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Playing the Man: Sport and Imperialism 1900-1907

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Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

February 2014

I declare that the following thesis is my own work.

Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between sport, manliness and imperial identity in the years between 1900 and 1907. In the second half of the nineteenth century, driven by the public school ideology of muscular Christianity, participation in team sports, principally football and cricket, came to be viewed by social commentators as a central characteristic of the ideal English man. The ideology of muscular Christianity then spread throughout the rest of Britain and its Empire via schools and imperial institutions such as the army and civil service. By the end of the century the practice of sport was central to the conception of the manly imperial Briton. At the same time subjects of British rule began to participate in British sports in increasing numbers, leading to a public debate on their ability to embody imperial manliness.

In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries there was a rapid growth in the playing of international sport, fuelled by faster means of communication between the metropole and the colonies, the development of a global media and the exploitation of sport as a commercial enterprise. This thesis argues that imperial sport was developed by a group of sports administrators, journalists, colonial officials and businessmen to foster a feeling of imperialism in the public at large. The matches they organised provoked a complex debate on imperial manliness. Defeat to colonial teams stirred anxieties about racial degeneration in the mother country, while debate surrounding the selection and performance of players from non-white communities in the empires of both Britain and France revealed competing visions of who could represent their empires in the public arena of sport.

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Abbreviations

GAA Gaelic Athletic Association

MCC Marylebone Cricket Club

RFU Rugby Football Union

Acknowledgements

There are two things in life of which you can never have enough: good friends and wise counsel. I could not have completed this thesis without the assistance and advice of a great many people. Foremost amongst the wise is my supervisor, Dr. Hilary Sapire, who has been a constant source of advice throughout the writing process. I hope that I can now count her among my good friends. Someone who was already a good friend when I started writing, but who has also provided plenty of wisdom, is Dr. John Law, a good listener and a fine lunch companion.

Birkbeck College is, in my experience, a unique institution and many of its scholars have given me sound advice over the years. In particular Dr. Sean Brady and Dr. Sarah Howard were kind enough to read through drafts of the chapters that dealt with the history of Ireland and France respectively. I should also acknowledge the generosity of time shown to me by Prof. Bruce Murray at the outset of this project, and by my fellow authors of *Empire and Cricket*. I am grateful as well to Prof. David Gilbert, who first encouraged me to publish in the *London Journal*. I would also like to thank Prof. John Nauright, Dr. Chris Bolsmann and Dion Giorgiou for their companionship and listening skills at various conferences and seminars. Dr. Heather Mendick deserves special credit for reading through the first draft and giving me excellent feedback.

I have been fortunate to have travelled extensively while researching and writing this thesis and would like to thank the staff of libraries and institutions in London, Kent, Yorkshire, Dublin, Belfast, Paris, Roubaix, Stellenbosch and Colindale for their assistance. Above all I would like to commend the London Library for providing the ideal space for writing up.

Finally I thank my wife, Denize, and our children, James and Gregory. They have been patient beyond belief. Boys when I started this work my sons are now men. This thesis is dedicated to them.

— But do you know what a nation means? Says John Wyse.

— Yes, says Bloom

— What is it? Says John Wyse.

— A nation? Says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place.

— By God, then, says Ned, laughing, if that's so I'm a nation for I'm living in the same place for the past five years.

So of course everyone had a laugh at Bloom and says he, trying to muck out of it:

— Or living in many different places.¹

¹ James Joyce, *Ulysses* (London, 1997), pp. 496-7

Introduction: The Golden Age?

The popular image of sport in the Edwardian era is that of a golden age, 'a time of complacency, security and opulent pride for Britain and her splendid Empire.'² Such an image is one that could only be formed with the benefit of hindsight, nostalgia even, in which the catastrophic events of 1914-18 loom large. This view of the Edwardian period as one of calm security *avant le deluge* of World War 1 was debunked a long time ago; Edwardian Britain was in turmoil. Samuel Hynes, in *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, described how in society, politics, and culture, new ideas were in conflict with the ossified authority of the Victorian era.³ While the Empire was expanded across southern Africa, with Jingoists cheering each bitterly won campaign, anti-imperialists like J. A. Hobson thought British values corrupted by capitalist conspirators in London and Johannesburg.⁴ At home, the issues of women's suffrage and Irish home rule caused deep division between classes and political parties, in the streets of London and Dublin.⁵ Across the channel, 'Belle Epoque' France was also in the grip of social schism. Dreyfusards and Anti-Dreyfusards clashed, sometimes violently, over their differing conceptions of who had the right to be French.⁶ Clashes on the sports field were less violent and more ritualised than those of the politics of the street. Yet there was just as much ideology invested in an Irish fifteen taking on South Africa at rugby in 1906 as there had been in an Irish Republican battalion facing down the Royal Dublin

² David Frith, *The Golden Age of Cricket* (London, 1983), p. 12

³ Samuel Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (London, 1991), p. 6

⁴ John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain* (London, 2012), p. 152

⁵ Roger Hyam, 'The British Empire in the Edwardian era', in Judith Brown and William Roger Louis (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. IV: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1999), p. 47-8

⁶ Alice Conklin, Sarah Fishman and Robert Zaretsky, *France and its Empire* (Oxford, 2011), p. 105

Fusiliers on the veldt six years earlier. It is my contention that through the close analysis of a selection of sports tours by colonial teams to Europe from 1905 to 1907 one can use the performance, observation and reporting of international sport as means of analysing the interaction of imperial power, national identity, racial identity, and manliness in the British and French Empires during this period. Sportsmen were 'playing the man' on the imperial field, acting a role that was watched by spectators and read about by a global public in the imperial press. But playing the man can have a pejorative meaning. Often it was administrators and selectors who played the man in deciding who could represent imperial manliness and excluding those they felt did not fit the criteria.⁷

Sport in the Edwardian Era

Sport in the Edwardian era was at the core of British imperial culture. It was seen by colonial administrators as the ideal training for the civilising mission which was central to the ideology of the empire, which held that it was necessary for British men to set an example to the supposedly inferior, uncivilised peoples of colonised societies.⁸ The qualities that were supposed to make an ideal sportsman - physical courage, moral uprightness, stoicism in the face of adversity, and putting the interests of one's team before one's own - were identical to those qualities that were presented as the masculine ideal for the Briton overseas. This identification of sport with imperial sentiment did not occur by accident but developed as a result of the reorganization of English public schools during the nineteenth

⁷ In sporting terminology 'playing the man' is part of the expression, 'to play the man and not the ball', i.e. to foul an opponent on purpose rather than play in the spirit of the game.

⁸ Stephen Howe, 'Empire and ideology', in Sarah Stockwell (ed.) *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives* (Oxford, 2008), p. 166

century. The upper- and middle-class boys who were the product of the reformed public schools were educated to believe in the combination of moral solidity with the cult of athleticism propagated by Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes (among others) that has been labelled 'muscular Christianity.'⁹ By the end of the nineteenth century, 'games, especially cricket, were elevated to the status of a moral discipline.'¹⁰

Public schools were the key to the elevation of cricket and rugby to being the archetypal middle class games in England, whose 'specific function was to accommodate and unify the older, 'landed', patrician class and the rising bourgeois elements.'¹¹ The influence of the public school system on the development of Rugby Union and cricket was profound and has formed a large part of the historiography of both sports. J. A. Mangan pioneered the study of muscular Christianity in public schools and the way in which it contributed to the formation of a new kind of middle-class manliness in the late-nineteenth century. He described the transformation of curricula in English schools and its spread throughout the home nations in the nineteenth century. The Scots, Welsh and Irish soon followed in reforming or setting up private schools on the English model, meaning that by the end of the twentieth century cohorts of young boys throughout the British Isles were exiting school having been steeped in the same culture of muscular Christianity.¹²

⁹ Keith A. P. Sandiford, 'Chapter 1: England', in Brian Stoddart and Keith A. P. Sandiford (eds.), *The Imperial Game: Cricket, Culture and Society* (Manchester, 1998), pp. 9-33

¹⁰ J. A. Mangan, 'Prologue', J. A. Mangan (ed.) *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire and Society* (London, 1992), p. 2

¹¹ John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power, Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 38

¹² J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 1-9

These former schoolboys went on to found sports clubs to continue their playing careers in a process that was part of what John Tosh describes as the 'flight from domesticity.'¹³ The proliferation of sports clubs during this period added a particularly physical slant to the idea of manliness; an idea that maintained the moral basis of muscular Christianity but was decoupled from the traditional middle-class family home. In the mid-nineteenth century advocates of muscular Christianity, such as Thomas Arnold, took it for granted that the ideal of manliness was one rooted in the domestic sphere, with the father as the moral leader of the family unit. As the century wore on, however, men's activities on a Sunday increasingly shifted from church and chapel, which attracted men and women alike, to sporting activities of varying kinds that tended during this period to be reserved for men alone. Sport had become 'a military code, to be exercised among men.'¹⁴ Such a transformation on a domestic level was reflected also on an international level, where sportsmen became representatives of their region, their nation, or their colony. As the public interest widened in elite sport in the twentieth century this representation of manliness was projected via the mass media to a global audience.

While the late-nineteenth century saw a growing movement towards female emancipation, women's engagement in competitive sport was largely confined to tennis, with the overall balance of participation in sport between men and women

¹³ John Tosh, 'Chapter 8: The flight from domesticity', in *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (Yale, 1999), pp. 170-194

¹⁴ Tosh, *A Man's Place*, p. 189

being 'desperately uneven.'¹⁵ Sport, for the most part, was the preserve of middle-class women, with women's sport developing 'only in the more affluent suburbs of the larger cities.'¹⁶ Women's tennis flourished at the Wimbledon Championships, albeit in the shadow of the men's championships, but the sport was seen as 'tame' compared with the manly sports of rugby and cricket.¹⁷ Team sports for women were even more marginalised than individual activities such as tennis and cycling. There was a short-lived burst of organised women's team sports in the 1890s in England but it was not until after World War 1 that women's cricket began to gather momentum, and even later for rugby.¹⁸ Only women's hockey established itself as a credible team sport before the First World War but matches were restricted to club level.¹⁹ Team sports at a representational level were a masculine diversion, at home and in the colonies. Both Mangan and Tosh have outlined the way in which the new manliness was tied into an imperial ideology of the manly Briton overseas,²⁰ and further work has described how muscular Christianity was exported as an ideology throughout the empire via schools run on the model of the English public school.²¹

¹⁵ Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports* (London, 1994), p. 42 and pp. 54-55

¹⁶ Richard Holt, *Sport and the British* (Oxford, 1989), p. 130

¹⁷ Rob Lake, 'Social class, etiquette and behavioural restraint in British lawn tennis, 1870-1939', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 28:6 (2011), p. 882

¹⁸ André Odendaal, 'Neither cricketers nor ladies': Towards a history of women and cricket in South Africa, 1860s-2000', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 28:1 (2011), pp. 117-120

¹⁹ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 129

²⁰ J. A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism and Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Abingdon, 2000); Tosh, *A Man's Place* and 'Masculinities in an industrialising society: Britain, 1800-1914', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 44:2 (April 2005)

²¹ John Lambert, 'Munition factories . . . Turning out a constant supply of living material': White South African elite boys' schools and the First World War', *South African Historical Journal*, No. 51 (2004); Patrick MacDevitt, *May the Best Man Win* (Basingstoke, 2004); Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali in the Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, 1995); Brian Stoddart, 'Sport, cultural imperialism, and the colonial response in the British Empire', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 30:4; Paul Thompson, 'Schools, sports and Britishness: Young white Natal, 1902-1961', *South African History Journal*, No. 45 (2001)

Sport, however, appealed not just to the middle and upper classes. Association football, rugby football and cricket grew in popularity with working men throughout the nineteenth century. Association football escaped the control of the small group of middle class clubs that began the Football Association in 1863, a process completed by the establishment of the Football League in 1888. The rugby and cricket authorities, on the other hand, managed to reassert middle class dominance in the face of challenges to their authority from organised working-class men seeking payment to play.²² In rugby and cricket different means were used to maintain class control and class distinction within the sports. Their ruling bodies had always been from an overwhelmingly public school background, and their class strived to maintain its control over the sports both domestically and internationally.²³ In cricket there was a division between 'gentlemen' and 'players'. Gentlemen were amateurs who supposedly played the game for its own reward, although of course there were notorious examples of the amateur rules being subverted by means of the payment of expenses. The most famous cricketer of the age, perhaps of all time, W. G. Grace, was the most well known practitioner of such 'shamateurism.'²⁴ Players were professionals, usually working class, who in the Edwardian era were generally treated as servants of the cricket clubs for which they played, having to forgo the status enjoyed by gentlemen. Indeed Lord Hawke, the captain of the Yorkshire County team is said to have treated the professionals

²² James Walvin, 'Chapter 3: The rise of working class football', in James Walvin, *The People's Game* (Edinburgh, 1994), pp. 52-73; Matthew Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football* (Harlow, 2008), pp. 63-70

²³ Eric Dunning, *Barbarians, Gentleman and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football* (Oxford, 1979); Derek Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket* (London, 2003); Tony Collins, *A Social History of Rugby Union* (Abingdon, 2009); James Bradley, 'The MCC, society and empire: A portrait of cricket's ruling body, 1860-1914', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 7:1 (1990)

²⁴ Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, pp. 158-160

on his side in much the same manner as he would an employee on his country estate.²⁵

In rugby the class divide was less subtly, but just as rigidly, applied. The great split between Rugby Union and Rugby League that took place in 1893 resulted from the desire of the Rugby Football Union that players receive no payment whatsoever for playing the game, even as compensation for loss of earnings that resulted from having to miss work.²⁶ This led the predominantly working-class clubs of the industrial north of England to break away to form a professional league. The Union, based in London, continued to rule over the amateur game throughout the rest of the United Kingdom and the British Empire. Although payment to play was ostensibly the reason for the divide in the rugby world, Tony Collins has pointed out that the split in rugby was engineered to 'provide a means of imposing social distinction.'²⁷ The authorities of both sports ensured that middle-class values lay at the heart of the way that the games were played and administered. How much participants adhered to those values would often determine whether they were permitted to participate. Equally, the extent to which participants *looked like* they belonged to the world of the English middle classes would determine their acceptance or rejection by the authorities that ran the games.

The invention of Britishness, which, as Linda Colley described, was 'superimposed' on the individual cultures of the British Isles in the Georgian period, was, throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, being superimposed

²⁵ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 107

²⁶ For a definitive account of the split see Tony Collins, *Rugby's Great Split: Class, culture, and the Origins of Rugby League Football* (Ilford, 1998)

²⁷ Collins, *A Social History of Rugby Union*, p. 35

on the colonies of settlement.²⁸ The extension of British cultural hegemony over the colonies was aided by the development of sport, with the playing of rugby and cricket defining the British world against ‘uncivilized’ natives or ‘effete’ Orientals.²⁹ If British culture was essentially, ‘the export of the gentlemanly order,’ then sport played an important part in that process.³⁰ Sporting culture was transferred via institutions such as the army and the civil service, and, as already mentioned, by the schools planted in the colonies in emulation of those in the mother country.³¹ However, the playing of sport soon extended beyond the colonisers’ social boundary and subaltern groups took up the games of their colonial masters. It has been argued that sport as cultural imperialism was never an official colonial policy; it was rather an informal means of reconciling indigenous peoples to the imposition of a foreign culture.³² Such a view is too narrowly focused on the upper classes of both colonisers and colonised. This may have been the case in India, and in those parts of the empire where local élites were educated in English style schools. Just as often it was the simple need for players to make up the numbers that encouraged colonialists to share the pitch with the colonised. In cricket, where status demanded that white people usually be spared the labouring jobs that would be accomplished by working-class professionals at ‘home’, local labour filled the gap. Such, for example, was the case in the West Indies.

Soon, the ‘natives’ became good enough to take on the ‘masters’, and the late-

²⁸ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (Yale, 1992)

²⁹ Sinha, *The ‘Manly Englishman’ and the ‘Effeminate Bengali’*; McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win*

³⁰ P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688-1914* (London, 1993), p. 34

³¹ Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism and Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*; Lambert, “Munitions factories ... turning out a constant supply of living material”

³² Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 212

nineteenth century saw a number of tours to Britain by non-European teams, with an Australian Aborigine cricket team visiting in 1868, a New Zealand Maori rugby team in 1888-9, and an Indian Parsi cricket team in 1886 and 1888.³³ However, it is notable that all of these sides were made up of a single ethnic group and were not considered to be representative of the colonies in which their members were born and therefore not of sufficient status to merit official competition against the English national team. But as their expertise improved a growing number of non-European players sought entry into 'white' representative sides at home and in the colonies towards the end of the century, forcing selectors to decide just who could wear the 'national' rugby jersey or cricket cap in international competition.

Such decisions were taken against a background of a tension between two trends in political thought about the British Empire and where its future lay. Each trend was expressed in the rise of the idea of Anglo-Saxonism, a strand of thought that saw the extraordinary growth of the empire over the previous three centuries as a product of the unique genius of the Anglo-Saxon 'race' for commercial, intellectual and military prowess. Anglo-Saxonism acted as both an explanation for, and a justification of, the continuation of the dominance of England - often elided with Britain - in the affairs of the world.³⁴ With the historian J. R. Seeley's book, *The Expansion of England* acting as the most coherent and popular underpinning of Anglo-Saxonism, one strand of imperial thought saw a bond of blood between the

³³ Richard Cashman, 'Chapter two: Australia', in Stoddart and Sandiford, *The Imperial Game*, p. 38; Malcolm Maclean, 'Of warriors and blokes: The problems of Maori rugby for Pakeha masculinity in New Zealand', in Timothy Chandler and John Nauright (eds.), *The Rugby World: Race, Gender, Commerce and Rugby Union* (Ilford, 1999); Ramachandra Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport* (London, 2002), pp. 30-33; Richard Cashman, 'Chapter six: The subcontinent', in Stoddart and Sandiford, *The Imperial Game*, p. 121

³⁴ G. R. Searle, *A New England? Peace and War, 1886-1918* (Oxford, 2004), p. 11-12

home nations and the settler colonies, as well as the United States. Such a bond was seen to act as a buttress against the rise of other powers, both European and Asian, at the end of the twentieth century.³⁵ Countering this argument of English/British blood being the foundation of the strength of the empire was a modernising tendency that saw that strength as residing in the culture that developed within the British Isles and had then been exported throughout the world. While that culture grew out of supposedly Anglo-Saxon roots, there were those who saw it as capable of being grafted on to cultures and societies that lay far from the original seed. This is what Bill Schwarz sees as the paradox of Anglo-Saxon ideology - it was not the blood of the white Anglo-Saxons that guaranteed that they would be the 'bearers of the forces of modernity'; it was the contingency of their being white that was, 'the sign of their being modern, and of their role as self-appointed makers of history.'³⁶ By the 1900s, there were peoples enough from outside the Anglosphere ready to take their place in the modern world that the British had brought into being. And one of the arenas where they were ready to do so was that of sport.

In the 1900s interaction between colonial rugby and cricket teams and those of the metropolis began to be formalised into a regular pattern of home and away tours that laid the foundations for the rhythm of the international game in both sports that continued until the 1980s. Such regular fixtures relied on technological developments at the end of the nineteenth century that, 'were fundamental to a rapaciously expansionist industrial order and were at the heart of the imperial

³⁵ J. R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures* (London, 1985); John Darwin, 'Empire and ethnicity', *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 16:3 (2010), pp. 393-394

³⁶ Bill Schwarz, *Memories of Empire: Vol. 1: The White Man's World* (Oxford, 2011), p.169

systems that were both fed and shaped (by it).³⁷ They also facilitated sporting links between colonies and metropole, and their commercial exploitation. Steam ships meant that tours became cheaper and quicker to put on, while the development of the popular press and the telegraph meant that tours could be publicised widely, and information on the players and matches could be distributed to an audience throughout the empire. Businessmen with interests in both the colonies and the mother country drove the development of tours. Entrepreneurs local to stadia had a vested interest in ensuring a flow of spectators to their town or city. At the other end of the scale businessmen with global influence used sport as a way of projecting a particular image of the regions in which their businesses operated. The commercialisation of sport became a means of extending imperial hegemony over the colonies. Those who did not play the sports of the British, both at home and abroad, were cast as outsiders and thus found it more difficult to be accepted as equals, in the same way that economic activities were skewed by empire towards those communities perceived to be ethnically 'British'.³⁸ To exclude groups from playing British sports was a means of casting them out of the British world. In sport, of course, it is very easy to tell who is inside and who is outside; presence on the pitch is the ultimate arbiter of who belongs to the territory represented.

Such judgements would be communicated to the wider public by the press. By the end of the nineteenth century the press industry in the British world had developed into a complex global system that connected London with both the

³⁷ Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, 'Chapter 2.2: Remaking the world', in Emily S. Rosenberg (ed.), *A World Connecting 1870-1945* (London, 2012), p. 348-9

³⁸ Gary B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c.1850-1914* (Cambridge, 2010), p. xiii

colonies and the regions of the home nations.³⁹ By means of the telegraph this allowed the result of a sports match in Dorset on a Saturday afternoon to be digested over Sunday breakfast in Bloemfontein. Coverage of international sports matches in newspapers reflected the way in which sport, as well as the newspapers in which it was described, created an 'imagined community' linking geographically disparate individuals who nevertheless had interests in common.⁴⁰ One might argue that an Afrikaner in Bloemfontein was rejecting the British community by rejoicing vicariously in her team's success across the sea, yet the fact that she is drawn into caring by means of a press report transmitted through the imperial network implicates her in being a participant in the British world, if not identifying with the British world.⁴¹ Historians of the press have tended to ignore the transnational nature of journalism during this period of the British Empire, preferring to concentrate on 'avowedly national perspectives,' even when examining the imperial press.⁴² Yet it was particularly the case in the sporting press that a relatively small group of individuals, writing in London for national titles and specialist sporting magazines, had a disproportionately loud voice by virtue of their being syndicated to newspapers throughout the empire. Their overbearing influence often led to frustration for local commentators and had the effect of reinforcing the cultural norms of the metropole onto the periphery.⁴³

³⁹ Simon J. Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System* (Oxford, 2003), p. 1

⁴⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 2006), p. 34-5

⁴¹ Dean Allen, 'Beating them at their own game: Rugby, the Anglo-Boer War and Afrikaner nationalism, 1899-1948', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 20:3 (2005); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, 2006), p. 121-2

⁴² Simon J. Potter, 'Introduction: Empire, propaganda and public opinion', in Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Britain and Ireland, c.1857-1921* (Dublin, 2004), p. 12

⁴³ John Lambert, "'The thinking is done in London': South Africa's English language press and imperialism', in Chandrika Kaul (ed.), *Media and the British Empire* (Basingstoke, 2008)

Sport is one area where there is clear evidence of an imperial network developing in the Edwardian era and there is a rich historiography of how cricket and rugby developed in the colonies. In New Zealand much of the writing has concentrated on how rugby came to be an essential part of the development of a New Zealand national identity in the early-twentieth century, distinct from that inherited from Britain.⁴⁴ In South Africa too historians have looked at how the rugby team contributed to the development of an Afrikaner identity in the same period,⁴⁵ while the historiography of cricket has focused on how the sport came under the patronage of Anglo-South African businessmen who wished to develop stronger cultural links between Britain and the colonies in the Rand after the South African War.⁴⁶ The development of sport in both New Zealand and South Africa can be seen as contributing to the development of an imperial network that fostered the sense of there being a British world. Yet little work thus far has analysed the contribution of sport, unlike, for example, in the fields of the press and the scientific establishment.⁴⁷ One of the inspirations behind the establishment of formal and informal imperial networks was the idea of imperial federation, which flowered in the years after the South African War.⁴⁸ Historians have explored how the colonial government in South Africa attempted to unify the white races under a

⁴⁴ Keith Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity* (London, 1986); Greg Ryan (ed.) *Tackling Rugby Myths: Rugby and New Zealand Society 1854-2004* (Otago, 2005)

⁴⁵ Albert Grundlingh, André Odendaal and Burrige Spies (eds.), *Beyond the Tryline: Rugby and South African Society* (Randburg, 1995); Dean Allen, 'Beating them at their own game'

⁴⁶ Dean Allen, 'Cricket's Laird: James Logan', in Bruce Murray and Goolam Vahed (eds.), *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience 1884-1914* (Pretoria, 2009); Bruce Murray, 'Abe Bailey and the foundation of the Imperial Cricket Conference', in Murray and Vahed, *Empire and Cricket*

⁴⁷ Edna Barlow, 'The British Association's South Africa meeting, 1905: The 'Flight to the Colonies' and some post-Anglo-Boer War Problems', *South African Historical Journal*, No. 46 (2002); Julie F. Codell (ed.), *Imperial Co-histories: National Identities and the British and Colonial Press* (London, 2003); Chandrika Kaul, *Reporting the Raj: The British Press and India c.1880-1922* (Manchester, 2003)

⁴⁸ John Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences: A Study in Imperial Organization* (London, 1967); John H. Field, *Toward a Programme of Imperial Life: The British Empire at the Turn of the Century* (Westport, 1982); Daniel Gorman, 'Lionel Curtis, imperial citizenship, and the quest for unity', *The Historian*, Vol. 66:1 (2004)

common culture, in a process that has been labeled 'South Africanism.'⁴⁹ Following Saul Dubow's work many historians have outlined the way in which cultural institutions and propaganda were used to try and bring about a South African identity that was loyal to the crown and fitted in with British imperial values.⁵⁰ One surprising omission has been a study of sport as a part of the 'South Africanist' agenda, although a start has been made on examining the role that cricket played.⁵¹

The history of the colonial teams touring the 'Motherland' has tended to be described most often for the role that it played in the development of national feeling in the colonies. What has been less explored is the impact that the teams had on ideas of Britishness and empire in the metropole itself. There has been some debate about the extent to which colonial teams led to a questioning of the quality of British masculinity, but historians have tended to look at this issue from a colonial perspective, and have tended to treat Britishness as a monolithic culture.⁵² While there is a rich historiography on Welsh responses to the tours of the New Zealanders and, to a lesser extent, the South Africans, there is little work

⁴⁹ Saul Dubow, 'Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of 'South Africanism', 1902-1910', *History Workshop Journal*, No. 43 (1997)

⁵⁰ Peter Merrington, 'Pagaentry and primitivism: Dorothea Fairbridge and the 'Aesthetics of Union'', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 21:4 (1995); Philip Buckner, 'The Royal Tour of 1901 and the construction of an imperial identity in South Africa', *South African Historical Journal*, No. 41(1999); Archie L. Dick, "To make the people of South Africa proud of their membership of the Great British Empire': Home reading unions in South Africa, 1900-1914', *Libraries and Culture*, Vol. 40:1 (2005); John Lambert, 'South Africa British? Or Dominion South Africans? The evolution of an identity in the 1910s and 1920s', *South African Historical Journal*, No. 43 (2000); Saul Dubow, 'Scientists, social research and the limits of 'South Africanism'. The case of Ernest Gideon Malherbe', *South African Historical Journal*, No. 44 (2001); J. M. Gore, 'A lack of nation? The evolution of history in South African Museums 1825-1945', *South African Historical Journal*, No. 51 (2004)

⁵¹ Geoffrey Levett, 'Constructing imperial identity: The South African cricket tour of England in 1907', in Murray and Vahed, *Empire and Cricket*; Emma Sandon, "African mirror': The life and times of the South African newsreel from 1910 to 1948', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 39:3 (2013), especially pp. 675-6

⁵² John Nauright, 'Colonial manhood and imperial race virility: British responses to post-Boer War Colonial rugby tours', in John Nauright and Timothy Chandler (eds.) *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity* (London, 1995); Greg Ryan, 'Chapter 2: Rural myth and urban actuality: The anatomy of All Black and New Zealand rugby 1884-1938, and Caroline Daley, 'The invention of 1905', in Ryan, *Tackling Rugby Myths*

on the responses in the regions of England and in the other 'home' nations of Scotland and Ireland.⁵³ Ireland in particular is an interesting case since the South Africans toured as a team of reconciliation and played in both Belfast and in Dublin. While there is some work on Irish nationalist responses to the South African War, there is no work on how unionists and nationalists responded to a team of Afrikaner and Anglo-South African players touring together.⁵⁴

Similarly, it is important to emphasise how varied was the political and social structure of each individual colony. John Darwin sees the empire as being constituted of three broad means of colonial rule. In the settler colonies of Australia, New Zealand and Canada rule was by European immigrants who imposed their own political economy on the indigenous inhabitants, through brute force if necessary. In India, where direct rule had been established following the Great Rebellion of 1857, the Indian Civil Service ruled as an empire within an empire under the leadership of the Viceroy. While the third group comprises the rest - Crown Colonies directly administered from London via directly appointed British administrators.⁵⁵ None of the three British colonial teams that I have chosen to examine came from a territory that fell into one of those easy categories. Ireland, as the oldest colony of the English, had a long and complex colonial history. It was inside the Westminster parliamentary system yet had a history of political independence going back centuries. Irish nationalists campaigned for

⁵³ Gareth Williams (ed.), *1905 and All That: Essays on Rugby Football, Sport and Welsh Society* (Llandysul, 1991); Martin Johnes, 'This Rugby spellbound people': Rugby football in nineteenth-century Cardiff and South Wales', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 29:10 (2012)

⁵⁴ Elleke Boehmer, *Empire, the National and the Post-colonial, 1890-1920* (Oxford, 2002); Keith Jeffery (ed.), *An Irish Empire? Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire* (Manchester, 1996); Donal Lowry, 'Nationalist and Unionist attitudes to empire in the age of the South African War, 1899-1902', in Simon J. Potter, *Newspapers and Empire*; Alan Bairner (ed.), *Sport and the Irish* (Dublin, 2005)

⁵⁵ John Darwin, 'Chapter 3: Ruling methods', in *Unfinished Empire*, p. 189-222

independence, while Catholic and Protestant unionists argued for varying forms of political accommodation under British rule.⁵⁶ The various territories of the West Indies were Crown Colonies, but only following the brutal suppression of the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica in 1865 did the British government to remove local (white) representative government and to impose direct rule. This left an independently minded plantocracy seeking a way of maintaining white dominance in the face of increasing demands from black West Indians for the right to political representation.⁵⁷ And in South Africa, the entire region was in a state of political uncertainty following the extension of British authority over the Transvaal and Orange Free State Peace of Vereeniging in 1902.⁵⁸

In France the growth of rugby during the Belle Epoque and the influence of British values upon French sport have been outlined as processes, but little research has been done on the cultural impact of colonial teams.⁵⁹ Given that the French Empire's relationship to race was different to that of the British, and that there had been some fellow republican sympathy for the South Africans during the South African War there is a need to redress the lack of research on French responses to the South African team as cultural ambassadors for the colony at the heart of the French Empire.⁶⁰ The gaping hole at the centre of French scholarship on their early

⁵⁶ Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (London, 2004), pp. 29-30

⁵⁷ Ged Heuman, 'The British West Indies', in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. III: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 486-492

⁵⁸ Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, (Yale, 2001), pp. 143-6

⁵⁹ Thierry Teret, 'Rugby et masculinité au début du siècle', *Sciences et Techniques des Activités Physiques et Sportives*, No. 50 (1999); Philippe Tétart (ed.), *Histoire du Sport en France du Second Empire au Régime de Vichy* (Paris, 2007); Philip Dine, *French Rugby Football: A Cultural History* (Oxford, 2001) and 'Du collegien a l'homme (aller-retour)': Rugby et masculinité en Grande Bretagne et en France', *Le Mouvement Sociale*, No. 198 (2002)

⁶⁰ Armand Colin, 'De Fachoda à l'Entente Cordiale: Romans de la guerre Anglo-Afrikaner (1899-1907)', *L'Information Historique*, No. 52 (1990); Jean-Guy Pelletier, 'France and the Boer War: The beginning of the war to the death of Villebois-Mare', *Historia-Paris*, Vol. 33:1 (1988)

rugby history is that period between its introduction into the country by British businessmen and Anglophile individuals like Pierre de Coubertin in the late nineteenth century and its flourishing in the South-West of France in the years immediately prior to World War 1.⁶¹ The Entente Cordiale expressed at the level of diplomacy a cultural trend that had been apparent for some years. The English élite acted as a model for the French élite. Such close cultural ties were exemplified by the French rugby fifteen that took on the English in 1906, which contained a Scot, an Englishman and an American. The *Athletic News* commented that the band welcoming the teams would be as well to play *Yankee Doodle* as the *Marseillaise*.⁶² Despite Anglophobia informing a strand of French public opinion, particularly at the time of the South African War, I would argue that Paris at this time must be seen as being overlapped by the British world. Parisian thinkers looked across the channel and saw a model for reforming their education system, including the introduction of English games.

Much recent historiography on empire has been inspired by the 'new imperial history', which in its own turn had been inspired by Edward Said's works, notably *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*.⁶³ Said's analysis of British culture in the nineteenth century argued that the empire was a fundamental part of British society and permeated areas of culture that were previously thought to be solely concerned with domestic matters. His insight led to two strands of thinking that are crucial to the development of my own research. The first of these has been founded upon the work of Antoinette Burton and Catherine Hall in which they

⁶¹ Dine, *French Rugby Football*; Jean Lacouture, *Voyous et Gentlemen: Un Histoire de Rugby* (Paris, 1993); Tétart, *Histoire du Sport en France*

⁶² *Athletic News*, 29th March 1906

⁶³ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993)

investigate the process of empire as something that does not simply happen to colonial societies, but is rather a dynamic process between colony and metropole in which it is necessary to examine both through the same analytic lens.⁶⁴ In other words there is no useful way to divide the history of the colonies from the history of Britain; they need to be examined as one continuous field of research. Associated with the work of Burton and Hall is that of the Subaltern Studies group, whose work is concerned with trying to recover the voice of the colonised in the imperial relationship.⁶⁵ By giving voice to the hitherto unexamined subjects of colonial power another dimension can be added to the explanation of the process of colonization, in which the influence of the colonised on metropolitan culture can be given its due.

The second strand of the new imperial history that has a direct influence on the examination of the interface between sport and empire has been that group of historians who have followed the example of John MacKenzie in writing on the influence of empire on British society. Scholars writing in a similar vein to MacKenzie's own *Propaganda and Empire* for the Manchester University Press have published a torrent of material on different aspects of imperialism, much of which will be cited later in this thesis.⁶⁶ MacKenzie and his followers maintain that imperial values were disseminated to the British public across a wide range of

⁶⁴ Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late Victorian Britain* (Berkeley, 1998); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-67* (Oxford, 2002)

⁶⁵ Ranjit Guha and Gayatri Spivak, *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford, 1988); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, 2000)

⁶⁶ John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion 1880-1960* (Manchester, 1984); John MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986)

cultural output, from music to children's books.⁶⁷ Further they assert that popular culture was consciously used to win backing for the imperial project across all sections of society, and that the imperial message was willingly received across classes in a way that demonstrates that British society was steeped in empire during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and beyond. Historians of London have taken MacKenzie's thesis and applied it to the capital to show how the city developed as an imperial metropolis in the Edwardian era. They have analysed the way in which London's popular culture was influenced by imperialism, and how the topography of the city developed in response to the demands for a city worthy of the centre of empire.⁶⁸

An opposition has formed, however, to the views of the new imperial historians and the MacKenzie school. Bernard Porter challenges the idea that the empire was a central part of the everyday life of Britons in the Edwardian era. His scepticism stems from two concerns. Firstly, a lack of evidence about to what extent propaganda influenced the way that people thought; secondly, a doubt whether such imperialist campaigning reached beyond the middle classes, who had most to gain from empire.⁶⁹ Similarly, David Cannadine argues in *Ornamentalism*, that class formed the key structure in the development of an imperial culture both at home and abroad, at an élite level at least.⁷⁰ Such views, that race, 'was never the decisive issue in colonial rule; that it was certainly never so in the metropole,' have

⁶⁷ Kathryn Castle, *Britannia's Children: Reading Colonialism through Children's Books and Magazines* (Manchester, 1996); Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876-1953* (Manchester, 2001)

⁶⁸ Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (Yale, 2001); Felix Driver and David Gilbert (eds.), *Imperial Cities* (Manchester, 2003)

⁶⁹ Bernard Porter, *The Absent-minded Imperialists: What the British Thought About Empire* (Oxford, 2004)

⁷⁰ David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British saw their Empire* (London, 2001)

received a firm rebuttal in Bill Schwarz's recent work and I would agree.⁷¹ The racial order in the colonies began to converge with a new racial order in the metropole in the 1900s. This was nowhere more apparent than in the selection of sports teams. It was also apparent in the fear expressed in the descriptions of the metropole by colonial journalists, and their sympathisers in the sporting press of England, who saw degeneration in London stemming from Jewish immigration and a decline in the physical condition of the lower classes.⁷²

My own view, and one that I will substantiate through this thesis, is that sport formed an inescapable part of the imperial project. In the years between the end of the South African War and the onset of the First World War sport was central to the debate about British manliness, where there was a fear that British men were failing to compete with challengers from within and without the empire on the sports field. At the same time the international development of cricket and rugby in the 1900s was directed by administrators whose lives and interests traversed imperial government, colonial businesses and the media. As sport became a major part of imperial culture, groups within the British Empire sought to take advantage of its capacity to legitimise imperial belonging. Sport was also used to foster a growing sense of nationalism in the colonies, particularly in the colonies of settlement. A similar process was also enacted in France, where rugby proved the means of assimilating ideas of a 'Greater French' identity into metropolitan society.

⁷¹ Schwarz, *Memories of Empire*, p. 13

⁷² David Feldman, 'Jews and the British Empire c. 1900', in *History Workshop Journal*, No. 63 (2007), pp. 76-77

Methodology and Sources

This thesis deals with two main themes regarding the role of sport in the relationship between Britain, France and their colonies: power and identity. In studying the relationship of power, identity and empire in the early-twentieth century I have decided to follow a microhistorical approach, exploring the discourses that developed in relation to a small group of men in a small period to draw out wider conclusions about imperial culture. Thus I limit myself to five geographical case studies - of England, South Africa, the West Indies, France, and Ireland; in two sports - Rugby Union and cricket. This has allowed me to examine a series of teams with differing racial and social backgrounds and explore the discourses surrounding them both in the metropole and in their colonies of origin. By these means I hope to overcome the limitations of following a nation-based approach that is far too common in sport history, where the concentration on the interaction between metropole and colony can impose too rigid a structure on empire.⁷³ In fact, imperial culture was dynamic; colonial cultures interacted with one another, and with the cultures of other empires, as well as with those of the home nations.

In limiting myself to these territories and these years I have, with reluctance, omitted a close examination of some teams and sports that would repay the same historical analysis. Firstly, Australia, which was the first white colonial team to

⁷³ Stoddart and Sandiford, *The Imperial Game*

tour England in 1878 and continued to do so regularly in subsequent years. Secondly, India, which was represented by a team who toured the mother country in 1911. In both cases I was aware of forthcoming work analysing tours in a similar way as I have done so for my own areas of study; work that I will build on in my chapter on the West Indies.⁷⁴ The choice of two sports was less difficult to make than narrowing my geographical scope. Cricket and rugby were *the* imperial sports, and recognised as such by contemporaries. In each of the sports a regular touring pattern was established during this period that was not apparent in other sports, even in Association football.⁷⁵ On the other hand there were sports that were popular throughout the empire, but less expressive of national identity. Either they were too narrowly restricted in appeal to the wider public, such as was the case with polo and lacrosse, or in the case of golf and tennis they were played by individuals.

Thus the thesis deals with four visits by colonial teams in the period. The first was by the New Zealand Rugby Union team in the autumn and winter of 1905. In the summer of the next year the West Indies came to Britain for their debut first-class cricket tour. In autumn and winter of 1906 it was the turn of the South African Rugby Union team to visit Europe, and they were followed by their compatriot

⁷⁴ W. F. Mandle, 'Cricket and Australian nationalism in the nineteenth century', *Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 59:4 (1973); Warwick Frost, 'Heritage, nationalism, identity: The 1861-1862 England cricket tour of Australia', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 19:4 (2002); Jared van Duinen, 'Playing to the 'imaginary grandstand': Sport, the British world and an Australian colonial identity', *Journal of Global History*, Vol. 8:2 (2013); Prashant Kidambi, 'Sport and the imperial bond: The 1911 'All-India' cricket tour of Great Britain', *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 8:3 (2013)

⁷⁵ Richard Holt, for example, omits any of the imperial aspects of Association Football in his account of 'Empire and nation' in the standard work on British sports history. Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp. 272-3. Some work is being done on the relationship between soccer and empire, see Chris Bolsmann, 'The 1899 Orange Free State football team tour of Europe: 'Race', imperial loyalty and sporting contest', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 28:1 (2011)

cricketers in the summer of 1907.⁷⁶ It is important to emphasise that these were genuine tours through the territories visited. In the modern age international teams, even on supposed 'tours' will play a sprinkling of more minor fixtures interspersed between the major international matches before jetting off to the next stop on the constant merry-go-round of international sport. In Edwardian times a tour was a tour around the whole of the British Isles, whether playing Rugby or cricket. It involved anything up to forty matches against regional sides, club teams and in friendlies, as well as the major matches against the 'home' nations. As such it meant that touring teams visited the most remote parts of the United Kingdom, as well as France. For those teams visiting from the southern hemisphere the trip would also often involve a stop in the United States on the way home. All in all such tours would necessitate being away from home and family for anything between three and five months, allowing time for the actions of the players to become an ongoing narrative in the lives of sports lovers and newspaper readers in the United Kingdom and around the world.

Such a major logistical undertaking inevitably required a large amount of forward planning between the various administrative bodies involved. At the centre of the rugby and cricketing establishment were the two institutions that ruled their respective sporting worlds, Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) and the Rugby Football Union (RFU). Each of these institutions' archives contains all the minutes of meetings relating to the tours, and correspondence with colonial sporting bodies.

⁷⁶ I am aware that not all readers will be familiar with the results of individual matches in the 1900s, and also that many may not be that interested. For the curious I would recommend two websites. The *ESPNCricinfo* website gathers its historic statistical information from entries in *Wisden Cricketer's Almanack*, the 'bible' of cricket. The website can be found at <http://www.espncricinfo.com/ci/engine/series/index.html>. A similar service for Rugby Union is provided by ESPN at <http://www.espn.co.uk/scrum/rugby/series/index.html>

Their libraries also contain sporting ephemera, artworks and other materials that are seldom available elsewhere and are invaluable sources on the culture of sport at the time. Archives dealing with individual teams, even at national level outside of England, are less reliable and often owe their existence to the passionate amateur enthusiast rather than the professional archivist.⁷⁷ Such archive materials are useful in gaining an insight into the workings of the 'official mind' when it comes to sports administration. However, the taking of minutes, even in discussing major international tours, leaves a lot to be desired in learning how selectors arrived at their decisions. One only has to think of the cloud of obfuscation that still hangs over the role of MCC in the D'Oliveira Affair of 1968 to realise that the process of settling contentious issues would rarely have been recorded on paper in the informal surroundings of a private club, even when it involved issues of international importance.⁷⁸

For the same reason memoirs and tour diaries, while valuable as insights into contemporary attitudes, must be treated with caution. It is part of the argument of this thesis that there was a nexus of men whose careers spanned those of élite sport, sports administration, journalism, business and politics. These were the men most likely to put their thoughts into print, creating a public narrative about sport in the Edwardian era. To take one individual as a brief example, whose career will

⁷⁷ In the Edwardian period élite sports clubs were usually private members' clubs. In some cases they continue to guard their privacy jealously - an attitude that can be disheartening to the historian.

⁷⁸ The D'Oliveira Affair concerned the non-selection then selection of a 'coloured' South African, Basil D'Oliveira, to play for MCC against South Africa in 1968. His selection prompted the Vorster government in South Africa to cancel the proposed tour to South Africa. The process by which D'Oliveira was first excluded then included in the MCC team, and the role of individual selectors in the decision, is still the matter of some debate. See 'Chapter 5: The D'Oliveira affair', in Bruce Murray and Christopher Merrett, *Caught Behind: Race and Politics in Springbok Cricket* (Pietermaritzburg, 2004) and Peter Osborne, *Basil D'Oliveira: Cricket and Conspiracy, the Untold Story* (London, 2004)

be fleshed out in more detail in later chapters, Lord Harris. Although at the aristocratic end of the middle-class/upper-class scale, he was typical of the men raised to run the empire in the nineteenth century. He participated in a network of commerce, media and sport that straddled the globe. Harris was born in Trinidad, where his father was the Governor General in the 1850s. After schooling at Eton he went up to Oxford, where he excelled as a cricketer. A regular participant in private cricket tours to the colonies he later went on to become the President of MCC. His political and business careers were equally stellar. Crediting himself with being the great patron of cricket in India during his spell as Governor of Bombay in the 1890s, he later became chairman of Consolidated Goldfields and saw service in the South African War before returning to England to become the grand old man of English cricket and an active participant in the business of the House of Lords.⁷⁹ His autobiography, *A Few Short Runs*, is discreet on politics to the point of making the reader unaware that he lived through, and took a leading role in, some of the most turbulent political events in Indian and South African history. Yet this in itself is telling of the turn of mind to be found amongst Harris's *milieu*; the cricket is discussed in minutiae as if it is entirely divorced from the political realm. It is an account of sport from an Olympian viewpoint.⁸⁰

Memoirs are an important source but the main thrust of this thesis is that sport was one of the key vehicles for disseminating imperial values to a wider public, and the chief means of doing so was through the mass media. For the historian of sport newspapers and specialist magazines are of vital importance, both for their

⁷⁹ Katherine Prior, 'Harris, George Robert Canning, fourth Baron Harris (1851–1932)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33724>, accessed 16th December 2013, James D. Coldham, *Lord Harris* (London, 1983)]

⁸⁰ Lord Harris, *A Few Short Runs* (London, 1921)

match reports and for their coverage of wider issues, such as selection controversies, reports about the players' backgrounds, and activities that players undertook off the sports field. Tours were covered by the major national papers in the United Kingdom, as well as in weekly journals, such as the *London Illustrated News*. Such journals' coverage was often accompanied by illustrations and photographs that can be more revelatory of the attitudes of the media towards the players than their mere words. One must also beware of neglecting the regional press in Britain and Ireland. Touring sides were intended to bring in large crowds to bolster the income of county teams, and hence publicity at a local level was an essential part of making a profitable trip. In the colonies, similar coverage was provided by the press, a press that was often partisan in its coverage of inter-colonial rivalry between, for example, the Cape and Transvaal Cricket Unions. The relationship between the mining industry, the press and sporting bodies in South Africa during this period was often very close. For example Abe Bailey was at the same time the proprietor of the *Rand Daily Mail*, a major sponsor of South African cricket, and one of the leading financiers in Johannesburg.⁸¹ In the West Indies too, rivalry between territories on the sports field for representation in the West Indian team was played out in the pages of the press of each island. In addition, in the colonies and the UK there was a thriving sporting press, with many periodicals specifically devoted to cricket. The doyenne of these sporting specialist was of course *Wisden Cricketer's Almanack* (hereafter called *Wisden*), the bible of cricket and a comprehensive source on all factual matters relating to the game.

⁸¹ John Lambert, 'The thinking is done in London', p. 46

In utilising the press as a source on the links between sport and empire one must be careful to put the coverage in the context of the wider politics of each newspaper. As Chandrika Kaul points out, many of the editors of Fleet Street were committed imperialists who sought to exploit events such as the South African War both for profit, by increasing circulation, and for ideological reasons, through a belief in Britain's imperial mission.⁸² A newspaper featuring the tour of a colonial team may say more about that newspaper's politics than it does about the readership's interest in such an event. In looking at the history of imperial sport it is crucial not to look at its development teleologically. It was not inevitable that cricket and rugby should become primarily 'imperial' sports, as they continue to be dominated by the home nations and ex-colonies to the present day. In analysing the relationship between sport, the press and imperial ideology. I hope to attack an 'under-developed' part of the historiography of empire.⁸³ At the same time I wish to avoid the flaws that MacKenzie sees in the methodology of looking at newspapers, especially the tendency to rely on *The Times*, by using a wide range of sources in each of the territories that I discuss.⁸⁴

Close analysis of sports coverage in newspapers and journals is the key to uncovering contemporary subaltern voices. Sportsmen did not by any means occupy the hitherto voiceless sectors of society concentrated upon by Subaltern Studies, but they were the subjects of colonial power and subjected to attempts to

⁸² Chandrika Kaul, *Reporting the Raj*, pp. 6-7

⁸³ John MacKenzie, 'The press and the dominant ideology of empire', pp. 23-39 in Potter, *Newspapers and Empire*, p. 24

⁸⁴ The availability of digitised newspapers grows seemingly exponentially, allowing the historian the luxury of consulting a broad range of opinion that only recently would have required many hours of time consulting microfilm in Colindale.

construct an imperial identity by an élite group.⁸⁵ It is difficult to get beneath the official representation of the ordinary sportsmen's views, but by investigating some of the debate around team selection, and the question of financial reward, it is possible to see that their own self-image was not necessarily congruent with that which the sporting establishment wished to portray on their behalf. Sport, like music and entertainment, was an activity that required talented individuals to attract the paying public. As such it was an area of public life that allowed a certain amount of social movement, across the usual class and race boundaries.

In examining the way in which teams were seen as embodying specifically imperial values it is necessary also to look at the issue of identity in the teams. It is not the aim of this thesis to suggest that the teams had a fixed, self-generated identity, although the South African rugby team's organisers certainly had a determination to project a loyalist imperial image. The thesis aims rather to look at the discourse surrounding the teams as they travelled through Europe. As Frederick Cooper points out, identification is a process that can be carried out implicitly in discourse or in public narratives.⁸⁶ This thesis will examine the way in which the identities of the teams were portrayed, the motivations for such portrayals, and the extent to which the portrayal of the team permeated society both in England and in the colonies. The essence of my analysis will be to see how sport could be used to include or exclude players, and thus be used as an arbiter of who was worthy of being held up as an exemplar of imperial masculinity.

⁸⁵ David Scott, 'Colonial Governmentality', *Social Text*, No. 43 (1995)

⁸⁶ Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (California, 2005), p. 73

A Note on Terminology

In writing this thesis, ranging as it does across different empires and different territories within those empires, I have had to grapple with a number of what Anne Spry Rush calls, 'slippery terms.'⁸⁷ For Rush the complication arises in how to describe people of the same geographical origin who refer to themselves and to one another by different terms depending on their colour, and on where they are living. Especially when those terms might be offensive when used in the present day. As she notes, the terms English and British were used almost interchangeably during the Edwardian period by natives of the British Isles, while those who were native to the Caribbean, especially people of colour, were 'far more likely to refer to themselves as British'.⁸⁸ Yet this seemingly useful categorisation of terminology breaks down when sport enters the picture. Black and white West Indians cricketers were referred to as Englishmen, whether they were resident in the Caribbean or had come to England to live.⁸⁹ Such looseness of labelling reflects the ramshackle nature of British imperial ideology. Much as it is tempting to impose a retrospective linguistic order on the chaos of contemporary discourse it is much better to let the sources speak for themselves and use their ambiguities and contradictions to highlight the fact that in the British world at least racial, national and regional identities were exceptionally fluid. Such fluidity reflected the way in

⁸⁷ Anne Spry Rush, *Bonds of Empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonization* (Oxford, 2011), p. 14. See also Catherine Hall, 'What is a West Indian?', in Bill Schwarz (ed.), *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain* (Manchester, 2003)

⁸⁸ *Idem.*

⁸⁹ For example, Sir Cavendish Boyle, former Governor General of British Guiana, welcomed the West Indian team of 1906 to England with a speech in which he referred to them as 'West Indian Anglo-Saxons.' This despite the fact that half of the party were not of European descent. *The Sportsman*, 11th June 1906

which individuals' imperial identities on the sports field were subject to being manipulated for political and ideological ends.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter 1 I examine the impact of colonial tours to England in the period 1905-7 by teams from South Africa and New Zealand. While the English press was proud of the strength of the challenge offered by colonial teams their strength also fuelled anxiety about relative national decline in the mother country. Such anxieties were closely tied to fear of suburbanization and its stultifying effect on the athleticism and intelligence of Englishmen, and to concerns about racial degeneration owing to the presence of increasing numbers of migrants in London. The chapter also looks at the case history of James Peters, a black Englishman who was excluded from the England rugby team at the behest of the South Africans in 1906, to demonstrate how this period was crucial in defining race and class boundaries in sport.

In Chapter 2 the tour of the South African cricket team in 1907 is analysed for the way in which it was used to portray South Africa as being part of the British world. The cricket team was initially intended to contain English and Australian born players, as well as South Africans born in the colonies. Such a policy opened up a debate about who could be considered to represent South Africa that had first been aired during the selection crisis over a coloured bowler, Krom Hendricks, in 1894. On arrival in England the team was strongly projected as being culturally British. The team is examined in relation to the idea of South Africanism, and the political

campaign for the federation of the South African colonies under British rule. Key to such a process was the role of Abe Bailey, a wealthy South African politician and industrialist, who attempted to use the playing of cricket as a soft power tactic to bring the colonies into the British world in the wake of the South African War.

Chapter 3 deals with French rugby. At the end of their tour to Europe in 1906, South Africa travelled to Paris to play against a French team that contained two black players, Georges Jérôme and André Vergès. Their journey from the French colony of Guyana to Paris is used to illustrate the difference in ideology between the French and British Empires that allowed some representatives of non-European societies to flourish under French rule and become representatives of a modern French imperial identity. Through the pages of a remarkable modernising journal, *La Vie au Grand Air*, Jérôme became an exemplar of French masculinity that countered stereotypes of colonial Frenchmen then current in the mass media.

Chapter 4 draws a contrast with Chapters 2 and 3 by examining the tour of England by a mixed race West Indian cricket team in 1906. The team was organised by the West Indian white community to act as an advocate of greater British intervention and investment in the region on the South African model. Its relative failure as a sporting and public relations enterprise is used to illustrate the rigid *de facto* racial boundaries that existed in the British Empire even as local élite whites advocated their removal.

Chapter 5 looks at the case of Ireland in the 1900s. The 1900s was a time when each wing of the political spectrum, nationalist and unionist, projected an ideal of

manliness to the general public via sport and the media. Rugby Union was used as a means of projecting a loyal Irish identity to both Catholics and Protestants and challenges the view that the triumph of Irish cultural nationalism was inevitable in the pre-Independence era. In a similar way to Jérôme, the sporting press used the Irish star player, Basil Maclear, to counter negative nationalist stereotypes of men who played rugby as un-Irish 'West Britons.'

Conclusion

Nostalgic cricket writers are still peddling the myth that sport in the Edwardian era developed in isolation from the social and political events of the period.⁹⁰ They see the war that brought the period to an end as a cataclysm that happened *to* sport and sportsmen rather than recognising that the issues of national prestige, imperial expansion and fears over racial degeneration that contributed to the onset of war in 1914 were just as apparent in the sporting arena as they were in wider society. This thesis argues that sport was central to the debate over the future of British society and the development of the empire, and uses close examination of contemporary sources to show how colonial tours were an important part of the way in which national and imperial identities played out in the public discourse.

⁹⁰ John Major, *More than a Game: The Story of Cricket's Early Years* (London, 2007), pp. 377-8

Colonial Tours and British Manliness

Degenerate Days

There are those who maintain – and make a nice income by doing so in the evening papers – that in these degenerate days the old, hardy spirit of the Briton has died out. They represent themselves as seeking vainly for evidence of the survival of those qualities of toughness and endurance which once made Englishmen what they were.¹

Juxtapose the photograph of ‘The Worship of C. B. Fry’ at the Oval in London with the above quotation from P. G. Wodehouse and one would find it hard to believe that there was ever an element of self-doubt about the fitness of the Edwardian sportsman (Fig. 1). The photograph, at first glance, seems to tell us of the ‘golden age’, when sports events in the capital were communal celebrations of the superiority of the Englishman, and heroes like Fry forever sated the appetite of the public for sporting glory. But the boater-sporting mass at the Oval, while being a testimony to the popularity of the summer game, would also be interpreted by some contemporaries, Fry included, as evidence of the decline of the Englishman. The monotony of the crowd, its lack of individuality and its docility, were seen as threats to the continuation of English superiority over the young colonies. This attitude is reflected in Wodehouse’s comment from *Summer Lightning*. Although the book came out in 1928, Wodehouse’s formative years as a writer were in the

¹ P. G. Wodehouse, *Summer Lightning* (London, 2008), p. 217. The quote is a useful illustration of the Edwardians’ habitual use of British/Briton/Britain and English/England interchangeably.

1900s; indeed both he and Fry were stablemates as writers for the children's magazine, *The Captain*.² While Wodehouse used the assumed superiority of the English as a vehicle for humour, Fry took the matter altogether more seriously, especially in linking Edwardian manliness to Edwardian sport.

² Kate Jackson, 'C. B. Fry: The sportsman editor', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 34:2 (2001), p. 167

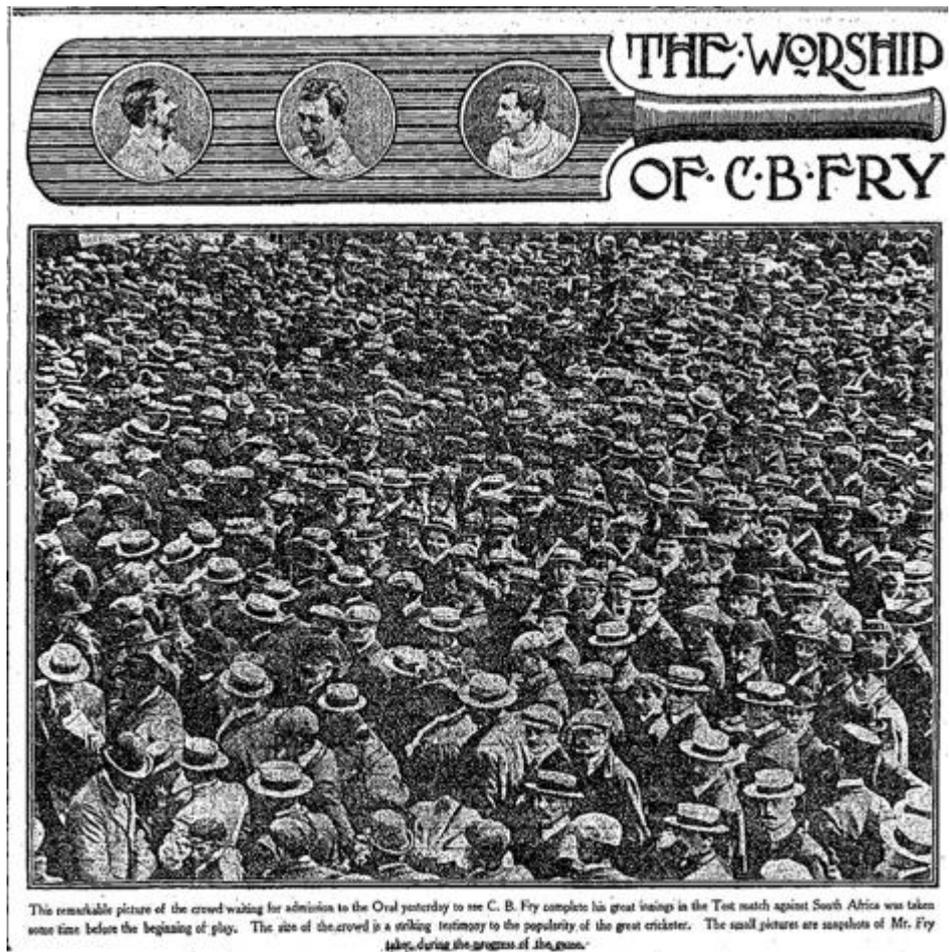


Fig. 1 'The Worship of C. B. Fry'

Daily Express, 21st August 1907

The 1900s saw a crisis in English manliness that played out in the commentary on sport in the national press.³ At a time when the theory of social Darwinism was becoming more influential among intellectuals and politicians, the British Army put in a catastrophic performance against the Boers in the South African War. A war fought by the most industrialised nation in the world against a predominantly rural enemy, dwarfed numerically, had succeeded only at the cost of thousands of the lives of British and Imperial soldiers, and an estimated 270 million pounds.⁴ In the aftermath of the war some of the blame for the bad performance of the Army had been placed upon the poor quality of working-class British recruits to the armed forces. Their performance was compared unfavourably with that of the troops raised by the settler colonies, of whom it was said that, 'Officers who had to deal with them in the field all spoke well of their physique, intelligence, courage, instinct for country, and powers of individual action and initiative.'⁵ There resulted a movement for 'national efficiency' that received support from a wide range of political opinion. While varying political groups divided on the means to achieve national efficiency, all were agreed that there was a need to improve the national stock through social and educational reform.⁶ The drive for national efficiency was fuelled by fears of physical deterioration at the end of the century.⁷ Threats to the physical wellbeing of the nation were seen as coming internally, from its inability to modernise education on the German model, and externally, from many sources: greedy plutocrats, Jewish cosmopolitans, racial 'others', and the grey masses of the

³ John Nauright, 'Colonial manhood and imperial race virility'

⁴ Ronald Hyam, 'The British Empire in the Edwardian era', p. 50

⁵ Cd 1789, *Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Military Preparations and Other Matters Concerned with the War in South Africa* (London, 1903), p. 79

⁶ G. R. Searle, *A New England*, p. 305

⁷ Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848-c.1918* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 200-202

growing metropolitan suburbs. Each of these threats was tied to anxieties about London's place at the heart of the Empire.

Some saw sport as a frivolous diversion for the young minds of public schoolboys from the serious business of coming international competition on the battlefield and in the boardroom. Kipling's jibe in *The Islanders* in 1902 about, 'the flannelled fools at the wicket or the muddied oafs at the goals' touched a nerve among the athletes in his readership. That *the* imperial poet should attack the very games that were held by public school ideology to be the founding lessons in becoming a man caused an outpouring of letters to the press arguing the merits of sport. Correspondents failed to see why, 'cricketers and footballers should be marked out for his vulgar abuse,' pointing out the number of sportsmen-soldiers who had participated in the war.⁸ Close reading of Kipling's account of schoolboy life, *Stalky and Co.*, allowed another correspondent to attribute his antipathy to sportsmen as deriving from his own incompetence at cricket as a child.⁹

Yet other correspondents, while defending the merits of sport in teaching youngsters physical toughness and mental dexterity, saw problems in the way that sport was developing in England, in particular with the issue of professionalism. An editorialist in the *Observer* worried that 'We have seen cricket and football lauded, analysed, and worshipped till it has emerged from the realm of present pastime and become a serious and well-paid cult ... their present absurd

⁸ *The Times*, 6th January 1906

⁹ *Observer*, 2nd February 1902

glorification detracts unduly from the furtherance of national ends.’¹⁰ There was concern, too, that people were more interested in watching sports than in playing them, and thus becoming passive rather than active participants in sport culture. Crowds at matches were said by middle-class commentators to be uninterested in the finer points of the game and only interested in the result, with one publication going so far as to say that, ‘the ball is often a superfluous element in a northern game of football, and the mob would enjoy the thing far more if the opposing fifteens simply took off their sweaters and enjoyed a free fight.’ Such comments were coded language criticising illegal gambling on sports fixtures - if the crowd were only interested in results rather than the quality of play it could only mean that they had a financial interest in the outcome. Those who saw success on the sports field as a test of national vitality had their faith in the ability of British manhood to compete in the modern world severely tested as international sport developed through the 1900s. Especially worrying were the visits of the New Zealand Rugby Union team in 1905 and that of the South Africans the following year. Their near total superiority over home-grown players was seen as evidence of the physical and mental superiority of men whose upbringing had supposedly taken place on the rugged frontiers of empire, where city life had neither softened their bodies nor corrupted their morals.

¹⁰ *Observer*, 5th January 1902

The 1905 All Blacks: 'A Lesson in the Game of Life'¹¹

The New Zealand team that toured in 1905 has achieved legendary status in rugby history for its achievements on the pitch. The 'Originals' were the first national team from outside the Northern Hemisphere to tour in Britain, and set a benchmark of excellence that has rarely been equalled. Of the thirty-two matches played in the British Isles, the All Blacks won thirty-one, their only defeat occurring against the Welsh as a result of a disputed try.¹² The tour had a significance that extended beyond sport in establishing an identity for the furthest-flung colony, and has been seen by social historians as one of the key moments in the foundation of New Zealand's national identity.¹³ The basis to the myth of the 1905 New Zealanders lies in a combination of two factors associated with the idea that they were visitors from the frontier of the empire. First their physical prowess was tied into ideas of the ruggedness of the frontier life shaping a superior athletic specimen. Second, the life of the frontier accounted for the cleverness of the New Zealanders' tactics, where a man had to live by his wits as an individual to survive in harsh conditions, but also had to learn to be a team man as part of a small community in the face of a sometimes hostile native population. Greg Ryan and Caroline Daley have argued that the motive for such declamations on the excellence of the New Zealand way of life was boosterism by the New Zealand

¹¹ *Daily Mail*, 10th October 1905

¹² A New Zealand native team had toured in 1888 and had a great degree of success. For a full account of this tour see Greg Ryan, *Forerunners of the All Blacks: the 1888-9 New Zealand Native Football Teams in Britain, Australia and New Zealand* (Christchurch, 1993). The 1905 team also visited France and North America on their tour, the results of which I have not included in the above summary.

¹³ See, for example, Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart*

political class. Their rhetoric aimed at encouraging people to immigrate to the colony, while at the same time taking the credit for the excellence of the living conditions there. That mythologising has come in for close scrutiny - the image of the New Zealand team as a group of lantern-jawed frontiersmen has been thoroughly exploded. Revisionism, however, should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the image of the team was very tightly controlled during the tour.¹⁴ There were some critics who saw and valued a certain deviousness in the practice of unorthodox tactics, especially the use of the wing forward, which even the sober *Times* called, 'a startling innovation.'¹⁵ Others thought it unsportsmanlike, or even illegal.¹⁶ The physical condition of the New Zealanders, who had followed a strict training régime on their passage to England, also led to insinuations of professionalism from the British sporting press.¹⁷ Despite such reservations there was a wholehearted acceptance by journalists and correspondents to newspapers alike that their excellence was due primarily to the superior way of life in New Zealand.

The portrayal of the All Blacks as colonial exemplars was pushed hard from the top of the New Zealand political establishment. When asked by the *Daily Mail* to

¹⁴ For revisionist accounts of the origins of the 1905 team see Ryan, 'Rural myth and urban actuality' and Daley, 'The invention of 1905'

¹⁵ *The Times*, 18th September 1905. The wing forward was an extra man deployed at the back of a scrum whose purpose was to act as a spoiling man for the opposition scrum half, or as an extra scrum half for his own team. It should be emphasised that until the inter-war period there were no fixed rules about scrum positions and that before World War 1 experimentation with scrum formations was not unusual. That English critics should decry New Zealand innovation was seen by later commentators as evidence of a too conservative state of mind in English rugby in the Edwardian period. W. W. Wakefield and H. P. Marshall, *Rugger* (London, 1927), pp. 112-114

¹⁶ *The National Review* (1905), p. 1076

¹⁷ Collins, *A Social History of Rugby Union*, p. 167

comment on his nation's remarkable success at rugby the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Richard Seddon, replied by telegram:

Not surprised British public amazed brilliancy of New Zealand footballers ...
The natural and healthy conditions of colonial life produce stalwart and athletic sons of whom New Zealand and the Empire are justly proud.¹⁸

While they prided themselves on being the most British of the settler colonies in the 1900s a growing sense of national consciousness was developing in New Zealand, in whose creation the rugby team had a leading role.¹⁹ However, the onset of such a process pre-dated 1905 and was fostered by Liberal politicians, chief among them Seddon, who called the colony, 'God's own country' during his 1904 Financial Statement.²⁰ The Liberals saw themselves as social reformers, and their society as a 'social laboratory' that could be an exemplar to the world.²¹ Policies such as the extension of the franchise to women in 1893 and efforts to tackle working-class poverty were contrasted with the sclerotic political system of the 'Old Country.'

Such an attitude prevailed regarding the relative merits of the rugby teams. Seddon's comment followed on a series of articles and letters published in the English press both trumpeting the strength of the New Zealanders, and bemoaning the state of English rugby men during the first month of the tour in October 1905.

¹⁸ Reported in *New Zealand Evening Post*, 18th October 1905

¹⁹ W. David McIntyre, 'Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands', in Brown and Roger Louis, *Oxford History of the British Empire*, Vol. IV, p. 669

²⁰ David Hamer, *The New Zealand Liberals: The Years of Power, 1891-1912* (Auckland, 1988), p. 61

²¹ P. J. Gibbons, 'Chapter 12: The climate of opinion', in W. H. Oliver and B. R. Williams (eds.), *The Oxford History of New Zealand* (Wellington, 1981), p. 308

The first rumblings of discontent were heard on 9th October. After seeing the champion County, Durham, thoroughly routed by the All Blacks, a correspondent to the *Daily Mail* wondered:

Is our national physique deteriorating? ... Our national character and physique are nowhere more apparent than in our games, and personally I am inclined to think that we have lost a good deal of our ancient robustness and sturdy independence.²²

This was typical of a number of correspondents' responses to the failure of English teams.

The most vigorous critic was a New Zealander, P. A. Vaile, who led the debate about national degeneracy in Britain, contrasting it with the superiority of the colonies. Vaile was a prolific journalist and author who wrote a series of books on sport, as well as a forgotten work on the condition of England.²³ He was also a regular contributor to the popular press and more serious reviews, such as the *Spectator* and the *National Review*. As such he formed part of that band of journalist/sportsmen whose careers straddled continents and who used sport to illustrate their world-view. On the 10th October 1905 he had published both an extensive letter to the *Times* outlining his critique, and an article in the *Daily Mail* entitled, *A Lesson in the Game of Life: Why the New Zealanders Win*.²⁴ In both Vaile

²² R. G. T. Coventry, *Daily Mail*, 9th October 1905

²³ P. A. Vaile, *Wake up, England* (London, 1907). His self-confidence as an expert on both sport and England was treated satirically back home in New Zealand where he was spoofed in a cartoon as a swell-headed prig. *Observer* (Auckland), 12th January 1907

²⁴ *Daily Mail*, 10th October 1905

argued, along the lines later followed by Seddon, that the New Zealanders' way of life gave them an inherent advantage over the British. In the *Times* he stated, 'The Maorilanders are bigger, stronger, faster men, who play with a dash and an abandon, a resource and versatility.'²⁵ In the *Mail* he developed the theme, emphasising that the New Zealanders were stronger both physically and mentally through living close to Mother Nature. As well as Richard Seddon riding on the back of New Zealand victories, the High Commissioner for the colony, William Pember Reeves, was a conspicuous attendee at matches and one who also commented on 'the natural advantages of the New Zealanders.'²⁶ Vaile had a further purpose in commenting on the state of English society, in a critique that saw the rugby matches merely as symptoms of a wider malaise, a malaise whose origins were to be found in the imperial metropolis.

'Squalor, poverty, degradation': The New Zealander Returns to London²⁷

In July 1905, a couple of months before the arrival of the rugby team in London, P. A. Vaile was one of two New Zealanders given a tour of the East End by Inspector Macmillan and Detective-Sergeant Ferrier of Scotland Yard. Vaile's report back to the New Zealand public can be seen as just one of a series of such journalistic reports of the middle classes visiting the dark heart of the metropolis that stretched back into the nineteenth century, and reached its peak during the

²⁵ *Times*, 10th October 1905

²⁶ Daley, 'The invention of 1905', p. 74

²⁷ *New Zealand Evening Post*, 10th July 1905

Whitechapel murders of 1888.²⁸ In his report Vaile emphasises the alien-ness of the population of the ‘country of ‘Jack the Ripper’’, where there is:

The bearded Russian who has not yet learned to discard his huge knee-boots; there are Anarchists ... by the score; there are secret society knaves, foreigners and cut-throats of every nationality mixed in one jostling, pushing, jabbering, polyglot crowd.’

The geographical extent is underlined with a description of:

Mile after mile of squalor and poverty and degradation, down through the little slums where, side by side, stand the shanties where Barney Barnato and Solly Joel were born.²⁹

It is significant that Vaile picks out Barnato and Joel as former inhabitants of the area, for they were emigrants to the Rand who had made their fortune in the disreputable melting pot of Johannesburg. Writers of popular stories featuring the empire, such as Rudyard Kipling and John Buchan, chose to portray Jewish people as ‘a degenerate ‘chosen race’ compared to the ‘civilising’ Imperial Race.’³⁰ At home too fierce criticism was levelled at the liberal immigration policy that allowed Jewish immigration from east Europe, culminating in the campaign for the introduction of an Aliens Act in the early 1900s. Opponents of Jewish immigration argued that the immigrants were ‘unskilled and physically feeble, but resilient and willing to work for a pittance.’³¹ It is just such a rhetoric into which Vaile’s

²⁸ Judith R. Walkowitz, ‘Chapter 1: Urban spectatorship’, pp. 15-40 in *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (London, 2000)

²⁹ *New Zealand Evening Post*, 10th July 1905

³⁰ Bryan Charette, *Constructions of ‘the Jew’ in English Literature 1875-1920* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 92; Nadia Valman, ‘Little Jew boys made good: Immigration, the South African War, and Anglo-Jewish fiction’, in Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (eds.), *The Jew’ in Late-Victorian and Edwardian culture: Between the East End and East Africa* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 46-48

³¹ David Feldman, ‘Jews and the British Empire’, p. 78

criticisms of city life fit, and which coloured his view of the degeneracy of life in the city among the poor.

Many commentators had criticised the South African War of 1899-1901 as one fought by honest British soldiers on behalf of the international capitalists based on the Rand. J. A. Hobson described South Africa as 'a weird mixture of civilization and savagedom: Uitlanders, Boers and Kaffirs' working under the sway of Jewish-British financiers in Johannesburg, which was 'essentially a Jewish town.'³² In the discourse surrounding touring South African teams, as shall be demonstrated later, there was a desire to separate South African sportsmen from such 'disreputable' elements by the financial sponsor of the tour, Abe Bailey. Vaile's text contrasts the way of life in England, where 'the criminal alien is pushing the British labourer out', with New Zealand, where 'the working man is a king compared with his brother here,' emphasising the degenerating process he perceived to be taking place in the imperial metropolis.

The theme of the degeneration of life within working-class London was one that was taken up among the sports press, and most especially in *C. B. Fry's Magazine*. *Fry's* was the most popular general sporting magazine of the era, and a publication 'infused with muscular Christianity.'³³ Fry himself was an amateur cricketer, one of

³² *Manchester Guardian*, 28th September 1899

³³ Kate Jackson, *George Newnes and the New Journalism in Britain, 1880-1910: Culture and Profit* (Aldershot, 2001), p.206

the stars of the England team, who made his living by journalism.³⁴ Like Vaile, Fry analysed English society and the wider Empire through the lens of sport. The influence of muscular Christianity on his world-view can be seen in the novel on which he collaborated with his wife, Beatrice, published in 1907 as *A Mother's Son*.³⁵ It tells the life of a man who has pursued the same life path as Fry himself: public school, Oxford (with a Blue), cricket for England. Where the novel diverges from Fry's own life is that Mark, the protagonist, volunteers to serve in the South African War, whereas Fry (in the prime of life), remained in England playing cricket.³⁶ Mark's life is ended prematurely on the veld, his old retainer informing the reader, 'They cruel Boers have shot him dead,' on the final page.³⁷ Such an ending is a classic example of the manly imperial Briton making a sacrifice for the national cause. The Frys also insert a note of contemporary political anxiety that echoes the anti-Semitism of Vaile in telling us that he was a reluctant soldier, 'He detested the idea of his country going to war with a small Republic. The thought of England doing the dirty work of alien financiers was odious to him.'³⁸ One can further see how the views of Vaile and Fry coincided on the problems of urban life in an editorial that Fry headlined *Straight Talk*. Introducing a piece of correspondence from a reader Fry says:

Here is a London headteacher declaring that two generations of London life mean deterioration, which is an opinion that ought to set the mind of a million thinking.

He goes on to quote the headmaster as saying:

³⁴ C. B. Fry, *Life Worth Living* (London, 1939); Iain Wilton, *C. B. Fry: An English Hero* (London, 1999). Fry was the most extraordinary all-round sportsman of his generation, if not of modern times.

³⁵ B. and C. B. Fry, *A Mother's Son* (London, 1907)

³⁶ Wilton, *C. B. Fry*, pp. 118-139

³⁷ Fry and Fry, *A Mother's Son*, p. 303

³⁸ Fry and Fry, *A Mother's Son*, p. 291

There can surely be no doubt that the human boy is the most difficult problem of our-day legislation ... if the conditions are not favourable to his developing in the way he was meant to, you will find that misdirected, civilization-hampered instincts and energies can turn him into a very nasty customer. See him smoking, and playing pitch and toss in the streets, full of suppressed insolence, and taking his ideas of manliness from men whose language, habits, and points of view have been fixed in the mould of the undesirable by a boyhood spent in town in their own turn.³⁹

Fears of the progressive worsening of character caused by life in London formed a background to the debate on the failures of English sportsmen that played out in the pages of the press.

Another prominent sports journalist to link sport to the deterioration of lower-class youth, and to the damaging effect of foreign elements, was Philip William Trevor, otherwise known as 'Dux'.⁴⁰ MCC member and keen club cricketer, he published a magisterial work on cricket in 1907 at the end of which he sought see into the future of the sport. He too was concerned for the future but was far less positive about the ability of working-class children than Fry. He dissented from those who would wish to see every English boy taught the national game, wryly commenting, 'What are the home surroundings of the majority of children in

³⁹ *C. B. Fry's Magazine*, Vol. 4 (1905-6), p.188. Fry had practical experience of educating working class children. During the 1900s he helped to run the *R. S. Mercury*, a training ship for 'improved street arabs of fourteen or fifteen years of age who ... vouched for themselves that they (were) willing to join the Royal Navy.' Wilton, *Fry*, p. 110.

⁴⁰ Trevor was rugby and cricket correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph* as well as a weekly columnist for *The Sportsman*. He was also a well-known club cricketer who managed an MCC tour to Australia in the winter of 1907-8. 'Obituary of Trevor, Col. Philip Christian William', in *Wisden* (London, 1932) at <http://www.espncricinfo.com/wisdenalmanack/content/story/228177.html>, accessed 3rd January 2014.

England?’ before telling the reader that even lower middle-class boys are brought up in an atmosphere of cheating and lying, before arguing that as a consequence:

It is well that cricket is not taught compulsorily to the children of those who are naïvely called “the poor”, as it is in the big schools of England. An obvious rejoinder ... is that the Yankee millionaire, the German Jew, or the wealthy English merchant ... who sends his sons to Eton or Harrow is a bigger swindler than the poor men he employs to swindle for him.⁴¹

Trevor then goes to argue that the plutocratic swindler can obviate his sin by using his money to send his children to a good school and, ‘delight in seeing them play cricket in a manly and generous spirit.’⁴² Such comments are typical of a more broadly held view among journalists that there was a requirement for the middle-classes to protect their sports from working class influence.

The fear of the pernicious effects of town life upon British masculinity was not confined, however, to the working classes. The failure of English rugby teams focused minds more on the decline of middle-class manliness in the new suburbs. Vaile’s original letter to *The Times* was provoked by Middlesex’s defeat by the All Blacks by 34 points to nil at Stamford Bridge. Vaile pointed out that the London county, with a catchment of some seven million people had been beaten by a country whose population was roughly one-tenth of that. Vaile went on to account for this act of giant-killing on the ground not only of a lack of physical ability, but also a want of mental agility, stating that:

⁴¹ Philip Christian William Trevor, *Problems of Cricket* (London, 1907), pp. 246-7

⁴² *Ibid.* p. 248

In England, the trend towards monotony of thought, speech, and action is repressing originality and vitality in every way, and is tending to induce a condition of mediocrity and inefficiency.⁴³

Vaile developed his thesis on the debilitating effect of suburban life on the imagination of the masses in a series of articles he produced throughout 1905 and 1906 for *C. B. Fry's Magazine* on the subject of 'John Bull', the male caricature of the English national character. Although the pieces are ostensibly about English society as a whole, as a metropolitan writer, and with their subject matter, it is clear that Vaile focused on the London middle classes. In an article on 'John Bull's Nerves' Vaile relates how one of his friends:

Who lives about ten miles out of London ... has come up to London for many years past with the same passengers, and in the evening has returned with them, but never a word "spake" they.

Vaile further outlines the sense of anomie in describing the life of the suburban commuter:

The husband lives ... in a grey street, as like the next grey street as one pea is like unto another, in a grey house as like to the next as one twin generally is unto the other, and he comes out on a grey morning frequently (in winter) as like unto yesterday as to-day is unto to-morrow, and he gets into a grey hole in the earth, which is the same as all grey holes in the earth, into a grey-or black-thing called by courtesy a carriage, and surrounded by grey somber, immobile faces, he is rushed through the grey hole to more grey streets and a grey office.⁴⁴

⁴³ *Times*, 10th October 1905

⁴⁴ *C. B. Fry's Magazine*, Vol. 5 (1906), p. 173-4

Thus, the failure of imagination of English rugby footballers was something that Vaile, and other critics, saw as being symptomatic of the monotony of modern urban life.

Such rhetoric about the stultifying effect of urban and suburban life developed Fry's arguments about the failure of the English rugby teams to compete with colonials. Fry claimed that:

A town-bred people can never compete with a country-bred people. We at home are chiefly town-bred ... we make no doubt that the New Zealanders, as a nation, in so far as they are an outdoor, fresh-air people, are physically superior to us in so far as we are an indoor, carbonic-acid people.⁴⁵

The theme of modern city life being incompatible with physical fitness was one that was explored by correspondents outside the pages of *Fry's*. In the *National Review*, E. H. D. Sewell, another prolific sports writer, acknowledged that, 'our players, office workers most of them, have no chance of competing on even terms.'⁴⁶ A correspondent to the *Daily Mail* complained that, 'the average Englishman of today, becoming more and more a flabby specimen of humanity (in work as in play) avoids as often as possible hard knocks, danger and much self-sacrifice. Small wonder the Middlesex team, puffing and blowing before half-time, cut such an amusing figure.'⁴⁷ Even correspondents wishing to refute the thesis that physical deterioration was taking place amongst English athletes conceded that the 'congested' nature of life in Middlesex was a barrier to success,⁴⁸ while the

⁴⁵ *C. B. Fry's Magazine*, Vol. 4 (1905-6), p. 210

⁴⁶ *National Review*, Vol. 46:276 (1906), p. 1078

⁴⁷ *Daily Mail*, 3rd October 1905

⁴⁸ *Times*, 17th October 1905

Globe waxed ironical upon the situation, commenting, 'it is the curse of modern sport that so many men let their business interfere with their training.'⁴⁹ The way in which English rugby players were castigated for being weak products of a new suburban lifestyle chimes with similar élitist worries in contemporary English literature that showed 'how a development in human geography that caused widespread dismay came to dictate the intellectuals' reading of twentieth century culture.'⁵⁰ Even if, as Greg Ryan has pointed out, the New Zealanders themselves were generally the product of city life, it was the fact that English players were leading an urban lifestyle to which commentators attributed their inferiority.⁵¹

Another fault of urban life, luxury, was given as a reason for the failure of English athletes during a revival of the physical degeneration debate that took place during the South African cricket tour of 1907. The cricketers proved to be unexpectedly formidable opponents in English conditions, *Wisden* commenting, 'to say that they far exceeded general expectations is to understate the facts.'⁵² In what was an atrocious summer, of the thirty-one matches that the tourists played they won twenty-one and lost only four. Already that year the British sporting public had been rocked by defeat by the Belgians in a rowing tournament, and scandalised by a Frenchman, Arnaud Massy, winning the British Open at golf. The threat that the South Africans posed at cricket provoked 'Dum Spero Spiro' to write to the *Daily Mail*, complaining that, 'the Colonial beats us time after time when it comes to

⁴⁹ *The Globe*, quoted in *Wanganui Herald*, 28th November 1905

⁵⁰ John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses* (London, 1992), p. 53

⁵¹ Ryan, 'Rural myth and urban actuality'. The All Blacks in this era were, to quote, 'disproportionately urban, educated and occupationally professional.' p. 33

⁵² *Wisden* (London, 1908)

endurance,' and in particular holding out the corrupt training methods of batsmen, who paid bowlers to bowl at them in the nets rather than taking their practice in direct competition on the cricket pitch.⁵³ This was contrasted in the press with the upbringing of the captain of the South Africans, Percy Sherwell, batting on roads using paraffin tins as wickets in Johannesburg.⁵⁴ Comment was made by a member at Lord's that, 'the gospel of fitness must be hammered into young England if it is to prevail as it did of old. There must be more self denial of luxury and indulgence ... carelessness and not degeneracy are at the root of much of our discomfiture.'⁵⁵ Such comments give the impression that cricket watchers at Lord's felt themselves in an oasis of calm, preserving ancient English values, in the midst of a city whose modernization and growth threatened those values.

Criticism of London as the source of national ills was not confined to writers for the London newspapers and reviews. Colonial teams toured the whole breadth of England and the United Kingdom where their success provoked similar debates in the regional press to those that broke out in the national titles. In the West Country, where a distinctive, anti-metropolitan rugby culture had developed, the weakness of English teams in the face of the colonial challenge was explicitly tied to their class bias.⁵⁶ One journalist from Devon, who went by the byline of 'Argus', complained:

⁵³ *Daily Mail*, 9th July 1907

⁵⁴ *Marylebone Times*, 19th July 1907

⁵⁵ *Observer*, 7th July 1907

⁵⁶ Dilwyn Porter, 'Cornwall and Rugby Union: Sport and identity in a place apart', in P. Dine and S. Crosson (eds.), *Sport, Representation and Evolving Identities in Europe* (Oxford, 2011)

It has been evident, too frequently, that, 'the classes' have had preference before 'the masses'. It is no longer possible to ignore quality among that stratum of society which is known as the working-classes. Possibly, even now, if it might be done with impunity, working-men players would be ignored for upper-crust persons ... It is a good thing that here in the West gentlemen will play as gentlemen, without that spirit of exclusiveness that is to be observed in some quarters. They are players on a level with the rest of the team, and they seek no distinction or differentiation.⁵⁷

His column was in response to 'attacks on working-men players' by metropolitan journalists.⁵⁸ Chief among those he took to task was Trevor, whom he quotes as saying:

I for one frankly confess that I do not consider RU eminently suited to the working man. He who has not been trained to it in the right school can scarcely be blamed for failing to realise that the game has its obligations as well as its opportunities.⁵⁹

Such an attitude was common amongst those running Rugby Union, where sensitivity to professionalism was a continuing theme after the split, with class separation being the main driving motivation.⁶⁰

However, there was a subtext to the conflict of views between Argus and Trevor that was usually referred to only obliquely in the pages of the press. Argus' local team were Devonshire, the champion county in 1906.⁶¹ Chief among their

⁵⁷ *Football Herald*, 1st December 1906

⁵⁸ *Football Herald*, 14th April 1906

⁵⁹ *Football Herald*, 14th April 1906

⁶⁰ Collins, *A Social History of Rugby Union*, p.45

⁶¹ Rugby Union players in the 1900s would play for a club side and, if selected, would also play for their county side. Club sides of the time did not play in leagues. Such regular competition was perceived as having led to the rise of professionalism. This is a contrast to the present day where

working-class players was James Peters, a carpenter in the dockyard at Devonport. Peters was born in 1879 to a black West Indian father and a white mother, both of whom worked in a circus troupe. As a child he worked as a bareback rider in the circus but after breaking his arm in an accident aged 11 he was abandoned to an orphanage in London. By chance the orphanage boys were allowed to watch Blackheath Rugby Club matches for free and by the age of fifteen Peters was the captain of the orphanage rugby team. On leaving the orphanage he moved to the West Country where he first played for Bristol before moving to Plymouth. In 1903 he received his Devon County cap and went on to play his first Test match for England against Scotland in 1906. Peters' selection for Bristol was not without controversy and there is evidence that members of the committee resigned over having a black player in the team.⁶²

There was further 'extraordinary debate' in the sports press over whether he should represent England, where it was said by the *Yorkshire Post* that his selection was 'by no means popular on racial grounds, though these should not prevail in sports.'⁶³ His outstanding contribution to Devonshire's progress in the County Championship led most observers to expect him to be selected with his halfback partner, Richard Jago for the first international of 1906 against Wales. That he wasn't caused consternation in the South-West with the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* commenting, 'it has been suggested that his non-selection has

(professionalised) club rugby is the élite level below internationals. Amateurs continue to play county championship Rugby Union.

⁶² Tony Collins, 'Peters, James (1879–1954)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/70984>, accessed 2nd Jan 2014]

⁶³ *Yorkshire Post*, 17th March 1906

been due to his features not being so white as those of others. But this cannot be true, or else he would not have been selected as first reserve.’⁶⁴ Peters finally got his chance for England, playing against Scotland and contributing to England’s first win over them in two years. After Peters scored a try in the match against France in the last international of the 1905-6 season, ‘Argus’ commented that:

The sturdy little scrum-worker, instanced early in the season (by a) critic ... as of a gutter-snipe species of half-backs, has justified all that was contended in his behalf by his most ardent admirers.⁶⁵

Peters had proved himself to be worthy of the international jersey, yet his selection remained controversial, especially with the arrival of the South Africans at the beginning of the next season.

The visits of touring teams provoked disquiet in the minds of many commentators on English sport and society. The success of the teams was important to politicians in the settler areas of the empire to aid the fostering of a national colonial identity. But the need to assert the strength of the colonial identity meant that perceived weaknesses in the mother country, whose social composition was radically different to those overseas, were magnified by the attention that visiting teams received in the press. English sportsmen became a political football to be kicked around between radicals who wanted to transform the traditional social order in a search to harness the energy of the masses, and conservatives who saw modern

⁶⁴ *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 5th February 1906. The latter remark is somewhat prescient of the Basil D’Oliveira affair. After initially not selecting the in-form D’Oliveira MCC considered naming him as a reserve to see if that would be an acceptable compromise for the South African Government. When the bowler Tom Cartwright withdrew from the squad MCC’s hand was forced and D’Oliveira was named as his replacement. The next day John Vorster, the South African Prime Minister, vetoed the tour. Murray and Merrett, *Caught Behind*, pp. 110-111

⁶⁵ *Football Herald*, 24th March 1906

life as accelerating away from the traditional structures that had underpinned national greatness in the past. Individuals such as James Peters, whose image did not fit the ideal of the imperial Englishman would find it much more difficult to be accepted on the field of play when their sport became a celebration of that imperial ideal. Peters' background stood in stark contrast with that of his immediate contemporary and rival for the halfback slot for England, Adrian Stoop. Stoop was the *right kind* of immigrant with a wealthy Dutch father who sent his son to Rugby School and University College, Oxford.⁶⁶

Rugby and Imperial Display - New Zealand

Despite the problems that the success of colonial sides posed for British masculinity, the sporting contests grew to become not just a celebration of sporting endeavour, but more specifically a celebration of imperial endeavour. The *Daily Mail*, a strongly imperialist paper, noted how tours had become a regular event, saying that:

We have become accustomed of recent years to the visits of colonial teams of cricketers and football players. A generation back Australia led the way, and twenty years later a Maori fifteen followed in the wake of the Australian cricketers. Last year it was the turn of the British population in New Zealand to send us the famous fifteen which marched to such a wonderful and unprecedented victory. If the South Africans can approach the performance of the 'All Blacks', their tour will be the sensation of 1906.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Ian Cooper, *Immortal Harlequin: The Adrian Stoop Story* (Stroud, 2004)

⁶⁷ *Daily Mail*, quoted in *New Zealand Evening Post*, 31st October 1906

This new regularity of tours meant that a programme of events began to develop, with the match against England in London, in cricket as well as in rugby, being the highpoint. The symbolism used in the press coverage of the tours conformed closely to the 'core ideology' of imperialism that MacKenzie identified, of militarism, royalism, the creation of national heroes, the cult of personality, and the racial ideas of Social Darwinism.⁶⁸ Clearly, in the sports most closely associated with imperialism - rugby and cricket - there was a class element to how the players were presented to the public. The press and authorities conspired to make the sports fixtures a middle- and upper-class ritual. There was neither the effort nor the desire to use sport as a vehicle for proselytising the imperial message to the masses in England.

There was also a difference between how each of the two sports was seen by its followers and exponents. Cricket was much more specifically an *English* sport. Although it was played throughout the empire, and in all home nations, it was felt to be the English game wherever it was played. Trevor summed the attitude of the time up when he said that:

Cricket is the national game, and I unhesitatingly say that, when you find a man completely out of sympathy with cricket, you will generally also find some other rather un-English trait in his character.

Ranjitsinhji, the great Indian batsman of the 1900s who became one of the most glamorous stars of the English game, described in *Jubilee Book of Cricket* how cricket conjured up image of England, together with the traditions, social

⁶⁸ MacKenzie, *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, p. 2 and p. 235

conventions and behaviours of the English no matter where it was played.⁶⁹ Of course the centre of the cricketing world, in the heart of empire, was Lord's Cricket Ground, 'as much a national institution as St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey.'⁷⁰ Conversely, the culture of Rugby Union, rather than unifying players in a common sporting culture, positively revelled in perceived differences of national style, as shall be brought out in this chapter and the further chapters on Ireland and France.⁷¹

English rugby, unlike cricket, had no fixed home stadium at the beginning of the twentieth century. Hence the choice of where to play the New Zealand fixture was decided quite late in the tour. The unprecedented demand for tickets for the colonial matches instigated a great debate in the press as to where it would be best to construct a new stadium for the Union game. Trevor, writing in *Country Life*, advocated 'a Rugby football Lord's' placed within the city that would be more convenient for spectators to get to than the current club grounds of Blackheath and Richmond.⁷² This opinion was vigorously opposed by traditionalists who preferred to site the national stadium in a semi-rural setting. In 1907 the RFU purchased a cabbage patch in Twickenham, then on the outskirts of London, as the plot for the future headquarters of the world game. With the issue of a purpose-built stadium for rugby still unresolved in 1905, however, it was uncertain at the beginning of the season exactly where the match between England and New Zealand would take

⁶⁹ K. S. Ranjitsinhji, *The Jubilee Book of Cricket* (London, 1897); Sandiford, 'England' in Stoddart and Sandiford, *The Imperial Game*, p. 27

⁷⁰ Trevor, *Problems of Cricket*, p. 2

⁷¹ Huw Richards, 'Review of the literature', in Cynthia McKinley (ed.), *A Rugby Compendium*, (London, 1998), p. 5

⁷² *Country life*, 27th October 1906

place. The unprecedented success of the New Zealanders, the *Sporting Life* remarked, demanded that the match against England be played at ‘the glassy pile’ of Crystal Palace.⁷³ Estimates of the crowd that came to see the New Zealanders were between 60,000 and 75,000, which made it one of the biggest attendances at a sporting fixture that year.⁷⁴ Crystal Palace was at the heart of the suburban spread of South London yet to look at the official illustration of the match one could be led to believe that it had been played in rural England (Fig. 2).⁷⁵

⁷³ *Sporting Life*, 5th December 1905

⁷⁴ *The Daily Mail* put the figure at 75,000, the *Sporting Life* between 60,000 and 70,000. The FA Cup Final at the same venue during this era commonly saw crowds in excess of 100,000.

⁷⁵ *Illustrated Sport and Dramatic News*, 9th December 1905



Fig. 2 England v New Zealand at Crystal Palace

Illustrated Sport and Dramatic News, 9th December 1905

The crowd, while apparent, is a formless mass, barely registering a presence as the action of the players, naturally enough, dominates the foreground. More telling is the scattering of trees across the horizon, while rather than the Crystal Palace itself being the significant building shown on the skyline we have a typical English church steeple. It is a picture of a major urban sporting event transmogrified into an Old Boys match on the village common. It is also a picture that domesticates the New Zealanders for the British audience.

The New Zealanders were portrayed in the media as model imperialists in ways that went beyond their embodiment of rugged frontier manliness. Much was made of the war record of the New Zealanders' captain, David Gallaher. Gallaher had fought in the South African War for eighteen months, attaining the rank of Squadron Sergeant-Major in the 10th New Zealand Rifles.⁷⁶ Fry was among many writers to comment upon this and he saw it as evidence of the closeness in culture between the New Zealanders and the British, commenting, 'in mufti they could not have been distinguished from their (British) opponents.'⁷⁷ E. H. D. Sewell also saw the tour in these terms, stating that:

On all hands there is evidence that the influence of the tour will be for further tightening the bonds of Empire. When the call comes again, as it assuredly will come again, Rugby men throughout the British Empire will once more be among the first to play the game shoulder to shoulder for the

⁷⁶ Denis McClean, 'Gallaher, David 1873-1917' in *Dictionary of New Zealand National Biography*, updated 22 June 2007 URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz>, accessed 18th December 2013.

⁷⁷ *C. B. Fry's Magazine*, Vol. 6 (1906-7), p.203

common cause, for which all true blue Britishers are always striving, King and Motherland.⁷⁸

One correspondent even ascribed the New Zealanders' success to their imperial fervour, saying that, 'The New Zealanders won because they are even more "loyal" than our men – they believe more in His Majesty.'⁷⁹ The King himself did not attend the Crystal Palace match but the desire to turn the rugby tour into a celebration of the imperial connection with the monarchy led to a campaign for an extra match to be added to the tour schedule. The idea was to hold a match in London between the colonial side and a team made up of the four home nations. The intention was to play the match in the presence of the sovereign with the proceeds of the game going towards the King Edward's Hospital Fund.⁸⁰ Such a match proved impossible to arrange, but the New Zealanders had the consolation of meeting their King at the Smithfield Show, the annual meeting of the Smithfield Club of livestock breeders at the Agricultural Hall in Islington, where 'His Majesty cordially shook hands with Mr. Tyler, at the same time congratulating the visitors on their splendid victory over England.'⁸¹ Presumably their presence had a connection with the New Zealanders' identification with farming, though it is tempting to think of them as being on display as some kind of 'best in show' among imperial male beasts.

Another way in which the New Zealanders were part of an imperial spectacle was in their use of the *haka*, or war cry, at the beginning of games. The *haka* was first performed in England by the New Zealand Maori, who toured in 1888, and it was

⁷⁸ E. H. D. Sewell, 'New Zealand and British Football' in *The National Review* (1906), p. 1083

⁷⁹ *Daily Mail*, 5th December 1905

⁸⁰ *Sporting Life*, 16th October 1905

⁸¹ *Sporting Life*, 5th December 1905. George Tyler was one of the New Zealand forwards.

revived to become part of the pageantry associated with the 1905 tourists, bringing a touch of colonial mystique to the mother country. The rituals of Maori culture had begun to be incorporated into the Pakeha conception of New Zealand identity as a degree of acceptance of Maori values developed through the second half of the nineteenth century.⁸² Royal visits in particular emphasised the linkage between Maori, settlers and the empire, as when Maori assembled at Rotorua to welcome the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall in 1901.⁸³ The *haka* that was performed in 1905 was not endowed with the aggressive machismo of that of the present era, but was a much more relaxed affair in keeping with the conventions of gentlemanliness of the Edwardian era (Fig. 3).

⁸² Philippa Mein Smith, *Concise History of New Zealand* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 117

⁸³ Michael King, 'Between two worlds', in Oliver and Williams, *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, p. 298



Fig. 3 The 1905 New Zealand team performs the *haka*.

C. B. Fry's Magazine, Vol. IV (1905), p. 298

Only two of the team were of Maori descent and it is unsure that even they knew the exact ritual meaning of the act.⁸⁴ However, for some people the *haka* was also evidence of a problem with the New Zealand team – how ‘British’ was it? Much of Fry’s concern to prove that the New Zealand team was more British than the British was a consequence of the fact that some of the team were of Maori descent. He conceded that, ‘Stead, the vice-captain ... had a dash of Maori blood in him, and so, it was said, had one or two of his colleagues; but generally the team were of purely British extraction.’⁸⁵ Although the *haka* was performed against club teams,

⁸⁴ John McCrystal, *The Originals: 1905 All Black Rugby Odyssey* (Auckland, 2005), p. 132

⁸⁵ *C. B. Fry's Magazine*, Vol. 6 (1906-7), p. 203

and was performed against the Welsh, it was not performed in the Crystal Palace match at the white heart of empire. Even if the New Zealand team had outperformed the mother country, it was important that the match was staged as a reminder of the familial imperial bond.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Charlotte MacDonald, 'Chapter 12: Ways of belonging: Sporting spaces in New Zealand history', in Giselle Byrnes (ed.), *The New Oxford History of New Zealand* (Oxford, 2009), p. 278



OUR INVADERS.

CAPTAIN OF THE SPRINGBORES. "WHAT WAS THIS FERREIRA TRYING TO DO WITH HIS SCRATCH LOT, WHEN IT'S OUR TEAM THAT'S MAKING THE ONLY AUTHORISED RAID?"
MR. REVIVER PYNCH. "WELL, THERE'S BEEN A WARM RECEPTION FOR BOTH OF YOU—WITH A DIFFERENCE!"

Fig. 4 'Our Invaders'

Punch, 21st November 1906

Rugby and Imperial Display – South Africa

Questions of Britishness and loyalty were also at the heart of the way that the South African rugby team was presented when it came to Britain in 1906. The tour had an overtly political message of reconciliation; at the outset of the tour the captain of the South Africans, Paul Roos, a man who had fought against the British during the War, declared that, 'politics and creed are sunk when Rugby is concerned.'⁸⁷ His comments were picked up in a *Punch* cartoon where Roos' loyalty is juxtaposed with reports of a rebellion that occurred in South Africa during the rugby tour (Fig. 4).⁸⁸ Although the team was almost half and half made up of men of British and Afrikaner descent the British press portrayed it as a Boer team. In fact the team was finely balanced to the extent that the captaincy of Roos was counter-balanced by the vice-captaincy of William Millar, who had fought on the British side. But in the press the South Africans were 'invaders from the Cape, carrying war into the Mother Country.'⁸⁹ The military theme was carried on in the *Sporting Life* where the team were described as having, 'a deep sense of the responsibility placed upon them, by being selected to represent their country, and in consequence of this, as it is in any of our crack regiments, their *esprit de corps* is

⁸⁷ *Evening Post*, 6th December 1906. Paul Roos was born in Stellenbosch in 1880, where he trained as a teacher and played rugby for Stellenbosch University. He saw brief service in the South African War before returning to his career on the cessation of hostilities. Piet van der Schyff, *Paul Roos, se Springbokken 1906-2006* (Stellenbosch, 2007), pp. 172-3. For an account of the tour's political significance see Dean Allen, 'Tours of reconciliation: Rugby, war and reconstruction in South Africa, 1891-1907', *Sport in History*, Vol. 72:2 (June 2007)

⁸⁸ *Punch*, 21st November 1906. The Ferreira Raid was a pre-cursor to the Afrikaner Rebellion of 1914 in which there was a small incursion into the Cape Colony by former Boer soldiers who had been working for the German colonial government in South-West Africa. President Kruger refused to support them and the revolt was put down by the Cape Government. Tilman Dederig, 'The Ferreira Raid of 1906: Boers, Britons and Germans in Southern Africa in the aftermath of the South African War', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 26:1 (2010)

⁸⁹ *Evening Post*, 17th December 1906

of a high standing.’⁹⁰ If the British element were ever acknowledged it would be in the context of the War, for example the *London Evening News* claiming that, ‘some of the team are of English extraction, but a great many are pure-bred Boer. In fact, four or five members of the team met in deadly combat during the recent war.’⁹¹ The idea of the ‘pure-bred’ Boer may have little basis in fact but it was certainly of concern to contemporary commentators that the racial difference of the Springboks should be emphasised. C. B. Fry was making a comparison with the South Africans when he lauded the British origins of the New Zealand team. For Fry the South Africans were ‘largely Cape Dutch, and their complexions are not of the British tint.’⁹² Ironically, this conception of the team as largely made up of Boers was one that would feed the developing Afrikaner masculine identity in the unified South Africa, which based itself on the Boers’ idealisation of rebellion and Republicanism.⁹³ Rugby, perceived as a macho sport, fitted in perfectly with the Afrikaner masculine ideals of physical resilience and collective discipline.⁹⁴ Such a process was aided by the way in which the South African team was portrayed as being loyal yet different by the British sporting press.

By contrast with the New Zealanders the ‘Boers’ were presented as an exotic ‘other’. The Springboks, too, had a ‘war cry’, but this time it was performed at the match in Crystal Palace against the English. Again, it was not so much a sporting

⁹⁰ *Sporting Life*, 24th September 1906

⁹¹ *London Evening News*, 26th September 1906

⁹² *C. B. Fry’s Magazine*, Vol. 6 (1906-7), p. 203

⁹³ Sandra Swart, ‘A Boer and his gun and his wife are three things that are always together’: Republican masculinity and the 1914 rebellion’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 24:4 (1998), p. 738

⁹⁴ Ronald Hyam and Peter Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok: Britain and South Africa since the Boer War* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 15; Allen, ‘Beating them at their own game’, pp. 51-2

challenge as an entertainment for the crowd, which had almost become expected of touring teams. Paddy Carolin, one of the forwards who kept a diary during the tour, described it thus, 'We gave the people a taste of our war cry, and if the smiles which adorned their faces were any criterion, they fully appreciated it.'⁹⁵ Unlike the New Zealand *haka*, however, the South African war cry seemed to have little basis in any kind of indigenous ritual. The origin of it was described as being 'in doubt', some players saying that it was derived from the 'Hottentots', others from Zulu practice.⁹⁶

Ironically the Springboks' embrace of cultural diversity extended no further than the performative. When it came to the match between Devonshire and South Africa, James Peters' race became a major issue. The match was the most anticipated of the tour thus far since Devon was the champion county and were expected to give the South Africans a tough game. One witness said that the South African team refused to play the match when they realised that the Devon team included a black player:

The South Africans made a scene, even though they were told Peters was known to be one of the best and fairest men who ever wore a football boot. Their High Commissioner who had to come down from the stand persuaded the visitors to take the field. 'Well, all right', they agreed, 'but we shall kill him.' Tom Kelly, Devon's captain replied, 'That's all right, we've been trying to for years.'⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Lappe Laubscher and Gideon Nieme (eds.), *The Carolin Papers: A Diary of the 1907 Springbok Tour* (Pretoria, 1990), p. 189

⁹⁶ *L'Auto*, 1st January 1907

⁹⁷ Anne Pallant, *A Sporting Century, 1863-1963* (Kingsbridge, 1997), p. 93 and p. 97

A South African, Reid, commented, 'Heaven help him ... the guys are determined to blot him out' and in his account made it clear that the team were totally against the idea of going on to the same field as Peters, whom he compared to a 'Cape Hottentot' with 'woolly black hair.'⁹⁸

No English newspaper commented on this incident at the time, presumably because it would have been an embarrassing scene both for the hosts and for the tourists, yet reading between the lines of the coverage of the match one can draw out a picture of racial prejudice being displayed towards Peters, and a collusion in that prejudice between the rugby authorities and the metropolitan press. The local press accused the referee of bias in favour of the South Africans, and more specifically said that Peters was denied a legitimate score from a drop-goal despite the fact that the referee himself had signalled the goal.⁹⁹ Some idea of the colour prejudice that appeared within the South African team can be gained from a series of columns that appeared in the *South African Review* throughout the duration of the tour. Written under the pseudonym 'Mimosa' and purporting to be letters home from a member of the touring party it is clear by the end of the series that they are satirical comments mixing real events with exaggerated situations that are designed to give a picture of life inside the South African camp. The players were subject to a press embargo and all access to the team was controlled by Carden, the team manager. Only he or Paul Roos, the captain, gave interviews. Despite their unreliability as factual evidence of actual dialogue, Mimosa's columns

⁹⁸ van der Schyff, *Paul Roos*, p. 88. The original Afrikaans for 'blot him out' is 'hok te slaan'. I am grateful to Anria Minaar for the Afrikaans translations in this thesis.

⁹⁹ *Football Herald*, 20th October 1906

give us an insight into the social attitudes prevalent in the team, or at least among the white society from which it was drawn. Worth quoting at length is this anecdote that appeared in November 1906, shortly after the match between Devon and the Springboks:

We had a rather painful experience a few days ago. A young Englishman, who has taken a great interest in our team, turned up one day looking exceptionally pleased. He was actually beaming, and asked us to go to his flat, as he had a great surprise in store for us. When we arrived he introduced us all round to the 'surprise', who he said was a great friend of his, and had been to college with him. A full-blooded Kaffir man! A man immaculately dressed and who spoke English as well as he did Kaffir, and with a strong college drawl. A man who we were told was an authority on mythology or something of that sort.

Well, we made the best of it, although I could see Roos' face burning and his hands twitching when the nigger wanted to shake hands. We spoke to him in Kaffir and he answered in that language and kindly wished us the best of luck against Wales, and gave us a few words of classical advice.

Carden is always pressing upon us the necessity of being friendly, but we never thought that it would extend to a Kaffir. We all swore it would be the last time, and we are not having any surprise packets in future.

The Englishman was as pleased as Punch.

'Just like being in your own country, wasn't it?' he said, delighted.

'Oh, very - very,' murmured Krige between his teeth.

Then we went home and washed and said bad words to each other. Krige would not eat any dinner that night.¹⁰⁰

Appearing so closely after the match between South Africa and Devonshire this article can be read as a coded way of referring to the South Africans' anger at being forced to play against Peters.

This anecdote also illustrates the powerful argument made by Vivian Bickford-Smith about 'creole élites' in British Africa at the turn of the twentieth century, that in the context of South Africa no matter how assimilated 'natives' and 'coloureds' became to Western culture by means of education, culture and economic autonomy 'black Englishmen' would never be treated in the same way as whites. Indeed just in this small vignette one can see a social manifestation of the political act of betrayal that the British state would commit upon those members of the creole élite who wished to join with the British in the 'civilising mission' of the empire whereby a rising black middle class in the Cape suffered 'growing instances of discrimination' as the British authorities grew to favour a partnership with the Afrikaans section of South African society.¹⁰¹

That any of the controversies surrounding the Devon game were not reported in the national press is testimony to the way in which the South African tour was being run very much as an exercise in imperial propaganda, with the dominant

¹⁰⁰ *South African Review*, 2nd November 1906

¹⁰¹ Vivian Bickford-Smith, 'The betrayal of creole élites', in Sean Hawkins and Phillip D. Morgan (eds.), *Black Experience and the Empire* (Oxford, 2004), p. 194-5. I am aware of criticism of the term 'creole élite' and its application in the British colonial context. Nevertheless I think it is a useful term to describe individuals who aspired to make a transition from traditional indigenous social structures to a career and lifestyle within the culture of their colonial rulers. As such I have used the term to describe a similar phenomenon in the French colonial context in Chapter 3.

narrative in the national press being that the tour demonstrated the loyalty of the South African colonies, such a narrative continues to be perpetuated by contemporary sports historians.¹⁰² The Devon game came shortly before the selection panel met to draw up the two teams that would compete in a trial match to provide the final England test team to play against South Africa at Crystal Palace. The Englishmen would not have a great surprise in store for their opponents at Crystal Palace - Peters did not make it into either of the squads for the trial match, despite having already played twice for England earlier that year. West Country correspondents attributed this to class bias, attacking the selectors for attempting to exclude working-class men from the game.¹⁰³ The way in which Peters' class and race intersected to make him a *persona non grata* within the international game is emphasised by a letter to the *The Sportsman*, which described Peters as:

Probably the finest half in the four countries ... who is constantly ignored, presumably because his skin is not so fair in shade as it might be. There is not a cleaner or fairer player than Peters in the whole of Great Britain: though not a 'Varsity man, Peters is one of Nature's gentlemen, and a man whom it is an honour to play with or against.¹⁰⁴

There was no rebuttal to this view by the selectors or in the London press. Its accuracy was confirmed by the leading sports journalist E.H.D. Sewell in his column for the *Straits Times* where he said that, 'When this year's big games come on, they leave out Peters, chiefly because the South Africans preferred not to play

¹⁰² Allen, 'Beating them at their own game'

¹⁰³ *Football Herald*, 14th April 1906

¹⁰⁴ Letter to *The Sportsman* from an unknown correspondent, quoted in *Straits Times*, 15th February 1907

against a coloured man.’¹⁰⁵ Sewell further reflected the prejudices of his class when Peters was recalled to the team in 1907, where he expressed his surprise at the recall and commented, ‘as though English Rugby football is in such a state that there are no white men left to play half!’ Peters’ treatment, as a consequence of his class and his race, led him to become a non-person in national sporting terms. This is testified to by an absence – there are few, if any, representations of Peters in the popular press of the day. Confirmation of the way in which the RFU now saw rugby as a white affair is shown by the way they refused to allow ‘a team of Kaffirs’ to tour England in 1907.¹⁰⁶

Although it was important for the British press to present the South Africans as an exotic ‘other’, it was also important for them to be shown as now loyal subjects of the British Empire. Thus, in an echo of events of the previous year, a campaign was launched for the South Africans to play England again. The first match at Crystal Palace, in front of 33-40,000 spectators, was played to a 3-3 draw, but had occurred in atrocious weather that many felt had disadvantaged the Springboks.¹⁰⁷ Campaigners for a repeat fixture included C. B. Fry and Winston Churchill, again with the proceeds going towards providing a ‘Springbok bed’ in a London hospital.¹⁰⁸ Once more the extra match proved too difficult to arrange but the desire to put on such a match demonstrates how sport was seen as an important way of expressing imperial unity, with the metropolis as the key site for imperial sporting display. Imperial unity between England and South Africa would be more

¹⁰⁵ *Straits Times*, 20th May 1907

¹⁰⁶ *Minutes of the Rugby Football Union*, 15th March 1907

¹⁰⁷ *Sporting Life*, 10th December 1906

¹⁰⁸ *Wanganui Herald*, 21st January 1907

fully expressed in the cricket tour the following summer, as outlined in the next chapter.

Conclusion: Middle-Class Values and Middle-Class Fears

It is patent that the playing of international cricket and rugby in the Edwardian era encompassed all five facets of the ideological cluster that MacKenzie sees as making up the core ideology of imperialism. The matches played against touring colonial teams were key demonstrations of the imperial brotherhood between the metropolis and the white settler colonies, with the message conveyed not just through performance on the field to large crowds, but also through the sporting and popular press to the country as a whole. In taking to the field to play one another English and colonial sides were demonstrating the successful exportation of the middle-class concept of muscular Christianity to the corners of the globe.

However, one must not overstate the extent to which there was any desire by the sporting authorities to transmit those values to the masses. Both Rugby Union and cricket in the Edwardian period were self-consciously middle-class games, and in the context of London demonstrate the way in which imperial culture had significant boundaries along class lines. Lord's during this period was an imperial club for spectators as well as players, in which one required the correct credentials, leisure time and disposable income to be able to attend. Similarly in rugby, despite boasts of massive attendance, audiences were overwhelmingly middle class. It is significant that after the success of the colonial matches at

Crystal Palace in 1905 and 1906 plans were made to create a purpose-built headquarters for rugby at Twickenham.¹⁰⁹ No longer would rugby be just one of a number of sporting spectacles that would be on show in a multi-purpose venue with which all classes of Londoners were familiar. With the construction of Twickenham one can see the Rugby Union authorities consciously imitating the All England Club at Wimbledon and MCC at Lord's in creating a purpose-built space that would ensure the segregation of their sport from the city as a whole. This demarcation of rugby from the masses in London, which came in for some criticism from London-based rugby supporters, mirrored the way in which each of the sporting authorities in cricket and Rugby Union rigorously enforced the divide between professional and amateur players; within the game in the case of cricket, and of course in rugby, by the casting out of professionals from the union code.¹¹⁰

The debate over physical degeneration and its relationship to city life also demonstrates how the middle-class players and administrators of the game felt the need to demarcate their game from the masses. Poor performances against colonial teams provoked a fear that the products of the public school system were failing to demonstrate the skills that were supposed to justify their leadership role in the political and social life of the nation and empire, as well as on the sports field. In part this was attributed to the effects of city life, both from the 'residuum' living in the East End, and also from the monotony of suburbia. That Twickenham was built on the fringe of the city, notwithstanding being a part of the process of suburbanisation itself, demonstrates a desire by the rugby authorities to take the

¹⁰⁹ *Minutes of the Rugby Football Union*, 1st December 1906

¹¹⁰ U. A. Titley and A. R. McWhirter, *Centenary History of the Rugby Football Union* (London, 1970), p. 126; Ed Harris, *Twickenham: The History of the Cathedral of Rugby* (Cheltenham, 2005), p. 40 and pp. 54-5

game away from the city and return it to its rural roots. In the debate between the conservatives and progressives among thinkers on sport the conservatives triumphed in their choice of a new headquarters for the imperial game.

Constructing Imperial Identity:

The 1907 South African Cricket Tour of England

The 'Anglification' of South Africa

The 1907 South African cricket tour of England was part of a programme aimed at making South Africa 'British'. In the wake of the South African War of 1899-1902 the colonies that were to become South Africa were still politically and culturally contested spaces. As Boer leaders struggled to hold in check a process of modernisation that was being accelerated by the massive industrial development of the Rand, the British leadership in South Africa was criticised for allowing the 'Boerfication' of territories conquered at the cost of much blood and £270 million.¹ In Britain itself, critics of imperial policy argued that the British had no business at all in South Africa, and that the war was essentially a piece of economic vampirism by international capitalists.² In bringing the cricket team to tour the United Kingdom a nexus of financiers, cricket administrators and journalists sought to use sport and its attendant publicity to smooth away the disreputable reputation of South Africa in the public mind. While the rugby tour may have been intended as a tour of reconciliation between Briton and Boer, by contrast, the cricket tour was a tour of rehabilitation. It was especially intended to rehabilitate the reputation of the Transvaal, both the source of South Africa's enormous mineral wealth, and of the bloody conflict to control that wealth. By this means I argue that there was an

¹ *Daily Express*, 20th August 1907

² J. A. Hobson, *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Effects* (London, 1900)

attempt to use sport to 'Anglify' South Africa in a process intended to reverse the 'Boerfication' feared by the *Express*.

The soft power projected by the cricket tour was founded on the hard politics of colonial government. The generation of British administrators placed in South Africa after the War were committed to a policy of colonial nationalism in which ties with Britain were to be strengthened by encouraging emigration from the mother country, a policy that aimed at tilting the balance of population away from the Afrikaners and towards the British.³ The South African cricketers of 1907 were a part of the wider discourse surrounding the character of South African society and its relationship to the British metropole, in which they served to emphasise the commonalities between the South African colonies and the mother country. The 1907 tour coincided with the Colonial Conference of Premiers in London, whose purpose in part was to settle the political future of South Africa. At the time South Africa was still an entity made up of several different colonies, each with its own government and historical relationship with Britain. In a remarkable anti-imperialist swing that year, the Afrikaners won power not only in their strongholds of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, but also in the Natal and Cape Colony, where British rule was more deeply embedded.⁴ The Union of South Africa was not yet assured. There was much to do if the British were to secure control of their newly conquered territory. As the outgoing High Commissioner, Lord Alfred Milner, had commented in a private letter to his successor Lord

³ Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido, 'Lord Milner and the South African state', *History Workshop Journal*, No. 8 (1970), p. 69; Hyam and Hensaw, *The Lion and the Springbok*, p. 10

⁴ Shula Marks, 'Chapter 4: War and union', in Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager and Bill Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa: Volume 2, 1885-1994* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 191

Selborne, 'the war had not decided that South Africa would remain permanently in the Empire: it had only made it possible.'⁵

The political shape of South Africa, and its geographical extent, was yet to be decided but there was another question to be decided about South African identity which continued to be played out in the twenty-first century: who is a South African? It was a crucial question for South Africa. In the wake of the economic boom caused by the discovery of vast quantities of gold at the end of the nineteenth century, the Rand had been swamped by a cosmopolitan population of labourers, adventurers and speculators, not just from Britain but from all over the world, to exploit the mines. The mining companies were generally under British control, or at least listed on the London Stock Exchange, but the population of the Rand was a mixture of indigenous Africans, immigrant Africans, Boers, Brits, Americans, Germans, Chinese, Jews and many other religions, nationalities and ethnicities besides. The Boers had failed to enforce a division of southern Africa into a British colony beside a Boer republic, but theirs was still the dominant culture among whites. In the census of 1904 one in five of the population of present-day South Africa was classed as 'European'. Of those, Afrikaans-speakers were the majority in every colony, even Natal, but especially in Orange Free State and the Transvaal, the centre of the mining industry.⁶ Some in Britain were uncertain as to whether South Africa was ready to take its place within the British Empire. The usually pro-imperial *Daily Mail* asserted that, 'It is difficult to assign South Africa a place among the daughter nations. Canada we know, Australia we

⁵ L. M. Thompson, *The Unification of South Africa* (Oxford, 1959), p. 15

⁶ John Eddy and Deryck Schrueder (eds.), *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism* (London, 1988), p. 211

know. But South Africa is like a sealed book. What form will Colonial Nationalism in South Africa assume?’⁷

The Chinese were the first to be rejected as potential South Africans, partly through motives of humanitarianism, but just as much as part of a wave of anti-Asian prejudice that appeared in white settler societies in the British Empire at the end of the nineteenth century.⁸ Asian migrants provoked disquiet through a combination of economic insecurity and racial hostility, with the white ‘imperial working class’ especially suspecting bosses of undercutting their wages by importing cheap labour.⁹ On the Transvaal, where there was a widespread feeling among white workers that the South African War ‘had been fought with the promise that it would become another white workers’ paradise like Australia’ there was controversy over the mining magnates’ use of imported Chinese labour running up to and during the 1907 cricket tour.¹⁰ Owing to the disruption of the African labour market in the wake of the war, the mining companies, supported by Milner, had resorted to using cheap imported Chinese labourers, who were forced to work in slavery-like conditions.¹¹ The Chinese were forced to live in self-contained compounds and forbidden to mix with the rest of society, so that they were in effect imprisoned. In Britain this caused uproar, especially amongst the Liberals who came to power in 1905. The incoming government terminated any

⁷ *Daily Mail*, 18th March 1906

⁸ Rachel K. Bright, ‘Chapter 5: Asian migration and the British world, c.1850-c.1914’, in Kent Fedorowich and Andrew S. Thompson (eds.), *Empire, Migration and Identity in the British World* (Manchester, 2013), p. 128; see Rachel K. Bright, *Chinese Labour in South Africa, 1902-10: Race, Violence, and Global Spectacle* (Cambridge, 2013) for a full account of the Chinese labour question in South Africa during this period.

⁹ Jonathan Hyslop, ‘The white imperial working class makes itself ‘white’: White labourism in Britain, Australia, and South Africa before the First World War’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 12:4 (1999), p. 399

¹⁰ Bright, ‘Asian migration’, p. 139

¹¹ Hyam and Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok*, p. 11

fresh arrival of Chinese labour, and was being pressed by progressive opinion in the United Kingdom to end the contracts of those already working in South Africa and repatriate them. The campaign against the use of Chinese labour focused on the iniquitous mine owners as the cause of the problem, and that campaign continued in Parliament and the press throughout 1907.¹² White labourers took advantage of the repatriation of Chinese labour to strike for better pay and conditions, and mine owners responded by employing Afrikaners from the countryside as strikebreakers. The British army was used to break up the striking miners, and again this caused uproar in Britain where it was perceived that British troops were ordered by the mining magnates to put down British workers in favour of Afrikaner blacklegs.¹³ One might say that in 1907 the Rand mining magnates had something of an image problem. By investigating the personalities behind the tour, and their motivations, this chapter argues that the development of cricket as a cultural bond between Britain and South Africa was a combination of financial interest and imperial ideology. Cricket was used as a way not just of improving the reputation of the Transvaal in the British public's mind; it was also used to advance the very concrete aim of reinforcing the commercial relationship between London and South Africa, especially with the mining interest.

Despite being the third oldest Test-playing side, the early years of the South African team has until recently been rather neglected by historians in comparison

¹² Peter Richardson, 'The recruiting of Chinese indentured labour for the South African gold mines, 1903-1908', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 18:1 (1977); Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815-1914* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 252 and p. 266

¹³ Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *The Randlords: The Men Who Made South Africa* (London, 1993), p. 224

to Australia, India and the West Indies.¹⁴ Perhaps because historians have seen Test cricket between South Africa and England as ‘an Anglophile ‘family’’ affair it has not had the same dramatic appeal as other colonies where there was a stronger narrative of colonial struggle against the mother country.’¹⁵ However, the set of circumstances in which Anglo-South African cricket became a ‘family affair’ is the very essence of how this chapter approaches the 1907 tour. In contrast to the rugby team the journalistic discourse around the cricket team emphasised the shared heritage of tourists and hosts. In 1907 there was no certainty in the British public’s mind that South Africa was part of the family. Cricket contests became a means of extending Britain’s cultural hegemony, not by fighting the Boers, but rather by excluding them and other racial groups from the English game.¹⁶ The empire was made to appear an essential part of the English character, while the English character was simultaneously made to appear essential to the British imperial project.

The common culture of the ‘motherland’ and South Africa was reinforced by the foundation of major cricket clubs in the centre of South African cities. Such clubs acted as centres for élite social and sporting encounters. Chief among them was the Wanderers Club in Johannesburg. The Wanderers Club had been formed during the Transvaal Boer Republic with the rather incongruous figure of President Kruger, who had donated the club the land for its ground, as its first President. However,

¹⁴ Although this is slowly being rectified. See Murray and Vahed, *Empire and Cricket*; Odendaal, ‘Neither cricketers nor ladies’; Albert Grundlingh, ‘From J. J. ‘Boerjong’ Kotze to Hanse Cronje: Afrikaners and cricket in twentieth-century South Africa - diffusion and representation’, *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 28:1 (2011)

¹⁵ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 227

¹⁶ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London, 1971), T. J. Jackson Lears, ‘The concept of cultural hegemony: Problems and possibilities’, *American Historical Review*, Vol. 90:3 (June, 1985)

the symbolic transfer of the space from one where English pastimes were accommodated by Boer patronage to one that was at the core of the new British political and financial establishment in Johannesburg was shown in the wake of the South Africa War. The Club was revived under the new Honorary Presidency of Sir Alfred Milner, with Abe Bailey as President.¹⁷

Playing the English Man

While sport in the Edwardian era was at the core of British imperial culture, cricket was *primus inter pares*. That cricket would become *the* imperial game was not inevitable but was a consequence of the power struggle between MCC and professional cricketers in the mid-nineteenth century. In the 1850s and 1860s professional cricketers began to organise themselves into teams that challenged the authority of MCC to run the game. This conflict in cricket between ‘independent professionals of the lower classes and latter-day representatives of the old feudal system’ was decided in favour of the latter by means of a healthy dose of hypocrisy, in the form of ‘shamateurism’. Thus liberated from the stigma of professionalism the middle- and upper-class products of public schools joined their former feudal Lords in rallying around the ideology of muscular Christianity.¹⁸ This unification of the upper and middle classes was embodied in the way that MCC roused itself against the threat of professional, working-class cricket in the mid-nineteenth century to enforce strict rules on professionals that ensured that gentlemen could maintain their social distinction on and off the cricket pitch. The upper classes asserted their authority over the game and ensured that the administration of the

¹⁷ Thelma Gutsche, *Old Gold: The History of the Wanderers Club* (Cape Town, 1966), p. 111

¹⁸ Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, p. 105-7

national sport remained in the hands of a private members' club, whose membership was homogeneously middle and upper class, in which 'the older world of noble connections and county contacts broke down' and was replaced by 'a new system of favours based upon education.'¹⁹ The extent to which the upper classes had a grip on the game can be seen from the fact that between 1860 and 1914 seventy-seven per cent of committee members of the MCC were Oxford or Cambridge graduates.²⁰ The president, who was the figurehead of the club and nominated for a one-year term, was almost invariably a member of the aristocracy. The men who ran the club and set policy were also entirely from an upper-class background. The secretary F. E. Lacey, whose term of office ran from 1898 to 1926, was an ex-Cambridge man, while Lords Hawke and Harris, who were the 'big men' at Lord's, were both old Etonians.²¹ Even Harris conceded that 'to some it might appear that MCC is a highly aristocratic and autocratic body.'²²

The rulers of the game were at one and the same time the ruling class of the nation, and they saw cricket as expressing the very essence of what it meant to be English; Englishmen were hard working, with a spirit of fair play and fundamentally 'gentlemanly.' The English manly ideal could be summed up in one word - 'character.' John H. Field has written of the way in which "Character" was a highly charged term of portentous significance for the late Victorians.²³ Defining what character meant to the Victorians, and by extension to the Edwardians, is not simple, for it was a concept that was open to different interpretations. But one of

¹⁹ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 113

²⁰ James Bradley, 'The MCC, society and empire', p. 31

²¹ P. F. Warner, *Long Innings* (London, 1951), p. 42

²² Lord Harris and F. Ashley-Cooper, *Lords and the MCC* (London, 1914), p. 211

²³ John Field, *Towards a Programme of Imperial Life*, p. 26

the key ways that the Victorians saw character being formed was through moral training and self-discipline, as opposed to the Georgian view where leisure and sociability were seen as the means of character development. Character could develop through the influence of others, but it was essentially seen as being under the individual's own control. Public schools were one way of training men of good character, but it was something which was held to be open to people of all classes, or rather all individuals, for the Victorian ethos was individualistic.

A good example of this is Samuel Smiles's book *Character* in which it was emphasised that, 'each man can act his part honestly and honourably, and to the best of his ability. He can use his gifts, and not abuse them. He can strive to make the best of life. He can be true, just, honest, and faithful, even in small things.'²⁴ This philosophy had great appeal amongst all classes towards the end of the century and by the Edwardian era the English character was widely held to be one of the fundamental reasons for the success of the British Empire and of English sport, 'in which the potentially conflicting values of teamwork and self-reliance, of concentration and courage, of obedience and initiative, were presented as unproblematically compatible.'²⁵

Character was deemed necessary to be a gentleman, and a cricketer. An essential part of the make-up of a gentleman cricketer was amateurism. Despite the fact that many supposedly amateur cricketers were handsomely rewarded in 'expenses' the status of amateur cricketers was jealously guarded in order to maintain a strict

²⁴ Samuel Smiles, *Character* (London, 1871), p. 2

²⁵ Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930* (Oxford, 1991), p. 116

social hierarchy on and off the cricket field. In the Edwardian era it was the gentlemen batsmen who were held up as an example of English masculinity. The distinction between professional Player and gentleman Amateur in the Edwardian period was at its height, with men like Lord Hawke, the captain of the great Yorkshire team of the era, who treated professional players much as he would treat loyal servants on his country estate.²⁶

Anglicising the South Africans

In order for the South Africans to be able to be regarded as social, as well as sporting equals, it had to be demonstrated that they were men of independent means who did not rely on cricket for their living. Hence the curious appearance of a list of 'South African Businesses' in the press prior to their departure from South Africa, in which every member of the touring party had his amateur credentials laid out before the public prior to their arrival in England.²⁷ In fact there was some scepticism over the 'amateurishness' of the South African team. They were after all being paid eight shillings per day expenses, and this brought forth much criticism. The *Marylebone Times* commented that, 'it is far better that it should be known that this preposterous money grant does not meet with the unanimous approval of sporting South Africans.'²⁸ Albert 'Ernie' Vogler, listed as an 'athletic outfitter' in the register of businesses, was discouraged from plying his trade on tour, MCC deciding that he could not advertise his cricket balls while on tour against them.²⁹ In fact the eight shillings per day expenses had been provided at the instigation of,

²⁶ Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, p. 135

²⁷ *Daily Mail*, 27th June 1906

²⁸ *Marylebone Times*, 26th April 1907

²⁹ MCC minutes, 24th June 1907

and presumably largely out of the pocket of, Abe Bailey and hence the players were in effect professionals.³⁰ Yet the team members were treated as amateur gentlemen, with each of them being listed as 'Mr.' on the match scorecards, and given their titles in press reports.³¹

The arrival of the South Africans in 1907 was accompanied by a barrage of journalism that heralded them as the very epitome of good British imperialists and compared them with other tourists of recent years. The South African rugby tour had been a great success, both from the sporting and the political point of view. That the tour had been a success in projecting a unified and peaceful image of the white races in South Africa was commented on both in England and South Africa. In England the *Morning Post* observed that, 'The South Africans have demonstrated that the colonies are capable of rejuvenating the methods of the Motherland, and have shown that the race from which they spring is equal to ours in courage, chivalry and sportsmanship.'³² In a speech in Cape Town on the team's return to South Africa Paul Roos stated that, 'from Cape Agulhas to the Zambezi, South Africa is united and all the differences must be forgotten.' As for the British, 'We understand one another better; and if this becomes one of the tangible results of this tour, we should be very satisfied.'³³ Yet when it came to cricket understanding, overcoming difference was far less important than emphasising existing similarity.

³⁰ SACA minutes, 15th March 1907. I am indebted to Professor Bruce Murray for this reference. The total collected to pay the expenses was £1120.

³¹ As a matter of fact, in contrast to the tour of 1904 which lost money, the 1907 tour made a profit of £1,400. *Wisden* (London, 1908). Until the abolition of distinctions between amateurs and professionals amateurs would have their names listed with their titles (i.e. Lord Harris, Dr. W. G. Grace, Mr. J. N. Crawford) while professionals would be listed with their initials and surname only (i.e. J. B. Hobbs, T. Hayward, W. Rhodes)

³² *Morning Post*, quoted in Black and Nauright, *Rugby and the South African Nation*, p. 34

³³ Quoted in E. J. L. Planauer (ed.), *The Springbokken in Great Britain* (Johannesburg, 1907), p. 114

While there was a long history of private tours being led overseas by English gentleman, until the early 1900s it was only the Australians who had been given formal Test status by MCC. Other teams which travelled to England were seen as being only on a level with English county sides. The South Africans of 1907 were only the second colonial team to have been given Test status, and as such their tour was a significant event in the international development of sport. The tour was also tied closely into imperial image-making. The process began before the team even sailed from Cape Town on the *Durham Castle*. The excellent performance and good grace of the South African rugby team had whetted the appetite of the English press for the cricketers, a fact noted by the *Rand Daily Mail*, which commented that, ‘there was a real satisfaction to be gained from the encomiums of the English Press that the South Africans “played the game” than from all the flattering remarks on the prowess of the team. This ideal then, of character in sport, will be one which the English public will look for in the cricket team.’³⁴ Such a comment was typical of the build up given to the tour in the English press.

While one of the themes of the tour by the rugby team was one of reconciliation between the white races the cricket team was relentlessly portrayed as being British and imperialist in character. Though rugby’s heartland remained in the Cape Colony in the early 1900s, the driving force behind South African cricket was very much centred on the Rand and the mining industry. The leaders of the mining industry, the Randlords, worked with the British colonial government to strengthen the cultural and financial ties between South Africa and Britain, and cricket was a part of that process. The leading English cricket magazine greeted the

³⁴ *Rand Daily Mail*, 1st March 1907

arrival of the cricket team with a profile of Abe Bailey, whom it described as ‘a strong Imperialist who fought in the Boer War.’ The profile emphasised the fact that character was every bit as important as ability, saying that, ‘A man to be in the South African eleven must not only be a good cricketer, but he must have concentration, energy, and an enthusiasm which will bring him to every match thoroughly fit, otherwise Mr. Bailey will see to it that he does not get there.’³⁵ Particular attention was paid to the captain of the ‘Summerboks’, as the South Africans had been dubbed, Percy Sherwell. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the *Marylebone Times* emphasised the toughness of his childhood in rural South Africa. But it also linked him to the mother country, describing him as ‘a clean-made, typical Colonial, with keen blue eyes, and a frank and engaging expression. He is exactly one’s conception of what the Briton beyond the seas should be.’³⁶ Similarly E. H. D. Sewell, in *C. B. Fry’s Magazine*, described him as ‘one of nine brothers, and the squarest-chinned, whitest man among hundreds of men in a white man’s game.’³⁷ Sewell too concentrated in his profile on the character of the South African team, when he asserted that ‘they have, as a body, more of that right type of confidence than any other team that I have ever met.’³⁸ These examples are typical of the way in which the South African team members were eulogised as good examples of the imperial Briton. This is not to say that their identity as South Africans was ever ignored in favour of emphasising their Britishness. They were customarily referred to as ‘colonials’, ‘Africans’ or ‘Afrikanders’, but the sense is that the discourse surrounding them was always to emphasise their distance as

³⁵ *Cricket: A Weekly Record of the Game*, 9th May 1907

³⁶ *Marylebone Times*, 19th July 1907

³⁷ E. H. D. Sewell, ‘The “Oolta-Poolta” Team’, in *C. B. Fry’s Magazine*, Vol. 7 (London, 1907), p. 416. One wonders what Fry’s close friend, K. S. Ranjitsinhji, would have made of that assertion.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

geographical rather than cultural. What was important to the British press was that above all they should be imperial heroes, and show the best features of the 'British race.'



Fig. 5 The Imperial Hotel

The Architect, January 24th 1908

The arrival of the South Africans became another means of tying them into being model imperialists. After arriving at Southampton they proceeded to London for their stay in the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square (Fig. 5). It was no coincidence that the team was put up at the Imperial, *The Daily Express* noted that, 'It was a happy omen for the South Africans that their arrival at their London headquarters, the Imperial Hotel, was on the same day as this brand new hotel, designed by the architect Fitzroy Doll, held its formal opening ceremony. The proprietors made special efforts to complete the hotel in time for the Africans' visit, and so arranged it that the visitors were the first guests to be registered.'³⁹ The building was designed in such a fashion as to emphasise the extent of the British Empire and its historical significance. On the front elevation were four life-size statues of the Emperors Charlemagne and Julius Caesar, and Edward VII and his consort, Queen Alexandra.⁴⁰ Further, the hotel was decorated with two hemispheres of the globe, executed in mosaic, showing 'British Territory,' including the newly conquered Transvaal and the Orange Free State.⁴¹

Thus we can see that in the manner of their arrival in London, and through the discourse that surrounded players in the media, the emphasis was always on the way in which the players were representatives of the Empire, assuring the public of South Africa's loyalty and home within the Empire. This is especially apparent in the publicity given to the tour's only Afrikaner participant, J. J. Kotze from the Cape

³⁹ *Daily Express*, 3rd May 1907

⁴⁰ *Holborn Guardian*, 4th May 1907

⁴¹ *Caterer and Hotel-Keepers' Gazette*, 15th June 1907. The original building was demolished in 1966 to be replaced by an alternative monstrosity. An idea of the opulent decorative style of Doll's original hotel can be gained from the Russell Hotel, a short distance away.

Colony. Before the South African War several Afrikaners, such as J. F. du Toit and C. G. Fichardt, had represented South Africa in first-class cricket against touring teams from Australia and England, but after the war there grew an antipathy among imperialists towards the idea that Boers were capable of playing the English game.⁴² John Buchan took the view that, 'It is worth considering the Boer at sport ... for there he is at his worst', and that the Boers 'were not a sporting race.'⁴³

The Afrikaner's inability to play cricket was further outlined by Abe Bailey in his section on South Africa in *Imperial Cricket*, a huge tome assembled by the cricketer and journalist Pelham Warner to celebrate the spread of the game to the farthest corners of the globe on the occasion of the Triangular Tournament between South Africa, England and Australia in England in 1912.⁴⁴ Bailey opened by saying that he 'should perhaps briefly mention that the South African national game is (rugby) football, in that it finds among its devotees the best of the youth of both races. Few Boers take to cricket, whilst they simply love football.'⁴⁵ This emphasis on the Afrikaner inability to 'take' to cricket of course has no basis in fact, as has already been noted.⁴⁶ Bailey went on to say that, 'What is required (in cricket) is the display of all the patriotism that we can command; I mean South African patriotism, the desire to uphold the honour and reputation of South Africa at all times,' hence tying South African patriotism to the English game.

⁴² Christopher Merrett and John Nauright, 'Chapter 3: South Africa', in Stoddart and Sandiford, *The Imperial Game*, p. 58

⁴³ John Buchan, quoted in Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 227

⁴⁴ P. F. Warner (ed.), *Imperial Cricket* (London, 1912) A measure of the identification of cricket with empire can be seen from the dedication of *Imperial Cricket* to 'King Emperor, George V' beneath the monarch's portrait.

⁴⁵ Sir Abe Bailey, 'Cricket in South Africa', in Warner, *Imperial Cricket*, p. 312

⁴⁶ See also F. J. G. van der Merwe, 'Sport and games in Boer prisoner of war camps during the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 9:3 (1992)

The patriotic credentials of Kotze could be in no doubt since he had acted as a guide for the British during the war, and even had the rare honour of reading his own obituary 'when a Boer named Coetze was named amongst the killed' during a raid.⁴⁷ When reference was made to Kotze's background it was always with the qualification that he came 'from a family that was loyal throughout the war.'⁴⁸ There was another way in which Kotze was made to appear more 'British' than was necessarily the case. Going back to cricket's roots in rural village life there had always been the stereotype of the rustic cricket player mixing with the local gentry on the team where 'Squire, farmer, blacksmith and labourer ... were at ease together and happy all the summer afternoon.'⁴⁹ Thus when described, Kotze was always picked out as a farmer, with his way of taking life 'calmly and deliberately', despite his reputation as a 'demon fast bowler', thus making him conform to a stereotype with which the British were more comfortable.⁵⁰ The idea of imperial character was firmly tied to a racial notion of British superiority (as exemplified by the description of Sherwell) in which the British had 'an aggressive sense of cultural superiority as the representatives of a global civilization then at the height of its prestige.'⁵¹ The way that Kotze was treated in the press was a means of assimilating him into a British team.

Remarks were made upon several of the other players' records in the war too. For example Sewell, in his profile of Jimmy Sinclair, linked his ability at cricket with his war service, describing how, 'As of yore he hits the ball when he hits it, and was

⁴⁷ Sewell, 'The 'Oolta-Poolta' Team', p. 419

⁴⁸ *Daily Mail*, 2nd May 1907

⁴⁹ G. M. Trevelyan, quoted in Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, p. 29

⁵⁰ *Daily Express*, 3rd May 1907

⁵¹ John Darwin, 'A third British Empire? The dominion idea in imperial politics', in Brown and Roger Louis, *Oxford History of the British Empire: Vol. IV*, p. 72

probably sorry, at the time, he did not go through with his stroke when, on a certain occasion, he was at the business end of a Lee-Metford – in the days of close quarters it would have been said he had ‘clubbed his musket’ – and a certain will-’o-the-wisp Boer general was within biff.’⁵² It was also rumoured that Sinclair was such a cricketing patriot that in order to make the South African tour to England in 1901 he had escaped from a Boer prisoner-of-war camp.⁵³

Emphasising the combative character of the South African team was another way of building them up as imperial heroes and was a common way of describing their encounters in England. Typical was the *Daily Mail*'s account of the way in which South Africa ground out a draw in the first Test after England had made them follow-on, ‘We may have had better cricketers, but we have not had better fighters ... We had war on the retreat, a matter of backs to the wall.’⁵⁴ For leading the South Africans so well in the first Test their captain, Sherwell (who had also scored an outstanding century in the second innings), was presented with a 10 guinea cup by Sir Henry McCullum, the Governor of Natal, prompting ‘Linesman’ of the *Mail* to comment that ‘he deserved a cup, and in addition the Victoria Cross.’⁵⁵ The players seem to have bought into the image of themselves as representing South Africa in sporting combat, with G. A. Faulkner writing that, ‘The Test Matches are the surest indication of national greatness in the summer pastime, and though South Africa has lost the only game brought to a conclusion, she has proved a foe fully worthy of the steel of the Mother Country.’⁵⁶

⁵² E. H. D. Sewell, ‘The ‘Oolta–Poolta’ Team’, p. 418

⁵³ Merrett and Nauright, ‘South Africa’, p. 75

⁵⁴ *Daily Mail*, 3rd July 1907

⁵⁵ *Daily Mail*, 4th July 1907

⁵⁶ *Rand Daily Mail*, 22nd August 1907

Defining the Sporting South African

Cricket in the South African colonies was not confined to the 'white' races of course.⁵⁷ One of the first civil rights campaigns that Gandhi embarked upon on his arrival in Johannesburg in 1905 was for the admission of non-whites to the Wanderers Cricket Club as spectators. Partial success was achieved when the Committee conceded that, 'special entrances and exits be provided for the sole use of ... Coloured people' as long as there were measures 'to prevent any intermingling of Coloured people with spectators of European descent.'⁵⁸ One advocate of the admission of non-whites to the ground was Abe Bailey, who was the sole committee member to vote in favour of the admission of 'Coloureds' when the subject was first broached in 1903.⁵⁹ Such liberality, though it was short-lived, was foreshadowed in Bailey's advocacy of a coloured player, 'Krom' Hendricks, to tour to England in 1894. Hendricks had burst onto the South African cricketing scene in 1892 by taking 4 wickets against an English touring team led by W. W. Read. He was named in the fifteen to represent South Africa on a tour of England two years later, with the backing of Bailey.⁶⁰ Hendricks' selection was firmly squashed by Cecil Rhodes, who commented to Pelham Warner, 'They wanted me to send a black fellow called Hendricks to England ... but I would not have it. They

⁵⁷ See for example, Ashwin Desai, Vishnu Padayachee, Krish Reddy and Goolam Vahed (eds.), *Blacks in whites: A Century of Cricket Struggles in KwaZulu-Natal* (Pietemaritzburg, 2002); André Odendaal, *The Story of an African Game: Black Cricketers and the Unmasking of one of Cricket's Greatest Myths, South Africa 1850-2003* (Cape Town, 2003); Goolam Vahed and Vishnu Padayachee, 'Chapter 4: Empire, race and Indian cricket in Natal, 1880-1914', in Murray and Vahed, *Empire and Cricket*

⁵⁸ Thelma Gutsche, *Old Gold*, p. 119

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 117

⁶⁰ Merrett & Nauright, 'South Africa', p. 58

would have expected him to throw boomerangs at the interval.’⁶¹ Thus, very early in the history of South African cricket non-white players were excluded from being able to represent their colony, even with a powerful advocate such as Bailey on their side.

Bailey’s motive in campaigning on behalf of Hendricks may more likely be put down to the will to win rather than brotherly love, as can be seen from his backing for another player’s selection for the 1907 tour. The complexity of what it meant to be an imperial South African in the period before Union was not confined to questions of colour. There was as much controversy in the selection of the 1907 touring side over J. R. M. ‘Sunny Jim’ Mackay, an Australian who had had a phenomenal season in 1905/06 for New South Wales, scoring 559 runs in just six innings. In the opinion of *Wisden*, ‘for brilliancy his batting had never been surpassed ... except for Trumper.’⁶² A club cricketer since his arrival on the Rand in 1906, he was considered the best leg-side batsman in South Africa, if not the world, and came under consideration by the South African selectors when L. J. Tancred pulled out of the tour.⁶³ The Transvaal members of the selection committee, J. H. Sinclair and P. W. Sherwell, advocated his replacement by Mackay with vigorous cheerleading coming from the *Rand Daily Mail*, which was owned by Abe Bailey.⁶⁴ Murray Bisset, the Western Province member of the selection committee, led the opposition to this move, claiming that Mackay was ‘in no sense identified with

⁶¹ P. F. Warner, *Lord’s 1787-1945* (London, 1951), p. 60. The story of Hendricks cricket career is related in more detail by Jonty Winch, ‘I could a tale unfold’: The tragic story of ‘Old Caddy’ and ‘Krom’ Hendricks’, in Murray and Vahed, *Empire and Cricket*

⁶² *Wisden* (London, 1907). Victor Trumper was the star Australian batsman of his day.

⁶³ *Rand Daily Mail*, 3rd March 1907

⁶⁴ John Lang, *Bullion Johannesburg: Men, Mines and the Challenge of Conflict* (Johannesburg, 1986), p. 181

South African cricket.' It was pointed out that Mackay had not qualified to play for Transvaal in the 1906/07 Currie Cup, let alone earned the right to represent South Africa, and simply had not earned his spurs in South African cricket as the Anglo-Africans in the squad had done. In fact two of the key players in the South African team were Englishmen. A. W. 'Dave' Nourse was born in Croydon, had gone to South Africa at the age of 18 as a soldier in the West Riding Regiment, and had stayed on after the South African War.⁶⁵ R. O. 'Reggie' Schwarz of Lee, London, had emigrated at an even later age, being 27 when he moved to South Africa, having already represented England at rugby.⁶⁶ Schwarz was described as an 'Anglo-African', together with A. E. 'Ernie' Vogler.⁶⁷ Vogler had come to London early in his career in an attempt to make his way as a cricket professional with Middlesex. Middlesex, already having two Australians on their books, did not have room for another colonial.⁶⁸ The fact that one of these, Albert Trott, played Test cricket for both Australia and England shows the fluidity in nationality that was possible in the Empire at the time. The difference between the case of the Anglo-South Africans and Trott, and the case of Mackay reveals the way in which colonial nationalism was creating tension in the British world. While Schwarz, Vogler and Trott could slip between their English and South African or Australian identities Mackay was unable to transfer from being an Australian to being a South African.

⁶⁵ Brian Bassano, *South Africa in International Cricket* (East London, 1979), p. 37. Nourse did not serve in the South African War, having become a policeman shortly after arriving in Natal.

⁶⁶ S. Canynge Caple, *The Springboks at Cricket: England versus South Africa 1881-1970* (Worcester, 1960), p. 47

⁶⁷ *Daily Express*, 4th May 1907

⁶⁸ Caple, *The Springboks at Cricket*, p. 48

In England too there was 'considerable indignation at an Australian going over to England as a representative of South African cricket'⁶⁹ For the *Daily Express* the issue seemed 'rather bald. Surely it was a question of a South African team or a team from South Africa.'⁷⁰ Ideas of what constituted a South African team had been raised by the Chief Justice of Cape Town at the end of the English tour to South Africa during the winter of 1906 when in his toast to the South African team he stated that, 'it must be a matter of great pleasure to every South African that nine of the eleven men comprising the team were born in South Africa, and that, therefore, they were truly representative of South Africa.'⁷¹ This goes to the heart of what the South Africa tour meant in imperial terms. A team was representing a country that was not yet a country, and whose population (of all races) was made up of a substantial number of immigrants from all over the world. The *Rand Daily Mail* put up a strong argument for the inclusion of Mackay, urging that he was not a bird of passage, having made South Africa his home:

There are times when sentiment is as strong as reason, and it is sentiment that in this case will object to Mackay. He has logical claims, but South Africa loves a side essentially South African, though in the cricket team, even as it is now constituted, it is not composed of men all South African born. This sentiment is capable more of being felt than expressed or debated. It cannot be ignored. It is a powerful factor for good. It is the expression of an ideal – the ideal that the South Africans by their own efforts can carve out a destiny for their country. It is possible, however, that 'South African' might be used in a narrow and restrictive sense, and that it might stand for exclusiveness. No journal believes in cultivating the South African sentiment more than this one; yet it cannot find that sentiment

⁶⁹ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 2nd April 1907

⁷⁰ *Daily Express*, 10th April 1907

⁷¹ P. F. Warner, *The M.C.C. in South Africa* (London, 1906), p. 218

would be outraged by the selection of Mackay if the committee thought proper.⁷²

In this passage we find the dilemma of the British administrators in South Africa. There was a strong movement to build a unified South African nation in which, as the Chief Justice of Cape Town put it in his toast, 'No one asked whether the names were English or Dutch; they all embraced in the term South Africans.'⁷³ The fact that the English were in such a minority among whites in South Africa meant that it was a struggle to create a dominant British culture for the country. Afrikaner nationalism was proving difficult to accommodate within the South African identity, despite the rhetoric of political leaders of both communities that there should be assimilation between the two white communities. For example when General Botha gave his speech (in Afrikaans) to the mining magnates at the Savoy on 2 May 1907 his translator refused to translate a reference to Britain as the 'Mutterland' as 'mother country' until forced to by the protests of the British present.⁷⁴ But there was a third element to the white community, especially in mining areas, which was the many immigrants who came from other parts of the Empire, Europe and other places besides. The correspondent of the *Rand Daily Mail* seemed to feel that they had as much right to become South Africans as the British or Boers, and yet this conflicted with the idea of South Africa being a wholly British colony. The fact that Mackay could not be considered to be British may be indicative of the nascent strength of the Australian identity at this time.⁷⁵ With the

⁷² *Rand Daily Mail*, 2nd March 1907

⁷³ Warner, *The M.C.C. in South Africa*, p. 219

⁷⁴ *Times*, 2nd May 1907

⁷⁵ See Gideon Haigh, *The Big Ship: Warwick Armstrong and the Making of Modern Cricket* (London, 2002) for a discussion of the rise of Australian nationalism and its relationship with cricket during this period.

strongest backing for Mackay coming from the Transvaal it is clear that the leaders of the mining industry, Bailey especially, were intent on fielding the strongest possible South African team on the cricket pitch in order to increase South African prestige within the empire. In the event Mackay was excluded, the committee voted 8-6 against him, and decided that 'the inclusion of Mackay ... would destroy the South African character of the team.'⁷⁶ Any chance that Mackay would have of proving his South African credentials in future series was ended by a serious injury received as a result of a work accident in 1907, which put an end to his career in South Africa.⁷⁷

In the discourse surrounding the South African tour of 1907 there was congruity between the interests of the British press and establishment and those of the British South African press and establishment, that made itself felt in the team selection and the way that the team were presented to the public. For the British it was important that the team was seen to be an expression of the colonial Briton made good, and it is hard to believe that the effects of the South African War on the confidence of the public in the imperial ideal did not have something to do with this. In the wake of the war, 'which cast a sulphurously long and exceedingly sober shadow' there was a debate on the strength of the British national character and its ability to maintain imperial expansion.⁷⁸ The South Africans were presented as an affirmation of the success of the "British character" in the colonies. For colonial nationalists like Bailey, who were attempting to bring about a union of the colonies in 1907, it was important to portray the strength of the nascent South African state

⁷⁶ *Rand Daily Mail*, 8th March 1907

⁷⁷ *Wisden* website, <http://www.espncricinfo.com/australia/content/player/6443.html> (Accessed 23rd January 2014)

⁷⁸ Hyam, 'The British Empire in the Edwardian era', p. 50

as arising from all its (white) constituents, be they Boer, British or other. One means of doing so was to display them to the public as loyal imperialists communing in the field with men of the mother country in an English sport.

'British or Boer?' Making South Africa British

On the day of the arrival of the South African team in London a dinner was held at the Savoy Hotel for General Botha, the head of the government of Transvaal, by the London representatives of the Transvaal banking, commercial and mining interests. The chair of the dinner was Lord Harris, the chairman of Consolidated Gold Fields of South Africa (Limited). In his welcoming speech to General Botha, Harris outlined his wish that together they could work to obtain the magnificent ideal of political union for South Africa.⁷⁹ In one sense Harris had already achieved a union for South Africa in the cricket team that had arrived that very morning. For Lord Harris was the prime organiser of cricket as an imperial sport. He was steeped in the empire, having been born in Trinidad, the son of the British Governor of the island. In 1890 he became the Governor of Bombay and used cricket to strengthen the imperial bond by inviting Lord Hawke to bring the first MCC team to play in the sub-continent. To accusations that to make so much of cricket was rather frivolous for a serious politician, 'Harris replied grandly that cricket afforded a far superior means of inculcating the spirit of patriotism than noisy politicking.'⁸⁰ On his return to London in 1895 Harris became the 'big man' at Lord's who never failed to attend every meeting.⁸¹ Harris was made President of

⁷⁹ *Times*, 2nd May 1907

⁸⁰ Prior, 'Harris, George Robert Canning'

⁸¹ P. F. Warner, *My Cricketing Life* (London, 1926), p. 142

the club in 1895, and thereafter was intimately associated with its running as committee member, trustee or treasurer until his death in 1932. Together with Lord Hawke he would effectively set policy for cricket until well into the twentieth century.

Lord Hawke too was a believer in the imperial mission of cricket, taking teams all over the world, and it was not until the Hawke-Harris axis gained primacy at Lord's in the 1890s that MCC took an interest in overseas tours, which had hitherto been left to private enterprise.⁸² Harris outlined his faith in the ability of cricket to reinforce the imperial project when he said that, 'the game of cricket has done more to draw the Mother Country and the Colonies together than years of beneficial legislation could have done.'⁸³ If Harris was the guiding hand for imperial cricket in the Edwardian era, there was a willing generation of younger men to take up the work of going into the empire on behalf of cricket. Chief among these was Pelham Warner, another Trinidadian, his father being Attorney-General there. Warner was the chief publicist for imperial cricket, publishing several accounts of MCC tours and producing much journalism on the subject, including an account of the 1906 MCC tour of South Africa, of which he was a member.⁸⁴ Thus one can see the MCC developing a role as an imperial proselytiser at the end of the nineteenth century, with Lord Harris as the central figure, 'dominant in the councils of the game, legislating, suggesting, praising, and assessing.'⁸⁵ One of the forums that was open to Lord Harris to legislate, suggest, praise, and assess was the House of Lords. In 1906 he intervened in the House during a debate on the

⁸² Bradley, 'The M.C.C., society and empire', pp. 40-41

⁸³ Quoted in Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 227

⁸⁴ Warner, *M.C.C. in South Africa*

⁸⁵ Coldham, *Lord Harris*, p. 101

proposed new constitution for the Transvaal. First, he defended the reputation of Transvaal businessmen, saying, 'With regard to the Rand magnates ... I know that both in this country and in South Africa there is a considerable feeling hostile to them. I consider that prejudice unjustifiable.'⁸⁶ His intervention further demonstrated his sympathy for the Milnerite cause of Anglicising the Transvaal, arguing that, 'The one chance for British supremacy in the Transvaal is that the commercial situation may improve and the British be encouraged to go out there.'⁸⁷ While acknowledging that he had found Afrikaners 'reasonable in their views', Harris then went on to call their language a 'low, degraded language compared to the language of commerce, the English language.' Historians have too often neglected Harris' political influence in favour of lauding his role as one of the godfathers of the international game. Harris' commercial interest in South Africa was crucial in their advance to the heart of the imperial game.

Thus there was a further motive for the South African tour of 1907 than merely using the English game to bind the empire together. The link between British imperial policy and cricket has been frequently remarked upon, with 'the gentlemen who ran the Empire from Whitehall ... also quite likely to be members of the private club at Marylebone to whom cricketers all over the world were expected to defer.'⁸⁸ No doubt MCC and the men who ran it were important to the spread of imperial cricket but I would argue that demand from the colonies for recognition was equally important. The stimulus for the tour came as much from the South African side as it did from London. Lord Harris, as we have seen, had

⁸⁶ *Hansard*, 31st July 1906

⁸⁷ *Idem*.

⁸⁸ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 227

strong connections with South African mining, being the chair of Consolidated Goldfields. This connection had prompted his service in the South African War as Assistant Adjutant with the Imperial Yeomanry.⁸⁹ Also serving in the War was Abe Bailey, who had been a member of the Reform Committee in Pretoria that was supposed to be the welcoming party for the infamous Jameson Raid in 1895, which had triggered the crisis in South Africa. During his time serving in the South African War, Harris had developed further links with South African cricket by playing for Consolidated Gold Fields Cricket Club against Corner House Cricket Club, whose captain was G. A. Faulkner, a tourist in 1907.⁹⁰

By 1907 Bailey was a powerful man in South Africa, seeing himself as 'Rhodes the Second', with a strong ideological conviction in the policy of colonial nationalism, which aimed at strengthening the bonds between the mother country and the colonies.⁹¹ Bailey's political concerns were crucial to the way in which South African cricket was so quickly advanced in the Edwardian era. Without his support South African cricket would not have been a going concern. Overseas tours were very expensive affairs, with no guarantee of financial success, and indeed in 1904 the South African team that toured England had made a loss. *Wisden* commented that 'the monetary loss was no doubt a disappointment, but it was not heavy enough to concern the gentlemen concerned. The fact is that no travelling team

⁸⁹ Coldham, *Lord Harris*, p. 98

⁹⁰ Coldham, *Lord Harris*, p. 99. 'Corner House' was the name given to Consolidated Goldfields, thus it must have been an intra-company match.

⁹¹ "Rhodes' the Second', Men of the Day No. 1134 (1908)' in Russell March (ed.), *The Cricketers of 'Vanity Fair'* (Exeter, 1982), p. 94

which does not come up to the Australian standard has much chance of proving a real attraction to the British public.’⁹²

Bailey would not make the same mistake again. In 1907 *Cricket* stated that, ‘One man above all others is responsible for the tremendous wave of enthusiasm now flooding South African cricket – Mr Abe Bailey.’⁹³ *Fry’s* welcomed him to England with an unusually avant-garde photo-montage in which he is portrayed in front of a Johannesburg scene with the caption, ‘The man in front of Johannesburg and behind South African cricket.’ (Fig. 6) In 1907 Bailey in fact bankrolled the side in order to guarantee that he had a team of professionals who were well up to Australian standards, and would hence prove attractive to English crowds and gain good publicity for South Africa. It is noticeable that many of the team were from the Transvaal, a predominantly Afrikaner area. Sherwell, the captain of the team, was from Johannesburg, being a mine manager, as was the tour manager, Mr. Allsop. Seven of the thirteen tourists were directly employed by the mining industry based on the Rand.⁹⁴ It could be argued that this was merely a consequence of the growing urbanisation of the region, that ‘it was the turn of Johannesburg’ to stand at the head of cricket.⁹⁵ Yet it is hard to believe that this did not have something to do with the shift of political power from the Cape to the Transvaal following the South African War, owing to the economic importance of

⁹² *Wisden*, quoted in Caple, *The Springboks at Cricket*, p. 32

⁹³ *Cricket*, 25th April 1907

⁹⁴ The men were, P. Sherwell (Mining Manager), J. H. Sinclair (Stockbroker), R. O. Schwarz (Secretary to Mr. Bailey), G. A. Faulkner (C. S. A. R. Engineer), M. Hathorn (Estate Manager), G. C. White (Mining Secretary) and H. E. Smith (Mining Engineer), *Daily Mail*, 2nd May 1907 and 27th June 1907

⁹⁵ Warner, *M.C.C. in South Africa*, p. 219.

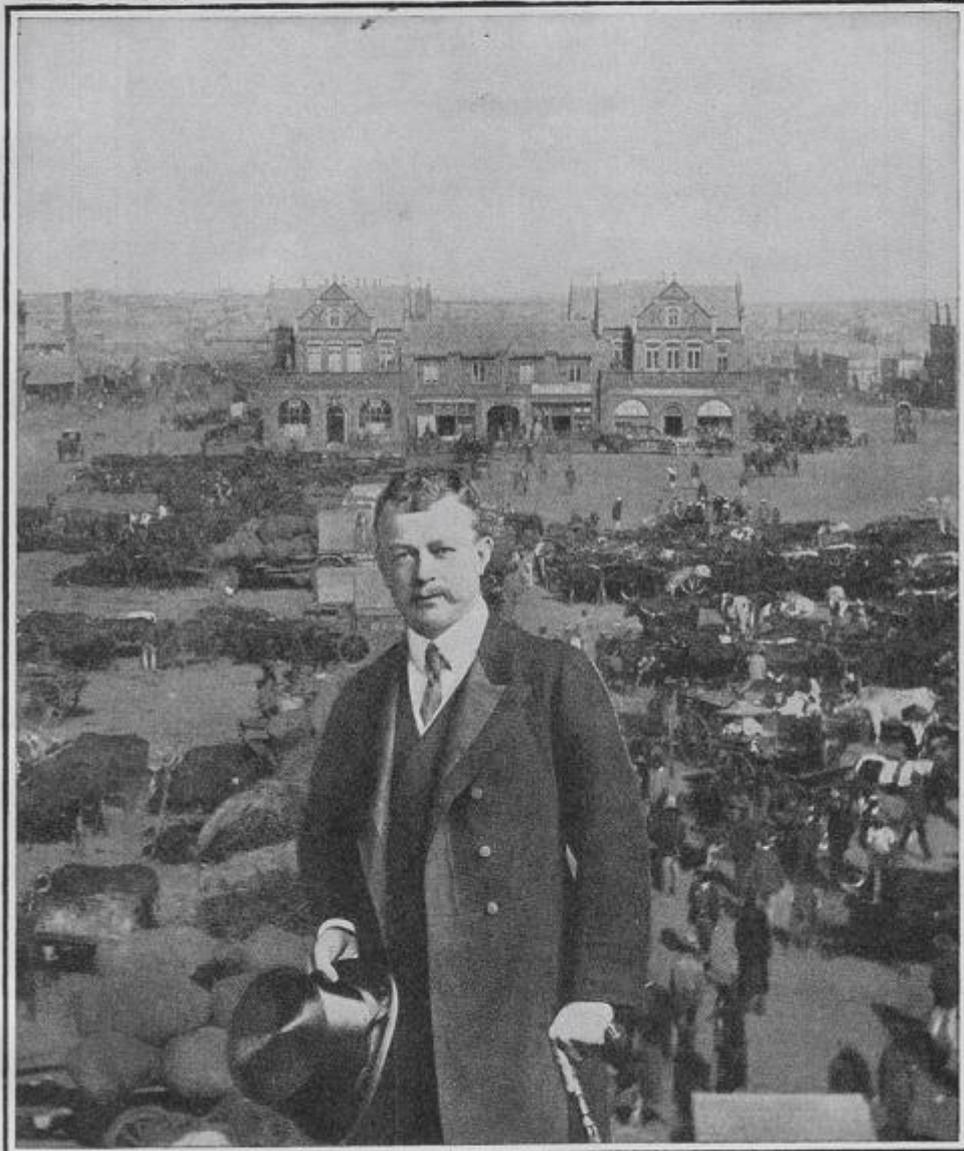
the region. Bailey used his influence as paymaster to create a team that would project the image that he wanted of South Africa: loyal, British and full of character.

FRY'S
THE OUTDOOR
MAGAZINE
EDITED BY C.B.FRY.

Vol. VII. No. 37

APRIL

1907



Photos, M. T. Edwards and Elliott & Fry.

ABE BAILEY.

The man in front of Johannesburg and behind South African cricket.

Vol. vii.—1

Fig. 6 Abe Bailey

C. B. Fry's Magazine, April 1907

What was Bailey getting in return for investing his money? There was undoubtedly a genuine sporting interest as Bailey was a keen cricketer who had captained Transvaal in the Currie Cup.⁹⁶ But one cannot ignore the contemporary political situation. The South African team was acting as an ambassador for British South Africa, and by being so closely associated with Bailey, was also acting as an ambassador for that part of South Africa that was most controversial as a British colony. Following the South African War, the outgoing high commissioner, Lord Milner, left a group of administrators (nicknamed 'Milner's kindergarten') to run the colonies. They had as their aim the Union of South Africa as a dominion under the British crown in which 'closer union would not be promoted by any overt action or initiative from the Colonial Office (but) must be an indigenous product.'⁹⁷ This group later became more formally organised as the Round Table, but incorporated businessmen as well as civil servants and politicians; 'Mine magnates such as ... Bailey were devoted to furthering the schemes of the Round Tablers whether through scholarships, chairs of Imperial history, or the Royal Institute at Chatham House.'⁹⁸

One might add cricket tours to this list of means by which closer union between metropole and colony could be pursued. The English sport of cricket came to be used to assert the cultural as well as political dominance of the British in South Africa. But while it would be tempting to analyse the cricket tour in terms of the

⁹⁶ Merrett and Nauright, 'South Africa', p. 62

⁹⁷ Thompson, *The Unification of South Africa*; p. 63; W. Nimocks, *Milner's Young men: The Kindergarten in Edwardian Imperial Affairs* (London, 1968)

⁹⁸ Shula Marks, 'Southern Africa', in Brown and Roger Louis, *Oxford History of the British Empire: Vol. IV*, p. 545

idea of cultural hegemony whereby British economic power was reinforced by extending its cultural dominance over the Rand, it would be mistaken to see this as the sole purpose of Bailey's patronage of cricket. His concern was as much with portraying South Africa to the mother country as it was with assimilating South Africans within a British culture. This process would be continued with the pursuance of Bailey's campaign to inaugurate the grandest imperial sporting project yet - an Imperial Cricket Contest between England, Australia and South Africa that was intended to take place in 1909. The value of the scheme to those who wished to raise South Africa's prestige within the empire was outlined by Lord Selborne, the man who had succeeded Lord Milner as high commissioner for South Africa and Governor of the Transvaal and Orange River colonies. In responding to Bailey's request for a comment upon the proposed tournament, Selborne stated that he thought that the tournament:

Has a real political value ... every time a team of Springboks or cricketers is brought together, representing the whole of South Africa, whether against Britain or Australia, the sense of South African unity is increased, and this without distinction between Boer and British ... A triangular contest would also have an Imperial value which it is not easy to define, but which I believe is real. The more the reality of Empire is brought home to its people in any shape or form, the more the idea becomes part of their natural being, and as there are more men interested in sport than in politics, art, literature, or business, there is a larger number who are touched by the influence of such a contest.⁹⁹

Here we see stated in bald terms the values that imperial leaders in South Africa saw in encouraging inter-colonial cricket. There was the hope that it could be used

⁹⁹ *Times* 24th January 1908. Lord Selborne later became President and Treasurer of MCC.

as a way of encouraging the unity of the different white races within the country. We also see the aspiration that cricket could be a means of publicising the imperial ideal to those classes of society that would not normally be reached by political campaigns.

Thus while the role of MCC in the imperialisation of cricket in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was large it would be wrong to see it as the key factor in the spread of Test cricket. Much of the writing of men like Harris, Hawke and Warner was written with nostalgic hindsight, and unsurprisingly they give themselves the starring role in the development of cricket overseas. In reality, as Ramachandra Guha has shown with the development of cricket in India, the spread of imperial cricket happened far more because of the demand from the colonies.¹⁰⁰ In contrast to India, however, the demand in South Africa came not from 'natives' wanting to beat the players of the mother country at their own game, or other social groups within their country, but from a loyalist élite who wanted to assert their oneness with the mother country.

The key figure of course was Abe Bailey, and it was his political ideal of colonial nationalism, motivated in part by financial interest, that drove the acceptance of South Africa into the fold of Test playing nations so much sooner than other cricketing colonies. His mission was to demonstrate the respectability of South African business, which had come under such criticism during the South African War, and continued to do so in the Edwardian era. Cricket was a major part of this, as was his interest in the royal sport of horse racing, which he also pursued with a

¹⁰⁰ Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field*, passim.

passion.¹⁰¹ But the crowning moment of the acceptance of South Africa into the imperial cultural firmament was when the South Africans took the field at Lord's in July 1907. This acceptance at a national level was followed on a personal level for Abe Bailey when he was accepted as a member of MCC shortly after the South African tour.¹⁰²

Conclusion: The Sporting Triumph of Afrikaner Nationalism

Abe Bailey finally fulfilled his dream of a triangular cricket tournament between England, Australia and South Africa in 1912. But it proved to be a great disappointment. The South African side had lost some of its magic in the intervening years and they lost three Tests to England and two to Australia. The googly bowlers were not as effective five years after their eruption on the English cricket scene in 1907, Schwarz taking just four wickets at an average of 76.55. Several key batsmen, including Percy Sherwell, were absent from the tour that was described as 'a disheartening experience.'¹⁰³ Crowds, partly due to the bad weather that summer, were low and unenthusiastic, which led the *Times* to predict that the experiment would probably not be repeated within a generation.¹⁰⁴ Of course with hindsight we know that for the generation of 1912 there would be little chance to repeat the experience. Of the 1907 team Gordon White died of wounds received in Palestine in 1918, and Schwarz of Spanish Influenza in France in the same year. The next Test match between England and South Africa did not take place until

¹⁰¹ Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, p. 256

¹⁰² MCC minutes, 29th June 1908

¹⁰³ *Times*, 14th August 1912

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

1922. And yet 1912 can also be seen as the apotheosis of Sir Abe Bailey's cricketing ideals, ideals that would be replicated in the way that South Africa was to prove a loyal and valuable part of the imperial war effort during the First World War. Following the 1907 tour Bailey campaigned hard for the establishment of an Imperial Cricket Conference, running along the same lines as the Colonial Conference of Premiers. This was achieved in 1909, the same year that South Africa as a (white) unified entity was born.¹⁰⁵

Bailey was triumphant in tying South African nationalism into the imperial game of cricket but one must not ignore rivals to cricket as a cultural vehicle for South African nationality. For Afrikaners cricket was too much the English game and they chose to express themselves in the other imperial game, rugby, which became 'a vehicle for Afrikaner self-expression and identity in the 1920s and 30s.'¹⁰⁶ While the message from imperialists of MCC was of cricket as a unifier between the mother country and the colonies, in many cases it was much more a cause of division between those living in the colonies who wished to identify with British values, and those who preferred to express their opposition to the colonial power by defeating English teams on their own terms and creating an alternative culture of resistance around the sport, as happened in India. But in South Africa the success of 1907 was an expression of the success of the British in extending her control over that country in the years leading up to the First World War. That cricket went into decline following the war was an expression of the fact that

¹⁰⁵ Merrett and Nauright, 'South Africa', p. 64

¹⁰⁶ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 228. The extent to which cricket had become a source of division in the identity of South Africans can be seen in the story of told B.J. Vorster, the South African President, in the 1960s. On being told that in a Test Match between South Africa and England, 'die Engelse' had lost three wickets for 42 runs he responded, 'Hulle engelse of ons Engelse?' - 'Their English or our English?', Murray and Merrett, *Caught Behind*, p. 79

Afrikaners were successful in reasserting their cultural identity and political control.¹⁰⁷ The case has remarkable parallels with the sporting history of Ireland, where British attempts to embed Rugby Union as the national game in Ireland were defeated by the hard political fact of Gaelic sports being part of the national identity fostered by Irish nationalists in the years before and after Independence. In South Africa too, rugby triumphed over cricket in the quest for a national identity that would trump that proposed by British South Africans. The Afrikaners' consolidation of political power went hand in hand with the development of rugby as the manly game in their society.

¹⁰⁷ Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field*, p. xiv

Jouez le Jeu! Black Champions and French Rugby

Why are the Anglo-Saxons Superior?

Rugby in the British world came to acquire ideological meaning over the course of its development in the nineteenth century. In France, by contrast, rugby was an ideological project from the outset. In England the roots of the game lay in the rural settings of public schools; the French game was urban from its outset. Frenchmen were inspired to play rugby by the example of British businessmen who set up sports clubs in Paris, and later Bordeaux, in the late-nineteenth century.¹ Whereas the rugby authorities in London sought to return the game to a rural idyll by creating a national stadium on the fringe of the city in Twickenham, in Paris the game took place in the middle-class playground of the Bois de Boulogne. French rugby's ethos was modern rather than traditional. The game played by ex-pats in the parks of Belle Epoque Paris and Bordeaux was observed and absorbed by French intellectuals.² They saw it as an expression of all the values that inspired the remarkable expansion of Britain's global domain during the long reign of Queen Victoria; values that were lacking in the generation humiliated in France by military defeat to Prussia in 1870 and the subsequent descent into civil fratricide of the Commune, and its bloody suppression.

¹ Philip Dine, *French Rugby Football*, pp. 26-27 and p. 41

² Jean Guiffan, 'L'anglophobie dans la culture savante et dans la culture populaire des années 1880 à la Seconde Guerre mondiale', *Ranam* No. 39 (2006), p. 134

One of the means by which the politicians of the Third Republic aimed to restore national unity after 1870 was by promoting imperialism as a core ideology of the new régime. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Jules Ferry, the 1880s saw the French extend their control in north and central Africa, as well as Southeast Asia. Ferry, and his supporters in the political and commercial spheres, saw imperial expansion as a 'cure for social division, worker unrest, and national decadence,' as well as continuing France's *mission civilisatrice*.³ Yet there was strong opposition to the colonial lobby. On the right, nationalists wanted the government to concentrate its efforts on recovering the lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine from the Germans, as did the Radicals of the left, led by Clemenceau.⁴ The prestige that the army gained from its role in conquering fresh territory overseas was, however, undermined by the Dreyfus Affair that broke in 1898.

The Dreyfus Affair began as a scandal that threatened the reputation of the army when evidence was uncovered of a spy operating on behalf of Germany at the heart of the French military. When the Jewish staff officer, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, was made a scapegoat the campaign to clear his name grew into a movement that caused 'a moral, political and social crisis of the first magnitude.'⁵ The Affair was one of the major issues that fed into a crisis about French masculinity and physical fitness that 'reverberated in the sporting world.'⁶ It also provoked a heated debate about who could be considered to be a Frenchman.⁷ Dreyfusards and anti-

³ Conklin, Fishman and Zaretsky, *France and its Empire*, p. 68

⁴ Jean-Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Rebérioux, *The Third Republic from its Origins to the Great War, 1871-1914* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 98-99

⁵ James F. MacMillan, *Dreyfus to de Gaulle: Politics and Society in France 1898-1969* (London, 1985), p. 12

⁶ Christopher E. Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood* (Baltimore, 2004); p. 212

⁷ Raoul Girardet, *L'Idée coloniale en France 1871-1962* (Paris, 1972), p. 90

Dreyfusards clashed, expressing their views violently in print, and sometimes taking that violence onto the streets. Dreyfusards campaigned for an inclusive society that embraced all who would subscribe to the republican ideology of liberty, equality and fraternity. Anti-Dreyfusards saw French identity as being based on religion, blood and soil; an identity that rejected Jews, Protestants and racial minorities. Against the background of continuing political instability in the Belle Epoque some of the élite of France cast an envious eye across the channel to the vigorous English upper classes and further afield to her flourishing colonies.⁸ The visits of the New Zealand and South African rugby teams acted as lightning rods for a variety of debates about the direction of French society, what it meant to be French, and the way forward to recovery from the failures of the previous century. The division about who could be considered a Frenchman also formed a background to the selection of players to represent France on the rugby pitch against teams from the British world.

The lycée system of schooling was seen as one of the key sites of failure of French society in the nineteenth century and its ethos was heavily criticised by contemporaries. Max Leclerc, the educational reformer, saw lycées as a barrier to the development of an independently minded middle class ready to give leadership to the lower orders. He criticised them as continuing to perpetuate a Napoleonic system of despotism in which the individual was crushed under the monolithic diktat of the Education Ministry. In 1894 he published a commentary on the English school system that contrasted the conservative French system with the

⁸ Christophe Charle, 'French intellectuals and the impossible English model (1870-1914)', in Christophe Charle, Julien Vincent and Jay Winter (eds.), *Anglo-French Attitudes: Comparisons and Transfers between England and France since the Eighteenth-Century* (Manchester, 2007), p. 236

dynamic English reformed public schools. One of the features of English schools that he extolled was the playing of sports, which he saw as encouraging the vigour of the nation in a way that built up a kind of physical capital, readying the state for competition in peace and war.⁹ In addition Leclerc argued that English schoolboys' participation in team games created a class of people whose individualism was tempered by 'l'obéissance librement consentie ... confiée au plus fort, au plus adroit, au plus expérimenté.'¹⁰ In this spirit rugby had been imported to France with the intention of imitating the English educational model and using sport to develop a new physical and moral culture among the social élite.¹¹ In particular Pierre de Coubertin, during his visit to England in 1888, was impressed by both the economic dynamism of England and of the schools and universities system whose ethos of muscular Christianity was much admired for its ability to produce leaders for the British Empire.¹² In *Les Sports Athlétiques*, which was one of the vehicles for publicising the views of de Coubertin and the coterie of educationalists who wished to reform the French lycée system on the English model, he wrote, 'la race Anglo-Saxonne nous dépassait dans tous les oeuvres sociales qui procèdent de la volonté et de l'action.'¹³ The role that sport could play in transforming society was later made explicit in the same journal by Jules Simon, who said:

On s'est aperçu depuis quelques années seulement, qu'il faut fortifier le corps pour fortifier l'esprit et l'on a importé en France les jeux athlétiques.

⁹ Max Leclerc, *L'Éducation des Classes Moyennes et Dirigeants en Angleterre* (Paris, 1894), p. 37

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 39 'Obedience freely given ... the respect for authority confided to the stronger, the more skilful, the more experienced.' All French translations are by the author, Geoffrey Levett.

¹¹ Richard Holt, 'Sport, the French and the Third Republic', *Modern Contemporary France*, Vol. 6:3 (1998), p. 292

¹² Yvon Léziart, *Sports et Dynamiques Sociales* (Paris, 1989), p. 54

¹³ *Les Sports Athlétiques*, 10th May 1890. 'The Anglo-Saxon race has overtaken us in all social activities which arise from the will and from action'. Quoted in Léziart, *Sports et Dynamiques Sociales*, p. 55

Ce n'est encore qu'une évolution dans les écoles, ce sera bientôt une révolution dans les moeurs.¹⁴

This theme was further developed in an early French handbook on rugby, in whose introduction the editor comments:

Longtemps indifférent au bienfaits du sports, les Français a enfin compris quelles avantages il en peut rétirer au double point de vue de la santé générale et du perfectionnement physique. Il est d'un intérêt supérieur, en effet, pour le pays et pour la race même, de former une jeunesse vigoureuse, énergique, hardie, entraînée à l'action, prompte à la lutte, fortement armée pour les dures batailles de la vie.¹⁵

Typically in this work rugby is discussed in military terms, a practice that was common in the discussion of sport in Britain too. In France the parallel between sport and war was especially significant given the imperial rivalry with Britain in Africa, and the continuing shadow of defeat against Germany in 1870.¹⁶

The comments of de Coubertin and Simon can be read in the light of theories proposed by acolytes of Charles Darwin, clustered under the name of social Darwinism, who applied his scientific insights on a sociological level.¹⁷ Social

¹⁴ *Les Sports Athlétiques*, 4th October 1890. 'Just a few years ago we realised that one must strengthen the body in order to strengthen the mind, and so we imported athletic games into France. Now it is no longer just an evolution of practice within our schools, it will be a revolution in our morals.' Quoted in Léziart, *Sports et Dynamiques Sociales*, p. 56

¹⁵ Ch. Gondouin et Jordan, *Le Football* (Paris, 1910). 'For a long time indifferent to the benefits of sport, the French have finally understood the advantages it can provide to both the general health and to the perfection of the physique. It is crucial for the country and even the race to develop a youth that is vigorous, energetic, hardy, trained for action, quick to the struggle, well-armed for the hard battles of life.'

¹⁶ Michel Winock, *La Belle Epoque* (Paris, 2002), p. 85

¹⁷ There is a vast historiography of Social Darwinism, some of which contests whether the term is useful at all. For the purposes of this thesis I have followed Mike Hawkins' view that social Darwinism was a discourse inspired by Darwin's theories that emphasised competition between races, nations and social groups and their relative physical, mental and sexual advantages over one

Darwinism has been said to have taken longer to establish itself in France than it did in the United Kingdom. Yet one of the earliest French intellectuals to laud the English school system, the poet Victor de Laprade, praised that system in essentially social Darwinist terms. In a letter to *Le Correspondant* he called for the French to imitate the English system to achieve a regeneration of the race through hygiene, physical education and morality in a combination that he called 'un christianisme musculaire.'¹⁸ The entwining of sport and politics of Laprade and those who followed him demonstrates how sport became a means of expressing concerns about the perceived social backwardness of France compared to England.¹⁹ Laprade's was just one voice among many influential intellectuals who in the last quarter of the nineteenth century demonstrated that a kind of 'Anglomania' had taken hold of the French élite of which the attraction of English sports formed a part.²⁰ In 1897 the educationalist Edmond Demolins published *A quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons?*, a provocatively titled work in which he argued that France's traditional rivals owed their imperial and commercial success to the unique racial mix imagined to be in their blood. According to Demolins the mix was due to the migrations of Frankish and Saxon tribes in the Dark Ages, a theory that may seem ludicrous to the present day reader but was taken seriously in its time by those who both agreed and disagreed with it.²¹ Demolins' thesis was

another as being fundamental to the development of human society. Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 31

¹⁸ Victor de Lapade, *Le Constitutionnel*, 25th June 1871. Quoted in Jean-Marc Bernardini, *Le Darwinisme Sociale en France (1859-1918)* (Paris, 1998), p. 127. De Lapade's is the first known reference to muscular Christianity in French writing, despite Pierre de Coubertin being seen as the pioneer of its ideology in France by most sports historians.

¹⁹ Bernardini, *Le Darwinisme Sociale en France*, p. 238

²⁰ Christophe Prochasson, 'An English crisis in French thought? French intellectuals confront England at the time of Fashoda and the Boer War', in Charle, Vincent and Winter, *Anglo-French Attitudes*, p. 257

²¹ Edmond Desmolins, *A Quoi Tient la Supériorité des Anglo-Saxons?* (Paris, 1897), pp. 310-11. English title, *Why are the Anglo-Saxons superior?*

further developed by Emile Durkheim, who posited that Anglo-Saxon societies had a characteristic 'positive individuality' that elevated them above the 'negative individuality' of the Latin races, including the French.²² Demolins and Durkheim between them constructed a social Darwinist theory that established a hierarchy within European peoples that placed Anglo-Saxons above Latins.²³ Combined with the nurture of the English school system the natural advantages given to the English race through its racial inheritance would seem to explain their continued global dominance in the twentieth century.

Vivent les Boers! Anglophobia and the South African War

However, the Anglomania of the French élite was severely dented by two events at the turn of the century, the Fashoda incident and the South African War of 1899-1902. In 1898 Captain Jean Louis Marchand led an expedition from the Congo to the Fashoda Basin in the Upper Nile in an attempt to claim the territory for France. Knowing that the Upper Nile was a strategically crucial area for controlling Egypt a large British force, led by General Kitchener, had been despatched by the British government as soon as rumour spread of the French expedition. Arriving a few days later than the French Kitchener's troops nevertheless forced Marchand into a humbling retreat.²⁴ The effect on public opinion in France was an upsurge of anglophobic writing in even the moderate press. For the right Marchand became a hero, 'an expiatory victim of a weak Republic undermined by the Jews and the

²² Christophe Prochasson, 'An English crisis', p. 259

²³ Martyn Cornick, 'Distorting mirrors: Franco-British perceptions in the fin-de-siècle', pp. 125-148 in Martyn Cornick and Cero Crossley (eds.) *Problems in French History* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 134

²⁴ Conklin, Fishman and Zaretsky, *France and its Empire*, p. 106-7

Masons.²⁵ Marchand's return to the capital became a fête for the right, an opportunity to celebrate a colonial hero, and a key event in the fusion of French nationalism and imperialism.

Such sentiments were further reinforced by the commencement of war between the British and Boers in 1899. While remaining officially neutral in the conflict the French government showed sympathy to their fellow Republicans by hosting the exiled President of the South African Republic, Paul Kruger, in the middle of the war. Kruger's arrival in Paris in November 1900 was treated with discretion by the Prime Minister, Waldeck-Rousseau, who chose to meet at his hotel rather than give the official banquet desired by some sections of the French press. Nevertheless, the warmth of French feelings for the Boers on both an official and a popular level was demonstrated by the crowds that came to see him as he travelled to the Hôtel de Ville for a reception by the Paris municipal authorities. At this time the right ran Paris, and they saw Kruger as striking 'a symbolic blow in the name of small-owner values against Anglo-Jewish finance'²⁶ after he paid a call on the Foreign Minister.²⁷ The sympathy between the Boers and French was further underlined by Kruger's visit to the Ecole des Beaux Arts to inspect the maquette of a memorial to Colonel Count Villebois-Mareuil.²⁸ Antagonism between France and Britain was fuelled early in the war by the action of Villebois-Mareuil, a right-wing officer who led a brigade of foreign volunteers as part of the Boer war effort. Villebois-Mareuil was

²⁵ Berny Sèbe, 'Chapter 1: From Thoisse to the capital via Fashoda: Major Marchand, partisan icon of the right in Paris', in Jessica Wardhaugh (ed.), *Paris and the Right in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 30

²⁶ Neil MacMaster, *Colonial Migrants and Racism: Algerians in France, 1900-1962* (London, 1997), p. 37

²⁷ *Le Petit Journal*, 28th November 1900

²⁸ *Le Figaro*, 28th November 1900

killed in action in April 1900, a futile gesture as his troops were cornered and outnumbered. Despite this, the French public saw his death as a noble act of sacrifice in a war characterised as 'a colonial war of extermination' in much of the French media.²⁹ The Boers were seen as brothers across the sea in spite of their Protestantism. As well as having sanguineous sympathy, the descendants of Huguenot settlers on the Cape were seen by the metropolitan French as having demonstrated their affection for the mother country by using French names for their towns and farms.³⁰ Right-wing political movements in France used the war to tie together anti-Semitic and anti-British sentiment with demonstrators crying, 'Vivent les Boers!' and 'A mort les Juifs!' during anti-British demonstrations that coincided with the stay of President Kruger.³¹ With such high feeling against the British during and after the war one can see the matches played between English or colonial British rugby teams and the French as part of an effort to rekindle cultural sympathy between the two countries in the train of the Entente Cordiale of 1904.³²

Rivalry between the British and French in world affairs generated a debate about the supposed merits of the Anglo-Saxon and Latin races. But of course the key field of theorisation for Social Darwinians was not the proposition of a hierarchy existing within European societies but rather the theory that there existed a hierarchy between races, with whites being at the top. Such a position did not

²⁹ Martyn Cornick, 'Representations of Britain and British colonialism in French adventure fiction, 1870-1914', *French Cultural Studies*, No. 17 (2006), p.149. See Roy MacNab, *The French Colonel: Villebois-Mareuil and the Boers 1899-1900* (Oxford, 1975) for a more detailed discussion of Villebois-Mareuil's career.

³⁰ Gilles Teulié, 'L'Image du Britannique pendant la Guerre Anglo-Boer', in Sylvie Aprile and Fabrice Bensimon (eds.), *La France et l'Angleterre au XIXième siècle: Echanges, Représentations, Comparisons* (Paris, 2006), p. 276

³¹ Prochasson, 'An English crisis', p. 256

³² Armand Colin, 'De Fachoda à l'Entente Cordiale', p. 92

necessarily derive from the theories of Darwin himself but rather reflected the social prejudices already existing in French society.³³ Darwinian theories were adapted to give intellectual ballast to racist attitudes as well as to provide a moral justification for the subjection of non-whites in overseas colonies. As a consequence of the popularizing of such ideas it has been proposed that non-white actors in metropolitan France became problematic, threatening presences that both fascinated and repelled the French public. This othering of non-whites was reinforced by the treatment of non-whites by the popular press and by popular spectacle.³⁴ Black participants in expositions, stage shows and dance troupes were treated as outlandish, uncivilised beings whose popularity threatened a miscegenation of the French race by offering a more virile and a more primitive form of sexuality than that of the civilised, bourgeois Parisian male.³⁵

Sport too provided a stage for racial spectacle in the 1900s, with the feats of black sportsmen being reported in the popular press. In its discussion of sport the academic literature on race has mostly concentrated on the post-World War I era. Those pre-war figures who have been investigated have tended to be black athletes who came to Europe to seek their fortune as a result of the statutory or tacit segregation in sport in the United States. Timothée Jobert has argued that the way in which black sportsmen, especially boxers, were portrayed at this time reflected the way in which autochthonous inhabitants of the colonies were stereotyped as being animalistic and in need of civilising by the French. Reinforcing Rae Beth Gordon's opinion that black performers were 'othered' in the

³³ Hawkins, *Social Darwinism*, p. 147

³⁴ Rae Beth Gordon, *Dances with Darwin, 1875-1910: Vernacular Modernity in France* (Farnham, 2009), p. 59

³⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 155-159

popular press he argues that, 'Dans la repartition raciale des competences, le Noir reste confine à la sphere corporelle tandis que le Blanc s'arroge celle de l'esprit.'³⁶ Yet this ignores the fact that in the early years of the century black players were among the pioneers of French rugby, participating in a game that, during this period, was thought to promote the imperial masculine ideal.³⁷ Far from there being a division between whites and blacks on the sports field rugby rather demonstrates the 'fusion of race' that was a central part of colonial ideology and which allowed colonial players to compete as equals with their metropolitan counterparts.³⁸ Subsequently a discourse about the strengths and weaknesses of different races or racial mixes within national teams would suffuse the coverage of visits by British colonial teams to France in the Edwardian period.

Rugby and Modernity in Paris

At the end of their tour to Europe the South Africans would play a team containing black players when they travelled to Paris to take on a combined XV from the Racing Club de France and Stade Français. Although it was not an official international match (the fixture clashed with a match already arranged between France and England for the same week) it nevertheless attracted a great deal of attention in the sporting and society press in France. Coverage of the match can tell us a great deal about the way in which race was viewed in different ways on either side of the Channel. It reveals the way in which the British and the South Africans'

³⁶ That, 'in effect any success that they displayed in sport was credited to the strength of their bodies rather than that of their minds.' Timothée Jobert, *Champions Noirs, Racisme Blanc: La Métropole et les Sportifs 1901-1944* (Paris, 2006), p. 7

³⁷ Thierry Teret, 'Rugby et masculinité au début du siècle', pp. 32-36

³⁸ Driss Abbassi, *Le Sport dans l'Empire Français: Un Instrument de Domination Coloniale?* (Paris, 2009), p. 7

tightening of the definition of who could represent the Empire was not followed in France, where in rugby at least the racial diversity of the empire was both celebrated and seen as a strength of the French nation.

As we have seen, rugby's importation into France did not happen by accident. This project was initially effected by a number of key individuals in Paris, such as de Coubertin, who had links to the capital's high society, to the élite sporting clubs that grew out of the Lycée and university systems, and to the sporting press.³⁹ The press was fundamental to the development of sport. The growth of the Tour de France as a national institution in France in the early-twentieth century owed a great deal to its being sponsored by *L'Auto-Vélo*, a sports newspaper set up by a conglomerate of businessmen who were unhappy with the pro-Dreyfus editorial line of the biggest selling sports newspaper of the day, *Le Vélo*.⁴⁰ Henri Desgranges acted as both editor of *L'Auto-Vélo* and director of the Tour de France, demonstrating how the press did not just reflect what was happening in the world of sport but had a much more dynamic role in the dissemination of the practice of sport.⁴¹ It was no different in the world of rugby where two men, Frantz Reichel and Pierre Lafitte, played a similar role in developing the sport as a spectacle in public and in print.

Reichel was born in Paris in 1871 and attended the Lycée Lakanal on the outskirts of the city, one of the most prestigious schools in France. It was at school that he

³⁹ Philip Dine, *French Rugby Football*, p. 29

⁴⁰ Christopher S. Thompson, *The Tour de France: A Cultural History* (London, 2006), p. 18. Following legal action by the publishers of *Le Vélo*, *L'Auto-Vélo* was renamed *L'Auto* in 1904.

⁴¹ Philippe Tétart and Sylvain Villaret (eds.), *Les Voix du Sport: La Presse Sportive Régionale à la Belle Epoque* (Biarritz, 2009), p. 10

was introduced to rugby and after graduating from university he was at the heart of the sports scene in Paris, becoming the captain of the first French team to play in England in 1893. The extent to which Reichel was imbued with the values of muscular Christianity, filtered down to him via the post-1870 transformation of French education, can be seen in the description of him given in an address at the unveiling of his memorial at the Stade Jean Bouin in Paris in 1932, where its author stated that:

Le sport pour lui n'était pas seulement la manifestation de la force, de l'adresse, du courage, de l'endurance, ce n'était pas seulement le moyen de donner à la jeunesse un corps sain et robuste; le Sport (sic) était l'école du devoir, de la volonté, de toutes les qualités morales, viriles et nobles. Le Sport était pour lui un jeu, mais aussi un entraînement aux disciplines individuelles et collectives, une des formes des plus hautes de l'activité humaine.⁴²

Reichel's sense of the moral value of sport was transmitted to the French public through his journalism; in the 1890s he worked for several specialist sports publications, as well as penning the first regular sports column in *Le Figaro*.⁴³

It was in the 1890s too that Pierre Lafitte, a lycéen from Bordeaux, came to Paris to pursue a career in journalism that had begun covering the sports scene in his native city. When Lafitte, aided by the endowment secured with an advantageous marriage to the daughter of a wealthy watchmaker, founded the magazine *La Vie*

⁴² Archives Nationales du Monde du Travail, 2011 No. 010 040 Monument Frantz Reichel. 'Sport (for Reichel) was not solely a manifestation of strength, of skill, of courage, of endurance, it wasn't only a means of creating youth with a sound and sturdy body; sport was a school of duty, of will, of all moral qualities, virile and noble. Sport for him was a game, but it was also a schooling in individual and collective discipline, and one of the highest forms of human activities.'

⁴³ *Le Figaro*, 27th March 1932

au Grand Air in 1898 Reichel soon became one of the key contributors.⁴⁴ Both men combined a career in journalism with participation in the *société mondaine* of the Belle Epoque. It has been said that to those who knew him Lafitte was ‘a political conservative who participated uncritically in the beau monde and who did not interest himself in new ideas.’⁴⁵ This was far from the case. Lafitte was a revolutionary figure in the history of the press in France, especially in his magazine, *La Vie au Grand Air*. Taking his inspiration from English publications, especially the large format of *Country Life* and the extensive use of photography of the *Daily Mirror*, Lafitte created what his contemporaries recognised as the first modern magazine in France. His obituary in *Le Temps* called it ‘le véritable précurseur de nos modernes et nombreux magazines.’⁴⁶ Contrary to its characterisation as ‘a magazine about posh country living,’⁴⁷ *La Vie au Grand Air* was, in fact, a dynamic production that used typography, page layout and photography in a radically different manner to any of its French precursors.⁴⁸ Lafitte invented the role of artistic director, whose job was to create a product in which the pictures would not merely illustrate the text but would rather be ‘documents photographiques’ that would be the central feature of the magazine.⁴⁹ In this way Lafitte changed the way in which magazines, or illustrated journals, were read. Readers now ‘leafed through’ the issue, and, as Thierry Gervais has pointed out, to leaf through a magazine one must be concentrating on something

⁴⁴ Juliette Dugal, ‘Pierre Lafitte, ‘Le Caesar du papier couché’’, *Le Rocambole*, No. 10 (Spring, 2000), p. 18 Lafitte’s wife had the aptronymical maiden name of ‘Hour.’

⁴⁵ Lenard R. Berlanstein, ‘Selling modern femininity: *Femina*, a forgotten feminist publishing success in Belle Epoque France’, *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 30:4 (2007), p. 642

⁴⁶ *Le Temps*, 14th December 1938 ‘The true precursor of our many modern magazines.’

⁴⁷ Berlanstein, ‘Selling modern femininity’, p. 642

⁴⁸ Claude Bellanger, Jacques Godechot, Pierre Guiral and Fernand Terrou (eds.), *Histoire Générale de la Presse Française*, Vol. III: De 1871 à 1940 (Paris, 1972), p. 383

⁴⁹ *La Vie au Grand Air*, 4th February 1899, p. 244

other than the text.⁵⁰ Lafitte's pioneering style was noticeably new, and sometimes disparaged. In some quarters he was known as the man who produced 'magazines for people who did not read.'⁵¹ Yet by the time of his death in 1938 *Le Petit Parisien* acknowledged that, 'Il fut un des premiers en France à comprendre l'utilisation de la photographie.'⁵² By the use of photomontage, cropping and unusual camera angles Lafitte's publication brought the grammar of artistic modernism to the mass market.

Lafitte's style was modern but so also was his subject matter. The pages of *La Vie au Grand Air* are crammed with the latest technology, from sports cars to aeroplanes, the visual style giving a sense of speed, of a whole society on the move. Sports too were included in this dynamic society. In contrast to the conservative values associated with sports in the British world, and where a suspicion of sport as spectacle continued to be expressed in the press, *La Vie au Grand Air* portrayed sportsmen as heroes of a new France to be acclaimed and emulated by wider society. If it was mostly aristocrats who were shown racing cars or flying aeroplanes this did not mean that those who bought the magazine were not aspiring to occupy one day the position of the wealthy pioneers of technology. Yet *La Vie au Grand Air* did not solely celebrate the lives of the wealthy. Cyclists, wrestlers, boxers, swimmers ... all were sportsmen who emerged from the people, who were watched by the people and who inspired the people to sporting exploits themselves. And not just sportsmen - in 1901 Lafitte launched a bimonthly

⁵⁰ Thierry Gervais, 'L'invention du magazine: La photographie mise en page dans "La Vie au Grand Air" (1898-1914)', *Etudes Photographiques*, No. 20 (2007), p. 51

⁵¹ Bellanger, Godechot, Guiral and Terrou, *Histoire de la Presse Française*, p. 382

⁵² *Le Petit Parisien*, 14th December 1938 'He was one of the first in France to understand the use of photographs.'

magazine, *Femina*, which aimed to show women embracing cutting edge technology, setting a feminist example to the women of France whereby embracing new forms of mobility (the bicycle, the car, the aeroplane) and sports aspired to set new norms for society of equality between the sexes.⁵³

Rugby and Race in Paris

As well as pioneering the representation of women in sport Lafitte's publications pioneered the representation of racial minorities. The campaign to import English sport in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries coincided with a movement to a 'new imperialism' in France that sought to revitalise society by drawing on the strengths of the colonies. In part this was to be done by assimilating the entirety of the population of the French empire, in theory extending the possibility of citizenship to all the subject peoples.⁵⁴ Yet historians have been sceptical of the ability of colonial actors to become representative of French values during this period. Tony Chafer acknowledges that empire in France became, 'a symbolic unifying force' but adds the qualification that, 'Imperial propaganda conveyed a strong sense of French cultural, political and indeed 'racial' superiority ... over conquered peoples.'⁵⁵ This necessitated representing black inhabitants of the empire as inferior to the white Frenchman in a way that

⁵³ Berlanstein, 'Selling modern femininity', p. 648. See for example *Femina*, 15th December 1906, 'La Parisienne au salon de l'automobile' where women are testing the cars on show. See also, Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr, 'Chapter 1: New Republic, new women? Feminism and modernity at the Belle Epoque', in Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr (eds.), *A 'Belle Epoque'? Women in French Society 1890-1914* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 15-18

⁵⁴ Thomas G. August, *The Selling of the Empire: British and French Imperial Propaganda, 1890-1940* (Westport, 1985), p. 7

⁵⁵ Tony Chafer, 'Introduction' in Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur (eds.), in *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France* (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 6

legitimised colonial dominance.⁵⁶ This process, it has been argued, meant that, 'the dynamism of republicanism drew upon the image of the individual white male citizen as the representative and protector of the nation.'⁵⁷ However, in the realm of rugby not only were black players significant actors on the national stage during the Third Republic, they also represented France against other nations and were celebrated for their skill in a sport that was seen by many influential people as central to moral rejuvenation.

In contrast to Britain, where James Peters was an exception, interracial rugby in France was commonplace, albeit within a much smaller pool of players. In 1905 a well publicised match took place in Paris that pitted a team of 'black' (nègres) players against a team of whites that the black team won by six points to five (Fig. 7). The match was celebrated in *La Vie au Grand Air* as having attracted a large crowd to an excellent sporting occasion with the whole match having a black and white theme.⁵⁸ The black players played in black kits and the white players in white. The ball used was made with black and white alternating leather panels and the players were even given a medal afterwards struck in half bronze and half silver.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Raymond Bachellet, Jean Barthélémi Debost, Anne-Claude Lelieur and Marie-Christine Peyrière (eds.), *Négripub: L'image des Noirs dans la Publicité* (Paris, 1992), p. 5

⁵⁷ Alice L. Conklin, 'Chapter 10: Faire naître v. faire du noir: Race regeneration in France and French West Africa, 1895-1940', in Chafer and Sackur, *Promoting the Colonial Idea*, p. 144

⁵⁸ *La Vie au Grand Air*, 9th February 1905, p. 104.

⁵⁹ *Le Figaro*, 3rd February 1905



Fig. 7 'Noirs contre blancs'

La Vie au Grand Air, 9th February 1905

The report in *La Vie au Grand Air* was accompanied by photographs of the two teams but of greater significance is the fact that the front cover showed a striking picture of the Black team captain, Georges Jérôme, upending a White player (Fig. 8).⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Jérôme's name is variously spelt as 'Jérôme', 'Jerome' and 'Gérome' in the press. His birth certificate shows it as Théodore Hubert Georges Jérôme, Archives National d'Outre-Mer, Guyane CAYENNE.

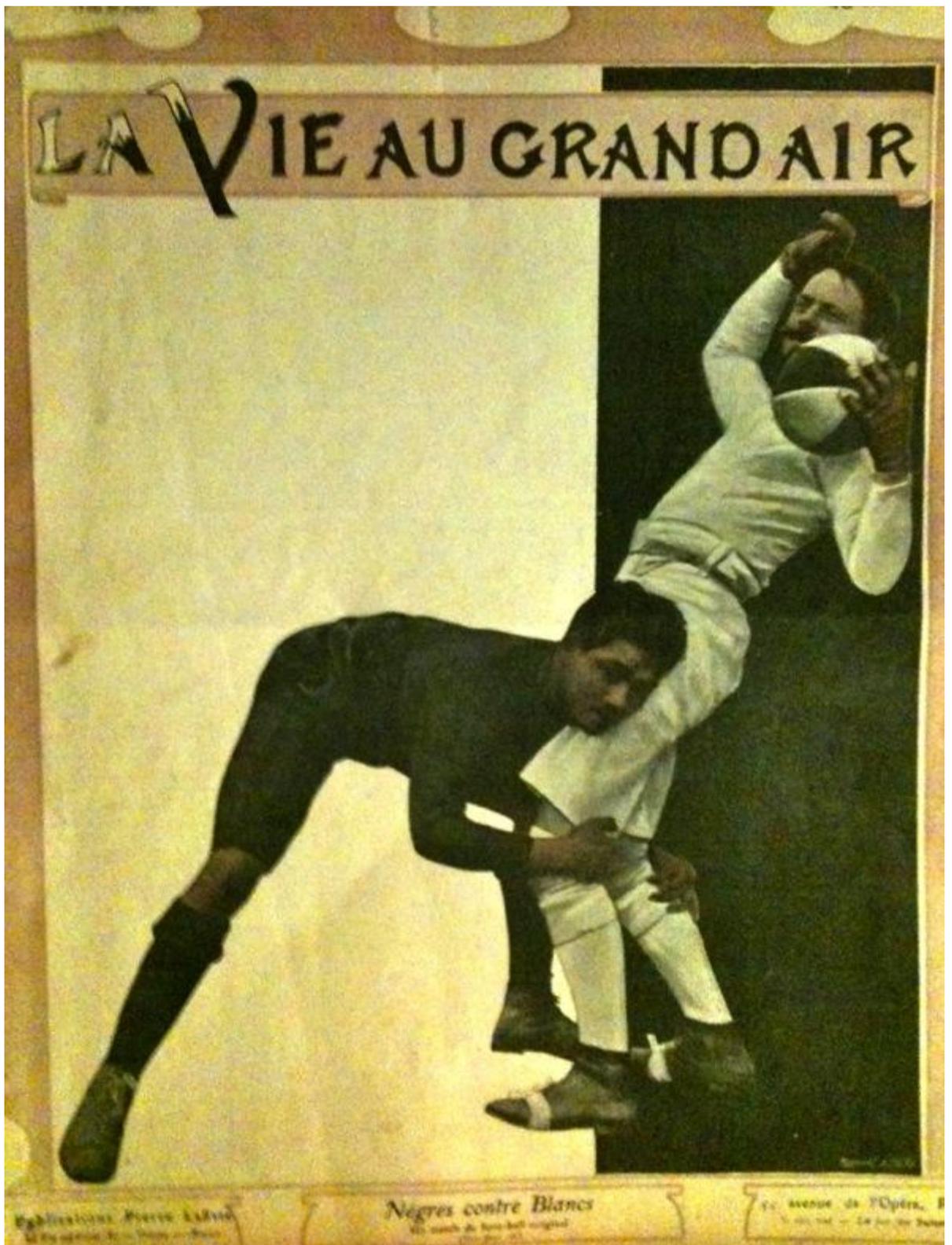


Fig. 8 'Nègres contre Blancs'

La Vie au Grand Air, 9th February 1905

In this picture one can see Jérôme being developed into an iconic figure for French sport. He is depicted as tackling one of the white team, Frantz Reichel, who had organised the match and was the captain of the whites.⁶¹ The image has been manipulated to emphasise the contrasting racial origins of the two men so that each man's colour stands out against a contrasting background colour. The picture shows Jérôme as being the dominant player, although he is crouching and Reichel is standing. Jérôme is in the process of upending Reichel, who is clearly off balance, and causing Reichel to drop the ball. Reichel's gaze is away from the viewer, whereas Jérôme looks directly at the camera, embracing the reader in a common cause and making reader and player confederates in an early demonstration of black power.

What would make the image all the more striking to the contemporary reader would be that it is a very physical image. To teams from the British world the French were seen as reluctant to embrace rugby as a contact sport. Paddy Carolin of the Springboks complained that they made a farce of the game with the forwards uninterested in scrums and their backs avoiding tackling in defence.⁶² That a magazine should depict Jérôme showing his physical prowess might be seen as conforming to the imperialist stereotype of black sportsmen as brutish or animalistic, yet the portrait shows us a sensitive individual playing the game in the robust English style.

⁶¹ René Maran, *Félix Eboué, Grand Commis et Loyal Serviteur, 1885-1944* (Paris, 2007), p. 14

⁶² van der Schyff, *Paul Roos*, p. 161

The Creole Elite in France

The black team was, for the most part, made up of players from French Guyana, and it was no accident that such a large group of Guyanese should have come together in Paris to play rugby. The structure of Guyanese society as it developed in the nineteenth century had opened up the opportunity for middle-class members of the creole élite in the colony to become assimilated into French society via educational and administrative institutions. France had first colonised Guyana in the 1760s and through the course of the following hundred years the settlement became a plantation society with a white minority supported by a slave economy.⁶³ In mid-century two events transformed French Guyana from a society operating under minority white control to one in which a creole élite came to political ascendancy within the French colonial system: the abolition of slavery and the discovery of gold deposits.

In 1848 the republican government in Paris abolished slavery in the French Empire, and this policy was enacted in French Guyana on August 10th of that year. After brief opposition from the plantation owners the effect of the liberation of the slaves was to turn the colony's economic system from one based on cash crops exported to the Americas and Europe to one based on subsistence agriculture in which freed slaves tended their own land. Attempts by French colonists to replace slave labour with imported labour from China and French sub-Saharan Africa failed due to the high costs involved and the unwillingness of the Chinese and French governments to allow emigration to what was the most remote colony in

⁶³ Serge Mam-Lam-Fouck, 'Chapter 2: Le système esclavagiste', pp. 29-48 in *Histoire de la Société Guyanaise: Les Années Cruciales: 1848-1946* (Editions Caribéens, 1997)

the French Empire. By 1880 French Guyana had in effect ceased to be an agricultural colony.⁶⁴ The discovery of gold in the hinterland of the colony in the mid-nineteenth century accelerated the decline of agriculture as a significant industry by attracting labour away from the land. Unlike in South Africa, white colonists failed to exercise a monopoly over the exploitation of gold and this failure marked the beginning of the end for white colonists' dominance as a class in French Guyana.⁶⁵

The economic eclipse of white colonists by creole Guyanese led to a transformation of society and the overturning of the structure of political power as the century progressed. Cayenne, the capital of French Guyana developed as a commercial centre as the mineral wealth of the interior was exported into the world economy and a large class of bourgeois creoles began to form. The formation of a creole élite was fostered by the French imperial ideology that used schools, administrative patronage and the church to inculcate loyalty to the French state. Education at the only college in the colony was monopolised by the offspring of the subalterns of the colonial state whose fathers worked in administration, the penal system or in commerce.⁶⁶ The creole urban bourgeoisie replicated the culture of their peers in the metropole by means of their press, their literary tastes and their theatre. Political power was kept in the hands of the creole élite through the manipulation of elections and control of the press.⁶⁷ The leaders of the French Republic accepted

⁶⁴ Mam-Lam-Fouck, *Histoire de la Société Guyanaise*, p. 82; Frédéric Piantoni, *L'Enjeu Migratoire en Guyane Française* (Paris, 2009), p. 9

⁶⁵ Mam-Lam-Fouck, *Histoire de la Société Guyanaise*, p. 94

⁶⁶ Serge Mam-Lam-Fouck, *Histoire de l'Assimilation: Des 'Vieilles Colonies' Françaises aux Départements d'Outre-mer* (Matoury, 2006), p. 57. French Guyana was the location of France's largest penal colony, including the infamous Devil's Island.

⁶⁷ Mam-Lam-Fouck, *Histoire Générale de la Guyane Française*, p. 167

this situation and fostered a system in which bourgeois men could be accommodated within the colonial state and given the opportunity to advance themselves within the bureaucratic institutions of the empire. They grasped the opportunity with both hands.

This process is testified to by the life of Gaston Monnerville, the grandson of a slave whose career would take him from growing up in Cayenne at the turn of the twentieth century to the presidency of the French Senate in the 1960s. In his memoirs he recalls how:

J'ai été formé au civisme, à l'amour de la République et à la France sur les bancs de l'école publique ... La France était ... pour moi ... une source attirante où s'éteignait notre soif de connaissance et d'émancipation humaine.⁶⁸

Creoles saw the adoption of French values as catching up with modern times, of becoming modern Frenchmen themselves. Another Guyanese who made a career in the metropole was A. E. Whily-Tell. Son of the first black director of the penal colony in French Guyana, Whily-Tell was sent by his father to the Lycée Condorcet in Paris to gain a higher quality of education than that to be found in Cayenne or the French Antilles. Finding Paris too cold for his liking Whily-Tell moved to Montauban in the southwest where his father told him that it would be easier for him to integrate into French society as he would be the only black pupil and thus would receive an entirely 'white' education. On leaving school Whily-Tell entered

⁶⁸ Gaston Monnerville, *Temoignage: De la France Equinoxale au Palais de Luxembourg* (Paris, 1975), p. 24-25. 'I learned civic duty, love of the Republic and of France on the benches of the local school ... France was ... for me ... a well to which I was drawn to slake my thirst for knowledge and human emancipation.'

the French army as an officer in the Chasseurs d'Afrique, the only known black officer in the French army then serving.⁶⁹ Despite these examples, some doubt has been cast on the ability of creoles, in the context of a French society infused with pseudo-Darwinian ideas of racial hierarchies, to overcome prejudice and to escape the position of second-class citizens.⁷⁰ Yet, if one looks at the situation through the prism of sport one gets a more nuanced perspective.

Monnerville and Whily-Tell were just two examples of a number of Guyanese who used the universalising conception of citizenship of French republican ideology to make a career within French metropolitan society, and it was from the Guyanese creole élite that the majority of the players in the black team that took to the field in Paris in 1905 were drawn. Among them was a young student enrolled in the school of colonial administration (Ecole Coloniale) in Paris, Félix Eboué.⁷¹ Eboué had arrived in Paris via the Grand Lycée in Bordeaux where there was a thriving community of Guyanese students. Bordeaux was a pioneering centre of rugby in France where its practice had originated among the large English community associated with the wine trade. Its popularity rapidly spread to the local youth under the patronage of Philippe Tissié's Ligue Girondine de l'Education Physique and teams associated with the Lycée and the University soon became rivals to the Parisian clubs.⁷² There being little sporting culture in Cayenne in the 1890s

⁶⁹ A. E. Whily-Tell, *Je Suis un Civilisé* (Paris, 1952), p. 21-28. Whily-Tell had a remarkable career. Leaving the army before the commencement of the First World War he became administrative director of the Folies Bergères in 1926 and remained in post throughout the German Occupation.

⁷⁰ Mam-Lam-Fouck, *Histoire de l'Assimilation*, p. 107

⁷¹ The Ecole Coloniale, at least until reforms were introduced in 1912, was less prestigious than the other Grands Ecoles, with only about 15% of entrants to the school being graduates. Unlike other tertiary institutions it required only a *baccalauréat* for entry. This might explain why it was easier for racial minorities to make a career in the civil service via this route. Robert Aldrich, *Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion* (Basingstoke, 1996) p. 151

⁷² Dine, *French Rugby Football*, pp. 41-9

Eboué's first contact with rugby came when he arrived in France and it is clear from the biography of him by his close friend René Maran that rugby played a significant part in his life and the lives of the other students from French Guyana.⁷³ Eboué also assimilated the ideology of muscular Christianity associated with the sport and used it to support the republican ideal of equality when he became a colonial administrator. In a speech given at a prize-giving day during his time as Governor of Guadeloupe Eboué outlined how the culture of sport, with its ideas of fair play and respect for the rules could be applied to modern society:

Jouez le jeu c'est répudier les préjugés, tous les préjugés...jouer le jeu c'est accepter la décision de l'arbitre que vous avez choisi ou que la libre jeu des institutions vous a imposé.⁷⁴

Once in Paris Eboué devoted his Sunday afternoons to playing rugby and it was at the Sporting-Club Universitaire de France (SCUF) that he first played with Frantz Reichel. It was Reichel who organised the match of 'noirs contre blancs' in which Eboué shared the field with Camille Lhuerre, André Vergès, Camille Galliot, Emile Leblond, Dorlin and Georges Jérôme, all of them Guyanese students in Paris.⁷⁵ It was this last who was taken as the star of the team, a man who had taken a trajectory from the creole élite in a French colony to the heart of the French sporting establishment in the metropole.

⁷³ Maran, *Félix Eboué*, p. 14

⁷⁴ 'Jouez le jeu', speech given by Félix Eboué at the prize-giving day of the Lycée Carnot, 1st July 1937, quoted in Jacques Dumont, 'Administration du sport, administration par le sport?', pp. 97-113 in Josette Rivallain and Hélène D'Almeida-Topor (eds.), *Eboué, Soixante Ans Après* (Paris, 2008), p. 107.

'To play the game is to repudiate prejudice, all prejudice ... to play the game is to accept the decision of the referee that you have chosen or that the free play of institutions has chosen for you'

⁷⁵ Camille Lhuerre, interview with Michel Lohier in *Parallèle 5* (1954), quoted in Maran, *Félix Eboué*, p. 14

The means by which Jérôme was depicted as a sporting icon of the French in the press was initiated during the build-up to the match that France played against New Zealand in Paris at the end of their European tour in 1905. The French had no illusions that their team, which was still in its infancy on the international stage, would be able to match the New Zealanders. Instead they looked forward to testing the strength of their own development against what was now renowned as the best team in the world. The press emphasised that this was not just a test of two teams against one another but also between two races.⁷⁶ If this was a racial struggle then Jérôme was certainly considered to be an outstanding representative of his race, again featuring as a cover star for *La Vie au Grand Air* in the issue appearing immediately before the match against New Zealand in December 1905 (Fig. 9). In this picture Jérôme embodies the qualities that Jacques Defrance identified as making up the ideal of aristocratic masculinity in France at the end of the nineteenth century – grace, style, elegance of attitude and aesthetic/academic cultivation.⁷⁷ This is a picture of a man whose colour is being celebrated at the same time that he is being objectified as an icon of French masculinity, and this at a time when the ‘relation of all those people had just passed under French rule to the people of European France (was) inevitably raised.’⁷⁸

⁷⁶ *Les Sports Modernes*, 1st January 1906

⁷⁷ Jacques Defrance, *L'Excellence Corporelle 1770-1914* (Rennes, 1987)

⁷⁸ Herman Lebovics, *True France: The War over Cultural Identity* (Cornell, 1992), p. 8

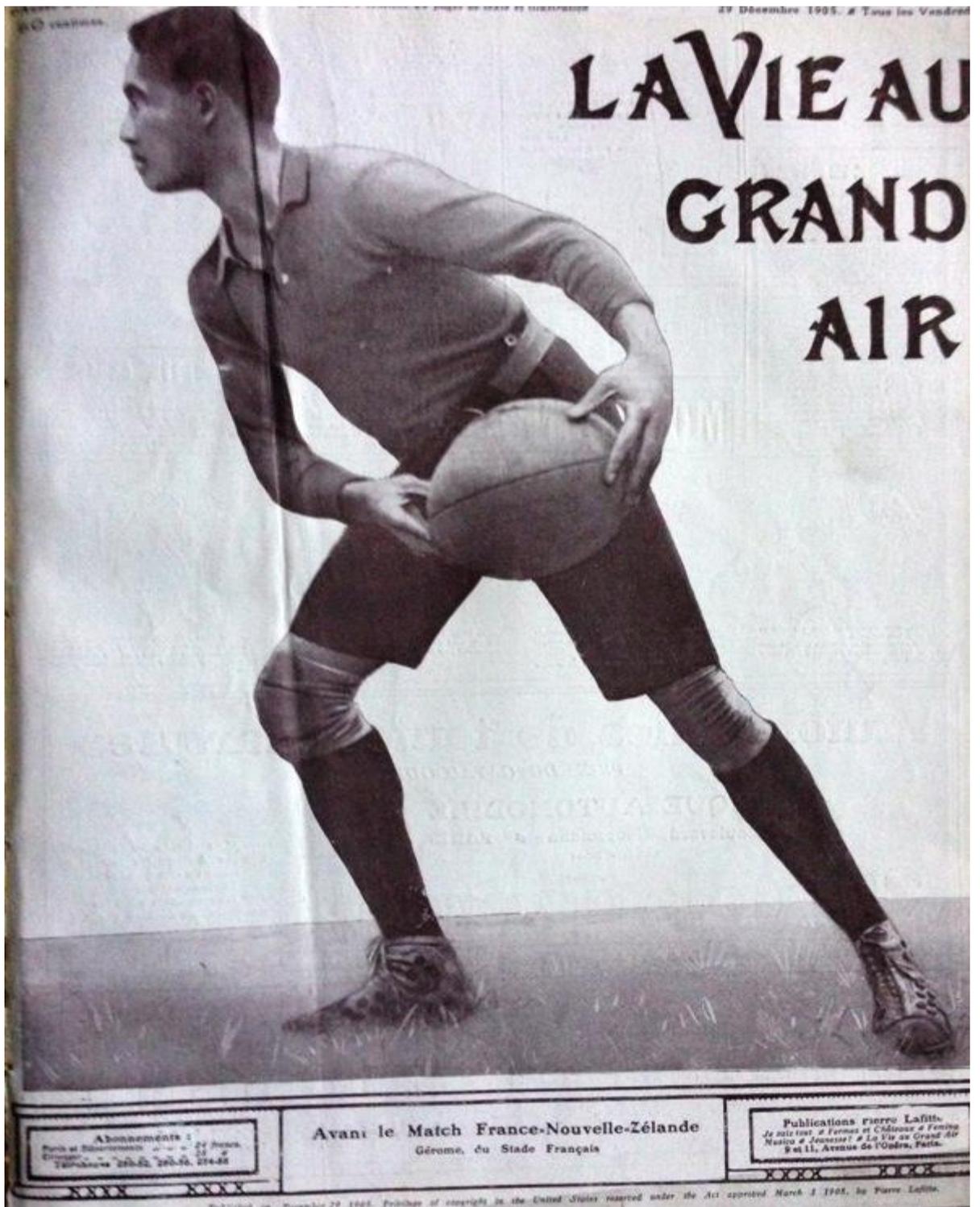


Fig. 9 Georges Jérôme before the match against New Zealand

La Vie au Grand Air, 29th December 1905

Yet the picture of French attitudes towards race is complicated by their reaction to the success of the New Zealanders, together with that of the South Africans who were to visit Europe later in 1906. While acknowledging that much of the New Zealanders' success came as a result of their tactical innovations (especially the use of the wing forward) there were certain elements of the press that saw a racial element to the robustness of their play. While the *haka*, or 'war cry', was treated in England as an instance of white colonialists appropriating native ritual for spectacular effect, in France it caused a sensation and was regarded as a demonstration of the fact that the New Zealanders were truly descended from Maori.⁷⁹ The correspondent of *L'Auto*, when comparing the style of play of the All Blacks and the Springboks, cast the New Zealanders style of play as from the 'peuplades primitives et sauvages des Maoris.'⁸⁰ Such an attitude demonstrates the hierarchy that existed within the French empire, where different colonies were judged to be at different stages of development. The New Zealanders' use of the *haka* reminded onlookers of France's own colonies of the South Pacific, typically seen as among the more 'primitive' peoples under French rule.⁸¹ By being assimilated into the cultural practices of the French state the members of the Guyanese creole élite were able to escape the kind of racial stereotyping that could be handed out to the visiting New Zealanders some of whom, likewise, had a mixed racial heritage.

Similar interest was shown in the racial background of the visitors when the South African team visited Paris the following year. When discussing the South Africans

⁷⁹ *Le Sport Universel Illustré*, 7th January 1906

⁸⁰ *L'Auto*, 31st December 1906. The 'primitive and savage tribes of the Maoris.'

⁸¹ Robert Aldrich, *Greater France*, p. 253

the press on the whole was very positive about the way in which the racial mix of the team was thought to benefit their style of play, *L'Auto* commenting that,

Si on jette un coup d'oeil sur les noms des joueurs qui composent leur équipe, on peut se rendre compte ... que les qualités des différentes races qui s'y retrouvent et qui, en se fondant, ont fini par faire un tout bien homogène, on peut se rendre compte, disons-nous, que c'est peut-être là tout le secret de leur supériorité ... Les physiologies ont toujours remarqués que les croisement des races, que les mélanges de sangs d'origines différentes ont donné les plus beaux resultants.⁸²

One sees here a demonstration of the French enthusiasm for the state to encourage mixing of the so-called 'white races' for the benefit of the common good. Yet it is ironic that the same correspondent ticks off the names of Anglo-Saxon, German and French origin but does not comment on the lack of a non-European element in the team, especially given that the French themselves had players of colour.

Not all the coverage of the South Africans was entirely positive and just as with the case of James Peters, one incident was commented on from the game that was not publicised more widely throughout the press, most likely because it did not fit in with the promotional aspect of the event. It was originally intended that the captain of the Springboks, Paul Roos, would not have to play against the Paris team, which was essentially seen as an exhibition match rather than a competitive part of the tour. However, after a long and hard tour injuries forced the South

⁸² *L'Auto*, 31st December 1906. 'If one takes a look at the names of the players making up their team one realizes ... the qualities of the different races one finds there, and which at base make up an overall homogeneity, which one might say is the secret of their superiority ... Physiologists have always said that the crossing of races, that the mixture of blood of different origins gives the best results.'

Africans into playing Roos. On the day Roos' opposite number as captain was Georges Jérôme and in *Le Matin* the two were pictured shaking hands before the start of the match (Fig. 10).⁸³

⁸³ *Le Matin*, 4th January 1907

SUD-AFRICAINS CONTRE PARISIENS

UN MATCH DE FOOTBALL RUGBY



UNE MÉLÉE

Les Sud-Africains viennent d'ajouter une nouvelle victoire à la liste déjà longue des succès qu'ils remportèrent en Angleterre. 55 points contre 6, tel est le résultat de ce match qui fut très beau, malgré l'infériorité manifeste de l'équipe mixte parisienne. Sur ce point, ouvrons une parenthèse. En



JÉROME ET LE ROUX
LES DEUX CAPITAINES

Fig. 10 The two captains, Roos and Jérôme shake hands

Le Matin, 4th January 1907

Roos himself gives an interesting account of how the photograph came about:

There were quite a few coloured players in the team, especially from the West Indian islands. So the captain for example was a coloured fellow from the island of St. Martinique. Before the match portraits were taken of the two teams together. Just after that the Captain came over and threw his arm round my neck to have a portrait of the two of us taken in that pose. My team had quite a laugh when I pulled my head out before we could be photographed and ran up the field to start playing.⁸⁴

Roos' biographer has tried to gloss over the snub delivered by Roos to Jérôme by arguing that, 'if Jérôme ... had just come and stood by him and asked for a photo, Roos probably would have remained standing, and then a very special photo would have taken up a very special place in the annals of Springbok rugby.'⁸⁵ Such wishful thinking demonstrates a continuing condescension to Jérôme in thinking that it should be he, a captain in his home ground, who should be expected to request a simple photograph from the visiting skipper. Roos' own account shows us just how uncomfortable he was with sharing a pitch with black players. There were not 'quite a few coloured players', but just two - Jérôme and André Vergès. The way that Roos removed Jérôme's arm from his shoulder shows clearly he was aware that this would imply a more intimate relationship between the two men than he was happy with, even one of subordination to his French opponent in an echo of the cover of *La Vie au Grand Air* a year previously. Contrary to the testimonies of Roos and van der Schiff a photograph of the two men posing together was taken, with both men, unsurprisingly, looking rather uncomfortable.

⁸⁴ van der Schyff, *Paul Roos*, p. 133

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 134

Amidst much coverage of the match in the French press, most of which was enthusiastic about the sportsmanship of the South Africans, one French newspaper correspondent flagged up an incident that was ignored by the rest of the press. *La Presse* finished off its coverage of the game with this account:

Entendu dans un groupe élégante:

-Pas étonnant si les Afrikanders gagnent: ce sont des sauvages!

Et, avec un moue de dégoût, la gracieuse qui a prononcé ces mots, se croit très spirituelle.

Plus loin, Roos, le capitaine des Afrikanders, donne une poignée de main à Jérôme, le capitaine français, et ses yeux prouvent que sa pensée erre loin, bien loin, en voyant que ce n'est pas un blanc qui command l'équipe de France!

Préjugés, direz-vous? Oui, mais préjugés que nous sommes fiers, nous d'avoir abandonnés.⁸⁶

The encounter between the white captain of the South African team and the black captain of the French team demonstrates the difference between conceptions of imperial belonging within the British and French empires. The prejudice displayed by the South Africans on tour had been accommodated by the English authorities and left with barely a comment by the London press – in France it was noticed and disparaged by the crowd and, at least some, reporters.

⁸⁶ *La Presse*, 5th January 1907

'Overheard in an elegant group: 'Not surprising that the Afrikanders won: they're savages!' And with a grimace of disgust, the gracious lady who pronounced these words thought herself very spiritual.

Later, Roos, the captain of the Afrikanders, gave a handshake to Jérôme, the French captain, and his eyes showed that his thoughts wandered far, very far, in seeing that it wasn't a white man who led the French team.

Prejudice, would you say? Yes, but prejudice that we are proud to have abandoned.'

Conclusion: Two Conceptions of Imperial Manliness

The intention of this chapter is not to present French rugby as being a multi-racial paradise compared to the overt racism of the British game but the rather to examine the way in which sport, in Sébastien Darbon's phrase, is 'un jeu dialectique complexe entre la dimension universelle et la dimension contextuelle des cultures sportives.'⁸⁷ The French, the English and the South Africans were playing the same game with the same rules but the way in which they perceived the rules of the game in social terms were very different. For the English, Peters' racial and class background was something at best to be tolerated and at worst to be banished from the field of play, leading to his eventual migration to the north to play League.⁸⁸ The belittling of Peters by the English sporting press was extended to Jérôme, who was referred to as 'a brunette from the Tropics' in a report of a match between England and France.⁸⁹

The match between a French XV and the South Africans was a true clash of sporting cultures. Paul Roos was the prototype for a new kind of Afrikaner masculinity. Before the South African War Afrikaner masculinity centred on 'a rural system of production and a social system of kinship and patronage' that privileged the Afrikaner man over women, people of colour and uitlanders in the Boer Republics.⁹⁰ Helen Bradford argues persuasively that the war provoked an

⁸⁷ 'A complex game of dialectics between the universal and contextual dimensions of sporting cultures'. Sébastien Darbon, *Diffusion des Sports et Impérialisme Anglo-Saxon* (Paris, 2008), p. 323

⁸⁸ Tony Collins, 'Peters, James (1879–1954)'

⁸⁹ *Athletic News*, 29th March 1906

⁹⁰ Robert Morrell, 'Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and gender in Southern African Studies', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 24:4 (1998), p. 617

internal missionary drive by middle-class male Afrikaners to remake rural Boers into men in their own image as a means to ‘fire the furnace of Afrikaner nationalism.’⁹¹ As the state modernised and urbanised after the war Afrikaner masculinity came to be centred increasingly around the national institutions of rugby, church and school.⁹² Roos embodied all three institutions. He was the captain of the national rugby team. He was a committed Christian who preached to thousands of Wesleyans during the Springbok tour, being praised in the British and South African press for his spiritual leadership.⁹³ And during his absence in Europe he was named on the committee of the South African Teachers’ Union.⁹⁴ On returning to South Africa Roos used his position as a teacher to champion rugby as a means of moral as well as of physical training for the next generation of white South Africans.⁹⁵

The sporting career of Jérôme and his fellow Guyanese makes a nonsense of the statement that ‘Black athletes from the French colonies began to appear in metropolitan France in the early twenties.’⁹⁶ He was a glamorous figure in the French sporting realm in the 1900s, personifying an élite French conception of modern masculinity, based on athleticism and elegance. It was the performative aspect of sport for the French that so confused the South Africans during their visit.

⁹¹ Helen Bradford, ‘Chapter 3: Gentlemen and Boers: Afrikaner nationalism, gender, and colonial warfare in the South African War’, in Greg Cuthbertson, Albert Grundlingh and Mary-Lynn Suttie (eds.), *Writing the Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902* (Athens, 2002), p. 37

⁹² Bradford, ‘Chapter 3: Gentlemen and Boers’, p. 37

⁹³ *Rand Daily Mail*, 30th November 1906; *Methodist Recorder*, 27th December 1906

⁹⁴ *Rand Daily Mail*, 21st December 1906

⁹⁵ Dean Allen, ‘“Captain diplomacy”: Paul Roos and the creation of South Africa’s rugby ‘Springboks’’, *Sport in History*, Vol. 33:4 (2013), p. 580

⁹⁶ Timothée Jobert, Stanislas Frenkiel, and Nicolas Bancel, ‘The athletic exception: Black champions and colonial culture (1900-1939)’, in Pascal Blanchard, Sandrine Lemaire, Nicolas Bancel, and Dominic Thomas, *Colonial Culture in France since the Revolution* (Indianapolis, 2014), p. 189

Billy Millar of the South African team commented on how the match was as much a social event as a sporting event in a crowd where, 'The ladies had their most elegant outfits on and the men arrived in ... grey swallow-tailed suits and bowler hats. The spectators were armed with racing binoculars and the movements of the players were watched the way the progress of race horses is watched.'⁹⁷ For the Parisian public the rugby match was a social event in which the style of the players ought to reflect the sophistication of the audience. That Jérôme, a try-scorer in the match against the Springboks, could be celebrated as a key member of the French side shows a contrast in the conception of imperial masculinity in the British and French worlds in the Edwardian era. His journey from Cayenne to Paris shows not that the French Empire was a more racially open space than that of the British. Rather, it demonstrates the way in which representatives of a particular colony were able to take advantage of a specific set of circumstances that allowed them to become an élite group within the structure of empire.⁹⁸ Such groups existed in the British Empire too, as will be seen in Chapter 4 on the West Indies, but prior to the First World War the members of such groups found that their opportunities for advancement were receding rather than advancing.

⁹⁷ van der Schyff, *Paul Roos*, p. 134

⁹⁸ Raymond F. Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory* (Columbia, 1968), p. 4

Empire, Sport and Race in the British World

Imperial Cricket

The career of James Peters, as explored in Chapter 1, provides an example of how the segregationist nature of South African society could have an impact on the lives of those living in the metropole. I would argue that in the 1900s there was an increasing tendency towards segregation in sport throughout the empire. The sports authorities in London mirrored the actions of the colonial authorities in paying lip service to the aspirations of people non-European origins to political and social equality while all the time maintaining de facto white dominance. This chapter examines the way in which cricket became a terrain for testing the relationship between race and imperial belonging in the year of 1906. Cricket in particular was entwined with the idea of Anglo-Saxonism in this period. As discussed in Chapter 2, cricket was seen as being part of what it meant to be an Englishman, and an expression of his 'moral worth.'¹ With the Englishman's sense of entitlement to rule being partly invested in his superiority at sports, it came as something of a challenge to that sense of superiority when colonial subaltern groups began to excel at the game both in the colonies and in tours to the mother country. If it was not easy for English cricketers to overcome the wound to their *amour propre* of having lost the first official Test match to an Australian cricket team in 1882, it was at least explicable as being the consequence of the British race

¹ Jack Williams, *Cricket and Race* (Oxford, 2001), p. 15

having emigrated and thrived.² And the earliest tour to England of a non-white team, that of the Aborigines in 1878, was seen as more of an exotic travelling show than a sporting contest. Despite the Aborigines' good standard of play, they were not taken seriously as a threat to English superiority.³

Developments in the colonies and at home, however, soon saw challenges to white superiority on the sports field. In the colonies of India, South Africa and the West Indies teams of colour proliferated and thrived, playing in their own leagues and often against white teams as well.⁴ In present-day Guyana and the British islands of the Caribbean (henceforth to be termed the West Indies) the small white population relied on black professionals to bolster the numbers enough to play club cricket within their colonies, even if those professionals were excluded from inter-colonial competitions in the Caribbean.⁵ And when, towards the end of the nineteenth century, a series of teams from England headed overseas on tour they often played against mixed race teams: such was the case in the West Indies.⁶ These tours are often seen as an example of Englishmen proselytising the game overseas, and in particular of using cricket as a way of strengthening the imperial bond between the metropole and the colonies where 'the touring cricketers from England were ambassadors, showing the flag in the colonies, providing a fond link for the settlers from the Old Country.'⁷ This retrospective view of the development of sports tours

² Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 229

³ Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, p. 123-4

⁴ For developments in individual colonies see Brian Stoddart, 'Chapter 4: West Indies', in Stoddart and Sandiford, *The Imperial Game*; Clem Seecharan, *Muscular Learning* (Kingston, 2006), pp. 95-123; Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field*, pp. 16-51; Murray and Merrett, *Caught Behind*, pp. 3-29; Kidambi, 'Sport and the imperial bond'

⁵ Hilary McD. Beckles, *The Development of West Indian Cricket Vol.1: The Age of Nationalism* (London, 1998), pp. 171-8

⁶ Seecharan, *Muscular Learning*, p. 124

⁷ Frith, *The Golden Age of Cricket*, p. 16

ignores the fact that early overseas tours were not strictly confined to the colonies. Lord Hawke, for example, led tours to the United States in 1901 and Argentina in 1912.⁸ As discussed in Chapter 3, the imperialisation of cricket in the 1900s was not solely driven from the centre. Rather it resulted from a combination of demand from the colonies encouraged by a group of individuals - Hawke, Harris and the cricketer-journalist, Pelham Warner foremost among them - who had family and business connections straddling the metropole and colonies.⁹ The significance of such individuals for the development of cricket in South Africa has already been demonstrated, and in the West Indies too the organisers of cricket tours expected to reinforce the cultural bond between the colonies and the Mother Country.

Yet the West Indies, in contrast to the rapidly industrialising South Africa, was in a position of relative decline in its economic importance to the empire. Smaller numbers of men or women were immigrating to the Caribbean than they were to the Cape and the Transvaal. A black, Asian and Chinese population that was becoming more wealthy, better educated and hungry for social reform was challenging the position of the white minority as a political and social élite.¹⁰ They were also clamouring for representation on the sports field and the tour of 1906 shows the way in which cricket became a medium for discussing what it meant to be a West Indian, as well as for discussing the position of the West Indies in the imperial family. As Anne Spry Rush has argued, the twentieth century was a period when black West Indians, even while pursuing independence, could still feel

⁸ Lord Hawke, *Recollections and Reminiscences* (London, 1924), pp. 218-230 and pp. 276-283

⁹ Bradley, 'The MCC, society and empire', p. 40

¹⁰ Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket*, p. xvii

themselves to be as British as white Britons from 'home.'¹¹ Her argument that black West Indians were not mere recipients of cultural imperialism but participants in the development of a shared imperial culture is given ample backing by the development of cricket culture in the Caribbean and its impact on the wider world.¹² Yet there is a lacuna in her discussion of West Indian culture, and that is the identity of white West Indians. As we shall see in Chapter 5 the binary relationship of coloniser/colonised often overlooks important middle groups - those colonisers who through their long association with a colony no longer feel themselves to be outsiders in a foreign land. The plantocracy of the West Indies, feeling as British themselves as any landholder in England, also came to feel the pull of colonial nationalism in the late-nineteenth century. As a group their history in the twentieth century has largely been forgotten, yet in the early years of the century they were campaigning for their colonies to be given the same status within the empire as the settler colonies of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Sport, especially cricket, played a crucial part in their campaign to advance their cause.

'Ranji', the 'Brown Englishman' and Indian Cricket

In contrast to the colonies there was no formal barrier to non-white players participating as representatives of the home nations. The cricketer Ranjitsinhji (more commonly called 'Ranji') is the most famous example, representing England on fifteen occasions between 1896 and 1902. Jack Williams has commented that

¹¹ Anne Spry Rush, *Bonds of empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonisation* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 6-7

¹² Spry Rush, *Bonds of Empire*, p. 8

those concerned about whether he was entitled to play for England in 1896 focused more on the fact that he was born in India rather than the fact that he had a dark skin.¹³ Given that the Treasurer of MCC and former England captain, Lord Harris, was himself born in Trinidad it is obvious that there was a racial element to the debate about Ranji's selection. After all, the white Harris' right to represent England was unquestioned. Harris, an influential member of the selection committee of the MCC, wished to reject Ranji from the MCC team for not being of English stock.¹⁴ Prejudice against Ranji within the MCC was strong throughout his career, and entirely based on his race. While still at Cambridge, Ranji had been denied his Blue until his final year; his contemporary Home Gordon said it was because 'there was so much prejudice against 'a nigger showing us how to play cricket'.¹⁵ And this attitude continued into his Test career; during a match at Lord's, after he had applauded a Ranji shot, Gordon was castigated by an MCC member for 'having the disgusting degeneracy to praise a dirty black.'¹⁶ Despite such prejudice Ranji had broad cross-class and cross-gender appeal among the wider sporting public as one of the great players of the era, adopted by the English people, 'in their own convoluted way.'¹⁷

Williams attributes Ranji's ability to overcome racial prejudice and play for England to the fact that selectors felt that he was culturally English, since he had been formed as a cricketer while at Cambridge University.¹⁸ Satadru Sen argues that English writers were able to cope with Ranji's challenge to white supremacy

¹³ Williams, *Cricket and Race*, p. 14

¹⁴ Simon Wilde, *Ranji: The Strange Genius of Ranjitsinhji* (London, 2004), p. 64-5

¹⁵ Home Gordon, *Background of Cricket* (London, 1939), p. 249

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 157

¹⁷ Mario Rodrigues, *Batting for Empire: A Political Biography of Ranjitsinhji* (London, 2003), p. 16

¹⁸ Williams, *Cricket and Race*, pp. 24-25

by incorporating him into the ranks of whiteness. By emphasising the similarities he shared with the supposed moral and physical qualities of his host nation he became an assimilated Englishman, an opinion that is borne out by the way in which Ranji was caricatured by 'Spy' in *Vanity Fair* (Fig. 11).¹⁹ While Ranji's skin is dark, he is depicted as the 'ultimate brown Englishman,' or more specifically as the ultimate brown English *gentleman*.²⁰ Having attained such a status one could see the incorporation of Ranji into an English team as an example of David Cannadine's notion of 'Ornamentalism', whereby Ranji's class made him socially acceptable to the imperial élite.²¹ Ranji was the (disputed) heir to the Gadi of Nawanagar, and therefore of princely blood, making it easier for him to cross the racial boundary.²²

¹⁹ Satadru Sen, *Migrant Races: Empire, Identity and K. S. Ranjitsinhji*, (Manchester, 2004), p. 46

²⁰ Arjun Appadurai, 'Playing with modernity: The decolonization of Indian cricket', in Carol A. Breckenridge, *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World* (Minneapolis, 1998), p. 31

²¹ Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*

²² Wilde, *Ranji*, pp. 97-110

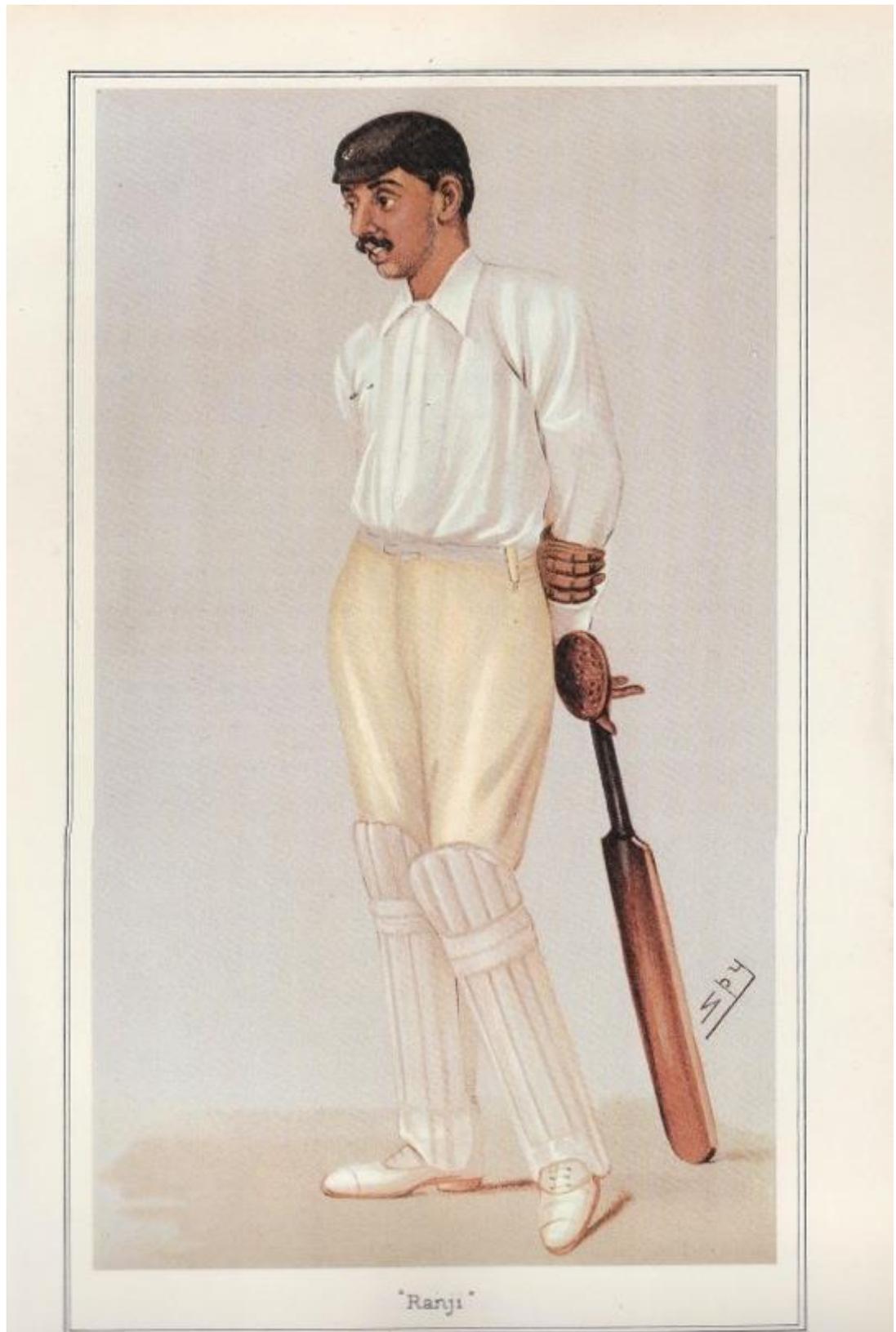


Fig. 11 'Ranji'

Vanity Fair, 27th August 1897

However, the barrier to Indians integrating into a vision of British imperial manliness is made clear by the issues thrown up by the visit of an Indian team to England in 1911. During the 1900s the 'Nestor of Parsi cricket', J. M. Framjee Patel, led a campaign in the British and Indian press to bring an Indian team to tour Britain.²³ Patel's mission to use cricket as a means of giving India the same status as the white settler colonies is shown in his book, *Stray Thoughts on Cricket*, where he argues:

The coloured people may suffer many disabilities in their own Empire, but to some extent cricket may prove their sheet anchor. We are not, in their opinion, fit company for the Antipodeans and South Africans, but if we beat them at cricket, they will think better of us. A Cambridge Professor, while lecturing before a mixed assembly of English and Indian students, told them that if Indians beat Englishmen at cricket, as Ranjitsinhji was doing, they are sure to command the respect of Englishmen who love manliness and fair play, and eventually the door of social and political privileges will be open to them.²⁴

Throughout the period one of Framjee Patel's main aims was to secure Ranji's services for a visiting Indian team, presumably both for the excellence of his batting and for his box office appeal. Yet Ranji remained unmoved by Patel's overtures, even when his own career with England had gone into decline. Having established his status as an English hero Ranji was keen to retain it.

When the Indians did finally tour in 1911 he was not among their number. Leading them instead was the equally aristocratic Maharaja of Patiala, Bhupindar Singh.

²³ Kidambi, 'Sport and the imperial bond', pp. 269-270

²⁴ J. M. Framjee Patel, *Stray Thoughts on Indian Cricket* (Bombay, 1905), p. 173

Bhupindar Singh's father was the noted cricket enthusiast, Rajendar Singh.²⁵ One of the first major patrons of cricket in India, Rajendar Singh brought professionals from England to play in his own highly cosmopolitan eleven, which contained not just English professionals but also English-born amateurs, Mulims, Parsis and even Ranji himself, in the late 1890s.²⁶ Yet despite his commitment to English sports and his championing of multi-racial cricket, Rajendar Singh's image in *Vanity Fair* is very different from that of Ranji (Fig. 12). In the picture Rajendar's racial difference is emphasised, the significant features being his outsized turban, extreme slenderness and his wearing thick glasses that obscure his eyes. The crucial difference between Ranji and Rajendar was that while they had near equal status in the colonial aristocracy, Ranji had been anglicised by his education at Cambridge. Rajendar, having been 'privately educated' in India, remained an outsider, just as his son would be when he led the Indian side in 1911. The outsider status of Indian cricketers was further underlined by the fact that they were not even considered for inclusion in the 1912 imperial cricket tournament.²⁷ No matter that Ranji could beat the English at their own game, the Indians were not seen as fit company for the Antipodeans and the South Africans.

²⁵ Kidambi, 'Sport and the imperial bond', p. 276

²⁶ Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field*, p. 105-106

²⁷ Bruce Murray, 'Abe Bailey and the foundation of the Imperial Cricket Conference'

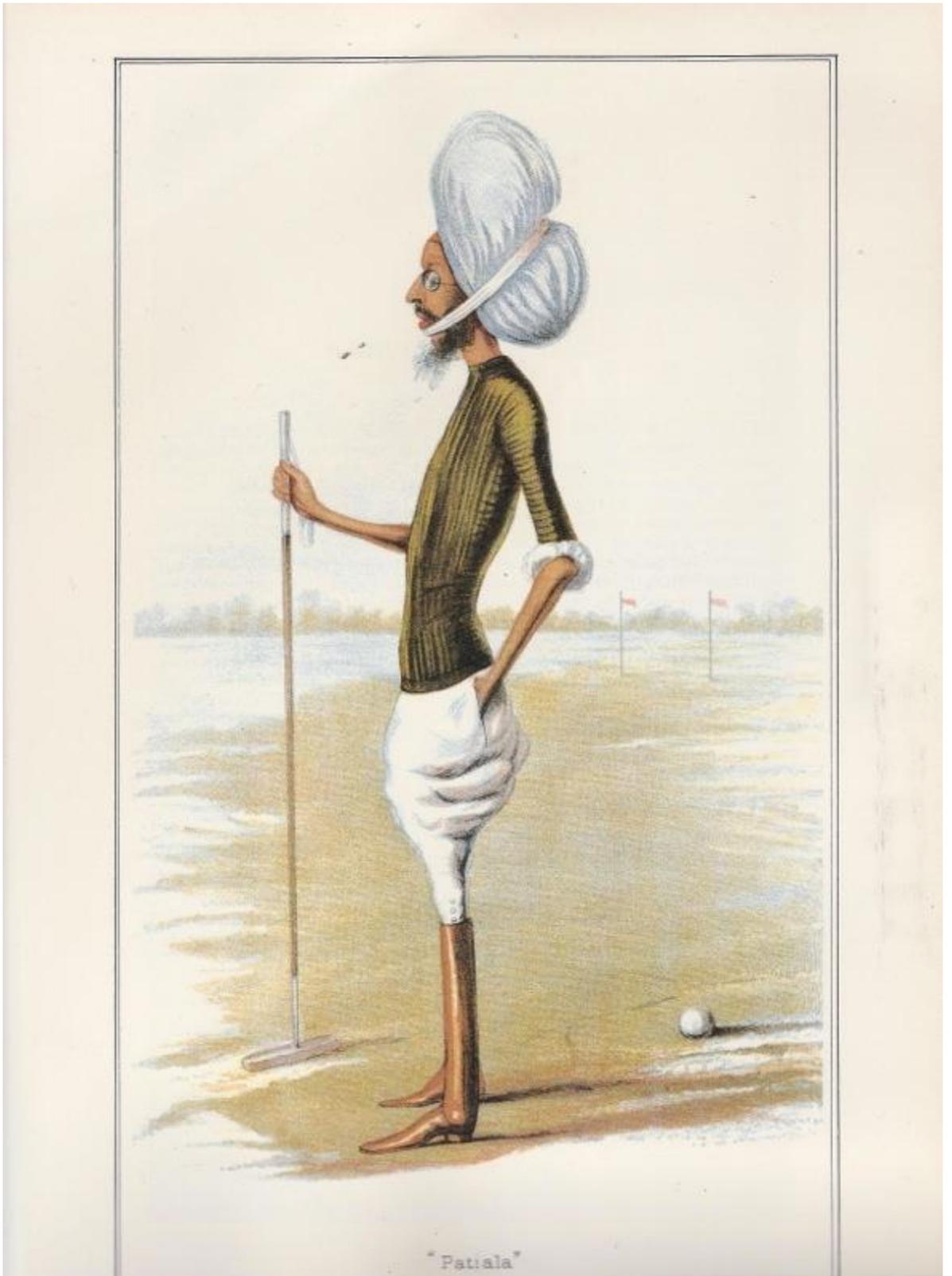


Fig. 12 'Patiala'

Vanity Fair, January 4th 1900

Nevertheless, the shared class status of Ranji and the Maharajahs of Patiala did at least ensure that they were treated as gentlemen and equals on the cricket field. This class element is significant given the treatment of James Peters. Peters, the son of a black West Indian father, represented England at rugby just months before the arrival of the West Indian cricket team in 1906. Not being of princely blood his entry into the world of international sport was both more difficult and less celebrated than that of Ranji. His treatment at the hands of the selectors and of the British press demonstrates how belonging in the empire was based on the intersection of race and class. This fact would be underlined by the discourse surrounding the tour of a West Indian team to Britain in the summer of 1906, in the months between Peters' excellent play for England in the home nations rugby internationals in the spring and his omission against the South Africans in the autumn.

West Indian Cricket at the End of the Nineteenth Century

Although Peters became an invisible man on the imperial sports field in 1906 this was not the case with the black members of the West Indian cricket team that visited the United Kingdom the same summer. In the West Indies, mixed race teams were becoming the norm, indeed necessarily so since without black players the white minority would not have enough personnel in each colony to assemble a competitive team to play against other colonies. The status of black players was complicated by the fact that conventions on who could or could not play against whites differed from colony to colony. Invariably, white players, given that they were all from the landowning or professional classes, were amateurs and played

for whites-only clubs. Black sportsmen formed their own clubs that had diverse class and racial conventions for membership.²⁸ In *Beyond a Boundary* C. L. R. James recalls how this process played out in his boyhood in 1900s Trinidad, where he says that the apparently simple question of choice of cricket club, 'plunged me into a social and moral crisis which had a profound effect on the future of my whole life.'²⁹ This was a pattern repeated across the Caribbean where 'there were as many struggles over boundaries within and between the lower ranked social groupings as there were within the white élite.'³⁰

When it came to the colonies playing one another at the end of the nineteenth century once more each colony had its own rules around race that had to be negotiated in order for the games to go ahead. In Jamaica, Guyana and Barbados professional (i.e. black) players were excluded, whereas in the more liberal - and more racially mixed - Trinidad, black players were selected. But when Trinidad went to Barbados to play they had to leave the black members of their team behind.³¹ Yet Trinidad had been very successful when their mixed race team beat a touring English eleven led by Lord Hawke twice in 1897 and then repeated the feat against another team of English tourists later in the year.³² The lesson for the other colonies of using all the available talent of the islands cannot have been lost on Barbadians since three of the Trinidadian bowlers, all black, were cricketers

²⁸ Stoddart, 'Chapter 4: West Indies', pp. 80-81

²⁹ C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (London, 1963), p. 49

³⁰ Stoddart, 'Chapter 4: West Indies', p. 84

³¹ Keith A. P. Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians* (Aldershot, 1994), p. 154

³² Arthur Priestley's XI played in the Caribbean the same year as the more prestigious Lord Hawke's through a mixture of 'misunderstanding and arrogance'. See Seecharan, *Muscular Learning*, pp.127-147 for the background and detail of each of the tours.

refugees from Barbados seeking better opportunities to ply their trade at a higher level in the rival colony.

As a result of the success of Hawke's and Priestley's trips to the West Indies in 1897 it was decided to organise a return visit by the West Indies in 1900. Pelham Warner, born and raised in Trinidad and the son of the Attorney General, was a driving force behind the project. He was determined that for a West Indian side to be competitive in the mother country it must include the best men of all races, saying:

These black men add considerably to the strength of a side, while their inclusion makes the game more popular locally, and tends to instil a mutual and universal enthusiasm amongst all classes of the population.³³

Warner, who was on Hawke's team during the 1897 tour, and whose brother, Aucher, was the captain of the Trinidad side, underlined the necessity of a mixed race West Indian party by noting how Barbados and Guyana weakened their bowling attacks by excluding black professionals against the English tourists.³⁴ Warner's enthusiasm for colour-blind selection was not matched universally across the West Indies.

The difficulty around who could be chosen to represent the West Indies was particularly demonstrated after the selection of a black working-class fast-bowler for the touring party. Fitz Hinds, a house-painter by trade, had joined the Spartan

³³ P. F. Warner, *Crickets in Many Climes* (London, 1900), p. 7

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 6

Cricket Club, the only club in Barbados 'intended to serve the upper middle class black and mulatto families.' His membership was unpopular not just with his white elite opponents, who refused to play against a working man, but also amongst members of his own club, some of whom designated him an 'undesirable member' for similar reasons.³⁵ Hinds' selection was nevertheless pushed through and he made the trip to England. This, however, came at a cost - one white member of the team, H. A. Cole, refused to tour with Hinds on the ground that he was a professional and not an amateur.³⁶ It is important to scrutinise what Cole meant by the distinction between professional and amateur. It has implications not just for events during the 1906 tour but also offers a parallel to the treatment of Peters. In the West Indies the term 'professional' applied to those men (who were always black) who made their living as employees of white cricket clubs, for example by bowling for white amateurs in the nets or acting as groundsmen or maintenance staff. Spartans was an amateur club and Hinds gained membership of the club by his excellence at cricket. What some members of Spartans objected to was that his craft of painter placed him in a class that did not entitle him to be in the company of the middle-class men who hitherto had constituted its membership. Cole, similarly, was happy to tour to England with black professionals who performed the function of menials to the rest of the touring group - Tommy Burton and 'Float' Woods were two such men. Cole's objection was to a black player who aspired to the status of an amateur within the touring group, as was the case with Hinds and the batsman Lebrun Constantine. Hinds was in the peculiar position in 1900 of having been deemed unsuitable to play for Barbados against Trinidad in the inter-colonial tournament while at the same time being included in a West Indian eleven

³⁵ Seecharan, *Muscular Learning*, p. 179

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 180

to travel to play against English teams of a far superior quality. This was commented on by the *Barbados Bulletin*, which noted that 'he is ... considered eligible to appear at Lord's and the Oval in company with the nobility of England, and yet not good enough to go to Port of Spain.'³⁷ The case also echoes that of 'Krom' Hendricks. The significance in terms of imperial belonging lies in the fact that Hendricks was excluded from representing South Africa on the grounds of his race and class (as Peters was to be from representing England *against* South Africa) while Hinds was not excluded from representing the West Indies. The push to some form of racial inclusion on the sports field was coming from the élite of the West Indies in the persons of Warner and, to a lesser extent, Lord Harris. It was H. A. Cole who stayed at home in 1900.

The social differences between the groups of colonies that comprised the West Indies and South Africa were key to the greater acceptance of black participation in imperial sport in the Caribbean. Vivian Bickford-Smith's concept of the creole élite can help to clarify the difference. In South Africa, the creole élite's desire to participate in civic society - to become 'Black English' - was closed off by the deal between the British authorities on the Cape and in the Rand, and the Afrikaner leaders in the Peace of Vereeniging that followed the South African War.³⁸ Sports authorities in England and South Africa colluded in this process by making sports fixtures between themselves whites only. By contrast, in the West Indies, in the sporting context at least, the white élite acted as advocates of the creole élite who were being educated in the schools modelled on those of the mother country and whose former students were burgeoning as a black middle class. Advocates too of

³⁷ Quoted in Seecharan, *Muscular Learning*, p. 181

³⁸ Bickford-Smith, 'The betrayal of creole élites', p. 225

black working-class players whose sporting excellence combined with ‘a healthy dose of practicality’ on the part of selectors led to five of their number being included in the trip to England in 1900 and of more than that number in 1906.³⁹ Historians have tended to see cricketing relations between the mother country and the West Indian colonies in binary terms, with whites on either side of the Atlantic acting in a spirit that ranged from paternalistic tolerance of the black presence on the pitch to openly racist hostility in the press. Such writers see the team as being portrayed as ‘a black force in spite of white leadership’⁴⁰ and argue that ‘the British press did not embrace them as fellow brothers of the Empire.’⁴¹ This is a crude reading that does not recognise either the variety of opinion among the British press or that black West Indians themselves showed a great deal of agency in controlling the terms of their engagement in the cricket team. While not denying that coverage of the tours was always inscribed within a racist régime of truth there were multiple voices in the press, and in the leadership of the sport, including many who saw the West Indians as part of the imperial family. As with the South Africans, commercial interests in particular played a part in the promotion of the West Indian tours.

³⁹ Major, *More than a Game*, p. 207

⁴⁰ Beckles, *The Development of West Indian Cricket*, p. 31

⁴¹ Aviston D. Downes, ‘Flannelled fools?’ Cricket and the political economy of the British West Indies c. 1895-1906’, *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 17:4 (December 2000), p. 75

1900: 'Englishmen who happen to reside in the West Indies'

The tours by the West Indians to Britain in 1900 and 1906 took place at a time of severe economic and social crisis in the Caribbean. A growing black middle class was taking advantage of the increased educational and employment opportunities offered by attempts to diversify local economies towards service industries.⁴² Yet the still-dominant industry, sugar production, was threatened by European governments' subsidies to beet production, rivalry from other producers in the British Empire, and rivalry too for the lucrative American market from Cuba and other non-British West Indian colonies. In response, plantation owners squeezed wages, leading to 'widespread destitution and malnutrition' as well as a series of riots across the region in the late 1890s and 1900s that fostered an increased sense of class and race consciousness among the black working class.⁴³ Crucial to the economic fortunes of the plantocracy was their ability to lobby the imperial government for trade preference. In this they were aided by the change in policy brought about by the appointment of Joseph Chamberlain as Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1895. The leading voice for imperial preference, Chamberlain took a special interest in the sugar industry; first by appointing a Royal Commission to investigate economic conditions, then by exerting diplomatic muscle to persuade the Europeans to end their subsidies of the beet industry.⁴⁴ Political lobbying on behalf of the plantocracy was rewarded with military action against their unruly employees. Troops were used to put down a riot in Montego Bay in 1902, and the

⁴² Howard Johnson, 'The black experience in the British Caribbean in the twentieth century', in Hawkins, *Black Experience and the Empire*, p. 318

⁴³ Heuman, 'The British West Indies', p. 490-1; Johnson, 'The black experience in the British Caribbean', p. 325

⁴⁴ Downes, 'Flannelled fools?', p. 64

Governor of Barbados called out a Man-of-War to intimidate striking port workers in 1907.⁴⁵

The chief lobbying group for the businessmen of the West Indies was the West India Committee. This group, formed in the City of London in 1735 to promote trade to the region, was in the process of a transformation of its role at the turn of the twentieth century. In the 1880s and 1890s the West India Committee was a single-issue campaigning group on the question of sugar subsidies. At its moment of triumph on that issue it transformed itself into an advocate for West Indian business in all its forms, as well as a promoter of the West Indies as a politically stable and culturally British group of colonies.⁴⁶ The lobbying for business took the form of campaigning for greater investment in the infrastructure of the Caribbean, chiefly in the form of improved cables between islands and to the American mainland, and also an improved mail service.⁴⁷ This, the Committee argued, would enable greater intra-colonial trade, as well as engendering a feeling of the colonies sharing a common political culture. The Committee praised Chamberlain not just for his desire for imperial preference but also for his enthusiasm for imperial federation.⁴⁸

The committee also launched a series of cultural initiatives aimed at the mother country. The *West India Committee Circular*, which had hitherto been an industry-focused journal, expanded its remit to include reportage on social and cultural activities, with greater use of photography to publicise the benign nature of life in

⁴⁵ Downes, 'Flannelled fools?', p. 76

⁴⁶ Douglas Hall, *Brief History of the West India Committee* (Kingston, 1971), p. 33

⁴⁷ *Annual Report of the West Indian Committee* (1906)

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

the islands making it akin to a *Country Life* of the Caribbean. At the same time the Secretary of the Committee (and editor of the *Circular*), Algernon Aspinall, published a series of books on the topography, history and literature of the West Indies that aimed to reestablish its reputation as a key space in the history of Britain, as well as a pleasurable potential destination for the British tourist.⁴⁹ The enhanced status of the Committee as a representative of the region as a whole was recognised by the imperial authorities when it was granted a Royal Charter of Incorporation in 1904 following petitioning by its Chairman, Sir Neville Lubbock, and his supporters direct to the King.⁵⁰ Aspinall's self-assessment of his mission of promotion was that 'there has been a good deal of progress in the West Indies in the direction of securing publicity for (the colonies) and for the undoubted attractions which they offer to young, energetic men with a moderate amount of capital, to capitalists, and to visitors during the winter months.'⁵¹ That Aspinall's confidence in the success of his mission might have been misplaced is testified to by one reviewer commenting that although, 'Among the oldest of British dominions overseas, the British West Indies is the most backward, the least developed, the most negligible in the councils of empire.'⁵² Nevertheless, that was not for any want in effort on the part of Aspinall and the Committee.

Allied to the media campaign a physical manifestation of the West Indies was planted in the heart of London in the form of the West India Club. The Club was an

⁴⁹ Algernon Edward Aspinall, *Sun Pictures of the Antilles and British Guiana* (London, 1905); *The Pocket Guide to the West Indies* (London, 1910); *West Indian Tales of Old* (London, 1912); *The British West Indies: Their History, Resources and Progress* (London, 1912)

⁵⁰ Aspinall, *The British West Indies*, p. 384

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 385-6

⁵² William Churchill, 'Review: "The British West Indies" by Algernon Aspinall', *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*, Vol. 45:12 (1913), p. 934

off-shoot from the Committee and was intended to 'further the interests of the West Indies and British Guyana by providing headquarters for associated activities', which included organising 'cricket matches and other kindred amusements recognised by our English Universities and Public Schools.'⁵³ None other than Lord Hawke chaired the Club's Sport Committee, and the linkage between sport and politics was made explicit by its statement that planning to bring a cricket team to England in 1900 would have the 'object of forwarding West Indian questions, and bringing them before the public in a useful manner.'⁵⁴

The tour, while no great success in sporting terms, certainly brought the West Indians to the attention of the public through widespread media coverage on their arrival in England. And contrary to what has been written on the tour, it was not the case that the team contained a 'few token blacks.'⁵⁵ Warner had pointed out that a 'West Indian eleven without these black men would undoubtedly be weak.' Warner's view was vindicated. Charles Olivierre and Lebrun Constantine, both black players from St. Vincent and Trinidad respectively, topped the batting averages. While 'Float' Woods and Tommie Burton of Barbados, also black, topped the bowling averages. In the light of the demonstrable value that its black members made to the team, and the backing that they received from the most important Anglo-West Indian player of his generation, how then were the team portrayed to the English public?

⁵³ *West Indian Club Annual Report* (1901)

⁵⁴ *West India Club Annual Report* (1899)

⁵⁵ Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p. 155

The portrayal was rather even-handed. Certainly there was racial stereotyping. C. L. R. James tells the story of how after a heavy defeat in their opening match against London County the team was depicted in a cartoon in the *Star* showing Dr. W. G. Grace, 'huge, towering, bat in hand, while around him crouched six black men all shedding tears, and saying to the doctor: "We have come to learn, sah!"'⁵⁶ Such an image would fit in with the idea that the 'non-white members of the team' were presented as 'fidgeting, ape-like, infantilized 'coons'.⁵⁷ Written descriptions of the team were for the most part, however, welcoming of the visitors. *The Boys' Own Paper*, a magazine aimed at public schoolboys and would-be public schoolboys, noted that the 'presence of coloured players' would be 'a great novelty' and speculated as to whether they would play in correct cricket attire, i.e. boots.⁵⁸ Yet this question was soon put to rest and the cricketers as a whole treated on their merits as players. It quoted an interview with Burton who mentioned the controversy over the colour bar in the Caribbean with the journalist going on to comment that, 'there is no reason whatever why the indifference (sic.) of race should not be abolished.' Burton's status as an equal with the white members is then underlined by his inclusion in an illustration of the 'Members of the West Indian cricket team.' (Fig.13)⁵⁹ Clem Seecharan has also shown how the cricketing press quickly recognised the excellence of the black players, quoting from an

⁵⁶ C. L. R. James, 'West Indies cricket', pp. 12-33 in *Cricket* (London, 1986), p. 18. The piece originally ran as part of a series of columns that appeared in *The Cricketer* between 6th May 1933 and 24th June 1933. James, writing for a cricket magazine, provides no reference for where the cartoon appeared. The *Star* of London published no such cartoon in 1900 and in fact covered the West Indians' tour very sparsely. It could be that James was referring to another *Star*. However, one should be cautious in using such a piece of evidence for claiming that it was the dominant image of the tour as covered by the press in 1900, whether it exists or not. See Anthony Bateman, *Cricket, Literature and Culture: Symbolising the Nation; Destabilising the Empire* (Ashgate, 2009), p. 158; Gerry Cotter, *England versus West Indies: A History of the Tests and other Matches* (Swindon, 1991), p. 17

⁵⁷ Downes, 'Flannelled fools?', p. 75

⁵⁸ *The Boys Own Annual* (1901), p. 426

⁵⁹ *The Boys Own Annual* (1901), p. 427

extended interview with 'Float' Woods before the end of the tour.⁶⁰ While there may have been some racial stereotyping of the team it was limited. Those who had contact with the team and those who managed the tour took no part in such practices.

⁶⁰ W. A. Bettesworth, 'Chats on the cricket field: J. Woods', *Cricket*, 13th September 1900, quoted in Seecharan, *Muscular Learning*, pp. 197-200

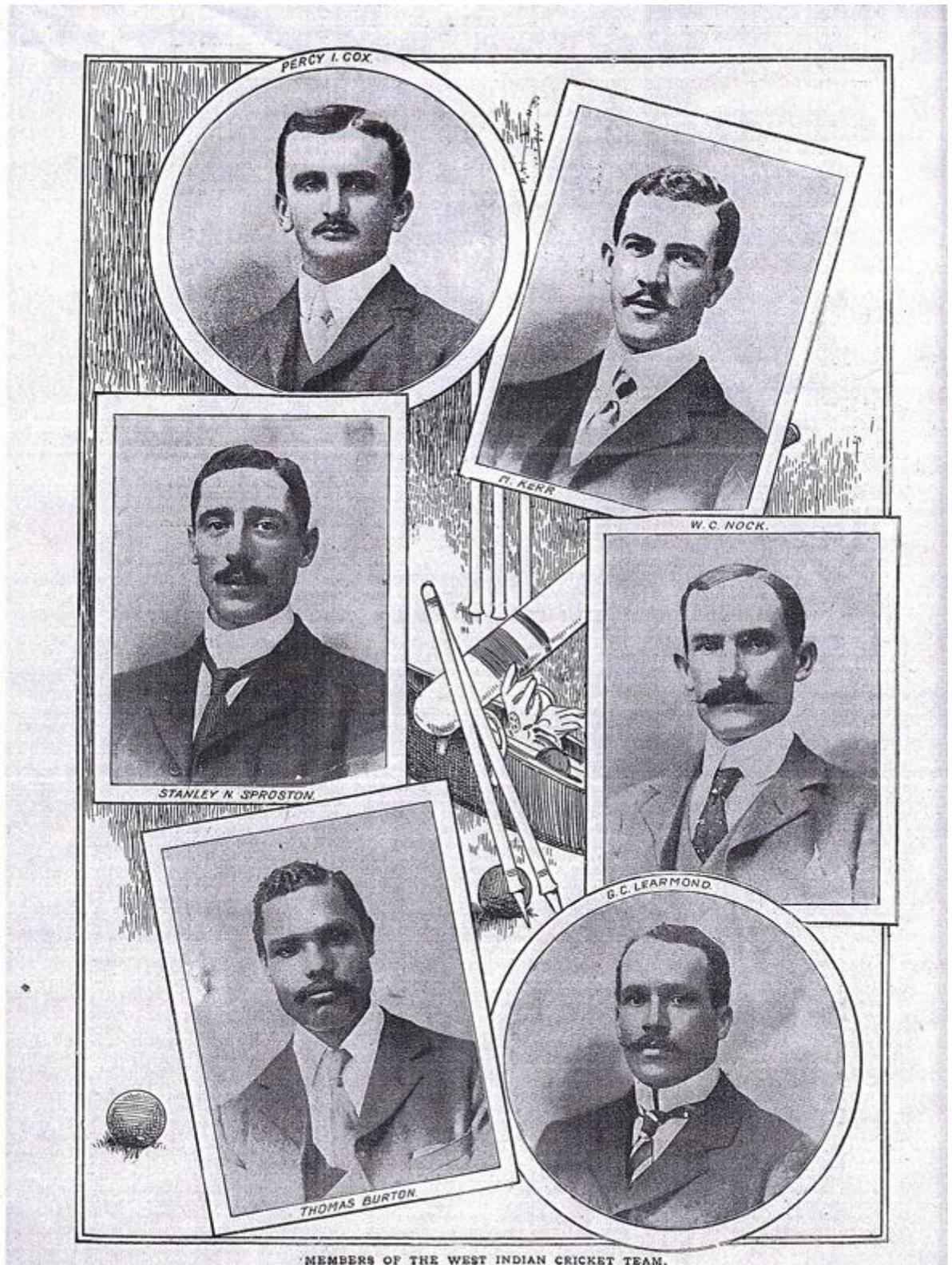


Fig. 13 'Members of the West Indian cricket team'

The Boy's Own Annual, 1900

At the end of the 1900 tour the West Indian Club held a dinner for the players and a collection of imperial grandees. Among the players in the report in *The Times*, Hinds and Olivierre are picked out by name. The grandees included Lord Harris and the Earl of Selborne (then under-secretary of state for the colonies under Chamberlain), as well as Sir Nevile Lubbock and Algernon Aspinall of the West India Committee. The Earl of Selborne gave the keynote address in which he used the example of Australia as a possible model for the West Indies in two ways. Firstly he saw how 'Cricket had an educational influence,' teaching the people of England about the colonies to the south, reminding them of their brotherhood and the way in which it was being demonstrated on the battlefields of South Africa. Secondly, he emphasised its progress to federation, and the way in which sport was a means of developing a national culture between disparate colonies, saying that, 'Not long ago the Australian colonies were like a disunited bundle of sticks. They had now united into a great Commonwealth.'⁶¹ Emphasising the multi-racial nature of the culture that imperialists expected to develop in the West Indies Lord Harris stated that:

I daresay there are lots of people in England ... who are ignorant as to the West Indians were. I was asked, 'Now who are these gentleman who are playing here?' 'Well,' I said, 'I do not know, they come from the West Indies.' 'Yes, but what race are they,' I said, 'They are Englishmen, I do not know what other race they are, they happen to be Englishmen who happen to reside in the West Indies.'⁶²

⁶¹ *Times*, 14th August 1900

⁶² P. F. Warner, *The West Indian Cricket Team: Full Report of their First Tour in England, June-August, 1900* (London, 1900), p. 31

This quote goes to the heart of the project of the West Indian tour, which was to persuade the British public of the place of the West Indies in the imperial family, equal to Australia. But the more interesting aspect of the idea that the team were 'Englishmen who happened to reside in the West Indies' was that this gave black cricketers the same status as their white counterparts. In 1906 this equality of status would be more explicitly asserted by members of the team, and more explicitly challenged by the British press.

1906: The Rejection of Mixed Cricket

The fact that the West Indians failed to make much of an impression on the sports field in 1900 was reflected in the fact that the coverage of their tour diminished the longer it progressed. This did nothing to dissuade the men of the West Indies from believing in the positive effect that continuing sporting relations could have on the image of their home. A further tour by an English eleven took place in 1904, of which the West India Committee noted that, 'the tourists not only put money into circulation, but they also, on their return, help to increase the very limited knowledge which the public has of this part of the Empire.'⁶³ That winter preparations were undertaken by the West India Club for a fresh visit by the West Indians to England, with the twin political aims of fostering closer union between the colonies and of promoting the colonies. Such aims were underlined in the *Circular*, which argued that, 'Good will result from the point of view of sport, but also because of the spirit of homogeneity and co-operation which it will impart to the Colonists in the West Indies. The visit will serve to draw an increased amount

⁶³ *West India Committee Circular*, 25th October 1904 Vol. XIX, No. 137

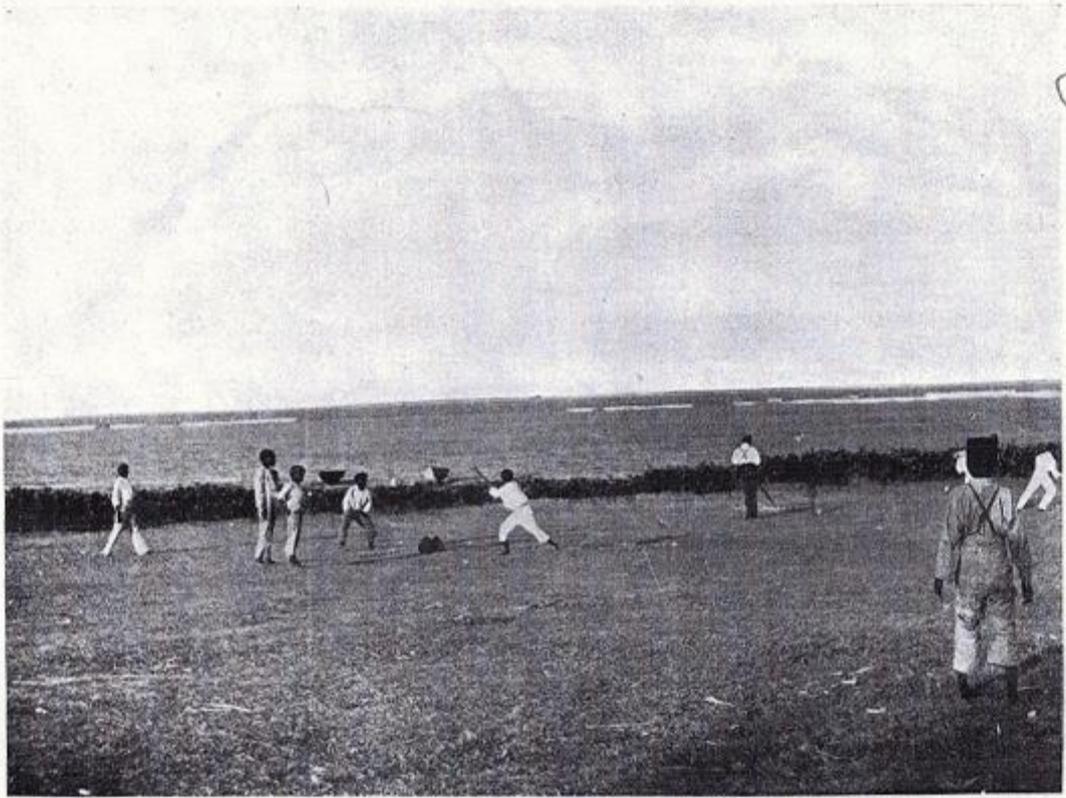
of attention to our West Indian Colonies, with which many will be induced to make greater acquaintance.’⁶⁴ The key phrase in the quote is ‘homogeneity and co-operation.’ The chief concern of the West Indians on their arrival in England was to emphasise the geographical spread of the lands that they represented and how the culture of cricket was intended to overcome the practical difficulties that the colonies faced in presenting a united front.

One can also see, if not homogeneity, then racial co-operation as being one of the key ideas of the promoters of the tour. In the issue of the Circular published in London in the same week that the West Indian players arrived in England there is a picture taken by A. E. Aspinall.⁶⁵ The picture is of a group of black boys playing cricket with an older black man or youth who has his back to the camera. The caption is ‘Youthful Cricketers’ with no further comment on the picture in the text of the journal (Fig. 14). However, the picture can be read as an illustration of the racial politics that the tour was intended to portray to the mother country. The boys are neat and tidy, although obviously not affluent enough to be able to afford the type of cricket kit that would be used by white amateurs in the islands. The pitch that they play on is improvised but it is nevertheless a recognisable cricket pitch, and the poses they have struck show the postures of people who play the game regularly. It is an ordered scene, and one that is reminiscent of many such scenes of white working-class youth playing games in England that appeared in the press in the 1900s. The only difference is that these boys are black – and perhaps that the weather’s a little better. That they are not racialised by the caption but

⁶⁴ *West Indian Committee Circular*, 1st December 1906 Vol. XX, No. 167

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* March 2nd 1906, Vol. XX, No. 180. The West Indians arrived on 4th June 1906 at Southampton. L. S. Smith, *West Indies Cricket History and Cricket Tours to England, 1900, 1906, 1923. Including Matches in Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (Port of Spain, 1922), p. 72

merely called 'young cricketers' puts them on the same plane as any other person who has taken up the game. The picture legitimises the presence of black players on the field while at the same time demonstrating their subordinate economic position as regards the equipment that they play with and the pitch that they use compared to their white counterparts in the Caribbean.



[Photo by Alphonse E. Anglart.]

[Copyright]

YOUTHFUL CRICKETERS.

Fig. 14 'Youthful cricketers'

West Indian Committee Circular, March 2nd 1906, Vol. XX, No.180

The message of racial inclusivity was further underlined at the dinner given to welcome the West Indians to England. Sir Cavendish Boyle, Vice-President of the West Indian Club and former Governor of British Guyana, gave the keynote speech in which he tied in Anglo-Saxon values with both the white and black members of the team, calling them 'West Indian Anglo-Saxons.' In his peroration he expressed the equivalent status of the members of the team - white and black, professional and amateur - saying, 'I feel confident that Messrs Learmond, Constantine, and Goodman and Burton will, with their companion teamsters, pull together, train together, bowl together, bat together, and field together for the honour of their sunny homes ... and to add another link in the chain of friendship and good fellowship, the chain of oneness and whole-heartedness, which binds the sons of Great Britain with the children of the Greater Britains in that undefeated, aye, undaunted whole - our United Empire, (Cheers.)'⁶⁶ The reference to the West Indians as children of the empire may ring warning bells about the stereotype of 'natives' of the British colonies being children to their white masters, except that in this case the team as a whole is referred to in the same way, white and black. The term can therefore be seen rather as a positive, if patronising, way of expressing the shared kinship that the players had with the imperial family. Some backing for the value of a colour blind selection policy came from the press on the tourists' arrival, with the *Express* commenting that, 'The Jamaican representatives are the poorest of the bunch, because Jamaica is the last of the West Indian Islands to stick to the bad old ploy of selecting men for their social rather than their sporting qualities, which up

⁶⁶ *The Sportsman*, 11th June 1906. Learmond and Goodman were white amateurs, Constantine travelled as a black amateur and Burton was a black professional.

until recently did so much harm to West Indian cricket.’⁶⁷ Yet while there may have been an effort to project a certain image of the tourists on the part of the West Indian Committee and their sympathisers there was a mixed response in the British press.

To read historians’ accounts thus far of the tour one would believe that the reception of the team was one of indifference with no sign of embracing them as fellows in empire. One historian writes that, ‘The team was projected as ‘black’ and represented in a very racist fashion.’⁶⁸ Another that ‘the West Indies team had now for the first time acquired the image as a black force in spite of white leadership ... elements of the press considered it necessary to cast the contest within a racial paradigm.’⁶⁹ Unfortunately these assertions are based on two cartoons by A. E. Morton that are reproduced in a fairly recent, unreferenced, account of the tour (Fig.15).⁷⁰ Each uses crude ‘coon’ stereotypes to illustrate the West Indians learning a lesson from their white English masters. While not denying that they are representative of a virulently racist strand of thinking present in English imperial culture it would be wrong to extrapolate from these two illustrations that appeared in the sports supplement of a Manchester evening newspaper to the view of the British press as a whole on the tourists of 1906.⁷¹ A. E. Morton, may have

⁶⁷ *Daily Express*, 6th June 1906. ‘Social’ is a euphemism for racial. In 1906 Jamaica was the last of the West Indian colonies to maintain a colour bar on the cricket pitch.

⁶⁸ Downes, ‘Flannelled fools?’, p. 75

⁶⁹ Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket*, p. 31. See also Bateman, *Cricket and Literature*, p. 158

⁷⁰ Gerry Wolstenholme, *The West Indian Tour of England 1906* (Privately published, 1992), p. 13 and p. 22. The second cartoon includes the same distasteful stereotypes. Its ‘joke’, and its obscure reference, does not merit reproduction.

⁷¹ The illustrations that appear in the Wolstenholme book are hand-drawn originals (correspondence with the author, September 2013). A. E. Morton, the artist, was a cartoonist on the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*. The *Chronicle* advertised his cartoons as appearing in their sport supplement but I have been unable to find the published examples as the supplement is not held by

been - and it is debatable - a 'popular English cartoonist' in his own country but he was not a national voice.⁷² There was racism but it was racism in the context of a dialogue about who could participate in imperial sports in which there was a resistance to the ideological thrust of the West India Committee, as well as the efforts of black players themselves to gain recognition for their talents.

the British Newspaper Library and the archive in Manchester is currently closed for renovation. Thus, at the time of writing, there is no certainty that the cartoons were actually published. I am especially grateful to Anita O'Brien of the Cartoon Museum in London for her assistance in tracking Morton down.

⁷² Beckles, *The Development of West Indian Cricket*, p. 40



Fig. 15 W. G. Grace gives the 'West Indians' a 'whacking'

Gerry Wolstenholme, *The West Indian Tour of England 1906*, p. 13

From the outset of the tour the West Indian team was criticised for not being of a sufficient quality to provide a genuine challenge to English teams, but for the most part critics were apt to take the captain of the team, H. G. B. Austin's, explanation as sufficient to explain why this should be so. In his speech to the banquet after the match against London County he predicted that it would take the team a fair deal of time to get into their stride since they came from 'five British West Indian colonies' and 'had never played together before, and had yet to find out one another's faults.'⁷³ The haphazard, improvised nature of the team was underlined by the manner in which Lebrun Constantine joined the group.

The story as told by C. L. R. James's in *Beyond a Boundary* is that Constantine, not being a professional, could not afford to take the time off work to travel to Europe and therefore was watching the tourists' boat depart from the dock in Trinidad. When the locals realised that he was not going to take part, 'A public subscription took place on the spot, a fast launch was chartered and caught the boat before it reached the open sea.'⁷⁴ James's romanticisation of the episode, in which it is the wealth and initiative of the common people that sends Constantine on his way, is rather undermined by the fact that he mistakenly places this episode as happening prior to the 1900 tour rather than that of 1906.⁷⁵ But the fact that it happened in 1906 is important, since it demonstrated that having been on tour once in 1900, Constantine was well aware of his value to the team and was exacting recognition for it from the authorities. In fact Constantine decided to go on the trip 'at the last

⁷³ *Times*, 11th June 1906

⁷⁴ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, p. 102

⁷⁵ Secharan, *Muscular Learning*, p. 214

minute'⁷⁶ and it was a local businessman, Michael Maillard, who paid for Constantine to make the boat and thereafter continued to pay his expenses throughout the tour.⁷⁷ Maillard was one of Trinidad's wealthiest black businessmen, owning a department store in Port-of-Spain. By acting as a sponsor to Constantine's voyage, Maillard once more demonstrates the crucial role of businessmen in early sports tours. Just as was the case with Abe Bailey in South Africa, Maillard was acting as a promoter of his community, in this case by extending his patronage to the most famous local cricketer. He was sending Constantine to England as a representative of his people, to maintain the black presence at the heart of empire.

On his return from England a banquet was held in Constantine's home town of Maraval, and the reporting of it in the *Trinidad Mirror* gives a genuine insight into how his community saw him as their champion, and also into the integrated nature of the sporting scene in Trinidad. Present at the banquet was Sydney Smith, the Trinidadan white all-rounder who was the star bowler of the tour. In his speech Constantine acknowledged the 'brilliant achievements' of Smith, his fellow islander, to great cheers from the audience. Constantine himself was described by the chairman as 'the Maraval hero' whose fame was known 'all over the British Empire.' In conclusion he was presented with a purse as a token of appreciation with the wish that the colonial government too would show *its* appreciation of the role he had played in putting his community on the sporting map.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Smith, *West Indies Cricket History*, p. 72

⁷⁷ Gerald Howat, *Learine Constantine* (London, 1975), p. 25

⁷⁸ *The Mirror* (Trinidad), 18th September 1906

While Constantine's assertion of independence was rewarded with fame and recognition from his community, another of the veterans of 1900, 'Tommie' Burton, was not so successful in his attempt to gain greater reward for his services. Whereas Constantine toured as an amateur, Burton was a professional. He had been one of the star bowlers in 1900 but in 1906 he failed to complete the tour and in fact returned home early, his last match being against Wiltshire on June 30th. On the 7th July the Trinidad *Mirror* carried a report that 'one man has written out to say that the daily allowance (pocket change) he received on a former occasion had not up to the time of writing been forthcoming during this tour.'⁷⁹ This brought a reply from the captain of the 1900 tour, W. C. Noch that there had never been 'such a thing as daily pocket change. One or two players may have received purses from personal admirers, but none of the men received anything with the cognizement of the Committee.'⁸⁰ It would seem that Burton, who as a professional would have had to have undertaken menial tasks such as carrying bags and cleaning boots just as he would have done at home, was trying to extract a little extra money for his services on tour. That he was cast out of the team and publicly reprimanded through the columns of his home newspaper shows the crucial difference between his status and that of Constantine and testifies to the complexity of black identity in the Caribbean at this time. Constantine, with a wealthy commercial sponsor, could attain the status of gentleman amateur. Burton, a working man, could not.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *The Mirror* (Trinidad), 7th July 1906

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 9th July 1906

⁸¹ There is still something of a cloud over the reasons for Burton's returning home early. My own research has only uncovered the story of an unnamed player complaining about pocket change, which given the close dating between that report and Burton's leaving England would seem to suggest that it was his complaint. A story of Burton *refusing* to carry out menial tasks would seem less valid. See Kenneth Surin, 'C. L. R. James and cricket', pp. 131-143 in Anthony Bateman and Jeffrey Hill (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Cricket* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 134. The story is referenced to Martin Williamson, 'Tommie Burton', at www.cricinfo.com/ci/content/player/51417.html. In correspondence with Martin Williamson I

Yet when they came to England not everyone was willing to extend the hand of imperial brotherhood to either Burton, Constantine or any of the other black members of the team. At the opening match against London County Constantine was the top scorer, earning praise from one of his opponents, E. H. D. Sewell, the cricketing journalist. Sewell, however, also remarked upon 'the disgusting behaviour of some ill-mannered yokels among the few spectators on the cheap side of the ground.' These people, he said, were jeering and insulting Constantine to such an extent that they were remonstrated with by two members of the West Indian team. Sewell linked their behaviour to the question of national character by stating that, 'There is unfortunately unmistakable evidence that some people who live in this country, but who have no other claim to the proud title of Englishman, have no sense of what good sportsmanship means.'⁸² In this commentary Sewell demonstrates an acceptance of Constantine as an Englishman, indeed as a superior Englishman compared to the jeering members of the crowd. Yet the sparseness of the crowd that he noted testified to the fact that the crowds tended to stay away from the West Indian games. Their unpopularity was reported widely in the press. *Wisden*, in its summary of the tour, said that they 'failed to make any strong appeal to the public.'⁸³

asked him where the reference came from and he said he could not remember. (Private correspondence, 2nd October 2013) The distinction is important since there is a difference between refusing to perform menial tasks *tout court* and refusing to perform menial tasks because one does not think the wage is large enough. The first motive would imply that Burton saw himself as an amateur, the second would imply that he felt his professional services were undervalued.

⁸² *The Sportsman*, quoted in *The Weekly Recorder* (Barbados), 30th June 1906

⁸³ *Wisden* (London, 1907)

Why this might be so is not difficult to divine. Despite the efforts of the West India Committee, and advocates such as Pelham Warner, to present a racially mixed team as a progressive example for the empire they came up against much harder attitudes among much of the press. From the start of the tour the 'native' players were criticised in stereotypical terms on the very aspects of their game that Warner had trumpeted as being their best disciplines in his book, *Cricket in Many Climes*. In that book, while praising the batting and bowling of the black West Indians, he picks out their fielding for particular praise, calling it 'brilliant ... the black men ... being especially fine throwers.'⁸⁴ When they arrived their fielding was taken as an index of their qualities both as cricketers and as men, with *The Sportsman* commenting:

There was no doubt about Constantine's powers as a batsman ... there is, however, one small detail which is likely, if not amended, to create a wrong impression. Two or three of the native members of the side certainly seem rather listless in the field. Temperaments differ according to nationality and the same abstract qualities are expressed in different ways in different countries. But the index of a cricketer is common to all lands and we know quite well what we mean as a smart and alert fieldsman as opposed to a merely brilliant or fairly safe fieldsman. And those who have the outward appearance of being a little supine have several examples of how the thing should be done in their own team. The captain, Mr Austin, was good and untiring, and so was Mr Harrigan.⁸⁵

Austin and Harrigan, of course, were white men. What is telling is that, in choosing to criticise the fielding of the black members of the team journalists were attacking

⁸⁴ Warner, *Cricket in Many Climes*, p. 5

⁸⁵ *The Sportsman*, 14th June 1906

them for the one area of the game that a reader would have to take on trust. Batting and bowling records are statistically verifiable, and of course the black players performed as well as, or better than, most of their white counterparts. To attack them for their attitude in the field therefore, was a way of overcoming the empirically provable quality of their cricket in other areas of the game. In fact the only first-hand testimony I could find from a cricketer of how the black players performed in the field was a quote from a Kent player that 'their field was badly set and only the coloured men are good catchers.'⁸⁶

What commentators objected to was not that the West Indians were a black team - the Morton cartoons are wholly misleading. They saw it as a mixed team, and it was racial mixing to which they objected. By the end of the tour the team was widely seen to have been out of its depth, the *Observer* commenting that, 'There is no getting away from the fact that from the cricket point of view the tour of the West Indians is frankly a failure.'⁸⁷ Even the *West India Committee Circular* had to admit in its review of the trip that, 'It is to be regretted that the visit of the West Indian team did not arouse greater enthusiasm. On no occasion were the gates of large dimensions.' In the same column the editor repeated the mud slung at the fielding of the black members of the team, whose 'fielding ... was freely commented upon as showing signs of slackness.'⁸⁸ But the most significant arguments as to the cause of the weakness of the West Indians were to be found in the columns of the biggest selling sports weekly of the era and in those of the establishment newspaper.

⁸⁶ *Morning Leader*, quoted in Smith, *West Indies Cricket History*, p. 83. The man responsible for setting the field would be Austin, the white captain.

⁸⁷ *Observer*, 22nd July 1906

⁸⁸ *West India Committee Circular*, August 29th 1906

In *The Sportsman*, Major Philip Trevor was clear in his mind that the team suffered because it contained black players:

They have several excellent cricketers in the team, cricketers who in different conditions would do better still. Moreover, several of them now and again do brilliant things. But they lack that combination and successful interdependence which has nearly always been a feature of every Australian team that we have seen in this country. The West Indians, in fact, have tried themselves a little too high at a too early period in their cricketing existence. At the same time the effort is not to be deplored and we can wish them better luck next time. When we come to think of it, satisfactory combination is about the last thing we ought to expect from a side constituted as they are. It is quite unnecessary to go into detail. Combination in cricket is not a mere product of the cricket field pure and simple. Other things concern the case, and, in the construction of their team, our visitors have, in my opinion, come perilously near to attempting the impossible. Speaking roughly the native members of the side have not so far done as much as those whose training, origin, and associations are more or less similar to our own; and in making of future arrangements in might be better to bear that fact in mind.⁸⁹

A long article followed this assessment in the *Times* of London at the end of August as the West Indians were bidding farewell to Europe. The correspondent, after analysing the performance of the team in each discipline of the game, asserts that, 'It cannot be pretended that the recent visit of the West Indian cricketers has aroused any great enthusiasm' before outlining why this should be so:

⁸⁹ *The Sportsman*, 22nd June 1906

The composition of the team did not appeal to the average Englishman. There is an obvious interest felt in the colonial cricketer. A kind of peculiar interest may be felt in the cricket of the man who differs from him in race, colour, associations, training, and temperament. But a team in which an attempt has been made to blend the two is of the nature of a compromise which does not convince. Combination, even at cricket, means something more than the appearance on the same field under the same leader of two totally different sets of men. Various parts of the British Empire have various customs. It is, however, safe to say that neither from the dependency of India nor from the colony of South Africa is there any likelihood of a mixed cricket team being sent to England.⁹⁰

Ignoring the irony of the fact that England had themselves already fielded a mixed cricket team with an Indian player in Ranji this quote goes to the heart of the rejection of the West Indians by metropolitan opinion.

It is telling that the writer should draw attention to the prospect of teams coming from India and South Africa. Framjee Patel was in England in 1906, campaigning to raise funding and interest to bring an All India team to tour. Speaking at the dinner given to the players after the match between London County and the West Indies. Patel, while admitting that there were 'difficulties as to race' in bringing about such a tour, expressed the hope that Europeans, Parsees, Hindoos, and Mohammedans' would bury their differences in the interests of sport.⁹¹ The Indians did tour in 1911, but without any 'European' representatives. The South Africans would visit in 1907, indeed preparations were already in train during the summer of 1906, and as was seen in Chapter 2, the portrayal of their team as white colonials was a

⁹⁰ *The Times*, 21st August 1906

⁹¹ *The Sportsman*, July 18th 1906

key part of projecting their appeal to the British public and made a marked contrast to the publicity surrounding the West Indians.

Conclusion: The Triumph of the Rand

In the ideological debate over whether Anglo-Saxonism was a matter of culture or a matter of blood, the 1906 tour by the West Indians makes a clear test case. The West India Committee, together with Pelham Warner, argued that to be English was a cultural phenomenon, denoted by playing the English game of cricket in the correct manner. In coming to England in 1906 however, the West Indians came up against a home culture that recognised an Englishman only as a reflection of itself in the mirror. The limits of mimicry, where the West Indians were 'almost the same as (the English), but not quite' had a serious impact on their cricketing future.⁹² They would not make another first-class tour to the home country until 1928. For Peters it meant that he would be cast out of Rugby Union to seek his trade in the more accommodating (and working class) Rugby League, where his race no longer excluded him from belonging.

In tracing the path of the cricket tours in 1900 and 1906 it is possible to discern a cooling of the notion of the West Indies as being able to fit into the idea of being 'settler' colonies, despite their status as being the oldest such English colonies. The 1900 tour occurred in the context of a bitter colonial war in South Africa of which the outcome was still in doubt. At that point in time, support from any of the colonies was welcome as a reminder of the loyalty of British subjects overseas. By 1906, with South Africa secure, the West Indies once again had become a peripheral territory in the imperial vision. This fact was reinforced by the success of the South Africans' rugby and cricket tours of 1906 and 1907, and hammered

⁹² Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994), p. 86

home by the exclusion of the West Indies (and India) from the Imperial Cricket Conference (a body that developed into the present-day International Cricket Council that runs the game) and the Triangular Cricket Tournament that took place in London in 1912.⁹³ In the early 1900s the South Africans were making all the running in imperial sports, especially since they had the financial resources and the network of political contacts to make their voice count at 'home.' And that gave them the ability to export the racial discrimination of the Rand to the imperial sports fields of London.

⁹³ Bruce Murray, 'Abe Bailey and the foundation of the Imperial Cricket Conference'

‘Gaelic Manhood’ versus ‘Anglican Athletics’

Two Models of Manliness in Irish Sport

Irish Rugby’s Forgotten Man

The greatest try in international rugby of the Edwardian era was scored by an Englishman; an Englishman wearing an Irish jersey, playing against a team of men from the land of his father’s birth, South Africa, some of whose members he may last have seen while looking down the barrel of a rifle.¹ The player was Basil Maclear. In his memoirs, the journalist E. H. D. Sewell, some thirty years after Maclear’s death on the Western Front, could still describe him as, ‘My ideal Rugger Man; for a man he was.’² Between his debut in 1905 and his retirement from the game in 1907 Maclear was the star of the Irish team, three times helping it to a victory over England, and in his debut season playing against the touring New Zealanders no less than four times for various clubs and country. Yet this sporting colossus of his own era has been largely forgotten in our own, his obscurity in the popular memory mirroring the way in which rugby as a cultural bond in pre-Independence Ireland has been largely overlooked by academic historians.³ For Mike Cronin, ‘Rugby is a problematic case for anyone studying the nature of sport

¹ David S. Evans, ‘Maclear, Sir Thomas (1794-1879)’ in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, May 2009) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17654>, accessed 28th Jan 2013. Sir Cecil Francis Romer and Arthur Edward Mainwaring, *The Second Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the South African War, with a Description of the Operations in the Aden Hinterland* (London, 1908) pp. 195-6

² E.H.D. Sewell, *Rugger: The Man’s Game* (London, 1944), p. 28

³ For example, in a recent account of Ireland’s hundred greatest rugby players Maclear does not feature. John Scally, *100 Irish Rugby Greats* (Edinburgh, 2011)

and nationalism in Ireland ... It is a sport that has never been affected in any great way by the ravages of the past or present troubles and one which, although forging an all-Ireland identity, does not make a huge impact on any understanding of Irish nationalism or national identity.⁴ As if to confirm Cronin's assertion of the marginality of rugby in the development of Irish national identity, popular historical accounts of the game read like history, with the turbulent politics of the twentieth century left out.⁵

Attention has instead focused on the centrality of Gaelic sports in Irish culture, especially the period after the foundation of the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1884.⁶ The GAA was founded with the express mission of developing an alternative model of native Irish manliness that would 'de-Anglicise' sport and return Ireland to a pre-British culture, a culture based on the Gaelic language and Gaelic pursuits. Indeed, among nationalists, sport was seen as the leading means of rejecting the British influence. As Douglas Hyde, later to become the first President of Ireland, commented in 1894, 'the work of the (Gaelic Athletic) Association ... has done more for Ireland than all the speeches of politicians in the last five years.'⁷ Gaelic sports developed in the 1900s to become the most popular sports in Ireland, attracting massive participation and spectatorship that, it has been argued, 'other sports then being played in Ireland did not.'⁸ The growth of Gaelic sports was part of the process that occurred between the onset of the South Africa War and that of World

⁴ Mike Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic Games, Soccer and Irish Identity since 1884* (Dublin, 1999), pp. 21-2

⁵ See Edmund van Esbeck, *Irish Rugby: A History 1874-1999* (Dublin, 1999); Sean Diffley, *The Men in Green: The Story of Irish Rugby* (London, 1973)

⁶ Marcus de Bùrca, *The GAA: A History* (Dublin, 1999), p. 15

⁷ Douglas Hyde, 'The necessity for de-Anglicising Ireland', in Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, *The Revival of Irish Literature: Addresses by Sir C. G. Duffy, Dr. G. Sigerson and Dr. D. Hyde* (London, 1894), p. 158

⁸ MacDevitt, *May the Best Man Win*, p. 22

War 1, whereby, as R. F. Foster notes, ‘the radicalization of Irish politics (and, to a certain extent, of Irish society) took place.’⁹ The close relationship between nationalism and Gaelic sports has meant that the narrative of the development of sport culture at that time has been told teleologically, with the attainment of Irish independence in 1922 going hand in hand with the inevitable triumph of Irish sports over those of ‘foreign’ interlopers. However, as has been shown with the recent explosion of the popularity of rugby (and even cricket) in Ireland, the fortunes and popularity of sports can increase as well as decline. This was the case in the 1900s.

In truth, the ‘foreign sport’ of rugby was central to Irish sporting culture in the Edwardian period. Even in the west, in Kerry - the heartland of Gaelic sports - rugby flourished during these supposed years of steady eclipse.¹⁰ Indeed, the years of the New Zealand and South African rugby tours - which, incidentally, coincided with the short career of Maclear - provoked a complex public debate about Irish manliness that erred far from the rigid positions of Catholic, communal-minded Gael versus Protestant, élite, class-bound Brit.¹¹ The rugby tours took place at a time when a new kind of Irish manliness was being projected that would combine a greater degree of independence within the framework of the empire. A manliness based on the virtues of military valour, of Celtic passion tempered by British self-possession and of physical fitness. Far from being restricted to the Protestant sector of the population it is clear that this concept of the ‘West Briton’, whose

⁹ R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London, 1989), p. 433

¹⁰ Richard McElligott, ‘Degenerating from sterling Irishmen into contemptible West Britons’: The GAA and Rugby in Kerry, 1885-1905’, *History Ireland* Vol. 19:4 (2011), p. 31

¹¹ Patrick McDevitt, ‘Muscular Catholicism: Nationalism, masculinity and Gaelic team sports 1884-1916’, *Gender and History* Vol. 9:2 (1997), p. 265

nationalist aspirations would be satisfied within an imperial context, was being encouraged among the Catholic middle classes via schooling and culture, as well as to the wider masses via the press and sporting events.¹² As shall be seen, Basil Maclear's try against the South Africans was a landmark event in the projection of this idea. That this attempt at reconciling Irish manliness with Britishness ultimately failed (or rather, in the sporting context, was suppressed) was less a consequence of the lack of interest in British sports than due to political events forcing cultural change.

Gaelic Manhood

When the British exported their ethos of muscular Christianity to the empire, Ireland was no exception. As with the colonies of settlement around the globe the chief means of inculcating British manliness were through the barracks and the boarding school.¹³ In Ireland, however, the situation was more complicated than in the colonies of settlement. In the latter British settlers, regardless of their geographical origin at 'home', tended to form a common culture around a shared British identity that was contrasted with that of the 'native' people whose land and labour they sought to exploit. English colonisation of Ireland pre-dated that of Australia and South Africa by generations and was further complicated by factors of religion, geographical proximity and class. This led to the formation of three distinct social groups on the island by the late-nineteenth century. Firstly, the

¹² Senia Pašeta, *Before the Revolution: Nationalism, Social Change and Ireland's Catholic Elite, 1879-1922* (Cork, 1999) p. 127; Alvin Jackson, 'Ireland, the Union, and the Empire, 1800-1960', in Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2004), p. 126

¹³ J. A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism and Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*; Alan Bairner, 'Chapter 2: Ireland, sport and empire', in Jeffery, *An Irish Empire?* p. 61

majority Catholic population, consisting mostly of the rural peasantry, a semi-skilled labouring population in the industrial centres of Dublin and Belfast, lower-middle-class shopkeepers and artisans, and a growing urban, professional middle class. In the north there was a Presbyterian, Protestant population of farmers, professionals and the urban working class deriving from the Plantations of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. And forming an even smaller (but politically powerful) minority were the Protestant Ascendancy who were the major landowners, members of the established church and entitled holders of the major administrative and governmental positions of the British state.¹⁴

Along with political subjugation in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Catholic Irish men were subjected to a cultural subjugation, carried out via the popular press, that othered the Irish man in one of two ways - as simian, wild and animalistic, or as feminised and weak.¹⁵ With the ideal of masculine character enjoying, 'a prominence in the political thought of the Victorian period that it had apparently not known before' (and with this situation extending into the Edwardian period), the characterization of Irishmen in such a way was a powerful means of exerting British cultural dominance.¹⁶ These two characterizations acted to put Irishmen in what Joseph Valente calls the 'double bind of Irish manhood.'¹⁷ If an Irishman failed to conform, or indeed refused to conform to the character norm of the ideal Briton then they could be portrayed as somehow backward, less developed in social Darwinian terms. Should they strive to conform to the British

¹⁴ Foster, *Modern Ireland*, pp. 436-7; Fergus Campbell, *The Irish Establishment 1879-1914* (Oxford, 2009) pp. 298-303

¹⁵ L. P. Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts* (Bridgeport, 1968)

¹⁶ Collini, *Public Moralists*, p. 94

¹⁷ Joseph Valente, *The Myth of Manliness in Irish National Culture, 1880-1922* (University of Illinois, 2011), p. 1

ideal this would then show their lack of independence, a submissiveness suggestive of femininity to contemporary thinkers, and once more falling short of the ethical norm of the imperial Briton.¹⁸ Thus, on a popular level, in cartoons in magazines like *Punch*, and at the level of intellectuals like Tennyson and Kingsley, who characterised the Irish as blind hysterics or ‘white chimpanzees’, the Victorians emphasised the superiority of the Briton and thus justified the subjection of Ireland to the British state.¹⁹ By the turn of the nineteenth century, however, two different discourses began to develop regarding the relationship between Irish and British manliness.

Crucial to the change in attitude, both amongst nationalists and loyalists, was the South African War. Attitudes towards the South African War became a means of expressing political affiliation to, or rejection of, the British state in Ireland. From the time of the South African War, the Irish Parliamentary Party and Unionists, on the political level, regarded each other from ‘positions of monolithic security.’²⁰ Each was secure in their parliamentary seats and the advancement or rebuffal of the cause of Home Rule, or independence, was dependent on the pressure that they could bring to bear on the Westminster government. Below the level of parliamentary politics, however, there was a bitter contest for the ‘hearts and minds’ of the populace between those nationalists who wished to create a purely Gaelic identity, free from British influence, and those who could see the possibility of an accommodation with an imperial identity, following the example of the Boer

¹⁸ Valente, *The Myth of Manliness*, p. 12-13

¹⁹ Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts*, p. 54; Liz Curtis, *Nothing but the Same Old Story* (London, 1983), p. 60

²⁰ Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 434.

reconciliation to British rule in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. And each side had sport at the centre of what it meant to be an ideal Irish man.

The GAA, founded in 1884 but on the decline in the 1890s, was revitalised in conjunction with the strengthening of the separatist movement towards the end of the century.²¹ Commemorations of Wolfe Tone's 1798 rising, followed by a rallying of republicanism as a consequence of sympathy with the Boers' resistance to the British, led to a groundswell of nationalist feeling that was felt in both the political and cultural spheres. The GAA's sympathy for the Boer cause was exemplified by the way in which its conventions passed pro-Boer resolutions, and also by the naming of GAA clubs after Boer leaders, for example with one club being named, 'The Irish Brigade Transvaal.'²² Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin movement saw Gaelic sports as the ideal vehicle for mobilizing young men for the republican cause, with his newspaper stating that, 'the main duty of the GAA is the cultivation of the Irish physique generally through the national and natural medium of our games.'²³ The causes of sporting and political independence were further entwined in an article that appeared just a few weeks before the Ireland versus England rugby Test of 1906 where it was argued that:

There is abroad to-day a spirit of national self-reliance, and a resolve of national self-redemption which the true Gael cannot honourably ignore, and yet which cannot triumph without his aid. The games he plays are part of that inheritance which aliens have almost pilfered from him, his and their glory and traditions are enshrined in the national tongue which was banned by the foreigner, and too often

²¹ De Burcà, *The GAA: A History*, p. 67

²² W. F. Mandle, *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Nationalist Politics, 1884-1924* (London, 1987), pp. 120-121

²³ *The United Irishman*, 18th February 1905

and too long ignored by the native. The very existence - corporeal and spiritual - of his race is dependent upon a revival of insular national life and a rallying and union of Gaelic and national forces.²⁴

Nationalists were encouraged to push themselves to the forefront of the GAA at a national and local level in order to further politicise the playing of sport rather than simply leaving it as an expression of cultural separateness.

The extent to which Gaelic sports were used to reject British values is demonstrated by 'the ban.' From 1901 a campaign was waged to revive a boycott on the playing of 'English' games by Irishmen that had lapsed in the 1890s. What had begun as a voluntary act became, in 1905, an enforceable rule whereby any person who had participated in, or even attended, a non-Gaelic sports meeting could be banned from participating in a GAA organised event.²⁵ Those who broke the ban could be treated ferociously, ostracised by their former team-mates and publicly lambasted via the press, as was the Irish athlete John O'Kelly-Lynch, who was described as:

A mediocre athlete with a hyphenated surname, an agent of West Britain in the guise of a Gael, an exquisite bank clerk with all the graces of his profession. There is such a gentleman making himself a peripatetic mercenary for alien games and subverting the Gaelic code wherever he goes ... it is not because this puny champion of Anglicisation is abroad we are alarmed, but rather to depict him as a typical specimen of the breed, and to warn unsuspecting Gaels against his specious blandishments and 'awfully

²⁴ *The United Irishman*, 6th January 1906

²⁵ Marcus de Búrca, *The GAA: A History*, pp. 70-71

nice' and clever ways ... All self-respecting Gaels will shun him with the recruiting-sergeant and the souper.²⁶

This passage reflects the way in which Sinn Féin aimed to subvert the traditional stereotype of Ireland as being a feminine space requiring protection by the masculine warder of the British state, instead portraying the British and those who would play their games as feminised creatures.²⁷ Nationalists aimed at de-anglicising Irish culture, as well as promoting a new form of Irish culture that was centred on the athletic masculine body. Gaelic sportsmen were portrayed as not only being different to British sportsmen in the games that they chose to play but also morally and physically superior in a way that flipped the British stereotype of the Irishman upside-down. This view was made clear in the *Gaelic Annual* of 1907-8 when it said that:

The Irish Celt is distinguished among the races for height and strength, manly vigour and womanly grace; despite wars and domestic disabilities, the stamina of the race has survived in almost pristine perfection. The ideal Gael is a matchless athlete, sober, pure in mind, speech and deed, self-possessed, self-reliant, self-respecting, loving his religion and his country with a deep and restless love, earnest in thought and effective in action.²⁸

This kind of rhetoric was commonplace in radical nationalist newspapers throughout the 1900s and was used to draw a distinction between the purity of the

²⁶ *The United Irishman*, 22nd July 1905

²⁷ Valente, *The Myth of Manliness*, p. 12

²⁸ Quoted in John Sugden and Alan Bairner, *Sport, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland*, (Leicester, 1993), p. 29

Gaelic race and the degeneracy of the British. Sport's centrality to the success of the Irish nationalist political project was underlined by an article on *Gaelic Manhood* in which it stated that:

The sports of a race have had their effects upon the race. Allied to the moral code prevailing and in a lesser degree with the hygienic conditions under which the race has lived, they determine not alone their athletic abilities -in the arena of competition- but what is of paramount importance, the general health and vitality of the race.²⁹

The debate about physical deterioration that had been provoked in England following the triumph of colonial sporting teams did not go unnoticed across the Irish Sea, where it was used to bolster the argument for a separation of Irish and British culture:

The Australians -an upstart colony of England sprung from convict settlements can beat the English at cricket -their national game. New Zealand and South Africa can send teams to paralyse them at Rugby. Americans can defeat them at shooting and yachting, and the Scotch can beat them at moneymaking and ruling their 'Empire'. At Athens (i.e at the Olympics of 1900) they made a miserable display -even with borrowed 'Imperial' honours. What in the name of reason claim have they to assert a supremacy or suzerainty in athletics or anything else? Their political power and existence rests upon the goodwill and subsidising of other peoples. The Jews live upon their vitals and they decay -morally and physically- boasting bragging, and bribing to an unlamented oblivion. Yet people with fear and awe, sitting like spectres in their souls, see not the frame and substance of

²⁹ *The United Irishman*, 3rd February 1906

the British lion looming large upon their offing, but its outline magnified by miasmatic clouds rising from the corruption of which it is composed ... Arrogance, lust and pride of power bred cankers and wasting diseases. Thus the Roman amphitheatre modernised is now erected in every town where twice weekly a score or more of purchased footballers maim and maul each other for the delectation of the anaemic, asthenic and emasculated people³⁰

What this damning column shows is that Irish nationalist critics of Britain shared a very similar vision of the faults of British society as those metropolitan critics of London discussed in a Chapter 1. There is the same focus on the malign influence of outsiders - although in this case, with the gloves taken off, Jews are named outright rather than alluded to. The same fear of the urban crowd, the ones who go to watch games rather than to play them, makes an appearance, as does the focus on moral and physical degeneration associated with the idle application of wealth to luxury. Yet, again echoing English conservatives, at root what is expressed is a fear of the way in which modern society is changing. For many nationalists were expressing not only a taste *for* what they considered to be unadulterated Irish pursuits but also a rejection of the intrusive pursuits not just of the British world but of the modern world in general, from popular culture to imports of foreign goods. Nationalists proposed cultural, as well as economic, autarky for the Irish, once rid of the British yoke.³¹

The revival of Gaelic sports became a means for nationalist leaders to control who could be considered Irish and also what the image of the ideal Irishman should be. They wanted to create an image that would inspire those farmers, small

³⁰ *Sinn Féin*, 3rd November, 1906

³¹ Pašeta, *Before the Revolution*, p. 126

businessmen and middle-class professionals that made up the greater part of their supporters.³² But Gaelic sports were not the only games in town and in this period, when the future of Ireland was subject to many competing visions, the British had a very strong masculine image of their own to attract the young Irish sportsman. Despite the protestations of the GAA it was one that was attractive across a broad range of Irish political opinion, for, as Mike Cronin points out, historians of sport have too often failed to bridge the gap between ideology and popular sentiment in this area, while hardly giving the British identity in Ireland a thought beyond the loyalist north east corner.³³

Rugby Football and the ‘Condamnium’

The phrase ‘condumnium’ comes from an essay written by Arthur Clery describing the split loyalties that nationalists faced when it came to the issue of sport.³⁴ In his essay he describes a friend:

The most Gaelic person of my acquaintance. He is equally versed in Irish language, music, dancing etc. He can play hurley. He wears a kilt. He is a Volunteer, and thereby, of course, incurs a liability to many years’ imprisonment. He is, to my certain knowledge, a true enthusiast. He announced his intention of playing in his first Rugby match, whereupon we

³² Patrick O’Mahony, Jo Campling and Gerard Delanty, *Re-thinking Irish History: Nationalism, Identity and Ideology* (Basingstoke, 1998), p. 58

³³ Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland*, p. 17

³⁴ Arthur Clery, ‘Rugby football and the ‘Condamnium’, in *Dublin Essays* (New York, 1920). This is an edited collection with no publication date given for the original individual essays. However, Clery must have written it at the latest in February 1911 since this was the last occasion on which the Irish had a victory over England (to which he refers later in the essay) before 1926. Van Esbeck, *Irish Rugby*, p. 340-44

trousered hypocrites cast up our eyes, and one that was there upbraided him.³⁵

The 'condumnium', he explains, was the practice whereby Irish monks of mediaeval times, once they encountered more relaxed Continental monastic practices, came to abandon the more rigorous rule of their homeland. The metaphor is an apt one for the practice of what was happening in Irish sport culture in the Edwardian period, a period which is skipped over in many accounts of the development of sport in Ireland, where there is a descriptive void between the revival of the GAA in the 1900s and the independence of the Irish Free State in 1922.³⁶ While the rhetoric of the GAA would paint a picture of a rigorous division between the Gaelic sports community and their English overlords, the reality was that there were more than a few Irishmen willing and eager to follow the West British in practising and watching 'foreign' games.

Part of the rugby-playing community necessarily came from the Protestant Ascendancy, whose members were the first to play the game. Upper-class Irish boys who had been educated at the rugby playing schools of England in the 1840s and 1850s, returned to complete their education at Dublin University and continued to play the game there.³⁷ From the University the playing of rugby spread to the major public schools in Ireland, whose collective educational ethos was modelled on the muscular Christianity of their English counterparts. Once

³⁵ Clery, 'Rugby football', p. 67.

³⁶ See Bairner, 'Ireland, sport and empire', p.67 and 'Chapter 3: British sports and Irish identity', in Sugden and Bairner (eds.), *Sport, Sectarianism and Society*; p. 55-56; Joseph Maguire and Jason Tuck, 'National identity, Rugby Union and notions of Ireland and the 'Irish'', *Irish Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 14:1 (2005), p. 93-4

³⁷ Diffley, *The Men in Green*, p. 20

these boys had grown up and gone out into the world clubs were formed across the island, but mostly in urban areas, so that by the 1880s the game had leapt out of the quadrangle and become a national sport.³⁸

The schools that nurtured the game included among them many of the important Catholic private schools that catered for the growing community of 'Castle Catholics', those members of the middle-class professions who saw an opportunity for social advancement by demonstrating their loyalty to the British Crown within the framework either of continuing union, or through a projected home rule.³⁹ The Catholic schools, even when their products later turned against the British state, acted as a means of transmission for 'shaping the cultural consciousness of their pupils.'⁴⁰ It is a remarkable fact that many of the strongest advocates of the GAA were, in their younger days, enthusiasts for English games learnt in Catholic schools. Even Michael Cusack, the future leader of the GAA, as a young man introduced his pupils to rugby when training them for entry to Trinity College.⁴¹ Thus it was no surprise that the GAA developed a masculine ideal that amounts to little more than English, middle-class muscular Christianity dressed up in 'Gaelic' clothing. If one substituted the word 'Briton' for 'Gael' in Arthur Griffith's description of the ideal Celt quoted from the *United Irishman* above one would easily be able to slip it into a copy of the *Boys' Own Paper* or *C. B. Fry*. In the

³⁸ van Esbeck, *Irish Rugby*, p. 30

³⁹ Jeff Dann, 'The representation of British sports in late nineteenth and early twentieth century elite Irish school publications', *Media History*, Vol. 17:2 (2011), p. 136

⁴⁰ J.A. Mangan, 'Images for confident control': Stereotypes in imperial discourse', in J. A. Mangan (ed.), *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience* (London, 1993), p. 7

⁴¹ Gerry P. T. Finn, 'Trinity mysteries: University, elite schooling and sport in Ireland', *International Journal of the History of Sport* Vol. 27:13 (2010), p. 228. James Joyce caricatured Cusack as 'The Citizen' in *Ulysses*, with whom Cusack shared ferocious anti-English and anti-Semitic sentiments. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, pp. 468-518

activities of the GAA one does not find the performance of 'a deliberate act of heresy in the face of the cultural imperialism and political domination of Great Britain.'⁴² One finds rather an internalization of the sporting culture of empire which is turned to nationalist purposes and embedded as part of the founding myth of the Irish nation state, while the origins of its vision of Irish masculinity is quietly forgotten. In the Edwardian period, it might have been easy to state that the true Gael, 'cannot be orthodox today and unfaithful tomorrow: Non-Gaelic on Saturday and Ultra-Gaelic on Sunday.'⁴³ In practice things were altogether different. There were men who were content to do just that. And to bring them into the fold of a West British identity the stereotypes of the Irishman found in nineteenth century English periodicals were being overturned by a new conception of imperial Irish masculinity.

'All-Ireland' Rugby

The title 'All-Ireland' comes from the way in which the Irish cricket team was referred to in its match against the touring South Africans in 1907 but it could just as easily be applied to the rugby team that faced their compatriots in 1906.⁴⁴ The early 1900s saw a rapid expansion of the game from its traditional urban centres of Dublin and Belfast to the provinces. This process replicated the way in which the GAA had expanded at the same time. The development of railways and improvement of roads facilitated the movement of spectators to games and the possibilities for players to play in new parts of the country. The growth of a

⁴² McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win*, p. 19

⁴³ P. J. Devlin, *Our Native Games* (Dublin, 1935), quoted in McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win*, pp. 19-20

⁴⁴ *Irish Independent*, 3rd August 1907

sporting press hungry for stories, and rising literacy rates in Irish society, created a market for the commercial exploitation of sport that fed into an explosion of interest in international rugby during this period.⁴⁵ That the Irish Rugby Union was trying to extend its reach into areas of the country traditionally supportive of Gaelic games can be no coincidence when it was happening just at the time that the GAA was attempting to make Gaelic games the exclusive occupation of Irishmen. The populous provinces of Leinster, Ulster and Munster had functioning provincial boards from the nineteenth century but it was in 1904 that Connacht, 'struggling along manfully despite its disadvantage of a small and dwindling population', was given full provincial status.⁴⁶ With this 'rugby was at last a truly national game in Ireland.'⁴⁷

The appeal of rugby as a sport to the Irish populace can be testified to both by the increasing participation in the 1900s and by the large crowds that went to watch it. On participation first, the strident tones in which Irish athletes were condemned in the pages of nationalist newspapers would tend to suggest that it was from what they perceived as being their own ranks that such traitors were being drawn. Regular scathing observations were made in *Sinn Féin* about GAA clubs who knowingly allowed players of 'English' sports to take to their fields, with the telling comment that, 'The poor Gael who, when accused of playing 'Soccer' or Rugby, says he thinks he remembers playing 'some kind' of a match - 'and it wasn't a match either, only a scratch game' - somewhere, and didn't know what 'rules it was

⁴⁵ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 239

⁴⁶ Diffley, *The Men in Green*, p. 63

⁴⁷ Neil Garnham, 'Introduction', in R. M. Peters, *The Origins and Development of Football in Ireland* (Belfast, 1999), p. 18

under,' is getting rather two (sic) common to be interesting.'⁴⁸ With little wonder, given that even some of the GAA leadership were willing to compromise with the cultural enemy and turn a blind eye to those who wanted to play both English and Gaelic sports. Arthur Clery, who decried 'the whole tendency of West-Britainism ... to reduce everything to a flat level of dullness', and who would be a life long advocate of political partition in Ireland between Catholic south and Protestant north, finally ended his essay on the condemnation with the plea, 'Let not a man be excommunicated for Rugby football.'⁴⁹ Indeed, Maurice Davin, the first President of the GAA and friend of Michael Cusack, took a similar view.⁵⁰ Evidence that the readers of Sinn Féin were happy to play in English sports comes from a letter to the editor sent just a week before the South African rugby team were due to play their first ever international against Ireland in Belfast. The correspondent takes the paper to task for its unwarrantedly vituperative tone on the subject of 'Anglican athletics' and goes on to ask, 'Is there any reason why 'Rugby' football should not be as national as 'Gaelic'?'⁵¹ On a local level such sentiments were commonplace. In Tipperary three rugby clubs were established or revived in 1906, against the opposition of the local GAA, prompting one nationalist correspondent to comment, 'I cannot for the life of me understand why the GAA are causing so much trouble over the country. The athletes of all classes and creeds are suffering on account of a bit of spite on the part of the officials of the different associations.'⁵² At a meeting to discuss the foundation of the Ormonde Rugby Club,

⁴⁸ *Sinn Féin*, 7th July 1906

⁴⁹ Clery, 'Rugby football', p. 68-9

⁵⁰ Peter C. L. Nohrnberg, 'Building up a nation once again: Irish masculinity, violence and the cultural politics of sports in 'A portrait of the artist as a young man' and 'Ulysses', *Joyce Studies Annual* (2010), p. 122

⁵¹ *Sinn Féin*, 17th November 1906

⁵² *Nenagh News*, 10th June 1906

Michael Gleeson, one of the founders of the GAA said that, 'it was never the object of the association to oppose or offer objection to any other' sport and that the only reason he had come to the meeting was to counter a circular that had been sent round objecting to the foundation of a rugby club in the district.⁵³ This was a pattern repeated nationwide.

The less radical nationalist press certainly took the view that rugby had as much right to be the national game as did any other sport. Not through direct comments about the merits of either game but rather through the even-handed and widespread coverage given to rugby by such papers as Dublin's *Freeman's Journal* and the nationalist papers in other cities. One can see that despite its reputation as the game of the barracks the Irish team was seen as not just the British in green shirts but as a legitimate expression of Irishness. This comes across especially in 1905 when the Irish rugby authorities voted for Cork to be the venue for the test match against England. Previously, the only time that an international had been played outside of the two main cities of Dublin and Belfast it had been at Limerick (also in Munster) in 1898. That was when the GAA was at a low ebb and before the South African War revived republicanism amongst Gaelic clubs. By contrast, in 1905, Cork was a centre for Gaelic games, where a crowd of 20,000 had turned up for the opening of the new Gaelic athletic grounds in 1904.⁵⁴ This was exactly coincident with the Cork rugby clubs' application to hold the England international for 1905 in the city. Despite the popularity of Gaelic games in Cork, the city was also seen as the centre of resistance to the ban.⁵⁵ There was evident concern on the

⁵³ *Nenagh News*, 29th June 1906

⁵⁴ Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 24

⁵⁵ de Bùrca, *The GAA: A History*, p. 71

part of the board that the appetite for rugby in the southern city would be lacking since they asked for a guaranteed payment from the Munster branch of £200 to cover expenses.⁵⁶ Eventually, the move was approved in Dublin. The development of a new ground capable of holding up to 20,000 spectators at the Mardyke was seen as a positive thing, an opportunity to 'assist in fostering the growth of the game in the Southern province.'⁵⁷

Central to the development of the ground was John Reese, an entrepreneur and sportsman, who had realised that the grounds of the 1902 Cork Greater International Exhibition would be an ideal place for a sporting arena.⁵⁸ Reese, it would appear, was a minor sporting Maecenas out of the Abe Bailey mould, since he was also the key man in the recruitment of Basil Maclear to the Irish cause.⁵⁹ Cork's civic pride at being able to produce a sports stadium worthy of a major international rugby fixture can be seen in the illustration in the *Irish Independent* previewing the match; the Mardyke ground takes centre stage. Significant too is that Basil Maclear, despite never having played for Ireland before, is the most prominent of the players pictured. Shown in his uniform, he is the epitome of the British soldier-sportsman, lionised in a nationalist newspaper (Fig.16).

⁵⁶ van Esbeck, *Irish Rugby*, p. 56

⁵⁷ *Daily Express* (Dublin), 13th February 1905

⁵⁸ *Irish Independent*, 11th February 1905

⁵⁹ *Athletic News*, 13th February 1905

The confidence of Munster in the popularity of rugby was vindicated by the success of the match. The *Irish Times* noted that, 'the attendance at the Mardyke ground ... fell much short of what we would have expected at Lansdowne Road (in Dublin) but there were sufficient numbers present to warrant the experiment.'⁶⁰ The *Times*, however, was mistaken. Estimates of the crowd put the figure at between twelve and fifteen thousand - far in excess of the 10,000 who attended the match against Wales at Lansdowne Road the following year.⁶¹ All this despite the location of the match being, as the correspondent of the *Athletic News* grumbled, like England playing in Cornwall.⁶² The chief feature of the match, aside from a rare victory of the Irish over the English, was the outstanding international debut of Maclear. Scoring a try, he was described as, 'the hero of the Irish side', chaired from the field at the close of play. In this match was forged a new model of Irish masculinity to counter the Gael.⁶³

The Idol of Cork - Basil Maclear and the Forging of a West Briton

Basil Maclear's rugby career demonstrates the way in which the combination of sport as spectacle with the mass media of the modern age could be a powerful means of transmitting ideas of cultural belonging. His early biography would hardly mark him out as a potential Irish sporting hero. Born in Portsmouth, he was one of five sons of a Bedford doctor, Major Henry Wallich Maclear, who had

⁶⁰ *Irish Times*, 13th February 1905

⁶¹ *Southern Star*, 19th February 1905

⁶² *Athletic News*, 13th February 1905

⁶³ *The Irish Field*, 13th February 1905 and *Ireland's Saturday Night*, 11th February 1905

married his cousin shortly after qualifying. The Major was born in South Africa, on the Cape, where Basil's grandfather was the Astronomer Royal at Cape Town Observatory. It was through his grandfather that Basil derived his connection with Ireland for Sir Thomas Maclear had been born and schooled in Tyrone before leaving for England at the age of fifteen to begin a brilliant career - first as a physician and then subsequently as a scientist.⁶⁴ Basil's schooling at Bedford School, where he was an outstanding sprinter, athlete and team man, and subsequent entry as an officer into the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was the conventional progress of a late-Victorian middle-class sportsman wishing to pursue a gentleman's career (Fig.17).⁶⁵ After exemplary service in the South African War and Aden he returned to the British Isles, where he was stationed in Ireland in 1904.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ David S. Evans, 'Maclear, Sir Thomas (1794-1879)', accessed 28th Jan 2013

⁶⁵ 'Basil Maclear', pp. 365-8 in *C. B. Fry's Magazine*, Vol. 8 (1907-1908), p. 365

⁶⁶ Romer and Mainwaring, *The Second Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers*



Fig. 17 – Royal Dublin Fusiliers in 1902

Maclear is second from the left in the top row

Sir Cecil Francis Romer and Arthur Edward Mainwaring, *The Second Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the South African War, with a Description of the Operations in the Aden Hinterland* (London, 1908), p. 217

Despite the geographical handicap of his barracks being located just outside Cork in southern Ireland, Maclear's sporting ambitions lay in finding fame in the metropolis. In the winter of 1904 Maclear travelled to London, where he played for Blackheath, the glamour team of the day, for whom he scored three tries in one match.⁶⁷ A week later he was playing for his Bedford Old Boys team against St Paul's in a game in which he scored four tries and kicked twelve goals, with the President of the English Rugby Football Union, Rowland Hill, in attendance.⁶⁸ It was at this point that Maclear the English officer began his transformation into Maclear the Irish idol.

Since he was playing for Bedford at the time, Maclear missed the chance to take a trial for the Irish team in Munster, which would seem to suggest that he saw his own prospects at that point as being tied to England. However, Rowland Hill's reported verdict on his performance that day was condemnatory, commenting, 'Not good enough, no opposition.'⁶⁹ Whether that was truly the case is debatable since the *Athletics News*, following Ireland's triumph over England, stated that, 'Mr John Reese, the gentleman to whom Cork owes its magnificent football ground, and who was the sponsor of Maclear, felt more than proud of his brilliant protégé.'⁷⁰ Such a term calls to mind Abe Bailey's practice of luring English cricketers to South Africa to strengthen their squad of players prior to their tour to the British Isles in 1907. From the coverage given in the *Irish Independent* it was evident that Maclear, who after all had played no international matches thus far, was the draw for the game. Above an illustration of the new ground in Cork he is given a central

⁶⁷ *Sporting Life*, 4th January 1905

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 11th January 1905

⁶⁹ Sewell, *Rugger: The man's game*, p. 9

⁷⁰ *Athletic News*, 13th February 1905

position, in uniform rather than football kit, more prominent than any of the other Irish players.⁷¹ In fact, during Maclear's international career the *Irish Independent* turned out to be a somewhat unlikely cheerleader for this British officer. During the South African War the paper had been a vociferous critic of British manhood, saying that, 'The physical superiority of the Boers gives no chance to the inferior English race.'⁷² By 1905 the line had changed, with the newspaper being given an exclusive interview with Maclear prior to the test against New Zealand.⁷³ The proprietor of the *Independent*, William Martin Murphy, was a nationalist who had strong sympathy with the 'collaborationist Catholic élites pursuing brokerage with the powers-that-be.'⁷⁴ He was also a pragmatic businessman. In 1905 he relaunched his newspaper as a cheap mass-market product, with its content low on politics and high in news on entertainment and sport. The appeal of a game in Cork cannot have been lost to Murphy, who was also the owner of the Great Southern and Western Railway, which ran the line between Dublin and the southern city.⁷⁵ The *Independent's* change in line on the empire demonstrates once more - as in the case of Reese - that while rugby was a British game, it was above all a profitable game via the paying public and the advertisers who wanted to access them.⁷⁶ The link between commerce and the drive for imperial sport is one which threads between all of the chapters in this thesis.

⁷¹ *Irish Independent*, 11th February 1905.

⁷² *Irish Independent*, quoted in Maume, 'The Irish independent and empire', in Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire*, p. 133

⁷³ *Irish Independent*, 8th November 1905

⁷⁴ Patrick Maume, 'William Martin Murphy, the *Irish Independent* and middle-class politics, 1905-1919', in Fintan Lane (ed.), *Politics, Society and the Middle Class in Modern Ireland* (London, 2010), p. 230

⁷⁵ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland*, p. 59

⁷⁶ Maume, 'The Irish Independent and empire', p. 133

That Maclear's claims to *be* an Irishman at the early stage of his international career were dubious is borne out through the coverage leading up to, and including, the game. He was not even Irish by accident of birth, as were a great deal of British military heroes.⁷⁷ In a provincial match between Munster and Ulster before the England match the Ulster paper, *Ireland's Saturday Night* pointed out that Munster, 'had only three good backs - Maclear, Newton and Millar - and they are not native.'⁷⁸ English papers were candid about Maclear's biography - the *Sporting Life* was categorical he was an Englishman and called him a 'fortunate find for Ireland.'⁷⁹ The *Athletic News* emphasised that he was born and schooled in England, even if his 'forefathers were Irish', as did the *Scottish Referee*.⁸⁰ That national qualification through heredity was not considered *de rigueur* at the time is shown by the fact that two colonial (i.e. Australian) players of Irish origin had been rejected as unsuitable for playing for Ireland the very same year.⁸¹

All this would not be that important if it were not for the fact that Maclear was picked up on quite so strongly as a representative of the Irish race following his tremendous impact on the international rugby scene. Highly significant in this was the fact that he was an officer in the British army. The key aspect of the ban on GAA athletes playing English games is that they were organised in Ireland, for a large part, by the British security forces - the police, the army and the navy. Some among the nationalist movement had asked for the ban to be extended to anyone who

⁷⁷ Kevin Kenny, 'The Irish in the empire', in Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2004), p. 107

⁷⁸ *Ireland's Saturday Night*, 28th January 1905. Ironically, Newton, who was born in Ireland (and therefore 'native'), went on to play for England in his sole international cap. He was also an officer in the 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

⁷⁹ *Sporting Life*, 13th February 1905

⁸⁰ *Athletic News*, 13th February 1905 and *Scottish Referee*, 27th February 1905

⁸¹ *The Irish Field*, 21st January 1905

played with civil servants, from postmen to local government officials, although that was too much even for the zealots of the GAA leadership.⁸² But the ferocity of opinion on those Irishmen who chose to take the King's shilling can be seen from the preachings of Canon MacFadden, as reported in the strongly nationalist *Donegal News*, who said that:

Words failed him to express his scorn and contempt for the Irish boy who, lost to all shame and decency, entered what the previous speaker had most truly styled the very hell of the British army, whether the men in that army were redcoats, or kaki (referring to the sappers) or black. He said that the farmer's son who joined the ranks of either the police or soldiers was an everlasting disgrace to the father who reared him, and an everlasting disgrace to the country that had the misfortune to bear him-a traitor to his country and a coward ... He urged on the people the necessity for reviving their language, and for doing away with foreign customs, foreign dances, foreign games, and said the time was come when Anglo-Saxon football should be crushed out.⁸³

Such views were common among the more radical wing of the GAA and the debate over the playing of British sports mirrored the division over the morality of Irishmen joining the armed forces. For those critical of British rule both were anathema. For the loyalist Protestant Ascendancy and Presbyterians it was the opposite. In the middle were the moderates, those who could legitimise either course of action given the context of their day to day circumstances. It was these

⁸² Mandle, *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Nationalist Politics*, p. 159

⁸³ *Donegal News*, 12th May 1906

pragmatic nationalists to whom Maclear was intended to appeal. Reflecting pragmatist thought was *The Leader*, a nationalist paper, when it argued that the GAA ban was unfair on nationalist Irishmen who were compelled to join the police or the army out of financial necessity, in addition saying that:

Every Irishman has not the physique to wield a caman or play Gaelic football. Then what is he to do? Is he to be debarred from playing golf, tennis, or cricket, and is he to be placed outside the pale of Irish Ireland because he does so? If he has the physique and has a preference for Rugby football he should not be ostracised if he is in other respects a good Irishman.⁸⁴

Maclear's profession was used to project him as an ideal Irishman, countering the negative nationalist rhetoric about the British military and holding him up as an example of manliness that fed on stereotypes of the Irish as a warrior race. For against the British stereotype of the Irish as somehow being feminine, discussed above, there was another, more positive, characterisation in imperial terms. That was, 'the myth of the Irishman as innately warlike', to the extent that Irishmen were thought to be more brave even than Englishmen. The foundation of the Irishman's bravery was felt to be his recklessness from which came the label, the 'wild Irish', a celebration of the supposedly 'passionate, moody' nature of the race.⁸⁵ This was a vision of Irishness that transcended unionism, nationalism and republicanism where all agreed that the bravery of the Irish only required a little

⁸⁴ *The Leader*, 29th June 1906

⁸⁵ Joanna Bourke, "Irish Tommies': The construction of a martial manhood 1914-1918', *Bullàn: An Irish Studies Review*, Vol. 3:2 (1997-8), p. 16

discipline to become effective.⁸⁶ The stereotype persisted throughout the twentieth century, not just on the battlefield but also on the rugby field, where the use of sport as a metaphor for war was (and remains) one of the clichés of the game. The link between rugby and the military was encouraged from the top, where the RFU campaigned for rugby to be *the* major sport for the armed services.⁸⁷ Both of the national histories of rugby in Ireland project the idea that the Irish ‘temperament’ was translated into a style of play characterised by a ‘dashing, devil-may-care manner’ in which the fighting qualities of the Irish could be used to overcome the disadvantage of coming from a small nation with a relatively small pool of talent on which to call.⁸⁸ The idea of a particular national style of play was a trope that has been described as being critical to the development of a post-Second World War Irishness, ‘perceived to have a unique ability in Ireland to transcend political, religious and social class divisions.’⁸⁹ I would argue that this development began rather in the post-South African War period. In *C. B. Fry’s Magazine* ‘National style in rugby’ was discussed in an article of 1906. Ireland’s play was said to be distinguished by a ‘kick and rush’ style, as opposed to the ‘scientific dribbling’ of the Scots. What is more, the Irish play with ball in hand is described as ‘erratic’, ‘slip-shod’ and prone to show ‘lack of judgement.’⁹⁰

Maclear introduced a new dimension to the concept of Ireland’s national style of play. Time and again in the coverage of matches Maclear’s military profession was

⁸⁶ David Fitzpatrick, ‘Militarism in Ireland 1900-1922’, in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (eds.), *A Military History of Ireland*, p. 379

⁸⁷ Collins, *A Social History of Rugby Union*, p. 50

⁸⁸ Duffley, *The Men in Green*, p. 11

⁸⁹ Maguire and Tuck, ‘National identity, Rugby Union and notions of Ireland’, p. 98

⁹⁰ *C. B. Fry’s Magazine*, Vol. 6 (1906-1907), p. 108-110

lauded in the most glowing terms. In the *Athletic News*, introducing Maclear to the sporting public, their correspondent reported that Maclear, 'is an officer in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers ... he is a man of splendid physique, with a heart as big as a lion.'⁹¹ Reviewing the test match against England the same paper commented that, 'Maclear is an idol in Cork, for his regiment is stationed in the immediate neighbourhood, and those who knew him and saw his marvellous efforts were beside themselves with ecstatic emotion.'⁹² Maclear quickly became an idol not just in Cork but for the Irish sporting public at large, one of those personalities that connects with a mass audience. On either side of the political divide in the city Maclear was the centre of attention for the match with the unionist *Cork Constitution* pointing out that with Captain Rogers, of the Royal Horse Artillery playing for England and Maclear for Ireland, 'the match had great interest for the military in the country.'⁹³ The *Cork Examiner*, a nationalist paper, was dubious about Maclear's origins, describing him as, 'a fair-haired, burly young fellow, he is not a typical Irishman, either in appearance or build.' Yet it still gave him star billing in the match with an account of a GAA game pushed lower down the page.⁹⁴

By the time of the New Zealanders' visit to Ireland in the autumn of 1905 Maclear had become the fulcrum of the Irish team, recognised by the press and opposition as the outstanding player of his generation. The *Freeman's Journal* described his star power among the sporting public, saying that, 'The presence of Maclear on a team will draw a crowd to any ground where that team appears these days ... the genial, easy-going, well-set-up, yellow-booted, white-gloved, broad-belted adjutant

⁹¹ *Athletic News*, 30th January 1905

⁹² *Ibid.* 13th February 1905

⁹³ *Cork Constitution*, 14th February 1905

⁹⁴ *Cork Examiner*, 13th February 1905

(is) the observed of all observers.’⁹⁵ His exceptional ability was now firmly associated with the combination of his supposedly Irish wildness with military discipline. The correspondent of the *Scottish Referee* said of Maclear that he ‘is a terror, and I heard him referred to as, ‘The Irish Terror’ (not Irish terrier). He has speed and weight and the way he brushed aside his opponents gave great amusement to the standites.’⁹⁶ Yet this terror also had discipline, with the *Irish Independent* commenting of the Irish performance against New Zealand, ‘that they would make the most magnificent infantry in the world. They had their instructions and they carried them out, played to the finish; played without flinching; played grimly, desperately.’⁹⁷ Thus was the stereotype constructed of an ‘Irish’ style of rugby that depended upon passion tempered by military discipline.⁹⁸

And in Basil Maclear one finds the perfect embodiment of this style. For all his characterization as a terror of rugby, there was never any doubt expressed in the press that here was a gentleman who carried the bearing of a man on and off the pitch. As noted in the above quote one of the details of Maclear that was picked up by the press was the fact that he wore white gloves.⁹⁹ Such a habit struck contemporary observers as being the height of sophistication, even of dandyism.¹⁰⁰ Yet in reality Maclear’s use of gloves in rugby was a sign of his discipline and efficiency. Passed off by historians of the game as fastidiousness it was in fact a

⁹⁵ *Irish Freeman’s Journal*, 8th November 1905

⁹⁶ *Scottish Referee*, 27th February 1905

⁹⁷ *Irish Independent*, 27th November 1905

⁹⁸ Tuck and Maguire demonstrate how powerful this stereotype was by the fact that in interviews they conducted with Irish internationals in the 1990s these two factors of passion and discipline endured as the distinctive markers of the ‘Irish’ style of play’. Tuck and Maguire, ‘National identity, Rugby Union and notions of Ireland’, p. 103

⁹⁹ *Irish Freeman’s Journal*, 8th November 1905

¹⁰⁰ Jim Shanahan, ‘Maclear, Basil’, *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge University Press, 2009; online edition), accessed 13th March 2013; Diffley, *The Men in Green*, p. 68

tactical manouevre aimed at giving superior grip of the ball.¹⁰¹ The definitive verdict on his career was given in *C. B. Fry's Magazine* on the announcement of his retirement in 1907. In a profile of him as player and man he is first described as, 'a Briton, born and bred' whose selection for Ireland was England's loss.¹⁰² However, his Englishness is soon forgotten in the article as he is swiftly characterised as being Irish, 'playing a typically Irish game, of which dash and irrepressibility are the leading features' whose 'roving' style was symptomatic of a characteristic national irresponsibility.¹⁰³ Yet, the article also points out that, 'he has never been guilty of a single thought, word, or deed that was not the very soul of football honour ... in the hottest moments so absolutely had he Self under control that it was a genuine pleasure to see this splendid exponent of the game he loves playing it.'¹⁰⁴ The article rounds off with the opinion that Maclear was, 'one of the manliest as well as the greatest exponents whose participation in it ever honoured the Rugby game.'¹⁰⁵ The magazine also cements Maclear's position in the iconography of Irish sport with a caricature (Fig.18).

¹⁰¹ *Times*, 15th January 1955

¹⁰² *C. B. Fry's Magazine*, Vol. 8 (1907-1908), p. 365

¹⁰³ *C. B. Fry's Magazine*, Vol. 8 (1907-1908), p. 365

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p.367

¹⁰⁵ *Idem.*

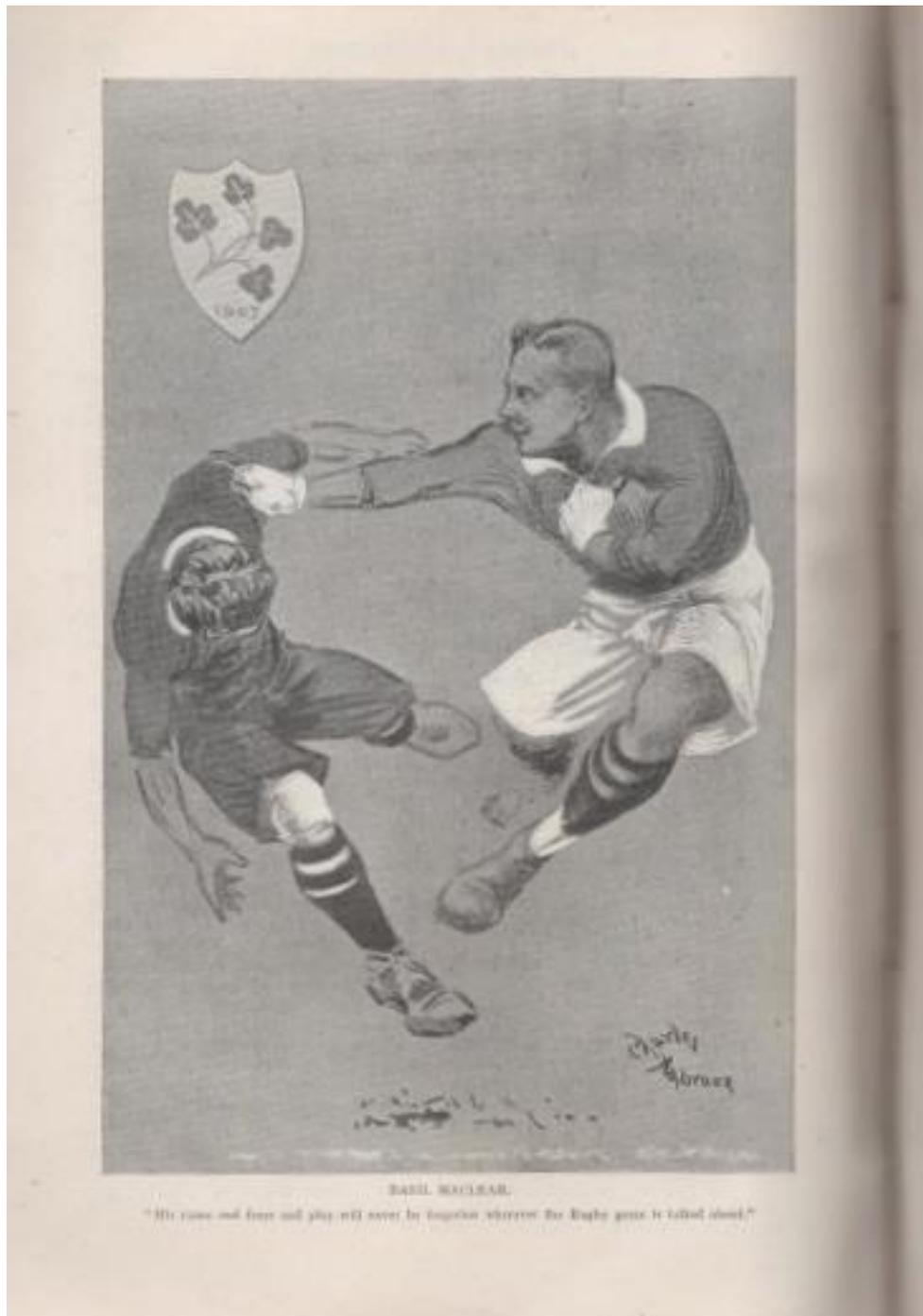


Fig. 18 The famous Maclear hand-off

C. B. Fry's Magazine, Vol. 8 (1907-1908), p.368

The picture shows an air-borne Maclear, seemingly escaping gravity as he casts down an opponent with his renowned hand-off like Michael throwing Lucifer down to earth. And he does so in the white gloves of a British gentleman beneath the imprimatur of the shamrock of Ireland top left.¹⁰⁶ Thus it was that Maclear's combination of Irish dash and English cool could add up to Sewell's 'ideal Rugger Man.'¹⁰⁷

The Imperial Idea - 'Celts vs Boers'

This combination would be significant when it came to the visit of the Springboks in 1906. The international match was to be played in Belfast, in the heart of unionist Ulster, where the local loyalist press was quick to draw parallels between the formerly rebellious Boers and the political situation in Ireland. The *Belfast Newsletter* was one of several newspapers to emphasise that the tour was a tour of reconciliation between Briton and Boer, seeing the two white communities of South Africa as being drawn together into a 'brotherhood' on the pitch playing under the same flag.¹⁰⁸ Such an attitude is to be expected since loyalists in Ireland were following the rhetoric in the London press of the tour promoting imperial solidarity. Indeed the *Northern Whig* suggested that the crowd of up to 20,000 was attracted to the game by the 'Imperial idea.'¹⁰⁹ Nowhere amongst the loyalist press was it contested that the match was an imperial event, a peaceful re-run of the War in which it was now made clear that the Boers were part of the imperial family.

¹⁰⁶ C. B. Fry's *Magazine*, Vol. 8 (1907-1908), p. 368

¹⁰⁷ Sewell, *Rugger: The Man's Game*, p. 28

¹⁰⁸ *Belfast Newsletter*, 25th November 1906

¹⁰⁹ *Northern Whig*, 26th November 1906

However, the nationalist response to the arrival of the South Africans was far more complex. Neal Garnham argues that the South African tour served 'to further push apart an already divided nation,' with the nationalist press using the two Irish defeats to demonstrate the fact that the home team was made up of representatives of the British rather than the Irish nation, and in so doing demonstrating again the weakness of the British race in the face of the Boer onslaught.¹¹⁰ It is true that the *Irish News*, the 'voice of Belfast's nationalist community,'¹¹¹ was vociferous in drawing this conclusion, stating that the Irish team contained no-one 'drawn from the classes that bred Irish athletes' and then going on to make a comparison between South African victory in Belfast and the defeat of two companies of Belfast Imperial Yeomen by Boer commandos during the War.¹¹² Yet the *Irish News* was not the only voice of the nationalist community and if looked at as a whole one can see that some sections of nationalist opinion, almost despite themselves, and others wholeheartedly, celebrated the Irish performance against the Springboks. Maclear the Irishman was the focus of their celebration. Already, in 1905, the enthusiasm for imperial sports had been shown by Irish crowds when the New Zealanders visited Limerick. A contemporary report described how Loyalists and Nationalists alike turned out to meet the New Zealand team at the railway station on their arrival from Dublin.¹¹³ Cross-community enthusiasm for international rugby was also displayed in the build up to the South Africa test a year later. Detailed profiles of the South African players appeared in nationalist as well as unionist papers. The *Freeman's Journal*, which was once one

¹¹⁰ Garnham, 'Rugby's imperial connections, domestic politics and colonial tours to Ireland before 1914', pp. 44-52 in Bairner (ed.), *Sport and the Irish*, p. 52

¹¹¹ Ibid. p. 49

¹¹² *Irish News*, 26th November 1906

¹¹³ Unknown source quoted in van Esbeck, *Irish Rugby*, p. 59

of the most vociferous supporters of the Boers in the South Africa War, welcomed them to the shores of Ireland as representatives of their continent. The *Journal*, and the *Irish Independent*, did not take the stance of the *Irish News* that this was a re-run of the War between Brits and Boers. Rather they saw it as a great opportunity for Irishmen to pit themselves against the thus far unbeaten Springboks, urging the team to, 'play the real Irish game.'¹¹⁴

Despite losing in the last few minutes of the game the talk of the match was a sensational try by Maclear, scored after a run from deep within his own half after handing off the Springbok fullback, Loubser, no less than three times. On the English side Sewell recalled, 'Nowhere else at a rucker game have I heard such a din as then arose. The mere sight of such a splendid figure of a man as was Basil Maclear going all out on business on a rucker field is not seen everyday. Inasmuch as, added to that, was the fact that he was on an Irish ground in an Irish jersey'¹¹⁵ The response to the try is telling of the way in which Maclear appealed to a broad spectrum of the Irish sporting public. The *Cork Examiner*, a nationalist paper, eulogised over him, describing the 'roar of cheers and yells' from spectators, 'delirious with delight' at all sides of the ground, including in the pressbox where:

The Pressmen were as bad as the rest, if not worse. There was not much respect shown for the 'copy' by some usually sedate members of the fourth estate, who jumped up on the tables, chairs, and forms, and danced Highland flings. One of the forms gave way, and half-a-dozen scribes were sent sprawling on the ground. The only individuals who seemed to preserve their sanity during this outburst were a couple of camera fiends from

¹¹⁴ *Irish Independent*, 24th November 1906

¹¹⁵ Sewell, *Rucker: The Man's Game*, p. 97

England, who calmly snap-shotted the 'wild Irish' for the illustrated weeklies.¹¹⁶

What is even more striking is that the *Donegal News*, so hardline previously in its enmity to the foreign game, could not help but be caught up in the national enthusiasm for the Irish team. In a report headlined 'Celt v Boer', the correspondent described a match, 'of strange nerve-shattering fluctuations, brilliant individuality, and spasms of intense excitement' where 'though Ireland surrendered the honours of a tremendous contest her defeat means no loss of prestige.'¹¹⁷ While not going as far as to name Lieutenant Maclear as the brilliant individual in question it is telling that the rugby team had been given a Celtic characterisation which would suggest that, in terms of sport at least, a space where both nationalist and loyalist could share a common sense of Irishness existed at this time.

The silence of hardline nationalist writers on the political implications of British and Boer sportsmen playing rugby together is testimony to the fact that the imperial Boer could no longer function as the exemplar to Irish republicanism as had been the case just five years earlier. And there were strands of nationalist, as well as loyalist, opinion that saw the reconciliation of the Transvaal to British rule as one that the Irish could follow. One such strand was the faction led by William O'Brien, an Irish MP who led a 'dissident' group of nationalists in Parliament committed to an 'All-Ireland' policy of moderate, parliamentary nationalism that could bridge the ethnic and religious divisions that hardliners on both sides

¹¹⁶ *Cork Examiner*, 26th November 1906. Note the reference, once again, to the 'wild Irish'.

¹¹⁷ *Donegal News*, 1st December 1906

wished to exploit. Based in County Cork, O'Brien's grouping, while numerically small in terms of parliament, nevertheless represented a significant section of nationalist opinion.¹¹⁸ O'Brien and his sympathisers were accused by Sinn Féin of having 'shown the spirit of slavish complaisance and compromise (and) admitted into their ranks most unworthy, un-Irish, members.'¹¹⁹ O'Brien fought back in an article published soon after the visit of the South Africans and coinciding with the visit of President Botha to London, arguing that, 'we have got to sit at Boer knees and humbly receive instruction', later going on to argue that, 'Solid interests on both sides make wholly for concord among classes, races and creeds in Ireland.'¹²⁰ It was just this kind of moderate nationalism that Maclear and the Irish rugby team were appealing to as an all-Ireland cultural institution.

Conclusion: The Triumph of Nationalism

Maclear played just one further season after the South African game, for the third time running taking part in an Irish victory over England in 1907. And it was on the occasion of his retirement that the profile of him was printed in *C. B. Fry's Magazine*. His wide-ranging appeal is demonstrated by the fact that the profile was printed word for word by the *Freeman's Journal* in December of that year.¹²¹ When the South Africans next visited, in 1912, it would be in a very different political climate, one characterised by increased polarisation between Protestant and

¹¹⁸ Philip Bull, 'O'Brien, William (1852–1928)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004)

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.londonlibrary.co.uk/view/article/35281>), accessed 19th March 2013

¹¹⁹ Seamus MacManus, 'Sinn Féin', in *North American Review*, Vol. 185 (May/Aug 1907), p. 826

¹²⁰ William O'Brien, MP, 'Ireland and the Transvaal', *Contemporary Review*, Vol. 92 (July/December 1907), p. 536

¹²¹ *Irish Freeman's Journal*, 30th December 1907

Catholic Ireland.¹²² The passing of the Home Rule Bill in 1911 provoked Ulster Unionists to take up arms to defend their right to direct British rule in a way that ran entirely counter to the spirit of the Treaty of Vereeniging. There was no talk of sport as conciliator during the South Africans' 1912 tour. Tony Collins notes that in Ulster the link between sport and the military took a sectarian turn when the 1913-14 rugby season had to be abandoned due to the vast majority of players volunteering for Sir Edward Carson's Ulster Volunteer Force.¹²³

Yet the political upheaval of the 1910s should not overshadow the fact that the previous ten years had been years in which there was a genuine push to project an image of the Irish sportsman as being able to combine the best elements of supposedly Irish and English traits in a British masculinity. And one must emphasise that this was a process aimed not just at the Irish sporting public. It was aimed too at the public in England and the rest of the Empire. The global readership of *C. B. Fry* could read about an imperial icon manufactured on the Mardyke Ground in Cork and in the press reports that tracked his progress through the next three seasons. Maclear became an example to the British of the best kind of Irishman in a time when public opinion was divided on whether Ireland was fit to be part of the United Kingdom. In this period, before the hyper-commercialisation of sport, and when the rule of the amateur held sway, nationality was a precursor of branding in sport, a crucial element in the modern world. In wearing the shamrock rather than the rose on his jersey Maclear had in some way come to embody Irishness for the sporting public. In so doing he could not help but

¹²² Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 462-471

¹²³ Collins, *A Social History of Rugby Union*, p. 51

portray a more sympathetic brand of Irishness to the British world than that of the traditional stereotypes of the English press, and indeed of the Gaelic masculinity pushed by Sinn Féin. At the same time his Irish-tinged Britishness projected a brand to the Irish sporting public that allowed his fame to overcome the negative connotations of his membership of the British armed forces. That is fame should have diminished so rapidly in the twentieth century is a testimony to the triumph of hard politics over the soft power of sporting competitions.

Conclusion

The sceptic Wyse in *Ulysses* puts his finger on one of the central problems in the relationship between sport and society that continues to have implications for the present day: A nation, *what is it?*¹ Or more specifically, *who* is it and *where* is it? This thesis has shown that sport acted as one means of discussing such questions in the Edwardian era. The role of sport as a means of dialogue between nations and colonies, and between different ethnic groups within those nations and colonies was one that was well understood by contemporary commentators in the 1900s. In books, periodicals, magazines and newspapers, Edwardian writers and correspondents used sport as a way of talking about the social and political issues of the day and thus transmitting their ideas to a wider public. What I have tried to tease out in this thesis is first, the way in which administrators and politicians used sports teams to portray a sense of national or imperial identity to the public. And then, secondly, the way in which sports teams' and their members' reception by the press and the public can be used to uncover who could be acceptable as representatives of the empire or colony in public life.

The tours undertaken by the teams that I have discussed had other aspects in common with the themes of Joyce's novel than national identity and its interpretation by individuals and society. Their world was the world of Joyce, temporally, geographically and socially. Sport brought together imperial mandarins, writers and the common man and woman as an interest that few other social activities did in the Edwardian era, or do today. The teams were peripatetic.

¹ Joyce, *Ulysses*, p. 496-7

The players undertook an odyssey through the empire, performing in front of diverse publics who brought their own ideas of what they represented to each match. In this thesis I have tried to explore how those ideas of identity fitted into a wider narrative about national and imperial identity in the years running up to World War 1.

I would argue that the Edwardian British Empire saw the birth in the modern era of sports diplomacy, both in its formal and informal sense.² Formally, sports tours acted as diplomatic missions from the colonies to the mother country, often coinciding with imperial conferences of politicians, as was the case with the Colonial Conference of 1907 in London that took place concurrently with the visit of the South African cricketers.³ Each of the tours that I have discussed carried with it a bundle of aspirations on behalf of its sponsors in the worlds of business and politics. Such aspirations were sometimes made public, as with the ‘tour of reconciliation’ espoused by Paul Roos and his team’s management during the rugby tour of 1906.⁴ More often such aspirations only made themselves apparent in the accompanying media discussion of the team, whether from publications closely associated with sponsors of the tour, such as the West India Committee, or in commentary given to the mass media, as was the case with Richard Seddon’s piggybacking on the New Zealanders success in 1905.

Informally, tours were created from a network of players, administrators, writers, readers and businessmen who between them created a sporting community that

² Stuart Murray, ‘Sports diplomacy’, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, No. 8 (2013), p. 193

³ Levett, ‘Constructing imperial identity’, p. 243

⁴ Allen, ‘Tours of reconciliation’

encompassed the globe. Such a network had its strongest concentration in the British Empire but it also drew in a worldwide membership as English sports went on to become the pastime of men and women beyond the boundaries of British colonial rule. Such a development owed its origin to a great extent to the rapid expansion of the media that occurred at the same time as the global expansion of sport. The popular media allowed its diverse consumers to imagine themselves as a community united by their interest in sport. In the space available in a thesis I have necessarily had to restrict my discussion of the development of such a process to a specific range of sports in time and place but I hope that the method of analysis that I have followed, examining the interaction between organisers, players, mediators and consumers of sport, is one that can be applied to other areas and times that I have necessarily had to overlook in this work.

Darbon's metaphor of sport acting as a *lingua franca* is a powerful one, for it allows us to conceive of sport as something that unifies culturally diverse participants in a mutually comprehensible dialogue.⁵ A key difference, however, is that sport, as it is practiced rather than consumed, is a physical activity to an extent that conversation is not. The hackneyed parallels of sport with war that littered the pages of sports reporting in the 1900s do at least serve as a reminder that both activities placed men, nearly always men at that time, in direct physical competition with one another. And therein lies the key as to why race and class were such powerful issues in sporting competitions during this period. It is difficult for the spectator or the reader to access the physical experience of playing sport but for participants it is the prime experience. The necessity of sharing a

⁵ Darbon, *Diffusion des Sports*, p. 323

constrained area in the field of play, and the same necessity of having to physically and mentally grapple at close quarters with complete strangers accounts for the visceral reaction that the South Africans had when confronted with James Peters prior to their match in Devon. Faced with having to leave the socially segregated mores of their home society at the changing room door in order to play in a prestigious match, they at first refused to do so. The column by 'Mimosa' on the imagined physical distaste felt by the South African players when being visited by a black well-wisher testifies to the powerful emotions engendered by contact with racial or ethnic groups who have been 'othered' by a racist social discourse. Yet such discourses could be overcome or changed. Indeed, the Boers themselves had been subjected to just such a discourse by the British media during the South African War in order to justify aggression against a fellow white settler nation.⁶

Such a transformation in the image of the Boer was emblematic of a wider trend in imperial thought that was growing stronger at the time that the tours described in this thesis took place. That is, the 'settler revolution', whereby white, masculine rule came to be embedded in the settler colonies of the British world.⁷ White and non-white became a binary just at this time, reinforced in the public sphere by narratives that shaped and defined who could qualify as a white man, a figure constructed in relation to 'those who had no claims, or lesser claims, to whiteness or to masculinity.'⁸ Of particular note in this process, and an event that formed a continual political background to the sports tours of the 1900s, was the Asian

⁶ Paula M. Krebs, *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire: Public Discourse and the Boer War* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 145

⁷ James Belich, 'Chapter 15: The rise and fall of greater Britain', pp. 456-479 in *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-world, 1783-1939* (Oxford, 2009)

⁸ Schwarz, *Memories of Empire*, p. 20

migration controversy. In the settler colonies of the empire pressure built on colonial governments from the white working-class to exclude Indian and Chinese labourers.⁹ In South Africa the situation came to a head with the rejection of Chinese labour in the Transvaal in 1907, where the newly elected colonial legislature's first act was to ban all future Asian migration.¹⁰ The ban on Asian migrants in the Transvaal replicated, or inspired, similar legislation throughout the settler colonies so that by 1907 Asian migration had virtually ceased.¹¹ Such actions provoked a tension with colonial authorities in London, who were torn between their 'professed philosophy of race equality within the empire' and their reluctance to interfere in the internal affairs of white colonial governments.¹² The British authorities' desire to create a universal concept of imperial belonging that extended to all the people of the empire came up against the burgeoning colonial nationalism of the settler colonies. The governments of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa were confident that theirs were white man's countries, whereas Britain herself was only seen as being ambiguously so.¹³

The same tension was apparent in the imperial sports world, where MCC and the RFU were attempting to exert their authority over the increasingly independently minded colonial sports authorities. South Africa in particular was the driving force behind the increasingly racialised aspect of both cricket and rugby. Whether it was the rejection of James Peters as an England player or the omission of 'Krom' Hendricks from their cricket team to tour England the increasingly segregated

⁹ Bright, *Chinese Labour in South Africa*, p. 39

¹⁰ Bright, 'Asian migration', p. 142

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 145

¹² Marjorie Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, p. 168

¹³ Schwartz, *Memories of Empire*, p. 21

nature of South African society had an effect of provoking tacit segregation throughout the empire. The effect of this can be seen in the way in which the West Indian cricketers of 1906 were treated with more hostility in the British press than those of 1900 but its most obvious manifestation in the time before World War 1 can be seen in the negotiations leading up to the 1912 Triangular cricket tournament. In 1909 Abe Bailey proposed a British Colonial Cricket Conference, which later adopted the name of the Imperial Cricket Conference (ICC). The foundation of the ICC was closely modelled on the Colonial Conferences of 1902 and 1907, whose purpose was to act to foster closer union between the mother country and the colonies. The two bodies shared similarities in that they focused on the settler colonies. The West India Committee had requested representation at the Colonial Conference of 1902 and was rejected by Joseph Chamberlain.¹⁴ India was represented at both the 1902 and 1907 Conferences, but only by members of the Indian Office, whose activities were 'negligible.'¹⁵ The ICC too excluded the West Indians and the Indians from its councils, despite each of them having been an integral part of the international cricketing network for decades. Their second-class status was further emphasised by the Triangular Tournament of 1912 being an emphatically whites only affair.¹⁶ The RFU and MCC proved to be willing accomplices of the settler colonies in the process of segregating imperial sport.

¹⁴ Kendle, *Colonial and Imperial Conferences*, p. 49

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 89

¹⁶ Merrett and Nauright, 'Chapter 3: South Africa', p. 64. One man who played for the South Africans, 'Buck' Llewellyn, was of mixed race background, with his mother being of mixed race origins in St Helena. In South Africa, however, he passed as white. It was only after his death that his racial origins came in for prolonged scrutiny. Rowland Bowen's assertion that he was 'openly avowed as a coloured man' was thoroughly refuted by Richard Parry and Jonty Winch. Rowland Bowen, *Cricket: A History of its Growth and Development throughout the World* (London, 1970); p. 150. Richard Parry and Jonty Winch, 'Two cricketers and a writer: The strange case of 'Buck' Llewellyn, Jimmy Sinclair and Major Bowen', in Murray and Vahed, *Empire and Cricket*, pp. 201-202

Such a process was buttressed by the nature of the sports media in the British world at this time. As was the case with the media as a whole, London's voice was dominant in setting the agenda for sports reporting. Journalists like C. B. Fry, Pelham Warner, E. H. D. Sewell and Major Philip Trevor wrote columns that were syndicated throughout the empire, wrote books on sport that were bestsellers throughout the empire, and wrote for magazines that served the entire British world. Local journalists in Britain or the colonies were thus always writing in reference to the big men of sport whose opinions were formed in London. And they were imperial men through and through. While each of them had different specific trajectories through the empire they were all immersed in imperial culture. Each of them came from a public school background and then went on to make a career that involved travel through the British world. Their accounts turn players into symbols in the myth of sport created by the discourse surrounding their actions.¹⁷ And men such as C. B. Fry were *glamorous* figures in their time, with a powerful effect on the imaginations of their admirers. Figure 1 of the adulation of Fry was only one of a myriad of such myth-making images in the Edwardian press. Their myth-making continues to have a powerful effect on the historiography of sport since it is their journalism and their memoirs that remain the most accessible sources for the historian. And their myths are embedded in the very fabric of the games that they described to this day.

Thus to write a history of sport against the grain of the myths created by the dominant powers in the game is a difficult task, but it is nevertheless a vital one. As I have shown, challenges to the idea of the white upper class imperial Briton as the

¹⁷ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London, 1998), pp. 131-133

model sportsman did occur in Ireland, in England, in France, in India and in the West Indies in the Edwardian period. By uncovering the history of such challenges and showing the diversity of background of sportsmen in the Edwardian era I hope to have made a contribution to explaining how the British saw themselves and how they were seen by those they ruled.¹⁸

¹⁸ Schwarz, *Memories of Empire*, p. 18

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ii) Internet resources

<http://www.espnricinfo.com/ci/engine/series/index.html> - Cricket statistics

<http://www.espn.co.uk/scrum/rugby/series/index.html> - Rugby Union statistics

Appendix A

Fixtures and Results of Colonial Tours 1905-1907

1) New Zealand Rugby Union 1905-6¹

Date	Opposition	Location	Result	Score
September				
16 th	Devon	Exeter	Win	55-4
21 st	Cornwall	Camborne	Win	41-0
23 rd	Bristol	Bristol	Win	32-0
30 th	Leicester	Leicester	Win	28-0
October				
4 th	Middlesex	Stamford Bridge	Win	34-0
7 th	Durham	Durham	Win	16-3
11 th	Hartlepool Clubs	West Hartlepool	Win	63-0
14 th	Northumberland	North Shields	Win	31-0
19 th	Gloucester	Gloucester	Win	44-0
21 st	Somerset	Taunton	Win	23-0
25 th	Devonport Albion	Devonport	Win	21-3
28 th	Midland Counties	Leicester	Win	21-5
November				
1 st	Surrey	Richmond	Win	11-0
4 th	Blackheath	Blackheath	Win	32-0
7 th	Oxford University	Oxford	Win	47-0
9 th	Cambridge University	Cambridge	Win	14-0
11 th	Richmond	Richmond	Win	17-0
15 th	Bedford	Bedford	Win	41-0
18 th	SCOTLAND	Edinburgh	Win	12-7
22 nd	West of Scotland	Glasgow	Win	22-0
25 th	IRELAND	Dublin	Win	15-0

¹ Statistics collated from McCrystal, *The Originals*, p.143

28 th	Munster	Limerick	Win	33-0
December				
2nd	ENGLAND	Crystal Palace	Win	15-0
6 th	Cheltenham	Cheltenham	Win	18-0
9 th	Cheshire	Birkenhead	Win	34-0
13 th	Yorkshire	Headingley	Win	40-0
16th	WALES	Cardiff	Loss	0-3
20 th	Glamorgan County	Swansea	Win	9-0
23 rd	Newport	Newport	Win	6-3
26 th	Cardiff	Cardiff	Win	10-8
31 st	Swansea	Swansea	Win	4-3
January				
1 st	FRANCE	Paris	Win	38-8
February				
10 th	British Columbia	Berkeley	Win	43-6
13 th	British Columbia	San Francisco	Win	65-6

2) West Indies Cricket 1906²

Date	Opposition	Location	Result
June			
11 th -12 th	Mr. W. G. Grace's XI	Crystal Palace	Lost by 247 runs
14 th -16 th	Essex	Leyton	Lost by 111 runs
18 th -20 th	Lord Brackley's XI	Lord's	Lost by 2 wickets
21 st -23 rd	Minor Counties	Ealing	Won by 215 runs
25 th -26 th	Surrey	Oval	Lost by 10 wickets
29 th -30 th	Wiltshire	Swindon	Lost by 86 runs
July			
2 nd -4 th	Hampshire	Southampton	Lost by 6 wickets
9 th -10 th	South Wales	Cardiff	Won by 278 runs
12 th -13 th	Kent	Catford	Lost by innings and 14 runs
16 th -17 th	MCC and Ground	Lord's	Lost by 6 wickets
19 th -21 st	Derbyshire	Derby	Lost by 6 wickets
23 rd -25 th	Scotland	Edinburgh	Won by 4 wickets
26 th -28 th	An England XI	Blackpool	Drawn
30 th -1 st	Northumberland and Durham	Sunderland	Won by 145 runs
August			
2 nd -4 th	Yorkshire	Harrogate	Won by 262 runs
6 th -8 th	Leicestershire	Leicester	Lost by 24 runs
10 th -11 th	Norfolk	Norwich	Won by innings and 118 runs
13 th -15 th	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham	Drawn
16 th -18 th	Northamptonshire	Northampton	Won by 155 runs

² Statistics collated from *Wisden Cricketer's Almanack* (1907)

South Africa Rugby Union 1906-7³

Date	Opposition	Location	Result	Score
September				
27 th	East Midlands	Northampton	Win	37-0
29 th	Midlands	Leicester	Win	29-0
October				
3 rd	Kent	Blackheath	Win	21-0
6 th	Durham	Hartlepool	Win	22-4
10 th	Northumberland	Newcastle	Win	44-0
13 th	Yorkshire	Leeds	Win	34-0
17 th	Devon	Devonport	Win	22-6
20 th	Somerset	Taunton	Win	14-0
24 th	Middlesex	Richmond	Win	9-0
27 th	Newport	Newport	Win	8-0
31 st	Glamorgan	Cardiff	Win	6-3
November				
3 rd	Gloucestershire	Gloucester	Win	23-0
7 th	Oxford University	Oxford	Win	24-3
10 th	Cambridge University	Cambridge	Win	29-0
13 th	South of Scotland	Hawick	Win	32-5
17 th	SCOTLAND	Glasgow	Loss	0-6
20 th	North of Scotland	Aberdeen	Win	35-3
24 th	IRELAND	Belfast	Win	15-12
27 th	Dublin University	Dublin	Win	28-3
December				
1 st	WALES	Swansea	Win	11-0
8 th	ENGLAND	Crystal Palace	Draw	3-3
12 th	Lancashire	Manchester	Win	11-8
15 th	Cumberland	Carlisle	Win	21-0
22 nd	Cornwall	Redruth	Win	9-3
26 th	Monmouthshire	Newport	Win	17-0
29 th	Llanelli	Llanelli	Win	16-3
January				
1 st	Cardiff	Cardiff	Loss	0-17
3 rd	FRANCE	Paris	Win	55-6

³ Statistics collated from Planauer, *The Springbokken in Great Britain*

South Africa Cricket 1907⁴

Date	Opposition	Location	Result
May			
20 th -22 nd 23 rd -25 th	Leicestershire Essex	Leicester Leyton	Won by 98 runs Won by innings and 99 runs
27 th -29 th 30 th -1 st	MCC and Ground Oxford University	Lord's Oxford	Won by 3 wickets Drawn
June			
3 rd -5 th 6 th -8 th	Cambridge University Northamptonshire	Cambridge Northampton	Drawn Won by 83 runs
10 th -12 th 13 th -15 th	Middlesex Hampshire	Lord's Southampton	Won by 278 runs Drawn
17 th -19 th 20 th -22 nd	Warwickshire Derbyshire	Birmingham Derby	Won by 276 runs Won by innings and 108 runs
24 th -26 th	Kent	Catford	Won by 2 runs
July			
1 st -3 rd 4 th -6 th	ENGLAND Sussex	Lord's Brighton	Drawn Won by 39 runs
11 th -13 th 15 th -16 th	Surrey Yorkshire	Oval Bradford	Lost by 85 runs Won by 5 wickets
18 th -19 th	Scottish XI	Glasgow	Won by innings and 371 runs
22 nd -24 th 25 th -26 th	Scotland Durham	Edinburgh Sunderland	Won by 8 wickets Won by innings and 29 runs
29 th -31 st	ENGLAND	Leeds	Lost by 53 runs
August			
1 st -2 nd	Lancashire	Manchester	Won by innings and 165 runs
5 th -7 th 8 th -9 th	Gentlemen of Ireland Mr. S. H. Cochrane's XI	Dublin Bray	Won by 151 runs Won by innings and 66 runs
12 th -14 th 15 th -17 th 19 th -21 st	Nottinghamshire Essex ENGLAND	Nottingham Leyton Oval	Lost by 5 wickets Won by 104 runs Drawn

⁴ Statistics collated from *Wisden Cricketer's Almanack* (1908)

22 nd -23 rd	Gloucestershire	Bristol	Won by innings and 38 runs
26 th -27 th	South Wales	Cardiff	Won by innings and 66 runs
29 th -31 st	Somerset	Bath	Won by 358 runs
September			
2 nd -4 th	MCC and Ground	Lord's	Lost by innings and 9 runs
5 th -6 th	Mr. Bamford's XI	Uttoxeter	Won by innings and 14 runs
9 th -11 th	Mr. C. I. Thornton's England XI	Scarborough	Drawn