

Volume 9, Number 1, September 2013

## Revision

# Social and cultural influences on rational recreation and the development of association football

*Symond Burrows*

## The Industrial Revolution

The influence of the Industrial Revolution on the development of rationalised sports and pastimes changed over the nineteenth century. During the first half of the century, the effects were negative:

- migration of the lower classes into urban areas — loss of space and overcrowding
- lack of time — shift from seasonal to machine work, leading to 12-hour days
- lack of income — low wages and poverty
- poor health — poor working and living conditions, lack of hygiene and little energy to play
- loss of rights — restrictions placed on mob games (e.g. mob football) and blood sports by changes in criminal laws

In the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a more positive effect:

- health and hygiene improved
- there was more time for sport owing to the Factory Acts and Saturday half-day
- development of the new middle class changed ways of behaving and playing sport — it became more acceptable and respectable
- influence of ex-public schoolboys via industry, Church etc.
- values of athleticism (i.e. physical endeavour with moral integrity) spread to the lower classes
- industrial patronage led to provision for recreation and sport — factory teams were set up, excursions to the seaside were provided etc.
- improvements in transport and communications influenced the distances spectators and players could travel, and leagues were established (e.g. football league)
- it became cheaper to travel

## Urban industrial factors that influenced the development of rational recreation

- The masses needed entertaining/mass spectatorism
- Lack of space available — purpose-built facilities
- Factory owners set up teams and provided facilities
- Wages gradually increased/paid holidays/broken time payments
- More free time available, e.g. Saturday afternoons
- Development of railways enabled trips 'away' to watch your team

## The transport revolution

The railways increased participation opportunities and spread interest in sport. Faster trains enabled people to travel further and more easily, giving more time for sports matches. Spectators could follow their teams to away matches and regular fixtures developed, creating a need for unified rules or codification. Although trains were expensive and used mostly by the middle and upper classes, excursions — often sponsored by employers — allowed working people to travel.

## The influence of the Church

Changing views of the Church during Victorian times also helped to promote sport and recreation. Sunday-school teams encouraged social control through 'civilised' activities. Church facilities such as halls provided venues for 'improving the morality' of the working classes. The development of the YMCA promoted the healthy body/healthy mind link. The clergy took an active role so as to increase church attendance. Aston Villa's roots can be traced back to the Church — Villa Cross Methodist Church.

## How nineteenth century English schools and public school old boys (e.g. at university) influenced the spread of rational recreation around the globe

- Set up NGBs — codification of sport, standardised rules for different sports, set up competitions
- As industrialists — provided facilities, set up work teams
- As missionaries of the Church — encouraged sport, spread it on their travels around the world
- As army officers/diplomats — they took sport into the armed services and spread it throughout the British Empire
- As philanthropists — they provided purpose-built public facilities, e.g. Titus Salt and Saltaire

## Reasons for the formation of NGBs (e.g. Football Association 1863)

During the mid- to late nineteenth century, NGBs began to develop in England for the following reasons:

- more teams/clubs were forming
- more fixtures/leagues were required for these teams to compete in
- rules/codification for different sports were required (e.g. association football)
- maintenance of the 'amateur ideal'/control of sport among the middle/upper classes was desired