

Cricket's Forgotten Past:  
A Social and Cultural History of the Game  
in the West Riding of Yorkshire  
1820 – 1870

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PhD Thesis  
June 2008  
De Montfort University

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## ABSTRACT

Whilst eighteenth and late nineteenth century cricket has attracted a limited amount of academic research, the sport's transitional development between 1820 and 1870 remains largely neglected. During these five decades the growth of a modern urban and industrial society had a major impact upon sport and leisure. This study, therefore, examines the development of cricket in one of the key areas of economic and social change: the West Riding of Yorkshire. Rather than cricket's predominantly southern based contemporary literature, which was involved in constructing an elite view of the sport, this study is based upon an extensive examination of previously neglected primary sources, including local newspapers and club archives. Through this material, supplemented by a careful examination of the wider literature, this study provides an original 'bottom up' account of cricket as a key component in the complex process of transition from traditional to modern forms of sport.

The research has identified five key themes - competition, commercialism, the club and the community, professionalism and culture and identity - which form the basis for successive chapters. Through this thematic analysis the relationship between sport's pre-modern structure and culture and the dynamic urban industrial growth that took place in the region is explored. The impact of cricket upon new developments in sport and leisure is then identified as the sport established a distinctive character in the West Riding. In particular, the significance of 'gentleman amateur' values, which came to dominate cricket during the latter part of this period, is considered. Events in the region are subsequently used to offer an alternative view of the impact this elite conception had upon the sport, in relation to issues such as professionalism, commercialism and county cricket. Throughout the study, major themes in the wider historiography of nineteenth century leisure are also considered. Key theories, such as the early nineteenth century 'vacuum' in recreation, the role of diffusion from above and the continuity of established traditions, are examined through the growth of West Riding cricket during the transition to modern leisure.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was partially funded by the International Centre for Sport History and Culture at De Montfort University.

Many people have assisted me in completing this thesis since its origins as a final dissertation for the Sport History and Culture MA at the International Centre for Sport History and Culture, De Montfort University, between 2000 and 2002. I would like to thank all the staff at the ICSHC during my time as a student there, especially my current and previous supervisors, Professor Tony Collins, Professor Jeff Hill, and Professor Richard Holt, whose advice and encouragement has been invaluable. Many other friends and colleagues have also provided valuable help in discussing ideas relating to my work, including Dean Allen, Dr Anthony Bateman, Dr Ian Clarke, Dr Jack Williams, Freda, Malcolm and Brian Heywood, Dennis O'Keefe and all the students who took part in the Bat and Ball: Cricket and Society in Calderdale and Kirklees c 1800-2000 course at the University of Huddersfield in 2006. I would also like to make special mention of Dr Peter Davies who led the HLF funded University of Huddersfield Calderdale and Kirklees Cricket Heritage project on which I was fortunate to be employed between June 2004 and December 2005.

My completion of the thesis would also not have been possible without the help and support of many other people. I would particularly like to thank Jos Overend for providing me with the opportunity to embark upon my postgraduate studies and, along with Julie Overend, Geoff Bowden and Adele Sutton, for giving much appreciated help and support throughout. But most of all, for their unwavering support and encouragement, I'd like to thank my family, Richard, Victoria and Isaac, and Frank and Marjorie.

## INTRODUCTION

For all that has been written about the history of cricket few, if any, real attempts have been made to understand the developments that took place in the sport during its definitive period of transition in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Between the start of the 1820s and the end of the 1860s cricket broke out of its earlier social, cultural and geographical boundaries and was reshaped to reflect many of the changes that were taking place as Britain became the first capitalist industrial society. The distinctive pre-modern structure and culture of cricket began to give way as the values of the English 'Gentleman Amateur' on both the national and international stage grew in prominence. These ideals found their fullest expression in the following three decades and it is this period that has largely dominated the historiography of cricket in the nineteenth century. Yet for much of the preceding sixty or so years important aspects of pre-modern sport retained a strong presence in the West Riding of Yorkshire in a way which brings into question some of the assumptions that have been made about the history of the game. As this period has been so often overlooked, an important part of cricket's past remains largely forgotten.

At the start of the 1820s cricket was still mostly confined to the south eastern counties of England. Although clearly an enjoyable pastime, in its pre-modern conception, the sport was fundamentally linked to competitive rivalries that were considerably enhanced by gambling. Organised forms of cricket commonly resulted from the same system of challenges for stake money that governed other forms of sport. At the pinnacle stood the 'great matches' which were played between teams which mostly consisted of leading professional players who were assembled by aristocratic patrons to contest for large sums of money that they had wagered. Often staged at privately owned commercial venues and promoted to attract a large popular audience, these events took place irregularly in London and the surrounding counties. A number of clubs, which reflected the prevailing sociability of Georgian leisure culture, had also been established amongst the gentry by the first decades of the nineteenth century. Yet cricket was perhaps more commonly played as a popular informal recreation in the same rural counties of south eastern England where the folk game had originally developed.



By the last decades of the nineteenth century, however, a remarkable transformation had taken place. Perhaps the most striking development was the dramatic geographic expansion of the sport. It was most strongly evident at the highest level of cricket in England which by the 1880s had come to revolve around a cohort of county clubs from all parts of the country. In 1889 teams representing 8 counties played 54 matches against each other and by 1895 the number of such clubs had risen to 14 with over 130 fixtures taking place. These contests could now be seen at venues in a variety of settings all over the country, including Taunton in the rural south west, Mote Park, in the estate of a country house in Kent, Derby, a market town in the Midlands, and Manchester and Bradford in the heart of the industrial north. International cricket had also become established as a regular feature of the season by this time and during the 1880s 11 major tours to England took place. Parties from Canada, Philadelphia and India all toured twice in the decade, whilst the most frequent visitors were the Australians who made 5 trips during which they played international fixtures against teams representing England that from 1885 onwards became known as test matches. Similar expansion had also taken place at a more recreational level. Organised regular matches became the standard form of the sport and they too were played in virtually all parts of the British Isles. Whilst cricket remained an important pastime in its traditional rural setting, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century the sport had set down equally strong roots in the new urban industrial communities of the north and midlands.

But, as well as these changes to the scale and structure of the way cricket was played in England, at least equally significant revision of the values the sport was seen to represent also took place during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. A new conception had been developed that invested a kind of moral purity in cricket which opposed any pursuit of self gain amongst those who played in or organised matches. Sport's true value was increasingly thought to be found in playing in the 'right way' rather than winning or watching and betting on the result, as a new emphasis was placed upon fair play, physical exercise and the team ethic. These values were most powerfully represented in the ideals of the 'Gentleman Amateur', a concept which also reflected the assumed right to social and political leadership of the British social elite both at home and throughout the empire. Indeed this view of cricket was closely linked to the new vision of elite education that governed the reform of the public school system as it was

shaped to prepare the next generation of social, political and imperial leaders.

### **The Historiography of Nineteenth Century Leisure**

The changes in recreational culture that transformed cricket and other forms of leisure in nineteenth century Britain have become the subject of an intense academic discourse. The importance of leisure as a key historical issue was first established in a number of works which charted the breakdown of pre-modern popular recreations during the onset of urban industrialisation. In one of the earliest and most comprehensive of these Robert Malcolmson described how a sophisticated and widespread recreational calendar had been developed in the pre-modern period which was almost completely dismantled by the growth of urban industrial society.<sup>1</sup> He concluded that ‘the foundations of many traditional practices were relentlessly swept away, leaving a vacuum which would be only gradually reoccupied, and then of necessity by novel or radically revamped forms of diversion.’<sup>2</sup> New approaches to leisure were subsequently developed through middle-class initiatives which sought to address what Peter Bailey and Robert Storch termed the ‘problem’ of leisure.<sup>3</sup> Bailey in particular highlighted the way in which, as economic growth led to increasing periods of free time, it became necessary to find new rational ways in which time away from work could be spent in a morally and physically enhancing way.

Bailey and Storch were also amongst the first historians to revise Malcolmson’s work. Whilst both recognised the strength of opposition to many forms of pre-modern popular recreation and the drive to promote rationalised respectable alternatives, they also highlighted the resilience with which both initiatives were met. Indeed the primary focus of Bailey’s work was upon how subsequent attempts to diffuse respectable recreational culture were contested. He argued that ‘leisure was one of the major frontiers of social change in the nineteenth century, and like most frontiers it was

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<sup>1</sup> Malcolmson, Robert, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850*, Cambridge, 1973.

<sup>2</sup> See Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, p 170.

<sup>3</sup> See Bailey, Peter, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational recreation and the contest for Control*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1978, p 5 and Storch, Robert D., The Problem of Working-class Leisure: Some Roots of Middle Class Moral Reform in the Industrial North, 1825-1850 in Donajrodzki, A.P., (ed.) *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 1977), pp. 138-162.

disputed territory'.<sup>4</sup> Bailey also questioned the impact of secular and non-secular recreational reform movements. Many members of the working-class, he concluded, used such institutions out of convenience and saw them as a 'socially neutral locus for the formation of their clubs and teams'<sup>5</sup>

Hugh Cunningham was equally sceptical about the reform movement's impact upon aspects of leisure, including sport.<sup>6</sup> He argued that despite the constraints which were placed upon recreation for many people during the onset of urban industrialisation, significant growth in some forms of popular leisure was still able to take place. Cunningham identified how continuities between urban and rural areas as well as over time could be found and even contributed to the process of change. In contrast to the view that the new initiatives in leisure came from 'high up the social scale and (sic) were diffused downwards' he noted the 'flow in both directions' especially in the fields of popular entertainment and drama.<sup>7</sup> Indeed Cunningham saw important similarities between the different forms of entertainment that continued to develop during this period, including cricket, and suggested that a common popular culture resonated across them all.<sup>8</sup>

Whilst these writers focused more upon the way in which commercial forms of popular leisure continued to expand in the first half of the nineteenth century Emma Griffin has recently re examined more closely the plight of informal recreations.<sup>9</sup> To do this she focused upon the use of public spaces for these activities during a period in which increasing pressure was placed upon such sites as places for recreation. After highlighting previous studies, which failed to recognise the degree of local and regional variations, Griffin looked to provide a more balanced analysis by examining a wide range of rural and urban localities.<sup>10</sup> She found that the suppression of activities in public spaces was far more successful in rural market towns than it was in the rapidly developing urban industrial environment where many traditional practices were both

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<sup>4</sup> See Bailey, *Leisure and Class*, p 5 and Storch The Problem of Working-class Leisure.

<sup>5</sup> See Bailey, *Leisure and Class*, p 139.

<sup>6</sup> See Cunningham, Hugh, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution c1780-c1880*. London: Croom Helm. 1980.

<sup>7</sup> See Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, p 10.

<sup>8</sup> See Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, pp 35-6.

<sup>9</sup> See Griffin, Emma, *England's Revelry: A History of Popular Sports and Pastimes, 1660-1830*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> See Griffin, *England's Revelry* pp 18-20.

continued and developed.<sup>11</sup> Griffin also noted that significant differences existed in the nature of activities between certain urban industrial regions. Whilst emphasising the absence of any main single explanation for these she did identify significant contrasts in the complexion of economic development and stressed the importance of specific social and economic forces in distinctive local patterns of popular recreational culture in all settings.<sup>12</sup> The importance of communal identity to the vibrant way these activities continued to be practised was also noted, especially the team sports that were most commonly played in the West Riding.<sup>13</sup>

As Griffin's work in particular highlighted, specific individual local and regional experiences are an important issue in the development of more general patterns of recreational culture. These have not always been fully considered in work on the history of leisure. However, a number of studies have been carried out which recognise the significance of an especially vigorous regional identity in northern England in its own right. In one of the earliest and most important of these Jeff Hill and Jack Williams edited a collection that examined the role of sport as a focal point for identity in different parts of the region.<sup>14</sup> A founding principle of the study was that it is easier to identify 'the north' as a cultural construct than to define it as a specific geographical area. Sport has played a varied and important role in this.<sup>15</sup> For many the idea of an honest, hardworking meritocratic northern cultural identity came to be expressed through support for local professional football teams.<sup>16</sup> These sentiments were most clearly defined in relation to perceptions of a contrasting southern sporting culture and Jeff Hill examined the way local and regional identities often became combined to form a singular concept of northerness in the ritual through which supporters regularly 'invaded' the capital for the cup final.<sup>17</sup>

In a more recent work Dave Russell has used a wider range of themes to examine the cultural identity of northern England and its role in the region's relationship with other

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<sup>11</sup> See Griffin, *England's Revelry* pp 186-189.

<sup>12</sup> See Griffin, *England's Revelry*, p 166.

<sup>13</sup> See Griffin, *England's Revelry*, p 156.

<sup>14</sup> See Hill Jeff, and Williams Jack, Eds., *Sport and Identity in the North of England*, Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

<sup>15</sup> See Hill and Williams Eds., *Sport and Identity in the North of England*, p 6.

<sup>16</sup> See Mason, Tony, Football, *Sport of the north?*, Ch. 3 in Hill and Williams Eds., *Sport and Identity in the North of England*, pp 41-52.

<sup>17</sup> See Hill, Jeff, *Rite of spring: Cup Finals and community in the north of England*, Ch. 5 in Hill and Williams Eds., *Sport and Identity in the North of England*, , pp 85-112.

parts of the country.<sup>18</sup> He identified how sport played an important part in this process and the last decades of the nineteenth century were pivotal.<sup>19</sup> It was during these years that a number of key sports were adapted to reflect distinctive social and cultural conditions that had come to prevail in the north. The changes were most prominent in the two codes of football and, to a lesser extent, in cricket which subsequently took on a new complexion that embraced professional players, spectators and commercialism in a way which has since become dominant at the highest level of most sports. As part of this process, Russell observed, sport came to be seen as a representation of northern cultural values. These have often been defined by a highly competitive approach to playing that was personified by Wilfred Rhodes and his famous Yorkshire dictum 'we doan't play cricket for foon'.<sup>20</sup> Indeed Yorkshire cricket forms a central part of Russell's analysis and is used to highlight the interplay between local and sub-regional identities in the construction of a broader concept of the north. He also examined some of the themes which are discussed in this general work in his previous study of Yorkshire cricket during the period from 1890 to 1939.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Historiography of Sport**

The impact of these broader social economic and cultural events upon the development of sport in general during the middle years of the nineteenth century has also been explored in a number of academic works.<sup>22</sup> Whilst recognising that important elements of continuity in recreational culture existed throughout this period, Richard Holt looked to fashion a deeper understanding of how the changes that had taken place in British

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<sup>18</sup> See Russell, Dave, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination*, Manchester University Press, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> See Russell, *Looking North*, Ch 8, pp 236-266.

<sup>20</sup> See Russell, *Looking North*, p 241.

<sup>21</sup> See Russell, Dave, *Sport and Identity: The case of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, 1890-1939*, *Twentieth Century British History*, 7, 2, 1996, pp 206-230.

<sup>22</sup> See, amongst others, Holt, Richard, *Sport and the British: A Modern History*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992; Vamplew, Wray, *Pay up and Play the Game: Professional Sport in Britain 1875-1914*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004; Harvey, Adrian, *The Beginnings of a Commercial Sporting Culture in Britain, 1793-1850*, Ashgate Publishing May 2004; Hargreaves, John, *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain*, Cambridge; 1986, Lowerson, J., *Sport and the English Middle Classes*, Manchester University Press, 1993; Mangan, J.A., *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, Cambridge University Press, 1981; and Brailsford, Dennis, *Sport, Time and Society: British at Play*, Routledge, London 1991.

society by the last decades of the nineteenth century were reflected in sport. To do this he focused, in part, upon the meanings which became attached to sport, highlighting the importance of 'ideological pressures' that were brought to bear by middle-class attitudes towards leisure and found expression through concepts such as rational recreation and the 'amateur gentleman'.<sup>23</sup> But Holt also examined the changing nature of working-class life and the value of sport as an important expression of identity amongst urban communities in which circumstances changed fundamentally over the course of the nineteenth century. Consequently, he stressed the way in which 'workers make their own culture rather than having their play organized for them or sold to them' despite the assumptions of the "diffusionist" view of popular culture'.<sup>24</sup>

Whilst Holt was more concerned with the social implications of the development of sport in Britain, Wray Vamplew viewed many similar events from an economic perspective. He concentrated on examining the professional-centred popular commercial spectator sports that grew rapidly during the last decades of the nineteenth century to take a central place in British popular culture. In doing so Vamplew recognised how widespread expansion in sports like cricket was rooted in developments which took place over the preceding 60 or so years. However as increases in real wages and access to leisure time were confined to specific regions and certain industries during this period, major events continued to be sporadic and heavily dependent upon patronage. Horse racing, football, rugby and cricket expanded rapidly as economic growth became widespread after the 1860s. Yet Vamplew found they were governed by a 'peculiar' form of economics in which 'many sports promoters were not necessarily in pursuit of profit.'<sup>25</sup> Utility maximisation was often the priority for clubs involved in professional sport and many players were paid relatively well in comparison to their working-class counterparts in other industries. Nevertheless, he showed how the position of professional sportsmen during this period was still severely undermined by other social and economic pressures. Restricted access to the labour market curtailed their economic freedom, whilst rigid social distinctions, constant insecurity and an

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<sup>23</sup> See Holt, *Sport and the British* p 5.

<sup>24</sup> See Holt, *Sport and the British*, p 135.

<sup>25</sup> See Vamplew, *Pay up and Play the Game*, p 282.

employment status which was akin to that of 'bonded men' meant that few were able to prosper during their careers in sport.<sup>26</sup>

The foundations which were laid for these modern commercial spectator sports during the first half of the nineteenth century have provided the focus for a more recent work by Adrian Harvey.<sup>27</sup> He has drawn together and expanded upon the work of Vamplew and others relating to the common existence of commercial sporting events which featured professional performers and attracted large numbers of spectators during this period. Harvey argued that a commercialised sporting culture had already been developed in Britain by the 1850s which eased the way for the rapid expansion that subsequently occurred in popular commercial spectator sport. He explained how a relatively sophisticated degree of organisation was established in a number of sports during this period, which included generally accepted rules and a national structure made possible by the growth of a dedicated sporting press.<sup>28</sup> But Harvey fails to provide a full understanding of the dynamics that drove the pre-modern structure of sport and never really gets inside the world of stake match challenges, national championships and the professional players around which this compelling commercial culture revolved. He also fails convincingly to place these developments in the changing broader social and economic context that surrounded them. For example his suggestion that the further development of commercialised sport was impeded because the press was unable to prevent 'significant inroads of corrupt elements' is far too simplistic.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, he also dates the assumption of 'gentlemanly amateur' control in sport from the 1850s, a time when professional touring teams had effectively taken the lead in cricket and were playing overtly commercial matches throughout much of Britain.<sup>30</sup>

As well as these general studies, there are also significant works on the development of other individual sports in the nineteenth century that this study aims to both draw from and complement. The most relevant of these are focused upon the professional-centred commercial spectator sports that also developed in northern urban industrial communities during the second half of the nineteenth century. There are a number of such works on Association Football, the earliest and most influential of which was by

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<sup>26</sup> See Vamplew, *Pay up and Play the Game*, p 225.

<sup>27</sup> See Harvey, *The Beginnings of a Commercial Sporting Culture*.

<sup>28</sup> See Harvey, *The Beginnings of a Commercial Sporting Culture*, Ch 3 pp 31-62 and Ch 6 pp 115-150.

<sup>29</sup> See Harvey, *The Beginnings of a Commercial Sporting Culture*, p 55.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

Tony Mason and set the standard for any rigorous empirical academic study on the history of a single sport.<sup>31</sup> He introduced many of the themes that became central to the extensive academic discourse on the history of sport and leisure. Consequently, his examination of the links between clubs and other institutions in the communities where they were formed, the social and economic backgrounds and circumstances of the players and the broader issue of professionals and amateurs in football are particularly valuable to this study.

In a relatively recent work, however, Tony Collins has focused more closely upon the question of class whilst examining the split in rugby which occurred during the 1890s.<sup>32</sup> He identified how the payment of players was the issue through which matters were brought to a head in the southern middle-class dominated Rugby Football Union's crusade to defend the amateur ideal. But Collins also looked beyond the subject of professionalism. He stressed the importance of the distinctive social and cultural traditions that continued to develop in urban industrial districts of northern England, such as the West Riding, where rugby was mostly a working man's game. Moreover, Collins also demonstrates how it was within this context that close links were forged between the sport and the many northern communities in which rugby became an important expression of local and civic identity.

### **The Historiography of Cricket**

The history of cricket has also attracted significant attention from academics. However, the main focus of such work has often been centred upon either the development of the sport before 1800 or its place in the social and cultural milieu of the late Victorian period. Although fundamental changes clearly took place in cricket during the nineteenth century, important aspects of the sport, such as the development of written laws for the game and playing techniques, have their roots in the preceding 70 or so years. Consequently this period has provided the focus for a number of notable works

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<sup>31</sup> See Mason, Tony, *Association Football and English Society 1863-1914*. The Harvester Press, Brighton, 1980.

<sup>32</sup> See Collins, Tony, *Rugby's Great Split. Class, Culture and the Origins of Rugby League Football*. Frank Cass, London, 1998.



on the sport. Indeed the first of these is widely regarded as one of the earliest examples of cricket literature. In it John Nyren gives an evocative and illuminating picture of the sport during the period in which the great matches of the eighteenth century were at their height. This affectionate account of the Hambledon side he watched as a boy provides valuable testimony to the distinctive class relations that underscored cricket during this period. Moreover it is also a particularly powerful representation of the strong sense of community identity that became focused upon the Hambledon team.<sup>33</sup> But as Anthony Bateman explained, Nyren's recollections can also be seen as a deeply nostalgic lament for the type of rural community which was disappearing at the time of writing and they also established enduring class related aesthetic stereotypes of players that were adopted by many subsequent writers.<sup>34</sup>

Of course *The Cricketers of my Time* had no pretension to academic credibility. However, in a recent work that is also focused upon this period David Underdown has provided a valuable example of the way the sport can be viewed within its broader contemporary social, economic and cultural context from a more rigorous empirical perspective.<sup>35</sup> Because cricket was yet to break out of its formative geographical boundaries the events Underdown examined so effectively are confined to the south of England. But as he points out, when the Hambledon era came to a close there was a 'shift in the game's regional vitality to the industrial Midlands and the North, to Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Nottinghamshire, where by the later 1820s the game was spreading rapidly and attracting great crowds.'<sup>36</sup> Consequently his work provides an excellent platform from which to understand many aspects of the structure and organisation which shaped cricket as it first developed a significant presence in Yorkshire and other parts of northern England.

Despite the existence of a considerable amount of literature that has focused upon cricket in the century that followed the Hambledon era, however, very few works have approached the subject from a similar academic perspective. One notable exception is Keith Sandiford's *Cricket and the Victorians*, which provides a detailed exploration of

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<sup>33</sup> See Mote Ashley, Ed., John Nyren's *The Cricketers of my Time: The original version*, Robson Books, London, 1998.

<sup>34</sup> See Bateman, A., *The Politics of the Aesthetic: Cricket, Literature and Culture 1850–1965*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Salford, 2005, p 55 and p 58.

<sup>35</sup> See Underdown, David, *Start of Play. Cricket and Culture in Eighteenth Century England*, Penguin, London, 2000.

<sup>36</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 209.

the sport's significance in the social and cultural milieu that marked this period.<sup>37</sup> Many important observations are made throughout, especially in relation to the incredible scale with which cricket developed. But like most other works on the sport's development in the nineteenth century Sandiford focuses mostly on the period from the 1870s onwards. So, whilst recognising continuities between pre-modern cricket during the Georgian era and the developments which shaped the sport from the 1840s onwards, he pays little attention to the differences in structure and organisation or how these changes came about.

Like many other works on the history of the sport Sandiford's view has been heavily influenced by the 'Gentleman Amateur' ideals that increasingly dominated writing on cricket from the 1850s onwards.<sup>38</sup> Indeed the values that underscored this vision of the sport have been largely constructed and promoted in contemporary rhetoric during this period. For example, commercial forces played an important role in the national and international expansion of the sport during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Yet as early as 1880 a writer for *Cricket* magazine could express concern that cricket 'might be made a profitable commercial speculation; and for the first time in the history of the game, the question of gate money was made a matter of primary importance'.<sup>39</sup>

A much more powerful reworking of both the past and the present, however, was provided as early as 1854 by Rev James Pycroft in *The Cricket Field*. As Tony Bateman recognised, amongst broader notions of national character, Pycroft

endows the sport with a sense of history and prestige and goes on to associate it with Victorian bourgeois ideals of temperance and self-denial and (sic) foreshadows the discourse of what was later to become known as 'Muscular Christianity': essentially a doctrine that saw physical weakness as evidence of spiritual shortcomings against which Christian faith, clean living, self-discipline and exercise in the form of team sports was the only cure.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See Sandiford, Keith A.P., *Cricket and the Victorians*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1994.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Altham H.S., & Swanton, E.W., *A History of Cricket*. George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London, 1947, Birley, Sir Derek, *A Social History of English Cricket*, Aurum Press, 1999, Bowen, Rowland, *Cricket: A History of its Growth and Development throughout the World*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1970, Major, John, *More than a Game: The Story of Cricket's Early Years*, Harper Press, 2007.

<sup>39</sup> See *Cricket*, No7, Vol. 1, 22/06/1882, p 100.

<sup>40</sup> See Bateman, *The Politics of the Aesthetic*, pp 1-2.

A further examination of Pycroft's work and its implications is given in the following chapters. However his and subsequent similar works have too often been used as source material in historical studies on cricket without any critical appraisal of their political standpoint or the use of a wide range of alternative primary sources to provide greater balance.

Indeed these considerations are apparent in Keith Sandiford's work. He devotes a whole chapter to the impact of 'Muscular Christianity' upon elite institutions, such as the public schools, and how followers of the doctrine provided the leadership which enabled the sport to develop throughout Britain and beyond. This 'diffusionist' view has been challenged in a number of empirical studies, such as those by Holt, Bailey and others, which have questioned the importance of both the secular and non-secular movements for reform.<sup>41</sup> However, Sandiford makes no reference to these works, despite including them in his bibliography, and contends that the 'notion of the chivalrous cricketer was of paramount importance in an age completely dominated by the cult of 'Muscular Christianity'.'<sup>42</sup> Yet although the large-scale expansion of cricket in Britain is examined further in a chapter entitled the 'great cricket explosion', Sandiford makes no real attempt to understand the social and cultural forces that drove this development in the many diverse communities where the sport took hold.<sup>43</sup>

Whilst at times providing some interesting details, most other works on the history of cricket during this period offer a similar view of the sport's development as an inevitable progression towards the establishment of amateur principles, often by focusing upon the rise of first class and county cricket. Typical of these is Rowland Bowen's history of the sport in which he makes some notable observations about the significance of gambling and the importance of specific, economic conditions in the cluster of provincial towns where the game first developed outside its traditional geographical boundaries.<sup>44</sup> But Bowen still focuses mainly on the role of the social elite in cricket and overlooks other important issues, such as the significance of professional players and commercialism. More recently, however, John Major and Sir Derek Birley

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<sup>41</sup> See Holt, *Sport and the British* and Bailey, *Leisure and Class*.

<sup>42</sup> See Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p 2.

<sup>43</sup> See Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, Ch 4, pp 53-79.

<sup>44</sup> See Bowen, *Cricket: A History of its Growth and Development*.

have attempted to view the development of the sport more from the perspective of social history.<sup>45</sup> Yet, whilst both writers make references to broader social economic and political developments as they recount the events that took place in cricket during the nineteenth century, neither makes any real attempt to situate the sport within this wider context.

There are, however, some notable exceptions to this general trend. Christopher Brookes has attempted to place key developments throughout the history of the sport in their broader context.<sup>46</sup> In doing so he provides some useful ideas relating to the organisation of pre-modern cricket, the impact of economic, social and cultural change during the early years of urban industrialisation and the importance of the professional touring elevens. In another groundbreaking study Ric Sissons examined the development of cricket between the 1840s and the 1980s from the perspective of professional players.<sup>47</sup> He offers important views on the role played by the itinerant touring elevens in spreading the sport. Indeed Sissons also shows how the game's expansion between the 1840s and the 1870s resulted in considerable growth in the number of players employed in cricket, as well as the existence of specific economic developments in areas which produced unusually large numbers of professional.

Nevertheless, like that of Sandiford, the work of both Brookes and Sissons still highlights the lack of empirical attention that has been paid to the pivotal period between the 1820s and the 1870s. Whilst Brookes is important as one of the earliest writers to examine some of the events that took place during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, his approach lacks the academic rigour to offer a comprehensive examination of how this crucial period unfolded. Sissons, on the other hand, has largely concentrated upon the social and economic circumstances of professional players from the 1870s onwards, a period which was dominated by the 'Gentleman Amateur' ascendancy. So, whilst recognising the social distinctions and economic restraints that were placed upon them, he becomes too much concerned with the financial circumstances of mid-nineteenth-century players, some of whom eventually experienced severe hardships.

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<sup>45</sup> See Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, and Major, *More than a Game*.

<sup>46</sup> See Brookes, Christopher, *English Cricket: The Game and its Players through the Ages*, Weidenfield and Nicholson, Exeter, 1978.

<sup>47</sup> See Sissons, Ric, *The Players. A Social History of the Professional Cricketer*. The Kingswood Press, Sydney, 1988.

There are, however, particularly significant, if somewhat neglected, historical works on cricket in Yorkshire during the nineteenth century. In the first official history of cricket in the county, Rev. R. S. Holmes provides an illuminating and particularly balanced account of the events and personalities that shaped the sport at its elite level, and in some cases below, from 1833 to 1903.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, A.W. Pullin (Old Ebor) has provided an extraordinarily valuable source for any work on nineteenth century cricket.<sup>49</sup> He interviewed 18 old Yorkshire cricketers for a series of articles that appeared in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* during 1897, before being published in book form in 1898. They provide a compelling account of events that helped to shape the sport over the previous 60 years which is mostly drawn from the perspective of professional players. Yet his work has been largely overlooked by most writers on the history of cricket and used only in passing by others. In a more recent study, however, Dave Russell has examined the role of Yorkshire County Cricket club as a focal point for regional identity in the period from 1890 to 1939. He has shown how cricket became a key means through which Yorkshire became known both to those within and outside the county during this period.

But whilst empirical works on nineteenth century cricket are notable by their scarcity, Jack Williams and Jeff Hill have produced valuable academic examinations that are primarily focused upon the sport during first half of the twentieth century.<sup>50</sup> These writers have viewed the development of cricket in relation to broader social, economic, political and cultural events at all levels of the sport. Williams examined the significance of cricket during the inter war period and found that it was 'riddled with social division' in a way that demonstrates how far English society was dominated by deep class distinctions during this period.<sup>51</sup> Consequently, for the middle and upper classes the sport was 'very much related to the assumptions which provided a moral

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<sup>48</sup> See Holmes, Rev R.S., *The History of Yorkshire County Cricket 1833-1903*, Archibald Constable and Co Ltd, London, 1904

<sup>49</sup> See Pullin A.W., ('Old Ebor'), *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, Reprinted from the Yorkshire Evening Post, Leeds, 1898.

<sup>50</sup> See Williams, Jack, *Cricket and England: A Social and Cultural History of the Inter-war Years*, Frank Cass, London 1999 and Hill, Jeff, First Class Cricket and the Leagues: Some Notes on the Development of English Cricket 1900-1940, *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol 4 No 1 pp 68-81, Frank Cass, London, 1987 and League Cricket in the North and Midlands, 1900-1940, *Sport and the Working-class in Modern Britain*, edited by Richard Holt, Manchester, 1990, pp 121-41.

<sup>51</sup> See Williams, *Cricket and England*, p 186.

validation for their exercise of social and political authority.<sup>52</sup> Yet he also demonstrates how cricket reflected the way in which this social structure was largely accepted in British society during these years and even served to reinforce a sense of social cohesion that mirrored the view of national moral worth. For, as Williams points out, there was rarely any sign of class antagonism in cricket during this period. Class divisions were bridged by paternalism and church involvement as well as through collective expressions of local and regional identity, such as support for some county clubs such as Yorkshire.<sup>53</sup>

Jeff Hill, on the other hand, has focused more closely upon league cricket which predominated in most urban industrial districts of the north and midlands from the last decades of the nineteenth century onwards. He found that cricket in this context represented a 'different' set of values to that which prevailed elsewhere in England.<sup>54</sup> Encompassing similar elements of competition, spectatorship, community identity and a professional-centred commercial complexion that predominated in the first half of the nineteenth century this form of the sport has largely been overlooked by most general writers on cricket.<sup>55</sup> So although the scope of Hill's work falls outside the limits of this study, he provides a vital insight into the strength and vibrancy with which these values continued to be expressed despite the perceived dominance of the 'amateur gentleman'. Yet, these differences apart, Hill still noted how league cricket 'found a place within the overall unified structure' of the sport in a way that reflects the observations that Williams made.<sup>56</sup>

## **Aims and Methods**

This study, therefore, aims to bridge the gap which exists between the work of Underdown and that of Hill, Williams and Russell by examining the development of the sport in the West Riding of Yorkshire during the middle decades of the nineteenth

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<sup>52</sup> See Williams, *Cricket and England*, p183.

<sup>53</sup> See Williams, *Cricket and England*, pp 183-190.

<sup>54</sup> See Hill, First Class Cricket and the Leagues, pp 68-81, and League Cricket in the North and Midlands, pp 121-41.

<sup>55</sup> There are two notable works on league cricket; Genders, Roy, *League Cricket in England*, T. Werner Laurie Ltd, London, 1952 and Kay, John, *Cricket in the Leagues*, Eyre and Spottiswood, London, 1970.

<sup>56</sup> See Hill, First Class Cricket and the Leagues, p 79.

century. It was within this period that the West Riding grew to occupy a position of national significance in the sport. Whilst Sheffield had become the first notable centre for cricket in the region during the 1820s, by 1870 Yorkshire had been crowned unofficial Champion county for the second time outright. But these years are also significant in relation to the pattern of development which took shape in cricket across the region. By the 1870s the complexion of cricket was changing and it was in this decade that 'gentlemanly amateur' predominance at the elite level of the sport was established as county cricket eclipsed the professional touring elevens. Many of the definitive characteristics that marked cricket during the previous 150 or so years had almost disappeared. Indeed the last major stake money challenge match involving teams from the West Riding took place between Lascelles Hall and Sheffield for £50 a side in 1870.

It was also during these years that the West Riding experienced its definitive period of urban industrial growth. Consequently, the social, economic and cultural changes that had such a profound impact upon society in Britain clearly reflected the development of the sport across the region. In this context West Riding cricket can offer an important insight into some of the pivotal issues which were raised in relation to leisure as urban industrial society took shape in nineteenth century Britain. Therefore, important questions, such as how far a vacuum in leisure was created by the spread of industrialisation, and whether recreational change was diffused from above or developed from existing cultural traditions below, will also be addressed.

In order to view the full significance of this social, economic and cultural context the main focus of the study will be centred upon how the sport took shape in rapidly changing communities during the nineteenth century rather than the development of first class and county cricket. These elite forms of the sport are examined only in relation to their role in the experience of professional players from the West Riding and the emergence of Yorkshire county cricket as a key symbol of regional identity. Sociological discourse on the development of sport and leisure, such as the theory of a 'civilising process' in sport, is also not considered here.<sup>57</sup> Instead the focus is on empirical historical analysis.

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<sup>57</sup> For examples of works on these subjects see, Dunning, Eric, *Sport and Leisure in the Civilising Process: Critique and Counter-critique*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1992, and Vamplew, Wray .

The regional focus also precludes a wider examination of events elsewhere in England and their impact upon the development of the sport. This study aims to reinforce Griffin's observations relating to the importance of regional variations in the general pattern of development and the important work done by Russell, Hill and Williams on sport and cultural identity in the north of England. Yet the growing national importance of the West Riding from the 1820s onwards means that many of the broader issues, which shaped the sport during the nineteenth century, were particularly relevant and are, consequently, considered in some detail. Moreover, by drawing a comprehensive picture of cricket in the West Riding, the study aims to complement other works with a regional focus that have examined similar nineteenth century issues relating to leisure and recreation. These include works by Clarke and Hignell, which are centred on cricket, and Metcalfe who has looked at sport in general.<sup>58</sup>

The thesis will, therefore, be focused primarily upon five key themes, namely competition, commercialism, the cricket club and the community, professionalism and culture and identity, and these will form the focus of each main chapter. Chapter one will view the way in which cricket first gained a significant presence in the region from within the context of the pre-modern competitive structure that continued to drive the sport between the 1820s and the 1860s. With close reference to the parallel growth of the local and dedicated national press, it will also explore the growing relationship between this compelling form of sport and the rivalries amongst rapidly expanding communities in the region that emerged during the onset of urban industrialisation.

The second chapter examines how commercial forces were also fundamental to the growth of cricket in the West Riding. To do this it will highlight the impact of commercial investment in stimulating the initial development of organised cricket in Sheffield during the 1820s. Following this, the expansion of the commercial model that was subsequently developed and its role in the growth of cricket in other districts across the region will be traced. These events will also be placed within the changing social, economic and cultural context to examine the broader implications upon workers in

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Empiricist Versus Sociological History: Some Comments on the 'Civilizing Process', *Sport in History*, Volume 27, Issue 2 June 2007, pages 161 – 171.

<sup>58</sup> See Clarke, Ian David, *The Development and social history of cricket in Cornwall 1815 to 1881*, Unpublished PhD thesis, De Montfort University, 2004, Hignell, Andrew, *A Favorit' Game, Cricket in South Wales before 1914*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1992 and Metcalfe, Alan, *Leisure and Recreation in a Victorian Mining Community: The Social Economy of Leisure in North-East England. 1820-1914*, Routledge, London, 2006.



certain industries of the diverse character of economic development in the region. Finally the significance of developments in commercial cricket which took place in the 1840s and their impact upon cricket both in the region and beyond will be highlighted.

The third chapter will focus upon the increasing number of cricket clubs which were formed in communities across the West Riding during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. It will trace the initial growth of cricket clubs in general before identifying how access to key economic, educational and spatial resources was crucial in enabling certain social groups to form such organisations, whilst its absence prevented others. The distinctive pattern through which cricket clubs in the West Riding grew from the 1850s onwards is subsequently examined in the light of these observations and related to general changes in the social economic and cultural context of the region.

The role of professionalism in the formative development of West Riding cricket is examined in chapter 4. It begins by establishing how professionals were a central feature of pre-modern cricket and viewed as essential to the rise in status of the sport in Sheffield during the 1820s, before examining the different ways in which they were financed during this period. The expansion of employment opportunities from the 1840s onwards is then explored, especially in relation to the growth of cricket clubs and the impact of the professional touring elevens. Finally the social and economic circumstances of the mid nineteenth century West Riding professionals are examined, before, during and after their careers, to establish how far the general picture of hardship that has been drawn of them offers a truly representative view.

The last chapter is focused upon the expression of cultural identity through cricket in the region and is divided into two halves. The initial examination looks at the continuing presence of the sport as a traditional popular recreation, how this was linked to the distinctive character of urban industrial development that took place and its implications for the subsequent development of the sport. The second half of the chapter focuses on the way in which cricket became a key symbol of regional identity in the West Riding. To do this the examination focuses upon representations of the county as a whole, as this became the dominant symbol of cricket in the region especially after the growth of formalised county cricket. Finally a short concluding chapter will draw together the key themes which have provided the central focus of each chapter and

relate them more specifically to the discourse surrounding the development of cricket, sport and leisure during the nineteenth century.

In view of the issues relating to primary sources that have been highlighted, the study will look beyond more commonly used examples of nineteenth century cricket literature and focus upon alternative material which offers a more balanced view. The distinctive pattern of development that emerged in the West Riding of Yorkshire meant events which shaped the sport were often reported from a popular rather than elite perspective. This is reflected in local and regional press coverage, which provides perhaps the most fertile ground for new research. It often gives a different view of the game's leading players as well as useful accounts of prominent local figures. Importantly, through its coverage of the major matches, the press gives an invaluable insight into the meaning these events had in the region. Newspapers, such as the *Leeds Mercury*, the *York Courant* and the *Sheffield Independent*, had been published since before the 1820s. But the emergence of new publications such as the *Bradford Observer*, and the *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser*, meant that by the 1840s local newspapers had been established in all the major towns in the West Riding. Some national publications also provide important coverage of cricket in Yorkshire during the first half of the nineteenth, particularly those dedicated specifically to sport, and *Bell's Life in London (Bell's Life)* is an essential primary source for any study of this type.

Allied to these newspaper sources are a number of journals which cover the sport from various perspectives. Although dedicated publications, such as *Cricket*, which eventually became the *Cricketer*, concentrated predominantly upon the first class game, *Athletic News* gives relatively detailed accounts of the sport below this level in the West Riding during the later part of the period which is covered by this study. Moreover, local journals such as the *Yorkshireman*, the *Yorkshire Owl* and *Toby the Tyke*, contain sections which cover major issues relating to sport in the region. *Lillywhite's Scores and Biographies* provides a further cricket related source which gives good background material on the All England XI's along with principal players and clubs.

The second vital form of primary source used in the study is archive material from individual clubs, leagues and other administrative organisations involved in local cricket. These are more fragmented and less accessible, as consent is often needed before they can be examined, and in many cases, material from the nineteenth century

has not survived. However, some documents have been handed on to local archive services, especially the West Yorkshire Archive, and I had the good fortune to be employed by the University of Huddersfield to work on its successful Heritage Lottery Fund sponsored Calderdale and Kirklees Cricket Heritage Project. The research which was undertaken provided rare access to important club and league records and uncovered a range of other relevant material. Although much of the information within these records is relatively inconsequential, it does give a feel for the character of the organisations, their social complexion, origins, and finances. Moreover the position of clubs within the overall structure of local cricket is also occasionally reflected, as well as their general outlook and ambitions along with the nature of issues and major decisions that affected them.

In addition to these sources other contemporary publications such as trade directories, collections of reminiscences and biographies have also occasionally been used and provide some interesting views on events which took place in the living memory of some local writers. Mostly written somewhat later, but often drawing on such material, there are also a number of very competent and well researched club histories that provide valuable details which are not readily available elsewhere. Although most of these publications are primarily concerned with personalities and performances, in some cases they also give an insight into the origins and motivation behind the club's formation, along with details of important officials, early patrons and significant events in local cricket. This can help direct more detailed primary research. By far the best of these is the work of the Heywood family on cricket in Todmorden, which bears comparison with any other study on the history of the sport in the nineteenth century.<sup>59</sup>

This range of archival primary sources will consequently be examined through a qualitative approach and situated within the academic context of those key secondary works which have been identified. Relevant statistical evidence relating to the events with which this study is concerned is rare. Moreover, any form of quantitative analysis of written primary sources can be particularly difficult and would be of doubtful statistical value. However the sources that have been identified provide a wealth of almost totally unexplored first-hand testimony which, when considered in a critical manner, can offer a representative view of the developments that shaped the sport

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<sup>59</sup> See Heywood, Freda, Malcolm and Brian, *Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy: Todmorden and Cricket 1835-1896*. Upper Calder Valley Publications, 2004.

during this period. Indeed as this material often provides an alternative view of events to that given by most contemporary and subsequent cricket writers it can, where appropriate, be balanced against such material.

## **Economic and Social Context**

But before embarking on the main body of the study it is first necessary to provide a brief picture of the social, economic, political and cultural context in which the examination will take place. Cricket spread northwards into the West Riding at a time of widespread urban industrial development in which many communities were transformed beyond recognition. The population of the region as a whole almost trebled in the first 60 years of the nineteenth century, growing from 591,000 in 1801 to 1,553,000 in 1861.<sup>60</sup> The scale of growth was most evident in the larger settlements as Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield all expanded at a remarkable rate to become major provincial towns during this period. Between 1801 and 1841 the number of inhabitants in Leeds had more than doubled, from 53,276 to 152,054, whilst the population that made up the four townships which became Bradford rose from 16,012 in 1810 to 103,778 in 1850, an increase of 648%.<sup>61</sup> In Sheffield however the most extreme period of growth came later and whilst the population rose from 45,755 to 135,310 between 1801 and 1851, by 1871 it had reached 239,946.<sup>62</sup> Much of the increase in major towns was the result of migration, either from the surrounding rural areas or Ireland and Europe, and it is estimated that in Sheffield, for example, 49% of the population aged over 20 were born outside the borough boundaries by 1851.<sup>63</sup>

But the pace of change was also felt in the region's smaller communities. Many long established semi rural villages expanded equally rapidly. Halifax was part of a moorland parish which in 1812 had a population of 73,415. Two decades later this figure had

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<sup>60</sup> Figures quoted in Reckendrees, Dr. Alfred, Diverse Paths to Factory Production, 1780s-1840s: the Woollen Cloth Industry in the West Riding of Yorkshire and in the West of the Rhineland (Prussian Rhine-Province), Paper presented to the 6<sup>th</sup> conference of the European Historical Economics Society, Istanbul 9-10 Sept. 2005, p 5.

<sup>61</sup> See Koditschek, Theodore, *Class Formation and Urban Industrial Society: Bradford 1750-1850*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p 79.

<sup>62</sup> See Hey, David, *Yorkshire since AD 1000*, Longman, London and New York, 1986, p 247.

<sup>63</sup> See Pollard, Sidney, *A History of Labour in Sheffield*, Liverpool University Press, 1959, p 6.

risen to 109,899, and with the inhabitants of the town numbering 15,382, most of the increase came in the surrounding villages. A similar pattern of growth also took place in the parish of Sheffield which extended over 22,370 acres and contained 5 townships, 12 villages and 47 hamlets. In 1851 the central township had 83,400 inhabitants whilst a further 51,900 people lived in the remaining settlements.<sup>64</sup>

The driving force behind this dramatic rate of demographic growth was a parallel and similarly vigorous period of development in certain key industries. The north of the region was dominated by the expansion in woollen and worsted textile manufacture. Between 1833 and 1838 the number of woollen mills in the West Riding rose from 129 to 606 and by 1850 had reached 880.<sup>65</sup> However as mechanisation in certain processes of the manufacture of woollen cloth was slow, significant numbers of people still worked in the domestic system during this period. Indeed even as late as 1858, Baines noted that the power loom did not have any 'considerable advantage over the handloom'.<sup>66</sup> Similarly rapid expansion also took place in the manufacture of worsted cloth and the region's output increased eightfold between 1810 and 1840, and by 1850 the industry employed 71,000 people.<sup>67</sup> But mechanisation in the worsted industry was a relatively smooth process and by 1850 practically all production was done in large scale units.

The manufacture of textiles was largely focused upon three major towns, Leeds, Huddersfield and Bradford, and each developed its own distinctive economic character. Leeds was the leading commercial and financial centre of the West Riding woollen industry. The town's economy was largely built upon the manufacture of woollen broad cloth and there were 106 mills in the parish of Leeds in 1838. Yet around 10,000 handloom weavers were still employed in the borough at the time, of which only 541 worked in the town itself. The rest were situated in surrounding clothing villages, such as Morley and Pudsey to the west and Horsforth and Yeadon to the north. South west of Leeds, however, production was focused upon the 'shoddy' trade which revolved around the smaller towns of Batley and Dewsbury. This was a relatively independent

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<sup>64</sup> See Smith, Dennis, *Conflict and Compromise: Class Formation in English Society 1830-1914*. Routledge and Keegan Paul, London, 1982, p 27, and Pollard, *A History of Labour in Sheffield*. P 4

<sup>65</sup> See Hey, *Yorkshire since AD 1000*, p 256.

<sup>66</sup> See Baines, Edward, *On the Woollen Manufacture of England; With Special Reference to the Leeds Clothing District*, *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, Vol. 22, No. 1. Mar., 1859, pp. 1-34, p 30.

<sup>67</sup> See Koditschek, *Class Formation and Urban Industrial Society*, p 79 and J.A Jowitt, *Model Industrial Communities in Mid Nineteenth Century Yorkshire*, University of Bradford, 1986, p 21.

sector of the industry in which woollen and worsted rags were recycled and loosely woven to produce a material that was often used in blankets and overcoats. On account of its financial and commercial infrastructure Leeds also developed a degree of relative economic diversity. Whilst 37.8 % (22,625 people) of the total workforce was employed in textiles in 1841, this figure had fallen to 19.3 % (17,506 people) by 1871.<sup>68</sup> Some industries such as engineering, chemicals and coal mining were linked to the manufacture of woollen cloth, whilst leather, pottery, brickmaking and others developed relatively independently.

In both Bradford and Huddersfield the economy was more firmly centred upon textiles. Huddersfield specialised in the manufacture of woollen narrow cloth and by 1851 just over a third of the males and around 27% of females who made up the town's workforce were employed in the industry.<sup>69</sup> Here too the manufacturing process was dependent upon a considerable outwork sector which was concentrated in surrounding villages such as Skelmanthorpe, Kirkheaton and Scissett. Bradford, however, was almost completely dominated by the manufacture of worsted cloth. After growing to rival that of neighbouring Halifax towards the end of the eighteenth century the worsted industry emerged as the most dynamic sector in the town's economy after 1815. As Koditschek observed, by the mid century 'Bradford and the worsted industry had merged into one.'<sup>70</sup> Consequently the town experienced rapid growth in large-scale production during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1833 only 3,627 workers were employed in the town's factories. But by 1850 the number had risen to 24,872.<sup>71</sup>

Economic development further south, however, was fundamentally different. Around Sheffield the metalworking industries predominated and whilst they also experienced a period of significant expansion in the first half of the nineteenth century more substantial growth occurred after the 1850s. Between 1824 and 1851 the number of employees in the cutlery and tool trades rose from 8,419 to 16,000 whilst the number of furnaces which converted iron to steel increased from 56 in 1835 to 160 in 1853.<sup>72</sup> Throughout this period the light trades, which consisted of the manufacture of small

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<sup>68</sup> See Cornell, E.J., and Ward, M, *Industrial Development 1780-1914*, in Fraser, Derek, Ed, *A Modern History of Leeds*, Manchester University Press, 1980, pp142-176, p 157.

<sup>69</sup> See Jenkins, David T., *Textiles and other Industries, 1851-1914*, in Haigh, E.A. Hilary, *Huddersfield. A Most Handsome Town*, Kirklees Cultural Services, 1992, pp 241-274, p 241.

<sup>70</sup> See Koditschek, *Class Formation and Urban Industrial Society*, p 100

<sup>71</sup> See Koditschek, *Class Formation and Urban Industrial Society*, p 360

<sup>72</sup> See Pollard, *A History of Labour in Sheffield*, p 6.

metal goods, dominated and were even more fully centred upon small scale unit production than woollen textiles. They accounted for 21,350 of the 26,750 employed in the industry in 1850 and it was not until after 1856, when Bessemer revolutionised the manufacture of steel, that factory production increased significantly in the town.<sup>73</sup> As in textiles, the increased production that subsequently took place was fuelled by coalfields which were largely situated between the region's two main industrial districts. By 1874 8.2 million tons of coal was being produced in the region of which the area ringed by Normanton, Pontefract, Barnsley and Rotherham accounted for around 6.75 million tons.<sup>74</sup>

The distinctive pattern of economic development which took place in each of the region's main manufacturing industries had significant social and political implications for its huge workforce. The continuation of independent trades in both textiles and metalworking meant that a mass industrial proletariat did not really develop in the West Riding during the first half of the nineteenth century and many aspects of pre-modern artisan culture were maintained. For example, in Sheffield especially, the informal holiday Saint Monday was vigorously upheld well into the second half of the nineteenth century whilst the public house remained as an important focal point for working-class communities across the region.

Indeed the way in which these popular cultural traditions continued to flourish attracted increasing attention from the expanding middle-classes. The culture of the urban industrial elites largely reflected the same sense of prudence, respectability and temperance that underscored their economic outlook and often found expression through the establishment of voluntary institutions. In Leeds for example a Philosophical and Literary Society was established in 1819 whilst the Mechanics Institute was founded in 1824. These new bodies sometimes sought to demonstrate the economic and social ascendancy of the new middle-class by promoting civic consciousness and elite culture. But many were inspired by the increasing influence of evangelical religion, fear of social breakdown and the need for a more disciplined workforce to become focused upon improving the condition of those lower down the social scale. They found a degree of compliance from certain sections of the working-

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<sup>73</sup> See Smith, *Conflict and Compromise*, p 67.

<sup>74</sup> See Singleton, Fred, *Industrial Revolution in Yorkshire*, The Dalesman Publishing Company Ltd, Clapham, Yorkshire, 1970, p 197.

classes who followed the doctrine of self-help that was articulated by Samuel Smiles, one time editor of the *Leeds Times*, and founded friendly societies, sick clubs and other institutions which looked to provide greater security for their members.

However, the coalition between middle and working-class groups was more evident in the political sphere. Although still exclusive to the middle-classes, parliamentary elections were given a new political dimension by the 1832 Reform Act, which gave representation to all the major industrial towns in the West Riding. However, the political arrangements which subsequently emerged were based as much on religion as on social or economic background.<sup>75</sup> Liberal Nonconformists, who supported the free market and political economy, formed the dominant political group and out of 108 candidates who were elected to represent constituencies in the region over the following two decades they accounted for 78. The rest were Tory Anglicans who had more traditional views about the right of the social elite to political leadership and the responsibilities this entailed.<sup>76</sup>

Even after 1832 considerable political activity took place away from formal elections. The relative economic independence that was still enjoyed in certain industries meant that class-based political divisions could be overcome in agitation against certain individual causes. In Sheffield the predominance of the small master before the 1860s meant that working men became involved in middle-class liberal political struggles such as the Reform Act agitation and the Anti-Corn Law campaign.<sup>77</sup> However, in the north of the region, where conditions in the factories were at their worst, some Tory paternalists formed a natural alliance with large numbers of working-class activists despite the strength of Methodism throughout the textile communities. They campaigned for Factory Reform and the Tory Radical Richard Oastler was enlisted as chief spokesman for the movement during the 1830s. Indeed for a short period a broad consensus between sections of all political groupings was formed in opposition to the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, which was widely viewed as a legislative imposition by the southern based political elite who did not understand conditions in the industrial north. But by the end of that decade large-scale popular politics had become

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<sup>75</sup> The act gave Bradford, Leeds, Halifax and Sheffield two MP's each, Huddersfield and Wakefield one and two MPs were created to represent the region as a whole.

<sup>76</sup> See Jowitt, *Model Industrial Communities in Mid Nineteenth Century Yorkshire*, p 23

<sup>77</sup> See Pollard, *A History of Labour in Sheffield*, p 41.



firmly focused upon independent working-class radicalism in the form of the Chartist Movement which reached its peak in the 1830s and 1840s. It was at its most extreme in Bradford and as factory production expanded to include the majority of workers in the worsted industry, the town became one of the most militant centres for physical force Chartism in the whole country.

But the character and extent of working-class political activity during this period was closely related to the cyclical economic fluctuations that punctuated the early years of urban industrialisation. Indeed as economic growth became more stable after 1850 a period of relative political calm took shape. Working-class conditions were improved by the greater economic security and legislation, such as the 10 Hours Act which was championed by John Fielden, the MP for Oldham, who came from a textile manufacturing family across the border in Todmorden. Consequently, as new technology transformed many industries, meaningful access to leisure became an accepted part of the new statutory working week which now affected most sections of the working-classes.

This unprecedented period of economic and social change provided the context for cricket's growth in the West Riding. The dynamic environment that subsequently developed resulted in a complex and compelling interplay between cultural continuity and cultural change. Emerging industrial communities expressed their new wealth and identity in traditional sporting forms, such as challenge matches for stake money. However, the transition to modern society also presented new ways for social meanings to be articulated through the sport. Increasing numbers of cricket clubs were formed and became important focal points of community identity as they began to reflect the developing social pattern of early urban industrial society. Consequently many of the cultural traditions that marked the pre-modern sport retained their resonance in the West Riding as the changing social, economic and cultural landscape began to transform the face of cricket.

# CHAPTER 1

## COMPETITION

### Introduction

Unlike the south east of England, cricket in the West Riding of Yorkshire does not enjoy a rich and well documented history that stretches back into the early eighteenth century. Although fleeting references to the sport can be found over the preceding seventy or so years, it was not until a major venue was opened at Darnal on the outskirts of Sheffield in 1822 that cricket first became prominent in the region. Over the following decade the sport began to attract significant attention from both within and outside the West Riding, as a strong cricket enclave rapidly developed around Sheffield. By the 1830s Sheffield cricket had been integrated into the national structure of the sport which, with the exception of the Nottingham area, remained largely centred in London and the south east. By this time a new ground at Hyde Park in north Sheffield had been built to rival and eventually replace Darnal as the chief venue in the town. Both staged major matches which were commonly attended by crowds numbering in their thousands. They watched teams of mainly professional players take part in a game which reflected the basic parameters of cricket as we know them today and was mostly governed by the same laws. But other aspects of the sport's structure and character remained very different from those of the game which rose to national and international prominence during the second half of the nineteenth century. During this formative period, and for some time after, a set of distinctive characteristics prevailed in West Riding cricket that reflected the sport's pre-modern cultural past far more than its future as a symbol of the values that were seen to represent the English national character. This chapter will identify the significance of competition within the pre-modern context and examine its role as cricket first became an established sport in Sheffield and then across the West Riding.

One of the most significant aspects of early major matches in Sheffield was that they were played for stake money and resulted from specific challenges. Indeed, it was around these two pivotal elements of pre-modern sport that early cricket largely revolved. Like most other sports, playing for stake money was an integral part of cricket's pre-modern culture. Certainly before the start of the nineteenth century, it was uncommon for matches not to carry a wager between the participants, whoever they were. When writing about the sport's early days in the villages of south east England David Underdown has remarked that whilst 'rural cricket was rarely compromised by the lure of money,...betting for very small stakes was common'<sup>1</sup> This was the case when Thomas Turner, a shopkeeper from East Hoathly in Sussex, took part in a seemingly inconsequential match on East Hoathly common in 1756. He played for the 'Street' quarter of the Parish against the 'Nursery' quarter, 'each time paying his due as a 'gamester'....in this case a shilling a match.'<sup>2</sup>

At the other end of the scale, as Keith Sandiford has noted, 'all the great cricket matches of the Georgian age were played for high stakes'.<sup>3</sup> This was mainly due to the involvement of leading aristocrats from the south east of England, for whom wagering money on cricket became a preferred way to express their wealth and power whilst playing out friendly and not so friendly rivalries. In 1731 the Duke of Richmond played a Mr Chambers at Richmond, Surrey, for 200 guineas a side, whilst in 1743 Lord John Sackville's Kent XI played Lord Mountford's XI for £500.<sup>4</sup> The high point of these 'Great Matches' for stake money came at the end of the eighteenth century when, between 1770 and 1790, the famous Hambledon club, which was backed by a group of wealthy aristocrats, played for £32,527 in stake money and won £22,497.<sup>5</sup>

The prevalence of gambling and aristocratic involvement in the 'great matches' had important consequences for cricket. As Dennis Brailsford has recognised, the 'patronage of noble patrons was particularly important during the second quarter of the eighteenth century when the game made such rapid developments'.<sup>6</sup> Large amounts of money were wagered on matches between the sport's aristocratic rivals and a heightened sense of

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<sup>1</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 35.

<sup>2</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 38

<sup>3</sup> See Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p 26.

<sup>4</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 66.

<sup>5</sup> See Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p26.

<sup>6</sup> See Brailsford, Dennis, *Sporting Days in Eighteenth Century England*, *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 9, No. 3 Winter, 1982 pp 42-55, p 48.

competition was created that saw a number of definitive characteristics develop which shaped cricket in the pre-modern context and beyond. For example, the first professional cricketers were being engaged by leading patrons to take part in the 'great matches' by the middle decades of the eighteenth century. Indeed, professionals also made an early appearance further north and it was reported, in 1751, that the 'Sheffield authorities engaged professional cricketers to amuse the populace, and so draw them from cock fighting exhibitions'.<sup>7</sup>

Although a rare occurrence in Yorkshire at this time, the use of cricket as a form of entertainment reflected the popular following which the sport had come to enjoy in London and the surrounding area. The involvement of high profile members of the nobility alongside leading players in contests which were played for high stakes meant that cricket became a spectator attraction and large crowds attended matches at purpose built, commercially run cricket grounds. As early as 1738 an estimated crowd of 10,000 people saw Kent play London at the most popular early venue, the Artillery Ground, where the proprietor and also landlord of the adjacent Pied Horse public house, George Smith, charged 2d for admission at this time.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the increasing regularity of matches during this period saw the early appearance of written rules for cricket when, in 1752, the 'cricket club' published the 'laws' by which it had been playing since 1744 in the *New Universal Magazine*.<sup>9</sup>

No less important to the early development of cricket than gambling, although far less well documented, was the concept of the challenge. Whilst gambling stimulated interest and investment, the challenge provided the distinctive structure that characterised sport in the pre-modern context. On a fundamental level the challenge was a necessary means of organising matches. Regular leisure time was not available to most people until the second half of the nineteenth century when the capitalist economic structure had been adopted in most industries. Working hours were regulated, making a rationalised weekly structure of sporting fixtures possible. Before this, work and leisure time was sporadic and a systematic programme of fixtures could not be staged. So matches had to be arranged in an *ad hoc* fashion to fit around the availability of those involved and this was done in the form of a specific challenge. Organising fixtures in this way also meant

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<sup>7</sup> See Holmes, *Yorkshire County Cricket*, p 10.

<sup>8</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 84.

<sup>9</sup> See Birley, *Social History of English Cricket*, p 27.

that the arrangements could be made well in advance, which enabled events on the scale of the 'Great Matches' to take place. Indeed, it is almost certain that the opportunity cricket provided the aristocracy to express their status through such spectacular public events was a major incentive for their involvement of cricket.<sup>10</sup>

More important to cricket's future, however, was the early use of written rules for the sport and the role of the challenge in this process reveals much about the cultural dynamics which were prevalent in the pre-modern period. Despite its accelerated early development cricket, like other pre-modern sports in the eighteenth century, remained a localised and informal game, not far removed from its folk origins. This meant that, alongside the basic parameters of the game, variant elements also existed and it was necessary to clarify which of these would be used in any single contest.

The large amounts of money wagered on matches by the aristocratic patrons of the game during the first half of the eighteenth century meant that, as Brailsford has pointed out, it became common for these contests to be governed by written contractual agreements.<sup>11</sup> The content of these documents was decided during the process of issuing and accepting the challenge and aimed to prevent disputes by both clarifying various aspects of play and setting out the terms of the wager. Adrian Harvey has identified the distinction between these twin purposes as a 'crucial difference (sic) between codes and contracts'.<sup>12</sup> He defines the sporting 'code' as a means by which the specifics of general play were usually governed, and it was from these agreements that generally accepted laws of the game evolved. The 'contract', however, related to separate arrangements for individual matches that usually referred to the wager, such as the means of arbitration, the qualification of participants and the size of the stake.

Indeed the distinction between the 'code' and the 'contract' is clearly demonstrated in an early set of 'Articles of Agreement', which presided over two matches between the Duke of Richmond and Mr Alan Broderick in 1727. Of the 16 points that were set out in the document, the following seven relate to the code by which the match was played and state

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<sup>10</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, ch3, pp 46-73.

<sup>11</sup> See Brailsford, Dennis, Morals and Maulers: the Ethics of Early Pugilism, *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Summer, 1985, pp 126-142, p129.

<sup>12</sup> See Harvey, *Commercial Sporting Culture in Britain*, p 116 and Brailsford, Morals and Maulers, p129.

- 2nd. That the wickets shall be pitched in a fair and even place, at 23 yards from each other.
- 3rd. A ball caught, cloathed or not cloathed the Striker is out.
- 4th. When a Ball is caught out, the Stroke counts nothing.
- 5th. Catching out behind the Wicket allowed.
- 7th. That 12 Gamesters shall play on each side.
- 14th. The Batt Men for every One they count are to touch the Umpires Stick.
- 15th. That it shall not be lawful to fling down the wickets, and that no Player shall be deemed out by any wicket put down, unless with the Ball in Hand.<sup>13</sup>

Each of these articles relates to a familiar aspect of the game that is covered by the present laws of cricket. But the unfamiliar language and slightly different parameters that were used place them firmly within the context of pre-modern sport. Indeed, this set of 'Articles' is generally seen as the first written codification of the game, and it is likely that, along with similar sets of agreements, it provided precedents which were adhered to in other contests before attempts to establish a single more generally accepted code began with the publication of laws in 1752.

In contrast, however, the 'Articles of Agreement' that were set in place for this match which relate to the 'contract', and deal with the conditions that presided over the wager, have little relevance to the sport today. But they do reveal much about the nature of pre-modern sporting contests and, most importantly, the tenth article stated 'that each Match shall be for twelve guineas of each Side; between the Duke and Mr Broderick'. Although this was a relatively small sum, the contests were still keenly competitive and the sixth Article of Agreement set out the following rules on who could take part in the matches,

That 'tis lawful for the Duke of Richmond to choose the Gamesters, who have played in either of his Grace's two last matches with Sir William Gage; and that 'tis lawful for Mr Broderick to choose the Gamesters within three miles of Pepperharowe, provided they actually lived there last Lady day.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.peperharow.info/cricket.htm>, 21/02/2008.

<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.peperharow.info/cricket.htm>

By the 1720s, wealthy patrons had already begun to employ leading players on their estates in order for them to play cricket. So, as Lady Day was traditionally the day for hiring servants, this regulation was clearly aimed at ensuring that both the Duke and Mr Broderick were aware of the players they would encounter by preventing new men from being engaged after the agreement had been made.

Competition was clearly fundamental to pre-modern cricket and the challenge provided the key means through which it was articulated. But the versatility of the concept meant that these competitive dynamics were not confined to expressing the rivalries of aristocratic patrons. Those lower down the social order, like Thomas Turner, also played in challenge matches and the contests between different sections of the Parish in East Hoathly demonstrate that communal identities were also being expressed through this form of competitive cricket.

By the middle decades of the nineteenth century the sense of local identity that was invested in cricket in the rural communities of south east England had begun to be transposed into the elite contest of the sport. Leading players from Sussex, Hampshire and Kent began to gain wider recognition and find engagements to play in the 'Great Matches' at the commercially run venues in London and the surrounding counties.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, William Beldham could later speak of how these men became the pride and honour in the parishes' when describing the way local people, in the villages where most early professionals learned to play the game, followed their performances in London'.<sup>16</sup> Beldham, of course, ranks amongst the sport's greatest early professional players and will always be linked with one of cricket's most famous institutions during the eighteenth century, Hambledon Cricket Club.

Indeed, much of the Hambledon club's phenomenal success was due to the potent way in which aristocratic patronage and local identity were combined on Broadhalfpenny Down. The team was predominantly made up of professional players who were backed to play in big money challenge matches by a group of wealthy aristocrats. But the roots of both the club and most of its players were firmly set in rural Hampshire, and on occasions such as when Hambledon played England for £1,050 in 1777 the importance of the contest went far beyond the stake money that had been wagered. The compelling

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<sup>15</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 71 for the development of professionals in the south eastern counties of England.

<sup>16</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 170.

sense of local identity that was invested in these matches was vividly expressed in John Nyren's famous reminiscence that,

There was high feasting on Broadhalfpenny during the solemnity of one of our grand matches. Oh it was a heart-stirring sight to witness the multitude forming a complete and dense circle round that noble green. Half the county would be present, and all their hearts with us-Little Hambledon, pitted against all England was a proud thought for the Hampshire men. Defeat was glory in a struggle-victory, indeed, made us 'a little lower than angels'.<sup>17</sup>

Obviously, looking back around 50 years to the days of his youth, Nyren was stirred by a fair amount of nostalgia. Nevertheless, as David Underdown argued, to many of those who played in and watched its matches, Hambledon Cricket Club 'strikingly expressed the identity of their neighbourhood – the rural communities of Hampshire and the adjacent counties.'<sup>18</sup>

### **Cricket in the Urban Industrial Context - Challenge matches and the development of the game across the West Riding**

But more importantly for this study, when cricket first took a strong foothold in the West Riding of Yorkshire during the 1820s, the competitive dynamics of the challenge match remained as the driving force behind the sport. Cricket spread northwards at a time when new forms of rivalry and identity were developing amongst the region's rapidly growing urban industrial towns and villages. Many communities were transformed beyond recognition during this period, creating an environment in which the vitality that had marked the thriving communities of London and the surrounding counties during the previous century was at least equally matched. The scale of growth was most evident in the larger towns. As we have seen, during the first half of the nineteenth century the number of inhabitants in Leeds more than doubled whilst in the

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<sup>17</sup> See Mote Ed., *John Nyren's The Cricketers of my Time*, p 71.

<sup>18</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 120-124.



neighbouring town of Bradford the population rose even more steeply in the same period. However, the pace of change was also felt in smaller communities and many long established semi rural villages expanded equally rapidly.

As the population figures demonstrate, this period also saw the emergence of major new industrial towns in the West Riding and each sought to develop a strong civic identity. It was often expressed through rivalries with places of similar size and profile, with municipal and political recognition providing two key status symbols. Leeds, first given a charter by Charles I, became a town well before Bradford was incorporated in 1847. However, both became electoral boroughs following the Great Reform Act of 1832. Sheffield, in the south of the region, had grown along similar lines to Leeds and Bradford during the first half of the nineteenth century. It too became an electoral borough in 1832 and was then incorporated as a municipal borough in 1843. But, unlike the textile towns further north, the Sheffield economy was centred around the manufacture of cutlery, and the growth of the town was built around various local developments in the production processes of iron and then steel. Indeed the industrial character of these towns was strongly represented in their civic identity. So, in the same way that the leading aristocratic patrons of eighteenth-century cricket expressed their stature by building large country houses, increasingly grand municipal buildings were constructed in the new manufacturing towns. Whilst a Wool Exchange was built in Bradford in 1864, Sheffield opened its Cutlers Hall in 1833. However, imposing town halls were seen as the greatest symbol of civic status and similarly grand buildings were opened in Leeds in 1858 and Bradford in 1873, whilst Sheffield Town Hall was constructed as early as 1808, before being enlarged in 1833.

During the 1820s cricket also became an important means through which people in Sheffield sought to promote the status and identity of the town. The initial step towards raising the status of Sheffield cricket was taken in 1821 by George Steer and his son-in-law William Woolhouse. It was they who established the first major venue for the sport in Yorkshire, by levelling a field and enclosing a cricket ground at Darnal on the outskirts of the town. The first major match at Darnal was between fifteen of Sheffield and eleven of Nottingham in 1822. Unfortunately, the occasion ended in disaster when a temporary stand collapsed and 23 people were taken to the infirmary. Indeed, the match

also exposed the inexperience of local cricketers, when pitted against ‘the celebrated players of Nottingham’, as J. Thomas later described them.<sup>19</sup>

However, this contest was pivotal to the rise of Sheffield cricket which followed. The event attracted a huge amount of interest in and around the town. Indeed the *Sheffield Independent* described how ‘Sheffield seemed almost to pour out the principal part of its population, the roads being literally covered all the morning with crowds hastening to the scene of the expected enjoyments’.<sup>20</sup> To those who had been involved in staging the match, this response evidently demonstrated that a high degree of popular demand existed for cricket in the town and events on this scale could be successful. Consequently, renewed investment was made in all aspects of the Darnal venture and, as Thomas later described in 1844:

The whole of the next year (sic) the players devoted to practice, not venturing upon another match, until they thought themselves strong enough for victory. The public, however, had so unequivocally shewn their admiration of the game, and their disposition to support the players, that the proprietor ventured to form, at a great expense, another and more extensive ground; and, to afford the members of the club every chance of improving themselves, engaged Sparkes, a well known cricketer from Marylebone, to instruct them.<sup>21</sup>

Over the next few years, the status of cricket in Sheffield was built through a series of challenge matches for large stakes. But as the reputation of cricket in the West Riding was of little consequence elsewhere in the country, competition with established centres of the game in the Midlands became the initial focus of those who sought to increase the town’s prominence in the sport. In August 1824 Bingham were beaten by eight wickets, in a match for 100 sovereigns that attracted around 15 to 20,000 people on the second day, whilst a meeting with Leicester for 200 sovereigns a month later ended in a narrow defeat.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, when a combined Sheffield and Leicester XI met a Nottingham

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<sup>19</sup> See Thomas, John, *Walks in the Neighbourhood of Sheffield. Yorkshire, Volume 2*. Robert Leader, Sheffield, 1844, p 47.

<sup>20</sup> See, *Sheffield Independent*, 24/08 1822

<sup>21</sup> See Thomas, *Walks in the Neighbourhood of Sheffield*, pp 47-8.

<sup>22</sup> See *Sheffield Independent* 07/08 1824 and *Sheffield Independent* 11/09/1824.

XI in a match at Darnal for 200 sovereigns, in July 1826, the *Sheffield Independent* explained,

This extraordinary match at cricket, which from the circumstance of the picked players of three counties having to contend in it, had excited the most intense interest amongst the admirers of this celebrated sport, began on Monday last at noon. Some hours before, an immense concourse of people had assembled on the ground, amongst whom might be distinguished most of the known patrons of the game. They appeared busily employed in observing the manner and capabilities of the different players as they were practising in groups, to the amusement and no small danger of the spectators.<sup>23</sup>

The Sheffield and Leicester team was victorious in this match with Tom Marsden, a Sheffield man, scoring a remarkable 227 and was then involved in two even more high profile contests against XI of All England in September 1826.<sup>24</sup> Playing as a XXII on both occasions, the combined team won the first encounter, at Leicester, and lost narrowly in the second, at Darnal. A year later, another watershed was reached on the field at Darnal when a team which consisted solely of Sheffield players defeated Nottingham, the leading side in the Midlands, on equal terms. The match was played for £100 and the *Sheffield Independent* reported that play ‘on Tuesday, was attended by a great number of respectable persons.’<sup>25</sup>

These major challenge matches raised both the profile and standard of the sport outside its traditional heartland, in the south east of England, and brought increased recognition for provincial cricket. Consequently, in 1830, during a preview of the forthcoming contest between Sheffield and Nottingham, *Bell's Life* explained that ‘This match excites considerable interest in the two counties, and is expected to be the greatest sporting match out of London; many large sums have been already betted by the friends of both parties, each feeling certain of success’.<sup>26</sup> Typically, the statement focused on the fact that the match had attracted considerable widespread betting. But, as we shall

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<sup>23</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 29/07/1826.

<sup>24</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 02/09/1826 and 09/09/1826.

<sup>25</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 04/08/1827

<sup>26</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 22/08/1830.

see, gambling was so closely linked to cricket and other sports during this period that, in publications such as *Bell's Life*, the degree of interest in a match was often gauged by the volume of speculation it attracted. Nevertheless, the appeal of the Nottingham encounter was clearly widespread and the rising status of the sport in Sheffield can also be seen in developments both inside and outside the town. New proprietor-owned grounds were opened at Hyde Park and Cross Scythers in Sheffield during the 1820s whilst leading local players, such as Tom Marsden, William Woolhouse, Emanuel Vincent and James Dearman, began to gain national recognition and all made appearances at Lord's in the 1820s and 1830s.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, as well as building a reputation on the field of play, efforts were also made to raise the profile of Sheffield cricket by establishing Darnal as a leading venue for the sport. A sequence of major matches which featured teams that included the sport's leading players from the south east of England were staged at the ground during the 1820s, beginning with a match between XI of All England and XXII of Yorkshire for a stake of one thousand sovereigns in 1825.<sup>28</sup> This contest marked the first appearance of the XI of All England in the county. However, the team became regular visitors to Darnal over the rest of the decade, playing against XXII of Sheffield and Leicester in 1826, and an XI from the three counties of Nottingham, York and Leicester in 1828.<sup>29</sup> But the most prestigious fixture that took place at Darnal came in 1826 when XIs representing Sussex and All England played the first in a series of three experimental matches, which were staged in an attempt to settle the controversy over round arm bowling. The importance of these games was reflected in their grandiose title, the 'March of Intellect' matches, and the choice of Darnal to stage the first fixture, which took place on Whit Monday, said much about the growing reputation of the ground. The match also marked another step in the development of Sheffield's cricketers as three local men, Tom Marsden, William Barber and George Dawson, were included in the All England XI. But, despite their importance to the future of cricket, these two matches were firmly rooted in the pre-modern culture of the sport. A one thousand sovereign

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<sup>27</sup> Marsden played at Lord's for England against Sussex in 1827, see <http://cricketarchive.com/Archive/Scorecards/0/441.html>, 05/07/2007, Woolhouse for All England against the 'B's' in 1828, See *Bell's Life* 29/06/1828, Vincent for England against Sussex in 1836, <http://cricketarchive.com/Archive/Scorecards/0/555.html>, 05/07/2007, and Dearman for The North against the South in 1837, see <http://cricketarchive.com/Archive/Scorecards/0/555.html>, 05/07/2007,

<sup>28</sup> See *The Morning Chronicle*, 27/05/1825.

<sup>29</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 14/09/1828.

purse was at stake and the names of the two ‘Gentlemen Backers: H. Tamplin, Esq. on the part of Sussex’ and ‘J. Jenner, Esq. on the part of All England’ were featured prominently in advertisements for the event which were placed in the *Sheffield Independent*.<sup>30</sup>

The pattern of development that proved so successful in Sheffield had a similar impact elsewhere in the West Riding and the growth of cricket in the textile districts to the north of region also revolved around a series of competitive stake money challenge matches. As early as 1824, the *Leeds Mercury* announced, whilst reporting on a match between the ‘Leeds New Club’ and the ‘Old Club’,

The second meeting of our rival Cricket Clubs took place on Wednesday last, on Woodhouse Moor, to decide which was to be the ‘Champion’ Club; much skill was displayed on the occasion, particularly by the ‘Old Ones,’ who acquitted themselves with great *éclat*, and gained the match in style, they having eight wickets to go down.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, teams from Sheffield were not the only representatives of West Riding cricket to take part in challenge matches that attracted attention from the national press at this time. Although situated on the eastern edge of the region, the Knaresborough club had recently found success against teams from the adjacent North Riding, when *Bell’s Life* published a challenge from ‘a correspondent of the Yarm Club’ in 1828. It stated that,

The Knaresboro’ Club, having beaten the Husthwaite, which, they say, consists of the best players in the North Riding of Yorkshire – if so they cannot hesitate (after beating the best) to challenge any other club in the Riding, which will give them a fair chance (in the field) of regaining the laurels lost by the Husthwaite club.<sup>32</sup>

Two fixtures between Knaresborough and Yarm were later agreed upon for a stake of 50 sovereigns, with the first taking place at Thirsk in September and a crowd of around

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<sup>30</sup> See appendix 1, advertisement from the *Sheffield Independent*, 02.06.1827.

<sup>31</sup> See *Leeds Mercury*, 23.10.1824.

<sup>32</sup> See *Bell’s Life*, 29.06.1828.

3,000 attended the event.<sup>33</sup> However, in a letter that was also published in *Bell's Life*, Knaresborough refused to play the return fixture. It was felt that the club had sufficient commitments for the remainder of the season, and an offer to play a match in the following year was made, providing 'the Yarm gentlemen (sic) bring an umpire who is not interested in the stakes'.<sup>34</sup>

The growing reputation of teams elsewhere in the county had also begun to be noticed in Sheffield by the end of the 1820s, as leading teams from the town looked to find suitable opponents nearer to home. Consequently, on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1829 the *Sheffield Independent* published a challenge which stated that the Darnal Wednesday Club was 'ready for any eleven in the county, and would not refuse small odds', and if Wakefield were willing to accept the offer, the Sheffield side 'would be glad to hear from (sixteen) of them'.<sup>35</sup>

But Sheffield's position at the forefront of West Riding cricket did not receive any serious challenge until the 1840s. As we shall see, commercial interests had contributed greatly to the sport's rapid development in the town during the 1820s and it was not until the end of the next decade that similar events took place elsewhere in the region. Cricket subsequently began to develop rapidly in the textile districts to the north of the region and teams from towns such as Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield and Leeds began to challenge Sheffield's ascendancy in the sport. Some distance in standing clearly remained when the *Leeds Times* reported on a match between '11 of Sheffield, including Dearman, Marsden, Vincent & co, and 16 of the Leeds and Harewood Clubs, also including Ibbetson and North' in 1838.<sup>36</sup>

Only four years later, however, teams from within the region had begun to compete on equal terms with Sheffield. In 1842 Dalton, the remarkable team from a small handloom weaving village near Huddersfield, met Sheffield in an eleven a side match for £30 as the county's leading side began to play similar contests, on an increasingly regular basis, against Leeds Victoria, Bradford, Harewood and even a Yorkshire XI.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 28/09/1828.

<sup>34</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 05/10/1828.

<sup>35</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 13/06/1829.

<sup>36</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 29/09/1838.

<sup>37</sup> For matches against Sheffield see *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser*, 11/6/1842 for Dalton, and *Leeds Times*, 19/06/1841 for Harewood, 23/9/1843 for Bradford, and 11/08/1849 for Yorkshire.

A regular framework of challenge matches subsequently emerged in which teams representing most of the major towns in the West Riding took part. In 1841 the *Leeds Times*, announced,

The Leeds Victoria Cricket Club is open to play the Bradford Cricket Club, a game of cricket for the sum of 50/- or upwards. The match to be played on the Sheffield (or any other neutral) ground, in three weeks or a month, and the players to be chosen from the list last sent by each club. Should the above challenge be accepted each club to deposit the sum of 20/- as a guarantee that the match be played.<sup>38</sup>

Not all these major contests resulted from publicly issued challenges. But when Dalton played Leeds Victoria for £1 per man in 1841, or Bradford played Dalton for £20 and Heckmondwike played Halifax Clarence for £10 in 1842 there is little doubt that a similar sense of rivalry was being expressed.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, the growth and intensity of rivalries between these teams resulted in the early development of broader competitive concepts during this period. The idea of an unofficial championship of the county first emerged in the 1840s and two matches were given this title in 1842. The first was described by one newspaper as a 'GRAND CRICKET MATCH FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP OF YORKSHIRE, BETWEEN THE DALTON AND BRADFORD CLUBS'.<sup>40</sup> Dalton won the match, which was played for £20 a side, and a few weeks later met Sheffield in a match which the same newspaper claimed was played to decide 'THE CHAMPIONSHIP OF YORKSHIRE FOR £100'. This match saw the Sheffield side, which won by nine wickets, reassert its supremacy in the county and also marked the beginning of strong rivalry with Dalton.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps of more significance to the future of the sport, however, formally organised competitions in which a number of teams took part were also played in the 1840s. In 1844 a four team 'sweepstakes amounting to 80 sovereigns' was organised by the York Cricket Club. The competition comprised of three matches in which York beat

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<sup>38</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 14/08/1841.

<sup>39</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 31/07/1841, and *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser* 13/08/1842 and 28/8/1842.

<sup>40</sup> See *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser*, 13/08/1842.

<sup>41</sup> See *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser*, 01/10/1842.

Knarborough and Leeds beat Malton before the two victorious sides met in the final.<sup>42</sup> This deciding match was a major event and took place over two days, during which the *Leeds Times* described how ‘from the well known celebrity of the two clubs, an immense concourse of spectators assembled to witness the game’.<sup>43</sup> This was on the first day of play, when ‘about £20 was taken at the gate’ and the second day’s play attracted a crowd of ‘not less than 2,000’ with receipts of £23.<sup>44</sup> Following the event’s success a second four team ‘sweepstakes’ tournament took place at York in 1845.<sup>45</sup> This time Dalton took part in the competition, and beat the hosts in the final, whilst a similar four team sweepstake was played in September 1847 between ‘the Salt Horn Club, Oakenshaw, the Birkenshaw, Dudley Hill and Pudsey Clubs’ at Oakenshaw near Bradford.<sup>46</sup>

Although far more limited in scale, these embryonic knockout competitions took place around three decades before the format was successfully adopted by many sports in the last third of the nineteenth century. They also show that, prior to its widespread adoption, the concept of the knockout tournament had not been exclusive to the public schools, which provided the model for the first of the later competitions, the FA Cup, in 1871.<sup>47</sup> But whilst the ‘Sweepstakes’ anticipated the cup knockout competitions which became a foundation of modern competitive sport, they were firmly rooted in pre-modern culture. As their name suggests, gambling was a major consideration and, as well as offering 80 sovereigns to the winner, the York cricket ‘sweepstakes’ attracted a significant amount of betting. On the first day of the final the *Leeds Times* noted that, ‘betting in the morning was 5 and 6 to 4 on the Leeds players, and a large sum was laid out at that price, the friends of each party being very sanguine’.<sup>48</sup> The ‘Curious Cricket Sweep’ that took place at Oakenshaw in 1847, however, was a far less prestigious affair, more in keeping with the informal and expedient nature of pre-modern sport. Possibly because it was played during the ‘hungry forties’, the winner received, as the *Leeds*

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<sup>42</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 31/08/1844.

<sup>43</sup> See *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> See *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> See *The Hull Packet and East Riding Times*, 27/06/1845.

<sup>46</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 19/09/1847.

<sup>47</sup> The FA cup was inspired by the ‘Cock House’ competition which took place at Harrow, see See Walvin, James, *The People’s Game: A Social History of British Football*, Readers Union, Newton Abbot, 1975, p 47.

<sup>48</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 31.08.1844.



*Times* put it, ‘a fat pig value £10-the Oakenshaw lads do not love the dry “doits,” but something greasy.’<sup>49</sup>

### **Challenge Matches and the role of the Press**

The rapidly increasing social, economic and political status of the West Riding during the nineteenth century was clearly reflected in the development of cricket in the region and a pivotal role was played in both by the simultaneous rise of the provincial press. Stamp duty and other forms of taxation, which had been raised to discourage sedition during the French Revolutionary War, were reduced in the 1830s before being abolished in the 1850s.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, a number of provincial newspapers were founded at around this time and whilst many lasted little more than a few years, at least one publication was subsequently established in most major West Riding towns. Amongst these the *Bradford Observer*, and the *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser* were the first newspapers to be published in their respective towns. In Leeds, Sheffield and York, however, newspapers had been in published since the first half of the eighteenth century. But new publications were also established in these towns during the 1830s, such as the *Leeds Times* and, in York, *Johnson's Racing Calendar*. Moreover, as Read explained it was during the first half of the nineteenth century that existing provincial newspapers began to take a more active role in local and national affairs.<sup>51</sup> Consequently, by 1863 Richard Cobden could look back, and declare that over the course of the previous half century provincial newspapers had ‘led public opinion in their localities’ and played a particularly significant role as ‘pioneers of political progress’.<sup>52</sup>

These publications were also instrumental in promoting the interests of local and civic institutions and were particularly partisan in their support for cricket teams through which a similar sense of community identity was expressed. As the source material which has been used to chart these events shows, the local press played an integral role

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<sup>49</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 19/9/1847.

<sup>50</sup> See Read, Donald, *Press and People 1790-1850: Opinion in Three English Cities*, Edward Arnold, 1961, pp 59-107.

<sup>51</sup> See Read, *Press and People*, p 59-107.

<sup>52</sup> See Read, *Press and People*, p vii.

in the rise of Sheffield cricket during the 1820s. The *Sheffield Independent* was a particularly prominent champion of the town's teams, individual players and venues. and at the end of the 1826 season it published a typically glowing assessment of the newfound status of Sheffield cricket. The article, which described the town's players as 'professors of the sport', concluded that 'our opinion is....our players need not fear a comparison with those of any county or town in England...town against town, or county against county, Sheffield and the West Riding, we say, shall win, or come near to it'.<sup>53</sup>

The competitive rivalries that subsequently drove the development of cricket in other towns across the West Riding were intensified by the parallel growth of the new style provincial press. Most of the local newspapers that became established in towns across the region during the 1830s and 1840s provided extensive coverage of cricket in which they were particularly keen to promote the success of local sides. For example, after Dalton defeated Bradford in the match that, it was claimed, decided the championship of Yorkshire, the Huddersfield correspondent for the *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser*, wrote that,

On Monday and Tuesday last, a match at cricket was played between the Bradford and Dalton clubs for £20 a side, and which according to the placards issued by the Bradford gentlemen was to decide the championship of Yorkshire. It is rather strange that in the *Bradford Herald* of Thursday no further mention is made of the match than that Dalton won with seven wickets to fall, and the reason for such a meagre account is attributed by the editor to the unwillingness of the Bradford club to exhibit its defeat. Such unwillingness is not at all to be wondered at, considering the boastings of the club as to the manner in which they would win their game. But the result has shown them that talk is not the only requisite of the game. After all their bombast how inglorious must their defeat appear. The championship was decided - the challenge was put forth and accepted - and the pretensions of the members of the Bradford club were proved to have rested on very loose foundations.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 21/10/1826.

<sup>54</sup> See *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser*, 13/08/1842

But the support that local newspapers gave to clubs was perhaps at its strongest when disputes occurred during matches. As the intense competition between clubs in the region was fuelled by the common presence of gambling it should come as no surprise that disagreements were relatively common. They were often most serious in contests that involved leading teams from the major towns and on these occasions local newspapers were particularly partisan in their reportage. This was the case when, during a match at Nottingham in 1827, the Sheffield players left the field after Tom Marsden and James Dearman had been repeatedly no-balled by the Nottingham umpire in both innings. In its report of the match the *Sheffield Independent* gave a scathing indictment of ‘the conduct of certain individuals’ and concluded that it was ‘conduct which if repeated, we assert must for ever take from cricketing the distinctive appellation of a *noble* game, and leave it to the support of the lowest patrons of the prize ring and the cock-pit.’<sup>55</sup>

The reaction the press on these occasions also provides an insight into the distinctive ethical foundation of cricket in the pre-modern context. Whilst the actions of the Sheffield players in their 1827 dispute with Nottingham contradicted modern interpretations of both the laws and spirit of cricket, they were fully condoned by the *Sheffield Independent*, which stated that,

The conduct of our town players, in leaving the field, must certainly be praised. The decision of the umpire left them no chance to win; and they did the right thing in refusing to be the first to establish the monstrous precedent that when an umpire is notoriously wrong, the game should be played.<sup>56</sup>

This challenge to the authority of the umpire reflected the pre-modern traditions of collective action against perceived injustice which was most famously exemplified by what Thompson termed the moral economy.<sup>57</sup> Of course gambling had almost certainly played an important role in the events and the Sheffield players were praised further for returning to the field of play when ‘other honourable umpires were appointed’, as ‘in

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<sup>55</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 25 08/1827.

<sup>56</sup> See *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> See, Thompson, E. P. "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the 18th Century". *Past & Present*, 50 , 1971, 76-136

doing so they gave their friends a chance to win their bets, which would not have existed had they abandoned the game'.<sup>58</sup>

Nevertheless these disputed matches often marked the growing intensity of competition between clubs of comparable status in the sport and resulted in longstanding rivalries. Sheffield's developing rivalry with Nottingham during the 1820s and 1830s clearly reflected the growth of the sport in the southern part of the West Riding. But by the 1840s competition was also intensifying within the region and we have seen how the *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser* gave vitriolic support to the Dalton side that had defeated Bradford in 1842. Indeed even stronger backing was given by Huddersfield newspapers when a strong rivalry developed between local clubs and teams from Sheffield. Matches between teams from the two towns took on an added intensity around the middle decades of the nineteenth century when Huddersfield emerged as the leading rival to Sheffield's predominance in West Riding cricket. Consequently, during a match with Dalton in 1842 the Sheffield players left the field of play when a decision by their umpire was questioned. The contest was subsequently abandoned and, unsurprisingly, the Huddersfield press were somewhat less than sympathetic towards the actions of the Sheffield men. The *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser* began its report of the match with the line, 'UNGENTLEMANLY BEHAVOIR OF THE SHEFFIELD CRICKET CLUB', before concluding that 'they set off home leaving behind them little of the reputation of gentlemen, as they gave no kind of satisfaction to their more humble but better behaved opponents'.<sup>59</sup> Contentions between teams representing Huddersfield and Sheffield carried on until the 1870s as, following the decline of Dalton in the 1850s, the nearby handloom weaving village of Lascelles Hall emerged as one of the leading sides in the county.

But, the climax of the Sheffield and Dalton rivalry came in an encounter which illustrates very effectively how this type of competitive stake money challenge match could capture the attention of both the regional and national press. The contest was played for £100 at Old Trafford, Manchester, in 1851 and *Bell's Life* observed that it 'was generally remarked that a more important match was never played either in

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<sup>58</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 25:08:1827.

<sup>59</sup> See, *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser*, 18:06:0842.

Lancashire or Yorkshire'.<sup>60</sup> Dalton proved victorious and the *Huddersfield Chronicle* was quick to capitalise on its local club's success by also claiming a moral victory. Despite the existence of the 1842 Sheffield versus Dalton match, along with many others throughout the previous decade, it was explained,

We understand that the assumed superiority of the Sheffield players has for some time excited the ambition of the Dalton men, and repeated offers were made by them to contest it. These offers, however, were always declined until the Dalton men placed their rivals in a position from which they could not escape, by inserting a challenge in *Bell's Life* for a match of £100.<sup>61</sup>

However, the *Leeds Times* gave a more impartial assessment of the match and a somewhat different account of the past rivalry between the two clubs. It explained that,

whilst Dalton had...wrested from Sheffield their hitherto proud position of invincibility in our county. Still, we must remember that Sheffield have on many a previous occasion defeated Dalton, and we must not, therefore, conclude, that because there is a turn in such a somewhat uncertain game as the one in question, that Dalton are superior.<sup>62</sup>

### **Challenge Matches and the Structure and Organisation of Cricket in the Region**

The press clearly stimulated the competitive dynamics of matches that came to express the developing local and civic identities in the urban industrial West Riding. However newspapers coverage of challenge matches played an equally pivotal role in the broader structure and organisation of the sport during the first half of the nineteenth century. The national press was integral to the promotion and organisation of such events, as commercialised sport developed throughout England during this period.<sup>63</sup> The

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<sup>60</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 19, 10, 1851.

<sup>61</sup> See *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 04, 10, 1851.

<sup>62</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 04/10/1851.

<sup>63</sup> See Harvey, *Commercial Sporting Culture in Britain*, p 41 – 63.

publication most heavily associated with the process of arranging matches was *Bell's Life in London* and the sport's growing reputation in the West Riding can be charted through the challenges that appeared in its pages during the 1820s and 1830s. As we have seen, the rivalry between Sheffield and Nottingham was at its height during this period and major matches were played regularly between teams representing the two towns. The increasing intensity of these matches was clearly evident in a Nottingham challenge to play Sheffield in three separate fixtures, which was issued in *Bell's Life* during the 1828 season, and is reproduced in full in appendix 2, figure 1. William Clarke concluded the offer by suggesting that to ensure 'no mistake may occur should these propositions be acceded to, Nottingham, who mean *batting*, and not *writing*, will put down 50/ to bind them all'.<sup>64</sup>

The challenges that were published in the press during the first half of the nineteenth century provided a competitive framework around which cricket began to flourish in the West Riding. By the 1840s the pages of *Bell's Life* were also beginning to reflect emerging rivalries between teams from major towns in the textile districts to the north of the region. Regular lists of challenges were published in the 'Cricketers Register' section of the journal during the 1840s and on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1841 the following notice appeared.

THE CRICKETERS OF DALTON will play those of Bradford for £10 a side, or they will play them on the Victoria Ground for £1 per man, at any time they appoint. Direct to H. Crossland secretary of the Dalton Club.<sup>65</sup>

But, despite its national profile, *Bell's Life* did not only feature the challenges through which matches between teams of leading players representing clubs from the major towns were arranged. In September 1841, a notice was published that explained;

The Halifax junior cricketers will choose eleven players out of the twenty-two who have already played the Heckmondwike club (and allow them the same

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<sup>64</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 15/06/1828. For a reproduction of the challenge in full, see appendix 2 figure 1.

<sup>65</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 22/08/1841. For a reproduction of the challenge see appendix 2 figure 2.

privilege), and will play them for £10 a side, on the Leeds Ground, each club choosing its umpire from the Leeds Victoria club.<sup>66</sup>

Local newspapers played a similar and equally pivotal role in the organisation and promotion of matches which also involved clubs from the region's smaller communities. The competitive dynamics of challenge matches provided an equally compelling focal point for the sport's development in this context and West Riding cricket clubs were using local newspapers to organise and publicise challenge matches as early as 1810. In September of that year the *Leeds Mercury* announced,

A CHALLENGE: THE WETHERBY CRICKET CLUB herby challenge the HAREWOOD CLUB to Play them a match and Return Match at Cricket, on Neutral Ground, for any Sum not less than Twenty-five Guineas, and not exceeding One Thousand Guineas. NICHOLAS LAMBERT, President to the club, Wetherby, Sept 11, 1810.<sup>67</sup>

This match reflected how, as we shall see, the early development of organised cricket in the West Riding was closely linked to the gentry from market towns and country estates to the east of the region. But by the middle decades of the nineteenth century challenges were issued in the region's press which reflected the rapid growth of cricket within the smaller urban industrial communities of the West Riding. Towards the end of the 1863 season the *Leeds Times* published a notice that declared,

The Pudsey Prospect College Club will be glad to play the Pudsey Britannia a home and home game; or if the Britannia think proper, the College Club will play them for £5 a side, on Neutral ground, and with neutral umpires. Address Joshua Lumley, Littlemoor Pudsey.<sup>68</sup>

Yet as well as providing an effective organisational structure for cricket these challenges also reveal much about the process through which such matches were

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<sup>66</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 05/09/1841. For a reproduction of the challenge in full, see appendix 3 figure 1.

<sup>67</sup> See *Leeds Mercury*, 15.09 1810.

<sup>68</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 04 10/1863.

organised. The terms of the 'contract' were fundamentally important in this context and negotiation played a pivotal role in agreements relating to issues such as where, when and for how much the match would be played. This was evident in the reply to a challenge from Sheffield which had been issued in *Bell's Life* the year after the controversial Nottingham victory in 1827, which can be seen in full in appendix 3, figure 2. In it William Clarke somewhat acerbically suggested that if the two other venues he proposed were not suitable the teams could, 'meet in Lord's Cricket Ground, on the same conditions (viz, each party bearing its own expense)'.<sup>69</sup>

Indeed, because local newspapers enjoyed a more intimate relationship with the clubs involved, the challenges they published often provide a fascinating further insight into the distinctive culture that characterised this form of the sport. Options relating to the size of the stake, proposals for the venue, the size of the deposit, and regulations regarding the eligibility of players could all still be negotiated during this period. For example in 1841 a notice in the *Leeds Times* announced,

The Leeds Victoria Cricket Club is open to play the Bradford Cricket Club, a game of cricket for the sum of 50 /- or upwards. The match to be played on the Sheffield (or any other neutral) ground, in three weeks or a month, and the players to be chosen from the list last sent by each club. Should the above challenge be accepted each club to deposit a sum of 20 /- as a guarantee that the match be played.<sup>70</sup>

As we have seen deposits such as this one were a common requirement for fixtures to go ahead and they often reveal that the traditional involvement of local publicans continued to be prominent. In 1835 the *Leeds Mercury* announced,

CHALLENGE – The members of the Britannia Cricket Club will play the Dexterity Club the GAME of CRICKET, a full field, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May next, for £11 a-side. The money is now ready at Mr Mitchell's, Druid's Arms, Huddersfield-May 9, 1835.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 15/06/1828. For the challenge in full see Appendix 3 figure 2.

<sup>70</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 14/08/1841.

<sup>71</sup> See *Leeds Mercury*, 09/05/1835.



Nevertheless the number of options that were offered in challenges during this period meant that some type of fixed formal agreement was usually made before matches took place and, at times, they were also published in the press. Indeed, during the 1820s the terms of the 'code' and the 'contract' for some matches were still determined by 'Articles of Agreement' and these arrangements also provide an illuminating insight into the transition towards accepted formalised laws in cricket. When Sheffield and Leicester agreed to play two matches for £50 in 1828, the conditions under which the match would take place were published in *Bell's Life* on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1828, and can be seen in appendix 4.<sup>72</sup>

The last condition of these 'Articles' demonstrates the distinction between the 'code' and the 'contract' very effectively, and by stipulating that the match would be 'played according to the Mary-le-bone rules' suggests that they were still yet to gain full acceptance. However, by the time a 'great match betwixt the cricket players of the North and West Ridings of the county of York' was played in 1843, and a similar set of conditions was published in the *Leeds Times*, there was no reference to the 'code' by which the match would be played. Presumably, by this time, the MCC laws had been widely adopted and only 5 proposals were published which, it was thought 'sufficiently explain the nature' of the fixture. They had been forwarded 'to the committee appointed to promote the match' and decreed,

First, - That the match take place at Thirsk, on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of October next.

Second, - That the players on the part of the North Riding, be selected from the North Riding and Ainsty of York.

Third, - That there be eleven players on each side.

Fourth, that the match be for eleven pounds a side.

Fifth, - That the committee give twenty pounds to be added to the stake, and find a good ground for playing the match."<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> See appendix 4.

<sup>73</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 23/09/1843.

In addition to publishing details of the 'contract', newspapers were also looked upon to fulfil the role of arbiter when agreements were broken. As Adrian Harvey has established, during the first half of the nineteenth century 'the editors of sporting columns were increasingly drawn into the supervision of sport' and by the 1840s *Bell's Life* was being asked to adjudicate on disputes every week.<sup>74</sup> One such request in 1841 came from the Bradford club and resulted from the premature termination of a match with Leeds Victoria following a disagreement. The 'final decision of *Bells Life*' was evidently awaited with much anticipation and when it had been made the *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser* decided to 'insert [verbatim] the remarks from this arbiter', which were that,

In the match between the Bradford and Leeds Victoria clubs, the batter was bound to go out in accordance with the decision of the umpire. The former club wins, and the bets go with the stakes.

Consequently, the Bradford club refused to play another match, which their opponents had proposed should take place to settle the dispute, and issued the following statement.

In answer to a challenge pompously circulated by the Leeds Victoria Cricket Club, we are authorized to state, that no mention will be paid, or any correspondence whatever entered into by the Bradford Club, in order to make arrangements for a third and conquering game, until the stakes of the last match are honourably paid over to the treasurer of the said Bradford Club.<sup>75</sup>

Opportunities for clubs from the West Riding to air their grievances were also offered by the local press. But, in contrast to the partisan support that was given to local teams in matches against rivals from other major towns, the region's newspapers were often far less keen to make judgements on disputes when they had no clear interest in either party. For example, in a letter to the *Leeds Times* on 28 August 1841 a representative of Halifax Cricket Club claimed that Heckmondwike had failed to fulfil a fixture which was allegedly made after a challenge had appeared in the same newspaper a few weeks

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<sup>74</sup> See Harvey, *Commercial Sporting Culture in Britain*, p 50.

<sup>75</sup> See *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser*, 21-08/1841.

earlier.<sup>76</sup> However, after Heckmondwike responded with a statement in which they denied accepting the challenge, the editor of the *Leeds Times* decreed that, 'We now beg to decline the insertion of any further communications on the above controversy, both parties have now been heard - ED.'<sup>77</sup>

Nevertheless, at times the local press was less impartial and when reporting on a match between the Dewsbury Albion and Earlsheaton Clubs in September 1843, the *Leeds Times* described how the

weather was very fine, and would have afforded good sport had the Heaton party played a fair game, but this is not the first time they have acted in such like manner. We hope they will come forward and redeem their credit, as the Dewsbury Club is ready to play the game out on their own ground.<sup>78</sup>

### **Odds, Given Men and the Single Wicket Match**

But it was not just the way in which these challenge matches were arranged that demonstrates how far the pre-modern culture of the sport still prevailed during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Sport in this context continued to be marked by an innate informality which was closely linked to gambling. As teams from Sheffield found in the 1820s and early 1830s, it was not always possible to find opponents of comparable standing in the game. Yet as most matches were played for stake money there was little reason for teams to take on opponents of superior strength. So a variety of means was used to make contests more even and specific conditions were agreed through the 'contract'. For example in the case of the 1828 Sheffield and Leicester agreement the Yorkshire side's accepted superiority meant that their opponents were allowed a 'given player of the All England', with Fuller Pilch taking on the role.<sup>79</sup> The bequest of 'given' men was relatively common in the West Riding during this period

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<sup>76</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 25/09/1841.

<sup>77</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 02/10/1841.

<sup>78</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 23/09/1843.

<sup>79</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 22/06/1828.

and when Halifax played Heckmondwike in 1842 the *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser* reported that to

make the contest more equal, it was agreed that the Heckmondwike players should have the privilege of choosing a man from a neighbouring village club and accordingly they pitched upon Mr A. Crossland of the Dalton Club.<sup>80</sup>

But there were other ways of making contests more even in order for challenges to be accepted. Perhaps the most common method throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was the odds match. As we have seen, teams of higher standing often allowed their opponents to field a greater number of players and, in some cases, these matches can be used to trace the developing strength of the sport in certain localities. For example, when XXII of Leeds and XI of Sheffield met in a match for £22 a side in 1832 the *Sheffield Independent* noted, 'when it is considered that the Leeds Club is to have the privilege of choosing its players throughout the county, that they will be two to one against Sheffield, it must be inferred that our townsmen feel very confident in their own strength to give such a challenge'.<sup>81</sup> However, cricket in Leeds developed rapidly and in July 1838 XVI of Leeds played XI of Sheffield, whilst just a month later the two sides met on equal terms, although the team from the south of the region was 'without Dearman, Marsden and Vincent'. Nevertheless, the Leeds XI secured a famous victory by 33 runs.<sup>82</sup>

Indeed, pre-modern sporting culture was so much part of cricket during the first half of the nineteenth century that similar contests were played at the highest level of the sport. Before the emergence of W.G. Grace, the superiority of the professionals in the annual Gentlemen v Players match resulted in a variety of efforts to make the contest less one sided. The first match in 1837 saw the Gentlemen defending three stumps, with a total dimension of 27 inches high by 8 inches wide, whilst, when the Players came to bat, the height of the stumps was increased to 36 inches and an extra stump was added to give the wicket a total width of 12 inches. However, the players won by an innings and 10 runs. So, in the second match, the Gentlemen fielded sixteen men against the Players'

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<sup>80</sup> See *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser*, 03/09/1842.

<sup>81</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 11/08/1832.

<sup>82</sup> See *Leeds Mercury*, 23/06/1838.

eleven. The result was the same and in the first match of 1838 a third method was used. This time the Gentlemen fielded three 'given' men in their eleven, Pilch, Cobbett and Wenman, again to no avail.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, similar methods were still being used in the middle decades of the nineteenth century as county cricket began to take shape. When a Yorkshire side, which included Michael Ellison, the future president of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, played Lancashire at Manchester in August 1851, the home side included three given men, Julius Ceasar, Chris Tinley and Shearman.<sup>84</sup>

Yet, the character of competitive pre-modern cricket is perhaps most effectively demonstrated by single wicket matches. These contests provide perhaps the sport's strongest link with contemporary popular culture and at their highest commercial level were akin to prize fights, with backers or contestants providing the finance to make matches upon which considerable amounts of betting often took place. Newspapers again played a key role in promoting and advertising these events, providing a remarkably effective competitive structure to emerge that predated similar developments in other forms of cricket and reached national proportions. Challenges for self-styled championships were made fairly frequently and as well as representing the pinnacle for commercial ambition, the involvement of leading local players in these contests could also generate a strong sense of collective identity.

This form of contest reached its height in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. It was during this period that Tom Marsden became the first in a number of champions from Sheffield and we have seen how his reputation grew rapidly following a series of stunning performances in the middle of the previous decade. Marsden and his backers looked to capitalise on this new found fame by issuing the following challenge in *Bell's Life*.

Sir,-You will please to state in your next paper that my friends are ready to back me to play any man in England a match at single wicket for the sum of £50. The game to be played on the New Ground at Darnall, on Monday, the 13<sup>th</sup>, or Monday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of October; and the person accepting the challenge to receive

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<sup>83</sup> See Wisden John, Ed, *Wisden Cricketers Almanack*, John Wisden & Co, Guildford, 1864 p 49, p 50, p 51.

<sup>84</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 17 08/1851

£10 for his travelling expenses. Upon receiving an answer to this challenge. the stake will be immediately sent to your office.

Yours, &c.,

Sheffield, *Sept.* 20<sup>th</sup>. 1828.

THOS. MARSDEN.<sup>85</sup>

The backers of Fuller Pilch, the leading Norfolk player, expressed interest in the challenge a few months later.<sup>86</sup> However, it took five years of continuing speculation and correspondence, much of which was published in the press, before Marsden and Pilch finally played in two matches during the 1833 season. The delay said much about the capabilities of Marsden, which reached their peak in this period, and meant that when the two finally met he was past his best. Consequently, Pilch won both contests convincingly, the first by an innings and 70 runs and the second by 127 runs.

Nevertheless, Marsden's challenge received widespread interest and elevated him to celebrity status in Sheffield. Throughout the build-up to these events he received considerable support in the local press and when the second fixture took place, at Darnal in August, the *Sheffield Independent* reported that the 'concourse of spectators was very large (upwards of 12,000)'.<sup>87</sup> The same newspaper was also quick to reconcile the defeats following his performance in a match between Yorkshire and Norfolk, including Pilch, which took place in September 1833. Marsden's 53 in the second innings was the highest individual total in the match and it was concluded that his 'playing was such as to convince the amateurs that he has no equal in a full field.' In the next two decades other Sheffield professionals, such as James Dearman, Tom Hunt and Harry Sampson, all rose to prominence in this form of the sport. Dearman even made a second attempt to bring the unofficial championship of England to the town by challenging Pilch in 1838. Other commitments prevented the great Norfolk batsman from taking part in the contest and Alfred Mynn, perhaps the leading amateur player of the era, took his place. Nevertheless, Dearman was also convincingly beaten in both of the contests that subsequently took place.

But as well as these relatively straight forward contests many less conventional single wicket matches also took place during this period. Here again the need to provide an

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<sup>85</sup> See Holmes, *Yorkshire County Cricket*, p 27.

<sup>86</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 19 10/1828.

<sup>87</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 10/08/1833.

advantage that would encourage players with less standing than their opponents to accept challenges caused matches to take a number of different forms. Many combinations of player numbers were used and, as we have seen, when Nottingham challenged Sheffield in 1829, three different contests were proposed. The last of these was clearly a successful format and a match between 'picked threes of the two clubs' was advertised in the *Sheffield Independent* on 23rd and 30th July 1831, whilst 'three of Sheffield and three of Nottingham' also met 'on the Manchester new ground at Hulme' for £100 in 1833.<sup>88</sup> Odds matches were another relatively common form of single wicket contest and in 1857 the Leeds cricketer George Atkinson was one of the 'Stockton five' who played the 'Cambridge three' for £400.<sup>89</sup>

However, more irregular single wicket matches also took place and on these occasions changes could also be made to the 'code' under which the contest was played. Sometimes leading professionals even took on full sides of eleven men. For example, in 1845 Tom Hunt challenged eleven of the Knaresborough club and beat them by eight runs. Strangely, the game took place on 6, 10 and 14 of August, although the second of these scheduled day's play was abandoned as the 'Knaresborough umpire was intoxicated'.<sup>90</sup> It is not clear whether any changes to the accepted laws of the game were made for this encounter. But when John Thewlis, the Lascelles Hall and Yorkshire CCC professional, played 11 landlords residing within a mile of Chickenley, he explained that before the match 'a long disputation as to the method of scoring' took place, 'but finally I carried my point that all runs were to be made in front of the wicket.'<sup>91</sup>

Indeed, other than retaining some compliance with the general concept of the game, almost any variation to the laws of the game was acceptable in single wicket matches during this period. When Sparkley, Woolhouse and Marsden played C. Dearman, H.Hall and J. Dearman in a match of 'rather novel description' at Hyde Park, Sheffield in July 1830. It was decided that for this encounter the 'players could bowl, throw or jerk the ball at pleasure' and when the former three were victorious they challenged the losers to a rematch 'for a rump and dozen'.<sup>92</sup> But some contests also took place that aimed to attract interest through their novelty alone. Typical of these was a 'novel

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<sup>88</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 22/06/1833.

<sup>89</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p18.

<sup>90</sup> See Holmes, *Yorkshire County Cricket*, p 28.

<sup>91</sup> See 'Old Ebor' *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, pp 41-42.

<sup>92</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 19/7/1830.

challenge' published by the *Leeds Times* in 1838 in which 'Mr Stock, landlord of the Packet Inn, Manningtree offered (sic) that himself and dog shall play any two gentlemen in England a game of cricket for any sum'.<sup>93</sup>

### **The Impact of Recreational Reform**

But whilst these pre-modern competitive dynamics continued to dominate the structure of the sport in the West Riding, the cultural traditions they represented conflicted fundamentally with new meanings that were being ascribed to cricket elsewhere in England. As we shall see, the sport had been viewed as a means of encouraging social unity since at least the 1820s. But by the 1850s a new generation of writers had begun to appropriate cricket as a vehicle for the ideals upon which they felt English society should be built. A number of contemporary commentators began again to promote traditional Tory values through the sport and in his book *The Cricket Field*, published in 1851, the Reverend James Pycroft pronounced,

It is no small praise of cricket that it occupies the place of less innocent sports. Drinking, gambling, cudgel-playing insensibly disappear before a manly recreation, which draws the labourer from the dark haunts of vice and misery to the open common....where 'the squire or parson o' th' parish or the attorney' may raise him without lowering themselves, by taking an interest if not a part in his sport.<sup>94</sup>

However, where previous writers had made little of cricket's association with the unsavoury aspects of pre-modern sport, Pycroft specifically attacked the practice of gambling. *The Cricket Field* included a chapter entitled 'A Dark Chapter in the History of Cricket' in which he condemned the prevalence of betting on the sport during the first decades of the nineteenth century and chronicled a number of incidents that took place at Lord's in which professional players had allegedly been paid by bookmakers to deliberately lose matches. Pycroft felt that there was no place in cricket for gambling.

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<sup>93</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 23/6/1838.

<sup>94</sup> See Pycroft, *The Cricket Field*, Quoted in Birley, *Social History of English Cricket*, p 86.



and he even maintained it had already been eradicated by the 1850s, a claim that has had significant implications for subsequent writers on the history of the sport and will be discussed in more detail later. Nevertheless, his views were clearly influential and Keith Sandiford later explained how, 'the purifying of the game was part of the new morality which steadily governed the nation after 1835. Thus could Frederick Gale, James Pycroft, and Anthony Trollope rejoice later on over the disappearance of dangerous betting from the cricket field.'<sup>95</sup>

Indeed by the end of the 1840s cricket matches which were played primarily for sociable reasons became relatively common across the West Riding. A more detailed examination of these events will take place in chapter 3. However, references to stake money in the press became increasingly infrequent during this period and reports on matches began to provide details of convivial post match activities. The 'Sheffield Wednesday club (certain players excluded) and eleven of the Ripon Friendly Club' had begun to play matches against each other as early as 1829 and in the following year it was reported how the 'Sheffield players returned with a pleasing recollection of the liberal and kind treatment which they have received...and promise themselves many repetitions.'<sup>96</sup> Similar occasions became more frequent elsewhere in the region over the next few decades and when Huddersfield Union played the Halifax Clarence club 13 years later,

After the match the parties adjourned to the George Hotel, where a sumptuous dinner was provided, and the evening was spent in harmony and good fellowship.<sup>97</sup>

Many clubs and teams were also formed by the secular and non-secular institutions which looked to guide the lower sections of society away from the mores of traditional recreational culture during this period. Like James Pycroft, the movement for recreational reform looked to eradicate gambling on sport, which had clearly been integral to the competitive structure of challenge matches. These clubs will also be more fully discussed in chapter 3. But by the 1860s, such occasions as when the Woodhouse

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<sup>95</sup> See Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p 26.

<sup>96</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 22/8/1829 and 21/8/1830.

<sup>97</sup> See *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser*, 16/07/1842.

Temperance and Mechanics Institute offered to play a 'friendly' against Hunslet Mechanics Institute in 1862 were becoming relatively common.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, a similar approach to cricket was also evident in the formation of some new clubs. A notice, which also appeared in the *Leeds Times* during 1862, announced that Bradford Amateurs were willing to 'arrange matches with similar clubs in the neighbourhood'.<sup>99</sup>

The attitude of the press towards disputes in matches had also begun to change by this time. Newspapers were much less willing to act as arbiters when disagreements occurred and in August 1863 the *Leeds Times* declared,

CHALLENGE-The New Wortley Leamington refuses the challenge of the Tong Park-side club published in our last, for reasons which we decline to publish. The challenge, it appears, originated in bad feeling between the clubs, and we regret its publication on that account. We know nothing of the facts of the case, and moreover, don't want to know. If clubs can't play their matches without coming to loggerheads, we have only to say they must find some other medium for recording their squabbles or venting their spleen than the columns of the '*Leeds Times*'.<sup>100</sup>

Yet, as we shall see further, during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, and to some extent beyond, a state of flux existed in certain aspects of West Riding cricket through which seemingly contradictory values coexisted and at times even complimented each other. The competitive traditions of the challenge were often still present in matches which were primarily played for sociable reasons, even if they contradicted the values of the institutions through which participating teams had been formed. As Bailey has argued, the cultural traditions that these secular and non-secular reform institutions looked to subdue often proved remarkably resilient. Matches between such teams were also played for a nominal stake, which brings into question the compliance of club and team members with the values that parent institutions looked to diffuse. For example in 1846 the following notice was published by the *Leeds Times*,

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<sup>98</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 17/08/1862.

<sup>99</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 17/05/1862.

<sup>100</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 15/08/1863.

## ODDFELLOWS CHALLENGE AT CRICKET.

The philanthropic lodge of Odd Fellows of Leeds District M.U., will play any eleven of the fore said district a friendly game for a dinner.<sup>101</sup>

A similar sense of ambiguity surrounded a match between the Halifax Albion and Temperance clubs in 1841, after which, 'the players and their friends retired to Wadsworth's Temperance Hotel'. For, whilst both the teams and the venue reflected growing contemporary disdain for the traditional alcoholic excesses of popular recreation, the post match dinner was still 'provided by the losers'.<sup>102</sup>

Clubs with no affiliation to the new reform institutions also played sociable matches which were given an added competitive edge by a nominal stake. When Keighley played Halifax in 1839 the *Leeds Times* reported that the teams 'retired to the Crown Inn, where they were accommodated with an excellent dinner, both sides enjoying the fare'. However the notice went on to explain how the match had been arranged 'agreeably by prior arrangement', which also determined that 'the stakes (sic) were 5s a man each side'.<sup>103</sup> Perhaps even more paradoxically, similar social etiquette was observed when Holmfirth and Lockwood played a stake match for £5 in 1857. At the end of the contest a dinner was held at the 'Shoulder of Mutton' at which J.P Crossland, who had backed Holmfirth, took the chair and C.G. Floyd, the backer of their opponents, the vice chair.<sup>104</sup>

Clearly, despite the new values that were being ascribed to cricket during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the competitive dynamics that had driven the sport's development continued to prevail in West Riding cricket. Even matches which were no longer played for stake money and presided over by 'Articles of Agreement' were still arranged through challenges. When a new cricket club was formed in Keighley during 1848 it received a number of approaches for fixtures which, although they did not carry a stake, were still referred to as 'challenges'. Bingley, Bradford Brunswick and Halifax all had such requests turned down and the latter's proposal was refused for reasons which were clearly linked to the competitive implications of such contests. Keighley

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<sup>101</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 25/07/1846.

<sup>102</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 18/09/1841.

<sup>103</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 01/06/1839.

<sup>104</sup> See *Huddersfield Examiner*, 19/09/1857.

declined the offer as their club was '...a new one containing very few experienced players....and were they to accept the Halifax challenge it would be no honour for Halifax to beat them.'<sup>105</sup>

But of more significance to future developments in West Riding cricket was the continued use of the challenge as a means of arranging fixtures when a new structure for leisure began to emerge. From the 1850s onwards, continued economic growth and social legislation made time away from work available once again lower down the social scale. But instead of the unregulated structure of piece work, around which individual challenge matches had revolved, leisure time in the increasingly rationalised working week took the form of a Saturday half day holiday.

Consequently, a weekly programme of regular Saturday afternoon matches could be arranged at the start of each season and, for many clubs in the West Riding, the challenge remained as the preferred means of organising these fixtures. Lists of challenges to proposed opponents were published in the local press and, for example, a notice in the *Leeds Times* on June 9<sup>th</sup> 1860 announced,

CHALLENGE - The Red House Cricket Club would be glad to arrange matches with the following clubs.- Courderoy, Bradford Moor, Shipley Utd, Low Moor Royal Blues, Low Moor Perseverance, Address Red House Inn, Barkerend Road Bradford.<sup>106</sup>

But the continued resonance of the challenge during the 1860s can also be found in more conclusive form. Although now far less common, challenges which involved stake money were still being played during this period and the following correspondence was published without comment by the *Leeds Times* in 1866,

Some time ago the Armley young Albion Club challenged the White Rose Club to play a match at so much per side, which challenge was accepted, and the match played on the 2<sup>nd</sup> last on the ground of Armley Young Albion. The White Rose

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<sup>105</sup> See Keighley Cricket Club, *The Jubilee of the Lawkholme Ground. With Records of Leading Players.* 1919, pp 4-6.

<sup>106</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 09 06 1860. For other examples, see similar lists from Yeadon, *Leeds Times* 15 03/1862 and 11 04/1863.

proved victorious by twelve runs, but the young Albion refused to deliver up the amount agreed upon, and, not satisfied with that they, with the help of a great number of the bystanders, very cowardly mobbed away the members of the White Rose Club with stones, to great danger of their lives. I think such disgraceful conduct should be brought before the public.<sup>107</sup>

The nature of this dispute clearly echoed those of twenty or more years earlier, although on this occasion the details were clearly published in order to support the correspondent's condemnation of the incident.

More common in the 1860s, however, were challenges to play for stake money in single wicket matches. The prolonged existence of these contests will be looked at in more detail later. But they occurred regularly throughout the early part of the decade and, occasionally, involved leading players. In 1866, the season after his debut for Yorkshire, George Freeman played Henry Terry, from Hull, at 'the old ground' in York. Interestingly, the terms of the 'contract' for this match were designed to reflect Freeman's stature in the game and he was backed for £50 whilst Terry staked £25.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, at the beginning of the 1860s this form of contest could still be the subject of a public challenge which echoed those of the 1840s. In 1860 the *Leeds Times* informed its readers that,

John Grange accepts the challenge which appeared in last Saturday's *Leeds Times* to play a single wicket match with the unknown challenger, for the sum of £10 to £50 a side, or he will play any member of the Otley Cricket Club or Caleb Robinson for the same sum. Arrangements for the match to be made at Mr Mathew Bell's Royal Oak, Dacre Banks.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 09:06:1866.

<sup>108</sup> See Thomas, Peter, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839 – 1939*, Derek Hodgson, Manchester, 1973, p193, and *Leeds Times*, 11:8:1866.

<sup>109</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 20:10:1860.

## Conclusion

The competitive dynamics that defined sporting matches in the pre-modern period clearly played an integral role as cricket first developed in the south east of England and beyond. As Dennis Brailsford established, such contests grew around the concept of the challenge which ‘began in defence of honour in the combat sports, spread to other forms of competition, and was cemented in by centuries of playing for stake money.’<sup>110</sup> But he argued that the ‘real significance’ of the concept diminished as ‘sports gained a degree of organization in the later eighteenth century’ and ‘cricket remained devoted to the challenge match and its stakes until about the 1820s, after which gambling began to lose favour’.<sup>111</sup> However, the concept was fundamental to the initial growth of the sport in the West Riding during the second quarter of the nineteenth century as the structure of stake money challenge matches enabled cricket’s initial geographical and social boundaries to be overcome.

The stake match challenge proved remarkably enduring and whilst the relevance of aristocratic rivalries diminished, the concept was revitalized by new forms of competition in the growing industrial regions. Cricket challenge matches for stake money became a compelling mechanism for broader issues relating to rivalry and status amongst the region’s rapidly developing urban industrial communities. In many ways these competitive dynamics had a deep-seated connection with the type of urban industrial society that came to dominate in the West Riding. Competition was a fundamental component in the vigorous form of economic growth that transformed communities right across the region. In this context leading local citizens financed the development of the sport in the same way they funded the construction of grand civic amenities. Yet competition was equally important to the working-class communities that also came to define the new industrial towns. The competitive traditions of popular pre-modern sport were in tune with the harsh realities of life in the new urban and economic environment. For some, playing for money or payment in kind could provide a welcome form of extra income. Many others, however, found a much needed sense of communal identity through support for local players and clubs in matches against local rivals that perhaps also offered similar financial rewards from suitably placed bets.

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<sup>110</sup> See Brailsford, Dennis, *Sport, Time and Society: British at Play*, Routledge, London 1991., p 14.

<sup>111</sup> See Ibid.

Albeit in a more anachronistic form, some characteristics of the stake money challenge matches could still be found in the West Riding during 1870s and coexisted with aspects of cricket that came to define the sport in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Although stake money challenges mostly disappeared during the 1860s, most of the players who represented Yorkshire County Cricket Club could still take part in a match between Lascelles Hall and Sheffield played for £100 in 1870.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, odds matches, in particular, remained a common feature of cricket during this period. Again at the highest level of the sport, professional itinerant elevens continued to be financed by this type of fixture against local and regional opposition in the 1860s and 1870s. Indeed, as well as the first test match to take place on English soil, the second tour by Australian first class cricketers to England, which took place in 1880, also included a number of matches fixtures against local 18s, and 22s which were played around the country to fund the trip.<sup>113</sup>

But perhaps more significantly the competitive traditions that were embodied in challenge matches had a fundamental impact upon the development of modern spectator sport in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Competition continued to be embraced in popular forms of sport across the urban industrial regions and by the beginning of the 1870s was beginning to find new forms of expression that reflected the social economic and cultural changes which had taken place over the previous 50 years. Ironically, the first cup knockout competition was inaugurated by the middle-class dominated Football Association. However, as we have seen, this form of tournament had already been pioneered in a less socially elite environment as West Riding cricket quickly came to provide an ideal focus for the competitive traditions of cricket in the region. Their impact was perhaps most evident in the two codes of football as first cup knockout and then league competitions played a definitive role in the development of both sports at their highest level. Indeed the idea of a champion county was eventually adopted in first-class cricket during the last quarter of the nineteenth century although, as we shall see, it was specifically shaped to emasculate what were seen as the worst exigencies of competition in sport.

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<sup>112</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 111.

<sup>113</sup> For example the Australian Eleven played against Eighteen of Keighley and District in June 1880, see *Northern Echo*, 03/06/1880.

Nevertheless, the ‘‘Gentleman Amateur’’ values that steered the elite form of cricket away from its competitive traditions clearly had much less impact upon cricket in the West Riding. Consequently, the example set by the FA in 1871 and YRU in 1877 was followed in West Riding cricket. The Emsley Cup was inaugurated in Leeds in 1880 at the behest of Councillor Emsley of Hunslet. He donated a 50 guinea Challenge Cup, which was to become the property of the first side to win it three times and similar competitions were soon established in other towns across the region. In and around Batley, the Heavy Woollen Cup competition first took place in 1883, and in Huddersfield the Lumb Cup was inaugurated in 1886. Elsewhere, the Wake Cup in Sheffield, the Airedale Challenge Cup, the South Leeds and District Challenge Cup and the Craven Cricket Union Cup were amongst a number of other knockouts to begin during the 1880s.<sup>114</sup> They were followed almost immediately by the equally rapid adoption of the league concept across the region. Yet the cup knockout competitions provide a particularly enduring testament to the importance of the challenge in the development of sport. For not only are Challenge Cups still played for at the highest level in Association and Rugby League Football, but more importantly, some of the cup knockouts which were amongst the first formal competitions to be staged in the region continue to provide a focal point for cricket in communities across the West Riding today.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> See Wheatley, R.E., Pannells *Leeds and District Cricket League: 100 Years of Leeds League Cricket 1892-1992*, 1992.

<sup>115</sup> Most famously the Heavy Woollen and District Challenge Cup still flourishes today.



## CHAPTER 2

### COMMERCIALISM

#### Introduction

Commercialism had been part of cricket long before George Steer saw the potential for a major venue in Sheffield at the start of the 1820s. In his groundbreaking work on Hambleton, David Underdown has placed the sport at the centre of a thriving commercial leisure culture in metropolitan London as early as the 1730s. Along with foot races, horse racing, cocking matches and prize fights, cricket was staged at commercial venues during this period and promoted to attract a popular audience. Publicans were often at the centre of these events and most provided facilities for participation in sports. Some public houses, however, had the resources to stage spectator events. Cock fights, for example, took place in purpose built indoor arenas whilst outdoor sports such as horse racing and cricket were often held at hostelrys which owned an adjacent field. Indeed, according to one observer, foot races were staged by publicans in Halifax as early as the seventeenth century in order 'to gather the country to drink their ale.'<sup>1</sup>

But major events usually required greater resources and these were often provided by some form of aristocratic patronage. Most commonly, the involvement of the social elite in sport stemmed from the opportunities which were offered for gambling. As we have seen, virtually all sporting contests took place for money during this period and it was often members of the gentry who owned leading race horses and fighting cocks or patronised pugilists, wrestlers and cricket teams. Major matches usually resulted from challenges between aristocratic patrons for large stakes. Indeed when arrangements were made for Jem Belcher to fight Daniel Mendoza for £600 in 1800 Fletcher Reid found himself in the unusual position of being the patron of both men.<sup>2</sup> Although the

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<sup>1</sup> See Brailsford, *Sport Time and Society*, p 54.

<sup>2</sup> See Radford, Peter, *The Celebrated Captain Barclay: Sport, Gambling and Adventure in Regency Times*, Headline Book Publishing, London, 2001, pp 74-7.

fight didn't take place, patronage of this type underscored the economy of sport during this period. As well as initiating important contests, patrons also funded the professional athletes who became major spectator attractions. Daniel Mendoza, for example, became so well known that his face was used to sell commemorative mugs.<sup>3</sup>

It was not usually possible to collect gate money during the eighteenth century and revenue from most early popular sporting contests was raised by other means. Enclosed venues were rare and open or common land was often used to stage major events which meant it was impossible to charge an admission fee. Consequently, satisfying the needs of spectators provided the major source of income for promoters. Betting was perhaps the most lucrative commercial activity and when the pugilist Jack Broughton lost to Jem Slack in 1750 his patron, the Duke of Cumberland, was said to have lost £10,000 on the fight. The sale of food and drink was also a profitable endeavour and fees were generally charged to those who provided such services. For example, the cost of erecting a booth at Blandford Races in 1756 was half a guinea.<sup>4</sup> However, accommodation for paying spectators was sometimes available and 200 reserved tickets were sold for the fight between Broughton and Slack at a cost of £1.10.6d each.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, as commercial interests in sport continued to develop, more venues became available at which an entrance charge could be made. By the start of the nineteenth century a number of enclosed cricket grounds had been built. They were usually run by proprietors who staged other sports in order to increase their income and in 1806 Thomas Lord charged 6d a head when Captain Barclay beat Edward Goulburn in a foot race over 440 yards at his cricket ground.<sup>6</sup>

Cricket was at the forefront of these commercial developments from the 1740s onwards. Almost a century before the sport began to make an impact at Darnal, crowds numbering in their thousands were paying to watch professional players take part in matches at the Artillery Ground in Finsbury.<sup>7</sup> This early recognition of the sport's commercial possibilities gave an added dynamism to the developing relationship between competitive rivalry and wagering to push the game forward. Commercial interests in cricket subsequently grew and, as well as providing facilities for playing,

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<sup>3</sup> See Radford, *The Celebrated Captain Barclay*, p 21.

<sup>4</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p33.

<sup>5</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, 79-80.

<sup>6</sup> See Radford, *The Celebrated Captain Barclay*, p 132.

<sup>7</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, 86-7.

equipment and refreshments, they began to promote the sport to an increasingly widespread and popular audience.<sup>8</sup>

At the pinnacle of all this activity stood the 'Great Matches', in which teams were assembled by aristocratic patrons to play contests on which large sums of money were staked. Entrepreneurs took on a supplementary role in these events and began to encourage their frequency in order to exploit the broadening opportunities that resulted.<sup>9</sup> For example, when Hambledon played an England team that had been raised by Sir Horace Mann at Guildford in 1772, the ground was ringed by booths in which local publicans mostly provided refreshments for members of the nobility.<sup>10</sup> But this relationship flourished only briefly and the aristocratic domination of elite cricket, in the style of the great eighteenth century patrons, had all but ended by the time the sport began to take off in Sheffield. By this time, a general withdrawal from public prominence by the English social elite had taken place as the aftermath of the French Revolution and spreading social and economic upheaval resulted in a marked deterioration in class relations.<sup>11</sup> Another change had, as Underdown recounted, seen the main focus of major events become more firmly centred upon London and, most especially, Lord's.<sup>12</sup> Although it continued to play an important role, this is seen as signalling the end of rural cricket's traditional position at the forefront of the game.<sup>13</sup> However, the relative decline of cricket in the agrarian communities to the south and east of London was in marked contrast to the sport's development in many rapidly expanding industrial areas further north.

### **Initial Development in Sheffield - the Pre-modern Commercial Model**

Without the leadership of a paternalistic and profligate aristocracy, around which cricket had grown in the south east of England, the finance and organisation for the sport's development in the West Riding had to be found elsewhere. As we have seen,

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<sup>8</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, 85-91, Birley, *Social History of English Cricket*, 29-30 and Ford, John, *Cricket - A Social History 1700-1835*, David and Charles, Newton Abbot, 1972, 108-120.

<sup>9</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, pp 92-93 and p 145.

<sup>10</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 111.

<sup>11</sup> See Brookes, *English Cricket*, pp 75-77, pp 83-4 and Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp 44-56.

<sup>12</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, chapter 7, pp 152 - 177.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

they were partly provided by the vibrant sense of civic and economic rivalry which flourished amongst the industrial towns and played a definitive role as cricket first became popular in the region. However, particularly in the first decades of the sport's growth in the West Riding, commercial interests were also fundamentally important. This is clear in the pivotal role which was played by the ground at Darnal as Sheffield cricket first rose to prominence. Speculative commercial enterprise was the driving force behind the development of this, the town's first fully enclosed venue for cricket, and its initial success enabled the proprietors, George Steer and William Woolhouse, to attract leading teams and the large crowds which followed.

The need for a fully enclosed venue, in order to take full advantage of the commercial possibilities that existed in the town, was demonstrated by the 1822 fixture between Sheffield and Nottingham. As well as causing one of the makeshift stands to collapse, the large crowd which attended this match exposed other important shortcomings at the Darnal 'Old Ground'. As its name suggests, the site was already well established as a venue for cricket. However, charges could only be made for admission to two areas of the ground, the 'extensive platforms' that were erected around the field, which cost 1s, and the 'Green Room', which cost 2s 6d.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, as Thomas explained, 'the proprietor ventured to form, at a great expense, another and more extensive ground'.<sup>15</sup> It opened in 1824 and the new facilities were described in the following contemporary report,

The ground stands amidst the most beautiful countryside, and contains 18,000 square yards of good forest turf. The plain slope upon which it is laid is level and has been formed by the spade from the slope of a gentle hill. At the top of the ground is an artificial terrace upon which seats have been placed for 8,000 spectators. Upon this terrace a noble brick pavilion, with an open balcony supported by seven stone pillars, has been raised; and it contains a large room with French windows from which play can be viewed, plus dressing rooms, private apartments and an excellent kitchen.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See appendix 5, advertisement from the *Sheffield Independent*, 17/08/1822.

<sup>15</sup> See, Thomas, *Walks in the Neighbourhood of Sheffield*, p 47.

<sup>16</sup> See Farnsworth, Keith, *Before and After Bramall Lane*, privately published, Sheffield, 1988, p 4.

In addition to all of this, the development of the new ground meant that further possibilities for spectator provision and increased revenue were now available in the adjacent 'Old Ground'. These were exploited on occasions such as when Sheffield and Leicester played Nottingham on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1826. It was announced, by the *Sheffield Independent*, that for this match 'arrangements have been made by erecting Booths, &c on the old ground, which will be thrown open to the new one for accommodation of those who wish to retire for refreshment'.<sup>17</sup> The quality of its facilities meant that the venue was soon attracting national recognition, and by 1828 *Bell's Life* felt that the ground 'may be justly reckoned as the finest in England'. Consequently, leading teams such as All England, Sussex, Nottingham, Leicester, and the MCC had all played matches at Darnal by this time and the ground had been the subject of an aquatint by Robert Cruikshank, which was probably produced to celebrate the 'March of Intellect' match in 1827.<sup>18</sup>

Despite its significance to the future of cricket in the West Riding, like many other forms of contemporary popular entertainment the Darnal venture was built upon strong pre-modern traditions. George Steer and William Woolhouse both spent time as publicans and, as we have seen, staging entertainment and sporting events was a common feature of their occupation during this period.<sup>19</sup> Cricket was no exception and many early grounds were owned by adjacent public houses. For example, the Ram in Smithfield was rated for a 'cricket field' as early as 1688.<sup>20</sup> A number of major venues were also famously linked to public houses and their proprietors. The earliest of these was the Artillery Ground which was managed by the incumbent landlord of the nearby Pied Horse Inn, a position filled by George Smith during the 1740s. A few decades later, the Bat and Ball Inn at Hambledon became as synonymous with the adjacent ground at Broadhalfpenny Lane as was its proprietor Richard Nyren with the success of the famous cricket club. Indeed, as well as profiting from the crowds which attended his ground, Thomas Lord also did well from the sale of refreshments at the close by Tavern he managed.<sup>21</sup> In the next century William Clarke, the key figure behind Nottingham

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<sup>17</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 27/7/1826

<sup>18</sup> See, *Bell's Life*, 14/9/1828.

<sup>19</sup> See Collins, Tony, Martin, John and Vamplew, Wray, Eds., *Encyclopedia of Traditional British Rural Sports*, Routledge, London, 2005, p 222-3.

<sup>20</sup> See Ford, *Cricket - A Social History*, 108-120 and Brailsford, *Sport, Time and Society*, p 68.

<sup>21</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 160.

cricket in the 1820s and 1830s, was another publican and cricket ground proprietor. As we have seen, Clarke was landlord of the Bell Inn, Nottingham Market Place when he accepted a Sheffield Challenge in 1829. But a decade or so later he had moved to the Trent Bridge Tavern and enclosed a cricket ground which held its opening match, between Nottingham and Sussex, in 1841.<sup>22</sup> The Darnal ground was also linked to a public house. Nearby stood the Cricket House Inn, which was managed by both George Steer, in 1822, and William Woolhouse, who had taken over by 1828.<sup>23</sup> By this time Hyde Park, Sheffield's second major commercial cricket ground, had opened. It was run from the adjacent Cricketers Tavern where, as we shall see, Woolhouse also spent time as manager.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed it was Woolhouse who emerged, in the style of William Clarke, as the leading figure behind cricket in Sheffield during the 1820s. He was instrumental as the town became one of the foremost centres for the sport in the north of England and his contribution was highlighted by the *Sheffield Independent* in the following tribute at the end of the 1826 season.

However, indulging in particular praise where it should be general, we may mention Mr (sic) William Henry Woolhouse as the man whose exertions, backed by the support of the gentlemen of the clubs, the lovers of cricket are indebted for the character and perfection which the sport has obtained amongst us. To his talent and unremitting attention, we are indebted for that *esprit de corps*, so necessary in this amusement to ensure success; and to his liberality, we owe the high treat of witnessing at once upon the ground at Darnal, the best players collected from various and distant parts of the country.<sup>25</sup>

Woolhouse clearly had great enthusiasm for the game, and was a leading local player, who appeared four times at Lord's. However, he was also involved in the sport for

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<sup>22</sup> See, Birley, *Social History of English Cricket*, p 83.

<sup>23</sup> See Farnsworth, *Before and After Bramall Lane*, p 3 and for Woolhouse's tenure see Blackwell, John, *Sheffield Directory and Guide 1828*, Blackwell, Sheffield, 1828, p 163.

<sup>24</sup> Woolhouse is listed as landlord of the Hyde Park Tavern in, White, William, *History, and General Directory, of the Borough of Sheffield, with Rotherham, Chesterfield, and all the villages and hamlets within a circuit of ten miles round the Capital of Hallamshire; including a topographical survey of each parish ... and a variety of commercial and statistical information*, R. Leader for W. White, Sheffield, 1833, p 290.

<sup>25</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 21/10 1826.

commercial reasons and the contacts and respect he gained as a cricketer must surely have proved beneficial to his business interests. His role as a promoter of cricket matches was highlighted in the name W.H. Woolhouse which appeared in bold alongside the size of the stake in advertisements for events at both Darnal and Hyde Park during the 1820s, such as those reproduced in appendix 6 and appendix 1.<sup>26</sup>

The centrality of Woolhouses's name in these advertisements also points to similarities between his role in cricket and that of promoters in the more general contemporary world of commercial entertainment.<sup>27</sup> In the same way that William Woolhouse clearly built a reputation for staging important cricket matches, individual promoters strove to become synonymous with a certain type and quality of other popular entertainments during this period. Hugh Cunningham has shown that a variety of attractions were promoted by showmen across provincial Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century. Richardson's Theatre travelled southern England in the 1820s featuring at local fairs, whilst Hurd's Theatre in Gloucestershire, Prince Miller in Scotland and Billy Purvis in Northumberland were also active. The circus was another contemporary form of popular entertainment which flourished, and shows promoted by Holloway, Milton and Bannister travelled the north and midlands. Another promoter, Purvis, even provided a link with contemporary sport as, although he specialised in pantomime, marionettes, fantoccini and melodrama, his shows also featured exhibitions of pugilism.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the growing popularity of circuses meant that promoters like Ducrow and Ryan made significant investment in permanent buildings to house their shows, in the same way that George Steer financed the new cricket ground at Darnal.

As Cunningham also noted, the shows, theatre and circuses which were successful during this period reflected 'an era of popular drama and spectacle' in entertainment.<sup>29</sup> This was mirrored by the way in which commercial cricket was promoted in Sheffield, as key facets of contemporary popular sporting culture were often used to capture public interest. Gambling was still perhaps the dominant feature of sporting culture in the 1820s and the stake received top billing when major matches were advertised in the press. Although rarely reaching the vast sums that were wagered by the great patrons of

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<sup>26</sup> See appendix 6, advertisement from the *Sheffield Independent*, 22/07/1826 and appendix 1, advertisement from the *Sheffield Independent*, 02/06/1827.

<sup>27</sup> For similar advertisements see *Sheffield Independent*, 8/08/1831, 20/08/1831 and 04/08/1832.

<sup>28</sup> See Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, p 30-34.

<sup>29</sup> See Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, p 28.

the previous century, relatively large amounts of money could still be at stake and most major matches were reputedly contested for between 100 and 1000 sovereigns.

However, promoters were undoubtedly aware that high stakes were a valuable means by which a greater sense of spectacle could be built up in order to attract large crowds. Consequently, it seems, these commercial considerations could often prove more important than the actual amount of money which had been wagered, when the major matches were advertised. In his *History of Yorkshire County Cricket*, which was published in 1903, the Reverend R.S. Holmes recounted a conversation he had with one of the oldest living players from the region, John Wilson of Dalton, who was born in 1817. When referring to what Wilson had told him about the matches which were played in the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Holmes wrote that they all ‘carried a stake, although not always of the amount of money advertised. Stakes of £500 or £1000 were doubtless more advertising dodges.’<sup>30</sup>

Sporting celebrity was another important characteristic of contemporary popular culture, and this was reflected in the use of star players to promote the matches in which they appeared. The Sussex against All England ‘March of Intellect’ match at Darnal included many of the leading players of the day, and William Woolhouse took full advantage of this by listing the members of each team in his advertisements for the event, such as the one that is reproduced in appendix 1.<sup>31</sup> A similar step was taken to capitalise on the newly established star status of Fuller Pilch, when Yorkshire met Norfolk at Hyde Park, a few weeks after his famous single wicket victory over local hero Tom Marsden. On 24<sup>th</sup> August 1833 the *Sheffield Independent* published an advertisement for a ‘GREAT CRICKET MATCH FOR £100...in which the three Pilches will play.’<sup>32</sup>

But the importance of using sporting celebrity to promote major fixtures is most effectively demonstrated by the occasions in which the presence of star players in Sheffield alone was used to promote the sport. An advertisement for the opening match at the newly built Hyde Park ground was published in the *Sheffield Independent* on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1826. Although two novice teams were to take part, the proprietors of the new ground still boasted that ‘the Doncaster Gentleman have for some time had instruction

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<sup>30</sup> See Holmes, *History of Yorkshire County Cricket*, p 12.

<sup>31</sup> See appendix 1, advertisement from the *Sheffield Independent*, 02/06/1827.

<sup>32</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 14-08-1833.



from Mr Caldercourt, a very celebrated London player' whilst 'the Norfolk Club are receiving Information from Mr Lambert, the Acknowledged best player in the world, (not only as a bowler, but in every point of the game).'<sup>33</sup> Indeed another leading player was used in this way during the lead up to the 'March of Intellect' match, although he also appeared in the fixture. The *Sheffield Independent* announced on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1827 that 'The Gentlemen of the clubs and players are respectfully informed that Lillywhite, the celebrated bowler, will practise on the ground every day during the ensuing week'.<sup>34</sup> At times, leading figures in the world of cricket also stood as umpires in major matches and these appearances were also publicised. When Tom Marsden finally met Fuller Pilch in a single wicket match at Hyde Park on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August 1833 the advertisement for the encounter stated that the umpires were 'J. Dark and W. Caldercourt, from Lord's Cricket Ground, London.'<sup>35</sup>

### **Initial Development in Sheffield - Early Commercial Success**

The efforts which were being made to promote the sport clearly found fertile ground and cricket's rapid development in Sheffield opened up a lucrative commercial market which deserves closer attention. Large crowds often attended major cricket matches at Darnal, which supports another of Hugh Cunningham's observations, that 'there was a large popular audience for commercialised entertainment in the period 1750-1850. This was already a spectator society.'<sup>36</sup> On 1<sup>st</sup> August 1824, just after the New Cricket Ground at Darnal had been opened, an estimated crowd of 19,000 watched Sheffield play Bingham, whilst around a month later, a crowd of 20,000 to 25,000 was said to have been present at the match between Sheffield and Leicester on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September, the last of the four day's play.<sup>37</sup> In the following year, the proprietors staged a more ambitious match and an XI of All England met XXII of Yorkshire for an advertised stake of 1000 sovereigns, at Darnal on Whit Monday 1825. The second day's

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<sup>33</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 22/07/1826.

<sup>34</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 26/05/1826.

<sup>35</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 03/08/1833.

<sup>36</sup> See Cunningham, Hugh, *Leisure and Culture*, in Thompson, F.M.L., Ed., *The Cambridge social history of Britain 1750-1950, II*, Cambridge, 1990, pp 279-339, p 310.

<sup>37</sup> See *Sheffield Mercury*, 07/08 1824 and 11/09/1824.

play in this match was attended by an estimated crowd of nearly 20,000 with each of the other four days said to have been watched by an average of around 10,000 spectators.<sup>38</sup>

Yet, although there is little doubt that large numbers of people watched cricket at Darnal in the early 1820s, any attempt to quantify the commercial opportunities which were realised at these events is confronted by a number of difficulties. Evidence relating to the size of attendances is patchy at best. Occasions when the number of spectators who were present at the early matches was estimated in the press are rare and, as Adrian Harvey has found, phrases such as an 'immense concourse' became a more common way of describing such crowds.<sup>39</sup> The questionable accuracy of the crowd figures which are available must also be noted and, although the new ground at Darnal had accommodation for 8,000 seated spectators alone, given the contemporary affinity for spectacle, exaggerated estimates are likely. Even the cost of admission, which was regularly included in advertisements for the major matches, presents difficulties. On most occasions different rates were charged for entrance to two or even three separate areas in the ground and no indication was given as to which was most heavily populated. Moreover, another major source of income, the sale of refreshments, is impossible to gauge.

Nevertheless, sufficient information is available to make a cautious estimate of the revenue which could be taken during matches at Darnal. One contest, for which both a crowd figure and admission prices are recorded was that between Sheffield and Leicester in September 1824. As we have seen, an attendance of between 20,000 and 25,000 spectators was estimated by the *Sheffield Independent* for the last of the four days play, and two rates of admission were charged. Entrance to the ground cost 6d and to the ground and Marquee 1s.<sup>40</sup> So, even when using the lower admission charge, the gate receipts during the one day's play for which figures are available totalled between £500 and £625. Moreover, admission prices at Darnal remained constant during this period, which means that it is possible to calculate the approximate gate money revenue from all of the six days cricket between 1824 and 1825, for which estimated attendance

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<sup>38</sup> See Farnsworth, *Before and After Bramall Lane*, pp 6-7.

<sup>39</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 20/9/1826.

<sup>40</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 04/09/1824.

figures are available.<sup>41</sup> Using the lowest admission charge and the lower estimate when two figures were provided, to allow for any exaggeration in the attendance figures, the average revenue for one day's play was just over £370 and the full total reached £2,225. Although it is likely that these crowd estimates were made in the press because attendances were at their highest, and revenue reached its peak, considerable commercial opportunities were clearly available to the proprietors Darnal in the early 1820s.

It is impossible, however, to gauge how much of this revenue represented a profit. Yet there is evidence to suggest that, aside from capital investment in facilities, expenditure on staging major matches could have been minimal. Providing payment for the players and stake money were two of the main sources of financial outlay and it seems that each was met by a variety of means. In the early days of the major matches in Sheffield an attempt was made by the *Sheffield Mercury* to fund local professional players by raising a subscription amongst 'the friends of the game of cricket'.<sup>42</sup> It is almost certain that the ambiguous group of people whose support was requested through this appeal consisted of cricket enthusiasts amongst the local gentry and businessmen.

The promoter clearly avoided any financial responsibility when professional teams were funded in this way and, according to the old Dalton player John Wilson, that was also the case with some other measures which were used. Wilson explained, in his conversation with the Reverend Holmes, that when he played cricket, a decade or so after the early Sheffield matches,

a certain sum was always at stake and the players themselves guaranteed so much apiece, each man's share of the pool, in the event of a win, being determined by the sum he had stood in for. Of course, in many cases a rich patron would incur all risk.<sup>43</sup>

Indeed, a clear example of these methods being used to finance both players and stake money is provided by a Dalton match, in which Wilson took part. The important stake

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<sup>41</sup> When Six of Sheffield and Five of Leicester played Eleven of Nottingham in 1826 the admission charges remained at 6d to the ground and 1s to the ground and Marquee. See *Sheffield Independent*, 22/7/1826

<sup>42</sup> See *Sheffield Mercury*, 07/08/1824.

<sup>43</sup> See Holmes, *Yorkshire County Cricket*, p12.

money contest between Dalton and Sheffield, which took place in 1851, came at a time when new social values had begun to change attitudes towards gambling on cricket matches, especially amongst members of the middle class. Consequently, after the match had been arranged to take place at Old Trafford in Manchester, the *Manchester Guardian* expressed its 'unqualified disapprobation of matches at cricket for stakes'. In reply the *Huddersfield Chronicle* defended the position of its local club by stating that,

The Dalton men occupy a position in life which prevents them from pecuniary sacrifices such as matches purely for honour, when on a scale such as the one at present under notice, must necessarily entail, and therefore if they are to come into the field at all to contest the superiority of clubs so notorious, it can only be by the generous support of the gentry or by matches under similar arrangements as the game under notice.<sup>44</sup>

Yet, it appears that on one occasion, at least, funding for players was provided by the cricket ground proprietor. Following the 'March of Intellect' match between Sussex and All England in 1827, the *Sheffield Independent* commented on the poor attendance for each day's play and noted that 'trouble nor expense was spared to find the best men between York and Brighton; and the result, we apprehend will leave the proprietor of the ground a great loser.' Interestingly the report was also suggested that 'the absence of the crowds which have hitherto attended cricket matches...should be attributed to their frequency, and consequent want of novelty.'<sup>45</sup>

Nevertheless, it had clearly been beneficial, in both commercial terms and for the development of the sport, to increase the number of major commercial matches that were staged at Darnal. The new cricket ground was opened on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1824, which meant that only the two major matches, against Bingham and Leicester, were possible that season. However, in 1825 matches between VIII of the MCC and VIII of All England, XI of Sheffield and XI of Leicester, and the ambitious fixture between XI of All England and XXII of Yorkshire were staged.<sup>46</sup> As we have seen, this last match in

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<sup>44</sup> See *Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser*, 04/10/1851.

<sup>45</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 09/06/1827.

<sup>46</sup> For MCC v All England and Sheffield v Leicester matches see Holmes, *Yorkshire County Cricket*, pp 14 - 15.

particular represented a major commercial triumph and detailed planning appears to have taken place to maximise its commercial potential. It was played for an advertised stake of 1,000 sovereigns and took place over five days during the Whitsuntide holiday period, thus increasing the possibility of a large attendance.<sup>47</sup> These arrangements were clearly successful and an All England team was engaged for another major match at Darnal in the following season. This time it faced XXII of Sheffield and Leicester for 400 sovereigns in the second of two encounters, with the first taking place at Leicester, whilst the same two towns also combined as an XI that year in a match against Nottingham at Darnal for 200 sovereigns. Admission to the latter match was again fixed at 6d to the ground and 1s to the 'Tents', and an added attraction was provided during the build up to the match as it was advertised that 'Mr Brown, from London, will practise with the Sheffield & Leicester Match players every day prior to the contest.'

### **Initial Development in Sheffield - Further Expansion and the Market for Commercial Sport**

As the large crowds and high revenues suggest, economic conditions in Sheffield at this time were particularly favourable for speculative investment in the leisure industry. Between 1821 and 1831 the population of Sheffield rose from 65,000 to 92,000, an increase of 40.7%, and from 1824 to 1826 the fluctuating local economy was undergoing a boom period.<sup>48</sup> As we have seen, large scale production in the iron and steel industries, which dominated the local economy, was scarce during this period and most workers were employed in the light trades. Typical of these, and the largest in the sector at this time, was the craft specific cutlery industry. By 1824 the number of 'Cutlers' in Sheffield had reached 8,549 and, like the majority of other local working men, they were employed for piece rates either in small workshops or as outworkers. This meant that a large proportion of the Sheffield workforce was not subject to the long regular hours which were being introduced by the capitalist industrial system, and could enjoy time away from work to spend on leisure activities such as watching or playing

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<sup>47</sup> See Farnsworth, *Before and After Bramall Lane*, pp 6-7.

<sup>48</sup> See Lloyd, G.H., *The Cutlery Trades*, Longmans, Green and Co, London, 1913, p 445-7.

cricket. Indeed, the Cutlers of Sheffield developed a reputation for their 'sprees' at the Darnal matches.<sup>49</sup>

It comes as no surprise, in this economic climate, that the commercial potential for cricket which was being demonstrated by the major events at Darnal did not go unnoticed. Other entrepreneurs began to take an interest in the sport and the proprietors of the ground very quickly found themselves pushed into the competitive commercial leisure market. Another commercially run cricket ground was opened at Hyde Park in Sheffield at the start of 1826. Built on a 5 ½ acre site at a cost of £4000 by Messers Wright and Hazelhurst, it was an ambitious project which clearly aimed to compete with Darnal for major matches.<sup>50</sup> Like Darnal, this was a major speculative investment in cricket although, when considering the revenue potential which was being realised at the town's first major venue, it was not a reckless one. Details relating to the men who made the financial commitment have proved elusive and neither previously featured in any other material relating to cricket. By 1828, however, they were listed in a Sheffield Directory as Wright and Hazelhurst, Hyde Park Cricket Ground, and had begun to make important strides to develop their venture.<sup>51</sup>

The ensuing competition between Sheffield's two premier commercial cricket grounds highlights how far advanced the leisure industry had become by the 1820s. It seems that, unlike Woolhouse who was clearly keen to promote the game as well as his business, Wright and Hazelhurst were purely entrepreneurs who recognised the commercial possibilities which were on offer. The way in which they managed their venture certainly supports this conclusion. On 9<sup>th</sup> June 1827, the *Sheffield Independent* published an advertisement which stated that the proprietors of the ground 'very respectfully inform the Admirers of Cricketing and the Public that it is intended to form two clubs for practising the amusement of cricket'.<sup>52</sup> These were the 'Amateur's Club' and the 'Player's Club', and although they were very different types of organisation, both were particularly astute marketing exercises. The socially exclusive 'Amateurs Club' was specifically aimed at maximising the use of the ground by providing

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<sup>49</sup> See Cutlers to the Cricket: Or some dissertations on the one time habit of "spending a Darnall note", *The Anvil: The information review of the Davy-United group*, Volume 5, No. 3 Christmas 1959, pp 26-7.

<sup>50</sup> For details about the construction of Hyde Park Cricket Ground see Farnsworth, *Before and After Bramall Lane*, p 6.

<sup>51</sup> See Blackwell, *Sheffield Directory*, p 108.

<sup>52</sup> See appendix 7, advertisement from the *Sheffield Independent* 09/06 1827.

recreational opportunities for members of the middle classes to play the sport, and will be discussed in more detail later. More important to the future success of the venture, however, was the intention to form a 'Players Club'. This was a far less exclusive organisation, with admittance depending on ability at cricket rather than social status. The advert explained that this 'club is intended to promote the practice of cricketing amongst those desirous of making themselves sufficiently masters of the game, to play in matches.'<sup>53</sup> The 'matches' referred to were undoubtedly the contests for stake money, which makes this an attempt to form an elite, almost certainly professional, team to play in major commercial matches.

In many ways, the 'Player's Club' can be compared to modern professional sporting clubs, as the ultimate aim was to form a side that could play against the leading teams from elsewhere in England. However, whilst later in the century competition between leading clubs became focused upon cup knockout and league competitions, in the pre-modern era stake money and gate receipts were the main rewards. So, by establishing a leading match play team at Hyde Park, the proprietors undoubtedly hoped gain access to the most lucrative sector of the commercial cricket market and stage the type of events which were attracting such huge crowds to Darnal.

Their goal was achieved by 1830 when the regular stake money challenge match with Nottingham was played at Hyde Park in August that year. It is not clear what role was eventually played by the new 'Players Club' in reaching this watershed, as the local team retained the name of the town and included most of the same players who had appeared at Darnal. Nevertheless, it signalled the demise of Sheffield's first prestigious ground as a major venue and Darnal Cricket Ground was sold in January 1830, after Woolhouse had been declared bankrupt. But the misfortune of the Darnal proprietor prompted the next major coup by Wright and Hazelhurst. Clearly aware of the value his contacts in the cricket world would bring to their business, they appointed William Woolhouse as manager of both the Cricketers Tavern and Hyde Park cricket ground.<sup>54</sup>

The proprietors at Hyde Park were evidently astute business strategists and they also recognised the power of advertising. This can be seen right from the start of their involvement in cricket and the advertisement for the first match at Hyde Park is worthy of closer inspection. Whether intentionally or not the inaugural fixture at Hyde Park was

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<sup>53</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 09/07/1827.

<sup>54</sup> See *Cutlers to the Cricket*, p27 for details of Woolhouse's bankruptcy.

arranged to take place on the same day as an important match at Darnal and advertisements for both matches appeared side by side in the *Sheffield Independent* on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1826, as can be seen in appendix 6.<sup>55</sup> This clash of fixtures highlighted the main obstacle facing the new venture, which, somewhat ironically in the light of subsequent events, was the reputation of William Woolhouse and the Darnal ground he promoted. In contrast to Darnal, where the Sheffield and Leicester XI's 200 sovereign a side contest against Nottingham was due to begin, two novice local teams faced each other at Hyde Park.

Nevertheless, Wright and Hazelhurst seized the opportunity to make an immediate impact by publishing an advertisement which was twice as large as that of their competitors.<sup>56</sup> This caught the reader's eye immediately and enabled many of contemporary cricket's promotional techniques to then be used in order to wrest publicity away from the Darnal fixture. Although, no attempt was made to compete with the quality of cricket which was on show at Darnal, the size of the stake remained a major consideration. Wright and Hazelhurst had 'at length succeeded in making a match' for 100 sovereigns, a remarkably high sum for two novice teams. Moreover, as has already been mentioned, the lack of celebrity players taking part in this match at Hyde Park did not prevent their use in promoting the event. Indeed, it is likely that William Caldercourt and William Lambert, the two men chosen to 'instruct' the teams that played at the new venue, had been carefully selected as they were more established figures in the game than any of the players on view at Darnal. The commercial potential of Lambert's appearance was exploited further as it was advertised that he would 'Umpire for Sheffield' and would also be 'upon the Ground every day for the purpose of giving instructions to Gentlemen wishing to become perfect in the game.'

Little expense was also spared on the provision of refreshments at Hyde Park. Whilst no real detail was given as to what was on offer at Darnal, Messer's Wright and Hazelhurst explained that a 'number of Booths are erected around the ground, and every accommodation is prepared for Tea Parties, or Persons wishing to partake of a Cold Collation...The best Wines, Spirits, and every other beverage, are prepared.' It also seems that the Hyde Park promoters attempted to widen public access to their event

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<sup>55</sup> See appendix 6, advertisement from the *Sheffield Independent*, 22/07/1827.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.



through links with Sheffield's Public Houses and a postscript to their advertisement added

N.B. Messer's Wright and Hazelhurst request Ladies and Gentlemen who intend favouring them with their company to call either at Hyde Park; King's Head Inn, Change-Alley; or Elephant Inn, Norfolk Street for Tickets to the Grand Stand which will be delivered *Gratis*.<sup>57</sup>

But perhaps the most effective marketing device employed by Wright and Hazelhurst was the cost of admission. Whilst William Woolhouse's charged 6 pence to the ground and 1 shilling to the tents, at Darnal the proprietors of the new venue explained that,

As it will be the first match played upon the Hyde Park Ground the proprietors intend it as a an opening there of, and a treat to their friends, as the Admittance to both ground and Grand Stand will be FREE.<sup>58</sup>

Unfortunately, the immediate impact of this promotional strategy is difficult to gauge. Cricket coverage in the following editions of the Sheffield press was dominated by the remarkable performance of Tom Marsden at Darnal where he scored 227 against Nottingham. According to the *Sheffield Independent* this match was attended by an 'immense concourse of people' which indicates that, in commercial as well as cricket terms, it was a successful event.<sup>59</sup>

Clearly, a lucrative and much sought after commercial market for cricket had developed in Sheffield by the late 1820s. But who were the people who went in their thousands to watch the sport at Darnal and Hyde Park? As we have seen, economic conditions in the town meant that cricket matches could be attended by a wide section of society. So, catering for the varying demands of different social groups was an important consideration when attempting to maximise revenue from spectators, and this provides an insight into the nature of the crowds that attended important matches in the 1820s.

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<sup>57</sup> See Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> See Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> See Ibid.

Repeated references to the numbers of 'respectable' persons, who were amongst the large crowds that flocked to both Darnal and Hyde Park indicate that interest from the social elite was significant. According to *Bell's Life* the match between England and Three Counties of York, Leicester and Nottingham in 1828 attracted a relatively disappointing estimated attendance of 3000 spectators. But the make up of the crowd was more noteworthy. It consisted of people from,

all parts within two hundred miles of the ground, among whom were most of the distinguished noblemen and gentlemen amateurs from all the above places. Indeed so great a degree of interest did the match excite, that it was with difficulty a number of the London amateurs, who had not made up their minds to witness the match till the last two days of the preceding week, could get a conveyance to Sheffield at any price, the whole of the places by the regular coaches having for some days previous been engaged.<sup>60</sup>

The presence of such high ranking members of society at these matches demanded that suitably exclusive accommodation must be provided as, in the same way that Wray Vamplew found at race meetings, there were always 'those who wished to segregate themselves away from the masses'.<sup>61</sup> The erection of Grandstands became the main means by which this was achieved at racecourses and it seems that the major commercial cricket grounds were no different. From the outset, Hyde Park had its own Grandstand, and this spurred the Darnal proprietors to make similar provision.

Indeed, it seems that the stand at Darnal was intended to make a statement of the venue's superior status in the cricket world and little expense appears to have been spared in its construction. It was built with 'the best materials and workmanship, and finished at a great expense, with Tuscan colonnade and Balcony, strong Timbered Roof, together with all the excellent Fixtures, Cooking Apparatus, and pump belonging'.<sup>62</sup> The cost of entrance reflected the surroundings and the new stand subsequently provided a third tier of admission to the ground. Prices for the 'March of Intellect' match in 1827

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<sup>60</sup> See *Bells Life*, 14 09 1828.

<sup>61</sup> See Vamplew, Wray, *The Turf: A Social and Economic History of Horse Racing*, Allen Lane, London, 1976, p18-19.

<sup>62</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 21/05 1831.

were listed as, ‘Gentlemen’s Tickets...to the Stand, 2s 6d. Ladies accompanying Gentlemen, each 1s, To the tents 1s; to the ground 6d.’<sup>63</sup> This pricing structure remained in place for other major matches that season, with the added option of a yearly subscription which provided free access to the stand.<sup>64</sup>

However, the new charges appear to have been unpopular, which suggests that the demand for such lavish surroundings had been overestimated. Consequently, after commenting on the ‘great number of respectable persons’ who were in attendance when Sheffield played Nottingham at Darnal in 1827, the *Sheffield Independent* explained that the ‘elegant stand (partially closed, as it is, by the ridiculously large charge of half-a-crown each day for of admission) contained very little company.’<sup>65</sup> In contrast, the proprietors of Hyde Park again demonstrated a greater understanding of the commercial market for cricket and adopted what seems to have been a more sensible strategy. Their admission charges were consistently set at 6d to enter the ground and 1s for access to the stand.

Perhaps more importantly, however, the use of differently structured admission rates appears to indicate that working-class spectators formed an important sector of the commercial cricket market during this period. Some matches were even aimed specifically at this social group. When Tom Marsden met ‘Jarvis of Nottingham’, in a single wicket match at Darnal for £30 on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1829, admission prices were listed as ‘Tradesmen 6d – Working People 3d – To the saloon 1s’.<sup>66</sup> The reason for this tariff may have been to attract lower-class spectators because followers of the game amongst the new industrial middle-class had little interest in this form of the game. Certainly, the single wicket matches were more overtly associated with wagering than any other form of pre-modern cricket, and it is possible that ‘respectable’ spectators from the developing industrial towns had less interest in gambling than their 18<sup>th</sup> century predecessors. But this was not the case for the working-class cricket enthusiasts, who continued to bet on cricket matches well into the 1850s and probably beyond.

Yet, aside from gambling, there may also have been another reason why admission was made affordable for this match for those lower down the social scale. As we shall see,

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<sup>63</sup> See appendix 1, advertisement from the *Sheffield Independent*, 02 06 1827.

<sup>64</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 21/07/1827.

<sup>65</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 04/08/1827.

<sup>66</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 10/10/1829.

the single wicket champions, and Marsden in particular, developed a kind of folk hero status, which suggests that their appearance in such matches may have generated a more genuinely popular following for this version of the sport. Unfortunately, the size and composition of the crowd at this particular fixture is not clear, as neither were mentioned in reports of the match. However, a remarkably large crowd numbering 'upwards of 12,000' was present at Hyde Park in August 1833 when Marsden played the second fixture in his match with Fuller Pilch. The appeal of this event clearly crossed class divisions as the *Sheffield Independent* reported that there 'was congregated every grade of society from the peasant to the lord, to witness a trial of skill between two such proficient'. But this was a major event which as well as resulting from years of speculation featured two leading figures in the game and, consequently, had attracted an extraordinary degree of interest.<sup>67</sup>

### **Initial Development in Sheffield - Diversification and the Impact of Competition**

Despite their high profile and domination of coverage in the press, the major stake matches were not the only form of commercial activity which took place in Sheffield cricket during the 1820s and 1830s. By the end of 1827 local teams were playing cricket at a third commercial ground in the area. It was variously referred to in the press as Cross Scythers or Cross Scythes, a name which suggests that the ground may also have been adjacent to a public house and managed by the landlord. The proprietor was George Barker and he clearly aimed to exploit a different sector of the commercial cricket market than that which was being fought over by the town's two major venues. This is probably the reason why, in comparison to its more illustrious counterparts, far less information about Cross Scythes is available. However, the references to the venue which have survived offer a different, but equally important, view of cricket's growing popularity in the area.

As well as providing major spectator events, these commercially run cricket grounds in Sheffield enabled the sport to develop in a more participatory and recreational manner. Formally organised cricket clubs began to spring up, and the newness of this concept is

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<sup>67</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 10-08 1833.

clear to see in the matches at Cross Scythes. Typical of these was a 'match betwixt Norton and Heeley against Hallam, for 22 sovereigns' which was advertised in the *Sheffield Independent* on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1827.<sup>68</sup> Clearly, the former team was relatively new to the sport and the advert explained that the 'ability displayed by the Norton and Heeley players against the Hyde Park Club last year, with the acknowledged merit of Hallam, leaves no doubt but it will be an interesting and well contested match'. This sense that matches at Cross Scythes represented new developments in local cricket was also exhibited when Norton and Heeley played Hallam at the venue in July 1827. Whether because of their social status or relative inexperience, the men who played in this fixture were evidently seen as being of lower standing than those who took part in matches which were usually reported in the press and the *Sheffield Independent* noted that these '*commoners* showed some tolerable play'.<sup>69</sup>

Nevertheless, it was this type of match which Cross Scythes mostly staged and the Norton and Heeley Club appeared regularly at the venue, which suggests that some kind of permanent relationship existed between the club and the proprietor. But other teams also played at the ground and Woodseats met Coal Ashton and Dronfield there in October 1827 whilst a 'friendly match' took place between 'frequenters of the Bull and Oak' and 'visitors to the Punch Bowl' in November 1829.<sup>70</sup> The staging of these matches suggests that the ground was also available for hire, as commercial realities were certainly attended to at Cross Scythes. Many of the promotional and revenue enhancing techniques which were practised by the town's two major venues were also in operation here and, as has been shown, the new venue hosted stake money matches which were often advertised in the press. It was also run by a proprietor who, like his more illustrious counterparts, was keen to develop his profile and maximise income by catering for the needs of spectators. When the Norton and Heeley against Hallam match was advertised in the press in 1827, it was announced that 'G. Barker respectfully announces, that refreshments of every description will be provided, and every exertion made to give satisfaction'.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 07/07/1827.

<sup>69</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 21/7/1827, the word '*commoners*' was italicised in the report.

<sup>70</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 13/10/1827 and 07/11/1829.

<sup>71</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 07/07/1827.

Of course commercial realities meant that efforts were also made to stage fixtures other than the major stake matches at Darnal and Hyde Park. Providing opportunities for participation in cricket was seen as a way of generating more regular income and also increased interest in the sport which, in turn, expanded the potential audience for large-scale spectator events. It was done in a relatively sophisticated way at both venues and provision was made to exploit the market possibilities on either side of the social divide. In similar fashion to Cross Scythes, forming a permanent relationship with one or more clubs was seen as the most secure means of maximising the usage of the ground.

Darnal was home to the Darnal or Sheffield Wednesday Club, which had been formed before the ground was developed and boasted William Woolhouse as a founder member.<sup>72</sup> Although it became better known for its football section, which was formed in 1867, the Wednesday club played regular cricket matches during the 1820s. Many of these were purely social affairs in which only club members took part. The two teams were assembled in a variety of ways, with married versus single the most common, although in July 1828 the players whose names began with letters from the first half of the alphabet played against those whose names started with letters from the second half.<sup>73</sup> Often such occasions were followed by a dinner, like the one which was held after a married versus single match in October 1827, and this, no doubt, brought further revenue to the proprietor.<sup>74</sup> A 'Darnal Friday Club' was also active at the venue during this period and in August 1827 it met the Gentlemen of the Rotherham Club.<sup>75</sup> The opposition for this match suggests that the 'Friday' Club was patronised by members of the middle classes, and the reason behind the name of the 'Wednesday' Club indicates that it was also formed by men of reasonably elevated social status. For, as local tradesmen, the founder members of the club took the name because Wednesday was a regular weekly day's holiday, upon which they were free to pursue their sporting interest.

Exact details of the relationships between the clubs which played regularly at Darnal and the proprietor of the ground are unclear, although it seems that they were independent organisations. However, as we have seen, the formation of similar clubs at

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<sup>72</sup> See Farnsworth, Keith, *Wednesday!: The History of Sheffield's Oldest Professional Football Club*, Sheffield City Libraries, Sheffield, 1982, p 7.

<sup>73</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 24 05/1828.

<sup>74</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 13 10/1827.

<sup>75</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 25 08 1827.

Hyde Park was carefully co-ordinated. Alongside the 'Players Club', which, as we have seen, was formed for explicitly commercial purposes, the 'Amateurs Club', was aimed at providing opportunities for participation in cricket amongst the social elite. The advertisement which announced the intention to form the club explained, that members were to be assisted by 'several of the best Match Players' on the club's 'days of playing' when the 'ground will be closed for all persons except Members of the Club and their Friends'. Moreover, the exclusivity of the organisation was ensured by a yearly subscription of 8 shillings.<sup>76</sup> Again it is difficult to ascertain how successful this enterprise became, as further details are virtually non-existent.

By 1830, however, casual participation in cricket had also become available to those lower down the social scale. On 21<sup>st</sup> August 1830 the *Sheffield Independent* announced that;

Parties for cricketing and amusements, and the public in general, are respectfully informed, that arrangements are now completed at Hyde-Park which will give general satisfaction. The turf has been improved, and presents a fine playing condition.

BATS, BALLS, STUMPS &c, may be obtained at the Bar, 3d each player- large and small parties desirous of engaging in a day's amusement, and requiring Dinner or Tea to be served, can be accommodated with liberality and economy.

WINES, SPIRITS, ALE, PORTER, &c of the best quality.<sup>77</sup>

The lack of exclusivity and relatively low cost of this offer, just half the price of the cheapest admission to the major matches, strongly suggests that it was aimed at attracting the lower classes. It also shows that provision was made for the type of ad hoc informal matches which, because of their employment commitments and lack of resources, were generally played by working men. Moreover, matches like the one between 'the customers of Mr Tyzack of the Black Swan', which took place in 1833 at Cross Scythes, almost certainly provide an early example of more formal working-class participation in cricket at commercial venues.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 09/06/1827.

<sup>77</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 21/08/1830.

<sup>78</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 17/08/1833.

The economic realities of commercial leisure clearly came to dominate management of Sheffield's early cricket grounds and further efforts to increase their earning potential were made by staging activities other than cricket. This flexibility of use gave the venues a sense of ambiguity that reflected the inherent informality of pre-modern sport and was emphasised further by the nature the events which were held. They were typified by the pedestrian contests, in which individual competitors commonly took on specific challenges for a stake, and a great deal of side betting took place. One such event was held at Hyde Park in October 1827 when Townsend, 'the champion Pedestrian', successfully completed a series of challenges in which he,

Gathered 60 stones in his mouth - each stone 1 yard apart in -----	18¼	minutes
Walked forward 2 miles in -----	20	minutes
Ran 2 miles in -----	14	minutes
Walked backwards 2 miles in -----	28½	minutes
Ran a barrow 2 miles in -----	21½	minutes
Ran a hoop 2 miles in -----	16¼	minutes <sup>79</sup>

Pedestrianism could have a relatively cross-class appeal, attracting support and financial speculation from the lower classes as well as those of higher social standing, like the group of sporting fanatics known as the Fancy. But, in typically thorough fashion, more socially exclusive activities were also available at Hyde Park. In 1827 advertisements appeared in the press to announce the formation of a 'Select Trap Ball Club' which illustrates further how social divisions were beginning to advance into the ways in which people chose to spend their leisure time. The sport was a team version of the popular local game Knurr and Spell and the club was to be called '*Hallamshire*'. It was being formed, the advert explained, due to

A number of Gentlemen having expressed their wish to form a respectable private club, for the practice of some healthful game which requires less exertion than cricket.

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<sup>79</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 27/10/1827.



This organisation was clearly aimed at the middle classes and, as well as a 10s 6d subscription for the season, which would ensure exclusivity on economic grounds, it was explained that ‘after the commencement of the Club, no additional Members to be admitted but by ballot.’<sup>80</sup> Darnal also hosted activities other than cricket and an event was staged during May 1827 which clearly aimed to attract a specifically popular audience. An advertisement in the *Sheffield Independent* announced that a,

Match at Knurr and Spell between Marsden and Royds, for forty pounds a side will be played on Monday week, May 21<sup>st</sup> – Admittance to the Ground 3d to be returned in drink.<sup>81</sup>

Shooting, rabbit coursing and handicap racing were also held at Darnal and these pastimes were also associated mainly with the working classes by this period. They took place during the decline of the venue as it struggled to counter the commercial pressures of competition.

During the early decades of the nineteenth century the commercial leisure industry was clearly a harsh and highly competitive environment which left little room for sentiment. At the start of the 1830s the distinguished grandstand at Darnal had become one of the earliest, and most famous, casualties. Although the ground continued to be used for some time after, with Darnal Cricket Club still playing home matches there in 1858, its days as a venue for major matches were effectively ended with the bankruptcy and subsequent departure of William Woolhouse to Hyde Park. This sad end to the great days of the first important cricket ground in the West Riding was punctuated by the symbolic sale of its distinctive grandstand by auction in 1831. An advertisement to publicise the sale appeared in the *Sheffield Independent* on 21st May, which can be seen in appendix 8.<sup>82</sup>

The full extent of the venue’s fading fortunes was highlighted by the quality of the building and its facilities. But perhaps this served more to emphasise the over ambition of the proprietor for, as we have seen, the higher charges demanded for access were unpopular and the stand was undersubscribed. Even the resident clubs at Darnal appear

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<sup>80</sup> See Collins et al Eds., *Traditional British Rural Sports*, p271.

<sup>81</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 12/05/1827.

<sup>82</sup> See appendix 8, advertisement from the *Sheffield Independent*, 21/05/1831.

to have migrated to Hyde Park by this time and Sheffield Wednesday played its 11 single versus 11 married members match there in July 1830.<sup>83</sup> Some time later, both the ground and Cricket House Inn came under the tenure of another leading early Sheffield cricketer James Dearman when, as we have seen, a variety of other sports were hosted.

Cricket at Hyde Park, however, continued to flourish and in 1833 the ground staged what is widely regarded as the first match to feature a Yorkshire XI against an XI from another county. Although county cricket was to later become the flagship of a very different set of values in cricket, the first Yorkshire fixture was a commercial challenge match played against Norfolk for £100 and, as no formalised clubs existed in either county, the teams were assembled by the backers who made the match. Consequently, the Yorkshire XI consisted of 10 players from Sheffield and one from Bakewell. Their opponents had been chosen because of the drawing power of Fuller Pilch, who was widely regarded as the best batsman in England, and on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1833 the *Sheffield Independent* previewed this momentous occasion accordingly, by describing how,

Nothing can exceed the interest this match excites in Sheffield and its neighbourhood, and many hundreds are betted on the event. Norfolk for choice, in consequence of the three Pilches, who are reckoned to be first raters. The Yorkshire players, likewise, have got a tower of strength in their eleven, the best, perhaps, that ever turned out on the field...Many improvements have been made to the ground, and a large tent which will accommodate 200 persons, has been erected for the gentlemen subscribers and their friends...Should the weather be fine, the lovers of this noble game may expect one of the greatest treats given in this neighbourhood.<sup>84</sup>

### **Commercial Development Elsewhere in the West Riding**

By this time cricket's popularity was beginning to grow elsewhere in the West Riding and commercialism continued to play an important role as the sport became prominent in a number of other principal towns across the region. At the end of the 1830s a major

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<sup>83</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 04/07/1830.

<sup>84</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 03/08/1833.

venue emerged in Leeds and was developed along similar lines to the commercial model that had first been successful at Darnal. Again, it was situated on a site which was well known for cricket and the crucial development came when a local entrepreneur decided to enclose a ground.<sup>85</sup> This was the Victoria ground which, as the *Leeds Intelligencer* explained in June 1838, had been ‘recently enclosed by Richard Cadman Esq, on the western side of Woodhouse Moor’.<sup>86</sup> Like William Woolhouse, Cadman was also a noted cricketer who recognised the growing commercial opportunities that the sport could offer. He played in many matches for the Leeds Clarence Club and also appeared in the Leeds and District teams which played against the All England XI at the end of the 1840s.<sup>87</sup> As with the two leading Sheffield cricket grounds, Cadman’s venture was a speculative commercial enterprise which, it seems, looked to benefit from commercial stake money matches between teams representing major towns. In September 1838 the Victoria Ground staged a ‘grand match at cricket... between 11 of Sheffield, including Dearman, Marsden Vincent & Co, and 16 of Leeds and Harewood Clubs, also including Ibbetson and North’.<sup>88</sup> Although no mention of a stake was made on this occasion, a notice that Harewood had made arrangements to play Darlington & Yarm in a match for £50 a side at the Victoria Ground appeared in the *Leeds Times* on 10<sup>th</sup> August in the following year.<sup>89</sup> Although placing notices in the local press was initially preferred as a means of publicising matches, similar marketing devices to those which had been successful in Sheffield were also used. The *Leeds Times* noted in September 1838 that the Leeds Oak and Bradford clubs were to meet at the Victoria Ground, which had been ‘generously allowed by the proprietor free of expense to the parties’.<sup>90</sup>

But as well as highlighting similarities with the way in which commercialised cricket was organised in Sheffield, the Victoria Ground also offers an important insight into the impact upon popular leisure of the changing nature of life in urban industrial communities. The 1830s, in particular, was a decade in which many people became subjected to the harsh social and economic realities of capitalist industrial economics.

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<sup>85</sup> Matches had been played on Woodhouse Moor, Leeds, since at least the 1828, see *Bell’s Life* 10/8/1828.

<sup>86</sup> See *Leeds Intelligencer*, 23/06/1838.

<sup>87</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 23/9/1846 and 17/06/1843.

<sup>88</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 29/9/1838.

<sup>89</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 10/8/1839.

<sup>90</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 22/9/1838.

This was particularly apparent in the West Riding where economic reorganisation in certain processes of the textile industry saw the introduction of mechanisation and large-scale production in an increasing number of large new mills.<sup>91</sup> As a result, many people who had previously enjoyed a degree of independence suffered from the imposition of excessive regulated working hours for reduced pay and a significant deterioration in working conditions.

The impact of these changes is perhaps most effectively reflected in the strength of opposition to their social and economic consequences, which found expression through three successive large-scale popular movements in the region. The first of these was the cross-class Factory Reform Movement. Although short lived, the campaign for shorter working hours was sufficiently well supported at its height to mobilise over 20,000 demonstrators and propagate a petition for Parliament with 138,652 signatures during the 'Pilgrimage to York' in 1832. Five years later a crowd estimated at between 80,000 and 100,000 people attended a demonstration at Hartshead Moor as resistance to the New Poor Law began to peak in May 1837. After this event, however, the focus of popular protest in the region shifted to a more explicitly working class struggle for political representation through the Chartist movement. On 15<sup>th</sup> October 1838 around 200,000 people were said to be in attendance at Hartshead Moor for a meeting chaired by the Todmorden MP John Fielden, who introduced the 10 hours bill in 1847.<sup>92</sup>

The same oppressive conditions, which aroused such large-scale unrest, were also mainly responsible for initial historiographical assumptions of a widespread decline of traditional popular leisure activities during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>93</sup> Yet, as more recent research has shown, the impact of the capitalist industrial economy was far less uniform than at first thought and there is little doubt that initial suggestions of a 'vacuum' in popular recreation were somewhat mistaken.<sup>94</sup> As we have seen, Cunningham, Harvey and others have identified that, as well as some continuity, important developments in popular recreation in general, and commercial sport in particular, took place between 1800 and 1850. The continued growth of cricket across the West Riding clearly supports this conclusion and the opening of the Victoria ground

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<sup>91</sup> See Burt, Steven, and Grady, Kevin, *The Illustrated History of Leeds*, Breedon Books, 1993, p 89.

<sup>92</sup> See Royle, Edward, *Chartism*, Longman, London and New York, 1986, p 23 for the 1837 meeting and p 80 for the 1838 meeting.

<sup>93</sup> See, the *Working-class culture conference report*, *Bull, SSLH*, 9, (1964), 6.

<sup>94</sup> See Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, p 170.

in Leeds, along with its subsequent rise to prominence, reflects a rising demand for commercial cricket matches in the area during this period. This was further demonstrated by the appearance of new teams representing the larger towns in the region, such as Halifax, Heckmondwike, Leeds, Barnsley, York, Bradford, Dewsbury and Wakefield, which all played matches at the Victoria ground during its first four years. Elsewhere in the region the scope of the commercial challenge matches had also begun to be developed. For example the sweepstakes held at York and Oakenshaw meant that competition for one stake or prize was being extended to encompass four teams and provide revenue from three matches.

Nevertheless, the economic, social and cultural upheavals were not without consequence for commercialised cricket. In general, their impact is more visible through the limited scale of development rather than any absence of activity. For example, it seems that the growth of cricket's popularity in the textile districts to the north of the region was built around a single major commercial cricket ground. Whereas three such venues were opened in Sheffield during the 1820s, when a comparable period of the sport's development took place in, what was then, a much less populated area.<sup>95</sup> For whilst stake matches were played fairly regularly at grounds such as Hopwood Lane in Halifax and Horton Road in Bradford the lack of publicity generated by these venues in the press suggests that they were not entrepreneurial ventures along the lines of the Victoria Ground. Moreover, the teams from other towns in the region which featured at the Leeds venue often played matches against each other rather than against sides from Leeds. On one hand this is not surprising, as the ground was clearly available for hire. But the occurrence of matches between Wakefield and Dewsbury or Halifax and Heckmondwike at Richard Cadman's ground suggests that it was seen as a central venue for stake match cricket throughout the northern part of the West Riding.

Yet, perhaps most significantly, despite a continuously increasing population, crowd estimates indicate that far fewer people watched commercial cricket in the textile district during the middle decades of the nineteenth century than had done in 1820s Sheffield. Indeed, there are notably few descriptive or numerical references in the press to the size of crowds at matches in the textile districts during the 1830s and 1840s,

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<sup>95</sup> The Sheffield population rose from 65,000 in 1821 to 92,000 in 1831, whilst, discounting the other major towns in the textile district like Bradford, Huddersfield and Halifax, the population of the borough of Leeds alone had reached 152,000 by 1841.

which suggests that they rarely reached a level worthy of comment. Amongst the few occasions when figures were quoted, was a crowd of 'from 4,000 to 5,000' which was said to have watched Bradford play Wharfedale and Dacre Banks in 1840.<sup>96</sup> Two years later a match at Hopwood Lane between Halifax and Huddersfield Union saw 'not less than 2000 persons assembled' and a similar crowd was in attendance when Leeds met York in the final of the cricket sweep played at the latter club's ground in 1844. At the last of these matches, it was also reported that there was 'about £20 taken at the gate for admission on the first day, and £23 on the second', which reflected a considerable reduction in financial incentives for entrepreneurs when compared to early commercial cricket in Sheffield.<sup>97</sup>

It could be argued that popular interest in cricket simply didn't reach the same magnitude, across the textile district during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, than it had previously done in Sheffield. However, a number of events suggest that the sport had remained strongly embedded in the working-class psyche. Two matches in 1857 demonstrate that traditional popular forms of cricket retained a strong following. On 16, 17 and 18 October 1857 a single wicket match took place at the Victoria ground between 'James Sadler of Leeds, and John Grange, a player from Dacre Banks, but who has lately resided at Kirkstall for £100.'<sup>98</sup> The *Leeds Times* recounted that this was a 'match which has caused considerable excitement, drawn together hundreds of spectators, and on which, in addition to the stake, we may say hundreds of pounds are pending'. But more significantly, in addition to the interest from those present at the match, many other followers were evidently prevented from attending because of the constraints placed upon them at work. The *Leeds Intelligencer* explained how 'boys were kept running between the cricket ground and Kirkstall Forge, every half hour, with the state of the game, the whole of the three days.'<sup>99</sup>

Gambling on cricket matches, undoubtedly played a strong role in the level of support for John Grange in this match and was also likely to have been important in the popular following which was enjoyed by his next opponent, George Atkinson. Grange met Atkinson, who later played for Yorkshire and All England, in another important single

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<sup>96</sup> See *Bells Life*, 12/06/1840.

<sup>97</sup> See *Bells Life*, 12/07/1840, *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser*, 06/08/1842 and *Leeds Times*, 31/8/1844.

<sup>98</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 18/10/1857

<sup>99</sup> See *Leeds Intelligencer*, 24/10/1857.

wicket match later that season. This time the contest took place at Horton Road, Bradford and 'betting was even at the commencement'.<sup>100</sup> It was won by Atkinson, who was from Leeds, and upon returning to his home town he received a reception which again demonstrated that strong popular interest had been focused on the event. Atkinson later recalled how when he got 'back to Leeds there was a great reception. They had the drum and fife band to meet us, and Bill Child presented me with a watch, with an inscription engraved, in honour of the match.'<sup>101</sup>

As well as the continued importance of gambling, these commercial single wicket matches clearly show that considerable popular support remained for local professional cricketers. This points to the existence of a strong sense of shared identity which, as we shall see later, reflected the social origins of such players. The relationship was also evident in the activities of the All England Eleven in the region and, perhaps more significantly, in this context was expressed more through the actions of the players than the supporters. When the Eleven played in Bradford during 1851 an unmistakable empathy with the people of the town was displayed as 'the proceeds of the match, after defraying expenses, were to be given for the formation of pleasure grounds for the recreation of the working classes, to be called the 'Peoples Park'.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, recognition that many were still prevented from attending major commercial matches by the constraints of excessive working hours and poor pay, came when arrangements were made for the annual All England Eleven match in Leeds in 1863. The *Leeds Times* announced that 'Mr Anderson has agreed, on behalf of the All England Eleven, that for the working classes to see them, they will play up to six 'o' clock on the Saturday Evening' and 'be admitted to the grounds after two 'o' clock, on the payment of 3d each', a sum which was half the normal admission price.<sup>103</sup>

Whilst these examples clearly point to the continued existence of popular interest in cricket, a scarcity of appropriate source material means that nature and extent of its appeal are likely to remain unknown. Nevertheless, far more weight is added to the argument that a strong popular following for the game continued to exist during the middle years of the nineteenth century, by events which took place in the 1860s when,

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<sup>100</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 14/11/1857.

<sup>101</sup> See Pullin *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p18.

<sup>102</sup> See Felix, 'The doings of the Eleven', reproduced in *Felix and the Eleven of England*, Gerald Broadribb, 2002.

<sup>103</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 13/09/1863.

after access to leisure activities was greatly increased across the social scale, the numbers of people taking part in cricket exploded.

Most of the reasons behind this limited but significant growth of commercial cricket across the textile district can be found in its distinctive pattern of economic development. In contrast to Sheffield in the 1820s, where the lack of large-scale economic organisation in the iron and steel industry was a key factor in the scale of the sport's growth, a major phase of factory building was taking place in Leeds at this time.<sup>104</sup> Towards the end of the decade, the impact of the new textile mills was already apparent and, in describing the town, one visitor explained how a

transparent cloud was diffused over the whole space which it occupied, on and between several hills; a hundred red fires shot upwards into the sky, and as many towering chimneys poured forth columns of black smoke. The huge manufactories, five stories high, in which every window was illuminated had a grand and striking effect. Here the toiling artisan labours far into the night...<sup>105</sup>

It has been estimated that by 1841 almost a quarter of the total Leeds workforce, of around 35,000, was employed in the town's factories, which by now numbered around two hundred. Clearly, whilst its reach was by no means comprehensive, the capitalist industrial system had begun to place severe restrictions upon a significant proportion of the Leeds workforce. The impact of this upon commercial cricket is evident in the absence of five-figure attendances at major matches and the limited number of cricket teams which were active in and around the town before 1860. When compared to the rest of the region, Leeds was exceptional in its economic development, experiencing a relatively high degree of diversity and small scale production. This can, perhaps, explain why no other commercial venue emerged in the textile district during this period and the Victoria ground was able to host many major stake matches between teams from outside the town.

But although the extent of factory organisation in the textile industry during the first half of the nineteenth century was greater than in Sheffield, it is also clear that enough

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<sup>104</sup> Burt and Grady, *History of Leeds*, p 89.

<sup>105</sup> Quoted from Herman, Prince, Puckler-Muskau, *Tour in Germany, Holland and England 1826. 1827 and 1828*, (1832), in Burt and Grady, *History of Leeds*, p 87.



people in these districts remained sufficiently free from economic restrictions to provide a commercial market for cricket. The distinctive economic complexion of Leeds, in particular, meant that the town could become an early commercial centre for the sport and equally important activity was also able to take place in other localities where skilled small-scale production methods survived. Indeed, craft specific processes still remained in the manufacture of textiles and the most notable of these was beginning to have a major impact upon cricket in the West Riding by the middle of the nineteenth century. Hand loom weaving survived the first phase of mechanisation and continued to provide the major source of employment for many small West Riding communities like Dalton, near Huddersfield. Here, the freedom from regulated working hours which was enjoyed by many inhabitants saw a thriving cricket club develop in the 1830s which, by the following decade, was producing a stream of professional cricketers and, in turn, a successful stake match team.

The paradoxical relationship between cricket's commercial traditions and these new economic conditions is even more apparent in the next major phase of the sport's development. This came in 1846 when William Clarke began touring the British Isles with a team that was made up mainly of the leading professionals of the day. They mostly played exhibition odds matches against local teams, in which their opponents fielded between sixteen and twenty two players, and are widely regarded as having been pivotal to cricket becoming a sport of truly national dimensions. By taking commercial cricket on the road Clarke also began a thirty or so year era in which, for the only time in the history of the sport, professional players were in control of their own interests. However, his background in cricket lay in the commercial stake money matches which had dominated the sport over the previous century. As we have seen, he was a publican, professional cricketer, and entrepreneurial promoter in the style of Woolhouse and Cadman and had been heavily involved in the matches between Sheffield and Nottingham since the 1820s. This clearly made him aware of the commercial possibilities that the sport could offer and he had already staged major commercial stake money matches at his Trent Bridge ground, like the one in 1845 when an 'England' side, which included Fuller Pilch, played and lost to 14 of Nottingham for £200.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> See Sissons, *The Players*, p 21.

Although the exact circumstances which triggered Clarke's next venture are unclear, the All England eleven represented a further extension of the commercial practices which he had followed throughout his career. It may have been that he had difficulties in attracting the fixtures, and crowds, which were necessary for his venture at Trent Bridge to be successful. But Clarke almost certainly understood that significant financial rewards could be gained by creating a regular programme of major matches for professional players. Perhaps more importantly, however, the commercial possibilities which were on offer in the new economic climate also seem to have been clear to him. An expanding rail network greatly assisted ease of travel for the Eleven, whilst the continued growth of population and urbanisation meant that, although the huge attendances of old were unlikely, interest in the larger industrial boroughs was still sufficient to offer regular matches for his team.

The importance to Clarke of this market for big match cricket in areas like the West Riding can be seen in the places where the Eleven played in its first few years. In the inaugural season only three matches took place, the first at Hyde Park, Sheffield, the second in Manchester and the last at the Victoria Ground, Leeds. The fixture list was expanded in the second season to include matches in Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool, Stockton, Birmingham, Newcastle, Stourbridge and York, whilst in 1848 the Eleven also visited Derby, Bradford, Wallsall, Coventry, Sunderland and Darlington.<sup>107</sup> Where he could, Clarke also avoided the commercial risks of speculative enterprise, that had proved so costly to the Darnal venture. A fixed fee, of initially £65, was most commonly charged, although the Eleven occasionally appeared for a percentage of the gate money when larger crowds were likely.<sup>108</sup>

From their outset, the All England Eleven matches were greeted with great excitement in the region and the similarities between their coverage in the local press and that of the matches at Darnal around two decades before are unmistakable. The first appearance of the All England Eleven in Leeds took place at the Victoria Ground on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1846. They faced an 18 of 'Leeds and District within twenty five miles' and the *Leeds Times* explained how,

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<sup>107</sup> See Sissons, *The Players*, p11.

<sup>108</sup> For details of the payments see Sissons, *The Players*, p27.

Long before the hour aimed for pitching the wickets, half past ten 'o'clock on Monday morning, the road leading from Leeds to Woodhouse was thronged with wayfarers, equestrian, pedestrian, and vehicularian,...and notwithstanding the price charged for admission was as high as one shilling; from two to three thousand people where upon the ground before the stumps were drawn at night.<sup>109</sup>

The organisation of the inaugural fixture in Leeds also lent heavily on existing commercial practices. Advertisements appeared in the local press in the weeks which led up to the match. Tickets, as the *Leeds Times* had pointed out, cost a rather expensive '1 shilling each day' and were available from a traditional source, namely,

...Mr P. Clark, Bull and Mouth Hotel; Mr H. Barrett; Haunch of Venison; Mr R. Broughton, Pack Horse, Woodhouse; and Mr J. Reid, Hon Sec., Guildford Street, Leeds. Ladies admitted free. Reserved seats provided for extra 6d.<sup>110</sup>

Arrangements inside the ground can also be compared to those of the early matches at Darnal. The *Leeds Intelligencer* related how 'provisions, malt liquors, wines, and spirits were dispensed at the usual charges to numerous thirsty applicants, whose sharpened appetites and thirsty palates drew them to the spot'.<sup>111</sup> But significantly, whilst no mention is made of a stake being played for, the *Leeds Intelligencer* reported that 'Betting, however, was decidedly in favour of "All England," 5 to 1 being the odds offered, their recent victory at Manchester having doubtless contributed much to create a confidence in their prowess.'<sup>112</sup> Moreover, it was reported in *Bell's Life* on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1846 that the All England Eleven match with Sheffield was to be played for a stake of '£100 a side'.

Indeed the paradoxical impact of economic development in the region was also evident. Companies offering the new forms of transport were clearly aware of the commercial possibilities which were on offer. An advert in the *Leeds Times* explained that 'Omnibuses and Cabs' would leave 'the Bull and Mouth Hotel, Briggate and Haunch of

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<sup>109</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 12/09/1846.

<sup>110</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 05/09/1846.

<sup>111</sup> See *Leeds Intelligencer* 12/09/1846.

<sup>112</sup> See *Ibid.*

Venison, Upperhead Row, EVERY HOUR, during each day of play'. whilst it was reported in the *Leeds Intelligencer* that some of the railway companies 'afforded facilities to parties wishing to be present on the occasion, by bringing them for half-price.'<sup>113</sup> The size of the crowd at the Victoria ground was also particularly revealing and, as we have seen, an attendance of 'two to three thousand' was thought worthy of mention. Even when allowing for the high price of admission, this figure provides a stark contrast with the early matches at Darnal, especially when considering that both received a similarly enthusiastic greeting in the local press. Indeed, this relatively modest attendance once again highlights the greater impact of economic change in the textile district, as the crowd for the All England Eleven match in Sheffield was said to have reached 16,000.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 05/09/1846.

<sup>114</sup> See Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p 112.

## Conclusion

The impetus commercial interests in Sheffield provided during the 1820s was clearly crucial to the first significant growth of cricket in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Although finance from private sources played an important role in raising the standard of local players, it was largely through commercial investment in the proprietor owned venues at Darnal and Hyde Park that major matches came to be staged in the region. The successful promotion of these events quickly established cricket as a popular spectator sport in Sheffield in a way that mirrored the expansion of other commercial forms of entertainment in provincial Britain during this period. For, as Cunningham established when identifying simultaneous developments in sport, drama, the pantomime and the circus, there are striking 'connections between these different forms of entertainment as part of one close knit popular culture. All these forms of entertainment were frankly commercial in nature, all aimed to attract spectators, all employed professionals.'<sup>115</sup>

The similarities between cricket in this context and other forms of contemporary entertainment remained just as resonant during the next major stage of commercial development which took place during the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

The itinerant professional teams toured the United Kingdom at around the same time as similar entrepreneurial initiatives were taking place in other popular forms of entertainment. Travelling showmen, such as Richardson, in the south, and Purvis and Wild, in the north, also took advantage of growing commercial markets in the new urban centers across provincial Britain. Indeed Clarke's experience of the major stake money challenge matches in Sheffield and Nottingham shows how, as Cunningham again recognised, these entrepreneurs were clearly 'alert to the new opportunities open in the big towns'.<sup>116</sup>

There is little doubt, therefore, that the commercial development of cricket in the West Riding of Yorkshire supports the view that continued growth in popular leisure took place throughout first half of the nineteenth century. However, the character and scale of these events also provide an important insight in to the social impact of urban industrialization. The specific characteristics which governed local economic

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<sup>115</sup> See Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, p 35.

<sup>116</sup> See Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution* p 36.

developments were more important in shaping the nature of growth than the scale of general urban industrial expansion. Consequently in Sheffield, where small production units and independent trades predominated in the metal working industry, commercial cricket took place on a greater scale than in the textile districts further north. Yet factory production did not totally dominate in the manufacture of woollen cloth or the other industries that provided some localities with a degree of economic diversity. So important commercial developments still took place in cricket around Leeds, Bradford and Huddersfield during a period in which Morris claimed 'only chapel and public house filled the gloomy gap between bear bating and the maypole on one hand and association football and the music hall on the other'.<sup>117</sup>

Indeed the distinctive commercial model that dominated elite cricket before the 1850s also had important implications for the future of the sport. Entrepreneurial proprietors such as George Smith, Thomas Lord, William Woolhouse and William Clarke may have disappeared from cricket as clubs assumed the ownership of leading grounds. But commercially run venues in the West Riding continued to provide a focal point for cricket by staging major matches that featured leading players well into the second half of the nineteenth century. Whilst the changing structure of cricket saw county and then Test matches eventually become the principal events in the sport, professional-centred commercial cricket also retained a strong presence in the region well into the 1870s. Itinerant eleven odds matches against local teams could also still be seen at grounds where first class fixtures were played during this period. As late as 1874 Parr's All England Eleven played XXVI of Bradford and District at the town's Great Horton Road ground in a benefit match for the club's longstanding professional William Wadsworth.<sup>118</sup> The fixture took place just a month after Yorkshire had played Lancashire at the same venue. However, six years earlier the United South of England XI took part in an odds match against 20 of the Sheffield Players Club at the Brammall Lane ground where Yorkshire County Cricket Club had been playing first class matches since its formation in 1863.

But perhaps more significantly, commercial necessity still dominated the structure of county cricket in the region after the 'Gentleman Amateur' constraints on the first-class

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<sup>117</sup> See Morris, R.J., *Class and Class consciousness in the Industrial Revolution 1780-1850*, Macmillan, London, 1979, p 53.

<sup>118</sup> See *Leeds Mercury*, 03/09/1874.

game effectively emasculated the sport's traditions as a spectator attraction. Yorkshire County Cricket club did not come to own a county ground until the twenty first century. So its matches continued to be staged at leading grounds in principal towns across the region which were run on a semi-commercial basis. Even the type of professional-centred commercial matches that had provided such a compelling popular attraction for cricket during the first half of the nineteenth century were being successfully staged at leading venues across the region by 1900.

In the same way the proprietors of commercial grounds had done in the first half of the nineteenth century, many clubs at different levels of West Riding cricket diversified the provision of sports to exact increased revenue from their facilities. In addition to athletics, bowls and cycling sections, which all became common place, many of the major cricket grounds also hosted some form of professional football. Rugby football, the most popular code in much of the region, was played at Fartown, Huddersfield, from 1878, Thrum Hall, Halifax, from 1886, Bradford Park Avenue, from 1880, the Savile Ground, Dewsbury, from 1881, Mount Pleasant, Batley, from 1880, and Headingley, Leeds, from its establishment in 1892. These clubs also staged first-class cricket during the nineteenth century and after 1895 their football sections became members of the newly formed Northern Rugby Union, in which commercial necessities were heightened by the need to fund professionalism.

Circumstances were slightly different in Sheffield, where Association Football was more popular. The Bramall Lane ground, which had been built in 1855 to replace Darnal and Hyde Park as the town's leading venue for cricket, was used to host the final ties of early association football knockout competitions in the 1860s. Sheffield Wednesday F.C. also used the ground before the club moved to its first permanent home in 1887. But after £574 was taken when the 1889 FA Cup semi final between Preston North End and West Bromwich Albion was held at the venue, it was decided that Bramall Lane should host football on a regular basis. Consequently, Sheffield United Football Club was formed later that year and by 1892 the club had joined the Football League. Indeed, the revenue from professional football subsequently became so important to the organisations which owned and ran these major venues that in 1887 the

*Athletic News* declared that in 'ninety-nine cases out of a hundred...football helps cricket over the stile of financial embarrassment'.<sup>119</sup>

Perhaps more surprisingly, however, the legacy of cricket's links with the general world of popular commercial entertainment could also still be seen during the last decades of the nineteenth century. As we shall see, staging major events became an important aspiration for many principal cricket clubs in smaller towns across the region. But as well as the increase in civic status that hosting leading teams of first-class cricketers could provide, the crowds that were attracted to major events represented a vital source of revenue for clubs. So more commercially driven events were also staged and whilst Elland Cricket Club hosted the Australian Tourists in 1878 and the Indian Parsees in 1886, Casey's Clown Cricketers also visited the Hullen Edge ground for a two day match in 1880. Casey's team was one of a number of similar touring sides that played matches across the region and elsewhere in England during this period. For example, the Collegian Male and Female Clown Cricketers played at Hanging Heaton in 1876, when around 3,000 people attended the match, and the 'Top Hat' Clown Cricketers played at Hebden Bridge in 1885. Dan Rice's Clown Cricketers also appeared in the region and played at Walsden in 1871 in a match that attracted 2,464 spectators who paid a total of £66 14s 2d.<sup>120</sup> The match at Elland in 1880 was somewhat less successful, however, and after rain prematurely ended the first day and ruined the second, the club lost £25 on the event. Nevertheless the *Halifax Courier* provided the following description of the remarkable events that could still take place in the sport at a time when a very different set of values were being acclaimed in the 'golden age' of amateur cricket.

Yesterday Casey's peripatetic cricketers commenced a two days match with 15 of Elland Cricket Club. One of the players, Dugwar, is a juggler and equilibrist: the rest of the Clowns do not play cricket but greatly amuse the spectators between the innings and as the game proceeds with jokes, acrobatic feats and whimsicalities. It was intended to give a grand variety of entertainment last

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<sup>119</sup> See Collins, *Rugby's Great Split*, p 102.

<sup>120</sup> See Heywoods, *Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy*, p 56, for the Walsden match., the *Hebden Bridge and Calder Valley Times* 29/07/1885, for the Hebden Bridge match and the *Dewsbury Reporter*, 22/07/1876, for the Hanging Heaton match.



evening after the wickets were drawn, a very good programme being arranged, but [with] a thunderstorm coming on at six-o'clock...the programme could not be proceeded with. There will be such an entertainment today, of course weather permitting, and we are told it is well worth seeing, with such tricks as were done yesterday during the match the spectators were greatly amused.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> See *Halifax Courier*, 07/08/1880.

## CHAPTER 3

### CRICKET CLUBS AND THE COMMUNITY

#### Introduction

The first organised sporting clubs in Britain emerged through the associational culture that grew to form a prominent and influential framework of social institutions during the long eighteenth century. Initially centred on London and the major provincial centres, the development of these voluntary associations spread outwards across British society. So by the 1730s a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* could declare 'what numbers of these sociable assemblies are subsisting.....not a town or village is without its club'.<sup>1</sup> These institutions subsequently began to play an increasingly influential role in the development of British social, economic, political and cultural life, causing Peter Clarke to suggest that 'if a British enlightenment did exist, then one of its principal engines was the Georgian voluntary society'.<sup>2</sup>

But despite their role in facilitating the transfer and development of ideas in the intellectual spheres, clubs and societies were ostensibly formed to provide leisure activities for members and their growth in numbers reflected a broadening of leisure opportunities across some sectors of society. A vibrant and at times excessive leisure culture developed in Georgian Britain and even when societies were formed through a common interest in serious matters like music, literature and the sciences, it was largely through dining and drinking at a variety of venues that meetings were convened. Indeed the opportunity to fraternise in this way with men of similar outlook and social standing played an important role in the growing impact of the voluntary organisations. Even members of the famous Lunar Society were as interested in a good dinner as they were in discussing matters of scientific and industrial progress.

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<sup>1</sup> See Clarke, Peter, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World*, Oxford University Press, 2000, p 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> See Clarke, *British Clubs and Societies*, p xi.

Of course the underlying sociability of these institutions meant that many less serious organisations were also formed, like the Ugly Face or Ugly clubs, and met for informal bouts of drinking and revelry.<sup>3</sup> Sport was another form of leisure activity which had grown in prominence during this period and, as such, provided a natural focal point for clubs and societies. Hunting, horse racing and archery clubs were formed from the middle of the century onwards and by this time cricket was firmly established at the forefront of fashionable sports. So with clubs and societies becoming increasingly popular amongst members of the same elite social group that dominated the game, dedicated organisations were an obvious progression.

Indeed, references to matches involving cricket teams which adopted some form of collective identity, can be found as early as the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For example, in 1705 the *Postman* gave notice of ‘a match at cricket’ that was to be played between ‘eleven Gentlemen of a west part of the county of Kent, against as many of Chatham, for eleven guineas a man’.<sup>4</sup> This type of fixture became relatively common over the following decades, with teams which adopted the identity of either a county or a town appearing on a relatively frequent basis in reports of matches in the press, and consequently providing many of the early references to cricket. By the end of the 1730s matches involving teams such as Dartford, London, Chertsey, Kent, Surrey and Middlesex were fairly common. However, perhaps the earliest and most vigorous representation of community identity in the form of eighteenth century cricket teams was much less well reported. As we have seen the strength of the game in rural south east England, cricket’s traditional home, meant that competitive matches between rival parishes were well under way by the beginning of the eighteenth century. But, because of their setting and the relatively humble status of the participants, written references to these matches are scarce. Nevertheless, occasional details have survived and they reveal the significance of this form of cricket as an expression of local identity that, as early as 1708, saw a Kentish farmer declare in his diary that ‘Wee beat Ash Street at Cricketts’.<sup>5</sup> Yet, in most cases, it is unlikely that many of these teams were part of a formally organised cricket club. Indeed, making the distinction between early cricket teams and cricket clubs is not an easy task. Most surviving references to early matches give little

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<sup>3</sup> See Clarke, *British Clubs and Societies*, p 71.

<sup>4</sup> See Brookes, *English Cricket*, p 25.

<sup>5</sup> See Brookes, *English Cricket*, p 24

detail about the teams that took part, other than their names. But sometimes the amount of money that had been wagered was also stated, along with the names of the men who played and an indication of their social class, which was often given by simply describing the participants as gentlemen.

However, the culture and organisation of sporting activity during this period suggests that teams were often assembled solely for individual matches rather than as a part of any permanent organisation, even when the same group of players often took part. The desire to organise and play matches was, as we have seen, almost exclusively driven by gambling and this meant that, although they were becoming more frequent, fixtures remained intermittent and depended upon specific terms being agreed for each contest. This structure of matches clearly worked against the formation of a permanent organisation, as did the prominence of aristocratic patrons who occupied a central role in the sport during its early development. It is largely through their involvement that articles of agreement, which relate to early matches, have survived and these contain eligibility regulations which, by the absence of any mention of cricket clubs, infer that such organisations were not involved in such contests. For many, working patterns were also an obstacle to the formation of clubs, as regular leisure time was needed in order to plan and attend meetings, matches and other social engagements. This was a major factor in the first professional cricketers being given jobs on the aristocratic estates to ensure their services were retained, rather than them playing in matches through any allegiance to, or employment by, a formalised club.

To complicate matters further, there is also evidence to suggest that, as well as fielding teams in major stake matches under their own name, some great patrons also adopted the name of the local parish for their cricket teams. The Duke of Richmond was strongly linked to the famous side from Slindon, the parish which lies three miles from his Goodwood estate. Moreover, when Sunbury played Kent for 30 guineas at Sunbury on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1731, Mr Edwin Stead assembled the Kent side and it is thought that Mr Andrews may have been responsible for Sunbury.<sup>6</sup> As we have seen, although the aristocratic presence largely subsided in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the

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<sup>6</sup> The rise of Slindon also coincided with the disappearance of teams that played under the direct patronage of the Duke of Richmond, i.e. the Duke of Richmond's XIs, see Brookes, *English Cricket*, p 54. For the Sunbury against Kent match see Leach, John, *By Royal Appointment: The History of Cricket 1731 to 1741*, <http://acscricket.com/Articles/3/3322.html>.

practice of teams being assembled by backers or promoters for major stake matches continued. But, although many teams that contested stake matches were not part of formally established clubs, it did not mean that the players had no sense of shared local identity. It is likely that, in similar fashion to the Sheffield sides of the 1820s, teams from places like Dartford and Croydon that played in the 1730s carried with them the prestige, support, and probably the wagers, of many members of their local community.

Nevertheless, despite the prevalence of stake matches and aristocratic patrons, as interest in cricket spread organised clubs began to be formed. In the south east of England, permanent organisations for cricket appear to have been established following participation in a series of matches by teams of cricket enthusiasts from a specific community, be it a town, village or, in the earliest and most prominent example, a city. One of the first known references to a cricket club appears in a letter about a match at Islington between Dartford and the 'London Club', which was published in the *Weekly Journal* on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1722. It came fifteen years after the first mention of a team playing under the name London appeared, in 1707, with other similar references also being found in 1718, 1719 and 1720. A similar pattern occurred with Dartford Cricket Club, the London Club's opponents in that first match. Despite around fifteen references to matches involving a Dartford team in the 1720s and 1730s alone, the first mention of a Dartford club does not appear until 1756.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, even Hambledon, which along with the MCC is the most famous of the eighteenth century clubs, seems to have been formed in similar circumstances. David Underdown has found that, although Hambledon teams were playing matches in the 1750s the first reference to a parish club does not appear until 1764, and to confuse the matter further it was often initially referred to as Squire Land's Club.<sup>8</sup>

But it is clear that in the decades which followed the first references to formal cricket clubs similar organisations became relatively common in London and the towns and villages that surround it. As well as in London, Dartford and Hambledon, clubs had been formed at Bridge Hill in Kent, Bishopsbourne, Coxheath, the Isle of Thanet, Couldston, Woburn and the Star and Garter Inn in Pall Mall, by the 1770s.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See John Leach, *In the Mists of Time The History of Cricket: 1300 – 1730*, <http://acscricket.com/Articles/3/3126.html> and *By Royal Appointment*.

<sup>8</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 127. Squire Land was the local squire.

<sup>9</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 126, 127, 144, 110, 67 and 158.

Although they begin to appear some years later, the earliest references to cricket matches in Yorkshire also suggest that clubs were not formed in the county until some time after organised matches had begun. In contrast to London and the area which surrounded it, cricket in Yorkshire had no longstanding folk tradition. The county's relatively sparse population throughout much of the eighteenth century meant that the social groups which featured strongly in early references to cricket matches, namely the landed aristocracy and the urban gentry, were not considerable. Consequently, references to cricket in the region do not appear until the 1750s and it is not until the beginning of the next century that they become relatively frequent.

But the development of the sport does follow a similar pattern to that of the south east of England, with the local gentry playing a prominent role and stake matches providing the most common form of contest. In one early match the Duke of Cleveland's XI played the Earl of Northumberland's XI at Stanwick in 1751, whilst, when Wetherby played a team from Scruton, near Catterick, for 100 guineas a side in 1797, the former side was under the patronage of the Hon. George Monson and their opponents were supported by a Mr Maillbank.<sup>10</sup> Elsewhere, matches involving groups of gentlemen from the towns of the region were also taking place. In 1765 the *London Chronicle* reported that on 'Mon se'nnight (Aug 26), the great Cricket Match was played on Chapel-town Moor between the Gentlemen of Leeds and the Gentlemen of Sheffield, and won with great difficulty by the latter'. Nine years later the 'Gentlemen of Leeds played the Gentlemen of Wakefield on the Chapel-Town-Moor, for 10 Guineas'.<sup>11</sup> By the beginning of the nineteenth century occasional matches were also being played by teams with a collective identity that reflected how the region's economic and social life, as well as its cricket, was beginning to develop a distinctive character. In 1802 the *Leeds Mercury* reported that 'a game of Crickets,....between eleven workmen employed in the factory of Messer. Smiths, Knowles, Creswick, Tate and Co. at Sheffield and eleven men employed in the factory of Messer's. Goodman, Gainsford, and Fairburn' had taken place, for a stake of 11 guineas.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See Holmes, *Yorkshire Cricket*, p 10 and p12.

<sup>11</sup> See, *London Chronicle* 05 09 1765 and Mitchell, W.R., *A History of Leeds*, Phillimore and Co. Ltd., Chichester, West Sussex, 2000, for the 1774 match.

<sup>12</sup> See, Holmes, *Yorkshire Cricket*, p13.

Still, the relative scarcity of references to cricket during the first decades of the sport's development in the region presents difficulties when attempting to trace the pattern through which early clubs were formed in Yorkshire. The first mention of a cricket club comes in 1772, when the *Derby Mercury* reported a match between the 'Sheffield Club and Nottingham Sherwood Youths'.<sup>13</sup> Cricket had certainly been played in the town before this date, and references to a match between teams from the same two towns in the previous year suggests that a similar pattern was being followed to that which saw the formation of early clubs in the south east of England. As we have seen, an intense rivalry later developed between Sheffield and Nottingham. However, matches between teams from the two towns appear to have ceased after 1772 and, with the exception of a couple of contests in 1800, were not resumed regularly until the major stake matches of the 1820s. This interlude may have resulted from the actions of the Sheffield side in the 1772 match when, after Nottingham had been bowled out for 14 in wet conditions, the home side 'ordered a large quantity of coal slack to be laid on the ground and thereby secured their running'.<sup>14</sup> But it is possible that this early Sheffield club was an ephemeral organisation which, like 'the late old club' in Leeds which the *Sheffield Mercury* reported was due to play the eleven of the Leeds new club in October 1824, only existed for a few years.<sup>15</sup>

The next reference to a cricket club in Yorkshire does not appear until twelve years after the Sheffield against Nottingham match. In 1784 a cricket club was formed in the Heworth area of York and a further twelve years later the 'York Club' played the curiously named Aurora Club at Wetherby. It is not clear whether or not these organisations were linked. But a cricket club from the city featured in a series of matches at the start of the nineteenth century, by which time more concerted activity had begun to take place. A number of other clubs also became active in the first decades of the nineteenth century, most of which were situated in the market towns to the east of the region. In 1813 the York club played the Ripon club and four years later it met a club from Knaresborough, with both matches taking place on the Knavesmire.<sup>16</sup> Elsewhere, a club was formed at Hallam, near Sheffield, in 1804 and references to a

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<sup>13</sup> See *Derby Mercury* 25/06/1772 and 11/06/1772.

<sup>14</sup> See *ibid*

<sup>15</sup> See *Sheffield Mercury*, 23/10/1824.

<sup>16</sup> See *York Courant* 06/09/1813 and *York Chronicle* 30/10/1817

Wetherby Cricket Club first appear in 1809 whilst, according to Holmes, a club was formed at Harewood in 1813. Indeed, by the end of the next decade, the spread of cricket clubs had begun to extend further across the West Riding and organisations were being formed in towns and villages where the early stages of urban industrial growth had begun, such as Leeds, Huddersfield, Dewsbury, Wakefield, Halifax, Woodhouse, Armley, Lascelles Hall and Sheffield.<sup>17</sup>

### **Early West Riding Clubs - the Gentry**

Although the initial pattern of development remains somewhat blurred, it is clear that, in both the south east of England and the West Riding of Yorkshire, cricket clubs were being established with some frequency three or four decades after their first appearance. But who were the people who formed and joined these organisations?

The answer to this question is a little clearer and it is almost certain that the early cricket clubs were formed amongst members of the gentry and aristocracy. Perhaps the most prominent indication of this can be found in the adoption of a leadership role within the game by a few select clubs in the south east of England. This mirrored the elite societies in other areas of British life, like medicine, the law and the church, which began to regulate their respective professions during the first half of the eighteenth century. The assumption of authority in cricket, however, almost certainly came through a desire to regulate gambling on the sport rather than a need to set out and maintain uniform standards for more respectable reasons. Nevertheless, as the growing popularity of cricket began to demand a degree of uniformity, written rules were first drawn up at a meeting of clubs initiated by the Star and Garter Club, in 1744. Indeed it was this organisation which led subsequent revisions before Hambledon, briefly, and then the Marylebone Cricket Club took on the responsibility.

The membership of these organisations provides obvious reasons why they were looked upon to provide leadership for the sport as all three included leading aristocrats. The members of the Star and Garter club, who presided over the Laws of the game, were fittingly described as a 'Committee of Noblemen and Gentlemen' in publications

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<sup>17</sup> See *Leeds Intelligencer* 04.09.1809 for reference to the Wetherby club and Holmes, *Yorkshire Cricket*, pp 15-17, for other examples.



of the regulations. Indeed it was also members of this high ranking organisation who eventually formed the Marylebone Cricket Club and two of its prime movers, the Earl of Wincheslea and Col the Hon Charles Lennox, also provided Thomas Lord with financial backing to open his new ground in 1787.<sup>18</sup> By this time both men were raising teams to play the Hambledon club which, in its heyday, included aristocratic members like Lord Dunkellin and Viscount Palmerston, father of the Victorian statesman, as well as the renowned patrons of eighteenth century cricket the Earl of Tankerville, and the Duke of Dorset.<sup>19</sup>

However, as the game grew more popular around the middle decades of the eighteenth century, and a number of new organisations began to appear, lesser members of the gentry were also beginning to participate in and form cricket clubs. Although specific information relating to these organisations is scarce, it is likely that members of the urban gentry rather than the high-ranking aristocracy formed the clubs in London's surrounding market towns, like Dartford, Croydon and Bromley. Some relatively detailed material about the membership of the Hambledon club is available, however, and this certainly indicates that gentlemen of relatively modest means were able to join the club, like Edward Hale, the son of a local surgeon and farmer, John Richards, the club treasurer and captain Erasmus Gower.<sup>20</sup>

It should come as no surprise that the first wave of cricket clubs was formed amongst members of the aristocracy and the gentry. For here were social groups which, as well as being well acquainted with the contemporary social and cultural conventions that were manifested in the formation of other clubs and societies, had the necessary spatial, financial and educational resources to form such organisations. Perhaps the most basic of these was regular access to free time, which was needed in order for members to meet with a frequency that made this kind of formal organisation sustainable. In contrast, available leisure time for the lower classes was largely intermittent and spread around the feasts and fairs of the agricultural and religious calendars. This clearly did not prevent professional players from participating in the sport on a regular basis. However, these men were mostly either given jobs by the aristocratic patrons of the game, to ensure they were available to play cricket, or were in relatively independent

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<sup>18</sup> See Brookes, *English Cricket*, Illustration 5.

<sup>19</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, Ch. 6 pp 126-151.

<sup>20</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, pp 131-4.

forms of employment as craftsmen, publicans, or farmers, and received due recompense for their absence from work.<sup>21</sup>

The greater access to leisure time which was enjoyed by members of the gentry clearly stemmed from their financial independence. A certain degree of expendable income was clearly required to set up and maintain such organisations, as well as to participate in their social activities, which in many cases could be rather substantial. Education was also essential as, along with managing funds, the ability to arrange fixtures and other social activities was clearly fundamental to the efficient running of a club. As we shall see, it is almost certain that people from varied social backgrounds played cricket at this time, possibly even on a relatively regular basis, But it is unlikely that any group other than the social elite would have the necessary access to these resources and the disposition to establish organisations around this form of sporting activity.

Those early references which provide some indication of the participants' social class indicate that there is also little doubt that members of the middle-class and gentry were the first people to form cricket clubs in the West Riding. York was an early centre of activity, and this reflected its position as the administrative and cultural capital of the region. The city had developed a fashionable season by the middle of the eighteenth century and, as a result, many members of the local aristocracy and gentry resided there for some part of the year.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, York became a focal point for the leisure institutions of this elite social group and a number of clubs and societies were in operation, particularly from the 1780s onwards. Although, as we have seen, it was not the earliest to be formed in the city, a cricket club became active in York during the second decade of the nineteenth century. In 1813 it played a match against the Ripon club on the Knavesmire and, the *York Courant* alluded to the social status of its members by explaining that the 'Gentlemen dined at the stand betwixt innings', before lamenting, 'we are sorry to add that Sir W.M. Milner was, by accident, prevented from playing the second innings'.<sup>23</sup> A similar event had taken place at the same venue in the city four years earlier when 'the Gentlemen of the Wetherby Club and the Gentlemen of Yorkshire' met and interest in the sport amongst the city's gentry continued to remain

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<sup>21</sup> For an analysis of professional players' employment background see Brookes, *English Cricket*, 63 –6.

<sup>22</sup> See Looney, J. Jefferson, *Cultural life in the provinces: Leeds and York, 1720-1820*, in Beier, A.L. , Cannadine, David, and Rosenheim, James M., eds., *The First Modern Society: Essays in English History in Honour of Lawrence Stone*, Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 483-510, p 488.

<sup>23</sup> See *York Courant*, 09.09 1813.

high two decades later.<sup>24</sup> On June 8<sup>th</sup> 1833 an advertisement in the *York Gazette* explained,

A Cricket club having been formed at the YORK TAVERN, any Gentlemen in York or the vicinity wishing to become members are requested to apply to Mr GEORGE SIMPSON, at the Tavern, or to MR H. RAWDON, Micklegate.<sup>25</sup>

Further south in Doncaster an even more socially prestigious organisation had been formed in 1820. On September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1823 the *York Courant* reported that a match had been played by members of the Doncaster club which, it was explained, ‘consists of nearly 100 resident or neighbouring nobility and gentry, and the present is the third season of their play’.<sup>26</sup>

Away from York and the market towns, like Ripon and Wetherby, which surround the city, the social elite had also begun to form cricket clubs around this time. The *Leeds Intelligencer* reported on 7th September 1824 that the Gentlemen of the Wakefield Club played the Gentlemen of the Leeds Club on Heath Common’ with the latter winning by ‘76 notches’, whilst similar organisations took part in a match near Sheffield three years later.<sup>27</sup> On this occasion, ‘the Gentlemen of the Rotherham Club, and the Gentlemen of the Darnal Friday Club’, met in August 1827, following which the return fixture was to be played at ‘Thribergh Park, Colonel Fullerton having kindly granted use of his ground for the occasion’.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, this was a venue at which a month earlier the spectators at a match between the Rotherham and Swinton clubs included ‘Lord Milton. M.P.; Sir Jno. Blyng; Col; Fullerton; Col. Bosville; Capt. Ramsden; S. Walker, Esq; C. Walker Esq.; besides many gentlemen.’<sup>29</sup> As we have seen, members of the gentry were also involved in newly formed cricket clubs in Sheffield during the 1820s. The ‘Amateur’s Club’, which the proprietors of the recently opened Hyde Park cricket ground looked to form in 1827, was clearly aimed at members the social elite. Moreover, the first match to be played at the venue was also the inaugural fixture for ‘Eleven Gentlemen’ of the

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<sup>24</sup> See *Leeds Intelligencer*, 04/09/1809.

<sup>25</sup> See *York Gazette* 08/06/1833.

<sup>26</sup> See *York Courant* 02/09/1823.

<sup>27</sup> See *Leeds Intelligencer*, 07/09/1824.

<sup>28</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 25/08/1827 & *Sheffield Independent*, 21/7/1827.

<sup>29</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 21/7/1827.

‘Wednesday’s Doncaster Club’ and ‘the like number from the Hyde Park Norfolk Club’.<sup>30</sup>

### **Early West Riding Clubs – the Industrial Middle and Working-classes**

By the 1820s, however, the rate of economic growth in the West Riding had already begun to pick up pace and early traces of the social and cultural changes that were to have a profound effect upon the way cricket in the region developed were becoming apparent. Large-scale economic and demographic growth saw the expansion of new social groups which reflected the region’s industrial base. By far the most influential of these was a much larger and broader middle-class, which played a pivotal role in the profound social, political and economic changes that transformed British life over the next few decades. But during the first 60 years of the nineteenth century it was also necessary for this social grouping to develop institutions through which their own social and cultural needs could be explored. This saw a wave of new voluntary associations become established in many walks of British life and these institutions helped facilitate the emergence of a set of values through which a distinctive middle-class identity was formed. As Peter Bailey has shown, largely because of the cultural norms of traditional popular recreation, sport and leisure in general, and cricket in particular, became important areas in which this discourse took place.<sup>31</sup>

Yet it seems likely that the first indication of the way in which the changing economic landscape could be reflected in the formation of cricket clubs came through the rising status of an economic group that was not directly related to the region’s industrial growth. In his *History of Yorkshire County Cricket Club 1833 – 1903*, Rev. Holmes published a set of rules from the cricket club in York that was formed in 1784. Although not providing any clear indication of their social background the rules stipulated that members should meet,

upon Heworth Moor every Tuesday and Friday morning at four ‘o’clock until the fifth day of September next for the purpose of playing Cricket, to play for one

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<sup>30</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 22/7/1826.

<sup>31</sup> See Bailey, *Leisure and Class*, pp 124-129.

penny a game and to fine three pence if not within sight of the wickets each morning before the Minster strikes five 'o'clock, every person hereafter to be admitted a member to pay one shilling.<sup>32</sup>

The relatively modest cost of membership certainly makes it unlikely that any members of this organisation were involved in the match between the gentlemen of the city and those of Doncaster two years later. Admission rates for upper class clubs and societies during this period were commonly around 4 guineas, with a further annual subscription of one or two guineas also being charged.<sup>33</sup> Fees to join middle-class organisations were also substantially more than a shilling, with one or two guineas often being paid, and even the artisan and lower rank societies charged around three shillings for admission.<sup>34</sup> Match fees were also fairly modest when compared with the 4d which was paid by journeymen and apprentices at a club on Wych Street, London for 'music and a female gratis'. However, the unusually early meeting time suggests that there was a need to fit cricket around a fixed work schedule. This was also the year in which J. Jefferson Looney has identified an increase in activity amongst the city's clubs and societies.<sup>35</sup> So perhaps, rather than members of the local gentry, the men who formed this organisation were part of the developing urban lower middle-classes, employed in occupations which reflected the City's status as the legal and administrative centre of the region.

The emergence of the Sheffield Wednesday club just over thirty years later, however, provides a much clearer indication of the region's changing social and economic complexion. Both the situation and membership of the club show that the region's emerging commercial and industrial middle-class was beginning to have an impact upon cricket. The organisation was based at Darnal and it seems likely that the club was formed amongst men who were involved in the type of commercial trades that predominated in and around Sheffield. The most famous indication of this link is provided by the club's name, Wednesday, which relates to the day of the week that, as independent tradesmen, they were regularly able to take as holiday and was consequently free for leisure activities. But in the book *Wednesday! The History of*

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<sup>32</sup> See Holmes, *Yorkshire Cricket*, illustration facing p 11.

<sup>33</sup> See Clarke, *British Clubs and Societies*, p 221.

<sup>34</sup> See Clarke, *British Clubs and Societies*, p 130.

<sup>35</sup> See Looney, *Cultural Life in the Provinces*, p 496.

*Sheffield's Oldest Football Club*, Keith Farnsworth explained that six men formed the club, amongst whom were William Henry Woolhouse, John Southern and George Hardisty, who are all included in the 'professions and trades' section of *Baines's Directory and Gazetteer Directory of 1822*. A 'Woolhouse W. H.' was listed as a 'merchant and mfr. of table knives, 2, Carver st.', which indicates that the man who became promoter of the new Darnal ground just two years later was, at this time, involved in the cutlery trade. Another entry listed 'Hardisty, George, table knife manufacturer, Rockingham St.', whilst a John Southern was 'agent for the highways, office,' at '10, Norfolk row'. But Sheffield Wednesday's links with the commercial world clearly extended beyond the background of its members and the club's close relationship with the Woolhouse managed enterprises at both Darnell and Hyde Park place it at the centre of the commercial cricket scene in Sheffield.<sup>36</sup>

Elsewhere in the region, by the 1830s and 1840s other clubs were being formed with similar relationships to the growing urban industrial centres. Indeed, although the background of its membership is less clear, a relationship that mirrored the Wednesday club's link with Woolhouse seems to have been enjoyed by the Leeds Victoria and Clarence clubs. They played regularly at the commercial cricket ground on Woodhouse Moor which shared the same name as the former club and its proprietor, Richard Cadman, took part in matches for both organisations. According to the magazine *Toby the Yorkshire Tyke*, the Leeds Clarence Club was 'the representative Club of Leeds gentlemen cricketers' before its demise in the 1880s, and it also had members who were involved in the broader commercial economy of Leeds.<sup>37</sup> In 1847 the *Leeds Times* announced that William Becket Dennison, a successful banker, whose family had built its considerable wealth through the woollen trade, had accepted the presidency of the club.<sup>38</sup>

Further west, other clubs were also being formed amongst the manufacturing middle-classes at around this time. In 1853 the *Halifax Courier* explained that a new club at Sowerby Bridge had been recently formed and was 'well patronised by the gentry and

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<sup>36</sup> For list of club members see Farnsworth, *Wednesday!*, p 7. For probable occupations of members see Baines, E., *History, Directory & Gazetteer, of the County of York. With select lists of the merchants & traders of London and the principal commercial towns of England ... The directory department by W. Parson, Volume 1. West Riding*, Baines, Leeds, 1822, p 352 for Woolhouse, p 321 for Hardisty and p 343 for Southern.

<sup>37</sup> See *Toby the Yorkshire Tyke*, 03/05/1884.

<sup>38</sup> See *Ibid*

mill owners of the neighbourhood', whilst a similarly socially prestigious organisation was established in Todmorden during the 1830s.<sup>39</sup> More detail is known about the second of these clubs because of the excellent research of the Heywoods. They examined the membership of the organisation and found that it was made up of men who were 'either employers of labour or self-employed'.<sup>40</sup> These included John and Sam Fielden, whose family owned the town's largest textile manufacturing business. Joseph Firth, a cotton spinner and manufacturer and Jeramiah Jackson, who founded a company of engineers and machine makers.

The enthusiasm for the game of Samuel Fielden, in particular, indicates that playing cricket was the most likely reason behind the establishment of the Todmorden club. Yet the relatively broad economic background of its members suggests the organisation may also have served as a locus of social formation for a rapidly expanding local middle-class. Clarke has identified that clubs and societies were 'influential in developing linkages inside urban communities, between social groups both within and (to a limited extent) across broad social alignments' during the eighteenth century.<sup>41</sup> This observation is certainly supported by Underdown's analysis of the Hambledon club membership pattern, which shows that recent arrivals in Hampshire society, professional men and those whose status was built upon new wealth, were able to both mix with each other and with members of the traditional landed elite.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, studies of two nearby towns, Leeds and Bradford, have both shown that clubs and societies played a prominent role in the development of the urban industrial middle-class during this period. R. J. Morris found that in Leeds they 'were the basis for the formation of a middle-class identity across (sic) wide status ranges' and a similar degree of social fluidity is reflected in the membership pattern of Todmorden Cricket Club.<sup>43</sup> Alongside members of the town's premier textile manufacturing family, men from the lower end of the commercial middle-classes, including two landlords, a dyer, a bookbinder, a printer and a corn miller were also members of the club.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See *Halifax Courier* 21/05/1853.

<sup>40</sup> See the Heywoods, *Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy*, p 2.

<sup>41</sup> See Clarke, *British Clubs and Societies*, p 446 and Underdown, *Start of Play*, p130-2.

<sup>42</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p130-2.

<sup>43</sup> See Morris, R. J., *Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites 1780 - 1850*, *Historical Journal*, Vol. 26, No 1, 1983, pp 95 - 118, p 93. See also Koditscheck, *Class Formation and Urban Industrial Society: Bradford 1750-1850*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, Ch. 10 and Ch. 11, pp 252-320.

<sup>44</sup> See Heywoods, *Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy*, p 2.

But there were clear limits to how far social inclusion would be extended through membership of these organisations and the fee to join the Todmorden club was 2s 6d. When combined with a further 1s per month subscription charge, this made an annual cost of 14s 6d, more than the weekly wage of a local weaver. For, as Clarke has shown, despite the relatively broad social boundaries which were encompassed by the membership patterns of these organisations, ‘voluntary associations in Georgian Britain never represented an alternative focus to established social structures’.<sup>45</sup> This is again apparent in Underdown's work on Hambledon where, despite the famously close relationship that was enjoyed between the club's aristocratic members and its professional players, the boundaries of the patrician-plebeian relationship were carefully kept. Consequently, the players, upon whose performances the stature of the Hambledon club was largely built, were excluded from membership of the club.<sup>46</sup>

The relationship between socially elite members of cricket clubs and the lower class players who they employed, therefore, reflects another of Clarke's observations. He found that such organisations, ‘assumed and incorporated elements of traditional social arrangements including status and wealth structures and patron client relationships’.<sup>47</sup> Indeed at Hambledon the general pattern of patronage that underscored class relations during this period is clearly visible through the way in which the gentry mixed with the lower classes at cricket matches as both players and spectators. However, even for the Georgian period, it was often taken to a remarkable level on occasions like the big matches at Broadhappeny Down.<sup>48</sup> Around fifty years after the great days of the Hambledon club, much of this relationship's spirit appears to have remained intact in the West Riding. The members of the Sheffield Wednesday Club evidently enjoyed a close relationship with players like Tom Marsden who, along with other professionals, such as Rollins, was sometimes described as being ‘of the Wednesday club’.<sup>49</sup> But it is likely this referred to an employment relationship, rather than any form of membership, and the status of both these players within the club is evident from a preview of the married versus single match which was played between its members in May 1828. Although both men were to play in the match, the *Sheffield Independent* report made it

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<sup>45</sup> See Clarke, *British Clubs and Societies* p 446.

<sup>46</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 128.

<sup>47</sup> See Clarke, *British Clubs and Societies*, p 446.

<sup>48</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 143 and chapter 3 pp 46-73.

<sup>49</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 07.09 1828



clear that their involvement was more as 'given' men to bolster each team than as actual members of the club. When giving details of the married team that was due to take part in the match it was explained that 'Tom Marsden, who has recently made a (match) which will last his lifetime, joins them; and Rollins is likewise taken in by the lusty bachelors to strengthen their side'.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, by the 1830s working-class professional players were able to become members of cricket clubs elsewhere in the region. Clearly, in order for working men to gain access to the resources to form cricket clubs, extraordinary circumstances were necessary, and for the two most prominent early working-class organisations these were provided by specific economic conditions. Lascelles Hall and Dalton cricket clubs were both formed in handloom weaving villages to the south east of Huddersfield. Somewhat paradoxically, handloom weavers in many sectors of the textile industry suffered a severe economic decline during the first half of the nineteenth century, which would appear to have militated against those employed in the trade participating in leisure organisations such as cricket clubs. Indeed, their plight is one of the few points of agreement in the long running historical debate over the standard of living in Britain during the early years of industrialisation. Late technological developments in the spinning process led to a considerable increase in the production of yarn during the late eighteenth century, initially placing the handloom weavers in a strong economic position. However, this was first undermined by an influx of new workers into the trade, who sought to benefit from its high wages and relatively independent working conditions, before the introduction of the power loom further compounded an already deteriorating situation.<sup>51</sup>

Yet the late mechanisation of the weaving process also proved pivotal to the formation of cricket clubs in these communities. Crucially, it meant that the handloom weaver was, as Thompson explained, 'subject to no work discipline except that of his own making' and this provided the regular free time to form and participate in the activities of cricket clubs.<sup>52</sup> The importance of such working conditions to the men who played for these cricket clubs was clearly stated by the Lascelles Hall player Allen Hill when he recalled that,

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<sup>50</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 24/05 1828

<sup>51</sup> See Thompson, E.P., *The Making of the English Working-class*, Penguin, 1980, Ch. 9, pp 297-346.

<sup>52</sup> See Thompson, *The Making of the English Working-class*, p 302.

We were all weavers, and spent half our time in playing cricket. The time we spent in practising in the daytime we made up for by sticking to the loom at night.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, the delicate nature of the yarn required to produce woollen broad cloth meant that these conditions remained well into the second half of the nineteenth century. This type of cloth was still predominantly woven by hand throughout the West Riding in 1858 and in some specialised sectors of the industry the practice continued beyond the 1870s.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the villages of Dalton and Lascelles Hall are situated to the south east of Huddersfield in an area that was dominated by specialised production and where, even in the 1880s, handloom weavers survived as ‘sturdy champions of a diminished industry’ through the demand for ‘novelties’.<sup>55</sup>

Despite the continued survival of the process, however, handloom weavers’ wages never really recovered from the slump. This again, it would seem, worked against workers in the trade gaining access to the necessary resources to form cricket clubs, such as money and a ground. In 1858 Baines’ report on the woollen industry shows that handloom weavers’ wages were considerably less than those of other textile workers. At the Waterloo Mill at Pudsey, near Leeds, around 120 were employed off the premises. They earned 14 shillings per week when spinners received 25 shillings a week, slubbers 24 and tenterers 21. Moreover, recollections of the early Lascelles Hall players also show that they often faced financial hardship. John Thewlis recounted how he played in a match for Lascelles Hall against Birkenshaw wearing a coat and explained that the opposition ‘shouted at me to doff my coat, but I was not going to show them the holes in my shirt’.<sup>56</sup>

Yet the absence of factory discipline for the handloom weavers meant that, in addition to leisure time, other sources of income could be sought, as they had traditionally been, and for many of the Lascelles Hall and Dalton players cricket provided such

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<sup>53</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p114.

<sup>54</sup> See Baines, *On the Woollen Manufacture of England*, p 4.

<sup>55</sup> See Jenkins, D.T. and Ponting, K.G., *The British Wool Textile Industry 1770-1914*, Heinemann Educational Books Pasold Research Fund, London, 1982. p 116.

<sup>56</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 42.

opportunities.<sup>57</sup> Between the 1840s and the 1880s, these two clubs provided an unprecedented number of professional cricketers. Although not formed until 1831, six years after Lascelles Hall, Dalton was the first of the two clubs to rise to prominence. Consequently, George Armitage, George, John and Joseph Berry, Andrew and Joseph Crossland, H. Boothroyd, William Kaye and Joshua Thomas were all Dalton professionals who featured in the various early teams which were assembled to represent Yorkshire. The list of professionals from Lascelles Hall is even more impressive and 21 players from the club were paid to play for teams representing Yorkshire during the course of the nineteenth century.

Most of these men found employment with the predominantly middle-class cricket clubs that were being formed across the region in the first half of the nineteenth century. However the predominance of stake match cricket also provided them with financial opportunities. The importance of this type of match as a source of income for leading players from working-class clubs was explained by the *Huddersfield Chronicle* before Dalton's £50 a side match against Sheffield in 1851, and will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4. But the Dalton club was particularly active on the stake match circuit during the late 1830s and early 1840s and enjoyed many successes. For example, it won £20 in a match against Bradford in 1842, £50 against Leeds Victoria in 1841 and 80 sovereigns was collected for winning York Cricket Club's sweepstake competition in 1845.<sup>58</sup>

But, as well as money and time, other important resources were clearly needed to form and maintain cricket clubs, and whilst little is known about the origins of the Dalton Club, the circumstances which surrounded the formation of Lascelles Hall Cricket Club owed much to traditional social relationships. According to John Jessop, who was secretary of the club from 1850 to 1880, the club was established through the patronage of the local landowner. He explained that in 1825, after they had been caught playing cricket on a piece of land which was part of the Lascelles Hall estate without permission, his father and John Hudson went to the Hall to 'beg off' where,

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<sup>57</sup> See Thompson, *The Making of the English Working-class*, p 299.

<sup>58</sup> For Dalton victories in stake money matches see *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser*, 13/08/1842, *Leeds Times* 25/09/1841 and *The Era* 10/08 1845.

They were seen by Mr and Mrs Walker, and on the latter hearing the circumstances she said, these young men seem fond of cricket. Let them have a play ground.<sup>59</sup>

The formation of the club followed later in that year and, whilst it moved to a new ground in 1866, the privilege of free tenancy was maintained by subsequent occupants of the Hall, Mr John Haigh, Mr Jesse Brierley and Mr Thomas Marriott. Indeed the Haigh family's association with the Lascelles Hall Cricket Club proved even more enduring as Walter Haigh, John Haigh's son, became one of its longest serving officials, acting as president for over 35 years.<sup>60</sup>

### **Cricket Clubs and Social Reform**

The emergence of such predominantly working-class cricket clubs as Lascelles Hall and Dalton was a precursor to the next era of the sport's development in the West Riding. The 1860s saw a dramatic increase in the number of cricket clubs in the region, and this was an important part of what Keith Sandiford has called the 'great cricket explosion'.<sup>61</sup> Much of this growth was due to changes in working patterns, which reflected the capitalist industrial economy's newly found stability. Working hours in most industries were reduced by a combination of legislative reform and increased prosperity. As we have seen, this saw regular leisure time once again become available to those lower down the social scale, enabling them to participate in activities such as cricket. So where, in June 1860 the *Leeds Times*, published details of 32 matches, which featured 50 different teams, by 1865 the same newspaper was giving the scores of 98 matches that had taken place across the West Riding in that month alone.<sup>62</sup> The rapid increase in the number of cricket teams that became active in the region during the 1860s continued and in April, May and June 1867 the *Huddersfield Examiner* published scores or reports on 209 matches that featured 107 different teams.<sup>63</sup> But, as we have

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<sup>59</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 229.

<sup>60</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 229.

<sup>61</sup> See Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, Ch 4 pp 53-80.

<sup>62</sup> For a list of the 1860 teams, see appendix 9.

<sup>63</sup> For a list of the 1867 teams, see appendix 10.

seen, resources other than time were needed to form and administer cricket clubs and, like the early eighteenth century references to cricket in southeast England, it is unlikely that many of the teams that were active during these years were ever part of a formal organisation.

Nevertheless, considerable growth in the formation of clubs did occur during this period and it was largely made possible by the kind of sponsorship that provided Lascelles Hall with its cricket ground in the 1820s. Clearly, most of the assistance that was given to enable clubs to be formed amongst the lower classes could only come from the social elite and in some cases this reflected the traditional paternalistic responsibilities of the church and the gentry. However, the social and economic ideas of the region's new middle-classes were also prominent and, as well as various forms of philanthropy, the movement for recreational reform was involved in the establishment of a wave of new socially inclusive clubs. Whilst the main thrust of these developments took place in the 1860s many of their characteristics were formed in the previous two decades.

As well as the traditional type of paternalism, which played a major role in the establishment of Lascelles Hall Cricket Club, the promotion of similar ideals by contemporary political groups could also be expressed through cricket. One of the earliest examples of this was provided by William Beckett Denison in 1847, shortly after he became president of the Leeds Clarence club. An active member of the Tory party, Beckett Dennison was also involved in social reform initiatives.<sup>64</sup> He began a movement to improve the condition of working men's lodging houses in Leeds and evidently also saw cricket as a means of improving social relations between the classes.<sup>65</sup> Following a match against Otley in 1847 the *Leeds Times* congratulated the performance of the Leeds eleven, which was made up of the club's 'youngest and smallest members-mere boys in fact', and added that,

We cannot close these remarks without observing that we wish more gentlemen would follow Mr Dennison's example, and by joining with the operatives in this

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<sup>64</sup> For Beckett Dennison's involvement in the Tory party see Roberts, Matthew, Constructing a Tory world-view: popular politics and the Conservative press in late-Victorian Leeds, *Historical Research*, Volume 79, Issue 203, February 2006, pp 115 - 143, p 121, footnote no. 24.

<sup>65</sup> See Tam, J.N., *Five Per Cent Philanthropy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1973, p 33.

healthy and manly game, promote that general good feeling which such conduct invariably generates.<sup>66</sup>

By promoting social inclusion through cricket, instead of simply offering some form of sponsorship, this initiative leant heavily on the paternalistic sentiments of the Young England movement that came to the fore in the 1840s. Led by the Tory activists Lord John Manners and the young Benjamin Disraeli, the movement looked back to a romantic vision of feudal England in which social harmony was maintained by the paternalism of church and aristocracy.

Despite the rigid social relations which came to be articulated through the game, the view that many of these ideals had been characterised in cricket throughout its long history was a popular part of the rhetoric which surrounded the sport for much of the nineteenth century and beyond.<sup>67</sup> Indeed similar sentiments were expressed towards cricket some time before the ideology of this particular political movement had been fully formed. In its report on a match between Eleven of All England and Twenty Two of the Sheffield and Leicester clubs in the September 1826, a writer in the Benthamite *Sheffield Independent* somewhat surprisingly declared,

The manners of the times have justly been termed superficial and with infinite satisfaction do we hail the restoration of these popular pastimes that were common to our countrymen when the reproach of having artificial manners would not (as the poet laureate says) stick. These amusements, and particularly the game of cricket, bring the different states of society to one common but pleasing level. They cause a friendly collision between those who are rich by inheritance and those who exist by their labour and as the latter are raised to a personal participation in the sports of their fortunate neighbours, they obtain some portion of content and raise themselves a little higher in the scale of independence.<sup>68</sup>

This view, however, reflected traditional Tory values rather than the ideals of the ‘‘Muscular Christian’’ movement that Pycroft later espoused. Consequently the match

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<sup>66</sup> See, *Leeds Times*, 12/07/1847.

<sup>67</sup> See Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p 43 and *Illustrated London News*, 25/09/1858.

<sup>68</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 02/09/1826.

in question was played for a stake of 400 sovereigns and no doubt attracted the same considerable amount of betting that, as we shall see, was reported on similar occasions during this period. Indeed, it would seem, this romanticised view of the sport added a political dimension to West Riding cricket during the middle decades of the nineteenth century as a number of teams with the epithet 'Young England' became active. For example, the Holbeck Young England club played a match against Leeds Albion in 1847. Wakefield Young England and Leeds Young England also played in matches around this time and a host of other similarly named clubs were formed in the 1860s.<sup>69</sup>

On the surface at least, however, the perceived improving qualities that Pycroft had ascribed to cricket were reflected in the increasing involvement of social reform groups that looked to encourage different strands of rational recreation amongst the working-classes. The Temperance Movement was one of the earliest secular reform bodies to form an association with cricket. As we have seen, the *Leeds Times* reported on a match between the Halifax Albion and Temperance Clubs in 1841 and according to 'King Willow's Haunts', a regular feature about the history of local clubs in the *Huddersfield Examiner* during 1932, the Holmfirth Temperance club was playing matches in the 1850s.<sup>70</sup> But the earliest secular reform organisations to form cricket clubs in any number were the Mechanic's Institutes. Both Brighouse and Holmfirth Mechanics' Institutes established cricket clubs in 1849, whilst in 1852 the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics Institutes' Report explained that at 'the Ossett, Bramley and Morley Institutes, cricket clubs are either established or in contemplation'.<sup>71</sup> This example was followed by a variety of similar organisations over the next two decades and the Carlton Working Men's club was formed in 1860, whilst the Triangle Reading Room formed a cricket club in 1862.

As was the case elsewhere in England, non-secular bodies enjoyed an even stronger relationship with cricket.<sup>72</sup> Although the main thrust of their involvement in the sport did not come until the last third of the nineteenth century, one notable exception, it appears, was the Pudsey St Lawrence cricket club. Whilst no specific evidence exists of the link, the adoption of the local Anglican Church's name and the situation of its home

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<sup>69</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 07/08/1847, 06/09/1856 and 22/9/1849.

<sup>70</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 18/09/1841 and *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 11/06/1932.

<sup>71</sup> See the *Twelfth Annual Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes*, 1849, p 30 and p 43, and the *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes*, 1852, p. 18.

<sup>72</sup> See Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, Ch. 3, pp 34-53.

ground, which was for a number of years in a field behind the church, strongly suggests that some form of relationship existed between the two organisations. Nevertheless, by the middle years of the 1860s many more clubs had been formed through links with religious organisations. Another famous example was the Huddersfield St John's club, which was formed in 1866 by Rev. W.E. Owen of St John's Church in Huddersfield. As we shall see, it later joined with the local football and athletic clubs to become one of the premier sporting organisations in the region. Moreover, by the middle of the 1860s the association between church and cricket was beginning to take off. Although it is unlikely that all were at this point, or even later, formalised clubs, Morley St Peter's, St John's Hillhouse, Moldgreen Christ Church, Robertstown All Saints, Lockwood Rohoboth Church Choir and Calverley St Wilfred's featured in matches during that decade.<sup>73</sup>

A later, but equally important, source of sponsorship, which enabled cricket clubs to be formed across the West Riding, came from the region's employers. Works cricket teams had, as we have seen, been involved in matches across the region since the start of the nineteenth century and over the course of the next 60 years many employers provided the facilities and finances that enabled clubs to be formed. Some, like the Fielden family in Todmorden, took an active interest in local cricket, and provided assistance to clubs that represented the community in which their businesses were based. After the initial organisation had lapsed some time in the early 1840s, moves to re-form the Todmorden club followed the Fieldens acquisition of the Centre Vale estate, which included the old club's home ground. In 1849 Samuel Fielden became chairman, and later president, of a new organisation which was made more socially inclusive by a significant reduction in subscription charges. Consequently, membership was made available to men such as George Brown and James Crossley, both power-loom weavers, John Davies, an iron moulder, Joseph Schofield, a smith and farrier, and Robert Lord, a machine turner and fitter.<sup>74</sup> This type of informal support for cricket clubs from local mill owners was also provided by the Brookes family at both Honley and Armitage Bridge, near Huddersfield, during the same period.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> For Calverley St Wilfred's see the *Leeds Times*, 20 05/1865. All the other teams played matches which were reported in the *Huddersfield Examiner* during April May and June 1867, see Appendix 10.

<sup>74</sup> For details of the Fielden families involvement in Todmorden Cricket Club see Heywoods, *Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy*, especially Ch 2, pp 20–31 and for membership details in 1849 p 21.

<sup>75</sup> See *Armitage Bridge Cricket Club 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Brochure 1839–1989*, Self Published, 1989, p 13.



Other employers, however, gave less anonymous assistance, and clubs were formed as part of the companies, which helped to found them. This form of club did not become relatively common until after the large-scale expansion of recreational cricket took place in the 1860s. So whilst matches between teams such as Messer's Milligan, Forbes & Co and Messer's Lockwood Lupton & Co, took place in the 1850s, it is unlikely that the participants were part of a formalised cricket club.<sup>76</sup> One possible exception is Meltham Mills Cricket Club, which was playing matches in the 1850s. However, despite the club's name, no details survive about either its formation or links to the local silk mill, which was owned by the Brooks family. Nevertheless, by the start of the 1860s clubs like Shelf Dye Works, which had its own ground, began to be formed.<sup>77</sup>

But the growth of ideas relating to recreational and temperance reform did not prevent clubs from being formed through the sport's more traditional cultural associations. We have seen how, as far back as the 1740s, landlords such as George Smith of the Pyed Horse in Finsbury were actively promoting cricket matches at the venues they managed and that the rapidly rising status of Sheffield cricket in the 1820s owed much to investment from the drinks trade. Indeed, the close association of the Sheffield Wednesday club with both Darnal cricket ground and William Woolhouse suggest a link was forged between the club and the Cricket House Inn, from which Woolhouse ran the venue. There were clearly also sound commercial reasons for those public houses that didn't own and rent out a cricket ground to actively encourage the formation of clubs. Financial benefits could be gained from accommodating these organisations, and the public house had already become well established as a meeting place for other forms of clubs and societies by the end of the eighteenth century. Once again, support for cricket clubs was given in both formal and informal ways. The York Tavern was evidently keen to encourage the formation of a new cricket club at a meeting which it hosted in June 1833, whilst in the following year a report in the *York Courant* explained that the Dewsbury Cricket Club was based at the New Inn.<sup>78</sup> However, other cricket clubs were formed following more direct involvement from public houses and in July 1834 the *York Courant* reported on a match between the Leeds Union and Geldard Arms public houses.

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<sup>76</sup> See *Leeds Intelligencer*, 14/06/1856 and 09/08/1856.

<sup>77</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 29/08/1863.

<sup>78</sup> See *York Gazette* 08/06/1833 and *York Courant* 03/07/1834.

Yet, in addition to the public houses, other organisations did not necessarily provide resources for cricket clubs simply because they saw the sport as a force for social harmony and self-elevation. Self-interest was often an equal if not more influential motivation amongst social reform groups. The Mechanics Institutes saw the provision of cricket clubs for their members more as a necessary contingency in order to maintain working-class interest in their organisations than any serious attempt to disseminate new ideas through sport. The institutes were specifically aimed at encouraging the doctrine of self-help amongst the working-class, chiefly by offering educational opportunities. But, as Koditscheck has found in Bradford, the middle-class originators of some institutes also saw them ‘as an agency for the diffusion of their rationalistic culture to the urban working-classes’ and this was reflected in the types of activities that were held.<sup>79</sup> Sport was seen as a part of the old ‘rough’ and disorderly popular culture which the Institutes hoped to dismantle and cricket was not yet infused with the ‘gentleman amateur’ values through which it came to be accepted by rational middle-class society in the 1870s and 1880s. The blend of lectures and musical recitals which were offered by the institutes often proved unpopular with their prospective members. Indeed the Yorkshire Mechanics Union annual meeting in 1852 discussed ‘whether there are not defects in the Institutions themselves, which prevent them attracting within their walls those whom it is pre-eminently desirable to reach.’<sup>80</sup>

Consequently, the formation of several Mechanics Institute clubs was clearly an early example of what Cunningham viewed as the realisation amongst ‘voluntary organisations founded to promote religion or education (sic) that in order to survive and grow they had to offer leisure to their members’.<sup>81</sup> The Holbeck Institute’s annual report of 1863 explained how,

A cricket club was started last summer and was very successful. An entrance fee of not less than one shilling was charged and we had more than 60 members and raised better than £6. Our cricket club had a very salutary effect on the Institute by bringing together and binding more closely many of the members.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> See Koditscheck, *Class Formation and Urban Industrial Society*, p 311.

<sup>80</sup> See *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics’ Institutes*, 1852, p 14, p 16, p 17 and p 18.

<sup>81</sup> See Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, p 178.

<sup>82</sup> See *Twenty Sixth Annual Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics’ Institutes*, 1863, p 101.

The success of this and other organisations was quickly recognised, and at the Yorkshire Mechanics Union Annual Report of the same year it was noted that,

The national game of cricket appears to have been the most popular amusement, and in places where local circumstances have been favourable, and a good field has been obtained, perfect satisfaction has been given by this experiment. The cricket field is governed by the committee, and great decorum and a fair reasonable amount of restraint exercised. It certainly seems unwise that the members of the village Institutions should discontinue their acquaintance during the summer, or only maintain it by meetings at street corners.<sup>83</sup>

But although cricket clearly proved a successful addition to the activities of these organisations, it was evidently felt that appropriate standards of behaviour could not be disseminated through participation in the sport alone. Indeed the report gave no indication that cricket was seen a viable means through which working-class reform could be achieved. Instead, the sport's usefulness was measured in practical terms and it was noted that,

A certain large amount of labour is necessary to reenlist the members when the winter sets in and the institution reopened to full activity, and a considerable amount of effort is lost which would be very valuable and more profitably expended on the working of the society.

By means of a cricket club a link is established between the educational seasons, and the acquaintance formed on the cricket field may ripen into friendship at the desk in the classroom of the Mechanics Institution. Many Institutions have made the experiment in the past year with unqualified satisfaction.<sup>84</sup>

Still, the choice of cricket as a suitable leisure activity for members of social reform organisations did indicate that the sport was viewed to hold some salutary values over

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<sup>83</sup> See *Twenty Sixth Annual Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes*, 1863, p 13 and p 14.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

other traditional forms of recreation. The Holbeck Mechanics Institute annual report explained,

An attempt was made to establish a gymnastic class for the practice of single stick, boxing, &c., but the committee of the Institution did not think proper to sanction.<sup>85</sup>

The rhetoric that was used to justify the formation of Triangle Reading Room's new cricket club in 1862 went even further and ascribed some moral value to the sport. An article about the establishment of this club, which appeared in the August 1862 edition of the *Sowerby Magazine*, declared that, whilst cricket was relatively new to the area,

feeling its characteristics are a fine and healthy exercise in the open air, we feel certain that it only needs to be known in order that it may be duly appreciated by the youth of this neighbourhood. There is most undoubtedly a vast moral good to be achieved by the introduction of this game and partly for this reason: that it necessarily prevents any addiction to intoxication because those who wish to excel must altogether eschew excess.

We believe it to be in every way calculated to foster regular and steady habits.

But the organisation's interest in cricket was also self-serving and the article explained that membership was restricted so 'none can be members who are not also members of the Triangle Reading Room.'<sup>86</sup>

There were also a variety of reasons for employers to encourage the establishment of cricket clubs amongst members of their workforce. No doubt some, who provided sponsorship for cricket clubs, either formally or informally, were genuine philanthropists and saw the game as an opportunity to provide their workers with recreational activities which would improve their physical health and morale. Indeed, Titus Salt, one of the most famous mid-nineteenth century philanthropic employers, encouraged his workers to form a cricket club in 1869 by providing a ground in Roberts Park, the recreational area which he had also set up for his workforce.

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<sup>85</sup> See *Twenty sixth Annual Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes*, 1863, p 101.

<sup>86</sup> See *The Sowerby Magazine*, August 1862.

But taking an interest in the leisure activities of the workforce was also a way of guarding against the traditional mores of popular pre-modern recreation. Despite the rhetoric which was beginning to surround the sport, as we have seen cricket had traditionally been accompanied by drinking, gambling and absenteeism, for unofficial holidays, such as St Monday. The establishment of a formal club with its own rules, regulations and a fixture list enabled employers to exercise some control over when workers played cricket and how they behaved, which could, in turn, reinforce the new discipline of the workplace. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Salt's strict opposition to drink was also applied to the recreational institutions he provided for his workforce and no alcohol was allowed on the club ground.

Moreover, despite the impact of 'Muscular Christianity, even the non-secular movement for social improvement also viewed cricket clubs as a means through which their own interests could be advanced. It was not unusual for access to church or chapel cricket clubs to also be restricted in order to increase membership of the parent organisation. The rules of both the Honley Church and Illingworth St Mary's clubs included regulations of this kind and rule 3 of the latter organisation stated that 'no person be admitted as a member of the Club unless he be a 'teacher or scholar in St Mary's Sunday School or a member of the Congregation of that Church.'<sup>87</sup>

### **The Character of West Riding Cricket Clubs – Sociability, Competition and Community Identity**

There is little doubt that, during the first 60 years of the nineteenth century, both the formation and membership patterns of cricket clubs in the West Riding reflected the changing economic and social conditions that dominated the region. However, it is important to examine what effect the involvement of men from changing social and economic backgrounds had upon the character of these organisations. Here again the primary source material is far from comprehensive. But a great deal can be revealed by examining the types of matches and other activities in which clubs were involved.

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<sup>87</sup> See O'Keefe, Dennis, *Start of Play: The Foundation and Progression of Illingworth St Mary's Cricket Club c. 1884-c. 1920*, Cricket Heritage Publications, 2007, appendix 2, p 62-3.

The type of sociability that pervaded throughout Georgian associational culture was an important function of many eighteenth-century cricket clubs. As well as the major stake money matches, which could be accompanied by the type of ‘high feasting’ that Nyren immortalised, many of the Hambledon club’s activities were specifically held in order for the members to socialise. Three dozen bottles of claret were ordered for the club’s annual dinner in 1784 and fines for not observing the correct decorum at meetings were paid in wine, with a bottle of claret providing the going rate for a single offence. For most club members participation in the sport also seems to have taken place on a social footing and ‘pick up’ matches, in which they played against each other, rather than against opponents from outside the club often took place.<sup>88</sup> This was fairly common in the southeast of England in the eighteenth century and other clubs, like Coxheath, Bridge Hill and the Sudbury ‘cricket society’ staged similar matches on a regular basis, with professionals often being employed to raise the standard of play and possibly provide instruction. These events, too, were often social occasions and at Coxheath dinner was laid on at a cost of 2s for members and 3s for non-members. Professionals were also charged the higher rate, although they received expenses for horse hire, 1s 6d for food and drink, and a payment of 5s, if on the winning side, 2s 6d if they lost.

As we briefly saw in chapter 1, similar sociable occasions were also common amongst the clubs that were established amongst members of the West Riding social elite during the early decades of the nineteenth century. In September 1823 the Doncaster cricket club which, according to the *York Courant* consisted of ‘nearly 100 resident or neighbouring nobility and gentry’, staged a match ‘between eleven married gentlemen and eleven bachelors, members of the club.’<sup>89</sup> However, such events were also held by the clubs whose members came from the region’s emerging manufacturing middle-classes. In the 1820s and 1830s the Sheffield Wednesday club staged many matches at Darnal and Hyde Park in which only its members took part. Married versus single was probably the most common means of convening the sides, although in July 1833 the players whose names began with letters from the first half of the alphabet played against those whose names started with letters from the second half.<sup>90</sup> In October 1842 the

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<sup>88</sup> See Underdown, *The Start of Play*, p 126-7.

<sup>89</sup> See *York Courant*, 02.09.1823.

<sup>90</sup> For an example of a Sheffield Wednesday club Married v Single match see *Bell’s Life* 15.06/1828 and *Sheffield Independent* 06.07/1833 for players whose names began with letters from the first half of the alphabet against those whose names started with letters from the second half.

Halifax Cricket Club also concluded its season with a Married versus Single match whilst, towards the end of that decade, the recently formed and socially exclusive Keighley Cricket Club held ten field days on which matches were played amongst club members.<sup>91</sup> Around a decade later, the new cricket club in Todmorden also placed the emphasis of its activity on participation amongst the members. A set of rules was adopted at the 1839 AGM which stated that 'Saturday be the general Field Day' and 'Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays be the Playing Days'. In contrast, matches against other clubs were far less frequent and the committee was given 'power to fix days on when Matches shall be played (not oftener than once a month)'.<sup>92</sup>

These predominantly middle-class cricket clubs were beginning to act in a way which underscores some of the views of Morris and Koditscheck about the role of voluntary associations in class formation amongst the developing industrial communities in the region during this period. Koditscheck found that around this time middle-class recreational organisations in Bradford, 'were practising the skills (sic) of social harmonization that the new associational culture generally required.'<sup>93</sup> Indeed the activities that West Riding cricket clubs staged away from the cricket field seem to have served a similar function. Dining, in particular, was a prominent pastime and occasions like the Wednesday club's opening dinner of the 1829 season, which was staged at Darnal in May, were common. It was reported that, at this event, 'forty members, with Mr Dawson, their president, sat down to a well supplied table.'<sup>94</sup> Contemporary etiquette for this type of occasion was also probably followed as, at a similar event to mark the end of the 1827 season, the 'chair was filled by Mr G.E. Dawson who, in a very neat speech, testified the many obligations the lovers of cricket owed to Mr George Steer'.<sup>95</sup>

In the same way that Collins has found in relation to twentieth-century rugby union, middle-class cricket clubs in the West Riding were focused as much on providing a 'nodal point in a social network' as offering opportunities for their members to play

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<sup>91</sup> See Keighley Cricket Club, *The Jubilee of the Lawkholme Ground*, pp 3-7.

<sup>92</sup> See Heywoods, *Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy*, p 9

<sup>93</sup> See Koditscheck, *Class Formation and Urban Industrial Society*, p 297.

<sup>94</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 30 05 1829.

<sup>95</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 13/10/1827.

sport.<sup>96</sup> Consequently, from the end of the 1820s onwards social links were clearly being forged at matches between clubs from across the region. As we have seen, by the end of the 1820s, the Sheffield Wednesday club was involved in a number of sociable events with clubs of similar standing. Two years before its close relationship with the Ripon Friendly was formed, the *Sheffield Independent* noted how after a match against the Hyde Park Morning Club ‘both parties sat down to an excellent dinner at the King’s Head.’<sup>97</sup> As growing numbers of cricket clubs were formed further north in the region over the next two decades similar relationships were developed. After the Halifax Clarence played the Leeds Old Club in April 1840,

The two clubs adjourned to the Crown and Anchor, where the greatest good feeling and harmony prevailed, and when the time arrived for the Leeds players to return home, it was not without feelings of regret they departed.<sup>98</sup>

The clubs that emerged in the working-class communities of the West Riding, however, differed markedly from their middle-class counterparts. Although, no doubt, a strong sense of camaraderie existed amongst their players and supporters, there is nothing to suggest that clubs such as Dalton and Lascelles Hall ever staged events that were specifically aimed at developing social relationships in this way. As Collins has also noted ‘sports clubs played different roles in working- and middle-class communities.’<sup>99</sup> Both Dalton and Lascelles Hall were clearly driven by the competitive dynamic of stake money challenge matches and this in part reflected the financial needs of working-class players. But, as we have seen, these clubs also provided a focal point for the expression of local identity, which mirrored that of the parish teams in rural south east England during the eighteenth century. Consequently it was these meanings that the distinctive and partisan local following which was often present at Lascelles Hall matches attached to cricket. For, as Luke Greenwood remembered, the ‘old weavers’

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<sup>96</sup> See Collins, Tony, *Rugby League in Twentieth Century Britain: A Social and Cultural History*, Routledge, London, 2006, p 36.

<sup>97</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 29.9.1827.

<sup>98</sup> See *Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser*, 04.09.1840.

<sup>99</sup> See Collins, *Rugby League in Twentieth Century Britain*, p 36.



...used to put their money down on us like bricks...How (sic) they...used to follow Cricket! There was a glee party among them who always came to the matches in Yorkshire. They would put up at the nearest 'pub' to the ground, and if we were batting and doing well the crowd always heard their music round the field. If things went wrong they kept quietly to the parlour bar.<sup>100</sup>

Clearly, cricket in this context contrasted fundamentally with the innate sociability of contemporary middle-class clubs, which could evidently transgress the result of matches in which they played. Indeed, Dalton enjoyed even more partisan support for a match for £40 against Sheffield in 1842. According to H. Sykes, the Dalton secretary, a disputed run out decision was given by the Sheffield umpire following which 'the spectators rushed in, and contended that G. Berry was not out'. The match was played in a particularly intense atmosphere and Mr Sykes rather clumsily explained,

circumstances was too glaring even for the most cool observer, which I'm sorry to say ended as foul play, once begun, generally does, particularly in an open field where the spectators cannot always be governed, especially when they are very numerous, as was the case here, there not being less than seven or eight thousand persons present all of whom appeared to take great interest in the game.<sup>101</sup>

No doubt gambling played an important role in the incident. But this only underlines how far elements of traditional popular culture, such as gambling, drink and crowd intervention, remained integral to the cultural identity of working-class communities like Lascelles Hall and Dalton during the first half of the nineteenth century.

As we have seen, gambling, in particular, remained an intrinsic part of cricket in the West Riding during the first half of the nineteenth century and, this was not just in the major commercial matches or those involving predominantly working-class clubs. In addition to their social functions, the clubs that were formed amongst the region's traditional social elite also played matches for stake money. Indeed the circuit of stake match cricket that developed in the industrial districts during the 1830s and 1840s was to some extent predated by similar matches between clubs that were formed by the

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<sup>100</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 33.

<sup>101</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 26 06 1842.

gentry in rural towns further east. The 'Gentlemen of the Wetherby Club' played the 'Gentlemen of All Yorkshire' in 1809 for '100 guineas a side, whilst in 1816 the Ripon and Nottingham clubs played on the Knavesmire, York, for 150 guineas.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, a notice in the *York Courant* on June 17<sup>th</sup> 1828, suggests that playing for stake money was a relatively common practice at this time. The newspaper reported how it 'was expected that the Ripon and Knaresborough clubs should have contended at Harrogate, yesterday, but the Ripon gentlemen have declined and have paid *the forfeit* of the deposit.'<sup>103</sup>

Some early clubs also embraced the type of major commercial stake matches that became incredibly popular at the proprietor owned venues in Sheffield. In 1817 the Ripon club gave Nottingham 20 guineas in expenses to play them in a match on the Knavesmire, York, which was an established venue for commercial sporting events. As well as the major matches that were played for money, other reports on cricket in the press reveal that betting on fixtures involving the region's socially prestigious clubs was also common. When the gentlemen of the Wetherby club played Yorkshire in 1809 the *York Courant* explained, at the 'commencement betting was rather in favour of the Yorkshire Gentlemen, the odds were 10 to 1 that they won'.<sup>104</sup> Eight years later more generous odds were offered during the course of the Knaresborough club's defeat at the hands of the York club when, 'after York's second innings...the bets were 20 to 1 in favour of Knaresborough'.<sup>105</sup> A much tighter match, however, was played between gentlemen's clubs from Leeds and Wakefield in 1826 when, the *York Courant* reported that, after the first innings,

the superiority remained on the side of the Wakefield youths, and betting ran five to four in their favour, but in the second, the tide turned against them and the Leeds players were declared victors with four wickets to go down.<sup>106</sup>

These matches clearly show how the recreational culture that pervaded amongst the eighteenth-century gentry continued to prevail as late as the 1820s. The values which later in the century came to represent a distinctive middle-class conception of sport, had

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<sup>102</sup> See *Leeds Intelligencer*, 04 09 1809 and *York Courant*, 22/7/1816.

<sup>103</sup> See *York Courant*, 17.06'1828.

<sup>104</sup> See *Leeds Intelligencer*, 04 09 1809.

<sup>105</sup> See *York Chronicle*, 30/10 1817.

<sup>106</sup> See *York Courant*, 08 08 1826.

not yet been invested in cricket. Although, as we have seen, the sport was beginning to attract the kind of rhetoric which ascribed to it some broader social and cultural meaning, this did not yet encompass the kind of moral values that were typified by James Pycroft in *The Cricket Field*, which was published in 1851. Gambling on cricket remained widely accepted amongst the social elite during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Bookmakers were not banned from Lord's until the 1820s, and even this measure, it seems, was more a reaction to allegations of corruption than a reflection of any change in the moral climate.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, rules for settling bets on cricket were included in the MCC laws until the 1884 revision.<sup>108</sup>

This resulted in a compelling interplay between traditional forms of cultural expression and the new values that were being ascribed to cricket which, for a time, gave West Riding cricket the compelling air of ambiguity that was evident in chapter 1. It was perhaps most vividly apparent in the activities of leading middle-class clubs during the first half of the nineteenth century as a number of such organisations participated in events which, to later observers, appear to contradict fundamentally the accepted cultural meanings of the sport. The clubs in Ripon, York and Wetherby that played in competitive matches for money during the 1820s were also contesting similar fixtures against clubs from the manufacturing districts by the end of that decade. Indeed when the somewhat inappropriately named Ripon Friendly Club met Sheffield Wednesday '(certain players excluded)' in the match which began their convivial relationship a purse of 90 sovereigns was at stake.<sup>109</sup>

These cultural dynamics were also apparent in the cricket club which was formed at Keighley in 1848. As we also saw in chapter 1, this organisation was particularly sensitive to the sport's competitive traditions, and they were even placed on a formal footing in its rules. On general field nights, matches amongst the members took place for either 2d per man or, occasionally, 1s a man, whilst the stake on practice nights was 1d per man, with the winnings in each case going to club funds.<sup>110</sup> Yet, these activities suggest that the club was focused primarily upon providing sociable opportunities for its members. A degree of exclusivity was also maintained by a 2s. 6d entrance fee, along

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<sup>107</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 165.

<sup>108</sup> See Woodcock, John, Ed., *Wisden Cricketers Almanack 1981*, p 132.

<sup>109</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 22-8 1829.

<sup>110</sup> See Keighley Cricket Club, *The Jubilee of the Lawkholme Ground*, pp 4-6.

with an annual subscription of 7s. 6d, and an honorary membership fee of 10s. 6d and particularly strict standards of behaviour were set by the club rules. Any member who took the field in a state of intoxication was to be fined 1s. for the first offence, and excluded from the club in the case of another occurrence, whilst anyone deemed responsible for a disturbance on the field by the majority of those present was fined 3d.

But more significantly, the close links that clearly existed between the continued prevalence of gambling during the first half of the nineteenth century and the competitive dynamics of West Riding cricket had important consequences for the future development of leading clubs in the region. The emergence of a generation of clubs in the major towns during the 1830s and 1840s saw competition intensify further. Although there is little evidence relating to the social background of their membership, these new organisations were almost certainly led by members of the commercial middle-classes. Clubs like Leeds Victoria, Halifax Clarence and Bradford all appear to have developed in a similar way to the Sheffield Wednesday club and were linked to venues on which commercial matches were staged. Moreover, by adopting the identity of leading towns and staging events that received a high media profile they also assumed a prestigious persona, which would have been beyond any predominantly working-class organisation.

Dalton and Lascelles Hall were clearly exceptions. But the way in which their inclusion in the stake match circuit was based upon an exceptional ability to develop professional players points to another significant development which was to have important consequences for the future shape of the sport in the region. The engagement of professional players was common practice during this period as clubs sought to compete in important matches. Although, in time, this practice led to permanent professional engagements, initially the relationship between clubs and leading players is less clear. Through men like Woolhouse and Marsden, a strong link undoubtedly existed between the Sheffield match play team and the Wednesday club, and this may have been established on a formal footing along the lines of that which the proprietors of the Hyde Park ground were attempting to set up in 1827. But many clubs simply followed the precedent that had been set by cricket's eighteenth century aristocratic patrons and engaged professionals for individual matches. This practice saw leading players from Dalton appearing for a number of clubs during the 1830s and 1840s and will be

discussed in more detail later. But George Berry, for example, played for Otley against Leeds Wellington in 1846 and for Huddersfield Gentlemen against Harewood five years later.<sup>111</sup> Neither of these matches was played for stake money, which provides an even greater demonstration of the competitive rivalries that existed between these types of clubs. Nevertheless, the employment of professionals by clubs for major stake matches signalled the transition from the match-play teams that were assembled for specific fixtures to the establishment of leading cricket clubs in the region's principal towns. As we have seen, the emergence of these organisations also reflected the sense of prestige and civic pride which was becoming a prominent feature across the region. Like the stake matches in which they played, most of these original clubs had disappeared by the last third of the nineteenth century. But they were replaced by a generation of organisations that not only maintained these traditions of competitive rivalry, but found new ways of expressing them in modern capitalist society.

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<sup>111</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 05/09/1846 and *Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser*, 05/07/1851.

## Conclusion

The unprecedented economic and social changes that shaped the West Riding during the nineteenth century clearly had a fundamental impact upon cricket clubs in the region. Their geographical pattern and social character was closely linked to the availability of resources that were required to organise and play the sport on a regular basis. So whilst the formation of early clubs was centred upon the gentry in market towns, the rapid growth of the industrial economy in the first half of the nineteenth century saw similar organisations become established amongst new social groups in the region's developing manufacturing centres. The urban industrial middle-class initially formed exclusive organisations to suit their own social and recreational needs. But, as access to leisure time spread, attention was increasingly drawn towards providing opportunities for working-class participation in the sport.

Consequently, the new style of socially inclusive cricket clubs that became common across the region from the 1850s onwards provide an important insight into the question of recreational reform that historians, such as Bailey and Cunningham, have addressed.<sup>112</sup> Middle-class involvement in these organisations was not solely motivated by a compulsion to reform working-class leisure. Traditional forms of patronage and self-interest played an equally significant role in the sponsorship of new clubs. Local landowners often looked to the sport as a means of improving the well-being of the community and provided land and other resources that enabled clubs to be formed. It is likely that the involvement of employers in local clubs could reflect a similar sense of duty. Yet, their support also reinforced the new concept of rationalised leisure time amongst a workforce that had previously associated cricket and other recreations with unregulated working practices such as Saint Monday. Most significantly, however, despite the rhetoric that surrounded the sport, both secular and non-secular reform institutions appear to have seen cricket more as a means of increasing dwindling membership numbers than disseminating any perceived improving qualities the sport may have offered.

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<sup>112</sup> See Bailey, *Leisure and Class*, p 139 and Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, p 10.

There is even less evidence to suggest that working-class compliance with secular and non-secular reform institutions in the formation of cricket clubs was anything more than a matter of necessity. As Cunningham established in relation to other activities,

the leisure provided by voluntary organisations was shaped as much by the demands of the members as the ideologies of the suppliers...this seems to have been the case with some of the early chapel-based football teams...people wanted to play football and were not fussy under whose auspices they played it'.<sup>113</sup>

Indeed, there is also evidence to suggest that the initiative to offer such activities came primarily from working-class members of reform institutions themselves. In 1852 the annual report of Holbeck Mechanics Institute also explained how 'Many young members of our Institute call earnestly for means of amusement and physical exercise.'<sup>114</sup> Moreover, in many cases links with founding institutions were severed when independent resources became available. The democratic foundations upon which they were built enabled members of clubs to move away from the limitations imposed on them by parent institutions and become relatively autonomous organisations. For example, just four years after its formation, members of Illingworth St Mary's Cricket Club were able to amend a rule which limited membership to teachers or scholars at St Mary's Sunday School. A resolution was passed at the club's AGM of 1887 that opened the club to non-churchgoers as long as they did 'not at any time exceed in number one fourth of the whole club including themselves.'<sup>115</sup>

Most clubs that separated themselves from the institutions which had formed them sought to become independent organisations representing the community as a whole. In many cases this was symbolised by the way they changed their names. So, for example, Carlton Working Men's Club became Kirkburton Cricket Club during the 1860s and in 1872 Paddock Methodists Cricket Club changed its name to Paddock Cricket Club.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> See Cunningham *Leisure and Culture*, p 330.

<sup>114</sup> See *Twenty sixth Annual Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes*, 1863, p 101.

<sup>115</sup> See O'Keefe, *Start of Play: The Foundation and Progression of Illingworth St Mary's Cricket Club*, pp 19-20.

<sup>116</sup> See *The Huddersfield & District Cricket League. Diamond Jubilee 1891-1951 – 60 Years of Glorious Cricket*, 1951, p15, p17 and p 24.

But occasionally precise reasons were recorded. The minutes of Honley St Mary's Cricket Club Annual General Meeting in 1879 explain how after,

reviewing the old rules it was found that, to improve the efficiency of the club, some changes were necessary among which the most important were that the title should be altered to that of 'The Honley Cricket Club' and that the club should be open to anyone subject to the approval of the committee.

This, it was hoped, 'will give the Club a better chance of competing with its neighbours and 'Honley in this respect may not be behind the neighbouring villages.'<sup>117</sup>

Events such as this demonstrate the way in which cricket clubs came to be seen as an important expression of collective identity for communities across the region. The establishment of socially inclusive clubs enabled the sport to transcend some of the pressures that were placed upon popular leisure during this period. They provided an opportunity for popular participation in the sport through which values that had marked pre-modern cricket could still be expressed.

Competition with similar organisations which represented other local communities continued to provide a major motivation for those who played and organised cricket. But these values also helped build a collective identity in towns and villages that were experiencing unprecedented economic, social and demographic change. Consequently the compelling competitive dynamics that had marked the challenge matches were reflected in the new regulated structure of cricket which developed in the region. Clubs representing virtually every community in the West Riding flocked to join the new cup knockout and league competitions that were established during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

But the way these organisations came to be looked upon as an important representation of the community was also reflected in the collective efforts that were made to develop them. Securing tenure of a suitable ground was usually a crucial step and this often provided the basis from which club members strove to build permanent facilities. The re-formed Slaithwaite Cricket Club, for example, first used what it could of the

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<sup>117</sup> See Newspaper cutting from *Honley Cricket Club Committee minute book 1879-1893*, held by the West Yorkshire Archive Service, Ref WYK1268/1/1, also available at <http://www.ckricketheritage.org.uk/southkirklees/honley/archive/arcgallery1.htm>.



equipment that had been passed on from the previous organisation. This included 'an 'old army bell tent' which was used as a 'dressing tent'.' The club played at Old White Royd, and Meal Hill Lane before its current Hill Top ground was secured in 1881. Whilst at Meal Hill the club began to improve its facilities as 'the old tent was considered unsuitable and a wood tent erected'. To buy the necessary wood for the new building, 'six of the members contribute £1 each as a loan to the club.' Following the move to Hill Top an extension to the ground was secured in 1886 and, after fund raising bazaars in 1884 and 1887 had raised over £120, work on a new pavilion and clubhouse began in 1901.<sup>118</sup> Similar events took place at Lidget Green near Bradford. Beginning as late as the early 1870s through a group of young men playing as 'T' Blazing Rag' on a ground without a permanent wicket or any changing facilities, by 1880 Lidget Green United had been formed and a pitch had been laid at the Legram Lane ground, which also boasted a small wooden pavilion.<sup>119</sup>

The leading clubs, which were formed amongst the commercial middle-classes in the region, were able to draw upon greater resources and in many cases set their sights higher. So, as well as providing the highest possible standard of cricket for their members, these organisations also strove to stage the type of major cricket events that had been common in the region since the 1820s. As the numbers of touring professional elevens increased they played at many towns across the West Riding, including Todmorden, Dewsbury, Leeds, Sheffield, Harrogate, Bradford, Batley, Mirfield, Huddersfield and Halifax. As we have seen in the early years of the Elevens these events were more commonly staged by the proprietors of the commercial grounds than by local clubs. But by the 1860s clubs like Todmorden had begun to host major fixtures and the United England XI visited Centre Vale in 1864, whilst in 1868 the All England XI played against the local XXII. Moreover, six years later, in 1874, the club staged one of the annual fixtures between the United North of England and the United South, which included W.G. Grace. As we have seen, later that decade Elland Cricket Club also began staging major matches and in 1878 the Australian touring XI came to Hull

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<sup>118</sup> See Brief History of the Club article in *Slaithwaite Cricket and Athletic Club Committee meeting minute book 1922-1928*, available at West Yorkshire Archive Service ref. WYK1278:1/1 and also at <http://www.ckcricketheritage.org.uk/southkirklees/slaithwaite/archive/arcgallery53.htm>

<sup>119</sup> See Haigh, Austin, Cricket at Lidget Green: Some Historical Reminiscences, Bradford Central Library Pamphlet, 1935.

Edge. Regular major matches continued to be held by the club in the next decade, including visits by the Parsee tourists in 1886, and Casey's Clown cricketers in 1880.

These ambitious developments were taken furthest by clubs in the principal towns of the West Riding. In places like Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, Huddersfield, Halifax and Dewsbury, one or sometimes two leading organisations emerged and grew rapidly to become civic institutions in their own right. Competition amongst these clubs grew to reflect the same sense of rivalry that had seen the construction of increasingly grand public buildings, such as town halls and libraries. Sports clubs became a similar source of civic pride and, whilst competition on the field of play remained intense, leading cricket clubs strove to develop bigger and better facilities. The main goal for all these clubs was to stage major matches and by the 1870s and 1880s this encompassed the home fixtures of Yorkshire C.C.C. in the expanding county cricket circuit. Consequently, in the Huddersfield and Halifax areas alone, first class fixtures were played at Huddersfield, Halifax, Dewsbury, Todmorden and Batley before the end of the nineteenth century.

The rapid development of these organisations often followed a similar pattern, and many eventually adopted some of the economic principles which had underscored the region's industrial development. The principal club in Huddersfield, for example, began in 1866 as Huddersfield St John's, a church initiative formed by Rev. W.E. Owen of St John's Church. After leasing the Fartown ground in 1868 the next decade saw a series of major developments. In 1872 the first ground had been enclosed and a second ground leased, which resulted in the club attracting fixtures against Yorkshire in 1873, Parr's All England Eleven in 1874, and a North versus South match which featured E.M. and W.G. Grace in 1875. Like most other similar clubs, Huddersfield St John's then increased its membership and profile by merging with various other sports organisation to become Huddersfield Cricket, Football and Athletic Club in 1876. This type of multi-sports organisation became a common development in the major towns and the premier Batley club followed suit in 1880 as did the Dewsbury Savile club in 1887. But the increase in sports provision and membership required a further development of facilities. At Fartown these initially included a new football pitch and bowling green at a cost of £1440. But the major period of development came after the club became a joint stock company in 1879. A new pavilion was erected in 1884 at a cost of £1,250, and in

1886 spectator accommodation was increased through the erection of a permanent grandstand that cost £1,200. Five years later, in 1891, a further £8,600 was spent on new facilities and when they were opened, with an American athletics event, a crowd of 14,500 was able to assemble in the ground.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> See Huddersfield Cricket, Football and Athletic Club, *Grand Bazaar Brochure*, October 1895.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROFESSIONALISM

#### Introduction

Professional players have been a central feature in cricket for much longer than is generally recognized. In its various forms, professionalism has been prominent in the sport since the middle of the eighteenth century when, as we have seen, leading aristocrats began assembling teams to play in matches on which large sums of money were wagered. Considerable financial resources became available through the sport's popularity amongst the social elite and providing payments to ensure the services of leading players in major matches was a logical progression. Over the course of the next half-century, professionals assumed a central role in cricket and developed a strong cultural presence which was to have important implications for cricket's formative growth in the West Riding of Yorkshire and beyond. But their position was compromised in the 1870s following the introduction of a set of regulations that reformed county cricket, and which themselves were part of the imposition of middle-class amateur values that spread across English sport. Over the next twenty-five years, the county and international circuit played a central role in shaping the distinctive gentleman amateur-led image that has arguably dominated perceptions of English cricket, and served to eclipse the professional legacy, ever since.

Nevertheless, the predominance of professional players in eighteenth-century cricket offers an important insight into the social, economic and cultural relations that drove the sport's formative development. Their origins reflect what Dennis Brailsford has seen as a form of surrogacy in sport, which stems from the concept of the champion representing another party in medieval contests and has survived into the modern era.<sup>1</sup> Although, at times, aristocratic employers also took part in matches, the professionals were clearly looked upon to decide their outcome and, in the style of the medieval

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<sup>1</sup> See Brailsford, *Start of Play*, pp 14-15.

champion, many players were engaged to represent the same patron on a regular basis. These men were employed through a form of 'retained' or 'indentured' professionalism, by which they were given token jobs on the estates of aristocratic cricket patrons and spent the greater part of the summer months playing in challenge matches.

Thomas Waymark, who was a groom on the Duke of Richmond's estate at Goodwood in the 1720s, is the earliest known example of a professional cricketer. According to the Goodwood accounts he worked on the estate between 1729 and 1732, and was initially paid 7 shillings a week plus board from Christmas 1729 until the following summer. Waymark also has the distinction of producing the first recorded match-winning performance by a professional player. On 6<sup>th</sup> September 1728 the *London Journal* described how, whilst playing for 'Sussex, Surrey and Hants' against Kent, a groom of the Duke of Richmond's, who is widely accepted to have been Waymark,

signalized himself by such extraordinary agility and dexterity to the surprise of the spectators which were some thousands and 'tis reckoned he turned the tide of victory which for some years has been generally on the Kentish side.<sup>2</sup>

Leading players continued to be engaged in this way throughout the eighteenth century. James Ayleward and George and John Ring were employed as a bailiff, huntsman, and whipper-in by Sir Horatio Mann in the 1770s and 1780s, whilst around the same time John Minshull, the man who scored the first recorded century, worked as a gardener on the Duke of Dorset's estate.<sup>3</sup>

But whilst the finance and opportunities that enabled professionalism to first develop in cricket were provided by aristocratic patrons, the origin of the players reflected the sport's roots as a folk game and its continued vitality as a popular recreation. As we have seen, despite its lack of written references, the popular rural form of cricket was almost certainly played regularly in the south east of England during the first half of the eighteenth century. Indeed, a vibrant competitive culture had developed in contests amongst the region's rural parishes at this time and Underdown has shown how talented local players could come to the attention of aristocratic patrons through their

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<sup>2</sup> See Birley, *Social History of English Cricket*, p 20.

<sup>3</sup> See Brookes, *English Cricket*, p 61.

performances in such matches.<sup>4</sup> Although the exact social backgrounds of the earliest recorded indentured professionals are largely unknown, these players clearly worked at the lower end of the rural economy, as they were willing to accept fairly menial positions on the aristocratic estates in order to play in major cricket matches. So the cultural association between professionalism and the lower classes, which later came to mean much more in cricket, existed from the outset and already offered a way into a life of greater possibilities for men of humble backgrounds.

By the second half of the eighteenth century, however, employment opportunities for professional cricketers had begun to expand. As we have seen, by the 1740s the popularity of cricket was growing in the south east of England, where the sport had been absorbed into a vibrant commercial leisure culture. Demand for major matches increased and a form of independent professionalism was developed, which saw players receive payment for the individual matches in which they took part. On the surface at least, the development of these new terms of employment can be viewed to represent a shift from more traditional paternalistic economic relations towards proto-capitalism and wage labour. But although the economic potential of cricket's increasing popularity was being realised at venues like the Artillery Ground at this time, there is no evidence to suggest that these growing commercial interests had begun to play a role in the organisation of the sport. Elite cricket continued to revolve around the challenges of aristocratic patrons throughout the eighteenth century, and they retained responsibility for assembling the teams which took part in major matches as well the payments that players received.

Nevertheless, the introduction of match payments saw a subtle but significant shift in the economic background of professional players, which became even more significant during the next century. Although they were still members of the lower classes, the players who were engaged to play cricket through this system commonly enjoyed a relatively independent economic status. Many were tradesmen or farmers, and were clearly not willing to give up their occupation for more menial work on the aristocratic estates. The offer of payment by the match, however, provided a financial incentive that enabled these men to experience the personal fulfilment of playing the sport at its highest level without compromising the advantages of their economic status. So, for

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<sup>4</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 71.

example. when Lord John Sackville's Kent XI faced an All England XI at the Artillery Ground in 1744, his team included Mills of Bromley who was a bookmaker. Hodswell of Dartford who was a tanner and Cutbush from Maidstone who was a clock maker. Richard Newland, who is regarded by many as the leading player of this period, was a yeoman farmer, as were his brothers who played alongside him in the Slindon team, which was backed by the Duke of Richmond.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1770s and 1780s Hambledon became the model for this type of independent professionalism. Travelling expenses and a system of fees for both practices and 'Great Matches' were paid to the farmers, publicans and tradesmen who made up the club's match play team. They received 'four shillings if winners and three shillings if losers' on practice days and were instructed to appear at the ground at 12 noon, when the teams would be selected.<sup>6</sup> Payments for the 'Great Matches' were not systematically recorded, although William Beldham recollected that the players received 5 guineas for a win and 3 guineas if they lost during the 1780s.<sup>7</sup>

It was through the club's successful professional formula that Hambledon came to mark the climax of the great patrons' domination of cricket and secured a substantial amount of money in stake matches. However, in view of subsequent attitudes towards gambling in cricket, it comes as little surprise that these players have been more widely recognised through their other enduring achievements. Regular practice and competitive match play between the era's leading players saw advancements in playing technique and equipment manufacture take place at Hambleton that pre-empted aspects of the sport's modern era. First, Richard Nyren and then David Harris perfected length bowling, which exploited the irregular bounce of uneven pitches. Then, in order to counter this new style of delivery, the straight bat technique was pioneered by John Small and 'Silver' Billy Beldham, who used forward play and brought the bat down in a vertical position. Indeed, Small, a master bat maker, turned his playing innovation into a literal one by first changing the shape of bat from its original curved form to one similar to that which is used today.

The legacy of these pioneering professional players was such that their contribution to the game began to be recognised by cricket writers as early as the second quarter of the

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<sup>5</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 94 and Brookes, *English Cricket*, p 62.

<sup>6</sup> See Brookes, *English Cricket*, p 58.

<sup>7</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 119.

next century. In an 1833 edition of *The Gentleman's Magazine* the Revd John Mitford explained that, it was on 'the down of Broad Halfpenny ...somewhere between the years 1770 and 1780, that a great decisive improvement took place and that cricket first began to assume that truly skilful and scientific character which it now possesses.'<sup>8</sup> Moreover, it was in the previous year that a series of articles by John Nyren, the son of the Richard Nyren and a former Hambledon player himself, was published in *The Town*. Nyren used his intimate knowledge of the club to immortalise the men whose great deeds precipitated its golden period and a year later the articles were published in his famous book *The Cricketers of My Time*, which is generally regarded as one of the first classic pieces of cricket literature.

The timing of these retrospective accounts is also significant. Clearly, professional players remained at the forefront in public perceptions of cricket in the third decade of the nineteenth century and this was reflected in other examples of early cricket writing. Thomas Boxall, a professional bowler, published *Rules & Instructions for Playing at the Game of Cricket* in 1800 whilst in 1816 William Lambert, the leading professional player of his day, published *Instructions and Rules For Playing The Noble Game Of Cricket*, which had sold 300,000 copies by 1865.<sup>9</sup> Indeed it is no surprise that these players were looked upon as leading authorities on the game. The professionals' continued domination of the sport was reflected in the Gentlemen versus Players matches, which began in 1806. In the 25 occasions the sides met before the end of the 1841 season the Gentlemen won only once without extra players or 'given' men.<sup>10</sup>

The early publications by leading players also point to other important facets of the professional's role in cricket during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Adrian Harvey has shown how cricket was a key component in the growing commercialisation of sport during this period and the celebrity of leading professional players was widely used to stimulate interest in the game. As we have seen, Lambert and other leading players from London were used to promote the major commercial matches in Sheffield during the 1820s. Indeed, Lambert had made an earlier appearance in the West Riding. The *Leeds Intelligencer* reported on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1810 that, after a match between

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<sup>8</sup> See Birley, *Social History of English Cricket*, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup> See Rayvern-Allen, David, *Early Books on Cricket*, Europa, London, 1987, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> Their 8 victories, to the Players 15, included one with the assistance of Beldham and Lambert, one with Lambert alone and one with Howard, whilst 4 were odds matches in which the Gentlemen fielded 12 men in 1829, 16 in 1825, 17 in 1827 and 18 in 1836, against their opponents' eleven.



Harewood and Wetherby had taken place ‘playing was resumed in Harewood Park where Lambert and Budd from the Marylebone Club shewed their well-known skill in the game.’<sup>11</sup> But, as we have also seen, professional players had already played occasional exhibition matches in the region and, six years after their first recorded appearance in Sheffield, cricketers were engaged to perform in Leeds. In 1756 Leeds Church Burgesses’ accounts record that they had ‘paid cricket players on Shrove Tuesday to entertain the populace and to prevent the infamous practice of throwing at cocks’ the sum expended being 14s. 6d.<sup>12</sup>

### **Professionalism and the Rise of Cricket in Sheffield**

The prominence of professional players in cricket during the early decades of the nineteenth century meant that they were looked towards to play a key role in the establishment of Sheffield as a leading centre for the sport. As we have seen, much of the impetus behind cricket’s rapid development in the town was commercially driven and, whilst leading players, like William Lambert, were used to promote major matches, there were also sound economic reasons to improve the standard of local players. Success in the intensely competitive challenge matches with local rivals like Nottingham stimulated local interest in cricket and helped to attract visits by teams of star professionals from the south east of England, which provided added spectator attractions. Consequently, George Steer, the man who had invested in the new enclosed ground at Darnall, engaged leading professionals from London to coach the local men. It was for this reason that William Fennex and John Sparkes, who both played with and against members of the great Hambledon side, were brought north in 1824. Indeed Sparkes returned the following year when he also took part in the first major match featuring a team of leading players from outside the north of England to be staged in Sheffield.<sup>13</sup> This was the contest between XXII of Yorkshire and XI of All England at

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<sup>11</sup> See *Leeds Intelligencer*, 11 09 1890.

<sup>12</sup> See Holmes, *History of Yorkshire County Cricket*, pp 10-11.

<sup>13</sup> See *The Morning Chronicle*, 27/05.1825.

Whitsuntide in 1825, at which an estimated 20,000 spectators were present on the second day with around 10,000 attending on each of the other four day's play.<sup>14</sup>

But there were other interested parties looking to develop a group of leading professional players to represent the town in major matches. Clearly, local and civic pride was also instrumental in driving forward the development of cricket in the West Riding. Consequently, following the Sheffield victory over Bingham in August 1824 a notice in the *Sheffield Mercury* declared that:

The superior talent displayed by the members of the Sheffield club is deservedly entitled to encouragement; and, in order to support its improvement, we think it would be well for the friends of the game of cricket to come forward, and provide an annual fund for the remuneration of individuals, who, from pecuniary circumstances, would otherwise be unable to dedicate their time and labour to one of the most manly amusements which is practised in this country.<sup>15</sup>

In principle, the financing of professional players by private individuals in this way carried on the tradition of the eighteenth century patrons. Yet the collective nature of this proposal reflected a growing civic identity and the desire to build the standing of Sheffield within the sport, rather than a need to indulge the reputation of any individual or passion for gambling.

The synthesis of commercial enterprise and civic pride created an environment that produced remarkably rapid results. By 1826 a local player had emerged whose performances not only raised the status of Sheffield cricket but were also capable of attracting spectators to watch major commercial matches in their own right. The man who first attained this kind of star status in Yorkshire cricket was Tom Marsden. After making his debut at Darnall in 1824 as a nineteen-year-old, Marsden shot to prominence following his score of 227 for Sheffield and Leicester against chief rivals, Nottingham in 1826. Although the match was played in front of a large home crowd, the *Sheffield Independent* explained that, at the start of the third day's play 'news of Marsden's

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<sup>14</sup> See Farnsworth, *Before and After Bramall Lane*, pp 6-7.

<sup>15</sup> See *Sheffield Mercury*, 07 08/1824.

success, and the desire to witness what may almost be termed his second innings. caused the ground to present a busy appearance at an earlier hour than usual.<sup>16</sup>

Over the next two decades Marsden played a leading role in developing the status of Sheffield cricket and he was revered almost unconditionally in the Sheffield newspapers. His innings of 227 was naturally reported with great relish and the *Sheffield Independent* contended that, upon his arrival at the crease,

Marsden began a course of batting, of which the oldest annals of cricketing afford no parallel whatever. The highest state of physical strength, the most perfect confidence, and the greatest practical talent, combined to produce such an exhibition of fine play, that we repeat, the oldest records of double wicket afford but one example of anything superior.<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, after another remarkable performance against Nottingham in the following year he was described as simply ‘the *master*’ by the same newspaper. On this occasion Marsden had scored 65 not out and 52 in a match against Nottingham and 3 years later the *Sheffield Mercury* decreed that for ‘Marsden too much praise cannot be given’ after he had scored 48 and 0 and taken 10 wickets in a match against the same opponents.<sup>18</sup> Even in defeat he was described as ‘glorious Tom’, when the *Sheffield Independent* reported on a single wicket match in which three of Sheffield lost to three of Nottingham in 1831.<sup>19</sup>

But as well as being a figure of immense popularity in the Sheffield area, by the end of the 1820s Marsden had also become a cricketer of national standing. His growing reputation attracted the attention of leading early writers on sport such as John Mitford and Pierce Egan. Mitford wrote that,

Marsden bears a great name in Yorkshire. As a fieldsman he is the finest point we can conceive. As a batter he gets his runs very quick, is vigorous and decisive, but he runs in too much off his ground and is wanting in temper and judgement and

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<sup>16</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 29 07/1826

<sup>17</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 29 07/1826

<sup>18</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 04 08 1827 and *Sheffield Mercury*, 04 09/1830.

<sup>19</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 13.08 1831.

discretion; however he is a good player. and had he been brought up at Marylebone, among fine players, would have been eminent.<sup>20</sup>

Egan, who had won his reputation as the chronicler of the Fancy through publications such as *Boxiana*, was less convinced by what he had seen of Marsden and gave his assessment in the verse,

Next Marsden may come, tho' it must be stated  
That his skill down in Sheffield is oft over-rated.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, this view was seemingly borne out in 1833 when Marsden played in arguably his most prestigious match, the single wicket contest for £100 against Fuller Pilch, the great Norfolk batsman. The match resulted from the open challenge, which Marsden issued in 1828, to play any man 'home and home' for the championship of England. It was not taken up for 5 years, which probably had major implications for his chances of success, and he was heavily defeated.

The contest projected Sheffield cricket even further onto the national stage, however, and brought interest in Marsden's career to its peak. He received partisan support in the Sheffield press and his movements in the lead up to the first match, which took place at Norwich, were reported with great anticipation. In its penultimate edition before the encounter was due to begin, the *Sheffield Independent* explained,

Yesterday (Friday) Marsden left this town for London, and will be one of England's eleven against sixteen Gentlemen. On the Monday following he will be one of the left-handed players against eleven of Gentlemen. On Thursday, July 18<sup>th</sup> he will contend against Pilch at Norwich; and on the first Monday in August he will contend against the same player at Hyde Park. The ground for which is already marked out. Marsden seems to be in fine play, and will no doubt realize the expectations of his numerous friends and supporters.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 124.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 06 07 1833.

Indeed, Marsden played alongside Pilch in the first of these matches and their respective performances were noted in the next edition of the same newspaper. Marsden made 21 runs to Pilch's 11 and the report commented that, 'Judging from their exertions on this occasion, we conclude that Tom is likely to bear the palm.'<sup>23</sup> A week later, news of Marsden's first encounter with Pilch was passed on hastily to a seemingly expectant Sheffield public. The report explained with great trepidation that,

On Thursday the match between Tom Marsden and Pilch was commenced at Norwich. Our returns are dated 3 'o' clock on that day, when Pilch had got tremendously ahead.<sup>24</sup>

Pilch was again victorious in the return match two weeks later and this event was reported in equally sombre mood. He all but ended Marsden's hopes of victory by scoring 106 during his second visit to the crease. With a total of 111 runs needed for victory, the contest was ended by 'a most tremendous ball delivered by Pilch' when Marsden had made 35.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, Marsden was the star performer a few weeks after the single-wicket defeats when a Yorkshire eleven met an eleven from Norfolk, which included Pilch. He scored 53 in the second innings as Yorkshire won by 120 runs and the *Sheffield Independent* felt that 'Marsden's playing was such as to convince the amateurs that he has no equal in a full side'.<sup>26</sup>

But by the end of the 1820s Marsden was not the only Sheffield professional whose reputation had spread beyond the West Riding. One member of the pioneering side of that decade was featured in an article in *Cricket* magazine during 1884. William Barber was probably the last surviving player from the era in which Sheffield first became known as a centre for cricket. He spoke about those early days to the journalist Thomas Keyworth, who explained,

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<sup>23</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 13.07/1833.

<sup>24</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 20.07/1833.

<sup>25</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 10.08.1833.

<sup>26</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 07.09.1833.

The match and tuition of Fennex and Sparkes commenced a new era in Sheffield cricket. Some of the players began to be known at headquarters (Lord's) and some of them afterwards played in the best matches of the time.

Woolhouse, Dearman, Vincent, and Marsden became well-known cricketers.<sup>27</sup>

Although Woolhouse made his living from the sport, and is listed in the *Who's Who of Cricketers* as a professional player, his economic background makes it unlikely that he was paid to play cricket in the same way as men like Marsden.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, there is little doubt about his stature in the game during the 1820s and 1830s. As we have seen, in addition to the high profile he enjoyed as proprietor of the leading venues in Sheffield and a promoter of major matches, Woolhouse also became a leading player. He made his debut at Lord's in 1828, representing England against the Bs, and *Bell's Life* noted 'his playing shows that we may expect a very fine hitter, after a little experience.'<sup>29</sup>

James Dearman was another professional who, like Marsden, built a strong reputation as a single wicket player. He also competed unsuccessfully for the single wicket championship of England, losing to Alfred Mynn in 1838. In 1833 Dearman played for Yorkshire against Norfolk, alongside Woolhouse and Marsden, in the match that is commonly viewed as the inaugural first class fixture to be played by a team representing the county. He also appeared for the North of England on four occasions, including the second ever North versus South encounter in 1836 and played at Lord's in three first class matches.

Although Emanuel Vincent, the third player who Keyworth mentioned, played most of his career for Nottingham, his breakthrough into major matches came with Sheffield. He recorded one of the first centuries to be scored by a Yorkshire player when he made 114 against Leicester in 1825, a year before Marsden's remarkable innings. Also an excellent wicketkeeper, by 1828 Vincent had moved on. But he returned to play alongside Marsden, Woolhouse and Dearman in the 1833 Yorkshire versus Norfolk match and also appeared at Lord's in first class matches on three occasions. Indeed his

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<sup>27</sup> See Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 13.

<sup>28</sup> See Bailey, Philip, Thorn, Philip, and Wynne Thomas, Peter, *Who's Who of Cricketers*. Hamlyn. London, 1993, p 1181.

<sup>29</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 29/06 1828.

last appearance at Lord's was for the North of England versus the South of England in a match that was played in 1837 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the famous ground.

By the time Emanuel Vincent played his last match at Lord's, however, a number of towns in the north of the region had begun to rival Sheffield as the leading centre for cricket in the West Riding. Their growing strength was also largely built around an emerging generation of professional players who came to form leading match play teams. Huddersfield was the first town in the textile districts to challenge the standing of Sheffield in the sport and, as we have seen, the area's reputation was built around a group of leading professionals from the surrounding villages. But professional players were also being developed elsewhere. Sam Baldwinson, J.R Ibbetson, Joseph Oates, J. Blatherwick and Hugh Barrett all emerged in the Leeds area, whilst John Hall, John Barker, William Wadsworth and Tom Burlinson became prominent around Bradford. Indeed the growing status of these men was reflected in the press notices that announced when matches had been made. In 1838 the *Leeds Times* gave notice of a match between '11 of Sheffield, including Dearman, Marsden, Vincent & co, and 16 of the Leeds and Harewood Clubs, including North and Ibbetson'.<sup>30</sup>

### **Structure and Finance – the Pre-Modern legacy and Early Clubs**

But how did the sport facilitate this rapid growth in the number of professional players, which continued to take place throughout cricket's formative development in the West Riding?

Perhaps the most significant development, in the light of future events, was the way in which commercial interests began to assume a leading role in elite cricket. It was largely through the entrepreneurial initiative of promoters such as Clarke and Woolhouse, who took responsibility for issuing the challenges through which major matches were made, that professionalism first became possible in the West Riding. Although it was still not possible to stage commercial challenge matches with any great frequency, a regular programme of major fixtures was established which produced clear financial benefits for both the promoters and the players. Indeed, there is evidence to

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<sup>30</sup> See *Leeds Mercury*, 29 09 1838.

suggest that commercial interests had also begun to provide finance for professional players as they first looked for ways to stimulate the sport's economic growth in the 1820s.

But new dynamics of civic status in the West Riding were also making a significant impact on the way in which cricket was organised during the first half of the nineteenth century. The sponsorship of local players by gentleman's subscription was clearly looked upon as a way to build the status of Sheffield as a leading centre for the sport. As this form of collective patronage aimed to establish a group of prominent professionals to represent the town in major matches against leading teams from elsewhere in England it anticipated future developments in cricket. Membership subscriptions provided the financial foundation upon which formalised county cricket clubs were built later in the century and to some degree have continued to be financed ever since. Indeed, the gentlemen of Sheffield played a leading role throughout these developments and when a team from the town met Yorkshire in a match at the Victoria Ground, Leeds in 1849, the *Leeds Times* explained that,

The match was especially arranged by W.B. Dennison, Esq., of Leeds, and the Sheffield Gentlemen, purposefully to test the cricketing talent of the county against so distinguished a club as that (under the patronage and support of the gentlemen of the town) Sheffield possesses.<sup>31</sup>

All but four of the men who played in this match were professionals and it took place just 12 years before a public match fund committee was established in the town, which by 1863 had led to the formation of Yorkshire County Cricket Club.

Yet the pre-modern structure around which cricket still revolved at this time offered other ways for players to make money. We have already seen that Tom Marsden and James Dearman took part in financially lucrative single wicket contests for the championship of England. Although less prestigious, many other matches of this type were played in the region during the first half of the nineteenth century. Marsden was one of the '3 of Sheffield' who beat '3 of Nottingham' for £50 a side on the Hulme ground near Manchester in 1833, and similar events had become common elsewhere in

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<sup>31</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 14/07/1849.



the region by the next decade.<sup>32</sup> In 1841 the *Leeds Times* published details of two single wicket matches that were played by Andrew Crossland, a Dalton professional. His victory over William Childe of Hunslet in a match for £10 a side was reported on 17<sup>th</sup> July, whilst on 25<sup>th</sup> October, a similar notice described how he had defeated Tennant of Leeds in a match for £20 a side.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the obituary of Harry Sampson, the Sheffield professional who was born in 1813, suggests that such contests could have been even more common. It explained how,

When apprenticed he was pitched to play against Samuel Bradbury, a noted cricketer living at Heeley, for a wager, and, during the game, exhibited such ability with the bat that he almost ran his opponent off 'his legs'. He figured in many other matches of the kind in and around Sheffield, it then being a general practice to play for stakes.<sup>34</sup>

Exactly how these matches were financed is unclear. The backers, or 'friends', of players, who usually provided the stake money, may have paid a set fee to the participants. But, as Peter Radford has shown, this type of sporting challenge often saw the men who took part provide a share of the purse or place bets upon themselves to win. Consequently, as well as receiving one third of the stake money for defeating Tom Molineaux in their second fight for the 'Championship', the pugilist Tom Cribb won around £400 in bets.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, when John Berry, the Dalton and Yorkshire professional, played Booth Woodhead from Netherthong in a single wicket match in 1851 the *Huddersfield Chronicle* explained that 'Berry backed himself for £20 against £10'.<sup>36</sup>

This form of self-financing by professionals can also be found in other stake money challenge matches and indicates that, albeit in a limited sense, professional players began to exert some control over their own interests during the first half of the nineteenth century. We have seen how the *Huddersfield Chronicle* argued, in 1851, that playing for stake money was a key means of funding the participation of working-class

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<sup>32</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 10/10/1829 and 22/06/1833.

<sup>33</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 17/07/1841 and 25/10/1841.

<sup>34</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 01/04/1883.

<sup>35</sup> See Radford, *The Celebrated Captain Barclay*, p 179.

<sup>36</sup> See *Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser*, 23/08/1851.

professionals in major fixtures, and John Wilson provided details of how this system worked.<sup>37</sup> As the old Dalton professional explained, 'the players themselves guaranteed so much apiece, each man's share of the pool, in the event of a win, being determined by the sum he had stood in for' and it is likely that the successful match play teams which represented working-class clubs like his were often financed in this way.<sup>38</sup> Although there were obvious drawbacks to this form of self-funding, when successful, good money could evidently be made. Joe Rowbotham, who began his career in major matches with Sheffield in 1854, before making his debut for Yorkshire in 1855, recalled how,

One of the earliest matches I played in was with an Eleven of Sheffield v the Next Eighteen, on the Hyde Park Ground. We played for £50 a-side, and the proprietor of the ground, Mr Heathcote, offered an additional £50, so the winners got £100. It was about the first important match Ned Stephenson and I played in. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the same week, we played in another match at Woodhouse Moor, Leeds for £50 a-side against Eleven of Leeds, York and Bradford. We won, also by four wickets. I know I felt like a little millionaire for a few hours.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, although the early structure of cricket in the West Riding clearly promoted the growth of professionalism, it is likely that very few players were able to approach full-time employment through the sport in the summer months before the 1840s. These challenges reflected the continued absence of regular leisure time around which such events could be arranged. Major matches were only played intermittently and could offer nothing more than an occasional source of income from the sport. Indeed, during the 1820s only Nottingham, Leicester and Bingham provided regular opposition for Sheffield in major commercial matches, which also reflected a lack of appropriate opposition in the North of England. But even when teams of players from further south, such as All England and the MCC, also appeared in the town, little more than a handful of fixtures were played each year. In 1826 there were only five major

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<sup>37</sup> See *Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser*, 04 10 1851.

<sup>38</sup> See Holmes, *Yorkshire County Cricket*, p12.

<sup>39</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 50.

matches reported in the press whilst in both 1827 and 1828 only four were featured.<sup>40</sup> Other employment opportunities were also sporadic and could evidently involve a degree of financial speculation on behalf of the players involved. Consequently, the only player from the West Riding likely to have found frequent employment in cricket during this period was, of course, Tom Marsden, whose prodigious talent saw his career develop beyond the confines of the region. The majority of his 55 appearances in first class fixtures took place between 1827 and 1838 and in four of those seasons he played in 5 or more matches.<sup>41</sup> Added to this were the numerous single wicket and odds matches in which he appeared.

But by the end of the 1830s cricket's increasing popularity in the developing urban industrial centres across the north of England had started to provide new employment opportunities for leading players. As we have seen, emerging forms of communal identity in these rapidly expanding towns also came to be expressed through the formation of new cricket clubs. Just as they had been for the early match play teams in Sheffield, competitive rivalry and the pursuit of civic status were key dynamics in the establishment of these organisations and professionals were again given key roles in their development.

Interestingly, it seems that coaching provided the first prominent type of formal employment with cricket clubs for players from the region. As we saw with the involvement of Sparkes and Fennex in Sheffield, professional cricketers were clearly still seen as the foremost practitioners of the game during this period and looked upon to improve standards of play amongst club members. By 1833 Tom Marsden was 'engaged by the Manchester Club, to bowl at them and give them instructions in the art of cricket' and in 1836 he was coaching the Burnley club.<sup>42</sup> Later in that decade James Dearman developed a similar link with the Todmorden club, where 'Mr Fielden got Dearman, or Jimmy as he was familiarly known, a cricketer of high repute, one of the Sheffield cracks, to come over from Rochdale occasionally to instruct us'.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> In 1826 XXII of Sheffield and Leicester played twice against an All England XI and once against Nottingham whilst XI of Sheffield played XXII of the Town and Neighbourhood. In 1827 Sheffield played Nottingham twice, XI of Sheffield played XI of Bingham and 3 Sheffield players represented All England in the match against Sussex at Darnal. In 1828 Sheffield played Leicester once and Nottingham twice whilst a team of players from these three counties played All England.

<sup>41</sup> In 1827 Marsden played in 7 first class matches, 5 in 1828, 6 in 1829, 6 in 1833 and 7 in 1834.

<sup>42</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 26 05 1833.

<sup>43</sup> See Heywoods, *Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy*, p 11.

These were clearly only temporary arrangements. But it was at Rochdale that Dearman became one of the first West Riding professionals to find a permanent club appointment. *Bell's Life* announced in 1839 that he had been engaged as a bowler for the season and he remained with the club until 1842.<sup>44</sup> Another West Riding player to be offered more stable employment in the sport around this time was Harry Sampson. He had to move further south to find an engagement and it was explained in his obituary that 'upon his prentice indentures expiring he was engaged as an instructor and ground man by the Reading Town Club'.<sup>45</sup> By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, permanent positions were becoming available with clubs in the region. The Todmorden club first employed Joseph Crossland in 1850 and his role was evidently seen as an extension of the work that James Dearman had done around a decade earlier. The *Halifax Guardian* explained that Crossland's reappointment 'as teacher' in 1854 reflected how the committee was 'anxious to promote the progress of the members'.<sup>46</sup>

The engagement of West Riding professionals to play cricket for clubs had similar transitory beginnings. In the early days of the sport's development outside London and the south east of England, many clubs were not in a position to make permanent professional appointments. So players were often engaged to assist in individual fixtures with major rivals or more socially prestigious opponents. This meant that leading local professionals often played for a number of clubs as 'given men' during one season. As we have seen, the Dalton professionals George and John Berry, who also played regularly in stake-match challenges for their local club during this period, assisted Otley against Leeds Wellington in 1846, while later in the same year Joseph and Andrew Crossland, also Dalton regulars, played for York in a match against Bradford.<sup>47</sup> Just two years before his death, at the age of 38, Tom Marsden played in a two-day match for Leeds against Harewood in 1841 whilst a similarly prestigious encounter took place ten years later when Leeds Clarence, who were assisted by Hugh Barrett from Harewood, played a Huddersfield Gentlemen's team, which included George Berry.<sup>48</sup>

As with coaching, permanent playing engagements had also become available to West Riding professionals by the 1850s. Indeed it is likely that employment with many clubs

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<sup>44</sup> See Heywoods', *Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy*, p 11.

<sup>45</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 01 04 1883.

<sup>46</sup> See Heywoods', *Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy*, p 23.

<sup>47</sup> See *Leeds Times* 05 09 1846 and 29 08 1846.

<sup>48</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 15 08 1841 and *Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser*, 05 07 1851.

combined both playing and coaching, and in addition to his role as 'teacher' with Todmorden, Joseph Crossland played regularly for the club.<sup>49</sup> John Berry began a formal engagement with Sheffield Wednesday in 1850, whilst George Henry Wright was employed by the Sheffield Royds club between 1846 and 1851.<sup>50</sup> Elsewhere, George Atkinson found a position with the Leeds Clarence club in the 1850s, before moving on to York.<sup>51</sup> Some players, however, still had to move away from the region to find professional employment and John Thewlis, from Lascelles Hall, took an engagement with Glossop in the 1850s.<sup>52</sup> Paul Smith began his professional career in Sheffield before taking positions in Northumberland, Carlisle, Whitehaven, Alnwick, Sunderland, and Tynemouth, whilst John Smith, a former soldier from Yeadon, was a professional in Scotland in the 1850s.<sup>53</sup>

But these permanent engagements with clubs did not prevent professionals from taking advantage of opportunities to further their earnings and career prospects by playing in the major commercial matches. Match play teams continued to be active into the second half of the nineteenth century and the Dalton side that beat Sheffield for £100 at Manchester in 1851 included both Joseph Crossland, and John Berry. As Joe Rowbotham indicated, teams that were selected to represent Sheffield also continued to play in major commercial matches in the 1840s and 1850s and they too included professionals from the town who had found club engagements elsewhere. Tom Hunt, who was employed by the Manchester club during the 1850s, was a regular member of the side, as was the well-travelled George Henry Wright.

From 1830 onwards matches involving teams that were selected to represent Yorkshire also became an increasingly prominent source of major commercial fixtures. Although Yorkshire County Cricket Club was not formed until 1863, as we have seen, teams that claimed to represent the county took part in stake money challenge matches as early as the 1820s and the first-11-a side match with another county was played in 1833. Over the next 20 years unofficial Yorkshire elevens played in 35 matches which have since been given first class status. These fixtures took place intermittently, with no more than

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<sup>49</sup> See, Heywoods', *Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy*, p.23.

<sup>50</sup> For details of John Berry's career see Ellam, J. R., *Huddersfield's Nineteenth Century Yorkshire XI*, Athena Press, Twickenham, 2004, p 11 and for George Henry Wright see Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 240.

<sup>51</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 15.

<sup>52</sup> See Ellam, *Huddersfield's Nineteenth Century Yorkshire XI*, p 28.

<sup>53</sup> See Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 183.

five matches being played in any one season. Nevertheless, they provided additional employment opportunities for the growing pool of leading West Riding professionals and John Berry was able to play in 21 first class matches for Yorkshire elevens during this period, whilst George Henry Wright appeared in 12 such fixtures. before the county club was formed.

### **Structure and Finance – New Commercial Developments**

However, county cricket was not the dominant form of the sport in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. As we have seen, beginning in 1846, a series of predominantly professional itinerant elevens took the game around the British Isles, playing in exhibition matches against local sides. By broadening access to the sport's leading players and exposing the game to a wider audience, they did much to raise the popularity of cricket outside London and the south-east of England. The resultant high profile was a key factor in the rapid expansion of cricket from the 1860s onwards as the explosion of leisure opportunities during this decade saw professional cricketers push back further the barriers of the sport. The touring sphere was extended to include the overseas destinations of America and Australia during two decades which followed the inception of the professional touring elevens, as they played a pivotal role in cricket becoming a sport of truly national and international dimension.

But the significance of this period in which professionals held the ascendancy in cricket goes beyond the rapid expansion of the sport. Although it is likely that William Clarke saw his venture as primarily a commercial enterprise, it had a profound effect upon the circumstances of professional players. Perhaps the most immediate impact of the All England Eleven (AEE) upon the region's professional players came through the increased number of major commercial matches it created. By the beginning of the 1850s William Clarke had used the contacts he built up whilst playing and organising matches over the previous two decades to assemble a programme of fixtures that could provide a regular income for professional players throughout the season. After the initial 3 fixtures of 1846, were successful, Clarke quickly increased the number of AEE matches, with 10 being played the following year, 16 in 1848, 21 in 1849, and 24 in

1850. The AEE fixture list then peaked at 34 matches in 1851, before settling at an average of around 25 per season until the early 1870s. However, the formation of the United All England Eleven (UAEE) in 1853, following disagreements between Clarke and a number of his players, added around 15 more major fixtures each season over a similar period.

Of course regular employment with the elevens was only available to a relatively small group of players. But a number of professionals from the West Riding were amongst the earliest to benefit from these new opportunities. The first men from the region to play for the AEE were George Chatterton, Harry Sampson, Tom Hunt and George Anderson. However, only Anderson, who played between 1851 and 1871, could be described as a regular.<sup>54</sup> He was joined in the 1850s by Edwin Stephenson, who made his debut in 1854 and played for both elevens throughout the next two decades, and Roger Iddison, who played first for the AEE before becoming a regular with the UAEE. George Freeman played on many occasions for the UAEE in late 1860s, whilst John Thewlis made occasional appearances for both elevens in the same decade. Joe Rowbotham was another West Riding player to be offered a regular position in the itinerant elevens. After first becoming a professional at Old Trafford in 1852, Rowbotham moved to Rochdale and, as he explained to Pullin, 'I played against Parr's Eleven, and was drafted into the travelling team. I played with Parr's team for nine or ten years during the time I was playing with the county.'<sup>55</sup>

But, as Rowbotham's first encounter with the AEE demonstrates, it was not only the players who were invited to play for the itinerant elevens that benefited from this expanding fixture list. The local sides that opposed them were commonly made up of between 16 and 22 players and many looked to bolster their strength by including local professionals, often in the form of bowlers. Indeed, the practice of including 'given men' was a further reflection of the sport's distinctive culture in the industrial regions of the north. As well as embracing the popular professional conception of the sport, as we have seen, cricket in regions such as the West Riding also developed a strong competitive edge, which reflected a growing perception of community status and identity. Staging matches in which the sport's leading players took part became an

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<sup>54</sup> Although his final match for the All England Eleven was not until 1871 Anderson did not play regularly after 1866. See West, Derek, *The Elevens of England*, Darf, London, 1988, p 16.

<sup>55</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 43-4.

important expression of civic status and providing strong competition, or even beating, the itinerant elevens heightened the sense of local pride even further.

Consequently, in the north of England, the opposition that faced the AEE and the UAEE often resembled a representative team of local professionals more than an attempt to raise a side of players from the participating clubs or towns. For example, in 1848, when the All England Eleven made its third appearance in Leeds, the 20 players who made up the Leeds and District team included 10 local professionals.

The Dalton professionals George Armitage, George and John Berry, all played, as did Andrew Crossland, who was engaged by York at this time, Sam Baldwinson, who was professional at Harewood, and Jonathon Joy from Knaresborough, and the Leeds professionals Hugh Barrett, J.R. Ibbetson, J. Bosomworth and James Porter. The inclusion of some of these men led to an objection from William Clarke, on behalf of the AEE, who argued

that they were not aware, when making the match, that the Clarence club intended enlisting men from other towns to form their Twenty. He contended that Baldwinson and Joy, who were from a distance, and had played against them elsewhere, were equal to the players in the All England Club, and they were never anticipated at Leeds.<sup>56</sup>

The engagement of 'given men' by the sides that faced the AEE was clearly productive for West Riding professionals in particular. In his exhaustive study of the itinerant elevens Derek West has identified how professionals often built productive careers around opportunities to appear regularly for the local sides they met. He found that Yorkshire professionals benefited more from these opportunities than players from any other region and this reflected the geographic distribution of itinerant eleven fixtures. The popularity of the itinerant elevens remained high in the north throughout much of the following 25 years, which meant that the Bradford professional Isaac Hodgson could play over 100 matches against the AEE and UAEE during his career. Hodgson appeared more times against the elevens than any other player, and alongside him in 30 of these fixtures, and probably bowling in tandem, was William Slinn. Slinn played 80

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<sup>56</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 23 09/1848.



times against the elevens, whilst Luke Greenwood, the Huddersfield professional, made around 90 such appearances, Andrew Crossland 44, between 1846 and 1860, and Tom Emmett over 30, between 1867 and 1876.<sup>57</sup>

The predominance of this professional-led form of commercial cricket during the middle decades of the nineteenth century was reflected in the attitude of local clubs. Although many leading professionals also held permanent club engagements, their employers remained just as willing to let them play in major commercial matches at the end of the 1860s as they had been over a decade before. The Keighley club, for example, offered Tom Emmett a short-term engagement until his commitments in the itinerant eleven matches began in 1868 even though it had engaged E.B. Rawlinson for 19 weeks of the season.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, the club committee also agreed that Rawlinson was free to accept other engagements when Keighley were without a fixture and he appeared in six first class matches that season.<sup>59</sup> Many other leading West Riding professionals were also still able to supplement their earnings from club engagements through appearances in the major commercial matches. The players who appeared regularly for the local sides which faced the itinerant elevens also often held permanent club positions. Before the start of the 1866 season the *Bradford Observer* remarked that Isaac Hodgson, ‘this popular Yorkshire bowler ...in addition to all the Bradford and Yorkshire County matches, has already received applications to play at Keighley, Ossett, Heckmondwike, Thorne, Horncastle, Oldham, Dudley, St Ives, Redcar, Darlington, Smethwick, and Glasgow’.<sup>60</sup>

Even further possibilities for professional cricketers in the region grew out of the sport’s rapid expansion in the 1860s. As we have seen, the widespread establishment of the Saturday half holiday, which was granted to textile workers as early as 1850, had a profound effect upon cricket and football in the West Riding.<sup>61</sup> These sports saw a huge increase in participation and large numbers of new clubs were formed that could now build a full programme of weekly fixtures throughout each season. Many of the new

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<sup>57</sup> See West, *The Elevens of England*, p 47-9.

<sup>58</sup> See Keighley Cricket Club minute book 1866-1874, West Yorkshire Archive Service Ref. BK209 minutes of committee meetings held on 06/11/1867, 20/11/1867 & 02/05/1868.

<sup>59</sup> See Keighley Cricket Club minute book 1866-1874 minutes of committee meetings held on 26/02/1868.

<sup>60</sup> See *Bradford Observer*, 12 April 1866.

<sup>61</sup> See, Russell, David, The Pursuit of Leisure, in Wright, D.G., & Jowitt, J.A., Eds, *Victorian Bradford*, City of Bradford Libraries Division, 1982, pp 201-2.  
201-2.

organisations also looked to employ professionals to play regularly in Saturday afternoon matches in order to strengthen their sides. Consequently, part-time engagements were created that did not encroach on working life for men in almost any form of employment outside the sport. This made the extra income and prestige that was associated with becoming a professional sportsman available to players who found that a first-class career was beyond their grasp and many of whom also became leading figures in the development of the clubs that employed them. For example, Bob Barrett, a locally produced player, took over 1,000 wickets for Keighley during his career, which included five years as the club professional in the 1880s and 1890s, as well as engagements with Enfield and Ramsbottom. Harry Hirst was another player who rose through the ranks of his local club to become its professional. He first played for Armitage Bridge near Huddersfield in the 1870s, and helped develop the careers of a number of local men who made their mark in county cricket during his spell as club professional.

For men like Ephraim Lockwood, however, an engagement to play on Saturday afternoons for a local club provided the initial step towards a full-time professional career in first class cricket. Lockwood, who played in 213 matches for Yorkshire between 1868 and 1884, began his professional career as a 'Saturday man' with the Kirkburton club in 1864 and 1865. He then moved on to Meltham Mills in 1866, Lockwood in 1867 and Cheetham Hill in Manchester in 1868 before, 'his first spring up the ladder of fame was made'.<sup>62</sup> Allen Hill was another of the young players to benefit from these new opportunities, and the subsequent development of his career shows how a relatively clear pathway towards full time employment in professional cricket had been established for young players by the end of the 1860s. When he retired in 1882 Hill had played 139 first-class matches for Yorkshire and toured Australia in 1876-7, appearing in the first ever Test match. Born in 1845, he recounted to A.W. Pullin how

When only about 17 or 18 I had my first professional engagement. I had been playing with Kirkheaton in the Wortley district, and some of the Dewsbury-Saville men saw my bowling and approached me. The result was that I was engaged to play at Dewsbury on Saturday afternoon at half-a-crown a match. And

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<sup>62</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 103.

that was my first experience as a professional cricketer! Thanks to Mr Fox, a gentleman who took great interest in Dewsbury cricket, I was engaged for three matches at the feast, and had 5s a match...But the first club to really bring me out was the Mirfield Old Club, who gave me an appointment at I think 15s or 16s, a week, my duties to commence at four o'clock each day. After that I kept playing without taking a regular engagement, until Luke Greenwood sent for me to go to Stoneyhurst College. That was 33 years ago last summer [1897]. Practically I went straight from the hand-loom to this college engagement, which I held for two years. Subsequently I was engaged at Old Trafford, and finally went to Burnley. It was at Burnley that my public career was destined to commence.<sup>63</sup>

### **Social Background - Casual Labour, Independent Trades and Class Distinctions before the 'Gentleman Amateur'**

But, the engagement of 'Saturday men' raises important questions about the players who had been able to build professional careers in the sport before the 1860s. As we have seen, the widespread establishment of Saturday afternoon as a weekly period of leisure time precipitated a huge increase in the number of people playing regular organised cricket and provided a structure around which sport continues to be organised today. But the 'great cricket explosion' also has implications that relate to economic conditions in the region during the years that preceded the reduction of working hours. The speed and scale with which participation in cricket grew emphasises further how many people had previously been excluded from playing the organised form of the sport by conditions that were placed upon them in working life. So how were growing numbers of men able to find sufficient free time to build successful playing careers as professional cricketers during the first half of the nineteenth century?

The answer to this question clearly lies in the social and, more importantly, economic circumstances of the early West Riding professionals, and these are themes that have been examined, in more general terms, in a number of notable academic works.<sup>64</sup> In this

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<sup>63</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p.114-5.

<sup>64</sup> See Vamplew, *Pay up and Play the Game*, especially Part IV, pp 183-259. Mandle, W.F., The professional cricketer in the nineteenth century, *Labour History*, XXIII, 1972, pp 1-16, Allison, Lincoln.

discourse the background of nineteenth-century professional cricketers has largely been viewed in the light of the rigorous social distinctions that were ascribed to them from the 1870s onwards through the concept of the “Amateur Gentleman”. Consequently, as Wray Vamplew has pointed out, to say that nineteenth-century professional sportsmen were predominantly members of the working-classes ‘is virtually a tautological statement’.<sup>65</sup> But, although clearly linked to social status, the economic necessity of payment for play and availability of access to free time are issues which were of at least equal importance to those players whose careers took place between 1820 and 1870.

Indeed W.F. Mandle provided some initial comment on the importance of relatively independent economic status in perhaps the first empirical analysis of nineteenth century professional cricketers. He examined the details of players that appeared in various volumes of *Frederick Lillywhite’s Scores and Biographies of Celebrated Cricketers*. His research highlighted how piece rate work provided opportunities for players to pursue professional engagements, using the handloom weavers of Lascelles Hall as an example.<sup>66</sup> The playing careers of the professionals included in his study spanned the period from 1827 to 1876 and Mandle also identified that shifts in both occupational background and geographical location took place, which mirrored more general patterns of economic change in Britain. During these years the nation’s industrial growth resulted in a shift in occupation from agriculture to industry, with the manufacturing districts in the north supplying increasing numbers of professional cricketers as the century progressed.

Yet, the source material used in Mandle’s analysis does not represent the full picture of professionalism in Yorkshire during these years. He only found details for seven players from the county between 1827 and 1840 and 10 between 1874 and 1876. Given the fragmented nature of information relating to the background of the nineteenth-century professionals it comes as no surprise that these figures are so low. But a more comprehensive picture can be drawn by using alternative primary source material along with a number of secondary sources that were not available at the time. For example, in one important work overlooked by Mandle, A.W. Pullin wrote a famous series of

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Batsman and Bowler: The Key Relation of Victorian England, *Journal of Sports History*, Vol 7, No 2 (Summer 1980), pp 5-20, and Sissons, *The Players*, especially Part Two, pp 85-193.

<sup>65</sup> See Vamplew, *Pay up and Play the Game*, p 204.

<sup>66</sup> See Mandle, *The professional cricketer in the nineteenth century*, p 5.

articles entitled *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, which were published in book form in 1898. They provide valuable details about the men who represented Yorkshire during the early years of the county club and were used, along with many other sources, by Peter Thomas in his comprehensive *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839 – 1939*. Published in 1973, the year after Mandle's paper, Thomas' book includes occupational details for a number of professionals who played between 1820 and 1870. These works have been added to more recently by Ric Sissons, in *The Players*, and J.R. Ellam who has provided specific information about the early Huddersfield professionals, whilst other references can be found in contemporary West Riding newspapers.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, it has been possible to find employment details for 30 West Riding professionals who played between the 1820s and the end of the 1860s. This material includes details relating to the working lives of players both during and after their playing careers, from which a relatively detailed analysis can be made.

Although the occupational backgrounds of these 30 players leaves little doubt that West Riding professional cricketers were predominantly members of the working-classes during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, a small minority enjoyed higher social status. Out of the 30 players for whom details are available 90% (27) were employed in working-class occupations. Of this figure most also worked in the independent trades, with 63% (19) in some form of employment which enjoyed a degree of craft status. Consequently, 27% (8) of the players were employed in forms of unskilled labour whilst, perhaps most interestingly, 10 % (3) had middle-class occupations.

Although unexpected, the existence of professional players from outside the working-classes is perhaps not as unlikely as it first appears. The willingness of men with lower middle-class backgrounds to earn money from playing the sport demonstrates how the social distinctions that have come to dominate perceptions of nineteenth century amateur and professional cricketers were not fully defined until the 1870s. Indeed, during the early part of the nineteenth century, as Wray Vamplew has noted, socially elite sportsmen were not referred to as amateurs at all, as 'the contradistinction to professional was gentleman'.<sup>68</sup> During this earlier period the term amateur had a different meaning and was often used to denote an enthusiastic follower with a keen

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<sup>67</sup> See Ellam, *Huddersfield's Nineteenth Century Yorkshire XI*.

<sup>68</sup> See Vamplew, *Pay up and Play the Game*, p 183.

interest in betting on the sport. For example in 1827 the *Sheffield Independent* reported that,

Soon after it was known that the Nottingham players would venture upon another *chance* with Sheffield, the amateurs of the game have looked with some anxiety for the day of contention.<sup>69</sup>

Attitudes towards professionals were also different during this period. Men such as Tom Marsden could clearly become popular and well-respected figures whose skill and knowledge of the sport brought them high regard from all levels of society. Members of the socially elite group 'the Fancy' even mixed regularly with professional pugilists, and other sportsmen, for whom they often provided financial backing in major contests.

Indeed these professional cricketers with middle-class backgrounds provide a further illustration of how the values that later came to dominate cricket could be contradicted during the middle years of the nineteenth century. All three players worked as clerks and whilst little detail is known about two of them, William Trueman and John Robinson, the same sense of ambiguity that marked the activities of early middle-class cricket clubs can be seen in the career of the third, George Freeman. Born at Boroughbridge in 1844, Freeman became one of the greatest of Yorkshire's nineteenth-century fast bowlers. He began working life in the office of Mr Hirst's solicitors, before moving to Leeds in the early 1860s to take up similar employment and set out building a successful career as a professional cricketer. His first class debut came in 1865 and he played in 42 such matches before drifting out of the sport at its highest level in 1872 to concentrate on his growing business as an auctioneer. However, five years later, following the continued success of his business he became one of a select group of professionals who also played first-class cricket as an amateur and in 1882 was asked to play for the Gentlemen against the Australians at the Oval, although he declined due to work commitments.<sup>70</sup>

Yet, Freeman came from a working-class family, his father was a 'bricklayer and mason', and his rise in social status came despite an association with aspects of cricket

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<sup>69</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 04/08/1827.

<sup>70</sup> For the working lives of Robinson and Trueman see Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 204 and p 164.

that conflicted fundamentally with later ideas about the values that the sport should represent. As we have seen, in August 1866 he took part in a high stake single wicket match against Henry Terry on the 'Old Ground', York. The match was said to have attracted over £1000 in bets, whilst three years later Freeman took on a principal role with one of the leading itinerant professional touring elevens. Along with Roger Iddison, he was instrumental in the formation of the United North of England Eleven after the United All England Eleven folded in 1869, and briefly became secretary of the team before business commitments cut short his tenure in the post.<sup>71</sup>

Nevertheless, employment in the independent trades was clearly pivotal to the development of professional players in the West Riding and their growth in numbers can be directly linked to the distinctive pattern of economic development that took place in the region. The late introduction of large-scale production in woollen textiles and metalworking, two of the region's principal industries, meant that craft status was especially prolonged in specific manufacturing processes that dominated certain areas. Sheffield and Huddersfield are two of the towns that were most closely associated with this pattern of industrial development and, as we have already seen, both produced a high proportion of professional cricketers.

In woollen textiles the relationship between professional cricketers and the prolonged survival of independent trades was reflected in the number of players who worked as handloom weavers in the villages that surround Huddersfield. Indeed, it has been estimated that as late as 1868 one-quarter of the looms were still worked by hand in the specialised 'fancy' woollen cloth trade that predominated around the town.<sup>72</sup> This was the decade in which Allen Hill was given his first professional engagements and he described how employment in the trade provided the free time that was necessary for him to pursue a career in cricket. But little had evidently changed since the late 1830s when the match-play team from Dalton first rose to prominence. John Berry, who played in the side, was born in 1823 and followed his father into the handloom weaving trade as a young man. For most handloom weavers the production process was based around a small domestic unit, in which other members of the family were involved, and

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<sup>71</sup> For details about Freeman's working life see Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, pp 86-101.

<sup>72</sup> See Clapham, J. H., *The Decline of the Handloom in England and Germany*, *Journal of the Bradford Textile Society*, Volume 11 (1905), p. 45.

it was common for the sons of weavers, like Berry, to continue the family tradition.<sup>73</sup> Consequently, of the eight players included in this analysis who worked in the textile industry, six were handloom weavers and they all came from the villages that surround Huddersfield. In addition to Berry and Hill, Luke Greenwood and John Thewlis, who were amongst the first generation of professionals from Lascelles Hall, both began their working lives as handloom weavers in the 1850s whilst Andrew Greenwood and Billy Bates, both contemporaries of Allen Hill, continued this tradition in the following decade.<sup>74</sup>

Similar self-regulated working practices were equally important to the professional players who came from the Sheffield area. Small scale production was particularly resilient in the Sheffield light trades and the unofficial weekly holiday, Saint Monday, became such a strong tradition in the town that it continued to be taken after the introduction of the steel mills later in the century.<sup>75</sup> The early occupations of nine players from Sheffield were available for this analysis and seven worked in the manufacture of small metal goods. George Rawlins and William Barber, who both played in the 1820s, worked as cutlers.<sup>76</sup> William Slinn, who was born in 1826, was a scissor smith, and Thomas Hall, who was born in 1824, was a file grinder, whilst Harry Sampson, the champion single wicket player and member of the county side in the 1840s, first worked as a file forger for Messers Cammell and Johnson, Furnival Street.<sup>77</sup> The trend continued in the second half of the nineteenth century. Joe Rowbotham, a regular for both the itinerant and Yorkshire elevens from the 1850s to the 1880s, began his working life as a saw maker whilst George Pinder, another Yorkshire player in the 1860s and 1870s, was first employed as a pocket blade grinder.<sup>78</sup> The occupational background of Tom Marsden, however, did not reflect Sheffield's distinctive economic character. He worked at a local brickworks in the early 1820s, where his father was the foreman. Nevertheless, sufficient access to free time in which to hone his skills at cricket was evidently available. Marsden lived in the Jericho district of Sheffield where,

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<sup>73</sup> See Ellam, *Huddersfield's Nineteenth Century Yorkshire XI*, p 10.

<sup>74</sup> See Ellam, *Huddersfield's Nineteenth Century Yorkshire XI*, p 17 for Luke Greenwood, p 27 for Thewlis, p 43 for Andrew Greenwood and p 65 for Bates.

<sup>75</sup> See Thompson, E .P., *Customs in Common*, The New Press, New York, 1993, p 375.

<sup>76</sup> See Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 11 for Barber and p 163 for Rawlins.

<sup>77</sup> See Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 73 for Hall. For Slinn see Sissons, *The Players*, p 80 and for Sampson see *Sheffield Independent* 01 04 1883.

<sup>78</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 74 for Pinder and p 43 for Rowbotham.



as some of his contemporaries later recounted, 'he was to be seen whenever he could get anyone to join him at cricket'.<sup>79</sup>

Away from the distinctive occupational patterns of Huddersfield and Sheffield, the employment backgrounds of professional players were more diverse. Yet craft specific employment was no less important. Roger Iddison, who captained the early Yorkshire County Cricket Club sides in the 1860s, started his working life as a butcher in Bedale, whilst William Swain, the Bradford professional, was a tailor.<sup>80</sup> Hugh Barrett, who played for Harewood in the 1830s, was a painter by trade, and, before he became a regular in the itinerant and Yorkshire elevens during the 1850s and 1860s, George Atkinson began an apprenticeship as a glass blower in Leeds.<sup>81</sup> John Hall had also worked in a textile trade, although not one related to the worsted industry that predominated in Bradford where he was a professional during the 1840s. He had moved north from Nottingham where he began his working life as a framework knitter.<sup>82</sup>

Indeed, Hall was not the only framework knitter to become a professional cricketer. Ric Sissons has found that a similar pattern of employment prevailed amongst the 19<sup>th</sup> century Nottingham professionals, with workers in trades that enjoyed prolonged craft status, most notably framework knitters and lace makers, predominating in the county eleven between 1835 and 1879.<sup>83</sup> He also contrasted the high number of professional cricketers from Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire with their relative scarcity in Lancashire, where a faster rate of industrialisation had seen many independent trades disappear much earlier.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, none of the West Riding players included in this analysis and only one of the 18 players who A.W. Pullin interviewed during his *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers* were employed at any time in occupations that were subjected to the work discipline of large-scale factory organisation. George Ulyett worked in a Sheffield rolling mill before his career as a full time professional with Yorkshire began in 1873. However, even here, time was made available for cricket, as Ulyett explained,

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<sup>79</sup> See Leader, Robert, *Reminiscences of old Sheffield: its Streets and its People*, Leader, Sheffield, 1875, pp. 198-9.

<sup>80</sup> See Sissons, *The Players*, p 79 for Iddison and Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 190 for Swain.

<sup>81</sup> See Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 14 for Barrett and Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 16.

<sup>82</sup> See Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 72.

<sup>83</sup> See Sissons, *The Players*, p 77.

<sup>84</sup> See *Ibid*, p 79.

I was so fond of cricket that I usually got the sack about a dozen times during the summer for going away to play in matches, but my employer was generous and always took me on again.<sup>85</sup>

Access to free time was also clearly important for the players who had more menial jobs and most, seemingly, found transient forms of employment that could be fitted around opportunities to earn money from cricket. As we have seen Tom Marsden was employed at the brickworks where his father was manager and it is likely that this family connection with work provided ample time to practise and play in matches. John Grange initially worked as a farm labourer near Dacre Banks in Nidderdale. But by the time he played James Sadler in a single wicket match for £50 on Woodhouse Moor in 1857 he lived at Kirkstall in Leeds and, it seems, was employed at the nearby forge.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, Tom Emmett had no fixed form of employment when he was offered his second professional appointment whilst riding with the Keighley cricket team to a match in 1863. He explained to A.W. Pullin that,

...they asked me if I would like to take an engagement with them. I entered into negotiations in earnest, and said if they would find me something to do in the winter I would engage myself to them. They did so.<sup>87</sup>

Work opportunities like the one given to Emmett also mark a significant departure from the other forms of employment that were undertaken by professional players during this period. They clearly show that the status of professional cricketers could provide access to work outside the sport. This type of 'tied' job became a feature of the professional engagements that were offered by the new generation of leading clubs which began to be formed in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Joseph Crossland can be found in the 1861 census working as a warehouseman and living in a cottage that was owned by the Fielden family. We have seen how the Fieldens were benefactors of the local cricket club, as well as being the town's major employers, and it is likely that

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<sup>85</sup> Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 201.

<sup>86</sup> See *Leeds Intelligencer*, 24 10/1857.

<sup>87</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 55.

both accommodation and employment were linked to Crossland's position at the club.<sup>88</sup> A decade or so earlier, James Dearman's engagement with Rochdale was similarly structured, and he worked for Mr John Mason, who was a local foundry owner and the driving force behind the town's cricket club.<sup>89</sup>

Another, more traditional, form of 'tied' employment for professional cricketers was also available during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. A number of players, such as John Berry, worked on the estates of aristocratic patrons. Indeed, Berry's employment as a gamekeeper for the Duke of Norfolk provides an interesting example of the way in which a successful career in cricket could provide access to work outside the sport. The former handloom weaver from Dalton had first moved with his family to Sheffield when he became a professional with the Wednesday club where Michael Ellison, who was agent to the Duke of Norfolk was a member.<sup>90</sup> Ellison was also one of the leading cricket enthusiasts in the town and it seems almost certain that he arranged for Berry to be given a job on the estate he managed. Indeed, this was not the only time Ellison used his position to help further the development of cricket in the town. During the 1850s he provided the impetus for a new venue for cricket in Sheffield to be built on a plot of land at Bramall Lane, which was part of the Duke of Norfolk's estate. Elsewhere, Emanuel Scott, a professional at Harewood in the 1860s, was employed on the Lascelles family estate where the club was based, whilst, according to Sissons, the Sheffield wicketkeeper George Chatterton, worked, at one time, as a servant for one of the sport's aristocratic patrons.<sup>91</sup>

### **Pay and Conditions - A Picture of 'Gradually Relieving Gloom'?**

The distinctive economic conditions of the West Riding were clearly important in helping players from the region take advantage of the opportunities that became available in professional cricket during the first two thirds of the nineteenth century. But how far did employment in the sport prove to be economically beneficial for these men?

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<sup>88</sup> See Heywoods, *Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy*, p 23.

<sup>89</sup> See *Ibid*, p 11.

<sup>90</sup> See Ellam, *Huddersfield's Nineteenth Century Yorkshire XI*, pp 10-15.

<sup>91</sup> See Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 33 for Scott and Sissons, *The Players*, p 80 for Chatterton.

The earnings of nineteenth century professional cricketers have also been examined by a number of writers during the past few decades.<sup>92</sup> Much of this work is concentrated, quite naturally, on material relating to first-class cricket from the 1870s onwards, as contemporary payments to players in this form of the sport are relatively well documented. Consequently, attention has largely been focused on how earnings changed little before the circumstances of professional players were enhanced considerably from the 1880s onwards by increased match payments and the introduction of winter pay in county cricket.<sup>93</sup> These economic improvements have been linked, both in contemporary accounts and by later writers, to the new element of respectability that is seen to have developed amongst professional cricketers in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This view will be discussed in greater detail later.<sup>94</sup> But it is necessary here to try and fill some of the gaps that have been left in the historiography of professional earnings in cricket. Understandably, given the absence of detailed material, little attention has been given to the payments that were made to professionals before county cricket became firmly established as the dominant form of the sport in the 1870s. However, sufficient material can be found to assemble a general picture of the earnings that were available to players in the first two thirds of the nineteenth century and relate them to contemporary incomes in the broader economy.

Whilst no specific details of the payments that were made to the first generation of West Riding professional have survived, references to the amount of money on offer to play in matches at Lord's during this period are available. In 1827, fees were increased to £6 for a win and £4 for a loss, in three day matches, whilst winning pay for shorter contests rose to £5 with the losers receiving £3.<sup>95</sup> It is likely that comparable payments would only be offered in the West Riding for appearing in major commercial matches and we have seen how these events were only played intermittently during the first half of the nineteenth century. So a significant proportion of the players' income during this

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<sup>92</sup> See Vamplew, *Pay up and Play the Game*, Mandle, *The professional cricketer in the nineteenth century*, Sissons, *The Players*, and Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*.

<sup>93</sup> See Vamplew, *Pay up and Play the Game*, especially pp 204-226, Mandle, *The professional cricketer in the nineteenth century*, Sissons, *The Players*, pp 85-126 and Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, pp 80-111.

<sup>94</sup> See Sissons, *The Players*, pp 86-91, and Lord Harris, *Amateurs and Professionals*, *The Times*, 22/01/1909.

<sup>95</sup> See Birley, *Social History of English Cricket*, p 67.

period almost certainly came from the somewhat more uncertain source of playing for stake money.

But some of the instability that surrounded professional earnings in cricket was lifted at the end of the 1840s when the itinerant elevens first established a structure that could accommodate full time professionalism in the sport. As we have seen, from the late 1840s onwards William Clarke's All England Eleven began to provide a relatively stable income throughout the season for both the players who made up his team and those who faced it. George Anderson, a regular member of the All England Eleven for around 15 years, provides the earliest indication of how much money West Riding professionals earned from playing for the All England Eleven. He explained to A.W. Pullin that the players 'got £5 a game, and sometimes when we had a long journey we would get a little more, but never more than £6 a match in all.'<sup>96</sup>

With an average of around 25 matches each season during the 1850s and 1860s it was possible for players to earn approximately £130 during the summer months, which compares well with both lower middle-class and working-class earnings from this period. In Manchester and Salford in 1860 the average wage for bookkeepers was £60 per annum, cashiers £100 and salesmen and buyers around £150.<sup>97</sup> Employment for skilled labour, however, was less financially rewarding. According to Mitchell's *British Historical Statistics*, the average wage for skilled employees in the textile industry was £58.64 per annum in 1851. In the Leeds textile trade Baines found that, aside from overlookers and foremen who could receive up to 40s a week, only drawers and press setters were able earn over £100 if a full year's work was possible during the late 1850s.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, as we have seen, in 1858 the 120 handloom weavers employed by the Waterloo Mill at Pudsey, near Leeds, off the premises, earned just 14s per week.<sup>99</sup>

Yet, as some writers have pointed out, the size of these match payments gives a somewhat misleading picture of the financial position in which the professionals who made up the itinerant elevens found themselves.<sup>100</sup> The players were responsible for all their own expenses, which included both accommodation and travelling, and, as they

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<sup>96</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 8.

<sup>97</sup> See Musgrove, F., Middle-Class Education and Employment in the Nineteenth Century, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 12, No. 1. (1959), p 104.

<sup>98</sup> See Mitchell, B. R., *British Historical Statistics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, p 149, and Baines, On the Woollen Manufacture of England, p 25.

<sup>99</sup> See Baines, On the Woollen Manufacture of England, p 27.

<sup>100</sup> See Sissons, *The Players*, pp 49-53.

were on the road throughout the whole season, these costs were substantial. George Atkinson, who played alongside Anderson in the 1850s, recounted that, although he.

...played in as many as 38 matches in a year with the old elevens and the county. I have got home with only 7s or 8s in my pocket after paying hotel bills and railway fares. The last time I played in Guernsey, George Freeman and I, when we got back to York, had to borrow our fares from old Clarke, who was then the stationmaster there. I got £7 to go from Middlesbrough to the Channel Islands.<sup>101</sup>

Indeed, the costs incurred whilst touring with the itinerant elevens prompted Anderson's evocative comment that 'there was not much left to get fat on.'<sup>102</sup>

As Sissons and others have noted, there is also little evidence to suggest that the financial position of leading professionals improved throughout much of the nineteenth century. Pay rates for major matches had not changed by the time George Pinder made his debut for the AEE against Worksop in 1865 and when Tom Emmett was first invited to play for Yorkshire in 1866 he asked for 'the usual fee, £5, but was told that 'it was not the practice to give so much to beginners'.<sup>103</sup> Indeed, as Pinder also explained, match fees remained at the same level throughout his career with Yorkshire, which ended in 1880. He told Pullin that,

At the time when I was playing we had not so many matches, and we only got £5 wherever we went. The largest number I played in one season was 24. That would be £120. Out of that I had to pay my hotel bills, my railway travelling, and maintain my home, wife, and four children. We started in May and gave up in September, - that is five months -, and then we had seven months to get over. So you could see we had not a deal to throw away or spend.<sup>104</sup>

Nevertheless, it was Anderson's generation of players who felt the stagnation of fees for major matches most severely. According to Bowley's index, fluctuations in the cost

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<sup>101</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 22.

<sup>102</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 8.

<sup>103</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 76.

<sup>104</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 85.

of living equated to an overall rise of 15% during the course of his career in elite cricket, which lasted from 1850 to 1869, and peaked at a rate of 23% in 1857. Indeed the cost of living in Britain remained relatively static throughout the 1860s and 1870s, and began to fall in the 1880s, effectively improving economic conditions for the professionals whose careers spanned these years. It also seems logical to assume that travelling and accommodation expenses decreased with the growth of county cricket in the 1870s, as a considerable proportion of these matches were played in the region.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, in comparison to the wages available to skilled workers in the textile industry, whose average income rose from £58.64 in 1855 to £85.77 in 1881, an increase of 46.26%, any economic gains made by professional cricketers during this period were minimal.<sup>106</sup>

There were also many professionals who failed to reach the level of these leading players. Ironically, however, it seems the economic circumstances they found themselves in were less oppressive. Most major matches in which local sides engaged West Riding professionals were staged within the region or the surrounding counties. So the men who played against them avoided the crippling costs of travel and accommodation that Anderson, Atkinson and Pinder all spoke about. Match payments could also compare well with those paid to the full time players in the itinerant elevens as some local sides used a relatively flexible system of match fees, which reflected the status of the players they engaged. When Todmorden hosted the United All England Eleven in 1864, the club employed four West Riding professionals for the local twenty-two. Edwin Stephenson, who was by far the most established of the four players, was paid £7, whilst Issac Hodgson, William Slinn and Luke Greenwood each received £5 for the match.<sup>107</sup> Stephenson had appeared in 43 first class matches since making his debut in 1857, whilst Hodgson had played in 20 such fixtures, despite making his debut in 1852, Slinn in 13 and Greenwood, who was just embarking on his successful career, in five. For players with little or no experience in major matches fees for playing with the local sides were smaller and George Pinder remembered receiving 30s when he played for Ossett in a three-day fixture against Parr's Eleven in 1865. However, in this

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<sup>105</sup> See Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, p 738.

<sup>106</sup> See Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, p 153.

<sup>107</sup> See Heywoods', *Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy*, p 34.

case the opportunity itself proved more valuable, as Pinder was subsequently engaged to play with Parr's Eleven.<sup>108</sup>

Yet there were other benefits for the professionals who did not have regular employment with the itinerant elevens. Most of these players also had other sources of income from cricket and, like Isaac Hodgson and Tom Emmett, combined appearances in itinerant eleven matches with club engagements. Hodgson was employed by Bradford in the 1860s, whilst Emmett held a position with Keighley for which he was paid 32s 6d a week in 1865, his first year with the club. This figure rose to '£3s 6d a week' before Emmett became a regular with Yorkshire and the itinerant elevens, and E.B. Rawlinson was employed to take his place.<sup>109</sup> In 1868 Rawlinson was engaged from the middle of June until the end of August at a rate of £2 2s a week. But as we have seen, he was able to supplement his income from Keighley by playing three times with Yorkshire, for which the fee was £5 per match. In the next year he played six times for the county whilst engaged by Keighley, this time for 19 weeks at 2 guineas a week. Moreover, Emmett was also offered £2 2s a match to play for the club when available during the 1868 season.<sup>110</sup>

So by combining various engagements, some club professionals could clearly earn a healthy income from cricket during the summer months without incurring any major expenses. In 1867 Rawlinson earned £42 3s from the sport, whilst his extra six weeks employment with Keighley in 1868 and three additional county matches saw the figure rise to £69 9s. These earnings compare well with those in the contemporary textile industry, in which the average annual income for a skilled worker was £63.26 in 1861 and £82.55 in 1871. Moreover, when Keighley first engaged Tom Emmett he was provided with work outside the sport. So the demands of the professional's position at the club clearly left sufficient time for other employment and his successor may have also been able to supplement his income from cricket in this way. Indeed, Allen Hill's engagement at the Mirfield club certainly allowed him to work outside the sport. His duties did not begin until four 'o' clock, leaving ample time during the day to earn money from handloom weaving.

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<sup>108</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 75.

<sup>109</sup> Keighley Cricket Club, *The Jubilee of the Lawkholme Ground*, p 21.

<sup>110</sup> See Keighley Cricket Club minute book 1866-1874, minutes of meetings held on 20/11/1867 and 02.05/1868.



As we have seen, by the end of 1860s growing numbers of men were also able to earn a casual income from playing cricket in the region as a 'Saturday man' which allowed work outside the sport to continue as their main source of income. Payments from these positions were relatively modest, especially for young players who were just setting out on their careers in the sport and Tom Emmett remembered being paid either 2'6 or 5s per match when making his first appearances as a professional, which were for Halifax during the early 1860s.<sup>111</sup> In 1869 5s per week was also the fee offered by Keighley for a junior professional, who the club decided should be employed alongside the senior appointment, for which fees were reduced to 30s a week for 20 weeks.<sup>112</sup> Yet the value of these additional earnings from cricket is placed in its true perspective by Allen Hill's recollections. After his first three professional engagements, which were at Dewsbury Feast, Hill told A.W. Pullin 'I took home 15s, and can remember how delighted my father and mother were'.<sup>113</sup>

But in addition to the fees they received for playing in matches all these professionals had opportunities to earn extra payments from spontaneous acts of patronage that were made to them following outstanding performances on the field of play. Indeed this form of payment provides the only specific details that are available for players' earnings in the region before the 1850s. When Tom Marsden played for Leeds against Harewood in 1841, *Bell's Life* reported that after the match, 'so satisfied were the cricketers of Harewood with the conduct of their opponents' that 'the veteran Marsden' was presented with 'a purse containing nearly £14'.<sup>114</sup> This was a remarkable figure considering that Hobsbawm found 25 shillings to be the highest weekly wage paid in any of the major trades in the town three years earlier.<sup>115</sup> However, it is likely that the size of the payment was in recognition of Marsden's immense contribution to Yorkshire cricket, rather than his performance during the match in question. Indeed, he had been rewarded in similar fashion 11 years earlier, when, after a match with Nottingham, the *Sheffield Independent* reported that,

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<sup>111</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 55.

<sup>112</sup> See Keighley Cricket Club minute book 1866-1874, minutes of meeting held on 01/12/1869.

<sup>113</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 114-5.

<sup>114</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 15/08/1841.

<sup>115</sup> See Hobsbawm, E. J., The British Standard of Living 1790-1850, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 10, No. 1. (1957), p 56.

...so impressed were the subscribers to how much they were indebted to Marsden for his great exertions, that on Wednesday after the match was terminated, they entered into a subscription and £16 was collected towards the purchase of a silver cup, of the value of £30, which it is intended to present to him as testimony of his ability and his conduct during the contest.<sup>116</sup>

Marsden had scored 48 and 2, and taken 10 wickets in the match as Sheffield won by 41 runs.

As we have seen, payment by patronage through gentlemen's subscription remained an important means of funding professional cricket throughout the nineteenth century and its longevity was matched by these more spontaneous acts of generosity. John Thewlis explained that when he made his debut for Yorkshire in 1863 'A gentleman came forward, whose name I cannot recall, offered me a shilling for every run I scored. I got 46 in the first innings, and 16 in the second, so that I had 62s to draw for the performance.'<sup>117</sup> Indeed the players themselves could also be generous in rewarding a match winning-performance by their team-mates. Joseph Rowbotham told A.W. Pullin how, in match against Cambridgeshire at Wisbech in 1867, Yorkshire needed 91 to win when the last man, J. Bowman, joined him at the crease. Rowbotham had already scored around 30 runs and said to the number 11, 'Thee hold thi bat still, I'll try and get the runs'. The pair managed to see their side through to victory and Rowbotham recalled 'All the players gave me half-a-crown apiece, a gentleman present gave me a sovereign, and the county committee an extra couple of sovereigns for this performance.'<sup>118</sup>

Indeed as the structure of organised cricket became more firmly centred on formalised cricket clubs the practice of providing such financial rewards for leading performances was also rationalised. The payment of 'talent money' quickly became a common feature of club matches across the region and at the sport's highest level Yorkshire gave bonuses to professionals such as Tom Emmett who represented the club in first class cricket during the 1860s and 1870s. Emmett recounted how he was close to earning an extra 18s 6d during a match against Gloucester in 1878, before over-confidence against

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<sup>116</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 04:09:1830.

<sup>117</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 38.

<sup>118</sup> See *ibid*, p 48.

the lob bowling of Mr Frank Townsend caused him to lose his wicket.<sup>119</sup> Similar payments were also available in club matches and were not restricted to professional players. When E. Dawson carried his bat for 54 in a match between Bradford and Sheffield during the 1865 season he ‘was presented with the usual “talent sovereign” whilst in 1871 payments were awarded to players who scored 50 runs or over during an innings in all three of the Keighley club elevens.’<sup>120</sup>

Benefit matches provided another important part of the professional’s income. However, it seems that, certainly during the middle years of the nineteenth-century, they were not primarily viewed, either by the players or their employers, as the means of rewarding long service and safeguarding against poverty that they came to represent.<sup>121</sup> In the 1860s it appears that benefit matches could be played to provide extra income for players whenever a suitable opportunity arose. Luke Greenwood was able to make £18 from a match between 17 gentlemen and 11 professionals in October 1864, over a decade before his career in first-class cricket ended, whilst in the previous year a similar event took place for William Swain and Caleb Robinson.<sup>122</sup> These players were aged just 33 and 35 respectively when the UAEE met a local 22 at Otley in August 1863 and in 1866, just five seasons after his 13-year first class career had begun, a match was staged for Joe Berry at Darlington, where he was employed at the time.<sup>123</sup> Some clubs even used benefits matches to supplement a players contractual income. In 1871 the Keighley club decided to offer John Moorhouse professional terms at a rate of 5s per week and a benefit match at the end of the season, if his conduct met with ‘the approbation of the Committee’.<sup>124</sup> However, some matches were staged in the region to reward players who had enjoyed long and successful careers with local clubs during the 1860s. On 9<sup>th</sup> May 1863 the *Leeds Times* announced that a match,

for the benefit of George Bosomworth, the well known Leeds cricketer is being arranged by his friends locally...no efforts will be spared to make the match as

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<sup>119</sup> See *ibid*, p 59 and p 60.

<sup>120</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 01/07/1865.

<sup>121</sup> For a retrospective view of the benefit match as a form of benevolent patronage towards professional players see Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p 87-108.

<sup>122</sup> See *Leeds Times* 15/10/1864, for the Lockwood match and *Leeds Times* 08·08·1863, for the Robinson and Swain match.

<sup>123</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 15/9/66.

<sup>124</sup> See Keighley Cricket Club minute book 1866-1874, minutes of March meeting 1871.

attractive and successful as possible...Bosomworth, as all cricketers will know, has rendered good service to Leeds in all their best matches for several years, and as we know of no man that more deserves the proposed substantial compliment we heartily wish the project the fullest success.<sup>125</sup>

But despite the various forms of payment that were available to them, much uncertainty clearly remained in the careers of professional cricketers during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Little security of employment was available and whilst some clubs offered positions for a fixed number of weeks during the summer months, many engagements were for one match only. The expansion of professional opportunities with local clubs also created problems, especially for the players who were employed at the elite level of the sport, as the growing pool of men who were willing and able to take their place was largely responsible for the lack of increase in match fees.

Consequently, some professionals failed to make any real economic progress over the course of their careers and fell on hard times in retirement. When A.W. Pullin was finally able to track down John Thewlis in 1898 he found him living in a state of abject poverty in Failsworth, near Oldham. Thewlis had returned to handloom weaving once his career ended in the 1870s only to find that there was little work left for those in the trade. The shock of seeing one of the great pioneers of Yorkshire county cricket in this position led to an impassioned appeal from the writer in his series of articles on the old players. But, Thewlis was not alone in finding life difficult in retirement, as both Luke Greenwood and George Pinder were also found to be in financial difficulties by Pullin.<sup>126</sup>

### **Reputation and Status - 'Ten Drunks and a Parson'?**

The poverty in which these former West Riding players found themselves after they had finished playing has often dominated perceptions of the professionals whose careers took place before the 1880s. Indeed, W.F. Mandle concluded that for the nineteenth century professional 'the picture was one of gradually relieving gloom'. Ric Sissons

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<sup>125</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 09/05/1863.

<sup>126</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, pp 35-36 for Thewlis and p 74-85 for Pinder.

further highlighted the experience of these and a number of other notable players from outside the region who fell on hard times, as well as pointing out the small number of professionals who took their own lives.<sup>127</sup> This view also reflects, and is to some extent influenced by, the conceptual framework that was used to establish the superiority of the 'Gentleman Amateur' in cricket during the last three decades of the nineteenth century.

Whilst a series of tangible controls were used to subjugate professionals from the 1870s onwards, the subsequent construction of two interrelated concepts was also an important part of this process. The first was the concept of the 'respectable professional', who under the new code of discipline that was imposed upon the players in county cricket had risen to a new level of recognition and status.<sup>128</sup> This notion served to endorse the strict moral guidance, social deference and economic constraints that the new regulations placed upon the players. But it also implied that previously the paid player had been 'unrespectable', a notion which mirrored middle-class attitudes towards the working-classes in contemporary society, and justified the allegations of self-interest and ill-discipline that had allegedly shown how unrestricted professionalism was bad for sport. So, the social order in cricket having been re-established, the second concept endorsed the ideological predominance of the middle-classes by celebrating the triumph of amateurism through the 'golden age' of cricket. It shaped an image of the late Victorian and Edwardian game in which a bedrock of erstwhile professionals provided a canvas upon which a glamorous host of naturally gifted amateurs expressed themselves to the full, through an aesthetically pure style of play that represented the apogee of amateur sport.

Indeed, assaults on the character of mid-nineteenth century professionals had begun in earnest during previous decades. Anthony Trollope described the formation of William Clarke's All England XI, as an 'evil hour for cricket' and accused the players of pursuing the 'quasi-Episcopal function' of 'propagating cricket in distant parts'. Trollope thought that professionals should play a subservient role in cricket and wrote nostalgically of the

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<sup>127</sup> See Mandle, The professional cricketer in the nineteenth century, p 16 and Sissons, *The Players*, pp 143-54.

<sup>128</sup> For a discussion of the 'respectable professional', see Sissons, *The Players*, pp 150-91.

time when they were 'proud to be asked to play. They came up to Lord's and earned their five pounds for winning a match. They were civil and contented.'<sup>129</sup>

However, Thomas Hughes expressed a less tolerant view of professionals. Hughes was a leading voice in the 'Muscular Christianity' movement and developed some particularly influential views on sport in his most famous novel, *Tom Brown's School Days*, which championed the reformed public school system his old headmaster Thomas Arnold had developed at Rugby. Although Arnold himself had little time for sport. Hughes, and others saw cricket and football as key components of the new curriculum. They believed these sports provided an ideal means through which values it was felt should represent the character of the English gentleman could be diffused amongst the future leaders of the nation and its Empire. Hughes used his novel to articulate these ideas and acclaimed cricket to be,

the birthright of British boys old and young, as habeas corpus and trial by jury are of British men...The discipline and reliance upon one another which it teaches is so invaluable, I think, ...it ought to be such an unselfish game. It merges the individual with the eleven: he does not play that he might win but that his side may.<sup>130</sup>

Men like Hughes saw no place for professionals in their vision of the sport and in a letter to the *Spectator*, which was published in full by the *Leeds Times* on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1863, he argued that

as surely as a sport is turned into a serious pursuit or profession it becomes mischievous and demoralising...Look at cricket again. This noble game is anything but benefited by the pursuit of it as a profession or trade by so many in late years. Gentlemen and players are alike injured by making it the object of their lives, and, moreover, the romance of the game is fast disappearing. Anyone who knew the game twenty years ago could generally tell you where any given player came from after watching him for an over or two. Each School, again, had its own

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<sup>129</sup> See Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, p 89.

<sup>130</sup> See Hughes, Thomas, *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, Oxford World Classic's, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989, p 335.

style; and hits, such as the Winchester batters and the Harrow drives, were handed on from one generation to another, and became part of the school inheritance. Now one eleven of boys trained by one professional is just like another in play.<sup>131</sup>

Yet, because of the pivotal role they had played in the sport's development, professional players had become an essential part of cricket by the 1870s. So they were accommodated within the new "Amateur Gentleman" led structure of county cricket, but ascribed a secondary status, which mirrored contemporary class divisions in general society. Throughout its lifespan, perhaps the central metaphor of this distinction between amateurs and professionals in cricket was provided by the role of the captain. While professionals led most of the early county sides, their tenure was commonly viewed as one fraught with fundamental difficulties. It was felt that, because of his basic self-interest, a professional was not capable of leading other players who also made their living from the game, while for an amateur to be under the jurisdiction of a player from the lower classes was totally unacceptable. So it was argued that only teams captained by amateur players could fulfil their potential.

Because of professionalism's strength in Yorkshire, the position of the county club's captain has a heightened relevance to this argument. The first county championship title won by a Yorkshire team after the 1873 regulations had been introduced did not come until 1893. This triumph was followed by a further seven titles in the next fourteen years, all achieved under the captaincy of the amateur Lord Hawke. In many ways Hawke personified the values that made up the role of the amateur captain. An autocratic patrician in leadership style, he also introduced a number of reforms which improved the economic position of the professionals under his charge, and he is commonly viewed as being almost singularly responsible for the county's vast improvement.

Hawke's reputation has often been reinforced by the county eleven's perceived lack of success in the years that led up to his appointment when a series of professional captains are seen as having been unable to get the best from their talented but ill-disciplined players. This unflattering but enduring view of the early Yorkshire professionals has

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<sup>131</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 24/01/1863.

been voiced by a number of writers and is perhaps most vehemently expressed by Sidney Rogerson. He explained how.

Over the greater part of its existence since its formation in the early 1800s, the record of Yorkshire CCC had been as chequered as it was inglorious. The elevens were made up entirely of professionals under a professional captain. Professional cricketers in those days were much akin to professional boxers, particularly to the rough hewn, bare-knuckle fighters of the prize ring, and enjoyed much the same status in the community. They were ill paid, their life was hard and harsh and they were little regarded by the more responsible sections of society. Small wonder that as a class they had little pride in their calling, however much store they might set in their own performances. These they were most content to flaunt before the sycophantic eyes of their hangers on who, proud to be seen in their company, followed them from match to match only too ready to ply them with drink in return for a public acknowledgement of friendship. And nowhere in England were there professionals of a rougher, tougher type than in Yorkshire, of whom it was said that the XI was made up of 'ten drunks and a parson' –the parson being Ephraim Lockwood, who was a lay preacher. Of this bunch of desperados, chock a block with cricket ability, all men of strong individuality and intolerant of restraint, while not a few were not willing or unable to restrain themselves, an amateur in the person of the Hon. Martin Bladen Hawke, later to become famous as Lord Hawke, was appointed as captain in 1883.<sup>132</sup>

Rogerson's description provides an important indication of how influential the concept of the respectable professional has been. It was published in a biography of Wilfred Rhodes, in which the all-rounder was portrayed as a perfect model for the new image that had been ascribed to professionals of his era. Later in the book Rogerson contrasted the unflattering picture he had painted of Rhodes' predecessors with the following portrait of the great all-rounder. Indeed it was this description that W.F. Mandle later used to show how far professional cricketers had risen in status by the start of the twentieth century in his pioneering work.

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<sup>132</sup> See Rogerson, Sydney, *Wilfred Rhodes: Professional and Gentleman*, Hollis and Carter, London, 1960, pp. 46-7.



He was wearing a well-cut grey flannelled suit. His brown shoes shone with much polishing and his straw hat had the scarlet and yellow band of M.C.C., or he was wearing an M.C.C. tie, I forgot which. With his deeply tanned face he looked, I remember thinking, almost exactly like the young captain in 60<sup>th</sup> Rifles who used when on leave from India to attend the parish church at Pateley Bridge.<sup>133</sup>

As we have seen, there is much to contradict this view of the Yorkshire professionals who played in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Perhaps one of the greatest misconceptions is that the sides that represented the county prior to Lord Hawke becoming captain were not successful. Before the start of a formalised championship competition in 1890, Yorkshire were acclaimed to be the most successful county by the press on three occasions within the first seven of years of the club's formation. It subsequently took 23 years before the next success. However, during much of this period there was no uniformity in the number of matches that were played and the title was given to the side which lost the fewest number of times. So, for instance, in 1878 when Middlesex were declared champions after winning 3, drawing 3 and losing none of the 6 matches played that season, Yorkshire had won 10, drawn 3 and lost 7 in a 20-match programme of fixtures.

But perhaps more importantly, there are also accounts of the players that question the way in which their character became sullied by accusations of self-interest and ill behaviour. Tom Marsden, the first star professional player from the region, was also amongst the earliest players to have his reputation tainted by accusations of a consuming aversion to alcohol.<sup>134</sup> But whilst in his 1988 publication, *Before and after Bramall Lane*, Ken Farnsworth claimed that he 'drank himself to an early grave' Marsden's obituary in the *Sheffield Independent* provided little indication of such an inglorious downfall. It gave the following tribute to his character and popularity,

Born in humble circumstances, yet, by his integrity, he passed through life with an unsullied reputation. ....On Thursday, he was followed to his last resting place by

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<sup>133</sup> See Mandle, The professional cricketer in the nineteenth century, p 16.

<sup>134</sup> See Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 125.

his friends, members of the cricket clubs and many hundreds of his fellow townsmen.<sup>135</sup>

It is later writers who have mostly expressed this view of the reasons behind Marsden's relatively short period of ascendancy in cricket.

However, A.W. Pullin found that, later in the century, similar allegations were made against West Riding professionals by their contemporaries. George Pinder explained how,

Gentlemen that used to treat me when I was playing pass me by now. They remark 'That used to be the best wicket keeper in England; poor d-l, he has spent all his money and has got nothing now'. It is not exactly being poor, but the remarks they make.

Pinder also answered accusations that the money he earned from cricket had been squandered on drink and gambling and told Pullin,

I was never the worse for drink at a match in my life. How could a man keep wicket to George Freeman, Allen Hill, Tom Emmett, and others, unless he was steady...I have heard, by a side wind, that I was said to be a gambler. Yet I never gambled a ha'penny on a match in my life! The long and short of it is that I was very badly treated by Yorkshire. I do not know the reason to this day. I do know that it cut me up very much.<sup>136</sup>

Luke Greenwood was another former Yorkshire professional who spoke openly to Pullin about similar rumours concerning his financial downfall. He explained 'I was in that house (the Carpenters Arms, Ossett), twenty years, and never had a single glass of drink!...We are often blamed, and rightly, for insobriety and improvidence, but neither charges can brought against me'<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 04/03 1843.

<sup>136</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 85-86

<sup>137</sup> See *ibid*, p 33.

Yet there are more positive arguments that challenge the tarnished image of many nineteenth-century professionals. When Isaac Hodgson, the popular Bradford professional, died from consumption in 1867 at the age of thirty-nine, the affection in which he was held around Yorkshire resulted in a series of benefit matches and collections that raised over £300 for his widow.<sup>138</sup> Harry Sampson, on the other hand lived into his 70s and an obituary which was published in the *Sheffield Independent* gave him the following glowing tribute,

As a cricketer he was successful, in business he was equally fortunate, his habits were plain and exceedingly temperate, and as a man he was kind, genial, and respected by all who knew him.<sup>139</sup>

George Anderson, however, provided a poignant, but equally significant testament to his many years as a professional player before he died. He explained to Pullin that 'Life in the All England Eleven was very jolly, and I often look back on those days with pleasant feelings', whilst after recounting the subsequently well documented hardships that were endured during those years, he remarked 'Still it was a happy and on the whole healthful life.'<sup>140</sup>

But perhaps more importantly, Harry Sampson was not the only West Riding professional who became successful in life outside cricket. We have seen how, despite his working-class origins, George Freeman built a prosperous business as an auctioneer. Yet other players with more humble beginnings in working life also became relatively successful and their careers in cricket clearly benefited the business interests they pursued. Roger Iddison, the former butcher from Bedale who captained Yorkshire and ran the United North of England Eleven in the 1860s, was clearly a man of exceptional capabilities. He also acted as a commission agent in York and built up a sports outfitters business in Manchester.<sup>141</sup> Ephraim Lockwood also took advantage of his reputation in cricket and the growing commercial economy of the sport. A.W. Pullin described how he 'found him oiling specimens of his famous bats with almost fatherly care at his well

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<sup>138</sup> See the Heywoods', *Cloth Caps and Cricket Crazy*, p. 43.

<sup>139</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 01/04 1883.

<sup>140</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 6 and p 7.

<sup>141</sup> See Sissons, *The Players*, p 65.

known cricket and athletic outfitting establishment at No. 18, West Parade, Huddersfield.<sup>142</sup> Elsewhere, John Hall built upon his career as a professional in Bradford by opening a cricket outfitters shop in the town, where William Swain ran a similar business.<sup>143</sup>

Many former players also developed successful careers in a more traditional occupation for professional cricketers and took advantage of the popularity they had gained through the sport by becoming landlords. James Dearman took on the tenancy of the Cricket House Inn at Darnall, whilst Harry Sampson ran the Adelphi Hotel in Sheffield which became a famous gathering place for local cricketers.<sup>144</sup> Indeed, in 1861 it was Sampson's premises that hosted the inaugural Public Match Fund Committee meeting at which the first steps towards forming Yorkshire County Cricket Club were taken. Harry Dewse was a well known figure in York as landlord of the Cricketers Arms at Tuft Green, and Hugh Barrett, the former painter who was a professional at Harewood, became landlord of the Haunch of Vennison in Leeds.<sup>145</sup>

Indeed, some former professionals from the region found themselves in jobs that appear to question the superior status of the amateur in sport. Despite the supposed pre-eminence of amateur batsmen who, it was claimed, expressed their natural talent through spontaneous and aesthetically pleasing stroke play, professionals were employed as coaches at most leading public schools and universities. By the 1870s, George Atkinson's decision to pass over a career as a glass blower for one in cricket saw him instructing the sons of the social elite at Marlborough and Rossall schools. His success in this role was such that Pullin wrote, 'many modern cricketers of repute acknowledge how much they owe to George Atkinson's coaching skill.'<sup>146</sup> Tom Emmett, who had relied on the Keighley club to find him casual work outside cricket during the 1860s, also became highly respected as a coach. He was engaged at Rugby School after his playing career had finished in 1888 and Sir Pelham Warner, who became a leading amateur cricketer and later president of the M.C.C., retained strong memories of the esteem in which Emmett was held. Warner recalled how,

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<sup>142</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 102.

<sup>143</sup> See Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 72 for Hall and p 190 for Swain.

<sup>144</sup> See Farnsworth, *Before and After Bramall Lane*, p 6 for Sampson and p 12 for Dearman.

<sup>145</sup> See Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 48 for Dewse and p 14 for Barrett.

<sup>146</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 15.

every Rugby boy knew him, loved him and I can see him....striding across the close, with his grey and well shaped head, crowned by a Yorkshire cap held high, and his body as straight as the most ramrod sergeant on display.<sup>147</sup>

Amongst other West Riding professionals to take up such positions were William Swain, William Slinn, John Smith and John Robinson.<sup>148</sup>

A number of ex-Yorkshire professionals also began careers as umpires in first class cricket and officiated over men who were looked upon as their social superiors. Indeed, the appointment of working-class men to such positions of authority on the cricket field proved somewhat problematic at times and their authority could be challenged. Joe Rowbotham recalled to A.W. Pullin how he once gave W.G. Grace out 'caught at the wicket' and was asked by the batsman, 'Joe. What have you done'. Rowbotham stuck by his decision and, after the great batsman rubbed his arm, retorted 'Nay, doctor, that's not the place' for, as he explained to Pullin, Grace had been 'caught off his glove'.<sup>149</sup> Nevertheless, Rowbotham stood as an umpire in first-class cricket for over 20 years, as did George Chatterton, and George Atkinson, whilst Ephraim Lockwood, Luke Greenwood William, Slinn and George and Joseph Berry also found occasional engagements at this level.

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<sup>147</sup> See Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 58.

<sup>148</sup> Swain was coach at Christchurch college, Oxford and Richmond, Sedbergh and Westminster Schools. Slinn was a coach and bowler at Cambridge University, Smith was coach at Marleborough, and Robinson was engaged at both Marleborough and Cambridge for many years. See Thomas, *Yorkshire Cricketers 1839-1939*, p 191 for Swain, p 177 for Slinn, p 182 for Smith, and p 164 for Robinson.

<sup>149</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 50.

## Conclusion

During their period of ascendancy in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, professionals played a pivotal role as cricket assumed a truly national and international complexion. They led a series of innovations and advancements both on and off the field of play. On the field, they not only developed the art of bowling, which resulted in the legalisation of the over-arm technique in 1864, but also it was professionals who made the significant advancements in batting, such as forward and back play, that were required to counter the new style of delivery.<sup>150</sup> The extent of professional domination was reflected in the annual Gentlemen versus Players fixtures before 1865, as the Players were victorious in twenty-three of the twenty-five matches played up to that year. Equipment for cricket was also improved by professionals, through innovations such as cork pads and cane-handle bats.

Perhaps more significantly, however, leading professionals began to exploit their growing popular profile during this period by starting commercial enterprises which saw new developments in sports retailing and publications. The latter of course ironically became an important medium through which the amateur view of the game was articulated, but regular cricket periodicals were pioneered by players such as Lillywhite and most significantly John Wisden. As we have seen, the overseas tour was another professional innovation which later became an institution in cricket. The first overseas trip, to the USA and Canada, was led by George Parr in 1859, while the initial tour to Australia was made by H.H. Stephenson's party in 1861. Both were successful commercial ventures organised and led by professionals.

Of course, in the light of this argument it would be wrong to deny that certain aspects of the conceptual representations of amateurs and professionals have their basis in reality. A generation of talented amateurs were undoubtedly prominent in cricket during the twenty years that preceded the First World War. The performances of men such as C.B. Fry, Ranjitsinhji and, even alongside the professionals of Yorkshire, F.S. Jackson are testament to the strong presence of many gifted amateurs at this time. Equally, it cannot be denied that the characteristics of professional players had changed by this

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<sup>150</sup> For a brief account of the professional influence upon developments in batting and bowling technique, see Sandiford, Keith A.P., Victorian Cricket Technique and Industrial Technology, *British Journal of Sports History*, 1, 3, December 1984, pp. 272-85.

period. The professional cricketer clearly became more sophisticated in the way he played cricket as the nineteenth century progressed, and more temperate in his behaviour or more precisely in the way he conformed to the predilections of middle-class morality. Also his counterpart during the 'pre-respectable' period was certainly a rumbustious individual off the field, prone to disputes both with his fellow professionals and cricket's administrators, and he employed a relatively unsophisticated style of play.

But like the early days of the Yorkshire county club, the predominant view of these personalities is far from conclusive when viewed from a broader perspective. For while the amateurs of the 'golden age' prevailed in the eyes of contemporary and subsequent cricket writers, how far they actually dominated the sport is open to question. Even at a glance, it can be observed that out of the 118 England-based players to be named by *Wisden* as cricketers of the year between 1889 and 1915, sixty-eight were professionals and fifty amateurs. Moreover, the two most predominantly professional county sides, Surrey and Yorkshire, dominated the county championship in these years.

Equally, in both the case of the respectable professional and of his implied 'pre-respectable' counterpart, their differences can be largely associated with time and place. The early professionals were active during a period in which much of Britain and the world was being opened up by the rapid improvement of communications and technology. So there is little surprise to find that, to use the analogy of Richard Holt, they had a pioneer persona, travelling in often difficult circumstances to push back the boundaries of their sport, not only on a quite remarkable national and international geographical level, but also in terms of commercial enterprise and playing technique.<sup>151</sup> Perhaps even more in the fashion of those early engineers, upon whose innovations the industrial world was built, this required a background in the trade and a practical, enterprising and vigorously determined outlook for what was without doubt an arduous lifestyle. Little wonder, then, that they lacked the refinements of the gentleman amateurs who played in the country-house matches or at Lord's.

But by the last two decades of the nineteenth century, improvements in transport, working conditions, public health and even, after 1870, education meant that professional cricketers benefited from a far less exigent background. Indeed their new demeanour also reflected the sense of rectitude that had been developed by sections of

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<sup>151</sup> See Holt, Richard, *Cricket and Englishness: the batsman as hero*, *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 13, 1, March 1996, pp. 48-70.

the working-class themselves, be it through the development of their own social and political institutions or by conforming to middle-class notions of 'respectability'. Moreover, because of the strict code of subordination that was inherent in the new formation of county cricket, the professional cricketer had little choice but to conform as, in contrast to his predecessor, who enjoyed a growing and relatively unrestricted labour market, he had few if any means of exercising his employment rights. In the 1860s it had been possible for disputes over playing opportunities, such as that of five Yorkshire players, to result in temporary withdrawal of labour with no serious consequences. But in the following era even men at the height of their profession, such as Sydney Barnes, could be relegated to a marginal role in the sport if they demanded more secure terms of employment.

Clearly, the professional cricketers of the nineteenth century helped to shape cricket's development in a way that is not commonly appreciated in the sport's historiography. But whilst professionals were reduced to secondary status in county cricket after 1873, they continued to play a central role in the sport throughout the West Riding. The increase in cricket clubs from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards saw a similar growth of opportunities for professionals, which was more than met by local players. As we have seen, the Lascelles Hall club was particularly prominent in producing players to fill the broadening opportunities for professionals at this time. In 1877 the club 'put out' twelve professionals, and by 1880 the number had risen to twenty-one players who were engaged all over the north of England. Many of these players were employed in the West Riding, where professionals continued to be looked upon to play an integral role by clubs. When the *Athletic News Cricket Supplement and Club Directory* was first published in 1886, it contained 112 entries from the region with fifty-five professionals engaged by forty-nine separate clubs.<sup>152</sup>

Indeed, professionalism in the West Riding continued to grow at an accelerated rate and scale as cricket in the region began to adopt new rationalised competitive structures that reflected the continued importance of local or civic identity and pride. A wave of cup knockout competitions spread across the north of England in the 1880s. But the formation in 1893 of a West Riding League which comprised of clubs representing the major towns and cities in the region was perhaps more significant. This competition not

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<sup>152</sup> See *Athletic News Cricket Supplement and Club Directory*, 20/04/1886.



only allowed each team to field two professionals but also sanctioned remuneration amounting to an 'exact equivalent for the loss of [sic] a player's wages accruing from his usual occupation'.<sup>153</sup> When compared to the broken-time concept that caused the split in rugby two years later, this clause gives a clear indication of professionalism's heightened strength in West Riding cricket.

The popularity of these new competitive concepts also points to the broader implications of the professional ascendancy in mid-Victorian cricket. The itinerant elevens had continued the pre-modern tradition of commercial sporting attractions, which were built around the renown of professional sportsmen. So when the renaissance in popular leisure began in the 1860s, it was from these roots that commercial professional spectator sports were subsequently developed to fit the needs of a rapidly expanding market.

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<sup>153</sup> See *Athletic News*, 19/04/1897.

## CHAPTER 5

### CULTURE AND IDENTITY

#### Introduction

In his introduction to the first official history of cricket in the county, which was published in 1904, Lord Hawke declared that ‘Yorkshire cricket is a thing of which not only every Yorkshireman but every Englishman must feel proud.’<sup>1</sup> Hawke was perhaps overstating the importance of Yorkshire cricket to people elsewhere in the country. Yet his statement captured the way that, as Dave Russell has noted, by the 1890s, ‘Yorkshire County Cricket Club served as a crucial mechanism through which Yorkshire became known both objectively and perhaps more importantly, metaphorically and symbolically, to its own inhabitants and those beyond the county boundary.’<sup>2</sup>

However Lord Hawke’s views take on an additional significance when the constituent parts that made up Yorkshire cricket at the beginning of the twentieth century are viewed from within the context of the first-class game in which the county team took part during this period. His statement about the importance of Yorkshire cricket was made at the zenith of the ‘Golden Age’ when the influence of the ‘Gentleman Amateur’ in English cricket was arguably at its height. Moreover, in both literal and metaphorical terms, Hawke himself arguably provides the strongest representation of ‘Gentleman Amateur’ values to have been present in Yorkshire cricket throughout its history.

But, as we have seen, the strength of cricket in the region had been built upon many aspects of the sport that were fundamentally opposed by the amateur ethos. Despite being controlled by a committee of gentlemen enthusiasts, the success of Yorkshire County Cricket was largely built upon these cultural foundations. Although the county

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<sup>1</sup> See Holmes, *History of Yorkshire County Cricket*, p 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Russell, Dave, *Sport and Identity: The case of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, 1890-1939*, *Twentieth Century British History*, 7, 2, 1996, pp 206-230.

club had a membership of around just 3000 people in the early decades of the nineteenth-century, the team enjoyed a popular appeal which, in 1904, saw 78,792 spectators watch Yorkshire play Lancashire in a three-day fixture at Headingley.<sup>3</sup> Unlike most county clubs Yorkshire C.C.C. had no ground of its own and matches were staged at venues run on a semi commercial basis in order to raise funds for the maintenance and development of their facilities. In 1903 Yorkshire matches were played at seven such venues and £2330 18s 4d, approximately a third of the takings that year, was paid in commission charges to the clubs that staged the fixtures.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps most importantly, however, the Yorkshire team itself provided a compelling representation of the strength and character of the sport across the region. Out of the 17 players who appeared for the county eleven in its 31 matches during 1903 13 were professionals who had begun their careers with local clubs from across the region, whilst only four were amateurs. By this time the side had also arguably become the most competitive in county cricket, as Yorkshire had been crowned county champions 6 times in the 14 years since the competition was set a formal basis in 1890, with four titles coming in the previous five years.

The values that came to be represented by Yorkshire county cricket at the beginning of the 1900s clearly reflected the characteristics that had driven the sport's development in the region during the previous century. Yorkshire county cricket retained the sense of competition, professionalism and commercialism that had dominated the sport throughout its formative years. It was through these values that the close links, which were forged between clubs and communities across the region, were articulated, providing Yorkshire cricket with its distinctive identity and strength. In this sense, cricket in the region resembled the popular spectator sports that grew so rapidly in the West Riding and similar urban industrial communities across the north of England at the end of the nineteenth-century far more than it did the county clubs that the Yorkshire side played against.

The popular cultural values that retained such a strong presence in Yorkshire cricket were perhaps most strongly represented by the way the sport permeated deep into the heart of urban industrial communities across the region. The strength and distinctive

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<sup>3</sup> See Woodcock Ed., *Wisden Cricketers Almanack 1981*, p291.

<sup>4</sup> See Pullin, A.W., ("Old Ebor"), *History of Yorkshire County Cricket 1903-1923*, Chorley & Pickersgill Ltd, The Electric Press Leeds, 1924, p 11

character of cricket in this context can be seen in the following report of a match between Holbeck and Leeds Leamington that appeared in the *Athletic News* in 1891.

### SOUTH LEEDS ON THE CRICKET FIELD

(By Wanderer)

This match is always a tug of war – a fight for supremacy; nay a veritable battle of giants. With creases placed within a stone's throw of each other, teams chosen from the same locality, it would be odd indeed if local rivalry – that important element in making matches attractive to the general public – did not operate here. The onlookers were there in multitudes, and partisanship was almost as pronounced as at a football match. Therefore, acting on 'information received,' I paid a visit to this extended railway siding that serves the purpose of a cricket field. But the neighbourhood is a dangerous one. After leaving Holbeck station a visitor has to tread his way through subterranean passages which for length and darkness remind me of the workings of a coal mine. No wonder therefore that on being ushered into daylight, I hailed the Skew Inn with delight, and afterwards entered into the business of searching for the railway siding with a bit more spirit, and soon found myself amongst Sir Lyon Playfair's constituents, at that moment on their best behaviour.<sup>5</sup>

In some ways this heavily urbanised context of industrial south Leeds was not typical of the manufacturing towns and villages in which cricket flourished across the West Riding, as many retained a semi-rural complexion. But the significance of the sport in this setting and the meanings that were attached to it provide a powerful illustration of how cricket was an important means through which elements of popular culture and identity could be expressed in the modern urban environment at the end of the nineteenth-century in a way that has rarely been recognised.

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<sup>5</sup> See *Athletic News*, 13/07/1891.

## Cricket and Popular Culture in the West Riding of Yorkshire

### **The Pre-modern Legacy**

Cricket's role as a focal point for collective popular identity was clearly a defining characteristic of the sport in the industrial communities of the West Riding from the outset. As we have seen, the rise of cricket in Sheffield owed much to the major matches that were played at Darnall, in which the town's match play team met local rivals such as Nottingham. These events may have been commercially led and can perhaps be seen as a forerunner of the leisure pursuits that grew out of the emergent capitalist society in the last decades of the nineteenth-century. But, as Richard Holt has found with the crowds that flocked to see their teams compete in the newly formed football competitions that prompted the sport's expansion in the last decades of the nineteenth-century, popular audiences at Darnall attached meanings to Sheffield cricket that were firmly rooted in their own contemporary culture.<sup>6</sup> As the large crowds that watched them suggest, major matches were evidently treated as an informal holiday by many workers and a later writer recalled how the

Sheffield Cutlers, out on the spree, would frequently make a whole week of it at the ground and boast that they had been "spending a Darnall note," implying that they had drawn on an imaginary bank.<sup>7</sup>

Famous victories could also become absorbed into the local popular consciousness especially when they resulted from an outstanding individual performance that thrust forward a new hero. The defeat of Nottingham by Sheffield and Leicester in 1826 was celebrated in a verse that resembled the broadside ballads, which as Patrick Joyce has shown, retained their popularity in the industrial towns throughout this period. According to the Reverend Holmes the verse had 13-stanzas, which each finished 'with a chorus of "Hey Derry Derry," &c' and was for many years given a conspicuous place

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<sup>6</sup> See Holt, *Sport and the British*, p 165.

<sup>7</sup> See *The Anvil*, p 27.

in all Sheffield festivities'.<sup>8</sup> The form and content of the verse, which is reproduced in full in appendix 11, also contained attributes that were common to similar forms of popular expression. It resembled the conversational style that Joyce has noted in traditional oral practices, from which the ballads were developed, and began with the lines,<sup>9</sup>

'What's the matter, my friends, at Sheffield today,  
That most of the people are going away?'  
'What's the matter, indeed? Why, don't you know, Mester,  
That Nottingham's playing both Sheffield and Lester?'

Of course the central character was Tom Marsden whose remarkable score of 227 inspired the victory. He was introduced by a reference to his prowess as a bowler, and soon referred to with a familiarity that implied the status of a popular folk hero.

When Rawlins and Marsden began to get warm,  
The Nottingham batters were filled with alarm;  
For down went their stumps with a terrible crash,  
And soon was extinguished the Nottingham flash  
Then old Father Dennis, enraged, took his bat,  
In wonder whatever his comrades were at;  
But Tom ripped his stumps in double quick time,  
And made the old boy with a round O to shine.

The Sheffield side's growing supremacy was then illustrated by a reference to changes in the odds that were being offered by bookmakers who were present, which explained how,

The knowing ones strangely were altered in looks  
And seemed very anxious to alter their books.

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<sup>8</sup> See Holmes, *History of Yorkshire County Cricket*, p 24.

<sup>9</sup> See Joyce, Patrick, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, c.1848-1914*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p 257.

The majority of the verse, however, was devoted to Marsden's innings. His arrival at the crease was described in the lines,

Then MARSDEN went in, in his glory and pride,  
And the Arts of the Nottingham players defied.  
Oh! Marsden at cricket is Nature's perfection  
For hitting the ball in any direction.  
He ne'er fears his wicket, so safely he strikes,  
And he does with the bat and the ball as he likes.

Then, in a way that was also typical of popular folk ballads, attention towards the end of the verse became focused on how Marsden put a seemingly self-important member of the opposition in his place.

But I said t'were a shame and I don't understand  
Why you don't give a shout for yon Kettleband;  
For when ever a ball is struck out on the green,  
There's sure to him and his striped breeches seen.  
So for Kettleband quickly we made good a shout,  
But Tom turning round, said let him look out;  
Then he drove the ball right over the people,  
Some thought it 't'were going over Handworth church steeple.<sup>10</sup>

But whilst the appeal of these major commercial matches indicates that cricket had become absorbed into the popular consciousness in Sheffield by the end of the 1820s, it is difficult to establish how far this was a reflection of any deeper traditions the sport may have had in the area. Cricket had been watched and played in and around the town since the middle of the eighteenth century. But the references to matches that have survived provide little detail about the social background of the players who took part. Moreover, they relate almost exclusively to organised cricket which, as we have seen,

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<sup>10</sup> See Holmes, *History of Yorkshire County Cricket*, p 24-5.

was led by members of the middle or upper classes during this period. Popular recreations were of little interest to contemporary writers and those who took part rarely had the means or motivation to record their activities. Indeed, much of what is known about late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century popular pastimes was recorded by antiquarian writers who often looked to preserve idealised elements of England's rural past during the onset of industrialisation. Consequently, when Little Sheffield Society played High Street Society for 5/- per man in 1807 it is unlikely that the victors who 'so full of spirits' marched from Owlergreave to Sheffield were members of the lower classes.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that cricket did have a significant popular presence in and around Sheffield before the 1820s. Although there appear to be no specific references to matches at the venue, the field known locally as the 'Old Ground' at Darnall was clearly a well known site for cricket before the new enclosed arena opened in the 1820s. Moreover, in addition to the Cricket House Inn, which was adjacent to the ground at Darnall, the existence of other public houses bearing the name of the sport in Sheffield at the start of the 1820s suggests that cricket had a popular presence elsewhere in the town. The Cricket Inn was situated in the Park district and had become sufficiently well established when under the tenancy of William Southern, in the 1820s and 1830s, that the road on which it stood was named Cricket Inn Lane.<sup>12</sup> Elsewhere in the town George Collier was landlord of the Old Cricket Players, which was situated on Coal Pit Lane.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, other occasional references show that cricket had similar popular roots elsewhere in the region. A cleric named Oliver Heywood recounted that Stool Ball, was popular around Halifax in the early 1680s.<sup>14</sup> Stool Ball was one of the bat and ball folk games from which cricket is often seen as being derived. As Emma Griffin noted, it is almost certain that both games were played informally by members of the lower classes in many parts of the country during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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<sup>11</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 15/09/1807.

<sup>12</sup> See Pigott & Co., J, *Pigot and Co.'s National Commercial Directory for 1828-9; [Part 2: Notts - Yorks & N Wales]*, London & Manchester: Pigot, 1828-29, p 1098.

<sup>13</sup> See Gell., R., *A New, General, & Commercial Directory of Sheffield and its Vicinity, in which the names, occupations, &c. are copiously compiled, and alphabetically arranged; also, a classification of all that are engaged in the various branches of the Sheffield manufacture ...*, W. D. Varey, Manchester, 1825, p 145.

<sup>14</sup> See Thompson, *Customs in Common*, p 53.



The probable sites for such matches were the areas of common land known locally as moors that surrounded many towns and villages in the region. Griffin again noted that these areas were traditional sites for popular events and, because of their distance from the main residential areas of many settlements, were most commonly used 'for the watching, rather than playing of sports'.<sup>15</sup> As we have seen, Woodhouse Moor in Leeds, for example, staged a number of cricket matches in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and then became the site for Richard Cadman's Victoria Ground, the town's first enclosed commercial venue for the sport, in 1838. But in some smaller towns and villages local inhabitants also used these areas of land for their own recreation. In 1878, John and George Hewitt, who were aged 64 and 59 years respectively, explained during the chancery proceedings of the Hunslet Moor Case,

We have resided on Hunslet Moor all our lives and it has been used by us and by the inhabitants of Hunslet as long as we can remember for diverse laudable sports and pastimes such as cricket and Knurr and Spell at all seasonal times throughout the year.<sup>16</sup>

As in Sheffield the names of public houses could also indicate that the sport was familiar to local people and the presence of a Cricket Arms in 1822 suggests that this was the case in Pateley Bridge 36 years before the first known written reference to the sport in the town.<sup>17</sup> Elsewhere, the names by which two freehold parcels of land for sale in 1814 at Chapel Allerton were known locally suggest a similar familiarity with the game. A notice in the *Leeds Mercury* explained that they were 'called by the several names of the cricket ground and quarries close'.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, it was informal games of cricket being played by the young men of Lascelles Hall which prompted Mrs Walker,

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<sup>15</sup> See Griffin, *England's Revelry*, p 173.

<sup>16</sup> See *The Commons question: report of Chancery proceedings in the Hunslet Moor case, Friday, February 22nd, 1878 : with the affidavits filed on both sides, with an introduction by John de Morgan.*, Leeds (Hunslet Road) : Geo Howe (13, Booksellers' Row, Strand; Westwood (1, Prospect Buildings, New Wortley) : Field, 1878, p18.

<sup>17</sup> See Baines, Edward, *History, Directory & Gazetteer of the County of York; with select lists of the merchants & traders of London and the principal commercial and manufacturing towns of England ... also a copious list of the seats of the nobility and gentry of Yorkshire. Vol. I: West Riding*, Baines, Leeds, 1822, p 574.

<sup>18</sup> See *Leeds Mercury*, 11 06/1814.

the wife of a local landowner, to persuade her husband to first provide a cricket ground for the villagers in 1825.<sup>19</sup>

But more significantly, the sport retained its presence as an informal popular recreation during the 1830s and 1840s when the development of organised cricket in the region was well underway. Perhaps the best known reference to this form of cricket being played in the West Riding was provided by Joseph Lawson in his book *Progress in Pudsey*, which was published in 1868. He explained that 'even thirty years ago' cricket in the village was not played with the order and decorum we see today' and recalled a time when,

...Cricketing was unknown in Pudsey, except as played mostly in the lanes or small openings in the village-with a tub leg for a bat, made smaller at one end for a handle, a wall cape, or some large stone set on end for a stump (called a hob), and a pot taw or some hard substance covered with listing and sometimes sewed on top with twine or band. They were all one ball overs if double wicket was played; no umpires, and often those who cheated the hardest won.<sup>20</sup>

The informal games around Pudsey in which makeshift equipment was used had clear parallels in Lascelles Hall. Ephraim Lockwood recounted to A.W. Pullin how,

We used to do a lot of practice on the road with seat-board legs and crewelled yarn balls. Don't know what seat-board legs are? Ah you didn't know the old hand-loom weaver's. Seat-board legs were the sticks that used to support the hand-loom weaver's seats.<sup>21</sup>

Elsewhere, cricket was played 'on the highways and commons in Morley during the first decades of the nineteenth-century, and boys in the Halifax area played similar informal games.'<sup>22</sup> Tom Emmett remembered that, whilst growing up in Illingworth during the 1850s, he and his friends used two stone gateposts in the entrance to a

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<sup>19</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 229.

<sup>20</sup> See Lawson, Joseph, *Progress in Pudsey*, Caliban Books, 1978 First Published 1887, p 81-82.

<sup>21</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 102.

<sup>22</sup> See Smith, William, *Morley: Ancient and Modern*, Longmans, Green, and Co, 1886, p 129.

driveway as the wickets. Also talking to Pullin, Emmett explained, 'That was where I was initiated into cricket, and where I first found I could hit the post with a round arm delivery.'<sup>23</sup>

The continued presence of these informal games of cricket further underscores what we have already noted about the initial impact of capitalist industrialisation upon leisure opportunities for sections of the working-classes. As Baines explained in 1858, 'the clothiers called machinery to their aid for the processes in which it has an indisputable superiority over hand-labour, that is in the preparing and spinning'. But even in the Leeds district, where large-scale production was more prevalent than most other towns in the region, the 'old system of domestic and village manufacture' survived in processes that were not improved by mechanisation.<sup>24</sup> Although most joint stock mills were built for shareholders to take their wool to be prepared and spun in outlying villages such as Morley and Pudsey from the 1790s onwards, it was still woven in houses or workshops. Consequently, workers in these sectors of the industry retained the ability to make free time available for leisure activities, such as cricket, just as they did more famously in and around Huddersfield.

Whilst the means that were necessary to form clubs and participate in regular organised cricket continued to elude the vast majority of working people during the middle decades of the nineteenth-century, many were clearly still able to find ways in which to participate in the sport. The survival of unregulated working practices was of course pivotal in providing access to free time in which to play cricket and nowhere in Yorkshire was it more prevalent than Sheffield. As has been mentioned, unofficial holidays, such as St Monday, continued to be taken in the town throughout much of the nineteenth-century and played an important role in the development of cricket's popular strength in the town. Moreover, it is likely that informal games of cricket not only reflected the sport's popularity amongst workingmen in Sheffield but also provided important opportunities for the procession of local players who built careers as professional cricketers to hone their skills.

But where no direct evidence can be found of the games of this type that almost certainly provided the sport's eighteenth-century foundations in the town, references to such matches taking place in the 1840s and 1850s are available. In their collection of

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<sup>23</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 53.

<sup>24</sup> See Baines, *On the Woollen Manufacture of England*, p 30.

letters from members of the working-class, which were published in the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper between 1849 and 1851, Razzell and Wainwright included one piece of correspondence from a man who had spent his early years in Sheffield before moving to Birmingham. He explained that in Birmingham,

As far as I know they have no games such as cricket, ball playing, jumping and foot-racing, which are comparatively common in Sheffield, where, on a Monday afternoon, when little or no work is done, the men of one establishment challenge those of another to a game of cricket, or something of the sort, and spend the evening pleasantly in this manner. At Sheffield the workmen turn out two or three times a week to indulge in these sports.<sup>25</sup>

More importantly, the manner in which informal games were played suggests the cultural meanings that marked the development of cricket during the previous century were strongly upheld in the sport's popular context across the West Riding. Tom Emmett recalled that there 'was a lot of rivalry among the boys on the 'Walk Top', where he first played the sport and they

...got to the length of arranging a single wicket match, and we played for 2d 'a man'. We were never such swells before. I turned out in beautiful white smock and clogs. It was such a terrible stake, 2d each; we were men!<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, Joseph Lawson described how similar values predominated in Pudsey. He explained that when cricket 'first came into vogue village clanship was rife. Money was mostly played for, and frequent uproar, confusion, and even fighting took place'.<sup>27</sup>

The continued presence of cricket as a form of popular recreation in the region also reflects recent academic work on the pattern of more general social and cultural change in popular culture across the industrial urban north of England during this period. Griffin found that 'plebeian street recreations lingered longest in the industrialising

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<sup>25</sup> See Razzell and Wainwright, *The Victorian Working-class: Selections from the "Morning Chronicle"*, Frank Cass, London, 1973, p 305.

<sup>26</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 54.

<sup>27</sup> See Lawson, *Progress in Pudsey*, p 82

towns and townships in northern and central England'. Similarly, the street games that Lawson described in Pudsey almost certainly took place around the 1830s and 1840s, at a time when the township was expanding rapidly.<sup>28</sup> A writer, in 1829, described Pudsey as 'one of the most populous villages in the West Riding' and explained, the 'manufacture of woollen cloths is carried on here to a greater extent than any other village in England.'<sup>29</sup> Pudsey had a population of 7,460 in 1831 and was in the parish of Calverley where the number of inhabitants rose from 16,184 in 1831 to 'near 30,000' in 1868.<sup>30</sup>

The reason for the prolonged survival of popular recreation in the streets of the manufacturing districts, suggests Griffin, was perhaps the initial failure of local government expansion to keep pace with the rate of industrial urbanisation. Indeed, as Storch has shown, when increased and more effective police forces began to act as an 'all purpose lever of urban discipline' in these areas, around the middle decades of the nineteenth-century, they confronted deep rooted opposition.<sup>31</sup> Pre-modern popular recreational culture had become so strongly embedded in the new industrial urban environment that attempts to suppress offending activities were met with deep resentment, evasion and often brutal physical attacks upon policemen. Although cricket was clearly not unlawful, Tom Emmett's recollections show that any form of recreation in the street was discouraged and the suppression of such activities accentuated local feelings of discontent.<sup>32</sup> Even the officious look of the new constabulary drew feelings of hostility and as A.W. Pullin explained, for Emmett and his friends,

It was often the case, however, of dodging the police. A gentleman in blue saw not the budding of a famous cricketer in the young rascal who was 'cock of Ambler's Walk Top'. 'The constable' added Tom, "wore a silk hat. Oh! He was a

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<sup>28</sup> See Griffin, *England's Revelry*, p 186.

<sup>29</sup> See *Pigot and Co.'s National Commercial Directory for 1828-9; [Part 2: Notts - Yorks & N Wales]*, p 1045

<sup>30</sup> See Pigot & Co., J., *Pigot and Co.'s National commercial directory: comprising a directory and classification of the merchants, bankers, professional gentlemen, manufacturers and traders, together with lists of the nobility, gentry & clergy, resident in the cities, towns, seaports, and principle villages in the counties of Chester, Cumberland, Durham, Lancaster, Northumberland, Westmoreland and York*, J. Pigot, London, 1834. p 887 for 1831 population details and Hamilton, Nicholas Esterhazy Stephen Armytage, *The National Gazeteer of Britain and Ireland*, London, 1868, for 1868 figures.

<sup>31</sup> See Storch, Robert, The Policeman as 'Domestic Missionary': Urban discipline and Popular Culture in Northern England 1850-1880, *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 9, 1976, pp 481-509. p 481.

<sup>32</sup> See Storch, The Policeman as 'Domestic Missionary', p 482.

terribly important personage. Talk about the majesty of the law! He would carry more of it under his box-hat than ten ordinary policemen in modern helmets.<sup>33</sup>

The distinctive character of industrial growth in the region clearly had a significant impact upon cricket that it penetrated far deeper than the provision of free time, which enabled many working people to play the sport. The region's expanding urban communities provided a vibrant rapidly changing environment in which many of the cultural values that had marked both the organised and informal sport's development in the eighteenth century could be upheld. As Emma Griffin concluded, these conditions 'served to create an atmosphere of permissiveness and freedom for popular recreation, facilitating the creation of new customs, and forging a strong tradition of plebeian cultural autonomy'.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, it was this compelling context that precipitated what David Underdown saw as a 'shift in the game's regional vitality to the industrial Midlands and the North' during the 1820s.<sup>35</sup>

Cricket clearly developed a significant popular presence across the West Riding during the first half of the nineteenth-century that had particularly important consequences for the way in which the sport subsequently developed in the region. Indeed there are a number of references which suggest that informal cricket coexisted and even complimented the organised form of the sport as it first developed in some industrial communities across the region. Cricket was evidently popular amongst the young men of Lascelles Hall at the time the village club was established in 1825, and, as Ephraim Lockwood recounted, games were still played in local streets with makeshift equipment after this date. Elsewhere, it seems that the matches Lawson described in Pudsey were being played when the first club in the village was formed in 1845 and similarly a club in Yeadon was active in the early 1850s, at around the same time that informal cricket was played on the local moor after work.<sup>36</sup> Organised cricket in Morley also has relatively early beginnings and a team called Throtlers Off was playing matches in 1841 before a Morley cricket club became active in the 1850s. Moreover, a number of clubs, such as Sheffield Wednesday and Hallam C.C. were in existence by the middle decades

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<sup>33</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 53-4.

<sup>34</sup> See Griffin, *England's Revelry*, p189.

<sup>35</sup> See Underdown, *Start of Play*, p 209.

<sup>36</sup> See *Leeds Times* 04/10/1851, for the cricket club and Wilkinson, Geoff, Ed., *A Century of Bradford League Cricket 1903-2003*, Bob Home Books, Halifax, 2003, p 323 for informal matches.

of the nineteenth-century when cricket was still played by workmen during the unofficial St Monday holiday.<sup>37</sup>

As we have seen, many of the cultural characteristics that marked the popular pre-modern form of the sport also continued to be expressed in these, and other, towns and villages in the region during the formative development of organised cricket. This was most profoundly demonstrated in the Huddersfield and Sheffield areas where stake matches and single wicket contests continued to be played well into the second half of the nineteenth-century. But these events also remained integral to the culture of the sport in the other towns and villages where cricket had strong popular traditions. A Pudsey eleven played a Baildon 13 in September 1849 for a purse of £22, whilst, after the Pudsey Britannia club had been formed in 1854 an All Pudsey Team played Morley at Farsley in 1868 for a purse of £50 per side.<sup>38</sup> Single wicket matches were particularly common throughout the West Riding during the first half of the 1860s and Morley, Pudsey and Yeadon were no exception. A 'Grand Single wicket match for £50' took place between Nelly Pearson of Farsley and John Smith of Yeadon in September 1864, whilst G and W Birks met A. Sutcliffe and J. Swithanbank of Pudsey in a match for £10 at the Royal Park Ground, Leeds, a month later.<sup>39</sup>

But whilst these characteristics continued to be prominent in the West Riding, the cultural traditions they represented conflicted fundamentally with the new meanings that were being ascribed to cricket elsewhere in England. Of course Pycroft was not alone in looking to facilitate new social and cultural values through the sport at around this time. As we have seen the work of Thomas Hughes became particularly influential in the 1850s and the amateur spirit of cricket that he supported also found practical expression in the wandering clubs that were being formed by aristocratic former public schoolboys from the 1840s onwards. These exclusive organisations toured the country playing country house cricket and refused to employ professionals, preferring to do their own bowling. Indeed, I Zingari, the most famous of the wandering clubs, played at Harewood in September 1862, a time when a number of clubs which were to have an even greater influence over the promotion of amateur values in cricket were being

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<sup>37</sup> See Wilkinson, *A Century of Bradford League Cricket*, p 279.

<sup>38</sup> See Wilkinson, *A Century of Bradford League Cricket*, p 289.

<sup>39</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 10 09 1864 and 01/10 1864.

formed.<sup>40</sup> These were the wave of formalised county cricket clubs that were established in the 1860s, including Lancashire, Hampshire, Middlesex, Worcestershire and Yorkshire.

Indeed the promotion of these new social and cultural values through the rhetoric of Pycroft, in particular, is also significant because of its conceptual implications for the reconstruction of cricket's past. As we have seen, he condemned the practice of betting on matches in his book *The Cricket Field*. It included a chapter entitled 'A Dark Chapter in the History of Cricket' which began by disassociating contemporary cricket from gambling. This was done by declaring 'Lovers of cricket may congratulate themselves that matches, at the present day, are made at cricket, as at chess, rather for the love and the honour of victory than for money.'<sup>41</sup>

The chapter subsequently paints a picture of widespread corruption in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century cricket that was caused by excessive gambling. With equal significance to later conceptual reconstructions in cricket, Pycroft portrayed the professional players who were implicated in these events as hapless individuals who had lacked the moral conviction to resist the lure of such self interest. He explained that 'the idea that all the Surrey and Hampshire rustics should either want or resist strong temptations to sell is not to be entertained for a moment. The constant habit of betting will take the honesty out of any man.'<sup>42</sup> Pycroft clearly had a strong view of the values that he felt cricket should embody and the ideological stance his writing subsequently represented had a significant influence upon the historiography of the sport. As Sandiford's remarks about the 'purifying' of the game indicate, *The Cricket Field* has become a key work for many writers on the history of cricket.<sup>43</sup> Consequently the important influence that commercial stake matches and other aspects of the sport's pre-modern culture had in the development of cricket in parts of the industrial north of England, such as the West Riding of Yorkshire, has largely been overlooked.

But by the beginning of the 1860s the change in attitudes towards cricket that was taking place in some parts of England had also become more directly focused upon the popular traditions that still found expression in the sport. An article entitled 'SINGLE

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<sup>40</sup> See *Leeds Times* 06/10/1862 for details of the I Zingari fixture at Harewood and Birley. *Social History of English Cricket* p 82-3 for rationale behind formation of the club.

<sup>41</sup> See Pycroft, *The Cricket Field*, p 99.

<sup>42</sup> See Pycroft, *The Cricket Field*, p 100.

<sup>43</sup> See Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p 26.



WICKET MATCHES CONDEMNED' was published in the *Leeds Times* on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1863. It had originally appeared in the *London Society* and argued

...let us have no more single wicket matches. Such matches will never be made for the love of cricket; for what then will they be made?...When the reputed champion of the day, like a Mynn or a Pilch, sends forth a challenge, we may see some reason in the affair; but as a regular system of common practice, single wicket matches can only be preferred for gambling purposes, and then, when thousands are laid on men who live hard by the winter, and are but penniless at the beginning of each cricket season - and such is the domestic history of not a few professionals - the high character of the game will be compromised, and our cricket grounds lose their charm...As to cricket there is comparably no play in them...Stop single wicket matches as simple gambling; cry *Barnu* to such matches-discard them as you would any public-house affair, 'where fools must pay that knaves play', and one step, at least, will be taken in the right direction.-  
*London Society*<sup>44</sup>

There is clearly little doubt that these new social and cultural values were present in West Riding cricket during the 1860s. But they were often obscured by the continued resonance with which the meanings that characterised the sport as a popular recreation were still articulated. Here again these opposing cultural characteristics of cricket co-existed for a time in a way that could be reflected pointedly in the region's newspapers. The edition of the *Leeds Times* that reported on the visit of I Zingari to Harewood also included details of a number of matches in which the pre-modern character of the sport was strongly evident. The most prominent gave notice of the forthcoming single wicket match between '3 of All England' and '5 of Stockton', including the Yorkshire player George Atkinson, for £200. However, readers were also informed of a similar, but less prestigious match between two members of the Morley Nelson club for £10.<sup>45</sup>

Indeed the Stockton match provides a compelling example of how this form of popular cultural event contrasted with the type of cricket that Pycroft, Hughes and others had begun to champion. The match followed a similar contest in which the Cambridgeshire

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<sup>44</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 28/02/1863.

<sup>45</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 06/10/1862.

players Hayward and Carpenter took on Robinson, Darnton and Tom Hornby of Stockton on Tees for £400 at Hyde Park, Sheffield, in the previous year.<sup>46</sup> The Cambridgeshire players were victorious and as George Atkinson explained, their next appearance in the north ‘caused a lot of excitement and betting’. The match itself was played in a particularly heightened atmosphere and Atkinson remembered,

When I ran out Carpenter, who had been batting beautifully, the crowd made such a terrible noise that a pair of horses attached to an omnibus on the ground were frightened, and bolted pell-mell twice around the enclosure, scattering the crowd right and left. There was a rare sensation for a few minutes. Halton and Fred Lillywhite managed to climb on to the roof of the omnibus, and though Fred was thrown off, Halton succeeded in getting hold of the reins and pulling up the horses, for which plucky feat he was liberally rewarded.<sup>47</sup>

#### **‘5 and 6 to 4 in favour of Yorkshire’ – the Prolonged Survival of Pre-modern Recreational Culture**

Gambling clearly penetrated much deeper into the culture of cricket than is often recognised. Laying bets on the sport was a far more inclusive form of gambling than playing for stake money and Pycroft’s interviews with old professionals such as William Beldham leave little doubt that this type of betting was common practice during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. But despite contemporary pronouncements on the newfound purity of the sport, betting on cricket matches continued to be common practice throughout the first half of the nineteenth-century.

As we have seen, gambling formed an important part of the matches that took place amongst members of the middle-classes during the sport’s early years in the West Riding. However, it also remained integral to the major commercial matches that dominated elite cricket in the region during the middle decades of the nineteenth-century. Indeed when Yorkshire met Norfolk in the first 11- a-side match to be played by a team representing the county, the amount of money speculated on the result was

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<sup>46</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 28.09.1861.

<sup>47</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 19.

used by the *Sheffield Independent* as a means of establishing the prestige of the match. A report in the build-up pronounced, 'Nothing can exceed the interest this match excites in Sheffield and its neighbourhood, and many hundreds are betted on the event'.<sup>48</sup>

Nor was this kind of speculation confined to the northern counties. When Kent played All England in September 1839, the *Leeds Times* reported a 'considerable sum is said to have changed hands on this occasion, one of the backers of All England being reported to have lost £1,500 and another £500 while there were hundreds of bets to a smaller amount.'<sup>49</sup> Indeed, major commercial matches were still attracting considerable amounts of betting over a decade later. In 1847 it was reported in the *Leeds Times* that when the All England Eleven met 18 of Manchester the odds against the local side were, '150 to 10, and in many cases twenty to one, to the extent of upwards of £30,000' being speculated.<sup>50</sup>

Gambling on cricket had also developed a relatively sophisticated structure during this period and there were even various different ways available to bet on matches. When All England played Sussex at Darnall in the 'March of Intellect' match during 1827, the *Sheffield Independent* explained '6 to 4 was offered that, in and out, through the match, Tom Marsden did more than any other player.'<sup>51</sup> It was also possible to place bets on individual scores and after York played Harewood in 1833 the *York Courant* told its readers how 'Letby took 2 to 1 that he scored fifty, which number he exactly obtained.'<sup>52</sup> The cricket equivalent of 'off course' betting was also clearly in operation by the time Dalton played Sheffield in 1851, the same year that Pycroft published *The Cricket Field*. The *Huddersfield Chronicle* remarked, during the build-up to the match, that in 'Manchester the betting at present is about even, with the call on Dalton, but at Leeds the odds are rather in favour of Sheffield'. Indeed this also suggests the betting rooms that sprung up in many provincial towns during the 1840s may have extended their interests to cover cricket matches.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 31/8/1833.

<sup>49</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 07/09/1839.

<sup>50</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 04/09/1847.

<sup>51</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 09/06/1827.

<sup>52</sup> See *York Courant*, 04/06/1833.

<sup>53</sup> See *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 27/09/1851 and Huggins, Mike, Second-class citizens? English middle-class leisure and sport 1850-1910: a reconsideration, *International Journal of the History of Sport* Vol.17 No.1, 2000, pp.1-35. p 22, for details of betting rooms in provincial towns.

Betting was clearly an integral part of watching cricket for spectators from all social backgrounds by the 1850s, linking the sport to broader elements of contemporary popular culture. Mike Huggins has found that members of the working-classes were betting on horse races by the 1840s in some parts of Britain. However there are references which suggest similar activities had been an important part of attendance at cricket matches for all classes as early as the middle of the eighteenth century.<sup>54</sup> The *St James Chronicle* reported in 1765 that on ‘Monday last; a young fellow, a butcher being entrusted with about £40 by his mistress to buy cattle in Smithfield Market, instead went into the Artillery Ground and sported away the whole sum betting on cricket players.’<sup>55</sup> It is also difficult to believe that some part of the ‘Darnal note’ the cutlers spent whilst on their sprees at matches in Sheffield during the 1820s was not speculated upon the result of the match. When Sheffield lost to Leicester in September 1824 and an estimated ‘20,000 to 25,000’ people attended the last day, it would seem likely that a large proportion of the crowd had backed the home team to win when on Thursday ‘at the conclusion of the day, odds were in favour of Leicester’.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, betting had clearly been considered an important part of watching cricket by the ‘old weavers’ who followed the Lascelles Hall team in the middle decades of the nineteenth-century and Luke Greenwood remembered how ‘they used to put their money down on us like bricks’.<sup>57</sup>

In this context, the sport clearly differed significantly from the generally accepted view that Lord’s and the MCC were predominant during the middle of the nineteenth-century. Even county matches in the south of England could still attract significant speculation in the 1850s. For example, when Yorkshire played Surrey at the Oval in 1851 *Bell’s Life* reported that betting for an earlier fixture between the sides at Hyde Park, Sheffield, had been ‘5 and 6 to 4 in favour of Yorkshire, but in this instance it was in favour of Surrey’.<sup>58</sup> Of course, as the leading publication for those with an interest in gambling on sport, *Bell’s Life*, provided details of betting on all the major matches and when Sheffield was due to play Leicester in 1828 explained ‘Much betting on this

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<sup>54</sup> See Huggins, Mike, *Flat Racing and British Society 1790–1914: A Social and Economic History*, Frank Cass, London, 2000, p 89.

<sup>55</sup> See Brookes, *English Cricket*, p 77.

<sup>56</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 11/9/1824.

<sup>57</sup> See, Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 33.

<sup>58</sup> See *Bell’s Life*, 10/08/1851.

match, at 5 to 4, has already taken place.<sup>59</sup> But the newspaper's role as arbiter in this form of cricket during the 1840s has a greater significance, especially in relation to Pycroft's pronouncements relating to the 'purifying' of the game.

Yet as well as the prevalence of gambling, there were other aspects of cricket in the West Riding that also linked the sport to broader elements of contemporary popular sporting culture as the second half of the nineteenth-century began. The enduring presence of the challenge matches meant the old rumbustious character which marked eighteenth and early nineteenth-century cricket continued to survive. For example, 16 years after Tom Hunt had played against eleven of the Knaresborough club, William Swaine, took part in a similar contest against members of the Burley Club. The match took place in October 1861 and Swaine, who appeared regularly against the itinerant elevens during this period, received no assistance in the field. But he still managed to dismiss his opponents for 0 in the second innings to win by 17 runs. Later in that decade, however, James Hall played an even more bizarre match against a full eleven. The *Leeds Times* described the contest as the 'most novel cricket match of the season', and explained that Hall was to play against 'eleven members of the 'Queerical Club'. The report went on to explain that membership of this organisation was subject to a number of criteria and,

One of the rules was that no man should be enrolled who could pass through a certain gateway, for if he could his Falstaffian proportions were not sufficiently ample, and he had to retire upon his cellar of port and his well stored larder, in defiance of gout and the blues, until he had swelled out to still greater rotundity of paunch. The club had always thus a hankering after the carving-knife, but bye-and-bye the members grew less fastidious-some were admitted not of the orthodox size, and even if they squinted or wanted an arm, provided they were 'jolly good fellows'.<sup>60</sup>

But this was just one example of a number of similarly idiosyncratic contests that took place in 1863. In June, a match between eleven one-armed Naval pensioners from Greenwich and eleven one-legged military pensioners from Chelsea for £100 a side took

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<sup>59</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 06/07/1828.

<sup>60</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 02/09/1865.

place at the Royal Park ground, Woodhouse Moor.<sup>61</sup> It was one of a series of contests between the two sides and the *Leeds Times* reported that when they met at Quarry Gap two weeks later

...there was a race for a sum of money between the one legs, the competitors being handicapped...Letford the “no leg” came in the winner. The contest caused considerable amusement throughout.<sup>62</sup>

Events such as these reflected a wider culture that was also evident in other sports that attracted a popular following during this period, such as pedestrianism. Pedestrian challenges were still promoted as commercial events in the region well beyond the 1850s and on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1864 the following notice was published in the *Leeds Times*.

CITY GARDENS, QUARRY GAP - Mrs EMMA SHARPE'S 1,000 miles in 1,000 Hours is still going on; near 700 miles already completed. Private day Tuesday NEXT, OCT 18<sup>th</sup>. Admission 6d each. The strictest order enforced.<sup>63</sup>

Knurr and spell was another prominent sport in the region during the 1860s that had its roots in traditional folk games and was organised around the concept of stake match challenges. On 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1856 *Bell's Life* reported that

Jas Teal, of Horsforth, hearing that Job Pearson, of Farsley, is anxious to play him, Teal will be at Joseph Wilkinson's, the St George Inn, Horsforth any night next week prepared to make a match for £5 or £10 a side, 25 or 30 rises each on either Woodhouse Moor, Holbeck Moor or Yeadon Moor.<sup>64</sup>

Indeed, at times some crossover between these types of sporting contest and cricket still remained. Pedestrian events, such as the walking match that took place at the West London cricket ground for £50 in March 1866, continued to be staged at cricket grounds

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<sup>61</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 27/06/1863.

<sup>62</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 01/08/1863.

<sup>63</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 15/10/1864.

<sup>64</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 02/11/1856.

in many parts of the country and sometimes also took place alongside major cricket matches themselves.<sup>65</sup> When the All England Eleven were in Bradford for a match in 1861 the *Leeds Times* reported that ‘a foot race of one hundred yards took place for £10.... between Mr Alfred Clarke of the All England players and Mr Holmes, who is of the employ of the Bradford wool warehouse. The former was the winner by about a yard and a half. The affair was a somewhat amusing episode in the proceedings of the principal match’.<sup>66</sup> Some leading players in the region were also successful at knurr and spell and Tom Marsden provides probably the first and clearest example of this crossover between the two sports. As we have seen he played Royds at Hyde Park for £40 in 1827, and on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1830 the *Sheffield Mercury* explained that Marsden ‘expresses his readiness to play any man in England, either at Single wicket or knurr and spell.’<sup>67</sup> But a similar link continued to exist in the middle decades of the nineteenth-century through players such as Job Pearson, the recipient of Jas Teal’s knurr and spell challenge in 1856. Known locally as ‘Nelly’, Pearson was also a prominent cricketer who played against the itinerant elevens on a few occasions, including an appearance for 22 of Leeds against the All England Eleven in October 1862.<sup>68</sup> He was also a prominent single wicket player, and before a match against Robert Pearson at the Horsforth Old Ball ground in 1864 the *Leeds Times* described him as ‘the knurr and spell champion’.<sup>69</sup>

The continued prevalence of these matches, with their informal structure of challenges, commercialism and heavy focus on gambling, was certainly a vibrant testament to the ‘strong tradition of plebeian cultural autonomy’, that Griffin noted in the region.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, despite the views that were being expressed in opposition to single wicket matches, the way they continued to be played across the region during the 1860s, suggests that the type of cultural contestation that Bailey highlighted was taking place.<sup>71</sup> Typical of many such events was a match for £20 a side between Joseph Gibson, a butcher from Bradford, and James Hurtle, a butcher from Leeds in 1866, whilst a year earlier G. Siddle and W. Topham, both from the Sticker Lane United club, met for £5 at

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<sup>65</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 17/03/1866.

<sup>66</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 25/05/1861.

<sup>67</sup> See *Sheffield Mercury*, 24/07/1830.

<sup>68</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 04 10/1862.

<sup>69</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 09/07/1864.

<sup>70</sup> See Griffin, *England’s Revelry*, p189.

<sup>71</sup> See Bailey, *Leisure and Class* in general.

Dudley Hill.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, a few months after the article attacking single wicket matches appeared in the *Leeds Times* a contest took place ‘on the Woodhouse Hill ground, Hunslet, for £20 between Messers Wm Farrer and Edward Dockrays of Batley and Oliver Scatchard Esq, and Mr Joseph Banks, of Morley’.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, the names of the Morley participants in this match suggest that they were members of the middle-classes blurring the social and cultural values that were being attached to cricket during this period even further.

But perhaps the best example of how far removed West Riding cricket could still be from the values which were being promoted through the sport by men like Pycroft and Hughes around the middle decades of the nineteenth-century can be seen in a Single wicket match that took place in 1857. As we have seen, on 16, 17 and 18 October 1857 John Grange met James Sadler in a match for £100 at the Victoria Ground, Leeds, that attracted ‘hundreds of spectators’ and upon which ‘hundreds of pounds (sic) were pending’. When the first days play ended, Grange had been dismissed for 27 and Sadler for 24, which meant the betting ‘was decidedly in favour of Grange-a few with more money than wit offering 6 to 1’. Bad weather interrupted the match on the second day and Grange was undefeated on 18 when it was decided to abandon play for the day. But at this point, the *Leeds Times* explained, the ‘Kirkstall forge men complained that matters had not been conducted “on the square” and that Sadler was indisposed to resume the game because he found out he must lose.’ So,

they hastened to the Pack Horse and endeavoured to bring about an arrangement by which playing could be continued. A most disreputable scene ensued. Numbers of forgemen crowded into the room where the umpires were sitting, in company with Sadler and his friends. A breach of the peace immediately threatened, the forgemen being furiously excited, and the umpires refusing to withdraw from the decision they had come to. Hard words were used, the umpires were accused of collusion with Sadler, and that individual himself was obliged to bolt through the window in order to save himself from worse usage. When he got outside the house, however, the case was worse. He had jumped out of the frying pan into the fire, and had he not exercised his discretion, and run to ground in Mr Broughton’s

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<sup>72</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 21-07/1866.

<sup>73</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 27-08-1863.



kitchen his body, if not his life would have been seriously jeopardised. Policemen were on the Moor, and their assistance was immediately invoked in order to preserve the public peace. Ultimately, Grange's supporters withdrew to the Moor to see what had become of their man: and the opportunity thus offered was used by Sadler's friends to such good purpose that he was persuaded to get into a cab and drive away. This was about four o'clock, but it was later before the neighbourhood became tranquil.<sup>74</sup>

Clearly, the amount of betting that this match had attracted was strongly involved in these events. But Grange was undoubtedly viewed as a representative of the Kirkstall Forge and the backing he received from that community suggests a strong sense of local identity was also at play. Indeed, there were also suggestions of foul play involving George Atkinson, who had been chosen to field for Sadler and taken a brilliant catch to dismiss Grange in the first innings, and the *Leeds Times* noted,

We would not forget to mention that Sadler's fielder-Atkinson-was mysteriously NON EST yesterday. It was reported that he had been spirited away, or else intimidated, but for the truth of these rumours we cannot vouch.<sup>75</sup>

Nevertheless, these scenes provide a poignant, but significant, contrast to Tom Brown's description of the sport in Thomas Hughes' famous and influential novel, which was published in the same year.

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<sup>74</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 18/10/1857.

<sup>75</sup> See *ibid.*

## Regional Identity and West Riding Cricket

### **‘A Yorkshire like way’ – the Construction of a Collective Identity**

The cultural foundations upon which the sport was built in the West Riding during the first half of the nineteenth-century clearly had important implications for the way county cricket developed as a key focal point of regional identity in Yorkshire. As we have seen the sport’s formative development in the West Riding took place in a distinctive and particularly dynamic environment. A wide range of meanings came to find expression through cricket as the region experienced its own definitive period of urban industrial growth. The sport developed a vigorous popular following which became focused upon the powerful sense of local and civic identity that helped numerous rapidly changing communities in the West Riding to define themselves. These dynamics found their fullest expression through the major commercial matches in which professional players predominantly took part and it was within this context that teams claiming to represent the county first began to appear.

However, the informal structure and disproportionate development of cricket during the first half of the nineteenth-century meant that it was some time before a cohesive expression of regional identity could be articulated through Yorkshire county sides. Indeed, the first teams to play as Yorkshire were somewhat transient affairs that did not always even claim to represent the county as a whole. For example, when the ‘Gentlemen of the Wetherby Club’ played the ‘Gentlemen of All Yorkshire’ for ‘100 guineas a side in 1809 the county side was clearly limited to members of the social elite. But more commonly, early Yorkshire sides were confined to a specific geographical location within the region. Most were assembled by backers or promoters to take part in commercial challenge matches and consisted mainly of local professionals from the town in which the contest was staged. As we have seen, the first appearance of an All England team in the West Riding was to play against 22 of Yorkshire at Darnal for 1,000 guineas in 1825. This ‘Yorkshire’ team was almost exclusively selected from Sheffield players. But in July 1833 the *York Courant* reported on a match between 20 of

Yorkshire, selected from the clubs 'within 30 miles of Ripon'. and Nottingham for 50 sovereigns at Ripon.<sup>76</sup>

Consequently, civic and regional identities were often intertwined in the sport during this period and Yorkshire cricket first began to gain national prominence through the growing reputation of players and teams from Sheffield. Outside the region, Sheffield cricketers were often seen as representatives of the county in the 1820s and 1830s. For example, when William Woolhouse made his debut at Lord's, playing for All England against the Bs in 1828, *Bell's Life* explained he 'was a stranger from Yorkshire, and we are informed this was his first match on the ground; his playing shows that we may expect a very fine hitter after a little experience.'<sup>77</sup> Indeed it was through the success of players from Sheffield that teams claiming to represent the county first began to gain recognition outside the region. When a county side that predominantly consisted of players from the town defeated Norfolk at Hyde Park in July 1834 *Bell's Life* proclaimed, 'the Yorkshire players in this match did more to stamp themselves first rate cricketers than perhaps any other contest in which they have been engaged.'<sup>78</sup>

The growing status of Sheffield cricket during this period, however, also offered tempting opportunities for self-promotion and local newspapers did not hesitate to highlight the town's contribution to the growing reputation of cricket in the region. In September 1826, when Eighteen of Sheffield and Leicester had beaten Eleven of All England at Leicester and were in a strong position in a second match between the teams at Darnall, the *Sheffield Independent* proudly proclaimed that the,

Yorkshire players, especially during the last three years, under the unremitting attention of the proprietor of the Darnal ground, have laboured to obtain perfection in the game, and to procure a reputation for themselves and the West Riding.<sup>79</sup>

The success of Sheffield-based early Yorkshire teams against other county sides received similar local acclaim and after Yorkshire beat Norfolk at Hyde Park in 1833

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<sup>76</sup> See *York Courant*, 21/08/1833.

<sup>77</sup> See *Bells Life*, 29 06/1828.

<sup>78</sup> See *Bells Life*, 27 07/1834.

<sup>79</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 09 09 1826.

the *Sheffield Independent* surmised that ‘the strength of the Yorkshire party lay in the Sheffield men’.<sup>80</sup>

But perhaps the strongest early representations of Yorkshire cricket to be made through the sport in Sheffield came with the participation of professionals from the town in major single wicket matches. As we have seen, these primarily commercial events were largely built around the distinctive structure and vigorous popular culture that characterised pre-modern sport. They centred upon challenges which, in order to raise publicity, were issued and accepted in characteristically pugnacious manner through correspondence in the press. Whilst broader regional associations were later invoked by Harry Sampson’s nickname, the ‘Star of the North’, arguably the most famous single wicket match involving a Sheffield player was that in which Tom Marsden contested for the championship of England in 1833. In the four years that lapsed before Fuller Pilch finally took up Marsden’s challenge a particularly lively public discourse took place between the backers of the two men. It reached its height in 1829 when Pilch’s backers attempted to negotiate alternative terms to those that had been laid down in the initial challenge. Of course, this dialogue took place in the press and after negotiations eventually broke down the *Sheffield Independent* stated ‘from *authority*’ that ‘Tom Marsden thinks the friends of Pilch have rather *blinked* his challenge....instead of replying to it in a Yorkshire like way ‘play or no play’’.<sup>81</sup> Clearly, as Russell has noted, some characteristics of the ‘broadly agreed self-image of Yorkshiremen’ which emerged at the end of the nineteenth-century were not only in place during the 1830s, but were also being expressed through cricket in the county.<sup>82</sup>

Yet, elsewhere in Yorkshire, the undoubted success of Sheffield cricket during the first half of the nineteenth-century did surprisingly little to establish the sport as a focal point for regional identity. The disproportionately localised development of cricket in the region during this period meant that whilst Sheffield players were able to first gain national recognition for Yorkshire cricket their efforts had far less impact in other parts of the county. Matches involving Yorkshire teams that were played during the 1820s and 1830s often received little interest away from the towns in which they had been organised. The seven eleven a side fixtures that were played by Sheffield-based

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<sup>80</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 07/09/1833.

<sup>81</sup> See *Sheffield Independent*, 30/5/1829.

<sup>82</sup> See Russell, *Sport and Identity: The case of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, 1890-1939*, p 214.

Yorkshire teams in the 1830s scarcely received any attention in either the Leeds or Bradford newspapers, even when the county side was victorious. Indeed, when the Sheffield team was strong enough to challenge and beat a Yorkshire side in 1849, the *Leeds Mercury* was at pains to make clear that the teams represented two distinctly different cricketing identities. It explained how,

The act of a single town presuming to challenge the whole county may seem extraordinary; but it will cease to appear when it is known that cricket is better supported in Sheffield than almost any town in the kingdom. There are no less than four cricket grounds at the service of the inhabitants. High and low, rich and poor, join together to support the noble game; the greater part from the love of cricket, the rest for the honour of their town. No wonder then that Sheffield may challenge Yorkshire.<sup>83</sup>

By the time this view was expressed, however, Sheffield's supremacy in Yorkshire cricket was being contested and the growing strength of the sport elsewhere in the region had begun to bring the town's right to represent the county into question. As we have seen, a series of challenge matches took place for the unofficial championship of the county during the 1840s and Huddersfield was beginning to emerge as a centre for the sport of comparative strength. The fierce rivalry that subsequently developed between the two towns was fuelled further by Sheffield's domination of teams that claimed to represent the county. Indeed, issues relating to the selection of Yorkshire sides added to the intensity of the Dalton versus Sheffield match for £100 at Old Trafford in 1851 and were articulated by a correspondent to *Bell's Life*, who used the pseudonym EBORACENSIS, earlier that year. He complained,

..the list of players for the late cricket match 'Yorkshire versus Surrey' [bye and bye, it should properly have been entitled *Sheffield* (with three given players from the county of York)...of the three best bowlers in Yorkshire – Armitage of Dalton, Hall of Bradford and Joy of Knaresborough – not one is chosen...I can only express hope that the managers of the next Yorkshire match will not depend so

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<sup>83</sup> See *Leeds Mercury*, 14 07 1849.

exclusively on Sheffield. That town can doubtless furnish the best batters and wicketkeepers in Yorkshire; but in bowlers it is inferior to both Dalton and Knaresborough...The county of York is, however, very strong in cricketers; and choose any eleven you would, fourteen others might be named who would rest the palm of victory from them...<sup>84</sup>

Yet, somewhat paradoxically, the development of these rivalries became integral to the emergence of Yorkshire county cricket as a key focal point of regional identity. As Dave Russell has noted, instead of highlighting the sense of competition that existed between West Riding communities, county cricket came to be seen as an opportunity for a shared sense of regional identity to be expressed. In this context, local pride provided a 'building block for a wider set of associational bonds'.<sup>85</sup> So, whilst the increasing strength of cricket away from Sheffield intensified rivalries within the region, it also helped establish the concept of a truly representative county team building Yorkshire's status within the national context of the sport. After only a handful of similar appearances in the previous decade, the number of eleven a side contests in which Yorkshire teams faced other counties increased dramatically at the start of the 1850s. In 1851 five such matches took place as a growing affinity with the county team emerged that was reflected in the region's press. The *Leeds Times* referred to the county eleven as 'our Yorkshire team' after a victory over Lancashire, 'with Caesar, Caffyn and Adams' at Sheffield in early August, and 'our county eleven' following a defeat by Surrey at the Oval a week later.<sup>86</sup>

Indeed, once focused upon these collective regional interests, the compelling sense of communal identity that was expressed by the sport in the West Riding became a key dynamic as a distinctive concept of county cricket subsequently developed in Yorkshire.<sup>87</sup> As Russell again has noted, as well as representing the region in the broader context of the county game, the professionals who largely made up Yorkshire sides also became an immense source of pride for the communities in which their careers had been developed.<sup>88</sup> An early indication of this synthesis between local and

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<sup>84</sup> See Bell's Life 31/08/1851

<sup>85</sup> See Russell, *Sport and Identity: The case of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, 1890-1939*, p 216.

<sup>86</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 02-08 1851 and 09-08 1851.

<sup>87</sup> See Russell, *Sport and Identity: The case of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, 1890-1939*, pp 215-17

<sup>88</sup> See *ibid.*, p 215.

regional pride was provided by the *Leeds Times* in its report on the Yorkshire victory over Lancashire at Sheffield in 1851. When describing how the match unfolded on its second morning the report explained,

Coates and Anderson, who brought out their bats on Monday, presently retired, and Baldwinson was the only one to make a stand. Our Harewood champion, who we are sorry to say has been unsuccessful this season, got his 14 runs in his wanted manner.<sup>89</sup>

The intensely competitive manner with which local rivalries were expressed through cricket across the West Riding also had a deeper impact upon the way county cricket came to be viewed in the region. Matches involving the Yorkshire team were increasingly seen as competitive contests in which the reputation of the county was at stake and were consequently reported in the region's press with the same belligerent manner that was stirred by rivalries between local clubs. For example, in May 1851 the *Leeds Times* boasted how 'fourteen of "All Yorkshire" had 'signally defeated eleven of "All England"' by an innings and 53 runs on the Hyde Park ground, Sheffield. The report then continued, and called for an eleven-a-side match to be played between 'our county cricketers' and the All England Eleven as a 'means of seeing the true *status* of the Yorkshire cricketers'.<sup>90</sup>

Embryonic representations of the divide between North and South were also beginning to be expressed through press reports of Yorkshire matches from this period. When Yorkshire met Surrey at Sheffield in July 1855 the *Leeds Times* explained 'it has long been anxiously desired that eleven of "All Yorkshire" should try their strength against the southern.'<sup>91</sup> The match ended in a comfortable victory for Surrey. But, as in broader northern conceptions of the south that Russell has noted, the London-based team was seen as having distinct advantages that the Yorkshire side did not enjoy.<sup>92</sup> It was argued that,

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<sup>89</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 02/08/1851.

<sup>90</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 17/05/1851.

<sup>91</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 26/07/1851.

<sup>92</sup> See Russell, Sport and Identity: The case of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, 1890-1939, especially p 207-8.

The Surrey team are organised-are almost daily in the habit of practising together, and have by a careful and almost incessant training, attained a greater perfection than any other eleven in England...The Yorkshire eleven on the contrary seldom or ever, except in matches, play together and again their practice (which is much inferior) is not so constant...What we have urged in Yorkshire's behalf is quite obvious, and shows that we are 'not so bad as we seem.' A defeat-although perhaps not so complete as the present one, was reasonably to be expected. Yorkshire was decidedly over-matched, yet in coming seasons if a similar contest should be repeated, we certainly expect our players will run a closer game.<sup>93</sup>

But perhaps most importantly, although individual arrangements were made for each match, the concept of a singular Yorkshire team was developing into a recognisable entity in its own right. Even though 14 players took part in the match against the All England Eleven, only 16 different men appeared in the five matches that were played in 1851, and 10 of them played four times or more. Despite the debate over selection, the side was also becoming more representative of the county as a whole. Because of the town's strength, Sheffield players still made up the bulk of the side. But players from clubs elsewhere in Yorkshire also had a significant presence. Out of the 10 men who appeared in all but one of the matches, George Anderson was from Bedale, Joe Berry and George Armitage from Dalton and Sam Baldwinson from Bradford.

Clearly, the team also had a distinctively professional complexion, which showed little indication of the growing 'Gentleman Amateur' influence in the sport during the 1850s. Indeed of the 16 men who played in the Yorkshire team during 1851 only 3 were amateurs, with R.F. Skelton, taking part in 4 matches, Bernard Wake in 2 and Benjamin Huntsman in 1. Consequently, the lack of an amateur presence was already beginning to stand out and after Yorkshire had convincingly beaten Lancashire at the Botanical Gardens ground, Manchester, in August, *Bell's Life* noted that the match,

...terminated in favour of Yorkshire by five wickets, a result even more favourable to Lancashire than might have been expected, when the numerical strength of Yorkshire is considered. So anxious were the Yorkshire Gentlemen to give the

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<sup>93</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 09.08 1851.



Lancashire a thorough beating, and so bashful were they of their own abilities to assist in that object, that the Yorkshire train arrived in Manchester [without one gentleman in it!].<sup>94</sup>

Many of the key elements through which Yorkshire county cricket subsequently came to be identified were clearly being formulated at the start of the 1850s. But whilst sufficient opportunities to further establish the distinctive identity of Yorkshire county cricket were not forthcoming during the rest of that decade, these circumstances changed significantly at the start of the next. The 1860s saw the circuit of regular county cricket that had previously revolved mainly around Sussex, Surrey and Kent first become established away from the south east of England. Frequent competition with other counties brought the first successes by Yorkshire against leading teams from the south of England and they were received with great enthusiasm by the region's press. Local and regional pride were again intertwined in 1861 when the *Bradford Observer* described how Yorkshire beat Surrey for the first time. With just five runs needed and two wickets to fall, it was explained how,

Our townsman, Hodgson, next stepped forth to the rescue and from the second ball he received made a splendid cut for three. This put the Yorkshire men in ecstasies...and after a few more balls had been given, Hodgson had the honour of contributing the run which was required to secure the victory for his county.<sup>95</sup>

Indeed, when Surrey were defeated again, in the following year, the *Bradford Observer* turned to a more distinctive representation of regional identity and celebrated the victory by using local dialect to mock the southern side. Surrey had defeated Yorkshire earlier in the season and the opportunity to gain revenge had been so eagerly anticipated that, after the home side's victory, the report contended,

It no longer 'remains to be seen what Yorkshire will do when Surrey cooms doon yam to them at the return match.' Surrey has now been "doon yam" for the

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<sup>94</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 07 09 1851.

<sup>95</sup> See *Bradford Observer*, 01 08 1861.

purpose, and has been sent home again, divested of that laurel wreath which was placed on her brow at the Oval on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May.<sup>96</sup>

### **Yorkshire during the Genesis of County Cricket - Professionals, Commercialism and Competition**

Clearly Yorkshire teams were coming to be looked upon as an important representation of regional identity well before the formalised county club was established in 1863. But perhaps more importantly, the distinctive concept of county cricket that had begun to develop was built around the cultural dynamics that had shaped cricket in the region over the previous 60 years. Middle-and upper-class involvement undoubtedly played an integral role in the formative growth of elite cricket in the West Riding. But the region's social elite never seriously attempted to exert any influence over the way the sport was played at this level or the meanings that it came to represent. Consequently, although club committees took over from the entrepreneur promoters in setting up fixtures, Yorkshire county cricket grew around the structure of major commercial matches that had provided a compelling popular focal point for the sport since the 1820s. Indeed, as late as 1851 the 'committee of the Sheffield club' still used the pages of *Bell's Life* to announce that it was ready to arrange for 'eleven of Yorkshire' to play against 'eleven of any other county, home and home' or they would pay a sum of money for any such team willing to travel to the town for a one-off match.<sup>97</sup>

Nevertheless, by the beginning of the 1860s there were calls for the Yorkshire gentry to follow the lead of their counterparts elsewhere in England and set its role in the sport at elite level on a more formal footing by establishing a county club. In 1861 a London journalist wrote,

Yorkshire you are wanted that is the leading men and cricketers of Yorkshire are wanted, to bestir themselves, beat up the wealth, rank and influential men of their shire, and establish a County Cricket Club. Good cricket grounds you have already in various parts of the county. Cricketers are ready at hand of that mental

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<sup>96</sup> See *Bradford Observer*, 10 07/1862.

<sup>97</sup> See *Bell's Life*, 01:06/1851.

and ability that even under the present disorganised - or rather, NO - state of things were found an eleven that could beat Surrey.....It is our opinion that if Yorkshiremen would but establish on a proper basis a county cricket club, they would in a year or two be enabled to bring such an eleven into the field as would make Yorkshire a cricketing county second to none in England, and Yorkshire-trained cricketers as famous as Yorkshire-trained racehorses.<sup>98</sup>

But, when steps to formalise the organisation of county cricket in the region were first taken in 1861, before the county club was formed two years later, they had little impact upon the cultural dynamics that surrounded Yorkshire representative sides. Indeed, the formation of Yorkshire County Cricket Club did more to revive local rivalries which had marked the appearance of teams claiming to represent the region before the 1850s than establish the 'Gentleman Amateur' concept of the county club. Away from Sheffield, the new county club was not viewed as an organisation that represented the whole region and in May 1863 the *Leeds Times* noted its establishment by commenting,

What is termed a "Yorkshire Cricket Club" has been formed in Sheffield, but as the officers (President, Secretary, Committee &c) are all Sheffield men, the project is not likely to meet with much encouragement out of that town.<sup>99</sup>

Consequently, independent Yorkshire county matches continued to be organised in the fashion of the unofficial professional-centred commercial fixtures of the itinerant elevens. Indeed a committee in Bradford also began arranging Yorkshire matches in 1863 whilst another county club was formed in York during the same year and over the following four seasons a pattern of regular fixtures emerged. The Bradford-based organisation arranged home and away matches with Nottinghamshire and Cambridgeshire, whilst the Sheffield based county club was responsible for fixtures against Surrey and Kent or Lancashire. The York club, however, decided to forgo fully representative county fixtures in order to concentrate solely on providing a high level of amateur cricket for the region's social elite.

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<sup>98</sup> See Holmes, *Yorkshire County Cricket*, p40.

<sup>99</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 02 05/1863.

As this structure suggests, the decline of commercially centred elite cricket and its replacement by the ‘Gentleman Amateur’ led first-class game was far from inevitable when these events are viewed in the context of the sport in the 1850s and 1860s. Certainly, little thought appears to have been given to changing the existing system of Yorkshire cricket in which teams were individually assembled to take part in commercial fixtures against other county sides or the itinerant elevens. These arrangements continued to operate for some time during the early years of the county club’s existence and the *Leeds Times* gave the following endorsement of such fixtures in its preview of the 1864 season,

The newly inaugurated county club, stated to have its headquarters in the cathedral city, has issued no programme that we are aware of; but the Sheffield and Bradford committees – who appear to hold aloof, and whose previous excellent arrangements in carrying out the matches which they have negotiated we are bound to speak in terms of commendation – appear as the promoters of two home-and-home contests with celebrated elevens of Surrey and Notts.<sup>100</sup>

Elsewhere in England, however, the middle-class-led formalised county club was a more powerful concept and some southern commentators found difficulty accepting the system that continued to prevail in Yorkshire. According to Holmes, the secretary of Kent wrote to the Sheffield-based county club in 1864 enquiring ‘as to who were the proper parties to get up Yorkshire county matches’.<sup>101</sup> The situation had changed little two years later and the 1866 *Cricketer’s Companion* commented that,

At present it is difficult to define which is the County Club, as York, Bradford and Sheffield aspire to that honour. That at York is more properly a gentleman’s club, and includes most of the amateur talent from the county. At Bradford there is a most energetic committee and a liberal subscription list and for several seasons the matches with Nottinghamshire and Cambridgeshire have been played there. The ground, though good and advantageously situated (in Horton Lane) is too confined for first-class matches; indeed, only square hits can be run out. An

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<sup>100</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 14/05 1864.

<sup>101</sup> See Holmes, *Yorkshire County Cricket*, p 42.

enlargement is contemplated, and this done, Bradford will enjoy, as it deserves, a fair share of county cricket. Bramall Lane is a splendid area, with ample accommodation of every kind. Except Nottingham, there is no town in England where the spectators are so numerous, or enter so thoroughly into the spirit of the game.<sup>102</sup>

This view clearly reflects how the organisation of county cricket in Yorkshire revolved around the dynamics of civic status that drove the development of leading venues across the West Riding during this period. As we have seen, major sporting fixtures had been coveted in the region's growing urban centres since the 1820s and the growth of such events provided new opportunities for ambitious clubs and towns. The changing urban landscape meant that most of the early leading venues, such as the Victoria Ground in Leeds and Darnal in Sheffield had disappeared by 1850. But during the second half of the nineteenth-century principal clubs in leading towns across the region began to develop their facilities in order to stage major matches. Whilst Horton Lane in Bradford and Bramall Lane in Sheffield had become the premier venues for cricket in Yorkshire by 1860, as we have seen, a number of clubs in other towns across the region were also able to attract first-class matches over the course of the next decade. Non-County club fixtures continued to take place in Yorkshire until 1874 and in all 26 were played at venues that included Middlesbrough, Hunslet, Holbeck, Dewsbury, Huddersfield and Scarborough. Indeed, the continued strength of this system for arranging county matches was reflected when 'Cover Point' in the *Leeds Intelligencer* told a correspondent during 1867,

I am not aware of any special committee for the arranging of Yorkshire matches. The only county committee that I know, which is not connected with a town club, is the one in Sheffield which is called "the Sheffield County Club" but it is only for arranging county matches on its own ground.'<sup>103</sup>

Most importantly, however, the concept of a singular Yorkshire team representing the region continued to gain strength throughout the first decade of the county club's

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<sup>102</sup> See Holmes, *Yorkshire County Cricket*, p 43.

<sup>103</sup> See *Leeds Intelligencer*, 21,08/1867.

existence. Although county matches were still arranged by separate organisations during this period, the make up of the team itself continued to remain relatively consistent. With the exception of occasional appearances by outstanding amateurs such as Brian Wilkes Waud who played six matches in 1863 and 1864, the sides for all Yorkshire fixtures were selected from the same group of professional players. The mainstays of the team throughout the 1860s were Roger Iddison, who played in 37 of the 43 matches that took place between 1863 and 1870, Joe Rowbotham, who played in 36 matches, Edwin Stephenson 34 and John Thewlis 30. Other regulars in all Yorkshire matches during the early years of the county club's existence include John Berry, George Anderson, George Atkinson and Issac Hodgson. They played in 19, 15, 15 and 21 of the 24 matches that took place between 1863 and 1867 respectively, whilst of the 19 fixtures which were played from 1867 to 1870 George Freeman played in 19, Tom Emmett 18, E.B. Rawlinson 14, and Luke Greenwood 13.

Moreover, the role these men played in representing the county in the national context of the sport continued to find growing support in the region's press. When Yorkshire beat Nottinghamshire in a match that was arranged by the Bradford committee which took place at Horton Road in June 1863, the *Leeds Times* explained,

some few years ago a leading member of the Surrey eleven observed, if we remember rightly, that Yorkshire, as a county, was weak at cricket. Now, although our team has not the advantage of practising together, we think their recent performances entitle them to the distinction of being called the champion eleven.<sup>104</sup>

However, the strength with which these cultural dynamics had come to be represented in Yorkshire county cricket by the 1860s was perhaps most effectively demonstrated by one of the sport's definitive events of that decade. Despite the growing number of formalised county clubs, this period arguably marks the high point of the professional players' ascendancy in cricket. As we have seen, the itinerant elevens had cemented their position at the head of the sport and similarly professional led international tours had already taken place to the USA and Canada, and Australia.

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<sup>104</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 27.06 1863.

Indeed, the predominance of professional cricketers in the middle of the 1860s was such that a temporary withdrawal of labour by five leading Yorkshire professionals could have far more serious consequences for the county club than the players concerned. The dispute followed a number of incidents during the early 1860s which saw the relationship between northern and southern based professionals break down, before leading members of the All England and United All England elevens from the south established a third itinerant team. The northern professionals saw the formation of the new organisation, the United South of England Eleven, as a direct threat to their livelihood. Consequently, Roger Iddison, George Atkinson, George Anderson, Edwin Stephenson and Joe Rowbotham refused to take part in the county club's fixtures against the Surrey eleven, which included a number of the players who had led the breakaway. In response to the boycott, the county club committee decreed that 'every professional player is bound to play for his county when called upon to do so'.<sup>105</sup> But, as Holmes later recounted, the players refused to back down and the,

Committee, finding that every effort they made to effect any arrangement totally failed, became convinced that they must either bow to the will of the players, or play the matches with such talent as they could bring together at the risk of almost certain failure and pecuniary loss. They accepted the latter.<sup>106</sup>

The dispute brought the interests of the county club into direct conflict with the meanings that Yorkshire county cricket had come to represent. But, whilst the county club committee attempted to exert its authority over the dissident players, widespread popular support was firmly behind the men who were looked upon to represent Yorkshire cricket in the national context of the game. The Bradford committee selected the players who were involved in the dispute for both its fixtures against Cambridgeshire, which were played at Horton Road, Bradford, in May, and Ashton Under Lyne in September, and the matches against Nottinghamshire, at Horton Road and Trent Bridge which both took place in July.

Public opinion also remained firmly in support of the players and the county committee was widely viewed to have compromised the standing of Yorkshire cricket by

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<sup>105</sup> See Holmes, *Yorkshire County Cricket*, p 44.

<sup>106</sup> See *ibid.*

undertaking fixtures with such a drastically under strength team. Consequently, when Surrey visited Bramall Lane in June the *Bradford Observer* noted that the 'match excited little or no interest throughout the county, as it was pretty well known beforehand that neither Anderson, Atkinson, Iddison, Rowbotham nor Stephenson would take part in it.'<sup>107</sup> The region's press was also critical of the decision to put the reputation of the county at stake in similar circumstances when the return match took place at the Oval in August. On this occasion the *Leeds Times* exclaimed,

We designate the contest a farce because, in the first place, the Yorkshire team consisted of only ten men – Luke Greenwood being 'absent', and in the second place, because it is simply absurd to speak of a 'Yorkshire eleven' in which neither Anderson, Atkinson, Iddison, E. Stephenson, nor Rowbotham, is included.<sup>108</sup>

More significantly, however, the subsequent response of the county club demonstrates how the commercial realities of major matches took precedent over ideological principles in Yorkshire county cricket during this period. The All England Eleven, which was now led by George Parr, agreed to go ahead with a match against the Sheffield-based Yorkshire side at Bramall Lane in July without any of the five Yorkshire players who were in dispute with the county. A fee of £65 was guaranteed for Parr's men. But, without these leading local players, the fixture failed to capture any significant popular interest and poor attendances led to a deficit of £75, as Yorkshire lost the match by an innings and 255 runs.<sup>109</sup> Facing financial disaster, the county club then decided to suspend its matches for the 1866 season leaving the organisation of Yorkshire county cricket in the hands of the Bradford club. It continued with its regular programme of fixtures and staged two matches against Nottinghamshire and one against Cambridgeshire in which the five players in dispute all took part. With its future in serious doubt, at the start of 1867 the county club decided that the,

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<sup>107</sup> See *Bradford Observer*, 22/06/1865.

<sup>108</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 19/08/1865.

<sup>109</sup> See Holmes, *Yorkshire County Cricket*, p 44.



..choice of players in the coming season be left in the hands of the committee, and they are empowered (if they think well) to play those cricketers who refused to play in the past season, on their expressing regret for what has occurred.<sup>110</sup>

Indeed, the strength of professional-centred commercial cricket in the region was demonstrated even further by the player's response to the offer of conciliation. Iddison and Rowbotham were prepared to make the much-compromised concession and consented to play in the two matches against Surrey that were arranged by the county club that season. The other three players, however, still refused to take the field against Surrey, and Atkinson and Stephenson did not play for the county club again until 1868, whilst none of Anderson's the remaining four appearances in first-class cricket were for the Sheffield-based organisation. Their stance was also supported by the Cambridge professionals who refused to take part in any fixture staged by an organisation that had dealings with Surrey and the match with the Yorkshire county club was cancelled.

But there were clearly other clubs willing to stage prestigious major matches during this period and the fixture subsequently took place at Dewsbury with the full Yorkshire team taking part. The rearranged match against Cambridge at Dewsbury was the inaugural first-class fixture at the recently developed Savile ground and represented a major success for the club. The report in the *Leeds Times* explained,

Probably never before has such an interesting match been played in the county as that which began at Dewsbury on Thursday between the two county elevens of Yorkshire and Cambridgeshire. It has been the principal match in the lengthy calendar of the Savile club and right earnestly have its members busied themselves to ensure its successful issue. Their efforts have not been in vain.<sup>111</sup>

Indeed the Saville Ground subsequently became a regular venue for first-class cricket and continued to stage Yorkshire County matches until 1933.

Nevertheless, the 1867 season was the county team's most successful to date. All of the seven matches which were arranged by the various enterprises that organised Yorkshire

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<sup>110</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> See *Leeds Times*, 17/06/1867.

county cricket ended in victory and in June, after gaining a second success that month over Surrey, the *Bradford Observer* boasted,

Time was, in the recollection of children not yet breached, when the Surrey eleven was thought by many, and certainly thought themselves, to be perfectly invincible. The difficulty now appears to be to find a county eleven not able to whip them into fits.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> See *Bradford Observer*, 13 06 1867.

## Conclusion

By the end of the 1860s, however, the predominance of professional players in elite cricket was in decline and in 1873 the first-class game was placed firmly under the control of 'Gentleman Amateur'-led county clubs. Moreover, the growing popularity of county cricket during this period enabled these organisations to underscore their ascendancy by establishing a set of qualification regulations that compromised the economic and social position of professional players for the most of the next 100 years. These events finally enabled the Sheffield-based Yorkshire club to assume full control of county cricket in Yorkshire.

But as we have seen, many of the definitive meanings that had come to dominate the sport within the West Riding continued to find expression through Yorkshire county cricket. Despite the new complexion of county cricket, matches in the region retained their semi commercial complexion and the venues that hosted Yorkshire fixtures remained as a source of great pride for the towns in which they had been developed. But perhaps most importantly, the county team continued to be assembled primarily from Yorkshire-based professionals upon whom a compelling combination of local and regional pride was invested by the sport's considerable popular following throughout the region.

The popular concept of the Yorkshire team representing the county in the national context of the sport clearly still provided the foundations upon which the distinctive model of regional identity that was built around Yorkshire county cricket came to find expression. Indeed in the light of these observations it is necessary to question Dave Russell's assertion, in an otherwise exceptionally perceptive analysis, that

Yorkshire county cricket perhaps had the most intense meanings for the class that watched it the most and got the closest to its centre of power: the middle and upper-middle-classes.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> See Russell, Sport and Identity: The case of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, 1890-1939, p 229.

It was clearly the way in which the Yorkshire team ‘engaged the attention and affection of a wide section of the county’s population’ that describes most closely the distinctive relationship that county cricket developed with the region.<sup>114</sup>

Consequently, towards the end of the nineteenth-century, employees in the Sheffield metalworking industries could still express their distinctive cultural identity during Yorkshire matches in the same way the cutlers had done when the Darnall ground first opened in the 1820s. As part of the formalised County Championship, these fixtures were now commonly held on weekdays which, due to the new rationalised working week, prevented regular popular attendance. They were also staged at the town’s modern multi-sports stadium. But the survival of St Monday in Sheffield meant that the first day of the match between Yorkshire and Lancashire in 1898 attracted a crowd of around 30,000 spectators. The *Manchester Times* sent a reporter to Bramall Lane to record his observations of the event and he produced the following enthralling description of the crowd that attended the match on that day,

Monday was ‘grinders’ day. They turned up together to cheer Lord Hawke and his colleagues with utter recklessness of appearance. Judging whole groups of them by their attire, they had very few of this world’s possessions. Without being in rags, they were distinctly shabby. But they were very jovial and very good humoured. Crushing they did not mind a bit. Elbowing one another seemed to be a favourite pastime. An occasional sparring match, without serious intent, they regarded as a pleasure and a lucid interval. There was very little horse-play, however. For the most part they were content to watch the game and relieve their minds with caustic comments on the performances of the players.<sup>115</sup>

But perhaps more importantly the report also provides the following illuminating picture of the great sense of regional pride and identity that was invested in the Yorkshire professionals and the team that they formed by popular followers of county cricket in the West Riding.

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<sup>114</sup> See Russell, *Sport and Identity: The case of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, 1890-1939*, p 213.

<sup>115</sup> See *Manchester Times*, 15/07/1898.

On the first day's play things were going very well with Yorkshire. Brown, the famous Brown from Driffield, 't' mon who beat Orstralia three year ago, and wold ha' done it again if they'd taken him," was playing a great innings for his side. Briggs and Cuttell were using all their arts to puzzle him, and hardly one of their devices passed unrecognised. I can not reproduce the remarks verbatim. The sentences would have to be mainly made up of dashes if I did. The effect of the comment was that Cuttell should have been playing for Yorkshire, as he was a 'reight good mon,' who learned his cricket in Sheffield.

#### A BURNING SHAME

'Most of the good'uns they have are Yorkshire,' said one perspiring old gentleman, who had all the appearance of a beerhouse keeper, and was regarded as an oracle. Bowdlerised his remarks were something like this: Call this Lancashire. It's a burning (only the word was not burning) shame. I'm told they have spies picking 'em up from everywhere. There's not only Cuttell, but there's Ward and Baker, both born in Yorkshire. Their captain's not Lancashire, nor Mold, nor Briggs in fact, there's hardly a Lancashire man among them.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> See *ibid.*

## CONCLUSION

Between the start of the 1820s and the end of the 1860s cricket was transformed from a pre-modern sport of largely regional significance to becoming one of the key features of English national culture. The changes that precipitated this transition were clearly linked to broader social economic and cultural developments that took place as Britain became the first industrial nation. Yet surprisingly little attention is focused upon how this transition took place. Academics have concentrated on broader developments in leisure during this period, and the wider literature of the sport has been largely shaped to reflect the assumed dominance of an elite view of the sport. Consequently the intention throughout this study has been to situate the growth of West Riding cricket during this period within its broader contemporary context to show how the social, economic and cultural changes that took place across the region in the nineteenth century helped shape the sport in ways that have not been widely recognised. As the sport's literature itself became a key element in the construction and dissemination of 'gentlemanly' values, this examination has been largely focused upon empirical analysis of primary source material from within the region. The research has identified five key themes - competition, commercialism, the club and the community, professionalism and culture and identity - which have formed the basis for each chapter.

Traditional forms of competition were fundamental to the pre-modern culture and structure of cricket in the first decades of the nineteenth century. It was during this period that cricket first took on a significant presence in the region at a time when many communities were experiencing dramatic growth and seeking ways through which their new status and identity could be expressed. The pre-modern structure of challenge matches for stake money provided a compelling way to meet these needs and was further enhanced by other important developments such as the growth of the national and regional press. This competitive pre-modern system was subsequently extended to encompass a regional and at times national structure which further enhanced the role of the sport as an important focal point for communal identity. Indeed by the time the mores that characterised this pre-modern structure of sport and recreation were no longer seen as compatible with the new sense of moral respectability, cricket in the

region was already firmly rooted in the cultural traditions of competition and communal identity. So it was these meanings which largely directed the shape the sport subsequently took as new possibilities for organisation were offered in the changing social and economic landscape.

Commercialism was another important element of pre-modern sport which played a key role. Whilst a strong interest in cricket was clearly evident, the entrepreneurial endeavour of William Woolhouse and, perhaps more importantly, the men who invested in the facilities he ran was vital to Sheffield's meteoric rise as a prominent regional and national centre for the sport. Without the kind of aristocratic leadership which had enabled its formative development to take place in the south east of England over the previous century, it was largely through this commercial model that cricket grew in other major towns across the region. At its elite level the sport consequently developed around leading commercial venues which staged major events. Initially these were matches for stake money, in all their various forms. Then, as gambling was becoming less socially acceptable in sport, the next phase of cricket's development was led by a new commercial initiative and the itinerant eleven fixtures became equally popular. Consequently watching cricket continued to be an important pastime in the region and, although the size and nature of crowds was affected by broader economic developments, by the end of the 1860s a commercial framework was in place which could embrace the new developments in sport, such as professional football and even county cricket.

The growth of cricket clubs in the region also had strong links with broader social economic and cultural developments. Key resources, including free time, money, and an area on which to play, were required to form such organisations and this saw their development in the region initially follow a similar pattern of growth to that which was first experienced in the south east of England during the eighteenth century. However, the nature of urban industrial development in the West Riding meant that the means to establish clubs also became available in some predominantly working-class communities as early as the 1820s and 1830s. These organisations attached meanings to the sport which contrasted sharply with the innate sociability that characterised the elite clubs. They were largely built upon a strong sense of community identity which was most vividly expressed in the competitive precepts of the challenge matches that formed

the focal point of their activities. Consequently it was these values that came to define the clubs, which were formed when regulated leisure time became a widely accepted part of the rationalised working week in the 1860s. Economic circumstances meant that middle-class sponsorship was critical in the formation of these organisations and the movement for recreational reform was conspicuous in this process. But, despite the rhetoric that increasingly surrounded cricket, the motivation of these institutions was not always as it seemed and many simply used the sport to attract more working-class members. Moreover, other interest groups were also prominent, including the industrial middle-classes and members of the social elite, who sometimes saw in the sport the meanings that had characterised predominantly working-class clubs since the second quarter of the nineteenth-century.

A fundamental role in all these developments was played by professionalism. Establishing a group of elite professionals was seen as the key to promoting Sheffield cricket by the commercial and civic interests who looked to establish a wider reputation for the town. Indeed they also brought leading players from London and the south east of England to the town as star attractions to assist in the promotion of the sport. But focusing on professional players in this way also built upon strong working-class traditions of reward for success in playing sport and a particularly powerful bond consequently developed between professional players and the communities they represented. It was perhaps most prominent in clubs such as Dalton and Lascelles Hall during the 1830s and 1840s when receiving payment for playing was the only route to regular participation for working-class players and funding was found by playing for stake money.

The distinctive character of county cricket that emerged in the West Riding also raises important questions relating to assumptions that have been made about the professionals who played during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. There is much evidence to suggest that the contemporary view of these men in the West Riding differed significantly from the way they have been seen by later writers such as Rogerson and David Lemmon, who claimed that in the mid-nineteenth century 'Yorkshire professionals were, for the most part, hard-drinking, with little sense of county pride.'<sup>1</sup> This ill-disciplined, self interested image has been drawn from

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<sup>1</sup> See David Lemmon, *The Crisis of Captaincy*, Christopher Helm, London, 1988, p 21.



contemporary and subsequent representations, which were constructed mainly in order to establish the concept of the 'Gentleman Amateur'. However, from the early days in Sheffield through to the county championship successes in the 1890s, West Riding professionals enjoyed an elevated status and an extended structure of employment that were rarely available elsewhere. As well as the players who participated at the highest level of the sport during this period, many others combined working life with an engagement as a 'Saturday man', increasing their weekly income and becoming influential and well respected figures with clubs in local cricket. Consequently the sport could offer opportunities to escape the demands of urban industrial life in a way that is rarely recognised. So although much attention has been fixed upon those men who experienced hardship when their playing days ended, the position in life of many West Riding professionals was considerably enhanced by a career in the sport.<sup>2</sup>

These early professionals subsequently benefited from the growth of the sport as new opportunities became available. Professional-centred commercial cricket expanded during the era of the itinerant elevens and many of the increasing number of clubs that were being formed also employed players to help increase their status by coaching the members and playing in matches. Professionals consequently had an important status in the West Riding which was reflected in the way county cricket developed in the region. Consequently most of the men who pioneered this form of the sport in the region became popular and well respected figures. So whilst a few fell victim to the exigencies that still reached into most all areas of life during the late nineteenth century, some continued to be well respected figures in the sport during retirement as coaches or umpires whilst others were able to improve their circumstances through cricket and find successful employment after their careers had finished.

The impact that the continued presence of cricket's pre-modern culture had in the region was perhaps most powerfully demonstrated in the distinctive popular character that the sport developed in the region. Cricket clearly permeated deep into the heart of the region's urban industrial communities in a way that has rarely been recognised. During the first half of the nineteenth century aspects of pre-modern sport became part of popular culture in many of these vibrant and rapidly changing communities. These proved remarkably enduring. Stake money challenges and single wicket contests were

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Sissons, *The Players*, pp 143-154

played by teams and individuals from organised cricket clubs in the urban industrial districts well into the 1860s and were closely associated with the practice of betting on cricket which also continued throughout this period. Through the continued survival of such activities a sense of traditional pre-modern culture could be maintained in the meanings that defined the sport in this context. So by the end of the nineteenth century, when the new rationalised structure of the sport had come to dominate, clubs could still be found in the heart of industrial cities such as Leeds where support for local clubs was perhaps at its most partisan and local rivalries were intensely felt.

However, the distinctive characteristics of the sport which developed in the West Riding during the middle years of the nineteenth century found their most prominent and arguably significant means of expression through county cricket. Teams that played as Yorkshire became widely looked upon to represent cricket in the region well before the county club was formed in 1863. The intense local rivalries that developed during the first half of the nineteenth century played an important role in this process. However they served to accentuate rather than diminish the importance of the Yorkshire team and transposed the strong sense of competition that had come to mark the sport in the region into the national arena. The regional press was particularly prominent in these events as cricket became a means through which Yorkshire defined itself in relation to other parts of the country. But most importantly this process took place at a time when the characteristics that had come to define the sport in the region were still prevalent in county cricket. So it was a predominantly professional Yorkshire team that took part in popular commercial matches at leading grounds in the county that first became a focal point for regional identity. Consequently these values were able to retain their resonance in county cricket in the region after the predominance of the 'Gentleman Amateur' in first class cricket began.

### **West Riding Cricket and the Discourse on Nineteenth Century Leisure**

These events clearly also have an important bearing upon the academic discourse that surrounds the process of change in nineteenth-century leisure. In view of Hill's work on league cricket, and the distinctive way that county cricket was shaped in the region,

Bailey's view that sport and leisure was an area of contestation during this period is particularly relevant here.<sup>3</sup> Indeed there were occasions when the values that continued to preside over cricket in the West Riding came into conflict with the new meanings that were being ascribed to the sport. The growing predominance of gentlemanly amateur principles in county cricket was reflected in the formation of Yorkshire County Cricket Club in 1863. However, the professional-centred form of the sport that Clarke and others pioneered continued to prevail in the region throughout the first decade of the county club's existence. Consequently, as well as representing the county club, West Riding professionals still played both for and against the itinerant elevens and also took part in independent Yorkshire fixtures, whilst it could even be argued that their continued predominance was demonstrated in the outcome of the 1865 players dispute.

The rapid expansion of organised cricket also took place in circumstances that, at times, offer an opportunity to question the diffusionist view of developments in sport and leisure during this period. Members of some cricket clubs looked to separate themselves from the secular and non-secular reform institutions which had enabled their formation, in order to become independent organisations that could represent the community as a whole and compete with local rivals on an equal footing. Indeed although many clubs were formed by churches and Mechanics Institutes or other similar bodies, there is evidence to suggest that these organisations did not necessarily see the sport as a force for social and moral improvement in the way that contemporary and subsequent writers have stressed. Consequently, there are few signs that Muscular Christianity had the kind of all encompassing influence that Sandiford claimed was the case throughout the country.<sup>4</sup>

However, the pattern of development that did occur in West Riding cricket offers considerable support to the observations that Cunningham, Griffin and others have made about the importance of continuities in recreational culture and how they contributed to the process of change in nineteenth-century leisure.<sup>5</sup> As Griffin noted, specific local conditions that were caused by the disproportionate rate of urban industrialisation had a pivotal impact in the region.<sup>6</sup> The survival of independent trades

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<sup>3</sup> See Hill, *First Class Cricket and the Leagues*, and *League Cricket in the North and Midlands* and Bailey, *Leisure and Class*.

<sup>4</sup> See Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p 2.

<sup>5</sup> See Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, p 10 and Griffin, *England's Revelry* pp 186-189.

<sup>6</sup> See Griffin, *England's Revelry*, p 166.

such as handloom weaving in the textile districts and various artisan processes in the metalworking industries around Sheffield was crucial here. It provided a degree of autonomy which enabled the distinctive culture that marked pre-modern sport to flourish as new forms of custom and expression were being developed within the vibrant and rapidly expanding urban industrial environment. Most importantly, the emphasis upon financial reward for success in sport was maintained through stake matches and professionalism whilst other popular pre-modern activities, such as gambling and single wicket matches, also retained a strong presence.

These aspects of the sport then became interwoven with the new forms of cricket that had begun to develop. So where conditions existed in which formally organised clubs, such as Lascelles Hall and Dalton, could be established in predominantly working-class urban industrial communities, they were largely built upon the cultural traditions that shaped cricket's pre-modern development. The compelling structure of stake match challenges in which they continued to take part stimulated interest in the sport and enabled a strong sense of popular participation to be maintained through watching and betting on cricket. Moreover, they also offered opportunities for players from outside the social elite to take part in organised cricket, in a way that further enhanced the tradition of professionalism in the region. As Adrian Harvey recognised, this process was considerably aided by the local and national press. Increasing newspaper coverage helped develop a vibrant structure for the sport which was still able to reach national proportions, despite the way Vamplew identified how economic circumstances limited the market for commercial sport before the 1870s.<sup>7</sup> Yet, although disputes frequently occurred at matches, there is little to suggest that corruption was widespread in West Riding cricket during the middle decades of the nineteenth century in the way that Harvey claimed, despite the centrality of gambling. Indeed the eventual demise of the sport's pre-modern structure was linked to the changing social and cultural climate and the new possibilities for regular matches that were on offer following the rationalisation of leisure time.

Nevertheless many pre-modern cultural characteristics still retained their presence in the region and played an important role in the shape the sport subsequently took. Commercial interests, for example, maintained much of their significance throughout

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<sup>7</sup> See Vamplew, *Pay up and Play the Game*, Ch. 6, pp 44-50 and Harvey, *The Beginnings of a Commercial Sporting Culture*, Ch 3 pp 31-62 and Ch 6 pp 115-150.

the nineteenth century. As Cunningham noted, for a time at the start of this period the sport's development was closely linked to a broader pattern of growth in contemporary commercial entertainment.<sup>8</sup> Following the breakdown of aristocratic involvement, which had provided leadership and finance as the formative development of the sport took place over the previous 100 or so years, entrepreneur-promoters assumed a pivotal role in the organisation of cricket. Major events were arranged and promoted by men, such as Woolhouse and Clarke, which stimulated the sport's initial growth in the West Riding and pointed the way forward for the next phase of development. For, as with other entertainment entrepreneurs, Clarke's knowledge and experience of the growing potential for commercial cricket in the expanding industrial regions prompted him to begin touring the country with a team of leading professional players. Indeed it was through these matches that the tradition of major events and leading commercial venues became established which helped shape the distinctive form of county cricket that emerged in Yorkshire.

As these events indicate, significant developments undoubtedly took place in West Riding cricket throughout the first half of the nineteenth century which contribute further to the revision of Malcolmson's initial assumption that the spread of urban industrialisation brought about a 'vacuum' in popular leisure.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the vibrant environment that was created in many rapidly expanding urban industrial communities often provided fertile ground for such kinds of activity. As well as the major commercial events that began to take place, there was also a significant rise in participation in organised cricket. Clubs had been established in most major urban centres and a number of smaller communities by the 1850s and membership was not always exclusive to the social elite. But working-class participation in the sport also took place in a more traditional form as cricket continued to be played as an informal popular recreation in the streets and other public spaces in some areas during this period.

Yet it is also clear that the social and economic conditions which were created by urban industrialisation still considerably restricted participation in the sport for many people across the region. Despite the developments which took place, cricket did not grow in proportion to the rapid rise in population that was simultaneously taking place.

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<sup>8</sup> See Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, p 35-6.

<sup>9</sup> See Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, p 170.

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century access to resources such as free time and finance was increasingly restricted for many people and opportunities for leisure were limited, especially for those employed in industries and manufacturing processes that were subjected to factory organisation. Consequently the extent of the restrictions that were imposed by the new economic system is perhaps most effectively demonstrated by the huge increase in participation that took place when statutory periods of leisure time were introduced in these industries during the 1860s.

It was through the large number of clubs which were established when access to leisure became widely distributed amongst the working-classes that cricket became firmly cemented as an important focal point for communal identity throughout the West Riding. Again this was the culmination of a process which began right at the start of the sport's development in the region. The early major stake matches in Sheffield and elsewhere reflected the growing drive for status amongst civic leaders in rapidly expanding urban industrial centres. But they were clearly underscored by a considerable degree of spectator interest through which a more popular affiliation with the sport was expressed, often through an affinity with the local professional players who took part. Despite the irregular nature of matches, where economic conditions were still conducive, local teams attracted a partisan popular following whose cultural identity was expressed through activities such as drinking and betting. Indeed although they predated the football matches he was referring to, when Holt observed how 'sports were very much an area of free expression and cultural independence', he could well have had such events in mind.<sup>10</sup> For there are few earlier or more vivid examples of these dynamics than the recollection of Luke Greenwood, the old Lascelles Hall player, about the glee party of old weavers who,

put their money down on us like bricks (sic) and if we were batting and doing well the crowd always heard their music round the field. If things went wrong they kept quietly to the parlour bar<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See Holt, *Sport and the British*, p 165.

<sup>11</sup> See Pullin, *Talks with Old Yorkshire Cricketers*, p 33.

Of course many of the cultural characteristics that defined the stake money challenge matches that Lascelles Hall took part in had disappeared by the era to which Holt referred. But cricket's place as a locus for community identity in the region was reinforced by the process which brought about these changes. The new structure of work and leisure was clearly embraced by large numbers of working men and women who began to play and watch organised cricket, and other sports, during the second half of the nineteenth century. For many, the clubs which were formed during this period offered an opportunity for cultural self expression, rather than guidance by a seemingly abstract set of values that was diffused from above. These organisations were shaped to provide a relatively broad range of opportunities for participation that were denied in other aspects of life. Such activities could transcend simply playing or watching the sport in a way that was often reflected in the collective efforts which were made to improve facilities and raise finances. In this context cricket provided what Eric Hobsbawm described as a 'a continuous means of asserting oneself as a human being, as an agent in the world and not the subject of others' actions'. Hobsbawm made this observation about professional sportsmen and it certainly applies to the working men and women who played for, watched and joined cricket clubs in the West Riding.<sup>12</sup>

Yet when compared to the findings of other regional studies that have been focused in part or more fully on cricket during this period it appears that cricket did not have the same popular values elsewhere in Britain. Organised cricket failed to permeate throughout working-class communities of East Northumberland in the same way that it did in the West Riding. Whilst miners certainly played cricket, the sport was not an activity commonly associated with their own recreational institutions. Moreover, according to Metcalfe, the members of the social elite and secular and non-secular reform institutions who often provided resources for clubs to be formed, maintained an active involvement in the sport through which their values continued to resonate. So although attempts to form leagues in the region were made, and some clubs joined competitions in neighbouring areas, neither organised competitions nor professionalism were widely accepted in East Northumberland cricket.<sup>13</sup>

Ian Clarke also found significant differences in the pattern of development in his examination of Cornwall. During the middle decades of the nineteenth century

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<sup>12</sup> See, Eric Hobsbawm, *Uncommon People Resistance Rebellion and Jazz*. Abacus, 1998, p 332.

<sup>13</sup> Metcalfe p 91-6

organised cricket was viewed as providing the kind of salutary alternative to traditional forms of popular recreation for the rising commercial middle-classes in rural towns across Cornwall that Bailey discussed.<sup>14</sup> However, as a predominantly rural county working-class involvement in the sport was limited and participation in cricket amongst those lower down the social scale did not occur in any significant way before the 1870s. This development was closely linked to cricket's perceived values as a rational recreation. Clarke found that even when broader participation did take place these values were not challenged in the same way they were in the West Riding. Indeed the clergy, who took a leading role in establishing cricket clubs in Cornwall, maintained their involvement through continued participation in matches, whilst schools played a similar and equally important role in spreading the sport.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, although the itinerant elevens were important in stimulating further interest in cricket, professionals were only employed by a handful of clubs before the 1880s and there was little competitive cricket in any form before the early 1900s.

In South Wales, however, Andrew Hignell found that professional players and competitive cricket helped stimulate the growth of the sport in the region's developing urban industrial areas during the last decades of the nineteenth century. But, despite the success of the South Wales Cup, organised competitions failed to become widespread in South Wales. This was perhaps because, as Hignell found, the secular and non-secular reform institutions which enabled the formation of more socially inclusive clubs were motivated primarily by 'a sense of moral guidance'.<sup>16</sup>

### **West Riding Cricket and local and Regional Identity**

By the time Yorkshire's fixture against Lancashire at Bramall Lane in 1898 took place the transition of West Riding cricket had taken full shape. The system of individual challenges that provided such a compelling foundation for the sport's growth in the region had been succeeded by a rationalised structure which embraced many of the social and economic developments that shaped modern capitalist society. But these

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<sup>14</sup> See Clarke, *History of Cricket in Cornwall*, p 263 and Bailey, *Leisure and Class*, p 63-72.

<sup>15</sup> See Clarke, *History of Cricket in Cornwall*, p 229-237 for clergy and 237-240 for schools.

<sup>16</sup> See Hignell, *A Favorit' Game*, Ch 9 pp 113-126 esp. p 122 and Ch. 7 pp 86-97.



events did not compromise the values that underscored the sport across the region. The cup knockout and league competitions, which spread so rapidly in the 1880s and 1890s, still reflected cultural traditions that had played an integral role in cricket across the West Riding over the course of the previous century. Competition, commercialism and professional players were all embraced in the new structure and consequently, as Jeff Hill recognised, ‘the meanings inscribed in league cricket contradicted those being articulated in the first class game’.<sup>17</sup>

When viewed from this perspective, cricket in the West Riding of Yorkshire was shaped in a way that has not been recognised in the sport’s contemporary literature and subsequent historical studies. There is little evidence to suggest that the ‘Gentleman Amateur’ conception, which often provides the focus for works such as those by Bowen, Birley and Major, had any significant impact outside county cricket.<sup>18</sup> Even this form of the sport took on a distinctively different complexion in the region than it did elsewhere in the country. Although the county club itself largely conformed to ‘Gentleman Amateur’ principles, matches involving teams that represented Yorkshire were still staged on a semi commercial basis at independently owned grounds in the West Riding where resources were maximised to increase revenue, most notably by staging professional spectator sport in the form of football. But perhaps more significantly the Yorkshire team continued to be dominated by professional players, who were produced and often subsequently employed by the myriad of clubs that had been established in communities across the county.

Cricket in the West Riding clearly became a key focal point for regional identity in a way that Russell has recognised in his work on the north in general and Yorkshire County Cricket Club in particular.<sup>19</sup> Cricket in the region was closely linked to the development of competitive commercial spectator sport which, as he noted, became an important means through which people in communities across northern England came to define themselves, especially in relation to the south. Yet the interplay between local and regional identities was also important. A strong following for the sport existed in communities across the region which was often reflected in support for the professional

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<sup>17</sup> See Hill, *First Class Cricket and the Leagues*, p 79.

<sup>18</sup> See Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, Bowen, *Cricket: A History of its Growth and Development* and Major, *More than a Game*.

<sup>19</sup> See Russell, *Sport and Identity: The case of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, 1890-1939*.

players who came from towns and villages in the West Riding and progressed into the Yorkshire side. Russell's study recognises the importance of these popular values although it views Yorkshire cricket identity in relation to the county club during a period in which Lord Hawke had a controlling presence and the county championship dominated the sport at its elite domestic level. This provides a context which places emphasis upon the 'Gentleman Amateur' conception of the sport. Consequently he concludes that the meanings inscribed in Yorkshire county cricket were most intense for those members of the middle and upper classes whose values the first class game was shaped to reflect. This study, however, would emphasise that it was the popular complexion this form of the sport developed in the region that sets it apart from elsewhere in England.

But despite the high profile of county cricket, the popular pre-modern characteristics that shaped cricket in the West Riding found their most dynamic form of expression in the myriad of new league and cup knockout competitions that were established across the region in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. At its most sophisticated level, the type of league cricket that Hill described was adopted by a group of elite clubs who attempted to replicate the professional-centred regional competitions that proved successful in association and rugby football. Formed in 1892, the West Riding League included clubs that represented most of the principal towns in the region and embraced professionalism in a way that caused the split in Rugby three years later. But these organisations never really attracted the broad popular following that had come to mark cricket in the region. In contrast to the football codes, in which large-scale support became focused upon clubs in the major towns, county cricket already provided an established high level of the sport through which a compelling synthesis of local, civic and regional identity had come to be expressed. Perhaps more importantly, however, these elite clubs were unable to offer the sense of intimacy and belonging that was provided by opportunities for personal involvement in the organisations that grew to represent communal interests in smaller towns and villages across the region. Consequently the West Riding League failed to attract widespread support and was disbanded in 1899.

In contrast, the more localised cup knockouts and leagues, which were focused upon individual towns and cities in the region, flourished. As we have seen the pattern of

urban industrial development that took place in the West Riding meant that places such as Huddersfield, Halifax, Leeds and Bradford effectively consisted of many smaller communities which, although they had grown to form one major conurbation, still retained much of their individual identity. So numerous traditional local rivalries still existed and were able to find expression through organised cricket in the new rationalised competitions. The great popularity of the leagues was reflected in the way they captured the attention of local newspapers. Whilst by no means intending to cover all the competitions in the region, on June 8th 1895 the *Leeds Mercury* listed fixtures from 21 different leagues in which 178 separate teams took part.<sup>20</sup>

These competitions came to provide a compelling popular focal point for cultural and communal identity which was fully embraced by the large scale following that cricket in the region had built up over the previous century. As we have seen, it was these powerful dynamics that first thrust the sport forward to occupy a position of predominance in Yorkshire through the major stake matches that were staged at Darnall in the 1820s and they remained at the heart of the sport in the region at the end of the century. Their continued importance was vividly demonstrated by the celebrations in towns and villages across the West Riding that took place following league and cup final victories and when Birstall had beaten Batley in the 1892 Heavy Woollen Cup Final the *Batley News* reported how,

The members of the respective teams mounted their wagonettes, Mr Ackroyd with the cup in his hands taking up a position in the box of the Birstall conveyance. Headed by the Birstall Brass Band they then proceeded through Batley. Having made one or two calls *en route*, the players, with a few of their friends...made their way to the Coach and Six Inn, the headquarters, in front of which were gathered, despite the heavy downpour of rain, about 1,000 people who gave lusty cheers as the captain Mr Ackroyd, and his men, stepped from the wagonettes bearing the trophy aloft.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See *Leeds Mercury*, 08/05/1895.

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Wakefield, May 30, 1827. 5

THREE  
**GRAND MATCHES AT CRICKET,**  
 FOR  
 1,000 SOVEREIGNS.

**W. H. WOOLHOUSE**

RESPECTFULLY informs his Friends and the Public, that the FIRST MATCH of the THREE, between the Players of SUSSEX and the best of ALL ENGLAND, will commence Playing on the New Ground, at DARNAL, on Whit-Monday, June 4th.

NAMES OF THE PLAYERS.

SUSSEX.	ALL ENGLAND.
Wm. Broadbridge,	J. Saunders,
James Broadbridge,	W. Searle,
G. Brown,	— Flavell,
W. Lillywhite,	— Matthews,
C. Duff,	F. Pilch,
J. Twaites,	— Beagley,
J. Dale,	W. Caldicourt,
T. Pierpoint,	— Bowyer,
C. Pierpoint,	G. E. Dawson,
W. Slater,	W. Barber,
G. Meads.	T. Marsden.

Umpire for All England, Mr. JOSEPH DENNIS, of Nottingham; Umpire for Sussex, Mr. C. ROOTS, of Brighton.

Names of the Gentlemen Backers: H. TAMPLIN, Esq., on the part of Sussex; J. JENNER, Esq., on the part of All England.

The Game to commence precisely at Eleven o'Clock, and the Stumps to be Drawn at Half-past Six.

The Public are respectfully informed, that the Grand Stand is now completed, and presents every accommodation for select Parties. Convenient Tents have likewise been erected on the right hand of the Ground, from which an excellent view of the Game may be obtained.

Gentlemen's Tickets of Admission to the Stand, 2s. 6d.; Ladies accompanying Gentlemen, each 1s. To the Tents, 1s.; to the Ground, 6d.

Entrance to the Stand and Tents over the Old Green.—The most extensive arrangements have been made to provide Refreshments for the Company.

N. B.—No Out-Checks will be given.

The Public are also respectfully informed, that the Members of the Darnal Clubs have Free Admission to the Ground to all Matches during the Season.

WOLYSON AND ATTERCLIFFE



## Appendix 3

on the LOWRY GROUND on Tuesday,

**THE ST. GERMAN'S AND ALFREDIAN CLUBS** play their return match at Blackheath on Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup> inst.

**CHALLENGERS.**—The Halifax Junior Cricketers will choose eleven out of the twenty-two who have already played the Heckmondwike Club (and allow them the same privilege), and will play them for £10 a side, on the Leeds Ground; each Club choosing its umpire from the Leeds Victoria Club.—Eight of the Halifax Clarence Club will play any eleven bona fide residents of Heckmondwike, and members of the Heckmondwike Club, for £50 a side.

**LEICESTER.**—One of the players of the Leicester Victoria Club (which was lately defeated by the Leicester Junior Albion), can be backed to play Mr Wm. Barker, jun., for from £5 to £10 a side. The name of the challenger can be known by applying to the secretary of the Leicester Victoria Club.

Figure 1. Advertisement in *Bell's Life in London* 05/09/1841.

—EXCEPT MANY IN-TOWNS, AND COUNTY CLUBS.

**THE SHEFFIELD AND NOTTINGHAM CLUBS.**  
**TO THE EDITOR OF BELL'S LIFE IN LONDON.**  
**SIR**—Observing in your last publication a challenge from Sheffield, to meet the Nottingham Old Cricket Club, home and home, for 500L., we offer three modes of accomplishing their wish:—  
 First, to play on the same terms as last year; or, secondly, if this should be rejected, to pitch the stumps half way between Sheffield and Nottingham, each party bearing its own expense; and, thirdly, if neither of the other two pleases them, to meet in Lord's Cricket Ground, on the same conditions (viz., each party bearing its own expense), and for the sum which Sheffield has named.  
 For the Nottingham Old Cricket Club,  
**JUNE 11, 1828. WILLIAM CLARK**  
 [For the Laws of Cricket see Next Page.]

**PEDESTRIANISM.**  
**EXTRAORDINARY HOPPING MATCH.**—A gentleman who had undertaken, for a considerable wager, to hop 270 feet in 30 successive hops, executed his task on Saturday week, at the Red

Figure 2. Challenge issued in *Bell's Life in London* 15/06/1828.

LEICESTER AGAINST SHEFFIELD.

The following Articles have been entered into between the Leicester and Sheffield Clubs :—

Articles of Agreement made this 14th day of June, 1823, between Wm. Henry Woolhouse (on the part of Sheffield) and Henry Davis (on the part of Leicester), to play two matches at cricket, home and home, for Fifty Pounds each match, eleven players, residents of Sheffield, against ten players of the county of Leicester, with a given player of All England, to be played according to the Mary-la-bonne Rules.

The first match to take place at Leicester, on the 30th day of June ; and the second at Darnal, near Sheffield, on the 7th day of July. The whole of the stakes for both matches to be made good before the first match is played.

Witness,  
GEO. W. OWSTON.

H. WOOLHOUSE.  
H. DAVIS.

The last match (in 1824) these two clubs played, was the best on record—the Leicester having scored in their first innings 110, and the Sheffield made it a tie ; the Leicester, in their second innings, scored 103, and the Sheffield 102, with all the wickets down—Leicester winning by one run. The Sheffield having considerably improved since the above match, have allowed the Leicester one from All England.

Advertisement from the *Bell's Life in London* 22/06/1828.

GRAND  
**CRICKET MATCH.**

THE Public are respectfully informed, that the Match will be played at the Cricket Ground, at Darnal, near Sheffield, on Monday, the 26th Day of August instant, between the Nottingham and Sheffield Clubs. The Stumps to be fixed at Ten o'Clock. For the accommodation of the Spectators, extensive Platforms have been erected round the Field. Admittance to the Platform, 1s.—Do. to the Low Green Room, 2s. 6d.

☞ The Hours of Admittance to the several Places appointed for the Spectators, is Eight o'Clock in the Morning. Peace Officers will be in attendance, and all Dogs found on the Ground, will be destroyed.

GEORGE STEER.

Cricket Ground, Darnall,  
August 16, 1822.

Advertisement in the *Sheffield Independent* 17/08/1822.

Two Closes of very good Land, adjoining each other, situate at a place called Carter Knowle (near Button Hill) in Ecclesall Bierlow, and the Parish of Sheffield, containing together nearly Four Acres, now in the occupation of — Doct, as Tenant of Mr. J. W. Clouon.  
Applications for further particulars, or to treat for the purchase, must be made to  
Messrs. PARKER, BROWN, & PARKER.  
July 10, 1826.

**GRAND MATCH AT CRICKET, FOR TWO HUNDRED SOVEREIGNS.**

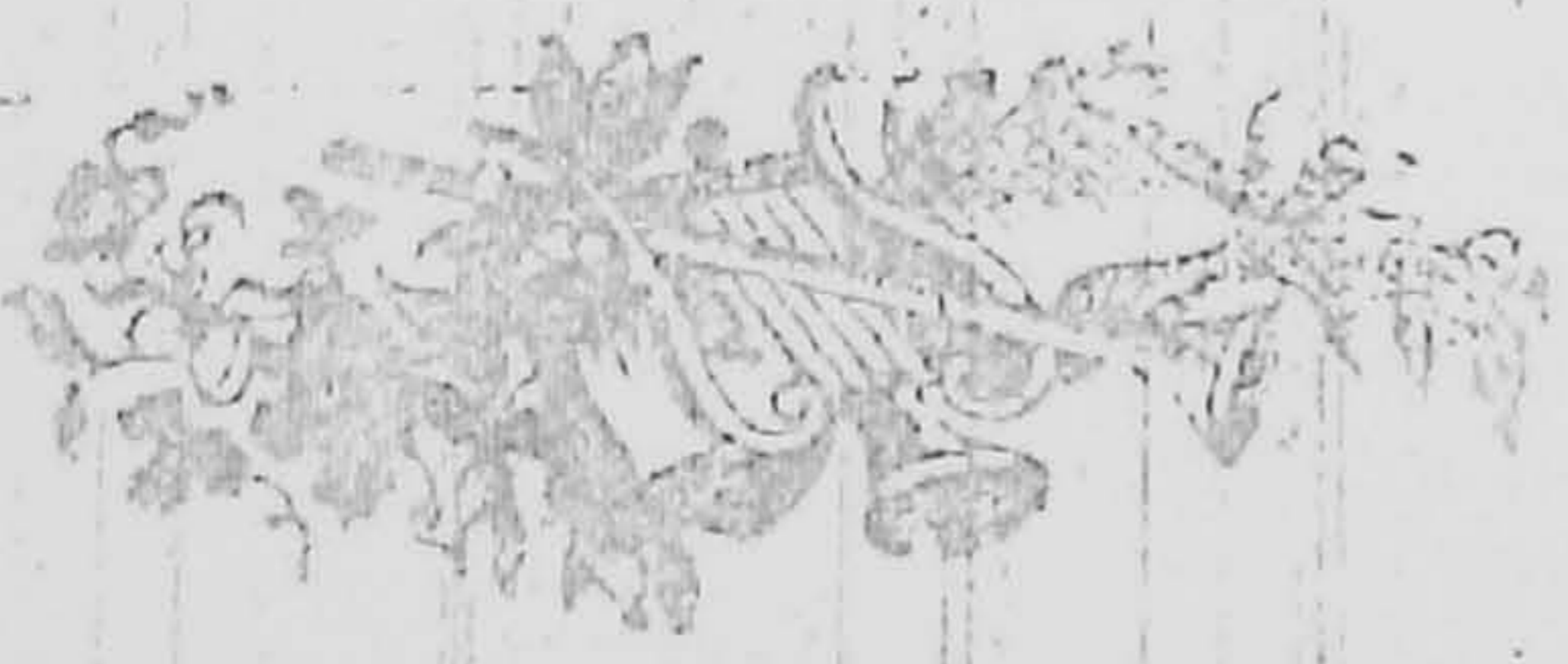
**W. H. WOOLHOUSE**

RESPECTFULLY informs his Friends and the Public, that the Match at Cricket, of Six of Sheffield with Five of Leicester, given against Eleven of Nottingham, will commence playing on the New Ground, at Darval, on MONDAY, July 24, 1826.  
Stumps to be fixed at Half Past Ten o'Clock.

Admittance to the Ground, Sixpence each; entrance through the Old Ground to the Tents, One Shilling.

N. B. In consequence of the great inconvenience and confusion occasioned by out Checks being given, arrangements have been made by erecting Booths, &c. on the Old Ground, which will be thrown open to the new one, for the accommodation of those who wish to retire for refreshment; so that in future no out checks will be given.

Mr. Brown, from London, will practise with the Sheffield & Leicester Match Players, every day previous to the Contest.



**MUSICAL INSTRUCTION.**

**W. TAYLOR & MRS. JACKSON**

RETURN their sincere thanks to the Friends of their deceased Son and Brother, (John Taylor, Professor of Music deceased) for the liberal sup-

For particulars, apply to the Printer.

**A TREAT.**

**OPENING OF HYDE PARK CRICKET GROUND.**

**GRAND MATCH FOR 100 SOVEREIGNS,**

BETWEEN

*Eleven of the Wednesday's Doncaster Club, and Eleven of the Sheffield Norfolk-Club,*  
ON MONDAY, JULY 24.

THE Proprietors of the above-mentioned Ground, have great pleasure in informing their Friends, that they have at length succeeded in making a Match with Eleven Gentlemen of the Doncaster Club, and the like number from the Hyde Park Norfolk Club; and as neither of them have as yet Played a Match in Public, they trust it will prove as interesting a game as any that has taken place in this neighbourhood, and a great treat to the admirers of this truly noble game. As the Doncaster Gentlemen have for some time had Instructions from Mr. CALDICOTT, a very celebrated London player, and as the Norfolk Club are receiving Information from Mr. LAMBERT, the acknowledged best player in the world, (not only as a bowler, but in every point of the game,) there is no doubt but it will be well contested; and as it will be the first Match played upon the Hyde Park Ground, the Proprietors intend it as an Opening thereof, and a treat to their Friends, as the Admittance to both Ground and Grand Stand will be FREE.

N. B.—Messrs. WRIGHT & HASLEHURST, request Ladies and Gentlemen who intend favouring them with their company, to call either at Hyde Park; King's Head Inn, Change-Alley; or Elephant Inn, Norfolk-Street, for Tickets to the Grand Stand, which will be delivered *Gratis*.

A number of Booths are erected round the Ground, and every accommodation is prepared for Tea Parties, or Persons wishing to partake of a Cold Collation.

The best Wines, Spirits, and every other Beverage, are prepared.

The Stumps to be fixed at Half-past Ten.  
Mr. LAMBERT, Umpire for Sheffield.

Mr. L. is in attendance upon the Ground every day for the purpose of giving instructions to Gentlemen wishing to become perfect in the Game.

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11th, June 9, 1827

## HYDE PARK CRICKET GROUND.

THE Proprietors of this Ground very respectfully inform the Admirers of Cricketing and the Public, that it is intended to form two Clubs for practising the amusement of Cricket; namely,

### THE AMATEURS' CLUB AND THE PLAYERS' CLUB.

The Amateur Club to meet every Wednesday, when they will be assisted by several of the best Match Players, and every attention will be given to promote their amusement.

Subscription for the Season, including every expense, (to be paid at the close,) 8s.

On the days of playing, the Ground will be closed to all persons except Members of the Club, and their Friends.

After the Opening of the Club, (on Wednesday, June 20,) all additional Members to be balloted for.

### THE PLAYERS' CLUB.

This Club is intended to promote the practice of Cricketing amongst those who are desirous of making themselves sufficiently masters of the game, to play in Matches. Day of playing, Monday.

Terms known on the Ground.

### SELECT TRAP BALL CLUB.

A number of Gentlemen having expressed their wish to form a respectable Private Club, for the practice of some healthful game which requires less exertion than Cricket, it is respectfully announced, that a select Trap Ball Club, to be called the "*Dartmouthshire*," will commence playing on Thursday, June 14th.

The Game will be played according to the improved London method; and Gentlemen will be supplied on the Ground with Traps, Bats, Balls, Rules, &c. free of expense.

Subscription for the Season, to be paid at its close, 10s. 6d.

After the commencement of the Club, no additional Members to be admitted but by ballot.

At half-past Six, on each Evening of the playing days, Tea and Coffee, Ham, &c. will be set out in the Great Room, solely for the Gentlemen of the Club, at 1s. each.

On the day of playing, the Ground will be free only to the Members of the Club; all others to pay 6d. each admission, to be allowed at the Bar of the House for Refreshment.

Names of Gentlemen desirous of joining any of the Clubs, will be received by Mr. WOODHEAD, King's Head, Change Alley; and at the House on the Playing Ground, any Afternoon after 3 o'clock.

Advertisement in the *Sheffield Independent* 09/06/1827



the Office of Mr. B. J. WAKE, Solicitor, in Castle-street,  
Sheffield.

**DARNALL CRICKET STAND.**

**TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,  
BY MR. B. SCHOFIELD.**

*On the Premises, at Darnall, near Sheffield, on Wednesday, the 25th day of May, 1831.*

ALL that capital BUILDING erected by the late Mr. George Steer about four years ago, called the DARNALL CRICKET STAND, of the best Materials and Workmanship, and finished at a great expense, with Tuscan Colonnade and Balcony, strong Timbered Roof, together with all the excellent Fixtures, Cooking Apparatus, and Pump belonging, suitable for any Person wishing to erect Public Rooms, or for Families, or Innkeepers; the whole of which will first be offered in one Lot, subject to removal; and if a suitable Purchaser be not found, the Materials will be Sold in Lots to suit Purchasers; particulars of which will appear in Posting-bills, and may be had of the Auctioneer.

For a view of the above, apply to Mrs. Bower, on the Premises; and for further particulars, to the Auctioneer, at his Offices, George-street, Sheffield.

Sale to commence precisely at Eleven o'Clock in the Forenoon.

**SALE BY MR. CLAYTON.**

**TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION.**

Advertisement in the *Sheffield Independent* 21/05/1831.

## Appendix 9

All Clubs appeared in fixtures that were reported in the Leeds Times during June 1860.

Armley District	Woodhouse Hill
Bradford	Harewood
Temple Newsham	Great Northern
Baildon Green	Birkenshaw
Low Fold Mill (Leeds)	Bank Mills (Morley)
Dudley Hill	Albion Club
Shipley United	Eccleshill Clarence
Mr Talbots Side	Mr Hobsons Side
Mr Talbots Side	Morley
Armley District	Keighley Brunswick
Kirkstall Educational	Otley
Queenshead	The Bank
Dacre Banks	Yeadon Beehive
Hunslet Hide Park	Holbeck Union
Bradford Unicorn	Pudsey Britannia
Bramley Young England	Headingley
Woodhouse Hill	Bramley Clarence
Leeds Clarence	Ovended Unity Club
Horsforth Union	Bradford Albion
Queenshead Unity Club	Yeadon United
Red House	Morley
Windhill	Knothrop
Waterloo	Drighlington Mount Pleasant
Earlsheaton Young England	Cullingworth
Bingley	
XI Mechanics employed by Burnley and Nichols, Old Voctoria Foundry Leeds.	
XI Moulder and Model Makers employed by Burnley and Nichols, Old Voctoria Foundry Leeds.	

## Appendix 10

All Clubs appeared in fixtures reported in the Huddersfield Examiner during April May and June 1867.

St Johns Hillhouse	Batley United
Slaithwaite Working Mens Institute	Linthwaite Woodford
Holmfirth Working Mens Club	Scholes
Clough House 'Amateur Casuals'	Lockwood Rohoboth Church Chior
Rashcliffe Church chior	Robertstown All Saints
Heartshead Royal Blue	Ravensthorpe Workingmens Institute
Wharfe	Marsh
Lindley United	Holbeck Lillywhite
Birstall	Birkby United
Dewsbury Ellis Club	Dudley Hill
Thornhill	Lofthouse
Queen Street Acadamy	Albert
Taylor Hall	Elland
Longsight	Eccleshill
Wakefield	Holmfirth
Broughton	Lockwood Working Mens Club
Crossland Moor Britannia	Cowcliffe
Westfield	Netherton Mechanics Institute
Saville Town	Brighouse
Birkby Lee Head	Zetland
Bradford	Kirkheaton
Springfield	Dalton United
Huddersfield St Johns	Meltham Mills
Harewood	Dewsbury Saville
Morley St Peters	Pudsey Britannia
Botherills United	Westown Mutual
Shelley	Nine Gimcrack Club
Nine West End Boys	Fartown Young Britannia
Marsh Shakespeare Club	Moldgreen Christ Church
Folly Hall Standard	Netherton
Emley	Kirkburton
Ossett	Bradford Kell And Co
Huddersfield Kell and Co	Bowling Napoleon
Clifton Britannia	Low Moor
Hunsworth	LittleTown Young Albion
Hope Foundry	Prospect Mill
Dewsbury Perseverence	Birkenshaw
Armitage Bridge	Crossland Moor Britannia Club
Thongsbridge	Hillhouse St Johns
Boston Spa	Gildersome United
Liversedge	Heartshead
Hunslet Union	Chickenley Young England

Batley Car Perseverance  
Leeds Young Albion  
Rough and Ready Club  
Holbeck  
Batley Canada  
Young Victoria  
Heckmondwike  
Batley Young Victoria  
Saville Club  
Kirkheaton Beaumont Club  
Lockwood  
Dalton

Prospect Top of Batley Car  
Cliffe End  
Ellis Batley Car  
Northgate House  
Mirfield Rifles Club  
Birstall Victoria  
Edgerton  
Mirfield  
Mirfield Young Alma  
Huddersfield  
Lascelles Hall

## Appendix 11

The lyrics of a song that was sung to celebrate Sheffield and Leicester's victory against Nottingham in 1826.

'What's the matter, my friends, at Sheffield to-day,  
That most of the people are going away ?'  
'What's the matter, indeed ! Why don't you know, Mester,  
That Nottingham's playing both Sheffield and Lester ?'  
So as I heard it reported by many  
That Cricket's the finest diversion of any,  
I thought, for just once I would join in their fun,  
And to Darnall I got as the stirrings begun.  
When Rawlins and Marsden began to get warm,  
The Nottingham batters were filled with alarm;  
For down went their stumps with a terrible crash,  
And soon was extinguished the Nottingham flash.  
Then old Father Dennis, enraged, took his bat,  
In wonder whatever his comrades were at;  
But Tom ripped his stumps in double quick time,  
And made the old boy with a round O to shine.  
Thus man followed man in rapid succession,  
And the score but slowly was making progression;  
The knowing ones strangely were altered in looks  
And seemed very anxious to alter their books.  
Davis, Barber and Vincent, with one or two more,  
Soon made for the union a very good score.  
Then MARSDEN went in, in his glory and pride,  
And the Arts of the Nottingham players defied.  
Oh ! Marsden at cricket is Nature's perfection  
For hitting the ball in any direction.  
He ne'er fears his wicket, so safely he strikes,  
And he does with the bat and the ball as he likes.  
Next Gamble came forward, aspiring for fame,  
And for ever established for cricket his name.  
He kept up his wicket that day and the next,  
And Barber and Clarke were bothered and vexed;  
For Tom kept hitting the ball in the crowd,  
Who in it's applause got boisterous and loud.  
Then in praises of Gamble grew equally mad-  
'Thoust nought but a good 'un, brave Gamble, my lad.'  
But I said 'twere a shame and I don't understand  
Why you don't give a shout for yon Kettleband;  
For when ever a ball is struck out on the green,  
There's sure to him and his striped breeches seen.  
So for Kettleband quickly we made good a shout,  
But Tom turning round, said let him look out;

Then he drove the ball right over the people,  
Some thought it 't'were going over Handworth church steeple.  
Then homeward I trudged to our county folks  
To tell 'em a few of our cricketers' jokes.  
But that joke of Tom Marsdens will ne'er be forgot,  
When two hundred and twenty-seven notches he got.  
For Marsden and Gamble we filled up our glasses  
As brimful as when we toast favourite lasses;  
And then drank success to all cricketers true  
Who with honour this noble diversion pursue.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The verse is quoted in full in Holmes, *History of Yorkshire County Cricket*, pp 24-5.