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Citation for published version:

McDowell 2014, 'The field of play: Phases and themes in the historiography of pre-1914 Scottish football' The International Journal of the History of Sport, vol. 31, no. 17, pp. 2121-2140. DOI: 10.1080/09523367.2014.900489

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1080/09523367.2014.900489](https://doi.org/10.1080/09523367.2014.900489)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

The International Journal of the History of Sport

Publisher Rights Statement:

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The field of play: phases and themes in the historiography of pre-1914 Scottish football

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Pre-publication print of: Matthew L. McDowell, 'The field of play: phases and themes in the historiography of pre-1914 Scottish football', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* (issue not yet assigned). There may be small textual differences between this version and the published version. Any reference made to this paper should refer to the published version.

Abstract

This article follows up on Adrian Harvey's piece 'The Emergence of Football in Nineteenth-Century England: The Historiographic Debate' (*IJHS* 30, no. 18: 2154-2163). It reviews the historiography of Scottish football on the period before the First World War. There is considerable literature on the topic, but it is not by any means evenly distributed to cover Scotland's geography, nor does it give balanced coverage to a wide-enough variety of thematic subjects. The author places this historiography into six broad categories which reflect the audience, research interests, and methodology of the pieces, and offers a critical assessment of work still to be done in what is a disparate field.

Introduction

Arguably, these are great times to be a historian of Scottish football. A popular exhibition has recently closed at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow, which celebrated Scotland's contribution to the world of football.¹ The past decade has seen a surge in publications on the subject, and the proliferation of the internet, social media and mobile technology has widened the channels by which both scholarly and popular histories of the Scottish game can be disseminated, and democratised the process by which community historians and club supporters can research and produce material on it. Yet, in terms of the focus of what has been published, and in terms of the mainstream media coverage of the Scottish game overall, the historiography of the pre-Great War Scottish game still suffers in comparison with its counterparts in other areas of the British Isles. Despite the significant leaps recently made within this field, there are still no real Scottish equivalents to Tony Mason's *Association Football and English Society*.² Such deficiencies are not confined to the pre-1914 period, however: there are also no Scottish equivalents to the comprehensive works of Dave Russell in England, and of Martin Johnes in Wales.³ Similarly, the approach utilised in Matthew Taylor's comprehensive and ambitious synthesis of material on British football's history, or in James Walvin's on world football, has not been replicated.⁴ This is not to state that historians of Scottish football should necessarily

compare like-for-like with English football's historiography; by its very nature, Scottish football's associational culture and institutions were created in a very different social, educational and legal environment than England. (Taylor's book connects the 'national' football histories of the UK's constituent nations.) Nevertheless, the imbalance remains: the corpus north of the Border has yet to replicate the sheer breadth and depth of material that is available on England. Geographically, and in terms of subject matter and available source material, there is still a great deal which has yet to be covered. This is despite considerable, though similarly disparate advances in the scholarly and popular historiography for the post-1914 period, including recent works by Alan Bairner, David Gutzke, Andrew Davies and Jack Alexander.⁵

This article certainly covers the weaknesses in the historiography; and, towards the end, proposes suggestions for the future. There is nevertheless a healthy historiography – both scholarly and popular – on Scottish football, and this piece attempts to offer a comparative framework by which historians can categorise the various, disparate publications on the subject. This framework does not strictly observe date of publication and subject matter, but also seeks to critically examine methodological approach towards research and theory. In doing so, it proposes the organisation of Scottish football's pre-1914 historiography under six broad categories which coalesce around these various criteria, as well as the background and intended audience of the texts and material. It acknowledges that these boundaries are hardly rigid, and that as the historiography continues to develop, these categories may be rendered obsolete, but it nevertheless gives historians a scorecard of what has been examined so far, and which approaches have been utilised – crucial in facilitating further research on Scottish football's history. This article follows on from Adrian Harvey's piece from last year, which critically examined the historiography on the 'origins' debate regarding football in nineteenth-century England.⁶

It is important to declare my own interests when writing this article. My PhD in history at the University of Glasgow, completed in 2010, examined the early origins, patronage and culture of football in the west of Scotland from roughly 1865 to the Ibrox disaster of 1902.⁷ A recent monograph and a series of articles have resulted from this research.⁸ I do not, however, propose that this research is by any means the final word, and is even entirely

airtight. In his recent review of *A Cultural History of Association Football, 1865-1902*, Roy Hay noted that it was clear that my book was intended more as a jumping-off point, rather than a final destination.⁹ Furthermore, Bill Murray, in his review, (correctly) critiqued how 1902 could be considered the 'watershed' moment that I believed it to be.¹⁰ As with the categorisation of publications discussed in this article, any artificial periodisation was bound to be contestable. My approaches and conclusions, furthermore, were governed by my own background as a middle-class American migrant to the west of Scotland; and, as such, I tried to remain as unmoved as possible by contemporary discourses on the 'Old Firm' and its purported sectarianism that I did not 'feel' to any appreciable degree. My monograph was at its weakest when attempting to directly engage with these particular arguments.

But nevertheless, this research represented an earnest attempt at changing the parameters of a historiographical debate on Scottish football that, for too long, has discussed the game's higher echelons, along with its most superficial features, at the expense of understanding the broader picture. Ethno-religious bigotry is, of course, a crucial component of Scottish football's history, but talking about 'sectarianism' alone has often failed to explicitly place such discrimination within wider dynamics which also involve work, gender, economics, elite and landed power, popular culture, and even emigration from Scotland. With regard to the latter point, Robert Lewis's and Steven Tischler's work on early football in England hints at the importance of Scottish migrants to the English game, and the interdependent push-pull factors which facilitated this movement, but Nick Aplin's recent work on the prominence of middle-class Scottish migrants to association football's development in late nineteenth-century Singapore indicates that historians are potentially missing a great deal more here.¹¹ (This is ironic, as many academics involved in Scottish football's historiography are either emigrants from Scotland, or migrants to Scotland.)

Even in otherwise strong chapters in edited volumes which examine Scottish football, there is a great deal written about the uniqueness of Scottish football, and what it *means*, rather than any attempt being made at digging deeper than these assumed truisms.¹² The historiography, especially as regards the grassroots game, and especially outwith the west and centre of Scotland, is still piecemeal, and 'common sense' clichés about the Scottish association game's early history should not necessarily be taken at face value. One

comprehensive narrative cannot exist. What, then, has been accomplished within Scottish football's historiography, and what are some possible ways forward?

These questions are particularly relevant in an era when historians not only disseminate content digitally, but also perform electronic research via online archives. In theory, this puts knowledge regarding the history of Scottish football at the fingertips of anyone in the world. The list of digitised Scottish newspapers is by no means comprehensive, and is skewed towards major urban titles; the *Scotsman*, the *Glasgow Herald*, the *Evening Times*, and the Aberdeen and Dundee papers (up to a point) inevitably get far better treatment, while Galashiels, Stornoway and other Scottish towns must settle for having their papers read on microfilm. Nevertheless, these digital archives permit Boolean searches, and allow far more data to be collected than was previously possible. Inevitably, this will permit theories to be tested to a far greater degree, and will lead to further clues as to where to look next. This is before the likes of family history websites, with their potentially vital biographical data, are even utilised. Twenty years from now, the historiography of Scottish football no doubt look very different.

First-wave popular narratives: the origin myths (1885-1939)

Previous to the 1970s, the only academic to touch the history of Scottish football was the American antiquarian Francis Peabody Magoun, whose work in the 1920s and 1930s discussed the pre-1871 history of 'football' (broadly defined) in the British Isles. Much of his research included Hogmanay and Fastern's E'en traditions in Scotland.¹³ Magoun's work was based on a broad swath of primary sources in medieval and early modern Scotland; and, for years, formed the bedrock of our understanding of Scottish 'folk football'.

The very first histories of the association game, however, were written by the players and officials of Scotland's major clubs themselves, and were crucial in solidifying the mythology of their own clubs as being integral to the institutionalisation of the no-hands code in Scotland. The first of these histories came within the newspapers from the late-1880s onwards. By 1890, the same year the Scottish Football League (SFL) was formed, *North British Daily Mail* journalist David Drummond Bone released *Scottish Football Reminiscences and Sketches*, arguably the first full-length volume detailing the history and characters of the

nascent association game in Scotland.¹⁴ It is more of an episodic account than a narrative one; it details certain players, situations and matches, and fictionalises accounts of some players by changing their names, and those of their clubs.

The Rev. W.W. Beveridge, himself capped for Scotland while a footballer at Glasgow University, opined in a chapter for N.L. 'Pa' Jackson's *Association Football* in 1900 that: 'The early history of the Association game north of the Tweed is largely the history of the renowned Queen's Park club'.¹⁵ To historians, it is perhaps easy to confuse the history of 'the Spiders' with that of early Scottish association football, simply because, as Scotland's alleged 'first club', Queen's Park were also amongst the first to tell their own 'story' with a considerable body of writing. A series of articles in the *Athletic News* in 1916, titled 'Stray Leaves: Origins of Queen's Park FC', and written by JAH Catton (under the pseudonym of 'Tityrus') chronicled the early years of Queen's Park, and their self-appointed role as Scottish football's primary ambassadors and tastemakers, all intrinsically linked to their staunch amateurism and upper middle-class identity.¹⁶

But Richard Robinson, one of the first athletic editors of the *Evening News* and later the initiator of the *Scottish Athletic Journal*, was responsible for a more substantive history of Queen's Park written four years later.¹⁷ This was not the first club history book written on Scottish football; but, like Bone's book, it nevertheless was designed as a starting-off point for introducing the early years of the Scottish game, very much through the eyes of middle-class representatives. The Irish-born Robinson's book was researched during 1916 and 1917; and, as Andy Mitchell states, was the only history of QP to be written using evidence from the club's now-destroyed original minutes. In addition, the book serves as one of the most in-depth documents of pre-First World War Scottish football written by a member of the press. Nevertheless, the book contains several factual inaccuracies, and continued Catton's tradition of rarefying club members' social backgrounds and university connections, often to the detriment of the wider context of Scottish football in which QP existed.¹⁸ Beveridge, Catton and Robinson, as well as Bone, made it appear as if football was a game gifted to the Scottish people by the middle class.

These issues of football's 'ownership', however, were not necessarily unique to Queen's Park. Rangers' and Celtic's first histories provided far more linear and less in-depth accounts of the football clubs, and were both written by club insiders: Rangers' by John Allan and Celtic's by player and first manager Willie Maley.¹⁹ Both books, accordingly, were crucial in solidifying the marketing appeal of both clubs to a very specific audience: Allan hints at Rangers' links with Freemasonry, while Maley places Celtic within the context of the international Irish diaspora. Allan stated that Rangers was founded in 1873, but Murray's research showed that this was inaccurate; the club's first formation (if not meeting of its officers) was in 1872.²⁰ Allen's and Maley's books, furthermore, are based on a combination of records and authors' memories, but the method of research is not discussed. These were books meant for popular consumption, not for academic historians to pore over their finer points. As such, they have a different purpose than strict scholarly rigour.

Somewhat more substantive – and more obscure – are 1927's *The Old Vale and its Memories* and 1929's *Epilogue to The Old Vale and its Memories*, both edited by James Ferguson and James G. Temple. Together these two books served as some of the first documents of what could be termed 'oral history' within Scottish football's historiography. The works compiled the memories of players, officials and supporters of Vale of Leven FC, as well as residents living in the club's Alexandria base, and those employed within the local calico industry. Together, Vale of Leven and neighbouring Renton were amongst the early association game's elite, and provided Queen's Park with its most dogged opposition before the arrival of Celtic in 1887. And yet, these books are more nostalgic than they are critical; they hint at the ethno-religious backgrounds of players, and the differences in skills and pay within the local employment hierarchy, but do not deconstruct them to any great length. These differences were by no means small; they shaped the very fabric of football in this region of Dunbartonshire, whose football clubs were the first credible opposition faced by Queen's Park in the Scottish Cup competition, first initiated in 1872.²¹

Second-wave popular narratives: broadcasters and journalists (1965-2000)

The next group of publications which made a significant impact on Scottish football's historiography were several books released during the last third of the twentieth century. Together, these publications were amongst the most influential in setting the narrative

direction of popular histories of Scottish football, in terms of their discussions of the history of the Scottish game's institutions, the Scottish international football team, and the chronological progression of competition within Scottish football. As with the publications by Allan, Maley, Bone and Robinson, they tell greater tales of success rather than 'average'-ness: little is discussed of Scottish football outwith the 'top-flight' and elite clubs, and outside the central belt. Moreover, the pre-1914 period is not the main focus of these books, save for the works of the late Robert Crampsey.

The Mount Florida-born Crampsey was a reserve footballer for Queen's Park himself, but it was his later career as a broadcaster with the BBC and STV, and a columnist for the *Evening Times*, for which he was most well-known.²² Three of his books, *The Game for the Game's Sake: The History of Queen's Park Football Club*, *The Scottish Footballer* and *The First 100 Years: The Scottish Football League*, represent the best narrative histories of Scottish football in this particular genre. In *The Game for the Game's Sake*, two sections – 87 out of 402 pages – are dedicated to the pre-1914 history of the Hampden club.²³ But once again, it was not intended for an academic audience. The language is descriptive, and the prose is more suited to telling a story than it is analysis. There are no footnotes, and no discussion of how the research was accomplished. It is, in fact, likely that Crampsey's main source of pre-1920 information was Robinson himself. This was an official history, published by the club, and as such does little to alleviate one of the central problems of the historiography to date: that the 'story' of the early years of the association game in Scotland was told through the eyes of one of its most anomalous clubs.

The Game for the Game's Sake is a highly readable, accessible book, but *The Scottish Footballer* and *The First 100 Years* were more illuminating in a variety of ways, in part because Crampsey's work obviously included extensive primary-source research (though still without footnotes). 1978's *The Scottish Footballer* was a short history of the Scottish game – slightly less than half of its 74-page running length is devoted to the period before 1914 – and it fostered an arguably opposite stereotype within the historiography: that of the working-class footballer. The lack of methodological discussion within the book is frustrating for an academic researcher, but it is clear that Crampsey was working with club and newspaper sources when he sought to describe some of these early footballers, many

of whom played the game side-by-side with their employment in heavy industry, and in conjunction with a new era of better opportunities via professional sport. In Crampsey's mind, this was a crucial component in the formation of Scottish football's collective character, hence the history of a national game functioning as something of a biography of a typical 'Scottish footballer'.²⁴ Meanwhile, in *The First 100 Years*, league records and correspondence were also quoted extensively, as were newspapers. It was also the study of one of Scottish football's governing institutions; this puts the SFL at one better than the SFA. Even here, however, in this otherwise good account of the SFL's history, the pre-Great War period inevitably suffers, and is discussed in solely the first sixth of the book, and to a certain extent in the 'Historical Data and Results' and 'Glossary' at the back.²⁵ For a popular account of Scottish football's history, the pre-1914 period understandably might not have made for the most audience-friendly subject matter. It, too, was an official publication of the SFL. Even when Scottish football's grassroots had its history written – in the form of David McGlone's and Bill McLure's centenary book on the history of 'junior' (i.e. a form of semi-professional) football in 1987, it was still one sanctioned by the Scottish Junior Football Association (SJFA).²⁶

In many respects, as with the first-wave popular narratives, the second wave also represents the triumph of the official word, something that later historiography continues to grapple with. This is shown in other second-wave popular narratives as well. John Rafferty's *One Hundred Years of Scottish Football* was published in 1973 to mark the centenary of the Scottish Football Association (SFA).²⁷ The book was arranged chronologically and thematically, and focused mostly on elite Scottish football's major club and international episodes. Kevin McCarra's more slickly-designed *Scottish Football: A Pictorial History – From 1867 to the Present Day* was a collaboration between McCarra and Glasgow's Third Eye Centre, and provided many memorable images, pieces of art, and copies of documents in its pages, a decent amount of which (though not most) examined the pre-1914 era.²⁸ It, too, however, was fairly chronological; and, together with Rafferty's book, and McCarra's and Hugh Keevins's volume to celebrate the history of Scottish Cup, did little to penetrate deeper beyond the surface of these competitions.²⁹ 1990's *The Only Game: The Scots and World Football*, by Roddy Forsyth (which itself features a lot of pictures), is only slightly deeper in its examinations of the early association game's social context, and even here this

does not amount to more than a few pages. One gets little feel for the politics or bureaucracy of Scottish football, or for the social context, bar a few references – ironically enough, usually when discussing the association game’s origins. Forsyth’s author’s note is especially telling: ‘This is not a history of Scottish football. It is an appreciation’.³⁰ These books are about the *game*; and, as they were often written by journalists for a popular audience, it is perhaps unfair to burden them with expectations of being social histories.

However, some books intended for the popular market *did* go some way towards accomplishing this goal, and provided possible ways forward for scholarly historians. John Hutchinson’s *The Football Industry: The Early Years of the Professional Game*, from 1982, examined the pre-World War I years of British football via photographs, newspaper clippings, and other visual media.³¹ But many of Hutchinson’s examples were based around Edinburgh and Glasgow. While Crampsey and the other journalists might have mentioned archival records, and newspapers like *Scottish Referee* in passing, Hutchinson actively sought to include them into his somewhat less narrative account of the association game’s early professionalism, one which discussed – amongst other subjects, work, migration, and early athletic training. Hutchinson’s introduction situated the game in its social context, while his following chapters went on to thematically discuss – through imagery – the coming of professionalism, including early football supporters, grounds and administrators.³² As far as Scottish football’s scholarly history was concerned, *these* were more relevant possible starting points for scholarly discussion than the established ‘story’ of Scottish football.

Some of the wide body of club histories, furthermore, have not ignored the social context. One of the best books to focus on the clubs of ‘the Old Firm’ (see below) is 1986’s *The Glory and the Dream: The History of Celtic FC, 1887-1986*, by Tom Campbell and Pat Woods, which situated the formation of Glasgow’s Celtic within the context of Irish migration to Scotland and emerging socialist politics during the period.³³ In a similar vein, the first two volumes of Alan Lugton’s history of Edinburgh’s Hibernian similarly examined the development of one of Scotland’s premier football clubs in the context of migrant identity.³⁴ Histories from Scotland’s coal mining regions, perhaps unsurprisingly, linked football to wider dynamics of work. This included columnist Ron Ferguson’s 1995 account of his hometown club, Cowdenbeath, which discussed the importance of miners in bringing association football to

the Fife town during the 1870s.³⁵ The game, Ferguson stated, was brought from Ayrshire, and the county featured two significant additions to the popular canon: Duncan Carmichael's and David Ross's official histories of Ayr United and Kilmarnock, respectively. Both brought order to the organised chaos of early association football in both towns, and situated the game in the sometimes contradictory contexts of schoolboy cricket, heavy industry and available parkland and ground space.³⁶ They reminded readers that the association game cannot be understood solely through examining Glasgow football, and that an assumed 'diffusion' of the game via metropolitan clubs towards the countryside was not as one-way as 'common sense' would dictate it to be.

First-wave academic: the economic historians and British sports historiography (1980-2000)

The historiography of Scottish sport as a whole benefitted from the work of several scholars during the first major turn towards sports history in the UK becoming viewed as a sub-discipline in its own right. The year 1975 saw the first publication of James Walvin's *The People's Game*, the first English-language scholarly book written on the history of association football.³⁷ This was a highly ambitious work, aimed at both academic and popular audiences, which examined (without footnotes, it might be added) the history of the game in the UK and far beyond. For subject matter with very little precedence, beyond the 'Thompsonian' tradition of Marxist histories of the working class, Walvin's volume has been remarkably influential. The other text of this ilk was Richard Holt's 1989 classic *Sport and the British*, which aimed to examine the totality of modern sporting culture in the UK; and, like Walvin's book, did so through examining developments well beyond London, including in Scotland and the UK's other constituent nations.³⁸ But it would be two economic historians, Wray Vamplew and Neil Tranter, who would perform a series of case studies into pre-1914 Scottish sport that would fundamentally transform the way that it was examined, and would form the bedrock of Vamplew's and Tranter's classic monographs: 1988's *Pay up and play the game: professional sport in Britain, 1875-1914* and 1998's *Sport, economy and society in Britain, 1750-1914*, respectively.³⁹ Neither would be considered strictly a 'historian of football', but both nevertheless initiated the first scholarly phase in the historiography of the Scottish game.

Vamplew, a Yorkshire-born migrant to Australia who spent time in Scotland, produced one of the first serious monographs on the history of British sport in 1976's *The Turf: A social and economic history of horse-racing*, and is additionally considered a pioneer of Australian sports historiography.⁴⁰ From 1980 onwards, Vamplew wrote an article in the *Journal of Sport History* (now *Sport in History*) which utilised quantitative research in determining the causes of spectator violence at sporting events during the period 1870-1914 in the UK.⁴¹ This article examined occurrences throughout the United Kingdom, but nevertheless discussed the April 1909 'Old Firm' riot at the Scottish Cup final at Hampden Park, along with contemporary, late nineteenth-century discourses on crowd violence within Scottish football.⁴² Even more significant was an article in the *Economic History Review* which examined the finances and shareholder composition of the SFA's major pre-1914 clubs, in a period where many of these clubs were transitioning to limited liability companies. Vamplew's research showed that, while SFL member clubs may have monopolised elite talent within Scottish football during the period, they were 'not a profit-maximising cartel', and struggled mightily with finances.⁴³ Primary sources included both SFA financial records and registers from the Scottish Record Office and Registrar of Companies.

Tranter utilised a slightly different approach. His research critically examined the social and economic composition of sport in nineteenth-century central Scotland, mostly in Stirlingshire and Clackmannanshire. For the most part, this was not football-only research: through meticulous research in local newspapers and census enumerators' books – to make up for deficiencies in archival material which explicitly discussed sportspeople and their social backgrounds – Tranter was able to reconstruct an approximate picture of the socio-economic context of regional sport, inclusive of gender, property and law enforcement.⁴⁴ His work went on to inform the wider historiography on the dynamics of leisure in nineteenth-century Scotland, particularly in the context of industrialisation.⁴⁵ Tranter's work showed 'football' in central Scotland, meanwhile, to be a known, if ephemeral, presence throughout the century in a variety of local holiday traditions. After 1870, the association game outpaced rugby's regional popularity by a considerable degree; nevertheless, due to the easy seizure of football grounds by the authorities and industrial concerns, local clubs typically had a short shelf life. Aside from building a solid foundation for other scholars to follow, in two of his pieces Tranter furthermore hinted at future directions they may have

wished to pursue. The first was his four-page 1993 essay for *IJHS* which examined the papers of Edinburgh lawyer and future (and controversial) town councillor John Hope, who in the 1820s and 1830s initiated 'The Football Club' with his colleagues.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, Tranter's 1995 article in *IJHS* analysed the riot at Cappielow Park, Greenock in 1899 at the semi-final of the Renfrewshire Cup semi-final between home club Greenock Morton and arch-enemies Port Glasgow Athletic, and utilised newspapers and police and municipal records to uncover the subtleties of crowd composition and violence in an area of heavy industry and high migration.⁴⁷

There were other important social- and economic-history based works published at this time. Roy Hay's 1981 piece for the edited collection *Sport: Money, Morality and the Media* took a long, critical view of Scottish football and the loaded question of social control; it was not just focused on the pre-1914 period.⁴⁸ Peter Bilsborough's 1983 MLitt thesis at the University of Stirling, on the other hand, examined the development of sport in Glasgow during the period 1850-1914, and included a section on the consolidation of the association game in the city, and how public accommodation on parks helped to foster participation in the years after 1870.⁴⁹ Bilsborough's research led to the 1984 publication of an article in *Momentum* which analysed the commercialisation of sport in Glasgow from 1870-1914; this article examined football and the rise of the 'Old Firm', how Rangers and Celtic came to dominate Glasgow football by 1900, and then sought to corner the cycling market for summer meets at their new grounds.⁵⁰ One of the most important quantitative studies on early Scottish football, however, was performed by Mason, as a means of comparing the Scottish game with that of England. In *Association Football and English Society*, Mason researched the occupations of 249 spectators who were casualties at the 1902 Ibrox disaster – half the listed casualties.⁵¹ Almost two decades later, his work would be built upon by Robert Shiels, who would integrate further research from the General Register Office for the purposes of giving a more in-depth account of what actually occurred at Ibrox on 5 April of that year, during the Scotland-England international. Shiels's research included looking into the causes of death for the 25 who died, and the nature of injuries of other casualties.⁵² Together, Mason and Shiels have helped to provide as complete a picture as possible as to what the Ibrox disaster entailed, and who its victims were.

'Classical' Old Firm: a 'Scottish' paradigm shift (1984-2000)

Vamplew's and (especially) Tranter's works acknowledged the 'Scottish' context of their case studies. Yet parallel to these works a very different path for the academic study of Scottish football was being created, one that looked beyond just the numbers; and, if the academic market is at the time of writing saturated with studies of the 'Old Firm', in 1984 it was a topic that had been surprisingly left untouched. Murray, a Scottish-born historian of the French Revolution based, like Vamplew, in Australia, might have been an unlikely candidate to write the first academic history of the 'Old Firm' rivalry, and his work can certainly be viewed as part of the 'first-wave academic'. Murray, however, unwittingly ushered in a paradigm shift within Scottish sports historiography. Whatever the merits of its critics, Murray's *The Old Firm: Sectarianism, Sport and Society in Scotland*, was a landmark book in British sports history in that it remains one of the few academic monographs to thoroughly examine the history of an intra-city club rivalry in British sport.⁵³ By contrast, Jim Wilkie's 1984 popular account of the Dundee derby, *Across the Great Divide*, was far more narrative, and did less to explore the social context of Dundee football, despite its football clubs being formed within a similar milieu of ethno-religious discrimination.⁵⁴ Murray would later go on to write a second and a third book on the Old Firm, though neither would come close to examining the pre-1914 in as great detail as his first book.⁵⁵ *The Old Firm* was also the first publication on Scottish football to examine the role of the press in creating competing, often prejudicial narratives within Scottish football, and existed parallel to Bilsborough in its attempts to understand the economic rise of the 'Old Firm'.

By sheer virtue of it being the first serious book on the subject, *The Old Firm* was bound to be controversial no matter its contents. Gerry Finn's first critique of Murray appeared in the *IJHS* in 1991, and a later one in an edited collection in 1999; part of a back-and-forth between Finn and Murray which lasted the better part of a decade.⁵⁶ Finn's background was also not immediately in the scholarly study of sport: he was an educational social scientist, one who had performed research on ethno-religious bigotry within Scottish society. Finn believed that Murray was actually or implicitly blaming Irish Catholic migrants to Scotland for introducing sectarianism into Scottish football. Aside from this, one of Finn's other primary charges was that Murray over-egged his study of the history of Celtic's origins as a club formed out of the Roman Catholic Church of Glasgow's East End. Finn, in turn, offered a

reinterpretation of some of Murray's evidence; and, at its best, his work offered evidence on the origins of Rangers and Hibernian, and warnings to future historians about the need for sensitivity in underestimating the institutional discrimination which existed against the Irish in Scotland.

Another of Finn's contributions involved a piece in Grant Jarvie and Graham Walker's *Scottish Sport in the Making of a Nation* from 1994: in it, one of Finn's case studies on ethno-religious bigotry featured John Hope from Tranter's 'The Football Club', only fast-forwarded to 1873, when Hope initiated the football club of the 3rd Edinburgh Rifle Volunteers as a means of promoting teetotalism and anti-Catholicism. Even after their reconstitution as St. Bernard's FC, the club's members were complicit in an Edinburgh FA which discriminated heavily against Hibernian, the first footballing representatives from Scotland's Irish Catholic community.⁵⁷ Finn's work was hardly systematic, but it featured all-too-rare examples of the early years of Edinburgh football being critically examined within the historiography.

Apart from Murray and Finn, two other academics have written pieces which tangentially – rather than directly – address the pre-1914 years of the 'Old Firm'. Joseph Bradley's *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland* was released in 1995. Bradley used a survey amongst Scottish football supporters, church goers, and friendly organisations based within Scotland's Protestant and Catholic communities as a means of interrogating then-contemporary popular-cultural discourses on the relationship between football and ethno-religious bigotry.⁵⁸ His work had a historical base which was utilised in his book, and in an accompanying article that same year in *IJHS*. Nevertheless, Bradley's historical base was often his weakest link: he relied upon secondary sources to discuss the early years of Celtic and the treatment of the Irish who arrived in Scotland.⁵⁹ Similarly, Walker, in a chapter on Rangers in his 1990 edited collection on Protestant identity in modern Scotland, only discussed the pre-1914 history of the Ibrox club in brief.⁶⁰ The work of both Bradley and Walker here can largely be seen in the context of later sympathetic edited collections put together on Celtic and Rangers by both men, respectively.⁶¹

The 'old school' revisionists: back to the future (2000-present)

The 'Old Firm' debate, whatever its potential pitfalls in repeatedly going over familiar ground, has nevertheless continued to influence the post-millennium historiography of the early Scottish association football. Nevertheless, the approaches utilised by historians after 2000, while incorporating the lessons learned from 'Old Firm' debate, featured several of the characters and approaches from the 'first-wave academic' group of historians, along with a new cohort of scholars who researched their doctorates during the 'noughties'. This group approached new challenges in terms of addressing the gaps in the historiography of Scottish football, along with providing critiques of the available source material, and attempting to understand the social conditions of Scottish sport: both within the localities themselves, and within the broader context of the UK and its neighbours. The 'national identity' context had been established; the local, regional and international contexts were still awaiting examination. Inevitably, this meant having to move beyond, and even subverting, established official narratives of the Scottish game, and a media discourse which utilised Scottish football's history solely through the prism of solving sectarianism.⁶²

Vamplew and Joyce Kay examined the history of philanthropy in British football, and the reasoning behind clubs', associations', and recipients' participation in charity tournaments.⁶³ The link between Scottish football and charity is largely assumed, especially given Celtic's foundations as a charity for Catholic youth. But Vamplew's and Kay's research had a slightly different focus, and included case studies of the Glasgow Charity Cup, whose minutes were kept at the Scottish Football Museum at Hampden Park. Vamplew's 2008 article in *Recordé: Revista de História do Esporte* sought to give the history of the competition – UK football's most prominent charity football tournament, as well as a major date on the Victorian and Edwardian Scottish footballing calendar – lasting from 1876 to 1966 – and to examine its beneficiaries in the context of a changing society. A considerable portion of Vamplew's piece concerned the pre-World War I years.⁶⁴ Kay's 2009 piece for *Sport in History*, meanwhile, critically examined the reliability of the Glasgow Charity Cup Committee's archive, in light of fragmentary, incomplete SFA records and critical press accounts from the 1877-78 Glasgow Charity Cup cycle which showed that the archive was not telling the full truth on the amount of fraud and discord which may have been taking place in association with the competition.⁶⁵ Kay's research was not a celebration of postmodernism; but, in the broader sports history canon, it nevertheless followed the likes

of Douglas Booth in interrogating the limitations of archives relating to sports history.⁶⁶ This body of work, by its very nature, cast a critical eye on football and charity, existing as they did side-by-side with the use of sport as a 'rational recreation' vehicle within the self-improvement schemes of west of Scotland employers, and before the existence of anything resembling a welfare state.⁶⁷

Hutchinson, meanwhile, followed up from Tranter's (more than Finn's) earlier work on John Hope with an article on the 'football'-playing circle of business professionals and young men which surrounded Hope in Edinburgh during the mid- to late-nineteenth century, one which played a kind of no-hands game based on his 'Rules for Football'.⁶⁸ Hutchinson, while underplaying Hope's anti-Catholicism in the context of his educational and philanthropic mission, is far more successful (by implication) in placing his work in the context of another broad debate in British sports history during the 2000s: that on the pre-1870 codes of football in the United Kingdom, as detailed by Harvey in the previous article, and as also examined by Hay, Peter Swain, and Gavin Kitching in a series of publications on the subject.⁶⁹ John Robertson's book on Scotland's most famous 'folk football' tradition, the Kirkwall Ba', was released in 2005, while John Burnett similarly made football a part of his 2000 examination of folk sport in Scotland during the pre-1860 period.⁷⁰ Hutchinson's focus, then, was part of a wider turn within the British and Scottish historiographies. Most of this debate is beyond the immediate remit of this article, but is nevertheless important towards understanding that association football is not an island unto itself, and that it has a relationship with 'football' games and traditions which no longer exist. The influence of Scots on the early English association game begs the question of what other traditions might have existed within Scotland during the 'pre-codification' era, and how these were related to broader leisure trends throughout nineteenth-century British society.

The research of Jessica Macbeth, meanwhile, added long-overdue work on the history of women's football in Scotland. Macbeth's research was based on her 2004 University of Stirling doctoral thesis, 'Women's Football in Scotland: An Interpretive Analysis'.⁷¹ While not a history thesis, her work nevertheless contained a significant historical element which built upon the Scottish-centred research of writer and documentarian Margot McCuaig, and connected with the British-wide work on the history of women's football by Jean Williams,

whose 2003 masterwork *A Game for Rough Girls? A History of Women's Football in Britain* contained several references to the Scottish game.⁷² While most of Macbeth's thesis concerned post-1971 developments (this being the year that the SFA, under pressure from UEFA, was forced to create the Scottish Women's Football Association), one chapter of her thesis and a subsequent published article on the topic nevertheless focus to a significant extent on hostile official treatment and press discourses towards women's football during the pre-1914 era, despite its considerable folk tradition.⁷³ Macbeth's article on this topic nevertheless remains the only piece which solely focuses on Victorian and Edwardian women's football in Scotland. While in 2013 BBC Alba produced a television documentary on the pioneers of women's football in Scotland, there is nevertheless still a chasm in the scholarly historiography.⁷⁴ This is despite the publication of James Lee's recent 2008 volume *The Lady Footballers: Struggling to Play in Victorian Britain*, which makes reference to the British Ladies' Football Club's controversial mid-1890s trips to Scotland.⁷⁵ My research shows that women were often present as spectators, which would certainly dovetail with recent research by Lewis in examining women spectators in Victorian and Edwardian Lancashire football.⁷⁶ Gender is still a woefully under-examined topic within the historiography.

My initial research was performed during the period 2005-2009. It owed a certain amount to the 'Classical "Old Firm"', especially in their discussions of the unique social contexts in which Scottish association football was forged. My own research sought to move beyond their work, however; and, if not with the same quantitative depth as Vamplew and Tranter, examined the grassroots across a broad swath of the early years of consolidated west of Scotland football; not just the SFA's and SFL's major clubs, but also 'junior' (a uniquely Scottish term for 'semi-professional') and youth clubs. This included case studies of football in Dunbartonshire, Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, along with Glasgow, which – like Murray, Finn, Bradley and Walker, examined football and migration – but did so in the broader context of industrial patronage, 'rational recreation' and regional identity. It did so mostly through newspaper research, primarily in local weekly papers, rather than city dailies, with some additional archival research within the Scottish Football Museum. I furthermore was interested in football's place within broader Scottish popular culture, and thus my work also included examinations of football's often gendered relationship with music hall, public

houses and tourism, as well as an examination of the Scottish sporting press, particularly with regard to Glasgow-based weekly sporting newspapers, which had their high water mark from the mid-1880s to 1900.⁷⁷ Additionally, as part of a research project to study the culture and politics of nineteenth-century sport in the Firth of Clyde, a paper I gave in 2012 on football in Rothesay, Bute during the period 1900-1914 was included in a Leisure Studies Association (LSA) volume. This piece examined community football in the context of tourism, municipal politics, and discourses on 'Scottish' national identity.⁷⁸

The 'new school': 'new media' and social engagement (2005-present)

The work of these scholars exists in parallel to the explosion of social media as a tool for disseminating both scholarly and community-based historical research to a broader audience than was formerly possible. Even if this new development has not radically altered the need for a rigorous methodology when doing historical research, it has, at the very least, ensured that academics of this generation are able to have an unmediated public conversation about their work not only with community historians, but with supporters and journalists.

Even going back to 1990, beyond just club historians, community historians had an effect on the way that Scottish football's scholarly history was being studied. Three publications by John Weir in particular deserve special mention: his histories of Cowllairs and Vale of Leven Football Clubs, and (especially) his 1991 edited collection *Drink, Religion and Scottish Football: 1873-1900*, all of which, while lacking in theoretical grounding, nevertheless employed empirical research in helping to build a picture of late-nineteenth-century Scottish football that scholars often avoided.⁷⁹ *Drink, Religion and Scottish Football* was singled out by Tony Collins and Vamplew in their 2002 monograph *Mud, Sweat and Beers: A Cultural History of Sport and Alcohol* as being one of the only publications to examine the historic links between sport and alcohol, a relationship left unexamined by scholarly historians, perhaps because it appeared 'self-evident'.⁸⁰

Dialogue with community historians of Scottish football allows academics possible two-way traffic with the contemporary concerns of supporters, especially as regards the heritage of their clubs vis-a-vis the modern condition of Scottish football. In my book, I praised the

Scottish League Website of webmaster (and Kilmarnock FC historian) David Ross as being an example of a forum which allows a democratic exchange on topics of Scottish football, whilst featuring a great deal of research from club historians.⁸¹ In the past five years, however, other sites have proliferated which encourage a form of DIY club heritage. This includes two sites for Celtic supporters: the Celtic Wiki, an online encyclopaedia of knowledge on the Parkhead club, and the Celtic Graves Society, which features online message boards which encourage their members to catalogue the grave sites of former Celtic players and officials.⁸² Rangers' supporters, meanwhile, have set up the website The Gallant Pioneers, whose name is based on *Daily Record* journalist Gary Ralston's popular 2009 book, which chronicled the first members and officials of the Rangers club upon its 1872 formation. The website features innovations such as a 'Founders Trail' through Glasgow for supporters to retrace the steps of the 1872-73 members of the club.⁸³

The history/public history/heritage debate, then, exists here as well, as it has on other fields of play in the history of sport.⁸⁴ There is, of course, a danger that all of this slides into mere nostalgia and celebration, rather than a critical examination of the social, cultural, economic and political forces which moulded these clubs. Inevitably, this may lead to criticism of a perceived lack of quality control (i.e. peer review) that occurs when any academic author attempts to extend beyond their usual audience in scholarly journals. New media, as it has in other sectors of the economy, presents a challenge to the old certainties of academic publication, regarding both the prestige of journals, and the sanctity of the review process. Undoubtedly, however, academia is already reaping the benefits of this informal relationship with the wider world. The Scottish Sport History website of Mitchell, a UEFA media officer, contains a variety of digitised antiquarian books on Scottish football. Some of these include Bone's *Scottish Football Reminiscences and Sketches*, a chapter from Magoun's *The History of Football from the Beginnings to 1871*, a variety of early club histories, and other contemporary accounts of Glasgow and Scottish football.⁸⁵ Mitchell's own work includes a self-published 2012 book which examines the lives of the first Scottish international team of 1872 (i.e. members of Queen's Park); and, as discussed earlier, also includes a variety of blog posts.⁸⁶

Mitchell's approach towards disseminating content works for a different audience than a strictly academic one, but it nevertheless exemplifies some of the avenues that historians can now take to ensure that their work reaches the broader church. Through other avenues such as Academia.edu, academics in sports history should already be beginning to bridge that gap, and moving towards an 'open access'-type model that allows for our own work to be scrutinised by the public at large.⁸⁷ Should the major academic publishing cartels be compelled to interact with the world of new media, as possibly even join it, beyond the provision of the expensive open-access models currently being put in place? The early years of Scottish association football are shrouded in mystery to many outwith the academic community; it is time that historians learned to engage with them, but the realities of having to negotiate an out-dated system of publishing – still controlled by the multinational publishing houses – leave the ball largely in our court with regard to developing a new way of transmitting research.

Conclusion

The era of the internet and social media has finally arrived with regard to scholarly accounts of contemporary football. John Flint and John Kelly's recent edited collection *Bigotry, Football and Scotland* helps to bring up to date contemporary discourses on football in Scotland: an era where Rangers now ply their trade in a lower league, and a time when Scotland actively debates its future role in the Union. But, while this book is a highly readable, informative, and somewhat irreverent collection, that has utilised source material from Web 2.0 along with traditional research, it too does not examine the pre-1914 world of Scottish football, irrespective of Davies's excellent piece on the 1920s and 1930s.⁸⁸

It is perhaps unreasonable to ask non-historians to examine this period for us; the Victorian and Edwardian eras, of course, are not times when participants on the pitch or in the stands can be interviewed by social scientists to ascertain their views on the game. But the deficit nevertheless remains that, for a scholarly and popular volume of considerable size, the geographic spread and subject matter on the pre-1914 historiography of the game in Scotland remains fairly narrow. Burnett, in a 2006 edited collection examining the popular cultural traditions of Scots, regretted that sectarianism and national identity should come to dominate the scholarly discourse on football. 'Supporters', he stated, 'have views on other

things, such as home life, the weather, shopping, and other supporters'.⁸⁹ While one cannot and should not dismiss contemporary concerns regarding bigotry, it is still necessary for historians to move beyond simple labels of green and blue when looking for clues as to the social, cultural, economic and political history of Scottish football.

The rough classification of Scottish football's previous historiography provided in this article gives us clues as to where historians might look next. The High Street market has certainly been well-covered with material; but unfortunately, this is material that very much reflects the official word and master narrative of Scottish football, a world which has barely begun to let women in, and has not quite allowed alternative views of 'national' identity than what is typically displayed at Hampden. Pre-1914 Scottish football very much needs more quantitative analyses; but furthermore, historians must also utilise some qualitative judgment as to where to look to next: be it in terms of location, of popular-cultural relationships, or in terms of economy. For certain, historians need an assessment of the potential source material that is being left unused in archives and newspapers, and what is now available digitally. It is furthermore worth asking ourselves: is there a community of popular historians and football supporters out there who desire a different route for Scottish football's historiography? And, do we want to join them?

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NOTES

¹ The official pamphlet for the exhibition is: McBrearty, *More than a game*.

² Mason, *Association Football*.

³ Johnes, *Soccer and Society*; Russell, *Football and the English*.

⁴ Taylor, *Association Game*; Walvin, *People's Game*.

⁵ Bairner, 'Memory and the Literary Imagination'; Gutzke, 'Tennent's Lager'; Davies, "'They sing that song'"; Alexander, *McCrae's Battalion*.

⁶ Harvey, 'Emergence of football'.

⁷ McDowell, 'Football in the west of Scotland'.

⁸ Idem., *Association Football in Scotland*; Idem., 'Football, migration and industrial patronage'; Idem., "'Enterprise with vengeance'"; Idem., "'Social physical exercise'".

⁹ Hay, Review of *Association Football in Scotland*.

¹⁰ Murray, Review of *Association Football in Scotland*.

¹¹ Lewis, 'The Genesis of Professional Football'; Tischler, *Footballers and Businessmen*; Aplin, 'Scottish example'.

¹² Bairner, 'Football'; Idem., 'Football and the Idea of Scotland'.

¹³ Magoun, *History of Football*, ch. VIII.

¹⁴ Bone, *Scottish Football Reminiscences and Sketches*. Additional introductory notes written on copy by Andy Mitchell, <http://www.scottishsportshistory.com/uploads/3/3/6/0/3360867/ddbone.pdf>, accessed 11 December 2013.

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- ¹⁵ Beveridge, 'Scottish Football: Its Early Days', 224-238.
- ¹⁶ Scottish Football Museum, ACC 9017/313, JAH Catton, 'History of Queen's Park', *Athletic News*.
- ¹⁷ Robinson, *Queen's Park*.
- ¹⁸ Mitchell, 'Football's founders from Fordyce'.
- ¹⁹ Allan, *Rangers*; Maley, *Celtic*.
- ²⁰ Murray, *Old Firm*, 7.
- ²¹ McDowell, "'Social physical exercise?'"
- ²² M. Vallance, 'Obituary: Bob Crampsey', *The Herald*, July 29, 2008; B. Wilson, 'Obituary: Bob Crampsey', *The Guardian*, August 12, 2008.
- ²³ Crampsey, *Game*, 2-86.
- ²⁴ Idem., *The Scottish Footballer*, 1-31.
- ²⁵ Idem., *First 100 Years*, 1-56,
- ²⁶ McGlone and McLure, *The Juniors*.
- ²⁷ Rafferty, *One Hundred Years*.
- ²⁸ McCarra, *Scottish Football*, 5-39.
- ²⁹ Keevins and McCarra, *100 Cups*.
- ³⁰ Forsyth, *The Only Game*, quote from i.
- ³¹ Hutchinson, *Football Industry*.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Campbell and Woods, *The Glory and the Dream*.
- ³⁴ Lugton, *The Making of Hibernian I, The Making of Hibernian II*.
- ³⁵ Ferguson, 'Black diamonds', 22.
- ³⁶ Carmichael, *Ayr United I*; Ross, *Killie*.
- ³⁷ Walvin, *People's Game*.
- ³⁸ Holt, *Sport and the British*.
- ³⁹ Vamplew, *Pay up*; Tranter, *Sport*.
- ⁴⁰ Vamplew, *The turf*; Collins, 'Sport as History'.
- ⁴¹ Vamplew, 'Sport Crowd Disorder in Britain'.
- ⁴² Ibid., 5-6.
- ⁴³ Idem., 'Economics of a Sports Industry'.
- ⁴⁴ Tranter, 'Chronology I', Idem., 'Chronology II', Idem., 'Social and Occupational Structure'.
- ⁴⁵ Idem., 'Industrial Revolution', Idem., 'Sport and economy'.
- ⁴⁶ Idem., 'The First Football Club?'
- ⁴⁷ Idem., 'Cappielow Riot'.
- ⁴⁸ Hay, 'Soccer and social control'.
- ⁴⁹ Bilsborough, 'Development', 96-105.
- ⁵⁰ Idem., 'Commercialisation'.
- ⁵¹ Mason, *Association Football*, 156.

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- ⁵² Shiels, 'Ibrox disaster'.
- ⁵³ Murray, *Old Firm*.
- ⁵⁴ Wilkie, *Across the Great Divide*.
- ⁵⁵ Murray, *Glasgow's Giants*; Idem., *Bhoys*.
- ⁵⁶ Finn, 'Racism I'; Idem., 'Racism II'; Idem. 'Scottish Myopia'; Murray, *Old Firm*, 18; Idem., *Bhoys*, 183.
- ⁵⁷ Finn, 'Faith', 92-99.
- ⁵⁸ Bradley, *Ethnic*.
- ⁵⁹ Idid., 9-15, 34-37; Bradley, 'Football in Scotland', 82-86.
- ⁶⁰ Walker, "'Glasgow Rangers'", 138-141.
- ⁶¹ Bradley (ed), *Celtic Minded*; Idem., *Celtic Minded 2*; Idem., *Celtic Minded 3*; Esplin and Walker (eds), *Rangers*; Idem., *It's Rangers for Me?*
- ⁶² In 2000, the most relevant collection reflecting this trend would have been Devine (ed), *Scotland's Shame?*
- ⁶³ Kay and Vamplew, 'Beyond altruism'.
- ⁶⁴ Vamplew, 'Glasgow Charity Cup'.
- ⁶⁵ Kay, 'Archive'.
- ⁶⁶ Booth, 'Refiguring the Archive'.
- ⁶⁷ McDowell, 'Social physical exercise?'; Idem., *Association Football in Scotland*, 99-198.
- ⁶⁸ Hutchinson, 'Nineteenth-century Edinburgh'.
- ⁶⁹ Harvey and Swain, 'Who really invented modern football'; Swain, 'Cultural Continuity', Kitching, 'Alnwick'; Hay, 'A tale of two footballs'; Harvey, *The First Hundred Years*.
- ⁷⁰ Robertson, *Kirkwall Ba'*, Burnett, *Riot*, 87-93.
- ⁷¹ Macbeth, 'Women's Football in Scotland'.
- ⁷² M. McCuaig, 'A Game of Two Sexes', *The Herald*, February 8, 1997; Williams, *A Game For Rough Girls?*
- ⁷³ Macbeth, 'Women's Football in Scotland', 94-112; Idem., 'Development'.
- ⁷⁴ *Honeyballers*; 'The Honeyballers: women who fought to play football', *BBC News*, 26 September 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-24176354>, accessed 21 December 2013.
- ⁷⁵ Lee, *The Lady Footballers*.
- ⁷⁶ McDowell, *Association Football in Scotland*, 263-65, 296-97; Lewis, 'Female Spectators'.
- ⁷⁷ McDowell, *Association Football in Scotland*; Idem. 'Football, migration and industrial patronage'; Idem., "'Enterprise with vengeance'"; Idem., "'Social physical exercise'".
- ⁷⁸ McDowell, 'Rothesay'.
- ⁷⁹ Weir, *Boys*; Idem., *Cowlairs*; Idem., *Drink*.
- ⁸⁰ Collins and Vamplew, *Mud, Sweat and Beers*, 2-3.
- ⁸¹ Scottish League Website, <http://www.scottishleague.net/>, accessed 21 December 2013. An excellent example of Ross's other written work is *Roar*, which is a statistical account of attendances of Scottish football matches during the time of the SFL.
- ⁸² The Celtic Wiki, <http://www.thecelticwiki.com/>, accessed 21 December 2013; *Celtic Graves Society*, <http://celticgraves.com/index/>, 21 December 2013.
- ⁸³ Ralston, *Gallant Pioneers*; *The Gallant Pioneers*, <http://www.thegallantpioneers.co.uk/>, <http://www.thegallantpioneers.co.uk/The-Founders-Trail-by-Foot.html>, 21 December 2013.

⁸⁴ For more on this tension, see Vamplew, 'Sports Museums and Public Sports History'.

⁸⁵ 'Scottish sporting anthology', Scottish Sport History, <http://www.scottishsporthistory.com/digitised-books-and-articles.html>, accessed 21 December 2013.

⁸⁶ Mitchell, *First Elevens*.

⁸⁷ Johnes, 'What's the Point?'

⁸⁸ Flint and Kelly (ed), *Bigotry*.

⁸⁹ Burnett, 'Sport', 237.