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**Cricket in Victorian Ireland 1848 - 1878:  
a social history**

Sean Reid

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in  
partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

September 2014

## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates the playing of cricket in Ireland in the period 1848 – 1878. This work makes an original contribution to knowledge in the Irish sporting, social and wider cricketing history canon as it is the first academic study of the history of cricket in nineteenth-century Ireland nationally. It will suggest cricket to be Ireland's most popular reported team sport in the mid-nineteenth century.

The thesis contains four key central themes examining the rise and then beginning subsequent decline of Irish cricket. These four driving questions examine: who played the game; how it was played in terms of facilitation and encouragement; where the game was played geographically and in terms of formations such as in clubs, schools and workplaces; and why cricket was played in these years. Cricket's popularity in this investigation peaks in the mid-1870s before beginning to decline, and attention will be paid to examine why cricket rose and then began to fall.

Cricket was played by all male socio-economic sections of society, by Protestants and Catholics, Unionists and nationalists. Women were involved in cricket as spectators and as an integral part of festivities, but this participation stayed beyond the boundary. Cricket was played due to the influence and leadership of political leaders, the wealthiest in society, businesses and businessmen, workplaces, leading administrative individuals, Catholic and Protestant churches and transport companies. Patronage was a key part of the rise of the sport metaphorically and through provision. No evidence has been found to support the idea of cricket being a deliberate and overt imperial implantation or enterprise. Cricket was played across the whole of Ireland geographically, in both urban and rural areas and in all four provinces, although the game was more reported in the eastern side of the island than the western. Nonetheless, cricket was played nationally and could even be called the national game. Cricket was played for a mixture of boredom and lack of alternative recreations, concerns about and desires to be healthy, the nobility and manliness of the game that would reflect well on those playing, the chance to establish local pride and the natural diffusion of a popular recreation from the mainland. Cricket established no clearly distinguishing characteristic as being English or British, and thus the game was supported by nationalistic organisations.

The beginning decline of cricket was due to internal structural problems in tandem with emerging external threats such as the growth of other sports – problems that had been predicted and forewarned from the mid-1860s, dismissing the idea of the game's decline being due to the Gaelic revival led by the GAA from the 1880s. Cricket had a broad base but shallow roots that depended on local generosity that was not sustainable in the long term.

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## Abbreviations

Co: County

FA: Football Association (of England)

GAA: Gaelic Athletic Association

Handbook: *Handbook of Cricket in Ireland* cricketing almanac

Hon. Sec.: Honorary Secretary of a cricket club – the lead administrator

ICAC: Irish Champion Athletic Club

IFA: Irish Football Association for soccer

IFU: Irish Football Union (forerunner of the IRFU)

IRFU: Irish Rugby Football Union

IZ: I Zingari, an Old Harrovian cricket team

JP: Justice of the Peace

MCC: Marylebone Cricket Club

MP: Member of Parliament of the United Kingdom

NICC: North of Ireland Cricket Club

RFU: Rugby Football Union (of England)

RIC: Royal Irish Constabulary (the police force of Ireland from 1836 although only becoming ‘Royal’ in 1867)

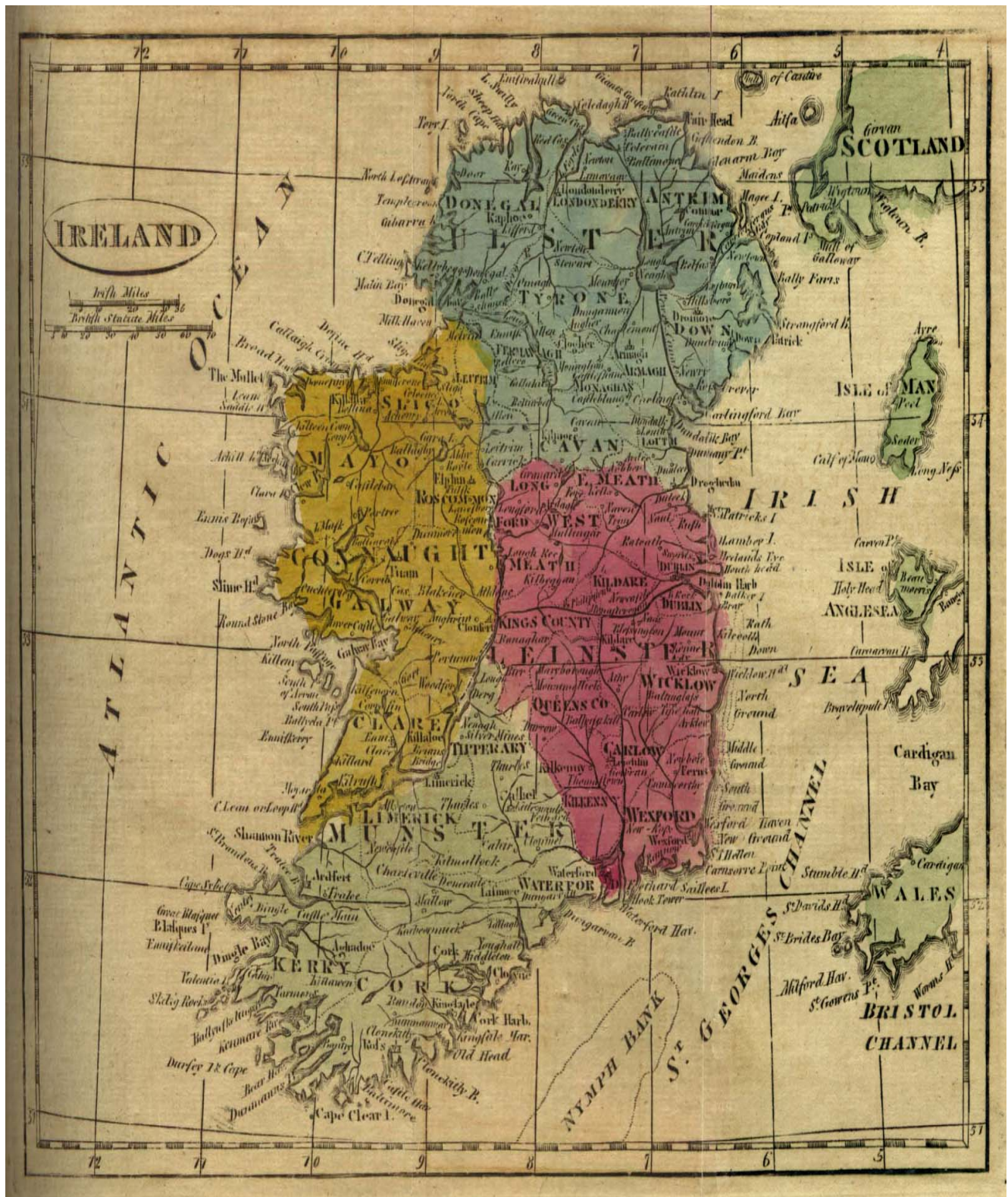
## Map of Ireland 1660-1800<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Sourced from Sir A.W. Ward, G.W. Prothero, Sir S.M. Leathes and E.A. Benians (eds), 'Ireland 1660-1800' in *The Cambridge Modern History Atlas* (Cambridge University Press, London, 1912), Map 47. Accessed from the University of Texas Libraries via [https://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/ward\\_1912/ireland\\_1660.jpg](https://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/ward_1912/ireland_1660.jpg) on 24 June 2014 at 09.36.



## Map of Ireland 1808<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Sourced from R. Brookes (revised by W. Guthrie and E. Jones), 'Ireland 1808' in *The General Gazetteer eighth edition* (P. Wogan, Dublin, 1808). Accessed via The University of Texas Libraries via <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/ireland.html> on 3 September 2014 at 22.05.

## **Introduction**

There is a story to be told about the history of cricket in Ireland in the nineteenth century, a thought that might seem fanciful to most, even ludicrous to some. How could Ireland, a nation which has struggled for centuries in political, military and cultural conflict with its dominant neighbour, ever have embraced that most stereotypically English of games? Perhaps it is this basic assumption, which most have wrongly made, that has produced a vacuum of serious historical research into cricket in Ireland, as so many presume that such a simplistic narrative of Irish history would forbid the Irish embracing such forms of later British imperial identity.

Yet thoughts of an Irish rejection of cricket are completely inaccurate. Cricket was arguably Ireland's premier game in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. There are many reasons for this prominence, but it should be noted early that there is little evidence to suggest the Irish viewing cricket as an English game; this would help explain how the game could become so popular and be supported by Irish nationalists. This hardening link of cricket with English identity came in the late nineteenth century in England itself.

The validity of constructing a social history of one sport in Ireland for academic investigation would seem obvious to the author, but for the uninitiated establishing a general remit seems appropriate. The history of sport has sometimes been unfairly overlooked or dismissed whilst the history of music, art and literature have enjoyed considerable attention and in many universities the History of Art is an academic discipline in its own right. This seems remiss, as sport was often more accessible to the everyday citizen than such other leisure pursuits – perhaps those seen as more ‘cultured’ - which have been investigated in more detail whilst these pursuits attracted a potentially more elitist support base. Richard Holt celebrated the sporting history genre by noting how an investigation of sport in Britain is a cultural, political, social and economic enterprise;<sup>3</sup> this thesis follows in this vein, and is not a blow-by-blow account of scorecards and number of wickets taken, delving into the more interesting questions of who, where, why and how the game was played in Ireland. In such a study, the words of Harold Perkin seem apt; Perkin having noted that ‘the history of societies is more widely reflected in the way they spend their leisure than in

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<sup>3</sup> R. Holt, *Sport and the British – A Modern History* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992), p.3.

their work or politics.’<sup>4</sup> More poetically, Richard McElligott has recently surmised that sport, like a body of water, reflects the physical, political and socio-economic world around it<sup>5</sup> whilst Jeff Hill and Jack Williams analogised sport as a ‘window’ through which to examine other social phenomena.<sup>6</sup> Thus the history of cricket in Ireland will reflect not just a history of the game, but a social history of Ireland within which the sport was located examining key ideas such as class, gender, nationalism and community relationships. This is a history of Ireland beyond the boundary, and the methodology employed is of the traditional historical mould.

### **A brief and select historiography of Ireland in the nineteenth century**

It seems right to begin by contextualising the investigation of cricket by examining a few key genres and topics both of the time itself and subsequent writings on areas connected to this period to expose both reality and perception. The thesis is written for readers assuming a basic understanding of Ireland in the nineteenth century which had been officially embraced as part of the United Kingdom as part of the Acts of Union of 1801.

In *Inventing Ireland*, Declan Kiberd began with a rhetorical question about who invented Ireland.<sup>7</sup> In such proximity to the mainland, and with a turbulent relationship containing conquest and eventual independence, this relationship has naturally been defined in no small way by Ireland’s relationship with the rest of Britain, Kiberd arguing that the mainland needed Ireland as much to define itself as vice-versa.<sup>8</sup> Richard Comerford developed this theme, noting how almost every Irish sport has been touched by nationality and thus they have contributed in different ways to the invention of the Irish nation.<sup>9</sup> Comerford, in echoing Kiberd, stated that nations are invented, not magically, but by focusing on certain things or discarding others,<sup>10</sup> the reality being that for cricket this has meant being pitched as the antihero to the emergent native Irish games of the 1880s and beyond.

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<sup>4</sup> N. Tranter, *Sport, economy and society in Britain 1750-1914* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998), p.94.

<sup>5</sup> R. McElligott, *Forging a Kingdom: the GAA in Kerry 1884 – 1934* (The Collins Press, Cork, 2013), p.8.

<sup>6</sup> J. Hill and J. Williams, ‘Introduction’ in J. Hill and J. Williams (eds), *Sport and identity in the North of England* (Keele University Press, Keele, 1996), p.3.

<sup>7</sup> D. Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (Jonathan Cape, London, 1995), p.1.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>9</sup> R.V. Comerford, *Inventing the Nation: Ireland* (Hodder Arnold, London, 2003), p.235.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.2.

### *The dominance of the GAA in Irish sporting history writing*

Whilst the Gaelic Athletic Association did not have a significant impact on the retraction of cricket in the late 1870s as it had not yet formed, the Association has had an important impact on the perception of cricket in Ireland. Thus whilst it might seem incongruous to begin by examining the GAA's history first, it is nonetheless necessary.

The historiography of sport in Ireland, but particularly in the nineteenth century, contains three dominant themes: a lack of work in general; the authorship of many existing books coming from a mainly amateur or partial base – being pieces by ‘admirers;’<sup>11</sup> and finally that much of the work that has been written has focused on the emergence and celebration of GAA games to the seeming oblivion of other leisure and sporting pursuits. Whilst the history of sport in Britain now has many scholastic and academically credible works in a tradition going back over twenty years, on the whole Irish writings on sport, to paraphrase James Kelly, are still in their infancies.<sup>12</sup>

Within the narrative of the history of sport in Ireland one institution looms large – that of the Gaelic Athletic Association, established in 1884 to resurrect ‘traditional’ Irish games. Some historians like Marcus de Burca have sought to construct an unbroken lineage of games across 2,000 years, hopping from century to century to impress an idea of the longevity and immovability of Irish games from the Irish population.<sup>13</sup> Such work is simply unbelievable, as intimating that pre-modern games with sticks somehow constituted hurling is tenuous. Linked to this idea of unassailable antiquity, the playing of GAA sports has been linked to nationalism, as though the oppressed and downtrodden Irishman had no sporting outlet in the years before 1884. Cormac Moore, even as late as 2012, has claimed that following the founding of the GAA ‘Nationalists were now offered the first opportunity to participate in sports in Ireland’ as previously sporting bodies had ‘kept their doors firmly shut to people of a nationalist outlook.’<sup>14</sup>

Of late such stereotypical views about the historicity and the exclusivity of the nationalism of GAA games have been increasingly challenged. In terms of historicity, one of the pre-eminent historians of sport in Ireland, Mike Cronin, has noted how

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<sup>11</sup> J. Kelly, *Sport in Ireland 1600 – 1840* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2014), p.13.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13.

<sup>13</sup> M. de Burca, *The GAA – A History* (Cumann Luthchleas Gael, Dublin, 1980), pp.1-6.

<sup>14</sup> C. Moore, *The GAA v Douglas Hyde: the removal of Ireland's first President as GAA patron* (The Collins Press, Cork, 2012), p.17.



certain historians and national institutions in Ireland attempted ‘to give the games a clear linear history from Cú Chulain to Michael Cusack... most serious historians would recognize that such work is driven by a political, rather than historical, agenda’ with Cronin playing down these lineage claims.<sup>15</sup> Liam O’Callaghan was even more scathing in his excellent recent history of rugby in Munster.<sup>16</sup> Some suggest that GAA games were ‘invented’ in the 1870s to form a new masculine identity<sup>17</sup> whilst others would suggest they were ‘reinvented and formalized’<sup>18</sup> from previous incarcerations of games in centuries before. Probably the most fitting summary can be gained from Eric Hobsbawm, who noted that sometimes new traditions are invented, and sometimes they are ‘grafted’ onto old ones,<sup>19</sup> a suggestion that fits snugly with the foundation of the GAA.

The perception of the GAA as a bastion of nationalism is well-versed. Mike Cronin exemplifies this view, saying ‘it effectively caused the failure of British colonialism in the sporting arena.’<sup>20</sup> Yet such a view is simplistic, assuming that other sports pre-1884 did not hold any cachet as outlets for nationalism and could not be enjoyed by those with nationalistic political views. Peter Gray has challenged this idea, saying that ‘The nationalisation of Irish sport pre-dated the emergence of the GAA’ before highlighting how nationalism was evident in rowing, archery and cricket pre-1884.<sup>21</sup> Cronin’s view also subscribes to the view that there was an intentional policy of British cultural and sporting imperialism in Ireland, of which this author has found no evidence, and that Irish people viewed games originating in Britain as imperial or alien. Of course, British politicians, civil servants, businessmen, clergymen, landlords, military men and many others brought games they had played on the mainland with them, but the idea that this formed an explicit colonial venture is misplaced and no evidence can be found for such theories. Privately these men might have held these ideas, but if they did they did not utter or record them openly in any

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<sup>15</sup> M. Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland – Gaelic games, soccer and Irish identity since 1884* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 1999), pp.73-74.

<sup>16</sup> L. O’Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster: a social and cultural history* (Cork University Press, Cork, 2011), p.18.

<sup>17</sup> P.F. McDevitt, *May The Best Man Win – Sport, Masculinity and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004), p.16.

<sup>18</sup> Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland*, p.70.

<sup>19</sup> E. Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction: inventing traditions’ in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013), p.1 and p.6.

<sup>20</sup> Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland*, p.114.

<sup>21</sup> P. Gray, ‘Introduction: Victoria’s Ireland? Irishness and Britishness, 1837 – 1901’ in P. Gray (ed), *Victoria’s Ireland? Irishness and Britishness, 1837 – 1901* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2004), p.11.



of the sources consulted. The overwhelmingly most likely reason for the carrying of these games out of Britain was because these men enjoyed playing them.

It is also hugely ironic that whenever Irish people have gone overseas and brought their indigenous pastimes with them that they are celebrated and commended: this was no more so than in the 1888 ‘Gaelic American Invasion’ tour by the GAA which saw 50 top GAA athletes and hurlers go to America to spread GAA games and raise money. This was a far more deliberate and conscious implantation than was ever carried out in Ireland by any British sporting body, on a tour that saw a successful impregnation of GAA games into north-eastern America.<sup>22</sup> That such ventures are seen as romantic and benign, whilst the migration of British norms in the nineteenth century to Ireland carry undertones of suspicion and slyness, is rank historical hypocrisy.

Yet whatever might be said about the writings on the GAA, it is still clear that even a cultural powerhouse like this has received only scant attention. Cronin, Duncan and Rouse have highlighted how, even with all its history and symbolism, the GAA has only received ‘piecemeal attention’ and even this has been mainly with a political focus.<sup>23</sup> Richard McElligott tried to correct this recently in writing a monograph on the history of the GAA in County Kerry, yet at his time of writing in 2013, there were only two county-specific, exclusively-GAA books in publication.<sup>24</sup>

### *The representation of other sports in Ireland*

Due to the dominance of the GAA in historical writings and the tinge that only they could provide nationalism in Irish sport, much has been said to denigrate, simplify and distort the reality of other sporting histories in the nineteenth century. Anything vaguely attached to Britain has been termed ‘Unionist,’ ‘Protestant,’ ‘loyalist,’ ‘imperial,’ ‘colonial,’ ‘elitist’ and so on. It seems implausible to many of the previous historians of Irish sport that such sports could be anything but these things, all the while failing to substantiate their claims with any concrete and systematic evidence.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> M. Cronin, M. Duncan and P. Rouse, *The GAA: a people’s history* (The Collins Press, Cork, 2009), pp.345-349.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xv.

<sup>24</sup> McElligott, *Forging a Kingdom*, p.382.

<sup>25</sup> For examples of such writings, please see A. Bairner, ‘Civic and ethnic nationalism in the Celtic version of Irish sport’ in G. Jarvie (ed), *Sport in the making of Celtic cultures* (Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1999), p.14 and Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland*, p.114.

These slurs have been directed not just at cricket but other sports like rugby and soccer. Liam O'Callaghan's work has bemoaned the accusation of rugby as a middle-class game that has not been more researched to either prove or disprove this theory, again highlighting the paucity of research on Irish sport in the nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup> Rugby has been 'lumped together' with other sports of British birth as some type of cultural imperialism, rescued by the GAA, which 'has not been corroborated by detailed academic research.'<sup>27</sup> A similar swipe sees O'Callaghan attacking the perceived Unionist 'bent' of participants as 'more fluid and localised than the propagandized perception promoted by the GAA allowed.'<sup>28</sup>

Another pre-eminent historian of Irish sporting history, Neal Garnham, has decried the implication by nationalists in the late 1800s of soccer as a Protestant and a Unionist game as 'a massive over-simplification of the situation.'<sup>29</sup> As a sport with roots outside of Ireland, soccer was always liable to be called Unionist and Protestant but the game was supported by men of both religions and political views.<sup>30</sup>

Richard Comerford broadened this theme, highlighting how tennis and cricket, as identified in Archbishop Croke's GAA acceptance letter, were no more foreign than tea, trains or rosary beads. Yet these sports became the comparative and alien enemy of this invention of nationalism, of which tennis was subsequently dropped to be replaced with the new chimeras of soccer and rugby.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, one need only look at Archbishop Croke's acceptance letter as a patron of the GAA, where he accepted the merits of English games, to undermine the anti-English espousal many would imagine, when he stated 'such foreign and fantastic field sports as lawn tennis, polo, croquet, cricket and the like – [are] very excellent I believe, and health-giving exercises in their way.'<sup>32</sup> This is hardly the tub-thumping, anti-English rant many would have conceived from the patron of the GAA.

Added to the excellent works of the last ten years like that of O'Callaghan and Garnham are other monographs like Brian Griffin's superb production on cycling in

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<sup>26</sup> O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, p.241.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.242.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.177.

<sup>29</sup> N. Garnham, *Association football and society in pre-partition Ireland* (Ulster Historical Foundation, Belfast, 2004), p.135.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.148.

<sup>31</sup> Comerford, *Inventing the Nation: Ireland*, p.220.

<sup>32</sup> *Dr Croke's Letter to Mr. Michael Cusack, Hon. Sec. of the Gaelic Athletic Association, December 18, 1884*, published in *The Nation* newspaper, 27 December, 1884.

Victorian Ireland<sup>33</sup> and the recent work of James Kelly in examining sport in Ireland before the Famine.<sup>34</sup> Yet the gap still remains for a national cricketing history in Ireland.

*A very brief historiography of cricket on the mainland*

The canon of English writing about the game on the mainland and its later colonial links is a well-populated library, yet even within such a sweeping genre there are significant gaps in understanding. Much literature has focused on the early initial history of cricket, the late Victorian period's eulogisation of the game and then the spread of colonial imagery within the Empire. With such a macro-level focus, much of the local and social history of the game on the mainland has gone unnoticed, which the works of Ian Clarke on Cornwall, Rob Light on the West Riding of Yorkshire, Dennis O'Keefe on Calderdale and its links to the Church and Duncan Stone's on Surrey have all investigated within the last decade on previously-untouched areas of the social history of nineteenth-century cricket. For example, Stone's work has shown that cup competitions and leagues were a significant feature of southern cricket from the early 1880s and prior to World War One it appears a good deal of social unity existed cross-class in opposition to the friendly, stratified popular image.<sup>35</sup> There is still much work to be done even on the English game at a local level, an enterprise that was aided through the 2012 publication by Peter Davies with Rob Light of *Cricket and community in England: 1800 to the present day*.<sup>36</sup> It is clear that much more work is needed at local levels to see why and how everyday citizens were playing cricket beyond the large spectacle matches.

Moving away from England, there have been some excellent histories of the game produced on cricket in Wales and Scotland in the nineteenth century.<sup>37</sup> There is a certain irony in that some of the most fertile grounds for investigating the history of cricket are to be found in the immediate neighbours to England in the British Isles. In

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<sup>33</sup> B. Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland* (Nonsuch Publishing, Dublin, 2006).

<sup>34</sup> J. Kelly, *Sport in Ireland 1600 – 1840* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2014).

<sup>35</sup> D. Stone, "'It's all friendly down there': the Club Cricket Conference, amateurism and the cultural meaning of cricket in the South of England' in *Sport in Society*, Vol. 15, No.2 (March 2012), p.198.

<sup>36</sup> P. Davies with R. Light, *Cricket and community in England: 1800 to the present day* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2012).

<sup>37</sup> Andrew Hignell has produced much work on cricket in Wales, whilst David Potter and John Burnett have generated useful pieces on Scottish cricket.

light of the continuing interest and research in the game, as Davies and Light have said, there has never been a better time to investigate the social history of cricket.<sup>38</sup>

### *The representation of cricket in Ireland*

Cricket has been an easier target for Irish nationalists and writers to attack than other 'British' sports, a label that has stuck in numerous publications and in some of the most pre-eminent writings of not just Irish sporting history writings but also within major studies of the game. To give a flavour of these, cricket has been seen as: innately bound up from the beginning with politics and British rule in Ireland as a game whose 'foreignness' could never be forgotten;<sup>39</sup> an English game that was regionalised, only having a specific social following being 'underpinned' by the British Army and Anglo-Irish elite;<sup>40</sup> a 'badge of Englishness' in Ireland in the nineteenth century<sup>41</sup> or the pursuit of Anglophiles<sup>42</sup> which experienced a rejection that was 'explicitly political.'<sup>43</sup> Even in a historiographical work published this year (2014) on nineteenth-century Ireland, no mention was made to cricket whilst a nod was given to croquet, and so research of the last decade into the game has still not filtered up or down to academia or the public.<sup>44</sup> Within this background, ungrounded assertions about cricket have become facts and myths have attained reality.

One of the accusations that has been popularly bandied around was that cricket in Ireland was an English possession, association and 'badge.' This thesis will argue that no such clear identification can be established: at worst, there was confusion about cricket, sometimes being labelled as British, and at other times as Irish. Most positively, one could argue that cricket took on strong Irish identification, being its own vehicle for nationalism and Irish pride. The support of the major nationalistic newspaper publications under investigation, teams called Home Rule and Young Ireland as well as the playing of cricket by prominent GAA members would bear this

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<sup>38</sup> Davies with Light, *Cricket and community in England*, p.167.

<sup>39</sup> J. Sugden and A. Bairner, *Sport, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland* (Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1993), p.48 and p.51.

<sup>40</sup> Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland*, p.76 and p.78.

<sup>41</sup> D. Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket* (Aurum Press, London, 2003), p.135.

<sup>42</sup> D. Birley, *Sport and the making of modern Britain* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2001), pp.277-278.

<sup>43</sup> M. Marqusee, *Anyone But England – An Outsider's Look at English Cricket* (Aurum, London, 1998), p.242.

<sup>44</sup> See H. Larkin, *A history of Ireland, 1800 – 1922: theatres of disorder?* (Anthem Press, London, 2014), whose paragraph on leisure makes no mention of cricket, p.126.

out. For example one of the founders of the GAA, Michael Cusack, believed that there was no better game for boys than cricket, and that every town and village in Ireland should have a cricket field.<sup>45</sup>

The accusation that cricket was eternally an English game on the face of it is one that is popular, for the game did come to be a symbol of Empire and England. Yet this clear demarcation of the game as English only really intensified in the late Victorian period,<sup>46</sup> and as Jack Williams has shown, the civilizing force of cricket for use in the colonies emerged most strongly in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century.<sup>47</sup> Williams has also noted it was between the two world wars that cricket became a metaphor for Englishness.<sup>48</sup> As Mike Marqusee would best summarise, this was when the ‘myth’ of the village green was established.<sup>49</sup> These periods of strongest and enduring establishment of cricket and Englishness obviously came after the years of this investigation of 1848 – 1878, and explain how the game could have been seen as less clearly identifiable with the mainland than most have suggested. That the ‘myth’ relating to Irish cricket has been negative in being seen as coercive, sinister, disloyal or unpatriotic - the Jekyll to the GAA’s Mr Hyde - is both an oversight and unfair. It is possibly one of the most enduring falsehoods in Irish history.

### *The historiography of cricket in Ireland*

The most obvious thing to note about the historiography of cricket in Ireland is its paucity. Major encyclopaedias have often implied through oversight that the game lacked popularity. For example, Tim Padwick’s<sup>50</sup> *Bibliography of Cricket* contains just over two pages of listed works on cricket in Ireland,<sup>51</sup> giving the impression of a limited history for scholars to investigate, and within this the overwhelming majority of works listed are from the second half of the twentieth century. In 1991, the update to ‘Padwick I’ by Stephen Eley and Peter Griffiths included very little in addition to

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<sup>45</sup> Cronin, Duncan and Rouse, *The GAA: a people’s history*, p.16.

<sup>46</sup> A. Bateman, ‘Cricket pastoral and Englishness’ in A. Bateman and J. Hill (eds), *The Cambridge companion to cricket* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011), p.14.

<sup>47</sup> J. Williams, *Cricket and race* (Berg, Oxford, 2001), pp.27-30.

<sup>48</sup> J. Williams, *Cricket and England, a cultural and social history of the inter-war years* (Frank Cass, London, 1999), p.1.

<sup>49</sup> Marqusee, *Anyone but England*, p.46.

<sup>50</sup> Although officially titled as Eric William, ‘Tim’ is the name that Padwick is commonly known by. Please see I. Rosenwater, *The Padwick ‘bibliography’: its genesis* (Christopher Saunders, Newnham-on-Severn, 2002), p.4.

<sup>51</sup> Please see: E.W. Padwick, *A Bibliography of Cricket second edition* (The Library Association for the Cricket Society, London, 1984), pp.263-265.

the original 1977 and then 1984 second edition productions of the original publications.<sup>52</sup> Even in recent global and overarching pieces about the history of cricket like *The Cambridge Companion to Cricket*, the chronology of cricket at the start of the publication provides a general overview of British and colonial countries' cricketing histories, even including the formation of the Netherland's cricket association and references to Danish cricket, but nothing on Ireland.<sup>53</sup> Thus there has been oversight from general, centralised cricketing works which have implied a lack of play and popularity.

Little has been written on the game, and what has normally carries a demeaning or rejectionist tone. The historiography of cricket in Ireland in imperial days conforms to, and even established, these stereotypes of cricket as unpopular. As early as 1851, James Pycroft took a sneering tone against Irish men and their cricket,<sup>54</sup> a refrain picked up in Ernest Ensor's entry on cricket in Ireland in Pelham Warner's *Imperial Cricket*, where he claimed cricket 'has never flourished upon the Celtic Fringe,' had not been adopted due to racial tendencies like a lack of self-restraint in the Irish and rejecting the idea of cross-class play of cricket in Ireland.<sup>55</sup> Coupled with the attacks or casual rejections that cricket has received from other quarters as already mentioned above, Richard Davis has highlighted the 'vicious cycle of adverse propaganda' that the game has had to endure.<sup>56</sup>

In response to and in revision of the popular imagery of Irish cricket, notable advances have been made in the last decade with the publication of a number of county-specific studies. In 2004 Pat Bracken led this revision, publishing his *Foreign and Fantastic Field Sports - Cricket in County Tipperary*.<sup>57</sup> Bracken noted the 'historical amnesia' in a game 'embraced by all walks of life.'<sup>58</sup> Michael O'Dwyer published a monograph on cricket in the county of Kilkenny in 2006,<sup>59</sup> in which he confirmed many threads Bracken had developed, namely that of a history that is 'largely forgotten' and which after investigation had shown cricket to be 'widely

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<sup>52</sup> S. Eley and P. Griffiths, *Padwick's Bibliography of Cricket, Volume II* (The Library Association for the Cricket Society, London, 1991), pp.88-89.

<sup>53</sup> Bateman and Hill (eds), *The Cambridge companion to cricket*, pp.xvi-xxv.

<sup>54</sup> J. Pycroft, *The cricket field* (Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, London, 1851), pp.14-16.

<sup>55</sup> E. Ensor, 'Irish cricket' in P. Warner (ed), *Imperial Cricket* (The London and Counties Press Association, London, 1912), pp.243-244 and p.254.

<sup>56</sup> R. Davis, 'Irish Cricket and Nationalism' in *Sporting Traditions*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1994), p.93.

<sup>57</sup> P. Bracken, *Foreign and Fantastic Field Sports - Cricket in County Tipperary* (Liskeveen Books, Thurles, 2004).

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>59</sup> M. O'Dwyer, *The History of Cricket in County Kilkenny* (O'Dwyer Books, Kilkenny, 2006).

played and enjoyed by all social classes for very many years in County Kilkenny' right into the 1930s.<sup>60</sup> O'Dwyer also challenged the association of cricket in Kilkenny with the British Army, noting how the county had a limited military presence and therefore the landed gentry had a greater responsibility for the game's implantation and popularisation.<sup>61</sup> Finally, in 2007 Tom Hunt's outstanding work *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath*<sup>62</sup> further challenged and explored why, how, who and where people played sports and followed leisure pursuits in the nineteenth century, in an empirically-driven piece in likeness to Neil Tranter's work on sport in Stirling in Scotland.<sup>63</sup> For example, Hunt found that between 1900 – 1902, 90 percent of cricket players in the county were Catholic and that the largest grouping of players in society playing cricket were those from social class D – those of farm labourers - with only 1 percent being aristocrats in this same time period.<sup>64</sup> Hunt found that the second most populous group playing cricket in this time period were those below farm labourers in society – those from social class U – challenging the idea of cricket as a rich man's game as these two social classes accounted for 75 percent of players in this time period.<sup>65</sup> Hunt also showed that cricket in Westmeath peaked after the foundation of the GAA, and that 179 civilian teams can be found to have played between 1880 – 1905 in this one county.<sup>66</sup>

There have of course been other local studies of the game of clubs and regions,<sup>67</sup> but these three recent publications have in the most detail tested and challenged with empirical data and examples many of the simplistic and casual assumptions that have been made in previous decades about cricket with seemingly little supporting evidence. This research has slowly been disseminating into the mainstream, with recent GAA publications now admitting cricket's popularity pre-1884.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp.8-9.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.12.

<sup>62</sup> T. Hunt, *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath* (Cork University Press, Cork, 2007).

<sup>63</sup> N. Tranter, *Sport, economy and society in Britain 1750-1914* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998).

<sup>64</sup> Hunt, *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath*, pp.135-136.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.136.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp.119-120.

<sup>67</sup> For example, Conor Curran's article on cricket in Donegal 1865 – 1914 provides another excellent local study of the game. See C. Curran, 'Cricket in Donegal, 1865 – 1914' in *Donegal Annual*, Vol. 63 (2011), pp.64-70. Individual scholars have also produced local club histories of the game.

<sup>68</sup> Cronin, Duncan and Rouse, *The GAA: a people's history*: the authors note how cricket rose and replaced hurling mid-century in a more measured analysis than in previous decades (pp.21-22); and also note how Croke had not insulted cricket and tennis in his acceptance letter (p.251).

There have been only two, limited works produced on cricket in Ireland from a national perspective: Patrick Hone's *Cricket in Ireland*, published in 1955,<sup>69</sup> and Ger Siggins' *Green Fields: Cricket in Ireland 1792 – 2002*.<sup>70</sup> Whilst informative, neither book really delves deep into why cricket was played, financed and so popular. It would not be unkind to call both books ones for the casual reader, and there is still a need for a national, academic, detailed investigation of the game to build upon the work that Hone and Siggins have produced.

It therefore seems apt to conduct a full investigation into the history of cricket in Ireland from a national perspective. Interest in Irish cricket has grown considerably over the last decade, yet still comparatively little is known about the national popularity of the game and reasons for this enthusiasm across the country in the nineteenth and indeed twentieth century. It is hoped that this PhD research will go some way towards correcting this oversight in making a substantial contribution to original knowledge in both Irish sporting and social history.

### **The context of Ireland 1848 - 1878**

Whilst the following is not meant to be a definitive historiographical review of every topic of discussion and investigation in this work,<sup>71</sup> it is hoped that a summary review of some of the major themes in this thesis will guide the reader about the contextual existence of cricket in Ireland in the years under examination. Cricket has been overlooked in Irish social historiography, but the appeal of the game in its rise in popularity certainly fits within the contemporary themes that existed at this time in the country. It was a healthy, manly, fashionable game at a time of increasing financial wealth nationally when there were limited other social opportunities. In many ways, the popularity of cricket was down to extremely good fortune, offering standardised rules and play when there were few other sports that could do so too.

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<sup>69</sup> W.P. Hone, *Cricket in Ireland* (The Kerryman Limited, Tralee, 1955).

<sup>70</sup> G. Siggins, *Green Fields: Cricket in Ireland, 1792-2005* (Nonsuch Publishing Limited, Stroud Gloucestershire, 2005).

<sup>71</sup> Hilary Larkin's recent historiographical review of Irish society in the nineteenth century was a complete academic monograph in its own right, and as such the author makes no claims to the brief historiographical review in this work being in any way complete. For a more detailed review of this period, please see H. Larkin, *A history of Ireland, 1800 – 1922: theatres of disorder?* (Anthem Press, London, 2014).



*A general impression of life in Ireland 1848 – 1878*

The years of investigation have been chosen for both sporting and social reasons. Sporting-wise, there was little cricket played in Ireland in the years before 1848, whilst the end point of 1878 was to see a rupturing of play due to the emergence of the land wars, where tenant and landlord relations were severely tested. Socially, 1848 roughly marks the end of the Famine period in Ireland in terms of crop failures, whilst 1878 (in addition to the oncoming land wars) saw Ireland heating on the hob of Home Rule. It is hoped that the years of 1879 – 1885 will be a future area of research for publication. This thesis drives at some key questions: who played the game, where, how and why? By answering these questions this thesis can explain how cricket's popularity rose to a peak in the mid-1870s.

Within this bookended time period of thirty years, the common picture is of despair followed by boredom. There was roughly a 25 percent population decline in Ireland between 1845 - 1851<sup>72</sup> with a dramatic impact on Irish society due to death and emigration in relation to the Famine. However, this period was not a watershed moment, but rather just accelerated changes already underway like emigration and the modernisation of previous decades.<sup>73</sup> In and amongst the repercussions of the Famine, a projection of destitution has endured.

Yet despair was actually very far from the minds of most Irish men and women at this time. The term post-Famine has been used to describe this period, with its implications and imagery of dreariness, desperation and solitude. Hilary Larkin has highlighted how the traditional view of this era has recently been re-examined and re-evaluated, the terming of 'mid-Victorian Ireland' better reflecting a new tone in historiography which has cast the period as one of exciting change with a 'boom period' from the 1850s to 1875.<sup>74</sup> Statistics can only tell one side of a story, but between the Famine and the 1870s, William Vaughan has shown that wages and profits combined increased 62 percent against a rental increase of 20 percent, with 1877 the peak that the decades before had been leading up to.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, Roy Foster has stated how the 'market' invaded rural Ireland with advertising, foreign goods,

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<sup>72</sup> R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (Penguin Books, London, 1989), p.323.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p.318.

<sup>74</sup> Larkin, *A history of Ireland, 1800 – 1922*, p.107 and p.119.

<sup>75</sup> W.E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1994), pp.21-22.

credit and other urban ideas.<sup>76</sup> It is worth reminding oneself that Ireland had a customs union with the mainland from 1823 and a monetary one from 1826<sup>77</sup> and was thus closer to the mainland in norms than might be imagined due to both the political union from 1801 and the simple matter of proximity.

Beyond monetary increases, living conditions were changing too. By 1870 65 millions letters were sent annually in Ireland, an average of 12 per head, in a nation that had literacy of 2/3 by 1871 with 400 towns boasting telegraphy offices by 1870.<sup>78</sup> Importantly to this investigation, in the 1850s Gladstone's budgets repealed all taxes on newspapers and adverts, seeing newspaper prices decline and the amount of newspapers increase from 100 in 1852 to 140 by 1871,<sup>79</sup> allowing the spread of sporting and mainland norms.

In addition to education which was to see a dramatic extension in the doubling of schools between 1850 - 1900,<sup>80</sup> health was a concern as it was on the mainland and in 1850 a central board of health had been established with concern for mental health too resulting in 22 asylums being established by 1869. Although combined this was nothing more than a 'gesture' it was still claimed at the time that Ireland had one of the most advanced health services in Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>81</sup> Supplementing this increasing awareness of healthiness was the castigation of alcohol, under the leadership at first of Fr Theobald Mathew, a crusader whose longer-term impact is difficult to ascertain even if whiskey production did more than halve in the early 1840s.<sup>82</sup> But what is clear is that he had propelled an idea into the mainstream about the evil of alcohol, a theme that sustained in the mid-Victorian period, with Victoria herself endorsing his quest with funding.<sup>83</sup>

Any overview of life in Ireland must, for all its difficulties, try to pay some attention to the different classes in Irish society, a nebulous, malleable and fluid structure and composition. But to try and examine a social and cultural history without reference to such ideas would prove incoherent.

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<sup>76</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.385.

<sup>77</sup> A. Jackson, *The two unions: Ireland, Scotland, and the survival of the United Kingdom, 1707 – 2007* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012), p.194.

<sup>78</sup> Larkin, *A history of Ireland, 1800 – 1922*, p.122.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p.122.

<sup>80</sup> F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine* (William Collins and Sons Co. Ltd, Glasgow, 1973), p.87.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p.77.

<sup>82</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.339.

<sup>83</sup> C. Lysaght (ed), *The Times: great Irish lives* (Times Books, London, 2009), p.35.

## *Landlords*

The popular image of landlords in Ireland in any generation is that of distant, careless, unscrupulous foreigners subjugating an indigenous population against their will. Of course there were individuals of this ilk, but it is necessary to talk in generalities in a national survey. As early as the 1960s, the image of the cruel and uncaring landlord had been challenged, a momentum that gathered speed in the 1970s.<sup>84</sup> Yet distance and uncaring aloofness is still the common perception of these individuals even amongst those with a working knowledge of Irish history. Moving from public perception to reality, Sean Connolly has proposed that as early as the 1600s the image of negative and stereotypical landlords ‘did not wholly sum up the realities of cultural coexistence’<sup>85</sup> and by the mid-Victorian period only 13.3 percent of landlords lived permanently outside of Ireland.<sup>86</sup>

Life for these men was not the straightforward one some might imagine. Landlords’ power was falling in a period of increasing monetary and political power for those in the rungs below them in Irish society. Their grip on society was not as secure as might be hazarded particularly once they had lost law-enforcement powers to the Irish Constabulary, established in 1836.

It could be suggested that landlords at this time had two main concerns: ensuring the collection of rent, and improving influence and standing in local communities. In terms of guaranteeing rent, landlords did of course have legal and administrative levers they could pull to extract rent or force eviction. But most landlords preferred guaranteed rent rather than the rigmarole of eviction notices and forced dismissal.<sup>87</sup> The agricultural and social boom of this time meant that this was a relatively peaceful and harmonious period; of the 90,000 evictions between 1847 – 1880, 50,000 were in the 1847 – 1850 period and evictions at this overall period rate were less frequent than industrial accidents in Britain or flogging in the British Army with only 1 or 2 homicides a year between 500,000 tenants and landlords in Ireland.<sup>88</sup> Likewise, outrages reported in Ireland fell by two-thirds from the mid-1840s to late

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<sup>84</sup> K. Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland 1832 – 1885* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1984), p.84.

<sup>85</sup> S. Connolly, “‘Ag Déanamh Commanding’: elite responses to popular culture, 1650 – 1850” in J.S. Donnelly Jr. and K.A. Miller (eds), *Irish popular culture 1650 – 1850* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin, 1998), p.3.

<sup>86</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.375.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p.375.

<sup>88</sup> Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants*, pp.23-25.

1870s.<sup>89</sup> In a best-case scenario, it has been theorised that violence was less than in England and Wales nationally.<sup>90</sup>

Even in this increasingly-positive era landlords still sought to increase their influence, particularly following the 1850 Franchise Act which extended voting rights to many of the aspiring middling sort in Ireland. Landlords would visit tenants, host meals and generally be more connected with their neighbours in the hope of guaranteed rent and favourable returns in elections.<sup>91</sup> Theodore Hoppen has surmised it best when saying that carrots were more useful than sticks in keeping tenants onside,<sup>92</sup> whilst at the same time not exactly being Santa Clauses either.<sup>93</sup> Or as William Vaughan has said, tenants and landlords knew each other as they lived side-by-side: the relationship was not like a bank account.<sup>94</sup>

This discourse into landlords' lives matters because it was these men who provided grounds, funds and encouragement for cricket locally in this time of peaceful relations, desirous to smooth rental payments and indeed gain influence and respect from their neighbours. Other ideas about healthiness, paternalism, respectability, enhancing their own reputations with fellow landlords and other social mores only raised the utility of cricket for these men.

### *A new gentry of farmers*

If the years between the Famine and the land wars were to see a gentle erosion of the power of landlords, then a new emergent class of farmers was to increasingly gaze upwards. Farmers, no longer threatened by the cottiers and labourers below them in rural society who had suffered so much during the Famine, were now entering their own ascendancy.<sup>95</sup> Aided by their own increasing financial clout and buoyed by their own political acceleration with a quadrupling of the county electorate in the 1850 Reform Act, meant elections were now dominated by middling and strong farmers

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<sup>89</sup> S.H. Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988), p.523.

<sup>90</sup> M. Cronin, *Agrarian protest in Ireland 1750 – 1960* (The economic and social history of Ireland society, Dublin, 2012), p.27.

<sup>91</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.378.

<sup>92</sup> Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland 1832 – 1885*, p.129.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p.91.

<sup>94</sup> Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants*, p.10.

<sup>95</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.344.

over whom landlords attempted to exert influence.<sup>96</sup> ‘Social decorum’ in wishing to assimilate with the respectable and fashionable lifestyle tendencies of the day coupled with a ‘new assertiveness’ coloured these families.<sup>97</sup> Both Michael O’Dwyer in Kilkenny and Pat Bracken in Tipperary have found local farmers enjoying cricket in these decades.<sup>98</sup>

### *Modernity*

Fused amidst all of these social changes was a less tangible but equally important ideal: the striving for modernity and the potential projection of desirable identities, a motif that encompassed all in society including the professional and commercial classes and interests in towns and cities that hitherto have been unmentioned. Echoing the Victorian pursuit of progress<sup>99</sup> and sharing the mainland middle classes’ desire for respectability,<sup>100</sup> many changes were afoot. Gaelic was being dismissed as a ‘language of poverty’,<sup>101</sup> and underwritten with assumptions of ignorance, indigence, stress and distress, seen as linked to the Gaelic speakers that were particularly hit by the Famine. Post-Famine, some parents beat their children with a *bata scoir* or ‘tally stick’ if their children spoke Irish.<sup>102</sup>

Famines in general have regularly been feminized, and there were many examples of contemporary writings in the 1840s describing famine in Ireland as such.<sup>103</sup> Playing the manly game of cricket therefore served as a useful antidote to such imagery. Coupled with this, images of Ireland in the 1850s on the mainland were ‘by and large bestial’<sup>104</sup> and thus the desire to modernise can be seen as both for domestic and external reasons. Supporting this modernisation was the Catholic Church whose rejection of hurling saw the game being left behind with patterns and

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p.377.

<sup>97</sup> Cronin, *Agrarian protest in Ireland 1750 – 1960*, p.24 and p.26.

<sup>98</sup> O’Dwyer, *The History of Cricket in County Kilkenny*: in Co Kilkenny, local farmers provided teams and farm labourers played, many playing in their own clothes, p.13. Bracken, *Foreign and Fantastic Field Sports*: many teams in Tipperary were tenant-farmer based, p.53.

<sup>99</sup> Larkin, *A history of Ireland, 1800 – 1922*, p.120.

<sup>100</sup> T. Bartlett, *Ireland - a History* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011): by the 1870s the middle classes of England and Ireland ‘both embraced respectability,’ p.310.

<sup>101</sup> O. MacDonagh, *States of mind: a study of Anglo-Irish conflict 1780 – 1980* (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1985), p.104.

<sup>102</sup> Larkin, *A history of Ireland, 1800 – 1922*, pp.112-113.

<sup>103</sup> M. Kelleher, *The Feminization of Famine: expressions of the inexpressible?* (Duke University Press, Durham, 1997), p.2 and pp.19-29.

<sup>104</sup> R.F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch – connections in Irish and English history* (Allen Lane, London, 1993), p.192.

wakes also under attack with a strengthening of clerical control.<sup>105</sup> Led by the formidable and draconian Cardinal Paul Cullen in these decades, the ‘personal embodiment’ of Catholicism that strong and middling farmers associated with as modern and shorn of magic and other folk customs,<sup>106</sup> cricket was exactly the type of healthy, purposeful, forward-looking recreation that the Church could endorse in place of the backward, alcohol-fuelled games and pastimes pre-Famine. Catholic as well as Protestant Churches supported the game, for example there being two Catholic seminaries playing cricket in mid-Victorian time in Tipperary,<sup>107</sup> a situation that could not have endured without Cullen’s implicit blessing such was his power at this time. As Sunday Mass attendance leapt from 40 percent in the 1840s to 90 percent in the 1880s and clerical ratios dropped from one priest per 2,180 in 1850 to one per 1,300 in 1870,<sup>108</sup> the Catholic Church was both in a position to and desirous of endorsing cricket.

### *The financial state of Ireland in the nineteenth century*

In 1868, Robert Dudley Baxter produced an analysis of the financial conditions of the countries of the United Kingdom.<sup>109</sup> In this piece, he made a number of noteworthy points within which to frame this thesis. ‘Ireland presents a singular phenomenon – a decreasing population and an increasing income’ due to the fact that population had decreased from 8.2 million in 1841 to 5.5 million in 1867. England’s population was 21 million, but Ireland’s income chargeable to income tax was only 1/12. The Irish population was double that of Scotland, yet Ireland paid £6 million less in tax.<sup>110</sup> Ireland was clearly a poorer country than the rest of the United Kingdom in 1867:

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<sup>105</sup> Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland 1832 – 1885*, p.144.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p.144.

<sup>107</sup> Bracken, *Foreign and Fantastic Field Sports*, p.50.

<sup>108</sup> Larkin, *A history of Ireland, 1800 – 1922*, pp.115-116.

<sup>109</sup> R. Dudley Baxter, *National Income: the United Kingdom* (Macmillan and Co, London, 1868).

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.57-58.

**Table one: Robert Dudley Baxter’s financial analysis of the United Kingdom in 1867<sup>111</sup>**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Average income of those with independent means in 1867</b>	<b>Average income per capita in 1867</b>
England and Wales	£68	£32
Scotland	£53	£23, 10s
Ireland	£31	£14

Within Ireland, the following analysis was conducted:<sup>112</sup>

<b>Class</b>	<b>Number of people of independent means</b>	<b>Amount of income tax paid</b>
Upper and middle classes	434,000	£39,758,000
Manual labour classes	2,054,000	£38,169,000

Filtering in those without ‘independent means’ – basically women and children without employment, there would probably have been around 1 million people in Ireland in the upper and middle classes of the 5.5 million total population. It was probably this group that took most to cricket, even if the game was played across all socio-economic groups, and it would also have been this group that was important for patronage, leadership and administration of local clubs due to their financial and time wealth.

#### *Ireland: imperial or metropolitan?*

There is a fractious debate about Ireland’s place within the British Empire in the nineteenth century, about whether it was a colony or a metropolitan city part of Britain. On the one hand, Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, electing MPs to

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 52, p.56 and p.61. ‘Independent means’ was termed as someone in employment or with the capital to sustain themselves. Women and children who did not work were not included in this bracket.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p.60.

Westminster in a way that other colonies did not. Yet at the same time, Ireland was ruled by a Viceroy and with a military presence, with the same administrative structure and apparatus as would be taken to India which clearly was colonial. The problem of defining Ireland as either metropolitan or colonial is therefore a difficult one, for as Stephen Howe has noted, there was not one set checklist with which to compare a nation as either colonial or non-colonial.<sup>113</sup> Ireland's close proximity to the mainland further muddies the water, Ronald Hyam describing the country as a 'halfway-house' between metropolitan and imperial<sup>114</sup> following the Acts of Union of 1801. Yet an evaluation of the country's attitudes to cricket (and playing matches against English teams) will undoubtedly throw some light on this debate, and will show how Irish cricket was seen as a distinctive nationalistic pastime supported by both nationalists and Unionists with a fervour that was not reciprocated by English teams, for example, visiting Manchester. Indeed, one of the key reasons for decline was the failure of Irish teams to secure victories and equality with English – opposed to Welsh and Scottish – teams. In an age of Home Rule in the 1870s and without Ireland establishing its own cricket union until 1923, such a situation was untenable and led to a desertion of the game.

#### *A lack of sporting alternatives*

There were few popularly-played sports across the country before the 1870s that have been chronicled. The Irish Rugby Football Union formed in embryo in 1875 and the Irish Football Association in 1880. A quasi-administrative body in the Irish Champion Athletic Club developed from 1872 onwards to cater to athletics, whilst the monolith of the GAA was only formed in 1884. Alternative sports such as golf and tennis popularised even later. With nationally-codified rules long before the formation of other national bodies therefore, cricket's success can be seen in part due to a lack of alternatives and the availability of a game playable across counties, regions, the country and indeed internationally. On a broad, superficial level, it would be

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<sup>113</sup> S. Howe, 'Historiography' in K. Kenny (ed), *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004), p.230.

<sup>114</sup> R. Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815-1914: a study of empire and expansion* (Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2002), p.166.



reasonable to suggest that cricket flourished in Ireland due to a lack of alternatives, in likeness to West Indian and Indian adoption.<sup>115</sup>

## Research and sources

The primary method of research for this investigation was through Irish newspaper records using the recently-developed digitised archives. The newspapers of *The Irish Times*, *Freeman's Journal*, *The Anglo-Celt*, *The Nation*, *Nenagh Guardian*, *Tuam Herald* and *Belfast News-Letter* provide an overview of cricketing developments across the country in the second half of the nineteenth century, and their political and religious leanings will be made clear in the main body of writing but the reader might note that their allegiances can be found in appendix two. Newspapers form the main basis of investigation as there is no substantial body of other resources to investigate cricket at this time in Ireland, a problem Keith Sandiford noted on his investigation into cricket in Victorian times when he relayed that cricketing historians are 'at the mercy of contemporary journalists' as cricket clubs did not leave many records, unlike the limited companies of early football clubs in Victorian Britain.<sup>116</sup> Almost no club records exist from the 1800s in Ireland and The National Archives contains no records of any reports on cricket being played in Ireland. Local club histories in Ireland have similarly relied upon newspaper records.<sup>117</sup>

This mix of newspapers has been chosen for a number of reasons. First, all bar *The Irish Times* were in publication by 1848, giving chronological balance. Second, these sources offer geographical breadth, with every province of Ireland being covered. Third, the papers offer a balance of political and religious views. Finally, this selection of newspapers offers a mix of both the major, urban-based newspapers – like the big-hitters of *The Irish Times*, *Belfast News-Letter* and *Freeman's Journal* – and smaller, regional offerings like *The Anglo-Celt*, *Nenagh*

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<sup>115</sup> R. Cashman, 'Cricket and Colonialism: Colonial Hegemony and Indigenous Subversion?' in J. Mangan (ed), *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700 – 1914* (Cass, London, 1988), p.259.

<sup>116</sup> K.A.P. Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians* (Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1994), p.6.

<sup>117</sup> For example, in writing their history of Merrion cricket club, Little and Parkinson depended upon utilising newspaper records and *John Lawrence's Handbook of Cricket* for events before 1925 - A. Little and D. Parkinson, *Merrion: a history of the cricket club 1892 – 2010* (Saltwater, Dublin, 2011), p.9. Similarly, Leinster cricket club's *Leinster Cricket Club 1852 – 2002* (exact details of publication unknown – presumable publisher is Leinster Cricket Club, Dublin, 2002) was constructed using newspapers and the *Handbook of Cricket* too. This information was gleaned from private email correspondence with the club.

*Guardian*, *The Nation* and *Tuam Herald*, offering both macro and sample micro studies. The papers offer geographical balance and distribution around the country. *The Irish Times*, *Freeman's Journal* and *Belfast News-Letter* were daily newspapers, and thus the reporting of cricket in them was naturally higher due to sheer output than their regional counterparts. Approximately 60,000 newspaper articles have been considered and consulted in this investigation to give real depth of analysis. It is worth noting that quotations from primary sources have been reproduced as they were in the initial production; hence, there might be archaic spellings as well as stray capitalisations and the like. A genuine and unaltered reproduction of the sources was used to keep the authentic feel of the original reports.

However, to contextualise and offer greater breadth than simply using newspaper archives, a total of almost 50 primary sources have been consulted. The newspaper research was significantly supplemented by using *John Lawrence's Handbook of Cricket in Ireland*, published for the seasons 1865 – 1881 inclusive, which was a continuous cricketing almanac bursting with rich social historical significance and detail. To further complement and broaden the scope of the work, individual contemporary writings and other relevant cricketing primary sources were consulted, including mainland cricketing publications such as *Wisden's Almanack*. A systematic and extensive secondary reading was undertaken.

This piece is a project focusing on the history of cricket in Ireland. It is not a history of cricket in the United Kingdom (excellent though that would be) nor is it a compare and contrast with other nations around the world. Neither is it a history of sport in Ireland 1848 – 1878. The main thrust and focus of the work is unashamedly on Irish cricket. Relevant and appropriate historiography from both inside and outside Ireland has been assimilated to furnish the piece, but the author was anxious to avoid a monotonous 'this also happened / didn't happen in England / Sydney' merry-go-round. Only limited reference has been made to other colonial nations' cricketing histories as to try to contextualise this thesis with the historiography of cricket worldwide would dilute argument and direction.

There is a certain irony that some of the last great reservoirs of national investigation for the history of cricket actually lie closest to England in the history of the game in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Andrew Hignell has produced some excellent work on the history of the game in Wales, whilst John Burnett and David Potter have produced good work on Scotland. As intimated above, there is still a gap

for an overarching history of the game in these four nations beyond these countries being mere footnotes to productions focusing mainly on England.

### **The years of investigation in this thesis**

The years 1848 and 1878 have been chosen as the respective start and end points of this work as they bookend a period of general social and political calm in Ireland, and thus seem both logical and intellectually justifiable as a timeframe of research. The year 1848 saw the last major failure of the potato crop, which had seriously disrupted the financial and social stability of the country. There was limited cricket in the decades before 1848 as can be seen in the scarce newspaper reports before these years, and thus 1848 is a logical beginning to the examination of the rise of cricket in the coming decades.

The year 1878 has been chosen as the end point for this research as this was the final year of the relative calm that had transcended Ireland in the thirty years following 1848. 1879 was to see the eruption of the land wars and the early 1880s saw the acceleration of the Home Rule movement and Irish nationalism. As such, the years after 1878 saw a new, disruptive tone and flavour to Irish life. Investigating the popularity of cricket within this thirty-year period between 1848 to 1878 therefore allows an investigation into the rise and beginning subsequent decline of the game before the political and social upheaval that was to come in the 1880s and allows an investigation framed within years of similar social and political circumstances and relative calm. By 1878 cricket club numbers had been in decline for four years since 1874, and a general trend of decline can be established to this end point of 1878 even before the even more trying years that lay ahead.

### **The history of cricket in Ireland before 1848**

Whilst the work will begin in the year 1848 as a start point following the disruption of the Famine years to everyday social life, it is clear that cricket had been growing in the first half of the nineteenth century. The first reference to cricket in national newspapers came in 1765, when there was call to ‘furious drive a cricket ball’ in a

poem about Spain in the *Freeman's Journal*.<sup>118</sup> By 1810 a cross-class Vice Regal game was recorded,<sup>119</sup> and by 1821 it was said that cricket was 'a game that is played almost every day at the proper season in the College Park' of Dublin University.<sup>120</sup> Cricket was advertised in sporting magazines and by retailers stocking cricket goods by 1824,<sup>121</sup> whilst by 1843 that bastion of Irish nationalism, *The Nation* newspaper, was calling for cricket's encouragement and wider play in Ireland for societal benefit in addition to it being a 'manly game'<sup>122</sup> and accepting adverts from sporting outlets selling cricketing paraphernalia by 1844.<sup>123</sup> By 1845, 26 teams had played at least once in Ireland through the selected newspaper records for this study, whilst secondary research shows that another 19 teams had played by this point.<sup>124</sup> The Famine was to curtail cricket-playing and caused untold death and distress to millions in the years 1845 - 1848, but it only served to halt, not extinguish, the growing popularity of cricket in Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century. By 1847 cricketing goods were being sold in Belfast, Limerick and Dublin.<sup>125</sup>

Although there was some anti-English sentiment after the horrors of the Famine in the late 1840s,<sup>126</sup> it is worth noting that this did not mean that cricket was viewed as being English. This should be made explicitly clear at the outset. As early as December 1832, at a Trades' Union meeting in Dublin, Daniel O'Connell, staunch Catholic and proud Irish nationalist who led the Repeal Association which sought repeal of the union with the mainland, stated his support for cricket in a speech in that he patronised the game himself for his neighbours, saying:

He was not one of those who thought that the Sunday should be spent in gloom and gravity, and that sickly and atrabilious devotion which made the face look pale. In his own country place, where he might say he was a kind of

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<sup>118</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 2 March 1765.

<sup>119</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 17 August 1810.

<sup>120</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 28 November 1821.

<sup>121</sup> See *Freeman's Journal*, 3 January 1822 and 15 April 1824.

<sup>122</sup> *The Nation*, 12 August 1843.

<sup>123</sup> See *The Nation*, 22 June 1844 for example.

<sup>124</sup> Those listed in the selected newspapers to 1845 are: Bannow Grammar School; Belfast; Carlow; Castletown; Clonmel; College Club (Belfast); Collegiate School Club (Belfast); Dublin; Dublin Garrison; Dublin University; Hibernian (Belfast); Hibernian (Dublin); Huntindgon (County Waterford); Kilkenny; Limerick; Meath; Northern (Belfast); Phoenix; Queen's County; Tullamore; Ulster; Vice Regal; Wexford; 5<sup>th</sup> fusiliers; 7<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons; 7<sup>th</sup> fusiliers. Those from the secondary literature include: Bandon; Cahir; Carrick-on-Suir; Castleblunden; Clare; Clongowes; County Kilkenny; County of Tipperary; Co Wicklow; Desart; Diamor; Enniscorthy; Gowran; Lisburn; Lodge Park; Newbridge Garrison; Portora, Royal School Dungannon; Royal Belfast Academical Institution; St Columba's College.

<sup>125</sup> *The Nation*, 29 May 1847.

<sup>126</sup> A. Jackson, *Ireland 1798 – 1998: Politics and War* (Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 2002), pp.84-86.

lord paramount, every Sunday, from two o'clock, he had a piper for his people, besides ball and cricket bats, and other kinds of amusement, so that those who liked dancing might amuse themselves with it, and those who liked other sports might also choose their amusement.<sup>127</sup>

It is unlikely O'Connell would have supported the game if it had carried clear English overtones, and the spread of play to his country house at Derrynane in Kerry shows cricket's early spread into remote regions of the country.

To prove such support was not an isolated one-off, *The Nation* newspaper published 18 articles on cricket in the years 1843 - 1846, not an amazing amount but noteworthy as there was no mention or thought of it being unpatriotic, even though *The Nation* was a firmly Catholic, nationalist, independence-seeking publication. Cricket in Ireland should be viewed in the same light, adopting itself to the local desire for amusement, opposed to being a conscious embrace of British values. Richard Cashman has proposed such sporting embrace took place in many countries around the British Empire, where people played 'British' games for their own interest and not necessarily to showcase a love of Britain itself.<sup>128</sup> As Dominic Malcolm has suggested, the 'uncritical acceptance of the ideological link between cricket and Englishness' has led to a conspicuous absence of work on cricket and identity in the British Isles,<sup>129</sup> a statement that could be broadened to include a lack of work on cricket in Ireland in general because of this very assumption.

## Chapter overviews

This piece's first two chapters have been written thematically across the years 1848 – 1866. This is because there were many repetitive themes across these early years of cricket's popularity within a limited amount of newspaper reporting in comparison to the later years of investigation, and thus a thematic introduction to issues like the reasons for play and the individuals who played cricket was preferable to a chronological study that would have repeated ideas across these two decades. The second two chapters have been written chronologically from the years 1867 – 1878,

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<sup>127</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 4 January 1833.

<sup>128</sup> Cashman, 'Cricket and Colonialism,' p.261.

<sup>129</sup> D. Malcolm, *Globalizing cricket: Englishness, Empire and identity* (Bloomsburg, London, 2013), p.91.

exploring how and why cricket reached its peak in the early-to-mid 1870s before beginning to retract in popularity and play.

Themes run consistently through the piece in some instances, but where ideas have been firmly established in the earlier chapters have not thereafter been consistently examined so as to avoid needless repetition. Relevant historiography has been blended in across chapters; the first chapter was not simply used as a chance to expose the wider work on all themes discussed.

The first chapter begins by examining the reasons and factors that led to the growth of cricket in Ireland in the post-Famine years. This chapter investigates the growth in popularity and playing of cricket in the 1848 – 1866 time period, looking at how and why the game grew from being a fledgling leisure pursuit to a popular sport by the mid-1860s through reasons and stimuli for the game. The military were important in this time period, introducing the game to local civilians. However the game became popular for far more reasons beyond early military support: the game rose to prominence at a time of limited other social opportunity, including what might be considered the traditional Irish sports of hurling and ‘Gaelic’ football which were under sustained attack in the mid-century from the Catholic Church. As a healthy, manly and noble game in a period of concern for these attributes, the game enjoyed a growing following, aided crucially by the support of a professional cricketer called Charles Lawrence who organised a professional eleven in Ireland as well as Vice-Regal support in general which was helpful in endorsing the game to the elite of society. Two other key actors of extreme importance emerged in addition to Charles Lawrence: John Lawrence, a sports shop owner, and the Earl of Carlisle as Viceroy. This time period saw a huge increase in patronage for the sport as well as a rising commercial interest in and exploitation of the game by those directly involved in cricket as well as general businesses. By 1866, both Charles Lawrence and the Earl of Carlisle had departed Ireland though, leaving John Lawrence as the sole custodian of the game, a situation that never formalised into a title as recognised authority or administrator of the game.

The second chapter will examine the years 1848 – 1866 by considering who played the game in these years, in what types of institutions and in what areas of the country. The assumptions of the game being merely the pursuit of the richest in society, Protestants or Unionists are challenged early in the thesis. In this time period cricket became increasingly important within elite schools in Ireland, and the game

extended across all classes in society. Catholic endorsement of the game was clear, and the game took on a role as a vehicle for nationalism against mainland teams who were now touring the country offering varied and exciting play. The idea of cricket as a minority sport in the country will be dismissed.

Chapter three will engage with the years 1867 - 1872, during which time many of the future seeds of deterioration were sown, but which nonetheless remained a fruitful time in the development of cricket in Ireland. The involvement of businesses and businessmen peaked in these years, whilst cricket developed momentum as a vehicle for both national and local pride. The rhetorical reasons for play continued, and when combined with the support of schools and both Catholic and Protestant communities, saw cricket spread even further geographically and socially into Ireland. Yet early warning signs for a lack of administration, the rise of other sports as well as the failure to fully grasp cricket as a nationalistic rod were missed, and a plateau would soon be reached.

The fourth chapter examining 1873 – 1878 begins positively, in that the number of cricket teams in Ireland peaked in 1874, when play can be noted across every county with more clubs found in the country than urban centres. The game continued to be played by all in society. This era was to see the decline of cricket, when the game came to be abandoned by businesses and the leadership of John Lawrence began to wane. A failure to achieve nationalistic victories over mainland opposition at the time of rising Home Rule sentiment was an embarrassment, whilst a general malaise and indifference had set in to the game which had failed to form an administration to oversee cups, leagues or inter-provincial games. Other sports rose in popularity, and by the late 1870s cricket was in decline, dispelling the idea that the GAA was somehow responsible for the demise of cricket as many have suggested.

### **Themes of investigation**

One of the main considerations of this work will be to consider the popularity of the game, where it was played, by who, how and why. Cricket's popularity has been consistently overlooked in almost all cricketing historiography, and this piece will use empirical data to prove the popularity of the game by showing the amount of reporting of the game in given years, the amount of teams playing per year as well as

comparative examples of how cricket reports compared numerically to other rival sports in given years will be included.

Linked closely to this will be the attempt to investigate the class of players who played the game, and question whether Irish cricket really was simply the game of the elite, Protestant landlords, as many have presumed. Mike Cronin exemplifies this belief, calling cricket ‘the preserve of elite strata of Irish society that identified itself with the Union’<sup>130</sup> without providing any evidence to support this claim, a form most historians have followed when making brash claims about Irish cricket. Whilst it will be difficult to go into great detail about class in a national research project, examples will be given of play across the whole of society even if a national, macro study will preclude detailed biographical interrogation such as Tom Hunt has produced on his analysis of cricketers in Westmeath in a much smaller locality.<sup>131</sup>

This is a history of Irish cricket dominated by men, but this is not a men’s history. The theme of manliness is one that comes through strongly in the research, and as a theme in its own right this is a topic that is worthy of much more investigation. Surprisingly little has been written on this topic in general, and David Miller has noted that men’s history is not a well-developed field in Ireland.<sup>132</sup> One excellent recent example examining cricket and manliness would be Max Davidson’s *We’ll get ‘em in sequins*, a piece examining manliness and Yorkshire cricket over the last century.<sup>133</sup> This thesis will not be able to go into the same detail as Davidson’s work, but will touch upon similar ideas.

Women naturally also deserve mention following this last paragraph. Astonishingly little has been written on the history of women’s cricket, beyond the accepted idea Empire-wide that women’s roles were to spectate and applaud but not to physically play.<sup>134</sup> Isabelle Duncan has made a notable contribution to this field, recently publishing *Skirting the boundary*, examining the social history of women’s cricket.<sup>135</sup> Whilst an important piece, Duncan does somewhat skip over women’s involvement in cricket in other ways before the first formation of the White Heather

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<sup>130</sup> Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland*, p.79.

<sup>131</sup> See Hunt, *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath*, p.136 for socio-economic backgrounds of cricket players in County Westmeath.

<sup>132</sup> D.W. Miller, ‘Religious History’ in L.M. Geary and M. Kelleher (eds), *Nineteenth-century Ireland – a guide to recent research* (University College Dublin Press, Dublin, 2005), p.73.

<sup>133</sup> M. Davidson, *We’ll get ‘em in sequins: manliness, Yorkshire cricket and the century that changed everything* (Wisden Sports Writing, London, 2012).

<sup>134</sup> D. Allen, ‘England’s “golden age”: imperial cricket and late Victorian society’ in *Sport in Society*, Vol. 15, No.2 (March 2012), p.215.

<sup>135</sup> I. Duncan, *Skirting the boundary: a history of women’s cricket* (The Robson Press, London, 2013).



Club in 1887, not really engaging in why women spectated, supported or cheered on men at grounds before the establishment of this club.<sup>136</sup> Andre Odendaal also deserves recognition for his attempts to construct a history for women's involvement in South African cricket.<sup>137</sup> This piece will show women to be involved in all sorts of ways at cricket – as spectators, as supporters of clubs and indeed community events through cricket – but will not satisfy the necessity for much more work on women's roles within the game.

Other important issues about why the game was played such as the impact of health considerations and social rhetoric, the financing of the game and provision of grounds, the role of nationalism in cricket, the place of businesses and businessmen as well as professionals will be addressed. The religious support of both branches of Christianity will be tested and examined to show support from both in schools and universities and more informal avenues. Cricket did not develop any political identification in Ireland, with leading clubs specifically outlawing discussion of politics or religion at their grounds. This was not an unusual or unique occurrence; for example, by the late 1880s there was little room or evidence of political sentiment in Irish rugby.<sup>138</sup> Cricket in Ireland was influenced by politics through desire for Home Rule and nationalism as well as through the support of politicians, but was not political itself and was played by both nationalists and Unionists.

The issue of gambling in Irish cricket at this time will be addressed mainly by the inability to find much evidence about its attachment to the game. Arthur Samuels, writing in 1888 and no doubt idealistically, claimed betting was not evident in Irish cricket,<sup>139</sup> though this idea is loosely supported in this research. Gambling no doubt existed but was almost never reported, a state of affairs that is unusual as gambling on other events like horse racing was reported widely and without shame.

To dispel the myth of the pre-eminence of the British military in the playing of cricket in Ireland, graphs will be produced showing the breakdown of teams noted in given years into 'club,' 'military' and 'scratch team' classifications. This, like the newspaper counting records, is not a fault-proof process and the methodology is

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<sup>136</sup> See Duncan, *Skirting the boundary*, pp.15-35.

<sup>137</sup> A. Odendaal, 'Neither cricketers nor ladies: Towards a history of women and cricket in South Africa, 1860s – 2000s' in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (January 2011), pp.115-136.

<sup>138</sup> O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, p.146.

<sup>139</sup> A. Samuels, *Early Cricket In Ireland – A Paper, read before the Kingstown Literary and Debating Society on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1888* (Kingstown Literary and Debating Society, Dublin, 1888), p.6.

explained in more detail in the appendices. But this does provide a solid indicative sense of who was playing the game and within what types of formations. It will show that the military played a moderate but by no means critical role introducing the game to Ireland by natural diffusion, but that after that their importance declined, a theory that echoes Tom Hunt's work on cricket in Westmeath.<sup>140</sup>

This work carries on the work of the cricketing heritage of Calderdale and Kirklees project, which investigated the rich history of the game as a point of community and fraternity in these Yorkshire localities<sup>141</sup> and which broadened to publication as *Cricket and Community in England* by Peter Davies with Rob Light.<sup>142</sup> This thesis showcases towns congregating around cricket fields as points of local pride and community, in a historical investigation with greater interest in the societal impact of the game rather than bowling analysis and scorecards in continuation of this field of research.

### **Proving cricket's popularity**

Proving cricket's 'popularity' can take on many heads: should the game be judged on numbers of teams playing; the amount of men playing; interest in the games; the amount of spectators; the amount of money that could be extracted from the game or indeed other measurements? Thus it is best to avoid absolute statements which might of course be undone in future years of research into other sports. But what can be said is that, however one wants to measure it with the data produced in this thesis, cricket was one of Ireland's leading sports in the 1860s and 1870s, and can lay strong claim to non-equine sporting hegemony.

### **Why this research is necessary and arguments that will be presented**

Cricket's popularity in Ireland has been completely underestimated, in a period that Roy Foster has lamented from the 1840s to 1870s as 'too often glossed over as a lull between the Famine and Parnell.'<sup>143</sup> This piece thus fills not just a sporting historical

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<sup>140</sup> Hunt, *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath*, p.130.

<sup>141</sup> For more information on this project and its resources, please see <http://www.ckcricketheritage.org.uk/>, accessed 30 July 2014.

<sup>142</sup> P. Davies with R. Light, *Cricket and community in England: 1800 to the present day* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2012).

<sup>143</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.373.

void but will also contribute to the general historiography of Irish social history mid-century. As James Kelly's recent publication on the history of sport in Ireland before the Famine has shown, only cricket and horse racing were in a position to prosper in the coming age of mass recreation from the 1840s onwards due to organisational steps already undertaken.<sup>144</sup> As such, this work will make an original contribution to knowledge in showcasing the immense popularity of cricket in an academic investigation that has never before been undertaken – a rare example worldwide of a missing national cricketing history, being one of the last remaining untapped fields.

It will be argued that cricket was the most popularly-reported team sport in Ireland in the 1860s and 1870s, being played across the whole country, in every county, by every class of society, by both Protestants and Catholics, in rural and urban areas in equal measure. It is hoped that this work will continue the correction of the historical fallacies that abound about the game being the preserve of landlords or those with English sympathies, and will also help to continue to dispel the idea of the GAA being the cause of cricket's decline as the game was in retraction by the late 1870s.

Writing in 2005 on the historiography of Irish social history, Gary Owens asserted that although work on nineteenth-century Ireland had never been of greater number and higher quality, 'our knowledge of certain subjects is almost non-existent,' citing how social history had appeared 'subordinate' to political history and with most historians following 'straight, narrow and well-trodden paths' when researching.<sup>145</sup> He implored that the social dimension of the history of sport in the country was 'ripe for investigation',<sup>146</sup> and in the ensuing decade there have been excellent national and local histories produced on the history of soccer, rugby and the GAA to name but three. There have been revolutionary monographs produced on a county level examining the popularity of cricket.

Yet there is still a gap for an academic investigation of cricket in Ireland on a national level. There is still a story to be told.

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<sup>144</sup> Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p.358.

<sup>145</sup> G. Owens, 'Social History' in L.M. Geary and M. Kelleher (eds), *Nineteenth-century Ireland – a guide to recent research* (University College Dublin Press, Dublin, 2005), p.28.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p.42.

## **Chapter one: factors affecting the playing of cricket**

### **between 1848 - 1866**

Cricket emerged and then significantly grew in Ireland in the years 1848 – 1866 for a variety of reasons and factors, one of the main reasons being that cricket was fortunate to have few real competing sporting or indeed general leisure activities in this time period. This situation significantly changed by the 1870s, when a wider raft of sporting and leisure opportunities existed. Many of the themes and ideas supporting cricket's rise overlapped and interlinked, although a rough order of importance has been established in this chapter. Cricket benefitted from the inspiration and lead given by a variety of men for the play of the sport, including: the leading professional in Ireland, Charles Lawrence; the Viceroy, the Earl of Carlisle; a Dublin sports shop owner, John Lawrence. The game was supported and played from the outset by the British Army and this patronage was then reciprocated and imitated by other leading gentlemen in the country. Combined, these factors introduced cricket to men across Ireland and were the primary factors – in addition to a lack of alternative recreation - which explains cricket's development in Ireland in these early years. This expansion was increased by societal and business influences that came to justify, support and grow the game further. Underpinning all of these movements were wider national concerns for health, happiness and respectable amusement, which endorsed the playing of cricket for all in society.

#### **1. The initial uptake of cricket between 1848 - 1866: reasons for play and provision**

Before exploring the reasons for the playing of cricket from the late 1840s onwards, a brief synopsis of play seems appropriate. The mid-to-late 1840s was a period of dramatic social and cultural change in Ireland, inflicted by the potato famine of the mid-decade. Cricket experienced noteworthy growth in the period before and immediately after the Famine years of 1845 - 1848 in Ireland, with 45 teams having played at least one game by 1845 as mentioned in the introduction. By 1850, this number had increased to at least 63 teams when combining primary sources and

secondary literature.<sup>147</sup> Whilst the game was clearly still in its infancy by the end of the Famine years (with only eight teams reported in primary material playing in the years 1845 – 1848)<sup>148</sup> the game had developed a loose footing in the country. Cricket was played in every province, in clubs as well as schools and universities, which would lay the groundwork for the development of interest in the game. Whilst it would be fair to assume that cricket was largely, though not exclusively, the game of the elite in the years immediately after the Famine, by the late 1850s the game was encompassing a far wider range of individuals than might commonly be considered. This was a trend that was consistent throughout these years of investigation and continued apace as more of Ireland's leading and wealthiest individuals began to patronise the game more in the 1860s. By 1866 cricket had experienced an upsurge in popularity and play, making it one of the country's leading sporting pastimes.

The basis of this play was to be the local club, a greater analysis of which is provided in chapter two. For 1874 at least 432 cricket club teams can be found playing in Ireland as part of a grand total of at least 533 teams when including military and scratch teams.<sup>149</sup> Local clubs formed due to local patronage or indeed the self-made leisure of Irish men in localities, and the growing availability of clubs naturally led to an increased awareness and enjoyment of cricket for all.

### *1.1: A lack of amusement overall and a lack of sporting alternatives to fill the leisure void in Ireland*

It is worth asking why cricket seems to have become popular amongst people of all classes in the post-Famine years. A general point is that there wasn't a huge amount

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<sup>147</sup> Civilian teams listed in the stated newspapers between 1846 – 1850 included: Ballinasloe; Bannow Grammar School; Belfast; Boyne; Cahir and Fethard; Carlow; Clonmel; Durrow; Fenagh; Kinsale; Nenagh; Phoenix; Rathdrum; Roebuck; Tullamore; Templemore; Dublin University. Military teams found were: the 3<sup>rd</sup> Buffs organised a club in Galway; 6<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards; 40<sup>th</sup> regiment; 60<sup>th</sup> regiment / 60<sup>th</sup> rifles; 79<sup>th</sup> Highlanders; 89<sup>th</sup> regiment; Caher Carbineers officers; Garrison of Athlone; Garrison of Dublin; at least one game at Longford barracks (it is unclear who was playing); Belfast Garrison. As well as this, the Ashbrook Union were playing in the year 1846 – 1848 which is examined in the early section of this chapter. In addition, the following teams have been noted in secondary literature playing to 1850: Bandon; Cahir Barracks; Carrick-on-Suir; Castleblunden; Castlecomer; Clare; Clongowes College; Clonmel Barracks; County Kilkenny; County of Tipperary; Co Wicklow; County Cork; Desart; Diamor; Downpatrick; Enniscorthy; Fethard Barracks; Gowran; Kilkenny; Kingstown; Lisburn; Lodge Park; Meath; Newbridge Garrison; Nutgrove School; Portora, Royal School Dungannon; Queen's College, Cork; Queen's County Club; Royal Belfast Academical Institution; St Columba's College; Templemore Barracks; Tullabeg; Ulster; Wexford.

<sup>148</sup> Ashbrook Union; Bannow Grammar School; Belfast; Belfast Garrison; Boyne; Kinsale; Tullamore; 60<sup>th</sup> regiment.

<sup>149</sup> Please see appendix three.

of other alternative leisure opportunity in the mid-nineteenth century in Ireland, an offering that obviously developed and diversified across the century which partly explains why interest in the game seems to have declined by the late 1870s, when cricket came into competition with new sports and amusements for players and spectators.

In the mid-century all classes in Irish society suffered from an absence of meaningful recreation and any type of organised and respectable amusement – be it political, cultural or sporting – was already in a strong position to attract interest. An abyss of leisure opportunities saw ‘thousands of the peasantry, standing, in their anxiety to cheer their favourites in the different aquatic contests, up to their knees in water’ at the Lough Ramor regatta in September 1846<sup>150</sup> and a large number of the peasantry attended the Trim steeplechases of 1865, showing peasantry and working-class involvement in other sports at this time and across these years of investigation.<sup>151</sup> The interest of the poorer section of society in cricket, as well as the richest and the elites who enjoyed a day of socialising and sport, should therefore come as no surprise. Lack of other recreational opportunity was as much a problem for these poorer groups of society at this time indeed if not being more of a problem due to tighter finances which constrained the ability to attend ticketed events, dine out or travel overseas.

It was such lack of social opportunity that led a reader to write to *The Nation* newspaper in 1848, calling for the establishment of cricket clubs. That such calls were being made in a nationalist, Catholic, pro-independence Repeal Association mouthpiece post-Famine should shatter completely the idea that cricket was despised as an English game to be played just by Anglophile cronies of the British government in these early years. As Roy Foster has shown, there was an abiding resentment to England as a result of the Famine<sup>152</sup> which would have made it impossible for this mouthpiece of the ‘hotly nationalistic’ Young Ireland<sup>153</sup> to have supported cricket if it was tainted with this association or was a clear and deliberate colonial implantation or impregnation. Yet this letter begged:

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<sup>150</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 11 September 1846.

<sup>151</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 26 April 1865.

<sup>152</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.342.

<sup>153</sup> Larkin, *A history of Ireland, 1800 – 1922*, p.75.

Sir – It appears to me that the attempt projected in your last NATION for the organization of rural districts would be more complete if the following additions were made to your plan:-

1. Mounted Clubs – to consist of a limited number of young men. In Dublin, if one was formed, the members could ride out to us in the suburbs of an evening, and let us know what is going on. You can have no difficulty in getting one up at once, and then others would be got up in imitation.

2. Cricket clubs, or hurling clubs. In some baronies there are no towns or places suitable for meeting, but if a hurling club, or cricket club was got up with its regular place and hour of meeting, and mixing up amusement with politics which would be an additional attraction, I think the object would be gained.

If you approve of these additions I would like to see them noticed in your next number.

A Confederate<sup>154</sup>

As James Kelly's recent work has shown, recreational sport in Ireland was in an 'essentially depressed state' when Victoria came to the throne, with only horse racing and cricket in a position to prosper from the 1840s in the coming age of mass recreation due to their established national rules and tentative grounding in the country by this time.<sup>155</sup> If hunting was included, which enjoyed significant patronage in its traditional form from the richest in society but as such only had a narrow base of participants, there was an otherwise barren sporting scene in Ireland which benefitted cricket's rise.

Horse racing was extremely popular mid-century, and increased in popularity as the century progressed. Horse racing would lay claim to the title of being perhaps the widest spectator sport in Ireland, Tom Hunt suggesting this being due to free entrance.<sup>156</sup> Yet horse racing offered far less opportunity in terms of actual physical

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<sup>154</sup> *The Nation*, 24 June 1848. The capitalisation of 'Nation' has been reproduced as per the original article.

<sup>155</sup> Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p.358.

<sup>156</sup> Hunt, *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath*, pp.218-220.

involvement compared to cricket if one defines participation as being able to influence the result of an activity. James Kelly's work has suggested roughly 70 horse racing courses existing in Ireland in the early 1800s,<sup>157</sup> whilst by mid-century there were 57 race meetings in Ireland in 1850 and 58 in both 1855 and 1860.<sup>158</sup> This compares with 108 cricket teams, of which 90 were clubs, as listed in the selected newspapers in 1860 which at its most basic level would have presumed around 54 matches as a minimum. However, the financial might of horse racing is worth noting in comparison to cricket: an estimated £50,000 was bet in 1801 and 1803 on outcomes of the Curragh Gold Cup.<sup>159</sup>

Hunting was a very popular mid-century sport for those who could afford it, being the most reported sport ahead of horse racing in the seven newspapers examined for 1855 (see diagram one), but would have had limited appeal to a wide spectatorship in its popular form. However, like in England, hunting might have been more popular in informal ways in hunting for animals and thus extending to a wider social breakdown; James Kelly has shown that pre-Famine, 'hunting' provided participation for the widest social catchment of individuals if defined in a loose sense.<sup>160</sup>

Yet in its purest form, Tom Hunt's work has shown that hunting in Westmeath was the preserve of social class A, the upper classes in society,<sup>161</sup> and was the sport of the select elite who could afford horses and dogs. It has been estimated that a well-groomed fox-hunting pack would cost around £3,000 a year to maintain in the early-to-mid nineteenth century in Britain,<sup>162</sup> whilst the Kildare Hounds allowance was £1,200 a year in 1870.<sup>163</sup> This was at a time when the average income per capita of the population was £14 in Ireland.<sup>164</sup> Hunting was also not really a threat to cricket's popularity as the season ran from September to April, and therefore cricket and hunting actually had a largely similar clientele to begin with and were not in competition with each other. Other genteel sports like rowing, although more popular than cricket in 1855 in terms of reporting, only really developed from the 1870s

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<sup>157</sup> Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p.109.

<sup>158</sup> F.A. D'Arcy, *Horses, Lords and Racing Men: The Turf Club, 1790-1900* (Turf Club, Curragh, Co Kildare, 1991), p.344.

<sup>159</sup> Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p.114.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12 and pp.154-156.

<sup>161</sup> Hunt, *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath*, p.19.

<sup>162</sup> A. Harvey, *The beginnings of a commercial sporting culture in Britain, 1793 – 1850* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2004), p.171.

<sup>163</sup> B.M. Fitzpatrick, *Irish Sport and Sportsmen* (M.H. Gill & Son, 1878, Dublin), p.35.

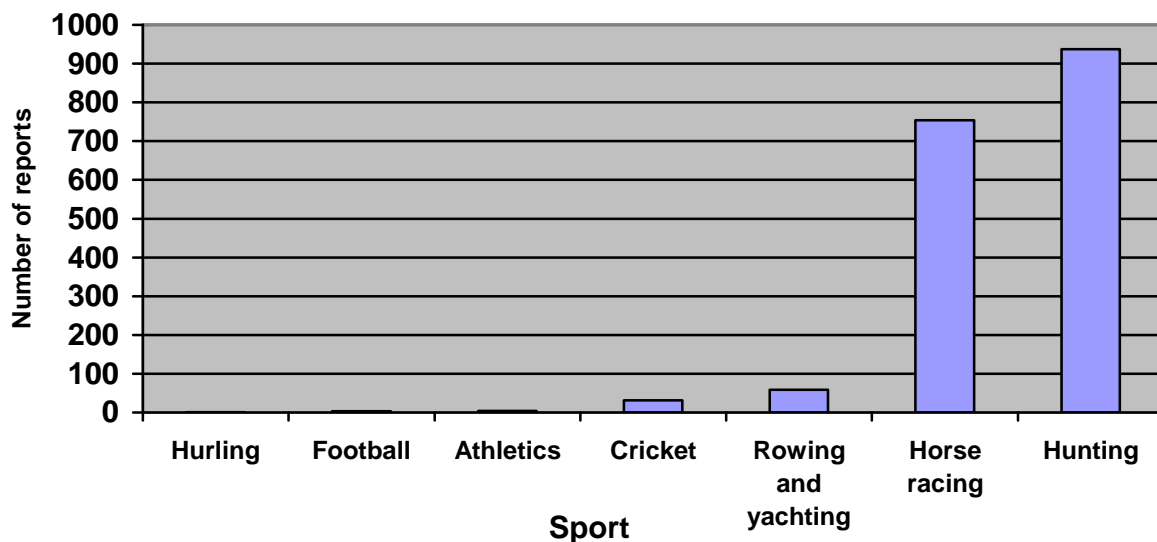
<sup>164</sup> Dudley Baxter, *National Income*, p.61.



onwards in Ireland; there were only ten regattas held in Ireland in the year 1865 compared to 293 cricket teams listed.<sup>165</sup> Rugby football's first club was established in Ireland in 1854 at Trinity College, and by 1874 there were only 13 clubs affiliated with the Irish Football Union.<sup>166</sup> Soccer too was a late developer in nineteenth-century Ireland, with the game having its first exhibition by two Scottish teams in 1878 – and by 1880 Neal Garnahm's recent work has shown there were only around four teams playing the game in Ireland.<sup>167</sup> The first golf club was established in 1881, and by 1889 there were no more than seven clubs with a maximum of 500 men playing nationwide.<sup>168</sup> Athletics was to become a popular sport in time, but like all of these other sports, didn't properly formalise until the 1870s<sup>169</sup> with little athletic racing reported in the 1850s.

As can be seen in diagram one, in 1855 hunting and horse racing were the dominant sports in Ireland in terms of reporting, with cricket among a variety of other minority sports. This would dramatically change by the year 1865.

**Diagram one: a comparative analysis of the different sports reported in the year 1855**



<sup>165</sup> T.F. Hall, *History of Boat-Racing in Ireland* (Irish Amateur Rowing Union, publication place probably Dublin in 1937), p.12.

<sup>166</sup> J.C. Conroy (ed), *Rugby in Leinster – 1879 to 1979* (The Leinster Branch of the I.R.F.U., Dublin, 1979), p.7.

<sup>167</sup> Garnham, *Association football*, pp.4-5.

<sup>168</sup> W.H. Gibson, *Early Irish Golf* (Oakleaf Publications, Naas, Co. Kildare, 1988), p.56.

<sup>169</sup> T. O'Donoghue, *Irish Championship Athletics 1873 - 1914* (T. O'Donoghue, Dublin, 2005), p.6.

Many people would assume that the most popular forms of sporting recreation for the poorest members in Irish society in the mid-1800s would have been hurling and ‘Gaelic’ football,<sup>170</sup> not cricket. This was not the case. James Kelly’s work has shown that from the early 1840s, hurling was at a ‘low ebb’ and that it would have been hazardous to have predicted a positive future for the game from this time,<sup>171</sup> whilst Richard McElligott has stated there was a ‘catastrophic decline of hurling’ in the mid-1800s.<sup>172</sup> From the seven newspapers investigated, the newspaper reporting of hurling amounted to just one article in the year 1855 and only three for football. Analysis of the comparative reporting for 1865 shows no improvement in diagram four in chapter two.

Such had been the impact of the Famine on traditional ways of life, that George Petrie undertook a campaign in 1855 to visit regional areas to try to record and preserve traditional music; what he found was the disappearance of this music as well as traditional sporting pastimes.<sup>173</sup> In the period between the Famine and the formation of the GAA in 1884, Marcus de Burca noted this time ‘probably saw them nearer than ever to extinction.’<sup>174</sup> Football was not formally organised and codified as a sport until the 1884 GAA foundation meeting, being a relatively new historical invention. It was therefore far behind hurling and even athletics in national importance in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, essentially being a new sport with new, standardised rules, even if there had naturally been regional variations of the game.

Hurling had been far more prominent than football before the Famine, having been very popular in the early nineteenth century, but had been attacked by the Catholic Church in the years immediately before and after the Famine due to its violence and general unseemliness,<sup>175</sup> and was also derided by magistrates too who feared mass meetings at matches. Following a deterioration in landlord-tenant relationships in the early 1800s and a subsequent withdrawal of patronage (and

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<sup>170</sup> In this thesis, football will refer to what is commonly known as ‘Gaelic’ football. Soccer will be referred to as soccer.

<sup>171</sup> Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p.268.

<sup>172</sup> McElligott, *Forging a Kingdom*, p.19.

<sup>173</sup> C. Ó Murchadha, *The Great Famine: Ireland’s agony 1845 – 1852* (Continuum, London, 2011), pp.181-182.

<sup>174</sup> De Burca, *The GAA – A History*, p.5.

<sup>175</sup> For example, Kevin Whelan’s work has shown how there were explicit attacks against hurling by Catholic priests in Killarney and Kilkenny in the 1830s. K. Whelan, ‘The cultural effects of the Famine’ in J. Cleary and C. Connolly (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005), p.146.

middle-class support), combined with the destruction of the Famine and mass emigration, hurling was lost in many communities and was essentially a fossilising pastime by the 1870s.<sup>176</sup> As James Kelly has shown, it would have been improbable that the clergy of any denomination could have completely condemned any sport or activity were it not for wider societal movements,<sup>177</sup> and the decline of hurling should be contextualised against attacks from many corners.

These attacks by the Catholic Church against the 'traditional' Irish games were consistent in the years to 1866. About 400 - 500 men were found playing football in Cloyne in May 1865, showing that these 'traditional' games had not completely died.<sup>178</sup> Yet these games were under mounting pressure, with *The Nation* newspaper carrying a damning, stinging attack on the game of hurling, shedding light into its decline as well as continuing reasons for opposition to its play in November 1864. The piece centred around a match between Kinsale and Ballinora, played at Ballinora in autumn 1864 which turned into a riot which the local Catholic clergy could not control.<sup>179</sup> Such violence was seen elsewhere, *The Nation* deriding Hurling in a piece on 14 January 1865. Magistrates attacked hurling too to cricket's advantage, one judge reporting in the summer of 1862 that he was 'happy to see the brutal practice of hurling being suspended by the manly game of cricket in this country,' following Michael Kennedy's conviction of grievous assault on Pat Taylor during a hurling match at Litkenny in January 1862.<sup>180</sup>

Hurling's demise was particularly compounded by the deaths and emigration caused in these Famine years of starvation and distress as it was the lowliest, hurling-playing in society who suffered the most. As one shopkeeper crudely put it, the pre-Famine potato people, or the 'trash of the town,' were decimated and demoralised by the events of 1845 - 1848,<sup>181</sup> with the 'respectable' farming and shop-keeping middle classes surviving the Famine when the cottiers and labourers did not.<sup>182</sup> It was such a change that led Roy Foster to comment that the Famine led to a 'drastic readjustment

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<sup>176</sup> M. de Burca, 'The Gaelic Athletic Association and organized sport in Ireland' in G. Jarvie (ed), *Sport in the making of Celtic cultures* (Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1999), p.101.

<sup>177</sup> Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p.357.

<sup>178</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 27 May 1865.

<sup>179</sup> *The Nation*, 5 November 1864.

<sup>180</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 30 July 1862.

<sup>181</sup> Whelan, 'The cultural effects of the Famine,' pp.139-140.

<sup>182</sup> Pre-Famine, smallholders and cottiers outnumbered farmers by 2.5:1, but by 1881 this ratio was equal. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.340.

of population in terms of class as well as numbers.’<sup>183</sup> As a result, the Ireland that emerged post-Famine had a different social composition with an aspirational hope and ensuing differences in cultural and sporting activities, with the labourers and cottiers who would have played hurling being completely wiped off the map in many areas.

Cricket therefore fell into a hurling-sized vacuum, as a match report on the Downpatrick versus Comber game in September 1859 noted, when it was said: ‘The batting and general fielding were good, and might be taken as evidence of the growing taste for the game of cricket which has sprung up of late years in this part of the country, extinguishing almost, if not altogether, the old games in which our forefathers used to excel...’<sup>184</sup> Cricket was therefore very much the future, hurling the game of the past as a national team sport. All in society saw hurling attacked by their pastoral leaders through the local priest and the magistrate, leaving cricket as one of the few sporting opportunities at that time for physical play which would increasingly come to be patronised and supplied by local leaders.

It wasn’t just traditional, rural Irish sporting recreation that was changing mid-century – rather, the whole fabric of Irish society was going through a period of modernisation and in many senses whole-scale upheaval. In 1852, Sir William Wilde commented that ‘The old forms and customs... are becoming obliterated’<sup>185</sup> and this went far beyond the hurling pitch in Irish life. Although the overall effects of temperance societies are debated they did at the least have some impact in raising awareness to reduce alcohol consumption in general. At one weekly temperance meeting in Dublin in January 1855, whose aim was to ‘reclaim the drunkard,’ it was noted that over 400 people had taken a pledge of abstinence at this event alone.<sup>186</sup> As a result of the temperance movement’s crusade, Gavan Duffy, writing in *The Nation* in December 1842, pleaded for greater leisure activities, saying:

Teetotalism has taken from the People their *only* enjoyment. They are altogether without public amusement... They need some stimulant. We are a social, lively, enjoyable People, and we must have excitement. Here is an opportunity to give it, of the purest and most healthy character.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p.340.

<sup>184</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 24 September 1859.

<sup>185</sup> E. Malcolm, ‘Popular recreation in nineteenth-century Ireland’ in O. MacDonagh, W.F. Mandle and P. Travers (eds), *Irish Culture and Nationalism, 1750 – 1950* (The Macmillan Press, London, 1983), p.40.

<sup>186</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 13 January 1855.

<sup>187</sup> Malcolm, ‘Popular recreation in nineteenth-century Ireland,’ p.48.

In addition to a reduction in drinking habits, as early as 1846 attendances at funerals, patterns (celebrating the local patron saint) and wakes were noted to be in decline due to opposition from the Catholic Church, which saw the last two in particular as occasions liable to drunkenness, sexual immorality and brawling.<sup>188</sup> Dancing was frowned upon by the Catholic Church, and was squeezed out of the popular mind by a disapproving clergy after the Famine.<sup>189</sup> It was such retractions in leisure that led Marcus de Burca to say that, in addition to field games, traditional pastimes of rural Ireland were amongst the major casualties of the Famine.<sup>190</sup> Although the number of fairs increased from 5,000 to 5,700 annually between 1845 – 1900,<sup>191</sup> these events became more focused as town-centred, one-day events with a much greater emphasis on enterprise instead of enjoyment. Thus people of all backgrounds in Ireland were losing another key part of the social calendar, in addition to a reduction in hurling, drinking and Church-related social events, all of which helps explain why any form of healthy and purposeful recreation would have been welcomed by all. The fact cricket was one of them in part, although far from fully, explains the game's appeal.

This was seen in the formation of the Newtownards cricket club in 1858, when it was noted: 'A Cricket Club was was [sic] greatly wanted in Newtownards during the Summer months, as there was no place for amusement for young men to go to after business hours.'<sup>192</sup> Likewise, the 11<sup>th</sup> Hussar officers stationed in Cahir arranged some public amusements in the town in September 1862, with prizes being given for stone throwing, sack and donkey races as well as 'playing at cricket.' *The Irish Times* glumly noted 'A series of rare fun and amusement will be afforded to the public on the occasion.'<sup>193</sup>

## *1.2: Cricket's early support by the military, Charles Lawrence and the Earl of Carlisle*

The military played an important part in the introduction and early play of cricket in Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Their playing of the game was crucial in the years after the Famine in spreading the game's appeal and visibility

<sup>188</sup> Hunt, *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath*, pp.216-217.

<sup>189</sup> Whelan, 'The cultural effects of the Famine,' p.144.

<sup>190</sup> De Burca, *The GAA – A History*, p.5.

<sup>191</sup> Malcolm, 'Popular recreation in nineteenth-century Ireland,' pp.46-47.

<sup>192</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 28 July 1858.

<sup>193</sup> *The Irish Times*, 4 September 1862.

from its limited playing base in a social scene devoid of other alternative amusement. It should be established from the outset that the support of the British Army, Viceroys and other administrative figures appears to be for personal indulgence and enjoyment: from all material consulted, no evidence supports the idea of cricket being introduced to Ireland for political or insincere means. The game offered amusement at a time when there was little else to do, and the support of these groups should be measured in terms of importance through providing teams and rhetorical justification to play the game opposed to continually questioning their motives for play.

The British Army posted between 20,000 - 30,000 troops in Ireland in the nineteenth century,<sup>194</sup> and it was natural for such a significant grouping of people to have an impact on the local, regional and national behaviours of the nation. For the Army, cricket offered exactly the same benefits that were supposedly being afforded to British public schoolboys at this time; the game promoted (in theory) unity, spirit and cooperation.<sup>195</sup> With soldiers often being based in remote districts with few social amenities,<sup>196</sup> and with hundreds in lodgings at these bases<sup>197</sup> it was no wonder that cricket became popular amongst military personnel. Games helped military men wherever posted dismiss boredom, helping to assimilate new recruits and also greasing the cogs of local administrative business and rule.<sup>198</sup> Offering standardised rules, facilitating play both within battalions and with rival Army corps and indeed local clubs, cricket would have provided a significant social outlet for soldiers based in Ireland. Men in the Tipperary military barracks could be garrisoned for up to two years at a time.<sup>199</sup>

Historians of Irish cricket have agreed upon the importance of the military in giving initial impetus to the game's spread. Michael O'Dwyer's work on cricket in County Kilkenny argues that cricket was introduced (passively, opposed to deliberately) into Tipperary and Cork due to the military presence in these areas, with locals then following suit by creating their own teams.<sup>200</sup> Such civilian teams sprung up as there was a close relationship between officers based in barracks and like-

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<sup>194</sup> Siggins, *Green Fields: Cricket in Ireland, 1792-2005*, p.18.

<sup>195</sup> Holt, *Sport and the British*, p.205.

<sup>196</sup> V. Crossman, 'The Army and law and order in the nineteenth century' in T. Bartlett and K. Jeffrey (eds), *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996), p.358.

<sup>197</sup> J. Gavin and S. O'Donnell, *Military Barracks Dundalk* (DFPP, Dundalk, 1999), p.12.

<sup>198</sup> Holt, *Sport and the British*, p.207.

<sup>199</sup> W.S. O'Shea, *A Short History of Tipperary Military Barracks (Infantry) 1874-1922* (Phoenix Publishing, Cashel Co. Tipperary, 1998), p.5.

<sup>200</sup> O'Dwyer, *The History of Cricket in County Kilkenny*, p.12.

mindful, respectable citizens in the countryside,<sup>201</sup> reinforcing the idea of cricket immediately post-Famine as a genteel sport of the gentry. Andrew Hignell has shown this close relationship through cricket between military men and local leading gentlemen in Wales mid-century too.<sup>202</sup> Whilst newspaper records will always be far from complete and show only a partial representation of cricketing participation, of the 29 teams listed in primary sources for 1846 - 1850, 11 were military teams, showing the Army's significance to national cricket at this time. This proportion loosely fits Tom Hunt's research findings that showed that 35.29 percent of cricket in Westmeath in the 1850s featured military participation.<sup>203</sup> However, this does show that cricket at this time, when military involvement was at its highest, was still two-thirds civilian, which shows the organic creation of cricket teams amongst local men. A more detailed comparative analysis of the military's importance can be found in chapter two.

The military's role in creating amusement in rural areas was important not just to the soldiers but also the town in which they were garrisoned. Far from living in isolation in barracks, Army battalions needed local towns for buying goods, amusement and everyday living as much as the towns needed them in terms of protection and trade. Pat Bell's work has shown that the Newbridge barracks in Kildare was one such example of barracks having close relations with the local town,<sup>204</sup> and another prominent example of the Army's role in bringing amusement to the Irish countryside is seen in the actions of the 79<sup>th</sup> Cameron Highlanders, who were stationed in Nenagh in the late 1840s. At a social event in the town marking the imminent departure of the battalion in April 1850, Major Ferguson commented that 'great stress has been laid upon the impetus the Officers of the 79<sup>th</sup> have given to the sports and amusements that have generally taken place here.'<sup>205</sup> This was no doubt even more attractive to military men due to the fine meals and sense of occasion dining in Brundley's Hotel in the town must have afforded the participants after hostilities had ceased. It was such efforts to generate leisure in the area that led the *Nenagh Guardian* to comment that they were:

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<sup>201</sup> E.M. Spiers, 'Army organisation and society in the nineteenth century' in T. Bartlett and K. Jeffrey (eds), *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996), p.342.

<sup>202</sup> A. Hignell, *Cricket in Wales: an illustrated history* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2008), p.21.

<sup>203</sup> Hunt, *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath*, p.130.

<sup>204</sup> P. Bell, *Long shies and slow twisters: 150 years of cricket in Kildare* (Templemills Press, Celbridge Co. Kildare, 1993), p.57.

<sup>205</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 10 April 1850.

...proud to bear testimony to and record the fact, that it is owing to the convivial spirit, love of social entertainment, and harmonious disposition, of the gallant officers of the 79<sup>th</sup> Cameron Highlanders, stationed in Nenagh, that not alone this race [the Nenagh Races], which gave so much unalloyed pleasure, but many other much required amusements, which tended to cheer the dull monotony of the town and its neighbourhood, has been creditably got up and respectably carried out by them. In fact, they have been foremost since they came amongst us in promoting mirth and diffusing pleasure, by the giving of balls, playing of cricket, and encouraging the sport of the turf in all its diversified forms... for which they have gained the applause and the heart-felt thanks of the people of Nenagh and its vicinity, and which, we have no doubt, shall long be remembered after their departure from amongst us.<sup>206</sup>

Such examples of the military bringing social amusement to otherwise barren leisure scenes and socialising with the respectable local leaders would have been seen up and down the country, showing the military's importance in spreading cricket in Ireland, a fact that would no doubt have only been enhanced by the 1841 decision for all Army barracks within the United Kingdom to have specifically laid-out grounds for cricket for soldiers' occupation and pleasure.<sup>207</sup>

The most explicit attempt to profit from cricket in mid-century Ireland was made by the professional cricketer, Charles Lawrence,<sup>208</sup> who exploited the early enthusiasm for cricket in Ireland. He established an All Ireland / United Eleven of Ireland team,<sup>209</sup> similar to the professional teams in existence in England at this time. Lawrence was a fascinating individual, and one of the three key individuals to popularise cricket in Ireland, the others being the Earl of Carlisle as Viceroy and John Lawrence, a sports shop owner in Dublin.

Charles played for Surrey, Middlesex, New South Wales as well as English and Irish professional elevens in his career, and in addition led the first Aboriginal tour from Australia to England in 1868.<sup>210</sup> A chance encounter saw William Clarke meet Lawrence in London, knowing him from previous cricketing matches, and told him he was looking for a professional for the Phoenix club in Dublin. He began in

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<sup>206</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 13 March 1850.

<sup>207</sup> J. Major, *More than a game: the story of cricket's early years* (Harper Collins Publishers, London, 2007), p.176.

<sup>208</sup> Charles Lawrence was sometimes referred to as Charles Laurence, but for the sake of this thesis will be referred to as the former.

<sup>209</sup> The naming differs in reporting, but both signified Lawrence's venture. For consistency, this team will be referred to as the All Ireland Eleven.

<sup>210</sup> A. Mallett, *The black lords of summer: the story of the 1868 Aboriginal tour of England and beyond* (University of Queensland Press, St Lucia Queensland, 2002), p.157.



May 1851 and in course the Viceroy, the Earl of Carlisle, asked him to establish a ground at the Vice Regal Lodge, then going on to support his initiation of a professional All Ireland Eleven with public support and grounds provision in this venture.<sup>211</sup> Lawrence built this cricket ground for Carlisle at the Vice Regal Lodge towards the end of the 1850s,<sup>212</sup> a highly significant development in terms of spreading cricketing awareness and raising its prestige further by establishing a national focus for the game.

One major difference between Irish and English cricket was the lack of professional players in Ireland, meaning that this team was supplemented by amateurs. Nevertheless, following their first match against eighteen of Phoenix in 1856, Charles Lawrence took his roving team from Dublin to Cork in the south of the country, after which the social element of the game was noted by the ball in the evening being 'fashionably attended.'<sup>213</sup> Whilst the All Ireland Eleven was never anywhere near as commercially successful nor playing as many games as such teams on the mainland, the concept generated further interest in the game, creating more grand matches in the calendar in both Dublin and the provinces following their formation in 1856.

By the late 1850s, the All Ireland had engaged teams in the north, east and south of the country in challenge matches, bringing spectacle to areas that would not have had such matches before, playing eight matches by the end of the 1857 season, winning them all.<sup>214</sup> By this season, Lawrence had been engaged as the Phoenix professional for seven seasons.<sup>215</sup> He spread cricketing knowledge amongst the elite players in Dublin at this time through coaching in addition to his exploits with the All Ireland. In part he must take credit for furthering the game in Ireland to the extent that by 1859 all players in the All Ireland were Irish-born, a fact symptomatic of the progress of the game in the 1850s in terms of standard and enthusiasm.<sup>216</sup> Lawrence was also heavily involved in organising English teams to tour Ireland, possible by his connections as a Londoner and to benefit his own personal finances, arranging English teams including the MCC and the United Eleven of England (amongst others)

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., pp.63-64.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., p.23.

<sup>213</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 20 September 1856.

<sup>214</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 30 September 1857.

<sup>215</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 24 June 1857.

<sup>216</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 4 June 1859.

to tour in the decade.<sup>217</sup> The All Ireland Eleven, under the management of Lawrence, had been overseas tourists themselves in this period, going to Scotland on tour. Yet their real influence lay within the island of Ireland, being described as the second most important establishment only to Phoenix.<sup>218</sup> They played 21 games between their debut in 1856 and 1861,<sup>219</sup> fuelling an appetite for the game and the commercial possibilities that so many others latched onto, which sometimes led to a perceived exploitation by Charles Lawrence.<sup>220</sup>

As a result of his efforts in developing cricket in Ireland, a testimonial was held for him in October 1857, 'in order to mark the approbation of the credit due to him in the advancement of cricket in Ireland.'<sup>221</sup> However, not many people attended this match, with a subsequent testimonial played in June 1858 between the All Ireland and twenty-two of Dublin. Poor fortune struck again, with Charles Lawrence losing money from this match.<sup>222</sup> If he did not receive the credit he was due in terms of attendance at his testimonials and subsequent financial benefit, what was clear to the *Irish Times* in 1859 was his immense impact in spreading the game's popularity. They suggested another attempt at a testimonial for Lawrence, to recognise the efforts of one who had worked so hard 'to bring forward a game that was so little known before he came to Ireland,' with the paper wanting to 'mark their sense of gratification at the manner in which he has brought cricket to the standing it holds at present in this country.'<sup>223</sup>

Lawrence created a desire for other professionals to enhance the quality of play in Ireland after his departure. In contrast to Lawrence, Flanagan and Doyle (both Irish men) were praised by the *Freeman's Journal* in September 1863 for staying in Ireland to develop cricket opposed to going to England where they could earn more,<sup>224</sup> whilst another professional, Heighes of the North of Ireland club, gained reward for his endeavours in his role by being presented with talent money at the end of the All Ireland Eleven versus North of Ireland sixteen match in September 1863.<sup>225</sup> Dublin University always had a minimum of two professionals from 1863 onwards

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<sup>217</sup> Siggins, *Green Fields: Cricket in Ireland, 1792-2005*, p.20.

<sup>218</sup> *The Irish Times*, 12 July 1861.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>220</sup> See *The Irish Times*, 6 September 1860 for an example of such complaints.

<sup>221</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 5 October 1857.

<sup>222</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 18 June 1858.

<sup>223</sup> *The Irish Times*, 1 September 1859.

<sup>224</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 8 September 1863.

<sup>225</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 September 1863.

and indeed three per year by the 1880s.<sup>226</sup> All of these later professionals owed a gratitude to Lawrence for creating the market for their services, although the number of professionals never came anywhere near matching those in England.

Charles Lawrence, esteemed professional and catalyst to the game nationwide, left Ireland and sailed for Australia as part of H.H. Stephenson's 1861 - 1862 tour.<sup>227</sup> He was to return to Britain in 1868 at the head of an Aboriginal tour that generated over £2,000 profit for him.<sup>228</sup> After this, he returned to Australia to coach the Melbourne Club, a position he held for a further thirty years.<sup>229</sup> He lived to the age of 88 before dying in 1916<sup>230</sup> having had a large influence not just on the history of Irish but also Australian cricket.

If Charles Lawrence had the greatest impact on the field of play in Ireland in the 1850s and early 1860s, then the individual who had the most significant impact off it was the Viceroy, the Earl of Carlisle. Although by mid-century the post of Viceroy was mainly ceremonial,<sup>231</sup> his ability to influence elite leaders of society during his office in Ireland between 1855 - 1858 and then 1859 - 1864 was still significant. The importance of elites in developing cricket in its infancy in Canada, Philadelphia and India has been highlighted<sup>232</sup> and Andrew Hignell has shown how the Marquess of Bute was integral to the development of Cardiff CC and the game in general in this area as patron, land leaser and funder in another part of the kingdom mid-century.<sup>233</sup>

Carlisle demands recognition for his impact on Irish cricket. It should be clarified that from all material consulted, and in similarity to the Army's play as outlined, there was no official policy to promote cricket in Ireland from central government administration. This is in likeness to Indian cricket's development where there was no official government policy to promote the game.<sup>234</sup> The benefit that Carlisle bestowed was indirect and was due to his personal enjoyment and indulgence

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<sup>226</sup> M.H.A. Milne, N.P. Perry and M. Halliday, *A history of Dublin University CC* (Dublin University Cricket Club, Dublin, 1982), p.18.

<sup>227</sup> *The Irish Times*, 21 September 1861.

<sup>228</sup> The 1868 tour made profit of over £2,000. J. Mulvaney and R. Harcourt, *Cricket walkabout – the Australian Aboriginal cricketers on tour 1867 – 68* (Macmillan, London, 1988), p.193.

<sup>229</sup> Hone, *Cricket in Ireland*, pp.19-20.

<sup>230</sup> Mallett, *The black lords of summer*, p.157.

<sup>231</sup> Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, p.72.

<sup>232</sup> Richard Cashman in India, Ian Tyrell in Philadelphia and David Cooper in Canada all show the importance of elites in the early spread of cricket in these areas. D. Cooper, 'Canadians Declare "It Isn't Cricket": A Century of Rejection of the Imperial Game, 1860-1960' in *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Spring 1999), pp.60-61.

<sup>233</sup> Hignell, *Cricket in Wales: an illustrated history*, p.24.

<sup>234</sup> Davis, 'Irish Cricket and Nationalism,' p.78.

of the game; this point is reinforced when one considers the lack of patronage and endorsement the game experienced when a non-cricketing Viceroy was in office, again undermining the idea of a centralised, deliberate, organised implantation or colonial project to indoctrinate through cricket.

Carlisle enjoyed cricket for its own sake, partaking as a scorer in games and attending matches, whilst also hosting matches at the Vice Regal Lodge, and thus there was an informal utilisation of government property to promote the game at a personal level. He oversaw considerable ground improvements at the Vice Regal Lodge's cricket ground over the winter of 1860 - 1861<sup>235</sup> and regularly kept score at many high profile matches. Carlisle was dedicated, for even though it was raining significantly at the Vice Regal versus Phoenix match of late July 1861, he never once left his post in observing the game.<sup>236</sup> He possessed his own private cricket tent,<sup>237</sup> which again would have created a sociable ambience for other patrons attending the game and affirming a positive view of the sport for any newcomers.

Yet Carlisle's enthusiasm was not just passive or reticent; he was also an active promoter and participant, personally playing in games<sup>238</sup> whilst also being a patron of certain clubs. The Civil Service club possessed the Lord Lieutenant as their benefactor, and claimed they owed their existence to Carlisle upon their foundation.<sup>239</sup> In addition, Carlisle patronised the Bray cricket club upon its opening,<sup>240</sup> with the grounds in Bray being called the Carlisle grounds in June of this year, surely after and in homage to the Lord Lieutenant for his encouragement.<sup>241</sup>

His patronage became more overt than merely attending or hosting games from 1857, when he patronised the All Ireland Eleven versus twenty-two of Dublin and District game, the first significant game in Ireland in terms of promotion. Five front-page ads were run in the *Freeman's Journal*,<sup>242</sup> whilst the newspaper sought to elicit further interest in the game by broadcasting the support of Carlisle and other notable individuals in Dublin society, saying:

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<sup>235</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 30 April 1861.

<sup>236</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 25 July 1861.

<sup>237</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 1 October 1862.

<sup>238</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 16 July 1861.

<sup>239</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 22 May 1863.

<sup>240</sup> *The Irish Times*, 5 May 1863.

<sup>241</sup> *The Irish Times*, 6 June 1863.

<sup>242</sup> *Freeman's Journal*: 27 June; 29 June; 1 July; 3 July; 4 July 1857.

We understand that the Lord Lieutenant, the most liberal patron and supporter of the game, has signified his attention of attending, to witness the match. This, besides the distinguished patronage of all the commanding officers in Dublin, cannot fail to prove an additional attraction.<sup>243</sup>

It seems as though Carlisle's patronage and interest in the game encouraged, or at least justified, support from other elites based in and around Dublin at this time, with this game in 1857 having publicised patronage and support from Carlisle, two Lords and five officers.<sup>244</sup> Carlisle similarly led the patronage of the much-vaunted All Ireland Eleven in two separate games over a four-day period versus the twenty-two of the county of Dublin and then twenty-two officers of the Dublin Garrison in June 1859, where the patronage list had grown from the eight listed in the 1857 match to fourteen for the 1859 instalment, with this match placing six front-page adverts in the *Freeman's Journal*.<sup>245</sup> This match was to be further boosted by performances by the band of every garrison battalion,<sup>246</sup> highlighting the prestigious nature of the game and also the scramble to be associated with it. It was such an increasingly interesting social spectacle that surely also led to increased spectatorship by non-cricketing male players and indeed women, as there was now more to occupy oneself with if not particularly interested in the game itself. Imitation and reciprocation of Carlisle's patronage continued into the 1860s by Irish elites from this starting point.<sup>247</sup>

The efforts of Carlisle and the impact his patronage had were noted by a contemporary, Arthur Samuels, who saw the rise of cricket in the mid-to-late nineteenth century from schoolboy to elderly gentleman. Speaking in 1888 in Dublin, he noted that during the Viceroyalty of Carlisle, 'cricket in Ireland flourished and made greater strides than at any other period.'<sup>248</sup> Carlisle was noted to have invested much in the Vice Regal grounds and hospitality, with good lunches always provided, which would have boosted the sense of occasion of cricket at the Lodge and drawn aspiring and inquisitive watchers of the game from the higher echelons of society. Carlisle provided a game or two every week during the cricket season, according to

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<sup>243</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 4 July 1857.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>245</sup> *Freeman's Journal*: 27 May; 28 May; 1 June; 2 June; 3 June; 6 June 1859.

<sup>246</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 28 May 1859.

<sup>247</sup> Aside from the Lord Lieutenant, no fewer than thirteen significant individuals and three groups of officers from the various regiments in Dublin were advertised attending the All England Eleven versus twenty-two of Ireland match in September 1860 in pre-game advertisements (*The Irish Times*, 27 August 1860) and the following year saw eight Lords or Ladies plus one knight of the realm join the Viceroy in the pavilion in an April match, where Carlisle was scoring the game (*The Irish Times*, 29 April 1861).

<sup>248</sup> Samuels, *Early cricket in Ireland*, p.16.

Samuels, whilst the associations and connections cricket could bring to the Viceroy through cricketing patronage were considerable, with Carlisle ‘never’ forgetting a cricketer; when acquaintances were made he would subsequently always recognise such men ‘in a marked and friendly manner.’<sup>249</sup> This endorsement of the importance of Carlisle by Samuels can be cross-referenced with both *The Irish Times* and *Freeman’s Journal* in the 1860s.<sup>250</sup>

Whilst the support of the theoretically-leading politician in Irish society might have proved beneficial for cricket’s development, this enthusiasm and even obsession of Carlisle’s was ridiculed in places, being mocked as early as 1861 in an article by the *Belfast News-Letter* – a Unionist publication - in discussing his fulfilment of his roles as Lord Lieutenant. It referred to the ‘grave responsibilities of cricket’ whilst important matters of the day were developing and Irish men of all classes of religion were being ill-served by a Viceroy ‘marking cricket at a pleasant match.’<sup>251</sup> These attacks extended into Parliament itself in London.<sup>252</sup> It was such degradations that led *The Irish Times* – another Unionist publication - to conclude in September 1863 that ‘In Ireland we find Lord Carlisle’s popularity on the wane. People are tired of him. Something more is expected of a Viceroy than a daily attendance at bazaars, cricket matches, flower shows and such like.’<sup>253</sup> Such a line was repeated in the *Belfast News-Letter*.<sup>254</sup> Yet these attacks again highlight the support and enthusiasm Carlisle had for the game, crucial for its increasing popularity, which was encouraged and evolved in Ireland in the early years of the decade.

These systemic and continued political attacks continued into the mid-decade, the *Belfast News-Letter* of 4 July 1864 taking him to task for not undertaking his responsibilities in the country properly, being, amongst other things, too keen at scoring at cricket matches opposed to the serious matters of the day as the Queen’s representative in Ireland.<sup>255</sup> This was repeated in the *The Irish Times* in this month for refusing to attend the Exhibition of Irish Products and Manufacturers in the summer of 1864, even though he had the time to go to cricket matches.<sup>256</sup> Even when under

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<sup>249</sup> Ibid., p.16.

<sup>250</sup> *The Irish Times*, 14 May 1861 and *Freeman’s Journal*, 2 September 1863.

<sup>251</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 20 June 1861.

<sup>252</sup> *The Irish Times*, 21 May 1862 and *Freeman’s Journal*, 8 June 1863.

<sup>253</sup> *The Irish Times*, 1 September 1863.

<sup>254</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 September 1863.

<sup>255</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 4 July 1864.

<sup>256</sup> *The Irish Times*, 13 July 1864. There was a similar attack in a letter to *The Irish Times* on 15 July 1864.

political pressure, his enthusiasm for the game did not relent, for in the Annual Report of the Commissioners of Education in Ireland for the year 1863 - 1864, presented to Carlisle at the time of these complaints, it was noted that 'in consequence of your Excellency's recommendation to us we caused a cricket ground to be formed at Portora, the expense of which, in consequence of the hilly nature of the ground, much exceeded what was at first anticipated' regarding the Enniskillen Royal School.<sup>257</sup> As James Kelly has shown, leaders in late early modern Ireland did not use levers of state to promote individual sports,<sup>258</sup> and aside from this intervention to aid this school and the more general usage of the Vice Regal grounds for matches as well as Vice Regal endorsements of the game, no direct utilisation of government resources can be found to support cricket.

Carlisle was replaced as Viceroy in the autumn of 1864 and died in the December. With this, Ireland had lost the second of its three crucial patrons, ruling during the rapid and systematic expansion of cricket in the key years of 1859 – 1864, and for a while after the country lacked the significant leadership of the Viceroy in cricket. Indeed, upon the new Viceroy's election, Lord Wodehouse was advised to be different and indeed dispense of those court members whose main functions were to score at cricket or physically play the game even in a newspaper like *The Irish Times* whose support of the game was unequivocal.<sup>259</sup> These were mildly worrying times for supporters of cricket.

The new Viceroy, Lord Wodehouse, attempted to keep up the pretence of cricket interest and engagement, by patronising John Lawrence's contracting of the United South of England to play twenty-two of Ireland in May 1865.<sup>260</sup> But there was a notable decline, even death, of the Vice Regal Eleven in the years 1865 and 1866, with seemingly little interest from the Viceroy in the pursuit of cricket. Such thoughts were articulated by the *Freeman's Journal*, who said that in the period 1864 – 1866, under Lord Wodehouse, cricket 'languished' in Dublin.<sup>261</sup> That cricket was not sustained and its support varied between office holders again debunks the idea of the game as a colonial implementation, as surely there would have been consistency of provision if this was a centralised policy.

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<sup>257</sup> *The Irish Times*, 14 July 1864.

<sup>258</sup> Kelly, *Sport in Ireland*, p.349.

<sup>259</sup> *The Irish Times*, 4 October 1864.

<sup>260</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 22 April 1865.

<sup>261</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 29 August 1866.

With the appointment of a new Viceroy, the Marquess of Abercorn in July 1866 and the re-establishment of the Vice Regal Eleven, the *Freeman's Journal* hoped cricket 'will again become, not only a favourit [sic] but a fashionable game.'<sup>262</sup> The fact that the game did find favour again shows that the game had modest roots by the mid-1860s that would not allow an easy or sudden demise. The IZ versus Phoenix twelve match in August 1866 saw a return to the glory days of Carlisle – with pomp, ceremony and many individuals of prominence attending the game, led by Abercorn and his family. The pavilion was noted as 'crowded by gentlemen interested in the game,' the match being called the one that had excited the most interest ever in Dublin for cricket.<sup>263</sup> Abercorn's apparent personal interest in the game was highlighted, watching the play of the Phoenix and Roebuck match of 1866 for some time<sup>264</sup> with his support continuing for the IZ versus Gentlemen of Ireland match concluding the tour in September 1866.<sup>265</sup> Cricket in Ireland finished the year on a high with prominent support re-established, especially in light of the IZ tour games that were played this month.

Following Carlisle's death *The Irish Times*, who had savaged him for his cricketing enthusiasms in the twilight of his reign in the autumn of 1864, called him in 1866 'the greatest supporter it [cricket] ever had in Ireland' and saying that his efforts had been one of the main causes of the game's success by 1866.<sup>266</sup> Political opportunism is evidently not a recent development in newspaper reporting.

### *1.3: Patronage of cricket through grounds provision - paternalism, control mechanism or concern for the common man?*

Patronage of cricket in supplying fields, lunches and general enthusiasm for the game for both the richer and poorer members of society had existed since the game's inception. The major benefactors of the supply of fields, houses and lunches for cricket in the mid-century were surely the elite members of society as local patrons would regularly provide their grounds for the playing of cricket by the richer

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> *The Irish Times*, 9 August 1866.

<sup>264</sup> *The Irish Times*, 27 August 1866.

<sup>265</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 17 September 1866.

<sup>266</sup> *The Irish Times*, 17 September 1866.



members of Irish society – such as Mr Brundley in Nenagh<sup>267</sup> and the Parnell family at Avondale for prominent matches at their demesne in Wicklow – whilst more irregularly significant individuals like the Viceroy or even the Mayor of Belfast<sup>268</sup> would contribute fields under their jurisdiction for major games. Although there might have been working-class players in these games and no doubt some working-class spectators, the likelihood is that such events were aimed predominantly at the richer members of society.

Lord Lurgan offers an interesting example of such provision for cricket at his demesne of Brownlow House in July 1856, hosting a game between Belfast and Rathfriland. A large assembly attended, including Francis Leslie, the High Sheriff of County Down, with meats provided by Mr Thompson of Belfast. It is Lurgan's interest in cricket which is really illuminating however, as he mentioned in his after-game speech after the evening meal that he hoped that such a game would be the first of many meetings between all those who had attended. 'He was himself only a novice at cricketing; he liked the sport, however, because it was manly, and because it was one of all others in which any of them might feel proud to be engaged' reported the *Belfast News-Letter*, a comment which was greeted with applause by his audience.<sup>269</sup>

However, it would be misleading to think that by this time in the late 1850s that cricket was a national obsession; it was a game played by all classes, but in a patchwork of localities. The move that would lead to the greater playing of cricket in the 1860s through increased provision of fields, organisation of games or funding of teams was noted in 1858 in a letter to *The Times* in London, reproduced in the *Freeman's Journal*:

I have often been puzzled to make out how the resident gentry in the south of Ireland pass their time... They seem to live in a sort of strenuous idleness within these [their houses'] walls, and only pass beyond them in pursuit of field sports, or when visiting the neighbouring gentry, or going a journey. There is no... hearty chats with farmers or their families, no persons coming to 'the house' for assistance or advice, no parish business – in short, no intercourse or communion with the people outside the wall and the gate, except casually and accidentally. There are no county cricket matches as in

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<sup>267</sup> It was said about the Nenagh CC versus constabulary game in 1851: 'The play came off in a well-adapted field, kindly given upon this, as upon all occasions, when any play or merry-making takes place – by Mr D. Brundley.' *Nenagh Guardian*, 24 September 1851.

<sup>268</sup> The Mayor of Belfast, Thomas Verner, granted ground in 1855 for a match between the Belfast Garrison and the Belfast CC at Ormeau. *Belfast News-Letter*, 1 June 1855.

<sup>269</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 25 July 1856.

England, no curling matches as in Scotland, where all ranks mix on equal terms.<sup>270</sup>

It would be such an embrace of cricket in the 1860s and an increasing patronage that would lead to the game becoming a truly national pastime, and this rise of patronage is the most striking development of the 1860s regarding the ascent of cricket in Ireland. Patronage was similarly important in England, but less prevalent in Wales.<sup>271</sup> In Ireland, far poorer than the mainland as outlined in the introduction, this funding and provision of cricket was crucial in explaining why cricket developed in popularity and play across the whole of society geographically and socio-economically.

The most visible way that this patronage manifested itself was through the provision of grounds, although it also included the provision of lunches, equipment and other important facilitators of play. In the early 1860s, those providing grounds included dukes, knights of the realm, MPs, counties' high sheriffs and Army officers, with grounds provision sweeping across the whole country from counties Antrim, Down and Cavan in Ulster, through the belly of Ireland in Tipperary, King's and Queen's counties, right down to the south of Cork.<sup>272</sup> This was a significantly higher offering and allocation of grounds than was seen even in the late 1850s, and undoubtedly increased the playing and access to cricket that was to be so disrupted in later years during the land wars when communal good will and leasing of grounds was to decrease. This provision maintained itself from the early 1860s until 1878.

Without detailed biographical knowledge of players' backgrounds in a national, macro study, it is impossible to know what percentage of players belonged to different social classes, but it could certainly be assumed that many of the people who accessed grounds through the generosity of local magnates would have been of humbler origin than the elite who enjoyed games at the Vice Regal ground in Dublin. This increasing provision of grounds was no doubt influenced by the enthusiasm of Carlisle as well as the general momentum and frenzy that was increasingly

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<sup>270</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 31 December 1858.

<sup>271</sup> In England, cricket was supported by the aristocracy, landlords and upper-middle classes who were convinced of the social value of cricket, and many teams in England were 'sustained by local charity.' See K.A.P. Sandiford, 'England' in B. Stoddart and K.A.P. Sandiford (eds), *The Imperial Game – Cricket, Culture and Society* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998), p.12 and p.24. All classes of Victorians were encouraged to play cricket by their social and cultural leaders and leadership came from the Church, aristocracy and crown but the majority of Victorian CCs struggled financially and relied upon local donations or fundraising (Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, pp.2-3 and p.56). In Wales, landlord and industrial patronage was the 'exception rather than the rule' (Hignell, *Cricket in Wales: an illustrated history*, p.72).

<sup>272</sup> Please see appendix seven for examples.

manifesting in cricketing reports and editorials in newspapers. For example, the Lurgan Demesne were playing within the grounds of Lord Lurgan by 1865, 'who gives every encouragement to the sport.'<sup>273</sup> Another case study of the patronage and physical play of Lord Massereene is showcased in chapter two, and again shows a leading member of Irish society providing grounds and enthusiasm for cross-class play.

The clearest explanation as to why these men of power and standing were becoming increasingly supportive and visible in their cricketing provision was voiced by J.P. Hennessy, MP, in presenting two bats to the Clara CC with a silver plate engraving signifying his bestowal in 1862. Upon the presentation, he was noted to have said:

I beg to present you with a pair of cricket bats, and I do so mainly because it gives me the opportunity of expressing my hearty approval of all country sports and pastimes. It is not only because such sports increase the vigour of the body and relieve the anxiety of the mind that they deserve to be promoted. They have, particularly in Ireland, a higher claim even than this to the support of all classes. Every religious creed and every party distinction in this county is to be found represented in your club, and yet you mix together, in the most friendly manner, on that little piece of common ground that lies around your wickets. Believe me, such intimate intercourse of such classes which, until a recent period, were widely separated, must be productive of good feeling in the country, and may lead to national results of no small magnitude. I earnestly hope that those who agree with me in approving of popular sports and pastimes will endeavour to establish, before long, in this county, not only more clubs such as yours, but also, in every parish, a good foot-ball club and a good hurling club, or any of those wholesome, innocent games that the people formerly enjoyed so much, but which are now, unfortunately, neglected.<sup>274</sup>

Even if elite investment was less than what they were investing in hunting circles,<sup>275</sup> this financial support still helped further the game. Improving social conditions led the way in allowing this increasing contact and encouragement, with numerous

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<sup>273</sup> *Handbook 1865-6*, p.48.

<sup>274</sup> *The Irish Times*, 12 November 1862.

<sup>275</sup> Thirty members of the Queen's County Hunt had a dinner in late December 1864, where fine wine and food was enjoyed, with £450 subscribed to building a town hall in Maryborough (current-day Portlaoise). Land for building the hall was leased for free, for ever, by Mr Thomas Turpin (*The Irish Times*, 3 January 1865). Similarly, the Marchioness of Ormonde donated £100 to the Kilkenny Hunt in January 1865 (*The Irish Times*, 26 January 1865). There was also cross-fertilisation of sports at this time too, with the Limerick Hunt Cup raced for £60 at the Great Munster Annual Race meeting on 18 and 19 September 1865 (*The Irish Times*, 3 July 1865). Riders had to be from the Co Limerick Hunt or Harriers, showing an air of exclusivity.

historians showing the positive relationships between ruler and ruled at this time, contradicting many popular stereotypes of the evil landlord. As William Vaughan has noted, the period between the early 1850s and late 1870s was one of ‘agricultural prosperity’<sup>276</sup> which would have produced more harmonious relationships, and Samuel Clark has termed this period one of ‘accommodation’ between landlord and tenant with a great improvement in the relationship in the decades before the land wars of the late 1870s.<sup>277</sup> The view of the distant landlord, ignorant and uncaring of his charges has generally been dismissed, with landlords and tenants often sharing the same interests: they did not live in completely alien worlds.<sup>278</sup> Likewise, there was some workplace patronage and provision by elites, but this was less than that through grounds provision across the country for local clubs and will be addressed later in this chapter.

Some felt that there was a need to provide amusement for the less fortunate in society in the mid-Victorian period. Although it is difficult to establish how widespread this sentiment was there is certainly evidence of paternalism at this time in Ireland, with a Working Classes’ Association existent in Belfast by 1852.<sup>279</sup> The Earl of Belfast made an impassioned plea on behalf of the working-class population of the city in this year, calling for the development of an Athenaeum in likeness to the ones existing in Liverpool and Manchester. He began by saying that ‘Amongst persons of all classes in this town I have found prevalent a consciousness that there is yet something wanting to its greatness, accompanied by a desire to remedy the deficiency of which they are conscious...’ before going on to decry:

What sources of amusement, what means of recreation are afforded them? Not one. In case of a holiday, there is not a single inducement held out to the humbler classes to abstain from visiting the public-house. They have no people’s park, such as exist in many large towns; they have not even space for a wholesome game of cricket. In the evening, the Theatre is closed, or, if it be occasionally open, the performances are not such as to convey the great moral lessons of the drama; they have no means of hearing music, they have no library to visit, no lectures to attend. Thus unprovided, who can blame them should they resort to the debasing pleasures of drunkenness and sensuality? Do not let me be told that such is their inclination, and that they will continue

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<sup>276</sup> Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants*, p.17.

<sup>277</sup> S. Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1979), pp.153-155.

<sup>278</sup> Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants*, p.12.

<sup>279</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 26 April 1852.

in their old habits in spite of your efforts? This plea does not relieve us from doing our duty in using our efforts in their behalf...<sup>280</sup>

Such calls for intervention for the betterment of people's lives by the Earl of Belfast in 1852 were acted upon, with the town of Ballymoney serving as an interesting example. The retiring manager of the Belfast Bank in Ballymoney, Mr Hugh Small, had 'secured the affection and esteem of all sections and classes of the Ballymoney community' in November 1856 for his 'untiring exertions to promote the social, moral and religious interests of the town in which he lived.' An industrial school had been established in Ballymoney, with a considerable endowment of £120 being collected in the year 1855 - 1856, presumably from the local landlords, gentry and middle-class citizens. Over 30 boys had been taken from the streets and engaged in industrial education. It was commented with pride that: 'These boys, who were once notorious, a pest to society, and a disgrace to the town, are now industrious in their habits and cleanly in their persons... training their minds, by intelligent and religious studies, to be useful to themselves and a blessing to their benefactors. – (Applause).' It was this very town that had described this time as 'an age of progress,' boasting of their development of a cricket and public park in addition to other amenities. It was noted that the funding for these symbols of progress had come from 'liberal contributions,' especially from the late Earl of Antrim.<sup>281</sup> The result of such generosity was 'good feeling' amongst all classes, amongst which 'the greatest cordiality exists.' Cricket, in addition to other improvements, was therefore benefiting from the pockets of significant individuals in Ballymoney, which correlates with the benevolent paternalism of the working classes in England at this time by patrons across the Irish Channel<sup>282</sup> and again reinforces a developing sense of community pride in Ireland in local areas that would increasingly be centred around cricket clubs.

The supposed benefit of these interactions was well reported. The *Freeman's Journal* reported a story as early as 1851 where a local judge in Lancashire had noted that crime was 'very light' in a neighbouring county, where cricket was played a great deal. He drew a correlation between low crime and cricket playing, and recommended subsequent greater play in Lancashire.<sup>283</sup> Whether this type of paternalism and gregarious concern was for the benefit of the common man himself or for the

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 November 1856.

<sup>282</sup> Sandiford, 'England,' p.23.

<sup>283</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 25 August 1851.

betterment of the local area which would also then benefit the patron is hard to know. But patronage of cricket was increasing in tandem with concern for the working man, with the Earl of Antrim becoming president of the Ballymoney cricket club in 1856,<sup>284</sup> an act which would be replicated much more in the decade to come by elite individuals and the gentry patronising cricket clubs.

Whilst it is clear that the richest were providing cricket, it is right to question why they would have done so for the less well-off in society beyond mere altruism or paternalism. Cricket could be seen as a form of social control, and at one extreme Trotsky's view of employing sport to distract men from politics could be considered,<sup>285</sup> although its usage at this time in this way would seem unlikely due to the relative social and political harmony that pervaded in the years between 1848 - 1878.

More generously, cricketing provision could be seen as a concern for the common man rather than an attempt to control him. The desire to influence and maintain local order and goodwill is a valid suggestion for cricket; as Neil Tranter has shown, sport on the mainland was seen as a social control in a number of different ways such as providing an alternative to drink, by distracting men from radical politics and crime and by encouraging a greater degree of social cohesion through the association of different classes at sporting events.<sup>286</sup> Cricket was used on the mainland to theoretically break down class barriers,<sup>287</sup> and whatever hypocrisies might have been embedded within this practice, it is clear that men in Ireland were also reflecting this custom. Echoing Keith Sandiford's observation of paternalism driving many successful individuals to establish cricket clubs catering to the working classes and enlightening local pride<sup>288</sup> was no doubt a genuine concern for local tenants and individuals who could benefit from the healthy, moral and temperance virtues of cricket being increasingly perpetuated in the decades under investigation. This concern was certainly shown in landlords' educational provision on their estates, as even after the establishment of the national schools, landlords were still involved in educational provision on estates through general oversight, leasings, teachers' pay,

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<sup>284</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 29 May 1856.

<sup>285</sup> C.L.R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (Yellow Jersey Press, London, 2005), p.200.

<sup>286</sup> Tranter, *Sport, economy and society*, p.37.

<sup>287</sup> Sandiford, 'England,' p.22.

<sup>288</sup> Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p.166.

building constructions, recruitment and training thereafter, appointing managers and overseeing curriculum content.<sup>289</sup>

Cricket in Ireland was probably more about the carrot than the stick. It is unlikely that landlords or prominent individuals sought absolutely no personal or communal gain from their investments, hoping no doubt for easy rental collections and favourable electoral returns in a community devoid of aggression or threats. However sociological control theories of a matrix developed to imprison the Irish masses just doesn't seem right in light of the current historiographical view of these men. Landlords were not the vampires as sometimes portrayed, and in addition to their concern for educational standards on their land as shown above, in many instances they have been shown to be concerned and disposed to generating positive local relations. One example of this would be of the Curraghmore gathering of 1865 for Lord Waterford's coming of age celebrations on his estate which saw over 700 individuals including the peasantry attend, with Waterford declaring his care for the well-being of his tenants.<sup>290</sup>

Whatever their motives for provision, the donation of cricketing grounds, facilities, funds and rhetorical support for the playing of the game by the richest half of Irish society extended and opened the game up to all in Ireland. Without this patronage, cricket would have remained predominantly the game of the elite.

## 2. Societal movements justifying the playing of cricket

### *2.1: A manly, noble, healthy and health-giving pursuit*

The elites in Irish society would undoubtedly have been attracted to cricket by its increasing overtures of being a manly and noble game. These ideas about being a manly man and extolling manliness in cricket have rightly been researched in themselves by Max Davidson in his work looking at the history of manliness in Yorkshire cricket.<sup>291</sup> Davidson highlights how crude tests have been used for

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<sup>289</sup> J. McEntee, 'Learning from the landlord? Primary education on the great estates in mid-nineteenth-century Ireland' in D. Dickson, J. Pyz and C. Shepard (eds), *Irish classrooms and British Empire* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2012), pp.30-41.

<sup>290</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 16 October 1865.

<sup>291</sup> M. Davidson, *We'll get 'em in sequins: manliness, Yorkshire cricket and the century that changed everything* (Wisden Sports Writing, London, 2012).

generations of men to show their strength in society, using Lady Macbeth's probing question of 'Are you a man?' as a provoking start point to introduce a challenge that has been laid before almost all men at some point as 'an eternal contest.' The goalposts and ways of proving this have constantly moved, and men have had to take the 'temperature of the times' to decide how they would succeed in the latest form to avoid relegation to a second tier of manhood.<sup>292</sup> That cricket was one of the few ways of showing oneself as a manly man in the mid-century due to a lack of sporting alternatives was to benefit the game's popularity and standing.

These associations between cricket and manliness were established early in this period of investigation. In 1848 Queen Victoria was reported to have initiated training for the Prince of Wales in the 'arts and mysteries of the healthful and manly game of cricket',<sup>293</sup> whilst Mr Young, MP for Cavan, was free to acknowledge in a public toast at the Virginia regatta in 1846 that he was 'an ardent admirer of manly sports, such as cricket, archery, boating.'<sup>294</sup> As such, the symbolism of cricket as an outlet for manliness existed from the earliest years of this thesis.

David Newsome has written extensively on this topic, and his work found that by the 1870s striving for manliness had become 'cultish' and by the end of the nineteenth century had almost become a cardinal virtue.<sup>295</sup> Such rhetoric manifested itself in Ireland, particularly in the 1850s and 1860s. The *Freeman's Journal* thanked Charles Lawrence for making this 'manly and interesting game popular in this country' upon reporting his testimonial match in 1858,<sup>296</sup> and Sligo School Cricket Club were fortunate in receiving £5 from Lord Palmerston in May 1862, in admiration of the 'manly game,' an investment that was reported in all three of the major national newspapers under investigation as well as the rural *Nenagh Guardian*.<sup>297</sup> Requisite clothing for cricketers and rowers – in an advert entitled 'Manly sports' – was provided by Kenny and Owens, merchant tailors, in Dublin in 1860.<sup>298</sup> In separate eulogies, *The Irish Times* was keen to decry cricket as 'one of the most manly and

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<sup>292</sup> Davidson, *We'll get 'em in sequins*, pp.1-2.

<sup>293</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 2 June 1848.

<sup>294</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 11 September 1846.

<sup>295</sup> D. Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning* (Cassell, London, 1961), p.195 and p.199.

<sup>296</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 12 June 1858.

<sup>297</sup> *The Irish Times*, 14 May 1862. This patronage was also reported in the *Belfast News-Letter*, *Freeman's Journal* and *Nenagh Guardian* too.

<sup>298</sup> See *The Irish Times*, 10 March 1860, for an example.



athletic of all games'<sup>299</sup> in 1861, but a bigger commendation had come the year before, where it was stated that:

It is an exhilarating and manly game, tending to encourage that muscular development which until lately has been too much neglected... Cricket, moreover, brings men together, clanships are formed, and by these societies are ruled.<sup>300</sup>

It was also made clear by *The Irish Times* that 'cricket must ever be a fashionable pastime for gentlemen' in comparing it with archery, which could be undertaken by both sexes.<sup>301</sup> Cricket's place as the sign of manhood was thus strengthened and assured in the 1860s, cementing if not even furthering its place as the sport of courageous men copying the bond of strong body and purity of heart and mind that was developing momentum at this time in mid-nineteenth century Britain.<sup>302</sup>

In addition to manliness, cricket's nobility was extolled and became synonymous with the game itself. The *Nenagh Guardian* commented in 1849 that 'We are glad to see this noble game so much patronised in Ireland this year'<sup>303</sup> and by 1854 the *Belfast News-Letter* felt even more self-confident, when commenting 'We are gratified to perceive that this noble and manly game is taking up the position which it ought to occupy in this country.'<sup>304</sup> By 1859, *The Irish Times* had singled cricket out as being 'the noble game,'<sup>305</sup> echoed in the *Belfast News-Letter* which praised the spirit 'of fair play which so distinguishes the game'<sup>306</sup> adding a brush of arrogance and reassurance to one's association with a game so refined and dignified. The nobility of the game and its demarcation as manly were often reported together as a type of double blessing which was seen frequently in newspaper reporting across these years and into the 1860s. This would have been a particularly attractive proposition to the elite in society who in turn would have cascaded this idea throughout society through their patronage of a worthy, respectful and manly pursuit for all Irish men.

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<sup>299</sup> *The Irish Times*, 22 April 1861.

<sup>300</sup> *The Irish Times*, 4 September 1860.

<sup>301</sup> *The Irish Times*, 14 August 1863.

<sup>302</sup> Holt, *Sport and the British*, p.89.

<sup>303</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 2 June 1849.

<sup>304</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 13 September 1854.

<sup>305</sup> *The Irish Times*, 17 September 1859.

<sup>306</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 10 July 1860.

The healthy qualities of cricket took on many forms. At its most simple level it saw generic rhetorical justification espoused about the game, but such thinking was increasingly underpinned by the support of doctors, researchers and educators. The effect of this saw cricket snowball to a vehicle for wider public health making it not only a popular but socially-useful game.

The mid-Victorian period was a time of increasing concern about issues of health, where cricket served as a useful antidote to fears of a variety of ailments - be they physical, mental or even what might be termed moral. This was a theme that developed as the years between 1848 – 1866 progressed. The health-giving qualities of cricket were evident in Irish society as early as 1848 (and indeed before), being described as ‘the healthful and manly game of cricket.’<sup>307</sup> Such rhetoric continued throughout the 1850s, but came to increasingly crescendo into the 1860s. In May 1860, on the opening of the cricket season, it was stated by *The Irish Times*:

There is no more manly or spirit stirring exercise - none which more strengthens the limbs and increases the speed and vigour of youth... Cricket offers almost the only athletic exercise which is within the reach of the numerous youth of our city.<sup>308</sup>

A similar piece in 1861 also spoke of the ‘health of body and muscularity of limb, and those friendships among the young which will last when the bat is thrown aside, an [sic] the ball thrown to other hands.’<sup>309</sup> Such enthusiastic editorial pieces typified the general healthy rhetoric of cricket as the years of this thesis develop.

Yet this justification did not just relate to the physical or the abstract; there were supposedly clear mental benefits to be gained from cricket too. Boasting about the development of cricket in schools which had experienced huge growth in popularity in the early 1860s, it was noted not only in English universities but also in Irish ones that ‘the most successful in literary contests are not the pale, cloistered, worn-out students, but those who have sought in healthful exercise, under the free air, that renovation which nature demands for the mind as well as the body.’<sup>310</sup> Similarly ‘The youth who expands his chest and develops his muscles by cricket or football performs as much effective work by six hours’ study as the cloistered student effects

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<sup>307</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 2 June 1848.

<sup>308</sup> *The Irish Times*, 3 May 1860.

<sup>309</sup> *The Irish Times*, 22 April 1861.

<sup>310</sup> *The Irish Times*, 4 September 1860.

[sic] in twenty.’<sup>311</sup> These ideas about the utility of cricket for all-round general health seeped into the schooling system in Ireland as well as the universities and colleges, where mainland norms and the sporting craze of British Public Schools were imitated in the leading private Irish equivalents.

These ideas were justified not just as the whims of newspaper journalists or enthusiasts, but by scientific evidence. Research into the status of Dublin University students seemingly found support for the idea that the able cricketer was also an able academic, in a piece covered extensively in the three major papers of the *Belfast News-Letter*, *The Irish Times* and *Freeman’s Journal*, where Dean Graves’ findings were celebrated in linking athleticism with scholasticism and general success in life.<sup>312</sup> Such comments were supported by a paper read by Mr James Heywood on ‘The recommendations of the Royal Commissioners on Popular Education, respecting primary instruction and the better application of educational charities’ at the Department for Education proceedings at the Social Science Congress, held in Dublin on 20 August 1861.<sup>313</sup>

This support for cricket was further enhanced by the endorsements of medical professionals as exemplified by the *Belfast News-Letter’s* article in 1856 on ‘Air, water, exercise’ written by Henry McCormac, consulting physician to Belfast Hospital. He said: ‘All large towns should abound with parks, gardens, grounds, well-aired enclosures, for harmless, manly exercises – as quoits, bowls, cricket, gymnastics, ball-play; for it is of great moment to encourage habits of open-air life and activity...’<sup>314</sup> The link between medical practitioners and cricket-playing can be seen in the physical play of cricket by doctors and consultants, with Dublin Medical School<sup>315</sup> and Steevens’ Hospital<sup>316</sup> two of four medical establishments playing cricket in Dublin in the years 1860 - 1866. In particular, the Dublin Medical School was Catholic,<sup>317</sup> and it should be assumed that doctors played the game as much for enjoyment rather than simply endorsing or indeed practising the rhetoric about healthiness increasingly seen in Ireland.

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<sup>311</sup> *The Irish Times*, 24 May 1862.

<sup>312</sup> *The Irish Times*, 21 August 1861. This was presumably Charles Graves, Dean of the Chapel Royal by 1865, and a member of Phoenix CC in their 1838 formation (*Handbook 1865-6*, p.5).

<sup>313</sup> *The Irish Times*, 21 August 1861.

<sup>314</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 4 July 1856.

<sup>315</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 4 May 1866.

<sup>316</sup> *The Irish Times*, 15 June 1864.

<sup>317</sup> Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, p.96.

These musings and endorsements went beyond the superficial: Victorians held strong and sincere concerns about the link between problems of the mind being linked to physical defect which had led to a ‘garbled Darwinism’ forming at this time<sup>318</sup> that had become so engrained mid-century that the proposition of a healthy body leading a healthy mind ‘soon felt like a classical truth.’<sup>319</sup> These ideas were clearly extolled in Ireland. The Catholic *Dublin Review* in 1860 said that sport was there not so much to produce cheerful Christians, but to ‘bring out pluck, self-reliance, independence – the animal man.’<sup>320</sup> Such rhetoric was found increasingly in newspapers, and would certainly have been considerations for the upper and middle classes of Irish men, particularly those with aspirations of self-improvement.

Such was the value in cricket that it was even played in special educational institutions; the Deaf and Dumb Institution played the Elmwood second eleven in May 1863,<sup>321</sup> and in 1865 the Lunatic Asylum of Armagh were allowed to watch the IZ versus eighteen of Co Armagh match, held at the grounds of Sir Capel Molyneux.<sup>322</sup> Such practice was first seen in Britain in 1846 when the Hanwell Lunatic Asylum provided the first recorded instance of cricket play for the mentally ill.<sup>323</sup> Rob Ellis’ work on cricket in asylums in Britain has shown three usages for such people: education for the insane through play or watching; a recreation played by the employees of the institutions; or as a way to integrate inmates with the local community.<sup>324</sup> It is unclear who the players were in the 1863 match, but the implication from the report of the IZ game in 1865 is certainly that the attendees were inmates. Cricket’s place as a training ground for pupils, mainstream or not, was becoming ever-more assured.

Yet cricket was not just for the adolescent student, those with disabilities or the brave, manly man seeking useful and health-giving exercise. It was also a vehicle for wider public health, as was being increasingly suggested. Joanna Brück has produced some excellent research on the issue of public parks in Ireland, and much of

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<sup>318</sup> Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp.87-89.

<sup>319</sup> J. Winder, *The little wonder: the remarkable history of Wisden* (Bloomsbury, London, 2013), p.10.

<sup>320</sup> Holt, *Sport and the British*, p.94.

<sup>321</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 25 May 1863.

<sup>322</sup> *Handbook 1865-6*, p.42.

<sup>323</sup> Harvey, *The beginnings of a commercial sporting culture in Britain*, p.142.

<sup>324</sup> R. Ellis, ‘Asylums and Sport: Participation, Isolation and the Role of Cricket in the Treatment of the Insane’ in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (January 2013), p.91.

her work chimes with the concerns raised in the contemporary sources and the ways in which cricket could be applied to the problems of public health.<sup>325</sup>

The issue of a people's park had previously been debated in Belfast, and this momentum was sustained at the beginning of the 1860s decade with the *Belfast News-Letter* hoping that cricket grounds could be set apart for 'healthful recreation.'<sup>326</sup> There was also a desire for a people's park in Dublin, with Benjamin Lee Guinness (of the brewery family) buying the ground of the Cobourg Gardens in May 1861 with the intention of opening it as a people's park and cricket ground 'for the benefit of the people.'<sup>327</sup> This was no small matter. As the wealthiest in Dublin fled their townhouses in the city centre in the early 1800s, these once-grand houses became encampments of squalor and illness as the industrial working classes moved in. The destitution shocked the middle classes: as early as 1841's census, it was found that 62 percent of children living in the impoverished south inner city died before the age of ten, and the threat of a health pandemic spreading from these classes to Dublin's wealthiest was an apocalyptic proposition, a problem that similarly threatened the industrial shipbuilding and manufacturing centres of Belfast.<sup>328</sup> In addition to their healthy benefits, parks were places where both the working and middle classes could take fresh air as well as enjoy respectable pursuits as their activities were monitored and regulated.<sup>329</sup> Public parks also became a form of civic pride in areas like Kingstown in Dublin as well as showcasing the middle-classes' wealth,<sup>330</sup> whilst in general allowed cross-class interaction and mingling to show the working classes how to better themselves through middle-class norms and behaviour.<sup>331</sup>

The Rev. Mr Scully wanted Stephen's Green in Dublin to be opened up to public amusement in 1863 as a vehicle for cross-class interaction, saying in November of this year:

In Sydney and in Melbourne there were splendid public gardens and parks, in which the bands played once a week, and the young men engaged at cricket.

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<sup>325</sup> See J. Brück, 'Landscapes of desire: parks, colonialism, and identity in Victorian and Edwardian Ireland' in *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, Vol.17, Issue 1 (2013), pp.196-223.

<sup>326</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 28 January 1860.

<sup>327</sup> *The Irish Times*, 21 May 1861.

<sup>328</sup> Brück, 'Landscapes of desire,' p.198.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, p.208.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, p.203.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, p.210.

He would be glad to see the young men playing cricket in Stephen's green [sic] (hear, hear).<sup>332</sup>

Such a public park was established by the Sorella Trust in 1864 in Belfast for 'the promotion of the recreation of the working classes of Belfast in encouraging sports and exercises, such as cricket, croquet, rowing, swimming, and the like.'<sup>333</sup>

## *2.2: Modern and supported by the Royal Family*

In addition to its various social qualities and identities, cricket was also one sign of modernity, particularly among the strengthening middle classes of this time. Ireland was modernising as a country, with the Gaelic language being abandoned by ambitious parents<sup>334</sup> and cricket would have been symbolic of an aspirational family. Ireland was brought closer to the mainland than ever before in 1852 with the laying of a cross-channel telegraph, making Ireland 'nearer to London than it has hitherto been'<sup>335</sup> which meant that mainland cultural activities and norms were increasingly spreading into Ireland. Cricket was associated with this development and modernisation, with the town of Ballymoney boasting in 1856 that 'this is an age of progress' before highlighting the town's development of a cricket and public park in addition to a whole host of physical, cultural and educational improvements including sewerage, pure water, gas works, footpaths and railway connections to Belfast and Derry.<sup>336</sup>

One of the most defining and lasting impacts of the Famine was upon landholding in Ireland, creating an enlarged class of large farmers. With many of the cottiers and labourers wiped out by those years of difficulty, and many of the smaller farmers relinquishing land to gain access to workhouses to gain relief, middling farmers benefited from this drastic shake-up of Irish local society by buying up swathes of land post-Famine. Roy Foster's work has highlighted the emergence of the strong farmers, who were now entering their own ascendancy; the plots of land on farms of one acre and above with 15 acres or more rose significantly between 1844

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<sup>332</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 14 November 1863.

<sup>333</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 1 August 1864.

<sup>334</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.340.

<sup>335</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 4 June 1852.

<sup>336</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 November 1856.

and 1881, going from 36 percent to 56.1 percent.<sup>337</sup> By 1854, 60 percent of Irish land was being farmed by 90,000 farmers holding above fifty acres; large farmers had effectively become landlords, if not landowners, achieving near-gentry status.<sup>338</sup>

Landlords were resentful of the way they felt that middling farmers had used the events of the 1840s to their advantage, essentially gobbling up smaller landholders' land to boost their own holdings. In addition to larger holdings, these significant farmers benefited from increased rights, as the 1850 Reform Act redistributed the franchise on land possession, opposed to land ownership, which gave tenant farmers a majority in many constituencies.<sup>339</sup> This was essentially a rise of the farmer, who now no longer threatened by the labourers and cottiers beneath them, set the grounds for an increasingly powerful position that would underpin the movement against landlords in later decades. When shopkeepers, merchants, traders and the professional classes who also benefitted from the 1850 reforms<sup>340</sup> are added to the growing strength of farmers, it is clear that an emergent middle class, largely untouched by the Famine, was developing in strength. A modernising group prepared to shed vestiges of the past – like the Gaelic language – whilst retaining their proud Catholic nationalism, were establishing themselves more forcefully in Ireland than in earlier decades.<sup>341</sup> This strengthening group sought solidarity with the landlords and gentry, in the hunting field and Dublin clubs, opposed to unity with the plebeians of their own religion.<sup>342</sup>

As Hilary Larkin has shown, it is difficult to fully ascertain the exact outlook of those living in Ireland to Britain and her social pleasures, as so little has been written on it. But the emerging small and middling farmers post-Famine placed an emphasis on respectability and a possible desire to distance themselves from sufferings of the past, and as they became more comfortable were able to indulge in Victorian pleasures and senses of lifestyle; there seemed to be a 'large degree of quiescence' from large farmers and certain Irish middle classes for Victorian respectability.<sup>343</sup> Ciaran Ó Murchadha has put this even more forcefully, suggesting

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<sup>337</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.336.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, p.379.

<sup>339</sup> R.V. Comerford, *The Fenians in context: Irish politics and society 1848 – 82* (Wolfhound Press, Dublin, 1998), p.23.

<sup>340</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, pp.343-344.

<sup>341</sup> R.F. Foster, 'Ascendancy and Union' in R.F. Foster (ed), *The Oxford History of Ireland* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001), p.173.

<sup>342</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.378.

<sup>343</sup> Larkin, *A history of Ireland, 1800 – 1922*, pp.112-113 and p.124.

that large farmers ingested ‘the most suffocating norms of Victorian respectability and moral prudery’ that transformed Irish society in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>344</sup>

That cricket was the fashionable summer game of the elite in society in Ireland as well as in Britain would have influenced this middling sort of Irish society, who wanted to project an identity of modernisation and respectability to the rest of society as they experienced their own ascendancy. Yet cricket was not just popular with those on the mainland at this time; it was a cosmopolitan, worldwide fashion that would have further attracted these emerging Irish middle classes. Reports had regularly trickled in about cricket in Australia, the Army’s playing of the game in India, as well as the USA and Canada when English teams had gone to play, but there was a notable increase to the mid-1860s of reports coming from new and often exotic locations. Cricket was gaining increasing coverage from France and particularly Paris at this time, where the Paris cricket club was gaining in popularity, Prince Napoleon himself becoming a member in 1866,<sup>345</sup> showing the game’s place in high society was not just confined to the Prince of Wales and the British and Australian elites overseas. Cricket was also being played in New Zealand and the Caribbean by 1865,<sup>346</sup> in Malta by the British Army in 1866<sup>347</sup> and even in Norway at Loffoden in the Vasgekaller mountain range.<sup>348</sup> There might have been a small part of cricket’s popularity that was due to its image as progressive, international and fashionable overseas in an age of Irish modernisation.

The Royal Family’s endorsement of cricket can be seen as early as 1848 as already stated, and more enthusiastic praise was heaped on cricket by the Prince of Wales’ continued interest which naturally propelled cricket further forward at this time of increasing Irish interest. The Prince of Wales’ desire to become adept in the national game of cricket led to him receiving daily instruction at his royal residence at Frewen Hall in Oxford, reported not only in the *Belfast News-Letter* but also the more rural *Nenagh Guardian*,<sup>349</sup> with his Royal Highness noted to have hosted a game of cricket with noblemen and gentlemen in Home Park, Windsor, in July 1860.<sup>350</sup> In

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<sup>344</sup> Ó Murchadha, *The Great Famine*, p.189.

<sup>345</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 20 June 1866.

<sup>346</sup> Cricket was being played in New Zealand (*The Irish Times*, 13 January 1865); there was also Caribbean reporting of cricket in October 1865 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 7 October 1865).

<sup>347</sup> *The Irish Times*, 6 July 1866.

<sup>348</sup> *The Irish Times*, 6 September 1864.

<sup>349</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 May 1860 and *Nenagh Guardian*, 19 May 1860.

<sup>350</sup> *The Irish Times*, 5 July 1860.



likeness to Carlisle, this support of cricket went beyond mere rhetoric, with the Prince of Wales physically playing in cricket matches in Ireland at the Vice Regal Lodge<sup>351</sup> and the Curragh camp,<sup>352</sup> which would have invited other leading gentlemen to do so too in imitation. On the mainland, Victoria and Albert ‘certainly gave it their stamp of approval’ which had a significant impact on both aristocrats and commoners who still followed royal endorsements and leadership, something that diffused to Ireland amongst certain sections of society.<sup>353</sup>

At this point one might assume that Victoria’s endorsement of the game would only have appealed to Unionists or Britons living in Ireland longing for home. This would be an inaccurate assumption. Along with many other idiosyncrasies in the popular mind in nineteenth-century Irish history like the main nationalist movements from the 1870s onwards being led by Protestants, James Murphy’s work has shown how in the nineteenth century there was an ‘undoubted popularity of monarchy among large sections of the Irish Catholic nationalist population,’ a popularity that was ‘an embarrassment’ for nationalist leaders.<sup>354</sup> Of course, there were the die-hard nationalists of newspapers like *The Nation* and groups like Young Ireland to name but two that opposed all things British in Ireland, but Victoria was more popular than might be commonly assumed. She visited Ireland on four occasions between 1849 – 1900 and ‘was met with a popular enthusiasm that surpassed all expectations’ in the words of Murphy, not a contemporary partisan.<sup>355</sup> Similarly, Hilary Larkin’s work has highlighted how Victoria’s visits were ‘on the whole, magnificently successful’,<sup>356</sup> whilst the Prince of Wales was ‘greeted warmly’ by Cardinal Cullen on a visit to the Catholic University in 1866.<sup>357</sup> Thus her endorsement of the game was not anecdotal in understanding another vein for cricket’s increasing popularity. Any association made with her at cricket grounds through members of the Royal Family attending games in Ireland or the singing of the national anthem does not necessarily mean those attending were Unionists. It was only from the 1870s onwards in Limerick that a transition began from toasting the Queen being uncontroversial to politically

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<sup>351</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 2 July 1861.

<sup>352</sup> *The Irish Times*, 5 July 1861.

<sup>353</sup> Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p.3.

<sup>354</sup> J.H. Murphy, *Abject loyalty: nationalism and monarchy in Ireland during the reign of Queen Victoria* (Cork University Press, Cork, 2001), p.290.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.290-291.

<sup>356</sup> Larkin, *A history of Ireland, 1800 - 1922*, p.119.

<sup>357</sup> Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p.154.

polarising; it was only from this time on that toasts became less deferential with new toasts towards Ireland emerging.<sup>358</sup>

### 3. Spectacle and business motives

#### *3.1: Spectacle matches and their place in furthering cricket*

As cricket entrenched itself more into Irish life the number and quality of spectacle matches increased, which in turn further fuelled appetites for the game. These spectacle matches featured either domestic or foreign opponents, the latter of which provided a nationalistic outlet for sporting fans at a time of limited other comparative sporting opportunities to contest mainland foes.

Aiding the proliferation of grand matches in the early-to-mid 1850s were the first visits to Ireland of some of the premier teams in England. I Zingari, the roving Old Harrovian team, was applauded for providing a ‘treat’<sup>359</sup> to lovers of the game by first coming to Ireland in 1851, whilst the MCC’s inaugural visit in 1853 was subsequently followed by a return to play sixteen of the Vice Regal club in 1856, which was a highlight of the Dublin social calendar that year.<sup>360</sup> The United Eleven of England first came to Ireland in 1853, playing twenty-two of the Phoenix club, which again excited interest in the game in combating such a prestigious team from England.<sup>361</sup> The visits of such teams, in particular I Zingari and the MCC, boosted the kudos and interest of the elite in Ireland in the game, and increased the patronage of cricket by those wishing to be associated with a game that was so well supported by the Viceroys of the time in fielding teams at the Vice Regal Lodge.

The All Ireland Eleven versus twenty-two of Dublin and District in 1857 was the first ‘big’ game in Ireland in terms of promotion as supported by Carlisle, and from then newspaper advertising and entrance fees to games became more widespread. Whilst these might seem like small matters, it shows the gentle emergence of spectacle and monetary-focused matches in a commercialisation of

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<sup>358</sup> Gray, ‘Introduction: Victoria’s Ireland?’ p.11.

<sup>359</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 19 April 1851.

<sup>360</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 5 September 1856.

<sup>361</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 9 September 1853.

cricket. This was to be crucial to generating more interest as businesses sought to tap into a new and emerging market.

It was the move towards more prestigious and bigger grounds that in many ways added to the sense of occasion of the games, with the All Ireland Eleven versus twenty-two of Dublin and District game in 1857 being staged at the Rotunda Gardens in Dublin, an arena that was felt could provide the best enclosed space for the numerous people expected. The scene at the Tuesday's play was captured evocatively and poetically by the *Freeman's Journal*, which reported:

A prettier sight could scarcely be imagined than the ground presented during the afternoon from the brilliant assembly of beauty and fashion arrayed in bright and varied colours – the numerous uniforms of the soldiers mingling with the dark green of the wooded banks – whilst the bands of the 1<sup>st</sup> Royals and Scots Greys added to the charm of the scene... the ground presented a most brilliant and animated appearance, the spectators forming a gay circle, in which we were glad to see a preponderance of the fair sex, who, by their presence, lent an additional charm to the scene...<sup>362</sup>

The presence of women was valued and appreciated; their attendance was celebrated. Manliness was often contrasted against the femininity of the women at games, thus offering a welcome comparison to the players on the field. Such matches as this increased the reporting of cricket in newspapers, as well as advertising the genteel, respectable and enjoyable facets of the sport.

This increasing reporting of games was aided by the continued and increasingly-varied novelty of touring sides by the mid-1860s, adding spice and originality to the cricketing season as well as evincing proto-nationalist pride in Irish cricket. Against-odds games with some of the leading professional and amateur English clubs were frequent and provided showpiece matches that were often the highlight of the season. Cricket was said to have made 'rapid strides' in the late years in 1865 due to the 'lions' of British cricket coming over to Ireland to play Irish teams,<sup>363</sup> and thirteen teams in total visited in the years 1864 – 1866, Scottish as well as English.<sup>364</sup> Most notable were the visits of the United South of England in 1865<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 11 July 1857.

<sup>363</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 11 September 1865.

<sup>364</sup> The Gentlemen of Yorkshire visited in June 1864, playing in Dublin, Belfast and the Curragh (*The Irish Times*, 30 June 1864, *Freeman's Journal*, 2 July 1864 and *Freeman's Journal*, 4 July 1864); West of Scotland, Gentlemen of Scotland, Eleven of Leeds and English Civil Service all toured Belfast in 1864 (*Freeman's Journal*, 5 July 1864); Birkenhead visited in 1865 (*Freeman's Journal*, 22 May 1865) as did Clydesdale (*Belfast News-Letter*, 23 May 1865); Kendal Mechanics' Institute visited in

and I Zingari, who toured in 1865 (playing five matches<sup>366</sup>) and in 1866 (playing six matches<sup>367</sup>). The 1866 tour was especially productive in spreading cricket further geographically in Ireland, touring to play games in Cork and the south of Ireland,<sup>368</sup> bringing highlight matches to new areas and new theatres of play in the absence of an Irish professional eleven.

Such tours would have appealed to these mainland players in addition to Irish players and spectators; Carlisle took the I Zingari visitors to see a Verdi opera in Dublin in the 1861 season, in addition to the customary balls, meals and jollity that one would normally expect.<sup>369</sup> Middle-class English guests also began to tour in addition to the elite and professional teams, including the English Civil Service as well as Bromsgrove School and the Bootle Club from Liverpool. Visits were not restricted to clubs from England with the Glasgow clubs of Thistle, Clydesdale and Caledonian in addition to the West of Scotland visiting in the early 1860s. Increasingly, Irish clubs were also taking to foreign adventure, with the North of Ireland touring Clydesdale in Scotland<sup>370</sup> and the Gentlemen of Ireland touring England to play the MCC on 26 and 27 May 1862.<sup>371</sup> By the mid-1860s, Phoenix and the North of Ireland were touring extensively on the mainland.<sup>372</sup> The increasing visits of overseas teams were also imitated by the more frequent play by elitist Irish teams. The Gentlemen of the North played the Gentlemen of the South in a return

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the summer of 1865 to play the North of Ireland (*Belfast News-Letter*, 7 June 1865); Liverpool CC toured in 1865 (*The Irish Times*, 4 August 1865); Anomalies toured from England in 1866 (*Freeman's Journal*, 2 July 1866), as did Caledonian CC (*The Irish Times*, 17 July 1866). I Zingari also visited in both 1865 and 1866, whilst the United South of England visited in 1865 (*Freeman's Journal*, 12 May 1865).

<sup>365</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 12 May 1865.

<sup>366</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 9 August 1865.

<sup>367</sup> *The Irish Times*, 17 September 1866.

<sup>368</sup> *The Irish Times*, 16 August 1866.

<sup>369</sup> *The Freeman's Journal*, 23 October 1861.

<sup>370</sup> *The Freeman's Journal*, 17 September 1861.

<sup>371</sup> *The Irish Times*, 29 May 1862.

<sup>372</sup> North of Ireland toured Scotland in June 1864 to play the West of Scotland and Clydesdale (*Belfast News-Letter*, 28 June 1864); Phoenix toured England in August 1864, playing Western CC of Manchester, Liverpool and Birkenhead (*Freeman's Journal*, 11 August 1864); Phoenix toured in 1865 too, playing Western again (*Freeman's Journal*, 9 August 1865), as well as Liverpool teams (*Belfast News-Letter*, 12 August 1865); North of Ireland played the Gentlemen of Yorkshire in York in late August 1865, in addition to other local teams (*Belfast News-Letter*, 15 August 1865) and also toured both Scotland in the summer of 1866 in June (*Belfast News-Letter*, 31 May 1866) and also England in August 1866 (*The Irish Times*, 20 August 1866).

fixture in Belfast in September 1865,<sup>373</sup> and the ‘full’ Gentlemen of Ireland team played versus IZ in 1866.<sup>374</sup>

Whilst the majority of these spectacle matches were played in the major urban centres of Belfast, Dublin and Cork, Irish clubs were increasingly touring within Ireland themselves by the mid-1860s, with rural teams going to the metropolis to find opposition or receiving major teams in their own neighbourhoods. The Civil Service of Dublin toured Belfast in 1864 to play the North of Ireland, whilst County Westmeath toured Dublin in 1864, 1865 and 1866, playing five games in the first two years and six in the last.<sup>375</sup> Navan cricket club went on a mini tour to Dundalk and Louth in July 1865, playing games on consecutive days, showing that touring was not necessarily just to the major Irish towns.<sup>376</sup> The roving Na Shuler were particularly active, playing in the counties of Wicklow, Carlow, Down and Queen’s for example in one year alone.<sup>377</sup> These matches added variety to the cricketing calendar for these rural teams, furthering the game’s appeal and attraction in areas away from the main population concentrations.

### *3.2: Businesses and clubs profiting from the game and their roles in spreading awareness of cricket*

Sports shops promoted cricket to the wealthier sections of society in newspapers. *The Nation* ran adverts for cricket bats and balls in sporting good shops in Dublin, Belfast and Limerick on three separate occasions as early as 1847<sup>378</sup> whilst the *Belfast News-Letter* ran adverts for John G. McGee & Co. of Belfast in 1849, promoting clothing for ‘the noble game of cricket.’<sup>379</sup> Shops such as Alexander Wilson in Belfast<sup>380</sup> and

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<sup>373</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 24 August 1865.

<sup>374</sup> The Gentlemen of Ireland played IZ in 1866, including representation from the north of Ireland (*Freeman’s Journal*, 30 August 1866).

<sup>375</sup> Westmeath toured Dublin in July 1864, winning three of five games played (*Freeman’s Journal*, 23 July 1864), touring in 1865 too – playing five matches again (*Freeman’s Journal*, 12 August 1865), and in 1866, playing six games this year (*Freeman’s Journal*, 30 July 1866).

<sup>376</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 31 July 1865.

<sup>377</sup> Na Shuler played fourteen of Wicklow and surrounding counties and also fourteen of Carlow and surrounding district in games on 6-7 (Wicklow) and 8-9 (Carlow) of September 1864 (*Freeman’s Journal*, 31 August 1864). They also played fourteen of Ballynoe and District within this series too (*Freeman’s Journal*, 9 September 1864). They played fourteen of Queen’s County in late September 1864 (*Freeman’s Journal*, 26 September 1864), with the fourteen of Queen’s County having six players seemingly of working-class origin (*Freeman’s Journal*, 29 September 1864).

<sup>378</sup> *The Nation*: 29 May, 10 July, 18 September 1847.

<sup>379</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 12 June 1849.

<sup>380</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 28 March 1851.

the opening of John Lawrence's shop in Grafton Street in Dublin in 1855<sup>381</sup> evidence a continued development of commercial cricket outlets in the 1850s, a trend that multiplied to the year 1866. Other regional shops sought to exploit the emergence of cricket by supplying the paraphernalia that was both needed and desired for play; this was not just a Dublin or Belfast craze. W. Nicholson, a Kilkenny shop owner, reported he had 'a large supply of bats and balls from the best makers' for sale as early as May 1857 in that county<sup>382</sup> and there was a cricketing outlet in Nenagh town, Co Tipperary, with J.D. Harkness selling cricket goods in 1866.<sup>383</sup>

The increasing patronage and supply of grounds fuelled a commercial opportunity that many divergent groups were clearly happy to exploit. As Ric Sissons stated regarding the 1850s and 1860s, 'In the era of Victorian free trade or laissez-faire, cricket was being sold in the market place like any other commodity and new "operations" endeavoured to cash in.'<sup>384</sup> This was certainly seen in Ireland in a scramble to profit. Equipment was an obvious area for expansion, with shops from London like John Wisden and Co. increasingly turning their eyes towards advertising in Irish newspapers: Wisden placed many adverts in the year 1860 in the rural *Nenagh Guardian* imploring those interested to order stock from his London store.<sup>385</sup>

Within this commercial element, cricketing goods evolved from the supply of bats, balls and wickets. By 1866 new outlets and individuals offered services for cricket in Dublin, ranging from tents, cricket boots, food services, the provision of musical bands at cricket as well as the more traditional and customary playing goods. Cricket club meetings were also increasingly being held in sports shops – Phoenix holding their early 1866 season meeting at John Lawrence's, for example<sup>386</sup> - showing how important these institutions were not just for the purchasing of equipment but also administration of the game.

Shops in Belfast became outlets for ticket sales for the All Ireland versus twenty-two of Ulster match in 1857,<sup>387</sup> and also extended their influence into the actual operations of the day at cricket matches. The offerings were becoming more varied, for instance with balloon ascents offered at the Sandymount cricket club in

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<sup>381</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 20 March 1855.

<sup>382</sup> O'Dwyer, *The History of Cricket in County Kilkenny*, p.25.

<sup>383</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 6 June 1866.

<sup>384</sup> R. Sissons, *The Players: a social history of the professional cricketer* (The Kingswood Press, London, 1988), p.60.

<sup>385</sup> See *Nenagh Guardian*, 10 March 1860, as an example.

<sup>386</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 25 April 1866.

<sup>387</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 September 1857.

June 1864,<sup>388</sup> in an attempt to encourage a wider spectatorship than those interested in cricket and no doubt to offer more amusement for female visitors. The physical preparation of playing surfaces was gaining more attention, with a new patent lawn mower on display at the Dublin Exhibition of July 1865, with a practice run shown on the cricket ground of Dublin University.<sup>389</sup> Belfast too was experiencing this development of grounds preparation, with Shanks' patent lawn-mowing machines on sale in Belfast in 1866 in adverts placed repeatedly in the summer months from June to August,<sup>390</sup> with particular seeds for cricket grounds being sold in the spring of 1866.<sup>391</sup> Cricket marquees<sup>392</sup> and photography at cricket matches<sup>393</sup> were other routes of exploitation. All these novel offerings would have particularly aided the enjoyment of the game by the richest in society, increasing the attractiveness of a day at the cricket, even if one didn't particularly enjoy watching the game.

Vital to this increasing spectacle at cricket grounds, whether it was cricket being the attraction or one of the various other amusements increasingly offered at grounds, were certain key individuals who did much to sensationalise and excite what might otherwise have been fairly pedestrian days out. In addition to the work that Charles Lawrence was doing with his promotion of the game to 1861 as professional, tour organiser and leader of the All Ireland Eleven, were two other men: John Lawrence (no relation to Charles) and Thomas Kirby, both shop owners in Dublin and firework artists. Their rivalry makes fascinating reading, in what turned out to be an arms-like build-up of entertainment. John Lawrence seems to have been the pyrotechnic artist of choice in the early 1860s, providing the fireworks after the All England Eleven versus twenty-two of Ireland games in September 1860<sup>394</sup> and May 1861.<sup>395</sup> Lawrence seemingly went one better in 1862, claiming the rights to being the cricketing outfitter to the Earl of Carlisle.<sup>396</sup> Yet disaster struck for Lawrence that very year, when Kirby announced he had the rights to being pyrotechnic artist at

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<sup>388</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 13 June 1864.

<sup>389</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 18 July 1865.

<sup>390</sup> See *Belfast News-Letter*, 2 June 1866 for example.

<sup>391</sup> See *Belfast News-Letter*, 16 March 1866 for an example of weekly adverts placed at this time.

<sup>392</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 17 May 1865.

<sup>393</sup> Adams and Dowling were offering photography for cricket matches in 1866, in an advert placed 32 times in the summer of 1866 in the *Belfast News-Letter*. See *Belfast News-Letter*, 10 May 1866, for an example.

<sup>394</sup> *The Irish Times*, 27 August 1860.

<sup>395</sup> *The Irish Times*, 20 May 1861.

<sup>396</sup> *The Irish Times*, 7 June 1862.

various races as well as the official pyrotechnic artist of the Viceroy in the *Freeman's Journal*.<sup>397</sup>

From hereon, the relationship between John Lawrence and Thomas Kirby became increasingly explosive, with Lawrence and Kirby competing as both promoters and pyrotechnic artists. Both men boasted of the fireworks shows they were putting up after athletic and cricket events, with Kirby now possessing the endorsement as Carlisle's provider. Lawrence in turn bragged that he would conclude the Leinster cricket ground athletic games on 5 August 1862 with the 'most Magnificent Display of FIREWORKS ever exhibited in Ireland,' claiming he was still pyrotechnic artist to Carlisle in an advert on 31 July 1862.<sup>398</sup> The very next day in *The Irish Times*, Kirby promised a 'magnificent display of Fire Works' at the Sandymount cricket ground's athletic fete on 4 August 1862, highlighting again his place as Carlisle's official pyrotechnic artist.<sup>399</sup> This rivalry extended throughout August and into September, with almost tit-for-tat adverts on consecutive days claiming supremacy, with respective bases at Leinster (for Lawrence) and Sandymount (for Kirby) now established. This juvenile one-upmanship saw the events at Leinster and Sandymount in September advertised with the articles literally running side-by-side for four days of publication in the *Freeman's Journal*, with Kirby's fireworks supposedly being 'superior to any yet exhibited' whilst Lawrence still claimed supremacy.<sup>400</sup>

The final blow for Lawrence came in May 1863 when it was announced, via a newspaper advert, that Kirby had secured the rights to being cricket and archery outfitter to the Lord Lieutenant in addition to fireworks-provider.<sup>401</sup> Lawrence was now left to claim he was the cricketing outfitter to the principal clubs in Ireland instead – signalling a rather embarrassing defeat.<sup>402</sup> But the squabbling of these two men did have an important effect in that they made cricket and cricket grounds more exciting, more intriguing, more exotic. They offered extra amusements to those who had little interest in conventional cricket, either through ignorance or lack of previous exposure, with their rivalry continuing in each of the years 1864, 1865 and 1866. And

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<sup>397</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 12 July 1862.

<sup>398</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 31 July 1862. This quotation is copied directly, and thus the emphasis on the event by the capitalisation of 'fireworks' in the quotation is an authentic representation of the newspaper report.

<sup>399</sup> *The Irish Times*, 1 August 1862.

<sup>400</sup> See the *Freeman's Journal* of 30 August and 2, 4, 5 September 1862.

<sup>401</sup> *The Irish Times*, 19 and 21 May 1863.

<sup>402</sup> *The Irish Times*, 18 May 1863.



for these reasons, their rivalry in a small way helped fuel cricket by increasing amusement at grounds, in drawing in spectators of a cricketing or general interest and generating income at the entrance gates, which in turn was further invested into the game in other ways.

By the mid-1860s, cricket clubs were also directly exploiting the financial opportunities of cricket in addition to sporting businesses and retailers, with a much-increased presence in newspapers advertising the wider use of their grounds for both cricketing and non-cricketing events. Many of the premier clubs charged varying entrance rates for cricket matches, ranging from sixpence for matches against lesser teams to one shilling for major games in the case of the North of Ireland.<sup>403</sup> Entrance fees were not always good value, with a letter to *The Irish Times* bemoaning the fact that upcoming major matches had an entrance price of one shilling, when at Lord's it was sixpence. The writer predicted a low attendance because of this and implored Charles Lawrence to lower the price for his own advantage, contending that 'most people – i.e. the public – will look several times at both sides of a shilling before parting with it'<sup>404</sup> – a reminder that cricket fans were customers. The selling of cricket thus increased newspaper advertising as clubs sought to publicise themselves and their major matches whilst the funds generated from such days led to more exciting opponents (sometimes brought from the mainland) and also an upgrading of facilities at grounds from profit.

Clubs themselves were looking to gain advantage not just through the bat and willow, but other ventures as well. Clubs were increasingly leasing their grounds out for non-cricketing purposes, such as athletic races and concerts, to generate income. Leinster cricket club repeatedly leased their grounds out to other stakeholders in the early 1860s,<sup>405</sup> as did the North of Ireland, for instance for military games.<sup>406</sup> The

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<sup>403</sup> The North of Ireland Cricket Club charged one shilling for entrance to their match against Lisburn on 6 and 7 June 1860 (*Belfast News-Letter* 6 and 7 June 1860) and Eleven of All Ireland on 1 August 1860 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 1 August 1860). Sixpence was the fee for the match versus Bromsgrove School in July 1860 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 13 July 1860) and Newry on 10 September 1860 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 10 September 1860). So there was clearly a variation for opposition, with the price going back up to one shilling for the All England Eleven match versus twenty-two of North of Ireland on 8 September 1860 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 8 September 1860).

<sup>404</sup> *The Irish Times*, 10 July 1861.

<sup>405</sup> For instance, by providing their grounds for the Dublin Foot Races in June 1860 (*The Irish Times*, 9 June 1860).

<sup>406</sup> The North of Ireland club opened up their ground for military games on 26 July 1861, for which there was a sixpence entrance charge (*Belfast News-Letter* 25 July 1861).

clubs of Dundalk and Malahide were similarly entrepreneurial,<sup>407</sup> all in imitation of mainland practices.<sup>408</sup>

Offerings extended to more exotic and unusual pursuits beyond what perhaps might be considered obvious branches into things like athletics or fireworks displays. The Carlisle archery and cricket ground in Dublin hosted Scottish Highland games first in 1863, with genuine Highlanders competing, no Irish men being allowed to do so.<sup>409</sup> Different entrance prices tiered guests to more or less respectable viewing areas; general admission was one shilling but the promenade was one shilling sixpence, the games being patronised not only by Carlisle but also the Queen, with twelve adverts being placed in total in the Dublin papers for this spectacle. Sandymount again hosted Highland sports in the autumn of 1864<sup>410</sup> as well as offering bowls and quoits in addition to cricket in the spring of 1865.<sup>411</sup> Not to be outdone, Leinster were leasing their grounds to the Royal Irish Archery Meeting<sup>412</sup> and even hosting civil and military horse and pony steeplechasing.<sup>413</sup> These two clubs were not the only clubs making their grounds available for alternative sport, with grounds also being used for sheep grazing and auctions,<sup>414</sup> showing a commercial eye by Irish cricketers.

### *3.3: Transport businesses and their place in promoting and transporting cricketers and cricket spectators*

The development of an Irish rail network had a huge impact on the whole idea of cultural diffusion across Ireland, and it was such a development that was to have a massive bearing on the future development of all Irish sports, as well as spreading cultural fancies. Following the opening of the first line between Dublin and

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<sup>407</sup> The Dundalk Foot Races were held in connection with the Dundalk cricket club, and it is unclear if there was payment for entrance (*The Irish Times*, 17 May 1861). Malahide CC also hosted athletic games on 18 September 1861, with a special return train service to Dublin (*Freeman's Journal*, 18 September 1861).

<sup>408</sup> Clubs in Victorian times regularly rented their grounds to other sports and in later decades, when soccer and cricket clubs operated together on the mainland, football clubs actually paid the debts of the cricket clubs. Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, pp.56-57.

<sup>409</sup> Seven ads were placed in July in the *Freeman's Journal* – see 7 July 1863 as an example, plus five in *The Irish Times* in July – see 10 July 1863 as an example.

<sup>410</sup> *The Irish Times*, 10 October 1864.

<sup>411</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 30 March 1865.

<sup>412</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 19 July 1864.

<sup>413</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 14 August 1866.

<sup>414</sup> Kingstown cricket club were letting their ground for grazing sheep in 1864 (*Freeman's Journal*, 18 May 1864); cricket grounds were even being used for auctions in the summer of 1865 in Dublin for wood goods (*Freeman's Journal*, 19 June 1865).

Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire from 1922) in December 1834, Ireland had developed 840 route miles of track by 1853 and 2,091 by 1872.<sup>415</sup> By 1875, Ireland had 43 lines and branches combined,<sup>416</sup> connecting the whole island with rail convenience, and importantly, cheaper and quicker transport. Being near a railway line helped facilitate matches for clubs, and this was the case for other sports too both on the mainland and in Ireland.<sup>417</sup> With increased rail connections, rail companies sought to tap into the emerging market of cricket by advertising matches and providing special rates to increase custom. This was aided indirectly by government policy throughout this period, as Parliament ordered third-class fares to be kept at one pence a mile, leading to a 'sociology of travel' and a 'certain democratisation' of transport that facilitated changing views of time, place and space as Ireland became more accessible to all.<sup>418</sup>

Train companies had a history of supporting sporting events for commercial gain in Ireland before the 1860s, showing that their interest in exploiting cricket was not unusual. The Great Southern and Western Railway contributed £3,000 to building a new stand at the Turf Club on agreement that a train line would be built to a station adjoining the stand, something that was completed in 1853; horse racing sponsorship had developed in Ireland from the 1840s onwards by such transport groups.<sup>419</sup> Locally in County Westmeath, companies contributed to the prize funds of horseracing meets to encourage travel on their lines beginning as early as 1849.<sup>420</sup>

Companies sought to encourage interest in and therefore gain from prominent matches by running trains at reduced fares and the area where collusion between cricket-provision and rail companies was most extensive was in the north of Ireland. The 1857 United Eleven of Ireland match against twenty-two of Ulster was advertised under the slogan of 'cheap fares' with the *Belfast News-Letter* commenting that the Ulster Railway Company was running the route at reduced fares for the days of play.<sup>421</sup> The advertisements highlighted tickets in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> carriages, which supports the idea that all classes were catered for in Irish society in getting supporters

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<sup>415</sup> H.C. Casserley, *Outline of Irish Railway History* (David and Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974), p.20.

<sup>416</sup> Irish Railway Clearing House, *Handbook of Distances 1875* (W. Leckie and Co., Dublin, 1875); there are no page numbers.

<sup>417</sup> Neil Tranter's work has shown that for horseracing in England, proximity to a train station became crucial to the success of a course, whilst Tom Hunt's work has shown that in Westmeath some hunts were more popular than others due to access to train lines. Tranter, *Sport, economy and society*, p.43; Hunt, *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath*, p.13.

<sup>418</sup> Larkin, *A History of Ireland, 1800 - 1922*, p.121.

<sup>419</sup> D'Arcy, *Horses, Lords and Racing Men*, p.143 and p.145.

<sup>420</sup> Hunt, *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath*, p.63.

<sup>421</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 22 September 1857.

to the game. In a similar deal, the Ulster and Dungannon Railway offered a special fare for the 1859 Belfast and Glasgow match, with first class fares being sold at single prices for travel on any train with free entrance to the cricket match too,<sup>422</sup> showing co-operation between cricket promoters and rail companies to get the richer members of society to prominent games. Whether for business purposes, his own zealously or a mix of the two, it was reported in 1859 that Mr Carlisle, the Traffic-Manager of the Belfast and County Down Railway, who was 'over anxious' to encourage more reunions like that at the Downpatrick and Comber match of 1859, provided rail journeys at single fares for all involved,<sup>423</sup> providing free entrance for the All England Eleven against twenty-two of Ulster match on 6 - 8 September 1860 if passengers travelled with his company.<sup>424</sup> Not to be outdone, the Northern Counties and Portrush Railways tried to undercut the Belfast and County Down for the very same game in September 1860, offering return tickets at single fares.<sup>425</sup> This was deliberate competition, with these respective adverts running literally above and below each other in the *Belfast News-Letter*. For this said match, the General Omnibus Company were also offering transport from the train terminus to the cricket grounds.<sup>426</sup> A fourth group, Northern Counties, Derry and Coleraine, Carrickfergus and Larne railways also sought to make gain from transporting individuals to cricket grounds.<sup>427</sup>

Increasing ease and affordability of travel therefore helped drive growth in the game, and needless to say these companies also offered transports to events at cricket grounds that were not cricket matches.<sup>428</sup> This interest in the game appears genuine, as the Ulster Railway possessed their own cricket club by 1865 in affection for the game also seen in rival northern railways.<sup>429</sup> Train companies were the arteries of an increasing sporting provision in Ireland at this time, not just facilitating cricket's growth, but aiding the playing and enjoyment of other sports too.

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<sup>422</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 10 June 1859.

<sup>423</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 24 September 1859.

<sup>424</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 1 and 4 September 1860.

<sup>425</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 4 September 1860.

<sup>426</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 5 September 1860.

<sup>427</sup> Six ads were run in total – see 15 December 1862 for example in the *Belfast News-Letter*.

<sup>428</sup> See *Freeman's Journal*, 18 September 1861 for example.

<sup>429</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 20 July 1865.

## 4. Facilitators of play

### *4.1: Police and newspapers*

Part of cricket's development can be attributed to its endorsement by local police forces, which accepted a game that had the patronage of social elites, the Viceroy and the local military on which the constabulary actually depended to enforce their rule. For example, the Nenagh constabulary were loudly cheered by the inhabitants of the town in their victory over the Nenagh CC as early as 1851.<sup>430</sup> Policing levels in Ireland increased significantly between 1842 and 1881; whilst the number of police to citizens in 1842 had been 1:791, in 1851 this had dropped to 1:480 (partly as a result of the deaths and emigrations of the Famine years), and continued to drop thereafter.<sup>431</sup> As a result, it became more difficult for subversive groups to meet and orchestrate proposed plans outside of endorsed cultural events, like cricket. Although cricket was not seen as an English game at this time in Ireland, it may amuse some to know that cricket (as well as other sports) was used to conceal Fenian gatherings in the nineteenth century as a result of this visible policing presence.<sup>432</sup>

This support went beyond mere acceptance or tolerance of the game; Constable Richard Gethings was presented a 'handsome and costly silver snuff-box' by the members of Downpatrick CC for his time and dedication as a consistent and straightforward police officer upon his departure in 1862.<sup>433</sup> The game had found favour with the police, with individual officers playing in local clubs but also now forming their own force teams based around constabularies in places such as Dublin and Clonbur.<sup>434</sup> As with the medical professionals who played the game, it is difficult to know if cricket was played for rhetoric or fun, but enjoyment and boredom must have influenced these men as much as any others in society. With their endorsement, the sport had another important blessing for widespread social play.

The increasing accessibility of newspapers, both figuratively and literally, which boasted about the manliness and nobility of the game as well as advertising games and reporting results undoubtedly aided cricket's rise. Literacy rates, due to a national schooling system that had developed far earlier than England from 1831 and

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<sup>430</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 17 September 1851.

<sup>431</sup> Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland 1832 – 1885*, p.414.

<sup>432</sup> Malcolm, 'Popular recreation in nineteenth-century Ireland,' p.50.

<sup>433</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 November 1862.

<sup>434</sup> See *Freeman's Journal* of 13 June 1864 for further examples.

would have placed Ireland near the top of any comparative European analysis,<sup>435</sup> meant that by 1861 61.3 percent of the population was literate.<sup>436</sup> Combined with this growing literacy was a growth in newspaper printing: by 1855 Ireland had 100 newspapers and by the late 1850s this was 130.<sup>437</sup> People were able to read more about cricket matches and become aware of the growing momentum the game was developing at this time since cricket was covered by all the newspapers in this survey to varying degrees in these early years.<sup>438</sup> This was particularly so for the major national papers like the *Freeman's Journal* with a circulation of 442,000 in 1850,<sup>439</sup> of which it was said every copy was read by an average of four people.<sup>440</sup> Therefore, cricket benefitted in the mid-nineteenth century due to increased literacy leading to greater awareness of cricket as published in an expanding newspaper industry that was keen to print about the game played and enjoyed by the highest members in society by cheerleading its virtuosity. Other newspapers beyond those investigated in this thesis like the *Sportsman* and *The Sporting Life*, both of which were advertising themselves in part on their possession of cricketing analysis, gave Irish men increased exposure to cricket.<sup>441</sup>

New Irish magazines and journals also increased the visibility of the game, with *The Penny Despatch* and *Irish Weekly Newspaper* providing an overview of a range of stories, including cricket.<sup>442</sup> From Britain too came copies of *Lillywhite's Guide* in the early 1860s, offered by men such as John Lawrence amongst others, whilst *The Sporting Gazette*<sup>443</sup> reported cricket from England in addition to substantial sections on horse race betting to supplement already existing titles and the newspapers of the country at this time. Other cricketing literature like *Wisden's Almanack* also showcased the game and allowed Irish men to read of the game overseas.

It wasn't just that these newspapers were reporting cricket that made the game popular; they actively supported its promotion and rise. Examples of some of this

<sup>435</sup> Bartlett, *Ireland - a History*, pp.273-274.

<sup>436</sup> Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland 1832 – 1885*, p.457.

<sup>437</sup> M. O'Brien, *The Irish Times: A History* (Four Courts Press Ltd., Dublin, 2008), p.16.

<sup>438</sup> The *Tuam Herald's* records for 1849 – 1859 are incomplete.

<sup>439</sup> J.S. North, *The Waterloo Directory of Irish Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800 – 1900, phase II* (North Waterloo Academic Press, Waterloo Ontario, 1986), p.418.

<sup>440</sup> Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland 1832 – 1885*, p.458.

<sup>441</sup> The *Sportsman* newspaper was publishing details of cricket in the mid-1860s (see *Freeman's Journal*, 12 April 1866 for example) whilst *The Sporting Life* from London was also published at this time (see *Freeman's Journal*, 7 September 1866 for example).

<sup>442</sup> *The Irish Times*, 7 September 1861.

<sup>443</sup> *The Irish Times*, 10 September 1863.

fawning praise can be seen in: ‘there has seldom been a time when, both at home and abroad, the interest of every class was more enlisted in the promotion of this noble game.’<sup>444</sup> This progress was celebrated, phrases like ‘Happily, now, every town in Ireland has its cricket club, and many of them their appropriated cricket ground’,<sup>445</sup> being used and *The Irish Times* reporting that ‘The immense increase in the popularity of the game during the last few years must be apparent to any frequenter of the Phoenix Park, where every summer evening, may be seen innumerable wickets pitched, frequently on ground unprepared for the purpose, where the experiment becomes somewhat hazardous to those engaged in the game’ typical of the excited prose journalists would sometimes use.<sup>446</sup> The tone of the reporting became instructional on occasions: the *Freeman’s Journal*, for example, encouraged the members of various government departments to show their appreciation to Carlisle by attending cricket matches following his inauguration of a Civil Service club.<sup>447</sup>

Of course, the hyperbole and clear excitement of some of these reports were the exception to the norm of more controlled reports about upcoming fixtures, results and short synopses, but where these reports were published it gave another varnishing to the game’s enhancing reputation between 1848 – 1866. Some newspapers now also sought to take ownership of certain games by claiming the exclusive reporting rights to particular matches and thus again highlighting the increased fervour around the games.

All of these factors combined led to an increased number of references to cricket in the selected newspapers under investigation (see diagram two). There was an upward surge across the period 1848 - 1866 amongst the large, national newspapers, with a relatively low but even-pace of reporting amongst the provincial papers.<sup>448</sup> This might be explained by the greater reporting of games to the major Dublin and Belfast newspapers or just the general interest of people in Ulster and Leinster compared to the rest of Ireland.

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<sup>444</sup> *The Irish Times*, 4 September 1860.

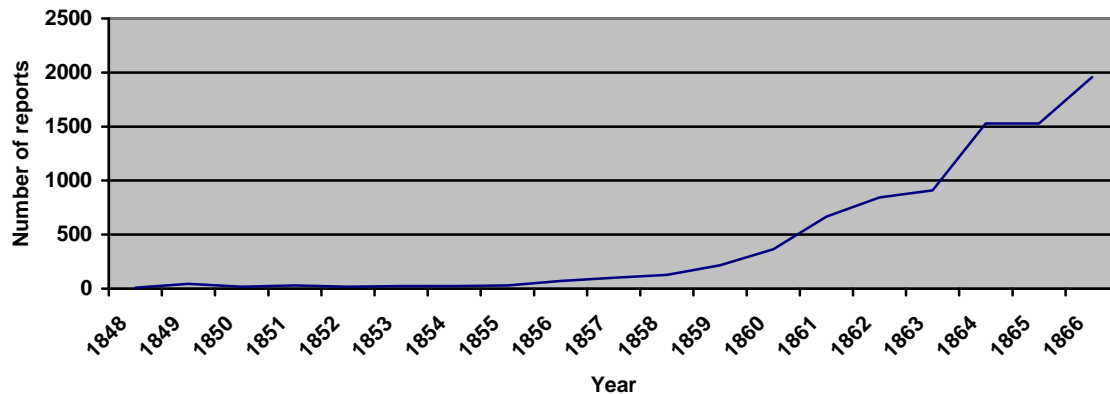
<sup>445</sup> *The Irish Times*, 27 May 1862.

<sup>446</sup> *The Irish Times*, 12 March 1863.

<sup>447</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 22 May 1863.

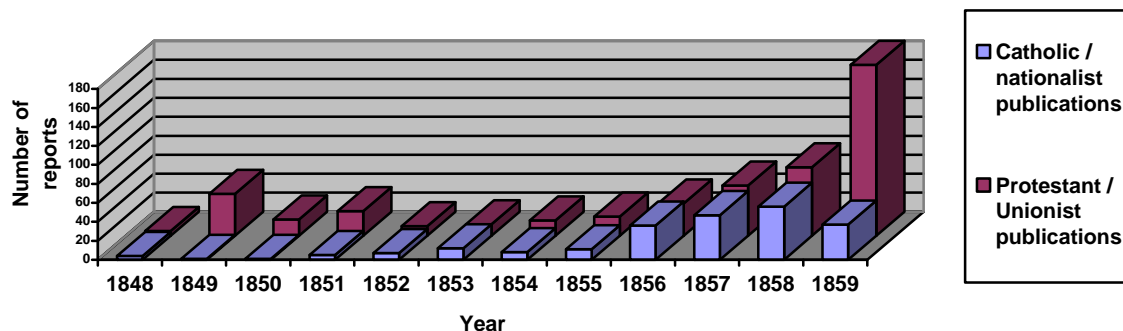
<sup>448</sup> Please see appendix two for more information.

**Diagram two: the number of newspaper reports on cricket  
for 1848 - 1866**



Examining the reporting of cricket in this period by political and religious affiliation shows the game to be more reported in the Protestant / Unionist publications under examination, but reporting is significant in the Catholic / nationalist publications nonetheless (see table two). The only really fruitful comparison between reporting in Catholic / nationalist and Protestant / Unionist newspapers can be conducted until 1858, as from 1859 there is an imbalance in the number of daily newspapers investigated by religious and political persuasion. From 1859, there are two Protestant / Unionist newspapers to work with (*The Irish Times* and the *Belfast News-Letter*) compared to only one for the Catholic / nationalist bracket (*Freeman's Journal*). The massive jump shown in diagram three for Protestant / Unionist publications lies mainly with the inaugural publication of *The Irish Times* in 1859, but as shown in this diagram, up until this point cricket reporting in Catholic / nationalist newspapers generally matched the Protestant / Unionist offerings.

**Diagram three: the breakdown of cricket articles by political and religious  
viewpoint in the selected newspapers between 1848 - 1859**





**Table two: the percentage of reports in the Catholic / nationalist newspapers under investigation**

<b>Period of investigation</b>	<b>Percentage of total newspaper reports in newspapers of Catholic / nationalist leaning</b>
1848 – 1859	31.50
1860 – 1866	45.74
1867 – 1872	24.08
1873 – 1878	36.25

81.01 percent of reports in the newspapers between 1848 - 1859 were reports about matches in Ireland and this figure increased every decade from hereon showing the Irish embrace of the game, allaying any suspicions that reports would have merely been regaling the political elite of matches being played in London or the Empire (see table three).

**Table three: the percentage of reports in the Irish newspapers on cricket in Ireland in comparison to overseas cricket**

<b>Period of investigation</b>	<b>Percentage of reports reporting on cricket in Ireland opposed to overseas cricket</b>
1848 - 1859	81.01
1860 – 1866	92.84
1867 – 1872	93.40
1873 – 1878	94.43

#### *4.2: John Lawrence*

There was no more important an individual to the spread of cricket in Ireland by the mid-1860s than John Lawrence, picking up where his namesake Charles had left off on his departure in 1861. He was crucial to the game's spread, the crux of an evolving administration, and a focal point for the game's continued rise through his Grafton Street store like London-based shop owners such as John Wisden. Lawrence was foremost a businessman, and he thus saw an opening in the market for cricketing

provision; in similarity to the mainland, there was the chance to financially benefit in the 1860s by filling a leisure void in ‘an era when much was up for grabs.’<sup>449</sup>

In addition to his Dublin store selling cricketing goods, he was involved in arranging (and profiting from promoting) grand matches, taking the lead as the most prominent promoter and organiser of games in Ireland in the 1860s and 1870s after the departure of Charles Lawrence in 1861.

From 1865 onwards, *John Lawrence’s Handbook of Cricket in Ireland* was published, an almanac that would help record and instigate matches, a scheme that relied on him sending secretaries a form which they then filled out and returned to him with club details for any given season.<sup>450</sup> It was similar to *Wisden’s Almanack* on the mainland,<sup>451</sup> Lawrence using the almanac to encourage gentlemen to patronise his Dublin store, and again in likeness to *Wisden* other sports were included to ‘pad things out,’ being pitched as a lifestyle accessory for Victorian gentlemen with flattering and deferential opening pages.<sup>452</sup> Of all the things John Lawrence was to do for cricket in Ireland, the publication of this almanac must rank as his greatest contribution.

Lawrence was also important though in not just providing cricketing goods, matches or almanacs; like other businessmen, he was broadening the apparatus, paraphernalia and experience of a cricket match by 1866. Lawrence not only offered fireworks after major cricket matches, but also as an evening in their own right at Leinster cricket ground<sup>453</sup> and facilitated cricket not just through his store but through other means: he was an agent arranging balloon ascents for Mr Hodsman,<sup>454</sup> was selling parlour cricket for play indoors at Christmas in 1865,<sup>455</sup> and producing scoring cards, first offered at the IZ versus Phoenix match of 1866, to allow those who would like to score to score the game in addition to the official card, which proved very popular at this match.<sup>456</sup> He was a visible presence on the Dublin scene, presenting at the Dublin Exhibition Palace event of May 1866, which allowed those not quite accustomed with cricket the opportunity to learn about the game.<sup>457</sup> He was also

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<sup>449</sup> Winder, *The little wonder*, p.27.

<sup>450</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 11 October 1865.

<sup>451</sup> J. Hadfield, *A Wisden century 1850 – 1950* (Sporting Handbooks Ltd., London, 1950), p.36.

<sup>452</sup> Winder, *The little wonder*, p.1, p.34 and pp.40-41.

<sup>453</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 21 June 1865.

<sup>454</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 26 May 1864.

<sup>455</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 13 December 1865.

<sup>456</sup> *The Irish Times*, 29 August 1866.

<sup>457</sup> *The Irish Times*, 8 May 1866.

branching out into other sports, providing the targets for the third annual meeting of the Royal Irish Grand National Archery Club,<sup>458</sup> whilst his burgeoning financial clout and retailing supremacy was highlighted in that he appointed Mrs Birch of Quinsborough Road in Bray as his agent for selling cricket and croquet goods under his name in this area in 1866 as a type of franchise.<sup>459</sup> Yet cricket remained his primary focus throughout, meaning the sizable void left by the cricket-playing Charles had been filled if not exceeded by the even more economically-driven John.

#### 4.3: Seeping into Irish society

One of the most interesting, anecdotal observations of cricket's rise at this time when reading the selected newspapers is the way in which cricketing language, symbolism and parlance became more widespread in Ireland, in addition to increased reporting of the game and the number of clubs playing. A mimic, one of whose acts was 'the cricketer' placed five adverts within seven days in the *Freeman's Journal* in February 1856,<sup>460</sup> cricket art was being auctioned in early 1857,<sup>461</sup> whilst an indoor cricket game was advertised for children as early as Christmas 1853 in Dublin.<sup>462</sup> Perhaps most interesting of all was the creeping use of cricketing language to describe politics and everyday life. As early as 1849 the *Anglo-Celt*, a small nationalist paper based in Cavan on the east coast of Ireland with a weekly circulation of 385 in 1850<sup>463</sup> had said that 'Life is like a game of cricket – those who are always running to every ball soon run the risk of being “stumped out.”’<sup>464</sup> In 1852, the *Freeman's Journal*, another nationalist publication, had said that Lord Derby had had his 'innings' politically.<sup>465</sup>

Literature on cricket was expanding into more niche markets, with comedy cricket writing (recommended as essential reading for ladies) being published in the mid-1860s<sup>466</sup> as well as more informative, instructional books on how to play the

<sup>458</sup> *The Irish Times*, 28 July 1864.

<sup>459</sup> *The Irish Times*, 24 August 1866.

<sup>460</sup> *Freeman's Journal*: 13 February, 14 February, 16 February, 19 February, 20 February 1856.

<sup>461</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 5 February 1857.

<sup>462</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 23 December 1853.

<sup>463</sup> North, *The Waterloo Directory of Irish Newspapers and Periodicals*, p.33.

<sup>464</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 20 April 1849.

<sup>465</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 15 December 1852.

<sup>466</sup> Comedy cricket writing was now being published – *Jerks in from Short Leg - with illustrations*, an example of this. It was recommended as essential reading for ladies under the dramatic title with capitalisation as in the advert of 'CRICKET, CRICKET, CRICKET,' being available from John Lawrence (*Freeman's Journal*, 5 May 1866). Please note that the capitalisation is an authentic representation of the advert.

game. Possibly the best example of how cricket was increasingly permeating into everyday Irish life can be seen in that the *Nenagh Guardian*, a provincial newspaper appealing to a wide range of society, carried an extensive piece on the merits and developments of the LBW law on 20 May 1863.<sup>467</sup> It was such bites into societal parlance that symbolises cricket's rise in popularity and awareness between the 1840s and 1860s.

There is considerable evidence to document the rapid and significant increase in the playing of cricket between the years 1848 – 1866. Arthur Samuels described the period between 1855 – 1865 as one where cricket made 'rapid strides' in Ireland,<sup>468</sup> declaring the 1860 All England Eleven versus twenty-two of Ireland match as one where 'Cricket at this time had taken such a hold in Ireland that it was patronized by all classes, from the Viceroy to the lowest who flocked to see this match.'<sup>469</sup> Probably the most fitting conclusion on this rise of cricket between 1848 – 1866 can be summarised by the *Freeman's Journal*, saying 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 amongst us that cricket may fairly be considered one of our great Irish pastimes. May we trust that in time it will prove one of those field sports which bring poor and peasant in contact and which teaches the one to respect the other the more. For the time being all are equal in the cricket field, and each as good as his fellow.<sup>470</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

A range of factors led to the developing popularity and playing of cricket between the years 1848 to 1866. Mid-century, there were few other alternative sporting or leisure recreations to amuse Irish men, and as a result cricket's popularity was in part due to the standardised sporting recreation it could provide. Cricket's healthiness, manliness, nobility and utility in providing amusement for all in society in a respectable fashion saw it popularise not just with the richest in society but also the Irish working classes, with patronage from elites either keen to provide recreation out of benevolence or a

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<sup>467</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 20 May 1863.

<sup>468</sup> Samuels, *Early cricket in Ireland*, p.7.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*, p.22.

<sup>470</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 12 May 1865.

desire to influence local men and women. Cricket enjoyed popular support from the British Army, Viceroys, professional cricketers like Charles Lawrence and also businessmen like John Lawrence. A wide variety of other businesses nationally were keen to exploit the commercial opportunities that cricket provided, all aided by a compliant police view of the game and enthusiastic newspaper reporting which did not regard the game as distinctly English, British or a colonial implantation. These factors examined in this chapter laid the groundwork for an adoption and enjoyment of cricket across a wide range of Irish men in the years 1848 – 1866. The class, religious and political stances of those who played the game, in what formations and institutions and areas of the country, will be examined in chapter two.

## **Chapter two: the people who played cricket in Ireland,**

### **1848 – 1866**

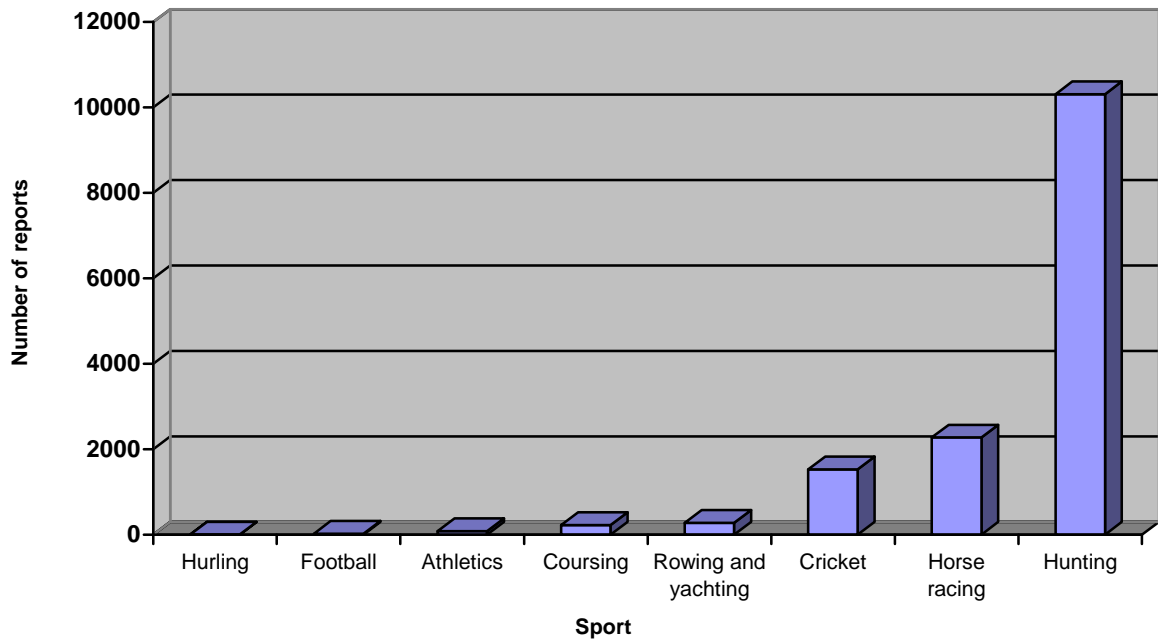
The vast majority of the historiography of cricket in Ireland has portrayed the game as an elitist, Unionist, Protestant pursuit with limited uptake. This chapter will challenge this viewpoint by examining the class, religious background and political viewpoints of those who played or supported cricket. The formations that men played in – be it club, workplace, school or informal play – will be explored to show cricket was played well beyond the elite in Irish society. Cricket will be shown to have popularised to all parts of the country by 1866, making it a national game in terms of coverage by the mid-1860s.

#### 1. The popularity of cricket between 1848 – 1866

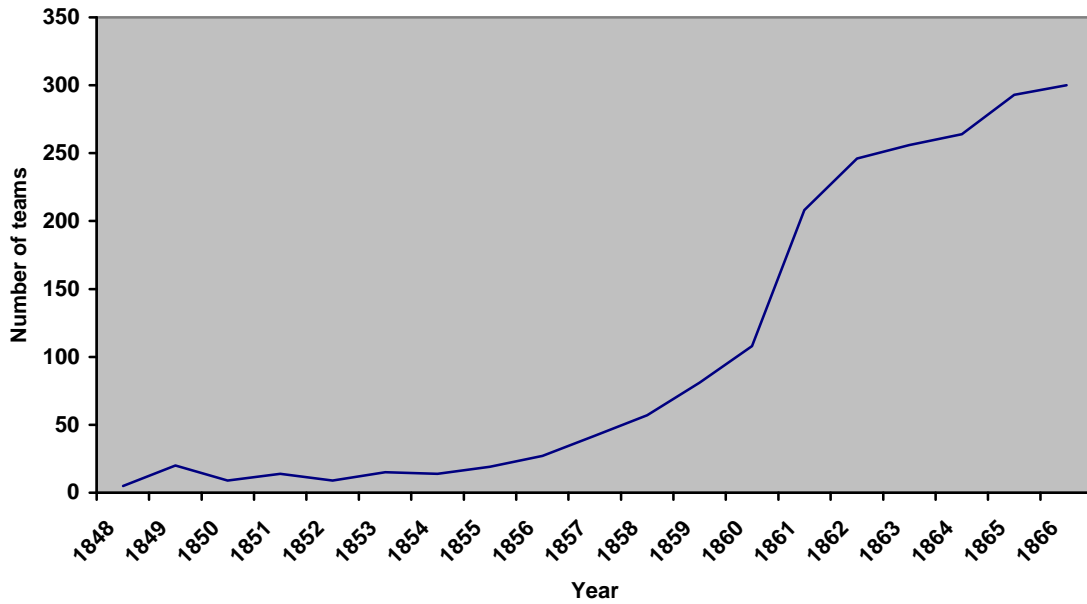
##### *1.1: The popularity of cricket by 1866*

By 1866, both the number of cricket teams playing in Ireland in this year as well as the reporting of the sport had reached a peak in the years 1848 – 1866. In the years to 1860, the name ‘team’ is more appropriate, in deliberate separation to club: in the time period 1848 - 1859, most groups were likely to have been ad-hoc, informal associations, even if some would have taken steps towards more formalised organisation such as the Ashbrook Union or Carlow clubs in the late 1840s. As a result, analysis of the breakdown of teams found in any given year only begins from 1860 onwards, the first full season of Carlisle’s second reign. As shown in diagram seven later in this chapter, the vast majority of teams as found for the years 1860 – 1866 can be classified as clubs. However these clubs were formed – either by patronage or a self-made nature - they spread cricketing awareness across the whole country and cricket was increasingly seen in town and country fields. The comparative analysis of newspaper reporting shows that by 1865, cricket was the third-most reported sport in Ireland (see diagram four), and for the period 1860 – 1866 the vast majority of this reporting was on Irish, compared to overseas, cricket (see diagram six).

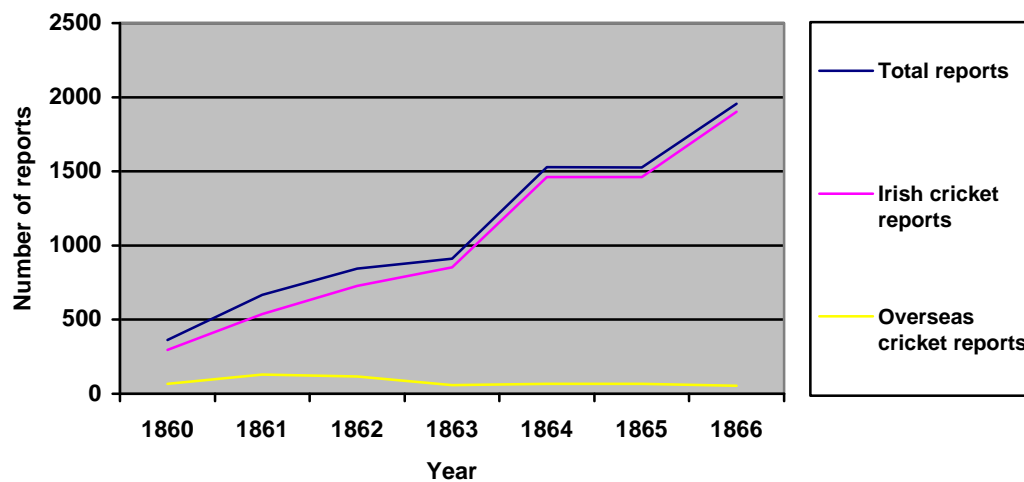
**Diagram four: a comparative analysis of the different sports reported in the year 1865**



**Diagram five: the number of cricket teams between 1848 - 1866**



**Diagram six: the number of newspaper reports between 1860 - 1866  
by classification of report as being about Irish or overseas cricket**



Beyond newspaper reporting or numbers of teams playing, other examples can be shown to support the idea of cricket's increasing popularity. Many teams possessed at least two elevens by the mid-1860s and the enthusiasm for cricket by some clubs can be seen in the examples of the Phoenix, Leinster, County Westmeath and Cavan clubs playing 26, 27, 18, and 19 matches respectively in the 1864 season.<sup>471</sup>

### *1.2: Locations of play nationally*

Cricket had become nationally popular in Ireland by 1866. Clubs were noted as playing in 'every quarter' of Dublin by April 1861,<sup>472</sup> a suggestion which would come as little surprise in light of the number of shops supplying the game in Dublin at this time. But it was the game's acceleration outside of Dublin and Belfast, especially in central, eastern and southern Ireland that was driving the growth. A number of new teams sprang up in central Ireland in Kildare, Kilkenny, King's County and Westmeath in the early 1860s.<sup>473</sup> This spread of cricket through the belly of Ireland

<sup>471</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 6 March 1865.

<sup>472</sup> *The Irish Times*, 29 April 1861.

<sup>473</sup> In Kildare, the County Kildare CC was established in 1861 (*The Irish Times*, 3 August 1861), whilst Shamrock of Naas were also playing by this year (*Freeman's Journal*, 2 October 1861). In Kilkenny, three new teams were noted: Gowran and Bennettsbridge (*Freeman's Journal*, 4 September 1861) and Mullinavat (*Freeman's Journal*, 28 September 1861). In Westmeath, Kilbeggan and Mullingar were noted as playing in 1862, where 'The desire to cultivate this fine manly pastime is rapidly on the



had reached far into the south of the country, with new teams established in Limerick, Waterford and Tipperary in these years,<sup>474</sup> whilst Carrick-on-Suir in Co Waterford were so taken with cricket that they had established a second eleven as early as 1862.<sup>475</sup> Cricket was even being played in the extreme southern areas of Ireland, at the monthly fair at Youghal, Co Cork, where the landlord's agent had made active arrangements ahead of the day to combine amusement and commerce with a cricket match played as part of the proceedings.<sup>476</sup>

This extension of cricket was no more apparent than in the west of Ireland, the very area ravaged most by the Famine. In addition to the County Galway club, Ormond, Mountshannon and Tuam were playing in this county by the early 1860s. The county saw further growth into the middle of the decade, with cricket being played at the re-established Ballinasloe club under the patronage of Lord Clancarty<sup>477</sup> and at Clonbur in Galway between the constabulary and civilians in mid-August 1866.<sup>478</sup> Slightly inland, cricket could be found in County Leitrim with Carrick-on-Shannon and Manorhamilton both noted as playing their first recorded games on 20 September 1862,<sup>479</sup> new clubs perhaps but seemingly intent on honouring cricket's time-old traditions, with 'generous and cordial hospitality' for the Carrick club when entertained by their hosts at the Robinson's Hotel after the game.<sup>480</sup> The County Leitrim debuted in the early 1860s, playing County Longford at Carrick-on-Shannon<sup>481</sup> whilst further south, the young men of Kilaloe, Co Clare, organised a cricket club.<sup>482</sup> County Roscommon had at least one cricket club by these years.<sup>483</sup> In Mayo, the joint most-westerly county of Ireland, cricket was taking hold in the early 1860s, with four new clubs forming – Westland, Castlebar, West Connaught and Ballina<sup>484</sup> - with all bar West Connaught, whose location is unknown, being within

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increase throughout the entire neighbourhood' (*The Irish Times*, 30 July 1862). Geashill in King's County were recorded as playing by 1862 (*The Irish Times*, 18 July 1862).

<sup>474</sup> Limerick CC were established by 1861, possessing 'gay uniform' (*The Irish Times*, 22 July 1861). Castleconnell of Co Limerick were playing by July 1862 (*The Irish Times*, 24 July 1862). Mullinavat near Waterford were playing by 1862 (*Freeman's Journal*, 23 August 1862) whilst Cloncannon, of Co Tipperary were also by June 1863 (*The Irish Times*, 13 June 1863).

<sup>475</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 2 October 1862.

<sup>476</sup> *The Irish Times*, 8 June 1863.

<sup>477</sup> *The Irish Times*, 23 April 1866.

<sup>478</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 13 August 1866.

<sup>479</sup> *The Irish Times*, 26 September 1862.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>481</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 25 August 1863.

<sup>482</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 26 August 1863.

<sup>483</sup> Roscommon CC were playing by 1866 (*Freeman's Journal*, 30 July 1866).

<sup>484</sup> Westland (*The Irish Times*, 27 August 1861); Castlebar and West Connaught (*The Irish Times*, 3 October 1863); Ballina (*The Irish Times*, 28 August 1863).

ten miles of the Atlantic coast to put their location in perspective. Cricket was even being played at Valentia, the landing point for the Atlantic telegraph in 1866, in the extreme west of Kerry.<sup>485</sup>

One reason for cricket's spread this far away from the metropolis is evidenced by the example of the Westland, whose inauguration was due to the energies of one man: 'Too much praise cannot be given to Mr Barnes, their captain, by whose exertions cricket has been established in this district, and we are glad to hear that several clubs are being formed again next year in the surrounding country.'<sup>486</sup> That cricket had spread so far west dispels the idea of the game being purely an east coast occupation, whilst the economic state of the west of Ireland shows that cricket was taking root in less well-off neighbourhoods of the country. The disadvantaged state of the west can be seen in the fact that the Midland Railway Athletic Club were organising athletic games on their cricket ground for the relief of the poor in the west in more than one of these early years of the 1860s.<sup>487</sup>

### *1.3: Cricket as a vehicle for local pride in communities*

It was such enjoyment of cricket by Irish civilians that meant club teams now often took on great importance as a source of local pride, with great interest in the achievements of cricketers. Naturally, the joy of a victory often led to great celebrations into the night, the 1858 match between the City of Kilkenny and County of Kilkenny leading to dancing in Kilcreene House, thrown by Mr Smithwick<sup>488</sup> and the Ballymoney club in 1855 patronised a concert in the town hall following their match with Ballymena in July of that year.<sup>489</sup>

Yet the reverberations often extended out beyond the players and the clubs themselves into civic life. Following the victory of Gowran against County Kilkenny in 1857, bonfires were lit in the village,<sup>490</sup> and the flow of everyday life for school children was even altered in 1856, in a match between Ballymoney and Ballymena, when public schools were closed to allow young people a half day of holiday, and

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<sup>485</sup> *The Irish Times*, 9 July 1866.

<sup>486</sup> *The Irish Times*, 27 August 1861.

<sup>487</sup> See *Freeman's Journal*, 7 July 1862, for an example.

<sup>488</sup> O'Dwyer, *The History of Cricket in County Kilkenny*, p.27.

<sup>489</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 16 July 1855.

<sup>490</sup> O'Dwyer, *The History of Cricket in County Kilkenny*, p.26.

presumably watch this important local game.<sup>491</sup> Such instances show the communal pride attached to cricket clubs as centres of the community at this time and echo the joyous receptions, music and fireworks that Mike Huggins found symptomatic of mainland cricket victories in the Victorian era.<sup>492</sup>

It was this closeness between towns and their clubs as well as the lack of other leisure opportunity available that led to great interest in the fate of local teams by all in local Irish society; the Castlecomer versus City of Kilkenny match in 1858 reported that there was a ‘vast concourse of people of all grades and classes, all manifesting a warm interest in the struggle’ whilst at the Desart game against Gowran in the same year ‘There were great numbers present of all classes with quite an interest in the cricket.’<sup>493</sup> This local and civic pride was clearly an early feature in Irish cricketing history and is consistent with the micro studies of Nenagh and Tuam in this thesis.

The importance of cricket to the town of Nenagh can be evidenced early in the years of investigation. In October 1851, a large concourse of people congregated in the town, even though it was raining, and ‘as the result of the game, and the defeat of the Borrisoleigh Club became known, the cricketers as they drove through the street were loudly cheered.’<sup>494</sup> A match in 1858 against Cloughjordan was even more noteworthy, the Nenagh club possessing their own band by this year which entered the town of Cloughjordan before them playing the ‘Bold Tipperary Boys,’ and then playing them into the field where the Cloughjordan team were waiting. Following the game, the teams were entertained in an empty house, where 40 dined to Guinness and sirloin steak, whilst the band stayed in the garden and played during the meal. It was hoped that the Cloughjordan cricketers would return to Nenagh for them to repay the generous hospitality, ‘and a hope expressed that that the friendship formed would continue to exist, and that all parties would meet again in good will and cordiality. The meeting then broke up, the Nenagh men being loudly cheered on their departure, and their band playing – “Should auld acquaintances be forgot.”’<sup>495</sup> Nenagh’s club had become the embodiment of a community, with several hundred people reported to have watched the return match in the middle of September 1858,<sup>496</sup> and these

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<sup>491</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 9 June 1856.

<sup>492</sup> M. Huggins, *The Victorians and sport* (Hambleton and London, London, 2004), p.98.

<sup>493</sup> O’Dwyer, *The History of Cricket in County Kilkenny*, p.26.

<sup>494</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 8 October 1851.

<sup>495</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 4 September 1858.

<sup>496</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 15 September 1858.

examples of communal and civic pride were only enhanced in Nenagh by the 1870s in this investigation.

## 2. Cricket and class between 1848 - 1866

### *2.1: Elites - interest, patronage and play*

Due to the paucity of Irish education, the Famine and the recent development of railways, in the mid-nineteenth century the number of Irish boys educated in Britain significantly rose. These young men brought back games and mainland schoolboy norms with them.<sup>497</sup> Such boys would merely have been playing games they enjoyed at school on their return to Ireland opposed to returning with a desire to implant English or British pursuits into Ireland, and they supplemented the Army and local elite's patronage of the game in explaining how cricket took early root.

Across the 1850s and the 1860s many richer members of society patronised and enjoyed the game for the wider societal considerations and limited leisure offerings that affected all. The richer members of Irish society would also have been attracted to cricket due to the support the game was given by successive Viceroy's in addition to its social amusement. In August 1856 the *Freeman's Journal* noted 'The Lord Lieutenant seemed to take much interest in this manly and exciting game' regarding the Vice Regal and MCC match,<sup>498</sup> which, coupled with the opportunity to create or strengthen business and social networks, made the game one of the popular pastimes of the day for the richer members of society in Ireland, in likeness to its status in England. W.J. O'Neill Daunt, a Catholic landowner in Cork and moderate nationalist who was associated with *The Nation* newspaper in the mid-nineteenth century, approved of cricket for the 'social rendezvous it promotes.'<sup>499</sup> Cultural mores and norms, particularly amongst the well-to-do, were shared between the two islands, and it should be of little surprise that cricket became popular in Ireland in likeness to the mainland.

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<sup>497</sup> T. West, *The bold Collegians: the development of sport in Trinity College, Dublin* (The Lilliput Press, Dublin, 1991), pp.12-13.

<sup>498</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 28 August 1856.

<sup>499</sup> Davis, 'Irish Cricket and nationalism,' p.84.

The elite in society were undoubtedly attracted to the game due to its endorsement by the Royal Family in Britain as well and its label as a fashionable, manly and noble game, which was reflected in the reporting of the sport in newspapers. Cricket was also popular because of the leisure, pleasure and socialising opportunities the game afforded outside of the winter hunting scene, and whilst there is not much open reporting of gambling at games, it surely existed.<sup>500</sup> However the Irish experience was very different to the Welsh one mid-century, as Andrew Hignell has shown that gambling in Wales was ‘a recurring theme’ and that the game was actually opposed by some religious and temperance leaders who denounced the gambling and drinking inherent.<sup>501</sup> Such complaints were never made about cricket in Ireland.

Cricket afforded a day of like-minded socialising between neighbours and persons of note in the local area, as well as between unmarried men and women, often in the genteel surroundings of a cricket club or country demesne. Excellent lunches were laid on, and military bands frequently played at significant games throughout the year. Lord and Lady Massy held a day of cricket, dining and dancing until midnight in July 1855 at their demesne of Hermitage,<sup>502</sup> and the 1856 Vice Regal eleven versus the MCC match was graced with real prestige; the Marquises and Marchionesses of Kildare and Londonderry were present, in addition to Lord Powerscourt, Lord John Hay, Lady Dover and Lady Fanny Howard,<sup>503</sup> symptomatic of the fashionable support cricket was increasingly experiencing at this time. Women’s involvement was integral and frequently commented upon as gracing a scene, but remained beyond the boundary rope.

By the 1860s this support and enjoyment of the game was increasing from such elite individuals. For example, Sir Capel Molyneux hosted the IZ versus eighteen of County Armagh in a match at his seat of Castle Dillon in the mid-1860s, physically playing in the game, with the ‘elite of the county’ in attendance, including knights of

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<sup>500</sup> A few such references to gambling exist. At the United All England Eleven versus Eighteen of Ireland match in 1856, where numerous members of the nobility and gentry had attended the game, ‘Some heavy betting took place on the event of this match’ (*Freeman’s Journal*, 5 September 1856). In 1859, it was reported that the in-play betting of the All Ireland Eleven versus twenty-two officers of the garrison match favoured the twenty-two (*Freeman’s Journal*, 4 June 1859) whilst later in the year the defendant in a Court of Common Pleas was stated to have ‘lost a large sum on a cricket match’ (*The Irish Times*, 23 November 1859).

<sup>501</sup> Hignell, *Cricket in Wales: an illustrated history*, pp.16-17.

<sup>502</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 11 July 1855.

<sup>503</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 5 September 1856.

the realm, JPs, priests, military men and many named ladies.<sup>504</sup> Sir Capel and Lady Molyneux hosted a ball on the evening between the two days of play, cementing country ties and reinforcing the spectacle and jollity cricket provided for the elite.<sup>505</sup> Grounds provision by the elite, leading gentlemen and the gentry of Ireland by the mid-1860s was extensive in continuation of the type of support shown in appendix seven for the early years of the 1860s, and this support as identified in the first chapter facilitated play for other leading Irish men as well as the working classes.<sup>506</sup>

As the years between 1848 – 1866 progressed, there was increasing variety and sophistication of music on offer at these elite grounds. Verdi and Rossini were played by the band of the 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars, with the Rossini piece repeated at the insistence of the Lord Lieutenant, at the I Zingari versus Phoenix match of October 1861<sup>507</sup> whilst in Belfast Verdi and Wagner were performed by the Royal Antrim Rifles at the Belfast CC grounds in the following year.<sup>508</sup> These two examples were not isolated, with such fancy and sophisticated music becoming the norm at leading grounds and matches by the early 1860s and onwards.

Irish elites weren't just spectators though, and came to increasingly involve themselves on fields of play. In addition to the play of the Prince of Wales and various Viceroys, Sir James Langrishe was exerting himself to such extremes that he dislocated his ankle practising with the County Kilkenny CC in the late summer of 1862.<sup>509</sup> This is in likeness of the Viceroy Eglinton who broke a finger in throwdowns from Charles Lawrence in 1861.<sup>510</sup> In 1866, the Na Shuler versus fifteen of Co Carlow saw Lords Hubert Butler and Lord Gosford playing for the former,<sup>511</sup> whilst Lord Bernard played in the twenty-two of Cork versus IZ match of late summer.<sup>512</sup> Elite clubs and individuals were beginning to venture out beyond their own surrounding neighbourhoods to engage in games as cricket evolved by the mid-1860s, with the North of Ireland making their first visit to Dublin to play Phoenix in July

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<sup>504</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 30 August 1865 and *Freeman's Journal*, 30 August 1865.

<sup>505</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 31 August 1865.

<sup>506</sup> For example in the mid-1860s: Earl Fitzwilliam provided grounds at Coolattin, his ground, for the Co Wicklow versus Co Carlow match of September 1865 (*Freeman's Journal*, 9 September 1865); T. Hamilton, Esq. and MP, hosted IZ on their visit to Dublin in 1866 (*The Irish Times*, 29 August 1866); IZ visited the Marquis of Ormonde's residence of Kilkenny Castle to play Kilkenny County on the way back from their match against Cork in the summer of 1866 (*The Irish Times*, 1 September 1866).

<sup>507</sup> *The Irish Times*, 3 October 1861.

<sup>508</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 30 May 1862.

<sup>509</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 2 September 1862.

<sup>510</sup> Mallett, *The black lords of summer*, p.66.

<sup>511</sup> *The Irish Times*, 16 August 1866.

<sup>512</sup> *The Irish Times*, 7 September 1866.

1861,<sup>513</sup> an example of the touring tradition that other elite clubs also enjoyed in the 1860s. Sir William Osbourne umpired the Nenagh versus Ormond match in July 1866,<sup>514</sup> showing involvement as officials as well as players by these elites.

Lord Massereene led this increasing physical involvement, his wicket-keeping being lauded for his three stumpings in a match involving his team against White Abbey in September 1864.<sup>515</sup> Massereene was not just a keen cricketer, but a keen sportsman in general,<sup>516</sup> a common trait in many leading gentlemen at this time who had multiple sporting interests.<sup>517</sup> Massereene's enthusiasm for the game of cricket was such that he had his own professional by 1865,<sup>518</sup> something that doubtlessly aided his development to the extent that by the end of the year, the *Belfast News-Letter* noted his batting 'has been steadily improving for some time.'<sup>519</sup> He was even taking his team overseas, Lord Massereene's eleven going to York to play the Gentlemen of Yorkshire, resulting in an easy victory for the latter, in September 1865. Massereene went on this tour, being a regular fixture in his team at this time.<sup>520</sup> He also appeared to bring two players who would not be well-off in society, based on the recording of their names in the tour details,<sup>521</sup> an occurrence seen in other matches he played in this year.<sup>522</sup> This should not be surprising considering Carlisle's involvement in cross-class interaction on the field of play. It is unclear whether the involvement of such players was undertaken on a paid basis, with gentlemen essentially hiring in crack players to help them win matches as was seen with the

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<sup>513</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 24 July 1861.

<sup>514</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 7 July 1866.

<sup>515</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 September 1864.

<sup>516</sup> The Massereene Challenge Cup was raced for in July 1865, with Lord Massereene having a horse in this race (*Belfast News-Letter*, 22 July 1865). Lord Massereene placed land at the disposal of the North Union coursing club for their meet on 4-5 April (*Belfast News-Letter*, 3 April 1865). Massereene was a Vice President of the North of Ireland Cricket Club for 1865 too (*Handbook 1865-6*, p.45).

<sup>517</sup> For example, Horace Rochfort founded not only the Co Carlow CC but also the Carlow Polo Club and Co Carlow RFC. See M. Cronin, M. Duncan and P. Rouse, *The GAA: county by county* (The Collins Press, Cork, 2011), pp.41-42. This correlates with Richard Holt's work, which stated that for the mainland 'few sportsmen ever confined themselves to a single activity' (Holt, *Sport and the British*, p.9).

<sup>518</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 19 April 1865.

<sup>519</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 16 September 1865.

<sup>520</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 2 September 1865.

<sup>521</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 September 1865.

<sup>522</sup> For example: six working-class players were seemingly playing in the West End and Lord Massereene match in May 1865 – six players had a hash followed by their surname, in difference to the professional who was just given his full surname, whilst all others were given an initial and then surname (*Belfast News-Letter*, 24 May 1865); in Lord Massereene's eleven versus Queen's College in the summer of 1865, six players are titled just by their surname, four having initials and surname with Lord Massereene being the eleventh player (*Belfast News-Letter*, 6 June 1865).

Ashbrook Union in the 1840s. It's certainly possible, but no evidence has been found to 1866 that would confirm this idea beyond the Ashbrook Union case.

Such examples of individual play and patronage by elites formalised into a gentlemen's team in 1863 when Na Shuler was formed, a club born in imitation of the roving I Zingari of England to promote cricket as an organised scratch eleven club.<sup>523</sup> The naming of the club as Na Shuler (roughly translated as 'the walkers') was in some ways an imitation of I Zingari on the mainland (translated as 'the Gypsies'). The club had over 50 members by August 1863, with gentlemanly status requisite for admission: the Marquises of Drogheda and Ormonde were two such men to subscribe.<sup>524</sup> Notably, Dublin men were not allowed to join the club, for members had to be provincial.<sup>525</sup> It was through ventures such as Na Shuler as well as the natural desire to socialise and reminisce with like-minded fellows in the country that fuelled cricket's attractions for such rich men, with the Bandon CC farewell dinner for their captain, N.P. Gepp's departure for England from Cork an interesting case in point. The leaving dinner was held in the Devonshire Arms, 'with every delicacy and the choicest wines,' with the Earl of Bandon presiding over proceedings with Lord Bernard, Sir Thomas Tobin and the Reverends Bernard and Colquhoun all present in addition to nearly all the members.<sup>526</sup> It was cricket in the summer and hunting in the winter that bound these men together at a continuing time of limited social opportunity. As well as Na Shuler, other gentlemanly teams were active by the mid-1860s like the Gentlemen of Ireland and their associated north and south divisions.

## *2.2: The Ashbrook Union and various Viceroys promoting cross-class play*

A rare and highly valuable source was found within the last decade of the Ashbrook Union cricket club's regulations and rules for the years 1846 – 1848, the peak years of the Famine.<sup>527</sup> For 1846, there were 25 players, all titled as 'Esq.' denoting gentlemanly status. However, it is absolutely clear that this club fielded players below

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<sup>523</sup> *The Irish Times*, 31 July 1863.

<sup>524</sup> *The Irish Times*, 1 August 1863.

<sup>525</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 1 August 1863.

<sup>526</sup> *The Irish Times*, 10 October 1863.

<sup>527</sup> *Ashbrook Union Cricket Club scorebook and rules and regulations for 1846 - 1848* (place and year of publication unknown). Please note that there are no page numbers in the document. As such, all information in this section has not been referenced aside from the link to *The Irish Times* article of 2 February 2012 and the biographical footnote to Pierce Butler, as there are no pages to reference information to.



gentlemanly status, and in many games overwhelmingly so. This was reciprocated by other club teams they were playing, and would support the idea of cross-class interaction and play from very early in Irish cricket's history, attacking the historiographical thought of many that cricket was an elite preserve. Whilst the gentlemen were of the Protestant local gentry, local Catholic men were hired in to play for the team at a rate of 2 shillings for practice days and the same rate plus expenses for external games.<sup>528</sup>

In 1846 the club was able to hold at least two Gentlemen and Players internal matches as a result of this arrangement and the players employed to play seem to have been a mix of bowlers and batsmen – a theme that was consistent throughout these years in the records. The club were unafraid of fielding men below gentlemanly status, for example playing a team containing six gentlemen and five labourers in their first 1846 match against the elite Carlow club and seven gentlemen and four labourers in their second match of the year against this side, with all of the Carlow players in both matches being gentlemen. The Players team were also used as a team in itself in 1846 to play a gentleman's team comprising a mix of gentlemen and players, playing J.L. Galliory's team in this year.

The club arranged eleven games for their 1847 season, at the peak of the Famine, a year in which their membership roll fell to 17. A subscription of £1 for the season would have precluded anyone but the rich being a full-time member in addition to the prerequisite of being proposed and seconded by gentlemen members of the club. For internal practice matches of the season, a shilling per man was payable by the losing side towards a ground fund, with five shillings payable for any matches a member played against foreign clubs in addition to their subscription for the year. Although other club teams also fielded non-gentleman players such as the Huntingdon club in 1847 who fielded three such players in their game, the Ashbrook Union appear to be the most democratic team on their circuit. Lord Ashbrook himself captained two sides against other club members' teams in 1847, playing both with and against peasantry players.

For 1848, Pierce Somerset Butler, MP for Kilkenny County since 1843,<sup>529</sup> was a subscribing member in a season that saw the number of games drop significantly to only four. There was some military involvement across the years of the club book, but

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<sup>528</sup> *The Irish Times*, 2 February 2012.

<sup>529</sup> B.M. Walker (ed), *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801 – 1922* (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 1978), p.73.

the players were overwhelmingly civilian. If anything, the involvement of labouring-class players increased across the years of 1846 – 1848, and in 1848 one of the Players even captained a team including other gentlemen.<sup>530</sup> 1848 saw another Gentlemen versus Players match, which appears to have become an annual fixture by this stage.

The micro study of this club explodes many of the assumptions casually made about cricket in Ireland being the preserve of the elite. With the exception of the Carlow club who did retain exclusivity, numerous other clubs show cross-class representation in teams too, with play between MPs, lords, military men and Irish peasants earning money to play. The fact that a peasant was able to captain a team including gentlemen in 1848 shows a democratisation way beyond what most would assume, and would support Derek Birley's assertion that the division between players and gentlemen in Ireland was less than in England at this time.<sup>531</sup>

This cross-class playing was following the precedent seen in the years before the Ashbrook Union, most notably when Viceroy Richmond had played with 'seven of his Grace's servants' in one of the earliest matches in Ireland, where all sections of society were represented.<sup>532</sup> This trend was continued by the Viceroys into the 1860s, as shared by Arthur Samuels, who relayed how the Earl of Carlisle had no qualms in mixing the whole spectrum of Irish society into his teams:

The Vice Regal Eleven consisted chiefly of members of his Excellency's household: his coachman, butcher, and baker, were amongst his best bats. His aides-de-camp and the best officers in the garrison were, of course, always imported into the Eleven, as was also George Barry. His chaplain, the Rev. Walter Creyke, was captain of the Eleven. He was an ardent cricketer and a fair underhand 'slow' bowler, and he did much to keep the game alive on the Vice Regal ground.<sup>533</sup>

Under Carlisle's Viceroyalty, there were numerous instances of the Viceroy fielding players who can only be assumed as being working class and in difference to the grandiose players one might associate with the Vice Regal team.<sup>534</sup> This is a key

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<sup>530</sup> Brown's team (a non-gentleman) played against the Hon. F. Flower's team in 1848.

<sup>531</sup> Birley, *Sport and the making of modern Britain*, p.253.

<sup>532</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 17 August 1810.

<sup>533</sup> Samuels, *Early cricket in Ireland*, p.17.

<sup>534</sup> The Vice Regal team to play twenty-two of recent clubs formed in Dublin contained six men titled as 'Mr', two military officers and three men with just their surname, who were last on the list (*The Irish Times*, 23 June 1862). On the scorecard for this said game, these three said individuals – Agar, Franklin and Kirby - are all noted without Esq. whilst everyone else was (*The Irish Times*, 24 June 1862). Agar,

reason in explaining how other leading gentlemen could patronise cricket not just for themselves but for the poorest in Irish society. If the Viceroy was doing so, in addition to the Royal Family on the mainland, then surely they too could play with and against those of lesser financial and social standing.

### *2.3: Cross-class association and play across Ireland*

As the examples of the Ashbrook Union and various Viceroys show, social distinction had little importance in the composition of players in teams and matches in general. There was no glass ceiling for cricketing involvement in Irish society, and cross-class play can be seen consistently across the years of investigation. The establishment of Castlecomer CC in 1848 points towards labouring-class involvement post-Famine, as R. Cooke, the estate agent, organised and coached a cricket team with the ground developed and looked after by the employees on the Wandesforde estate.<sup>535</sup> There were signs of integration between the varying strands of Irish society in a match in 1853 between Ooning CC and Belline CC, where five players were given both their forename and surname, whilst the rest were addressed as 'Mr' which would show class distinction between players but participation on the same field of play in likeness to the Ashbrook Union.<sup>536</sup>

In a match between Eglinton and the United Emerald in 1858, seven of the eleven Eglinton players appear to be working class<sup>537</sup> whilst in the elite Co Wicklow versus Phoenix match in June 1859, five of the eleven Wicklow players were denoted as being 'Esquires' whilst six were not (in comparison to all being so from the

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Franklin and Kirby all played in the Players of Dublin versus Gentlemen of Dublin match on 28 May 1862 for the Players (*The Irish Times*, 27 May 1862). These three were joined by Luke in the game versus Wicklow on 15 July 1862 with the same denoting of status compared to the Esquires and military men (*The Irish Times*, 16 July 1862). These players were referred to just by their second name in the same sentence as their fellow Vice Regal players who were referred to as 'Mr' – 'The Vice Regal went in, Mr Booth and Agar being the first to face the bowling... Franklin and Mr Walker, who brought out his bat...' (*Freeman's Journal*, 28 July 1862), thus showing a consistency of referencing for these individuals across the publications of the *Freeman's Journal* and *The Irish Times*. In June 1863 in the match versus Co Kildare, the Vice Regal Eleven possessed five gentlemen with Esq., one military officer and five with no title (being Agar, Godden, Franklin, Luke and Kirby – not the pyrotechnic artist of the same name). In the match description, Mr George Barry, Esq., is referred to as such, whilst Luke, not an esquire, was just referred to as Luke (*The Irish Times*, 12 June 1863). These players were probably professional talent – Franklin and Luke playing in the Gentlemen versus Players match of July 1863 (*Freeman's Journal*, 11 July 1863) in addition to the 1862 match already stated.

<sup>535</sup> O'Dwyer, *The History of Cricket in County Kilkenny*, p.233.

<sup>536</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 24 August 1853.

<sup>537</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 11 June 1858.

gentlemanly Phoenix).<sup>538</sup> Massereene's cross-class play in the 1860s has been shown, and another good example of the aristocratic and well-to-do's involvement in cricket at this time can be seen in the IZ versus twenty-two of Co Kilkenny two-day match in September 1866, where two Lords and a Marquis physically played, with an earl and three knights of the realm spectating along with associated wives, military men and other distinguished individuals of society, including Henry Bruen, MP.<sup>539</sup> The attendance of these leading families was repeated on the next day of play too,<sup>540</sup> with a colourful ball part of the visit of IZ further increasing the social attraction.<sup>541</sup> Yet even in such a game as this, there seems to be two working-class players in the twenty-two.<sup>542</sup>

This cross-class integration was defended in newspapers, the *Belfast News-Letter* reporting the actions of Lord Enniskillen and other leading Protestants, who were making a day trip to Derry with 700 others when the train was attacked. 'In this innocent recreation Protestants of high rank associated themselves with those of humbler station. There was surely no great harm in this... Cardinal Wiseman himself would hardly pound Lord John Manners to death with huge stones because his lordship has been caught playing cricket with his father's Protestant workmen. Why should Lord Enniskillen be jammed against iron nails because he chooses to make an excursion to Derry in company with the Protestant tradesmen of Enniskillen?' the paper indignantly asked.<sup>543</sup>

This association and involvement with others beyond one's own social class didn't just show itself on the field of play, as shown in the Lord Enniskillen example. About 3,000 people attended the 1853 Ballymoney versus Coleraine match, notable as an example of cricket's popularity in its own right. Whilst all players in the match were titled as 'Esq.' showing their middling and elite status, the size of the crowd denotes that there must have been a fair representation of all strata of Irish society in a small town of this size.<sup>544</sup> Indeed, there was a conscious effort by the Botanic Gardens of Belfast to increase the attendance of the 62<sup>nd</sup> and 68<sup>th</sup> foot regiments' match by offering reduced entrance fees which ensured that a large crowd attended and must

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<sup>538</sup> *The Irish Times*, 23 June 1859.

<sup>539</sup> *The Irish Times*, 12 September 1866; *Freeman's Journal*, 12 September 1866; *The Irish Times*, 13 September 1866.

<sup>540</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 13 September 1866.

<sup>541</sup> *The Irish Times*, 13 September 1866.

<sup>542</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 13 September 1866.

<sup>543</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 2 October 1854.

<sup>544</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 July 1853.

have possessed a broad spectrum of society.<sup>545</sup> In addition, the advertising by railway companies of matches included fares at third-class rates, seemingly to attract commercial workers and small farmers and labourers, which must have resulted in some form of association at grounds between classes.

Grounds provision was an obvious route to cross-class cricketing support as already mentioned in chapter one. The Gageboro Tenantry versus Moate Club match in September 1862 saw the tenants of P.C. Judge Esq. play cricket with the use of the field of A.W. Bermingham. Judge was ‘a gentleman who has cultivated for himself the kindest possible regard of his tenants by many humane and endearing acts... With such landlords as Mr Judge and Mr Bermingham, there is neither “tenant right” nor any other right required.’<sup>546</sup> In addition, the Lurgan Demesne were playing within the grounds of Lord Lurgan by 1865, with the members meeting three times a week in this year.<sup>547</sup> David Potter’s work in Scotland has shown how, in similarity, the Master of Dunnikier House, James Townsend Oswald, saw the establishment of a cricket club as a way for his staff to amuse themselves rather than in other less-salubrious activities and his butler and coachman were talented players. In 1856 he seemed to be playing amongst the ‘lads’ himself.<sup>548</sup>

Whether working-class Irish men played the game for the perceived societal or political benefits for which patrons might have provided the game is unknown. Yet the idea of working-class ‘dupes’<sup>549</sup> sleepwalking into mantras of cross-class bliss seems unlikely. Indeed, Dennis O’Keefe has noted how a number of historians have evidenced how working-class men paid ‘lip-service’ to ideologies or institutions like religions to gain access to recreational opportunities,<sup>550</sup> which Peter Bailey has referred to as potential ‘exploitation in reverse’ with working-class people acting respectably or playing along to gain leisure or financial benefit through sport.<sup>551</sup>

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<sup>545</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 2 June 1854. Please note that the naming of the Botanic Gardens varied, sometimes being prefixed with ‘Royal.’ Where there is variation, this is due to a desire to use and reproduce newspaper material as close to print as possible to retain an authentic feel of reports.

<sup>546</sup> *The Irish Times*, 8 September 1862.

<sup>547</sup> *Handbook 1865-6*, p.48.

<sup>548</sup> D.W. Potter, *150 Not Out: Dunnikier cricket club* (exact publication details unknown, but the British Library tentatively suggest: privately published, Kircaldy, 2007), p.7 and p.15.

<sup>549</sup> J. Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture – a social and historical analysis of popular sports in Britain* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1986), p.3.

<sup>550</sup> D. O’Keefe, ‘The Lord’s opening partnership: church and cricket in Calderdale, 1860 to c.1920’ in *Sport in Society*, Vol. 15, No.2 (March 2012), p.257.

<sup>551</sup> P. Bailey, *Leisure and class in Victorian England – rational recreation and the contest for control, 1830 – 1885* (Methuen & Co, London, 1987), p.185.

## 2.4: Working-class cricket

In analysing the involvement of poorer members of Irish society, it should be noted that there is difficulty in ascertaining exactly which socio-economic groups such players came from within the overarching term of 'working class.' There was variation in reporting of individuals by naming in scorecards, and working with the mainland practice of denoting gentlemen with devices like 'Esq.' and full titles and those of non-elite status only being given by surname gives some insight into those playing and at least shows that poorer Irish men were playing cricket.<sup>552</sup> Of course, some newspaper reports might not have deliberately differentiated between players by social standing and thus many more working-class players were no doubt playing than might be read in scorecards.

Within this 'working class' bracket though there are at least three different sub-groups of categorisation: peasants and labourers who resided in the countryside, better described as 'the rural working class,'<sup>553</sup> artisans, who were skilled with their hands and generally lived in towns; and the more traditional working classes who worked especially in towns and urban areas in factories and mills for example.

Naturally, these broad groupings could be extended and altered further. Within the working classes, there was of course natural variation in income, social standing and leisure interests between a worker with fixed tenure of employment and someone employed more informally. The outlook and interests of the working classes would have varied due to age as well as geographical location in the country, as well as religious beliefs. Likewise, the factory manager, whilst still being working class, would no doubt have had different views, access to and thoughts on cricket compared to the everyday worker.

Another way of analysing and investigating working-class cricketing involvement would be to try and distinguish how 'respectable' the working classes involved were. Hugh Cunningham's work has suggested that in Victorian Britain, division was not necessarily just between classes, but between the respectable and not, with the middle classes associating with the 'respectable' working classes.<sup>554</sup> Even though such simplistic judgements have been questioned by later historians as an

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<sup>552</sup> Major, *More than a game*, p.268.

<sup>553</sup> F. Lane, 'P.F. Johnson, nationalism, and Irish rural labourers, 1869 – 82' in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. XXXIII, No.130 (November 2002), p.191.

<sup>554</sup> H. Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution* (Croom Helm, London, 1980), p.11.

identity that was constantly being challenged and debated by contemporaries,<sup>555</sup> it would be a further avenue of research to try to distil more clearly which elements of the working classes were playing the game – whether that be the lawless, stereotypical peasant of Victorian minds as Roy Foster’s work has shown,<sup>556</sup> or the more aspiring, ‘decent’ members of the working classes. A greater analysis of how these working-class Irish individuals accessed cricket too would be fruitful, to better understand whether this was self-made or patronised leisure by richer members of Irish society that facilitated access to cricket, or indeed not.

In a macro study it is impossible to do justice in analysing the details of players of cricket from newspaper reports, and the local histories of the game might be consulted for a more localised analysis of players playing. As can be seen, being ‘working class’ was not a homogenous, nationalised conformity that meant the same thing to every member of this grouping. Even with these difficulties acknowledged though, it is clear that poorer people in Irish society had involvement and enjoyment from cricket, challenging the historiography which has portrayed cricket as elitist.

For example, in 1859 there was a game between Grange and Callan, with the teams made up of players who had learnt the game watching the elite aristocratic teams as well as from contact with employees on the Desart estate, with many of the Grange players being local tenant farmers.<sup>557</sup> A poem from the *Belfast News-Letter* of 11 August 1859 would seem to support this idea of whole societal involvement:

The village lads prepare to leave  
The labours of the day;  
The cricket-field is loud with mirth,  
Of hearty, earnest play;  
And gray-haired [sic] men look on and think  
Of days that are gone by,  
And the light of Summer sunset  
Lingers still about the sky.<sup>558</sup>

The round-arm bowlers versus underhand match in July 1861 in Dublin saw the admission reduced to half price to allow ‘all classes (underhand being most in vogue

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<sup>555</sup> M. Huggins and J.A. Mangan, ‘Epilogue: the dogs bark but the caravan moves on’ in M. Huggins and J.A. Mangan (eds), *Disreputable pleasures – less virtuous Victorians at play* (Frank Cass, London, 2004), p.206.

<sup>556</sup> Please see the chapter ‘Paddy and Mr Punch’ in R.F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch – connections in Irish and English history* (Allen Lane, London, 1993), pp.171-194 for further detail.

<sup>557</sup> O’Dwyer, *The History of Cricket in County Kilkenny*, p.27.

<sup>558</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 11 August 1859.

amongst young players and new clubs), an opportunity of witnessing the best representation of both styles of bowling in Ireland.’<sup>559</sup> There was also a natural diffusion of cricket, simply by the watching and subsequent imitation of social superiors in society. One example is of several little boys being fined one penny for playing cricket in Peter Street, Nenagh, in late September 1863.<sup>560</sup>

The Navan Town’s duels with Navan cricket club in August 1864 highlight town-based working-class play. All the Navan cricket club players were referred to as ‘Mr’ in the report, with initial and then surname in innings list, with the Town players possessing just their second names. It was reported that ‘The Club’s members who played gave the boys of the town a substantial luncheon after the first innings’ although there is no reference to this being a juvenile team.<sup>561</sup> This rivalry in Navan ran for the consecutive years of the mid-decade, with a new team (or perhaps new way of referencing the Navan Town team’s identity) of Navan Working Men’s Club regularly playing the distinctly middle-class Navan cricket club.<sup>562</sup> In terms of rural play, Colonel Bruen, MP, in providing grounds for County Carlow at his estate of Tiny Park led the *Freeman’s Journal* to record:

...we can only say, from personal observation, that we have never seen better cricket by the Irish peasant class than we here witnessed in the case of some, brought forward by this club and instructed on adjoining farms. Truly such county clubs must be regarded as the nurseries of cricket.<sup>563</sup>

Probably the clearest sign of peasantry and working-class involvement comes through reports of violence. A match cited from the *Kilkenny Moderator* in the *Nenagh Guardian* showed participation by a group of manual labourers leading to a rather undignified end to a match in 1851, but again reinforcing cricket’s spread across the whole Irish demographic:

The game of Cricket has lately become quite a rage amongst the young men at the Lake, but the game was unseasonably interrupted by a quarrel as to a

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<sup>559</sup> *The Irish Times*, 13 July 1861.

<sup>560</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 26 September 1863.

<sup>561</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 18 August 1864.

<sup>562</sup> The Navan Working Men’s Club played Slane in late July 1864. All of the Navan men were denoted just by their second name, whilst the Slane players seem of higher social status, nine of the eleven being given their initial plus surname (*Freeman’s Journal*, 27 July 1864). The Navan Working Men’s Club played Summerhill too in 1865 (*Freeman’s Journal*, 9 August 1865) in addition to Navan cricket club annually at this time.

<sup>563</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 6 March 1865.



score, amongst the players which proceeded from words to blows, and ended in a general melee, in which a lad named Peter Powell, son to the well known cobbler of that name, received a blow from a bat in the head, which produced such serious consequences that he was conveyed to the County Infirmary.<sup>564</sup>

Likewise, two violent acts in 1862 further show involvement by all in society. The ‘young lads’ of Urlingford were playing a cricket match at Borrismore when William Walsh was attacked by Michael Blanchfield with a bat after a dispute, which resulted in a severely fractured skull for Walsh. Both were under eighteen.<sup>565</sup> More morbidly, John Bowe died in Kilkeasy in Kilkenny in October, having been kicked in the abdomen in a quarrel that occurred at a cricket match.<sup>566</sup> He was just fourteen.

## 2.5: Middle-class cricket

Cricket teams catering to the middle classes and gentry surged in number between 1848 – 1866, but particularly so from the early 1860s when Carlisle’s endorsement of cricket rippled through Dublin and then began to permeate out into the country. In the urban areas of Ireland such teams would have not been dissimilar to the Sandymount, who were referred to as having players who were ‘young gentlemen engaged in business (professional, &c.) during the day’ making practice confined to mornings and evenings, possessing 60 members by 1862 and a committee of eight.<sup>567</sup> Cricket in Cardiff followed a similar route, Canton CC in Cardiff being a level below the elite Cardiff CC with less financial power and a broader mix of professional men and leading local residents.<sup>568</sup> Numerous such clubs established themselves in this period, offering cricket to such individuals. In addition to the medical professionals mentioned playing in chapter one were other middle-class teams: the Trafalgar, with their headquarters at the Sandymount Hotel;<sup>569</sup> Bray;<sup>570</sup> Ordnance Survey (even if part of the Army);<sup>571</sup> Dublin Castle;<sup>572</sup> Bank of Ireland and Royal Bank, with *The Irish Times* commending the rivalry of public offices in England extending into Ireland,

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<sup>564</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 20 September 1851.

<sup>565</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 10 September 1862.

<sup>566</sup> *The Irish Times*, 21 October 1862.

<sup>567</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 19 April 1862.

<sup>568</sup> A. Hignell, ‘Participants and providers: a micro-scale analysis of cricket in Cardiff during the nineteenth century’ in *Sport in Society*, Vol. 15, No.2 (March 2012), p.173.

<sup>569</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 19 April 1862.

<sup>570</sup> In early May 1863 their formation was led by P. Jackson, Esq., with the leading gentry set to support too (*The Irish Times*, 30 April 1863).

<sup>571</sup> *The Irish Times*, 4 July 1861.

<sup>572</sup> *The Irish Times*, 2 September 1862.

calling on other banks and offices of Dublin to follow suit in forming cricket clubs.<sup>573</sup> The Leinster Bar were another example of a Dublin middle-class team affording cricket to the professionals of the capital<sup>574</sup> and in conjunction with the support cricket had from the police helps explain why the game could be played by all: if the lawyers and upholders of the law played the game, then surely all could and should.

In the country, such teams allowed the gentry – including MPs – a day of socialising and entertainment.<sup>575</sup> Enniskillen town hosted a meeting on 9 June 1866 to establish a cricket club, with the Chairman of the Town Commissioners presiding over the meeting. Within one week, over forty members had joined the club, many of them being ‘gentlemen of influence’ in the town and neighbourhood and serving as a good example of how cricket became popular with middle-class Irish men in the countryside.<sup>576</sup> As with the aristocratic pursuit of the game, cricket afforded all the fillips of healthiness, manliness, fashion and amusement that all sections of society were desirous of. Cricket clubs of this middling sort provided eminently pleasant social opportunity, the Leinster club’s holding of their end-of-season dinner for 1866 at the Exhibition Palace in Dublin with fine food and singing to cap a memorable season an example of such festivities.<sup>577</sup>

### 3. Institutional play of cricket between 1848 - 1866

#### *3.1: Workplace cricket*

Workplace cricket offers another lens through which to view working-class cricket but also naturally included all classes to an extent, and can be roughly broken down into self-made and patronised leisure by employers or well-wishers. There are naturally many examples where the source of funding for clubs cannot be traced, where for example a local employer might have donated funds to a club for the

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<sup>573</sup> *The Irish Times*, 7 May 1863.

<sup>574</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 5 August 1865.

<sup>575</sup> The Monasterevan versus Edenderry match of 29 July 1863 possessed a ‘fashionable assembly of the King’s County gentry’ (*The Irish Times*, 1 August 1863) whilst the Clara Club versus Sandymount match in the summer of 1863 predicted ‘A very exciting match is anticipated, as the county members of Parliament and many of the local gentry take a lively interest in the Clara club’ (*The Irish Times*, 6 August 1863).

<sup>576</sup> *The Irish Times*, 15 June 1866.

<sup>577</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 11 October 1866.

benefit of employees in the local area, but without playing under the title of that place of employment.

One of the most prominent examples of self-made workplace cricket comes from the Ballymena cricket club, in an example highlighting the non-elite participation in cricket, the lack of alternative recreation and the drive to keep the population away from alcohol. Although the leisure was self-made, the patronage of a significant local individual facilitated play. In June 1853, the *Belfast News-Letter* reported:

The woollen-drapers of Ballymena, having unanimously agreed to adopt the early closing movement, the young men in their employment have taken advantage of it, by the formation of a cricket club. It consists of twenty-six members, assistant drapers exclusively, employed in the several warehouses in town. The uniform is a scarlet cap, with gold band and tassel, and blue and white jacket. It cannot be doubted that young men, who meet for this description of recreation, are better able to discharge their duties on the following day than if they had spent their evenings in taverns, &c., which, unfortunately, happens too often for want of useful societies to attract them elsewhere. Mr John Jellett has placed at the disposal of the club a large field adjacent to the town, with a promptitude and public spiri [sic] quite in accordance with his reputation of being always amongst the foremost in contributing to the amusement and well-being of his fellow-townsmen.<sup>578</sup>

Ballymena were to go on to be one of the mainstays of Irish cricket in later years. In the south-west of Ireland, employment-based cricket was gaining foot too, a cricket club being formed by the assistants in the employment of Messrs. Cannock Tait and Company in Limerick under the title of the Garryowen Eleven.<sup>579</sup> These two clubs show Irish working-class men organising cricket of their own volition.

Although it is impossible to ascertain if the following clubs were formed by employees or employers, other workers' or trades' cricket clubs can be found. The Junior Mechanics' Club (for those in employment using machines) in Dublin was formed in 1856<sup>580</sup> and in June 1863 a match was played between the employees of Travers and Sons, the wholesale grocers, and those of Mr Borwick, the drysalter, presumably in Dublin based on geographical reporting.<sup>581</sup> The New Ross Mechanic cricket club in Co Wexford<sup>582</sup> and The Engineers' Club in the north of Ireland<sup>583</sup> were

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<sup>578</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 13 June 1853.

<sup>579</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 16 March 1864.

<sup>580</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 20 August 1856.

<sup>581</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 2 July 1863.

<sup>582</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 9 September 1865.

playing by 1865, the latter seemingly possessing a clear majority of working-class players.<sup>584</sup> Pat Bracken's work has shown how mechanics' clubs were established by 1863 in Carrick-on-Suir and Clonmel in Tipperary and were playing cricket, being designed for the benefit of the working classes with support from the wealthier members of Irish society.<sup>585</sup> Such an avenue to the game would have diffused to Ireland from England, with working men's clubs being reported from England at this time, allowing working-class men the chance for recreation.<sup>586</sup> Likewise, in the early 1860s the employees of the local mill were the main players at the Bennettsbridge CC in County Kilkenny.<sup>587</sup>

There were more deliberate attempts to encourage cricket by employers as well. In 1860 a pilgrimage by employees of Richardson, Sons, and Owden to Castleblaney saw 1,500 men enjoy a day at the demesne playing games like cricket and football in addition to a fine picnic at the expense of the said employers.<sup>588</sup> Such benevolence and encouragement of cricket was seen elsewhere too: W. Fetherston Haugh, Esq., of Carrick (presumably the Carrick in Westmeath based on the opposition team being from this county), was 'encouraging amongst the young men in his extensive employment, such a manly pastime as cricket. How much better employed were both the players and spectators on that holiday, than if they had been, as is too often the case on such occasions, spending it in public houses' noted *The Irish Times* regarding a match between Carrick and Dalystown in 1862.<sup>589</sup>

The most effusive endorsement of workplace cricket-playing came from Messrs Switzer, Ferguson and Company, owners of the Commercial Hall in Dublin, 'a great industrial institution' in the words of *The Irish Times*.<sup>590</sup> The patrons threw a ball in the spring of 1866 for their employees at their Grafton Street premises, the men being the 'assistants' of the firm. Switzer and Ferguson were noted to have taken 'the greatest interest in the pursuits of their assistants after business hours' including supporting a cricket club, choral class and library.<sup>591</sup> In the toasts, Mr Whitcalde, in offering the thanks of the workers for the ball and general support, said: 'We believe

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<sup>583</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 3 July 1865.

<sup>584</sup> *The Irish Times*, 19 August 1862.

<sup>585</sup> Bracken, *Foreign and Fantastic Field Sports*, pp.31-32.

<sup>586</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 5 July 1865.

<sup>587</sup> O'Dwyer, *The History of Cricket in County Kilkenny*, p.30.

<sup>588</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 11 August 1860.

<sup>589</sup> *The Irish Times*, 19 August 1862.

<sup>590</sup> *The Irish Times*, 16 April 1866.

<sup>591</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 14 April 1866.

that we enjoy privileges [sic] not usually accorded to assistants in the large commercial houses... Our cricket club experienced in its origin the warmth of your liberality, and its success has been established by your substantial assistance.'<sup>592</sup> Mr Switzer replied that: 'It is our wish to regard our assistants as friends, and to encourage in them an ambition to advance themselves in life.'<sup>593</sup>

Mr Switzer's reply is similar in tone to the benevolent paternalism that was seen elsewhere across the United Kingdom. One such story from Scotland saw a day of amusement thrown at Rossie Priory for the Dundee chimney sweeps and their families by Lord Kinnaird and Lady Kinnaird, with Lord Kinnaird providing his grounds, food and amusements around the cricket ground for those visitors, stating at the end that he was sure the men were pleased they could spend a day without whisky. The chimneysweeps shook hands with his Lordship impulsively at the end of the day, before returning home.<sup>594</sup> Even the Prince of Wales was admitting the tenantry to Sandringham to watch the IZ and twelve gentlemen of Norfolk match in July 1866.<sup>595</sup>

Whitcalde's point that the employees of the Commercial Hall were fortunate in having such benevolent overseers is a fair one as it would be wrong to portray such workplace teams as the abiding norm: as Hugh Cunningham has said, there was always a minority of the middle classes who wanted to help and reform the working classes.<sup>596</sup> For selfish reasons to boost production of the workforce, some employers would have encouraged sport either for the healthy, self-improving benefits it could bring workers or alternatively its state as a preferred activity to the public house.<sup>597</sup> Alternatively, but less likely, would be the idea that employers were being swept along in the mainland cricketing craze that saw local capitalists placing cricket teams in the same socio-cultural bracket as the arts and music,<sup>598</sup> and it was certainly the case that factory owners and industrialists were keen to support and extend the provision of cricket in the second half of the nineteenth century on the mainland.<sup>599</sup> Where these workplace, philanthropic and working-class ventures did exist (and they

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<sup>592</sup> *The Irish Times*, 16 April 1866.

<sup>593</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>594</sup> *The Irish Times*, 27 August 1864.

<sup>595</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 July 1866.

<sup>596</sup> H. Cunningham, 'Leisure and culture' in F.M.L. Thompson (ed), *The Cambridge social history of Britain 1750 – 1950, volume 2 – people and their environment* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990), p.299.

<sup>597</sup> Sport was seen as helping to produce more productive, invigorated workers, and thinkers such as George Cadbury advocated sport for workers to boost efficiency. Tranter, *Sport, economy and society*, p.59.

<sup>598</sup> Sandiford, 'England,' p.11.

<sup>599</sup> Hignell, *Cricket in Wales: an illustrated history*, pp.26-27 and p.69.

were certainly developing in number to 1866), they opened up new streams from which cricket trickled into the mainstream of Irish life.

### 3.2: Schools, universities and youth cricket

Although schools' uptake in the late 1840s was fairly limited, the playing of cricket at St Columba's College, Clongowes Wood, Portora Royal School Dungannon, in addition to the dual school and college of Royal Belfast Academical Institution, shows that future generations were beginning to learn Ireland's major nationally-codified team sport from early in this investigation.

By 1861 *The Irish Times* boasted that 'Every school in Ireland has its cricket club,'<sup>600</sup> a statement patently untrue of all schools but a fair judgement of the leading institutions nationwide. In the years 1860 - 1866 there is record of at least 39 schools playing the game,<sup>601</sup> a small number when considering the thousands of schools nationwide. The nature and limited number of these schools should be emphasised in comparison to national norms: the number of schools in Ireland doubled from around 4,500 to approximately 9,000 between 1850 – 1900,<sup>602</sup> and a glance at the schools playing show them to be predominantly the endowed, grammar and elite private schools. Ciaran O'Neill's work has shown that those attending 'superior' schools as a percentage of a yearly intake were 1.1 percent for Anglicans, 0.4 percent for Presbyterians and 0.2 percent for Catholics,<sup>603</sup> again reinforcing the limited numerical impact of such play even if this was still an incredibly important target group for the game's future growth.

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<sup>600</sup> *The Irish Times*, 16 May 1861.

<sup>601</sup> Academic Institute; Arlington House School (Queen's County); Armagh Royal School; Bective College; Belvidere (presumably Belvedere College); Blackrock College; Continental Academic Institute, Ringstown; Collegiate Institution of Leeson Street, Dublin; Carrickmacross GS; Clongowes; Cloyne Diocesan School (Mallow); Drogheda Grammar School; Dundalk Academy; Dundalk Grammar School; Ennis College; Hillbrook School; Hollyville Park School; Institution School; Irish Missionary College, Ballinasloe (Galway); Kilkenny College; Kingstown School; Mr O'Sullivan's School / Mr Sullivan's School; Mr Wood's School; Nutgrove School; Parsonstown Grammar School; Portora Royal School, Enniskillen; Ranelagh School, Athlone; Rathmines School; Royal Hibernian Military School; Royal School, Banagher (King's County); Royal School Dungannon; Santry School; Sligo School; St Columba's College; St Germain's, Portarlinton; St Stanislaus College; Tipperary Grammar School; Tivoli Hall Academy; Tullabeg.

<sup>602</sup> Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, p.87.

<sup>603</sup> C. O'Neill, 'Education, imperial careers and the Irish Catholic elite in the nineteenth century' in D. Dickson, J. Pyz and C. Shepard (eds), *Irish classrooms and British Empire* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2012), p.100.

For these institutions, cricket provided the moral, physical, manly, healthy training that the game was supposedly affording all in society – be they schoolboy, soldier or common man. The rhetoric used for all men about cricket would have been particularly important for educating the emerging generations, *The Irish Times* carrying an article in June 1859 calling for cricket to be used in schools, boys becoming ‘Ill, not physically, but mentally and morally’ with cricket being the antidote.<sup>604</sup> A report in December 1865 was even more compelling, in saying ‘There are no cricket grounds or other places of the kind about New York, so that the physical part of the educational system is rather defective’ when relaying a visit to the most prominent grammar school in New York City.<sup>605</sup>

Enthusiastic heads of schools such as Mr Jones of Hollyville Park (who apparently appreciated that all work and no play would make Jack a dull boy, and therefore invested his own personal money in a cricket ground at the rear of the school)<sup>606</sup> and the Reverend Benson of Rathmines School, who was a prolific supporter of the game in his establishment in the 1860s and 1870s, show support for the game from above, no doubt indulging the social justifications for the game.

Many of these schools were proud to draw attention to their association with cricket, showing the game’s usefulness as both a marketing tool and a stamp of approval for boys’ wider education as desired by parents; adverts placed sixteen times in total in the autumn of 1861 for Rathmines School<sup>607</sup> and ten adverts placed in the autumn of 1862 for the Collegiate Institution of Leeson Street, Dublin<sup>608</sup> both clearly and repeatedly emphasised the access boys at these institutions had to cricket facilities in imitation of the mainland craze in Public Schools. Likewise, Hillbrook School of High Holywood, County Down, placed 21 adverts in the summer of 1864 boasting of the boys’ access to five acres of grounds for cricket pitches.<sup>609</sup> Schools from England advertised their offerings in Irish newspapers, highlighting their access to and provision of cricket, a marketing ploy that was repeated by many schools in

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<sup>604</sup> *The Irish Times*, 25 June 1859.

<sup>605</sup> *The Irish Times*, 4 December 1865.

<sup>606</sup> Mr Jones, principal of Hollyville Park School, Dublin, ‘seems fully to understand the truth of the saying, so well known and so often repeated by school-boys, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” In order to prevent Jack being a dull boy, Mr Jones has laid out, at his own expense, an extensive cricket ground, at the rear of his school, in which his boys are wont to while away their leisure hours at that manly sport.’ *The Irish Times*, 17 July 1860.

<sup>607</sup> For an example, see *The Irish Times*, 8 August 1861.

<sup>608</sup> For an example, see *The Irish Times*, 29 September 1862.

<sup>609</sup> For an example, see *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 June 1864.

Ireland.<sup>610</sup> As such, headmasters also would have published their cricketing prowess as a way to encourage the Irish middle and upper classes to send their children to Irish instead of mainland schools, seeing as cricket was an important part of the curriculum in Britain. The game certainly was becoming increasingly popular in these institutions: by the 1860s Blackrock, Rathmines and Hollyville Park all possessed second elevens whilst the Academic Institute was fielding three sides by 1862.<sup>611</sup> Some were even starting to tour, with the Royal School Dungannon visiting Dublin in late June and early July 1862<sup>612</sup> and repeating the visit the following year.<sup>613</sup>

In the schools where cricket had taken hold, the game was of clear importance. In the Church of Ireland school of St Columba's, cricket had taken firm root. The Reverend William Longden, Warden of St Columba's and also founder of Radley College in Oxford, stated at prize day in June 1865 that one of the benefits of expanding the school would be 'we should have a better game of cricket.'<sup>614</sup> A new cricket pavilion had been built at St Columba's by 1866, with praise given to the fact that 'physical training is regarded in St Columba's College as an essential part of a system of education whose object is not merely to produce scholars, but sound-minded, healthy, and vigorous men.'<sup>615</sup> Such was the devotion that the school had a college professional throughout the century, with masters and Wardens being largely drawn from Oxbridge with reflection of the mainland Public School craze for sport seeing members of the 1XI being awarded caps and blazers.<sup>616</sup> The 1866 building of a substantial pavilion at St Columba's – chapel and scholasticism apart – meant 'cricket was the most tangible expression of St Columba's culture and values' at this time.<sup>617</sup>

That cricket was played and popular in Protestant schools in Ireland might come as little surprise, but there was also a significant amount of play at Catholic schools such as Blackrock, Clongowes and St Stanislaus, to name but three. These

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<sup>610</sup> For examples see: Portora Royal School, Enniskillen, boasted of their cricket facilities in adverts – see *The Irish Times*, 17 March 1865; Kilkenny College boasted of cricket grounds in adverts in spring 1864 – see *The Irish Times*, 18 March 1864; Hillbrook School, High Holywood, County Down, placed 21 adverts in the summer of 1864 broadcasting the boys' access to five acres of grounds for cricket pitches – see *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 June 1864.

<sup>611</sup> Blackrock – *The Irish Times*, 4 July 1861; Hollyville Park School – *The Irish Times*, 9 August 1861; Rathmines School – *The Irish Times*, 17 June 1862; Academic Institute – *The Irish Times*, 27 May 1862.

<sup>612</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 3 July 1862.

<sup>613</sup> *The Irish Times*, 27 June 1863. See 1 July 1863 in same publication for the University match report.

<sup>614</sup> *The Irish Times*, 10 June 1865.

<sup>615</sup> *The Irish Times*, 11 June 1866.

<sup>616</sup> J. Bailey and M. Dockrell (eds), *St Columba's Cricket, Not Out 150* (St Columba's College, Dublin, 1993), pp.7-8.

<sup>617</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9.



schools were actively, and visibly, promoting their prominence in the game, to the extent that to enhance the training given both Carlow College (a Catholic collegiate seminary awarding degrees) and St Stanislaus were employing professionals by 1865.<sup>618</sup> That a Catholic collegiate seminary was playing cricket again challenges the historiographical view of cricket as a Protestant endeavour.

Boys from these elite schools were able to continue their cricketing education and enjoyment at the universities of Ireland. Trinity College, Dublin (the sole constituent college of Dublin University), played cricket enthusiastically and possessed a 3XI by 1865.<sup>619</sup> In the other major Dublin college of the Catholic University there was a 2XI by 1865.<sup>620</sup>

Cricket was also played in universities and colleges outside of Dublin. Queen's College Belfast possessed a second team by 1866<sup>621</sup> and cricket was also played in the other Queen's Colleges of Cork and Galway, meaning that cricket was being played in the universities of all the major towns of Ireland by the mid-1860s. Similar to cricket's popularity in schools, this would have an important knock-on effect in future years as the game was spread when these young men became leaders of local and indeed national society, crucial for the sport's development in the years after schooling when these men fanned out across the country and would have taken their pastimes of youth with them to new pastures.

Yet it wasn't just in schools and universities that cricket was accessible for the youth of Ireland. The game was noted to have 'received a remarkable impulse among our young men' in 1860 to the detriment of rowing and lake activity,<sup>622</sup> and away from formal schools the sport continued to develop. The 'young men' of Templemore formed a cricket club in the summer of 1861, which numbered around 20 members by June 1861,<sup>623</sup> and in addition junior teams were found at another eight clubs in the period from the early-to-mid 1860s.<sup>624</sup> Where there were not formalised junior sections, young players could still of course play in full adult teams – as was the case at the Rutland versus Bray match in mid-September 1863, where Rutland had 'many

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<sup>618</sup> *Handbook 1865-6*: Carlow College (p.50) and St Stanislaus (p.58).

<sup>619</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 8 April 1865.

<sup>620</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 19 June 1865.

<sup>621</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 12 December 1866.

<sup>622</sup> *The Irish Times*, 10 September 1860.

<sup>623</sup> *The Irish Times*, 1 July 1861.

<sup>624</sup> Juveniles were gaining their own teams in the form of: Junior Charlemont; the Armagh Junior Club; Clara Juvenile Club; Leinster; Dundalk Juveniles (presumably of Dundalk CC); Ballysax; Curragh Camp. Rathgar even had a junior second eleven.

juveniles' playing.<sup>625</sup> There was even an attempt to raise a formal representative team of Young Ireland (no political connection) purported by that ever-constant champion of the game Charles Lawrence in the summer of 1861, which was to comprise the best undergraduates and boys of the Irish Public Schools.<sup>626</sup> It is unclear if this team ever actually materialised, and the assumption could be safely made that Lawrence's departure for Australia at the end of 1861 saw the death of this project. By 1865 there was sufficient demand for *John Lawrence's Handbook of Cricket* to advertise specific youth cricket balls and leg guards for sale<sup>627</sup> to facilitate this youthful interest. Even for those who had left formal education in schools where cricket was played, there was an increasing preponderance for old boys' or past and present teams to play, useful in keeping cricketers active in those early post-school years.

### *3.3: The military - the Army and civilian militias*

The military were important for their early play of the game in Ireland. Their play was important in providing opposition to local clubs in Ireland and particularly so in remote areas throughout the years of 1848 to 1866. At national level, various Military of Ireland teams could be formed to play elite civilians, being exclusive and special representative matches that added a further dash of interest to the cricketing calendar. With regimental and battalion formations naturally and easily delineating to provide teams, inter-regimental and inter-garrison games proved a useful activity and outlet for the military as well as their civilian opponents.

By 1855, possibly 50 percent of the rank-and-file British Army was Irish Catholic,<sup>628</sup> important because of the exposure Irish men would have gained towards cricket when based in barracks either in the United Kingdom or overseas, where cricket was used to pass time. As a result, many depot battalions in Ireland were Catholic,<sup>629</sup> and troops were used to defend their own countrymen in times of agitation, which made the Army actually more popular than might be imagined and in many instances more popular than the police who were the surveillance gatherers. This closeness is exemplified by scenes in Galway in 1852, where dragoons and

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<sup>625</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 23 September 1863.

<sup>626</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 22 June 1861.

<sup>627</sup> Cricket balls were being especially made for youths by 1865 (p.84) and youth leg guards too (p.86), both sourced from the *Handbook 1865-6*.

<sup>628</sup> Bartlett, *Ireland - a History*, p.311.

<sup>629</sup> Crossman, 'The Army and law and order,' p.360.

civilians of all classes danced together to fiddles and flutes, whilst soldiers also gave well-received theatrical shows at Ballinasloe in 1868.<sup>630</sup> This closeness extended to cricket in hundreds of instances, and in the summer of 1862 a match was played on the drill field of Templemore barracks between the military of the garrison and the young men of the town, with the sergeants of the depot entertaining the young men to dinner afterwards. It was noted that some of the officers took part in the match, although the emphasis on the sergeants showed the involvement of less well-heeled members of the military opposed to grandees, these men probably being Irish men in the Army. The presence of the 'young men of the town' also implies an informal, humbler status than those of the elite clubs,<sup>631</sup> supporting the idea of cross-class play not just between civilians in Ireland but in those matches involving the military too.

In addition to a high proportion of Irish soldiers learning cricket in the British Army, changes by Howick Grey, Colonial Secretary, meant that new recruits from 1847 could enlist for ten years before retiring,<sup>632</sup> meaning Irish men could now return home to Ireland at an earlier age, probably in better condition to play and teach cricket to fellow Irish men than under old Army rules. Officers based in Ireland integrated with the respectable local citizenry, spreading the game to local elites, as shown in the early matches played in the country. The justification for military cricket existed in likeness to the civilian norms and mores of health, happiness and morality, with games such as 'football, cricket, racing, &c., &c., so conducive to the soldier's health and strength.'<sup>633</sup>

Such was the seriousness with which cricket was treated and revered at the Curragh Camp that a match involving the Light Infantry Regiments' sergeants and that of another troop supposedly saw the other troop dressing their best privates as sergeants to play as officers. This disgusted an NCO of the said corps who observed the match, so much so that he felt compelled to write to *The Irish Times* to air the issue, emphasising the seriousness and integrity of the game, something that was not isolated to the military with disputes between school teams too.<sup>634</sup> The writer made plain that the officers of one regiment would not be able to match the NCOs and

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<sup>630</sup> Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland 1832 – 1885*, p.422.

<sup>631</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 5 July 1862.

<sup>632</sup> P. Burroughs, 'An unreformed Army? 1815-1868' in D. Chandler and I. Beckett (eds), *The Oxford History of the British Army* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003), p.177.

<sup>633</sup> *The Irish Times*, 21 October 1862.

<sup>634</sup> The Nutgrove and Academic Institution schools had a very public argument in the columns of *The Irish Times* about a similar issue of honesty and fair play – see *The Irish Times*, 28 May 1863.

privates of another, implying that the numerically-stronger everyday rank-and-file to be better than the smaller grouping of officers, interesting in therefore showing the talent many common Irish soldiers must have possessed if this was the case.<sup>635</sup>

As well as the regular-serving Army, another group of military men demand analysis. Irish militias were raised at times of insecurity, and surely must have played some role in cricket's rise due to part time soldiers' association with the full-time Army, given the military's support for the game and the commissioning of cricket grounds in all barracks from 1841. In 1855, there were 40 militia regiments in Ireland, with one in every county (and two in some), whilst there were also an extra 10 artillery militia regiments.<sup>636</sup> These part-time militia regiments were raised for the duration of the Crimean War between 1854 - 1856, as well as during the turbulence of the Indian Mutiny in 1857. For example, the Louth militia was re-embodied in 1855, with an officer class of the local gentry and the merchant classes redolent of the cross-class interaction mentioned on cricket fields.<sup>637</sup> The Louth Rifles had annual training lasting between 21 – 28 days a year, with 2,800 enrolling between 1855 – 1876, of whom 38 percent were labourers.<sup>638</sup> By 1860, there were 370 men in the Waterford militia alone, which had been in existence for all but one year between 1854 - 1860 inclusive.<sup>639</sup> Across the years of investigation, militias are found playing cricket in recorded matches in the newspapers investigated.<sup>640</sup> It would be remiss to suggest the raising of these militias was the key reason for cricket's development or even that the Army deliberately then tried to train Irish men in cricket whilst raised in formations, but the militias add another dimension to Irish men's access to cricket in the mid-Victorian period.

The military's role should not be overstated. Even in the earliest years of investigation in the late 1840s, military cricket teams peaked at most at around 1/3 of all teams, and analysis of the teams playing in Ireland in the years 1860 – 1866 shows that the military were now vastly outnumbered by civilian teams by almost 7:1 (see

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<sup>635</sup> *The Irish Times*, 5 August 1863.

<sup>636</sup> For a general overview of the Irish militias, see R.G. Harris, *The Irish Regiments 1683-1999* (Spellmount, Staplehurst Kent, 1999), pp.270-281.

<sup>637</sup> Gavin and O'Donnell, *Military Barracks Dundalk*, p.15.

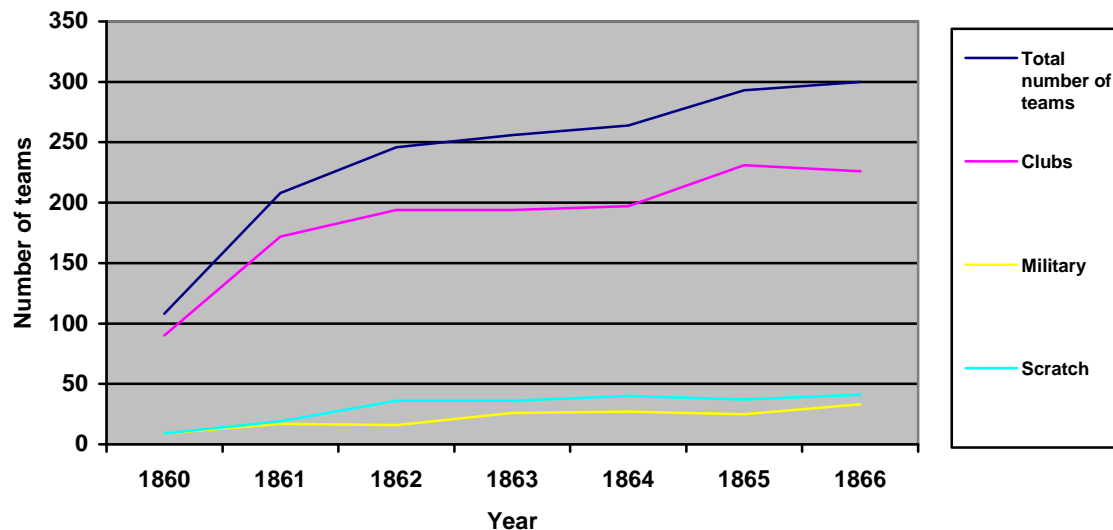
<sup>638</sup> B. Hall, *Officers and Recruits of the Louth Rifles 1854-1876* (The Dun Laoghaire Genealogical Society, Dublin, 1999): annual training lasted 21 - 28 days (p.16); 2,800 individuals enrolled with the Louth Militia between 1855 – 1876 (p.31), 38 percent of whom were labourers (p.33).

<sup>639</sup> Major O.W. Cuffe, *Records of the Waterford Militia, 1584 to 1885* (Waterford, 1885), p.19.

<sup>640</sup> For example the North Cork Militia Club played the Cloyne Diocesan School (Mallow) in late September 1863 (*The Irish Times*, 28 September 1863).

diagram seven), dismissing the picture of cricket as a garrison game or colonial venture. This again proves that cricket went beyond a military amusement and had become a localised Irish game.

**Diagram seven: classification of cricket teams between 1860 - 1866**



#### 4. Religion, nationalism and Unionism

##### *4.1: Cricket's support in both Protestant and Catholic churches*

Christian churches played their part in furthering the game away from formal schooling, where it has been shown that both Catholic and Protestant institutions enthusiastically played the game. Owing to the paternalistic and well-wishing nature of many religious social enterprises, there can be little surprise at the concern shown for Irish citizens through such groups, and many instances can be seen of this nature.

The sport was supported by Protestants, with cricket played at Sunday School days in addition to Protestant schools. In July 1857, a trip was arranged by the Band of Hope Society with Sabbath Schools in the north of Ireland, carrying at least 13,000 people by train from towns in Donegal, Londonderry, Tyrone and Antrim to Portrush, with the day observed as a general holiday in Ballymoney, Ballymena and Coleraine (all of which coincidentally had cricket clubs). Cricket and other sports were played

for the afternoon.<sup>641</sup> Children of the Sunday and Daily Parochial Schools at Holywood received entertainment from Rev. J.C. Flood and Mrs Flood the next month, with 250 children plus their teachers attending. Having had lunch and a blessing, the children were allowed to play for the afternoon, with cricket and football both being played,<sup>642</sup> whilst 170 returned for a similar jaunt in 1859.<sup>643</sup> Sunday School days of Cashel and the Redcross Sunday and Day Schools in Co Wicklow show this as a trend in the 1860s too, prizes being provided for cricket at the latter.<sup>644</sup>

In addition to such Protestant groups, the Catholic Young Men's Society, potentially boasting 127 branches across the country by 1856 and in likeness to the temperance movement of the time in providing moral guidance and intellectual improvement in working-class men, provided cricket as one form of societal training.<sup>645</sup> Dublin Catholic Young Men's Society possessed their own gymnasium and cricket ground by the early 1860s, allowing the osmosis of these ideals on the field of play.<sup>646</sup> Their ground possessed a stand, and in addition to the 'many members' the club had, possessed 'some excellent cricketers.'<sup>647</sup>

The ecclesiastical rule of Paul Cullen of the Catholic Church in Ireland is important to contextualise this Catholic playing of the game. Cullen had been installed as Archbishop of Dublin in 1852 and became a Cardinal in 1866, before retiring in 1878, thus leading the Irish Catholic Church for the majority of the years of this investigation. He was 'of the most uncompromising type' in the words of Charles Lysaght - who enforced a 'systematic policy which made its influence felt and feared' leading to limited opposition within the church.<sup>648</sup> That cricket was played widely and

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<sup>641</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 24 July 1857.

<sup>642</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 31 August 1857.

<sup>643</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 29 July 1859.

<sup>644</sup> The Cashel Sunday School Fete was held at the Cathedral in mid-summer 1863, which 73 children attended, with the group retreating to the Deanery House grounds. The 'great event' of the day was a cricket match between two teams, with parents and friends of pupils having joined the children for the amusements (*Nenagh Guardian*, 5 August 1863). The Reverend John A. Dickinson held the annual entertainment for children of Redcross Sunday and Day Schools in Co Wicklow in September 1863, with almost 70 children attending. Athletic games and cricket were played by the children, with prizes for the winners (*The Irish Times*, 19 September 1863).

<sup>645</sup> Although it is difficult to know how much cricket was played due to a lack of secondary literature, Michael O'Rourke's work investigating the Wexford Catholic Young Men's Society shows that this branch possessed a cricket club, which seemingly would have been the case in many other institutions. M.A. O'Rourke, *History of the Wexford Catholic Young Men's Society 1855 – 2008 volume 1* (Breffni, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, 2008 - 2009 – exact publication date unknown), pp.1-6.

<sup>646</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 7 July 1863 and *The Irish Times*, 7 May 1863.

<sup>647</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 7 May 1863.

<sup>648</sup> Lysaght (ed), *The Times: great Irish lives*, p.44.

publically by Catholic schools and other bodies would not have endured across the years of this thesis if the game had not had his approval.

The prevalence and visibility of play by Catholic organisations is noteworthy. Leading Catholic schools, seminary colleges and informal associations were all involved in the game, particularly in leading middle-class Catholic schools such as Blackrock College. Schools like Blackrock and Terenure College, had been established at the instigation of Cullen,<sup>649</sup> and it would have been impossible for them to be openly playing cricket and advertising this fact in newspapers if the game did not at least have his implicit blessing, especially as his See was Dublin. Schools like Blackrock and Clongowes were ‘drenched in Catholicism’<sup>650</sup> and Blackrock’s enthusiasm for the game is worthy of attention in that their connection to the Irish Catholic hierarchy - after their inauguration at their behest - had remained strong, thus showing the game’s endorsement from the Church’s leaders.<sup>651</sup> Likewise, the Catholic University School played cricket throughout this period, having been developed as a preparatory secondary-level school for students to progress to the Catholic University itself under the gaze of Paul Cullen.<sup>652</sup>

These schools modelled themselves on the English product which the Catholic middle classes in Ireland had a tradition of sending their children to board at.<sup>653</sup> These schools indulged in ‘mimicry’ of the English schools, offering all they offered and valued to avoid disadvantaging themselves.<sup>654</sup>

The Catholic University in Dublin was another leading Catholic educational institution also heavily involved in cricket. Cullen had been directly involved in the establishment of the Catholic University in 1854,<sup>655</sup> with an opening attended by 100,000 people according to police reports in a day of exuberant celebration.<sup>656</sup> The University had been established by Catholic bishops in Ireland in 1854 as a counterweight to the Protestant-dominated Trinity College.<sup>657</sup> Such was the

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<sup>649</sup> C. O’Carroll, ‘The pastoral vision of Paul Cullen’ in D. Keogh and A. McDonnell (eds), *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2011), pp.127-128. In 1866 Cullen was created Cardinal by the Holy See, although his encouragement of Catholic schools as mentioned above occurred when Archbishop of Dublin.

<sup>650</sup> C. O’Neill, ‘Rule Etonia: educating the Irish Catholic elite 1850 – 1900’ PhD thesis submitted to the University of Liverpool, UK, June 2010, pp.1-2.

<sup>651</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38.

<sup>652</sup> O’Carroll, ‘The pastoral vision of Paul Cullen,’ p.129.

<sup>653</sup> O’Neill, ‘Rule Etonia,’ p.55.

<sup>654</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27.

<sup>655</sup> O’Carroll, ‘The pastoral vision of Paul Cullen,’ p.128.

<sup>656</sup> Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p.79.

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6.

importance and publicity of the University that it is impossible cricket was played without at least the passing acceptance of Paul Cullen and other leading Catholics of the time.

#### *4.2: Support by nationalists*

Most would assume that cricket in Ireland was the pursuit of Unionists, yet cricket did not carry clear and overriding associations with England or Britain and was certainly supported by nationalists. Reading the newspapers of the time, it is apparent that there are a few (although not substantially) more references to the game's English roots in the early 1860s in comparison to earlier years – perhaps an unsurprising state when bearing in mind the hugely increased number of reports being published. At various times the game was referred to as a 'British field sport'<sup>658</sup> and the 'British darling',<sup>659</sup> whilst it was also reported that 'In a few years it will no longer be the great English game.'<sup>660</sup> Yet at the same time cricket also became increasingly associated with nationalism, often reported as an Irish possession – a popular refrain being 'our national game'<sup>661</sup> and with this came a greater desire to take possession of the game as an Irish pursuit. *The Irish Times* led these calls in 1861, saying:

Cricket has been hitherto considered a peculiarly English game, yet there is no reason why it should be so. It is one of the most manly and athletic of all games, and, consequently, there is no reason why it should not be thoroughly indigenated in Ireland... The game has now been very generally taken up in Ireland. We have several cricket clubs associated with the metropolis, and it is cheering to observe, with the first appearance of fine weather, the wickets pitched once more.<sup>662</sup>

Likewise, Mr G.F. Shaw felt compelled to say that cricket had been 'naturalized' amongst Irish people in these years, a development that pleased him on his wider discourse about physical education.<sup>663</sup>

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<sup>658</sup> Cricket was referred to as a 'British field sport' in an advert by Henry Greer's wareroom in May 1860 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 31 May 1860).

<sup>659</sup> *The Irish Times*, 29 December 1863.

<sup>660</sup> *The Irish Times*, 4 September 1860.

<sup>661</sup> See *Nenagh Guardian*, 30 July 1864 for example.

<sup>662</sup> *The Irish Times*, 22 April 1861.

<sup>663</sup> Mr G.F. Shaw delivered a lecture at the Dublin Athenaeum in December 1862 on 'Education of the Commercial Man' and in particular on the importance of physical education. He spoke favourably of many sports like athletics, gymnasium and rackets, also saying that 'The game of cricket has been of



This increasing pride in Irish cricket evinced itself in more blatant and increasingly-proud forms. It was boasted in 1860 that within a decade English and Irish national elevens would ‘see an evenhanded fight, when eleven English will content [sic] against an equal number.’<sup>664</sup> Following the All England Eleven match in September of this year it was hoped that ‘judging from the general display of skill yesterday on the part of the Twenty-two, we may safely augur that the day is not far distant when the combat will be even, set man for man.’<sup>665</sup> This increasing pride in wanting equality with English cricket was shown in the cry that ‘If her (England’s) admirers were to visit the King’s and Queen’s County, and peep into the classic town of Portarlinton, probably they would discover as fine a “Grecian” and as “light” a batsman as any of the “Versemen” of Harrow, or the cricketers of Eton.’<sup>666</sup>

The strongest indication that cricket was not seen as specifically or clearly English or British but a game played freely and willingly by all, comes in the support of nationalistic organisations like the newspapers of *The Nation* and the *Freeman’s Journal*. These publications would not have supported the game if it were so, particularly *The Nation*, the most aggressively nationalistic publication consulted. Although far from widespread reporting in *The Nation*, the reports that were presented showed little hostility towards the game; the events surrounding the Eton and Harrow cricket match were reported without any associated barbs.<sup>667</sup> The newspaper made possibly its most vocal support for cricket known in the mid-1860s, in reporting the opening to the Ballymahon’s second season as a club, when the paper proclaimed:

...let us pray, long may the young cricketers live to whirl the bat, spin the ball, and defend their wickets for their own recreation, for the amusement of their friends, and, first and foremost, and, above all, for the promotion of kindly feelings amongst Irishmen of different ranks and sects.<sup>668</sup>

It is worth noting that this piece was from a correspondent of *The Nation*, being a *bona fide* report: it was not a letter from an unrepresentative reader. The rest of the page in which this report was made details reports about emigration, the Fenian

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late years naturalized among us’ which obviously pleased him as part of his broader discourse (*The Irish Times*, 5 December 1862).

<sup>664</sup> *The Irish Times*, 31 August 1860.

<sup>665</sup> *The Irish Times*, 4 September 1860.

<sup>666</sup> *The Irish Times*, 3 May 1861.

<sup>667</sup> *The Nation*, 23 July 1864.

<sup>668</sup> *The Nation*, 21 April 1866.

movement, Fenians in America and the arrest of alleged Fenians and the charging of printing and publishing seditious ballads. So fairly pro-Ireland and pro-independence.

In addition, by 1866 the *Freeman's Journal* carried the most newspaper reports out of any of the seven under investigation, out-reporting the other daily newspapers of *The Irish Times* and the *Belfast News-Letter* combined for this year. Being a Catholic, nationalistic newspaper thus further confirms not only the acceptability but also the pleasure that cricket was providing to such sub-sections of Irish society.

This increasing ownership of cricket by nationalists was reciprocated in rising nationalism in other publications, with joy seen in nationalistic victories. There was immense pride and pleasure at the beating the MCC received at the hands of the Gentlemen of Ireland in late May 1862, smugly noted as 'the more satisfactory when it is considered that only a few years since the game of Cricket was virtually unknown in this country.'<sup>669</sup> 'Erin's sons' were noted as representing the country in a match referenced as 'Ireland v England' in the *Nenagh Guardian* regarding Wilsher and Stephenson's eleven's visit to Ireland to play twenty-two of Dublin and twenty-two of Belfast in May 1864.<sup>670</sup> Creeping nationalisation of the game is shown in the many new teams who emerged with pro-Irish names: the United Shamrock, The Green Flag, Naas Shamrock, Edenderry Shamrock and Patriotic CC reinforce the idea that cricket and proud Irish nationalism were not exclusive entities. Even that great future leader of the nationalist cause, Charles Parnell, was active in cricketing circles, for example hosting a South County Wicklow (with the implication made that Parnell had organised the South Wicklow team) versus Sandymount match, providing a 'splendid luncheon' with the match held at Avondale, his family home.<sup>671</sup>

The cross-channel rivalry was certainly evolving at this time, evidenced by the Kendal Mechanics' Institute visit in the summer of 1865 to play the North of Ireland club, the visitors being beaten easily, leading the *Belfast News-Letter* to hope a more powerful team could be brought over the following year: 'we advise the English to bring a stronger team, the shillelagh having long since ceased to be the only weapon that Paddy can use with effect, the cricket bat being now added to the list.'<sup>672</sup> As Declan Kiberd has noted, Paddy at this time, in representing Ireland, was seen as

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<sup>669</sup> *The Irish Times*, 29 May 1862.

<sup>670</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 7 May 1864.

<sup>671</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 10 August 1863.

<sup>672</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 June 1865.

indolent, unstable, emotional, contrary, childish and feminine.<sup>673</sup> The fact that Paddy was now wielding a bat thus carried enormous metaphorical weight, particularly when written in a Protestant, Unionist publication which shows the acceptability of being a political Unionist but also a cricketing nationalist. Horace Rochfort also exemplified this rising nationalism in demanding in a letter to *The Irish Times* on 8 September 1866 that the Gentlemen of Ireland team picked to play IZ in mid-September 1866 should be composed solely of those who were genuine Irish men.<sup>674</sup> This was certainly a time of rising pride in Irish cricket, including an opposition and contrast to the English playing of the game.

For some nationalists, cricket was being used as a cover for political meetings. Groups from Callan, Kilkenny and Carrick-on-Suir in County Kilkenny met in October 1860, under the guise of cricket. The men wore bits of green ribbon on their breast, with over 50 people coming from Carrick-on-Suir, of whom it was reported that they were mainly shop-assistants and tradesmen. The players pitched wickets at Dunnamaggin in County Kilkenny, where some ‘mock play was gone through.’ After the game, the participants retired to a pub to spend many hours together, and as a result was not forthcoming in the match, a return fixture was arranged for the following Sunday. The Phoenix Society were known to have a strong hold in Carrick-on-Suir and on this night the town was decorated with documents bearing swords and pikes and messages of a disloyal kind.<sup>675</sup> It should be noted that it wasn’t just cricket that was used as a cover for political meetings at this time.<sup>676</sup>

This 1860 meeting under the guise of cricket was not an isolated event. Cricket was used as cover for a nationalist political meeting of 800 to 1,000 men in the autumn of 1864 again at Dunnamaggin, with people travelling from as far as Dublin to attend. Although in instances like this, the nationalists in question were probably exploiting cricket’s position as a legitimate arena for meeting and political discussion, *The Belfast News-Letter* still believed that this event would lead to cricket

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<sup>673</sup> D. Kiberd, ‘Irish Literature and Irish History’ in R.F. Foster (ed), *The Oxford History of Ireland* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001), pp.263-264.

<sup>674</sup> *The Irish Times*, 8 September 1866.

<sup>675</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 12 October 1860.

<sup>676</sup> Fenians were using hurling and football to conceal political meetings in Mayo in 1865. See: *Belfast News-Letter*, 16 September 1865; *The Irish Times*, 30 November 1865; and *The Irish Times* 6 December 1865. Fenians also used the Carrick-on-Suir regatta in 1865 to publicise their grief (*The Irish Times*, 22 September 1865). Roy Foster’s work has also highlighted Fenians meeting for fake cricket matches by the 1860s – Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.394.

being played far more widely by nationalists<sup>677</sup> – an idea that is far from absurd when considering the pro-nationalist *The Nation*'s positive coverage of cricket in the mid-1860s.

Overall, the ownership and celebration of the game by nationalists and as a vehicle for nationalism significantly challenges the idea of cricket as a purely Unionist game and also shows that sporting nationalism could be seen in Irish cricket by the mid-1860s, destroying the idea that it was only from 1884 that nationalists found a sporting outlet.

#### 4.3: Support by Unionists

Common assumptions would probably not evoke surprise at the interest and support for cricket from Unionists and Unionist publications. Yet much like the seemingly-anachronistic nationalistic support for Queen Victoria, it might surprise some to learn that these Irish political Unionists were proud sporting nationalists and cheered for Ireland against mainland teams once wickets had been pitched. David Powell has highlighted the 'dual identity' of Unionists in nineteenth-century Ireland who saw themselves as both British and Irish,<sup>678</sup> whilst Krishan Kumar has similarly noted the 'dual nationalities' that abounded in the United Kingdom in the century.<sup>679</sup> Linda Colley's oft-quoted image of identity not being like hats, in that people could wear many at the same time in the nineteenth century, correlates well here.<sup>680</sup> It is within this current that Unionist support must be seen: it was not seen as duplicitous or strange for those supporting Union to cheer Ireland in cricketing contests in addition to the obvious support that nationalists provided, nor was it seen as insincere to consider oneself a proud Irishman as well as a member of the United Kingdom. The example of the Church of Ireland school St Columba's College is a good case in point, where the Irish and British dimensions of the school were interlinked; supporting Empire was not seen as anti-Irish or loving Ireland less than Britain.<sup>681</sup> As a result, Unionist publications and political voters celebrated victories over the

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<sup>677</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 October 1864.

<sup>678</sup> D. Powell, *Nationhood and identity: the British State since 1800* (I.B. Tauris Publishers, London, 2002), p.252.

<sup>679</sup> K. Kumar, *The making of English National Identity* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003), p.179.

<sup>680</sup> L. Colley, *Britons: forging the nation 1707 – 1837* (Pimlico, London, 1994), p.6.

<sup>681</sup> J. Pyz, 'St Columba's College: an Irish school in the age of empire' in D. Dickson, J. Pyz and C. Shepard (eds), *Irish classrooms and British Empire* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2012), p.133.

mainland but without this becoming dubious or disloyal. This sporting nationalism was fuelled by the visits of mainland teams which increasingly came to tour Ireland, particularly in the decade of the 1860s.

## 5. Some early problems: a lack of professional players and structure

### *5.1: An absence of professional players*

Although cricket had developed support across all classes, in all regions and amongst a wide variety of institutions, political and religious outlooks, one glaring contrast with the mainland is the absence of fully-professional touring teams. There were professionals plying a trade at individual clubs, but by 1866 there had been no replacement for the defunct All Ireland Eleven team following Charles Lawrence's departure in 1861. This on its own was not a catastrophic problem, for other sports in Ireland in the late nineteenth century such as hurling, football, rugby, soccer and athletics were essentially amateur. However, a new professional team would no doubt have helped spread the game, and the comparison with the approximately 20 professional teams in England that existed until the 1880s is striking.<sup>682</sup>

### *5.2: A lack of administrative structure or a national cricket union*

Between 1848 – 1878, cricket in Ireland never developed a formalised administrative structure, a sporting union to lead the game. Charles Lawrence had been an unofficial administrator, popularising the game through coaching in leading Dublin clubs, his leadership of the All Ireland Eleven and the grand matches he organised as promoter. Yet he was not a formal leadership figure or union. The other great patron of the game in the 1850s, Earl Carlisle, was a figurehead, a cheerleader or an enthusiast. Beyond lending either grounds or his rhetorical or visible support, he was not involved in the day-to-day running of the sport. The third of Irish cricket's key individuals - Charles Lawrence – did take some administrative steps, but without fully formalising this role or position. This was to be one of the failings of Irish cricket by the 1870s, when the sport was unable to defend or reinvent itself against increasingly attractive alternative

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<sup>682</sup> Major, *More than a game*, p.192.

sporting or leisure alternatives; cricket was paralysed in the face of better organised recreational outlets by the conclusion of this thesis.

There were some steps taken to administration in the years to 1866, and one such area was in terms of publicising and arranging games. W.H. Greer of Belfast intended to produce a register of cricket matches for the month of June in 1861,<sup>683</sup> whilst this idea was also touted in a letter to *The Irish Times* calling for the names of secretaries and their addresses to be subjoined to all match details to allow the contact and challenging of teams to allow more cricket to be played in 1862.<sup>684</sup> By July, *The Irish Times* was calling for a list of matches to be published to allow all who took an interest in the game to be aware of forthcoming fixtures, saying such a register would exist within a few months.<sup>685</sup>

Although from 1865 onwards *John Lawrence's Handbook of Cricket in Ireland* was published, even this was a step removed from a formal cricket union to organise leagues, cups or representative teams. The publication of this almanac relied upon the exertions of local club secretaries to administrate and initiate cricket and then report it to Lawrence for publication in the *Handbook*, and when Lawrence ceased publication in 1881, there was nothing nationally to fill the void.

There were steps towards selection committees for prominent teams, but this again fell short of a recognised and permanent body. The All England Eleven match in August 1860 to play twenty-two of Ireland saw players selected not for their patronage (called 'the old system'), but for the standard of their play.<sup>686</sup> A committee met to select the twenty-two of Ireland to play the United South of England in the summer of 1865 as another example of organisation and pre-selection.<sup>687</sup> The match between the Gentlemen of the North and South of Ireland in July 1863 was played not with the aim of just putting on a good match, but also allowing younger players representative honours – with an emphasis on showcasing provincial players and giving an impetus to clubs outside of Dublin. As a result the teams selected were not the strongest they could have been, but they were deliberately selected by Horace Rochfort for the South and A.P. McNeill for the North with the intention of growing the game and enthusing support for it.<sup>688</sup> Clubs were beginning to organise themselves

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<sup>683</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 28 May 1861.

<sup>684</sup> *The Irish Times*, 14 June 1861.

<sup>685</sup> *The Irish Times*, 12 July 1861.

<sup>686</sup> *The Irish Times*, 16 August 1860.

<sup>687</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 1 May 1865.

<sup>688</sup> *The Irish Times*, 21 July 1863.

better as well, with a Midland Counties team playing the Vice Regal Eleven in August 1864,<sup>689</sup> and there was also a desire for greater attachments to counties in county games, the Co Wicklow versus Co Carlow match in September 1865 seeing all players having been born in these said counties, as agreed, something the *Freeman's Journal* wished was seen more, to encourage younger players and evince local pride.<sup>690</sup> However, selection protocols were ad-hoc, localised or one-off suggestions or policies, again lacking the permanency that an established union could have provided.

Attempts were made to improve the spectacle of matches, an organic idea that developed naturally amongst cricketers without an overarching direction or destination. Named umpires were increasingly used, whilst the preparation of grounds was developing, in conjunction with the use of rollers and grass cutters, Tom Davis being one individual enjoying increased acclaim for his work on the Phoenix wickets. Significant work went into preparing the ground for the IZ versus twenty-two of Cork match in 1866, with the Corporation of Cork involved, showing an increased care of preparation.<sup>691</sup> There were attempts being made to further the spectacle of games, not just with advertising, balloon rides or sumptuous food, but through the physical space of the grounds: a national sports ground was planned for development in Ballydoyle to support the national sports, including cricket, in 1865.<sup>692</sup> Following the University Foot Races of 1866 and the surplus remaining from that year, the committee organising the races decided to use these funds to build a new cricket pavilion, not only to promote interest in the splendid game of cricket, but also to add to the beauty of the College Park.<sup>693</sup> Yet these movements were never realised, and Irish cricket never established a recognised home ground to develop folklore.

## 6. Conclusion

A much wider range of Irish men enjoyed cricket in the years 1848 – 1866 than might be assumed. Although it is impossible in a national, macro study to numerate the exact percentages of players' backgrounds, what can be shown at least is that all

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<sup>689</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 8 August 1864.

<sup>690</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 9 September 1865.

<sup>691</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 4 September 1866.

<sup>692</sup> *The Irish Times*, 19 May 1865.

<sup>693</sup> *The Irish Times*, 31 May 1866.

classes, nationalists and Unionists as well as Catholics and Protestants patronised the sport. Cricket was permeating society, the game being played across the whole of Ireland by 1866, in both towns and the countryside and with great enthusiasm in many localities where the game had become a vehicle for local pride. It was from this solid grounding as identified in these first two chapters that cricket's popularity would go on to peak in the early-to-mid 1870s before beginning to retract in the late 1870s for a variety of reasons, some of which – like the lack of administrative structure or national cricketing union – had been forewarned from the early 1860s.



## **Chapter three: reaching the apogee of Irish cricket,**

### **1867 – 1872**

Cricket was a popular sport in Ireland and continued to grow, stretching and tentatively planting itself ever further into the extremities of the country both geographically and socially in the years 1867 - 1872. Yet there a growing sense in the newspaper reports of these years that the initial excitement and novelty – the stimulus - of cricket had somewhat worn off. The game was still developing in popularity but was now an established pastime, not quite mundane, but certainly deposed from its status as the new and exciting game of the early 1860s. Part of the reason for this decline in the enthusiasm for cricket lay in the emergence of other sports. One of the major reasons for the popularity of cricket in the earlier years of investigation was due to a distinct lack of other social and cultural opposition, yet by the early 1870s a whole range of other sports were coming to increasingly challenge cricket as recreations in their own right: athletics, rowing, rugby, shooting and even more unusual sports like pigeon shooting were now lurking as threats to cricket's non-equine sporting hegemony of the mid-1860s. In addition, major structural problems like the lack of a national administration, ground and cups and competitions were still not addressed. Cricket had a broad base but shallow roots that depended on local generosity, a situation that was unstable for long-term popularity.

#### **1. The people who played cricket between 1867 - 1872**

##### *1.1: Continued support from the leaders of Irish society*

Whilst not unique in attracting the patronage of Viceroys,<sup>694</sup> cricket no doubt benefitted from its continuing association with the political leaders of Irish society in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Abercorn, Viceroy for the cricketing seasons of 1867 and 1868 before being replaced in December of the latter year, was a solid if

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<sup>694</sup> Abercorn patronised the Abercorn Stakes at the Curragh in 1866 and 1867. D'Arcy, *Horses, Lords and Racing Men*, p.172.

unspectacular supporter, attending and patronising games in his years of office.<sup>695</sup> Under Abercorn's rule there was a Vice Regal ground, but no Vice Regal team of note, only one game being played on the ground in the 1867 season.<sup>696</sup> This was to change with the appointment of a new cricketing Viceroy in December 1868, when Spencer arrived in Dublin to take up the administrative reins and in 1870 six games were played at the Lodge.<sup>697</sup> In addition to providing the patronage that almost all Viceroys, cricketers or not, afforded cricket by supporting leading games,<sup>698</sup> Spencer was notable for his playing involvement in games, taking part in at least three games in his first season at the helm and in all of the years 1869 - 1872 inclusive.<sup>699</sup> It was such involvement that led the Royal Horticultural Society, at their annual dinner in October 1872 at the Gresham Hotel in Dublin, to praise Spencer in a toast to the Viceroy:

His Excellency was identified with everything Irish. As a sportsman in the field, he always occupied a favourite position. On the cricket field, he was well known as an ardent lover of the game, and at the rifle range he was always able to hold his own.<sup>700</sup>

Needless to say, the identification of cricket as a distinctly Irish pastime further emphasises the national identity the game had formed. Coupled with the support of Spencer, the endorsement of the Royal Family added further continuing kudos to the game, with the Prince of Wales reported as a keen cricketing fan as in earlier years,<sup>701</sup> attending the Dublin Week of 1871 – a week-long cricket festival like the Canterbury

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<sup>695</sup> Abercorn attended games on the 1867 IZ tour when they played in Dublin, heading a particularly impressive list of attendees at the IZ – Gentlemen of Ireland match in September 1867 (*The Irish Times*, 12 September 1867) and also patronised the All England Eleven versus twenty-two Gentlemen of Ireland match in 1868 in adverts in addition to a formidable roll call of the well-to-do (*Freeman's Journal*, 1 June 1868).

<sup>696</sup> *Handbook 1867-8*, p.4.

<sup>697</sup> *Handbook 1870-1*, pp.13-14.

<sup>698</sup> For instance, Spencer patronised the All England Eleven versus twenty-two Gentlemen of Ireland match in June 1869 (*Freeman's Journal*, 8 June 1869).

<sup>699</sup> Earl Spencer physically played in May 1869 (*Freeman's Journal*, 21 May 1869), again in the Vice Regal versus Newbridge Garrison game the following week (*The Irish Times*, 25 May 1869) and again against the Irish Civil Service in June 1869 (*Freeman's Journal*, 8 June 1869). The Vice Regal team were active in 1870 (*Freeman's Journal*, 9 May 1870) with Spencer playing this season (see *Freeman's Journal*, 27 May 1870 for example) as well as in the 1871 season (*Freeman's Journal*, 8 May 1871) and 1872 season too (*Belfast News-Letter*, 16 May 1872).

<sup>700</sup> *The Irish Times*, 11 October 1872.

<sup>701</sup> For example, the Prince of Wales was noted as watching cricket at Windsor, watching IZ play in 1870 (*The Irish Times*, 21 June 1870) as well as cricket watching in other years, such as in 1872 (*The Irish Times*, 17 June 1872).

Week in England - to further encourage any wavering gentleman of the game's highest approval.<sup>702</sup>

Of particular interest amongst the reporting of the Royal Family are games involving household servants, the Prince and Princess of Wales stated as enjoying a visit to Sandringham with a match played between the household and their servants,<sup>703</sup> a game the Princess purportedly enjoyed watching.<sup>704</sup> Queen Victoria and her wider family were noted as watching a game of cricket at Balmoral in September 1870 between her servants and the Prince of Wales' in which Prince Arthur played. This was a return match from one played the previous week at Abergeldie, a building leased to the Royal Family in the mid-nineteenth century as it was close to Balmoral.<sup>705</sup> Another match was played between these Balmoral and Abergeldie servants in late September 1870, which the Queen again watched.<sup>706</sup> Such reports continue to explain the acceptability and justification for patronage of less well-off individuals to play cricket by those richer in society as well as encouraging other females to take interest too. If the Queen was endorsing and interested in seeing her servants play the game, then surely landlords and the gentry should follow suit.

### *1.2: Gendered reasons for play*

In an increasingly crowded leisure and sporting scene, cricket retained its hallmarks of manliness, an evermore important distinguishing feature in these years, particularly in contrast with female sports. Of course this is not to say that athletics, rugby football and shooting were not manly – they were and are – but this does help further explain cricket's continued attraction at this time, still being evoked as a manly, noble game.<sup>707</sup>

A new emergence at the end of the late 1860s and early 1870s was Irish sporting society (at least from a cricketing perspective) increasingly diverging into gender-specific stereotypes. Cricket had always been seen as manly, but was now

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<sup>702</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 2 August 1871.

<sup>703</sup> *The Irish Times*, 28 April 1870.

<sup>704</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 30 April 1870.

<sup>705</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 12 September 1870.

<sup>706</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 1 October 1870.

<sup>707</sup> The manliness and nobility of the game was decried in speeches from the North of Ireland CC dinner in 1867 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 28 October 1867), whilst a eulogy similar to those early in the 1860s can be seen in *The Irish Times* on 19 May 1868, lauding cricket as manly, a team sport and so on.

contrasted to female sport as a counterpoint. Croquet and archery had emerged as leading female pastimes, and were singled out as being the preserve of women.<sup>708</sup> More explicitly, the Saint Bride's National Schools enjoyed their annual excursion to Howth in August 1871, where sports, including cricket, were played 'suited to each sex.'<sup>709</sup> The increasingly gendered nature of Irish society at this time is seen well in the adverts of John Lawrence in December 1871 and December 1872 for Christmas presents for women, men, girls and boys – cricket naturally being listed as a present for men and boys and not for females.<sup>710</sup>

### *1.3: The continued spread of the game amongst all sections of society*

With endorsement and justification for playing the game coming from important quarters, the aristocratic and the richest in Ireland continued to enjoy cricket. Leading clubs retained their exclusive element for the richest,<sup>711</sup> and fancy social events and opportunities added to the appeal of cricketing membership; the silver mounted bats presented to the two leading players at the Phoenix annual dinner in 1871 serve as a case in point for these elite players.<sup>712</sup> The connections that cricketing involvement would have provided proved useful for some, the death of Lord Hubert Butler being reported in April 1867 that 'he was known to the aristocracy of almost every county from his connection with the Zingari Cricket Club, of which he was one of the foremost members.'<sup>713</sup> Another Lord who loved cricket was Massereene, who in addition to having his own team, played regularly for the North of Ireland club and

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<sup>708</sup> The Sandymount placed some of their field at disposal for the women's recreations of croquet and archery in 1867 (*The Irish Times*, 17 June 1867), whilst John Brigwell, MP, allowed an archery meeting to be held on his Marlfield demesne at the end of August in 1867, a meeting that was open only to women, whilst men played or watched the cricket between Limerick and Tipperary (*Nenagh Guardian*, 31 August 1867). This gender split was best exemplified in a report from the Curragh Field Day in 1868: croquet, 'that fashionable amusement for ladies,' was seen as a 'feminine imitation of the athletic and health-inspiring game of cricket' (*The Irish Times*, 4 July 1868). Croquet was specifically designated as the 'feminine correlative' of cricket in *The Irish Times* on 22 February 1869.

<sup>709</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 10 August 1871.

<sup>710</sup> For annual examples see *The Irish Times*, 18 December 1871 and *Freeman's Journal*, 17 December 1872.

<sup>711</sup> The exclusivity of the North of Ireland club can be seen that their athletic sports were open to military personnel, Universities, Public Schools, recognised athletics clubs and Gentlemen Amateurs (*The Irish Times*, 4 May 1870).

<sup>712</sup> *Handbook 1871-2*, p.17. In likeness, Mr Harris of the Leinster club was presented with a silver mounted bat for his score of 154 in the club's match against Portora Royal School in May 1868 (*Freeman's Journal*, 1 June 1868).

<sup>713</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 19 April 1867.

was seemingly of a good standard as he was selected to play in the North of Ireland game against the United South of England in 1871.<sup>714</sup>

Cricket still continued to develop and attract those of the middling sort in Irish society in the years 1867 – 1872. At least four law teams played in these years,<sup>715</sup> whilst the description of attendees at the United South of England versus Dublin University twenty-two match in May 1871 was a very middle-class affair, unsurprising perhaps considering there were entry charges, the ground being populated by graduates and undergraduates of the said university, leading Dublin cricket club members, employees of public offices and banks at this fee-paying game.<sup>716</sup> Similarly, a Piltown match in 1871 reported, ‘The attendance on the ground was large, comprising the respectable people of the Piltown district, who appeared much interested with the noble game’<sup>717</sup> and a report from Roscrea in 1871 about the sport’s progress in the county echoed such sentiments.<sup>718</sup> The spread of cricket to rural areas by the gentry and professional classes in future years was aided in 1870 when Dublin University decided to abolish their entrance fee, seeing nearly 50 new members join by the beginning of the season, important to the later diffusion of cricket nationally.<sup>719</sup>

Cross-class interaction, whether through watching, playing with or facilitating play for cricket outside one’s natural social circle was certainly still a feature of the time in Ireland, similar to the support Queen Victoria herself displayed. The Trinity College Athletic Sports’ report espoused this idea in 1872 in *The Irish Times*, saying:

It is one of the peculiar features of these annual College sports that the different orders of society enjoy them alike, and mix on mutually respectful and kindly terms. In this respect the Irish people resemble those of Continent more nearly than they do their fellow subjects across the Channel...<sup>720</sup>

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<sup>714</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 19 May 1871.

<sup>715</sup> The Irish Bar (*The Irish Times*, 1 June 1870), Munster Bar (*The Irish Times*, 23 July 1872), a Legal XI (*The Irish Times*, 20 May 1872) and Mr Palmer’s Chamber in Dublin played in the 1870 season. In 1868, ‘The first day of the sessions at Bantry, judge, counsellors, lawyers, jurors, clients, and process-servers, for want of business, went cricketing’ (*Freeman’s Journal*, 23 July 1868).

<sup>716</sup> *The Irish Times*, 29 May 1871. Another banking team, the Bank Buildings CC, were also playing in Belfast in 1872 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 6 July 1872).

<sup>717</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 12 July 1871.

<sup>718</sup> The Roscrea CC was established in 1871: ‘This interesting game, which has been daily making progress in the country, has at last found its way into the little town of Roscrea, and, it is anticipated, will be largely supported by the gentry of the district’ (*Nenagh Guardian*, 17 June 1871).

<sup>719</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 4 April 1870.

<sup>720</sup> *The Irish Times*, 1 June 1872.

Such mixing was facilitated and encouraged not just in the provision of grounds, but also in opening grounds to allow anyone to attend due to the abolition of admission fee. Lord Massereene, that cricketing patron and enthusiast, opened attendance to anyone for the match of his eleven versus Mr McCalmont's eleven in May 1870, and as such the 'townspeople turned out in large numbers.' In addition, Lord Massereene's band made their debut this day, all being inhabitants of Antrim,<sup>721</sup> in imitation of the other bands being formed at this time in the country as will be seen in Nenagh. The North of Ireland opened their ground for free for all local match days in the 1872 season, 'trusting that this movement upon their part will tend to develop the noble game amongst the inhabitants of Ulster.'<sup>722</sup> How far such initiatives led to cricket-playing by the less well-off is impossible to prove, but they were being made and encouraged nonetheless as they had been in previous years.

Continued working-class participation can be seen from the irregular recording of names in scorecards.<sup>723</sup> More explicitly, the *Handbook*, in encouraging more peasantry and working-class playing, reported in 1867 that 'The Carlow, Westmeath and other County Clubs, have discovered much latent talent in the peasant class'<sup>724</sup> which reinforces the idea of cross-class playing of the game as these were elite provincial teams. This supports the previous example of the Ashbrook Union in the 1840s which was an incredibly democratic formation in terms of representation. Indeed, such working-class involvement in the game was being seen and encouraged in other sports, with proposals for a working men's rowing club in 1871 showing similar uptake in other gentlemanly sports which might not have been considered likely.<sup>725</sup>

Farmers too were now noted as playing the game. In 1872 in a letter to the *Belfast News-Letter*, 'Londonderry' wrote:

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<sup>721</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 26 May 1870.

<sup>722</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 11 May 1872.

<sup>723</sup> For example, the Massereene team who played Kellswater on 31 August 1867 seemed to have seven working-class players, with seven only given their surname; all others on both the Kellswater and Massereene team were titled with initial and surname (*Belfast News-Letter*, 4 September 1867). Holywood CC seemed to possess a number of poorer players looking at noting in the scorecard in the *Belfast News-Letter* on 12 July 1871, whilst the Co Cavan versus Cavan Town match seems to show labouring / poorer involvement of six men due to noting on scorecards with one labouring / poorer player presumably playing for the Co Cavan team showing potentially either a professional or cross-class playing (*Anglo-Celt*, 1 June 1872).

<sup>724</sup> *Handbook* 1867-8, p.70.

<sup>725</sup> *The Irish Times*, 15 May 1872.

In Dunboe, near Coleraine, a cricket club has been got up amongst the young farmers, and is a decided success. This instance is solitary in my experience... The man who will provide for the lower orders in Ireland like popular amusements, like English cricket, bell-ringing, and rowing, will do vast things in aiding to put down drinking.<sup>726</sup>

‘Londonderry’ claims that cricket-playing amongst farmers was an unusual phenomenon - a statement surely untrue when considering the evidence provided by Bracken and O’Dwyer as outlined in the introduction as well as the aspirational nature of the new gentry of farmers who inhaled mainland mores. Another example of such play can be seen in the more tragic situation involving John Comerford of Carrick-on-Suir, as reported in the *Freeman’s Journal* in 1869:

A party of young men from the vicinity were engaged playing a match of cricket, when one of their number, named John Comerford, a respectable well-to-do farmer’s son, was observed by some of his comrades to stagger and fall suddenly to the ground. He was at once raised, but expired in a few minutes in the arms of a brother. Information was sent to the police at Glenbower station, and they took charge of the body. The deceased was a fine healthy athletic young man, the pride of all his comrades, the true type of an Irish peasant, and his early and sudden death has cast a deep gloom over the locality.<sup>727</sup>

The verdict on Comerford returned natural causes.

The involvement of the less well-off in society is clearer still in the reporting of punishments or tragic events regarding cricket. William Harrison Hargraven was whipped for playing cricket in fields adjoining those of Mr Fitzpatrick, dairy keeper of Church Road, Dublin in 1868<sup>728</sup> whilst David Sinclair, around age seven, was put into custody for assault for striking a man named Robert Pritchard on the mouth with a cricket bat in Belfast. Pritchard was walking up behind the boy when Sinclair swung the bat back, a ball having been bowled to him by another boy, hitting Pritchard in the mouth. The case was remanded.<sup>729</sup> James Feehand was not so lucky in escaping punishment for misdemeanour, and was jailed in the summer of 1871 for one month in Nenagh gaol for striking William Deegan with a cricket bat on the head, inflicting a

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<sup>726</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 September 1872.

<sup>727</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 4 August 1869.

<sup>728</sup> Mr Fitzpatrick was found guilty of taking the law into his own hands and fined 42 shillings in total (*Freeman’s Journal*, 8 June 1868).

<sup>729</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 26 June 1871.

severe wound.<sup>730</sup> Cricket was even the scene for mass disturbance at this time, a fight breaking out in 1872 in a field on the Falls Road, Belfast, traditionally a Catholic area of Belfast. A number of men had collected to play cricket in a field when a dispute arose, with the men then splitting into two factions to throw stones at each other, at which point the RIC arrived and arrested one man.<sup>731</sup> Such examples show that cricket was played beyond country demesnes and elite clubs in these years.

#### *1.4: Workplace cricket*

Working-class professions were particularly forming cricket teams in Belfast in these years. Linen firms, flax spinners and factories were seen as possessing cricket teams at this time, with no fewer than eight in Belfast,<sup>732</sup> whilst the Drogheda Town club in 1867 reported they were unable to play many games as they were a club of ‘young men chiefly engaged in mercantile pursuits.’<sup>733</sup> The playing of cricket by the Belfast Mercantile Academy (a school for those training for mercantile professions) and the Belfast Gas Works are further cases in point and echo the pattern of Cardiff, where by 1867 mercantile company teams included ironmongers, grocers and drapers.<sup>734</sup>

The increase of workplace-based employment in Belfast in general difference to the rest of the country should not be surprising. Ulster, and particularly Belfast, were the only really industrialised areas of Ireland,<sup>735</sup> meaning more benefitted from working regulations and Acts of Parliament than elsewhere in Ireland. In addition, the Belfast working population seems to have had more time and money available to enjoy sporting recreation, which would help account for the popularity of the game in

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<sup>730</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 22 July 1871.

<sup>731</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 August 1872.

<sup>732</sup> York Street Spinning Company, Belfast, played Whiteabbey in July 1867 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 18 July 1867). Finlay Bros and Co played in late August 1867 on the NICC ground (*Belfast News-Letter*, 30 August 1867) whilst York Street Mills played an eleven of NICC in September 1867 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 18 September 1867). Lowry, Valentine and Kirk (a linen firm) played Finlay Bros and Co in 1868, having played each other in 1867 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 13 May 1868). Evidence of Lowry, Valentine and Kirk’s status as a linen firm can be found in: P. Ollerenshaw, *Banking in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: the Belfast Banks, 1825-1914* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1987), p.110. Other examples saw: Belfast Mercantile CC playing in June 1869 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 9 June 1869); Arnott and Co playing under the name of Cassino in June 1869 in Belfast against the Belfast Mercantile CC (*Belfast News-Letter*, 26 June 1869); Lurgan Brownlow Factory CC playing in 1870 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 10 September 1870) and Clearing House CC playing in Dublin 1871 (*Freeman’s Journal*, 12 June 1871). Jennymount Mills were also playing in the Belfast area.

<sup>733</sup> *Handbook 1867–8*, p. 83.

<sup>734</sup> Hignell, ‘Participants and providers,’ p.170.

<sup>735</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.342.



this region.<sup>736</sup> Neil Tranter has noted how the adoption of sports by different groups in the nineteenth century was linked to their per-capita income; hence the middle classes adopted earlier, whilst the increasingly-blessed working classes adopted sports later in the third and fourth quarters of the nineteenth century.<sup>737</sup> This appears to be true in Belfast.

A particularly interesting example of this workplace-based engagement in the game came in August 1871, when employees of F.W. Hayes & Co, flax spinners and linen thread manufacturers, had a day trip, all expenses paid, to Warrenpoint, Co Down, with over 800 attending. After lunch, which was accompanied by ale and lemonade, excursionists enjoyed ‘dancing, cricket, and foot-ball.’<sup>738</sup> Like Sunday School ventures of this sort, such games at the very least gave the briefest of exposures to cricket to those who had perhaps not accessed the game before.

## 2. Continued reasons for cricket’s play in the years 1867 - 1872

### *2.1: A healthy and useful game*

The concern for public parks and health in general in Ireland remained towards the end of the 1860s, at a time of increasing provision of such parks in Ireland; for example, in Dublin and Belfast alone almost 30 public parks were opened in the last third of the nineteenth century.<sup>739</sup> The opening of a public park in Liverpool in January 1867, which had provision for outdoor recreation in the form of cricket and bowling greens, was reported, and it was hoped that local authorities in Ireland would heed the Liverpoolian example in building its own public park, ‘for the toiling masses in Belfast’.<sup>740</sup> More explicit provision for cricket for the people was reported about a public cricket ground’s development in Southampton in May 1867.<sup>741</sup> Champions of the Belfast venture would have rejoiced no doubt in 1868, when a public park was set aside in Belfast by Act of Parliament, although there were still some who took umbrage against people playing cricket there, which the *Belfast News-Letter*

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<sup>736</sup> Garnham, *Association football*, p.11.

<sup>737</sup> Tranter, *Sport, economy and society*, p.36.

<sup>738</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 16 August 1871.

<sup>739</sup> Brück, ‘Landscapes of desire,’ p.196.

<sup>740</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 29 January 1867.

<sup>741</sup> *Freeman’s Journal* and *Belfast News-Letter*, both 13 May 1867.

denounced.<sup>742</sup> Other public park examples existed in Ireland at this time too; Sir Shafto Adair made a gift of a public park to the people of Ballymena in 1870 which, in addition to plants and walking paths, would contain a cricket ground.<sup>743</sup> This correlates with the development of civic pride and town spirit across the midlands and northern England that began in the 1860s and into the 1870s, most famously exemplified by Joseph Chamberlain in Birmingham.<sup>744</sup>

Medical professionals continued to associate with cricket. Both the Dublin Medical School<sup>745</sup> and the College of Surgeons<sup>746</sup> boasted cricket teams at this time, as did the Wilson's Hospital and the City of Dublin Hospital. By 1873, the Ledwich School of Medicine, another pre-eminent Dublin medical institution, were playing. Most emphatically, Professor Cameron, speaking at the College of Surgeons in Dublin on 'Exercise and Training' as part of a course of lectures on 'Hygiene' was clear-cut in his endorsement of the game, ramping up the rhetorical support:

Over-exercise is injurious, and many persons preparing for athletic competitions overstrain their muscles and injure themselves for life... Cricket Dr. Cameron considered to be the best form of exercise, as it stimulated both the mental and bodily faculties, and did not, like some other forms of exercise, over-exert the muscles.<sup>747</sup>

The College of Surgeons would also be important in hosting the first meeting of the Dublin Hurling Club at their York Street premises in December 1882.<sup>748</sup>

Scattered throughout the *Handbook's* reports in these years are examples of doctors active as players and administrators nationally; for example, in 1872, both the captain and Hon. Secretary of the Co Cavan team were doctors.<sup>749</sup> Although not as scientifically qualified as the medical professionals mentioned, the President of the Tuam Temperance Club was inquisitive to know why the athletic sports had not come off in Tuam in late July 1870, showing how temperance groups were beginning to see sport's healthful and socially-beneficial properties.<sup>750</sup>

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<sup>742</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 12 May 1868.

<sup>743</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 27 June 1870.

<sup>744</sup> Sissons, *The Players*, p.76.

<sup>745</sup> *The Irish Times*, 18 May 1871.

<sup>746</sup> *The Irish Times*, 5 June 1869.

<sup>747</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 7 June 1869.

<sup>748</sup> Cronin, Duncan and Rouse, *The GAA: a people's history*, p.25.

<sup>749</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, p.127.

<sup>750</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 23 July 1870.

## 2.2: A game patronised and enjoyed by politicians and policemen

Going beyond the idea of healthiness, cricket was also a way to develop cordial local relations at a time when MPs were increasingly seeing their seats contested; in 1868's election 69 seats went uncontested, but by 1874 this was only 10.<sup>751</sup> For example, cricket's revival in Carlow in 1871 was under a body of gentlemen with two MPs leading the charge.<sup>752</sup> The *Handbook of Cricket* in these years shows a stream of MPs involved in the game, and when including the two Carlow MPs aforementioned, politician involvement numbered no less than eighteen,<sup>753</sup> a significant number when one considers there were approximately 100 Irish MPs at this time although it should be noted that two Parliaments sat during the period 1867 – 1872 as there was an election in 1868. Such support by MPs can be seen in Wales at this time too in addition to England and thus the support of MPs in Ireland was not a unique or suspicious phenomenon as these men were locally elected individuals, not alien figures voted in by proxy in absence.<sup>754</sup> These men would have been targeting the votes of the respectable, enfranchised, aspiring middle classes of farmers and merchants who had been empowered by the 1850 Reform Act, as well as another reforming act of the late 1860s in Ireland that saw a 47 percent increase in the borough franchises.<sup>755</sup> This must partly explain the notable increase in cricketing patronage from MPs compared to earlier years, in an attempt to woo voters.

In an interesting case from England, the idea of educational value emerges in a report from the *Daily Telegraph*, where the noble use of cricket was supported. A team of Aboriginal cricketers were reported to have started playing the game in 1868 under the tutelage of Charles Lawrence, the commendation being that these 'more or less noble savages have been educated to play the good old game.'<sup>756</sup> If noble savages could be taught the game, then so could the Irish peasantry, at a time when Irish peasants were portrayed as apes in mainland publications<sup>757</sup> and the Irish in general as

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<sup>751</sup> Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p.198.

<sup>752</sup> Captain W. Fagan and H. Bruen were the MPs. *Freeman's Journal*, 3 August 1871.

<sup>753</sup> Please see appendix six.

<sup>754</sup> Hignell, *Cricket in Wales: an illustrated history*, p.26 and p.36.

<sup>755</sup> Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p.161.

<sup>756</sup> *The Irish Times*, 22 April 1867.

<sup>757</sup> Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, p.193.

similar to Africans by thinkers such as the Rev. Charles Kinglsey.<sup>758</sup> As such, the issue of race might have been a consideration too in patronising play for local poor men by those of mainland background, in educating and enlightening the ‘natives’ through sport.

Instances of the constabulary playing cricket against local teams became more numerous, and the band of the Royal Irish Constabulary were not just playing for the benefit of spectators at major games such as the All England Eleven versus twenty-two Gentlemen of Ireland in June 1868<sup>759</sup> but also as a team in their own right.<sup>760</sup> Some policemen were organisers of the game, George Maxwell being the Hon. Secretary of the Charleville club in Cork in 1870 as well as a serving member of the RIC.<sup>761</sup> Whether policemen were playing against their neighbours for their own enjoyment, to promote cordial feeling in the neighbourhood when they were sometimes viewed with suspicion or even as a form of social control is difficult to pinpoint but their play certainly can be evidenced, not just in the primary records consulted but also through Pat Bracken’s local county study of Tipperary for example.<sup>762</sup>

In addition to the police, countless justices of the peace are numbered in the *Handbook of Cricket’s* annals from 1865 onwards, as were lawyers. Any activity or form of recreation likely to encourage social restraint would therefore have been a welcome tool for both the police and local magnates in tempering the oft-feared emotional urges of the Irish peasant. What is abundantly clear is that provision of grounds for the playing of cricket remained a consistent feature at this time by the richest in Irish society.<sup>763</sup>

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<sup>758</sup> C. Kaplan, ‘White, black and green: racializing Irishness in Victorian England’ in P. Gray (ed), *Victoria’s Ireland? Irishness and Britishness, 1837 – 1901* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2004), pp.54-55.

<sup>759</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 23 June 1868.

<sup>760</sup> *The Irish Times*, 3 August 1870.

<sup>761</sup> *Handbook 1870-1*, p.134.

<sup>762</sup> Bracken, *Foreign and Fantastic Field Sports*, p.49, p.52 and p.72.

<sup>763</sup> For example, Waterford CC were lent grounds for play by John H. Jones, Esq. and JP (*Nenagh Guardian*, 15 May 1867); Drogheda CC, formed 1867, had grounds given to them by Thomas P. Cairnes, Esq. and JP (*Freeman’s Journal*, 20 May 1867); the Marquis of Drogheda was providing grounds in August 1867 (*Freeman’s Journal*, 20 August 1867).

### 2.3: Endorsed by nationalists and politically neutral

The two most nationalistic of newspapers under investigation maintained their support for cricket. The *Freeman's Journal's* pro-Irish, nationalistic credentials can be well seen in an article in April 1867, in a piece that systematically attacked the British government's soft treatment of Orangemen in Ireland.<sup>764</sup> The idea that cricket was acceptable for both nationalists and Catholics is watertight and destroys the image of cricket as a Protestant or Unionist game.

An even greater endorsement of this theory is provided through the reports of *The Nation* newspaper, the most virulent and active supporters of an Irish state and denouncers of British imperialistic policy in the newspapers under investigation, who continued their solid if not excessive support for the game. If in any doubt about *The Nation's* views on England, one might see an article from 17 August 1867, or indeed an even more strident statement of beliefs from 1868:

We shall never acquiesce in any arrangement which degrades to province of England this ancient nation... Assimilation of the Irish nation with England never has been, and never can take place... There never has been any real union between the two countries. Ireland has never acquiesced in the plundering atrocity of 1800, or believed either in the will or power of the English Parliament to govern this country. Nor, on the other hand, has there ever been on the mind of England any clear, honest, abiding belief that Ireland was an integral portion of the British Empire. The sentiments of the English may be most commonly ascertained at the dinner tables, which is a sort of altar amongst them, and except when attention is roused to the existence of Ireland by some portentous [sic] agitation like that of Fenianism, her existence is ignored.<sup>765</sup>

Yet cricket-playing was still supported in such a publication, or at least unopposed, again granting acceptability for any Irishman to take up the game and again showing that cricket did not carry clear baggage as an English possession. Bearing in mind this antagonism *The Nation* had with England, the newspaper was proud to report the victory of the Dublin University team against the United South of England on 1 July

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<sup>764</sup> The article in question was a piece in the *Freeman's Journal* in April 1867 discussing the problems of Fenianism and Orangeism – 'two kindred organisations' and bemoaning the trouble both caused the country. In the piece the reporting is particularly scathing about British actions in Ireland and the general behaviour of Orangemen (*Freeman's Journal*, 4 April 1867). The same report was run in the *Anglo-Celt* on 6 April 1867.

<sup>765</sup> *The Nation*, 9 May 1868.

1871 as part of a wider celebration of Irish achievement against mainland opposition. The positive benefits cricket could bring were also endorsed by *The Nation* on 4 May 1872 in relation to the Castlecomer Young Men's Society, where they said:

We are happy to learn from a correspondent that this society flourishes. The weekly meetings attract a large number of the young men of the locality, who have enrolled themselves in its ranks, and the establishment of a Cricket Club, in connection with the society, was resolved upon last Sunday. Such cooperation among young men as these excellent associations invite and further throughout the country is productive of great benefits, both positive and negative; and we should regard it as matter of congratulation if other societies were to follow the example of that at Castlecomer, and give their members the means of developing physical strength as well as mental power.

It is appropriate to consider the impact that political developments may have had on cricket in Ireland. By the early 1870s, cricket had not developed any clear political association, and this correlates with work carried out on other sports in Ireland. Pat Bracken has noted that sport in late nineteenth-century Tipperary was overwhelmingly not played for political motivations,<sup>766</sup> whilst Liam O'Callaghan has said 'Yet rugby in Munster was far from an imperial game... There was no neat delineation between political outlook and sporting choice in Ireland.'<sup>767</sup> Richard Comerford has shown how it was not until the 1880s that sport in Ireland began to politicise,<sup>768</sup> a period after this thesis' investigation. Ernest Ensor, writing in Pelham Warner's *Imperial Cricket* in 1912, likewise said that Viceroy's patronised cricket in Ireland as it was 'non-contentious.'<sup>769</sup> Thus a picture emerges of a game not driven by the politics of the day, an idea supported in the cross-class and cross-political play in clubs, with some clubs banning political or religious discussion at grounds.

However, that is not to say that cricket was not affected in some ways by political movements indirectly, mainly in terms of nationalism and Home Rule. Judith Hill has noted how it is hard to define what nationalism was between O'Connell and Parnell as this period saw more of a focus on local rather than national issues.<sup>770</sup> This

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<sup>766</sup> Bracken, *Foreign and Fantastic Field Sports*, p.6.

<sup>767</sup> O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, p.238.

<sup>768</sup> Comerford, *Inventing the Nation: Ireland*, p.217.

<sup>769</sup> Ensor, 'Irish cricket,' p.248.

<sup>770</sup> J. Hill, 'Ideology and cultural production: nationalism and the public monument in mid nineteenth-century Ireland' in T. Foley and S. Ryder (eds), *Ideology and Ireland in the nineteenth century* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 1998), p.56.

would again explain how landlords – if they were using cricket as a way to combat political ideas – would have been doing so on a localised, opposed to national, level. Throughout this time there were no real national movements to rally behind; aside from the 1867 Fenian Uprising, there was no open revolt within which to contextualise cricket. Even in this uprising, the public were ‘apathetic’ to the failed attempt,<sup>771</sup> but this event did begin the resurrection of Irish nationalism that would prove problematic for cricket in the 1870s which saw a string of national defeats against English opposition. Linked to this slow rise of Irish nationalism from 1867 was the formation of Isaac Butt’s Home Rule Government Association in 1870 and then subsequent Home Rule League in 1873.<sup>772</sup> Like the slow rise of Irish nationalism and the desire for victories on the field of play, the Home Rule movement was completely at-odds with Irish cricket’s inability to formalise and administrate itself in Ireland; there was no Irish Cricket Union until 1923. Combined, these issues would contrast Irish cricket in the 1870s against other sports that had both formalised Irish ownership of their respective sports as well as providing victories for an increasingly-proud Irish nation. Therefore, politics did indirectly affect cricket in Ireland as any general social movement would be likely to, but a clear political, religious or indeed social demarcation of the game cannot be found.

#### 2.4: *Cricket and Christianity*

Cricket benefitted from the continued endorsement, at times implicit and others more overt, of the Catholic Church. Cricket was seen as an acceptable association for the Christian Brothers in 1867, which raffled amongst other things a handsome pair of gentlemen’s cricket boots to build a new convent in September 1867.<sup>773</sup> Reaching even to the epoch of the Catholic hierarchy, news of a Papal eleven in Rome comprising English and Irish men playing against eleven English visitors was reported in 1868; the Pope had planned to attend to watch this match but bad weather saw the cancellation of the game.<sup>774</sup>

Cricket was still played in the higher education institutions of the Catholic University in Dublin and also St Patrick’s College in Thurles, the latter being a formal

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<sup>771</sup> Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, p.137.

<sup>772</sup> A. Jackson, *Home Rule: an Irish history, 1800 – 2000* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 2003), p.25.

<sup>773</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 4 September 1867.

<sup>774</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 19 March 1868.

training college for priests wishing to enter the Catholic vocation of priesthood.<sup>775</sup> Other educational ventures saw cricket-playing as part of the offerings of St Cronan's Catholic Young Men's Society, who were playing in 1871 in Co Tipperary<sup>776</sup> and who possessed a 2XI by 1876. Such an example was seen elsewhere in the unspecified religious institution of the Ballina Christian Association possessing a cricket club in 1872.<sup>777</sup>

It should be noted that a blessing by either branch of the Christian church would not necessarily have led to an uptake and patronage of cricket on its own. Oliver MacDonagh has highlighted how priests had 'considerable, though by no means overwhelming, political power'<sup>778</sup> in the mid-nineteenth century. As Thomas Bartlett has shown, the church, parishioners and police were not always able to stamp out illicit activities: an RIC report in 1870 found 563 brothels in Ireland even at a time of opposition to such practice.<sup>779</sup> Believers therefore did pay attention to the preachings of their ministers, but only if they were preaching a message they were receptive to.

In keeping with their Catholic counterparts, Protestant groups were still supportive, the Protestant Armagh Cathedral CC showing the forming of clubs around ecclesiastical sites of worship, similar to the presumable Church of Ireland club listed as St Patrick's Cathedral CC in Dublin, the seat of the Church of Ireland.<sup>780</sup> However, three key differences emerge in the greater involvement that some Protestants had with the game in comparison to their Catholic counterparts, showing differences in patronage between the two religions. The first difference is in the work of Sunday Schools in introducing new players to the game or indeed developing the interest of those already acquainted; numerous examples are cited where Protestant Sunday School annual fetes saw children and adults playing cricket along with other amusements, sporting or otherwise.<sup>781</sup> Comparatively few such examples exist within the Catholic community and would show a more direct provision by the Protestant

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<sup>775</sup> See the article in the *Freeman's Journal* on 22 May 1869 on 'St Patrick's College, Thurles' for further information on the college.

<sup>776</sup> *Handbook 1871-2*, p.208.

<sup>777</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, p.172.

<sup>778</sup> MacDonagh, *States of mind*, p.92.

<sup>779</sup> Bartlett, *Ireland - a History*, pp.290-291.

<sup>780</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 4 June 1868.

<sup>781</sup> For examples in this time, see: Clonmel Sunday School's annual fete saw cricket, racing and swinging all enjoyed by the children (*Nenagh Guardian*, 27 July 1867); the Knockbreda Parochial Schools' annual fete passed with the children, of around 250, enjoying games, races and cricket as part of the day's proceedings in the north of Ireland in August 1867 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 24 August 1867).



Church than the Catholic. Secondly, the physical involvement and support that Protestant preachers gave appears more hands-on than their Catholic counterparts. A gift of a watch was presented by the members of the Tuam cricket club to J.B. Bernard, Esq. for his coming of age in December 1868. This is presumably the son of the Lord Bishop of Tuam, seeing as it was he and the Bernard family who hosted the reception. 'The Lord Bishop, in acknowledging the compliment, said that the Hon. Mrs Bernard and himself found great pleasure at all times in promoting the interest of the cricket club and the pleasure of the inhabitants of Tuam' it was reported.<sup>782</sup> Examples such as this presentation in thanks for Protestant clergy can be seen elsewhere at this time.

Finally and most strikingly compared to the Catholic support which was normally provided in terms of hospitality, many Protestant priests were active players. Leading this charge was the Rev. J.P. Mahaffy, who played for the twenty-two of University and Ground versus United South of England in 1870,<sup>783</sup> took six wickets in the 1871 Vice Regal versus Na Shuler match<sup>784</sup> and also chaired the 1872 Dublin Week meeting at John Lawrence's in April of that year.<sup>785</sup> As early as 1861, there is photographic evidence of the Rev. James Strangeways, a Church of Ireland priest, appearing to play in clerical garbs.<sup>786</sup> References to Muscular Christianity flittingly crept in to newspaper reporting from 1867 onwards, and by 1868 one team went so far to name themselves as 'The Muscular Christians, Belfast.'<sup>787</sup> Although such terminology was not widespread, the involvement of a significant amount of Protestant clergy and groups in playing cricket highlights the physical and metaphorical support that such brethren were now very visibly giving the game.

## 2.5: Cricket in schools

Central to cricket's continued play in later decades was how successful the game was taken up by the youngest in society. In formal educational settings and away from schools, the game continued its increase in popularity, further supporting the idea of

<sup>782</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 12 January 1869.

<sup>783</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 25 May 1870.

<sup>784</sup> *The Irish Times*, 26 July 1871.

<sup>785</sup> *The Irish Times*, 24 April 1872.

<sup>786</sup> B. Weir, *Armagh cricket club – 150 not out: the history of cricket in an Ulster city* (Armagh cricket club, Armagh, 2009), p.10 and p.14.

<sup>787</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 3 June 1868.

the game's use for either educational or controlling purposes. A notable increase in the advertising of cricket as part of schools' promotional adverts in newspapers can be seen at this time; ten schools made explicit reference to their provision of cricket in 1867 - 1872 advertising material to coax parents into sending their sons to these schools. These schools went beyond the major Dublin and Belfast schools, including Ennis College in Co Clare and Tuam Diocesan School in Co Galway in the very west of Ireland, St John's College, Newport Tipperary, near Limerick and Dundalk Grammar School on the midland east coast. This trait of expounding access to cricket as a marketing tool was also used to great and consistent effect by English schools also advertising repeatedly in Irish newspapers too.<sup>788</sup> The leading Catholic schools continued to enjoy cricket, and the hospitality of the priests running these institutions was noted more so than their Protestant counterparts, being one area where the Catholic clergy outdid their Protestant counterparts. For example, St Stanislaus College, a Catholic school, were in the habit of receiving an annual visit from the Dublin-based Leinster club, which was always highly commended:

The Leinster Eleven experienced to the full that unbounded hospitality which is invariably extended to visitors at St Stanislaus, the Rev. Rector, Dr Delany, and all the College authorities vied with one another in making the Eleven most perfectly at home. Indeed, in our experience – and it is a pretty wide one – in the cricketing world we never knew of any Eleven – especially metropolitan Elevens – that had once been within the precincts of St Stanislaus College that did not wish to revisit its hospitable halls.<sup>789</sup>

Protestant schools remained active. The Headmaster Rev. Dr Benson, an enthusiastic supporter of cricket, presented a bat each to the two players with the best averages for the Rathmines School 1XI and 2XI at their ground on Monday 30 September 1867<sup>790</sup> as well as subscribing £25 annually towards renting a field for the boys to play cricket in and acting as President of the cricket club in 1868.<sup>791</sup> Likewise, the Rev. F.H. Wall played for Arlington House School from Queen's County against the Dublin University Boat Club in September 1872, being the principal of the school and being the host of the University rowers.<sup>792</sup> In addition to Arlington House, the playing of

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<sup>788</sup> Please see appendix eight for examples of both Irish and British schools' advertising.

<sup>789</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 10 July 1871.

<sup>790</sup> *The Irish Times*, 1 October 1867.

<sup>791</sup> *Handbook 1868-9*, pp.57-58.

<sup>792</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 17 September 1872.

Monaghan Diocesan School<sup>793</sup> and Middleton College in Cork<sup>794</sup> show that Protestant schools' cricket had a national spread in its play. This embrace of the game by private schools was an uptake also seen in Wales, where play in such institutions increased dramatically mid-century<sup>795</sup> and also in Scotland, where John Burnett has shown the development of cricket was aided by public schools of the English model.<sup>796</sup>

In tune with the mainland schools' buzz for the game, the rhetoric of sport and cricket was noted by contemporary schoolmasters. Maurice Hime, in reflecting on his career spanning almost twenty years in 1885, sounded like many mainland headmasters, when he said:

Plenty of vigorous exercise in the fresh air is of the greatest possible benefit to a boy's mind and body, provided always that the exercise be not monotonous (e.g. not *all* cricket, or *all* football), excessive, or dangerous.<sup>797</sup>

Away from schools, cricket was also available to young men in Ireland through other avenues. Barrett's of Stephen's Green in Dublin were stocking an array of 'toys, games and fancy goods' including those for cricket, croquet and archery, seemingly aimed at the young or for indoor use in 1867.<sup>798</sup> A later report from a Dublin exhibition described Mr Barrett as showcasing 'juvenile toys' and cricket outfits.<sup>799</sup> For the more serious young cricketer, clubs continued to provide colts teams, with at least six recorded in this period.<sup>800</sup> As previously highlighted with the instances of juveniles unfortunately finding disfavour with the law, cricket was being played by less well-off individuals on streets and in fields away from the more exclusive nurseries of teenage development in Ireland.

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<sup>793</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 27 September 1870.

<sup>794</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 24 September 1870.

<sup>795</sup> Hignell, *Cricket in Wales: an illustrated history*, p.58.

<sup>796</sup> J. Burnett, 'Cricket' in G. Jarvie and J. Burnett (eds), *Sport, Scotland and the Scots* (Tuckwell Press, East Linton, 2000), p.55.

<sup>797</sup> M.C. Hime, *A schoolmaster's retrospect of eighteen and a half years in an Irish school* (Sullivan, Simpkin, Marshall, Dublin, 1885), p.22.

<sup>798</sup> *The Irish Times*, 27 February 1867.

<sup>799</sup> *The Irish Times*, 24 April 1867.

<sup>800</sup> Leinster had a colts team playing in the 1867 season, playing the Leinster 2XI, for example (*Freeman's Journal*, 21 May 1867) whilst two new juvenile teams were playing in 1867 in Dublin – the Star of the Cricket Field CC and Dolphin's-Barn CC (*Freeman's Journal*, 2 July 1867); Altnachree put out a team in 1868 comprising and named '11 Colts' (*Handbook 1868-9*, p.148); Lurgan Junior CC were playing in 1871 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 27 June 1871); a Carrickfergus (Junior) team were playing in 1872 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 17 July 1872).

### 3. Where cricket was played geographically in Ireland

#### *3.1: Spreading further afield into the south and the west*

An important impact the playing of cricket had in the schools and universities in the 1850s and 1860s was in increasing the spread and play of cricket further across Ireland as these graduates moved to new areas, often into positions of responsibility. Aside from the surge of cricketing popularity in the cities of Belfast and Dublin, nowhere better than the west of Ireland serves to showcase the increasing reach of the game by 1872. Of the west of Ireland's cricketing prowess, it was stated in John Lawrence's *Handbook of Cricket* in 1867 that 'Mr Lawrence's excellent *Guide* for this year, compared with his last, shows a considerable increase of Cricket in Ireland; but there is still a striking barrenness in Connaught.'<sup>801</sup> Whilst this sentiment would hold moderately true in 1867, by 1872 this idea was being undermined. In the town of Galway, in addition to the leading County Galway team (who had gained permission in 1871 to play their matches from the Town Commissioners in the square, thus adding further spectacle to their games<sup>802</sup>) the University of Queen's College Galway was still playing.<sup>803</sup> Elsewhere in this county, the game continued to spread; Shanbally CC were playing by 1872<sup>804</sup> as were the geographically-unspecified Galway Western Club, who played Tuam in 1871.<sup>805</sup> Clonbur and Ross CC, near Cong in Galway, played 15 matches in 1869<sup>806</sup> and in addition to Ballinasloe CC, the Ballinasloe College were playing, again helping the spread of the game by educating tomorrow's workforce today.<sup>807</sup> Most strikingly regarding cricket in County Galway was the stretch of the game to the west of the county, cricket being played at Ard, right on the Atlantic shoreline, in 1869<sup>808</sup> and between two remote Connemara clubs in 1871.<sup>809</sup> Cricket continued to spread in Mayo too: in addition to Westport and Castlebar,<sup>810</sup> Newport, on the Atlantic coast, were playing by 1870.<sup>811</sup>

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<sup>801</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 4 May 1867.

<sup>802</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 29 April 1871.

<sup>803</sup> *The Irish Times*, 20 May 1870.

<sup>804</sup> *The Irish Times*, 21 August 1872.

<sup>805</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 19 August 1871.

<sup>806</sup> *Handbook 1869–70*, p.117.

<sup>807</sup> *The Irish Times*, 25 May 1871.

<sup>808</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 21 July 1869.

<sup>809</sup> Kylmore, in remote Connemara in Co Galway played Carrollstown of Connemara in June 1871 (*The Irish Times*, 26 June 1871).

<sup>810</sup> *The Irish Times*, 19 April 1870.

One particular club from the west of the country, the West Mayo CC (playing by 1870), had a very interesting letter to the *Tuam Herald* from the captain, James R. Dudgeon, published in July 1870:

I beg in addition to inform you the club was originated, not for the sole purpose of affording amusement to individual members. It aims at a wider scope - to afford rational amusement and develope [sic] kindly feeling amongst all classes and creeds.<sup>812</sup>

Most interesting of all about this correspondence is that a list of club members for the West Mayo CC was published in the *Tuam Herald* on the day of this letter's publication: the club comprised four journalists (two from the *Mayo Constitution* and two from the *Mayo Examiner*), two doctors, three National Bank employees and one postmaster.<sup>813</sup> This is a rare example of the occupational backgrounds of players being clearly identified in this research, and would show the West Mayo club to be populated by the professional working and middle classes. More analysis like this is needed to clarify exactly who was playing cricket at this time in Ireland.

### 3.2: *The micro study of Tuam*

A case study about the foundation, growth and development of cricket in County Galway can be shown in the example of the Tuam cricket club. Although established and playing by 1863, the club was reformed in 1867. A committee was organised, members joined, and the *Tuam Herald* went on to state that 'we have good reason to hope for a renewed enjoyment of those fine and manly sports of bat and ball.'<sup>814</sup> The enthusiasm of the Tuam players early in this inaugural reformed year was impressive in light of poor weather, perhaps unsurprising bearing in mind the relatively limited other social outlets at this time in Ireland:

An older and consequently more fastidious Club might have objected to playing on a crease of the consistency and colour of blacking, but the novices were not particular, for fielding in a sea of mud, batting on a ground particularly sticky and liable to last impressions, besprinkled at the same time by barely intermittent, but unmistakeably, heavy showers – they helped to give

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<sup>811</sup> *The Irish Times*, 8 June 1870.

<sup>812</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 2 July 1870.

<sup>813</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>814</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 6 April 1867.

their laundresses a living, at the same time that they inaugurated themselves, and acquired a local habitation and a name. The cold *water* of the period was, however, completely neutralised by the sympathising *spirit* (considerably overproof) of the spectators. The Cricket Club has begun its career under very favourable (though rather moist) auspices. There is not only an unmistakeable interest in its progress, which is important, but there is evidently a good deal of talent in some of its members, which is rather necessary. We have little doubt, that (with steady practice and a little energy backed up by that external interest which exists at present), the Club will ascend (like a bird) to a very prominent place in the cricketing department of Ireland W.<sup>815</sup>

From these early beginnings, the club grew over this season of play. Tuam were fielding a 2XI by June 1867<sup>816</sup> whilst the playing membership was nearly 60 members by mid-July,<sup>817</sup> a figure upgraded to 80 in the *Handbook of Cricket* submission.<sup>818</sup> The sociable aspect and aesthetic appearance of the game seemed important for the Tuam club, as for their game against Castlebar in 1867, Tuam's colours of scarlet and white were displayed on flags in the four corners of the field,<sup>819</sup> a clear outlet for communal pride. This enthusiasm saw Tuam find a new ground for the 1868 season, which was being prepared and levelled by a man (presumably contracted to do so), whilst it was also agreed at the first meeting of 1868 that a pavilion be erected in March 1868.<sup>820</sup> Remarkably this new pavilion was open by April 1868, containing a flagstaff (with other flags dotted around the ground), the lunchtime eating at the internal moustached versus clean-shaven men of the club match transforming the pavilion turn into a 'brilliant saloon' with all the 'choicest delicacies' of the season.<sup>821</sup> A stirring and poetic description of Tuam at play in this April 1868 internal match helps explain why some would have felt all this effort to be worthwhile:

And when play had commenced and the fielders were out, and the batsmen were wielding the willow, all dressed in their variegated uniform, and when all around and about were to be seen groups of ladies in every pleasing variety of summer costume, and the warm, brilliant sun-light glinted softly down on the bright green award, the scene was altogether gay and picturesque.<sup>822</sup>

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<sup>815</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 4 May 1867. This report is actually much longer, showing the enthusiasm of the *Tuam Herald* for this new cricketing venture in the locality.

<sup>816</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 8 June 1867.

<sup>817</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 20 July 1867.

<sup>818</sup> Tuam had nearly 80 members, with around 60 being active players with 'almost daily practice games' (*Handbook 1867-8*, p.64).

<sup>819</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 29 June 1867.

<sup>820</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 14 March 1868.

<sup>821</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 18 April 1868.

<sup>822</sup> *Ibid.*

It was with such clubs as Tuam that the military did retain an importance for the playing of cricket in the country; with limited other local opposition, military matches were important in facilitating play.<sup>823</sup> That said, for a town of its size, Tuam had an impressive number of clubs: in addition to the first and second elevens of Tuam plus the military teams of the town and local area were Tuam Diocesan School,<sup>824</sup> this school being a Church of Ireland school<sup>825</sup> with their club President being the Headmaster Reverend H.C. Murphy, with practice days on Monday, Thursday and Saturday.<sup>826</sup> In addition, the major Catholic school in the town, St Jarlath's College, played cricket,<sup>827</sup> and by 1873 a local factory – the Curragh Factory – were active, bringing the number of elevens playing in the area to at least six for this small and rural town at the turn of the 1860s – 1870s decade. Another snapshot of rural western Irish life would show at least four civilian teams playing in Ballinasloe, County Galway, in 1872 as one cross-reference.<sup>828</sup> How typical such a scenario of the evolution and enjoyment of the game for clubs in other rural areas like Tuam is the subject of further debate, but this case study shows the immense popularity and gaiety that cricket could afford to an otherwise dull social calendar outside of the major conurbations. This peak appears to be short-lived, for although the game was played across all classes in the town before football took root in the 1880s, St Jarlath's College purchased the Tuam CC's ground in 1893, and by then the game's 'heyday had passed.'<sup>829</sup>

### 3.3: *Spreading nationally*

It wasn't just in the western County Galway and town of Tuam where cricket's popularity was continuing to rise; this was not an aberration or some type of fluke. All across Ireland, new clubs continued to emerge. In the very south of Ireland, in the county of Cork, cricket retained its prosperous state, with at least twenty-four club

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<sup>823</sup> Tuam were engaging with the military in local areas – those stationed at Tuam and Dunmore played Tuam CC in July 1870 (*Tuam Herald*, 2 July 1870). Tuam opened their 1871 season against the 98<sup>th</sup> regiment, stationed in the town (*Tuam Herald*, 8 July 1871), a team Co Galway would play later in the year too (*Tuam Herald*, 22 July 1871).

<sup>824</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 14 June 1867.

<sup>825</sup> J.A. O'Connell, 'Tuam Schools in the Nineteenth Century' in *Galway Reader*, Vol. 2, Nos 3 and 4, pp.171-179.

<sup>826</sup> *Handbook 1869-70*, p.69.

<sup>827</sup> J. Cunningham, *St. Jarlath's College, Tuam 1800 – 2000* (SJC Publications, Tuam, 1999), p.85.

<sup>828</sup> Ballinasloe CC had two elevens in this year, Ballinasloe College had a team as did the Knights of the Green team, based in the town.

<sup>829</sup> Cunningham, *St Jarlath's College*, p.85.

teams shown to have played in the years 1867 – 1872.<sup>830</sup> In particular, the support for Bandon from the said Earl was contributing to the success not only of that club, but also more broadly across the southern region, noted in 1869 when the *Freeman's Journal* reported 'The Earl has extended his patronage to the noble game, and with his support cricket has taken a firm root in this very extreme southern part of the "green isle."' <sup>831</sup> Whilst cricket was not seemingly as popular in one of modern Cork's great sporting rivals in the county of Kerry, nonetheless seven clubs played in this county in the years to 1872.<sup>832</sup> In terms of extremities, the continued playing of cricket by two teams on Valentia Island in the very west of County Kerry, the landing point of the Atlantic telegraph, shows how successful cricket had been in reaching the furthest shores of Ireland in its expansion.<sup>833</sup> Elsewhere in the south west, cricket remained active in both the counties of Clare and Limerick, whilst further north, cricket was taking a firmer hold in the north west in places like Sligo and Donegal, with a new spate of clubs emerging at a later rate of development in contrast to the well-established cricketing community scene in Dublin by 1872. However, in this area of the north west, cricket's development was often hindered if not indeed unsuccessful, with reports in the early 1870s making this point.<sup>834</sup> Other examples of cricketing rejection are reported too at this time.<sup>835</sup>

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<sup>830</sup> Bandon and Kinsale (*The Irish Times*, 10 June 1869); Cork CC, Queen's College Cork, Cork Garrison (*The Irish Times*, 26 April 1870); Fermoy Garrison (*The Irish Times*, 2 May 1870); Mallow (*The Irish Times*, 15 May 1871); North Cork Rifles (*The Irish Times*, 5 June 1871); Charleville (*Freeman's Journal*, 29 August 1872). Upton, Macroom, Bandon, Youghal and Innishannon were all playing too (*Handbook 1868-9*, pp.103-107). The Co Cork were also a newly-incepted team in this time and the Bunglers, Dunmanway, Mardyke, Sundays Well, Cork Butterflies and Queenstown were playing as well. The Cork club also had a 2XI and 3XI in addition to their 1XI and Queen's College, Cork had a 2XI.

<sup>831</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 3 September 1869.

<sup>832</sup> Co Kerry CC were playing by 1872 (*Freeman's Journal*, 27 July 1872) and had a home ground near Tralee. Killarney and Kenmare in Co Kerry were playing by 1872 (*Freeman's Journal*, 29 July 1872). Bantry and Tralee were also playing in Co Kerry in 1869 (*Handbook 1869-70*, p.118) as were the Bosthoons, who were from Kenmare in Kerry (*Handbook 1872-3*, p.163). Anglo-American were also active in this time in this county.

<sup>833</sup> *The Irish Times*, 25 June 1870.

<sup>834</sup> In County Londonderry in 1870 it was reported: 'cricket is not improving in the extreme North; whether this is another of the many evils entailed by absenteeism, need not here be discussed...' (*Handbook 1870-1*, p.167); there was greater reference to clubs not being supported enough slowly coming through in general at this time, one such case being at the Dunboe CC in Derry in 1870 (*Handbook 1870-1*, p.168), an idea repeated in 1871 when comment was made that cricket was not receiving the support it should (or the *Handbook* would like it to have) in the north west of Ireland at this time in 1871 (*Handbook 1871-2*, p.191).

<sup>835</sup> Cricket was not embraced everywhere – the Kildare Town CC surviving only through the exertions of the members despite the 'apathy of the neighbourhood' (*Handbook 1869-70*, p.122).



#### 4. Commercial interests fuelling the growth of cricket

##### *4.1: Businesses and businessmen*

Supporting and facilitating this spread of cricket across the country was the continued outlet of cricketing shops, mainly located in Dublin and Belfast, but offering delivery to the countryside for any keen cricketer who was not intending on visiting the cities.<sup>836</sup> In addition to John Lawrence's shop at 39 Grafton Street in Dublin, there were an abundance of other retailers profiting from the sport at this time. The following examples exclude auctions that were held to liquidate assets, as such events were naturally one-off and not really centred on the deliberate sale of cricketing goods. There were a number of general cricketing shops, selling bats, balls, leg guards and equipment in likeness to John Lawrence. There were also specific clothing retailers, who offered apparel appropriate to the game. Such businesses sold hats, cricketing boots, trousers and shirts, ensuring players could both perform and impress on the field. Naturally, there would be crossover between some of the general cricketing stores and providers in providing clothing in addition to cricket equipment. In addition to these shops, there was a wide variety of other businesses involved in selling cricketing paraphernalia, whether it be cricket nets, cups and tankards for prizes, marquees and tents for enjoyment, rollers to prepare pitches or even the sale of tickets for matches: the marketplace of cricket was expanding further and wider than had ever existed before. Individuals were also keen to cash in on the financial opportunities cricket offered at this time: an advert for a valet offering his services in March 1870 boasted of his experience in hunting and cricket circles as an attractive card in his employment CV,<sup>837</sup> whilst Mr Stewart, of Ann Street, Belfast, was the designated caterer to the North of Ireland club in 1871.<sup>838</sup> Please see appendix five for detailed information about businesses' exploitation of cricket in the years 1867 – 1872.

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<sup>836</sup> John Lawrence provided personal guarantee of attention to postal orders, and would exchange any good deemed unsatisfactory from customers (*Handbook 1869-70*, p.197).

<sup>837</sup> The valet boasted he 'has been about last season with the IZ and Na Shulers' and as such would make a suitable employee in *The Irish Times* of 9 March 1870.

<sup>838</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 1 September 1871.

#### 4.2: The crucial role of John Lawrence

At this time in Ireland there was no individual more important to, or indeed exploitative of, cricket's continued enjoyment than John Lawrence. In addition to providing cricketing goods, where he enjoyed and promoted his status as the cricketing outfitter to the Viceroy and other leading Dublin clubs,<sup>839</sup> Lawrence had moved somewhat to being the unofficial administrator of cricket in Ireland. Lawrence's most significant contribution to the game was his publication of the *Handbook of Cricket*, providing the only cricket-specific source we have in these years.<sup>840</sup> The significance of the almanac would have been in spreading news of the season, clubs, rule changes and the like that might sometimes have been missed for a cricketer in the newspapers.

A development within the Dublin area was the increasing use of Lawrence's shop at 39 Grafton Street for hosting cricket meetings, a provision which was made free of charge,<sup>841</sup> an offer that was taken up by many leading Dublin clubs. Not content with waiting for customers to come to him, Lawrence was also reaching out to his patrons to increase transactions, hosting a stand at the Royal Agricultural Society's National Cattle and Horse Show on Wednesday 28 August 1867 at St Stephen's Green in Dublin.<sup>842</sup> Such was Lawrence's prosperous balance sheet by 1868 that he was able to open a shop in Bray on his own and seemingly beyond the franchise arrangement of earlier years in this area, selling goods at Dublin prices, including cricketing items.<sup>843</sup> In addition to hosting individuals in his shops, Lawrence was also keen to organise and promote cricket matches, welcoming spectators into the grounds of leading Dublin clubs, organising for example the All England Eleven versus twenty-two Gentlemen of Ireland matches for both 1868 and

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<sup>839</sup> Lawrence was detailed as the cricket outfitter to Spencer, Phoenix, University, Leinster and all the leading clubs of Ireland in an 1871 advert (see *The Irish Times*, 27 April 1871 for example). By 1872, he seems to have lost his role as outfitter to Spencer, although nobody else was claiming to be so. In other adverts articles then subsequently referred to him as the outfitter to Phoenix, University and Leinster (see *The Irish Times*, 30 May 1872 for example).

<sup>840</sup> Lawrence was happy to promote the benefit clubs appearing in the *Handbook* would supposedly receive (*Handbook 1867-8*, p.1).

<sup>841</sup> Use of the committee room at his Grafton Street shop was advertised as free to any cricket or archery club in Ireland in 1869, though this offer no doubt would have been extended to athletic and other sporting clubs in later years (*Handbook 1869-70*, p.197).

<sup>842</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 30 August 1867.

<sup>843</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 1 August 1868.

1869.<sup>844</sup> He was often fairly utilitarian in his outlook, weighing the success or not of matches in terms of gate receipts, supporting the idea of his involvement in cricket as being for commercial gain opposed to altruistic love, for instance lamenting that the All England Eleven versus twenty-two Gentlemen of Ireland match in 1869 was not the financial reward he was hoping it would be even though it was well advertised.<sup>845</sup>

In a symptomatic attempt to profit, Lawrence also continued his pyrotechnical displays, seemingly having defeated his erstwhile enemy Thomas Kirby, who was notably redundant in these years in comparison to the duel of the early-to-mid-1860s.<sup>846</sup> Lawrence retained his base at the Leinster CC for 1867, running his fireworks shows, for instance on 4 July 1867 with not one but two bands.<sup>847</sup> The more irregular nature of Lawrence's fireworks at cricket grounds in this period is partly explained by his branching out into other sports in general in addition to cricket. Lawrence provided fireworks for the Bray regatta in August 1867<sup>848</sup> and even at a velocipede race in June 1869.<sup>849</sup> This was an independent venture of his, being held in the Exhibition Palace and grounds, with a military promenade concert to conclude events.<sup>850</sup> Amongst more mainstream sports, Lawrence was also befriending the athletic fraternity, hosting the Civil Service Athletic Club general committee meetings at his Grafton Street shop<sup>851</sup> as well as displaying the prizes for the Civil Service Athletic Sports in July 1868 in his windows on Grafton Street for the week before the day of competition.<sup>852</sup> His diversification into other sports in both retail and reporting in the *Handbook* highlights the increasing challenge the game would experience from these newer pursuits and the diminishing returns that the game could reap.

What is abundantly clear and without question is that following Charles Lawrence's departure in 1861, when cricket could have collapsed under a lack of

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<sup>844</sup> Abercorn patronised the All England Eleven versus twenty-two Gentlemen of Ireland match in 1868 in adverts comprising a formidable roll call of well-to-do, with John Lawrence organising (*Freeman's Journal*, 1 June 1868). Interestingly, money would not be taken on the gates – tickets had to be bought in advance, possibly to tie-in fair-weather fans (*The Irish Times*, 11 June 1868 for example). Likewise, Lawrence organised the All England Eleven versus twenty-two Gentlemen of Ireland match in 1869 (*The Irish Times*, 2 June 1869).

<sup>845</sup> *Handbook 1869-70*, p.2.

<sup>846</sup> Thomas Kirby hosted fireworks at Sandymount cricket club in late July 1867, claiming still he was the pyrotechnical artist to the Viceroy (*The Irish Times*, 27 July 1867). However, aside from this foray, Kirby is a notable absence and a reduced threat to Lawrence's firework hegemony.

<sup>847</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 29 June 1867.

<sup>848</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 6 August 1867.

<sup>849</sup> *The Irish Times*, 17 June 1869.

<sup>850</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 19 June 1869.

<sup>851</sup> See *Freeman's Journal* 20 June 1867 and 25 June 1868 for examples.

<sup>852</sup> *The Irish Times*, 4 July 1868.

leadership and organisation, in Charles' namesake John cricketers in Ireland had found probably the single most important individual who would ever impact the playing of the game in the country. That such a burden rested on one man alone highlights one of the major flaws in the game in Ireland.

#### *4.3: The organisation of other individuals and institutions*

In addition to the shops and businesses already mentioned, there were a range of other individuals who were associated with cricket, almost exclusively as ticket retailers.<sup>853</sup> Competition existed to Lawrence's financial and administrative grip on the country, notably from the Dublin University cricket club who also acted as promoters on occasion. The Provost and Board of Trinity College Dublin were responsible for bringing over the United South of England in 1870, and sold the tickets for this venture exclusively themselves.<sup>854</sup> This same university also patronised, sold and organised the United South of England versus twenty-two of Dublin University past and present match in 1871,<sup>855</sup> although Lawrence weaselled in and gained permission to sell tickets for this match in the end.<sup>856</sup> There were at the very least 60 businesses or individuals involved in the provision, facilitation or exploitation of cricket in the years 1867 - 1872, a figure that could no doubt be revised upwards going beyond the initial newspaper reports considered in this study.<sup>857</sup> However, by chapter four's years of 1873 – 1878, this number had declined by roughly 20 percent.

The Leinster cricket club were lauded in 1869 as fast becoming the Marylebone of Ireland due to their exertions in promoting cricket by bringing over the United South of England to play in 1869,<sup>858</sup> and like the Marylebone, they were also active in other sports such as hosting the Civil Service Athletic Sports in various years throughout this period.<sup>859</sup> The strong and mutually-beneficial relationship between Leinster and John Lawrence remained; in addition to the club using his facilities for meetings and Lawrence using the Leinster ground for his firework displays, the club also allowed him the use of their ground for the All England Eleven versus twenty-

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<sup>853</sup> For example, Marks's Upholstery Warehouse were selling tickets to the United South of England versus twenty-two of Dublin University CC match in 1871 (*Freeman's Journal*, 26 May 1871).

<sup>854</sup> See *Freeman's Journal*, 4 May 1870 for example.

<sup>855</sup> See *Freeman's Journal*, 16 May 1871 for example.

<sup>856</sup> *The Irish Times*, 25 May 1871.

<sup>857</sup> Please see appendix five for more details.

<sup>858</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 6 September 1869.

<sup>859</sup> See *Freeman's Journal* of 20 August 1867 and 9 June 1868 and *The Irish Times* of 1 May 1872.

two Gentlemen of Ireland match in 1869.<sup>860</sup> Other clubs used their grounds for events beyond cricket, sometimes in the most original ways.

The exertions of clubs and businesses in promoting cricket or using their facilities to reap financial benefit from the use of cricket facilities overwhelmingly compensated for the withdrawal of the explicit support of transport companies by the early 1870s, which had been so prevalent in promoting and transporting individuals to cricketing events in the early 1860s. With the exception of 'Favorite' Buses providing transport for the All England Eleven versus twenty-two Gentlemen of Ireland match in June 1869,<sup>861</sup> transport companies were notably absent from the records of these years in providing overt access to cricket events, a situation that would worsen in the next era of investigation. This is significant, as over the coming years railway companies increased their support of horse racing, and so this desertion of cricket is indicative of a growing malaise. This would suggest that cricket was a temporary boom or an activity that caught the imagination for a time before being usurped.

Of course, trains did still prove a highly useful means of transport for local clubs to go and play foreign opponents and for supporters to attend matches. Train companies and stagecoaches were central to the increasing habit of Irish teams to play further afield and to tour within the country. Na Shuler, the roving gentlemanly team, would have been an almost exclusively urban adventure were it not for trains, but with locomotives they were free to pursue their aim of being an eclectic, nomadic team bringing cricket to the Irish countryside. Trains facilitated the trips being made increasingly between the east and west coasts and Belfast and Dublin, one example being Phoenix's match against the County Galway in Ballinasloe in 1870,<sup>862</sup> a match that would not have been possible forty years before. This relatively new form of transport provided a potentially wonderful resource to furthering cricket, something that the Phoenix club availed of in an 1870 tour of the counties Galway, Westmeath, Wicklow, Limerick and Kildare,<sup>863</sup> playing 10 games in these counties in total.<sup>864</sup> Rail transport too would have been important for the foreign teams from England and Scotland visiting Ireland, in allowing clubs to make the journey between Belfast and Dublin to play the major teams or indeed to venture into the countryside, as IZ did so regularly in providing spectacle games.

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<sup>860</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 12 June 1869.

<sup>861</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 16 June 1869.

<sup>862</sup> *The Irish Times*, 1 August 1870.

<sup>863</sup> *Handbook 1870-1*, p.4.

<sup>864</sup> *Handbook 1870-1*, p.15.

## 5. Problems on the horizon that would affect the long-term adoption of cricket in Ireland

### *5.1: The rise of other sports*

If one looks below the surface features of the game and also puts cricket into a comparative analysis with other sports, one realises that the supremacy that cricket had enjoyed in the early-to-mid 1860s was starting to splinter if not quite fracture. One of the great ironies of the increasing challenge that other sports would prove to the popularity of cricket was that many of these sports were enjoyed on cricket club grounds, with one such club, the North of Ireland, becoming almost a multipurpose sporting gymnasium, offering an extensive and impressive range of activities on their club grounds (even if not organised by the club themselves in instances). They were key in introducing football to the north of Ireland in 1869,<sup>865</sup> with the cricket club's football club coalescing wonderfully with the summer game: the first match of the NICC football club in the 1869 season was on 23 October<sup>866</sup> and in the 1871 season the first game was on 7 October.<sup>867</sup> This seasonal playing dovetailed well with the cricketing season, offering sportsmen a synchronised sporting calendar. The clubs that the North of Ireland football club were playing increased in novelty and interest within only a few years of this founding: the club played Dublin University in mid-December 1871 on their home ground<sup>868</sup> and even played Glasgow Academical at home in 1872.<sup>869</sup> In addition to their annual athletics events, which attracted a wide range of Belfast society,<sup>870</sup> the North of Ireland held other sporting events.

Other clubs too were patronising alternative sporting opportunities, such as the Cork cricket club who supported the Foot Races in Cork on the cricket ground at the Mardyke on Tuesday 31 December 1867 in association with Cork rowing club, which

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<sup>865</sup> North of Ireland foot-ball [sic] club played at the NICC grounds in early 1869, offering free entry to spectators (*Belfast News-Letter*, 8 January 1869). The report in the *Belfast News-Letter* on 11 January 1869 detailed how this was the first (rugby) football game in the area. In case of any doubt of what type of football this was, the North of Ireland football club played Queen's College in January 1869 too, the game being played under 'Rugby rules' with backs, half-backs and forwards listed (*Belfast News-Letter*, 18 January 1869).

<sup>866</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 23 October 1869.

<sup>867</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 October 1871.

<sup>868</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 December 1871.

<sup>869</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 5 January 1872.

<sup>870</sup> For the NICC athletic sports in 1869, all were seemingly welcome: 'the amount of public favour bestowed on the amusements of yesterday by all classes of the community, as manifested by the vast concourse of people attracted to the grounds...' *Belfast News-Letter*, 13 May 1869.

over 2,000 attended.<sup>871</sup> Around the country, in addition to the major teams in Dublin, Belfast and Cork, other clubs also supported a variety of sports, particularly athletics, examples seen at the cricket clubs of Armagh, Tuam, and West Mayo.<sup>872</sup> There was also the development of greater cross-fertilisation of sports, with almost hybrid systems in place like that of the North of Ireland where one club would engage in numerous sports. Adding in the other sports of archery, gymnastics, bowls and even hawking, the sporting and cultural scene (even before the rebirth of GAA sports in the mid-1880s) was far more varied and vivid in Ireland by 1872 than it had been in the decades previously, with significantly more opportunities beyond the cricket and equine-based sports of the middle of the century. The irony was that cricket was aiding its own usurpation.

These rival attractions in themselves may only have proved a distraction from cricket opposed to signalling its demise at this stage, but what is most damning is the superior popularity that some of these sports, particularly athletics, appear to hold. This would support the idea of cricket's popularity in the early 1860s as much to lack of alternative opportunity opposed to an embrace of the game for its own enjoyment with many other athletic events under investigation in this time period showing a perceived greater popularity than cricketing events. Principal amongst these was undoubtedly the Dublin University athletic sports that took place annually, *The Irish Times* reporting there were supposedly 20,000 - 25,000 attending these sports by the early 1870s, although it should be noted that this was a two-day event.<sup>873</sup> To further add to the event's prestige, *The Field* estimated that these Dublin University athletic races were the largest event of their kind in the world.<sup>874</sup> Elsewhere in Dublin, the Civil Service Athletic Sports of 1872 saw Dublin schoolboys from principal schools being admitted at very favourable rates,<sup>875</sup> with about 9,000 attending.<sup>876</sup> Outside of Dublin, the rising popularity of athletics can also be seen in both Ulster and Cork as mass-spectator events,<sup>877</sup> and the upsurge of athletics can also be seen in more subtle

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<sup>871</sup> *The Irish Times*, 2 January 1868.

<sup>872</sup> Armagh (*Belfast News-Letter*, 11 October 1870); Tuam (*Tuam Herald*, 13 May 1871); West Mayo (*Tuam Herald*, 27 May 1871); the Co Limerick CC ground was used for a Limerick athletics meeting in August 1872 (*The Irish Times*, 13 August 1872).

<sup>873</sup> *The Irish Times*, 6 March 1871.

<sup>874</sup> *Handbook 1869-70*, p.6.

<sup>875</sup> *The Irish Times*, 25 May 1872.

<sup>876</sup> *The Irish Times*, 27 May 1872.

<sup>877</sup> The Lurgan cricket club athletic sports were held in June 1869 for the first time, with 2,000 attending (*Belfast News-Letter*, 2 July 1869); the Queen's College Cork athletic sports were held on the

ways, such as the moving of the reports on athletics from the back pages to the front for greater prominence in the *Handbook of Cricket* from 1870 onwards, having been very much the secondary consideration to cricket in this publication prior to this year. Whether these events impacted on the attendance of crowds at cricket as a spectator sport will require significantly more research, even if the number of cricket clubs continued to grow in this time.

As a spectator sport the major cricketing games don't really match the euphoria and excitement that the athletic events seemed to offer. The All England Eleven match in Dublin in June 1868 was attended by 'thousands'<sup>878</sup> but not nearly as many as the University Foot Races. In comparison to the 1871 University Races, which saw spectators twelve to fourteen deep,<sup>879</sup> the United South of England versus twenty-two of Ireland match in 1869 saw the spectators two to three in depth.<sup>880</sup> Even the zenith of cricketing events in this time for spectators, the 18,500 who attended the All England Eleven versus twenty-two of Dublin University match in 1872 which saw signs put up to declare its sold out status<sup>881</sup> appears rather meagre if viewing this event through an athletic lens. Put simply, a reciprocal Irish number of the 25,000 who attended the Eton versus Harrow match in 1872 in London would only really have been seen in Ireland at non-cricketing events like athletics and horse racing.<sup>882</sup> One cannot easily blame the discrepancies in numbers attending on dubious or over-optimistic reporting either, as the guestimate figures used for both cricket and athletics reporting came from the same newspapers and likely the same reporters. Cricket remained popular, but it wasn't seemingly cherished in the same way as other sports by 1872.

Why then had cricket started to lose wind from its sails in comparison to other sports? Simply, maybe the game had enjoyed its moment; it was peaking in the early-to-mid 1870s and was now due to decline in relative popularity. More likely is that with a rising menu of sporting entertainment available, there was either a dilution of interest in cricket or a downright abandonment by some in favour of new pastures, even if cricket team numbers remained steady in comparison to previous years. That

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cricket ground at the Mardyke in 1870 and 'Many thousands were present' (*The Irish Times*, 8 April 1870).

<sup>878</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 26 June 1868.

<sup>879</sup> *The Irish Times*, 8 June 1871.

<sup>880</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 3 September 1869.

<sup>881</sup> *The Irish Times*, 31 May 1872.

<sup>882</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 13 July 1872.



these new sports were emerging in the 1870s, with their own formalised rules and administrative bodies, was to be part of cricket's undoing.

### 5.2: *The failure to achieve nationalistic victories*

No doubt contributing to this waning in cricket was the inability to score a major victory over the leading English teams. Calls for such a monumental victory were frequent, and the pride in Irish cricket as a distinctly Irish pastime can be seen in the naming of one club from Abbeyfeale in County Limerick as Home Rule CC in 1872 which again shows the ability to be both a proud Irish nationalist and a keen cricketer in these times.<sup>883</sup> In 1867, *The Irish Times* was calling for the organisation of national teams to compete against British ones, not just in cricket but in pursuits like rifle shooting,<sup>884</sup> something that was achieved with the latter when an Irish international shooting team of 20 was sent to Wimbledon to compete in the NRA event in the summer of 1867.<sup>885</sup> Such calls grew over the period 1867 – 1872, with an 1869 espousal in the Unionist *The Irish Times* begging:

But as long as man consists of body as well as of mind, and as long as mind and body act and react on each other, yielding mutual support and strength, so long will men, by a healthy natural instinct, respect the possessors of physical accomplishments. To familiarize young English-men with Irish successes on the cricket ground and the river, in the gymnasium and at the rifle butts, will predispose them at a more mature period of life to look with respect on our national pretensions in graver and larger fields of effort.<sup>886</sup>

This desire for international and nationalistic duel saw *The Irish Times* fume about the All England Eleven match versus the twenty-two Gentlemen of Ireland in 1869, an event that 'lost much of its interest when it ceased to be a purely international affair.' That gentlemen from England were included in the Irish team, when they were 'merely birds of passage' clearly angered and disappointed this newspaper. It went on

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<sup>883</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 30 July 1872. The team appears to be a relatively new team this year due to the newspaper reporting on this game describing them as a 'young club.'

<sup>884</sup> 'We trust to see yet a team organized in Ireland that will be able to enter in successful though generous rivalry with the sister isle, not alone in cricketing and rifle shooting, but every other manly exercise requiring for its development physical activity and disciplined skill' (*The Irish Times*, 4 March 1867).

<sup>885</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 9 July 1867.

<sup>886</sup> *The Irish Times*, 12 March 1869. Another example of such rhetoric can be seen later in the *Freeman's Journal* on 25 March 1872.

that ‘Irish cricket, if it is to exist, must be supported by Irish gentlemen; but if they are debarred from playing by this substitution of Englishmen they will soon cease to take any interest in the game.’ Similar displeasure was expressed that, aside from two representatives from County Galway, all the others in the twenty-two were from Dublin-based clubs. *The Irish Times* was indignant about this – where were the players from NICC, Armagh, Carlow, Meath, Cork, Wicklow etc.? Repeating their question for emphasis, they concluded their rant by demanding again that such teams should be composed of truly Irish players.<sup>887</sup> Such reporting reinforces the possibility of being a political Unionist but sporting nationalist in Ireland in the mid-Victorian era which has been shown in numerous examples in addition to the more stereotypical nationalists of both the political and sporting kind.

This great victory so sought after was finally achieved in the twenty-two of Dublin University’s defeat of the United South of England in 1871. The *Freeman’s Journal* cried on 29 May 1871:

Our cricketers are now in a position to meet with and conquer their English brethren evenhanded. Irishmen are, at least, equal to the Saxon race in intellect and physical vigour. With these attributes, which they possess to the full, they should never deign to meet Englishmen in any contest except upon a perfect footing of equality. Of course, it will be urged that in England, it is most common for Twenty-two’s [sic] to meet professional Elevens. We repeat that eleven Irish gentlemen cricketers should be fully able – of course eleven properly selected men – to give an account of even a better team than the United South of England Eleven.

Yet just as this crest of nationalism was riding through the cricketing community, the chance to sustain and fuel it was missed. The MCC thumped the Gentlemen of Ireland, winning by one innings and 80 runs at the Dublin Week in 1871, with an apologetic *Handbook* insisting that the game did not reflect the real merits of the Gentlemen of Ireland,<sup>888</sup> although this MCC team did contain five professionals, something the *Handbook* was unimpressed with.<sup>889</sup> There were no grand matches again of this sort at the following year’s Dublin Week and for the 1872 venture, the organisers were unable to find a team willing to come across the Channel to play All

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<sup>887</sup> *The Irish Times*, 21 June 1869. John Lawrence too had been an active supporter of such initiatives (unsurprisingly) in this time.

<sup>888</sup> *Handbook 1871-2*, p.105.

<sup>889</sup> *Handbook 1871-2*, p.113.

Ireland, the dull games at the 1872 festival (Military versus Civilians, North of Ireland versus South etc.)<sup>890</sup> partly explaining why the Dublin Week's demise came about in this year after only opening in 1871, and from then on Irish cricket's attempt to emulate the Canterbury Week in England - which was welcoming in excess of 10,000 spectators a day in the 1870s<sup>891</sup> - was shelved, another indictment that cricket was losing its Midas touch. This inability to stage national competition contrasts with the calls for Irish athletes and rowers to go across the Channel to 'do battle for Ireland.'<sup>892</sup> Cricketing nationalism was very much existent in 1872, but it was not being successfully harnessed to further embed the game into Irish life, and the continued playing of against-odds matches was to be a national embarrassment in the later years of the 1870s under the spotlight of Home Rule's call for equality.

### 5.3: *Not even amateur organisation*

In addition to the failings on the pitch were errors being made off it. Whilst Victorian sporting establishments in England like the Football Association and Rugby Football Union had formed to coordinate these sports, Irish cricket lacked and showed no signs of taking such an administrative step. Whilst English cricket too lacked a distinct, absolute administrative body, at least the MCC provided a type of passive leadership through upholding laws and becoming a 'legendary institution'<sup>893</sup> – Ireland lacked even this clearly-defined leading club. Although Honorary Secretaries had begun to meet to select teams for major matches to represent Ireland, such as the Gentlemen of Ireland versus IZ matches,<sup>894</sup> a leading match like the twenty-two of Ireland versus United South of England in 1869 saw many good players not attend for a variety of reasons, which Ireland went on to lose.<sup>895</sup> The best Ireland had to offer in this administrative department was a solitary Dublin shop owner, who would cease publication of his *Handbook* in 1881, and when Lawrence fell, it was hard to envisage who would step into the breach. The laws of cricket, as dictated by the MCC, were laid down in the *Handbook* as the form for cricket in Ireland, and this inability to organise cricket indigenously in the country is exemplified by the rather embarrassing

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<sup>890</sup> *The Irish Times*, 6 July 1872.

<sup>891</sup> Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p.63.

<sup>892</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 29 July 1872.

<sup>893</sup> Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p.75.

<sup>894</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 3 September 1867 and 4 June 1868.

<sup>895</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 30 August 1869.

case of John Lawrence fielding and replying to issues on the laws of cricket by forwarding one particular concern to a member of the MCC.<sup>896</sup> This would support the idea of cricket failing indigenous adoption, the game simply being an adaptation of mainland mores. Following the years of Carlisle's Viceroy, when the Vice Regal ground retained the air of Ireland's premier ground, there was also no clear leading venue to build history and memory in the way that Lansdowne Road and Croke Park would do in their respective ways in later years: there was no hub, no heartbeat to the cricketing calendar. Indeed, the leading cricket venue in Ireland at this time, the Dublin University cricket ground which was site to many of the leading matches between 1867 – 1872, still had no pavilion for any sports at the end of the 1871 season, a matter that would not be considered again until 1873 following a meeting about this issue in Dublin in December 1871.<sup>897</sup> This issue had initially been raised as early as 1868.<sup>898</sup> One cannot help but sympathise with the English visitors to the Dublin Week in 1871 and their lukewarm response to invitations to return in 1872 when one considers the amateur state of Irish cricketing facilities and indeed administration in the early 1870s.

#### *5.4: 1872 - towards the peak of popularity*

By 1872, cricket in Ireland remained, on the surface at least, in a strong position. The game continued to rise in terms of teams playing the game (see diagram eight), the vast majority of which were *bona fide* clubs (see diagram nine).

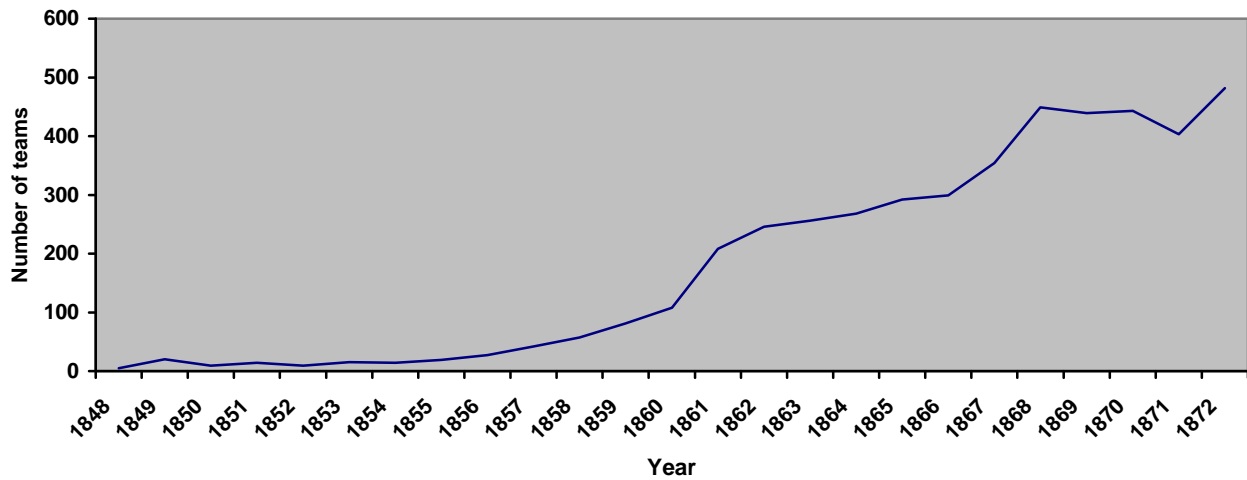
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<sup>896</sup> *Handbook 1867-8*, p.4.

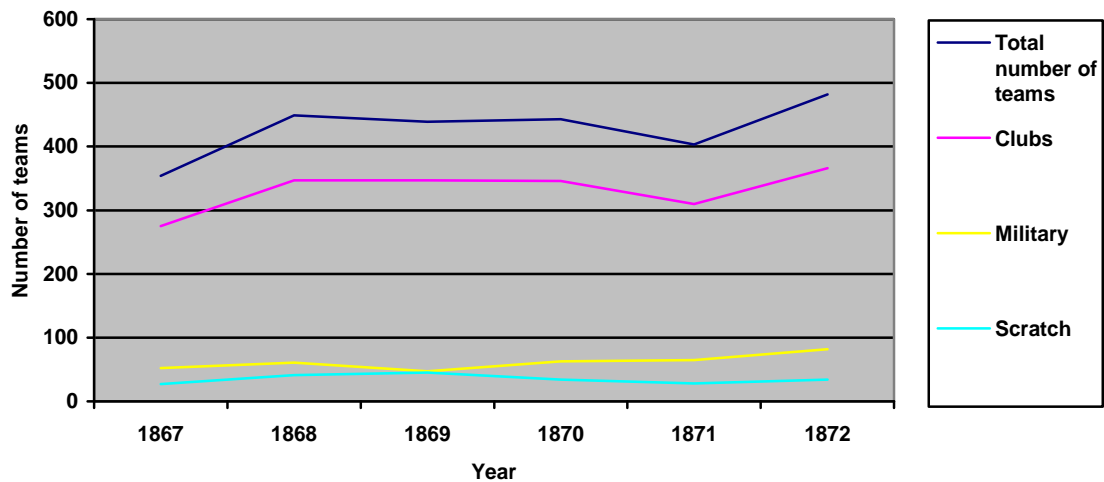
<sup>897</sup> *The Irish Times*, 9 December 1871.

<sup>898</sup> *The Irish Times*, 7 May 1868.

**Diagram eight: the number of cricket teams between 1848 - 1872**



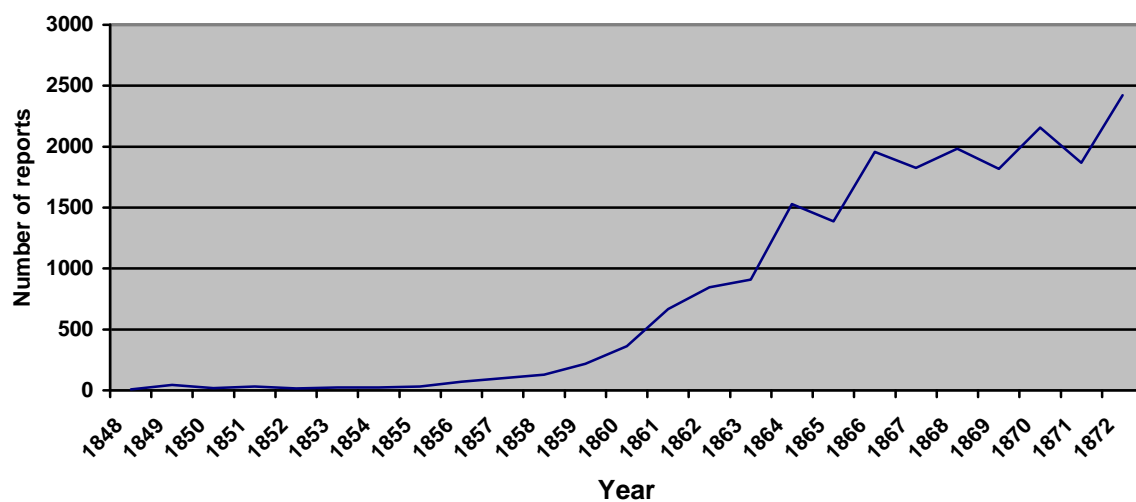
**Diagram nine: classification of cricket teams between 1867 - 1872**



The image of the irrepressible and almost parasitic invasion into Irish sporting life is further reinforced when one considers the newspaper reports as shown in diagram ten. In total, for the years 1867 – 1872, there were 12,105 newspaper reports found in the newspapers under investigation and 93.35 percent of these reports were on cricket in Ireland (see table three in chapter one). Notably, the percentage of reporting as grouped by Protestant / Unionist and Catholic / nationalist bracketing shows a significant increase in the percentage of newspaper reports overall in the Protestant

and Unionist publications in this time period; the percentage overall of reports for these newspapers had been 68.5 percent in the years 1848 – 1859 before falling to 53.5 percent for the years 1860 - 1866. For this period of 1867 – 1872, the figure had rebounded beyond the earliest chapter's percentage to now stand at just over 76 percent (see table two in chapter one). This is due to a significant increase in reporting in the two major daily Protestant / Unionist newspapers of *The Irish Times* and the *Belfast News-Letter*, coupled with a dramatic decrease in the only Catholic / nationalist daily under investigation, the *Freeman's Journal*. Whereas for the years 1860 - 1866 the *Freeman's Journal* almost out-reported the *Belfast News-Letter* and *The Irish Times* combined, for this period of investigation the said newspaper now lay third in terms of raw reporting of cricket behind these two Protestant / Unionist publications. Indeed, not only was the *Freeman's Journal* being outpaced by these papers, the chasm in cricket reporting due to the growth of *The Irish Times*' offerings and the relative stagnation of the *Freeman's* reporting meant that for these years the latter was reporting only 44 percent of what the former printed in terms of cricket. This drop is hard to explain, as by 1873 reporting in the *Freeman's* was the most of all the papers again; it appears across the years there was simply natural fluctuation in reporting probably due to the interests of the journalists, editors and proprietors (please see the end of appendix two for yearly reporting).

**Diagram ten: the number of newspaper reports on cricket for 1848 - 1872**



The year 1872 was something of a watershed moment. Partly this was down to bad fortune; the 1871 and 1872 seasons were noted as being extremely wet seasons,<sup>899</sup> the Phoenix club's games being eleven fewer in the 1872 season compared even to the poor year of 1871<sup>900</sup> with 'floods' reported for this season by this club.<sup>901</sup> The Leinster club were even more evocative, stating 'The season of 1872 will long be remembered, we think, as one of the most damping to the pleasures of cricket. Many a pleasant match had to be abandoned, and many more were played in weather such that sou'-westers and dreadnoughts were more in demand than cricketing flannels.'<sup>902</sup> Such poor weather had been seen to diminish cricket's fortunes in the 1869 season too.<sup>903</sup> As well as this poor stream of weather, the Vice Regal were not playing as much as would be hoped, the *Handbook* praying that 'Vice Regal cricket will become more the rule than the exception,'<sup>904</sup> there being only four Vice Regal matches in 1872.<sup>905</sup> So whilst cricket club numbers continued to rise, the inability to play matches in these seasons would have highlighted to new players one of the unsolvable problems of a quintessentially summer game on an island renowned for rain, whilst the failure of the Dublin Week project showed a wider malaise and inability to profit from cricket.

Yet there were also problems that had been slowly rising that were becoming evermore taxing. Whilst cricket was enjoyed in remote areas of Ireland, the issue of sustaining fixtures and enthusiasm after a few years of initial enjoyment was being hampered by a lack of opposition. In 1869, there was frequent practice in the summer for Castlebar CC, but few matches were played due to their isolated geography,<sup>906</sup> a difficulty that was again noted in 1870.<sup>907</sup> The idea and need for greater support of rural cricket by urban clubs was championed in the *Handbook* in 1870, where they pleaded:

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<sup>899</sup> The *Handbook* in its 1871-2 edition noted on p.1 the exceptionally wet season of 1871, whilst the 1872 editorial likewise chronicles the same idea for 1872 (*Handbook 1872-3*, p.2).

<sup>900</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, p.2.

<sup>901</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, p.21.

<sup>902</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, p.32.

<sup>903</sup> The opening editorial of the *Handbook* in 1869-70 highlights the unpredictable weather of the year, saying 'To this variation of climate we must attribute the seeming apathy which pervaded the cricket world during the past season' (*Handbook 1869-70*, p.1).

<sup>904</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, p.2.

<sup>905</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, pp.16-17.

<sup>906</sup> *Handbook 1869-70*, p.131.

<sup>907</sup> *Handbook 1870-1*, p.172.

...we should like to see an adventurous Metropolitan Eleven penetrate to the more remote regions where our game is in its infancy and struggling to sustain life from the lack of opposing clubs. It may be said or thought that Na Shuler supplies this want, but that is not at all the case. The Shuler matches are chiefly with county clubs, whose members are thought worthy of opposing such formidable antagonists; but we look for the extension of cricket to the villages; we desire to see it, as it is in England, the pastime of the rustic.<sup>908</sup>

By 1872, Na Shuler's touring itinerary had become incredibly Dublin-centric, and with the exception of the Belfast-based North of Ireland, none of their opponents were more than 30 miles from Dublin.<sup>909</sup> Another remote team, Ballinasloe, like Castlebar, bemoaned in 1872 that 'We have again to regret the fact that no Dublin club visited the West, and to hope most sincerely that such will not be the case next season.'<sup>910</sup> Cricket needed better organisation and lead from the prominent clubs to sustain itself nationally in leagues, cups or provincial matches. Whilst in England in December 1872 the better administration of the game can be seen in leading counties meeting to firm up the qualification regulations to ensure players could only play for one county per season,<sup>911</sup> in Ireland the game remained the amateur, ad-hoc organised, happy-go-lucky spectacle where people could potentially play for numerous teams per year which diluted the idea of cricket as a serious sport.

Lurking increasingly over cricket's shoulder was its rival summer attraction of athletics, with 1872 said to have been the best year of athletics in terms of competitors and competition,<sup>912</sup> and even though the weather was poor in 1872, it was felt that the weather had been fairly kind to athletics in this year<sup>913</sup> in comparison to the decline cricket experienced. Acting as a striking counterpart to cricket, 1872 saw the establishment of the Irish Champion Athletics Club, a distinctly middle-class venture which excluded mechanics, artisans and labourers.<sup>914</sup> It comprised a central executive committee as well as provincial representatives, in essence being a national regulatory and administrative body, something cricket never had. The extended committee reached to nineteen, and contained representatives from all corners of Ireland – Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick, Belfast and other northern clubs with the patronage

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<sup>908</sup> *Handbook 1870-1*, pp.4-5.

<sup>909</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, pp.61-63.

<sup>910</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, p.141.

<sup>911</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, p.10.

<sup>912</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, p.11.

<sup>913</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>914</sup> Garnham, *Association football*, p.68.



list of supporters reading like a power list of those in Irish life, comprising eighteen landlords, military leaders, knights and MPs.<sup>915</sup> The aim of the club was to allow all amateur Irish athletes to compete with each other at the end of each season at one event, ensuring ‘A satisfactory settlement will thus be obtained each year of all questions of superiority in standard athletic performances.’<sup>916</sup> The cups to be fought for were to be perpetual cups – being the possession of the winner for one year only - with engravings made to show the winner for future years.<sup>917</sup>

This example shows many of the failings of Irish cricket to continue growing at this time; whilst athletics was forming administratively, was organising a national competition and rewarding the winners of these events and therefore encouraging competition for later years, cricket remained the game of organised friendlies, and mainly domestic ones at that. Archery had also taken this increased competitive step as early as 1867.<sup>918</sup> Even pigeon shooting had a national tournament.<sup>919</sup>

A period that had begun in 1867, with the continued enthusiasm of the earlier 1860s for cricket, had seen Irish cricketers fail to embrace the opportunities that lay at its table to cement itself as a leading national pastime. By the end of this chapter of investigation, this failure was starting to antagonise even newspapers that had previously been fervent supporters of the game. Both *The Irish Times*<sup>920</sup> and the *Freeman’s Journal*<sup>921</sup> expressed disappointment that the Dublin Cricket Week had been unsuccessful. Yet the *Freeman’s Journal*, after starting out its objections in fairly moderate terms, then launched into a scathing, full-scale assault on cricket in Ireland that may explain the noted decline in reporting in this newspaper in this period due to exasperation with the game:

In fact, many are to be found who ask “what the Dublin Week means,” and when informed that it was a project set on foot for the purpose of creating a fund to be applied to the development of professional cricket in Ireland, reply that they hope it may be successful, but, from the suggestive “shrug” which in too many instances accompanies these words, it is easy to see that the public

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<sup>915</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, pp.11-12.

<sup>916</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, p.13.

<sup>917</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>918</sup> *The Irish Times*, 30 August 1867.

<sup>919</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 July 1870 and 15 July 1871.

<sup>920</sup> In a piece on 9 July 1872, the newspaper was damning about the Dublin Week’s lack of popularity, hopeful though *The Irish Times* was that it may increase in popularity. The Dublin Week had been initiated to provide enjoyment, but also to provide a fund to develop Irish professional cricketers. Its failure was a blow to the long-term development of the game (*The Irish Times*, 9 July 1872).

<sup>921</sup> ‘The attendance was small, and but little interest appears to be manifested in the series of matches arranged to be played during the present week’ (*Freeman’s Journal*, 9 July 1872).

feel what the committee must now know – that, financially speaking, the Dublin Week is a complete failure, and that professional talent will not derive much benefit from the project. It could scarcely fail to result otherwise. The game in Ireland does not enjoy that popularity with non-players which a big match in England never fails to have, and where excited thousands throng together and display a partizanship [sic] for the contending sides, which it requires the stronger seasoning of political or sectarian animosity to successfully develope [sic] in this “tight little island”. If future Dublin weeks are to prove a success the committee will have to arrange a different series of matches from those attempted up to the present. People take no interest – that is those outside the clubs – in what we may almost term these domestic matters; they require novelty, and if English or Scotch elevens are not induced to come over, the committee may as well, after the close of the present week, abandon a project that, so far as we can foresee, will not under the present *regime* be placed amongst those undertakings which have proved successes... (going on to list all the available amenities, tents etc. at College Park)... yet notwithstanding all these inducements the number in the College Park yesterday could be counted by hundreds only, and they were but few.<sup>922</sup>

Such stirrings struck right at the heart of some of the long-term problems in adopting cricket in Ireland: an interest in the game but no national obsession; lack of professionals to improve standards; the inability to profit financially from cricket in the way teams like the All England Eleven could on the mainland; the lack of feisty competition based around class or religion or even just between clubs in annual competition seen elsewhere in the world.

The attacks continued in these following days, the attendance of visitors at the Military of Ireland versus Civilians match being described as ‘scanty’ in the *Freeman’s Journal* on 11 July 1872 whilst the previous day on 10 July 1872 this same paper had asserted that ‘Cricket is justly held to be a manly game, but the interest is not very widespread.’ Quite why these attacks came almost without warning is curious, for normal service in the support of cricket seems to be resumed in the *Freeman’s Journal* by the end of the year, when it was reported ‘But it is, we respectfully submit, the sheerest nonsense to denounce a healthful sport like cricket...’<sup>923</sup> Whether this was caused by a change of editorial tone, a change of editor himself or was just sheer frustration with the game, the pointed attacks in these few days, the most sustained against cricket to date in this investigation, did not bode well for the game in Ireland.

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<sup>922</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 9 July 1872.

<sup>923</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 8 November 1872.

## 6. Conclusion

In so many ways, cricket's trajectory remained positive in this period of investigation. Business numbers profiting from cricket peaked at 60 in this period, MPs were patronising the game and both reporting and club numbers continued to rise. The game continued to spread geographically, socially and was potentially a vehicle for sporting nationalism. In towns like Tuam in the west of Ireland, cricket had taken firm root and there were at least six teams playing, whilst County Cork had at least 24 teams playing in these years. The historiographical or common idea that cricket was never popular in Ireland is dismissed, and the range of play in terms of social standing, religious and political beliefs corroborates what the few local county cricket historians have shown: that cricket was played across the whole of Irish society. Yet no national ground or identified leading club like the MCC had been established, no regular great nationalistic contests with English teams had emerged to focus on, nor sectarian games as suggested by the *Freeman's Journal* in their 1872 attack to stimulate the game.<sup>924</sup> Cross-class play and warmth of decency and care for one's neighbours removed the possibility of social warfare on cricket squares. There was even an amazing absence of reporting of betting,<sup>925</sup> which combined meant that cricket in Ireland had almost hit the peak by 1872, and within nine years John Lawrence would publish the final edition of the cricketing almanac he subsidised to generate interest in the game due to a decline in support and interest. Symbolised by the great venture of the Dublin Week, full of promise and hope for a surge on to greater things, the condemnatory poor attendances confirmed the death of this venture in an increasingly varied and populated social calendar that cricket could no longer dominate without invention, effort and professional administration and competition. Strikingly, cricket in Ireland at no time possessed a leading figure – a W.G. – of their own, further adding to the increasing list of problems that were hampering cricket's

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<sup>924</sup> The Leinster CC cricket rules for the guidance of a cricket club as published in the *Handbook* stated bye-law 23 as the prohibition of political or religious discussion at all meetings of the club (*Handbook 1869-70*, p.168).

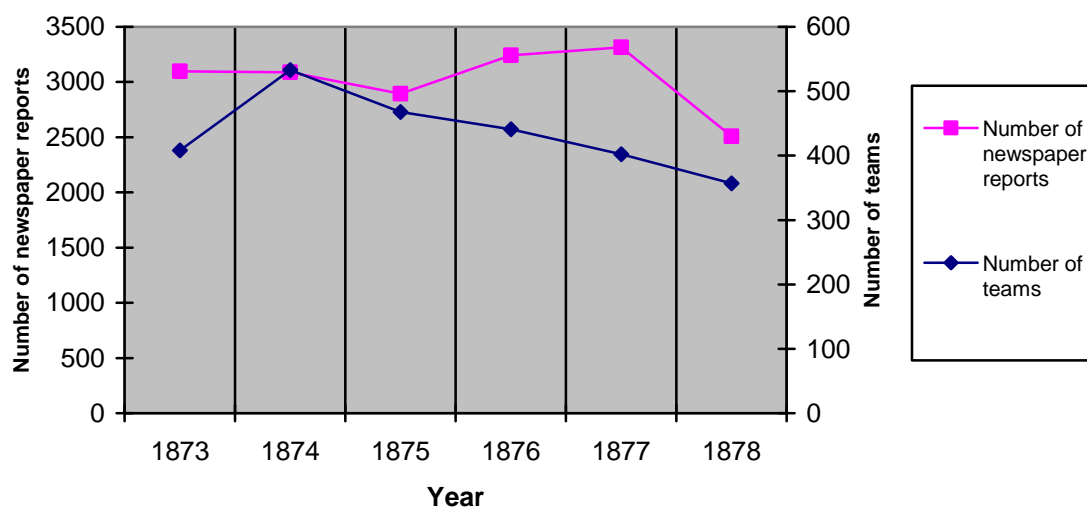
<sup>925</sup> There were rules for betting placed at the back of the *Handbook* in 1870-71 (p.205), but reports on betting in cricket are almost non-existent. Whilst there would no doubt have been betting at matches, the undercover nature of this activity is surprising as the newspapers showed no embarrassment in extensively reporting horse racing betting odds. This conclusion was also reached by Pat Bracken, an independent scholar at the time of presenting on: 'Cricket and Society in Rural Ireland: Co. Tipperary, a case study, 1849-1914' – a paper presented at the sixth annual conference of Sports History Ireland, held at Mater Dei Institute of Education in Dublin on 25 September 2010, in which he stated he had found no references to gambling, but believed it did exist within cricket in Tipperary.

full adoption and cherishment. And so whilst cricket continued to be played on fields across the country in the summer of 1872 with almost 500 teams noted this year, trouble lay on the horizon due to an inability or credulity to act to firmly entrench and solidify the broad but shallow roots that had been laid. That cricketers either seemed unaware of this impending storm or were unable to act to remedy the brewing situation defines the impotency of leadership and organisation of Irish cricket in the early 1870s.

## **Chapter four: only ever an amateur game, 1873 – 1878**

In the 1860s and early 1870s cricket had laid a strong claim to being one of, if not *the*, leading national sporting pastimes. Yet the temporality of the situation was to be exposed by the late 1870s, when other sports came to increasingly supersede cricket in the affections of the nation. That this overtaking was predicted, forewarned and ultimately aided by negligence makes the regression of the game somewhat frustrating to analyse. By 1878 the game was declining in both reporting and play by teams, a predicament that would surely only worsen with the land wars of the late 1870s and early 1880s, even before one considers the competition that the Gaelic Athletic Association would pose from 1884 onwards. There is something of an inconsistency in that newspaper reporting peaked in 1877, at a time when teams playing were in decline (see diagram eleven), which would logically suggest that more games were being reported amongst fewer clubs. That cricket was retracting in terms of numbers of teams playing before the nationalist revival of the 1880s onwards should further support the idea that cricket both rose and fell because of its own merits; the game did not languish because it was English, but rather because it was amateur and lacked leadership. By 1878, the number of teams playing had declined to its lowest level since 1867, and cricket was now surely in a downward spiral. This assertion cannot be made with complete confidence until further research is conducted into the era of 1879 – 1885, but the signs were ominous.

**Diagram eleven: the number of newspaper reports and teams listed  
between 1873 - 1878**



## 1. Still justified: reasons for and facilitators of continued play

### *1.1: Healthiness and temperance*

Cricket maintained, and in some cases even extended, its supporting reasons for play in the years 1873 – 1878. In a continuing age of concern about healthiness and the mental and physical benefits activity could facilitate, cricket – along with other sports – continued to serve as a useful functionary to health and happiness,<sup>926</sup> and play by medical institutions gave an implicit endorsement of the health-giving qualities of cricket in addition to its social benefits. Doctors remained noted players and organisers of the game, away from medical institutions in the cities, diffusing the idea of medical gain to the country.<sup>927</sup> The utility of cricket can be seen in both civilian and military play at this time, the Ulster CC being formed in part to ‘give useful and healthy recreation to young men engaged in business’<sup>928</sup> whilst the daily play of cricket and other sports at the Curragh Camp were not just seen as good for friendship and camaraderie, but also productive for digestion and appetite too now.<sup>929</sup> Another article even more impressively endorsed cricket as a game requiring the physical qualities of rowing fused with the mental application of chess.<sup>930</sup> The Public Park committee for Belfast decreed in the autumn of 1874 that ground should be specially set aside for cricket in the new offering<sup>931</sup> whilst similar policy was suggested for the People’s Park in Limerick, with croquet and cricket facilitation as part of an annual investment of £150 to be provided by the Corporation for the upkeep of the park.<sup>932</sup>

Within temperance movements, there was a notable increase in the use of the game as part of a proselytising mission to save the common man from the temptations of alcohol. In the northern town of Maghera, the western village of Gort, the metropolis of Dublin and near the southern coastline in Carrick-on-Suir,<sup>933</sup> the

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<sup>926</sup> For example, athleticism and the benefits of sports were still lauded – see *Freeman’s Journal*, 11 June 1873, for one such instance.

<sup>927</sup> For example, three doctors were on the committee of Thurles CC in the 1873 season (*Handbook 1873-4*, p.151) and 1874 season (*Handbook 1874-5*, p.159), whilst the Co Cavan Hon. Sec. in 1875 was a doctor (*Handbook 1875-6*, p.108).

<sup>928</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 20 March 1874.

<sup>929</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 11 July 1874.

<sup>930</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 12 May 1873.

<sup>931</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 2 October 1874.

<sup>932</sup> *The Irish Times*, 3 August 1877.

<sup>933</sup> The Good Templars had members in the Maghera CC in 1873. They proposed and carried a resolution to ban alcohol at cricket club dinners (*Belfast News-Letter*, 31 July 1873). The Dublin Total Abstinence League spent Whit Monday celebrations in Slane Castle as part of their annual celebrations

connection and interrelationship between cricket and temperance was strengthened by the increasing play of temperance clubs and movements. Such a relationship would also be seen in other Irish sports.<sup>934</sup> This was an increasingly serious matter in Ireland, as by the second half of the nineteenth century the pub was the principal centre of male working-class recreation in Ireland according to police reports. Estimates put a figure of up to 50 percent of Dublin working-class citizens as visiting pubs on Sundays by the mid-1870s,<sup>935</sup> a state of affairs aided by the assaults on popular culture that had been undertaken across the nineteenth century.<sup>936</sup> The association between temperance movements and cricket clubs can be seen in Wales at this time as well,<sup>937</sup> and more cricket activity on the mainland was based around the pub than in Ireland.<sup>938</sup>

In the emergence of temperance groups and their increasing utilisation of cricket at this time, cricket in Ireland had almost exactly mirrored the avenues of provision in England. Davies and Light have identified six main groups that provided cricket in England: paternalists, employers, religious groups, public houses, schools and social reform groups.<sup>939</sup> Cricket was offered in Ireland through all these groups notably save public houses. Although it is possible that publicans provided clubs with facilities or funding without leaving historical trace, no evidence has been found to this effect. Bearing in mind the temperance movements in Ireland in the mid-century, this perhaps should come as little surprise, in that the healthiness of cricket was in many ways the counterpoint to the evils of the public house. This was not to be the case in County Kerry in the next decade however, where publicans played a big role in the establishment of the GAA in the county and by 1890 the RIC reported that the

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in 1874, with a cricket match played between the York Street and Gardiner Street clubs, with racing, general sports and dancing enjoyed (*The Nation*, 30 May 1874). Cricket was also enjoyed as part of the same group's 1875 Whit Monday events at Carton Demesne (*Freeman's Journal*, 11 May 1875). There was also a club team playing, the Total Abstinence League, in Dublin in 1874, though called the Temperance League XI in scorecards sometimes (*Freeman's Journal*, 15 September 1874). Gort Teetotal were playing by 1875 (*Freeman's Journal*, 27 August 1875). A workingmen's temperance club and free library meeting was held in Carrick-on-Suir in January 1877, 'for the purpose of forming a literary and recreational club for the working classes.' In the winter, readings, concerts and lectures were to be given, whilst in the summer months football, athletics, boating and cricket were to be used as 'preventatives.' Upwards of fifty young men, mainly tradesmen, joined in this meeting (*Freeman's Journal*, 25 January 1877).

<sup>934</sup> See O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, p.147 and Garnham, *Association football*, p.14 for examples.

<sup>935</sup> E. Malcolm, 'The rise of the pub: a study in the disciplining of popular culture' in J.S. Donnelly Jr. and K.A. Miller (eds), *Irish popular culture 1650 – 1850* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin, 1998), p.51.

<sup>936</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xix.

<sup>937</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 4 July 1874.

<sup>938</sup> Tranter, *Sport, economy and society*, p.38.

<sup>939</sup> Davies with Light, *Cricket and community in England*, pp.41-52.

GAA was only being kept alive by publicans' efforts.<sup>940</sup> Although showing workplace compared to generic publican provision for cricket, the playing of the St James' club as noted in 1874 in appendix three was likely the St James' club of the Guinness brewery,<sup>941</sup> a club that played in many years around the turn of the 1860 – 1870s decades.

### *1.2: Religious groups, Viceroy's and law enforcement endorsements*

The difference in play between religious groups on the mainland and Ireland is striking. Dennis O'Keefe's work has shown that in Calderdale between 1860 to around 1920 at least 200 teams were formed from religious organisations – almost 1/3 of all created and more than workplace and pub-based teams combined.<sup>942</sup> Jack Williams' work similarly found an extremely close correlation between church-based cricket clubs in Bolton and Burnley in 1900 but in likeness to Ireland found works teams were only a small component of play in some selected northern English areas under investigation in 1900.<sup>943</sup> John Hargreaves has shown that by 1867, 1/3 of cricket clubs in Bolton were connected to a religious body<sup>944</sup> whilst Richard Holt has highlighted that between 1876 - 1884, of 218 football clubs mentioned in the local press in Birmingham, 84 were connected to organised religion.<sup>945</sup> A connection as clear and as strong as these cannot be made in Ireland, even though Christian churches supported the game. Cricket in Ireland surely echoed the trends reported in Calderdale though, where the playing of cricket was mainly due to congregational demand rather than clerical supply<sup>946</sup> in light of the aforementioned difficulty the Irish clergy had in closing down unwanted brothels.

Cricket's ability to function as a sociable and healthful outlet was due to the continued support of religious institutions which maintained their use and support for the game. Although W.G. Grace was referred to as 'a model of muscular Christianity'

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<sup>940</sup> McElligott, *Forging a Kingdom*, p.48.

<sup>941</sup> Garnham, *Association football*, p.48.

<sup>942</sup> O'Keefe, 'The Lord's opening partnership,' p.246.

<sup>943</sup> J. Williams, 'Churches, sport and identities in the North, 1900 – 1939' in J. Hill and J. Williams (eds), *Sport and identity in the North of England* (Keele University Press, Keele, 1996), p.115 and pp.123-124.

<sup>944</sup> Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture*, p.49.

<sup>945</sup> Holt, *Sport and the British*, p.150.

<sup>946</sup> O'Keefe, 'The Lord's opening partnership,' p.258.



by the *Freeman's Journal* in 1875,<sup>947</sup> it appears as though this clerical support in Ireland was not based explicitly upon any linkage between healthiness and godliness, but rather more for the practical usages and benefits that cricket could bring such as kindred spirit in neighbourhoods and abstinence from the dreaded public house. This support can be seen in generic Christian institutions like the Esperanza (Young Men's Christian Association) cricket club<sup>948</sup> and a church at Roundtown in Dublin whose denomination is unknown but had cricket grounds attached to it.<sup>949</sup> Clergymen were still actively involved in playing the game,<sup>950</sup> particularly in the Protestant Church, whilst grounds provision and administrative support was evident still in Tuam, where the Lord Bishop of Tuam provided grounds and the Rev. E. Lombard was elected the Hon. Sec. of Tuam CC in 1877.<sup>951</sup> Protestant Sunday School outings continued,<sup>952</sup> whilst the Protestant Armagh Cathedral Choir had their own club.<sup>953</sup>

Specifically within the Catholic community, play by distinctive and explicit bodies are found in the Castlecomer Catholic Young Men's Society CC playing Castlecomer in 1873 in their first 'great' game,<sup>954</sup> and the existence of the Roscrea Young Men's Catholic Society CC playing in 1876.<sup>955</sup> The visible and symbolic Catholic University were still active on the field in general and by 1878 had two elevens playing.<sup>956</sup> St Bernard's, Mount Melleray Seminary, Cappoquin, appears to be a Catholic seminary, with the Hon. Secretary being a resident of the institution in 1875.<sup>957</sup> Likewise, Carlow College were active in fielding teams at this time.<sup>958</sup>

The power of Catholic priests (although not omnipotent) is worth highlighting considering the peak of the game in 1874 in terms of numbers of teams playing. Paul Bew has suggested that the Catholic priest was the most respected figure in Irish life throughout the nineteenth century,<sup>959</sup> and when combined with an increased ratio of

<sup>947</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 14 May 1875.

<sup>948</sup> *The Irish Times*, 6 August 1878.

<sup>949</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 26 July 1875.

<sup>950</sup> For example, two clergymen played in the Portarlington versus Tullamore game in September 1875 (*The Irish Times*, 8 September 1875), plus the Rev. J.P. Mahaffy was still involved, playing in leading national matches too (for example see *The Irish Times*, 11 September 1875).

<sup>951</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 30 April 1877.

<sup>952</sup> For example, see: *Belfast News-Letter*, 27 August 1873; *The Irish Times*, 12 June 1876; *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 August 1877.

<sup>953</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 11 July 1873.

<sup>954</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 21 June 1873.

<sup>955</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 6 September 1876.

<sup>956</sup> *The Irish Times*, 20 June 1878.

<sup>957</sup> *Handbook 1875-6*, p.163.

<sup>958</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 4 July 1877.

<sup>959</sup> P. Bew, *Ireland: the politics of enmity 1789 – 2006* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007), p.562.

priests – to – parishioners between 1850 and 1870 as well as a huge leap in Mass attendance<sup>960</sup> it is clear that cricket could not have flourished were it not blessed by the Catholic Church. This is supported by Brian Griffin's work, which has shown that clergymen of both Christian branches enjoyed and supported other sports such as cycling and for some clergymen bikes provided means of surveying their charges.<sup>961</sup>

Added to this religious endorsement, was the continued approval of cricket by the Viceroys in Ireland in the early-to-mid 1870s. Before his departure, Earl Spencer continued to patronise cricket, and his successor the Duke of Abercorn was an even more enthusiastic supporter and proponent, physically playing for the Vice Regal team in his first year in office in 1874 in games against Phoenix and IZ, both of which saw him playing with leaders of Irish society in the form of four Lords and one marquis.<sup>962</sup> Although perhaps laced with deferential hyperbole, the Viceroy partook in baseball at an exhibition game in Dublin in August 1874, sending the balls he was pitched 'flying all over the field.'<sup>963</sup> Yet his true love was cricket, being the leading Viceroy in patronising and spreading the game nationally in terms of actual physical involvement. 1876 saw Abercorn playing for the Vice Regal team in a match in Belfast versus the North of Ireland club in May, this match seeing all the pomp and ceremony of a major game at show.<sup>964</sup> Indeed, it was only an attack of gout that stopped Abercorn playing in the Vice Regal versus Co Cork match a few months later in August,<sup>965</sup> which, if played, would have constituted a national Vice Regal cricketing tour in the summer of this year. Abercorn's replacement in 1876 by a non-cricketing Viceroy was, as in previous changes of administration, to have a significant impact on the playing of the game. Yet until 1876, cricket continued with the support and patronage of the highest office in the land, driven by Abercorn's own personal interest in the game.

The support for the game by the Viceroy and religious institutions left little room or reason for the military or police services to hinder the game's play. The military in particular would have been an unlikely source of opposition anyhow, considering their enthusiasm for the game in the decades prior to the 1870s. Needless to say, this patronage and enjoyment of the game continued unabated, cricket being

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<sup>960</sup> Larkin, *A history of Ireland, 1800 – 1922*, pp.115-116.

<sup>961</sup> Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, pp.71-74.

<sup>962</sup> See *The Irish Times*, 19 August 1874 and *The Irish Times*, 28 August 1874.

<sup>963</sup> *The Irish Times*, 25 August 1874.

<sup>964</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 25 May 1876.

<sup>965</sup> *The Irish Times*, 28 July 1876.

said to be the most popular pastime at the Curragh Camp in an article on its summer manoeuvres in 1875.<sup>966</sup> Garrison clubs continued to play a crucial role in opposing local men in areas beyond the major cities where there was not an abundance of teams. Local militias, raised at times of uncertainty for the defence of a local area and staffed by civilians but led by the military, were also increasingly playing the game in the later 1870s. This must have been in part due to concerns about the Eastern Question at this time which would have required mobilisation of such forces, further spreading knowledge of cricket by the interaction between the cricket-supporting Army and local Irish men.<sup>967</sup> Whilst there was positive benefit to engaging with these local neighbourhoods, an easy relationship was not necessarily assured. There were disturbances in Nenagh in the spring of 1877 between some residents and military men;<sup>968</sup> this, even though there were close relationships between the townspeople and those stationed through cricket and football and the like, shows that whilst sports-playing promoted positive neighbourly relationships, it did not guarantee them.

As the other face of peacekeeping in Ireland, the support of the Royal Irish Constabulary allowed the playing of cricket. As intelligence gatherers and keepers of the peace before extremities arose, they had a slightly more nuanced and challenging role to play with regards cricket. Much like the military, being involved in sporting endeavour with local residents built stronger relationships with the community, and there are numerous examples of police involvement in sporting recreation at this time – something that certainly increased in the 1870s compared to previous decades. Being an all-Irish force<sup>969</sup> with men from both religions but being composed of 70 percent Catholic men by the 1870s,<sup>970</sup> this interaction was highly desirable, to avoid accusations of being the puppets of an overseas government. This was a charge sometimes laid against them.<sup>971</sup> The playing of cricket may not have necessarily smoothed the relationship with all in Irish society, but at the least it would have

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<sup>966</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 1 June 1875.

<sup>967</sup> The Militia and RIC of Co Donegal played against the county club in 1875 (*The Irish Times*, 14 July 1875); the Royal Meath Militia were playing by 1876 (*The Irish Times*, 26 June 1876); the Wexford Militia were playing by 1878 (*The Irish Times*, 27 June 1878). The Kerry Militia possessed a ground, as the Killarney and Tralee clubs in Kerry played their match there in 1876 (*Handbook 1876-7*, p.104). These militias were also involved in other sporting events too, for example the North Mayo Militia band played at the Swinford athletic sports in August 1875 (*Freeman's Journal*, 30 August 1875).

<sup>968</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 4 April 1877.

<sup>969</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 12 June 1877.

<sup>970</sup> Bartlett, *Ireland – a History*, p.313.

<sup>971</sup> The RIC were rather flippantly referred to not as a police force, but a military force in the House of Commons in 1875, being sarcastically praised for their excellence in organising archery and cricket matches (*The Nation*, 15 May 1875).

softened some of the suspicions local communities may have held, and in many instances did no doubt strengthen communal goodwill. One policeman, Thomas Hayes was the Roscommon CC Hon. Sec. in 1873,<sup>972</sup> whilst another, M. O'Shaughnessy, an RIC member of Ardfert, was the Hon. Sec. of Brandon CC, Ardfert.<sup>973</sup> The RIC were active in other sports too; cycling was to become very popular with them in the late 1800s, and by 1901 Wexford RIC were Ireland's largest cycling club.<sup>974</sup>

### *1.3: Institutional play, patronage and business interest*

Whilst Davies and Light have suggested that churches, pubs and workplaces were strong influences on cricket's growth in England,<sup>975</sup> in Ireland the real focal point of the game was in the local club. Churches and workplaces had a small impact in actual provision overall; in 1874, only around 20 of the 432 club teams identified belonged to a specific workplace institution, excluding the looser commercial teams which presumably were for those collectively employed in a certain profession in an area. Such a figure correlates roughly with Tom Hunt's findings on cricket in County Westmeath, where he found that only 3 percent of teams between 1880 – 1905 were sponsored by employers.<sup>976</sup> There is only one clearly-identifiable church organisation playing this year too, although there are many Catholic and Protestant schools playing the game. Naturally, workplaces and churches would have provided grounds, funds and might have even gone under a different name to their religious organisation, and so their involvement cannot simply be dismissed. But it would appear that these groups were less important than in England at this time, the game instead being a local initiative, supporting Tom Hunt's work which showed 68 percent of teams in County Westmeath being those representing towns, villages and parishes.<sup>977</sup>

Workplaces increased their provision of cricket in the 1870s, particularly in the north of the country. Print works, factories, mills, workingmen's clubs and general commercial enterprises all boasted teams in this time. In addition were the more

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<sup>972</sup> *Handbook 1873-4*, p.151.

<sup>973</sup> *Handbook 1874-5*, p.119.

<sup>974</sup> Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland*, pp.75-83.

<sup>975</sup> Davies with Light, *Cricket and community in England*, p.8.

<sup>976</sup> Hunt, *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath*, p.124.

<sup>977</sup> *Ibid.*, p.124.

glamorous professions of telegraphy and journalism,<sup>978</sup> including those for *The Irish Times* and the *Freeman's Journal*, the latter of which, being a nationalist, Catholic publication should prove further evidence for the embrace of the game by followers of Rome. Bankers and lawyers were still active, particularly the former, with bankers seen in organisational positions in various clubs.<sup>979</sup>

It is not unreasonable to think that those in positions of power or standing in society believed in at least some of the moral, physical or social benefits to cricket. Patronage, in the support and leadership of the game, was still provided by the elite in society, such as Arthur Kavanagh, MP, being President of the Borris CC,<sup>980</sup> Viscount Newry's presidency of Newry CC for 1876,<sup>981</sup> or the more humble leadership of Theobald Butler and James Ryan, both of whom took the lead in organising local cricket.<sup>982</sup> It was probably a cocktail of educational benefit, genuine benevolence and desire for popular perception that led such men to act in these ways in supporting the game, with a notable increase in the amount of Deputy Lieutenants (who represented the Viceroy in local counties) patronising and being involved with the game in these years of the 1870s,<sup>983</sup> probably in imitation of various Viceroys' patronage of the game nationally.

Facilitating this continued play of cricket were the commercial interests who sought to exploit the popularity and enthusiasm of the game for profit in a wide variety of ways already shown. In the years 1873 – 1878, if including John Lawrence, the number of businesses or individuals gaining commercial opportunity from cricket was at least 50 nationally. Whilst not insignificant, this is somewhat down on the minimum of 60 as found in the investigation's years of 1867 – 1872, and does point towards a gentle corrosion of cricketing popularity.

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<sup>978</sup> Belfast Telegraphists (*Belfast News-Letter*, 21 August 1876); *The Irish Times* (*Freeman's Journal*, 28 August 1876); *Freeman's Journal* (*Freeman's Journal*, 29 July 1878).

<sup>979</sup> Ballina CC in Co Mayo's Hon. Sec. in 1874 was an employee of the National Bank, Ballina (*Handbook 1874-5*, p.150) and a Bank of Ireland employee was the Hon. Sec. of Kilbeggan CC in Co Westmeath in 1874 (*Handbook 1874-5*, p.168).

<sup>980</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 9 July 1875.

<sup>981</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 18 May 1876.

<sup>982</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 9 August 1878.

<sup>983</sup> This is a noteworthy increase, and such involvement of Deputy Lieutenants can be seen in the Patrons and Presidents of the Portarlinton, Dovea and Turtulla clubs in 1875 (*Handbook 1875-6*, p.152 and p.160).

## 2. Still a popular pastime: who played or watched?

### *2.1: Still played and enjoyed by the elites and the middle classes*

Major games continued to hold social cache, with over 40 prominent individuals specifically named as attending the Naas and Co Kildare versus Rathmines School (past and present) match in early June 1873,<sup>984</sup> and the IZ versus All Ireland match in August 1874 pulled the elite of Dublin and wider society to the game.<sup>985</sup> Whilst the rhetoric of manliness and virtuosity had notably dampened, cricket still allowed gentlemen to prove their mettle to spectating ladies – with female attendance still a key and remarked upon feature and desire at leading matches. Aristocratic and landowning gentlemen were continuing players of the game, sometimes in tandem on the field with Abercorn,<sup>986</sup> and there was a resuscitation of the old Gentlemen of the North and South teams in 1877.<sup>987</sup> No doubt this was in part to arrest the decline in cricketing interest that was underway by this stage in tone of reporting if not necessarily diminishing numbers of reports; in this year cricket games did not really provide the stir or oomph in a crowding social scene.

Some leading clubs continued to flourish and develop infrastructure, such as the North of Ireland club, who felt the need to appoint an Assistant Secretary in 1873<sup>988</sup> and a caterer in 1875.<sup>989</sup> The sociable aspect of these clubs was still crucial, seen in the reporting of a robbery in 1874 at the Phoenix CC ground resulting in the theft of port wine, two gallons of sherry and two gallons of whiskey being stolen by six soldiers, whom were subsequently found asleep nearby.<sup>990</sup> Yet even within the leading elite of Irish society, malaise was setting in by the late 1870s, shown for example in the Phoenix versus Garrison game that opened the 1877 season, where it was suggested there would have been an even greater attendance of spectators, yet the zoological garden's promenade and a polo match were taking place.<sup>991</sup>

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<sup>984</sup> *The Irish Times*, 4 June 1873.

<sup>985</sup> *The Irish Times*, 28 August 1874.

<sup>986</sup> See *The Irish Times*, 19 August 1874 and *The Irish Times* 28 August 1874.

<sup>987</sup> A Gentlemen of the South of Ireland team formed again in 1877, playing matches in Dublin (*The Irish Times*, 5 June 1877) whilst a similar team played in the north against IZ in 1877 too (*Belfast News-Letter*, 16 August 1877).

<sup>988</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 February 1873.

<sup>989</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 10 February 1873.

<sup>990</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 17 June 1874.

<sup>991</sup> *The Irish Times*, 7 May 1877.

The middling sort of society enjoyed the game as before. Within this group, much of the administrative and organisational lead for teams and clubs was taken. A club formed in Ballinrobe in Co Mayo in 1875 provides one of the rare insights into the professions of players found, with two justices of the peace, one doctor and two bankers being some of the leading gentlemen in the initiation and administration of the new club.<sup>992</sup> That such leadership was provided by this background of citizen is perhaps unsurprising, Banagher CC in Co Derry in 1873 being comprised ‘principally of farmers’ sons... not being able to include amongst its members country gentlemen, Dublin University students, or military officers, who are generally the leading spirits at cricket’ seeing as these men had the time, money and inclination to lead such ventures.<sup>993</sup>

Music remained an integral part of the sport for all classes, with many clubs developing bands attached to their club in likeness to the Roscrea CC who played the Nenagh club out of town for one mile with ‘an immense concourse of townspeople’ in 1875.<sup>994</sup> They also then played themselves out of town in their return visit to Nenagh in September.<sup>995</sup> General musical accompaniment was still provided playing at major matches in Ireland by regimental and other bands.

## 2.2: *The case study of Nenagh*

As a micro study of the rise and fall of cricket in Ireland, there can be no more fascinating a club than that of Nenagh, an association that saw incredibly close and increasingly strong links between the different sections of Irish society in the mid-to-late 1870s. The club had become a vehicle of local pride, boasting 300 members at the end of the 1876 season.<sup>996</sup> Quite simply, the zest, passion and pride in this club was extraordinary. As one case in point, in August 1877, 300 individuals associated with Nenagh CC (plus their band) travelled for a match in Thurles in carriages, with the band being placed in the first carriage and playing music as they travelled along en route. The visitors attended Mass in Thurles before playing their match and then

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<sup>992</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 27 March 1875.

<sup>993</sup> *Handbook 1873-4*, p.142.

<sup>994</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 28 August 1875.

<sup>995</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 15 September 1875.

<sup>996</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 9 August 1876.

returning home close to midnight.<sup>997</sup> Other examples of such pleasantly-spirited days to opposing towns can be seen too elsewhere in Ireland.<sup>998</sup>

What makes this club's example even more intriguing is the close cross-class interaction that was evidently seen in Nenagh by the club, showing that cricket was used as a societal vehicle to build harmony in local areas. In autumn 1874, the club grew to become the Nenagh cricket club association – a forum for amusement beyond the cricket field, which also extended to rugby by December 1875.<sup>999</sup> Not all were respectful of the club's efforts, James Stapleton of Ballyanny entering the club's rooms in autumn 1875, 'wilfully and maliciously' tearing up newspapers of the club and generally threatening the peace.<sup>1000</sup>

Dr F.P. Cleary, a practising doctor and native Irish man,<sup>1001</sup> was responsible for arranging the cricket club's brass band and also keeping both the band and the cricket club free from political opinion as noted on leaving the Nenagh town in 1876.<sup>1002</sup> From the 1840s in Britain, Hugh Cunningham has shown that brass bands had emerged as competitive ventures,<sup>1003</sup> whilst Alan Metcalfe has highlighted how brass bands were formed at collieries in northern England in the late nineteenth century.<sup>1004</sup> The Nenagh equivalent certainly had a role in fostering local pride, and in tandem with the cricket club, these ventures allowed the club not just to showcase itself locally but nationally, similar to the way sport did for villages in East Northumberland in the nineteenth century.<sup>1005</sup> Sport allows for the construction of individual, group and national identities,<sup>1006</sup> and this was certainly true for Irish cricket clubs across the thirty years of investigation.

In his leaving speech in 1876, Dr Cleary made clear he had been honoured to be associated with the cricket club, 'proud of its success, and still more proud of your undeviating adherence to that grand principle – the absence of which, alas! has been the bane of our fatherland – perfect unity of Irishmen, irrespective of caste or

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<sup>997</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 15 August 1877.

<sup>998</sup> For example, see *Nenagh Guardian*, 28 August 1875.

<sup>999</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 29 December 1875.

<sup>1000</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 23 October 1875.

<sup>1001</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 11 October 1876.

<sup>1002</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1003</sup> Cunningham, 'Leisure and culture,' p.316.

<sup>1004</sup> A. Metcalfe, 'Sport and community: a case study of the mining villages of East Northumberland, 1800 – 1914' in J. Hill and J. Williams (eds), *Sport and identity in the North of England* (Keele University Press, Keele, 1996), p.20.

<sup>1005</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.30-31.

<sup>1006</sup> M. Cronin and D. Mayall, 'Sport and Ethnicity: some introductory remarks' in M. Cronin and D. Mayall (eds.), *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation* (Frank Cass, London 1998), pp.1-2.



religion.’ He went on to say that the club had morphed from being a cricket club into an association providing the young men of Nenagh with moral, healthful, mental and physical recreation. The club had provided not only cricket, but football, swimming, annual athletics, entertainments, music and a reading room, claiming that the club had allowed Protestant and Catholic young men to link ‘arm in arm.’ To enshrine this separation of party and politics, sub-laws were embedded in the club’s constitution.<sup>1007</sup>

Whilst some might scoff at such rhetoric as whimsical or idealistic, the club does seem both genuine and sincere in its moralistic tone, trying to unify the local area and encourage cross-class relations and cross-religious friendship for the betterment of society. Visible examples of this attempt can be seen in the club contributing towards poor law provision for those in the local area in 1877,<sup>1008</sup> and the athletic sports of 1878 which saw the committee make provision ‘for all classes.’<sup>1009</sup> Even the police were incorporated into social events, a tug of war being held between twelve of Nenagh CC and twelve of the RIC at the Nenagh athletic sports in June 1876<sup>1010</sup> and rugby matches at the turn of the 1875 / 1876 years.<sup>1011</sup> In many ways, it was such tolerance of both class and religion within the game that would be two ways in which the game could have further entrenched itself; as it was, cricket was just too decent.

The club’s brass band appears to have been at the forefront of this attempt to provide for the less well-off, the band being an opportunity for novices to learn music and remain on a virtuous stead, subscriptions funding the venture.<sup>1012</sup> The band was being used not just in cricket matches, but at other sporting and cultural events like the North Tipperary Farming Society’s Show in August 1876 and 1877.<sup>1013</sup> The band also played a crucial part in local festivities and events of note, in particular in playing teams and individuals out of town, a sort of musical farewell, seen when they did so for the detachment of the 50<sup>th</sup> regiment stationed at Nenagh to the train station on their departure to the Curragh Camp in June 1876,<sup>1014</sup> again showing a close association with the security apparatus in the town. The band of the Nenagh CC, and

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<sup>1007</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 14 October 1876.

<sup>1008</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 16 May 1877.

<sup>1009</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 8 June 1878.

<sup>1010</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 17 June 1876.

<sup>1011</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 29 December 1875. A match was also played in early 1876.

<sup>1012</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 25 August 1877 and 24 November 1877.

<sup>1013</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 12 August 1876 and *The Irish Weekly Times*, 18 August 1877.

<sup>1014</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 10 June 1876.

indeed the general club, were commented upon as having ‘become a great element of good in Nenagh’ by 1877,<sup>1015</sup> and this micro example chimes very closely with clubs found in the West Riding of Yorkshire in the mid-century, where principal clubs emerged in major towns as civic institutions in their own right for civic pride with a local desire to improve these clubs.<sup>1016</sup>

### *2.3: Working-class play showing the sport still being played by all*

There were at least eight professional players in Ireland coaching clubs in the 1873 season, allowing the organisation of a Gentlemen versus Players match,<sup>1017</sup> although the sums generated would have paled in comparison to the £306 generated over three days in the English Gentlemen versus Players match in 1876.<sup>1018</sup> Yet cricket in Ireland never developed a well-resourced professional scene in comparison to the mainland, no doubt in part due to inferior rates of pay,<sup>1019</sup> and the game remained essentially amateur in play. Some professionals were from the mainland and came over for the season before returning to Britain.

The spirit of cooperation and care for one’s fellow man can be seen in institutions in Ireland’s two major towns. The Belfast Working Men’s Institute contained a cricket club by 1877, with 777 members overall in the institution and possessing an income of over £1,000. Similar to the Nenagh CC, they boasted a reading room of 3,000 books and temperance refreshments for the members, with a trip also planned to Paris. The institute was called ‘one of the glories’ of Belfast<sup>1020</sup> and shows the accessibility of cricket to those with limited means beyond inclusive neighbourhoods like Nenagh. Likewise, in Dublin, the Purveyors’ Assistants’ Association in Dublin held their club meeting in the Mechanics’ Institute, Lower Abbey Street Dublin, in April 1877. Literary classes were deemed a success, and a committee was formed to provide cricket and other outdoor amusement in the summer months.<sup>1021</sup> A large number of men were proposed in the May meeting to join the

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<sup>1015</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 21 March 1877.

<sup>1016</sup> Davies with Light, *Cricket and community in England*, pp.54-55.

<sup>1017</sup> *The Irish Times*, 18 July 1873.

<sup>1018</sup> B. Heald (ed), *1876 – A Statistical Survey* (The Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians, Nottingham, 2000), p.12.

<sup>1019</sup> Milne, Perry and Halliday, *A history of Dublin University CC*, p.19.

<sup>1020</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 15 January 1878. Athenaeum CC had held meetings in the committee rooms of the Belfast Working Men’s Institute as early as April 1873 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 18 April 1873).

<sup>1021</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 18 April 1877.

club, supposedly on the popularity of the plan initiated in the previous meeting to form a cricket club.<sup>1022</sup> Workingmen's and mechanics' teams playing cricket were existent in Scotland as well as England,<sup>1023</sup> and cricket in Glasgow in the second half of the nineteenth century appeared to be for all as it was in Ireland.<sup>1024</sup>

Away from formalised provision, there were also many instances of what might be termed informal, improvised or 'street' cricket, as was also seen on the mainland at this time.<sup>1025</sup> A letter appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* on 11 July 1874 about 'bands of young rowdies' playing cricket in Dublin. It was complained that in public thoroughfares, such groups were playing cricket with stones and improvised bats, a lady being hit in the head from one of these 'balls' in early July 1874, forcing a resident of the city to write to the *Freeman's Journal*. The police were asked to monitor such areas, to protect Dubliners 'from the violence and abuse which those rowdies give.' The newspaper concurred, noting: 'It is the practice, so common among our juvenile population, of playing cricket and other sports, in some respects of a dangerous kind, in the streets. We should be sorry to interfere with the growing popularity of the noblest of outdoor recreations, but the cricket which is admirable in the proper arena is intolerable in crowded thoroughfares.' Such instances can be seen on other occasions in Dublin,<sup>1026</sup> giving credence to *The Irish Times'* call in 1877 for more public park space in the Phoenix Park in Dublin to allow individuals to recreate in a safe and suitable space.<sup>1027</sup>

Such play can also be seen elsewhere in the country. A complaint was made in the *Belfast News-Letter* on 5 October 1874 about 50 - 70 'roughs' meeting on Sundays to play cards, cricket and other activities in meadows and fields such as at Legar Hill in northern Ireland. Bryan Dunn was charged for breaking a cricket bat of some boys who had been playing cricket in a field outside the town of Borrisoleigh in

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<sup>1022</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 29 May 1877.

<sup>1023</sup> D.W. Potter, *The Encyclopaedia of Scottish Cricket* (Empire Publications, Manchester, 1999): Haddington Working Men's Club played their first game in 1877 (p.95) and mechanics' teams in Scotland had existed since the early 1860s (p.112). Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*: Wakefield Mechanics' Institution CC were active mid-century (p.3).

<sup>1024</sup> Burnett, 'Cricket,' p.59.

<sup>1025</sup> In Durham City, following the formation of the cricket club in 1828, chimney sweeps could be seen playing cricket on the street with their caps and sweeps. J. Chapman, *Cream teas and nutty slack – a history of club cricket in County Durham 1751 – 2002* (Jack Chapman, England – exact publication details unknown, 2003), p.19.

<sup>1026</sup> For example, see the *Handbook's* belief that a ride through Phoenix Park would see cricket played in every stage, from embryonic street cricket to the refined play of the Phoenix club (*Handbook 1876-7*, p.3).

<sup>1027</sup> *The Irish Times*, 2 April 1877.

Tipperary in 1878 - he was ordered to pay a penalty and the cost of a new bat<sup>1028</sup> - whilst Patrick Brien of Thurles successfully prosecuted 'a number of lads' for continuous trespassing to play cricket on his lands.<sup>1029</sup> Violence was still a feature of working-class play, as in October 1877 Thomas and John Maher were summoned by Constable Connell of Toomavara for fighting and disturbing the peace in town on the way home from Ballinwear, where they had played for Toomavara against Ballyanny CC.<sup>1030</sup> A similarly violent episode had an unfortunately more regrettable conclusion, when a party of cricketers were returning to Callan in Co Kilkenny in the autumn of 1877 when two members fell out. One of these individuals then hit the other in the head with a bat, killing him.<sup>1031</sup>

The reason these instances appear to be working-class in nature is that they received so little media attention; there is no real outpouring of grief in the tone or language and the reporting on them is so matter-of-fact. One cannot help but feel that if these actions had been undertaken by or inflicted upon a wealthier member of society, there would have been either greater scandal or sympathy associated with the actions. For these examples, it was just accepted, maybe even expected. Such examples dispel the idea of cricket as a purely elite pursuit.

#### *2.4: Cricket in schools and universities*

The schools that continued to play cricket showed breadth in play both geographically and in terms of religious affiliation. Leading Catholic schools continued to play the game with enthusiasm, in institutions like Blackrock College, Clongowes Wood and St Stanislaus, of which Blackrock and Clongowes both possessed third elevens in this time period.<sup>1032</sup>

An attempt to unify these leading Catholic schools into representative teams can be seen in Phoenix playing the Catholic Colleges in late September 1873<sup>1033</sup> and in August 1874.<sup>1034</sup> There appears to be genuine enthusiasm for the game in these

<sup>1028</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 29 June 1878.

<sup>1029</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 23 September 1874.

<sup>1030</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 13 October 1877.

<sup>1031</sup> *The Irish Times*, 4 September 1877.

<sup>1032</sup> Blackrock were fielding 3XIs in 1873 for example (*Freeman's Journal*, 14 June 1873) and Clongowes had a 3XI by 1874 (*Freeman's Journal*, 4 May 1874). Other schools such as Academic Institute also had a 3XI by 1874 (*The Irish Times*, 24 August 1874).

<sup>1033</sup> *The Irish Times*, 29 September 1873.

<sup>1034</sup> *The Irish Times*, 17 August 1874.

Catholic schools, and one future avenue of study would be to examine within these schools how far this playing was led by pupils or imposed by teachers; as a case study, Clongowes Wood shows that there is evidence for both these theories. The Clongowes' speech day was covered in extensive length in 1873 in the *Freeman's Journal*, where it was lauded that 'the Jesuit Fathers are, *par excellence*, the leaders still in the intellectual and scholastic training of the Catholic rising generation,' the piece then going on to talk about the mental, moral and physical education that was offered, including via the ball court and cricket ground, which served to 'develop their bone and muscle to the highest point of perfection.'<sup>1035</sup> This piece implied that such training was at least tacitly encouraged by the priests themselves, even if only indirectly in acquiescing to such play outside of lesson time.

Yet Clongowes students seemed to genuinely enjoy the game, with an Old Clongownians' team formed by 1874<sup>1036</sup> which would point towards a passion for the game beyond the school grounds. Whilst it could be argued that there may have been social, commercial or more clandestine reasons for play that doubtless attracted some to the game, it is surely implausible that the majority would have continued for any other reason than because they mainly enjoyed a day of cricket.

Within the Catholic fraternity, the hospitality of the clergy who were teachers continued to astound and impress, which would again support the idea of school leaders' endorsement of the game and their desire to foster it for its benefits and uses. Blackrock's and Clongowes' hospitality were celebrated in 1877<sup>1037</sup> and shows that Catholic school cricket was far from dilapidated by the late 1870s. Indeed, proposals were suggested to further entrench and ensconce this cricketing participation by the development of major matches, a proposal in 1875 suggesting that Clongowes and Blackrock – the two principal public schools in Ireland according to the writer – host annual games at Phoenix CC in Dublin to develop spectacle.<sup>1038</sup> Another suggestion for a leading Irish schools' match was attempted in name and nature in 1877, when St Stanislaus took on Clongowes under the vestiges of 'a kind of Irish Eton and Harrow cricket match.'<sup>1039</sup> That such ideas were not developed must in part explain why such

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<sup>1035</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 22 July 1873 and *The Nation* on 27 July 1873.

<sup>1036</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 8 May 1874.

<sup>1037</sup> The Blackrock hospitality was noted in the match versus the Catholic University in 1877 (*Freeman's Journal*, 24 May 1877), as was the Clongowes hospitality in their match versus Leinster (*The Irish Times*, 24 May 1877).

<sup>1038</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 5 April 1875.

<sup>1039</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 25 May 1877.

schools eventually drifted to rugby union as their gospel, as for example an Ulster Schools Cup was established in the season 1875-6.<sup>1040</sup>

Whilst the hospitality was seemingly not as impressive in Protestant establishments such schools continued playing the game much as before. Both Rathmines School and Methodist College, Belfast, possessed third elevens in this time.<sup>1041</sup> At Dundalk Grammar School, the Head Master wanted a physical as well as intellectual education – and so he was supportive of cricket, football, athletics and the like so that the boys ‘should have a well developed triceps and biceps.’<sup>1042</sup> Like their Catholic counterparts, such schools were afflicted by some of the problems and errors that were beginning to plague the game nationally; even a cricket-mad school like Rathmines was supporting athletics with fervour, with a ‘large and fashionable attendance’ attending the athletic sports in 1878.<sup>1043</sup>

The universities still provided cricketing opportunities, the benefits of which were celebrated at Trinity College, Dublin in the House of Commons.<sup>1044</sup> Trinity was taking steps to formalise its teams early in the season, publishing the selected squads in newspapers to theoretically gain prestige or reward selection to these teams.<sup>1045</sup> In total, Trinity College possessed seven club teams,<sup>1046</sup> and it was the popularity of cricket in Trinity – the college being a ‘bastion of Unionism’<sup>1047</sup> and populated overwhelmingly with Protestants but also the Catholic middle and upper classes<sup>1048</sup> – that has no doubt influenced the perception of cricket as a Protestant and Unionist game.

The Catholic University was still active in Dublin, but there does seem to have been a noticeable downgrading of enthusiasm in the universities of Belfast and Cork (which were turning to athletics), which would prove detrimental in future years as fewer young men gained exposure to the game. Outside of formal educational institutions, the opportunities for cricket had increased, with at least seventeen specifically-named junior teams active in the country, the majority of which were

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<sup>1040</sup> E. Van Esbeck, *Irish rugby 1874 – 1999: a history* (Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1999), p.33.

<sup>1041</sup> Rathmines School had a 3XI by 1873 (*The Irish Times*, 19 August 1873) as did Methodist College by 1876 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 5 September 1876).

<sup>1042</sup> *The Irish Times*, 24 January 1874.

<sup>1043</sup> *The Irish Times*, 26 June 1878.

<sup>1044</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 22 April 1873 and *The Nation*, 26 April 1873.

<sup>1045</sup> See *The Irish Times*, 7 May 1873 for example.

<sup>1046</sup> These teams were a 1XI, 2XI, Boat Club, Engineering School, Divinity department, Law School and Medical School teams.

<sup>1047</sup> West, *The bold Collegians*, p.8.

<sup>1048</sup> Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, p.94.

from the north of Ireland,<sup>1049</sup> a big increase on previous decades. There would have been more such teams and also teenage boys playing in men's matches. However, the much greater development of colts' cricket in England was not reciprocated in Ireland at this time, and the noteworthy matches of county colts' teams and colts of the North and South matches were not played in Ireland.<sup>1050</sup>

### 3. Reasons for the decline of cricket by 1878

#### *3.1: The accelerating rise of other sports*

A decade that began with optimism was to end with decline. The number of cricket teams in Ireland peaked in 1874, and the game had become a genuinely national pursuit with clubs listed in every county in this year. With only 45 percent of teams coming from Dublin and Belfast the game was clearly as much regional and local as urban.<sup>1051</sup> It was in this era that cricket probably reached furthest across society due to the sheer amount of teams playing, and this weight of teams as well as the cross-class playing identified repeats the consistent challenges this work poses to the historiography that labels cricket as unpopular or elitist. Irish cricket bears many striking parallels to the Scottish game at this time, as Scottish cricket enjoyed a peak period roughly from 1860 – 1890, with an estimated 200 clubs in 1873. This is almost exactly the same as Irish cricket's peak popularity, and likewise in Scotland almost every village had a team before retraction due to the rise of other sports that took greater root.<sup>1052</sup>

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<sup>1049</sup> Shrigley and Killyleagh both had juvenile teams playing in 1874 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 30 June 1874); Comber Spinning Mill had a junior team in 1874 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 5 August 1874); Dungannon Junior were playing in 1874 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 10 August 1874); Ballymena Junior were playing in 1876 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 19 June 1876); Goresbridge and Gouran were both fielding junior elevens in August 1878 (*Freeman's Journal*, 29 August 1878); Nenagh Wanderers were a juvenile eleven of Nenagh CC (*Nenagh Guardian*, 5 September 1877). Comber had a junior team too, as did Hollywood, Monkstown, Newtownards, Sullatober, Saintfield, Killyleagh demesne, Dungannon and Armagh.

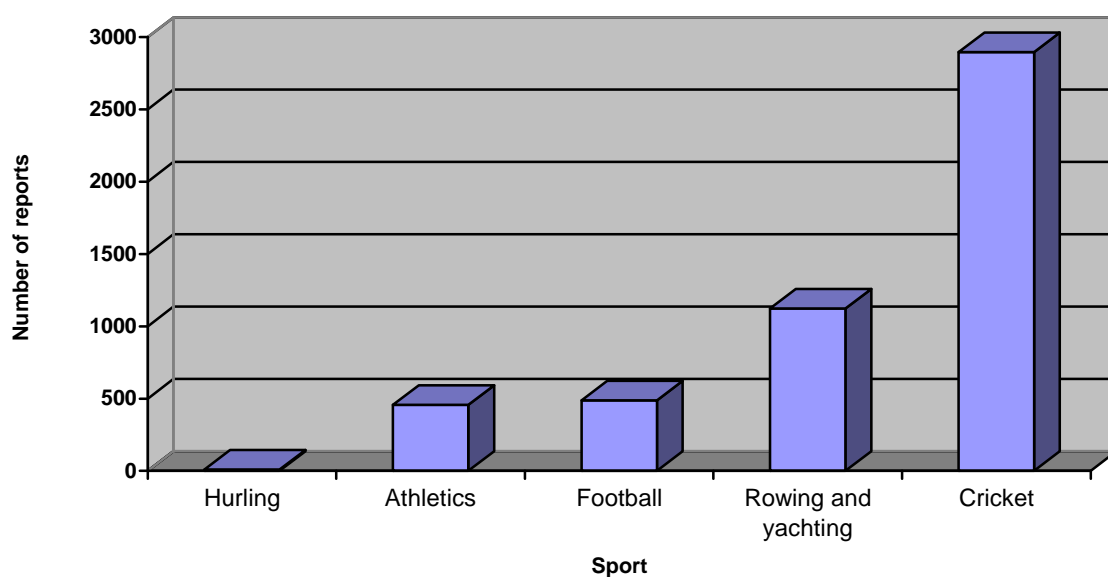
<sup>1050</sup> *Wisden, The Cricketers' Almanack For 1870*: colts county games were taking place such as Notts versus 22 colts (p.87); Sussex colts played a team of gentlemen (p.127); Hampshire colts were active too (p.128); 11 colts of the North played versus 11 colts of the South at Lord's (p.130). This trend would only accelerate in the 1870s with more and more prominent matches taking place. In the 1874 *Wisden*: Sussex had 15 professional colts playing in 1873 (p.150) and both a gentlemen's colts 11 and a professional colts 11 at the club in 1873 (p.153). In the *Wisden* of 1876: Middlesex had a similar arrangement (p.110) in 1875, and Surrey colts played Middlesex colts in 1875 (p.150).

<sup>1051</sup> Please see appendices three and four.

<sup>1052</sup> Burnett, 'Cricket,' pp.58-60.

For all of its continuing positive characteristics, cricket still remained the amateur game in both play and organisation of old; it was codified but not coordinated in terms of administration and competition to allow longevity. As the years of the 1870s progressed, it becomes abundantly clear that the passion, even obsession, with cricket in the early-to-mid 1860s was abating, something that is difficult to quantify. Many cricket reports had become simply fixture lists, with less of the excited detail and reporting of games in previous years. Cricket was being challenged by rival sports, which were reported with generally more enthusiasm and intrigue than cricket. The comparative reporting for 1875 shows cricket still in a dominant position and thus cricket was by no means in dire straights by the middle of the decade, still being an incredibly popular game in comparison to its rivals. Cricket was still eclipsed by hunting and horse racing, these sports being reported more than cricket in all but one of the samples below which have been used as a snapshot of these sports as reporting on them was still so extensive at this time. However, cricket's popularity was in decline by 1878 in real terms, and must also have been comparatively as these other new and emerging sports continued to grow. The storm clouds had been forming for years, and the impending fall for cricket was nothing to do with the GAA as many historians have declared.

**Diagram twelve: a comparative analysis of the different sports reported in 1875**





**Table four: newspaper reporting in some selected newspapers for cricket, horse racing and hunting in 1875**

<b>Newspaper reports for 1875</b>	<i>Belfast News-Letter</i>	<i>Nenagh Guardian</i>	<i>The Nation</i>
Cricket	1053	38	7
Horse racing	576	251	46
Hunting	1057	138	40

The primary way in which cricket was overtaken and overshadowed by rival sports in the mid-to-late 1870s was through leadership and administration. Not only had new sports emerged in the 1850s and 1860s - like athletics, rugby and rowing - but also now in the 1870s tennis, soccer and cycling. These sports formed and established themselves with structures and procedures to both endear and establish the sports in the long term. Cricket's set-up was amateur and pathetic by comparison.

Leading this charge to sporting organisation were the increasingly popular pastimes of athletics and rugby. The Irish Champion Athletic Club, which had been formed in 1872, was the heartbeat of athletics in Ireland. The most impressive administrative development though came in the game of rugby union. The Irish Football Union existed by 1875, hosting English players after the international against Ireland in Dublin in December 1875, a team that was genuinely national as far as such teams were in this time, with players from the North of Ireland, Windsor, Dublin University, the Wanderers and Lansdowne Road.<sup>1053</sup> This coordinating and leading body was to do so much to organise and perpetuate the game in Ireland, organising a general meeting for clubs affiliated to the union in Dublin in early October 1876 to plan the forthcoming season,<sup>1054</sup> with a splinter group establishing themselves as leaders of the game in the north in the form the Northern Football Union.<sup>1055</sup> This rival group hosted an Ireland - Scotland match in February 1877,<sup>1056</sup> but the administrative lead of the IFU was such that committees were formed of the

<sup>1053</sup> *The Irish Times*, 14 December 1875.

<sup>1054</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 30 September 1876.

<sup>1055</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 5 February 1877.

<sup>1056</sup> This game shows the financial nous of this new rugby establishment, offering five tickets for the price of four to union members for this match (*Belfast News-Letter*, 12 February 1877).

constituent clubs to select the international teams,<sup>1057</sup> and in 1879 these two groups would fuse to create the IRFU. By 1877, even newspapers were aiding the implementation and planning of fixtures, *The Irish Times* calling for secretaries of football clubs to send fixture lists in for production of a fixture card to allow clubs to correspond.<sup>1058</sup> Such an undertaking had been attempted with cricket in earlier years, but had failed.

Other organisations were also following the Victorian model of sporting ownership and national direction. Horse racing had professionalised further, with a meeting of the Irish National Hunt Steeplechase Committee in August 1878 to debate racing matters and interpretations on jump racing<sup>1059</sup> to go in tandem with the Turf Club's organisation of flat racing. What is most dispiriting about watching these years unfold is how even minor sports like shooting,<sup>1060</sup> cycling,<sup>1061</sup> polo<sup>1062</sup> and croquet<sup>1063</sup> were enjoying national leadership and organisation of competition. Cricket still lurked in the decades gone, almost paralysed, whilst these new and emerging sports entered into the slipstream of professionalising sport that was enveloping mainland Britain.

Combined with this greater organisation in general of these other sports in Ireland came a significantly more interesting competitive spectacle on offer to those wishing to attend and enjoy events. Great competitions were elicited in a variety of sports, athletics and rugby again to the fore. The ICAC held their inaugural meeting in July 1873, with representatives from Belfast, Lurgan, Cork and other provincial areas sending forth athletes to Dublin to the event in College Park; it was believed by the *Freeman's Journal* that 'all the crack Irish athletes' would attend.<sup>1064</sup> Records were set in every event undertaken at this inaugural set of races, and the high jump record was broken for the United Kingdom by Mr Davin, probably the famed Maurice Davin who was to later establish the Gaelic Athletic Association and who was known as a prolific athlete in the 1870s.<sup>1065</sup> There also appears to be professionalisation of

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<sup>1057</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 22 February 1877.

<sup>1058</sup> *The Irish Times*, 26 September 1877.

<sup>1059</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 10 August 1878.

<sup>1060</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 28 May 1874.

<sup>1061</sup> The Irish Champion Bicycle Association, comprising a number of constituent clubs nationwide, held its first meeting in Dublin in June 1876 (*Freeman's Journal*, 26 June 1876).

<sup>1062</sup> The All Ireland Polo Club was established by the end of the summer of 1874 in Dublin (*Freeman's Journal*, 29 August 1874).

<sup>1063</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 13 August 1874.

<sup>1064</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 5 July 1873.

<sup>1065</sup> *The Irish Times*, 25 May 1874. To further cement the event in history, photos of the victor in each event were taken, 'each as he appeared panting and in the war-paint of victory' (*Freeman's Journal*, 8 July 1873).

athletes at leading Irish athletic events at this time,<sup>1066</sup> in contrast to the largely-amateur population of cricketers.

New and interesting athletic spectacle was provided away from these elite national athletic championships; the Queen's University Sports, an athletics meeting for the athletes of Cork, Galway and Belfast Queen's colleges was inaugurated in Cork in May 1873, being the first inter-collegiate affair in Ireland,<sup>1067</sup> whilst in 1874 these races were rotated and held in Belfast at the North of Ireland CC.<sup>1068</sup> Not to be disappointed if a southern athlete, the South of Ireland Championship Sports were inaugurated in Cork in 1876 to bestow upon the winner the title of athletic champion of southern Ireland by the Cork Amateur Athletic Club. A grandstand was erected, and 'some thousands' filled the unreserved or free sections of the ground at the Cork Park racecourse.<sup>1069</sup> Novelty was also found at athletics grounds in other ways, with over 200 competing in 32 events at the North of Ireland CC athletic sports in 1874<sup>1070</sup> whilst at the 1876 competition there were 41 advertised categories of sport.<sup>1071</sup> Running handicaps were used for athletics races – for example at the Ulster CC in September 1875 where one man had a 60 yard head start in a 440 yard race<sup>1072</sup> - furthering interest and intrigue in athletic events beyond the athletes involved. Rugby union, in addition to implementing international matches against England and Scotland, had now initiated provincial matches, something that is still the bedrock of the Irish game today<sup>1073</sup> whilst the rugby-playing Cork FC and Limerick FC were playing for an informal 'champion of the south' title in the late 1870s.<sup>1074</sup>

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<sup>1066</sup> The Kanturk athletic sports, held on 1 July 1873, seem to imply the presence of professional athletes. Two events were open to all, with the rest being confined to amateurs (*Freeman's Journal*, 27 June 1873) whilst a piece in the *Belfast News-Letter* on 4 September 1876 hints at a significant presence of professional / non-amateur athletes at the Whiteabbey athletic sports in late summer 1876, hoping 'that in the future contests the amateur element will be more largely represented.'

<sup>1067</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 15 May 1873.

<sup>1068</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 May 1874. The following year, the Queen's College Belfast athletic sports saw competitors from Dublin taking part; athletics was certainly leading the charge in domestic sporting rivalry and competition in Ireland at this time (*Belfast News-Letter*, 30 April 1875).

<sup>1069</sup> *The Irish Times*, 18 May 1876.

<sup>1070</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 17 June 1874.

<sup>1071</sup> The NICC athletic sports in 1876 featured 41 events (*Belfast News-Letter*, 3 May 1876), although it should be noted that on the day itself a few of these ended as walkovers due to withdrawals (*Belfast News-Letter*, 10 June 1876).

<sup>1072</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 September 1875.

<sup>1073</sup> A Leinster versus Ulster inter-provincial match was played in mid-December of 1876 in Dublin (*The Irish Times*, 12 December 1876).

<sup>1074</sup> O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, p.181.

Champion archery meetings were held at the ICAC,<sup>1075</sup> a fifty miles road championship race of Ireland came off in September 1878 under the direction of the Irish Champion Bicycle Club in Dublin's Phoenix Park,<sup>1076</sup> whilst even in minority sports like billiards, the ex-champion of England played the champion of Ireland in Dublin in 1878.<sup>1077</sup> All around, other sports were offering exciting, novel and attractive competitive elements, none of which cricket was providing. Although an unalterable problem, these sports too were also easily understandable to the untrained eye; in discussing lacrosse, the *Freeman's Journal* described it as possessing 'none of the endless variety and complication that render cricket so interesting to the initiated, and so hopelessly mysterious to the general public.'<sup>1078</sup> These sports were also providing greater outlets for sporting nationalism.

Central to the incentive and rewards of these new competitions were monetary prizes and elaborate cups, another component of the excitement at a day's event and also encouragement for individuals to strive for excellence and victory in endeavour. It appears as though there was a belief in the link between sporting excellence and reward, being felt in June 1875 that athletes had been compelled to enter the NICC athletic sports as 'the prizes are really valuable and handsome' on a day of competition where the attendance was 'exceedingly large.'<sup>1079</sup> The first Grand Lawn Tennis tournament held on the Co Limerick CC grounds in September 1876, being deemed an 'unqualified success,' encouraged the committee to increase the value of the cups for competition for the next year.<sup>1080</sup> Some of the figures associated with these events in the 1870s are noteworthy, comparing so favourably with cricket's only real accolade being the borderline-tragic award of bats for a notable score. The Queen's College Belfast athletic sports in 1877 had nearly £160 in prizes for distribution;<sup>1081</sup> within the rowing fraternity, the Dublin Metropolitan Regatta of 1875 saw £550 worth of cups competed for;<sup>1082</sup> the wealth and interest in Irish horse racing hardly needs emphasising, the example of a single £150 cup being raced for in 1873 by only four horses at the relatively-obscure Charleville races a case in point.<sup>1083</sup>

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<sup>1075</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 23 September 1874.

<sup>1076</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 17 September 1878.

<sup>1077</sup> *The Irish Times*, 24 May 1878.

<sup>1078</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 16 May 1876.

<sup>1079</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 12 June 1875.

<sup>1080</sup> *The Irish Times*, 18 September 1876.

<sup>1081</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 April 1877.

<sup>1082</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 16 May 1876.

<sup>1083</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 10 May 1873.

Indeed, such was the discrepancy in funding for cricket that the national reporting in the *Freeman's Journal* of a £2 donation to Gort cricket club by the Right Honourable W.H. Gregory, Governor of Ceylon, is laughable in comparison to other sports,<sup>1084</sup> and there were indeed cases of cricketers actually losing money from organising notable events.<sup>1085</sup> It was of course the case that both England and Wales saw a rise of other sports at this time too, yet cricket's popularity still increased. The difference between Irish and English cricket was that the English game had novelty and competition in distinction to its rivals – from Australian tours, county matches and the great professional elevens. Locally, as Davies and Light have shown in England, league and cup competitions from their inception 'captured the collective imagination in local communities.'<sup>1086</sup>

Irish cricket had none of this excitement as it remained a localised, informal, amateur operation whilst its sporting rivals began to offer more interesting spectacles to spectators, businesses and indeed players, to further devalue cricket by 1878.

### *3.2: A sense of nationalism in other sports*

Irish sports were increasingly engaging in national competition, both within Ireland and overseas, creating a sense of pride and nationalism that cricket was failing to offer. It should be remembered that the GAA only formed in 1884, and thus this nationalism was being channelled through other sports before this time in contradiction to some of the historiography. Athletics events in particular were pitting the best Ireland could offer against overseas visitors: the NICC athletic sports of 1874 saw the elite athletes of Ireland, England and Scotland compete<sup>1087</sup> and the Queen's College, Belfast Athletic Sports in the early summer of 1876 saw fevered anticipation and excitement in the upcoming fixture. The recognised Irish champions were named and counterpointed against leading English and Scottish athletes, one of whom, G.E. Warburton of Manchester AC, posted the fastest two-mile amateur time recorded. As a result, an enticing overview of the duels he would have with leading Irish and

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<sup>1084</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 18 June 1874.

<sup>1085</sup> For example, the members of the Leinster club arranged to underwrite the cost of bringing over the United South of England in 1874, yet due to the conflicting attraction of a regatta, a loss was made on hosting the game (*Handbook 1874-5*, p.74).

<sup>1086</sup> Davies with Light, *Cricket and community in England*, p.74.

<sup>1087</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 19 June 1874.

Scottish athletes at the event was reported.<sup>1088</sup> This competition went beyond Irish and English athletes and even into that of representative teams, there being an international athletics meeting between Ireland and England held at the Irish Champion Athletic Club in June 1876.<sup>1089</sup> As already mentioned, rugby had taken this route, forming and playing international matches against England and Scotland,<sup>1090</sup> and Irish rugby clubs were also now enjoying the visits of mainland teams, the North of Ireland Football Club (part of the cricket club) booking fixtures against English, Scottish and Irish teams in the 1877-78 season.<sup>1091</sup> Cambridge University also played Dublin University in December 1878,<sup>1092</sup> a visit that was never made by the Cambridge cricketers. Lacrosse was delving into the international arena, with games between Irish and Scottish teams in 1877,<sup>1093</sup> whilst soccer was played in exhibition format by two Scottish teams in Belfast in the autumn of 1878.<sup>1094</sup> Even the Unionist, Protestant publication of *The Irish Times* was indulging in rhetorical jousting, referring to ‘an English invader’ defeating the Irish national champion at one event at the Dublin University athletic sports in June 1875<sup>1095</sup> and again reinforcing the acceptability of dual nationalities at this time for such Unionists, being proud Irish men in sporting pursuits but still wanting Union.

Competitors from these emerging sports were taking on challenges overseas as well as receiving opponents within Irish shores. This again compares so greatly with the languid indifference and absence of adventure of Irish cricketers. Challengers were sent to the mainland to the Henley Royal Regatta,<sup>1096</sup> to the National Rifle Association meets in Wimbledon,<sup>1097</sup> and to London for international athletic

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<sup>1088</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 5 May 1876.

<sup>1089</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 June 1876.

<sup>1090</sup> The first Anglo-Irish rugby international was held in London in February 1875 (*Freeman's Journal*, 15 February 1875). For the Scotland fixture, please see *Freeman's Journal*, 6 March 1876.

<sup>1091</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 25 September 1877.

<sup>1092</sup> *The Irish Times*, 16 December 1878.

<sup>1093</sup> Belfast and District played Caledonian Lacrosse club at NICC in mid-July 1877 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 11 July 1877), whilst there was a purported Ireland and Scotland Lacrosse match at Lansdowne Road on 14 July 1877 (*Freeman's Journal*, 14 July 1877), although the attendance was very small (*Belfast News-Letter*, 16 July 1877). The match was really a game between Dublin and Glasgow club sides (*Freeman's Journal*, 16 July 1877).

<sup>1094</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 25 October 1878.

<sup>1095</sup> *The Irish Times*, 9 June 1875.

<sup>1096</sup> By 1875, Dublin University Boat Club were sending crews to race at Henley (*The Irish Times*, 14 May 1875).

<sup>1097</sup> A team to represent Ireland was selected and also published in July 1876 (*Freeman's Journal*, 6 July 1876).

events<sup>1098</sup> and international rugby matches.<sup>1099</sup> Representative teams were even being sent to America, such as the Dublin University Boat Club's participation in an international colleges meeting in the USA in 1876<sup>1100</sup> and the selection and venture of an Irish rifle team to America in the autumn of 1876,<sup>1101</sup> showing other sports breaking national boundaries in a way cricket never really did to any great or noteworthy extent.

These club and international matches and competitions aroused and became a vehicle for sporting nationalism and filled the breaches to which cricket never rose. One particular example of this emergent fiery nationalism can be seen within the rugby internationals, when Ireland lost both the February internationals of 1877 against England and Scotland, leading to the weaknesses of the Irish team being sneered at by an Englishman in a letter to the *Belfast News-Letter* on 21 February 1877. This provided a deluge of ripostes the following week, in a spirit of national fervour that had not been seen in such sustained form anywhere else in the investigation to date. Not only was a defence of the game in Ireland offered, but also solutions to the problem of the quality gap that had been highlighted between the Irish and mainland international teams, including the playing for challenge cups, inter-provincial games between, for example, a united Belfast team and other provincial towns and the like.<sup>1102</sup> A sense of indignation, provincial and national pride rang through the *Belfast News-Letter's* letters pages for the days following this initial report, showing the passionate and emotional response and affection certain Irish men felt for rugby, a sustained defence that was not seen for cricket.

Momentum in ascendant popularity and a sense of originality saw many of these sports enjoying the sort of write-ups and editorial endorsement that cricket had

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<sup>1098</sup> A second international athletics meeting between England and Ireland was held in 1877 in London – Ireland did poorly, winning only two of thirteen events (*Freeman's Journal*, 28 May 1877).

<sup>1099</sup> The first Anglo-Irish rugby international was played in London in February 1875 (*Freeman's Journal*, 15 February 1875).

<sup>1100</sup> *The Irish Times*, 22 May 1876.

<sup>1101</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 17 April 1876. This Irish rifle team were undertaking team practice ahead of their trip to America in 1876 showing a professionalism that Irish cricket did not match, no Irish cricket teams being noted as playing together before major games in this period (*The Irish Times*, 12 August 1876).

<sup>1102</sup> In response to the letter on 21 February 1877 in the *Belfast News-Letter* on 22 February 1877 in the same paper, it was said: 'it is practised by very few, and cannot as yet be called popular.' To further improve the standing of the game, challenge cups were proposed to elicit interest in Dublin and Belfast for teams affiliated to the Irish Football Union. As well as this, a suggestion of a Belfast versus provincial towns match was made to further the game in another letter. Some of the replies to this English letter contained venomous denunciations of the Englishman, including attacks on his grasp of grammar and written style. Four letters were published in total in response to this Englishman's initial offering on 22 February 1877, with a further full week of replies on this subject.

enjoyed in the early-to-mid 1860s but that had now receded. An *Irish Times* eulogy on rowing in 1873 was like the good-old ones on cricket, extending to hundreds of words. The rhetoric, including lines like ‘A race is the reflection of our life’<sup>1103</sup> was similar to that of cricket in the 1860s, a defence that was now all but gone. Other observations included those that boasted of a new and emergent focus on bravery and manliness in athletic sports and rugby, with a particular favour amongst the young of Ireland.<sup>1104</sup> Some isolated attacks even pointed to the futility in playing cricket, one report in the *Freeman’s Journal* noting that ‘Boating and cricket are, we admit very well in their way, but proficiency in those amusements will never enable us to save our fellow-creature from the grave. They are amusing and health-giving exercises, and nothing more, and even on these grounds we do not believe that they are entitled to any superiority over swimming’ regarding the Blackrock Swimming Matches at the Blackrock swimming baths in September 1873.<sup>1105</sup> That such an important ally of cricket in former years was continuing its blunted attacks against the sport was symbolic of the game’s fall from favour.

### 3.3: Superior spectatorship numbers and general interest in other sports

This sense of competition, of novelty and excitement about these new and emerging sports is best exemplified in the spectatorship numbers that attended events in the mid-1870s. Stands were increasingly being built either as part of clubs or temporarily for significant functions, increasing the enjoyment that such days afforded. Leading the improvements to grounds in Ireland at this time was the Irish Champion Athletic Club, feeling so certain of their future that they proposed raising £1,000 by debentures for the purpose of grounds development for cricket, football and athletics in the autumn of 1873.<sup>1106</sup> By 1874 this association had purchased Lansdowne Road, a name that was later to become synonymous with Irish rugby, and opened a spacious pavilion that could hold around 450 in May of that year, with 2,000 people in total attending the opening, the club also having laid down a running path, the first of its

<sup>1103</sup> *The Irish Times*, 3 March 1873.

<sup>1104</sup> The 1875 Ulster CC athletic sports saw a ‘large concourse’ of visitors attend, ‘principally of the younger members of the community, for whom feats of physical prowess and endurance possess a strong fascination’ (*Belfast News-Letter*, 30 March 1875).

<sup>1105</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 13 September 1873.

<sup>1106</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 24 October 1873.



kind in Ireland.<sup>1107</sup> The importance of this ‘splendid ground’ and their champion athletic sports was that ‘they have given a status to athletics in this country by stimulating their practice in every province, and offering substantial prizes which must be regarded as enviable trophies of skill, swiftness, strength and agility.’<sup>1108</sup> Informal stands were being used too at athletic events in Belfast, Lurgan, Dublin and Nenagh for various sports at this time, something that was not repeated at cricket matches due to a defused sense of excitement around leading matches. Indeed, as a point of comparison, by 1875 the leading Co Cork CC still had not enclosed their Mardyke ground, and the club accrued a debt of £91, 16s, 1d in building a pavilion in this 1875 season. This meant there was no professional for the 1876 season. By 1877 the club was still in debt, and the only way to clear this debt was from subscriptions from members, showing an inability to profit from cricket commercially.<sup>1109</sup>

Irrespective of seating provision, there was sustained and notable interest in other sports in comparison to cricket. About 2,000 attended the small and localised athletic events in Nenagh and Sion Mills by the late 1870s.<sup>1110</sup> Yet it was in Dublin at the Trinity College races that still led the field, an estimated 20,000 attending the 1875 instalment, and whatever the difficulties with estimates, what was certain was that 5,000 more tickets were sold compared to the previous year.<sup>1111</sup> The premier sporting day of the 1870s in Ireland came at this very event in 1877, when the spectators were said to number between 37,000 – 40,000 on the first day,<sup>1112</sup> the largest ever event in College Park history. It was said to have become a magnet not just for Dublin and female society, who were now also taking a far greater interest in athletics,<sup>1113</sup> but nationally, with people returning to Dublin to attend these races, the

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<sup>1107</sup> *The Irish Times*, 25 May 1874.

<sup>1108</sup> *The Irish Times*, 24 May 1875.

<sup>1109</sup> D. O’Sullivan, *Sport in Cork: a history* (The History Press Ireland, Dublin, 2010), pp.135-136.

<sup>1110</sup> The Nenagh CC athletic sports exceeded 2,000 in July 1877 (*Nenagh Guardian*, 11 July 1877) and between 2,000 – 3,000 spectators attended the Sion Mills athletic sports in May 1876 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 26 May 1876).

<sup>1111</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 9 June 1875. *The Irish Times* actually placed their estimate at 24,000 for the day’s attendance on 8 June 1875, saying that crowds entered the College Park for three hours from various entrances, and that at the day’s conclusion, it was impossible to make a passage through to an exit for one hour (*The Irish Times*, 9 June 1875).

<sup>1112</sup> *The Irish Times*, 16 June 1877.

<sup>1113</sup> The *Freeman’s Journal* reported of the Dublin University Races in 1874 that ‘Ladies, having got to make knowing books at races, and to discuss learnedly points of cricket, are now fast acquiring a technical insight into the conditions and contentions of the gymnasium’ (*Freeman’s Journal*, 11 June 1874).

second day seeing a reduced 25,000 attend.<sup>1114</sup> There were significant athletic events also taking place in Cork too in this period.<sup>1115</sup>

Whilst athletics was leading the field in terms of spectatorship numbers, rowing, yachting and rugby were in close pursuit. Rowing and yachting were spreading nationally, with teams and events in rural as well as urban areas and in all four provinces of Ireland, but particularly in the south, south west, eastern seaboard, Dublin and north of Ireland;<sup>1116</sup> the Tramore regatta in August 1876 saw over 3,000 travel from Waterford by train alone.<sup>1117</sup> Rugby was gaining more reporting inches in newspapers,<sup>1118</sup> with the game spreading into its historical heartlands of Limerick and Cork by 1876<sup>1119</sup> as well as infiltrating the Dublin schools circuit,<sup>1120</sup> which were both to be bedrocks of the game and still are to this day. The superb administration and leadership of the Irish Football Union was already beginning to bear fruit within only a few years of its inception, with Leinster and Munster playing an inter-provincial match on the Mardyke cricket ground in December 1878 in a match witnessed by over 5,000 people. 3,000 attended the Dublin University versus Cork match in Cork in this month too.<sup>1121</sup> Horse racing's attractions cannot be forgotten, the *Belfast News-Letter* noting that 'Popular though athletic displays have now become with all classes, there is yet a large proportion to whom equine competitions are more attractive.'<sup>1122</sup> Fergus D'Arcy's research on horse racing in Ireland shows how this sport was to accelerate away from cricket in the 1870s in terms of financial value:

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<sup>1114</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 18 June 1877.

<sup>1115</sup> See *The Irish Times*, 8 September 1877.

<sup>1116</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 26 July 1876 and *Freeman's Journal*, 12 August 1876.

<sup>1117</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 24 August 1876.

<sup>1118</sup> The growth of rugby can be seen in reporting in the *Belfast News-Letter* of 8 December 1874, where it is extensive and detailed – gone are the days of the odd article. 18 fixtures were noted for the mid-December to end of January period for Belfast area teams.

<sup>1119</sup> A Co Limerick football club was existent by 1876 (*Freeman's Journal*, 6 March 1876) and a Co Cork club by 1876 too, playing each other in a game at the Co Limerick CC ground in March 1876 (*Freeman's Journal*, 31 March 1876).

<sup>1120</sup> Rugby was creeping into leading cricket schools in Dublin like Kingstown and Rathmines by 1877 (*The Irish Times*, 30 January 1877).

<sup>1121</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 4 December 1878. The enthusiasm for rugby and its growing popularity with its play in Dublin and northern Ireland is well shown by looking at the extensive reporting in this newspaper entry.

<sup>1122</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 3 May 1875.

**Table five: details of Irish horse racing data between 1850 - 1880<sup>1123</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Meetings</b>	<b>Races</b>	<b>Horses</b>	<b>Winnings</b>
1850	57	273	521	£15,537
1855	58	319	528	£19,600
1860	58	337	556	£20,654
1865	63	346	717	£19,321
1870	62	397	845	£27,041
1875	60	381	772	£29,973
1880	78	435	902	£26,488

By 1878, no real threat had been posed to cricket from consistently hostile reports of the newspapers under investigation, and in particular there was surprisingly little written on traditional national pastimes like hurling. To emphasise the point, one article in the *Nenagh Guardian* in 1877 referred to hurling as ‘a sort of cricket’ with no sense of irony as the piece talked about life in Ireland 100 years previously where hurling matches were often used to win the hand of a lady in marriage.<sup>1124</sup> Yet the attractions of these to-be-revived Gaelic games was indirectly highlighted in a piece in the minority sport of lacrosse, where it was celebrated ‘As a game involving no heavy outlay for outfit, no expensive preparation or rolling of the ground; as a game which can be played in winter as well as summer...’<sup>1125</sup> That another two powerful, attractive and nationalistic pastimes in hurling and football would soon be reinstated only helped to undermine cricket further. Cricket’s retracting state even before the emergence of these games should be underlined and reiterated: at worst, these new Irish sports hammered the final nail in the coffin of cricket’s mass popularity, but their more likely impact was negligible due to cricket’s strangled and increasingly marginalised nature by 1878 in the shadow of newer, better organised and more interesting sports. The problem was that cricket was popular but rootless and rudderless.

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<sup>1123</sup> D’Arcy, *Horses, Lords and Racing Men*, p.344.

<sup>1124</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 31 October 1877.

<sup>1125</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 11 May 1876.

### 3.4: A divergence of patronage and interest from cricket to newer sports

Underpinning these emergent sports was the patronage of leading men, who were seemingly now diverting their funds and enthusiasm away from cricket and to these new forms of recreation, particularly by the late 1870s. This increasing support for other sports was a mix of intrigue, greater excitement offered by these new sports as well as personal preference in a decade of increasing choice. For athletics to have become ‘all the rage’ by 1877,<sup>1126</sup> the overwhelming endorsement would have come from those middling sort of Ireland who had been such fervent leaders of cricket in earlier years. Athletics and other such sports were receiving patronage from the elite of society too: Lord Waveney and the Mayor of Belfast, T.G. Lindsay, took a real interest in the 1875 Ulster CC athletic sports,<sup>1127</sup> Waveney having donated a ‘magnificent oxydized silver gilt cup’ to the value of £15 for competition in a one mile race open to amateur gentlemen, the implication being the attendance of professionals at these races.<sup>1128</sup> Similarly, the Borris cricket club’s athletic sports in 1875 had already achieved noted success, ‘managed as they are by an influential local committee composed of the gentry of the district’ leading to a ‘large, respectable and orderly’ attendance in the thousands at the event held at a club whose president, Arthur Kavanagh, was an MP.<sup>1129</sup> Businesses were also funding the uptake of other sports, such as the directors of the Belfast and County Down Railway Company providing the largest donation of the £300 contributed to the building of the Belmont Bowling and Lawn Tennis greens in eastern Belfast in 1877. Mr James Alexander Henderson, JP, in opening the greens, commended bowling as the highest sport, providing exercise without the ‘violent exertion or straining which characterizes other games, such as cricket.’<sup>1130</sup>

The patronage and uptake of the competing sports to cricket did not necessarily enjoy a linear progression, much in the same way that cricket’s decline was not vertical. Athletics was afflicted by poor weather much like cricket,<sup>1131</sup> and its

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<sup>1126</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 21 May 1877.

<sup>1127</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 13 April 1876.

<sup>1128</sup> This cup was also to be displayed at Mr Gibson’s in Donegall Place in Belfast ahead of the competition, which had attracted 130 competitors (*Belfast News-Letter*, 24 March 1875).

<sup>1129</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 9 July 1875.

<sup>1130</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 20 June 1877.

<sup>1131</sup> Rain played havoc with the 1875 ICAC champion races, for example (*The Irish Times*, 24 May 1875).

supporters were questioned in terms of number<sup>1132</sup> with attendance at some athletic events being poor.<sup>1133</sup> Disappointing attendance at other notable and leading sports events were also recorded: the *Belfast News-Letter* claimed that the inaugural rugby international in Dublin generated hardly any interest outside of the metropolis, and even within the city the game only saw ‘several hundred’ attend.<sup>1134</sup> It would clearly be wrong to assume that just because new sports were emerging that cricket would inevitably wither. However, the cumulative effect of the general rise of a whole host of new sporting chance and opportunity was bound to have an impact on any sport, let alone a sport with such weak roots as one like cricket in Ireland by the mid-1870s.

#### 4. The decline of cricket due to a fall in popularity due to weak administrative structures, a failure to achieve nationalistic victories, declining business and military interest and bad fortune

##### *4.1: Cricket’s declining popularity by 1878*

By the mid-to-late 1870s cricket was experiencing a decline in popularity in numbers of teams playing and interest in terms of the number and tone of reporting in newspapers. The major advertising of games in the early and mid-1860s had gone, and the adverts that do feature cricket generally are those of athletics events taking place on cricket grounds. In the few examples where stands were being built on club grounds, the main incentive was to provide for athletics events.<sup>1135</sup> Although roughly 2,000 attended the first day of the All England Eleven versus Dublin University eighteen (past and present) match in May 1877,<sup>1136</sup> *The Irish Times* declared ‘the attendance was but small,’<sup>1137</sup> a condemnatory figure for the largest-attended cricket match in this period and one that pales when compared to the emergence of athletics

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<sup>1132</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 September 1875.

<sup>1133</sup> The rise of athletics was not an inevitable march. The Co Limerick CC athletic sports saw an unusually small attendance in 1876 (*The Irish Times*, 15 September 1876) and the Ulster CC athletic sports’ first day in 1877 was described as ‘disappointing’ with a lack of real competition in any of the races (*Belfast News-Letter*, 2 April 1877).

<sup>1134</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 14 December 1875.

<sup>1135</sup> The Ulster CC built a grandstand over the winter of 1875-6, capable of seating over 700, in part built for the Easter athletic sports which also saw a new quarter mile running path built too (*Belfast News-Letter*, 18 March 1876).

<sup>1136</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 25 May 1877. Around 3,000 attended on the second day (*Freeman’s Journal*, 26 May 1877).

<sup>1137</sup> *The Irish Times*, 25 May 1877.

and rugby attendances. Whilst some of the old eulogies about cricket appeared in the early 1870s,<sup>1138</sup> even by these years there seemed to be a dawning realisation of the coming peril for Irish cricket,<sup>1139</sup> a decline that was to be seen across the 1870s in terms of teams playing. In Dublin it was noted that there was a ‘languid, lazy sort of interest’ in the affairs of a leading club like Phoenix in the summer<sup>1140</sup> whilst in the west of Ireland there was sadness that cricket was not more popular in Tuam’s vicinity, being stated that the national pastime of football was now eclipsing cricket, with an optimistic 13,000 supposed to have attended an Irish international rugby match in April 1877 with £364 taken on the gate. Cricket ‘never created such a furore’ even at its peak, bemoaned the editor, consoling himself in the fact that he had no doubt cricket was the ‘grander and more scientific game.’<sup>1141</sup>

The number of cricket clubs in Ireland peaked in this period of investigation from 1848 – 1878 in 1874, from where the numbers of teams playing in any given year began to decline, and by 1878 the number of teams playing had receded to the same number as in 1867. This correlates closely with Pat Bracken’s work on cricket in Tipperary, where 1876 saw the highest amount of team activity and with 1877 seeing the beginning of a downward trend.<sup>1142</sup> The local nature of cricket meant that in County Kilkenny the peak of cricket teams actually came with 50 in 1896.<sup>1143</sup> In Westmeath this was 1899 with a peak of 39 teams playing, and matches being highest in 1900.<sup>1144</sup> Likewise, Pat Bell has called the 1890s the golden age of cricket in Co Kildare.<sup>1145</sup> Thus there is regional variation in peaks and declines of the game which would be fruitful areas of research for future investigation.

What is strange is that newspaper reporting on the game continued to rise throughout the 1870s to a peak in 1877, showing that reporting had not suffered in this period. Yet a gap had emerged between the number of clubs playing and the continuing rise of reporting, and by 1878 a nosedive in reporting began to reflect the decline in teams playing (see diagram thirteen).

<sup>1138</sup> For example, see the *Freeman’s Journal* of 18 August 1874.

<sup>1139</sup> For example, it was said about the Civil Service cricket club in 1873 that: ‘Other institutions launched under the auspices of the Civil Service have been successful, and prospered to the full. On the contrary, the Civil Service Cricket Club, after the first year of its existence, commenced to languish, and year after year since then its downward course has continued, until now it is in extremis’ (*Freeman’s Journal*, 12 April 1873).

<sup>1140</sup> *The Irish Times*, 19 April 1876.

<sup>1141</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 30 April 1877.

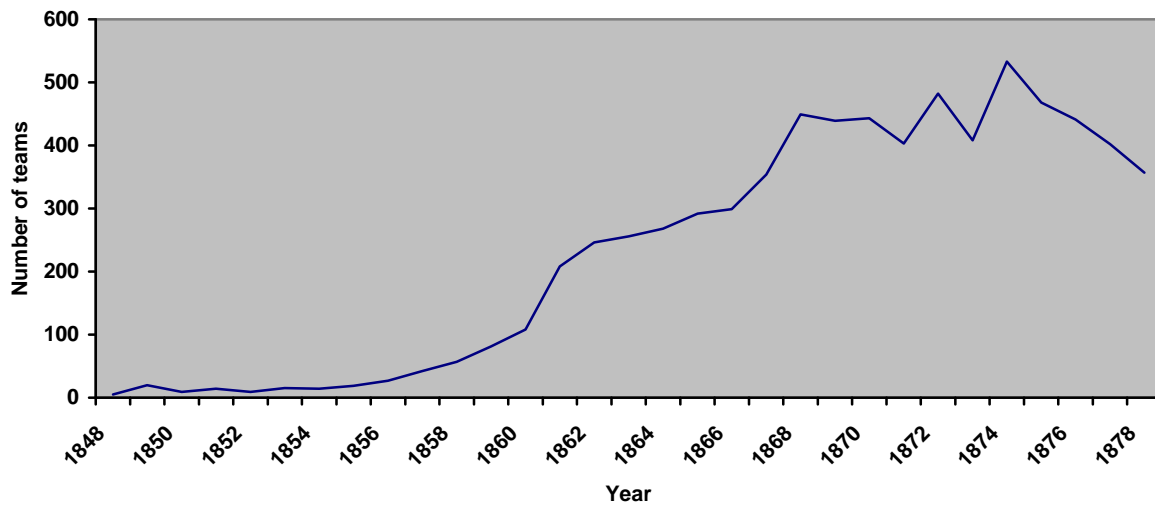
<sup>1142</sup> Bracken, *Foreign and Fantastic Field Sports*, p.68 and p.74.

<sup>1143</sup> O’Dwyer, *The History of Cricket in County Kilkenny*, p.13.

<sup>1144</sup> Hunt, *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath*, p.119.

<sup>1145</sup> Bell, *Long shies and slow twisters: 150 years of cricket in Kildare*, p.1.

Diagram thirteen: the number of cricket teams between 1848 - 1878



Although the emergent sports were severely undermining cricket, there were still elements that were completely within the control of Irish cricketers that had not been addressed. It seems as though players themselves were simply losing energy and interest for the game, with the associated knock-on this would obviously have on the whole buzz around cricket. As early as 1873, *The Irish Times* felt compelled to castigate the increasing habit of players simply not turning up for games, something they felt that they were having to write increasingly more on,<sup>1146</sup> and in another article that on the one hand had claimed that cricket was ‘one of our best games’ had simultaneously pointed to the lurking problem of too much ‘mere lounging.’<sup>1147</sup>

Yet more serious concerns were to be raised. By the mid-1870s, *The Irish Times* noted that some had suggested that cricket in Dublin did not maintain its past popularity, an assertion that it rejected.<sup>1148</sup> But anecdotal evidence for this can be seen in the limited advertising placed in the lead-up to the United South of England versus twenty-two of Leinster game in July 1874 about which this point was made. A singular row of seats surrounded the ground for this game as well as a marquee – but this was hardly the stuff of years gone by and is embarrassing provision for spectators

<sup>1146</sup> This tirade was sparked by news from the Leinster versus Civil Service game in autumn 1873 that saw a number of people withdraw, angering *The Irish Times*. They stressed the increasing habit of people not fulfilling their obligations and the impact this had on both one’s word and the team. Four out of twelve Civil Service players did not turn up for this match (*The Irish Times*, 7 October 1873). A similar scenario was reported in the Phoenix versus Curragh Camp match in July 1874 (*The Irish Times*, 27 July 1874), as well as in 1873 itself too with only six Civil Service players turning up to play Ballyna Amateur in autumn 1873 (*The Irish Times*, 2 September 1873).

<sup>1147</sup> *The Irish Times*, 3 March 1873.

<sup>1148</sup> *The Irish Times*, 17 July 1874.

at such a high-profile match, being nothing compared to the leading events at other sports at this time.<sup>1149</sup> Other leading matches in the 1870s in Ireland show the increasing disinterest or general malaise in the game.

Clubs like the North of Ireland took the backward step of playing against-odds matches against a visiting team like IZ,<sup>1150</sup> a retrospective step that no doubt angered the papers that had argued so forcefully against such practice at a time of rising nationalism in sport. Even when quasi-nationalistic victories were achieved, like in the Gentlemen of Ireland's victory over IZ in August 1877, there was no real excitement or sense of triumph for the victory; a whimper, opposed to nationalist rejoicing, was the muted response.<sup>1151</sup> That such matches, even in their limited state, were only really now taking place in Dublin and Belfast shows an increasing urbanisation of the game; Cork and Galway were now largely forgotten for large spectacle matches, never mind the smaller localities.<sup>1152</sup> Whilst in England, a North and South match in September of 1878 raised £256 at the Oval,<sup>1153</sup> an Irish attempt to enliven what had become a dreary and uninspiring scene saw a United South of Ireland team formed comprising players from Tipperary, Limerick and Cork, playing in Dublin against Dublin University<sup>1154</sup> and Phoenix.<sup>1155</sup> Various attempts were made in the late 1870s for Gentlemen of the South and North games too. But Irish cricketers were taking the initiative ten years too late.

#### *4.2: A failure of administration*

The structural problems within the game went further and deeper than simply interest fatigue. Without a national representative body, a leading ground, victorious sporting nationalism in duel with the mainland or other leading foreign teams or an inspiring hero around whom to build idolisation and national following, the game was lingering in the late 1870s. Denuded of national, provincial or county competition in any form, cricket was retracting in the countryside, where it had made promising inroads in the

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<sup>1149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1150</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 18 August 1877.

<sup>1151</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 23 August 1877.

<sup>1152</sup> By 1877, the only real movement for major matches was between Belfast and Dublin. This can be seen in the IZ tour of 1877 which took in four games – two each in Dublin and Belfast (*Freeman's Journal*, 28 July 1877).

<sup>1153</sup> *The Irish Times*, 26 September 1878.

<sup>1154</sup> *The Irish Times*, 18 June 1878.

<sup>1155</sup> *The Irish Times*, 20 June 1878.



1860s and early 1870s. An 1875 letter to the *Freeman's Journal* from 'a lover of cricket' stated that although a lot had been done to advance cricket in Ireland, 'much still remains to be done.' He bemoaned the fact that most of the best players in Ireland were from urban areas:

Now this is not as it should be. Country cricket is not fostered enough in Ireland. There are but three or four provincial clubs of any note, and even the best of them would, I think, be easily defeated by a second-rate metropolitan C.C., such as the Pembroke or the Malahide. Country gentlemen should unite and form clubs in their county. These clubs should not be exclusively composed of gentlemen. The best men, whether gentlemen or otherwise, should be found and got to play in the matches, and also to attend at the practice ground. I would also wish to call attention to the fact that school cricket is not attended to sufficiently.'<sup>1156</sup>

The day after this letter in the *Freeman's Journal* on 1 April 1875, these ideas were seconded by another 'Old Cricketer' also supporting the idea of great matches between the two leading Jesuit schools in Ireland of Blackrock College and Clongowes Wood,<sup>1157</sup> another writer suggesting that these matches could be hosted annually as major matches at Phoenix CC.<sup>1158</sup> That Irish schools neither had a cup competition like the Irish Football Union was to initiate nor the highlight match of an Eton – Harrow type event as in England was to be the game's undoing in schools.

Within the clubs and local communities were chronic difficulties. In its opening comment to the 1875 season, the *Freeman's Journal*, after noting cricket's place as originally a British recreation, talked of how the game soon shed its image as an aristocratic game and overtook other games of a more violent nature:

We think, however, that very little has been done which might have been done to introduce cricket into Ireland. In England local clubs are not mere chance associations, held together by the casual ties of an occasional afternoon's amusement, with a set match or two in prospect. Across the Channel the lord of the manor, the squire, the rector or some "gentleman farmer," acts as nucleus, patron, and captain of the club. His tenants, his parishioners, his workmen form its corps, and his neighbours on every side of him, like himself, encouragers and enthusiasts of the game, offer foemen worthy of his steel. There is very little of this among us, but nevertheless cricket, as we have said, is making its way swiftly and surely in this country. Indeed, there are several

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<sup>1156</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 1 April 1875.

<sup>1157</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 2 April 1875.

<sup>1158</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 5 April 1875.

districts in which it has wholly taken the place once held by the manly but perilous sport of hurling...<sup>1159</sup>

This would suggest that although leaders of society had funded clubs with money, grounds and rhetorical support, that (beyond a few notable cases) there had been little day-to-day management and leadership of local teams – the affairs had indeed been ‘casual ties.’ This would explain how and why cricket was to plummet during the land wars, when this informal offer of grounds or an interested gaze over a local team was withdrawn.

The calls were made to rectify Irish cricket’s weakened situation, yet again impotency and a stand-by attitude by players meant that the calls fell on deaf ears. The situation was not irrevocable, and that an Irish cricket union was not formed was fundamentally and categorically the most important reason as to why cricket eventually was to retract. A cricketer lent his opinions for furthering cricket in a letter to the *Belfast News-Letter* in February 1877 to this effect, by saying that clubs needed to take on their own grounds and apparatus to professionalise the game like in England with professional coaching if Ireland was ever to match England on the field. He wanted more cricket clubs, and annual fixtures like Belfast versus Dublin to encourage competition. He felt the game in Belfast, nay even Ireland, needed to be ‘fed with the enthusiasm which we ever discover in strong cricketing localities.’<sup>1160</sup> Similarly, in another letter in this month, a writer commented that club games in Ireland excited no interest beyond the club members themselves, and that, in imitation of the IFU, inter-provincial cricket matches and games against Scotland should be initiated to further interest.<sup>1161</sup> That it was the newspapers who were leading this role of administrators of the game<sup>1162</sup> depicts a situation that could not and would not endure.

Influenced by this general malaise and languid approach to the sport from players, the leading matches of this time in Ireland featuring overseas teams overall no longer recorded the excited feel of the leading games of earlier years; there is a growing tone to the newspaper reports that cricket was an established game, but was

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<sup>1159</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 26 April 1875.

<sup>1160</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 22 February 1877.

<sup>1161</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 24 February 1877.

<sup>1162</sup> In another effort to further the game, the *Freeman’s Journal* in 1876 had published a list of club secretaries’ details to allow greater interaction between clubs (*Freeman’s Journal*, 20 and 21 April 1876).

beginning to run its course. Mainland club sides continued to visit, but with less regularity by the mid-to-late 1870s, and in places these teams were of a comedic nature. A group of London clown cricketers came to Dublin to play the Gentlemen of Ireland in August 1874,<sup>1163</sup> playing cricket by day and performing shows by night.<sup>1164</sup> Such a venture offered novelty, but was degrading to the game, especially seeing as the match was against the Gentlemen of Ireland. The first day's attendance of this game was low, as many cricketers objected to their game being 'burlesqued', expecting nothing more than 'buffoonery' and on the second day of play, two of the clowns appeared at the wicket with what seemed to be extra large bats, something that the children particularly appreciated.<sup>1165</sup> This match was arranged by John Lawrence, and the fact that he lost £100 on it was a further indication that the profit in cricket was decreasing.<sup>1166</sup>

The *Freeman's Journal* believed that this 1874 match should not be regarded from a cricketer's point of view.<sup>1167</sup> Yet again in 1877 a similar team of visiting clowns came to Ireland to play one of the North of Ireland's leading games this season.<sup>1168</sup> Although clown teams such as these were active in England at the time and as such were not a condemnatory opposition in their own right, the centrality and highlight this game brought to these seasons shows the desperate nature that was befalling not just these teams but the game in Ireland more widely.

There were of course other leading matches of note, but the pizzazz and verve had dissipated; the great games in the College Park were now a memory, leading matches mainly taking place on club grounds with the most basic of spectatorship provisions. These teams, like the leading All England Eleven and United South of England, were still brought over either through club or businessmen's expense such as John Lawrence, but it was increasingly clear that such ventures were not profitable. Elsewhere, there was some form of administrative coordination through team

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<sup>1163</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 13 August 1874.

<sup>1164</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 17 August 1874.

<sup>1165</sup> *The Irish Times*, 19 August 1874.

<sup>1166</sup> G. Siggins and M. Clerkin, *Lansdowne Road: the stadium, the matches, the greatest days* (The O'Brien Press, Dublin, 2010), p.47.

<sup>1167</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 19 August 1874.

<sup>1168</sup> The *Belfast News-Letter* tried to put a positive spin on this event – clown matches were also played in England at this time. But one can't help but feel that in England they were a supplement to the main event, whereas in Ireland they almost *were* the main event by 1877. The clowns performed in the evening in Belfast (*Belfast News-Letter*, 7 July 1877). This was probably the most notable game in the north this season yet even for this the *Belfast News-Letter* was disappointed with the attendance (*Belfast News-Letter*, 10 July 1877).

selection,<sup>1169</sup> but there was no official and recognised selection process<sup>1170</sup> to put the leading Irish players on the field under the title of ‘Ireland’ as there were in team in events like rugby and shooting or in individual events like athletics where the recognised national champion was accredited by the ICAC. Indeed, such a status was lampooned by a writer to the *Freeman’s Journal* in August 1876, when he noted that all but one of those selected for the Gentlemen of Ireland team to play IZ came from just two Dublin clubs.<sup>1171</sup> Even when leading matches were arranged, such as the 1873 match between the All England Eleven and twenty-two of Dublin University where ‘thousands’ attended,<sup>1172</sup> interest in the games was weakening. Even though Dublin University won this match against elite British talent, the rhetoric was hardly celebratory; indeed, the attendance on the third day (when victory was in sight for the Irish) was significantly diminished by the reopening of the Dublin Exhibition Palace and Loan Museum.<sup>1173</sup> There was a general drift away from cricket from spectators and players, a common complaint being that the players of the 1870s were the same as the 1860s, with young Irish men seemingly favouring and finding reward in other sporting or cultural pursuits.

#### 4.3: A failure as a torch of nationalism

The continued playing of against-odds matches did much to divert interest from cricket: why, or indeed how, could one be proud of Irish cricketers when they continued to play with numerical superiority against any visitors of note? The *Freeman’s Journal* stated that it had no grumble with losses against more seasoned English teams;<sup>1174</sup> against-odds matches were acceptable as long as there was a sense of progression over time leading to full equality, an idea that did not evolve over the 1870s, and if anything regressed. This issue was increasingly problematic in a time of rising national consciousness and the calling for Home Rule from the 1870s onwards,

<sup>1169</sup> For the game against eighteen of America, the Hon. Secs. of Phoenix, University and Leinster formed a committee to select the Irish team (*The Irish Times*, 15 August 1874).

<sup>1170</sup> Ireland lost the eighteen of America match in August 1874, leading *The Irish Times* to complain that this was not a genuine Irish team as only five or six would merit selection for an All Ireland team (*The Irish Times*, 26 August 1874).

<sup>1171</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 26 August 1876.

<sup>1172</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 13 May 1873.

<sup>1173</sup> *The Irish Times*, 15 May 1873.

<sup>1174</sup> In a piece on the opening of the Dublin University eighteen versus the United South of England in May 1876, the *Freeman’s Journal* accepted defeats would be inevitable, but part of a learning curve – ‘...that lessons will be learned, experience gained, and improvement in the science of the game generally attained.’ *Freeman’s Journal*, 16 May 1876.

a wave that would only swell further in the 1880s. The 1873 victory of Dublin University against the All England Eleven was described by *The Irish Times* as a 'hollow victory,' calling on the Dublin students to match Cambridge's habit of playing eighteen men at most as a 'point of honour' against such opposition.<sup>1175</sup> The *Freeman's Journal* was even more strident about this game, stating:

...Irish Cricketers should not rest satisfied until they have met English Cricketers on perfectly equal terms, and doggedly persevere in this resolve until they are able to wrest victory after victory from them. They must learn to rely upon their own exertions. No auxiliary, such as English bowlers, should be allowed.<sup>1176</sup>

The national characteristics and differences of each team were noted by this newspaper, citing the Irish players for their 'buoyancy and dash... quite Celtic in its exuberance; and on the other hand a cool, steady, stubborn, businesslike air about the Eleven, entirely characteristic of the countrymen of the stormers of the Redan.' Resentment was then expressed that, whatever the odds, the All England Eleven match would not be properly credited in England:

The All England Eleven beaten by a Trinity College Twenty-Two in one innings, and one hundred and seven runs to spare! Such an announcement will hardly be credited in England, where egotism reigns supreme, and where contempt for every Irish performance is the order of the day.<sup>1177</sup>

This embarrassment about against-odds matches was an open sore for Irish cricketing pride throughout the decade and helps explain why spectators began to desert the game<sup>1178</sup> when manliness and nationalism were available in other new sports. In a

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<sup>1175</sup> *The Irish Times*, 15 May 1873.

<sup>1176</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 15 May 1873.

<sup>1177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1178</sup> In 1874, the *Freeman's Journal* decried the against-odds match of eighteen of Dublin University versus the All England Eleven: 'We should like to see the day when the odds in numbers can be surrendered, and the two countries stand equally faced in amicable contest. It is a pity that such international matches cannot be popularised, for beyond question the friendly meeting and emulation of games like cricket would do more to bring about a desirable *entente cordiale* than heaven knows how much high-political tinkering' (*Freeman's Journal*, 30 May 1874). Calls were again made in the *Freeman's Journal* in 1875 for equality in international matches, wanting the matches against leading English teams 'fought out upon terms more honourable to us' (*Freeman's Journal*, 26 April 1875), but despite this, the United South of England match versus Dublin University game in 1875 was eighteen of Dublin University past and present (*The Irish Times*, 5 May 1875). The North of Ireland club played twenty-two versus the United South of England (*Belfast News-Letter*, 11 May 1875). It is notable that the *Freeman's Journal* was certainly the most interested paper under investigation in sporting equality and also stoking nationalistic rhetoric regarding cricket, beginning its report on the 1874 All England Eleven's match with Dublin University's eighteen first day of play in 1874 with 'The sportive and

particularly pointed attack mid-decade, the *Freeman's Journal*, following the losing draw for the twenty-two of Leinster club against the United South of England, decried:

It is not pleasant to our national self-respect that eleven Englishmen should be more than a match for twenty-two Irish in a game for which skill, strength, and agility are so eminently requisite, and, indeed, this superiority is somewhat difficult to account for. It may in some measure be attributed to the fact that cricket has not got the same hold on the nation in Ireland as in England. There are not here such crowded attendances on the field, nor is there such an eager interest displayed in the result of the match.<sup>1179</sup>

This exasperation continued throughout the decade, culminating in stinging criticism in 1877 from a former key and supportive newspaper. *The Irish Times* began in a restrained manner in a piece on 29 May 1877, citing a 'gratifying' win for the eighteen of Dublin University (past and present) against the All England Eleven, whilst still calling for play on more equal terms. Yet the language and tone of the piece soon turned to violent and angry rejection of cricket in Ireland, a cataclysmic turn of phrase considering the support that a newspaper like this had given the game both in terms of theoretical and administrative support. *The Irish Times* denounced Dublin University for playing the match as past and present, being almost as angry about this as against-odds matches, saying nobody cared about former players:

Cricket has made large progress in this country during the past decade, yet Irish cricketers are as much in want of self-reliance as they were a quarter of a century since, when the game was in its infancy at this side of the Channel, compared with what it now is... No interest is taken in a "Past" member – no matter how eminent he may be – whose general style, whether at the wickets, in the field, or handling the leather, has been witnessed *ad nauseam* for perhaps more than a quarter of a century. People will not pay their half-crowns to look at stale cricket... There is no reason whatever why the cricketers of Ireland should not meet their English brethren on more level terms than they have hitherto. Irishmen never funk anywhere but before a wicket or English bowling. We trust the University club will inaugurate a match between Irish gentlemen and English professionals, on a perfectly level basis. If the U.C.C. accomplish this, the College Park will be filled with a larger, more interested, and much more enthusiastic audience than any cricket match has drawn together in Ireland for very many years.

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spirited Saxon was to have proceeded with the business of his latest invasion yesterday...' before rain curtailed any play (*Freeman's Journal*, 29 May 1874).

<sup>1179</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 20 July 1874.

Even in club games by 1878, Irish teams were now playing against-odds matches against English teams, when twelve of IZ played seventeen of the Vice Regal team. Even though the ground was thrown open, 'There was a very scanty attendance of spectators on the ground.'<sup>1180</sup> And in another reference to odds, cricket had never really ever been associated with gambling, reports to this effect being no more than a handful of examples somewhat supporting the glorious boast in 1873 that there was 'no public betting in connexion with it.'<sup>1181</sup>

That the association between cricket and nationalism could not be established and entrenched was to be a major undoing of Irish cricket, as witnessed in Nenagh in the winter of 1878 when Mr J.P. O'Brien, a released military Fenian, was received in the town by a torchlight procession. The Nenagh CC brass band played some appropriate airs before Mr O'Brien was entertained to dinner by sympathisers at Synen's Hotel.<sup>1182</sup> Looking at the demise of cricket, one cannot help but wonder how much further cricket would have become established in Ireland if in more situations like this cricket had become a conduit for nationalism and Irishness as the association between Nenagh's band and Fenianism again shows cricket to be acceptable to nationalists.

Cricket, however, became a source of national embarrassment and shyness. Irish cricket at this time became increasingly inward looking (indeed, one could say within Ireland increasingly urbanised too), with hardly any touring teams leaving Irish shores, even though Irish rowers, shooters, athletes and rugby players were doing so. Canadian and American cricket teams were touring Britain and Ireland at this time,<sup>1183</sup> whilst the excitement and dynamitic lighting that Anglo-Australia cricket rivalry would provide from the 1870s needs little embellishment. Keith Sandiford has said it was a 'stimulus' to English cricket which meant the game flourished in a way that it otherwise would not have,<sup>1184</sup> a competition that mattered a great deal in Australia too as a vehicle for nationalism in the nineteenth century.<sup>1185</sup>

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<sup>1180</sup> *The Irish Times*, 13 August 1878.

<sup>1181</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 13 May 1873.

<sup>1182</sup> *The Nation*, 2 February 1878.

<sup>1183</sup> For example, a Canadian eleven played fifteen of the MCC in London in July 1873 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 22 July 1873), whilst John Lawrence arranged for eighteen baseball players to visit Ireland in 1874 and also for an eighteen of America to play eleven of Ireland in the same visit at the ICAC (*The Irish Times*, 12 August 1874).

<sup>1184</sup> Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p.62 and p.116.

<sup>1185</sup> R. Cashman, 'Symbols of Imperial Unity: Anglo-Australian Cricketers, 1877 – 1900' in J.A. Mangan (ed), *The Cultural Bond – Sport Empire, Society* (Frank Cass, London, 1992), p.129.

The 1878 summer, the final of this investigation, saw the powerful Australians led by their own national hero of Fred Spofforth – the demon bowler – on a captivating tour of England when they ‘demolished’ the best amateurs England could offer. If they could beat the best professional English talent, it was apocalyptically predicted that ‘the sun of our empire in the cricket field is set.’<sup>1186</sup> In taking ten MCC wickets for twenty runs on this tour, Chris Ryan has suggested Spofforth’s performance as ‘the most resounding day’s bowling in cricket’s history’<sup>1187</sup> in a victory that ‘supercharged Australian nationalism.’<sup>1188</sup> Malcolm Knox believes this was the most important sporting venture in Australian history.<sup>1189</sup> Had these Australian tourists extended their trip to Ireland, as they did to Scotland,<sup>1190</sup> perhaps cricket in Ireland might have gotten a second wind and a new taste for nationalistic struggle. Yet Irish newspapers were under no illusions about the strength and difficulty that such a match would pose,<sup>1191</sup> and the financial earnings of the Australians were estimated to have been the greatest ever.<sup>1192</sup> That Ireland would not have provided either enough financial inducement, competition on the field or general attraction to tour was indicative of the Irish game; in many ways, the last thing Irish cricket needed was a humiliating and crushing defeat by the dominant Australians. Poignantly, whilst in August 1878 Australian cricket fever was sweeping through England, one visiting team to Ireland playing the elite Irish clubs of Phoenix and Leinster was the High School of Edinburgh,<sup>1193</sup> hardly a box office draw. The year concluded in England with Lord Harris leading a team to Australia in the autumn of 1878, with the scheduling of the now-infamous Boxing Day cricketing events in Melbourne at the Melbourne cricket club,<sup>1194</sup> whilst Irish cricket slipped further into the abyss.

The opportunities were there, and the occasions came, but the sense of national antagonism that would define encounters between England and Australia were never realised in Ireland. In the early 1870s, there was still hope that cricket could become a vehicle for national pride and achievement, the *Freeman’s Journal*

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<sup>1186</sup> *The Irish Times*, 12 September 1878.

<sup>1187</sup> C. Ryan, ‘Five greatest Australian cricketers’ in C. Ryan (ed), *Australia: story of a cricket country* (Hardie Grant Books, Richmond Victoria, 2011), p.218.

<sup>1188</sup> M. Knox, *Never a gentleman’s game* (Hardie Grant Books, Richmond Victoria, 2013), p.29.

<sup>1189</sup> *Ibid.*, p.34.

<sup>1190</sup> *The Irish Times*, 16 September 1878.

<sup>1191</sup> *The Irish Times*, 6 June 1878 and *Freeman’s Journal*, 16 September 1878.

<sup>1192</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 16 September 1878.

<sup>1193</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 31 July 1878.

<sup>1194</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 18 October 1878.



hoping ‘at no distant day, to turn this steady tide of victory. Why should the English be able to conquer the world in cricket, as well as in everything else, as John Bull was so fond of boasting till Mr Gladstone bestrode the Arbitration hobby?’ before going on to insist that cricket would soon be a national game in Ireland in the way it was in England.<sup>1195</sup> Yet this great nationalistic victory never came. In 1874 the Gentlemen of Ireland were defeated by a visiting eighteen of America. The loss was affected by the Irish wicketkeeper only arriving late in the second day, having gone off to play in another match.<sup>1196</sup> Although there was nationalistic potential with regards the United South of England visit to play eighteen of Dublin University in 1875 – the English team being referred to as ‘The invading Saxon’<sup>1197</sup> – the fact that the game saw a ‘considerable amount of money staked’ on the English team was cited as a ‘patriotic sense of humiliation’<sup>1198</sup> in a match the visitors won.<sup>1199</sup> This was a rare example of betting being reported. In 1876 in a matter of days, IZ defeated the Gentlemen of Ireland,<sup>1200</sup> the Vice Regal team were beaten by the MCC,<sup>1201</sup> and the IZ versus Phoenix match ended in a draw;<sup>1202</sup> out of these three ‘national’ games, none were victories for Ireland – indeed, two were losses. Subsequently, the Vice Regal team played Leinster at the end of August and early September 1876, and at least this way one Irish team was guaranteed victory.<sup>1203</sup> 1877 saw the Dublin University team gain a nationalistic victory of sorts against the All England Eleven as already mentioned, but one gets the feeling that this victory had come too late: the emphasis and steam was running out of Irish cricket, seen in dire attendances in other leading matches. Following the 1876 losses, the IZ versus Gentlemen of Ireland match in 1877 saw ‘the majority of spectators’ attending a horse show, with the game not attracting the numbers it supposedly deserved in inclement weather.<sup>1204</sup> The Gentlemen won and the victory was celebrated, but it was clear that Irish spectators were finding more exciting, enticing and stirring events to which to devote their time. The great game of the 1878 season, Dublin University versus the United South of England was ruined by

<sup>1195</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 12 May 1873.

<sup>1196</sup> *The Irish Times*, 26 August 1874.

<sup>1197</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 14 May 1875.

<sup>1198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1199</sup> *The Irish Times*, 17 May 1875.

<sup>1200</sup> IZ defeated the Gentlemen of Ireland in Ireland in 1876 (*Freeman’s Journal*, 25 August 1876), not exactly being a great nationalistic struggle either. *The Irish Times* attacked the team selection for the Gentlemen, saying they were all Dublin cricketers (*The Irish Times*, 25 August 1876).

<sup>1201</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 28 August 1876.

<sup>1202</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 30 August 1876.

<sup>1203</sup> *The Irish Times*, 31 August 1876.

<sup>1204</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 25 August 1877.

rain, making running on the wicket next to impossible by the third day.<sup>1205</sup> Even when the Australians did tour Ireland in 1880 the depressed state of the game was shown in that only 5,000 spectators attended the match in the College Park.<sup>1206</sup>

That the association between cricket and nationalism could not be established and entrenched was to be a major undoing of Irish cricket. One wonders what the game might have achieved and how far it might have endured if anti-English hatred, sectarianism - which is found only in the rarest of cases<sup>1207</sup> - or cross-class rivalry had grown and taken root to push the game on to long-lasting popularity as it did in other colonies. But this was the key problem: the game was neither fully Irish nor English, either to be adopted as a localised and fully nationalised Irish pursuit, or an alien, clearly-identifiable baton with which to bash the horrid Englishman at his own game that he was trying to enforce on the people of Ireland. That teams such as Home Rule and Young Ireland were playing should again reinforce the idea that playing cricket and Irish nationalism were compatible at this time, and whilst these examples show a very light dash of political thought in cricket, the game remained proudly un-political in play. O'Callaghan's work has shown that, in similarity to cricket, by the late 1880s there was little room or evidence of political sentiment in rugby either.<sup>1208</sup> Cricket was neither a den of religious rivalry, as cricket became in India, nor was it a bastion of class or indeed race as the game was in the West Indies. Cricket was none of these – it was a bland, generic pastime by the late 1870s in a decade of increasing nationalistic sporting provision from rugby, athletics and other minor sports. It was just too pleasant for its own good.

#### *4.4: The decline of business and military support*

Whether this collapse was caused from the players above or the failings of structures and support below that should have been underpinning the game, it is clear that the pillars of the game were now crumbling. The single most important individual to associate himself with cricket in Ireland, John Lawrence, was withdrawing his support for the game, not for want of trying, but due to diverging business interests. He had

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<sup>1205</sup> *The Irish Times*, 27 May 1878.

<sup>1206</sup> Milne, Perry and Halliday, *A history of Dublin University CC*, p.35.

<sup>1207</sup> A Catholic applicant was apparently rejected admission by blackballing to the Phoenix club in Dublin in 1877 due to his religion, one writer posted in a gossip section of *The Irish Times* (*The Irish Times*, 6 July 1877).

<sup>1208</sup> O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, p.146.

established and endowed the *Handbook of Cricket*, a publication that was becoming increasingly financially precarious across the 1870s, suffering ‘a considerable pecuniary loss’ as early as the 1874 edition,<sup>1209</sup> and the 1878 edition was the penultimate publication of this quasi-administrative body. Lawrence was still busy supporting the game in the 1870s, hosting meetings at his premises,<sup>1210</sup> putting on his fireworks displays at cricket clubs<sup>1211</sup> as well as being a general ticket seller for matches of note. He was also still active as a promoter and patron of cricketing events, arranging for eighteen baseball players to visit Ireland in 1874 and also an eighteen of America to play eleven of Ireland in the same visit at the Irish Champion Athletic Club,<sup>1212</sup> a venture he lost over £100 on due to ‘wretched attendance’ – a jibe aimed at cricketing supporters.<sup>1213</sup> Coupled with the £100 Lawrence lost on the Gentlemen of Ireland match against the clowns in August 1874 as already shown, meant that he had lost over £200 trying to promote cricket in one month of this year. This was at a time when, in 1871, there were only 2,235 earning over £200 a year in Ireland.<sup>1214</sup> It was little wonder therefore that Lawrence was diversifying, moving away from his perceived earlier passion for cricket and a sign of the diminishing financial returns available. He can be found increasingly selling tickets for other sporting events,<sup>1215</sup> availing his committee rooms for other sporting organisations<sup>1216</sup> and even morphing titles to move with the financial breeze of the year, describing himself as a cricket and tennis outfitter in adverts in 1876<sup>1217</sup> but by 1878 had become a cricket and football outfitter.<sup>1218</sup>

It would be romantic, almost poetic, to think that John Lawrence took up the cause of cricket for aesthetic or moralistic reasons in the early-to-mid 1860s, yet the true reason must be mercenary. Lawrence, like many other businesses in the 1860s and early 1870s, saw a chance to exploit and profit from cricket’s popularity. With the

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<sup>1209</sup> *Handbook 1874-5*, p.12.

<sup>1210</sup> For examples see Leinster (*The Irish Times*, 7 March 1873) and Malahide (*Freeman’s Journal*, 13 October 1874).

<sup>1211</sup> Lawrence was hosting fireworks at Leinster cricket club in June 1873 for example (*Freeman’s Journal*, 10 June 1873).

<sup>1212</sup> *The Irish Times*, 12 August 1874.

<sup>1213</sup> *Handbook 1874-5*, p.7.

<sup>1214</sup> G. Best, *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851 – 75* (Fontana, London, 1979), p.103.

<sup>1215</sup> Lawrence was a ticket seller for the Dublin Amateur Athletic Club sports in August 1873 (*The Irish Times*, 11 August 1873) and for the croquet championships in 1874 as examples (*Freeman’s Journal*, 14 August 1874).

<sup>1216</sup> Such as the committee meetings of the ICAC (*Freeman’s Journal*, 16 June 1874) and Amateur Bicycle Club (*Freeman’s Journal*, 29 April 1875).

<sup>1217</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 22 April 1876.

<sup>1218</sup> *The Irish Times*, 7 October 1878.

seeping disinterest that came to permeate the game in the mid-to-late 1870s, these same businesses then drifted away. Their increasing indifference is testament to the parlous and insipid state that cricket found itself by the late 1870s, when its last great leader was to abandon the game altogether. That cricket was so dependant on one man again crystallises the complete lack of administrative structure that was so clearly needed to embed the game in the country in the long term. The importance of individual leadership was crucial in Welsh cricket as Andrew Hignell has shown<sup>1219</sup> and thus this was not a unique problem. Yet once John Lawrence stepped away from his informal leadership, there was nobody else to assume the mantle, and cricket had therefore lost the last of the holy trinity that had popularised the game. Whilst on the mainland in the last third of the century, leagues and associations ‘sprang up like mushrooms everywhere’<sup>1220</sup> in Ireland the game remained a series of friendlies.

That other businesses followed Lawrence’s lead compounded the commercial retreat from cricket, and in particular train companies’ desertion helps showcase the new and alternative revenue streams that such companies were chasing. Railways had always been important to cricketers in transporting players and spectators to and from games, and train travel was becoming increasingly speedy and comparable with today’s standards in these years.<sup>1221</sup> Cricket was now no longer a focus for train companies; no examples have been found in the years 1873 – 1878 where train companies sought to dovetail or exploit cricket matches, although there is one example of trams utilising cricket for exploitation.<sup>1222</sup> Yet examples of transport provision can be found for rugby,<sup>1223</sup> bowling and lawn tennis,<sup>1224</sup> athletics<sup>1225</sup> and numerous cases for yachting or rowing.<sup>1226</sup> The exploitation was greatest in horse

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<sup>1219</sup> Hignell, ‘Participants and providers’: T. Page Wood, a Cardiff sports shop owner, took the lead in late 1880s in organizing a Cardiff cricket union and league to further establish the game, p.171.

<sup>1220</sup> Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p.4.

<sup>1221</sup> Although not a typical case, the Viceroy’s train journey from Belfast to Dublin was three hours in 1876, a journey time comparable to today’s (*Freeman’s Journal*, 26 May 1876).

<sup>1222</sup> *The Irish Times*, 25 August 1874.

<sup>1223</sup> The Limerick and Cork football match finished in time for the Cork men to get the 4.45pm train home in the evening in spring 1876 (*The Irish Times*, 3 April 1876).

<sup>1224</sup> The directors of the Belfast and County Down Railway Company provided the largest donation of the £300 contributed to the building of the Belmont Bowling and Lawn Tennis greens in eastern Belfast in 1877 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 20 June 1877).

<sup>1225</sup> Bangor steamers were advertising their schedule to coincide with attendance at the Ulster CC athletic sports in 1878 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 17 April 1878).

<sup>1226</sup> With the term regatta, it is difficult to know if the event taking place was for rowing, yachting or sailing. Examples can be seen though in the Drogheda Railway Company providing reduced fares to Malahide Regatta in August 1873 (*Freeman’s Journal*, 5 August 1873), the Northern Counties and Larne Railway running special promotions to Whitehead Regatta in mid-August 1877 (*Belfast News-*

racing, which again contrasts so sharply with cricket: in 1876, the amount spent on sponsorship by railways was £632, 10s, with a total racing purse of £30,502 in 472 races in 75 separate fixtures. By 1901, railway support was £903 with total race winnings in excess of £51,281 in 674 races at 94 meetings.<sup>1227</sup> These railway companies only sponsored where they saw profit, as table six shows.

The greater monetary power in horse racing is likewise shown in the case study of the Balydoyle Derby prizes in Dublin between 1874 – 1876, which were £520, £490 and £495 at an enclosed ground by the early 1870s with stand accommodation for 3,500.<sup>1228</sup> It's almost laughable in contrast that, in addition to the Co Cork's inability to enclose their ground by the late 1870s, that even as late as 1912 the pre-eminent Phoenix grounds had not been enclosed to halt free entrance and better profit from cricket.<sup>1229</sup>

**Table six: a sample of 1888 Great Southern and Western Railway horse racing sponsorship**<sup>1230</sup>

Racecourse meeting	Sponsorship	Rail receipts
Curragh	£100	£1,700
Punchestown	£100	£1,750

Severe disruption was caused to the playing of cricket by soldiers and officers due to the Eastern Question problems in Europe, which meant that less time could be devoted to play. Not much cricket was played at the Curragh Camp in 1876,<sup>1231</sup> and by 1878, it was decried that 'the war in the East had interfered so considerably with military cricket.'<sup>1232</sup> Between 1873 and 1878, the amount of military teams declined by over a third going from 50 in both 1873 and 1874 to 34 in 1878, and within this the amount of matches played by these remaining teams no doubt declined too. The key importance for this diminished play was that rural teams, which so often depended

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*Letter*, 13 August 1877) and special trains being run to the Wicklow regatta at reduced rates from Dublin in autumn 1878 (*Freeman's Journal*, 29 August 1878).

<sup>1227</sup> D'Arcy, *Horses, Lords and Racing Men*, p.146.

<sup>1228</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.194-195.

<sup>1229</sup> Ensor, 'Irish cricket,' p.253.

<sup>1230</sup> *Ibid.*, p.148.

<sup>1231</sup> The County Carlow CC noting in 1876 that at the base there was 'more drill and less cricket' (*Handbook 1876-7*, p.88).

<sup>1232</sup> *Handbook 1878-9*, p.54.

upon local military regiments for opposition due to the reluctance of urban teams to tour, were robbed of some of their few opponents.

When considering all of these retractions, it was clear that cricket was in decline. Hugh Cunningham's work has identified four supplies of leisure: provision by the state legally and literally; self-made leisure, whether communal, associational or personal; voluntary bodies or philanthropic groups; and commercial.<sup>1233</sup> At its heyday, cricket had enjoyed all four avenues of facilitation, from supportive Viceroys and the Army to enthusiastic local players supported by the philanthropy of the rich and greased by a strong commercial interest. Yet by 1878, Ireland had lost state provision from both the Army whose attentions were focused on military matters and a non-cricketing incumbent Viceroy. The commercial attraction of the game had declined, as shown in the decreased number of businesses supporting the game and the complete withdrawal of train companies' support. The self-made leisure component was starting to look elsewhere at other new and attractive sports, whilst philanthropy would be dashed by the oncoming financial troubles of the land wars.

#### 4.5: *Bad fortune*

Bad fortune saw Ireland never establish a cricketing celebrity like a W.G., a Fred Spofforth or a Ranji, the greatest accolade being wicket-keeper Leland Hone's selection for Lord Harris' team to Australia in 1878,<sup>1234</sup> a failure as *John Lillywhite's Cricketers' Companion* noted, that the team had 'no wicket-keeper at all.'<sup>1235</sup> As the *Handbook* had admitted, not every country could produce a W.G. Grace,<sup>1236</sup> in a career that boasted almost 55,000 runs.<sup>1237</sup> It was unfortunate that David Trotter – the 'star Irish batsman of the nineteenth century' in the opinion of Ger Siggins and James Fitzgerald and someone who went on to play in the North and South game in England in 1877<sup>1238</sup> - was unable to establish himself as an Irish hero. Cumulatively with all the factors mentioned, as diagram fourteen shows, by 1878 cricket reporting was in decline.

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<sup>1233</sup> Cunningham, 'Leisure and culture,' p.320.

<sup>1234</sup> *Handbook 1878-9*, p.6.

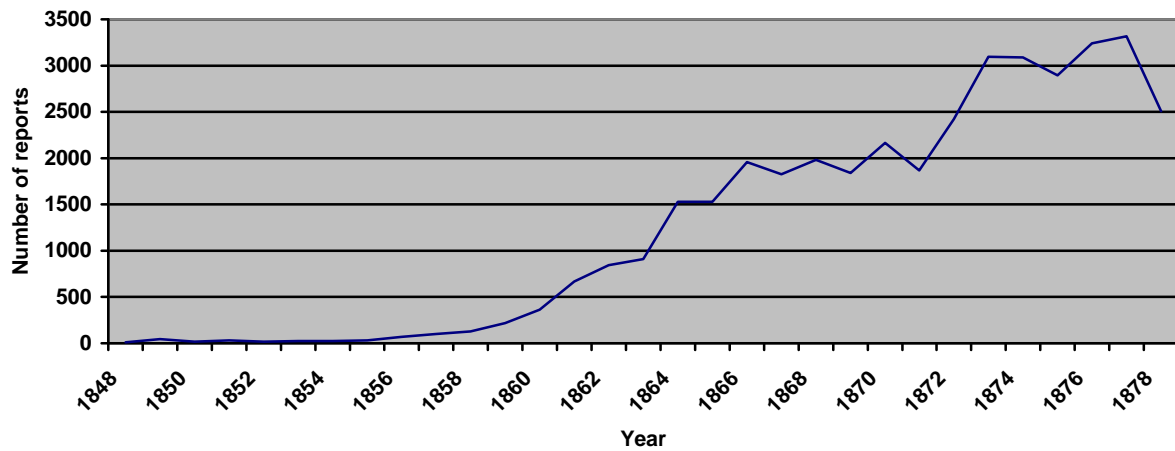
<sup>1235</sup> *Lillywhite's Cricketers' Companion for 1880*, p.25.

<sup>1236</sup> *Handbook 1877-8*, p.5.

<sup>1237</sup> S. Hughes, *And God created cricket* (Doubleday, London, 2009), p.56.

<sup>1238</sup> G. Siggins and J. Fitzgerald, *Ireland's 100 cricket greats* (Nonsuch, Dublin, 2006), p.153.

Diagram fourteen: the number of newspaper reports on cricket for  
1848 - 1878



With urban teams refusing to leave the major conurbations, this left a yawning gap, one which would be only further yanked apart by the oncoming land wars which would destroy the communal goodwill that had generally existed since the Famine. The old touring teams like Na Shuler were not filling this void, becoming ever more town-centred in their fixture list. Even before these violent years of the land wars therefore, cricket was suffocating in Munster and Connaught, and even in the major urban clubs a sort of arrogant nonchalance and disregard for the game had set in, labelled as ‘constitutional carelessness’ and ‘slothful’ by the *Handbook* in its 1876 editorial.<sup>1239</sup> Again, there were spurts of growth in these years and the decline was not always as consistent as one might imagine within the general national trend, with the counties of Westmeath and Kilkenny showing an increasing popularity in the years to the turn of the century. There were even attempts being made to strengthen the standing, respect and importance of the game by individual clubs like the County Galway’s plan to reform eligibility rules,<sup>1240</sup> much like had been decided in London in 1872. Yet such shoots were rare bright moments in a national context in a time of morbid ambience, a letter to the *Freeman’s Journal* on 7 September 1876 claiming that cricket was in decline in popularity and practice in Munster, calling for county or provincial representation and a system of play like in England to excite the cricketing public. The point that Ireland had no Marylebone to lead the game in the country was

<sup>1239</sup> *Handbook* 1876-7, p.1.

<sup>1240</sup> The Co Galway were actually strengthening playing rules in 1877 opposed to weakening them as one might assume if interest was falling, meaning players had to be born in the county, resident in the county for twelve months or a stationed member of the armed forces (*Tuam Herald*, 26 March 1877).

stated, asking if a lead institution like this could be initiated in Ireland, something that would have allowed the ideas and example of the County Galway to become enshrined as a rule across the country. As it was, cricket still remained a localised, disorganised game. The final article of *The Irish Times* in this project's investigation details the arranging of 67 leading English fixtures for 1879 at a meeting of the MCC and eight county secretaries at Lord's in December 1878,<sup>1241</sup> an administrative stride that Irish cricket was seemingly unable or uninterested to take which could have led to greater national ownership and professionalisation of the game. The fact that the MCC in London were still recognised as the 'highest authority on all Cricket subjects' was not a position that would endear cricket to the Irish public at a time of rising nationalism amidst the furnace of Home Rule.<sup>1242</sup>

To compound the doom, the introduction of the Intermediate Education Act in 1878 to recognise and reward achievement in secondary schools was to blight cricket. With a greater focus on exams to gain schools prestige through public record of academic achievement, time devoted to cricket and enthusiasm for the game must have declined in summer months. The top ten schools in the 1879 Intermediate exams list was populated by the major cricket-playing schools; Blackrock gained 48 awards and St Stanislaus 40.<sup>1243</sup> At Castleknock, both the boys and the staff were incentivised by the headmaster as well employing an exams coach,<sup>1244</sup> schools of this standing being desperate not for the financial benefits but for national glory.<sup>1245</sup> That these institutions of upper- and middle-class cricket were now distracted by other attractions in summer months was foreboding, as it was these schools that had generated a notable contribution to the playing and patronage base nationally once these boys had graduated to adult life in positions of prominence nationwide.

That a new non-cricketing Viceroy was appointed and showed little interest in the game compounded the doom from 1877 and yet another problem included extremely wet weather in the years 1877 and 1878, a problem highlighted for the adoption of cricket in Canada.<sup>1246</sup> Yet by these years the rot was becoming endemic, and the game was on the verge of bankruptcy. Land wars which would wreak havoc

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<sup>1241</sup> *The Irish Times*, 27 December 1878.

<sup>1242</sup> *Handbook 1876-7*, p.1.

<sup>1243</sup> O'Neill, 'Rule Etonia,' p.80.

<sup>1244</sup> *Ibid.*, p.85.

<sup>1245</sup> *Ibid.*, p.290.

<sup>1246</sup> Cooper, 'Canadians Declare "It Isn't Cricket,"' p.66.



financially, politically and socially in rural Ireland were about to erupt and embryonic national Irish sports were soon to be reborn.

## 5. Conclusion

Beyond the initial enthusiasm, rhetoric and justification for cricket in Ireland lay deep structural problems. Without an administrative body, county or provincial matches, cups or leagues, a leading national ground or cricketing hero, the game was now under passive attack. New sports had emerged that offered the manliness and excitement of cricket in the 1860s to early 1870s, and nationalistic contest was being embraced in these sports in comparison to the failure to achieve national victories through cricket. An inability to profit from the game saw a desertion from previous supporters. By the late 1870s cricket was in decline, which debunks the idea of the GAA's dismantling of cricket. The rot was already set by 1878, and at best the GAA accelerated a retraction that had already begun. Yet so much of the decline had been predicted and reported, dismissing the idea of cricket's decline as purely the fault of the land wars or the founding of the GAA.

The problem was that cricket in Ireland had always only ever been an amateur game.

## **Conclusion**

The central thrust of this work was to establish the popularity of cricket in Ireland in the years 1848 – 1878, as most cricketing historiography has either overlooked or dismissed the game's popularity. When considering the number of teams playing, the number of newspaper reports and the comparative cross-sport analysis conducted every ten years, it is clear that there is a forgotten history about cricket in Ireland. Trying to capture data from newspapers is not a science, and figures ascertained are indicative and not absolute, but they do provide baseline figures from which to work. From this data, cricket can be considered one of Ireland's most popular sports in the mid-Victorian era in a period of relative social calm between the Famine of the 1840s and the land wars of 1879 – 1882.

Aside from a few recent notable exceptions, mainly in the county-specific studies of the last decade, the historiography of the game has generally labelled cricket as English, Protestant, Unionist, middle class, elitist and lacking popularity. This work has shown that the game was played by all classes of men in society, from the elites to the gentry, strong and middling farmers, professional and commercial classes right through to the Irish peasantry.

Cricket was played by both Catholics and Protestants, Unionists and nationalists. Cricket was reported in both Catholic and nationalist publications as well as Protestant and Unionist ones and established no clear and defining association with England or the mainland which explains how aggressively nationalistic newspapers could support the game. The *Freeman's Journal*, a Catholic and nationalist publication, provided the highest reporting of all seven newspapers in many years of investigation. There is something of an oxymoron of political Unionists being sporting nationalists in many examples in the Unionist newspapers under investigation, but this should not be so surprising considering the hybridity of identities and nationalities that existed not just in Ireland but in the rest of the United Kingdom at this time.

Cricket was not an imperial implantation in Ireland; there was no deliberate state policy of this sort, and no evidence has been found to suggest a covert and secretive deployment of the game by individuals or groups of individuals working independently of the British government. It should be remembered that Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, even if its imperial status was muddled, and thus the

playing of cricket should not be seen as some type of Trojan Horse or dubious activity anymore than the spread of cricket on the mainland was to rural areas. Although the game moved from the mainland to Ireland through the Army and British politicians and businessmen, the conclusion of this work is that this was because of these individuals' enjoyment of the game opposed to political or racial reasons to better the Irish. Their patronage was important, but their indulgence seems personal opposed to political, and too much should not be read into the fact that British men were both playing and enjoying cricket in Ireland when Ireland was a political part of the United Kingdom. Nationalism came to increasingly attach itself to cricket by the 1870s, but the game was not taken up in early years as a nationalist pursuit with which to beat the mainland as the game was in some other colonial nations. Cricket's increasing attachment to and symbolism of Englishness in the late nineteenth century came after the years of 1848 – 1878 as investigated in this thesis.

Cricket was played in schools keen to imitate the mores of mainland equivalents and in universities, workplaces, local towns and villages, county formations and in national teams of varying degrees of selection. Many theories about control or societal education can be suggested for this play, but the evidence supports Pat Bracken's conclusions on cricket in Tipperary, in that a lack of alternatives opposed to landlord patronage or political reasons was the main reason people played cricket, not because they had to but because they wanted to.<sup>1247</sup>

A macro study precludes a detailed biographical analysis of the backgrounds of players, but evidence has been given to at the very least showcase involvement by the widest range of society, supporting the assertions of Bracken, O'Dwyer and Hunt at local levels that cricket was played by all classes.

Like the mainland, women's roles were to attend, spectate and applaud opposed to being physically involved on fields of play. Yet women were integral to proceedings. Their attendance at grounds in dandy dresses was the counterpoint to men being manly in a time when manliness was all the rage. No better summary of such an important link can be given than that of the Newcastle West CC, who commented in 1872 that: 'What wonder then that its favored sons should be nerved to practice, and thus attain distinction; sure of the reward so much coveted – an

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<sup>1247</sup> Bracken, *Foreign and Fantastic Field Sports*, pp.54-55.

approving smile.’<sup>1248</sup> Women were vital at club social functions, and thus whilst cricket was a man’s game it was not only enjoyed by men.

Cricket was fuelled by businesses and businessmen particularly in the 1860s to early 1870s. Train companies and newspapers both encouraged a game that could in turn help them achieve profit, and professional cricketers probably numbering around the low teens nationally at any given time taught and encouraged the game. However, this was significantly below the 99 professionals listed by Lillywhite in 1877<sup>1249</sup> when the population of England was only four times that of Ireland, but was similar to the position of Scottish cricket, where professionals existed but were not widespread in a country that experienced a similar decline of play towards the end of the 1800s.<sup>1250</sup> The establishment of only one professional team in Ireland in the 1850s pales in comparison to the figure of around 20 for the mainland to the 1880s.<sup>1251</sup> Unlike cricket in England and in other sports such as rugby union and then league, debates about the issue of professionalism did not manifest in Irish cricket. Yet not too much attention should be paid to this as a reason for decline, as other Irish sports continued afoot on a largely amateur basis in later decades with success, and GAA athletes today are still basically amateur. However, these sports’ administrations were far superior in terms of professionalism to the lacklustre, nay absence of, administration in Ireland.

Grounds provision and patronage facilitated play for men at a time of financial generosity by the richest, a concern for the working man and a desire to build cordial relations with both tenants and voters, seen in the 18 MPs patronising the game between 1867 – 1872, a figure of immense interest and reflecting the passion many Westminster politicians had for cricket in this era. These MPs were local men elected by Irish men to represent them at Westminster, not alien figures from London.

Although the game could be described as an eastern half of Ireland game, cricket was nonetheless still played in every corner of the country and right across the whole of Ireland. There was significant rural play to match the enthusiasm found for the game in the major urban centres of Dublin and Belfast at this time as appendix four shows.

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<sup>1248</sup> *Handbook 1872-3*, p.164.

<sup>1249</sup> *John Lillywhite’s Cricketers’ Companion For 1878*, pp.205-208.

<sup>1250</sup> Burnett, ‘Cricket,’ p.64.

<sup>1251</sup> Major, *More than a game*, p.192.

In the years between 1848 and 1878 cricket was played due to a lack of alternatives at a time of increasing concern for health, manliness and in a climate of self-improvement to respectability. The game was introduced and supported at first by the military and simple diffusion from the mainland in a time of ever-increasing proximity and closeness to Victorian culture and norms, but then established itself as a game untainted by clear association with the mainland and in many examples was shown to be a proud Irish possession; it was not a colonial game. The game moved well beyond that of a military garrison game, and came to be overwhelmingly dominated by civilians, dismissing another historiographical inaccuracy.

The impact that cricket had on Irish society can be approached in a number of different ways, but two obvious tranches would be by geography and class. Across the whole of the country, cricket provided a sporting outlet and amusement, something that was not as obviously available as might be imagined at this time. In rural areas and in the small towns, cricket offered entertainment where there was limited other social and leisure offerings. As cricket was played cross-class in general, but particularly so in the country, the sport was a social bond in many rural areas with teams being given land on local magnates' grounds. The provision of ground and cross-class interaction was certainly welcomed in the newspaper reports, even if such reports were obviously produced by cricketing enthusiasts. More than in the cities, local teams also relied upon the military in the area for opposition, showing their importance to sustaining rural cricket even if the number of military teams in the country was always significantly outnumbered by civilian teams. Strong relationships were formed between Irish citizens and the military through many of these encounters. This was similar to Wales, where military personnel joined local clubs, in addition to military teams, mid-century and played against leading gentlemen in local areas.<sup>1252</sup> The gentry and elite of Irish counties could also congregate around rural cricket grounds in the summer as a form of amusement, networking and collective bonding.

As a result, cricket took on immense importance for many rural Irish people, particularly so in the micro studies of the towns of Tuam and Nenagh, which showed cricket clubs as a source of communal pride and focus. Visits from other teams often produced fanfare and local sensation, as shown in the receptions and visits of the Nenagh club to other conurbations. Cricket in the countryside and small towns of

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<sup>1252</sup> Hignell, *Cricket in Wales: an illustrated history*, p.21.

Ireland bound together local individuals of all classes and allowed a town or team to put itself proudly on the sporting map of Ireland in a way that perhaps wasn't as necessary for those living in the major towns and cities. This is particularly noteworthy as the other popular sporting pursuits at this time – hunting and horse racing – could not develop and excite local, tribal pride in the same way that beating a visiting cricket team could.

Cricket was also important in the major towns and cities of Ireland. Cricket was used as a relief from work by some of the working classes and as a means to healthiness and general amusement by many. Cricket was played in private club grounds but also public spaces in cities, and the calls for public park provision to allow cricket showed that the game was more than a rudimentary concern in urban areas. The formation of many middle-class teams, particularly in the cities, shows that cricket could be a social bond for amusement and socialisation after hours. Similarly, the formation of various trades' clubs showed that cricket went beyond the middle and upper classes of Irish society in cities. Businesses and businessmen, whether rural or urban, exploited cricket for commercial gain.

On a national level, cricket offered the opportunity for some of the earliest sporting representative contests with the mainland. The sport's popularity and momentum as a nationalistic wagon engaged many, who came in their thousands to see leading Irish teams compete against the finest mainland opposition. However, the inability of a leading team or teams to consistently defeat mainland sides was a frustration to the game's greater establishment in Ireland. Within Ireland, county teams emerged with selection procedures in some instances, allowing representation beyond one's own local team. Notably in comparison to rugby, provincial teams did not emerge, meaning the chance to claim glory and prestige at inter-provincial level was missed. The popularity of cricket as played in counties themselves can be loosely established, but even within this there is variation, Pat Bracken's work on cricket in Tipperary showing that within local counties play was uneven, cricket in Tipperary being primarily a game played in the north of the county.<sup>1253</sup>

For the various social classes of society, cricket offered a variety of benefits. The richest in society enjoyed cricket as it offered a day of amusement, a chance to present oneself as *au fait* with fashionable mainland norms. Their enthusiasm is perhaps unsurprising considering what little else was on offer socially at this time as

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<sup>1253</sup> Bracken, *Foreign and Fantastic Field Sports*, p.45.

well as their relative freedom with time and money. The poorer half of Irish society too gained a lot from cricket. Some benefitted from self-made leisure and the amusement that cricket could provide, yet many of the poorer members of Irish society gained cricketing opportunity as provided by those richer in society through patronage, grounds provision and general encouragement. Their willingness to accept the patronage and generosity of provision as afforded them either suggests the idea of inverted exploitation of the richer classes, or a stronger sense of communal goodwill and fraternity than might commonly be assumed about Irish life in the mid-Victorian period.

It is difficult to fully explain why cricket never developed the administrative structure to establish the game more permanently in the national conscience. Reading the contemporary sources, there is no clear conclusion to why Irish men did not formalise their ownership of the game; there were no meetings arranged which failed, no rivalries between competing cricketing groups which saw none succeed nor any bitter disputes over ownership rights that led to anyone feeling it legally dubious to try to exploit or lead the game. The sources do not give clear or easy conclusions to this conundrum.

Some tentative steps towards administration did occur, yet these were never built upon. There were selection meetings for some of the prominent national teams that played against touring opposition, as well as the committees and leadership groups that, for example, led ventures like the Dublin Week. There were some movements like these towards infrastructure that might have perpetuated the game further, yet these groups never solidified. Such leadership was crucial in many other sports, none more so than the Football Association on the mainland, where Charles Alcock basically saved the body from dissolution with his innovations and rule changes in the mid-1860s, including his idea for the FA Cup.<sup>1254</sup>

There are many possibilities as to why this leadership of Irish cricket never materialised. Simply, cricket might just have been seen as a fun amusement, but not something that was to be further solidified or underpinned to provide greater longevity. This would again support the idea of cricket at this time being a fashionable fad that peaked and had appeal for a decade or so before being overtaken by other new and emerging sports. Irish men thus might have enjoyed the game and

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<sup>1254</sup> R. Sanders, *Beastly fury: the strange birth of British football* (Bantam Books, London, 2010), pp.55-59.

played it with gusto, but without ever seriously considering or wanting to invest their own time and energy into more permanently establishing the sport in the country. This particularly might have been so when many other rival options emerged that were better administrated and provided more exciting opportunities for self-promotion and recognition administratively.

Another reason might have been that cricket players and supporters mistook the quasi-leadership of some of the leading men such as Charles and John Lawrence as actually being more substantial than it actually was. Both were supporters and exploiters of the game, but they did not possess the recognised lead and endorsement as custodians of the game that might have embedded the game more fully into Irish life. Yet to some it might have appeared as though these two were giving leadership and organisation to the game, however informal or profit-driven this was by the Lawrences, thus negating the need for their own involvement. This would suggest that Irish cricket was almost undone by being caught between full, national organisation and ownership on the one hand that would have led to a development of the game, and a complete absence of any leadership on the other that might have meant more came forward to take a formal lead.

It is worth remembering that, in theory, the MCC were at least a spiritual leader of the game in the British Isles, and thus some might have considered there to be an administrative body to turn to for points of clarification on laws and the like as John Lawrence did indeed himself when seeking definition of rules. It is possible that some would have read this situation as satisfactory and thus negated the need for an independent, Irish body to oversee and lead the game in Ireland when the country was of course a political part of the United Kingdom.

Whilst difficult to quantify, what is certainly clear is that the enthusiasm for cricket that was surging in the 1860s had somewhat calmed by the early 1870s. Thus another reason for a lack of formalised leadership might be that the men who might have offered their time – as many did to institutions like the ICAC for athletics and IFU for rugby in the 1870s – saw in cricket a waning star, thus choosing to devote their time and administrative efforts into the new emergent sports that came to overtake cricket in excitement, novelty and professionalism of administration. These men who might have taken such a lead would no doubt have been perturbed by the failings of the Dublin Week, which did in many ways show that cricket was over-reaching itself by trying to go beyond the series of friendlies a season represented.



The inability to score nationalistic victories over touring teams might have led some to question whether it was worth investing time into a sport that was unlikely to yield the victories craved as the Home Rule movement grew from the early 1870s. Business interest in the 1870s diminished as the ability to profit from cricket either retracted or was overshadowed by the greater financial opportunities available in other sports, and thus businesses did not attempt to initiate a leadership group to exploit the game and generally became less interested in selling cricketing goods. Indeed, this very fact explains why John Lawrence finally stepped away from his unofficial role as national cricketing administrator, retiring frustrated, financially indebted and exasperated due to the happy-go-lucky approach of Irish cricketers who seemed oblivious of the need to help their own situation by taking it all more seriously. All of these problems came before the re-emergence of the traditional Gaelic games in the 1880s, and shows again that cricket's decline preceded this cultural rebirth. The GAA benefitted from the leadership and drive of Michael Cusack, whom Joseph Bradley has termed a sporting, social and cultural revolutionary.<sup>1255</sup> Again, cricket in Ireland had no such towering figure driving the game forwards in comparison to so many other emerging sports in both Ireland and the mainland.

This lack of infrastructure and leadership and the importance it would have can be seen in other cricketing nations. Richard Cashman and Tom Hickie have shown how Sydney and Melbourne experienced differences in their initial uptake of cricket, Melbourne being ascendant due to possessing a leading club, a notable ground and committees and leading gentlemen working together to promote cricket. Sydney, on the other hand, was 'much less homogenous.'<sup>1256</sup> Ireland in general therefore mirrored the Sydney experience much more than the Melbourne one by the late 1870s.

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly why there was no birth of an Irish cricketing union or committee to steer and implant the game more deliberately, strategically and

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<sup>1255</sup> Bradley has made the following points about Cusack: that he 'made one of the most significant contributions to culture and sport in late nineteenth-century Ireland' (p.71); was 'one of Ireland's most important sports innovators' (p.71); that Cusack 'sought to revolutionize the ownership, organization of and participation in Irish sport' (p.61); and that he generally oversaw a revolution in Irish sport (pp.61-64). Please see J. Bradley, 'Unrecognized middle-class revolutionary? Michael Cusack, sport and cultural change in nineteenth-century Ireland' in J.A. Mangan (ed), *Reformers, Sport, Modernizers: middle-class revolutionaries* (Frank Cass, London, 2002) for all references.

<sup>1256</sup> R. Cashman and T. Hickie, 'The Divergent Sporting Cultures of Sydney and Melbourne' in *Sporting Traditions*, Vol. 7, Issue 1 (November, 1990), p.33.

forcefully into Irish life. Whatever the reason for this administrative oversight or even deliberate rejection of leadership opportunities by leading Irish men for the sport in Ireland, what is certain is the absence of a national leadership body was to be a significant blow to the prospects of Irish cricket establishing itself more fully as a national pastime, especially so when every other major sport had administrative bodies to popularise their sports by the late 1870s.

The game had reached a pinnacle in terms of teams playing and newspaper reporting in the mid-1870s due to a cocktail of circumstances, before retraction occurred due to a lack of administration, competition, nationalistic victories and the simple rise of other sports. Cricket had become incredibly popular, yet had only laid shallow roots due to a lack of clear national ownership and the establishment of cup and league competitions. David Cooper's lucid diffusion model for the uptake of cricket somehow doesn't fit with cricket in Ireland, offering either a pure acceptance or rejection of the game.<sup>1257</sup> Cricket in Ireland declined, was overtaken or waned: it wasn't violently rejected, even if this is the common view of the game in Ireland in much historiography. It withered away, and the game's fate was surely sealed before the Gaelic revival of the 1880s and 1890s.

This thesis' contribution to knowledge has been to excavate and examine the sport of cricket in Ireland which has, either through ignorance or simple oversight, been buried amidst wider sporting and social historiography. Cricket was played widely across the whole of Ireland, by all classes, religions, political viewpoints and to an extent that demands far greater consideration than has been afforded to date.

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<sup>1257</sup> Cooper, 'Canadians Declare "It Isn't Cricket,"' p.54.

## Epilogue

In many ways writing the conclusion to this thesis evinces frustration. Cricket's popularity was beginning to retract in the late 1870s, and as such 1878 seems an artificial stopping point. How far and how quickly this decline was to continue is a point of further research. Indeed, it could be that cricket's fortunes rebounded, however unlikely this would seem in light of John Lawrence's ceasing publication of the *Handbook* in 1881 due to continued financial loss over a number of years, an occurrence seen too in the failure of leading matches in the late 1870s to reward their promoters as well as the decreased amount of businesses involved in selling the game between the third and fourth decades of investigation. But constrictions must, even if this period from 1879 – 1885 will hopefully be the basis of future personal work amongst many other areas that demand attention from this thesis.

In 1878 Ireland stood on the verge of another bout of major social and economic change which was to dramatically alter society, interrupting the general peace and prosperity that had existed since the early 1850s. Land wars about tenant right were to destroy communal relations in the countryside between landlord and tenant which had been positive in the years of investigation, with the ensuing collapse in rent giving landlords less finance to patronise recreation. There were 67 murders of landlords and their agents in the years 1879 – 1882.<sup>1258</sup>

Political change was afoot, with the desire for Home Rule increasing in what Alvin Jackson has termed the single most important political feature of Irish life between the 1870s and the Great War.<sup>1259</sup> As Ireland did not have a formalised national union to administrate and lead the game in the country until 1923, with the effect of having to seek clarification from London on cricketing matters, the sport was placed at-odds with increasing demands for national self-respect and self-reliance. Socially, a whole raft of new sports and amusements would continue to grow in the 1880s, with the advent of new Irish sports through the GAA varnishing a desperate situation. In particular, their initiation of sporting organisation on a county-by-county level of committees from 1887 was an obvious step that Irish cricket missed.<sup>1260</sup> With

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<sup>1258</sup> Powell, *Nationhood and identity*, p.71.

<sup>1259</sup> Jackson, *Home Rule: an Irish history*, p.3.

<sup>1260</sup> Cronin, Duncan and Rouse, *The GAA: a people's history*, p.42.

the 1888 decree of one club per parish, ‘the GAA grafted itself onto an existing and durable ecclesiastical territorial structure’ which still holds to this day.<sup>1261</sup>

The rate of decline varied in different counties and it is impossible to say with absolute certainty that cricket was in national decline from 1878 onwards until future research is conducted. But the evidence would suggest this when one considers the aforementioned economic, social and political situations that were to develop in the 1880s. Caught in a blizzard of Kulturkampf, cricket would be unable to defend itself at a time of nationalism, Home Rule and greater excitement in other sports.

The (re-) emergence of GAA games from the 1880s provided sports that both projected manliness and national pride at a time of cricket’s stagnation, and the people who had previously patronised cricket – and particularly the farmers of Ireland – would now switch to these new games. As James Murphy has shown, it was ironic that following the modernising of the 1850s – 1870s, that the 1890s saw a return to old traditions to form a new and heavily Irish identity for Ireland.<sup>1262</sup>

Yet even amidst this reformation, the impact of the GAA was not disastrous on its own. On a practical level various mutterings about perceived foreign sports, as intimated in Archbishop Croke’s acceptance letter as patron of the GAA, did not necessarily diffuse down to the everyday man. To 1878, cricket had not established an identity as a clear-cut English or British pastime and general attempts at ‘bans’ by the GAA to prohibit their associates from non-GAA sports varied in both implementation and effectiveness. Even the infamous 1905 ban was enforced differently nationally, so even this year was not the death-knell for non-GAA games.<sup>1263</sup> O’Dwyer has shown that the GAA had little impact on cricket in Co Kilkenny until the 1900s, and that 1896 was the actual peak of teams in this county, twelve years after the GAA’s formation.<sup>1264</sup> Hunt has shown in Westmeath a peak of 39 teams playing in 1899 and the amount of matches being highest in 1900.<sup>1265</sup> Likewise, Bell has called the 1890s the golden age of cricket in Co Kildare.<sup>1266</sup>

Regarding GAA games, it was still seen as possible at local levels to play these sports and cricket. As O’Callaghan has noted from the late 1880s, ‘the

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<sup>1261</sup> McElligott, *Forging a Kingdom*, p.51.

<sup>1262</sup> J.H. Murphy, *Ireland: a social, cultural and literary history, 1791 – 1891* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2003), p.166.

<sup>1263</sup> Garnham, *Association football*, p.29.

<sup>1264</sup> O’Dwyer, *The History of Cricket in County Kilkenny*, p.13.

<sup>1265</sup> Hunt, *Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath*, p.119.

<sup>1266</sup> Bell, *Long shies and slow twisters: 150 years of cricket in Kildare*, p.1.

acquisition of the social and cultural connotations that various sports would become associated with' was gradual. 'Within this context, therefore, the apparent incongruity of Gaelic football clubs fielding cricket teams in 1890s Westmeath was clearly an anomaly only in retrospect...'<sup>1267</sup> It is this anachronism where most readers have associated cricket with Englishness in Ireland that has stereotyped the game so unfairly and incorrectly which has no doubt led to a dearth of research on the game.

Frank Doran captained the 1890 Moate team in the county football championship, but was also the professional of the Moate CC,<sup>1268</sup> whilst Kells GAA played cricket in 1887.<sup>1269</sup> Similarly, the local TD (Irish MP) for Kilkenny elected in the 1920s, D.J. Gorey, had been chairman of the Co Kilkenny GAA board yet played cricket for a number of teams in the 1920s.<sup>1270</sup> Otway Cuffee, president of the Kilkenny branch of the Gaelic League, organised a cricket team in the early-to-mid 1900s.<sup>1271</sup> All these examples show that men could play and associate with cricket whilst supporting GAA games and Irish nationalism in general.

Specifically regarding nationalism and the idea of cricket's connection as English, Castlecomer Young Ireland were still playing cricket in 1888.<sup>1272</sup> As late as the 1930s a team in Co Kilkenny was playing called Home Rule (with no sense of irony), beginning in 1926 and probably linked to the Home Rule club in Kilkenny city, whose charter stated the 'advancement of Catholic and Nationalist interests' and playing at least 15 matches in 1932.<sup>1273</sup> In terms of religion and the popular association and idea that the game was the preserve of Protestants, of the 33 players of the Thurles Great Southern and Western Railway CC in the 1890s, 25 were Catholic.<sup>1274</sup> Likewise, cricket was still being played by the Catholic priests of St Patrick's seminary, Thurles, in 1898. This game saw Archbishop Croke, founder of the GAA, attend where he was loudly cheered; this again reinforces the acceptability of playing GAA sports and cricket by not just nationalists but Catholics too.<sup>1275</sup>

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<sup>1267</sup> O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, p.146.

<sup>1268</sup> Cronin, Duncan and Rouse, *The GAA: county by county*, p.403.

<sup>1269</sup> O'Dwyer, *The History of Cricket in County Kilkenny*, p.50.

<sup>1270</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.14-15.

<sup>1271</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.14-15.

<sup>1272</sup> *Ibid.*, p.51.

<sup>1273</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.77-82 and pp.113-115.

<sup>1274</sup> P. Bracken, 'Cricket and Society in Rural Ireland: Co. Tipperary, a case study, 1849-1914' – a paper presented at the sixth annual conference of Sports History Ireland, held at Mater Dei Institute of Education in Dublin on 25 September 2010.

<sup>1275</sup> Bracken, *Foreign and Fantastic Field Sports*, p.95.

Yet the 1880s posed grave challenges for cricket in Ireland, in a period that surely saw the demise of the game as a widely-played national pastime. By 1890 the IFA had initiated both national cup competitions and an Irish Football League to promote soccer with an extension to provincial branches by the end of the century.<sup>1276</sup> Soccer had also gained sporting equality with the other mainland soccer associations by gaining a seat on the international board in 1882 to coordinate the sport as equals.<sup>1277</sup> The IRFU was participating in round-robin Home Nations matches from 1883 – 1884 and had established provincial cup competitions in Leinster, Ulster and Munster by 1887.<sup>1278</sup> Between 1878 – 2006 the IRFU held 244 consecutive international games at Lansdowne Road, creating the national ground, focus and folklore that Irish cricket never did.<sup>1279</sup> The GAA's power and reach does not need embellishment, but an interesting aside is that the three most powerful hurling counties in GAA history – Kilkenny, Cork and Tipperary – were all hotbeds of cricket before the game's retraction in these counties. These counties were particularly dominant from the mid-1880s to the 1920s. O'Dwyer's work on Kilkenny and Bracken's work on Tipperary has shown how popular cricket was in these areas before being usurped by these games, whilst this thesis has shown the immense popularity of cricket in Cork too. It would be fruitful to investigate further to what extent this earlier cricketing popularity then transferred to hurling once cricket began to retract around the turn of the century, seeing the similarity of skills needed to play both games and the transferability of such actions.

Whilst cricket took some tentative administrative steps in the 1880s like the formation of a County Derry Cricket Union,<sup>1280</sup> these were inferior not just to rival sporting organisations in Ireland but also in comparison to Germany, with the formation of a Bund in Berlin in 1891 to coordinate national play and successfully initiate a cricket league by 1898.<sup>1281</sup>

Counterfactual history is something of an indulgence. Yet how far might cricket in Ireland have gone if effective leadership had been provided on a permanent basis, if the game had professionalised or developed competition to inspire greater interest, if a leading national hero had emerged, great victories had been achieved

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<sup>1276</sup> Garnham, *Association football*, pp.5-6.

<sup>1277</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32.

<sup>1278</sup> Van Esbeck, *Irish rugby 1874 – 1999*, p.33 and p.35.

<sup>1279</sup> Siggins and Clerkin, *Lansdowne Road*, p.38.

<sup>1280</sup> W.H.W. Platt, *History of Limavady Cricket Club 1856-2001* (W.H.W. Platt, Coleraine, 2000), p.12.

<sup>1281</sup> J.D. Coldham, *German cricket: a brief history* (privately published, London, 1983), p.3.

against English teams in a period of frenzying nationalism or if a leading national ground had emerged to create heritage and history? More strikingly, what if Ireland had been awarded the embryonic Test status of the time if standards had been slightly higher, to become the third Test-playing nation after Australia and England but before South Africa and the game had gone on to harness the nationalism of the early-to-mid 1870s in cricket? Of course, we shall never know.

What can be said is that cricket was surely on the verge of decline in Ireland in 1878 as a national pastime and pursuit, and a golden and largely forgotten era of Irish cricket was about to close.

## Appendices



## Appendix one: a note on methodology

Creating a methodology for counting newspaper reports is an imperfect science, but it was felt necessary to try and loosely establish the popularity of the game. The author admits the challenging nature of such a task, but has tried to apply a methodology that would be consistent, repeatable and reflective in all sports under consideration.

### *Finding records*

Using newspaper digitised archives, returns for cricket were researched and analysed. On the whole, the returns of the search engines were trusted, although on occasions a manual search of the daily newspapers to find records was necessary if returns were incomplete or showing significant gaps (of three days or more between reports in the months of June, July or August from 1865 onwards). For the final chapter, if there were any dates without returns for the months of June, July or August, a manual search was undertaken to ensure that as many records as could reasonably be attained were found for analysis to explain why cricket began to retract. For some newspapers under investigation – particularly the smaller newspapers – some records have been untraceable.

If one is searching for *The Irish Times*' articles, please be aware that the search engine landing page is one day behind the entry it then showcases. So an article for 1 January 1871 would at first return appear as 31 December 1870.

### *Counting records*

This was not a fault-proof process, but was deemed the most successful and appropriate methodology available to apply to all sports.

Any article that had a mention of a sport was counted as one newspaper report. This did not take into account the length of any article, as to try to account for length, size of text and so on would be even more problematic. If a newspaper article then went on to talk about an upcoming fixture with a specified date, then subsequent matches would be counted as individual reports too. This was because some newspapers would clearly differentiate each new fixture as a new article with a line space or gap, whilst some newspapers would just have one single list of upcoming games. Defining the former as worthy of individual reports but the latter as not would thus seem unrepresentative and inconsistent.

Counting each reference to a match in the future as a newspaper report seemed reasonable and was applied consistently across all sports. Without doing this, hunting and horse racing would have been significantly less reported, as often their newspaper reports were lists of major upcoming fixtures in list form. To thus have only counted a list of say twenty upcoming horse racing or hunting fixtures as one newspaper report and equal to a one-line result of a football or cricket match would seem unfair. Counting of matches as individual reports only applied to matches with a definitive fixed date, as a loose reference to a match that would be played 'sometime in June' seemed to lack solidity to be counted as a reliable fixture. End-of-season reviews were only counted as one report, as to try to individually count each game that was relayed

in a report with varying degrees of analysis and exploration seemed unnecessary and would have made the process less scientific. The length of an event did not affect its counting or lead to increased counting: so a three day cricket match advertised in an article was only counted as one newspaper report.

References to events that do not relate to the specific sport were not counted: for example, Dickens' *Cricket in the Hearth* was not counted in cricket tallies.

To loosely ascertain whether reports on cricket were reports on cricket in Ireland or overseas cricket, counting was made of the national placing of the report. So for example a match report about Phoenix playing the Vice Regal Lodge would obviously be one Irish cricket report, whereas the MCC playing Sussex would be counted as an overseas report. There were a few isolated grey articles, about how to identify for example a general article about cricket that might have been reprinted after publication in a mainland publication. Unless an article could be proven to be distinctly overseas in interest (like on New Zealand cricket) opposed to an article on cricket with a particular focus for Irish cricketers like LBW laws, articles were considered of Irish nature as the appeal and focus was to Irish cricket in its widest sense.

Cricket does somewhat benefit from the more clearly identifiable label it possesses: searching for 'cricket' is fairly clear-cut, whereas searching for other sports under consideration was more difficult, as the names applied to rugby could have been either 'rugby' or 'football.' Athletics events were referred to as 'races' or 'athletic sports.' To try and untangle these in a study on cricket would have been impossible, and the author again repeats that these figures are indicative and not absolute. As a result, and drawing attention to the impossibility within any reasonable time constraints to do anything but what was undertaken, one term was used consistently for all sports considered to try to achieve some degree of uniformity in research.

The terms used for finding these articles were: horse racing – 'races;' hunting – 'hunting;' hurling – 'hurling;' athletics – 'athletic;' rugby, Gaelic football and soccer – 'football;' yachting and rowing – 'regatta.' Some sports had to be grouped together as it was often unclear which sport was being played when a similar term was used to describe different sports. For example, 'regatta' was used for both rowing or yachting, and there was often no clear identification as to which sport was being partaken.

### *Identifying teams*

Naturally, it was sometimes difficult to distinguish exactly which team was being referred to. For example, 'Medical School' in Dublin could mean the Dublin University Medical School or the Medical School in Cecilia Street at this time. Likewise, in Armagh a variety of schools were mentioned, such as Royal School Armagh, Armagh School and Armagh College, the likelihood being these three terms were used to describe only one school – the Royal School Armagh - although there was a College Street School playing in the town too. To further confuse matters, the Royal School was sometimes referred to as 'College' even in local reports showing the inaccurate nature of reporting even in localities. Where in doubt the author has used his discretion to best identify the team as far as possible, and has been conservative in estimation and noting of a team to avoid claims of duplication or

generous accounting. Where doubt existed as to the exact team in question, a '/' has been used to show possible alternative naming.

In identifying teams as 'club,' 'military' or 'scratch' a few resources were used. Primarily, the way in which these teams were reported in newspapers was used to guide the decision. The military teams were fairly easy to identify, but the ascertaining of whether a club was a genuine club team or an informal or sporadic association was a nebulous activity. Newspapers made clear distinguishing between scratch teams and clubs: clubs were normally titled as 'CC' whilst scratch teams were often bracketed with quotation marks around them and without being noted as 'CC.' However, this was of course at the discretion of the journalist, who may have exaggerated the nature of such teams, or indeed been misled by writings to a newspaper whereby local individuals inflated their organisation beyond scratch association to club level. The naming of teams such as 'Mr Ward's eleven' obviously gave a lead on the nature of the team, although within this there were club teams named after an individual and other such groups that were genuine teams. Trying to define whether the Gentlemen of Ireland were a 'club' or 'scratch' team is tricky: on the one hand, they had consistency of play, heritage and a clear playing base; on the other, they drifted in and out of existence between years and had no fixed Honorary Secretary or ground. Within this, the reader should not be alarmed to see teams moving from being scratch elevens to clubs in later years, and the best judgement possible has always been made to try and distinguish in this task. At the conclusion of research, if readers disagree with the tentative groupings the author makes, the author would fall back to the overall reporting of teams in any given year as a baseline of popularity.

Teams have been listed as long as they played one game in the season mentioned: no tally was kept of how many games each team played due to the sheer number of teams involved. This is unsatisfactory, but establishing this research data was significantly difficult and time-consuming enough before trying to account how many games over 500 teams played in any given year.

In addition, it should be noted that teams have only been recorded in the team lists if they might be considered a *bona fide* representative, externally-playing team: so for example, 2XIs of a club were noted, but an internal match of Liberals versus Conservatives or boarders versus day pupils were not. This is to try and keep the study as focused as much as possible on representing genuine and sincere matches, compared to friendly play internally in clubs. In this way, a club playing 1XI versus next XXII would be noted as having three teams in this year as this would represent as close to genuine competitive play as might be found in internal matches, but if there were a friendly match noted as moustached versus clean-shaven then this would not be counted as two club teams playing, even if a club was therefore fielding at least 22 players in a given season. The rationale for this is that due to the duplicity of naming, some clubs could be over-represented if every team of Liberals, Conservatives, Irish-educated, English-educated, surnames of A-M and N-Z were counted as separate teams for a given club. School teams of past and present were amalgamated in counting with the school itself: so a school that played both as a team of the boys and as a past and present team would only be counted as one team for the year, as it was felt that to count two teams would be unfair as the schoolboys would then be counted twice. Old boys' teams were counted separately as a team if they competed on their own in any given year without current boys' involvement.

This is a fluid and subjective task, in difference say to clubs paying affiliation fees to the IFA or IRFU in their early days. But without a central administrative body's records and membership fees to consult, there is no other formula available.

#### *Problems of team identification in a national study*

It should also be noted that there will be numerous teams that have not been identified nationally but that were playing locally in counties. This becomes abundantly clear if one reads some of the excellent county histories of cricket in Ireland, where many teams did not send records to the major daily newspapers in Dublin or Belfast to publicise their play. This was a problem even for local historians of cricket like Pat Bracken and Tom Hunt, where they found that even in counties some clubs were not recorded in local county newspapers, a problem that is only multiplied in a national study.

Identifying military teams with absolute precision was sometimes difficult, as references to 'the King's Dragoon Guards' could mean numerous regiments with such a title (there were four such Dragoon regiments named in connection to 'The King'), or could represent an associational team comprising men of different regiments of such terming playing under this banner. Likewise, garrison teams may have represented one regiment or numerous sections based in a barracks. However, most military teams were clearly and easily identified.

#### *The problem of crowd estimates*

Numbers for spectators are difficult to ascertain due to limited enclosure beyond grounds being properties of clubs. Newspapers were making estimates for all sports, so the inconsistencies and difficulties to fully quantify accurately are likely to be universal, and with the absence of detailed club records showing ticket revenue or sales (unlike in the limited companies of football clubs in Victorian Britain), newspaper reports are the only real source available to use, utilised as they are with caution.

Whilst the author appreciates that reading this methodology might seem confusing or difficult, it is worth stating that the overwhelming majority of newspaper reports and teams were easy to analyse and digest.

## Appendix two: records of newspaper reporting

P=Protestant

U=Unionist

C=Catholic

N=Nationalist

Please note that the denoting for each entry for each newspaper is: total reports on cricket followed by the bracketed numbers of Irish and then overseas cricket reports.

n/a denotes that records were not available for this year.

### Newspaper reports for cricket for 1848 - 1859:

	<i>Belfast News-Letter</i> (P/U)	<i>The Irish Times</i> (P/U)	<i>Nenagh Guardian</i> (P)	<i>Anglo-Celt</i> (N)	<i>Freeman's Journal</i> (C/N)	<i>The Nation</i> (C/N)	<i>Tuam Herald</i> (N)	Year totals
1848	3 (1+2)		2 (1+1)	1 (1+0)	0	2 (1+1)	1 (1+0)	9
1849	3 (2+1)		41 (39+2)	1 (1+0)	0	n/a	n/a	45
1850	1 (1+0)		16 (10+6)	1 (0+1)	0	0	n/a	18
1851	10 (3+7)		16 (15+1)	0	3 (2+1)	2 (0+2)	n/a	31
1852	4 (3+1)		6 (5+1)	0	7 (3+4)	0	n/a	17
1853	6 (6+0)		6 (6+0)	0	12 (12+0)	0	n/a	24
1854	15 (12+3)		1 (0+1)	0	6 (2+4)	2 (0+2)	n/a	24
1855	15 (13+2)		5 (4+1)	1 (1+0)	7 (5+2)	3 (0+3)	n/a	31
1856	26 (21+5)		8 (6+2)	3 (0+3)	32 (29+3)	1 (0+1)	n/a	70
1857	50 (43+7)		3 (3+0)	0	46 (42+4)	1 (0+1)	n/a	100
1858	62 (57+5)	1859 first publication	10 (9+1)	0	55 (54+1)	1 (0+1)	n/a	128
1859	90 (68+22)	78 (57+21)	12 (10+2)	3 (0+3)	33 (30+3)	1 (0+1)	n/a	217
Totals 1848 - 1859	285	78	126	10	201	13	1	714

Newspaper reports for cricket for 1860 – 1866:

Year	<i>Belfast News-Letter</i> (P/U)	<i>The Irish Times</i> (P/U)	<i>Nenagh Guardian</i> (P)	<i>Anglo-Celt</i> (N)	<i>Freeman's Journal</i> (C/N)	<i>The Nation</i> (C/N)	<i>Tuam Herald</i> (N)	Year totals
1860	88 (72+16)	148 (113+35)	68 (60+8)	2 (1+1)	57 (50+7)	n/a	n/a	363
1861	81 (66+15)	311 (246+65)	14 (9+5)	n/a	261 (217+44)	0	n/a	667
1862	130 (94+36)	363 (341+22)	53 (22+31)	n/a	299 (271+28)	n/a	n/a	845
1863	68 (52+16)	432 (416+16)	23 (12+11)	n/a	387 (372+15)	n/a	n/a	910
1864	115 (95+20)	584 (561+23)	27 (19+8)	n/a	799 (785+14)	3 (2+1)	n/a	1528
1865	186 (165+21)	524 (507+17)	71 (59+12)	n/a	737 (722+15)	9 (8+1)	n/a	1527
1866	274 (263+11)	622 (600+22)	49 (42+7)	n/a	1000 (986+14)	12 (11+1)	n/a	1957
Totals 1860 - 1866	942	2984	305	2	3540	24	0	7797

Newspaper reports for cricket for 1867 – 1872:

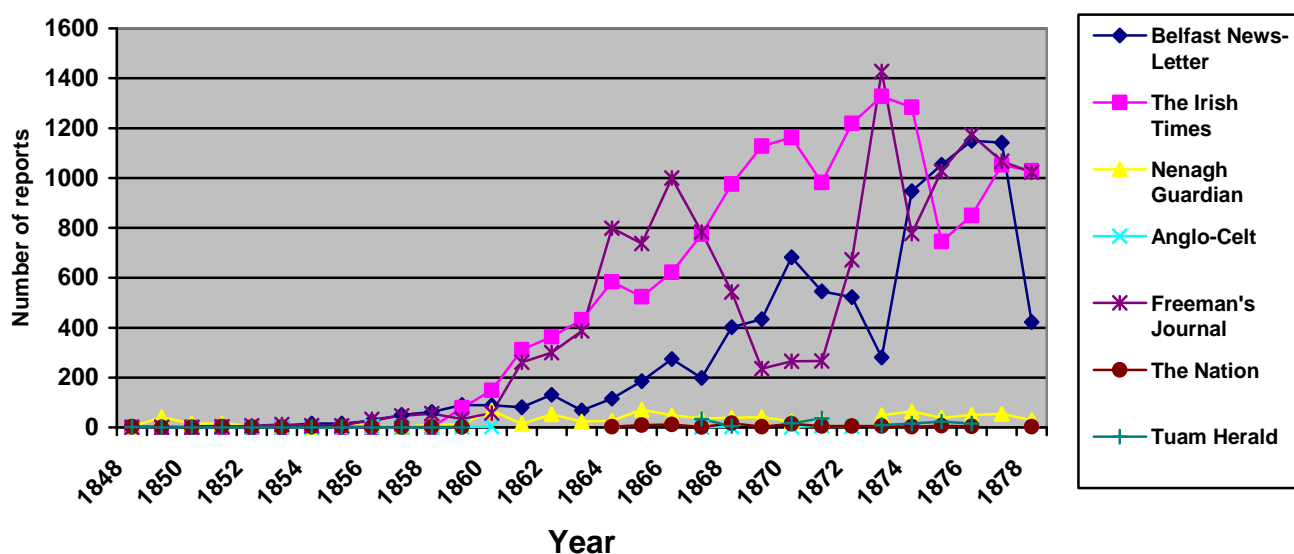
Year	<i>Belfast News-Letter</i> (P/U)	<i>The Irish Times</i> (P/U)	<i>Nenagh Guardian</i> (P)	<i>Anglo-Celt</i> (N)	<i>Freeman's Journal</i> (C/N)	<i>The Nation</i> (C/N)	<i>Tuam Herald</i> (N)	Year totals
1867	199 (177+22)	774 (752+22)	36 (28+8)	1 (1+0)	783 (771+12)	1 (0+1)	33 (33+0)	1827
1868	402 (363+39)	975 (900+75)	38 (28+10)	3 (3+0)	543 (527+16)	17 (15+2)	5 (5+0) but records available only up to 11 July 1868	1983
1869	434 (349+85)	1128 (1062+66)	41 (35+6)	0	235 (227+8)	3 (2+1)	n/a	1841
1870	682 (626+56)	1162 (1059+103)	24 (14+10)	1 (1+0)	265 (248+17)	14 (3+11)	17 (16+1)	2165
1871	545 (518+27)	982 (935+47)	28 (23+5)	6 (6+0)	266 (254+12)	5 (5+0)	36 (36+0)	1868

1872	522 (451 +71)	1218 (1177+41)	n/a	4 (4+0)	672 (648+24)	5 (4+1)	0	2421
Totals 1867 - 1872	2784	6239	167	15	2764	45	91	12,105

Newspaper reports for cricket for 1873 – 1878:

Year	<i>Belfast News-Letter</i> (P/U)	<i>The Irish Times</i> (P/U)	<i>Nenagh Guardian</i> (P)	<i>Anglo-Celt</i> (N)	<i>Freeman's Journal</i> (C/N)	<i>The Nation</i> (C/N)	<i>Tuam Herald</i> (N)	Year totals
1873	280 (228 +52)	1327 (1236+91)	49 (42+7)	0	1427 (1399+28)	5 (5+0)	9 (9+0)	3097
1874	947 (900 +47)	1284 (1235+49)	64 (52+12)	n/a	774 (752+22)	3 (3+0)	15 (14+1)	3087
1875	1053 (1014+39)	745 (700+45)	38 (31+7)	n/a	1028 (1008+20)	7 (6+1)	23 (23+0)	2894
1876	1150 (1093+57)	850 (780+70)	50 (40+10)	n/a	1172 (1152+20)	4 (4+0)	16 (13+3)	3242
1877	1142 (1104 +38)	1052 (950+102)	54 (49+5)	n/a	1067 (1046+21)	0	n/a	3315
1878	423 (408+15)	1029 (818+211)	30 (21+9)	n/a	1023 (994+29)	3 (3+0)	n/a	2508
Totals 1873 - 1878	4995	6287	285	0	6491	22	63	18,143

**Diagram fifteen: the number of newspaper reports on cricket in the selected Irish newspapers, 1848 - 1878**



### Appendix three: cricket teams in Ireland in 1874

*Wherever possible, the county details have been provided with the club to guide the reader as to geographical location. For some clubs, it was impossible to locate their place with relative certainty, and thus some teams do not have a geographical location next to their name. Where only a rough location of a team was ascertainable, 'Belfast area' etc. was used to denote a team's approximate location. It should be clear that if a geographical location was ascertainable, then this would not be labelled as 'Dublin area': this term was only used when a team had a non-geographical name. So for example, a club from Trim in Co Meath would not be given as 'Dublin area' as a county and town place was easily identifiable: this terming was saved for mainly urban teams for whom exact details were not forthcoming.*

Academic Institute, Harcourt Street, Dublin

Academic Institute 2XI

Academic Institute 3XI

Adare, Co Limerick

Adelaide Hall orphanage school, Dublin / past and present

Adelaide Hall 2XI

Albion, Dublin area

Albion, Belfast area

Alexandria (John Arnott & Co business), Belfast

Annsboro, Belfast

Apollo, Dublin area

Arlington House School (Queen's county) / Arlington, Portarlinton / Portarlinton School (Arlington House is Portarlinton School – see *Handbook 1874-75*, p.154)

Ard, Co Galway

Ardee, Co Louth

Ardoyne, Belfast area

Arranmore, Dublin area

Armagh (Armagh town, not county), Co Armagh

Armagh Royal School, Co Armagh

Articlave, Belfast area

Ashfield, Belfast area

Ashley, Belfast area

Athlone, Co Westmeath

Athy, Co Kildare

Aughnacloy, Belfast area

Ballina, Co Mayo

Ballinware, Co Tipperary area

Ballincollig, Co Cork

Ballybrack, Dublin

Ballymackey, Co Tipperary area

Ballymahon, Co Longford

Ballymena, Co Antrim

Ballymoney, Co Antrim

Ballynahinch, Belfast area

Ballyna, Dublin area



Ballysillan, Belfast area / Ballyillan, Belfast area  
Bamford, Co Kilkenny  
Banagher, Co Londonderry  
Banagher, King's County  
Bandon, Co Cork  
Bank of Ireland, Dublin  
Bantry, Co Cork  
Ballystanley  
Bective, Dublin area  
Bective 2XI  
Bective 3XI  
Bective College, Dublin area  
Bective College 2XI  
Belgrave, Dublin  
Belleville, Dublin area  
Belleville 2XI  
Belmont, King's County  
Belvidere, Dublin (presumably the school)  
Belvidere 2XI  
Belvoir, Dublin  
Benlomond  
Bessbrook, Belfast area  
Birr, King's County  
Blessington, Co Wicklow  
Borris, Co Carlow  
Botanic, Belfast area  
Brandon, Ardfert, Co Galway  
Bromley, Co Wicklow area  
Brookfield, Belfast area  
Brunswick School, Dublin area  
Butterflies, Dublin area  
Buttevant, Co Cork

Cahir, Co Tipperary  
Carlow Borough, Co Carlow  
Carlow College, Co Carlow  
Carlow College (past)  
Carlisle, Dublin area  
Carlton, Dublin area  
Carmichael School of Medicine, Dublin  
Carney, Co Tipperary area  
Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan  
Carrigbyrne, Co Waterford area  
Cashel, Co Tipperary  
Castleblaney, Co Monaghan  
Castlecomer, Co Kilkenny  
Castlecomer Brass Band CC, Co Kilkenny  
Castlecomer Catholic Young Men's Society, Co Kilkenny  
Castlewellen, Belfast area  
Cavan Royal School, Co Cavan

Central, Belfast area  
Church Temporalities Office, Dublin  
Civil Service, Dublin  
Clashnevin  
Cliftonville, Belfast  
Cliftonville 2XI  
Clongowes Wood College, Co Kildare  
Clongowes Wood (past)  
Cloughjordan, Co Tipperary  
Cloughjordan 2XI  
Clonmel, Co Cork  
Co Carlow  
Co Cork  
Commercial, Dublin area  
Coleraine Academical Institution / Coleraine Academy, Co Londonderry  
Coleraine Academical Institution (past), Co Londonderry  
Comber, Co Down  
Comber 2XI  
Comber Mill / Comber Spinning Mill, Co Down  
Comber Spinning Mill 2XI  
Comber Spinning Mill Junior  
Commercial, Cork, Co Cork  
Coologorna, Co Tipperary area  
Coolattin, Co Wicklow  
Corbetstown, Co Westmeath  
Cork, Co Cork  
Corking, Co Kerry area  
Corry, Co Leitrim  
Court, Co Donegal  
Court, Rathkeale, Co Limerick  
Courtmacsherry, Co Cork  
Cozy Lodge, Dublin  
Curragawn, Co Tipperary  
Custom House, Dublin

Dalriada, Belfast area  
Delgany, Co Wicklow  
Derry Academical Institution, Co Londonderry  
Derrylamogue Shamrocks, Co Louth  
Dolphin / Royal Dolphin, Dublin  
Co Down  
Dreadnought, Dundalk area  
Drenagh, Newtonlimavady  
Drogheda Grammar School, Co Louth  
Dublin Total Abstinence  
Dufferin Villas, Belfast area  
Dundalk, Co Louth  
Dundalk Grammar School, Co Louth  
Dundalk Grammar School 2XI  
Dundrum, Co Tipperary

Dungannon, Co Tyrone  
Dungannon Junior, Co Tyrone  
Dungannon Royal School, Co Tyrone  
Dungannon Royal School (past)  
Dungarvan, Co Waterford  
Dunsany, Co Meath

Eagle, Dublin area  
Eblana, Dublin area  
Edenderry, King's County  
Effra  
Eglington, Belfast area  
Eglinton, Dublin area  
Eglinton 2XI  
Eglinton 3XI  
Elcho, Dublin area  
Elm, Dublin area  
Elmwood, Belfast area  
Emerald, Dublin area  
Emeriti, Dublin area  
Enfield, Belfast area  
Ennis, Co Clare  
Ennis College, Co Clare  
Ennistymon, Co Clare  
Eureka, Warrenpoint, Co Down  
Excelsior, Dublin area

Falls Road, Belfast  
Finglas, Dublin  
Forth River, Belfast area  
Foyle College, Derry, Co Londonderry  
Foxhall, King's County  
Foxrock, Dublin  
French College, Blackrock, Dublin  
French College 2XI  
French College 3XI  
French College (past)

Galgorm 'Kafoozleum' / Galgorm, Belfast area  
Co Galway  
Galway city / town, Co Galway  
Galway Shamrocks, Co Galway  
Gardiner Street club of Dublin Total Abstinence League, Dublin  
Geashill, King's County  
Gentlemen of Ireland  
Gilford, Co Down  
Glenahilty, Co Tipperary  
Glenbank, Belfast area  
Glenmore, Belfast area

Glens of Antrim, Co Antrim  
Gloucester Street School, Dublin  
Gormanstown, Co Meath  
Gort, Co Galway  
Gortmore, Co Cork  
Gowran, Co Kilkenny  
Gracehill Academy, Co Antrim  
Granville, Belfast area  
Greenwood, Belfast area  
Green Vale, Waterford area  
Groomsport, Belfast area  
Grosvenor, Dublin

Hardwicke Street School, Dublin  
Harkaway, Dublin area  
Harkaway 2XI  
Harvey, near Ballystanley, King's County  
Hazelbrook, Dublin area  
Hazelbrook 2XI  
Heywood, Queen's County  
Hibernian Bank, Dublin  
Hillbrook School, Hollywood, Co Down  
Hillbrook School 2XI  
Hollyville Park School, Dublin area  
Hollyville Park School 2XI

Inniscarra, Co Cork  
Innisfail, Dublin area  
Ireland / All Ireland

Kells, Co Meath  
Kenkora, Belfast area  
Kenmare, Co Kerry  
Co Kerry  
Kilbeggan, Co Westmeath  
Kilcoleman, Tipperary area  
Co Kilkenny  
Killadysert, Co Clare  
Killarney, Co Kerry  
Killavinogue, Abbey View, presumably Trim, Co Meath  
Killiney, Dublin  
Killiney School, Dublin  
Killyleagh, Co Down  
Killyleagh 2XI  
Killyleagh Juvenile  
Killyman, Co Tyrone  
Killyman Rangers, Co Tyrone  
Kilmore, Co Meath

Kilultagh, Belfast area  
Kingsbury, Dublin area  
Kingsbury 2XI  
Kingsbury 3XI  
Kingstown School / past and present, Dublin  
Kingstown School 2XI  
Knights of the Green, Ballinasloe, Co Galway  
Knock, Belfast

Lahinch, Co Clare  
Leinster, Dublin  
Leinster 2XI  
Leinster Shamrocks, Kilkenny area, Co Kilkenny  
Leopardstown, Dublin  
Co Limerick  
Lismore, Co Waterford  
Listowel, Co Kerry  
Lombard, Dublin area  
Co Longford  
Co Londonderry  
Longford town, Co Longford  
Loughgall, Co Armagh  
Co Louth  
Lurgan, Co Armagh  
Lurgan Demesne, Lurgan, Co Armagh

Maghera, Belfast area  
Magpies, Dublin area  
Malahide, Dublin  
Malahide 2XI  
Maryboro, Queen's County  
Maryville, Dublin area  
Maryville, Cork, Co Cork  
Mayfield, Waterford area  
Meath, Co Meath (a club, not a county team)  
Merrion Wanderers, Dublin  
Merrivale, Dublin area  
Methodist College, Belfast  
Middleton, Co Cork  
Middleton College, Co Cork  
Milford, Co Donegal  
Monaghan, Co Monaghan  
Monaghan Diocesan School, Co Monaghan  
Monaghan School (different to Monaghan Diocesan School as they played each other in this year), Co Monaghan  
Monasterevan, Queen's County  
Mountjoy, Dublin area  
Mountrath, Queen's County  
Mountmellick, Queen's County

Mountpleasant, Dublin area  
Munster Bar, Co Cork area

Na Shuler  
Naas and Co Kildare, Co Kildare  
National Bank, Dublin  
Navan, Co Meath  
Neal's, Dublin area  
Nenagh, Co Tipperary  
New Ross, Co Wexford  
Newcastle West, Co Limerick  
Newtownmountkennedy, Co Wicklow  
North of Ireland, Belfast  
North Down, Co Down  
North River, Belfast area  
North Tipperary, Co Tipperary

Oakwood, Co Cork  
Old Park, Belfast area  
Old Park Print Works, Belfast area  
Osborne, Dublin area  
Oulart, Co Wexford

Parsonstown, King's County  
Parsonstown School, King's County  
Pembroke, Dublin  
Pembroke 2XI  
Phoenix, Dublin  
Pocock College  
Portadown, Co Armagh  
Portaferry, Belfast area  
Portarlinton, Queen's County  
Portobello, Dublin  
Portora Royal School, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh  
Portora Royal School (past)  
Probate Court, Dublin  
Prospect, Belfast area

Queen's College, Belfast  
Queen's College, Belfast 2XI  
Queen's College, Cork, Co Cork

Ramblers, Dublin area  
Ranelagh School, Dublin  
Raphoe Royal School, Co Donegal  
Rathowen, Co Westmeath  
Rathfarnham, Dublin

Rathmines School / past and present, Dublin  
Rialto, Dublin  
RIC band, Dublin  
Riverstown Amateur, Co Westmeath  
Rochester, Dublin area  
Rock, Cashel, Co Tipperary  
Rockwell College, Co Tipperary  
Roscommon town, Co Roscommon  
Co Roscommon  
Roscrea, Co Tipperary  
Roscrea Young Men's Society, Co Tipperary  
Roscrea Borderers, Co Tipperary  
Route, Co Antrim  
Royal Academical Institution / past and present, Belfast  
Royal Academical Institution 2XI  
Royal Academical Institution 3XI  
Royal Academical Institution 4XI  
Royal Academical Institution 5XI  
Royal Albert, Dublin  
Royal William, Dublin  
Rutland, Dublin

Santry School, Dublin  
Santry School 2XI  
Saintfield, Belfast area  
Scotchmount, Belfast area  
Seapoint, Dublin area  
Shankhill, Dublin area  
Shamrock, Belfast area  
Shelbourne, Dublin  
Shields' Institution, Belfast area  
Shrigley, Belfast area  
Shrigley Juvenile / Junior  
Shirks  
Skibbereen, Co Cork  
Slane, Co Meath  
Sligo, Co Sligo  
Sligo Diocesan School, Co Sligo  
Snugville, Belfast area  
Somerton, Dublin area  
Sopwell, Co Tipperary  
South Tipperary, Co Tipperary  
St Aidan's, Ferns, Co Wexford  
St Brendan's College, Killarney, Co Kerry  
St Brendan's College, Killarney 2XI  
St Brendan's College, Killarney 3XI  
St Brendan's Junior  
St Columba's College, Dublin  
St James', Dublin area  
St John's College, Newport, Tipperary / Newport School, Co Tipperary

St Joseph's Day School, Ballymahon, Co Longford  
 St Kevin's, Dublin area  
 St Lawrence, Co Kilkenny area  
 St Malachy's, Belfast area  
 St Mary's College, Dundalk, Co Louth  
 St Mary's College, Dundalk (past)  
 St Michael's Day School, Co Longford  
 St Stanislaus' College, King's County  
 Star, Belfast area  
 Star, Dublin area  
 Steevens' School of Medicine, Dublin  
 Stephen's Green, Dublin  
 Stock Exchange, Dublin  
 Stoics, Dublin area  
 Strokestown, Co Roscommon  
 Strollers, Dublin area  
 Summerhill, Co Cork  
 Summerhill, Co Cork 2XI  
 Summerhill, Co Meath  
 Sunburst, Dublin area  
 Sunday's Well, Co Cork  
 Sydenham, Belfast

Tandragee, Belfast area  
 Tergarvil, Belfast area  
 Telegraph, Dublin area  
 Temperance League / Temperance, Dublin  
 Templemichael, Co Tipperary  
 Thurles, Co Tipperary  
 Tinahely, Co Wicklow  
 Tipperary town, Co Tipperary  
 Tralee Commercial, Co Kerry  
 Tramore, Co Waterford  
 Tuam, Co Galway  
 Tuam Diocesan School, Co Galway  
 Tubbercurry, Co Sligo  
 Tullamore, King's County  
 Turtulla, Thurles, Co Tipperary  
 Tyone, Co Tipperary

Ulster, Belfast  
 Ulster 2XI  
 Ulsterville, Belfast area  
 Union, Belfast area  
 Union 2XI  
 United, Co Cork  
 Unity, Dublin area  
 University / University (past and present) / Dublin University  
 University 2XI



University Boat Club, Dublin University  
University Medical School, Dublin University  
Upperlands, Belfast area

Vice Regal

Wanderers, Belfast area  
Wanderers, Dublin area  
Waringstown, Lurgan, Co Down  
Warrington, Dublin area  
Warrington 2XI  
Waterford, Co Waterford  
Waverlies, Belfast  
Weeping Willows, Belfast  
Wellington (Bank Buildings), Belfast  
Wellington, Dublin area  
Wells, Co Carlow  
Wesleyan Connexional School / past and present, Dublin  
Whiteabbey, Belfast  
Whiteabbey 2XI  
Whitewell Print Works, Belfast area  
Co Wicklow  
Williamston, Dublin area  
Winton  
Wolfhill, Belfast area

York Street club of Dublin Total Abstinence League, Dublin  
Youghal, Co Cork

#### Military teams

Antrim Rifles Militia  
Armagh Garrison  
Army Service Corps, Dublin area  
No 11 company Army Service Corps  
Cavan Militia  
Channel Fleet  
Officers of the Channel Fleet  
Cork Garrison  
Curragh Camp  
Curragh Camp cavalry officers  
Curragh Camp infantry officers  
Clare Garrison (3<sup>rd</sup> Buffs)  
Dublin Garrison  
Garrisons of Ulster  
Grenadier Guards (1<sup>st</sup> regiment of Foot Guards)  
3<sup>rd</sup> battalion Grenadier Guards  
Officers of HMS Raleigh

HMS Defence  
 King's Dragoon Guards  
 Limerick Garrison  
 Ordnance Survey / Survey  
 Royal Artillery  
 Royal Foot Artillery, 14<sup>th</sup> brigade  
 Royal Horse Artillery  
 Richmond barracks  
 Templemore Garrison  
 Thurles Garrison  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Queen's regiment  
 4<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards  
 5<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards  
 5<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards junior eleven  
 6<sup>th</sup> regiment  
 6<sup>th</sup> Iniskilling Dragoons  
 7<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards  
 8<sup>th</sup> Hussars  
 Band of the 8<sup>th</sup> Hussars  
 12<sup>th</sup> regiment  
 I company 12<sup>th</sup> regiment  
 13<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry  
 13<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion  
 17<sup>th</sup> Lancers  
 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion 17<sup>th</sup> regiment  
 H company 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion 17<sup>th</sup> regiment  
 25<sup>th</sup> regiment  
 27<sup>th</sup> regiment  
 29<sup>th</sup> regiment  
 35<sup>th</sup> regiment  
 46<sup>th</sup> regiment  
 61<sup>st</sup> regiment  
 79<sup>th</sup> regiment  
 94<sup>th</sup> regiment

#### Scratch teams

Annsboro and district  
 18 of Carlow and district  
 C.P. Coote's eleven  
 Captain Dickson's eleven  
 Captain McCalmont's eleven (8<sup>th</sup> Hussars)  
 Catholic Colleges  
 Captain Richardson's eleven  
 Clough and district  
 Dr Morewood's eleven  
 Dr Traill's eleven  
 Dublin University racket court  
 Dunmurry & District  
 English schools

Everton  
 Impregnable  
 Irish schools  
 Lord Fitzwilliam's eleven  
 Major Curtis' eleven  
 Melville  
 Mr Adair's eleven  
 Mr Bain's eleven  
 Mr Black's eleven  
 Mr Brooke's eleven  
 Mr Caffrey's eleven  
 Mr J.R. Carolin's eleven  
 Mr G.D. Casey's eleven  
 Mr Corbett's eleven  
 Mr J. D'Arcy's eleven  
 Mr Giveen's eleven  
 Mr Jack's eleven  
 Mr Johnson's eleven / Mr C Johnston's eleven  
 Mr J. Kirwan's eleven  
 Mr Latouche's eleven  
 Mr Leslie's eleven  
 Mr Lyle's eleven  
 Mr McDonald's eleven  
 Mr Parnell's eleven, Avondale  
 Mr Perse's eleven  
 Mr W. Tisdall's eleven  
 Mr Verner's eleven  
 Mr Warren's eleven  
 Mr White's eleven  
 Plains  
 Rathmines schoolmasters  
 Royal Alb  
 Sir William Osborne's eleven  
 Tuam Palace and Castlehackett  
 16 of Co Tyrone  
 United Belfast  
 W. O'Hara's eleven

Totals: 432 club teams; 51 military teams; 50 scratch teams. Totalling at least 533 teams in Ireland in 1874.

#### Appendix four: geographical details of cricket teams in Ireland in 1874

Using appendix three, of the 432 clubs teams 124 can be traced to Dublin and the surrounding area and 69 to Belfast and the surrounding area. Whilst a significant contribution to club numbers, this does still mean that 55 percent of club teams were not from Dublin or Belfast, the two major conurbations in the country.

In this year, at least one club team can be found in all of the 32 counties in Ireland, and in many counties numerous clubs.

#### Appendix five: businesses found selling cricketing goods in Ireland 1867 – 1872

General shops in Belfast: Riddel and Company were selling cricketing goods in Belfast (*Belfast News-Letter*, 12 July 1867); T. Heighes, cricket professional to NICC, was selling a range of cricket gear at the NICC home ground at Ormeau Road in 1868 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 6 May 1868); H. Wharton was selling cricket bats and balls at the Royal Scottish Bazaar in Belfast (see *Belfast News-Letter*, 3 May 1869 for example); Greer's of High Street, Belfast was selling cricketing goods (*Belfast News-Letter*, 20 June 1871).

General shops in Dublin: Philip Patman was selling cricketing and archery appendages by auction for many days in December 1867 in Dublin (*Freeman's Journal*, 17 December 1867); Carey Brothers were using auctioning as a form of sale on a consistent basis for cricket bats in early 1868 (*Freeman's Journal*, 25 January 1868). Please note that both Patman and Carey as above appear to be shopkeepers selling by auction, not being auctioneers liquidating assets which have been discounted in general business counting as such efforts were one-off events. Reynolds and Co were selling cricketing equipment in Dublin in 1868 (*The Irish Times*, 2 May 1868); Edward Keevil and Company, pipe makers and tobacconists, were selling cricketing goods in 1868 (*The Nation*, 8 August 1868 for example for a total of 12 ads) presumably in Dublin as no specified address was given and this was the city of publication for the said newspaper; Carleton's were stocking cricket goods in 1871 in Dublin (*Freeman's Journal*, 18 January 1871); Stephen's-Green Divisional Saleroom in Dublin were selling cricketing goods in 1871 (*Freeman's Journal*, 22 June 1871); Lawlor, Hill and Co were selling cricketing goods in 1872 in Dublin (*Freeman's Journal*, 4 January 1872); J.D. Askins were selling cricketing goods in Dublin in 1872 (*The Irish Times*, 16 March 1872); Mackintosh and Co's had a clearance sale of croquet, cricket and archery in 1872 in Dublin (*The Irish Times*, 26 August 1872). John Lawrence can also naturally be added to this list.

Apparel and clothing shops in Dublin: Barnado's of Dublin were selling cricket hats in the summer of 1867 (see *Freeman's Journal*, 25 May 1867 for example); cricket boots were being sold by Richard Hackett's of Dublin in 1867 (*The Irish Times*, 25 May 1867); T. Webb and Co were offering buckskin cricket boots in Dublin in 1870 (*Freeman's Journal*, 10 June 1870 for example); Kenny and Owers were selling cricket trousers in Dublin in 1870 (*The Irish Times*, 7 April 1870); Lemass's were selling cricket caps and hats in 1871 in Dublin (*Freeman's Journal*, 4 April 1871); J.S. Wilson of Dublin were selling cricketing shirts which were cashmere and cotton in comparison to the normal flannels in 1868 (*The Irish Times*, 25 May 1868); J. Murray's were selling cricket shoes in Dublin in 1869 (*The Irish Times*, 21 October 1869). John Boon of 96 Grafton Street was advertising at the back of the *Handbook* in 1868-69, selling scarves, braces etc. (there are no page numbers, so please see the back of the *Handbook* in this year for this example). The following Belfast retailers were selling goods too: George Mansfield was selling cricketing clothing in Belfast in the summer of 1867 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 11 May 1867 for example); Simpson and Marshall of Belfast were selling cricketing trousers in 1870 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 1 June 1870); Heaton and Co were selling cricketing outfits in the summer of 1871 in Belfast (*Belfast News-Letter*, 1 June 1871 for example); Watson and Henderson in Belfast in 1872 were selling cricket shoes (*Belfast News-Letter*, 16 April 1872 for example).

Toy manufacturers sold cricketing goods at this time: Barrett's of Stephen's Green in Dublin were stocking an array of 'toys, games and fancy goods' including those for cricket, croquet and archery seemingly aimed at the young or for indoor use (*The Irish Times*, 27 February 1867) and a later report from a Dublin exhibition described him as showcasing 'juvenile toys' and cricket outfits too (*The Irish Times*, 24 April 1867); a new toy, basket & fancy goods warehouse opened in Donegall Place, Belfast in 1871 selling cricketing goods (*Belfast News-Letter*, 10 July 1871).

Prizes and cups were a prime business at this time: Mr William Gibson, jeweller in Donegall Place in Belfast, displayed the cups, tankards and jugs being competed for at the athletic sports being held at NICC in June 1871 in addition to use for general cricketing use (*Belfast News-Letter*, 9 June 1871); Thomas Bruncker was selling cups and prizes suitable for cricket and foot races in Dublin's Grafton Street in May 1869 (*The Irish Times*, 5 May 1869).

Tents, cricket nets and rollers were on sale at this time: William Bailey was selling tents, marquees and flags by exhibiting them at the All England Eleven versus twenty-two Gentlemen of Ireland match in Trinity College Park in Dublin in June 1868 (*Freeman's Journal*, 23 June 1868); exhibitors at the Royal Agricultural Show included a stand with marquees, tents and flags for a variety of sports, including cricket (*Belfast News-Letter*, 9 August 1872), with a separate company offering tents for a variety of sports including cricket at this event too (*Belfast News-Letter*, 6 August 1872); O'Brien, Kearney and Co were selling cricket nets in Dublin in 1869 (*Freeman's Journal*, 27 March 1869 for example); Green's Patent Rollers were on sale for lawns, bowling greens and cricket fields in 1867 (see *Freeman's Journal*, 27 April 1867 for example); Shanks' patent lawn-moving machines were back on sale from 1868 onwards, having been popular in the early 1860s (see *Belfast News-Letter*, 29 May 1868 and 20 April 1869 for example). Keenan and Sons of Fishamble Street, Dublin were advertising in the back of the *Handbook* for their lawn mowers, rollers and benches for cricket at this time (there are no page numbers, but please see the back of the 1867-68 *Handbook* for example). The Atlantic Hotel, Miltown, Co Clare, were keen to advertise their ability to host cricket, croquet and archery clubs in their hotel grounds (*Freeman's Journal*, 11 July 1868) whilst Thomas Kirby continued to host fireworks at Sandymount cricket club in late July 1867, claiming he was still the pyrotechnical artist to the Viceroy (*The Irish Times*, 27 July 1867).

Ticket selling was a popular business opportunity: Marks's Upholstery Warehouse were selling tickets to the United South of England versus twenty-two of Dublin University CC match in 1871 (*Freeman's Journal*, 26 May 1871). The following were selling tickets, with all but two of them not cross-referenced in selling items elsewhere (all from *Freeman's Journal*, 23 June 1868): Mr Madden, cigar importer, of 119 Grafton Street; Mr Carrigan, outfitter, of 118 Grafton Street; Mr Yeates, optician, of 1 Grafton Street; Mrs Connell of Westland-row Station; Mr Gealy, merchant tailor, of 53 Dame Street; Mr Mitchell, cigar importer, of 20 Lower Sackville Street; Mr Wiseheart, stationer, of 42 Lower Sackville Street; Messrs. Ingram and McWilliams, outfitters, of 14 Lower Sackville Street; Messrs. Treacy and Co., outfitters, 24 Westmoreland Street; Mr Wilson, outfitter, 26 Nassau Street (presumably the same Mr Wilson as already mentioned selling cricketing shirts which were cashmere and cotton in comparison to the normal flannels in 1868, *The Irish Times*, 25 May 1868); Mr Grattan, outfitter, of 14 Nassau Street; Mr J. Booth junior,

watchmaker, 12 Nassau Street; Mr Deane, outfitter, 13 Leinster Street; Mr Bowen, cigar importer, 14 College Green. McGlashan and Gill, of Dublin, were selling the *Handbook* in this time (see the front page of the 1867-68 edition for example). Dublin University acted as ticket sellers exclusively at times (*Freeman's Journal*, 4 May 1870). Mr Tracy, as already mentioned as an outfitter at Westmoreland Street, was also a vendor for tickets to Dublin Cricket Week in addition to Lawrence and Dublin University in 1872 (*Freeman's Journal*, 29 June 1872).

Individuals: a valet was boasting of his cricketing knowledge to gain employment in 1870 (*The Irish Times*, 9 March 1870).

Catering: Mr Stewart, of Ann Street, Belfast, was the designated caterer to the North of Ireland club in 1871 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 1 September 1871). Andrews & Co were advertising food for cricket matches, archery, picnics and races including pies, pates, sardines, anchovies, cheeses, biscuits, champagne and wines in the back of the *Handbook* of 1868-69. Mr Thomas Byrne was caught in his attempts to exploit cricket's financial benefits, being charged with selling spirits without a licence at the Leinster cricket ground in the summer of 1868 (*Freeman's Journal*, 6 August 1868).

## Appendix six: details of Irish MPs patronising cricket between 1867 – 1872

Cricket's revival in Co Carlow was apparently due to Captain W. Fagan and H. Bruen in 1871, both being MPs (*Freeman's Journal*, 3 August 1871); Monasterevan CC had two MPs – the Right Hon. W.H.F. Cogan and Lord Otho Fitzgerald - amongst its patrons and supporters in 1868 (*Handbook of Cricket 1868-69*, p.144); Arthur Smith Barry, MP, hosted IZ ahead of their 1869 match versus eighteen of Cork (*Handbook of Cricket 1869-70*, p.75); Sir J.M. Stronge, MP, was Vice President of Armagh CC in 1869 (*Handbook of Cricket 1869-70*, p.92) and 1870 too (*Handbook of Cricket 1870-71*, p.120); Arthur Kavanagh, MP, was President of Borris CC in 1870 and provided his grounds for the game (*Handbook of Cricket 1870-71*, pp.125-126) and was still President of Borris CC in 1872 (*Handbook of Cricket 1872-73*, p.123); the Co Cavan had three MPs as Vice-Presidents in 1870 – E. Saunderson, Colonel the Hon. H. Annesley and H. Willis Thompson (*Handbook of Cricket 1870-71*, p.127); Kylemore's President in 1871 was Mitchell Henry, MP, providing grounds at his property (*Handbook of Cricket 1871-72*, p.160); three MPs – The Right Hon. Colonel Monselli, Edward J. Synan and Major Gavin - were patrons of the Co Limerick CC in 1871 (*Handbook of Cricket 1871-72*, p.178); Sir William Verner, MP, was President of Killyman CC in 1871 (*Handbook of Cricket 1871-71*, p.208); J.J. Ennis, MP, was Patron of Athlone CC in 1871 (*Handbook of Cricket 1871-71*, p.217); Sir H.H. Brace, MP, was President of Dunboe in 1872 (*Handbook of Cricket 1872-73*, p.167); Pat Bracken's work has also uncovered John Bagwell, MP, presenting the South Tipperary CC with four bats and six balls in 1871 (*Bracken, Foreign and Fantastic Field Sports*, p.52).

Some MPs held multiple positions in continuance from the list above: E.J. Synan, MP, was President of Rathkale in 1872 in addition to his role on the Co Limerick Patron list in 1871 (*Handbook of Cricket 1872-73*, p.167).

Of particular interest is Mitchell Henry, the Kylemore President in 1871. He was elected to a Co Galway seat in 1871 under a Home Rule ticket.<sup>1282</sup>

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<sup>1282</sup> Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p.192.



Appendix seven: examples of grounds provision and support for cricket in Ireland in the early 1860s

Ballymena CC in Antrim had their grounds provided by Sir Shafto Adair's demesne in Ballymena and the public were admitted to their match versus NICC in June 1860 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 4 June 1860). The Armagh – Banbridge match of 6 June 1862 was played on the grounds of John Temple Reilly, Esq. at Scarva, County Down (*Belfast News-Letter*, 10 June 1862). Major Waring provided grounds for the Rathfriland and Waringstown clubs' match on 12 July 1861 (*The Irish Times*, 18 July 1861) and also for the Gilford and Waringstown match on 16 July 1862 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 19 July 1862). The Lurgan Demesne Club played on the Lurgan demesne in Cavan in June 1860, with two players given both names, a professional just his surname and all eight others their initials and second names. Lord Lurgan was noted for being present during the whole match, taking a great interest in the game and entertaining the players and visitors hospitably (*Belfast News-Letter* 25 June 1860). In Tipperary, the Manor versus Airfield match was played in the demesne of Thomas Cranfield of Dundrum in June 1860 (*The Irish Times*, 12 June 1860). The Tullamore versus Geashill match in King's County was played on the estate of Lord Digby, in a game hosted by Thomas Weldon French, JP. Lady Digby graced the field with her daughter in the evening of the game (*The Irish Times*, 1 August 1861). Within this report, all the players on the Tullamore side were only given their second names, whilst the Geashill team had eight of the eleven with an initial and surname, with three just given their surname. The return match was played in the Charleville demesne of Hon. Alfred Bury, High Sheriff of the King's County (*Freeman's Journal*, 10 August 1861). In July 1863, Thomas Clibborn allowed Newtown CC to use one of his fields as its cricket ground (*The Irish Times*, 17 July 1863). In Cork, the Duke of Devonshire (who resided in neighbouring Waterford) provided ground through his agent for Middleton CC to use in 1860, with 40 members signing up for this club (*Nenagh Guardian*, 2 June 1860).

Appendix eight: examples of schools in Ireland and Britain using cricket as part of their advertising material in the years 1867 – 1872

Ennis College were using the possession of cricketing fields in advertising material in many years, for example in 1867 (*The Irish Times*, 5 January 1867), 1869 (*The Irish Times*, 6 January 1869), 1870 (*The Irish Times*, 4 January 1870) etc; Dundalk Grammar School were using facilities of a cricket ground in promotional material in multiple years too (*The Irish Times*, 19 March 1867 and 7 January 1868); Newry School boasted of football and cricket fields for pupils' use (*Belfast News-Letter*, 25 July 1867); Diocesan School, Tuam were advertising the accessibility and use of a cricket field for boys in adverts in 1868 (*The Irish Times*, 7 January 1868); St John's College, Newport Tipperary, near Limerick, boasted of their 'first class cricket ground' in adverts in 1868 and in 1869 (see *The Irish Times*, 16 January 1869 for example); Preparatory College, Killiney, south Dublin, stated cricket and football were being promoted and 'every care is taken to form a healthy and vigorous youth' (*The Irish Times*, 3 January 1870); Coleraine Academical Institution were advertising cricket in their material (*The Irish Times*, 6 April 1871); Portarlinton School boasted of 9 acres of grounds in 1872, including those devoted to cricket and football (*The Irish Times*, 8 July 1872); Hillbrook School, Hollywood, Co Down, used their cricket ground as advertising bait in 1872 (*Belfast News-Letter*, 13 July 1872 for example); Rathmines School had a page devoted to cricket in their 1872 school magazine, on general sale in 1872 (see *The Irish Times*, 15 June 1872).

The following all used cricket as an advertising tool in attempting to recruit Irish boys to school in England: Allstone College used the allure of cricketing facilities each year in their repetitive marketing drive to gain scholars from Ireland (see *The Irish Times*, 5 January 1867 and 5 January 1870 as well as the *Belfast News-Letter* of 4 January 1869 as examples); East Hardwick School in Yorkshire were also using such tools (see *The Irish Times*, 9 January 1870 for example). The following were also exploiting cricket in advertising: The Ancient Endowed Grammar School, Hawarden (*Belfast News-Letter*, 4 January 1869); Anglo French College, London (*The Irish Times*, 15 February 1869); Sandicroft College, Cheshire (*The Irish Times*, 23 March 1872); Aspley School, Woburn, Bedfordshire (*The Irish Times*, 20 June 1868); East London College, London (*The Irish Times*, 15 July 1868).

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### **Conference papers**

Allen, D., of Cape Peninsula University of Technology: "'The Englishman's game": Cricket and Colonial Identity in South Africa, 1880 – 1910' - a paper presented at the Cricket, Migration and Diasporic Communities around the World Conference, held at Leeds Metropolitan University on 4 July 2012.

Bateman, A., Honorary Visiting Research Fellow of the International Centre for Sport History and Culture, De Montfort University: "'From far it looks like politics": CLR James and the Canon of English Cricket Literature' - a paper presented at the Cricket, Migration and Diasporic Communities around the World Conference, held at Leeds Metropolitan University on 4 July 2012.

Bracken, P., an independent scholar at the time of presenting: 'Cricket and Society in Rural Ireland: Co. Tipperary, a case study, 1849-1914' – a paper presented at the sixth annual conference of Sports History Ireland, held at Mater Dei Institute of Education in Dublin on 25 September 2010.

Bracken, P., of De Montfort University: 'Not quite yet on death's door: Hurling 1840 - 1884' – a paper presented at the eighth annual conference of Sports History Ireland held at University College Cork on 15 September 2012.

Curran, C., of De Montfort University, Leicester: 'The Development of Cricket in County Donegal, 1865-1900' – a paper presented at the sixth annual conference of Sports History Ireland, held at Mater Dei Institute of Education in Dublin on 25 September 2010.

Curran, C., of De Montfort University: 'Sport and cultural nationalism: The conflict between Association and Gaelic football in Donegal, 1905-1934' – a paper presented at the eighth annual conference of Sports History Ireland held at University College Cork on 15 September 2012.

Garnham, N., of the University of Ulster: 'The roles of cricket in Edwardian and Victorian Ireland' - a paper presented at the Economic and Social History Society of Ireland Annual Conference, held at the University of Limerick, 8-9 November 2002.

Harding, T., of Trinity College Dublin: 'Bell's Life in London, a window on Irish sport before the Famine' – a paper presented at the sixth annual conference of Sports

History Ireland, held at Mater Dei Institute of Education in Dublin on 25 September 2010.

McElligott, R., of University College Dublin: “‘Degenerating, from sterling Irishmen into contemptible West Britons’: The GAA and Rugby Football in Kerry, 1885-1905’ – a paper presented at the sixth annual conference of Sports History Ireland, held at Mater Dei Institute of Education in Dublin on 25 September 2010.

O’Keefe, D., independent scholar: ‘Killing dragons and taming ogres: Irish Mountaineering from the Eiger to Everest’ - a paper presented at the eighth annual conference of Sports History Ireland held at University College Cork on 15 September 2012.

O’Riordan, M., of University College Cork: ‘Active Participant or passive bystander? The sporting activity of women in the Irish landed class, 1860-1914’ - a paper presented at the eighth annual conference of Sports History Ireland held at University College Cork on 15 September 2012.

Papavasileiou, E., of the ss Great Britain museum in Bristol: ‘Brunel’s ss Great Britain and the All England Eleven’ – a paper presented at the Cricket, Migration and Diasporic Communities around the World Conference, held at Leeds Metropolitan University on 4 July 2012.

Titley, A., of University College Cork: “‘A Rational Continuation of the Past’: How the History of Irish Games Could Inform the Future’ - a paper presented at the eighth annual conference of Sports History Ireland held at University College Cork on 15 September 2012.

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Watson, E.F., of the Cave Hill Campus of The University of the West Indies in Barbados: ‘Re/Examining Cricket, Migration and Race through the lens of Jackie Opel’s *Worrell’s Captaincy*’ - a paper presented at the Cricket, Migration and Diasporic Communities around the World Conference, held at Leeds Metropolitan University on 4 July 2012.

### **Unpublished PhD theses**

Bateman, A., ‘The politics of the aesthetic: cricket, literature and culture 1850 – 1965’ submitted to the University of Salford, UK, June 2005.

Clarke, I.D., ‘The development and social history of cricket in Cornwall 1815 to 1881’ submitted to De Montfort University, UK, June 2004.

Light, R., ‘Cricket’s forgotten past: a social and cultural history of the game in the West Riding of Yorkshire 1820 – 1870’ submitted to De Montfort University, UK, June 2008.

O'Neill, C., 'Rule Etonia: educating the Irish Catholic elite 1850 – 1900' submitted to the University of Liverpool, UK, June 2010.

Stone, D., 'Cricket, competition and the amateur ethos: Surrey and the Home Counties 1870 – 1970' submitted to the University of Huddersfield, UK, May 2013.