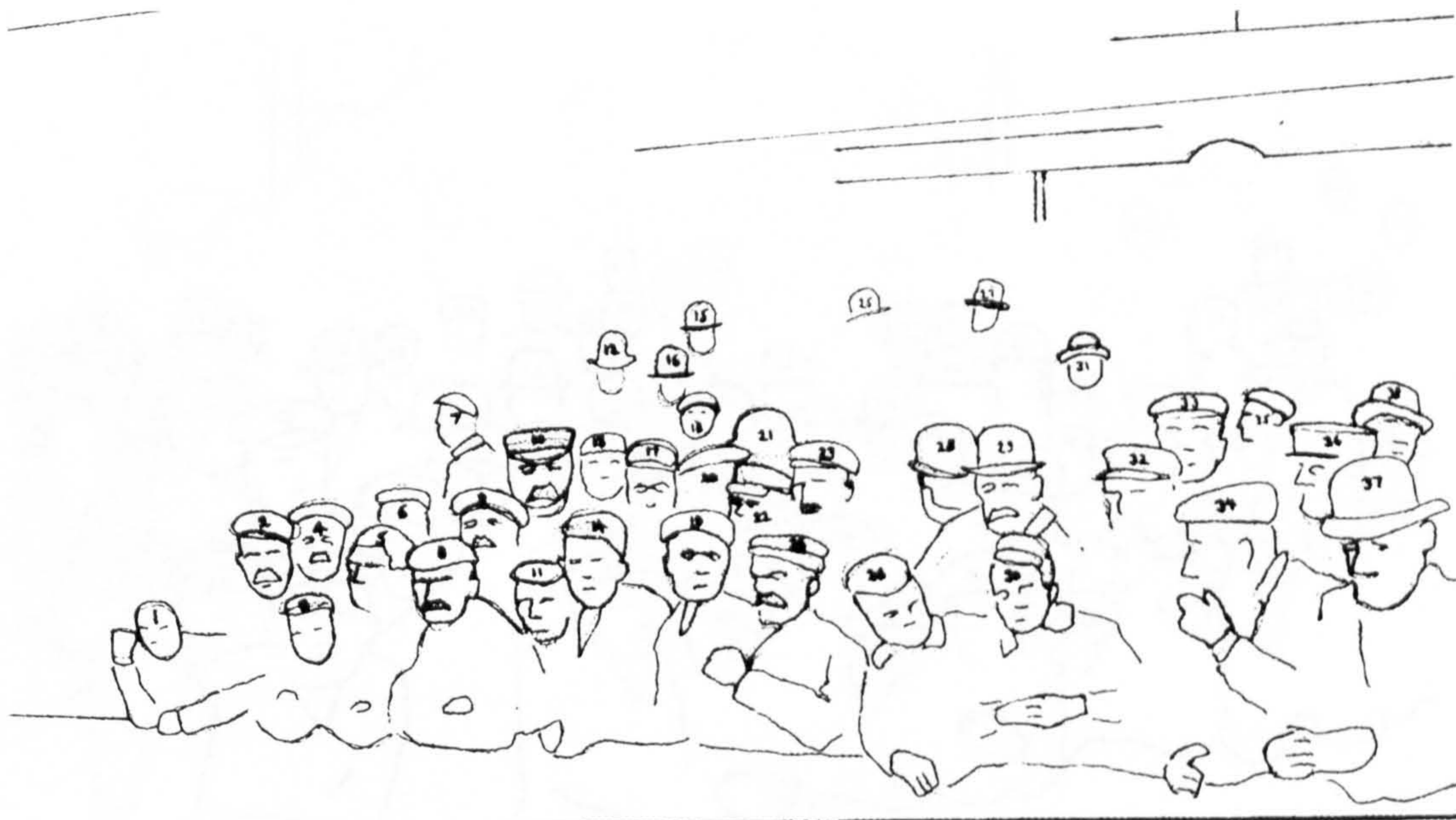


Figure 5.11: Mitchell and Kenyon view 2.
Westerly view of Goodison Road terrace.

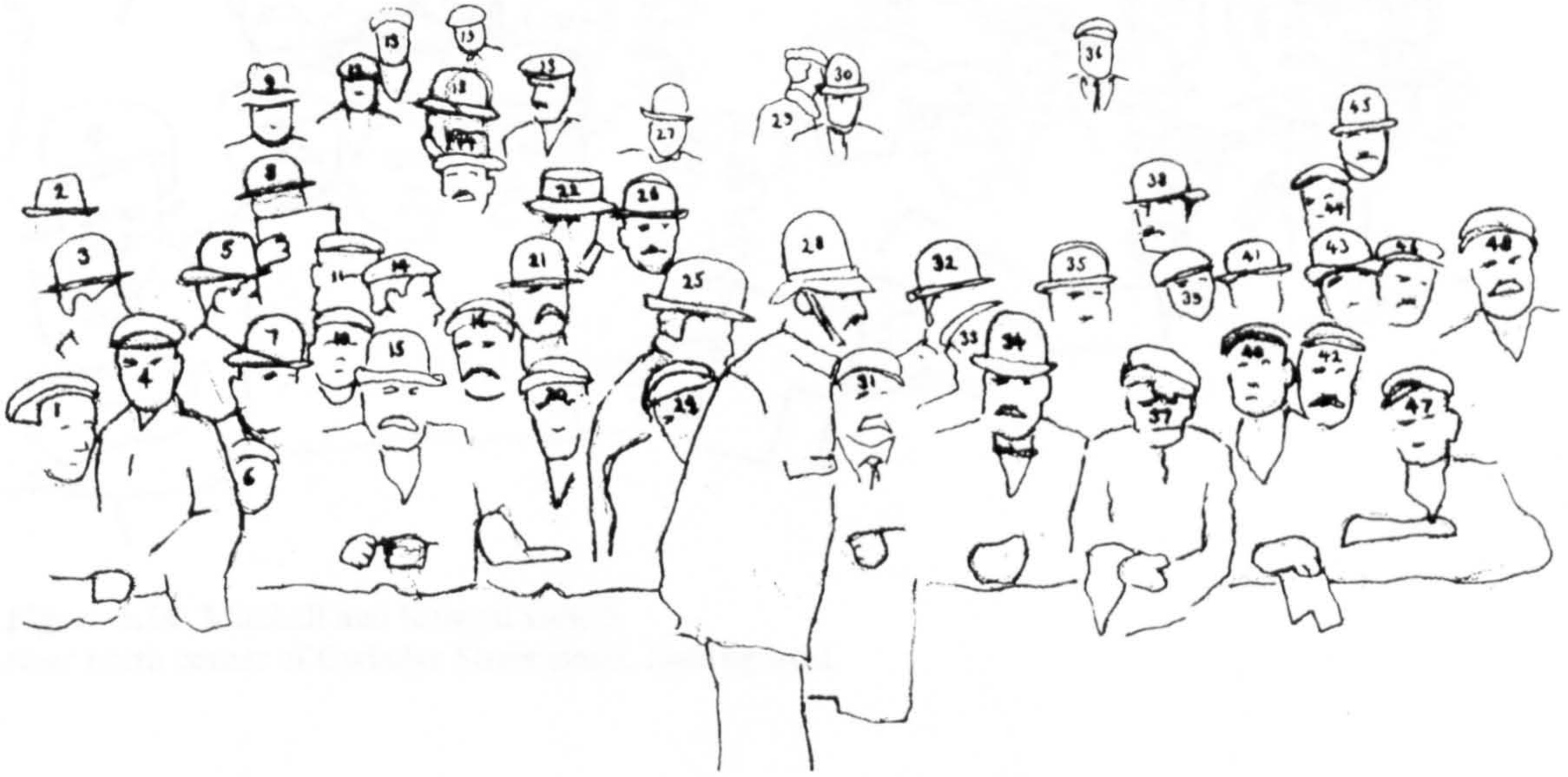


Figure 5.12: Mitchell and Kenyon view 3.
Near north corner of Gwladys Street stand.



Figure 5.13: Mitchell and Kenyon view 4.
Extreme north corner of Gwladys Street stand.

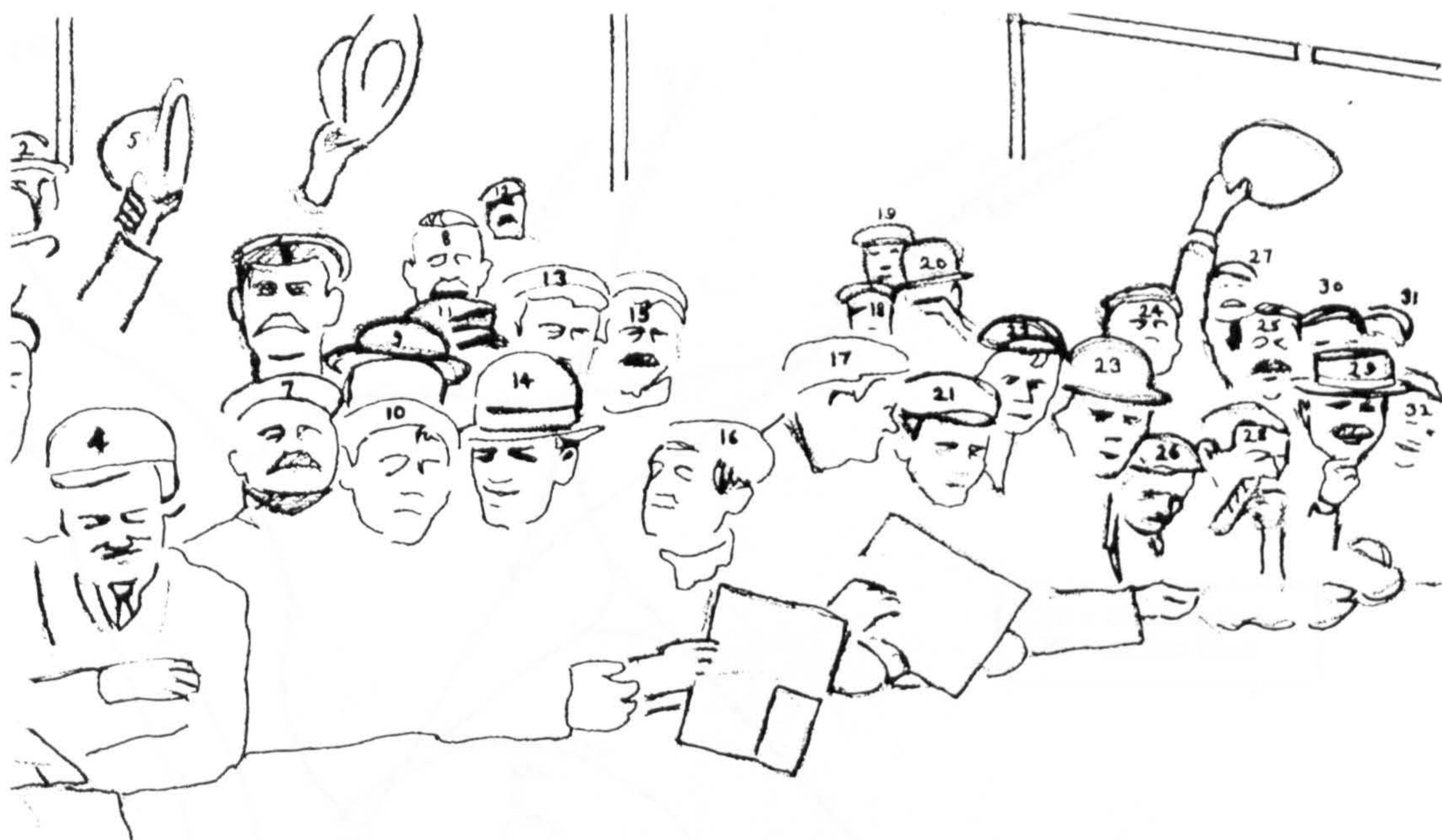


Figure 5.14: Mitchell and Kenyon view 5.
Near north corner of Gwladys Street stand, looking west.



Figure 5.15: Mitchell and Kenyon view 6.
Near north corner of Gwladys Street stand, looking west (2).

(9)

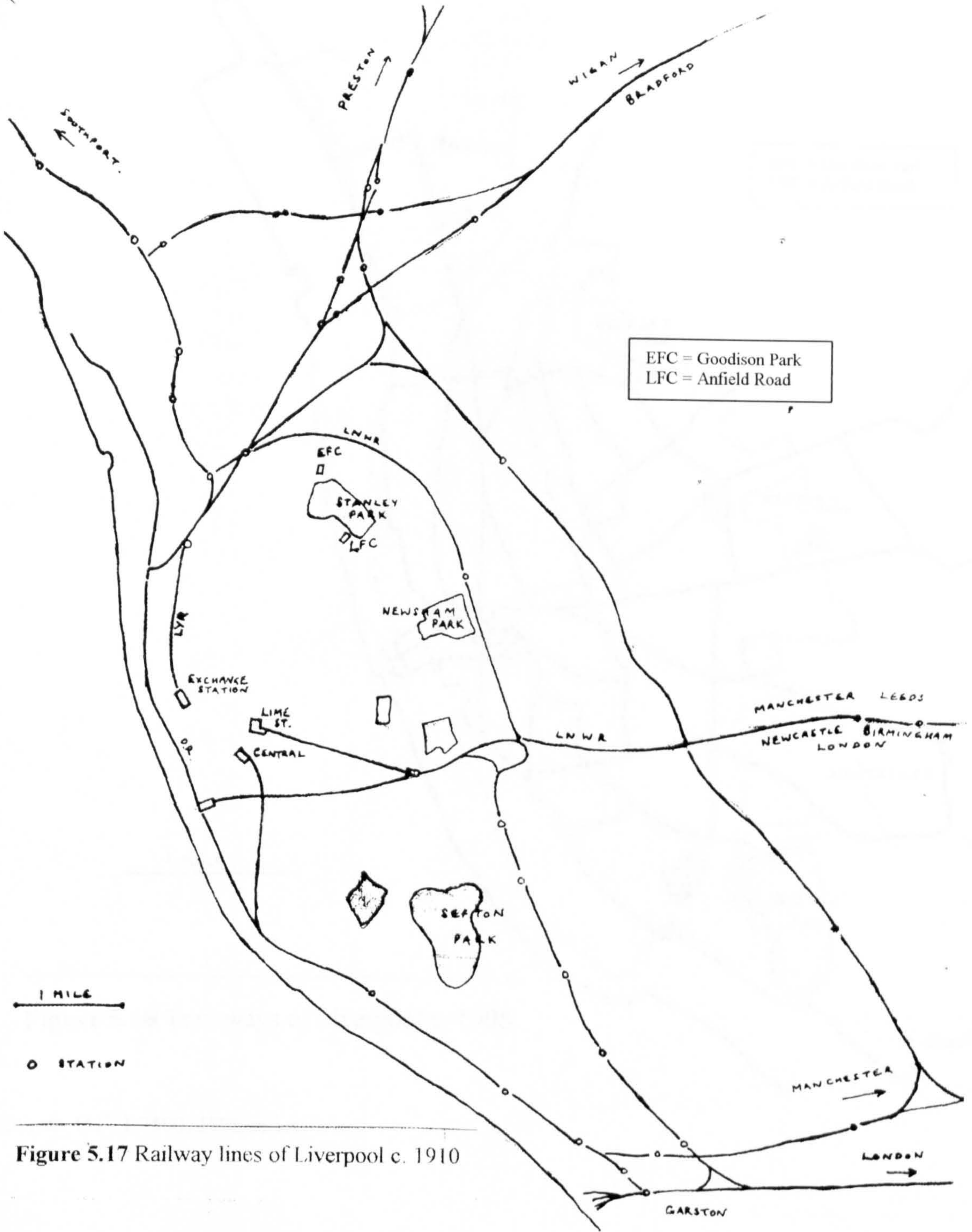


Figure 5.17 Railway lines of Liverpool c. 1910

(Source: O.S. 1:2500, 1908 series)

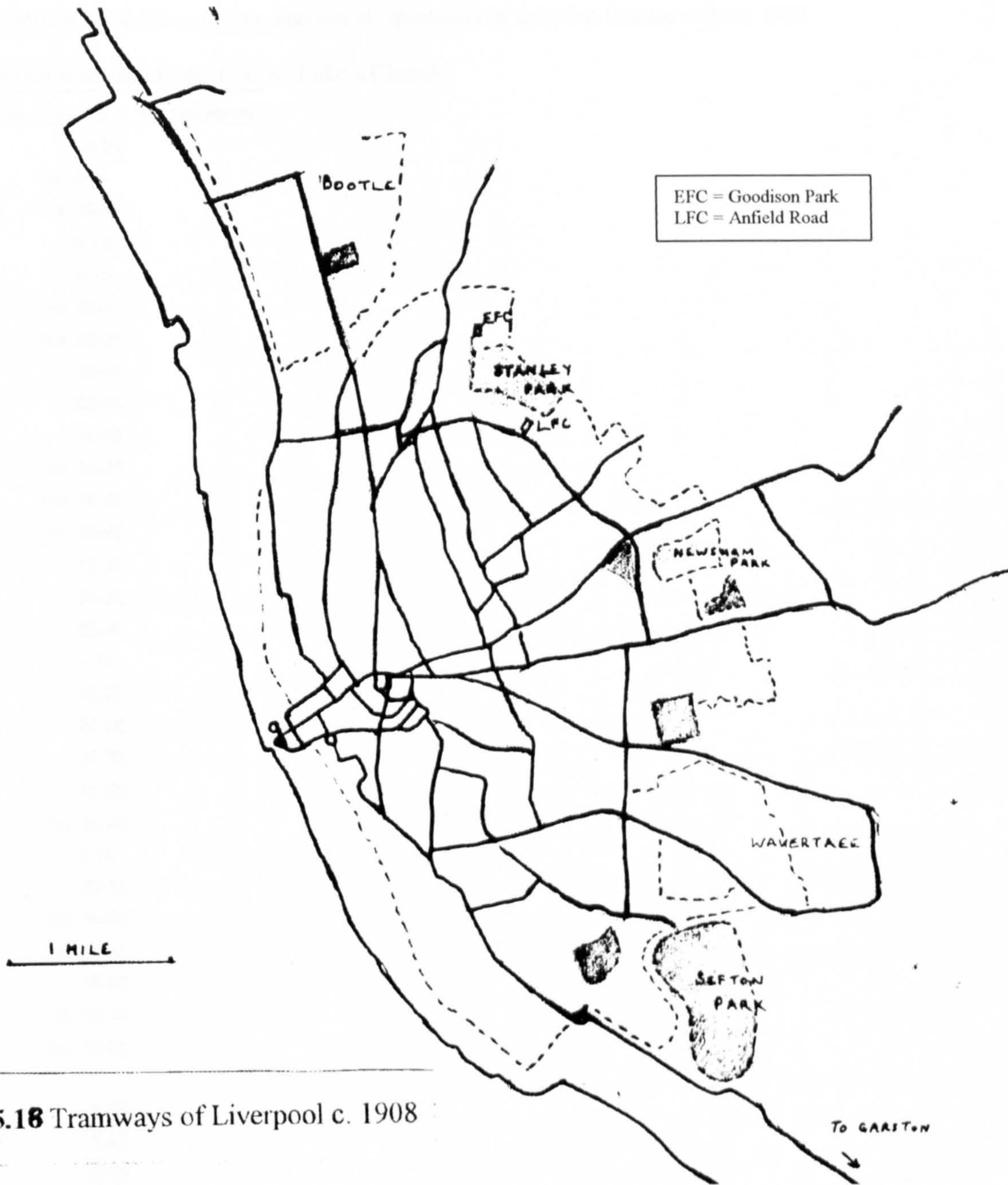


Figure 5.16 Tramways of Liverpool c. 1908

(Source: O.S. 1:2500, 1908 series)

Appendix 5.1 Mitchell and Kenyon film, analysis of spectators in crowd at Goodison Park, 1902.

View One: Corner Goodison Road, near St. Luke's Church.

<u>Identity</u>	<u>Hat type</u>	<u>Tie</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Manual worker</u>
No. 1	Cap		16-25	
No. 2	Trilby	Yes	45+	
No. 3	Bowler	Yes	36-45	
No. 4	Cap		0-15	
No. 5	Cap		0-15	
No. 6	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 7	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 8	Cap		36-45	
No. 9	Trilby		36-45	
No. 10	Cap		16-25	
No. 11	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 12	Cap	Yes	16-25	
No. 13	Bowler	Yes	36-45	
No. 14	Cap		16-25	
No. 15	Cap		26-35	
No. 16	Bowler		36-45	
No. 17	Cap		0-15	
No. 18	Cap		16-25	
No. 19	Cap		26-35	
No. 20	Cap		26-35	
No. 21	Cap		16-25	
No. 22	Bowler	Yes	36-45	
No. 23	Cap		0-15	
No. 24	Bowler		26-35	
No. 25	Cap	Yes	16-25	
No. 26	Cap	Yes	26-35	
No. 27	Cap		26-35	
No. 28	Bowler	Yes	36-45	
No. 29	Cap	Yes	16-25	
No. 30	Cap			
No. 31	Trilby		26-35	
No. 32	Bowler		26-35	
No. 33	Cap		16-25	
No. 34	Cap		26-35	
No. 35	Cap		26-35	
No. 36	Cap		26-35	
No. 37	Cap		26-35	
No. 38	Cap		16-25	Manual
No. 39	Trilby	Yes	26-35	
No. 40	Bowler	Yes	26-35	

View Two: Goodison Road Terrace

<i>Identity</i>	<i>Hat type</i>	<i>Tie</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Manual worker</i>
No. 1	Cap		0-15	
No. 2	Cap		26-35	Manual
No. 3	Cap		0-15	
No. 4	Cap		16-25	Manual
No. 5	None?		26-35	Manual
No. 6	Cap		16-25	
No. 7	Cap		16-25	
No. 8	Cap		36-45	Manual
No. 9	Cap		26-35	Manual
No. 10	Cap 2		36-45	
No. 11	Cap		0-15	Manual
No. 12	Bowler		16-25	
No. 13	Cap		16-25	Manual
No. 14	Cap		16-25	Manual
No. 15	Bowler		26-35	
No. 16	Bowler		26-35	
No. 17	Cap		16-25	Manual
No. 18	Cap		16-25	
No. 19	Cap		16-25	
No. 20	Cap		16-25	Manual
No. 21	Bowler		U/K	
No. 22	Cap		26-35	
No. 23	Cap		26-35	
No. 24	Cap		36-45	Manual
No. 25	Trilby		36-45	
No. 26	Cap	Yes	0-15	
No. 27	Bowler		26-35	
No. 28	Bowler	Yes	U/K	
No. 29	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 30	Cap	Yes	0-15	
No. 31	Bowler		26-35	
No. 32	Cap		36-45	
No. 33	Cap		26-35	
No. 34	Cap 2	Yes	36-45	
No. 35	Cap		16-25	
No. 36	Cap		36-45	
No. 37	Bowler		45+	
No. 38	Bowler		45+	

View Three: Gwladys Street end

<i>Identity</i>	<i>Hat type</i>	<i>Tie</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Manual worker</i>
No. 1	Cap		16-25	
No. 2	Trilby		u/k	
No. 3	Bowler	Yes	16-25	
No. 4	Cap		0-15	

No. 5	Bowler	Yes	16-25	
No. 6	Cap		0-15	
No. 7	Bowler	Yes	36-45	
No. 8	Bowler		16-25	
No. 9	Trilby	Yes	26-35	
No. 10	Cap		0-15	
No. 11	Cap		16-25	
No. 12	Cap		16-25	
No. 13	Cap		26-35	manual
No. 14	Cap		26-35	
No. 15	Bowler		36-45	
No. 16	Cap		26-35	
No. 17	Trilby		26-35	
No. 18	Bowler		36-45	
No. 19	Cap		16-25	
No. 20	Cap		16-25	
No. 21	Bowler	Yes	36-45	
No. 22	Bowler		36-45	
No. 23	Cap		26-35	
No. 24	Cap		16-25	
No. 25	Bowler		26-35	
No. 26	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 27	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 28	Policeman		26-35	
No. 29	Cap	Yes	16-25	
No. 30	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 31	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 32	Bowler	Yes	16-25	
No. 33	Cap		26-35	
No. 34	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 35	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 36	Cap		16-25	
No. 37	Cap		0-15	
No. 38	Bowler		36-45	
No. 39	Cap		16-25	
No. 40	Cap		26-35	
No. 41	Bowler		26-35	
No. 42	Cap		36-45	
No. 43	Bowler		26-35	
No. 44	Cap		26-35	
No. 45	Bowler	Yes	36-45	
No. 46	Cap		26-35	
No. 47	Cap	Yes	0-15	
No. 48	Cap		26-35	

View Four: Corner Gwladys St. end

<i>Identity</i>	<i>Hat type</i>	<i>Tie</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Manual worker</i>
No. 1	Cap		0-15	
No. 2	Bowler		16-25	
No. 3	Trilby	Yes	26-35	
No. 4	Cap		0-15	
No. 5	Cap		0-15	
No. 6	Cap		26-35	manual
No. 7	Bowler		26-35	
No. 8	Cap		26-35	
No. 9	Cap		26-35	
No. 10	Cap		0-15	
No. 11	Bowler		26-35	
No. 12	Cap		26-35	
No. 13	Cap		36-45	manual
No. 14	Cap		0-15	manual
No. 15	Bowler		36-45	
No. 16	Cap		0-15	manual
No. 17	Cap		16-25	
No. 18	Bowler		u/k	
No. 19	Cap		16-25	
No. 20	Cap		16-25	
No. 21	Boater/Trilby	Yes	26-35	
No. 22	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 23	Cap		26-35	
No. 24	Cap		26-35	
No. 25	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 26	Bowler		u/k	
No. 27	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 28	Cap		0-15	manual
No. 29	Bowler		16-25	
No. 30	Cap	Yes	16-25	
No. 31	Cap		26-35	
No. 32	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 33	Cap		16-25	
No. 34	Cap		16-25	manual
No. 35	Bowler		36-45	
No. 36	Cap		26-35	
No. 37	Cap		16-25	
No. 38	Cap		0-15	
No. 39	Cap		26-35	
No. 40	Cap		26-35	
No. 41	Bowler		26-35	
No. 42	Bowler		26-35	
No. 43	Cap		16-25	manual
No. 44	Cap		16-25	
No. 45	Cap		26-35	
No. 46	Bowler		26-35	

No. 47	Bowler	36-45	
No. 48	Bowler	26-35	
No. 49	Bowler	45+	
No. 50	Cap	16-25	
No. 51	Cap	16-25	
No. 52	Cap	0-15	
No. 53	Cap	26-35	
No. 54	Cap	26-35	
No. 55	Cap	26-35	manual
No. 56	Cap	16-25	
No. 57	Cap	16-25	
No. 58	Cap	16-25	
No. 59	Cap	26-35	manual
No. 60	Cap	36-45	
No. 61	Cap	26-35	
No. 62	Cap	26-35	manual
No. 63	No hat	26-35	
No. 64	No hat	16-25	
No. 65	Bowler	26-35	
No. 66	Cap	16-25	
No. 67	Cap	16-25	
No. 68	Cap	26-35	
No. 69	Bowler	26-35	
No. 70	Cap	26-35	
No. 71	Cap	0-15	

View Five: Corner Gwladys St. end (north-east view)

<i>Identity</i>	<i>Hat type</i>	<i>Tie</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Manual worker</i>
No. 1	Bowler		26-35	
No. 2	Bowler		26-35	
No. 3	Cap		26-35	
No. 4	Cap	Yes	0-15	
No. 5	Bowler		u/k	
No. 6	Cap		26-35	manual
No. 7	Cap		26-35	manual
No. 8	Trilby		26-35	
No. 9	Bowler		26-35	
No. 10	Cap		16-25	
No. 11	Cap		u/k	
No. 12	Cap		36-45	
No. 13	Cap		16-25	
No. 14	Bowler		16-25	
No. 15	Cap		26-35	
No. 16	Cap		16-25	
No. 17	Cap		16-25	
No. 18	Cap		16-25	
No. 19	Cap		16-25	

No. 20	Bowler	26-35
No. 21	Cap	16-25
No. 22	Cap	Yes 0-15
No. 23	Bowler	26-35
No. 24	Cap	26-35
No. 25	Bowler	26-35
No. 26	Cap	0-15
No. 27	Cap	36-45
No. 28	None	26-35
No. 29	Boater	26-35
No. 30	Cap	16-25
No. 31	Cap	16-25
No. 32	Cap	16-25

View Six: Corner Gwladys St. end (north-east view 2)

Identity	Hat type	Tie	Age	Manual worker
No. 1	Bowler	Yes	45+	
No. 2	Bowler		u/k	
No. 3	Bowler		36-45	
No. 4	Cap		26-35	
No. 5	Cap		16-25	manual
No. 6	Cap	Yes	16-25	
No. 7	Cap		16-25	
No. 8	Cap		16-25	manual
No. 9	Cap		16-25	
No. 10	Bowler	Yes	26-35	
No. 11	Bowler	Yes	36-45	
No. 12	Cap		16-25	manual
No. 13	Cap		16-25	
No. 14	Bowler	Yes	16-25	
No. 15	Cap		16-25	manual
No. 16	Cap		16-25	
No. 17	Cap		26-35	
No. 18	Cap	Yes	36-45	
No. 19	Cap		16-25	manual
No. 20	Cap		26-35	
No. 21	Cap		16-25	
No. 22	Cap	Yes	16-25	
No. 23	Cap		16-25	manual
No. 24	Bowler		36-45	
No. 25	Cap	Yes	16-25	
No. 26	Cap		26-35	
No. 27	Cap		16-25	manual
No. 28	Cap		0-15	
No. 29	Cap		16-25	
No. 30	Bowler		36-45	
No. 31	Cap		26-35	
No. 32	Bowler		36-45	

No. 33	Cap	26-35
No. 34	Cap	26-35
No. 35	Bowler	45+
No. 36	Cap	26-35

CHAPTER SIX

NEWS, NOTES, AND NOTIONS¹:
THE FOOTBALL PRESS IN LIVERPOOL 1875 TO 1915

INTRODUCTION

The main source of evidence for this study has been local Liverpool newspapers. The press not only provided match reports but extensive data on footballers, management, and spectators.² The amount of football and editorial content in local newspapers tells a great deal about the relative importance of the game to the late-Victorian general public. Before the Great War the press was effectively the only medium by which reports and gossip on football were transmitted to the public at large. As Martin Johnes has pointed out, it was ‘an integral actor in the whole local culture of soccer’ and that ‘the public’s perception of the game was as much shaped by reading newspapers as it was by their own experience.’³ Also for people living in outlying areas such as north Wales, Cheshire, and west Lancashire, the press provided the main means to vicariously enjoy the experience of distant football matches involving Everton and Liverpool. This chapter examines the growth and role of local football journalism in Liverpool.

The formative years of professional football in Liverpool roughly coincided with developments in the modernising of the press. Alfred Harmsworth’s *Evening News* and *Daily Mail* were aimed at a newly literate public that wanted short, simple and readable news stories, based to some extent on the example of the American populist penny papers. Larger banner headlines, sport and human interest stories characterised the change in style. The new journalism was criticised for being ‘vulgar, trashy, and lacking altogether in the dignity of the old-time press.’ However, ‘...a public had grown up which took an intelligent interest in things not previously considered part of newspaper chronicles... food, fashions, the drama of life in low places as well as high,

¹ Title of column in *Liverpool Football Echo*, (hereafter *Echo*), Oct. 11th 1913.

² Martin Johnes has noted that the press offers ‘more than a convenient and rich band of information.’ Johnes, M., *Soccer and Society: South Wales, 1900-1939*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), p. 10.

³ Johnes, *Soccer and Society*, pp. 10-11.

(and) sport of all kinds.’⁴ The notion that football was a subject tailor-made for the so-called new journalism, has been well expressed by Richard Holt:

‘Professional football helped flesh out a distinctive sense of place within the wider framework of national competition. By following the progress of your team you could assert your membership of the city; it gave you something to belong to in common with thousands of other men. It provided a commonly identifiable source of conversation between friends, colleagues, and acquaintances.’⁵

Newspapers were the ideal conduits for such sporting gossip.

Mason has suggested that the 1890s was the key decade for sports coverage for the reason that in England no large-scale regional newspaper could afford to neglect it. Those in Liverpool that did ignore sport either rapidly adapted or sank into oblivion. The increasing urban market for sporting news led to the creation of special cheap editions of local papers which met more specific local needs than national sports journals could. In the 1880s, Liverpool had more papers than most cities, and some of these did report football, but the belated entry of the *Liverpool Football Echo* forced its competitors to re-assess their own coverage. By the early 1890s, the *Football Echo* predominated and was ‘undoubtedly a central part of the sporting, and especially, the football life of the city.’⁶ The *Echo* achieved this by abandoning the ‘old journalism’ of interminable densely packed columns and detailed accounts of matches, and adopted modern reporting techniques which summed up the ‘game as a whole’ and provided entertaining, informed comment ‘on those occurrences that were likely to be discussed in the pub afterwards.’⁷

Football editions contained ‘reports of the matches of League clubs playing in a wide area around the city.’⁸ In most conurbations this would include several scattered clubs

⁴ Phillip Gibbs [journalist with the *Daily Mail* (1902)], Spartacus website, ‘Daily Mail’, p. 5.

⁵ ‘Observers of inner-city youth noted that along with smoking and clothes, talking about sport was the main amusement of lads on the street corner.’ Holt, Richard, *Sport and the British*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 308.

⁶ Mason, Tony, ‘All the Winners and Half Times’ in *The Sports Historian*, No. 13, May 1993, p. 7.

⁷ Mason, ‘All the Winners’, p. 11.

⁸ Mason, ‘All the Winners’, p. 7.

but the Liverpool district's only major clubs were Everton and Liverpool.⁹ The nearest League clubs were Preston North End and Bolton Wanderers and the rest of the vast Liverpool sub-region had none. Mason wrote that 'sports coverage...helped shape local identities and boost partisanship'. One of the notions explored in this chapter is how the *Football Echo* did this for a massive circulation area with only two urban League clubs.

The football press has been relatively neglected as a focus for academic study. As in so many areas of football history, it is Tony Mason who has made the most significant contributions, though Richard Holt, Dave Russell, and Jeff Hill have posed questions on the press's role in forging urban and regional identities. Most of the work that has been undertaken has concentrated on the post-Great War period, whilst the formative era has been substantially under-researched, despite the huge reliance on the early press for source material. Andrew Walker has recently published a valuable study of sports coverage in Lincolnshire where sports reporting became more inward-looking, as it was increasingly undertaken by amateurs.¹⁰ Walker also provides some insights into the issue of gender and local sports journalism, which was overwhelmingly from a male perspective. The results of competitions in Liverpool, however, show that significantly more women were interested in football than the numbers attending matches would suggest. The Canadian academic, Stacy Lorenz, has made some relevant observations about community identity in her work on Canada's sports journalism. It was in the interests of newspapers, particularly major provincial ones, to promote and be identified with sport in their locality. The growth and prosperity of their district was concomitant with increasing sales of newspapers. The press was, therefore, an important component in the 'corporate civic project' as they were 'far and away the most effective agent of a sense of community.'¹¹ Sport reports 'encouraged spectatorship and helped create a sense of community spirit and civic pride around a city's sports teams.'¹² In words which echo Holt, Lorenz makes the

⁹ New Brighton Tower FC was very briefly a League Division Two member from 1898-1901.

¹⁰ Walker, Andrew, 'Reporting Play: the local newspaper and sports journalism c.1870-1914', *Journalism Studies*, Vol.7, No. 3, (2006).

¹¹ Lorenz, Stacy L., ' "In the Field of Sport at Home and Abroad": Sports Coverage in Canadian Daily Newspapers, 1850-1914', in *Sports History Review*, 34, (2003), p. 148.

¹² Lorenz, 'Field of Sport', p. 133.

point that when city dwellers attended sporting events, ‘read about their city’s teams in the newspaper, and exchanged opinions about what they saw and heard, they developed a feeling of having something in common...sport combined with the media to create opportunities for regular rehearsals of collective identity in urban centres.’¹³ How the ‘collective identity’ of a ‘Greater Liverpool’ was achieved through the inhabitants’ support of Everton, Liverpool, and the press, is one of the themes explored in this final chapter.

This chapter examines how the football press evolved in Liverpool and how the *Football Echo* came to dominate the Liverpool sports press before 1914. It also shows how new technologies of news dissemination were pioneered for the sports section before being applied generally and contrasts the writing styles of ‘old school’ and emergent professionalised journalists. It also considers how the local footballing press engaged with its public through competitions and its reporting of the amateur game, and shows how rivalries and alliances between newspapers and clubs affected the evolution of the Liverpool football press before the Great War.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOOTBALL COVERAGE IN LIVERPOOL NEWSPAPERS

As the kingdom’s second city and biggest port, up-to-date news, and particularly shipping intelligence, was of critical importance to the mercantile life of Liverpool. It is no surprise, therefore, that in the mid-nineteenth century, Liverpool possessed a thriving press, with more newspaper titles than any other provincial English city.¹⁴ But even in Conservative Liverpool, the press was predominantly a Liberal enterprise, challenging traditional Tory orthodoxies of class and privilege, and the city had three times as many Liberal titles as Tory ones.¹⁵ With the abolition of stamp duty in 1855, newspapers were affordable to the lower middle class. The more conducive social and economic climate encouraged entrepreneurs to establish new papers and the *Liverpool*

¹³ Lorenz, ‘Field of Sport’, p. 156.

¹⁴ There were five daily papers in Liverpool by the 1850s. Lee, Alan J., *The Origins of the Popular Press 1855-1914*, (London: Croom Helm, 1977), pp. 274-276.

¹⁵ Lee, *Popular Press*, pp. 133-34. The most influential being the Conservative *Courier* (founded 1808), and the Liberal-supporting *Mercury* (1811), *Daily Post*, and the *Liverpool Review*, (hereafter *Review*), the latter a weekly miscellany of local news, gossip, and issues of general concern.

Daily Post was founded in anticipation of the newly favourable conditions. Increasing demand for newspapers during the 1860s and 'seventies meant that the production of big regional newspapers became a more sophisticated and costly enterprise, that could only be undertaken by wealthy publishers such as the *Daily Post* and the Tinling group (owners of the *Liverpool Courier*).¹⁶ The trend towards professionalisation meant that specialist newsmen were 'headhunted' from all corners of the nation. The management of the *Daily Post* was strengthened by the recruitment of Edward Russell (later Lord Russell of Liverpool) from London and Alexander Jeans from Scotland. The latter's most significant achievement came early in his career, when he organised the establishment of a new evening daily for Liverpool. By the late 1870s, the city's popular press consisted of morning dailies such as the *Daily Post*, *Courier*, and *Mercury*, with weekly journals like the *Review*, *Porcupine*, and the *Weekly Post*. Higher literacy rates and shorter working hours meant there was a widening market for populist daily papers. The time was ripe for daily evening papers to emerge. The half-penny *Liverpool Echo* was founded in October 1879 by the owners of the *Daily Post* with an American-influenced mixture of serious and sensational news, aimed at working/lower middle class readers of both sexes.

By the late 1870s, when the Liverpool artisan and lower middle class started to have some spare time to watch and play sport, the *Liverpool Courier* tentatively began to include reports of team sports in its 'British Sports and Pastimes' section. During the autumn and winter months this mostly comprised substantial accounts of local rugby games, and included team lists and forthcoming fixtures. There were some reports on association football but as the game was then unknown in the Liverpool area, these mostly concerned senior matches in the south, east Lancashire, or Wales.¹⁷ Occasionally other team sports such as hockey and lacrosse were also covered but

¹⁶ Waller, P. J., *Town, Country, and Nation, England 1850-1914*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 295. The *Courier* had been owned and edited by the printer Charles Tinling since 1856 but John Archibald Willox (a major shareholder in Houlding's Liverpool FC) eventually became part-owner of the *Courier* newspaper group and editor-in-chief until his death in 1905. The *Courier's* decline coincided with Willox's career as MP for Everton from 1892, a period when he was more directly preoccupied with political matters.

¹⁷ Barnes v. Upton Park (*Courier*, Jan. 6th 1879) Lancs v. North Wales, and some Welsh Cup ties such as Bangor v. Caernarvon, and Friars' School (Bangor) v. Rhyl, *Courier*, (Oct. 29th 1878).

most significantly, from the autumn of 1879, the *Courier* included reports on local soccer matches played by the new Liverpool-based teams. These included fairly detailed descriptions of the play with complete team listings, mostly written and submitted by club secretaries. Surprisingly, given Liverpool's tardiness in adopting football, the coverage of the game in the *Courier* was approximately equal to that in some newspapers in the football heartlands of east Lancashire where the sport was already established. The *Blackburn Standard* and the *Darwen News* only began football columns during 1880.¹⁸ The early appearance of football in a Conservative newspaper in Liverpool might be explained by the close links between the aspirant Tory politician, John Houlding and the editor of the *Courier*, J.A. Willox (soon to be MP for Everton). As we saw in Chapter One, Houlding was connected to the Everton United Church club, and he had an instinctive understanding of the value of publicity to his political activities.

In contrast to the *Courier*, the new Liberal evening paper, the *Liverpool Echo* contained no football coverage at all. From the paper's inception in October 1879 through to the creation of the Football League in 1888, its football coverage was virtually non-existent. Small tit-bits of football were occasionally to be found in the 'Weekly Notes on National Pastimes' column written by 'A Country Sportsman' which dealt mainly with blood sports, with occasional coverage of cricket and rugby, and sometimes even gardening. Even in the earlier part of 1888, the year that the Football League was founded, the *Echo*'s football coverage was restricted to short reports (20 or so lines) on the country's top teams such as Preston North End and Aston Villa.¹⁹ The foundation of the new Football League and particularly Everton's membership of it, was the catalyst for the *Echo* management to improve the paper's coverage. On September 8th 1888, after 2,760 standard editions, the *Liverpool Echo* produced its first *Saturday Night Football Edition*, available on the streets from 7 p.m., and printed on pink paper 'to distinguish it from the standard edition'.²⁰ An

¹⁸ Mason, Tony, *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915*, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), p. 194.

¹⁹ ' "Great Football Match at Birmingham Today" ([by] Special Telegram) English Cup, Preston N.E. v. Aston Villa.' *Echo*, Jan. 7th 1888.

²⁰ Cheap penny football editions were being published in some football towns by the early 1880s. The *Football Field and Sports Telegram* began publication in Bolton in 1884, and like the *Athletic News* it

advertisement proclaimed that the football version would give ‘full details of the afternoon’s play. All the important matches in England, Scotland and Wales will be reported...(with) special prominence to local matches.’ The *Echo* management also boasted that it would ‘also contain all Saturday’s racing, sporting news and prophecies, and the latest telegrams up to the hour of going to press. The *Football Edition of the Liverpool Echo* will thus contain news by several hours than any other paper published in the district.’²¹ The first edition remained similar to the standard *Echo* in many respects; the first two pages consisted of advertisements, half of the third page was filled with mainstream news, and the rest of the paper was devoted to sport, specifically, football, cricket, and quoits. As Andrew Walker has indicated, this was normal practice with what, in effect, were prototype football papers.²² The football columns (by ‘Forward’) were the most substantial, the equivalent of two and a half columns, split between rugby and association. There was also a 40 line report on Everton’s first ever League match (against Accrington FC) which covered only the first half’s action, but did include the full-time result. The final page had two columns of short football results which included some of the other new League fixtures, major exhibition matches, and some local amateur games. There were some columns of mostly rugby reports and half of the fourth page comprised a further collection of non-sporting news. A full list of Everton’s 40 fixtures for the forthcoming season was also published.²³ The *Football Echo* was continually updated during Saturday evening with as many as three separate editions available up to 9pm. By the following year, the paper’s title was modified to *The Liverpool Football Echo*, and the equivalent of one of its four pages continued to include non-sporting news. The front page now consisted of solely editorial material, with advertisements being moved to the inside,

had a wider regional following. Bolton was in the vanguard of progressive newspaper development. In 1870, the town boasted three daily papers for a total population of 82,000. Lee, *Popular Press*, p. 277.

²¹ *Echo*, Oct. 5th 1888.

²² Walker, ‘Reporting Play’, p.456. The *Blackburn Times* (1883), *Wolverhampton Express and Star* (1884), and the *Lincolnshire Echo* (1893) only had one page out of four devoted to sport. See also Mason, Tony, ‘Sporting News, 1860-1914’, in Harris, M. and Lee, A., *The Press in English society from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries*, (London: 1986), pp.177-178.

²³ Only 22 of the 40 matches scheduled from September 1st 1888 until May 4th 1889 were actually Football League fixtures. *Echo*, Sept. 8th 1888.

making the *Football Echo* the first Liverpool paper to adopt such a modern format.²⁴ The small amount of football coverage in the standard daily *Echo* diminished further following the introduction of the football version.

Shortly after the foundation of the *Football Echo*, another specialist sporting paper was established in Liverpool. *The Liverpool Athletic Times*, priced one penny (twice the *Echo*'s price), was, as its masthead proclaimed, 'devoted to Football, Cycling, Cricket, Athletics, Rounders, Swimming and Drama' (the last an anomalous inclusion). In fact, football was a minor concern, because in essence this was a cycling journal aimed at a middle-class regional audience. The *Athletic Times* was clearly inspired by the success of the *Athletic News*, the most influential football journal of the period, which had been founded in Manchester fourteen years previously²⁵, and apart from aping its general format, was also available throughout Lancashire, the midlands, and western Scotland (it even changed its name to the very similar *Athletic and Dramatic News*). However, despite initially large revenues from advertising and clearly ambitious intentions, the declining circulation and progressively increasing cover price (3d.) doomed the paper and the title folded in 1893.

Despite the 'football fever' of the late 1880s and early '90s, not all of Liverpool's newspapers showed enthusiasm for football. The *Liverpool Citizen* criticised the *Daily Post* for giving 46 lines to a report of the British Scientific Association whilst giving a full column to an FA meeting. '...hath it indeed come to this? The proceedings of the aristocracy of British scientific intellect being thought of less momentous than a list of football fixtures.'²⁶ The pious *Citizen* closed down in August 1891 after only four years. The Liberal *Liverpool Review* was reputedly 'totally abhorrent' to all forms of football but later, downplayed its political intentions

²⁴ The daily *Liverpool Echo* had to wait until 1958 for this innovation.

²⁵ By 1905, the *Athletic News* was including 500 word reports on every Football League and Southern League match. Initially the *Athletic News* cost 2d but this was reduced to only a penny by the mid-1880s. The circulation increased to 100,000 by the mid-1890s. Mason, *Association Football*, pp. 190-191, and p. 195.

²⁶ *Liverpool Citizen*, Sept. 10th 1889.

and included a more varied range of special articles, theatre and sport.²⁷ However, even this august journal eventually succumbed to football. From the late 1880s to the early 1900s, the *Review* regularly ran a literate and informative football column, eventually expanded to a whole page.

The *Courier* was the first paper in Liverpool with substantial coverage of sport and football, but by the 1890s it began to falter. In not having a Saturday special, the *Courier*'s peak day for match reports remained Monday and in October 1893, accounted for about a quarter of a broadsheet page (just under 2 ½ columns). This was about the same as in 1880, when the *Courier* was the main footballing paper. From Tuesday to Thursday, there was normally very little, if any coverage, but football gossip and speculation generally resumed on Friday. The football columns in Saturday's edition would comprise the day's forthcoming fixtures, plus more speculation and projected team line-ups. A summary of the reports of the previous week's senior matches was often also included. The increasing popularity of the *Football Echo* continued to profoundly affect coverage in the *Courier* and other Liverpool dailies. By 1898, a typical Monday edition of the *Courier* had only 1½ columns of football, almost a whole column less than five years previously.²⁸

The content of the *Football Echo* shows why it was immediately appealing to a mass audience from its launch in 1888. League tables were displayed on the front page, including not just the Football League, but also the Lancashire League, the Combination (a Cheshire/North Staffordshire grouping in which Everton ran their reserve team), the Lancashire Combination, and the Lancashire Alliance. There was even space for two local leagues, The Liverpool and District Alliance, and the Liverpool and District Combination. Illustrations were mostly drawings, including player caricatures, column mastheads, and visual metaphors such as League ladders. An important regular item of reportage was 'J. L.'s Football Sketch Book', which was a strip cartoon drawing of a recent local match (Figure 6.1, page 312). Photographs began to appear regularly by c.1900 but were mostly posed team settings or portraits

²⁷ Richardson, M. *The Development of Professional Football on Merseyside during the Nineteenth Century*, (1983), Unpublished MA thesis, University of Lancaster, Chapter 3.

²⁸ The current Division One table was displayed. Only half a column was devoted to rugby with a very short report on the Roses hockey match. *Courier*, Dec. 6th 1898.

of individual players, both amateurs and professionals. Though the main Liverpool papers had the technology to reproduce photographs, this was a relatively expensive and cumbersome process and the use of action photographs in football reports was a rarity until the 1910s. By the end of the 1900s the *Echo* used a panoply of illustrations, bold mastheads, tables, and even diagrams to make the paper more accessible to the ordinary football follower.

The modern style of presentation was designed to further widen appeal of the sports pages to include younger readers and even perhaps readers who had no direct interest in football. The *Echo*'s approach to journalism was fresher and contrasted with the unimaginative and stale reporting style of the *Courier*. The differing perspectives are illustrated by the reporting of the injury suffered by Liverpool's James Ross in October 1893. The *Echo* adopted a whimsical but inventive slant on the incident:

'Scene: Bolton Wanderers' ground: Voice from the stand – 'What's the matter, Jemmy?'
James Ross Esq. (with a look that would have wrung tears from a millstone): 'Oh! I've broken my collarbone.' And then he cavorted away and was mainly instrumental in scoring the last goal of the match. It will be some weeks before he scores another goal.'²⁹

This evocative description gave the reader a vivid sense of the ambience of the match and made the event memorable. In contrast, the *Courier*'s report of the same incident, headlined, 'Serious Accident to a Footballer' merely gave readers a matter-of-fact report on Ross seeing a doctor and being out of the game for six weeks.³⁰

By the 1900s, the *Football Echo* contained far more gossip and intrigue than did its rivals. By 1908, it had a 'Football Item of the Week' column, together with the perennial favourite, 'Stud Marks', which ran for many years before the Great War. 'Stud Marks' was an extensive miscellany of short news lines of current football tittle-tattle on the professional and amateur game and was generally the longest single column in the paper. Some items were so abbreviated as to be rather obscure non-sequiturs:

²⁹ *Echo* Oct. 7th 1893.

³⁰ *Courier*, Oct. 3rd 1893.

'Sales of programmes to the Chelsea-Aston match which was witnessed by 50,000 spectators realised £93 – record figures.

Something for O'W to look forward to.

177 games have been played in connection with the three leading leagues.

The professional can no longer expect any forgiveness for indifferent form in future games.

Notts County have shortly to give up occupation of Trent Bridge.

At Nottingham, 300,000 visitors are expected today. Forest will be pleased if they get a tenth to cross Trent Bridge.'³¹

This sort of information carried on for about another 80 lines (three and a half broadsheet columns). From the start 'Stud Marks' included much chit-chat on the local amateur scene and by 1910 this dominated the section. The *Echo* was assuming a major role in the dissemination of news and information for the local amateur game; a service formerly provided by the *Courier* but which that paper had now largely surrendered. Occasionally the 'Stud Marks' column would be written not as a long series of unconnected news lines but given coherence as dialogue, as if an overheard conversation between two football followers.³² This 'conversational' device was a favourite of football writers of the period. Burns Campbell's column, "What Mr. Smith heard on Spion Kop" was written as an imaginary dialogue between the writer and the fictional 'Mr. Smith'.³³

NEWSGATHERING AND JOURNALISTS

Sport was one of the first categories of news to marshal new technologies for large-scale news-gathering, and it was necessary for competitors to keep pace if they wanted to stay in contention as major news providers. The electric telegraph allowed newspapers to include regularly updated football and other sports results. The *Echo* and *Courier* both leased private wires from the Post Office, and their telegraph rooms were directly connected to their local offices throughout north-west England and north Wales. The ready availability of telegraphed results reduced 'informational distance' between places and helped to cohere the wider footballing community. Press

³¹ *Echo*, Oct. 2nd 1908. The huge number of visitors to Nottingham must have been for the annual Goose Fair.

³² *Echo*, Nov. 3rd 1906.

³³ *Echo*, Oct. 10th 1914.

agencies made it commercially viable to collect by telegraph the results of race meetings and football matches, tabulate columns of results, and re-direct them to provincial papers across the country.³⁴ The syndicated football reports, results and regular updates of league tables further stimulated interest in the activities of local football clubs. As we have seen, tables of national results and local match reports occupied a good proportion of space in the *Football Echo* and other sports papers. The ready accessibility of tabulated results in the newspapers helped football followers to gauge the relative success or failure of their team within the context of the Football League. Simply by incorporating results and league tables, newspapers sustained supporters' interest in the relative fortunes of their own club and further reinforced the relationship between club, fan, and the press, and this, in turn, strengthened ties of local identity for readers.³⁵ Football and other major sports such as cricket and horse-racing, influenced newspaper owners to develop and utilise ever more progressive newsgathering methods and techniques which had benefits in other fields of reporting.

The telephone had obvious advantages over the telegraph and the commercial importance of Liverpool ensured that the city was an early recipient of new telephone technology. Liverpool's first telephone exchange was opened in October 1879, only two months after the first London exchange, but technical shortcomings ensured that telephones were slow to catch on. Even thirteen years after the arrival of telephones in Liverpool, most football reports still relied on written messages for the transmission of copy, carried by messenger boys cycling from the grounds to newspaper headquarters in central Liverpool. By the 1900s the telephone had begun to facilitate speedy football reporting but it still required nimble organisation of a large team. A staff of specially trained clerks trained in shorthand would be engaged on Saturday afternoons with ears 'glued to a telephone for the greater part of an hour'. The *Courier's* Switch Room had special telephone lines reserved for the use of their reporters at Goodison and Anfield.³⁶ Each man wrote down the report of one match

³⁴ Brown, Lucy, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 124.

³⁵ Brown, *Victorian News*, p. 125.

³⁶ The Liverpool magazine, *Out of Doors*, indicated that the press staircase at the back of Goodison's new Bullens Road stand provided a 'convenient way a busy reporter can run out with an urgent

only, and each of these was taken off to the composing room where a whole page of seven columns (12,000 words), could be set up in as little as thirty minutes.³⁷ From new, Goodison Park had a press enclosure equipped with telephones but they were initially for the exclusive use of *Echo* and *Evening Express/Courier* journalists; *Liverpool Review* reporters apparently had to wait until March 1894 before a special telephone was rigged up for their use.³⁸ However, long-distance telephone calls remained a fairly slow and cumbersome process for most of this period. Even as late as 1909, it still took 24 minutes to set up a call to London from Liverpool, and even took ten minutes to contact Manchester. The tardiness of the national telephone network could be by-passed by resorting to older technologies and carrier pigeons still performed a useful role in the speedy reporting of Saturday football matches as late as the 1900s. 'A fine collection of birds' was housed in the lofty tower of the *Courier* building, 'one of the most conspicuous objects in the upper architecture of Liverpool.'³⁹

The earliest contributors to the football columns of Liverpool papers were mostly unpaid enthusiasts such as club secretaries and team captains who sent in handwritten reports to the newspapers.⁴⁰ Typically such reports began by describing the weather, the venue, and the attendance.⁴¹ Certain individual players were singled out for praise and some attempt was made to describe an aspect of the play. Copy may have been edited and refined, perhaps even re-written, by one of the newspaper's own

message.' *Out of Doors*, October 1892, in Young, Percy M., *Football on Merseyside*, (London: Stanley Paul, 1963), p.175.

³⁶ *The Liverpool Courier Centenary Brochure*, (Liverpool: Tinling, 1908), p. 22.

³⁷ *Liverpool Daily Post Centenary Special*, (Liverpool: *Post and Echo*, 1955), p.117.

³⁸ *Out of Doors* in Young, *Merseyside*, p. 176, *Review*, March 3rd 1894.

³⁹ *Courier Centenary*, p. 23.

⁴⁰ The O'Whatmore, *Porcupine's* football correspondent of the early 1900s, was by his own admission, closely involved in football at the dawn of its introduction to Liverpool. He appears to have been closely associated with the Everton United Church team in Stanley Park. Frank Brettell, an elementary school teacher (and sometime Everton FC secretary) contributed reports to newspapers before he became a secretary-manager with Bolton Wanderers in 1896.

⁴¹ 'Press reports on local sporting events often called attention to the number of spectators in attendance. If a game drew a large contingent of spectators, the city had successfully demonstrated its energy and vitality.' Lorenz, 'Field of Sport', p. 149.

journalists. One of the purposes of the revision process was to eliminate bias in the original eye-witness report though such re-writing magnified the possibility of error.⁴² Editors occasionally showed irritation with the punctuality of their troop of amateur correspondents: 'The reports of a large number of matches played on Saturday have been rejected in consequence of not having been sent out with sufficient promptitude.'⁴³ Some reports went beyond mere description of matches and told readers something about the prevailing scenario in which football was played. For instance, the *Courier's* extended account of Everton's Lancashire Cup tie at Great Lever in December 1880 (see Chapter One) revealed a great deal about the aggressively competitive spirit in which football was played in east Lancashire.

The descriptive abilities of these early amateur correspondents show that they were highly literate and erudite men who, as in the Great Lever example cited above, inadvertently provided excellent source material for historians. By the late 1880s, professional sportswriters were being employed by major Liverpool newspapers, though their style was no less verbose than the scholarly amateurs who preceded them. 'Men of some literary aspiration', schooled in the 'Greek classics and Shakespeare' were writing for the *Athletic News* in the late 1880s, typical of whom was James Catton, ('Tityrus'), who following a classical public school education, served his journalistic apprenticeship in Preston just as North End began to establish their 'invincible' reputation.⁴⁴ Editors favoured such erudite and articulate reporters because of their ability to reflect the 'tension, atmosphere and excitement associated with sporting events.'⁴⁵ One of the few professional sports journalists, who can be

⁴² The *Courier* contained protracted correspondence regarding a match between Everton FC v. Liverpool Association FC, initiated by a complaint from the Everton umpire about 'two mis-statements', indicating possible bias by the original correspondent. *Courier*, Nov. 14th to 19th 1881. Errors in a report on a match between Rhyl and Ruthin, suggests that the details were relayed through to an intermediary who actually wrote up the piece. *Courier*, Dec. 25th 1879.

⁴³ *Courier*, Dec. 1st 1880. Twenty-six years later, the compiler of Stud Marks urged secretaries to 'be brief in reporting clubs' doings' 'owing to the large number of reports' featured in the column. To ensure a mention they were reminded that the deadline was Wednesday.

⁴⁴ Mason, *Association Football*, p. 189. Catton, educated at Malvern College, was, from 1875, apprenticed to the *Preston Herald* as a news reporter. He later wrote for the *Athletic News*, initially under the pseudonym, 'Ubique', before adopting his more famous 'Tityrus' moniker.

⁴⁵ Lorenz, 'Field of Sport', p. 145.

positively identified in Liverpool during this period, was Francis E. Hughes (born 1871), who was highly adroit in the Tityrus school of classical allusion and mannered expression. His verbose, over-descriptive style would be an anathema to readers used to populist modern journalism with its limited supply of over-used clichés. Hughes, whose father was also a newspaperman, was, like many of his contemporaries, especially partial to cod-doggerel.⁴⁶ This piece on the October 1909 ‘derby’ match appeared in the *Echo* in his ‘Comments on the Game’ column, a critical and somewhat poetic summary of big local matches:

‘And so, once more into the breach, dear friends...A sea of faces surround a verdant patch that is just at this moment restful to the eye, but in a few minutes will be the arena for a battle, in which neither side can afford or is willing to give or take quarter. Restfulness will give way to strife and stirring passages at arms are promised. Meanwhile, Dan Phoebus (*the sun*) looks benignly down and smiles upon the occasion...’⁴⁷

Such an archaic, polysyllabic writing style may seem a complete anachronism to modern readers, but as Lucy Brown has succinctly expressed, ‘...there was a smaller difference in style and language than there is today between the “quality” papers and the “down-market” ones’. The average reader of a provincial paper was considered educated enough to understand complex discourse and to possess a broad vocabulary. The reporting style in the provincial press was not that unlike the writing found in *The Times*.⁴⁸

By the 1910s, Hughes’ reporting style was beginning to seem increasingly outdated as sports reporters began to be influenced by ‘the “gee-whizzers” of American journalism’, and a ‘more colourful, gossipy style of writing took over from the rather self-consciously poetic late Victorian style with its “hapless custodians” and “leather spheroids”’.⁴⁹ As an Atlantic port, Liverpool was particularly susceptible to direct influences from the United States and this was reflected in contemporary newspaper culture. This newer gossipy style of sports writing was exemplified by the journalism

⁴⁶ *Echo*, Oct. 3rd 1909, ‘Play and Players’ column.

⁴⁷ *Echo*, Oct. 2nd 1909.

⁴⁸ Lucy Brown, *Victorian News*, p. 100 and p.102

⁴⁹ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p.309.

of young Ernest Edwards who was recruited by the *Echo* to be senior sports reporter in the early 1900s. Edwards (1883-1959) became the best-known of Liverpool sports journalists, better known to the public-at-large by his nom-de-plume, 'Bee' (Figure 6.2, page 312).⁵⁰ He was originally from Bromsgrove in Worcestershire, where his father was a tailor's cutter, but by the early 1900s, he was working as a reporter in Birmingham. In 1902 he became the first specialised football journalist recruited by the *Echo* through the national network of the provincial press. Though the *Football Echo* had by then been in existence for fourteen years, Edwards' arrival marked the beginning of a modern professional attitude to sports reporting in Liverpool.⁵¹

Edwards instinctively provided his readers with conversational fodder on football. In cities men might not work with friends and social acquaintances, and 'could not always exchange gossip about the shop floor. But football...(provided) an endless source of argument and banter.'⁵² Edwards provided men with raw material for their banter with mates or acquaintances and as this extract from 1914 illustrates, he was explicit that that was his purpose:

'Here are some chat items: Lowe will not be able to play for a month or more; Bratley and Galt, the centre-halves, have never played in local "Derbies" before, and Campbell (the Liverpool goalkeeper) kept the game up for a minute through wearing a blue jersey. Everton were dangerous in the first two minutes. Parker dribbled neatly, and had three men beaten when Fairfoul came right away across the goalmouth, and half-cleared from under Campbell's nose. Chedzgoy kept the ball in play and Makepeace shot well and truly. The ball hit a defender and went for a corner, after which Clennell did a cute bit of dribbling and when the ball finally went out to Fleetwood, Jefferis tried a first-time shot spiritedly.'⁵³

⁵⁰ 'Bee' may have been Edwards' full initials or an acronym of his by-line. Edwards' career spanned five decades until the 1950s.

⁵¹ Though the 'amateur' contributors still had some influence. The *Echo*'s biggest football column, 'Stud Marks', was compiled by Anfield baker, Louis Kelly (1870-?). Living close to Stanley Park, Kelly, a Manxman, was geographically well placed to report on football. He obviously had some influence in local circles; his son Theo became Everton's first manager in the 1930s, and his daughter married Liverpool player, Tom Bromilow. *Echo*, March 5th 1959.

⁵² Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 168.

⁵³ 'Bee', *Echo*, Oct. 3rd 1914.

Edwards' direct economical style contrasts graphically with the archaic approach of his colleague, Francis Hughes. Match reporting, as Holt has said, 'was an "art" in itself', and reports of mundane matches were made to sound more exciting by the use of stock clichés (some of which remain favourites down to the present day).⁵⁴ The reporter in the field frequently resorted to ready-made phrases to facilitate a quick and accurate description of the action, generally written as the match was actually taking place.

Edwards' influence also went beyond the sports pages. He virtually ingratiated himself with the management of both football clubs and protected this relationship as it gave him almost exclusive access to the inner sanctum of the boardrooms. As we saw in Chapter Three, he was highly critical of the footballers' threatened strike in 1909 and willingly acted as the mouthpiece of Everton and Liverpool Football Clubs. He even successfully lobbied the clubs to sign footballers that he himself had spotted.⁵⁵ It was also allegedly Edwards who suggested the name Spion Kop for Anfield's newly raised mound in 1906 and in 1924, he persuaded Sam Chedzgoj that it was perfectly acceptable within the existing FA laws to score a legitimate goal by dribbling directly from a corner. After the Great War, Edwards also acted as the Merseyside correspondent for national Sunday papers and he was a pioneering wireless broadcaster.⁵⁶ He attained the status of a genuine local celebrity (at least under his apian by-line), and his exploits even featured in the Liverpool gossip magazine, *Liverpolitan*. He lived comfortably in the Wirral stockbroker belt, close to the Royal Liverpool Golf Club, and was followed as *Echo* sports editor by his son, Leslie.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p.309. Inside forwards would 'turn on a sixpence'; a centre forward would 'rise like a salmon'.

⁵⁵ Edwards apparently persuaded a reluctant Everton directorate to sign Bert Freeman from Woolwich Arsenal in the spring of 1908. Edwards may have known Freeman during his time as a reporter in Birmingham. Freeman (born Handsworth 1885), was signed by Aston Villa after playing for Gower Street School, Aston in 1902, and moved to Woolwich later the same year. *Liverpool Echo*, June 18th 2003.

⁵⁶ Chedzgoj scored the goal in a match against Tottenham. Fabian and Green, *Association Football*, (London: Caxton Press, 1960), Vol. III, p. 219.

⁵⁷ Another contemporary sports reporting dynasty was established by Edwards' colleague John Wolfe, whose son, Harold, was also a long-serving sports journalist on the *Echo*.

THE READERSHIP

Even before the Great War, Ernest Edwards had achieved a powerful position as the voice of Liverpool football, but what was the extent of his audience and what sort of person read the football columns? In 1885 the *Daily Post* and *Echo* group sold 3,250,000 copies of their papers per month, which works out at a daily circulation of 135,000.⁵⁸ Most big city northern and midland newspapers were claiming daily circulations of over 20,000 by the late 1880s, so the *Post* and *Echo* figures were already exceptionally high.⁵⁹ Thirteen years later, the circulation figures for the *Echo* group were even more impressive. On average the *Post* and *Echo* titles were selling 385,000 extra copies per month compared with the previous year (1897). In the best month for sales between April and September 1898, the whole *Echo-Post* group sold 4,910,000 papers.⁶⁰ These figures were published in the *Echo* at the end of the year and the paper proudly made the point that the circulation figures for the group's three papers exceeded the combined total for their local rivals.⁶¹ This massive increase in circulation must have been, in no small part, due to the immense popularity of the *Liverpool Football Echo*. Faced with such overwhelming competition, the *Courier*, *Review*, and *Mercury* were already on the road to oblivion. 1904 was a bad year: the *Mercury* merged with the *Daily Post* and the *Review* ceased publication although the *Courier* struggled on until the 1920s.

What sort of people read the football columns of the local press? By the 1900s, newspapers were more popular in England than in any other country. Sales were increasing as result of improved levels of literacy but still only a fifth of people read a

⁵⁸ This may signify a daily circulation for the *Echo* alone of more than 100,000 in the mid to late 1880s. To put the *Echo* circulation figures into context: *Athletic News* sold 128,000 copies in 1893, 180,000 (1896), and 192,000 (1914). Mason, *Association Football*, p 191.

⁵⁹ Waller, *Town, Country, and Nation*, p. 296.

⁶⁰ *Echo*, Dec. 17th 1898.

⁶¹ By 1898, the *Saturday Football Echo* had very comprehensive football coverage, while other Liverpool papers had generally wound down reporting the game.

daily paper by 1910.⁶² Most households bought only a Sunday paper to last the week, such as *Lloyd's Weekly News*, which had a massive circulation of a million even as early as 1890, partly due to its 'down-market' content, of great appeal to the working classes, who eschewed the material which their social betters wanted them to read.⁶³ In 1899, the best-selling papers in Bolton were Harmsworth's titles, *Comic Cuts*, *Tit-bits*, *Answers*, and 'the sporting and betting papers.'⁶⁴ Liverpool's poorer citizens generally endured more profound levels of poverty than their equivalents in other towns and cities, but even amongst them, weekly newspaper reading was becoming commonplace at the turn of the twentieth century. In the south-end of Liverpool, Pat O'Mara claimed that in his mother's mostly unschooled family, 'all reading was limited to the *Weekly Post*', which Orchard claimed was 'so edited as to be popular among the rougher and less thoughtful classes.'⁶⁵ By the early 1900s, school attendance was being rigorously enforced among the poorest groups of Liverpool children and literacy levels were significantly better than only a few years previously.⁶⁶ Boys were able to buy a bundle of a dozen or so morning papers from a newspaper delivery cart for cash and sell them on the streets.⁶⁷ Literate newsboys could have availed themselves of the opportunity to snatch a quick read of their papers and may well occasionally taken home unsold newspapers which other members of the family could have taken the trouble to read. However, apart from the question of literacy, the poorest people in society simply could not afford to regularly buy a newspaper, still well beyond the means of their meagre budgets.⁶⁸ Of course,

⁶² 'In Middlesbrough, Lady Bell estimated that only a quarter of families there read both books and newspapers.' Thompson, Paul, *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society*, (London: Paladin, 1977), p.200 and p. 199.

⁶³ Thompson, *Edwardians*, p. 165 and p. 315.

⁶⁴ Clarke, Allen, 'The Effects of the Factory System', (1899) quoted in Walton, J.K. *Lancashire, a social history, 1558-1939*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), p. 303.

⁶⁵ O'Mara, Pat, *The Autobiography of a Liverpool Slummy*, (Liverpool: The Bluecoat Press, c.1995 edition), p. 14. O'Mara's mother apparently still read the *Weekly Post* in 1919. Orchard, B. Guinness, *Liverpool's Legion of Honour*, (Birkenhead: Orchard, 1892), p. 609.

⁶⁶ Walker, Brian and Hinchliffe, Ann, *In Our Liverpool Home*, (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1978), p.21.

⁶⁷ Walker and Hinchliffe, *Liverpool Home*, p.26.

⁶⁸ Thompson, *Edwardians*, p. 323. Seebohm Rowntree showed that a manual worker could feed his family of four children, provided all non-essential spending was cut out; for instance, 'They must never purchase a ½ d newspaper.' Thompson, *Edwardians*, p.30.

people did not need to actually buy a newspaper themselves in order to read it. A 1903 photograph of the Brown Reading Room in Liverpool shows several working-class men, some shabbily attired, reading reference books and newspapers.⁶⁹ Discarded newspapers could have come into people's possession, as for example, the wrappings of fish and chip meals, or even 'when the newsagent gave it to them to light fires.'⁷⁰ In Glasgow in 1901, groups of young men clubbed together to buy the late Saturday football edition and read it together by gaslight on street corners.⁷¹ Such practices must have also been followed in Liverpool. The overall point is that even the lowest stratum of the Liverpool working-class could have, at least occasionally, read a newspaper and so through the press had an awareness of the current activities of Everton, Liverpool, and the lesser clubs of the area.

Whilst this anecdotal evidence gives some insights into aspects of the reading habits of the Victorian working-class, there are more objective sources about the type of person reading the football pages. Competitions were used to bolster the sales of newspapers from the 1880s and their published results are useful sources with which to analyse readership. As described earlier, Mason used a competition to determine the social composition of some spectators at Everton and Liverpool home games but his results would also indicate that the readership of the football pages of *Porcupine* were generally respectable skilled and white-collar workers.⁷²

In the 1890s and 1900s, available prize money often exceeded the weekly wage of a skilled worker (on £2 per week), and consequently some entrants took competitions very seriously. S. Bunney of Egremont, Wallasey, won an *Echo* competition on consecutive weeks in January 1900. For one of these, he sent in two separate entries

⁶⁹ *Handbook compiled for the Congress of the Royal Institute of Public Health*, (Liverpool, 1903), p. 26. Liverpool was particularly well-endowed with public libraries, though nationally provision was less than mediocre. Even Glasgow and Edinburgh had no public libraries even as late as 1900.

⁷⁰ Thompson, *Edwardians*, p. 152.

⁷¹ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 308.

⁷² Mason, Tony, *The Blues and the Reds*, (Liverpool: Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1985), p. 14, and see footnote 64 of this chapter. The skilled working-class were regular newspaper readers by the 1900s, Thompson, *Edwardians*, p. 58, A skilled engineer in Bolton habitually read the local paper after work.

and for his efforts received double the cash prize. There were multiple entries from some families, presumably to boost the chances of winning. The competitions (and the possibility of winning) were declared by some in the know to be one of the main reasons for buying a newspaper. A Salford newsagent claimed that this was why most of his customers bought papers.⁷³ Some entrants took great diligence over competitions, attracted by the mental challenge and the prize money. An Everton-supporting shopkeeper wrote into the *Echo* in October 1913 that he 'set about' competition number 46 after he closed his shop 'and it took me 1 ½ hours.'⁷⁴

'Our Puzzle Column' was a regular general competition in the *Liverpool Echo* of the late 1880s, but in January 1888 its compiler decided to have a special football version because 'most of our readers are more or less interested in the game'.⁷⁵ Entrants were required to submit their proposals for the 'Best Football Team (association) representing Lancashire, Cheshire, and North Wales'.⁷⁶ The answer closest to the setter's version would win two guineas, and the runner-up, one guinea. Entries were to be submitted only on the official form printed in the *Echo*, validated by a copy of the competition rules cut out from the paper and attached to the entry coupon.⁷⁷ As it happened, no single entrant named all eleven players chosen by the judge, but five people named ten correctly, and nearly 100 had nine correct matches. This may have represented a total original entry of 200 or more people. The five winners shared the three guineas prize money and *their* names and addresses were printed in the *Echo*.

⁷³ The newsagent said, 'reading don't matter that much. What does count is the chance of getting something for nothing.' Golby, J.M. and Purdue, A.W., *The Civilisation of the Crowd*, (London: Batsford, 1984), p. 172.

⁷⁴ *Echo*, Oct. 11th 1913.

⁷⁵ An interesting comment on the perceived level of interest in the sport at the time, particularly, in so far as the football version of the *Liverpool Echo* would not be launched for a further nine months.

⁷⁶ *Echo* Jan. 14th 1888.

⁷⁷ The answers printed in the *Football Echo* of Jan. 28th 1888 were: N.J. Ross (Preston NE), Farmer (Everton), J. Ross Jr. (PNE), G. Howarth (PNE), Pearson, Goodall (PNE), Russell (PNE), R. Howarth (PNE), H. Arthur, Dewhurst (PNE), Traynor (PNE).

Table 6.1: Football competition winners announced in the *Football Echo*, January 1888.

Name	Address	Age/ Occupation
Miss Louisa Gibney	6 Sim St., near Soho Street (St. Anne's ward).	11 years old. Family from Somerset.
H. Rawcliffe	15 Ogwen St., Everton	Father a policeman.
J. Little	57 Exley St. Kensington.	
Harold Wilde	30 Monastery Rd., Anfield	
Arthur J. Mothersole	Mill Rd., Higher Bebington	18 years old, clerk, born Essex. Father: Retired Naval officer.

Sources: *Echo*, January 14th 1888, and 1881, 1891 censuses.

Housing type and census data on most of the five winners suggests that they were from the lower middle class. The exception is the 11 year old girl whose family may have temporarily fallen on hard times. In Somerset her father had been a tailor. Unlike the other winners, Louise lived in a small terraced house, in a rather squalid part of inner city Liverpool.

From his appointment as sports editor in 1902, Ernest Edwards made competitions a regular feature of the *Football Echo*. Three typically diverse competitions were run in October 1906 (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Winners of October 1906 *Football Echo* competitions

Name	Birthplace (if known)	Age in 1906 (if known)	Address	Occupation (if known)
James Cutts	Liverpool	24	10 Clapham Road, Anfield	General clerk
William Gerard	Liverpool	22	21 Belmont Drive, Anfield	Assurance clerk
Thomas Gerard	Liverpool	19	21 Belmont Drive, Anfield	
Lucy Bramham	Liverpool	23	Alroy Road, Anfield	Milliner
Joseph Clark			61 Breckfield Road, Everton	Chandler
James Cannon	Earlestown	34	154 Haydock St., Earlestown	Newsagent
J. Parry			48 Vienna St., Anfield	
J. Molyneux			9 Warbreck Avenue, Aintree	
George Green			109 Belmont Rd., Anfield	Clerk of works (father)
Percy Wardle		39	9 St. Bride's Rd., Birkenhead	Railway clerk
E.V. Howard			1 Francis Avenue, Birkenhead	Bank clerk (father)
W. Williams			Ivy cottage, Little Sutton, Cheshire	
Thomas Lloyd			Newfield Cottages, Helsby	
E.K. Davies			15 Bradley Road, Wrexham	

Sources: *Echo*, Oct 6th, Oct 13th, Oct. 20th 1906, *Gore's Directory*, 1901 census.

One was a 'Football Faces' competition in which entrants had to guess the identity of certain footballers from caricatures. Another was a 'Best Team' contest in which entrants had to nominate a player to each team position. The closest to 'Bee's' own

selection would be the winner. Entrants for this competition were asked to make a donation to William Dunlop's (Liverpool FC) benefit fund. In the third competition, contestants were required to write a footballing limerick. The three competitions produced fourteen winners, including two brothers living at the same address. The addresses covered a wide geographic area reflecting the large distribution network established by such a major provincial paper as the *Echo*.⁷⁸ Eight out of the 14 winners lived in north Liverpool, and significantly, six of those were from Anfield, close to the football clubs. Of the winners whose ages were known, most were in their early twenties, and at least one was female. Clerks and shopkeepers had a significant presence among the winners, suggesting that the *Football Echo*'s readership remained mainly lower middle and skilled working class, as it had been at the end of the 1880s.⁷⁹

Table 6.3: *Football Echo* competition winners October 1913

Name	Birthplace	Birth year	Age (1913)	Address (1913)	Occupation
Dauncey, Walter	Didcot	1884	29	161 Queens Rd. Everton	Handcart owner
Whamond, George H.	Rhuddlan	1898	15	13 Sycamore Rd. Waterloo	Father- hosier
Carruthers, James		1877	36	Wapping	Carter
Jinks, Edward	Liverpool	1900	13	45 Molyneux Rd. Kirkdale	Father- chemical labourer
Jinks, Thomas	Liverpool	1874	39		Printing machinist
Percival, Ralph	Liverpool	1897	16		
Gadie, George	Liverpool	1893	20	7 Sunlight St. Anfield	Jeweller
Gadie, Charles	Liverpool	1897	16	35 Molyneux Rd. Kirkdale	Jeweller
Reed, Stanley	Liverpool	1891	21		
Fore, Thomas	Surrey	1895	18	20 Market St. Birkenhead	Father- pharmacist
Fore, Charles	Birkenhead	1899	14	20 Market St. Birkenhead	Father- pharmacist
Litner, Mellie/Emma	Liverpool	1893/95	18/20	171 Walton Breck Rd. Anfield	Father (German)- Licensed broker
Stirrup, Ralph	Widnes	1894	19	Widnes	
Reade, Lewis	Huyton	1893	20	Whiston	Father- potter
Stringer, John	Widnes	1894	19	Widnes	Father- engine driver
Almond, Paul	Thornton	1876	37	26 Lyra Rd. Waterloo	Insurance agent
Leonard, Martin J.				4 Grove Rd. Hoylake	
Evans, Stanley				26 Oxford Drive, Waterloo	Cotton salesman
Parry, Richard Henry				69 Trevor Rd., Orrell Park	Warehouseman
Boadle, Harold	Liverpool	1890	23	Toxteth (1901)	
Shimmin, Henry				27 Rossini St., Seaforth	Electrician

Sources: *Echo*, Oct. 11th 1913, *Gore's Directory*, 1913, 1901 Census.

Two hundred and forty two readers were winners in one of the *Football Echo*'s 'Fireside Football Puzzles' in October 1913. The overall winner was Mrs Delaney of

⁷⁸ The *Courier*, too, had a widely flung network of local distribution points spread over south-west Lancashire, west Cheshire, and north Wales. *Courier Centenary Brochure*, p. 22.

⁷⁹ Four winners were clerks, and a further two of unknown occupation had fathers who were clerks, with two winners being shopkeepers. *Echo*, Oct. 6th 1906.

44 St. George's Hill, Everton. No addresses were given for the other 241 names but their home districts were also listed allowing a limited amount of cross-referencing with the 1901 census and contemporary street directories. The results of this analysis illustrate a number of significant factors. Firstly, the geographical distribution shows that the *Echo* was available over an enormous area, from south Lancashire, through Cheshire, and down to mid-Wales (Figure 6.3, page 313). There were even entrants from Edinburgh, London, and Lincoln, attesting to the national availability of the *Echo*. Unsurprisingly, the majority of entrants (171) were from Liverpool, 14 from outer Liverpool districts, 12 from the Wirral and Chester areas, 10 from North Wales, and 30 from peripheral districts in south-west Lancashire. Interestingly, once again the area which seems to produce the most number of winners was north Liverpool, with six of the 20 names listed living there.

Comparatively few of the entrants have been positively identified (see Table 6.3), but the general trend suggests that a large proportion were in their teens. To increase the likelihood of winning the cash prize, it would appear that it was common practice for several members of the same family to enter the competition (for example, the Carruthers). Husbands, fathers, or brothers may have entered female family members, which may explain the relatively large numbers of female entrants, though of course some women may have entered football competitions on their own initiative. Newspapers, through their football gossip columns, reports and competitions, provided females with vicarious opportunity to engage actively with the sport. Nearly 10% (22) of the 242 correct entries for the October 1913 competition were from females, including the overall winner, a far higher proportion than the numbers of women spectators seen at Goodison and Anfield at the time.

RELATIONSHIP WITH READERS AND CLUBS

The popularity of these football competitions shows that newspaper publishers were not only interested in supplying information to the 30,000 regular football spectators and five thousand amateur players in and around Liverpool. Geographically far-flung entrants may not have been able to attend matches involving Liverpool or Everton, but they were able to follow events and developments in the sport through the newspapers. Readers had a range of motives for perusing the football columns.

Spectators may have read reports on games at which they had been present because they wanted another perspective on the game. Players, secretaries, and officials must also have read such reports if only to check their veracity or even to experience the sensation of seeing their names in print. Football match reports were also intended for general readers of the newspaper, including people who may never have actually attended a football match. Such readers may have had no idea of the intricacies of play or tactics, but perhaps because of their sense of local pride and community identification, wanted up-to-date news on the exploits of local clubs.

Newspapers also engaged the interest of readers by the inclusion of profiles, or pen-pictures, on leading players. A series on leading local professionals appeared in the *Athletic and Dramatic News* in the early 1890s. The *Football Echo* ran occasional player profiles too, on both professional and amateur players. Suburban weeklies, concentrating on their parochial football scenes, also included profiles of prominent local amateurs. Rarely critical, pen-pictures were generally over-praiseworthy of a player's abilities.⁸⁰ Abbreviated versions of player pen-pictures were also written for cigarette cards, which were issued by the Liverpool-based Ogden's Tobacco Company from about 1894.⁸¹ Such cards were essentially advertisements, though before 1914 no Liverpool-based player seems to have actually promoted a product in the way that some Lincoln City players apparently did.⁸² Cards certainly gave top players extra publicity but there was also an indirect implication that they were endorsing the smoking of a particular brand of cigarette, even though players were not paid to appear on the cards. The cult of collecting cards also appealed to younger fans and reinforced the featured players' heroic status in supporters' minds.⁸³ Sources for pen-pictures came from the football clubs, but occasionally players themselves spoke

⁸⁰ There was a series of pen-pictures in the *Athletic and Dramatic News* during the autumn of 1892. Also *Prescot Reporter*, March 18th 1905.

⁸¹ France, David, *Toffee Cards: the Tobacco Years*, (Essex: Skript Design, 1997), p. 1.

⁸² Walker, 'Reporting Play', p. 458.

⁸³ 'A most amazing knowledge is betrayed of the personal appearance, character, and moral weakness of each individual player.' Freeman, A., 'Boy's Life and Labour', (1914), in Thompson, *Edwardians*, p. 200.

directly to journalists. Press interviews with officials and players were uncommon but began to appear sporadically from the 1890s.⁸⁴

The press made possible the idea of a 'passive' football fan who may not have been able to attend matches but in other ways could be considered no less passionate a supporter. In the pre-merchandising era, a passive fan was of no direct economic value to his football club, but was crucial to the sales of newspapers. The football press made positive efforts to cultivate the interest of the enormous football readership in the Liverpool region by supplying an on-going diet of information regarding injuries, changes to the first team, behind the scenes machinations, and prospective new signings. Such football gossip was surprisingly modern even by the early 1890s. As the *Liverpool Review* put it in 1892, '...the ever-expectant football public the while scanning the papers to see how and when the team in which they were most interested was to be strengthened by the inclusion of new blood.'⁸⁵ Football journalism had developed considerably from its beginnings in the simple reporting of matches and by the 1890s, the Liverpool press played a significant part in the promotion of local football as a fulfilling hobby, if not a way of life. As Mason put it, the press was 'describing events, giving the score, providing practical assistance in numerous other ways, keeping records, writing up outstanding performers, (and not least) building up myths about golden eras.'⁸⁶ The latter was already happening in the 1900s with regard to the footballers of the 1880s and 1890s. Newspaper coverage catalysed the public's interest in football and persuaded some of them to actively participate by watching or playing the game.⁸⁷

Football infrastructures may well have evolved in Liverpool without the involvement of local newspapers, but unquestionably, the press was a major factor in accelerating the game's spread and development, and was absolutely indispensable to its organisation and sustained popularity. The local amateur game depended on the press,

⁸⁴ 'No secretary contrived to be mentioned in print as often as Tom Watson of Liverpool. He loved to see his name in good type. It was a little weakness of his and quite pardonable.' Catton, J. H. (1924) quoted in Carter, Neil, *The Football Manager: a History*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 45.

⁸⁵ *Review*, Sept. 10th 1892.

⁸⁶ Mason, 'All the Winners', p. 12.

⁸⁷ Lorenz, 'Field of Sport', p. 149.

not simply to report games but for the publicity it gave to matches, leagues, players and teams, effectively acting as a clearing-house for information. The *Echo*, in particular, realised the important function it served for local amateurs through its various regional columns, news from local leagues and associations, and information and features on players. A lot of this was conveyed through the 'Stud Marks' column, an authoritative and comprehensive compilation of news and information mostly on the local amateur scene. Much of its content came from local club secretaries who were repeatedly urged by the newspaper to promptly submit suitable material and match reports.⁸⁸ By the mid-1900s, it was accompanied by many snapshots of individual amateur players (generally attired in Sunday best rather than football kit) and team photographs of local clubs. Suburban weeklies such as the *Prescot and Huyton Reporter*, *Waterloo Times*, and the *St. Helens Lantern*, served a similar function in the promotion of the amateur game in their own districts, but a mention in the *Football Echo*, with its huge circulation and wide catchment area, conferred more prestige.

Even in the 1890s, before the local newspaper market reached its optimum extent, football journalists, realising the scale of the audience they were addressing, attempted to assert the authority they now felt that they commanded. Several campaigns were launched in attempts to influence both their readerships and the football authorities. The *Review* repeatedly attempted to promote the idea of two referees officiating in matches during 1893-94.⁸⁹ 'Centre' of the *Review* made several attempts to influence the attitudes and behaviour of fans, for his repeated attempts to promote nicknames for Everton FC ('Bluebottles'), and almost comical stance against bad language at Goodison.⁹⁰ As we saw earlier, by the 1900s, Ernest Edwards had also realised the considerable influence of his position as *Echo* sports editor, and rarely hesitated to use it.

When journalists and clubs realised the power they wielded, rivalries and alliances developed between them, and the complex relationship between the parties was a

⁸⁸ *Echo*, Oct. 27th 1906.

⁸⁹ *Review*, Dec. 6th 1893.

⁹⁰ *Review*, Oct. 7th 1893, Jan. 20th 1894.

factor in determining the ultimate shape of the Liverpool sporting press. This is well illustrated by the contrasting perspectives brought by the press to the reporting of the internecine struggles within Everton FC in 1891-92. The newspapers provided a day-by-day commentary on the crisis and their particular political affiliations coloured the standpoint of their reports, having long-term effects on the relationship between press and the clubs. That bulwark of Liverpool Conservatism, the *Courier*, was owned and edited by J.A. Willox, a close confidante of John Houlding, and unsurprisingly the paper supported the Houlding faction throughout the crisis. Willox was so closely involved in the events of 1892 that he subsequently became an original shareholder in Houlding's new Liverpool FC.⁹¹ The *Courier* claimed that the anti-Houlding group were intriguing behind the scenes with the Liberal press, and the *Daily Post* and *Echo* group, with its Liberal and temperance sympathies, was certainly critical of Houlding and his cohorts. Following the crucial decision to expel Houlding and re-locate to Mere Green, the *Daily Post* commented:

‘Messrs Mahon and Clayton... took upon themselves a big task in trying to rid the Everton club of an influence that had apparently grown stronger year after year... This independent action of Mr. Mahon and his friends might be said to have produced the chaos the club found itself in, but having shaken off the incubus their action is now clear and defined...and it was gratifying to find that neither publicans nor moneylenders had been approached for assistance.’⁹²

Despite its own Liberal credentials, the *Liverpool Review* initially adopted a neutral position to the prejudices shown by the press during the local reporting of the crisis.⁹³ Indeed, the *Review* gradually became broadly supportive of Houlding and inclined to be somewhat dismissive of the Mahon faction. As we have seen, Houlding was astute enough to appreciate the value of publicity both for his political career and his football clubs. For Houlding, personal publicity and football publicity were often

⁹¹ Coincidentally, at the height of the dispute, Willox was elected MP for Everton in a by-election; Houlding having been persuaded not to be considered as Tory candidate.

⁹² *Daily Post*, March 19th 1892.

⁹³ *Review*, May 28th 1892.

interchangeable as football spilt over into the political and general news sections of the local press (Figure 6.4, page 312).⁹⁴

Following the split, the re-formed Everton FC seems to have formed a particularly close relationship with the *Echo* and the *Evening Express*. The press room at the new Goodison Park was equipped exclusively for the use of these two papers and their staff even played a charity match at Goodison at Christmas 1892. However, the new Everton management were uncooperative, even hostile, towards the *Liverpool Review*, possibly due to the paper's not unfavourable stance towards Houlding, an attitude which continued after the founding of Liverpool FC. For instance, the *Echo* was critical of Houlding over his actions in a minor dispute over the ownership of some property left at Anfield by Everton. The *Liverpool Review* used the episode as an opportunity to browbeat the ethics of *Echo* journalists:

‘It is not enough for this gentlemen (*the Echo editor*) that the broad difference between Mr. Houlding and the Everton FC executive has, weeks ago, been healed up. He must needs quibble and quibble and manufacture ‘copy’ out of every infinitesimal and insignificant item in connection with the final adjustment of the disagreement between the two parties.’⁹⁵

The *Review* continued to criticise the *Echo*, souring an already somewhat fraught relationship with the Everton management. This was not helped by explicit ridicule of the Everton directorate probably borne to some extent by sheer frustration in the club's lack of cooperation. ‘In the principal stand there are always a number of committeemen who love to make themselves conspicuous by shouting commands to the players, which in nine cases out of ten, cannot be heard, and in the tenth instance are completely ignored.’⁹⁶ The Everton management retaliated by becoming progressively more intransigent. ‘Linesman’, the *Review*'s main correspondent complained that Everton did not supply details of team selection prior to matches and there were repeated complaints that the *Review* was allowed only one press pass,

⁹⁴ The newspapers of the 1880s and ‘90s frequently refer to Houlding's exploits ranging from donating to charities, handing out prizes, or opening civic amenities.

⁹⁵ *Review*, May 28th 1892.

⁹⁶ *Review*, Sept. 2nd 1893.

which hindered the reporting of reserve games.⁹⁷ The *Review* even used the issue of bad language, endemic at football grounds then as now, to specifically single out Everton, swearing described as ‘particularly prevalent amongst the spectators at Goodison Park.’⁹⁸ The *Review* made a farrago of accusations against Everton FC over the next few years: for instance, it had deliberately organised counter-attractions to stymie Liverpool’s gate, Everton’s poor form was blamed on directors who were advised ‘to go into retreat for a season’, and the perennial complaints regarding the unsporting behaviour of Everton fans.⁹⁹ The continued lack of cooperation by Everton FC may have prompted the decision around 1900 of the *Review*’s management to alter the emphasis of the weekly’s football coverage. In fact, the entire journal was comprehensively revamped and the *Review* altered the emphasis of its football coverage by concentrating on the gentleman-amateur game. Whilst this was certainly an area not generally covered by other Liverpool papers, it clearly had a relatively limited appeal and perhaps contributed in some small way to declining sales and the eventual closure of the *Review* in August 1904.

Though Liverpool was the largest city in north-west England, its newspaper publishers were troubled that the city’s political and geographical influence was compromised by its subordination to Manchester as a capital for the entire north-west region. Outlying Lancashire towns that should have been within Liverpool’s sphere of influence, looked towards Manchester for a regional focus. Without a cultural connection to Liverpool, citizens of such towns were disinclined to buy the city’s newspapers. This may have been why the *Liverpool Echo* emphasised that it was a newspaper for Lancashire, Cheshire (in reality, only south-west Lancashire and western Cheshire) and together with north Wales, this providing a somewhat artificial trans-region with Liverpool as a nominal capital. Bonds between Liverpool and distant parts of this trans-region could be reinforced if the dominant city provided football and sporting news for its disparate retinue of scattered small towns. The *Football Echo* helped to cement the notion of cultural links across the outer fringes of its circulation area with localised columns such as ‘*Bala Bullets*’, ‘*Crewe Chatter*’,

⁹⁷ *Review*, Sept. 30th 1893, Dec. 16th 1893, and Dec. 23rd 1893.

⁹⁸ *Review*, Oct. 7th 1893.

⁹⁹ *Review*, Feb. 10th 1894, Mar. 10th 1894, April 14th 1894, and May 5th 1894.

and *'Market Drayton Items'*, detailing the sporting goings-on in these areas. The titles of these columns again demonstrate the enormity of the *Echo's* circulation area. The paper's coverage of Everton and Liverpool also benefited the clubs by creating interest and potential support in these remote outposts.

Community consciousness and civic identity were amorphous notions that could be enhanced by successful football clubs and a confident local press and this gave them a mutual interest in working together to optimise the relationship. Coverage of football, both amateur and professional, reinforced bonds between citizens and strengthened urban identity, accommodating teams within a wider 'world of sport.' The way that Everton and Liverpool League games were reported provided a context for the city of Liverpool to situate itself in relation to other footballing cities, such as Manchester, Newcastle, Birmingham, and Sheffield. Even the size of fan support was perceived as an 'important measure of civic spirit' and the huge attendance figures seen at Anfield and Goodison were regularly publicised in local newspapers as a re-affirmation of urban pride.¹⁰⁰

The size and variety of support for Everton and Liverpool was most apparent in the press during a period of extreme anticipation and excitement, such as an appearance in an FA Cup Final. Before the Great War, Everton reached four finals, winning only one, whilst Liverpool FC only played in only one, the last at the Crystal Palace before the war, which they lost to Burnley. The participation of a local team meant that the local press expanded the scope of its normal football coverage to include not just a match report but all the concomitant manifestations of the people's celebrations. As Jeff Hill has commented, 'the local press celebrated its team's appearance in the Cup Final in numerous ways which reveal much about ritual and impact of a Cup Final on a local community.'¹⁰¹ For Liverpool FC's first Cup Final in 1914, the *Football Echo* reported that 20,000 excited Liverpudlians left for the capital by train the day before the match. A football special left Lime Street Station with 1200 people in 18 ½ carriages. The enormity of the invasion of London ('a steady stream of trains') was

¹⁰⁰ Lorenz, 'Field of Sport', p. 149.

¹⁰¹ Hill, Jeff, 'Rite of spring: Cup Finals and community in the North of England' in Hill, J. and Williams, Jack, *Sport and Identity in the North of England*, (Keele: Keele University Press, 1996), p. 86.

also emphasised by the *Courier*, ‘from 11 o’clock until after midnight there was such a rush for the cheap excursions departing from Lime Street, Exchange, and Central Stations, that relief trains had to be provided.’¹⁰² These numbers are impressive, and show the extent of the exodus to London, but the level of travelling support was apparently far more for the opposing team, Burnley, which only had a population of 106,000 in comparison to Liverpool’s 746,000, although the *Echo* did make the point that the Liverpudlians ‘excelled in enthusiasm.’ This may have been genuine excitement, or perhaps was a euphemism for drunkenness, but drinking antics on the journey to London certainly provided opportunities for journalists to register incredulous reactions to the eccentricities of Liverpool fans. The papers mentioned that some supporters filled their pockets with sandwiches and bottles of beer, and the *Echo* reported that one John Gibson, a plasterer from Everton, after being ejected from a train for drunken misbehaviour, pleaded successfully with the magistrates to be allowed to continue to the Crystal Palace (after being fined).¹⁰³ It was also reported that groups of supporters refused to be split up on the train, with the result that some compartments were packed, and others half empty. The 1914 Final was only the second all-Lancashire affair, and also the first attended by a reigning monarch. The presence of the King, the Earl of Derby, F.E. Smith, and assorted Lancashire worthies (George V even sported the red rose of Lancashire), emphasised the Lancastrian identity of the occasion, which was given appropriate prominence in newspaper coverage. The press also made the point that it was an affirmation of the importance of Lancashire to the established powers that be, and the particular place that Liverpool FC and the city occupied in this recognition. The Earl of Derby, Liverpool’s senior aristocrat and the so-called ‘King of Lancashire’, evidently played a considerable role in persuading the King to attend the Final. The presence of the King gave the event an even greater resonance, helping to reinforce not just a notion of local urban and regional identity, but also validating Liverpudlians’ sense of themselves within the nation as a whole.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² *Courier*, April 25th 1914.

¹⁰³ Pead, Brian, *Eye-aye-addio- We’ve Won the Cup! Liverpool in the FA Cup 1892-1993*, (Sidcup: Champion Press, 1992), p. 130 and p. 133.

¹⁰⁴ Pead, *Eye-aye-addio*, p. 129 and pp. 130-131.

However, in a two-club city like Liverpool, the press could be seen to be alienating a significant proportion of its readership by over-enthusiastic bias in a Cup Final. In Liverpool's case this dichotomy was perfectly resolved in 1906, when Everton won the FA Cup and Liverpool were League champions. Apart from Preston's and Aston Villa's double achievements, this was the first time that both trophies had gone to clubs from the same city in the same season. From the press's point of view, this was even better than if either Everton or Liverpool had won the Cup and League 'double'. It was the ideal opportunity for a celebration of unified Liverpool identity. The *Football Echo* summed up the sense of achievement with a cartoon entitled 'Supremacy', depicting Everton captain, Jack Taylor holding the FA Cup, and Alex Raisbeck, Liverpool's captain, with the Championship trophy, linked arm-in-arm (Figure 6.5, page 312). The cartoon symbolised Liverpool's status as England's supreme football city, and despite earlier rivalries, showed that Everton and Liverpool had a special relationship like no other.¹⁰⁵

CONCLUSION

Football was introduced to Liverpool at the same time that the local press was expanding its reach to include the working-class. The evolution of newspapers and football ran parallel, so that whilst not absolutely in thrall to each other, they undoubtedly strengthened each other's influence. Early football coverage in Liverpool provided publicity for teams, acted as a clearing-house for information, and was a forum for participation in the game.

As the game became more commercial, newspaper publishers realised that, with the formation of the Football League, there was a huge potential market of football followers, eager for reports and speculation on the sport. The *Liverpool Echo*, which had previously ignored football, introduced a special football edition in time for the start of the new League in 1888. The mere fact that there was a special edition of the paper just for football, reinforces the importance of the sport in the public consciousness. Other local newspapers also increased their coverage of football, but could not compete with the geographical reach and influence of the *Football Echo*.

¹⁰⁵ *Echo*, April 28th 1906.

The paper's journalistic and graphic style made it readily accessible for the Liverpool working man, and it also aimed to broadly cover the amateur game throughout its huge circulation area. A new breed of professional sports reporter, exemplified by Ernest Edwards, infused the previously staid journalism with vivid descriptive writing, informed speculation, and popular competitions.

Through its football and sports coverage, the *Echo* played a role in shaping the notion of a Mersey-wide community, as the city was forced to abandon certain aspects of its Lancashire character, and forged stronger links with the Wirral, western Cheshire, and north Wales. Liverpool's suzerainty over its Lancashire hinterland continued but extended only as far as Southport, St. Helens, and Warrington. However, the circulation areas for provincial papers like the *Courier* and *Echo* was huge, making Liverpool effectively the capital of a trans-region centred mostly on its adjacent southern and western peripheries. The *Liverpool Echo*' exploited this recognition of the city's dominance over this notional 'region' and its masthead proclaimed that it was 'An Evening Newspaper for Lancashire, Cheshire, and North Wales'. As 'symbolic representatives of their communities', provincial newspapers and football clubs were an important element in the social and economic promotion ('civic boosterism') of the town or city where they were based.¹⁰⁶ Sport lent 'itself well to broader forms of civic identification, to a shared sense of belonging to a particular town or city as a whole.'¹⁰⁷ Richard Holt's point is apposite, that as 'the scale of the industrial city outstripped the capacity of individuals to encompass it, the fact of being a (football) supporter offered a sense of place, of belonging and of meaning that could never come from the formal expression of citizenship through the municipal ballot box.'¹⁰⁸ A city's 'sense of collective identity' was strongly underlined by the status of its local press and football clubs which contributed to the public's perception of their home towns or cities as dynamic and important places.

The increased press coverage of football in the late nineteenth century may in itself have expanded the market for more football coverage by encouraging readers to

¹⁰⁶ Lorenz, 'Field of Sport', p.148.

¹⁰⁷ Lorenz, 'Field of Sport', p.149.

¹⁰⁸ Holt, R., 'Football and the Urban Way of Life in Nineteenth-Century Britain', in Mangan, J.A. (ed), *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism*, (London: Frank Cass, 1988), p.83.

watch or play the game, and creating ‘a sense of community spirit and civic pride around a city’s sports teams.’¹⁰⁹ In particular, the *Echo* gave far-flung amateur teams the opportunity to achieve recognition within the Liverpool region, and also widened the support base for Everton and Liverpool beyond the city into south-west Lancashire, Cheshire, and north Wales. In this way the *Echo* maintained its supremacy over rival newspapers by further boosting its sales and reinforcing its symbiotic relationship with local football, cultivating football heroes, and providing a conduit for dialogue between clubs and the media that has endured to the present day.

¹⁰⁹ Lorenz, ‘Field of Sport’, p. 133.



Figure 6.1: A cartoon strip of the 1907 English Cup Final, lost by Everton to Sheffield Wednesday. (*Football Echo*, 27th April 1907).



Figure 6.2: Ernest Edwards (BEE of the *Football Echo*), pictured in 1936 at the age of 53. (*The Liverpoolitan*, June 1936)



Figure 6.4: John Houlding depicted in the *Liverpool Review* in March 1892, following the victory of the Mahon faction. The original caption was: ‘Moral – A King may be knocked down in various ways. If we were a “King” we would prefer that the blow came from another than a football quarter.’ (*Liverpool Review*, 26th March 1892).

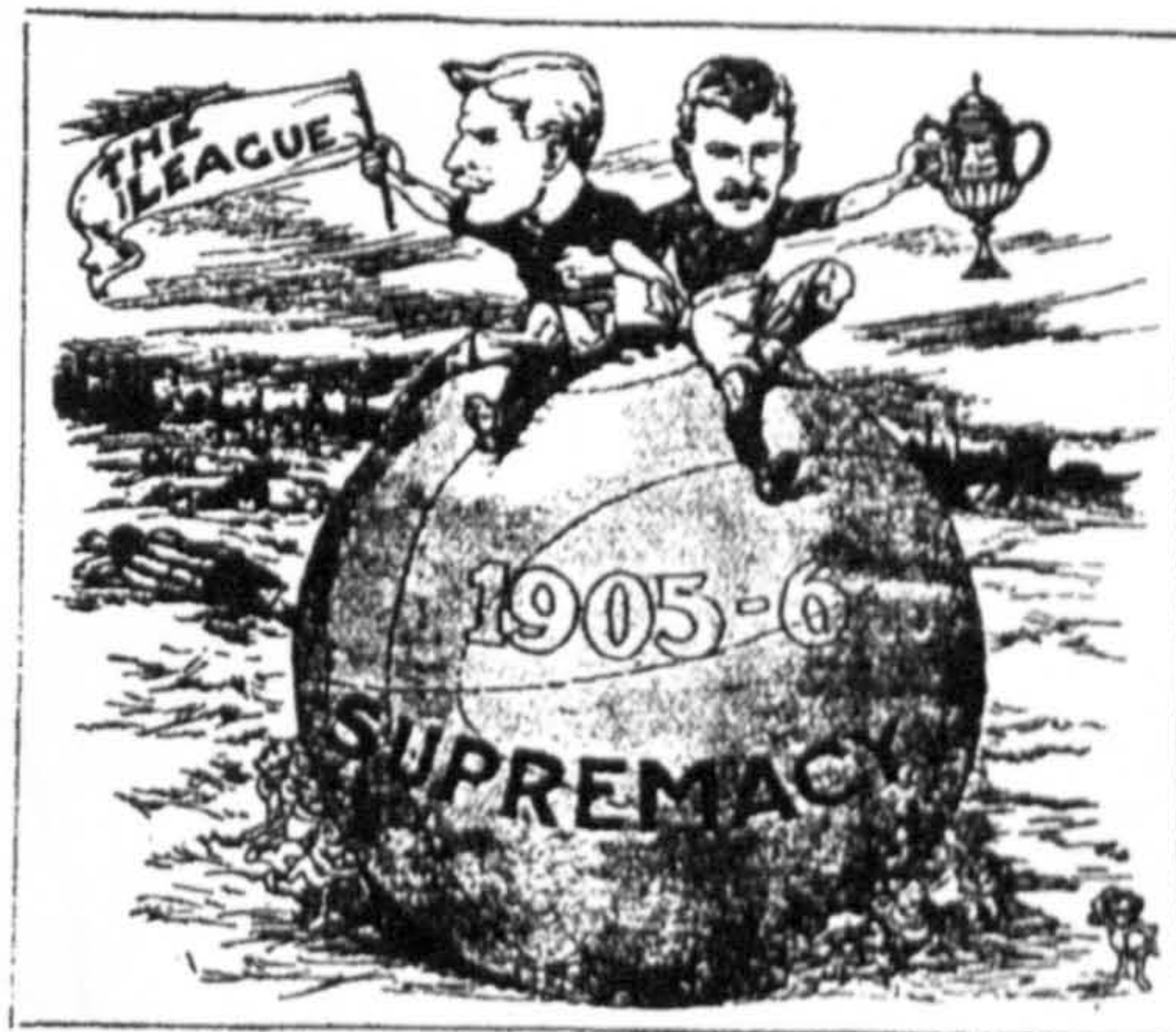


Figure 6.5: In 1905-06, Everton won the English Cup, and Liverpool were League champions. The *Daily Post* celebrated the city of Liverpool’s footballing supremacy with this cartoon. (*Daily Post*, 23rd April 1906).

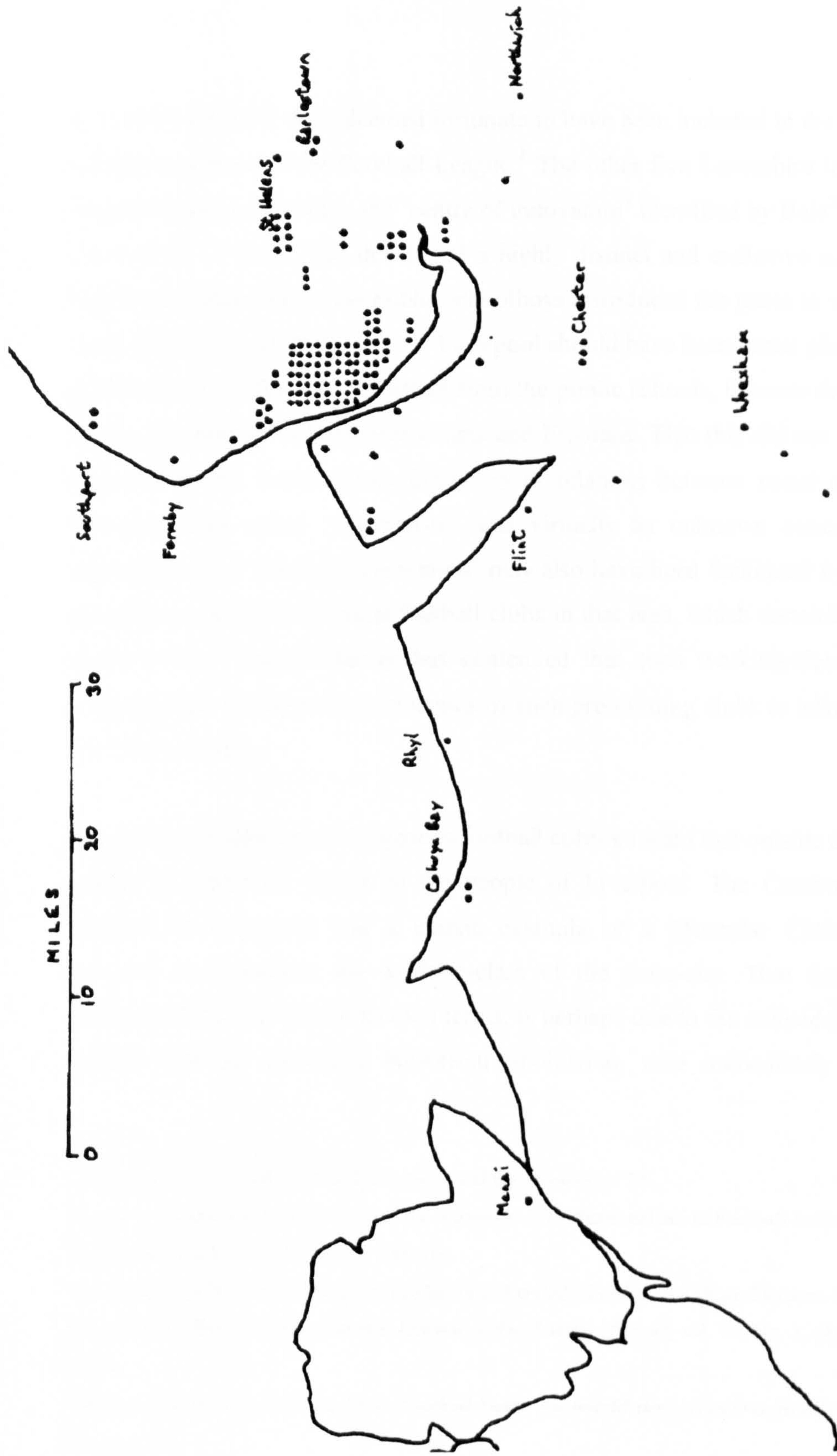


Figure 6.3: Map of south-west Lancashire, Cheshire, and north Wales, showing home locations of *Echo* competition winners, October 1913. See Table 6.2.

CONCLUSIONS

In 1888 Everton FC were deemed fortunate to have been included in the select twelve founder members of the Football League.¹ The other five Lancashire founders were situated close to, or within, the 'centre of innovation' identified by Bale², which, over a period of 18 years, had developed a highly distinct and exclusive soccer culture. This began when Harrovian public schoolboys introduced the game to working-class youth in Bolton and Darwen.³ Yet Liverpool should have been better placed as a rival conduit for the diffusion of football from the public schools, because the city had far greater numbers of resident Harrovians and Etonians. That this did not materialise is testament to the extraordinary inhibition of relations between social classes in the Liverpool area where 'paternalism' was virtually an unknown concept. Bolton's importance as a 'centre of innovation' may also have been facilitated by continuities of earlier organised traditional football clubs in that area, which certainly still existed in the 1840s.⁴ Adrian Harvey has contended that such working-class clubs were commonplace but there is no evidence of such pre-existing clubs or infrastructures in the Liverpool area.

The moribund state of an indigenous football culture meant that outside agencies were needed to introduce soccer to the people of Liverpool. The Cambridge curates' initiative in Liverpool was a classic example of a Muscular Christian mission designed to evangelise the working-class of the inner-city. That this experiment ultimately failed, at least in its own terms, is perhaps due to the coincidence of abrupt contact with an ambitious brewer-cum-politician, who immediately realised the

¹ *Courier*, Sept. 8th 1888. Russell, *Football and the English*, p. 33.

² Bale, J., Geographical Diffusion and the Adoption of Professionalism in Football in England and Wales, *Geography*, 63, (1978), pp. 189-194.

³ Lewis, Robert W., 'The Genesis of Professional Football: Bolton-Blackburn-Darwen, the Centre of Innovation 1878-85' in *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 14, No. 1, (April 1997), pp. 26-29.

⁴ Harvey Adrian *Football: the First Hundred Years: the untold story*, (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 72 and p. 76.

political and commercial benefits of football as a vehicle for arousing communal identity, and was ideally situated to exploit them.

John Houlding was the single most important figure in the early development of Liverpool football. He was part of a long tradition of landlord-promoters, and he already had some experience in the organisation of sports.⁵ Undoubtedly politicised by his reaction to Liberal legislation on licensing in the early 1870s, he embarked on a parallel career as a local Conservative politician, and had a particularly astute understanding of publicity and the cultivation of the electorate. He promoted an image as a man of the people, 'King John of Everton', courting the newly enfranchised lower-middle and working-class clerks and artisans that made up the bulk of the predominantly Protestant Tory electorate.

Houlding initiated a process of increasing commercialisation over the Everton club that the Muscular Christians could not have remotely envisaged. The club were initially shunned by the elite east Lancashire clubs, who perceived them as sub-standard, but by the late 1880s, Everton's commercial solvency was sufficient to convince the promoters of the new Football League to offer membership.⁶ However, the overtly commercial and political influence of Houlding over the committee of Everton FC was an anathema to certain factions within the club. In 1892 these opposing forces resulted in its bifurcation into Liverpool FC and a new Everton company.

The latter were managed by New Connection Methodists who had been prominent among the leaders of the anti-Houlding faction within the original club. The extent of the divisions within the original unincorporated club was highlighted in Kennedy's recent thesis, which provided a richly detailed narrative of the events that led to the bifurcation of the club.⁷ However, Kennedy's thesis was predicated on the widely

⁵ *Courier*, Dec. 6th 1879.

⁶ Sutcliffe, C.E. and Hargreaves, F., *History of the Lancashire Football Association 1878-1929*, (Blackburn: Lancashire FA, 1928)

⁷ Kennedy, D., *The Division of Everton Football Club into Hostile Factions: the development of professional football organisation on Merseyside 1878-1914*, Univ. of Leeds unpublished PhD thesis, (2003).

held assumption that the Everton club derived from the earlier Methodist St. Domingo's FC. One of his principal aims was to examine the growing impact of commercial and competitive factors 'on the course of the club's movement away from its *chapel roots* to a nationally successful professional football organisation.'⁸ Indeed as this study has made clear, the St. Domingo's club simply never existed and Houlding, the principal initiator of commercialism in the Everton club, actually played a pivotal role in its formation. The fact that Kennedy goes on to examine 'the aims of the original club's religious founders', undermines his contention that this was a factor in the factionalization in the original Everton club.

The New Connection Methodist members of the post-1892 Everton board seem to have been the likely originators of the St. Domingo FC myth. Their political and religious antipathy to Houlding was of such magnitude that they may have contrived to diminish his contribution in the formation of the original club. By alleging that an entirely fictional New Connection Methodist team had been the originator of football in the Everton area, the new Everton board appeared not only to eradicate Houlding's links with the original club, but that of the brewing industry and Conservatism too. Frustratingly, the St. Domingo myth has also obscured the far more interesting Muscular Christian link and the true extent of evangelising through sport within the Victorian Church of England.

What is undeniably true was that within a few years of its introduction football was attracting the interest of a broad cross-section of Liverpool society. It was not just working men who were following the game; even brokers in the Cotton Exchange were showing enthusiastic support for Everton FC.⁹ Politicians, as ever, were keen to exploit the public fascination with soccer. John Houlding had grasped the social importance of the sport at a very early stage, and following his lead, other local politicians clamoured to become patrons, committeemen, and directors of local football clubs. Even if they had no formal connection, mere attendance at an important match, preferably with press coverage, was deemed to be sufficient.¹⁰

⁸ Kennedy, *Thesis*, abstract.

⁹ *Review*, Jan. 14th 1893.

¹⁰ *Review*, Jan. 21st 1893.

Active participation in the sport also increased enormously over the last two decades of the nineteenth century. By the 1900s, young men from all social classes played soccer and although Liverpool's infrastructure of amateur leagues was compartmentalised by class, cup competitions did provide some opportunity for limited social mixing. Football even began to gain a foothold in the city's most deprived areas through an informal community of working-class leagues and the evolving networks of elementary school football. There was also an acute awareness of football amongst those sections of society opposed to it. Complaints about the game were commonplace in the local press. These were not just the expected comments on perceptions of spectators' behaviour or the money spent on the commercial game, but complaints about the ways in which football impinged on other aspects of ordinary life, such as interfering with the tranquillity of public parks and the inconvenience to bus passengers on Saturday afternoons.¹¹

Football had its most significant public impact in the north Liverpool suburbs, in the area where it had been initially introduced, and though it spread to other districts, this remained the area where public interest was most concentrated. When leading citizens and entrepreneurs attempted to launch a professional club in the south of the city it was a commercial failure. The enormous local market for commercial football in Liverpool should have been able to sustain several professional clubs but Everton's dominance was such that new entrants could not even gain a foothold. The lure of First Division football at the new Goodison Park may have attracted some supporters from distant suburbs. Everton's market dominance was so strong that had the bifurcation of 1892 not resulted in the formation of Liverpool FC it seems doubtful that Everton would ever have had a League rival of equivalent status. The fact that the new Liverpool club played at Everton's former ground and included some of its former management, gave it a commercial advantage that other market entrants could not equal.

Belchem has made the point that the 'increasing complexity of large cities' (with half a million inhabitants or more by the late nineteenth century) seemed unsuited for

¹¹ *Review*, Sept. 23rd 1893.

united endeavour: such ‘grande villes’ lacked the structural foundations for collective action found in small and single industry townships where communal loyalty reinforced occupational loyalty.’¹² In absolute terms the Liverpool football industry was huge, but seemed less significant in the relative size of the city. In 1891 Liverpool was five times bigger than Preston, home of North End, the most successful football team of the late 1880s and early 1890s. The differential in attendances between Preston and Everton was several thousand in the latter’s favour, but proportionally more of Preston’s population watched games at Deepdale than the citizens of Liverpool watched matches at Anfield or Goodison. If football mattered proportionally as much to Liverpudlians as it did to the citizens of Preston and other comparable Lancashire football towns, then Liverpool could have sustained perhaps as many as six major professional clubs, the same number as Glasgow. There were early signs that Liverpool as a whole was not quite as soccer-obsessed as the press sometimes indicated. For instance, the attendance at the 1894 FA Cup final, football’s most prestigious event held that year at the new Goodison Park, was considered to be disappointing.¹³ The sheer enormity of the urban population was such that football did not assume the importance that it had in some Lancashire towns or in the north-east coalfields.

The city dweller may have felt somewhat lost and impotent within the enormous scale of large conurbations, but found in football a means of clarifying his relationship to the sprawling urban mass and according to Holt, ‘the supreme appeal of football lay almost certainly in its expression of a sense of civic pride and identity.’¹⁴ In this regard, the example of Everton FC, deliberately promoted by John Houlding as a focus for communal unity in Victorian Everton, succeeded brilliantly. It helped to give the thousands of citizens in this suburban in-migrant community, a sharply focussed urban identity within the vast city and the club’s association with Houlding benefited his political ambitions. The case of Liverpool FC, so named as to proclaim identity with the whole city rather than the mere suburb that Everton had become by 1892, may have seemed an even greater inspiration of Houlding’s, but Everton had

¹² Belchem, John *Merseypride: essays in Liverpool exceptionalism*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), p. 201.

¹³ Notts County v. Bolton Wanderers.

¹⁴ Holt, Richard, *Sport and the British*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 166.

outgrown their suburban origins and were already seen as a representative of the whole city.

Holt's point that clubs in big cities, drew on 'geographically well demarcated areas for their support', a notion reinforced by Russell, was irrelevant in the case of Liverpool.¹⁵ The supporting constituencies for Everton and Liverpool were unusually complex by comparison with other multi-club cities of the period. Both clubs do seem to have had a concentration of followers in north Liverpool but because of their common origin and geographical proximity they could not have had separately delineated territories. Many football followers even watched both clubs on alternate Saturdays, so in a sense, rather than identifying with one club or the other, they were aligning themselves with a pan-Liverpool identity, rather than a specific suburban community or either of the two clubs. It was not simply geographical criteria of intra-urban identities that did not fit the Liverpool experience. For instance, despite the city's reputation for religious intolerance, there was no evidence of sectarian affiliation between the two clubs, although Liverpool FC's associations with anti-Catholic religious, political, and social organisations may have perhaps lessened its appeal to potential Catholic supporters. The congenial atmosphere of Liverpool 'derby' matches may have been due to the supporters' lack of territorial and religious affiliations.

'Going to the match' started to become a feature of urban working-class and lower middle-class life even when football was still being played in Liverpool's public parks. Attendances at Everton matches were equal to those at top Lancashire clubs even by the mid-eighties, and a concentrated programme of home fixtures, extending into the summer months, maximised gate revenue still further.¹⁶ By then, Everton FC was the market leader in the Liverpool region's substantial local football industry and frequently scheduled concurrent matches to 'spoil' the potentially lucrative fixtures of

¹⁵ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 169. Russell, Dave, *Football and the English*, (Preston: Carnegie, 1997), p. 66.

¹⁶ Kennedy, D., 'Locality and Professional Football Club development: the Demographics of Football Club Support in Late Victorian Liverpool', *Soccer and Society*, Vol. 5, No. 3, (Autumn 2004), p. 376. Lewis, R., *The Development of Professional Football in Lancashire 1870-1914*, (1994), unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, p. 335.

rivals.¹⁷ It also became increasingly clear that the local supply of good Liverpudlian players was insufficient to meet the demands of commercialised regular football. The ideal solution was to exploit the plentiful reserves of amateur Scottish players, highly regarded because of their tactically superior style of football. The Scots' resolute attitude to winning chimed in well with the increasing professionalism of Lancashire football, and generous offers of remuneration easily persuaded them to decamp to Liverpool.

From the mid-1880s, up to 10,000 Liverpudlians regularly attended Everton's matches and the club's attendances were the Football League's highest for its first decade.¹⁸ This huge demand prompted the club's promoters to provide a high standard of facilities for spectators. Even before the advent of the Football League, Everton's Anfield ground was regarded as a model development, its tall stands allowing thousands of spectators unimpeded sightlines to follow the action. The new Goodison Park was selected as the venue of the English FA Cup final in 1894. A programme of ground improvement continued at both Anfield Road and Goodison Park, reaching its apotheosis in the late 1900s under the direction of the engineer, Archibald Leitch.¹⁹

Whilst both Everton and Liverpool were successful football clubs in the playing sense, it was their contribution to the development of commercialised football in the period before 1914, that is particularly significant. Football was ideally suited to occupy working people during their newly free Saturday afternoons, whether as active participants or as a passive spectators.

The overtly commercial objectives of Everton and Liverpool meant that both clubs pursued a policy of recruiting the best footballers from across the country, in marked contrast with, for instance, Black Country clubs who deliberately employed players from their localities. However, football in Wolverhampton and West Bromwich was long-established, and the region's dense conglomeration of proudly independent communities provided ideal conditions for the stimulation of a rich football culture. In

¹⁷ *Courier*, April 6th 1885.

¹⁸ Tabner, Brian *Through the Turnstiles*, (Middlesex: Yore Publications, 1992), pp. 62-65.

¹⁹ Inglis, Simon *Engineering Archie: Archibald Leitch – football ground designer*, (London: English Heritage/HOK Sport Architecture, 2005), pp. 86-89, pp. 100-107.

contrast, Liverpool football had started late, and the sheer variety of urban life in the city militated against the concentration on a particular sporting culture, such as that in the main football producing areas.²⁰ Everton's and Liverpool's lack of encouragement and nurturing of local talent must have impeded the development of local professionals, but other factors were also crucial. Liverpool had evolved a large infrastructure of amateur football, but players typically were lower middle class and skilled working-class men and the precarious nature of a professional football career may not have been that attractive to them. By the 1900s, Liverpool also had a substantial community of working-class leagues, mostly located in deprived inner-city areas, but their relative transience suggests that clubs lacked continuity and organisation, and any talented players may not have received repeated practice at a sufficiently demanding level. These considerations aside, men from the inner-city were also more likely to suffer generally poorer health and lower levels of stamina. Despite Liverpool's disadvantages as a footballer producing culture, some professional footballers started to emerge in the 1890s, and there was a rising trend in the years before the war, but the numbers remained less than from parts of Scotland or north-east England, and Merseyside's reputation for developing footballing talent lay in the future.²¹

The role of the press in the evolution of Liverpool's football subculture was crucial. Local newspapers had a profound effect on football's popularity, and the sport occupied progressively more column inches over the period. An early watershed in public interest was Bootle's and Everton's forays into east Lancashire, an early encounter with mass football fanaticism which horrified Liverpoolian journalists, confronted by natives' level of hostility.²² The fact that both clubs were seen to be taking on challenging opponents from the football heartlands, did much to boost Liverpool civic pride in its teams.

²⁰ Peripheral townships such as Prescot did conform more to the parochial model seen in the main football producing areas.

²¹ Osborne in Vamplew, Wray, *Pay Up and Play the Game*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 205. Bale, John, *Sport and Place*, (London: Frank Cass, 1982), pp. 32-38.

²² *Courier*, Dec. 4th 1880. Great Lever FC v. Everton.

Press coverage grew progressively throughout the 1880s but the 'football craze' accelerated still further with the formation of the Football League in 1888. Anticipating the commercial possibilities of increased public interest, newspaper proprietors launched special football newspapers. The most successful in Liverpool was the *Football Echo*, launched at the commencement of the Football League in 1888, even though its parent paper had ignored the game before this. The timing of the paper's launch was not coincidence, as the newspaper's proprietors were aware that the imminent creation of the League would be a watershed in the commercialisation of football, and the huge public interest would certainly benefit the press. The *Echo* extensively reported sporting news and information over the paper's huge circulation area, and more importantly, began to provide a forum for supporters to engage with the game. This consolidated the symbiotic relationship between press and local clubs of all levels that already existed to a limited degree.

However, the balance of the relationship between press and the clubs was generally biased in the latter's favour. The *Football Echo* became effectively the mouthpiece of the two League clubs, and afraid of losing its conduit to the boardrooms, the paper rarely expressed criticism. Despite this, its editor, Ernest Edwards, still had considerable influence over his readership and the local football authorities. The *Echo* may even have prevailed upon Everton and Liverpool to play their reserve sides in the Combination league, whose boundaries coincided with the paper's circulation area in Cheshire and north Wales. The newspaper was a crucial link in perceptions of local identity and the *Football Echo's* increasing sales and geographical reach across a large circulation area cemented notions of a culturally unified sub-region.

Football did not just play a part in cementing the identity of this large sub-region, but also helped to define the urban identity of Liverpool, and the city's national ties. Liverpool has been described as the 'least "English" of the great Victorian cities'²³ and the huge Irish influx, coupled with the long-established seafarer culture, gave it a cosmopolitan ambience distinct from the rest of Lancashire. Jeffrey Richards has even claimed that, 'Liverpool is not a Lancashire city at all. It is a Celtic city that happens to be situated on the Lancashire coast; the Irish and Welsh influences are much

²³ Belchem, *Merseypride*, p. xii.

stronger than the English.’²⁴ John Belchem’s recent collection of essays on Liverpool, reinforces the perception that the city stands ‘outside the main narrative frameworks of modern British history’.²⁵ This sense of apartness, ‘exceptionalism’, as Belchem terms it, has been pivotal to the city’s identity, both for inhabitants and outsiders. However, in so far as Irish-Liverpudlians were the main factor in the general perception of the city’s ‘exceptionalism’, football itself was an exception as it was mainly the sport of the working-class of English extraction, and for most of the period before 1914, largely excluded the Irish.²⁶ Nevertheless, the early history of Liverpool football displays many features consistent with the city’s lack of conformity to a national norm.²⁷ For example, the manner of soccer’s diffusion to Liverpool was unique. In no other place was the game introduced as a Muscular Christian experiment directly from one of the sources of its elite origins (Cambridge University). Rather improbably, given this background, within a few years, Everton FC became the market leader of commercial football, overtaking even the industry pioneers in east Lancashire. In these towns, the consequence of football’s popularity was its commercialisation, but in Liverpool, the reverse seems to have occurred, football becoming popular because it was promoted as a business. Liverpudlians were being groomed as consumers of football as a leisure product, concomitantly developing an emotional attachment to the club and the area it represented.

Opposition to the extent and pace of this commercialising process within Everton FC, led the opposing forces to split into two new football companies, a unique occurrence in English football. And, as shown earlier, the common origin and proximity of these two clubs meant that they did not develop geographically separate territories of support, as was the norm in other multiple club cities.

²⁴ Richards, J., *Stars in Our Eyes: Lancashire Stars of Stage, Screen, and Radio*, (Preston: Lancashire County Books, 1994), p. 9.

²⁵ Belchem, *Merseypride*, p. xi.

²⁶ Irish Liverpudlians in the Scotland wards only began to seriously engage with football once Catholic elementary schools took up the game at the very end of the nineteenth century.

²⁷ Curiously, Belchem virtually ignores football in his writings on ‘exceptionalism’ in Liverpool, which is extraordinary, given its potency as a shibboleth of Liverpudlian male working-class identity for more than a century.

But as suggested above, football ultimately seems to have counteracted the 'exceptionalist' perception of Liverpool. Not only was it the sport of the working-class of mostly English origin, the game had been introduced to an essentially *English* suburb, Everton, by Church of *England* curates, and had been subsequently developed as a commercial sport by a Conservative politician with anti-Celtic leanings. For local working-class supporters, perceptions of football as a symbol of 'Englishness', helped to reinforce their loyalties to the home county of Lancashire and to wider concepts of nationhood. Richard Holt succinctly expressed a similar notion when he wrote that 'Professional football helped flesh out a distinctive sense of place within the wider framework of national competition.'²⁸ The Liverpool clubs' membership of the Football League helped their followers to define themselves against the city's seemingly inevitable retreat into an acceptance of the perception of Celtic 'exceptionalism'. This may partly explain the lack of engagement with commercial football shown by the city's poorer, mostly Irish, citizens.

By the 1910s, football had evolved into a significant Liverpool industry. At its centre were the wealthy League clubs, Everton and Liverpool, with a core between them of perhaps as many as 40,000 regular attenders. The game was an important factor in many more Liverpudlian's lives, including women. As well as the Football League sides, spectators had the opportunity of watching Everton's and Liverpool's reserve sides or one of the local semi-professional clubs playing in regional leagues. Several thousand Liverpudlians actively played the game in hundreds of local amateur teams at various levels, even down to boys kicking makeshift balls on waste ground. The press provided all these groups with news and information on their teams, allowing them to engage with the game through reports, correspondence and competitions.

From the late 1890s, several city-based clubs, such as Aston Villa, Newcastle United, and Chelsea, began to surpass Everton's previously unassailable lead in attendance levels.²⁹ This was in no small way due to their increasing success on the field, but local factors such as industrial growth, and favourable changes in demography also

²⁸ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 168.

²⁹ Tabner, pp. 65-68.

played a part in rising attendances.³⁰ Football crowds in Liverpool seem to have reached a ceiling in the years before the Great War, suggesting that in Liverpool at least, the social groups who were potentially most likely to attend football matches were already doing so. There remained vast sections of the Liverpool population, such as the inner-city poor, for whom the habit of regularly watching commercial football was beyond their means.

Demographic and geographical shifts in Liverpool society from the 1920s may have resulted in increasing numbers of less affluent Liverpudlians attending football matches, and the city regaining its pre-eminence in attendance levels. The game reached its apogee in popularity in the years after the Second World War when improving standards of health and the participation of schools also began to produce increasing numbers of professional footballers from Liverpool's working-class districts. The city's status as a dominant centre of football culture has been the most durable and tells us much about the sport and its relationship with communities in the city and the wider region.

³⁰ Waller, P. J., *Town, Country, and Nation*, Chapter 4, 'New Growths', pp. 127-184.

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