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Sport in Dublin in the nineteenth century

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17209972

This thesis is submitted to University College Dublin in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of History

Head of School: Professor William Mulligan

Supervisor: Professor Paul Rouse

2022

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Thesis abstract

Despite the recent growth of academic interest in Irish sport history, the emergence of formally organized sport in nineteenth-century Irish urban areas has received scant attention. This thesis addresses such a gap and maps out the transition from a traditional world of play to a modern sporting scene in Dublin, Ireland's capital city.

It is argued that the development of a modern capitalist society in the eighteenth century and the resulting emergence of an associational culture, the bureaucratisation of state apparel, the development of faster and cheaper means of transportation, and the dissemination of information contributed to the nineteenth-century codification, commercialisation, and internationalisation of sport. Such change was especially observed among elite pastimes in the earliest part of the century, but as living standards increased from mid-century, the model spread to the city's middle class and eventually reached the working class by the 1880s.

Drawing extensively from contemporary newspapers and archival material, this thesis stresses the roles of social class, gender, education, urbanisation, religion, and politics in shaping the modern sporting scene in Dublin. Conversely, it emphasises how sport was central to the evolution of the nineteenth-century city and its importance to the everyday life of its inhabitants. By correlating such findings with broader evolutions then taking place in Britain and Ireland, the present research assesses the extent to which the development of sport in Dublin fitted national and international trends but also highlights its original features. In so doing, it enriches our understanding of Ireland's sporting past.

Statement of Original Authorship

I hereby certify that the submitted work is my own work, was completed while registered as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and I have not obtained a degree elsewhere on the basis of the research presented in this submitted work.

Acknowledgments

I first came to Ireland in June 2006, full of certitudes about the happy-go-lucky lifestyle of its inhabitants, about the fighting spirit of its rugby and soccer players, about the weight of traditional music and Irish language in everyday life, and about the centuries of oppression at the hands of the English. As I quickly figured out, life here was very different from the clichés I had been fed with. There lay my original fascination with this country. The decision to write a thesis on Dublin sport history in turn stems from two specific moments that have left a durable impression on me. The 2006 All-Ireland football semi-final between Dublin and Mayo was the first one. Up until that summer, I had never heard of Gaelic games and by the time Ciáran McDonald scored a late point from the sideline to send Mayo through, I was hooked. Fast forward 2009, I came across Tom Hunt's *Sport and society in Victorian Ireland* and realised that sport history is as much about society as it is about sport. To say that the present thesis has been inspired by this particular work is an understatement.

In my journey, the role and assistance provided by librarians and archivists has been crucial and I am indebted to them. Access to the archives of Trinity College was fundamental in mapping out the introduction and development of modern sport in Dublin, and Aisling Lockhart and Dr Jane Maxwell have considerably facilitated my work in that regard. Acknowledgments must also go to Sheyeda Allen, Patricia Downing, Ellaine Harrington, and Mary Lombard of the Special Collections & Archives in University College Cork. I spent many months there rummaging through microfilms, and a kind word every morning certainly made the task easier.

My supervisor, Professor Paul Rouse, was the greatest support to bring this work to completion. His enthusiasm about sport history has been contagious, his professionalism an example, and his encouragements much welcomed when I seemed overwhelmed. The comments and insights provided by the members of my Research Studies Panel, Associate Professor Ivar McGrath and Associate Professor Conor Mulvagh, have also been greatly appreciated and contributed to enrich this research. I am grateful to Dr Conor Curran who gave me on several occasions the opportunity to publicly present my work, and reserve my warmest

thanks for Dr Conor Heffernan and Conor Murray. They have been steady and lively companions of research these past few years and their experience of academic life guided me on many occasions.

On a personal note, the unconditional support of my family was truly comforting. My wife, Karolina, was a rock to lean on. Very little could have been achieved without her understanding and ability to bring the best out of people. For this, I can't express enough gratitude. At last, being employed full-time in hospitality lengthened my studies by a few years but brought much-needed perspective. Historical research, as fastidious as it can be, compares in no way to grueling round-the-clock weekend shifts in a kitchen. For all the effort I put into this thesis, it has been a labour of love.

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List of Abbreviations

AAA	Amateur Athletic Association
ARA	Amateur Rowing Association
DAAC	Dublin Amateur Athletic Club
DAFC	Dublin Association Football Club
DMP	Dublin Metropolitan Police
DUAC	Dublin University Athletic Club
DUAFC	Dublin University Association Football Club
DUBC	Dublin University Boat Club
DUCC	Dublin University Cricket Club
DUFC	Dublin University Football Club
DUHC	Dublin University Hurley Club
DURC	Dublin University Rowing Club
FA	Football Association
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GPO	General Post Office
GSWR	Great Southern and Western Railway
IAAA	Irish Amateur Athletic Association
IARA	Irish Amateur Rowing Association
ICAC	Irish Champion Athletic Club
ICU	Irish Cycling Association
IFU	Irish Football Union
INHSC	Irish National Hunt Steeplechase Committee
IPP	Irish Parliamentary Party
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood

IRFU	Irish Rugby Football Union
RDS	Royal Dublin Society
RIC	Royal Irish Constabulary
RFU	Rugby Football Union

Introduction

> In 1780 no one could have predicted the shape of leisure a century ahead. In 1880, by contrast, the lines of development are clear. Since then the time and money available for leisure have increased, technology has changed the form of leisure activities, and there has been a growth of the leisure industries and of governmental provision of facilities. But there is nothing in the leisure of today which was not visible in 1880.[1]

During the nineteenth century, and especially after 1850, the leisure habits of Dubliners were totally transformed. Their games were codified into sports that are, for the large part, still played today. The *ad hoc* or traditional features of their pastimes were rationalised into clubs and associations, many of which still exist. Their recreations were commercialised by entrepreneurs who built stadiums, public houses, or shops that are in some instance still in trade. From the local, leisure became nationalised, and then internationalised. The sporting world in 1900 would have been unrecognisable to a person born a century earlier. Later nineteenth-century Dubliners, on the other hand, would have been familiar with the core attributes of our current sport system. However important twentieth century evolutions might have been, they were, as Hugh Cunningham pointed out, rather a matter of degree than nature. The change that had taken place in the decades after 1850 fundamentally affected the way people played or watched games, and what it meant to them. This was nothing short of a 'sporting revolution' and how it unfolded in Dublin is the topic of this thesis. The extent of these evolutions is assessed in this research and rooted in ongoing economic and social developments.

The perspective offered here firmly connects the changes in leisure and sporting habits with the transformation of Dublin as a commercial and administrative centre, connected to both its Irish hinterland and to the British imperial power. Sport

[1] Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c.1780-c.1880* (Oxford, 1980), pp 14-5.

reciprocally contributed to shape Dublin and Dubliners. By 1900, much of the population enjoyed it in one form or another, as player, spectator, or well-wisher. For those who showed little interest, there was no escaping the increased press coverage, street advertising, and throngs of spectators going to and from football matches or horseraces. A substantial economic sector had developed, and numerous lasting sporting infrastructures began to define the city's landscape. Essentially associated with pleasure, sport also assumed masculine, martial, and imperialist or nationalist values. It increasingly became a vector of personal identity, articulated around class, gender, creed, or age, and many of those who engaged with it became associated with such identities.

Inextricable from such evolutions were ongoing developments in Britain. The Industrial Revolution loomed large and provided the economic engine to sweeping societal changes from the mid-eighteenth century.[2] With it came the urbanisation and capitalisation of Western societies as well as the growing role of the state. The development of national education, the popular press, and fast and affordable modes of transport were also key to the emergence of modern sports in England and their subsequent spread throughout Britain, Ireland, and the rest of the British empire.[3] They were indissociable too from the rise to prominence of the middle classes and of their value system in England.[4] The expanding intellectual world of the eighteenth century paved the way for the expansion of associational culture and the sprouting of clubs which became the cornerstone of new forms of leisure.[5] Concurrent with the bureaucratisation of sociability was the rise of a new moral ethic and the wish by many (but not all) within the middle classes to see 'improving' recreations prevail over the hedonistic features of early modern leisure.[6] Ultimately,

[2] Wray Vamplew, 'Sport and industrialization: an economic interpretation of the changes in popular sport in nineteenth-century England', in J.A. Mangan, *Pleasure, profit, proselytism: British culture and sport at home and abroad 1700-1914* (London, 1988), pp 7-17.
[3] Richard Holt, 'Ireland and the birth of modern sport', in Mike Cronin, William Murphy and Paul Rouse (eds), *The Gaelic Athletic Association 1884-2009* (Dublin, 2009), p. 34.
[4] John Lowerson, *Sport and the English middle classes 1870-1914* (Manchester, 1993), pp 17-26; Mike Huggins, 'Second-class citizens? English middle-class culture and sport, 1850–1910: a reconsideration', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xvii, no. 1 (2000), pp 1-35.
[5] T.C. Barnard, 'Sites and rites of associational life in eighteenth century Ireland', in Jennifer Kelly and R.V Comerford (eds), *Associational culture in Ireland and abroad* (Dublin, 2010), pp 11-26; James Kelly and Martyn J. Powell, 'Introduction', in James Kelly and Martyn J. Powell (eds), *Clubs and societies in eighteenth century Ireland* (Dublin, 2010), pp 20-1.
[6] Peter Bailey, *Leisure and class in Victorian England: rational recreation and the contest for control, 1830-1885* (London, 1978), pp 47-67.

the doctrine of amateurism reflected these reforming wishes, and by its very exclusive nature, also anchored modern sport into the class system governing nineteenth-century Britain.[7]

Sport in Ireland largely came to reflect evolutions seen in England. Like its neighbour, the country witnessed sweeping socio-economic changes which drastically altered the living conditions and aspirations of the population.[8] The Irish and the British shared a common government, a common market and a marked taste for modern consumption and leisure, albeit to a varying degree. Unlike its neighbour, however, Ireland experienced a significant population decline which manifested itself in the decades following the Great Famine of the late 1840s. The failure of Ireland to industrialise its economy was another important contrast. Save for Belfast, none of the great conurbations which had sprouted in the English Midlands, Lancashire, Yorkshire, or Clydeside, and which proved so essential to the mass commercialisation of sport, developed in Ireland. Ireland was nonetheless at the centre of the growing British empire.[9] Its men served as soldiers, missionaries, traders, or administrators. The regular visits of colonial sport teams or theatrical troupes, as well as the holding of industrial exhibitions, firmly linked Ireland to the colonial centre. At the same time, the country was never totally integrated within the imperial mission and retained a colonial status in several respects. Irish emigrants in Britain were subject to derision and stigmatisation.[10] At home, doubts about Irish loyalty necessitated a heavy militarisation of the country as well as specific institutions in Dublin Castle. This unequal relationship meant that Ireland was an integral part of the United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland after 1800, yet was still firmly economically and socially subjugated to its neighbour.

The lack of industrialisation ensured a slower degree of urbanisation, and the ambiguous position of Ireland within the British empire contributed to fashion its

[7] Neil Wigglesworth, *The evolution of English sport* (London, 1996), pp 85-90.
[8] Joseph Lee, *The modernisation of Irish society* (Dublin, 1973), pp 1-35; Cormac Ó Gráda, *Ireland: a new economic history 1780-1939* (Oxford, 1994), pp 236-50, 270-2; Liam Kennedy, *Unhappy the land: the most oppressed people ever, the Irish?* (Dublin, 2016), pp 53-68; Thomas E. Jordan, 'The quality of life in Victorian Ireland, 1831-1901', *New Hibernia Review*, iv, no. 1 (2000), pp 106-121.
[9] Jill C. Bender, 'Ireland and empire', in Richard Bourke and Ian McBride (eds), *The Princeton history of modern Ireland* (Princeton, 2016), pp 343-60.
[10] Roger Swift, 'The outcast Irish in the British Victorian city: problems and perspectives', *Irish Historical Studies*, xxv, no. 99 (1987), pp 264-76; Michael De Nie, 'British conceptions of Ireland and Irishness in the nineteenth century', *History Compass*, iii (2005), pp 1-6.

unique sporting culture by 1900.[11] Rising living standards, high levels of education and bureaucratisation, a cheap popular press, and comprehensive transport networks ensured that a country that was overwhelmingly rural could, and did, experience a sporting revolution. Games which originated in England were wholly adopted, first among the local anglophile landed elite or public-school educated students, and then progressively by the rest of the population. As the imperialist tone of British society grew more evident in the last third of the century, so too became their sports, and especially cricket and rugby. In Ireland, the simultaneous politicisation of the population took a nationalist rather than imperialist form for the majority and precipitated the emergence of a native athletic movement in 1884: the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). This latter came to embody Irish specificities and paradoxes. An avowedly nationalist and rural body catering for 'native' sports, it nevertheless adapted the British sport revolution into an Irish context and adopted some of the middle-class values that underpinned it.[12]

Within Irish sport, Dublin occupied a central position throughout the nineteenth century which was barely dented by the emergence of Belfast as the first home of Irish soccer and golf in the 1880s. As the capital and the seat of the British presence in Ireland, Dublin was the interface through which fashions were imported and then spread to the country. Despite its unimpressive economic and demographic growth, the city undisputedly remained the country's administrative and commercial centre. A modern transport and retail network developed there first, which in turn eased the adoption of British leisure and sporting habits by the substantial middle class living in the city and its suburbs. The role of the prestigious and elitist Dublin University (equally referred to as Trinity College throughout this thesis) in fostering public-school games and their values from the 1840s to the 1870s, through returning students or emulation, was essential too. Not all sports and games were introduced or created first in Dublin, but it was there that a significant and lasting network of clubs, administration, and competitions first appeared and then spread to the rest of the country.

[11] Holt, 'Ireland and the birth of modern sport', p. 45.
[12] Mike Cronin, 'Fighting for Ireland, playing for England? The nationalist history of the Gaelic Athletic Association and the English influence on Irish sport', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xv, no. 3 (1998), pp 47-55.

Literature review

The preponderant role of Dublin in the evolution of nineteenth-century Irish sport, and conversely the importance of sport to the development of the city, has produced remarkably little scholarly research. Such scant appreciation is at odds with the rapid growth of Irish sport history, its acceptance as a legitimate field of research in the past two decades, and its recent systematic inclusion in collective undertakings.[13] With the notable exception of W. F. Mandle's research in the 1980s on the links between the GAA and Irish revolutionary movements, and the reassessment of his work by Paul Rouse and Mike Cronin in the 1990s, sport history remained an oddity in Irish academic circles until the latter's publication of *Sport and nationalism in Ireland* in 1999.[14] Since then, however, numerous studies have considerably improved our knowledge of Ireland's sporting past. Early historiography, notably by John Sudgen, Alan Bairner, and Cronin kept a political lens yet reassessed the links between sport and nationalism in the formation of modern Irish society.[15] Social studies of individual sports have since refined our comprehension of their emergence and growth in Ireland, as well as the forces that supported them. Fergus D'Arcy led the way with the institutional history of the Turf Club and has since been joined by Neal Garnham's work on Irish soccer, Brian Griffin's extensive publications on cycling, and Rouse's interest in Gaelic games.[16]

[13] The *New History of Ireland* series, published in the 1980s, includes music but not sport. Publications in the 2010s, however, deal with sport and popular leisure. See for example Gillian Doherty, 'Early history of the Gaelic Athletic Association, 1884-91', in Donnchadh Ó Corráin and Tomás O'Riordan (eds), *Ireland, 1870-1914: coercion and conciliation* (Dublin, 2010), pp 127-40; William Murphy, 'Associational life, leisure and identity since 1740' in Eugenio Biagini and Mary Daly (eds), *The Cambridge social history of modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), pp 383-401; James Kelly, 'Sport and recreation in the eighteenth and nineteenth century', in James Kelly (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Ireland, volume III: 1750-1880* (Cambridge, 2018), pp 489-516; Paul Rouse, 'Popular culture in Ireland, 1880-2016', in Thomas Bartlett (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Ireland, volume IV: 1880 to the present* (Cambridge, 2018), pp 577-603.

[14] William F. Mandle, 'The IRB and the beginnings of the Gaelic Athletic Association', *Irish Historical Studies*, xx, no. 80 (1977), pp 418-438; William F. Mandle, *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish nationalist politics* (London, 1987); Paul Rouse, 'The politics of culture and sport in Ireland: a history of the G.A.A. ban on foreign games 1884–1971: part one: 1884–1921', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, x, no. 3 (1993), pp 333-360; Mike Cronin, 'Enshrined in blood the naming of Gaelic Athletic Association grounds and clubs', *The Sports Historian*, xviii, no. 1 (1998), pp 90-104; Mike Cronin, 'Sport and a Sense of Irishness', *Irish Studies Review*, iii, no. 9 (1994), pp 13-17; Mike Cronin, *Sport and nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic games, soccer and Irish identity since 1884* (Dublin, 1999).

[15] John Sugden and Alan Bairner, *Sport, sectarianism and society in a divided Ireland* (Leicester, 1993); Neal Garnham, 'Sport history: the cases of Britain and Ireland stated', *Journal of Sport History*, xxx1, no. 2 (2004), pp 139-44.

[16] Fergus D'Arcy, *Horses, lords and racing men – the Turf Club 1790-1990* (Kildare, 1991); Neal Garnham, *Association football and society in pre-partition Ireland* (Belfast, 2004); Brian Griffin,

More recent studies by Sean Reid and Conor Heffernan on cricket and physical culture respectively further added to the growing body of work being published.[17] A second strand of sport studies stemmed from the publication by Tom Hunt of *Sport and society in Victorian Ireland*, in 2008.[18] His case study of Westmeath, where local trends are set within an Irish and British frame, is the direct inspiration behind the present thesis and has previously been imitated by Conor Curran in Donegal, Pat Bracken in Tipperary, and Thomas Hayes in Limerick.[19] Liam O'Callaghan, Richard McElligott and David Toms, with respective studies on rugby in Munster, Gaelic games in Kerry, and soccer in Munster, have married the two traditions to some extent.[20] As our understanding of Irish sport history grows, its complexities and nuances clearly appear and have been the subject of two major monographs by James Kelly and Rouse. Both anchored the development of sport since the early seventeenth century into their social, cultural and economic contexts and provide the essential background to further studies in the field.[21] At the same time, a wealth of scholarly studies have taken a thematic approach. Important publications for the 125th anniversary of the GAA, for example, dealt with the media, amateurism, or pre-codified forms of Gaelic games.[22] The role of social class in archery, cycling, Gaelic games, or golf has subsequently been discussed by Griffin, Hunt and Roisín Higgins.[23] Garnham touched upon rugby and empire.[24] Book chapters by Martyn

Cycling in Victorian Ireland (Dublin, 2006), Paul Rouse, *The hurlers, the first All-Ireland championship and the making of modern hurling* (London, 2018).

[17] Sean Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland 1848-1878: a social history' (PhD Thesis, University of Huddersfield, 2014); Conor Heffernan, *The history of physical culture in Ireland* (London, 2020).

[18] Tom Hunt, *Sport and society in Victorian Ireland, the case of Westmeath* (Cork, 2008).

[19] Thomas Hayes, 'From ludicrous to logical: the transformation of sport in North Munster, 1850-1890' (PhD thesis, University of Limerick, 2009), Conor Curran, *The development of sport in Donegal, 1880-1935* (Cork, 2015); Pat Bracken, *The growth of sport in County Tipperary, 1840-1880* (Cork, 2018).

[20] Liam O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster: a social and cultural history* (Cork, 2011); Richard McElligott, *Forging a kingdom: the GAA in Kerry 1884-1934* (Cork, 2013); David Toms, *Soccer in Munster: a social history*, 1877-1937 (Cork, 2015).

[21] James Kelly, *Sport in Ireland 1600-1840* (Dublin, 2014); Paul Rouse, *Sport & Ireland* (Oxford, 2015).

[22] Mike Cronin *et al*., *The Gaelic Athletic Association*; Dónal McAnallen, David Hassan and Roddy Hegarty (eds), *The evolution of the GAA: Ulaidh, Éire agus Eile* (Belfast, 2009).

[23] Brian Griffin, 'Cycling and gender in Victorian Ireland', *Éire-Ireland*, xli, no. 1&2 (2006), pp 213-41; Brian Griffin, 'The Big House at play: archery as an elite pursuit from the 1830s to the 1870s', in Ciaran O Neill (ed), *Irish elites in the Nineteenth Century* (Dublin, 2013), pp 153-71; Tom Hunt, 'The GAA: social structure and associated clubs' in Cronin *et al.*, *The Gaelic Athletic Association*, pp 183-202; Roisín Higgins '"The hallmark of pluperfect respectability": the early development of golf in Irish society', *Éire-Ireland*, xlviii, no. 1-2 (2013), pp 15-31.

[24] Neal Garnham, 'Rugby and empire in Ireland; Irish reactions to colonial rugby tours before 1914', *Sport in History*, xxiii, no. 1 (2003), pp 107-14.

Powell and Kelly contextualised the rise of associational culture in eighteenth-century Ireland.[25] More recently Deirdre Raftery and Catriona Delaney have highlighted the gendered nature of children's physical education and McElligott discussed the role of sport in forging a masculine ethos for Ireland's youth.[26]

Within this exponential body of work, the dearth of studies on nineteenth-century urban centres stands out and reinforces the value of this research. Some insights are found in Garnham's study of soccer in the country and its rapid development in Belfast. William Nolan similarly offers a study of the GAA in Dublin since 1884.[27] Donal O'Sullivan produced, too, an history of sport in Cork which focused on nineteenth-century developments.[28] This remains too little as, for example, the British sport historiography has specifically located the sweeping transformation of leisure habits within industrialising and urbanising patterns.[29] Belfast and Dublin were the two Irish urban centres that established an industrial, commercial, or administrative structure akin to the largest British cities, yet neither has yet generated the academic consideration it deserves.

Conversely, the historiography of nineteenth-century Dublin has largely been oblivious to sporting matters. Maurice Craig's publication of *Dublin 1660-1860* in 1952 marks perhaps the first scholarly study of the city yet remains essentially an architectural history.[30] In the 1980s, Mary Daly rose as the prominent social and economic historian of Dublin and *The deposed capital*, published in 1984, remains to this day the quintessential introduction to the Victorian city.[31] The themes she laid out have since been widely delved into. Stefanie Jones, Séamas Ó Maitiú, and more recently James Murphy comprehensively dealt with the administration and

[25] James Kelly and Martyn J. Powell, *Clubs and societies in eighteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2010).
[26] Deirdre Rafferty and Catriona Delaney, '"Un-Irish and un-Catholic": sports, physical education and girls' schooling', *Irish Studies Review*, xxvii, no. 3 (2019), pp 328-35; Richard McElligott, '"Boys indifferent to the manly sports of their race": nationalism and children's sport in Ireland, 1880–1920', *Irish Studies Review*, xxvii, no. 3 (2019), pp 344-61.
[27] William Nolan, Jim Wren, Marcus De Búrca, and David Gorry (eds), *The Gaelic Athletic Association in Dublin 1884-2000* (Dublin, 2005).
[28] Donal O'Sullivan, *Sport in Cork: a history* (Dublin, 2010).
[29] Neil Tranter, *Sport, economy and society in Britain 1750-1914* (Cambridge, 1998), pp 3-12; Emma Griffin, 'Popular culture in industrializing England', *The Historical Journal*, xlv, no. 3 (2002), pp 619-35. For the United States, see Steven Riess, *Sport in industrial America 1850-1920* (2013, 2nd edition).
[30] Maurice Craig, *Dublin 1660-1860* (Dublin, 1952).
[31] Mary Daly, *Dublin, the deposed capital: a social and economic history 1860-1914* (Cork, 1984).

municipal politics of the city and its suburbs.[32] Dublin's chronic housing and health crises have been assessed by Jacinta Prunty and the rise of the city centre as a commercial hub and shopping destination has been highlighted by Joseph Brady and Stephanie Rains.[33] Several other themes attracted scholarly attention. A cultural history by Siobhan Kilfeather naturally emphasises architectural, literary, and cultural changes, while H. A. Gilligan's study of the port focuses on industrial and institutional developments.[34] People's lives have been the subject of several studies. Robert McDowell looked at gentlemen's clubs, Tony Farmar at middle-class experiences, and the study of hospitals by Gary A. Boyd opened a window on the Dublin demi monde.[35] Several works stand out by their scope and ambition, chief among them *The making of Dublin city*, whose seven volumes present a long and wide-ranging overview of the city since medieval times yet essentially insist on twentieth-century developments.[36] This imbalance was corrected by David Dickson, a specialist of early modern Ireland, in *The making of a capital city*, which currently stands as the central reference work on Dublin since early seventeenth century.[37] Because it remains largely outside the remit of their specialties, none of the reference works cited above has touched upon the development of a modern sporting infrastructure in Dublin in a meaningful way, nor have they assessed the role of games and pastimes in Dubliners' lives. Since 1938, local historians have also had an outlet in the *Dublin Historical Record* and for all its invaluable insights into many aspects of the city, yet again sport and games remain distinctly under-researched.[38]

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[32] Jones, Stefanie, 'Dublin reformed: the transformation of the municipal governance of a Victorian city, 1840-1860' (PhD Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2001); Séamas Ó Maitiú, *Dublin's suburban towns 1834-1930* (Dublin, 2003), James H Murphy, *The politics of Dublin Corporation, 1840-1900: from reform to expansion* (Dublin, 2020).

[33] Jacinta Prunty, *Dublin slums, 1800-1925: a study in urban geography* (Dublin, 1998); Joseph Brady, 'The heart of the city: commercial Dublin, c.1890-1915', in Joseph Brady and Anngret Simms, *Dublin through space and time (c. 900-1900)* (Dublin, 2001), pp 282-340; Stephanie Rains, *Commodity culture and social class in Dublin 1850-1916* (Dublin, 2010).

[34] Siobhán Kilfeather, *Dublin: a cultural and literary history* (Dublin, 2005); H.A. Gilligan, *A history of the port of Dublin* (Dublin, 1988).

[35] Robert McDowell, *Land & learning: two Irish clubs* (Dublin, 1993); Tony Farmar, *Privileged lives: a social history of middle-class Ireland 1882-1989* (Dublin, 2010); Gary A. Boyd, *Dublin, 1745-1922: hospitals, spectacle and vice* (Dublin, 2006).

[36] The two volumes by Gary Boyd and Joseph Brady and Anngret Simms have been consulted for this thesis. The five other volumes deal with the twentieth century.

[37] David Dickson, *Dublin, the making of a capital city* (Dublin, 2014).

[38] With noteworthy exceptions, see Michael Killeen, 'Harry Reynolds world cycling champion', *Dublin Historical Record*, xli, no. 2 (1988), pp 70-81; Fergus D'Arcy, 'The Kingstown races', *Dublin Historical Record*, xlv, no. 1 (1992), p. 55-64; Maighréad Ní Mhurchadha, 'Two hundred men at tennis sport in

The contribution of this research is thus dual. Influences from imperial London, industrial Britain, and rural Ireland fashioned nineteenth-century Dublin sport. Its unicity deserves more than passing attention or inclusion within a national frame only. This research is also a history of Dublin and Dubliners. How people chose to occupy their leisure time was indissociable from the social, economic, and political context in which it took place, as Rains has convincingly shown with regard to consumption and shopping in *Commodity culture and social class in Dublin*. Turning to sport specifically, the expansion of retailing and commercially run stadiums revealed the rise of consumerist attitudes as much as legislation illustrated the assertion of public powers over space and behaviours. The geographic spread of clubs matched the pattern of suburban expansion, the relegation of women to a spectating role betrayed imbalanced gender relations, and the socio-economic profile of sportsmen highlighted the city's social stratification. Through the lens of sport, this research unveils what it was like to live in Dublin, what were the passions of Dubliners, and what mattered to them. With it comes a reassessment of nineteenth-century 'dear dirty Dublin' as there was more to it than the doom and gloom of acute poverty, loss of political power, and unkind comparisons with the majesty of the classical city.[39]

Methodology and structure

The wide-ranging nature of a thesis on sport in Dublin in the nineteenth century needs boundaries which have voluntarily been inclusive rather than strictly observed. The term sport, for one, is not easily defined and took on various meanings through the years.[40] In the early nineteenth century, it meant the field sports enjoyed by the elite.[41] William Maxwell's *Wild sports of the West of Ireland*

North Dublin 1600-1760', *Dublin Historical Record*, lxi, no. 1 (2008), pp 87-106; Bernadine Ruddy, 'Clontarf Baths and Assembly Rooms', *Dublin Historical Record*, lxii, no. 1 (2009), pp 27-35.

[39] For Rains, 'the evidence shows that, from at least the end of the Great Famine, Dublin *always* had a thriving middle-class population', see Rains, *Commodity culture*, p. 3. See also Tony Farmar, *Privileged lives*; Mary Daly, Mona Hearn, and Peter Pearson (eds), *Dublin's Victorian houses* (Dublin, 1998); Michael Barry, *Victorian Dublin revealed: the remarkable legacy of nineteenth century Dublin* (Dublin, 2011).

[40] Ross McKibbin, 'Sport history: status, definitions and meanings', *Sport in History*, xxi, no. 2 (2011), pp 167-74.

[41] Huggins, *The Victorians and sport* (London, 2004), ix.

(1832) is about angling, hunting and shooting.[42] Such a definition retained currency well into the century. Bernard Fitzpatrick's *Irish Sport and Sportsmen* (1878), for example, found only space for hunting and steeplechasing.[43] Sports, in its plural form, were also a condescending synonym for the games, amusements, or pastimes enjoyed by the population at large. Such 'rural sports' were ill-defined but usually involved dancing, sack racing, climbing the greasy pole, or donkey races.[44] From the 1850s, sport increasingly referred to 'modern sport'. That is, the codified games that put emphasis on physical exertion, skill, organisation, competition, and usually involved a certain number of players or spectators.[45] This research does not adhere to a strict definition of what is sport and what is not, but instead looks at how people played, what it meant to them, and how Irish society in the nineteenth century affected these forms of play.

Likewise the temporal and spatial boundaries of this thesis are flexibly understood. Timewise, this thesis encompasses the whole nineteenth century. As no specific date stands out to fittingly inaugurate the period, elements of latter eighteenth-century history have been included for clarity. Conversely, the revival of militant nationalism in the latter 1890s and the subsequent hardening of the politicisation of sport have been touched upon but largely fall outside the scope of this study. County Dublin provides the geographical setting and encompasses three specific areas. The city lay within the municipal borough boundaries as defined in 1840 and is roughly delimitated by the Royal Canal on its northern side and the Grand Canal on its southern edge. The 'suburbs' refers to the nine townships created between 1834 and 1878. This corresponds to the immediate suburban belt (Clontarf, Drumcondra, Kilmainham, Rathmines, Pembroke) and the southern seaside residential towns and villages of Blackrock, Kingstown, Dalkey and Killiney. Bray, lying further south in County Wicklow, has only occasionally been included even though its social and economic development presented more resemblance to suburban Dublin than to its neighbouring countryside. The third area, the countryside, covers the rest of the

[42] William Maxwell, *Wild sports of the West with legendary tales and local sketches* (London, 1832).
[43] Bernard Fitzpatrick, *Irish sport and sportsmen* (Dublin, 1878).
[44] For example at Finglas on May Day 1828. See *Saunders's News-Letter*, 2 May 1828.
[45] Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, ix; Brailsford, *Sport, time, and society: the British at play* (London, 1991), xii; Guttman, *From ritual to record: the nature of modern sports* (New York, 2004, 2nd edition), pp 5-12.

county. In hunting and horseracing, parts of County Kildare and County Meath have been included within Dublin as they corresponded to the district of the Ward Union Hunt, a hunting pack which originated in Dublin in the 1840s. Racecourses at Dunboyne, Fairyhouse, or Ashbourne (County Meath) which were located on the lands hunted by the Ward Hunt have accordingly been included within Dublin horseracing and so was Confey Castle in Leixlip (County Kildare), which was owned in the 1850s by William Robinson, who resided and had his business interests in the city.

A quantitative approach has been taken whenever possible. This involved the systematic consultation of contemporary newspapers of various political allegiances to record combinations and players alike. Most, but not all, of the coverage in the first part of the century was provided by *Saunders's News-Letter* and the nationalist *Freeman's Journal*, which were later joined by the conservative *Dublin Daily Express* (1851), *Irish Times* (1859), or *Irish Sportsman* (1870-94), as well as by the nationalist *Sport* (1880) and *Irish Daily Independent* (1891). Because the notion of 'club' is difficult to apprehend in the nineteenth century, the term 'combination' has been preferred and refers to any team or club that has been reported in the press, archives, or secondary sources as playing a game. It does not differentiate between long-established, highly bureaucratised clubs with large membership and important lists of fixtures such as the Dublin University Cricket Club (DUCC) and *ad hoc* combinations who adopted a geographical or metaphorical name but failed to take part in more than one game. Giving a specific name to a combination and corresponding with the press were two symbolic steps that differentiated combinations from mere gatherings of friends. Hence scratch teams have deliberately not been included because of their inherently temporary nature and because their players were too often affiliated with another combination. Mr Jones's (1860) or Mr Scott's (1859) cricket elevens were, for example, teams selected from the Holyville Park School Cricket Club or the DUCC. Regimental teams have not been accounted for due to inconsistent coverage throughout the century and imprecise nomenclature, which ultimately prevent accurate quantification of the military involvement in sport. Despite the lack of data, this thesis acknowledges the large military participation in elite sports and athletics, as well as the crucial contribution of officers in fostering a cricket culture in the first part of the century or

the role of enlisted soldiers in the growth of association football from the 1880s, as will be seen in the last chapter. In horseracing, pony meetings have only been accounted from 1889 when a lasting and organised scene emerged in Dublin. In previous decades promoters or publicans had occasionally staged such races but this thesis considers them to belong to the world of entertainment rather than sport. The capitalisation of the sport is largely seen in the increase in stakes, which is the money prize given to the winner of a race by the committee and advertised beforehand. This represents the added money brought into racing and not the total gains, as sweepstakes (races where the prize is made up from starters' contributions) were still commonplace.

Such overreliance on the contemporary press is not without issue and leaves the researcher at the mercy of editorial choices. Most often the political bias ensured that certain sports engendered more attention than others and distorted their relative importance. Such was the case of Gaelic games, which received minimal coverage from the conservative press. The personal nature of newspapers also influenced their outputs. The *Irish Sportsman* and *Celtic Times*, for example, heavily bore the mark of their respective owners, James Dunbar and Michael Cusack, and reflected their preferences and agendas.[46] Finally, the social bias was the most pernicious. Nineteenth-century newspapers were essentially middle-class institutions which were tailored to suit a middle-class readership and were enmeshed in a web of political and commercial imperatives.[47] Sport historians thus face the obstacle of a large underreporting of working-class sport and casual forms of play.[48] Improvement in literacy rates, production systems, and the abolition of the stamp duty on newspapers in 1855 greatly contributed to the large growth in newspapers (and their pagination) available in Dublin in the nineteenth century. Comparisons between decades must thus take into consideration the rapid increase in the number of newspaper columns devoted to sport, especially from the 1870s.

[46] Paul Rouse, 'Michael Cusack: sportsman and journalist', in Cronin *et al*., *The Gaelic Athletic Association*, pp 55-9.
[47] Michael De Nie, *The eternal Paddy: Irish identity and the British press, 1798-1882* (Madison, 2004), pp 31-2.
[48] Most sporting reports in the press emanated from club secretaries. The likelihood that smaller or less organised clubs did not communicate their results is thus real. Games of a private nature taking place within schools, or Big Houses, likewise have probably been underreported, especially in the first three-quarters of the century.

These issues are partly attenuated by using archival material. The 1901 census was crucial to the socio-economic study of sportsmen at the turn of the twentieth century. The Ordnance Survey maps of 1847 and updates in the 1860s and 1880s have been essential to map out the building of sporting infrastructures in relation to the urban environment. Archives from clubs and sport associations that still survive are few and patchy and their proceedings were then usually well covered by friendly newspapers. The minutes of the Irish Rugby Football Union and Clontarf FC, however, give useful insight into the spread of rugby from Trinity College to the rest of the country and the dynamics of recruitment at local level. School archives, and notably their financial reports and school papers, provided the necessary material to assess with some accuracy the role of sport within these establishments. Most important perhaps in charting the introduction and development of several sports in Ireland were the archives of Trinity College, which have been extensively consulted. Such archival material, essentially produced by urban middle-class institutions, is however equally prone to social bias. Prison records or the reminiscences gathered by the National Folklore Commission in the latter 1930s offset such bias, yet only provided a succinct overview of working-class or rural pastimes.

The research undertaken follows a reconstructionist model, as opposed to the constructionist and deconstructionist approaches described by Alun Munslow and Douglas Booth.[49] The orthodox stance of sport historians on methodology has been, and still is, a reliance on written primary sources to objectively 'reconstruct' the past and to do so without the predetermined theories or ideologies pertaining to constructivism. Deconstructionism, on the other hand, stemmed from postmodernism and the linguistic turn of the 1970s and relativises the weight of empiricism to bring out reflections of the past that are necessarily partial and fragmented. Identifying and categorising methodologies is an exercise that highlights differences rather than common ground and possibly falls into simplification and hierarchisation, as rightly pointed out by Allen Guttman.[50] No reconstructionist historian pretends to absolute objectivity nor to have unearthed *the* truth about the past. Likewise, many avail of sociological concepts and theoretical

[49] Alun Munslow, *The Routledge companion to sport history* (London, 2000), pp 5-10; Douglas Booth, *The field: truth and fiction in sport history* (London, 2005), pp 7-13.
[50] Allen Guttman, 'Straw men in imaginary boxes', *Journal of Sport History*, xxxii, no. 3 (2005), pp 395-6.

frameworks to ground their research into wider societal developments without adhering to meta-narratives or general theorisation.[51] The figurational sociology of Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, the Marxist-inspired hegemony theory of John Hargreaves, and the educational theory of athleticism promoted by J. A. Mangan have all provided insightful leads in the completion of this research, as did their detractors.[52] While acknowledging their contribution, the present thesis has found that a theoretical agenda has either proved too restrictive a framework or has failed to convincingly account for discrepancies between theory and facts. Instead, this thesis bases its conclusions on evidence found in the large amount of archival material or contemporary newspapers which has been consulted in the course of its completion. Such empirical research stands out in the numerous charts and tables and is intended to quantitatively support the arguments advanced.[53] Because of the shortcomings inherent in the overreliance on newspapers, the figures presented do not claim absolute exactitude. What the systematic recording of teams and players made possible, however, was the establishment of accurate trends. Applied consistently throughout the second part of the century, a picture of the development of modern sport in Dublin clearly emerges.

The chapters that follow are chronologically organised to convey best the nature and scope of changes in Dublin sport. The first chapter deals with the earlier part of the century. It analyses the sports and pastimes then played, their nature, whom they appealed to, and what forces underpinned them. Clearly distinguishable then was the burgeoning development of associational culture and commercialised leisure outlets among the elite, as well as the growing moral and legal repression of traditional and popular recreations. These twin evolutions gathered pace in the 1850s and 1860s and are central to the second chapter. Sport then became consistently organised through written rules and organisations and was availed of by a growing portion of the middle classes. These trends, observed for several

[51] Nancy L. Struna, 'Social history and sport', in Jay Coakley and Eric Dunning (eds), *Handbook of sport studies* (London, 2000), pp 188-91.
[52] Nobert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Quest for excitement: sport and leisure in the civilizing process* (Oxford, 1986), John Hargreaves, *Sport, power and culture: a social and historical analysis of popular sports in Britain* (Cambridge, 1986), J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian public school* (Cambridge, 1981).
[53] The influence of Wray Vamplew and Tom Hunt must be acknowledged in that respect. See Mike Cronin, 'What went wrong with counting? Thinking about sport and class in Britain and Ireland', *Sport in History*, xxix, no. 3 (2009), pp 392-404.

decades, then reached maturity in Dublin in the 1870s, which is the subject of the third chapter. The sweeping changes that then took place are seen through the lens of bureaucratisation, commercialisation, and internationalisation. By then, modern sport had been firmly implanted and witnessed a rapid democratisation from the 1880s onwards, which is analysed at length in the fourth chapter. Chapter five in turn complements the overview of sport in Dublin in the latter nineteenth century by anchoring sport into ongoing political, cultural, and social evolutions. If the underlying theme in each chapter fits a teleological narrative of the 'modernisation' of sport, nothing was ineluctable or predictable in the transformation of traditional and uncodified pastimes into bureaucratised sports.[54] The development of modern sports should rather be rooted in their own social and economic contexts, which did not always imply change, as will be seen in the conclusion.

[54] Nancy L. Struna, 'Reframing the direction of change in the history of sport', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xviii, no. 4 (2001), pp 1-15; Collins, *Sport in capitalist society: a short history* (Oxford, 2013), viii; Paul Rouse, 'The sporting world and the human heart: Ireland, 1880-1930', *Irish Studies Review*, xxvii, no. 3 (2019), p. 320.

Chapter One

Traditions and new models: 1800-1850

The great expansion of modern, formally organised, sport that happened in the second part of the nineteenth century has its roots in the mid-eighteenth century when social and economic changes brought by the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment promoted new forms of leisure that in time came to supersede older games. Before a new order became the norm, decades elapsed in which the Dublin sporting landscape presented a motley appearance where traditional pastimes co-existed with newly created, fashionable and socially exclusive sports. This chapter covers this period and initially provides an overview of the games and recreations partaken of by Dubliners, before considering the forces that underpinned change as the modern world of sport was created.

It is shown that the transition from a traditional to modern sporting scene was occasionally observed in late eighteenth century, gathered pace from the 1830s, and yet remained incomplete by mid-nineteenth century. By then elite and upper middle-class pastimes such as cricket, rowing, and sailing had clearly adopted bureaucratic structures which define modern sport. The transition from a private and ludicrous world of play towards a public, organised, and conspicuous sporting scene was also eased by the budding and small-scale commercial outlets which supplied sporting equipment and meeting venues, and conditioned by the mounting inference of the state in leisure matters. Supported by the increasingly influential middle class, legislation began to actively target popular gatherings, traditional fairs, violent pastimes, working-class betting, and redefined proper behaviours on public spaces. These were powerful agencies acting for change, yet it took decades before the transformation was complete as traditional forms of play could remain impervious to it. By 1850, the rise of associational culture, modern capitalism, and the heightened sense of class differentiation clearly and actively helped the emergence of formally organised sport among the Dublin elite and upper-middle class. It was

also equally clear that the bulk of the population still availed of older forms of leisure and that, despite their decline, such popular amusements were still the norm.

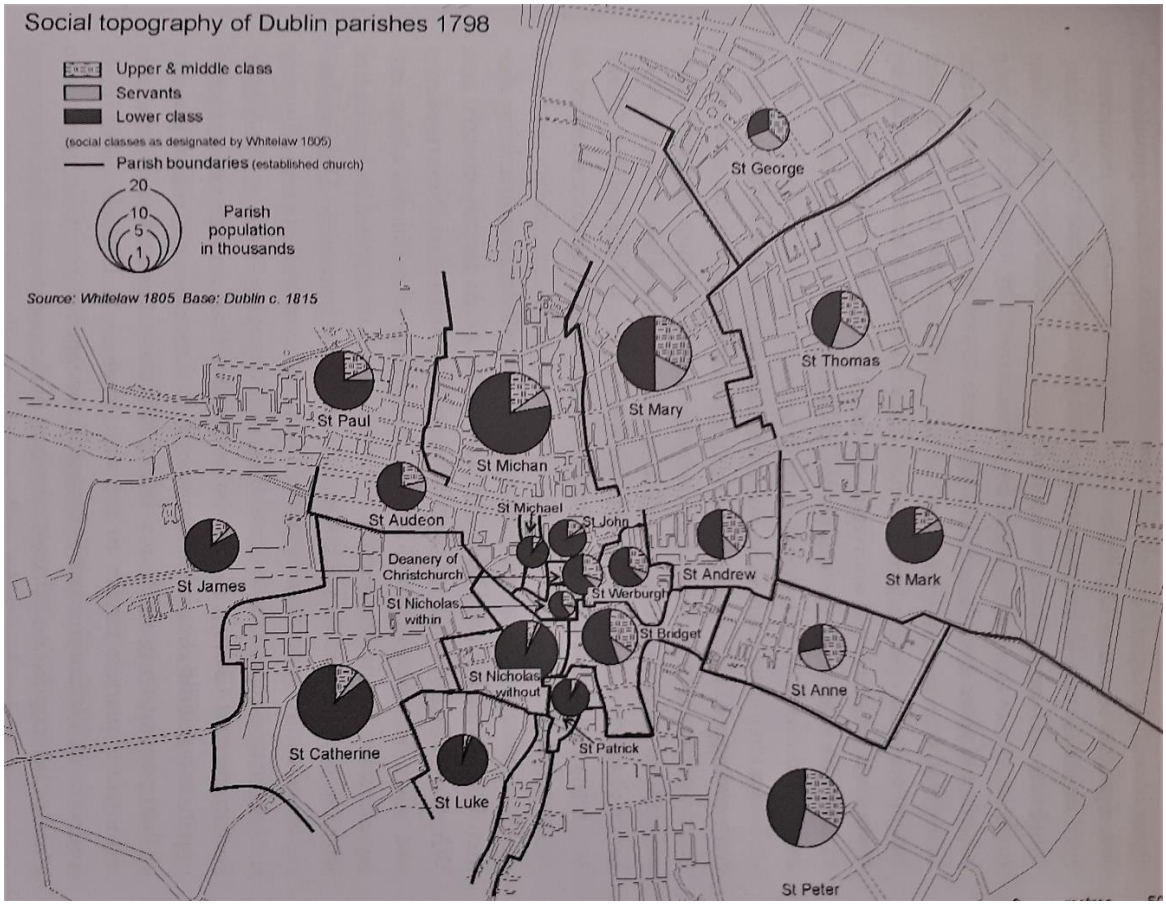
1- Dublin in the early nineteenth century

With 182,000 inhabitants in 1800, Dublin was among the ten most populated cities in Europe. Its medieval appearance had been utterly changed by an important financial and demographic expansion in the eighteenth century. The city was the mercantile heart of Ireland, territorially linked to its hinterland by the Liffey, canals and turnpikes roads, and maritimely to England through regular postal packet ships and a fast-developing port.[1] With an area of approximately two thousand acres, the city lay at the heart of an agricultural county of 150,000 inhabitants in 1821.[2] The nature of the soil and needs of the growing city determined the farming patterns of its immediate countryside. Near Dublin, dairy farming, market gardening and nurseries dominated and farms averaged thirty acres in size. In the western and northern parts of the county, larger farms (50 to 150 acres) increasingly focused on tillage.[3] Along the coast, fishing villages dominated but Dunleary (renamed Kingstown in 1821) gained importance from the 1820s as a postal harbour and seaside resort.[4] The southern part of the county was mountainous and made for poor farming ground. Elsewhere, the landscape was sprinkled with small towns, villages, and a dense network of country residences owned and inhabited by the local gentry.[5] The visual and physical proximity of the city to its rural surroundings was reinforced by fairs and markets as well as by the presence of cattle on the

[1] Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 228-30; Arnold Horner, 'Ireland's time-space revolution: improvements to pre-Famine travel', *History Ireland*, xv, no. 5 (2007), pp 22-3; Gilligan, *A history of the port of Dublin*, pp 124-31; Edward Wakefield, *An account of Ireland, statistical and political, vol. I* (London, 1812), pp 629, 664-5.
[2] Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland, comprising the several counties, cities, boroughs corporate, market, and post towns, parishes and villages* (London, 1840, 2nd edition), p. 522.
[3] R.A. Butlin, 'Agriculture in County Dublin in the late eighteenth century', *Studia Hibernica*, ix (1969), pp 95-102.
[4] Peter Pearson, *Dun Laoghaire – Kingstown* (Dublin, 1981), pp 43, 73-4.
[5] Joseph Archer, *Statistical survey of the county Dublin, with observations on the means of improvement* (Dublin, 1801), pp 97-109; Butlin, 'Agriculture in county Dublin', p. 101. Archer numbered at least 67 such residences outside the city.

streets and in the parks.[6] By 1800, butchers and dairymen still kept livestock which they had bought at the Smithfield cattle market and grazing herds were a feature of the Phoenix Park, a 1,750-acre enclosed park at the western end of the city which, although largely the preserve of the wealthy before 1800, became availed of for recreational purposes by the population at large in the nineteenth century.

Figure 1.1: Social topography of Dublin parishes, 1798.



Source: Edel Sheridan, *Living in the capital city*, p. 147.

Dublin was a city of contrasts and opposed dynamics. A clear east–west division defined recent urban developments from its medieval core and emphasised the great disparity in wealth and status between their respective inhabitants (figure 1.1). In the early eighteenth century, politician and land developer Luke Gardiner

[6] Vandra Costello, 'Public spaces for recreations in Dublin, 1660-1760', *Garden History*, xxxv, no. 2 (2007), pp 164-5; Archer, *Statistical survey*, pp 51-2.

acquired several plots of land east of Capel street and over the following century he and his family developed it into a fashionable area.[7] Further upmarket residential expansion then took place from the middle of the century in the estate of Viscount Fitzwilliam, east of St Stephen's Green.[8] Large streets, promenades, and parks made for picturesque neighbourhoods which became highly prized by the upper classes. The grandeur of such areas contrasted with the sharp decline in status and wealth of the Liberties which followed the building of the new Custom House and Carlisle Bridge (O'Connell Bridge) in the 1790s and the ensuing delocalisation of Dublin's commercial hub downstream of the Liffey. The growth of residential segregation mirrored the high level of social inequalities. In the eight parishes where the middle and upper classes represented over thirty percent of the population, the average number of inhabitants per house stood at 10.4 and the density at 130 residents per acre. Conversely, in the eight parishes where the lower classes made up at least eighty percent of the population, these figures rose respectively to 13.3 inhabitants per house and over 195 residents per acre.[9] The poverty, overpopulation, and extreme distress which became synonymous with districts in the Liberties contrasted with the opulence of the newly laid streets on the eastern edge of the city.[10] Deep inequalities were likewise observed in rural areas. The manicured gardens of the gentry's residences and the 'thousands of small neat houses' were in contrast with the mud-wall cabins of cottiers who fed essentially on potatoes and milk.[11] High and growing rents forced many Catholic tenant farmers to become indebted and short leases encouraged intensive use of the land to the detriment of its improvement.[12] In between these extremes existed a large body of the population – skilled workers earned twice as much as labourers – whose situation above subsistence level was balanced by the risk of a reversal of fortune.[13]

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[7] Niall McCullough, *Dublin: an urban history – the plan of the city* (Dublin, 2007), pp 114-5; Edel Sheridan, 'Designing the capital city: Dublin c. 1660-1810', in Brady and Simms, *Dublin through space & time*, pp 91-100.
[8] Sheridan, 'Designing the capital city', pp 100-8.
[9] Figures drawn from James Whitelaw, *An essay on the population of Dublin, being the result of an actual survey taken in 1798, with great care and precision, and arranged in a manner entirely new* (Dublin, 1805), pp 14, 33-5.
[10] Whitelaw*, An essay on the population*, pp 50-7; Edel Sheridan, 'Living in the capital city: Dublin in the eighteenth century', in Brady and Simms, *Dublin through space & time*, pp 149-58.
[11] Archer, *A statistical survey*, pp 109-12.
[12] Butlin, 'Agriculture in County Dublin', pp 102-3.
[13] Fergus D'Arcy, 'Wages of Labourers in the Dublin Building Industry, 1667-1918', *Saothar*, xiv (1989), pp 20-1; Fergus D'Arcy, 'Wages of Skilled Workers in the Dublin Building Industry, 1667-

Those were precisely the men – for most women earned less and carried more household responsibilities – who had a marginal surplus of time and income to socialise, gamble, or attend horseracing meetings.[14]

Eighteenth-century Dublin was home to the Irish Parliament, the powers of which were delimitated by policymakers in London. The centralisation of state apparels in the early modern period and the growing impatience of the government with an unreliable Irish Parliament came to a head in the 1780s and 1790s when the ideals of the American and French Revolutions reached the island. The ensuing continental wars, the risk of French invasion, and a violent insurrection in 1798 throughout the country threatened Britain's integrity and pressed for the passing of the Act of Union (1800) which integrated the country within the United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland.[15] The British presence in Ireland thenceforth grew, especially in Dublin which had remained the administrative and military centre of the country. Even though the fears of anti-unionists – the exodus of the resident aristocracy, the weakening of its civic and artistic institutions, and an industrial collapse – were only partly realised, Dublin suffered the humiliation of being a 'deposed' capital reduced to the rank of regional centre.[16] The demise of the parliament, however flawed and corrupted it was, became the symbol of the loss of independence, and thereafter the maintenance or repeal of the Union defined and divided politics until its partial dismantlement in 1921. In this new order, Dublin occupied an ambiguous position. For the British government, the city was the capital of a country whose loyalty was uncertain to the point that its presence was reinforced through administrative or military personnel. For the Irish Catholic population, on the other hand, the Lord Lieutenant and Dublin Castle epitomised the English presence in Ireland, which was supported by an influential native Protestant minority against the wishes of the majority.

A religious schism underpinned the political divisions. Ireland was an overwhelmingly Catholic country with an important Presbyterian presence in north-

1918', *Saothar*, xv (1990), pp 25-6. Unskilled women and children earned however considerably less than labourers.

[14] Hugh Cunningham, *Time, work and leisure: life changes in England since 1700* (Manchester, 2014), pp 39-41.

[15] Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the Famine: 1798-1848* (Dublin, 1972), p. 30.

[16] Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 273-95; Jacinta Prunty, 'Improving the urban environment: public health and housing in nineteenth-century Dublin', in Brady and Simms, *Dublin through space and time*, p. 166.

east Ulster. Yet the wealth, land and tools of power were firmly in the hands of a Church of Ireland minority who held the reins of the Irish Parliament and benefited from the discriminative Penal Laws passed in the late seventeenth century. From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, Protestants in Dublin, who increasingly came to reside in the wealthier eastern districts, became outnumbered by Catholics, and by 1800 these latter made up around seventy percent of the city's population.[17] The Catholic demographic expansion coincided with the slow removal of sectarian legislation in the last quarter of the eighteenth century as the London government, then embroiled in wars in America and Europe, sought to appease a rising Catholic bourgeoisie while keeping in check an increasingly assertive Irish Parliament.[18] The integration of Ireland into the United Kingdom, however, initially marked a stop to further concessions and hardened religious issues. The Ascendancy, at first reluctant to relinquish its independence, found in the Union the guarantees of its protection. Conversely for Catholics, the disenchantment with it further added to religious grievances and opened the way for a popular mobilisation which merged political, religious and social concerns and was successfully harnessed by lawyer and gifted orator Daniel O'Connell in the 1820s.[19] The binary pattern of nineteenth-century Irish politics was set and permeated social interactions throughout the century: a minority Protestant elite sought to preserve the *status quo* whereas an increasingly politicised Catholic population pressed for reform. The religious rift reinforced the class divide, limited diversity, and weakened social cohesion. Because religion had become politicised, most issues were merged into communitarian postures and were apprehended as a zero-sum game. Dublin municipal politics was impacted. Following the 1840 Municipal Corporation Ireland Act, the hitherto staunchly Protestant Dublin Corporation became dominated by the Catholic middle class, who found there a chamber to ventilate national concerns, as

[17] Patrick Fagan, 'The population of Dublin in the eighteenth century with particular reference to the proportions of Protestants and Catholics', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an dá chultúr*, vi (1991), pp 141, 156.
[18] Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the Famine*, pp 42-5; D. George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland* (London, 1995, 3rd edition), pp 123-8.
[19] Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland: 1600-1972* (Dublin, 1988), pp 289-91; K. Theodore Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800, conflict and conformity* (London, 1999, 2nd edition), pp 16-9; Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, pp 132-49.

well as local ones.[20] The strong sense of civic pride and consciousness ingrained in the development of British industrial cities was consequently largely tuned down in nineteenth-century Dublin.[21]

This contrasted strikingly with the grandeur of later eighteenth-century improvements.[22] The tastefully arranged Gardiner and Fitzwilliam estates boasted promenades and parks (Rotunda, Mountjoy, Merrion and Fitzwilliam) which embellished their respective districts. A large-scale public endeavour, the Wide Street Commission, was established in 1758 to overhaul and remodel the city on a scale rarely seen elsewhere in Europe. It sought to modernise and give coherence to a city centre which had hitherto witnessed an anarchical and piecemeal development. New bridges and streets linked Sackville Mall (O'Connell Street), Trinity College, Parliament House, Dublin Castle, and Christchurch cathedral. On the edges of the city were built the Custom House and the Four Courts while circular roads running alongside the canals gave the city visual boundaries. The transformation of Dublin marked the apogee of absolutism in Ireland. It was a fitting tribute to the power, pride and confidence of the Ascendancy who had reigned supreme for over a century. After 1800, the scale and scope of public and private developments reflected the political and religious shifts. The delusions of grandeur of the capital city gave way to the utilitarianism of an administrative and regional centre.[23] Monumentalism ended with the opening of the General Post Office (GPO) in 1818 which also heralded a period of rapid improvements in communications. Technical developments and the need to further integrate Ireland into the United Kingdom provided the background to the opening of five railway terminuses in the city between 1834 and 1859. A second seawall (1824) and a new wharf (1834) enabled Dublin port to accommodate larger ships and to dramatically increase its output. Between 1786 and 1836, the total tonnage of vessels arriving in the port

[20] Stefanie Jones, 'Dublin reformed: the transformation of the municipal governance of a Victorian city, 1840-1860' (PhD Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2001), pp 63-8; Daly, *The deposed capital*, p. 208.
[21] Murphy, *The politics of Dublin Corporation*, pp 72-3; Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London, 1963), chapters 4 and 5; R.J. Morris and Richard Rodger, 'An introduction to British urban history 1820-1914', in R.J. Morris and Richard Rodger (eds), *The Victorian city: a reader in British urban history 1820-1914* (London, 1993), p. 37.
[22] For an overview, see Sheridan, *Designing the capital city*; McCullough, *Dublin: an urban history*, pp 134-45; Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 218-31; Maurice Craig, *Dublin 1660-1860*, pp 178-259.
[23] McCullough, *Dublin: an urban history*, p. 156; Brady, Joseph, 'Dublin at the turn of the century', in Brady and Simms, *Dublin through space and time*, p. 223; Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 287-95; Craig, *Dublin 1660-1860*, pp 291-306.

grew from 300,000 tons to 400,000 tons. By 1866, it had reached 1,400,000 tons.[24] Between 1798 and 1827, military barracks were opened on the outskirts of the city at Islandbridge, Inchicore (Richmond), Rathmines (Portobello), and Donnybrook (Beggar's Bush), partly as agents of coercion but essentially to recruit an imperial army. With the Royal Barracks in Oxmantown, between four and six thousand soldiers were based in Dublin in the early nineteenth century.[25] These men quickly integrated into Dublin circles as officers mingled with the local upper classes and enlisted soldiers bolstered all sort of trades near the barracks. Finally, a spurt in church construction, both Catholic and Protestant, reflected the evangelical revival of the early nineteenth century and also the arrival of Catholicism as an assertive political force in Ireland.[26]

The contrast between rich and poor, unionists and nationalists, Catholics and Protestants, or eighteenth-century opulence and nineteenth-century pragmatism shaped Dubliners' lives. So did many other things. The Union eased the importation of the commercialised British cultural model which was then rapidly expanding. As 'information was commodified, new forms of visual consumption emerged: natural history displays, freak shows, curiosities, magic lantern shows, vaudeville, ventriloquism and panoramas became increasingly popular.'[27] Success came to those who tapped into the growing middle-class market. The Theatre Royal, built in Hawkins Street in 1821, for example, engaged the international stars of the day and programmed comedies or melodramas.[28] Goods, fashions and ideas were imported from further afield and at a faster pace. For the wealthiest, variety and exoticism were not only on stage but in everyday life. Grocers stocked Souchong tea, cocoa

[24] Gilligan, *A history of the port of Dublin*, pp 89, 131.
[25] Henry Fairbrother, 'The British army presence in Dublin', *Dublin Historical Record*, lxx, no. 1 (2017), p. 71; Jacinta Prunty, 'Military barracks and mapping in the nineteenth century: sources and issues in Irish urban history', in Howard Clarke, Jacinta Prunty and Mark Hennessy (eds), *Surveying Ireland's past* (Dublin, 2004), p. 528; Whitelaw, *An essay on the population*, p. 15.
[26] Dickson, *Dublin*, p. 303; Desmond Keenan, *The Catholic Church in nineteenth-century Ireland – a sociological study* (Dublin, 1983), pp 115-21, 243; *Dublin Review*, li (1862), p. 340. Over two thousand Catholic churches were built in Ireland in the first part of the nineteenth century and between 1800 and 1862, the number of Church of Ireland churches grew by forty-five percent.
[27] Niamh O'Sullivan, 'Troubled waters: high art and popular culture, Dublin, 1821', in Ciara Breathnach and Catherine Lawless (eds.), *Visual, material, and print culture in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2010), p. 38.
[28] Charles A. Cameron, *Reminiscences of Sir Charles A. Cameron, C.B.* (Dublin, 1913), pp 33-47; Basil Walsh, 'Michael W. Balfe, the 'Irish Italian': Ireland's uniquely gifted composer', *History Ireland*, xi, no. 1 (2003), p. 30; John Scarry, 'Singers in Victorian Dublin', *Dublin Historical Record*, lix, no. 1 (2006), p. 36.

powder or mocha coffee and translated versions of *The Count of Monte-Cristo* could be had a mere two years after the first French edition.[29] The Dublin Society meanwhile promoted 'improving' recreations and was instrumental in the opening of museums and of the Botanic Garden at Glasnevin in the 1790s.[30] The opening of the Zoological Garden in the Phoenix Park in 1831 – and admission at 1*d.* on Sundays from 1840 onwards – eventually came to symbolise genteel culture made accessible to all.[31] For most of the population, foreign fashions, commercial leisure, or trips on the newly invented train remained unaffordable. Yet they were there to be seen in newspapers, streets or windows and were talked about at work, home, or in the pub. Dubliners lived in a modern city where excitement and leisure gave rhythm to life. Chief among them were sports and pastimes.

2- Sport in early nineteenth-century Dublin

The following section will look at which sports were played in early nineteenth-century Dublin, their dynamic, and to whom they appealed. Field sports were growing in importance and so were elite pastimes, both of which had developed a club organisation by the end of the period. Unregulated sports included football, hurling, ball playing, foot races and had a large demotic following. Blood sports and combat sports were disrupted by the authorities and in decline. The last section deals with non-competitive recreations such as gymnastics or bathing and their legitimisation as healthy and wholesome pastimes.

Field sports

Central to the world of sport were horseracing and hunting. They enjoyed extensive patronage from the aristocracy and were ingrained in the gentry's social and cultural identities. Crucially, they presented organisational features, through clubs or institutions, that singularly contrasted with the other pastimes.

[29] *Dublin Evening Post*, 20 Mar. 1821, 7 Mar. 1846. It was sold in ten parts at 2*s*. each.
[30] Dickson, *Dublin*, p. 288.
[31] *Dublin Weekly Herald*, 17 Oct. 1840.

Horseracing

Horseracing in Ireland goes back to time immemorial but underwent a slow and steady transformation during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Several places became strongly associated with the sport and enduring governing bodies, namely the Down Royal Corporation of Horse-breeders (1685) and the Turf Club (1790), were established at the Maze in County Down and at the Curragh in Kildare respectively.[32] The sport was popular among all classes throughout the country and Dublin was no exception.[33] James Kelly recorded 19 formal race meetings taking place in Dublin between 1731 and 1790, while 183 meetings were held throughout Ireland for the same period.[34] They were boisterous affairs and authorities struggled to control crowds at the gatherings taking place on the outskirts of the city in Glasnevin, Finglas, or on the Kilmainham and Crumlin commons. The fear of social unrest, as well as class snobbery towards working-class gambling and amusements, led the public authorities to ban horseracing meetings of more than twelve people within nine miles of the metropolis in 1791.[35] This was ill-timed and prevented the city from benefiting from the unprecedented expansion of racing that took place during the Napoleonic Wars. When racing eventually resumed in Dublin in 1825, the fortunes of the sport had dwindled nationally 'as the country entered a period of agricultural depression and industrial decline in many areas.'[36] By then the centre of Irish horseracing was the Curragh, firmly established as the premier venue in the island and from where the Turf Club increasingly sought to control the sport.

[32] John Welcome, *Irish horse-racing, an illustrated history* (Dublin, 1982), pp 1-7; Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 31-5; D'Arcy, *Horses*, pp 1-12.
[33] Wakefield, *An account of Ireland, vol. II*, p. 739; Johann Georg Kohl, *Travels in Ireland* (London, 1844), pp 196-205.
[34] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 44, 79. Tony and Annie Sweeney meanwhile have recorded over 3,400 races between 1751 and 1790 and John Welcome mentions seventy-one meetings advertised by the newly founded Jockey Club taking place in Ireland in 1750 only. See John Welcome, *Irish horseracing*, p. 12; Tony Sweeney, Annie Sweeney and Francis Hyland, *The Sweeney guide to the Irish turf from 1501 to 2001* (Dublin, 2002), p. 26.
[35] *The parliamentary register: or, history of the proceedings and debates of the House of Commons of Ireland, vol. xi* (Dublin, 1791), pp 283, 463. See also Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 94-101; D'Arcy, *Horses*, pp 20-1.
[36] D'Arcy, *Horses*, p. 81. The total amount of stakes fell from £40,383 (302 races) to £8,121 (133 races) between 1815 and 1825, see Sweeney *et al.*, *The Sweeney guide*, p. 27.

Figure 1.2: Horseracing in Dublin, 1825-49.

		1825-9	1830-9	1840-9	Total
Turf Club rules	Meetings	2	29	54	85
	Days	4	59	94	154
	Races	7	142	328	477
Others	Meetings	4	18	15	37
	Days	6	22	15	43
	Races	11	65	38	114
Total	Meetings	6	47	69	122
	Days	10	78	109	197
	Races	18	207	366	591
Total races in Ireland under Turf Club rules		1,443 (1820-9)	1,858	2,279	

Source: *Irish Racing Calendar*; Sweeney *et al*., *The Sweeney guide*, p. 27.

Figure 1.2 clearly illustrates two trends which underpinned Dublin racing in the second quarter of the century. At first, the expansion of racing in Dublin was exponential and more pronounced than in the rest of the country, which itself then recovered at a slower rate from a decade of post-war slump. The continuous presence of a local patron, the rapid development of hunt and military meetings from the 1830s, and the emergence of commercial racing in the 1840s allowed such a rapid expansion. Secondly, it became clear that the Turf Club came to assume a hegemonic position in Dublin racing. The proximity with the Curragh as well as the intermingling of leading horse-owners, hunters and Turf Club members in counties Dublin, Meath and Kildare ensured that high-end horseracing in the city would fall in line with the leading racing institution.

For James Kelly, landowners, municipalities and popular 'folk' racing structured racing in eighteenth century.[37] They remained important agencies in the mid-nineteenth century. The gentry especially were the driving force and provided the land, prizes, and horses to run the sport. Viscount Frankfort de Montmorency sponsored cups and took part in racing matches in 1833.[38] Matthew Fortescue, chamberlain to the Lord-Lieutenant, arranged a course in a field behind his villa in Sandymount and held races there in the 1840s.[39] In Howth, however, lived the two greatest patrons of the turf in the county: Thomas St Lawrence, 3rd Earl of Howth (1803-74) and William, 4th Earl of Howth (1827-1909). Owners of over nine thousand acres of land in Dublin and Meath worth £18,936 annually by the 1880s, they could indulge extensively in hunting and racing, and came to exert a crucial role in nineteenth-century racing in the city.[40] Both father and son assumed the position of rider, owner and administrator in the Irish turf at some time in their lives, and were at the helm of the Howth races between 1829 and 1842, which then moved to Baldoyle from 1853 onwards.[41] The role of municipalities and civic pride was evident in Kingstown. Local notables set up races to raise the profile of the town and attract tourists after the arrival of the railway in 1834. As regattas were organised in the summer, horseracing proved to be another way to bring the seaside resort to the forefront of social life during the off-season. Six meetings took place between 1834 and 1839, and another three between 1851 and 1859. Hotel proprietor Edward Hayes was decisive in the smooth running of the first instalment whereby the township's treasurer added £25 in stakes.[42] Another hotelier, Thomas Gresham, known for his Sackville Street establishment and then undertaking vast property investment in the township, took matters in hand in 1837, offered a course for the races, and had the Gresham stakes run for. Fergus D'Arcy suggests that the prospective building of a grandstand (that never came to be) could also have fuelled

[37] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 47-8, 57, 96-9.
[38] *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Sept. 1833; *Leinster Express*, 26 Oct. 1833.
[39] *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Aug. 1842; 8 Mar. 1844. When racing occurred on Sandymount strand, Fortescue was found among the stewards, see *Nation*, 23 Dec. 1843.
[40] George E. Cokayne, *Complete peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom* (London, 1892), pp 274-5.
[41] Michael J. Hurley, *Baldoyle, the racecourse village* (Dublin, 2002), pp 8-9, 31; Michael J. Hurley, *Baldoyle, Portmarnock, Sutton: a local history* (Dublin, 2009), pp 48-9.
[42] *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Mar. 1834, 21 Mar. 1834.

his interest in the races.[43] Twenty years later, the 1859 races took place near Foxrock on the lands of a local entrepreneur who also sought to raise the profile of the village and to develop it into an upper-middle-class estate.[44] The benefit of races was obvious to local traders. Merely two months after the 1851 races, 'the inhabitants have resolved (…) to make a strong effort to have a repetition of the sports', which however did not materialise.[45]

The third strand, folk racing, was seemingly receding. Public authorities feared these popular gatherings and the enclosure of commons around the city further encroached on traditional practices. In 1838, John D'Alton observed that in Crumlin 'there were formerly 150A. of commons here, on which horseraces were exhibited. This tract is now enclosed.'[46] It took several decades for such racing to disappear, however. The racecourse in the Lusk common escaped enclosure in 1821, and folk race meetings were held there in the 1840s.[47] The tradition of strand racing was also kept alive at Rush, Baldoyle, Howth, Dollymount and Sandymount.[48] Held on St Stephen's Day in 1849 in front of seven thousand spectators, the meeting at Dollymount reveals how popular fashions could survive the growing organisation and standardisation of racing:

> there was not to be sure all the regularities to be expected at a regularly established meeting nor was the course marked out after the best fashion, those in authorities preferring to have the races run on the strand in place of taking advantage of the reclaimed ground, on which could have been formed a very pretty circular course.[49]

The influx of military officers in Dublin further boosted racing in the city. No fewer than twenty-four military meetings took place in the 1830s and 1840s, often at

[43] *Saunders' News-Letter*, 18 Apr. 1837; Fergus D'Arcy, 'The Kingstown races', *Dublin Historical Record*, xiv, no. 1 (spring 1992), p. 56.
[44] D'Arcy, 'The Kingstown races', p. 62.
[45] *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Mar. 1851.
[46] John D'Alton, *The history of the county of Dublin* (Dublin, 1838), p. 694.
[47] *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Oct. 1843; *Leinster Express*, 23 Aug. 1845. The Lusk common was also used for meeting held under Turf Club rules. For the enclosure of commons in Dublin at the turn of the 1820s, see footnote 333, p. 80.
[48] *Nation*, 9 Nov. 1844; *Freeman's Journal*, 9 July 1844, 18 Mar. 1845, 12 July 1845, 16 Jan. 1851; *Dublin Weekly Register*, 2 Aug. 1845.
[49] *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Dec. 1849.

Ashbourne or in the Phoenix Park, where they were enthusiastically attended by the population. The growth of hunting packs at the time also profited horseracing. The Ward Union Hunt began to organise steeplechases or point-to-point races at the end of their season from 1833 onwards and the Palmerstown Harriers did so in 1850.[50] Finally the 1840s also witnessed the emergence of racing run on commercial lines. This marked a decisive first step in the modernisation and monetarisation of the sport and will be analysed at greater length in the next chapter.

Hunting, coursing, and shooting

Hunting for pleasure was, like horseracing, an ancillary activity. In its modern form it developed in the eighteenth century and witnessed the rise to primacy of foxhunting.[51] Hunting embodied the rural gentry lifestyle and was the opportunity for kindred upper-class members to meet, show their skills in riding through brooks and hedges, and share a bowl of punch afterwards.[52]

In Dublin, the leading pack was the Ward Union Hunt, established in 1830 after the amalgamation of the Dubber and Hollywood packs. Six years later their master decided to purchase a herd of deer and gave up foxhunting.[53] By 1850 they had sufficiently grown in size and prestige to belong to the first tier of Irish packs alongside the Kilkenny, South Union (Cork) or Curraghmore (Waterford) hunts and arguably only the Kildare Hunt could claim pre-eminence over them in the country at large. Elsewhere in the county a few landlords and eager huntsmen established their own pack of hounds while their purse and enthusiasm lasted. In the early 1830s, James Hamilton was known to organise buck hunting in north County Dublin and in the 1840s a Fingal Hunt was also active there.[54] Dr Gregory and the Earl of Howth also privately kept a pack of hounds.[55] Within two years of its acquisition, the Earl of Howth had sold it to the Dublin Garrison Hunt. The southern part of the

[50] *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Apr. 1833, 6 Apr. 1838,15 May 1850.
[51] Emma Griffin, *Blood sport, hunting in Britain since 1066* (London, 2007), pp 125-9; Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 141-7
[52] Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, p. 105; Hunt, *Sport and society*, pp 29-32; Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p. 147; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p 69.
[53] Fitzpatrick, *Irish sport*, pp 92-3.
[54] *Sporting Magazine*, May 1834; *Nation*, 31 Dec. 1842.
[55] *Leinster Express*, 26 Oct. 1833; Earl of Mayo and W.B Boulton, *A history of the Kildare Hunt* (London, 1913), p. 129.

county was mainly harrier country and packs were kept at various stages at Tallaght and Palmerstown.[56] Rivalries between Dublin hunts were usually rooted in a friendly spirit and competition gave way to coordination. At the start of the 1852 season, the Ward Hunt hunted on Wednesdays and Saturdays, the Garrison Hunt on Mondays and Fridays and the Palmerstown Hunt settled for Tuesdays and Thursdays.[57] Dubliners were also welcomed in the Kildare Hunt, whose meetings were never further than a ninety-minute train journey from Kingsbridge station (Heuston, built 1846).[58] The story of hunting in nineteenth-century Dublin was thus intimately linked to the Ward Union Hunt, who led the pace on and off the field. There was, however, always present a second layer of smaller packs that never managed to successfully overcome the withdrawal of their principal patrons after a few seasons. These latter, however, brought a variety of venues and quarries to eager hunters and were also proof that private low-key hunting could, and did, exist alongside the model of the highly fashionable subscription hunt.

Coursing (the chase of live hares by hounds) and shooting at wild fowl were the poor relations of the main field sports in the capital. Why coursing did not develop in Dublin remains difficult to understand and contrasted with its implantation in neighbouring counties. At least five different venues were used in Meath at the turn of the 1850s and a club was long established in the Curragh by then. No conflictual situation existed with neighbouring hunts since the necessary elimination of foxes suited harrier and stag hunting packs. Finally, there was no shortage of enthusiasts either and Dubliners were involved in the sport as organisers, judges or breeders.[59] The absence of shooting in the county was explained by the lack of reserves and of a suitable natural environment to foster the growing of wild fowl. The only exceptions were a couple of shooting estates at Glencullen and Glenasmole Lodge in the Dublin mountains, which had been used at least since the early nineteenth

[56] James E. Norton, *History of the South County Dublin Harriers and some neighbouring harrier packs* (Dublin, 1991), p. 12. The Tallaght harrier were active until the death of their owner in the 1830s and the Palmerstown started to hunt in the 1848/9 season.
[57] *Freeman's Journal,* 15 Oct. 1852, 28 Oct. 1852, 30 Oct. 1852.
[58] Even before the coming of the railway, the Kildare Hunt had a substantial minority of Dubliners within its ranks. Out of the 52 members elected to the Hunt between 1815 and 1838 who returned an address, 14 did so for Dublin. See Mayo and Boulton, *A history of the Kildare Hunt*, pp 146-9.
[59] National Archives of Ireland, CSO/RP/OR/1832/210, letter from Alexander Ferris, dated 2 Feb. 1832; *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Mar. 1850, 24 Mar. 1852, 18 Apr. 1853.

century.[60] The heartland of the sport was in Connacht and wealthy Dubliners spent the months of August and September there shooting at grouse, woodcock, or snipe. Some, like the Earl of Howth, were invited by friends.[61] Others owned estates and shooting lodges, Lord Talbot of Malahide near Bangor in Mayo and, most famously, the brewing magnate Sir Benjamin Guinness at Ashford Castle in Galway.[62]

Clubs and elite pastimes

The development of the press, means of communication, and coffee houses in the eighteenth century, coupled with an expanding intellectual environment and the development of a public sphere, led to the growth of associational culture in Britain and Ireland.[63] Essentially male preserves, clubs were created throughout the country for whichever purpose suited their members: political, charitable, cultural or merely social. The promotion of their purpose entailed clearly defined binding rules for members and a continuity in time. In sport, clubs sprouted in horseracing and hunting and a local, if not national, organisation emerged. Soon after, other pastimes followed.

Cricket

The English game of cricket was known and occasionally played in Dublin in the eighteenth century, but unlike England, where it was enjoyed by the whole population, it remained confined to the upper class and the often British-born officers.[64] The club structure which became prominent at the time in England was

[60] *Sporting Magazine*, Sept. 1815; Peter Bacon, *Land, lust and gun smoke: a social history of game shoots in Ireland* (Dublin, 2012), pp 239-40.
[61] *Tuam Herald*, 1 Sept. 1849 (shooting in Mayo with Lord Sligo); *Freeman's Journal*, 15 Sept. 1858 (shooting party in Donegal).
[62] *Belfast Newsletter*, 1 Sept. 1859; Bacon, *Land, lust and gun smoke*, p. 42. Regarding the Ashford estate, it seems it was intensively developed for shooting purpose in the late 1860s, once Sir Arthur Guinness inherited the castle from his father.
[63] Kelly and Powell, 'Introduction', in Kelly and Powell, *Clubs and societies*, pp 20-1. On the development of a public sphere in eighteenth-century Ireland, its relation to a print-culture, and to which extent it overrode the linguistic divide between an English-speaking urban Ascendancy and a Gaelic-speaking rural 'Hidden Ireland', see Joep Leerssen, *Hidden Ireland, public sphere* (Galway, 2002), pp 36-9; James Kelly, 'The state and the control of print in eighteenth-century Ireland', *Eighteenth-century Ireland/Iris an dá chultúr*,, xxiii (2008), pp 151-2; Wes Hamrick, 'The public sphere and eighteenth-century Ireland', *New Hibernia Review*, xviii, no. 4 (2014), pp. 87-100.
[64] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 74.

only partially replicated in Dublin at the turn of the nineteenth century. In the wake of a match between vice-regal and officer teams in August 1792, these latter 'have formed themselves into a club for the purpose of frequently exercising in that foreign sport.'[65] A decade later, in 1804 and 1805, the Hibernian Cricket Club advertised annual dinners at which new members were balloted in and meetings for the coming season decided.[66] Poor exposure in the media, limited knowledge of the game among the population, and want of adversaries hindered the development of these early clubs, which folded shortly thereafter. Cricket nevertheless kept making inroads. In 1810, the officers of the 7th Dragoons defeated the Lord Lieutenant's team in the Royal Barracks.[67] It was also informally played in Trinity College in the late 1810s, which left the vice-provost to enquire whether that game 'played almost every day at the proper season in the College Park' was akin to shuttlecock.[68] Cricket was meanwhile probably played in the country houses of Fingal and the Board of Works rolled out and watered a ground in the Phoenix Park in 1829.[69] By then the fostering of the game had started to gather pace as retailers stocked cricket gear and a few clubs, such as the Dublin and Sandyford cricket clubs, were established and played against teams drawn from the landed gentry or military establishment.[70] These clubs did not have a lasting impact on Dublin's cricket scene but ensured that military personnel and landed gentry became familiar with it, in line with what was then happening in the rest of the country.[71] The former were predominant in counties where barracks were firmly established, as in Cork or Tipperary, while wealthy landlords were the prime factor behind the development of

[65] *Dublin Evening Post*, 16 Aug. 1792.
[66] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 1 May 1804, 26 Apr. 1805.
[67] Noel Mahony and Robert Whiteside, *Cricket at the King's Hospital 1897-1997* (Dublin, 1997), p. 1; *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Aug. 1810.
[68] *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Nov. 1821. William P. Hone, *Cricket in Ireland* (Tralee, 1956), p. 6.
[69] National Archives of Ireland, CSO/RP/1829/1239/1, letter from Robert Robinson, dated 18 Aug. 1829; https://www.cricketleinster.ie/about/history, accessed 24 Jan. 2021. No other reference of the match between the Ardgillan and Kenure estates has been uncovered in this research.
[70] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 28 July 1825, 12 May 1829; *Dublin Evening Post*, 27 June 1826; *Dublin Evening Packet*, 9 Aug. 1828; *Dublin Weekly Register*, 3 Oct. 1829; Sean Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland, p. 35.
[71] Pat Bracken, *Foreign and fantastic field sports, cricket in county Tipperary* (Thurles, 2004), p. 13. Reid acknowledged the presence of at least one cricket match in seventeen counties by 1845, nine of them being in Leinster. He, however, did not include the Ballinasloe team from Galway nor a military match in Kerry, which would thus bring the total to nineteen counties. See Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', p. 35; *Kerry Evening Post*, 30 July 1845.

the game in Carlow, Wicklow, Galway and Kilkenny.[72] The spread of the game went hand in hand with its crystallisation around clubs, made up of members who paid up an annual fee, elected a hierarchy, and sought a stability in time and space. In Dublin, two clubs were crucial in that respect. The Phoenix club was founded in 1830 and secured a ground in the Phoenix Park in 1838.[73] This was a club reserved for the elite which initially played mainly against military officers but by the late 1830s had engaged in matches with Kilkenny, Carlow, Meath and Liverpool and had become the standard bearer of the game in the country.[74] A second club, the Dublin University Cricket Club (DUCC), was created around 1835 by students who had casually been playing for years within Trinity College. The club became the nursery of the game in the city and provided an important reservoir of players to the Phoenix CC or other clubs that came to the fore in subsequent decades.

The role of the military was decisive in the early years of Dublin cricket. Even though a match between the Ardgillan and Kenure estates allegedly took place in Fingal as early as 1829, the first reliable evidence of a game between two local civilian elevens dates from 1840 with a match between the Phoenix and University clubs, fully five years after the creation of this latter as the DUCC.[75] The Garrison (an umbrella term for officer teams not formally organised) meanwhile remained a regular opponent for those two clubs and another couple of decades elapsed before the military importance diminished. The DUCC records show 19 games played between 1845 and 1853 by the club, 12 of which were against Phoenix, 3 against the Garrison and 4 against Roebuck, a club established in the mid-1840s in Rathmines by the wealthy Kinahan family.[76] Among the 74 members of the Phoenix club that lined up against the DUCC in these games, 31 (42%) were officers. Altogether in the 19 games, 72 students faced 108 different opponents, 46 of whom

[72] Michael O'Dwyer, *The history of cricket in County Kilkenny – the forgotten game* (Kilkenny, 2006), p. 12; Bracken, *Foreign and fantastic field sports,* pp 17, 28; Hone, *Cricket in Ireland*, pp 10-1.
[73] John Lawrence, *Handbook of cricket in Ireland, 1865-6* (Dublin, 1866), pp 4-5; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 13 Feb. 1835. The club was initially called Hibernian or Metropolitan and played in an enclosed ground in Upper Baggot Street.
[74] *Freeman's Journal*, 24 May 1833, 8 June 1833, 7 Aug. 1839, 12 Aug. 1839; *Leinster Express*, 23 May 1835, 23 June 1838, 30 June 1838, 3 Aug. 1839
[75] Michael H Milne, 'A history of the Dublin University Cricket Club, 1835-1914', in M.R. Beamish and E.H. Murray (eds), *Dublin University Cricket Club, a pictorial history* (Dublin, 1982), p. 5; *Dublin Evening Packet*, 20 June 1840. It is unknown why did these two clubs not meet before. In the meantime, the Phoenix club had travelled throughout Leinster and even ventured to England.
[76] Hone, *Cricket in Ireland*, p10.

(43%) were engaged in the army.[77] It was only with the creation of new clubs in the 1850s, and especially Leinster CC in 1852, that the importance of the military element within Dublin cricket faded out. The second important element regarding Dublin cricket in mid-nineteenth century was its home-grown nature. In the 1840s, only a quarter (10/41) of the identified players of the DUCC were educated in England. For Michael Milne:

> Students from a background of private education learnt their cricket in their own areas where the game was being introduced by the 1840's. In fact, students from schools in Ireland also learnt the game outside their educational environment, because no Irish school played cricket prior to the mid-forties when the sport was introduced to the Portora and Armagh Royal schools by individual students. Consequently, for the first decade of the club's existence it had to rely upon a flow of students with experience of estate cricket, supplemented by a minority of students from the English public schools. In the absence of professionals, these latter members must have been instrumental in the raising of the general standard of play, and the coaching of new players.[78]

The profile of cricket in Dublin, thus, did not differ greatly from the rest of the country. The number of army personnel stationed in the city ensured a high level of participation from the military, but the growing importance of the game among students and civilians, and the fact that they learned it in Ireland, indicated that the game was firmly taking root among the Irish upper-middle classes.

Rowing and sailing

A surge of interest in sailing and rowing took place in the country at large from the 1820s onwards and resulted in the creation of the Royal Northern Yacht Club (1825) and in a renewed dynamism in the long-established Royal Cork Yacht Club (1720).[79]

[77] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Cricket/6.
[78] Milne, 'Dublin University Cricket Club', p. 8.
[79] *Belfast Newsletter*, 27 June 1828; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p114. The Water Club of the Harbour of Cork was established in 1720 and obtained its royal warrant in 1831.

In July 1828 a ‘grand boat race’ was advertised to take place in Howth and this marked a vital moment in modern rowing and sailing in Dublin.[80] Weeks later a full-scale regatta took place at Kingstown under the patronage of the newly appointed Lord Lieutenant, the Marquis of Anglesey.[81] Its success led to the creation of the Royal Irish Boat Club in the locality in 1831 and further regattas until 1839.[82]

At the same time a burgeoning of rowing clubs took place around Ringsend and Clontarf, but none reached the status of the Pembroke club, created in 1836 and counting over a hundred members by 1840.[83] Supported by Dublin University students, its membership included a fair sprinkling of the professional and business classes. A partial analysis of the club records shows that Joseph Hone, the first secretary of the club, was engaged in mercantile activities and that John Du Bedat and his business partner J. W. Porter were stockbrokers. Distiller John Jameson and newspaper editor William Potts were also early members of the club.[84] The building of a clubhouse and a small fleet of sculls reinforced the status of a club which began to organise its own regattas and even competed in Liverpool in 1839.[85] Its strength dwindled, however, in the early 1840s when some members left to set up a University Rowing Club in Ringsend as well as another boat club in Kingstown.[86] Eventually the Pembroke and University clubs merged in 1847 to form the Dublin University Rowing Club (DURC), a student body where non-students had a significantly reduced importance, both in number and power.[87] On the southern

[80] *Freeman’s Journal*, 4 July 1828.
[81] *Freeman’s Journal,* 22-4 July 1828.
[82] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 115.
[83] For the Dollymount Rowing Club organising a small-scale rowing regatta in Clontarf in 1831 and for the Phoenix, Liffey, Triton and Dublin rowing clubs taking part in the Kingstown regatta in 1842, see *Freeman’s Journal*, 16 July 1831, 16 Sept. 1842; TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/1, 2 Nov. 1836, 2 Mar. 1840.
[84] Raymond Blake, *In black & white: a history of rowing at Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin, 1991), p. 5. See also TCD archives, Mun/Club/Boat/10/1; Henry Shaw, *The Dublin pictorial guide & directory of 1850*, introduction by Kevin Nolan (Dublin, 1988).
[85] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/1, 2 Mar. 1840, 25 July 1840, 1 Mar. 1841.
[86] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/1, 1 Apr 1844; Ibid., Mun/Club/Boat/2a, 26 Oct. 1844; Stella Archer and Peter Pearson, *Royal St George Yacht Club, a history* (Dublin, 1987), pp 1-2; Blake, *In black & white*, p. 9; Trevor West, *The bold collegians: the development of sport in Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin, 1991), pp 18-9. Both Blake and West imply that the Pembroke club declined solely because of the creation of the University RC, based on their reading of the records of the 1844 AGM which explained that the 1843 season was ‘disadvantageous to the interest of the Pembroke Club, owing more particularly to the formation of a new Boat Club’. The minutes of the club, however, are more detailed and precise that ‘the establishment of new clubs – especially the Kingstown Boat Club – for the purpose of boating has materially impaired the Pembroke Club.’
[87] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/1, 15 May 1847, 3 Apr. 1848. In its first season, the new club had 105 registered members and over thirty supplementary honorary members.

side of the bay, the sailing element became so essential to the development of the Kingstown Boat Club that it was renamed the Royal Kingstown Yacht Club in 1845 and then rebranded Royal St George Yacht Club in 1847. The creation of two yacht clubs in Kingstown was part of a broader trend of developing seaside resorts for upper-class tourists in Britain and Ireland. Linked to the city by train since 1834, the township became a focus for wealthy day-trippers that contrasted with the industrial and fishing features of Ringsend. The higher social cachet associated with sailing was also crucial in attracting the more ambitious of the Pembroke BC members. Out of 208 registered members between 1836 and 1846, at least 41 (20%) had migrated to the Kingstown YC by 1845.[88] Among the 501 members this latter counted in 1845, 36 were titled, at least 39 belonged to one of Dublin's gentlemen's clubs, 56 were officers in the army and 5 were MPs, including Antrim, Wexford and Queen's County representatives. It is possible to trace back with precision the activity of 75 of those members and all bar one belonged to the professional classes, with a heavy predominance of the law.[89] Archer and Pearson also implied the early participation of the mercantile class in the club in the like of distillers William Jameson and Henry Roe, and wine merchants Daniel Kinahan and Sir John Kingstown James.

By 1850 a clearly defined boating culture separating rowing from sailing had been created in Dublin. Rowing was based in Ringsend under the informal leadership of the Dublin University Rowing Club. The minutes of the club reveal the monthly routine intrinsic to any organisation: admission of members, repairing the boathouse, correspondence with other clubs. The seriousness and sportsmanlike focus of the club (and of the DUCC) revealed the growth of organised sport within Trinity College and reflected the ongoing general development of a sporting culture in British and Irish universities. Sailing settled in Kingstown around the prestigious Royal Irish and Royal St George yacht clubs. These were extensions of the gentlemen's clubs found in the city and prioritised a social agenda, as their clubhouses were fitted with a bar and restaurant as well as cigar and billiard rooms.[90] The connection between the club and its locality was weak and in 1845, over a quarter of the members of the Kingstown YC resided outside of County

[88] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/10/1; Archer and Pearson, *The Royal St George*, pp 137-40.
[89] Archer and Pearson, *The Royal St George*, pp 7-8 and 137-40; Shaw, *The Dublin pictorial guide*. These are minimal estimations and it is also likely that the mercantile element is still under-acknowledged as Shaw's *Directory* placed a heavy emphasis on the legal profession.
[90] *Sporting Magazine*, July 1833; Archer and Pearson, *The Royal St George*, pp 23-7, 41.

Dublin.[91] As for the Turf Club and Phoenix CC, membership of a yacht club was often a status symbol, which illustrates how sports clubs were not only about sport but about one's identification with a position in society and with cultural trends.

Minority sports: chess, archery, angling, and rifle shooting

From the 1840s onwards, other pastimes began to be organised around clubs and societies. The rapid development of chess in Britain after 1830 coincided with decades of moral crusade against gambling-prone dice and card playing, but also with the appearance of cheaper instruction books and increased coverage in the press. Chess expanded its popularity to the middle classes, and this was then reflected in a growing number of clubs.[92] In England, the game essentially took roots in the literary and mechanics' institutes which bloomed in the fast-growing urban areas, but this was only partly the case in Dublin.[93] As with cricket and boating, most early chess clubs were linked to Trinity College or to intellectual gentlemen's clubs. The Philidorean Society (named after the eighteenth-century French chess master Philidor) was created in 1819, and by 1833 over one hundred more players gathered in the Dublin University Chess Club or in dedicated chess rooms in the Dublin Institution and Dublin Library Society.[94] Only then was a class started at the Dublin Mechanics' Institute in 1848.[95] Correspondence matches (games at distance where moves are sent to the opponent by post or telegram) took place in 1839-40 when the Philidorean club lost to the Ballinasloe club (Galway) and then in 1852 the Dublin Mechanics' Institute defeated the York Literary and Scientific Institute.[96] The loss of influential members and the fading away of early enthusiasm seriously disrupted the expansion of a club structure in the city and subsequent attempts in the 1860s

[91] Archer and Pearson, *The Royal St George*, pp 137-40. Among members whose address was available, 132 out of 489 resided outside County Dublin.
[92] Timothy Harding, '"Battle at long range": correspondence chess in Britain and Ireland, 1824-1914, a social and cultural history (PhD Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2009), pp 29-31. Adrian Harvey, '"You may say what you like to the professional and dismiss them when you want": the rise and fall of professional chess players in Victorian Britain', *Sport in History*, xxx, no. 3 (2010), pp 403-4.
[93] Harding, 'Battle at long range', pp 148-54.
[94] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 June 1833; TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/2a, 18 Sept. 1847. In 1847 the DURC sanctioned the creation of a chess club within the rowing club, but whether it materialised is unknown.
[95] Harding, 'Battle at long range', p. 318.
[96] *Bell's Life*, 5 Jan. 1840; *London Evening Standard*, 9 June 1834; Harding, 'Battle at long range', pp 316, 437.

likewise failed to make an impact. Only from the mid-1880s would a lasting Irish chess scene develop.[97] According to chess historian Timothy Harding, chess as an organised pastime was structurally hampered in Ireland by a lower level of industrialisation and the consequent smaller number of mechanics' institutes, which was precisely where the game bloomed and became democratised in Britain from the mid-nineteenth century.[98]

Angling, archery and rifle shooting grew from a utilitarian purpose to become aristocratic or upper-middle-class pastimes in the eighteenth century.[99] As the sole sporting outlet fully available to women in the first part of the century, archery stood out from other pastimes. In the late 1820s, several entrepreneurs, including John Blang who became endorsed by the Lord Lieutenant in 1829, catered for a nascent community of local archers.[100] The association of the pastime with the aristocracy and gentry was immediately clear, as it began to be a staple of garden parties throughout the country. In the mid-1830s, exhibitions took place at fêtes held in the zoological garden near the vice-regal lodge and at Rathfarnham castle.[101] At the same time, the first archery societies were founded in counties Meath and Westmeath.[102] It took another decade for such clubs to spread throughout Leinster. In 1846 a short-lived County of Dublin Toxophilite Society was active in the south of the county and by 1848 clubs were about to be formed in Bray and Wexford.[103] The paucity of established leisure outlets in rural areas and the mixed-gender nature of archery ensured that sociability was at the core of this early toxophilite associational culture. On the other hand, angling and rifle shooting clubs stemmed from the necessity to secure a safe and legal environment. Anglers congregated 'to ensure the acquisition of stretches of the river, and to enforce the exclusion of other anglers, particularly coarse anglers, from these stretches.'[104] Early angling clubs solely

[97] Harding, 'Battle at long range', pp 315-9.
[98] Ibid., p. 147.
[99] Richard Coopey, 'A river does indeed run through it: angling and society in Britain since 1800', in Karen V. Lykke Syse and Terje Oestigaard (eds), *Perceptions of water in Britain from early modern times to the present: an introduction* (Bergen, 2010), pp 60-4; E.G. Heath, *A history of target archery* (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp 61-83.
[100] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 21 Apr. 1828, 8 May 1828, 2 June 1829. W.T. Kennan also sold bows and arrows in his establishment on Fishamble Street.
[101] *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 10 June 1835; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 15 July 1835; *Dublin Morning Register*, 31 May 1836.
[102] Brian Griffin, 'The Big House at play', pp 154-5.
[103] *Dublin Evening Packet*, 27 June 1846; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 2 Aug. 1848; *The Pilot*, 13 Sept. 1848.
[104] Coopey, 'A river does indeed run through it', p. 66.

catered for prestigious game fishing (salmon and trout) and came to assume an upper-middle-class character. Under the pretence of regulating stocks of fishes, such clubs appropriated for themselves the right to decide who could legally kill wildlife and who could not. In the 1840s, angling, like game shooting, reflected the class structure of society and the Fisheries (Ireland) Act 1842 regarding poaching and fishing on Sundays or off-season was enforced by a water-bailiff appointed by the Dublin Angling Club.[105] Rifle-shooting clubs likewise provided a legally safe environment for their members as well as a competitive outlet. The appreciation of danger, left in the hands of the police and magistrates, was very personal, as John Rigby, the leading gun manufacturer in the country, discovered. In 1839, he was arrested when trying his latest rifle model on a wall near the canal dock.[106] Solicitor Moutray Erskine was also brought to court in 1846 as a stray bullet hit a bather during a practice session on Dalkey island.[107] Dedicated indoor shooting ranges in the city first appeared in the early 1830s. Home's Hotel on Usher's Quay offered a forty-yard shooting saloon and gunmakers John Rigby and William Trulock fitted their premises on Suffolk and Dawson streets with a shooting gallery in 1829 and 1831 respectively.[108] A decade later the sport was taken outdoors by the Dublin Rifle Club and the short-lived Dublin University Rifle Club, which monitored longer shooting ranges.[109] The upper-middle-class status of such clubs was clear from the start. Isaac M. D'Olier belonged to a celebrated banking family, Thomas Coulter was a botanist and curator of Trinity College, and the generous and unconditional sponsorship of the club by John Rigby was reciprocated in sole supplying rights.[110]

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[105] 'An Act to regulate the Irish Fisheries', *The statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 5 & 6 Victoria, 1842* (London, 1842), pp 880-926; *Dublin Monitor*, 29 Nov. 1844; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 29 Sept. 1846. The irony in the latter case is that the water-bailiff appointed by the club was guilty of allowing parties to fish off-season.
[106] *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Aug. 1839.
[107] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 16 July 1846; *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Sep. 1845.
[108] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 13 Dec. 1830, 25 Nov. 1836; *Dublin Morning Register*, 31 Mar. 1831. Another gallery on Exchequer street was opened in 1835, see *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 7 Mar. 1835.
[109] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Ducac/50/2, Letter from Thomas Coulter, dated Nov. 1842; *Dublin Morning Register*, 13 Nov. 1841.
[110] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 24 Sept. 1846; E. Charles Nelson, 'Trinity's miner-botanist Dr Thomas Coulter (1793-1843)', *Hermathena*, no. 145 (1988), pp 16-7.

Non-organised pastimes

The persistence of traditional pastimes was an important feature in early nineteenth-century Dublin. Essentially associated with demotic recreations, this was not always so and billiards, handball, rackets or even foot races were enjoyed across the social spectrum. They existed concurrently with the growth of associational culture and their evolution also mirrored broader societal changes. In the first part of the nineteenth century some disappeared or were displaced from the city while others displayed a proto-commercialisation or were adopted in schools. By 1850 they still made up the bulk of leisure pastimes in Dublin.

Football and hurling

Folk football and hurling, in their pre-codified forms, were played in Dublin in the eighteenth century and both were in decline in the first half of the nineteenth century. New middle-class values – namely the greater state intervention in public life, the growing importance of private property, and Sabbatarianism – were the chief obstacles to their continuing popularity. The increasing association of hurling with the peasantry and seditious behaviour, as well as the counter-attraction of cricket and the conversion of part of the aristocracy to middle-class values, further eroded its cross-class status and reduced its prestige.[111]

Hurling and football were not made illegal but the conditions of their practice were severely restricted.[112] The development of the Fitzwilliam estate in the south-eastern quarter of the city encroached on fields hitherto used for games.[113] As with horseracing, the enclosing of commons progressively deprived the population of free and easily accessible playing areas. The Crumlin common had been an important venue for hurling matches in the last quarter of the eighteenth century before it was enclosed in 1818.[114] Likewise, the King's Hospital school was built on the former Oxmantown Green in 1783 and resorted to erecting high walls and a

[111] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 265-7; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 91-2.
[112] Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, p. 200.
[113] Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 277-8; *Hibernian Journal*, 23 May 1874 (football in Merrion square); *Dublin Evening Post*, 16 Dec. 1780 (hurling at Holles Street); *Saunders's News-Letter*, 26 Jan. 1821 (football at Harcourt Street).
[114] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 13 Sept. 1776, 8 Oct. 1779, 27 Sept. 1780.

large gate to prevent locals playing ball on their grounds.[115] Finally, road and streets in and around the city became increasingly devoted to traffic and business rather than games or loitering. A Turnpike Act from 1819 forbade 'playing foot-ball or bullets, or making bonfires' on these publicly maintained roads.[116] Children caught playing hurling in the streets in the 1840s were likewise brought to court.[117]

The rationale for stamping out popular forms of leisure was articulated around three tenets which resonated powerfully for lawmakers at the turn of the nineteenth century. They were, firstly, an attack on private property. Footballers in a field at Drumcondra were dispersed by the army 'after much Damage done, by breaking done [sic] the fences, and trampling the Grass'.[118] At Holles Street, hurlers were accused of 'demolishing ditches, destroying grass, and damaging land, for which struggling tenants pay nine and ten pounds an acre'.[119] Secondly, the fear of the mob was a common thread throughout Europe which especially resonated in a poorly policed city undergoing tremendous political changes. The emphasis on peaceful and orderly public spaces stemmed from the damage done to property and the challenge to authority posed by riotous behaviour. Seeing hurlers playing in the Phoenix Park in 1779, 'the sheriff came upon them by surprize, took from them a number of hurls, and dispersed this riotous mob.'[120] Likewise fears of subversion were at the root of the interruption of a football match at Kilmainham in 1800.[121] Sometimes couched in sectarian terms, the rise of Sabbatarianism, thirdly, came as a further blow to demotic pastimes.[122] This was a clear attempt at curtailing the long-established tradition of Sunday play and affected hurlers and footballers alike.[123] These three components were usually combined. In 1780, for example, the owner of a field near Eccles Street hired a constable to prevent footballers from gathering in his property on Sundays, whereupon he was stoned by the assembled party and

[115] Lesley Whiteside, *A history of the King's Hospital* (Dublin, 1975), p. 60.
[116] *Dublin Weekly Register*, 29 Jan. 1820. This was reaffirmed in subsequent legislation, see *Pilot*, 7 Apr. 1834.
[117] *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Nov. 1841, 28 Oct. 1843.
[118] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 18 Apr. 1774.
[119] *Dublin Evening Post*, 16 Dec. 1780.
[120] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 4 Aug. 1779.
[121] *Dublin Monitor*, 1 Apr. 1842.
[122] *Hibernian Journal*, 20 Sept. 1776; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 11 Feb. 1789.
[123] National Archives of Ireland, CSO/RP/1829/358, Memorial of ten men seeking permission to resume their usual activity of hurling in the Phoenix Park on Sundays, dated 3 Apr. 1829; *Dublin Evening Post*, 20 July 1779, 5 May 1785; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 10 July 1785.

shot a local baker in retaliation.[124] Similarly the police had to call for mounted reinforcement when assailed 'with sticks and stones' by a party of five hundred people assembled for a football game in Harcourt Street on Sunday 6 March 1831.[125]

If hurling and football had largely (yet not totally) disappeared from public areas in the city by 1850, the extent of their decline as sport is difficult to assess. Former Dublin University student Charles Lever recalled that 'there was plenty of hurling, cricketing, foot-ball, racket-playing, hand-ball (fives) playing, but no such thing as tennis was ever heard of' during his time there in the 1820s.[126] Cricket player Arthur Samuels likewise reckoned that around this time 'Kingstown School was famed for having the best hurling team in Ireland.'[127] Ultimately, it is impossible to know how many games went unrecorded in the Phoenix Park or in the adjoining countryside, as was then the case elsewhere in the country.[128] Evading the Sunday Observance Act (1695) was widespread and pressed the Lord Lieutenant and the Inspector-General of the constabulary to remind chief-constables throughout the country of the legislation in a circular of 1838:

> No person or persons whatsoever shall play, use, or exercise any hurling, commoning, football playing, cudgels, wrestling, or any other games, pastimes, or sports on the Lord's Day, or any part thereof, under a penalty of one shilling for every such offence.[129]

Far from being extinct, demotic games survived on the fringes of the city. While their revival in their traditional form was impossible, their lingering presence among children and schools ensured that an important part of folk leisure was not forgotten and could be re-invented as modern sports in subsequent decades.

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[124] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 10 Apr. 1780.
[125] *Pilot*, 9 Mar. 1831.
[126] *Dublin Evening Packet*, 6 Aug. 1842.
[127] Arthur Samuels, *Early cricket in Ireland. A paper read before the Kingstown literary and debating society on the 22nd February 1888* (Dublin, 1888), p. 8.
[128] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 92-3; *Dublin Evening Post*, 7 Sept. 1824 (hurling in Clare); *Dublin Evening Packet*, 21 Mar. 1840 (football in Kerry).
[129] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 17 Dec. 1838.

Handball and court games

The court games of handball, rackets and fives, present in Dublin before 1850, essentially consisted of hitting a ball with the hand or a racquet against a wall to put it out of reach of one's opponent. Played in singles or doubles, they necessitated few players and fitted the urban environment as a walled area was sufficient to start a game.

Rackets (a forerunner of modern-day squash) replaced the older game of real tennis among the city's upper classes in the first part of the nineteenth century. Real tennis, played in a walled court over a net, had been popular among the aristocracy in preceding centuries yet had fallen out of favour by the late eighteenth century and thereafter practically disappeared from the country.[130] In the 1880s, a court was built by brewery magnate Sir Edward Guinness in his mansion overlooking St Stephen's Green and a confrontation between American professional Tom Pettitt and his English counterpart Charles Saunders took place to great acclaim in May 1890.[131] The building of this court, however, revealed the idiosyncrasies of a man seeking patrician lineage rather than the persistence of a long-forgotten aristocratic game. By the 1820s, rackets had indeed decisively overtaken real tennis. It allegedly originated among the inmates of Fleet prison in London in the mid-eighteenth century and eventually spread out of its walls to find respectability in the English public schools and universities.[132] In Ireland, it was played at Trinity College and then reached the upper sections of civilian society.[133] In 1833 for example the officers of the garrison challenged the players of the Kildare Street club, an elitist gentlemen's club, to a match for £500 a side.[134] A decade later, 'the son of a nobleman, not 100 miles from Dublin, lost 270l. in a match at rackets, on Sunday last, at the new racket court' in Limerick.[135] Finally the appointment of the Earl of

[130] Maighréad Ní Mhurchadha, 'Two hundred men at tennis', p. 88; Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 323-5.
[131] *Sport*, 31 May 1890.
[132] Tony Collins, Wray Vamplew, and John Martin (eds), *Encyclopedia of traditional British rural sports* (Oxford, 2005), p. 227; Eustace Miles, *Racquets, tennis, and squash* (New York, 1903), p. 281.
[133] *Dublin Evening Packet*, 6 Aug. 1842; *Irish Times*, 6 May 1863.
[134] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 9 Aug. 1833.
[135] *Dublin Evening Packet*, 27 June 1845. This also proves that not all members of the gentry had succumbed to Sabbatarianism by 1850.

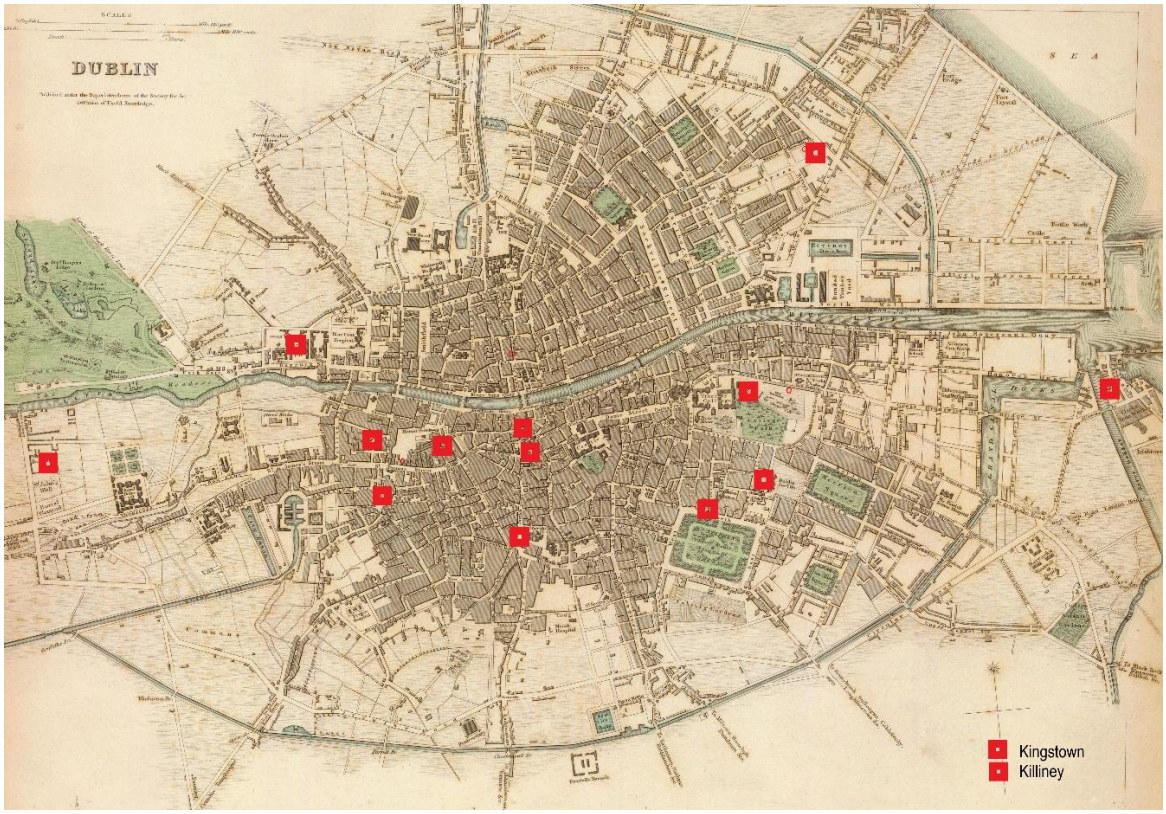
Eglinton as Lord Lieutenant in 1858 marked the high point of rackets in Ireland. An avid player, he built a covered court within the vice-regal lodge.[136]

Fives was an English name for the more generic game of handball and was essentially connected with public schools where local rules applied. Returning students probably introduced the game in Dublin University and a court was built there in the second part of the eighteenth century.[137] At St Columba's College a fives court was also built in 1855 under the impetus of the warden Rev. George Williams, an Englishman and Eton College alumnus.[138] The close links the school then entertained with their sister-establishment of Radley College in Oxfordshire might also have been an incentive to stick to the game once Rev. Williams left the college in 1856. No evidence of another dedicated fives court being built in Ireland has been uncovered so far. Without a direct link with an English institution, any attempt at introducing fives in the country merely served to enrich the local handball vernacular and traditions which were as disparate as they were popular. Both Kelly and Rouse acknowledged its resurgence across Ireland in the early nineteenth century, yet it is likely that the extent of handball's popularity in Dublin remains underestimated (figure 1.3).[139] Like other demotic sports, matches encroached on public space, could be boisterous affairs, were held on Sundays, and attracted the opprobrium of Dublin authorities in the nineteenth century.[140] In 1823, for example, there were complaints that 'the wall of the splendid New Stores belonging to the Custom House [was] battered by hand-ball playing'.[141] Handball, however, fitted the urban fabric and was more difficult to dislodge than football and hurling, which required large amounts of space and players alike. Crucially it retained the support of influential sections of society. Upper-class institutions such as the Pembroke BC had a court built for their members.[142] The military establishment also tacitly supported handball. Barracks and prisons yards provided ready-made courts for rank-and-file soldiers or inmates while officers could avail of a refurbished Royal Garrison racket

[136] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 11 June 1858. The Earl of Eglinton was an enthusiastic player and built the first covered racket court in the early 1840s in Scotland. The court still exists.
[137] West, *The bold collegians*, pp 6-7.
[138] Tom McElligott, *The story of handball* (Dublin, 1984), p. 16.
[139] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 109; Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 339-40.
[140] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 337-8; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 24 Sept. 1822. On that occasion the police arrested twenty people gathered on a Sunday near St Patrick's cathedral.
[141] *Dublin Correspondent*, 7 Aug. 1823.
[142] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/1, 6 Apr. 1846.

court near Christ Church after 1839.[143] Finally, handball began to appear in schools, where it became a welcome and affordable addition to calisthenics, bowling, or sea bathing.[144]

Figure 1.3: Dedicated ball courts, 1830-49.



Note: the courts on Winetavern Street and Thomas Court were possibly not in use any more by the 1840s. Only one square has been allotted per venue, regardless of how many courts were built. There were at least two courts within the Royal Barracks, the Four Courts Marshalsea and at Aldborough house.

Pedestrianism and foot racing

In common with the rest of Ireland and Britain, running, walking, leaping or throwing had been an important, if casual, part of the leisure spectrum in Dublin since early

[143] National Archives of Ireland, CSO/RP/1831/2733/5, letter from William Logan, dated 23 July 1823; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 8 Nov. 1839; Frank Cullen, *Dublin 1847, city of the Ordnance Survey* (Dublin, 2015), p. 95.
[144] *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 7 June 1845; *Dublin Evening Packet*, 20 July 1845. Both the Rockfield Boarding School (Killiney) and the Kingstown School advertised their handball facilities.

modern times.[145] They accompanied any sort of communal gathering and especially horseracing meetings. Races at Lusk, Rush or Sandymount were invariably followed by foot or sack races in the 1840s.[146] The birthday of the Earl of Howth was likewise celebrated with horse and foot races on Howth strand.[147] Fun and good humour ruled these informal games but contests for a wager and important side betting reveal how financial gain was another source of motivation for competitors and spectators alike.[148] The range of contests and challenges defied imagination. A lost sack race between the Metal and Essex bridges (Ha'penny and Grattan bridges) had cost a man ten gallons of porter in 1822.[149] Covering blindfolded the five miles between Clontarf Crescent and the city in less than three hours earned £100 to the contestant and his backers.[150] Pedestrianism was nevertheless not immune from external influences. The celebrated feat of walking a thousand miles in a thousand hours achieved by pedestrian Robert Barclay at Newmarket in 1809 was emulated throughout Britain and Ireland in the following decades, including at the Portobello Garden in Dublin in 1844.[151] Finally, foot races were enjoyed throughout the social spectrum. In 1839, 'nearly the whole of the officers of the garrison, and many leading citizens of Dublin' witnessed Lieutenant Tuite run ten miles in less than eighty minutes.[152] Three years later, Lieutenant Peel, the nephew of Prime Minister Robert Peel, entered a wager with Major Wayward to walk fifteen miles in three hours in the Phoenix Park.[153]

Save for a race between a giant and a dwarf 'dressed in jockey costume' at the Portobello barracks in 1820, a leaping match as a side attraction to a wrestling demonstration at the Theatre Royal in 1837, and a pedestrian feat at the Portobello Tavern in 1850, there is only scant evidence of foot races taking place in enclosed venues.[154] Reasons for such an absence are difficult to find and contrast both with

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[145] Dennis Brailsford, *A taste for diversions: sport in Georgian England* (Cambridge, 1999), pp 28-30; John Burnett, *Riot, revelry and rout: sport in Lowland Scotland before 1860* (East Lothian, 2000), pp 230-3; Kelly, *Sport and Ireland*, pp 330-3; Ní Mhurchadha, 'Two hundred men at tennis', pp 100-1.
[146] *Dublin Evening Packet*, 7 Mar. 1843; *Dublin Weekly Register*, 2 Aug. 1845; *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Aug. 1845.
[147] *Dublin Monitor*, 12 July 1844; *Freeman's Journal*, 5 July 1845.
[148] Kelly, *Sport and Ireland*, p. 330.
[149] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 9 May 1822.
[150] *Dublin Observer*, 26 Apr. 1834.
[151] *Dublin Weekly Register*, 27 Apr. 1844.
[152] *Dublin Mercantile Advertiser*, 18 Oct. 1839.
[153] *Weekly Freeman's Journal*, 23 Apr. 1842.
[154] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 15 May 1820, 28 Apr. 1837; *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Jan. 1850.

the entrepreneurial acumen shown in the organisation of cockfights, ball playing or wrestling in Dublin and the eager harnessing of pedestrianism by publicans in Britain before 1850.[155]

Blood sports: cock and dog fighting

Cockfighting and bull-baiting were two highly popular activities endorsed by the gentry or civic authorities which witnessed a sharp decline in the latter part of the eighteenth century as new modes of behaviour in the public space began to emerge. Rapid demographic growth in England, and especially the younger and more urban outlook of its population, worried the rising middle class and parts of the elite who feared a breakdown of old-established social ties. The expanding commercial activity and higher wages made possible by the First Industrial Revolution were a further source of concern as licentiousness and 'luxury' spending were facilitated. The loss of American colonies in 1783 merely added to the general feeling of crisis and calls for moral regeneration were made more vocal from the 1780s.[156] One answer was the rise of a cult of sensibility which promoted humanitarian feelings. For Karen Halttunen:

> … the cult of sensibility took for its hero 'the man of feeling,' whose tender-hearted susceptibility to the torments of others was the mark of his deeply virtuous nature. The culture of sensibility steadily broadened the arena within which humanitarian feeling was encouraged to operate, extending compassion to animals and to previously despised types of persons including slaves, criminals, and the insane and generating a reformist critique of forms of cruelty that had once gone unquestioned.[157]

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[155] Emma Lile, 'Professional pedestrianism in South Wales during the nineteenth century', *The Sports Historian*, xx, no. 2 (2000), p. 95; Peter Swain, 'Pedestrianism, the public house and gambling in nineteenth-century south-east Lancashire', *Sport in History*, xxxii, no. 3 (2012), pp 399-400; Samantha-Jayne Oldfield, 'Running pedestrianism in Victorian Manchester', *Sport in History,* xxxiv, no. 2 (2014), pp 223-7.

[156] M.J.D. Roberts, *Making English morals: voluntary association and moral reform in England, 1787-1886* (Cambridge, 2004), pp 24-33.

[157] Karen Halttunen, 'Humanitarianism and the pornography of pain in Anglo-American culture', *American Historical Review*, c, no. 2 (1995), p. 303. See also Paul Langford, *A polite and commercial people: England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1992), chapter 10 and especially pp 498-505.

Old forms of entertainment which involved blood sports, but also boisterous gatherings, heavy betting or drinking, and more generally working-class participation, became suspect and resented by the middle classes.[158] Sensibility and humanitarianism were hence deeply embedded in the class structure of early nineteenth-century Britain and Ireland and used to affirm one's position both on the social ladder and at the vanguard of cultural evolution. Emma Griffin has thus convincingly explained that cruelty *per se* was not the reason behind the set of legislative measures passed in the first part of the nineteenth century to curtail blood sports. Instead, they were rooted in the reforming and progressive image middle-class Victorians legislators had of themselves.[159] The Cruelty to Animals Act, 1835 (extended to Ireland in 1837), considered to be the corner-piece of the legislation against bull-baiting, dog and cock fighting, was a cultural stamp that merely stated an established fact: bull-baiting was almost extinct and cockfighting was in severe decline, on both sides of the Irish Sea before the bill came into law.[160]

Bull-baiting was practically defunct in Ireland in the decades leading up to 1835 and the last evidence of any such staging in Dublin came from Swords in 1820 when a disgruntled neighbour complained in the columns of the *Freeman's Journal*.[161] Meanwhile the rules of cockfighting were dropped from the *Racing Calendar* in 1819 which is proof of the weakening support thitherto shown by the landed gentry.[162] The decline was progressive however and in 1820 the Cockpit Royal was moved from Essex Street to Clarendon Street, where it was still a highly sought-after venue and mains (matches between two teams) were openly advertised in the press. They were made up of individual cockfights (battles) and the side winning the most battles won the main. At the high end, cockfighting was equivalent to the largest horseracing meetings in terms of organisation, betting and stakes. In 1824, for

[158] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 157-74, 198-203, 218-33.
[159] Emma Griffin, *England's revelry: a history of popular sports and pastimes, 1660-1830* (Oxford, 2005), pp 224-34; Griffin, *Blood sport*, pp 145-51; Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 232-3.
[160] An Act to extend to Ireland the Act of the Fifth and Sixth Years of His late Majesty's Reign consolidating and amending the Laws relating to the cruel and improper Treatment of Animals, *The statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 7 William IV & 1 Victoria, 1837* (London, 1837), pp 294-5.
[161] *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Dec. 1820. Elsewhere in Ireland, there is evidence of a bull-bait in Clonmel (Tipperary) in 1822, see *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Oct. 1822 and Rouse acknowledged another one in Kilkenny as late as 1837, see Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 90.
[162] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 202-3.

example, a main between Fermanagh and Sligo was disputed over six days at the Clarendon Street cockpit for 3,000 guineas, and each of the forty battles had a twenty-guinea stake attached to it.[163] Betting possibilities were limitless. Folk cockfighting was secretive and rudimentary, but existed too.[164] Large-scale and legal cockfighting in Dublin, however, came to a stop after 1829 when the renewal of the licence of the Clarendon Street venue was made conditional on a commitment by its owner not to organise cock, dog or badger fights.[165] Such a resolution highlighted the legal and moral pressure on cockfighting before its formal interdiction and reinforces Griffin's thesis that the Cruelty to Animals Act essentially sanctioned a *fait accompli*. In subsequent decades, the pastime witnessed the decisive end of its connection with upper-class gentlemen in Dublin whereas the association lingered in rural areas.[166]

If cockfighting declined, it never disappeared and found in dogfighting a template to follow. This latter had hitherto been associated with bull-baiting but had never received the large-scale patronage from the landed gentry that could have given it an air of respectability.[167] As a result it was an almost exclusively working-class pursuit and whether the prohibition changed much the fortune of a sport already existing on the margin of society is debatable. After 1830 both pastimes survived in Dublin and had an interchangeable and exclusively working-class following.[168] Pushed underground, breeders and betters found refuge in the neighbouring countryside and in the back rooms of tenement houses or resorted to night fights to avoid prying eyes. This microcosm relied upon a few leading and devoted men who took little notice of repeated convictions. William Ruth was brought to court in 1843, 1856, 1859 and 1861 for his involvement in cockfights, including in his own property

[163] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 8 July 1824
[164] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 28 Jan. 1824.
[165] *Dublin Morning Register*, 16 Mar. 1830.
[166] Celebrated horse owners William Disney (Curragh) and Captain Goff (Roscommon) were still actively involved in cockfighting in the second part of the nineteenth century, see *Irish Times*, 30 July 1873; *Irish Sportsman*, 6 Feb. 1875. The Marquis of Waterford also patronized a cockfight at Kilworth (Cork) in 1845, *Dublin Weekly* Register, 3 May 1845. In Dublin the only exception seemed to have been a cockpit uncovered on Hammond lane in 1842 when an alleged Queen's County Deputy Lieutenant and William D. Ferrier who lived on the highly fancied Fitzwilliam Square were among the fourteen arrested parties, see *Dublin Morning Register*, 12 May 1842
[167] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 234-5.
[168] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 9 Dec. 1837, 3 May 1864; *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Feb, 1840, 15 Mar. 1853, 29 July 1858; *Dublin Daily Express*, 6 May 1856.

on Essex Street.[169] John Coyne, a butcher from Cole's Lane (now the ILAC centre), was arrested twice for cockfighting and three times for dogfighting in the latter 1850s.[170] The degree of organisation necessary to sustain these pastimes has been overlooked but was significant. The logistics employed in bringing 'not less than one or two thousand people' to a cockfight near Shankill in 1843 contradicts any idea of an impromptu and marginal activity.[171] Crucially, a degree of proto-commercialisation was also observed. James Harvey conceded in 1836 to regularly staging badger fights on Monday nights in Red Cow's Lane, 'when the labouring men have the halfpence.'[172] In 1840, James Heavy (possibly the same person) admitted 'that he derived a good livelihood' from organising badger-baiting in his room near St Patrick's cathedral.[173] Likewise a publican of Johnson's Court was brought to court in 1843 for repeatedly setting dogs upon each other in his establishment.[174]

There is enough evidence of the survival of cock and dog fights in Dublin in subsequent decades to affirm that a subculture existed and carried the pastime on from one generation to another (figure 1.4). Questionable too was the extent to which the police were able to efficiently put a stop to such practices and whether judges really sought to strike a hard line against offenders. Maximum sentences were not prohibitive and spectators, if caught, could expect to be a few shillings out of pocket by the end of the trial.[175] Yet there were no lifelines available to counter the progressive loss of support for these sports. The legislation surely became more prescriptive as the nineteenth century went by and, bar its hard-core supporters, no one else really wished to revive or modernise the traditional pastimes of cock and dog fighting.

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[169] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 14 Mar. 1843; *Catholic Telegraph*, 16 Aug. 1856; *Evening Freeman*, 19 Apr. 1859; *Dublin Daily Express*, 4 June 1861.
[170] *Dublin Daily Express*, 6 May 1856, 4 June 1861; *Catholic Telegraph*, 16 Aug. 1856; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 25 Aug. 1856; *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Feb. 1860.
[171] *Saunder's News-Letter*, 14 Mar. 1843. Dogfighting could also attract crowds of several hundreds and side betting of over £500, see *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Apr. 1837
[172] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 9 Dec. 1836.
[173] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Feb. 1840.
[174] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 31 Jan. 1843.
[175] Neal Garnham, 'The survival of popular blood sports in Victorian Ulster', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, cvii C, 2007, pp 109-13; Hayes, 'From ludicrous to logical', p. 88.

Figure 1.4: Cock, dog, and prize fights in Dublin and vicinity, 1810-69.

	Cockfight	Dog/Badger fight	Prize-fight
1800-9	18	-	-
1810-9	15	-	2
1820-9	21	1	4
1830-9	1	5	3
1840-9	6	3	4
1850-9	4	2	8
1860-9	4	5	8
Total	15 (after 1830)	16	29

Note: Included are the fights which went to a finish or were foiled by the police when the contestants were on the ground, either during or immediately before a bout. Most of the legal cockfights (pre-1830) took place over six days whereas the illegal affairs were concluded in a few hours. In 1854, a prize-fight involving Dubliners taking place at Greenogue, on the Meath side of the Meath/Dublin border, has been accounted in this table.

Combat sports: pugilism and wrestling

Among combat sports in nineteenth-century Ireland, fencing was reserved to an aristocratic minority and was privately taught in gymnastic academies where it remained throughout the century largely as a status symbol.[176] Cudgelling (single-stick fighting) sat uneasily at the intersection of sport, faction fighting and recreational violence.[177] Especially associated with fairs and communal gatherings, it remained a component of the Dublin sporting world in the late eighteenth century:

[176] *Dublin Morning Register*, 28 Apr. 1826; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 4 Feb. 1829; *Dublin Evening Packet*, 9 Sept. 1841.
[177] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 53; Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 283-4; *Dublin Evening Post*, 26 Aug. 1779.

> In the fields opposite the houses [of Merrion Square], it was usual for groups to assemble on Sunday evenings, to entertain themselves with cudgel playing, wrestling, and other gymnastic exercises. These groups were generally composed of over-grown chairmen, pampered footmen, stable-boys, helpers from the adjacent gentlemen's houses; and what is not a little strange, their masters suffered this profanation of the Sabbath, almost under their very noses, much to their dishonour.[178]

Essentially a demotic pastime, cudgelling was also taught 'as usual' alongside small and broad swords in the city's fencing academies, highlighting here both its appeal among a few aristocratic gentlemen and its usefulness for self-defence.[179] Eventually a renewed emphasis on the commercial rather than leisure role of fairs throughout the country, a more efficient policing of the city and its population, and possibly changing popular tastes, led to the disappearance of cudgelling from the Dublin sporting world by the mid-nineteenth century.

Wrestling and pugilism became then the most important fighting sports and remained so until the 1890s, despite falling foul of the law on the count of affray, riotous assembly, gambling, or breaking the Sabbath.[180] Pugilism (also called prize-fighting) was a forerunner of modern-day boxing which was contested using bare knuckles and without time limit, making it a contest of endurance as much as strength and skill.[181] Its heyday in England, as in Ireland, was during the Regency period, when larger-than-life characters and aristocratic support allowed the sport to prosper.[182] After cutting their teeth on the local scene, talented Irish fighters such as Peter Corcoran or Jack Langan went on to pursue their careers in England, where they earned a brief notoriety.[183] Dan Donnelly's fame, on the other hand, was inversely proportional to his fighting skills. He started his career in style by beating

[178] *Dublin Evening Post*, 15 May 1787.
[179] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 7 Nov. 1807.
[180] Jack Anderson, 'Pugilistic prosecutions: prize fighting and the courts in nineteenth century Britain', *The Sports Historian*, xxi, no. 2 (2001), pp 36-43.
[181] Kasia Boddy, *Boxing, a cultural history* (London, 2019, second edition), pp 91-2,145-6.
[182] Dennis Brailsford, *Bareknuckles: a social history of prize-fighting* (Cambridge, 1988), pp 23-32; Anderson, 'Pugilistic prosecutions', pp 36-7.
[183] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 99-101; Jim Shanahan, 'Langan, John (Jack)', https://dib.ie, accessed 10 Aug. 2021; Patrick M. Geoghegan, 'Corcoran, Peter', https://dib.ie, accessed 10 Aug. 2021.

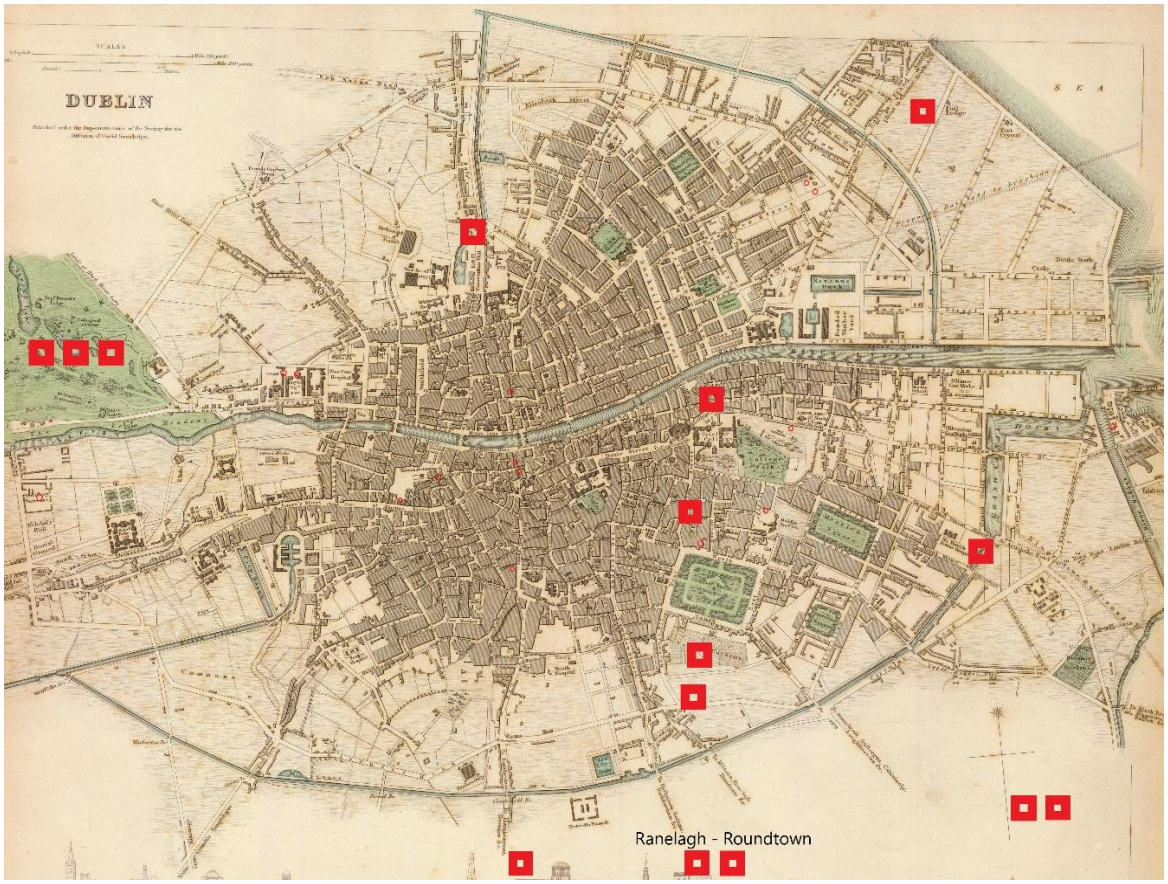
two Englishmen in quick succession at the Curragh in 1814 and 1815 but never lived up to the hype afterwards and only achieved minor victories. Yet he was the man of the people, adulated in his own city of Dublin and his dissolute life only added to a legend that still lingers on two centuries later.[184] Behind the glamorous names were pugilists who scraped a few pounds by going to and from England trying to find an adequate match. Simon Byrne fought an Englishman at Dunboyne in 1826, and then beat Scottish fighter Sandy McKay in 1830 near Northampton.[185] A decade later Mick Hayden was another of these journeymen. Between September 1841 and August 1842, he beat a Donnybrook blacksmith near Tallaght and took on Jem Byrne (brother of Simon) at Peamount before accepting an engagement in Liverpool.[186] The job was thankless and dangerous. Sandy McKay died from the blows received at the hand of Simon Byrne, who, in turn, met his death in the ring three years later.[187] Yet young men still pursued a career in search of a glory and wealth reserved to only a few.

Wrestling appealed to the same plebeian public as pugilism but was much more embedded in Dubliners' lives. Prize-fights, if highly anticipated and reported in the press, were by nature irregular and relied on a few well-known faces to carry the flag. Wrestling, on the other hand, was then regularly held on the outskirts of the city (figure 1.5). The contention by James Kelly that in early nineteenth-century Ireland, wrestling was 'an occasional rather than a regular activity' and lost its independence from pugilism has been contradicted by Paul Dunning, who believes it survived long into the nineteenth century.[188] Evidence in Dublin, if sketchy, sides with the latter. In 1811, wrestling bouts went 'for years back' on Sunday evenings near the Broadstone aqueduct and involved fighters from different counties, the

[184] Paul Rouse, 'Donnelly, Dan', https://dib.ie, accessed 10 Aug. 2021; Patrick Myler, *Regency Rogue: Dan Donnelly, his life and legends* (Dublin, 1976), pp 171-87; Neal Garnham, '"To die with honour or gain the day": Dan Donnelly as an Irish sporting hero', *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxvii, no. 148 (2011), pp 535-6.
[185] *Freeman's Journal*, 8 May 1826; *Pilot*, 7 June 1830.
[186] *Dublin Morning Register*, 23 Sept. 1841, 3 Jan. 1842; *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Feb. 1942, 21 Nov. 1842; *Dublin Evening Post*, 30 Aug. 1842.
[187] *Dublin Morning Register*, 23 July 1830; *Pilot*, 5 June 1833. At the subsequent trial Simon Byrne was found not guilty following the evidence forwarded by McKay's surgeon. This latter stated 'that his death had been caused by the blood flowing into his head, from the improper manner in which he had been carried from the field, and not by the blows he received there.'
[188] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 310-1; Paul Dunning, 'Hardy Fingallians, Kildare trippers and "the Divil Ye'll Rise" scufflers, wrestling in modern Ireland', *Sport in Society*, xix, no. 1 (2016), p. 117.

winner defending his honour next time round.[189] Wrestling then possibly took place on a weekly basis near Harcourt Street and in the Phoenix Park in the 1820s and 1830s.[190] These, and other bouts, regularly attracted over a thousand spectators.[191]

Figure 1.5: Locations of wrestling bouts recorded in Dublin, 1810-40.



Note: The bouts at the Theatre Royal (Hawkins St), Central Gymnasium (Grafton St) and Coburg Garden were advertised in the press beforehand and must have charged admission.

The characteristics of wrestling in mid-nineteenth-century Dublin were encapsulated in a fight organised at the Central Gymnasium in March 1837.[192] The contest, held

[189] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 19 June 1811.
[190] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 26 Jan. 1821; *Dublin Observer*, 9 May 1835. Even if the frequency of wrestling has been exaggerated by journalists anxious to amplify the threat of rioting or gambling, it is plausible that it remained a popular pastime.
[191] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 19 June 1811, 11 Jan. 1828; *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Apr. 1824, 11 Apr. 1827; *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 14 June 1834.
[192] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 13 Mar. 1837.

under collar and elbow rules, indicates that in common with pugilism, wrestling had pre-established rules. Those were unwritten and subject to local interpretations but were 'customarily accepted and understood when diffused orally and inter-generationally.'[193] The collar and elbow style came to dominate wrestling in Ireland and was also used at a match held at the Theatre Royal in April 1837 between the 'champion of Meath' and an Englishman.[194] The familiarity of Irishmen with an English code of rules is similarly demonstrated by the adoption of 'the Devonshire and Cornish system' at a tournament held at the Coburg Garden between contestants from counties Dublin, Meath, Wicklow and Kildare.[195] Secondly, the evening at the Central Gymnasium was an all-ticket event 'made by two gentlemen of Meath and Dublin, each backing the champion of their county for 20l.'. With admission at one or two shillings 'with a view to respectability', it was in line with attractions then on offer at the Theatre Royal, Rotunda Rooms or Portobello Gardens but especially indicates that wrestling had retained some level of support within the middle and upper classes up to the late 1830s. This degree of commercialisation was, however, not as pronounced as in prize-fighting, where the habit of the sparring contest was by then firmly established to sustain pugilists between fights.[196] Finally, this match took place because 'a difference of opinion has existed for some years as to the superiority of these counties in this manly exercise.' Whereas prize-fighting rivalries were expressed in a national or ethnic context, wrestling in Leinster was articulated around counties.[197] County or even more localised rivalry fuelled general interest and eased the proto-commercialisation of the pastime. In informal bouts, it became a pretext for faction fighting and recreational violence. Thousands of Meath and Kildare countrymen assembled in June 1834 in the Phoenix Park to watch their champions wrestle. It remains unknown whether what ensued was planned or spontaneous:

For some time the wrestlers were permitted to exhibit their skill in 'shinning

[193] Gunning, 'Hardy Fingallians', p. 113. In pugilism, the Broughton rules were written in 1743 and then evolved into the London Prize Ring rules (1838, revised in 1853).
[194] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 28 Apr. 1837.
[195] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 14 June 1837.
[196] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 305-7; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 18 July and 6 Sept. 1820.
[197] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 June 1837. The allegiance to county remained strong throughout the nineteenth century and a tournament involving these four counties was held at the Lansdowne Road grounds in 1877, see *Irish Times*, 27 Mar. 1877.

and tripping,' and no tendency to a general conflict was evinced until about seven o'clock. At this juncture a Meath man, who keeps a public-house in Smithfield, interrupted a 'match,' declaring that his countryman had not met with fair play from his Kildare antagonist. The publican was knocked down, and this became the signal for a general fight. Shillelaghs, which up to this period had been concealed under frieze coats, were now drawn forth, and a furious attack was commenced of one party against the other. For five or six minutes the belligerents fought, and broken heads were given and received, without any churlish disposition being evinced by either party of sneaking off without returning freely quite as much as they got.[198]

Non-competitive and utilitarian recreations: gymnastics and swimming

The largely non-competitive recreations of gymnastic and bathing drew their legitimacy from their utilitarian values. Gymnastics and calisthenics in early nineteenth-century Ireland followed the continental fashions as European instructors were enticed to provide theoretical and practical teaching. The two leading instructors in the city in the 1820s and 1830s, Frenchman J. A. Beaujeu and Swiss-born Louis Huguenin, readily acknowledged the philosophical and scientific foundations of the discipline and their debt to philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau or to the late eighteenth-century precursors of modern gymnastics, Christian Salzmann, Clément Tissot or Johann GutsMuths: a healthy body was a requisite for a healthy mind. Regular exercise prevented illness and then became essential in the development of the young.[199] Beaujeu paved the way in the Royal Hibernian Military School from 1824 onwards. He introduced gymnastics to boys and girls alike while running a gymnasium in the city with his wife, seemingly with success as the

[198] *Dublin Evening Packet*, 12 June 1834. Passers-by were also the victim of random violence and policemen breaking up parties of wrestlers and their supporters could expect retaliation, see *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Apr. 1824; *Dublin Observer,* 9 May 1835.
[199] Louis Huguenin, *Treatise on physical education, founded on physiological principles: by Louis Huguenin* (Liverpool, 1850), pp 32-3; J.A. Beaujeu, *A treatise on gymnastic exercises, or calisthenics, for the use of young ladies: Introduced at the Royal Hibernian Military School, also at the Seminary for the Education of Young Ladies, under the direction of Miss Hincks, in 1824* (Dublin, 1828), pp 1-15; Janice Suffolk Todd, 'Physical culture and the body beautiful: an examination of the role of purposive exercises in the lives of American women, 1800-1870' (PhD Thesis, University of Texas, 1995), pp 70-5.

school's surgeon observed a significant improvement in the girls' health during his tenure and other schools looked out for instructors acquainted with his principles.[200] After his accidental death in 1828, Huguenin inherited his position.[201] Like his predecessor, he proved himself at the Royal Hibernian Military School, in no fewer than four other establishments in the 1830s and in his Grafton Street gymnasium, run jointly with his wife, where ladies and gentlemen took classes.[202] He worked alongside fencing instructor Jacques Satelle at the Bective House seminary and upon Huguenin's departure for Liverpool in the 1840s, Satelle became the leading fencing and gymnastics instructor in the city and was in turn succeeded by his son Samuel in the 1860s.[203] The benefits of physical education in schools were outlined as early as 1826 by the Commissioners of Education in Ireland, yet implementing this policy was left to the discretion of schoolmasters.[204] By and large, schools under the National Board of Education (1831) did not avail of gymnastics or drill classes until the last decade of the century (when they were made compulsory) but private establishments eagerly promoted their calisthenic classes to prospective students.[205] The anchorage of gymnastics into the educational and scientific discourse presented girls and women with a rare outlet for formal physical activity. This was controversial but it gathered support, notably among the medical profession, and eventually proved acceptable because discipline, or the cultivation of body and mind, was clearly emphasised over leisure.[206] From its inception in schools, gymnastics then spread to civilian society, but instead of evolving into the politicised mass movements of continental Europe, it became associated in Dublin

[200] James Macauley, *Observations on Gymnastics, and the Gymnasium* (Dublin, 1828), pp 8-9. He remarked a decrease of twenty percent in the admission of females in hospital, while results are less marked for boys. See also *Dublin Morning Register*, 24 July 1827.
[201] National Archives of Ireland, CSO/RP/1828/1637/1, letter from George Spottiswood, dated 8 Nov. 1828.
[202] Conor Heffernan, 'Physical culture in Ireland, 1893 to 1939' (PhD thesis, University College Dublin, 2019), p. 26; *Pilot*, 6 Nov. 1829; *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Oct. 1833, *Saunders's News-Letter*, 23 Feb. 1828, 13 Aug. 1836, Huguenin also taught at the Feinaiglian Institution, Smyth's school, Crawford's school, Flynn's school, and the Bective House seminary.
[203] *Dublin Evening Packet*, 8 June 1834; *Dublin Morning Register*, 6 Aug. 1836; *Freeman's Journal*, 6 May 1870.
[204] Heffernan, *The history of physical culture*, p. 98.
[205] Ibid., p. 94. Among establishments were a St Stephen's Green 'Academy for Young Ladies', a 'select seminary' in Kingstown, another seminary on Lower Mount Street, and Prospect House in Sandymount. See *Saunders's News-Letter*, 2 Sept. 1843, 27 July 1846; *Dublin Evening Packet*, 9 May 1844; *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Oct. 1848.
[206] Heffernan, 'Physical culture in Ireland', pp 23-6. Huguenin's method was endorsed by several Dublin physicians, see Huguenin, *Treatise of physical education*, pp 5-18, 61-8.

with more genteel activities: deportment, ballroom dancing and fencing.[207] Academies and private teachers flourished in the city in the 1830s and targeted the elite which could afford expensive private tuition for both men and women and was under social pressure to respect high society's etiquette and be *au fait* with the latest fashionable developments.[208]

Figure 1.6: John P. Laporte, *Dublin Bay from Clontarf*, 1796.



Source: British Museum, *Catalogue of Maps, Prints, Drawing, etc., forming the geographical and topographical collection attached to the Library of his late Majesty King George the third, etc.* (London, 1829). Note: two bathing boxes are clearly distinguishable on the strand. They were pulled into the water by horses, so women could change and enter water without being seen.

Swimming, or more exactly submerging oneself in water, was an ancillary activity

[207] Heffernan, 'Physical culture in Ireland', pp 4-5.
[208] *Dublin Evening Packet*, 11 Mar. 1828, 31 Oct. 1833, 8 Nov. 1849; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 31 Dec. 1836, 29 Sept. 1837, 28 Oct. 1839, 3 June 1843; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 29 Oct. 1841; *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Feb. 1846.

which took place along the Dublin shoreline. John Rocque's map of 1760 clearly depicted permanent baths built at Irishtown and Blackrock as well as a bath house at Killiney.[209] By then, bathing had become increasingly fashionable and upmarket seaside resorts profited from this rise in interest.[210] In the early nineteenth century, baths were built at Sandymount, Blackrock and Booterstown.[211] As the building of the railway line between Dublin and Kingstown cut off their access from the sea, they disappeared and were almost immediately replaced by the three 'Dublin and Kingstown Railway Baths', built and let by the railway company, at Blackrock, Williamstown and Salt-Hill.[212] In the northside, the East Wall baths were put out of business by land reclamation in the 1820s, yet Clontarf bay retained a permanent infrastructure after the Royal Charter School (Clontarf Road) was transformed into the Kingscourt baths in 1831.[213]

Swimming was a universal activity enjoyed across the social, age and gender spectrum and was, by far, the recreation most availed of by Dubliners. This was, however, a segregated physical activity. Commercial baths attracted the rising middle classes whose growing income and status allowed them to budget for leisure. The elite and professional classes largely retired to the privacy of country houses fitted with private bathing lodges or enjoyed the facilities offered by the Royal Hotel in Malahide.[214] Finally the sea, Liffey, Tolka, or canals provided free (and more hazardous) bathing facilities for children, soldiers, craftsmen, and servants.[215] The trend towards sexual separation among the middle and upper classes which became pervasive in nineteenth century Britain was already observed. Rocque's maps clearly distinguished men's and women's baths. Bathing

[209] John Rocque, *An actual survey of the County of Dublin, on the same scale as those of Middlesex, Oxford, Barks, Buckinghamshire* (Dublin, 1860), https://libguides.ucd.ie/findingmaps/mapshistDublin, accessed 24 Feb. 2021.
[210] Christopher Love, 'An overview of the development of swimming in England, c.1750-1918', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxiv, no. 5 (2007), pp 570-1; Frank Keohane, *Former Merrion Baths, Sandymount Strand, Dublin 4* (Conservation Report to Dublin City Council, 2015), p. 25.
[211] Keohane*, Former Merrion Baths*, pp 27-8. In the 1840s, another bathing facility was built at Sandycove.
[212] *Dublin Morning Register*, 28 Apr. 1838.
[213] Bernardine Ruddy: 'Clontarf Baths', pp 27-8; 1847 OSI Maps, City of Dublin, Sheet 16, https://digital.ucd.ie/view/ucdlib:40377, accessed 25 Feb. 2021.
[214] *Dublin Evening Post*, 2 Sept. 1845. Bathing lodges pre-dated most bathing infrastructures and were a selling argument in latter eighteenth century, see *Saunders's News-Letter*, 12 Sept. 1782, 27 Aug. 1789, 8 Aug. 1793, 26 May 1795.
[215] *Saunders' News-Letter*, 2 Sep. 1829; *Freeman's Journal*, 12 July 1833, 8 Aug. 1840, 19 July 1842, 1 Aug. 1843.

boxes, installed at Irishtown, Clontarf and Howth, also allowed women to change and enter the water without being observed (figure 1.6).[216] Bathing's popularity and segregation was thus basically, if accurately, reported by statistician Edward Wakefield in 1812:

> When the winter is over, the lord-lieutenant retires to the Phoenix Park, and during the summer visits occasionally the nobility and principal gentry. The aristocracy, who had assembled in Dublin, return to their country seats; and the families of lawyers, merchants, and trades-people, if their circumstances admit of it, retire to their villas near the sea; those whose circumstances forbid this gratification, crowd into lodging near the coast; and those who cannot afford either, content themselves with bathing, a luxury which they very much enjoy. Thousands may be seen every morning between Dublin and the Black Rock, and on the shore of Clontarf, going into the water to 'wash.'[217]

The societal encouragement working-class bathing received in the nineteenth century was rooted in the humanitarian and reforming values which grew in the late eighteenth century and contrasted with the ongoing assaults on other demotic pastimes. Swimming was a life-saving skill promoted in Britain by the Royal Humane Society (1774) and reaffirmed by the creation of the National Swimming Society (1837).[218] Regular bathing meanwhile was seen as having medical benefits, offset the negativities brought by industrialisation and urbanisation, prevented epidemics, and promoted personal cleanliness which 'was believed to be an indicator of good social behaviour.'[219] The passing of the Baths and Washhouses Act in 1846 in England and Ireland was a further step to encourage the provision of affordable swimming pools and baths by municipal authorities.[220] Initially only patchily availed

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[216] *Freeman's Journal*, 17 May 1836, 18 Aug. 1845, 18 Sept. 1845, 27 June 1851.
[217] Edward Wakefield, *An account of Ireland, vol. II*, p. 789.
[218] Christopher Love, '"Whomsoever you see in distress": swimming, saving life and the rise of royal life saving society', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxiv, no. 5 (2007), pp 667-8.
[219] Claire Parker, 'Improving the "condition" of the people: the health of Britain and the provision of public baths 1840-1870', *The Sports Historian*, xx, no. 2 (2000), pp 24-8. See also Keohane, *Former Merrion Baths*, p. 24.
[220] 'An Act for promoting the voluntary Establishment in Boroughs and certain Cities and Towns in Ireland of public Baths and Wash-houses', *The statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 9 & 10 Victoria, 1846* (London 1846), pp 516-24; Christopher Love, 'Local aquatic empires:

of throughout England, they were meant to complement the commercial or philanthropic private initiatives which had sprung up in previous decades.[221] Commercial warm baths then existed in Dublin but the corporation was also fully aware of the inadequate bathing and washing facilities in the working-class district of the Liberties. The passing of the Act was welcomed, yet early good resolutions were dashed within a year.[222] At £5,000, the undertaking was believed to be too costly to build and there were no guarantees that the Board of Works would lend such a sum to the corporation. Additionally, the doubt whether the venture would be sufficiently commercially viable to repay the loan and interest defeated the project.[223] The failure of Dublin municipal authorities to build public baths and washhouses until the mid-1880s compared badly with other British cities and was only ameliorated by charities stepping in. Months after the corporation's project fell through, the Mendicity Institution launched its own project to transform a part of their building on Usher's Island into warm baths and washhouses.[224] Opened in 1851, they accommodated nearly nineteen thousand visitors by 1860.[225]

The array of pastimes enjoyed by Dubliners before 1850 was wide and varied. All classes, ages and sexes were involved as actors or spectators, but did not take part in the same recreations nor at the same time. For a few dozen devotee archers, there were thousands of regular bathers. The simplicity of a foot race contrasted with the intricacies of breeding racehorses or the arithmetic of rounding bets. Killing hares and foxes was authorized on the ground of vermin-control, killing cocks, dogs, or badgers for sport was however illegal. The influx of military officers following the passing of the Act of Union and the friendly relationship they entertained with the Irish upper classes helped foster English elite games that were known in Ireland yet not widely practised. Conversely, the growth of the city and new conceptions of morality in public life precipitated a decline in popular sports which had hitherto taken place in its streets. This overview has shown how pastimes were not fixed in

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the municipal provision of swimming pools in England, 1828-1918', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxiv, no. 5 (2007), pp 620-1.
[221] Parker, 'Improving the "condition"', pp 30-5.
[222] *Dublin Weekly Nation*, 10 Oct. 1846.
[223] *Freeman's Journal*, 14 May 1847, 22 June 1847, 21 Aug. 1847.
[224] *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Sept. 1848. The cost of the transformation was estimated at £500.
[225] *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Apr. 1851, 23 Mar. 1860.

time and place but were framed by society's broader evolutions. As a traditional world of leisure coexisted alongside modern forms of recreation, further questions arise. Why did people play? Which forces underpinned the existence of games and pastimes in the early nineteenth century? And what does it tell us about Dublin? The second part of this chapter will attempt to answer them.

3- Fun, excitement, and a day out

People played because they enjoyed it. Writer and folklorist William Carleton wrote thus of his growing up in County Tyrone in the 1810s:

> I now mingled in the sports and pastimes of the people, until indulgence in them became the predominant passion of my youth. Throwing the stone, wrestling, leaping, foot-ball, and every other description of athletic exercise filled up the measure of my early happiness. I attended every wake, dance, fair, and merry-making in the neighbourhood, and became so celebrated for dancing hornpipes, jigs, and reels, that I was soon without a rival in the parish.[226]

The pleasure derived from recreational activities was impervious to class, age, or creed. Hurling was a 'wild and exhilarating game', a 'national and spirit-stirring sport.'[227] Conversely there was 'much quiet amusement in angling, a rich field of enjoyment to those who […] could appreciate the scenery as well as the sport'.[228] The thrill of the chase and the excitement of horseracing best described elitist sports:

> The Garrison Races terminated on Wednesday, and we feel confident that every lover of the turf must have returned from the Park on that day gratified

[226] William Carleton, *Traits and stories of the Irish peasantry* (London, 1852), xv-xvi.
[227] *Dublin Monitor*, 27 Feb. 1841
[228] *Dublin Monitor*, 13 Nov. 1838.

> in the highest degree by the quantity and quality of the sport that was there provided for their amusement; but, like school-boys, we lament the limits of our enjoyment and look forward with delight to our next vacation.[229]

Recreation was about simple pleasure too. Dancing at the Palmerstown fair in 1810 was 'not done with the grace of Vestris or Angiolini perhaps, but to the full with as much spirit.'[230] Bathing, for all its therapeutic properties, was above all a matter of fun:

> The vicinity of the city to the sea, and the lovely and inviting coast which surrounds it, are attractions which have universal influence. The whole population of Dublin seem to crowd the water in the summer months, and all ranks and ages think bathing a specific for the preservation of health or the cure of distemper. [..] The swarm of naked figures thus seen on the shore from Ringsend to Sandymount is as singular as it is surprising, while the noise and sportive merriment seem to indicate that it is not practised so much for health as festive recreation. It is supposed that 20,000 people bathe every tide in Dublin-bay during the summer months, and many continue the practice through the winter.[231]

The physical exercise, the excitement, the tension and the competition appealed to actors and spectators alike.[232] Recreations provided a respite from work, a loosening of social conventions, and free-flowing feelings could momentarily remove the boundaries of accepted behaviours. In 1845, a cockfight near Fermoy (Cork) under the patronage of the Marquis of Waterford presented such an opportunity:

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[229] *Dublin Monitor*, 19 Sept. 1842.
[230] John Gamble, *Sketches of history, politics, and manners, in Dublin, and the north of Ireland, in 1810* (London, 1811), p. 44.
[231] John Warburton, James Whitelaw, and Robert Walsh, *History of the city of Dublin from the earliest accounts to the present time: containing its annals, antiquities, ecclesiastical history, and charters: its present extent, public buildings, schools, institutions, &c. to which are added biographical notices of eminent men, and copious appendices of its population, revenue, commerce, and literature* (London, 1818), pp 1173-4.
[232] Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, pp 107-8.

> Several magistrates, with a party of police and Rifles, attended, and informed the gentlemen assembled of the illegal nature of their intended sport, and that they were determined to enforce the penalty if they persisted. It was resolved on, however, to proceed, and when the sport became exhilarating, the magistrates forgot the nonce their controlling functions, and became as eager and interested spectators of the fun as the police, the military, or any civilian on the ground![233]

The 'great deal of amusement' and 'shouts of laughter' seen and heard at race meetings were essentially connected to the sports then taking place.[234] There was much more to it, however. In England, Huggins has described how the Boat Race was 'a social event with ritualised and theatrical aspects, a cultural and communal expression of pleasurable leisure.'[235] This was where 'men, women and children of all classes put on their finest clothes for the occasion' and 'dance, bawl or turn away in sheer excitement.' Likewise, the Derby meeting 'presented its sporting pleasures as an abundance, with amenities in the grand style, an occasion for the relaxing of inhibitions, for gambling, sexual licence, overindulgence in food and alcoholic drink, loud music, fighting and folly.'[236] With fairs, which will be looked at in detail in the following section, horseracing was the greatest form of secular festival in early nineteenth-century Ireland.[237] German traveller Johann Georg Kohl vividly described the atmosphere he witnessed at the Kilkenny races and similar scenes were observed in Dublin.[238] The Earl of Howth threw open his demesne to the population at annual race meetings in the 1830s. Travelling for hours was part of the experience for 'the gentry and peasantry of the counties of Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, and Meath' who thronged the venue in their thousands.[239] Earthly pleasures dominated the day. While the Earl entertained his friends to a '*déjeuner à la fourchette'*, 'the green was full of peripatetic tavern keepers, who for a trifling

[233] *Dublin Weekly Register*, 3 May 1845.
[234] *Dublin Morning Register*, 12 Oct. 1840; *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Mar. 1844. Here a hackney and sack race at the Sandymount strand races.
[235] Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, p. 85.
[236] Ibid., p. 86.
[237] Rouse, *Sport and Ireland*, pp 53-4 and 104-6.
[238] Kohl, *Travels in Ireland*, pp 196-205.
[239] *Freeman's Journal*, 13 Sept. 1839.

sum refreshed the "rural swans."'[240] The music, bunting, and socialising went hand in hand with most pastimes. On regatta days 'there was evidence that rigid sobriety was not the order of the night just elapsed' and the Pembroke Boat Club took great care to offer a good déjeuner to the subscribers of their regatta.[241]

The association of a day out and enjoyment with the traditional world of play is essential to understanding the popularity of pastimes. It applied differently to the dedicated sports clubs which appeared in the early nineteenth century. The communal sodality which bound early modern societies gave way to mediated and privatised forms of congeniality. Within this institutionalisation of leisure, clubs circumscribed the socialisation to their members and associates, yet replicated ancillary modes of amusement. In the latter 1840s, members of the Pembroke BC could meet in the club's premises to play handball or chess.[242] Subscribers to sailing clubs found in their clubhouses all the attributes of a first-class gentlemen's club: dining, cigar and billiard rooms. Conviviality and good humour ruled the day and members enjoyed the opportunity to dine and drink together, often to excess.[243] This was nowhere more evident than among hunting societies, where alcohol consumption was inextricable from the chase, and breakfasts, dinners, and balls were eagerly looked forward to.[244] The pleasure derived from sport thus fundamentally explains why it was partaken of. Other elements contributed to determine how, where, and when it took place and how that affected the surrounding city. Among them, traditions and established customs prevailed.

4- Fairs, patterns, and their decline

Fairs, patterns, or holidays had concentrated the attention of the population around

[240] *Dublin Morning Register*, 2 June 1831; *Freeman's Journal*, 2 June 1831.
[241] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/1, 27 July 1839; Mun/Club/Boat/2a, 15 June 1841; *Freeman's Journal*, 22 July 1828.
[242] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/1, 12 Feb. 1845; Ibid., Mun/Club/Boat/2a, 18 Sept. 1847.
[243] D'Arcy, *Horses*, p. 110.
[244] *Memoir of the Kilkenny Hunt* (Dublin, 1897), p. 17; Mayo and Boulton, *A history of the Kildare Hunt*, p. 94; *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Oct. 1838; Martyn J. Powell, 'Hunting clubs and societies', in Kelly and Powell, *Clubs and societies*, pp 399-402

specific dates in the calendar since the Middle Ages. They were embedded in the fabric of community and fulfilled a religious, commercial, and increasingly a recreative role.[245] From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, this traditional conception of the calendar became challenged by the urbanisation and industrialisation of British and Irish society, but also by a shift in behavioural expectations promoted by reforming religious movements, Protestant and Catholic alike.[246]

In early nineteenth-century Dublin, popular gatherings were still prominent. Bonfires were lit in the city in 1825 to celebrate May Day (*Bealtaine*). A decade later, Harold's Cross publicans erected a May pole in place of a poplar tree which had replaced a still older May pole.[247] Celebrations were elaborate in the northern village of Finglas:

> The revels consisted of climbing the pole; running after a pig with a shaved and well-soaped tail, which was let loose in the middle of the throng; grinning through horse-collars for tobacco; leaping and running in sacks; foot races for men and women; dancing reels, jigs, and hornpipes; ass races, in which each person rode or drove his neighbour's beast, the last being declared the winner; blindfolded men trying to catch a bell-ringer; and also wrestling, hopping, and leaping.[248]

Some festivals were more recent inventions. In the southern coastal village of Dalkey, for example, the election of the King of Dalkey was a mock ceremony whose origins lay in a gentlemen's society in the 1780s.[249] Initially an annual occurrence, the festival lapsed after 1797 and was only revived in 1850. What might originally have been a select assembly became a true popular festival and the coronation was followed by 'rural games of all sorts, running matches, climbing a pole, wheelbarrow races, and the like, which prolonged the amusements to an advanced hour of the

[245] Robert W. Malcolmson, *Popular recreations in English society 1700-1850* (Cambridge, 1973), pp 15-33; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 45-54; Collins *et al*., *Encyclopedia*, pp 55-9.
[246] John Golby and William Purdue, *The civilisation of the crowd: popular culture in England 1750-1900* (London, 1984), p. 39; Malcolmson, *Popular recreations*, chapters 6 and 7.
[247] William Wilde, *Irish popular superstitions* (Dublin, 1852), pp 39 and 63
[248] Ibid., p. 63; *Dublin Evening Post*, 3 May 1828.
[249] John Edward Walsh, *Sketches of Ireland sixty years ago* (Dublin, 1847), pp 134-50.

evening.'[250] It is unclear whether other editions took place in following years, but the tradition stopped again from the late 1850s until the twentieth century, since when it has intermittently been held.[251]

Fairs came to symbolise the sense of occasion, the 'gala day of the year', for most of the population.[252] From commercial origins, they sometimes fitted themselves to the religious calendar of patterns which characterised social life in early modern Ireland. Palmerston fair coincided with the locality's celebration of St Lawrence every August.[253] St John's Well fair in Kilmainham and St James's fair in the Liberties likewise honoured their specific patron saint in the last fortnight of June and July. By the eighteenth century, some of these fairs had lost most, yet not all, of their commercial relevance to become essentially leisure festivals. Donnybrook fair stood atop in this regard.[254] Taking place since the early thirteenth century, it was a 'major source of popular entertainment and rough merriment [and] it is in the eighteenth century that it became a byword in that respect.'[255] Contemporary accounts highlighted its carnivalesque and unruly style where fun mixed with ready violence.[256] The array of recreations enjoyed there was wide and varied, and has been immortalised in 'The humours of Donnybrook', a popular folk song:

> Oh you lads that are witty from famed Dublin city
> And you, that in pastime take any delight
> To Donnybrook fly, for the time's drawing nigh
> When fat pigs are hunted and lean cobblers fight
> When maidens, so swift, run for a new shift
> Men, muffled in sacks, for a shirt they race there
> There jockeys well booted, and horses sure-footed

[250] *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Aug. 1850.
[251] *Wicklow People*, 7 Aug. 1937; *Irish Press*, 2 Jul 1951; *Evening Herald*, 4 July 1988.
[252] Walter Thomas Meyler, *Saint Catherine's Bells: an autobiography, volume I* (Dublin, 1868, 2nd edition), p. 32; T. Dawson, 'Some echoes of "St. Catherine's Bells"', *Dublin Historical Record*, vol. xxxi, no. 3 (1878), pp 82-93. On that occasion Meyler, a Dublin businessman, reflected on his childhood memories of St James's fair and a trip to St John's Well.
[253] Nessa O'Connor, *Palmerstown, an ancient place* (Dublin, 2003), pp 30-2.
[254] Séamas Ó Maitiú, *The humours of Donnybrook: Dublin's famous fair and its suppression*, (Dublin, 1995), pp 10-3.
[255] Fergus D'Arcy, 'The decline and fall of Donnybrook Fair: moral reform and social control in nineteenth century Dublin', *Saothar*, xiii (1988), p. 7.
[256] Ó Maitiú, *The humours of Donnybrook*, pp 14-33.

All keep up the humours of Donnybrook Fair

The ballad also has a special recommendation for the 'toss-players and scramblers and showmen and gamblers'. The *Dublin Penny Journal* asked its readers had 'they ever seen Donnybrook fair? That far famed sport for drollery and drunkenness, for courting and cudgelling, for gambling and gymnastics, for frolicking and fighting'.[257] This was the kingdom of popular heroes. In 1819, Dan Donnelly rented a tent, fittingly called the 'Shining Daisy', to exhibit his strength. After his death in 1820, his memory was honoured at the fair through poems and sculptures.[258] Decades later, 'pugilistic predilections' were also delivered by local fighter Andrew Moore, whose fame as the 'Black Diamond' spanned the 1840s and 1850s.[259]

Annually held, fairs were an important moment in the life of a community. They were sometimes extraordinary occasions marked by their size and boisterousness, which was the reason both for their appeal and rapid downfall after 1830 when the reforming strand within State and Church gathered momentum.[260] The idea of unchecked working-class amusements sat uneasily with a growing portion of the middle and upper classes who stressed their rowdiness and drunkenness and sought to stamp them down.[261] The Finglas May Day ritual ceased in the 1830s when the Privy Council forbade the sports, which were concurrently being undermined by teetotalism and a sudden cholera outbreak in 1833.[262] St John's Well fair, which had been especially targeted by Catholic archbishop Daniel Murray in 1832, was effectively discontinued in 1834 after magistrates had prohibited 'publicans from transferring their licences for the holding of tents and sale of spirituous liquors'.[263] Protected by patents held privately, fairs at Palmerston and Donnybrook could ward off encroachment on their rights by municipal authorities which in turn resorted to circumscribing fairs' lengths and opening hours in the

[257] Philip Dixon Hardy, *The Dublin Penny Journal* (Dublin, 1834), p. 153.
[258] *Saunders' News-Letter*, 20 Aug. 1819; Ó Maitiú, *The humours of Donnybrook*, p. 18; Myler, *Dan Donnelly*, pp 137-41.
[259] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Aug. 1854.
[260] D'Arcy, 'The decline and fall', p. 8.
[261] National Archives of Ireland, CSO/RP/1823/732/1/A, *Report of the circumstances of the fair held in Donnybrook August 1822*; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 24 June 1824; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 20 June 1825; *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Sept. 1837.
[262] Wilde, *Irish popular superstitions*, p. 64.
[263] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 June 1832; *Dublin Observer*, 22 June 1833.

1830s and 1840s.[264] Faced with relentless religious opposition and the removal of its support by the elite and municipal authorities, Donnybrook fair was but a shadow of its heyday by 1850. It still attracted thousands of revellers, but its decline fitted with the discontinuance of popular gatherings and pastimes then witnessed in Ireland and Britain.

Figure 1.7: Erskine Nicol, *Donnybrook Fair* (1859).



Source: National Gallery of Ireland.

This decline did not however herald the end of popular pastimes. For Dennis Brailsford, 'ever since the middle ages sports had been escaping from specific feast days, finding their own occasions and paying less deference to traditional holidays.'[265] Coinciding with the development of alternative senses of time in the eighteenth century, a calendar centred around the working week appeared.[266] With Saturday a full working and late pay day in pre-industrial Britain, the value of Sunday

[264] National Archives of Ireland, CSO/RP/1819/289/1, Memorial requesting the government to take measures to curtail the duration of Donnybrook fair dated May 1819; Ó Maitiú, *The humours of Donnybrook*, pp 39-42; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 10 Aug. 1825; *Dublin Morning Register*, 17 Aug. 1837, 6 Feb. 1838.
[265] Brailsford, *A taste for diversions*, p. 81.
[266] For the rise of alternative forms of the conception of time, and how one's control over available time was determinant in leisure pursuits in early modern England, see Cunningham, *Time, work and leisure*, pp 7-88.

increased to become a day of leisure as much as a day for God and often lingered on into Monday.[267] This conception of Sundays and Mondays as essential leisure outlets steadily became encroached upon by employers, who progressively replaced the pay-for-task approach of artisans and workshops with the pay-for-time regulation of the industrial schedule. The tradition of St Monday waned but then entrenched Sunday as the sole day of rest and leisure for the working population in urbanised and industrial societies, to the regret of middle-class reformers:

> The children are busily employed in the labours of their trade six days in the week – but what become [sic] of the seventh? – they are that day free to amuse themselves; and how do they contrive to do so? By the most flagrant profanation of the sabbath, assembling at ball, or hurling matches - cock fights - crickets, &c. which early inspires them with a thirst for the lower order of gaming, and often ends in rancour, riot, and revenge.'[268]

In Dublin, popular pastimes followed a traditional calendar but a secular sense of time increasingly gained prominence. Michaelmas was the occasion to stage a hurling match between married men and bachelors in 1756, but the game was otherwise essentially played on Sundays.[269] And so was wrestling, which also observed a tradition of having bouts on a larger scale 'according to annual custom on Easter Monday.'[270] In the late 1810s, bull-baiting was allegedly '*Annually* Practised (about Christmas) in the town of Swords.'[271] Horseracing, on the other hand, was not associated in any meaningful way with religious feasts but followed a seasonal pattern whereby almost a third (39/124) of the meetings in 1825-49 were held in March and April, precisely when the hunting season reached its end and grounds were favourable to steeplechasing (figures 1.8 and 1.9). Only in subsequent decades would horseracing in Dublin clearly became associated with Easter Monday, Whitsuntide and St Stephen's Day, primarily for commercial reasons (appendix 2).

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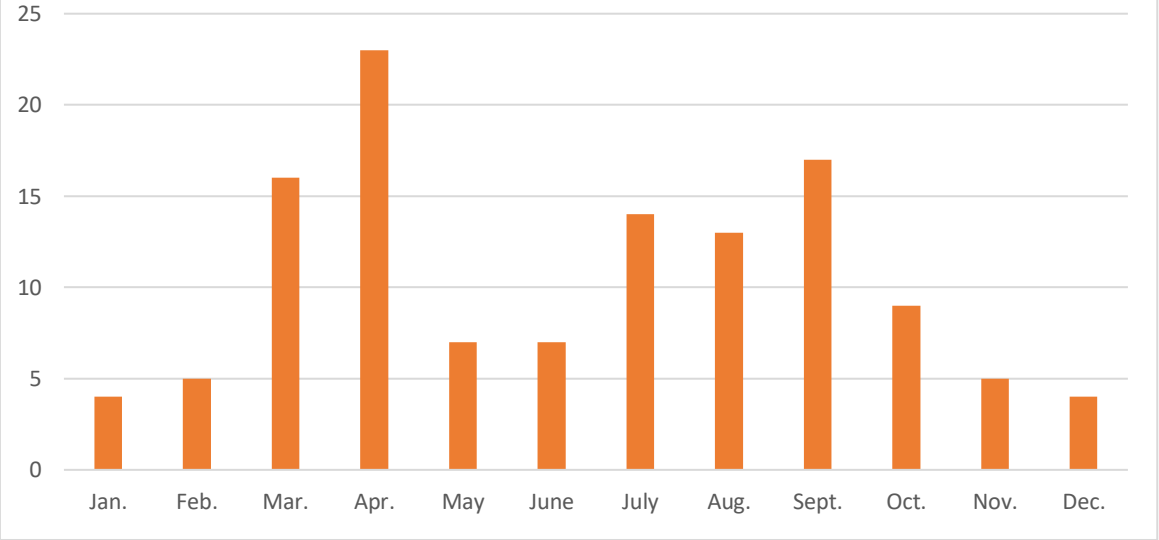
[267] Brailsford, *Sport, time and society*, pp 81-2.
[268] *Dublin Evening Post*, 5 May 1785.
[269] *Pue's Occurrence*, 21 Sept. 1756; Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p. 259.
[270] *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Apr. 1824; Gunning, 'Hardy Fingallians', p. 116.
[271] *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Dec. 1820, original emphasis.

Figure 1.8: Timing of horseracing meetings (holiday), 1825-49.

St Patrick/ Lady Day	Easter	Whit	All Saints'	Christmas	Landlord's Birthday	Total meetings
5	9	-	1	3	2	124

Note: Contemporary newspapers did not highlight the annual or traditional character of horseracing in Dublin, and the higher figures for St Patrick's Day, Lady Day, and Easter Monday merely corresponded to the seasonality of racing in the city.

Figure 1.9: Timing of horseracing meetings (month), 1825-49.



5- Betting and gambling

Betting (staking money on the result of an event) and gambling (staking money on a game of chance) were the *raison d'être* of horseracing, cockfighting, or prize-fighting and essential to many other pastimes such as cricket, rackets or billiards matches.[272] In sports where direct participation was not possible, the gentry

[272] See footnotes 134, 135 and 153, pp 42-5; Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p. 334; Gerard Siggins, *Green days: cricket in Ireland 1792-2005* (Dublin, 2005), p. 12.

maintained studs or sponsored champion runners or pugilists.[273] Patronage of hurling in the eighteenth century by local elites, or at least wealthy farmers and middlemen, answered both a need for social paternalism and betting. The stakes involved, too high to have come solely from the contestants (skilled workers in the building industry then earned around two shillings a day and unskilled workers half as much), add weight to this hypothesis.[274] In 1757, a match between King's County and Dublin at Irishtown commanded twenty guineas a side.[275] A decade later, the Connacht and Leinster men who met on the Crumlin common forfeited their £25 stake before the game began and the 'Green [was] corded round, and none admitted inside but the two Judges.'[276] Such formalisation is consistent with the ongoing legalisation of horseracing, cockfighting, or prize-fighting which was meant to ensure fairness in financial dealings. Occasionally, as Kelly has uncovered, hundreds of pounds could be staked on a match, and side wagers possibly dwarfed such sums.[277] The general disengagement of the elite from demotic sport from the late eighteenth century onwards limited direct matchmaking, save for horseracing and, to a lesser extent, coursing. It nevertheless lingered on, and as late as 1829, a gentleman wagered that his servant would cover sixty miles in twelve hours near Blackrock.[278] Heavy betting or gambling was then part of the lavish lifestyle and high-spiritedness the landed gentry were meant to adopt. Dice and card games were a staple of the city's gentlemen's clubs and it was alleged that up to £10,000 was gambled on a single throw of dice at a dinner of the Turf Club.[279] Wagering important sums, and losing them graciously, was socially rewarding for the younger sons of the aristocracy:

> The gambling rules of the day were, in fact, stricter than they later became, still carrying about them some lingering traces of the ethics of chivalry and embodying concepts of honour which went well beyond what was expected in

[273] Dennis Brailsford, *Bareknuckles*, p. 26.
[274] D'Arcy, 'Wages of labourers', p. 19; Ibid., 'Wages of skilled workers', p. 24.
[275] *Pue's Occurrences*, 19 Jul. 1757.
[276] *Saunders's News-letter*, 13 Sept. 1776.
[277] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p. 262-3.
[278] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 7 Oct. 1829.
[279] David Ryan, *Blasphemers and blackguards; the Irish Hellfire clubs* (Dublin, 2012), pp 123-5; Martyn J. Powell, '"Beef, claret and communication": convivial clubs in the public sphere, 1750-1800', in Kelly and Powell, *Clubs and societies*, p. 363; D'Arcy, *Horses*, p. 110.

> the market place or on the stock exchange. Backing a man or a team was still seen as something more than a mere financial transaction. The sporting contestant, whether horse, pedestrian, or pugilist, was still notionally his backer's representative, his residual champion, carrying his colours. Any dilution of this allegiance could readily been [sic] seen as dishonourable.[280]

Betting and gambling were widespread too among the working class. Frowned upon by the law since the Middle Ages, the illegality of betting and gambling was subsequently reaffirmed in 1739 in the Irish House of Lords.[281] Legislation was however largely evaded as coins and card games remained essential to the street and pub lore.[282] Roulette tables or thimble riggers were commonplace at fairs or racecourses and betting was inseparable from the great popular festivals.[283] When enforced, the law betrayed both the ubiquity of gambling among the population and the social bias of the police in prosecuting the lower classes. Hackney car drivers were charged for playing pitch and toss 'with coppers' in Brunswick Street, children with mere buttons.[284] Teenagers were arrested for gambling away 2*s*. in the card game of lanterloo in the vicinity of Amiens Street.[285] In nearby Eden Quay, an old man was fined 10*s*. for 'obstructing the pathway' and enticing children to stake their lunch on a game of roulette.[286] At night time, the gambling houses which scattered the city attracted card sharpers and revellers of all walks of life.[287]

At the turn of the nineteenth century, betting was evolving towards more complexity as the progressive substitution of matches by sweepstakes in horseracing required the establishment of odds for each contestant. Meanwhile in England, the regulation of horseracing by the Jockey Club, the establishment of annual races, and the development of newspapers and racing information at the time favoured ante-post

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[280] Brailsford, *A taste for diversions*, p. 170.
[281] D'Arcy, *Horses*, pp 20-1.
[282] For a nineteenth century overview of such betting in England, see Mark Clapson, *A bit of a flutter: popular gambling and English society, c. 1823-1961* (Manchester, 1992), pp 79-97. For the wide array of pub games available since the eighteenth century, see Arthur Taylor, *Played at the pub: the pub games of Britain* (Swindon, 2009).
[283] *Dublin Observer*, 31 Aug. 1833; *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Sept. 1838; *Dublin Evening Packet*, 19 Nov. 1839.
[284] *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Aug. 1839, 16 July 1842.
[285] *Dublin Morning Register*, 5 Sept. 1837.
[286] *Dublin Evening Packet*, 29 Sept. 1849.
[287] *Dublin Evening Packet*, 23 Feb. 1830; *Dublin Evening Post*, 2 Feb. 1843; *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Apr. 1843; *Pilot*, 10 June 1846.

and off-course betting. Modern bookmaking emerged from these evolutions and betting expanded drastically in the first part of the nineteenth century.[288] This evolution was a cause of concern for social reformers who readily linked betting and gambling with drink, riotous behaviour, and corruption. The profligacy of aristocratic gambling undermined 'the legitimate processes of money making and the acquisition of property' and working-class betting put undue pressure on tight family budgets.[289] As these voices became more influential within the state, successive parliamentary enquiries were set up and resulted in more restrictive legislation. State-sponsored lotteries which had been running in England and Ireland for over two centuries were ended in 1823.[290] The 1845 Gaming Act 'strengthened police powers against hells [gambling houses], and … nullified and made unenforceable in law all contracts or agreements which related to gaming and wagering.'[291] Finally the 1853 Betting Act made illegal the betting houses which had sprung up throughout Britain, partly because of the clampdown on gaming houses following the 1845 Act.[292]

Lobbies failed to gather sufficient support in their moral crusade or to unify a section of society behind their objective. The reforming movement was anchored in the rise of the middle classes since the mid-eighteenth century but these latter also proved avid betters.[293] Betting on chess matches was so common in the 1830s that a chess room on Dame Street prohibited it within its premises.[294] In 1838, a scandal broke out following a dice game in the clubhouse of the Pembroke BC. The issue was not the £60 at stake, but that the dice were loaded.[295] At Trinity College, botanist

[288] For an overview of the transition from professional bettors in the eighteenth century to modern-day bookmakers, see Carl Chinn, *Better betting with a decent feller: a social history of bookmaking* (London, 2004, 2nd edition), chapter 2; Adrian Harvey, *The beginnings of a commercial sporting culture in Britain, 1793-1850* (Aldershot, 2004), pp 163-5.
[289] Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, p. 39; Chinn, *Better betting*, pp 12-4.
[290] 'An Act for granting to His Majesty a Sum of Money to be raised by Lotteries', *The statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 4 George IV, 1823* (London 1823), pp 393-4; Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, pp 14-6. The last draw took place in 1826.
[291] 'An Act to amend the Law concerning Games and Wagers', *The statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 8 & 9 Victoria, 1845* (London 1845), pp 1123-34; Chin, *Better betting*, p. 60.
[292] 'An Act for the Suppression of Betting Houses', *The statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 16 & 17 Victoria, 1853* (London 1853), pp 995-1000; Chin, *Better betting*, pp 65-8.
[293] Mike Huggins, *Flat racing and British society, 1790-1914: a social and economic history* (London, 2000), pp 78-80; Chin, *Better betting*, p. 67; Wakefield, *An account of Ireland, vol. II*, p. 739.
[294] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 17 Oct. 1836.
[295] TCD archives, Mun/Club/Boat/1, 24 Mar. 1838.

Thomas Coulter casually 'offered an even bet' that someone would hit a target twenty-two times out of twenty-five in a rifle shooting contest.[296] Newspapers were likewise ambivalent. Holding the moral high ground in condemning petty gambling, they still informed their readership of odds on coming races. Mid-nineteenth-century legislation finally failed because it was flawed. Aristocratic betting taking place in gentlemen's or betting clubs remained unaffected by the Betting Act dispositions which particularly targeted the lower orders. As a result, working-class bookmakers merely substituted streets, pubs or back rooms for their betting shops and returned to the underground world of popular gambling which had thrived illegally since the eighteenth century.[297]

6- Incipient commercialisation

It is the contention of Adrian Harvey that a mass sporting commercial culture grew in Britain between 1793 and 1850.[298] He observed a substantial rise in the number of sporting events taking place and in the total amount of stakes played for. Hand in hand with these developments was the advent of dedicated enclosed arenas which could then be commercially exploited through gate money or drink sales. He finally remarked an increase in the number of people who earned a living from sport, either directly (jockey) or indirectly (bookmaker). This expansion of sport was fuelled by, and benefited, a nascent sporting press. The commercialisation process gathered pace after the end of the Napoleonic Wars and brought both higher levels of corruption and state intervention (legislation on blood sports and betting). The upper classes, which had hitherto served as a moral compass, progressively withdrew from patronising and refereeing such commercial events and instead found refuge in an alternative vision of leisure: amateurism. The prevalence of this ethos in the third quarter of the nineteenth century merely marked a pause in the commercialisation of sport, which eventually came back to the fore in subsequent

[296] TCD archives, Mun/Club/Ducac/50/2, letter from Thomas Coulter, dated Nov. 1842
[297] Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, pp 22-4.
[298] Harvey, *The beginnings*, *passim*.

decades. The Dublin sporting experience differs from this narrative. Benign legal dispositions towards recreations witnessed during the Napoleonic Wars in England contrasted with the mistrust of large gatherings in Ireland following insurrections and political upheavals. The monetarisation of Irish society was not as advanced as in England and the Irish market was too small for a sporting press to appear, which further slowed down the emergence of a fully-fledged commercial sporting culture. Yet some of what Harvey observed was witnessed in Dublin to some extent.

The building of dedicated enclosed places to attract paying spectators was not seen in Dublin until the turn of the 1860s, but the city's theatres and gardens had already been accommodating paying crowds for decades. The carnivalesque race between a giant and a dwarf at the Portobello barracks in 1820 was an all-ticket affair, for example.[299] This incipient commercialisation gathered momentum in the 1830s. An entrance fee was required from those who wanted to see pony races or the English pedestrian Robert Cootes perform at the Rotunda Garden in 1835 and 1836.[300] The following year the sparring teacher R. Cootes (probably the same person) staged wrestling matches at the Central Gymnasium and Royal Theatre.[301] In 1837 a wrestling tournament, pony races, and a ten-mile hurdle race between Cootes and a horse were held at the Coburg Garden.[302] This confirms that commercial opportunities were identified and exploited. By 1849 the Rotunda and Portobello gardens were leased for the summer by entrepreneur Mr Sheffield who laid down a track for pony racing and held no fewer than eight race meetings.[303]

The beginning of a spectator culture in sport echoed the commodification of leisure and the growing social importance of theatres, exhibitions, lectures and galleries. In that regard, the role of the public house in providing sporting facilities to the lower classes was essential in England and Ireland too.[304] The range of pastimes available to customers went well beyond the games of skittles, quoits, and

[299] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 13 May 1820.
[300] *Dublin Morning Register*, 8 Sept. 1835, 6 June 1836.
[301] See footnotes 192-5, p. 54; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 13 Mar. 1837.
[302] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 4 May 1837, 15 May 1837, 22 June 1837; *Dublin Evening Packet*, 23 June 1838.
[303] *Freeman's Journal*, 4 July 1849, 10 July 1849, 16 July 1849, 20 July 1849, 25 July 1849, 27 July 1849, 3 Aug. 1849, 15 Aug. 1849.
[304] Tony Collins and Wray Vamplew, *Mud, sweat and beers: a cultural history of sport and alcohol* (Oxford, 200), chapter 1; Huggins, *The Victorians and* sport, pp 114-5; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 59-60.

bagatelle. Some pubs had a ball court adjoining their premises, while others, like the Portobello Tavern, could stage pedestrian feats by Cootes.[305] In Kingstown, publicans enjoyed premium trading places during the regatta and in return contributed to its prize fund.[306] Cockfighting took place in licensed premises until 1829 but the 1835 Cruelty to Animals Act did not lead publicans to cease their involvement in dogfighting.[307] Billiard tables were a staple of coffee houses in the eighteenth century and remained an attraction at the city's hotels and restaurants in the following century.[308] With time, some pastimes outgrew their crowd-pulling attributes and became business-worthy in their own right. Dedicated billiard rooms were opened in the city by the 1820s and a racket court near Christchurch was launched in 1839.[309] The building of a network of privately-owned baths and the renting of bathing boxes along the coast was, however, the most comprehensive attempt at commercialising a pastime at the time, for swimmers and spectators alike.[310]

The growth of the commercial element in sport was matched by this latter's increasing value for the city's economy, although this is impossible to assess precisely. A small workforce existed. Gymnastics and dancing instructors usually ran family businesses while jockeys, stable boys, horse-trainers and billiard or ball-court markers were hired by stud-owners or hotel managers. Clubs were also employers. The Pembroke BC had a year-round storekeeper by 1840 and the following season he welcomed a part-time help during the season.[311] Further up the social ladder, the Royal St George Yacht Club relied on a steward, waiters, cook, billiard marker and storekeeper to run the club according to their standards. By 1850 staff wages alone cost the club just under £200 per annum.[312] Of more consequence was the indirect value of sport to the economy. The hospitality sector thrived on large gatherings and retailers in the shopping hubs near Sackville and Grafton

[305] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 12 Apr. 1822; *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Jan. 1850. The pub with the handball court has not been located.
[306] National Archives of Ireland, CSO/RP/1832/2816/2, Memorial of the vintners of Kingstown seeking permission to erect tents during the forthcoming regatta, dated 2 June 1832.
[307] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 31 Jan. 1843.
[308] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p. 333.
[309] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 26 Feb. 1821, 29 Mar. 1828, 14 Apr. 1836, 8 Nov. 1839, 23 Jan. 1843. These rooms offered also offered refreshments and cigars.
[310] Wakefield, *An account of Ireland*, p. 789; Meyler, *Saint Catherine's bells*, p. 76; *Dublin Evening Packet*, 20 Sept. 1845.
[311] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/1, 2 Mar. 1840; Mun/Club/Boat/2a, 29 May 1841.
[312] Archer and Pearson, *The Royal St George*, pp 23-5 and 41.

streets began to advertise sporting wares. Messrs Jackson and Kirby stocked cricket bats, rackets, bows, arrows and billiard balls in their stores.[313] Messrs Kelly, Trulock and Rigby made their name catering for hunters and game shots.[314] Businesses whose primary activity was not related to sport occasionally derived a supplementary income: silversmiths crafted cups and medals, steamboats carried passengers to Kingstown regatta, and builders were contracted to erect stands, clubhouses or boat sheds.[315] After 1834 and the opening of the railway line between Harcourt Street and Kingstown, train companies came to symbolise the growing commercialisation of sport. The direct investment of the Dublin and Kingstown Railway Company in three baths alongside its line was matched by contributions to the prize funds of regattas or horseracing meetings. Aggressive marketing, scheduling 'special' trains, and preferential rates for day trippers to the baths or the races accordingly boosted the traffic. Underwhelming returns for 1838 were due to 'the very unfavourable state of the weather during [the preceding] summer, by which sea bathing and other amusements were prevented.' The company 'also suffered a loss from 600l. to 750l. in their income, from the discontinuance of the Kingstown races.'[316] Smaller race meetings at Lusk were likewise worth over £100 in extra passengers to the Dublin and Drogheda Railway Company in the mid-1840s.[317]

It is an exaggeration to affirm that a fully-fledged mass commercial sporting culture existed in Dublin by 1850 as was then the case in England, yet unmistakable trends were apparent. A growing number of people and enterprises profited from games and recreations and their interest clearly lay in promoting and developing leisure. This would only be amplified in subsequent decades.

[313] *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Dec. 1825; *Dublin Evening Packet*, 4 May 1843.
[314] *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Aug. 1848.
[315] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/1, 5 Mar. 1830, 2 Mar. 1840; *Freeman's Journal*, 4 July 1828, 14 July 1828; *Saunders' News-Letter*, 14 June 1832, 14 Feb. 1853.
[316] *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Mar. 1840.
[317] *Freeman's Journal*, 20 June 1846. In 1846, when the meeting did not take place, income was down £121/9/5 compared with the corresponding week in 1845.

7- The State, changing mentalities, and sport

The Industrial and French revolutions fundamentally altered British and Irish societies, prompted the end of the old order inherited from feudal societies, and precipitated the industrialisation and urbanisation of Western Europe in the nineteenth century. Three main philosophical tenets underpinned these evolutions. The natural world order and God-given right to govern which had benefitted the aristocracy became undermined in the age of reason.[318] Advancements in economic thought legitimised private property, utilitarianism, the concentration of capital and the commercialisation of society.[319] Finally, a marked renewal of evangelism in Britain contrasted with the high-spiritedness of post-Reformation England and emphasised work, modesty, order, and the separation of private and public spheres.[320]

The social stratification of these new societies was made more complex by the addition of several new layers between the landed gentry and the lower orders: the middle classes.[321] This upwardly mobile group was by no means monolithic nor did all its members share the same living conditions and aspirations, but it had a few distinctive marks: it was prosperous and sought to widen the social gap with the lower orders and narrow it with the aristocracy, whom they looked at with both envy and opprobrium.[322] The 1832 Reform Act in England eventually incorporated most of the industrial, mercantile, and professional elements in the administration of the state and further consecrated the advancement of middle-class opinions.[323] In Ireland, the apparently unbridgeable rift between the Protestant Ascendancy and a largely Catholic peasantry in the country and the growing antagonism brought by

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[318] Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the creation of the modern world* (London, 2000), pp 397-423.
[319] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of revolutions 1789-1848* (London, 1962), chapter 2.
[320] F.M.L. Thompson, *The rise of respectable society: a social history of Victorian Britain 1830-1900* (London, 1988), pp 251-2; Hobsbawm, *The age of revolutions*, pp 387-9; Asa Briggs, *The age of improvement 1783-1867* (London, 1979, revised edition), pp 66-74; Judith Flanders, *The Victorian house: domestic life from childbirth to deathbed* (London, 2003), xx-xxv.
[321] Cunningham*, Time, work and leisure*, p. 7.
[322] Thompson, *The rise of respectable society*, pp 256-7; Dennis Brailsford, *British sport: a social history* (Cambridge, 1992), pp 88-90; Purdue and Golby, *The civilisation of the crowd*, p. 84
[323] Thompson, *The rise of respectable society*, p. 13. Its effects were not as felt in Ireland as in England due to the smaller size of the middle class in towns, but also to the actual raising of the franchise from 40*s*. to £10 in the counties. See K. Theodore Hoppen, 'The franchise and electoral politics in England and Ireland 1832-1885', *History*, lxx, no. 229 (1985), pp 203-4.

the steady yet incomplete removal of discriminative legislation ensured that social cohesion was patchy at best.[324] This did not preclude, however, the development of a Catholic urban middle class in the eighteenth century and its rapid growth after 1850.[325] By and large, this Catholic bourgeoisie espoused the values and behaviours of their British and continental contemporaries and emphasised the values of the work ethic, utilitarianism, respectability and moral improvement.[326] From this middle-class ideology emanated the denigration of folk recreations and opposition to the boisterousness of the gentry and peasantry. It must be stressed nevertheless that many within the bourgeoisie refused to live a frugal and religious life and sought a conspicuous lifestyle. Conversely, the reforming agenda progressively made inroads within the upper and lower classes, not least in the temperance movement at the turn of the 1840s in Munster.[327] These themes were the driving forces which undermined traditional leisure and drove the spread of modern sport. The process was slow and elicited resistance, but the transformation was clearly visible from the latter part of the eighteenth century.[328]

The timing and location of leisure were redefined. The dismissal of folk recreations as mere idleness and a stress on labour discipline challenged the legitimacy of local and traditional calendars.[329] Increasingly, the working week came to determine the time for leisure. In England Monday retained a strong appeal until replaced by Saturday in the second part of the nineteenth century.[330] In Ireland, however, Sabbatarianism never truly gained a foothold within the Catholic population and Sunday remained the preferred day for leisure, further widening the cultural gap between communities.[331] The reduction of places to play stemmed from several trends. The growing city was land-hungry and common land that had hitherto been used for recreation by the population became enclosed and privately owned.

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[324] Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the Famine*, p. 147; Foster, *Modern Ireland*, pp 302-7.
[325] Maureen Wall, 'The Rise of a Catholic Middle Class in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies*, xi, no. 42 (1958), pp 91-115; Daly, *The deposed capital*, pp 125-7.
[326] Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 345-8.
[327] In Ireland, the Cork Total Abstinence Society (1838) was a Catholic mass organisation which replaced the Protestant upper-class temperance movements of the 1830s in social and political influence. See Paul A. Townsend, *Father Mathew, temperance and Irish identity* (Dublin, 2002), pp 11, 55-9.
[328] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 86.
[329] Malcolmson, *Popular recreations*, pp 89-100.
[330] Cunningham, *Time, work and leisure*, p. 105; Brailsford, *Sport, time, and society*, p. 105; Harvey, *The beginnings*, 24-7.
[331] *Hibernian Journal*, 20 Sept. 1776; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 11 Feb. 1789.

Oxmantown Green, so long associated with Dubliners' amusements, was steadily encroached on in the eighteenth century until the Blue Coat Hospital (later renamed King's Hospital) was built on its last remains in the 1780s (appendix 1).[332] Successive private Acts of the Parliament in 1818 and 1821 precipitated the enclosure of over 2,791 acres of common and waste land in the parishes of Clondalkin, Crumlin, Kilmainham, Kilsallaghan, Lusk, Newcastle, Rathcoole, and Tallaght.[333] As old communal ties weakened, the concept of private property became firmly established.[334] Newly-built gardens in Mountjoy and Merrion squares were reserved for the sole use of residents, and landowners in Eccles Street or Drumcondra became more reluctant to leave their fields at the disposition of the population.[335] The lack of accountability for damage done to private property only added to the class aspect of such restrictions. Finally, public authorities progressively adopted a utilitarian and business-friendly conception of the streets and public spaces and withdrew their consent to using the urban public space for recreational purposes.[336] For Emma Griffin:

> This was not the consequence of new ideas concerning the impropriety of rulers and ruled participating in traditional activities, but rather it was symptomatic of a progressive narrowing of the cultural space provided by streets and squares in the eighteenth-century town, a breakdown of consensus concerning the right of the poor to appropriate the streets for activities of their choice at the time of their choosing.[337]

The shift in attitude was clear and judges asserted the new civic order: children 'might hurl as much as they pleased in the fields, but […] in the streets they should

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[332] Colm Lennon and John Montague, *John Rocque's Dublin, a guide to the Georgian city* (Dublin, 2010), pp 4-5.
[333] An Act for inclosing Lands in the Parishes of Kilmainham, Saint James, Clondalkin, Crumlin, Newcastle and Rathcoole, in the County of Dublin', *The statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 58 George III, 1818* (London, 1818), p. 495; 'An Act for inclosing Lands in the Parishes of Tallaght, Killsallaghan alias Kilsoughan and Luske in the County of Dublin', *The statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 1 & 2 George IV, 1821* (London, 1821), p. 553. The Lusk racecourse was not enclosed.
[334] Cuningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, pp 80-2.
[335] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 18 Apr. 1774; *Hibernian Journal*, 23 May 1774, 10 Apr. 1780.
[336] Hunt, *Sport and the British*, p. 40.
[337] Griffin, *England's revelry*, p. 82.

not.'[338] Parents were especially urged to prevent them 'from hurling in the streets, as the practice is very dangerous both to the eyes of the passengers and the windows of the inhabitants.'[339]

Regulating the use of public space went hand in hand with a restructuring of the police. The ineffective parish-based watchmen were replaced by a professional force in 1786, but it was only from 1836 onwards and the creation of the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) that policing the city became more effective.[340] The ancillary fear of the mob had reached new heights in Dublin in the 1780s and 1790s, fuelled by the French Revolution, continental warfare, and insurrections in 1798 and 1803, and had already resulted in the prohibition of horseracing meetings of more than twelve people within nine miles of the city in 1791.[341] Crowds were unruly, and respect for the police low, but fear sometimes bordered on hysteria. In September 1789, John Magee, a publisher and owner of the *Dublin Evening Post*, plotted his revenge against the Earl of Clonmel, then Lord Chief Justice, whom he believed had recently unfairly dealt with him in court:

> He leased a large plot of land in Blackrock, County Dublin, adjacent to Temple Hill, the country estate of Clonmel. Magee then hosted an 'Irish Festivity; or, Lau Bragh Pleashura' and 'Grand Olympic Pig Hunt,' to which he issued an open invitation to all of Dublin to be present on 12 August, to celebrate the birthday of the Prince of Wales. After an afternoon's free liquor, the crowd of thousands greeted the release of several soaped piglets enthusiastically, and, when the pigs broke through Lord Clonmel's manicured hedges, the crowd followed, trampling the judge's prized lawns and gardens. Reportedly, Clonmel was so frightened by what he thought was a riotous mob coming to wreak vengeance upon his head for his decision against Magee, that he fled to the viceroy's palace, demanding that a state of emergency be raised, but cooler

[338] *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Nov. 1841.
[339] *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Oct. 1843. For the examples of play in the street being interfered with by the police in England, see Bailey, *Leisure and class*, pp 33-4.
[340] Brian Griffin, *The Bulkies: police and crime in Belfast, 1800-1865* (Dublin, 1998), pp 1-5; Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 212-8.
[341] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 97-101; Golby and Purdue, *The civilisation of the crowd*, p. 89.

heads prevailed.[342]

The suspicion that sporting crowds were a decoy for subversion remained deeply ingrained among the city's authorities and often resurfaced when political agitation loomed. In 1800, for example, 'the vigilance of the authorities was aroused by the circumstance of a number of persons assembling in a field in the vicinity of Kilmainham, for the purpose of playing foot-ball.'[343] Similar concerns were raised at the sudden blooming of rifle shooting clubs throughout the country in the months preceding the 1848 Young Ireland rebellion, despite it being more an expression of virile sociability among young men than a real commitment to insurrection.[344]

In the first part of the nineteenth century a picture emerges of a slow shifting of mores and opinions on what was tolerable or not in society. Moral and social reform, urged by a profusion of societies, associations and lobbies, steadily became a matter of public concern and forced authorities to legislate.[345] The class aspect was difficult to ignore as traditional recreations bore the brunt of the restrictions.[346] Their association with Sunday, drinking, sexual promiscuity or gambling especially clashed with the new gospel of respectability which ironically still tolerated some of the aristocracy's extravagances. The 1853 Betting House Act, for example, prohibited businesses taking bets from all-comers but allowed private bets to take place within clubs.[347] Likewise bull-baiting, cockfighting and pugilism ran against the humanitarian underpinnings of such movements and sustained a prolonged campaign for their abolition which culminated in the 1835 Cruelty to Animals Act. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, created in 1824 (with a Dublin

[342] John C. Greene, 'The trials of Richard Daly and John Magee, involving the Sham Squire, the Lottery Swindle of 1788, the Billiard Marker's Ghost, and the Grand Olympic Pig Hunt', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland/Iris an dá chultúr*, xxiv (2009), p. 149; *Dublin Evening Post*, 6 Aug. 1789.
[343] *Dublin Monitor*, 1 Apr. 1842.
[344] *Dublin Weekly Nation*, 8 Apr. 1848, 29 Apr. 1848; *Dublin Evening Packet*, 6 July 1848; Gary Owens, 'Popular mobilisation and the rising of 1848: the clubs of the Irish Confederation', in Laurence M. Geary (ed.), *Rebellion and remembrance in modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), pp 60-2; Vincent Comerford, 'Patriotism as pastime: the appeal of Fenianism in the mid-1860s', *Irish Historical Studies*, xxii, no. 86 (1980), pp 246-9.
[345] Bailey, *Leisure and class*, pp 30-4; Purdue and Golby, *The civilisation of the crowd*, p. 85; 'An Act for improving the Dublin Police', *The statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 5 & 6 Victoria, 1842* (London, 1842), pp 160-5. The 1842 Dublin Police Act reiterated the legislation on animal-baiting, gambling and inappropriate use of thoroughfares and entrusted the DMP to enforce it.
[346] Rouse, *Sport and Ireland*, p. 90.
[347] Chinn, *Better betting*, pp 65-7.

branch since 1840), was instrumental in canvassing for stricter legislation but refused to campaign against the excesses of shooting or hunting, partly out of class deference and partly because prominent hunters were subscribers to the society.[348] And indeed among supporters of the society in subsequent decades were Leonard Morrough (Master of the Ward Hunt) and Lady Ardilaun whose husband, Sir Arthur Guinness, owned extensive shooting ranges at Ashford Castle in Galway.[349] The high moral stance held by many within the middle class was crucial in legitimising their social rise:

> By casting the perpetrators of cruelty as ignorant and unenlightened, Victorian reformers inevitably defined themselves as in the vanguard of progress and civilisation; this was a way for the middle classes to reaffirm their status as humane and enlightened individuals. The ignorant masses needed to be saved from their wickedness, but fortunately there was a well-meaning middle class, willing and able to do the saving.[350]

The reforming agenda was also crucial in establishing a hierarchy of cultures whereby folk traditions were deemed inferior by virtue of their lack of sophistication as against the 'scientificity' of new pastimes:

> The expansion of urban centres themselves helped the middling sorts acquire many attributes of polite society. Likewise the movement of army officers often facilitated cultural diffusion. While élite culture was opened to the wealthy, distinction was made between participants who could *appreciate* what they saw and heard and those who could not. Culture, and especially sociability, became distinctive to wealth, education, and appreciation, while, in Ireland, religion also played its part.[351]

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[348] Griffin, *Blood sport*, p. 150; Freeman's *Journal*, 5 Jan. 1816. Five horses died after a sixteen-mile-long foxhunt between the Ward and Naul.
[349] *Freeman's Journal*, 4 May 1875; *Dublin Daily Express*, 15 Nov. 1884.
[350] Griffin, *Blood sport*, p. 150.
[351] David A. Fleming, 'Diversions of the people: sociability among the orders of early eighteenth-century Ireland', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland/Iris an dá chultúr*, xvii (2002), p. 102. See also Griffin, *England's revelry*, p. 3.

Municipal endorsement reflected this hierarchisation. In 1828 the regatta committee had its headquarters in the Mansion House and the Kingstown races received £25 in stakes from the township's treasurer.[352] The Phoenix CC also benefited from public largesse as the Commissioner of Woods and Forests allowed them to enclose a piece of ground in the Phoenix Park for their own private use. In 1846, a remodelling of the park led the Board of Works to pay the £73 necessary for their relocation to their present-day ground.[353] In early nineteenth-century Dublin, official encouragement was given to horse owners, yachtsmen and cricketers, while parties of wrestlers, hurlers or footballers could be broken up. Devoid of civic or aristocratic patronage, the traditional world of leisure, whose very legitimacy was questioned by the middle class, was disappearing fast by 1850. This nostalgia for a bygone world was vividly expressed by surgeon and amateur antiquarian Sir William Wilde:

> Alas! What are we dreaming about – things that were, not are – memories of other, of better and happier times – of ancient customs sneered away by modern utilitarianism – of ceremonies almost forgotten, and healthful rustic sports and pastimes, now prohibited by law, put down by force – starved out of our light-hearted people, or carried beyond the blue waves of the Atlantic?[354]

What appeared to be an onslaught on popular leisure must however be contextualised and Robert Malcolmson's idea of a vacuum refuted.[355] The theory that change was forced upon the lower orders fails to consider their ability to adapt, regardless of the law or gentry support. Gambling went on unabated and blood or combat sports, for example, were too deeply embedded in the working-class culture to suddenly disappear.[356] Wrestling remained widely practised in Dublin well into the 1880s and an underground dogfighting scene existed in the early twentieth

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[352] *Freeman's Journal*, 5 July 1828, 21 Mar. 1834.
[353] Lawrence, *Handbook 1865-6*, p. 5; Hone, *Cricket in Ireland*, pp 8-9.
[354] Wilde, *Irish popular superstitions*, p. 34; Walshe, *Sketches of Ireland*, iv. Walshe, like many of his contemporaries, welcomed these evolutions as an unmitigated 'improvement'.
[355] Malcolmson, *Popular recreations*, p. 170. For Malcolmson, the industrialisation of British society destroyed many popular pastimes and resulted in the reduction of leisure opportunities for the population at large. Cunningham and Harvey have convincingly shown this was not the case and that traditional games could survive well into the nineteenth century and that commercialised forms of leisure were also available to the population..
[356] Wray Vamplew, *Pay up and play the game: professional sport in Britain 1875-1914* (Cambridge, 1988), pp 40-1.

century. The theory also fails to recognise the capacity of the working class to fashion their own pastimes, to have 'some capacity to make their own culture' and to retain a level of independence from the middle and upper classes.[357] For Emma Griffin, bull-baiting 'became ever more infrequent in the second half of the eighteenth century, and popular support for the sport had ebbed away years before reforming zeal crystallised.'[358] Thirdly, the urbanisation and disappearance of commons never stopped games taking place.[359] The Phoenix Park was within commuting distance for most Dubliners, and it is doubtful whether the police were successful in stamping out children playing in the streets, let alone enforcing Sabbatarianism. Finally, Adrian Harvey acknowledged the new opportunities generated by this evolution. Better policing of the city meant a safer environment for players and spectators alike, and the loss of available space due to urbanisation created a need for enclosed venues which further accentuated the development of a mass commercial sporting culture.[360] This, however, only became fully evident in Dublin from the 1860s.

8- Fashion and novelty

The corollary of the delegitimisation of traditional pastimes was the high regard in which new games came to be held. The emergence of sports clubs in Dublin in the first part of the nineteenth century thus underlined concepts of belonging, fashion and modernity.

Sports clubs were created to provide organised leisure and offered a place for male bonding outside the remits of work or familial circles, as women were conspicuous by their absence or were restricted to a spectator role. They were a marker of social status and of belonging to a community of like-minded people:

[357] Cuningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, p. 9; Neil Tranter, *Sport, economy and society*, p. 10; Griffin, *England's revelry*, pp 166, 189.
[358] Griffin, *England's revelry*, p. 232
[359] Ibid., pp 174-7.
[360] Harvey, *The beginnings*, p. 102; *Freeman's Journal*, 13 Sept. 1839. At the Howth races, eighty-six policemen were on duty 'to preserve order, and did so with little trouble.'

> Clubs mirrored the social and political distribution of power in their area, and they utilized the press to convey and affirm that fact. A position within the administrative hierarchy of a club might reflect local hierarchies, but it could also act as a means of boosting an individual's standing – and status – within an associational world… Just as membership of a club conferred status, so status could be refused, or taken away by the deprival of membership, and of course it was necessary for sanctions of this nature to be publicized.[361]

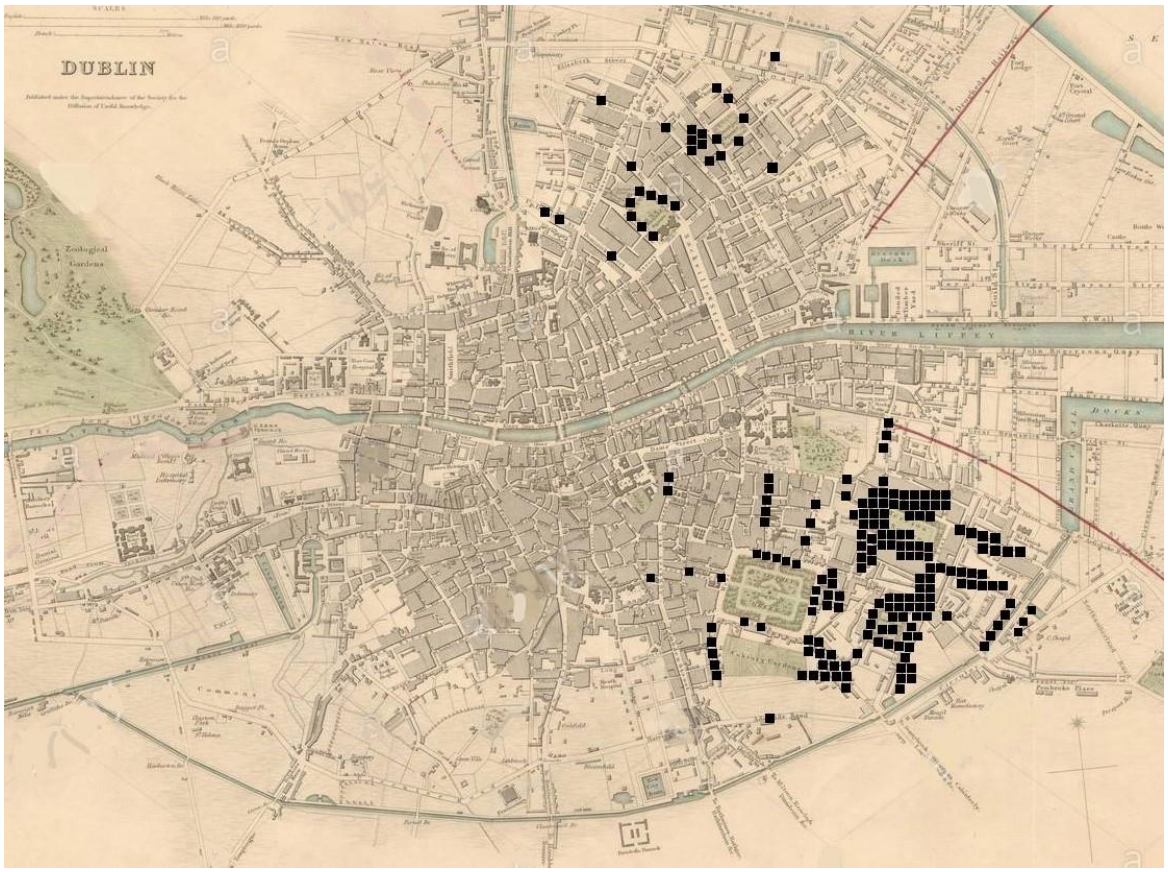
The social pressure to match social standing with adequate forms of leisure was especially seen in sailing and highlighted by the residential pattern of the members of the Royal St George Yacht Club (figure 1.10). In 1845, out of 196 members returning an address in the city, 28 lived in the former Gardiner estate and 164 resided in an area approximately corresponding to the former Fitzwilliam estate. This latter figure represented about a third of the total membership of the club concentrated in three hundred acres (c. 15% of the surface of the city) at the south-eastern tip of College Green. It is consistent with the geographical distribution of wealth at the time and reinforces the image of sailing as the preserve of the privileged. It also tells the story of neighbours, workmates, associates and friends joining the same yacht club. Emulation, peer pressure and the wish to belong to the most prestigious sailing club in the country were more important than interest in sailing to explain why wealthy Dubliners applied for membership.

The benevolent press coverage of elite leisure further inflated egos.[362] Stewards were named and praised and so were prestigious spectators.[363] Newspapers made the distinction between who 'mattered' and who did not. At the 1839 Howth races, 'the munificent proprietor of the park' had a grandstand 'set apart for the guests' and 'a large portion of the more fashionable visitors were invited to the Castle during the day.'[364] The *Sporting Magazine* was blunter. In July 1833, the monthly named twenty-seven people 'among the opulent and distinguished Members' of the Royal Irish Yacht Club in 1833, 'besides a list of rich and eminent Commoners, whom we

[361] Powell, 'Beef, claret and communication', p. 357.
[362] Robert Colls, *This sporting life: sport and liberty in England, 1760-1960* (Oxford, 2020), pp 14-5.
[363] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Mar. 1844.
[364] *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Sept. 1839.

have not room to particularise.'[365]

Figure 1.10: Residences of Royal St George Yacht Club members (Dublin city), 1845.



Source: Archer and Pearson, *The Royal St George*, pp 137-40. Out of 501 members, 196 resided in the city, and another 3 on Percy Place, on the south side of the Grand Canal. A further 87 members gave a club or professional address (e.g. Dublin Castle) and have not been reported in this figure.

The novelty of cricket, sailing, or archery in Ireland was exciting. They were an occasion for showing one's wealth, awareness of the world outside and integration in a broader historical narrative. Archery found its strength in an adulterated vision of a chivalric England. It summoned hints of romanticism and medievalism which reassured the landed gentry in a time of political and industrial upheavals.[366] Sailing,

[365] *Sporting Magazine,* July 1833.
[366] Martin Johnes, 'Archery, romance and elite culture in England and Wales, c. 1780 – 1840', *History*, lxxxix, no. 2, pp 205-6. See also Mark Girourard, *The return to Camelot, chivalry and the*

on the other hand, grew as a symbol of status when Britain developed into a maritime and imperial power. In Ireland, the gentry began to endorse cricket rather than hurling at the turn of the nineteenth century since it represented a novel and English game. For many sons of the gentry, hurling had become associated with the peasantry and was yesterday's game. By engaging with cricket, they broke the old order and embraced the present and its values. It also fitted the elite which was culturally at ease in an Ireland integrated within the United Kingdom.[367]

The association of formally organised sport with modernity and fashion legitimised its relevance, as opposed to the idleness of traditional pastimes. Archery conjured pictures of the past but its success was firmly rooted in the present. It echoed Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819) and the renewal of interest in Robin Hood, whose love interest, Lady Marion, carefully mixed 'ability and traditional femininity [and] offered female archers a perfect role model.'[368] These legends answered the emotional needs of early nineteenth-century Britain and emphasised its value system. In Ireland, the integration of archery into the network of balls, regattas, and nascent cricket clubs, furthered its sense of novelty.[369] Inspiration came from continental Europe too, not least in dancing, with the quadrille and other ballroom dances quickly becoming the new standard in elite society.[370] In Dublin, French-speaking gymnastics instructors propagated new concepts of health, body and mind to an eager audience with a touch of exoticism which must have been as enthralling as the seriousness of the matter itself. A 'numerous and fashionable' crowd thronged the Rotunda Round Room in 1836 to hear Louis Huguenin's 'lecture on the development of the mental and physical powers of man.'[371] Whether they attended because of a genuine interest or because it was *de bon ton* is however unknown. Sport had become so immersed in the broader world of modern culture that it became indissociable from it. The light-hearted atmosphere witnessed in the Rotunda or Portobello pony races, with balloon ascent, musical bands and

English gentleman (London, 1981), pp 88-110 for an account of the 1839 Eglinton tournament which re-enacted medieval jousts.

[367] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p. 328; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 91-2.

[368] Johnes, 'Archery, romance and elite culture', p. 206. Several clubs in Britain and Ireland became named Robin Hood, including one at Rathgar in the latter 1860s, see *Dublin Daily Express*, 28 Oct. 1867.

[369] *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 13 June 1835, 11 Aug. 1838; *Dublin Evening Post*, 23 July 1849, 30 July 1849.

[370] Helen Brennan, *The story of Irish dance*, Brandon (Dingle, 1999), pp 23-30.

[371] *Dublin Morning Register*, 25 May 1836.

fashionable walks, was reminiscent of the Vauxhall Gardens in London and contributed to making Dublin the undisputed fashionable and cultural centre of Ireland.[372] At the Theatre Royal a play entitled *Life in Dublin* ran in the mid-1830s and depicted scenes from Donnybrook, the races at Howth and the opening of the railroad, a mere fortnight after the first journey took place.[373] Elsewhere, the Pembroke BC had a boat named the *Jenny Lind* in 1847, less than two months after the opera superstar premiered in London.[374] Pastimes and recreations were linked to current technical and cultural developments and further embedded the sporting experience at the forefront of modernity.

9- Conclusion

This chapter offers an overview of the range and societal context of the pastimes enjoyed in Dublin in the decades leading up to 1850. The relation of sport with education and gender has only partially been dealt with but was nonetheless important. The benefit of regular physical activity on the development of body and mind was largely agreed upon and most private schools had playing fields where they encouraged children to play. Women, on the other hand, were conspicuously absent from this sporting world, both old and new.[375] They were less likely than men to have the time and means to indulge in leisure in the eighteenth century, and the increasing sexual segregation of social life precluded them from taking part in sport in the next.[376] A degree of financial freedom and fewer social constraints, however, allowed upper-class ladies to join gymnastic classes, hire bathing boxes, or take

[372] Cullen, *Dublin 1847*, pp 37, 81; *Freemans' Journal*, 4 July 1849.
[373] *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Oct. 1834.
[374] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/2a, 26 June 1847. A horse named Jenny Lind also took part in a match at a Lucan horseracing meeting in 1848, see *Dublin Evening Mail*, 11 Oct. 1848.
[375] Malcolmson, *Popular recreations*, p. 56; Harvey, *The beginnings*, p. 189; Brailsford, *A taste for diversions*, pp 142-5. It is believed that opportunities for leisure dwindled from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, examples of women taking part in foot races at fairs or in enclosed ground, horseracing, cricket or else pugilism and cockfighting were the exception, even among the lower classes. See *Freeman's Journal*, 17 May 1836; Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 19; Brailsford, *A taste for diversions*, pp 145-57.
[376] Cunningham, *Time, work and leisure*, pp 39-41; Neil Tranter, *Sport, economy and society*, pp 78-9. Working-class women did not have sufficient time and income to take part in organised sport until the twentieth century.

part in hunts. These were too few opportunities for too few women, and sport in Dublin remained essentially a man's world until the 1890s. Because the debate about the relationship between sport and education and between gender and physical activity would reach maturity in the second part of the nineteenth century, these themes will recur time and again throughout this work.

The links between class, religion, and sport have been implicitly discussed throughout this chapter but will be seen comprehensively in chapter four, as the democratisation of sport from the 1880s then emphasised ongoing social concerns. Because the religious divide was largely contained within the class structure of Dublin society, it is difficult to assess the extent of its importance in sporting matters. Developments within Protestantism – a recrudescence of evangelism and puritanism – had arguably wider implications for people's amusements than the binary opposition between Catholics and Protestants. Class was however a determining factor as leisure came to be ascribed more importance in the early modern period.[377] Time and income were material factors which explained the disparities between the recreations of the 'leisure class' and those of the rest of the population. Places of convergence existed at fairs, horseracing, hurling matches and cock or prize fights, but it remains doubtful whether intermingling between social ranks took place on such occasions.[378] Professional jockeys and gentlemen riders did not take part in the same races, and in rowing an ingrained segregation already existed in Dublin by the 1830s which separated gentlemen from fishermen.[379] Cricket was possibly the only sport in Ireland where landlords and estate employees played side by side.[380] The vice-regal cricket team in 1810 was, for example, made up of four aristocrats and seven of the Lord-Lieutenant's servants.[381] Pat Bracken has shown, however, that estate workers in Tipperary were paid 2*s*. per match and

[377] Peter Burke, 'The invention of leisure in early modern Europe', *Past & Present*, no. 146 (1995), pp 144-50.
[378] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 52-3; Fleming, 'Diversions of the people', pp 108-10.
[379] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/1, Minutes of the Boat Club, 21 Aug. 1839. At the Mersey regatta, the Pembroke Boat Club refused to consider the Victoria crew as qualified as one of its members 'has worked for members of this club as manual labour for wages.' At the Kingstown regatta races were reserved for gentlemen, fishermen, 'merchantsmen', watermen or boatmen. See *Saunders' News-Letter*, 30 Aug. 1837; *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Sept. 1842, 10 July 1845; *Nation*, 6 July 1844.
[380] Samuels, *Early cricket*, p. 17; O'Dwyer, *Cricket in County Kilkenny*, pp 12 and 23; Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, pp 44-5.
[381] *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Aug. 1810. This social diversity also happened in Kilkenny cricket in the early nineteenth century and was also found in hurling in the eighteenth century, see O'Dwyer, *Cricket in County Kilkenny*, pp 12, 23; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 78-9.

that fielding a strong team (and winning a bet), rather than social cohesion, was the landlords' priority.[382] Patronage and gestures of good will were common but came with innuendos. Liberal subscriptions from the Garrison and Ward hunts at ploughing matches for local farmers were given in return for assistance during the hunting season.[383] Reciprocally, grateful tradesmen in the employment of Lord Howth offered him a £100 cup to be run for at a coming horseracing meeting.[384] David Fleming has noted that social interactions, if frequent, were firmly kept within the class boundaries:

> The culture of the age did not, as some historians have argued, soften the boundaries dividing élite and popular cultures; if anything they grew more distant. Patronage of popular games, music and other forms may have been simply benevolence or individual interest but not shared interest; there is certainly not enough evidence to generalise and to blur the distinctions of eighteenth-century stratification. The use of patronage was probably used more to stabilise and appease society than as a means to soften its distinction through socialising.[385]

By 1850, sport of a casual and unorganised nature was still predominant in Dublin, and even more so in the rest of Ireland. Yet the dislocation of the traditional world of play was clearly observable since the late eighteenth century. The breakdown of the social consensus on the character, timing, and necessity of popular recreations initiated a decline in folk pastimes and conversely new modes of production, consumption, and behaviour encouraged the development of sports clubs among the upper classes. These twin processes evolved more slowly than previously imagined but gathered pace significantly from the 1830s, leaving few doubts as to their continuance in subsequent decades. What the new world of leisure would resemble was, however, uncertain. Would the working and middle classes embrace the growth of associational culture and form their own sports societies? To what extent would the upper class retain their role of patron and sponsor as class

[382] Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, p. 45.
[383] *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Mar. 1843; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 24 Mar. 1845.
[384] *Dublin Weekly Register*, 14 Sept. 1833.
[385] Fleming, 'Diversions of the people', p. 110.

relations became more strained? What effect on leisure would the rampant commercialisation of society have? How would the reforming movement deal with the ingrained habits of gambling, drinking and merrymaking common to large sporting gatherings? These questions all found their answers in the following decades as sport in Dublin was rapidly transformed.

Chapter Two

Transition: the 1850s and 1860s

An acceleration in the transition of sport from traditional to modern in took place in mid-nineteenth-century Dublin. The decline of folk pastimes and blood sports, the development of strong and leading bodies in field sports and the dominance of Dublin University in the new sports of cricket, athletics and rowing contributed to it. More important still was the role of Trinity College in fostering the notion of a club as the basic sporting unit and in spreading to the city's growing middle classes the games and ethos copied from similar institutions in England. The commercial exploitation of sport by retailers was evident but early attempts at profiting from spectatorship met with only moderate success. In this chapter, it is argued that the model of the club imposed itself as the most legitimate form to organise and run competitions in Dublin and that the first national sport associations, with the notable exception of the Turf Club, also appeared during this period. Whereas the early nineteenth-century budding bureaucratisation remained largely elitist, it assumed a middle-class character from the 1850s and by the latter 1860s had even spread to traditional pastimes such as football and hurling which were being codified in elite schools throughout Britain and Ireland. By the end of the period, the foundations on which modern sport was laid – bureaucratisation, commercialisation, and internationalisation – were clearly visible in Dublin, yet had not reached the total dominance that would become clear in the last quarter of the century.

This chapter sets out to provide the background of such changes and will first present an overview of sport in Dublin in the 1850s and 1860s. This in turn introduces four key themes that were critical in shaping modern sport in the city: the end of fairs as recreational outlets and legitimate form of amusement, the fundamental role played by Dublin University students in the codification of sport in the country and its transfer from educational setting to civilian society, the

commercialisation of leisure and attempts at developing spectator sport, and the growth of cricket as a popular sport.

1- Dublin, England, and the development of modern sport

The rapid growth in population of Dublin was sustained in the first part of the nineteenth century. From 180,000 inhabitants in 1800, the city and its suburbs had reached a population of almost 320,000 by 1851 (77% increase). In the following half-century, however, the rate of growth considerably slackened (20%) and just over 380,000 people lived in Dublin and adjoining suburbs by 1901.[1] This trend contrasted both with the Irish pattern of declining population during and after the Great Famine (1845-50), but also with British cities which experienced a rapid demographic growth. A commercial city like Bristol, for example, quadrupled its population between 1800 and 1881, and industrial centres witnessed even sharper rates. Liverpool grew eightfold in that time.[2] At the turn of the twentieth century, Belfast, the only Irish city to have experienced large-scale industrialisation, was as populated as Dublin and its suburbs despite having only 25,000 inhabitants in 1800 and 70,000 by 1841. The second characteristic of Dublin was a slow economic development. While it was firmly established as a commercial and administrative centre, Dublin failed to develop a substantial industrial infrastructure. The lower monetarisation of society and the competition from British industries in the British and Irish markets slowed down the emergence of mass-consumption industries (e.g. cycle factories) in the city.[3] Save for exceptions such as Guinness (brewing) or Jacob's (biscuits), industries remained specialised and feebly capitalised.[4] As a result of poor housing conditions, lower wages, and fewer job opportunities, rural immigration during and after the famine remained low in Dublin as Irish people preferred to emigrate to British and American cities. If the relatively slower economic development of Dublin in the nineteenth century was the chief reason for its slow

[1] Daly, *The deposed capital*, p. 3.
[2] Dickson, *Dublin*, p. 308.
[3] Mary Daly, *Social and economic history of Ireland since 1800* (Dublin, 1981), pp 71-84
[4] Daly, *The deposed capital*, pp 47-9. Belfast however developed important linen and ship-building industries.

demographic expansion, the city experienced large-scale modernisation in other aspects and followed the pattern of development of the largest British cities.

Most visible was the expansion of the middle class who, by 1850, had already acquired the habits of modern consumerism.[5] Dublin grew to resemble the aspirations of a bourgeoisie made up of wealthy tradesmen, senior civil servants, and professionals. The commodification of culture, the arrival of department stores in the 1850s and 1860s and international exhibitions in 1853, 1865 and 1882 allowed for ostentatious display of wealth and consumption and showcased their confidence in the existing moral and social order.[6] With the development of clerical jobs in the 1860s and 1870s, the middle class became increasingly sub-layered which further increased the values put on lifestyles, public behaviours, places of residence or modes of consumption as social markers of status. Attendance at a prestigious secondary school became crucial in that respect. The need for a literate population in an increasingly bureaucratised and scientific society brought a complete overhaul of the educational system and the development of national education at primary level in 1831. Secondary education, however, was then 'seen as a concern for the middle classes who, if they saw fit, should buy it as a commodity just like any other personal goods.'[7] These fee-paying schools were modelled on English public schools and took great care to cultivate their image and school ethos. As the multitude of small fee-paying private academies (over two hundred in 1846) disappeared, larger establishments were created.[8] The King's Hospital (seventeenth century), St Columba's College (1843), Wesley College (1843), Rathmines School (1858), Alexandra College (1866, a girls' school) and the High School (1870) were the main Protestant schools, while the leading Catholic colleges were Clongowes Wood (in nearby County Kildare, 1814), Belvedere (1832), Castleknock (1835), Blackrock and Terenure (both 1860). This flurry of establishments both illustrated and encouraged the development of a Catholic middle class who began to populate the lower echelons of the professions, civil

[5] Rains, *Commodity culture*, p. 24.
[6] Ibid., pp 78-84; Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 347-8. For the commodification of high and low culture in Britain, see K. Theodore Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian generation 1846-1886* (Oxford, 1998), pp 372-426; Peter Bailey, *Leisure and class*, pp 154-75.
[7] John Coolahan, *Irish education: its history and structure* (Dublin, 1981), p. 52
[8] Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 348-53; Senia Pašeta, *Before the revolution: nationalism, social change and Ireland's Catholic elite, 1870-1922* (Cork, 1999), p. 29.

service and business. It also further fuelled the religious rift as education was strictly organised on denominational lines.

Another consequence of the embourgeoisement of Dublin was its suburbanisation. The phenomenon had been common to most British cities since the early nineteenth century but gathered pace from the 1850s when a significant portion of the population experienced a growth in income and was able to escape the noise, squalor and overcrowding of city centres. It also fitted, and nourished, the ethos of privacy and domesticity which dominated Victorian middle-class values.[9] The flight from the city was evident. From nearly 33,000 residents in 1831 (12.4% of the combined population of the city and suburbs), suburbs accounted for a population of over 100,000 in 1891 (29.6%).[10] These suburbs grew outside the jurisdiction of Dublin Corporation and between 1834 and 1878, nine districts secured municipal independence with a township status.[11] In the south of the county, the 'railway' townships of Blackrock, Kingstown, Killiney and Dalkey had been linked to the city by train since 1834 and essentially consisted of independent communities bolstered by seaside residents. The townships of Rathmines and Pembroke, south of the Grand Canal, and Clontarf in the north were developed to accommodate a commuting and decidedly Protestant middle-class population. On the western and northern edges of the city were the townships of Kilmainham and Drumcondra. Kilmainham was dominated by employees of the Great Southern and Western Railway (GSWR) company while the expansion of Drumcondra coincided with the growth of a Catholic lower-middle population from the 1870s onwards. Township status was the culmination of the spirit underpinning suburbanisation. It was a way of evading the high rates of Dublin Corporation and the increasingly nationalist tone of municipal politics and of creating a community fitting middle-class Protestant ideals.[12] Civic pride and consciousness, so often conspicuously absent from the

[9] F.M.L. Thompson, 'Introduction: the rise of suburbia', in F.M.L. Thompson, *The rise of suburbia* (Leicester, 1982), pp 14-5; Richard Dennis, 'Urbanising experiences', in Martin Hewitt, *The Victorian world* (London, 2012), pp 249-50.
[10] Daly*, The deposed capital*, p. 3.
[11] For an overview of the development of Dublin suburbs and their relation with the city and Dublin Corporation, see Ó Maitiú, *Dublin's suburban towns*, pp 19-47; Brady, 'Dublin at the turn of the century', pp 261-81, Daly, *The deposed capital*, pp 152-202 and 226-39; Mary Daly, 'The growth of Victorian Dublin' in Mary Daly, Mona Hearn and Peter Pearson (eds), *Dublin's Victorian houses* (Dublin, 1998), pp 1-57.
[12] Daly, *The deposed capital*, p. 205.

city, found their full expression in the townships.[13] In Dublin, suburbanisation deepened the already high levels of social segregation and inequality. Townships were the space of home and womanhood as opposed to the business and masculine features of workplace and city centre. The fundamental unfairness of the wealthiest part of the community using the amenities of Dublin city for commuting, entertainment or shopping purposes yet contributing to the budget of independent suburbs furthered the pattern of a decaying city as against dynamic suburbs.[14]

Britain and modern sport

Technological advances, an increase in real income and a decrease in working hours from the 1850s provided the background to the expansion of a national sporting culture.[15] As more men joined or created sports clubs and as developments in newspapers, transport, and university education brought into contact men from different geographical areas, the need to assimilate local rules and customs into codified and national games became apparent.[16] In industrial Yorkshire, the rules of the upper-middle-class Sheffield FC (1858 and 1862) were adopted by newly formed football clubs in the 1860s. At Cambridge University, rules were drafted in 1848 and updated thereafter to allow students coming from different public schools and football cultures to play together. The 1863 Cambridge rules became in turn the basis of a new football code designed by the newly founded Football Association (FA) which regrouped a few middle-class London clubs. By 1868 the rapprochement between the London and Sheffield bodies was effectual and the FA became the regulatory body in Britain for the kicking style of football (thenceforth known as association football or soccer) and inaugurated its annual competition, the FA Cup, in 1871. The FA, however, refused to legislate for the carrying style of football, as practised at the Rugby and Cheltenham schools, leading to the creation of the Rugby Football Union (RFU) in 1871 whereby modern-day rugby became codified. The growth of the FA and RFU in subsequent years and their spread to the rest of

[13] Ó Maitiú, *Dublin's suburban towns*, pp 145-93.
[14] Daly, 'The growth of Victorian Dublin', pp 42-3; Brady, 'Dublin at the turn of the century', p. 265
[15] Tranter, *Sport, economy and society*, pp 33-6; Derek Birley, *Sport and the making of Britain* (Manchester, 1993), pp 263-5.
[16] Harvey, *The beginnings*, p. 128. The creation of written national rules in cricket, horseracing and pugilism dates from the eighteenth century.

Britain and Ireland signalled the progressive end of local football cultures and the development of two distinct and nationwide brands of football.[17] This pattern of codification and organisation became a feature of most sports in Britain and Ireland after 1850.

The improving living conditions in the mid-nineteenth century mainly benefited the middle classes who began to include leisure in their lifestyles. However, their 'own sports had to be justified, and to have a sense of purpose, so supporting ideologies were created.'[18] Such legitimisation of leisure reflected both a concern about status and social hierarchy and a belief in reforming and moralising society.[19] Suburbanisation spatially separated the wealthy from the poor and club membership further refined local hierarchies. As skilled workers also began to experience better living conditions, the doctrine of amateurism was remodelled to keep out clubs and athletes of lower social standing.[20] Whereas the older definition of a professional was articulated according to direct employment (such as jockey, pedestrian, cricketer or sculler), a new conception grew which unapologetically enforced social segregation. All artisans, mechanics or menial workers were considered professionals and money prizes became taboo. The moral high ground of playing for its own sake effectively ruled out working-class contestants from middle-class organised competitions, but it also targeted the aristocratic traditions of adding stakes to sporting events.[21] If the social segregation of recreations was not invented by the Victorians, it was they who institutionalised it and made it a strict reflection of the class relations observed in society. To be morally acceptable, games and sports became imbued with values then permeating society: manliness,

[17] For an overview of the transformation in England of local popular or public schools football games into nationally administered associations, see Adrian Harvey, *Football: the first hundred years – the untold story* (Oxford, 2005).
[18] Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, p. 31. If this holds true at a microscopic level, Huggins nevertheless emphasises the divergences of conditions, opinions and actions within the middle classes. Most of the values they considered paramount (e.g. respectability, fair play, amateurism), were more akin to ideals than actually enforced concepts. The strength of that ideal was however essential in shaping Victorian sport. See Mike Huggins, 'Second-class citizens? English middle-class culture and sport, 1850-1910: a reconsideration', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. xvii, no. 1 (2000), pp 1-35; Huggins, *Flat racing*, pp 68-87.
[19] Peter Bailey, *Leisure and class*, pp 83-90.
[20] Norman Baker, 'Whose hegemony? The origins of the amateur ethos in nineteenth century English society', *Sport in History*, xxiv, no. 1 (2004), pp 2-5; Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, pp 51-62; Harvey, *The beginnings*, pp 202-8.
[21] Derek Birley, *A social history of English cricket* (London, 1999), pp 105-7; Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, pp 51-60; Brailsford, *British sport*, pp 98-9; Hargreaves, *Sport, power and culture,* pp 67-8.

militarism and imperialism.[22] Time spent playing was not mere leisure nor idleness but a form of training for manhood, citizenship and war. This conception of muscular Christianity ostensibly left women out and was crystallised in public schools in the second part of the nineteenth century. For James Mangan, a cult of games, athleticism, took roots in the elite schools of Britain initially as a form of social control from the teaching staff over unruly teenagers and then progressively as a way of inculcating Christian, masculine and imperial values into the young upper-middle-class students who were getting prepared to run the country and its empire.[23] Sport – especially football and cricket – became thus intimately connected with the imperial mission as a means of bonding colonisers and colonised within the British Empire. It was an emotional reminder of home, a means to propagate imperial values, and a definition of Britishness, which in turn was remade as a tool to challenge the colonial rule.[24]

The middle classes had a crucial role in shaping the sporting culture of the second part of the nineteenth century and the forces which underpinned such developments resonated particularly in Dublin. The growth and suburbanisation of the middle classes were propitious for the spread of segregated sports clubs and elite secondary schools, which found in muscular Christianity a ready-made model to follow. Institutions such as Dublin University or the army eased the propagation of English games in Ireland, and in turn Irish soldiers, missionaries and traders went on to spread these games in foreign countries.

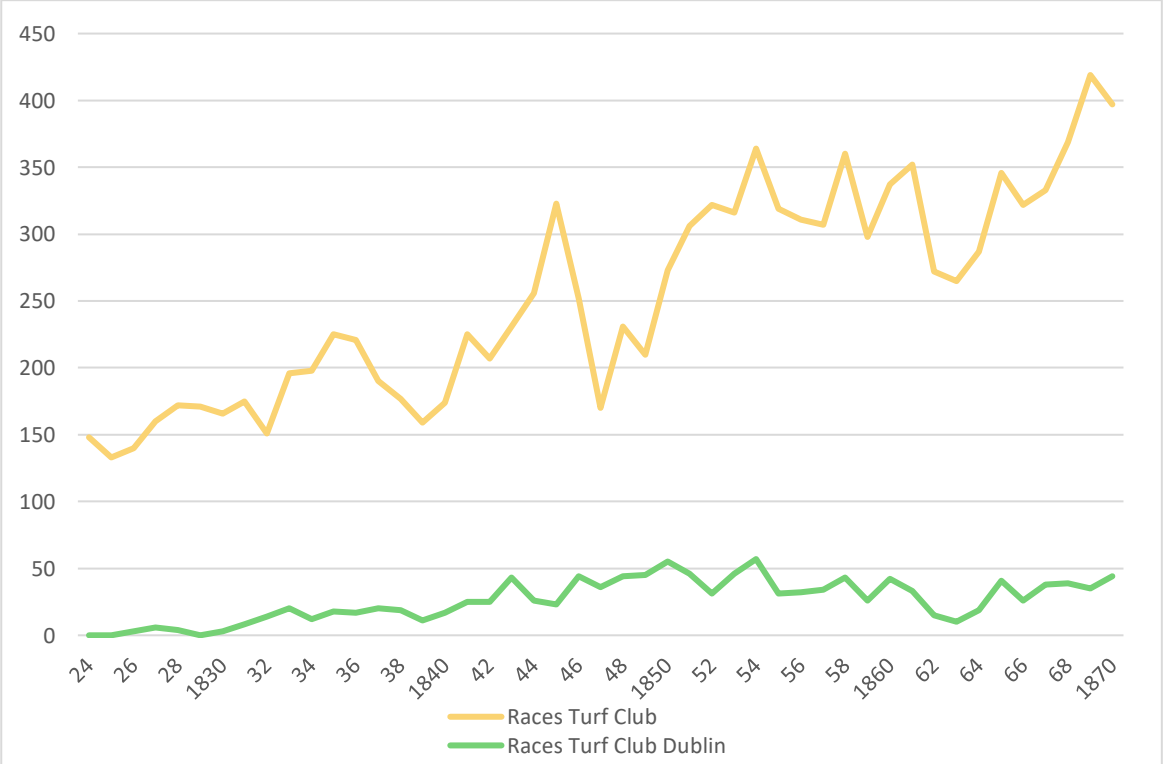
2- The sporting world after 1850

This overview provides the background to and introduces specific themes analysed in the second part of this chapter. It also confirms the amplification of trends observed since the 1830s. Horseracing, pedestrianism, wrestling and pugilism were

[22] Lowerson, *Sport and the English middle classes*, pp 64-77; Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp 86-98
[23] Mangan, *Athleticism*, *passim*.
[24] J.A. Mangan, *The games ethic and imperialism* (Harmondsworth, 1986); Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, pp 220-47; Dean Allen, 'South African cricket, imperial cricketers and imperial expansion, 1850-1910', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxv, no. 4 (2008), pp 446-7, 453-4.

on the path to becoming commercialised. Elite sports created national organisations while club-based cricket and rowing spread to the middle classes. Finally, football and hurling became ingrained in schools.

Figure 2.1: Races held under Turf Club rules, 1824-70.



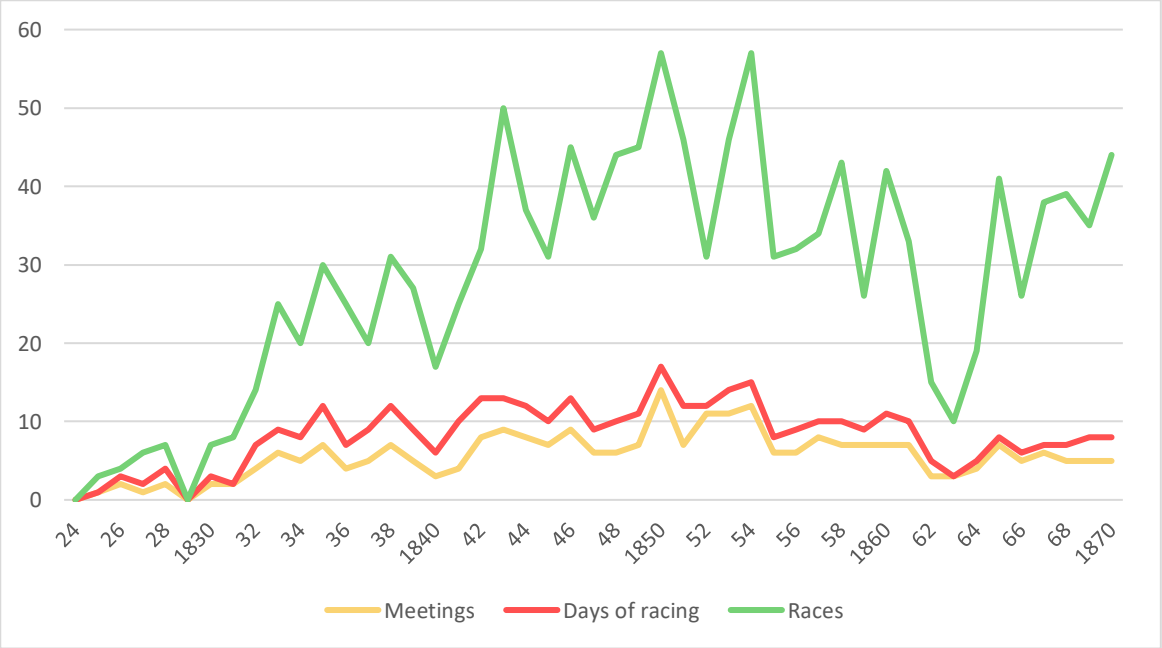
Source: Sweeney, *The Sweeney guide*, pp 26-30; *Irish Racing Calendar*, 1824-71.

Horseracing

The dynamic of horseracing in Dublin in the mid-nineteenth century diverged from the Irish pattern (figures 2.1 and 2.2). The disastrous impact of the Famine for many country meetings and the swift recovery following it were not replicated in the city and mirrored the lesser impact that the catastrophe had on the capital. The Crimean War (1853-6), however, proved to have greater consequences in Dublin than in the rest of the country. The mobilisation of regiments prompted the diminution of military racing which had been prevalent in the 1840s. The slump observed at the turn of the 1860s was also due to the decline of ambitious yet small-scale meetings, such as the Kingstown, Skerries and Tallaght races (respectively discontinued after 1856,

1861 and 1862), the end of the active involvement of leading race manager William Robinson (1855), and the temporary lapse of the Howth races after 1861 amidst allegations of crowd disorder.[25] Folk meetings were also declining and while they never really assumed the importance of the well-endowed military or gentry-sponsored meetings, they were reminders that race meetings could also be low-key and demotic affairs. The decrease in available public spaces to hold such racing, coupled with the increasing hold of the Turf Club on Irish racing, made them more difficult to organise as the century went on.

Figure 2.2: Horseracing in Dublin 1824-70.



The mid-nineteenth century witnessed deep-lying evolutions in the structure of the sport which would set the foundations of modern racing in the city. Early commercialisation was exemplified by the career of William Robinson. The *City Directory* returned him as a wholesale lozenge and comfit manufacturer in 1850, yet he was best known for his connection with horseracing.[26] In the 1840s and 1850s

[25] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 17 May 1861; Hurley, *Baldoyle*, p. 67; D'Arcy, *Horses*, p. 194. Both D'Arcy and Hurley believe that an accumulation of crowd trouble was the origin of this lapse, but no definitive explanation has been found so far. It is true however that 'a set of ruffians' climbed the walls of the racecourse and annoyed those present. See *Irish Times*, 20 March 1861.
[26] Henry Shaw, *The Dublin pictorial guide & of 1850*, intro. by Kevin Nolan (Dublin, 1988).

he was successively clerk of the course, secretary and treasurer, handler of bets and meeting manager and was also building grandstands.[27] A man without an estate to back up his enterprise, he nevertheless went on to bigger things by purchasing land, laying courses and holding races, first at Lucan between 1845 and 1850 (27 meetings) and then at Confey Castle in Leixlip between 1851 and 1855 (14 meetings).[28] His profits were mainly made through charging admission to the stand and with over four meetings a year on average he tried to quickly recoup his investment. Whether Robinson was successful as a racecourse owner is not clear, nor what were his primary intentions – love of sport, advertising, or profit – but he showed that for a decade in the mid-nineteenth century a person with business acumen, knowledge and a network could successfully organise horseracing at a national level. These were propitious times for such enterprises: public awareness of the sport increased as did the ability to travel, and yet a large-scale investment was not yet required as the commercialisation of horseracing in Ireland was still in its infancy. Robinson is unlikely to have made substantial profits out of his ventures. In 1859, he again had to make a living by erecting stands at the Tallaght races and was still registered as a comfit manufacturer at 53, Capel Street. This seems to be the end of nineteen years of his active involvement in Dublin horseracing as his whereabouts are here left on a sour note. His Capel Street address was then valued at £40 (£10 less than twelve years earlier) and he was found guilty of negligence by a jury following the collapse of his stand at Tallaght, which caused the death of a spectator and numerous injuries. The following year, Patrick Costello – a hotelier also versed in the building of stands and courses – was contracted for their annual meeting.[29]

The end of Robinson's active involvement in the turf coincided with the growth of Fairyhouse and Baldoyle as dedicated racing venues. In 1853 the Howth meetings were moved to nearby Baldoyle. Served by the Dublin and Drogheda Railway Company, the new course proved to be of greater potential than the deer park on

[27] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Sept. 1842, 5 June 1845, 29 Aug. 1848, 29 Mar. 1853; *Drogheda Argus*, 1 Apr. 1843; D'Arcy, 'The Kingstown races', p. 60.
[28] *Leinster Express*, 31 Oct. 1846 for Robinson being 'the spirited proprietor' of the Lucan course and *Freeman's Journal,* 15 Nov. 1853 for him being 'the worthy proprietor' of Confy racecourse. In 1850 his Capel Street address was valued at £50.
[29] Alexander Thom, *Thom's Irish almanac and official directory with the post office Dublin city and county directory for the year 1862* (Dublin, 1862); Hunt, *Sport and society*, pp 610-2; *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Feb. 1859, 29 Feb. 1860.

the hill of Howth and catered for two annual meetings from 1865 onwards.[30] The first meeting at Fairyhouse took place in 1848 but from 1861 onwards it started to take over from the multitude of smaller meetings at Dunboyne, Rathcoole and Ashbourne to become the privileged racecourse of the Ward Hunt and local regiments. Their rise to prominence illustrated the changing nature of racing in the country with the development of a first tier of racecourses at the Curragh, Punchestown (1861), Galway (1869) and Cork (1870) which to some extent mixed aristocratic patronage, middle-class subscriptions and industrial sponsorship. At the Curragh, a brand-new Stand House was erected by the GSWR in 1853 and leased back to the company at a rate of £500 per annum.[31] In Dublin, twelve of the fourteen meetings held at Fairyhouse or Baldoyle between 1865 and 1869 included a railway plate.[32] Not served by rail, the Tallaght meeting relied on jarveys to sponsor the Dublin Carowners' Challenge Cup, held six times between 1855 and 1862. At the 1867 Metropolitan steeplechases held at Portobello, the Grocers' and Vintners' Stake indicated which trades contributed to the meeting. While membership of the Turf Club remained extremely elitist, as did ownership of racehorses, the day-to-day running of the sport was assured by semi-professional middle-class administrators who acted as managers, judge, handicappers and sponsors.[33] A hotelier was secretary of the Tallaght races and local vintners were involved in the 1853 Rathfarnham meeting.[34] At the same time a broad coalition of inner-city centre Dubliners was at the heart of the creation of the Citizens' Gold Challenge Cup in 1854. Among early subscribers were theatre owners, circus managers, foundry men, timber merchants, brewers, solicitors, and veterinary surgeons as well as the Alliance gas works, the Liffey bank and Findlater's mercantile establishment. The financial assistance of the gentry was then looked for in return for prestigious and symbolic stewardship appointments.[35]

[30] Hurley, *Baldoyle*, p. 66.
[31] D'Arcy, *Horse*, p. 144; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 29 June 1853.
[32] This does not take into account hunt or military meetings.
[33] *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Aug. 1867. Huggins also reappraises the role of the middle classes in English racing throughout the nineteenth century, far from the initial preconception of their opposition to racing on moral grounds. See Huggins, *Flat racing*, pp 68-72.
[34] *Dublin Weekly Nation*, 8 Oct. 1853; *Freeman's Journal*, 31 Mar. 1855.
[35] *Freeman's Journal*, 5 July 1854, 28 July 1854, 2 Aug. 1854, 5 Aug. 1854,16 Aug. 1854, 19 Aug. 1854, 4 Oct. 1854, 9 Oct. 1854, 21 Nov. 1854.

Quantitatively, the importance of racing in Dublin in the mid-nineteenth century was underwhelming by Irish standards. These were however decades when the sport became structured around two rapidly expanding venues at Fairyhouse and Baldoyle. Through their association with the Ward Hunt and the Howth family, both venues were identifiable with traditional and influential institutions. By being accessible by railway, holding several annual meetings, and charging admission to the stands, they were also part of the newly commercialised world of racing which was developing fast throughout Britain and Ireland. This was a sign of the loss of diversity and of the consolidation of the sport in the city, and this trend of more racing in fewer racecourses was also consistent with the English experience in the second part of the nineteenth century.[36]

Hunting

By 1850, the model of the large-scale subscription hunt was firmly established in Dublin and entailed members paying an annual subscription to the Master of Hounds to cover the cost of running a pack of hounds. The high end of the sport in the county was devoted to stag hunting (Ward and Garrison hunts) and coexisted with smaller, never lasting, harrier packs such as the Palmerstown (1849-58) or Finglas (1862-6) hunts. Relationships between packs were essentially seamless and common membership usual. As quarries were compatible, overlapping in territory was not an issue and the Ward Hunt likely promoted smaller harrier packs as a training ground for young hunters before they eventually upgraded to the more demanding deer hunting.[37] The outbreak of the Crimean War and the departure of many officers for the front precipitated the dismantling of the Garrison Hunt and an agreement was concluded with the Ward Hunt. In return for £200 annually, this latter would accommodate the remaining officers within their ranks and provide a third weekly outing.[38] As the Ward also suffered a dip in membership during the war and since many officers already partook in their meeting, this was a perfect arrangement which went on after the war ended.[39]

[36] Huggins, *Flat racing*, pp 30-1.
[37] James E. Norton, *History of the South County Dublin harriers and some neighbouring harrier packs* (Dublin, 1991), p. 13.
[38] Fitzpatrick, *Irish sport and sportsmen*, p. 95.
[39] *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Mar. 1853, 15 Mar. 1856, 21 Oct. 1856.

The fluidity of personnel between hunting and horseracing was evident in Dublin throughout the century. In 1847, the stewards of the Lucan races postponed the start of the meeting until 3 p.m. as they were hunting with the Garrison Hunt in the morning, and conversely in 1851 the Palmerstown Harriers cancelled an outing which clashed with the Kingstown races.[40] John W. Hely-Hutchinson (second son of the 3rd Earl of Donoughmore) and his cousin Robert Bernard kept 'hunting and racing establishments' until 1854.[41] The 3rd Earl of Howth was a keen horseracing sponsor and also subsidised his own pack of hounds in the 1840s.[42] His son, the 4th Earl of Howth, inherited his passions and was a keen hunter with the Ward Hunt, but was then perhaps more famous as master of the Kilkenny Hunt between 1856 and 1861 and the force behind the redevelopment of the Galway races at Ballybrit from 1869.[43] The development of fully-fledged steeplechase meetings in the 1860s provided the missing link between the two pastimes. What started as a steeplechase between friends or members of the Teapot or Citizens' clubs at the end of the hunting season became a more elaborate and eagerly anticipated meeting at Fairyhouse by the late 1860s. Because these events were reserved to members or farmers belonging to the Ward Hunt district, they remained purely local affairs and had not reached national status by 1870, unlike the Kildare Hunt races at Punchestown.[44]

Until the Land War (an episode of intense agrarian agitation at the turn of the 1880s) broke out, hunting to hounds was more than just a sport. It was a belief in belonging to a cultural and landed elite, of being an upholder of a tradition and social order that was perceived as timeless. It meant following a strict etiquette that valorised hard riding, subsequent drinking, and generous subscriptions. The 'community' of the hunt was made up of interconnected landowning families and military officers who evolved in the same social milieu.[45] The Ward Hunt incontestably belonged to the top tier in that respect, as successive Lord-Lieutenants, High Sheriffs, and JPs relished coming along. Consecration for the Ward Hunt came in 1879 and 1880

[40] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Feb. 1847, 15 Feb. 1851.
[41] *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Apr. 1854.
[42] *Leinster Express*, 26 Oct. 1833. On that occasion the Earl of Howth took part in a horseracing match and hoped to follow with stag hunting, weather permitting.
[43] Caroline Corballis, *Hunting in County Kilkenny* (Gowran, 1999), p. 46; D'Arcy, *Horses*, p. 189; *Irish Times*, 7 Feb. 1862.
[44] *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Nov. 1869.
[45] Hunt, *Sport and society*, pp 14-39; Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, pp 92-3.

when the Princess of Austria (more famous as Sissi) enjoyed two successive hunting trips in Meath, Kildare and Dublin.[46] This incidentally marked the apogee of hunting in Ireland as in subsequent decades the agricultural depression and challenge from the urban bourgeoisie throughout Britain increasingly undermined the economic and social status of landed elites.[47] In Ireland the Land War and the political mobilisation of the masses in the 1880s further shattered conceptions of and beliefs in the existing social order.[48]

Figure 2.3: William Osborne, *Meet of the Ward Union Hunt* (1873).



Source: *National Gallery of Ireland.*

How socially exclusive hunting in Dublin was before 1880 is difficult to assess. It was undoubtedly a pastime for the wealthy and journalists gushed over their presence 'among 6,000*l* a-year men.'[49] Yet the myth of hunting as the monolithic

[46] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 4 Mar. 1879; *Weekly Irish Times*, 21 Feb. 1880.
[47] David Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy*, (London, 1992, revised edition), pp 25-31
[48] Terence Dooley, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland: a study of Irish landed families* (Dublin, 2001), pp 79-111.
[49] *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Nov. 1853.

bastion of the male Protestant Ascendancy does not hold.[50] John Dennis was a wealthy Roman Catholic landlord who owned his own private pack of hounds between 1867 and 1877.[51] Women hunted throughout the nineteenth century and found there an opportunity to take part into a physically demanding activity in a socially acceptable manner.[52] In Dublin, they were an elite minority yet broke the all-male company witnessed in other field sports.[53] Finally the professional and mercantile classes began to take part in hunting as costs rose above the gentry's solvency. Horse trainers and dealers hunted with the Palmerstown Harriers in 1853 and it was wondered whether 'the licensed victuallers' would support the pack 'in their usual princely manner.'[54] At the same time, the Ward Hunt accommodated 'one of our merchant princes, two or three limbs of the law, a few junior members of families who were devoted to the Dii Infernales [sic], an horse farmer, two horsedealers, and a justice of the quorum' and, on another occasion, a 'notorious middleaged man in the "staff of life" trade'.[55] Urban participation in hunting was facilitated by the building of train stations at Batterstown and Drumree in the early 1860s. The scheduling of hunts in the afternoon suited city-dwellers and officers who could attend to their business in the morning and then profit from the 12pm special train from Broadstone terminus.[56] Rather than upset the values underpinning hunting, these wealthy merchants and professionals sought to adopt them to legitimate their own fortune or social position. Hunting was a means to integrate in exclusive social circles and thus the small degree of social dilution witnessed in Dublin hunting packs before 1880 reinforced rather than challenged the cultural significance of hunting.

[50] L.P. Curtis, 'Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882: an aspect of the Irish Land War', in C.H.E. Philpin (ed), *Nationalism and popular protest in Ireland* (Cambridge, 1987), pp 351-4. Hunt has already shown that this was not the case in Westmeath, see Hunt, *Sport and society*, p. 26.
[51] Norton, *The South County Dublin Harriers*, p. 19.
[52] Maeve O'Riordan, '"We … galloped hard and straight over some big stone gaps": freedom of the hunt for elite women in Ireland, 1860-1914', *Studies in Arts and Humanities*, vii, no. 1 (2021), pp 20-1.
[53] *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Nov. 1854. On this occasion no less than a dozen women out of a field of seventy were hunting with the Ward Hunt; Fitzpatrick, *Irish sport and sportsmen*, pp 100-1; Griffin, *Blood sport*, p. 168; Corballis, *Hunting in Kilkenny*, pp 51-6.
[54] *Evening Freeman*, 24 Oct. 1853; *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Sept. 1854.
[55] *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Jan. 1853, 20 Nov. 1857.
[56] *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Apr. 1869; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 25 Nov. 1871. For similar developments in Britain, see Griffin, *Blood sport*, p. 168.

Elite minority sports and the first national organisations

The nascent club scene of the 1830s and 1840s in elite sports grew into regional or national organisation in the 1860s. The Irish Fox Hunting Committee was for example founded in April 1859 to amicably resolve disputes between packs (over boundaries notably), to concertedly lobby for the development of the pastime, and to preserve foxes.[57]

If the development of archery was not as evident in Dublin as in the rest of Leinster and Munster, a growth of interest clearly happened from 1857 onwards when Molyneux Betham, the son of Ulster King of Arms and Principal Herald of All Ireland Sir William Betham, revived the County of Dublin Archers. His residence in the southern suburb of Blackrock became the seat of the club and his daughter, Cecilia, counted as one of the best archers of the country.[58] In the north of the county, the Fingal archers began to practise in the demesne of Lord Talbot of Malahide.[59] As more clubs were established, and in order to facilitate competition, the Irish National Archery Club was founded in 1860 in Blackrock.[60] This first attempt at creating a supra-entity considerably raised the profile of the pastime and successive meetings at the newly opened Bray Carlisle grounds in 1863, and from 1865 onwards on the site of the International Exhibition at Earlsfort Terrace, further increased its position as a fashionable and elite sport.[61] Perhaps the sole pastime where women outnumbered men, archery remained firmly rooted in a familial setting. Out of twenty-five women who took part in a meeting of the Grand Leinster Archery society at Earlsfort Terrace in 1865, sixteen had a direct relative contesting too.[62]

Like archery, the early impetus of rifle shooting in the 1840s was not sustained until a revival occurred in the latter 1850s. The resurgence of the sport around Belfast, the Curragh and Dublin came in the wake of the creation of the National Rifle Association in England in 1859. A brief scare of a French invasion pressed the War

[57] Irish Master of Foxhounds Association, http://imfha.ie/about.html, accessed 31 Mar. 2021; *Irish Times*, 29 Apr. 1861; *Tuam Herald*, 26 Apr. 1862; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 11 Aug. 1871. The earliest press report from the committee dates from 1861.
[58] Thomas Hayes, 'From ludicrous to logical', pp 163-5; Brian Griffin, 'The Big House at play', pp 153-8; Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, pp 56-62; Brian Griffin, 'Cecilia Betham (1843-1913): Ireland's first female international sports star', *History Ireland*, xxiv no. 3 (2016), pp 30-3.
[59] *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent*, 13 Oct. 1860.
[60] *Dublin Evening Post*, 13 Oct. 1860.
[61] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 1 June 1865.
[62] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 20 Sept. 1865. From Meath came Miss Radcliffe, Lilly, Arthur, and Thomas Radcliffe.

Office to encourage civilians to practise shooting with military rifles and to establish volunteer corps.[63] Support in Britain naturally came from the higher echelons of the political and military establishment but because Irish loyalty remained uncertain, the measure was not extended to Ireland. A few enthusiasts nevertheless took to rifle shooting as a pastime and established the Dublin Shooting Club in 1862.[64] It was set on foot 'by some members of the United Service and other influential clubs in Dublin' and at its first meetings Lord Talbot de Malahide and Baronet Jocelyn Coghill were among the contestants.[65] Membership was clearly elitist: landed gentry, officers, and high-ranking professionals or businessmen. The club enjoyed the hospitality of land developer William Bentley in Foxrock and of barrister Henry Cusack at Abbeyville in Fingal, but the club eventually settled at Bull Island in Clontarf thanks to local landlord and developer John Vernon.[66] Its two most influential members were Arthur B. Leech and John Rigby. Leech, a one-time barrister, land agent and then landowner in his own right, was instrumental in building up links between clubs and in 1865 successfully campaigned for the insertion of an Irish team at the Wimbledon meeting, the most prestigious tournament in Britain.[67] Two years later he oversaw the creation of the Irish Rifle Association.[68] If he was the leading light and policy maker of rifle shooting in Ireland, Rigby was his implementer. A leading gunmaker and equally prominent shot throughout Britain and Ireland, he joined business and pleasure as secretary of the Dublin club and then as a stalwart of the Irish team for close on three decades. His prowess, and that of his son William, with a rifle of his own manufacture considerably increased the profile of rifle shooting in Ireland and gave ample publicity for the family firm.

Leaving aside the specific case of the Turf Club, foxhunting, archery and rifle shooting were the first national sports organisations formally established in the country. That these pastimes were developed essentially in rural areas or in Ulster, yet came to adopt Dublin as administrative centre in the 1860s, reveals the cultural

[63] J.R. MacDonnell, *The National Rifle Association, a sketch of its history and progress 1859-1876* (London, 1877), pp 1-10.
[64] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 2 Oct. 1862.
[65] *Dublin Daily Express*, 15 Apr. 1862.
[66] *Dublin Daily Express*, 9 Apr. 1864; *Banner of Ulster*, 4 June 1864.
[67] Arthur B. Leech, *Irish riflemen in America* (London, 1875), p. 5; *Irish Times*, 27 June 1894.
[68] *Dublin Daily Express*, 24 Jan. 1867.

and practical importance of the city vis-à-vis the rest of the country. At the centre of the transport network, of the social season, and of the network of gentlemen's clubs, Dublin was the place where Masters of Hunt and archers met. The organisation of an annual shooting competition, the Abercorn Cup, by the Irish Rifle Association, further exposes the degree of bureaucratisation which came to regulate sport. Opened only to resident Irishmen or those qualified 'by paternal descent', the contest was designated to select eight competitors who would then represent Ireland at the ensuing Wimbledon meeting.[69] The emphasis on nationality and meritocracy which came to rule international competition in subsequent decades was introduced in Ireland in the 1860s, yet still contrasted with established practices, notably in cricket.

Field sports and elite sports presented a coherent picture of sports deeply rooted in the structure of the countryside and fitted the building of a national culture. Shooting or sailing for pleasure developed at a time when the British military and geographical expansion gathered pace. Such pastimes also appealed to the same upper-class constituency, showed a remarkable fluidity in membership and succeeded each other in the seasonal year. Wealthy Bray landowner Charles Putland was a sailor, hunter, and rifle shot.[70] Richard Hely Hutchinson, the brother of the Earl of Donoughmore, was the long-standing president of the Irish National Archery Club and his nephew a devoted hunter before his death in the Crimea.[71] Henry Cusack was on friendly terms with the Dublin Shooting Club and he and his brother James were an integral part of the Dublin archer community.[72] So was their neighbour Lord Talbot de Malahide who also started a short-lived falconry club in 1860.[73] Successive influential Lord-Lieutenants – the Earl of Carlisle (1855-8 and 1859-64), the Duke of Abercorn (1866-8 and 1874-6) and Earl Spencer (1868-74 and 1882-5)

[69] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 30 May 1868. Non-Irishmen could take part in the competition but were not eligible for the Irish team. The four best-placed competitors were assured of their selection and the four following competitors could see their selection challenged and the matter resolved in a second competition. This amendment opened a back door to talented shots who missed the initial reunion or experienced a bad day.
[70] Bridget Hourican, 'Putland, Charles', https://dib.cambridge.org/, accessed 31 Mar. 2021; Liam Clare, 'The Putland family of Dublin and Bray', in *Dublin Historical Record*, liv, no. 2 (2001), p. 203; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 23 Sept. 1867
[71] *Evening Freeman*, 12 Oct. 1860; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 2 Aug. 1866.
[72] *Evening Freeman*, 13 Oct. 1860. There is no evidence that another brother, businessman and chairman of the Midland Great Western Railway Sir Ralph Cusack, took active part in archery meetings.
[73] *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Aug. 1860.

– were keen hunters and sponsored rifle shooting and steeplechase competitions. These were closed pastimes that were too expensive and too symbolically tied to upper-class lifestyle to witness any significant downwards social spread in the mid-nineteenth century. Cricket and rowing, on the other hand, successfully made the transition from elite to middle-class participation.

The rise of middle-class clubs: cricket, rowing and athletics

The great strides made by cricket in Dublin after 1857 will be analysed later in this chapter. Its growth was sudden and especially marked within the middle classes as clubs mushroomed in the developing suburbs and became firmly ingrained within schools. The democratisation observed in cricket was also evident in rowing. A nationwide expansion in the 1860s precipitated a separation of rowing from sailing as it was felt the various Kingstown yacht clubs accorded little attention to the discipline.[74] Following the lead and example set by the DURC, rowing in Dublin developed around large clubs. They were well-defined entities possessing their own buildings and fleet and offered a year-round social and sporting calendar: dinners, racquet court or theatrical play in the off season, training and competition in the summer.[75] The Catholic University had crews between 1857 and 1861 and the rumour that employees of banks or 'great establishments' would form their own clubs lingered throughout the 1860s.[76] The Commercial Rowing Club was eventually founded in 1869 and two clubs were also created in Kingstown: the lower-middle-class Kingstown Township Rowing Club and the elitist Kingstown Harbour Boat Club.[77] The same year also saw the first edition of the Dublin Amateur Metropolitan Regatta. Its nationwide scope and collegial management by all Dublin amateur clubs gave this institution the power of a national body in all but name.[78]

[74] Blake, *In black & white*, pp 16-7. For examples of inconsistency in programme and badly kept course or encroachment at Kingstown, see *Freeman's Journal*, 5 May 1864, 3 Aug. 1865, 20 Jul. 1868.
[75] *Irish Times*, 27 Jan. 1866, 8 Dec. 1869.
[76] *Irish Times*, 27 May 1861, 28 May 1866. John Arnott, the Cork businessman, also had the idea of promoting rowing among the mercantile classes when he sought to pick a crew from the Lee Rowing Club and send it to the Glasgow regatta, see *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Sept. 1862.
[77] *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Sept., 2 Oct. 1869; *Evening Freeman*, 29 Nov. 1869. The Kingstown Harbour BC had an annual subscription of two guineas, which was in the higher bracket for a rowing club at the time. Its main patron and first president was local JP and developer John Crosthwaite.
[78] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 2 Feb. 1869, 5 Feb. 1869.

This proved a crucial step in harnessing provincial rowing cultures into a national one. The prizes offered at the Metropolitan Regatta were the most prestigious in Ireland, its rules were adopted at local meetings, and it entrenched amateurism in the city, which effectively excluded the lower classes from club membership despite a still loose definition.

Unlike cricket and rowing, athletics in Ireland did not originate in upper-class clubs but graduated from popular practices. Its adaptation into an amateur sport took place in Irish schools and barracks, whereupon it spread to civilian society. The first uncovered sports in Trinity College date from 1846 and were 'confined to the students of the University.'[79] They consisted of a flat and hurdle race, long and high jumps contests, a walking match, and a consolation race. A committee of eight students was appointed to receive entrance fees from competitors and handed out non-monetary prizes. Both races were 400 yards long, the hurdles 3ft 6in in height, and the winners of the races which took place in October 1845 conceded five yards to their opponents. The amateurism, standardisation and bureaucratisation which came to define athletics in the following decades was thus already present in a nutshell in the mid-1840s within Trinity College. No further meeting in the university, however, has been unearthed until 1857 when the 'College Races' were organised by the Dublin University Football Club (DUFC).[80] Thereafter they became 'the social event of the year for Dublin' and easily attracted twenty thousand spectators over two days in the College Park.[81] In the meantime, an athletic meeting had taken place at the Curragh in 1856 and inaugurated a tradition of military sports that would also prove to be highly popular throughout the country.[82]

These late-1850s athletic meetings paved the way for the creation of more clubs in the following decade. In 1860, the Amateur Racing Club was made up of 'young men in the establishment of Messrs. Todd, Burns, and Co'; a year later the Midland Railway Athletic Club boasted two hundred members drawn from the officers and mechanics of the railway company, and by 1867 a Civil Service club had also been

[79] *Bell's Life*, 15 Feb. 1846.
[80] West, *The bold collegians*, p. 37; Alan Gilsenan, *Dublin University harriers and athletic club, a centenary history* (Dublin, 1985), p. 14.
[81] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Rugby F./38/16, letter from Charles Barrington to E.J.M. Watson, dated 18 Dec. 1929. Original emphasis.
[82] Rouse*, Sport & Ireland*, pp 134-5.

formed.[83] Various institutions, including the Rathmines School Cricket Club, Catholic Young Men's Society, the Richmond Asylum and the Great Western Railway Company, were also seen to be encouraging the holding of sports among their membership, customers or personnel.[84] Athletics grew from strength to strength in the 1860s and found supporting communities in the wealthy suburbs. The holding of races for local children in Marino Crescent, Sandymount or Merrion Square provided a societal focus for parents and neighbours alike as military bands or fireworks brightened the surroundings.[85] It remains nonetheless impossible to ascertain to what extent the rise of modern athletics affected traditional contests. Informal competition between children or at race meetings did not suddenly come to an end. More significant still were the reminiscences of rural residents gathered in the late 1930s by the National Folklore Commission which betrayed the persistence of local customs well into the 1870s or 1880s. At Lucan stone throwing was practised across fields, whereas in Balrothery men threw iron stones on the roads and had to cover the greatest distance in three throws.[86]

What stood out in the development of rowing, cricket and athletics after 1850 was their being run on resolutely new lines. Many clubs were established (and hierarchised) and annual competitions held. If a bureaucratic transition was clearly observed, it was nevertheless not as complete as in archery or rifle shooting. The second important evolution was their implantation within the Dublin middle classes and the adoption of the British model, notably amateurism. Cricket pitches were among the first dedicated sporting facilities built in the townships and often doubled as promenades or athletics tracks. They became part of the suburban fabric and helped to convey the image of suburbs as wealthy, modern and wholesome places, as well as creating a community of values between the Irish and British middle classes.

[83] *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Aug. 1860, 17 June 1867; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 13 Sept. 1861.
[84] *Dublin Daily Express*, 4 Oct. 1862; *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Aug. 1863, 17 Aug. 1869; *Irish Times*, 18 Sept. 1868.
[85] *Evening Freeman*, 22 Sept. 1860; *Irish Times*, 2 Sept. 1862; *Dublin Daily Express*, 26 June 1871.
[86] National Folklore Collection, School's Collection, vol. 0784, pp 31-2; Ibid., vol. 0793, p. 129. The Balrothery game shares similarities with the game of long bullets (road bowling).

Football, hurling and their development in schools

This research has not been able to unearth casual games of football played in Dublin in the 1850s and 1860s, in contrast to Munster for example.[87] Progressive enclosure of public spaces, lack of endorsement by respectable patrons and better policing probably drove the regular and large-scale football playing of the early nineteenth century out of the city. Whether it disappeared remains unknown as rural customs or children's games were then largely ignored by newspapers.

There was however a burgeoning football community fast developing in schools. Football had already been long played in Trinity College and students had founded the DUFC by 1854.[88] Two years later Castledawson School advertised its 'large field for cricket, football, &c.'[89] By 1862, Rathmines School also mentioned its football facilities to prospective parents.[90] A take-off in club football in Dublin then began in the 1866/7 season. In November 1866, Belvedere School was opposed to Mr M'Dermott's FBC on three consecutive Saturdays in the Phoenix Park.[91] In March 1867 they played against Dominick Street School and in March 1869 lost to Rathmines School.[92] This latter had begun external matches in November 1867 against a local civilian team, Waltham FC, and then played the second XV of the DUFC.[93] By then the Trinity College students had already been opposed by St Columba's College and Hume Street School.[94] Elsewhere Clongowes Wood and Castleknock College played their own version of gravel football, until association football took over in the 1880s.[95] That both schools did not play external matches until the 1890s and initially chose soccer over rugby contrasted with other schools, yet illustrates how marginal school games could survive independently of a thriving school rugby scene.

Evidence shows that Dublin schools initially favoured the kicking over the carrying game. Studying at St Columba's College in 1859, Charles Barrington remembered

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[87] O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, p. 18; Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, p. 52; *Irish Times*, 8 Nov. 1859. Bracken counts no less than ten football references in Tipperary for the 1850-69 period
[88] West, *The bold collegians*, pp 23-4.
[89] *Dublin Daily Express*, 22 Jan. 1856.
[90] *Dublin Daily Express*, 15 Nov. 1862.
[91] *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Nov. 1866.
[92] *Evening Freeman*, 1 Mar. 1867; *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Mar. 1869.
[93] *Dublin Daily Express*, 18 Nov. 1867; 28 Nov. 1867; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 25 Nov. 1867.
[94] *Dublin Daily Express*, 28 Nov. 1867.
[95] *St Vincent's College centenary record 1835-1935* (Dublin, 1935), pp 264-5; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 130.

playing ‘a sort of soccer game’ which prohibited running with the ball.[96] Castleknock and Clongowes Wood both had a dribbling game which proscribed tackling and it is possible that early games played at Blackrock College were similar.[97] The nature of the ground, gravel or soft grass, was probably as great a determinant as cultural factors in deciding which rules to adopt. The adoption of the carrying game by the DUFC and the printing of rules in 1868 would, however, prove to be crucial in changing the nature of football in Dublin elite schools.

The rare reports of hurling in the press reveal the survival of the game in its popular form and the condemnation of the anarchical, immoral, and seditious aspects of those who indulged in it. Children playing in the streets were a nuisance to passers-by, desecrated the Sabbath, and bad temper could lead to fatal accidents.[98] The issue, as explained in the first chapter, was not with the game as such but with who played it and where and when it happened. An advertisement inserted in the *Irish Times* in 1861 looking for ‘a field suited for Cricket or HURLING within a mile of Fitzwilliam-square’ indicates that some of the Dublin upper-class residents had retained a degree of support for the game.[99] If not them, then their sons did. A brand of hurling was indeed gaining ground at Trinity College and in schools from the early 1860s onwards. Both West and Rouse rightly indicated that the Dublin University Hurley Club (DUHC) led the way and that the publication of its rules in John Lawrence’s 1870/71 edition of *Handbook of cricket in Ireland* marked an important step towards its diffusion and codification.[100] But contrary to what has been hitherto believed, the DUHC was not playing only internal matches in its early years nor was it the only club. Interschool matches took place as early as 1860 when the Academic Institute hosted the Leeson Park Club.[101] Two years later the University Hurling Club [sic] played a series of matches against the Rathmines club in the College Park and in 1867 the same hurling club hosted Santry School, much to the pleasure of the conservative *Dublin Daily Express*, which remarked that ‘great interest was evinced

[96] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/ Rugby F./38/6, letter from Charles Barrington to E.J.M. Watson, undated.
[97] Seán P. Farragher, *The French College Blackrock 1860-1896* (Blackrock, 2011), p. 179.
[98] *The Advocate*, 7 Nov. 1857; *Irish Times*, 20 Jan. 1863; *Freeman’s Journal*, 29 Mar. 1864; *Saunders’s News-Letter*, 22 Oct. 1869; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 94.
[99] *Irish Times*, 31 Aug. 1861, original emphasis.
[100] West, *The bold collegians*, pp 33-5; Rouse, *The hurlers*, pp 8-9; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 172-3.
[101] *Irish Times*, 20 Feb. 1860.

in the match and a number of spectators fringed the ground, which shows that a lively interest is still taken in Ireland's oldest game.'[102] It is not clear what were the rules of hurling before they became codified in the late 1860s and whether the games played in streets and schools were similar. What is sure, however, is that like football, hurling was losing ground at popular level while being rejuvenated in schools.

Pugilism, wrestling and proto-commercialisation

The rise in policing and changing mentalities concerning the role of violence in and around games, large-scale betting, rowdy crowds and a clear association with the lower classes condemned wrestling and prize-fighting in their traditional form. Unlike football and hurling, they did not enjoy a revival in Dublin schools to retain their legitimacy as a pastime and were pushed underground. What differentiated them from cock and dog fighting, however, was their ability to benefit from the budding commercialisation of sport through the staging of mock fights in front of a paying audience and to stay in the limelight before the development of modern-day boxing in the city in the 1870s and its democratisation from the late 1880s.[103] This was not a new development, as seen in the previous chapter, yet it especially gathered pace in pugilism at a time when the entertainment industry was expanding.

Whether wrestling declined is naturally difficult to assess. There is evidence of large gatherings in the Phoenix Park and at Swords in 1856 and 1862, at which the police intervened.[104] In 1865, a wrestler fractured his leg at a bout held in Monkstown.[105] The tone of the reports implied a regular practice despite the lack of coverage by contemporary newspapers. Meanwhile the city's theatres and music halls included the pastime in their programme and some athletic meetings even held a 'Great All-Ireland Wrestling match' to great success (figure 2.4).[106] The pattern of public condemnation coupled with commercial exploitation was more obvious in pugilism. Devoid of aristocratic patronage and scorned by the reforming middle classes, the

[102] *Irish Times*, 15 Nov. 1862; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 3 Dec. 1862; *Dublin Daily Express*, 7 Dec. 1867.
[103] Dublin University started to hold annual boxing tournaments in 1872 with gloved bouts and weight categories, *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 4 June 1872.
[104] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 29 Apr. 1856; *Irish Times*, 19 May 1862.
[105] *Irish Times*, 26 Dec. 1865.
[106] Gunning, *Hardy Fingallians*, p. 120, *Evening Freeman*, 24 Feb. 1864.

long-term prospects for prize-fighting were poor.[107] It initially survived on the margin of legality because a substantial network of supporters existed. No fewer than sixteen prize-fights have been uncovered in the press in the 1850s and 1860s (figure 1.4, p. 51).[108] They could be of considerable dimensions but were more often staged in front of small crowds of barely a hundred spectators. Some fighters were local stars such as Andrew Moore, who earned the sobriquet of 'Black Diamond' and enjoyed sufficient fame in the early 1850s to cash in on his name at the Donnybrook fair.[109] Most were just local men who fought for a purse or a bet. The location of the bouts, at Irishtown, Crumlin Road, Sherriff Street, Phoenix Park and North Strand, as well as the occupation of some fighters (blacksmith, cork cutter or coal porter) reinforced the working-class status of the pastime.

Figure 2.4: Sparring exhibition and wrestling competition, 1864.



TWO MORE DAYS.

JEM MACE,

CHAMPION OF ENGLAND.

GRAND FISTIC TOURNAMENT,

THIS AFTERNOON and EVENING,

And

TO-MORROW AFTERNOON and EVENING,

At DYCER'S RIDING SCHOOL.

MACE,

The Wonder of the P.R., will exhibit the

ORIGINAL CHAMPION OF ENGLAND'S BELT, the

GREAT WINDHAM GOLD CUP,

Value 500 Guineas,

And all his other Belts and Cups, and will set-to at each Exhibition with the renowned JOE GOSS, who lately fought the Champion for £1,000, ARR HASSAN, the Big Black, or another of the big celebrities of the P.R.; Young Donnelly, the Scientific, and other members of the P.R. too numerous to mention, will illustrate the noble art.

The scientific Champion of England and Joe Goss, Champion of the Middle Weights, will be presented with a testimonial on To-morrow (Thursday) Evening.

Afternoon performance at Three precisely; grand Wind-up at a Quarter to Five precisely. Evening performance at Eight o'Clock; grand Wind-up about Ten o'Clock.

Admission—Body of the School, 1s; Select Circle, 2s; Balcony, 5s.

Tickets of admission and all particulars can be obtained at Mr. John Levett's Spirit Stores, 32, Cross Kevin-street, which house Mace, Goss, and the others will visit every day.

Notice—The only entrance for admission is South King-street.

☞ Mace positively leaves Dublin on Friday Morning.

THIS DAY! THIS DAY!! THIS DAY!!!

ROYAL RECREATION GROUNDS,

UPPER WELLINGTON-STREET.

A Grand Fashionable competition of Athletic Sports, including Foot Racing, Wrestling, Weights Throwing, Highland Dancing, Military Bands, Grand Fashionable Promenade, Fire works, &c., &c., will take place on the above Grounds on THIS DAY (Monday), the 19th September, 1864.

PROGRAMME.

Five o'Clock—300 Yards Race—M Hughes, T O'Dwyer, J Waterson, S Byrne, W M'Loughlin, and R Hayburne.

Half-past Five o'Clock—Half Mile Race—S Byrne, M Hughes, J Waterson, T O'Dwyer, J Neary.

Six o'Clock—Great Three Mile Walking Handicap—J Hubert, J Lawless, W Plunkett, B Maddock, W Keogh, J Sherry, Morgan, P Myles.

Half-past Six o'Clock—Great All Ireland Wrestling Match, for a splendid Champion Gold and Silver Belt—W Gill, M Hughes, M Fitzsimons, J M'Grane, T Mulligan, D Doyle, W M Cormack.

Seven o'Clock—160 Yards Race for Men—T O'Dwyer, M Hughes, S Byrne, J Watson, P Hayburne. Half-past 7 o'Clock—Great and exciting One Mile Champion Race, for splendid Silver Champion Cup, value £10—M Hughes, James Black, P Canivan, J Waterson, J Gordon, W Sheehy. Eight o'Clock—Grand display of Fireworks, and Balloon Ascents, by Professor Hodsman; Fashionable Promenade, Highland Dancing, &c. Gates open at Four o'Clock, to commence at Five o'Clock precisely. Admission, 6d. P S—The Programme of Music to be performed by the Military Bands will be published in the Field Programmes. Refreshments supplied on the Grounds at the ordinary prices.

s17 MR. J. J. GORDON, Manager.

Source: *Evening Freeman*, 24 Feb. 1864, 19 Sept. 1864.

[107] Brailsford, *Bareknuckles*, pp 136-7.
[108] *Freeman's Journal*, 13 Sept. 1850, 18 Aug. 1852, 2 Nov. 1852, 10 Feb. 1857, 28 May 1861, 3 Sept. 1861, 17 Sept. 1861, 7 Mar. 1866, 26 June 1866,1 Sept. 1868; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 8 Feb. 1854, 29 Oct. 185, 1 Feb. 1864; *Irish Times*, 24 Apr. 1859, 23 July 1861; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 6 May 1867.
[109] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Aug. 1854.

Prize-fighting in Dublin also survived because it copied developments taking place in England, and a small renaissance was observed in the wake of the fight between John Heenan and Tom Sayers in April 1860. Four fights have been recorded as taking place in Dublin in 1861 and the possibility of staging a fight between the Irish-born American champion Joe Coburn and the English fighter Jem Mace 'above 20 and under 100 miles from Dublin' in 1864 brought further publicity to the pastime.[110] The arrival of the fighters in Ireland and their daily routine were widely commented on by the Dublin press until the match fell through at the last minute following Coburn's insistence on appointing his brother-in-law as referee.[111]

The integration of Ireland into the wider British pugilist scene proved to be a lifeline for the sport in Dublin in the mid-century. The best fighters were internationally renowned and exploited the possibilities opened to them by the expansion of music halls and commercial popular culture. In 1860, both Tom Sayers and John Heenan pocketed £40 for a rapturous appearance at the Rotunda Garden two months after their highly publicised fight. The same Heenan was back in Dublin in 1864 with Tom King, who had just beaten him in a controversial fight.[112] Weeks before, Jem Mace and Joe Goss had sparred at the same venue in front of a full house (figure 2.4). Military men occupied the five-shilling gallery while cab-men, coal porters and milkmen and other 'roughs' from the Liberties gathered in the 'shilling place'.[113] Lesser-known fighters who never reached fame also toured Dublin and exhibited themselves in the 1860s.[114] This system remained in place until the turn of the 1890s when working-class boxing eventually replaced prize-fighting as the leading combat sport in the city.

The development of sport in Dublin in the 1850s and 1860s follows the trends observed since the 1830s and highlights several aspects that need further examination. The rest of this chapter will thus look at the role of Dublin University in fostering and spreading new games, at the increased commercialisation of sport,

[110] *Bell's Life*, 11 June 1864.
[111] *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Sept. 1864, 5 Oct. 1864.
[112] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 June 1860, 24 Feb. 1864; *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 30 June 1860.
[113] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Feb. 1864.
[114] *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Feb. 1863, 10 Mar. 1863.

and at the advent of cricket as a popular sport. As a fitting tribute to the new sporting order, however, this section starts with the end of Donnybrook fair.

3- Donnybrook fair: end and legacy

The mounting pressure to abolish Donnybrook fair grew in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, but John Madden, who owned its patent, staunchly refused to yield.[115] Upon his death in 1850, the rights of the fair passed into the hands of his sister Eleanor, an aged and influenceable woman who eventually agreed in 1855 to cede the rights for £3,000.[116] A broad coalition, including civic authorities, middle-class residents and the Protestant and Catholic churches, then proceeded to raise the sum needed to finally put an end to the fair.[117] In retrospect, Donnybrook could not have survived nineteenth-century societal changes. All over the country, fairs progressively tended to emphasise their trading role over their more boisterous attributes and grew in frequency while shortening in length.[118] No fewer than thirteen other places in County Dublin held thirty one-day fairs in 1857, without apparent outcry.[119] Donnybrook, on the other hand, had lost its commercial relevance by mid-century to become essentially a pleasure fair. Its location right at the core of the expanding Pembroke township was another affront to the utilitarianism and respectability of the middle classes.[120]

If the end was near, it took a further decade to arrive. Legal recourse and the dogged determination of Joseph Dillon, a nephew of John and Eleanor Madden, kept a semblance of the fair going on until the mid-1860s.[121] But to no avail, as crowds had

[115] Ó Maitiú, *The humours of Donnybrook*, pp 38-41
[116] Ibid., pp 43-4; *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 19 May 1855.
[117] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 15 May 1855; *Dublin Daily Express*, 4 Jul. 1855; D'Arcy, 'The decline and fall', p. 8.
[118] Hunt, *Sport and society*, p. 217.
[119] Alexander Thom, *Thom's Irish almanac and official directory with the post office Dublin city and county directory for the year 1857* (Dublin, 1857), p. 864. There were over thirty places in the county where fairs were held in early nineteenth century.
[120] D'Arcy, 'The decline and fall', p. 17.
[121] *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Jul. 1859. On this occasion a pickpocket was arrested at Kingstown regatta. He 'had come from the country for the purpose of being present at the Kingstown regatta, Rathfarnham Fair, and to wind up his professional engagement for the season at the Carnival at Donnybrook.'

made up their mind and stopped going to Donnybrook. From a height of over seventy thousand visitors on the opening day (Walking Sunday) in the early 1840s, only twelve thousand attended a week-long festival in 1855.[122] Meanwhile legal and religious opposition did not abate. Publicans' licences were not renewed, policemen were dispersed on the ground and Catholic Archbishop Paul Cullen saw fit to issue a pastoral exhorting his flock not to patronise the fair.[123] It all ended in 1866 when Dillon's attempt to organise a pedestrian meeting on Walking Sunday fell flat. The very same day, and overlooking the fair ground, the Church of the Sacred Heart was inaugurated with pomp. The irony cannot be missed, and this marked the end of Donnybrook fair.[124]

The true motives for disestablishing the fair were linked to the image that the middle classes projected of themselves. The presence of a strong contingent of Protestant and Catholic clergy in subscription lists, as well as the Liberal Richard Armstrong and abolitionist and temperance activist James Haughton, are consistent with a moral crusade. More than fighting immorality, they set out to promote 'rational recreation' for the working classes in the likes of botanic gardens or tee-total mechanics' institutes.[125] This was the triumph of middle-class respectability, a stamp of arrival, and their programme for a modern industrial society. The presence of numerous inhabitants of Donnybrook and businessmen in the movement also suggests a more pragmatical layer to their convictions. For some, abolishing the fair meant preserving the quietness of a socially segregated neighbourhood. For others, it answered a career plan or advertising needs. Thus, the secretary in charge of the subscription list was solicitor Stephen Radcliff Fetherston, the son-in-law of the then Lord Mayor, Joseph Boyce. Hotelier Thomas Gresham, retailers Hugh Browne, James Thomas and Thomas Bewley, brewer Robert Manders, and theatre owner John Harris contributed to the fund. So did the building and engineering firms Cockburn & Sons and Sykes & Co. Perhaps the kudos associated with a good deed

[122] Séamas Ó Maitiú, 'Changing images of Donnybrook fair', in Denis A. Cronin, Jim Gilligan and Karina Holton (eds), *Irish fairs and markets* (Dublin, 2001), p. 171; Ó Maitiú, *Humours of Donnybrook*, p. 47.
[123] *Catholic Telegraph*, 18 Aug. 1860; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 27 Aug. 1860; Ó Maitiú, *Humours of Donnybrook*, p. 49.
[124] Ó Maitiú, *Humours of Donnybrook*, pp 51-2. In 1868 a very last attempt was made by a relative of Dillon, but it attracted less than 120 people on the first three days before the ground became deserted.
[125] Samuel Haughton, *Memoir of James Haughton, with extract from his private and published letters* (Dublin, 1877), pp 96-7, 126-7; *Dublin Daily Express*, 12 June 1855.

led them to join the bandwagon: cheap advertising, a good conscience, and an increase of status within the community.[126]

The drastic fall in attendance at Donnybrook over the space of two decades has been rightly attributed to changing mentalities and increased religious observance from a growingly law-abiding population eager for 'self-improvement'.[127] This however fails to account for alternatives. The development of horseracing and regattas from the 1830s onwards provided occasions of popular enjoyment. Reports of dancing, gambling and drinking to excess at Fairyhouse or Sandymount abound.[128] In Britain, 'annual race-meetings were seen by locals as a carnival equivalent, the social and recreational zenith of the year, family occasions and a main annual holiday for workers'.[129] As Punchestown became established as the leading steeplechasing event of the Irish racing calendar, Dublin employers were repeatedly asked to grant the day off to their employees, which only highlights the holiday nature recently acquired by the festival.[130] By the 1850s, the attractions of Donnybrook were also freely available in the streets of the city as gambling, drinking, and sexual promiscuity became ingrained in the lifestyle of a large portion of the male urban working class, in Victorian Britain and in Dublin alike.[131] Finally, demotic pastimes could survive or disappear regardless of middle-class pretentions, as shown by the decline of bull-baiting or conversely the survival of dog and cock fighting.[132] The end of Donnybrook did not come solely because authorities decided so but also because the population had other recreative outlets to resort to.

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[126] Ó Maitiú, *Humours of Donnybrook*, pp 45-6.
[127] D'Arcy, 'The decline and fall', pp 16-8; Vamplew, *Pay up*, pp 46-7.
[128] *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Mar. 1857, 1 Sept. 1857, 20 Aug. 1858, 7 Jul. 1864, 16 May 1865; *Irish Times*, 16 Jul. 1863, 3 Apr. 1866.
[129] Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, p. 88; Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp 180-1.
[130] *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Apr. 1867, 25 Mar. 1868, 9 Apr. 1868. See also *Irish Times*, 10 Aug. 1866 for a farmer asking the committee of the Malahide regatta to bring forward the races from 16 August to 15 August so that it would match with Lady Day and thus ensure a larger crowd.
[131] Judith Flanders, *The Victorian city: everyday life in Dickens' London* (London, 2012), pp 347-58, 411-3 for an aspect of drink and prostitution in London; Bailey, *Leisure and class*, pp 38-46 for an account of the development of 'singing saloons' and the resistance of urban working class to middle-class reformers in mid-nineteenth century England. For singing and dancing in Dublin pubs, see *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Nov. 1858; *Dublin Daily Express*, 5 Apr. 1866. Gambling, in streets or dedicated houses, was ubiquitous, see *Dublin Daily Express*, 30 Jan. 1858; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 28 Sept. 1867.
[132] Robert D Storch, 'The policeman as domestic missionary: urban discipline and popular culture in Northern England, 1850-80', in R.J. Morris and Richard Rodger (eds.), *The Victorian city: a reader in British urban history, 1820-1914* (London, 1993), p. 287; Peter Bailey, 'Leisure', in Hewitt, *The Victorian world*, pp 622-3.

New traditions around specific dates in the calendar came to replace the fair. In the first part of the century, no pattern existed as far as horseracing was concerned. In the 1850s and 1860s, however, racing took place on fifteen occasions on Easter Monday, which is to this day associated with Fairyhouse racecourse. Whit Monday and St Stephen's Day also started to be used by athletics or pony-racing promoters who possessed enclosed venues and charged admission fees (appendix 2). These holidays had no specific connection with local traditions but were chosen because gate money could be maximised. A reciprocally advantageous relationship developed whereby new customs were created and reinforced both the status of the holiday and the sport that went with it. Later on in the century, Whit Monday became synonymous with athletic meetings and the Baldoyle races, while Easter Monday was reserved to Fairyhouse and the opening of the cycling season. Donnybrook was long gone by then, but the association of meaningful dates with horse or athletic races persisted and became commercially exploited.

4- Dublin University

Cricket, football, athletics and rowing were practised by Dublin University students in the early nineteenth century and became formally organised in the mid-1830s as the DUCC was created. The establishment of a university rowing club dates from 1847. The DUFC was established by 1855 (possibly created in 1854) and athletic meetings were organised in the mid-1840s before becoming annual occurrences from 1857. This formalisation of sport in Dublin University both fitted and fuelled the nascent rise in sport clubs witnessed in the city and echoed the increased organisation of sport observed within British elite schools and universities. The transition was eased by students who had availed of a secondary education in England – over 1,500 (disproportionately wealthy and Protestant) Irish boys did so in the early 1860s – and then enrolled in Trinity College.[133] A clear minority among

[133] Ciaran O'Neill, *Catholics of consequence: transnational education, social mobility, and the Irish Catholic elite, 1850-1900* (Oxford, 2014), p. 10. Students educated in England however made up only a small minority of the Trinity College matriculants. See Kieran Flanagan, 'The shaping of Irish Anglican secondary schools, 1854-1878', *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society*, xiii, no. 1 (1984), p. 42.

students, their importance was nevertheless primordial in introducing a handling form of football in Dublin but seems to have been more diffuse in other sports. The model was uncontested however and as the old order of leisure was disappearing, the new one was imported from England and developed fast within Dublin University.

Adoption of English games

Football was clearly a case of direct importation as former public-school boys formed a large majority of the early membership of the DUFC (34 out the 43 players for whom information is available).[134] The preponderance of old Cheltenham (20) and Rugby (14) boys in the club up to the late 1850s was not repeated in following decades as there were proportionately fewer players educated in England and, significantly, they came from a larger number of schools. In the 1860s, the fourteen identified English-educated boys came from ten different schools. The initial impetus was decisive in creating a carrying tradition of football in the university before the formal adoption of rules by the club in 1868.[135] It reflected too the second rank status of Trinity College students within the British elite.[136] The social cachet associated with English public schools carried more weight than Irish schools, and so their rules were favoured over the local kicking style of football. The novelty and pride of bringing something new into Dublin University must have further enticed students to develop a carrying game. Conversely, the wealthiest section of the upper class tended to attend the public schools of Eton or Harrow (both with a kicking football tradition) and then enrol at Oxford or Cambridge universities. Dublin University attracted the lower tier of the elite, and crucially those who attended less prestigious public schools with a carrying football tradition. The presence of Irish students at Cheltenham and Rugby and their return to Dublin University reflected the power relationships within the British and Irish upper classes, and thus partly explains the adoption of their games at Trinity College.

[134] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Rugby F./13. See also Michael J. O'Connor, 'Early history of the club', in *Dublin University Football Club 1854-1954* (Dublin, 1954), p. 17
[135] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Rugby F./38/6. Charles Barrington remembers that before rules were written in the DUFC, players ran with the ball and had the Rugby post as only paraphernalia.
[136] Gerry P.T. Finn, 'Trinity Mysteries: University, Elite Schooling and Sport in Ireland', in *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxvii, no. 13 (2010), p. 2258.

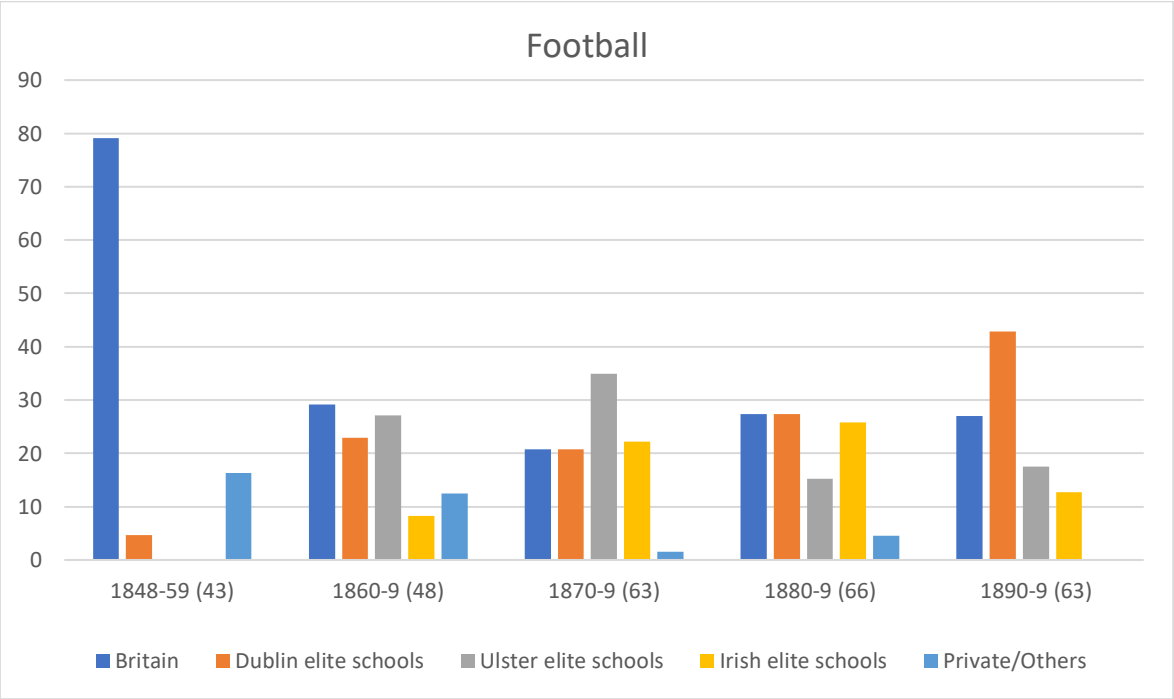
In cricket, rowing or athletics, the relationship between English schools and Dublin University was indirect. The study of the cricket club by Milne reveals that most of its early members had been educated in Ireland before entering Trinity College (figure 2.5).[137] Unlike football, it was only towards the end of the nineteenth century that the proportion of English-educated students rose among members of the DUCC. The relative decline of cricket in Ireland from the 1880s onwards and its being taken over in Irish schools by a longer football season, athletics and tennis is a possible explanation. Conversely, the growing association of cricket with Englishness and imperialism ensured it remained a privileged sport in English schools and perhaps explains a better proficiency in the game from English-educated students.

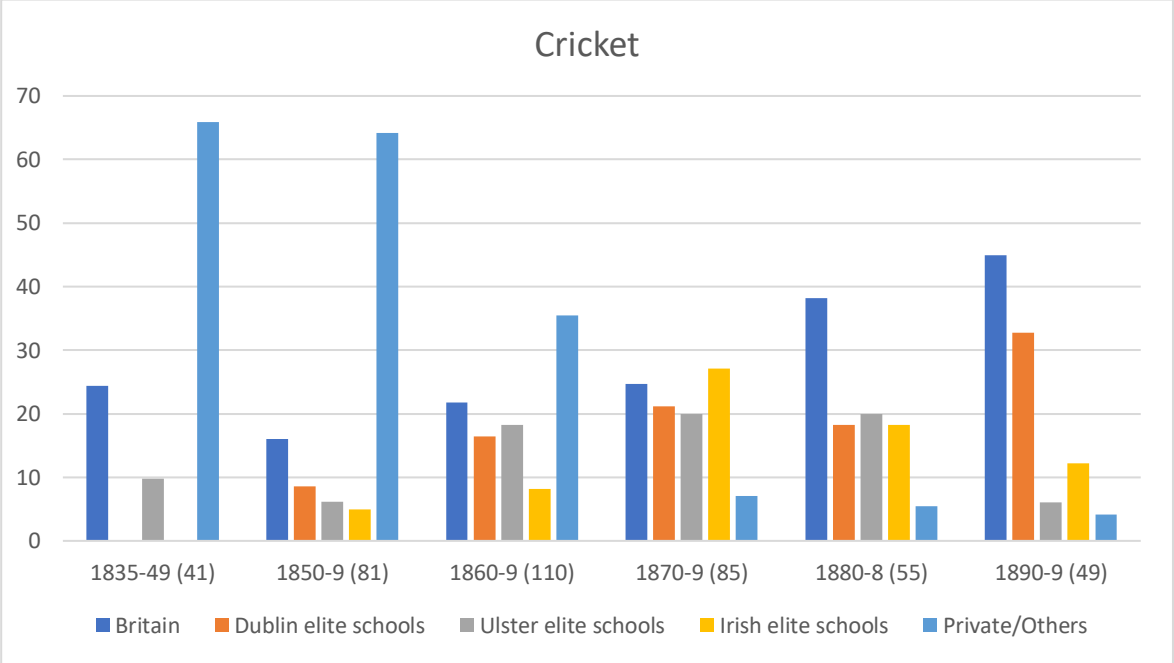
The lack of data in the archives of the DURC makes it difficult to assess who were the leading members of the club in the 1850s, and the same pitfall occurs in athletics. In the latter case, however, the indirect influence of English military or university institutions was felt in the creation of the 'College sports'. This was a day-long athletic meeting with a lengthy and varied programme that included track and field events confined in time and space, whereas pedestrian practices emphasised matches or challenges (sometimes over several days) and rarely staged field events. In England meetings had already been started at Woolwich and Oxford from 1849 onwards and the College Races in 1857 marked the start of annual all-round athletic meetings in Ireland.[138] Local differences could easily be distinguished as the Curragh and College races had a distinctive emphasis on jumping and throwing events to the detriment of short sprinting distances that were the hallmark of English meetings (appendix 3).

If the origin of athletics, cricket and rowing within Dublin University cannot always be directly linked to students bringing sports from English public schools, an indirect influence and a form of soft cultural power was probably at play in the development of such sports in Dublin in the 1850s. In Trinity College, these pastimes witnessed an incipient codification and bureaucratisation and from there spread out to civilian society in the 1860 and 1870s.

[137] Milne, 'Dublin University Cricket Club', p. 8.
[138] Birley, *Sport and the making of Britain*, p. 241; West, *The bold collegians*, p. 37.

Figure 2.5: Place of secondary education of DUFC and DUCC players (%).





Source: TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Rugby F./13; Ibid., Mun/Club/Cricket/19.

Note: The total number of identified players is indicated in brackets. Both sets of data were compiled according to the first year of affiliation to the club. For football, the information relies on secondary annotations made on the original list of members. In cricket, players educated in Australia and New Zealand (3) are included within Britain. Elite schools are considered in this thesis to be the fee-paying secondary establishments which were larger,

usually denominational, and had a longer longevity than smaller private schools. Such a definition is more inclusive than the one adopted by Ciaran O'Neill in *Catholics of consequence* and remains voluntary loose to include Rathmines and Kingstown schools for example, yet still distinguishes schools reserved only to the wealthiest.

The rise to prominence

The Dublin University sports clubs had carved out a leading position in their respective fields in the country by the late 1860s. Facilities in the College Green and a constant influx of new players who had been playing cricket or football at school level gave them a structural advantage. These were structured clubs, with an elected committee, club regulations, paying membership and hired professional coaches in rowing or cricket.[139] The football club penned its own rules of football in 1868 under the guidance of Charles Barrington, the son of a Limerick aristocrat who had previously studied at St Columba's and Rugby schools before entering Trinity College in 1867.[140] Allowing for embellished reminiscences, a clear picture of the rule-making process of the DUFC is found in the correspondence he and fellow student Arnold Graves held with the club archivist Edward Watson in 1929.[141] The pre-1868 game obeyed unwritten rules resembling the games played at Rugby and Cheltenham with the crucial distinction that hacking (kicking an opponent on the shin) was not allowed during play. Instead, a five-minute free-for-all took place afterwards. The 1868 written rules were likewise an adaptation of the Rugby rules for the Dublin scene. Out of the 23 DUFC rules, 16 could be found in the 1862 Rugby school rules, yet again hacking was expressly prohibited.[142] Why it was so rests with the ongoing codification of football in England and the will of the DUFC to

[139] TCD archives, Mun/Club/Boat/Box X, *Rules and regulations of the Dublin University Rowing Club* (Dublin, 1855); Ibid., Mun/Club/Cricket/1, 2 Apr. 1864,18 Dec. 1868; Ibid., Mun/Club/Athletics/2, 5 Mar. 1866 for the 'Rules and regulations of Dublin University Rowing Club', dating 1855 and the decision of the 'committee of the foot races' needing the approval of a general meeting of subscribers with regard to the management of the College sports. See also Blake, *In black and white*, p. 22.

[140] Shaun Boylan, 'Barrington, Sir Charles Burton', https://www.dib.ie, accessed 10 Aug. 2021.

[141] TCD archives, Mun/Club/Rugby F./38/5-16, 38/50-1; Ibid., Mun/Club/Rugby F/46; West, *The bold collegians*, pp 25-6; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 130. Barrington boasted that the introduction of rules and uniform caused a renewal of interest and great excitement in a club that was moribund upon his arrival in 1867.

[142] TCD archives, Mun/Club/Rugby F./38/6; West, *The bold collegians*, pp 27-8; *The laws of football, as played at Rugby School* (Rugby, 1862). Barrington admitted having dictated them from memory.

establish a model for other Irish clubs. The creation of the FA in 1863 and the explicit ban on hacking created a schism and precipitated the departure of clubs accustomed to it. As the FA began to cater for a kicking game, the need to codify the carrying game became especially felt and led to the creation of the RFU in 1871. Within the carrying tradition, hacking had however become a point of contention among clubs throughout the 1860s and the first rules of rugby reflected such evolutions by prohibiting the practice.[143] Such a move reflected too the growing importance of civilian clubs in English football and the need to sanitise the game of its most dangerous attributes, which might have led to work absenteeism. Contemporary debates around this contentious form of play were surely familiar to Barrington, and, without the existence of a strong Rugby and Cheltenham lobby within the membership of the DUFC by the latter 1860s, he settled for compromised rules. The club's affirmed objective of drafting rules for the burgeoning Dublin footballing scene where hacking, if known, was not popular, further explained such a decision.[144] The codification of football in Trinity College in 1868 should thus be seen in the light of the English trend to codify the carrying game and of the ambition to create a common Irish footballing culture by the then most structured Irish football club.

In rowing, the leading status of Trinity College was similarly based on success, size and seniority. The dissatisfaction with the way the Kingstown yacht clubs handled rowing at their regattas highlighted the need for sailing and rowing to be separately organised. A first step was made in 1866 when the University club organised a regatta whose attractive programme secured entries from Cork and Liverpool crews.[145] This early momentum was, however, suddenly stopped by a split within the DURC after the blackballing of a Catholic aspiring new member provoked a stream of resignations and precipitated the creation of the Dublin University Boat Club (DUBC).[146] Officially, the religious discrimination shown by the overwhelmingly

[143] Harvey, *Football, the first hundred years*, pp 134-48, 167-70; Tony Collins, *The oval world: a global history of rugby* (London, 2015), pp 24-31. Ironically, Rugby school did not become a member of the RFU until 1890 precisely because they refused to give up hacking.
[144] John Lawrence, *Handbook of cricket in Ireland 1868-9* (Dublin, 1869), p. 196; *Irish Times*, 20 Oct. 1868. A debate on the danger of football occurred in the *Irish Times* following a fracture contracted by an officer during a game played by the Garrison against the DUFC. See *Irish Times*, 15 Apr. 1867, 16 Apr. 1867, 22 Apr. 1867.
[145] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 6 Jul. 1866.
[146] Blake, *In black & white*, p. 24.

Protestant rowing club, as then was Trinity College, was the crux of the matter.[147] Club historian Raymond Blake, however, explains that many within the club likely waited for a *casus belli* to break away and create a purely student body, thus getting rid of the substantial minority of 'associate members' allowed since 1847.[148] The presence of two university clubs in Dublin, until an eventual reunification in 1898, seemed incongruous but in the short term it gave a stimulus to the sport as a healthy rivalry began.[149] Both clubs assumed a leading role in Irish rowing and were influential in setting up and running the Dublin Metropolitan regatta in 1869, whose position at the apex of Irish rowing remained uncontested in the following three decades.[150]

The spread to schools and civilian society

The informal influence held by Trinity College sports clubs in the late 1860s nurtured the spread of modern sport in Dublin on masculine and amateur lines and contributed to its adoption by the local middle classes.

Too little is known of early civilian athletics and rowing clubs to assert with precision if students played a role in their creation. In cricket, joining the Phoenix CC was a natural progression for former DUCC members but it is also unclear to what extent students directly contributed to the emergence of a cricket scene in the city. In 1861, Arthur Samuels played with Kingstown against his *alma mater*.[151] The same year,

[147] TCD archives, Mun/Club/Boat/Box X, resignation letters from Dublin University Rowing Club members, 1867. The club archives retained twenty-seven letters of resignation with at least half of them explicitly mentioning religious discrimination as their motive for leaving.
[148] Ibid.; Blake, *In black & white*, pp 24-5; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 16 May 1867. Blake suggests that the timing of the affair and that those who resigned were mainly undergraduates indicate a pre-established wish to break away and the blackballing merely gave them an excuse to do so. The resignation letters from Anthony Traill and Robert Bell for example highlight the need of furthering the interests of a 'purely' student body.
[149] The rivalry between the two clubs was only felt on the water and after a few years, cooperation clearly existed between them. The DUBC helped the DURC after one of their eight-oar boat met with an accident. Conversely, the DURC granted the privilege of visitors to the DUBC stalwarts Charles Barrington, Croker Barrington and Charles Pentland during their training for the Henley regatta. See TCD archives, Mun/Club/Boat/2/1, 4 Nov. 1874, 22 Apr. 1876; *Dublin Daily Express*, 12 Jul. 1879
[150] All Dublin amateur clubs could take part in the proceedings of the regatta, but the Trinity clubs were disproportionately influential. The idea initially came from the DUBC, then after a couple of years under their guidance, the DURC took over, before the clubs eventually settled for power sharing in the mid-1870s. See *Irish Times*, 3 Feb. 1869; TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/2/1, 21 June 1871, 24 June 1871, 5 July 1871.
[151] TCD archives, Mun/Club/Cricket/20.

members of the TCD engineering class bolstered the Bray team.[152] But conversely, there were few, if any, former DUCC members at the creation of the Leinster Cricket Club in 1852.[153] If evidence is lacking, the contemporary press did not doubt the role of the student diaspora and gave the DUCC 'a special notice, as well for the excellence of its play, as for the advantage derived by the dissemination of good cricket to "all parts" through its *alumni*.'[154] The influence of university cricket was probably indirect and consisted in raising standards and awareness around the game. In 1855, for example, former DUCC member William Nicholson organised a match between an English and an Irish XI.[155] In the summers of 1866 and 1867, the *Ephemerals*, a team made of University students, played against clubs from Sandymount and Malahide and the following year the *Stoics*, a past and present DUCC team, played against provincial clubs.[156] Matches with local schools were recurrent. Between 1860 and 1867, the second XI of the DUCC played St Columba's annually, Holyville Park school six times and met at least once the Academic Institute, Kingstown and Rathmines schools. Playing the University club, even its second XI, was a mark of honour for these schools and contributed without doubt to spread the gospel of cricket at the time.

In football, the first official outside match of the DUFC first XV took place in 1871 against North of Ireland, a Belfast club.[157] While most matches were internal affairs, encounters had been taking place sporadically since 1860 when the club was opposed to the Wanderers (no link with the club founded in 1869).[158] A game involving former Rugbeians then took place in 1863 in Merrion Square, but it was really from 1867 onwards that external matches became commonplace. Games against the 65th and 85th regiments in the late 1860s gave students opportunities to showcase their skills against drilled opponents.[159] With regard to the spread of football in Ireland, the matches that DUFC players had with St Columba's and Hume

[152] *Irish Times*, 30 May 1861.
[153] None of the twenty-six initial members of the Leinster CC appear on the membership list of the DUCC, see Lawrence, *Handbook 1865-6*, p. 14. The Phoenix, University and Leinster cricket clubs are often referred as 'the big three' as they were the most senior and successful clubs in the city.
[154] *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Mar. 1865.
[155] *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Sept. 1855.
[156] *Freeman's Journal*, 12 June 1866, 27 May 1867; *Irish Times*, 20 June 1866; Lawrence, *Handbook 1868-9*, p. 28.
[157] *Dublin University Football Club*, p14.
[158] *Irish Times*, 6 Dec. 1860.
[159] *Irish Times*, 11 Apr. 1867, 23 Mar. 1869. Some of these matches were played under Eton and others under Rugby rules.

Street school past and present in 1867 and the two matches against Rathmines school in 1869 were crucial.[160] They provided the background to the codification of football in the city and highlighted the link between the University and other schools. Granby Burke (educated at St Columba's College) was the DUFC captain in 1867 when the club met his former school. The following year, Ralph Benson (son of Rathmines School headmaster) was the club captain and Daniel Neill, who led the University players against the Rathmines School team in 1869, was also a school alumnus. It is only in the 1870s that former DUFC players would be instrumental in creating clubs throughout the city and Ireland, but in the late 1860s, the process of diffusion had already started.

The influence of Trinity College in the development of sport in Dublin from the 1850s to the 1870s was immense. The University was solely responsible for the introduction of a handling form of football, its codification, and the spread of these rules to local schools. It was largely accountable for the return of interest in athletics and rowing, not least through the establishment of annual competitions with national status. And it possessed one of the three strongest cricket elevens in the country at the time. Sport in its amateur and organised form found a foothold there from which to spread. Its modern and fashionable aspect was emulated elsewhere in the city and quickly attracted commercial entrepreneurs.

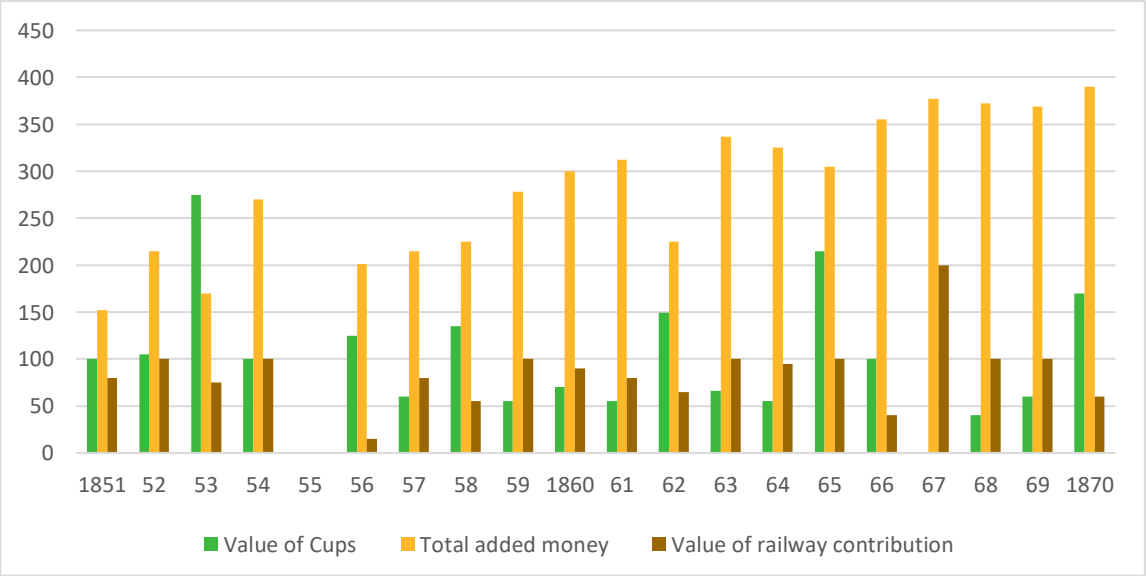
5- Early commercial ventures: hopes and disillusions

The exploitation of leisure by publicans, outfitters and railway companies, if not new to Dublin, became especially visible after 1850 in the rest of the country thanks to the rapid development of railway lines.[161] If horseracing secured the lion's share of railway sponsorship nationwide, the Kingstown regatta was its main recipient in Dublin, with over thirty percent of its money prize in the 1850s and 1860s given by the Dublin and Kingstown or Dublin and Wicklow railway companies (figure 2.6). While the intrinsic value of sponsorship witnessed little variation, its relative

[160] *Irish Times*, 1 Nov. 1867, 30 Nov. 1867, 24 Nov. 1869.
[161] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 106-7; D'Arcy, *Horses*, pp 139-52.

importance declined over the years as yacht clubs tended to abandon cups for money prizes and had to increase the prize money to face off competition from other regattas in Ireland and Britain. Conversely, railway companies were less tempted to pour money into what had become a well-established annual popular event. Whereas railway sponsorship was needed in the early 1850s to make the regatta the nautical event of the year, companies could relatively decrease their involvement in the 1860s without loss of traffic.

Figure 2.6: Value of prizes (£) at the Kingstown regatta, 1851-70.



Note: no edition took place in 1855.

Concurrently with the growth of railway sponsorship was the development of a network of venues where an admission fee was sought. Charging spectators to watch sporting events was intermittently seen in the 1830s in wrestling or pugilism and took off in the 1840s in horseracing, when grandstands began to segregate the wealthy from the crowd and when the Rotunda garden held weekly pony racing during the summer months. After 1850, the model was replicated in other sports. English professional cricketer Charles Lawrence copied the English professional touring teams to promote his own All-Ireland XI. Between 1856 and 1861 he organised twenty-one games and rented out the Coburg and Mountpleasant

gardens which could be enclosed in Dublin.[162] At the same time, a short-lived craze for pedestrianism and athletics brought English pedestrian John Levett into the limelight. He had won minor fame in his native country and witnessed there its commercial potential.[163] His first appearance in Dublin was for Whit Monday in 1860 when he organised races for gentlemen amateurs and the military at the Portobello garden, then leased by Thomas Kirby, a Grafton Street pyrotechnician. A few weeks later he rekindled his antagonism with William Jackson, another famous pedestrian who ran under the nickname of 'American Deer'.[164] By then Levett had moved on to the Rotunda, where he eventually settled and organised six further meetings during the summer and autumn. He also judged races at Marino, Kingstown, and on the Leinster cricket ground, undertook to walk a thousand miles in thousand hours and finally was the promoter of a boxing exhibition with Jem Mace in the Portobello garden on St Stephen's Day. Within a year he had become a household name in Dublin athletics circles, both amateur and professional, and went on to have another fruitful season in 1861 whose climax was the arrival of 'Deerfoot', a native American who was the star of the troupe of itinerant pedestrians put together by promoter George Martin. Over five thousand paying spectators thronged the grounds of the Rotunda on two separate occasions to witness him defeat the cream of British pedestrians in Dublin.[165] On his second stint in Dublin in 1862, the novelty had faded and crowds came in fewer numbers.[166] By then, the hitherto so profitable Deerfoot bubble had burst amidst allegations of race fixing, unpaid wages and other illegalities.[167] Levett had meanwhile turned his attention to the economic potential of the nearby seaside resort of Bray. Laid down at a cost of £700 by railway developer William Dargan just a few meters away from the train station, the new enclosed Bray recreation ground was opened in 1862 under the patronage of the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Carlisle, whose name henceforth became associated with the venue.[168] Levett ran a few athletic meetings in the winter and spring of 1863 and the season culminated in the Highland Games in July. The venue diversified

[162] Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 56-8; *Irish Times*, 6 Sept. 1860, 14 May 1861.
[163] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 13 Oct. 1852. On this occasion he ran a ten-mile race against William Jackson at Islington in front of over 11,000 spectators.
[164] *Freeman's Journal*, 22 May 1860; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 17 Jul. 1860.
[165] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 1 Oct. 1861; 8 Oct. 1861.
[166] *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Aug. 1862, 10 Sept. 1862. John Levett was not in charge of the second coming of Deerfoot to Dublin, but a Mr Cassidy was the organiser of the events.
[167] Oldfield, 'Running pedestrianism', p. 233-4; *Irish Times*, 25 Oct. 1862, 8 Nov. 1862
[168] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 10 Oct. 1862.

itself and started to accommodate archers, cricketers and quoits players as well as having weekly bands.[169]

The inherent contradictions of his business plan then appeared. Until the summer of 1863 Levett had successfully managed to organise athletic meetings for a middle-class audience by mixing amateur and children races with more dazzling entertainments such as fireworks or circus-style tricks. He also catered for the masses with larger pedestrian meetings playing the national tune and involving foreign professionals. In the long run, and in the context of a nascent debate on amateurism where the middle classes became more and more resentful of being associated with boisterous crowds, a catch-all position became untenable. The case of the Bray Carlisle ground illustrates it. Levett meant it as an enclosed venue where the local middle classes would enjoy their own games and musical evenings, but also where money could be made by cashing in on Dublin holiday-makers. In the 1860s, both could not be accommodated simultaneously. There were rumours that Dargan wanted to close the ground to pedestrians.[170] Attendance dipped and was accounted for by 'the fact that the residents in the neighbourhood of Bray do not favourably regard the maintenance of the Pleasure Ground for such purposes'.[171] In the spring of 1864, Levett was involved in meetings in the City grounds in Summerhill, and thereafter disappeared from Dublin athletics life without notice and probably returned to England where he passed away in 1876. Levett was not the sole entrepreneur to have identified a gap in the leisure market. Gymnastics instructor Jacques Satelle promoted an athletic meeting at the Rotunda in 1860 and outfitters and pyrotechnicians Thomas Kirby and John Lawrence extended their rivalry to the promotion of sporting events.[172] On Monday 4 August 1862, Kirby held a 'grand athletic fete' on the grounds of the Sandymount Cricket Club. The following evening, Lawrence launched his 'athletic games' at the Leinster Cricket Club grounds. At Roundtown, near Rathfarnham, it was hotel proprietor Isaac Cole who was behind the organisation of pedestrian and pony racing in the mid-1860s.[173]

[169] *Irish Times*, 25 Feb. 1863; *Penny Despatch*, 25 Jul. 1863.
[170] *Irish Times*, 25 Mar. 1863.
[171] *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Apr. 1863. Levett attracted negative comments from the *Irish Times* upon his involvement in the Jem Mace boxing exhibition on Christmas Eve 1860, see *Irish Times*, 26 Dec. 1860
[172] *Irish Times*, 21 Aug. 1860; *Dublin Daily Express*, 4 Aug. 1862, 5 Aug. 1862.
[173] *Penny Despatch*, 20 June 1863; *Dublin Evening Post*, 28 Jul. 1866.

The brief involvement of Levett in Dublin athletics is symptomatic of the early commercialisation of sport in the city. He tried to maximise profit by holding meetings on holidays or Monday evenings and with theatrical plays and training manuals, he strived to diversify his offer.[174] He brought novelties and celebrated runners who created a sense of fashion and excitement eagerly promoted by the press. Hitherto staged in public spaces, pedestrianism became an enclosed and profitable business in Dublin at the turn of the 1860s and then gradually disappeared as amateur athletics, epitomised by the College Races, rose to prominence.

The rise of the amateur ethos, according to Harvey, delayed the full-scale commercialisation of sport in Britain in the third quarter of the century.[175] His thesis was partly corroborated in Dublin where, by 1870, the process of total enclosure and profit maximisation of sporting venues was still in its infancy. Disinterested behaviours were still seen in cricket or horseracing and rumours that a limited company would take over racing at Baldoyle in the mid-1860s did not materialise until 1873.[176] Another certainty was that the economic prosperity witnessed in the decades after the Famine was not sufficient to create a mass leisure industry. The Dublin economy remained prone to short-term setbacks and average income was inferior to English levels throughout the nineteenth century.[177] There were not yet enough people with the necessary surplus money that could have generated and sustained a commercialised sporting world. Charles Lawrence, for example, struggled to derive a consistent income from cricket matches if the best English players were not involved.[178] Nevertheless, despite middle-class ideological resentment and working-class economic shortcomings, sport after 1850 was promoted by an increasingly commercialised structure.[179] As regattas and athletic meetings sought to maximise attendance, they increasingly resorted to press advertising and bulked up their events with musical bands or fireworks.[180] The irony

[174] *Dublin Daily Express*, 11 Feb. 1862, *Irish Times*, 21 Jul. 1862.
[175] Harvey, *The beginnings*, p. 180.
[176] *Dublin Daily Express*, 16 May 1865.
[177] Robert Dudley Baxter, *National income: the United Kingdom* (London, 1868), pp 57-61; Daly, *The deposed capital*, pp 53-7; Ó Gráda, *A new economic history*, pp 250-5.
[178] *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Oct. 1857, 17 June 1858, 1 Sept. 1859. On these occasions he allegedly made a loss on these matches.
[179] Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 86-9
[180] For example, the Dublin Amateur Athletic Club held a meeting on a Monday evening including a 'grand fashionable promenade, athletic sports, and a grand display of fireworks'. The band was directed 'by Mr. J O'Donnell, of the Theatre Royal.' See *Evening Freeman*, 29 Aug. 1864.

of amateur sports adopting the paraphernalia of pony or pedestrian racing merely highlighted the paradoxes of a society where modesty and respectability were required from the very people whose social status was based on conspicuously displaying their wealth. Watching sport, like shopping in department stores or going to the theatre, had indeed become a commodity for an increasing number of people and this reached maturity in the following decades.

6- The cricket craze

This thesis agrees with the recent socio-economic analyses of cricket in Ireland which have claimed that it was a cross-class game and, by far, the most popular team sport in the country before the advent of new sports and pastimes in the mid-1870s.[181] The idea that the game was solely the preserve of the aristocracy and garrison has been undermined by the studies of Hunt, O'Dwyer and Bracken in Westmeath, Kilkenny and Tipperary respectively, and Reid further developed their findings in a national context. This section will examine the extent of the development of cricket in Dublin, to what measure the game spread down the social ladder, and why was it so popular.

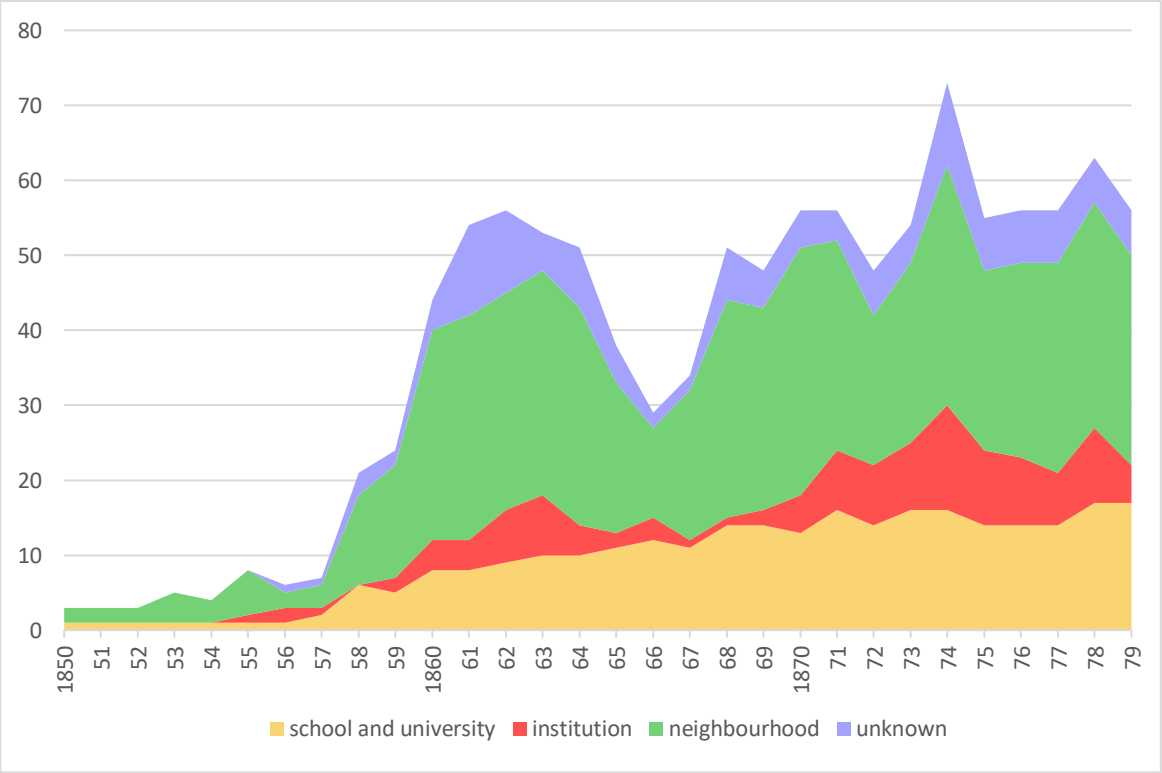
A major sport

The take-off of cricket in the city happened between 1857 and 1862 when the number of recorded combinations jumped from 7 to 56. It thus predated the national expansion of the mid-1860s by a few years.[182] If cricket was already widespread in Irish country houses in the early nineteenth century, it was in Dublin at the turn of the 1850s that the cricket clubs of Phoenix, University and Leinster rose to prominence and had the means to hire professionals, establish a schedule of fixtures and, crucially, to command regular media coverage. As the profile of the

[181] Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, p. 188; Hunt, *Sport and society*, p. 113; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 123; Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 102,180.
[182] Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', p. 222; Hunt, *Sport and society*, p. 116; Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, p. 197.

game rose in the city, it began to spread from the late 1850s onwards to the middle classes as well as in the rest of Leinster and in Munster.

Figure 2.7: Origin of civilian cricket combinations in Dublin, 1850-79.



Note: institution is meant in the wider sense of the term (e.g. workplace, religious society, rowing club).

The first chapter has shown that the military were essential in developing cricket in the first part of the nineteenth century in Dublin and provided players to the Phoenix CC as well as regularly playing against the Phoenix and University clubs. This influence did not last after the 1850s. Regimental teams kept playing and the Garrison XI was a recognised force in the city, but they did not partake in games with civilian clubs as often as might have been the case in Tipperary, another county where the military had been influential.[183] The Phoenix and Vice-regal clubs maintained a strong connection with the military but the DUCC and Leinster CC had

[183] Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, p. 194; Bracken, *Foreign and fantastic*, pp 35-43.

no officers within their ranks.[184] By the late 1860s, military teams were mainly reduced to the role of prestigious sparring partners and did not interfere in any meaningful way with the development of the game in Dublin.[185]

Figure 2.7 shows that cricket had become strongly implanted in Dublin schools by the mid-1860s, where it remained a steady pastime throughout the century. They, however, only constituted a substantial minority as the greatest component in the creation of teams were streets and neighbourhoods. Local identification was the essential driving force in the playing of cricket and this explains the family ties often seen in these teams. The Roebuck club of 1849-53 included two Bradys, three MacCartneys and no fewer than five Kinahan players.[186] Early members of the Leinster CC included sets of Chapman, Lawrenson, Searight and Whitfield and in the mid-1860s, the treasurer and secretary of the Malahide CC were Henry Dillon and his son Henry jr.[187] The family or friendship bonds which linked members in early cricket clubs explain the rapid rise in numbers from the late 1850s but were also a major weakness as there was no institution to fall back on once the initial burst of enthusiasm had waned. Out of 105 local combinations identified for the 1850-69 period, only 23 were active for more than three consecutive seasons and 50 of them played only for a single game or season. This emphasis on local clubs and conversely a lower number of teams linked to civilian institutions is consistent with results elsewhere in the country but contrasts with the English experience.[188]

Social diffusion

In the 1860s cricket stopped being the preserve of the wealthy or Dublin University students and had spread down the social ladder. It had become largely a middle-

[184] TCD archives, Mun/Club/Cricket/1, 3 May 1869. On that occasion the proposition of allowing officers to become honorary members was refused even though at £5 a head, it would have meant a welcomed increase in income.
[185] Lawrence, *Handbook 1868-9*, pp 62-9; Ibid., *Handbook of cricket in Ireland 1869-70* (Dublin, 1870), p. 3. In the 1868/9 edition, Lawrence only counted eleven games played by a military team and reported by the *Dublin Daily Express*. In the following edition he remarked the 'unusually large number of matches' involving a military team in the 1869 season. That these up and downs were without significance for the overall development of the game in the city shows that military cricket had lost its driving force in the city after the 1850s.
[186] TCD archives, Mun/Club/Cricket/6.
[187] Lawrence, *Handbook 1865-6*, p. 14; *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Mar. 1865, 5 Apr. 1866. Over a decade later the two Chapman were still involved in the Leinster CC.
[188] Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', p. 195.

class activity and the location of the clubs, mainly in the southern suburbs, corresponded to their residential pattern (figure 2.8). Newspapers noted the changing demographics of cricket as the game that 'was formerly the pleasure of the few, is becoming the amusement of the people'.[189] The *Freeman's Journal* remarked in 1865 that 'all classes, high, middle and low, now take an interest in cricket and a game which was once exclusively English has now taken such deep root among us that cricket may fairly be considered one of our great Irish pastimes.'[190] The *Irish Times* concurred:

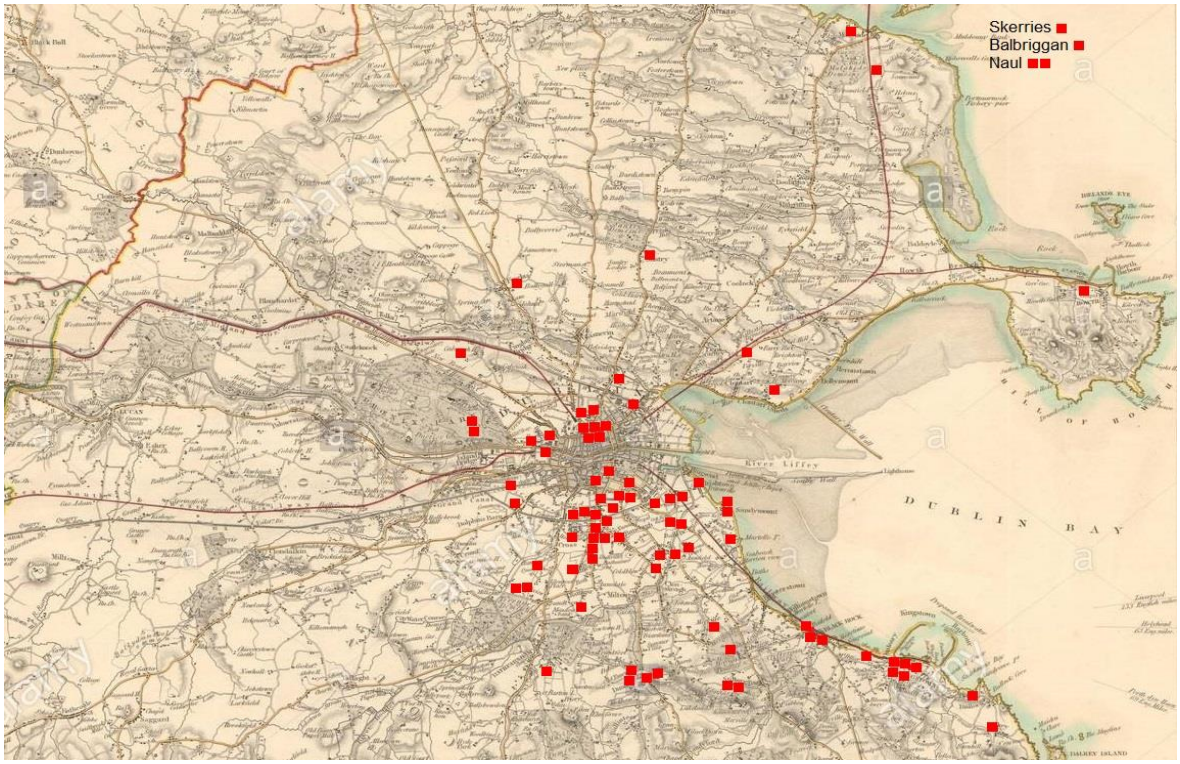
> even among the middle class it supersedes former pastimes, and in several of the agricultural and manufacturing portions of the country the stranger may easily perceive during the summer months groups of artisans and labourers after working hours proceeding to some field near the localities in which they earn their livelihood, for the purpose of enjoying themselves in this excellent game.[191]

Notwithstanding these emphatic statements, the socio-economic background of 1860s players is difficult to determine and it remains impossible to assess with precision the extent of working-class involvement in cricket at the time. It is, however, certain that the middle classes wholly embraced it. A match between the Bank of Ireland and the Royal Bank in 1863 implies the participation of administrative staff and bankers.[192] Civil servants had their dedicated clubs in the Civil Service (1860-70), Ordnance Survey (1859-63) and Dublin Castle (1862). Policemen fielded a team (1863-4), as did journalists of the *Herald* (1860-2). Clubs such as Junior Mechanics (1856) or Commercials (1864-6) also had unequivocal names as for their social constitution. The case of the Civil Service CC is emblematic of the democratisation of cricket at the time since the subscription fee was reduced in 1866 to allow junior clerks to join.[193] Meanwhile, residents of Rathmines who found the Leinster CC too exclusive proposed to create another

[189] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 6 Sept. 1860.
[190] *Freeman's Journal*, 12 May 1865.
[191] *Irish Times*, 29 Aug. 1866.
[192] *Dublin Daily Express*, 9 May 1863.
[193] *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Apr. 1866.

club with a more moderate subscription.[194] These observations are consistent with the recent academic historiography of the game in the country at large: by 1870, cricket was the most popular team sport across the social spectrum.[195]

Figure 2.8: Location of cricket combinations, 1850-69.



Note: Only combinations linked to a locality are shown, 84 out of 105 having been precisely localised. School and institutional teams are not represented as they were overwhelmingly situated in the city and did not reflect the geographical origin of their members.

Cricket was a non-denominational and non-political game. The belief that it was a game for Protestants and unionists stems from early twentieth-century attempts by cultural nationalists to discredit cricket to the profit of Gaelic games and is a myth that has been debunked by scholarly studies. The Catholic University fielded a team by 1857 and Catholic elite schools (Belvedere, Blackrock and Terenure) and the Catholic Young Men's Society did so in the 1860s. [196] These institutions could not

[194] *Irish Times*,11 June 1867.
[195] Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 114-6; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 119.
[196] Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 133-5; *Freeman's Journal*, 9 May 1863.

have possibly promoted cricket without at least the tacit approval of their hierarchy. Cricket was likewise free of political association. Clearly a game of English origin, it had been adopted by Irishmen and was rapidly becoming a 'national' game.[197] The nomenclature of Dublin teams revealed of a spectrum of terms and self-styled clubs that were more innocent than politically charged. Thus, Green Flags, Erin-Go-Bragh, and Patriotics existed alongside the Volunteers, Trafalgars and Waterloos in the 1860s. Conclusions cannot be drawn from such observations. The Young Ireland team, created in 1861, was made up of students of Dublin University or senior public schools.[198] The name was not a nod to the political and cultural nationalist movement of the 1840s but literally referred to young Irishmen. The same year a club called Garibaldi played two matches against Blackrock and Dalkey.[199] This was a team rooted in its local neighbourhood where brothers or cousins played together. For them, the name of the Italian general was not linked with political republicanism but represented youth, success, fashion and exoticism. These were the values that cricket became imbued with and was one of the reasons why cricket enjoyed unparalleled dominance in Dublin sport at the time.

Reasons for success

The primary reason why cricket experienced an unprecedented development in Dublin at the turn of the 1860s lay in the increasing number of men who had sufficient time to indulge in leisure activities. Cricket was also a codified team sport which satisfactorily answered the moral and physical needs of the growing middle class. It developed in a lull when hurling throughout the country was declining and condemned by religious or civic authorities and when athletics, rowing and rugby were not yet codified or lacked ready-made patronage.[200] Crucially, it was cheap.[201] Bats, wickets and shin guards could be shared and the lack of club structure for

[197] *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent*, 14 June 1861; *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Mar. 1865; *Irish Times*, 15 Sept. 1866; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 120; Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 156-8. The term 'national' did not have the same connotation in the 1860s as nowadays. It meant that cricket was popular and played nationwide by all sections of society rather than being associated with a specific conception of Irishness.
[198] *Irish Times*, 22 June 1861.
[199] *Irish Times*, 4 July 1861, 9 July 1861. In the team, two players were named Wiley, and three Brown.
[200] Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 47-52; Bracken, *Foreign and fantastic*, p. 54.
[201] Hunt, *Sport and society*, p. 125

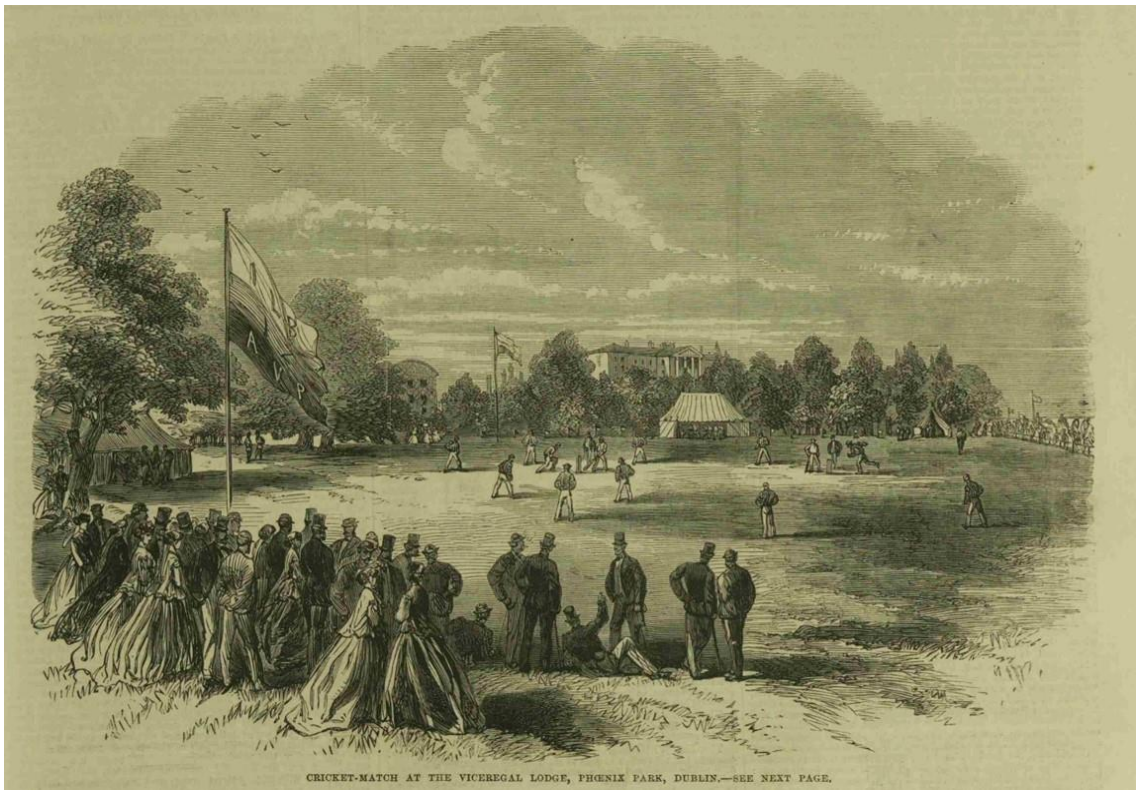
many teams meant that no subscriptions were paid. If many within the lower-middle classes could not afford to be regular paying spectators at the All-Ireland XI matches, playing the game was within their means.

More elements came together to further the growth of cricket and have been summed up by Reid throughout his thesis. It was endorsed by the aristocracy and enthusiastic Lord Lieutenants Abercorn and Spencer provided a model at the higher level of state that could be emulated by the aspiring middle classes (figure 2.9).[202] As concerns over health and gender became more preoccupying in urban societies, cricket was perceived as a manly game which provided physical exercise to players.[203] This particularly appealed to junior white-collar employees whose long hours confined in an office were only worsened by their subaltern position. Cricket was for these young men an exaltation of their masculinity as women in England had shied away from the game in the early nineteenth century under economic or social pressure.[204] Conversely, its growing importance in elite schools contributed to its entrenchment as the incarnation of masculine and imperial Englishness. Regardless of the absence of physicality and the mild exertion required, cricket had become the man's game *par excellence* in England and was so seen in Ireland.[205] It also fitted the budding commercialisation of sport and was supported by entrepreneurs who had a vested interest in promoting the sport.[206] Charles Lawrence, the Phoenix CC professional, used his contacts to bring famous English cricketers to the Rotunda or Coburg gardens. His endeavours failed to bring him wealth but significantly raised the profile of cricket in the city.[207] John Lawrence (no relation) was another businessman who benefited from the healthy sporting scene. He was, as seen previously, a leading sports retailer in the 1860s and 1870s but became especially associated with cricket when he began to publish his *Handbook of cricket in Ireland* – the Irish equivalent to Wisden – which ran from 1866 to the early 1880s.[208] The last and maybe most potent element in furthering the growth of the game was its perceived freshness and modernity. In the first edition of the

[202] Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 79-80.
[203] Ibid., pp 70-7.
[204] Kathleen E. McCrone, *Playing the game: sport and the physical emancipation of English women, 1870-1914* (Kentucky, 1988), p. 141.
[205] Ibid., pp 142-3.
[206] Reif, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 84-9.
[207] Ibid., pp 55-8.
[208] *Dublin Daily Express*, 31 May 1869

Handbook, Lawrence meticulously described the 'spark of novelty' and excitement felt by the early Leinster CC players who had decided to switch from old-fashioned bal-ballon to cricket in 1852.[209] This anecdote, accurate or not, was not meant just to narrate the early years of the club, but essentially to depict cricket as the fashionable pastime of mid-nineteenth-century Ireland. Trends, fashions, and sudden popular crazes affected sports and pastimes throughout the period covered by this thesis, but the faster speed with which they came or went after 1850 illustrated both the development of a common cultural sphere with Britain and the growing consideration given to sport.

Figure 2.9: Gentlemen of Ireland *v*. *I Zingari* at the Vice-regal lodge, 1866.



Source: *Illustrated London News*, 29 Sept. 1866.

[209] Lawrence, *Handbook 1865-6*, pp 13-4.

7- Conclusion

If the first wave of clubs' creation took place in the 1830s, the following three decades witnessed an acceleration of the trend. The rise of formally organised sport was articulated around three specific aspects. The first was the clear downward social diffusion of organised sport to the middle classes. As the spread of associational culture reached these latter, so did the model of the club. Cricket and rowing, which had initially been upper class in character, thus became the sports of the middle classes. A budding bureaucratisation of sport was the second element. The codification process in Dublin and Britain was most evident in football but affected most pastimes. The development of a national infrastructure was limited to the elite sports of archery, rifle shooting and to the specific case of field sports, but provided a clear model of hierarchical integration that spread thereafter. Finally, a growing number of games witnessed the creation of clubs and these included folk pastimes such as football, hurling, athletics and bowling. These evolutions took place in a specific socio-economic context which saw the decline of traditional pastimes as legitimate forms of recreation and the development of a consumerist society. The growth of the middle classes and the commercialisation of leisure fuelled the emergence and take-off of a modern sporting scene. This latter was also shaped by the emotional needs of a British society undergoing rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, as well as a redefinition of the social hierarchy. Gender and class segregation was emphasised and a martial, masculine and Christian ethos began to permeate sport. Although these themes were not as prominent in Dublin, sport then developed along English lines and found in Dublin University and elite schools active agents of diffusion. By 1870, the foundations of modern sport had been laid in Dublin. From them emerged the great expansion of organised sport in the 1870s and its democratisation in the 1880s.

Chapter Three

Transformation: the 1870s

The rapid transformation of sport in the 1870s was the outcome of trends observed in previous decades. The bureaucratisation and commercialisation of pastimes then allowed a rapid expansion of formally organised sport. What were the forces driving such changes, why did it happen precisely at that time, and what were the consequences for the future development of sport in Dublin are the questions that this chapter will answer. These were macroscopic developments that affected equally the rest of the country. Given its capital status, the leading role of Dublin University and the weight of specific clubs and institutions, the Dublin story sometimes merged with the Irish experience. This chapter offers first a general overview which sets out sport in its broader context and links it to ongoing socio-economic evolutions. By then modern sport had expanded beyond the walls of College Green and sports such as rugby, athletics and rowing which hitherto were the preserve of a wealthy few and university students had broadened their appeal to the city's growing middle class. These latter's improving living conditions, and those of the skilled working class towards the end of the decade, altered leisure habits and made possible the development of spectator sport. This was actively encouraged by entrepreneurs with a business acumen and illustrated by the redevelopment of Baldoyle as a fully enclosed racecourse and the building of Lansdowne Road stadium as the first year-long dedicated sporting venue. Such developments, it will be seen, occurred precisely when transports within and between cities was made faster, cheaper, and more reliable and when a popular press developed. As awareness of the wider world grew, national and international sporting contests became more common – often fuelled by commercial interests – and made bare the need for harmonisation of rules and practices. The codification of sport, observed since early nineteenth century, experienced a rapid acceleration and this chapter argues that the 1870s was a turning point in that regard. This is when sport in Ireland became bureaucratised, commercialised, and

internationalised. These three tenets are treated separately in this chapter, yet these were highly interconnected patterns that fuelled each other and permitted the dramatic quantitative and qualitative expansion of sport seen in the 1870s. The nature of such changes, and especially the heightened class-consciousness permeating society at a time when the working class began to budget for leisure, rendered more salient the divisions observed in Irish society. In the 1870s, such issues were articulated around the notion of amateurism, a concept brought from England which precluded working-class people to engage with, or alongside middle-class contestants. Such philosophy, designed to enhance class differentiation in Britain, was implemented with greater difficulty in a country less populated and whose modern sporting structures rested on shallower foundations. It nevertheless gave a foretaste of the bitter social and cultural struggles which will be the hallmark of the 1880s and 1890s and which will the focus of the following two chapters.

1- Dublin, modernisation, and sport

By the 1870s, average annual income remained significantly lower in Ireland than in Britain and contributed to a lower monetarisation of society and consumerism. In 1867, statistician Robert Baxter estimated it at £14 per head of population as against £23/10 and £32 for Scotland and England.[1] His occupational analysis of the 1861 census adds strength to his estimation. The upper and middle classes thus made up 17.8% of the Irish male population aged twenty and over, as against 22.8% and 23.0% in Scotland and England. Conversely, men without independent means reached 9.8% of the Irish male population aged over twenty but the figure dropped to 7.4% and 6.4% respectively for Scotland and England.[2] A general growth in real income in the decades following the Famine, especially between the 1860s and mid-1890s, and a narrowing of the gap with Britain, is nevertheless agreed upon by economic historians.[3] George Boyer likewise estimates that between 1870 and

[1] Baxter, *National income*, p. 61.
[2] Ibid., pp 79-80.
[3] Ó Gráda, *A new economic history*, pp 236-50; George R. Boyer, Tomothy J. Hatton, and Kevin O'Rourke, 'The impact of emigration on real wages in Ireland, 1850-1914', in Tomothy J. Hatton

1913, leisure time in Ireland grew by nearly forty percent.[4] The exact extent and timing of increases in real wages in Dublin still remains difficult to precisely assess. Despite patchy or incomplete data, Daly and D'Arcy managed to chart the price of basic commodities and wages for skilled and unskilled workers in late nineteenth-century Dublin and general trends can be observed (figure 3.1). The figures uncovered are consistent with the historiography and highlight the rapid growth in income witnessed by general labourers in the last third of the century, yet they still earned half as much as skilled workers. Wage increases for these latter had meanwhile been more modest, but as prices fell from the mid-1880s, their disposable income grew. This would eventually prove critical to the democratisation of sport and the commercial exploitation of spectatorship.

Much like southern English cities, Dublin's wealth was based on the expansion of its commercial and administrative sectors. This economic development partly defined the social structure of the city and the improvements described above only applied to those who worked. The lack of heavy industry and focus on consumer industries required a higher proportion of casual over skilled workers and contributed to the seasonality of employment and chronic underemployment.[5] The poor and destitute largely suffered from a deficient sanitary system, overcrowding, and malnutrition which, even by nineteenth century standards, grimly stood out.[6] Conversely, higher demand for clerks fuelled the development of a large, and increasingly Catholic, lower-middle class.[7] These trends further increased the suburbanisation of the middle class and widened the social chasm, which was perhaps best exemplified by the sudden decline in status of the Gardiner estate. Sold in 1848 to the Encumbered Estates' Court (the state-sponsored sale of lands belonging to insolvent landlords), the estate was then re-sold piecemeal to highest bidders, who transformed it into tenement housing. In the span of a few decades,

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and Jeffrey G. Williamson (eds), *Migration and the international labor market, 1850-1939* (London, 1994), pp 222-7.

[4] George R. Boyer, 'The convergence of living standards in the Atlantic economy, 1870-1930', in Timothy J. Hatton, Kevin O'Rourke, and Alan M. Taylor (eds), *The new comparative economic history: essays in honor of Jeffrey G. Williamson* (Cambridge, 2007), pp 319-21. Boyer acknowledges the difficulty of such an exercise and does not claim absolute exactitude in his estimation. The trend was however unmistakable.

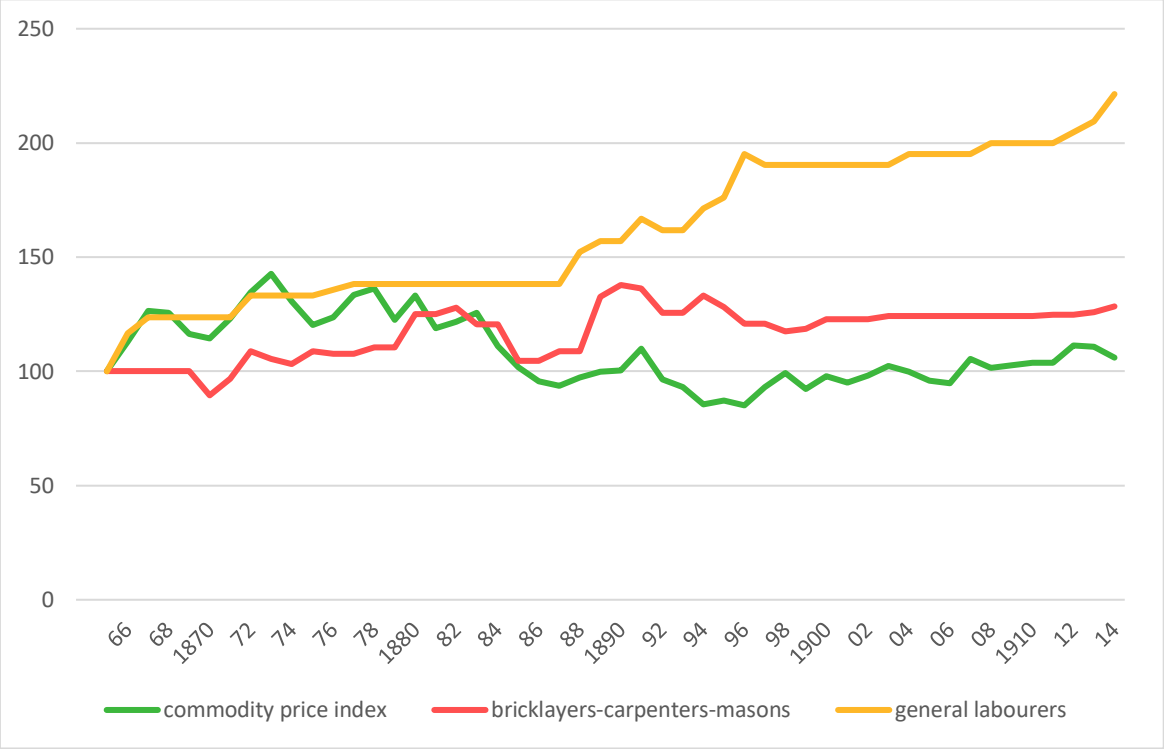
[5] Daly, *The deposed capital*, p. 77.

[6] Ibid., pp 74-5; Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 372-8.

[7] Dickson, *Dublin*, p. 344-6

the area fell from one the city's fanciest areas into one of its worse slums.[8] In response to inadequate municipal action, religious charities stepped in to provide immediate and considerable relief to impoverished city dwellers. Their proselyting nature, however, hindered social cohesion and deepened the religious rift.[9]

Figure 3.1: Index of wages and commodity prices in Dublin, 1865-1914 (1865=100).



Source: Daly, *The deposed capital*, pp 74-5; D'Arcy, 'Wages of skilled workers', pp 31, 33; Ibid., 'Wages of labourers', pp 24, 26. The average income of bricklayers, carpenters and masons has been taken into account since data was most available for these occupations. When data was unavailable, the previous available figure has been used instead. The table does not claim absolute accuracy but instead presents trends.

The dilapidation and destitution witnessed in swathes of the city centre contrasted with the rapid modernisation of the urban area. At the interface of British–Irish relations, Dublin benefited from the rapid expansion of newspapers and means of

[8] Prunty, *Dublin slums*, pp 274-307; Sinead O'Shea and Ruth McManus, 'Upper Buckingham Street: a microcosm of Dublin 1788-2012', *Studia Hibernica*, no. 38 (2012), pp 147-53.
[9] Prunty, *Dublin slums*, pp 273-4; Mary Daly, 'Dublin Life', in Tom Kennedy (ed.), *Victorian Dublin* (Dublin, 1980), p. 73.

communication throughout Europe, and eventually worldwide after the development of the trans-oceanic telegraph in the 1860s.[10] As news travelled faster and further, transport within the city was eased too as the omnibuses that had linked the centre to its suburbs since 1848 were progressively replaced by (horse-drawn) tramways from 1872. They provided cheap and reliable commuting services which entrenched the pattern of a commercial city-centre and residential suburbs, and, crucially, facilitated access to sporting facilities to players and spectators alike.[11]

If communications illustrated the growing importance of scientific and technical progress in nineteenth-century Europe, the whole apparatus of state, commerce, industry, and army underwent a similar process of technicisation and rationalisation. Such a society required the universalisation of education and, slowly, employment on merit began to replace patronage.[12] In Ireland, literacy levels rose from 47% to 88% of the population between 1841 and 1911.[13] Secondary education grew in importance and the 1878 Intermediate Education Act provided a compromise, after years of wrangling between Church and State, for the rising Catholic bourgeoisie to avail of state-sponsored university education.[14] This was legislation for a new society, where compulsory examination and payment on results mattered more than religious affiliation, theoretically at least. The ensuing intellectual empowerment crucially benefited the Catholic community who started to populate the lower echelons of commerce and the civil service.[15] Their improving living conditions permitted them to budget for leisure and to adopt the consumption modes of the upper-middle class. Department stores such as the South City Markets (1881), and suburban life, especially in the single-storey terraced houses of Drumcondra, became affordable to a less affluent population eager to display the 'material trappings of social respectability'.[16] Such developments also opened the door for the emergence of a nationalist political party which sought to gain legislative independence from Westminster. The Home Rule League (1873) introduced a

[10] Hobsbawm, *The age of capital 1848-1875* (London, 1975), pp 70-7.
[11] Kevin Murray, 'Transport', in Kennedy, *Victorian Dublin*, pp 93-6; Riess, *Sport in industrial America*, p. 35.
[12] Cannadine, *The decline and fall*, chapter 6.
[13] Lee, *The modernisation of Irish society*, p. 13.
[14] Pašeta, *Before the Revolution*, pp 12, 28-30.
[15] Lawrence McBride, *The greening of Dublin Castle: the transformation of bureaucratic and judicial personnel in Ireland, 1892-1922* (Washington, 1991), p. 23; Campbell, *The Irish establishment 1879-1914* (Oxford, 2009), pp 303-5.
[16] Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 345-8; Rains, *Commodity culture*, p. 63.

generation of young and ambitious politicians led by Wicklow landowner Charles S. Parnell who gave the movement a definite populist turn. By 1880, he and his supporters had gathered sufficient power to assume effective control over the party and exploit to their advantage the social and religious dissensions riddling Irish society.[17] The rise of moderate nationalism in the renamed Irish Parliamentary Party (1882) was the standout feature of the 1880s but was no revolution. Rather, it reflected 'the deepening tendency of Irish nationalists to become entwined in a British middle-class culture which stressed the virtues of respectability, professional advancement and social refinement.'[18]

Such socio-economic developments contributed to defining the city's sporting landscape in the last quarter of the century. Awareness and emulation of what went on in London was a serious motivation for the rapid adoption of newly codified middle-class and commercial sports by the city's large white-collar workforce. Crucial to their participation was the new gospel of masculinity around sport which endowed them with male attributes that a life in the office could not provide.[19] The widespread adoption of the principles of amateurism by the growing nationalist and Catholic middle class also reflected the embracing of contemporary British lifestyles. In time, the founders of the Gaelic Athletic Association, who had been nurtured by such concepts, adapted amateurism to the conditions of the Irish labouring class, marking a departure from contemporary British working-class sports organisations. Meanwhile the slower development of the Dublin skilled working class contributed to the fact that the growth of association football was retarded until the mid-1890s and its professionalisation until 1906, whereas veiled payments were already made to Belfast players before its legalisation by the Irish Football Association (IFA) in 1894.[20] Its rapid implantation in the native industrial communities of Ringsend (glass and gas factories), East Wall (port), and the St James and Kilmainham neighbourhoods (Guinness and railway industries), to the detriment of Gaelic

[17] Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, pp 197-211. The codes of modern and highly mediatised political campaigns had also been adopted by Liberal leader William Gladstone in the 1880 general election, see Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian generation*, pp 632-5.
[18] Pašeta, *Before the revolution*, p. 3.
[19] Geoff Spurr, 'Lower-middle class masculinity and the Young Men's Christian Association, 1844-1880', *Social History*, xlvii, no. 95 (2014), p. 553; Rains, *Commodity culture*, pp 64-7. In an American context, see Jeffrey P. Hantover, 'The Boy Scouts and the validation of masculinity', *Journal of social issues*, xxiv, no. 1 (1978), pp 186-9.
[20] Neal Garnham, *Association football and society*, pp 70-81.

games, again mirrored developments in Britain where soccer had become the game of the urban working class.[21] In that instance, socio-economic similarities with British workers proved more potent than the cultural and political aspirations of nationalist Ireland, and it is further evidence that the lower classes retained a power to fashion their own leisure according to their sensibility.

The sporting press

The development of newspapers as disseminators of mass information in the second part of the nineteenth century in Ireland stemmed from growing literacy levels, the politicisation of the population since the 1870s, cheaper costs of production, the abolition of the stamp duty in 1855, and faster and more reliable communications systems.[22] The sporting press appeared when a demand for such information was made commercially viable. In England, dedicated newspapers had existed since the late eighteenth century and in turn greatly contributed to transforming sport along commercial lines in the first part of the nineteenth century.[23] British titles such as *Bell's Life* (1822) or *The Field* (1853), circulated among Dublin field sport enthusiasts and the occasional coverage of local sport by the English press further hints at a readership spread throughout Britain and Ireland. The smaller size of the Irish market, and the lower degree of economic and sporting development, however, ensured that no Irish-based sporting press developed until the 1870s.

The weekly *Irish Sportsman and Farmer* was the first of such ventures. Created in 1870 by William J. Dunbar and sold for 4*d*., the paper reflected the personality of its owner: Dublin University alumnus, former headmaster of a civil service and university preparatory school, and owner of racehorses and coursing hounds.[24] The obvious targeting of the Irish middle classes by the paper is evidence that, by 1870, a native market for sporting news had expanded beyond the elite and was commercially sustainable. That since the 1860s a popular 'penny' sporting press had appeared in England and not in Dublin confirmed the gap in economic and

[21] Holt, *Football and the urban way of life*, pp 72-83; Brad Beaven, *Leisure, citizenship and working-class men in Britain, 1850-1945* (Manchester, 2005), pp 72-80.
[22] Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 388-9.
[23] Harvey, *The beginnings*, pp 41-55.
[24] *Dublin Daily Express*, 12 Dec. 1881; *Irish Sportsman*, 17 Dec. 1881.

sporting development still observed in the 1870s.[25] The *Irish Sportsman* was a family business essentially run by William's sons who, as active sportsmen and administrators, were able to gather first-hand information. His eldest son, William R., was a horseracing handicapper, judge and secretary.[26] Reginald was an athlete and jockey before passing away in 1877, aged 21.[27] John had also been an athlete of local reputation before immersing himself in the organisation of Irish athletics in the 1870s and 1880s.[28] Valentine was the foremost athletics and racing handicapper in the country, while Lionel, the youngest son, rode his father horses with minor success in the late 1870s.[29] With around four thousand copies sold weekly – half of them sent by post throughout the country – the venture was a minor success.[30] However, the resolutely elitist editorial line of the *Irish Sportsman* increasingly contrasted with the large-scale embracing of modern sport by the working class in the 1880s. At 4*d*. it was also significantly dearer than 'penny' papers and failed to harness both the nationalist revival and the democratisation of Irish sport. The *Freeman's Journal* exploited the niche in the market and created its own weekly sporting edition, *Sport*, in 1880.[31] The latter's resolutely populist tone, penny fare, and the genuine journalistic qualities of its writers contributed to making the new venture the leading sporting paper in the country.[32] The challenge to the *Irish Sportsman* was serious and this latter's failure to lure the vintner lobby into becoming a minor partner in 1881 was a further blow.[33] *Sport* meanwhile grew in strength and doubled its pagination to eight pages in February 1884. A fortnight later, they granted a full page to the 'licensed trade' proceedings.[34] That a popular sporting weekly became the mouthpiece of the drinks industry was a marriage of heart and reason. Its journalists likely shared with publicans a similar lower-middle-class and nationalist background. More prosaically, both the press and drinks industry profited from a dynamic sporting scene and sympathetic coverage was

[25] Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, p. 148.
[26] *Irish Times*, 25 Mar. 1875; *Dublin Daily Express*, 26 May 1888.
[27] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 28 Sept. 1877.
[28] *Irish Times*, 2 Apr. 1891.
[29] *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Nov. 1878; *Irish Sportsman*, 8 Jan. 1887; *Sport*, 29 Apr. 1922.
[30] *Irish Sportsman*, 13 Aug. 1870, 22 Oct. 1870.
[31] *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Dec. 1880.
[32] Paul Rouse, '*Sport* and Ireland in 1881', in Alan Bairner (ed), *Sport and the Irish: histories, identities, issues* (Dublin, 2004), pp 9-16.
[33] *Irish Sportsman*, 3 Sept. 1881.
[34] *Sport*, 8 Mar. 1884.

extended in return for the trade's endorsement and increased circulation. The *Irish Sportsman* graced the shelves of gentlemen's clubs whereas *Sport* was found on public houses' counters. In subsequent decades, the paper retained its quality writing yet wholly espoused the late nineteenth-century new brand of journalism which was clearly aimed at the working class: first-hand interviews, sensationalism, illustrations, and shorter paragraphs.[35] The *Irish Sportsman* meanwhile chose to remain elitist, and proudly so. In November 1883, the weekly chess column which had been present in the early 1870s was reintroduced.[36] *Sport*, on the other hand, struck a balance between serious sporting coverage and light-hearted news. The edition of 16 February 1884, for example, promised three guineas to the best tipster, half a guinea to the funniest joke, and wrapped up its edition with a humorous poem laced with caricatures.[37]

If the Dunbar family failed to adapt their offer to a popular readership, they however correctly analysed the fragmentation of the sporting press in the 1880s, which was marked by a flurry of new publications driven by sports journalists and administrators, such as Michael Cusack's *Celtic Times* (1887, Gaelic games), Patrick Hoctor's *The Gael* (1887, Gaelic games) or Richard Mecredy's *Irish Cyclist* (1885-1931, cycling).[38] In November 1885, John Dunbar launched the *Irish Athletic and Cycling News*, which was replaced by the *Wheelman* in 1890.[39] At the same time, the *Irish Sportsman* lowered its price to 1*d*. in 1888 and focused exclusively on field sports.[40] John's death in 1891 marked the end of the family's intimate connection with Irish sport and the flagship paper was put up for sale and eventually became integrated into the *Irish Field* in 1894.[41] The Dunbar family epitomised the Dublin Protestant middle classes who greatly benefited from the Act of Union and whose relative social status peaked in the third quarter of the century. Shrewd businessmen, their papers advertised the personal ventures of Valentine and John as much as they promoted sport on modern lines. Snobbish to the core, they rallied

[35] Mark Hampton, 'Newspapers in Victorian Britain', *History Compass*, ii (2004), p. 2. See for example the build-up to the *Freeman's Journal* athletic meeting, *Sport*, 24 Jul. 1886.
[36] *Irish Sportsman*, 24 Nov. 1883.
[37] *Sport*, 16 Feb. 1884.
[38] *Dublin Daily Express*, 31 Dec. 1885; Mark Duncan, 'The camera and the Gael: the early photography of the GAA, 1884-1914', in Cronin *et al*, *The Gaelic Athletic Association*, pp 106-7.
[39] *Kilkenny Moderator*, 7 Nov. 1885; *Dublin Daily Express*, 18 Oct. 1890.
[40] *Irish Sportsman*, 3 Mar. 1888.
[41] *Dublin Daily Express* 28 Apr. 1891; *Northern Whig*, 23 Aug. 1892; *Weekly Irish Times*, 1 Dec. 1894.

behind the doctrine of amateurism and were essential players in the division of Irish athletics in the latter 1870s. Proud Irishmen yet firm unionists (William J. wrote both for the nationalist *Nation* in the 1840s and later for the conservative *Daily Express*), their Irishness was as assertive as it was rooted in its association with Britain. For two decades the *Irish Sportsman* and the Dunbar brothers were at the heart of the transformation of sport in Ireland. They strived to shape Irish sport to their image in the 1870s and fought to keep it that way in the 1880s when popular forces and the populist press began to undermine their model.

The symbiotic relationship between the expansion of modern sport and the development of the press in a British and Irish context has been widely dealt with by the historiography and can be summarised in four essential points.[42] As the demand for sporting news grew in Ireland from the 1870s, media coverage dramatically increased to service this 'established public interest.'[43] The sporting press obviously contributed to it but daily papers which had hitherto failed to offer a comprehensive sporting coverage had also by the 1880s developed specialised sporting sections to satisfy the demand for such news.[44] The greater pagination devoted to sport in turn fuelled interest and was critical to the growth in participation then observed. Secondly, newspapers acted as didactic agents who eased the diffusion of games throughout the country. The revised rules of horseracing and cricket were published in full in the *Irish Sportsman* to keep readers updated.[45] Printing the rules of newly codified games or budding athletic organisations proved essential to early Irish enthusiasts who found there a blueprint to follow.[46] Equally crucial was the opening of a space for interaction and debate between readers and journalists and the expertise of these latter, who were often personally involved in the organisation or playing of games. The Dunbar brothers, Cusack, and Mecredy

[42] Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp 306-10; Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, pp 141-56; Harvey, *The beginnings*, pp 31-62; Andrew Walker, 'Reporting play: the local newspaper and sport journalism, c. 1870-1914', *Journalism Studies*, vii, no. 3 (2006), pp 452-62; Martyn Dean Cooke, 'The inextricable link between sport and the press in the Victorian era: the example of the "Sentinel Cup"', *Sport in History*, xxxix, no. 1 (2019), pp 1-23; Rouse, '*Sport* and Ireland', pp 7-22; Paul Rouse, 'Journalists and the making of the Gaelic Athletic Association, 1884-1887', *Media History*, xvii, no. 2 (2011), pp 117-31; David Toms, 'The *Cork Sportsman*: a provincial sporting newspaper, 1908–1911, Sport in Society, xix, no. 1 (2016), pp 24-37.
[43] Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 307.
[44] Rouse, '*Sport* and Ireland', pp 21-2.
[45] *Irish Sportsman*, 29 Dec. 1877, 24 Aug. 1878, 16 Dec. 1878.
[46] *Irish Sportsman*, 26 July 1879 (Northern Counties' Athletic Association), 2 Aug. 1879 (Bicycle Union), 27 Dec. 1879 (hockey), 4 June 1881 (quoits); *Sport*, 12 Jul. 1884 (Hurlingham Polo Club).

were sportsmen turned journalists. Chess columns were written by leading players and administrators, including George F. Barry (also a talented cricketer), Alfred Peake, and Frideswide and Thomas Rowland.[47] Hurler Patrick Sutton was the GAA correspondent for *Sport* and Daniel Kinsella, who wrote as *Lux* in the same paper, had previously been a horse breeder and winner of the first Irish Derby in 1866.[48] These men – Frideswide Rowland was an exception in a male-dominated world – discussed the latest Turf Club rules, explained rowing tactics, or distilled athletic training tips.[49] Bad faith and personal enmities often spilled onto paper, yet their contribution to the creation of a vibrant and homogenised sporting community in later nineteenth-century Ireland was paramount. Thirdly, newspapers directly promoted and facilitated competition. They advertised it and strived to expand it. The *Irish Times*, for example, by no mean a sport-oriented publication, sponsored drop-kicking and gymnastic contests in the 1880s.[50] *Sport* organised pigeon racing at the turn of the 1880s and had taken over the amateur boxing championship from the hands of John Dunbar in 1887.[51] Athletic meetings were held by the *Freeman's Journal* in the mid-1880s and Edward Healy (known as *Vates* in *Sport*) mooted the idea of staging the world heavy-weight boxing championship at the Theatre Royal in 1908.[52] Finally, newspapers were crucial in shaping a national and class-based sporting culture.[53] Partisanship and the playing out of rivalries were integral to press reports and expressed civic pride, pleased readers and bolstered sales. Glorifying the modern and masculine virtues of sport, turning athletes into heroes, and inventing historical narratives increased attention, sold copies, and most importantly fitted the contemporary rise of nationalism and heightened class consciousness then witnessed in the Western world.

The sporting press did not create modern sport but was essential to its bureaucratisation, commercialisation and internationalisation, which are the central themes of this chapter. In Dublin this was evident from the early 1870s as dedicated newspapers began to appear on newsagents' shelves. The trend gathered pace in

[47] Harding, 'Battle at long range', pp 118, 298-308.
[48] *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Dec. 1888; Séamas S. De Vál, 'Patrick Prendergast Sutton (1865-1901)', *The Past: The Organ of the Uí Cinsealaigh Historical Society,* no. 16 (1988), pp 53-4.
[49] Ibid., 18 Jan. 1873, 3 Mar. 1883; *Sport*, 21 May 1881.
[50] *Irish Times*, 5 Apr. 1878, 20 May 1887.
[51] Rouse, '*Sport* and Ireland', p. 15; *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Feb. 1887.
[52] *Freeman's Journal*, 31 Aug. 1885, 26 Jul. 1886; *Sport*, 20 Aug. 1910.
[53] Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, p. 142; Rouse, 'Journalists', pp 120-1.

the 1880s and both reflected and fuelled the dramatic expansion in modern sport which is analysed in the following chapter.

2- The growth of organised sport

The following overview of sport in the 1870s highlights how the trends that had appeared mid-century became central to the development of sport. The capitalisation and centralisation of horseracing was observed in the rapid expansion of the Baldoyle and Fairyhouse racecourses. The sports which grew in Dublin University in the 1850s were codified and spread to the city's middle classes. Finally, new pastimes appeared, fuelled by the internationalisation and commercialisation of society.

Horseracing and concentration

From the 1860s, the Turf Club consolidated its position as the leading body in Irish horseracing and adopted 'a position of exerting positive power rather than informal influence.'[54] Meetings were persuaded to bolster their prize money and compelled to adhere to an increasing number of rules. Chief among these was the decision taken in 1876 to disqualify any horse that had taken part in a flat race worth £20 not held under their rules from taking part in further racing.[55] In parallel with more coercive legislation, and linked to the centralisation and standardisation of elite racing in the country, was the establishment of a few racecourses run on commercial lines in urban centres at the turn of the 1870s. In Galway, the 4th Earl of Howth profited from his tenure as local MP to become involved in the creation of the Ballybrit racecourse.[56] In Cork, a consortium of six local businessmen invested £1,000 each in creating Cork Park and the corporation was willing to contribute £13,000 (out of an estimated £18,000) towards the creation of a train station within

[54] D'Arcy, *Horses*, p. 184,
[55] Ibid., p. 184.
[56] Ibid., pp 188-9.

walking distance of the ground.[57] As the cost of running horseracing on a national scale soared, individual entrepreneurs or townships were effectively pushed out from racing organisation, whereas it had still happened at Confey Castle and Kingstown in the 1850s. The gentry, who had hitherto been the outstanding contributors to the development of horseracing, witnessed likewise a progressive erosion of their power as the cost and technical nature of the sport grew. The ensuing relative decline of racing in the provincial towns and cities of Derry, Maryborough, Kilkenny and Bellewstown, and conversely its expansion in Galway, Cork, the Curragh, and Dublin, reflected such structural changes.

Between 1870 and 1879, 46 out of 51 recorded Dublin meetings took place in Fairyhouse or Baldoyle and confirmed their nationwide rise. Fairyhouse racecourse, hitherto associated with semi-private hunt and military steeplechases, became a first-rank venue in 1870 when the Ward Hunt launched the Irish Grand National on Easter Monday. The restrictions regarding professional jockeys and non-local horses were lifted and a consequent increase in prize money brought it national renown.[58] In 1868 and 1869 the committee respectively added £189 and £248 to a couple of cups. In 1871 the amount rose to £478 and reached £900 by 1874, the year when the Midland and Great Western Railway Company started to sponsor the meeting.[59] At the same time, the Earl of Howth witnessed the arrival of entrepreneurs John Arnott and Colonel Graves as partners in the running of Baldoyle racecourse late in 1873. After having led the Cork Park project to completion, both men sought to develop their own venue in Dublin. For Arnott it was part of a grander scheme of setting foot in the city after becoming in 1865 the owner of the department store that still bears his name and acquiring the *Irish Times* in 1873. Arnott and Graves's exertions since 1871 were largely endorsed by the *Irish Sportsman* and the eventually set out to redevelop the Baldoyle venue once it became clear local authorities would not grant them the right to build a racecourse in the Phoenix Park.[60] The racecourse became totally enclosed, stylishly rebranded

[57] *Freeman's Journal*, 25 July 1870; *Irish Times*, 2 Nov. 1871.
[58] *Irish Times*, 20 Jan. 1870.
[59] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 24 Mar. 1868; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 31 Mar. 1869; *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Apr. 1871, 7 Apr. 1874.
[60] *Irish Sportsman*, 14 Jan. 1871, 5 June 1871, 17 June 1871, 5 July 1871, 19 Aug. 1871, 18 Nov. 1871, 27 Jan. 1872, 26 July 1872, 8 Mar. 1873, 3 Nov. 1873; D'Arcy, *Horses*, p. 196.

the Dublin Metropolitan Meeting, and William R. Dunbar was appointed secretary.[61] Money was splashed out as had rarely been seen before on an Irish racecourse. Although the Howth family had already increased the annual stakes from £1,100 to £2,600 between 1871 and 1873 (or from £50 to £85 per race), the take-over marked a real step up. In 1874, 26 races combined a total added money of £5,300 (£190 per race). Such amounts declined thereafter but races at Baldoyle commanded above £80 on average for the following two decades, well above the national average (figure 5.9, p. 318). Whether the new management derived a profit from the venue is unclear. That it was an unmitigated personal success for Arnott is certain as his name henceforth became associated with the most popular Irish racecourse of the 1870s. With a mixture of flat racing and steeplechasing, Baldoyle appealed to spectators and horse owners alike and attracted English horses who had just a short stroll from Howth pier.

The consolidation of racing in two racecourses which had reached national renown stood out as the most defining element of the 1870s. More races attracted more horses and were worth more money (figure 3.2). The growth of racing in Dublin followed the Irish expansion witnessed between 1863 and 1874 but was also a locomotive of such changes. Thereafter the nationwide decline in the industry resulting from agricultural downturn and the Land War was mitigated by the growing strength of Dublin racing.

Figure 3.2: Horseracing in Dublin, 1868-82.

	Meetings	Races	Starters	Stakes
1868-72	25	181	1,184	£8,729
1873-7	37	208	1,590	£23,204
1878-82	36	273	1,887	£20,748

[61] *Irish Times*, 28 Sept. 1874. It is unknown whether Dunbar was appointed for services given or for his abilities. In 1875 he was replaced by Turf Club administrator Thomas Brindley.

The 'Dublin University' sports and their middle-class appropriation

By the 1870s, cricket in Dublin and Ireland had broadened its appeal to the lower classes.[62] Children from Smithfield broke windows playing in the streets, and Liberties boys' 'entire cricketing property consist[ed] of one real bat and a flabby ball, everything else being improvised on the ground with sticks and stones.'[63] Sunday cricket became common and further betrays the participation of the Catholic lower classes.[64] Finally, teams linked to the Guinness brewery or the department store of Pim Brothers & Co. began playing by the end of the decade.[65] There were, however, few opportunities for social mingling as the sporting hierarchisation of clubs reflected the social one. Upper-class clubs tended to be longer established, had their own facilities, professionals, a larger membership, and preferred to meet teams of similar standing. The sports of rugby, hurley, athletics and rowing which grew in Dublin University in the 1850s did not witness large-scale democratisation and remained essentially middle-class sports at the turn of the 1880s. They had, however, outgrown their university status as students who had been playing in College Park then brought these games into wider society after graduating. Overlap in membership was common and reinforced the association of these games with the middle classes. The Lansdowne and Phoenix clubs had cricket, hurley and rugby sections.[66] Similarly the DUBC played cricket in the early 1870s, the Dublin Amateur Athletic Club fielded its own 'Gitanos' rugby team in the mid-1870s and the Pembroke RC had so many common members with the Wanderers FC that their annual confrontation was seen as a club match.[67] This section examines these sports in succession.

Hurley

The publication of the rules of the DUHC in Lawrence's *Handbook of cricket* in 1870/1 is evidence of the wish to disseminate the rules of the game as played within Trinity College. Steps towards an opening of the game to the outside world had

[62] *Irish Sportsman*, 11 Nov. 1871; Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 116-20; Bracken, *Foreign and fantastic*, pp 56-70.
[63] *Freeman's Journal*, 11 July 1874; *Irish Times*, 19 Apr. 1876
[64] *Freeman's Journal*, 4 May 1875; *Irish Times*, 23 July 1877; *Dublin Daily Express*, 13 Sept. 1879.
[65] *Dublin Daily Express*, 14 June 1877; *Irish Times*, 10 Aug. 1877.
[66] West, *The bold collegians*, p. 39.
[67] *Irish Sportsman*, 28 Oct. 1875; *Dublin Daily Express*, 13 Oct. 1879.

already been taken the previous year when club members agreed to accept non-students as associate members.[68] Progress was thereafter slow and only in 1876 was a second club, Monkstown, recorded.[69] By 1879, the total number of clubs had grown to nine and the game was then fast developing within banks, Protestant schools, and the southern suburbs (appendix 4). Historians of Trinity College sport have linked hurley to commons, a version of hurling played in eighteenth-century Ulster which was then in sharp decline.[70] Evidence for this lay in the 1870 rules which distinctively cater for a ground game played with a thin hurl. To reinforce the association of hurley with commons was its timing, winter, and the belief that many northerners within the university had previously been familiar with the game. This research has not been able to confirm nor infirm this hypothesis. The MacIvor brothers and Richard Galbraith, who respectively played in 1868 and 1876 had been educated at Portora Royal School, and DUHC members John Ross, Henry Hall, and William Gilliland were also born in Ulster.[71] Cork-born Thomas S. Lindsay and Charles W. Welland, and Tipperary Grammar School-educated T. H. Abraham and Standish O'Grady must on the other hand have been more familiar with the summer version of the game played in Munster with a wider hurl.[72] Moreover, the preference for winter play might merely have conformed to the university calendar which saw students leaving Dublin during the summer recess. Whether hurley before 1870 was directly linked to commons thus remains a matter of speculation. What is sure, however, is that the game after 1870 grew to resemble hockey, a stick and ball game then making headway in England and which eventually became administered in the London area by the Hockey Association after 1875.[73] The higher degree of bureaucratisation of the English game provided a blueprint for Irish hurley players who had by then become numerous. The momentum was channelled into the Irish

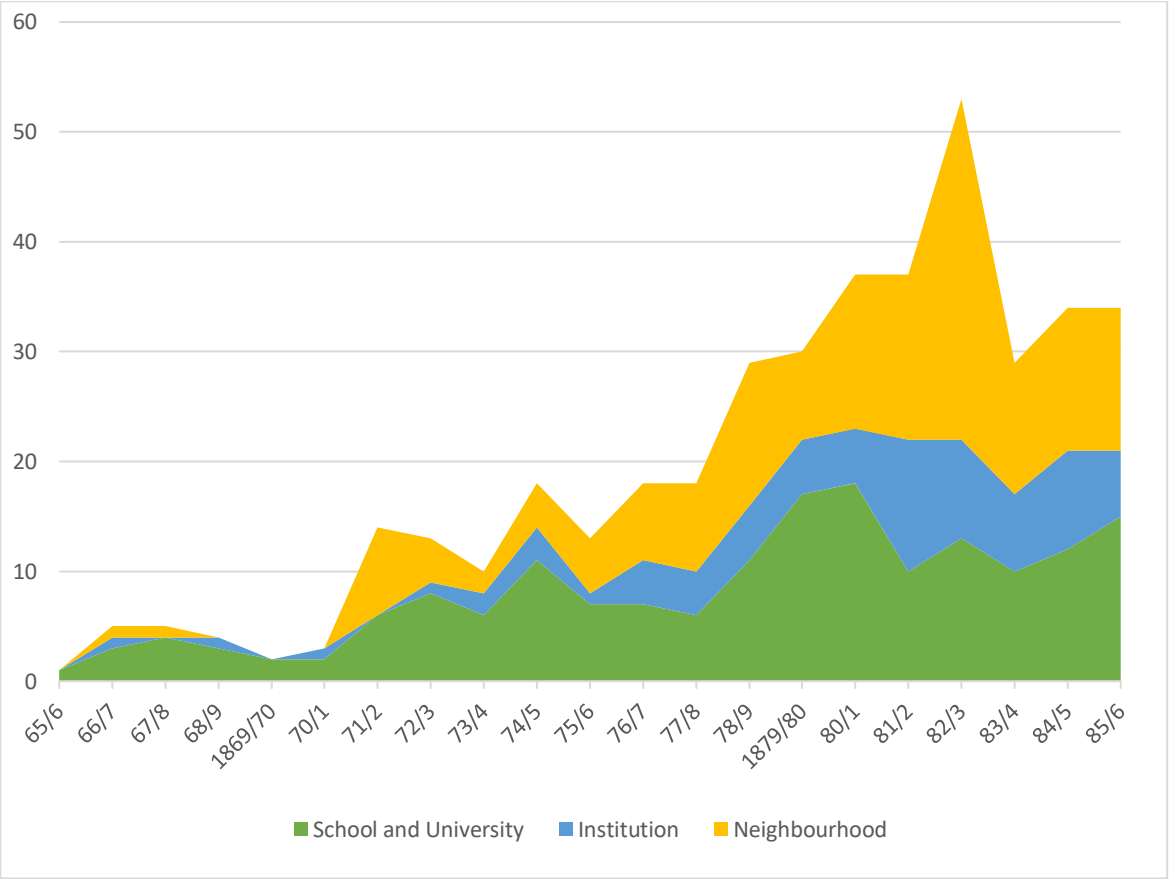
[68] *Dublin Daily Express*, 15 Nov. 1869.
[69] *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Dec. 1876.
[70] West, *The bold collegians*, p. 35; Seán Freyne, *Gaelic games at Trinity, 1884-1984* (Dublin, 1984), p. 8; Art Ó Maolfabhail, Roddy Hegarty, and Dónal McAnallen, 'From Cú Chullain to Cusack: ball-playing, camán, shinny and hurling in Ulster before the GAA', in McAnallen *et al*., *The evolution of the GAA*, p. 73.
[71] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Cricket/19; Ibid., Mun/Club/Rugby F./13; Census of Ireland, 1901, Household returns; *Dublin Daily Express*, 14 Dec. 1868, 5 Dec 1876; *Northern Whig*, 11 Nov. 1879; *Belfast-News-Letter*, 8 Oct. 1881.
[72] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Cricket/19; 1901 Census of Ireland, Household returns.
[73] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 172. *Field*, 1 May 1875, 23 Oct. 1875. The original association was disbanded in the early 1880s. West too acknowledged the connection, see West, *The bold collegians*, p. 35.

Hurley Union, created in January 1879 to cater for this growing community of players.[74] While hurley supporters proudly claimed its distinctive Irishness, its rules became increasingly similar to hockey and sought to sanitise it of its most brutal features. The 1870 and 1879 rules prohibited winding the hurl round the head when in close quarter. In 1882, revised rules totally proscribed raising the hurl over the shoulder in such situations.[75] The alignment with the English game was perhaps a cultural endorsement but was undoubtedly also a rational move to facilitate eventual international matches.[76] The increased participation of white-collar employees was perhaps a further incentive to provide for a safer game and echoed the 1860s debate on hacking in football.

Trinity College students were the agency responsible for the transition from a university game to a civilian one. West affirmed that 'pupils in the school concerned … matriculated to, and staff were drawn from, Trinity College; and among the clubs, Leinster, Merrion, Phoenix and Kenilworth were linked to existing cricket clubs with which the university had regular fixtures.'[77] DUHC members Robert Polden and Frederick Searight were also enrolled by the Lansdowne club in 1879.[78] Hurley, however, failed to break free from the university hold on the game, making its spread to the Catholic lower-middle class impossible and ensuring its demise once the Trinity club folded in 1883.[79] In the long term, the game was not equipped to face the revival of hurling in its modern, popular, and nationalist form after 1883. Because it failed to spread beyond a small contingent of Protestant schools and a few upper-middle-class clubs in the Rathmines and Pembroke townships, hurley was highly sensitive to reversals of fortune. Finally, its growing association with an English game and move away from the traditions of hurling aroused the jibes of revivalists and proved to be prohibitive once the cultural aspect of sport rose to prominence in the mid-1880s.[80]

[74] *Irish Sportsman*, 1 Feb. 1879.
[75] West, *The bold collegians*, pp 34, 120-3; *Irish Sportsman*, 27 Dec. 1879
[76] *Irish Sportsman*, 19 Oct. 1878, 4 Nov. 1882.
[77] West, *The bold collegians*, p. 35.
[78] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Cricket/19; *Dublin Daily Express*, 9 Feb. 1878, 13 Jan. 1879.
[79] By 1883, the DUHC membership had declined to such a low point that the club was forced to resign from the Dublin University Athletic Union and probably folded shortly after, see TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Athletic/3, 27 Apr. 1883, 22 May 1883.
[80] Rouse, *The hurlers*, pp 8-10; West, *The bold collegians*, pp 35-6.

Figure 3.3: Origin of rugby combinations in Dublin, 1865-85.



Note: Up to 1872, any team playing football has been included. Thereafter only explicitly rugby teams have been accounted for.

Rugby

Just as football in England experienced a rapid development in the 1870s, so it did in Ireland. The appeal of a codified winter team game was accentuated by the emphasis put on it in schools and by the holding of annual international matches between England, Scotland and Ireland which generated popular enthusiasm and media coverage. Soccer in England began to lose its middle-class apparatus to become a game firmly implanted among industrial workers of the north and midlands. That in Ireland the first soccer clubs developed in Belfast only from 1878 reflected both the increasing association of the game with industrial cities and the lower level of economic development of the Irish working class.

Rugby proudly retained its middle-class character, and especially in Ireland where the role of former Dublin University students in spreading the game was

paramount.[81] William Dunlop created the Lansdowne club in 1872 and recalled that 'there were so many Trinity men' within the team that he created a second team within the club reserved to other members.[82] At the club's 1877 annual general meeting, there were still at least twelve members who had been members of a Dublin University sports club and in 1879 at least five of their players had previously been DUFC players.[83] Early members of the Wanderers RC, founded in 1872 by R. M. Peter (a former Blackheath School student), were also drawn from the university ranks and so were two officers of the Wesley College FC in 1880. Former DUFC captain Granby Burke played for both Lansdowne and Wanderers after leaving Trinity College.[84] Thomas Taggart was influential in the creation of the Leinster Schools' Cup during his tenure as assistant master at the High School and credited himself as having been a pioneer of rugby in Derry while teaching there.[85] The creation of the Irish Football Union in 1874 to organise rugby in the country – save for the Belfast area – further highlighted the DUFC's decisive role in its development nationally. Five out of the six members of its working committee were associated with the student club, and this latter occasionally lent ropes and posts for international matches.[86] In its early years, representatives of the Bray, Kingstown, Dungannon, Portora, Monaghan, Dundalk and Limerick clubs had also played rugby in the College Park and sometimes still played for the DUFC while being members of another club.[87]

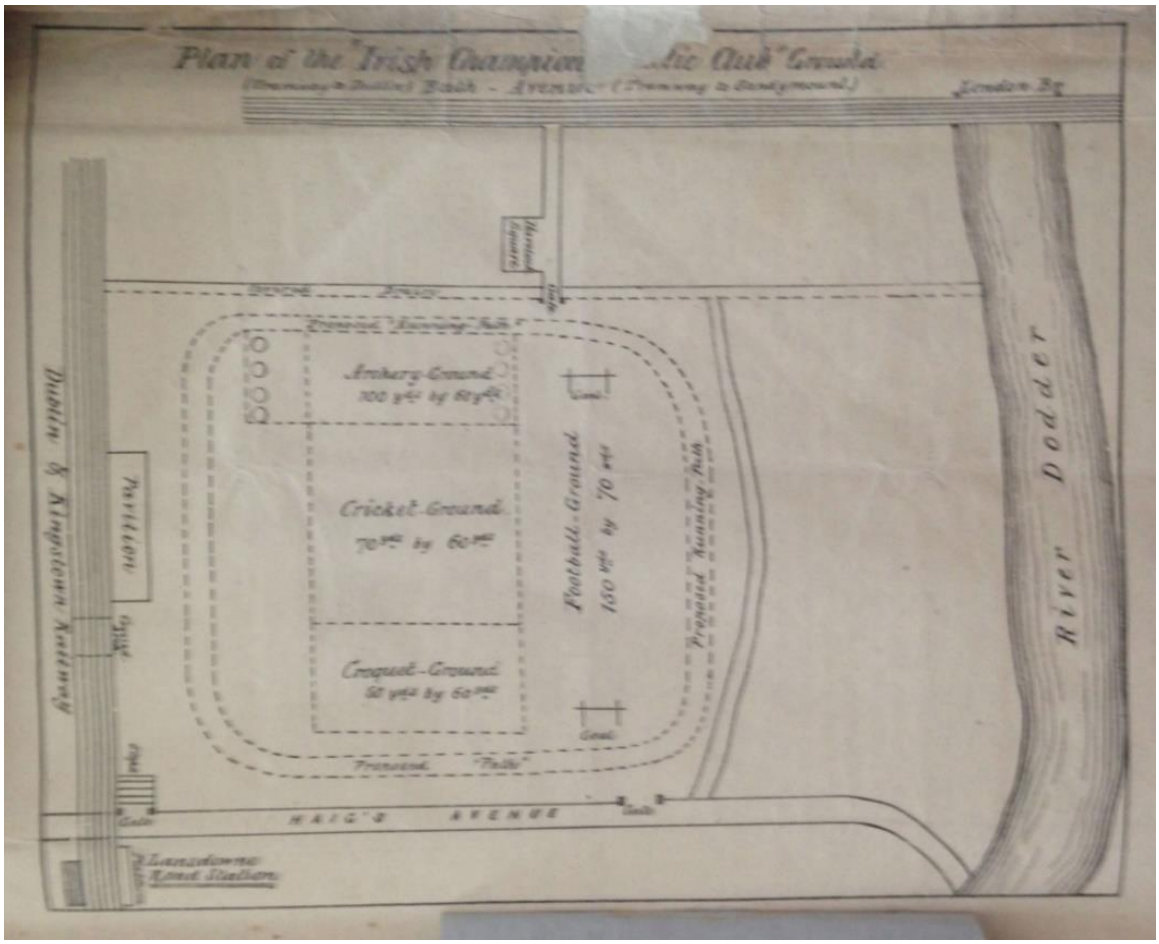
Less than a decade after the DUFC drafted its rules, most Dublin elite schools, regardless of their religious affiliation, had adopted rugby as a winter game and

[81] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 130-2; O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, pp 23-6, 68.
[82] IRFU Archives, letter from H. Dunlop.
[83] The Lansdowne club consistently fielded former DUFC players throughout the decades even though their importance declined, both in number and influence. See *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Oct. 1877, 25 Nov. 1884; *Dublin Daily Express*, 11 Nov. 1879; *Irish Daily Independent*, 14 Oct. 1892.
[84] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Rugby F./38/23, Letter of Granby Burke to E.J.M. Watson, dated 3 Dec. 1829. See also *Dublin Daily Express*, 23 Sept. 1880; J.J. McCarthy, 'International football: Ireland' in Rev. F. Marshall (ed.), *Football, the rugby union game* (London, 1892), p. 225.
[85] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Rugby. F./38/124, Letter of Thomas Taggart to E.J.M. Watson, dated 29 May 1930.
[86] IRFU Archives, Minutes of the IFU, 3 Feb. 1875, 7 Dec. 1875.
[87] Ibid., 3 Feb. 1875, 7 Dec. 1875, 4 Oct. 1876, 15 Oct. 1877, 4 Oct. 1878. B. Casement, while being a representative of the Dungannon club, was also selected in the Irish XV under the Wanderers banner. He had previously been captain and secretary of the DUFC. William Neville, a former DUFC player, was later credited for his role in bringing the Ulster and Leinster unions to merge into the IRFU, see TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Rugby.F/38/118, Letter from G. Scriven to E.J.M. Watson, dated 26 Nov. 1829.

engaged in external matches.[88] They were the bedrock of the game in Dublin, more so than in any other sport, and guaranteed a constant influx of new players both for the DUFC and other clubs (figure 3.3). Rugby had also spread to the Dublin professional classes and testimony to this are the teams of Ordnance Survey, the 'Banks' and the numerous hospitals which created their own Hospital Cup in 1881/2.[89] That 49 of the 107 recorded Dun's Hospital players had formerly played with the DUFC again highlights the connection between Trinity College and civilian clubs.[90] Conversely, and possibly because of the importance of elite schools and universities in propagating the game, rugby failed to appeal to the lower-middle class, clerks and employees of department stores. The attempts to have Henry St or Sackville St combinations were one-offs and the Civil Service club failed to last more than a season.[91] In contrast to hurley, rugby had geographically spread to all the suburbs. Elsewhere in the country, clubs and rugby traditions were rapidly being established in Belfast, Limerick and Cork and reinforced the game as much as they would diminish the influence of Dublin University on and off the pitch in subsequent decades. Rivalries were created and the games opposing the DUFC to Wanderers or Kingstown were played in front of thousands of spectators.[92] In turn, the Dublin clubs sided together in the annual interprovincial matches against Ulster and Munster. The apex of the season was then reached in the February internationals against England or Scotland in which the disillusion on the pitch was only lessened by the prospective of good takings at the gates. In the space of a decade, football in Dublin had become codified, internationalised, and successfully made the transition from being a purely student pastime to a civilian middle-class sport.

[88] Blackrock College, Belvidere College, Cusack's Academy and the Catholic University were four Catholic establishments which had taken part in external matches by the end of the 1879/80 season.
[89] *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Dec. 1881, 19 Dec. 1881, 27 Feb. 1882.
[90] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Rugby F./41/2; Ibid., Mun/Club/Rugby F./13.
[91] *Irish Times*, 11 Nov. 1874, *Freeman's Journal*, 6 July 1877.
[92] *Irish Times*, 28 Jan. 1878; *Dublin Daily Express*, 25 Nov. 1878. On these occasion crowds of four thousand attended a Leinster-Munster tie and a DUFC-Kingstown match in the College Park.

Figure 3.4: Plan of the original Lansdowne Road grounds, Nov. 1873.



Source: IRFU archives, Minutes of the ICAC, 29 Nov. 1873.

Rowing and athletics

By 1870 rowing had reached a plateau in the city while it expanded in the rest of the country.[93] With the exception of two clubs in Kingstown and Clontarf, all other rowing clubs were located in Ringsend where the combined membership totalled around a thousand.[94] Tides and rough seas impaired practice and sharing the river with a rapidly growing volume of commercial shipping and industrial waste made it an unwelcoming place.[95] With few elite schools in the vicinity, rowing failed to develop a following before university level, which resulted in poor competitiveness at the Henley regatta as only a few students were familiar with rowing before entering

[93] Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, pp 174-6; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 113.
[94] *Irish Times*, 8 Dec. 1874.
[95] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/3/1, Hillary term, 1888; *Freeman's Journal*, 5 July 1870, 6 Mar. 1872, 11 July 1873. West, *The bold collegians*, p. 19.

Dublin University. The lack of a clear identification of rowing with elite schools allowed for more diversified backgrounds and the social origin of rowers spanned the middle-class spectrum. Civil servants, clerks or employees of department stores joined the Metropolitan, Neptune, Dolphin or Commercial clubs, while the rather upmarket Pembroke club, created in 1872, was made up 'chiefly of the Civil Service and Banking interests in the city'.[96]

Athletics, however, witnessed a rapid growth in the 1870s as annual sports became a staple of the city's elite schools and middle-class institutions such as hospitals, the Order of Foresters or the Civil Service.[97] The near inexistence of work-related meetings reveals how the working class was then still largely kept outside of modern athletics in the city.[98] Instead three clubs created in 1872 contributed to foster athletics on amateur and English lines in Dublin: the Dublin University Athletic Club (DUAC), the Dublin Amateur Athletic Club (DAAC) and the Irish Champion Athletic Club (ICAC). The DUAC was a year-round body that replaced the temporary Race Committee at the helm of the fashionable College sports.[99] The second club was the brainchild of the Dunbar family. William J. was the club's initial president, John was secretary, and Valentine was judge and handicapper.[100] The DAAC became the leading civilian athletic club in Dublin and imported the English fashion of hare and hound (cross-country running) in Ireland from the 1873/4 season.[101] This winter sport then rapidly gathered support as four clubs were active by 1881 and eighteen by 1887. Finally the ICAC was created late in 1872 by Henry Dunlop, a Dublin University student who initially relied on fellow students for committee membership or basic equipment (not least a ground) throughout 1873.[102] He quickly transformed his athletic club into a truly multi-sport organisation. Rugby, cricket, tennis, archery, quoits and croquet sections were added within a few years, some of which still existed under the Lansdowne name adopted after settling in their new grounds early

[96] *Irish Sportsman*, 3 June 1871, 25 Jan. 1873, 19 Dec 1874; *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Mar. 1872; *Irish Times*, 5 Mar. 1874.
[97] Farragher, *The French College*, pp 181-2; *St Vincent's College Centenary*, p. 246; *Irish Times*, 7 July 1871, 21 May 1874, 6 Mar. 1876, 24 June 1878.
[98] *Irish Times*, 14 June 1877; *Irish Sportsman*, 25 Aug. 1877. Leaving aside the Civil Service, only the Guinness brewery and the GSWR have been related to an athletic meeting in the 1870s, out of over one hundred meetings recorded in the contemporary press.
[99] TCD archives, Mun/Club/Athletics/2, 6 Mar. 1872; *Irish Sportsman*, 16 Mar. 1872.
[100] *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Sept. 1872.
[101] *Irish Sportsman*, 29 Nov. 1873. Valentine Dunbar took part in the initial run.
[102] IRFU archives, Minutes of the ICAC, 22 Nov. 1872; 12 May 1873; TCD archives, Mun/Club/Athletics/2, 29 Mar. 1873.

in 1874 (figure 3.4).[103] The lasting contribution of the athletic club was the establishment in 1873 of an annual national championship.[104] Open to all Irish amateurs, it became instantly the reference point in Irish athletics and kept a balanced programme of track and field events satisfying the different traditions within the island. Running events were thus usually carried away by the best Dublin or Belfast sprinters, of whom James Ogilby in the 1870s and Daniel Bulger in the following decade were the best examples. Munster men turned up in force for jumping and throwing events and the exploits of the Davin brothers are but part of a long list of world-class feats coming from Golden Vale athletes.[105]

The ICAC as an athletic club did not survive long, victim of the growing appetite of the Dunbar family to control Irish athletics and Dunlop's wish to take over the exploitation of Lansdowne Road stadium through a private company. Having reached a dominant position through the *Irish Sportsman* and their roles as judges and handicappers, the Dunbar brothers sought to gain effective power over the sport when they called for the creation of a national body in September 1877.[106] By then they were aware of growing tensions within the ICAC and of Dunlop's wish to privatise the ground for his own profit, to which they answered by ventilating the dispute in the family's paper.[107] Matters came to a head at the club annual general meeting in December when Dunlop's scheme was passed by 22 votes to 11 in a tumultuous atmosphere, whereupon he resigned from secretaryship and saw opponents of the project take control of the committee.[108] A schism had happened, and Dunlop's supporters gradually left the club. At the 1878 annual general meeting, only 3 out of 22 who voted for the company scheme were present as against 6 out the 11 members who opposed it. John and Valentine Dunbar were also present at this meeting and contributed to drafting the club's new rules. Rules which would unmistakably bear their mark included the resolute condemnation of sports on Sunday and the promotion of amateurism on class lines.[109] The revitalisation of the ICAC did not work and the club folded in 1880 after a few seasons of poor sport,

[103] IRFU archives, Minutes of the ICAC, 29 Nov. 1873; IRFU archives, letter from Dunlop, p. 1.
[104] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 137
[105] Kevin McCarthy, *Gold, silver and green: the Irish Olympic journey 1896-1924* (Cork, 2011), p. 7.
[106] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 138; *Irish Sportsman*, 27 Oct. 1877, 1 Dec. 1877, 5 Oct. 1878; *Bell's Life*, 3 Nov. 1877.
[107] *Irish Sportsman*, 22 Sept. 1877; *Irish Times*, 30 Nov. 1877.
[108] *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Dec. 1877.
[109] *Irish Sportsman*, 21 Dec. 1878.

bad publicity and financial struggles.[110] Its legacy was nevertheless considerable. The Irish championships were then taken over by different organisers and held continuously to provide the annual focus of Irish athletes. The ICAC multi-sport ambitions gave an early impetus to lacrosse, cycling and tennis but it is perhaps in rugby that it is nowadays best remembered.

The expansion of organised sport in British universities and public schools after 1850 was rapidly replicated in Trinity College and Dublin elite schools. Irish establishments shared similar beliefs on education and social order and readily adopted the model fast developing in England. When Dublin University students entered professional life, they brought with them their playing habits and were thus partly responsible for the spread of hurley, rowing, athletics and rugby throughout Dublin and Ireland. They were, however, not the sole agents of sport diffusion. The growth of a commercial leisure society was at least as potent as the public-school ethos in propagating new pastimes.

Commercial sports: cycling and skating

A string of new sports was imported in the 1870s and the pace of their spread, codification and organisation was resolutely higher than hitherto witnessed. Only six years elapsed between the introduction of polo in England and the final of the annual Irish championship in the Phoenix Park in front of thousands of spectators in 1878.[111] The modern tennis box set had barely been patented by Major Wingfield in 1874 when the Sackville Street Grand Bazaar started selling sets from one to five guineas.[112] Two years later, an All-Ireland championship was inaugurated and

[110] *Irish Sportsman*, 21 Aug. 1880, 18 Dec. 1880. It does not seem that hard feelings were held by both camps. Upon folding the ICAC, athlete and administrator J. A. H. Christian proposed to gather a broad coalition of the city's prominent athletes (including Dunlop) to build a new club. Likewise, members of both sides of the argument were found the following winter playing side by side in the first XV of the Lansdowne FC, see *Dublin Daily Express*, 11 Nov. 1879.
[111] *Freeman's Journal*, 2 July 1872, 14 Aug. 1875; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 13 Aug. 1878. In 1872 polo was still called 'hockey on horseback'.
[112] Heiner Gillmeister, *Tennis, a cultural history* (Leicester, 1997), pp 174-5; *Irish Times*, 24 Aug. 1874.

within a decade the Irish championships were second only to Wimbledon in the growing world of lawn tennis.[113]

The fashionable aspect of these sports was crucial both to their initial popularity and eventually to their downfall as they were replaced before they became ingrained in middle-class rituals or to had spread down the social ladder. A short craze for croquet in the early 1870s outmoded archery as a garden pastime before being in turn supplanted by lawn tennis after 1874, and golf from the mid-1890s. The volatility of sports was best illustrated by short crazes, often linked to ongoing technological or industrial developments. Cycling exemplified such fluctuations in popularity. In 1861, Frenchman Pierre Michaux fitted pedals to the then foot-propelled Draisienne and the ensuing growing demand in France and Britain was henceforth supplied from 1868 onwards by Rowley Turner's Coventry factory.[114] Boneshakers, as they became subsequently known, immediately penetrated the Irish market and could be hired or bought for £5.[115] In the summer of 1869, the first cycling races were held in Dublin and a Velocipede club created shortly thereafter.[116] The momentum gathered pace in 1870 and then it stopped, possibly due to cycles' dangerousness and uncomfortableness. By 1871 the craze was gone, and it took the innovation of the 'ordinary' bicycle (penny-farthing) to revive it again in the mid-1870s when at least five clubs were established in the city. Cycling became a minor yet firmly established part of the athletic programme, in Dublin first and then throughout the country (figure 3.5). Further technical innovations in the late 1880s, such as the chain-driven back wheel and pneumatic tyres, brought more speed and safety to the new 'safety bicycle' and yet again a cycling craze in the city. Industrial production eventually led to a drop in prices and put cycling within the reach of the lower-middle class who adopted it as much for pleasure as for commuting purposes in the early twentieth century.[117]

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[113] Simon J. Eaves and Robert J. Lake, 'The forgotten powerhouse: analysing the brief rise to prominence of lawn tennis in Ireland in the late-nineteenth century', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxxvi, no. 11 (2019), p. 961; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 24 July 1876.
[114] Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, p. 16.
[115] *Freeman's Journal*, 29 July 1869, 4 Sept. 1869. Tricycles were cheaper at £3/10.
[116] *Irish Times*, 2 June 1869, 5 June 1869; *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Oct. 1869. The first races were held as part of promenade evenings, with music and fireworks involved. Slow races were more akin to equilibrium feats than purely racing challenges.
[117] Daly, 'The growth of Victorian Dublin', p. 20; Brian Griffin, 'Cycle camping in Victorian and Edwardian Ireland', *Irish Studies Review*, xxvii, no. 3 (2019), pp 388-93.

Figure 3.5: Athletic and cycling meetings, 1873-85.

	Dublin			Rest of Ireland		
	Total meetings	Total events	Cycling races	Total meetings	Total events	Cycling races
1873	11	169	-	16	242	1 – 0.4%
1874	9	150	-	12	215	4 – 1.9%
1875	15	205	19 – 9.3%	31	450	8 – 1.8%
1876	8	129	14 – 10.9%	33	406	10 – 2.5%
1877	18	259	16 – 6.2%	50	730	22 – 3.0%
1878	14	195	18 – 9.2%	60	889	50 – 5.6%
1879	11	113	14 – 12.4%	64	974	72 – 7.4%
1880	10	109	9 – 8.3%	48	726	95 – 13.1%
1881	15	179	16 – 8.9%	49	685	74 – 10.8%
1882	19	208	32 – 15.4%	54	764	93 – 12.2%
1883	21	268	38 – 14.2%	54	750	146 – 19.5%
1884	20	306	57 – 18.6%	80	1,039	185 – 17.8%
1885	17	275	50 – 18.2%	78	1,006	169 – 16.8%

Note: The GSWR sports of 1877 have been counted with Dublin even if held at the Curragh. This table only includes the athletic and cycling meetings reported in the *Irish Sportsman* and *Sport* and gives trends rather than the total number of meetings held in Ireland.

The dramatic rise and fall of rink skating in 1875-7 perhaps illustrates best how the combination of technical progress, marketing and a sense of fashion contributed to shape and constantly renew leisure time. While the refrigerating technique of producing ice all year long was still in its infancy, the discovery in 1873 that asphalt rinks could provide an alternative to ice-skating created a leisure bubble that

disappeared as fast as it appeared.[118] The initial spread was phenomenal in England. By 1876, London had fifty such rinks. In Ireland rinks were built in Waterford, Cork, Limerick, Clonmel, and in Dublin. The seven rinks built there were situated at the heart of the retailing and middle-class areas, near the Rotunda and St Stephen's Green parks, as well as in the Rathmines, Pembroke and Kingstown townships. Enhanced by promenades, musical bands, cricket lawns, or tennis courts, they were highly sought-after destinations designed to attract women and tap into the rapidly growing market for conspicuous leisure. Blind optimism characterised the early days since the London rinks returned staggering benefits. In Dublin, shareholders of the Dublin Skating Rink Company, which operated the Earlsfort Terrace rink, learned that the company had cleared its liabilities a mere two years into its existence and began to grant dividends of twenty percent. The company's solicitor then 'had not the slightest fear that the amusement would grow out of favour in Dublin.'[119] By then, skating was promoted by scientific revues, was staged in theatres, and touring Russian skaters held up to seven exhibitions per week.[120] New sports stemmed from it, and by 1877 rink hockey, speed skating and figure skating were staged in Dublin (figure 3.6).[121]

The bubble burst as suddenly as it grew, with no other apparent reason than changing popular tastes. In January 1878, 'the now half-defunct practice of skating' appealed to fewer enthusiasts and a year later the *Freeman's Journal* summed up the situation:

> It is not two years since the rinking rage suddenly seized hold of the fashionable public. The whole country went mad about it. Dublin was patched with squares of asshalte [sic] in every direction, and the rattle of rollers was heard in all quarters of the city and suburbs. For every aspiring little provincial town a rink became as essential as a marketplace, and those who knew how to take the tide of fashionable infatuation at the flow achieved a fortune by the

[118] *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Nov. 1875.
[119] *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Feb. 1877. See also *Dublin Evening Mail*, 26 Sept. 1876. The National Skating Rink Company, operating venues in Limerick and Waterford, also handed out interim dividends of twenty percent after only four months in existence. The craze was then nationwide.
[120] *Irish Times*, 2 Mar. 1876; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 26 Sept. 1876, 28 Nov. 1876.
[121] *Irish Times*, 27 Mar. 1877, 11 May 1877; *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Aug. 1877. The hockey match opposed the Dublin University Hurley Club to the Hammersmith Rink Hockey Club.

> speculation. But if the success was unparalleled, the reaction against it was proportionately rapid and complete. Within a few months the eager, animated, fashionable assemblies were converted into blank wilderness of high walls and flat floors. Fortunes were lost by those who had built their hopes on the shifting sands of popular favour.[122]

The Rathmines and Earlsfort rinks survived into the 1880s and had to resort to holding bazaars to fill up their grounds. The fashion had passed and only came back in the latter 1900s.[123]

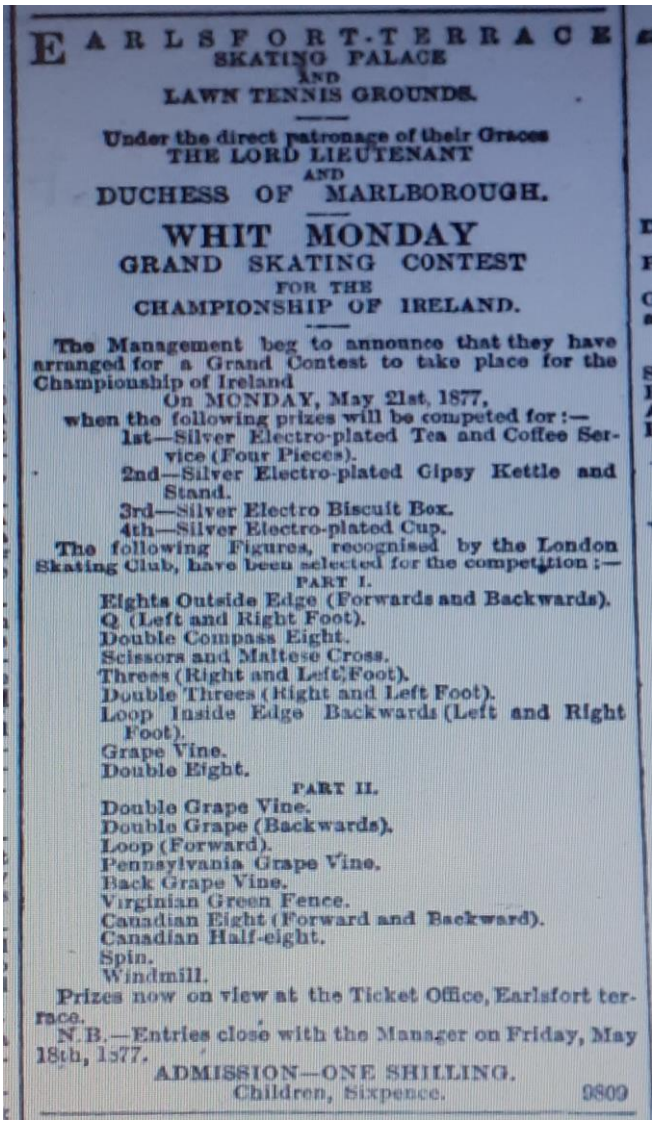
The increasing role of commercial ventures in fostering new leisure outlets in the 1870s marked the start of the decline of Dublin University in shaping sport in Ireland. Croquet and tennis, like archery, conquered initially the Dublin upper classes and the landed gentry in the country as manufacturers and sports retailers sustained the growth of these 'garden games'. The strength of these new pastimes lay in their novelty and perceived modernity or technical progress, as in skating or cycling. They also fed on the expansion of international interactions. The cultural importance of Britain in creating and spreading its games was vital, but the horizon was also broadened and eyes turned to a rapidly expanding post-Civil War America. Trotting and baseball failed to develop but walking and lacrosse (of Canadian origin) had more endurance.

These new pastimes, fuelled by the elite or middle classes, essentially adopted the form and ethos of existing games. They embraced amateurism and grafted themselves onto existing clubs (often cricket) or created their own networks of clubs and associations. The growth of organised sport in Dublin was especially visible from the 1870s onwards and found in the city and its suburbs a fertile ground to spread. The British model of clubs and associations was wholly adopted as the middle classes enjoyed a higher level of prosperity and the city was home to an efficient transport network, a dynamic press and enclosed stadiums, and witnessed a wider integration into the international system. From this resulted a rapid growth

[122] *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Jan. 1878, 6 Jan. 1879.
[123] *Irish Times*, 8 Oct. 1909.

of modern of sport, whose three tenets of bureaucratisation, commercialisation and internationalisation constitute the second part of this chapter.

Figure 3.6: Programme of the skating championship of Ireland, 1877.



EARLSFORT-TERRACE
SKATING PALACE
AND
LAWN TENNIS GROUNDS.

Under the direct patronage of their Graces
THE LORD LIEUTENANT
AND
DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

WHIT MONDAY
GRAND SKATING CONTEST
FOR THE
CHAMPIONSHIP OF IRELAND.

The Management beg to announce that they have arranged for a Grand Contest to take place for the Championship of Ireland
On MONDAY, May 21st, 1877,
when the following prizes will be competed for:—
1st—Silver Electro-plated Tea and Coffee Service (Four Pieces).
2nd—Silver Electro-plated Gipsy Kettle and Stand.
3rd—Silver Electro Biscuit Box.
4th—Silver Electro-plated Cup.
The following Figures, recognised by the London Skating Club, have been selected for the competition:—
PART I.
Eights Outside Edge (Forwards and Backwards).
Q (Left and Right Foot).
Double Compass Eight.
Scissors and Maltese Cross.
Threes (Right and Left Foot).
Double Threes (Right and Left Foot).
Loop Inside Edge Backwards (Left and Right Foot).
Grape Vine.
Double Eight.
PART II.
Double Grape Vine.
Double Grape (Backwards).
Loop (Forward).
Pennsylvania Grape Vine.
Back Grape Vine.
Virginian Green Fence.
Canadian Eight (Forward and Backward).
Canadian Half-eight.
Spin.
Windmill.
Prizes now on view at the Ticket Office, Earlsfort terrace.
N.B.—Entries close with the Manager on Friday, May 18th, 1877.
ADMISSION—ONE SHILLING.
Children, Sixpence. 9809

Source: *Freeman's Journal*, 14 May 1877.

3- Bureaucratisation

The bureaucratisation of sport is understood in this thesis as the combined process of writing rules, homogenising practices, and creating organisations to enforce

them. The codification, convergence and centralisation of sport was crucial in creating a common sporting culture in Ireland and shaped the world of sport as we know it. Glimpses of bureaucratisation had been seen in previous decades, notably in horseracing, rifle shooting and archery, but these features stood out in the 1870s and came to reflect the more important status of sport within society and the growing role of administration in modern Britain. Sport, like other facets of life, became regulated to fit an industrial society that firmly believed in progress, emphasised scientific and technological advances, and aimed at rationalising every facet of people's lives.[124]

Codification

Codification was the legalisation of pastimes and their framing into a specific sphere in time and space. As distances shrank fast under the advance of the railway, telegraph and printed press, common rules made it easier to hold competitions between athletes coming from diferent parts of Ireland and Britain. Without established and shared practices, confusion sprang up, as happened for example at the Highland games held in Bray in 1863. The Irish style of weight throwing allowed the thrower to be carried away by momentum after their throw (to follow the throw) which differed from Scottish practices and conferred an advantage on Irish throwers.[125] Croquet experienced similar situations. Known for decades in Ireland as an elite garden game, it was a casual affair as related by a correspondent of the *Field* who was 'not aware that any authorised rules exist[ed], having only received a few verbal ones, which have been committed to paper and additions made as difficulties occurred.' When unforeseen issues arose, they were 'decided in harmony' among participants 'or a fresh rule made on the spot to meet the case.'[126] The emergence of open competition in England in the late 1860s pressed for a unified code of rules which appeared in 1870.[127] The prestige of the clubs involved in its drafting – it included the All-England Croquet Club among others – ensured its

[124] Eric Hobsbawm, *The age of capital*, pp 294-6; Asa Briggs, *The age of improvement*, pp 394-9; Hugill, 'The shrinking Victorian world', in Hewitt, *The Victorian world*, pp 81-4; Guttman, *From ritual to record*, pp 36-51.
[125] *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Aug. 1863.
[126] *Field*, 31 July 1858.
[127] James D. Heath, *The complete croquet-player* (London, 1874), iii, pp 9-11.

swift implementation throughout Britain and Ireland and the first Irish championships, held in 1874, complied with them.[128]

Rules were adopted for rational reasons as a legal frame was necessary to settle betting arguments. In horseracing, cockfighting and prize-fighting, where large sums of money were staked on the outcome, written rules were adhered to by the late eighteenth century.[129] Their multiplication in the nineteenth century was nowhere better illustrated than in flat racing. From 23 rules in 1790, the Turf Club had come to pass 246 rules by 1890 (including 18 dealing specifically with betting).[130] The phenomenon witnessed a quickening of pace in the 1870s. The nationwide growth of hunting in the 1850s and 1860s brought a large increase in steeplechase meetings and a need for the Turf Club to legislate. Rules were thus incorporated in the *Racing Calendar* in 1866, and in 1870 the Irish National Hunt Steeplechase Committee (INHSC) was officially sanctioned as the national body governing steeplechasing, to the great displeasure of the Earl of Howth, who witnessed his authority over the Punchestown meeting disputed.[131] A practical approach was adopted too by the DUFC in 1873 when the club began to engage with English sides and decided to adopt the rules of the RFU which were then gaining support in Britain.[132] Because the dedicated press and retailers benefited from an expanding sporting scene, their role was crucial in disseminating new rules and canvassing for standardised practices. The rules of polo and hockey were published in the *Freeman's Journal* and *Irish Sportsman*, and retailer John Lawrence was central to the process.[133] He sold croquet sets that included the latest rules, and rules of hockey and football as played in Dublin University were printed in the *Handbook of cricket in Ireland*.[134] In 1874, he published *The Laws of Football* which included both rugby and association football rules, fully a year before the first recorded soccer game in the country.[135]

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[128] *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Aug. 1874.
[129] Brailsford, *British Sport*, pp 52-3; Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 173-4.
[130] D'Arcy, *Horses*, pp 179-80.
[131] Ibid., p. 176; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 24 Dec. 1870.
[132] *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Dec. 1872, 27 Oct. 1873.
[133] *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Aug. 1873; *Irish Sportsman*, 27 Dec. 1879.
[134] Lawrence, *Handbook 1868-9*, pp 196-8; Ibid., *Handbook of cricket in Ireland 1870-1* (Dublin, 1871), p. 233; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 18 July 1862.
[135] *Irish Sportsman*, 31 Oct. 1874; Martin Moore, 'The origins of association football in Ireland, 1875-1880: a reappraisal', *Sport in History*, xxxvii, no. 4 (2017), p. 509. The first recorded games in Dublin date from 1878.

Pragmatism was the core reason behind the spread of rules. New entities usually copied the dominant model because it provided a clear template to follow as well as some form of legitimisation. The Boyne regatta adopted the rules of the Dublin Metropolitan regatta, which in turn took its inspiration from the leading English clubs.[136] The Bray athletic meeting of 1875 followed the rules of the ICAC while the Cork AAC at its first annual general meeting drew its inspiration from the London Amateur Athletic Club and DAAC.[137] In 1880, Michael Cusack, hardly a promoter of amateurism on class lines, advocated 'that a code of rules – based on the principle of those of the Thames Hare and Hounds, South London Harriers, and Clapton Beagles (the leading London cross-country clubs) … should be adopted' by the newly created City and Suburban Harriers.[138] The codification of sports and spread of rules by copying the strongest elements ultimately drew towards a convergence of styles and practices.

Convergence

The convergence of rules and practices was seen in football and hurley, whereby the rules of the Dublin University club tended to get closer to those of rugby (until wholly adopted in 1873) and hockey. In 1871, the INHSC carried a motion to adopt steeplechasing rules as near as possible to those used in England.[139] The pattern of convergence of rules was clearly observable but also largely unilateral, as weaker entities adopted the ways of the strongest. In short, Ireland copied England. This can partly be ascribed to soft power and cultural imperialism, but as in the case of codification, pragmatic elements and simple emulation were at its core.[140] In rowing, the blue ribbon event of the discipline was eight-oar racing with a coxswain, and the Grand Challenge Cup of the Henley regatta its most coveted prize. Dublin clubs did not row in such boats as they are not suited for tidal estuaries but in the 1870s attempts were made to introduce the discipline in Ringsend. In 1870, the DUBC

[136] *Irish Times*, 12 July 1870; *Irish Sportsman*, 17 May 1873.
[137] *Irish Sportsman*, 20 Mar. 1875; *Freeman's Journal*, 8 July 1875.
[138] *Irish Sportsman*, 18 Dec. 1880.
[139] Saunders's News-Letter, 3 Feb 1871.
[140] Joseph Maguire, 'Sport and globalization' in Coakley and Dunning, *Handbook of sport studies*, pp 358-9 The chapter deals with the spread and homogenisation of sports more generally. See also Allen Guttman, *Games and empire: modern sport and cultural imperialism* (New York, 1994), pp 171-80.

crew borrowed an eight-oar boat from the DURC to train, but eventually came last in their heat of the Grand Challenge Cup.[141] The following year, the Dublin Metropolitan Regatta committee used a £50 subscription from the Earl of Pembroke to purchase a cup and introduced eight-oar racing in the country.[142] By the end of the decade, the Visitor's Cup was also established for eight-oared crews that had never won such a race before.[143] Bringing forward the discipline further coincided with a leaning towards the adoption of Henley rules and amateurism whenever possible.[144] The legitimacy of the Dublin Metropolitan regatta and the two university clubs as Ireland's leading institutions came from their sporting merits, but also from their ability to showcase a modern system of rowing aligned with the leading British institutions.

Athletics in Trinity College also converged with English practices in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In 1870, the committee dropped the 42lb weight-throwing event from their annual meeting to adopt the 16lb weight used in English universities.[145] By the 1880s, the early emphasis on field events typical of contemporary Irish meetings had progressively given way to track races (figure 3.7). If such changes could be seen through the prism of cultural assimilation, the ambition of Dublin University to match Oxford and Cambridge universities in prestige was also a decisive factor. As in rowing, adopting the customs of leading institutions was a form of legitimisation. The proposition to organise a varsity competition with Oxford in 1870 was, however, swiftly rebuked and highlighted the ambiguous position of Trinity College in a British and Irish context.[146] Its perception of its superiority over the three Queen's Colleges of Belfast, Galway and Cork was characterised by refusing to take part in Irish varsity contests in 1873, but Dublin

[141] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/2/1, 29 Jan. 1870; *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 2 July 1870. It is not known how nor when the DURC acquired the boat.
[142] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/Box X, minutes of the Dublin Metropolitan Regatta, 1 Aug. 1871, 4 Aug. 1871. The Pembroke cup still exists.
[143] *Dublin Daily Express*, 12 July 1879. Such races helped promote the discipline by rewarding beginners or second-rate crews.
[144] *Dublin Daily Express*, 3 June 1874. On that occasion the committee of the regatta thought of adopting the regulations on coxswain boats as defined by Henley regatta, only to back down at the last minute as provincial clubs were not familiar enough with such boats to ensure fair competition.
[145] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Athletics/2, 19 Mar. 1870.
[146] *Freeman's Journal*, 31 Jan. 1870. In rowing, the attempt to challenge Oxford and Cambridge at the turn of the 1870s by the DUBC was also rebuked and eventually led the club to take part in the Henley regatta as an alternative, see *Evening Freeman*, 30 June 1870.

University was looked down on in turn by the most prestigious English universities.[147]

Figure 3.7: Events held at the Dublin University sports, 1858-1902.

	1858-62	1868-72	1876-82	1898-1902
Sprint	9 – 12,5%	28 – 22,6%	35 – 28,9%	20 – 25%
Middle distance	4 – 5,6%	22 – 17,7%	20 – 16,5%	20 – 25%
Long distance	2 – 2,8%	-	3 – 2,5%	-
Hurdle	11 – 15,3%	15 – 12,1%	12 – 9,9%	5 – 6.3%
Throwing	18 – 25%	19 – 15,3%	12 – 9,9%	5 – 6.3%
Jumping	20 – 27,8%	25 – 19,3%	13 – 10,7%	10 – 12.5%
Walking	-	9 – 7,3%	9 – 7,4%	2 – 2.5%
Cycling	-	-	14 – 11,6%	18 – 22.5%
Folk	8 – 11,1%	7 – 5,7%	3 – 2,5%	-
Total	72	124	121	80

Note: No sports were held in 1879 and 1880, so each column corresponds to five editions. Sprint races went from 100 yards to 600 yards, middle distance races from half-mile to two miles and long distance races were three miles.

The convergence of styles, distances, events and sports was reinforced by the developing notion of record. The building of cinder tracks and reliable chronometers were by-products of industrial societies which allowed an efficient recording of performances in standardised arenas and meant that athletes or cyclists could compete without meeting each other. The quantification of sporting performance

[147] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Athletics/2, 3 June 1872, 14 Mar. 1873; *Irish Sportsman*, 19 Feb. 1870; Finn, 'Trinity Mysteries', p. 2258. Oxford refused to meet Dublin because, if they did so, then they would be bound to accept challenges from other universities.

then fitted a teleological society that put a premium on human and scientific progress.[148] It also increased the competitiveness, technicity and mathematisation of sport even among amateurs, who blatantly flouted their own ethos of little training and playing for the game's sake.[149] The emphasis on winning often meant adopting the tactics of successful teams and contributed to spreading common styles. In the early 1870s, the Dublin rowing scene attempted to adopt the long and slow stroke which had made Tyne scullers near unbeatable for two decades.[150] Later, in the 1880s, the IRFU officially recommended the adoption of the 'Passing Tactics' for Irish teams as 'it has always proved so beneficial to the teams which visit Ireland.'[151]

Centralisation

If sporting organisations predated the 1870s in Dublin and Ireland, their rate of creation and scope of action grew in that decade (appendix 5). This was the result of the increasing formalisation of sport which required an overarching authority to draft and enforce rules, select representative teams, and decide who could play and who could not. No template existed but eventually the model adopted by the Irish Rugby Football Union in 1879 would spread in later decades.

The less integrated model consisted of a club whose authority stemmed from its nationwide reach, seniority and prestige. The Turf Club was such a case and, by the 1870s, its power covered both flat and steeplechase racing.[152] The ICAC (1872), the All-Ireland Polo Club (1873) and the Fitzwilliam Lawn Tennis Club (1877) then came to informally rule athletics, polo and tennis in the country. The acceptance by the wider community that their annual championship crowned the Irish champion gave these clubs a national status akin to a formal organisation. In athletics, for example, the national championships were seen as 'the meeting par excellence of the Irish season.'[153] The limits of such a model lay in the reliance on a single club

[148] Allen Guttmann, 'The development of modern sports', in Coakley and Dunning, *Handbook of sport studies*, pp 249-50; Gillmeister, *Tennis*, pp 186-7. Dublin and national papers kept track and regularly published athletic records. See *Irish Sportsman*, 8 Feb. 1879, 8 Nov. 1879.
[149] Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, pp 32-3.
[150] *Irish Sportsman*, 1 Oct. 1870, 22 Oct. 1870, 20 Dec. 1873 The change of style was motivated by the hiring of trainer Tom Grant by the DUBC. His success with the DUBC and then the Kingstown Boat Club brought a debate on the respective merits of rowing styles.
[151] IRFU Archives, minutes of the IRFU, 11 Dec. 1885.
[152] D'Arcy, *Horses*, p. 184.
[153] *Irish Sportsman*, 6 Jan. 1877.

which could disappear, as did the ICAC within a decade of its foundation. A more complex form of organisation was observed in rowing when the Dublin Metropolitan Amateur Regatta was founded in 1869. It was a regatta of national scope yet remained strongly anchored in Dublin as only local amateur clubs could send representatives to the regatta committee.[154] Nominally on equal terms, members of the committee who belonged to the university clubs were disproportionately influential. The ability of the regatta to attract the best provincial crews, as well as some from Britain, conferred on it an informal leading and pace-setting role in the 1870s that was unchallenged.[155]

The most evolved form of association, and the more bureaucratic, eventually imposed itself in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This was the model of the federation of clubs or athletes, as adopted by the FA or RFU for football in England. The Irish Fox Hunting Committee (1859) and the Irish Rifle Association (1867) adopted the core principles of the system, but it was really rugby which first clearly set out the bureaucratised model in Ireland. Throughout 1874 contact with England and Scotland was made and brought forward the possibility of engaging in international matches.[156] A committee was then constituted to organise the selection of the team and the travelling arrangements to London, where the first international was scheduled to take place in February 1875.[157] Within weeks, this committee transformed itself into the Irish Football Union and essentially grouped clubs from Dublin.[158] By the end of January 1875, clubs around Belfast had meanwhile grouped into the Northern Football Union and from then on two rugby organisations co-existed in Ireland. The relationship between the two bodies, if at time strained regarding the selection of the national team, was otherwise understood in a businesslike manner and marked by repeated attempts at unification.[159] These attempts finally bore fruit in 1879 when the Irish Rugby Football

[154] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/Box X, Minutes of the Dublin Metropolitan Regatta, 7 July 1871, 20 Mar. 1872; *Irish Sportsman*, 12 Aug. 1871, 5 Apr. 1873; *Irish Times*, 18 Apr. 1873.
[155] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 17 May 1872; *Freeman's Journal*, 16 May 1881.
[156] *Irish Sportsman*, 28 Mar. 1874; *Irish Times*, 30 Nov. 1874.
[157] *Dublin Daily Express*, 14 Dec. 1874.
[158] *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Dec. 1874. In subsequent months clubs from Leinster and Munster would also join.
[159] *Bell's Life*, 23 Jan. 1875. For the attempted mergers, see IRFU Archives, Minutes of the IRFU, 29 Oct. 1875; 29 Oct. 1877. It is difficult to know why Belfast clubs did not initially joined the IFU and why they decided to create their own local union. O'Callaghan suggests that it might have been due to resentment at not having been initially invited to form the IFU, see O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, p. 25. Ultimately evidence is scant and the minutes of the IRFU betray a

Union came into force yet kept the local administrative structure in place by creating provincial branches.[160] The multi-layered administration of rugby henceforth became adopted by other sports, such as Gaelic games and soccer in the 1880s, and prompted the creation of a white-collar workforce in sport. The specialisation on the pitch observed by Allen Guttman as an attribute of modern sport also took place in boardrooms.[161]

The most important sports were adopting a centralised structure of one form or another. The chief exception was cricket which remained under the loose and informal influence of the Marylebone CC. In Ireland, the leading clubs, and chief among them the Phoenix CC, cultivated an elitism that failed to channel the popular and nationwide enthusiasm from the 1860s. The failure to build even the premises of a modern organisation resulted in a lack of competitions, in arbitrarily selected national teams, and in the absence of national myths, heroes or stadiums which would have given a cultural strength to the game.[162] Staging regular competitions, international events, and promoting their discipline became indeed the three essential tenets of governing bodies. These latter developed in Ireland in the 1870s, precisely when a sufficient playing base made them sustainable and the expansion in transport and information networks made their objectives realisable.

4- Commercialisation

The sustained, if unequal, economic growth in the third quarter of the century in Ireland meant that the middle classes and a portion of the working class began to budget for leisure activities, as then happened in Britain.[163] At the same time, lower costs of production and expanding international trade brought greater availability of goods of all sorts, which permitted mass consumption. The development of retail areas in city centres, symbolised by department stores, was a common thread

seemingly smooth relationship between the two bodies despite J.J. McCarthy's opinion. This latter's account of the early years of football in Ireland is too colourful to be rigorous and his involvement with the Wanderers FC led him to underrate the role of the DUFC.

[160] IRFU Archives, Minutes of the IRFU, 18 Mar. 1879.

[161] Guttman, *From ritual to record*, pp 38-9; *Irish Sportsman*, 9 Dec. 1871.

[162] Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', p. 208.

[163] A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London, 2002), p. 409; Vamplew, *Pay up*, pp 51-4.

throughout European cities and illustrated the rise of consumerism among an increasing portion of the population.[164] Modern sport fitted the new economic and entertainment patterns unfolded by the industrial and urban revolutions and became a significant part of the leisure sector alongside theatres, music halls and gin palaces. This section analyses the growing importance of sports retailing in Dublin, the grafting of modern sports onto the existing public houses structure, and the development of enclosed arenas.

Retail involvement in sport, if not new to the second part of the nineteenth century, grew exponentially. Sport matured into an important market *per se* and more shops started to stock sports articles. According to Reid, no fewer than twenty-six different Dublin retailers advertised cricket goods or clothing in the press between 1867 and 1872 and a further fifteen businesses were selling match tickets.[165] Publishers identified a demand for sporting literature and Lawrence's *Handbook of cricket* shared bookshelves with physical training and chess manuals.[166] Celebratory and uncritical publications, such as *Irish Sport and Sportsmen* (1878), made for the perfect Christmas gift and highlighted the commercial turn taken by sports retailing.[167] Competition was exacerbated by media advertising. Retailers and promoters Thomas Kirby and John Lawrence fought for dominance over the market of garden parties.[168] The nascent cycling business too witnessed rivalries in 1869. In early summer, the market was dominated by the firms of Carpenter & Neale (bicycle from £7/10) and the cheaper J. Edmundson & Co. (£5).[169] By late July, Carpenter & Neale dropped their prices to match their competitor, who in turn also reduced his price to £4/10 by late August.[170]

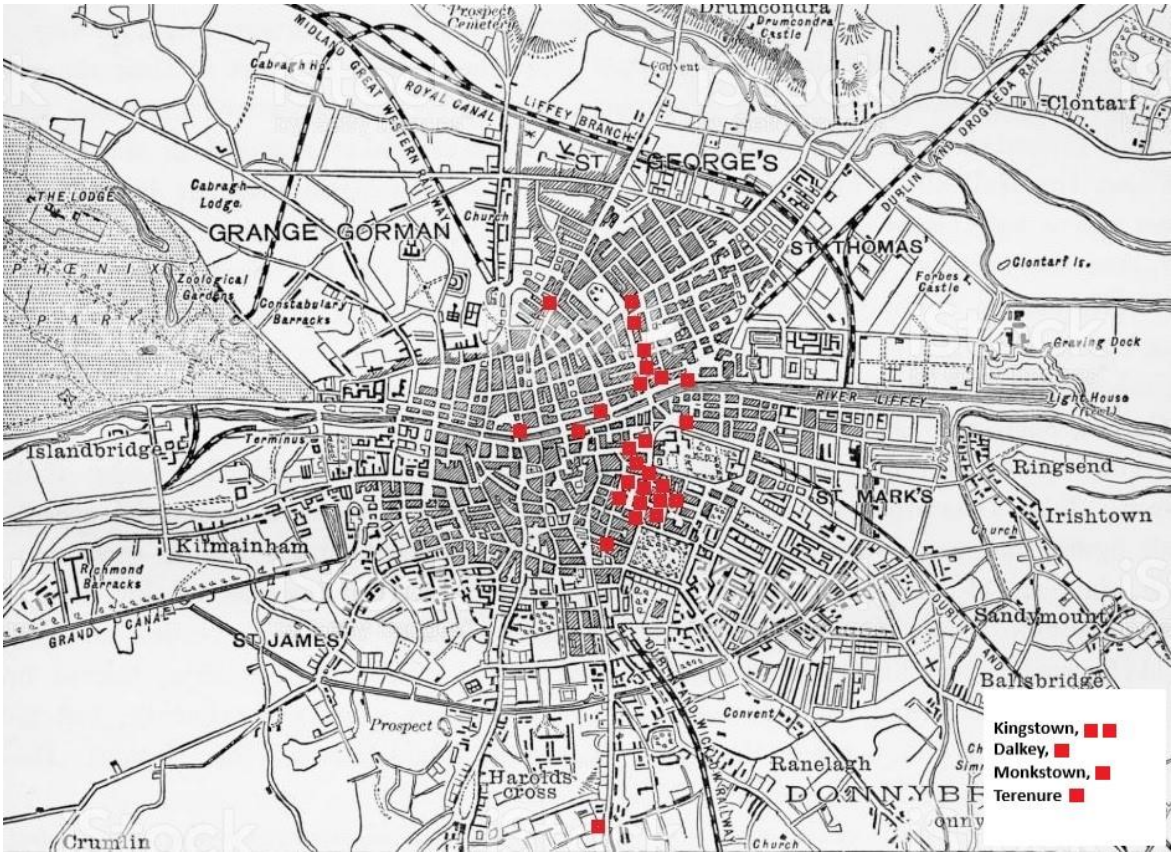
Evidence of endorsement of sport by public houses, already widespread in Britain, abounds in Ireland after 1860.[171] The discrepancy and partiality of newspaper coverage limits the pertinence of comparisons between decades and whether publicans' involvement in sport grew or declined remains unknown. What is certain,

[164] Rains, *Commodity culture*, pp 79-80; Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 347-8; Elaine Freedgood, 'Cultures of commodities, cultures of things', in Hewitt, *The Victorian World*, p. 228.
[165] Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 276-8.
[166] *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Feb. 1876, 11 Nov. 1879.
[167] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Dec. 1874, 19 Dec. 1877.
[168] Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 86-8.
[169] *Irish Times*, 22 June 1869; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 13 Jul. 1869
[170] *Irish Times*, 28 Jul. 1869; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 27 Aug. 1869.
[171] Brailsford, *British sport*, p. 69; Collins and Vamplew, *Mud, sweat and beers*, pp 10-2.

however, was that the modern sporting world that emerged in the second part of the nineteenth century remained structurally associated with public houses. As in earlier times, publicans offered meeting spaces. Mr Woodrooffe was the caterer of the Phoenix Cricket Club and put his tavern at Islandbridge at the disposal of pugilist Jem Mace in 1864.[172] In the following decade, suburban public houses served as dressing rooms for cross-country runners.[173] Publicans and hoteliers actively embraced sporting evolutions and adapted their offers to the demand. In Terenure, Isaac Cole used his hotel for pony racing and athletics in the 1860s and his premises were advertised to billiard players and grouse shooters alike.[174] At the turn of the 1870s he also accommodated cricketers and bowlers.[175] The settling of billiards as a masculine middle-class status symbol was particularly reflected in the location of the upmarket hotels and restaurants which advertised their dedicated rooms in the press (figure 3.8). Their concentration in the retail areas of Sackville and Grafton streets and in the legal and banking districts near College Green, the Four Courts and King's Inn highlighted both the business acumen of entrepreneurs and the embedding of billiards within a specific socio-economic class in mid-century. Finally, publicans contributed to entrench modern sport. Lawn bowling, a popular elite pastime in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, was reintroduced in Dublin by Mr Broadbent at the Mullingar Hotel in Chapelizod in 1862 and then at the Dollymount Hotel in Clontarf in the 1870s.[176] Club competitions and inter-club matches on a home-and-away basis took place thereafter.[177] If lawn bowling then failed to expand beyond the sociability of public houses, the codes adopted by its early players reflected the modern organisation of sport. The wider scope of activities provided by Dublin publicans from the 1860s mirrored the growing popularity of sport among the population at large and its incipient downward social spread.

[172] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 30 Sept. 1864; *Evening Freeman*, 30 Aug. 1866; *Irish Times*, 10 Nov. 1879.
[173] *Irish Sportsman*, 29 Nov. 1873, 16 Mar. 1878; *Dublin Evening mail*, 10 Oct. 1879; *Irish Times*, 10 Nov. 1879. The Black Lion Hotel in Inchicore, and the Cat and Cage in Drumcondra still exist.
[174] *Evening Freeman*, 22 Aug. 1863.
[175] *Irish Sportsman*, 8 Apr. 1871.
[176] *Dublin Daily Express*, 4 Aug. 1862; *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 6 July 1872; *Freeman's Journal*, 27 May 1876; Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 314-22.
[177] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 13 Aug. 1867; *Freeman's Journal*, 27 May 1876, 22 Sept. 1876. The Sandymount club was not associated with a public house.

Figure 3.8: Location of hotels and restaurants advertising their billiard rooms, 1870-80.



Note: Gentlemen's clubs are not included.

The sustained growth in interest in sport caused the development of enclosed venues in Dublin. As an expanding number of people began to budget for leisure, building and exploiting stadiums became financially sustainable and more rewarding than previous attempts made in 1849 (pony racing) and the early 1860s (pedestrianism). The takeover of the Baldoyle racecourse by John Arnott not only meant higher stakes and more visibility but also a restructuring of the venue, which now included a 6*d*. admission charge to a thirty-acre People's Park located within the tracks. Enclosure prevented encroachment on the course but mainly priced out those who considered horseracing as an opportunity for disorder.[178] Professional management and a safer environment made for better exploitation of the grandstand and promenades that were the real money-makers for the venue. One

[178] *Irish Sportsman*, 7 Mar. 1874,15 May 1874, 9 Oct. 1880; *Field*, 16 May 1874; Hurley, *Baldoyle*, p. 67.

of the first totally enclosed racecourses in Britain and Ireland, Baldoyle accurately illustrated the monetarisation of high-end racing at the time but also its specialisation and shying away from the carnivalesque features of preceding decades.[179]

At the same time, the ICAC assigned £1,000 to suitably fit a ground near Lansdowne Road which eventually became a multi-purpose stadium.[180] Only the College Park and the Leinster Cricket Club ground in Rathmines were then totally enclosed yet both failed to have permanent stands erected. Easily accessible from the city and southern townships by tramway, and located precisely where the expansion of cricket, rugby, hurley and tennis was most significant, Lansdowne Road stadium, as it became known, thus directly benefited from the expansion of spectator sport in Dublin. At last, the growth in number of sports came to occupy the full calendar year and allowed for a year-round exploitation of the venue. Renting the ground to local clubs was meant to offset the initial cost and was the steadiest form of income. Rev. Skeen, for example, secured the cricket pitch for his school for £10 in 1874.[181] In 1880 the Wanderers FC moved in at the rate of £26 per year.[182] One-off gate-taking events brought additional revenue and rates were tailored to the occasion. The DAAC was thus asked £10 for their annual sports but when larger crowds were expected, a share of the profit was negotiated.[183]

The venue rapidly hosted and cashed in on the largest sporting events held in the country. In August 1874, John Lawrence organised an exhibition match starring Bostonian and Philadelphian baseball teams who had just finished their British tour and were about to embark from Queenstown (Cobh).[184] Two years later, Highland games were held at Easter and the excitement caused by a lacrosse game between Canadian gentlemen and an Iroquois team in May warranted a doubling of the usual admission charge.[185] The appeal of such events was rooted in their novel and

[179] Huggins, *Flat racing*, pp 166-7; Vamplew, *Pay up*, pp 57-8. Since the mid-1860s the sale of alcohol on the grounds was prohibited by the Earl of Howth and fines were imposed for those selling spirits without licences. It is not certain whether this measure applied to the whole racecourse or if grandstand patrons were exempted. See Hurley, *Baldoyle*, p. 67; *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Mar. 1874.
[180] IRFU Archives, Minutes of the ICAC, 22 Oct. 1873, 29 Nov. 1873.
[181] Ibid., 29 Apr. 1874.
[182] *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Sept. 1880.
[183] IRFU Archives, Minutes of the ICAC, 29 Apr. 1874, 24 Nov. 1876, 6 Mar. 1878.
[184] *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Aug. 1874.
[185] *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Apr. 1876, 17 Dec. 1877; *Irish Times*, 15 May 1876. The lacrosse match brought the ICAC £300 in gate receipts which was 'an exceptional success'.

international nature and reinforced by a growing taste for exoticism. The native dances of the Iroquois were reminiscent of the war-cries of pedestrian Deerfoot in 1861 and echoed the contemporary tones of the imperialist and civilising mission. The pattern laid out by John Levett in the early 1860s to host as many sports as possible and to keep crowds entertained by playing national and ethnocentric tunes was astutely repeated at Lansdowne Road in the mid-1870s.[186] Whereas Levett relied essentially on middle-class patronage, the ICAC committee could tap into a growing working-class market.[187] Pigeon-shooting took place from 1875.[188] In 1877, wrestling was staged at the venue on St Patrick's Day, Easter Monday, Whit Monday and Lady Day, not without serious crowd interference.[189] Musical accompaniment by the Bricklayers', James Street, Chapelizod, and Inchicore bands reinforced the popular aspect of the day, as did dancing and tug of war. The same year, dog shows and pedestrianism were scheduled and in 1878 the Dublin Trotting Club established its headquarters there and attracted over 1,200 paying spectators in the early 1880s.[190] Horseracing, wrestling and long-distance walking, however, ran contrary to the initial genteel project set out by the original ICAC members and the taking over of the exploitation of the grounds by a limited company in 1878 brought dissension within the club.[191] Thereafter the club never recovered and the stadium lost its appeal. By the mid-1880s the lease on the grounds had been transferred to Henry Sheppard, an administrator within the IRFU and Wanderers rugby club, and the venue thereafter became essentially associated with rugby.[192]

The early years of the exploitation of the stadium contrasted with the experiences of the 1860s. The Bray Carlisle grounds and the City Running grounds relied too heavily on pedestrianism or athletics and were mainly supported by the middle classes. Changes in real income, working hours, lifestyles, and consumption modes in Dublin in the 1870s brought about new conceptions of leisure and pastimes. The

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[186] The greatest success of Levett had been to bring Deerfoot in 1861 (see p. 133) and the Highland Games at Bray in 1863 which attracted eight thousand people, see *Irish Times*, 21 July 1863.
[187] *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Mar. 1880.
[188] Ibid., 1 July 1875; 28 June 1877.
[189] Ibid., 13 Mar. 1877, 27 Mar. 1877, 19 May 1877, 15 Aug. 1877; Gunning, 'Hardy Fingallians', pp 121-2.
[190] *Irish Times*, 26 Jan. 1877; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 2 Aug. 1877; *Irish Sportsman*, 13 Apr. 1878, 22 Mar. 1881. In 1879 trotting also moved to Baldoyle as the ground was too small. Sheep dog trials also took place in the winter.
[191] *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Dec. 1877.
[192] *Dublin Daily Express*, 10 Dec. 1906.

middle classes looked to secure grounds for the expanding number of sporting clubs and the upper layers of the working class had become avid spectators. By providing grounds and stands, Lansdowne Road stadium appealed to all sections of the community. The importance of the ICAC in the history of sport in Dublin thus particularly stands out. As a 'sort of federation of existing clubs', committed to the idea of a national championship in athletics, tennis, croquet or archery, it had a determinant role in the codification and centralisation of Irish sport.[193] Its modern infrastructures and businesslike behaviour to schedule year-round entertainment on their grounds marked also, together with Baldoyle racecourse, the transition towards spectator sports.

5- Internationalisation

Like bureaucratisation or commercialisation, the internationalisation of Irish sport pre-dated the 1870s but a significant expansion took place at that time. These three elements mutually fed each other and were crucial to the expansion of modern sport in Dublin in the second part of the nineteenth century. The Irish Football Union, for example, owes its immediate origins to a challenge sent by the RFU in 1874 and commercial ventures underpinned the baseball and lacrosse exhibitions of 1874 and 1876. If the sporting world was ripe for internationalisation in the 1870s, several factors had largely contributed to it.

Technical progress and the growth of modern capitalism had made international exchanges faster and more frequent. Reliable transatlantic telegraph communication was made available in 1866, steamships improved both the safety and speed of maritime navigation, and the opening of the Suez canal in 1869 halved the travelling time between Europe and the Indian subcontinent.[194] If goods were carried in greater quantity, so were people. Thousands of soldiers, missionaries, and civil servants were disseminated throughout Asia, Australasia and Africa to staff the growing empires of Europeans. British merchants ran their businesses from

[193] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 137.
[194] Hugill, 'The shrinking Victorian world', pp 75-80.

continental Europe or South America. And those Europeans who sought to escape poverty and unemployment emigrated in millions to North America. With these people went their games. Germans in America created their own turners societies (Germanophile gymnastic clubs).[195] Irishmen played hurling in Argentina, Australia and the United States.[196] Cricket, rowing, athletics, rugby and soccer meanwhile spread throughout the British-influenced world and were adopted by local communities.

Concurrently to the integration of large parts of the world into a capitalist economy, and linked to it, was the development of nationalism. The bureaucratisation of European state apparels during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the assimilation of territories into centralised powers through national education, national press, military conscription, faster and wide-reaching transport systems, and the progressive integration of the middle and then working classes into the political system contributed to create 'imagined communities' that found in the nation-state the ideal political form to express their full identity.[197] Sport came to reflect such evolutions. Its internationalisation matched the nascent globalisation of commercial, scientific, cultural and human exchanges. Its anchorage into a national context reflected the growth of nationalism as a vector of civic pride.

Conversely, modern sport came to play a role in the construction of national identities. Baseball was thus essential to turn second-generation immigrants into Americans while hurling was imbued with a distinct version of Irishness after 1884 to which millions of emigrants could relate.[198] Imperial powers encouraged modern sport among indigene elites to convert them to the colonial project. Horseracing was for example widely patronised by French officers in colonial Algeria.[199] In the British empire, the phenomenon was the most exacerbated and sustained by the Christian,

[195] Riess, *Sport in industrial America*, pp 99-102.
[196] *Sport*, 30 June 1888; Seamus King and Paul Darby, 'Becoming *Irlandés*: hurling and Irish identity in Argentina', *Sport in Society*, x, no. 3 (2007), pp 430-2; Pat Bracken, 'The emergence of hurling in Australia 1877-1917', *Sport in Society*, xix, no. 1 (2016), pp 62-73; Paul Darby, *Gaelic games, nationalism and the Irish diaspora in the United States* (Dublin, 2009), pp 30-53.
[197] Hugill, 'The shrinking Victorian world', pp 81-6; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Cornell, 1983); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London, 2006, revised edition); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: program, myth, reality* (Cambridge, 2012, second edition).
[198] Riess, *Sport in America*, pp 123-4; Darby, *Gaelic games in the United States*, pp 60-7.
[199] Philip Dine, 'Nation et narration dans la diffusion sportive: l'exemple des courses de chevaux dans l'Algérie coloniale', *Ethnologie Française*, xli, no. 4 (2011), pp 625-32.

military and masculine public-school ethos.[200] Cricket and rugby especially epitomised Englishness and allegedly promoted the values that underpinned the imperial mission.[201] In time, and as the increasingly frequent colonial sports tours began to turn in favour of the colonised, cricket and rugby became an integral component of South African, Australian, and New Zealander nationalism.[202]

In Ireland, the excitement aroused by international competition was rooted in its extra-ordinary feature as 'the long distances travelled and the time taken by champion sportsmen built up hope, expectation and interest.'[203] In 1876 the DUBC sent a crew to compete at the 'Centennial' regatta held in Philadelphia alongside the International Exhibition.[204] Four years later over three thousand spectators thronged the College Park to watch Australian cricketers engage the DUCC.[205] If contacts with the Indian subcontinent, South Africa, or Australia remained scarce in Ireland by 1880, firm links had by then been established with North America. As one would expect, competition was increasingly frequent with Britain. The exchanges observed since early nineteenth century in horseracing and pugilism and from mid-century in cricket and pedestrianism became more obvious. Reid counted no fewer than thirteen British cricket teams visiting Ireland between 1864 and 1866.[206] Conversely, Dublin teams toured England or Wales, although not on the same scale.[207] In the 1870s, the DUCC began to hire annually a professional English XI to highlight their season and bring extra income to balance their chronically loss-making budget.[208] Annual rugby internationals with England began in 1875 and with Scotland in 1877. In athletics, the first match with England took place in 1876. A

[200] Mangan, *The games ethic*.
[201] Dean Allen, 'England's "golden age": imperial cricket and late Victorian society', *Sport in Society* xv, no. 2 (2012), pp 213-5; Brian Stoddart, 'Sport, cultural imperialism, and colonial response in the British Empire', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, xxx, no. 4 (1988), pp 658-66.
[202] Collins, *The oval world*, pp 111-60; Stoddart, 'Sport, cultural imperialism', pp 666-9. The nationalism which developed in these countries was however the product of early European immigrants and indigenous populations remained largely discriminated against.
[203] Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, p. 234.
[204] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 3 Aug. 1876. The crew included the Barrington brothers.
[205] *Irish Times*, 18 June 1880, 19 June 1880. This was considered a large crowd for cricket in Ireland and thus shows the limits of the game as a spectator sport at a time when racing at Baldoyle, international rugby matches, or the largest athletic meetings easily attracted over five thousand paying spectators. Besides, the Australian tours of 1868 and 1878 did not come to Ireland, showing again the relative lack of status of Irish cricket in a British context.
[206] Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 82-3.
[207] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 11 Aug. 1864, *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Sept. 1868. That few Irish cricket teams toured Britain in the 1860s is also revealing of the lower standard of play and financial abilities of clubs at the time.
[208] Milne, 'Dublin University Cricket Club', p. 22.

similar acceleration of internationalisation took place in rowing. English clubs had occasionally participated in Dublin regattas since the 1840s, but from 1870 the Dublin University clubs began to regularly send crews to the Henley regatta.[209]

The convergence patterns seen in a British and Irish context were also reproduced at world level. Cricket spread throughout the empire and football to continental Europe. Reciprocally, polo and badminton were inspired by Indian pastimes – although mediated and adapted to British values – and long-distance walking or trotting were new American commercial activities propitious to betting.[210] Early competitions adopted the cup system of consecutive elimination rounds until a winner emerged, but billiards came to adopt the 'American system', which consisted of 'each player playing one game with every other player, the winner of most games being declared the winner'.[211] Leagues had appeared in Britain and Ireland.

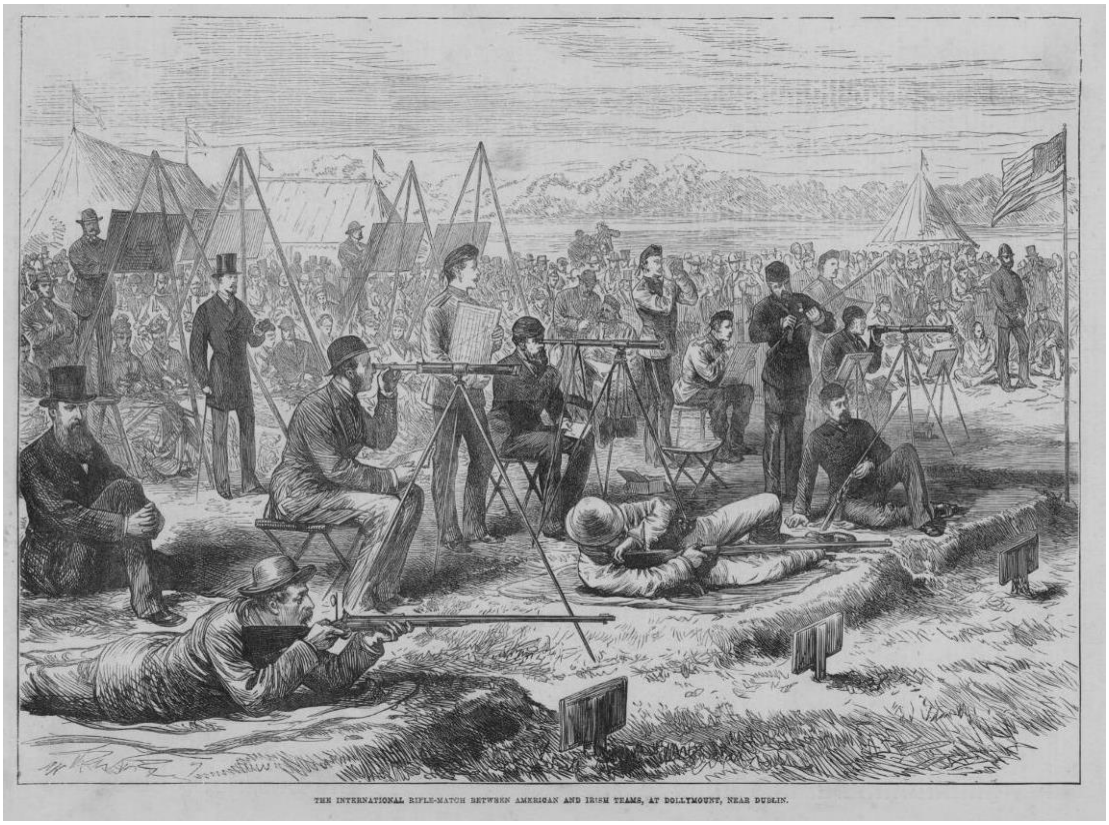
If sporting contests thrived on parochialism and civic pride, then it was multiplied at international level.[212] The development of national organisations legitimised the right of their representatives to be called 'Ireland' and the emotional power of playing for a country quickly appeared to be more potent than playing for a club. Such feelings were readily conveyed by the press, who previewed the 1876 international athletic meeting as:

> perhaps the most interesting gathering of the kind that this country has seen. The fact that it is an international contest, that Englishmen and Irishmen are pitted against each other on fair terms, that Ireland's athletic reputation is so to speak in the balance, gives the sports their peculiar interest and importance.[213]

[209] There was uninterrupted participation of either the DUBC or DURC between 1870 and 1878.
[210] Patrick McDevitt, 'The king of sports: polo in late Victorian and Edwardian India', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xx, no. 1 (2003), p. 1; Peng Han Lim and Modh Salleh Aman, 'The history of modern organized badminton and the men's team Thomas Cup tournaments, 1948-1979', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxxiv, no. 7-8, (2017), p. 677; *Irish Sportsman*, 27 Dec. 1873; *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Oct. 1876.
[211] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 28 Feb. 1877.
[212] See for example the crowd actively cheering for an Irish athlete in a race against an Englishman at the College Races, *Irish Sportsman*, 12 June 1875.
[213] *Freeman's Journal*, 5 June 1876.

The switch from local to national was rooted in nineteenth-century societal evolutions which had shrunk physical boundaries, had expanded mental ones, and had eventually participated in nation-building processes throughout the Western world. Much like contemporary industrial exhibitions, the sporting contest itself was relegated to the background and loaded with political subtext that paradoxically emphasised peace between nations as much as asserted a country's strength, fitness, and financial ability to stage international events.[214]

Figure 3.9: The 1875 international rifle shooting match at Dollymount.



Source: *Illustrated London News*, 10 July 1875.

The apex was reached between 1874 and 1876 when three long-distance shooting matches between Ireland and the United States made headlines. A minority sport reserved to the upper-middle or business classes, rifle shooting largely failed to

[214] *Irish Sportsman*, 14 Nov. 1874.

develop any sort of spectatorship.[215] At the annual Irish Rifle Association championships, the bulk of the attendants were indeed the competitors themselves.[216] In the world of long-distance shooting, Ireland was competitive and captured the Elcho Shield in 1873 over the English and Scottish selections. This should have represented the pinnacle for Arthur Leech, who reaped the reward of a decade of active involvement in the sport. It was not so. He next set out to prove that Irishmen could take on the world at rifle shooting. A challenge was sent to America through the *New York Herald*, was accepted by the National Rifle Association of America and the Irish team narrowly conceded defeat in September 1874 in New York amidst friendly and civic receptions.[217] The return match, set for Dollymount strand in Clontarf in June 1875, remains the earliest incarnation of mass following for an Irish team (figure 3.9). The build-up by the press was unprecedented as newspapers strived to publish the latest news and exclusive statements from the contestants themselves.[218] Popular interest and anticipation grew to the point that admission charge was sought for attending practice sessions.[219] On match day, around thirty newspapers were present at the ranges to cover the proceedings and at least twenty thousand spectators went through the turnstiles momentarily borrowed from the Baldoyle racecourse. The wooden palisade that separated sections in the stands fell under the pressure of spectators, at first reserved but increasingly partisan and exuberant.[220] The *Freeman's Journal* issued a Dublin edition within ten minutes of the last shot being fired.[221] The *Irish Times* retaliated the following day by printing portraits of the contestants.[222] America had won again and so they did in the third match, which took place in New York in 1876. The highly successful and popular series then came to an end. The cost of sending the team became prohibitive as no less than £1,200 was needed in 1876 for twelve

[215] *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Dec. 1877. The nine members of the Irish team in 1877 were RIC member, officers, civil servants, land agent, four were in mercantile activities and one was based in England.
[216] *Freeman's Journal*, 25 June 1874, 2 July 1875.
[217] Leech, *Irish riflemen*, pp 14-7; *Weekly Freeman's Journal*, 17 Oct. 1874.
[218] *Irish Sportsman*, 1 May 1875.
[219] *Irish Times*, 26 June 1875.
[220] *Dublin Daily Express*, 30 June 1875; *Freeman's Journal*, 30 June 1875; *Irish Times*, 30 June 1875. The largest estimations reached fifty thousand spectators.
[221] *Freeman's Journal*, 30 June 1875.
[222] *Irish Times*, 30 June 1875. Until the appearance of the popular press in the 1880s, portraits were rare in Irish newspapers.

members.[223] If subscriptions were not forthcoming, then the contestants had to pay for their travel and expenses.[224] Little turnover in the team (given the small pool of players) meant that repetitive financial contributions were asked from the same members. Americans also refused to travel back to Ireland as they believed three successes in a row granted them the trophy. If anyone wanted to grasp it from them, it would be on American soil.[225] Finally the English National Rifle Association intended to have a combined British and Irish touring team. Leech, who ardently sought to retain Irish independence in rifle-shooting matters, thwarted a first attempt in 1876, but in 1877 he was unable to prevent four Irishmen from entering a British team.[226] A last match eventually successfully took place in Dublin in 1880 but the momentum for rifle shooting was gone.[227]

The sheer number of people and atmosphere seen on Dollymount strand on 29 June 1874 had rarely been seen in Irish sport previously. Perhaps only the prize-fight between Donnelly and George Cooper at the Curragh in 1815 and the visit of the Prince of Wales to the Punchestown steeplechasing meeting in 1868 had witnessed such anticipation before. Horseracing and pugilism at that time, however, commanded patronage from the aristocracy and were largely followed by the working class, who profited from free attendance and the festival-like atmosphere. Long-distance rifle shooting was no such sport and was not ingrained in Irish leisure habits. The reason for the 1875 enthusiasm thus lay in its specific nature: an international contest between Irish and American representative teams. The encounter made plain the interwovenness of the bureaucratisation, commercialisation, and internationalisation of sport. It was a legitimate and fair contest between the best European team whose members went through a national and international selection process and an American team selected by its own organisation.[228] Weeks of build-up by the press created a frenzied atmosphere around the event, which allowed them to sell copies, ensured a big gate and promoted John Rigby's gun-making factory in a way that the best advertising

[223] *Freeman's Journal*, 7 July 1876.
[224] *Irish Times*, 8 Feb. 1875.
[225] *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Oct. 1878.
[226] *Irish Times*, 30 Mar. 1876. *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Sept. 1877, 19 Nov. 1877.
[227] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 1 July 1880.
[228] The rules of the first two legs were identical and they changed for the last match in New-York in 1876. Had they stay the same, then Ireland would have won.

campaign could not have done.[229]

6- Amateurism: early stage and inadequacies

The great strides made by organised sport in Britain had wider social implications after it began to expand to the working class in the 1860s and prompted the development of amateurism as a sporting ideology. Class divisions became enshrined in a sporting segregation which ruled out the working class from sports organised by and for the middle classes. Amateurism was further legitimised by presenting sport as a vehicle for greater aspirations: Christianity, manliness and selflessness. These values then resonated high among the ruling class and were sustained by their nurturing in public schools.[230] In Dublin, elite schools and the new sporting organisations established in the 1870s copied the English model, partly due to emulation, but mainly because the principles behind amateurism were shared by the Irish middle classes.[231] Implementing amateurism in Ireland was however a thorny issue on two counts. As in the rest of Britain and Ireland, the concept was inherently flawed as expediency took precedence over rhetorical ambitions. Irish social and economic conditions then further hampered its full development.

The doctrine's major weakness was to allow a few high-profile amateurs to earn a living from sport, and English cricketer W. G. Grace stood out in that respect.[232] Lesser-known cricketers or athletes were likewise guilty of inflating travelling

[229] *Irish Times*, 18 Sept. 1876, 21 Sept. 1876; *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Oct. 1876. It is not certain whether the members of the team were given a Rigby rifle or whether they bought one. Rigby's business was also represented at the 1876 Philadelphia exhibition, where he took part in an international shooting contest.
[230] Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp 96-101; Norman Baker, 'Whose hegemony? The origins of the amateur ethos in nineteenth century English society', *Sport in History*, xxiv, no. 1 (2004), pp 1-3; Girourard, *The return to Camelot*, pp 233-40.
[231] *Irish Sportsman*, 1 Feb. 1873. Catholic elite schools also adopted the style and values of their Protestant counterparts, see Colm Hickey, 'The evolution of athleticism in elite Irish schools 1878-1914. Beyond the Finn/Cronin debate', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxx, no. 12 (2013), pp 1400-1. See also the snobbism of ICAC members J.A.H. Christian towards the participants of the Tullow athletic sports, *Irish Sportsman*, 21 Sept. 1878.
[232] Birley, *English cricket*, pp 122-7; Vamplew, *Pay up*, pp 199-203.

expenses or 'pothunting' (running for the prize).[233] Irish horseracing condoned such hypocrisy.[234] In 1876, former MP and gentleman rider Reginald Greville-Nugent rode and won more races (70 and 19) than the best-ranked professional S. Fleming (68 and 16).[235] Between 1871 and 1879, gentlemen riders Garret Moore and Thomas Beasley were engaged in 391 and 457 races respectively (107 and 118 wins) which compared to the 405 and 487 races of leading professional jockeys W. Gould and P. Gavin (92 and 100 wins).[236] As owners, trainers and riders, Moore and the Beasley brothers were *de facto* in full-time employment on the turf.[237] The moral values underpinning the doctrine were likewise blatantly ignored as betting, gamesmanship and intense training undermined its very ideals.[238] Athletic meetings were vulnerable to race fixing and Henry Beasley, for example, was not adverse to pulling (slowing down) his mount to land a betting coup.[239]

Athletics and rowing embodied the hardening of the rules on amateurism. Their reinvention as gentlemanly sports in public schools clashed with the long tradition of working-class involvement and professional pedestrianism or sculling in England.[240] Dublin institutions followed the trend. In 1870, the Dublin Metropolitan regatta declared 'that no club shall be considered an amateur boat club any member of which has been a professional oarsman, or has rowed or trained for hire, or has competed for a prize which was not restricted to amateur.'[241] By 1878 the canon definition in use at the Henley regatta had been adopted. It left little to the imagination and clearly stated the social bias of amateurism:

> An amateur oarsman or sculler must be an officer of her Majesty's Army, or Navy, or Civil Service, a member of the Liberal Professions, or of the Universities or Public Schools, or of any established boat or rowing club not

[233] *Northern Whig*, 24 May 1881; *Sport*, 26 July 1884; *Flag of Ireland*, 11 Oct. 1884, 13 Feb. 1886; Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, p 60.
[234] *Irish Sportsman*, 17 Apr. 1880.
[235] *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Nov. 1876.
[236] *Irish Sportsman*, 17 Jan. 1880; *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Nov. 1876, 26 Nov. 1877, 18 Nov. 1878. Only races taking place in Ireland are accounted for. Data for Gavin encompass the years 1871-6 and 1878. Greville-Nugent, riding as Mr St James also rode in England and died after a fall sustained at the Sandown races in 1877.
[237] *Sport*, 9 Oct. 1886, 23 Apr. 1890.
[238] Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, p. 61; Birley, *English cricket*, pp 109-12
[239] *Irish Sportsman*, 17 May 1879, 10 Apr. 1880; *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Mar. 1881.
[240] John Lowerson, *Sport and the English middle-classes*, pp 158-66.
[241] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 17 May 1870.

> containing mechanics or professionals, and must not have competed in any competition for either a stake or money, or entrance fee, or with or against a professional for any prize, or have ever taught, pursued, or assisted in the pursuit of athletic exercises of any kind as a means of livelihood; or have ever been employed in or about boats, or in manual labour; or be a mechanic, artisan, or labourer.[242]

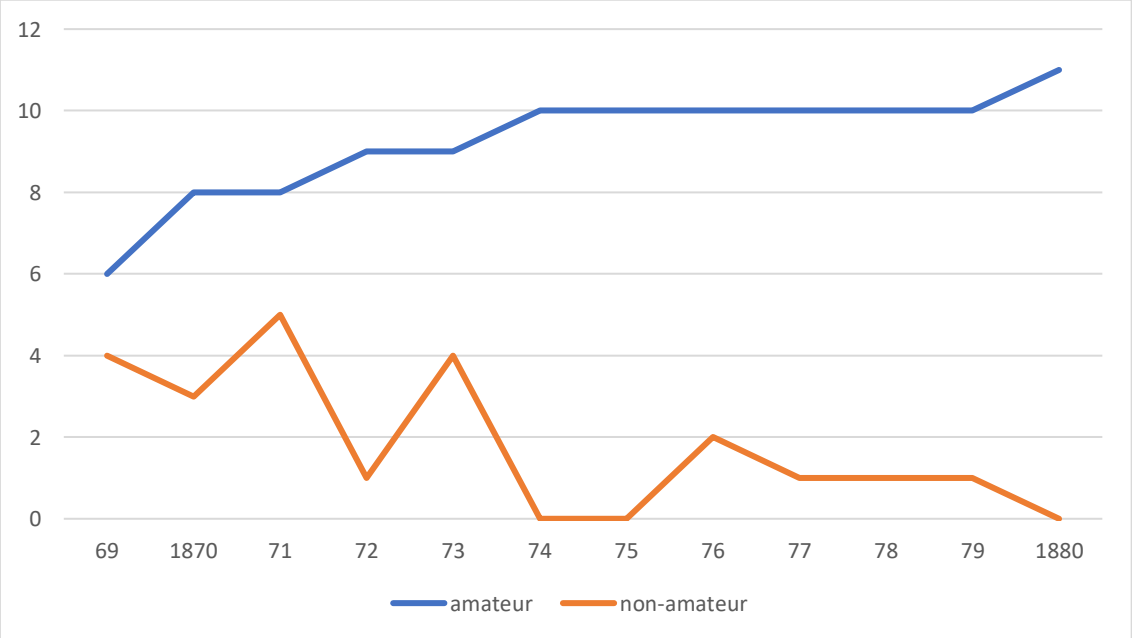
In Ireland only the flagship clubs of Dublin, Belfast and Cork could follow the rule to the letter. In athletics, the ICAC, DAAC and Civil Service AC paved the way while in rowing the University clubs were the most intransigent in enforcing amateurism (figure 3.10). In rural areas, however, towns were not populous enough to support more than one truly amateur club and the middle classes had to compromise with the growing participation of the local lower-middle classes and working classes.[243] Second-rank regattas around Dublin Bay also bulked up their programmes with races for local fishermen and coastguards to attract competitors and spectators.[244] The low number of clubs and amateur rowers in the country at large made impossible the emergence of a two-tier system and gave way to an informal arrangement: cash prizes were tolerated if distributed to the winning club rather than the rowers.[245] The system banned open professionalism but allowed smaller clubs to earn an additional income without losing amateur status.

Throughout the 1870s, the definition of amateurism remained unclear and open to interpretation and abuse, especially in the rapidly expanding world of athletics.[246] For want of direction from a clearly established national organisation in Britain or Ireland, opinions diverged and were mirrored in the lack of a clear editorial line by the *Irish Sportsman*. In 1877, the newspaper sided with a draper's assistant who had been thrown out of an English meeting on class grounds.[247] Yet the following

[242] *Irish Times*, 4 May 1878.
[243] Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, p. 183; *Irish Sportsman*, 10 Nov. 1877, 21 Sept. 1879.
[244] *Dublin Daily Express*, 8 Aug. 1879; *Irish Times*, 26 Aug. 1879; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 4 Sept. 1879; *Freeman's Journal*, 13 Aug. 1879, 12 Sept. 1879, 15 Sept. 1879. At the Clontarf, Boyne, Howth, Kingstown Township and Bray regattas, between one and five races were reserved for non-amateurs. The data for the Fairview regatta is missing, but it is likely that the four races were all for local boats. Prizes for professional events were usually smaller than for amateur races and so regattas with small budgets could thus schedule a full day of sports.
[245] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/2/1, 1 Mar. 1876; *Irish Sportsman*, 4 July 1874, 15 Mar. 1884.
[246] *Irish Sportsman*, 23 May 1874, 4 July 1874, 21 Aug. 1875, 10 Nov. 1877; 26 July 1879.
[247] *Irish Sportsman*, 14 July 1877.

year, Valentine Dunbar ensured that the ICAC would henceforth bar athletes who had competed on Sundays from their meetings. Ever the snob, he shamelessly extended his sympathy to 'the class of mechanics, and the rural population who meet for athletic exercises on Sunday, from inability to meet on other days'.[248] In the end, the gospel of amateurism preached by the leading Dublin clubs largely failed to take root in a country used to cash prizes, furthered the fragmentation of athletics, and opened the door to the creation of the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1884.[249] Amateurism as a means of social segregation found its way in England in the 1860s and 1870s to answer the need for clearer class stratification in a society where urbanisation, industrialisation and democratisation were redefining social relations. Such drastic measures were ill-suited for Ireland, whose sporting structures in their modern forms lay on much shallower foundations and where there was not a pool of amateur athletes sufficient to ensure the sustainability of rowing or athletics. The advent of working-class sport in the 1880s brought this inadequacy into plain sight, as shown in the next chapter.

Figure 3.10: Races at the Dublin Metropolitan regatta, 1869-1880.



[248] *Irish Sportsman*, 21 Dec. 1878. Valentine Dunbar resented the mixing of social classes but had otherwise no issues with pedestrians as he proposed them his services as stakeholder or referee. See *Irish Sportsman*, 23 June 1877; *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Dec. 1877.
[249] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 143-4.

7- The growth of the leisure industry: rational recreation versus indulgence

The development of sport along bureaucratised and commercialised lines was part of a broader expansion of leisure in Britain and Ireland since the mid-century.[250] As the lower classes too began to budget for leisure, a moral dilemma presented itself to the middle classes.

A reforming strand was devoted to promoting rational recreation and insisted on intellectual improvement and respectability.[251] Libraries, zoological or botanic gardens as well as workingmen's institutes became symbols of a movement which forced the imposition of middle-class ideals on working-class leisure.[252] The creation of the City of Dublin Workingmen's Cricket Club in 1883 highlighted some of the paternalistic resorts of the rational recreation movement.[253] The new club was uncharacteristically granted a private playing pitch by the Board of Work in the Phoenix Park, and its first president was Granby Burke, a former prominent rugby player with Dublin University and son of the Master of the Court of Common Pleas. Unlike traditional pastimes, modern sport could be grafted onto such ideals but was more prosaically used as a recruiting tool for reforming institutions. The adoption of soccer by the Boys' Brigade (a urban religious youth movement) in the 1890s was as much a nod to the Corinthian ideals as a mean of attracting new members.[254] Two decades earlier, the Young Men's Christian Association and the Temperance League in Dublin had already been playing cricket and organised athletics on excursion days, while mechanics' clubs began to be fitted with billiard tables and offered dancing classes.[255]

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[250] Bailey, 'Leisure', in Hewitt, *The Victorian world*, pp 619-35.
[251] Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp 136-7; Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, pp 40-3.
[252] Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, pp 151-8. It must however be noted that a minority within the working class also adhered to such reforming programmes and that within this working-class reforming strand, a form of autonomy subsisted free of middle-class interference. See Beaven, *Leisure, citizenship and working-class men*, pp 16-27.
[253] *Sport*, 21 Apr. 1883
[254] Power, Bredan, 'The functions of association football in the Boys' Brigade in Ireland, 1888-1914', in Leeann Lane and William Murphy (eds), *Leisure and the Irish in the nineteenth century* (Liverpool, 2016), pp 45-6, 51-2.
[255] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 June 1874, 9 June 1875, 6 June 1876, 6 Aug. 1878; *Dublin Daily Express*, 22 May 1877; *Irishman*, 4 Dec. 1880. See also Bailey, *Leisure and class*, pp 133-53.

Concurrent with the fostering of rational recreations was a dynamic of the commercialisation of popular leisure by middle-class entrepreneurs. For Brad Beaven:

> The emergence of the modern city with its crowded living and working conditions ensured that mass leisure became a potent symbol of the age. New populist and heavily capitalised commercial leisure events offered no 'rational' self-improvement, and in turn attracted vast numbers of 'pleasure seekers'. With few moral restraints, leisure entrepreneurs capitalised on traits within working-class culture and recast them into appealing commercial ventures. The male worker, who was the chief beneficiary of an increase in surplus income, was in the front line of this new commercial entertainment.[256]

Music halls, gin palaces, circuses or, for example, serial novels thus began to gain legitimacy as a form of low culture in Victorian Britain.[257] By the 1870s they too were embedded in Dubliners' lifestyles.[258] The ability and the wish of reformers to bend popular tastes, if truly present, was pitted against the greater wish for extravaganza and fun.[259] In sport, a sense of staging became more obvious in the 1860s and profited from the rivalry between sports retailers and promoters John Lawrence and Thomas Kirby. Enclosed cricket matches and athletic meetings were accompanied by musical bands, balloon ascents and fireworks to please the paying crowd.[260] Similarly, the visits of Deerfoot and the Iroquois lacrosse team lay uneasily at the intersection of sporting occasions and ethnological exhibitions. For the *Irish Sportsman*, 'much curiosity was exhibited to get a near look at the Indians' and this was also acknowledged as a selling argument for the management: the Iroquois

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[256] Brad Beaven, *Leisure, citizenship and working-class men*, p. 44.
[257] Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian generation*, pp 357, 365-7; Judith Flanders, *Consuming passions: leisure and pleasure in Victorian Britain* (London, 2006), pp 140-4; Jonathan Conlin, *Tales of two cities: Paris, London and the birth of the modern city* (London, 2013), pp 145-50.
[258] Dickson, *Dublin*, pp 390, 402-4. In 1872, a publican allegedly spent £13,000 in building a gin palace on Sackville Street, see *Freeman's Journal*, 15 Oct. 1872. Hengler's Circus regularly toured the city at the time. In 1884, the troupe even played cricket against a RIC team in the Phoenix Park, see *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Jul. 1884.
[259] Bailey, *Leisure and class*, p. 147.
[260] Reid, 'Cricket in Victorian Ireland', pp 86-8; TCD archives, Mun/club/athletics/2, 23 Apr. 1868, 29 Apr. 1868. On that occasion, no fewer than three military bands were hired by the committee of the College races. See also *Dublin Daily Express*, 30 Sept. 1862; *Irishman*, 13 May 1871.

team, in traditional clothing, was introduced to the six-thousand-strong crowd fully thirty minutes before their opponents.[261] The rise in living standards of the lower-middle and working classes and their adoption of the codes of leisure consumption permitted commercial spectatorship to become a feature of the Dublin sporting scene in the 1870s. This latter was not built on self-improvement, but on indulgence.

The rationalisation of forms of play and the channelling of popular enthusiasm into bureaucratic and commercial institutions were the essential attributes of modern sport. Central to it was the pleasure, sociability and sense of fashion derived from taking part in, or watching, games. The continuity with the sociability and hedonism of the pre-modern recreations was obvious and reinforced the idea that pleasure was rooted at the heart of the sporting world, old or new.

The peer pressure element, fashion, and emulation observed for example in 1840s upper-middle-class yacht club membership, remained an important factor in explaining attendance at sporting events. Crowds thronged the Fairyhouse racecourse on Easter Monday 'because it is the fashion, or for the sake of open air and exercise.'[262] At the College Races, the largest portion of spectators 'car[ed] not iota about the day's proceedings [and] came to see others, to show themselves, to take an airing'.[263] Regattas were likewise social occasion where 'to see and be seen' was primordial.[264] Simple pleasures also explained the participation in sport. A trip of the Amateur Bicycle Club was marked by 'another stop of about an hour at Enniskerry, to enjoy the scenery and have a cup of tea' and it 'just gave time to run home with good daylight, after a very pleasant ride.'[265] Cricket's appeal was couched in lyrical terms by the *Irish Times*:

> Every happy moment the ball springing from the bat, the sharp catch sounding in the palm, the long reach or sudden spring and quick return, the exulting throw with balls and wicket flying – those all are joys enhanced by sympathy purely reflected from each other's eyes. In the cricket field, as by the covers'

[261] *Irish Times*, 15 May 1876; *Irish Sportsman*, 20 May 1876.
[262] *Irish Sportsman*, 7 Apr. 1877.
[263] *Irish Sportsman*, 14 June 1873.
[264] *Irish Sportsman*, 22 July 1876, and 27 Aug. 1878 for the case of the Dublin Metropolitan regatta.
[265] *Irish Sportsman*, 5 June 1875.

side, the sport is in the free and open air and light of Heaven, where we can waive for awhile the precedence of birth.[266]

More prosaic but equally telling was the obvious satisfaction felt by the captain of the DUBC in 1884 when his crews 'won everything in Cork & had a gay time of it there' or when training session provided 'great rowing!'[267]

As at any other social gathering, food and drink fuelled the sense of occasion and relief from everyday duties. To some extent, socialising had become institutionalised since the 1860s. Elite schools, for example, wrapped up their annual sports with large-scale dinners. These were shows of strength, meant to showcase the school's taste, modernity and financial abilities. At St Columba's College, the 1866 sports were held in conjunction with the annual distribution of prizes and St Vincent's College invited two hundred guests to crown their 1873 athletic meeting.[268] Blackrock College matched its growing ambitions with lavish entertainment. Their annual sports, begun in 1875, attracted no less than eight hundred guests for lunch at the turn of the 1890s (figure 3.11).[269] In rugby the same spirit prevailed at post-internationals dinners and the IRFU earned in boardrooms a legitimacy that was wanting on the pitch.[270] Within clubs, a formalisation of entertainment was also observed when they started to organise annual dinners as end-of-season get-togethers.[271] The larger and better administered Dublin University clubs had more comprehensive policies. The DUCC hired its own caterer for home games in the 1860s and fined 1*s*. members who did not avail of his services.[272] The DUBC had a 'Liquor subcommittee' appointed to look after the bar of the clubhouse at Ringsend.[273] With time, the bureaucratisation and commercialisation of socialisation grew within clubs. Profits from the DUBC bar

[266] *Irish Times*, 24 May 1870.
[267] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/3/1, 1884.
[268] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 11 June 1866; *Irish Sportsman*, 19 Apr. 1873.
[269] Farragher, *The French College*, pp 180-2, 405-7.
[270] IRFU Archives, Minutes of the IRFU, 23 Nov. 1875, 17 Dec. 1882. See also the menu for the reception of the English team, dated 6 Feb. 1886.
[271] *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Sept. 1879.
[272] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Cricket/1, 29 May 1865. This decision arose following a complaint made by the caterer that not enough members availed of his 2*s*. lunch and that he worked at a loss.
[273] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/2/2, 29 May 1878. The storekeeper was henceforth forbidden to provide drinks on credit.

were given back to the club and in the mid-1880s, the Clontarf FC elected its own concert committee, which was making a (modest) profit by 1895.[274]

Figure 3.11: Blackrock College athletic sports and Artane Boys' Band, 1890s.



Source: Farragher, *The French College*, p. 406.

This underlined the all-encompassing nature of the rationalisation and capitalisation of British and Irish societies in the nineteenth century. What records do not show, however, was the importance of *ad hoc* socialisation and the casual nature of most social interactions. Everyday life found in sport a background for personal stories to unravel. In 1867, a cricket match between County Wicklow and the Dublin Garrison celebrating the twenty-first birthday of future politician Charles S. Parnell turned into 'a real spree' and three days of uninterrupted party.[275] Flirting was integral to archery or lawn tennis parties.[276] Serious love affairs blossomed in rowing clubs too and the treasurer of the Dolphin club first met his wife at the club.[277] George H. Pentland, a

[274] Minutes of the Clontarf FC, 8 Feb. 1887, 17 Dec. 1895; TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/3, 21 Nov. 1898.
[275] Emily Dickinson, *A patriot's mistake, being personal recollections of the Parnell family, by a daughter of the house* (Dublin, 1905), pp 65-78.
[276] Griffin, *The Big House at play*, pp 166-70; Hunt, *Sport and society*, p. 78.
[277] *Irish Times*, 6 Oct. 1876.

stalwart of the DUBC in the 1870s, married a sister of his crewmates Croker and Charles Barrington.[278] Many more friendships were bound by sporting memories. The same Charles Barrington thus remained a lifelong friend of George Scriven, with whom he had played football at Trinity College in the early 1870s.[279] Arthur Samuels likewise 'made numerous friends' throughout his cricketing days.[280] The memories of John Joyce, father of novelist James Joyce, during his employment at the Phoenix distillery in Chapelizod in the late 1870s are perhaps apocryphal yet vividly capture the inextricability of sport, friendship and merrymaking:

> Broadbent and I were very great friends. He had the Mullingar Hotel there, and a fine decent fellow he was. We used to have great times there. There was a bowling green at the back of his hotel and I was considered a celebrated bowler … On one occasion Dollymount challenged us to a game. We won and we stood them food and drink after it. This was followed by a splendid musical evening as we had a lot of musical fellows down with us … We beat Dollymount and I made a big score; and by God I was carried around the place and such a time we had … I was made a lot of and was taken around by the boys on their shoulders; and my God the quantity of whisky that I drank that night! It must have been something terrible for I had to go to bed.[281]

If modern sport expanded in a specific socio-economic environment and developed as an important strand of the leisure spectrum by the 1870s, its role as social lubricant remained, as in pre-modern times, one of its core characteristics.

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[278] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Rugby F./38/15, letter from Barrington to E.J.M. Watson dated 11 Dec. 1929; *Dublin Daily Express*, 1 Feb. 1889.
[279] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Rugby F./38/116, letter from G Scriven to E.J.M. Watson, dated 17 Oct. 1929.
[280] Samuels, *Early cricket*, p. 32.
[281] Quoted in Maria Jolas, *A James Joyce yearbook* (1949), pp 159-69. Joycean scholars still debate whether the interview was real or a hoax from novelist Brian O'Nolan but at any rate all believe it was plausible, not least James Joyce himself who might have used his father's alleged reminiscences to set the actions of *Finnegan's Wake* in the Mullingar Hotel.

8- Conclusion

The increasingly administrative nature of a British state geared towards economic and imperial expansion had repercussions for Dublin sport in the 1870s. A sharp acceleration of the bureaucratic and commercial trends observed in the previous half-century occurred and fundamentally remodelled the sporting scene. It affirmed the primacy of the centralised, hierarchised, and club-based model of the national association, allowed its commercial exploitation, and redefined sport. From being associated in the early nineteenth century with field or demotic pastimes, sport henceforth came to refer to the codified games that had developed among the British middle classes from the early nineteenth century. The model was not all-encompassing, and many pastimes failed to evolve. Informal forms of play, if often overlooked, subsisted too. The changing nature of sport meant that these practices increasingly came to be degraded to mere children's or public house games.

The role of the middle classes was crucial. They shaped sport in their image but in so doing ensured that the flaws at their heart stood out. They built their social rise on the rationalisation, competitiveness, and rapid expansion of industry, trade and administration, which had been pervasive in the British and Irish societies since the eighteenth century. Those were the very forces that also allowed the transformation of traditional pastimes into codified and organised sports. They, however, clashed with the idealised perception the middle classes had of themselves and with the disinterested values they ingrained in sport through amateurism. The inherent contradictions between their material dispositions and moral attitudes spilled over onto sport and resulted in frictions regarding the participation of the working class. In Ireland, the tension was made bare in the 1880s under the combined influence of improving living standards for the lower classes and a renewal of political and social agitation. This is at the centre of the following two chapters.

Chapter Four

Democratisation: 1880-1900

This chapter deals with the democratisation of sport in the 1880s and 1890s in Dublin. More and more tradesmen, artisans, shop assistants, or schoolboys came to play sports that were hitherto decidedly middle class in character and embedded in elite schooling. This development stemmed from, and in turn accelerated, the bureaucratisation, commercialisation and internationalisation of sport seen in previous chapters. Which sports experienced a downward social spread, to what extent, and why it happened, are the questions this chapter seeks to answer. Underlying this democratisation of sport was its relation to broader evolutions in Irish society, which will only be glimpsed in this chapter but dealt with at length in the following one.

Such upheavals had been made possible by continuous improvements in the living conditions of the working class in Britain and Ireland. Real wages increased from the 1850s onwards and conversely working hours diminished.[1] The Saturday half-holiday had become a specific timeslot for the population to avail of leisure.[2] Primary education was generalised. Cheap and popular publications appeared. And legislative reforms like the Representation of the People Acts (1867 and 1884) and Local Government Acts (1888-9, and 1898 in Ireland) intellectually and politically empowered a large portion of the population who had previously been kept aside from public affairs.[3] The rise of the 'masses', however diverse and divided they were, deeply concerned the bourgeois middle classes who saw in it a threat to the social order they had been fashioning since early Victorian times.[4] Growing working-class involvement in sport proved to be an acute point of dissension and fuelled the

[1] Brad Beaven, *Leisure, citizenship and working-class men*, pp 16, 48-9; Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian generation*, pp 79-82.
[2] Dennis Brailsford, *Sport, time, and society*, pp 100-5; Cunningham*, Time, work and leisure*, pp 105-9.
[3] Eric Hobsbawm, *The age of empires, 1875-1914* (London, 1987), pp 112-24.
[4] Asa Briggs, *Victorian cities*, pp 65-6; Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian generation*, pp 40, 482-4; Hobsbawm, *Age of empires*, chapter 7.

resentment of the middle classes for whom 'sport was an opportunity for differentiation not conciliation, and was used to restrict rather than expand contact with social inferiors.'[5] The mechanisms employed varied from attempting to convert the working classes to the rational recreation movement (with limited success) to plainly restricting their access to certain sports. The redefinition of amateurism in athletics, cycling and rowing barred all but gentlemen amateurs and the costs associated with tennis, golf or yachting promoted a conspicuous coterie of the wealthiest.[6] For the British middle class, the national social angst was accompanied by a feeling of international decline in the latter nineteenth century as a unified Germany was a continental power to be reckoned with and the post-Civil War United States began to display its economic strength to the face of Europe.[7] More importantly in the context of this thesis, Americans began to compete with – and beat – the best Englishmen in rowing, athletics and cycling from the late 1870s onwards. Their casual approach to amateurism was questioned and led to further retrenchment behind the stricter English interpretation of the rule.[8]

Ireland had a different economic structure from Britain and remained essentially a rural country and Dublin a city predominantly turned towards commerce, administration and services. Yet the labouring classes in the city and country equally witnessed an improvement in their living standards throughout the second part of the nineteenth century, albeit at a slower pace than in Britain. Only in the 1890s did the Saturday half-holiday become widespread for Dublin industrial workers, which was not availed of by the many engaged in the retail or hospitality trades.[9] In the country, Sunday remained the only day of rest to most of the labouring force, and was also the day traditionally associated with leisure in Ireland since pre-modern times. Ireland, unlike England, was also a society divided along religious and communitarian lines. The great majority of the labouring classes and lower-middle class were Catholic and identified with an Irish nation, whereas the upper-middle class and the gentry were disproportionately Protestant and considered themselves

[5] Tranter, *Sport, economy and society*, p. 41.
[6] Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 144; Huggins*, The Victorians and sport*, p. 34; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 141-3; Lowerson, *Sport and the English middle classes*, p. 14.
[7] Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian generation*, p. 306.
[8] Lowerson, *Sport and the English middle classes*, pp 263-4; Andrew Ritchie, 'Amateur world champion, 1893: the international cycling career of American Arthur Augustus Zimmerman, 1888-1896', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxii, no. 4 (2005), pp 566-71.
[9] Daly, *The deposed capital*, p. 71

Irish only in the context of Britain. The economic, cultural and social aspirations of the Catholic community were made more vocal in the latter 1870s when Parnell remodelled the Home Rule League into the Irish Parliamentary Party and shrewdly channelled the popular enthusiasm drawn from the Land War into a powerful nationalist political movement aiming at parliamentary autonomy: Home Rule. High on the agenda from the 1870s, it was the ill-defined answer to the various grievances of the nationalist community.[10] Irish society was then irremediably polarised as the Liberal Unionist Party became the political arm of the Presbyterian industrial workforce of Ulster, of the Church of Ireland southern gentry and middle class, and of the imperialist branch of the Liberal party. The addition of a political layer to social and religious divisions added to the anxiety felt by the Irish Protestant community. The land and franchise reforms had indeed more resonance and implication for the Irish elites than their British counterparts and the power of the local gentry declined at a faster rate.[11] In Britain, the marriage of interest between the bourgeoisie, the upper layers of the professions and the aristocracy was a case of some buying legitimacy while others bought time. In Ireland it was about immediate survival.[12] The crystallisation of Irish society in two distinct and irreconcilable communities is often conveniently described by interchangeable terms: Catholic, nationalist and rural lower classes as opposed to Protestant, unionist and urban middle classes. True at a macroscopic level, such simplification overlooks the fact that a large and vocal minority on the unionist side was made up of the Belfast industrial proletariat and a ten-thousand-strong Dublin workforce who shared with the Catholic working class similar living conditions yet chose communitarian over labour politics.[13] The second deviation from the pattern was the emergence of a small urban Catholic elite which attended fee-paying schools and increased its presence among the professional classes and civil service.[14] Derided

[10] Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, chapters 7 and 9.
[11] Cannadine, *The decline and fall*, pp 25-31; Dooley, *The decline of the Big House*, pp 79-89.
[12] Wilson, *The Victorians*, p. 583; Cannadine, *The decline and fall*, *passim*; Campbell, *The Irish establishment*, pp 310-2.
[13] Martin Maguire, 'The organisation and activism of Dublin's Protestant working class, 1882-1935', *Irish Historical Studies*, xxix, no. 113 (1994), pp 65-87. Maguire estimates at twenty thousand the combined number of male Protestant working class, lower-middle-class clerks and shopkeepers in County Dublin in 1911.
[14] Daly, *The deposed capital*, pp 125-7; McBride, *The greening of Dublin castle*, pp 11, 23, 31,37; Pašeta, *Before the revolution*, chapter 4, pp 134-6; Campbell, *The Irish establishment*, pp 72-3, 95, 303; McBride, Pašeta and Campbell agree that positions within the establishment were made available to Catholics but differ as for the extent of such opening.

as ‘Castle Catholics’ by nationalists, they were the great beneficiaries of the modernisation of Irish society in the second part of the nineteenth century and found themselves at ease in the existing social order.

The democratisation of middle-class games for the male population from the 1880s onwards, the appearance of an avowedly nationalist and working-class organisation in the GAA, the development of sport associated to the workplace and the retreat of Dublin elites into socially exclusive pastimes were corollary of broader societal and political developments then affecting Britain and Ireland and should be seen in this light. Successively analysed in this chapter, they provide the background to further trends, such as the politicisation and continued commercialisation of certain sports, which will be analysed in chapter five. Matching newspapers reports with the households returns of the 1901 census made possible the establishment of a large database of sportsmen – women were considerably more difficult to identify – and the socio-economic analysis of twelve sports. This chapter thus highlights who played what and explains participatory trends. Several sports, such as boxing or soccer, had made the transition from middle-class to working-class because it was cheap and rooted in the masculine urban lifestyle of British and Irish cities. Rugby and hockey, on the other hand, were too emblematic of secondary schooling to permit any dilution of the amateur and middle-class ethos and remained so well into the twentieth century. At the other end of the social spectrum, hunting or sailing, for example, embodied the lavish lifestyle of the elite and were simply unaffordable to anybody else. Ultimately, this chapter shows that by 1900, the great majority of the Dublin male population could, and did, enjoy organised and competitive sport. It also explains that sporting preferences were conditioned by age, education, or social condition, and that, conversely, engaging with sport reinforced the social and cultural identities of players and spectators alike. Such democratisation nevertheless remained incomplete as women largely retained a subaltern position despite the growing number of middle-class women who actively engaged with tennis, hockey, or gymnastics by the turn of the nineteenth century.

1- Scope of changes and methodology

The dramatic expansion of the sporting scene in Dublin in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was visible to all. The total of recorded male combinations in football (Gaelic, rugby and soccer) and hurley, hurling and hockey jumped from 4 in 1870 to 43 in 1880, 80 in 1890 and 196 in 1900. Not only were there more clubs, but they had become more important and intensified their activities. The first XV of the DUFC played 42 matches in the 1870s, 127 in the 1880s and 180 in the 1890s.[15] A similar expansion was witnessed in hockey. Within five years of their creation, the Donnybrook, Palmerstown and Corinthians clubs entered three teams in various leagues, which could witness up to 16 matches played simultaneously on Saturday afternoons by 1899.[16] Athletes turned up in hundreds at the largest athletic meetings. The *Freeman's Journal* athletic meeting in 1886, for example, recorded 356 entries in track and field events, 129 in cycling, as well as 10 tug of war teams.[17]

There were more sports too. The codification of games in the third quarter of the century essentially adapted old pastimes to the modern sporting scene. In subsequent decades, whole new sports and disciplines were created to suit tastes, needs, and commercial interest. Water polo, brought from England to Dublin in 1886, introduced a ball and teams to water sports.[18] Bicycle polo, invented by Irish champion cyclist Richard J. Mecredy in 1891, did so to cycling.[19] Indoor sports were created to offset the vagaries of the weather. Basketball suited the vigorous North American winters but did not make inroads in Dublin. Exhibition games within the Boys' Brigades in May 1898 and by the City of Dublin Gymnasium in November 1898 failed to arouse local enthusiasm.[20] The 'ping pong' mania of 1901 was more successful as the casualness of the game contrasted with the increased technicity of lawn tennis. Astute marketing and an acute sense of fashion were responsible for its sudden rise to popularity and equally sudden downfall, which echoed the late 1870s skating craze.[21] Technological innovation and entrepreneurial acumen were

[15] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Rugby F./17.
[16] *Sport*, 29 Oct. 1898, 21 Oct. 1899; *Irish Daily Independent*, 16 Dec. 1899.
[17] *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Jul. 1886; *Sport*, 31 Jul. 1886.
[18] *Sport*, 31 July 1886.
[19] *Dublin Daily Express*, 20 Oct. 1891; Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, pp 63-4.
[20] *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 21 May 1898; *Sport*, 19 Nov. 1898.
[21] *Sport*, 29 Mar. 1902, 8 Oct. 1904; Lowerson, *Sport and the English middle classes*, pp 110-1.

paramount in introducing new sports. Table tennis rose to fame precisely when it was discovered that celluloid balls had a better bounce.[22] The replacement of gutta percha golf balls by wound-core balls in the early twentieth century made the game more accessible to beginners and partly explained its sustained popularity in Britain, Ireland and the United States.[23] New disciplines appeared within sports, fuelled by popular enthusiasm, natural competition and financial interests. Cycling stood out in that respect. Manufacturers promoted competitions, sponsored riders to advertise their products, and generally contributed to creating a dynamic cycling scene throughout Britain and Ireland from the 1880s.[24] Substantial popular following in continental Europe enticed entrepreneurs to build velodromes to stage track racing. The sporting press also encouraged long-distance road racing to swell newspaper sales.[25] A single innovation at the turn of the 1870s had thus, within three decades, given way to many sub-specialities ranging from amateur and mixed-gender bicycle polo to the month-long professional Tour de France.

Despite its rapid expansion, active participation in organised sport only concerned a minority of the male population, while women were largely excluded.[26] In 1900, a total of at least 317 combinations has been uncovered in cross-country running, rowing, cycling, cricket, hocket, soccer, rugby, Gaelic games, sailing, golf, tennis and swimming in County Dublin. Allowing for fifty playing members per club and adding hunters, jockeys, athletes, wrestlers, boxers, the total number of active sportsmen can perhaps be estimated at twenty thousand.[27] Such a level of participation marked a sharp increase over previous decades yet only represented 14.3% of the County Dublin male population aged 10 to 50 (140,005).[28] The place modern sport came to occupy in society was, however, incomparable with the level of participation observed. A multitude of dedicated sporting venues and grounds

[22] *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 4 Jan. 1902
[23] Lowerson, *Sport and the English middle classes*, pp 238-9. Gutta percha balls had replaced feathered balls in the 1850s as they were cheaper, lasted longer, and flew further.
[24] Brian Griffin, 'All colours of the rainbow, including black and gold: making and selling bicycles in Ireland in the 1880s and 1890s', *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxviii, no. 152 (2013), pp 630-1.
[25] Hugh Dauncey, *French cycling, a social and cultural history* (Liverpool, 2012), pp 51-8. Such events were not staged in Ireland but generally reported in the press.
[26] Vamplew, 'Sport and industrialization', p. 12; Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, p. 7.
[27] In practice few clubs had so many playing members.
[28] 1901 Census of Ireland, vol. 1, part 1, no. 2, p. 45; Ibid., vol. 1, part 1, no. 2(a), p. 13.

dotted the city and its suburbs. Imposing racecourses were built in the adjoining countryside at Fairyhouse (early 1870s), Baldoyle (1874) and Leopardstown (1888) before a fourth one was built within the Phoenix Park in 1902. The use of this latter mirrored the evolution of sport, as the anarchical play of the early century had now given way to careful planification. The Office of Public Work granted semi-private enclosed grounds within the Phoenix Park to four cricket clubs between the 1830s and 1884 and had set aside the best part of the Nine-Acres field for polo players since the mid-1870s. A greater need to accommodate the general public in the 1890s led to four public cricket grounds and up to thirty-one football pitches (twenty-nine of them for soccer) being laid down between 1894 and 1906.[29] Visually, sport permeated everyday life and increasingly so in the last quarter of the century. In December 1875, notices of the first rugby match between Ireland and England were inserted '16 by 14 ½ in, in the windows of the Tramcars'.[30] By 1900, eight dedicated papers were sold by newsagents and the generalist dailies had drastically increased their sporting coverage since mid-century.[31] Department stores, such as Switzer & Co., Pim Brothers, and Clery & Co., sold tennis, cycling and football clothing.[32] By 1900, Elvery & Co. was the leading specialist retailer in the city and the 'Elephant houses' on Sackville and Nassau streets were unmistakably identifiable from afar. Racehorse or hound paintings had long adorned the halls of gentry houses until photographs increasingly took over from the second part of the nineteenth century.[33] J. J. King, owner of a 'tobacco divan and billiard saloon' which specialised in 'athlete mixture and athlete cigarette', had his establishment decorated with a photo of the Blackrock College rugby team for example.[34]

The relevance of sport extended beyond what happened on the pitch or in the stands. It was a vehicle of civic pride for newly formed urban communities, a proof of virility or else a symbol of political allegiance. Some characteristics of pre-modern recreations remained essential to late nineteenth-century sport. It was a marker of

[29] *Evening Herald*, 6 June 1894; Garnham, *Association football and society*, p. 12.
[30] IRFU Archives, Minutes of the IRFU, 7 Dec. 1875.
[31] Those were *Irish Cyclist*, *Irish Field*, *Irish Golf*, *Irish Wheelman*, *Sport*, *Sporting Echo*, *Sporting News*, and *Ireland's Saturday's Night* which was essentially a Belfast paper but distributed in Dublin too. See Alexander Thom, *Thom's Irish almanac and official directory with the post office Dublin city and county directory for the year 1900* (Dublin, 1900), p. 1297.
[32] *Irish Times*, 28 May 1887, 27 May 1891, 16 June 1897.
[33] Jonathan Magee, 'The legacy of Master McGrath: coursing and sporting heroes in Ireland', *Sport in History*, xxv, no. 1 (2005), p. 89.
[34] *Irish Daily Independent*, 13 Mar. 1896; *Irish Times*, 15 Jul. 1898.

time, as seasons and weeks were given rhythm by the sporting calendar. Saturday and Sunday replaced Monday and local religious or pagan festivities as days of play but were as eagerly looked forward to. It remained a social lubricant and a topic of conversation at home, in the street, or at work. Finally, the bureaucratisation of sport and its articulation around clubs was never totally complete. Forms of play which lay at the intersection of ancient pastimes and children's games remained important components of the leisure spectrum. Increasingly, however, they came to be defined by modern sports. Makeshift games readily identified with codified games and ultimately reinforced the latter as the sole legitimate form of sporting activity by 1900. Street football was not association football *per se* but adopted its codes and features. For children, such as future senior civil servant Todd Andrews who played in school yards, on pathways, on real pitches and was an avid fan of Bohemian FC at the turn of the 1910s, this was soccer all the same.[35] And so for hockey:

> Hockey was very popular. There was a local team called Olney which played in the Green lanes; we were enthusiastically followers of it. They played in a lower league and never won a match, but they were heroes to us and we tried to imitate them. We had no hockey sticks but we got branches of trees shaped at least vaguely like a hockey stick and we bullied and dribbled and took corners and penalty corners as if we had the most expensive equipment. We certainly got as much fun from it.[36]

Informal appropriation of soccer, hockey or cricket by lower-middle-class and working-class children is impossible to quantify. Available information, however, clearly betrays a degree of democratisation of sport in the 1880s and 1890s that was not evident in previous decades. The rest of this chapter assesses the extent of this pattern with an in-depth socio-economic analysis of twelve sports. Contemporary newspapers of different political affiliations have permitted the identification of over 1,200 sportsmen between 1895 and 1902, who were then matched with the Household returns from the 1901 census.[37] In order not to bias

[35] C.S. Andrews, *Dublin made me* (Dublin, 1979), pp 46-7.
[36] Ibid., pp 46-7.
[37] See Appendix 6 for the different sources used to build the databases. The Household returns of the 1901 census are available online: http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/.

the database thus created, teams obviously linked to an educational establishment, regiment, workplace or institution have not been considered. Nor were club presidents and vice-presidents, who often held only honorary positions. This methodology presents flaws that need to be acknowledged. Newspapers constitute the major source of information in compiling names, and results might thus be biased towards middle-class and urban participation. Nineteenth-century match reports usually emanated first-hand from clubs and as such poorly administered or casual clubs were unlikely to communicate with the press.[38] Reciprocally, newspapers prioritised the proceedings of major and well-established clubs over junior or rural clubs as they aroused more interest among the readership. Dealing with a populous county, the problem of homonymy was also recurrent. Age, residence, occupation, and family links often helped narrow the choice, but it has often not been possible to identify players with certainty. The results shown are likely biased towards a Protestant participation in sport given the smaller population (20.5% of County Dublin in 1901) and the wider range of names and surnames then employed. The possibility of having underestimated both Catholic and working-class participation is thus real, especially as Catholics were overrepresented within the lower social orders.[39] This applies particularly to cricket and soccer, where participation cost was minimal and the administrative structure weak or non-existent. If sport remained overwhelmingly a male preserve by 1900, the increasing participation of schoolgirls and women in hockey, tennis, gymnastics and golf was clearly noticeable. However, recording their names and matching them with the census proved an arduous task. Newspapers often used the deferential Miss rather than initials or given names, and low levels of employment among middle-class women precluded establishing socio-economic trends. The familial nature of women's involvement in golf, tennis and hunting and the embedment of hockey in the Protestant elite school of Alexandra College betrays similar recruitment patterns between men and women in elite sports. The results presented in this chapter are solely concerned with male participation, yet these findings can perhaps be generalised to female participation in the few sports in which they took part.

[38] Hunt, *Sport and society*, xiii-xiv.
[39] Daly, *The deposed capital*, p. 125; Martin Maguire, 'A Socio-Economic Analysis of the Dublin Protestant Working Class, 1870-1926', *Irish Economic and Social History*, no. 20 (1993), p. 37.

The database thus built is used throughout this chapter. Results are presented in percentages and occurrences indicated in brackets. When players were mere schoolboys, the occupation of their father has been considered instead. Sometimes, only partial information was available, hence some discrepancies. For example, the religion of 87 yachtsmen has been positively identified whereas the occupation of only 85 has been ascertained. The socio-economic breakdown of the population follows the one used by Martin Maguire in 'A socio-economic analysis of the Dublin Protestant working class, 1870-1926' with minor modifications. Category 1 is made up of professionals and major proprietors and represent the aristocracy, upper-middle classes, large businessmen or farmers, as well as students in third-level education. Category 2 includes clerks, salesmen and semi-professionals. They were broadly the lower-middle class and white-collar employees who might have had a private schooling yet did not always attend university. Category 3 encompasses managers and small employers. Those were the lower-middle-class shopkeepers and petty proprietors. Skilled workers are accounted for in category 4, semi-skilled workers (including grocers' and drapers' assistants) make up category 5, while unskilled workers and general labourers are gathered in category 6. This method of classification is in this context more appropriate than the one used respectively by Daly in Dublin and Hunt in Westmeath as it decisively separates clerks from tradesmen and shop assistants.[40] The 1901 census classification which focused on sector of activity rather than skill level, while suiting Curran in his study of soccer in Ulster, is of limited usefulness in this case as it does not sufficiently distinguish professionals from clerks and shopkeepers.[41]

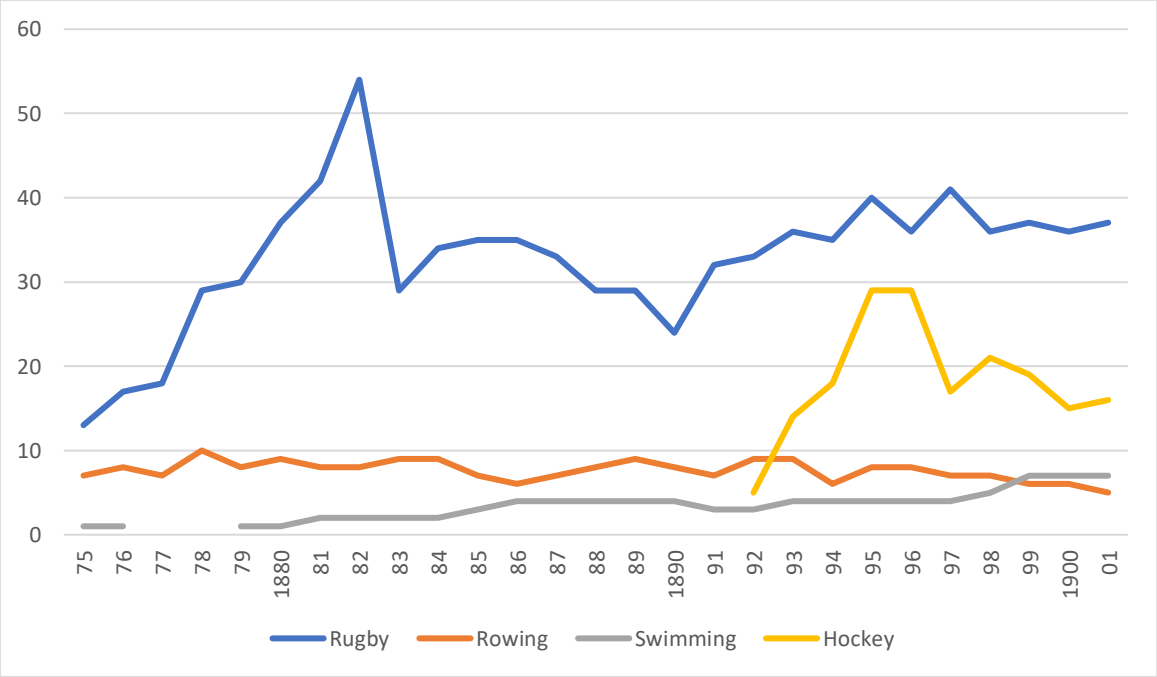
2- Intra-middle-class spread: rugby, rowing, swimming, hockey

A succinct outline of the development of these four sports in the 1880s and 1890s introduces the socio-economic analysis of rowers and swimmers, as well as rugby

[40] Daly, *The deposed capital*, pp 64-5; Hunt, *Sport and society*, xv.
[41] Conor Curran, 'The Social Background of Ireland's Pre-World War I Association Football Clubs, Players and Administrators: The Case of South and West Ulster'. *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxxiii, no. 16 (2016), p. 1998.

and hockey players. From university or elite school origins, these sports only witnessed a moderate downward social spread to become embedded in lower-middle-class leisure habits. This broad middle-class appeal in turn ensured a general cohesiveness which was only occasionally questioned in rowing when Dublin amateurism clashed with provincial practices.

Figure 4.1: Number of rugby, rowing, swimming, and hockey combinations in Dublin, 1875-1901.



Overview

The direct influence of Dublin University in rugby was diluted from the 1880s onwards as more clubs sprang up across the country. The presence of many former students in the leading clubs and the importance of the game among Dublin elite schools and hospital staff reinforced its middle-class status and ethos. These, as well as a few well-established clubs whose membership numbered hundreds, were at the core of a rugby scene which had reached maturity in the city by the early 1880s.

Rowing, another sport developed within the confines of Trinity College, had peaked in Dublin in the early 1870s and thereafter suffered from the competition of athletics,

cycling, tennis and Gaelic games. The two university clubs struggled to attract new blood and the prestige of the Dublin Metropolitan Regatta dwindled. As with the College Races, the novelty had worn off and the fashionable event of the season had by then moved to Fitzwilliam Place and the Irish lawn tennis championship. The unsuitability of Ringsend as a rowing hub, apparent in previous decades, became a pressing matter too. The working-class outlook of the area, tides, industrial waste, and maritime traffic seriously hampered rowing and contributed to the pastime's relative decline.[42] The solution found by the DUBC was to build in 1898 an upriver course at Islandbridge which also permitted year-round practice. The cost involved, added to two decades of falling membership in the two university clubs, led to a merger under the Dublin University Boat Club banner, after thirty-one years of separation.[43] Their rivalry in the 1870s had greatly contributed to the development of rowing in the city and in Ireland, but had conversely weakened their position on the international stage.

The introduction of hockey in Dublin was made through the agency of elite Protestant schools. St Columba's College students played the game in 1889, but its adoption by the High School and King's Hospital in October 1892 marked the start of its spread to civilian society.[44] Those were precisely the two schools where hurley had been popular in the early 1880s before disappearing just when hurling became codified. This latter had always been unpalatable to hurley players, initially because of disagreement on rules and the level of physicality tolerated, and later because of real (or perceived) cultural and political divergences.[45] Meanwhile, hockey grew in strength and stature in England. A first effort at unifying the game in the mid-1870s failed to spread beyond London or to survive the initial burst of enthusiasm and was replaced in March 1886 by the Hockey Association.[46] This was the model William Paterson, master at the High School, had in mind when he revived the game in the city. He was joined days later by Rev. Gibson, the headmaster of King's Hospital and former treasurer of the Irish Hurley Union in 1881. These two schools were instrumental in founding the Irish Hockey Union early in 1893 with the Castlecomer

[42] Blake, *In black & white*, p. 74; *Freeman's Journal*, 18 June 1887.
[43] Blake, *In black & white*, pp 73-7.
[44] St Columba's College Archives, *Columban*, x, no. 2 (Mar. 1889); Ibid., x, no. 7 (Oct. 1889); *Irish Times*, 13 Oct. 1892, 26 Oct. 1892, 29 Oct. 1892.
[45] Rouse, *The hurlers*, pp 8-14.
[46] Tom Wynne, *Ninety years of the Irish Hockey Union* (Naas, 1995), p. 65.

(Kilkenny) and Sandycove clubs whose representatives on that occasion belonged to one of these schools.[47] High School students then became prominent within the Corinthian club.[48] Former King's Hospital players were found in the Donnybrook club and in trusted positions on the Irish team.[49] The irony was that within five years of successfully importing hockey to Ireland and nurturing a first generation of players, both schools had altogether stopped their involvement in the game.[50] The appointment of Welshman Thomas P. Richards as headmaster of King's Hospital instead of Rev. Gibson late in 1896 brought a severe reappraisal of the school policies and a realignment on the orthodox model of English public school: prefect system, school magazine, importance of physical exercise and above all cricket and rugby.[51] Why High School dropped hockey remains speculative, but the school magazine hinted in October 1894 that competition from rugby was fierce in a school then witnessing a serious decline in enrolment.[52] The development of women's hockey in the city followed the exact same lines as the men's game. Alexandra College, a Protestant girls' school established in 1866, founded its own club in December 1892 and held their first game in March 1893.[53] In turn, the school became the nursery of the game in the city and the prime instigator of the Irish Ladies' Hockey Union in 1894.[54] The adoption of hockey in girls' schools and its development as a suitable female team sport in the 1880s and 1890s throughout Britain and Ireland stemmed from the need to offer more competitive outlets to a new generation of educated girls, from the spread to some extent of the tenets of athleticism to girls' schools, and from the need to preserve the canons of femininity.[55] As a non-contact niche sport, hockey provided physical exertion to young women without exhibiting the physicality of football, could be played in

[47] *Irish Daily Independent*, 8 Feb. 1893.
[48] High School Archives, *Red and Black*, ii, no. 6 (Feb. 1894), p. 27. In 1894, the Corinthians team included at least four former High School players (Paterson, Yeo, Richardson and Lovell), *Irish Daily Independent*, 18 Dec. 1894.
[49] King's Hospital Archives, Headmaster's Report, Mar. 1895, June 1896; Robert Whiteside, *Hockey at the King's Hospital, 1892-1992* (Maynooth, 1992), p. 15.
[50] *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Mar. 1898.
[51] Lesley Whiteside, *A history of King's Hospital*, pp 141-3.
[52] High School Archives, *Red and Black*, ii, no. 8 (Oct. 1894), p. 3; Ibid., GS/449, 15 Oct. 1893, July 1898. The number of enrolled schoolboys went from 313 to 225.
[53] Alexandra College Archives, Minutes of the Hockey Club, season 1893.
[54] Ibid., 8 Oct. 1894, 22 Oct. 1894.
[55] Lowerson, *Sport and the English middle classes*, pp 208-13; Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, pp 81-3; Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting females: critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sports* (London, 1994), pp 101-2.

gendered clothing (arguably long dresses even helped to stop the ball), and above all preserved the quintessential bastion of masculinity that were cricket, athletics and rowing (all non-contact sports) from being associated with female participation.

Dedicated swimming clubs appeared in England in the 1860s and a national association was created in 1869, which became known as the Swimming Association of Great-Britain from 1873 onwards. The recreational, life-saving or hygienic attributes which underpinned bathing in earlier decades still existed, yet swimming had become a modern sport.[56] Races and diving contests had also been integral to the Dublin bathing culture but sustained competitive swimming appeared in 1865 and 1866 when the Blackrock baths incorrectly boasted their open summer races as 'the first of the kind ever held in Ireland'.[57] A decade elapsed between these races and the establishment of the County of Dublin Swimming Club in 1875.[58] The club was active in the summer of 1880 but folded shortly thereafter before being revived as the Dublin Swimming Club in May 1881.[59] The inaugural meeting was chaired by R. M. Peter, the IRFU secretary, who inaugurated on that occasion decades of administrative involvement in his club, in the Leinster Swimming and Aquatic Polo Association (1891) and the Irish Amateur Swimming Association (1893).[60] With admission to the commercial baths of Clontarf, Merrion and Blackrock at 3*d*. and to the public baths of Tara Street at 2*d*., swimming for leisure was accessible to most of the working population but swimming as a sport undoubtedly retained the middle-class character of its early administrators.[61]

[56] Love, 'An overview of the development of swimming', pp 574-5; Claire Parker, 'The rise of competitive swimming, 1840 to 1878', *The Sports Historian*, xxi, no. 2 (2001), pp 53, 63-4.
[57] *Dublin Evening Packet*, 20 Sept. 1845; *Evening Freeman*, 21 May 1864; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 10 Jul. 1865; *Saunders's News-Letter*, 18 Jul. 1866. It was not the first race as, in 1845, a swimming match for a £30 cup was held at the Salthill baths.
[58] *Freeman's Journal*, 28 June 1875; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 22 Aug. 1878; *Dublin Daily Express*, 17 June 1880. The club was also named Blackrock SC.
[59] *Dublin Daily Express*, 11 Aug. 1880; *Freeman's Journal*, 20 May 1881.
[60] *Sport*, 5 Jul. 1890, 9 Sept. 1893; *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Aug. 1891; *Irish Times*, 27 Nov. 1893.
[61] *Dublin Daily Express*, 4 Aug. 1883; *Freeman's Journal*, 13 Jul. 1886; *Irish Times*, 1 June 1889; *Irish Daily Independent*, 26 Aug. 1897. Free bathing in the open sea remained popular too.

Figure 4.2: Socio-economic distribution of rugby, rowing, swimming, and hockey players (%), 1895-1902

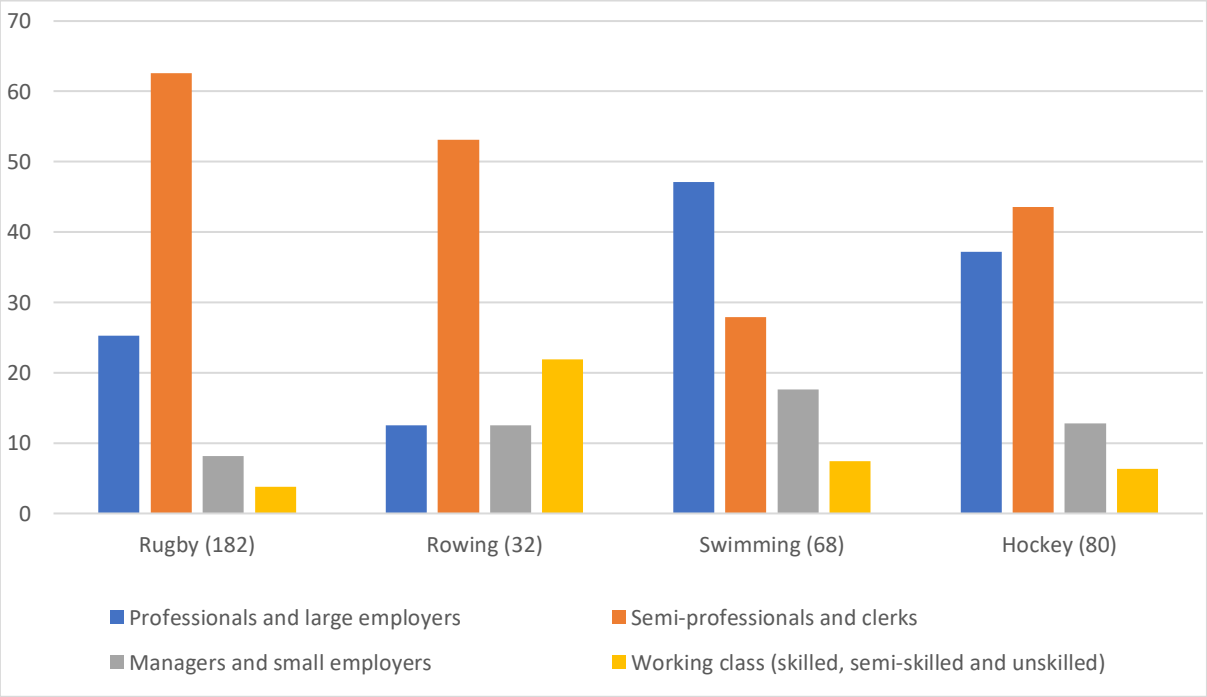
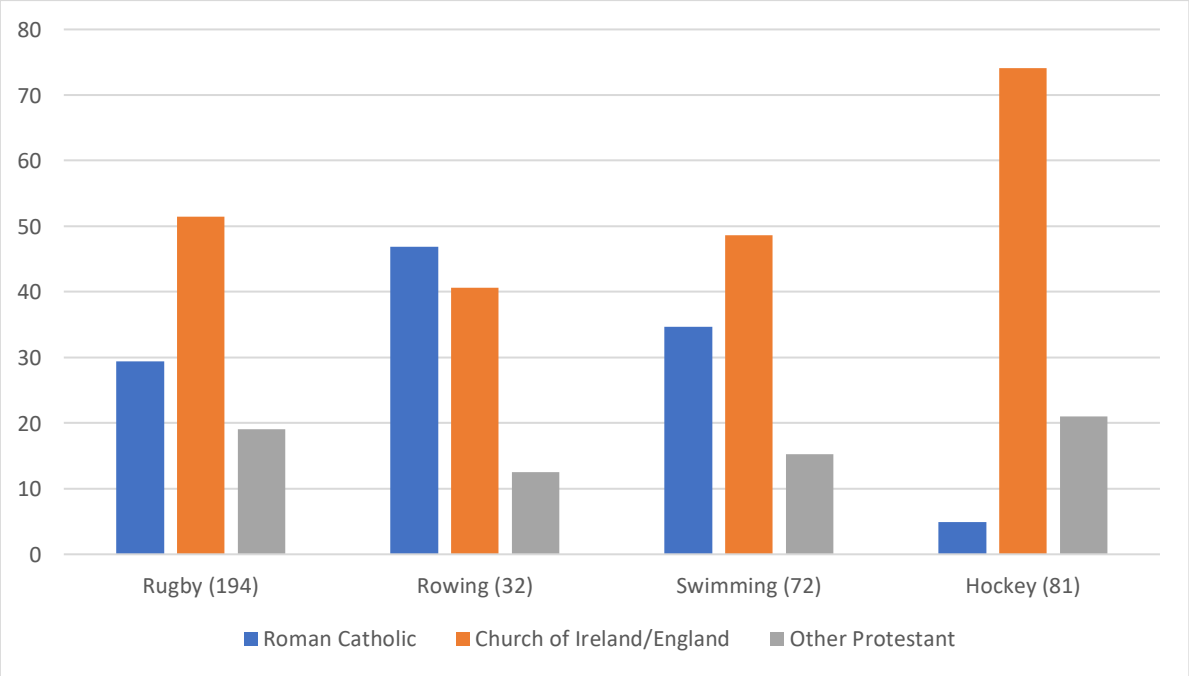


Figure 4.3: Religious denomination of rugby, rowing, swimming, and hockey players (%), 1895-1902.



Socio-economic analysis

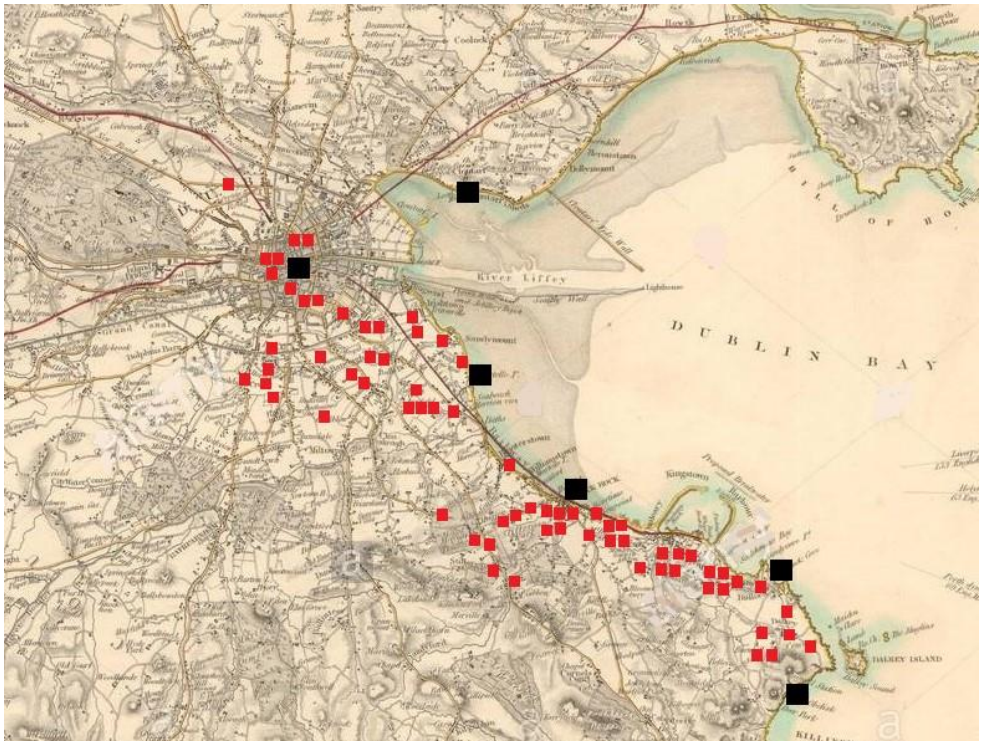
By 1900, swimming and hockey were strongly associated with the professional classes but a measure of downward spread to the lower-middle class can clearly be discerned (figure 4.2). Rugby and rowing, on the other hand, had by the end of the nineteenth century largely outgrown their university origins. Rugby, however, never broke free from the hold of elite schools and remained essentially a middle-class game, albeit heavily played by those former schoolboys who did not attend Trinity College and came to populate administrative and office jobs. Over half of the identified rugby players with an occupation were either clerks or engaged in the civil service (88/157). The establishment by the Leinster and Ulster branches of the IRFU of Saturday as the privileged day of play was a tribute to this changing demographic and highlighted the importance of white-collar employees both as players and spectators.[62] Rowing in Dublin followed national developments observed in the 1870s. The participation of tradesmen and clerks seen in provincial towns was reflected in the membership of the well-established Commercial RC, and in the short-lived Tyro (1880-5) and Riverside (1899-1900) clubs. Further layers were clearly discernible. Drapers' assistants and tradesmen gathered within the Commercial club. Clerks, journalists and other lower-middle-class rowers affiliated with the Dolphin RC, and the Neptune and Pembroke clubs accommodated the middle and upper-middle classes respectively. The division in rugby was more subtle, yet nonetheless present. Clerks were overrepresented in the Bective and Clontarf clubs (respectively 19/30 and 43/68 of players reporting an occupation), whereas they only made up a small minority of the Wanderers, Lansdowne, and Monkstown clubs (2/17) where university students and the legal professions remained prevalent.

Class was not the only social determinant in explaining sporting affiliation. Place of birth, of residence, and religion were also essential factors (figures 4.3 and 4.4). The high percentage of Dublin-born swimmers (50/61) and their place of residence in the southern suburbs reflected as much the pattern of middle-class habitation as the network of bathing infrastructures in the city. Rowing was also particularly

[62] IRFU Archives, *By-laws of the Leinster branch of the Irish Rugby Football Union* (Dublin, 1886), p. 9.

affected by geographical factors. Dubliners tended to gather within the Dolphin and Neptune clubs whereas the Commercial and Pembroke clubs were essentially populated by country immigrants. The near absence of Catholics playing hockey was due to the denigrating influence of the GAA combined with a lack of familiarity, as the schools responsible for fostering hockey were all Protestant. In rugby, religious differences were added to social ones. Bective Rangers gathered mostly Catholic members (19/35) whereas the Wanderers, Lansdowne, Kingstown and Monkstown players belonged to the Church of Ireland (27/31). In tight-knit communities, neighbourhood relations finally proved an essential tool of recruitment for clubs. In October 1900, Richard Cashel, a member of the Clontarf FC, proposed for election to the club no fewer than nine prospective members who, like him, hailed from St Lawrence Road.[63]

Figure 4.4: Place of residence of Dublin swimmers and location of baths, 1895-1902.



Note: the Clontarf baths were opened in 1882 but were not used by swimming clubs in 1895-1902.

[63] Minutes of the Clontarf FC, 9 Oct. 1900.

British influence, amateurism, and tensions

The evolution of rugby, rowing, swimming and hockey in England shaped their development in Dublin. The sheer disparity in numbers and seniority gave Irish swimming and hockey clubs little option but total alignment with the practices enacted by the London associations. Discussions around regulation hockey balls or water polo rules invariably ended up with the adoption of English rules.[64] In rugby, a contested English try in the 1884 encounter with Scotland brought to light the need for a mechanism of mediation between the national organisations of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales and resulted in the creation of the International Rugby Football Board in 1887. It met with contempt from the hitherto all-powerful RFU who then refused to engage in internationals. An honourable way out was found to eventually end the stalemate: the RFU yielded to the establishment of a rugby supra-authority but kept half of the voting powers, maintaining its *de facto* decision-making power in rugby matters.[65] Beside technicalities, the ethos adopted by the English institutions were wholeheartedly shared by Dublin administrators, who keenly espoused the loyal, imperial and amateur stance of the RFU. In 1894, the IRFU, for example, sternly reminded the IFA that their mutual understanding of recognising suspensions of players would be rescinded should they allow professionalism.[66] The homogeneous middle-class character of rugby in the country – only in the city of Limerick did rugby become the game of the working class – ensured that the split which occurred in England in 1895 between the northern professional Rugby League and the southern amateur Rugby Union could not possibly be replicated in Ireland.[67]

Matters were different in rowing as English views on amateurism came to be imposed rather than adopted. In Dublin and other Irish cities, social lines demarcated clubs. In the early 1880s the Limerick Boat Club and Shannon Rowing Club were the established clubs of Limerick, whereas the Commercial Rowing Club

[64] Wynne, *Ninety years of the Irish Hockey Union*, p. 65; *Sport*, 24 June 1893, 1 Jul. 1893.
[65] Collins, *The oval world*, pp 59-60. For the adoption of the International Board Rules by the IRFU, see IRFU Archives, Minutes of the IRFU, 23 Jan. 1891.
[66] IRFU Archives, Minutes of the IRFU, 20 Jan. 1894.
[67] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 194-5; O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, pp 76-85.

catered for working men.[68] In smaller provincial towns, clubs were usually founded by local professionals and businessmen with the blessing of the local gentry and had a varying degree of openness to local clerks and shop assistants.[69] In Wexford town, rowing became associated with tennis and sailing, whereas in Cappoquin (Waterford) dissension arose in 1885 upon the need to decorate the clubhouse in honour of the Prince of Wales, indicating nationalist affinities among the membership and the possibility of lower-middle-class or working-class participation in the club.[70] Irish rowers, however various their social status might have been, remained *bona fide* amateur and no professional sculling scene developed in the country, in clear distinction to London and Newcastle. The rules on amateurism were thus differently interpreted and cash prizes became acceptable if handed out to clubs instead of successful rowers. The low number and small membership of clubs in the country at large, their concentration on the eastern coast, and the reluctance of train companies to offer discount rates meant that provincial rowing clubs relied on cash prizes for their budget. Conversely, committees who wished to increase the appeal of their regatta needed to provide money prizes to entice clubs to undertake the journey.[71] Even the DUBC and DURC gladly received such prizes in the 1870s and early 1880s.[72]

The creation of the Amateur Rowing Association (ARA) in 1882 as the regulating body for rowing in England prompted the two university clubs to propose the establishment of a similar body in Ireland, which would take over from the informal lead held by the Dublin Metropolitan Regatta.[73] In January 1884 the Irish Amateur Rowing Association (IARA) was created and adopted the rules of the ARA, which explicitly banned mechanics, artisans and labourers, as well as prize money.[74] Difficulties soon arose when some provincial clubs sought to redraft the amateur rule to conform with Irish practices. The leading Dublin and provincial clubs were, on the other hand, at ease with the English rules. Eventually, under pressure from

[68] Hayes, 'From ludicrous to logical', p. 117.
[69] Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, pp 174-80.
[70] Eithne Scallan, *The Boat Club: the story of the Wexford Harbour Boat and Tennis Club 1873-2003* (Wexford, 2004), p. 1; Brendan Kiely, *The old dark blue: Cappoquin Rowing Club 1862-2002* (Cappoquin, 2002), p. 58
[71] *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Feb. 1884; *Irish Sportsman*, 15 Mar. 1884.
[72] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/18/1, 1870, 1872; Mun/Club/Boat/Box X, 1868 regatta accounts; *Irish Sportsman*, 1 Mar. 1884.
[73] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/2/2, 7 Nov. 1883; *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Dec. 1883.
[74] *Sport*, 12 Jan. 1884.

the ARA, the IARA members narrowly voted to retain the stricter definition.[75] The breakdown of the vote revealed social and geographical divisions that had hitherto been of no consequence in Irish rowing but surfaced precisely when rowing unity was about to be reached. Against prize money were the rowing institutions and clubs from large cities which were able to gather a homogeneously middle-class membership: IARA secretary, the two Dublin University clubs, the Metropolitan regatta committee and the Pembroke club in Dublin, Glenbrook club and Glenbrook regatta committee in Cork, Shannon and Limerick Boat Club, Wexford Boat Club, Belfast Boat Club and Galway Royal Boat Club (12). They were also the most likely to suffer from a severing of ties with English rowing. The DUBC and DURC were regular contestants at Henley and the main Irish regatta sought out international contestants to enhance their programme. In favour of remodelling the rule were a string of provincial towns and the lower-middle-class clubs from the largest cities: the Commercial clubs of Dublin and Galway, Corrib Boat Club, Cappoquin, Drogheda and its regatta committee, Carrickfergus, Derry, Newry, Bann and Shandon from Cork (11). These were the clubs with a motley membership who most needed cash prizes. The Tyro club from Dublin was present at the meeting yet did not take part in the vote.[76] No explanation was given but they possibly abstained to avoid a stalemate, or else had been plainly asked by leading Dublin clubs not to get in their way. Hard-liners won on the day, but the IARA's viability was compromised from the start. The dejected northern clubs were also considering establishing their own Northern Amateur Rowing Association which would explicitly remove the ban on artisans and mechanics.[77] A few months later, both university clubs decided to stop their subscription to the association, further entrenching the division lines.[78]

The consensus lasted just over a year. At the 1885 annual general meeting, held in November, the rule regarding the definition of an amateur was altered to allow prize money to be given to clubs, with a convincing majority of 19 votes to 7. In Dublin the Pembroke and University clubs sided together and were opposed this time by the lower-middle-class clubs of Commercial, Tyro, Neptune and Dolphin.[79] Fearing being cast away by English rowing authorities, the prestigious clubs subsequently

[75] *Freeman's Journal*, 10 May 1884.
[76] *Sport*, 17 May 1884.
[77] *Irish Times*, 26 Sept. 1884.
[78] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/2/2, 11 Mar. 1885.
[79] *Sport*, 28 Nov. 1885.

resigned from the IARA.[80] Deprived of its most essential elements, the association had lost its relevance and voted itself out of existence in November 1886.[81] It is hard to miss the irony of the fact that it fell not because of Irish social or political tensions which ran high at the time, but because of English clubs' own social concerns. The hard line adopted reflected their resentment at a downward social spread of the sport in Britain and of being increasingly made to compete with, and lose to, American or continental crews who had looser interpretations of what was an amateur.[82] It took a further decade for another attempt to establish a national organisation, and the Irish Amateur Rowing Union eventually came to life in May 1899 with the benediction of both Dublin University and the ARA.[83]

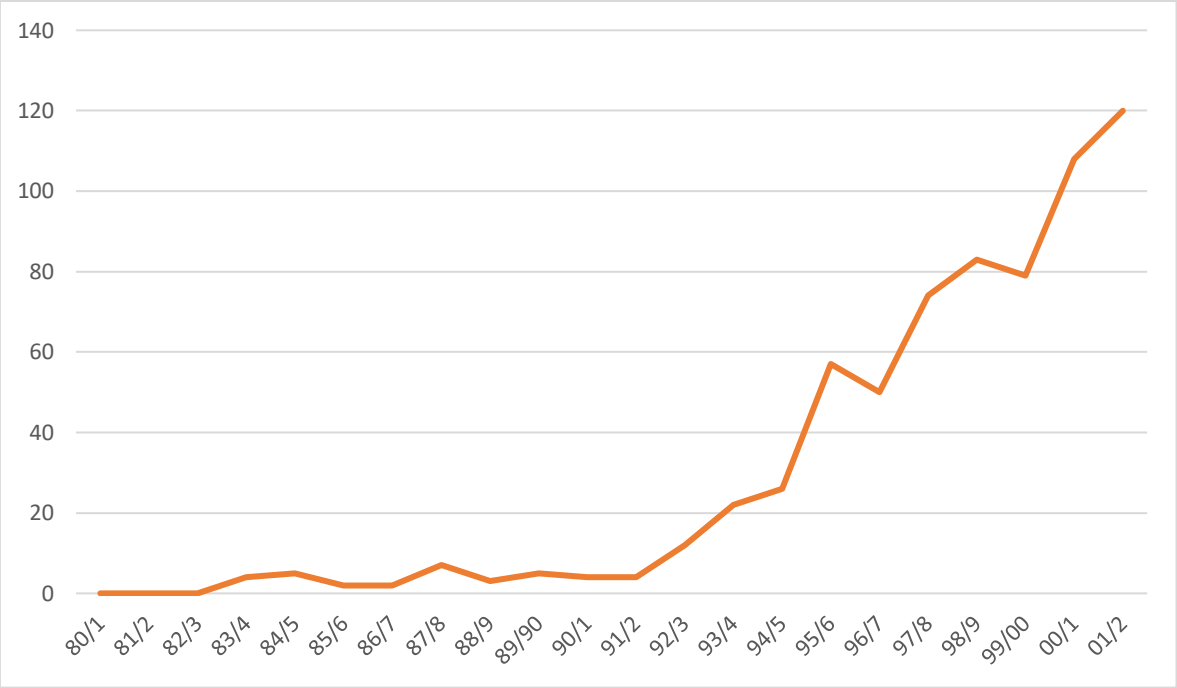
3- From middle to working class: athletics, cycling, soccer, boxing

Prize-fighting, football and pedestrianism were important traditional pastimes. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century, they underwent a process of codification and modernisation in England that profoundly changed their nature and gave way to modern day boxing, athletics and several codes of football. Largely developed by the English upper-middle classes attending public school and university, the new administrators emphasised amateurism, masculinity, fair play as well as physical and moral development. The sports thus created bore little resemblance to the old-established but declining pastimes they sought to reform, yet became highly popular among the lower classes, both in England and Ireland. This section opens with a brief overview of their development in Dublin and then analyses the extent of their democratisation. A second part focuses on amateurism and its dynamic when confronted with working-class dominance in sport. In the case of the GAA, amateurism was adopted but removed social barriers. In other cases,

[80] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/2/2, 7 Jan. 1886; *Sport*, 6 Mar. 1886, 3 Apr. 1886.
[81] *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Nov. 1886.
[82] *Irish Sportsman*, 1 Mar. 1884; Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, p. 235; Lowerson, *Sport and the English middle classes*, pp 158-61.
[83] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/3, 11 Mar. 1899; *Freeman's Journal*, 8 May 1899.

professionalism came to the fore as amateurs began to lose their sporting relevance while remaining firmly in control of sporting institutions.[84]

Figure 4.5: Number of civilian soccer combinations in Dublin, 1880-1902.



Overview

The Queensberry rules began to regulate boxing from 1867 onwards. They introduced gloves, weight categories, time limits, and emphasised skill over endurance.[85] They 'were designed to do for boxing what the establishment of strict amateur rules was doing for athletics, distancing the new sport from the old professionalism.'[86] For reformers, boxing had cut off its links with the prize ring and found a legitimacy as a branch of gymnastics.[87] Dublin University students availed of the new gymnasium, built in 1870, to practise and from there spread boxing to civilian society following the pattern previously seen in rugby, rowing and hurley.[88] Boxing then quickly became an integral part of military assault-at-arms contests or

[84] Harvey, *Football, the first hundred years*, pp 216-9; Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, pp 65-70.
[85] Brailsford, *Bareknuckles*, pp 157-60.
[86] Ibid., p. 158.
[87] *Irish Sportsman*, 4 Dec. 1886.
[88] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 23 June 1870.

annual galas of exclusive gymnastic clubs.[89] By 1882 a budding amateur boxing scene had firmly been implanted and two years later the Dublin Amateur Boxing Club held the first amateur championships at the Rotunda.[90] The County Dublin Boxing Club, founded by former Wanderers FC player D. C. Maturin, then took over and had 190 members by 1885.[91] The social tone of these early boxing reunions was in tune with the contemporary amateur orthodoxy, and in 1883 a building contractor was forbidden to enter competitions whereas his friend, a clerk, was allowed.[92] Within a few years, however, boxing in Dublin witnessed a rapid democratisation. The newspaper *Sport* took the organisation of the 1887 championship away from the established boxing scene and (unsuccessfully) sought to hire the great prize-fighter John L. Sullivan as referee instead of John Dunbar.[93] The meeting also witnessed the crowning of Peter Maher, a young employee of the Phoenix brewery 'whose attitude reminded us of the bold Bendigo', as the new middleweight champion and the beginning of his successful international career.[94] The cultural rapprochement of modern boxing with the prize ring was clear by 1887 – Bendigo had been an early nineteenth-century pugilist – and in subsequent years, professional boxer and promoter Jack Hickey began to introduce professional fights to the hitherto all-amateur programmes.[95] As a sport, boxing had been fundamentally transformed by its codification, but the paraphernalia in which it was wrapped in the 1890s clearly belonged to the old prize ring. Rags-to-riches stories, shady practices, populist tones, exaltation of physicality, and heavy commercial exploitation on the lines developed by the music hall industry had become integral to boxing as a global sport. By the 1890s, Dublin middle-class boxers had retreated

[89] *Irish Times*, 28 Dec. 1874; *Dublin Daily Express*, 28 May 1878; *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Mar. 1879.
[90] *Irish Sportsman*, 11 Feb. 1882, 3 Feb 1888; *Sport*, 23 Feb. 1884. The *Irish Sportsman* believed the Dublin Amateur BC had been founded in 1876 but no evidence in contemporary sources has yet been found, see *Irish Sportsman*, 22 Mar. 1884.
[91] *Dublin Daily Express*, 17 Oct. 1884, 22 Nov. 1884, 28 Sept. 1886.
[92] *Irish Sportsman*, 29 Dec. 1883.
[93] *Sport*, 5 Mar. 1887, 12 Mar. 1887. Dunbar was not hired either and this might have been a reason behind the scathing review of the event by the *Irish Sportsman* and the paper's call for a reorganisation of boxing on their own lines. See *Irish Sportsman*, 2 Apr. 1887.
[94] *Sport*, 26 Mar. 1887; Matt Donnellon, *The Irish champion Peter Maher: the untold story of Ireland's only world heavyweight champion and the records of men he fought* (2008), p. 12.
[95] *Sport*, 11 Aug. 1888, 10 Aug. 1889; *Irish Times*, 13 Dec. 1889.

to the privacy of gymnastic clubs and expensive private tuition and left the limelight to working-class fighters.[96]

The springing up of athletic meetings throughout the country in the 1870s involved artisans and labourers, first as part of the crowd and then increasingly as athletes.[97] The social harmony vaunted by moral guardians and based on a reciprocal sense of duty and respect between landlords, the rural bourgeoisie, and the labouring majority came crashing down in the face of the reality of a country in the midst of deep social and economic changes. Athletic meetings throughout the country repeatedly ignored the three cardinal values held in respect by the established Dublin clubs. Amateurism was regularly flouted by the attribution of prize money, Sabbatarianism lost ground at the turn of the 1880s, and the loyal connection with Britain started to be brought into question.[98] In Dublin, athletics had usually been the prerogative of the middle classes, yet the frank success of the 1880 Easter meeting at Lansdowne Road stadium was 'attributed partly to the genial weather, but principally to the increasing popularity of the sports, which are intended chiefly for the amusement of the artisan class.'[99] The following year a hundred yards competition held on a Sunday in the Phoenix Park attracted twenty-five entries, mostly grocers' assistants.[100] The growth of athletics throughout the working class eventually led to the channelling of its popularity into an administrative structure and the creation of the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1884. Cycling followed a similar path in the 1890s as safer and cheaper machines allowed a degree of democratisation. Women and elderly people were the prime beneficiaries of the arrival of the safety bicycle (1886) and of pneumatic tyres (1889), which considerably eased cycling.[101] But the price drop really made it affordable to skilled working men by 1900. Despite high prices still asked for a new machine (around £10), a vigorous second-hand market and offers of monthly instalments by cycling agents democratised the practice.[102] In the 1870s, the first organised clubs had a

[96] *Irish Sportsman*, 5 Nov. 1887; *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Mar. 1895. Eight boxing lessons were available for £1.
[97] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 138-41; Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, p. 168.
[98] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 141-8; Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, pp 169-71; *Irish Sportsman*, 10 Apr. 1880, 11 June 1881, 1 Oct. 1881, 28 Oct. 1882; *Sport*, 24 Mar. 1883.
[99] *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Mar. 1880.
[100] *Irish Sportsman*, 25 June 1881.
[101] Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, pp 40-4.
[102] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 22 Aug. 1898, 22 Apr. 1901; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 15 Apr. 1902, 7 June 1902; Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, pp 85-97. Monthly instalments started at 10*s*.

decidedly upper-middle-class tone and their ethos permeated the Irish Cycling Association (ICA), which was founded in April 1882.[103] By the 1890s, however, the elitist attitude had been greatly diluted, not least in the numerous cycling clubs linked to a workplace which had appeared in Dublin and by the inclusion of cycling at GAA meetings.[104]

Association football in Ireland was put on a firm footing in Belfast from 1878 onwards.[105] There, the social, economic and demographic proximity with Scotland provided a fertile ground for soccer to grow and the IFA was created in 1880 to cater to a rapidly expanding number of players. The local industrial class quickly took to the game and the Belfast soccer scene came to resemble those of northern British cities as working-class clubs eventually took precedence over the early middle-class outfits. In Dublin, the first matches appear to have taken place in November 1878 when the enlisted men of the Queen's Bay, 7th Hussars, and 7th Dragoons Guards met in the Phoenix Park before a return leg was organised shortly after in the Newbridge barracks (Kildare).[106] Trial games by the DUFC, Lansdowne FC, Cusack's Academy and Terenure College had also been taking place between 1878 and 1881, yet none of these early experiments lasted.[107] Finally, in November 1883, the Dublin Association FC (DAFC) and the Dublin University Association FC (DUAFC) were created around a nucleus of former English public-school boys, whether mediated through Scotland and Belfast or not.[108] Only from 1887 onwards did soccer spread to the local lower-middle and working classes when the teacher-training establishment of Marlborough Street (Central Model School), the local Royal Hibernian and Bell's academies, and a Stoneybatter cricket club respectively created the Britannia, Bohemian and Montpelier clubs, whose initial key members crucially hailed from Belfast.[109] These clubs came to represent the three pillars on

[103] *Irish Sportsman*, 22 Apr. 1882. It was initially called Irish Bicycle Association and changed its name in 1884 to include tricycles.
[104] Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, pp 33-4, 89.
[105] Martin Moore, 'The origins of association football in Ireland, 1875-1880: a reappraisal', *Sport in History*, xxxvii, no. 4 (2017), pp 515-9.
[106] *Dublin Daily Express*, 5 Nov. 1878, 19 Nov. 1878; *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Nov. 1878.
[107] Martin Moore, Early association football in Ireland: embryonic diffusion outside Ulster, 1877-1882', *Sport in History*, https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2021.1873830, (accessed 10 May 2021), p. 3; D'Arcy, *Terenure College 1860-2010, a history* (Dublin, 2009), p. 99; *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Dec. 1880, 28 Sept. 1881.
[108] *Dublin Daily Express*, 29 Oct. 1883; *Sport*, 24 Nov. 1883, 5 Apr. 1884.
[109] Garnham, *Association football and society*, p. 17; Ciarán Priestley, *The Enduring Legacy of an Idle Youth*. 2020 (2nd edition), https://bohemianfc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Enduring-

which Dublin soccer was founded. Bohemian was primarily a club of clerks and civil servants which retained a middle-class apparatus well into the twentieth century. Britannia trained a generation of national schoolteachers who then possibly introduced the game in their workplace. By 1901, association football was played in the Coombe, Rathgar and Inchicore national schools as well as in Morgan's (Castleknock) and Woodtown House (Rathfarnham) preparatory schools.[110] Elite schools, with the notable exceptions of Clongowes Wood and Castleknock College, largely shunned soccer.[111] There, rugby had been firmly established as the winter game and the growing association of soccer with the urban working class acted as a further repellent. Finally, the Montpelier club gathered tradesmen from the inner-city centre and chose to play on Sunday before reverting to Saturday as opposition was lacking.[112] Alongside the DAFC and DUAFC, Bohemian and Montpelier were instrumental in the creation of the Leinster branch of the IFA in 1892, which established an administrative framework for the game to develop.[113] The take-off in subsequent years was impressive. Cups and leagues were created to cater for an ever-increasing number of combinations. From 12 combinations mentioned in the press for the 1892/3 season, the total grew to 74 five years later and reached 119 by 1901/2 (figure 4.5, p. 226). In contrast with rugby and hockey, the early soccer scene in Dublin was marked by its transience. Small membership and the lack of private grounds at which to play meant that only a third of the 228 civilian combinations uncovered between 1883 and 1902 had been in existence for three years or more. In common with other sports, various agencies such as workplace (Phoenix/Ordnance Survey, Emerald/GPO), local churches (Molyneux), or else old Boys' Brigades networks (Corinthians, St Matthias, Swifts) were responsible for the creation of clubs.[114] By and large, however, local ties were prevalent in the sprouting of clubs in the inner-city centre and in the growing suburbs of Drumcondra,

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Legacy-of-an-Idle-Youth-2nd-Ed-2020.pdf, accessed 5 Aug. 2020, p. 8; *Sport*, 10 Dec. 1887; *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Oct. 1888.

[110] *Irish Daily Independent*, 3 Feb. 1901; *Dublin Daily Express*, 7 Oct. 1901; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 7 Nov. 1901, 22 Nov. 1901, 3 Dec. 1901.

[111] Clongowes Wood and Castleknock colleges initially played soccer due to the resemblance with their own gravel game. Association football was eventually dropped for rugby in 1907 and 1909 respectively, see Garnham, *Association football and society*, p. 67.

[112] *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Oct. 1888, 1 Oct. 1891; *Dublin Daily Express*, 29 Sept. 1890. Thomas Slemen and Joseph D'Arcy were reported as a tobacconist and carpenter in the 1901 census.

[113] *Evening Herald*, 27 Oct. 1892.

[114] Garnham, *Association football and society*, p 46; Power, 'The functions of association football', p. 55; *Irish Times*, 4 Oct. 1901.

Glasnevin, Kilmainham and Irishtown.[115] Club nomenclature reflected the streets or neighbourhoods where they came from and suggested an anchorage in the local community and its working population. The Reginald club, named after a street in the Liberties, was captained by Michael Balfe, who lived in nearby Watkins buildings and worked as a labourer in one of the area's numerous breweries.

Socio-economic analysis

Only soccer and cycling are considered in this section. Athletes were too loosely tied to a club or neighbourhood and boxing clubs did not gather sufficient press coverage to build a representative database. In boxing, describing the contestants as 'the lads' and the use of nicknames betrayed a lack of deference from journalists and hints at a largely working-class participation.[116] Eight boxers have been identified in this research. Thomas Lynch has not been tracked back to the census, but earned local fame for repeatedly breaking the peace while inebriated.[117] The seven others worked as labourers (6) or carpenter (1) in the city and one of them was illiterate.[118] Further evidence of the democratisation of boxing was its adoption by enlisted soldiers, especially within the Marlborough barracks, and within mechanics' institutes.[119]

Soccer and cycling had, like rugby, become deeply ingrained among the clerks and civil service employees in the city (49/137 of footballers returning an occupation, and 15/50 of cyclists). The Dublin economy emphasis on services rather than industries ensured that the level of working-class involvement did not reach those seen in Belfast or other northern British cities, yet a third of cyclists and over half of footballers were manual workers or shop assistants by 1900 (figure 4.6). Playing soccer on Sundays was not a taboo but remained marginal as the Leinster FA invariably scheduled its fixtures on Saturdays. Hence the decision of the bottle

[115] Julien Clénet, 'Association football in Dublin in the late nineteenth century: an overview', *Soccer & Society*, xxii, no. 8 (2021), p. 815.
[116] *Irish Daily Independent*, 3 Apr. 1894; *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 26 Apr. 1894; *Evening Herald*, 24 Mar. 1900.
[117] *Dublin Daily Nation*, 30 Jul. 1900; *Irish Daily Independent*, 12 Dec. 1900.
[118] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 3 Apr. 1894 (R. Lynam); *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Mar. 1898, 27 Apr. 1898, 22 Mar. 1899 (O. Mooney, M. Head, M. Keogh, E. McLoughlin); *Sport*, 9 Jul. 1898, 1 Jul. 1899 (J. Reed, J. Dewale). James Reed, of Gardiner Street, was the illiterate boxer.
[119] *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Dec. 1898; *Dublin Daily Express*, 21 Dec. 1903, 28 Jan. 1905, *Irish Times*, 12 Nov. 1904.

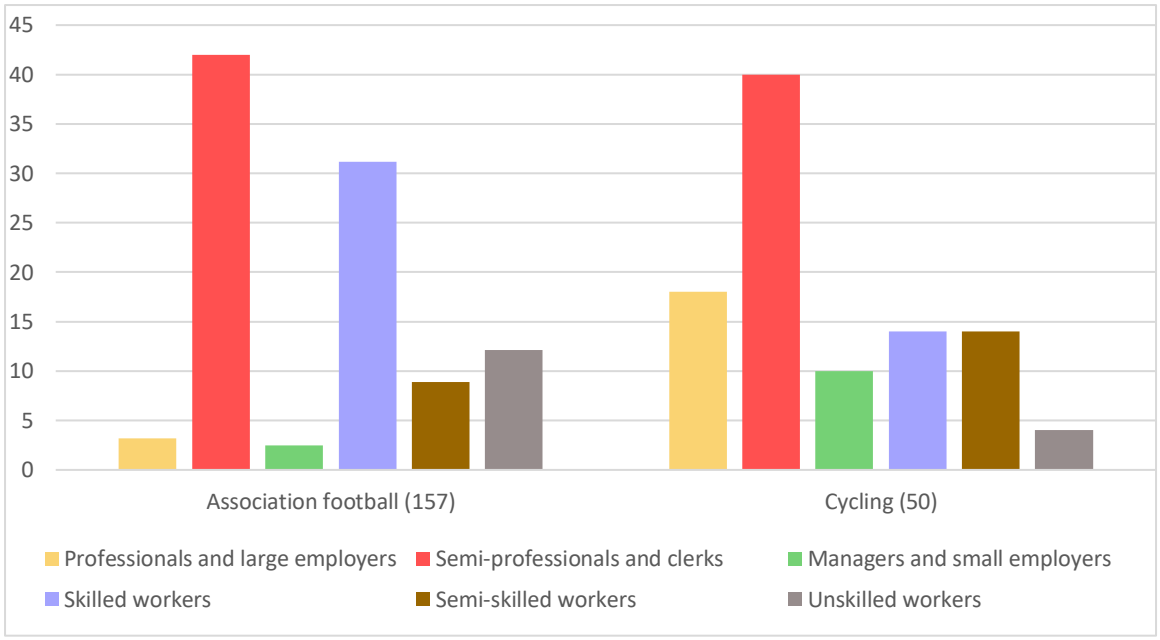
blowers of the Ringsend factory who founded the Pembroke FC to start their shift thirty minutes earlier during the week to finish by lunchtime on Saturdays.[120] The reduction of the working week to 52.5 hours in the printing trade was another reason behind their large involvement in soccer and the holding of a ten-club printing house league in 1900/1.[121] Conversely, the absence of employees from department stores and grocers' assistants frankly contrasted with the pattern of occupation seen in the Commercial cycling and rowing clubs, in athletics and in Gaelic games more generally. Not only could they not avail of the Saturday half-holiday, but most of them hailed from rural areas of Leinster and Munster where soccer remained largely undeveloped by 1900.[122] The socio-economic profile of soccer players also correlated with their place of residence. The great majority lived in the city (109/164) and its immediate suburban belt (50/164), precisely where industrial and commercial employments were found. That Irishtown, a working-class enclave within the wealthy township of Pembroke, came to be the hub of soccer in the city further revealed that it had become the game of 'the masses, not the classes'.[123]

The reasons why soccer reached out to those young men lay in its comparative advantages. It was cheap, exciting and easy to play.[124] Rules were clearly defined and universally adopted. Teams also required a smaller pitch and fewer players than Gaelic games and the light and informal administration contrasted with the heavy bureaucratisation of the GAA. Socially and culturally, soccer was not associated with the city's elite schools as were hockey and rugby, nor was it obviously linked to nationalism as was the GAA. Instead, it became increasingly indissociable from male urban working-class culture in Britain, and the values of grit, solidarity and hard work it became imbued with were equally appealing to Dubliners.[125] Finally, it was a formidable vehicle for civic pride.[126] The great majority of combinations unearthed in this study were based on streets or neighbourhoods and were rooted in their community. The Mountjoy Rovers team was made up of four sets of brothers, none above seventeen, who lived in the streets adjacent to

[120] Garnham, *Association football and society*, p. 49.
[121] Daly, *The deposed capital*, p. 71; *Evening Herald*, 14 Jan. 1901.
[122] Daly, *The deposed capital*, p. 133.
[123] Garnham, *Association football and society*, p. 68. Two of Ireland's current most successful clubs, Shelbourne FC and Shamrock Rovers, were founded there in 1895 and 1899 respectively.
[124] Ibid., pp 40-1.
[125] Holt, 'Football and the urban way of life', pp 72-7.
[126] Ibid., pp 77-83; Beaven, *Leisure, citizenship and working-class men*, pp 72-80.

Mountjoy Square East. The Midland Rovers were another juvenile team whose members hailed from a small area around Doyle's Corner in Phibsborough. All of them were allowed competitive fixtures in one of the Leinster FA cups or leagues, further fuelling a sense of local belonging and male bonding. The young age of the Dublin soccer community (119/161 were aged twenty or less) made them even more responsive to these factors.

Figure 4.6: Socio-economic distribution of cyclists and soccer players (%), 1895-1902.



The composition of cycling clubs, like soccer, revealed the different forces which underpinned sport in late nineteenth-century Dublin. Location was a predominant factor in the Kingstown and Fingal Rovers clubs. The latter membership, made up of farmers, grocers and clerks, reflected the local fabric of society. Employment also proved to be a strong factor governing participation in cycling and is seen in numerous workplace clubs.[127] The Chapelizod CC attracted the clerks of the Ordnance Survey (Phoenix Park) and employees of the Great Southern Railway Company (Inchicore), reflecting both local and occupational recruitment patterns. Tradesmen from the inner-city centre congregated in the Ivy CC, but department

[127] Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, pp 88-9.

store employees joined the Commercial CC, founded by the Dublin Drapers' Club.[128] Religious affiliation added another layer to club membership. The Ivy and Fingal clubs were essentially Catholic (14/14 of identified members) whereas the Kingstown and Chapelizod clubs clearly leaned towards a Church of Ireland membership (10/12). And there were clubs whose motley membership belied any attempt at categorising them. Such was the Al Fresco CC whose membership was religiously and geographically mixed (8 Catholic and 6 Protestants, 8 living in the city and 6 in the suburbs) and accommodated cabinet makers, a baker's assistant, clerks, brokers and Dublin University students

The fight for the control of athletics

The influx of tradesmen at athletic meetings throughout Ireland from the late 1870s onwards led to a polarisation on the question of amateurism which culminated in the creation of two irreconcilable national organisations by 1885. As in rowing, athletic meetings sprang up throughout the country at which prize money was regularly handed out, flouting the rules on amateurism.[129] The situation was made more sensitive by the chaotic state of athletic organisation in Dublin in the early 1880s. The growth in athletics essentially took place in the provincial towns of Leinster and Munster, where Sunday sports and field events were popular. In Dublin, the Protestant middle classes who had developed modern athletics since the 1860s looked to England for their programmes and had come to focus on track events, as well as walking and cycling, by the late 1870s. The disregard shown by Dublin administrators for Irish athletic traditions was accentuated by sheer snobbism, which reflected three divisions: middle classes and labourers, urban and rural, modernity and tradition. These differences were fuelled by the lack of a coherent and legitimate administration of athletics in Dublin. The College Races saw their sporting relevance steadily decline in the 1870s as civilian clubs rose in importance. Their standing as the fashionable event of the year was further challenged by the Irish lawn tennis championships held in Fitzwilliam Place since 1879. To add to their woes, the riotous behaviour of a large body of students during

[128] Ibid., p. 89; *Freeman's Journal*, 20 June 1900.
[129] Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, pp 169-71; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 143-4.

the 1878 edition led the University Board to cancel the 1879 sports.[130] Further irreverence towards the departing Lord Lieutenant in 1880 and a timetable clash with medical students' examinations then led to this edition being cancelled too.[131] The resuming of the sports in 1881 was an emasculated affair: a one-day event with attendance capped at 10,000, limited refreshment facilities and more decisively a renewed focus on it as a university rather than a social event.[132] The successive demise of the clubs which had shaped the Dublin athletics scene in the 1870s created a vacuum that was highly unsatisfactory to all those involved. The annual national championships were somehow still held, either organised by an *ad hoc* committee in 1881 or by a newly created Dublin Athletic Club between 1882 and 1884. Their prestige had, however, considerably waned, resulting in fewer entries, bad crowds, and indifferent sporting feats.[133]

To this situation were added the personal agendas of Michael Cusack and Valentine and John Dunbar. Cusack was the fiery headmaster of a successful civil service preparatory school and regular columnist in the local press. Born in County Clare, he settled in Dublin in 1874 where he quickly became a well-known figure in sporting circles.[134] A keen cricketer, rugby player and weight thrower, Cusack was also part of the small group of men administrating Dublin athletics in the early 1880s. He shared with them the two core principles of amateurism and athleticism. Played in the right spirit, sport instilled physical, moral and social values in its proponents. But his definition of amateurism drastically contrasted with that of his fellow administrators, who saw in it an efficient way of ensuring social segregation. His was based on an inclusive *bona fide* amateurism, with all classes involved. Rather than condone the hypocrisy of non-monetary prizes which were selected beforehand by the favourite or brought to the pawnbroker afterwards, Cusack was not opposed to small prize money to defray travelling expenses, similarly to the then ongoing debate in rowing.[135] He was also fond of field events and regretted their demise and replacement by sprint or walking races. His resentment became more

[130] West, *The bold collegians*, p. 41.
[131] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Athletics/3, 25 May 1880.
[132] Ibid., 16 June 1880; West, *The bold collegians*, p. 42.
[133] Tony O'Donoghue, *Irish championship athletics 1873-1914* (Dublin, 2005), pp 24-31.
[134] Marcus de Búrca, *Michael Cusack and the GAA* (Dublin, 1989), chapter 2.
[135] *Irish Sportsman*, 9 June 1883; *Sport*, 26 Jul. 1884; Dónal McAnallen, '"The greatest amateur association in the world"? The GAA and amateurism', in Cronin *et al*, *The Gaelic Athletic Association*, pp 157-8.

acute from the moment he became immersed in the Gaelic revival in 1882 which was manifested in his participation in the Gaelic Union and in his attempts at reviving hurling.[136] In the following two years, he grew even more dissatisfied with the Irish athletic elite and in November 1884 he co-founded the GAA with Maurice Davin, a widely respected athlete of truly international standard.

From 1882 onwards, Cusack came to repeatedly oppose the omnipresence of the Dunbar brothers. The leading Dublin athletic or cross-country clubs had either John or Valentine in their committee and both were the driving force behind the creation of the Cross-Country Association of Ireland in March 1881 or the stillborn Amateur Athletic Association of Ireland in 1881 and 1882.[137] Their energy and dedication to athletics were remarkable. The Dunboyne family farm was requisitioned for the first cross-country championship, meetings took place in the office of the *Irish Sportsman* and the newspaper also sponsored a cup for a five-mile race of the City and Suburban Harriers.[138] Like Cusack, they anxiously and repeatedly denounced the shortcomings of Irish athletics. For them, they were bedevilled by betting and shamateurism and needed a strong organisation at the helm, which would be modelled on the Amateur Athletic Association of England (AAA), created in April 1880.[139] John and Valentine, however, failed to acknowledge the blatant conflict of interest at the heart of their position. As administrators, they proclaimed themselves the true guardians of the athletic spirit. As journalists, they easily derided smaller rural meetings as not being *au fait* with the rules and etiquette of the sport.[140] As handicappers or judges, they were hired by race committees throughout the country to oversee their meetings. Whether their journalistic output was conditioned by employment, and how many country meetings availed of their service to secure a good word from the Dublin press is unknown. What is known is that both brothers could abuse their position at times. In 1883, Valentine had a rather cavalier way of dispatching his duties as judge and handicapper of the County Kerry Amateur AC sports. Having not been appointed for the 1884 edition, he retaliated by over-

[136] Paul Rouse, 'Michael Cusack: sportsman and journalist', in Cronin *et al*., *The Gaelic Athletic Association*, p. 52; Rouse, *The hurlers*, chapters 1 and 2; De Búrca, *Michael Cusack*, pp 60-3.
[137] *Dublin Daily Express*, 3 Mar. 1881; *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Aug. 1881, 3 May 1882. They were notably involved in the City and Suburban Harriers, County Dublin Harriers, and Dublin AAC.
[138] *Dublin Daily Express*, 11 Apr. 1881, 21 May 1884; *Irish Sportsman*, 18 Feb. 1882.
[139] *Irish Sportsman*, 1 Aug. 1881, 4 Nov. 1882, 28 Jul. 1883, 26 Jan. 1884.
[140] *Irish Sportsman*, 25 Sept. 1880, 10 June 1882, 15 Jul. 1882; Paul Rouse, 'Why the GAA was founded', in McAnallen *et al*, *The evolution of the GAA*, p. 82.

handicapping the Kerrymen at the subsequent Limerick sports.[141] Already in 1882 he had seen his licence as horserace starter revoked by the Turf Club as he accepted two engagements he knew he could not fulfil.[142] As for John, he profited from his secretaryship of the Cross-Country Association of Ireland to divulge information exclusively to the family newspapers.[143]

The combination of two conflicting athletics agendas from 1882 onwards, coupled with a weak organisational state of athletics in the country, was made untenable by a third factor: time. The establishment of the AAA put both sides under pressure as meetings began to be held under its rules, for lack of an alternative.[144] An Irish organisation was necessary for Cusack to stem the tide of English fashions in Irish athletics.[145] For the Dunbar brothers and their supporters, it was equally necessary to keep their position at the helm of Irish athletics. The question of who could play and legislate arose in athletics as in rowing in the 1880s, but with a drastically different outcome, which led to the creation of two competing associations split on social, as well as confessional and political lines. The changes brought about by the GAA in Irish sport were seismic. Here was an organisation that was avowedly Catholic, nationalist, specifically catered for the working class, and fashioned its own definition of amateurism. In return it attracted the opprobrium of the Dublin athletic and cycling elite. Not only did these latter feel uncomfortable with the cultural and political ethos of the GAA, but they risked exclusion from English athletics circles on ground of professionalism if they took part in a Gaelic meeting.[146] Faced with such a threat, the Irish Amateur Athletic Association (IAAA) was created in February 1885 on middle-class lines advocated by the AAA.[147] The IAAA had the backing of the ICA, of the majority of the Dublin clubs, of the University club, and of most of the well-established provincial clubs which were generally associated with middle-class institutions such as the Ulster Cricket Club, the Londonderry Academical Institute and the Dundalk FC. The GAA relied on a wealth of newly created clubs, mainly in the Leinster and Munster rural areas which became its

[141] *Sport*, 28 June 1884.
[142] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Oct. 1882.
[143] *Sport*, 7 Nov. 1885.
[144] *Irish Sportsman*, 15 Apr. 1882, 28 Jul. 1883.
[145] Paul Rouse, 'Why the GAA was founded', p. 84.
[146] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Jan. 1885.
[147] *Sport*, 28 Feb. 1885.

heartland.[148] After a year of tumultuous relations, both associations realised that they could not overcome their opponent and settled for a working rather than confrontational relation, which lasted until independence. The warming-up of relations involved mutually recognising records and suspensions while the GAA became open to ICA and IAAA athletes.[149]

Professionals and amateurs in the 1890s

In working-class sports the appreciation of professionalism came to change in the 1890s, fuelled by its adoption in English soccer from 1885 onwards and the promotion of sporting celebrities by the popular press. A less strenuous job and marginally higher rates of payment than contemporary industrial wages made it an enviable employment for the best players, notwithstanding the risk of injuries, short career lengths and denigration by all-round amateurs.[150] Soccer did not turn professional in Dublin before the Shelbourne FC side of 1906 even though the IFA had allowed it since 1894, with Belfast clubs rapidly availing of the new dispositions.[151] Attendance remained well below the Belfast levels and Dublin clubs could plainly not afford to hire players.[152] Besides, the leading clubs by 1900 were regimental teams, as well as the middle-class Bohemians and Freebooter clubs which showed little inclination to desist from amateurism.

A reversal of hierarchy was however clearly happening. For many, professionalism meant proficiency and was but the natural evolution of amateurism:

> Almost every class of sport has its own definition of an amateur, and everybody knows that there are different kinds of amateurs. The most recent kind of amateur we have met is the man who is not good enough to be a professional, like the amateur carpenter or the amateur gardener. Not very

[148] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Jan. 1885, 23 Feb. 1885, 1 Aug. 1885.
[149] Kevin McCarthy, *Gold, silver and green*, pp 18-9; For the ICA working 'harmoniously' with the GAA and IAAA, see *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Jan. 1893.
[150] Vamplew, *Pay* up, pp 204-38; Garnham, *Association football and society*, pp 74-81; Baker, 'Whose hegemony?', pp 9-10.
[151] Neal Garnham, 'Professionals and professionalism in Pre-Great War Irish soccer', *Journal of Sport History*, xxix, no. 2 (2002), pp 81, 86. The professionalisation of soccer in Ireland, even in industrial Belfast, was significantly less important than in England.
[152] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 194.

> long ago we saw a boxing match for a cup – an humble trophy to be sure – which was competed for by amateurs. After the match the successful competitor took the cup, and the hat was sent round for the unsuccessful man, who profusely thanked the audience for its kindness. So much for amateurism.[153]

The best amateurs tended to seek fame, fortune, or records in the American rings, Australian velodromes, or English athletic tracks. Peter Maher had a meteoric rise to amateur predominance in boxing in Ireland in 1887 and 1888 before turning professional and embracing an American career in the 1890s.[154] In the city, amateur fights were curtain-raisers for the professional bouts, highlighting again the reversal of status.[155] Amateur cycling and athletic clubs had become resigned to losing their best elements year after year. John Purcell and Tommy Conneff, the leading amateur long-jumper and mile runner, left for an American career in 1888. For Purcell, the motivation was clear. He had 'nearly won all the laurels [he could] lay claim to as an amateur' and 'would turn professional for the chance of winning one or two championships' against the cream of American athletes. He then added:

> when taking into consideration the respective merits of professionalism and the amateurism of the present day, as witnessed in England and the northern province of Ireland, in [his] mind the professional in infinitely superior to the amateur. Professionalism is in a certain sense a misnomer. This is equally applicable to amateurism.[156]

The best amateurs indeed easily flouted the rules. The stellar rise to fame of Tommy Conneff in 1885 and 1886 earned him a position on the commercial staff of *Sport*.[157] His employment really consisted in winning races to sell more papers. In August 1887, a victorious trip to the North of England championship was reported first-hand

[153] *Sport*, 25 Apr. 1903.
[154] *Sport*, 8 Dec. 1894.
[155] *Dublin Daily Express*, 10 Feb. 1891; *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 26 Apr. 1894.
[156] *Irish Sportsman*, 30 Jul. 1887.
[157] *Sport*, 30 Jul. 1887.

by Fred Gallagher of the *Freeman's Journal*, *Sport*'s parent company.[158] Less than a month later, the *Freeman's Journal* organised a four-mile match between Conneff and the then record-holder, Anglo-American E. C. Carter. The self-advertised 'race of the century' brought over twenty thousand spectators to the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) grounds in Ballsbridge and a substantial profit to the organisers.[159] Such success caught the attention of the Manhattan AC, which guaranteed him 'a remunerative situation' in New York. The *Irish Sportsman*, perhaps jealous of its rival, ironically encouraged him to take up the offer.[160] Successful Irish athletes followed this path in the 1890s. Alfred Stone gave up amateur weightlifting and his job at Scott & Sons (wholesale victualler) for a career in music hall in 1895.[161] John J. Mullen, Beauchamp R. Day, and George B. Tincler (the son of a solicitor and educated at the Rathmines Grammar School) all won national athletic championships with Dublin clubs before turning professional.[162] Balbriggan cyclist Harry Reynolds was a fish salesman and clerk earning £100 a year when he became the mile amateur world champion in August 1896 in Copenhagen. Within four months, the Enfield Cycle company had offered him £300 per year plus expenses to represent the brand in Australia. J. H. Healy, another cyclist, followed him and turned professional too.[163]

Cycling's position *vis à vis* amateurism was even more ambiguous as 'makers' amateurs' thronged velodromes. Those were successful riders whose bicycles, expenses and bonuses were taken care of by cycling companies and agents in exchange for successfully promoting the brand.[164] In Dublin, the extent of such practice remains unknown yet there was 'more than one prominent cyclist so intimately connected with the trade and its offshoots.'[165] It is difficult here not to see the jibe directed at Harvey DuCros jr. and Richard J. Mecredy. DuCros, hailing from a well-to-do financial family, was an outstanding all-round sportsman whose father

[158] *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Aug. 1887.
[159] Ciarán O'Reilly, 'Conneff, Thomas Patrick', https://dib.ie, accessed 10 Aug. 2021.
[160] *Irish Sportsman*, 3 Sept. 1887; *Sport*, 7 Jan. 1888, 5 Jan. 1889. Conneff officially turned professional in 1896 but the practices of the New York clubs of attracting the best athletes by guaranteeing them a well-paid job flouted the spirit of the rules.
[161] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 31 Oct. 1896.
[162] O'Donoghue, *Irish championship athletics*, pp 65-89, 109; *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Feb. 1897, 6 May 1901; *Sport*, 30 Jan. 1897.
[163] David Murphy, 'Reynolds, Richard Henry ('Harry')', https://dib.ie, accessed 10 Aug. 2021; *Dublin Daily Express*, 19 Jan. 1899.
[164] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 11 June 1894; Brian Griffin, 'All colours of the rainbow', p. 631.
[165] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 31 Dec. 1892.

and five brothers excelled in athletics, boxing, rugby or cycling. Mecredy meanwhile was the most prominent Irish cyclist, administrator and journalist of the 1880s and 1890s. An ardent preacher of elitism and amateurism, he vowed to 'quash' the nascent GAA in January 1885.[166] From 1886 he owned the *Irish Cyclist* newspaper conjointly with his brother Alexander, who in turn opened his own cycling factory in 1889.[167] In 1890, both DuCros and Mecredy enjoyed a short but irresistible streak of record-breaking feats due to their early adoption of the pneumatic tyre, recently developed by John Dunlop.[168] Incidentally, Harvey DuCros sr. had been director of the Pneumatic Tyre Company since its creation in 1889 and Mecredy a member of the board.[169] The hypocrisy did not stop at them. Harry Reynolds later admitted that he received £200 from the company's fund while still an amateur to endorse their product.[170] This was a recurring issue for the ICA throughout the 1890s and by 1900 the body decided to allow the registration of professionals within its ranks under specific conditions.[171]

4- The Gaelic Athletic Association

The organisation that best came to illustrate the democratisation of sport in Ireland in the 1880s was undoubtedly the GAA. This section presents an overview of the first two decades of the association in Dublin and first explains how and why the early development of Gaelic games in the city differed from national trends. Secondly, the reasons and extent of the association's decline in the 1890s are assessed.

[166] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Jan. 1885; Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, p. 93.
[167] *Dublin Daily Express*, 22 Oct. 1889; *Sport*, 26 Jul. 1890.
[168] Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, pp 43-6.
[169] Arthur Du Cros, *Wheels of fortune, a salute to pioneers* (London, 1938), pp 79-89. Eventually the six Du Cros brothers would be employed in the venture, rebranded Dunlop Pneumatic Tyre Company in 1896.
[170] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 19 Jan. 1899.
[171] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 20 Feb. 1900. Catering for professionals did not however mean the end of the separation with amateurs.

Overview

The founding of the GAA was the consequence of the empowerment of the labouring classes in Britain and Ireland, coupled with the highly politicised atmosphere of the late 1870s and 1880s in Ireland. Michael Cusack was the third element. In many respects he was the product of these twin evolutions. He profited from the generalisation of national education to establish himself as a successful teacher and journalist, and his active involvement in cultural nationalism started in 1882. To his imagination, enthusiasm and exuberance should be given the credit for establishing *ex nihilo* a country-wide sports organisation which appealed to the labouring class, aimed at preserving the Irish athletic, wrestling and handball traditions, revived hurling, and created a football code. Cusack's aspirations matured throughout 1883 and 1884 as he founded the Dublin Hurling Club (January-April 1883), Cusack's Academy Hurling Club (October-December 1883) and finally the Metropolitan Hurling Club (December 1883).[172] Meanwhile he cultivated his relationship with Davin, whose meticulous pragmatism complemented his flamboyant idealism.[173] In November 1884, both men joined forces and established the GAA. Its originality in the world of late nineteenth-century sport was dual and lay in its rural and amateur outlook. Whereas most British games tapped into the rapidly growing urban areas, such possibilities were limited in Ireland as only a third of the population lived in towns of two thousand inhabitants or more (as against three-quarters in England). This rural population was highly literate, connected to local centres by train, and had witnessed a significant economic development since the Famine despite occasional downturns. Eventually, this proved a fertile ground for a sporting organisation which espoused its social and cultural aspirations. The GAA also stood out from contemporary working-class organisations by embracing amateurism. But contrary to the middle-class doctrine, the association adopted an inclusive definition which segregated professionals on account of direct employment rather than social condition.[174] Socially inclusive, the GAA however remained a male organisation which perpetuated the sexual segregation then in vigour in most other sporting associations. Women were welcome as spectators and well-wishers but not as players, until camogie (a female

[172] Rouse, *The hurlers*, pp 5-23.
[173] Ibid., pp 31-7.
[174] McAnallen, 'The greatest amateur association', pp 157-60.

version of hurling) was devised in 1903.[175] Early camogie clubs were then linked to the Gaelic League, an association promoting Irish language and culture since 1893, and were embedded in the cultural revival, as were their male counterparts.[176] The creation of the Camogie Association in 1905, like hockey a decade earlier, resulted from increasing rates of secondary education among women and the concurrent growth of sporting outlets made available to them in and outside schools in the 1890s. A visible minority, they remained so even among middle-class women who were most likely to have been the beneficiaries of such evolutions.

The immediate popularity of the GAA stemmed from several factors. The effervescence of an avowedly Catholic and nationalist organisation coincided with political gains made by the IPP in the latter 1880s and created a favourable momentum. More significantly for its long-term development was its affordability and the wide scope of games it offered.[177] Socialising around games, dancing, music and drinking were, as in other sports, essential.[178] Finally, the GAA was embedded in the patterns of rural life, perpetuated the tradition of Sunday play, and anchored long-standing village rivalries within a sporting frame. The parish rule introduced at the 1886 annual convention and refined in April 1887 stipulated that clubs' boundaries should replicate Roman Catholic parishes.[179] Though the rule was largely evaded, and ill-suited to deal with the drastic fall in membership in the 1890s, its spirit was nevertheless adhered to: GAA clubs in rural areas reproduced geographical divisions and built their popularity upon re-enacting local and long-standing rivalries.[180] Territoriality, centred on townlands, parishes, and eventually counties, was at the heart of the GAA from its inception and one of its most appealing attributes.[181]

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[175] Regina Fitzpatrick, Paul Rouse, and Dónal McAnallen, 'The freedom of the field: camogie before 1850', in McAnallen *et al*., *The evolution of the GAA*, pp 123-5.
[176] Ibid., pp 125-6.
[177] *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Jan. 1890. The annual subscription to the St Patrick club in Inchicore was 6*s*., payable in monthly instalments of 6*d*.
[178] Neal Garnham, 'Accounting for the early success of the Gaelic Athletic Association', *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxiv, no. 133 (2004), pp 71-6; Tom Hunt, 'Parish factions, parading bands and sumptuous repasts: the diverse origins and activities of early GAA clubs', in McAnallen *et al*., *The evolution of the GAA*, pp 95-8.
[179] *Sport*, 20 Nov. 1886; Rouse, *The hurlers*, p. 123.
[180] For the presence of several clubs within a parish, or the difficulties of adhering to such a rule in small parishes or in time of decline, see *Sport*, 30 Apr. 1887, 7 Jan. 1888, 22 Mar. 1890, 14 June 1890, 23 Jan. 1892.
[181] Hunt, 'The GAA: social structure', pp 193-7.

This was wholly replicated in rural Dublin. But these defining features were tuned down in the city and suburbs. There, the Sunday Closure Act did not apply and public houses remained open throughout the weekend.[182] The spectrum of entertainment available to the working class was also much broader. Music halls, theatres, circuses, exhibitions, youth organisations, and mechanics' institutes were counter-attractions that had developed quickly since the 1870s. The virtual monopoly on organised sport that the GAA had in many rural areas was absent too in the capital as soccer, cycling, and cricket to some extent contested its hegemony among the city's working class. Finally, geographical boundaries and rivalries meant little in a city where a third of the population was born outside the county or in recently built suburbs. The link between a club and its community was further weakened by the dearth of playing pitches in the city, the difficulty of securing long leases in the suburbs, and the merging of clubs.[183] Instead, the development of Gaelic clubs in Dublin followed social ties. As in cricket, rugby and soccer, teams sprang from streets and neighbourhoods (Crumlin Independents, Isle of the Sea), public houses (Lord Edward), teacher-training colleges (Erin's Hope), and cultural institutions such as the Gaelic League or Celtic Literary Society (Éire Óg, Fianna na hÉireann).[184] Workplaces too provided an essential pre-established socio-economic network for organising sport.[185] Grocers' assistants joined the Faughs, Davitt, Commercial, or Grocers' Assistants clubs. Drapers famously made up the highly successful Kickham club. Brewery workers played for the Young Ireland and Phoenix clubs, GPO staff for the Thomas Davis club, railway employees for the Dargan club, and so on.[186] Finally, territoriality was most strongly expressed among immigrant communities who recreated in clubs the networks of their home counties. The Kickhams and Faughs clubs were made of Tipperary men, the Shilmallier club of Wexford immigrants, and a Claremen's Hurling Club was established in November 1901.[187] The dichotomy which existed between urban and rural clubs is confirmed by their socio-economic analysis.

[182] Garnham, 'Accounting for the early success', p. 73.
[183] Nolan *et al*, *The GAA in Dublin*, pp 59, 111.
[184] Ibid., pp 1201-78.
[185] Hunt, 'Parish factions', pp 89-90.
[186] Ibid.; *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 17 Nov. 1900; *Irish Daily Independent*, 24 Nov. 1900; Rouse, *The hurlers*, p. 89.
[187] Nolan, *The GAA in Dublin*, pp 24, 58; *Sport*, 30 Jul. 1887; *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Nov. 1901.

Figure 4.7: Place of birth of Dublin GAA players (%), 1895-1902.

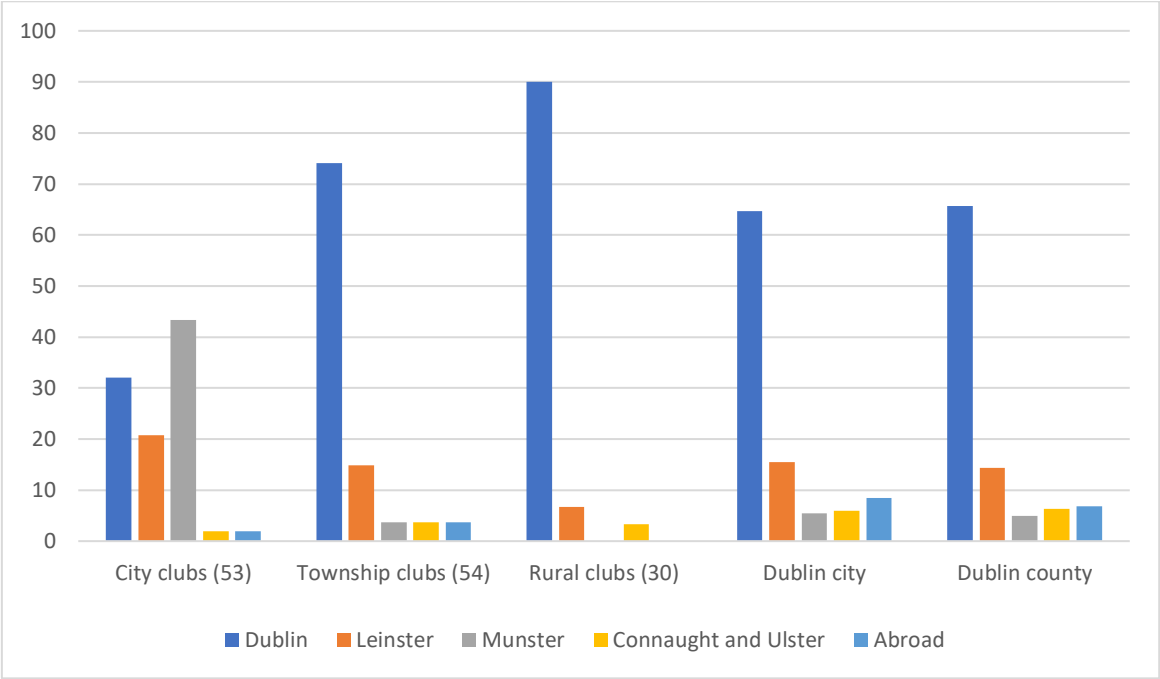
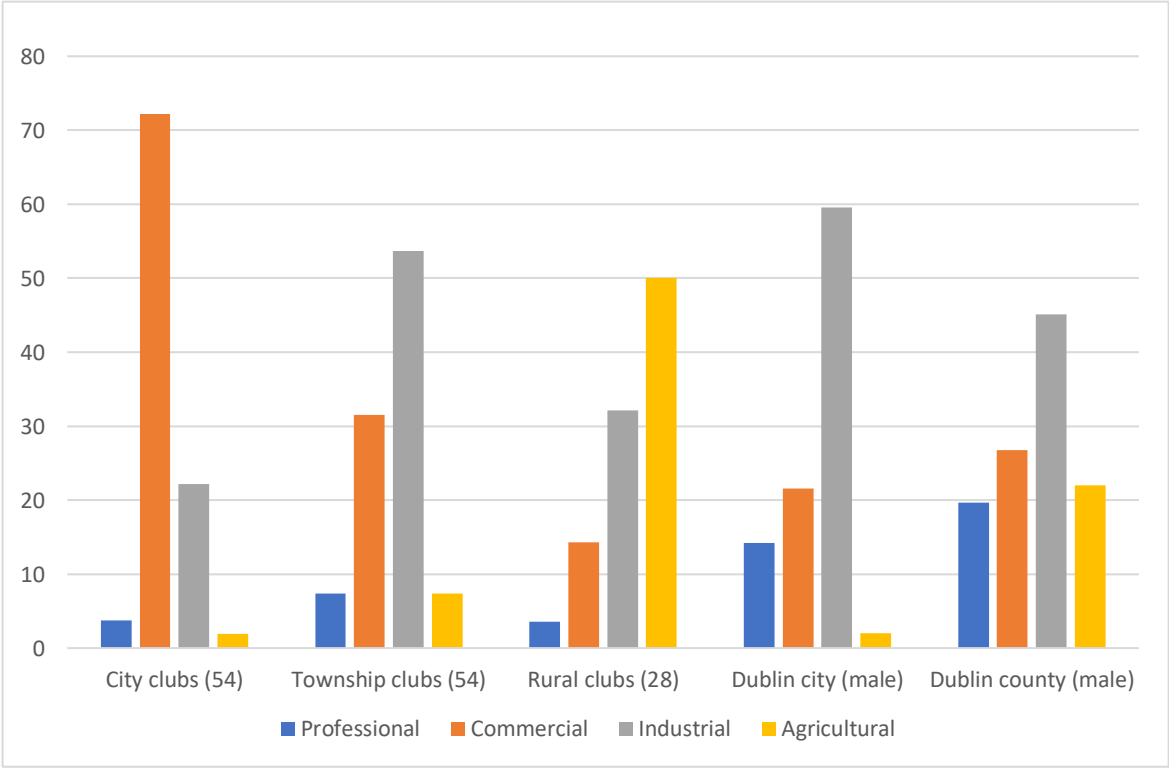
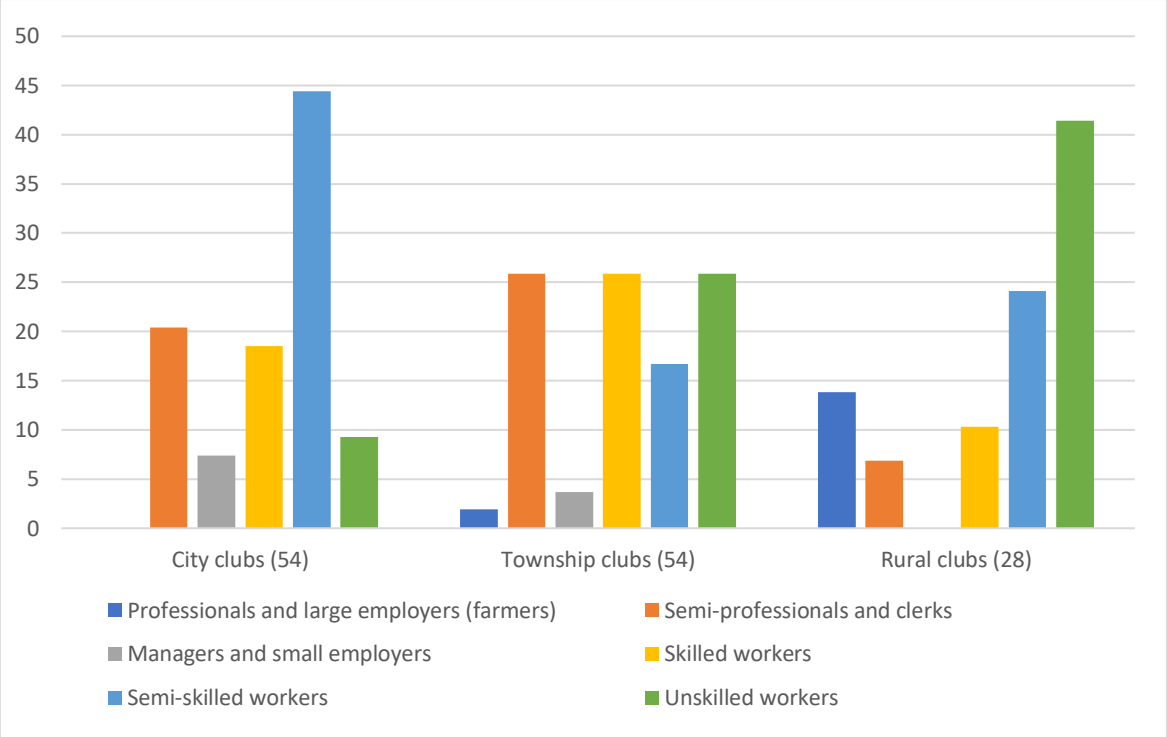


Figure 4.8: Socio-economic distribution of GAA players (%), 1895-1902.





City and county: socio-economic analysis

Rural and suburban clubs showed a broad alignment with the local fabric of their community. Players were overwhelmingly born in Dublin, and the pattern of occupation reflected the neighbourhood they grew up in, with the notable exception of the professional classes which were underrepresented. Suburban clubs relied on the commercial and industrial classes for their membership while rural clubs had mostly farmers and agricultural labourers within their ranks (figures 4.7 and 4.8).[188] With around fifty members, rural clubs were smaller than those in the city or in the suburbs, where membership of a hundred and upward was common by the latter 1880s.[189] They were thus more affected by the reversal of fortune following the enthusiasm of early years, by the loss of influential players or by the administrative shortcomings and political events that weakened the GAA in the 1890s. By 1901,

[188] In the 1901 census, 4 players out of 29 returned general labourer as occupation and have been counted as industrial workers. They may have been agricultural labourers which would have bolstered their importance even more.

[189] Nolan, *The GAA in Dublin*, pp 29-30. The Clondalkin, St Doulough's, Howth, Clontarf, Lusk, Naul, Rush, Swords and Oldtown clubs had a maximum of fifty-five members in 1889. For an element of comparison, the Wolfe Tone (Bluebell), Grocer's Assistant and St Patrick (Kilmainham) had over hundred members in 1887, the *Freeman's Journal* club counted over hundred fifty men, and the Dundrum and Davitts (city) had around two hundred members. See *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Feb. 1887; *Sport*, 6 Aug. 1887, 3 Sept. 1887, 10 Dec. 1887.

less than twenty percent (13/66) of the recorded rural clubs had been active for five years or more, as against a third for suburban and city clubs (17/44 and 27/76 respectively). The small amount of data obtained for rural players is enough to draw some conclusions but remains too limited to establish relevant comparisons with the studies made in Kerry, Westmeath and Leinster by McElligott and Hunt, who have been able to distinguish between farmers and farm labourers and to contextualise these findings in their respective settings.[190]

The socio-economic profile of city players was drastically different. They were essentially economic migrants from the rest of Leinster (21.2%) and especially Munster (42.3%) who found work in the city's department stores or as grocers' assistants. Their origins and living conditions fashioned their sporting habits and contributed to giving early Dublin GAA its distinctive nature. As immigrants, they turned to Gaelic games because they were familiar with them. As shop assistants, they did not avail of the Saturday half-holiday and so joined the sole body which advocated Sunday play. Barmen, who worked in afternoon, even resorted to Sunday morning matches.[191] Hunt adds that employees in retail and hospitality often lived together in accommodation provided by their employers. The natural bonds created by sharing similar origins, employment, and living space (and the wish to escape employers' supervision) 'allowed for ease of organisation from a GAA club perspective.'[192] Familiarity, companionship, emulation, and a degree of personal freedom were for these uprooted young men key elements in deciding to engage with Gaelic games. Unlike in rural areas, this was not expressed in terms of townlands or parishes, but in workplace or place of origin.

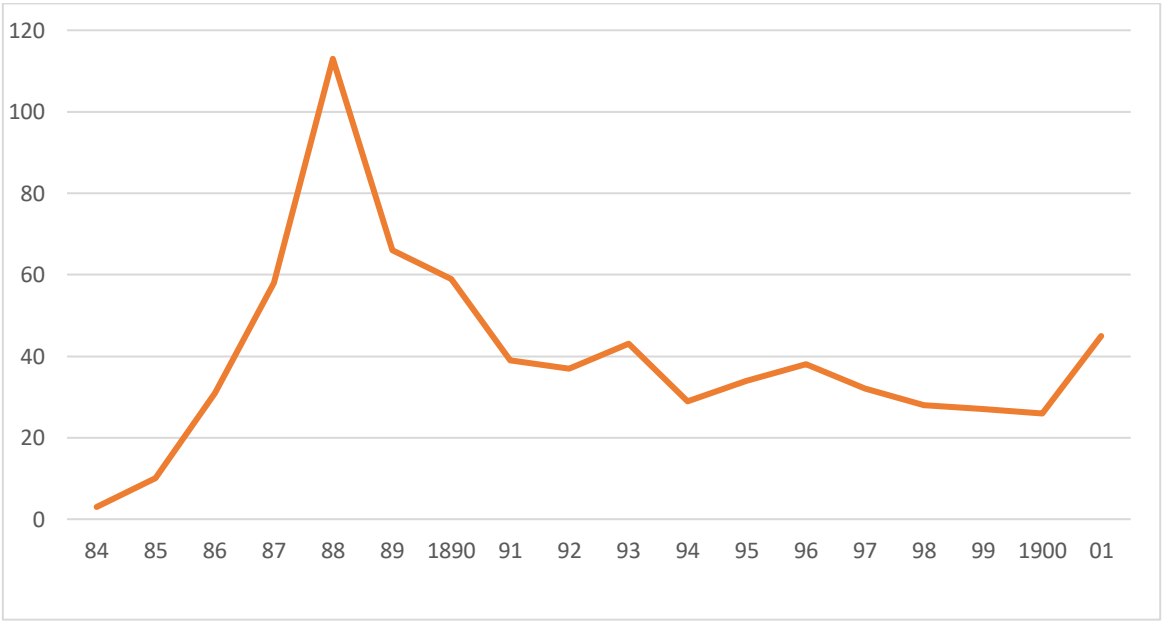
Dissension and administrative shortcomings: the 1890s

The roots of the nationwide decline of the GAA in the 1890s lay in three factors. First, an economic crisis resulted in rural emigration. Second, the take-over of the GAA executive by the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), a nationalist secret society advocating physical force, and their staunch support of Parnell during the

[190] Hunt, *Sport in Victorian Ireland*, pp 211-5; Tom Hunt, 'The GAA: social structure', pp 183-202; McElligott, *Forging a kingdom*, pp 134-45.
[191] Faughs GAA minute book, 19 Dec. 1885; *Sport*, 11 June 1898.
[192] Hunt, 'The GAA: social structure', p. 197.

Split (a political crisis in 1890-1 which witnessed the fall of Parnell as leader of the IPP) antagonised the Catholic Church. Finally, the poor administration and structural weakness of Gaelic games as sports hindered their development.[193] These factors applied to Dublin with varying importance (figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9: Number of Gaelic games combinations in Dublin, 1884-1901.



Emigration cannot be considered a primary factor in the numerical decline of the GAA in Dublin in the 1890s. Between 1891 and 1901, the population of the city increased by 6.2%, of the suburbs by 13.4%, and of rural Dublin by 2.9%.[194] The arrival of economic migrants from Munster should even have bolstered participation in Gaelic games in the city.[195] Rural clubs such as the Ben Edars of Howth, however, found it difficult to stem the departure of key players.[196] Less fortunate were the

[193] Marcus de Búrca, *The GAA, a history* (Dublin, 1999, 2nd edition), pp 25-47; Simon Gillepsie and Roddy Hegarty, 'Camán and crozier: the Catholic Church and the GAA 1884-1902', in McAnallen *et al*., *The evolution of the GAA*, pp 118-22; Richard McElligott, '"Quenching the prairie fire", the collapse of the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1890s Ireland', *Irish Economic and Social History*, xli (2014), pp 55-6, 63-6.
[194] 1901 Census of Ireland, vol. 1, part 1, no. 2, vii; Ibid., vol. 1, part 1, no. 2(a), p. 2. In this instance, the townships of Clontarf, Drumcondra and Kilmainham are counted as suburban even though they were integrated into the city in 1900.
[195] Ibid., vol. 1, part 1, no. 2(a), p. 38. The proportion of Dublin city residents born in Munster increased from 4.3% to 4.9% between 1891 and 1901, whereas Leinster-born residents declined from 17.3% to 16.2%.
[196] *Irish Daily Independent*, 28 Jan. 1892.

O'Donnell Aboos of Lucan, who were dissolved in 1890 when some of their twenty-one playing members (just about enough to field a team) left the country.[197] Overall the situation was not as severe as in other counties, yet Dublin officials deplored in February 1895 that 'emigration deplete[d] the clubs of their best men.'[198]

The falling-out between the IRB and the Catholic Church was likewise not as strongly felt in Dublin as in other parts of the country. Fenians never totally succeeded in gaining control of the county board, and conversely Archbishop Walsh was not the most vocal in his condemnation.[199] Commentators came to believe that the interview he gave to the press in July 1889 was 'in effect a green light to the GAA in Dublin'.[200] This was not the case. The archbishop's intervention was essentially a reaction to a letter published a day earlier in the London press. A correspondent had argued that Irish bishops decided to oppose the GAA as they believed football was 'too exciting to be suited to the "Celtic temperament"' and that the government seditiously promoted Fenianism within the organisation to divide Irish nationalists. Walsh first answered by explaining to the British public that the stage Irishman, childish and intemperate, was not an adequate description of Irish footballers. He then implied, rather than stated or proved, that the rumours of plotting were true. The innuendos he used were sufficient both to put opprobrium on the government and present the IRB as their tools. The interview was not a defence nor a condemnation of the GAA but an easy political shot at his adversaries.[201] More decisive was the Church opposition shown to Parnell during the Split, whereas the Dublin County Board remained loyal to him and eventually turned up in force at his funeral in October 1891.[202] The subsequent fall-out greatly affected membership. Again, rural clubs were more likely to be affected due to lower numerical strength and to the greater social power held by the Church in villages and small towns. A bad situation was made worse by the election of the always divisive Michael Cusack as secretary of the Dublin County Board in 1893, prompting more clubs to disaffiliate.[203] Cusack's relationship with the GAA since 1884 had met

[197] *Sport*, 26 Mar. 1892.
[198] *Irish Daily Independent*, 16 Feb. 1895.
[199] Nolan, *The GAA in Dublin*, p. 26; De Búrca*, The GAA: a history*, p. 64.
[200] Nolan, *The GAA in Dublin*, p. 26; *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Jul. 1889, 31 Jul. 1889.
[201] For a scathing analysis by the unionist press, see *Dublin Daily Express*, 1 Aug. 1889.
[202] Nolan, *The GAA in Dublin*, pp 33-36.
[203] Ibid., pp 38-9.

with more lows than highs since his personal approach to administrative duties and committee work led him to being ousted as secretary in 1886. He had kept a low-key involvement in GAA affairs but became a prolific and acerbic commentator on Gaelic affairs through his own *Celtic Times* newspaper, published briefly in 1887, which brought him further antipathy.[204]

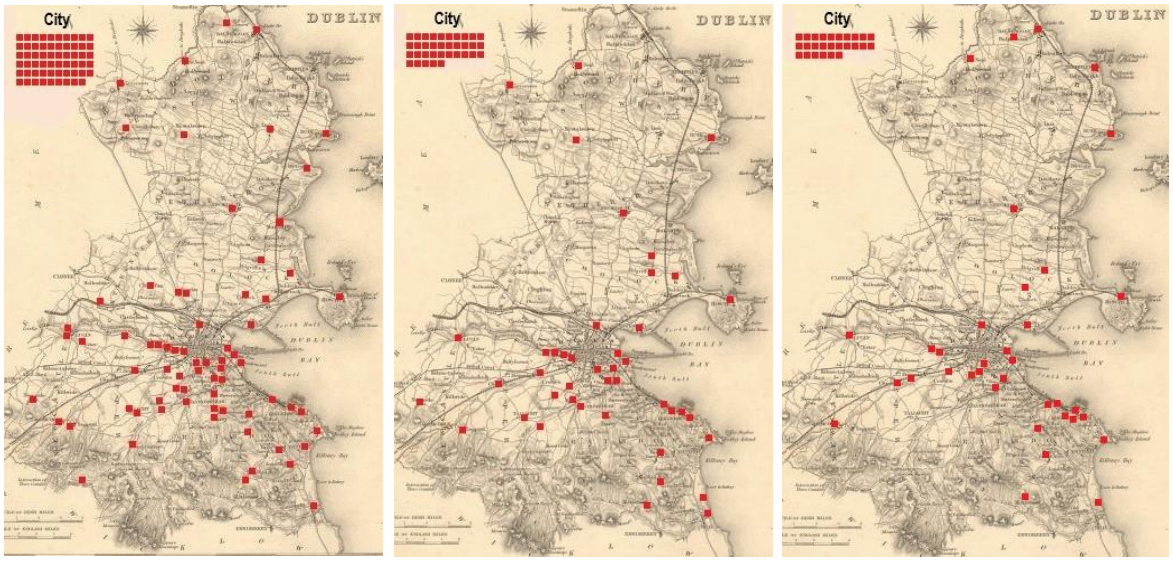
Loss of enthusiasm and constant political bickering undermined the outstanding achievements of the GAA in its first decade, and the problems were made even more acute by administrative shortcomings.[205] The heavy bureaucratisation of the Association considerably slowed down the holding of matches. Clubs were prevented from playing against non-affiliated ones, their fixtures and tournaments had to be previously ratified by the County Board, as did transfers of players between clubs. Delays and reports plagued the holding of championships, and countless protests led to several editions being decided in boardrooms.[206] The semi-final of the 1900 Dublin hurling championship, between the Commercials and the Grocers' Assistants, is an example of an ill-managed situation where lack of goodwill and a slow and weak administration unduly delayed the competition. The match was meant to happen initially on 15 September 1900, when the Grocers' team failed to show up. The fixture was then rescheduled a fortnight later but was again postponed as the Commercials were grieving the loss of a member's brother. The game was finally played, and won by the Commercials, on 14 October. The validity of the tie was immediately contested by the losing side, who deemed the size of the ground did not conform with regulations. At the following meeting of the Dublin County Board, no decision was made as a senior member of the committee was absent. After further deliberations and a measurement of the pitch, a replay was granted to the Grocers. On 20 January 1901, the teams were ready to finally settle the matter when the Commercials refused to play owing to the absence of their captain. The referee was thus left with no other choice than to award the game to their opponents, a decision which was upheld by the Dublin County Board. The long-awaited final between the Grocers' and Faughs nevertheless failed to take place on 3 February, as disgruntled Commercials players interrupted the

[204] Rouse, 'Michael Cusack: sportsman and journalist', pp 54-8.
[205] Richard McElligott, 'Contesting the fields of play: the Gaelic Athletic Association and the battle for popular sport in Ireland, 1890-1906', *Sport in Society*, xix, no. 1 (2016), p. 5.
[206] *Sport*, 11 Nov. 1893; *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Aug. 1892, 7 Sept. 1892, 6 May 1895.

proceedings. Their club was immediately suspended for a year by the County Board, and reinstated mere weeks later at the county annual convention. The saga came to an end on 31 March 1901, when the Grocers convincingly beat Faughs and won the 1900 Dublin hurling title.[207] In the meantime, the Leinster FA had overseen the beginning and completion of three cups and five leagues involving over eighty teams.

Figure 4.10: Location of Dublin GAA combinations.

1885-90 1891-5 1896-1900



Note: when two or more clubs existed concurrently in the same locality, dots have accordingly been attributed. If two clubs existed in a locality but not concurrently, only one dot has been attributed.

Such shortcomings impaired the GAA in its first decades and sharply contrasted with the highly efficient bureaucracy of the IRFU or the more informal and free-flowing administration of the Leinster FA.[208] Practical considerations further handicapped Gaelic games *vis à vis* soccer. It was more difficult to muster seventeen players than eleven and an official ground was about twice the size of

[207] *Sport*, 22 Sept. 1900, 29 Sept. 1900, 20 Oct. 1900, 27 Oct. 1900, 26 Jan. 1901, 6 Apr. 1901; *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Feb. 1901, 6 Feb. 1901, 28 Feb. 1901, 11 Mar. 1901.
[208] Nolan, *The GAA in Dublin*, p. 76. No hurling and football championships were held in Dublin in 1902 to 'clear the backlog of competitions'.

an association football pitch.[209] In the context of declining membership and limited access to playing fields, these were severe hindrances. The temptation to link the decline of the GAA with the growth of other sports is confronted with a lack of evidence. In the Midlands, cricket came to replace Gaelic games in the 1890s, but this research did not observe a recrudescence of teams in rural Dublin at the time (figures 4.14 and 4.15, pp 262-65).[210] In north-west Ulster, association football was the greatest beneficiary of the decline of Gaelic games, and this might also have been the case in Dublin.[211] But since soccer failed to spread beyond the city and immediate suburbs, it remains uncertain which sports the rural population reverted to when the GAA collapsed there in the 1890s.

Revival in early twentieth century

What figure 4.9 does not show are the structural changes that began to affect Gaelic games from the mid-1890s and whose results would only become fully apparent from early twentieth century. The election of Richard Blake as secretary of the Association in 1895 led to a restructuration and harmonisation of Gaelic football and hurling rules towards faster and more free-flowing games which would appeal to players and spectators alike.[212] For him, the GAA was a sporting body first and foremost and should abstain from engaging in politics, since bitter faction rivalries had severely damaged its reputation in its first decade. This position was quickly made untenable and led to his controversial dismissal in 1898. His apolitical line was resented within the association by influent administrators, led by Frank Dineen, who were tied to the IRB.[213] Blake's stance also ran contrary to the renewed cultural nationalism which gathered pace in the 1890s and attracted a generation of educated and politicised young men and women who insisted upon de-anglicising Ireland and rekindling with a timeless sense of Irishness. The Gaelic revival was no unified and centralised movement yet significant overlap in membership and

[209] The contemporary press hinted that the reduction from 21 to 17 players in a Gaelic team in 1892 might have been due to the difficulty of finding so many available players. See *Sport*, 21 May 1892.
[210] McElligott, 'Contesting the fields of play', pp 7-8.
[211] Ibid., pp 8-9.
[212] McElligott, *Forging a kingdom*, pp 160-2.
[213] William Murphy, 'Blake, Richard Francis', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, accessed 3 May 2022.

objectives was observed between its various components.[214] The Gaelic League (1893) essentially focused on promoting the Irish language but, like the GAA, crucially provided places to meet, learn, socialise, and dance.[215] In Dublin, several hurling clubs, such as the Keatings or Desmonds, grew out of League branches.[216] On 28 January 1900, over a thousand leaflets were distributed by members of the Grocer's branch of the Gaelic League around Jones's Road stadium as the Commercial HC (likely made up of grocer's assistants) met Tullaroan of Kilkenny.[217] Conversely, the Dublin County Board contributed to funds set up by the League towards the relief of distress in the west or towards promoting the Irish language.[218] Even though the GAA essentially retained a working-class support in the county and had a social tone somewhat lower than that of the Gaelic League, several socio-economic similarities were observed. According to Timothy McMahon, around sixty percent of the League members between 1894 and 1899 in Dublin were minor civil servants, teachers, clerks, or shop assistants.[219] These were people ascending the social ladder, and most of them hailed from rural districts.[220] The correlation between occupation in civil service or retail, place of birth, and possibly a familiarity with the Irish language since youth observed in membership of the League thus resembled the profile of GAA players in the city. This did not mean that all Gaelic footballers and hurlers showed interest in Irish culture, nor that language enthusiasts necessarily enjoyed the rough and tumble of hurling. What it meant, however, was that from the mid-1890s the GAA became firmly attached to the Gaelic revival wagon and was helped in that respect by a new generation of administrators at local and national level who were versed into cultural nationalism.

The centenary commemorations of the 1798 insurrection were thus largely embraced by the GAA as tournaments were set up throughout the country.[221] In Dublin, the Celtic Hurling Club formed its own '98 Centenary Club while the Robert

[214] Cathal Billings, 'Speaking Irish with hurley sticks: Gaelic sports, the Irish language and national identity in revival Ireland', *Sport in History*, xxxvii, no. 1 (2017), pp 27-9.
[215] Timothy G. McMahon, '"All creeds and all classes"?: just who made up the Gaelic League?', *Éire-Ireland*, xxxvii, no. 3 & 4 (2002), p
[216] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 20 Dec. 1900; *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Mar. 1903.
[217] *Irish Daily Independent*, 30 Jan. 1900.
[218] *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Sept. 1898, 28 Dec. 1900.
[219] McMahon, '"All creeds and all classes"?', pp 139-45.
[220] Ibid., p. 146.
[221] *Irish Daily Independent*, 8 Jan. 1898; *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Jan. 1898, 18 Sept. 1898, 28 Sept. 1898; McElligott, *Forging a Kingdom*, pp 115-6.

Emmet FC (Milltown) and Wolfe Tone FC (Kingstown) contributed to the Wolfe Tone and United Irishmen Memorial Committee.[222] The momentum was tragically kept going as the outbreak of the Second Boer War (1899-1902) further polarised Irish society over its role and position within the British empire. Throughout the country and in Dublin, Gaelic clubs adopted the names of leading Boer leaders as a mark of sympathy.[223] From 1901, the reinstalment of bans on playing or attending cricket, hockey, soccer, and rugby matches, and the creation of camogie in 1903, further revealed the increasingly cultural and nationalist stance held by the GAA. Such effervescence brought a revival of sorts. In Dublin, 25 clubs were affiliated to the county board in 1895, 38 in 1898, but by 1904, the number had doubled to 80. Meanwhile, the Gaelic League had quintupled its number of branches between 1899 and 1902 and thereafter continued to grow until 1908.[224] From the mid-1890s, the GAA as a sporting association had restructured hurling and football to offer more exciting games. As a cultural body, it had embraced the Gaelic revival and furthered its position as the great sporting outlet of the nationalist community. The rapid reversal of fortunes observed from the turn of the century is beyond the scope of this thesis, yet its roots were clearly identifiable in 1890s Dublin.

5- Sport in the workplace

Sport associated with the workplace grew in importance in the 1870s when it remained essentially linked to middle-class institutions or professions. A significant increase in number and in the variety of trades represented was witnessed from the 1880s and fitted the broader development of sport in Dublin at the time. Its extent, and the role of employers in providing their workforce with facilities, are here appreciated. Work-related sport participated in the democratisation of sport, yet also contributed to further the gender divide in sports participation as women experienced lower levels of employment and lower wages. Sport in the context of work thus remained seen exclusively as a tool for male cohesiveness.

[222] *Dublin Daily Nation*, 14 Dec. 1897; *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Nov. 1898.
[223] Rouse*, Sport & Ireland*, p. 209.
[224] McMahon, '"All creeds and all classes"?', p. 122.

Figure 4.11: Occurrences of cricket combinations by sector of activity, 1870-89.

	1870-9	1880-9
Law	8	7
Bank – finance	17	13
Hospital	1	10
Public sector – RIC	19	21
Communication – transport	6	26
Newspaper	3	7
Institute – trade union	3	13
Commercial – industrial	8	29
Total	65	126
Total Dublin	573	706

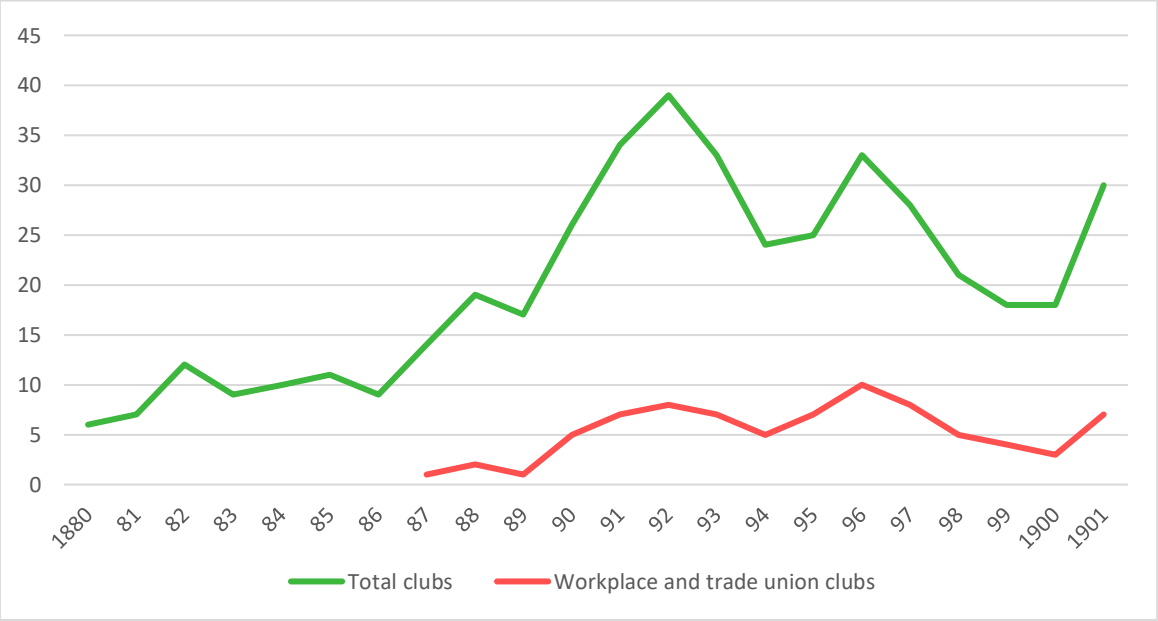
Note: this table adds annual occurrences and does not represent the number of combinations in each category. For example, in the 1880s, the Irish Bar team was active six seasons and the Probate Court team one season, hence the seven occurrences found for Law combinations.

Overview

In the 1870s, cricket and to a lesser extent rugby were the two sports which had witnessed the development of clubs around trades. The legal profession, financial services, or state departments such as the Civil Service and Ordnance Survey provided some of these early combinations. Rugby also observed an influx of hospital teams from 1878 onwards and thereafter very little variation happened, which confirmed its status as a staunchly middle-class game. Cricket, on the other hand, experienced a substantial expansion within railway companies and commercial establishments (figure 4.11). By 1894 a short-lived Dublin Workmen's Cricket League was even created, with newspapers and the GPO among the teams involved.[225]

[225] *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Jul. 1894.

Figure 4.12: Number of cycling combinations in Dublin, 1880-1901.



Cycling and athletics too developed within the workplace, whereas the phenomenon was virtually unknown before the 1880s.[226] In August 1881 the Inchicore sports were set up for the employees of the GSWR and the following year the Patience theatrical company – already engaged in cricket and tennis – rented out Lansdowne Road stadium for an athletic meeting for its staff 'and others connected with the theatrical profession in the city.'[227] Meanwhile shopkeepers and publicans contributed to the prizes given by the Grocers' Assistants' Association to the twenty-three contestants in a race taking place in the Phoenix Park in August 1884.[228] By the end of the decade, most of Dublin's department stores had at least once held an in-house athletic meeting: Pim Brothers in 1886, Switzer's and Eason's in 1887, and Todd, Burns and Co. in 1888.[229] The pace increased in the 1890s with no fewer than fifty-five such meetings being recorded in the capital. The development of tug of war as an integral part of the athletics programme in the 1890s was particularly

[226] Only two meetings specifically linked to a workplace, Guinness and the GSWR, have been recorded in the 1870s.
[227] *Freeman's Journal*, 15 Aug. 1881, 25 Oct. 1882.
[228] *Sport*, 2 Aug. 1884.
[229] *Irish Times*, 15 Jul. 1887; *Sport* 13 Aug. 1887; *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Jul. 1888, 7 Aug. 1888.

taken aboard by the Guinness brewery and within the police.[230] Finally, the first cycling clubs related to workplace or trade union clubs appeared in 1887 and made up over a fifth of the Dublin clubs by the 1890s (figure 4.12).

The role of employers

By and large, the impetus behind athletic meetings came not from the employers themselves, but rather from trade unions or workingmen's clubs, which then had a social as well as an industrial role. Chief among them were the Grocers' Assistants' Association (1863), the Dublin Pawnbroking Assistants' Association (1881) and the Dublin Trades Council (1886), which ran annual sports respectively from 1886, 1888 and 1889 onwards.[231] The Hotel and Club Assistants had an athletic meeting in 1894, the Purveyors' Assistants in 1900 and the Vintners' Assistants in 1901. The Pathfinders Cycling Club was associated to the Catholic Commercial Club and the Grattan and 41 York Street clubs were linked to the Wellington Quay and York Street workingmen's clubs.[232] Similarly, employees of drapery houses, rather than the department stores themselves, were the initiators of an inter-firm Gaelic football tournament in 1896. John Power, a former draper and member of the Kickham club, provided a cup and the first edition brought together eight combinations made of the leading businesses in the retailing areas around Henry and Grafton streets.[233] The success of the inaugural tournament was repeated in following years until Arnott's won the Power Cup outright. Thereafter the Kickham club – the parent club of most drapers' assistants – stepped in and organised the annual tournament while the Henry St Warehouse offered the aptly named Kickham Cup to the winners.[234]

Because in Dublin the incentive essentially came from the workforce rather than employers, sport occurred around working hours. The Power Cup matches were

[230] *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Oct. 1893; *Irish Daily Independent*, 3 Sept. 1894; *Dublin Daily Nation*, 10 Jul. 1897.
[231] By 1901, these three trade unions were still holding annual sports, the Pawnbrokers' Assistants' had a gap of three years in the late 1890s.
[232] *Sport*, 21 June 1890; *Irish Daily Independent*, 25 Sept. 1895; *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Jul. 1896. The Inchicore workingmen's club, the Grocers' Assistants and Purveyors' Assistants also had their own cycling club in the 1890s.
[233] *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Oct. 1896. The teams entered hailed from Clery's, Arnott's, Todd and Burn's, Henry St Warehouse, Pim Brothers', Crowe, Wilson & Webb's, and a combination of Earl Street houses as well as Grafton Street houses.
[234] *Sport*, 25 May 1901.

held on weekday evenings and so were most of the athletic and cycling races of the pawnbrokers and department store staff.[235] Short daylight in the winter, coupled with an ingrained Sabbatarianism in rugby, cross-country running and association football, ensured that workplace teams were almost absent during these months. Three exceptions stood out. Hospitals were largely staffed with former Dublin University students, and quickly became a pillar of the local rugby scene, as seen in the previous chapter. Gymnastic clubs operated indoors and were established within working-class institutions such as the Dublin Drapers' Club, Catholic Commercial Club and the Harding Technical School (a shelter for employed Protestant orphans) as they fitted the rational recreation movement that underpinned such ventures.[236] Finally, the workers in the printing trade were over-represented in soccer as shorter hours applied in this specific line of industry.

The secondary role played by employers was offset by a measure of goodwill. Subscription or purchase of cups, as seen previously, was common from grocers and department stores. Honorary positions were akin to official endorsement. Edward Brooks, of Brooks, Thomas & Co (a building provider company), was elected president of the Sackville Rovers Association FC by his employees in 1901 and his firm was warmly toasted at the annual dinner of the athletic branch of the club.[237] The largest employers, however, had a more comprehensive policy towards their employees' welfare in the late nineteenth century. English manufacturers such as Cadbury (chocolate), Colman's (mustard) and Rowntree's (sweets), for example, provided sporting facilities and encouraged their staff to practise.[238] Three main reasons underpinned such an investment in extra-economic activities. It built loyalty and a 'company culture' that would mentally tie the workforce to the firm and reduce employee turnover. It improved the physical and mental fitness of employees

[235] *Sport*, 8 Aug. 1891 (Pawnbrokers' Assistants); *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Jul. 1891 (Todd, Burns and Co.).
[236] *Irish Daily Independent*, 21 Mar. 1893, 10 Oct. 1894. The Drapers' Club gymnastic classes were scheduled for 8pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The York Street and Inchicore workingmen's clubs were also active in the latter 1890s.
[237] *Irish Times*, 21 Mar. 1900; *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Oct. 1901. The blunt refusal by a few department stores to grant a half-holiday to their employees to participate in the sports of the Dublin Drapers' Club seemed to have been exceptional, see *Irish Daily Independent*, 24 Sept. 1894.
[238] Vamplew, *Pay up*, p. 52; John Bromhead, 'George Cadbury's contribution to sport', *Sports Historian*, xx, no. 1 (May 2000), pp 97-117; Roger Munting, 'The games ethic and industrial capitalism before 1914: the provision of company sports', *Sport in History*, xxiii, no. 1 (2003), pp 45-63.

through regular physical exercise. Lastly, benevolent paternalism and conformity to social duties was expected from employers.[239] Guinness, with a workforce of 2,650 employees in 1889, was such a case in Dublin.[240] While not going to the length of building a model town, as Cadbury did in Bournville, the family and company records stood out in social matters and they participated in housing development in the Liberties, where most of their workforce resided.[241] Staff could avail of musical and theatrical societies, as well as farming, industrial and dog fancier associations by 1900.[242] If the most emblematic Guinness sporting section remains St James's Gate FC (1902) which won national honours in soccer in the 1920s and 1930s, cricket and athletics were partaken of by employees since the 1870s under the West End Cricket Club umbrella.[243] Later, the cricket team was known as the Shamrock or Iveagh club.[244] Annual excursions for the cooperage department started in 1882 and athletics were as much part of the fete as were the picnic and bottles of stout.[245] From the mid-1880s onwards, the barrel makers became specifically associated with tug of war as they confronted teams from Jameson's distillery, the GSWR and the DMP.[246] Finally, in 1887, Claude Guinness, then managing director of the brewery, was elected president of the newly created athletic and cycling club where gymnastics, cricket and football were offered to members.[247] Through subscriptions, honorary positions, the provision of rooms and facilities for the numerous social and sporting clubs, the management of the company strived to create an *esprit de corps* within its workforce while encouraging sport and rational hobbies.[248] The benevolent attitude of Edward Guinness towards his employees and the unabated philanthropic actions he and his brother Arthur undertook during their lifetime were deeply embedded in the middle-class morality and improving values of Victorian society.

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[239] Michael Heller, 'Sport, bureaucracies and London clerks 1880-1939', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxv, no. 5 (2008), pp 582-6; Steven Crewe, 'What about the workers? Works-based sport and recreation in England c. 1918-c.1970', *Sport in History*, xxxiv, no. 4 (2014), pp 544-6.
[240] Alfred Barnard, *The noted breweries of Great Britain and Ireland, vol 1* (London, 1889), pp 42-3.
[241] Prunty, 'Improving the urban environment', pp 207-11.
[242] *Irish Times*, 16 Apr. 1881, 22 May 1883; *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Mar. 1894, 7 Aug. 1897, 25 June 1898; Alfred Barnard, *The noted breweries*, pp 42-3. In 1897, the St James's Gate Musical Society even held its own athletic sports, see *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Sept. 1897.
[243] *Dublin Daily Express*, 14 June 1877.
[244] *Freeman's Journal*, 16 June 1887; *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 13 Apr. 1901.
[245] *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Aug. 1882, 21 Aug. 1883.
[246] *Sport*, 7 Aug. 1886; *Dublin Daily Nation*, 26 May 1898.
[247] *Sport*, 1 Oct. 1887. Guinness employees played for the Young Ireland GAA club, but it is not clear whether the company facilitated them.
[248] Heller, 'Sport, bureaucracies and London clerks', pp 590-6.

They also betrayed a genuine interest for social concerns, which incidentally was crucial to legitimate their recently acquired fabulous wealth.[249]

6- Cricket: limited conclusions

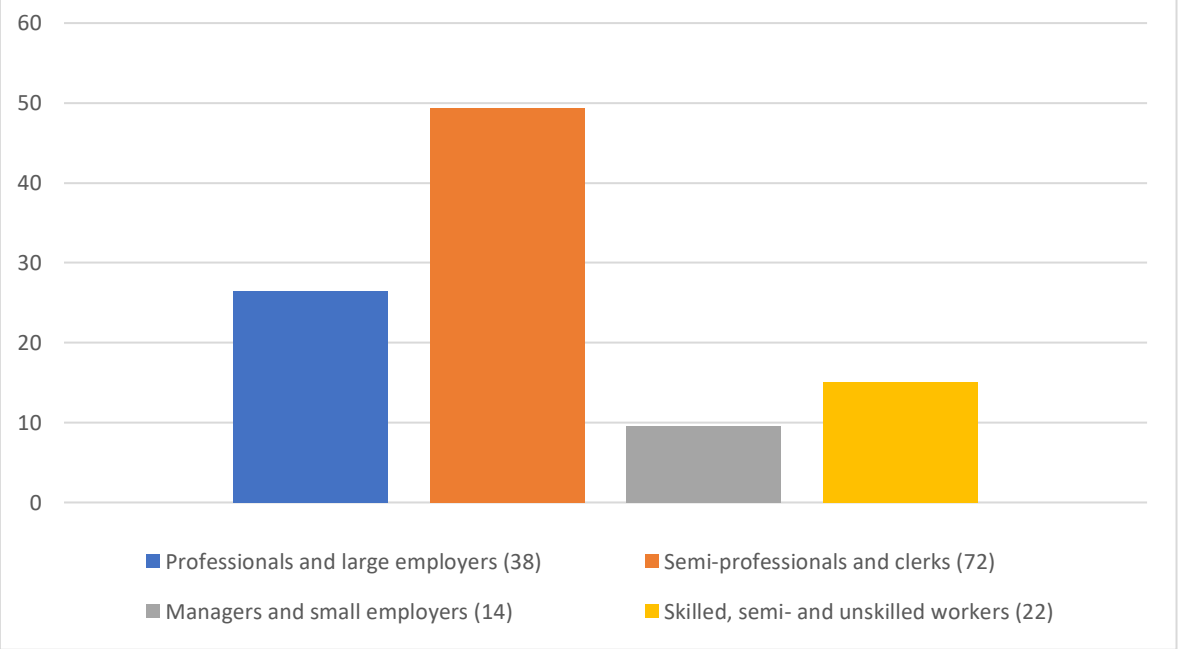
In the 1870s, cricket became the first modern sport to spread to all parts of Ireland and throughout the social spectrum. By 1900, the game remained firmly implanted but the lack of an administrative structure and competition from other sports undermined its position as a leading game in the country.

Socio-economic analysis

In the 1880s, cricket had become the sport of choice of the largest institutions and employers. It was also the summer game of the lower-middle class: 58 out of 131 identified players who reported an occupation were clerks (figure 4.13). The results of this study do not show a large involvement of the working class, contrasting here with Kilkenny or Westmeath where farm labourers and semi-skilled workers made up almost half of the recorded players in the 1890s.[250] The growing popularity of Saturday and especially Sunday cricket in Tipperary in the latter 1870s also betrays the increasing participation of rural labourers in rural Munster.[251] To some extent this happened in Dublin, and by the turn of the century teams associated with Belvedere College or Guinness brewery played cricket on Sundays and so did the Ana Liffey and Ivy clubs.[252] Among city clubs, a degree of democratisation was observed as working-class players made up a quarter of the identified players reporting an occupation (10/40) and Catholics accounted for 57.4% of identified players as against 22.6% in suburban clubs (27/47 and 19/84 respectively).

[249] Cannadine, *The decline and fall*, p. 309.
[250] O'Dwyer, *Cricket in county Kilkenny*, pp 44-54; Hunt, *Sport and society*, pp 136-9.
[251] Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, pp 192-3.
[252] *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Apr. 1887, 2 May 1902; *Sport*, 23 Apr. 1898; *Irish Daily Independent*, 6 May 1899, 3 May 1902.

Figure 4.13: Socio-economic distribution of cricket players (%), 1895-1902.



The unbalanced nature of the collected data nevertheless limits the accuracy of the research. The lower-middle-class tone of Dublin cricket found in this study largely results from the prevalence of suburban clubs in the data. Only 17 and 47 out of 155 identified cricket players belonged to rural and city clubs respectively. Yet comparing figures 2.8 (p. 140) and 4.14 shows that cricket had spread to the small towns of the Liffey valley and north County Dublin in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Out of 15 rural players in employment uncovered in the data, 7 were engaged either in farming or manual labour, indicating a pattern of participation closer to the findings of Hunt in Westmeath. The under-reporting of cricket in rural Dublin was especially observable in the south and south-west of the county, precisely the area where the decline of the GAA in the 1890s was most felt. The sport history of large swathes of County Dublin thus remains virtually uncharted as no organised ball games, nor athletic meetings or cycling clubs have so far been retrieved from contemporary publications. The limited evidence unearthed by this research hints at a sporting culture in rural Dublin aligned with other Leinster counties rather than determined by developments within the metropolis and its suburbs. Further studies, however, are necessary to confirm it.

Figure 4.14: Location of cricket combinations, 1885-1900.



Note: Dots represent any combination which it has been possible to link with certainty with a location. At least fifty other Dublin combinations have been recorded during the 1885-1900 period, for which a location has not been identified. Combinations linked to an institution have not been included.

The failure of a national organisation

In contrast with most sports, cricket failed to develop an administrative structure by 1900. Clubs existed alongside each other with little connection between them, and revealingly no season calendar was agreed upon by the leading clubs before the mid-1880s.[253] An attempt was made in 1884 to create an Irish Cricket Union,

[253] *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Sept. 1883; *Irish Times*, 18 Mar. 1886.

modelled on the rowing and rugby associations, whose objectives would have been to select the Irish team, arrange interprovincial matches and eventually settle disputes.[254] A process of integration in the Northern Cricket Union (1884) was concurrently taking place in Ulster and it was hoped that cricket could profit from a similar body in Dublin.[255] The Leinster CC took the matter in hand, but early promises were dashed within a month when the Phoenix club refused to take part as 'it would kill the monopoly that [they] had always had in selecting the Gentlemen of Ireland team.'[256] Meanwhile, the DUCC disagreed on according equal rights to all members and would have hoped for a privileged position within the union.[257] Without the two leading Irish clubs, the project was stillborn. A mere couple of weeks after their refusal to enter any form of power-sharing body, the Phoenix and the University clubs unilaterally selected the Gentlemen of Ireland to play a Philadelphian team.[258]

The question of a cricket union was recurrent in the following two decades and never resolved. A Leinster branch of the Irish Cricket Union was formed in 1890 yet remained small in its first year.[259] Only 8 clubs affiliated in 1894, out of 60 non-military combinations retrieved in the press. It gathered pace from 1895 onwards as 15 clubs affiliated and a junior cup was inaugurated.[260] Three years later, a junior league came to bolster the competitive calendar.[261] And then the momentum stopped. The ambivalence of the Phoenix and University clubs towards any form of integration and dilution of authority proved too strong until a compromise was eventually found in 1902.[262] Common good was clearly being sacrificed to personal interest as the nationalist *Dublin Evening Telegraph* bluntly explained:

[254] *Dublin Daily Express*, 10 Mar. 1884.
[255] Siggins, *Green days*, pp 39-41; *Sport*, 22 Mar. 1884. The NCU still exists as the Ulster branch of Cricket Ireland, founded in 1923.
[256] *Irish Times*, 22 Apr. 1884.
[257] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Cricket/2, 26 Apr. 1884, 13 May 1884.
[258] Ibid., 22 May 1884.
[259] Milne, 'Dublin University Cricket Club', p. 27.
[260] *Irish Times*, 13 Nov. 1895, 21 Jan. 1896.
[261] *Irish Times*, 3 May 1898.
[262] The DUCC withdrew in 1897 and refused to participate in talks to take part in yet another reincarnation of a Cricket Union in 1901. TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Cricket/2, 27 Jan. 1897, 30 Jul. 1901; Milne, 'Dublin University Cricket Club', p. 29.

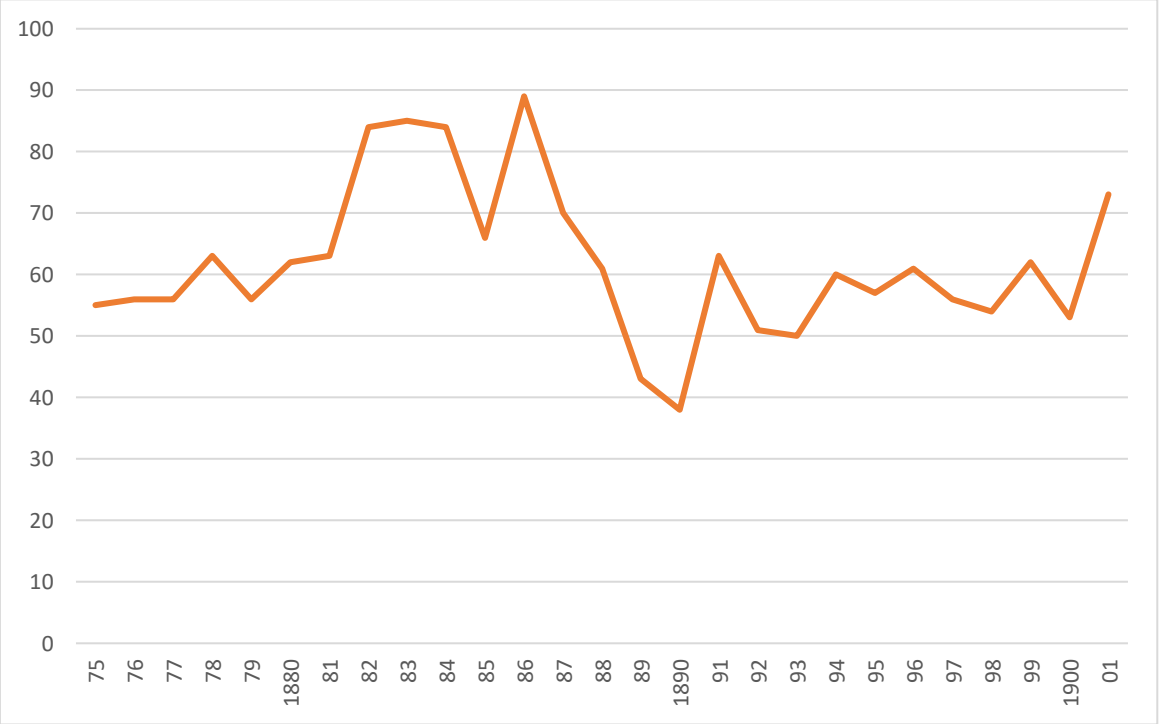
> The Phoenix Club, though it is now sadly fallen from its former estate, has always aspired to occupy the place in Irish cricket that the M.C.C. holds in English. At the same time it has never opened its doors so as to make itself really representative of Irish cricketers. Again and again prominent cricketers seeking admission have been black-beaned for reasons that would not be listened to outside a court of snobs. Naturally its pretensions to premiership and control are looked upon as not a little insolent by the other clubs. But the aspiration to dominate is really at the root of the boycott. Trinity follows as a matter of course.[263]

Meanwhile, standards were slipping. The high hopes of the 1860s were long gone and the gap between the best English and Irish teams kept widening.[264] Crowds shrank and the Dublin University club was structurally in deficit.[265] The scarcity of competitions prevented expressions of local pride and muted rivalries. Commercial exploitation failed to expand beyond the budding stage seen in the 1860s. By 1900 only the Leinster CC and DUCC could enclose their stadiums and charge admission. In the face of such self-inflicted adversity, cricket remarkably maintained a strong hold in Dublin (figure 4.15). It remained so because the quaint and anarchical cricket scene allowed for co-existence with little friction. The lack of a clear association with a section of society throughout Ireland before 1900 made cricket a springboard or a secondary choice for many other sports. Clubs harboured the beginning of athletics in Dublin in the 1860s and of tennis in the 1870s.[266] In 1892, the GSWR cricket club had a cycling section and ten years later the Monkstown club held a table tennis tournament.[267] Cricket was also associated with soccer, either as parent club (Montpelier) or as a summer pastime (Bohemians, Victoria, Molyneux).[268] In the long term, however, the game was ill-equipped to face the cultural challenge and the revival of the GAA from 1900 onwards and to stem

[263] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 24 June 1901.
[264] *Irish Sportsman*, 8 Aug. 1885.
[265] Milne, 'Dublin University Cricket Club', pp 21-4.
[266] *Dublin Daily Express*, 9 June 1863, 23 June 1863; *Irish Sportsman*, 15 June 1878; *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Sept. 1880, 1 Sept. 1885; *Sport*, 22 Sept. 1883.
[267] *Dublin Daily Express*, 4 May 1892; *Weekly Irish Times*, 8 Mar. 1902.
[268] Garnham*, Association football and society*, p. 45; *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Oct. 1888; *Dublin Daily Express*, 13 Feb. 1897; *Evening Herald*, 23 Oct. 1897; *Irish Times*, 4 Oct. 1901.

the advances of other sports.[269] Soccer had already cropped the cricket season of the months of April and September. As for the upper classes, the long summer afternoons were henceforth spent in the tennis and sailing pavilions or on golf courses rather than on cricket grounds.

Figure 4.14: Number of civilian cricket combinations, 1875-1901.



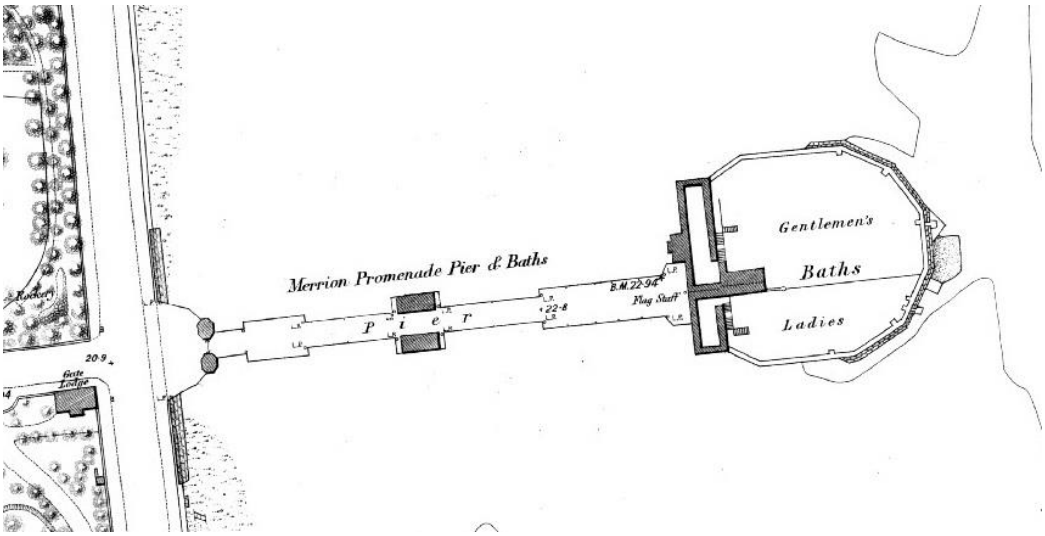
7- Women and the limits of democratisation

The democratisation of sport in the 1880s was apparent to all yet essentially limited to men, as women were by and large excluded from the sport revolution. The sexual segregation partly stemmed from concerns about the physical aptitudes of women to engage in games, but fundamentally meant to entrench modern sport and its values as bastions of masculinity. From the 1880s, however, more organised

[269] McElligott, 'Contesting the fields of play', pp 11-4; Bracken, *Foreign and fantastic*, pp 126-8.

recreative outlets became socially acceptable to middle-class women and their participation in sport accordingly grew.

Figure 4.16: Segregated pools at the Merrion baths, 1865.



Source: OSI Map, City of Dublin, Pembroke township, sheet XVIII.91, https://digital.ucd.ie/view/ucdlib:40377, accessed 12 Jan. 2021. Note the different size of the two basins.

Sport and gender

Despite exceptions and transgressions, the gendered construction of Victorian society demanded that men and women occupied separate spheres. The male sphere was public and focused on masculine activities, such as work, war, politics or, in the context of this thesis, sport. Underlying here were values of strength, determination and competition. Women, on the other hand, inhabited a private sphere and were secluded in the confines of home. Their passive and reproductive position was stressed and required from them comeliness and emotional support.[270] Biological differences between the sexes – essentially connected to procreation – were used to define the female body and mind as weaker and thus unsuited for masculine activities, as explained by Jennifer Hargreaves:

[270] Hargreaves, *Sporting females*, p. 43.

> The Victorians maximised cultural differences between the sexes and used biological explanations to justify them. This is the essence of biological reductionism. Biological ideas were used specifically to construct social ideas about gender and to defend inequalities between men and women in sports.[271]

Too active a participation in sport was deemed incompatible with womanhood since it endangered the woman's body, yet the level of fitness necessary to motherhood meant that some sort of physical activity was encouraged, especially among girls.[272] For Patricia Vertinsky, 'sporting activities as well as educational pursuits had to be compatible with female physiology and to be focused upon health and balance rather than the irresponsibility of inactivity or the recklessness of unregulated competition.'[273] Physiological concerns thus led to the approval of games which have 'been designed to remove much of the physicality of boys' sport' and included light gymnastics, tennis, golf, hockey, rounders and basketball.[274] It was furthermore critical to uphold one's femininity as 'the subordination of muscle to womanhood should ever be kept in mind as being an infinitely higher ideal than can ever be the subordination of womanhood to muscle.'[275] When playing or spectating, women were expected to adopt the values and codes of the homestead. Selflessness meant that too obvious a competitive spirit was deemed unbecoming. Empathy proscribed game shooting 'because of its obvious and open cruelty'.[276] Gracefulness pervaded the cycling etiquette. Social conventions on the adequate pace, dress, or riding style were propagated by society newspapers.[277] Finally, modesty imposed the wearing of corsets and ample garments severely limiting freedom of movement, only to be partially attenuated by the dress reform movement (figure 4.17).[278]

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[271] Ibid. See also Patricia A. Vertinsky, *The eternally wounded woman: women, doctors, and exercise in the late nineteenth century* (Manchester, 1990), pp 39-108.
[272] Vertinsky, *The eternally wounded woman*, p. 54.
[273] Ibid., p. 59.
[274] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 199. See also Mandy Treagus, 'Playing like ladies: basketball, netball and feminine restraint', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxii, no. 1 (2005), pp 91-3.
[275] *Freeman's Journal*, 19 June 1899.
[276] *Evening Herald*, 16 Mar. 1895.
[277] *Social Review*, 5 Jan. 1895, 23 May 1896; Griffin, 'Cycling and gender in Victorian Ireland', *Éire-Ireland*, xli, no. 1&2 (2006), pp 236-8.
[278] Dave Day, 'Natational dress: functionality, fashion and fracturing of separate spheres in Victorian Britain', *Annals of Leisure Research*, xix, no. 2 (2016), pp 164, 174-5; Lake, *A social history of tennis*, pp 31-2; Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, pp 123-35.

Figure 4.17: Cycling polo match: Ohne Hast (Dublin) versus Belfast, 1899.



Source: *Illustrated Sporting News*, 6 May 1899.

Note: Three of the four Dublin ladies (dark skirt) used a male bicycle (top-bar type) and all wore divided skirts giving them more pace than their opponents.

Women's sport was delineated not only by physical and behavioural restraints imposed upon them by a patriarchal society, but also by men's own concerns with masculinity. Women on the field of play downgraded the position of games among men. In the mid-1880s, tricycling became totally disregarded as a male pastime once it became clear that early female cyclists privileged it over ordinaries (penny-farthing).[279] Croquet, hockey and tennis were likewise targeted.[280] Advocates of this latter agreed that the game could be seen 'as being in a sense namby-pamby, not to say effeminate … No doubt as compared with cricket, football, and other manly exercise, it presents but a sorry and insignificant spectacle.'[281] To offset such criticism, tennis adopted a chivalric code which promoted gentlemanly conduct over sheer force during games.[282] Adherence to etiquette was, however, of little significance when opposed to the values underpinning male sport. For the captain

[279] Griffin, *Cycling and gender*, pp 227-8.
[280] *Irish Sportsman*, 18 June 1881, 13 May 1882, 13 June 1885.
[281] *Freeman's Journal*, 19 May 1885. See also Lake, *A social history of tennis*, p. 36.
[282] Robert J. Lake, 'Social class, etiquette and behavioural restraint in British lawn tennis, 1870-1939', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxviii, no. 6 (2011), p. 882.

of the DUBC, 'football, hockey and other blandishments' were responsible for interfering with rowing practice.[283] At St Columba's College, the editor of the school paper swiftly and scornfully rebuffed any suggestion of introducing dancing classes.[284] A sporting hierarchy existed whereby all-male sport stood atop, and this was obvious to everyone.

To the gender differentiation was added a social discrimination:

> the development of women's sport in late-nineteenth century England, then, was trapped in a class and gender context. The power men held over women in society at large dominated the sporting relations between the sexes in all classes, while the power the superior classes held over those below them dominated the sporting relations between women of different classes. As a result, the sporting activities of working-class women were strictly limited in time and space.[285]

The increase in leisure time and income witnessed by the lower class was largely a male phenomenon. For working-class women, the burden of house chores and raising a family merely added to employment inequalities.[286] Most of them were thus prevented from availing of regular leisure activities, but 'these generalities belie a more complex picture deriving from specific economic, ideological and cultural circumstances which also played a part in shaping the nature and extent of women's leisure.'[287] Social differentiation was reproduced at school level, for both economic and moral reasons. Poorly equipped national schools emphasised drill or calisthenics while private schools added games, dancing and gymnastics to their curriculum.[288] Coupled to the paucity of after-school leisure outlets, working-class girls 'were not provided with a sporting tradition to carry into the adult world'.[289] When it did happen, as with the Dublin Working Girls Drilling Association, the

[283] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/3/1, 1897-8.
[284] St Columba's College Archive, *Columban*, v, no. 1 (Mar. 1884).
[285] Kathleen E. McCrone, 'Class, gender, and English women's sport, c. 1890-1914', *Journal of Sport History*, xviii, no. 1 (1991), pp 181-2.
[286] Catriona M. Parratt, 'Little means or time: working-class women and leisure in late Victorian and Edwardian England', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xv, no. 2 (1998), pp 26-37.
[287] Ibid., p. 38.
[288] Rafferty and Delaney, 'Un-Irish and un-Catholic', pp 328-35.
[289] McCrone, 'Class, gender, and English women's sport', p. 165.

recreative element was subjugated to the want of turning girls into healthier and better workers.[290] Efforts by upper- and middle-class lobbies to provide rational recreation to the urban labouring female population also met with limited success. Like their male counterparts, working class women preferred their own recreations, and music hall or dancing then became an ingrained element of their leisure culture.[291] In the last quarter of the century, women's sports remained thus essentially upper- and middle-class in character and dominated by the gendered structure of these classes. In this context, a rapid development occurred.

The growth of women's sport

The increase in participation was clearly observable from the 1880s. The codification and ensuing creation of a network of clubs in urban areas of elitist garden pastimes such as archery, croquet, tennis and golf allowed women to actively engage with modern sport and conform to social expectations at the same time.[292] Elite schools fostered games among girls, albeit not on the scale witnessed in English female schools.[293] Dancing and gymnastics were emphasised in Catholic establishments, and by 1901 the Loreto Physical Education Society could hold a gymnastic contest between their five Dublin and two Wexford schools.[294] In the Protestant and elitist Alexandra College, calisthenics was integral part of the curriculum since the school's opening in 1866 and remained so in following decades.[295] Additionally modern games were introduced and a tennis and hockey clubs were established in 1889 and 1892 respectively.[296] Cricket was played too. By 1904, the girls even thought of introducing rounders, basketball and golf in the school.[297] The creation of clubs, running of competitions and establishment of

[290] Heffernan, *The history of physical culture*, p. 37.
[291] Parratt, 'Little means or time', pp 38-43.
[292] Lake, *A social history of tennis*, pp 17-8, 29-38
[293] Rafferty and Delany, 'Un-Irish and un-Catholic', p. 327. It was also a far cry from the importance given to sport in boys' schools. See Colls, *The sporting life*, pp 212-6.
[294] Rafferty and Delany, 'Un-Irish and un-Catholic', pp 331-2; *Weekly Irish Times*, 23 Nov. 1901. This included the Loreto abbey (Rathfarnham), college (St Stephen's Green), and convents (Rathmines, Balbriggan and Bray).
[295] Alexandra College Archives, A1/2/5, Timetable, 1867. Two hours per week were dedicated to calisthenics or gymnastics.
[296] Anne V. O'Connor and Susan M. Parkes, *Gladly learn and gladly teach, Alexandra College and School 1866-1966* (Dublin, 1984), pp 36, 54.
[297] Alexandra College Archives, Minutes of the hockey club, 1 May 1901, 3 Oct. 1904.

governing bodies by women for women quickly followed. The Dublin-based Ladies Cycling Club was affiliated to the ICA in 1889 and gymnastic tournaments began to take place.[298] Alexandra College students initiated the Irish Ladies Hockey Union in 1894. Within seven years, eight clubs affiliated, senior and junior competitions were set up, and several hundred (paying) spectators attended the most important fixtures.[299] The Irish Ladies Golfing Union (1893) was an Ulster-centred body but met with unqualified success throughout the country. Enthusiasm was real and in 1901, the final rounds of the Irish Ladies Golf Championship held at Portmarnock witnessed what 'was probably the largest ever [crowd] seen at a golf match in Ireland.'[300]

Women's participation was additionally eased by technological progress and innovation. A third pommel and the 'apron skirt' considerably increased the safety of lady hunters who then rode side-saddle.[301] The arrival on the market of the tricycle in the 1880s and the spread of the safety bicycle and pneumatic tyres the following decade made cycling a much safer activity too.[302] Substantial markets were opened, and retailers stepped into the breach.[303] Drill and tennis dresses were sold by Forrest & Son on Grafton Street.[304] Elvery's & Co. stocked gendered golfing equipment (figure 4.18).[305] By the latter 1890s, the demand for women's bicycles equalled that for men's in Dublin.[306] As consumption patterns evolved during the nineteenth century, shopping had become central to middle-class identity and 'was consistently gendered as a female urban pleasure.'[307] This made the commodification of women's sport all the more potent.

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[298] Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, pp 113-4; *Weekly Irish Times*, 3 Oct. 1896; *Irish Times*, 26 Mar. 1897.
[299] Alexandra College Archives, Minutes of the hockey club, 22 Oct. 1894, 31 Jan. 1898; *Weekly Irish Times*, 9 Mar. 1901. The college issued two hundred tickets for a match of the club against England. Full international games probably gathered more spectators.
[300] *Dublin Daily Express*, 3 May 1901. Ironically, women were barred from membership of the Portmarnock Golf Club until 2021.
[301] Erica Munkwitz, 'Angels and amazons: fox-hunting and sporting emancipation for women', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxxv, no. 6 (2018), pp 516-9.
[302] Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, pp 109, 116-7.
[303] Flanders, *Consuming passions*, pp 462-5.
[304] *Irish Times*, 26 May 1899.
[305] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 8 Apr. 1898; *Irish Times*, 6 June 1899.
[306] Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, p. 121.
[307] Erika D. Rappaport, '"The Halls of Temptation": gender, politics, and the construction of the department store in late Victorian London', *Journal of British Studies*, xxxv, no. 1 (1996), p. 82. Alternatively, shopping was presented as the 'work' of middle-class women. See Rains, *Commodity culture*, pp 27-8.

Figure 4.18: Advertising for women's golf equipment.



Source: *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 8 Apr. 1898.

Whether or not to anchor the budding female sporting scene into the ongoing incipient emancipation of Irish women, then seen in property and educational matters, is subject to debate.[308] Competitive spirit and stirring passions were clearly no male preserve, nor were administrative or decision-making abilities. Hunting certainly forced women to find 'one's own way' and to 'cut out a line' for themselves during high-speed chases.[309] For Erika Munkvitz, 'there is a case here for suggesting that by creating such strong independent feminine identities through sport, women riders helped the broader campaign for women's rights.'[310] Conversely there is also a case for a deep internalisation and reproduction of gendered behaviours by middle-class ladies in 1890s Dublin. Challenging sexual conventions would also have meant challenging the social order shaped by the middle classes for their own profit. Emancipation through sport existed but was slow

[308] Rosemary Cullens Owens, *A social history of women in Ireland*, 1870-1970 (Dublin, 2005), p. 15. More generally, see chapters 1 and 2 for nineteenth-century early emancipatory movements.
[309] Munkvitz, 'Angels and amazons', p. 522.
[310] Munkvitz, 'Vixens of venery', p. 83.

and piecemeal. For the few who relished independence, most professed obedience to social conventions.

8- Elite retreat: golf, sailing, tennis, hunting

If golf, tennis, hockey and hunting began to accommodate women in greater numbers by 1900, they conversely remained socially closed pastimes, as the cost and time necessary to engage in them ensured that only the wealthiest could partake. By 1900, they came to embody the leisure of the Dublin upper class who, despite distinct sublayers, presented a coherent and common set of values meant to preserve the social order and the constitutional link with Britain.

Overview

Since the 1860s, sailing in Dublin had shifted from mere social gatherings to real trials of skill. By 1880 the Royal St George and Royal Irish clubs had lost their relevance and kept to themselves in the confines of their expansive and expensive clubhouses.[311] Instead, a flurry of small sailing clubs profited from the lead shown by the Royal Alfred Yacht Club (1857) and appeared around Dublin Bay in the last quarter of the century. On its northern side, clubs were established in Clontarf in 1875, in Sutton in 1890, and in Howth in 1895, but regattas had regularly been taking place in Malahide and Howth since the 1860s.[312] In these small towns, membership of the yacht club went hand in hand with social status and civic pride.[313] The Earl of Howth and Lord Ardilaun patronised their local clubs, and in Clontarf at least ten JPs or town commissioners were appointed to the local regatta committee.[314] In contrast, a flurry of newly created clubs on the south side in the 1880s insisted on weekly outings, on races between crafts of identical design, and

[311] *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Jul. 1897; Archer and Pearson, *The Royal St George YC*, p. 61. The premises and content of the Royal St George YC were insured for £5,000 in 1860.
[312] W.M. Nixon, *Howth, a centenary of sailing* (Howth, 1995), p. 25.
[313] *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Aug. 1882, 6 Aug. 1886.
[314] *Freeman's Journal*, 8 June 1898. Seven of them were both J.P. and town commissioner.

on a reduction of the paid workforce aboard to conform to amateurism.[315] The emphasis on single-boat design meant that sailing skills rather than owners' purses were to be tested and the creation of the Dublin Bay Sailing Club (1884) and the Water Wags (1887) were essential in that respect.[316]

Introduced in Ireland in 1874, lawn tennis was immediately adopted by the landed gentry and replaced croquet and archery as favourite garden pastimes. The first clubs accommodated the local elite, to which were added the highest levels of the professional and commercial classes.[317] The situation was similar in Dublin by the latter 1880s. Private lawns had become essential to the attractiveness of the seaside villas of the southern suburbs and prospective tenants increasingly requested 'a detached residence, with garden and tennis ground'.[318] More relevant to the development of the sport in the city was the steady growth of a network of clubs and tournaments in the 1880s. They initially sprang up in cricket clubs where the pre-existing associational structure eased the evolution of tennis into an administered sport. The Phoenix, Civil Service and Lansdowne clubs in Dublin were just such examples, but the phenomenon was observed throughout the country, and especially in provincial towns where the cricket club was also the refuge of the local upper-middle classes.[319] Soon afterwards, tennis clubs *per se* were established and among them the Fitzwilliam LTC was the most prestigious. Created in 1877, it took over the organisation of the Irish Championships from the Lansdowne club in 1879, ran for two decades the most fashionable tennis tournament in Europe, and was second only to Wimbledon for its sporting merits.[320] In the absence of a national organisation, the Fitzwilliam club acted as a pacesetter and its informal leading role was respected throughout Ireland.

The development of golf in its modern form in Ireland dates from the creation of the Royal Belfast Golf Club in 1881, even though it had intermittently been played by

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[315] John Lowerson*, Sport and the English middle classes*, pp 49-50. For weekly outings of the Water Wags and the consideration of adopting a new model of vessel following the rise in price of cedar wood, see *Dublin Daily Express*, 20 Apr. 1897; *Sport*, 26 Feb. 1898.
[316] Donal O'Sullivan, *Dublin bay, a century of sailing – 1884-1984*, (Dublin, 1984), pp 17-40.
[317] Robert J. Lake, *A social history of tennis in Britain* (London, 2015), p. 17; Hunt, *Sport and society*, pp 76-9; Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, pp 150-3.
[318] *Irish Times*, 11 Feb. 1885, 26 Sept. 1889; *Dublin Daily Express*, 21 Jul. 1883, 5 Dec. 1883, 18 Apr. 1889.
[319] *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Sept. 1880; *Sport*, 22 Sept. 1883.
[320] Simon J. Eaves and Robert J. Lake, 'The forgotten powerhouse', pp 965-9; J.J. Treacy, *Fitzwilliam's first fifty, half a century of Irish lawn tennis* (Dublin, 1927), pp 6-11.

Curragh officers since the 1850s.[321] In Dublin, the game was possibly played before the 1880s in the sandbanks of the Malahide coastline, where the Jameson distilling family had allegedly built their own private links in 1858, or among officers within the Phoenix Park.[322] As golf began to be formally organised in the early 1880s, military officers were influential in the creation of clubs in 1883 at the Curragh, in Kinsale and Fota Island (Cork), and in 1884 in the Phoenix Park.[323] In April 1885, John Lawrence began to sell clubs from his Grafton Street premises.[324] A month later, the Dublin Golf Club was established, absorbed the military golfers, and built the first golf course in the Phoenix Park before finally settling on Bull Island in 1889.[325] Its members shared similar socio-economic and geographical backgrounds with the Belfast golf scene. It contrasted with the genteel background of hunting and tennis and was clearly traced back to the Scottish community involved in financial services or commerce.[326] The Jameson distilling dynasty had kept strong intergenerational marriage links with Scotland since the eighteenth century. The Dublin GC's first captain and secretary, John Lumsden and Robert H. Charles, were both bankers born in Scotland while the treasurer, Benjamin H. Todd, was an English stockbroker. Among early members were also found a civil engineer, grain and cattle brokers, physicians and insurance secretaries.[327] Other clubs in Dublin had similar features. The Foxrock club (1893) was built on lands belonging to the Royal Exchange Insurance Company and influential members of the Portmarnock Golf Club (1894) were either Scottish or involved in insurance services.[328] In the 1890s, a sharp increase in participation both in Ireland and in Dublin revealed both its popularity among the professional financial and commercial elite, as well as its assimilation by the native community.[329]

Exclusive and elitist pastimes symbolised the marriage of reason between the gentry and the upper levels of professions and commerce which had taken place in

[321] William H. Gibson, *Early Irish golf: the first courses, clubs and pioneers* (Naas, 1988), pp 17-39
[322] Ibid., pp 31-2; *Sport*, 4 Jul. 1885; *Freeman's Journal*, 18 May 1898.
[323] Gibson, *Early Irish golf*, pp 40-6.
[324] *Irish Times*, 29 Apr. 1885.
[325] William H. Menton, *The Golfing Union of Ireland, 1891-1991* (Dublin, 1991), p. 2; *Dublin Daily Express*, 16 May 1885; *Sport*, 4 Jul. 1885.
[326] Menton, *The Golfing Union of Ireland*, pp 1-3.
[327] *Sport*, 4 Jul. 1885; *Irish Times*, 16 Oct. 1885. Names were matched with the 1901 census.
[328] *Irish Times*, 9 Feb. 1893; T.M. Healy, *Portmarnock Golf Club 1894-1994, a centenary history* (Portmarnock, 1993), pp 9, 14.
[329] *Irish Times*, 5 Sept. 1895; Gibson, *Early Irish golf*, pp 69-70.

Ireland in the second part of the century. They elicited glowing reviews from the contemporary conservative press which strived to present hunting as a cross-class pastime:

> not only the gentry of the metropolitan county and of the neighbouring shires, but the officers of the Dublin Garrison, and a large number of Dublin merchants and tradesmen of high and low degree, with a plentiful representation of Dublin residents [sic] members of one of the learned professions […] mounted on every kind of horse, from the stateliest of hunters to the veriest of hacks.[330]

Such reports were only meant to sooth the tensions aroused by the Land War. In truth, only the very wealthy could regularly afford it. That the Clontarf foot beagles, among the least prestigious packs in the county, were linked to the local yacht club further embedded hunting into a specific socio-economic setting.[331] Common membership was frequent between these sports. In Lucan, the tennis and golf clubs were linked to the Spa Hotel.[332] The Sutton Golf Club grew out of the local sailing club and in Clontarf the tennis club grew out of the yacht club.[333] In Howth, the Baird family was heavily involved in sailing, golf and rugby. Charles Chaytor, a stalwart of the Fitzwilliam LTC, rode on occasion with the Ward Union Hunt and so did James Meldon, whose brother Louis regularly played golf with the Royal Dublin GC. This community of taste and values was largely reflected in their socio-economic status.

Socio-economic composition: layered upper class

Cost was the primary reason behind the lack of democratisation. The initial investment in sailing craft, manicured golf links, tennis courts, or kennels was simply too high for any but the wealthiest. The Wilton LTC had spent over £700 within months of its creation to lay down six courts and a pavilion, and the Dublin Bay Sailing Club estimated the total value of its fleet at over £3,000 in 1896.[334] The

[330] *Irish Sportsman*, 17 Oct. 1885.
[331] *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Mar. 1888. Foot beagles were hunting packs where hunters were not mounted and followed the hounds on foot.
[332] *Dublin Daily Express*, 3 Sep. 1898; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 7 Jun. 1902.
[333] Nixon, *A centenary of sailing*, pp 26-8; *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Oct. 1889.
[334] *Freeman's Journal*, 17 May 1880; *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 11 May 1896.

budget of the Ward Hunt defied all comparison. In 1883, total income reached £24,633, which was essentially made up of members' subscriptions (£14,702, including £2,322 from officers) and field money (£6,336) which was collected by 'passing the hat' on the ground.[335] For all these sports, co-option and high subscription rates further ensured social homogeneity within and between clubs.[336] A deeper socio-economic analysis, however, reveals specific participation patterns (figures 4.19 to 4.21).

Hunting was, with polo, the most expensive of late-nineteenth-century sports but also the one where religious and occupational barriers were the most flexible. In the 1890s, farmers (15/53) and law or medicine professionals (13/53) took part in the sport, alongside landowners, military officers and businessmen. That most of the farmers were Catholic (10/15) further showed how hunting packs had moved away from being the preserve of the Protestant gentry.[337] Farming and professional involvement grew in the 1880s as the position of hunting was made precarious throughout Ireland. Maintaining a pack remained expensive, yet income from land declined.[338] Subscriptions from the urban bourgeoisie or professionals thus gave the gentry the means to keep hunting on a grand scale. Similarly, the land agitation of the 1880s brought the demise of many packs throughout Leinster and Munster, and further highlighted the necessity for masters of hunts to establish lasting and good neighbouring relations with nearby farmers.[339] Prestige and acceptance into the largest Irish stag-hunting pack were implicitly traded for money and peace.

In comparison with hunting, tennis presented a lesser level of economic exclusivity. Its adoption in elite schools meant that former pupils who followed a career in civil service or clerkship rather than attended university remained an important minority within the game. The decline in social tone was also felt from the mid-1890s onwards when the fashionable image of tennis suffered from a progressive disengagement by the rural gentry who had been so prominent in conveying the

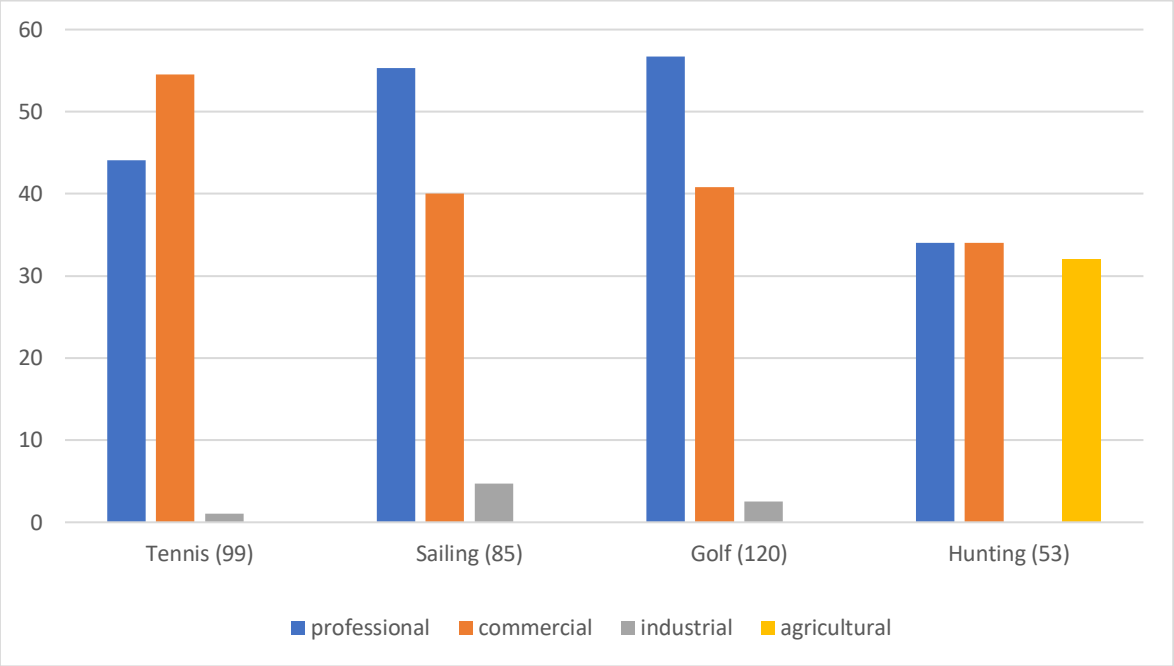
[335] *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Jul. 1883.
[336] Richard Holt, 'Golf and the English suburbs: class and gender in a London club, c. 1890-c.1960', *Sports Historian*, xviii, no. 1 (1998), pp 77, 79; Garnham, 'Accounting for the early success', p. 71.
[337] The presence of large farmers was also seen in Westmeath after 1875, see Hunt, *Sport and society*, pp 28-9.
[338] Dooley, *The decline of the Big House*, pp 99-111; Pamela Hinkson, *Seventy years young: memories of Elizabeth, countess of Fingall*, 1937 (Dublin, 1991), p. 186.
[339] L.P. Curtis, 'Stopping the hunt', pp 356-7.

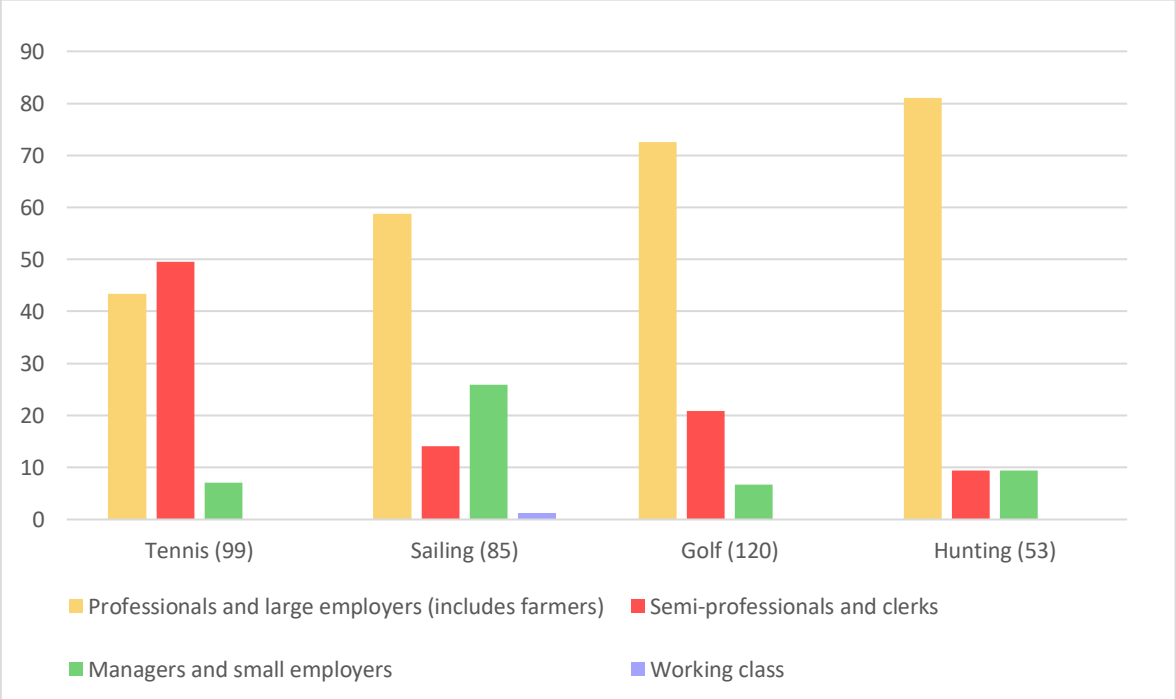
picturesque image of the game in the 1870s.[340] At the same time, competition from cycling and golf became more keenly felt.[341] The age divide also explains such findings. Golfers and sailors respectively averaged 38.6 and 41.3 years of age. Compared to tennis players (29.4 years old on average), they were at a more advanced stage in their careers. Among the identified tennis players, nineteen held junior or apprentice positions in the law, civil service, or financial services and were still under thirty in 1901. By 1911, ten of them had progressed from the semi-professional ranks to professional employment and only four did not have any career advancement.[342] The lower figure for professionals participating in tennis thus illustrates both a degree of lower-middle class participation and the involvement of the upper-middle class at an early stage of life.

The socio-economic patterns in sailing and golfing were only marginally different but place of birth clearly set them apart (figure 4.20). Dubliners were greatly under-represented in golf and reflected the slower rate of expansion of the game in the city. According to William Menton, only 13 of the 128 courses built in Ireland between 1881 and 1901 were in Dublin, and this research has found that only from 1895 were there at least five clubs simultaneously in existence in the county.[343] Sailors belonging to the Kingstown clubs, where the emphasis on sailing was the strongest, were conversely disproportionately born in Dublin. This suggests a familiarity with the sea since an early age, which is confirmed by similar results among swimmers.

[340] Eaves and Lake, 'The forgotten powerhouse', p. 968.
[341] *Dublin Daily Nation*, 26 May 1898; *Dublin Daily Express*, 27 May 1899; *Freeman's Journal*, 23 May 1900; *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 8 June 1901, 15 June 1901.
[342] Census of Ireland 1911, Household returns. The five others have not been found in the 1911 census.
[343] Menton, *The Golfing Union of Ireland*, pp 7,17-8, 48. Meanwhile, 50 had been built in Ulster, 37 in Munster, 22 in the rest of Leinster, and only 6 in Connacht.

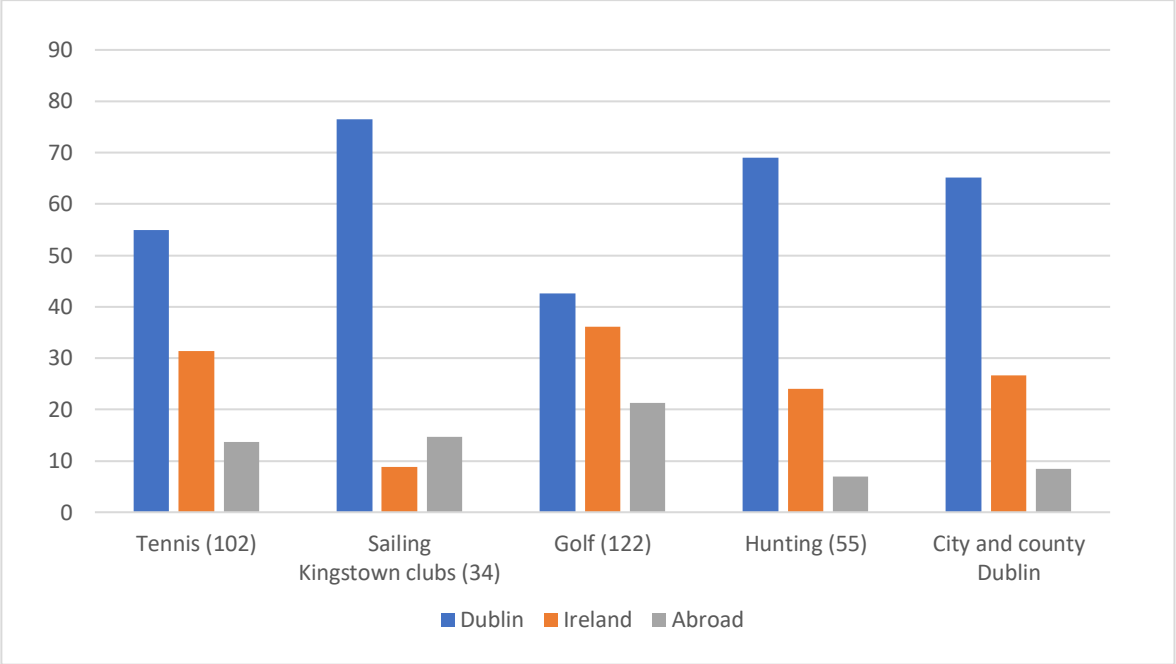
Figure 4.19: Socio-economic distribution of male tennis players, yachtsmen, golfers, and hunters (%), 1895-1902.[344]





[344] The research has been extended back to 1889 for hunting due to too few occurrences for the 1895-1902 period.

Figure 4.20: Place of birth of male tennis players, yachtsmen, golfers, and hunters (%), 1895-1902.



A subtle internal stratification existed among and within elite pastimes which further refined the patterns of participation.[345] Annual membership of tennis clubs ranged from 15*s*. to £1/5 in the 1880s.[346] This was slightly less than in yachting, where membership started at 10/6*s*. in the lowly fancied Liffey Yacht Club in Ringsend but then reached one and two guineas in the Clontarf and Kingstown clubs respectively.[347] In the socially exclusive world of golf, the Portmarnock GC charged its members two guineas per year in 1896, but the Royal Dublin GC subscription had reached eight guineas by the latter 1890s.[348] At the very top were hunting and polo, where the upkeep of hunters and ponies alone required hundreds of pounds yearly.[349] Within neighbourhoods, marked differences were also observed. In 1901, the parish of Clontarf, for example, counted 759 male Protestants out of a male population of 2,522.[350] The local tennis and sailing clubs essentially recruited their

[345] Mike Huggins, 'Sport and the upper classes: introduction', *Sport in History*, xxviii, no. 3 (2008), pp 353-4.
[346] *Irish Sportsman*, 1 Apr. 1882; *Irish Times*, 9 Mar. 1887; *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Mar. 1887.
[347] *Dublin Daily Express*, 22 Jul. 1881; *Irish Sportsman*, 17 Mar. 1885; *Irish Times*, 8 Mar. 1893.
[348] *Irish Times*, 22 Jan. 1895, 24 Jan. 1896.
[349] *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Jan. 1877, 8 Feb. 1877, 13 Feb. 1877.
[350] 1901 Census of Ireland, vol. 1, part 1, no. 2, p. 43.

members among the professionals and businessmen of this latter community. Yet their respective socio-economic profile suggests the coexistence of two distinct sub-sections within this tightly knit community (figure 4.21).

Figure 4.21: Details of membership of the Clontarf tennis and yacht clubs, 1895-1902.

	Tennis	Sailing
Average age	27.5	46.0
Religion		
Church of Ireland	8/20	21/24
Other Protestant	11/20	2/24
Occupation		
Professional – clerk	13/18	11/24
Manager – official	5/18	12/24
Place of birth		
Dublin	12/19	10/24
Ireland – abroad	7/19	14/24

The meaning of it all

The bridges that linked these sports were more important than what set them apart. They clearly stood for the Protestant, loyalist and elite section of Dublin society. Informal religious barriers existed, but a systemic and strict segregation on religious grounds alone was not enforced (figure 4.22). Social status, wealth, political leaning, and a network of relations were the real division lines in elite society and its pastimes. In the exclusive Royal Dublin Golf Club, six of the thirty-one identified players were Catholic, five of whom were solicitors. John H. Pigot came from a well-known law family and was brother-in-law to George M. Knox, a fellow solicitor and

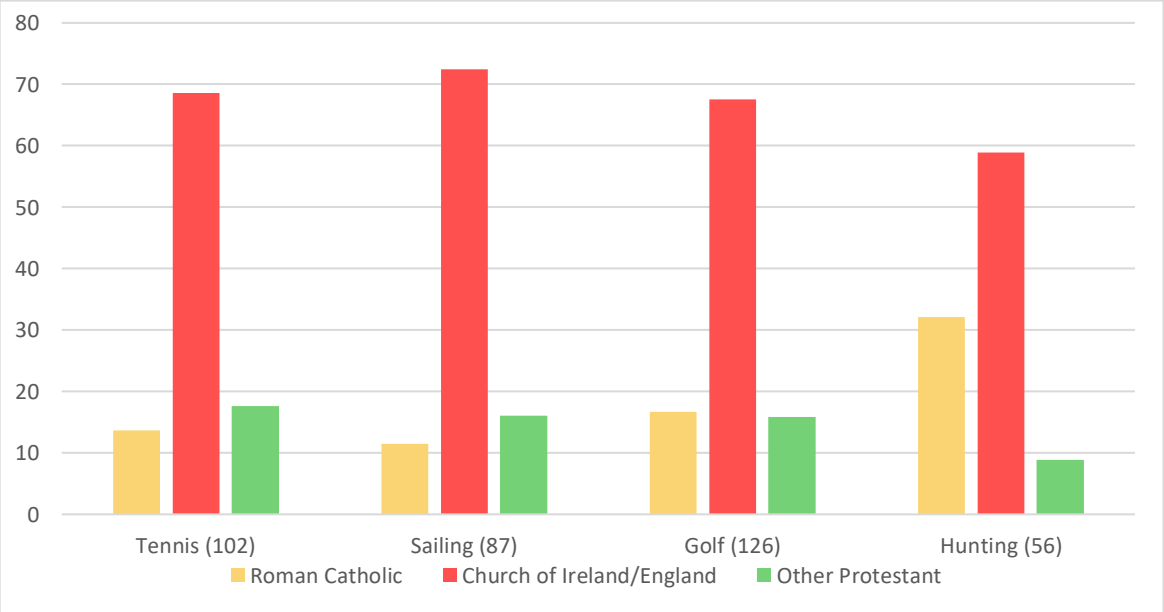
Protestant member of the same golf club.[351] Louis Meldon, also coming from a distinguished barrister family, was a famous all-round sportsman, at ease in cricket, golf, cycling or sailing.[352] His brother James F. Meldon was a stalwart of the Ward Union Hunt.[353] William H. Dillon played golf too. He was a stockbroker who hailed from a banking family based in the southern suburb of Merrion.[354] His brother Charles F. Dillon was a keen polo player who passed away in 1904 shortly after lining up for the All-Ireland Polo Club.[355] All were highly integrated into Dublin legal and financial networks and saw in the sports they practised the natural extension of their social position. From the 1880s to the 1910s, elite pastimes provided a bubble from the contemporary upheavals taking place in Ireland, but also in Britain. These were safe havens where economic and social orthodoxy applied, where loyalism prevailed and where threats of revolution did not exist. This was sport, but also much more than that. It was the celebration and the protection of a certain idea of Britain and its position in the world.

Loyalism was a central element to it. Lord Powerscourt was president of Mountemple LTC, Chief Secretary Gerald Balfour held a similar position within the Royal Dublin GC.[356] Toasts were freely given to the royal family and 'God save the Queen' traditionally rounded off the musical entertainment, invariably played by a military band.[357] Social aspirations of suburban dwellers were grafted onto sports which were redolent of a vaunted rural lifestyle then quickly fading away. Hunters attempted to preserve the status of the landowning community at the top of the social order. Golfers created a rural idyll free from physical constraint that suited the Victorian values of self-improvement.[358] Tennis clubs successfully transferred the bucolic features of 1870s garden parties to the administrative and official setting of urban clubs. An extensive social agenda was expected and afternoon teas, 'at

[351] *Dublin Daily Nation*, 20 Aug. 1898; *Evening Herald*, 18 Nov. 1926.
[352] *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Feb. 1895. On that occasion he was appointed captain of the Water Wags.
[353] *Dublin Daily Express*, 23 Apr. 1878, 27 Mar. 1883.
[354] *Irish Daily Independent*, 1 Apr. 1904.
[355] *Irish Times*, 23 May 1904.
[356] *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Apr. 1893; *Irish Times*, 17 Dec. 1897.
[357] *Irish Times*, 25 Aug. 1882; *Dublin Daily Express*, 26 Nov. 1891; *Freeman's Journal*, 23 May 1894.
[358] Roisín Higgins, '"The hallmark of pluperfect respectability": the early development of golf in Irish society', *Éire-Ireland*, xlviii, no. 1-2 (2013), p. 20; Holt, 'Golf and the English suburb', pp 78-9.

homes', or annual balls succeeded each other throughout the year.[359] Diversification was another key element to sociability and by the latter 1890s, Fitzwilliam LTC members availed of cycling excursions and cricket or croquet facilities.[360]

Figure 4.22: Religious denomination of male tennis players, sailors, golfers, and hunters (%), 1895-1902.



For players and spectators, all sports meant more than what went on on the pitch. Inclusion within a wider political frame was seen in rugby, hockey, and of course Gaelic games. Social events were important during the rowing off-season and within the GAA too. What decisively set apart elite pastimes was their apparent remoteness from the outside world and their familial nature.[361] The large presence of women in tennis, and to some extent in golf and hunting, was however more the embodiment of a caste at play than emancipation, even though a degree of personal freedom was perhaps observed in hunting.[362] In golf, gendered behaviours were the

[359] *Irish Sportsman*, 25 Sept. 1881; *Irish Times*, 13 Apr. 1892; *Irish Society*, 28 Nov. 1891, 3 Dec. 1892; *Freeman's Journal*, 25 June 1894.
[360] *Irish Times*, 21 Feb. 1899, 19 Feb. 1900. See also Treacy, *Fitzwilliam's first fifty*, pp 6-10.
[361] O'Riordan, 'We … galloped', pp 24-5.
[362] Erica Munkvitz, 'Vixens of venery: women, sport, and fox-hunting in Britain, 1860-1914', *Critical Survey*, xxiv, no. 1 (2012), pp 81-3; Colls, *This sporting life*, pp 18-9.

norm.[363] In tennis, women organised the tea parties and annual balls.[364] As mentioned in the preceding section, the subordinate status of women was sufficiently ingrained in social mores to downplay velleities of emancipation. For some, like the Countess of Fingal, it was internalised. In her own words, she was 'too delicate for hunting every day in the week and so must be left at home, like a horse in the stable, for one day at least between hunts.'[365]

9- Conclusion

The spread of modern, codified sport to the lower class in the last quarter of the nineteenth century stemmed from the democratisation and improving living conditions of British and Irish societies. By 1900, male Dubliners of all ages and social ranks had the means and opportunity to join a sports club. Many did, and more still watched from the stands. Income, education, religion, place of residence, political affinities, and personal taste defined allegiance to a game or club and ensured that sport became a marker of social identity. The sporting scene thus replicated the Dublin class structure, and reciprocally further entrenched it.

The growth of sublayers within social classes refined the sporting structure, yet also blurred boundaries at the margins. A degree of overlapping between upper and upper-middle-class games existed. Among the 77 identified players of the Clontarf FC, 7 played tennis too and 4 had their father involved in the local yacht club. The Mountemple and Alexandra College hockey clubs grew from the local tennis clubs, and three members of the Three Rock Rovers Hockey Club played golf at the nearby Foxrock course.[366] Division lines were not clear either at the lower end of the middle-class spectrum. Despite the 'relative stability' of inter-generational social mobility, Daly acknowledges that between 1871 and 1911, 'the only groups which

[363] Jane George, '"An excellent means of combining fresh air, exercise and society": females on the fairways, 1890-1914', *Sport in History*, xxix, no. 3 (2009), pp 335-6.
[364] Lowerson, *Sport and the English middle classes*, p. 208; *Irish Society*, 18 Oct. 1890; *Irish Times*, 13 Apr. 1892.
[365] Hinkson, *Seventy years young*, p. 110.
[366] Alexandra College Archives, Minutes of the Hockey Club, season 1893; *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Oct. 1894.

show any degree of inter-generational mobility are clerical white-collar workers, reflecting that this was an expanding and relatively new occupation, and semi-skilled workers.'[367] Many of the young clerks who made up a large chunk of the Dublin sporting world were upwardly mobile but had a working-class or farming background. Their desire to achieve respectability was further offset by the fact that their economic and social conditions were similar to those of skilled workers. According to Huggins, 'the "petty bourgeoisie" of small shopkeepers, school teachers, clerks and white-collar workers, had more in common with the upper working-class in their sports, even if their dress, speech and housing might be different.'[368] Soccer was such a convergence point in Dublin.

If social class was a determinant of sport participation at the turn of the twentieth century, so were other factors. Educational trends, political upheavals, urban development, and heightened commercial exploitation were potent forces that both refined and complexified the social study made in this chapter. Their role in shaping modern sport in Dublin is assessed in the following and last chapter.

[367] Daly, *The deposed capital*, pp 127-30.
[368] Mike Huggins, 'Second-class citizen?', p. 15.

Chapter Five

Sport in society: 1880-1900

Building up from the socio-economic analysis made in the previous section, this final chapter looks at aspects which had become fundamental to explain sporting participation in late nineteenth century Dublin. Even though fun and pleasure remained primordial to the appeal of sport, its relevance to daily life had largely spilled out from playing fields by the latter nineteenth century. Several factors have thus been identified as being essential in shaping the sporting scene and their evolution and contribution are assessed in this chapter. It is first explained that sport was paramount in building social and cultural identities and fitted the contemporary political upheavals which followed the rise of nationalism as a popular force in Europe and its conflictual implementation in an Irish setting. Sport in that regard was used to express civic pride and a sense of belonging to a neighbourhood, city, and country. Increasingly such emotions were created and exploited by the press or promoters for personal profit. The commercialisation of sport which has been observed in this thesis since early nineteenth century thus experienced a marked acceleration from 1870. Retail was dominated by family businesses or department stores but larger investments were needed and eventually led to the creation of limited liability companies to run venues at Leopardstown, Baldoyle, and Jones's Road.

This chapter will finally address the idealisation of sport and its perception as wholesome, masculine, and heroic. In schools, the doctrine of athleticism readily linked games with Christian masculinity and imperialism. By keeping wickets or scrummaging, the boys from socially ambitious families learned how to be men and to run a country. If they did not, then surely life in the army did so. There, physical exercise kept the forces fit, and the public-school ethos pervaded officers' corps: games were a preparation for the greater game of war. Such beliefs – accurate or not – were pervasive and reinforced sport as a bastion of masculinity. These were

powerful motivating factors, yet kudos often took on down-to-earth forms: interviews and pictures in the press, heightened social capital, easier employment paths, and opportunities to flirt. Most of the forces this chapter focuses on were already present to some extent at the beginning of the period studied. A century later, they had become predominant.

1- The passion for play

How, when, where, with whom, and what people played are some of the questions this research has addressed. Why they did it was fundamentally simple. People played because it brought them pleasure and a good time.[1] Tremendous social, technological, and economic developments greatly altered the leisure habits of Dubliners and revolutionised games and sports. Inherent in them, however, was the excitement and fun contestants and spectators felt, and little changed in that regard throughout the century.

Travelling to the venue and soaking up the atmosphere of a day out was looked forward to. Anticipating many metropolitan visitors to Cork for Gaelic sports, the *Irish Daily Independent* believed that 'the scenery of the Lee, the friendship of the natives, and the excellence of hurling and football, shall form an enticing combination of pleasure for the Dublin excursionists.'[2] Among all organisations, the GAA perhaps best encapsulated the carnivalesque ambiance that sport could offer. A 'Gaelic Whitsuntide Carnival at Elm Park' held in May 1887 also illustrated the continuity of many leisure practices throughout the century as it was held in conjunction with a religious feast (albeit only recently celebrated) and on a ground lent by local landlord Lord Ffrench. The hurling, football and athletic contests were accompanied by hammer throwing, tug of war, hurdle racing and jig dancing. For those not competing, there were also 'spacious grounds for picnic parties, special band for dancing, swing boats, shooting galleries, velocipedes, merry-go-rounds,

[1] Rouse, 'The sporting world', pp 310-2.
[2] *Irish Daily Independent*, 24 Sept. 1892.

etc.'[3] The extension of sport meetings into community gatherings and social events appears thus essential to their appeal. A football match between the Lucan Sarsfields and Clondalkin Round Towers was concluded in the evening by 'a dance in the football field. A regular party was given: minerals, biscuits, sweets, and sandwiches etc. The whole field was crowded with people from everywhere and everyone enjoyed the party and game.'[4] Impromptu or carefully planned, dancing, smoking concerts, and tea parties were integral parts of the sporting experience.[5]

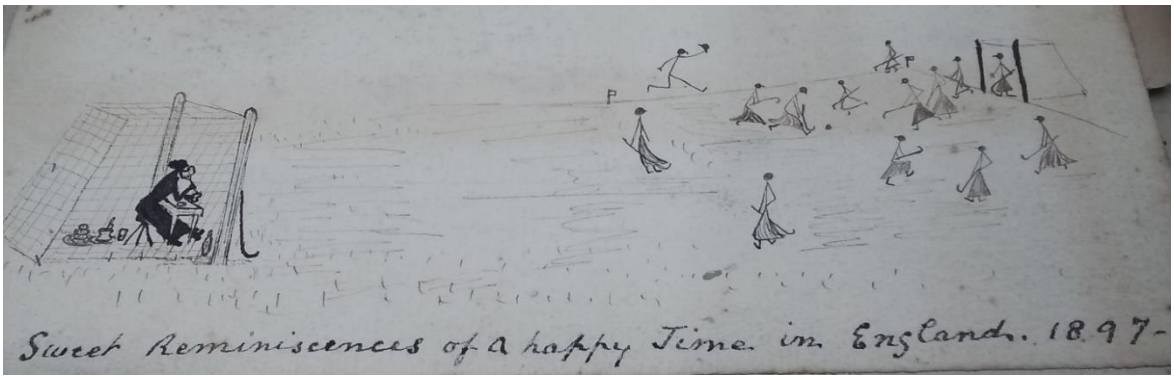
Sport was a reason to congregate with friends and neighbours outside the household and workplace. The quoit club near Tallaght was thus known locally as 'a delightful place to spend an evening.'[6] If games acted as social lubricant, so did drinking around them and nearby publicans enjoyed a thriving trade on match days. Two of them even hurriedly sought to extend their licences upon hearing that Bohemian FC had secured a lease on a Phibsborough ground in 1901.[7] Conversely, the Dublin GAA County Board knew that Drumcondra establishments would profit from matches held at Clonturk Park and expected from them a financial contribution towards organisation costs.[8] The emotional aspect of sport and the ensuing relaxation of social constraints led to exuberance and excess. Entertained by the Lansdowne FC in 1887, most of the visiting Hull rugby team 'wished in the morning that John Jameson has never seen the light'.[9] At a DUBC banquet in 1993, the club captain noted that 'the Senior eight retired early to keep in training for Henley.' The party went on long after, for 'the others don't remember anything of it.'[10]

More central still was the pleasure of playing or watching. Anecdotal evidence largely captures the satisfaction derived from competing. The zeal shown by schoolboys to demand better facilities from their headmasters highlighted the recreative aspect of games. At the High School and King's Hospital, students asked

[3] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 28 May 1887.
[4] National Folklore Collection, School's Collection, vol. 0788, p. 125.
[5] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/2/2, 28 Jan. 1885 (rowing); Minutes of the Clontarf FC, 17 Dec. 1895 (rugby); *Sport*, 24 Sept. 1887 (Gaelic games); *Irish Society*, 9 June 1894 (tennis).
[6] *Irish Times*, 18 Oct. 1883.
[7] *Sport*, 7 Sept. 1901. The ground is now known as Dalymount Park and still home to Bohemian FC. The two public houses, the Hut and Dunphy's (now Doyle's) still exist.
[8] GAA Archives, Minutes of the County Dublin Committee, 24 Feb. 1897.
[9] *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Nov. 1887.
[10] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/3/1, 1893.

the board to help them secure or renovate cricket and handball facilities.[11] At Belvedere College, boxing classes were requested by students.[12] At Blackrock College, a staff member observed that 'infinitely more enthusiasm and zeal are shown by the students in trying to qualify for entrance into the "Cup team" than entrance into the lists of Exhibitioners.'[13] At the King's Hospital, only one boy was sick on Wednesday 15 September 1869 and missed the athletic sports. This was a sharp drop from an average of four in the preceding and following weeks.[14]

Figure 5.1: Recollections of a hockey tour in England by Laura Stevens, 1897.



Source: Alexandra College Archives, E/5/1/2, Laura Stevens scrapbook.

Recollections of that love for games abound in contemporary newspapers and elsewhere (figure 5.1). *Irish Furze* wrote in the *Irish Sportsman* how much he had regretted leaving behind Cork and his hunting, shooting and fishing when he enrolled in Dublin University in the 1840s.[15] In 1889, Pembroke RC member Walter Kelly was asked why did he 'first take rowing as an amusement in preference to any other outdoor sport?' He simply answered that he 'was fond of it from a boy'.[16] Decades later, another generation of sportsmen recalled their passion for rugby at

[11] High School Archives, Board Meeting Book, BG/1011, no 6, 16 June 1876; King's Hospital Archives, Board Minute Book, 23 Mar. 1880, 22 Mar. 1881, 26 Sept. 1882.
[12] *The Belvederian*, i, no. 3 (1908), p. 143.
[13] Quoted in Farragher, *The French College*, pp 491-2.
[14] King's Hospital Archives, Weekly Register, Sept. 1869. Between Wednesday 1 September and Saturday 11 September 1869, an average of four boys were sick daily. Only one boy was registered as sick on Monday 13, Tuesday 14, and Wednesday 15 (date of the sports). From Thursday 16 to Thursday 30 September, the daily average of sick boys rose again to 4.5. Sincere thanks to Andrew Whiteside for bringing this to my attention.
[15] *Irish Sportsman*, 20 Sept. 1884.
[16] *Sport*, 28 Sept. 1889.

the turn of the twentieth century. Bethel Solomons, of St Andrew's College, did 'fairly well at lessons', but rugby was his 'real joy'.[17] In Trinity College, a few students went to the length of using aliases to avoid detection by parents who thought they were reading for examinations. Daniel Rambaut was one of them:

> I played occasionally for Monkstown first fifteen in 1883-4-5-6. I think under an assumed name. When I joined the Medical School in October 1886 I could not resist any longer, and I went immediately in the T.C.D. first fifteen, the Leinster fifteen and the Ireland fifteen.[18]

Pleasure was universally shared and did not discriminate according to age, wealth, or gender. In 1930s Balscadden, a village in north Dublin, 'the older people still talk[ed] with pleasure of their cross roads dancing on Sunday evenings.'[19] Similarly, the effort of Alexandra College teachers to set up a hockey club in the 1890s 'were hailed with delight by the students. [They] were all very keen in those days and needed no persuasion to turn out in all weathers for practice, and a match of any sort was a source of pure joy, and intense excitement.'[20]

The love of sport which inhabited these people radiates from their testimonies. All had different backgrounds, expectations, and levels. Both Rambaut and Solomons earned international caps and went on to successful careers in medicine. *Irish Furze* roamed the Cork countryside with a few of his friends and the names of the Balscadden dwellers who danced at the crossroads have long been forgotten. Yet at the heart of all these lives was a shared passion for play.

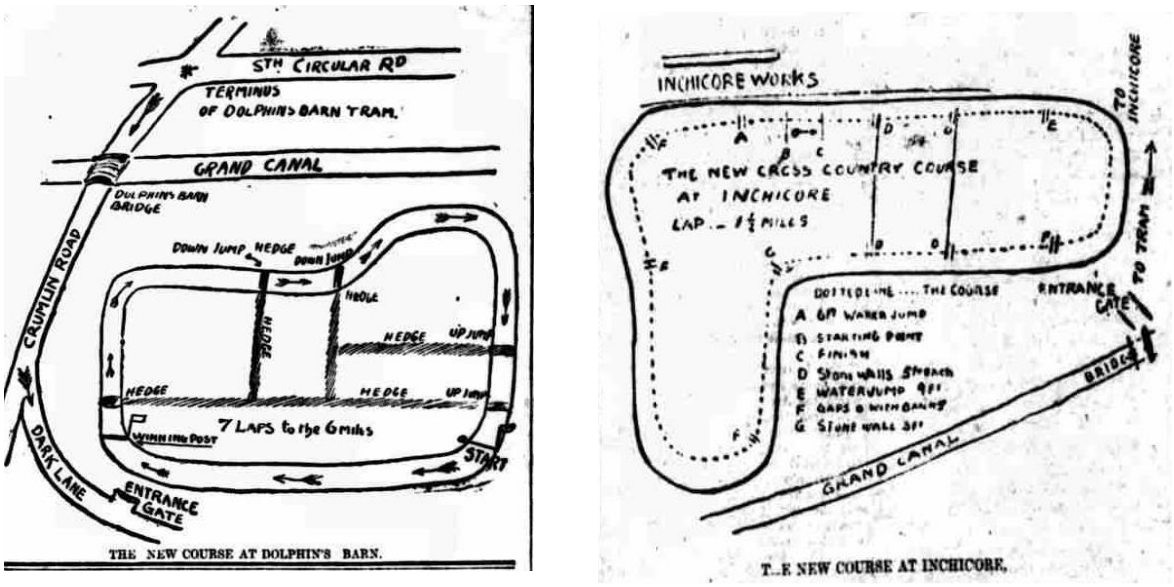
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[17] Fitzpatrick, Georgina Fitzpatrick, *St Andrew's College, 1894-1994: Ardens sed virens* (Blackrock, 1994), p. 27.
[18] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Rugby F./38/108, letter from Daniel F. Rambaut to E.J.M. Watson, 13 June 1930; Ibid., Mun/Club/Rugby F./ 38/111, letter from Henry A. Richey to E.J.M. Watson, 2 Feb. 1930.
[19] National Folklore Collection, School's Collection, vol. 0783, p. 184.
[20] Alexandra College Archives, E5/1/3, *Notes on the early history of women's hockey in Ireland by a Veteran*, p. 2.

2- Urbanisation and identity

Urbanisation in nineteenth-century Western Europe destroyed many of the organic societal ties which underpinned early modern societies and contributed to hastening the transition from traditional and communal pastimes to modern sports. In turn, these latter were crucial in channelling civic pride in newly built neighbourhoods. This proved to be especially the case in the rapidly growing industrial cities where immigrant or native communities found in the support of sports clubs a mean of expressing an urban identity.[21] The case of Dublin is here analysed in detail, first by examining how the spread of the city contributed to the modification of recreative habits, and then by identifying how sport contributed to a sense of belonging.

Figure 5.2: Cross-country running courses at Dolphin's Barn and Inchicore.



Source: *Sport*, 18 Feb. 1899, 27 Jan.1900.

[21] Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp 166-7; Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, pp 196-9. For the insertion of sport into the wider 'invention of tradition' in Western societies, see Eric Hobsbawm, 'Mass-producing traditions: Europe, 1870-1914', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), pp 263-307.

Urbanisation and sport

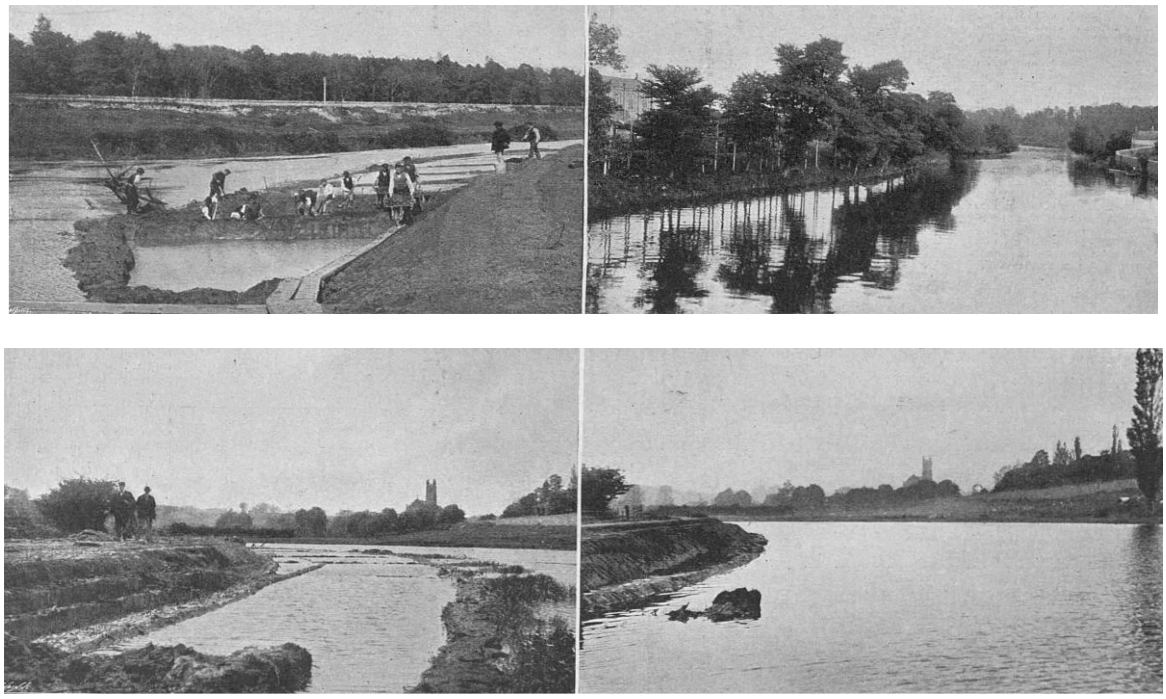
The acreage of built-up land within ten miles of the city centre grew by 127.9% from 3,910 acres to 8,910 acres between the early 1840s and early twentieth century.[22] Such expansion contributed to transforming the geography of sport in Dublin.

As the southern and northern limits of the city were gradually pushed further under demographic growth, the eastern edge was transformed by commercial and industrial developments. The necessity of building a deep-water port in the late eighteenth century and the subsequent and sustained increase in maritime traffic drastically transformed the coastal outlook and opportunities for sport.[23] The construction of the North Bull Wall at Dollymount in the early 1820s generated an accumulation of silt on its northern part and led to the creation of Bull Island. Strand racing took place there in the 1850s, rifle shooting in the 1870s, and the Royal Dublin Golf Club settled there in 1889.[24] The gradual expansion of the East Wall from the 1870s onwards and the development of Ringsend as an industrial hub, however, curtailed the possibility of bathing and impaired the rowing clubs which had been established there since mid-century.[25] Suburban expansion meanwhile proved pivotal in the decline of communal pastimes. The privatisation of common land and the replacement of agricultural land, still present within the city limits in the early nineteenth century, with rows of terraced housing signalled the end of communal horseracing and ball games on the edge of the city. Conversely, the expansion of residential middle-class housing was determinant in creating a privately owned sporting landscape made of cricket, tennis, athletics and football grounds. The pattern of destruction and creation brought out by urbanisation was also observed in pastimes hitherto associated with open country. The Ward Hunt witnessed the steady displacement of its hunting districts towards County Meath as fixtures near Finglas or Blanchardstown disappeared (appendix 7).[26] Conversely,

[22] Arnold Horner, 'The Dublin region, 1880-1982: an overview on its development and planning', in Michael J. Bannon (ed.), *The emergence of Irish planning, 1880-1920* (Dublin, 1985), p. 24.
[23] Brady, 'Dublin at the turn of the century', pp 254-9.
[24] Gilligan, *A history of the port of Dublin*, pp 89-93.
[25] *Freeman's Journal*, 7 July 1879, 9 Nov. 1891. The development of the Langan estuary in Belfast similarly affected local rowing clubs. The straightening of the river in the 1840s initially worked out in their favour before the development of the Harland and Wolff shipyard put an end to rowing at Queen's Island in 1868, see Walter F. Mitchell, *Belfast Rowing Club 1880-1982* (Belfast, 1994), pp 9,29.
[26] *Sport*, 4 Oct. 1884; *Freeman's Journal*, 31 Dec. 1901.

the building of the Bohernabreena reservoir in 1887 to supply wholesome water to Rathmines township offered anglers new trout fishing opportunities.[27] Enclosed cross-country courses in populated suburbs and the enlargement and straightening of the Liffey at Islandbridge in 1898 to build a rowing course further participated in re-creating an open country landscape within the urban fabric and are evidence of the integration of sport at the heart of the late nineteenth-century city (figures 5.2 and 5.3).

Figure 5.3: Widening and straightening of the Liffey at Islandbridge, 1898.



Source: *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 18 June 1898.

The general overhaul of the transport network in the second part of the nineteenth century was decisive in shrinking time and distance and led too to fundamental changes in the structure of sport.[28] The railway contributed to a shift of focus from local to national and shipping companies made sport international in such a way that 'to cross over to Ascot would consume less time and cost little more money

[27] Ó Maitiú, *Dublin's suburban towns*, pp 95-7; *Irish Times*, 1 Mar. 1888; *Dublin Daily Express*, 8 June 1888.
[28] Brailsford, *Sport, time, and society*, pp 94-100.

than to reach either Ballinrobe or Strokestown.'[29] As the flux of people was eased, so were sporting opportunities. Between 1871 and 1899, the DUFC first XV played 61 matches against British opposition and 71 more involved Ulster or Munster clubs, representing altogether over a third of their engagements during the period.[30] Within Ireland, the whole structure of Irish sport gravitated around the two urban poles of Belfast and especially Dublin. Most organisations had their headquarters and annual competitions held there, reflecting the seniority and importance of its clubs, but also its crucial position at the heart of the railway network. Despite its strong social and cultural anchorage in rural Munster and Leinster, the GAA differed little and resorted to using the metropolis for its inter-county fixtures (figure 5.4).[31]

Figure 5.4: Location of All-Ireland championship matches, 1887-1901.

	Dublin (Dublin team involved)	Rest of Ireland (Dublin team involved)
Football	19 (10)	7 (3)
Hurling	17 (4)	5 (-)
Total	36 (14)	12 (3)

Source: Tom Doyle (ed.), *The complete handbook of Gaelic games: a comprehensive record of results and teams (1887-2014)* (Dublin, 2014), pp 4-5, 140-1.

Within Dublin, transport infrastructures contributed to the modification of sporting practices. Notwithstanding their bad state of upkeep, roads were cyclists' playgrounds.[32] In 1881, the Drumcondra Township Improvement Committee authorised the public roads of the township to be used for a race, and hill-climbing

[29] *Irish Times*, 24 June 1889.
[30] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Rugby F./17. Two matches against non-European touring teams are included in the British fixtures.
[31] The idea that Dublin had the best stadium infrastructures cannot be held solely responsible for the staging of matches in the city. The 1893 All-Ireland hurling and football finals were held in the Phoenix Park for example.
[32] Griffin, *Cyclin in Victorian Ireland*, pp 161-3.

time trials began at Knockmaroon Hill in 1886.[33] The dense tramway network facilitated travel within the city and was crucial to rises in spectatorship.[34] Its extension to the towns of Lucan and Tallaght in the 1880s eased the assimilation of the social and cultural practices of the metropolis by rural communities. The advent of the motor car in the first decades of the twentieth century further accelerated the demise of local traditions and homogenised leisure habits between the city, suburbs and country. Fairs which had held an important commercial role for farmers and cattle dealers in north County Dublin had disappeared 'since motor lorries came into use'. Instead 'people [brought] their goods to the city markets and [sold] them there.'[35] And with them went away the games and sports which concluded fair days.

Largely defined by its immediate environment, sport in return contributed to fashioning neighbourhoods just as industrial and residential infrastructures did. Racecourses and stadiums were imposing buildings visible from afar. Dublin Bay was scattered with golf clubs on its north side and bathing places on its southern shore. In between lay a city dotted with pitches, playgrounds, or gymnasiums which had become integral to the urban landscape. Elite sporting facilities such as hunting grounds, golf courses and tennis courts contributed to the prestige of a neighbourhood and increased housing value.[36] Similarly, proximity to a stadium bolstered trade on match days but was also a nuisance for residents.[37] Crucially, playing or watching sport presented aspects of a 'third place' where social interactions took place outside home or work. For sociologist Ray Oldenburg, places such as public houses or cafés provided a social focus as informal and light-hearted as it was central to the life of communities.[38] In expanding cities, where the sense of belonging was altered by migration from the country or to the suburbs, sporting grounds and their adjoining clubhouses or public houses were such places for people to mingle. They fulfilled too a role in providing the sense of place which was at the heart of sporting competition.

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[33] *Freeman's Journal*, 19 July 1881; *Dublin Daily Express*, 4 Oct. 1886.
[34] Riess, *Sport in industrial America*, pp 35-8.
[35] National Folklore Collection, School's Collection, vol. 0792, p. 115.
[36] Lowerson, *Sport and the English middle-class*, pp 242-3; *Irish Daily Independent*, 12 Mar. 1895; *Dublin Daily Express*, 7 Apr. 1893.
[37] For example in Drumcondra, see pp 324-5.
[38] Ray Oldenburg, *The great good place: cafés, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons and other hangouts at the heart of a community* (New York, 1989), pp 20-42.

Sport and identity

The growth of associational culture was the bedrock on which modern sport developed in the nineteenth century and the exclusive nature of most clubs – on religious, occupational, gender, age, or else residence grounds – meant that members found in them a congeniality which suited their social and cultural preferences. Reciprocally, membership affected members' standing in their community as a mark of status, affluence or taste.[39] The creation of rivalries stemmed from this identification of oneself with a club and the wish to see it prevailing among its peers. In this lay the essence of competition which pervaded most sporting relations, even the most futile. In 1881, a procession of cyclists through the Phoenix Park, for example, saw Dublin clubs wrangle over their respective position in the peloton.[40] Layers of identification were multiple, non-exclusive, and contributed to fashion a sense of belonging as the city experienced suburbanisation and rural immigration.

Occupation and education mattered. The concentration of grocers and shop assistants in the Erin's Pride, Commercial, Michael Davitts, Faughs, Kickhams and Grocers' Assistants GAA clubs brought an added incentive to their contests such that 'the rivalry existing among the profession [was] of such an extent that outsiders are simply not in the running when the Grocers and Commercials decide superiority.'[41] In the latter 1890s, when the Dublin soccer scene was still nascent, matches between civilians and military teams were the most keenly contested and looked forward to.[42] Likewise pupils' connection with their school was never as high as during Leinster Schools' Cup matches:

> Football is, therefore, the outlet for school rivalries, the test of school superiority. Headmasters may study the Intermediate Pass List and the tabulations in the 'Freeman's Journal' (all schools seem fond of this paper) and invent plans for getting their school first of all schools in Ireland, but boys

[39] Brian Griffin, 'Irish cycling clubs, 1869-1901', in Kelly and Comerford, *Associational culture in Ireland*, p. 111; Hargreaves, *Sporting females*, p. 52.
[40] *Irish Times*, 19 May 1881; *Freeman's Journal*, 13 June. 1881.
[41] *Dublin Daily Nation*, 4 Oct. 1897. See also *Sport*, 6 May 1889; *Flag of Ireland*, 27 Aug. 1892.
[42] *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Nov. 1897; *Sport*, 23 Feb. 1901.

> as a rule will still consider that their superiority over the 'Imperial Academical Institution' or St Somebody's College lies in their victory of half a dozen goals and tries over them in the last match.[43]

Religion was another important marker even though the open sectarianism occasionally observed in Belfast soccer was less visible in Dublin.[44] In the early 1900s, billiard tournaments between workingmen's clubs of different religious affiliations 'were popular though contentious events.'[45] The heightened sense of rivalry between schools brought out by the Intermediate Education Act and open competition spilled over from academic results and took a confessional turn.[46] In rugby, Blackrock College matched their high academic achievements by accumulating honours in the Senior Schools' Cup (1887).[47] That it was the sole Catholic establishment able to repeatedly beat Protestant schools filled Fr Ebenrecht, the school bursar, with pride:

> All returned by 6.30 with the cup, and a deafening hurrah all along the road as they came up towards the College. Our team made 6 goals and four tries versus nil. The discomfiture of the secretary, one of the Leinster XV, was complete. The Cup was handed to the winner and the crosses given to each of the XV from Blackrock, without a word of praise or congratulation of any sort, in fact with perfect silence.[48]

By and large, however, territoriality was the driving element of identification with a team and an important means of expressing civic pride.[49] Sports clubs often tapped into long-standing territorial and social loyalties and established a clear connection between the immemorial independence of the community and its pastimes, new or old. The gentry found in the county division the means of sustainably expressing

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[43] High School Archive, *H.S.D.*, ii, no. 1 (Feb. 1899), p. 3.
[44] Garnham, *Association football and society*, p. 122; *Northern Whig*, 20 Apr. 1891.
[45] Maguire, 'The organisation and activism', p. 70.
[46] Pašeta*, Before the Revolution*, pp 31-2; Farragher*, The French College*, pp 448-9.
[47] Farragher, *The French College*, pp 338-9. The school won 18 of the first 25 editions of the Leinster Schools' Cup.
[48] Quoted in ibid., p. 388.
[49] Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, pp 192-6.

their belonging to a locality, as polo, archery and elite cricket clubs embraced this administrative unit.[50] Closely-knit communities such as townlands or parishes, on the other hand, provided the template for the GAA to spread throughout the country and efficiently channel local enmities into sporting rivalries.[51] Rugby in Limerick developed alongside geographical delimitations and soccer in Belfast reproduced the religious fragmentation of the city.[52] Expressions of localism in Dublin were limited by its socio-geographical situation. Middle-class suburbs were recent developments with little historical consciousness and GAA clubs in the city were essentially composed of rural migrants who had recently moved to the city. Soccer developed around streets and neighbourhoods, but too few clubs were established long enough by 1900 to truly represent their community, as was then already the case in Belfast. In this context, local pride still emerged. Informal geographical homogeneity based on home county pervaded several GAA clubs as 'kin followed kin and local followed local in the manner of chain migration, earlier migrants established economic and social frameworks for those following'.[53] In the budding soccer scene, regimental teams were associated with Britain. The defeat of Freebooters by the Liverpool Regiment, based at the Curragh in 1901, was ironically commented on in *Sport*: 'Freebooters have done it properly this time! Imagine the Leinster Cup going to Liverpool!'[54]

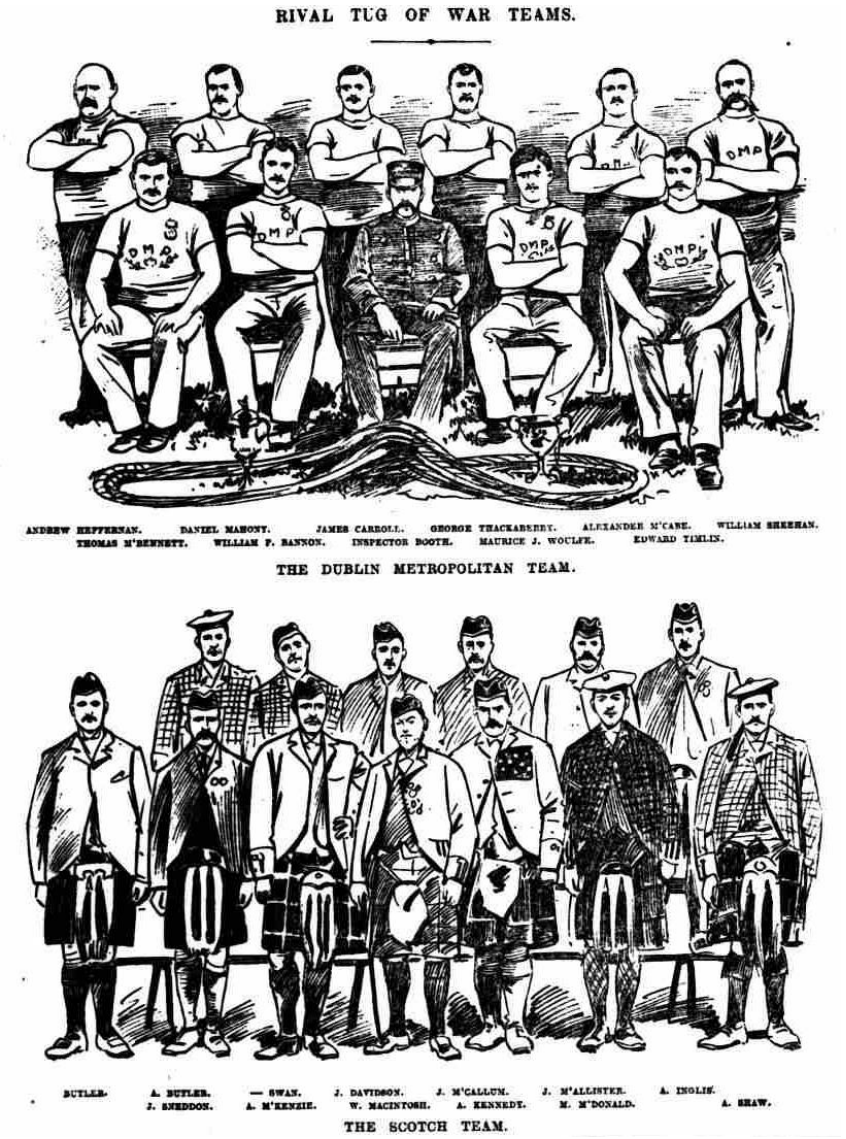
Identification with neighbourhood, city, or country were powerful vectors of pride and reinforced one's perception of self in the community. Nineteenth-century modernisation and urbanisation broke many of the old organic social ties which underpinned early modern society and replaced them with new forms of belonging. The emotional aspect of sport was essential in creating them, as victories by Dubliners or Irish teams were interpreted as successes for the entire community and brought scenes of effusion and communal bonding. The try scored by half-back

[50] For example the County Kildare Cricket Club, County Cork Cricket Club, County Carlow Polo Club, County Meath Archers, South Tipperary Bowmen.
[51] Neal Garnham, 'Accounting for the early success', pp 75-6; Hunt, 'The GAA: social structure', p. 193; Hunt, 'Parish factions', pp 86-8.
[52] John McGrath, 'An urban community: St Mary's parish, Limerick and the social role of sporting and musical clubs, 1885-1905', in Kelly and Comerford, *Associational culture*, pp 127-31; O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, pp 92-3; Garnham, *Association football and society*, pp 63-6.
[53] Nolan, *The GAA in Dublin*, p. 59. See also footnote 187, p. 243.
[54] *Sport*, 23 Feb. 1901.

Robert Montgomery that sealed the first Irish victory over England in February 1887 made the spectators 'fairly demented at this – hats went flying all over the place, and handkerchiefs were largely on display.'[55] Exaggeration and irrationality were part of the attachment to a team and 'to the ordinary footballer the result of an international match is almost of as much importance as the fate of an empire.'[56] Gwendoline Parr, a Belfast international hockey player of the early 1900s, also recalled how her mother – who married an English bank manager – 'hated the English! Some of her stories about the incidents in the Ireland v England matches were quite unrepeatable. When describing anyone, the most insulting thing she could say was how English they were.'[57] Anticipation and celebration prolonged the sporting experience in time. Sending off or welcoming the team, parading, civic receptions and addresses were highly significant moments that bound together athletes and supporters.[58] Contestants came to embody their community and felt the fact too. In September 1896, the landing at Kingstown of the new cycling world amateur mile champion Harry Reynolds saw thousands of Dubliners congregate under the rain to escort him back to the city where more celebrations ensued.[59] His victory was not just his for he was 'sent to the world's championship by the ICA to do what [he] could to uphold the cycling character of Ireland.'[60] Successful Irish rifle shooting teams placed the Elcho Shield in the custody of the Dublin Lord Mayor after parading through the city.[61] Again it was acknowledged by their captain, Major Leech, that the eight men did 'not contend for prizes, or personal advantage, but the honour of representing their native country.'[62]

[55] *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Feb. 1887.
[56] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 14 Feb. 1903.
[57] Quoted in Jean Williams, *A contemporary history of women's sport, part one: sporting women, 1850-1960* (Oxford, 2016), p. 55.
[58] John Strachan and Kayla Rose, 'Illuminated addresses, national identity and Irish sport, 1880-1901', *Irish Studies Review*, xxvii, no. 3 (2019), p. 363.
[59] Michael Killeen, 'Harry Reynolds world cycling champion', *Dublin Historical Record*, xli, no. 2 (1988), pp 73-6.
[60] *Sport*, 5 Sept. 1896.
[61] *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Sept. 1873, 24 Apr. 1889; *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 1 Nov. 1875; *Dublin Daily Express*, 17 Aug. 1880.
[62] *Weekly Freeman's Journal*, 17 Aug. 1878.

Figure 5.5: The Dublin and Glasgow police tug of war teams, 1893.



Source: *Evening Herald*, 18 Oct. 1893.

Note: representing the Glasgow police team in kilts clearly anchored the contest into an international, cultural and historical dimension, although it was likely that members of both teams shared similar living conditions and lifestyles.

The importance of sport for a community is perhaps best illustrated by the success of the DMP tug of war team in 1893 (figure 5.5).[63] In September, they defeated the favourites, Glasgow Police team, in the final of the DMP tournament, unexpectedly beating strong opposition in earlier rounds. Upon arriving back in Scotland the losing

[63] Brian Griffin, 'Sporting policemen: sports and the police in Victorian and Edwardian Ireland', *Éire-Ireland*, xlviii, no. 1&2 (2013), pp 70-1.

side complained (not without reason) that the crowd that had gathered at Jones's Road stadium in Drumcondra had unfairly shown excessive partisanship.[64] A tournament was quickly set up a month later in Glasgow to settle the argument and the draw delicately poised the teams to meet again in the final.[65] The build-up in the press was intense as both teams cruised through the initial rounds. When news broke out shortly after 9 p.m. on Friday 21 October that Dublin had comprehensively defeated Glasgow, the thousands of supporters who had gathered around newspapers' offices on Abbey Street and College Green erupted. The crowd 'that stretched away into the middle of Sackville street could shout no more – men clasped each other by the hand and almost embraced each other.'[66] Plays in the city's theatres were interrupted, and policemen on duty in theatres or in the streets were acclaimed and carried shoulder high under the ovation of the crowd.[67] The homecoming at Amiens Street station the following Tuesday was the occasion of further effusion of joy and traffic could not break through the throngs of Dubliners who had gathered to accompany them to the Kevin Street barracks.[68] For the *Irish Daily Independent*, this was clearly more than sport:

> under the circumstances in which the event took place, victory had an especial significance. It meant not only the successful assertion of the prowess of the Dublin Metropolitan Police team, but it meant as well the vindication of the people of Dublin who were present at the recent sports in Jones's road from an uncalled for and unwarrantable aspersion.[69]

The magnitude of the reception was drastically at odds with the status of tug of war in the athletics world, notwithstanding its brief rise to fame in the mid-1890s in Ireland. The length of the actual winning bout (less than two minutes) also greatly contrasted with the weeks of anticipation, largely fuelled by the press, and days of subsequent celebrations. Paradoxically, the loud cheers of the population

[64] *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Sept. 1893,14 Sept. 1893.
[65] *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Oct. 1893.
[66] *Dublin Daily Express*, 21 Oct. 1893.
[67] Ibid.; *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Oct. 1893. Policemen used to attend theatrical plays to ensure peaceful performances, see Dickson, *Dublin*, p. 403.
[68] *Irish Times*, 25 Oct. 1893; *Flag of Ireland*, 28 Oct. 1893.
[69] *Irish Daily Independent*, 21 Oct. 1893.

acclaimed representatives of a coercive institution and the cries of 'Good old Dublin' hailed a team none of whom was born in the county.[70] Modern sport and the urbanisation of society made possible the holding of a highly mediatised international tug of war tournament whose contestants represented a city which they were not born in. Identities were remodelled and boundaries of belonging redrawn, yet their anchorage into community and territory remained. Eventually, the playing out of local or long-standing rivalries so essential in eighteenth-century sport endured as one of its driving forces a century later. The politicisation of society from the late 1870s further increased one's association with a community, but also contributed to its division.

3- The divided community: sport and politics

The rise of a popular, sustained and multi-faceted nationalist movement from the latter 1870s contributed to shaping the sporting landscape. The cultural revival of the 1880s was largely spearheaded in sport by the GAA, which aimed at preserving Irish traditions and games. Old pastimes, such as hurling or football, were reinvented as modern sport and imbued with a distinctive Irishness which was harnessed with varying degrees of intensity by the three nationalist forces: the IPP, the IRB, and the Catholic Church.[71] The politicisation of society permeated most sports, however, as 'stopping the hunt' became emblematic of the social and agrarian pressure to curb the leisure pursuits associated with the Protestant land-owning elite.[72] Political symbols came to assume a greater importance in the 1880s as they became increasingly contested. An intensification of cultural nationalism in the latter 1890s coupled with conflicting opinions on the Second Boer War (1899-1902) further entrenched positions and divided the community. Sport increasingly came to reflect this.

[70] The majority of Dublin policemen were farmers' sons. See *Sport*, 14 Oct. 1893; Daly, *The deposed capital*, p. 138.
[71] Cronin, 'Enshrined in blood', pp 95-6.
[72] William Murphy, 'Sport in a time of revolution: Sinn Féin and the hunt in Ireland, 1919', *Éire-Ireland*, xlviii, no. 1&2 (2013), pp 117-8.

Hunting

The foundation in 1879 of the Irish National Land League (a tenant farmer organisation aiming to lower rents), the ensuing Land War until 1882, and the lingering agrarian resentment severely hampered the hunting community in Ireland. Poaching became rife when it had not previously been the case, poisoning of hounds more common, and alternative Land League hunts sprang up to disrupt established packs. As tenants refused permission to hunters to cross their land, foxhunting was almost brought to a stop in the 1881-2 season.[73] The widespread association of hunting with landlordism provided the general background to the dispute and was reinforced at local level by acute antagonism between landlord and tenants or by the presence of an active branch of the Land League. Packs in the midlands and the south of the country were most severely affected, coinciding with what would become the heartlands of the GAA and with hurling strongholds. Large pastoral farms characterised these regions, which were the ones that profited most from the post-Famine recovery and where rural nationalist politics were most developed.[74] No part of Ireland was left unscathed, however, and the threat of disruptions cast a cloud over hunting in the country in the following decades, forcing hunters to seek conciliation rather than confrontation.[75]

Dublin hunting packs were privileged for three reasons. Firstly, the immediate countryside witnessed lower levels of agrarian agitation.[76] Lack of solidarity with rural issues was apparent among the Dublin working class as they too experienced distressing conditions and neither could nor wished to support tenant farmers.[77] The correlation between urban unemployment and land agitation resulted in 'a singular lack of sympathy for the problems of the rural peasantry which was reinforced by the number of rural migrants who streamed into the city'.[78] Secondly, Dublin hunting

[73] *Irish Sportsman*, 28 Feb. 1880; *Irish Times*, 20 Jan. 1882; Corballis, *Hunting in County Kilkenny*, p. 69; Curtis, 'Stopping the hunt', pp 356-87.
[74] Kevin Whelan, 'The geography of hurling', *History Ireland*, i, no. 1 (1993), pp 27-31; Curtis, 'Stopping the hunt', p. 401; Ó Gráda, *A new economic history*, p. 264.
[75] Dooley, *The decline of the Big House*, pp 260-4; Hayes, 'From ludicrous to logical', p. 323.
[76] Adam D. Pole, 'Landlord responses to the Irish Land War, 1879-1882' (PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2006), p. 172.
[77] Gerard Moran, 'The Land War, urban destitution and town tenant protest, 1879-1882', *Saothar*, xx (1995), pp 20-1, 27-8.
[78] Daly, *The deposed capital*, p. 59.

packs were less susceptible to being associated with landlordism. That fewer than half (22/52) of the identified Dublin hunters were farmers or landowners greatly diminished the chance of personal antagonism between hunters and Land Leaguers. Finally, the Ward Hunt was anxious to maintain good neighbourly relations with local tenant farmers. At the height of the crisis, the committee curtailed the size of the pack to local landholders or subscribers and made much of a paltry £65 donation towards the relief of distress in the district.[79] Such appeasing policies became the norm thereafter and opportunities to flatter the local peasantry or to buy out its favour were seldom missed.[80]

Interference, if rare, still happened. In October 1882, the harriers of wealthy wine merchant and intransigent landowner George Brooke were prevented from running over the lands of the sister of local Land League leader Edward Lynch near Clondalkin.[81] It remains unclear, however, whether Lynch resented the participation of hunters linked to the landlord-friendly Land Corporation of Ireland, or if he was merely preventing tillage land from being trampled upon.[82] As a rule, prior consultation was sought before matters escalated. A meeting of landholders in January 1888 brought attention to 'persons obnoxious to the general body of the public' among local packs. The hint was taken by the Lord Lieutenant, who accordingly abstained from hunting with the Ward Hunt the following season.[83] At the same time the nearby Meath Hunt liaised with the local Catholic bishop to establish a hunting framework and in the 1890s the Bray and Dublin Draghounds also consulted local landholders before the start of the season.[84] The political dynamic in 1880s Ireland reversed the hierarchy of power in rural areas and inaugurated a new regime for hunting packs: killing dissent by kindness.[85] The important economic role hunts still held in rural districts was used as leverage against the vanishing social deference and permitted most packs to resume

[79] *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Dec. 1881; *Irish Sportsman*, 7 Jan. 1882. The £65 donation by the whole Ward Hunt must be set against the hundreds of pounds annually spent on maintaining hunters by subscribers of the pack.
[80] *Sport*, 14 Oct. 1882, 26 Jan. 1884, 5 Oct. 1889, 8 Dec. 1900; *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Sept. 1893.
[81] Pauric J. Dempsey, 'Brooke, Sir George Frederick', https://dib.ie, accessed 10 Aug. 2021; *Freeman's Journal*, 31 Oct. 1882.
[82] *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Nov. 1882, 2 Nov. 1882, 4 Nov. 1882. Accounts from both sides agree on a peaceful exchange between Lynch and a third party who then warned Brooke. This latter then went to hunt elsewhere without seeking further confrontation.
[83] *Sport*, 7 Jan. 1888; *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Sept. 1888.
[84] *Irish Times*, 24 Dec. 1887; *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Oct. 1893.
[85] *Irish Sportsman*, 31 Jan. 1880, 28 Oct. 1882.

activities after the winter of 1882, at a great diplomatic and financial cost. Part of it was remembered by the Countess of Fingal:

> when Fingall was Master, the yard used to be the scene of weekly assemblies of the people for compensation for damage done by the fox on their property […] Fingall, of course, was easy enough to manage, and although he appeared to weigh the evidence and the claim carefully, the compensation demanded was paid – pretty well always, I think – and on a generous scale.[86]

Figure 5.6: Portmarnock Golf Club, late nineteenth century.



Source: NLI, *The Lawrence Photograph Collection*.

The divided community

Crystallisation of attitudes around the symbols of the monarchy, nationality and political events was commonplace in the 1880s (figure 5.6). Anthems betrayed

[86] Hinkson, *Seventy years young*, p. 118.

political affiliations. ‘God save Ireland’ came to characterise Gaelic meetings and ‘God save the Queen’ proudly wrapped up gymnastic, swimming or yachting events.[87] Deference towards the monarchy was accordingly observed by mourning (or lack thereof) upon the passing of Queen Victoria in January 1901.[88] A politicised press was crucial in stirring up tensions and fuelling a binary interpretation of events. Impromptu renditions of the ‘God save the Queen’ at the 1887 Dublin Metropolitan regatta sprang up when Princess Edward of Saxe-Weimar, wife of the Commander-in-Chief in Ireland (and cousin of Queen Victoria), appeared to hand out the prizes. For some, it was a mark of respect. For others it was plainly bad taste.[89]

Both leading sporting weeklies merely answered the cultural needs of their readership, yet largely contributed to poisoning relations between parties. In 1881, the disgrace of Curragh horse-owner George Low, found guilty of offering to withdraw his horse *Barcaldine* from races in exchange for money, was cheaply exploited by the nationalist *Sport*.[90] The paper ‘rejoice[d] that Mr. Low cannot call Ireland the land of his birth. He has adopted this country as his home, but no errors of his can ever be laid at our door.’[91] The unionist *Irish Sportsman* was prejudiced too. The failure in 1882 to create an aisle dedicated to sporting trophies at the nationalist-leaning International Exhibition held at the Rotunda was blamed on ‘the narrow-minded and partisan basis’ of its organisers who had ‘alienated from its support those classes in the country who could best have made it a success.'[92] Convergence points, if few, existed. Economic nationalism was one of them. The British and Irish re-appraisal of ‘native manufactures’ in the 1880s was, for nationalists, a mark of self-respect and for unionists plain common sense as they were most likely to benefit financially from a dynamic home market.[93] The GAA was most vocal in that regard, but the *Irish Sportsman* was also an ardent partisan of supporting local industry and trades.[94]

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[87] *Irish Times*, 23 Aug. 1882, 25 Aug. 1882; *Irish Sportsman*, 27 Mar. 1886; *Freeman’s Journal*, 15 June 1886.
[88] *Sport*, 26 Jan. 1901.
[89] *Freeman’s Journal*, 13 July 1887.
[90] Mícheál Ó Dubhshláine, *Are you going home now? Memories of old Kilkea* (Tralee, 2006), pp 131-2.
[91] *Sport*, 9 July 1881.
[92] *Irish Sportsman*, 21 Feb. 1885.
[93] Rains, *Commodity culture*, pp 95-9, 121-2.
[94] *Irish Sportsman*, 9 May 1885, 16 Oct. 1886, 26 May 1888; *Sport*, 10 Mar. 1888.

Of more consequence for social cohesion was the revival of cultural nationalism in the late 1890s.[95] The GAA wholly embraced it and the Dublin County Board, for example, encouraged clubs to take part in the build-up to the commemorations of the 1798 insurrection.[96] The proximity with the Gaelic League, a social and cultural organisation promoting the Irish language since 1893, was obvious too.[97] Fundraising tournaments were held, and the Keatings (1901) and Rathmines (1901) clubs sprouted from League branches.[98] Change was embraced elsewhere. The Fingal Rovers Cycling Club invited the Gaelic League to give historical lectures and *ceilis*.[99] The chairman of the North City Athletic and Literary Club exhorted the younger members 'who would join this club that instead of devoting their attention to ridiculous English literature they should study the literature and history of their country'.[100] The outbreak of the Boer War in October 1899 further entrenched the lines of division. Nationalist Ireland found in the conflict the anti-imperialist rhetoric needed to legitimise their own fight for autonomy, whereas the unionist community rallied to the British cause in a surge of loyalism.[101] The war effort was considerable, the Irish regiments called to the front lost 4,452 men and over £65,000 was raised by charities to support Irish soldiers' families.[102] One immediate consequence of the war was the abrupt end of military involvement in sport. Polo lost its best teams and the Leinster senior soccer league was amputated of its regimental clubs during the 1899/1900 season.[103] Many sportsmen went to South Africa in various capacities. J. F. Whelan, former president of the Bohemian FC, enrolled as a surgeon. Athlete Arthur DuCros (son of Harvey DuCros sr.) led a company essentially staffed by employees of Dunlop and replicated on the front the social hierarchy observed at

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[95] Patrick Maume, *The long gestation: Irish nationalist life 1891-1918* (Dublin, 1999), pp 27-39; George D. Boyce, *Nineteenth-century Ireland: the search for stability* (Dublin, 1990), pp 215-26.
[96] GAA Archives, Minutes of the County Dublin Committee, 3 Mar. 1897; McEligott, 'Contesting the fields of play', pp 10-1.
[97] Cathal Billings, 'The first minutes: an analysis of the Irish language within the official structures of the Gaelic Athletic Association, 1884-1934', Éire-Ireland, xlviii, no. 1&2 (2013), pp 41-3.
[98] Nolan, *The GAA in Dublin*, pp 1241, 1257; *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 20 Dec. 1900; *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Sept. 1901, 29 Oct. 1901.
[99] *Sport*, 30 Mar. 1901.
[100] *Irish Daily Independent*, 9 Mar. 1897.
[101] Luke Diver, 'Ireland and the South African War, 1899-1902' (PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth), 2014, pp 152-161.
[102] Ibid., p. 171; Donal P. McCracken, 'MacBride's Brigade in the Anglo-Boer War', *History Ireland*, viii, no. 1 (2000), p. 29. As an element of comparison, the popular and cross-denomination collection for the Dublin Hospital Sunday fund averaged around £4,200 per year in the 1878-97 period. See *Irish Times*, 13 Nov. 1897, 17 Feb. 1898.
[103] *Sport*, 14 Oct. 1899, 28 Oct. 1899, 9 Dec. 1899, 23 Dec. 1899, 30 Dec. 1899; *Irish Times*, 23 Aug. 1901.

home.[104] Cricketer and rugby international Pierce O'Brien Butler was an officer with the Dublin Fusiliers regiment and fought alongside fellow teammate Cecil Riding when transferred to the Inniskilling Fusiliers. There, they joked 'of having a full Monkstown Transvaal Fifteen when they returned home.'[105] Taking part in the conflict was worn as a badge of honour by unionist institutions. The DUBC 'has been represented in South Africa' by no fewer than thirteen rowers and the *Irish Times* praised swimming clubs for having 'a good record of men who have gone to the front'.[106] The pro-Boer active war effort paled in comparison as John McBride's Irish Transvaal Brigade played a negligible role. They were a motley and amateurish assemblage of Irishmen living in South Africa, joined by a few volunteers coming from Ireland, and numbered hundreds at most.[107] They, however, benefitted from a high mediatisation in the nationalist press and surfed on a tide of anti-Britishness to cause enthusiasm and fuel antagonism. In Dublin, the Kruger and Major McBride GAA clubs, both founded in 1901, left no doubt as to where lay the allegiance of the nationalist community.[108] The deep-seated nature of the political schism in Ireland had truly infiltrated every form of social interaction by the turn of the twentieth century. Sport accurately reflected it.

4- The military and sport

Policemen in the RIC or DMP were largely recruited in Ireland and the religious composition of the force fitted the pattern observed in society at large.[109] In the British army, the proportion of Irish soldiers declined from 27.9% in 1870 to 13.2% in 1899. Emigration, land reform and better living conditions, rather than the rise of nationalist feelings were, for Terence Denman, more relevant factors to explain

[104] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 23 Dec. 1899; *Sport*, 5 Jan. 1901. R.B Tuke was another athlete enrolled.
[105] *Sport*, 11 Aug. 1900, 6 Oct. 1900. O'Brien Butler was killed during the conflict.
[106] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Boat/3, 1899/1900 Annual Report; *Irish Times*, 23 Mar. 1900.
[107] McCracken, 'MacBride's Brigade', pp 27-9.
[108] Nolan, *The GAA in Dublin*, pp 1243, 1245. Paul Kruger was president of the Transvaal when the war erupted.
[109] W.J. Lowe and Elizabeth Malcolm, 'The domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary, 1836-1922', *Irish Economic and Social History*, xix (1992), p. 35; Daly, *The deposed capital*, p. 126.

such a trend.[110] That the enlistment of new recruits in Ireland remained stable between 1880 and 1900 adds strength to his conclusions.[111] The presence of Irish soldiers was, however, spread throughout the world and meant that barracks were disproportionately populated by British (and Protestant) recruits.[112] Notwithstanding their being agents of a coercive force, soldiers and policemen in nineteenth-century Ireland entertained good relations with the population.[113] From the mid-1880s, relations began to strain. Between 1888 and 1893, the GAA barred policemen from membership as retaliation for their assisting insolvent tenants' evictions.[114] More potent was the revival of cultural nationalism in the latter 1890s and the nationalist instrumentalisation of the Boer War. As the role of the police and army in Ireland was reappraised, an increasing minority began to consider them as oppressive rather than protecting forces.[115] This point largely lies outside the scope of this research, and focus is instead given to the importance of sport within the armed forces and on their interactions with civilian society.

Agents of diffusion

The growth of the British empire during the Victorian period, coupled with the increasing importance of physical education and games within the army from the 1870s onwards, meant that military forces – alongside missionaries and exiled workers – became important agents in diffusing modern sport throughout the world.[116] This was so in Ireland. Local regiments 'were primary facilitators and promoters' of cricket in Tipperary in the 1840s and 1850s, though less so in Kilkenny and Westmeath, where the local gentry had a greater influence.[117] Alongside schools, the army was also essential in introducing soccer in Leinster, Munster and

[110] Terence Denman, '"Ethnic soldiers pure and simple"? The Irish in the late Victorian British army', *War in History*, iii, no. 3 (1996), pp 261-2.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Daly, *The deposed capital*, p. 126.
[113] Lowe and Malcolm, *The domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary*, pp 27-32; Terence Denman, '"The red livery of shame": the campaign against army recruitment in Ireland, 1899-1914', *Irish Historical Studies*, xix, no. 114 (1994), p. 211; Garnham, 'The only thing British that everybody likes: military-civilian relations in Late Victorian Ulster', *Éire-Ireland*, xli, no. 3 (2006), pp 78-9.
[114] Paul Rouse, 'The politics of culture and sport in Ireland', pp 342–43.
[115] Denman, 'The red livery of shame', pp 212-31; Denman, 'Ethnic soldiers pure and simple', pp 268-71; Brian Griffin, 'Sporting policemen', pp 75-8.
[116] Huggins, *Sport and the Victorians*, pp 219-29.
[117] Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, p. 23; Hunt, *Sport and society*, pp 129-30.

Connacht at the turn of the 1880s.[118] This was especially the case in Tipperary, Kerry and Westmeath, and in Cork 'the bulk of teams [came] from the various barracks of the city.'[119] That in Donegal the military role was more diffuse, despite military infrastructures in Lough Swilly, points out the limitations of generalisation and incites us to look at local factors too.[120]

With several hundred officers and around five thousand soldiers or non-commissioned officers quartered in barracks, the military presence in Dublin was numerous yet diluted in a large city.[121] Locally stationed officers had been fervently involved in hunting and horseracing since the 1840s, as was then common throughout Ireland and Britain.[122] In the early 1850s, a Garrison pack of staghounds was active but disappeared with the outbreak of the Crimean War. Officers were thereafter accommodated by the Ward Hunt and remained a significant minority of this pack throughout the century.[123] Local regiments also held their own military horseraces at Fairyhouse or Baldoyle. Between 1850 and 1879, 22 meetings have been recorded and a further 33 from 1880 to 1899. Such increase betrayed the popularity of racing among officers, as well as the tacit complicity of the military hierarchy, for whom horsemanship was both a valuable skill and a status symbol. Its combination with teamwork was epitomised in polo, which was dominated in Dublin by military combinations after its introduction in the city in July 1874.[124]

Outside of field sports, the playing of golf in the Phoenix Park by local officers in a semi-organised way in the early 1880s was anecdotal. It predated the creation of the Dublin Golf Club in 1885 yet was of little consequence for the development of the sport in the area as officers became assimilated within civilian clubs and ceased to be active protagonists. More important was the role of military personnel in mid-

[118] Moore, 'Early association football in Ireland', pp 14-5.
[119] Toms, *Soccer in Munster*, p. 15; Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, p. 37; McElligott, 'Forging a kingdom', pp 101-2; Hunt, *Sport and society*, pp 181-2.
[120] Conor Curran, 'The development of Gaelic football and soccer zones in county Donegal, 1884-1934', *Sport in History*, xxxii, no. 3 (2012), p. 427.
[121] The 1881 census numbers 492 officers and 5,049 soldiers quartered in the city and county. In 1901, respective figures were 359 and 4,570. See Census of Ireland, 1881, part 1, vol. 1, no. 2, pp 119,131; Census of Ireland, 1901, part 1, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 53; Ibid., no. 2(a), p. 19.
[122] Hunt, *Sport and society*, pp 14-7; Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, pp 27-36.
[123] *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Oct. 1854, 21 Oct. 1856. In 1883, officers contributed to 15.8% of the total amount subscribed to the Ward Hunt, see *Freeman's Journal*, 30 July 1883.
[124] McDevitt, 'The king of sports', pp 4-6; *Freeman's Journal*, 9 July 1874, 10 July 1874; *Irish Sportsman*, 12 Aug. 1882; *Irish Times*, 23 Aug. 1901. The *Freeman's Journal* erroneously mentioned this as the first exhibition of polo in the country, but the game had been played since 1872 in Carlow.

century cricket and 1880s soccer. While not having introduced them into the city nor having been the sole agents of their diffusion, soldiers and officers provided skilled opposition to the few early civilian clubs. Garrison teams raised the profile of these games and retained a high status on sporting merit years after their democratisation among civilians. Military cricket remained essentially associated with the officer class and fitted the informal social segregation then observed in Dublin cricket. The Phoenix club welcomed officers, and members of the DUCC could hone their skills without losing status.[125] Between 1882 and the outbreak of the Boer War in October 1899, the first XI of the DUCC played over a quarter of its matches against the Curragh Brigade, Dublin Garrison or the Military of Ireland, which was almost as many times as against the Phoenix and Leinster clubs combined (60/214 as against 70/214).[126] In soccer, regimental teams were privileged opposition for senior civilian clubs. In 1896/7, for example, the fixture list of Bohemian FC reflected the higher status held by military teams (12/17 matches).[127] In the same season Shelbourne FC played the Oxford Regiment five times.[128] The following year, three regiments were invited in a revamped eight-team Leinster senior league, increasing the number of competitive fixtures for the best civilians and soldiers alike.[129]

The sheer difference in standard of play, added to class snobbery in cricket, meant that few military cricket or soccer teams competed against local junior combinations. Open competition in soccer was limited to senior clubs and only in 1900/1 did the Leinster FA authorise military teams to enter cup ties.[130] In contrast to cricket, very few soldiers played for civilian sides and regiments had too short a stay in Dublin to build lasting relations or rivalries with local communities and clubs. Military influence was however as informal as it was important. Emulation pressed the leading civilian clubs to improve their game and was reinforced by anchoring contests into a Dubliners versus Englishmen rivalry. Crucially, barracks were situated in areas

[125] Lawrence, *Handbook 1868-9*, p. 6.
[126] TCD Archives, Mun/Club/Cricket/7; Ibid., Mun/Club/Cricket/22; Ibid., Mun/Club/Cricket/23. That only five clubs made up 60.7% of the opposition of the first XI of the DUCC in the 1880s and 1890s highlights the informal hierarchisation of Dublin cricket at the time and the small pool of clubs the DUCC consented to play with.
[127] *Sport*, 24 Oct. 1896.
[128] *Sport*, 17 Apr. 1897.
[129] *Irish Daily Independent*, 11 Oct. 1897. On this inaugural meeting, only three civilian clubs were admitted and the number grew to five in following seasons.
[130] *Irish Times*, 16 May 1900.

where soccer was popular and children likely grew up watching the game.[131] Finally, free access to matches taking place in the Phoenix Park or in barracks also made the game familiar to Dubliners. By 1897, it was remarked 'that military football has been gradually attracting more and more the attention of civilian spectators'.[132]

Sport, army and society

The development of gymnastics and games in the British army at an increased pace from the 1870s onwards resulted from, and in turn legitimised, the proto-military educational theories which had developed in English public schools. Physical exercise kept the forces fit, served to build discipline and group cohesion, and exalted masculinity.[133] For enlisted soldiers, boxing and soccer were immersed in the broader rational recreation spectrum as wholesome alternatives to idleness, drink and brothels.[134] According to the public-school ethos meanwhile, officers' sports – cricket, hunting and polo – were supposed to foster the manly and leadership skills necessary to play the 'greater game' of war.[135] The social interactions ruling civilian life were replicated in the army as officers were largely recruited from among the public-school educated upper class or landed gentry who had the networks and means to secure such positions.[136] Despite the abolition of purchase in 1871, social pressure meant that the expenses entailed by an officer's lifestyle went well beyond their pay grade.[137] In many barracks, officers were thus drawn from the same social strata as the neighbouring elite, often shared cultural aspirations and were integrated within the same social circles.[138]

[131] The Royal, Richmond, Portobello, and Beggar's Bush barracks were respectively located in Stoneybatter, Kilmainham, South Circular Rd and Ringsend/Irishtown. See also Hunt, *Sport and Society*, p. 184; Toms, *Soccer in Munster*, p. 14.
[132] *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Oct. 1897.
[133] Tony Mason and Eliza Riedi, *Sport and the military, the British armed forces 1880-1960* (Cambridge, 2010), pp 41-2, 49, 68. For similar developments within the police force, see Heffernan, *Physical culture in Ireland*, pp 55-7.
[134] Mason and Riedi, *Sport and the military*, pp 16, 37.
[135] J.D. Campbell, '"Training for sport is training for war": sport and the transformation of British army, 1860-1914,' *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xvii, no. 4 (2000), p. 24; Mason and Riedi, *Sport and the military*, pp 78-9.
[136] Campbell, 'Training for sport', pp 22-3. As seen earlier, Arthur DuCros led employees of the family's company during the Boer War.
[137] Cannadine, *The decline and fall*, pp 264-80; Mason and Riedi, *Sport and the military*, pp 51-2.
[138] *Irish Society*, 20 Sept. 1890; *Social Review*, 28 Sept. 1895; Hunt, *Sport and society*, pp 14-7.

Rank and file soldiers also used sport to facilitate their integration into the local community. A military gymnastic tournament held in 1899 was the occasion to invite five hundred local children to enjoy a day out at Ballsbridge and free access to regimental sports also proved popular among the civilian population.[139] In 1893, a Scotch colonel within the Royal Munster Fusiliers encouraged his men to take on Gaelic sports. Hurling matches were subsequently held against the Brian Borus from Clontarf and the 18th Royal Irish regiment from the Curragh before the regiment departed Dublin in May 1894.[140] It is, however, in soccer that contacts were most frequent and most intense. A match between the Kent regiment and Bohemian FC in 1897 attracted four thousand spectators on the Royal Barracks esplanade. There, 'the authorities thought fit to reserve one side of the ground for military and the other for civilian spectators, and this arrangement caused a considerable amount of good-humoured banter and counter-cheering in the course of the game.'[141] The location of barracks in working-class areas also anchored military soccer in a specific socio-economic setting and furthered its assimilation as the people's game. This perhaps served to fluidify relations between civilians and soldiers at a time when police and military forces were not yet jettisoned by the nationalist community.

In Dublin, the role of the army in introducing sports was never as decisive as in rural Ireland. Save for the specific case of polo, other agencies such as commercial, educational, or migratory links were more important in developing a sporting network. Nevertheless, soldiers and officers proved to be relentless sportsmen and increased the visibility of sports as well as their standards. The army's widespread adoption of drill and games in the last quarter of the century further associated sport and physical education with war, strength and manliness.[142] By doing so it justified the existing value system promoted by elite schools and ensured that an influential section of society understood sport in an imperial and gendered context.

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[139] *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Sept. 1882, 9 Oct. 1897, 16 June 1899; *Dublin Daily Express*, 17 Sept. 1885.
[140] Nolan, *The GAA in Dublin*, p. 1249, *Irish Daily Independent*, 17 Mar. 1893; *Sport*, 24 Mar. 1894; *Freeman's Journal*, 26 May 1894.
[141] *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Nov. 1897.
[142] Campbell, 'Training for sport', pp 50-2. For masculinity in the police forces, see Conor Heffernan, 'Physical culture, the Royal Irish Constabulary and police masculinities in Ireland, 1900-14', *Irish Historical Studies*, xliii, no. 164 (2019), pp 241-3.

5- Consumerism

The expansion of capitalism in the nineteenth century and the emergence of 'an industrial working class, a unified national culture and a mass popular press' in its last third in Western Europe, as well as in North America and Australia, led to an 'industrial revolution' in sport.[143] As a mass sporting culture appeared, so did its commercial exploitation and large-scale stadiums or velodromes were built, for example in London, Paris and Amsterdam, to capitalise on the growing working-class leisure market.[144] The impetus given by commercial enterprise to the development of modern sport was observed in Dublin too. Dedicated retailers and newspapers appeared from the 1860s and 1870s to answer the growing demand for sporting articles and news. They in turn were essential agents in introducing new games and fostering them. The commercial trend grew more obvious in the last quarter of the century. In 1881, 50 people in Dublin were registered in the census as engaged in 'Billiard, Cricket, and other Games'[145] By 1891, this number had almost doubled, to 97, and reached 101 by 1901.[146] This research especially focuses on two specific aspects: the provision and exploitation of enclosed stadiums, and the progressive democratisation of sport consumerism as living conditions improved. Seen over decades, these two trends came to illustrate the higher levels of capitalisation seen in sport and its growing importance as a market *per se*. The advent of limited liability companies to run the largest stadiums in 1888, and the appearance of working-class horseracing and coursing in 1889, marked further significant steps in that regard.

[143] Collins, *Sport in capitalist society*, pp 49, 53.
[144] Ibid., chapter 6; Richard Holt, *Sport and society in modern France*, MacMillan (London, 1981), pp 86-9; Nick Piercey, 'Sport and the new culture of the "Second Golden Age": Amsterdam's sporting entrepreneurs in the 1880s and 1890s', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxxv, no. 7 (2018), pp 712-22.
[145] Census of Ireland, 1881, part 1, vol. 1, no. 2, pp 120, 132.
[146] Ibid., pp 120-132; Census of Ireland, 1901, part 1, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 54; Ibid., part 1, col. 1, no. 2(a), p. 19.

Leopardstown, Jones's Road, and the advent of spectator sport

The enclosure of the Baldoyle racecourse and the building of Lansdowne Road stadium in the early 1870s were large-scale enterprises which offered state-of-the-art facilities to participants. The changing nature of sport in the later nineteenth century, geared towards participation and spectatorship, meant that requirements for new stadiums included better stands, catering, and transport provisions. Costs soared. In 1873, the ICAC sought £1,000 'for the purpose of enclosing levelling and otherwise suitably preparing a ground'.[147] Twenty years later, no less than £6,500 was spent to make Jones's Road stadium (now Croke Park) the leading all-purpose venue in the country.[148] Very few clubs or individuals had such liquidity. Limited liability companies instead became the preferred system for owning and operating the largest venues. An early attempt at buying off the Lansdowne Road grounds in the spring of 1882 failed as only £500 out of the necessary £3,000 was promised. The lease was eventually transferred to IRFU administrator Harry Sheppard and the venue henceforth chiefly focused on rugby.[149] In 1885, athletes and cyclists then migrated to the grounds recently acquired by the RDS in Ballsbridge. This latter, however, did not show any particular interest in furthering sporting events, and income received from cycling meetings or training admission to the track or tennis courts remained a negligible fraction of its budget.[150]

The real watershed was the building of a racecourse at Leopardstown in 1888. Here was horseracing 'not organised upon any old-fashioned sporting ideas' and whose promoters were 'resolved to make the affair pay.'[151] At the heart of the project was Captain George Quinn, whose efficiency and understanding of the turf made up for his lack of diplomacy and popularity.[152] He knew how to turn the £16,000 necessary to build the course and stands into a profitable venture. Timing was right as the rural depression of the later 1870s had waned and horseracing had recovered nationally.

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[147] IRFU Archive, Minutes of the ICAC, 29 Nov. 1873.
[148] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 18 Apr. 1894. Initially, £5,500 was spent on the stadium, and a further £1,000 the following year.
[149] *Dublin Daily Express*, 7 Mar. 1882; *Irish Sportsman*, 5 Aug. 1882; *Irish Times*, 10 Dec. 1906; IRFU Archives, Minutes of the IRFU 14 Jan. 1907. His lease on the grounds was eventually transferred to the IRFU upon his death.
[150] RDS Archives, Accounts of the Royal Dublin Society, 1885-1901. It represented around two percent of their annual income.
[151] *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Aug. 1888.
[152] D'Arcy, *Horses*, pp 199-201; *Sport*, 3 Nov. 1888, 23 Feb. 1889.

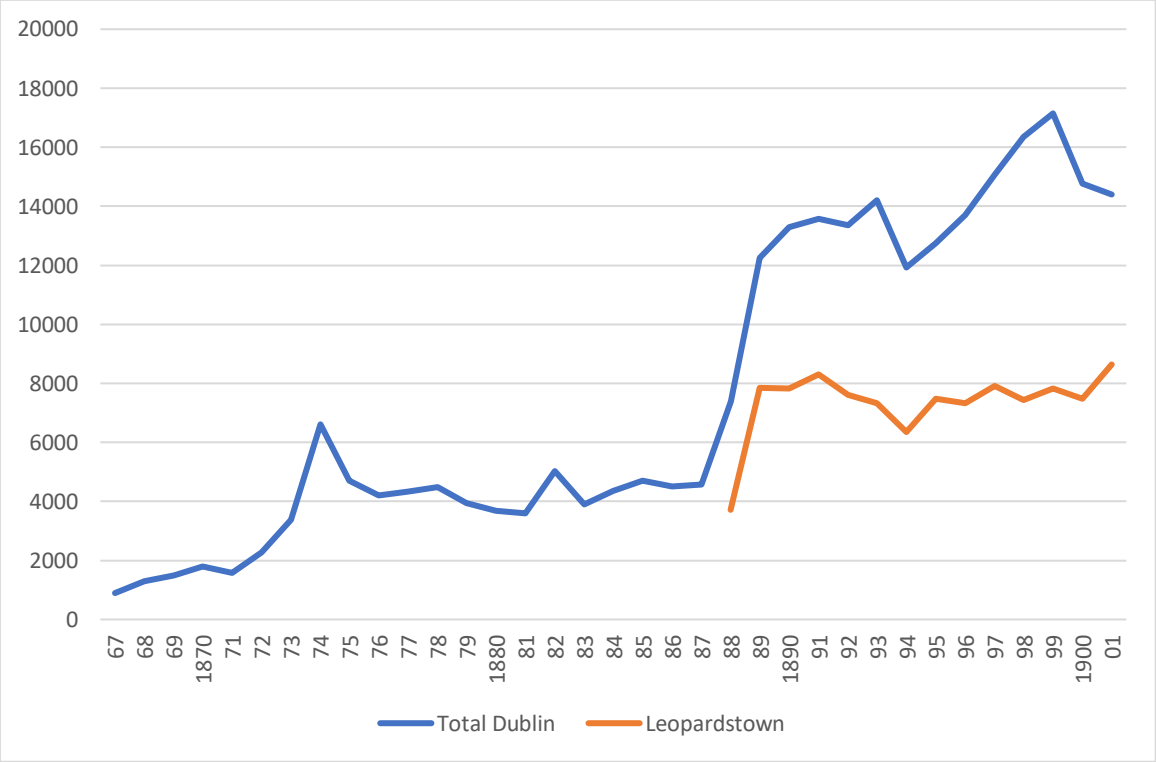
The location in the southern suburbs was carefully chosen and meant 'to attract the attendance and secure the support not only of the inhabitants of Dublin and its environs, but also of the residents and visitors of the fashionable resorts of Kingstown, Bray, and the thickly populated country round about.'[153] The Foxrock station, on the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford Railway, stopped within fifty yards of the main gate and combined train and admission tickets made the whole journey seamless for spectators.[154] Meetings were tailored to catch attention and maximise attendance. The August meeting coincided with the enthusiasm surrounding the Horse Show held on the RDS grounds, Saturday races started later to allow 'half-holiday' workers to attend, and St Stephen's Day racing was resumed for the first time in Dublin since 1855.[155] Admission tickets were the main source of income, complemented by catering or grazing contracts (estimated at £400 annually) as well as renting out the venue to tennis, polo or golf players.[156]

Leopardstown was a locomotive for the whole racing industry in the country (figure 5.7 and 5.9). It accelerated the nationwide revival observed at the time and provided a template for other venues to follow, as limited liability companies were then established in Mullingar and Limerick in 1890 and 1891.[157] Another consequence was to undermine the position of the Baldoyle racecourse. The committee in charge of this latter immediately resigned to leave the experienced and popular turf administrator Thomas Brindley to run the place on modern lines.[158] Brindley first obtained a halving of the rent from the Earl of Howth, then proceeded to give a facelift to the place, and finally set up the Metropolitan (Baldoyle) Race Company in 1891 with his son-in-law Robert M'K Waters at the helm. Net profits of £792 and £1,351 were returned for 1889 and 1890, completing a turnaround for the better of a venue which had been struggling to get a good word from the press for a decade.[159] At this stage, Brindley left for a position as Keeper of the Match Book in the Turf Club. Waters, however, proved to be another efficient manager and

[153] *Dublin Daily Express*, 28 June 1888.
[154] Fergus D'Arcy, 'Opening day', in Fergus D'Arcy and Con Power (eds), *The Leopardstown story 1888-1988* (Dublin, 1988), p. 9.
[155] Ibid.
[156] *Weekly Irish Times*, 18 Aug. 1888; *Irish Society*, 6 July 1889; *Freeman's Journal*, 16 July 1889, 27 July 1891.
[157] Hunt*, Sport and society*, pp 53-61; *Sport*, 30 May 1891.
[158] D'Arcy, *Horses*, pp 201-6; *Irish Times*, 27 May 1890.
[159] *Irish Times*, 12 Sept. 1891.

shareholders could confidently expect dividends of eight to ten percent in the company's first decade.[160] With Fairyhouse, the city boasted three modern racecourses of international stature by 1900 and their rational exploitation considerably increased Dublin's importance in Irish horseracing (figure 5.8). The opening of the Phoenix Park racecourse in 1902 further accentuated the trend.

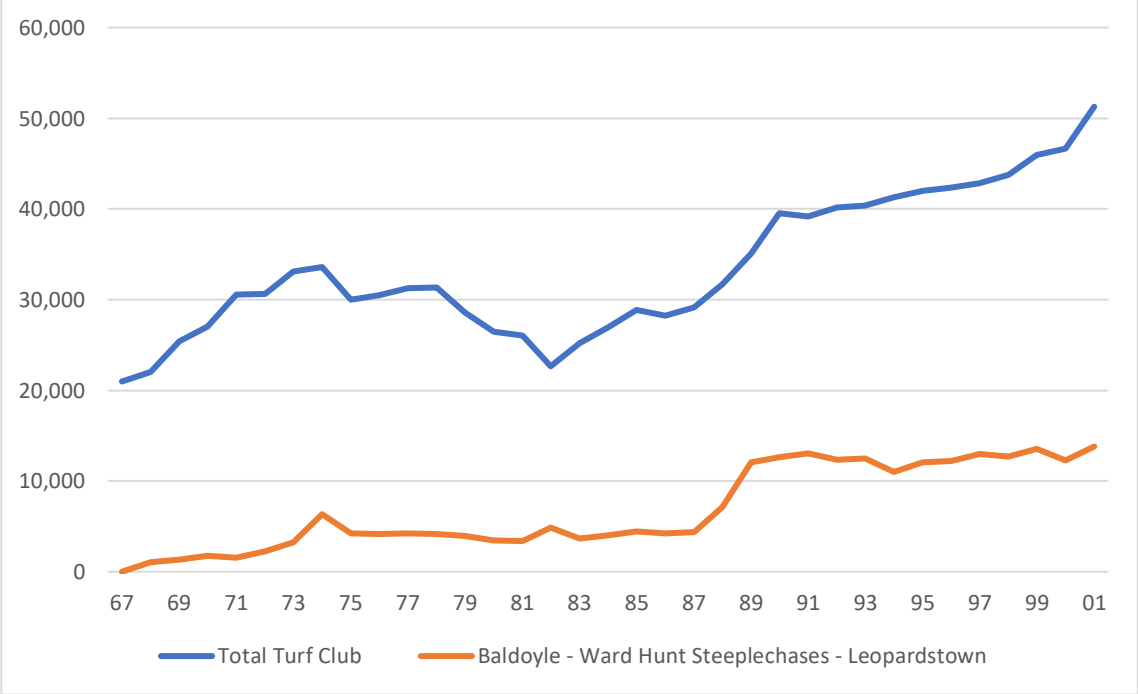
Figure 5.7: Annual stakes (£) in Dublin horseracing, 1867-1901.



Note: consistent data is available since 1865 for Baldoyle and 1867 for Fairyhouse which also coincides with a shift in emphasis from trophies to money prizes in racing.

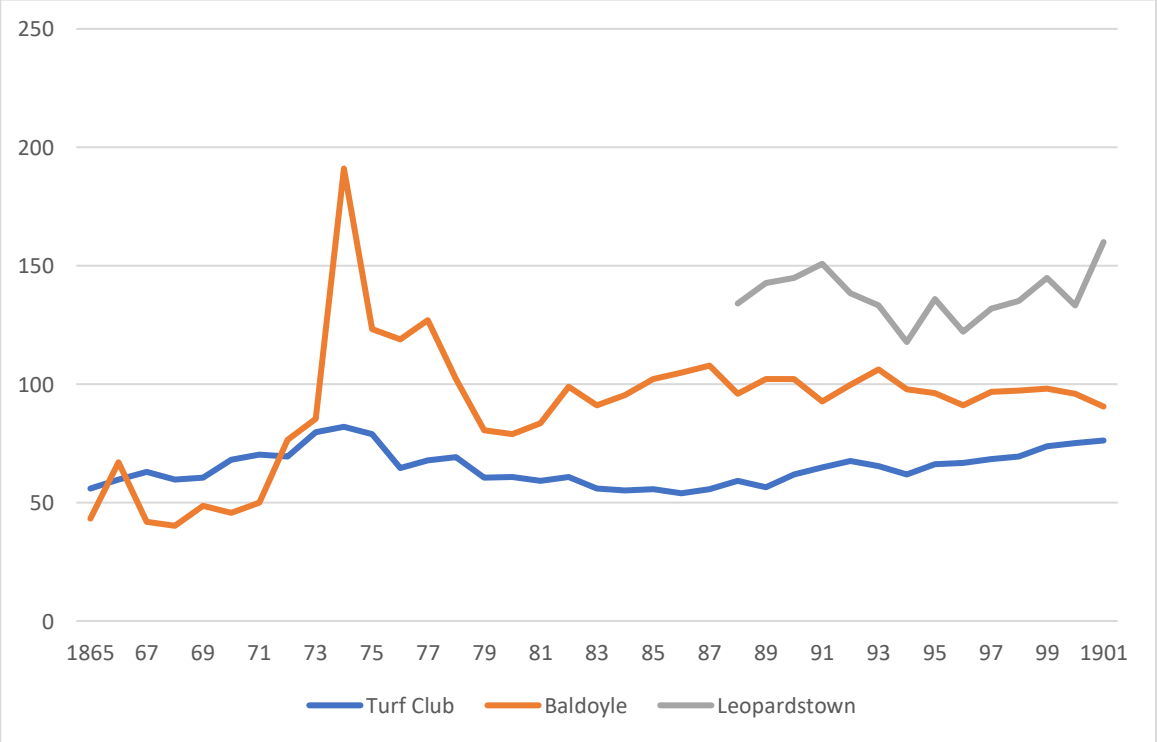
[160] *Dublin Daily Express*, 22 Oct. 1892; *Sport*, 27 Oct. 1894, 13 Mar. 1897; *Freeman's Journal*, 24 May 1899.

Figure 5.8: Annual stakes (£) at meetings under Turf Club rules, 1867-1901.



Source for Turf Club figures: Sweeney, *The Sweeney guide*, pp 26-30.

Figure 5.9: Average stake per race (£), 1865-1901.



Source for Turf Club figures: Sweeney, *The Sweeney guide*, pp 26-30.

Concurrent with the redevelopment of horseracing as a highly capitalised industry was the establishment of two all-purpose sporting venues in the northern suburb of Drumcondra: Clonturk Park and Jones's Road stadium. Their location and the men behind them are key to understanding the transformation of sporting venues from places to play to spectator arenas. Unlike the townships of Rathmines, Pembroke and Clontarf, whose growth targeted the Protestant middle class, the new single-storey terraced housing of Drumcondra suited the ever-expanding cohort of Catholic lower-middle class and skilled workers.[161] Township status was obtained in 1877. The population almost trebled between 1881 and 1901 (from 4,878 to 13,818 inhabitants), and valuation grew from £12,717 to £28,900 between 1879 and 1899.[162] Instrumental to such expansion were land developers James Lombard and Home Rule MP Edward MacMahon, who had been investing in the district since the mid-1860s. Maurice Butterly, chairman of the town commissioners and local JP, was another influential land developer. These were men with a bigger picture in mind. Lombard was a director at Arnott's department store and the chairman of the Dublin United Tramways Company. Promoting a neighbourhood within commuting distance of his retail activities was his interest.[163] Butterly was decisive in securing an Act of Parliament in 1894 to establish the North Dublin Link Railway. This would have linked the GSWR network to the other railway networks and a station in the township promised to enhance its attractiveness and accessibility.[164]

Drumcondra was thus home to a fast-growing population who were the main beneficiaries of the democratisation of sport since the 1880s. Tramways had run from Sackville Street since 1877 and influential entrepreneurs were deeply embedded in its development and politics. These were ideal conditions to witness the development of mass sporting venues. In August 1888, Clonturk House and its twenty-one acres of ornamental garden were bought by Lombard for £3,250.[165] He

[161] Daly, *The deposed capital*, pp 168-70; Ó Maitiú, *Dublin suburban's towns*, pp 44-5.
[162] Census of Ireland, 1881, part 1, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 73; Census of Ireland, 1901, part 1, vol. 1, no. 2(a), p. 2; *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Dec. 1884, 18 Oct. 1899.
[163] Stefanie P. Jones, 'Lombard, James Fitzgerald', https://dib.ie, accessed 10 Aug. 2021; Rains, *Commodity culture*, p. 88.
[164] M. J. Tutty, 'Drumcondra', *Dublin Historical Record*, xv, no. 3 (1959), p. 95. The project turned out to be more expensive and time-consuming than expected and was eventually bought out by the GSWR. The station opened in 1901, only to close in 1910. The idea was to link without interruption the GSWR with Kingstown harbour, and to make faster the carrying of goods and agricultural products from Leinster and Munster to England.
[165] *Drogheda Argus*, 4 Aug. 1888.

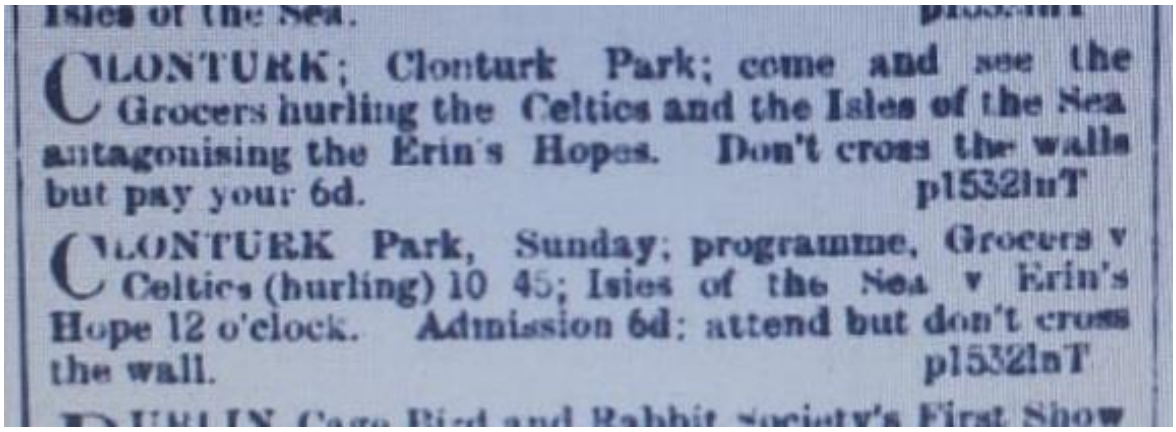
immediately began to exploit the expanding market of lower-middle and working-class entertainment. Musical ballads and parachute descents were acclaimed in the summer of 1889.[166] Within weeks, two pony meetings and the annual sports of the Kickham GAA club (whose membership was likely related to Arnott's) took place and set the tone for a place quickly associated with racing, coursing and Gaelic games.[167] His model was copied by Butterly shortly after. Less than a mile away in Jones's Road, he set out to transform fifteen acres of land into a modern sporting venue. In August 1892, he opened the City and Suburban Racecourse and General Amusement Grounds, made a net profit of £472 in seven weeks of exploitation in 1893, and transformed the venture into a limited liability company the following year.[168] Promises of 7.5% dividends brought in new investors and Butterly reaped a handsome profit from the floating. He too remained chairman of a board of directors made up of men who shared an interest both in the venture and in the development of the area. John Tyson was a RIC district inspector and fond of horseracing, James MacDonald a substantial grocer in nearby Upper Dorset St, and Joseph Bridgeman a civil engineer and valuation expert whose services were required in the growing township.[169] The influx of investors' capital allowed Butterly to pursue the development of the stadium, exploit it all year long, and maximise profit while retaining his leading role.[170]

The venture was a popular success. By 1900, Jones's Road stadium had become synonymous with Sunday racing, large athletic and cycling meetings, and catered for the most important Gaelic games. What set it apart from the RDS or other racecourses, however, was its cheaper terms – both for attending and renting – and its clear targeting of the working class.[171] Harnessing popular enthusiasm, which was resented by Lansdowne Road middle-class patrons in the late 1870s, was key to the venue's success as contemporary societal issues were turned into entertainment. The 'revival of the Tailtenn games practised by our forefathers on

[166] *Irish Society*, 13 July 1889; *Dublin Weekly Nation*, 21 Sept. 1889. At 2*d*., the musical promenades were considerably cheaper than the 6*d*. usually charged elsewhere.
[167] *Sport*, 10 Aug. 1889; *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Sept. 1889, 30 Sept. 1889.
[168] *Sport*, 27 Aug. 1892; *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 18 Apr. 1894.The new company bought the stadium for £13,500 from Butterly, half paid in shares.
[169] 1901 Census of Ireland, Household Reports; *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 18 Apr. 1894; Weekly *Irish Times*, 27 Apr. 1901; *Evening Herald*, 26 Apr. 1895.
[170] *Freeman's Journal*, 20 May 1898. On that occasion the Star Cycling Club held a race at 12 p.m. and a horseracing meeting took place at 3 p.m.
[171] Cycling clubs complained of the high price asked by the RDS, *Irish Sportsman*, 29 Oct. 1887.

the greensward' held for St Patrick's Day in 1895 fitted the broader cultural revival.[172] That it was nothing more than brass bands, jig-dancing and tug of war competitions was irrelevant. Large crowds turned out and enjoyed the day. A year later Florence Dixie's British Ladies' Football Club came to Dublin.[173] Two exhibition games on 18 and 19 May 1896 were profitable enough to entice the promoters to stage an extra fixture on Saturday 23 May, where the eleven ladies faced eleven gentlemen.[174] The whole enterprise, and its coverage by an amused press, further reveals how gender relations and sexual stereotypes could be made profitable.[175]

Figure 5.10: Clonturk Park programme, 1895.


CLONTURK; Clonturk Park; come and see the Grocers hurling the Celtics and the Isles of the Sea antagonising the Erin's Hopes. Don't cross the walls but pay your 6d. p1532lnT

CLONTURK Park, Sunday; programme, Grocers v Celtics (hurling) 10 45; Isles of the Sea v Erin's Hope 12 o'clock. Admission 6d; attend but don't cross the wall. p1532lnT

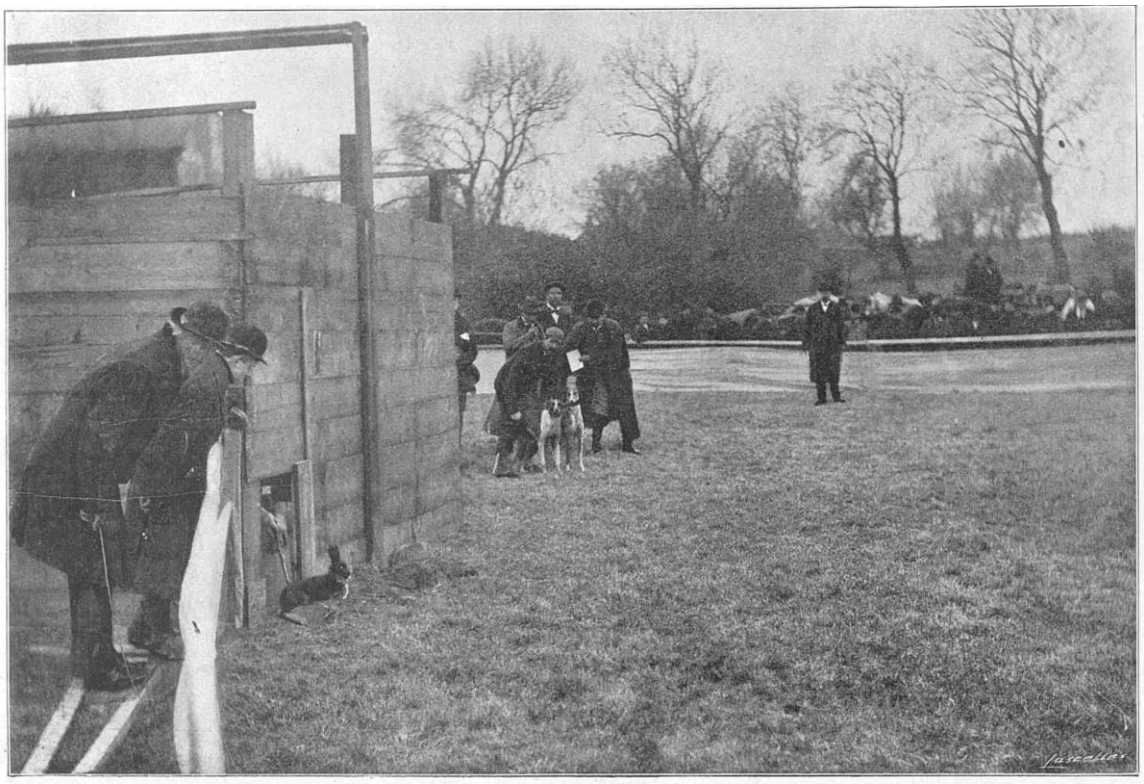
Source: *Evening Herald*, 14 Nov. 1895. Stadiums principally relied on admission tickets for their income and attempted to curb the widespread cheating of the gate by many spectators.

The exploitation of field sports: Sunday coursing and horseracing

The democratisation of spectatorship since the 1880s was nowhere better seen than in the emergence of Sunday coursing and horseracing. They illustrated how traditional, rural, and elite pastimes could be reinvented as urban and working-class sports and integrated into a weekend timeframe.

[172] *Evening Herald*, 16 Mar. 1895.
[173] Stuart Gibbs, 'When women's football came to the island', *Studies in Arts and Humanities*, vii, no. 1 (2021), pp 44-6.
[174] *Freeman's Journal*, 18 May 1896, 25 May 1896; *Irish Daily Independent*, 20 May 1896.
[175] James Lee, 'Damned if the did, damned if the didn't', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxiv, no. 11 (2007), pp 1483-6.

Figure 5.11: Trapped hare released at a Dublin Coursing Club meeting.



Source: *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 9 Mar. 1901.

Coursing in Ireland witnessed its heyday in the early 1870s when Lord Lurgan won the prestigious Waterloo Cup thrice with Master M'Grath. A long decline ensued, hastened by Lord Lurgan's death in 1882, decreasing financial wealth from landed gentry, and rife and uncontrolled poaching which destroyed most of the stock of hares.[176] To avoid blank days, the practice of purchasing bagged hares and enclosing grounds appeared in Britain at the turn of the 1880s and was adopted at Mourne Park (Down) in 1882.[177] In cities, terrier dogs and rabbits came to replace greyhounds and hares, as their upkeep or purchase was easier and cheaper. In these new settings, the genteel social tone of greyhound coursing disappeared and gave way to working-class participation and spectatorship.[178] The demographic

[176] Jonathan Magee, 'Coursing and the upper classes in Victorian Ireland', *Sport in History*, xxviii, no. 3 (2008), pp 491-511; *Irish Sportsman*, 9 Feb. 1884, 31 July 1886, 4 Sept. 1886.
[177] *Sport*, 30 Sept. 1882; *Irish Sportsman*, 3 Nov. 1883.
[178] Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, pp 140-2. Greyhound racing stemmed from whippet racing which was already developed in England by the later nineteenth century but only spread in Ireland in the 1910s.

change was further accelerated by the ingrained urban lower-class habit of keeping dogs for leisure, as proven by the resilience of dogfighting throughout the century.[179]

The Dublin Irish Terrier Coursing Club was established in 1889.[180] Within five years, other clubs had been created and twenty-six meetings were taking place during the winter season. Within ten years the fashion was gone (appendix 8). The short-lived interest in terrier coursing suited the working-class lifestyle. Sunday racing was preferred, admission was affordable (6*d*.), and using GAA grounds further anchored the sport into a specific socio-economic setting. Even the (greyhound) Dublin Coursing Club resorted to 'workingmen stakes' to increase its attractiveness.[181] Central to terrier coursing were the betting opportunities it offered. According to Ross McKibbin, betting patterns evolved in the second part of the nineteenth century, and especially from the 1880s, which entailed a decline of large-scale betting as a status symbol for the upper class and conversely its rise in importance within working-class lifestyles.[182] As leisure time and sporting news grew more available from the 1870s, so did the possibility for betters to ponder chances and reduce luck to a minimum.[183] Betting in this context was not solely about pecuniary gains, but about the pleasure of having one's intellect vindicated:

> While the upper and middle classes were being taught that gambling was on the whole, no longer acceptable behaviour, and were abandoning it, the working class, excluded from the particular forms of middle-class intellectual and economic activity, practised an intellectualized betting as one way of expressing the more rational and controlled culture of the late nineteenth century.[184]

If terrier coursing was an opportunity for male bonding and betting, meetings were less numerous from 1895 and none was held after the 1897/8 season. The concurrent development of Saturday and Sunday pony racing remains the most

[179] See figure 6.2, p. 361; Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, p. 141.
[180] *Sport*, 12 Feb. 1887; *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Dec. 1889.
[181] *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Jan. 1894, 23 Mar. 1894.
[182] Ross McKibbin, 'Working-class gambling in Britain, 1880-1939', *Past & Present*, no. 82 (1979), pp 148, 173; Chinn, *Better betting*, pp 84-5.
[183] McKibbin, 'Working-class gambling', pp 165-9
[184] Ibid., p. 178.

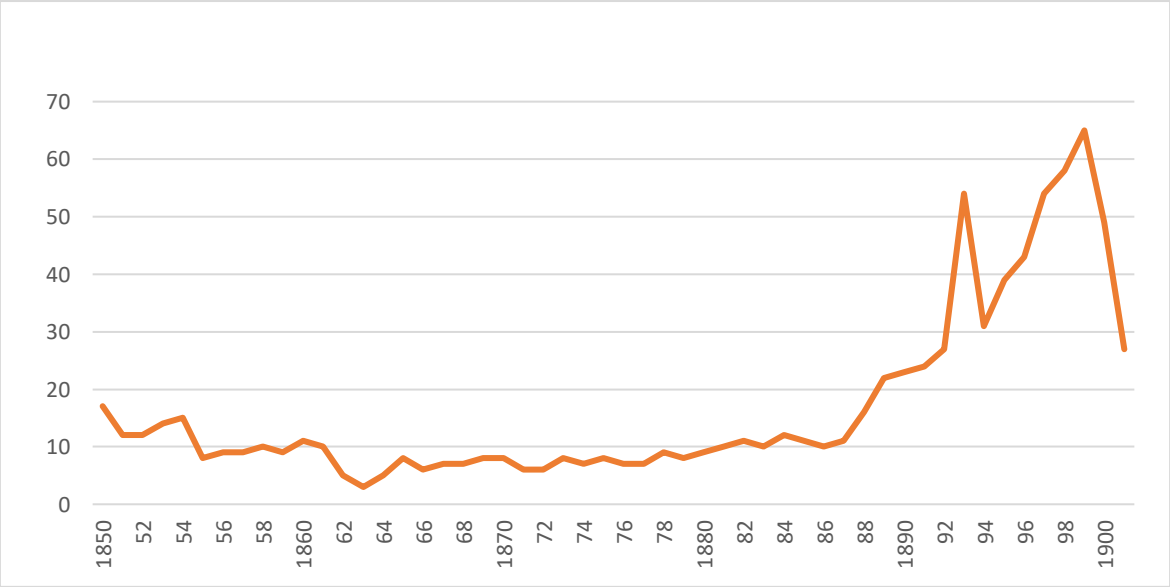
likely reason behind such a dynamic as both sports shared the same constituency and grounds (appendix 9). Pony meetings began at Clonturk Park in 1889 and profited from a loophole in the Turf Club rules since 1884 which allowed meetings whose races did not exceed £4/19 in prize not to be declared illegal.[185] Jockeys and horses involved were not thereafter barred from entering races organised under Turf Club rules. Costs were lower too and opened commercial opportunities for horseracing on a modest scale. The constant sneering from the conservative press and the lack of high stakes or first-class horses were more than made up for by the excitement brought by the day out and betting. Saturday and Sunday were favoured, and pony racing quickly grew in popularity in the early 1890s.[186] The proliferation of such meetings and the lack of accountability eventually brought the Turf Club to intervene and to abruptly put a stop to such racing for the 1894 season.[187]

That racing outside the jurisdiction of the Turf Club kept being organised at Jones's Road stadium and Dundrum in 1895 is a tribute to the commercial possibilities of small-scale meetings and a reminder that its control over Irish racing in the nineteenth century had never been complete. In November 1895, Butterly and Major McFarlane, owner of the Dundrum racecourse, were decisive in calling a meeting 'to form an association to govern race meetings held in Ireland not under rules.'[188] The Irish Racing Association, as it became known, was an immediate success and 51 meetings were held throughout the country in 1896 and 63 two years later, with 14 and 35 respectively taking place in Dublin.[189] A peak in the city was reached in 1899 and then it brutally stopped in 1901 (figure 5.12). Butterly initially gave up racing at Jones's Road after the 1898 season as the GSWR encroached on his track to build the link line.[190] More potent in the decline of pony racing was the resurgence of active Sabbatarianism, especially manifest in Drumcondra since racing took place during Mass hours. A court case ensued and was eventually

[185] *Sport*, 9 Feb. 1884. The threshold was then actually lowered from £20 to £4/19. The Turf Club then did not foresee that unfashionable pony racing could reach such popularity within a decade.
[186] *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Oct. 1889.
[187] *Irish Times*, 3 July 1893, 9 Apr. 1894.
[188] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Nov. 1895.
[189] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Jan. 1897, *Irish Daily Independent*, 25 Jan. 1899, *Irish Times*, 2 Mar. 1899. Crowds of two thousand paying spectators were common on sunny days.
[190] *Dublin Daily Nation*, 27 Sept. 1898; *Dublin Daily Express*, 21 Nov. 1899. The irony was that Butterly was heavily involved in canvassing for the building of such a line in the early 1890s, before the project was eventually transferred to the GSWR.

settled in favour of the local churchgoers in July 1899.[191] Even though racing had stopped at Jones's Road by then, it had created a precedent for other racecourses. Pressure grew further in 1900 when the Catholic bishops gathered at the Synod of Maynooth expressed their opposition to Sunday racing.[192] Owners of racecourses were left with little recourse but to surrender, which they did in October 1900.[193] In Dublin it marked the death knell of pony racing, but the Irish Racing Association remained active in the country for another few seasons.[194]

Figure 5.12: Number of days of racing in Dublin, 1850-1901.



The evolution of horseracing in the last quarter of the nineteenth century reflected the higher degree of monetisation and specialisation seen in sport, and society more generally. Meetings at enclosed venues in the largest cities 'became less carnavalistic, less prone to excess and there was more focus on the racing and betting itself.'[195] The sense of occasion of great communal gatherings gave way to mass consumption and working-class male bonding.[196] Lack of figures for and

[191] *Irish Times*, 28 Mar. 1899.
[192] *Pastoral letter of the archbishops and bishops assembled in national synod at Maynooth to the clergy, secular and regular, and the laity of the Catholic Church in Ireland* (Dublin, 1900), p. 40.
[193] *Irish Times*, 20 Oct. 1900.
[194] In May 1903, a one-off meeting held under Irish Racing Association rules was held at Jones's Road, see *Irish Daily Independent*, 8 May 1903.
[195] Huggins, *Flat racing*, pp 166-7.
[196] Ibid., pp 90-5.

analysis of the composition of crowds precludes any definitive conclusions yet the cost of admission at horseracing meetings hints at a decline in female attendance. The May 1874 Baldoyle meeting did not discriminate on gender.[197] The following year, ladies were allowed at half price in the Grand Stand and by 1888, access to the promenade was reduced to a quarter of a male ticket.[198] In 1901, a season ticket was fixed at £2/10 and his holder could bring two ladies with him for just an extra pound.[199] The lower the social standing of the venue, the more likely it was a male preserve. The first meeting of Ashtown racecourse in 1898 even let in ladies for free.[200]

The business acumen with which Leopardstown and Jones's Road were run underlined the growing acknowledgment of the role of spectators in financing sport from the 1880s onwards.[201] Fortunes fluctuated, however, and the failure of terrier coursing or trotting to durably last in the city is a reminder that traditions and popular tastes were sometimes impermeable to imported fashions, regardless of their cheapness and support by the press.[202]

6- The state, public policies, and sport

The action of the state, if still heavily tilted towards law and war, grew exponentially during the nineteenth century both in Ireland and Britain.[203] Within this spectrum, sport and recreations remained essentially considered as law-and-order matters. Increasingly, however, public authorities began to adopt proactive policies towards them. Of a very limited nature, they nevertheless betrayed the growing awareness of the need to provide the population with playing areas and illustrated the rising importance of sport as a public concern.

[197] *Irish Times*, 28 Apr. 1874.
[198] *Irish Times*, 8 May 1875; *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Apr. 1888.
[199] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Dec. 1900.
[200] *Dublin Daily Nation*, 3 Jan. 1898; *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Dec. 1900.
[201] *Sport*, 15 Aug. 1885; Freeman's *Journal*, 25 Oct. 1889.
[202] *Irish Sportsman*, 29 Nov. 1884; *Freeman's Journal*, 13 Jan. 1897.
[203] Virginia Crossman, 'The growth of the state in the nineteenth century', in Kelly, *The Cambridge history of Ireland, volume III*, pp 542-66.

Public space

The regulation of public space and the driving out of folk pastimes from streets and commons towards enclosed and dedicated areas remained a contentious issue throughout the nineteenth century. Public authorities never succeeded in preventing children from using streets and increasingly cultural assumptions were added to utilitarian concerns. More crucial to the development of modern sport were the early attempts at developing a municipal policy towards the recreative use of public space. Largely piecemeal and unequally applied between the city and its townships, they reflected too the politicisation of society from the 1870s.

By the mid-nineteenth century, large communal sporting events had disappeared from thoroughfares and unenclosed fields in Dublin city. But stamping out any sort of recreational activity proved impossible.[204] Children made the streets their playgrounds and were reprimanded for doing so.[205] Teenagers and adults went to jail. In 1860, twenty-one people were incarcerated in Richmond prison for playing ball, pitch and toss, cards, or hopscotch in the street.[206] Fifteen were aged 14-19 and six were twenty and more. In 1900, seventeen spent time at Mountjoy prison for similar offences.[207] Nine were aged 16-19 and eight were twenty or more. Available data remains insufficient to evaluate trends in street games, and prison records fail to translate the level of leniency shown by judges or policemen in dealing with such offences. What was clear, however, was that streets were used throughout the century for casual recreation, and this not only by children. That only two of the thirty-eight people concerned were Protestant perhaps highlights the prejudiced nature of the nineteenth-century police and legal system, and might hint at a religious divide in street games. What was really defining in sending people to jail, however, was their social class. Among 32 men whose occupation was identifiable, 1 was a soldier, 5 were skilled workers, and 26 unskilled workers. Those

[204] Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, pp 79-84 Chinn, *Better betting*, pp 85-93.
[205] *Evening Freeman*, 28 Mar. 1864 (hurling); *Dublin Evening Mail*, 7 Feb. 1876 (hurling); *Freeman's Journal*, 24 May 1883 ('road cricket'); *Dublin Daily Express*, 29 Jan. 1895 (tip-cat and peg-top); *Evening Herald*, 16 Apr. 1896 (football); *Dublin Daily Nation*, 29 Apr. 1899 (cricket).
[206] National Archives of Ireland, NAI/PRIS/1/13/13, Dublin – Bridewell (Richmond) Prison general register 1859-1860. Eighteen of them were incarcerated for playing pitch and toss.
[207] National Archives of Ireland, NAI/PRIS/1/43/1, Mountjoy Prison general register male 1899-1901. Eight were in jail for playing pitch and toss.

were precisely the people who lived in the cramped city centre housing and resorted to public space for social interactions and recreation.

As in the early nineteenth century, preserving public order and the tranquillity of residents were the primary reasons to prosecute infringements. Increasingly though, a social and cultural layer was added which had its origin in the greater wish for social segregation and in the feeling that betting had become pervasive among the working class.[208] Trotting on the Howth Road was recurrent in the 1880s, but only became an issue when it took place on Sunday. Clontarf residents then objected to the degradation of the middle-class character of the township by 'a motley assemblage of cars, bookmakers, and the class of men frequenting races.'[209] Playing in the streets was bad, but betting was worse and occurrences were 'viewed as symptoms of a wider crisis of morality among the youth expressed in disobedience of the law.'[210] Fear was propagated by the conservative *Dublin Daily Express*, which saw in young pitch and toss players mere 'corner-boys' eager to assault the policemen who arrested them.[211] The widening gulf between middle-class and working-class interpretations of the law was nowhere made clearer than by a case that took place at the Kingstown police courts in 1895:

> Two young lads … were charged with playing pitch and toss on public thoroughfare at Albert road on the 2nd inst. The father of one of the boys stated that the game was being carried on in an old laneway which was not a public thoroughfare, about 150 yards from the road. His Worship asked severely if he desired to bring up the boys as gamblers, and imposed a fine of 1s each, with the option of 4 ½ hours' imprisonment.[212]

Concurrently with the repression of play on public thoroughfares began a debate on the use of public amenities for leisure. Stemming from the emergence of a popular

[208] McKibbin, 'Working-class gambling', pp 149-50.
[209] *Irish Times*, 31 Oct. 1889; *Sport*, 2 Nov. 1889. The popular *Sport* however believed that 'the proceedings passed off in the most orderly manner.'
[210] Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, p. 81.
[211] *Dublin Daily Express*, 8 Apr. 1884, 1 Aug. 1890, 30 Jan. 1894.
[212] *Dublin Daily Express*, 21 June 1895.

press, of a class of populist politicians, and of the growing schism between the Irish population and its elite, this debate largely espoused contemporary political lines.

The enclosing and privatisation of commons became hotly resented and this resentment was integrated into wider claims for Irish land reform. In 1885, for example, the (unsanctioned) erection of walls and of gates by residents on the roads and alleyways which led to the seashore at Dalkey led the *Freeman's Journal* to intensively campaign for their removal.[213] The Dalkey town commissioners were forced to intervene and to moot the idea of a people's park to preserve the public character of Dalkey common.[214] A decade later, the purchase of a large tract of land between Howth and Sutton by distiller and unionist politician Andrew Jameson brought similar complaints. The campaign was this time fuelled by nationalist MPs Timothy M. Healy and John J. Clancy and was resolved by a court case whereby the rights of way on the Sutton cliff walk remained public.[215]

The creation and use of public parks was also determined by the socio-geographic environment. In the middle-class, Protestant, and unionist townships, the rush to build municipal parks in the 1890s answered a need for well-designed and carefully kept greens which were meant to enhance the status of these suburbs.[216] Sport there was simply not a matter of public interest, and the ample provision of private sporting grounds or gardens reduced the desire for further public action. In 1885, the Blackrock commissioners 'recommended that games should not be permitted [in the People's Park] on Sundays.'[217] A decade later, the early project of converting the slob lands between the railway line and the road in Fairview into a park failed to set aside a space for playgrounds and playing fields.[218] In Kingstown, the playground of the People's Park was used as stone depository while new footpaths were being laid, and got damaged in the process.[219] Further south in Bray, the town commissioners were presented with a memorandum 'from a number of residents of Dargle road complaining of the state of Peoples Park and the annoyance caused

[213] *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Oct. 1885, 19 Oct. 1885, 20 Oct. 1885, 27 Oct. 1885, 31 Oct. 1885.
[214] *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Nov. 1885, 17 Nov. 1885, 19 Nov. 1885, 3 Dec. 1885.
[215] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 16 Nov. 1894; *Dublin Daily Express*, 22 May 1897.
[216] Ó Maitiú, *Dublin's suburban towns*, pp 169-73; *Irish Society*, 15 Apr. 1893.
[217] *Dublin Daily Express*, 7 Feb. 1885.
[218] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 31 Aug. 1893.
[219] *Evening Herald*, 3 July 1897.

by football players. It was ordered that football playing should be prohibited in the Park in future.'[220]

Whether or not Dublin Corporation had a better record in that regard is difficult to assess. Recreation grounds were built and St Michan's Park, opened in 1898, contained two handball alleys as well as playgrounds.[221] The use of public amenities for sport on certain occasions was common practice both in townships and the city. In Bray, part of the esplanade was enclosed during the regatta.[222] In Dublin, the Stoneybatter abattoirs were made available by the municipality, usually free of charge, to the GAA, Grocers' Assistants or Trades Hall athletic clubs.[223] The common socio-economic profile of these organisations and of Dublin Corporation members perhaps explained a shared interest in Gaelic games and athletics which was undoubtedly reinforced by political clientelism.[224] Overall, a cash-stripped city and more pressing matters of health and housing distracted from the creation of a coherent sport policy by Dublin Corporation, and involvement beyond the provision of playgrounds and playing fields remained patchy, as was then the case throughout Britain and Ireland.[225]

The Phoenix Park, one of the largest recreation grounds in Europe, relieved the sense of urgency. It was free, within commuting distance of the city, and could accommodate hundreds of players and thousands of spectators at once. Yet the attribution of grounds since the 1830s to the Phoenix, Constabulary, Garrison and Workingmen's cricket clubs, as well as to the All-Ireland Polo Club, by the Board of Works was not without issues.[226] Over the years these clubs enjoyed the right to enclose their grounds, to build sheds, pavilions and stands rent-free in easily accessible portions of a public park. While ownership remained in the hands of Dublin Corporation, these clubs could warn off trespassers and eventually

[220] Wicklow County Archives, Bray Town Commissioners and Urban District Council Minute Book, 19 June 1893.
[221] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 23 Dec. 1898.
[222] Wicklow County Archives, Bray Town Commissioners and Urban District Council Minute Book, 19 June 1893.
[223] *Dublin Daily Express*, 12 May 1886; *Sport*, 20 July 1889; *Freeman's Journal*, 13 July 1893. Access to the grounds was not always granted either, see *Dublin Daily Express*, 20 Feb. 1899 for a refusal.
[224] Daly, *The deposed capital*, pp 204-7.
[225] Ibid., pp 203-39; Prunty, 'Improving the urban environment', pp 191-200.
[226] *Irish Sportsman*, 19 June 1880; *Irish Times*, 12 May 1881; *Irish Daily Independent*, 29 May 1894. The Board of Works had been managing the park since 1860.

prosecute.[227] Their clear association with the establishment was the crux of the matter. As with Dalkey and Sutton commons, such moves were understood by nationalist politicians Tim and Maurice Healy and historian John P. Prendergast as part of the annexation of public land by an elite, unrepresentative and estranged from its people.[228] The semi-privatisation of grounds was, however, offset by a non-partisan approach by the Board of Works and the provision of a public cricket ground (able to host four simultaneous games) and over thirty football pitches between 1894 and 1907.[229]

The provision of sporting facilities in Dublin and its suburbs in the late nineteenth century reflected its political and social divisions. Though small in scope, the trend was nevertheless consistent with other urban areas in Britain and highlighted the increasing importance of leisure in the political and scientific discourse.[230] By encouraging sport, however, public authorities were bound to police and fashion behaviours.

Behaviour

The larger range of actions undertaken by the state in the late nineteenth century meant that public authorities came to play a minor, yet growing, role in shaping sporting practices. Providing playgrounds and playing fields was the most visible part of public action and was reinforced by policing actions to ensure the safety of participants and spectators alike. Standards of behaviour were accordingly expected, promoted by middle-class lobbies, and enforced by the state.

Upholding law and order was the most visible part of the state attempt to shape behaviours. Large events required consultation between organisers and the DMP

[227] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 10 May 1894.
[228] Questions to the House of Commons, 'Ireland – the Phoenix Park, Dublin – the Polo ground', vol. 297, col. 18, 17 Apr. 1885; Ibid., 'Class 1. Public works and buildings', vol. 299, col. 1214-8, 20 July 1885; Ibid., 'Polo in Phoenix Park' and ''Cricket in Phoenix Park', vol. 25, col. 422-5, 5 June 1894; Ibid., 'Phoenix Park – Polo club', vol. 51, col. 1,475-6, 9 July 1897, available at https://parlipapers.proquest.com, accessed 10 Aug. 2021; *Irish Times*, 27 July 1885, 12 Aug. 1886. Prendergast felt entitled to a voice on the matter as his most celebrated work dealt with the Cromwellian Settlement in Ireland.
[229] *Evening Herald*, 6 June 1894; *Dublin Daily Express*, 10 Feb. 1903. By 1907, there were over thirty soccer grounds available, see Garnham, *Association football and society*, p. 12.
[230] *Irish Sportsman*, 26 Feb. 1887.

and the deployment of forces around the grounds.[231] In April 1903, the Leopardstown race committee hired twenty-nine policemen for their meeting and police expenses at cyclist meetings cost the RDS around £10 annually in the latter 1890s.[232] Violence around sporting events was common at the turn of the century but was of a personal rather than communal nature. Premeditated faction-fighting had largely receded and was almost solely associated with wrestling, while open sectarian violence in Dublin was largely muted. Instead, the constabulary essentially dealt with petty crime common to all large gatherings: drunken altercations, pickpocketing, or welshing (voluntarily defaulting on a bet).[233] Police presence ensured that peaceful and respectable manners were adhered to within and around enclosures and made sporting grounds places where social and cultural norms applied.

Sanitary measures also became part of the state legal arsenal. A recrudescence of rabies in 1899 forced the Board of Agriculture to put a halt to the transporting of dogs between Ireland and Britain. Coursing and hunting were especially affected, and so was the local dog show scene which relied heavily on British dogs.[234] Acknowledged since the eighteenth century, the link between bathing, cleanliness and health became threatened by sewer discharges and proved a salient issue in Kingstown township. Its appeal and middle-class character relied on the maintenance of an efficient and cheap sewer system and at the same time the protection from pollution of several popular bathing spots which dotted its coastline.[235] To answer growing public concern, commissioners were forced to install a sewer-free hundred-yard perimeter around their bathing places (figure 5.13, bye-law iv). This uneasy compromise opened commercial possibilities in less urbanised suburban towns. The Howth baths, for example, made a sales argument

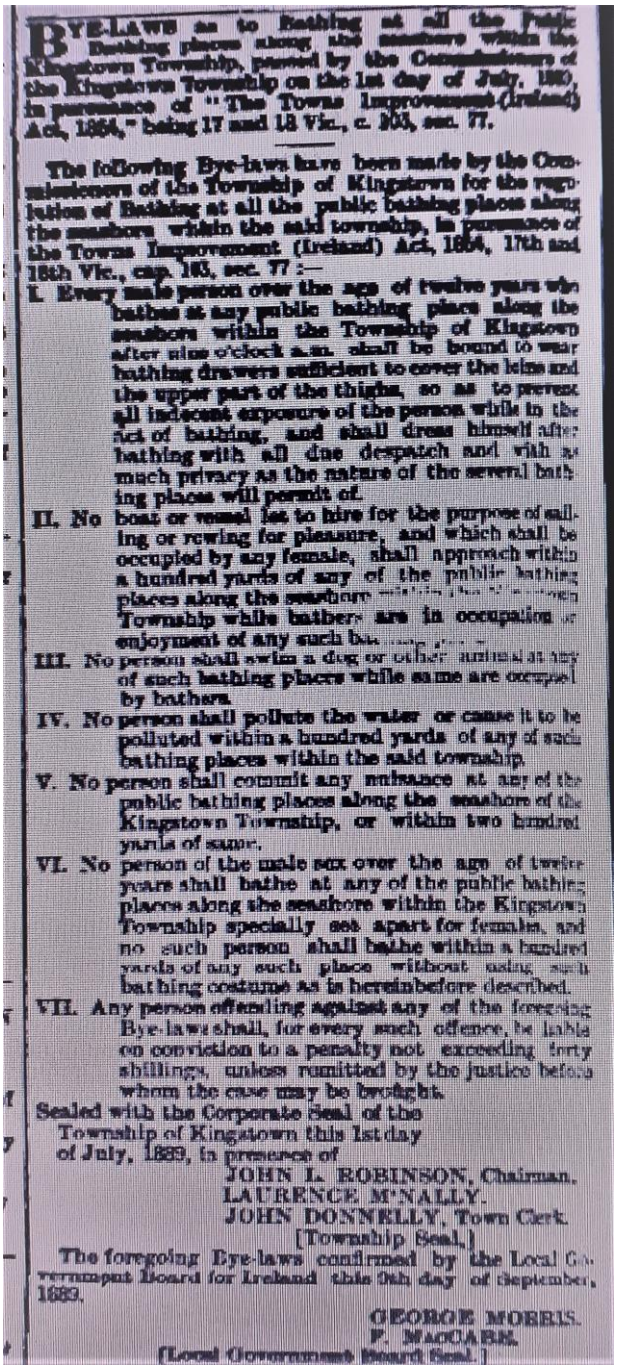
[231] GAA Archives, Minutes of the County Dublin Committee, 12 May 1897.
[232] Questions to the House of Commons, 'Dublin police at Punchestown races', vol. 107, col. 625, 5 May 1902, available at https://parlipapers.proquest.com, accessed 10 Aug. 2021; RDS Archives, Accounts of the Royal Dublin Society, 1894-1900. Sixty-six policemen were employed at the Punchestown meeting. Policemen were paid their usual rate by the DMP but travel and expenses were taken care of by race committees.
[233] This was also the case in Westmeath, see Hunt, *Sport and society* pp 237-42.
[234] Questions to the House of Commons, 'Quarantine regulations for dogs landed in Great Britain from Ireland', vol. 80, col. 215-7, 6 Mar. 1900, available at https://parlipapers.proquest.com, accessed 10 Aug. 2021; *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Aug. 1899. Concessions were made on some specific cases.
[235] *Dublin Daily Express*, 24 Sept. 1889; *Irish Times*, 4 Nov. 1889. For an overview of drainage issues in the southern townships, see Ó Maitiú, *Dublin's suburban towns*, pp 96-103.

of the 'superiority of the water' and trumpeted that 'the Water at Howth is perfectly pure and in no way contaminated with Sewage'.[236] Providing washhouses and bathing facilities for the poor was the alternative to open sea bathing and had proved a consensual matter among Dublin Corporation members since 1846. All agreed on its necessity, but none actively sought to implement the provisions of the Baths and Washhouses Act. The extension of Dublin port further eastwards and increased traffic, however, came to severely curtail popular bathing at the mouth of the Liffey. In 1879, the building of a new quay at the East Wall, according to the dispositions of the Dublin Port and Docks Act 1879, threatened a local spot known as the Smoothing Iron and free bathing more generally. Attention was brought to the committee of the House of Commons by Corporation members Granville Somerset and MP Edmund D. Gray and resulted in the insertion of a clause 'binding the board not to remove or interfere with the existing bathing places until bathing places and approaches were constructed in lieu of them, to be maintained in good repair afterwards.'[237] Of more consequence was the decision made by the Corporation in 1880 to build a public swimming pool and washhouse in Tara Street. Eventually opened in 1885 and 1886 at a cost of £12,000, the venue and its moderate terms proved highly successful in subsequent years.[238] In 1896, 46,138 baths tickets were sold and over 51,000 paid admission for the warm baths, for a total income of £1,200.[239] As municipal civic pride became a driving force in the provision of public swimming pools throughout Britain from the 1870s, Dublin nevertheless negatively stood out.[240] By 1893, it was clear that a sole public facility was not enough to cater for the demand.[241] Belfast had inaugurated its own public baths as early as 1879 and by the 1890s four were in operation.[242] Furthermore, the decision to close the Tara Street amenities during the winter season ran against the very principle of

[236] *Evening Irish Times*, 6 June 1888; *Irish Daily Independent*, 7 June 1892.
[237] *Irish Times*, 7 July 1879.
[238] *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Apr. 1884, 13 July 1886; *Dublin Daily Express*, 20 Mar. 1885, 4 June 1885; *Irish Times*, 13 May 1897. Access to the washhouse was available for 1*d*. and to the swimming pool at 2*d*. which was then cheaper than the admission at commercially exploited baths where 3*d*. was the norm.
[239] *Irish Times*, 13 May 1897.
[240] Christopher Love, 'Local aquatic empires', pp 626-8; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 1 Nov. 1899.
[241] *Freeman's Journal*, 15 Sept. 1893; *Sport*, 6 May 1899.
[242] *Dublin Daily Express*, 26 Sept. 1879; *Irish Times*, 19 May 1900.

affordable washing facilities for the population.[243] In that matter, Dublin Corporation simply did too little and too late.

Figure 5.13: Regulations of Kingstown township regarding bathing, 1889.



BYE-LAWS as to Bathing at all the Public Bathing places along the seashore within the Kingstown Township, passed by the Commissioners of the Kingstown Township on the 1st day of July, 1889, in pursuance of "The Towns Improvement (Ireland) Act, 1854," being 17 and 18 Vic., c. 103, sec. 77.

The following Bye-laws have been made by the Commissioners of the Township of Kingstown for the regulation of Bathing at all the public bathing places along the seashore within the said township, in pursuance of the Towns Improvement (Ireland) Act, 1854, 17th and 18th Vic., cap. 103, sec. 77 :—

I. Every male person over the age of twelve years who bathes at any public bathing place along the seashore within the Township of Kingstown after nine o'clock a.m. shall be bound to wear bathing drawers sufficient to cover the loins and the upper part of the thighs, so as to prevent all indecent exposure of the person while in the act of bathing, and shall dress himself after bathing with all due despatch and with as much privacy as the nature of the several bathing places will permit of.

II. No boat or vessel let to hire for the purpose of sailing or rowing for pleasure, and which shall be occupied by any female, shall approach within a hundred yards of any of the public bathing places along the seashore within the Kingstown Township while bathers are in occupation or enjoyment of any such ba...

III. No person shall swim a dog or other animal at any of such bathing places while same are occupied by bathers.

IV. No person shall pollute the water or cause it to be polluted within a hundred yards of any of such bathing places within the said township.

V. No person shall commit any nuisance at any of the public bathing places along the seashore of the Kingstown Township, or within two hundred yards of same.

VI. No person of the male sex over the age of twelve years shall bathe at any of the public bathing places along the seashore within the Kingstown Township specially set apart for females, and no such person shall bathe within a hundred yards of any such place without using such bathing costume as is hereinbefore described.

VII. Any person offending against any of the foregoing Bye-laws shall, for every such offence, be liable on conviction to a penalty not exceeding forty shillings, unless remitted by the justice before whom the case may be brought.

Sealed with the Corporate Seal of the Township of Kingstown this 1st day of July, 1889, in presence of

JOHN L. ROBINSON, Chairman.
LAURENCE M'NALLY.
JOHN DONNELLY, Town Clerk.
[Township Seal.]

The foregoing Bye-laws confirmed by the Local Government Board for Ireland this 9th day of September, 1889.

GEORGE MORRIS.
F. MACCABE.
[Local Government Board Seal.]

Source: *Irish Times*, 20 Sept. 1889.

[243] *Irish Times*, 13 May 1897; *Sport*, 6 May 1899; *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 10 Nov. 1900. The Baths opened for the 1900 winter at a loss and closed again the following year. No private baths (all open air) were open during the winter.

Other attempts at controlling behaviours reflected the ambitions of a reforming strand within the middle classes, their ability to get attention from courts, and ultimately their limited powers to curb popular practices. Gambling prosecutions and the refusal to grant licences to sell alcohol were mere statements of intent that highlighted a pious wish to regulate society in line with virtuous and middle-class values. They were no deterrent for the working class (and others) who enjoyed betting within racecourses and socialising around sporting events, and by the mid-1880s, the fight for Sabbatarianism was truly lost in 'Catholic' Ireland. At times mobilisation could still prove effective and Sunday racing was clearly targeted. In 1895, the manager of the Ashtown Trotting Club was fined £10 for selling alcohol without a licence. His hopes of securing one were quickly dashed as the chairman of the Blanchardstown Petty Sessions 'said no power on earth could manage such an institution as a racecourse on Sunday without violating the law, and therefore they would have to give up this sale of drink.'[244] Three years later a self-styled 'Committee for the Suppression of Sunday Horse Racing in the vicinity of Dublin' was created in reaction to the sharp rise in meetings.[245] With supporters on both sides of the religious divide, the campaign gathered momentum and successfully obtained an injunction against the holding of races on Sundays at Jones's Road in March 1899.[246]

Beyond short-term and specific purposes, cultural attempts at shaping spectating behaviours were confronted by multiple contradictions as Sabbatarianism and tee-totalism opposed middle-class reformers to middle-class entrepreneurs. Bathing perhaps best illustrated the paradoxes inherent in the reforming agenda.[247] As a hygienic necessity, it was ardently promoted. Yet the working-class use of canals and open sea was equally ardently decried.[248] Reconciling the display of the physical body with the middle-class conception of chastity was in this instance the most fundamental issue.[249] This was taken seriously too. Thomas Lenehan, a

[244] *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Oct. 1895.
[245] *Dublin Daily Nation*, 25 Oct. 1898.
[246] *Irish Times*, 28 Mar. 1899.
[247] *Irishman*, 29 July 1876.
[248] *Dublin Daily Express*, 28 Aug. 1878; *Irish Times*, 18 July 1881.
[249] Catherine Horwood, '"Girls who arouse dangerous passions": women and bathing, 1900-39', *Women's History Review*, ix, no. 4 (2000), pp 655-8.

twenty-one-year-old labourer, went to jail in 1900 for 'bathing within public view'.[250] For social reformers, how people bathed was as important as why they did it. It entailed designated areas, full costume and sexual segregation (figure 5.13, bye-laws i, ii, vi).[251]

7- Youth and sport

Most children were introduced to organised sport at school or in youth movements. Their role in shaping a sporting culture defined on gendered and social lines was paramount as children then brought their games into adulthood and largely contributed to their spread as players and administrators, or as well-wishers and spectators.[252] An educational doctrine, athleticism, underpinned such emphasis on sport within schools, yet was unequally applied.

Sport in schools: doctrine

A consensus had existed since the early nineteenth century as to the benefits of physical education on body and mind alike. As Britain evolved from being an agrarian and regional power to industrial and global dominance, educational theories were refined to suit necessities. The growth of military drill and calisthenics in primary and secondary schools stemmed from the imperialisation and militarisation of the public discourse, from concerns regarding the fitness of an urban population, as well as by a growing debate on childhood and its specificities.[253] In England, the teaching of drilling was facilitated by the Elementary Education Act 1870 and despite disagreements upon which form drill should adopt (i.e. military or

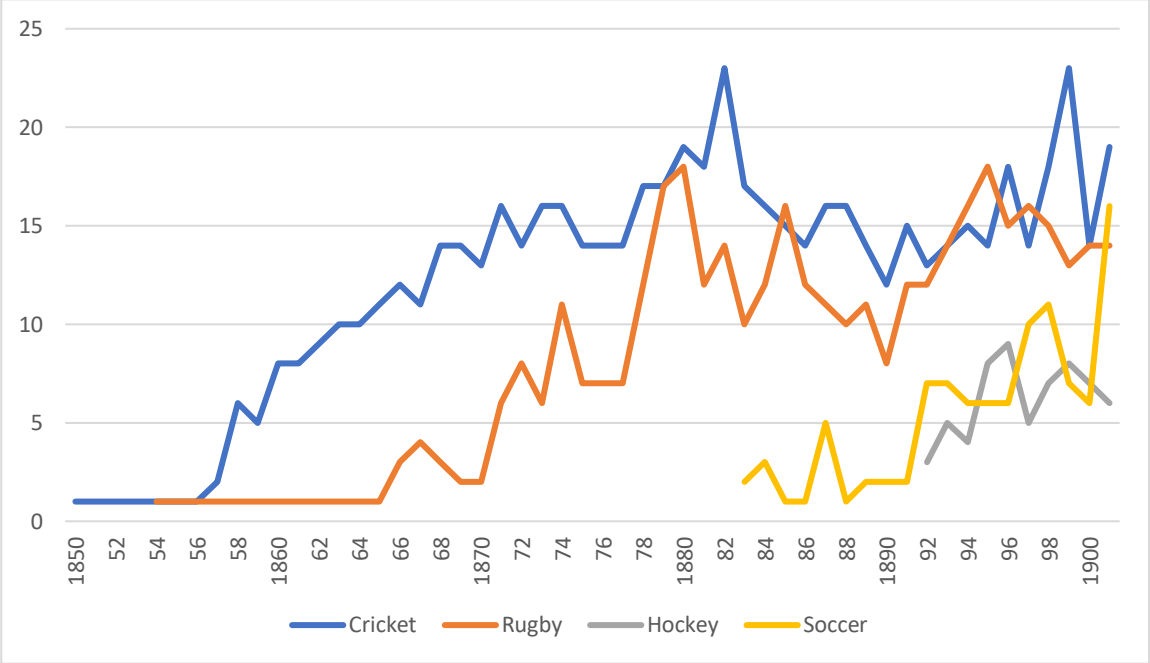
[250] National Archives of Ireland, NAI/PRIS/1/43/1, Mountjoy Prison general register male 1899-1901, 23 July 1900.
[251] *Freeman's Journal*, 1 July 1891. See also Gilligan, *A history of the port of Dublin*, p. 94. The Dublin Port and Dock Board posted a notice at the North Bull Wall requiring swimmers to wear costumes and not to swim within five hundred feet of Clontarf Road.
[252] Earlier chapters have shown that schoolboys and Dublin University students were crucial in the diffusion of rugby and hockey. A few Dublin soccer clubs were also the continuation of Boys' Brigades football teams.
[253] Alan Penn, *Targeting schools: drill, militarism and imperialism* (London, 1999), pp 1-12, 78; Heffernan, 'Physical culture in Ireland', pp 59-60; Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp 87-8.

not), the practice spread in subsequent decades.[254] In Ireland, it had become part of the primary school syllabus by 1900.[255] The measure, however, was not extended to secondary schools and the dearth of playgrounds in urban state-sponsored schools further slowed down its implementation.[256] Great disparities in playgrounds amenities was observed by physician Charles Cameron in 1905 even though 123 of the 135 schools surveyed taught physical education.[257] At the Summerhill school, in the inner-city centre, the three hundred boys enrolled could only avail of a hundred square meters of playgrounds. At the same time, the ninety-five girls from St Michian's school on North Anne Street had to do with hundred square feet of playgrounds.[258] In the Dublin fee-paying secondary schools, the adoption of modern sports alongside calisthenics witnessed a sharp increase from the 1860s onwards which replicated the model adopted by English public schools (figure 5.14). There, the role of games in ingraining Christian, masculine and imperial values into the young upper-middle-class students who were getting prepared to run the country and its empire became paramount in the second part of the nineteenth century. The doctrine of athleticism, as described by J. A. Mangan, was powerful. Games (and life in a boarding school) bound pupils to each other, to their alma mater, and to the public-school ethos for life. Or so it was seen.[259] No elite schools in Dublin had the prestige and networking powers of the Clarendon schools, yet they strived to emulate them. Headmasters and teachers showed the way. At the King's Hospital, Rev. Richards exemplified the spirit by foregoing summer recess to improve the school's playing fields.[260] At Alexandra College, Misses Lyster and Story were instrumental in the creation of the hockey club.[261] At St Vincent's College, Father McKenna set up the Athletic Sports Club.[262] At Blackrock College, Michael Cusack

[254] Penn, *Targeting schools*, pp 19-41.
[255] Tom Walsh, 'The national system of education, 1831-2000', in Brendan Walsh (ed.), *Essays in the History of Irish Education* (London, 2016), p. 31.
[256] Heffernan, 'Physical culture in Ireland', pp 60-3.
[257] Charles A. Cameron, *An examination of the condition of primary schools in Dublin in 1905* (Dublin, 1905), pp 8-37.
[258] Ibid. Even accounting for a large absenteeism, playgrounds facilities were largely underdeveloped and such an observation applied equally to boys, girls, mixed, or infant schools.
[259] High School Archives, *H.S.D.*, i, no. 4 (1898), p. 1; Ibid., *The Erasmian*, i, no.1 (1899), p. 3. For a balanced overview of life in nineteenth-century public schools and their importance in the sporting and national imagination, see Colls, *This sporting life*, pp 171-200.
[260] King's Hospital Archive, *The Irish Blue*, no. 1 (Dec. 1900).
[261] Alexandra College Archive, E/5/1/3, *Notes on the early history of women's hockey in Ireland by a Veteran*, p. 2.
[262] *St. Vincent's College*, p. 246.

played cricket with the boys.[263] When he opened his Academy on Gardiner Street, he played rugby and hurling with them.[264] Throughout the city, teachers and headmasters enthusiastically endorsed sport.

Figure 5.14: Number of Dublin educational and youth institutions fielding teams, 1850-1901.



Note: the graph includes national and technical schools, third-level institutions as well as religious organisations such as the YMCA or Boys' Brigades. School football before 1872 is counted as rugby.

By the turn of the twentieth century, more national schools and working-class institutions engaged with team sports and embraced to some extent the rhetoric of athleticism.[265] Soccer was, for example, a favourite at the James Street, Synge Street, Coombe, Rathgar and Inchicore schools.[266] The downward social spread of the ideology remained nevertheless deeply embedded in moral values and consolidated the cultural model and social order. Repetitive drilling and calisthenics

[263] De Búrca, *Michael Cusack*, pp 30-1.
[264] Rouse, *The hurlers*, pp 14-7.
[265] Penn, *Targeting schools*, p. 37.
[266] *Dublin Daily Nation*, 15 Apr. 1899; *Dublin Daily Express*, 7 Oct. 1901; *Dublin Evening Mail*, 22 Nov. 1901; *Irish Daily Independent*, 3 Feb. 1902.

in national schools was the product of poor facilities and lack of imagination. Drill and calisthenics not only could be held in small yards, in classrooms even, but suited too the desire to teach masses their role and position in society.[267] Rational recreation was likewise promoted by religious institutions or seen in the municipal provision of playgrounds and playing fields. This helped to create an environment loaded with social conventions meant to offset the negativities of urban and working-class surroundings.[268] Religious movements, such as the Boys' Brigades whose first Dublin branch was established in 1891, used association football to inculcate notions of sacrifice, courage and self-control to children. More prosaically, it kept young teenagers off the streets and provided the nucleus of a religious education.[269]

Whether athleticism is relevant to explain the importance held by games in nineteenth century schools and the spread of modern sport throughout Britain and its empire is a matter of heated debate between sport historians and Ireland proves no exception. Gerry Finn for example severely reassesses Mike Cronin's *Sport and nationalism in Ireland* and links the growth of modern sport in Trinity College to athleticism.[270] His attempt remains unconclusive and fails to account for alternatives. Dublin University indeed was the place where sport in its bureaucratised and middle-class form developed in the country in the 1850s and 1860s, but other agencies – transport, military personnel, or commercial interests – have been equally important in the diffusion of modern sport in the country and increasingly so from 1870s onwards. On an anecdotal level, he also struggles to convey the full spectrum of causality, or as Cronin puts it, 'where Finn wants black and white, there are only complex shades of grey.'[271] That St Columba's students played a kicking brand of football in the 1850s was possibly due to the school's links with Radley College and its headmaster's former association with Eton.[272] Perhaps

[267] Vanessa Rutherford, 'Girls and the foundation of modern Ireland', *Childhood in the Past*, xi, no. 1 (2018), pp 39-41; Kathleen E. McCrone, 'Class, gender, and English women's sport', pp 160-3.
[268] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 22 Dec. 1898; Vanessa Rutherford, 'Muscles and morals: children's playground culture in Ireland, 1836-1918', in Lane and Murphy, *Leisure and the Irish*, *passim*; Christopher J. Spackman, 'The Boys' Brigade and urban cultures, 1883-1933: a relationship examined' (PhD Thesis, University of Portsmouth, 2016), pp 54-6. For an international perspective, see Roberta J. Park, '"Boys' clubs are better than policemen's clubs": endeavours by philanthropists, social reformers, and others to prevent juvenile crime, the late 1800s to 1917', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxiv, no. 6 (2007), pp 749-75.
[269] Power, 'The functions of association football', pp 45-7.
[270] Finn, 'Trinity mysteries', pp 2255-87
[271] Mike Cronin. '"Trinity mysteries": responding to a chaotic reading of Irish history', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxviii, no. 18 (2011), p. 2755
[272] Finn, 'Trinity mysteries', p. 2263.

other elements blended in too, such as the nature of the ground, or the absence of a handling football tradition in Dublin schools before the 1860s. In his footnotes, Finn also wonders 'what is the historical link, if any, between "fives" and handball.'[273] The question remains unanswered as if to imply that handball, as administered by the GAA since early twentieth century, was as much a derivative of an English public-school game than from the popular pastime that was already played casually across the country and throughout the social spectrum in the eighteenth century. Such innuendos and his blunt criticism of Cronin weaken his argument. Cronin in turn offers a defence of his work, highlights the flaws of Finn's article, belittles the overall importance of Trinity College in the spread of modern sport throughout Ireland, and broadly dismisses athleticism as a practical theory to explain it all.[274]

Colm Hickey, a fervent proponent of athleticism, focuses instead on elite schools rather than Trinity College and explains that there, similarly to other elite schools in Britain, sport was perceived as instilling masculine, Christian, and imperial values into boys.[275] Such beliefs were made plain in school publications and contemporary press and seemed to have been equally shared by headmasters, teachers, parents, and boys alike.[276] The present thesis agrees that such ideology was clearly visible in Dublin elite schools and proved essential to explain the provision of facilities and the impetus given on sport in these establishments. Hickey, however, fails to properly assess the relative situation of Irish elite schools and how academic success and financial imperatives clashed with sporting prestige. For Richard McElligott:

> '… the nature of secondary education in Ireland meant that athleticism could never be as pervasive a creed as it became in Britain. Even elite colleges were dependent on fees awarded by the Board of Education which were based on students' results in the inter-cert examinations. Academic and not sporting achievement was thus the priority. The demands of the inter-cert examination system gave teachers and principals very little scope to indulge in extra-

[273] Finn, 'Trinity mysteries', p. 2280.
[274] Cronin. 'Responding to a chaotic reading', pp 2753-60.
[275] Hickey, 'The evolution of Irish athleticism in elite Irish schools', pp 1394-1417.
[276] Jeff Dann, 'The representation of British sports in late nineteenth and early twentieth century elite Irish school publications', *Media History*, xvii, no. 2 (2011), pp 133-46.

curricular activity. The physical constraints in which many schools operated also negated the provision of sports for pupils. Thus, the diffusion of modern games from these elite colleges into other secondary schools and down to the national school level in Ireland was not a simple or uniform process.'[277]

Like Finn, Hickey also struggles to consider alternatives to athleticism in the development of sport in Irish schools or society and inflates the weight of his evidence. Can it be really said of former Castleknock and Clongowes Wood students that they were 'instrumental in spreading association football in Ireland'?[278] Were there no other agencies – military, workplace, youth organisations, neighbourhoods – equally important in rooting soccer among the Dublin-born lower-middle and working-class population?[279] Was muscular Christianism the sole motive for headmasters and teachers? Or was it held in conjunction with pleasure, health, transfer of knowledge, or prestige, as advanced by Colm Kerrigan with regard to elementary-school association football in London?[280] The present research hence presents a nuanced point of view. In the second part of the nineteenth century, athleticism as an educational theory was as influential in Dublin elite schools as it was tempered by practical considerations.

Sport in schools: application

Irish secondary schools markedly differed from the English public schools which they emulated and whose paraphernalia they replicated. They were smaller establishments which had fewer facilities, less prestige, and smaller affiliation fees. Thus a minority drawn from the wealthiest Irish families, for whom networking and

[277] Richard McElligott, '"A youth tainted with the deadly poison of Anglicism"? Sport and childhood in the Irish independence period', in Ciara Boylan and Ciara Gallagher (eds), *Constructions of the Irish child in the independence period, 1910-1940* (London, 2018), p. 284.
[278] Hickey, 'The evolution of Irish athleticism', p. 1406. Soccer was played in Castleknock College since the early 1880s yet the school did not play an external match before 1896. The first opposition between Clongowes Wood and Castleknock colleges occurred in 1901. Hickey's affirmation comes from the fact that many players of the leading Bohemian FC had previously been educated in one of these establishments. Perhaps the example of the Britannia club, linked to the Central Model School teacher-training establishment, might have been more relevant in that regard.
[279] Clénet, 'Association football in Dublin', pp 813-5.
[280] Colm Kerrigan, '"Sweet analytics"; athleticism and elementary-school football associations', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, xxix, no. 18 (2012), pp 2501-3.

social elitism were paramount, continuously privileged an English education for their children throughout the nineteenth century. Irish secondary schools remained, however, well beyond the means of the great majority of the population and instead suited the ambitious middle-class families who sought upward social mobility for their children and for whom academic results and admission to the upper layers of the professions, army, or industry were essential to secure social status.[281] Slightly over twenty thousand students were enrolled in secondary education in Ireland until the early 1880s, at which time the effects of partial state funding and the settlement of the University question in 1878, combined with an expanding Catholic bourgeoisie and growing opportunities in the civil or imperial service, brought about a rapid increase in numbers.[282] By 1901, 35,306 students were enrolled in secondary education in Ireland, 23,897 of whom were Catholics.[283] Because Irish schools took for model the English public schools, and also because headmasters believed in its educative values, athleticism found its way into Irish secondary schools. Nevertheless, it remained clearly subordinated to the academic curriculum and even more so after the introduction of compulsory examinations following the Intermediate Education Act (1878). Parents expected schools to deliver refined manners, social networking, and team games. They were also aware that academic success was crucial to ensure upward social mobility. Headmasters, meanwhile, struggled with tight budgets and a competitive market. Good pass rates meant publicity, prestige, and eventually much-needed affiliation fees.[284]

In Dublin, the cult of athleticism never reached the levels observed in English public schools and therefore sport had to be set against crucial academic results and the lack of facilities in an urban area. Little money was spent on sport once grounds were secured (and they were). At Alexandra College, the total amount granted to the tennis and hockey clubs totalled £90 between 1890 and 1905, whereas annual income amounted to over £5,000 per year.[285] At the High School, the annual budget in the 1890s exceeded £2,500, yet the direct annual contribution to physical

[281] O'Neill, *Catholics of consequence*, pp 25, 54-9.
[282] Pašeta, *Before the Revolution*, pp 28-32.
[283] O'Neill, *Catholics of consequence*, p. 10.
[284] Ibid., p. 64; Fitzpatrick, *St Andrew's College*, pp 25-6.
[285] Alexandra College Archives, *Balance Sheets*, 1890-1909.

education and games never surpassed £85.[286] The aloofness of schoolmasters in the day-to-day running of clubs was consistent with the wish to confer a degree of self-government on boys.[287] At St Vincent's College, the boys managed the athletic club.[288] At the High School and St Columba's College, boys financed and ran the clubs themselves.[289] In Dublin, granting autonomy to boys was nevertheless as much a financial necessity as an educational tool. Economies were relentlessly sought. Drill masters were a burden on the wage bill. Merging the position with the caretaker was one way of reducing costs.[290] Reducing salaries was another.[291] Dilapidated facilities were a concern too and the money necessary to maintain them was difficult to secure. At St Columba's College, the swimming pool was in a dirty condition in 1885 and the shower attending it had been broken for a year by then.[292] Later, the suggestion to build a gymnasium was discarded as other needs had to be settled first.[293] At the King's Hospital, it took the headmaster over a year to convince the board to cover a shed and turn it into a pavilion and gymnasium. His requests for fresh wallpaper, new desks, or the repair of an organ also fell on deaf ears.[294]

Societal forces were likewise paramount in shaping sport within Dublin schools. Offering an extensive extra-curricular menu added prestige and appeal. The French fathers who had run Blackrock College since its creation in 1860 quickly realised that their continental habits clashed with local expectations:

> the parents are capricious and at times unreasonable in their demands. The most important consideration for them and their children is delicacy in food,

[286] High School Archives, GS/449, 1890-1900. This included between £15 and £25 to rent a cricket ground and £45 for a drill instructor.
[287] Mangan, *Athleticism*, p. 148; Colls, *This sporting life*, pp 202-5.
[288] *St. Vincent's College*, p. 246.
[289] High School Archive, *The* Buzzer, i, no. 3 (1893), p. 29; Ibid., *Red and Black*, iii, no 11 (1895), p. 3; St Columba's College Archives, *The Columban*, vi, no.1 (Mar. 1885). The *Columban*, was the school paper edited by the boys themselves and sport clubs accounts were annually published.
[290] King's Hospital Archives, *Board minute book*, 17 Mar. 1885
[291] High School Archives, GS/449, July 1897, Jan. 1898.
[292] St Columba's Archives, *The Columban*, vi, no. 6 (Sept 1885).
[293] Ibid., xv, no. 5-6 (June 1894).
[294] King's Hospital Archives, *Headmaster's report book*, Dec. 1893, Mar. 1894, June 1894, Mar. 1895, June 1895.

> plenty of play and sleep, little study, and they still hope to become brilliant students at the end of it all.[295]

The misunderstandings were cleared by rejuvenating the school's uniform and introducing games instead of the sterner calisthenics.[296] When the school attained university status in the early 1880s, it sought to enhance its profile by showing off 'the various aspects of collegiate life associated with university institutions – a literary and debating society, adequate library facilities, as well as facilities for sport etc.'[297]

Sport historiography has naturally focused on the rapid growth of games, both in quantity and status, within elite schools. But they were not the only leisure outlet left to students. Brass bands, plays, and later photography also fitted the self-help and cooperation ethos sought from boys and broadened the attractiveness of schools.[298] The cultural offering of these latter increasingly came to reflect the leisure habits seen outside their walls. The rage for tennis in the 1880s – judged effeminate and inherently inferior to cricket or rugby – in the city's boys' schools was consistent with contemporary developments in Dublin but at odds with the strict application of the tenets of athleticism.[299] At the High School, students acknowledged in 1893 that the tennis club 'has always been well supported and it is almost the only club (…) that can more than pay its way'.[300] Tennis was popular at St Columba's College, Blackrock College and King's Hospital too.[301] Golf was played by the schoolboys of St Columba's College in 1897.[302] In 1904 the girls of Alexandra College considered the possibility of forming a school golf club.[303] At Blackrock College, the bursar laid down a costly bicycle track even though he never rode a bicycle himself. His logic, according to the school's historian, 'was that since the bicycle is part of life it must

[295] Quoted in Farragher, *The French College*, p. 74.
[296] Farragher, *The French College*, p. 83.
[297] Ibid., p. 284.
[298] *St Vincent's College centenary*, p. 231; *The Belvederian*, i, no. 2 (summer 1907), p. 124; D'Arcy, *Terenure College*, p. 71, Farragher, *The French College*, p. 384.
[299] Mike Huggins, *The Victorians and sport*, p. 74; *Freeman's Journal*, 19 May 1885.
[300] High School Archives, *The Buzzer*, i, no. 2 (Sept. 1893), p. 14.
[301] St Columba's College Archives, *The Columban*, ii, no. 7 (Oct 1881); King's Hospital Archives, *Headmaster's report book*, Sept. 1888; Farragher, *The French College*, p. 342
[302] St Columba's College Archives, *The Columban*, xviii, no. 2 (June 1897).
[303] Alexandra College Archives, *Minutes of the Hockey Club*, 3 Oct. 1904.

be part of a boy's education.'[304] These examples merely highlighted the multi-faceted approach towards sport in these establishments. Headmasters perhaps truly believed in the regenerative Christian masculinity rhetoric that accompanied the playing of cricket or rugby. Perhaps they also promoted these sports to fall in line with current societal and educational trends, or to advertise their establishment to prospective students. These were not mutually exclusive motivations and as much as the spirit of athleticism undoubtedly existed in Dublin schools, it co-existed with fashions, pragmatic beliefs, and children's tastes.

8- The athlete as a role model

As icons or role models, athletes came to occupy a specific position on the public stage.[305] Their sporting prowess, obvious to all, was refined by intrinsic virtuousness, steadfastness and courage. From street or village fame, successful sportsmen became household names whose feats and lives were reported by the national press. This was amplified by the twin developments of a modern society where a cheap press was available to a highly literate population and where sport was increasingly associated with education, military training and manliness. Athletes became celebrated because they brought pride to their community and because they fitted the late nineteenth-century canons of muscular Christianity. Improved status within one's community was perhaps not a determining factor in explaining individual participation in sport, yet it contributed to creating an aura of modernity and glamour around it.

The advent of the popular press, and especially *Sport* in December 1880, changed the perception the public might have had of athletes.[306] The new brand of journalism, based on first-hand interviews '"a la" the "New York Herald"' or 'Yankee'

[304] Farragher, *The French College*, p. 418.
[305] Richard C. Crepeau, 'Sport, heroes and myth', *Journal of sport and social issues*, v, no. 1 (1981), pp 24-5.
[306] Rouse, *Sport & Ireland*, p. 155-7.

fashion, gave the athlete an opinion of his own and a voice to be listened to.[307] Portraits and biographies of famous athletes became increasingly frequent in print, contributed to their celebrity and fuelled a sense of familiarity from the wider public. Admiration went beyond sport. In the words of Michael Cusack, Maurice Davin was 'a leader who is spotless in the midst of the speckled.'[308] Athlete and Fenian Patrick W. Nally was eulogised by the *Irish Daily Independent* as 'a man of magnificent physique, an ardent sportsman … but withal a man whose chief characteristic was that he was endowed with all the tenderness of a woman.'[309]

The sporting press made stars out of athletes and channelled it into profit. Fame was a commercial opportunity for the best cyclists who secured advertising contracts with cycle firms. Successful careers were launching pads for personal businesses too. Pugilists had turned into publicans upon retiring from the ring since the late eighteenth century.[310] As football overtook prize-fighting as the great popular sport, soccer or rugby players opened their establishments in England.[311] In Dublin, Harry Reynolds also attempted to cash in on his 1896 World Championship when he opened his own cycle shop on Aston Quay in 1900.[312] By and large, newspapers were the main beneficiaries of such evolutions. Creating sporting celebrities and sustaining enthusiasm sold papers, even in the off-season. In December 1883, for example, *Sport* organised a poll to find the 'best "all-round" sportsman in Ireland.'[313] To cast a vote, supporters had to purchase an edition of the paper and send back a coupon filled in with their favourite's name. Provisional results appeared week after week and built the excitement until the famous horse trainer Henry Linde handsomely outran cricketer Geoffrey Hone and the all-round enthusiast Lord Lieutenant Earl Spencer.[314] The poll further reveals the high esteem in which racehorse owners, sometimes explicitly linked to the establishment, were

[307] *Sport*, 23 Sept. 1882, 7 June 1902; *Irish Sportsman*, 30 July 1887. *Sport* was not the first nor the only newspaper to adopt such a style but became the leading sporting paper and had a greater influence.
[308] *Irishman*, 25 Oct. 1884.
[309] *Irish Daily Independent*, 5 Sept. 1892.
[310] Brailsford, *Bareknuckles*, pp 18-9; Myler, *Dan Donnelly*, pp 74-5.
[311] Collins and Vamplew, *Mud, sweat and beers*, p. 112; Pamela Dixon and Neal Garnham, 'Drink and the professional footballer in 1890s England and Ireland', *Sport in History*, xxv, no. 3 (2005), p. 376.
[312] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 28 Nov. 1900.
[313] *Sport*, 1 Dec. 1883
[314] *Sport*, 8 Dec. 1883, 15 Dec. 1883, 22 Dec. 1883, 29 Dec. 1883, 5 Jan. 1884.

held by their contemporaries during challenging times, even among the presumably nationalist readers of *Sport*.

Figure 5.15: High School hockey club, 1893.



Source: High School archives.

Kudos was not solely monetary. Egos were inflated too. Inscribing the names of the senior cricket and football teams on the walls of the King's Hospital made them read like a roll of honour.[315] Photographs were more powerful still. At St Columba's College, they were granted to successful teams.[316] International rugby teams had their picture taken too.[317] Carefully constructed to exhibit the masculine body and to convey the seriousness of purpose of both players and the institution behind them, photographs revealed the changing appreciation of sport within society (figure 5.15).[318] Sex-appeal was equally important. As modern sport came to magnify

[315] King's Hospital Archives, *Irish Blue*, no. 2, Dec. 1901, p. 3.
[316] St Columba's College Archives, *The Columban*, vi, no. 2 (Apr. 1885).
[317] *Evening Herald*, 2 May 1895; *Irish Daily Independent*, 16 Mar. 1896.
[318] Duncan, 'The camera and the Gael', pp 105-6

masculine values, leading sportsmen were perceived in that light. The *Irish Times* observed that 'the physique of the [DMP tug of war] team as they passed through the streets in the procession was immensely admired.'[319] The *Irish Sportsman* cycling correspondent freely admitted being jealous of the contestants:

> How I envied those fellows as they sped round the track, anxiously followed by the tender eyes of the seraphic beings on the grand stand. Most of these latter seemed to have a bright particular star, and upon his exploits her whole being seemed to be centred.[320]

The attraction successful athletes allegedly held for women fitted the gender stereotypes of the late nineteenth century and reinforced the active and public nature of male activities, as against the supportive role of women. Whether real or fantasised, it held sway among men. A GAA handicapper was asked for leniency in his duties toward an unsuccessful athlete, for this latter was 'going in hard for a certain girl in this neighbourhood, and if he won even a second prize it would *of course* greatly promote his chances.'[321] In a similar tone was the report of the Gaelic football match between the Grocers' and Dauntless clubs in February 1888. It acknowledged among 'a large number of persons' the presence of 'the Dauntless hon sec.'s "young lady."' And to conclude, tongue in cheek, that 'perhaps this explains why that individual worked so well.'[322]

The new image of the athlete was not only purposeful in reaffirming gender differences, but also meant to answer the needs of a society coming to terms with national upheavals, urbanisation and imperialism. A healthy mind in a healthy body was the antidote to the decay and ills brought by urbanisation and industrialisation in the Western world.[323] It was the key to a racial regeneration that invoked a

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[319] *Irish Times*, 25 Oct. 1893.
[320] *Irish Sportsman*, 8 May 1886.
[321] *Sport*, 4 Sept. 1886.
[322] *Sport*, 18 Feb. 1888.
[323] Robert A. Nye, 'Degeneration, neurasthenia and the culture of sport in Belle Epoque France', *Journal of Contemporary History*, xvii, no. 1 (1982), pp 60-4. See also Bill Luckin, 'Revisiting the idea of degeneration in urban Britain, 1830-1900', *Urban History*, xxxiii, no. 2 (2006), pp 249-50. While medical opinion was articulated in biological terms, contemporaries also understood it in cultural terms. Not all shared the feeling of racial decline, see *Irish Times*, 31 Aug. 1875; *Evening Herald*, 21 Aug. 1894.

mythical and pure Greek antiquity or pre-Norman Ireland, according to one's national sensibility:

> When manly sports become unpopular, manhood declines; and the nation which has lost the relish for its athletic pastimes is incapable of winning or maintaining its independence. […] Let us not be so degenerate. Inheriting the sorrows and the glories of the past, we owe much to the future. Ireland claims good service at our hands: let us begin to do it, not in talk and swagger and idle show, but in labouring to revive that glorious education of the olden days, the noble athletic sports and pastimes of the Gaedhel [sic]![324]

Interest in the past soared as communities struggled to make sense of the tremendous technological and social evolutions.[325] In sport, this was complex and sometimes contradictory. A lost golden age, usually articulated in moral terms, saw in amateur athletes the link between an unsullied ancient past and a troublesome present. This coexisted with awe at seemingly unstoppable progress. Emphasis on quantification and records, even among amateurs, firmly embedded sport in a bureaucratised society that emphasised a teleological conception of progress.[326] Inserting sportsmen in a progressive narrative legitimised the present and reinforced their status as standard-bearers among contemporaries. Incidentally, they also became references for future generations and the photos of the 1900/1 senior cricket and football teams still hang on the walls of the King's Hospital.[327]

[324] *Irishman*, 22 Oct. 1859.
[325] Billie Melman, 'The power of the past: history and modernity in the Victorian world', in Hewitt, *The Victorian world*, pp 466-7.
[326] Guttman, *From ritual to record*, pp 45-54.
[327] Every senior cricket and football team since has had its photo taken and hung on the school's corridors. The King's Hospital moved out from Blackhall Place into large modern facilities in Palmerston in the 1970s and photos were placed again on the new walls. My thanks again to Andrew Whiteside for bringing this to my attention.

Conclusion

On Saturday 21 August 1897, the Fingal Rovers held an athletic and cycling meeting in Oldtown. The ten events attracted at least seventy-eight entries and the meeting was handicapped and judged by Patrick Sutton, who worked for the weekly *Sport*.[1] At the same time, fellow journalist P. J. Gormley ensured that the proceedings of the Catholic Boys' Brigade sports went off according to regulations at Jones's Road stadium. There, over eighty participants, mainly young boys, took part in twelve athletic and cycling races.[2] Further west in the Phoenix Park, the last two winners of the Irish County Polo Cup, Westmeath and Sligo, played out the final tie of the 1897 edition in the Nine Acres.[3] Later, footballers from the Albion and Brighton Wanderers soccer clubs kicked off their season with a draw.[4] In the nearby ground of the Civil Service Cricket Club, the semi-final of the junior cup opposed Knapton to the GSWR team.[5] At Rathmines, teams from the Leinster and Pembroke cricket clubs were interrupted in their game by the rain and elsewhere in the city, players from the University Long Vacation, Civil Service, Land Commission, Clontarf, and Workingmen's clubs were likewise disappointed.[6] Eastwards, the weekly gatherings of the Dalkey Rifle Club, Dublin Bay and Clontarf sailing clubs went ahead.[7] So did the monthly competition of the Dublin Golf Club on Bull Island and the swimming race organised by the Pembroke Swimming Club at the Merrion baths.[8] Thousands of Dubliners had meanwhile congregated around Harcourt Street station and made their way to Leopardstown racecourse where the August meeting began at 1.45pm.[9] The following day, Gaelic games and pony racing took place at Harold's Cross and Jones's Road stadium respectively.[10] On Monday 23 August, the Phoenix Cricket

[1] *Irish Daily Independent*, 23 Aug. 1897.
[2] Ibid.
[3] *Dublin Daily Express*, 23 Aug. 1897.
[4] *Irish Times*, 23 Aug. 1897.
[5] Ibid.
[6] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Aug. 1897.
[7] *Irish Times*, 23 Aug. 1897.
[8] Ibid., *Dublin Daily Nation*, 23 Aug. 1897.
[9] *Irish Daily Independent*, 23 Aug. 1897.
[10] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Aug. 1897.

Club began a three-day match against County Cork in the Phoenix Park and the Leopardstown horseracing meeting was concluded.[11] On Tuesday 24 August, the annual Horse Show began at Ballsbridge, another polo competition started in the Phoenix Park, and boxer Peter Maher was the star of an exhibition scheduled in the Mechanics' Institute on Abbey Street.[12]

By 1900, formally organised sport had thus become a daily occurrence in Dublin and involved thousands of players, almost invariably men. Tens of thousands more assisted from the sidelines or stands and there again men greatly outnumbered women. Despite the gender segregation, such numbers were simply incomparable with the levels of participation observed even three decades earlier. Concomitant with this expansion, and fuelling it, was its bureaucratisation. At Leopardstown, the state apparel was deployed to the full. Forty policemen from the DMP (city) and a hundred and forty from the RIC (county) maintained order while a further fifty formed a guard of honour to accompany the city's civic authorities and their guests, the Duke and Duchess of York (the future George V).[13] Sport was complexified as regulated competitions had succeeded the traditional or casual encounters of the early modern period. These could involve a large number of contestants and leagues or cups were held over several months. Impartial authorities were appointed to handicap and judge athletic, cycling, sailing and horseracing contests. Records were kept to update league positions and facilitate the handicapper's task. Playing had also become formalised. The Celtic hurlers who defeated the Grocers on Sunday 22 August all had specific duties. The goalkeeper and defenders stopped the opponents from scoring. Forward players weighed probabilities of whether to score points or attempt to go for the more difficult yet more rewarding goal. The seriousness with which competition was taken entailed prior practice. Horse owner F. F. MacCabe had specifically trained *Sabine Queen* for five-furlong races in 1897. As the filly's performance at Leopardstown on Saturday 21 August did not match his expectations nor was consistent with her other outings, he suspected that the course was too short. Racing had in that instance become a legal matter which involved the Leopardstown race committee, the Turf Club, the (English) Jockey Club, and had entailed several appeals, a re-match, and a

[11] *Irish Daily Independent*, 24 Aug. 1897.
[12] *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Aug. 1897.
[13] *Irish Daily Independent*, 23 Aug. 1897.

measurement of the course by an independent engineer who found it to be 989 yards long instead of 1,100 yards.[14] Such oversight would have been meaningless in 1850 but five decades later it had cost Leopardstown managers £100 in fines and was a serious blow to their reputation. The formalisation of sport was inextricable from its harnessing by commercial forces. Special trains carried spectators from the city to suburban race meetings, and polo players from the country to the city. Journalists ran Dublin athletics and then reported it in their papers. Entrepreneurs who built and looked after swimming pools, racecourses and stadiums cashed in on the throngs of spectators who wished to watched athletes and horses competing. In Dublin, as in the rest of Ireland and Britain, modern sport was built on a comprehensive transport network, a cheap press, and enclosed venues which financially profited from its expansion and democratisation.

The scale and pace of change in the Dublin sporting scene after 1870 sharply contrasted with the casual approach to games and pastimes seen in the early nineteenth century, even though an embryo of bureaucratisation and commercialisation had existed, as highlighted in the first chapter. Moreover, with the development of modern sport came a reassessment of its role in society and its espousal of contemporary issues. Religious youth organisations found in athletics the tools to fashion boys' education. Cricket teams associated with state departments or railway companies benefited from the benevolence of their managers, who readily understood the team-bonding character of sport. Local pride and sexual segregation were common threads throughout the period studied yet came to be understood differently. Localism and the sense of belonging to an organic community prevailed both in early modern societies and an internationalised world. In the latter case, however, it had become enriched by the rise of nationalism as a popular force. That polo teams from Sligo and Westmeath travelled to Dublin to play the final tie of a tournament reinforced both the status of the city as the Irish capital and of the competition as a national event. The broad exclusion of women from the eighteenth-century world of sport on material grounds, such as lack of time or means, was reinforced by moral considerations in the following century. Modern sport became a male construct destined to promote wholesomeness, to offset fears of racial or physical degeneration and to enhance manliness. Women fitted as

[14] *Irish Times*, 23 Oct. 1897.

uncritical spectators or in a few gendered activities which reinforced the sexual divide and further entrenched the ideal of active masculinity as opposed to passive femininity. Contemporary beliefs on women's physical abilities ensured that physicality and aggressiveness were removed from their games and incidentally reinforced modern sport as a bastion of masculinity. Such segregation both mirrored and reaffirmed the unbalanced sexual relations observed in society at large. Eventually, the numerical expansion of the middle class and the growing recognition that physical exercise was necessary to the development of the female body and encouraged the establishment of sporting outlets for women in Dublin from the 1880s. It nevertheless remained firmly subordinated to gender and social considerations. The lack of opportunities, beyond calisthenics, for working-class women drastically contrasted with the rapid strides made by their middle-class counterparts for whom sport was a mean to conspicuously display social status.

Sport historians in Britain and Ireland agree on the tenets underpinning such evolutions and this thesis too has argued that the economic transition into a modern capitalist society, the transport revolution, the development of mass media and education, and the complexification of class stratification and identification were essential in shaping the sporting world by 1900. As the social and economic structures of Dublin society became increasingly bureaucratised, capitalised, and hierarchically layered throughout the century, so did leisure. The new games which came to replace demotic and traditional pastimes in the third quarter of the nineteenth century originated in the transformation of capitalist economies and the subsequent rationalisation of social interactions since the mid-eighteenth century.[15] Initially largely imported by the elite, such developments gathered pace from the 1850s as Dublin University students began to adopt the new sports then being developed and codified in British public schools and universities. In turn, they contributed to the spread of these games to the local middle classes, who were then the main beneficiaries of the expansion of secondary education and communication means, the growth of officialdom within state departments, and the development of consumerist behaviours. Closely connected with the codification of sport was its commercialisation and internationalisation, as they legitimised the new practices and further pressed the bureaucratisation of sport and the institution of national

[15] Collins, *Sport in capitalist society*, chapter 1.

organisations. In turn, these latter promoted their games and created popular interest through lasting competitions and international encounters. The capitalisation of society greatly contributed to the exploitation of leisure, which benefited from the rise in income of the middle classes first and then increasingly the working classes from the 1880s. Social class remained fundamental in explaining patterns of participation in sport and in the formation of sporting cultures. Playing or watching from the stands necessitated a level of disposable income and time that excluded the poorer sections of society. Despite increases in real wages and the generalisation of the Saturday half-holiday in the last quarter of the century (with the noticeable exception of the retail and vintner industries), elite pastimes such as hunting, sailing, and golf remained simply too costly for the great majority of Dubliners. Conversely, sport was essential to the creation of class identity as players and spectators brought their codes and values into their games. The endurance of violent sports epitomised the physicality associated with the lifestyle of a portion of the male working-class. The chivalresque etiquette which permeated tennis, on the other hand, was for the upper-middle class the reflexion of what they believed were their refined taste and manners. Little social interaction occurred on the field of play and the growing middle-class anxiousness towards the empowerment of a large portion of the male working class resulted in transforming the doctrine of amateurism into a mean of social segregation. In Ireland, the religious schism and the ongoing hardening of the political polarisation reinforced social angst and ensured that sporting preferences increasingly melted into social identities. In that respect, the case of the GAA, clearly associated with the Catholic and nationalist community, was the most obvious. If open sectarianism at sporting events was rarely reported in the Dublin press, competition between schools and mechanics' institutes was rarely free of confessional undertones.

The transition from 'ludicrous to logical', to paraphrase Tom Hayes, has been the theme of this research, and as such transformation rather than continuity has been insisted upon. The pleasure and tension felt by players and spectators alike was one such continuity and remained equally present throughout the period covered by this study regardless of the social and economic infrastructures shaping sport. Another continuity were the casual games played by children which answered makeshift rules readily devised to deal with the constraints of time, space or number.

School cricket, street football, or foot races in a field were not modern sports *stricto-sensu* and the rules used could bear little resemblance to the codified versions of such games. Yet participants in such games undoubtedly believed they played cricket, soccer, rugby, or engaged in cycling or athletics. They adopted the codes and values which defined them, mimicked the leading sportsmen, and were perhaps otherwise also involved in formally organised clubs. Finally, several highly popular pastimes ostensibly retained some of the pre-bureaucratised and pre-commercialised features of the early nineteenth century. By 1900, such pastimes were however increasingly adopting the structure of modern sports.

Continuity and transition: violent sports, handball, dancing, pub games

The continued popularity in Dublin of pastimes that had essentially retained a pre-modern outlook shows that multiple paths of development existed and that leisure habits could take many forms. Despite their survival in proto-modern forms at popular level, a trend towards the adoption of modern features was clearly discernible by 1900.

Dancing, pub games and handball were extremely popular pastimes throughout the nineteenth century. At competitive level, contestants were highly trained and important betting took place. In the absence of formal administration, personal challenges remained the main form of competition and rules differed in each village, handball court, or public house. Dancing traditions in nineteenth-century Ireland were highly localised and no club structure was developed at elite level. Despite such informality and apparent casualness, fierce and long-standing competitive spirit reigned among local champions. This was still remembered in 1930s Fingal:

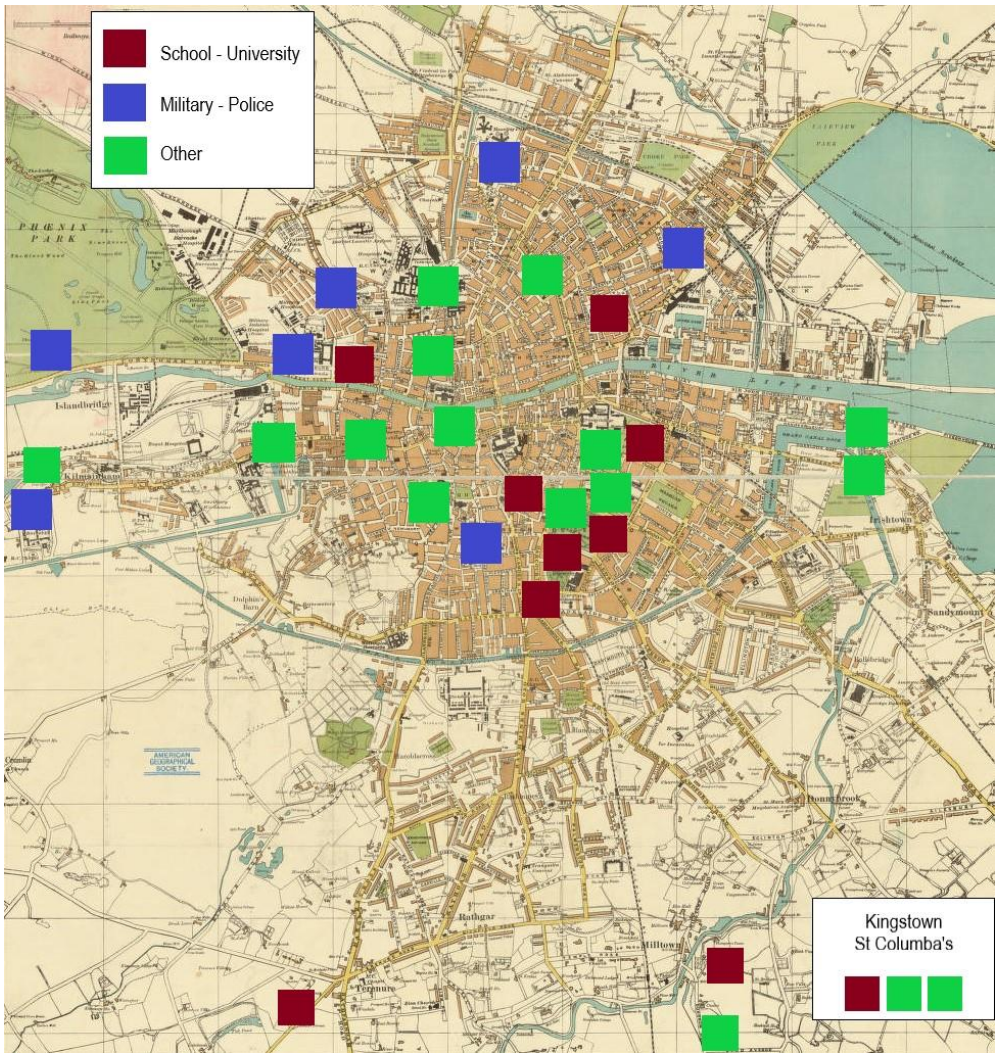
> dancing was always a favourite pastime ... Figure dancing was generally done and dancers came from other parishes to join the local people at the coach road cross. … Balscadden was famed for its step dancers and even to this day this grand old custom of tripping the board is carried on at every little friendly

gathering. It would be difficult to mention champion step-dancers. Even keen rivalry exists between many families.[16]

In handball, standardisation was likewise absent and courts literally took on many shapes. Kenny's court in Kingstown was purpose-built and integrated to a hotel.[17] In the north Dublin village of Balrothery, the mud walls of the chapel were used.[18] The ease with which courts could be built and maintained and the low number of players required was precisely the reason why the game prospered within barracks and schools of all denominations. Any preconception of a solely rural and demotic game is thus belied (figure 6.1).[19] The King's Hospital had a wall built by the latter 1850s and High School students made it a serious business.[20] Handball presented many features propitious to its bureaucratisation in the nineteenth century and why it failed to happen remains unknown. It was played throughout the country.[21] A proto-commercial structure had also been established in Dublin at least since the 1830s. Students of elite schools and Dublin University, so essential in the codification of sport in Ireland, were all familiar with the game. And it became wholeheartedly endorsed by the GAA in the 1880s. Yet handball failed to secure more than junior status within the association and despite half-hearted efforts to universalise rules, most matches in the 1890s remained 'played under a combination of "custom" (varying according to the alley or district) and Gaelic rules'.[22]

[16] National Folklore Collection, School's Collection, vol. 0783, p. 184. See also Brennan, *The story of Irish dance*, pp 73-7.
[17] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 3 Aug. 1881.
[18] National Folklore Collection, School's Collection, vol. 0783, p. 178.
[19] *Irish Sportsman*, 29 May 1875; *Dublin Daily Express*, 11 Mar. 1895; McElligott, *The story of handball*, pp 14 -6.
[20] King's Hospital Archives, Committee Minute Book, 15 Oct. 1857; Ibid., Board Minute Book, 29 Sept. 1882, 19 Dec. 1882; High School Archives, *The Buzzer*, i, no. 1 (1893), p. 4; Ibid., *Red and Black*, ii, no. 7 (Sept. 1894), pp 15-6; Ibid., *H.S.D.*, ii, no. 1 (Feb. 1899), p. 6. At St Columba's College, perhaps the most elitist Protestant school, students considered switching the ailing game of fives for handball in the early 1880s, see St Columba's Archive, *Columban*, iv, no. 1 (Mar. 1883). McElligott believes both fives and handball were played within the school.
[21] Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p. 340; Bracken, *Sport in Tipperary*, pp 216-9; Rouse*, Sport & Ireland*, p. 109.
[22] *Wexford People*, 11 Mar. 1893. For repetitive attempts by the GAA to establish common rules, see *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Aug. 1887 (Gaelic rules); *Wexford People*, 13 June 1891 (sixteen rules); *Drogheda Argus*, 25 May 1895 (twenty-eight rules). For the junior status of handball within the GAA, see *Sport*, 13 Mar. 1886, 30 July 1892.

Figure 6.1: Dedicated ball courts, 1880-1900.



Note: it is possible that the alleys at Aldborough House, Bonham Street and Winetavern Street were in disuse by then. Only one dot has been attributed per recorded location, regardless of the number of courts.

Bowling, quoits, skittles, and bagatelle were associated with public houses and working-class clubs such as the Trades Hall, Journeyman Hairdressers' Club, and Democratic Club.[23] Contrary to what happened in Britain, these clubs were short-lived and failed to establish a regional or national structure. A short enthusiasm for English bowls in the 1860s was due to Mr Broadbent who fitted his Mullingar Hotel at Chapelizod with a green and created the Victoria Bowling Club. The Dollymount

[23] *Irish Daily Independent*, 20 Feb. 1894, 10 Dec. 1894; *Evening Herald*, 7 Mar. 1898; Taylor, *Played at the pub*, *passim*.

Bowling Club was likewise based around Doyle's Hotel in Clontarf. The Eureka skittle and shooting club in Glasnevin was linked to Kavanagh's public house in the latter 1890s and a bagatelle match took place in D'Arcy's premises on Common Street between a self-styled Coal and Grain Labourers Club against an unnamed northern team.[24] Quoits alone stood out among pub games in establishing a brief existence of its own from the 1870s, which might have been a reflection of the growing popularity of the game in England at the time.[25] A few clubs were then created in Dublin and clearly linked the game to Scotland, as befitted their presence at the Caledonian games in 1885.[26] Among the players of the North Dublin and County Dublin quoiting clubs were Thomas Stodart, an English-born Presbyterian journalist, James Carlyle, a Scottish-born Presbyterian journalist, and the Harrison family, Scottish-born Presbyterian farmers.[27] Unlike in England, where quoits had by then become associated with the skilled working class (though not exclusively), newspaper coverage in Dublin described a middle-class participation.[28] The conservative press lauded the game as a modern-day variant of the ancient discus throwing, Major Leech was a patron of the North Dublin club, and in 1895 quoits were played within the Clontarf Yacht and Boat Club.[29] The creation of an associational life around traditional games and a budding network of club organisations was at times observed in the second part of the century. However, such developments remained closely linked to public house or working-class club bonding, and save for quoits, largely failed to expand beyond such forms of socialisation.

Violent sports did not develop into modern sports. The frequency with which dog and cock fights were held in Dublin is nonetheless proof that habits deeply ingrained in a subculture could survive despite having been illegal since the 1830s (figure

[24] *Evening Herald*, 26 Feb. 1896; *Irish Daily Independent*, 28 Oct. 1896.
[25] *Saunders's News-Letter*, 16 Sept. 1871. In 1881, two quoiting associations were created in England, one catering for northern clubs, and the other one based in London. The *Irish Sportsman* published the rule of the northern body in June 1881. See *Sporting Life*, 26 Apr. 1881, 27 Oct. 1881; *Irish Sportsman*, 18 June 1881.
[26] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 25 May 1885.
[27] *Irish Times*, 1 May 1883, 26 July 1886; 1901 Census of Ireland, Household reports. James Carlyle was a manager at the *Irish Times* which possibly explains the club's coverage by the newspaper.
[28] Sidney Daryl, *Routledge's handbook of quoits and bowls* (London, 1868), pp 15-6; Taylor, *Played at the pub*, pp 71-2.
[29] *Dublin Daily Express*, 25 Sept. 1882; *Irish Times*, 1 May 1883; *Irish Daily Independent*, 24 July 1895.

6.2). Dogfighting and prize-fighting emphasised masculinity, toughness, betting, and a degree of disregard for the authorities which appealed to a part of the urban working class (appendix 10).[30] Cockfighting required altogether higher organisational skills as bouts assumed an international character. In 1884, cockers from Ulster and Liverpool boarded a steamer at the North Wall docks and hid behind Ireland's Eye where they quietly went on with the main.[31] A match between Mountmellick (Queen's County) and Manchester a decade later in Drumcondra reveals the degree of complexity attached to the sport in the late nineteenth century.[32] The venue 'selected was uniquely adapted to the purpose, insamuch as it was within easy distance of the metropolis; quiet, roomy, and practically altogether unknown to the police.' The fifty-seven people present at the event came 'sometimes in couples, but, as a rule, one by one' and included a stakeholder and his aide de camp, two judges and a referee 'who is a well-known prominent dealer in the horse world.' Andy Conroy, 'for whom it is claimed that he is one of the coolest and shrewdest men in the corner of a battle at cocking', handled the Irish birds. The rules were strictly adhered to, and the stakes (£125 for the main and £5 for each battle) swiftly handed out to the English winners who calmly shared their impressions with the *Evening Herald* reporter present at the scene:

> We have been taught a lesson coming over here. On such a mission we anticipated we would have a rough deal, but instead of that we have met with the utmost courtesy and most sportsmanlike treatment, and we go back to Manchester with nothing but the brightest and most gratifying recollections of our trip to Dublin.[33]

Unlike dog and cock fighting, unanimously condemned by the law and public opinion, prize-fighting and wrestling retained an ambiguous status throughout the century. Organised and commercially run exhibitions were both legal and highly popular but relied on a wealth of participants who cut their teeth on the informal

[30] This was also the case in cockfighting, see Brian Ward, 'Cockfighting in Ireland, 1900 to 1925', *New Hibernia Review*, xx, no. 3 (2016), pp 99-100.
[31] *Irish Times*, 5 Jul. 1884.
[32] *Evening Herald*, 23 May 1895.
[33] Ibid.

pugilistic or wrestling scene which was frowned upon by the law. A substantial and renewed network of fighters, backers and supporters nevertheless existed in Dublin and ensured that bare-knuckle fighting survived into the 1880s. When boxing reached out to the working class from 1887 onwards, the ancillary form of the sport rapidly declined. In the space of a few years, the transition was almost total and perhaps best illustrated by the career of Myler Keogh. The son of James 'Clocker' Keogh, a prize-fighter of local fame in the 1870s, Myler too began his career with bare knuckles in 1889 before donning the gloves and becoming one of the city's leading boxers at the turn of the 1900s. This was perhaps when he came to the attention of a young James Joyce, who in turn immortalised him as 'Dublin's pet lamb' in *Ulysses*.[34] Wrestling was especially partaken of in Fingal and invoked village pride and traditional ways of life. Shrove Tuesday still marked the start of the season in Lusk and patterns in Portrane or Naul were occasions for local champions to test their strength.[35] Wrestling remained popular in the 1880s. On 'Sunday evenings it [was] usual for the young men of Balbriggan and surrounding neighbourhood to assemble on the strand and organise wrestling matches.'[36] In the city most bouts took place in the Phoenix Park where 'on ordinary occasions there are at least 5,000 people present, and on special days that number is often doubled.'[37] Associated too with wrestling was faction fighting, another remnant of pre-modern times, which was still occasionally observed in Dublin by the 1880s.[38] Despite its popularity and endorsement by the GAA as a native sport, wrestling failed to spread outside its heartlands or to develop a sustainable club or commercial structure. In subsequent decades, the integration of the north Dublin communities into an urban-oriented lifestyle and the resulting weakening of local folk traditions, the lack of organisation, and the over-reliance on a few leading

[34] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 21 Mar. 1876; *Weekly Irish Times*, 30 Jan. 1878; *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Oct. 1887, 23 Aug. 1889; John Simpson, 'Myler Keogh and James Keogh: the story of a boxing family', *Dublin Historical Record*, lxiv, no. 1 (2011), pp 2-12; Boddy, *Boxing, a cultural history*, pp 202-3.
[35] National Folklore Collection, School's Collection, vol. 0784, p. 36; Ibid., vol. 0786, p. 237; Ibid., vol. 0789, pp 273-4; *Drogheda Independent*, 18 Aug. 1906.
[36] *Irish Times*, 28 Sept. 1886.
[37] *Sport*, 28 Oct. 1882; *Irish Sportsman*, 11 June 1887. On the latter occasion a crowd of twenty thousand assembled in the Phoenix Park. Even fancily guessed, such estimations betray the popularity of wrestling in the 1880s.
[38] National Folklore Collection, School's Collection, vol. 0789, pp 273-4; Gunning, 'Hardy Fingallians', p. 122.

athletes to run the sport further hastened the decline of this once popular – if highly localised – pastime in Dublin.[39]

Figure 6.2: Cock, dog and prize fights in Dublin and vicinity, 1870-1905.

	Cockfights	Dogfights	Prize-fights
1870-4	-	-	3
1875-9	1	5 (one v. badger)	7
1880-4	1	5	4
1885-9	4	1 (v. badger)	4
1890-4	3	1	1
1895-9	2	1	-
1900-4	-	4	-
Total	11	17	19

Note: Counted as fights are the events that either went to a finish or those foiled by the police which led to arrests. The last cockfights recorded in Dublin were both in 1895.

These pastimes shared few similarities, yet several trends were clearly observed and can be grouped in five points. First, undisputedly, was their continuous and unwavering popularity. Dancing, handball, or pub games were rooted in forms of sociability based around the public house, school, or neighbourhood which fitted both pre-modern and industrialised societies. Supporters of violent sports projected their own cultural norms and values onto their leisure habits, which made them more difficult to repress. The contention by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1873 that 'it has succeeded in eradicating, [hopefully] thoroughly and completely, the barbarous practices of dog and cock fighting' was a pious wish

[39] Gunning, 'Hardy Fingallians', pp 125-6.

which underestimated the power of popular taste in sustaining traditional games and pastimes.[40]

Second was their receptiveness to fashions, commercial developments, or international influences. Aunt Sally owes its name to an American fairground game but was an evolution of the still older practice of 'throwing at cocks' which had disappeared in the late eighteenth century as part of the campaign against blood sports.[41] Bagatelle had its origin in earlier British and continental cue and ball games and grew in popularity from the turn of the nineteenth century in clubs, mechanics' institutes, and public houses, where it competed with another cue game whose popularity grew from the mid-nineteenth century: billiards.[42] The fluidity of dancing was greater still as the wealth of continental fashions – mazurka, waltz, quadrille – first made headways into the ballrooms of Dublin society before spreading out into the country and wider population where 'they were absorbed into the repertoire and subtly changed by the effects of Irish "stepping" and local musical tastes.'[43] Traditional in that regard did not mean imperviousness to change.

Thirdly, the persistence of violent sports in Dublin belies any idea that they could only thrive in remote areas difficult to police or in microcosms where the social and economic structures remained overwhelmingly rural and traditional.[44] The logistics necessary to undertake an international cockfight in total secrecy from authorities and have it reported in the press does not fit an evolutionary pattern whereby attraction to violent sports was synonymous with a lower level of economic modernisation and rationalisation of lifestyles.[45] Despite rapid urbanisation and the increased regulation of public spaces by public authorities, cockfights took place in the Stoneybatter abattoir and in the nearby cattle market on Prussia Street in the 1880s.[46] Tenements' back rooms or courtyards (and even a theatre) provided enough privacy for dogfights to be staged while pugilism was easily accommodated

[40] *Irish Times*, 27 Aug. 1873.
[41] Taylor, *Played at the pub*, p. 62; Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, pp 216-7.
[42] Taylor, *Played at the pub*, pp 92-102. Shooting galleries also appeared in the 1890s in pubs and were a miniaturisation of rifle shooting. See *Sport*, 24 May 1890; *Irish Daily Independent*, 24 Oct. 1896; *Evening Herald*, 27 Jan. 1897.
[43] Brennan, *The story of Irish dance*, p. 28
[44] Garnham, 'The survival of popular blood sports', pp 122-4; Ward, 'Cockfighting in Ireland', p. 100.
[45] For the connivance between cockers and the press and the logistics of the sport in Ulster, see Ward, 'Cockfighting in Ireland', pp 101-2.
[46] *Sport*, 29 Jan. 1887, 7 Jul. 1888.

in suburban gardens.[47] Their supporters were likely enthusiasts of other sports too. Myler Keogh and Peter Maher were as much at ease fighting bare-knuckle as they were playing Gaelic football for the Benburbs or Phoenix GAA clubs.[48] Eventually, as Neal Garnham rightly argues, 'the people's tastes in leisure continued to be formed by their environment and their wider beliefs and perceptions. Lecturing and legislation would have a very limited effect in the face of these established influences.'[49] Blood and combat sports were embedded in the leisure habits of a portion of the Dublin male working class and crucially defined their sense of identity and masculinity. It remained so throughout the nineteenth century despite their prohibition.

Fourthly, when codified alternatives developed, they were adopted and rapidly replaced the older form of the sport, which then declined. Prize-fighters wholly embraced boxing in the 1890s. This offered a legal alternative whose shorter and less predictable bouts fitted the canons of the entertainment industry yet still preserved the codes and values of the prize ring.[50] The decline of wrestling in Dublin from the 1890s was possibly related to the ongoing growth of boxing and most certainly to the development of Graeco-Roman and catch-as-catch-can wrestling as the leading codes of international wrestling in the later nineteenth century.[51] An exhibition of collar-and-elbow wrestling at the Empire theatre on Dame Street in 1906 even left many spectators puzzled as 'the audience were apparently unacquainted with the rules of the Irish style, and did not by any means appreciate the display'.[52] The challenges thrown down by Lusk champion George Hoey to continental stars George Hackendschmidt and Ahmed Madrali fell on deaf ears precisely because these latter were unfamiliar with the collar-and-elbow style.[53] By

[47] *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Dec. 1878, 28 Dec. 1878, 29 Mar. 1884; *Irish Times*, 4 Nov. 1881; *Sport*, 26 May 1888.
[48] *Wexford People*, 29 Aug. 1894; Donnellon, *The Irish champion*, p. 13; GAA Archives, Minutes of the County Dublin Committee, 1896; Nolan*, The GAA in Dublin*, pp 1205, 1237. The brothers of Peter Maher had leading playing and administrative roles within the Hugh O'Neills GAA club too
[49] Garnham, 'The survival of popular blood sports', p. 126.
[50] Kasia Boddy, '"Under Queensberry rules, so to speak": some versions of a metaphor', *Sport in History*, xxxi, no. 4 (2011), p. 401; *Sport*, 19 Jan. 1901.
[51] Most wrestlers and exhibitions adopted the Graeco-Roman, Cumberland or catch-as-catch can styles, see Gunning, 'Hardy Fingallians', pp 124-5; Jim Shanahan, 'Barrett, Edmond ('Edward')', https://dib.ie, accessed 10 Aug. 2021; *Weekly Irish Times*, 10 Nov. 1900.
[52] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 29 Aug. 1906
[53] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 12 Jul. 1906; National Folklore Commission, School's Collection, vol. 0784, pp 144-5. Local folklore had it that Hoey met Hackenshmidt, but the report of the bout has not been found in contemporary papers. If it happened, collar-and-elbow rules were unlikely used.

the mid-1900s, the prospects for Irish wrestling were grim as internationalised wrestling codes and the popularity of boxing among Dubliners had undermined its relevance as a sport and spectacle. An embryo of organisation and standardisation was likewise witnessed in quoits, and by 1905 six clubs were engaged in a Dublin league running senior and junior championships.[54] Handball and dancing were appropriated by the cultural revival of the later nineteenth century and eventually fell under the umbrella of nationalist organisations. Jig competitions and exhibitions had already been added to the programme of the Caledonian and Gaelic meetings in Dublin from the mid-1880s onwards, but it was the creation of the Gaelic League in 1893 which really marked the moment when 'step-dancing in Ireland became "Irish dancing".'[55] The grip of the GAA and Gaelic League on competitive handball and dancing was tightened in subsequent decades until it became total in the 1920s.[56]

Finally, the extent with which formally organised boxing, wrestling, dancing and handball put an end to popular practices cannot be assessed. In Mulhuddart, 'many of the men of the village would meet in a field on a Sunday' and form two teams of equal number who then would box each other in turns. 'When all the men had boxed the side with the most winners won and each man of the winning side received a half of a gallon of porter.'[57] Whether such communal bouts as existed in west Dublin survived into the twentieth century remains unknown. Unknown too was the extent to which the GAA and Gaelic League were able to successfully replace local handball and dancing traditions by their own homogenised and value-loaded versions.[58]

Sport, Dublin, and Dubliners

The development of formally organised and commercialised sport and its wide popular appeal in nineteenth-century Dublin was, notwithstanding the persistence

[54] *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Oct. 1905.
[55] *Flag of Ireland*, 10 May 1884; *Irish Times*, 26 May 1885; *Sport*, 5 June 1886; Frank Hall, *Competitive Irish dance: art, sport, duty* (Madison, 2008), p. 27.
[56] *Belfast News-Letter*, 9 June 1904; *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 30 Nov. 1911; McElligott, *The story of handball*, pp 47-61; Hall, *Competitive Irish dance*, pp 37-40.
[57] National Folklore Collection, Schools' Collection, vol. 0790, p. 100.
[58] For the 'cultural civil war' in early twentieth-century Irish dancing, see Brennan, *The story of Irish dance*, pp 29-43.

of several pastimes in their traditional forms, unmistakable. The quantification of such a transformation and its relation to ongoing socio-economic changes in Britain and Ireland has been largely appraised in this research. Within this macroscopic frame, the relationship between modern sport, Dublin, and Dubliners needs to be reassessed, as the peculiarities of the city contributed to fashioning its distinctive sporting features. The demographic and economic growth, poor by British standards and high by Irish ones, was essentially geared towards administration and services, contrasting again with the rapidly expanding British industrial cities. The emergence of a large class of white-collar employees which ensued meant that the commercial exploitation of sport did take place. Conversely, the underdevelopment of the skilled working class retarded the growth of soccer in the city and the development of a professional sporting scene. The education, and cultural and political tastes of the Dublin upper and middle classes, ensured that English sports were adopted in the city and replicated their social and cultural ethos. Reciprocally, Dublin sport was equally shaped by Irish customs. Steeplechasing remained a favourite among equine sports and when the country convulsed in the 1880s, its rural immigrants ensured that Gaelic games and their underpinning rural, Catholic and nationalist tones became firmly established in the city. The rapid growth of soccer in the 1890s and the persistence of prize-fighting and dogfighting throughout the century indicate that experiences rooted in urban working-class consciousness also contributed to the creation of a unique sporting scene by 1900. The history of sport in Dublin during the nineteenth century thus inextricably resulted from local, national, and international factors and was shaped by the city's own socio-economic dynamic.

Conversely, Dublin was essential to the expansion of modern sport in Ireland. The importation of English games, the fostering of an associational culture and the adoption of specific sets of values linked to sport, such as masculinity or amateurism, were seen among the elite in various parts of the country in the early nineteenth century. It was, however, in Dublin University that these themes were systematised, developed to the full, and in turn spread to the city's and country's middle classes. There, the blueprint of modern sport in Ireland was established as the university became the nursery of cricket, football, athletics, rowing and hurley in the country. Hand in hand with the pivotal role of Trinity College in adopting and spreading formally organised sport in Ireland was its commercialisation. In the early

nineteenth century, the trend remained essentially associated with elite or field sports such as archery, hunting or horseracing. From the 1860s onwards, and the development of a more affluent middle class in the city, a number of dedicated venues and sports retailers began to commercially harness cricket and athletics, which in turn contributed to their popularity, first in Dublin and then in the rest of Ireland. The localisation of the city, as the seat of the British administration in Ireland and the heart of the transport system (both within the country and between Ireland and Britain), further cemented the position of Dublin as the intermediary between sporting developments then taking place in England and their implementation (mediated or not) in Ireland. The specificity of the city, both a capital in an Irish context and a regional centre within the United Kingdom, ensured that local history was often integrated within, and impacted, the national or imperial experience.

The ambitions of this thesis, as stated in the introduction, were dual. It meant to fill a gap in Irish sport historiography, to assess how modern sport emerged in nineteenth-century Dublin, to what extent it fitted the pattern then unfolding in Britain, what made it singular, and what its role was in creating a distinctive Irish sporting culture. The answers to these questions have been made plain throughout this research and have contributed to enriching our understanding of Ireland's sporting past. The second aim was for it to be a history of Dublin and Dubliners. In that regard, sport and changing leisure habits were crucial to fashioning the nineteenth-century city and its population. Pastimes remained a marker of time, but a secular calendar was substituted for the religious or traditional ones of the early modern period. The Saturday half-holiday entrenched the recreative nature of the weekend and created a weekly cycle of anticipation and excitement. The seasonality of pastimes, observed in field sports in early modern times, became institutionalised through leagues and cup competitions in the nineteenth century. International football matches took place in February, cup finals in March. April marked the start of the cricket, cycling and athletics seasons. The College Races took place in May and so did the Irish tennis and athletics championships. The Dublin Metropolitan regatta was the nautical event of June, followed by the Kingstown regatta in July. Scarcely a day in August went by without an athletic meeting or a tennis tournament. Early September was the time for soccer players to gather again. A month later, rugby players began training and by November

hunting was in full swing. Be it weekly or monthly, the sporting calendar was visible to all and gave rhythm to the lives of many.

Visible to all too was the network of dedicated infrastructures that laced the landscape. The development of suburbs was inextricable from the rise of middle-class disposable income and of new conceptions of living. Sport was integral to it as cricket grounds, football pitches, and tennis pavilions were built alongside rows of terraced houses and public parks and came to define neighbourhoods as much as they were defined by them. Such reciprocity was encapsulated by Rouse:

> The forces that shaped the making of modern Ireland were not grand sweeping narratives with no resonance in the lives of sportsmen and sportswomen. In this respect, divides over politics and identity were important, and so, too, were religion, technological change, the growth of disposable income, globalisation, education, ideas around gender and class, and the conflict, both real and imagined, between "tradition" and "modernity". The push and pull of these forces shaped how people engaged with sport in Ireland and help explain why certain people played certain games in certain places at certain times.[59]

Sport, as highlighted in chapters four and five, was as much determined by the class and gender structure of society as it actively contributed to shaping it. Part of its appeal was the cultural identity that was associated with it and its role in fuelling adhesion to a socio-economic grouping. Whereas such association was largely the preserve of the gentry in the early nineteenth century, in this case with field sports, most classes and subclasses had become defined by their leisure by 1900. In Dublin, soccer or boxing became as symbolic of the working-class lifestyle as factory work and the flat cap. Rugby and hockey were almost indissociable from private schooling, hurling was a rallying point for Munster immigrants working in department stores, and most merchants or professionals considered golf links as mere extension of their business premises. Sport was also a way of asserting one's masculinity. The pervasiveness of nineteenth-century gender segregation ensured that most social activities were sexually determined. Modern sport was enshrined

[59] Rouse, 'The sporting world', p. 312.

in a rhetoric which claimed for itself courage, wholesomeness, strength, and selflessness and was deeply interwoven with manhood. Such a conception was actively promoted by schools, newspapers and workplaces, and left few men insensible of it. Finally, the contribution of sport to fashioning one's sense of place was crucial in later nineteenth-century Dublin. A third of the city's population had been born in rural Ireland or Britain by 1900 and the suburbs were still recent developments with high residency turnover.[60] Attachment to a neighbourhood was thus weak and parochial rivalries which structured the life of many rural communities were almost non-existent. Sport was a means to establish the nucleus of a Dublin identity. This was especially relevant as the rise of nationalism throughout Europe, fuelled by the development of state apparel, education, and military service on the continent, was then redefining the mental boundaries of belonging. Within Ireland, Dublin teams defended the honour of the capital against the province, and this was nowhere more evident than in football, where the popular following was largest, and rivalries were anchored in localities (city for soccer, county for Gaelic games, and province for rugby). In international contests, expressions of civic pride were decoupled and Dubliners cheered to uphold Ireland's hopes.

As Dublin underwent a relative decline throughout the nineteenth century, marked by the loss of status and poor economic and demographic growth, sport offered a unique recreative outlet for its people. Essentially, it gave them pleasure and was an occasion of socialisation. It was also an occasion for them to assert their own personality, their belonging to a larger socio-economic or cultural community, and to present the city in a successful light.

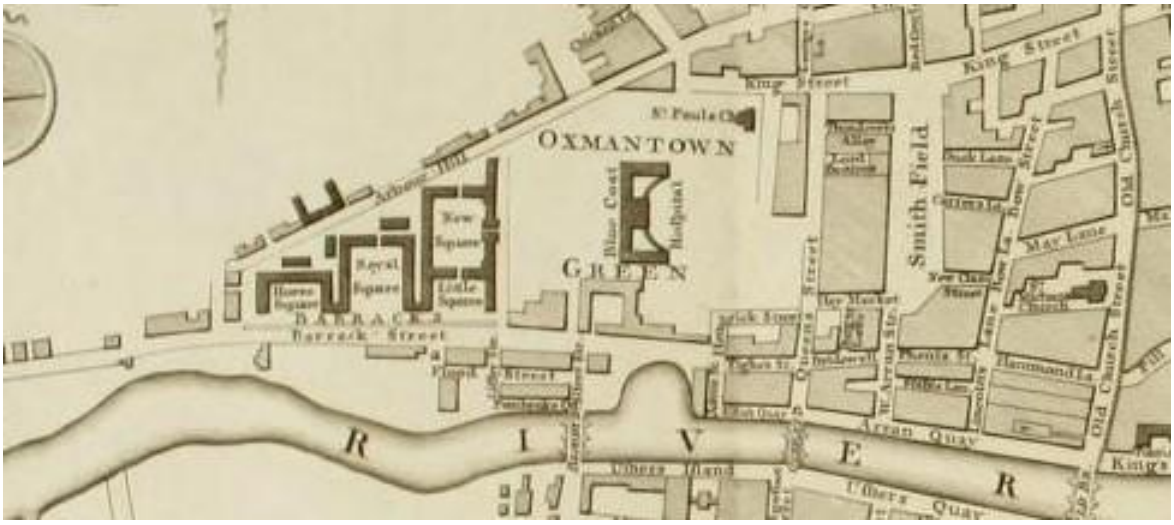
[60] Mona Hearn, 'How Victorian families lived', in Daly *et al*., *Dublin's Victorian houses*, pp 72-4.

Appendix 1: Enclosing of Oxmantown Green, 1756-97.

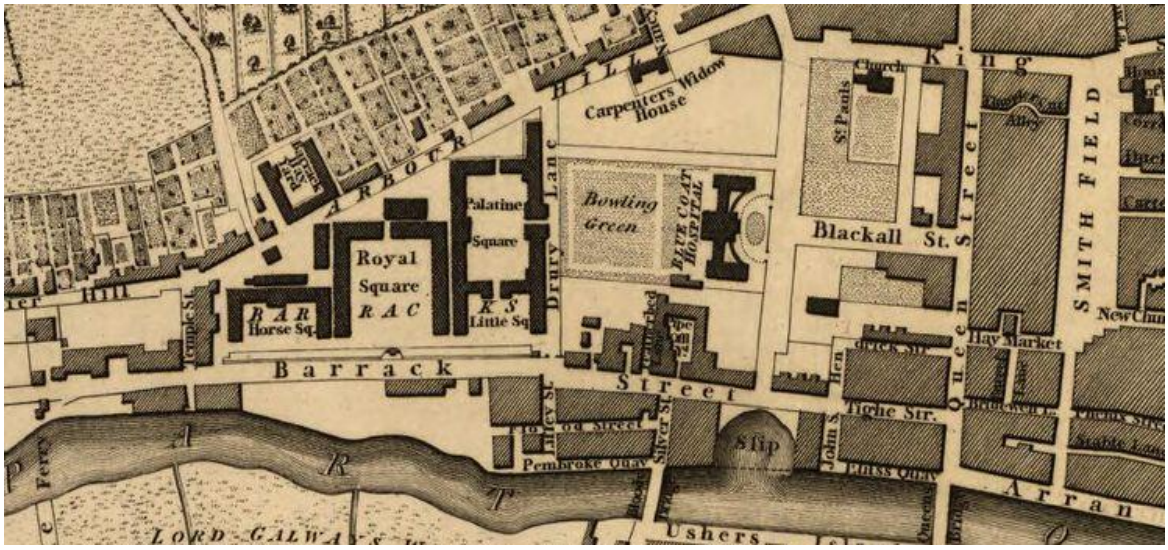
1756



1780



1797



Source: John Rocque, *A plan of the city of Dublin and the environs on the same scale of London, Paris Rome* (1756); John Cash, Robert Pool, and Isaac Taylor, *Views of the most remarkable public buildings, monuments and other edifices in the city of Dublin* (Dublin, 1780); William Fadden, *A plan of the city of Dublin: as surveyed for the use of the divisional justice to which have been added plans of the canal harbour and its junction with the Grand Canal, the Royal Canal, and every projection and alteration to the present time* (1797). All maps available at https://libguides.ucd.ie/findingmaps/mapshistDublin, accessed 10 Aug. 2021.

Appendix 2: Public sporting events on specific holidays, 1850-69.

	New Year's Day	St Patrick's Day	Easter Monday	Whit Monday	St Stephen's Day
1850					Horseracing
1851	Horseracing		Horseracing		
1852		Horseracing	Horseracing		Horseracing*
1853		Horseracing			
1854		Horseracing	Horseracing		
1855					Horseracing
1856			Horseracing	Horseracing	Horseracing
1857		Horseracing	Horseracing		
1858			Horseracing	Horseracing	
1859			Horseracing		
1860			Horseracing	Athletics	
1861			Horseracing Athletics		
1862			Horseracing		Athletics
1863	Athletics*	Athletics	Horseracing Athletics Athletics	Athletics Athletics Athletics	Athletics
1864			Horseracing		Athletics
1865			Horseracing Athletics		Athletics
1866			Horseracing	Pony racing	Pony racing*
1867				Pony racing	
1868			Horseracing		
1869					

Note: The horseracing meeting in 1856 took place on Ascension Thursday and not on Whit Monday. Events marked with an asterisk were advertised beforehand in the press but either postponed or cancelled due to bad weather.

Appendix 3: Athletic meetings at Marlborough and Rugby schools, Cambridge, Dublin and Oxford universities, and the Curragh, 1846-59.

	Oxford University				Marlborough School	
	1852	1856	1857	1858	1855	1856
Sprint	100y×2, 150y	100y×3	100y, 220y	100y, 150y, 200y	150y×3, 250y	150y×2, 250y
440 yards	300y, 440y				400y	400y
Half mile		1		1	half and ¾ mile	Half and ¾ mile
Mile(s)		1m	1m	1m	1m	1m
Sprint hurdle	1	120y, 440y	100y, 300y	120y, 440y	100y, 200y, 300y×2	100y, 200y×2, 300y
Distance hurdle						
Long jump		1	1	1	1	1
High jump		1	1	1	1	1
Hop, step and jump						
Dropping football					1	
Throwing cricket ball			1	1	1	1
Weight throwing		20lb		20lb		
Hammer throwing		1	1	1		
Sack, cigar races…	1	2		2		
Donkey race	1	1		1		1
Others		Mile walk	Consolation race		Consolation race	Consolation race
Total	8	15	10	15	17	16

	Cambridge University			Rugby School		
	1857	1857	1858	1852	1853	1854
Sprint	100y	100y	100y	100y, 200y×3	100y×2, 200y×3	100y, 200y×3
440 yards	1	1	1	1	1	1
Half mile	1	1				
Mile(s)	1m	1m, 2m	1m	1m	1m	1m
Sprint hurdle	250y, scurry	200y	150y	200y×2, 400y	200y×2	200y×2
Distance hurdle						
Long jump	1	1	1		Wide jump	
High jump	1	2	1	2 and 1 vaulting	3 and 1 vaulting	3 and 1 vaulting
Hop, step and jump					1	
Dropping football						
Throwing cricket ball	1	1	1	1	1	1 and 1 wicket throw
Weight throwing	14lb	28lb	14lb			
Hammer throwing						
Sack, cigar races…					2	
Donkey race	1					
Others						
Total	11	11	8	13	18	14

	Curragh	Dublin University			
	1856	1846	1857	1858	1859
Sprint	100y, 200y			150y	150y
440 yards		400y × 2	1	1	1
Half mile	2				
Mile(s)				3 miles	3 miles
Sprint hurdle	200y	400y	440y	440y and 1 hurdle race	440y and 1 hurdle race
Distance hurdle			650y	600y	600y
Long jump	1	1	1	1	1
High jump	1	1	1	2	1
Hop, step and jump			1		
Dropping football			1	1	1
Throwing cricket ball	1		1	1	1
Weight throwing	56lb		42lb	28lb and 42lb	42lb
Hammer throwing	1				
Sack, cigar races…	2		1	1	1
Donkey race					
Others	2 miles marching	Walking match			
Total	13	6	10	14	12

Note: Modern athletic meetings developed in the 1850s in English regiments, public schools and universities. Spread over a day or two, they presented a varied programme mixing track and field events. Dublin University followed this model when they inaugurated their 1857 annual sports. The Irish tradition of throwing heavier weights and jumping is seen from the early programmes.

Appendix 4: Hurley clubs in Dublin, 1875-85.

	75/6	76/7	77/8	78/9	79/80	80/1	81/2	82/3	83/4	84/5
Dublin University	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
High School			X		X	X	X	X	X	X
King's Hospital					X	X	X	X	X	X
Rathmines School			X							
Adelaide Hall School				X						
Santry School				X						
Merchant Taylor's School							X			
Lansdowne			X	X	X					
Monkstown		X								
Sandymount				X	X					
Tritonville				X	X					
Morehampton				X						
Havelock				X						
Terenure					X	X				
Leinster							X	X		
Phoenix							X	X		
Victoria							X			
Corsair							X			
Royal Bank			X	X	X	X	X			

National Bank			X							
Civil Service									X	
Dublin YMCA						X				
Dublin Rovers									X	
Total clubs	1	2	6	9	8	6	9	5	4	2

Note: The Dublin University Hurley Club existed from the 1860s. After the 1884/5 season, no record of any hurley club has been found.

Appendix 5: Principal sports organisations in late nineteenth century Ireland.

Sport	Institution	Place	Creation	Type of power
Flat racing	Turf Club	Curragh	1755	Formal
Cricket	Marylebone CC	England	1787	Informal
Coursing	National Coursing Club	England	1858	Formal
Fox hunting	Irish fox-hunting committee	Ireland	1859	Informal
Archery	Irish National Archery Club ICAC	Dublin	1860 1875	Informal
Rifle shooting	Irish Rifle Association	Dublin	1867	Formal
Swimming	Amateur Swimming Association Irish Amateur Swimming Association	England Ireland	1869 1893	Formal
Rowing	Dublin Metropolitan Regatta Irish Amateur Rowing Association	Dublin	1869 1884	Informal Formal
Steeplechasing	Irish National Hunt Steeplechase Committee	Curragh	1870	Formal

Athletics	ICAC GAA IAAA	Dublin Ireland Dublin	1872 1884 1885	Informal Formal Formal
Polo	All-Ireland Polo Club	Dublin	1873	Informal
Croquet	ICAC	Dublin	1874	Informal
Yachting	Yacht Racing Association	England	1875	Formal
Rugby	Irish Football Union	Dublin	1875	Formal
Tennis	Fitzwilliam LTC	Dublin	1877	Informal
Association football	Irish Football Association	Belfast	1880	Formal
Cycling	Irish Cycling Association	Dublin	1882	Formal
Hurley	Irish Hurley Union	Dublin	1882	Formal
Gaelic football - Hurling	GAA	Ireland	1884	Formal
Golf	Golfing Union of Ireland	Belfast	1891	Formal

Note: Formal here means that the institution had a pro-active national legislative and judicary role, as well as promoting the sport through competitions. Informal qualifies the insitutions that partly fullfilled these functions. For example, the Dublin Metropolitan Regatta had precise rules for amateur rowing and held an annual competition but did not seek a national status. The ICAC did not have for primary function to legislate on athletics while the MCC did not organise cricket competitons. Only the date of establishment has been recorded and several organisations merely lasted a few years.

Appendix 6: Sources of the database.

Minutes and archives:

Minutes of the Clontarf FC, 1895-1902

GAA Archives, Minutes of the County Dublin Committee, 1896-1902

Newspapers:

Dublin Daily Express

Dublin Daily Nation

Dublin Evening Mail

Dublin Evening Telegraph

Dublin Weekly Nation

Evening Herald

Flag of Ireland

Freeman's Journal

Irish Daily Independent

Irish Sportsman

Irish Times

Saunders' News-Letter

Sport

Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail

Weekly Irish Times

Wicklow People

Wicklow News-Letter and County Advertiser

Secondary sources:

Branigan, Dominic: *Clonliffe Harriers Athletic Club, 1886-2013.*

C.L.G. Parnell Centenary Year 1993.

De Búrca, Marcus: *One hundred years of Faughs Hurling.*

Nolan, William (ed): *The Gaelic Athletic Association in Dublin, 1884-2000.*

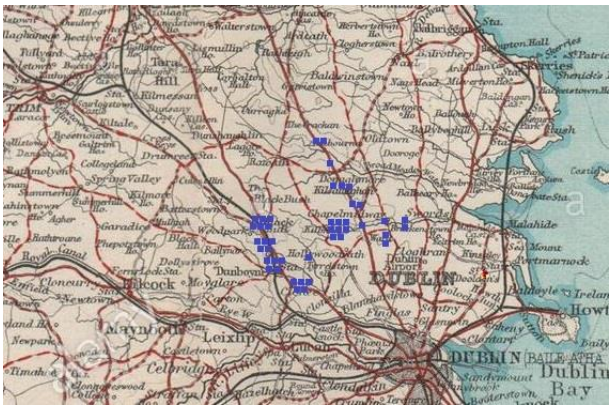
Vaughan, D. J.: *A century of Gaelic games: Liffey Gaels 1884-1984.*

Wren, Jimmy: *Saint Laurence O'Toole G.A.C. 1901-2001 centenary history.*

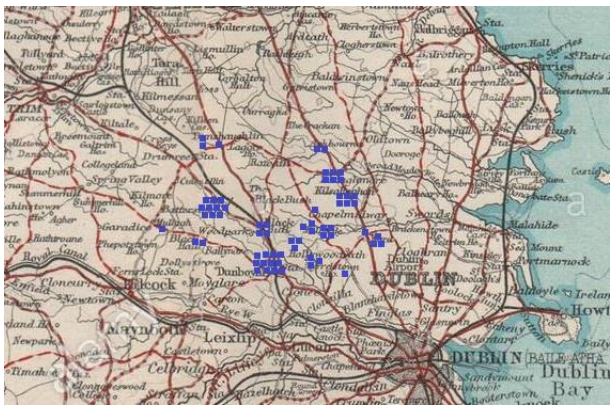
Wynne, Tom: *Ninety years of Irish Hockey Union.*

Appendix 7: Meeting places of the Ward Union Hunt, 1850-1910.

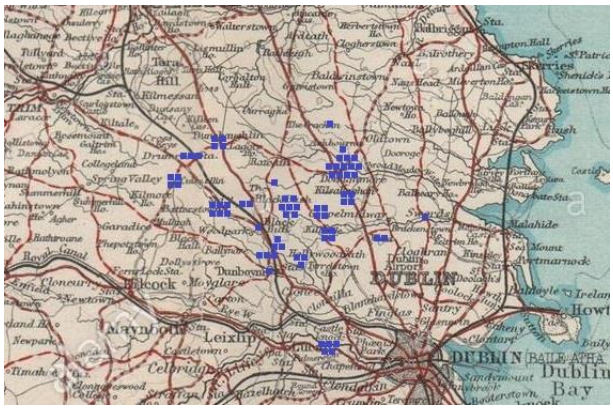
1849/50



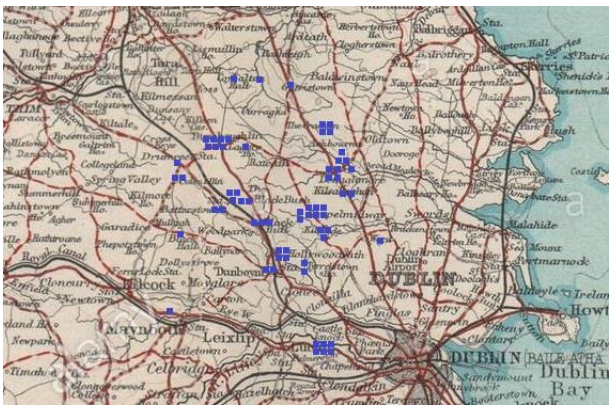
1869/70



1889/90



1909/10



Appendix 8: Coursing meetings in Dublin, 1889-1901.

	89/0	90/1	91/2	92/3	93/4	94/5	95/6	96/7	97/8	98/9	99/0	00/1
Greyhound	-	-	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	-	1	2
Terrier	4	12	20	26	26	24	10	4	4	-	-	-
Total	4	12	22	28	29	27	13	7	7	0	1	2

Phoenix Park / Ashtown	1892-8	45
Inchicore	1890-4	26
Stillorgan / Murphystown (greyhound)	1891-1901	22
Blackrock / Monkstown av.	1892-6	15
Clonturk Park	1891-6	14
Goatstown	1891-3	8
Clonskeagh / Benburb GAA	1890-2	5
Glasthule / Circus field	1894-5	4
Clontarf / Owen Roe O'Neills GAA	1891-2	2
Jones's Rd grounds	1892-5	2
Milltown / Windy Harbour	1897-8	2
Ranelagh / Cullenswood	1889-92	2
Santry	1889-90	2
Castleknock	1889-90	1
Drumcondra / the Thatch	1892-3	1
Unidentified		1
Total		152

Appendix 9: Horseracing meetings in Dublin, 1889-1901.

Turf Club - military	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01
Fairyhouse	3	3	3	1	1	1	3	2	4	2	1	1	1
Baldoyle	3	4	5	4	6	6	4	6	4	5	4	4	5
Leopardstown	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Total	9	10	13	10	12	12	12	13	13	12	10	10	11

Pony – Irish Racing Association rules	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01
Clonturk Park	2	1	1										
Inchicore	1	3	3	4	11	1							
Jones's Rd				2	6		7	11	13	8			
Ashtown					3			6	13	17	27	25	9
Dundrum					6		2						
Rathfarnham										10	18	7	
Total	3	4	4	6	26	1	9	17	26	35	45	32	9

Trotting	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01
Ashtown				2	5	10	9	3	4		1		
Jones's Rd							1						
Total				2	5	10	10	3	4		1		

Note: Baldoyle and Leopardstown meetings were usually held over two days.

Appendix 10: Identified men involved in dog, cock, and prize fights, 1875-1904.

Dogfights

Name	Occupation	Address	place of fight
-	Butcher	Bray	7th lock
-	-	Thomas St	
Francis Carbery	Painter	Granby lane	Phibsborough
Joseph Caffrey	Labourer	Murtagh's Mill	
James Crowley	Miller	Harold's Cross	
Michael Doyle	Bricklayer	Dorset St	
Laurence Molloy	-	Maguiness Place	Rathfarnham
James Byrne	-	Whitehall	
James Keogh	Labourer	Donnybrook	
William Byrne	-	Donnybrook	
Patrick Byrne	-	Donnybrook	
John Byrne	Labourer	James St	North Anne St
John Meagher	Labourer	Winetavern St	
Michael Reilly	Labourer	Bulls Lane	
Donegan	Labourer	Halston St	Anne St
William McGrane	-	Cole's lane	Kilmore
John Maguire	Labourer	Up. Gloucester Pl	
William Fitzgerald	Labourer	Sir Rogerson's Qu.	

Cockfights

Bernard Walsh	shop assistant	North Circular Rd	Tallaght
William Noud	car proprietor	Townsend St	
Edward Downey	-	Bow St	
Matthew Harford	Cooper	Prussia St	Dunsink
Andrew Conway	farm assistant	Co. Kildare	
Thomas Marshall	Shoemaker	East Essex St	Phoenix Park

Prize-fights

James Keogh	labourer	Donnybrook	7th lock
Boland	-	William St	
Jack Boylan	butcher boy	Hanover St	Clonsilla
John Murray	labourer	-	North Strand
William Connolly	labourer	-	
-	dairyman	-	Harold's Cross
Francis Hart	paviour	Riddel row	Ballymun
John Bellew	-	Wentworth place	
Joseph Rafferty	-	Gt Britain St	
William Willis	-	East Wall	

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